

= Cora Cross =

Cora Cross is a fictional character from the BBC soap opera EastEnders , played by Ann Mitchell . Cora is the mother of Tanya Branning (Jo Joyner) and Rainie Cross (Tanya Franks) and the grandmother of Lauren (Jacqueline Jossa) and Abi Branning (Lorna Fitzgerald) . Cora initially appeared from 11 to 15 April 2011 , and returned as a regular character on 28 July . Cora is described as having " a brash , outspoken attitude and does not care who she offends " , deemed " an archetypal East End matriarch " and Inside Soap says that Cora is a " brash , loud lady who likes to tell everyone what she thinks and has absolute no shame . "

In May 2011 , when it was confirmed that Cora would be returning to EastEnders , executive producer Bryan Kirkwood said , " We all love Cora here ? actress Ann Mitchell could be one of the Walford greats " . Kirkwood was keen to find a new matriarch for the show after the loss of Peggy Mitchell , played by Barbara Windsor and explained that Cora is a perfect fit . Kate White of Inside Soap praised Cora and added she could watch Ann Mitchell acting " her socks off " all day long .

Mitchell took hiatus in April 2015 , returned for a five @-@ month guest stint from July to December 2015 , and is due to make a full return in late 2016 .

= = Storylines = =

Cora turns up at her daughter Tanya Branning 's (Jo Joyner) house unannounced , and revealing that Tanya 's fiancé Greg Jessop (Stefan Booth) invited her to their wedding against Tanya 's wishes . Cora 's other daughter , Rainie Cross , (Tanya Franks) also arrives at Tanya 's house , which Tanya is initially unhappy about , but Cora vouches for her by promising that she is now clean from drugs and explains that Rainie 's counsellor thinks she should reconnect with her family . Tanya soon softens towards her mother and sister . On Tanya 's hen night , Cora takes a dislike to Vanessa Gold (Zöe Lucker) after Vanessa laughs about them living on a council estate . The next day , Tanya 's ex @-@ husband , Max , goes to Tanya 's house after tearing their daughter Abi Branning 's (Lorna Fitzgerald) bridesmaid dress ; Tanya does not want to see him so Cora attempts to sort him out . She tells Max that although the girls have his name , they are Crosses deep down . It is later revealed that Rainie is staying at Cora 's house . Cora then attends Tanya 's wedding , and finds it amusing when Jane Beale (Laurie Brett) says she kissed Greg the night before . Cora departs after the wedding on 15 April , and Rainie later reveals that she has moved out of her mother 's home .

Cora returns months later as she can no longer handle her abusive neighbours and asks to stay with Tanya for a few days . Tanya lets her stay longer , and on her birthday , she visits The Queen Victoria public house and meets Patrick Trueman (Rudolph Walker) and Alfie Moon (Shane Richie) . She gets drunk and confronts Tanya about forgetting her birthday and how she treats Rainie . Cora also guesses that Tanya does not love Greg , but Tanya denies this . Cora reveals she has been evicted from her home because her neighbour has an ASBO , but when Cora , Tanya and Rainie return there to empty the house , the neighbour reveals that Cora is the one with the ASBO . She looks after Tanya 's young son Oscar Branning (Charlee and Neo Hall) but he annoys her due to the noise he makes . She leaves him to play on the stairs but he falls down them , leaving him with minor injuries .

Eventually Cora is forced to move out of Tanya 's and convinces Dot Branning (June Brown) to let her stay with her and her sister Rose Cotton (Polly Perkins) . She asks Anthony Moon (Matt Lapinskas) to help her move her things , saying he can keep one of her belongings as payment . He asks for her candlesticks , but she says they are the only decent thing she owns , so she lets him buy them for £ 200 . She later finds out they could be worth £ 1000 , so convinces Anthony 's father Eddie (David Essex) to give her an extra £ 300 , but he believes them to be worth £ 8000 . Dot later kicks Cora out for laughing at her and using language that Dot dislikes . Cora arrives at Tanya 's house just as Shirley Carter (Linda Henry) is throttling Rainie so Cora fends Shirley off and threatens her . Tanya then lets Cora stay with her . When Max returns because Abi is worried about Tanya , it leads to Lauren revealing that Tanya has cervical cancer and has stopped her treatment .

