

Synopsis

Christopher finds his neighbour Mrs Shears' dog, Wellington, lying dead with a garden fork sticking out of his side. As the main action continues, Christopher's teacher, Siobhan, narrates the story by reading from his notebook.

A policeman arrives and Christopher tells him that he didn't kill the dog. In his book, Christopher explains that he doesn't lie. Christopher starts to groan, and when the policeman tries to help Christopher up, he hits him. The policeman arrests him. At the police station we find out that Christopher has a father, but his mother has died. His father, Ed, arrives and explains that Christopher didn't mean to hurt the policeman. Christopher is given a caution and released.

In Christopher's book he explains that his mum died two years ago. He came home from school one day and she wasn't there. We see the moment when Ed tells Christopher his mum has died of a heart attack.

Christopher tells Siobhan he is going to make finding Wellington's killer a project although his father told him not to. He visits a number of neighbours, including Mrs Alexander. She hasn't heard anything about Wellington, but realises they haven't talked before and it's nice that he's come to talk to her. When she goes inside to get some refreshments, Christopher worries Mrs Alexander will call the police so he goes away.

Ed talks to Mrs Gascoyne at Christopher's school. He wants Christopher to take his Maths A Level early and offers to pay for the extra staff needed.

Ed tells Christopher off for 'poking round' Mrs Shears' garden. He makes him promise to give up his detective work.

Christopher goes back to see Mrs Alexander and asks her about Mr Shears. She explains that Christopher's mother had an affair with Mr Shears: this is why Mr Shears left.

Ed discovers Christopher's book and reads about his conversation with Mrs Alexander and what he's been up to. Ed shakes Christopher, who punches him. Ed then hits him back before going off in search of a drink. After he has calmed down, Ed apologises to Christopher.

When Christopher gets home, he looks all over the house for his book, eventually finding a box with his book and a number of envelopes with his name and address on. He realises they are from his mother, Judy, who is now living with Mr Shears.

The next day, while Ed is out, Christopher reads more of the letters from his mother. Ed finds him with the letters and tries to explain that he wanted to protect him. He explains that when his mother left with Mr Shears, Mrs Shears was very nice to him and they became good friends, although things became difficult and they argued. One day he left after an argument with Mrs Shears to find Wellington waiting to attack him, so he killed the dog. Christopher rolls himself into a ball and recites numbers to calm down. He tells his father he has to leave because it would be dangerous to stay. He has his mother's address now.

Christopher decides to go and live with his mum in London. He finds his dad's wallet, takes out a card and memorises the PIN. He goes to Swindon to get to the train station. Christopher explains a formula for reaching places if you are lost.

At the station, a policeman approaches Christopher and offers to help him. As he tries to board the train, Christopher is stopped by the policeman, who tells him his father is at the police station, looking for him. Unable to convince Christopher to get off, the train departs with them both still on board. Christopher wets himself and the policeman sends him to the toilet. He hides in the luggage rack, counting prime numbers to calm down. Eventually the train arrives in London.

This station is even more confusing than Swindon. Siobhan's voice talks him through how find his way, and Ed's tells him how to safely board an Underground train. Finally getting a train, Christopher arrives at Willesden Junction and asks a shopkeeper how to get to '451c Chapter Road, London NW2 5NG.'

Judy arrives home with Roger (Mr Shears) to find Christopher waiting outside. She comforts her son, takes him inside, in spite of Roger's reluctance.

Later, Ed arrives from Swindon and argues with Judy. Ed is allowed to see his son



and tries desperately to apologise, but the policeman returns and escorts Ed from the house. Judy and Roger argue over how long Christopher can stay, but Christopher announces that he needs to go back to Swindon to sit his Maths A Level. Judy later tells him that she has postponed his exam, which sends him into a panic.

Roger is drunk and grabs at Christopher. Judy pulls him away and promises her son it will never happen again. They take the car and drive back to Swindon.

At Christopher's school, Siobhan says that the A Level papers are still there and they are arranging for the Reverend Peters to invigilate the exam. Christopher is very tired but wants to do the exam. When he attempts the paper, though, he goes into a wild panic and can't even read the words. He counts cardinal numbers to calm down and is soon able to answer a question – Siobhan suggests that he could explain it to the audience after the play has finished.

Ed begs Christopher for five minutes of his time. They need to talk: Ed can't cope any more with being shunned by his son. He asks if they can start a project to spend more time together and promises everything will be OK. He presents his son with a dog. It will stay at Ed's house but Christopher can visit at any time. Christopher names him Sandy.

At school, Christopher receives his exam result. He has an A*. He tells Siobhan he's spending much more time with his Dad, who has also arranged for him to take a Further Maths A Level next year. Christopher is making plans to go to university. He knows he can do it because he went to London, solved the mystery of Wellington, found his mother, was brave and wrote a book.

