***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time***

**By Mark Haddon**

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**CHAPTER QUESTIONS**

**Chapters 2-43 (pp.1 – 30)**

* **What key plot turns occurred in these chapters? Summarise the plot so far in detail.**
* **List and describe the characters introduced:**
* **Make 3-5 observations about Christopher Boone:**
* **List and explain 3-5 of the literary devices used by Haddon so far. To what effect has he used these techniques?**
* **List 3-5 key quotes used in these chapters, explaining who said them and why.**

**Chapters 47-67 (pp.31 – 55)**

* **What key plot turns occurred? Summarise the plot in detail.**
* **List and describe any new characters introduced:**
* **Find 3-5 quotes from the novel that support the interpretation of this novel being a mystery detective novel.**

**Chapters 71-89 (pp.56 – 68)**

* **List and describe what Christopher considers to be his ‘Behavioural Problems’ .**
* **How does Christopher view ‘Special Needs’, both for himself and others?**

**Chapters 97-137 (pp. 69 – 110)**

* **In 5-7 dot points summarise everything Christopher knows about his mother, up to this stage in the text.**
* **In 4-6 dot points, add any additional information the audience may have deduced, or that you suspect about Mrs. Boone.**
* **Note as many descriptive things about Christopher that you can in the chart below:**

* **The text is often referred to as humourous. What is funny about Christopher’s sense of humour?**
* **Examine two funny episodes. Reference these. How does Haddon make the audience laugh at or with Christopher? What literary devices does he use?**

**Up to Chapter 157 (p.128)**

* **In 3-4 sentences, explain Christopher’s style of narration – how he tells the story. What sort of vocabulary does he use, sentence structure, how does he tell stories? Etc.**
* **Christopher has just found the letters addressed to himself from his mother.**

**How would you react to the discovery that a family member was not dead like you thought?**

**How does Christopher react? What is his emotional reaction?**

* **Review every passage that Ed Boone appears in.**

**Make a list describing Ed.**

**What mannerisms does Ed use in his speech? How does he talk to Christopher? Do you think he usually talks like this? (Examine pp.56-57 when Ed talks to Mrs. Gascoyne, the Principal)**

**Using these mannerisms, write a letter from Ed’s perspective to Judy Boone. Tell Judy why you told Christopher his mother was dead and why you are not forwarding the mail. (400 words)**

* **Re-read pp. 125-128 (Chapter 151). Christopher discusses the world’s mysteries. Answer the following in 400-500 words**.

**On p. 124, Christopher explains that “I was excited. When I started writing my book there was only one mystery I had to solve. Now there were two”. What two mysteries is Christopher talking about?**

**What two mysteries does Christopher discuss in chapter 151?**

**What point is Christopher making about mysteries here?**

**How is this chapter important to the plot?**

**What is the point of this inter-chapter? Why did Haddon include it here?**

**Up to Chapter 179 (p.173): Truth**

* **In Chapter 157, after reading his mother’s letters, Christopher realises his father has lied to him. What is Christopher’s reaction to this realisation and his father’s confession? What happens to him physically? How does he react emotionally and is this usual behaviour for Christopher?**
* **How does Ed Boone justify not telling Christopher his mother is alive?**
* **Why does Ed then explain about Wellington?**
* **What does this chapter say about Ed’s perspective on Truth? Is truth more important than feelings?**
* **Contrast this to Christopher’s perspective on truth and lies.**
* **Find ten quotes throughout the entire novel that highlight the theme of truth. Explain who said these quotes and why, and reference them.**

**SETTING**

**The novel is set in two, very different locations. Swindon, Christopher’s home, where everything is comfortingly familiar, and ‘not Swindon’, the world Christopher experiences on his way to London and London itself, places where Christopher finds it very difficult to cope.**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. **How is your understanding of each setting developed (descriptions, illustrations, mood)?**
2. **How important is the setting to the story’s development, to your understanding of character and to the novel’s ideas?**
3. **What is Christopher’s response to each environment? How is this communicated?**

**PLOT**

1. **List the key incidents in the novel.**
2. **Now graph these incidents (maximum of ten), as they take place, and give them a ‘tension’ grade out of ten. For example…**



