



## Talk of the Town

*Lisa Wingate*

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Between Hollywood glamour and small-town secrets, what is the truth? The show American Superstars is the hottest thing on television, but its associate producer, Mandalay Florentino, is worried. She's just arrived in the tiny town of Daily, Texas, to arrange a surprise "reunion concert" for hometown finalist Amber Amberson. Only it turns out everyone in town seems to know the secret. And paparazzi are arriving. And word from Hollywood is that Amber has disappeared with a "bad boy" actor. Can anything go right in this tumbleweed town?

Imogene Doll loves her town of Daily, Texas, but things are lonelier without her beloved husband. Life seems dull. At least until that fancy-dressed woman pulls into town, looking terrified and glamorous all at once. Soon life's not the least bit boring as Imogene--and the rest of Daily--find themselves at the center of a media maelstrom...with a young girl's future on the line.

## **Talk of the Town Details**

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Author : Lisa Wingate

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## From Reader Review Talk of the Town for online ebook

### Kristina says

This was a Kindle freebie I thought I'd try out. I gave this book two stars because it was just okay. There really wasn't anything all that special about it as it was extremely predictable from start to finish. If you're looking for a rosy-colored perfect happy ending then this is it. I won't really spoil too much by saying there is one point in the book where two of the main characters get in a tiff, but at no point did I ever doubt they would make right up and "ride off into the sunset."

I did enjoy that this book was set in Texas since we are newly residents of this grand state which made it fun to read. Don't get me wrong -this is a relaxing, quick easy-read and there was nothing wrong with this book, but perhaps that WAS what was wrong with it if that makes any sense... Despite its predictability, I did find myself about 1/2 to 3/4 of the way through the book entertained and wanting to see it to the end.

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### Mary says

I hadn't read any of Lisa Wingate's books before, but I'm a sucker for a romantic comedy, so I thought I'd give it a try. Overall, it's a well-written, engaging, and inspirational story. I'd recommend it to anyone who's looking for a positive and lighthearted read.

Set in the small town of Daily, Texas, *Talk of the Town* is filled with memorable and varied characters. Daily's the kind of place that we all secretly wish we could live - a small, rural town where everybody knows and looks out for everybody else (even, sometimes, the town outcasts). When local girl Amber Anderson makes it to the Final Five on hit show American Megastar (the equivalent of American Idol), it's a clash of cultures as TV producers and paparazzi invade the small town. One such TV producer, Manda Florentino, finds herself constantly thrown into situations with Carter Woods, a mysterious and handsome cowboy type. Too bad Manda's already engaged.

Wingate does a nice job of interspersing her faith background throughout the story - some Christian fiction authors beat the reader over the head with morality lessons, but Wingate tactfully utilizes her characters' situations to demonstrate that faith in a higher power can be a liberating experience.

I've got several other books lined up to read, but should another Lisa Wingate title make it into my hands, I'd definitely take the time to see what else she's created.

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### Kelly says

This author can write so well even in different styles. The first series I read of hers, had more of a suspenseful edge, but this book, which is the first book in another series had me laughing my head off! I loved it, and now am going on to the second book!

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### **Lisa Carter says**

Really loved the quirky characters and homespun warmth of Daily, a small, Southern town in Texas. Completely drawn in by toe-curling romance. Laughed out loud at sounds-like-me moments. I can't wait to read the rest of Wingate's Texas Hill Country novels. Loved the beautiful picture she painted of God's sovereign hand over all the details and situations of our lives—despite our mistakes, course correcting to come full circle to become the truest self we were always meant to be.