Tanya explains that she did not tell anyone because of how it was for her when her father , William , was dying of cancer . She then tells Cora and Rainie that William did not die peacefully as they thought , but he was in constant pain so Tanya helped him to die . Cora is initially horrified , but after Tanya explains further the circumstances surrounding William 's death , they reconcile .

Cora then vows to support Tanya through her illness . Cora starts voluntary work at a cancer charity shop , where she is quickly promoted to manager . Cora also returns to live with Dot and Rose . Cora suspects Max of having an affair with Roxy Mitchell (Rita Simons) . Max gets Roxy to admit to Cora that she attempted to seduce him , but that he refused her . Cora then warns Roxy to stay away from Max before throwing her out . Lucy Beale (Hetti Bywater) confides in Cora as she is unsure if she will see her father again . Having smashed Cora 's shop window , Sasha Dixon (Rebecca Sanneh) is made to do shifts in the shop to pay for the damage . Cora swindles funeral director Les Coker (Roger Sloman) as a means of increasing shop sales . When Lola Pearce (Danielle Harold) goes into labour , Cora helps deliver her baby daughter , Lexi .

Cora pretends to be in a relationship with Patrick at a funeral of one of his old friends . Tanya assumes the relationship is real , so Cora is angry that Tanya is interfering . Cora and Patrick then decide to start a real relationship , taking it slowly . Tanya tries to make up for upsetting Cora by replacing a bracelet she lost , but discovers a birth certificate for a sister she knew nothing about , Ava Anderton (Clare Perkins) . Cora refuses to discuss the matter , until later , when she burns the birth certificate and tells Tanya that Ava died shortly after birth . Tanya asks Cora find Rainie so she can be a bridesmaid at Tanya 's second wedding to Max . Rainie sends her addiction sponsor to meet Cora , who reveals that Rainie has been sober for six weeks , Rainie blames Cora for her bad behaviour and does not want any further contact with her . Cora bins Rainie 's bridesmaid dress and simply tells Tanya that Rainie refused to be a bridesmaid . Cora begins behaving strangely and angrily tells Tanya the truth about Rainie .

When Patrick questions Cora about a cake she is baking , she tells him it is for Ava 's birthday , she is in fact alive and she was forced to give her up for adoption by her parents because she was unmarried and the baby was mixed race . Her erratic behaviour continues and she is subsequently fired from the charity shop . Patrick reveals to Tanya that Ava is alive , so Tanya tracks her down to a school in Dalston where she works as a deputy headmistress . Tanya is shocked to discover that Ava is mixed @-@ race and decides to leave things . However , she leaves her purse behind , and Ava returns it to Tanya 's home , where Cora is horrified when she introduces herself by her name . Tanya reveals the truth , and Cora leaves after slapping Tanya for meddling in her private life . She is angry at Patrick when he says he told Tanya the truth and ends the relationship . Cora then speaks to Ava , and Ava has many questions . Ava says she thought about finding Cora before but decided against it as she wanted to keep the past in the past , and says that nothing has changed now , rejecting Cora . Ava leaves and Cora cries . Cora later goes to Ava 's workplace and gives her a Christmas card , and a short while later , Ava brings one for Cora . She also reconciles with Patrick but they stay friends .

As Christmas nears , Cora reunites with Tanya , and is invited for Christmas with the Brannings . At Derek Branning 's (Jamie Foreman) funeral , Cora delivers an honest eulogy . Cora comforts Tanya after she splits with Max . She befriends her grandson , Ava 's son Dexter Hartman (Khali Best) , who helps to bring Cora and Ava closer . Cora is a support to Tanya and Lauren while Lauren goes through alcoholism . Tanya takes Lauren away to a clinic , but Tanya does not return when Lauren does . When Dexter 's father Sam James (Cornell S John) arrives , he tries to win Cora over but she sees that Ava and Dexter are upset and warns him off . Ava and Sam reunite , and Cora eventually tells Dexter , who is initially angry but comes to terms with the relationship . Cora is jealous when Patrick picks Betty Spragg (Tessa Wyatt) as his dance partner , making fun of her behind her back and angering Patrick , putting a strain on their friendship . Abi and Kim Fox (Tameka Empson) plot to get Cora and Patrick back together , locking them in a shed . Patrick ends his friendship with Betty and resumes a relationship with Cora .

