



Big Sky Country

Linda Lael Miller

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No one writes Western romance better than #1 New York Times bestselling author Linda Lael Miller!

Let her take you to the town of Parable, Montana...

The illegitimate son of a wealthy rancher, Sheriff Slade Barlow grew up in a trailer hitched to the Curly-Burly hair salon his mother runs. He was never acknowledged by his father...until now. Suddenly, Slade has inherited half of Whisper Creek Ranch, one of the most prosperous in Parable County. That doesn't sit well with his half brother, Hutch, who grew up with all the rights of a Carmody, including the affections of Joslyn Kirk, homecoming queen, rodeo queen, beauty queen—and the girl Slade's never forgotten.

But Joslyn has come home to Parable under difficult circumstances. Resented by many of the townspeople cheated by her crooked stepfather, she's trying to rebuild her life and repay everyone who lost money because of his schemes. With a town to protect, plus a rebellious teenage stepdaughter, Slade already has his hands full. But someone has to convince Joslyn that she's responsible only for her own actions—and that someone is Sheriff Barlow!

Big Sky Country Details

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From Reader Review Big Sky Country for online ebook

Amanda says

I have a like/hate relationship with this book. I liked it. It was SLOW moving, but an overall decent read-- a solid 3.5 stars. The characters were likable. The premise got old, but it could have been so much worse. It had the requisite happy ending. Eventually. There wasn't a lot of drama. It wasn't cheesy or over the top.

This book simply had my pet peeve. The "I know we've only exchanged 3 sentences, and it's been MAYBE 2 days since I met you, but you're super hot and I've actually mapped out an entire relationship in my mind and I just KNOW our souls have connected (she actually used that line in the book). So, hey, I'm in such LOVE with you and I just KNOW we are going to live happily ever after because the author set it up to where we fit together just perfectly without is having to actually get to know one another.". That's called lust people. In order to get beyond infatuation and actually fall on love you have to know more about a person than the town gossip. You should maybe have a full conversation with them?!?!? Just a thought.....

That scenario is probably what made this book so slow for me-- it took me 3 days to finish. Granted, I've been super busy, but still. It NEVER takes me 3 days to read a good book-- There was so little dialogue in the story. The majority of everything happened in the characters heads. It just drove me nuts as I made myself finish the book.

Sarah says

Well, I should start by saying I'm a huge LLM fan. I've read all her stuff and loved most of it, however, this book falls short. It was extremely dull at points and the h spends most of her time talking to a cat. The book is 370 odd pages and the H and h don't even kiss until around page 265. The romance is flat, they spend forever talking to their pets, then they kiss, fall into bed, and the end. I realize the first book of the series needs to set up for the following books, and it sometimes takes a while to get things rolling but. . . I was beginning to wonder if this book would ever end. If this had been written by anyone other than the wonderful Ms. Miller, I would have stopped reading around page 200. Hopefully the next installment in the parable series will be better.

Lisa says

My first LLMiller book and I appreciate that Goodreads opens reviews to all viewers--I needed to keep seeing that Miller has a huge fan base and is worth trying again.

My main comment on this book is that it was very sloppy. We all have our pet peeves, and careful writing is one of mine. The most jarring, continually throughout, was Miller's time sequences. Slade and Joslyn walk into a restaurant (first date), get seated and almost get served before they ordered (not really, of course, but food arrived in the next sentence). Another time Slade never even takes a bite before he's lashing out at Hutch and he "pushes away the rest of his uneaten cheeseburger." The rest? Oh, you mean all of it since he CLEARLY never took a bite. Then, the night of Kendra's party, the dance floor is laid (at no small effort), Joslyn has one dance, and next sentence/paragraph the band is finished, packing up. Things like this

happened all over the book.

This almost reminds me of a mad lib--I think those are still around. The pieces just don't quite fit together--you need an [emotion] and you get an [action]. Hero and heroine have date, hero gets upset by snotty half brother, date ends. It's done in about as many sentences and with about as much finesse.

