

The Brocton Chronicles

Book I

**By
Brandy Golden**

The Brocton Chronicles

Book I

**By
Brandy Golden**

A Newsite Web Services Book

Published by arrangement with the author

All rights reserved.

Copyright 2008 © by Brandy Golden

This book may not be reproduced in whole or part,
by mimeograph or any other means, without
permission of the author or Newsite Web Services,

LLC

Published by Newsite Web Services, LLC

P.O. Box 1286, Loganville, Georgia 30052 USA

disciplineanddesire@hotmail.com

disciplineanddesire.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Brocton Chronicles I

Maddie and her Preacher	1
-------------------------	---

The Brocton Chronicles II

Maddie and the Rattlesnake

Part One	16
----------	----

Part Two	30
----------	----

The Brocton Chronicles III

Heath's Bright Idea

Part One	45
----------	----

Part Two	59
----------	----

Part Three	73
------------	----

The Brocton Chronicles IV

The County Fair

Part One	88
----------	----

Part Two	103
----------	-----

Part Three	117
------------	-----

Part Four	131
-----------	-----

The Brocton Chronicles I

Maddie and her Preacher

Maddie sat at the old piano, the warm sunshine on her back, a slow buzzing fly drifting around her head. The drone of her husband's voice from the pulpit seemed further and further away as she tried valiantly to keep her eyes open. Hard as she tried, she couldn't quite keep them from dragging shut, the cool darkness feeling good against her tired grainy eyeballs. The festive Easter hat on her honey blonde curls dipped lower and lower, the bluebird on the front brim threatening to take a walk on the weathered piano ledge that held the sheet music to Rock of Ages.

Out of the corner of his eye, the Reverend Heathcliff Danvers kept watch as the bright head sunk lower and lower towards the piano keys. Inside, he was very aggravated at Maddie for ignoring him once again. He had tried to warn her, but she wouldn't listen and now here she was, embarrassing him as the congregation tittered and twittered at the sight of his wife about to fall off her bench.

"Wives, obey your husbands, for this is right in the sight of the Lord," his soft mellow tones entreated the women while the men watched in amusement. He saw his friend Sam Decker, of Decker's mercantile winking up at him and a dull flush crept up his throat and spread across his face.

It was only yesterday that he and Maddie had been in the mercantile, and he had been chatting with Sam about this very subject!

"I don't know why Maddie feels like she has to do everything herself," said Heath, his eyes narrowing as his wife rushed around the small store, purchasing thread and material and all the

makings for Easter hats for the little girls in her Sunday school class.

"She has already planned the entire Easter festivities for tomorrow afternoon; the games, the meal, the egg hunt, and now she wants to make hats for the girls! I don't really want her to, but she won't listen to me!"

"Well, you two haven't been married very long, Heath," replied Sam, his eyes twinkling. "Less than a year, right?"

"Just under a year," agreed Heath. He scratched his head and looked at Sam, wanting to talk man to the man, yet not wanting to be disloyal to his darling wife. Truth was, though, Maddie was becoming more and more obstinate and demanding, and he wasn't quite sure how to handle it.

Sam, on the other hand, was pretty sure the young Reverend was feeling overwhelmed. Everyone knew Madeline Marie Owens was headstrong. When she had fallen for a gentle soft-spoken preacher man the entire town had gossiped its collective tongue out.

However, as the months had gone by, and Maddie's slim figure did not fill out, they reckoned how it must be true love after all, especially seeing as how she wasn't coming with child a mite early. Of course, they would have overlooked that, being that everybody loved Maddie, and she was getting married to one of the finest young men in the territory.

Taking pity on the young fellow, Sam decided to impart some of his vast worldly knowledge to Heathcliff Danvers. Biting on a piece of broom straw, he let it hang out of the side of his mouth as he spoke.

"A young filly like your Maddie needs a firm hand, Heath," he warned. "If you don't rein her in while she is young, she will be too much to handle as she gets older, even for the strongest man."

Heath stared doubtfully at Sam, his handsome brow wreathed in a scowl. His masculine brown eyes were clouded with worry, and he smoothed down his shiny mustache as he pondered Sam's words. "Just what are you getting at, Sam?" he asked finally.

Just then, Maddie came rushing up, her deep blue eyes the color of sapphires glowing with excitement. "Look, Heath, isn't this beautiful? This would look so wonderful on the piano at the church with a nice arrangement of prairie flowers scattered across the top of it for Easter. I'm going to buy a yard of it and make the cloth tonight!"

"But, Maddie, when will you have time to make it?" protested Heath, hating to spoil her excitement, but knowing it would mean a very late night for her...again! She had already been up late the past two nights, leaving him alone in bed, and yearning for her, while she made all sorts of preparations for the Easter weekend events.

Maddie waved his protests aside. "Oh, don't worry, Heath, I'll get it done!" She turned away, but Heath grabbed her elbow and turned her back. He was aware of Sam's wolfish grin out of the corner of his eye.

"I don't want you to do it, Maddie. Put the material back. You've been up late enough lately, and you need your rest, tonight." He tried to sound authoritative, but he knew he had failed when she responded by turning her back on him.

"Now, don't worry, darling, it won't take that long to make this." She hurried over to Angelina to discuss her ideas with her and have her mark the material for Sam to cut.

"Now, see here, Maddie," began Heath, reaching for her again, but she had evaded him, and he dropped his arm with a sigh.

Sam chuckled.

Exasperated, Heath turned to him. "What do you mean rein her in, Sam? What exactly are you talking about? I just told her no, and she did it anyway."

Lowering his voice, Sam confided, "I mean when she disobeys you, take a firm hand to her backside."

"You mean, beat her?" asked Heath, appalled at this suggestion. "I could never do that to Maddie. I love her!"

"If you really love her, you will turn her over your knee and apply a little discipline, or she will get more and more out of control! That's not a beating, son, that's called laying down the law, and stubborn, headstrong women have to know who's in charge, or they will take over FOR you!"

"But...but..." spluttered Heath.

Sam leaned in then and whispered conspiratorially. "Do you want to wind up like Evelyn and Tom Grouse?"

Heath stared, appalled at the very idea. Everyone knew about Evelyn Grouse. She ruled her husband with an iron thumb, and the poor man had no mind of his own. Evelyn answered for him when people addressed Tom, and she ordered him about like a servant.

"Maddie would never be like that!"

"You think not?" chuckled Sam. "I remember ten years ago when those two got married. Evelyn was just as sweet and winning as your Maddie. Now look at 'em. Poor Tom can't pass the time of day with a buddy without Evelyn jumping all over him to get on home and get to his chores."

"I'm not sure I could spank Maddie," returned Heath doubtfully. "I just don't think I could hurt her and make her cry like that."

"Well, it's your call, son. It's pretty common, though, you know. Men are expected to see to it that their wives behave themselves, and most men

around here don't respect a man who lets his wife rule the roost." He straightened up as the women approached, their arms filled with Maddie's supplies. "And, it doesn't hurt them. It just lets them know where you stand. Otherwise, they tromp all over you."

"I'm done, darling," crowed Maddie. "I've got everything I need now!" She put all the stuff in her arms on the counter.

"How about some of this horehound candy here, Maddie," said Heath, looking at the stick candies in the jars along the counter. "I know you like horehound."

"What kind do you like, Heath?" asked Sam, reaching for the candies. "You can each have a piece on the house."

"Well, I kind of like..."

"Oh, he doesn't like candy," assured Maddie, waving aside Heath's words. "He told me so."

"That's mostly true, Maddie," said Heath, flushing under Sam's mocking grin. "But, once in awhile I do like a sweet."

"Well, why did you tell me you didn't like it then?" challenged Maddie impatiently. "Oh, shoot, just give him whatever he wants, Sam, I'm in a hurry."

Heath's jaw dropped at her curt tone and subsequent dismissal. He flushed beet red and turned and strode out the door, figuring he would wait for her in the wagon.

Inside, Maddie looked at Angelina, her eyes troubled. "Was it something I said?" she asked, puzzled. Sam had taken the material into the back room to cut the pieces Maddie required.

"Well, you know, Maddie, you have been rather rude to Heath a couple of times now," replied Angelina, her green eyes twinkling at her young friend. "If I were to ignore Sam when he told me no and get impatient and rude to him, I'd find

myself over his lap getting a good spanking very shortly."

"A spanking?" echoed Maddie disbelievingly. "How barbaric! Besides, spanking is for children, not wives."

"You'd be surprised how many wives around here are spanked. The only one I know of that isn't would be Evelyn Grouse. You just haven't been a wife long enough to know it yet. Besides, it's not something we advertise, you know." She blushed as she put her hand to her backside and rubbed it ruefully.

Maddie stared curiously, watching her. "Does Sam spank you?"

"As recently as this morning," admitted Angelina grudgingly.

Maddie's eyes were big as saucers when Sam returned with the material, and she watched his huge hands surreptitiously as he rang up her purchases. Heath had better not try that, she decided. He would be very sorry if he did!

Heath returned to the present moment. The men in the audience were making no secret of their amusement by this time as Maddie's head dipped lower and to the side. The women were chuckling behind their hands, and Heath's sermon was becoming increasingly weak as he tried to talk about men being in charge of their families while his own wife was so obviously bored to the point of sleep.

Inevitably, Maddie's tired body gave up the battle, and she slumped sideways, falling onto the piano keys, and the strident sounds of unharmonious chords filled the small country church. Even old man Weatherly jumped and cursed as the awful din awakened him.

"Oh!" gasped Maddie, coming awake with a jerk and pushing herself back away from the keyboard. Her hat had fallen off, and her hair like burnished

wheat in the sun went tumbling down her back. Her face flushed bright red as she stared at her husband, who for the first time she could remember, looked furious! Then, she paled at his next words.

"Excuse us please, my wife and I need to have a word together." He strode over to her, took her by the elbow and ushered her into the small study behind the pulpit where he often received people of the parish for talks and other various things pertaining to the ministry. The buzz of the congregation dimmed as the door slammed shut, and Maddie was turned to face her husband.

Her eyes were huge in her pale face as she watched him take off his robes and hang them on the hook. There was something different about him, although she couldn't quite place it. She was suddenly very apprehensive and nervous. So far, he hadn't said a word! He turned back to her then, the sunlight glinting off his dark curls, and his 6 ft height suddenly seeming to dwarf her own 5 foot 5 inches.

"I'm s...sorry, darling," stuttered Maddie, for once at a loss for words. "I didn't mean to fall asleep. I don't know what came over me."

"What came over you," answered Heath grimly, "is lack of sleep, caused by disobedience to your husband. I told you I didn't want you to make that piano coverlet, but you just had to anyway didn't you? And, you didn't get to bed until well after midnight ...for the third night in a row, in spite of my entreating you to come to bed!"

Maddie gulped as he began to roll up the sleeves on the pristine white shirt she had prepared for him at 2:00am that morning. "W...what are you doing, Heath?" she squeaked.

"I'm taking control of my household, " he replied in a rigid tone that she had never heard before.

"Meaning what?" she whispered, her face going even more pale if that was possible. Suddenly remembering Angelina's words yesterday, her tummy felt queer, and she felt slightly nauseated.

"Meaning I'm going to turn you over my knee, bare your backside, and spank your little fanny. By the time I'm finished, you won't have to worry about falling asleep for the rest of the sermon."

"You can't!" she exclaimed in horror. "They might hear you out there...it would be too...too embarrassing!"

"You didn't mind embarrassing me," replied Heath determinedly. "And, seeing as how everyone around here seems to engage in this particular marriage practice, I see no reason why we should be any different."

"I won't let you do this, Heath," she argued, backing away.

"Oh yes you will my dear." He took her arm and marched her to the straight-backed chair along the wall of the room. Sitting down, he pulled her unceremoniously across his lap, and she fell with a protesting cry, her hands reaching for the floor on the other side of his broad lap.

"No! You can't do this, Heath, I forbid it!" She kicked and tried to push up, but he simply pulled her long pink dress tail with the little red rosebuds up over her back and held her firmly in place with his left arm.

"You don't forbid your husband to correct you, young lady," he replied with more confidence than he actually felt, his right hand sweeping aside the sheer lacy chemise to reveal the porcelain globes that were wiggling and squirming in protest of this latest development.

He paused for a moment to admire their alabaster perfection before he lovingly ran his hand over them in a caress.

"Please, Heath, I'm sorry, I won't ignore you again," Maddie pleaded frantically, feeling the cool air on her bared cheeks. She kicked her legs helplessly as she felt his hand leave her bottom, and her stomach threatened to turn itself inside out with apprehension.

"I hope that will be the case," replied Heath, and he brought his palm down in a satisfying SMACK! across her nicely plump right cheek. The flesh depressed and bounced back out, leaving an angry red handprint outline, and he felt amazingly vindicated already.

"Ouch!" yelled Maddie, trying to wiggle out of his grasp again. "OW!" she squealed again as another burning spank landed on her left cheek. "That hurts, Heath, stop it!" demanded Maddie, whimpering.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!

Heath's measured palm fell four more times on Maddie's upturned bottom, eliciting squeals and protests, all of which he ignored.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!

"Ohhh, Heath, pleaseee!" gasped Maddie, close to tears. Her arms flailed helplessly as she tried to put her hand back to stop the stinging punishment.

He stopped, then, and rested his palm on her reddened rear, feeling the light warmth he had engendered. "Are you going to fall asleep, now?" he asked in mock concern.

"No, I won't, I promise, Heath," she gasped. "Please, let me up."

He pulled her up then and sat her on his knee. "When we get home, we are going to talk about some things," he said firmly. "And, you are going to get another spanking for disobeying me all weekend."

Maddie gaped at him in astonishment, her bottom burning and shock keeping her from talking.

"Now, fix your clothes, we are going to finish the services." Heath rolled his sleeves down and went to get his robes.

"Do I have to go back out there, Heath," whimpered Maddie, then, thoroughly chastened by the spanking and her husband's new attitude. "Everyone will be laughing at me. You know they have to have heard us, this church is too small to think they didn't."

He returned and gently lifted her chin with his forefinger. "No more than at me," he replied tenderly, his brown eyes twinkling. "I'm sure they did hear us, but I can take it if you can."

She looked up at him, realizing how much she loved him. She really had embarrassed him, and she knew it. "I guess I can, for your sake," she whispered.

Maddie's bottom burned against the wooden seat as she pounded out the accompaniment to Rock of Ages, and the little church rang with the sound of music as enthusiastic voices sang out. She hadn't fallen asleep again, and she had been surprised at the number of sympathetic smiles she got from the women when she dared to peek at the congregation. Somehow, it made her feel more a part of them than ever before.

As the wagon lurched along the dusty track towards their home, Maddie yawned and leaned into her sturdy husband. She was so tired! Her mind was racing, though, as she remembered his promise to continue what he had started at home. She had to admit that the stinging had gone quickly from the hard swats he had given her, but she still felt a little tender against the bumping wagon. She wondered if he was really going to spank her again when they got home.

She got her answer when they pulled up in front of the house. "Go to the bedroom, take off everything but your chemise and wait for me," he

instructed quietly. "I'll go put the buckboard away and put the horses in the barn."

She responded to his quiet authority, and she stepped down and went to do as he asked, her heart hammering in her chest. She stood in front of the mirror, dressed only in the lacy chemise with pink ribbons at the ruffles on the bodice and the knees and surveyed herself. Her long honey hair hung to her waist, and her blue eyes stared back at her, dark with trepidation in her pale face. She started as the door opened, and Heath stepped inside.

She turned to face him, her breath catching in her throat. Seeing desire light up his eyes, she stepped towards him, hoping he might forget about the spanking and make love to her, instead.

Heath stared at his beautiful wife, wanting nothing more than to take her in his arms and carry her to the bed where he would strip her and make sweet love to her, but he knew he couldn't. Not yet. He did take his shirt off though; eliminating having to roll up his sleeves again, and his muscles bulged beneath the short-sleeved undershirt. In spite of being a preacher, he was used to hard work, and his body reflected that.

Hands on his narrow hips, he watched as she swayed towards him, a seductive smile on her rosy lips. So, she was going to try out her feminine wiles on him. Well, it was working he had to admit, ruefully. He could feel his hard shaft rising up to salute her sensuous efforts, and he was hard pressed to keep from pulling her into his arms and kissing her silly.

"Are you trying to get around me, Maddie," he murmured softly.

Maddie slid her slender bare arms around his neck and planted soft kisses along his hard jaw line. "I really am sorry, Heath," she replied humbly,

feeling desire tug at her senses as she ran her hands across his muscled shoulders.

That humble apology was almost Heath's undoing. He was ready to give in when she whispered gently in his ear. "I promise I won't fall asleep next time I'm up so late."

Grasping her arm firmly, he steered her towards the bed. "There won't be a next time, Maddie, that's the point of this." He sat down on the bed and pulled her down on his right knee, her legs between his.

"I told you at the store I did NOT want you making the piano coverlet. You were already making the hats for the children against my better judgment, besides overseeing almost everything else planned for this entire weekend. You had already worn yourself out in spite of my advising you to the contrary. You totally ignored me when I told you to put that material back, and then you were rude to both Sam and me with your impatient attitude."

"But, Heath," protested Maddie weakly, "I just wanted everything to be nice for Easter, and I didn't mean to be rude to you and Sam, honest."

"Maddie, I realize you probably did not mean to have the attitude you did. And, I know you wanted things to be nice for Easter, but, honey, I'm your husband, and you promised to obey me in our wedding vows, and you've gotten more and more disobedient over the last few months. I don't intend to allow that to continue." He tipped her chin up so he could look into her eyes. He didn't like the mulish look on her face. It was getting worse, the more he talked.

"How can I stand in the pulpit and encourage the women to obey their husbands before the Lord when my own wife is disrespectful and disobedient to me? It makes me the laughingstock of Brocton!"

"I don't care what anyone else thinks," replied Maddie petulantly. She was not happy that Heath seemed to care more about what the town thought than what she had to say. He seemed determined to follow through on this course of action, and she did not like this new side of him at all!

"You may not care what anyone else thinks, but you WILL care what I think."

Exasperated, Heath pulled Maddie on over his left knee despite her protests. With her upper body on the bed and his right leg behind hers, he had her pinned, and he quickly moved the chemise apart, revealing her delightfully rounded cheeks once again.

Aggravated that Heath was not responding to her usual evasive tactics when he lectured her, Maddie began to protest hotly. "Stop it, Heath! I mean it! I don't want you to spank me...not ever again!"

Heath almost had second thoughts at her strident protests, but then he steeled himself, remembering the snickering faces of the men in the congregation and the embarrassment he had suffered at Maddie's hands at the mercantile yesterday. He brought his palm down, landing a sharp stinging swat on the squirming bottom over his knee and then another and another.

Maddie cried out as the burning spanks began to rain down on her unprotected lower cheeks, and her hands grabbed the quilt on her bed as she tried to crawl forward and away from the hot fusillade.

But, Heath had her pinned too well, and she couldn't go anywhere. All she could do was wail and plead for him to stop, which she did in abundance, her voice carrying out the open window, making the horses prick their ears nervously.

"Heaaaathhh," she cried out finally, dissolving into heartbreaking sobs. "I won't disobey you anymoreeeee! I p...p...promiseeeee!" She laid her

head on the bed, unable to fight anymore and feeling thoroughly helpless against his superior strength.

Heath sensed her surrender, and he stopped spanking her very red bottom, but didn't let her up. "Are you really sorry, Maddie?" he asked softly, running his palm over the hot skin. "Are you going to listen to me from now on?"

"Y...yes," she sobbed piteously. "I'm s...sorry I was r...rude and I will listen to you."

"That's all I wanted to hear, darling." He lifted her up then and sat her on his knee, surprised when she clung to him, burying her lovely face in his shoulder. He had thought she would be angry once he finally let her go. He folded his long arms around her, holding her tightly against him.

When the shuddering sobs began to die down, he spoke again. "I want you to take a nap now, darling. We have a few hours before we have to be back at the church for the festivities, and I want you to rest. You need it."

"But, what about the food," she began to protest, then stopped at the look on his face.

"I'll get the food you've prepared and get it ready to go in the wagon. I want you to rest, and I mean that," he said warningly. "I don't want to have to spank you again so soon."

Maddie stared at his set face, her eyes still swimming in tears and realized he was serious. Her poor bottom ached and burned, but she felt herself accepting this new development. She guessed she could let him and maybe others shoulder some of the burdens. She didn't have to do everything herself.

"All right, darling," she replied. She stood up and allowed him to pull the quilt back for her and wait for her to get into the bed. Then, he tucked it up under her chin and placed a gentle kiss on her soft lips.

"Now, go to sleep. If I come in to check on you, and you're not asleep I'll spank you again for sure." He wouldn't, really, but she didn't have to know that. He was practicing being authoritative, and she seemed to be responding. That pleased him greatly.

"Yes, Heath," she replied meekly, a yawn stealing over her as she tiredly closed her eyes. She wasn't sure how she felt about being spanked and put to bed, but she would worry about it later. For now, obedience to her young husband seemed the wisest course.

