

HEARTWARMING INSPIRATIONAL ROMANCE

*Love of a Cowboy*

# Yuletide Cowboy

Debra Clopton

**MEN**  
OF  
**MULE HOLLOW**

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. I hope you enjoyed Chance and Lynn's story. If so, what about it did you enjoy the most? Why?
2. Lynn thought she was finally at peace with her life until Chance came crashing in. Why did his arrival open up all her old wounds and make her realize she was far from healed?
3. Chance had wounds of his own that he was trying to let heal. He thought coming to the solitude of the family ranch would be just what the doctor ordered...but God had different plans. Have you ever thought one thing was good for you and God showed you He had other plans for you? If so discuss this with the group.
4. Lynn couldn't trust men. And even though she knew Chance was an honorable, trustworthy man she still had a hard time. Even though she'd helped others move forward with their lives, she couldn't. Why?
5. Although Chance felt unworthy and deeply saddened, his life changed the moment he was run over by Lynn's twins, Gavin and Jack. There was no way he couldn't smile upon their first meeting. Do you ever feel sad and low and then God puts someone or something in your path that brightens

your day or changes your life for the better even though you didn't feel you deserved it?

6. Chance made his first big impression on Lynn when he promised her boys he'd watch them on the swing and then he actually did it. Why was this so important to her? As Christians, don't you believe the small things—or the seemingly small things—matter?
7. Why was it so important to Stacy to be married to Emmett by a preacher?
8. Why was it so important to Lynn for Chance to step up and be that preacher? I love seeing how God works in real life and in my books to bring people together in just the right moments—moments I call “God moments.” Have you experienced “God moments?” Discuss these and their effects on you with the group.
9. Applegate and Stanley are pretty frank about the first preacher who came to preach at the church. What would you have done in their situation?
10. Chance was angry at God because he believed God should have given him one more chance to win Randy's soul. Then he remembered that God did give him that chance. When was it and what happened?
11. How did this help Chance?

12. What kind of life change do you think Chance will make in the lives of Lynn's twins?
13. The matchmakers saw the signs and pushed Lynn to bid on Chance in the auction. They wanted to make a difference in Lynn's and Chance's lives. Is there something you can do to help make a difference in someone's life?



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*When Texas Ranger Benjamin Fritz arrives at his captain's house after receiving an urgent message, he finds him murdered and the man's daughter in shock.*

*Read on for a sneak peek at DAUGHTER OF TEXAS by Terri Reed, the first book in the exciting new TEXAS RANGER JUSTICE series, available January 2011 from Love Inspired Suspense.*

Corinna's dark hair had loosened from her normally severe bun. And her dark eyes were glassy as she stared off into space. Taking her shoulders in his hands, Ben pulled her to her feet. She didn't resist. He figured shock was setting in.

When she turned to face him, his heart contracted painfully in his chest. "You're hurt!"

She didn't seem to hear him.

Blood seeped from a scrape on her right upper biceps. He inspected the wound. Looked as if a bullet had grazed her. Whoever had killed her father had tried to kill her. With aching ferocity, rage roared through Ben. The heat of the bullet cauterized the flesh. It would probably heal quickly enough.

But Ben had a feeling that her heart wouldn't heal anytime soon. She'd adored her father. That had been apparent from the moment Ben set foot in the Pike world. She'd barely tolerated Ben from the get-go, with her icy stares and brusque manner, making it clear she thought him not good enough to be in her world. But when it came to her father...

Greg had known that if anything happened to him, she'd need help coping with the loss.

*Ben, I need you to promise me if anything ever happens to me, you'll watch out for Corinna. She'll need an anchor.*

*I fear she's too fragile to suffer another death.*

Of course Ben had promised. Though he'd refused to even allow the thought to form that any harm would befall his mentor and friend. He'd wanted to believe Greg was indestructible. But he wasn't. None of them were.

The Rangers were human and very mortal, performing a risky job that put their lives on the line every day.

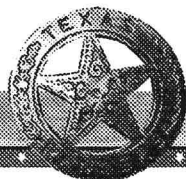
Never before had Ben been so acutely aware of that fact.

Now his captain was gone. It was up to him not only to bring Greg's murderer to justice, but to protect and help Corinna Pike.

*For more of this story, look for DAUGHTER OF TEXAS  
by Terri Reed, available in January 2011  
from Love Inspired Suspense.*



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**"So what do you think?"**  
**Chance asked.**

He'd hung several strands of Christmas lights, and Lynn's old house was looking great. He was standing close to her and she could feel the warmth from his body through the down vest he wore. She'd helped him for the past hour and he'd been wonderful with her boys. And okay, the man smelled wonderful.

