



Public Confessions of a Middle-Aged Woman

Sue Townsend

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Enter the world of Susan Lilian Townsend - sun-worshippers, work-shy writers, garden-centre lovers and those in search of a good time all welcome. Over the last decade, Sue Townsend has written a monthly column for "Sainsbury's Magazine", which covers everything from hosepipe bans and Spanish restaurants to writer's block and the posh middle-aged woman she once met who'd never heard of Winnie-the-Pooh. Collected together now for the first time, they form a set of pieces from one of Britain's most popular and acclaimed writers that is funny, perceptive and touching.

Public Confessions of a Middle-Aged Woman Details

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Author : Sue Townsend

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From Reader Review Public Confessions of a Middle-Aged Woman for online ebook

Judy says

This is a great collection of contributions to Sainsbury (the supermarket) Magazine from around 1993 to 2002. They make entertaining, thought-provoking and very funny reading. This is an author who loves life and laughs at it (including her own serious health issues). Her writing is sharp, perceptive and, at the same time, kind - a wonderful gift. Many readers will be familiar with her Adrian Mole series. I did not realise, though, that she is also a successful screen writer. I would love to know her personally.

Svetlana says

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Indy says

DNF at 50%

This is a collection of columns Sue Townsend write for a supermarket magazine. If I'd read the columns once a month or every now and again, they'd be mildly entertaining. Unfortunately they don't work as a book.

ST had to write the columns three months in advance so there's nothing topical in the content. It all feels very superficial and, after a while, they become very repetitive.

It's a shame because in her fiction, she is very good at observations and subtle humour, but that is missing from this book.

-A says

Sue Townsend is incredible. Each of the columns was witty, funny and interesting. Her mind works in great ways and I am so happy she is a writer.

Plum-crazy says

I picked this up with the intention of just dipping in & out of it between other reads or for carrying around

when my current read was too big but once I started it I just sniggered my way straight through it!

My first thoughts were that I'd make a note of anything I particularly related too or found very amusing - I soon gave up on that idea as I realised that covered the majority of the book! Maybe it's an age thing (as much as I hate the idea I guess, yes I am middle-aged) or maybe this type of humour is a British thing but whatever it certainly hit the spot with me.

R.I.P. Ms Townsend you will be sorely missed.

Lilian says

Although I have some of the Adrian Mole books already, I still have not yet read them because it is not yet complete. So this is really the first time I've read Sue Townsend. Now I'm itching to start on the Mole diaries, because I like Ms Townsend's writing style. Apparently this is a collection of her columns. There was not one I didn't like or chuckled over. She may be labelled as a comic writer, but the ones that stand out for me were a few of the later columns/essays here, the ones about kids in the train and train traveling, and the street beggar.

(However, it did bother me how she didn't know why dolphins kept getting caught in fishing nets or that scampi is the culinary term, like pigs is to pork.)

Merry says

Love her writing, even in short essays as here. I had no idea how ill she became - she bore it so bravely. Made me long to read a whole Sue Townsend novel again!

Tony says

First up I need to say that I had never heard of Sue Townsend or any of her work. This book is very British and also a little dated now. This book was a 'greatest hits' of articles she had written for a magazine/newspaper. I did not like the humorous stories but that was probably because there were too many references to places/event/situations that I am unaware of. Also, as previously stated the book is now 16 years old. I did however, really enjoy her serious articles and her reflection on life. In particular about "Gipton Estate" and "Wayne Webb". In my view that is where her talent really lies. This would be a good book if you are from Britain to read while holidaying abroad.

Iona Stewart says

Sue Townsend is the funniest author I know and I enjoy being made/allowed to laugh aloud occasionally, so I'm now steadily making my way through all her books.

This book is a collection of Sue's articles from her monthly column for Sainsbury's Magazine. At first, I was

a bit disappointed by these articles since they seemed a bit short and lacking in substance. But soon I was totally addicted as with her other books.

As a child, I read in one of my father's Somerset Maugham books that the easiest way to be funny was to tell the truth. And this is what Sue does – she tells the truth about the various ups and downs of her life, including her serious health problems.

Sue is able to write about anything, as is indicated in the last lines of her articles when she needs to create a specific number of extra words to give the article the exact length required by her editor.

The first article in the collection that riveted me was "Janet and John", where she satirizes the idealized and simplistic family life depicted in these, our first reading books.

"They got on remarkably well, unlike most brothers and sisters I know, --- They spent a lot of time shouting, 'Look, Spot, look! Look at the ball! Fetch the ball!'"

When Daddy came home from work, he sat in his armchair and read the newspaper. Mummy smiled serenely as she prepared tea. She then came to the kitchen door and shouted, 'Come here, Janet! Come here, John!'

