

# ADOPTING A FAMILY APPROACH

## Case Study 2

### The Watson Family

#### Mary Watson, age 76



**Mary  
Grandmother**

I had a fall again today. Things have been going so well the last few weeks, but I can't help it; my Parkinson's is getting worse. Damn legs won't do as I tell them. Sarah was helping me get into bed in the evening and she just couldn't hold me up. She got angry again. She pulled me up off the floor and yelled at me. My arm has a black bruise, and my back hurts too. I'll have to hide that from the carer tomorrow – she's always asking questions. It's none of her business.

I've had a carer for a few months now. Jennie comes in once a day in the mornings, and helps me get washed and dressed, and takes me to the toilet. She's like a breath of fresh air – always so chirpy, and never gets cross, even when I take a long time to get up out of bed. It takes some of the pressure off Sarah, my daughter. She

tries so hard to look after me, but she doesn't have much patience and I always seem to get it wrong. Sometimes I have to hold it in when I need the toilet because she's busy, and I don't want to disturb her. I try not to drink water as it just means I'll need to go again, and I'll have to ask her to take me. There never seems to be a good time to ask.

Sarah doesn't mean to get angry – she's got enough on her plate with the kids, without having an elderly mother to run about after. She resents having to look after me, tells me I'm a burden and gets angry when I ask her to help me. Her boyfriend, Martin, is nice to me. He's a good soul. But Sarah won't let him help. Says that he only does it to show her up that she can't do it. She gets angry with him too. She's under a lot of pressure.

Sarah's oldest is always in trouble, and definitely gets his temper from his mother. They're always shouting at someone. Martin takes the brunt of it. I hear the fights downstairs. The shouting, the plates smashing, the baby crying. I don't ask her about it. When it happens, I'm just glad it's not me. I stay up in my room in my armchair with my TV on and keep out of the way. Sometimes I turn it up so I can't hear.

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Sarah doesn't shout as much when Jennie is here. She hates having a stranger coming into the house. Says she will spy on us and cause trouble. Jennie does ask a lot of questions. Asks me if I feel safe, and whether Sarah ever yells at me the way she yells at Martin. I just tell her all couples fight sometimes. Well, they do, don't they? It's not always like this. We have some good days. We just haven't had one for a while. Once the children grow up a bit she won't be so stressed, and she won't yell anymore. I know she loves me deep down. She's my daughter.