When Tanya moves away from Walford , Cora continues to live with Lauren and Abi , and they are later joined by Dexter when Ava moves to Newcastle . Cora supports her granddaughters when Max is in prison for attempted murder , but following his release from prison and separation from his third

wife Kirsty (Kierston Wareing) , he buys 5 Albert Square , and throws Cora and Dexter out , as they do nothing around the house . They move in with Patrick , but he ends his relationship with Cora in March 2014 due to her insensitive comments that she makes to Dot following the death of her son Nick Cotton (John Altman) . He later tells her that she and Dexter have one month to find somewhere else . Cora steals money from the laundrette to rent a flat , but after Dot finds her stealing money from the washing machines , Cora loses hope until Stan Carter (Timothy West) , who she has recently befriended agrees to give her some cash . Cora and Dexter later move into a flat together . Lauren and Abi move in with her when Max is revealed to have been sleeping with Lauren 's best friend Lucy , before her recent murder . Cora becomes suspicious that Max is withholding information from the police and calls them to clarify his statement . She later warns him not to hurt Lauren and Abi any further .

Cora and Stan start dating and Stan , who has terminal prostate cancer , decides he wants to commit the time he has left with her . He surprises her with a Christmas dance , but things are ruined when Stan 's ex @-@ wife Sylvie Carter (Linda Marlowe) walks in on them together . Cora decides to move to Newcastle with Dexter and Ava , but after Stan apologises to her and goes with her to the station , she has a change of heart and decides to stay . Stan then takes Cora to a retro dance event , but Cora walks out when Sylvie arrives there . She goes back there with Babe Smith (Annette Badland) but leaves again after seeing Stan and Sylvie sharing a dance and a kiss and learning that Babe has had feelings for Stan all along .

Several weeks later , Stan invites Cora to a horse racing match in hopes of rekindling their relationship , but she turns him down as she feels she will lose him again . The same day , Stan collapses due to his cancer spreading leaving him paralysed from the waist down . Two days later , after much hesitation , Cora visits Stan in hospital to say goodbye to him , but is unperturbed by Babe 's presence in caring for Stan . After Babe privately recalls to Cora how much she loved Stan from the minute she met him , Cora is surprised when Stan proposes to her . She rejects his proposal , not wanting to hurt Babe 's feelings , but Babe , realising that her and Stan were never meant to be , encourages Cora to accept the proposal for his last chance of happiness , but told her that he 's love Sylvie more . Two weeks later , Stan passes away from his cancer , devastating Cora . After his funeral she departs , saying she will stay with Tanya in Exeter , and is then seen calling her and waiting for her to pick her up .

A few months later , a dishevelled Cora attends a charity drive for the homeless at the community centre , but ensures nobody sees her . When Abi calls Tanya , she discovers Cora has not visited Tanya . Abi is distressed and attempts to find her . Cora is found by Abi , Jane and Carol Jackson (Lindsey Coulson) sleeping rough in a bus shelter and at first does not recognise Abi , however , she soon returns to Walford and lives in an allotment shed and in alleyways . Babe continues to make fun of her homeless state and when Cora steals food from the Vic , she humiliates Babe by exposing her past with Queenie Trott (Judy Cornwell) . Eventually , Cora 's friends and neighbours stage a protest , surprisingly led by Babe , at the local council 's Christmas party and they are forced to house Cora .

= = Character creation = =

= = = Casting = = =

Cora and her casting were announced on 21 March 2011 . It was announced that award @-@ winning actress , Ann Mitchell would be playing the role . Mitchell said of her casting " As a lifelong fan of EastEnders , I am thrilled to join the cast . I am a great fan of June Brown 's [who plays Dot Branning] and am looking forward to sharing some scenes with her . " Executive producer Bryan Kirkwood opined : " I 'm very excited to have the much @-@ loved Ann Mitchell joining us . Cora Cross is a formidable woman , cut from the same cloth as many glorious Walford women of the past , and Ann Mitchell is just perfect for the role . " It is Mitchell 's second role in EastEnders , having previously played Jane Williams from 2001 to 2002 . Cora initially appeared from 11 to 15 April 2011

. On 31 May 2011 , it was confirmed that Cora would be returning to EastEnders as a regular character . Kirkwood said , " We all love Cora here ? actress Ann Mitchell could be one of the Walford greats . She 'll be returning late in the summer and is here to stay . " Kirkwood added that he was keen to establish the Cross women . Mitchell was originally a guest artiste , appearing from 11 April to 15 April but was brought back as a regular character as of 28 July 2011 .

