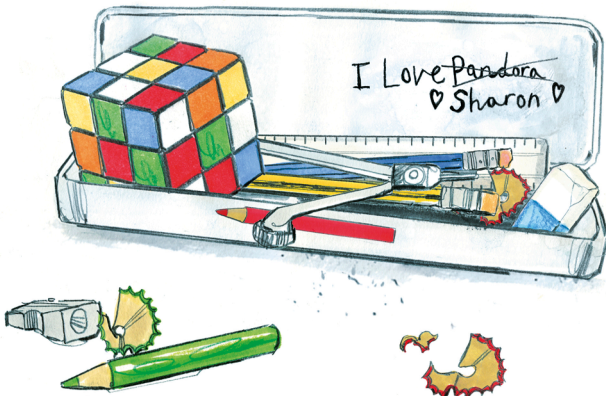


THE NO.1 BESTSELLER



SUE TOWNSEND

The Growing Pains of
Adrian Mole



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'Adrian Mole will be remembered some day
as one of England's great diarists' *Evening Standard*

PENGUIN BOOKS

THE GROWING PAINS OF ADRIAN MOLE

Praise for Adrian Mole:

‘Adrian Mole really is a brilliant comic creation’ *The Times*

‘Every sentence is witty and well thought out, and the whole has reverberations beyond itself’ *The Times*

‘The publishers could offer a money back guarantee if you don’t laugh and be sure they wouldn’t have to write a single cheque’ Jeremy Paxman

‘A classic. The Adrian Mole diaries are thoroughly subversive. A true hero for our time’ Richard Ingrams

‘The real greatness of Townsend’s creation comes from the gap between aspiration and reality. Adrian Mole is one of literature’s great underachievers; his tragedy is that he knows it and the sadness of this undercuts the humour and makes us laugh not until, but while, it hurts’ *Daily Mail*

‘Adrian Mole is one of the great comic characters of our time . . . [Townsend] never writes a sentence which doesn’t ring true; she never gets Adrian’s voice wrong or attributes a thought or feeling to him which strikes one as false. Whatever happens, we may be sure that new troubles will assail Adrian, that new disasters will threaten, but that he will survive them all. Like Evelyn Waugh’s Captain Grimes, Adrian is “one of the immortals” and the series of his diaries the comic masterpiece of our time’ *Scotsman*

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Praise for *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13¾*:

'I not only wept, I howled and hooted and had to get up and walk around the room and wipe my eyes so that I could go on reading' Tom Sharpe

Praise for *The True Confessions of Adrian Albert Mole*:

'Wonderfully funny and sharp as knives' *Sunday Times*

Praise for *Adrian Mole: The Wilderness Years*:

'A very, very funny book' *Sunday Times*

Praise for *Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years*:

'I can't remember a more relentlessly funny book' *Daily Mirror*

Praise for *Adrian Mole: The Lost Diaries*:

'Very funny indeed. A satire of our times' *Sunday Times*

Praise for *Adrian Mole and The Weapons of Mass Destruction*:

'The funniest book of the year. I can think of no more comical read' Jeremy Paxman, *Sunday Telegraph*

Praise for *Adrian Mole: The Prostrate Years*:

'Brilliant, sharp, honest, moving, an exquisite social comedy' *Daily Telegraph*

Praise for *Queen Camilla*:

‘Wickedly satirical, mad, ferociously farcical, subversive. Great stuff’ *Daily Mail*

Praise for *The Queen and I*:

‘Absorbing, entertaining . . . the funniest thing in print since *Adrian Mole*’ Ruth Rendell, *Daily Telegraph*

Praise for *Number Ten*:

‘A delight. Genuinely funny . . . compassion shines through the unashamedly ironic social commentary’ *Guardian*

Praise for *The Ghost Children*:

‘Bleak, tender and deeply affecting. Seldom have I rooted so hard for a set of fictional individuals’ *Mail on Sunday*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sue Townsend was born in Leicester in 1946. Despite not learning to read until the age of eight, leaving school at fifteen with no qualifications and having three children by the time she was in her mid-twenties, she always found time to read widely. She also wrote secretly for twenty years. After joining a writers’ group at The Phoenix Theatre, Leicester, she won a Thames Television award for her first play, *Womberang*, and became a professional playwright and novelist. After the publication of *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13¾*, Sue continued to make the nation laugh and prick its conscience. She wrote seven further volumes of Adrian’s diaries and five other popular novels – including *The Queen and I*, *Number Ten* and *The Woman Who Went to Bed for a Year* – and numerous well-received plays. Sue passed away in 2014 at the age of sixty-eight. She remains widely regarded as Britain’s favourite comic writer.

