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Auszug aus:

Hornby - High Fidelity (Excerpt)

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Thema:

Excerpt: from Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity*

TMD: 29710

Kurzvorstellung des Materials:

- The excerpt and the tasks can be found on the website http://englischlehrer.de/texts/high_fidelity.php
- The excerpt is taken from the novel *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby (1995). The novel is about Rob Fleming, who is in his mid-thirties, runs a record shop and has recently been left by his girlfriend Laura. The novel is narrated by Rob, whose life is centred more on his records than his relationships.

Übersicht über die Teile

- Sum up the content of the telephone conversation
- Examine how the author presents the interaction between Rob and his mother. Make sure to refer to the language and the point of view
- Compare Rob with Marcus (from the novel *About a Boy*) by analysing their respective relationships to their mothers.
- In the excerpt at hand Rob comments on what he considers "good parenting" ("I want sympathy, understanding, advice and money, and not necessarily in that order...", ll. 32-33). Write a diary entry in which Marcus explains his idea of "good parenting".

Information zum Dokument

- Ca. 5 Seiten, Größe ca. 70,5 KByte

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2. Examine how the author presents the interaction between Rob and his mother. Make sure to refer to the language and the point of view.

The interaction between Rob and his mother is mostly presented directly via the dialogue. Only a few times the reader gets to know Rob's thoughts towards his mother's remarks. The point of view is restricted to Rob as the narrator and the focal character of the novel. Therefore the reader does not learn anything about his mother's thoughts and feelings besides Rob's own insights into his mother's state of mind.

The extract starts directly with the conversation; the reader is not introduced to the circumstances in any way. By the use of "love" (l.1) as a term of endearment it becomes obvious right from the beginning that two people are talking here who have some kind of close relationship. Also, the introduction "it's me" underlines this impression. At the same time, this introduction makes clear that this is the person who has called.

The first few remarks of the conversation are merely an exchange of small talk. Obviously the person who has been called is not feeling very talkative or does not wish to speak to the caller, which can be deduced from the indifferent and uninformative answers he gives to the caller's inquiries:

'Everything all right?'
'Not bad.'
'What sort of week have you had?'
'Oh, you know.'
'How's the shop doing?'
'So-so. (...)' (ll.2-7)

Following this start of the conversation, the reader learns that the person who has been called is Rob. This becomes apparent when he grants the reader access to his thoughts, revealing that his answer to the question how the shop is doing was not entirely truthful: in fact, business is going rather badly. In the next contribution to the conversation the reader learns that the caller is his mother when she states that "[Rob's] dad and I are very worried about this recession". Rob again reacts in an indifferent way, it seems that he has heard remarks like this one several times before. His mother ignores his comment completely, it seems that she only mentioned her worries in order to voice them, but not really because she wanted to provoke a reaction from Rob. She suddenly changes the subject completely and starts talking about Rob's girlfriend Laura. Again it appears that his mother does not consider Rob's feelings very much, because she rather insensitively tells Rob that, if she were Laura, she would not have kept the relationship going for so long.

In this part of the conversation the communication problems between Rob and his mother become apparent. The reader is allowed insight into Rob's thoughts again. He is trying to remain quiet and not say anything, even though he is very irritated by what his mother is saying. Interestingly, he does not want to break bad news to her, but his mother's hurting remarks make him furious, so Rob ends up telling her that Laura ended the relationship. It appears, though, that Rob's mother is not actively trying to hurt him by what she says, but that she just does not think about the hurtful potential of her words.

Rob's mother's reaction to the news again underlines her self-centredness. At first she does not show a reaction at all, then she starts to cry. Again, Rob gives the reader some insights which further support the impression of immense self-centredness the reader has gained of



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