

Diary Writing

One advantage of diary style writing is that it allows the author to develop quite an informal, close and conversational relationship with the reader often used to generate empathy with the character. It also has the advantage that you are allowed to portray events from as biased and prejudiced a point of view as possible. Juxtaposing two diary entries of the same events that differ radically in their interpretation of that event can be a good source of humour

January

An Exceptionally Bad Start

Sunday 1 January:

9st 3 (but post-Christmas), alcohol units 14 (but effectively covers 2 days as 4 hours of party was on New Year's Day), cigarettes 22, calories 5424.

Food consumed today:

2 pkts Emmenthal cheese slices
14 cold new potatoes
2 Bloody Marys (count as food as contain Worcester sauce and tomatoes)
½ Ciabatta loaf with Brie
Corander leaves – ½ packet
12 Milk Tray (best to get rid of all Christmas confectionary in one go)
13 cocktail sticks securing cheese and pineapples

Portion Una Alconbury's turkey curry, peas and banana

Portion Una Alconbury's Raspberry Surprise made with Bourbon biscuits, tinned raspberries, eight gallons of whipped cream, decorated with glace cherries and angelica.

Noon. London: my flat. Ugh. The last thing on earth I feel physically, emotionally or mentally equipped to do was drive to Una and Geoffrey Alconbury's New Year's Day Turkey Curry Buffet in Grafton Underwood. Geoffrey and Una Alconbury are my parents' best friends and, as Uncle Geoffrey never tires of reminding me, have known me since I was running round the lawn with no clothes on. My mother rang up at 8.30 in the morning last August Bank Holiday and forced me to promise to go. She approached it via a cunningly circuitous route.

'Oh, hello, darling. I was just ringing to see what you wanted for Christmas.'

'Christmas?'

'Would you like a surprise, darling?'

'No!' I bellowed. 'Sorry. I mean ...'

'I wondered if you'd like a set of wheels for your suitcase.'

'But I haven't got a suitcase.'

'Why don't I get you a little suitcase with wheels attached. You know, like air hostesses have.'

'I've already got a bag.'

'Oh, darling, you can't go around with that tatty green canvas thing. You look like some sort of Mary Poppins person who's fallen on hard times. Just a little compact case with a pull-out handle. It's amazing how much you can get in. Do you want it in navy on red or red on navy?'

Comment [K1]: The all-to-obvious use of a date to start the diary is avoided here with this comment which is ostensibly written by / to Bridget as it is her diary but effectively is written to the reader and creates an informal, intimate tone right away

Comment [K2]: Foregrounding of the comment on weight (9 stone 3 pounds is about 60kg) shows that this character is weight / health obsessed. Bridget is caricature used to poke gentle fun at and create empathy with the typical nineties / noughties woman who is fixated on weight, healthy living, her career and getting a man.

Comment [K3]: The repetition of the 'but' in brackets creates a sense of that this character is a failure but loveable because firstly she admits it and secondly she uses excuses that are familiar to many ... well everyone's a bit overweight just after Christmas ...!

Comment [K4]: List used – again creating informal feel. These are important things to Bridget

Comment [K5]: Again a feeble excuse (Bloody Mary's are alcoholic drinks that presumably are diet busters) which reinforces Bridget as a loveable failure

Comment [K6]: The repetition of the singular 'portion' emphasises that she is alone

Comment [K7]: Gentle hyperbole – pokes fun at Una Alconbury and at Bridget's guilty conscience for once again eating something fattening

Comment [K8]: Simple, emotive, informal expression of disgust at self and life

Comment [K9]: The diary format allows a close, intimate conversational style to be developed

Comment [K10]: The capitalization and extended name are again gentle hyperbole suggesting that this event (which should in theory be a pleasure) is going to be an ordeal

Comment [K11]: Typical embarrassing comment that readers can relate to

Comment [K12]: Key verb which underlines Bridget's unwillingness and the sense of blackmail that she is feeling

Comment [K13]: The mother, again in an example of gentle hyperbole, is painted as cunningly evil. As if even her parents are ranged against Bridget in the mess that is her life

Comment [K14]: Once again, gentle humour. The reason for Bridget's extreme reaction (the short sentence, the exclamation, the fact that it is bellowed) are not known but obviously something very bad happened the last time Bridget was given a surprise

Comment [K15]: Obviously the mother knows this and the impression we are meant to get is that she is manipulating Bridget into accepting the present that the mother has already bought or at least decided to buy

Comment [K16]: Beginning to establish the idea that Bridget is to some extent a failure in the eyes of her parents and they are meddling and interfering

Comment [K17]: A nice transition from 'Do you want it at all' to 'what colour do you want it in'. Poor Bridget has been hopelessly out-manoeuvred

Taken from 'Bridget Jones's Diary' by Helen Fielding