



## The Perfect Husband

*Lisa Gardner*

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## **The Perfect Husband** Lisa Gardner

What would you do if the man of your dreams hides the soul of a killer?

Jim Beckett was everything she'd ever dreamed of...But two years after Tess married the decorated cop and bore his child, she helped put him behind bars for savagely murdering ten women. Even locked up in a maximum security prison, he vowed he would come after her and make her pay. Now the cunning killer has escaped--and the most dangerous game of all begins....

After a lifetime of fear, Tess will do something she's never done before. She's going to learn to protect her daughter and fight back, with the help of a burned-out ex-marine. As the largest manhunt four states have ever seen mobilizes to catch Beckett, the clock winds down to the terrifying reunion between husband and wife. And Tess knows that this time, her only choices are to kill--or be killed.

## **The Perfect Husband Details**

Date : Published June 1st 2004 by Bantam (first published December 1st 1997)

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Author : Lisa Gardner

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Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, Fiction, Crime, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review The Perfect Husband for online ebook

### Carol says

Going to make this quick! I grabbed this to read on the plane on my trip to Booktopia Bellingham as I wanted a book that was "light". It was certainly light in regards to weight but not "light" reading in the typical sense.

I don't know if I've read any other Gardner books but found both the violence and sex more graphic than I was expecting. This is a comment, not a criticism.

Good edge of your seat thriller, with great character development and a plot about domestic violence and control that is all too true. So why not 4 or 5 stars. I found it a bit repetitious, too long, like Gardner was trying to fill in for a set number of pages. Without mentioning names I saw no purpose to one character's demise and I think this distracted from the whole of the story.

I definitely going to give another of Gardner's books a try as this is my type of thriller reading.

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### Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Is this supposed to be a suspense thriller? Okay. Technically it was. But for me it was an awesome romance story and a female empowerment story to boot. Loved JT and Tess. Loved them together. I loved how Tess went from mild and meek to kickbutt heroine. Did not love psychopathic ex-husband. But it was worth reading for the fantastic love story (okay I guess I missed the point of this book, didn't I?).

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### Sharon says

Tess Williams thought she was marrying the man of her dreams. Jim Beckett a police officer who did he's job well and was well thought of by his colleagues. Tess believed he was a loving and caring person unlike her father who was an abusive man. Being a young bride at the age of eighteen, Tess was eager to please her husband. It was only a couple of weeks after they'd been married that Tess noticed her husband change. He no longer was the sweet loving man that she'd first met. If things around the house weren't done to his liking and standards such as cooking and cleaning she would get a beating where she'd remain in pain for days afterwards. Tess was becoming increasingly scared of her husband and never knew when the next beating was coming. It seemed the more she tried to please him the less she succeeded. It was after the birth of their daughter Samantha, that Jim went back to his old loving self, but it didn't last long and things were back to the way they were.

After being married for two years things become worse when, Jim turned into a psychopath and murders ten women over sixteen months. It was Tess who helped put him behind bars, but after killing two guards he manages to escape. Tess knows she and Samantha are in danger and she must find a way of keeping them safe.

With the help from J.T. Dillon an ex-marine, Tess decides it's time to fight back. She wants him to train her

and teach her everything he knows so by the end of it she'll know how to defend herself, but will this be enough to keep her alive from a psychopath like Jim Beckett? In the meantime Jim is plotting his next move and he has every intention of finding Tess and following through with his threat on killing her.

Oh my goodness what a breathtaking, nail-biting and fantastic read this was. I absolutely LOVED this novel which was full of suspense from start to finish. This truly is a gripping and very intense novel and one that will have you turning the pages quite quickly the closer you get to the end. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

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### **Jill Manske says**

Well, if this had been my first Lisa Gardner book, I guarantee it would have been my last. It fulfilled my worst suspicions about a much more recent book, which actually was pretty good. But this one - groan! It's basically a romance novel with a thin veneer of murder mystery/thriller. If you like Mary Higgins Clark, this is the book for you. If you're a fan of more recent Gardner books, don't read this one! The plot is weak, the characters are shallow and predictable, the dialog is trite, and the romance is just plain stupid. But, you can see faint glimmers of the Lisa Gardner to come. The FBI profiler explaining how he identifies patterns feels like step one in Gardner's progress up the evolutionary ladder. Sadly, it's not enough to make this book even tolerable. Fortunately, though the learning curve was steep, Gardner has become a pretty good writer in this decade. But "The Perfect Husband" is so bad, it's laughable. If I were Gardner, I would assure this book is out of print and I would pay libraries to de-shelve it. It creates a very bad impression of her writing skills. My recommendation - run away from this book!

