

It Was Out of Love: A True Love Story of Deception, Grace, and Forgiveness

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Author Profile

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Stranger than fiction: husband writes memoir to set record straight about wife's long-term deception

James S. Marr is a computer systems engineer who was formerly an Air Force officer and instructor of computer science at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He's also a first-time book author who writes a true story about his wife, the elaborate lies she told him about herself, and how he learned to forgive her.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1956, Marr grew up in the city of Florissant. He was a member of the first graduating class from McCluer North High School in 1974 and began his Air Force career as an enlisted electronics technician. He served in that role during duty assignments in Missouri, South Dakota, and South Korea. While on active duty, Jim obtained a bachelor's degree in computer science, graduating summa cum laude from the University of Missouri-Rolla in 1985. As a distinguished graduate of Officer Training School in San Antonio, Texas, Jim became a communications-computer officer, serving in Illinois, Ohio, Nebraska, and Colorado.

Jim obtained a master's degree in computer science as a distinguished graduate of the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, in 1990. He concluded his twenty-two-year Air Force career with the Academy instructorship prior to transitioning to a civilian career in 1996.

Jim met his future wife Melissa Jo Carrington in 1975 on a “blind phone date” when he was only nineteen. Following that initial phone call, they continued to talk on the phone and exchange photographs, cards, and letters. Jim found there were many things about Melissa’s background and Christian faith that were gratifyingly similar to his, and he began to fall for the person he thought she was. He went so far as to hide away a note declaring his intent to marry this woman someday—before ever meeting her face-to-face.

After six months’ delay in getting to see Melissa in person because she had mononucleosis, Marr was shocked to find out that this “sickness” was just a deception to hide the truth about who she really was. He unmasked her ruse and with God’s help, decided to forgive her. When Marr was twenty, he and Melissa married.

Ten years into their marriage, Melissa was diagnosed with diabetes. Gradually the damaging effects of long-term diabetes took a toll on Melissa’s health, first affecting her eyes, then her heart and blood pressure, and eventually her kidneys. Through all of this, Jim remained dedicated to his wife and the love that had enabled them to move past Melissa’s deception so many years before. Ultimately, Melissa became bedridden in a hospital for what became the final two-and-a-half months of her life.

Facing the reality of death, Melissa confessed to her husband that her deception more than thirty years before was actually a cover-up for a much more elaborate series of lies she had told him about her past. The full truth about her life before she met Jim was much different from what she had led him to believe, and the details were shocking. So shocking was this confession that Marr doubts that he would have married Melissa if he had known the truth.

Somehow, by what Marr says can only be “the grace of God,” he found the strength to forgive Melissa for keeping these secrets from him through their entire thirty-year marriage. In

the few short weeks following Melissa's confession and before she passed away, he attempted to learn as much as he could about this woman with whom he had shared his life for three decades.

Following Melissa's memorial service in early 2007, Jim wrote a letter to family and friends that outlined what he had learned about Melissa's deception and helped clear up the newly revealed name changes and family relationships that now appeared in her obituary. Many who read this brief explanation encouraged him to turn his bizarre true story into a book.

Marr says today about *It Was Out of Love*, "I hope the reader can benefit from this story on two levels: first as a very intriguing story and second, and more importantly, as a story of God's grace and forgiveness." He explains, "I also want the book to demonstrate the depth of God's love in that He can turn something evil, such as lies and deception, to good, through a blessed marriage in the midst of the deception. Melissa was a true helpmate. Melissa had a fun, wry sense of humor and loved to laugh. She was always quick to volunteer to help people. She had a talent for hospitality, making people feel comfortable and welcome in our home. She and I ministered to others through our church outreach programs."

Marr wants the reader to take away an essential lesson: God can salvage whatever wrongs we may have committed and use our lives for His glory. He says, "I am uniquely qualified to present this unusual love story because I lived it. I wrote it from my heart."

To obtain a review copy of *It Was Out of Love* or to schedule a conversation with James S. Marr, contact Abigail Davidson at Abigail@winepresspublishing.com.