

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

## Story-Guide



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# Table of Contents

Plot Summary.....	3
Characters.....	4
Emotional Impact & World of the Play.....	5
Setting.....	6

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## Plot Summary

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* focuses on Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old with many signs of autism. Christopher lives with his father, Ed, in Swindon, Great Britain. Ed has told Christopher that his mother, Judy, died two years ago. One night, Christopher discovers that his next door neighbor's dog, Wellington, has been killed with a pitchfork. Although his father tells him to keep his nose out of other people's business, Christopher decides to find out who killed Wellington.

Christopher's teacher, Siobhan (*pronounced sho-VAHN*), suggests to Christopher that he write a story about his investigation of Wellington's death. During his investigation, Christopher meets people whom he has never before encountered, even though they live on the same street, including Mrs. Alexander, who informs Christopher that his mother had an affair with Mr. Shears and had been with him for a long time.

Christopher's father, Ed, discovers the book Christopher is writing about the investigation and hides it. While searching for the book, Christopher uncovers a trove of letters which his mother wrote to him, dated after her supposed death. He is so shocked by his father lying about his mother's death that he is inconsolable. Ed finds Christopher and that he has discovered the truth. He then confesses that he had indeed lied about Judy's death and also that it was he who killed Wellington, stating that it was a mistake resulting from his anger after a heated argument with Mrs. Shears. Christopher, having lost all trust in his father, decides to live with his mother and runs away. He remembers his mother's address from the letters and embarks on an adventurous trip to London, where his mother lives with Mr. Shears.

Christopher is able to navigate the train station and the London tube, leading him to his mother's home. Judy is delighted that Christopher has come to her and is upset that Ed told Christopher that she was dead. Very soon after arriving, Christopher wants to return to Swindon in order to take his mathematics A-level (a very important exam in British schools). Christopher is brilliant at math and is taking it three years early. His mother leaves Mr. Shears, their relationship having broken down because of conflict about Christopher and Mr. Shears' rejection of him. With nowhere to live, Judy returns to Swindon. Despite an all-night drive with little sleep and no food, Christopher insists on taking his A-level exam the next morning.

After reuniting and arguing with Ed, Judy agrees to let him meet Christopher for daily brief visits. Christopher remains terrified of his father and makes repeated attempts to prevent him from talking.

To make amends, Ed gets Christopher a puppy, promising that he will rebuild trust with Christopher slowly, "no matter how long it takes." Christopher learns that he has received the top score on his A-level. Christopher's book ends with him optimistic about his future, with plans to go to a university and become a scientist. Having solved the mystery of the murdered dog, gone to London on his own, found his mother, and written a book about his adventures, Christopher believes he is capable of anything.

Siobhan encourages Christopher to create a play based on his book, and that play is the story you will see!

## Characters

**Christopher Boone** – Christopher is 15 years old. He finds his neighbor’s dog, Wellington, dead, and decides to solve the mystery of who murdered him.

**Siobhan** – Siobhan is Christopher’s teacher. She encourages him to write a story about his investigation, and she encourages Christopher to perform it as a play.

**Ed Boone** – Christopher’s father. He and Christopher have been living alone for the last two years, since the alleged death of Christopher’s mother.

**Judy Boone** – Judy is Christopher’s mother. Early in the story, we are told that she has died of a heart attack and has been dead for the last two years.

**Mrs. Shears** – Christopher’s neighbor. She was Wellington’s owner before he was murdered.

**Mr. Shears** – Formerly Christopher’s neighbor who lived with Mrs. Shears. They divorced and he moved to London two years ago.

The actors who are in this play, except Siobhan and Christopher, play multiple characters. This is done with the simple change of a costume or accessory. These characters include:

- Police Officers
- Mrs. Alexander, Christopher’s neighbor
- Mrs. Gascoyne, Christopher’s principal
- Reverend Peters, a priest at Christopher’s School
- Train Commuters
- Shop Clerks
- Other residents of Christopher’s neighborhood

And many more!



## Emotional Impact

This play is very emotionally charged. The characters in this story handle complicated situations and there are times when they are in emotional distress. There are a number of times where Judy and Ed yell at each other, Christopher has breakdowns, and characters resort to physical violence or threats of violence as a way to express their feelings. Sometimes these moments we can anticipate, and sometimes they feel like they come unexpectedly.

We will be using visual indicators who will sit at the front of the stage to indicate the more intense moments. We have a document available to list which moments in the show will be indicated, and when they will happen. Please refer to this guide for more information on what we will indicate and for options you have if you need to take a break from the story.

## The World of the Play

In the play by Simon Stephens, Siobhan encourages Christopher to turn the book he wrote about his mystery into a play. In doing this, we see different story telling techniques used. Siobhan reads Christopher's book aloud at times, while in other scenes Christopher speaks to the audience directly. Some moments are narrated, but most are enacted by the cast, many of whom play several different roles.

The story of the play is told not only through words, but also through choreographed movement by the ensemble of ten actors. Those playing multiple roles often change characters with the simple switch of a costume accessory.

The audience does not see this story told in a linear way from beginning to end. The audience learns parts of the story out of order in the way they happened to Christopher. Sometimes that makes parts of the play confusing, but that's okay!



## Setting

The show takes place in multiple locations in Swindon, England and London, England. There are many different locations in the show. Sometimes these locations represent real places in England, and sometimes the setting represents the ideas in Christopher's head.

We see these locations in traditional ways. The stage setting is very sparse, allowing the words and the actors' movement to help us imagine where they are with simple tables and movable walls that the actors move onstage. The story also uses lighting, music, sound, and video projections to help show where they are and what Christopher is thinking.



We hope you have a wonderful time at IRT!