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### **Karlyflower \*The Vampire Ninja, Luminescent Monster & Wendigo Nerd Goddess of Canada (according to The Hulk)\* says**

This Review reminded me of this book's existence!

I read this book two times, my best friend says I'm disturbed for this, and thought it was wonderful both times.

I haven't read it in a few years now so my feelings are not as crystal clear and precise as they would be were they all fresh and new, so bear with me!

Tess had the perfect life: She was young, in love and married to one of the handsomest men she had ever seen.... what more could a woman want?!

Life isn't as fucking perfect as all this though!! We soon learn that their relationship is anything but perfect. Tess's husband Jim is volatile, explosive and violent; things which he had hid well from Tess prior to their marriage.

The book takes place after Tess has helped put Jim behind bars for the savage murder of ten women... after she discovered body parts in her basement!

This book is really creepy, ladies and gents!! Like, REALLY creepy! And although it does have a seek-out-a-stranger-for-help thing I'm not a fan of, it has a very powerful message:

Just because he looks like this:

Does NOT mean that he is incapable of malice, abuse or murder!

Be SMART, ladies! Do NOT just trust a pretty face!!

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## **Scott Rhee says**

*I preface this review by divulging two pieces of information: 1) I hate romance novels. (To be fair, I've only actually ever read three romance novels in my life, so I understand that my assessment is based on a very small study sample.) 2) While I don't think of myself as sexist, some of what I may say in this review may sound sexist. It's unintentional, I swear, but I am aware that I may say things about men and women that, to some people, may be offensive, such as the fact that men and women act, think, and behave very differently at times. If that view is sexist, then, yes, I suppose I am sexist.*

Lisa Gardner writes damn good suspense thrillers. That's my observation, based on only two books by Gardner that I've read. I read "Hide", which was written somewhat later in her career (2007), and, most recently, "The Perfect Husband", written at the very start of her career (1998). Both are excellent. They are riveting, edge-of-the-seat, well-written thrillers that are unflinching in their use of graphic violence and intelligent in their use of character development.

Gardner also writes strong female lead characters. This makes sense, since Gardner herself is a woman. Her women are tough, intelligent fighters who still manage to maintain a femininity that is still attractive and sexy.

Her men, however, are problematic. To me, at least, as a man.

Not that I think the men in her novels are totally unbelievable. The male protagonist in "Hide", Bobby Dodge, was, by far, a more realistic and believable character than the male protagonist in "The Perfect Husband", J.T. Dillon. This clearly exhibits an evolution in Gardner's writing and attitudes toward male characters.

J.T. Dillon is a burned-out ex-Marine who is pickling himself with copious amounts of alcohol and has wild sex with every woman he meets---mostly prostitutes---with the exception of his younger sister. He is, by nature, an asshole, but he has become even more bitter and hateful toward the world due to some horrible personal tragedies. His wife and son were killed by a drunk driver years ago, his father was emotionally abusive to him, and he still has guilt over not being able to protect his younger sister from his father's sexual advances. All of this, of course, helps to give him a "sensitive" side that he works hard at keeping hidden.

When Tess arrives at his door one day with an extraordinary proposition, Dillon's world is thrown for a loop. Tess wants him to train her how to defend herself and how to kill someone. The "someone" is her ex-husband, Jim Beckett, a former police officer and serial killer. He killed dozens of young women in horrible

ways, and he was the focus of one of the largest manhunts in FBI history. It was Tess who subsequently alerted the FBI, and it was her information about him that led to his arrest and eventual incarceration.

A few days ago, Beckett killed two prison guards and escaped the maximum security prison in which he was being held. The police, led by FBI agent Pierce Quincey (the man who put him away the first time), are girding their loins. Quincey knows that Beckett has only one real target this time: his wife, Tess.

Tess knows it, too, which is why she has put her young daughter, Samantha (the only person that Beckett seems to sincerely love and care for) under the care of the FBI at a safe house and she, herself, has gone on the lam under a series of aliases.

Her research has led her to Dillon. She knows about his past, his reputation, his state of mind. She also knows that, if anyone can kill Beckett, it's Dillon.

All well and good, so far, with the storyline. Here's one problem I have with the book: Beneath the novel's intense cat-and-mouse plot, graphic murder scenes, and top-notch police procedural, Gardner has secretly written a romance novel.

