

It is difficult to sympathise with Simon's point of view as he fails to see the point of view of others

This story is of a boy, Simon who lived with his mum and dad. When he was young, his dad died. Simon was sent to boarding school where he was happy until one day when his mum came to school and took him for a ride in her car. She told him she was re-marrying and moving house. From this day onwards, he is living in the memory of father. He is alone from now, so this when this problem occurs.

Simon is only thirteen years old and he has had a lot to deal with. His dad dieing didn't help as he was the type of boy who enjoyed the company of his father. He talks of:

“Lifting Simon up on his shoulder and spinning him till the ceiling whirled.

Then putting Simon down and laughing, while Simon tottered, dizzy, on short legs from chair to table, clinging on desperately.”

This shows the relationship between Simon and his father, one of loving compassion. Another example of this is:

“Once father took him out alone in the car and kept shouting, ‘shall we go faster, Simon?’ and Simon yelling, ‘Faster, faster!’ and every time he yelled ‘faster’, Father got more pleased”

This shows how his dad enjoys his son. Losing such an influential man in Simon's life is critical, for many reasons. One factor is that he will face growing up into a man alone. He cannot really talk to his mum, about issues. Also, from this loss, he will lose all that physical play that he experienced with his dad, making him shy and more 'alone'. He was a dad's boy, so from this day forth, he was changed and had to get the loving experienced from his dad via his mum who he didn't really have a true bond with. This is a big factor why it isn't difficult to sympathise with Simon.

But on the other hand, his mum has also lost her husband which must be equally traumatic, so really they are in the 'same shoes.' This should mean

they will grow stronger together but this isn't the case. She sends him to boarding school, allowing him to get on by himself when really they should be confiding in one another. Debbie, Simon's mum, moves on faster than Simon and wants to try and get re-married. Simon detests this idea for many reasons. One of which is that he thinks Joe Moreton is a big fat ape in Simon's eyes. The other is that he takes the fact that she is getting re-married as an insult on his dad. He feels that she is forgetting about his father, a person who he loved to bits and idolised. In this way, Simon acts selfish and wants to control his mum. It is as though they have swapped roles and Simon is the over protective one, whereas his mum is the carefree one who has a new found love and she is excited and starts to put on makeup and new dresses. This selfishness means that the reader finds it hard to sympathise with Simon as he cannot see the emotion his mum is going through. Simon has no right to interfere with his mum's love life. Time is distorted in this book, thus creating a feeling that his mum is rushing into everything, when really she could have been dating Joe for a while before, but as the book is told by Simon's point of view, we only find out about the relationship towards the marriage stage as he was at boarding school. This distortion creates a big sympathy for Simon because

It feels so sudden and Simon cannot understand what is happening.

However, Debbie should be more understanding of Simon and respect his love for his dad. Ever since he has gone to boarding school, they have detached and so hardly know anything about each other. An example of this lack of understanding and detachment is in chapter four. He finds it hard to see the point of view of others as they seem to reject his point of view. This is well demonstrated:

"I didn't come to ask you if I could marry him. I have given my word and that settled. I came to ask you about.....arrangements."

From this attitude she gives, Simon has a right to be angry and this is why it is a good point to show it isn't difficult to sympathise with Simon. He has just been told his mum is going to re-marry and that after, they are moving to Cheshire. This is forgetting his dad as they are moving from his dad's home and she is re-marrying. Simon now turns against them. What adds salt into the wound is that she says that she has driven a hundred miles just to ask him what he wants to keep? This is pathetic and makes the reader reject the ungrateful mum and sympathise with Simon. However, Simon acts as though the whole world revolves around him, so he acts like a spoilt brat:

“Tris- at his house? Joe Moreton’s rotten house? You must be joking. I invite friends to *our* house”

“Simon, don’t be silly. I thought you were beginning to be sensible. What about your model railway? Sell it. Give it away. Give that to Billy Turner too. Throw it out the window.” This shows his immaturity so the reader isn’t sympathetic, however, depending on the reader, they may see this as a normal incidence with a child. At this point, he doesn’t see the view of his mum. Her view is to move on and forget his dad. She does this by moving house and selling the car. This means Simon only has a few pieces of his father’s history, which is mostly his kit, but his mum confiscates that away from him:

“When you are twenty-one,” said Mum. “When you are grown-up enough to use them *properly* and with *respect*”

The reader gains back the sympathy for Simon easily when he is being “excluded from the family.” This happens in many incidences. At the end, Joe, Mum and Jane are all monsters and Simon is a person who is haunted. This shows one distancing from the family, another is:

“He was outside. Outside the family.”

This distancing and expulsion from the family means that the reader can sympathise with Simon more easily.

What also helps the reader to sympathise with Simon is the fact that he now has a new family. With Joe, Simon’s world has been turned upside down. Jane, Simon’s sister now thinks that her father is Joe:

“Well, he is *my* father an’ I love him- you hear? I *love* him!”

This desperately upsets Simon as now he is the only one that wants to remember his dad. Simon wants to get his own back on the family, for himself and his dead dad.

He does this by looking down through a crack in the ceiling to Joe and Mum’s room, seeing them having sex is frankly disgusting and the reader feels that Simon has crossed the boarder and any sympathy is lost. Another way he makes it harder for the reader to sympathise with him is when he brings down his fathers kit, and puts in their room. He resurrects the past for his mum who has clearly moved on. Simon acts like an idiot and when she gets emotional,

he reckons that is a victory for him and his dad. He dragged up the past so the reader loses sympathy.

But, the reader finds it easier to sympathise with Simon due to a supernatural presence that he has. He is a boy who is clearly clever. This is demonstrated in chapter 6 when he pieces together the past of mill house. It is due to this supernatural presence he cannot think straight. Sometimes he even loses control over himself and cannot do anything:

“A force that was making Simon’s finger tighten on the trigger.”
 “Stop, Joe, stop!” he shouted; knowing danger.

He cannot be blamed as he isn’t actually in control. Whenever he gets angry the devils come. This makes it easier for the reader to sympathise with him as he has issues that he cannot solve, he is a helpless young boy.

Altogether, it isn’t difficult to sympathise with Simon’s point of view. This is because he has gone through a lot. His father dieing and his mum being so inconsiderate of his feelings has left Simon in a miserable world. He doesn’t see the point of view of others as they don’t see his.