



The Rosie Project

Graeme Simsion

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An international sensation, this hilarious, feel-good novel is narrated by an oddly charming and socially challenged genetics professor on an unusual quest: to find out if he is capable of true love.

Don Tillman, professor of genetics, has never been on a second date. He is a man who can count all his friends on the fingers of one hand, whose lifelong difficulty with social rituals has convinced him that he is simply not wired for romance. So when an acquaintance informs him that he would make a “wonderful” husband, his first reaction is shock. Yet he must concede to the statistical probability that there is someone for everyone, and he embarks upon The Wife Project. In the orderly, evidence-based manner with which he approaches all things, Don sets out to find the perfect partner. She will be punctual and logical—most definitely not a barmaid, a smoker, a drinker, or a late-arriver.

Yet Rosie Jarman is all these things. She is also beguiling, fiery, intelligent—and on a quest of her own. She is looking for her biological father, a search that a certain DNA expert might be able to help her with. Don's Wife Project takes a back burner to the Father Project and an unlikely relationship blooms, forcing the scientifically minded geneticist to confront the spontaneous whirlwind that is Rosie—and the realization that love is not always what looks good on paper.

The Rosie Project is a moving and hilarious novel for anyone who has ever tenaciously gone after life or love in the face of overwhelming challenges.

The Rosie Project Details

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Author : Graeme Simsion

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From Reader Review The Rosie Project for online ebook

Angela says

What a shame!

What a shame Graeme Simsion wrote this offering "quickly" and that he went with a "comedy rather than a drama".

What a shame that the opportunity to educate and illuminate was squandered and traded for gratuitous laughs ,extreme generalisations and blatant stereotyping.

My initial delight at realising the subject matter of this book meant I was immediately enrolled in ' the project'. A third of the way into the book, I became uncomfortable with the tenor and theme. The premise that higher functioning individuals on the Autistic Spectrum , or anyone for that matter who sits outside societies 'normal' framework accepts their position matter-of-factly is absurd.

Don knows he is 'weird' , inappropriate and that people make fun of him and the author suggests that Don is OK with it. So accepting of ridicule is he that he purposefully resorts to self-promotion as the class clown and nutty professor as a means of gaining some form of acceptance or acknowledgment. Don tells us that he is "an expert at being laughed at" , but Simsion never let him tell us how he felt about being so. Instead the author invites us to laugh along with an inexhaustable number of accounts of 'crazy' behaviours , thoughts and incidents throughout this 'comedy'. I waited and hoped for for the opportunity to feel Don's pain; but unfortunately his distress, sadness, vulnerability and loneliness if touched on were labels without feeling, what we regular people experience, but Asperger individuals (according to Simsion) only know if they score highly on a questionnaire! The idea that the Don's of this world do not feel the anguish associated with isolation and rejection is no less inaccurate than they are incapable of feeling empathy or knowing how to show love.

In the 1997 movie "as Good As It Gets " (mentioned in The Rosie Project), screenwriter Mark Andrus ensures that whilst revealing the prescriptive anxiety-provoking world of Obsessive- Compulsive Disorder , he never loses sight of the anguish and humanity that underscores the day to day reality of a person who fails to conform to societal norms. He offers the audience an opportunity to empathise as well as laugh at seemingly 'weird' behaviours of the main character Unfortunately, in his 'Rosie Project' , Simsion misses the opportunity to be a champion for his protagonist, failing to show that although Don is hard-wired neurologically to behave and respond in what makes make him a target for ridicule and isolation , that his acute awareness of how he is perceived compromises his inner struggle and peace. Even at the end, when it seems Don has found happiness and acceptance, it was dependant on his adjustment and conformity to societies sensibilities.

Obviously I found some positives in this book. Well written, engaging and with plenty of local flavour being set in Melbourne , making for an enjoyable read. The insights offered about the inconsistencies of what society accepts of human behaviour depending on who you are or your position in life were welcomed. I also felt heartened that along with laughing at Don, the audience were also shown that if you move beyond the visible and audible irregularities of a person, we all have something to offer; that we all have value and strengths and all deserve respect and to be treated with dignity. I hope that maybe, some readers will also see beyond the comedy to the human side and perhaps even accept that maybe, we 'neurotypicals' all need to change a little , tolerate a little bit more and accept a different way of seeing things so that the marginalised in society can fit in a little bit more.

