

## The Rosie Project

By Graeme Simsion (2013)

Some years ago, a book titled “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time” by Mark Haddon delighted me. It related the story of a small boy in England with Asperger’s syndrome, who became a successful amateur sleuth. It was funny and moving in equal measure: the best portrait of this interesting condition I had read up to that time. Since then, we have seen the incorporation of the endlessly frustrating Dr Sheldon Cooper in “The Big Bang Theory” into popular culture so the trials and tribulations of existing alongside adults with the syndrome are well known to many.

Of course, there are shades of grey in any syndrome, not 50 of them perhaps but enough, and Asperger’s is no different. Not everyone exhibits the same features or exhibits them to the same degree. Most of us know someone with at least some features of Asperger’s syndrome, which may, of course, include ourselves. Some of the features of Asperger’s syndrome result in startlingly high levels of performance by affected individuals, typically in scientific fields. Emotional and psychological development is their problem, not intelligence.

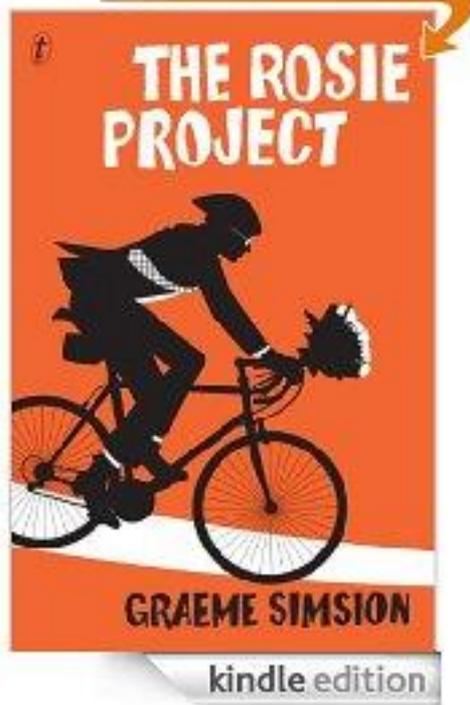
Graeme Simsion is an IT consultant and teacher in Melbourne, who wrote the first of his books on technical subjects in 1994 and now writes full-time. He is married to a Professor of Psychiatry, who writes erotic fiction. The influence of these things is apparent in the story line Simsion provides for “The Rosie Project”, which was originally written as a screenplay. As such, it won a national award for Best Romantic Comedy Script in 2010. In novel form, it won the Victorian Premier’s award for an unpublished fiction manuscript in 2012 and deservedly so. I waited eagerly for its commercial release and picked it up at the first opportunity.

“The Rosie Project” doesn’t simply challenge “The Dog in the Night-Time” for the mantle of best Asperger’s story; it surpasses it though neither the author nor any of the characters ever uses that word to describe his protagonist and narrator, genetics professor Don Tillman. He is 39 and in need of a wife so he goes about finding one in a most unusual way, as would be expected, against the backdrop of his highly regimented life. The eponymous Rosie is a totally unsuitable candidate he rejects early but cannot let go. I do not wish to give away too much detail about the plot of this charming, quirky, thoughtful and, ultimately, laugh out loud story. Do yourself a favour as Molly Meldrum used to say.

We have a proud tradition of great writing and fine writers in this country. I wish I were one of them but Graeme Simsion is definitely a name to add to the list.

Five stars (six if I could).

Click to **LOOK INSIDE!**



kindle edition