Maybe Miller has ADD. She goes into SUCH detail on things and then skims right over the next. It's rather disconcerting.

****PARTIAL SPOILER****

In 2 pages of one chapter a portion of a day is revealed, in the next sentence 3 months pass and we are suddenly at the big race day. Say what? Not only is the timing of this handled very oddly (what author writes off months in a single sentence in the middle of a chapter --with no pause, no leading the reader from and to the before and after?), but, as well, there is NO explanation as to why Slade and Joslyn never have sex for all those months after having just had it for the first time. This makes totally NO sense. My judgement of Miller was that she was too lazy to fill in the gap b/c she just wanted to get the book done.

And then, SUCH a minor detail, but it's like listening to a senile person rant about the trivial--cat Lucy-Mae (was it? I forget) is repetitively mentioned as pregnant, almost ad nauseam (were this a thriller you'd think there was HUGE significance to this fact) and then in that 1-sentence leap of 3 months to race time the cat is never mentioned again. Ever. She had to have had the kittens during the 3 months (obviously), but she and her offspring are deleted from the story. The texting use of WTF seems to fit here. Why bother to introduce the fact the cat is pregnant? She could have just been a cat.

Another testament to sloppy is that in the beginning of the book Joslyn rarely eats and is never hungry. She is CONTINUALLY starting to eat then gets upset and pushes her food away. It's like a skip on the cd where the same segment keeps repeating. Not only is this boring, lazy writing, it also upsets me because it glamorizes not eating, it stereotypes "upset woman who doesn't eat," but most of all it is unrealistic--she goes on like this for days, maybe weeks (the time segments--as I've been saying here--are often sketchy). Unless Miller wants to turn Joslyn anorexic, the girl would be hungry!

Not much else to say than this. Daughter Shae and mother Callie are wonderful additions to the story and there are many passages with all characters throughout the book that are enjoyable. It's just too disjointed to be considered a good read. It's just like having a nicely designed house built by shoddy builders. The overall concept is good, but the execution is sloppy and poorly put together.

It's interesting, I went ahead and read the reviews for the next book in the series and no surprise--those who gave it low stars are saying Miller gets caught in minutia and doesn't present a realistic/cohesive story. Not sure why disjointedness is such a problem with this series.

I'm going to try another LLMiller and see if I can find why so many love her.

Jennifer says

This book was just "eh." I love contemporary romances about cowboys as much as the next person but this one was lackluster. The heroine, Joslyn, has had guilt over a scheme that her stepfather perpetuated when she was a teenager. She has let this affect her entire life and she has come back to her hometown for some reason

that is never really explained to the readers. This is completely unbelievable as a plot point and Miller never took the time to really flesh Joslyn's character out to make it seem a little more believable. The hero, Slade, is just as bad. He is the illegitimate son of a local rancher who inherits half of his father's estate upon his death. Since Slade was never acknowledged by his father this came as a complete shock to him and his legitimate half-brother. Huh?! Okay, this is an interesting plot point, but all of the characters- Slade, his half-brother, and his mother- were all so shallowly built that none of this was believable either. Then, after one roll in the hay, Joslyn and Slade ignore their feelings until the day of a race between Slade and his brother (which was itself a cool plot point that was wholly under utilized) he tells her he loves her and she reciprocates. There was no talk of their feelings growing stronger throughout the book so this was also random and unbelievable.

I think Miller was being lazy when she wrote this book. She didn't make great, complex characters that were memorable. She set up this little town and the beginnings of some interesting characters, but didn't flesh them out enough to make any of their actions ring true. It felt like she tried to push characters into situations that she wanted for a story rather than creating a set of strong characters and letting their personalities dictate their actions.

I give this story a B- for boring.