I share my life with a 'Don' and I think 'the Rosie Project' has not done his cause any favours and does not represent him faithfully, with respect or the humanity he deserves.

Again... What a shame!

Richard says

This does for Autism what *Pretty Woman* did for prostitutes. It uses it for entertainment, it plays on it for laughter. It's a 1970's sitcom of a book.

The character of (Shel)Don feels like little more than fan-fiction of *The Big Bang Theory* and Rosie seems like the perfect emulation of *The Cool Girl* as described in *Gone Girl*. She's too trite and quirky to be believable. Don himself is simply a figure of fun, he moves from scene to scene for our amusement in a "what will he do now?" manner as Julia Roberts did in *Pretty Woman*. The book groans plot wise, nothing is surprising and though it is an easy read it is an utterly underwhelming one.

I spent most of the book thinking of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *The Fault in our Stars* or *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, books with exceptional narrators that show rather than tell. At every stage Don tells. He is created simply to amuse. I guess this is meant to be an entertaining book but given the subject matter it should have been more than a collection of "smirk at the autistic dude, it's ok cause the author had him say we could" sequences.

<http://atheistdad74.blogspot.com.au/>

<http://www.wattpad.com/story/18231712...>

Ruth says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was very amusing and clever. The protagonist Don is definitely a clichéd version of someone with Asperger's, but I think he had to be for the purposes of the novel. He sits on the very end of the spectrum and embodies every single stereotypical attribute of an Aspie. At one point I cringed at the end of the book when he is struggling about whether he feels love or not. Not accurate for someone with Asperger's - they actually have intense emotions but are unable to express them very well. But the author redeems himself by communicating that in the end and adds a very insightful point which is that perhaps Rosie needs to also be more accepting and not expect Don to change his core being. Very much a neurodiversity message.

I absolutely LOVE Don's address to the parents of young Asperger's students. It is brilliant and very amusing.

And I knew I liked Don the moment he decided the following about Asperger's:

"I formed a provisional conclusion that most of these were simply variations in human brain function that had been inappropriately medicalised because they did not fit social norms - constructed social norms - that reflected the most common human configuration rather than the full range."

ALPHAreader says

'The Rosie Project' by Graeme Simsion is so wonderful.

I'm going to attempt to enumerate my enjoyment of the novel;

1. Don Tillman is an Associate Professor of genetics at the University of Melbourne. He has a black-belt in Aikido, and can cook a mean lobster salad. He also has Asperger syndrome – but he doesn't know that. Don just thinks that there's something missing that leaves him baffled by human behaviour and unappealing to other people (especially the opposite sex). But after his dear old neighbour tells him that he would make someone a good husband, Don decides to get married – and to limit the fallout of incompatibility and highly ineffective dating detection, Don decides to make a questionnaire to find himself the perfect wife. Thus, 'The Wife Project'. This is not insane. It has actually happened, to Amy Webb from Baltimore who found her husband by using math and analytics to narrow the dating field.

2. Rosie Jarman is not a potential partner for Don's Wife Project. She's a barmaid who is perpetually late and vegetarian. But she is also beautiful and smart. And she's on her own quest to find someone – her biological father. Rosie has bright red hair, dresses to impress no one but herself and calls em' like she sees em'. But she is not a 'Manic Pixie Dream Girl'. She does not want to 'fix' Don, she's tough and imperfect and very aware of her failings. She is one of the best romantic-comedy heroines I've ever read.

3. This scene of Don speed-dating (which I read while on the train, and attracted many curious looks as I snorted my way through it);

'I've sequenced the questions for maximum speed of elimination,' I explained. 'I believe I can eliminate most women in less than forty seconds. Then you can choose the topic of discussion for the remaining time.'

'But then it won't matter,' said Frances. 'I'll have been eliminated.'

'Only as a potential partner. We may still be able to have an interesting discussion.'

