

A Day of Horror

Sunday 1 January

9.3 stone¹ (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.

Noon. London: my flat. Ugh. The last thing on earth I feel physically, emotionally or
5 mentally equipped to do is drive to Una and Geoffrey Alconbury's New Year's Day Turkey Curry
Buffet. 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 around the lawn with no clothes on. My
mother rang up and forced me to promise to go.

"You will be coming to Geoffrey and Una's New Year's Day Turkey Curry Buffet this year,
10 won't you?"

"Ah. Actually, I..." I panicked wildly. What could I pretend to be doing? "I... think I might
have to work on New Year's Day."

"That doesn't matter. You can drive up after work. Oh, did I mention? Malcolm and Elaine
Darcy are coming and bringing Mark with them. Do you remember Mark, darling? He's one of those
15 top-notch barristers. Masses of money. Divorced. It doesn't start till eight."

Oh God. Not another strangely dressed opera freak with bushy hair. "Mum, I've told you. I
don't need to be fixed up with..."

"Now come along, darling. Una and Geoffrey have been holding the New Year buffet since
you were running around the lawn with no clothes on! Of course you're going to come."

20 **11:45 p.m.** Ugh. First day of New Year has been day of horror. Cannot believe I am once
again starting the year in a single bed in my parents' house. It is too humiliating at my age... I
eventually set off for the Turkey Curry Buffet far too late. When I got to the Alconburys', I was still
suffering from road-rage after inadvertently getting on to the M6 instead of the M1 and having to
drive half way to Birmingham before I could turn round.

25 "Bridget! We'd almost given you up for lost! Happy New Year! Just about to start without
you."

"Sorry. I got lost."

"Lost? Durr! What are we going to do with you? Come on in!"

She led me into the lounge, shouting, "She got lost, everyone!"

30 "Bridget! Happy New Year!" said Geoffrey Alconbury. "Come on, let's get you a drink. How's
your love life, anyway?"

Oh God. Why can't married people understand that this is no longer a polite question to ask?
We wouldn't rush up to them and roar, "How's your marriage going? Still having sex?"

Not being a natural liar, I ended up mumbling, "Fine," at which point he boomed, "So you still
35 haven't got a feller!"

"Bridget! What are we going to do with you?" said Una. "You career girls! I don't know! Can't
put it off forever, you know. Tick-tock-tick-tock."

**Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones's Diary*
1997, Viking Press**

¹ 1 stone = 14 pounds = 6.36 kilograms

Close-up

Read the lines in italics.

1. Explain these lines in your own words. What do the comments in brackets tell us about Bridget Jones?

Read part 1

2. Where is Bridget supposed to go? Why? What is the effect of the capital letters used? Quote words that confirm this impression.
3. What grammatical form used by Bridget's mother reinforces the expression "forced me to go"?
4. Pick out the words used to describe Bridget's reaction? Why do you think she reacts that way?
5. Comment on the information Bridget's mother gives about Mark Darcy. What elements does she mention?
6. Compare with the way Bridget "translates" this information. What is the effect produced? Guess what "*I don't need to be fixed up*" (l. 18) means.

Read part 2

7. Sum up what happened to Bridget. Why do you think she calls this day a "*day of horror*"?
8. What do you think of the way Una Alconbury welcomes her?
9. Explain why Bridget considers Geoffrey's question impolite.
10. What is the effect produced by the comparison she makes? Pick out a verb that echoes Una's "*shouting*".
11. What other verb does she use to describe Geoffrey's tone. What do we understand about her feelings?
12. Comment on the way the Alconburys talk to her.
13. Comment on Una's expression, "*you career girls*."
14. In the last sentence, what does "*it*" refer to? Explain what "*Tick-tock-tick-tock*" means.

Standpoint

1. Analyze the humor of the passage.
2. What is the Alconburys' idea of a "*normal life*"? Do you think people still consider this as a norm?
3. Why did she go to the party after all? Would you or wouldn't you have gone if you were her?
4. What pressure does she have to face in her life?
5. Do you also sometimes feel pressure? What sort of pressure? How do you react?

Word Trackers

1. Find the English equivalents in the text.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| a. dinde | e. fou |
| b. excessivement | f. broussailleux |
| c. de premier ordre | g. se précipiter |
| d. avocat | h. marmonner |

2. Complete with **off** or **up**.

- a. She set early to avoid the traffic.
- b. Her mum rang her to tell her to come.
- c. When she didn't arrive the hosts gave on her ever arriving.
- d. Bridget puts doing things she doesn't like.
- e. Her host rushed to her and asked where her boyfriend was.

