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Sue Townsend- The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole

Summary

The book deals with the problems of a 13³/₄ year old boy.

Adrian starts his diary on January 1st, when he is 13 ³/₄ years old. He makes some resolutions for the New Year and he is worried about a spot on his chin. Adrian's parents quarrel between themselves about the flowers his mother has received from their neighbour. After a while he decides to become an intellectual, so he writes to the BBC to ask what to do about this. He also writes his first poem and joins the library.

At school Adrian meets Pandora. He joins a group called "The Good Samaritans". They do social work for old people. Adrian looks after Bert Baxter. Adrian's first visits to Bert Baxter are disappointments, because he is a dirty old man and his house is in a disgusting state. Moreover, he complains about Adrian to the headmaster and Adrian is unjustly reprimanded. When, on top of this, he discovers that his best friend Nigel is going out with Pandora.

In March his father tell him that he and his mother are splitting up. At the end of the month his mother leaves for Sheffield with the neighbour after his father and the neighbour have had a fight. On June 1st Adrian's father is made redundant and starts smoking and drinking heavily. His father is very depressed and loses his job. At school Adrian gets into trouble for wearing red socks, which he has put on because he feels rebellious. Pandora and he organize a Red-Sock-Revolution where everyone wears red socks, but the headmaster sends them all home. This event brings Adrian and Pandora together and Nigel reconcile.

In October Bert Baxter is taken to an old age pensioner's home because of leg trouble. He hates it there and only one month later, after Adrian has been in hospital to have his tonsils out, he hears Bert has befriended a woman called Queenie. In the meantime Adrian's father is still without a job and he does nothing all day. Adrian's relationship with Pandora isn't very harmonious anymore. When Pandora finds out that another girl is in love with Adrian she fights her. Adrian has a three-day friendship with a girl called Barbara.. On April 2nd, Adrian's birthday, Pandora ignores him. But the next day they make it up. This day happens to be the day that the Falklands War begins.

The book goes on with repeating all the problems like spots, school; the division and so on. But in the end of his diary entries his mother comes back to her family, his father finds a new job, he is in love with Pandora and even his new friend Bert

Baxter marries. Now life is worth living for Adrian.

The Themes:

One of the big themes of the book is *Pandora*, because Adrian falls in love with her and she dates Nigel at first, his best friend who actually knows that Adrian loves her. She is new at Adrian's school and she sits next to him in their Geography lessons. But when she notices that Adrian also has his rebellious side as cause of his red sock-wearing, she is interested in him. So they both are in love. If I should describe Pandora, I wouldn't say that she is like you would expect a 14 year-old girl to be, because she often wants to oppose, to resist and she is rebellious. Maybe it shows that she only wants to be different from the other pupils in school, she is also a very good pupil, she has very good marks and that she wants to escape from the ordinary things. She is not really afraid of troubles.

Also a big theme is the separation of Adrian's parents. Her mother leaves her family behind for Mr. Lucas who is the neighbour. She is flirting with him in front of her son and husband. It starts with visiting Pauline, Adrian's mother, when she was ill but then he visits her nearly every day. Mrs. Lucas, the wife of Mr. Lucas, seems to know that anything is going on with Pauline and her husband and every time he visits Pauline, she does anything in the garden, maybe to see something happening between Pauline and Mr. Lucas. For having the reason to leave Mr. Lucas behind. Pauline and George have many fights because of Mr. Lucas and one day Pauline leaves them behind and moves to Sheffield with Mr. Lucas. After Mr. Lucas and George having a fight.

The dog is also very important, he is not treated very well by the Moles. They shut him in the coal shed and because of that he gets ill and has to go to the vet and get operated. But the only person who is worried about the dog is Pauline. When the dog disappears she calls the police to find the dog. She cares much more for the dog than for the family, because she neglects Adrian and the household. She and her husband haven't a good sex life. She only thinks of herself doing well with Mr. Lucas.

Bullying:

I want to focus on the topic of bullying and therefore another character is very important to mention, namely Barry Kent.

- he likes to treat others badly by hitting and hurting them
- even some teachers are afraid of him and do nothing against his treatment
- he gets banned from the youth club because of his bad behaviour
- he gets always in big troubles, especially in school

I want now to focus on the relationship between Adrian and Barry, which is not a real relationship, because Barry treats Adrian very badly. One day he says to him that he will always hit him unless he will give him 25 pence every day. The problem for Adrian is that he has no money at all, because his dad pays his spare money by cheque. Adrian has no way out, either he pays this protection money or he gets hurt by Barry.

