

Richard mayhew's character development in neverwhere



Richard Mayhew is a quiet, lonely, and, overall, average man from Scotland looking for a new life in London. He meets, who he believes is the, love of his life, and enjoys every minute of being in her company. Richard goes about his normal day job and lives a boring and relatively “normal” life. Until he meets Door and the parallel world of London Below. As an underground collection of those who don't quite belong in London Above – a place where he would no sooner find himself facing a mythical creature than his boss. For in a foreign world full of dangers and adventure, it is here that Richard finds himself. Throughout the book, he realizes that he is more than what he had initially thought he had been. He is not one of the many who belong in the average version of London that everyone is familiar with; he belongs in London Below, where he is himself, not the boring mediocre man he had thought himself to be, but the courageous and loyal one he truly is.

At the beginning of the novel, Neverwhere, Richard Mayhew is an average, young, Scottish man, looking to move to the heart of England – London. But once he arrives, he soon realizes that he does not truly know who he is as a person. He finds the love of his life, a woman named Jessica. He allows Jessica to control every aspect of his life and she sways every one of his decisions to something good for her; from the way he dresses, to the décor of his office, to even their engagement.

Jessica saw in Richard an enormous amount of potential ... so she gave him books with titles like Dress for Success and A Hundred and Twenty-Five Habits of Successful Men. ... She would pick out for him the kinds of clothes she thought that he should wear ... and, a year to the day after their first

encounter, she told him she thought it was time that they went shopping for an engagement ring. (11-13 Neverwhere, Kindle Edition)

Although Jessica micromanages Richard's life, she doesn't know him as well as someone would normally know their lover, especially after a year of dating. Their relationship is, most certainly, not a traditional one, based entirely on love; Jessica seems to enjoy bringing forth a more ambitious side to Richard, whereas Richard is only with her because she is something different in his otherwise tedious and boring life. He does everything Jessica tells him to do because he is completely and totally in love with her and wants to appease her, but in doing so, doesn't give himself the opportunity to find out what he really wants in life. He seems to only be marrying Jessica because it is expected of him, and because he has a need to fill the emptiness of his life outside of work, with the presence of another person. He soon realizes that he does not need another person in his life in order to make it satisfy. When he saves a dying girl named Door and is thrust into the world of London Below, he begins to comprehend the extent of his own abilities.

After Richard met Door and had some excitement added to his life, he is still afraid of conflict during his time in London Above. After Richard seems to disappear to the people of the Above world, he witnesses his apartment being sold while he was still inside. After they left, he had a moment to himself to contemplate what to do, and he then “ took the black sports bag from under the bed and put socks into it. Underpants. Some T-shirts. His passport. His wallet” (73, Kindle Edition). Instead of fighting for his home and for his normal life, although it would be in vain, he decides to pack his bags <https://assignbuster.com/richard-mayhews-character-development-in-neverwhere/>

and leave. Richard is now just a lost soul on the streets of London who has lost everything and everyone he knows and loves. His passiveness and lack of will to continue forward is just heart breaking. Richard reaches his lowest and darkest moments during this time.

Moving forward, once he finds his way back into London Below, he meets a rat-speaker named Anaesthesia who is then assigned to guide Richard to the Floating Market. Anaesthesia is the first person he is able to have a conversation with who he is able to relate to from London Below. After the crossing of Night's Bridge Richard discovers Anaesthesia died on the bridge his immediate reaction was exclaiming that they must go back to get her, to save her. Hunter, his new companion at the time, tells him that it is impossible and that she is gone forever. Richard almost breaks down but is able to keep it together in order to continue his journey to find Door and the Marquis de Carabas. This display of emotion shows that Richard is desperate to have someone with him that he is comfortable with and is able to give him some of the answers that he needs. Losing Anaesthesia was like losing a protective blanket, and he was once again alone in the world of London Below.

The next major development in Richard's growth as a character was after his trial, and almost death, to obtain the key for Islington. Once Richard goes through his trial, he comes out of it a noticeably different person. As Hunter describes him as, " he looked less boyish. He looked as if he had begun to grow up" (278, Kindle Edition). Richard begins to develop into more of a man than he was before his experience. The encounter he had with the trial seemed to have really opened his eyes to how he used to be. As the mirages <https://assignbuster.com/richard-mayhews-character-development-in-neverwhere/>

of his friends and loved ones were saying, he was in a very dark place, and the idea of suicide may have been an option for Richard at that time. But he realized that the person he was before is not the person that he is now. He gains a purpose due to Door and their other companions and continues to grow as a person as their adventures continue.

After all this, Richard moves towards his development of becoming more of a man. During the fight with the Beast he is able to do what Hunter could not, kill the beast. Since Hunter failed, in her dying moments, she says to Richard "you're the greatest hunter in London Below. The Warrior..." (351, Kindle Edition). This is an extraordinary growth for Richard as he has come from being a lost soul to now becoming "The Warrior." In later events he meets with the Earl again and a comment is made about his growth and how he is "Not really a boy anymore..." (384, Kindle Edition). The Earl then knights Richard and he becomes "'Sir Richard of Maybury. With this knife I do give to you the freedom of the Underside. May you be allowed to walk freely, without let or hindrance'" (385, Kindle Edition). Being given these titles represents a mile stone that signifies him no longer being the fresh-faced young man but, as an older, stronger person. In aftermath of the climax of Richard's character development he is finally able to make his way back to existence as a member of society in London Above.

Once Richard is in London Above, the developments he has made in his adventure begin to emerge and a new side of Richard is seen. This is made especially clear when he goes to deal with his landlord about his apartment being sold while he was on "vacation". After being told that his old apartment could not be given back to him Richard thought,
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The old Richard, the one who had lived in what was now the Buchanans' home, would have crumbled at this point, apologized for being a nuisance, and gone away. Instead, Richard said, " Really? Nothing you can do about it? You let out a property I was legally renting from your company to someone else, and in the process lost all my personal possessions, and there's nothing you can do about it? Now, I happen to think, and I'm sure my lawyer will also think, that there is a great deal you can do about it. (397, Kindle Edition).

When he fights for the unit, he ends up gaining a better deal with a penthouse suite. At this point he notices the change in himself as he enters his new place, and, almost poetically, puts down the dagger as if he was putting down his new persona.

At the very end of the novel the character of Richard Mayhew realizes he does not want the life of London Above. Here Richard feels that life in London Above is not exciting enough, and he knows that if he were to go back to London Below, he would have his titles, influence, and Lady Door to start and have a great life there. In his last act of the novel he walks back through the door into London Below to live this new life, and hopefully enjoy more adventures and excitement.

Richard's new, no nonsense, attitude completely replaces his original passive and complacent attitude. Through meeting new companions and forming strong bonds with other characters they came across; Richard was able to develop and become a strong character. He learned that his boring and repetitive lifestyle was not the way he wanted to live his life, and he changed to become a new person that fit his new lifestyle. By the end of the novel

there was no more of the London Above Richard and there was only the new, strong, and independent London Below Richard Mayhew.

Citations:

- Gaiman, Neil. *Neverwhere* . Headline, 2017.