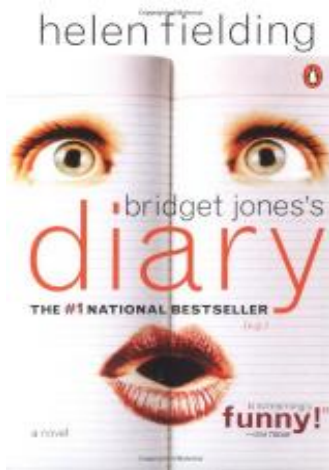


Bridget Jones's Diary

by Helen Fielding



About the Book

Bridget Jones's Diary is the devastatingly self-aware, laugh-out-loud account of a year in the life of a thirty-something Singleton on a permanent doomed quest for self-improvement. Caught between the joys of Singleton fun, and the fear of dying alone and being found three weeks later half eaten by an Alsatian; tortured by Smug Married friends asking, "How's your love life" with lascivious, yet patronizing leers, Bridget resolves to reduce the circumference of each thigh by 1.5 inches, visit the gym three times a week not just to buy a sandwich, form a functional relationship with a responsible adult and learn to program the VCR. With a blend of flighty charm, existential gloom, and endearing self-deprecation, the diary has touched a raw nerve with millions of readers the world round. Read it, laugh and crash your head onto the table before you cry, "Bridget Jones is me!"

Discussion Guide

1. At one point Bridget realizes that she's been on a diet for so many years that "the idea that you might actually need calories to survive has been completely wiped out of my consciousness." Yet one of her greatest assets is that she recognizes that this eternal quest for self-improvement is doomed and silly. How does the media influence women's self-images? Why do women collaborate so energetically in the process? When Bridget decides she's simply not up to the struggle and is going to stay home in an egg-spotted sweater, it is a victory or a defeat?
2. Was the book as satisfying to read as a conventionally structured novel? How did the diary form affect your impression of **Bridget Jones's Diary**? Does it make you want to keep one, and if so, why?
3. What do you think Bridget looks like? Why does Fielding never describe her? Given the frequent references to shagging, why are there no steamy sex scenes either?
4. "We women are only vulnerable because we are a pioneer generation daring to refuse to compromise in love and

relying on our own economic power. In twenty years' time men won't even dare start with fuckwittage because we will just **laugh in their faces**," bellows Sharon early in the story. What purpose does Sharon's character serve? Do you think she's got a point? How do you think Bridget's daughter's story might differ from her mother's?

5. At one point Bridget describes her mother as having been infected with "Having It All Syndrome." Does Bridget herself have a closet case of the same affliction? (She does, after all, have an affair with a her glamorous boss in publishing and a knack for TV production.) How important is professional achievement to the Bridgets of the world?

6. On the one hand, Bridget's mother gets her daughter the job in television and is a constant in her daughter's life; on the other hand, she's impossibly self-centered, endlessly critical, and an object of some competition. "Bloody Mum," Bridget groans at one point, "how come she gets to be the irresistible sex goddess?" Is Bridget's mother a negative or positive influence on Bridget? How has she shaped her daughter?

7. "We're not lonely. We have extended families in the form of networks of friends," says Tom, joining Sharon in deploring others' "arrogant hand-wringing about single life." Are these "urban families" an acceptable alternative to traditional family units? Are they helping to move society towards Fielding's objective, an unbiased acceptance of different ways of life?

8. Bridget's world is unrelentingly self-centered. Is this problematic? If not, is Bridget rescued by her wit and lack of self-pity, by the fact that she does take responsibility for herself, or by something else entirely?

9. Is the attraction between Mark Darcy and Bridget credible? Why isn't he too "safe" for her? Why isn't she too scatterbrained for him? Is it satisfying or clichéd when he literally carries her off to bed?

10. How much of Bridget's identity lies in the quest for a decent relationship? Do you think marriage would change her?

Author Bio

Helen Fielding is the author of BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY, BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON and BRIDGET JONES: MAD ABOUT THE BOY, and was part of the screenwriting team on the associated movies. BRIDGET JONES'S BABY: The Diaries is her sixth novel. She has two children and lives in London and Los Angeles.

Critical Praise

"Bridget Jones is channeling something so universal and (horrifyingly) familiar that readers will giggle and sigh with collective delight."

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Publication Date: May 24, 1999

Genres: Humor

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Penguin (Non-Classics)

ISBN-10: 014028009X

ISBN-13: 9780140280098