



Book Review: Eighteen Acres

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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If you are interested in reading a unique novel by an author who has great insight into the setting where she places her fictional characters, I believe you will enjoy "Eighteen Acres" by Nicolle Wallace.

Ms. Wallace has been a political commentator and analyst, communications director and campaign advisor to the presidential level. Because of this, she has been able to write a plot that is very detailed and extremely realistic.

One of the main characters of this story is Charlotte Kramer who is the first female president of the United States. Her White House chief of staff, Melanie Kingston and one of the key political reporters, Dale Smith, are also females in responsible positions. All three share loyalty to their work as well as difficulties in managing their personal relationships. In fact, problems that they have in trying to balance personal and work affects and harms each of them in different ways.

A crisis occurs when President Kramer and Dale Smith head to Afghanistan where a serious attack is made on them. The result of this is that a number of secrets from their personal lives become known to the world. They are faced with drastic changes not only in their careers but also in their personal lives. Relationships that otherwise had seemed to be solid are jeopardized and the media is scrambling to cover all the details for the public. This affects popularity polls in a way that might not otherwise have occurred.

Eighteen acres is the actual size of the area on which the White House complex sits. It is therefore also an apt title for this book which focusses on staff who work and invest most of their waking hours dealing with White House issues.

The author lays out her tale in a very interesting but easy-to-understand manner. The chapters are short but each of them provides an important key to developing the overall plot. Her thirteen years of experience in politics is evident as she weaves details of protocol and scheduling in with the very real aspects of family life that each of the characters experiences. And, of course, it would not be as exciting a story if it were not for the inclusion of the corrupting influence that can accompany power.

I really enjoyed this book. It is an easy read that provides insight into what might happen in a White House of the future but, at the same time, incorporates past and present politics so that the whole thing is entirely believable.