

## **THE STRANGER IN HER HOUSE by John Marrs**

**Published by Thomas and Mercer**

My latest book recommendation is '*The Stranger in Her House*' by John Marrs. It is a clever but disturbing story about a wolf in sheep's clothing who targets elderly women.

### **THE PLOTLINE**

Sent by a charity for vulnerable people to do odd jobs for elderly widow Gwen, Paul seems the perfect little helper. However, for Gwen's daughter Connie, there's something about Paul that starts to ring alarm bells from day one. He's a little too kind, a little too involved. Worse still, Gwen seems to have fallen under his spell.

As Gwen has dementia, the last thing Connie wants is a stranger meddling in the safe routine she's built around her mother. Always having been the one Gwen turns to for cooking, cleaning and company, she is therefore alarmed when Gwen starts to confuse Paul with her late husband – despite the large age gap. Taking advantage of this, when Paul conveniently finds himself between homes, he successfully convinces Gwen to let him move in with her. Horrified, Connie is now certain he's trying to push her out completely.

It's her word against his, though, as the neighbours have also fallen for his charm, and as her attempts to unmask him become ever more desperate, Connie starts to feel she's not the only one left wondering if she's lost her grip on reality. Unfortunately, when things start spiralling rapidly out of her control, Connie must decide whether she should wage all-out war on Paul and risk losing Gwen forever – or has that been his plan all along?

### **MY REVIEW**

When I first started reading '*The Stranger in Her House*' I was not sure whether I could continue. As my own mother had been an elderly widow living with dementia, it hit a raw nerve. However, I'm glad I kept going as the story suddenly developed into a gripping game of cat and mouse as Connie and Paul go head-to-head in a no holds barred war of attrition.

Unfortunately for Connie, she has secrets of her own, which somehow Paul has managed to discover.

Every time she thinks she has Paul banged to rights, the more he seems to be two steps ahead of her, bringing her credibility into question and leaving her wondering where he was getting his information from.

Written from the point of view of each of the different characters involved, as well as Connie's, a picture emerges of how easy it is to be fooled by good looks and a smooth tongue. It is only when the truth emerges, and everyone realises that Connie has been right all along, do they change their opinions.

*'The Stranger in Her House'* is a rollercoaster of suspense, and I can thoroughly recommend it. The ending is both shocking and surprising.

## **THE AUTHOR**

John Marrs is an author and former journalist based in London and Northamptonshire. After spending his career interviewing celebrities from the worlds of television, film and music for numerous national newspapers and magazines, he is now a full-time author. His books include the No 1 bestseller and Netflix series *'The One'*, *'The Passengers'*, the award winning *'What Lies Between Us'* and *'The Good Samaritan'*.

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