



## The Wedding Garden

*Linda Goodnight*

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**The Wedding Garden** Linda Goodnight

"Are You My Dad?"

The young boy's question shocks Sloan Hawkins. Until Sloan realizes he is this child's father. Years ago, the former bad boy was run out of Redemption, Oklahoma, where, ironically, he was thought unredeemable. The only people who believed in him were his beloved aunt and Annie Markham, the girl he loved and left behind. Now Sloan is back to face his past and help keep his aunt's cherished garden thriving. But when he discovers his secret child--and that single mother Annie never stopped loving him--he's determined that a wedding will take place in the garden nurtured by faith and love.

## The Wedding Garden Details

Date : Published May 1st 2010 by Steeple Hill Love Inspired

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Author : Linda Goodnight

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## **From Reader Review The Wedding Garden for online ebook**

### **Ashley says**

I would actually give this book 3 1/2 stars. I really grew to love all the characters in the book. I had a hard time putting it down and read it in a day and a half. However the two main characters lack of communication with each other and making assumptions that they wouldn't be able to work past their past issues drove me a little nuts. It had a good twist at the end and some unexpected suspense. I enjoyed this quick read.

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### **K. Dawn says**

Great book. This is one of the better Love Inspired books. No wonder it's up for some awards! Ms. Goodnight did a wonderful job of characterization and was great at building romantic tension. The characters kept me turning the pages and the twist at the end was unexpected, making it a satisfying read for someone who normally reads mostly suspense.

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### **Kieraanne says**

While I enjoyed this easy read, I did find the characters constant lack of communication rather annoying "I love him but, oh he could never forgive this or that" or "if only we could be together, but I know she must secretly hate me..." Bah. Stupidheads. The random mystery at the end was exciting for the 15 pages or so that it lasted... I also find these "born again" (?) books interesting. It's nice I guess how these people can just one day say a prayer and suddenly they "find Jesus" and their entire lives are different. In my experience it takes a little more work than that, but at least I didn't have to worry about any bad scenes in this book. ;)

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### **Cathy Daniel says**

So thankful for the recommendation! I have ordered the rest of the books in this series! Such a good mix of romance, sad and mystery but happy ending of course. Linda Goodnight is quickly becoming a favorite!!

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### **Gail says**

This is a nice book, a reunion romance. Hero was the town bad boy, son of a single mother who abandoned him, & raised by an aunt. Heroine was the only other person who ever believed in him. Now the aunt is ill, dying, and he's come home to look after her. Heroine is the aunt's hospice care nurse. She's widowed, with a son. Aunt's pride & joy is her garden, which often hosted weddings. Hero decides to restore it for her. Then he learns heroine's son is his, and there are lots of bridges to rebuild. I liked the book, but found the mystery plot a little jarring. Still, it's a good read.

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## **Emily says**

I would give this book zero stars if I could. I don't read a lot of these Christian romance novels, so I don't have much to compare this to, but I wish I wouldn't have wasted my time. The Characters, dialogue, and setting are completely cliché. The plot is not believable and has a creepy twist that the author doesn't really even hint is in the works. The theology is awful. Lets throw in a couple of "Lord, please help me"s and a conversion experience that happens overnight with absolutely no reference to the Bible, and no real change in the character other than that he now has "an inner peace" and "a presence" that will always be with him, and now you have a Christian novel!

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## **Jill says**

# 2 in Redemption River Series After 12 year Sloan returns to Redemption River to spend time with his dying Aunt. The nurse caring for his Aunt turns out to be is "long lost love". He left town as the "bad seed" of the town and returns home a successful business man, but does anyone really believe he has changed?  
Sloan/Annie/Aunt Lydia/ Justin

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## **Kathryn Cooper says**

Reviewed on Clean Adult Fiction

I loved this story!!! It had it all- romance, family, suspense, mystery. It wasn't fast paced but a truly enjoyable read.

Sloan had left the town of Redemption long ago thinking it was for the best not knowing he'd left a son behind. Now he was back to see his dying aunt, the only family he had. Annie was the girl he thought he wasn't good enough for and now she was his aunt's at-home nurse. Annie and Sloan had to spend a lot of time around each other as Annie cared for his aunt.

I loved watching the story unfold. I think what made me love this story so much was because I loved the characters. Sloan and Annie had their own challenges and past heartaches that made me want them to find happiness.

This was a wonderful romance and story of Redemption. I cried and laughed, was happy and heartbroken. A fantastic read!

Content Ratings:

sexual: mild

language: none

violence: very mild

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## **J. says**

I was taken with the first book in the Redemption River series and was even more so with the second book, *The Wedding Garden*. This story has it all: an alpha former bad boy, his true love from high school, gardening (!!!), surprises and suspense.

Linda does a wonderful job with detail and had me teary eyed several times over. Her characters come across as honest and true.

*The Wedding Garden*, with its wonderful cast of characters, only made me long for the third in the series which, according to the book, won't be out until 2011. I am already looking forward to the next time a main character takes the road into town, travels over the bridge and into a wonderful story.

