



The Rosie Project

By Graeme Simsion

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Genre and Subject

Marriage– Fiction

Australian Fiction

Synopsis

A first date dud, socially awkward and overly fond of quick dry clothes, Don Tillman has given up on love. Until a chance encounter gives him an idea.

Author Biography

Graeme C. Simsion is a New Zealand born, Australian author, screen-writer, playwright and data modeller. He recently won the 2012 Victorian Premier's Unpublished Manuscript Award for his book, The Rosie Project. Text Publishing has sold the rights to the book internationally for over \$1.8m.

Prior to writing fiction he was an information systems consultant and wrote two books and several papers about data-modelling. He established a consulting business in 1982 and sold it in 1999. At that time Simsion Bowles and Associates had over seventy staff. He co-founded a wine importing business, Pinot Now with Steven Naughton.

Graeme Simsion is married to Professor Anne Buist and has two children.

Discussion Starters

- The Rosie Project is about becoming open to seeing things from a different angle: Don must reconsider his strict criteria in order to find love, Gene needs to reevaluate his behaviour in order to save his marriage, and Rosie has her own set of prejudices and expectations to overcome in terms of Don and her non-biological father, Phil. What was stopping the characters from making these discoveries earlier? Did the novel change your own perspective on anything?
- Don describes people with a scientific level of detail, yet makes very few assumptions about their personality based on their appearance. As a reader, did you find yourself reading between the lines to make your own judgments? Were there any instances when you misjudged someone based on what Don did or didn't say?
- Don's 16-page questionnaire for prospective partners elicits a very different reaction from Rosie and Bianca. Rosie is offended and claims that it objectifies women, while Bianca says it is nice to finally meet a man who is more interested in her than himself. What do you think?
- Does the humour in the novel come from Don's awkward responses to social situations or the absurdity of falling in love in general? Do you feel as though you are laughing with Don or at Don?

- Don says: ‘Humans often fail to see what is close to them and obvious to others.’ Pg 93. What are some of the things that the characters in *The Rosie Project* fail to see that are obvious to you?
- At the conclusion of the Father Project, were you surprised to discover who Rosie’s real father was?
- Don changes as the book progresses—he begins to relax some of his rigid standards. This is shown in his interaction with Kevin Yu. What are some other examples? Do you think that the changes are solely due to Rosie’s influence?
- Imagine the book had been written from Rosie’s perspective. Would it have been as enjoyable? Would you have understood Don’s actions and behaviour had he not been the narrator?
- What was your favourite scene in the novel? Why?
- Rosie’s belief that Don can’t feel love makes her reluctant to be in a relationship with him. He tells her that he does feel love — it’s the ability to empathise that he struggles with. Do you agree that empathy and love are two separate things? Do you think Don can feel love?
- At what point do you think Rosie starts to view Don as a prospective partner? Did your own feelings towards Don change at a particular point in the novel?
- What conclusions did you make about Don’s character from his description of his relationship with Daphne?
- On a number of occasions Don makes reference to Gene’s affairs in front of Claudia. Do you think Don has a full understanding of how Gene and Claudia’s marriage operates? Why do you think Claudia puts up with Gene’s affairs?
- *The Rosie Project* can be read as a novel about tolerance and acceptance, but it also makes a case for people to take control of how others perceive them and change their behaviour if necessary. Do you agree with this view? To what extent do you think Don changes himself for Rosie?

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