Preterit simple / Preterit BE + V-ing

- a. *When I got to the Alconburys' I was still suffering from road-rage.*
- b. *When I got to the Alconburys' I met Mark Darcy at the door.*

➤ **Comparez les formes verbales de ces deux phrases.**

➤ **Placez les verbes sur une ligne des temps et justifiez les choix faits par l'énonciateur.**

1. Quelle fin de phrase correspond à quelle amorce?

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. • They were all listening to him | - ... and then they started laughing. |
| • They all listened to him | - ... while he was describing the scene. |
| b. • When they all turned round | - ... and I tried to leave the room with dignity. |
| • I told them I was only five then | - ... I was trying to leave the room with dignity. |
| c. • When he saw me, he gave a big smile, | - ... he was telling everybody he had seen me naked! |
| • When I came into the room, he interrupted his story | - ... then he told everybody he had seen me naked! |

Agir sur quelqu'un

- a. *My mother forced me to go to the Alconburys'.*
- b. *My mother talked me into going to the Alconburys'.*
- c. *My mother made me go to the Alconburys'.*

➤ **Quel est le point commun entre toutes ces phrases?**

➤ **Relevez la construction des structures utilisées.**

➤ **Quelles sont les nuances de sens qui différencient ces phrases?**

2. Reformulez ces phrases avec *force*, *talk* ou *make*.

Ex: *Mother: "If you go to the party I will do anything you want."*

→ *Her mother talked her into going to the party by promising to do anything she wanted.*

- a. Mother: "If you don't marry Mark, I will cut you off without a penny."
- b. Father: "If you don't come home by midnight, you must stay in all weekend."
- c. Grandma: "If you don't cook for me everyday, I won't lend you my car."
- d. Mother: "Please, please lend me your new dress. I'll give you my diamond ring."

Will + V / will be + v-ing

- a. *You will be coming to Una's buffet this year, won't you?"*
b. *You will come to Una's buffet this year, won't you?"*

- **Décrivez les formes verbales de ces deux phrases.**
- **Dans quelle phrase la mère demande-t-elle une simple confirmation, dans laquelle insiste-t-elle pour que sa fille vienne ?**
- **Quel indice vous a permis de faire votre choix ?**

3. Complétez ces phrases avec les verbes entre parenthèses, en utilisant la forme BE + V-ING chaque fois que c'est possible.

- a. "Where is Bridget?" "Well, she must (write) her diary in her bedroom".
b. "I can't ... (believe) it! She should (talk) to Mark Darcy at this very minute!"
c. "Bridget, will you (come) down soon? We're waiting for you!"
d. "No answer! She might (listen) to music and she can't (hear) you."
e. "Don't worry. In 30 minutes, she will (dance) with Mark Darcy, or I am not her mother anymore!"

Translating

After/ before

I was still suffering from road-rage after inadvertently getting on to the M6 instead of the M1 and having to drive half way to Birmingham before I could turn round.

→ J'étais toujours folle de rage en arrivant, après avoir pris par erreur la M6 au lieu de la M1, et avoir dû faire la moitié du chemin vers Birmingham avant de réussir à faire demi-tour.

Comparez cet extrait du texte et sa traduction en français. Que remarquez vous en ce qui concerne la construction des verbes qui suivent *after* et *before*?

1. Traduisez en français.

- a. After forcing me to come, my mother called Una.
b. Don't forget to tell everybody about Bridget's marital status before she arrives!
c. After seeing the awful pullover he was wearing, Bridget immediately thought Mark Darcy was the most ridiculous man in the world.
d. Before she finally admitted she was in love with Mark Darcy, she had an affair with Daniel, her colleague.
e. In fact, Mark Darcy had known Daniel long before he met him with Bridget.

2. Traduisez en anglais.

- a. Sa mère la convainquit de ne pas mettre cette robe.
b. Avant que tu ne dises quoi que ce soit, regarde celle que je t'ai achetée!
c. Tu ne peux pas me forcer à mettre ça!
d. Quand je l'ai achetée, tout le monde me regardait avec envie!
e. Crois-moi, c'est toi qui porteras la robe la plus extraordinaire de la soirée!