Fifteen minutes later, when Heath came back to check on his wife, she was sound asleep, her fist tucked up under her chin, the dark lashes of her eyes fanned across her porcelain cheeks. His heart swelled with love for her, and he felt a new possessiveness, a new tenderness and desire to protect and nurture that had not been there before.

He was under no illusions that she would be easy to handle. After all, she was by nature a stubborn girl. But, she was a goodhearted one, and they loved each other deeply. Hopefully, that would see them through the good times and the bad, and they would grow to love each other even more.

He placed a tender kiss on her brow and watched as her rosy lips curved in a smile. Then, he left the bedroom, closing the door softly while she dreamed on. Once she awoke, there would be other fires to quench, but for now, she needed the rest.

He walked out the front door and stood leaning against the white pillar of the wraparound porch. Brocton was a good place to live, and he just knew he and Maddie would be happy here. He sighed contentedly, a satisfied man in charge of his household. With the good Lord's blessing, it would remain that way.

The Brocton Chronicles II

Maddie and the Rattlesnake Part One

"And that was the first time Heath ever spanked me," finished Maddie, her faded blue eyes twinkling at the lovely young girl that so resembled herself in her youth.

"Wow, Grams, that was a looong time ago," replied Madeline Marie Danvers, so named after her paternal great grandmother who lay before her on the sterile white sheets of the nursing home bed. "People don't do that today."

Maddie...or Grams...laughed softly, the sound small and sweet like fairy bells to the young Maddie's active imagination. She watched her great granddaughter with bright inquisitive eyes. She was happy her daughter had finally moved close enough to bring her to visit with her. She wished she hadn't left it so late. Gently, Grams spoke, "Your turn will come my dear...some things never change."

Eighteen-year-old Maddie popped her bubble gum and stared back at the small shrunken figure. Her great grandmother was very old and very feeble, but her mind was solid, and Maddie had confided to her in a moment of weakness that her boyfriend had threatened to smack her fanny. It had just popped out when her Grams had asked her how she was doing with Dugan. He had come once with her to visit Grams, and apparently, he had impressed her. Now, she asked about him every time Maddie came to visit!

That comment had sparked the wonderful story her Grams had just told her, and it had turned into the most delightful visit yet, and Maddie didn't want it to end. She looked fondly at the snowy white head lying against the pillow, and she patted the

blue veined hand that lay beside the frail body. It was surprisingly warm, and it gripped hers in a loving vise.

"Tell me some more stories, Grams," she said eagerly. She had been entranced at this side of her Grams that she had never seen before. Not that she had seen her all that often. Now, it seemed a shame they hadn't been closer. "Tell me some more stories about Brocton!"

Maddie smiled her sweet one hundred and six year old smile. Living and loving around the turn of the century along the foothills of the Smoky Mountains of Kentucky had been her life, and it had been a grand one. She gazed fondly at her great granddaughter, she too wishing they had been able to spend more time together, but life has its twists and turns and often robs one of opportunities. But, by and large, she had no real regrets.

Maddie's faded blue eyes saw another time and place as she turned her head to stare unseeingly at the blank wall ahead of her, her mind flowing back...back to Brocton...back to...Heath...her beloved Heath. Only too happy to live again in those idyllic years, she began once more, taking young Maddie with her to a simpler era, an era where men and women stayed together through thick and thin....a time when women were spanked by the men who loved them!

Heathcliff Danvers looked up at the warm June sun blazing down as he wiped the sweat from his forehead onto the long sleeved shirt. It was hot, already, plowing between the rows of young green corn. Seemed impossible to keep the blasted weeds out of the garden! Must be about noon he reckoned.

Picking up the reins, he clucked at the horse to finish the row he was working on. Then, he would

go wash up at the pump and see what Maddie had ready for lunch. Heath wondered if she was still mad at him. He grinned to himself, remembering her indignant little face that morning before he went to work.

"Stop threatening me, Healthcliff Danvers," she fussed at him. "You've got to where you threaten to spank me all the time, now, and I don't like it." She paused, her hands on her hips and glared defiantly at her husband. "Just because I let you spank me once doesn't mean I'll let you do it again!"

"You let me?" questioned Heath derisively, a small grin playing beneath the mustache on his handsome features. He was remembering pinning her over his knee last Sabbath for falling asleep at the organ, and the site of her shapely derriere sprang to his mind making him wish he didn't have to leave for the garden quite so soon.

Maddie stamped her small foot and turned her back on him. "Ohhh, you are impossible! I'm going to the rock flats to read for awhile!" She started out, but Heath grabbed her arm and twirled her around to face him.

"Hold on there, Maddie, I don't want you getting on the rock flats just now." His laughing brown eyes were serious as he looked down at her. "I've seen a couple of rattlers around there in the last week, and I don't want you near there until I've had a chance to check it out."

"But, Heath, that's my favorite spot to read," argued Maddie stubbornly. "I'll keep an eye out for snakes, I promise."

"I said no, Maddie," replied Heath firmly. "It's too risky!"

Maddie stared at him in frustration. Ever since he had spanked her last week, he now seemed to be awfully highhanded and bossy. She had already

been to the rock flats this week, and she hadn't seen any stupid snakes!

"Will you stop treating me like I'm an imbecile," she stormed at him. "Heath, what has gotten into you? You didn't used to treat me like I don't know how to take care of myself! You are always telling me no, anymore, and I hate it!"

Heath flushed, his temper rising. He knew he was more solicitous than normal since he had spanked her, but he loved Maddie more every day, and he didn't want anything to happen to her. She didn't seem to take care of herself properly, not the way he would like her to, and it bothered him. She was quick to put herself at risk for the sake of others and to take on more than she could handle at the drop of a hat.

"Well, someone has to, Maddie, you don't seem to know how to say no!"

But, she was gone, and his words fell into empty air. The screen door slammed behind her as she flounced out.

Heath supposed he should have followed her and scolded her for being disrespectful, but he hadn't.

He quickly washed himself down at the pump and went into the kitchen looking around for Maddie. She was nowhere to be seen, and there didn't appear to be any lunch made, either. His stomach growled in protest at this development, and warning bells sounded in his mind.

Looking quickly around the house, he could see she wasn't there. The book she had left on the nightstand was gone too. She must have gone to read after all! Concern made his breath catch in anger. If she had gone to the rock flats...he didn't finish the thought.

Quickly, Heath grabbed his rifle and strapped on his holster with the six-gun in it. If Maddie was in trouble, he might need more than one shot. He was

almost sure there was a nest of rattlers there, and he intended to clean it out but hadn't had the time yet. There was nothing meaner than a rattlesnake with a nest of babies!

He ran out the back door and into the stables, his stomach curling in anxiety as fear ate at him. He pulled Bacon, his chestnut bay, out of the stall and leapt on him bareback, heading for the rock flats as hard as he could ride!

Maddie was sitting on the rock chair, leaning back against the boulder that shaped naturally to her back. It was her favorite spot to read, and she had fallen half asleep in the warm sun, the book falling to her lap.

She had been so angry when she got here earlier, not even caring what Heath had said about not coming here. How dare he tell her she couldn't come here, anyway! She had been very upset with him that morning, not liking the bossy attitude he had adopted, lately. He probably made up that part about the rattlesnakes just so he could boss her around again!

She sleepily mulled it over in her mind. Every since he had spanked her last Sunday, he had seemed to question her more, to probe more into her affairs and dealings with other members of the town, like he was checking up on her or something! It made her feel resentful, and she didn't like it at all! It was like he didn't trust her anymore, and it really bothered her!

She thought about her father and her brother. Her father had put her over his lap a few times in the past, but that was her father! Heath was her husband, and she wasn't a child anymore.

Her older brother was married, but Chrissy didn't show any signs of Able spanking her! She would have to ask her the next time she saw her, she decided. Chrissy and Able had been married for 6 years now and had two children.

Angelina Decker had told her that most all the women in Brocton got spanked by their husbands; except for Evelyn Grouse, that is. But why did Heath suddenly begin now when he hadn't before? It must be Sam Decker...he must be influencing her husband, she thought, and not for the better! She didn't want a husband who would spank her, she wanted her kind, sweet Heath back...the way he was before! Her lip drooped in a pout, and she sniffed, feeling very sorry for herself and angry still with Heath.

Her bottom felt a bit stiff from sitting on the rocks, and she stretched and yawned, preparing to get up. It must be getting late from the shadows on the rocks, and Heath would be looking for his lunch, she needed to get back. She supposed she would feed him, even if she was still miffed with him.

That was then she heard it! That deadly rattle that sent cold shivers through the stomach of anyone unlucky enough to be near it. She froze in place and listened, realizing it was coming from the right of the boulder about three feet away. Her eyes slid sideways, and she saw it...a huge rattlesnake coiled on the rocks, its tail buzzing in warning at her movement, its cold eyes staring at her and its flicking tongue tasting the air.

Maddie heard a second rattle join the first and saw another one rear up just beyond the first one, most of its body below the shale step.

Her mouth went dry, and she tried not to tremble. Any movement would set them off, and she knew full well what would happen if she was bitten by a full-grown mountain rattler. She would die within minutes.

How could this be? She had never seen snakes out here before. Maddie knew that snakes often liked to sun in the spring, especially after hibernating all winter. And that rock outcroppings

were a favorite place to do it, but she had supposed since she used this place all the time that they wouldn't come near the people smell. She had been wrong! She should have listened to Heath when he said he had seen snakes near here, but she truly hadn't believed him. She had really thought he just liked the idea of bossing her around, and she had intended to show him that he wasn't going to get away with it!

She was debating her chances of throwing herself sideways when she heard Heath's voice.

"Don't move, Maddie."

Maddie tried to obey, but she was shaking. When the shot rang out, she launched herself to the left, feeling a sharp pain in her ankle as she did so. A second shot rang out, and then she felt Heath grab her boot and yank it off.

She looked around and saw the head of a snake attached to her boot by one fang. Oh, god, it must have bitten her, she thought. That's what the pain in her ankle was from!

"Lay still, Maddie," commanded Heath harshly. He had killed the snake closest to Maddie with the first shot, but the second one had leapt through the air and attacked her boot when she launched herself off the rock.

Swiftly, he took out his knife and cut the stocking off her leg, looking for the puncture site. He noted there was only one and felt a small stab of relief. If he was quick enough, Maddie would not die today. He placed the knife on the skin and pressed.

Maddie felt the knife and gasped. "What are you doing?" She tried to pull her foot away from Heath.

"Hold still, Maddie!" He looked at her sternly. "I have to drain the poison, darling, and I have to do it quickly. This will hurt, but it will save your life if I'm in time."

Maddie was white as a sheet, but she nodded and lay back, clenching her teeth as the knife sliced sharply into her skin. She was already feeling ill, but she didn't know if it was from the snake venom or from what Heath was doing. She saw his dark head go down and felt his mouth on her ankle sucking at the cut.

When Heath was finished, he picked her up and sat her on Bacon, then swung up behind her. Holding her tightly against his chest, he tried to hurry Bacon back to the house. Maddie was slumping heavily against him, and he carried her into the house and laid her on their bed.

"Stay as still as you can, Maddie," he warned. "I'm going to go for the doctor."

"No, Heath, don't leave me," begged Maddie reaching for him. She was scared, and she felt very ill. "We both know there is nothing the doctor can do. I'll either survive it, or I won't."

"You will survive it, Maddie," he replied with more confidence than he felt. "You were only bitten with one fang, but the doctor has some herbs that will ease the pain and swelling and make you feel better." It wouldn't hurt to have the insurance of the doctor's herbal medicines, he thought grimly, even though he was sure he was right. Playing with Maddie's life was shaking him up badly, though, and he wanted to get to town and back as quickly as possible.

"Are you sure?" quavered Maddie in a small voice, wanting desperately to believe him. She had seen her small cousin bitten by a rattler years ago when they were about 6 years old. He had died very quickly.

"Yes darling," he said tenderly, kissing her on the forehead. "You would be more productive worrying about the spanking I'm going to give you when you are well, than worrying about dying."

"Oh," she said tearily. "Right now, even that sounds okay as long as I'm going to live." She clutched his hands with her small ones. "Promise me, Heath, promise me you'll be back really soon...and that I will be here when you get back."

Heath took her small hands in his and sat on the side of the bed to give her the reassurance she sought. "You will live, Maddie, I promise you that. You are an adult, not a child like Herbie was, and you didn't get near the amount of venom that he got. You would be unconscious by now if you had." He smiled down at her, knowing she was thinking of her little cousin. Inside, he was praying he was right.

He put his hand to her forehead and smoothed back the honey strands away from her flushed face. "I want you to rest. Don't get up, and I'll be back in about thirty minutes, okay?" He leaned forward and placed a loving kiss on her trembling lips.

"Okay, Heath," she promised in a small, childlike voice. Now that she was assured that she was going to live, she began to worry about...other things!

Heath got a towel for the cut to drain on and then left the window open, the breeze lazily swirling the curtains around and squeezed Maddie's hand one more time. "I'll be back soon," he promised, and then he was gone.

It was a week later when Heath took Maddie for a ride, and they came upon the rocks where she had been bitten by the rattler. Maddie shivered as she remembered the dreaded rattle, and she looked carefully to make sure there were no more about.

Heath had told her he had come and cleaned out a nest of them under the shale. Something he had suspected when he saw the parents earlier. He had

never said anything to her about a nest of snakes, though, but her conscience pricked at her for not taking him seriously and obeying him when he told her not to go near the rocks for a while.

Heath had returned quickly as promised that day, and except for being very ill for a day or so, Maddie had fully recovered. The herbs had helped relieve Maddie's fever and pain as he had said, and her youth and good health had done the rest.

Her solicitous husband hadn't mentioned a spanking all week, and Maddie had finally started to relax, thinking he wasn't going to do anything after all. She couldn't have been more wrong!

Heath glanced sideways at Maddie looking relaxed in the saddle. He had talked to his friend Sam this week and listened to his advice concerning what to do with Maddie. Sam had agreed that this certainly warranted a sound spanking and had suggested he take Maddie back to the rocks and spank her there. To get the message well delivered, he had added tactfully. And, a nice hickory switch wouldn't be amiss at all. Make her cut it, herself, he had said! Being a novice at this spanking business, but definitely willing, Heath had followed his advice.

"We're going to stop here, Maddie," Heath said, pulling Bacon in and dismounting. He walked over to help Maddie down from Eggs, her golden palomino. Maddie had named both mounts while he shook his head and told her she would give those horses a complex! Who ever named their horses Bacon and Eggs! She had just wrinkled her cute little nose at him and went on.

"But, Heath, I don't want to stop here. I don't like this place, anymore," Maddie protested as he lifted her from the horse, her heart beating fast at the look in his eye. It was the same look he had had in the church two weeks ago!

"I think this place is appropriate for what I have in mind," he said mildly. "Seems to me the best place to learn a lesson is where the disobedience happened."

Maddie was afraid he had been thinking along those lines, and she instinctively shot her hands back to cover her bottom in her riding skirt. "No, Heath...I thought you forgave me, and it was all over with!"

"I do forgive you, Maddie, but it's not all over with. I promised you a spanking when you got well, and you are well...now it's time."

"That's not fair, Heath! If you had told me about the nest I wouldn't have come here," Maddie argued desperately.

Heath wasn't about to let that argument get in the way. "Yes, you would Maddie. You are very stubborn, darling, and you wanted to come, so you did. It wouldn't have mattered what I had said. The results would have been the same. You were determined to have your own way."

He took out his pocketknife and handed it to her. "Go over to the hickory tree and cut a switch." He tried to sound very matter of fact in spite of his own doubts as to her obeying him.

Maddie stared at him, her mouth agape. Then, she folded her arms and refused to take the knife. "I won't do it, and you can't make me!" Since he insisted on being unreasonable, she would just have to make a stand!

But, Heath was prepared for her. He had thought it all out in advance. "Okay, I'll do it myself. But, if I do, I will cut TWO switches, and I'll use them both." His brown eyes gleamed at the consternation that appeared on her lovely face.

Maddie was flummoxed! "You...you wouldn't," she quavered, her voice suddenly unsure.

"Oh, but I would," he assured her. "After almost losing you, I can do it quite easily. Especially if I

feel it will make you think twice about doing something so foolish again. I warned you, and you still ignored me!" He glared sternly at her, tapping the pocketknife against his palm. He hoped he looked appropriately fierce; he really didn't want to cut two switches and use them both.

He sighed inwardly in relief when she stepped forward and took the knife from him, then turned around and marched towards the trees, indignation in every step. He had to smile at her ramrod stiff spine. Maddie SO hated to be told what to do, but Heath was coming more and more to realize she did need some discipline in her life. Since he was her husband that would be his job, and he intended to do it well.

Maddie was angry. Angry at his determination to beat her with a switch, angry at herself for not listening to him in the first place and just plain...angry! This was so humiliating! Being sent to cut your own implement of torture was just too much. Angrily, she slashed off a slender shoot and returned to her husband, jamming the offensive twig into his chest.

"There!" she announced triumphantly.

Heath took the proffered switch and held it up. "It's a bit puny isn't it, Maddie?" he asked. The branch was about 6 inches long and covered with leaves, hardly big enough to swat a palm with, let alone a nice rear-end.

"Well, you never said how big it was supposed to be," she returned defensively, flushing.

Heath began peeling leaves from the little branch. "Well, it's your choice I suppose. But, this is what I'll wear out on your thighs after I spank your bottom with the real switch you are still going to go get. If you come back with another one like this, then I'll have one for each thigh won't I?" He smiled smugly at her and swished the little branch through the air.

Maddie gasped! He wouldn't...surely! The look in his eye told her he was serious, and Maddie's temper finally began to cool as she realized she wasn't getting out of this.

Feeling suddenly scared and forlorn, she slowly dragged herself back to the tree, looking for what she hoped was a suitable branch this time. She took her time cutting it, trying not to wince as she remembered Able hopping and yelling when their father had used a switch on him. He had sported little red welts for hours afterward, even seemed proud of them. Boys! She thought scornfully.

Finally, she slunk back to Heath, her head bowed and handed him the switch. When she glanced up at him, her eyes were misty, and she watched in apprehension as he smoothly stripped the branch of its twigs and leaves. Finally, he swished it experimentally through the air, and she shivered at the hiss it made.

Heath felt sorry for his young wife, and he hesitated, but then he took her arm and led her to the boulder where she had been sitting. "Take your skirt down, Maddie and place your hands face down on the rock." Glancing at what was left of the rattlesnake, he strengthened his failing resolve and motioned her to obey him.

"Don't do this, Heath," she begged, then, very much afraid of the long switch. "I'm really sorry, I won't disobey you again like this...please!"

"Skirt down, Maddie," was his only reply.

"I...I can't," she said, her hands trembling on the snap to her riding skirt. "I'm scared, Heath. Please, don't spank me hard." Her baby blue eyes filled with tears, and they spilled over and coursed down her pale cheeks.

Heath could see that she really was very scared, and her knees were shaking. He doubted she would be able to stay in place bent over the boulder. It had sounded good when Sam had told

him about it, but it didn't seem like such a great idea, now.

He gently took the snap out of her hands and unsnapped it himself and slid her riding skirt down her thighs. Taking her hand, he led her to a taller boulder and pulled her down over it on her tummy. She tried to get up, but he pushed her back down until she was well over the boulder.

"No, Heath...don't," she yelped as she felt her chemise being parted. She reached back and put both hands over her cheeks.

"Move your hands, Maddie, or I'll switch your thighs," said Heath warningly. "I've heard that's worse than your bottom!"

Maddie reluctantly moved her hands back to the front of her body, closed her eyes, and then braced herself for the first blow!

Maddie and the Rattlesnake Part Two

Heath admired the pale skin gleaming in the sunlight as Maddie lay over the boulder waiting for the first stripe of the hickory switch he held in his hands. He couldn't resist reaching out and running his palm over the milky whiteness, regretting that he would soon be laying red stripes across it and marring the pristine perfection.

He shivered slightly as he remembered the huge rattlesnake jumping for Maddie. He had thanked the Lord profusely every day since then that it had only hit her with the one fang.

Eyeing the switch he held, he knew it had the power to bring a lot of pain. He had been switched a few times when he was growing up by his own Pa.

He grimaced in distaste. Bringing that kind of pain to his young bride did not appeal to him in the slightest! But, she had disobeyed him and put herself in extreme danger, so she hadn't left him much choice. He raised his arm.

The waiting Maddie heard the swish of the switch coming through the air just before it landed on her shrinking bottom. The boulder refused to absorb any of her body though, and her backside remained thrust out and exposed as the evil limb bit into her tender cheeks.

Swish-crack!

"Ouch!" yelped Maddie, her hands flying back in an effort to rub away the stinging pain.

"Hands out of the way, Maddie," Heath said patiently for the second time. When she didn't obey, he quickly landed one across the back of her thighs.

"No, Heath!" the cringing girl protested at the assault on her thighs, and she moved her hands back to the front of her, again, and tried to tuck them under her chest.

