

Possible essay
question on "the
curious incident of the
dog in the night time"



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Essay Question: Does the novel end on an optimistic note? Explain why. In the book "the curious incident of the dog in the night-time" By Mark Haddon, the new incident of a murder of a dog, Wellington, is introduced in the first chapter. Christopher, a boy diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, who lives next door, seeks to solve the mystery which has befallen on his neighbour's pet dog. However, as he ventures out to find the murderer, he finds out another mystery which involves his mother who he had thought was dead.

In the end, as Christopher finds out about his mother's existence and his father's relation to the death of the dog, he starts to feel insecure and makes an extraordinary trip to meet his mother. Eventually, he slowly starts to gain trust in his father once again and the mysteries are solved. However, does the novel end on an optimistic note? I believe that it does. Although the real world is much more different than what he expects, Christopher has started to step out of his comfort zone and has made steps towards independence by overcoming many of his fears.

All the mysteries are also solved and Christopher gets to meet his mother and is slowly reconciling with his father. He also does well for his A level exams and his new pet, Sandy is much more interactive compared to his previous pet rat, Toby. In the beginning of the novel, Christopher has been extremely eager to solve the mystery of Wellington's murder. We see this by him going against his father's instructions and starting to interact with his neighbours in order to find clues to the murder case.

Although he wants to solve the mystery, he also tries to find other ways or excuses of doing so, just so that he would not be breaking his own promise. From the statement " she might tell me something about Wellington or Mr Shears without be asking her, so that wouldn't be breaking my promise", we can tell that he is so eager to solve the murder case that he is willing to go to the extent of disobeying his father, which is something he would not normally do. His eagerness is also revealed through his interaction with his neighbours, in order to find out more clues about the murder.

Phrases such as " I do not like talking to strangers" and " feels frightening" shows how Christopher detests talking to strangers as it makes him feel scared and uncomfortable. However, he is willing to overcome his fear and step out of his comfort zone to find out the murderer. Therefore, right from the start, Christopher is revealed to be bent on solving the mystery of Wellington's death. In addition, while working on the case, he also finds out about his mother's letters to him. "I thought mother was dead" shows us how Christopher had always believed in the death of his mother and had not known that she was alive all along. By finding out this new truth, it also allowed him to meet his mother who was living in London. Therefore, at the end of the novel, Christopher has been able to find out the answers to both mysteries and is able to reunite with his mother. Secondly, Christopher manages to overcome many of his fears. Initially, he often stays at home while his father would usually help him buy the things he wanted.

However, as an attempt to find out clues to Wellington's murderer, Christopher manages to talk to some of his neighbours without screaming or behaving abnormally. His fear is shown by the phrase " which was
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frightening". However, he makes it seem compulsory by using the words "no choice", in order to find out more clues to the case. From this, we can see how Christopher forces himself to interact with others, which is something he would not do if given a choice. However, by those words, we know how much Christopher loves dogs and his eagerness to solve the case.

Later on in the novel, he also stays to talk with Mrs. Alexander and even follows her to the park "even though it scared me". This was something he would never do, especially with someone he was not too familiar with. In addition, when Christopher found out about his father's deception and lies to him about his mother, he also makes a trip to London to live with his mother. In the past, he would never have dared to go out on his own. However, because of his fear of his father, he managed to make a trip to the train station on his own, despite his fear of crowds.

Therefore, Christopher's train ride is symbolic of how he is slowly taking steps towards independence, without relying so much on his father anymore. Instead, the train ride forces him to adapt to the changes and people around him in order for him to find his mother. Phrases like "did a maths problem to make my head clearer" and "was confused" shows the many difficulties that Christopher faced. It allowed him to find solutions to his own problems and shows him trying to adjust to the changes around him. Eventually, by the end of the novel, Christopher has one through many major changes, allowing him to overcome most of his fears. However, although Christopher has made a huge development, he is still naive towards the world around him. This is shown by the phrase "my dreams will come true". Christopher still does not know the extent of the world and believes that he is able to fulfill his dreams

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and do what he wants. He also does not realise that the world will be unable to function without people and wishes that everyone who is different from him would die. "I will be able to do what I like" reveals his naivety and his foolish approach towards people around him. He still maintains a constant fear of strangers starts to panic whenever they talk to him. The phrase "hold my Swiss Army knife" shows how he resorts to using a weapon in order to make him feel calm. However, in the world, he is unable to maintain such an attitude as it would not allow him to behave normally and interact with others. Despite Christopher's naivety, the novel ends on an optimistic note as Christopher's new pet dog, Sandy is much more interactive compared to Toby, his previous rat.

This would allow him to start being more social and aid him to step out of his comfort zone. It could also cause him to put down his guard and security by his belief that Sandy would protect him if "someone entered my room". Through Sandy, Christopher has also slowly begun to accept his father and regain his trust in him. Therefore, Sandy would then continue to nurture Christopher and allow him to exercise the overcoming of his fears and allow him to be able to become more independent in the process as well.

In Conclusion, I agree that the novel ends on an optimistic note. This is because Christopher has finally managed to overcome his fears and difficulties in the process of solving the mystery. In return, he has also managed to find the answers to all the mysteries in the book and has a new pet Sandy who allows him to develop more independence and regain trust in his father once more. All in all, Christopher has benefitted highly and is now able to live a better and more independent life than before.

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