'But I'll have been eliminated.'

I nodded. 'Do you smoke?'

'Occasionally,' she said.

I put the questionnaire away.

'Excellent.' I was pleased that my question sequencing was working so well. We could have wasted time talking about ice-cream flavours and make-up only to find that she smoked. Needless to say, smoking was not negotiable. 'No more questions. What would you like to discuss?'

4. Don Tillman is described as being a dead-ringer for Gregory Peck, circa Atticus Finch. *le sigh*

5. 'The Rosie Project' started as a screenplay. Graeme Simsion then decided to turn it into a novel – but still used film-writing techniques and his writing partners were film-industry experts. This is why 'The Rosie Project' is destined for the big-screen. The dialogue is so tight and pitch-perfect, the lines just leap up at you and it's as though characters are speaking from the page. I want to see this film adapted – move over Harry & Sally, it's all about Don & Rosie!

6. At one point, Don and Rosie travel to New York where, Don says, *"being weird is acceptable."* I am going to New York this year. I'm planning an entire day at the Natural History Museum, thanks to Don. I can't wait!

7. The cover is in-your-face-magnificence. It called to me from the bookshelf, and loudly announced itself to

fellow commuters as I read it on the train. I liked this. Very much.

8. Throughout the novel Don starts to question if it's him that's missing some vital human-connection component, or if maybe other people are the problem . . . this is encapsulated in the relationship Don has with his best friend and fellow teacher, Gene. Gene is fifty-six and happily married to a beautiful woman with whom he has two children. But Gene's wife, Claudia, has agreed to an open-marriage and Gene is currently attempting to sleep with a woman from every country. Gene dispenses romantic advice to Don. This is not a good idea, and was a fantastic counter-point to Rosie and Don's romantic shenanigans.

9. I would actually love a follow-up to 'The Rosie Project' because when I got to the last page I immediately missed Don Tillman and wanted him back! But whatever Graeme Simsion decides to write next, I'll be reading because he's now an automatic-buy author for me.

10. I could keep going and going and going because I adored 'The Rosie Project', but let's agree that '10' is a good place to stop espousing on all the reasons everyone should read this book.

Whitney Atkinson says

This book started out really great. For the first 100 pages I was entertained and even got a kick out of the quirky narration. Then I sat back and thought about who I was reading into the mind of. Don is a sort of disturbed man. I was very uncomfortable throughout the last half of this book because he needed serious help dealing with the world that he wasn't receiving. Rather, people-- his *friends*-- would watch his actions and laugh. Don was such an unreliable narrator and what was an attempt at making a unique character read as someone who was creepy and deranged, and I disagree with how this book ended. I'm gonna have to ponder this one for a while. Very mixed feelings.

Maureen says

I actually ended up enjoying this book much more than I originally thought I would.

At the forefront it seems extremely sexist and not that great plot-wise, but it definitely addresses those issues and works through them with character development, which I found to be fantastic.

The only thing I'm not sure on is the depiction of Asperger's. I am not an expert in any way, so I'm not sure if this portrayal was accurate/correct/well done. If someone wants to tell me that would be awesome!

Overall enjoyable and pretty interesting romance.

Cait • A Page with a View says

This book was so completely adorable and had me actually laughing out loud several times!

It's told through the POV of Don, a scientist with Asperger's who is basically Sheldon Cooper from The Big Bang theory. He compiles an extensive (and logical) list of the qualities he wants in a wife to start "The Wife Project," but gets sidetracked by "The Father Project" of a twenty-something woman named Rosie. Their story takes place around a mission to grab sneaky DNA samples from a bunch of men in order to find Rosie's dad.

The author perfectly captured Don's voice and it's the strongest part of the story by far. A couple people close to me have Asperger's and I think they'd actually be entertained by this story instead of feel alienated. Some parts where he knew he didn't fit in were a little sad, but it was pretty optimistic for the most part.

It's nothing terribly complex or fast-paced, but it was a genuinely fun read with really cute characters!