Swish-crack!

Maddie's body jerked again, and once more her hands flew to her backside. She moaned and held her bottom cheeks, one leg lifted into the air as she tried to absorb the pain.

Heath shook his head. He knew he wasn't striping her that hard, but nevertheless, she was unused to it, and he could understand her lack of obedience in this case. However, it was making it hard for him to complete his task in a timely manner! Without warning this time he slapped another stripe across the back of her thighs.

"OWW! Heathhh!" protested Maddie, tears springing to her eyes. This was torture! Sheer torture! She was NOT happy with her husband for this, but it wasn't the time to protest, obviously! Maddie stood up and stared accusingly at Heath.

"Back down, Maddie, I'm not finished," warned Heath, his brown eyes very serious. "You'll get extra for not staying in place if I have to tell you again!"

The sniffing girl reluctantly lay back over the rock. "Please, Heath, no more, I'll obey next time, I promise." She would say anything as this point to stop the painful chastisement.

Swish-crack!

"OWWWW!" wailed Maddie, her hands again flying to her burning bottom and her feet alternately rising in the air. The tears started flowing down her pale cheeks. "Pleaaaaaase, Heath!" She let go of her cheeks at his look and started wringing her hands.

Fast losing patience, Heath stepped forward. Taking Maddie's right wrist in his hand, he stood against the boulder, so she couldn't put her left hand back. Then, he began to steadily land hot slashes against the wiggling buttocks in spite of her kicking and jumping. He didn't stop until he had

added another 10 cracks of the switch, making a total of fifteen.

Maddie bucked and kicked out at this development, her cries of protest and pain filling the air. She sobbed over the boulder, vowing retribution to herself as she felt Heath's warm palm slide over the burning welts. He would pay for this indignity! When Heath stood her up, she glared at him through her tears.

"I *hate* you, Heathcliff Danvers," she wailed. "I am *never* going to speak to you again!"

She quickly pulled her riding skirt up, pushing Heath's hands away as he tried to help her. She ran for her horse then, and climbed up onto Eggs's back.

"Wait, Maddie!" urged Heath, throwing the switch away and running towards her. He had been completely taken aback at her reaction, and it had taken a few seconds too long for him to register what she was doing and then spring into action. Maddie kicked Eggs in the side and took off, leaving Heath in the dust.

Heath stared at the retreating figure, wondering if he should give her some time to think about things, or follow her. She was hopping mad, that was for sure! He scratched his head. Sam had never said what to do if she got mad about it.

Last week, he had put her to bed for nap, and she had gone quietly, obeying him like a proper wife should, and he had felt good about spanking her. But, this time...this was different!

Heath grabbed the dangling reins of Bacon's bridle and walked slowly towards the house. He would give her time to recover, he guessed, although he wasn't sure what he had done wrong. Something wasn't right, that was for certain!

Maddie's bottom burned against the saddle, but it was not too uncomfortable to ride. She would show Heathcliff Danvers! She didn't have to put up

with this treatment! If he wanted to beat his wife, well...then he just wouldn't have a wife...at least not this wife!

She pulled Eggs up abruptly at their home and dashed into the bedroom. Opening the trunk at the foot of the bed, she fished around until she found the purse her mother had given her. Opening it, she reassured herself that the bills were still there, and then she grabbed a valise and stuffed several articles of clothing into it.

Returning to Eggs, she tied the satchel on, trying to hurry in case Heath came back and tried to stop her. Mounting once again, she headed for Brocton. The two o'clock train would be leaving in thirty minutes, and she would be on it!

"I want a one way ticket to Panier flats," Maddie told the teller, and she shoved the money through the small window.

"It's just getting ready to pull out," said Ed, a small bald headed man behind the counter. His handlebar mustache was in great contrast to the smooth baldness of his pate, but Maddie was too upset to appreciate it in her usual style.

"Here's some extra cash, Ed. See that Eggs gets over to the livery, will you? I'm sure Heath will be along after while to pick him up."

Ed nodded his acquiescence to her request.

"Heath not going with you?" he asked curiously.

"Not this time," replied Maddie firmly, still angry. "I'm going alone!"

Ed shrugged. "You better hurry then, the conductor is calling for boarding."

Maddie hurried up the steps and made her way through the railcar and took a seat by the window. It was only a few moments, and the train was pulling out, taking her to Panier Flats. Once there, it would be a simple matter to have someone take her to her parents ranch outside town.

She leaned her forehead against the window glass of the train and watched the countryside slide by. Her bottom ached and throbbed, and she began to feel very sorry for herself. Here she was, an abused woman on her way home to her parents. How dare Heath put her in this humiliating position, she thought indignantly! Then, she sniffled. She was going to miss him, though.

Once again, hot tears leaked from beneath her eyelids. Somehow, she would get even with Sam Decker for ruining her life...that...that man! Giving Heath all these ideas! There was simply no reason why she and Evelyn Grouse could not have something in common.

Her lip drooped as she pouted. Well, until Heath promised her faithfully that he would never spank her again, she would NOT be coming home, she decided, a tear sliding off the end of her small nose. She could hold out as long as she needed to, and her father and mother would be in complete agreement with her! Heath didn't stand a chance, he was totally outnumbered, and he would have to give in if he wanted her back.

She *did* want to go back, she knew that. She missed him dreadfully, already, especially now that her anger was wearing off. But, she had to make a stand somewhere, and Heath simply had to understand that spanking her in the future was going to be totally unacceptable! He would come for her...she hoped it was soon.

Heath walked into the house and looked around for Maddie. Probably in the bedroom crying, he decided. He laid his ear against the bedroom door, listening. When he didn't hear anything, he eased the door open. The bed was empty, but the chest at the bottom of the bed was standing open!

Quickly, he rifled through it, looking for the purse her mother had left...it was gone! Alarmed, he yanked open the dresser drawers and saw that her undergarments were missing. Rushing to the closet he looked at the shelf and saw the valise was gone as well. Maddie had left him!

Heath's heart sank, and he ran to the barn to verify that Eggs was missing. He then ran back to the hitching post in front of the house and leapt into Bacon's saddle and galloped towards town.

"She bought a ticket to Panier Flats about an hour ago, Heath," Ed told him. "Said you'd be along directly and pick up Eggs at the livery." The small man stared at Heath's grim face. "You didn't know?"

"It was ...uh...a spur of the moment thing, I wasn't for sure she was going," mumbled Heath, turning away. The last thing he needed was gossip all over town that Maddie had left him. It wouldn't look good for him to tell Ed that his wife had left him. Tongues would wag for sure.

Ed looked skeptical as Heath walked out the door. "Maddie's done left him," he murmured to himself. "Hey, Martha!"

A short plump woman came bustling from the back. "What is it, Ed?"

"Preacher's wife done left him, that's what," replied Ed thoughtfully.

"Oh my," exclaimed Martha, her bright brown eyes full of excitement. "You sure about that, Ed?"

"Pretty sure!" Ed replied matter of factly.

Martha made a beeline for the switchboard. At the turn of the century, not many people had a new fangled telephone, but a few did. She dialed over to the mercantile.

Ed finished his paperwork and walked back into the room with the switchboard. His wife's voice was running as usual.

"That's right, Angelina, Maddie's done left Heath!"

"Martha!" thundered Ed. "How many times I told you not to spread gossip?"

"B...but, Ed, it's not gossip, you just told me!" stammered Martha, her round little face going pale.

Ed closed the door meaningfully behind him. "Get off the switchboard, Martha, you know what to do!"

"Yes sir, Ed," replied Martha hastily. "I'll call you later, Angelina," she said and rung off.

Ed took the razor strap off the wall and slapped it against his leg. "Over the chair, young lady!"

Martha knew better than to disobey Ed. They had been married for nigh on ten years now, and she knew what to expect. Disobedience simply brought more stinging smacks of the razor strap. Quickly, she bent over the back of the wooden chair gripping the sides of the seat to keep from putting her hands back. She grimaced as she felt her long dress come up over her back. Ed always spanked on the bare. She shivered as she felt the sides to her chemise being parted. She gasped when the first lick of the strap fell across her plump buttocks.

Whap!

"Just cause I tell you something, woman, don't give you the right to spread it all over town. How many times we got to go through this, Martha?"

Whap! Whap! Whap!

"Ohhh...gasp...OWW! I'm s...sorry, Ed...I shouldn't have, I know!" Tears sprang to Martha's eyes as the strap found its mark again and again.

Whap! Whap! Whap!

"You remember what happened the last time you spread something that turned out not to be true!"

Whap! Whap! Whap!

"OWW! Yes...yes, Ed...I remember...OWWWW!" Martha danced in place as the burning spanks

blazed across her defenseless cheeks. "I won't do it no more...OWW...please, Ed!"

Whap! Whap! Whap!

Ed finished with a flurry of stinging spanks of the strap and then hung it on the wall. He went to Martha and lifted her up into his chest, her dress falling back to the floor and held her while she sobbed on his shoulder.

"There now, honey," he said gruffly, patting her back. They were about the same height, and Martha probably outweighed him by about 10 pounds, but she was his jewel, and he loved her, even with her loose tongue. "You just remember what I told you and keep things to yourself. I'd hate to not be able to tell you anything! And, the preacher never said for sure that his wife left him, it just adds up to that, you understand?"

"Yes, Ed," sniffed Martha, drying her eyes on her apron. "I understand, and I'll surely remember."

He kissed her tenderly on the forehead. "I got to get back to work. I suggest you do the same."

"Yes, Ed," beamed Martha through the mistiness in her eyes. She turned back to the switchboard, then, as a call rang through, and Ed went back to the teller window.

Maddie stormed in the door of her parent's ranch house, slamming it behind her. Her mother came rushing out from the kitchen to see who was in her home.

"Why, Maddie, what are you doing here?" she exclaimed, hurrying to take her daughter in her arms.

"Oh, mother, you won't believe what's going on!" sobbed Maddie, the tears flowing again at the site of her mother.

"What's going on here?" came a deep voice to Maddie's left. It was her father coming out of the

study to find out what the commotion was all about. "Is something wrong, Maddie? Where's Heath?" The tall man with the gray laced brown hair and square jaw walked over to look down into his daughter's tear streaked face.

"He...he beats me, Father," sobbed Maddie burying her face in her mother's arms.

"Who beats you?" demanded her father as her mother gasped. "You're not talking about Heath, surely?" Her father was aghast at the idea of the young, gentle preacher beating his daughter. But, who else would she be talking about?

"Of course, I'm talking about Heath," exclaimed Maddie impatiently. "He took a stick today...and...and beat me with it!"

"Oh, no!" squeaked her mother. She gently turned Maddie around and started undoing the buttons on the back of her shirt so she could see Maddie's back. "How could he do this to our daughter, Harrison?"

"No, mother," said Maddie, pushing her mother's hands away. "He didn't hit me in the back."

"Well, where then," asked her mother urgently, running her hands up and down Maddie's slim arms. "Tell me where he hit you!"

Maddie blushed. "It was here," she said, her hands resting on her bottom.

"Hmmm," mused her father, his hazel eyes beginning to twinkle. "It wasn't a...spanking...by any chance was it, young lady?"

"Well, that's what he called it, of course," huffed Maddie. "But, he used a stick...and he made me cut it myself, but to me it was still a beating." She sniffed and looked woefully at her mother.

Her mother looked appropriately sympathetic, but much less urgent. "So, Heath gave you a switching? Whatever for?"

Maddie didn't like the way this conversation was going. Instead of being outraged, her parents were

beginning to calm down from their original state of upset. She swiftly outlined the details of why Heath had switched her, and her father's brows drew together in a very familiar frown.

"He had every right to spank you, young lady," he announced, "and, furthermore, I would have expected him to!"

"Motherrrr!" wailed Maddie in frustration. She stamped her foot and glared at her father who was looking way too self-satisfied. Men! "You can't possibly approve of this...this barbaric behavior, Father!"

"I not only approve, I condone it. Looks like Heath has more backbone than I gave him credit for. I have to admit, I was worried about you marrying such a gentle, soft-spoken man, but by Jove, my faith is restored in the preacher!" He chuckled at the mulish look on Maddie's face and cupped her chin in his hand. "He ought to spank you again for running out on him!"

"Come, dear," said her mother, softly, taking Maddie's hand and leading her towards the kitchen. "Let's have a cup of tea, and you can tell me all about the rattlesnakes. I'm SO glad you weren't seriously hurt."

Maddie allowed her mother to lead her away. She was feeling very dejected as the support she had counted on seemed to be going by the wayside. "All right, mother," she sighed.

Heath knocked hesitantly on the door to the ranch house and gazed at Harrison Owen's amused expression when he opened it. He wasn't sure whether to expect a welcome or a shotgun in his face.

"Is Maddie here?"

"Oh, yes, she's here," chuckled Harrison. "Come in, my boy, come in." He took Heath by the arm

and led him into his study, closing the door behind them. "I'm sure by now you could use a drop of good Scotch," he said, pouring drinks for the two of them.

Heath was not usually a drinking man, but he sat across from Harrison and took a sip of the smooth scotch.

Harrison eyed the younger man thoughtfully and then spoke. "So, you spanked my daughter, and she ran away from home, huh?"

Heath loosened the collar of his shirt and flushed slightly. "Yes, I did. She had it coming, and I'd do it again," he said defensively, not sure if the other man approved or not.

"Yes, she explained about the rattlesnakes. I agree with you, Heath, she needed a good spanking."

"Well, I spanked her, but it made her furious," replied Heath dejectedly. "I guess I didn't expect that. It's only the second time I've spanked her, and she didn't react that way the first time."

The two men chatted for a while, and Harrison explained that Maddie happened to be a very spoiled young lady. Oh, she had a good heart and was very talented, but she was spoiled nonetheless. Harrison had always hoped she would marry someone with a firm hand because he knew she needed it, even if she didn't realize that.

Heath in turn explained about Brocton and the things Sam Decker had told him. Harrison nodded in agreement with all that he said.

"Looks to me like the only mistake you made, Heath, was in not spanking her long enough or firmly enough."

"How so?" Heath cocked his head to the side and listened interestedly.

"Well, if she can get up from a spanking still angry, you haven't spanked her long enough. And, if she can sit a horse and ride for twenty minutes,

you haven't spanked her firmly enough, especially with a switching."

"How do I know if it's long enough?" asked Heath. "I don't want to hurt her!"

"Practice, my boy, practice," chuckled Harrison. "You'll get the hang of it. When you paddle her bottom, you should at least paddle until she is repentant and not fighting mad anymore. You'll be able to tell better the more you do it."

"Well, I guess I blew that then," grinned Heath, thinking of Maddie's irate face when he let her up. "All I did was make her mad."

Harrison's eyes twinkled at the young man. "Well, it's not too late to rectify that mistake. Besides, running off is not acceptable in the first place. You need to make that clear to your wife." He sat back in his chair. "Course, if it's done properly, you won't be able to take her home for a day or two. It would be too uncomfortable for her to ride."

Heath nodded. "I reckon you won't mind putting us up for a few days, then?"

"Not at all, my boy, not at all!" He leaned over and opened the drawer to the old wooden desk. "Here, you might try this, it's a real attitude adjuster." He handed Heath a large wooden backed hairbrush. Both men looked up as a knock sounded on the door.

Maddie knew Heath was in her father's study. Curiosity had finally driven her to come see what they were doing.

"Hello, Maddie, come on in," beamed her father, taking Maddie's arm and leading her into the study. "I'll just leave you two young people to work it out." With that, he stepped outside the door and closed it firmly.

Maddie watched as Heath rose from the chair and walked towards her. She had expected to see apologies all over his face, but instead, she saw that

same look in his eye...that...spanking look! She started to back away, but he took her arm and steered her towards a hardback chair with no arms.

"W...what are you doing, Heath?" she quavered, trying to pull her arm free.

"I'm not happy with you, Maddie," he said sternly, sitting in the chair. She had changed out of her riding skirt and was wearing a pretty cotton dress, light blue, with embroidered flowers along the bodice and the hem of the skirt. She looked lovely, but he knew he needed to be very firm with her. He pulled her down onto his lap.

"Well, I'm not very happy with you, either," she said petulantly, folding her bare arms. Her honey blonde tresses were gathered behind her head and secured in a blue ribbon, the tail cascading down her back and wisps curling along her temples and ears.

"Maddie, I was correcting your behavior today, and you got angry and ran off," began Heath. "And, I had to chase you clear over here to your parents home."

"I don't need you to correct my behavior, Heath," argued Maddie, her pink lips pouting at him.

"Luckily, the train runs by Panier flats every two hours, or I wouldn't have gotten here until tomorrow," he went on as if she hadn't spoken.

"I didn't want to run away, Heath, but I didn't know what else to do to make you understand that I don't want you to spank me...not ever!" She looked earnestly at him.

Heath sighed and then looked at his recalcitrant wife. He had already made up his mind after the incident with the rattlesnakes that Maddie was going to be subject to discipline. The other wives put up with, she needed it, and he was *going* to do it!

"Maddie, I *am* going to spank you. Each and every time I think you need it." He turned her face

to look into her baby blue eyes. "I love you, Madeline Marie Danvers, and I couldn't stand it if something happened to you because I was remiss in my duties as a husband. It's my job to look after you, to protect you, and that means you have to mind me when I say something is necessary."

Maddie gazed thoughtfully at Heath's serious face. She could see that he wasn't going to give up on this. She sighed. "I love you too, Heath, and I don't want you to do this. But, if you are determined to do so, I guess I don't have a choice, do I?"

"There's always a choice, Maddie," he said softly, his thumb stroking the back of her hand gently. "But, I hope you'll choose to stay with me." He waited for her response.

"Of course, I'll stay with you, Heath, you are my love, my life," she murmured taking his face between her palms. She placed a soft kiss on his firm lips, loving the feel of them beneath her own soft ones.

"I'm glad," he whispered softly against her mouth. "I couldn't bear to lose you." His mouth took hers, and it was a breathless few moments before they broke apart. "Now, let's get this spanking out of the way and go find your old room."

"Wait! What spanking?" cried Maddie as she felt herself pulled down and over Heath's knee.

"The one I'm giving you for running away from me this morning. I don't want you to ever do that again!" Heath remonstrated.

"But, Heath," she protested as she felt her skirts rise up her back. "I was angry with you!"

"You're not suppose to be angry with me after a spanking, you are suppose to be repentant," Heath instructed cheerfully, parting the filmy soft chemise. This was almost becoming enjoyable. At least, the sights before him were always enjoyable! He lovingly patted her firm backside, noting some

very faint striping marks from the switching that morning. He guessed Harrison had been right. She hardly looked spanked and certainly not enough to be uncomfortable!

Oh, well, he wasn't going to go back and redo it, but next time...next time he would make sure he did the job right. Starting right now!

It was much later when Maddie was curled up in his arms that night that Heath reflected on the hairbrush. It had certainly changed Maddie's tune in a hurry! It hadn't been long at all before Maddie was squealing all kinds of promises to behave, and her little bottom had been bright red when he finally let her up. She had, indeed, been tearful and repentant, promising never to run out on him again and to obey him when he deemed it necessary. And, she had snuggled into his shoulder, sobbing and hanging onto him for dear life. Heath, on his side of the equation had felt the need more strongly than ever to find her old bedroom!

Heath grinned to himself. He'd have to see Sam Decker about ordering in a nice hairbrush for his little wife. He just knew she would be thrilled! Knowing Maddie, though, he would probably have to order three or four. Just one was sure to end up in the cook stove when he wasn't looking!

He pulled her in close to his body and kissed her forehead tenderly in her sleep. She was a handful, no denying that. Life would certainly be interesting with Madeline Marie Danvers to live it with. He smiled and drifted off to sleep...a content man once again in charge of his little household.

The Brocton Chronicles III

Heath's Bright Idea Part One

"Have you tried standing up to your wife, Tom? Sounds like she needs you to be stronger," hinted Heathcliff Danvers, local minister of the Brocton County Evangelical Church.

Heath was often called upon to offer advice and council to the members of his small parish in Brocton, Kentucky and was making every effort to do so on this rainy slow moving day. Time always seemed to drag like a snail on rainy days, and Heath much preferred to be outside working in the bright sunshine. However, parish duties were paramount, and so he endeavored to be available to the populace of the town when called upon.

I know, Preacher, I know!" grumbled thirty one year old Thomas Grouse, or Tom as everyone called him for as long as he could remember. He stared across the old wooden desk in the rectory and eyed the Reverend Danvers with a look akin to disgust and hope all in the same word.

He was a man disgusted with himself for not being able to handle his wife Evelyn and hopeful that the preacher could give him some magic formula to help him develop some backbone. Maybe what he really needed was some elixir or something...like an instant formula!

"I jest ain't got no stomach to be doing like the other men of this here town, Preacher," he went on, taking his hat off his head and swiping at the moisture that was collecting along his hairline. "I was hopin you might...well...talk to Evelyn...or somethin." He fanned himself with his hat, the humidity making the Reverend's office seem small and close.