In an interview with Inside Soap , the executive producer of EastEnders , Bryan Kirkwood commented : " With the loss of Barbara Windsor , I was keen to find a new matriarch for the show , and Ann Mitchell is a dream booking . I 've always been a fan of her work , and with the storyline we 've got planned , we 'll wonder how we ever did without Cora " . Discussing the permanent return of Cora , Tanya Franks commented : " Ann Mitchell isn 't that scary in real life ! It 'll be nice to see these three crazy women as a family unit . There 's room for lots more skeletons to fall out of the closet . "

= = = Personality = = =

Cora was described as having " a brash , outspoken attitude and does not care who she offends . She also quickly puts Tanya under scrutiny , believing that success has turned her into a snob " . It was said that she secretly wants to heal the rift between Tanya and Rainie . Cora has also been described as a " bolshie battleaxe " . The BBC website describes Cora as " tough as old boots " and to " cross her at your peril . " It continues to read : " Outwardly , Cora ? s tough as old boots and doesn ? t give a stuff what people think of her . But underneath all her bling and hair dye there is a sadness to her . She ? s lonely , and wishes she had a relationship with her daughters Tanya and Rainie . Unpredictable Cora has lived on an estate all her life . She ? s never really had any money and finds it impossible to hold down a job . Even though she ? s always skint , she does enjoy the finer things in life . She ? s a fan of gold , and her big earrings may even outshine some of Pat 's . This lary lady won ? t back down from an argument and holds life long grudges . Cross Cora at your peril ! "

Inside Soap says that Cora is a " brash , loud lady who likes to tell everyone what she thinks and has absolute no shame . " An EastEnders informant says : " She 'll be a massive embarrassment to Tanya , who likes to think she 's risen above her roots and made a better life for herself . While Cora will be pretty impressed with Tanya 's lot , she 'll be quick to accuse her daughter of becoming snobby and stuck @-@ up . That 'll lead to plenty of drama and lots of comedy . " Mitchell said that Cora has a " gutsy spirit " and " thick skin " .

= = Development = =

In an interview with Digital Spy , Jake Wood was asked what kind of a dynamic he thinks that viewers could expect from Max and Cora . He replied : " If Max does move back home , they 'd potentially have to spend a lot of time together , so I think they 'd have to put their differences aside for Tanya 's sake . Ann Mitchell is a superb actor and Cora is a great character - a great addition to the show . I 'm very happy that she 's here . " Also in an interview with Digital Spy , Jo Joyner commented on the relationship between Tanya and Cora at present . She said : " I think that now we 've explored all of the history with Tanya 's father , the two of them are in a new territory . Cora can sometimes be distant and cold , but you have to remember that they hadn 't spoken for a long time . At the moment , because of Tanya 's illness , Cora is being supportive and quite ' mummy ' - but there 's always the possibility that things could take a turn for the worse with their relationship , so I think that could change . " Joyner later added : " There 's some really great stuff to come with Max , Cora and Tanya and her past . It all comes to a bit of a head . "

In October 2011 , Daniel Kilkelly of Digital Spy reported that Max would be returning to EastEnders with his brother Derek (Jamie Foreman) and teased that Tanya will reveal a long @-@ held family secret which will shock Cora . Tanya reveals to Cora and Rainie that she helped her father to die . Joyner stated that particularly enjoyed filming the scene where Tanya reveals the truth about her father 's death . Rudolph Walker revealed in July 2012 that Cora and Patrick Trueman are to embark

on a fling with each other . Upon Tanya discovering that Cora had another daughter , Mitchell said that many twists and turns will follow . She added : " The whole situation has pierced her thick skin . "