B the BookAddict says

My first note written about this novel is a 1 ★ *intolerably woeful* but a night's sleep has made me feel a little more generous so I've amended it to 2★*it was ok*. The whole premise felt predictable, horribly predictable, I found that main character incredibly annoying and the humor did not amuse me. I know I am swimming against the tide of most readers, especially my GR friends but it was just all very ho-hum for me. *Sorry, folks.* 2★

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

Actual rating : 3.5 stars

From the moment I finished it I knew I had one critical task to perform : **To review this project book.**

Although the timing is particularly annoying, I realized that the several options I faced made my choice incredibly clear.

❶ **Not reviewing this book**, resulting in damage to this book's fame, which would be appalling due to the fact that **it's fucking awesome**.

❷ **Rescheduling this review to another time**, resulting in loss of memories and leading to a probable abandonment of the task in the long term.

❸ **Reviewing this book**, resulting in loss of time to read others books, including *Stolen Songbird* which I already started (with good vibes), fact that increased my eagerness to resume it.

After a prompt analyze of this data, I take the decision to write this review which will be **as evidence-based as possible, that is to say, close to none**. ← Please refer to option #3 to understand why.

? **Subject 1 : Don, narrator.**

✓ Gender : Male

✓ Age : 39

✓ Appearance : Average, but the presence of a six-pack due to extreme Aikido training deserves to be mentioned. The clothing is practical, highly influenced by *a) the weather, b) that's about it*. Please don't talk

about *jacket* if your meaning is limited to "*conventional jacket*", otherwise you would have to face an hilarious misunderstanding. Now that I think about it, please mislead us, that's too deliciously funny to forget.

"But why, why, why can't people just say what they mean?"

✓ Relationship status : After realizing that many women didn't get his over-organized way of living, Don decided to start the *Wife Project*, following the *batshit crazy* idea where women have to apply to a questionnaire - I *KNOW!!* - to decipher if a relationship would be sustainable.

? Sub-mentioned project will lead to :

a) **Awkward and head-desk situations** which still always remain **smile-inducing** and never maddening (it seems important to mention because the *Wife Project* can appear to objectify women (it does - but that's clear from the beginning that Don is wrong). Well, you'll probably be annoyed by him at some point, but don't worry, subject 2 is coming.

b) As previously mentioned, **hilarious misunderstandings**.

"I turned to see him - he was large and angry. In order to prevent further violence, I was forced to sit on him.

'Get the fuck off me. I'll fucking kill you,' he said.

On that basis, it seemed illogical to grant his request."

c) **Adorable and swoon-worthy scenes** from the moment subject 2 is introduced. Yes, because there is **EVOLUTION** in Don's character. I know, big word, right? Exciting.

? Subject 2 : **Rosie, troublemaker.**

✓ Gender : Female

Oh, **FUCK THAT**. I'm not a scientist by any means. **You want to know who Rosie is?**

? Let me tell you : she's **an utterly likeable female lead** who's going to bring the unexpected in Don's life, shatter his (numerous) beliefs and stereotypes, and make you love her in the process. **Smart, strong-minded, sarcastic, sure of her value as a person**, the madness she personifies stirs up the winds of freedom in Don's life and damn, I enjoyed that something fierce. Note that by madness I mean "*not as overly strict as Don*", so her description can be applied to any woman who doesn't want to be imprisoned in an artificial straightjacket, and loathes that some guys think that women are only good to cook and fuck. **I say yes to this.**

? Controversies : **The Butterfly Problem.**

At this point you might wonder why I'm only giving it 3.5 stars. The fact is, as awesome as I found the idea and the execution of it, **I felt underwhelmed at times**. In a word, it lacked feels for me. As it is, I'm able to point that's *The Rosie Project* is **an original and cute read**, but the butterflies were too rare, even if they were here for sure (**note that several scenes will make you Awww out loud**). *What can I say?* I need my shoot at butterflies. However, I can't deny that **the character of Don, the fact that's his POV, drives this**

lack of feels so maybe that's the point, you know? That's why I rounded up my rating to a 4.