Heath gazed back at poor Tom, thinking how grateful he was not to be in his shoes! Tom Grouse was a big man, a really big man! Standing 6ft 5inches, he was the Brocton blacksmith and had a reputation for being the man to see when you needed fine work done. But, Tom's sky-blue eyes were full of misery at the moment and all because of a tiny little scrap of a woman who had a mouth bigger than west Texas!

Heath cleared his throat and asked Tom a delicate question " Well, Tom, you know what the other men hereabouts do with their women when they need to get a...ahem...message across, and their wives won't listen?"

Tom rolled the hat brim uneasily in his fingers. "Of course, I do, preacher," he said testily. "That's what I'm talkin' about! I just cain't go beating on little Evelyn...why, I might hurt her! She's so tiny and frail and all, I might break her in two if I was to do that!"

Frail was the last word Heath would have applied to Evelyn Grouse, thinking of the raven-haired green-eyed terror. She had a tongue sharper than a slice of glass and could bore holes through you with those eyes, and she didn't seem to mind using her tools. She was tiny, though...Heath would give her that! With that pale skin, she looked like a miniature china doll, but boy could that girl give Tom hell! Pardon my language, Lord, thought Heath to himself, even if it is only in my mind.

"I can understand that, Tom," murmured Heath sympathetically. "I know you wouldn't want to hurt Evelyn." He thought of his own wife, Maddie. A smile flitted across his face as he remembered the last spanking he had given her in her parent's home with that hairbrush her father had lent him. It hadn't been easy for him to spank her like that, but as Harrison Owens had promised, it had quickly adjusted her attitude!

Heath was beginning to feel like a pro in the spanking department, having spanked Maddie a grand total of four times, now. Well, at least he was getting more used to the idea! Enough so that he could suggest it to Tom and feel like he was doing him a service. If anyone needed a good spanking though, it had to be Evelyn Grouse!

"No, sir," nodded Tom vigorously. "I won't ever hurt my little gal! So, that's why I came to you, preacher, I figured you could talk to her, maybe."

Heath shifted uncomfortably in the chair. "I'm afraid I wouldn't know what to say, Tom. Did you have something in mind?" He looked hopefully at Tom, open to suggestions. Talking to Evelyn did not appeal in the slightest! He could imagine the tiny dynamo's reaction to his interfering between her and Tom. He pulled the collar of his robe away from his throat to let in a bit of cool air. These robes got hot, especially in the summertime!

Tom slapped his hat vigorously against his knee, and the dust flew out of the faded denim. "Hell's bells, preacher, that's whut I came to you for? You're the one with the fancy education and the high falutin ideas. Cain't you think of somethin'?

Heath cleared his throat again. "Uhh...well...you better give me some time, Tom. If you're dead set against spanking Evelyn, then I'm not sure what I can do. A man sort of has to take care of his own family...you know what I mean?" He watched as Tom's face fell at this pronouncement.

"I ain't getting no younger, Preacher," grouched Tom, standing up. "Evelyn and I been married for ten years now, and her domineerin' attitude has only gotten worse." Tom hesitated over the word domineering. His sixth grade education hadn't gotten him very far in the fancy words department, but he did like to use the ones he knew.

"I'll think about it," promised Heath, standing up to reach for Tom's hand. "Come back and see me in a few days."

"I'll try," replied Tom. "But, if it ain't rainin' still, Evelyn will have me in the garden for sure. She says the weeds need pullin' this week what with the rain and all we've been havin'."

"Why doesn't Evelyn pull the weeds?" Heath asked curiously. Maddie was going to pull the weeds in their garden although Heath did the plowing for the heavy stuff.

"She says it makes her hands brown," replied Tom, looking embarrassed. "So, I have to do it instead."

Heath looked skeptical, but he didn't say anything. Most of the women he knew always handled the garden weeds once the seeds were in. But...however the Grouse's divided up the chores was their business! "Perhaps you and Evelyn can drop by our home later this week, then," Heath replied, an idea forming suddenly in his mind. "I think a meal together might help us all get to know one another better."

"I'll mention it to Evelyn," Tom promised, his dark tanned features lighting up. "Evelyn does like to socialize. I think she might like that. Say Thursday?"

Heath nodded and then quickly took off his robes and hung them on the hook when Tom left. Jamming his white hat onto his head, he went out the back door and mounted Bacon, headed for home and lunch...and an idea to run over with Maddie! She should be back from her shopping by now, and if he handled this right, perhaps he could help Tom Grouse out after all!

"What is this, Angelina?" Maddie asked curiously, taking the package wrapped in brown paper from her friend.

"You best open it and see," replied Angelina, a smile playing around the corners of her sweet mouth. Her light green eyes gleamed, and she tossed her long length of chestnut brown braid over her shoulder. "Heath said it was to be given to you when you came in."

Maddie's face lit up with excitement. "A gift? For me? Ohhhh, what a sweet husband Heath is!" Her slender fingers quickly untied the twine and she eagerly pushed the brown wrapping aside to uncover...a wooden hairbrush! Her face fell as she picked up the heavy brush and turned it over in her hands. It looked an awful lot like the one he had used on her tender bottom at her parents ranch several weeks ago!

"Now, that's a really pretty brush," Angelina remarked, not saying anything about her friend's sudden lack of enthusiasm. "Look, Maddie, it even has your name engraved in the handle." She pointed to the delicate engraving on the handle of the hairbrush.

"I...I already have a hairbrush," stammered Maddie, her face turning red. "I can't believe Heath would special order another one. We don't need it, after all, and I'm sure it must have cost a pretty penny!"

"He wanted you to have that one," remarked Sam, stopping in his stocking of the shelves. He walked over to the girls. "Special ordered that particular one just for you, Maddie." He gave her a knowing grin, and she flushed, her ire beginning to rise.

"I want you to send it back, Sam," replied Maddie stubbornly. "We don't need to waste the money on something we have no use for. One hairbrush is enough."

"I can't do that, Maddie. It's already been engraved so it's not returnable." He looked patiently at her, waiting for her next words.

"Well, I don't want it," Maddie persisted, her voice getting louder in her agitation.

"Now, Maddie, that brush has been sitting here for two days, waiting for you to get into town. Heath left it special for you so you could have a surprise the next time you got supplies." Sam looked grieved at her attitude.

"Where would he get the idea that I would love this?" Maddie ask in outrage, pinning Sam in a fierce glare.

A dull red crept up Sam's neck as he struggled to hold his tongue. This was Heath's wife, but goldurn it, the woman needed that brush bad in his opinion! "You better talk to her, Angelina," Sam said to his wife. Turning away, he went back to stocking shelves, indignation in every movement. Some women just didn't know how to be grateful to their men!

Since the store lacked customers at the moment, Angelina took Maddie by the arm and hustled her into the storeroom where she had a small stove with a pot of tea on warming.

"Sit down here, Maddie, and we'll just have ourselves a little talk." She bustled around and poured two cups of tea and set out a small china dish with sugar cubes.

Maddie's hands were shaking as she took a couple of sugar cubes and put them in the hot tea, then took a sip of the soothing liquid. Finally, she looked at her friend. "Angelina, I love you to death, but your husband has GOT to stop giving Heath all these ideas! It's driving me crazy!" She crimped the edges of her pinafore in agitation. "Heath never laid a hand on me until Sam started telling him I needed spanking, and now he has spanked me several times, and I hate it!"

Angelina nodded in sympathy and listened to Maddie vent her feelings.

"It wasn't too awful bad until he spanked me with a hairbrush at my father's house. Oh, Angelina, those hairbrushes hurt!" Tears appeared in young Maddie's eyes at the memory.

She had been wearing her favorite blue cotton dress and sitting on Heath's knee in her father's study when Heath had turned her over that knee and announced a spanking for running off and leaving him.

Maddie had squealed in surprise. She had counted on her parent's support to stop Heath in this new barbaric behavior, but to her consternation, they had supported him! Her father had even lent Heath his hairbrush to spank her with. She shivered at the memory.

"You are not to run home to your parents when we have an argument, young lady!" Heath turned the pretty dress up and pinned it to her back with his left hand, leaving her in her very thin, very filmy chemise, her firm young buttocks filling it out quite nicely. He ran his hand over the delightful bottom, lovingly, and then slipped inside the fragile material, parting it to leave the pale globes free of encumbrance.

Harrison had warned him about warming Maddie up with a hand spanking to alleviate any bruising from the heavy wooden brush, and so he began to swat her firmly, but lightly eliciting protests all the while. The very faint few marks of the switch from earlier that morning hardly showed at all, but his hand was quickly turning the pale skin a dusky pink.

"Stop it, Heath," protested Maddie, putting her hands back to block his progress. "This is exactly why I ran away! I don't want you to spank me! Can't you understand that?"

"You just said you were going to stay with me, Maddie, were you lying to me then?"

Heath paused and waited for an answer. Maddie bit her lip and looked back. Realizing he was right,

and she had made her choice, she sighed and nodded her assent. She didn't have to like it, though, and she would make sure he understood that!

Heath picked up the hairbrush Harrison had given him and hefted it experimentally. This time, he would make sure Maddie knew she had been spanked! His mind flitted across the images of that huge rattler attacking his wife, and his determination deepened. Coming home and finding her gone also strengthened his commitment. Maddie needed to accept her discipline before she got anymore out of hand!

He had shaken his head at some the escapades her family had regaled him with while courting her, but they had all seemed to take it as...that's our Maddie! Harrison had admitted to only disciplining his daughter a few times. He just hadn't had the heart because she was so good most of the time. So, he had let it slide, but he admitted he should have been more diligent.

Gripping the hairbrush, firmly, he brought it down with a sharp crack! A strangled cry escaped Maddie's lips, and her back arched as she tried to bring her hand back.

"OHH!"

But, Heath quickly pinned her hand to her lower back and began to pepper the sweet bottom with firm crisp swats of the brush. Her skin began to redden very quickly, indeed, and her howls of protest rang in his ears.

Steeling himself against her cries and sobs, he continued grimly until he felt her stop fighting him, as if she was finally resigned to her fate. She was telling him how sorry she was and promising never to run away again or to disobey him ever again!

Heath recognized that under this type of stress she was bound to make promises she might not mean, but he felt there was a difference this time

from the other times. Her bottom was deep red when he pulled her up to sob on his shoulder. He thought he'd done a much better job this time.

Maddie had fidgeted on Heath's knee, trying to find a comfortable position for her aching bottom to sit in. Clinging to his neck, she had sniffled piteously as he had picked her up and headed for her old bedroom.

"I know hairbrushes hurt, Maddie," sympathized Angelina, " we have one, too. A lot like this one, as a matter of fact, and it has my name on it too."

"So, Heath did get the idea from Sam!"

"Well, I think he got it from your father, actually, but it was Sam's idea to put your name on it, I'm sure."

"Ohhhh," Maddie growled.

"Look, Maddie, I think you should try to look at this from another angle." Angelina took another sip of her tea. "Sam told me that he had my name engraved because he loved me so much and that he spanked me because he loved me. He said if he didn't care what I did, it wouldn't matter, and he wouldn't ever spank me. But, he does care about me and about what happens to me. So, he spanks me for my own good, and I accept it because I love him back. Do you understand?"

Maddie nodded doubtfully, trying to follow what Angelina was getting at.

"So, he said the brush is a symbol of the love we have between us, and it's a special brush, only for me. He would never spank anyone else with it, and it's only used for my correction."

"All because he loves you," finished Maddie skeptically.

"Yes." She smiled at Maddie, knowing her young friend didn't really understand...yet. But, hopefully, she would...eventually. Maddie was awfully stubborn and independent. It must rankle to be turned over Heath's knee and punished soundly like a child.

It had been hard for her to accept, too, when Sam had spanked her the first few times, but, now, she knew what to expect, and most of the time, Sam was only playing. She rarely earned a discipline spanking these days. A small secretive smile played around the corners of her well-shaped lips. Obviously, Maddie had not recognized the benefits just yet, but Angelina was confident that she would in time. She was just willful and didn't want to give in.

Maddie finished her tea and stood up. "I guess I'd better be getting on home. Heath will be expecting lunch."

Angelina stood up and hugged Maddie. "You think about it, okay? And, I'm here if you need to talk. Just come by anytime."

Maddie returned the hug and grinned. "Thanks, Angelina, I will think about it, but I still say it's barbaric. I wish Heath wasn't so dead set on it. I haven't given up trying to change his mind yet."

"Well, there are other benefits," grinned Angelina wickedly. She laughed when Maddie blushed.

"Umm...yes," she said stiltedly, remembering how eager she and Heath had been to make love that night. And, surprisingly enough, she had been more than ready for him as well!

She walked back into the shop with Angelina and picked up the hairbrush. Rewrapping it in the brown paper, she stuck it in her bag. Sam turned and eyed her speculatively as she walked towards the door.

"Tell Heath I said hello," he called to her.

"Oh, I will," Maddie returned sweetly. She really was going to get even with that man one of these days, she vowed to herself.

Sam noted the gleam in her eye and chuckled. He recognized mischief when he saw it, and whatever she had in mind would most likely get her

spanked, too. Heath was coming along quite nicely, though! He grinned as she turned and huffed out the door.

"I don't think Maddie likes me," Sam said to Angelina, taking his wife in his arms.

"Oh, it's not that. She just doesn't like you giving Heath ideas," chuckled Angelina, looking up at him.

"Well, she has the look of mischief, mark my words. You just make sure you're not a part of it, you hear?" He ran his palm warningly over the swells of her backside beneath the cotton gingham.

"Yes, dear," murmured Angelina, which earned her a sharp swat.

"I mean it, now!" Sam said warningly. "You best heed me!"

Angelina smiled sweetly up at him, and he bent to kiss the inviting lips. He didn't even note that she hadn't answered the last time.

Angelina kept her own council and allowed him to walk her backwards into the storeroom. She didn't have angel in her name for nothing and changing the subject so deftly was testament to that. Soon, Maddie and Heath were forgotten!

"You want me to what?" Maddie asked in outrage, staring at Heath as if he had just lost his common sense.

"Now see here, Maddie," Heath replied firmly. "Tom Grouse needs our help."

"Not that kind of help," Maddie yelled indignantly.

"Madeline Marie Danvers, are you going to stand there and tell me that you don't think Evelyn Grouse needs Tom to stand up to her?" Heath's brows drew together in a frown. Maddie was not appreciating his plan to help Tom.

"Well...maybe," admitted Maddie. "But, you are trying to convert the man to spanking her. He already said he doesn't want to, just leave it at

that." Secretly, Maddie had to admit to herself that if any woman needed a paddling, it had to be Evelyn. But, she didn't want to bring it on the poor woman! Lord knows, she was mad enough at Sam for introducing it to Heath!

"Look, all I want you to do is act up a bit, and I'll take you to the bedroom. I won't spank you, I promise...but we'll let them think I did. Then we come out and you apologize and be your normal sweet self, and Tom will see that it did you a world of good and didn't hurt you a bit!" Heath beamed at her wanting her to appreciate his wonderful idea.

"No, Heath, I won't do it," replied Maddie stubbornly stamping her foot on the floor. Looking around for a distraction, she remembered the hairbrush.

"And, just what is the meaning of this?" She walked to her bag she had tossed on the kitchen table when she walked in and took out the package wrapped in brown paper. Taking the paper off, she shook the heavy hairbrush at her grinning husband.

"You like it?" Heath was sidetracked from the subject for the moment.

She studied him, carefully. Obviously, she was missing something here.

"Ordinarily, I would love it. But, knowing what you intend to use it for, I hate it!" she snapped.

Heath's eager face turned stern. "Now, Maddie, we talked about this." His face softened at the threat of tears on her baby blue eyes. He walked over to her and took the hairbrush, then enfolded her in his arms. "Honey, you might as well give in. I'm determined on this issue, and you won't dissuade me this time." He slipped his finger under her chin so he could tip her head back to look in her eyes. "You are going to be spanked when I feel like you need it, you already accepted that verbally, now accept it in your heart."

Maddie sniffed and buried her face in his chest. "But, I really don't want you to, Heath," she mumbled against his shirt.

He stroked her honey blonde tresses and held her tight. "Don't you trust me, darling?"

When she nodded her assent, he asked, "Do you think I'd ever hurt you?"

Maddie shook her head no. "I know you would never hurt me, Heath, but it hurts my backside when you paddle me, and I don't like it!" Her eyes pled with him to change his mind.

Heath's chuckle rumbled deep in his chest. "Of course, it hurts your backside, that's the point. If it hurts, you behave yourself so you don't get a sore bottom." He showed her the hairbrush. "See, it has your name on it...Sam told me he had one made for Angelina, and she loved it. I thought you would too." His brown eyes watched her eagerly, hoping she would love the idea behind it. "I love you, Maddie, you must know that."

Maddie was nonplussed. Heath really believed she would love the hairbrush because he loved her and wanted to correct her with it. A small part of her acknowledged that, yes, it was sweet...but the stubborn side of her did not want to give in and admit she was going to be a spanked wife!

Suddenly, an idea popped into her mind! Pushing back from her handsome husband, Maddie's eyes gleamed as she wiped away a small tear. "Okay, Heath, you convinced me. I'll play along with you concerning Tom and Evelyn. I'll invite them for supper on Thursday, and we'll play it out, okay?"

Disconcerted at the quick change of subject, Heath tried to follow her reasoning. Failing, he nodded doubtfully. "All right, Maddie, thank you. I don't know if it will help or not, but it can't hurt, and I'm short on ideas at the moment I must confess."

Maddie took the heavy hairbrush from Heath's hands. "Maybe I'll even show Evelyn my new brush."

She is bound to love it...after all, you and Sam have it all figured out." She smiled sagely at him. "I'll just have to trust you and hope it all works in the end."

"Good girl," congratulated Heath. He wasn't exactly sure what had happened, but Maddie was in a good humor once again and agreeing with him. He guessed that's all he could ask for at the moment.

Heath watched as Maddie turned away to prepare lunch. He knew something was not quite right, but he couldn't put his finger on just what it was. Healthcliff Danvers was not a stupid man, but his little wife could lead him in circles sometimes. Must be the deviousness of a woman's mind he decided. You just never knew what they were up to!

Heath's Bright Idea Part Two

"Not there...*there!*" exclaimed Evelyn Grouse, her small piquant face flushed as she tried to hold her temper with her big lug of a husband. "I wanted it right *there* Tom!" She pointed exaggeratedly to a spot two inches from the spot Tom had deposited the heavy potbellied cook stove for his tiny wife.

Grunting, Tom obediently hefted the heavy stove once again and put it down two inches further to the right. Taking out his handkerchief from his bib pocket, he wiped down the sweat from his brow. "Is that right now, Evelyn?"

"Yes, yes, you finally got it right," she replied making shooing motions at him to move out of the way, so she could inspect it thoroughly. She didn't know why she was so grumpy this morning, except it seemed Tom was denser than usual today.

She felt close to tears and couldn't really account for it, except that Chastity was a little more on her mind than usual. She supposed it was because the anniversary of her little girl's death was coming up next week, and she was unusually maudlin about it this year.

"You need anything else, sweetheart?" asked Tom solicitously, almost reading her mind. He knew she was fretting, but there wasn't a thing he could do about it.

"No, Tom, I don't need anything," she snapped, brushing a strand of raven hair behind her ear, impatient for him to be gone. She knew she wasn't being very nice, but it had seemed to become a habit more and more. It was just so easy to be rude to the big lug. He brushed it all off and came back for more, like a puppy dog that you kick, and it just rolls over. Sometimes she wished...she

brushed the thought aside and looked pointedly at the door.

"Well then, I done got a surprise fer you, sweetie," Tom said in a cajoling tone, ignoring the unspoken invitation to get lost.

Evelyn looked suspiciously at him. The last time Tom had brought her a surprise, it had been two baby deer, and she had yelled at him that deer would eat the corn and other stuff out of the truck garden, and then they would starve. He had sheepishly gotten rid of the deer and said no more about it, but honestly...sometimes she didn't know how the man had survived for 21 years in the world before she had married him!

"What is it?"

"We done been invited to dinner at the Preacher's house," he announced triumphantly. "Come Thursday night!"

"We have been," corrected Evelyn.

"Yes, we have been," echoed Tom. Evelyn was always correcting his grammar. He grinned at her startled face.

"And just why would the Preacher and his wife invite us to dinner?" she asked suspiciously. "What have you been up to, Tom? When did you talk to the Preacher? And how come Maddie hasn't invited me, herself?"

"Now, Evelyn, she's a goin too! I jest wanted to tell ya, myself, first." He beamed at her, his light blue eyes dancing at the thought of presenting her with something he knew she would like.

"Well, seeing is believing," huffed Evelyn, causing Tom's face to fall. She felt a bit bad at that, but she didn't apologize. What was the point? Tom forgave her anything, anyway. "You'd best get back to work, now, those nails for Sam Decker are still waiting to be finished."