= = = Ava Hartman = = =

In September 2012 , Kilkelly reported that Tanya would discover Cora has been keeping a secret from her for years . Tanya discovers that Cora once had a daughter by the name of Ava , after coming across a birth certificate by accident . Tanya questions Cora , but she remains secretive and refuses to talk to her daughter . Cora later opens up to Tanya and tells that her daughter was called Ava , but that she died shortly after birth . It was later announced that Ava would be introduced to the show and that actress Claire Perkins had been cast in the role . Mitchell said that Cora was " forced to give up Ava " adding " The baby 's father was black and he left Cora before he knew she was pregnant . She was 18 and unmarried , and at that time , having a baby in her situation was a social stigma . She was made to feel enormous shame by her parents , who forced her to give the baby up for adoption . " On the subject of Cora keeping the secret for a significant amount of time , Mitchell also said that it 's down to guilt and wanting things to be kept safe and uncomplicated . Mitchell added " It 's going to be mayhem . The implications will be huge . The family will want answers , and I 'm sure we won 't be seeing the back of Ava . "

= = Reception = =

Speaking of Cora 's arrival , Jane Simon of the Daily Mirror said " Tanya 's mum Cora provides a stark warning about the dangers of Botox . She turns up tonight looking like Ronald McDonald in drag - no wonder Tanya 's been avoiding her . " The Daily Mail 's Jaci Stephen deemed Cora " an archetypal East End matriarch " . Stephen wrote : " brash and blunt , what she lacks in diplomacy she makes up for in style , even if that 's not the way daughter Tanya always sees it . The role is a perfect fit for actress Ann who , as gangster Dolly Rawlins in Widows , was one of the Eighties ' most iconic TV females . Daniel Kilkelly from Digital Spy said of Cora 's guest stint , " During her brief stay on Albert Square , Cora quickly became known for her brash attitude and outspoken ways . " Kate Woodward from Inside Soap said the introduction of Cora and Sylvia Goodwin (Stephanie Cole) from Coronation Street proved that soap operas need more " outspoken older women " . She commented that the characters cannot resist a barb and say the things many people would not ; just like " famous battleaxe " Blanche Hunt (Maggie Jones) . Cora and Sylvia have the " edge " that cannot be achieved by younger characters . Woodward described Cora as rough and that she owned a " gob as scary as her slap @-@ plastered mug " . Woodward later said that " outrageous Rose is the perfect foil for caustic Cora " . She named them as " the best double @-@ act ever " and added that they deserved an whole episode dedicated to them .

Kate White from the publication later praised the character saying " All hail the new queen of soap ? fabulous Cora is everything the discerning viewer could ever want . " White added she could watch Mitchell acting " her socks off " all day long . The writer later said that Cora has the " undisputed title of The Biggest Hair In Soap " . Michael Cregan of Inside Soap said that Cora has " proved that she isn 't a woman to be messed with " . He also admitted that " it was a real surprise " to see Cora 's vulnerable side as she listened to the truth of her husband 's supposed " peaceful death " . He added that it is clear that viewers still have a lot to learn about Cora . In October 2011 , Inside Soap readers voted Cora their " favourite soap battleaxe " over Sylvia Goodwin (Stephanie Cole) and Edna Birch (Shirley Stelfox) . Kevin O 'Sullivan of the Daily Mirror rated one of Cora 's lines his favourite . Cora said " I used to be able to walk down the street and stop traffic . " O 'Sullivan replied : " So she was a lollipop lady . " In Heat , Julie Emery called Cora " a bouffanted harridan of a mother " . Simon of the Daily Mirror later hinted that " Cora has a real soft spot for bad boy Derek Branning . " A writer for the Daily Mirror called Rose Cotton (Polly Perkins) , Patrick Trueman (Rudolph Walker) and Cora " diamond geezers " . Mitchell revealed in July 2012 that she was shocked to see that Cora has a young fanbase . She added that it is very interesting as people

seem to believe there is great division between young and old people , and that youngsters respond to her because she is a tough mother and grandmother . A writer for Press Association called Cora a " larger @-@ than @-@ life pensioner " . Mitchell received a nomination in the " Funniest Female " category at the 2012 Inside Soap Awards for her portrayal of Cora . Upon receiving the nomination , Mitchell commented " I 'm chuffed to be nominated for this award , Cora 's sense of humour is so dry . I love her . She 's so much fun to play ! "