? **Results : Why should you read this book?**

Because *The Rosie Project* is a tale of metamorphose, by **the acceptance of others for who they truly are and the acceptance of who WE are**. Can I say? For all his awkwardness, and surely *because of it*, Don is an adorable and heartbreaking character whose desire to fit in moved me - because the world we're living in doesn't always accept differences and that's a shame in my opinion. A fucking huge one.

In a word? **Such an originally written cute romance**.

"I asked you here tonight because when you realise you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible."

[Last edited : June 2016]

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Librariasaurus says

This book made me laugh. Not many books can do that. This was a truly delightful book to read and I would never ask for a minute of the time spent reading it back.

Made all the more amazing by the fact that it is the first novel of Melbourne writer Graeme Simsion, *The Rosie Project* will rank highly amongst my 2013 reads.

Written from a unique perspective, this is one of the few, if not the only, romantic comedies with a male protagonist. And not only male, but autistic.

Don Tillman is a brilliant scientist, but a hapless socialist (I mean that with no political leanings, Don literally sucks at being social.)

Rosie is beautiful, smart and nowhere close to what Don sees as a perfect life partner.

This book is one of those rare gems that most people could relate to on some level. Does he love me? Does she love me? Can two people really be destined for one another? Is mankind meant for monogamy? Can anyone really love?

Written with a one of a kind voice, you experience all of Don's ups and downs as he over-analyses, fears and then embraces change and eventually learns how to love.

This is a beautiful love story.

Tatiana says

Sheldon in love.

Adorable and fun. Probably one of the most enjoyable chick lit books I've read, ironically, written by a man.

On the other hand, not nearly enough sex in it.

Charmaine Clancy says

Read this over two very busy days. I fell in love with Don, the protagonist. I loved the ways he measured and evaluated life. I want to embrace his rigid meal plan and have lobster in my bathtub every Tuesday night. Although Don is a highly esteemed genetics scientist, he views life with a beautiful naivety, he knows the workings and technicalities of people, but just can't grasp that element that makes us chaotic, individual works of art.

And I laughed! Yep, I finally came to understand the intent behind LOL. There is a particularly amusing dance scene. I also enjoyed the talk on Aspergers. Go Aspies!

Don is obviously bordering on being dysfunctional in life and yet, his idiosyncracies started to make sense to me. I found myself agreeing with his practical approach many times.

Now there needs to be a movie!

This has become a favourite, and I'd read it again.

Fabian says

Ultracharming & very very, uh, cute. The singular voice of the main character is enough to convince the reader that a love story exists in anything. This rom-com takes some DNA from various films, especially 1997's "As Good As It Gets." Worth a read, its very likely to become a film soon (the novel was originally written as a, yup, screenplay!).

Paula Weston says

How addictive was this book? I read it in a day - a day when I should have been doing other things.

It's a fun, quirky and erudite love story. It's laugh-out-loud funny and unexpectedly touching.

Don is a wonderfully offbeat narrative character and Rosie is his perfect foil. Graeme Simsion writes both characters pitch perfect.

I think one of the reasons the story is so appealing is that it's written by a man, from a man's perspective. And it's definitely not lad lit.

This book is going to be a huge hit and deservedly so. Highly recommended.

Sam Quixote says

Don Tillman is an Associate Professor of Genetics with (probably) Asperger's Syndrome who has decided that, as he is nearing 40, he will solve "the wife problem" (ie. not being married) by creating a questionnaire that will ascertain, for him, the perfect wife and then marry her. That is until he meets Rosie, a grad student working part-time in a gay bar who's looking for her biological father, and slowly Don's "Wife Project" becomes "The Rosie Project" as he realises he's falling in love with her.

I say that Don probably has Aspergers because it's never explicitly stated but as he narrates the book in the first person, the reader is immediately aware that he sees the world differently than the rest of us. It's kind of like having Sheldon Cooper from "The Big Bang Theory" talking to you - Don is a genius with no social skills who's unable to read facial expressions and has a highly regimented lifestyle and peculiar way of speaking. Couple that with the opening scene where he gives a talk on Aspergers and it's highly suggested that he has it. Not knowing anyone with Aspergers, I can't tell whether he sounds convincingly like someone with it but what little I know of the condition suggests that his personality is unlikely to change as dramatically as Don's does throughout the book. It's almost like his meeting Rosie reverses the condition. I mean, he's unable to feel love - but he can? He's unable to read facial expressions or understand social conventions - but then he can?

