



Book Review: All Those Things We Never Said

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Marc Levy has written a number one international bestseller that is highly unusual but, at the same time, very thought-provoking.

"All Those Things We Never Said" begins as the main character, Julie Walsh, is preparing for her wedding. She is convinced that her father, who has been estranged from her for a long time, will not attend or will disrupt her special day, and, just as she predicted, a telephone call from her father's secretary interferes with the ceremony just three days before it is scheduled to occur. Her father has died!

Julie is shocked when a large box is delivered to her apartment and, frankly, as a reader, its introduction does not seem to be at all plausible as it contains a three billion dollar remote-controlled prototype of her father that holds all his memories. Julie thinks that it is a joke but, over the next six days, her life is changed as she gets to know the father that she never really knew or understood. Her desire to keep this a secret, leads her to lie to her fiancé, ignore her normal work ethic and begin physically and emotionally travelling into her past to recapture things that she had lost.

Julia's strongest support is her gay friend, Stanley, who is the only person that she tells about what is happening to her. As she chases the positive and negative experiences of her youth and is able to understand the perspective of her father that was previously missing, she contacts Stanley and depends on him to help her to analyze the bizarre situations that she is experiencing. In the meantime, her fiancé is left in a confused and isolated state.

Julia confronts the times that she was upset by her father's actions. The most difficult of these was when he separated her from the man who she loved and lived with in Europe and then hid the letters that were sent to her from that man. The story follows Julia and her prototype father as they attempt to find Thomas in an excursion that is fraught with challenges.

As the six-day time limit for father and daughter to be together approaches, the prototype appears to be wearing down - but, at the same time, the wisdom and "humanness" of the father-figure helps to facilitate healing for Julia's hurts of the past. She begins to realize that her firmly held ideas about her father were not necessarily accurate and that he did love her. At times, the prototype seems distant and mechanical. At other times, it is kind, loving and wise.

Critics of this book have described it as "a must read" and "a wonderful fable". For me, it began as a rather unbelievable and somewhat ridiculous fiction that evolved into a unique way for the main character to re-evaluate her troubled relationship with her father during a period of grief after his death.

The most interesting part, I found, is that as Julia works through the issues that she had held with resentment over the years, she moves towards a life that is very different from the one she had at the beginning of the book.

I think you will enjoy this read and know for sure that you will be surprised at how the story ends!