



## One Wish

*Linda Lael Miller*

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*New York Times* bestselling author Linda Lael Miller gave readers "a gift to treasure" (*Romantic Times*) with her acclaimed *Springwater Seasons* novels. Now, once again capturing the spirit of early America, she delivers a marvelous tale of love, family loyalty, and passionate desire on the Western frontier -- where fairy tales sometimes do come true.

She was the only child of a rich and powerful rancher. He was the son of a drunken ne'er-do-well. But when eleven-year-old Luke Shardlow rescued eight-year-old Charity Barnham from drowning, she promised him one wish...any wish his heart might desire.

Fifteen years later, Charity and Luke meet once more, but the gulf between them seems as wide as ever.

Charity is engaged to a neighboring rancher her father has chosen for her. Luke still seems to be a Shardlow to the core -- a drifter, maybe even an outlaw, on a road to nowhere. But things are not always what they appear, for Luke has a few secrets to hide. And as a sweet, sensual passion begins to grow between them, Luke and Charity discover that the only wish either of them long to fulfill is to spend a sweet eternity in each other's arms -- no matter the cost.

## One Wish Details

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## **From Reader Review One Wish for online ebook**

### **Jody says**

Love in the western frontier. Romance, drama, gunfights, blackmail, secrets; an interesting book from cover to cover. If you like westerns, you will love this novel. I didn't want it to end, but was happy with the ending!

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### **Rochelle Rudicil says**

Love Linda Miller books but hated the ending of this one. Never understand why the man leave, woman has child (neither new she was preg when he left), and then he comes back after she has had baby and all is forgiven. Whatever!

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### **Drucilla says**

Your typical historical romance, no surprises here. I do think that the way the author had the characters get together at the end was kind of ridiculous. It seemed like she ran out of pages and had to quickly tie up everything.

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### **Marilyn Miles says**

I don't normally read non-contemporary stories, but enjoyed this one and found it hard to put down.

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### **RD says**

This book is an example of how Linda Lael Miller's writing has deteriorated over the past few years. The story started out somewhat promisingly but less than a quarter way through it just started going downhill. I had to force myself to finish the book, skimming the last third just to get through it.

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### **Debbie says**

Coming home was never easy but with a name like Shardlow, know for his murdering father and his thieving half-brother, Luke never expected anyone to be happy to see him again. Finding Charity Barnham, the daughter of a powerful rancher up a tree made him remember what he had been through as a young boy. A moment with Charity could not change his plans, he had to track and take down his older half-brother no matter who he had to fool to do it. She had heard the stories but she was not prepared to find out the type of man Luke really was, the stories just didn't seem to match the man she was getting to know and surprisingly was beginning to fall for regardless of what her fathers wishes were.

1889, Washington Territory - Pride, is the normal reason for any distance between loves in these historical novels, and this one is no different. I enjoyed the characters and the setting. There was something about the writing that occasionally had me shaking my head - as to say 'why was it worded like that'. Liked how strong and determined Charity was and how in the end Luke made better decisions. I felt the ending should have been a little different, didn't seem entirely finished to me even though it was the typical 'happily ever after' scenario. First Linda Lael Miller I have read, I will probably read another if I come across one that sounds good, but I won't rush out to get one.

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### **Malika-Liki says**

I read this book after reading an entry on endearing western romance heroes by Stacey Kayne in [pettycoatandpistols.com](http://pettycoatandpistols.com). I do love when the characters are from opposite side of town like in *Apache Flame* by Madeline Baker and I did love their interaction.

I also loved the fact that she was a strong character and that she named her daughter Mariettan, I just appreciate her more.

I would have loved to discover a little bit more about Molly the doc and how Raoul found out that he finally, loved her.

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### **Wendy says**

I like this book a lot. Though I didn't think that it was quite as good as her Stone Creek series. The characters were funny and she writes them very real. I love Miller for that. The story wasn't contrite or predictable. It set a nice pace and kept you interested. I give it 4 out of 5 stars.

