



Holiday in Stone Creek: A Stone Creek Christmas / At Home in Stone Creek

Linda Lael Miller

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A Stone Creek Christmas

Stone Creek veterinarian Olivia O'Ballivan communicates easily with animals, but men are another story. Especially rugged architect-turned-rancher Tanner Quinn. Olivia's uncanny bond with his daughter Sophie's pony has him questioning her sanity, while *she* wonders if he's not just a drugstore cowboy. Then twelve-year-old Sophie conspires with Olivia to get Tanner into the spirit of Christmas. But will a holiday miracle transform the globe-trotting Tanner into a rancher—and family man—for all seasons?

At Home In Stone Creek

Everyone in Ashley O'Ballivan's life is marrying and starting families—except her. But why bother dating when no one can compare to Jack McCall, the man who left her heartbroken years ago? Now he's back in town—and maybe he *isn't* who she thinks he is.

While recovering from a dangerous mission for the DEA, security expert Jack rents a room in Ashley's bed-and-breakfast. For both their sakes, he tries to keep his distance, though neither can deny the growing spark between them. But when his past catches up with him, he'll have to leave again...just as he realizes where he's always belonged—in Stone Creek.

Holiday in Stone Creek: A Stone Creek Christmas / At Home in Stone Creek Details

Date : Published October 25th 2011 by HQN Books (first published January 1st 2011)

ISBN : 9780373776061

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Format : Paperback 448 pages

Genre : Romance, Holiday, Christmas, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary, Westerns

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Stone Creek** Linda Lael Miller

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Jackie says

Having previously read book 4 it was a reread/refresher introduction to the town and characters who call Stone Creek home. Olivia/Dr. Doolittle is probably one of my favorite female leads because of her ability to talk to animals, both domestic and wild. In her capacity as a country vet it is a valuable asset.

In the 6th book younger sister Ashley takes the lead. Billed as a Martha Stewart type she is the consummate homebody whose love for baking, cooking tasty meals and all other arts of a homemaker give her great satisfaction.

Two tales of laughter, love and small town life.

Christi Snow says

A Stone Creek Christmas

My Rating for this book: B

Story Overview:

Stone Creek veterinarian Olivia O'Ballivan communicates easily with animals, but men are another story. Especially rugged architect-turned-rancher Tanner Quinn. Olivia's uncanny bond with his daughter Sophie's pony has him questioning her sanity, while she wonders if he's not just a drugstore cowboy. Then twelve-year-old Sophie conspires with Olivia to get Tanner into the spirit of Christmas. But will a holiday miracle transform the globe-trotting Tanner into a rancher—and family man—for all seasons?

My Review:

This was simply a sweet old-fashioned Christmas love story, featuring a broken-hearted widower (Tanner,) his 12 yo daughter (Sophie,) and the town veterinarian (Olivia.) There was a special sense of holiday magic in this book because Olivia can talk to animals which leads her to a lost reindeer at the start of the story. As a result, a character named Kris Kringle appears periodically and mysteriously throughout the novel. It adds a touch of whimsy to the novel, that at times, went a bit too far for me, but it was all for Christmas fun, I know.

I really liked what Sophie added to the story, but there were times that Tanner's overprotectiveness just didn't seem to make sense. Tanner's over-the-top reaction to her supposed danger, just didn't ring true to the actual circumstances. I don't think that it would have been that hard to fix the issues within that story and made this a really superb book, but as it stands, it just seemed a little off to me.

I did enjoy this book. There were little things that niggled at me, but overall it was a fun holiday read.

At Home in Stone Creek

My Rating for this book: A-

Story Overview:

Everyone in Ashley O'Ballivan's life is marrying and starting families—except her. But why bother dating

when no one can compare to Jack McCall, the man who left her heartbroken years ago? Now he's back in town —and maybe he isn't who she thinks he is.

While recovering from a dangerous mission for the DEA, security expert Jack rents a room in Ashley's bed-and-breakfast. For both their sakes, he tries to keep his distance, though neither can deny the growing spark between them. But when his past catches up with him, he'll have to leave again...just as he realizes where he's always belonged—in Stone Creek.

My Review:

This is Jack and Ashley's story. Jack is a covert contractor whom Ashley has been involved with off and on since her freshman year in college. But he comes in and out of her erratically and usually breaks her heart when he leaves suddenly (many times without even a goodbye) because of the nature of his job. In this book, his last job went badly and he is suffering the life-threatening effects of a toxin that was injected into him as he escaped. Out of his mind with the accompanying fever, he shows up on Ashley's doorstep of her B&B.

