

Martyn pig



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How does Kevin Brooks portray power relations in at least 4 key scenes in the novel *Martyn Pig*. Power relationships play a key role in the book *Martyn Pig* by Kevin Brooks. Power is a term given when a person has control over the other person and a relationship is a term given when there's an accepting between two people, when put together we can understand that the term 'power relations' is when a character in this book uses power to control a relationship.

Martyn Pig is an eleven year old whose life isn't really the best at the time and it's about to get worse as it takes an unforeseen twist after an accident that takes place which will leave young Martyn to lead a life full of deception, disloyalty and doubtfulness on a daily basis. I will be focusing on how Martyn's power is being fluctuated throughout the book as he confronts various characters whom of which have different relationships with Martyn.

The four scenes I will be analysing the 'Bottle Bank' scene, the killing scene, the first confrontation between Dean and Martyn, the second confrontation between Dean and Martyn and finally the scene where Alex the Assassin gets exposed. The Bottle bank scene illustrates William Pig's power which outlines his superiority over Martyn's vulnerability. In this scene we can see that Martyn "was in the kitchen filling a plastic bin liner with empty bottles" this shows that although Martyn's father is shown to have the power, it is Martyn the eleven year old kid that is looking after his father a grown man when it should be the other way.

This makes the reader feel disheartened but this gives Martyn a sense of mental power; the reason why William Pig isn't in control of Martyn the way he should be is because the alcohol intake is taking control of him which

makes him lose his physical stature which is why “ Dad was leaning against the doorway, smoking a cigarette, watching me through his bloodshot eyes” Bloodshot eyes gives a indication to the audience that this a result of alcohol and drug abuse which is resulting in his violent and abusive mentality he has towards Martyn, this also shows a sense of power that Martyn’s father has as it inserts fear into Martyn.

Moreover, Martyn’s father then goes on to say “ Don’t you go takin’ ‘ em to the bottle bank” Authority is shown immediately with a use of an imperative verb. Martyn’s Dad then goes having a short rant about the environment by saying “ Bloody environment this, bloody environment that ... if anyone wants to use my empty bottles again they’ll have to pay for ‘ em” this sums up Mr Pig’s attitude to just about everything, unconcerned. Also this tells the reader the lack of education that Mr Pig has as it was written colloquially.

Martyn on the other hand is highly intelligent, which is pointed out when in the internal monologue shortly after Mr Pigs rant in which Martyn says “ I thought of telling him that there’s no such thing as the environment” Martyn feels that there isn’t a need to correct his dad as it would seem pointless. Therefore he decides to be the bigger man by keeping it in his mind and not risk being a victim of his father’s violent mind state which creates an impression to the reader that Martyn’s intellect is more overpowering than of his fathers.

As we move onto the Killing scene we begin to notice that Martyn’s powers have advanced and it now seems that Martyn has the ultimate control for the moment, which is a first in the book. This gain of power is triggered by an outburst Martyn had with his father in which Martyn had said “ For God’s

sake, Dad just shut up! It's not funny, it's pathetic. You're pathetic. Why can't you let me watch the bloody television for once? " As readers we are normally subjected to be shown Martyn thoughts through internal monologues as he normally kept his feelings confined within himself.

The reader can visualize Martyn shouting at his father due to the exclamation marks added in which adds fire to the exceeding power Martyn is getting but for now this isn't Physical power, it's filtered out as verbal power. The snappy short sentences show great effectiveness as they represent anger being vented out with pauses in which Martyn doesn't seem to be interrupted by his father (this shows the great power Martyn has elevated into which lets him control the situation swiftly). This is ended intellectually by a Rhetorical question to which neither Martyn or his Father answers as they were meant to.

However, shortly after Martyn gains power Martyn's father steals the spotlight and retains his former glory. Martyn had taken control of the situation due to Verbal power but he had overlooked his father's physical power. We begin to realise this as " I turned just in time to see him bearing down on me with his fist raised above his head and drunken madness burning his eyes" Martyn seems to get intimidated as his father showcased his physical strength to show who was the man in the house.

We the readers are given an image planted in our minds of David and Goliath situation with Mr Pig being Goliath as he was overlooking Martyn. As readers we feel highly sympathetic as we thought that Martyn had finally gotten the upper hand and things could've changed from this point on and Martyn and his father could've sustained a normal father and son

relationship. In the first confrontation between Martyn and Dean we can understand that Dean is the more overpowering individual, which allows him to be in control of the situation.

This is pointed out to us when the following takes place “unbelievable”, he said. “Kids today, I don’t know. No respect for their elders” this indirectly confirms Dean’s knowing about the killing of Martyn’s father which would make Martyn feel deceived by Alex and nervously cautious about Dean. This makes the reader feel remorseful for Martyn’s mole is slowly turning into a mountain. Despite the fact that Dean has full control in the first confrontation between the pair, it was all about to change in Thursday as it was now Martyn that was in control of the situation.

Dean tries to regain power by making the following threat “Do you understand Pig? No money, no type. If I don’t get the money - he tapped the tape ‘this goes to the Police” A dash is added to cause a dramatic effect, but not even this attempt to create tension could make the ball swing in Dean’s court. Ironically Dean tries to dumb it down for Martyn who is probably has the most intellect out of the pair. Dean had thought that it would be a walk in the park to capture the money from Martyn but it hasn’t exactly been like this.

As readers we are relieved that Martyn has taken some of the burden of his shoulder. During the course of the book we can understand that no one has really maintained their power that they had for a long period of time, it had only lasted for a particular scene and had then be lost. What I have learnt from this book is that you shouldn’t follow someone blindly and that it’s

normally the person that is most close to you that would cause you the most pain.