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### **Andrea says**

The beginning of the novel captured my interest fairly well, and I kept wanting to read, because it was pretty enjoyable. Charity was mostly likable, and she had some of the same traits as me, which is always nice to read. She wasn't one to sit around once she made a decision, and she seemed to be a caring, honest person. I didn't like her when she snapped at Luke when he came to help out at the church when the children came down with the measles though, or when her fiancé Raoul showed up and she was being rude. Her interest in Luke happened quickly, almost instantly when they met, but it wasn't the annoying, rushed job most romance authors make, where it's unrealistic. It was believable and genuine, because Charity would be affected by his touches and his concern for her, and I could see how she was starting to become interested in him because of these moments.

And then things started taking a turn. Charity was independent and self-reliant in the beginning, but then, as she began to know Luke more, she starts losing that and morphed into the kind of woman I hate: the kind that listens to a man instead of doing what they want. She started getting on my nerves, and I didn't agree with the choices she made or the way she reacted to things.

Charity, for someone that was innocent, was quite bold, and I didn't care for it. I didn't like when Charity put Luke's hand on her breast. That was way too forward, and I hate forward women. It was way too soon for

them to be doing that. And Luke was bruised and injured from being beaten by his brother, so it was also the wrong time and place for that. I also didn't like when she suggested to Luke that they could get married so she could keep the ranch. I don't like the whole "she has to marry or else" thing, and I sure as heck don't like when the woman asks the man to marry her. It's all wrong. When she tried it again later on, and Luke agreed to marry her, I was turned off. The story went in a direction I didn't care for. Luke made a comment that he was a traditional man that wanted to get married one time, and he imagines himself telling his future wife about this story, that he had to get married so Charity could get her ranch, and to himself it sounds bad. How lovely.

Luke was a jerk at several points, the typical "indolent" and "mischievous" man that's really just crude and rude, though Luke wasn't half as bad as most of the men I've read about. Charity was talking to her dad, and Luke just barges in and starts questioning him about the ledger, which Charity had said not to do. She gets a little put out, not nearly as mad as she should have been, and he lays down the law about their marriage, saying he's the husband and he'll protect her and all that, and she's the wife and he "suspects she understands her duties fairly well." How crude and insulting to say the only thing she's going to do is give him sex. How incredibly chauvinistic. I don't know why authors like for the man to act that way, but it's not romantic at all. And he mentions collecting on his wish and Charity actually wants to kiss him. After he treated her that way, she should be mad at him. Here's another forgiving doormat of a woman willing to take anything, and is too lustful over him to care about any wrong he does her.

Charity turned a sniffing, sniveling baby and I was so disgusted I just skimmed and scanned much of the rest of the book, not caring what happened at all. Vance, Luke's brother, slaps her and makes a mark on her skin, not an actual cut that drew blood, but just enough to where a mark was left (I guess the author wanted Luke to have something to be mad about, but didn't want Charity's skin marked too bad, convenient) and as soon as Luke comes home she shows him the mark, like a total baby. I expected her to not say anything at all, to do the brave, self-sacrificing thing, and Luke would just find it on his own. But no, Charity shares it in the typical whiny, babyish fashion. Luke, of course, gets mad, and starts to go after Vance. Charity repeatedly clings to his arm and pulls him back, not wanting him to go into danger. Well what did you think was going to happen when you showed him the mark on you, you big idiot? If you don't want him hurt, then you shouldn't have told him what happened.

Luke goes back to the house with her, and Charity knows he wants something as interesting or whatever as going after his brother would have been, so they have sex. Except when Charity wakes up Luke is gone and there's a note that says only "sorry, stay here" or something like that. Charity is rightfully mad, so I expect her to go out and confront things, to try to help Luke, and then get mad at him. But lo and behold, she does exactly what Luke *told* her to do, and stays right in the house with the door barred.

Higgins, the corrupt marshal, comes to the door and it was so incredibly obvious that he was lying about Luke having been shot, but Charity rushes out with no questions asked, and walks right into the trap that Vance had set. He orders his men to tie her up, but not to touch her. Miller wants a little danger, like ropeburn, but not enough actual danger, like rape or torment. No, she won't go that far to her little baby Charity. Not that I wanted Charity to get raped, but it was kind of odd that Vance specifically ordered his men not to do that. I thought he was supposed to be evil. Again, it was just convenient.

