



## **Book Review: Lean Mean Thirteen**

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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In the thirteenth book of the Stephanie Plum series, the heroine is asked by her mentor and love-interest Ranger to find out some information for him. The bad news is that the one who has the information is Stephanie's ex-husband, Dickie Orr. Their marriage was very short because Stephanie caught him having sex with a woman who had been her enemy since childhood, Joyce Barnhardt.

Now, Stephanie wants to help Ranger but is shocked to find out that her ex and Joyce are an item again. And then, wouldn't you know it, Dickie disappears and everyone suspects that Stephanie is behind this disappearance. But this isn't the only confusing part of the plot. Dickie was a lawyer who had formed a partnership with other men who start turning up dead. And no one knows who they are or what they doing together in the first place.

Stephanie's "on again off again" relationship with Trenton police officer, Joe Morelli has been fairly close but things change when she turns to Ranger to help protect her. Both of the men obviously love her but she doesn't know which one she wants to be with. Perhaps she values her independence too much to actually be with either of them.

Stephanie's rather unusual family also have roles in the plot. Her father doesn't say much but obviously is frustrated by the chaos created by the other family members, especially Grandma Mazur who lives with Stephanie's parents. Even though she is in her seventies, she often acts like a teenager, talking about sex and wanted to be part of any adventure that occurs. Stephanie's mother tries to deal with the stress by sticking to a strict schedule, crossing herself, ironing obsessively and reaching for the bottle that she has conveniently stored in a cupboard by the stove.

So Stephanie is frequently moving around. Sometimes she is living in her own humble apartment with her hamster Rex. Sometimes she stays at the home of her parents and grandmother. Sometimes she is living with Morelli and sometimes she is living with Ranger. She is confused and very afraid for her life because there are people who are obviously out to get her and everyone knows it.

Even Stephanie's work life is confused. She is supposed to be a bounty hunter who is contracted with her slimy cousin Vinnie Plum but earning a living based on commission for capturing those who skip their Court dates isn't always enough. Often she has to ask Lulu who is his filing clerk to help her with the cases.

Ranger also has offered her opportunities to work for him but the job can be boring and she is so attracted to him that being too close just might be risky.

Stephanie lives a very simple life - eating peanut butter sandwiches or cake for breakfast and having little in the way of lifestyle. That is, until she gets herself into very dangerous and sometimes laughable situations that even the police cannot believe happen to her.

The only problem with this book is a publication error. Pages 121 to 144 are missing while pages 145 to 168 are in the book twice!