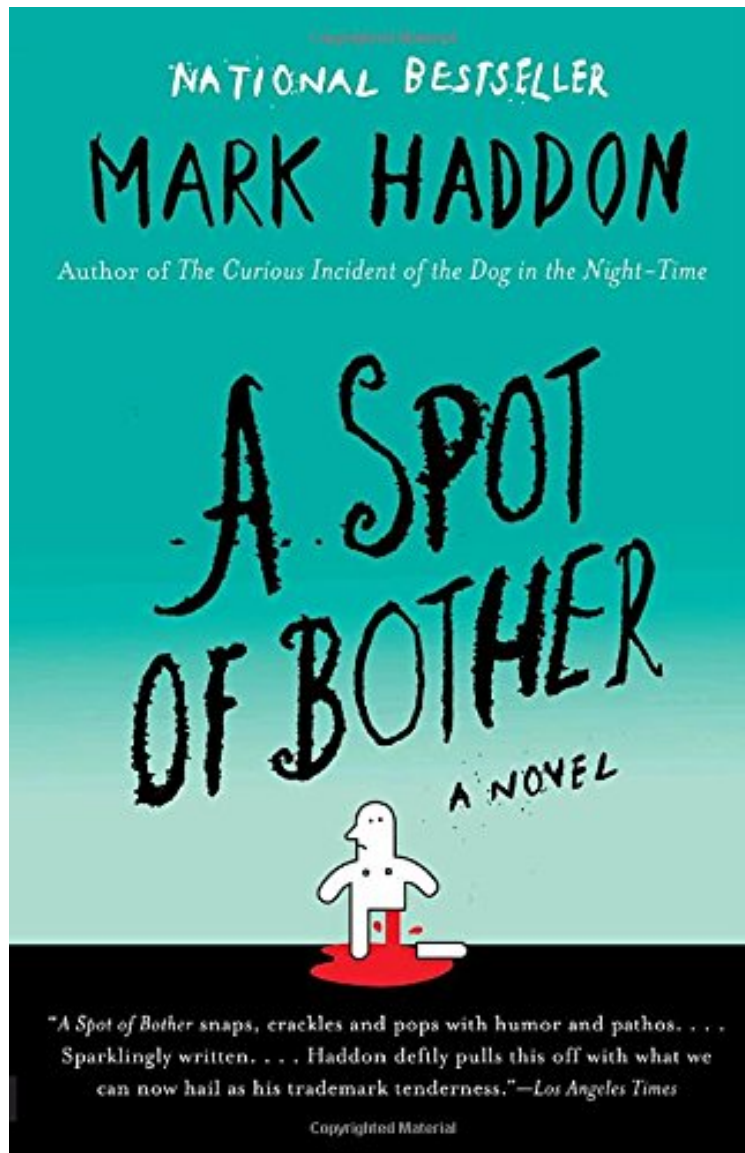


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A Spot of Bother

Mark Haddon

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#468400 in Books Mark Haddon 2007-08-14 2007-08-14 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .70 x 5.201, .60 #File Name: 0307278867368 pages A Spot of Bother | File size: 22.Mb

Mark Haddon : A Spot of Bother before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Spot of Bother:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Spot of Bother - come prepared for British humor By Susan L. Bruns I had read this book a few years ago and recommended it to my book club. To be honest, not everyone liked it. Some really did NOT like it, finding the characters without any positive qualities. Those of us who scored it high, though, appreciated the human flaws in each of the characters, related to the imperfections in the family and