There is a lot of emotion in this book. Jack is more than likely dying from the toxin. As far as his family knows, he has been dead for many years (the military killed off his original identity so that he could work covert ops for them without endangering his family.) His illness makes him question his choices that he has made especially in regards to them.

I really enjoyed this book. Because of the nature of Jack's job and his medical condition, it read a lot like a romantic suspense novel and I LOVE those. There were moments when the story turned a bit cheesy and unbelievable (like Ashley just rolling over when older brother Brad issued his edicts...*argh*,) but overall, I truly loved the story and enjoyed it a LOT!

This book was a re-issue of two earlier novels, but I am so glad that I picked it up. These two books feature two sisters from the O'Ballivan family. Their older brother Brad has obviously been featured in a book too. I will have to figure out which book it is so I can read his story. The last O'Ballivan sibling to still need an HEA is Melissa (Ashley's twin) and her novel is A Creed in Stone Creek. I have this book and the other two Creed novels in that series, but I haven't read them yet (they were released over the summer.) I can promise you that they are moving to the top of the TBR very soon after Christmas (I have to finish all my Christmas-themed reads first.)

charmaine White says

Great Read

Linda Lael Miller is one of those authors whose books always leave you feeling good. I'll be coming back to her again and again.

Julie Weaver says

I loved this book. I haven't read any of the series but that didn't matter. The author makes you feel like you personally know all of the characters! It was a great story and easy read.

Julie Morales says

In these two books brought together in one volume, we meet the O'Ballivans, a couple of generations after Sam and Mattie and the stone Creek we got to know when the West was wild. Stone Creek is still a small town, and it's easy to still imagine the things we read about in previous books.

The first book focuses on Olivia, the area's veterinarian. She also has a unique way with animals, able to communicate with them in a way most people can't. She endures the odd looks and remarks of her family, but when Tanner moves in next door, he doesn't know her like they do and is surprised to find her in his barn talking to his daughter's pony. Before that, in the middle of the night, she was awakened by a reindeer's call for help at the bottom of her driveway. A reindeer? What the heck? But Olivia is used to these occurrences, even if they can be annoying and disruptive. Convincing Tanner she's not totally insane wouldn't be easy though.

Tanner is used to a nomadic sort of lifestyle. Ever since his wife died, it was just easier to send his daughter to a boarding school where she'd be safe and not a target for terrorists like his wife had been. He was a contractor and had been contracted to build the new animal shelter for Stone Creek. He hadn't met the one yet who would be responsible for running that shelter...or at least not until he meets Olivia in his barn, communicating with his horses and knowing way more about him than she should, considering they'd never met. She was talking to the horses and they were telling her these things? No way! He was way too smart for that stuff.

But it was true, and this story had a magical feel to it, with the reindeer and all, and of course it has Linda Lael Miller's flair for both Westerns and romances. Of the two in this book, I think this one has to be my favorite, but the other one was good too.

In that one, we get to know Ashley better. She and Melissa are the two youngest of the O'Ballivans and Twins. Ashley runs a bed and breakfast financed with the help of her brother Brad. He held the mortgage and she just paid him, which made her more dependent on him than she'd like but she had her business and she loved it. Her family called her a Martha Stewart clone and maybe she was, but she had a simple life, was an old-fashioned sort of girl...probably someone Mattie and Sam would have been proud of. Her life was easy and predictable and she liked it that way...or at least it was until her old flame shows up on her doorstep via an ambulance, needing a place to heal before he'd undoubtedly be off again on another mission she didn't understand. One thing was for sure, she knew very little about Jack's true life, present and past, but she was about to find out.

This one wasn't magical like the first but was homey and felt like family. I like both types of Christmas stories so I liked this one too.

Sara Vazquez says

cute and quick

Jennifer says

I should have stopped when the heroine in the first book started telepathically communicating with every animal in a 10 miles radius.

Just...no

Marissa says

These two books are simple, fun reads but careless throw-ins are frustrating.

For example, Tanner's late wife was apparently a pediatric cardiac surgeon, but of course she gave it up to follow him. Reality check: in order to become a pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon, one needs 1) a bachelor's degree 2) medical school 3) five year general surgery residency 4) additional 2-3 year cardiothoracic residency 5) a 2-4 year pediatric fellowship. That's an absolute minimum of 17 years of training after high school. Does it really make sense that someone would just walk away from that? Further, that also means such a surgeon is just starting an independent career in his/her mid to late 30s. Unless Tanner was far younger than his wife, that puts him at almost 50 years of age given that he has a 12 year old daughter, but that doesn't match the story. Yeah, I know, it's fiction, but foolish crap like that bugs me. It would have been just as easy to say she had a different, more reasonable career.