1. **Considering your graph, describe the narrative ‘landscape’. The questions below can be used to help you.**
	1. **How quickly does the complication of the novel take place? Is it effective in drawing you into the story?**
	2. **When are we given the story’s orientation? How is the novel/ character introduced?**
	3. **What often happens after moments of high tension or excitement? What is the effect of this?**
	4. **The mystery of the dog’s murder is solved quite early on in the novel. Is this the climax of the story? How does Haddon keep the reader engaged after this revelation?**
	5. **What is the climax of the story?**
	6. **Is there a clear resolution at the story’s end?**
	7. **Do you find the end of the story satisfying and/ or suitable? How does the ending develop your understanding of key ideas?**
	8. **Does the story use a traditional narrative development?**
	9. **Are any aspects of the story’s narrative development** **distinctive?**

**Is Haddon/ Christopher a good storyteller? Why/ why not?**

**THEMES**

**There are many ideas/ themes explored in the novel. Consider the suggestions below.**

* **the value of truth/ truth and perspective**
* **human needs and relationships**
* **the need for control/ stability**
* **the nature of difference**
* **communication**
* **acceptance**

**Select the themes above that you believe are the most important, or the most interesting to you, and complete the table below. As your progress through this unit, you may wish to return to this table and develop/ alter your thematic ideas. The themes below are just a few of many possible suggestions. You might choose to phrase the wording of the theme differently, or to add your own.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Events/ content from the text that develop this theme** | **Relevant quote** | **Conclusions you can draw/ your response to the representation of this theme** |
|   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |

**LITERARY DEVICES**

**Find examples of each of these literary devices throughout the novel. Write the example next to the appropriate definition**

**Allegory:** a symbolic representation. For instance, the blindfolded figure holding scales is an allegory of justice.

**Alliteration:** the repetition of the initial consonant. *Peter Piper picked a peck of picked peppers.*

**Allusion:** a reference to a famous person or event in life or literature. *She is as pretty as the Mona Lisa*

**Analogy:** the comparison of two pairs which have the same relationship. For instance *shoe is to foot as tire is to wheel.*

**Assonance:** the repetition of similar vowel sounds in a sentence. *The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plane.*

**Climax:** the turning point of the action in the plot of a play or story. The climax represents the point of greatest tension in the work.

**Foreshadowing:** hints of what is to come in the action of a play or story.

**Hyperbole`:** a figure of speech involving exaggeration.

**Metaphor:** a comparison where one thing is said to be another. *Juliet is the sun.*

**Onomatopoeia:** the use of words to imitate the sounds they describe. *Whoosh... Beep... Hiss... etc.*

**Oxymoron:** putting two contradictory words together. *Bittersweet, act naturally, jumbo shrimp.*

**Personification:** giving human qualities to animals or objects. *Daffodils nodding heads, the gnarly fingers of the outstretched branch.*

**Pun:** a word used which has two meanings at the same time, which result in humour.

**Simile:** figure of speech involving a comparison between unlike things, using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’ or ‘as though’. *She floated in like a cloud... Juliet was like the sun. Etc.*

**GENRE**

***“This is a murder mystery novel.”***

**At the beginning of Chapter 7 Christopher tells us that ‘This is a murder mystery novel.’**

* **Why does Christopher decide to write a murder mystery novel? Why is it appropriate that that Christopher has chosen to write this type of novel?**
* **Consider each of these conventions listed below. For each convention list how the novel fulfils, plays with, or subverts these conventions?**

**Murder Mystery Conventions**

* + **A morally upright, intelligent and isolated protagonist**
	+ **A crime, usually a murder**
	+ **A suspect/ villain**
	+ **Clues and red herrings**
	+ **Exposure of the protagonist to danger, confrontation and conflict**
	+ **A resolution/ the suggestion that order has been returned to the world**
	+ **A moral/ message**
	+ **A setting of moral decay, or decadence**
* **How does the use of the murder mystery genre shape your understanding of the issues and characters in the novel?**

**STYLE**

**Narrative Development/ Digressions**

**Christopher’s ‘digressions’ are a unique aspect of the novel. His reflections on life, math and human nature are as important as the central narrative in the development of our understanding of the novel’s key issues and central character.**

**Complete the table below.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chapter/ overview of digression’s focus** | **Place in the novel (connection to events before or after)** | **Connection to key ideas/ understanding of character** | **Quotes** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Explain the effect of the use of narrative digressions on the story. How do these digressions shape meaning and add to your understanding of key issues?**

**CHARACTERS**

**Character Analysis**

**The characters in the novel are not typical of characters in Young Adult fiction. They are complex, with many flaws, and yet many redeeming qualities.**

**Complete the following charts that outline some of the key personality characteristics of the main characters in the novel.**

