



Book Review: Ada's Rules

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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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"Ada's Rules" is the fictional story of a preacher's wife who has always thought that big is beautiful. She and her husband are so involved in the needs of their congregation and the work of the church that their own relationship begins to drift. Ada is concerned about her aging parents who seem to need her to cook and clean for them. Although her twin daughters are adults now, they tend to rely on her for support. The families at the daycare where she works depend on her.

There is little time for Ada and Preach to be together and it seems that financially they are always sacrificing for others.

Then Ada receives an invitation from a former boyfriend and she begins thinking about rekindling the relationship with him. In order to do that, she thinks that she needs to lose weight and improve her body. Her thoughts are fueled by the fact that she and Preach haven't had sex together for several months and Ada wonders if he is having an affair. An affair of her own would be exciting and she begins making a plan to becoming healthier and more attractive.

Alice Randall, the author, invites the reader into the thought-life of her main character. There are times that Ada seems to be afraid and times when she seems to be very immature. Because she doesn't understand how to become healthy and to lose weight she researches a number of methods, some of which are not very successful. For example, at one point she begins using a powdered drink called Medifast but even though it helps her to lose weight she realizes that she quickly becomes tired of it and risks bingeing.

Ada also seems to be very convinced that DNA testing is important to determine the foods that are best for individuals with specific genes. She does not consider the fact that there is a great deal of controversy about this.

As the book progresses, Ada's motivation seems to change. She started by thinking that her actions would lead to an affair with the former boyfriend but then, at one point, begins to think about her twin daughters and their health. She starts talking with them about the things she is doing and they follow her lead.

Ada's attitude towards her parents and Preach's mother changes, too, as she changes her priorities and begins to spend time with them in a more meaningful way.

Ada's goal was to lose one hundred pounds but by the time that she has lost seventy pounds, her whole life is different. She and Preach begin talking to each other about the things that have separated them in the past. He begins to work on organizing their finances and suddenly has a real revelation about her value. He takes a stand that surprises everyone and after a week alone Ada also comes to a point of understanding what her true motivation had been.

There were times when I had to re-read sentences because the dialogue was not clear or contained slang of which I was not familiar. Overall, though, it was an interesting read that chronicled the struggle of a middle-aged woman in her quest for self-improvement.