

Character of Da in "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha"

Da is quite well informed and knowledgeable- reads political paper "Backbencher", quotes poems (p 27) and reads Norman Mailer's "The Naked & the Dead" (p 24). Quite liberal in his views- praises the Israelis for their achievements and dislikes Henno hitting the boys.

Likes teaching Paddy and can be close to him- shows him fingerprints (p 10), tells Paddy about Arab/Israeli conflict (p 30), chooses books in library for him (p 56), teaches him the country and western song (p 88).

Can be good fun, playing with boys and telling jokes- singing song about Terence Long (p 28), singing Batman song (p 90), shares Moses joke with Paddy (p 145). Initially is quite close to Ma and good humoured- shares joke with her about the Swanwicks (p 16) and is comic about the mouse in the toilet (p 45).

Negative aspects about Da's character quickly emerge and become more prominent as book progresses.

Is moody and changeable- sometimes likes answering boys questions, sometimes doesn't (p 25); p 37, Paddy says he could be mean. When moody, he tends to be distant and unapproachable- has head in the paper, pretending to read or watch television. Example of his changeability on p 115 when he laughs at boys' painting Sinbad's glasses and then gets in a mood about his dinner. When in a mood he does not react to Paddy with usual warmth- eg when Paddy tries to tell Da of award he won at race, Da frightens him off from telling by his manner (p 204).

Is quite a harsh disciplinarian- does not show restraint or compassion of Ma- angry when Sinbad won't eat (p 37); dismissive of Paddy's claiming he wants to be a missionary; takes belt to Paddy for stealing from shops (p 162).

Is quite dictatorial- everything must stop when he plays records (p 90); makes family stay in car on rainy day to have picnic (p 93) and insists everyone join in on family photos (p 94).

Leaves comforting and general care of the children to Ma- he doesn't go up when Sinbad is crying- leaves it to tired Ma (p 65).

Da has high expectations and short temper if Paddy doesn't achieve these- smacks Paddy for getting song wrong (p 88); angry when Paddy can't ride new bike (p 150)- though some of it for Paddy's own good to get him to learn to ride: just rather harsh in his manner.

Da is argumentative with Ma- he is the one who precipitates fights- over the runny egg (p154); over getting pork (p 208); he won't answer Ma (p 222). Paddy thinks Da more at fault than Ma in their arguments (p 202-3) and says (p 257-8) "She liked him; it was him who didn't like her".

Paddy can easily distract Da from arguments by appealing to his interests- referring to TV during fight (p 208) and by singing when Da about to hit Sinbad (p 189-90).

Has a violent temper- hits Ma and often flares up at the boys. Gets drunk and increasingly tense and moody toward the end of the book, hence friction with family- Paddy says (p 244): "He looked mean, like he was making himself look mean".

Paddy loves his Da but can't understand why he acts so nastily sometimes, increasingly so as the book progresses. While he still loves him, he comes to resent him at times and an increasingly negative view of him comes across, especially in comparison to Ma. At the very end, Da is almost a stranger to Paddy- their final meeting in the book is formal and distant.