



## **Book Review: Olive Kitteridge**

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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This book is a Pulitzer Prize winner by best-selling author Elizabeth Strout.

The fictional tale has Olive Kitteridge as the main character. She is a retired schoolteacher who lives in Maine with her husband. Because she had been a math teacher and lived in Crosby for many years, Olive knows the people well - or thinks that she does.

In fact, Olive seems to think that she even knows herself well but, as the storyline progresses, she becomes aware of a number of things that bring her new insight and subsequently a different perspective about herself and others.

Olive has had and continues to have involvement with a number of people. One of the things that she has always wanted was for everything to stay the same in her town and, because of this, she has tended to ignore the reality of what is going on around her.

Things do and have changed over the years. For example, she encounters a former student who is suicidal. She has to consider the situation of a musician who works in a lounge since being hurt from a romantic disappointment.

One of the most interesting parts of this story for the reader is to see how Olive's own family is affected by her. Olive's husband seems to be caught in a marriage that has both gifts and burdens. Her son becomes emotionally distant from her because of her attitude and behaviours. Their relationship can, at times, be filled with conflict and at other times with silence or misunderstanding.

Olive is sometimes viewed by others as being insensitive or rude. She is always honest but sometimes that is not very endearing and others can feel repelled by her. At other times, however, she demonstrates other characteristics and emotions that are friendlier or touched with humour.

This book is not just about Olive though. It is also about life in a small village - a place where all human conditions arise and everyone knows about them. It is also about the ways that individuals interact with each other while each of them is going through tragedies or joys and how sometimes the connections between them are the only things that really matter.

The book is also about our environment and how there is beauty and change that can be meaningful for everyone if we just look around.

Elizabeth Strout has written a novel that reminded me of growing up in a small town where more days are routine than not. Important events happen to people but most of life is about what happens each day in the relationships formed with family, friends and even casual acquaintances.

If you are looking for an interesting tale that will remind you of the choices we have each day and the simple ways that people support or hurt each other, then this is an easy read. The book is about the real life, everyday situations that people experience all around us every day.

"Olive Kitteridge" is 301 pages in length a paperback format.