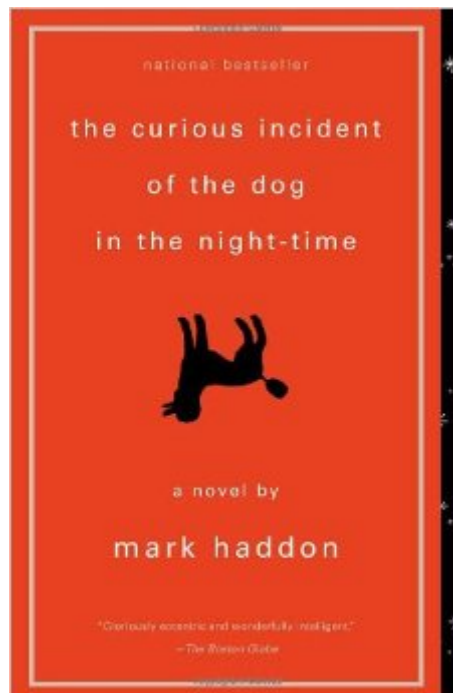


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The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time



Synopsis

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (3,475 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I doubt my review will be worth anything, what with there being 1,400-plus reviews already. But I thought I should tell of my opinion seeing as I am mildly autistic myself, & have interacted with other autistic beings from all across the spectrum. I'm sure you already know what this book is focused on: a 15-year-old boy named Christopher, plagued by a case of autism more severe than my own, & he plays the literal-minded narrator. Indeed the author pulls very hard to make Christopher sound like an authentic autistic person, & I can't say he failed. This story is more about him than the murdered dog, his family's turmoil, anything. & yet I had a very hard time liking Christopher. His character never shines a single moment of empathy for others. Very bluntly he tells his audience of the people surrounding him, but his voice holds such devoid distance as if these people are hollow shells not quite alive. At one point in the story, a torn person pleads for Christopher to hold their hand... just this once, & Christopher refuses apathetically. I strongly dislike being touched, however I will suck it up & allow myself to be touched or even reach out to hug someone if I feel they truly need it. As much as I know that these are the lines that separate the mild from the severe cases, it still remains hard for

me to feel for Christopher knowing that he cannot feel for others beyond himself. (On another note, some people with autism are known to feel physical pain with skin to skin contact. Christopher never mentions such a thing, so it seems clear that he 'feels' like me when it comes to touching.) Despite this stoic nature, the story unfolds in such a way that others' emotions bleed through the pages via bits of dialog & in their simple actions.

What I loved about this book is the graceful way Haddon uses the literal mind of Christopher to develop our understanding of his life. No neurotypical person may ever fully grasp the working of the autistic mind. We must rely on them to tell us, and as we see with Christopher, the viewpoint is told in language quite different from the words we neurotypicals usually use for description. Many books written by parents or teachers of autistic people tell what they see in their neurotypical words. Christopher tells us from his words and his descriptions. Very clever. Does Haddon get all the details precisely right? Perhaps people with autism in a book group discussion might be able to tell us that. I must respectfully disagree with the parent of a child with Asperger Syndrome whose rating of this book gave it only a "1." I, too, have a child with Asperger Syndrome, and I found Haddon's novel to be an entertaining read, a fine story, and a rare peek inside the workings of my son's mind. Certainly Christopher isn't my child -- just as every literary hero or heroine is not an exact replica of a true life man or woman. I found surprising insight in how Christopher tells his story ... and it is insight into my own son and the other people I know who have autism. Christopher's eating preferences, literal thinking, sensory difficulties, and math facts as a calming technique seem quite accurate. As to the comment about savant capabilities. People with Asperger Syndrome must have a perseverating interest; it is part of the psychiatric diagnosis. In creating a character whose interest is math, Haddon hasn't done "rainman" stereotyping, nor is he creating a circus freak to entertain us. He's shown us into one character's world.

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