

Visual Story

The acclaimed **National Theatre** production

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING NOVEL BY
MARK HADDON

ADAPTED BY
SIMON STEPHENS

DIRECTED BY
MARIANNE ELLIOTT



Supported by

**ACCESS
ALL AREAS**

Information about the stage and the set:

- The stage is the area where the actors perform the play
- The set is the name for all the scenery, furniture and objects used onstage in a play
- **The play and its set are very pretty, but we ask that you do not take any photos during the performance.**



Here are some pictures of the stage and the set:

This is an example of how the set looks on stage.



This is a photo of Christopher when he arrives in London



This is a photo of some of the cast



About the play

How long does the play last?

The play is performed in two sections with a break in the middle.

The sections are called 'acts' and the break is called the 'interval.'

All together it will be approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes long:

Act 1 65 minutes

Interval 20 minutes

Act 2 65 minutes

What is the play about?

This play is about Christopher and his family.

Christopher is 15 years old – he is very good at maths but finds it difficult to understand everyday life. He doesn't like being touched, he's wary of strangers and he has never gone further than the end of his road on his own. Christopher starts to investigate the murder of his neighbour's dog, Wellington. During this investigation he travels to London and discovers some revealing truths about his family.

Further information on the play and the characters

In the following section you will find out more about what happens in the play and there are also some notes on some moments which are dramatic, distressing or exciting, that you might want to talk through before coming to see the show.



Content Notes

Lighting

Throughout the play, **lots of different lights are used.**

In the second act, there is a scene in a tube station (a tube is an underground train in London). There are lots of bright video projections, loud noises and a part of the set moves. There is also some smoke used in this scene.



Sound

There is a lot of music and sound effects used throughout the play. Sometimes it can be quite noisy.



Movement

There is a lot of movement and sometimes the action changes very quickly from place to place. Sometimes there are two scenes happening at once which can be confusing. The action of the play can be very busy to show how busy Christopher's mind is. For example, sometimes Christopher will be at school talking to Siobhan and his mum will also be on stage talking to him at home. Sometimes the actors will use movement to pretend to be real objects like doors, fridges, a computer game or waves in the sea.



Play contents

There are a few short moments of physical violence between Christopher and other characters. When Christopher doesn't like something, or is feeling upset or anxious, he makes quite a loud groaning noise. Sometimes, when the characters get angry or excited they will swear, so there is a bit of swearing in the play.

The show begins with the audience seeing a dog which has been speared by a garden fork. **It is not a real dog.** During the first act, Christopher has a seizure which is very realistic. He recovers and is helped to bed by his father. Sometimes, Christopher draws on the floor. If you are sat at stage level, you might not be able to see the floor of the stage. Everything Christopher draws on the floor is projected onto the back wall of the stage. You will not miss the drawings if you cannot see the floor.



The actors and the characters they play

There are two actors who play **Christopher**, who is the main character in the play, and these actors will play Christopher on different performances.



This is **Siobhan**, she is Christopher's teacher and helper at school



This is **Ed**, he is Christopher's dad



This is **Judy**, she is Christopher's mum. There are two actors who play Judy on different performances.





This is **Mrs Alexander**; she is Christopher's neighbour.



The actress who plays **Mrs Shears** plays other characters in the play as well. She plays Mrs Gascoyne and other characters in the play.



The actor who plays **Mr Shears** also plays a policeman and other characters in the play.



The actor who plays **Reverend Peters** also plays a policeman and other characters in the play.

Act 1

The Play

In this section you will find out more about the plot of play.

Act 1

At the beginning of the play a dog called Wellington is lying dead in Mrs Shears' garden. **What you see is not a real dog, it is a sculpture made for the play.** Mrs Shears is Christopher's neighbour and Wellington was her dog. She thinks Christopher has killed Wellington because he is in her garden when she discovers that Wellington is dead.



Christopher says that he isn't responsible for Wellington's death. Mrs Shears calls the police and, when a policeman comes to talk to Christopher to find out what has happened, he gets upset and hits the policeman, who arrests him. Ed, Christopher's dad, comes to help Christopher get out of the police station and to explain that Christopher didn't mean to hurt the policeman.



The scene changes to Christopher's school where we see him talking to Siobhan, his teacher. Siobhan is reading from Christopher's book and reads the line 'Mother died two years ago' so we learn that Christopher's mum is dead. Because Christopher's mum is dead, when she is on stage these are his memories or thoughts about his mother.