Luke comes and busts Charity out, like we expected anything different. And Charity isn't mad at him at all. Even though he lied and used sex as a means to distract her, knowing she would fall asleep afterward so he could sneak out, she says not one word to him about it. She turns into a crying little whiny idiot who looks at him with tearful eyes and says "I was scared." Oh boy, save me from helpless, cowardly women. And Luke acts like the burns around her wrists and ankles where the rope cut her are just the worse things in the world. Charity cries as he puts rum on them and it burns. Need I say more about the annoyances she caused me? How about some real scars, something actually plausible to cry about?

It had all the characteristics of a cookie-cutter romance, with the grinning, suggestive, indolent bordering on insolent male, the female that's supposed to be fiery but isn't, and "evil" villains that surfaced when convenient. The whole business with Luke's brother was just odd to me. The story didn't need it at all. Then Luke just leaves, because that was what he was going to do in the beginning. It was just stupid. And of course Charity was pregnant. Gosh, I'm so sick of that.

I didn't like how Charity treated the situation with Raoul. She was insensitive to his feelings and treated him with anger when she should have been gentle. She stated over and over again that she would never choose him and she would always want Luke, which was cruel. She didn't deserve Raoul at all. He was too good for her, and the author only used him for a little jealousy on Luke's part, and to make Luke like a martyr, doing what was best for Charity and telling Raoul to marry her. What a complete joke. And Raoul pursued Charity until the end when Luke left, saying he would take her even though he knew she had slept with Luke. Yeah, right. Raoul had looked at Molly, the doctor, and the doctor had been caught looking at him too. And Charity remarked that Raoul was in love with Molly and he didn't know it. You've got to be kidding me. For convenience's sake, just have him "love" another woman the whole time, but be unaware of it. And when the main woman he thinks he loves get with someone else, have him marry the woman out of the blue.

I'm not sure why all the crap was in here about Jonah, and Blaise, and Genesis (boy, what names) and Charity's mom who was thought to be dead—turns out she just left—no, wait, she's really dead now. It was just dragging the story down and getting use sidetracked from the main story...oh wait, there was no story. Luke wanted to kill his brother and collect a bounty...and Charity wanted to run the ranch. What a plot!

And it infuriated me to no end that Charity rushed headlong into a marriage with a virtual stranger, whom she knew barely anything about. There again, the author used convenience time and time again, saying things like "Charity had judged him long ago and found him trustworthy," or "Charity knew that to be false," or "she didn't think that was true at all" in regards to Vance claiming that Luke had actually killed their father, or some such thing, or that Luke had killed someone. *Excuse* me? You're having a character instantly believe that something is true or not true, based on nothing, instead of taking the time for them to question or investigate it? Wow. The laziness of this author knows no bounds. And there was one wild story flying around that Luke had skinned a man because he beat a whore, and Charity remarks that it wasn't true. But when Luke attacks her captors she said it just might be true. Well which one is it? I waited for her to come out and ask him, and she NEVER did! Wtf? And she doesn't find out until nearly the very end that Luke was a bounty hunter, and she doesn't have a word to say about it! You married a freakin bounty hunter, an occupation she was not okay with, and she doesn't confront him about it at all—ever. That makes sense.

I thought Luke was going to be different. I expected a sweet romance with a caring man, like I was led to believe in the beginning. But the author shaped him into the standard jerk of today's romance novels, and it ruined the story for me. The author sabotaged her own work by jumping on the bandwagon and using the same mold that nearly all romance authors have used before her when creating their own characters. Just once I'd like to see an author use their own brain to create a man that actually cares about how the woman feels.

Oh, and the love scenes. Omg! They were so lacking it wasn't even funny. I expected so much more. The sex was over in like half a page, or at the most a page, if I remember correctly. And there were no details, no descriptions of what was going on. There were just stupid sensations and flowery speech, and it was so unsatisfying. I waited so long for these 2 to come together and that's all I got. I hate when romance authors don't write out the romance and blow over it like they're bashful of the subject. That's what a romance book is about!

