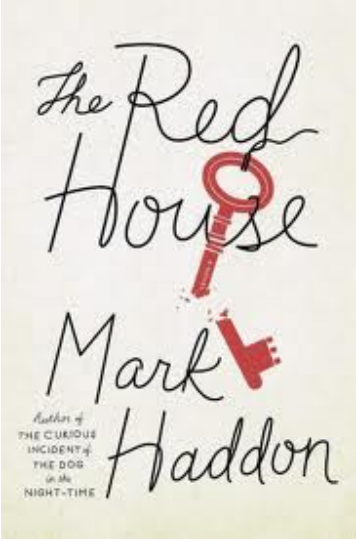
The Red House by Mark Haddon



Like many readers, I loved loved loved *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* [1]. And I had high hopes for Mark Haddon?s follow up, *A Spot of Bother* [2] but was generally let down. That was years ago, and Haddon had sort of fallen off my radar when I recently came across his newest, *The Red House* [3].
The premise is simple. Wealthy doctor, Richard invites his estranged sister, Angela, her unemployed husband and their three children to share a vacation house in the Welsh countryside knowing she cannot pay for a trip on their own. Joining Richard is his new wife and her willful teenage daughter. Their trip initially brims with the hope of forgiveness and family bonding, all nicely tucked away in a cozy modern pastoral setting. But secrets, resentments, pain and confusion ? both old and new ? follow everyone. The complicated dynamics of this family and their often awkward attempts to set things right are at the crux of this novel. Can?t we all relate? Being in a family is hard.

The structure Haddon has created to tell this family?s story is unusual, and might not be for everyone. The narrative is told from multiple perspectives of the different family members, a storytelling technique that I usually enjoy. But the dialog, inner voices and story are told in a more stream of consciousness style that took some getting used to. I can see how this construct might put off some readers. I kept at it thought it was worth the extra effort and by the end, I was deeply involved.

If you also enjoy novels with multiple narratives, check out the Many Voices, One Story [4] book list on our website.

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Posted by Sarah B. on Aug 1, 2012

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[2] http://mcpl.monroe.lib.in.us/view.aspx?cn=205431,%20290589
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