relationships, and found humor in the misunderstandings and miscommunications that sometimes brought about the best things that could happen in the family. On the surface the book is about a man obsessed with the fear that a lesion he discovers on his leg is terminal cancer, in spite of his doctor's diagnosis of simple eczema. In the midst of his own fears and paranoia, however, he comes to understand and appreciate some things about his own family that he probably would not have otherwise. The future son-in-law that everyone thinks is a poor match for the outspoken and temperamental daughter turns out to be a hero of sorts, demonstrating far superior human relationship skills than most of the rest of the characters. In the course of the story, all three (four?) love relationships - George and his wife (and his wife and her lover), their gay son and his significant other, and their daughter and her fiance -- are dramatically challenged. Breakups occur, self-reflections kick in, and attempts to communicate and re-build relationships meet with varying success. But at daughter Kate and Ray's wedding, a perfect storm of dark comedy somehow brings everything together. I truly laughed aloud at parts of this book, but I understand why some of our book club members just couldn't appreciate it. Mark Haddon has a strange mind, but it is also a very observant one, perceptive of human frailty, idiosyncrasy, and the need for love. If the reader comes prepared and in the right frame of mind, he'll find this an enjoyable, humorous, insightful, and memorable read.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. relationships and retirement with a light touch but the result is a bit of a thrill and horror about reading what feels like what might be your own life.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... the Dog at the Midnight" which I thought was fantastic I was really looking forward to reading "A Spot ...By Customer Having read and seen the theatre production of "The Curious Incident of the Dog at the Midnight" which I thought was fantastic I was really looking forward to reading "A Spot of Bother". I did so, and enjoyed it. I think that the author has an amazing ability to express the thoughts of so many diverse characters in a way that seems to make each character his own, though I must say It seems as if he has a fetish about toilets and bowel movements, something which does not appeal - in fact is off putting. But that does not detract from the over-all merit of the book.

A Spot of Bother is Mark Haddon's unforgettable follow-up to the internationally beloved bestseller *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. At sixty-one, George Hall is settling down to a comfortable retirement. When his tempestuous daughter, Katie, announces that she is getting married to the deeply inappropriate Ray, the Hall family is thrown into a tizzy. Unnoticed in the uproar, George discovers a sinister lesion on his hip, and quietly begins to lose his mind. As parents and children fall apart and come together, Haddon paints a disturbing yet amusing portrait of a dignified man trying to go insane politely. A Washington Post Best Book of the Year

From Publishers Weekly Recent retiree George Hall, convinced that his eczema is cancer, goes into a tailspin in Haddon's (*Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) laugh-out-loud slice of British domestic life. George, 61, is clearly channeling a host of other worries into the discoloration on his hip (the "spot of bother"): daughter Katie, who has a toddler, Jacob, from her disastrous first-marriage to the horrid Graham, is about to marry the equally unlikable Ray; inattentive wife Jean is having an affair—with George's former co-worker, David Symmonds; and son Jamie doesn't think George is OK with Jamie's being queer. Haddon gets into their heads wonderfully, from Jean's waffling about her affair to Katie's being overwhelmed (by Jacob, and by her impending marriage) and Jamie's takes on men (and boyfriend Tony in particular, who wants to come to the wedding). Mild-mannered George, meanwhile, despairing over his health, slinks into a depression; his major coping strategies involve hiding behind furniture on all fours and lowing like a cow. It's an odd, slight plot—something like the movie *Father of the Bride* crossed with Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (as skin rash)—but it zips along, and Haddon subtly pulls it all together with sparkling asides and a genuine sympathy for his poor Halls. No bother at all, this comic follow-up to Haddon's blockbuster (and nicely selling book of poems) is great fun. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From *The New Yorker* Haddon's acclaimed debut novel, "*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*," brilliantly imagined the inner world of an autistic teen-ager. Here the hero is similarly uncommunicative and detached, this time because of a stiff upper lip. George, recently retired, thinks talking is "overrated" and greets the death of a friend with relief "that they would not be playing squash again." Obsessed with his own mortality, he barely registers the dramas around him: his wife is having an affair, his daughter is marrying a man she's not sure she loves, and his son is afraid to bring his boyfriend to the wedding. Haddon has a deft comic touch, but he pushes his characters too hard toward epiphanies, and in the end this antic farce is merely affable, without surprises. Copyright © 2006 Click here to subscribe to *The New Yorker* From *Bookmarks Magazine* Mark Haddon's first novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (HHHH Sept/Oct 2003), was a critical hit, a best seller, and a *Bookmarks* staff favorite; *A Spot of Bother* is a very different book, making the inevitable comparisons somewhat difficult. Critics

agree that Haddon's style remains smooth, clever, and appealing, but they differ on the question of whether that's enough to overcome a somewhat predictable plot and an overly neat ending. The depictions of the Halls are accurate and humorous, and while Briticisms fly thick and fast, they add to the atmosphere and don't get too much in the way of American readers. Despite some shortcomings, *A Spot of Bother* is a charming, entertaining read. Copyright © 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc.