



Love is a Stranger

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How do you love someone who exists entirely in the shadows? How do you love a man who describes himself as dead? How do you get that ghost to love you back? Ex-SAS soldier Ben Rider falls in love with his enigmatic married boss Sir Nikolas Mikkelsen, but Nikolas is living a lie. A lie so profound that when the shadows are lifted, Ben realises he's in love with a very dangerous stranger. Ben has to choose between Nikolas and safety, but sometimes danger comes in a very seductive package.

Love is a Stranger Details


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From Reader Review Love is a Stranger for online ebook

Ele says

My friends will disown me because of this review. But for the life of me, I can't find a single thing that worked for me in this book. 2 stars because I could tell that something great was trying to pick out from this mess.

I can't even tell you what my overall reading experience was, because the whole thing felt like mismatched scenes just thrown together. Odd writing, too much telling, lapses in time, plot lines that last just a few pages and a lot of repetitive inner monologue.

As far as the relationship is concerned, well the above meme describes it perfectly. I think a huge part of the reason I didn't connect with the couple at all, is that we don't get to see how they started this affair. Obviously, they've been sleeping together for the last few years, but how did it all start? This really affected my understanding of the relationship dynamics.

I don't always have to like the characters in my books. But I have to be able to understand them.

I never managed to figure Nik out, not even when the "big secret" is revealed. And Ben's reactions gave me whiplash. One minute he's immature, the next he's all badass and tough, but when Nik says jump, he says how high. He turns into a puppy.

And lastly, the sex. I didn't like it and not because of the no lube thing. Not just I didn't care for it. Not just meh. I disliked the sex scenes! It was weird, it came out of nowhere most times and it was sketchy. Many fade to black scenes and others were over in the blink of an eye. All these little scenes together, make for a big sex scene.

I'm sorry, friends, I don't think I'll be reading the next books.

Jan says

****4.5 Stars****

Firstly I want to say that it took me a while to get into this and I almost gave up. I am glad I've persevered because at some point an U turn happened and I couldn't stop reading it.

There were two things bothering me at the very beginning but I came to terms with it as soon as I started to get to know both characters better - around 30% in the story, I would say. They were:

1) I know it's going to sound weird but their sex style was bothering me. I believe my friends know me as an avid dark reader and as such I am ok with rough sex in a story. However, Ben and Nikolas seem to know no

other way. Don't take me wrong, I like that they play with fire.

And I am not saying that I wanted them to change either, because their "tough way" defines them as a couple. I just wish this wild animalist attraction they shared, was tuned down a bit and softer at certain times. I felt this need, especially when I began to glimpse a tenuous shape of relationship starting to form between them. You know... making love sometimes. (view spoiler) Tough guys! They just go for the kill. It's getting better though. Snail pace, but I can see it happening.

2)Nikolas and Ben knew each other for 4 years and I have to confess that I was a bit disappointed about that. It felt like the story started without me. I wish there was more flash backs or past glimpses of them **together**. :(

That all said, passing that crucial mark of giving up, I started to get lured by what I couldn't see and soon I was tangled in a web, bewitched by an aura of seductive mystery. My thoughts about giving up completely gone!

Here are my highlights:

??)Ben Rider is our typical alpha and stands no chance of resisting his enigmatic boss.

..)Sir Nikolas Mikkelsen is something else. The complexity of his character stands out and calls to me.

and the more I get to unravel and learn about him, little by little, the more appealing he becomes to me. I think the author did an incredible job when creating all this aura of mystery surrounding Nikolas. I can't get enough of him.

Now, can you imagine these two together?

??)An age gap of 12 years between the MC's holds an irresistible allure on me.

..)I love the fact that they cannot keep their hands off each other.

??)And finally, the dynamic between both MC's – both tops - was a first to me.

Throw all that together with some action, a **scorching hot chemistry** (I advise you not read in public) and we have a winner!

Fantastic!

~IreneOust~ says

This book did the impossible: it cured one of THE worst book hangovers I ever had caused by An Exaltation of Larks! It was literally a 'Mission Impossible' kind of situation but ... John Wiltshire's Ben & Nik stole my heart. 'Love is a Stranger' sucked me in right from the Prologue and managed to hit all the right buttons

thereafter: 3rd person narrative (I think I've become allergic to anything BUT), set in Britain, exquisite writing, mystery element that had me guessing and biting my finger nails till the end, the chemistry, the two men ... what can I say? Damaged men is something I crave in my books. They provide for fantastic leading men which is exactly what happens in this book. What else? Ah ... the dialogue. That back and forth banter. The British-ism (is that a word?). I can keep going but honestly ... if M/M is your thing and even if it isn't but you are in need of an exceptionally well written story, give this a go.

I one-clicked THE ENTIRE series after having read a free sample of this book on Amazon. John Wiltshire now has a fan for life in me!

Cheers!

Sofia says

It's a tale replete with:

Kickass, emotional, picture-perfect model mc's, able to kill or cry at the drop of a hat.

Back stories full of tear jerking traumas.

James Bond action

Fluids – starting from tears going on to spit and spunk, plus lots of showers.

Sex - well lots and lots of that in every shape and form.

I tried hard to connect believe me, my friends assured me that I would. Unfortunately the writing and me never gelled. This was me whilst reading

Unplanned BR with Lena, Mark and Nick – they liked it much better than me.

Wynne Katherine says

Ps. I just found out about Radulf's blog after reading my darling Lena's review, and now I cannot stop laughing.

Lol this dog is truly something else.

Spent whole day alone with blond biped. Played hide and seek. Brilliant. Blond biped more fun than thought. Will occasionally obey him now as reward.

I have new ball! I have new ball! It's yellow and bounces and runs away and then I bring it back! Dark-haired biped learnt to throw it quickly. He appears easily trainable. Blond one hid it so I couldn't find it. He won't find his socks either.

Hi. This review will probably be short cause I'm lazy as fuck right now and I haven't been feeling the review writing groove for a while now so please bear with me.

This book was definitely different from all the other books I have read before. It was odd at times, character and plot was new and unique in a way that is just odd, but the kind of odd that works, you know?

For the first 30% of the book, the character and story development was a little too fast for my liking, but after I got through the first 30%, things starts to get really interesting that I can't stop reading.

There are things here and there that I don't really agree with and that I have problems with, but when a book is *this* good, the minor issues aren't even worth mentioning.

I love Nik and Ben – I mean duh. Their relationship is kind of like a dysfunctionally functional relationship that works. I love their dynamic, the sarcasm and dry humor. Well bottom point is, I love them.

This books end in a cliffhanger, so now if you'd please excuse me, I'm going to jump onto book two and find my answers.

(view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

MaDoReader says

4,5 La verdad, no sé porqué no le doy las 5, llegados a este punto estoy absolutamente entregada a Nik y Ben, me encantan ellos, sus diálogos, su dinámica, la retorcida historia que les rodea, todo.

No es el típico libro de chico conoce chico, aquí la relación entre los protagonistas ya lleva 4 años en marcha y para mi ha sido refrescante ver como de esos encuentros furtivos algo ha despertado, algo que ha puesto su mundo patas arriba y que les hace moverse sin saber muy bien donde ponen los pies. Si a eso le sumamos un trasfondo de espías, agencias secretas, e identidades que no son lo que parecen, el cóctel es perfecto y te mantiene en vilo hasta el último momento.

Ya estoy con el segundo empezado, no podía abandonarles ahora que empezaba lo bueno ^^

Wendy says

This series has been on my tbr list for some time and since I love mystery, suspense and m/m, I figured it was time to give it a try.

I was sucked right into the storyline and even though this story doesn't have a real distinct beginning, I had no problems figuring out what was going on. At least not at this point. You see, we get thrown right in the middle of an already ongoing relationship. If you can call fucking your "almost stranger boss" for 4 years a relationship ;)

I was happily reading when bit by bit pieces got revealed, and I was gobbeling them all up. It was delicious...as were the two hot men getting it on together.

Near the end, things got way more confusing though and I had to call in my helpline "Marte" to figure everything out. Damn, but there were some complicated parts. I already read the same chapter twice and it still didn't make sence to me !!

Thankfully Marte cleared it all up for me, so I ould continue my reading in peace...without the extreme confusion <3

However, I loved this one. The mystery and secrets, the steam, the characters. I can't wait to read the next one, which is said, is even better than this one. I think was a bit of an intro book. Now that I know the characters, or at least I know some, since I'm sure there will be more secrets, I wonder what book 2 has in store for me. So...on to the next one :)

I'm gonna go with 3,5 rounded it up to 4, because I was so intrigued.

Baba says

4 stars. Review posted December 1, 2014

One of my favorite quotes. Its meaning is very telling:

Dead men can't be resurrected, no matter how much life you have running through your veins.

First off, let me sweep some preconceptions out of the way. While Love is a Stranger has a couple similarities, it's nothing like Special Forces: Soldiers Part I -Director's Cut. SF is edgier, grittier, much more violent and certainly steamier. Yet all those facts did not prevent my humble little self from enjoying this first book. Very much so. Besides, I'm very glad that this series seems to be different because I don't want to read the same story again. For a debut, I must say I'm pretty much impressed and look forward to reading more by John Wiltshire. Let's get down to business.

After a prologue, the story starts off with Ben running, testing his bruised right knee. When he comes home, his cottage is on fire and a man dies. A few weeks later, Ben meets up with his new boss and lover, Sir Nikolas Mikkelsen, head of a Black Ops department within Britain's Intelligence Agency. As it was, Ben had been a former SAS member. They have a talk if the fire might have been anything but an accident. After a rather heated discussion, Nikolas has another job for Ben and invites him to spend a weekend with him, his wife and a few friends.

"People like us cannot afford love, Benjamin. Even affection is dangerous. You should know this, and if you do not, then you will have to learn. We have to stay alone or be destroyed."

"Bollocks! What about you? You're not alone, you're married."

Nikolas's hands stilled, and he said distinctly, "Metaphorically alone works just as well."

Even though Ben had been sleeping with Nikolas for the last four years, he didn't really know him. Over the past years, Nikolas always succeeded to retain his enigmatic facade. He was a man living in the shadows, whose whole existence was based on a tangled web of half-truths and lies. Outwardly, Nikolas was an impeccably dressed, tall, handsome, very sophisticated, self-possessed and rich diplomat and married to a queen's cousin. But inwardly...who and what was Nikolas really? According to the very apt title, Ben fell for a stranger.

I will admit that I needed a few % to feel at ease with the plot and characters. It started off somewhat strange, mainly due to the fact that Ben and Nikolas had been shagging each other for the last four years already. There is no careful build up; I was thrown right into the middle of their lives and had to find my bearings. As I see it, that can and will be a turn-off for some readers. Though the good thing here is, both main characters come off as a bit mysterious, especially Nikolas. It's not easy to figure him out and what I'd like to encourage you to do is to read between the lines and pay attention to all those little hints the author was planting throughout the entire story. Everything is going to climax in a rather shocking and sad revelation. Author A.B. Gayle told me that this first book is a set up for the sequels which doesn't surprise me at all. After having finished the first book, there remain questions and I can't say that I really "know" both characters. Sure, the foundation stone was laid and I knew much more about Nikolas's past by the end of *Love is a Stranger*. Yet it's time to build the basement and I'm very stoked to see these two men construct a very complex and intriguing building. The end result should be stunning. Guys, digging out the proper engineering skills might be very helpful. Also, due to both main characters' backgrounds, the author has a lot of options to develop new stories.

The development of the interesting plot as well as the characters is done very well and kept me engaged. While the beginning felt somewhat detached, I really enjoyed to see Ben and Nikolas make the transition to a certain level of intimacy and familiarity which also helped me to connect with them and feel their chemistry. Another little detail worked just fine for me: an age gap of twelve years between Ben and Nikolas. Of course it didn't hurt either that both MCs are physically very appealing.

What bugged me a bit was the frequency of the sex scenes. I'm one of those readers who believe in *less is more*. However, the writing is great, the dialogue witty and I really like the author's voice very much. All in all a very promising start in the *More Heat Than the Sun* series that managed to garner my vote in the Goodreads M/M Romance Member's Choice Awards as best debut. It goes without saying that I'll be reading the entire series and anything else written by John Wiltshire. In a time where the book market is flooded with tons of superfluous and trite *sexy billionaire* stories (view spoiler) it feels darn good to discover a new author whose work hits all the right buttons. Thank you.

Nikolas put his hands up and held Ben's face. "I once told you that I've lost everyone I've ever said I love you to--which is true--but I've been thinking while I've been lying here today that maybe I always said it to the wrong people. I should have said it to you a long time ago, Benjamin, because I do--I love you."

Recommended read.

Ingie says

Written January 6, 2015

4 1/2 Stars - Overwhelmed and totally exhausted after this emotional and action-packed adventure

Book #1

The first book in John Wiltshire's talked about series 'More Heat Than the Sun' (4 books so far - all published 2014). ~ I was so very happy for this Christmas freebie gift and so very curious and excited to start to read it.

...

Ohmygod what have I just read and experienced?

This is unlike anything I've read in a long time. A cross between an action spy / agent thriller and melodramatic epic love story. There are maybe one or two things to whine about, but I'm totally charmed and enchanted.

'Love is a Stranger' was for me an mostly very unpredictable and also often surprisingly tough bloody read. This story is —set in the UK and deliciously 'British stylish'— kind of a grand twists and turns relationship drama.

Devon and London, UK

The main topic is about an ex-SAS soldier who, after four years of a mostly unemotional *"friends"-with-benefits* relationship, falls in love with his enigmatic married boss. ~ An mysterious older powerful, and rich, man with many (dark) secrets. The *larger-than-life hero* we have met so many times but maybe not in this shape and form.

Benjamin (Ben) Rider, the "pretty boy", a six foot four with wide-set green eyes and high cheekbones, is a sort of 'double bluff' agent.

‘Who would ever suspect such a pretty boy? Distracted by the charming, beautiful exterior, the skill and quiet self-possession beneath were often overlooked.’

Sir Nikolas Mikkelsen, the head of a 'Black Ops' department within *Britain's Intelligence Agency*, is a secretive, tall, handsome, impeccably dressed Dane. A beautiful and impressive lord-like man with a lovely perfect British upper class wife —*Lady Philipa*, a cousin of the queen— and a grand country estate filled with weekend guests in hunting mood.

But Sir Nikolas is living a lie. A lie so nasty and huge that when the shadows are lifted, dear Ben realises he's in love with a very dangerous stranger.

‘Nikolas regarded him thoughtfully. “You think my life is camouflage?”

Ben held the stare. “Sir, I think everything you do from the moment you wake up to the moment you let yourself sleep is nothing more than a shadow dance.”

Gorgeous, goodlooking, smut yummy men but...

I can't say I loved, or even always liked, these two characters. They are certainly no good examples or particularly easy to like. But, I'm by now very interested in them and want to know much, much more. This first (quite long) installment was just like a small tempting and enticing appetizer.

High steam and angst factor but grandly romantic

Ben and Nikolas relationship is anything but simple. It is violent and intense with a constant struggle for power and advantage. And amid all this drama in the same time so amazing intensely romantic and sexy. ~ I believe in it, on them and that it is possible to solve most if hearts beat hard and hot like these two.

“You...” Ben hesitated. “You hold all the cards, don’t you?”

Nikolas shrugged then nodded. He flicked his eyes up to Ben as if to see how his words would be received, and replied honestly, “I relish owning you, Ben. I need it.”

Ben gave him a small, conspiratorial smirk. “And that’s exactly why I allow you to do it.”