**Mr. Boone**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive Quality** | **Example/ Quote** | **Negative quality** | **Example/ Quote** |
| **dedicated** |  | **Verbally aggressive** | **‘Holy f#@\*ing Jesus, Christopher. How stupid are you?’ p. 102** |
|  |  | **Deceitful** | **Does not tell the truth about Christopher’s mother,’ I did it for your own good, Christopher…I never meant to lie.’ (p. 143)** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Mrs. Boone**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive Quality** | **Example/ Quote** | **Negative quality** | **Example/ Quote** |
| **protective** |  |  |  |
|  |  | **selfish** | **Leaves her son: ‘I realised you and your father were probably better off if I wasn’t living in the house.’ (p. 136)** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Mrs Alexander**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive Quality** | **Example/ Quote** | **Negative quality** | **Example/ Quote** |
| **kind** | **Takes the time to talk to Christopher and get to know him** | **Inappropriate** | **Tells Christopher that his mother had an affair with Mr. Shears. “I mean that they were very good friends. Very, very good friends.” (p. 76)** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**As Christopher is less able to control his behaviour, it is difficult to categorise Christopher’s qualities into ‘good’ or ‘bad’. However, he does have qualities that you will respond to in a positive or negative.**

**Christopher**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive Quality** | **Example/ Quote** | **Negative quality** | **Example/ Quote** |
| **intelligent** |  | **Unable to control his violent tendencies** | **‘I don’t like it when people grab me. And I don’t like being surprised either. So I hit him…’ p. 103** |

**Siobhan**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive Quality** | **Example/ Quote** | **Negative quality** | **Example/ Quote** |
| **Understanding** | **Siobhan knows how to communicate clearly with Christopher** |  |  |

**Mr. Shears**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Positive Quality** | **Example/ Quote** | **Negative quality** | **Example/ Quote** |
|  |  | **Abusive** | **When Christopher moves to London** |

**\*Extension Questions\***

**Christopher**

1. **What techniques does the author use to create Christopher and develop our understanding of who he is? In your response consider what Christopher says, what he thinks about, how he acts, how other people react to him, what other people say about him.**
2. **What are Christopher’s values (what does he consider important)? What are your values? Consider the similarities and differences. What happens when people’s values differ?**
3. **We are very aware of how different Christopher is. How is he *like* us?**
4. **Who is Christopher closest to? What are the characteristics of this/these relationships?**
5. **Author Mark Haddon considers Christopher to be ‘an ideal narrator’. Do you agree? Why/ Why not?**
6. **Does Christopher change over the course of the novel? If so, how? If not, why not?**

**Ed Boone, Christopher’s father**

1. **Describe Ed Boone with examples from the text. How do key events shape your understanding of him?**
2. **What techniques does Haddon use to create the character of Christopher’s father?**
3. **What is your opinion of Ed Boone? What is Christopher’s opinion of his father?**

**Judy Boone, Christopher’s mother**

1. **Describe Judy Boone with examples from the text. How do key events shape your understanding of her? Does your opinion of her change?**
2. **What techniques does Haddon use to develop our understanding of Judy Boone?**
3. **What is your opinion of Judy? What is Christopher’s opinion of his mother?**

**Discussion: How does the complexity of the characters enhance your understanding of human nature?**

**POST READING REVIEW**

**Answer the following questions when you have finished reading the novel and before you begin a text response essay. They will give insight into the important features of the text that are worth considering when you do analyse the text in more detail.**

**Answer the following questions quickly, with ‘instant’ responses preferable to considered ones:**

* 1. **Do you like the novel? Why/ why not?**
	2. **How is the novel different from many novels you have read?**
	3. **How is it similar?**
	4. **What is your favourite scene? Why?**
	5. **Who is your favourite character? Why?**
	6. **List the three events in the novel that affected you the most. What was your response to these events?**
	7. **What writing techniques did you like/ dislike?**
	8. **What did you learn from the novel?**
	9. **What do you think are the two most important ideas of the novel?**

**QUOTES AND ESSAY TOPICS**

**Christopher’s father lied about his mother’s whereabouts. Why did he find it necessary to lie? Do you feel this behaviour is justified? Why?**

1. **Mrs. Alexander talking to Christopher about his mothers’ death; in the park- “you won’t tell your father about this conversation, will you”(page 77)**
2. **“It’s bloody hard telling the truth. Sometimes it’s impossible.”-Ed Boone (page 150)**
3. **“I did it for your good Christopher. Honestly I did. I never meant to lie… I just thought it was better if you didn’t know…”-Ed Boone (page 143)**
4. **“So you decided to just wipe me out of his life altogether?”**