Ugh.

Tess and Dillon react to each other like fire and gasoline. She's a firebrand, and he's a giant dick with feet. They don't meet-cute. They meet-nasty, and as the novel progresses, so, too, do their feelings for one another.

And here's another problem I have with the book: Tess's last relationship with a raging asshole didn't exactly go so well. The guy turned out to be a serial killer. He was also an OCD husband who beat her if she didn't have the fork and spoon set right on the dinner table, or if she missed a spot of dust on the TV.

So, what does she do? Fall in love with another asshole.

Here's something I've noticed in a lot of books written by, for, and about women: women love assholes.

Now, I don't necessarily agree with this axiom, and I've written about this in other reviews. I personally think that the reality is that women are attracted to self-confidence. There's nothing wrong with that. Unfortunately, many women mistake self-confident with brooding, cocky, aggressive, and borderline (and not-so-borderline) violent men because they seem self-confident. In truth, these men are anything but. They are merely compensating. But appearances go a long way.

This is why there is a whole genre of literature, from "Twilight" to "Fifty Shades of Grey" to the works of Jacqueline Susann and the novels of Tami Hoag, in which the female protagonists meet and fall in love with completely unlikeable assholes and engage in sexual relationships that, to any sane person, blatantly resembles rape. That's because it is rape. But the female protagonists don't seem to mind.

This is fucked up. Well, ostensibly. In actuality, it's probably not.

Now, either there are a lot of women out there who secretly harbor rape fantasies, which is why books and authors like this become insanely popular, or there is something else going on.

I'm guessing it has to do with the same reason that most men love hard-core porn. Most men are ashamed to

admit it, but it shouldn't be that shocking to women that their boyfriends and husbands, every once in a while, like to watch videos of men doing naughty things with women. Especially things that they may find too embarrassed to ask their significant others to do.

I'm guessing that what's going on is that, while men like the idea of taking a "good" girl (the silent, bookish, shy and unworldly type) and turning them into sex-crazed wild things, women prefer the opposite: taking sex-crazed wild men and turning them into sensitive, emotionally expressive "good" guys.

I get it. But a part of me doesn't like the idea of perpetuating the whole "women love assholes" thing, which is kind of what writers like Gardner are doing. There's nothing romantic about rape, fantasy or not.

And I know, men are probably just as guilty, if not moreso, of perpetuating this myth. After all, men love that male fantasy, as well. This is why fictional characters like James Bond, John Rambo, and Jack Reacher continue to be popular archetypes in our culture. The man who can have sex with any woman he meets and dumps her the next day. The seven-foot four hundred-pound man who can hold a gatling gun with one hand and karate chop a bad guy into next week. The man who doesn't like to talk about his past, his feelings, or what he's wearing. He doesn't give a shit. I don't know too many guys who *don't* wish they could be that guy.

I have a feeling that I've gotten away from my main point, and my review of this book, which, by the way, I liked, a lot.

So, yeah, I had a problem with the fact that, deep down, "The Perfect Husband" was a damn romance novel disguised as a suspense thriller. And I had a problem with the rather, in my opinion, fucked-up gender roles and stereotypes employed in the novel.

But, despite all this, I still thought the book was an excellent thriller. I look forward to reading more of Gardner's books.

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### **Alp says**

4.5/5

***"Jim Beckett is a pure psychopath. Most of you out there probably think you know what that means. I'm here to tell you that you don't."***

Oh my God! What did I just read?

Lisa Gardner is a genius! This was such an intense and gripping suspense/thriller story with a touch of romance. It left me exhausted as if it drained all my energy away after I finished it. The Perfect Husband gave me chills from the very start and I felt more and more terrified of what would happen to Tess and her daughter as I went further into the book. The whole story totally kept me on the edge. During the last 30% of the book, I felt like my heart thumping out of my chest. So much happened near the end and it was full of action and excitement that I wasn't able to put it down until I finished.

Just thinking about this psycho killer and what he did still gives me goosebumps even now. Jim Beckett is one of the most dangerous and scariest villains I've ever read. Reading the scenes where the bodies of the

murdered women were discovered and the description of how he tortured and then killed them made me sick to my stomach that I had to hug myself tightly and close my eyes for a few seconds. Damn, it wasn't that easy to nerve myself to turn to the next page!