Susan says

I really liked this book. It starts out with Slade and Hutch at the reading of the will. Slade is a fairly laid back guy who is pretty slow to anger. He also tends to think well before he speaks or acts. He has always resented the fact that his father never acknowledged him or gave his mother any kind of support, but has made a good life for himself in spite of it. Hutch is ticked that Slade has been given half of everything that he always expected to be his, and is determined to buy Slade out so he can have it back. Every time the two of them are together the tension is up. Joslyn has come back to Parable, which she still considers her home. She is deeply ashamed of what her stepfather did, and sold her software company and used the money to confidentially repay the people he cheated. There are some people who have welcomed her back, and others who haven't, but she still feels at home here. She has also felt an immediate attraction to Slade, but doesn't expect anything to come of it. Slade also feels the attraction and is very interested in seeing where it goes. Slade also ends up with his teenage stepdaughter staying with him. I loved seeing her and her interactions with people. Slade is trying to curb her rebelliousness with work and rules, while Shea tries to get away with what she can. She also seems to have no filter between brain and mouth and says some pretty interesting things to both Joslyn and Slade. There are also some good scenes with the dog who adopts Slade and the cat that adopts Joslyn. The dialogue in the book is great, with sarcasm and humor and tenderness all there. While there wasn't any really intense conflict in the book, there was enough emotion to really suck me in. I'm looking forward to book two, which is Hutch and Kendra's story, and book three I expect will be that of Boone and probably Tara.

Marleen says

Here I am, giving this author another try and, eventually finding myself somewhat disappointed because Big Sky Country seems to me like rather generic effort by Linda Lael Miller. In all honesty, this story just leaves me indifferent – simply because there's nothing special about it and I've read it all before – for me, it's one

in a dozen.

This was an audiobook and in my opinion the narrator wasn't really suited for this story.

I personally feel that this author's past work is so much better (referring to her earlier Stone Creek series and McKettrick series) – and her two “Mojo” books were simply superb and original. Her earlier work and storylines were definitely of higher quality.

1,5 stars out of 5.

Trisha says

ooooh, ignore my rating.

This just isn't my kind of story, not my kind of book. I read it for a challenge so I just managed to get through it.

I did think the added storyline of the will and Shea was interesting but I didn't find them terribly original. most of the other adult silly drama (and...uh...adult stuff) was just...boring.

meh. just not my kind of book. oh well.

Naksed says

Made it to 58%. This is obviously a good writer who takes her time with setting and characterizations. There were some poignant moments, as when the hero realizes his deadbeat dad who never even acknowledged him during his lifetime had an over the top attachment for his dog, for whom he celebrated every birthday and Christmas. So the guy was obviously capable of emotional attachment, kindness and compassion, just not for his illegitimate son. The heroine carried her portion of grief and guilt with a crook step dad who ruined the life of so many in the small town where she grew up and where she tries to reintegrate.

There were even some nice added touches with the inclusion of pets with big personality for each of the main characters. I am personally a sucker for animals, both real and fictional :)

But maaaaan! Twelve chapters and zero chemistry between the two protagonists. It's not even a slow burn. There's just no heat, nada. Worse, nothing happens. There are a lot of monotonous, mundane minutiae. Hero drives his truck. Heroine takes a shower. Hero gets a coffee to go at the local diner. Heroine bakes focaccia bread. Neighbor pops in. Best friend shares a glass of wine. Heroine makes a quick trip to the local discount store. Dog likes canned meat, not his dry kibbles, because he is a picky eater. Cat is pregnant with kittens, making heroine wonder if she is to turn into a crazy cat lady (at least, that would spice up the nonexistent plot!). Etc. Etc. Etc. Sorry, but had to give up. I am sure these two will eventually get together but by this point, I have unfortunately run out of any interest whatsoever in their story.

Fernanda says

:)

bem... apesar de ser a minha muito querida LLM, esta historia estava meio sem sal. pouco apelativa e já com o dito modelo (!) já explorado qb.

apesar de tudo, não deixou de ser "cute" e que dá para uma leitura agradável sem grandes expectativas.

Tina "IRead2Escape" says

Big Sky Country is the first book in Linda Lael Miller's new series, Swoon-Worthy Cowboys. I am a huge fan of Linda Lael Miller and have found another great series to love. This book is about so many things. The love of a step father, the hurts that a father can cause, forgiveness, acceptance, overcoming the past, healing.