Once he couldn't pay his protection money and so Barry menaces him badly. Adrian has to tell it his father because some things of him get damaged. His father wants to take back the menaces money and to talk with the father of Barry, who just laughs at him.

Only his grand mother could help him out, only she could force Barry to give back the protection money and to never hurt Adrian again. She has a very strong personality. So the father of Barry has no effect on him and he doesn't do anything against the bad behaviour of his son, what is very surprising. Maybe Barry has this attitude of hurting other human beings from his father.

Adrian Mole:

- main character(writer of the diary)

- 13¾ years old
- young adolescent boy living on estate in Leicester, England
- grows up in unusual circumstances
- experiences the problems of teenage life
- has problems of existence
- doesn't know where he belongs to
- is looking for his own personality
- can identify himself with being an intellectual, but nobody in his environment
- admires his poems and knows that he is one - a good statement to prove this is "None of the teachers at school have noticed that I am an intellectual. They will be sorry, when I am famous."

Pandora:

- at first dates Nigel (Adrian's best friend)
- new girl at Adrian's school, sits next to him in Geography
- falls in love with Adrian
- she wants to oppose, to resist and she is very rebellious
- maybe her rebellious way shows that she wants to be different
- she wants to escape from the ordinary things
- a good example is the Red-Sock-Protest they were all sent home by the director, but she doesn't regret it

Bert Baxter:

- dirty old man, 89 years old
- his house is in a disgusting state
- Adrian takes care of him (The Good Samaritans)
- you can observe the development of their relationship
- is a very important friend in Adrian's life
- maybe he is some kind of substitute for his father, who neglects him because of his own problems
- marries an old woman called Queenie, he meets at the old pensioner's home

Barry Kent:

- likes to treat others badly and to hurt them
- some teachers are afraid of him
- is even banned from the youth club
- gets always in big troubles (especially in school)

Barry Kent always treats Adrian very badly. Once Barry tells him that he will hurt him very badly unless Adrian gives him 25 pence every day. But Adrian never has any spare money and his father pays his pocket money by cheque but Adrian has no other chance than to give Barry his protection money. After having been seriously menaced at school, he is forced to tell his father about everything. His father wants to talk to Barry Kent's father and to get back all the menaces money. Barry just laughs about him and also the argument with Barry's father doesn't make sense.

Father, George Mole:

- loses his job, is very depressed after the divorce
- he lies around the whole day instead of doing some work
- falls in self-pity
- he finds a new girlfriend (Doreen Slater), but it's more a relationship to forget his wife
- neglects Adrian

Mother, Pauline Mole:

- leaves town with Mr. Lucas, the neighbour
- the only thing she does for Adrian is to write letters from Sheffield

- also neglects him
- thinks only of herself (selfish)

Divorce: After having lost his job Adrian's father doesn't know what to do.: In Adrian's case his mother leaves town with the neighbour. So she doesn't separate only from his father but also from Adrian and that's the real problem. Now he would need his father but he is too depressed to take care of Adrian. So he has to stand the situation alone and loses both his mother and his father.

Unemployment: After having lost his job Adrian's father doesn't know what to do. Normally people would look for a new job but he is too depressed and too lazy. Now they are on the dole but that's not enough money for them. Even when the electricity is turned off his father doesn't react in any way. The problem is that he hasn't anybody who gives him courage and comforts him. He hasn't any support of the family.

Identity: Adrian doesn't know where he belongs to like many teenagers as I already have mentioned before. Therefore he joins for instance "The Good Samaritans" and he flees in his own world being an intellectual.

Rebellion: The Red-Sock-Committee - they didn't wear red socks because they looked so beautiful but because it wasn't normal and they couldn't accept that it was forbidden. They call themselves "Freedom fighter for the rights of the individual".

My Position: Well, the book is fulfilled with sarcastic humor and I enjoyed reading it a lot. Adrian Mole, the main character of the book, is about 14 years old. I really enjoyed reading about his life, the meaning of poetry to him, school, family, spots (that ruined his chin) and especially about the funny ways Adrian solves his problems. I liked the way he expresses his thoughts and feelings very much: direct and uncomplicated. Adrian lives with his mum, his dad and his dog in a house in England near London. His life is - I don't know how I could express it in another way - a chaos: His parents split up, his girlfriend's parents are communists (she tries to be a feminist) and his best friend is an aged man, Bert Baxter.