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Adrian Mole

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To Mum, Dad and the whole family
with love and thanks

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‘The aristocratic rebel, since he has enough to eat, must have other causes of discontent.’

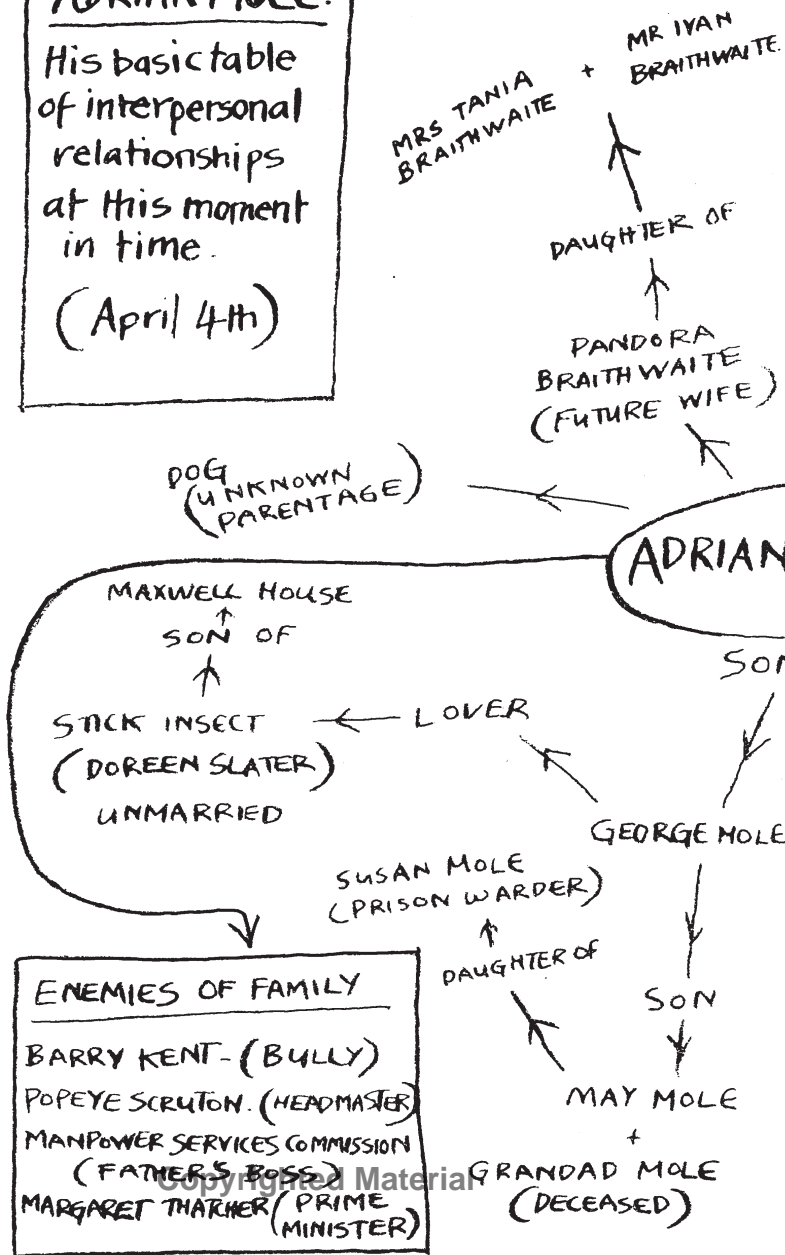
Bertrand Russell *The History of Western Philosophy*

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ADRIAN MOLE:

His basic table
of interpersonal
relationships
at this moment
in time.

(April 4th)



SABRE
(ALSATIAN)

BERT'S CHILDREN
IN AUSTRALIA

BERT BAXTER
MARRIED TO
QUEENIE BAXTER
(2nd WIFE)

GOOD SAMARITAN
TO

NEIGHBOUR

NEXT DOOR
MR SINGH
MRS SINGH
ALL THE LITTLE SINGHS

OVER THE ROAD
O'LEARYS

MOLE

OF

LOVER OF MR (CREEP) LUCAS
MARRIED AND SEPARATED

FROM

MRS LUCAS

PAULINE MOLE

DAUGHTER OF

MR AND MRS
SUGDEN

FRIENDS OF FAMILY

NIGEL (BEST FRIEND)

RICK LEMON (YOUTH LEADER)

COURTNEY ELLIOT (POSTMAN)

MR TYDEMAN (OF THE B.B.C.)

