Types of Endings

Directions: Read the following examples of types of endings and choose one that fits your story.

The Circular Ending:
This type of ending revisits the beginning of a piece of writing.

The following poem has a circular ending:

I never knew my grandmother.
Never tasted her homemade cherry strudels,
Or felt her crisp, white linen table cloths,
Or smelled the perfume of vanilla and cinnamon wafting from the kitchen,
Or looked into her compassionate, soft brown eyes,
Or heard her whistle in her sweet, loving way.
I never knew my grandmother.

The Surprise Ending:
This type of ending surprises or shocks the reader with an unexpected event or information.

Example:
I had pestered my parents for months about what I was going to receive for my birthday. I would bring the topic up at dinner, talk about it at church, press them while they were talking on the phone, and in general drive them crazy with my question: “What are you guys going to get me?” They would roll their eyes and tell me it was something special, which made me even more persistent. To make matters worse, I would continually remind them: “I’m not a kid anymore, I need a present that reflects my newly achieved maturity”. So, when the day finally came, I tore open my present with glee and abandonment, only to find an empty box, save for a note at the bottom, which read: “Dear son, a boy of your maturity needs nothing like toys or games, but rather these words to keep him strong and positive: “We love you always.”

Touching/Emotional Ending
This type of ending plays on the reader’s emotions.

Example:
When I was a child, I had a dog name Obbie. Her real name was Obsidian, after a shiny black volcanic rock that looked like glass, but I couldn’t pronounce her name correctly, so we just called her Obbie. Obbie and I were best friends. We played chase and fetch and I took her for long walks. On especially cold nights, she would cuddle with me on my bed and keep me warm, and everyday after school I would be greeted with warm licks and happy barks the minute I walked through the door.

One day, my parents sat me down and explained that my dad had gotten a new job and we were all moving to Chicago. Unfortunately, the company apartments we were going to be living in did not allow dogs. We had to give Obbie away to a neighbor, who in turn moved to some far away place like Nebraska, or Wyoming. I never did see Obbie again, but sometimes on cold winter nights, I can feel her soft, warm, furry body lying next to mine, or hear her barking somewhere in the distance, a lonesome, but somehow comforting sound. Perhaps I will see her again one day, but I know that will probably never happen.

Philosophical/Reflective Ending
This type of ending provides insight into what a character has learned from their experiences.

Example:
To this day, my father has never apologized to my brother. In fact, he avoids saying anything at all. Some people may say he has hardened his heart beyond repair. I can understand this. My father keeps to himself, and rarely if ever shares anything on an emotional level. He reduces everything to some rational conclusion, a prisoner of his own logic, which isolates him from feeling.

Yet, when I stop and think about it, even though my father is a tough man, he was just doing the best that he could do with what he had. I guess that’s all he could do, the most that anyone can do. In this sense, no one is alone.