Nevertheless I thought the first 200 pages of the book were charming. Don is a likeable guy whose eccentric lifestyle makes a change of pace to the usual rom-com formula and the different angle it gives to the genre made me interested in it even though romantic comedies aren't usually my thing. There were also some excellent scenes that stuck out memorably like Don and Rosie's first date, from using aikido on the waiters to altering time and having dinner on a whiteboard (not as surreal as it sounds but nice touches anyway), and Don and Rosie's moonlighting as cocktail waiters and Don using his remarkable memory (eidetic?) to take complex drink orders for dozens of people at a time. I read the first two-thirds of the book in a couple days, smiling a lot throughout. And then I got to the final third which took me over a week and ruined the book for me.

The first 200 pages had been unique to the rom-com genre and felt highly original which is why I responded so well to it - it wasn't going over the same ground countless other stories had gone over before. The final third is all about convention and it opens with a scene in New York. The story is set in Australia but because Don and Rosie are hell bent on finding Rosie's biological father, their search takes them to two possible fathers in NY. This 50 page section felt completely contrived and could've been cut from the book entirely.

This book was originally a screenplay and these scenes felt very cinematic and included so that film backers would have recognisable locations for their film to make it easier to sell, rather than serving the story. Yes, the finding Rosie's real dad storyline is in play but if you took those two people away from NY and cut it entirely, the book would've been snappier. As such it feels really contrived and dull, like the scene in the movie where the two romantic leads get to do a kind of montage sequence of things. It also constantly references other romantic comedy movies the entire time too, adding to the feeling that this is a homage to the genre and included because that's what's expected when you do something like this.

Then the final 70 or so pages are about Don winning Rosie back and it's done in such a conventionally rom-com way that I totally lost interest. Worse, Don's character didn't seem consistent in this part either (see the criticisms in the Aspergers section above).

I've used the label "romantic-comedy" throughout because that's what the marketing says it is but it's not. It's romantic, sure, but it's not funny. I didn't laugh once and didn't think Don's numerous social faux pas to be particularly funny either. Worse still are the scenes which are clumsily designed to be funny and feel very forced, like when Don is learning sexual positions from a book and uses a skeleton (he's at the university for this scene so it's not a Dahmer moment or anything) and the Dean walks in on him. It feels like the kind of scene in a sitcom where the canned laughter goes on and on as the camera switches from Don's face to the Dean's and back again while the audience begins to clap and laugh at the same time. It might as well be labelled "funny scene". And it's not.

Despite my criticisms, I was quite happy to give this book 3 stars - until I read the end. Now I know the ending shouldn't have more importance over any other aspect of the story, whatever the genre, but the ending to this book is especially bad. So Rosie, at the very start when she's introduced to Don, tells him about her dad Phil, a man who raised her alone after her mum died when Rosie was 12, who's a person whom she doesn't particularly get along with (largely because of a minor quibble which she's unreasonably held against him for her entire life) - but no more so than any other person who doesn't get along with their mum or dad for whatever reason. Except she's convinced herself he can't possibly be her real dad and that her real dad must be out there somewhere. This is basically the motivation for everything Don and Rosie do in this entire book and right off, I thought "I bet it turns out Phil IS her real dad after all". Well... I won't give it away but you can kind of guess what happens in the end. And I really, really hated that. Don all but says what I was feeling in the second-to-final sentence of the book and I immediately dropped the book down another star.

This book definitely has some good moments and Don is a memorable and oftentimes delightful character, but the final third of the book really frustrated me. If the book had been more tightly edited with the NY sequence thrown out and had had a less predictable ending, I would be enthusiastically recommending this novel. As it is, it is a flawed debut novel that's well written but severely lacking in crucial parts of the story reducing it from a charmingly quirky romance story to yet another rom-com with no surprises and a sloppily rushed final act. Graeme Simsion can write and he might one day write a brilliant novel but sadly "The Rosie Project" is not that book.