This 'thriller' plot (plots) is anything but 'sweet & simple. I'll not even try to say something useful about what is actually happening here. It is precisely all these unexpected surprises that made this book so awesome and entertaining. ~ Ignore some incredible twists and turns, and new truths, and just enjoy the speed and the never cooling steamy heat.

I must say I feel some vibrations of those thriller agent books an old boyfriend always read by writers like Ken Follett, Tom Clancy, Frederick Forsyth etc (...and I also in cases of crisis and at a casual girl-book shortage.)

..Exciting, clever and scary spy / agent stories from that old 'cold war' time (70s and 80s) with a lot of violence, fire and blood. Evil nasty (usually Russian / Soviet) enemies and those kind of tough, but also goodlooking and sharp, characters (beloved heroes) who never ever hesitate. They just keep running, and shooting, and killing, and keep on to be brave smart male sexy manly MEN.

‘Ben knew that if he didn’t pull away, he would be truly lost. But as he was entirely happy to be entirely lost in Nikolas, he made no attempt to leave the strong arms at all. Sometimes, he wondered if he was so far gone on Nikolas that he’d let him kill him one day.’

...Like these two, in this book. Like this complicated puzzle. Like this first part in what I assume will be a great series.

Frightfully intense and crazy exciting reading!

Did I undoubtedly fall for this? Well, almost. ~ Against all better judgment completely involved.

Gosh, it will be wonderful to download the second book (#2 - Conscious Decisions of the Heart) soon and continue this 'crazy' addictive adventure.

I LIKE - Oh YES I Do !!

YAY!!! - A Christmas FREEBIE 23 December from MLR Press - Thanks!! (view spoiler)

Lena♥Ribka says

3,4 stars

SEX, LOVE, SECRET SERVICE and a DOG.

Even if there is a significantly increased risk that all my brain cells would be irretrievably destroyed after...

I.HAVE.TO.READ.THE. NEXT. SEQUEL.

And if a harmful effect has been already shown, I have a single reassurance – I am not alone.

We'll go down all together!

WARNING: *Everyone can be infected, but our experience shows that particularly young men and women with preference for strong masculine characters with a hard shell and a soft core are especially susceptible to this ~~VIRUS~~ series.*

My extra bonus for Radulf!-don't miss his blog!:))

BR with Nick and Mark!

Thank you, buddies, it was fun to read with you!

P.S It was a totally new experience for me-I have rolled my eyes almost in non-stop-run, but I was jolly entertained!

I promise to be more serious in my review for the next sequel.

J *deep in the heart of Texas* says

Oh man.....I really had to use my brain on this one.

It almost felt like the book started in the middle of the story or something. Nik is Ben's boss and they've apparently been sleeping together for the last 4 years. It's previously only been sex, but where this story begins its obvious more feelings are involved.

And speaking of the sex. It was....different. interesting. Definitely fade to black in some scenes and not always very detailed. But then at times was really hot.

I really wish we had gotten some of Nik's POV...but maybe that wasn't possible with all of the secrets he was hiding.

Knowing there was some big reveal coming, definitely had me intrigued and turning the pages.

But the reveal itself....

Wait...what? I'm confused. I had to re-read some parts a few times. I'm still not 100% sure I know what happened.

Still, I liked this one enough to continue on with the series. At least for now. Relationship wise, things ended fine. But the plot was definitely left open.

Tina says

YouTube Booktrailer Love is a Stranger

Wow... this book was just wow, it's an exhausting, overwhelming start of a brand new series, I couldn't put it down one damn second. Who needs sleep? Sleep is overrated anyway.... John Wiltshire made me virtually inhale the story, devour it. I've never heard from this author before but after only reading one of his books he became an auto-buy to me.

You love dark? You love gritty? You love reading about a MC who seems to exist entirely in the shadows? You don't mind falling for guys who are trained to kill deliberately and don't fear to do exactly that?

You love hot ex special forces guys falling in love? You love mystery/suspense novels mixed up with freaking hot M/M loving? Then the More Heat than the Sun series is the perfect reading choice for you.