HAMISH MANCINI (AMERICAN PEN-PAL)

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Spring

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Sunday April 4th

My father has sent a telegram to the War Office. He wants to take part in the war with Argentina. His telegram read:

QUALIFIED HEATING ENGINEER STOP A1 FITNESS
STOP OFFERS HIMSELF IN THE SERVICE OF HIS
COUNTRY STOP READY FOR IMMEDIATE MOBIL-
IZATION

My mother says that my father will do anything to avoid working for Manpower Services as a canal bank renovator.

At tea-time I was looking at our world map, but I couldn't see the Falkland Islands anywhere. My mother found them; they were hidden under a crumb of fruitcake.

I feel guilty about mentioning a personal anguish at this time of national crisis, but ever since last night when a model aeroplane became stuck fast to my nose with glue, I have suffered torment. My nose has swollen

up so much that I am frantic with worry that it might burst and take my brain with it.

I rang the Casualty Department and, after a lot of laughing, the nurse who removed the plane came on the line. She said that I was ‘probably allergic to the glue’, and that the swelling would go down in a few days. She added, ‘Perhaps it will teach you not to sniff glue again.’ I tried to explain but she put the phone down.

Pandora has been round but I declined to see her. She would go straight off me if she saw my repulsive nose.

Monday April 5th

Just my luck! It is the first day of the school holidays and I can’t go out because of my gigantic swollen nose. Even my mother is a bit worried about it now. She wanted to prick it with a sterilized needle, but I wouldn’t let her. She can’t sew an accurate patch on a pair of jeans with a needle, let alone do delicate medical procedures with one. I’ve begged her to take me to a private nose specialist, but she has refused. She says she needs the money for her ‘Well Woman’ test. She is having her primary and secondary sexual organs checked. Yuk!

The dog is in love with a cocker spaniel called Mitzi. The dog stands no chance, though: (a) it isn’t a pedigree, and (b) it doesn’t keep itself looking smart like most dogs. I tried to explain these things to the

dog, but it just looked sad and mournful and went back to lying outside Mitzi's gate. Being in love is no joke. I have the same problem with Pandora that the dog has with Mitzi. We are both in a lower social class than our loved ones.

Tuesday April 6th

The nation has been told that Britain and Argentina are not at war, we are at conflict.

I am reading *Scoop* by a woman called Evelyn Waugh.

Wednesday April 7th

Wrote and sent Pandora a love letter and a poem. The letter said:

Pandora my love,

Due to an unfortunate physical disability I am unable to see you in person, but every fibre of my being cries out for your immediate physical proximity. Be patient, my love, soon we will laugh again.

Yours with undying love,

Adrian

PS. What are your views on the Argentinian conflict, with particular reference to Lord Carrington's resignation?

The Discontented Tuna

I am a Tuna fish,
Swimming in the sea of discontent.
Oh, when, when,
Will I find the spawning ground?

I hope Pandora sees through my poem and realizes the symbolism of ‘spawning ground’. I am sick of being the only virgin in our class. Everybody but me is sexually experienced. Barry Kent boasts about how many housewives he makes love to on his father’s milkround. He says they are the reason why he is always late for school.

Thursday April 8th

Maundy Thursday. Full Moon

Nose has gone down a bit.

My mother came home from her ‘Well Woman’ check in a bad mood.

I allowed Pandora to visit me in my darkened bedroom. We had a brilliant kissing session. Pandora was wearing her mother’s Janet Reger full-length silk slip under her dress and she allowed me to touch the lace on the hem. I was more interested in the lace near the shoulder straps but Pandora said, ‘No darling, we must wait until we’ve got our “O” levels.’

I pointed out to Pandora that all this sexual frustration is playing havoc with my skin. But she said, ‘If you really love me you will wait.’

I said, 'If you really love me you *wouldn't* wait.'

She went then; she had to replace the Janet Reger slip before her mother got back from work.

I have got thirty-eight spots: twenty-eight on my face and the rest on my shoulders.

Friday April 9th

Good Friday

Barry Kent has been spreading malicious rumours that I am addicted to Bostik. His Auntie is a cleaner in the hospital and heard about the nose-stuck-to-model-aeroplane incident. I think it is disgusting that cleaners are allowed to talk about patients' private medical secrets. They should be made to take the Hippocratic oath, like doctors and nurses.

My mother is fed up. She is just sitting around the house smoking and sighing. There was a programme on BBC 2 about French babies being born into swimming pools; it was most interesting (and erotic) but my mother quickly switched over to ITV and watched BERNIE WINTERS!!! When I protested she screamed, 'Why don't you clear off and sulk in your room like other teenagers?'

My father is as baffled as I am as to why my mother is depressed. She's been like it since she came back from the 'Well Woman' clinic.