*On the one hand, he considers himself outside the boundaries of society — that is his neurosis. On the other hand, deep down, like any person, he has a need for limits. As he gets away with murder, he tries even more daring and dangerous stunts. Not just because of ego, but because some part of him wants to be caught. Like the child who evolves from petty tantrums to small crime to get a parent's attention, Beckett will commit riskier and riskier murders seeking that barrier.*

At first, I thought this was another typical woman-on-the-run-from-her-psycho-ex-husband story, but boy was I wrong. It was much more than that and I can't tell you anymore than this! You really need to read it for yourself!

By the way, this was my enjoyable read. The pace was fast and the plot was suspenseful and action-packed. This book absolutely lived up to its hype. Really worth it!

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### **Paula says**

Very disappointing book. This is because the book tends to focus more on J.T., the mercenary who Tess goes to for self-defense training, than it does on Tess and her recently escaped serial killer ex-husband.

J.T. is crude, rude, and a very unlikable character. He's tortured by his past and full of self-pity and he's constantly thinking of - his abusive father, the colonel - his sister Marion, who he feels he didn't protect from the colonel - his dead wife and kid. When he's not thinking about them, it's about how much he wants his next drink so he can fall into a drunken stupor and forget about his miserable life.

This book is more like a depressing dysfunctional family drama (J.T.'s family) than the suspense book I thought it would be. The FBI manhunt that is alluded to on the back cover blurb is barely even there, and the little that is there is just too far-fetched. This book was too slow-moving and it could have used more action and suspense than it provided.

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### **Shelley says**

\*Rating\* 4 Creme Filled Donuts

\*Genre\* Mystery/Thriller/Romance

\*Review\*

The Perfect Husband is the first book in what is supposed to be the Quincy/Raine series by Lisa Gardner. FBI profiler Pierce Quincy does play a small part in this series, but it is Theresa (Tess) Williams and J.T. Dillon that the storyline follows throughout the book.

The Perfect Husband is an intense drama with a sick, evil, twisted, and sadistic serial killer named Jim Beckett. Beckett, was once a cop, decides that he needs to challenge himself. Thus, he turned to killing young, gorgeous, blonde-haired women. It isn't until he battered, and broken young wife learns the horrific truth, that he ends up briefly caught and imprisoned. Of course, he escapes and focuses heavily on Tess for revenge.

Tess is the wife who was brutalized most of her young life not only by her sadistic bastard of a husband Beckett, but her father as well. Tess is one of those characters that you absolutely have to feel emotion for because she really wasn't allowed any free choices in what she did with her life. Her 4 year old daughter Samantha's safety and security is on her mind 24/7 when she decides to forgo police and FBI protection, and seeks out a down and out mercenary to help her fight back against the husband who wants her dead in the worse way after she helped the police put him behind bars.

J.T. is the former marine/mercenary who is at the end of his rope and trying hard to make things right with his FBI sister Marion who has a extremely hard past that she refuses to speak to him about. J.T. is at first, a hard core drunk, who swims laps in his pool, and tries to rebel against his father the Colonel who he hates with everything in his being. When Tess shows up, he is torn in what to do about this firecracker of a woman who wants revenge on her husband.

Marion is the sister who is hard core in a male dominated FBI that believes she is a dyke and cold and thus unfeeling. That is so far from the truth from what Marion is hiding from those who know her best, including her own brother. She has a dark blight on her past as a child that she can't seem to remember, or she refuses to acknowledge the events that happened to her because they were so awful. Marion's only mistake in this story, is a huge one, and you could see coming a mile away. It still doesn't take away from the powerful emotions it will leave readers feeling upon reaching this point in the story.

The rest of the supporting cast is pretty decent, and I absolutely adore Lisa Gardner's ability to put you in the story and put some truth behind the things that are happening to her characters. She obviously takes a real deal of time and effort to look into and research police and FBI procedures when dealing with serial killers.

The ending leaves no room for imagination as the stories final climax plays itself out. My only recommendation: Don't get too attached to the characters. This is a bloody story, and lots of people die before it is all wrapped up in a little bow for your enjoyment.

Definitely one of those books I would recommend to my friends.

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### **Jim says**

This is listed as the first book in the Quincy & Rainie series but Quincy is not a major character and there is no Rainie. I have read several of Lisa Gardner's books including one other in this series. I have enjoyed her other books and decided to read this series in order. In my opinion this is not one of her better books. It was okay and I will probably still read the other books in the series but if I had started with this I probably would not have that interest.