"Yessum," replied Tom looking chagrined. He had hoped for more of a reaction than that, but it

seemed like Evelyn was less and less happy these days. He hoped she wasn't thinkin of leavin him. He walked dejectedly out the door and across the street to his blacksmith shop. It was goin to be another hot day, he decided as he rolled up his sleeves and fired up the forge.

He made a decent living for himself and Evelyn, but he didn't have no education. Evelyn bemoaned that fact and tried her best to teach him book learnin, but he just didn't have the head for facts and figures. Now give him a good piece of steel, and he could shape the sweetest axe you ever saw out of it! He was all brawn and no brains, just as she said.

Tom sighed. He loved Evelyn to distraction, but he did get a mite tired of her always being so cross with him. She was getting worse and worse. He sure hoped the preacher had some ideas, 'cause at the rate things were goin, he was finding himself tempted to try paddlin' her little rear end after all! If he did that, though, she'd leave him for sure, and the thing he feared most in the world was losin his little doll baby. She was so tiny and perfect you jest couldn't help but love her!

Evelyn watched the huge ox cross the street and shook her head fondly. He was so big! She felt like a tiny doll when he handled her, and she loved feeling so small and feminine in contrast to his largeness. And his gentle manner and soft words had attracted her most of all.

She thought about her childhood as she swept the ashes and dirt up from the kitchen floor, her mind wandering to those old days before she had met Tom.

Her step daddy had been a drinking man, and you never knew whether he would come home sober or not. He had a still hidden in the hills, and he visited it on a regular basis, selling moonshine every chance he got. He was a mean drunk too.

Evelyn had just turned sixteen when her Tom had rescued her from her step daddy's drunken intentions. She had gotten into a fight with her younger sister, the true daughter of Henry O'Clanahan and she had slapped her stepsister in the face. Henry had taken a knife and come after her, chasing her across the rail fence and into the fields.

Gasping for breath, she had stepped in a hole, fallen sideways and twisted her ankle. Ordinarily, her stepfather would never have been able to catch her, but the pain in her ankle had taken her breath away, and he was catching up fast. She tried to crawl into the woods, and then screamed when she looked back and saw him stumbling up to her, the knife held high in his hand. She hadn't doubted that he would kill or hurt her with it. Henry O'Clanahan had done all sorts of things when he was drunk that he claimed never to remember sober, and he didn't like her at all!

Suddenly, strong arms had lifted her high into the air, and a huge foot shot out, kicking her step father in the stomach, causing him to wheeze and gasp for air. When the tiny Evelyn had looked up into the lightest blue eyes she had ever seen, she had fallen in love with the handsome giant immediately. His 6'5" to her 4'11" had been quite the contrast, but they had been devoted to each other immediately.

After a whirlwind courtship, they had married, and Tom had taken her away to live in Brocton, his hometown, and they had been here ever since. But, he did try her patience these days, more so than usual. She wasn't given much to self-examination, but then she supposed it might have to do with feeling a mite useless.

Evelyn had just hit her 26th birthday a few weeks ago, and she was feeling old, too. She so badly wanted a child! She had miscarried three

babies in the first 5 years they had been married, and then Chastity had been born. Sweet, beautiful Chastity.... born with full head of dark hair and her mother's green eyes. The baby had only lived six months before developing lung congestion, and they hadn't been able to save her. The doctor had arrived too late with his medicines, and baby Chastity was gone.

Evelyn so wanted to be a mother again. Chastity had been gone three years next week, and she hadn't conceived again, much to her disappointment. She had loved the feel of the warm soft body and the sweet baby scent of the little head when she held her baby to her breast to feed, and she wanted to experience it again. Tom just didn't understand. He seemed content just to have her, and he never mentioned having a son...well, he had a few times. But, he had never mentioned it again once Chastity had been born and died... said he would love another baby girl just as good.

Pausing to look out the back window, she could see the little white stone in the back where Tom had made a fence around the grave. He had fashioned a baby angel out of some scrap metal and forged it to the stone and engraved Chastity's name on it. Evelyn rarely went there, though. It hurt too much.

Shrugging aside her maudlin thoughts, she bent to the task of scrubbing the wooden floor. The problem with these kinds of chores, though, was that you still had time to think. She thought about her brute of a husband.

Tom had been raised in a passel of kids, a dirt-poor family that had required his strong back and willing body to help with the farm chores. His daddy had died young, leaving his Ma with twelve year old Tom and 4 younger brothers and sisters to care for. So, Tom had done the work on the farm, and then at sixteen, his Ma had apprenticed him to

the town Blacksmith. He had had little time for formal schooling in his life and didn't like being indoors and book learning, anyway. By the time he was twenty-one, he had taken over the smithy for old man Rivers and met her.

Her rosebud lips curved into a smile, a rare occurrence these days. Lord knows, rough and ready men like her stepfather scared her, but some days she wished Tom were a mite more...manly. She knew the townsfolk all whispered behind their hands that Tom was henpecked, but darn it...the man never tried to be anything else!

Vigorously, she scrubbed the floor as if it were the sole reason for all her woes. She figured she might have lost some respect for Tom, and that bothered her. She also knew most all the other women in town were turned over their husband's knee or treated to a lick of the strap if their men folk felt they deserved it. She didn't rightly know how she felt about that, but sometimes...sometimes she wondered if she wasn't pushing Tom just to see if he ever would do it? She blushed at her own errant thoughts as those strange night feelings stirred in the pit of her stomach at the thought. Not that she would ever say anything to Tom about it. A lady just doesn't discuss those sorts of things, and Tom sure didn't seem inclined to that direction.

"Just be grateful for Tom's gentleness and let it go at that," she muttered to herself. "No sense stirring up a can of worms I might just come to regret later on." With that, she pushed the thoughts aside and concentrated on her work, thinking of what else she had to do that day.

Three days later, Maddie was rushing around getting the table set for the upcoming meal with the Grouses. Evelyn had accepted her invitation to supper, albeit a bit suspiciously, but she had accepted it, nonetheless.

She had spent a hot hour over the potbellied cook stove, frying chicken and fixing home canned green beans her mother had passed on to her. The potatoes were mashed and the gravy made and ice-cold lemonade was chilling in the cooler box with the ice block inside it.

She had just enough time to change her dress and wash her face. It sure had been hot this week, unusually hot for the month of June. Quickly, she changed into her lilac sprigged white lawn dress with lace at the sweetheart neckline. She checked her hair in the old mirror over the dresser to make sure it was still in place. She had tied it up with a ribbon and the banana curls fell to her shoulders while small honey colored wisps framed her temples and forehead. At least, she looked cool and refreshed! Hearing the buckboard coming into the front yard and Heath's greeting, she hurried to meet their guests. On her way out, her eye caught the hairbrush Heath had insisted sit on her dresser, and she felt a small surge of satisfaction. Tonight...tonight her plan would come together!

Heath was feeling very alarmed. What in the world was Maddie up too? She had greeted Evelyn and Tom with great courtesy and ushered them into the small dining room, as was the usual manner with dinner guests. But, during dinner, she had become more and more snappy with him. He had wanted her to act up, but she was going beyond a bit of playacting and now she and Evelyn were having a gay old time at his and Tom's expense. They were carrying on like old friends and laughing at men's follies, and Heath was getting offended.

"Honestly, sometimes Tom just doesn't use his head," laughed Evelyn, after regaling the story of the two baby deer he had brought home.

"I hear you," agreed Maddie with great relish. "I remember the time Heath tried corn whiskey..."

"Maddie!" exclaimed Heath; perturbed that Maddie would even consider such a story in the presence of guests with him being a preacher and all.

Maddie stopped and looked inquiringly at him. "Yes, Heath?"

"I'd like to see you for a minute if I may," he said politely, standing up. His manner did not brook refusal, and Maddie's eyes slid away from his as she blushed and stood up.

"Excuse us a moment please," said Heath to Evelyn and Tom, nodding politely to his guests and casting Tom a meaningful glance.

Heath walked to the bedroom door and opened it, allowing Maddie to precede him into the room before he followed her and closed the door.

Walking over to the dresser, Maddie picked up the hairbrush and walked to the bed.

Heath turned around and spoke. "You are getting terribly carried away, Maddie," he said sternly. "That was NOT an appropriate story to tell in front of strangers."

Maddie felt a twinge of guilt, then she stubbornly strengthened her resolve, and she set one of the pillows in the middle of the bed. Picking up the brush, she whacked the pillow...hard!

Heath just stared.

Then Maddie began to yell. "No, I'm sorry, Heath...OWW...I'm sorry, I won't do it again."

She whacked the pillow again and yelled some more.

Heath was aghast. Quickly, he went to this wife and took the brush away from her, but not before she could hit the hapless pillow a few more times with it.

She opened her mouth to yell again, and Heath quickly put his hand over it. "What are you doing?" he hissed.

"I'm showing poor Evelyn what really happens when you get spanked!" she exclaimed. "Isn't that what you wanted?"

"Not like this," said Heath angrily. "You are really overdoing it here, Maddie. Screaming like a banshee, this will scare poor Tom more than it will Evelyn!"

They both stopped as they heard the front door slam, and they looked at each other and hurried out of the bedroom. Heath ran to the front room door and opened it. Tom was lifting Evelyn into the buckboard, a grim look on his face.

"Tom, wait," called Heath.

Tom turned to face the preacher. "I got no use fer a man that beats his wife," he said evenly. "Especially, in front of guests! If that's what you be wantin' me to do with Evelyn, then you can jest forget it!"

Evelyn looked surprised at his words, and she stared at Heath. Her expression was not angry, though, but Heath was too distraught to notice.

Tom climbed up beside his wife.

"B...but Tom...it's not what you think," Heath stammered.

Tom cut him off. "And, we won't be coming to services no more, neither. I knowed you men folk did this to yer wives, but I never figured you to put on a show like that one, Preacher!" He clicked his tongue at the horses, and they broke into a canter. They left the Danvers ranch in a hurry, Evelyn holding down her hat as they went!

Heath scratched his head and remembered that Tom and Evelyn had been gone the week he had spanked Maddie for falling asleep at the piano. Given the circumstances, he doubted Tom would even have come to him if they had been there. He felt deflated, like he had let Tom down. This was not going well...not well at all. And, he had a certain blue-eyed, blonde haired minx to thank for

this fiasco. What had gotten into Maddie to pull such a stunt? He stared after the disappearing wagon, his hands on his hips, trying to control the irritation he felt at his wife before he faced her.

Maddie's slim fingers crimped the edges of her lilac pinafore. She knew Heath well enough to know he was very upset with her, and she was a bit apprehensive. She wasn't, however, prepared for the dark look on his face when he turned around to pin her in a piercing glare. She looked at him defiantly, trying to hold her ground, but when he didn't say a word as he walked towards her, she turned tail and ran.

She ran through the house and towards the back door of the kitchen.

"Don't you run from me, Madeline Marie," thundered Heath, following her at a sedate pace.

Maddie stopped dead in her tracks at the kitchen door and turned to face him, her heart beating fast. "N...now, Heath," she stammered. "You're just upset, you'll get over it! You know you deserved that!"

When he didn't answer her, but just kept coming, she gasped and yanked the kitchen door open and ran towards the barn, holding up her skirts to keep from falling, her booted feet seemingly sprouting wings.

Heath kept coming, secretly enjoying the fact that she was intimidated and running. He rarely saw Maddie apprehensive about anything. It did nothing to defuse his righteous wrath, however, and he stalked indignantly towards the barn.

Maddie stopped at the ladder to the loft, and looked back. Heath was still coming, rolling up the sleeves of his pristine white shirt and loosening the black string tie that had been around his neck.

Her stomach lurched, and she hurriedly began to climb the ladder. Once up there, she lay flat on her tummy and looked down. She saw booted male

feet first, and then the rest of the body, and soon, her husband's face staring up at her.

"Come down here, Maddie," he said softly, menacingly.

"W...what are you g...going to do?" Maddie asked, her small voice quavering.

"What am I going to do? You know what I'm going to do, young lady. I'm going to blister your little bottom until you can't sit for a month of Sundays, that's what I'm going to do!"

"No!" Maddie squeaked. "Heath, no!"

"Yes, Maddie," he mimicked. "Yes...I am!" He pointed to the spot at the bottom of the ladder. "Now, get down here! The longer you wait, the longer I'm going to spank!"

"But, Heath," Maddie whined from her vantage point. "You know you weren't being fair...you had that coming!"

"If I had that coming, then you certainly have what I'm going to reward you with coming, Maddie, so get down here."

"No, Heath," argued Maddie obstinately. "Come on, now, you have to admit you weren't being fair to poor Evelyn!"

"I was trying to make life better for both of them because Tom asked me to," growled Heath. "Now, you've ruined it all! Not only have you lost us two Sunday school attendees, but by tomorrow it will be all over Brocton as well! And, you know how things spread when fueled by gossip. By the end of the week, I'll be a monster, and we may not have anyone in church...and you know what that means!" he stated sternly, his brows furrowed together.

"Y...you're just exaggerating, Heath," huffed Maddie, feeling a twinge of guilt. The more parishioners on Sunday meant the more popular the preacher was and the townspeople paid well for someone that everyone liked. If Heath were to

develop a bad reputation and have no following, he could lose his job!

Maddie peered down over the edge, her baby blue eyes apprehensive and guilty looking. "Maybe I did overdo it just a bit?"

Heath gazed up into the eyes peeking down at him. "If I come up there, little girl, you are not going to like the results, I can promise you that!"

"I'm not going to like the results if I come down there," protested Maddie, "so what's the difference?"

Heath put his booted foot on the first rung of the ladder and grasped the sides. "Okay, Maddie," growled Heath. "You asked for it. I'm not taking anymore of your sass!"

Maddie scabbled backwards in alarm as Heath's tall frame quickly climbed the ladder, and he crawled into the loft and stood up. The barn ceiling was just high enough for Heath to stand up in, making it easier for him to stack bales of hay up there for winter-feed. He looked around for his wife. Seeing a piece of lilac sprigged dress sticking out from behind a stack of hay bales, he started towards her.

Maddie stood with her back to the hay bales, hiding with her eyes closed as she strained to listen for Heath's footsteps. Her heart was beating like thunder in her ears as she heard him coming towards her. He had found her already! She had hoped he might go the other way so she could shinny down the ladder, but it was not to be. She dove to the left but stopped short when she realized Heath had calculated her actions and stepped around the other side, grabbing both her arms above the elbows.

She gasped and tried to pull away, but Heath was having none of it. He pulled her steadily towards a lone bale, her feet skidding across the slick strands of hay scattered on the loft floor.

"No, Heath," Maddie yelled, trying to dig her feet in and resist, but it was useless.

Reaching his objective, Heath sat down, bringing his wayward wife down with him and right over his lap.

Maddie squeaked as she reached out to stop her falling motion, her hands connecting with the wooden floor and her fingers scrabbling among the hay strands, trying to get a firm placement to push back up. She wiggled and squirmed as Heath yanked the skirt of her dress up. It billowed down over her shoulders, and she felt the warm air against her thin summer drawers.

"No, Heath...don't!"

Without preamble, Heath began spanking her over her drawers, hard hurtful swats of his big right hand, and she squealed and kicked out, her feet scissoring the air as he landed full blows from his powerful right shoulder palm down on her shrinking, writhing backside. Her chemise was no protection as Heath paddled her mercilessly, watching the pale roundness beneath his palm spring in and out and grow redder and redder.

Gasping and sobbing, the tears were soon running down Maddie's face, and she begged Heath to stop. Her nose was running, and she sniffled helplessly, her body bucking and straining to get away from the painful barrage.

At last, Heath stopped and rested his hand on her hot bottom, breathing heavily. He had really laid into Maddie, and he pushed the fragile garment aside to fully inspect his handiwork. She had deserved every last spank and more he decided. But he wasn't finished with her yet. He began to talk.

"Maddie, I love you, but you had no call or right to do what you did. I asked for your help, and you turned it into a foolish prank which has the possibility of losing us our livelihood."

"I...I'm s...sorry, Heath," sobbed Maddie, feeling thoroughly chastised. She tried to push up, but he held her down firmly with his left hand.

"Would you like to have to move away?" he asked sternly. "To have to leave Brocton and go somewhere else and hope a bad reputation doesn't follow us?"

"N...no, H...Heath," she hiccupped, feeling very small. Heath had never made her feel quite this way before, and guilt gnawed at her.

"Then, this is what you are going to do," Heath replied. "You are going to go to Tom and Evelyn and explain and apologize for your behavior. You will explain to them that you are not beaten, and I'm not a monster, is that clear?"

"Y...yes, Heath," sobbed Maddie. "Yes, I will, I promise." She was wondering why he hadn't let her up yet and was afraid to ask. Her bottom was burning and throbbing something awful, and she was scared he might start spanking her again if she argued with him. Besides, she was beginning to feel like she did owe him that.

"Good," Heath stated with satisfaction. "Then there's only one thing left to do." He lifted Maddie up and stood up with her.

Heath's Bright Idea Part Three

"W...what are you doing, Heath?" Maddie asked, still sobbing. He was leading her to a two-stack bale of hay. When he began to pull her over it, she protested, "What are you doing?"

"I told you if I had to come up here after you, it would be worse for you, Maddie," stated Heath grimly. "Now, you are going to get 5 licks with my belt for not obeying me when I told you to come down."

"Noooo!" wailed Maddie, trying to keep him from pulling her over the hay bales.

"Six!" stated Heath, very matter of factly.

"You can't, Heath, not your belt," cried Maddie still resisting.

"Seven!"

Maddie was no fool, and she figured the more she resisted the more Heath was going to count, so she let him bend her over the hay bales until her bottom was perched in the air, and she sobbed as he raised her skirts once again. Her little booted feet did not even reach the floor, and her arms hung over the other side. She felt terribly exposed and helpless.

"Nooooo...Heathhhhhh!" she sobbed as he parted the thin garment to reveal her very red bottom outlined in the opening. She glanced back to see him sliding his heavy belt from the loops of his pants, and her heart sank at the determined look on his face. Looked like she wasn't getting out of this one, and she sobbed harder and dropped her face in her hands, kicking her feet into the hay bale over and over.

Heath folded the belt double and gripped it firmly. He hated to do this, but Maddie had brought it on herself. She hadn't obeyed him when he told her to come down and take her punishment, and he

had been forced to follow her into the hayloft. He raised his arm and swung the belt down and across her right cheek, leaving a deep band of red on the already bright red cheeks of his little wife.

Whap!

"Yeowwwch!" squealed Maddie, her feet kicking harder. That burning stripe was nothing like the switching stripes he had given her! That seemed like a cakewalk compared to this. She cried out again as the second one bit into her left cheek.

"Oh, Heath.... I'm sorry, Heath!" she yelled as the third one landed across both cheeks.

"Wahhh!!" she squalled, afraid to put her hands back in case he swung across her thighs.

She rolled her hips from side to side as the 4th and 5th spanks landed on each cheek respectively, trying to get away from the burning hot punishment.

Her feet beat a steady tattoo against the hay bales as the last two licks of the belt landed across the center of her rounded backside, burning their messages into Maddie's brain. Next time, she would come when Heath called her!

She sobbed helplessly over the bales as Heath ran his palm over her burning flesh and gently pulled her dress down. She also gasped when the thin material of her undergarment slid back over the flaming swells, and she groaned piteously.

Heath turned her into his chest and soothed her, his hand rubbing up and down her back.

"It's all over now, honey, you stayed good on the hay bales. I'm glad because I sure didn't want to spank you any more."

Maddie didn't answer, she just continued to cry into the crook of his shoulder.

Heath sank down onto a loose pile of hay and pulled Maddie down with him, cradling her head under his chin as he kept his arms around her, holding her close.

The hay was fragrant and soft, and Heath waited for Maddie's sobs to subside before speaking again.

"I love you, Maddie," whispered Heath, kissing her hair as her shoulders shuddered with a hiccupping sigh.

"I know, Heath," she said softly, looking up at him with tear-drenched eyes. "And, I'm really sorry I caused you so much trouble. I didn't think about how it could actually turn out." Maddie really did feel bad at the possibility that Heath could lose his job and his reputation.

"Most likely, it won't turn out like that," replied Heath, but he really was worried. If the town board got enough flack from its citizens, it could fire him. It just depended on what Tom and Evelyn did.

"I hope not," said Maddie fervently. She leaned up on her elbow and bent over to kiss Heath's firm lips, her breasts pushing into his chest and showing the cleavage down the sweetheart neckline. She felt an intense desire to get next to him, to feel him closer to her, holding her.

Heath groaned and pulled her on top of him, taking her lips possessively, his hands going to the buttons at the back of her neckline.

It wasn't long before neither had any clothing left, and Heath pressed her down into the soft fragrant hay, delighting in the pearl smoothness of her delicate skin. He ran his hands lovingly up and down her body, bending to taste the perky rosebuds standing up for his attention.

Maddie wound soft arms around his neck and moaned with wanting...hot need building between them. When Heath finally took her, she was wild with desire, and they came together in sweet, passionate loving.