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### **Lisa says**

Very cute story- I'd give it more of a 3.5 than a flat 3 if there was an option. I got 'Talk of the Town' as a free Kindle book back in Feb. and it finally made it's way to the top of the "To be Read" list- now I'm kicking myself for not reading it earlier. The story is told from 2 viewpoints, one being Mandalay Florentino, associate producer of an American Idol like TV show, who has come to small town Daily, Texas to set up a remote shoot the show will be using to spotlight young Amber Anderson's making it to the top 5 contestants, and the second being elderly Imagene Doll, Daily resident who works at the little diner next door to the hotel where Mandalay ends up staying in town. I'll admit at first the dual voices telling the story didn't thrill me and I felt it slowed the pace down a lot, but as things progressed I began to enjoy seeing things from both sides. Imagene's sections were amusing and touching while Mandalay's had the backstory about the goings on of the show (which drove the plot), as well as a little heartbreak and a touch of romance. It ended up being a nice mix and made for an enjoyable read.

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### **Caroline says**

What a wonderful book by Lisa Wingate and an excellent narration by Johanna Parker!

Things I loved:

- 1) Small town charm of Daily, Texas with extra quirky characters like Imagene Doll and Donetta.
- 2) Johanna Parker's voice repertoire - old voice of Imagene Doll, voice of Amber with a Texas drawl, high pitched voice of Donetta with Texas twang, Swedish voice of Ursula, old drunken voice of Verl.
- 3) Imagene Doll's use of animal/farm metaphors - "happy as pig in poop", "they will be all over you like stink on a skunk", "he was choked down like a hot tractor in a July wheat field", "...went out the door looking like a barnyard rooster puffed up to crow at the sunrise"
- 4) The exciting roller coaster scenes of both Mandalay and Imagene Doll
- 5) The night at Daily hotel with Mandalay and Carter - so funny

I may have skimmed through the book if I read it. But listening to it made me enjoy every nuance in Wingate's storytelling.

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### **Melissa says**

I had read the 2nd book in this series by Lisa Wingate a long time ago (Word Gets Around) and I had enjoyed it. Enough that when I saw this first book I decided to give it a read. They can be read in any order

as the plots are separate from one another, so that didn't make any difference to my enjoyment of this one. What did make a difference was the fact that this one was almost excruciating to get through.

Mandalay Florentino is a producer from California who has landed in Daily, TX as part of a secret plan to have American Megastar come to town for the top final five, of which a Daily resident will be a part of. Amber Anderson, local talent, is under big wraps for this announcement and it's Mandalay's job to make sure everything runs smoothly. But of course there are always hitches when you have to deal with the paparazzi. She has to deal with her love life too and a new found attraction for a country boy passing through. Mandalay wants to do her best, but she has a lot of things working against her.

There weren't very many characters that I liked in this book. I found Mandalay boring and whiny and she didn't seem to do very much. She just had other people do everything for her. Carter was sweet but kind of unbelievable and he just seemed to pop up like a gopher in almost every chapter. Imagene was about the only character I liked as she seemed down to earth and since she took turns being a narrator with Mandalay, we got to know her pretty well. Amber Anderson, who only make a brief appearance was overly saccharine sweet and also an unbelievable character.

Between the slow moving plot and the writing, there was definitely a reason why I didn't enjoy this installment of Lisa Wingate's. The plot leisurely took its course getting to the conclusion with a lot of useless filler. But the writing was the real kicker. Wingate decided to make sure that you knew these people had accents and spelled things out phonetically to illustrate these accents. Charming for about the first paragraph, it quickly grated on my nerves after and made the book difficult to read. She also switches back and forth between Mandalay and Imagene as narrators and while they have different voices, sometimes they run together and confuse the reader that was as well. I should also note that this is considered Christian fiction and much to my delight, there was barely any mention of religion at all making it entirely non-preachy.

Not the best for sure and it makes me a bit hesitant to read the third book in the series. I probably will though just because I don't like to leave anything unfinished.

Talk of the Town  
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359 pages

Review by M. Reynard 2011

More of my reviews can be found at [www.ifithaswords.blogspot.com](http://www.ifithaswords.blogspot.com) .

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### **Lyuba says**

Talk of the Town ended up being completely different from what I expected. I expected a romance novel, but I got a story of friendship with romance thrown in for good measure.

The story takes place in a small town of Daily, Texas, completely run down and very sad. But the town gets its second chance, when one of their own gets into top 5 in American Idol type of program.