Tess Williams thought she married the perfect man. Handsome. A decorated cop. The man other girls dreamed about. She cannot believe that he choose her. And choose her he did. As soon as they were married Tess learned that Jim Beckett was not as perfect as he appeared. He had rules and if Tess broke any of his

rules she paid a price. They had a daughter and Jim wanted a son. Tess saw Jim's dark side and started gathering evidence which she took to the police. Evidence that helped convict him of murdering ten women and sent to a maximum security prison.

Jim Beckett vowed that Tess would pay and now he has escaped. Tess is not going to hide or depend on police protection. Police protection did not work out all that well after she reported her suspicions and before he was sent to prison. She is not going to rely on it now. Instead she places her daughter in protective custody and seeks out a mercenary. J.T. Dillon is a former Marine and a former mercenary. Currently he appears to be a binge drinker with loads of personal issues. Tess wants to hire J.T. to train her not protect her. She will pay him to train her for one month.

Tess lived in Massachusetts and that is where she left her daughter, Samantha. J.T. lives in Arizona and this is where Tess goes for her training. For reasons I will not go into both Tess and J.T. return to Massachusetts for the showdown with Jim Beckett. Throughout the story the police are made to look incompetent and are constantly outsmarted by Beckett. Thankfully Tess and J.T. return to assist the police with the case.

This is not a very realistic story by any stretch of the imagination but it is entertaining. Several times while reading this book I found myself thinking this should be a movie or at least on television. I saw mixed reviews on this book and can understand why. It is not a bad book but it is not one of her better stories. I plan to move on and read the next book in the series, *The Third Victim*, but I am not in a hurry.

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## **Oriboaz says**

Disclaimer: This is the second Lisa Gardner book I have read. The previous book of hers I've read was written much later, and I enjoyed that book. This review is about this book only, not about Gardner's ability as a writer.

Unfortunately, I can't say that I liked or enjoyed this book much. The premise, a woman on the run from an insane serial killer, sounded intriguing, but the execution wasn't good.

Usually in a mystery, there is a puzzle, something unknown (such as the identity of the killer) that the hero is trying to uncover. In this book, there is no such mystery. We know from the start who the villain is, what his ultimate goal is, and pretty much how the book will end.

The characters are completely unbelievable. The killer almost has magical powers; the police -- in the few scenes they appear -- are clueless and act quite stupidly; the main character's actions simply don't make sense; and so on. Except for Quincy, who really makes just a passing appearance in the book, I found the characters really unlikable. I did not want to read about them.

The book seems to comprise of a lot of conversations. This should make for very fast reading, but I just found myself struggling to read on. It was hard for me to read more than a few pages at a time. In large parts of the book, really nothing happens. The plot doesn't really advance, and the characters just talk among themselves. Eventually, I started skimming whole sections where nothing happens.

In many cases, this book was not a mystery or suspense story, but seemed more like a romance or soft porn book. I did not care for that. I don't mind a little romance in a book, but in this book it was excessive.

So, to summarize, I did not enjoy this book. I struggled to finish reading it. I found the plot and characters unbelievable, and I knew how the book will end from page one. Lisa Gardner is generally a good writer, so I'd skip this book and start with a later entry.

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### **Crista says**

This is my first shot at a "suspense/thriller" novel. I am a sucker for romance and also for serial killers...strange but true. My ideal movie night would be "Pretty Woman" followed by "Silence of the Lambs". This little ideoisncrasy of mine set me up perfectly to love this book....only I really didn't. Here's why....

1. Tess has been through hell. An physically abusive father and an emotionally abusive and controlling psychopath for a husband. Why couldn't this author have made J.T. Dillon a "hero" instead of making him proof of the fact that Tess is going to keep making mistakes with the men she gets involved with. His drinking, harsh..(abusive at times) way of dealing with Tess left a really bad taste in my mouth. While I know that it's true that victims of abuse tend to gravitate towards men who will continue that abuse, I had hoped that in a "fictional novel" Tess would have made a stronger choice, or more importantly, that this author would have made a more respectable character of J.T.
2. I will never know why this author brought Marion, J.T.'s sister, into the story line. She got in the way. All the issues with J.T.'s family...ie, Marion and their abusive father, got in the way of the story I really cared about...Tess and her daughter. I didn't feel connected to Marion of J.T. They were both so messed up from their past that Tess's trauma often took a back seat to J.T. and Marion's issues.....how frustrating.
3. The chemistry between J.T. and Tess was just plain unbelievable. I never bought in to them....ever...not for a single second. This book would've been better with no romance theme. The author should have kept J.T. a messed up mercenary and not made him the object of Tess's affection.