It doesn't get much better than this, thought Heath; surprised at the passion his wife was capable of. Briefly, he wondered if it might have anything to do with the spanking he had given her, but the

thought was lost as they climbed the pinnacle and fell to the other side, satiated and deeply satisfied in each other's arms.

Heath rolled over and brought Maddie with him, cradling her head on his chest, lazily running his big hands up and down her smooth back. Finally moving both hands down her body, he cupped her red cheeks and squeezed gently. "You are mine, Madeline Marie Danvers, and I love you more than life itself," he said fiercely.

Maddie felt thrilled at his possessiveness, and she smiled triumphantly. "You are mine too, mister preacher man, and don't you forget it!" She wiggled up to where she could kiss him, and he groaned again.

"If we don't get out of here, we'll be here all night," complained Heath, lightly slapping the wiggling bottom located strategically on his lower half.

"So, where have we got to go?" sassed Maddie, tossing her head back, mischief in her eyes as she squirmed a bit more.

"You have a job to do, young lady, an apology to make!"

Maddie's face fell. "Tonight?"

"Yes, tonight!"

"Aww, Heath, do I really have to do it tonight?" A sharp spank landed on her sore bottom, and she yelped.

"Yes, you do," he stated firmly. Then he rolled her off him and stood up, pulling her to her feet.

Maddie rubbed her still aching bottom and pouted. "Fine, let's get it over with then." Huffing, she began to get dressed.

Heath was amused as he watched Maddie, indignation in every move of her body. She so hated to be told what to do! Well, she was just going to have to get used to it because Heath intended to tame some of her wild ways, and he

was beginning to almost like it. Well, that is to say he liked the results he was getting. He really didn't like hurting Maddie's pert little rear, but if that's what it took, then he was a convert to the idea of a good spanking. Besides, there had always been something about a cute female bottom that appealed to him. He used to love to watch the girls' hips sway back and forth as they walked. Yes, he decided. He did like Maddie's cute little backside, and there was even something appealing about the red coloring. He smiled a big smile.

Evelyn Grouse held onto her hat and the wagon as Tom drove away from the Preacher's ranch. Anger was not his usual custom, but Evelyn could feel it emanating from him, and she wasn't sure what to say, so she didn't say anything at all.

Tom finally noticed Evelyn hanging on, and he slowed the horses down. "I'm sorry, honey, I didn't mean to get so upset. I jest never figured the Preacher for a violent man."

"He's not," replied Evelyn crossly. She didn't know what Tom was so upset about.

Tom turned to stare at her. "You don't think beatin Maddie is violent?" He was shocked at her words. It was not the reaction he would have expected from Evelyn, given her background.

"Of course not," scoffed Evelyn. "He just spanked her, he didn't beat her."

"But, Evelyn, what about yer stepfather?" asked Tom, perplexed.

"My stepfather was a viscous brute," snapped Maddie, "at least to me. I stayed out of his way or got knocked down. That was the end of our relationship, and I was glad to get away from him. My mother made him leave me alone the biggest part of the time, but he still managed to knock me about now and then. However, that's nothing to do

with the Preacher and Maddie." Evelyn's words were short and clipped. Memories were often painful, but she felt the need to defend the Preacher for some strange reason. "It would be obvious to anyone that Maddie is not a wife that's beat up by her husband," she finished tersely and looked away.

Tom was bewildered. He struggled to understand Evelyn's view of the situation. Here he had thought surely the scene they had heard in the bedroom would have offended his wife to the highest extreme, and he had hurried her right out of there, intent on protecting her sensibilities. Now, she was defending the Preacher!

He stared at her tight profile wondering what was going on in that little head. Sighing, he turned back to the horses and kept his own thoughts to himself. He never did understand Evelyn very well, and all she did was get mad at him when he tried. Best, he jest go on keepin' his mouth shut like normal and not give her cause to scold him. "Get on up there," he clucked to the horses, snapping the reins lightly.

Beside him, Evelyn stared at the darkening landscape. It was twilight, and the melancholy feelings crowded in. It had been twilight when Chastity had passed on. She felt a million miles away from Tom at that moment. He just didn't understand, no one but another mother who had lost her child could understand. He hadn't even mentioned their daughter, although he must know the anniversary was close. Maybe men just didn't feel the finer feelings as strongly as women, mused Evelyn. Big brute! A silent single tear slid from the corner of her eye and slid down her pale cheek. She hugged her arms around her waist as if to ward off the pain, but it didn't help. It cut through her like a knife every time she pictured the baby's face. Suddenly, tears were coursing down her face in

rivulets, silent sobs shaking her small body as she struggled to deal with the pain alone.

Evelyn wasn't even aware that the wagon had stopped until she felt strong hands beneath her, lifting her up and placing her in a warm lap. Strong arms enfolded her protectively and held her close to a broad chest, and she finally relented and relaxed against Tom's big warm body and let the tears fall unchecked.

"It's Chastity ain't it?" came the soft inquiry. There was no answer, but Tom knew it had to be so.

"Oh, Tom," Evelyn finally said, her grief overcoming her normal reticence. "I want my baby girl back so bad."

Tom felt helpless. He didn't know what to say or do. His big heart ached to give his little girl what she wanted so badly, but he didn't know how. He didn't really know much about women at all. He had rarely seen Evelyn cry; she had been very stoic through the years, and sometimes she rejected his comfort when he tried. She was very prickly, and he never seemed to do the right thing at the right time. He felt like a bull in a china shop around her tiny person most of the time, but he loved her to distraction. So, he held her as long as she would let him, and then let her go when she insisted on getting off his lap.

"We'd best be getting on home," said Evelyn, drying her eyes on her pinafore. "It's getting late, and someone might come along."

Tom picked up the horse's reins and then looked sideways at her. "You know I love you, honey, right?" A flush crept up his neck. He was not normally given to casual endearments.

"I know, Tom," replied Evelyn softly. Then she added shyly, "I...I love you, too." She looked away, slightly embarrassed. She was usually fussing at

him instead of saying love words. It had become their way over these last years.

Tom flicked the reins, and the horses started again, taking them on home to Brocton.

"I still don't see why we have to do this tonight, Heath," argued Maddie as the buckboard drew closer to the Grouses home in town. "It's not like they are going to run right out and tell everyone they know what happened. It's almost eight thirty in the evening, and people are getting ready for bed for heavens sake!"

"Maddie, stop complaining," ordered Heath patiently.

"Well, my bottom hurts, and this stupid wagon isn't helping it one bit," gritted Maddie.

"If you hadn't pulled such a stunt, your bottom wouldn't be hurting, and we wouldn't be on our way to the Grouse's now would we?"

"Can I help it if you have no sense of humor," she demanded in return.

Heath stopped the wagon and turned to look at his unhappy wife. "Maddie, if you don't stop, when we get home, I'm going to give you another spanking before you go to bed...with your new hairbrush!"

Maddie opened her mouth for a blistering reply, and then closed it as Heath wagged his finger in an *uh...uh...uh* motion at her, his brown eyes full of promise. She settled for a huff and folded arms as she sat gingerly on the wagon seat, wishing she had thought to bring a pillow! A huge sigh of relief escaped her lips when they finally pulled up in front of Tom's house, and she quickly stood up.

Heath tied off the horses while Maddie stubbornly helped herself down instead of waiting for him to do so. He shook his head in exasperation

and took her arm as they walked to the front door, which Tom was already opening.

"What are you doing here, Preacher," Tom asked guardedly.

"May we come in?" Heath asked politely. "Maddie has something she'd like to say to you."

"Of course, you can come in," piped up Evelyn, ducking under Tom's arm. "Move aside, Tom, for land's sake! You take up the entire doorway!" She elbowed him aside and let Maddie and Heath inside, ushering them to the small kitchen table.

Tom flushed and followed rather sheepishly, feeling embarrassed at Evelyn's treatment of him once again.

Evelyn looked curiously at Maddie. "So, what brings you to town at this time of night?"

It was Maddie's turn to flush as Heath poked her gently in the ribs. "Go on, Maddie, you have something to say to Tom and Evelyn."

Maddie shifted uncomfortably on the hard kitchen chair and cleared her throat. "Yes, well...I guess I owe you both an apology."

Tom and Evelyn glanced at each other, but didn't say anything.

"You see...in the bedroom...Heath didn't really spank me. I just made it sound like he did."

Tom looked very skeptical, and Evelyn looked very curious.

"Why would you do that, Maddie?" she asked.

"Oh...well." Maddie picked at the lilac embroidered sprigs on her pinafore. She wasn't sure how much to reveal about Heath and Tom's conversation, and she glanced at her husband for help.

Tom intervened, his look incredulous. "So, yer're sayin Preacher never laid a hand on ya in there? All that hollerin was jest for nothin'?"

"It wasn't for nothing," protested Maddie hotly. "It was for poor Evelyn, so she would know what a spanking was like!"

Evelyn looked more perplexed than ever. "I know what spankings are like, Maddie, it's a pretty common occurrence in most families. My stepfather used to spank my stepsister until she was squalling and bawling, and my mother spanked me a few times growing up."

"Well, has Tom ever spanked you?" Maddie asked defensively, lifting her chin.

"Maddie!" exclaimed Heath.

"Of course not," protested Tom.

Evelyn actually blushed and stammered, "n...no, I can't say that he has."

"I wouldn't beat ya like that, Evelyn!" Tom insisted furiously.

Evelyn looked exasperatedly at Tom although her face was pink. "I know you would never beat me Tom, that's not what we are talking about here. A spanking is NOT a beating, how many times I have to tell you that in one night?"

Tom flushed once again under her criticism, and Heath looked mighty interested in both their reactions.

Evelyn went on. "That still doesn't explain why Maddie did what she did. I'm beginning to think there is something you aren't telling me, Tom."

When Tom shifted uneasily from one foot to the next, Heath took pity on him. He cleared his throat and tried to explain without giving Tom totally away. "You see, Tom dropped by to chat with me the other day, Evelyn, and we got to talking about how the men in Brocton react with regards to disciplining their wives and..." he trailed off trying to think of how to finish it.

"And, I told him I weren't goin to do that to you, Evelyn," Tom finished baldly.

When Evelyn still looked disbelieving, Heath decided to be honest. "I thought a little demonstration might convince Tom that it wouldn't hurt to try it with you if you were being too sassy with him."

Evelyn looked startled, and Tom looked guilty, but it went against the grain for Heath to be at all dishonest.

"And, I didn't think it was fair of Heath to advise Tom to do something he was already set against," chimed in Maddie indignantly, wiggling on her chair once again.

"So, you advised Tom to spank me?" Evelyn looked more intrigued than annoyed, and the other three were not sure what to think.

"Well...yes I did," Heath replied frankly.

Evelyn stood up then. "I think we should call it a night, Preacher. I'm not holding this against you because, obviously, Tom went to you for advice. The only complaint I have is why he wasn't man enough to come to me himself." She glared at Tom then, and he turned bright red. "And, thank you, Maddie, for thinking of my best interests. She hooked her arm through Maddie's and escorted her speechless guests to the door.

"I hear you are interested in quilting, Maddie," said Evelyn conversationally as she opened the door. "If you come sometime, I'll be happy to show you some tricks I learned."

"That would be great!" beamed Maddie, grateful for the change in subject. "I'll do that, you can count on it!"

"Good night then," said Heath, taking Maddie's elbow and escorting her out the door. He looked back at Tom who was looking mighty uncomfortable.

"G'nite, Preacher," he mumbled.

When the door closed behind them, Heath looked at Maddie and grinned. "Come on, wife, let's get on home and let them take it from here."

"You're looking awfully pleased with yourself," grumbled Maddie as he handed her up into the wagon. "You must think Tom is going to spank poor Evelyn."

"I really don't know what will happen, to be honest." Heath climbed up beside her and picked up the reins. "But, whatever happens, it will be their business."

"Not for long, nothing is sacred in Brocton!" Heath laughed and Maddie joined him, her good nature restored.

Inside the little house, Evelyn was staring up at Tom, her eyes accusing. "Why didn't you ever tell me you didn't like the way I was treating you?"

"Aw, honey, I jest never wanted to make ya feel bad." Tom shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, looking away from his little wife.

"So, instead, you let me make you feel bad...bad enough to go to Preacher for advice?" Evelyn was tapping her foot.

"Like I said, I ain't wantin to hurt ya, Evelyn."

Evelyn reached up and poked him in the chest. "And just what *does* it take to get a rise out of you, Mr. Grouse?" She poked him again, hard, her other hand on her hip and her green eyes flashing.

He stepped backwards. "Ouch, Evelyn, that hurts!"

"So? You think I care?" She poked him again, forcing him backwards again. She wasn't sure what was driving her, but she felt the need to have this out for some reason...to push him...to what?

"Now, ya jest stop that, Evelyn!"

"Or what?" She poked him again and advanced on him when he backed up.

"I'm warning ya, little girl, ya best quit that now, ya hear?"

"I'll quit when I'm damn good and ready and not before. You hear that, Tom Grouse?" She poked him furiously then.

"You better stop, or I might jest spank yer backside after all," threatened Tom, his brows drawing together in a frown. "Seems to me like yer're a askin fer it!"

"I'm just doing as I please," scoffed Evelyn, a strange excitement stirring her blood. "After all, I'm in charge here, right?" She poked him once again and managed to hit the same spot although his big hands were moving around, trying to block her sharp little finger jabs.

"Ow," roared Tom grabbing her wrist. "That does it, little girl, don't say I never warned ya!" He picked Evelyn up and tucked her under his left arm, her feet completely off the floor. He quickly raised her skirts up over his arm and uncovered the small bottom that was jiggling slightly from the force of her legs kicking. He could see right through her summer drawers, and he brought his right hand down with a sharp swat to the rounded rump.

Smack!

Evelyn yelped when Tom's hand landed on her backside, almost covering it in one blow. Her arms were flailing, and she was aware more than ever of the differences in their size. She felt totally helpless, dangling there in the loop of Tom's long arm, and she squealed again when his hand fell once more.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!

Evelyn kicked and yelped, and suddenly it was over as he set her back on her feet once more, her bottom stinging painfully. Her hands flew to her rear, and she rubbed furiously.

"Are ya goin to behave yerself now, or do I need to take ya over my knee?" Tom asked determinedly.

"I...I'll stop poking you, Tom," replied Evelyn shyly, her face turning pink. She felt strange inside and excited at Tom's forcefulness. She slowly slid her arms up and rested her hands on his chest, unsure of herself at this point. They neither one went in much for public displays of affection. That sort of stuff was best left to the nighttime, but she found herself wanting to be close to him. "I...I'm sorry if I hurt you." She smiled up at him.

Tom was surprised and delighted at this sudden change in his wife. He harrumphed and replied gruffly, "Well, don't let it happen agin, little girl, or it'll be worse next time!" He picked her up, his big arms under her bottom, and she finally slid her arms around his neck, pulling his head down for a kiss.

Again, Tom was shocked. He could count on one hand the number of times Evelyn had made advances to him. Usually, it was the other way around, but he responded happily, taking her proffered lips in a soft and tender touch. It was Evelyn that pulled him fiercely closer, acting hungry in a way she hadn't for a long time.

Feeling the bulge in his pants, Tom turned and headed towards the bedroom, carrying his captive easily. He could carry two of her easily if he'd wanted too.

Maybe the Preacher had somethin' here, he thought to himself. He had only intended to teach Evelyn an object lesson when she had pushed him, but it seemed to have made a big difference to her! It was almost like she had wanted it! *Looked like he had some experimentin to do in the future,* he thought with satisfaction.

Evelyn was trembling while Tom's big hands undressed her, and her skin seemed sensitized all over...almost like when they were first married. She was on fire with need and aching for his long length to fill her, to satisfy the longing in her blood. She

gasped as usual when his huge girth parted her softness, but she welcomed him, holding onto him as his powerful arms held him slightly above her body so he wouldn't hurt her.

He loved her fiercely, throwing his head back exultantly when they both found their pleasure, then rolled sideways and gathered her in close to him, his breathing ragged.

Evelyn wasn't quite sure what had happened, but she knew it had to do with Tom spanking her. She yawned, tired and satiated and...content in the circle of her husband's arms. Yes...content, she thought, surprised at herself. This would bear thinking on. But it could wait until tomorrow. Tonight...tonight she would rest. Sunrise would come early enough in Brocton...just like always.

Tom and Evelyn slipped into a deep and satisfied sleep, a small smile on both their faces.

The Brocton Chronicles IV

The County Fair Part One

"Sam! Sam have you got the judge's slips ready yet?" Angelina Decker came rushing into the back room of their mercantile where Sam was seated at an old table, his lanky frame bent over his paperwork. "Rebecca Smothers is here to pick them up." Her green eyes were excited as she peered over his shoulder.

Sam looked up, impatiently. "I told Rebecca they wouldn't be ready until this afternoon," he growled. "What is she doing here now? Its only a little after 12:00." He picked up the rubber stamp and began stamping the image of little jars along the printed slips of paper, waiting to be cut into sections.

"Oh, Sam, you sure are a grouch today," complained Angelina, wrinkling her nose at him. "Anyway, it is afternoon...well...a few minutes after anyway." She added that last bit on hastily as he frowned at her.

"Well, tell her they won't be done for two hours at least," he replied, picking up the shears. "I'm working on them as fast as I can." He peered at her over the rim of his half glasses. At forty, it was getting a bit hard for Sam to read small print, and he found himself relying on them more and more. "And, I don't want no arguing this year, you hear me?"

Angelina blushed as the image of her and Rebecca Smothers arguing over the judging of the preserves and jam last year came to mind. "Well, I still say she won the blackberry preserve award because her husband was doing the judging," replied Angelina huffily.

"Is that right?" Sam continued to gaze steadily at her flushed face. "And, even though Sheriff Hawkins agreed after tasting for himself, you still think so?"

"Well, her husband is the circuit Judge of Brocton County you know! He had reason to support him!" Angelina's green eyes flashed. "This year, you are going to be judging the preserves area, and I know you'll be fair." She turned and left just short of a huff, her skirts swirling around her shapely ankles.

Sam grinned and shook his head. He had actually had to threaten Angelina's backside last year to get her to stop complaining about losing the blackberry preserves award. She did make awfully good preserves, but he had tasted Rebecca Smothers's preserves too, and they were delicious as well. It had been a close contest, and either woman could have won as far as he was concerned, but Rebecca's had been chosen.

Women sure got all heated up over these contests, and Sam wished he hadn't been assigned to the preserve set this year. If he chose Angelina's, and they weren't the best, others would be upset. If Angelina didn't win, there would be hell to pay here at home. He sighed and continued to cut the judging slips apart. Well, if there were any trouble this year, he would tan Angelina's rear end if she started it. Last year, Rebecca had started it with a little dig at his wife, and he could understand that it had upset her, even if he hadn't condoned her arguing back. Angelina had a nasty temper when it was fully aroused, and Sam had spent the last 23 years taming it!

He smiled as he mused on the first time he had put her over his knee for a good paddling! They had been courting for about three months and.....

"No, Mother, I will NOT, and you can't make me!" snapped the seventeen-year-old Angelina

Stanton. She glared at her mother, her green eyes flashing, her chin set in a defiant thrust.

"Angelina, you promised you would work in the garden today," her mother spoke to her in a soft yet determined voice.

"No, Mother, I didn't promise, I said I would try to," responded Angelina, tossing her head.

Angelina had always had a temper, but since her Pa had passed away last year, it had gotten worse. Angelina had loved her Pa, and she missed him dreadfully. She loved her mother too, but sometimes her temper got the better of her, and she wasn't very nice to her.

Sam Decker was courting her and had asked her to come swimming with him and his family, and she had agreed, totally forgetting about her promise to work in the garden.

The door to their small home was standing open because of the heat of the summer, and Sam could hear the ensuing argument as he strode across the wooden planks of the old porch.

"I'm going swimming with Sam, and that's that, Mother," snapped Angelina, spinning on her heel to head out the door. She stopped abruptly as she came face to face with the tall lanky man standing there with a huge scowl on his face looking like a thundercloud about to burst open with a downpour at anytime!

"S...Sam," she stuttered. "What are you doing here so soon?"

"Did I hear you being disrespectful to your Ma, little lady?" Sam questioned, dark eyes like two black orbs of coal beginning to ignite. Sam's Ma had always taught them to answer respectfully and to say yes Sir and yes Ma'm when spoken to by an adult. To hear Angelina back talking her ma and being disobedient did not set well with him, not at all!

"She...she is trying to keep me from going swimming and picnicking with you, Sam," replied Angelina defensively, folding her slender arms protectively across her fully developed chest.

Her motion pushed the pale mounds of her lovely bosom up, and Sam could see the full cleft between them peeking above the gingham checked bodice. He didn't allow that to interfere with his questioning of the impudent young lady before him, however, and he continued. "Did you make a promise to your Ma?"

"She can go, Sam, I'll do the weeding myself," said Mary Stanton, slumping wearily into a chair near the great stone fireplace that dominated the room. The kitchen and living room quarters were all in one room with the bedrooms off to the side. The Stanton's were not a rich family, and times had been even harder with Pa Stanton gone.