The story is told from the point of view of two women. One is Mandalay, the producer of the show who is tasked with top secret mission of coming to Daily and secretly organizing and filming the Homecoming

segment of the show. Another is Imagene, a 70 year old lady who lost her husband a year ago and as a result is neglecting herself and giving up on life. Although Mandalay is trying to keep her reason for being in town secret, the news travel fast and everyone 'secretly' knows.

I loved it. In fact, I was more excited to read Imagene's point of view than Mandalay's because Imagene was just so real, I even cried several times at some parts. Loosing her husband was very traumatic for her, after spending many many years with him, she just doesn't know how to live alone anymore. But throughout the book, she is able to move on and helping Mandalay gives her a purpose in life again.

If you're looking for a genuinely feel good book, the one that will leave you smiling at the end, this is the book for you.

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### **Joleen says**

Normally I enjoy 1800's westerns, or older British storylines, so this was sort of a recess. Not a bad recess...just different.

The story has two voices:

Mandalay Florentino, a music executive of sorts, who works for an American Idol sort of singing competition.... and

Imogene Doll, an Aunt Bea sort of character, who is a sweet older woman who ends up to be quite helpful to Mandalay.

The story is all about a small town sweet Christian girl who is making it to the top 5 where she will have her hometown visit, video-taped with a concert. The executive is setting the stage for this visit and getting the lay of the town, including its inhabitants, and getting to know her family. Her boss, a shark of a woman, is making it all so hard for Mandalay with her demands, all the while there's a plot going on in the background we don't know about until near the end.

This is a funny book, although it's not meant to be a comedy. But the humor mixed into it is smart and fun. A few times I laughed right out loud, turning heads, as I was at a park. :)

I can't give much more than that away, but suffice it to say, it's pretty good.

I've enjoyed other Lisa Wingate books, so I wasn't surprised that I would enjoy this one.

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### **Lorraine says**

Rating 4.5

If I had only read the first 3 or 4 chapters, I would have missed out on a good book. I was ready to quit after the first few chapters due to Miss Wingate's use of phonetic Texas dialogue that read more like hillbilly talk (think of the Clampets) and the same for the main character's boss who was eastern European (think Zsa Zsa Gabor). It seemed to stop though after about the 4th chapter (thank goodness).

Mandalay Florentino (nicknamed Amanda Lee by the towns folk) is a assistant on the production of a reality TV show that features unknown talent with the winner awarded a recording contract. Amber Anderson, one of the contestants, is a 19 year old Texas Christian who has come from hard scrabble roots. Raised by a drunken grandfather along with her 3 brothers, she's never had much to her name other than a gifted singing voice. The producer of the show doesn't want her to win due to her faith and faith-filled music. But

Mandalay is impressed by Amber with her honesty, work ethic and faith.

This book was filled with a delightful cast of characters who all changed in various ways. Imagene had been stuck in a rut since her husband had passed away became more aware of life and the importance of living each moment. Verl, Amber's drunken grandfather, discovered that there was more to life than the bottle. Amber's brothers found someone who cared about them and thought they were special. Donetta found the spunk to bring her run-down, closed hotel back to life. And best of all, the town of Daily found a reason to be proud of their town. Mandalay and Carter were a great pairing. The provided moments of laughter, anger and joy. Even bad boy, Justin Shay, turned out to be someone different than the townspeople thought.

The small town, cozy feel permeated this entire book; and when the story was finished, I felt like I had become a part of Daily, Texas. I can't wait to read the next in the series to see if Donetta, Imagene, and Lucy do head off on the high seas, what happens to Mandalay and Carter, and what is in store for Amber and the Anderson family.

FAVORITE QUOTES; "The blues is an ailment that don't allow no sunshine in the room."

"In the era of self-help, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment, there was one common thread. Self."

"You frown on the outside long enough, eventually you'll grow a frown on the inside too."

