



Book Review: Snowfall at Willow Lake

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

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Sophie Bellamy, the main character in Susan Wiggs book "Snowfall at Willow Lake" was determined to make a difference in the world. As an international lawyer, she focussed every waking hour to help people from war-torn countries. After years of dedication she was invited to meet Queen Beatrix of Holland who would present her with a medal for her work.

The night of the award ceremony, however, led to traumatic incidents that would change Sophie's life forever. Sophie witnessed guests at the ceremony being killed and beaten. Then she was taken hostage and, while travelling with her captors, decided that she had to do something or die. She grabbed the wheel of the vehicle and turned it sharply so that the van broke through the guard rail on the bridge they were crossing and plunged into the water below. This experience caused Sophie to think about her life and she decided that she needed to move closer to her children and invest in their lives. Everyone, including her family members were shocked when she left a promotion and her life in Holland in order to live in the Catskill village of Avalon on the shores of Willow Lake.

But life doesn't always turn out the way that one plans it and this is what happened to Sophie. On the drive to her new home, she hit a deer and that is how she met Dr. Noah Shepherd, a veterinarian who lived near the house that Sophie's friends had offered her on a temporary basis.

Sophie was eager to rebuild her relationships with her two children, Max and Daisy. She also wanted to be involved in the life of her grandson, Charlie and to help Daisy who was a single mother to raise him.

Sophie did not, however, want to be near her ex-husband, Greg who had remarried or the villagers who viewed Greg and his wife as upstanding citizens. She knew that she might not be accepted by the residents but decided that being close to her children would overshadow that.

It wasn't easy to fit into the new world that she entered as a stranger. Because she had been away so much, people criticized her and didn't trust her to stay long-term.

Noah was a decade younger than Sophie. He was born and raised in the village and, in fact, lived in the house of his parents. His taste in music and movies greatly different from Sophie and his approach to life was much more relaxed. At times, this helped Sophie to reinvent her life and at others times, it caused conflict between them.

Sophie's previous life was always tempting her to go back but she was determined to be there for her children in a way that she hadn't been in the past. This required learning and sacrifice beginning with something as simple as learning how to dress for the weather and culture.

The author has written an interesting romance novel in which she was able to contrast the sophistication of living as a workaholic international lawyer in Holland with the commitment of honouring the values of family while living in a small village.