



## **Book Review Smokin' Seventeen**

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 divorcee who has problems in several areas of her life. After losing her job as a lingerie purchaser, she was desperate and, as a result, blackmailed her cousin Vinnie into letting her work for him as a bail enforcement officer. She isn't very good at it and, in fact, doesn't like to carry a gun. Frequently she goes after someone who has skipped out on their Court date, only to fail in her attempts to capture that person. Sometimes it is worse and she either loses a vehicle in the process because it was stolen, bombed or crushed. Most times she is at risk of physical harm. But Stephanie has bills to pay and not many options so she continues in the work.

In this novel, dead bodies are being found on the lot where Vinnie had his office. Although police are involved, no one seems to know why they are there or if there is a connection that might lead to the murderer.

Stephanie becomes afraid when it seems obvious that she is also a target for murder. She also has other problems including her love life. She knows that even though her security expert mentor Ranger is very sexy and interested in her, he is not the type to commit. That doesn't stop her attraction to him. She also, however, is attracted to Trenton New Jersey police officer Joe Morelli but their on-again off-again relationship never seems to be "on" for both of them at the same time. And his grandmother, Bella, scares Stephanie. In fact, Bella puts a curse on Stephanie which causes a serious change in her life.

Stephanie's family members are eager for her to settle down into a committed relationship and are always trying to match her up with someone. This time, it is a former high school sports star who recently returned to the city. He has a number of positive traits but Stephanie doesn't think she needs more than two lovers in her life at this time.

Lulu, who left her career as a prostitute to do filing in Vinnie's office often works with Stephanie but is not usually much help. The two, however, share a comradeship that is centered around eating greasy and sugary foods.

On top of all of these complications, Stephanie encounters a dancing bear and senior citizen skipper who thinks that he is a vampire.

Stephanie often turns to her rather dysfunctional family for support and is usually fed good home-cooked meals that are laced with advice from her Grandma Mazur and horrified emotions from her mother and father. It seems that deep down they would just like her to get a steady job at the button factory and marry so that they could have grandchildren and know that she was safe.

"Smokin' Seventeen" offers mystery, good humour and the promise that things will always be entertaining. Stephanie is presented as a very real individual who just happens to get herself into a number of screwy situations.