Christopher decides he is going to investigate Wellington's death and starts to question his neighbours. Ed (Christopher's dad) goes to talk to his head teacher (Mrs Gascoyne) to see if she will let Christopher to take his maths A-level early, which she eventually agrees to. Christopher and his dad have an argument as his dad doesn't want him to ask anyone questions about Wellington's death.



Siobhan is then reading aloud from Christopher's book again and says Christopher has described that he would like to go to space. Christopher is lifted off the ground and carried around the stage by some of the other actors and the whole theatre is covered in little lights which look like stars.



Christopher goes to see Mrs Alexander, one of his neighbours, again and they talk about his mum. Mrs Alexander tells Christopher a secret – that his mum and Mrs Shears' husband (who is called Roger) were very good friends before his mother died. Christopher asks if this means they were 'doing sex' and Mrs Alexander says yes.



Ed finds Christopher's book and he starts to read that Christopher has been asking the neighbours questions, which make him very angry. At the same time, we also meet Christopher's mum who comes onto the stage. Ed is very angry at Christopher and they have a fight. Christopher is upset because his dad takes his book and hides it. Christopher decides to look all over the house for his book. He then finds his book at the bottom of his dad's wardrobe in a box.

Inside this box are also lots of letters, all addressed to Christopher. Christopher reads the letters, they are from his mum and he realises that she is still alive.



Ed talks to Christopher and tells him that he pretended his mum was dead as he was very angry with her for leaving him and moving away to London to live with Mr Shears (Roger). Ed also admits that he killed Wellington because he thought Mrs Shears was going to move in with him but she didn't want to. Christopher is very upset and he thinks that if his dad can kill Wellington, he could kill him too – so he decides to run away to London to see his mum.

Interval

INTERVAL

After Act 1, there will be a short 20-minute break called an 'interval.' The lights where you are sitting will get brighter and the audience will clap to show that they are enjoying the show. You can clap if you'd like, but you don't have to if you don't want to. Some audience members might go to the toilet or buy some refreshments.

Act 2

Act 2

The second act of the play begins with Siobhan asking Christopher if he would like his book to be turned into a play which will be performed at his school. Christopher is running away to London but before he goes he talks to Mrs Alexander and he steals his dad's credit card. He goes to his local train station, Swindon, and we see him talking to a policeman, buying a ticket and getting on the train. Just before his train is about to leave Swindon on its way to London, a policeman gets on board. The policeman is looking for Christopher because his dad (Ed) has reported him missing. Before the policeman can get Christopher off the train, the doors shut and the train sets off to London.





Christopher hides on the train so that the policeman doesn't find him and manages to avoid him and another policeman when they reach London. Christopher then makes his way to his mum's house (where she lives with Mr Shears). When he finally gets there a policeman comes to see him to check that he is happy to live with his mum and his mum says that he can stay for as long as he likes.



Ed (Christopher's dad) also arrives and wants to see Christopher but Christopher stays in his bedroom and won't talk to his dad. Mr Shears is worried that there isn't enough room for all three of them – Mr Shears, Christopher and Judy (Christopher's mum).

Christopher wants to go back to Swindon so he can sit his maths A-level exam but his mum tells him she has called his head teacher (Mrs Gascoyne) and has asked her to cancel the exam until next year. Christopher is very upset that he cannot take his A-level and he screams.



Later (at night) Mr Shears comes home, he is drunk and angry with Christopher. In the middle of the night Christopher and his mum leave the flat in London and run away from Mr Shears. They go to stay in Swindon with Christopher's dad who goes to stay with a friend so that Christopher and his mum can stay in the house.

Judy (Christopher's mum) goes to visit Siobhan, who has some good news – the school still have his maths A-level papers, so Christopher decides that he will take the A-level. Christopher and his mum move into their own place but Christopher doesn't like it very much.

Ed (Christopher's dad) comes to see him but Christopher is still nervous about talking to his dad since he found out he killed Wellington. Ed brings a present for Christopher – a puppy called Sandy - and Christopher starts to visit his dad so that he can see Sandy.



Christopher gets an A* grade for his maths A-level – he is happy because this is the best grade. The play then ends with Christopher and Siobhan talking about the book which Siobhan has been reading throughout. The book has been turned into a play for Christopher's school and tells the story of who killed Wellington.

At the end of the play, the actor playing Christopher comes back onto stage to explain how he solved a maths problem on his A-level exam. He uses lots of different lights to help him. To celebrate at the end, a confetti cannon fires - this sends lots of tiny bits of paper into the auditorium. Again, the audience will clap to show that they are enjoyed the show.

The End

Photo credit: Brinkhoff Mögenburg