



Book Review: Almost a Crime

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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Things are almost never the way that they seem at first glance and this book emphasizes that point. Tom and Octavia Fleming looked good from the outside. They seem to have everything that would bring happiness: a good marriage, attractive looks, beautiful children, successful businesses, social connections and wealth.

But things begin to fall apart when one of the children became ill and Octavia discovered the fact that Tom was having an affair. She just wasn't sure who he is seeing, hesitated to confront him and was then frustrated when he did not want to share that information with her. It was hard for Octavia to carry on with her responsibilities, wondering how she would deal with this situation and there were times when she acted inappropriately because of the angst she was experiencing.

Octavia's relationship with her mother was also strained, primarily because her mom had a secret that Octavia did not share. She misinterpreted her mother's actions in a personal way and, even though she desired to have her mother's support during her own trauma, never initially understood the stress that her mother had at the same time. When she did learn about the secret, there were even more strong emotions for her to assess.

Both Tom and Octavia were interested and involved in political and social issues in their home country of England. They therefore not only continued to work with others in order to fight for the things that they valued - not only in their personal lives but also for the benefit of others.

But Tom and Octavia are not the only characters in this intriguing novel. There are other family members, co-workers, friends, business associates and lovers who play very important roles in the story line that twists and turns as new information is uncovered. Their reactions and choices made are very realistic and, because of this, we can easily relate.

Although all of the settings are in the United Kingdom, Vincenzi moves the plot to different locations that include London, Cornwall and Scotland. This adds variety and helps the reader a little about the environments that are beautifully described.

The author, Penny Vincenzi, uses her unique style of developing the characters and situations to reveal multiple secrets that easily hold the readers' interest and change the characters options. This book focusses on not one person or event but instead on multi-generational secrets and situations involving sex, business, relationships, illegitimate birth, terror and strong but hidden emotions.

"Almost a Crime" is the ninth novel of bestselling author Vincenzi who was previously a journalist and editor. The 627 pages are captivating and complex but, at the same time, what I would classify as "A good read". I recommend this book for anyone who enjoys reading about the things that affect families and the options that are available to them.

Penny Vincenzi is one of my very favourite authors and I have read all of her books. I think you will also enjoy the many hours that you will invest and enjoy as you move from one to the next to the next to the next.