Slade Barlow is the sheriff of Parable, Montana. He was raised modestly by a single mother in this very town, all the while being completely ignored and unclaimed by his wealthy and affluent father. The book starts with the reading of this same father's will. Of course, all believe that his assets and many millions will be left to his "legitimate" son Hutch Carmody. Surprise, surprise old John Carmody splits everything between his two sons. Hutch would like nothing more than to buy Slade out and keep Whisper Creek Ranch "in the family". To add to the mix, Slade's 16 year old step-daughter from his previous marriage is back in the picture and needs her "dad" to make life better.

Joslyn Kirk, prom queen, beauty queen, homecoming queen - has returned home after the death of her step father. She, her mother and housekeeper Opal fled Parable, Montana after her step-father swindled many of the towns people out of their hard earned savings in a get rich quick scheme. She's back to face the townspeople and take responsibility for his actions. In the process she finds herself.

Slade not only has to make a decision about Whisper Creek Ranch, but the rest of his life, as well. Does he really want half the ranch or is he just holding out to aggravate his half brother? Can he adjust and be what his 16 year old step daughter needs? Can he convince Joslyn that she doesn't have to make amends and do penance for the sins of her step father?

Pros:

This is a great book. It's a bit slow in parts, but that's normal for a first book in a series. Linda did a great job in creating the characters and relationships between them. She lays great groundwork for the upcoming books. I can not wait to read the next books in this series.

Cons:

Weirdly enough I only have one. Joslyn and Kendra have been lifelong best friends. Yet, there are so many secrets between them. This is very unbelievable to me. Kendra is described throughout the book as one of the only 2 people of Parable, Montana to stand by Joslyn when her step-father shamed the family. Yet, Kendra hides past relationships and her feelings about them. She doesn't lean on or call in the middle of the night for support when her ex-husband is dying and requests Kendra at his bedside. I get the secrets are important for the next book. But, it's very hard to swallow that any friends, least of all best friends would be this closed off emotionally from one another.

Phyllis says

This book was such a disappointment compared to most of Miller's other books.

It is the first book in a new series and I don't understand why she has to throw so much into every book. Her books are so formulaic now that you know exactly what is going to happen, but this one was even worse.

SPOILERS!!!! (maybe)

The book takes place in Montana -- a girl coming home. Her stepfather had swindled the towns people out of money in the past. The beginning of the book was about how she had made money at a software company then sold it and sent checks to the families her stepfather had stolen money from. The people in the town weren't very happy to see her because of the hurt her stepfather had caused --- then BAM! That story line totally disappeared from the book.

She meets Slade, the sheriff, they think each other are hot, but they barely spend anytime together, it takes until the end of the book before they even kiss, then all of a sudden they are in love.

Slade has a step daughter that shows up for no reason to carry the story along. I don't understand why LLMiller feels the need to already have kids in most of her stories. This was not a plausible situation. Kids keep adults from having time to get to know each other and spend time together and I just don't understand why there is always a kid in her story. And a lot of the times, the child doesn't even belong to the main character.

Anyway, I think this book was just not up to par, but it introduced characters for the next in the series, so maybe that one holds more potential.

She had lots of better books to read than this one.

Yodamom says

3.5 stars. A lovely story about love, forgiveness, trust, reconnecting, and of course horses, cowboys, truck, a dog and even a cat. You take a young woman scarred from a crime her step-father committed which hurt almost her whole town. Give her the strength to come back and try to make good on it. Then you take an outcast illegitimate cowboy sheriff who never knew the love of a father. He had to watch his father's legitimate son raised wealthily and respected while he and his mother struggled. You put these two childhood friends together among old boyfriends, ex wives, angry towns people and insecurities and you have one wild ride mixed with country charm.

A great beginning to a series I plan on following. I can't wait for the next book. Good old fashioned romantic comfort reading.