"Angelina will do her chores before she goes anywhere," Sam replied decisively.

Angelina resented Sam's interference, and she angrily stamped her foot at him. "I will not! I can do the garden later. It's too hot right now, anyway," she sassed, lifting her chin defiantly at Sam.

Sam did not bother to answer her. He simply took her arm and pulled her over to one of the wooden kitchen chairs and pulled her brusquely across his long thighs and began to swat the seat of her thin summer dress with hard strokes of his strong right hand.

"Let me go, Samuel Decker," screeched Angelina, her legs pumping up and down. "You can't do this to me!"

"Sam!" Mary gasped, sitting up in her chair.

"Any little girl that sasses her Ma and her beau like you have deserves a sound thrashing," said Sam grimly. "I can't abide disrespect, especially for your poor overworked Ma!" He continued to paddle her well-shaped backside, his arm establishing a

steady rhythm across the bouncing swells beneath the red checked gingham fabric.

Angelina's arm flailed uselessly as she tried to get her hand back to block the target area, but Sam's long arm was keeping her from doing so. She just couldn't quite reach back there, and she yelped in strident protests. "Stop it, Sam...you stop that!"

"Not until you are sorry, little girl, and are ready to apologize to your Ma and do your chores!"

"Mother...make him stop," yelled Angelina, her voice cracking as she tried to stop the tears that were threatening to overflow her shimmering green eyes.

But, Mary just sat there in surprise, not saying anything. Finally, she seemed to collect herself, and she tried to speak, "Uhh...Sam..."

Sam cut her off when he spoke to Angelina again. "You will apologize, little girl, or we will take this dress up and start over on your bloomers."

Mary gasped and put her hand to her throat, but still didn't say anything.

Angelina, seeing her Ma was not going to come to her rescue and the threat of her dress going up becoming imminent, began to cry, then. "I'...I'm sorry Mother!"

Spank! Spank! Spank! Spank!

"You're sorry...and?" Sam asked sternly, not stopping the burning flurries of spanks he was applying.

"Ohhhhhh...owwwwwww," sobbed Angelina beginning to feel thoroughly chastened. "A...and, I'll do the gardennnnnnnnnnn!"

"And?" Sam paused, his hand resting on her squirming rear.

"I...I'm s...sorry Sammmmm," she wailed, the tears dripping off the end of her nose and her long brown curls brushing the floor. "P...please let me up!"

"All right, then," replied Sam pulling her up and setting her on his knee. "Now, are you ready to behave and obey your Ma?"

Angelina hid her face in his shoulder, her words muffled. "Y...yes, Sam."

"Go wash your face, then, and I'll help you with the garden," he said with a smile. "If we get done in time, we can still go swimming." He looked at Mary Stanton. "If that's all right with you, Ma'm?"

Mary looked dazed, but she managed to nod. "Y...yes, that's fine, Sam. Thank you."

Sam had won an ardent supporter in Mary that day, and he still addressed her as Ma'm, even now. Sometimes, she would grin and remind him of that day, even though Angelina hated it when they drug the incident out to reflect on.

Sam returned to the present with a smile. His wife should have been a redhead, given her sassy temperament. That spanking had only been the first...there had been more, even before they married six months later. But, Sam had never spanked her bare bottom until after they were married. Feeling the hardness between his thighs, he pushed the thought of that aside and concentrated on his work. Rebecca would be back soon for these blasted coupons!

Maddie put the spoon in her mouth, savoring the flavor of Angelina's blackberry preserves. "Mmmmm.... Angelina, I think you've outdone yourself," she said, her pink tongue swiping across her bottom lip. "These preserves are absolutely delicious. I have to have your recipe. Heath loves blackberries, and I'd like to make him some."

"I'll give you a recipe, hon," chuckled Angelina, but I won't give you my secret ingredient. No one knows that but me."

"Aw, come on, Angelina," wheedled Maddie. "Why do you want to keep it a secret?"

"Because of that darned Rebecca Smothers, that's why," fumed Angelina. "My preserves are going to win from now on, every year. I'm not going to let her take it away from me again."

Maddie stared curiously at Angelina. She was flushed and looked a bit...well...demented was the only word she could think of...or perhaps fanatical.

"Aren't you getting a little carried away?" Maddie asked, wiping the perspiration from her upper lip. It was August, and the heat of the summer dog days was upon them. Her white bonnet shielded her eyes from the glaring sun, but it was very hot! She stood under the makeshift tent top and eyed all the rows of glistening jars full of everything from pickled pigs knuckles to jams and jellies on this end.

Maddie's own contribution to the fair contests was in the paints and crafts area where she had a picture of Heath on display. She had captured him at the woodpile, his axe sunk into a log and his foot propped on the log dislodging it. The strong muscles of his brown forearm were captured in the painting with his sleeves rolled up and a stack of freshly cut logs beside him. It was a delightful picture of a hardworking man, and Maddie was pleased with it. Heath had liked it too, saying Maddie had seemed to capture a good likeness of his face and he was pleased at her talent.

"No, I am not getting carried away," hissed Angelina, her eyes darting to her preserves and back at Maddie. "The judging wasn't fair last year, I should have won!"

"But, Angelina, haven't you won every year for the last several years," Maddie persisted.

"Well...yes, but that's beside the point. It's a matter of honor. A person should win fair and square, not because you haven't ever won before!" She fanned herself with a makeshift fan made of paper. "And Rebecca Smothers never won fair and square!"

Maddie shrugged her shoulders and nodded. She guessed she would be upset if someone else won the painting contest. None of the other paintings were anywhere close to Maddie's obvious talent, even if she did say so herself. But, she wasn't fanatical about it.

She hoped Angelina did win, though. She had already heard Sam warn her friend a few times about her attitude over the whole thing, but Angelina seemed oblivious. Not that Maddie was on Sam's side. She was still mad at him! Encouraging Heath to spank her and all...she had quite a score to settle with Sam Decker! But, she would get the opportunity for revenge one of these days! In the meantime, she had no doubt what Sam would do to her friend if Angelina tried his patience much further. She recognized those warning signals...she had seen them on Heath's face before!

"Maddie!"

Maddie heard Heath calling her and turned to see him walking up with two icy cold lemonades in his hand. He handed her one of the glasses and said, "They are getting ready to judge the paintings...do you want to watch?"

Maddie nodded eagerly and asked her friend, "Would you like to come, Angelina?"

"No, no, you go on ahead. I'll just stay here and...keep an eye on things." She looked around suspiciously as if Rebecca Smothers was standing in the wings just waiting for her to leave her precious preserves unattended.

Maddie smothered a laugh and followed Heath.

"Angelina still upset about last year?" Heath asked curiously.

"Big time, I'm afraid."

"Sam mentioned it to me a little while ago. He is getting awfully impatient with her," replied Heath with a chuckle. "He said she better not try any

shenanigans, or he is going to talk to her seat instead of her face."

"Humph! He would!"

Heath just laughed as he took Maddie's hand and led her through the crowd, so they could get close enough to watch the tables.

The Judges strutted around looking very official and personally inspecting each painting and piece of needlework as if they were experts on the subject. Maddie figured not one of them had ever picked up a paintbrush or a needle in their lives! Briefly, she wondered why men were chosen to judge everything when women did most of it?

She nudged Heath in the ribs. "How many women are going to be judging the hogs and cattle this year do you suppose?" she asked conversationally.

Heath looked at her, shocked until he realized she was smirking. Then, he saw the irony, and he shrugged and grinned that lazy male grin that took her breath away in spite of her aggravation.

"Face it, honey, men are just better at some things than women, and judging is one of them. Women just can't be impartial and would soon be awarding their friends the prizes just because they are their friends."

Maddie's mouth dropped open, and she spluttered, "Why...you...you..." words failed her as Heath broke into outright laughter at her indignation.

She was trying to think of a blistering comeback when all hell seemed to break loose under the cooking tent. They could hear Angelina yelling and Rebecca Smothers screeching, and people were rushing towards the pair.

She took off running, Heath right behind her and elbowed her way through the crowd until she could see the two women nose to nose, shouting insults at each other.

Suddenly, Sam pushed his way through the crowd and grabbed Angelina's upper arm and whirled her to face him. "Just what is going on here?" he growled in frustration. "Can't I leave you alone for fifteen minutes?"

"It's her fault, Sam, I caught her trying to slip something into my blackberry preserves." She scowled at Rebecca.

"Only because she did it to mine first!" accused Rebecca.

"What are you talking about Rebecca?" Clarence Smothers stepped out of the crowd and approached his plump little wife.

"I did not!" replied Angelina hotly.

"You did too, I saw you," declared Rebecca. "I hid behind that screen and saw you open my jar!" Her brown eyes were accusing as she stared at Angelina from beneath the blue cotton bonnet.

"Is this true, Angelina?" Sam thundered, his face looking as dark as his eyes.

"I did NOT put anything into her jar, I just wanted to taste them for myself." Angelina flushed and had the grace to look embarrassed. "But, I did see her put something into mine, and I'm betting it was salt, right on the top. That's bound to ruin the flavor!"

The Judge shook his wife's arm. "Did you do that, Rebecca?" His steely gray eyes bored into hers.

"Well, yes I did," she answered defensively. "But only because she did it to mine first!"

"I say they are both disqualified," piped up Lawrence Gooding, the banker. He was on the committee for the judging of the truck garden vegetables.

"And, I agree," added another committee member, Allen Delaney, who was head of the livestock competitions.

The crowd around them murmured and nodded their heads in agreement with the two men.

Sam looked around him and nodded. "It's unanimous then. As judge of the jams, jellies and preserves, I officially disqualify both entries."

Both women gasped and then glared balefully at one another. Angelina whirled around and began to elbow her way through the crowd, intending to head for home. Sam caught up with her and snagged her arm, turning her to face him.

"Where do you think you are going?"

"Away from here, Sam Decker!" seethed Angelina. "How could you do this to me?"

Sam forcefully began to march his wife towards the privy on the edge of the fairgrounds.

Seeing where he was headed, Angelina's self preservation instincts suddenly kicked into gear and she began to dig her heels in. "What are you doing, Sam?" she squeaked fearfully.

"I was going to wait until we got home to give you the thrashing you deserve, but I think a little on account might not be a bad idea," he said grimly, pushing her along.

"No, Sam! Not here!" Angelina's heart sank at his words. And she tried to resist, but it was useless as Sam opened the privy door and pushed her inside.

"This isn't fair. Sam!" Angelina tried to protest as Sam bent her over and yanked the back of her dress up. "You know how important that contest was to me!"

Sam made short work of the chemise covering the well filled out buttocks and began slapping them with hard stinging slaps that made her yelp and dance in place under his arm.

"OWWW...OHHH...Sam...stop...please!"

Sam continued despite her protests until her backside was red, and then he stood her up. "That's

just a sample of what you're going to get when we get home, little girl!"

Angelina stood clutching her bottom cheeks, dismay on her lovely face. Sam never called her little girl in that tone unless he was really upset with her. She knew she was in for a strapping when that happened. "But...but, Sam...I..."

"No buts," declared Sam. He was embarrassed and humiliated at the public display his wife had made of herself and thoroughly sick of the whole thing. "I warned you not to make any scenes with that Smothers woman over this silly preserves nonsense, and you didn't listen to me. Now your backside is going to pay the price!"

Angelina fidgeted and dropped her head. She was beginning to feel somewhat ashamed of herself even though she was still angry with Rebecca. Somehow, the preserves didn't seem so important when faced with one of Sam's strappings. "I'm sorry, Sam," she said woefully.

"You will be," replied Sam grimly. "In the meantime, let that stinging butt of yours remind you to behave yourself for the rest of the day." He opened the door and ushered her out.

"I know Sam must be upset with Angelina, but why did they go into the privy together?" Maddie looked puzzled as she spoke softly to Heath. They had followed their friends out of the crowd and had seen Sam hustle Angelina inside. "That's not a very good place to talk!"

"Oh, I imagine it might be a good place for the kind of talk I'm sure Sam has in mind," he chuckled.

"He surely wouldn't do that here," protested Maddie. She scowled up at Heath. "I would never...and I mean absolutely never speak to you again if you embarrassed me like that, Heathcliff Danvers!"

"Maddie, I would do whatever I thought appropriate at the time and as my wife, you would

accept it," Heath replied with more authority than he actually felt. He was getting better at being more forceful. "Besides, didn't she just embarrass him?"

"Well, yes. I guess she did." Maddie was reluctant to admit it even though she did agree.

Heath laughed and put his arm around her slender shoulders. "Come on, honey, lets not stand here and debate something that hasn't even happened. I want to see how your painting was judged."

Maddie allowed Heath to escort her back to the arts and crafts tables and tried not to think about what Angelina must be enduring. Ohhh, that Sam, she thought angrily. One of these days! Her thoughts were interrupted by Heath's excited exclamation.

"Look, Maddie, look at your painting."

Maddie looked and forgot about Angelina as she saw the Grand Champion ribbon hanging on the right side of her painting. She clapped her hands with delight. "Oh Heath! Not just a blue ribbon, but the Grand Champion!"

Heath pulled her into his arms and squeezed her close. "Congratulations madam artist!" He bent and planted a congratulatory kiss on her sweet pink lips. "Mmmm...tastes like blackberries," he teased.

"Oh, Heath," she blushed. But her eyes were shining, and she was beside herself with excitement. Grabbing his hand, she pulled him towards the painting, wanting to see the ribbon up close and inspect the other entries and their awards.

She was looking closely at a waterfall painting when she heard Angelina's voice beside her. "Congratulations, Maddie. You deserve that ribbon, yours was the best."

Maddie heard the threat of tears in her friend's voice, and she looked at her with sympathy.

"Thank you, Angelina." She looked around and saw Sam talking to Heath on the next table over. "You okay?"

"Yes, I'm fine," replied Angelina. But she looked sad. "I guess you heard, huh?"

"I'm sorry you were disqualified."

"I should have known better," sniffed Angelina, refusing to cry. "Sam warned me several times, but I just wanted to win so bad I ignored him. Now I'm really in trouble, Maddie."

Maddie hooked her arm through Angelina's. "Come on, let's go find something cool to drink, and you can tell me about it."

The girls walked to the well located near the lemonade stand and quickly pumped up a couple of cupfuls, replacing the tin cups when they were finished. Then they went to a large shade tree with benches beneath it and sat down.

"Did you put something in Rebecca's preserves?" Maddie asked curiously.

"No, I really didn't," replied Angelina. "I just wanted to taste them like I said. I wanted to make sure for myself that they weren't as good as mine before the judging." She sighed. "I should have left well enough alone." She wiggled on the hard wooden bench, the sharp spans Sam had given her still burning slightly and making it uncomfortable to sit flat.

"I suppose Sam spanked you?" Maddie looked at her sympathetically.

"Well, yes, but that was nothing compared to what's coming when we get home."

"You mean he's going to spank you again?" Maddie asked shocked.

Angelina nodded ruefully. "Only, tonight, it will be with the strap. Gosh, I hate that thing!" Her bottom burned just thinking about it.

"Oh no!" gasped Maddie. "You mean the razor strap?" She thought of Heath's heavy strap that

hung on the wall, the one he sharpened his razor on. The thought of being spanked with that was horrible! His belt had been bad enough in the hayloft. She would kill him in a slow death if he ever tried to use that thing on her!

Angelina nodded. "That's the one."

"I'll talk to Heath!" Maddie stood up. "Maybe he can talk Sam out of it."

Angelina grabbed Maddie's arm. "No, Maddie! That would only make Sam madder, and I don't need more licks. Please don't!" She looked pleadingly at Maddie.

Reluctantly, Maddie sat back down. "All right, if that's the way you want it."

"It's the way it has to be," Angelina replied softly. "I know Sam. I also know he'll be fair, but he would resent anyone trying to interfere, and you might end up spanked in the end. No, its best left like it is. I'll just take what's coming to me."

The County Fair Part Two

Maddie dissolved into helpless laughter as she watched the antics of Heath with the children trying to catch the greased pig. He had been assigned to supervise the contest for the local children ages 5 to 10, and he had accepted in spite of his reservations. He loved kids, but the supervisor would have to help catch the pig if the little ones couldn't quite make it. That had been the cause of his reservations! He didn't think he could actually catch a greased pig, but Maddie had assured him it wasn't all that hard.

The pig was really getting into the chase. The men had greased him up good with lard from his nose to his curly tail, and he was darting between the children's legs much to their delight. Their screams of laughter could be heard all through the gathered crowd, and people were all hooting and hollering their encouragement.

Heath had just made a dive for the recalcitrant pig and missed...and landed in the pigs wallow, the mud pushing up under his chin and muddy water splashing all around. The children squealed and ducked back from him, trying to avoid the splashing preacher who somewhat resembled the pig when he was wallowing in the mire.

Maddie was laughing so hard the tears were forming in her eyes, and Heath sent her a sheepish grin; then with a whoop and a holler made another dive for the pig that obviously loved it. When he missed again, the slick little pig bounded over his head and tromped all the way down his back and hopped off his rear with a triumphant leap as if to declare himself the victor.

"Need any help there, Preacher?" called Tom Grouse with a lopsided grin.

"Looks like we might have to declare the pig the winner," Sam said hooting with laughter. "He has sure enough got you on the run, Heath!"

The children were delighted to see the pig getting the best of their good-natured preacher, of course, and they didn't help any by getting in Heath's way; although they thought they were!

Giggling and squealing, they chased the pig around the muddy corral...the pig always narrowly escaping with a flick of his little curly tail.

Heath was getting tired, even though he was having a ball. Finally, he shook his head and admitted he was not going to be able to catch Elmer...and it didn't look like any of the children were either! He looked over at his highly amused wife and made a decision. He began to stride towards her, the mud dripping from his clothing, a determined look on his muddy handsome face.

Maddie saw Heath coming towards her, and she began to back up slightly, not liking the determination she saw glinting in his brown eyes. She held her arm out as if to ward off the mud demon approaching.

"Oh, no you don't, Maddie Danvers," declared Heath, grabbing his wife's outstretched hand. "You said it was easy to catch a greased pig, so you come and show us!"

The crowd backed away from Maddie as Heath reached over the fence and picked her up, resisting and squealing all the while. "Heath! You crazy man put me down!" She laughed in spite of herself. "You're going to ruin my dress!"

"Go for it, Maddie," shouted Angelina. "Show the man how it's done!" She laughed at Maddie as Heath sat her down in the muddy corral.

"I'll buy you new material for a dress if you can catch that ornery pig," vowed Heath.

Maddie, getting into the spirit of the game, giggled and said, "Okay, you have a deal, mister."

The children all watched as Maddie looked around. Planning her moves, they all whispered among themselves.

Finally, she picked her skirts up daintily and walked over to a bucket sitting on the other side of the fence. Reaching in, she picked up a juicy corncob still covered with a goodly amount of corn and walked towards Elmer. Bending over, she held the corncob out to Elmer, who was resting on his haunches and watching them all, a seeming smile on his piggy face.

Elmer trotted over to Maddie and began chewing on the corncob, and Maddie reached down picked him up with both arms around the middle. Elmer was still chewing on the cob when Maddie handed him to Heath, trying to suppress the giggles as the crowd cheered her and hooted at Heath.

Heath looked down at her triumphant face and shook his head with a laugh. "You little minx. You did that on purpose didn't you? I bet you've never actually caught a greased pig have you?"

"Well, not like you were trying to," she admitted, her eyes brimming with amusement. "But, as you see, it can be done...if you have the right bait." She cocked her head to the side. "I believe you owe me a new dress, mister Preacher."

"I guess you're right at that," admitted Heath, the glow of devilment suddenly lighting up his eyes. "And, since I do, I might as well make sure it's worth the money." So saying he picked her up again and headed for the watery, muddy middle of the corral.

Guessing his intentions, Maddie kicked and squealed. "Don't you dare, Heath!"

Grinning, Heath leaned over and set his captive down in the middle of the mud and water, then splashed more of it all over her yellow dress. It was certainly ruined now if it hadn't been before!

"Ohhh, I'll get even with you for this," squealed Maddie, but she was laughing, too. Heath helped her up then, and they all went out of the corral to be washed down with buckets of water.

"Come on, Maddie," Heath said. "Let's go home and get changed and get some supper, its almost 6:00pm."

"I'm with you, Heath," said Sam walking up to them with Angelina at his side. "I guess we'll see you two tomorrow at the box lunch?"

Maddie glanced at Angelina and saw the shadows of apprehension on her face. She felt very sorry for her friend, knowing what was awaiting her at Sam's hands tonight. She wished Angelina had let her talk to Heath about it. It was really too late now. She tried to give her an encouraging smile. "I'll see you tomorrow, Angelina."

Angelina nodded and smiled nervously as she allowed Sam to lead her away to their buckboard.

Maddie was quiet as Heath directed Bacon and Eggs towards home. She leaned against his shoulder. It was still hot although the water had cooled them off some.

When they pulled up in front of their log home, Heath spoke. "You get our clothes Maddie and go on ahead. I'll put the horses away and join you in a few minutes.