I won't go into details because I don't want to spoiler anything... but let me say that Love is a Stranger is outstanding, it's brilliantly written and definitely the beginning of a series that is going to be one of my top favorites this year.

Nik and Ben are great characters... you can't not fall for them. Okay, at the beginning Nik is a real mystery, but give him a chance, don't let him fool you... OMG - you have no idea what he's been through.

"If this is love for you, then you are in love with a ghost, with the illusion of a man. Is that enough for you?"

"Would you let me have that? If you do, then I will find the man. I'll breathe life back into the ghost."

Now off to reading the second book of the series. Highly recommended!

Nick Pageant says

BR with Lena, Mark, and Sofia!

3.5 Stars

My head is still spinning! This is a very good book. Lots of action, lots of sex, and some great plot twists. I'm taking off one star for a pretty rough start, but I promise if you hang in there you'll be hooked (unless you're Sofia). Good stuff!

Kaje Harper says

The main characters in this book begin as boss and subordinate in a black-ops type of unit based within the UK. Ex-SAS soldier Ben Rider is a man whose skills of all sorts, including sex and assassination, have been used by his smoothly-charismatic married boss Sir Nikolas Mikkelsen, in the pursuit of the unit's goals. But a recent operation resulted in the death of a man whose family is intent on revenge against Ben, and as they strike back, the falling dominoes unravel the whole situation. Nikolas is far from who he seems, and Ben is very unsure how to deal with both his obvious ignorance about Nik and the fact that he is becoming more and more emotionally involved with the man.

There is a lot of plot here, in a somewhat episodic multi-event style, and even more back story, particularly where Nik is concerned. The writing, while smooth and easy to follow, is a bit unemotional and often more detailed with setting and plot than with motivation and emotion. The characters are used to violence, and have few qualms about killing or even torture if it's warranted in their eyes. That attitude even bleeds over unrealistically into the softest and most ethical man in the story (view spoiler). Violence is always an acceptable practical answer for these men, and usually leads to few qualms. This lack of deep moral focus is somewhat explained, particularly for Nik, but it had the effect of holding me at a bit of a distance from the characters, particularly given the writing style which didn't expose the emotional resonance of those actions very often.

There is a lot of physical heat between the characters, and a relationship that has balance without equality.

The shift from a long-term sex-only relationship to falling in love is sudden and not always convincing, although I always believed the physical attraction. Nik is a very damaged character and his inconsistencies make him less sympathetic (especially since we only see him through Ben's eyes). Nik's background eventually explains a lot, as it is slowly revealed, and it is somewhat unusual and unexpected, but it happens a bit late in the story.

This will appeal to fans of dramatic mystery/spy/black ops stories, who are willing to accept somewhat amoral men of action. I was entertained and pulled along through this book, interested to see the events unfolding and to learn all the back-story secrets. I'm not sure I came to care about the characters enough to pick up the next one, though, with the anticipation of more untempered mayhem to come.

Val Shameless ?? Steamy Reads ?? says

Need to catch up on this series...so going to re-read it...4/29/16

This was insanely good.

Seriously, outstanding.

It's not everyday that you score like this and get the sometimes elusive trifecta of great writing, a solid plot and fleshed out characters **ALL IN ONE BOOK**.

Crazy, I know.

Plus, I have read a lot of m/m, a lot of military, and a lot of mystery/thrillers in my time ...and let me tell you, John Wiltshire took my expectations for this this book and said, "Pffft."

Benjamin and Nikolas are *such* great, interesting characters. They have both been through **A LOT** in their lives and overcome - or emotionally buried - a great deal of tragic experiences.

Not to mention they are just plain dead sexy. Their chemistry was palpable.

I loved their constant byplay and repartee.

Honestly, when I die, I want to be reincarnated as a saucy aristocrat with a bitchin' European accent.

Plus, as I mentioned earlier, I loved Wiltshire's writing style and his dry, sarcastic, deadpan delivery of

humor throughout.

I have already started number two.