I expected Luke to be a virgin, because they'd met when he was 11. Naturally, I thought he would remember

her and be faithful to that moment. Silly me. We spend a great deal of the novel without those unsavory distasteful comments about the man's past, and then Luke makes a comment that if he hadn't met Charity he would've gone to a place where women specialize in that or whatever, and that was disgusting. So you're traditional enough to want to marry only one woman, but you'll sleep with countless whores? How respectable, and what a true gentleman. And Charity, the virgin full of bountiful knowledge on the subject, realizes when she sleeps with him that he must have been with women to share their "tutelage" on the matter, but has no thoughts on the subject, like she's completely okay with it. Okayy.

The ending was utterly ridiculous. Charity had so much to be mad at him about, and the author just kept with her theme of convenience. She has Charity be happy that Luke is back, and not mad at all that he left her for 13 months and missed out on her baby's first 5 months of life. Yeah, you don't have anything at all to be mad about. It made me sick, the ending of this book did.

And the "one wish" kept surfacing again and again and again, until I was sick of hearing about it. They brought it up like 5 times, and I kept expecting him to make his freakin wish, which he didn't end up doing until the epilogue. And he wishes to love her and protect her for the rest of her life. How nice. Wanna know what my one wish is? That I hadn't wasted my time on this mediocre sleep aid.

I don't see myself reading a Linda Lael Miller novel again, because this was dry, boring, and as steamy as lukewarm water. The plot, what little there was, was overshadowed by side characters and their own dramas, and then all of a sudden—BAM! The epilogue is before you and the story is being raced to the finish line with a happily-ever-after ending that is enough to make you want to puke it's so perfect.

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## **Darlene Infantino says**

Ranching, romance, love all in one book!

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## **Prairie Lover says**

Another enjoyable read from Linda Lael Miller ... This wasn't her best but I've yet to find anything I could label as her worst. That book has to be written by this author. I just love all of her stories ... her works are the surest bet for any reader who loves historical romances set in the 19th century American West. If you like your fiction with a dash of spice and aren't fond of squeaky clean and 'inspirational' stories, pick up one of her yarns and you'll be a loyal reader after the 1st chapter.

I have my list of attributes that draw me to a particular offering in this genre. This one lacked a few but had the rest: a bounty hunter, ranches, a heroine struggling to hold her own in a male dominated society, a hero who hails from the wrong side of the tracks finding himself in love and more surprisingly loved in return by a woman he feels he isn't worthy to have. There are also the plot thickening components to add to the mix like the hero's worst enemy who uses the hero's feelings for the heroine to exact some revenge; along with the nemesis who wants the heroine and isn't afraid to reveal his feelings - and you want to dislike him but you just can't and neither can the hero; the heroine's strong willed and protective father; blended families; buried secrets and surprise babies. Indeed all the food groups are present here so I consumed it all and left the table feeling wholly satisfied but wanting a little dessert (a Linda Lael Miller novella would do the trick I think).

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**Lauri says**

It felt over complicated. No one ever said what they actually felt. I heard a military leader say that you don't want an equal, fair fight; you want to dominate to protect your team. The so called feared gunslinger didn't believe it. It didn't make me think he was a good guy. It made me feel like unneeded drama.

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**Jeanne says**

Steamy western. The story of Luke Shardlow and Charity Barnham. When these two were children, Luke saved Charity when she fell in the creek, and she granted him one wish. Luke returns as an adult. Luke is a bounty hunter chasing his half-brother, Vance. Shoot-em-ups and Beat-em-ups ensue.

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**Malissa Oconnor says**

I loved this book the suspense and the story line was great.

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**Sharon says**

One Wish was OK. It seemed more like an older book than something recent by Miller. It felt like someone editing out a bunch of sentences that I felt like I missed much of the actions. The slow scenes dragged but the action scenes seemed like they were missing something and went to fast.

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