Perhaps she's not well.

The *Canberra* has gone to the Falklands and taken Barry Kent's older brother, Clive, with it.

Saturday April 10th

Bert has been thrown out of the British Legion club for saying that the Falklands belong to Argentina. Bert doesn't mind, he only used to go to take advantage of their OAP cheap beer offer.

Grandma came round to check our pantry for Argentinian corned beef. We passed the test because our corned beef was made by Brazilian cows.

Grandma has got a funny look in her eyes. My mother says it is called Jingoism, but I think it is more likely to be cataracts forming. We did them in human biology last term, so I speak from knowledge.

Sunday April 11th

Easter Day

The working classes are toiling round the clock to mend Britain's old battleships. Britain is planning to spring a surprise attack on Argentina in six weeks' time.

Grandma made me go to church. The vicar forced us to pray for the Falkland Islanders. He said that they were 'under the tyranny of the jackboot of fascism'. He got dead mad talking about world peace. His sermon went on far too long in my opinion; even Grandma started fidgeting and whispering about getting back to switch her sprouts on.

I have made my mind up to confess to Grandma that I am no longer a Christian believer. She'll just

have to find somebody else to help her up the hill to the church. Didn't get an Easter egg: my mother and father said I am too old. Anybody would think there is a law against people of fifteen eating Easter eggs!

Monday April 12th

Easter Monday

I think mother is cracking up; she is behaving even more strangely than usual. She came into my bedroom to change my sheets and when I objected to her dropping cigarette ash on my Falklands Campaign map she said, 'For God's sake, Adrian, this room is like a bloody shrine! Why don't you leave your clothes on the floor like *normal* teenagers?'

I said that I like things to be neat and tidy but she said, 'You're a bloody obsessive,' and went out.

My mother and father are always arguing about their bedroom. My father's side of the room is dead neat, but my mother's side is disgusting: overflowing ashtrays, old yellow *Observers*, books, magazines and puddles of nylon knickers on the floor. *Her* bedside shelves are full of the yukky junk she buys from second-hand shops, one-armed statues, broken vases and stinking old books etc. I pity my father having to share a room with her. All *he's* got on his shelves are his AA book and a photograph of my mother in a wedding dress. She's the only bride I've seen who's got cigarette smoke coming out of her nostrils.

I just can't understand why my father married her.

Tuesday April 13th

After *Crossroads* had finished I asked my father why he had married my mother. Talk about opening the floodgates! Fifteen years of bitterness and resentment spilled out. He said, 'Never make the mistake I made, Adrian. Don't let a woman's body blind you to her character and habits.'

He explained that he met my mother when mini-skirts were in fashion. He said that in those days my mother had superb legs and thighs. He said, 'You must realize that most women looked bloody awful in miniskirts, so your mother had a certain rarity value.'

I was shocked at his sexist attitude and told him that I was in love with Pandora because of her brains and compassion for lesser mortals. My father gave a nasty laugh and said, 'Oh yeah! And if Pandora was as ugly as sin you wouldn't have noticed her bloody IQ and bleeding heart in the first place.'

He ended our first man-to-man talk by saying, 'Look, kiddo, don't even think about getting married until you've spent a few months sharing a bedroom with a bird. If she leaves her knickers on the floor for more than three days running forget it!'

Wednesday April 14th

Mitzi's owner came round to ask my mother to keep our dog away from Mitzi. My mother said that the dog lived in a liberal household and was allowed to go where it pleased.

Mitzi's owner, a Mrs Carmichael, said that if our dog 'continued harassing Mitzi' she would be forced to report our dog to the police. My mother laughed and said, 'Why don't you go the whole hog and take a High Court injunction out?'

Mr Carmichael came round half an hour later. He said that Mitzi was being prepared for Crufts and mustn't suffer any stress. My mother said, 'I've got better things to do than to stand here talking about a romance between a bloody cocker spaniel and a mongrel.' I hoped this would mean she would cook some dinner but no, she went into the kitchen and read the *Guardian* from cover to cover, so I opened a tin of tuna again.

Thursday April 15th

Woke up at 4 a.m. with a toothache. Took six junior aspirins for the pain. At 5 a.m. I woke my mother and father and told them that I was in torment.

My father said, 'It's your own bloody fault for missing your last three dentist's appointments.'

At 5.30 a.m. I asked my father to drive me to the

hospital Casualty Department, but he refused and turned over in bed. It's all right for him: he hasn't got any real teeth. I sat up, racked with agony, and watched the sky get light. The lucky toothless birds started their horrible squawking and I swore that from this day forward I would go to the dentist's four times a year, whether I was in pain or not.