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## **AJ says**

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Steeple Hill Books

18 chapters/214 pages

Review—Sloan Hawkins is back in Redemption, the town in which he'd grown up as the bad boy whose father was a murderer and died in prison, whose mother was accused of being “no better than she ought to be” with various riffraff she'd meet at her job at Redemption Diner, and then, when he was 11, skipped town with one of the men, leaving Sloan an orphan. So Aunt Lydia took him in and reared him. And now she's dying, so Sloan returns—a responsible businessman worth at least a million. But he still has the demons of his past, the biggest one being Chief Dooley Crawford, Annie Crawford Markham's father, who has always hated the boy. But Sloan was the boy Annie loved. And still is. So the question that begs to be answered throughout the story is: Will love triumph, or will Chief Daddy manage to come between the town ne'er-do-well and his heart's desire once again?

My Notes—Good story with a nice twist at the end. Since the back of the book tells you Annie's son, Justin, questions Sloan about being his father, it's not a spoiler to mention this one “twist,” but I won't give voice (or letter as it were) to the major twists, though I did figure a little bit of the second twist out but only about a page or two before the “reveal.”

This is a good love story, too. Bad boy-makes-good and the town good girl who sees more in him than a good many in the town, including her own parents. Cheyenne Rhodes, from book one, and Trace Bowman get married in this book, though Trace's only actual “appearance” is at the wedding, but, as it's told from Sloan's and Annie's points of view, he doesn't really figure in at all in this story. Cheyenne makes three “appearances,” one being the wedding, but nothing really to signify. Zoey happens to be Annie's daughter, Delaney's, friend, but even Zoey doesn't have a real part. Most of the characters from book one are just filler/backdrop for this book. However, we meet new people, including Roberta Prine and her son (Justin's nemesis), Jilly Fairmont, Delores Miller, Simmy-John Case, Orville Warp, Sunny Case, Carleen Crawford, and others.

I think Kitty Wainright and Jace the carpenter will be the subjects of the next book (or one of the upcoming

ones—I keep thinking this is a trilogy and not a series) because a lot was made of them in this one.

You also learn of the history between Lydia Hawkins and Ulysses “Popbottle” Jones and why he seems so in love with her yet they were never an item.

Sloan was a good hero (Linda Goodnight does “hero” well), and I can understand why she felt a little partiality toward him while writing this (what is it about women and attractions to bad boys? Lord knows the results are NEVER good!), because you just can’t seem to help being attracted to him. From his tall, strong military body hard with muscles to his deep, gorgeous blue eyes and black hair (I think it was black—great combo!) to his bad-boy grin and attitude that seems to camouflage the heart of a truly wonderful, sweet, kind, compassionate, caring man...hubba. A little “bad boy” within a sincerely decent “nice boy” is a GOOD thing. Trace Bowman displayed his “bad boy” at the end of book one when he went all protective on Cheyenne and took down the drunk with a one-handed “don’t-mess-with-my-woman” move. Again, hubba.

Grade: A+

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### **Anna says**

Sloan left Redemption under pressure from his high school girlfriend, Annie's, Dad, the town sheriff. Annie was left heartbroken and has never understood why Sloan left on the night they were supposed to attend their high school prom. Annie married on the rebound, and is now divorced and raising her two children as a single Mom. Sloan returns to Redemption to care for his dying Aunt Lydia, who took him in as a young boy. Sloan's father was in jail and his mother left one night never to return. Sloan's memories of his childhood are not warm and fuzzy. When Sloan arrives at his Aunt's home the first person he encounters is Annie, Lydia's Hospice nurse. Both are wary of the other, and their conversations are awkward. Yet, the sparks and feelings they once had for each other are resurfacing. When Annie's son, Justin, gets in trouble, Sloan sees himself as a boy and takes him under his wing. To help pay the restitution for the vandalism Justin was responsible for, Sloan has him working to help restore Lydia's once glorious garden. Sloan begins to see the good in the people of Redemption, and the possibilities for his own redemption. A wonderful love story, with a bit of mystery and suspense to keep you turning the pages.

Really 3.5 stars.

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### **Shelley Chastagner says**

Excellent follow-up to "Finding Her Way Home". I loved getting to know the town of Redemption and its wonderful cast of citizens better. Sloan and Annie have a wonderful story to tell and they do it well.

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### **Kristy Teague says**

I have only read 3 books from this author, but her characters come alive in her stories, and her plots are suspenseful. Her books are easy to read and stay true to the Christian romance genre.

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## **Sally Witt says**

This was such a good story. Highly recommended. Great characters and I feel liked I lived in this town!

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## **Elizabeth says**

Sloan Hawkins was shocked when a young boy asks him "are you my dad!" But he realized it was true. Years ago when he was the former bad boy he was run out of town.he had left the girl that he loved, Annie Markham and now he has to face her and his past.

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