Same thing with the twins' birth in "At Home in Stone Creek." First, the character is said to be two weeks overdue with twins. Um, no. Modern medicine would never in a million years allow that. And then the twins are born in a clinic. Right. No clinic would deliver and keep a mom with one or two babies - they would transfer them to an actual hospital as soon as humanly possible. Rural medicine just doesn't work that way. Finally, a woman in her twenties who doesn't know how to use a computer.

I know these are details, but they are really obvious, easily discoverable details.

So, overall a quick enjoyable read, but plenty of eye-rolling things. I enjoy her historicals much more.

Beth says

2 nice stories. I hope to find Melissa's story now.

Anjelica says

Holiday in Stone Creek are two novels in one. The first one, A Stone Creek Christmas stars Olivia O'Ballivan and Tanner Quinn. Olivia is the vet for Stone Creek and she has the uncanny ability to speak to animals, so when she hears a distressed call from a horse in the stables next to her house, she can't help but go investigate. What she didn't expect to find was hot and irresistible Tanner Quinn. Olivia and Tanner both agree on a no-strings relationship, but that quickly changes for the both of them, when they start to do the unexpected and fall for each other. The summary on the back of the book, sort of misleads you. It says that Sophie, Tanner's twelve year old daughter, conspires with Olivia to get Tanner into the Christmas spirit. But Olivia and Sophie don't have that much interaction. Yes they are together in some parts and they both get along really well, but Tanner got into the Christmas spirit when his daughter was able to stay with him for the holidays and when he didn't have to worry about her. And having Olivia with him didn't do any harm either.

The second story, At Home in Stone Creek, is about Ashley O'Ballivan and Jack McCall. In A Stone Creek Christmas we meet Ashley, a B&B owner and operator, and towards the end of the first story we meet Jack and we learn what he did to Ashley to make her resent him and other men. At Home In Stone Creek tells the story when Jack comes back from a dangerous security mission only to end up at Ashley's B&B. But Ashley

doesn't want him there because she thinks that once she starts to call for him (not that she ever stopped) he'll leave again with no explanation. But Jack has other plans. He is hell bent on staying with Ashley and making Stone Creek his home even if his life depends on it.

To me, it seemed like At Home in Stone Creek happened to fast. One thing lead to another and the end, it was finished. I was thinking maybe because we learned the history of Jack and Ashley in the first book, but I was hoping that Linda Lael Miller would go into more depth. At Home in Stone Creek was more about the sex than anything versus in A Stone Creek Christmas, different things happened that made me think that it was focused more on the strains of family and how a family can pull it together and make anything work.

Overall I loved both stories and it was the perfect Christmas read.

Jessica Alcazar says

I was reading the Creed series and jumped to this book after I got done with Tyler's story because as I began to read A Creed in Stone Creek, I realized that the book made references to both Olivia (A Stone Creek Christmas) and Ashley (At Home in Stone Creek) as married with kids and the last time I read about them in Brad and Meg's story (The McKettrick Way) they were single. I learned my lesson when I read the McKettrick series in the order in which the website has them which is totally convoluted and wrong in my opinion (I would not have jumped from the 1800 to the present as much as they do, it almost turned me off from reading any other of Linda Lael's books).

So anyways, about the stories ... I loved both love stories, but I gotta say, Linda Lael does not disappoint in her 'way out there' themes! As I was reading A Stone Creek Christmas, I didn't shake my head when Olivia 'talked' to animals because I already knew from reading The McKettrick Way, but it is one thing to make her eccentric and quite another to make Rudolph and Santa part of her story....SERIOUSLY?! LOL ... And what's with turning the page and WHAM, she's in love....no lead in, no development, nothing... 3 Stars at best!

but now At Home in Stone Creek is another story all together. That's a 5 star (if not more) all around. The only thing I would have preferred, but it did not take away from this story, was to have Jack's character better developed and their on and off love story as well. They deserve a 'real' 400 page book of their own. But they still get 2+ thumbs up! :)

Gwen Hopkins says

Enjoyable characters, I liked the communication of animals.

I have always enjoyed talking to my animals and have thought they understood me. However, never thought I was very good at understanding much of what they thought beyond joy, sadness, and guilt. These two stories were very good.

Delwyn D. Anderson says

Great Read

I have loved all Linda Lael Miller's books. This is no exception. Fun reading and don't want to put it down.

Kristen says

If you like Dr. Doolittle and you like your slightly x-rated trashy romance novels to be set in AZ and have a touch of Christmas magic, this is the book for you. It was a little ridiculous, but it was also charming, so I didn't care.

Betty Davey says

Two heartwarming stories. Really enjoyed them.