"Momina, don't ya got ya ears on? What do you think?" he asked, tugging on her arm. It was what she always asked him and Gavin when they weren't listening to her.

Boy, where had she been? "Ear one and ear two are both on and ready to do their jobs," she said lightly.

She hoped Chance hadn't noticed her embarrassing lapse. She stole a glance at him. He caught her looking and the wink he gave her said he'd noticed plenty.

## Books by Debra Clopton

### Love Inspired

- \*The Trouble with Lacy Brown*
- \*And Baby Makes Five*
- \*No Place Like Home*
- \*Dream a Little Dream*
- \*Meeting Her Match*
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- \*\*Yuletide Cowboy*
- \*Mule Hollow*
- \*\*Men of Mule Hollow*

## DEBRA CLOPTON

was a 2004 Golden Heart finalist in the inspirational category, a 2006 Inspirational Readers' Choice Award winner, a 2007 Golden Quill award winner and a finalist for the 2007 American Christian Fiction Writers Book of the Year Award. She praises the Lord each time someone votes for one of her books, and takes it as an affirmation that she is exactly where God wants her to be.

Debra is a hopeless romantic and loves to create stories with lively heroines and the strong heroes who fall in love with them. But most important, she loves showing her characters living their faith, seeking God's will in their lives one day at a time. Her goal is to give her readers an entertaining story that will make them smile, hopefully laugh and always feel God's goodness as they read her books. She has found the perfect home for her stories, writing for the Love Inspired line, and still has to pinch herself just to see if she really is awake and living her dream.

When she isn't writing, she enjoys taking road trips, reading and spending time with her two sons, Chase and Kris. She loves hearing from readers and can be reached through her website, [www.debraclopton.com](http://www.debraclopton.com), or by mail at P.O. Box 1125, Madisonville, Texas 77864.

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Debra Clopton



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YULETIDE COWBOY

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When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God,  
whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be  
afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

—*Psalms* 56: 3, 4



This book is dedicated to my home church:  
Cowboy Church of Leon County. Thank you all  
so much for your huge hearts! You are changing  
lives...mine included!

A special thank-you and dedication to our pastor,  
Tuffy Lofton—you are a cowboy preacher with a  
true heart for God.

## Chapter One



Chance Turner stepped from his truck as country singer Craig Morgan crooned “Small Town USA” on the radio. He was home in Mule Hollow, Texas, which definitely fit the song’s positive image of small-town life in the USA. A smile tugging at his lips, he reached into the truck bed for the large box his sister-in-law had instructed him to deliver to the church.

Colorful strings of Christmas lights overflowed from the box. Melody was late for work, she’d said, and didn’t have time to deliver the lights to the church secretary. That had been her pretense anyway, but Chance had no illusions about why she’d asked him to run the errand for her. It was the church.

She wanted him to be as near the church as possible. She had hopes that being here would fix “his problem”... if only it were that easy. He could have told her that seeing the church, being on the premises, wouldn’t help him. Instead he’d done as Melody asked—it was easier that way. The last thing he wanted to do was talk about his problem.

And he didn’t want to think about it either.



Pushing the dark thoughts aside he focused on delivering the lights. He'd get this done, then he'd head back to the ranch, back to the solitude he'd come home to find. Just him and his horse, and the land that had been in his family for six generations. He wasn't the first Turner to contemplate the state of his life riding in the sanctuary of the vast Turner family ranch. Sanctuary—not exactly something he deserved. Not when he couldn't see past the guilt eating at him.

Still, right now he needed what the solitude of the ranch offered him.

He wanted to ride across the pasture, just him and his horse...but, before he could saddle up, he had lights to deliver.

Hefting the box into his arms he strode toward the quaint white church he'd attended off and on for the better part of his youth. His boots crunched on the white rock and his spurs jangled as he headed down the sidewalk toward the office. The squeals of kids' laughter, shrill with excitement, rode the chilly November wind. Chance had just reached the door when, like bulls out of the chute, two small boys pounded around the edge of the building. Trailing behind them was a monster of a dog.

He tried to sidestep the first kid but he was already on a collision course, and the rest was a blur. One-two-three he was hit by the first kid, fighting for balance as the second kid tangled up with them, and the horse of a dog launched himself at the box of lights in Chance's arms. That was the kicker.