At nine o'clock my mother woke me up to tell me that she'd made me an appointment at the dentist's emergency clinic. I told her that the pain had stopped and instructed her to cancel the appointment.

Friday April 16th

Moon's Last Quarter

Woke up at 3 a.m. in agony with toothache. I tried to suffer in silence but my pain-racked sobs must have filtered through to my parents' bedroom because my father crashed into my room and asked me to be quiet. He showed no sympathy, just moaned on about how he had to work on the canal tomorrow and he needed his sleep. On his way back to bed he slipped on one of my mother's *Cosmopolitans* that she'd left on her side of the bedroom floor. His swearing woke the dog up. Then my mother woke up. Then the lousy birds started. So once again I watched dawn's grey fingers infiltrate the night.

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Saturday April 17th

Still in bed with toothache.

My parents are showing me no sympathy, they keep saying, 'You should have gone to the dentist's.'

I have phoned Pandora: she is coming round tomorrow. She asked me if I needed anything; I said a Mars bar would be nice. She said (quite irritably I thought), 'Heavens above, Adrian, aren't your teeth rotten enough?'

The dog has been howling outside Mitzi's gate all day. It is also off its Pedigree Chum and Winalot.

Sunday April 18th

Low Sunday

Pandora has just left my bedroom. I am just about devastated with frustration. I can't go on like this. I have written to Aunt Clara, the Agony Aunt.

Dear Aunt Clara,

I am a fifteen-year-old schoolboy. My grandma tells me that I am attractive and many people have commented on how mature I am for my years. I am the only child of a bad marriage (apart from the dog). My problem is this: I am deeply in love with an older girl (by three months). She is in a class above me (I don't mean in school: we are in the same class at school. I mean that she is a social class above me.) but she claims that this doesn't matter to our

relationship. We have been very happy until recently when I have started to be obsessed by sex. I have fallen to self-manipulation quite a lot lately, and it is OK for a bit but it soon wears off. I know that a proper bout of lovemaking would do me good. It would improve my skin and help my mind to concentrate on my 'O' level studies.

I have tried all sorts of erotic things, but my girl-friend refuses to go the whole hog. She says we are not ready.

I am quite aware of the awesome things about bringing an unwanted baby into the world and I would wear a protective dildo.

Yours in desperation,
Poet of the Midlands

Monday April 19th

We had a dead good debate in Social Studies this morning. It was about the Falklands.

Pandora put the proposition 'That this class is against the use of force to regain the Falkland Islands.'

The standard of debate was quite good for a change. I made a brilliant speech in favour of the motion. I quoted from *Animal Farm* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. I got quite a good round of applause when I sat down.

Barry Kent spoke *against* the proposition. He said, 'Er, I er, fink we should er, you know, like, bomb the coast of Argentina.' He was quoting from his father, yet *he* sat down to a standing ovation!

Dentist's at 2.30, worse luck!

4 p.m. I am now minus a front tooth! The stupid Australian dentist took it *out* instead of repairing it. He even had the nerve to wrap it in a bit of tissue paper and give it to me to take home!

I said, 'But I've got a gap!' He said, 'So has Watford, and if Watford can get used to it so can you.'

I asked him if another tooth would grow in its place. He said, 'Bloody ignorant Poms,' under his breath, but he didn't answer my question.

As I was stumbling out of his surgery clutching my frozen-up jaw he said that he had often seen me walking home from school eating a Mars bar, and it would be entirely my own fault if I was toothless at thirty.

I will walk home another way in future.

Tuesday April 20th

I have now got the kind of face that you see on 'Wanted' posters. I look like a mass murderer. My mother is dead mad with the dentist; she has written him a letter demanding that he makes a false tooth free of charge.

School was terrible; Barry Kent started calling me 'Gappy Mole' and soon everyone was at it; even Pandora was a bit distant. I sent her a note in Physics asking her if she still loved me. She sent a note back saying, 'I will love you for as long as Britain has Gibraltar.'

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Wednesday April 21st

It has just been on the news that Spain wants Gibraltar back.

Thursday April 22nd

I couldn't face taking my gap to school this morning so I stayed in bed until 12.45 p.m. I asked my mother for an excuse note. I gave it to Ms Fossington-Gore during afternoon registration. She read it angrily then said, 'At least your mother is honest. It makes a change from the usual lies one has come to expect from most parents.'

She showed me the letter. It said:

Dear Ms Fossington-Gore,
Adrian did not come to school this morning because he didn't get out of bed until 12.45.

Yours faithfully,
Ms Pauline Mole

I will get my father to write my excuse notes in future; he is a born liar.