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The London Eye Mystery

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Coming so soon after Mark Haddon's **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time**, it takes considerable nerve to write another novel about a boy with Asperger's Syndrome, especially when, like Haddon's Christopher, the boy concerned becomes a detective, has a Conan Doyle-like mystery to solve, and links himself explicitly with Sherlock Holmes. But 12-year-old Ted is a very different character, and is in no respect the creator of the problem he sets out to crack. His analysis of the mystery hangs on his perception that how things are depends on how you look at them (?Clockwise or anti-clockwise, male or female, half empty or half full, stationary or moving, *depending on how you look at it?*) and comparing these two excellent novels shows that the same is true of Asperger's Syndrome itself. Ted is at the 'high functioning end of the spectrum?'. Although he has serious problems, and displays many classic symptoms of the syndrome, he is well integrated in a happy family, and successful joint detective work even cements a good relationship with his slightly older and infuriatingly normal sister Kat.

The actual mystery is truly Holmesian. Ted's 13-year-old cousin Salim, staying briefly at Ted's London home en route from Manchester to New York, is taken to the London Eye, and is seen to get into a pod, but doesn't get out of it. Salim's disappearance is both mystery and family ordeal. His eventual recovery is entirely due to Ted's unique, formidable and tenacious analytical intelligence. Believably for once, small boy outdoes all adults, including the Metropolitan Police. Ted's first-person narrative is tense and mesmerising, and gives us a most satisfying upbeat view of the strengths that can accompany this now famous medical condition.

Running Order:

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