



Book Review: An Outrageous Affair

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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In 1993 Penny Vincenzi wrote a wonderful work with a fairly complex plot that quickly and easily captures the attention of the reader. The story spans three decades from 1942 to 1972 and the characters who live on two continents are from three generations of one family

Caroline is the only child who feels trapped in a home where her mother suffers from mood swings and her father is rather distant. As she grows, she becomes interested in her own sexuality and, even though she gains short-term pleasure from the romantic relationships that she enters, each brings with it some serious complications.

Over time, Caroline becomes the mother of four children. She agrees that the older daughter can move from her native England to America with her father when they are separated and, throughout the story, tries to establish a healthy relationship with the girl from a distance.

In the meantime, her second daughter feels unloved by Caroline and believes that this is because her mother is grieving the loss of her firstborn.

By the time that the two women become young adults, they have developed very negative thoughts about each other even though they have never met. Chloe marries a man who is much older than she is and is quickly disappointed by the way that he does not seem to care about or try to meet her needs. Her sister, Fleur, also suffers hurt and disappointment when she finds herself living with her aunts and grandmother after her beloved father heads to Hollywood in search of fame.

And so, each of these three women move in and out of affairs, only to be horrified when a journalist who is known for his sleazy but intriguing books, begins interviewing people and writing their story. Each family member is threatened by the fact that their secrets from both past and present will be made public. Their actions to prevent this, whether wise or foolish are often fueled by fear and anger rather than by wise planning.

Vincenzi uses 624 pages to weave the complex plot that involves thirty-one main characters, many of whom are interacting with each other in dysfunctional ways.

"An Outrageous Affair" includes issues that affect most families - love, sex, finances, careers, parenting, - and the consequences that individuals face when they make choices that affect themselves as well as others.

I really enjoyed this book. The characters were portrayed in an intimate manner that made me feel like I could relate to each of them and understand what motivated their choices, but, at the same time, there were twists and turns in the plot that kept me guessing about what would happen next.

It is amazing to realize that this author has written so many wonderful tales of fiction. You may have read all of them or this may be your very first but, no matter what experience you have had with Penny Vincenzi, I believe that you will quickly become fascinated with the good reads that she offers.