Sue hints at an "alternative" Janet and John book she has come across, called "Janet and John go into care".

"Daddy is getting ready for work. 'Where are my gloves, Mummy?' he asks. 'Look, Daddy, look, there are your gloves', snaps Mummy, 'though why you would want to wear gloves in August defeats me!'

Spot runs in and knocks Daddy's briefcase over. A copy of Health and Efficiency slithers out and falls open at a picture of nudists playing tennis. John runs in, 'Look, Janet, look!' Daddy hits John on the head with his pipe, kicks Spot and leaves for work. Mummy dries her tears and walks to the village shop. She is still upset by the row with Daddy, and slips a tin of corned beef into her wicker basket.

Mummy is arrested for shoplifting ---. John looks up and sees Mummy in the back of a police car."

And so on.

Another column discusses the advantages of being king (were Charles to become king, for instance).

"having twenty-four hour room service (every day) --- They don't lie awake at night worrying about class, agonizing, 'Am I upper-lower-middle?' or 'Am I lower-working scum?' Kings can confidently assert, 'I am upper, upper, upper' and know that no British person will contradict them."

To sum up, this is a brilliant, relaxing read. It is addictive and unputdownable, one of Sue's best.

I have a great admiration for Sue Townsend who gifted us with all those hilarious books in the midst of her own grave health problems and growing blindness. She gives us an accurate representation of British life in these last decades as well as making us split our sides laughing.

penelopewanders says

Series of articles, here as a ring.

When I first started to read this, I was reading it as I would a novel - and was not really enjoying it. Then I realized I should read it the way I read magazines - in bits and pieces, and started enjoying this very much. I was moved by the sections about her becoming partially sighted (and couldn't help thinking of a fellow bookcrosser who is currently having major problems with his eyesight). One of my favorite bits was the piece about November - maybe because I live in the mountains and some days, like today, are just so dreary...

Dawn Hamsher says

Ms. Townsend is English and she has that dry humor that I love. The book is a collection of her newspaper column stories. All are reflections on herself and her life. From her bad back to her problem with slugs, she makes mundane things funny. Each story is short, so its a great read for lunch breaks and waiting rooms.

The other thing I really enjoyed was her use of English slang words. She uses words like "larf", "gormless", and "groanies". It was lots of fun to figure out what the words meant. Fun read!

Katherine Hetzel says

On the one hand, it was interesting to catch glimpses of what it was like to be Sue Townsend; of her life and struggles with impending blindness.

On the other, some of these snippets were rambling and seemed to have been thrown together simply to fill column inches - which was, of course, their original purpose.

It's a dip-in, dip-out kinda book, and it's easy to skip through the ones you don't find interesting.

Janet Panter says

Some articles are still amusing to read but a lot of them haven't really stood the test of time and are a bit dated now.

Lorraine Sears says

After being chatted up over a splendid meal by British culinary queen, Delia Smith who, at the time was the official spokescook of supermarket giant Sainsbury's, Sue Townsends agreed to write a regular column of about 800 words in their new magazine: 'The Magazine'.

If like me, you weren't shopping in Sainsbury's ten to fifteen years ago, you can still catch all Sue's witty, frank and often poignant musings right here in this book. 'The Public Confessions of a Middle-aged Woman' is a bulging collection of those Sainsbury's columns all wrapped up in one neat package that you can dip in and out of with ease.

It doesn't matter that the events mentioned in the book happened over a decade ago, because the writing remains sharp and humorous throughout. It's the human touch that Sue gives each article, which makes them so easy to relate to.

Whether it's her poor relationship with the domestic appliances in her house, or the fact she seems to be the most burglarised person I have ever heard of, every time I put this book down I couldn't wait to pick it up again. It's stuffed full of slices of life as experienced first hand by Sue herself and is totally worth every penny paid to download it to Kindle or put it on your bookshelf.

I was a huge fan of Sue's Adrian Mole books when I was a teenager but hadn't read anything of hers since. However, on the strength of this book alone I've added all her recent stuff to my wishlist, the first of which - 'The Woman who Went to Bed for a Year' I'm already reading.

Oksana Koshel says

The canvas of this book seemed a little ragged for my liking. I am fully aware that this is a collection of short articles, but not too many of them turned out memorable or even a bit funny. Some seemed made out of thin air, and in some the author tells the reader directly that she had run out of ideas for her column and that's why she will just speak about whatever she sees that day. And I was surprised by the controversy of some of the facts - it made me feel somewhat fooled at times.

However there were a couple of entries that made me laugh out loud and want to have a friend as witty and bold as the writer.
