I Love You, Goodbye

Cynthia Rogerson. Edinburgh, UK: Black & White Publishing, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-1-845-02296-9. Price: £11.99. Pages: 256 (paperback)

In this book by Cynthia Rogerson, the themes of love, intimacy and relationships are brought together to narrate the stories of six different characters all related in some way.

Alia is a relationship counsellor who believes in making lists – lists for love, marriage, divorce and broken and mending relationships. Somehow, her list for love doesn't include the passion and

overwhelming feelings that she experiences when she meets and falls in love with Maciek, a philosopher turned pizza maker. She still manages to keep her marriage going – not being able to take the action her heart wants to so badly. Maciek's loss spells disaster but at least she has his baby. So much for planned intercourse and a husband with a low sperm count!

The couple Alia is counselling have forgotten why they got together in the first place. Through their separation and longing for meaning in their relationship they finally conclude that they were best when they were together after all. Not before the emotional rollercoaster of admitting their true feelings, separation and jealousy. Their son Sam feels a misfit – typical of teenage boys. His emotional highs and lows, falling in love, finding and losing friendship are sensitively explored.

To talk of Maciek just as the pizza man would be to forget how he is scripted into the story like a gel that makes all the subjects and storylines relate to each other. His character is enigmatic, mysterious yet vulnerable. His passing is dramatic yet such a waste of human potential, it seems.

This fiction book explores themes that clinicians see every day but do not question. Relationships under stress, decisions taken hastily, families split by seemingly random arguments and the all pervading effect that being in love brings about – inability to reason clearly and make sensible choices – something that we presume most of our teenage clients experience, but which older clients may too. This book is an entertaining and light read which most readers will enjoy, without necessarily learning anything new to apply in their clinical setting.

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