



## **Book Review: Learning to Love**

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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Debbie Macomber is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author who has written more than two dozen fictional books. This one, "Learning to Love" actually consists of two stories that she wrote early in her career and then "refreshed".

"Sugar and Spice" tells the story of a librarian, Jayne Gilbert who is invited to attend her school reunion. She wants to go to it but feels that it would be best if she could attend with a handsome date. The bad news is that she doesn't know who that person might be as she doesn't have anyone in her life that would serve in this role. She therefore begins reading the book "How to Pick Up a Man". The surprising thing is that her neighbour, Riley Chambers, who seemed to be emotionally distant and disinterested, notices the book and this leads to some very interesting encounters. Jayne wants to be with him and although they do have some good times together, she often wonders if she should trust him as he has a very mysterious side and she knows in her heart that he isn't always telling her the truth about his activities.

"Love by Degree" features Ellen Cunningham, a woman in her mid-twenties who has decided to return to school in order to become a teacher. She answers an ad for accommodation that was placed by Derek Morgan who is also a student. As the only one of four residents in the large house that they share, she becomes the cook, housekeeper and general organizer in exchange for reduced rent. Everything runs smoothly for the students until Derek's older brother, Reed unexpectedly arrives home early from a business trip. He doesn't seem to like the arrangements that have been made but agrees to them because he is out of town a great deal of the time. Twists and turns in the plot cause frustration and confusion for everyone involved. This story, however, seems to have a much more predictable ending than "Sugar and Spice".

Both of these are romance stories that start with two people meeting, go through the antics of developing a relationship and end with commitment to each other. The characters are written with strong personalities that grab the reader's interest.

I like the way that the author has used real settings. For example, she sets up a staff party at the Space Needle in Seattle.

If you are looking for an easy read that can be completed in an afternoon, either of these stories will fit the bill!