

"the curious incident of the dog in the night-time," by mark haddon

[Literature](#)



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In the story "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time," by Mark Haddon, the autistic protagonist Christopher J. F. Boone finds himself in a compromising situation once he finds his neighbor's dog Wellington dead. He was hugging Wellington when Christopher was found by the hysterical dog's owner, Mrs. Shears. He was taken into custody when a policeman touched Christopher while he was trying to question him about Wellington, and Christopher assaulted the man for making contact.

Once his father clears Christopher of the police's suspicion, he decides to try to figure out who killed Wellington. As Christopher dives deeper and deeper into his case, he finds information about his own family that throws his life into disarray. He takes a journey into the heart of London to find his mother and run away from his father who wasn't all that he seemed to be. This journey that Christopher takes acts as an attempt to solve his trust issues, his lack of emotion, and the fact that he was inconsiderate of other people's emotions and actions. One of Christopher's more personal flaws is his lack of trust towards other people. He distrusts strangers, even if they are kind, or trying to help him. "I do not like strangers because I do not like people I have never met before. They are hard to understand. (Page 34)" Christopher finds it hard to trust people he does not know, and even if he does know them, if they betray his trust he is a lot less likely to trust them again, even if that particular person is his own parent. After finding out something that his father had done, Christopher stated that "I couldn't trust him, even though he said "Trust me," because he had told a lie about a big thing. (Page 122)" Throughout the journey that he takes to reach his mother in London, he learns to trust people a little more.

The journey partially resolves his trust issues, by making Christopher be put into situations in which he needs to ask someone else for help. By having to ask others for help, he has to trust people enough to not only just talk to him, but to help him find his way. For all that he knew, they could have given him incorrect directions, but he trusted them enough to at least help him find his way. Christopher also has to trust his father after he had been lied to by him. He does not do so at first, but Christopher eventually realizes that his father meant him no real harm or meant anybody any harm. Christopher only understands this after he shares a conversation with his father. His father tells him, " Things can't go on like this. I don't know about you, but this... this just hurts too much. You being in the house but refusing to talk to me...You have to learn to trust me... (Page 218)" Throughout his journey, Christopher's trust issues become slightly better, but they are not completely resolved, seeing as how he was unable to trust just anyone for directions, and how it took a lot of time for him to trust his father again, despite his father attempting many things to make Christopher hear him out and start to trust him again. Another one of Christopher's flaws was his inability to feel and understand emotions.

One time, his teacher Siobhan drew a few faces. At first, Christopher was able to understand the simple ones, but some of the more complicated ones he was unable to make sense of. "...she drew some other pictures, but I was unable to say what these meant. (Page 3)" Emotions that are easily identified and understood by normal people, are hard for Christopher to understand. He has an inability to understand human emotions, but throughout his journey, he is put into situations in which he feels foreign

emotions. He does not know how to cope with these new emotions, and instead feels nausea. When he finds something out about his family, and that his father has been lying to him about it, he reacts strongly. He becomes nauseous, and although he does not understand what he is feeling, he definitely starts to feel a greater variety of emotions. He becomes so emotional, that he is unable to fight back or even complain when his father helped him clean off carried him to bed, overstepping Christopher's personal boundaries. "'Let's do this really gently, Christopher. Let's sit you up and get your clothes off and get you into the bath, OK? I'm going to have to touch you, but it's going to be alright.' Then he lifted me up and made me sit on the side of the bed. He took my jumper and my shirt off and put them on the bed.

Then he made me stand up and walk through to the bathroom. And I didn't scream. And I didn't fight. And I didn't fight him. (Page 115)" Christopher feels so much, that he becomes numb. He is just so confused he is unsure of what to do with all of the new emotions rolling through him and becomes sick. Not only does Christopher have a problem with feeling foreign emotions, he is also unable to understand other people's emotions. If he were to talk to someone about a sensitive subject and were extremely blunt about it, he would not really understand that what he was doing was wrong. He'd be unable to see that the person does not want Christopher talking about the subject. Christopher would be unable to decipher the emotions of the person and know when to stop. Throughout his journey, he does not really gain the ability to interpret emotions, but he becomes able to better understand other emotions, after having felt them. As well as Christopher's

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lack of ability to understand emotions, he also has the flaw of being inconsiderate to other people. For example, when he had a conversation with Mrs. Shears, he couldn't tell that he was unwanted and that what he was doing was bothering Mrs. Shears. " That evening I went round to Mrs. Shear's house and knocked on the door and waited for her to answer it..." " She said, ' Christopher, I really don't think I want to see you right now.' I said, ' I didn't kill Wellington.' And she replied, ' What are you doing here?' I said, ' I wanted to come and tell you that I didn't kill Wellington. And also I wanted to find out who killed him.' Some of her tea spilled onto the carpet. I said, ' Do you know who killed Wellington?' She didn't answer my question. She just said, ' Goodbye, Christopher,' and closed the door." Here, Christopher is being inconsiderate of Mrs. Shears, and he cannot tell that he is intruding onto personal boundaries because he is unable to tell what Mrs. Shears is feeling. The fact that he is inconsiderate stems from his inability to read into situations and emotions of other people.

Throughout his journey, this particular flaw does not get fixed. Compared to the previous flaws, this flaw is completely untouched. This flaw does not get fixed, as Christopher is still unable to read into a situation later on in the story. He does not stop to think about others, and only really cares about things that impact or interest him. When he first started staying with his mom in London, he ignores her needs and wants in the difficult situation that Christopher put them in. "...when mother came into the spare room before I went to sleep I said, ' I have to go to Swindon to take my A level. And she said, ' Christopher, not now. I'm getting phone calls from your father threatening to take me to court. I'm getting it in the neck from Roger. It's not

a good time.' And I said, ' But I have to go because it's been arranged and Reverend Peters is going to invigilate.' And she said, ' Look. It's only an exam. I can ring the school. We can get it postponed. You can take it some other time.' And I said, ' I can't take it another time. It's been arranged. And I've done lots of revision. And Mrs. Gascoyne said we could use a room at school.' And Mother said, ' Christopher, I am just about holding this together. But I am this close to losing it, all right? So just give me some— (Page 205)"

His mother is tired and in a stressful situation because of Christopher coming over, and Christopher won't acknowledge her problems and only thought about his math exam. He did not even feel any guilt for putting his mother in such a situation. Therefore, his journey does not really do much to change his inability to be considerate to others.

All in all, the journey that Christopher takes acts as an attempt to help him with his character flaws, which include his trust issues, his inability to understand and feel emotions, and the fact that he is unsympathetic towards others. None of his problems are completely solved, but his trust issues are not too much of an issue now. He still doesn't trust others too much, but he can ask for their help. Compared to how he was before, his trust issues are solved to a point where it is not too much of a problem, and that they are no longer unreasonable. Christopher still is unable to understand emotions, especially emotions of others. But he is now more open to them, and he can now analyze people a little better. In its own way, the journey's attempt to solve these two flaws are successful to a degree. The last flaw is not fixed throughout the entire book, and the journey does nothing to change that. The journey was not successful in fixing his unmindful ways. From finding <https://assignbuster.com/the-curious-incident-of-the-dog-in-the-night-time-by-mark-haddon/>

Wellington dead to finding his mother, Christopher has been on a large journey in which his character changes in more ways than one. In the end, Christopher has emerged from the journey as a better person who was able to do so much more than he could before he started his journey.