



## **Book Review: Hard Eight**

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](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Stephanie Plum is a bounty hunter who doesn't seem to be very competent in her job. In fact, she often does things that cause the police to make fun of her - like frequently having her vehicles blown up or causing damage to the environment where she is looking for those who have skipped appearing for their Court dates. But Stephanie does the work because she needs the money to pay her bills.

In "Hard Eight", however, Stephanie is asked by the neighbour of her parents to find the lady's granddaughter and great-granddaughter who have disappeared. Stephanie knows that she will not get paid for this and has never even heard of a custody bond that involved a child. She agrees to put some effort into the case without having any idea about the danger that she would put herself in because of this.

Stephanie is an individual who isn't very good at self-care. Her diet consists mostly of sugar and she only exercises when her clothes aren't fitting very well. Her best relationship is with her hamster, Rex, who lives in her sparsely-furnished apartment. She did have what she thought was a growing relationship with Joe Morelli, vice-cop, who has been in her life since childhood, but he doesn't like her or her job or the fact that she works with Ranger. Ranger is a mysterious individual who is interested in a sexual relationship with Stephanie as long as there isn't any commitment from either of them.

Several new characters are introduced in this eighth novel in the Stephanie Plum series. Eddie Abruzzi is a very dangerous individual who is mentally ill and out to get Stephanie. Alberta Kloughn is a laundromat owner and rather unsuccessful lawyer. He is rather annoying for Stephanie but becomes her sister Valerie's employer and father of her fourth child. Jeanne Ellen Burrows is a female version of Ranger and therefore rather intimidating to Stephanie.

The plot for "Hard Eight" twists and turns but the humour and mystery are constants throughout. Danger and laughs are both present.

Stephanie's parents are also constants in this novel series. Her father is a retired postal worker who drives a cab part-time. He doesn't say much but it is obvious that he easily becomes frustrated by the antics of all the women in his life. Her mother is frequently crossing herself as she seems to be horrified by Stephanie's activities. Grandma Mazur is a very young-thinking woman who is not afraid of danger and still very interested in sex. Also living in the Plum household are recently-divorced daughter Valerie who is unmarried and pregnant as well as her two daughters, one of whom thinks she is a horse. All these family members live together with only one bathroom!

There are times when you will laugh out loud while reading this book and others when you might be tempted to chew your nails due to the suspenseful situations.

I love the Stephanie Plum series! The books are easily read and delightful! I'm sure you will also enjoy them.