Jonetta says

Slade Barlow, the divorced Sheriff of Parable Montana, grew up as the illegitimate son of wealthy rancher, John Carmody, who never acknowledged him as his son. Now that he is dead, Carmody decides he's going to come clean with the town's worst-kept secret by including Slade in his will. Slade now shares half of his estate with his half brother, Hutch, who was raised by Carmody with all of the rights and perks of that legacy. Joslyn Kirk returns to Parable following the shame of her stepfather's crooked actions that cheated many of the town's residents in an investment scheme. While she had nothing to do with his activities, Joslyn makes it her mission to atone for his actions in a town hostile to her return.

This was an entertaining story of small town western life in the big sky state of Montana. Slade's conflict over his father's bequest, having his teenage stepdaughter live with him for the summer and his struggles with his obvious attraction to Joslyn were the central issues. I never quite understood why he and Joslyn tried to deny their attraction and it became irritating. The secondary characters have potential in making the series very interesting but their roles seem to drift and they ended up pretty one-dimensional, never really taking life. For example, Kendra Shepard, Joslyn's best friend who took her in and has her helping out in her business, inexplicably left town for a few months, leaving her real estate company unattended and then suddenly returns months later when Slade and Hutch decide to do something risky.

While I enjoyed the story, I never really engaged with any of the characters (except Jasper the dog!!) and the plot seemed to meander. I'm hoping the next book in the series is more interesting.

Steven Walle says

Big Sky Country is about a young lady who is paying retribution for her Father's sins in a small fictitious town in Montana.

It was pretty slow although the writing was very picturous in the descriptions of the scenery.
Enjoy and Be Blessed.

? Kimberly says

rating 3.5 new series..Big Sky Country is the first in a new contemporary romance series called Swoon-Worthy Cowboys by popular author Linda Lael Miller. If you follow my blog, you know I am not a huge fan of contemporary romance. There are two exceptions; small towns and heroes in cowboy boots. I have read several of Miller's series and loved them. In particular The McKittrick's and the Creed's. Big Sky Country offers a new town and cast of characters to fall in love with. Each of Miller's books are designed to be read as standalone. I enjoy reading them in order and building relationships with the characters.

This new series takes place in the small town of Parable, Montana. The tale offers us Joslyn Kirk's and Slade Barlow's story. Joslyn has just returned to the town of Parable after her family left years ago in the middle of

the night. She and her mother where shamed into leaving when her step-father was sent to jail for swindling half of the town folk out of their money. Joslyn has recently sold her successful company and has secretly begun paying them back. Parable has always been home to her and so she returns. Her best friend, Kendra Shepherd, gives her a job as a receptionist in her successful real estate business. Joslyn finds herself living in the guest house of the home she and her family once owned. Swoon worthy Sheriff Slade Barlow is living in limbo after a painful divorce that left him more upset about the lost of his step-daughter then his wife. He is due for re-election, but secretly dreams of owning his own ranch. Things are about to get a little crazy for him. He learns the father who never claimed him as a son has left him half of Whisper Creek Ranch. As if that wasn't enough he bumps into Joslyn the former beauty and rodeo queen who stirred something in him as a teenager. The chemistry between them is all fireworks. Both are hung up on their own personal demons and neither knows how to react. They choose avoidance...however this doesn't work at all, and the tale that unfolds is delightful.

I love the town of Parable and we meet some memorable characters. There is Hutch the legitimate son of John Carmody and the half-brother of Slade. Kendra Shepherd looks like a million bucks and personifies success, but inside she is lonely and fearful of love. Other characters make the tale and the town come alive and I look forward to hearing more of their stories. I like both Slade and Joslyn, they are good people and their pasts present them with a lot of emotional luggage. Seeing them dance around the fireworks that occur whenever they are near each other is hilarious. When the two of them finely connect..the results are smoking! I want to thank netGalley and Harlequin for providing this ARC in exchange for my unbiased review.

you can see this and other reviews on my blog:[Caffeinated Book Reviewer](#)