 **“Well isn’t that what you wanted?”**

 **Conversation between Ed and Judy Boone, at the flat, in London (pages 239-241)**

**"This is a novel that explores the concepts of perception, lies and the truth. Discuss"**

1. **“dogs are faithful and they do not tell lies as they cannot talk" (page 4)**
2. **“Chris did not like being touched, and his perception of the officer's actions were incorrect; "I didn't like him touching me like this. and this is when I hit him" (page 9)**
3. **“this is called a white lie which is not a lie at all" (page 62)**
4. **His perception of marriage and life are strange and somewhat incorrect; "I will be able to pay someone to look after me...or i will get a lady to marry me...not be on my own" (page 58)**
5. **Perception and individuality - what's logical to some isn't to others; e.g.: red and yellow cars**
6. **“Because he had told a lie about a big thing" (page 153)**
7. **“Metaphors are lies”.**
8. **“A lie is when you say something happened which didn’t happen”.**
9. **“I know he meant this because this is what he said”.**
10. **“I think prime numbers are like life”.**

**The narrative in the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* is primarily focussed on solving the mystery of "Who killed Wellington?" Do you agree?**

1. **"This is a murder mystery novel." p.4**
2. **"I decided that I was going to find out who killed Wellington even though father had told me to stay out of other people’s business." p.38**
3. **"The next day was Saturday and there is not much to do on Saturday...so I decided to do some more detection on my own." p.45**
4. **Chain of reasoning. p.53**
5. **Interviewing neighbours. p.47-55**
6. **“When I started writing this book there was only one mystery to solve, now there's two.”**
7. **“I am going to find out who killed Wellington” pg 26**
8. **'In a murder mystery novel someone has to work out who the murderer is and then catch them....that is why i started with the dog' pg 5**
9. **I went to London on my own ... I solved the mystery of who killed Wellington... pg 268**
10. **'Father had told me I couldn't do any more detecting which meant that the book was finished' pg 67**

**Christopher's father lied about his mother's where-abouts. Why did he find it necessary to lie? Do you feel this behaviour is justified? Why?

"I did it for your good, Christopher" (p.143)**

**"It was an accident" (p.143)

"But once I said it... I couldn't change it" (p.144)

"We all make mistakes, Christopher. You, me, your mum, everyone... We're only human"**

**Given Christopher’s aversion to being touched, is there any evidence in the novel that suggests he experiences a sense of attachment to other people/things?**

1. **She spread her fingers out in a fan so that I could touch her fingers, but then I saw Toby had escaped out of my cage so I had to catch him.**
2. **and it was like counting but saying, left right left right, which Siobhan taught me to make me feel calm**
3. **Sherlock Holmes doesn't believe in supernatural things, which is God ... Which are stupid things.**
4. **4 red cars in a row make it a good day, 3 red cars ...'**

**“Christopher’s parents behave in Christopher’s best interests.” Do you agree?**

**Christopher’s mother explains in a letter to him:**

**-“I’m not like your Father. Your father is a much more patient person; he knows how to deal with you.” page 133**

**-“But I said that I couldn’t leave you, and he was sad about that but he understood that you were really important to me.” Page 135**

**-“And I think that was when I realised you and your father were probably better off if I wasn’t living in the house” page 136**

**-“Christopher, I never meant to hurt you. I thought that what I was doing was the best for all of us. I hope it is. And I want you to know that this is not your fault.” Page 137**

**Christopher’s Father tries to explain why he lied about Christopher’s Mother’s death.**

**-Then he said, “I did it for your good, Christopher. Honestly I did. I never meant to lie. I just thought… I just thought it was better if you didn’t know that… that … I didn’t mean to… I was going to show them to you when you were older.” Page 143**

**-Another piece of evidence was the fact that Christopher’s father only killed Wellington because the dog was getting in the way of creating a new family with Mrs Shears. Christopher’s father only killed Wellington for the chance that maybe one day Mrs Shears would come and live with them. “I think she cared more for that bloody dog than for me, for us.” Page 151**

**-And father shouted, “I cooked his meals. I cleaned his clothes. I looked after him every weekend. I looked after him when he was ill. I took him to the doctor. I worried myself sick every time he wandered off somewhere at night. I went to school every time he got himself into a fight. And you? What? You wrote him some fucking letters. I did it to protect him.” Page 240**

**Four Important Multi-use Quotes:**

**"...loving someone is helping then when they are in trouble, and looking after them, and telling them the truth..." pg. 146**

**"Because...if you don't tell the truth now, then later...later on it hurts even more." pg. 150**

**"... there was nothing to do except to wait and to hurt." pg. 217**

**"The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes." pg. 92**