Suspense C+ Romance F

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### **Jean says**

"Lock your closets." That's the best defense against this serial killer who is brutally bashing young, blonde women?

The Perfect Husband by Lisa Gardner is billed as "Quincy and Rainie #1" with FBI profiler Pierce Quincy – but where's Officer Rainie Connor? I think she doesn't show up until the next book. At any rate, this novel is more about Theresa "Tess" Williams and JT Dillon, with JT's sister Marion, who is an FBI agent, in a supporting role.

The "perfect" husband? He's a strong, handsome cop who expects a perfect wife. He's demanding, controlling, and abusive. One more thing: He's a serial killer. Tess was married to Jim Beckett, and she knows who his final target will be. She is determined to be ready. For her young daughter's sake, she cannot fail. She must not fail.

Tess turns to a down-and-out ex-Marine for help. JT Dillon is in the midst of his annual tequila bender when Tess shows up at his home in Arizona expecting the former mercenary to train her. What she doesn't bank on is a drunk claiming to be out of the business. But Tess (AKA "Angela") is desperate, and there's something pathetic, yet appealing, about her, so JT lets her stay.

They make an unlikely team, this pair. They are both damaged goods. Who would ever think they could help one another? When Marion, JT's sister comes on the scene, things get really tense. Bit by bit, "Angela" learns about their father, the Colonel, and that there is no love lost between these siblings, at least not until you dig very, very deep. Once Angela's identity is discovered, the brother-sister duo are both on board, and the training begins in earnest. Shooting, over and over. Swimming. More target practice.

We see what kind of man Jim Beckett is. He's smart, and he knows it. He's proud of it. As a cop, he knows how cops operate and how they think, which gives him the ability to stay steps ahead of their investigations. As a former cop, he knows how to lie low and evade detection. He has a pattern, and he smugly believes that even the FBI's profiler can't figure it out. Can anyone break his code? He's a man without a conscience, a sociopath who will kill anyone who gets in his way. Gardner lets him kill off some of her investigators and cops along the way to prove the point.

Lock your closets. The man seems to pop out of nowhere sometimes. Lisa Gardner creates tension, and lots of it. Tess and JT feel the heat, too, and I'm not just talking about Arizona desert heat. This is quite different from the DD Warren books that I've read. Who knew there could be steam in Arizona? But will the training end there, or will it take Tess back to the Northeast, where her troubles began?

I think the author gets a bit carried away with the sexual relationship between JT and Tess, but I do like most of the character development in this story. I especially like what she does with JT and Marion's childhood, their relationship to their father and each other, and how that has affected their adult relationships. Of course, we also get a look at what Theresa's life with Jim was like. That part of this book is very well done.

I wasn't especially keen on the book being billed as "Quincy and Rainie," because, as I said, there is no Rainie, and Quincy really isn't that much of a factor either. I didn't like this character, particularly, and he has a fairly limited role. Perhaps in the second book he takes more of a lead, but for readers who expect a police procedural, this might be disappointing. Nonetheless, this is a very entertaining, tension-filled book. If it were a movie, I might have been peeking out from between my fingers or maybe squeezing my eyes tightly shut a few times. If that's the kind of story you like, then *The Perfect Husband* may be just right for you.

3.5 stars

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### **Andrea says**

This was harder to rate I was thinking 3.5 \*rating but gave it a four as did enjoy the characters in this book, but lacking in areas of gritty parts missing in the book as it's more about the characters, it starts with a husband a serial killer he goes to prison for his crimes and escapes and his wife who has a child who manages to escape from her husband who was tortured by him and gets her child into hiding, but she doesn't trust cops you soon get to know why and finds help from a troubled alcoholic and his sister have a bad relationship as the story unfolds. I'm going to read more of her books as was recommended to read her books and they get better.

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### **Jen says**

This was one of the first books that Gardner wrote... she has definately become a much better writer. I have loved the other books by her (alone, gone, killing hour), but i really didn't like this one.

The story line is very unrealistic and the characters are not likable.

The story centers around "tess" Her husband, is a psychopath who kills many people, he gets arrested, breaks out of prison, and comes back for her and her daughter.

That plot sounds great, but the storyline was very bad.

Tess goes to a mercenary for help (JT). The books centers on how screwed up JT is and how is father beat him and his sister..... i don't know. The book was just not a good read. I didn't like reading about JT; the book should have centered around Tess and her killer husband.

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