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### **Courtney says**

"Talk of the Town" by Lisa Wingate was a different type novel for me by an author that I have never read before, it was a little slow at first but the deeper I got into the story the better it became. There were many different characters that made for one very wild story. You have your big city girl meets small town grandmother, and the Lord begins to take everything into His hands to make a miracle out of a mess.

The beginning was kind of a bumpy road, slow but not to the point that I felt the need to put it down. I am very glad however that I persevered through until the very end because it was worth the ride it took to get there. There has been many times that someone- everyone- thinks that they have their life in order but it takes the mighty hands of our Father to show that He always knows best.

Praise be to Him alone that there are authors like Ms. Wingate who can convey such a wonderful story for believers and unbelievers alike. It takes an amazing person to portray the truth in such a way that everyone can relate in some shape or form. Well done!

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### **Jeanne Adamek says**

It took a while--three tries actually-- but I finally got into this book and enjoyed a great part of it.

I have to admit the topic, American Megastar, just wasn't really something that I was interested in. But I do really enjoy the way that Lisa Wingate puts a story together. In this novel the only problem for me was to read enough to get into the story and appreciate the characters... which the author does superbly. She was able to create a town that had people I would love to know. No one was perfect-- in fact some of the

townspeople had real problems and these problems we dealt with sympathetically...warmheartedly. I love how Lisa Wingate can take a challenging person (or situation) and bring in a perspective that makes one think--all without sounding preachy.

From the two main characters (from which the story was told in two points of view) I loved Imagene. I could see her and actually hear her, she was brilliantly done. Mandalay was nice but not the snapshot that Imagene was.

I really, eventually, came to love this story even if it took me a while to get into it. I also realized, again, that if I know that I enjoy a certain author and can not get into a story it is best to put the book away for a little while and try again. I would have really missed reading this wonderful novel.

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### **Stacy says**

Predictable, but humorous and entertaining. I loved the small town characters. Clean enough to recommend to friends and family.

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### **Gail says**

This was a fun, lively women's fiction read with a nice romance. Heroine works for an American-Idol-esque reality show and has been sent to prep for the "Visit Home" show for one of the contestants who is a small-town Texas gospel singer nobody believes is real. The heroine is trying to keep the purpose of her visit a secret--which, given that she's come to a small Texas town, is pretty much impossible. Why else would a sleek stranger from California come to town? The other main character of the book is a widow in her 60s who's just going through the motions after the death of her beloved husband. She works as a waitress in the local diner, and gets caught up in her best friend's machinations to re-open her family hotel by getting this California woman to book all the rooms for her "friends." Oh, and never mind the fact that she's rented out the other half of the heroine's suite to another stranger--of the handsome male variety. Lots of shenanigans ensue, bringing about discovery and growth and providing a good, solidly entertaining, smile-inducing read. Enjoyed it a lot.

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### **April says**

I was unexpectedly charmed. The book is a romance, without it being an obvious romance. In fact, it's more seemingly about friendship, small towns, and the fish out of water -- but it's got kind of a romantic comedy vibe to it. The two POVs are the heroine's and another female character's. The heroine, Mandalay, is from L.A., and she's in a small town because as a producer in a reality TV show much like American Idol, she's supposed to do a piece about one of the contestant's hometown and childhood.

Anyway, Mandalay is very likable, and she befriends an older woman in town named Imagene, who is also really likable. The POV shifts between the two of them in alternating chapters as we meet a bunch of other really charming characters, one of whom becomes Mandalay's love interest.

The antagonist is Mandalay's boss, who has threatened an end to Mandalay's career should Mandalay fail,

and the conflict comes from various sources -- the paparazzi hounding the female contestant, the notorious celebrity who is always seen with her, and even the contestant herself, who through ignorance can be damaging to her own career. Also, Mandalay's boss has made it extremely clear that no one in the town should know about Mandalay's purpose there, so that itself becomes a source of conflict.

Having established all that, the story then unfolds quite beautifully. Even the religious references seemed to fit without being obtrusive, that I nearly forgot that this is faith fiction.

Cute read. I ended up staying awake all night just to read it.

Downloaded February 22, 2010.

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