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was the nature of our relationship that I should always disappoint you. You expected it, and so it came to be."

Her story changes from addressing him in the second person, mostly accusingly, to a third-person narrative in which she remembers the past from a child's point of view. The effect of these juxtapositions is mostly striking, but at times it jars and irritates.

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Lily has always wanted to atone for her betrayal of Tom. They haven't spoken in 30 years. His memoir opens many wounds and exposes a sense of unfinished business for others which he has not bargained for. To his distress, a confrontation with the people intertwined in his story becomes inevitable.

The second part is told by Tom himself, now a successful director of an NGO, who has put the past behind him, or so he thinks. After years in the struggle, he has forgiven Lily's betrayal and the resulting 12 years in prison, and he wants to move on. He enters into a relationship with Louise, a trauma counsellor, who too often treats him like one of her patients, not only confusing Tom but sometimes exasperating the reader.

Tom's memoir also attracts the attention of one of his former lovers, Miranda. Lily and Tom's narrations are interspersed with letters written by Lily to Miranda and by Miranda to both siblings. In the end, Tom has to face all the women in his life, each demanding something of him in her own way. Confronted with fatherhood, impending loss of his position because of affirmative action and a devastating revelation from the past, the anger he has kept at bay for such a long time threatens to consume him again.

My Brother's Book is a richly told story which manages to keep it secrets well hidden until the very last. Above all, it can be read as a meditation on truth, its unstable and highly individualised nature. The last part of the novel, told from Pop's perspective, offers a consolatory glimpse into the future of his fractured family and leaves one with a sense of hope and closure.



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