Maddie nodded, and Heath helped her down from the buckboard. "All right, Heath."

It was not a long walk to the pool in the glade. Maddie loved this spot, it had been one of the reasons they had bought this property. The cold water from the mountain run off fed the pool and was then warmed by the sun as it swirled lazily around before the overflow went on downstream. The leaves of the trees made dappling effects on

the water in the evening light, and it was a wonderful place to bathe in the summertime.

Since the nearest farm was four miles away, they were pretty well insured privacy, and they used it almost every day, usually around suppertime before the evening cool set in.

Heath had hurried with the horses' feedbags and wasn't far behind Maddie. He came up the path and stopped when he saw her at the water's edge, facing the pool. She had taken off the yellow dress and white bonnet and was releasing the pins from her hair, the long honey blonde tresses falling to her waist in springing waves. The late afternoon sun made her one-piece chemise almost transparent, and her womanly form was outlined in exquisite perfection. Heath's chest tightened with love and desire for her, and his breath caught in his throat as she bent to peel calf stockings from her slim legs. Her shapely buttocks were wonderfully rounded as she bent over, filling out the filmy material and shading the tantalizing cleft between them.

Maddie was dabbling her bare toes in the cool water's edge when she felt hands slide around her ribcage and up to cup her breasts. She knew in an instant whose hands were on her, and she sank back against Heath's broad chest with a heartfelt sigh as his gentle fingers brought the rosy nubs to pebble like hardness. She shivered and turned in his arms, sliding her bare arms around his neck and pulling his head down for a kiss.

It was a breathless moment before he released her and began to peel his dirty clothing off. He was down to his under shorts and beginning to peel them off when Maddie laughed and waded into the water, intending to tease him by not undressing all the way. She was waist high in the water when Heath caught up to her.

"What is this?" he growled, moving the fabric off her shoulders and down her arms. Maddie laughed

up at him in devilment, and he quickly peeled the chemise down her body and hefted her up over his shoulder to peel it off her legs. She was giggling and kicking, thoroughly enjoying his masculine hardness next to her softness and his strength as he handled her easily.

Heath tossed the chemise towards the shore and let his wet, slick captive slide down his own wet body until he had her in the circle of his arms once again. "Playing games, huh?" His smile was deceptively slow and lazy beneath his neat moustache, and Maddie giggled in delight. "In that case, I have a game of my own to play." Reaching down and picking her up, he strode out of the water and to a nearby rock, the water sliding off their nude bodies. Sitting down, he quickly dumped her face down over his lap, holding her to keep her squirming body from sliding off.

"What are you doing, Heath?" squeaked Maddie when she found herself facing the ground in an unpleasant position. "Let me up!"

"Oh, no," replied Heath silkily. "I think I'm going to have fun teaching my wife what happens to young ladies who torment their husbands and play tricks on them with greased pigs."

Maddie couldn't help giggling as her scene of triumph flashed through her mind once again. She also couldn't help the squeal that escaped her lips when Heath brought his palm down in a wet splat against her wiggling backside.

"Oh," gasped Maddie, although it wasn't hard enough to really hurt, she felt she had to protest anyway.

"You think it's funny, huh?" Heath landed another wet splat on the delightful derriere and grinned.

"Ouch!" Maddie giggled, trying to put her hands back. "Now, Heath, you have to admit it was funny!"

Splat! Splat! Splattttt!

"Of course it was funny, see how I'm laughing?" Heath's hand connected several more times with Maddie's bare bottom turning it nicely pink. He was dodging around her hands as she tried to block his swats and landing the spanks in spite of her interference.

Maddie began to feel a throbbing desire in the pit of her abdomen, and she felt stirrings of physical need, hot and strong. "Ohhhh...Heath!" she gasped, her bottom seeming to lift of its own accord as the warmth from the sun combined with the stinging of the spanks did strange things to her.

There was something totally decadent about being outside, completely naked in the warm sun and across her likewise naked husband's strong thighs. Well, that and the throbbing hardness of Heath's manhood beneath her stomach. It was plain that his desire was as strong as hers, and she moaned as his hand continued to warm and sting the flesh on her writhing backside.

Heath was amazed and delighted at the discoveries he was making. He knew Maddie had been hot with desire after he had spanked her before, but he hadn't totally connected it...until now. She was usually so shy, and it had taken him a long time to get her to bathe without her undergarments and now...now here she was...in broad daylight no less and seemingly ready to make love!

He stopped spanking her and trailed his long brown fingers down the cleft between the lovely pinkness, feeling the moisture before dipping his fingers into the hot wetness. Yes, she was more than ready for him!

Maddie arched her back as exploring fingers found the source of her womanhood, and she moaned low in her throat, her head coming back as she gasped his name. "Heath! Oh, Heath!"

Quickly, Heath pulled her up and stood up with her, leading her to the blanket she had spread out

on the bank and brought her down with him, his body moving over hers as she opened to receive him between her thighs.

He thrust into her hard and fast and Maddie's small hands gripped his shoulders, her nails digging into the muscles as he brought her to a fever pitch. "Maddie!" he cried out as they went over the edge together. Panting, he dropped to her side and cradled her head on his shoulder. "I love you, Maddie," he said tenderly, planting adoring kisses along her temple.

"I...I love you too, Heath...and that was...wonderful," she admitted shyly. She reached back to feel her warm pink bottom. "I have to admit, Heath, your playing that way did something to me...I don't really understand it, but I enjoyed it."

"So did I, Maddie," replied Heath with feeling. "You were wonderful too!"

Her eyes clouded over as she thought suddenly of Angelina. "I'm sure that's not the kind of spanking poor Angelina is going to get, though," she said unhappily.

"No, I'm sure it's not," said Heath gently.

"Did you know Sam is planning on using his razor strap on her?" questioned Maddie, her baby blue eyes big in her face. She leaned up on her elbow to look into his face as he lay back.

"Yes, I know, Maddie."

"And, you approve of that?"

Heath studied her face for a moment. "I don't approve or disapprove, Maddie, it's not my business. Angelina is Sam's wife, and he has to discipline her as he sees fit."

Maddie sat up then and stared at him. "I want you to promise me here and now that you will never do such a thing," she demanded.

Heath sat up too and took her small hands in his own. "Maddie, I'm not promising anything. Right now, I don't see a need for such strong measures

and may never do so. But, I'm not going to limit myself by saying it won't ever happen."

Maddie opened her mouth for a stinging retort and then closed it. Pulling her hands away from Heath's she stood up and waded into the water. She needed to think about this before replying. This spanking business was doing strange things to her, and she didn't understand it.

Heath knew the subject wasn't over just because Maddie hadn't sassed him. But, he would give her time to think it over. At least, she seemed less quick to fly off the handle at him...something which made him happier. Getting up, he grabbed the scented soap she had brought and went to join her. He needed to do some thinking of his own.

Angelina was quiet and resigned as she preceded her husband into their home behind the mercantile. Knowing Sam would leave her spanking until just before bedtime, she set about getting something ready for supper.

When she set the pot of green beans and potatoes on the table and slid the fried pork off onto a platter, she knew she wouldn't be able to eat. Her stomach churned just thinking of trying to put food into it.

"Come and sit down, Angel," Sam said gruffly. He reached for her hand and escorted her to the table. He called her angel in tender moments and at times when he felt sorry for her. He hated to do it, but he knew he would have to strap her backside. She had been warned several times and after last year he had thought she would have known better.

Angelina obeyed, but she picked at her food, her fingers trembling slightly. "I'm sorry, Sam," she finally said, plucking up the courage to address the situation. After 23 years, it didn't get any easier, knowing she was going to be very sore very soon!

"I shouldn't have messed with those preserves, I know that now. I don't know what came over me, I really don't." She dropped her hands in her lap and hung her head.

Sam reached out and covered her hand with his own. "I know you're sorry, Angel, I'm sorry too. Sorry I have to spank you. You know I don't enjoy it, but it has to be done."

"You don't have to, Sam," Angelina lifted her head and looked hopefully at him. "I learned my lesson, honest I did. I won't ever do anything like that again, I promise."

For a moment, Sam was tempted to give in and let it go, but then he caught himself. He knew his wife well enough to know that if he gave her an inch she would take a mile. It was just her way. Sure, she didn't want spanked, but if he didn't do it, then before long she would be up to something else. Once the spanking was over, she would be good for a right long time. It was almost like she couldn't help herself, and she just needed to have that correction when it was deserved, even though she fought against it.

"No, Angel, you're getting the spanking you deserve. You might as well go ahead and get ready for bed, its plain you aren't going to eat anything. I'll clean off the dishes and put them in the sink for tomorrow."

Sam watched her as she pushed her chair away from the table and stood up, a mutinous look on her face. He knew that would happen too, it always did. She was penitent and sorry until she knew she wasn't going to get out of her punishment, and then she got rebellious. He chuckled as she walked out of the kitchen, her back stiff as a poker. It was always the same. By the time he was finished with her, though, she would be a sorry, sobbing little girl ready to behave herself again. Sam loved her in all her moods.

Angelina glanced at the heavy strap on the wall as she exited the kitchen and felt nauseous. Sam would do a thorough job on her bottom, and she wished it were already over with. After finishing at the privy, she took some warm water into her bedroom and poured it into the pretty china basin to wash with.

It was getting dusky when she sat in her rocking chair looking out the window that looked over the western horizon. The sun was setting, and it was beautiful, the rays bouncing off the distant mountain tops. She heard the door open behind her. She kept rocking and running her fingers through her long, loose chestnut hair, ignoring Sam for the moment.

"Beautiful isn't it?" murmured Sam, coming to stand beside her. In his hand was the razor strap.

Angelina nodded but didn't say anything. Her heart was beating faster, making her feel almost choked.

Holding the strap under his arm, Sam lit the gas lanterns that brought bright light into the room and gently closed the curtains. He held his hand out for Angelina's. It was time.

Slowly, Angelina stood up, her white nightdress falling to the floor to swish around her bare feet. She took a deep breath.

Sam pulled her into his arms and rested his chin on top of her shiny head, inhaling the fragrance of honeysuckle. Then he took her hand and led her to the bedpost of their four-poster bed. "You know what to do, Angel."

Obediently, Angelina bent over and grabbed hold of the poster on the bed, spreading her legs about two feet apart. Her fingernails were white with the force she was using to grip the rounded poster of the old walnut bed. She knew what the penalty was for standing up, and she had no intention of incurring any more strokes than Sam

already had in mind. She felt her nightgown lifting and the cool air against her bare legs and nether regions made her shiver. She hadn't worn any undergarments; there wasn't any need.

Sam pushed the white cotton gown up Angelina's back and then stood her up to slip it off her completely. It was a ritual they shared, one that Sam insisted on. He wanted to undress her after she submitted by bending over. The creamy skin glowed in the lantern light, and her full breasts swayed as she bent back to the post. Sam laid his palm on her satiny back and slid it down the curve of her hip and around to stroke her full trembling cheeks. He never tired of seeing the womanly shape of her and knowing she was his and his alone.

At forty, Angelina was still a handsome woman. The few marks on her stomach were from the gifts of love she bore him, and they only made her more beautiful in his eyes. He never took her for granted, though, and he prayed his thanks regularly to God for bringing her into his life and for giving him their two children.

Regretfully, he switched the strap he had been holding in his left hand to his right and took his place behind her.

Sam believed in being fair, but he also believed in doing a good job if you had to do it. Lifting the razor strap, he swung down hard and licked it across her right buttock. Almost immediately, a red band appeared as Angelina gasped and jumped. He repeated it on the left cheek.

Angelina whimpered, but she didn't even begin to get out of place. She knew Sam's method by this time and knew he would alternate back and forth before moving to the side and getting her sideways across both cheeks at the same time. Biting her lip, she moaned low in her throat as the next two burning stripes landed across her bottom.

Swish-crack!

The sound repeated itself over and over as Sam methodically laid welt after welt on Angelina's rapidly reddening backside.

She began to dance in place as the tears slid down her cheeks, and Sam hadn't even moved to the side yet. "Oh, Sam...I'm so...sorry, Sam," she choked out between cracks of the hateful strap. "Please, Sam...please!"

She didn't know how many he laid across her while alternating cheeks before he finally moved to the side and began to lay them across both until she thought she would surely burst into flames. She was wildly sobbing by this time and had given up trying not to yell.

"Oh, God, Sam....pleaseeeeeee!" she begged shamelessly then, just wanting it to be over. "I will never...ever...do it again!" She hung onto the post for dear life; not wanting to risk getting any more until she thought her fingernails would be imbedded in the wood.

Finally, Sam dropped the heavy strap and laid his hand on her swollen and welted backside. It was very hot. Gently, he took her hands from the post and helped her stand up, holding her as she cried her tears of regret and sorrow.

"Are you going to be my angel again?" he asked softly in her ear.

"Yes, Sam," she sobbed into his shoulder. "I promise I won't do anything like that again. I'm sorry I embarrassed you."

"That's my good girl," he murmured against her hair. "Come on now, its time for bed." He walked her to the side of the bed and pulled the summer spread aside, helping her to lie on her tummy on the bed. Then he picked up the jar of cream she had beside the bed and began to gently spread it over her deeply red and swollen backside.

Angelina moaned in relief and hiccupped a last sobbing cry as Sam tended to her blistered bottom.

She would have a very hard time sitting tomorrow, but she was glad it was over, and she felt a lot better and more at peace than she had for days. She hated losing to Rebecca, but it wasn't the end of the world, and there was always next year. She tried to remember why winning seemed so important that she had had to get into Rebecca's jar, but for the life of her, she couldn't.

As Sam rubbed some more of the cooling cream across her welts, she visibly relaxed and closed her eyes. Soon, she was breathing deeply as her tired body gave into the demands of sleep.

Sam smiled when he heard the small snore that came from his angel. Peace again in the Decker household, he thought. He, too, was glad it was over; it had weighed heavy on his mind all day.

Something else was begging for attention, but he could wait till morning. He didn't intend to disturb her rest after the heavy strapping; he knew she was exhausted. Laying the sheet lightly over her, he turned out the lanterns, undressed and slid in beside her.

Angelina muttered inaudibly in her sleep, but other than that, she didn't move. He leaned over and placed a kiss on her temple and laid his arm across her satiny back. Closing his eyes he too settled down for a good night's sleep. Tomorrow was another day at the fair.

The County Fair Part Three

"But, Heath," protested Maddie, "I don't want to eat my box lunch with anyone else but you."

Heath looked patiently at Maddie. "Now, Maddie, you know the auction brings in money for the orphanage, and it won't hurt you to be a good sport with whomever buys your box lunch."

"But, what if I get someone like...like...Sam!" Maddie's brows drew together in a scowl. "I don't want to have lunch with Sam Decker!"

Heath was growing exasperated. "And what is wrong with Sam Decker?"

Maddie's lip dropped sulkily. "I just don't want to have lunch with him, that's all."

Heath put his arms around Maddie and smiled forbearingly down at her. "You mean you don't like him because he spansks Angelina."

Maddie nodded cautiously. That was close enough. She didn't really feel like telling Heath she didn't like him because of his advice to her husband! She wished she could be sure Sam WOULD get her lunch; she'd fix his wagon!

Heath tipped his finger under her chin, forcing her to look back up at him. "You be nice to Sam, honey, he's a good man." He grinned at her expression and slid his hands down her back to cup her bottom cheeks and squeeze lovingly. "I promise I'll do my best to get your box, but they are all going to look alike, there's no way to know which one will be yours."

"I'll tie a yellow ribbon around it."

"But, the fair committee insisted that you ladies don't mark them in any way. They want us all to meet our neighbors and eat in pairs, as you know."

"I know," groaned Maddie. "It was that silly Rebecca Smothers's fault. She thought it would be

neighborly to do it that way this year. No one has ever cared before that I know of!"

She scowled at Heath again. "What if you get Sarah Tucker's box? You know how jealous William is, he about took the ears off Tip Jackson just for looking at his wife!"

Maddie put her hands on her hips. "He would be watching you two like a hawk for the whole meal!"

Maddie didn't mention that she wouldn't like it either. The beautiful saloon girl that turned from her ne'er do well life and married a god fearing man made her a bit jealous, too, at the thought of Heath sitting under a tree and having lunch with her. Sarah was very beautiful, indeed, with white blonde curls and a face like an angel. Her only drawback was that she was very clumsy! The girl seemed to have no grace, but the men lapped it up. They fell over themselves to pick up a handkerchief or parasol that she conveniently seemed to drop when there was a man around.

"Sure you're not a little jealous?" teased Heath.

Maddie tossed her head. "No, I won't be. I know you'll do your best to enjoy your meal and be sociable, just as I will if Adam Hanks should get mine." She smiled sweetly up at him.

"Adam Hanks?" growled Heath. Suddenly, the idea of Maddie marking the boxes didn't seem so bad after all. Adam had been hot on Maddie's trail before Heath had met her, and everyone had figured she would marry him eventually. Adam still wasn't married!

"Yes, you remember Adam?" Maddie peeped demurely from beneath her long eyelashes.

"Yes, I remember. Perhaps the committee should have stuck to making the singles buy singles and the married couples purchase from married women." His brown eyes raked possessively up and down her figure, and Maddie grinned in delight.

"Too late, now," replied Maddie airily. "Let's go, or we'll be late, and Angelina is meeting me at the quilt display." She picked up her box lunch and walked out the door, Heath right behind her. As he watched her pert backside swaying beneath the pretty flowered print dress, it occurred to him that he felt like giving her a few swats just for her attitude, but he resisted.

It wasn't long before they were meeting Sam and Angelina, and the ladies paired off to look over the quilts. It looked like Evelyn Grouse would be winning hands down for her wedding ring design. It was gorgeous!

"So how did it go last night?" Maddie asked Angelina sympathetically.

"Let's just say I'm not sitting any more than I have to today," confessed Angelina. "But, it's over and done with now, and Sam has forgiven me." She lowered her voice and whispered conspiratorially to Maddie. "There's always next year. Besides, I'm sure Rebecca got her plump little backside strapped too. Clarence is not known for being lenient, in the courtroom or at home!" The girls laughed together.

Suddenly, Maddie grasped Angelina's arm, her nails digging in. "Would you look at that!"

"What?" Angelina looked around to see what Maddie was talking about.

"That woman...she is wearing pants!"

"Oh her, yes...she is the one that does trick rides on the horses. First time we've ever had anything like that at our little backwoods county fair, but the committee decided it would be new and creative." Angelina rolled her eyes.

"But, it's illegal for women to wear pants in public," protested Maddie. She had thought before about wearing pants, but her folks had always been

adamant and squelched the idea when it surfaced, and Maddie had given it up.

She stared, fascinated as the woman put her foot in the stirrup of the saddle and swung herself up and onto the waiting white horse. "That must be great, not to have to wear a riding skirt," she said in awe. Swiftly making up her mind, she went to speak to the woman.

"Hey, where you going?" Angelina quickly followed her friend as she headed towards the woman on the prancing horse.

Maddie drew abreast of the horse, staying back until the young woman had him under strict control and looked down at Maddie, her blue eyes curious.

"Hi, my name is Maddie Danvers." Maddie looked up at the pretty girl, inspecting her thoroughly. She was wearing white pants with black boots to the knees and a black shirt that buttoned down the front and a cap. Her long dark hair was pulled back and tied with a ribbon. "I couldn't help but notice you are wearing pants. Doesn't the law prohibit that?"

The young girl smiled, her white teeth flashing between full pink lips. "And, I'm Rosalee Jackson and no, no one has ever said anything, but I only wear them to perform and practice in. I wear a dress when I have to go out otherwise." She wrinkled her pert little nose. "My father wouldn't approve of me wearing them to town."

The white horse started prancing again, and Maddie and Angelina stepped back.

"I better go, now, Satan needs his workout," Rosalee said. "Are you coming to the show?"

"We wouldn't miss it," vowed Maddie fervently. She watched as Rosalee smiled and turned Satan towards a corral with a workout ring in it. "I'm going to get me some pants, Angelina," she declared. "Do you think the Sears Roebuck catalogue would have them? Or should I make them?"

"Maddie! You can't do that," Angelina gasped. "What will Heath say?"

Maddie glanced at her friend, an impish grin on her face. "I just won't tell him until I have them."

"Boy, are you looking for trouble!" Angelina fell in step with her friend.

"Say, why don't you get some, and we'll go riding together!" Maddie's baby blue eyes lit up.

"Are you kidding? Sam would have my hide, literally!"

"Oh, come on...how mad can he be? We'll just use them for riding, and he'll get used to the idea. Please, Angelina...for me?" Maddie coaxed her friend.

Angelina hesitated, and then shrugged her shoulders. "I'll think about it, Maddie, but that's the best you are going to get! I can't let Sam catch me in pants if I do get them, so it will have to be our secret!"

"Well, okay...for a while. But, eventually, I'm going to tell Heath. I don't see why I should have to sneak around, he can just get used to the idea!" Maddie tossed her head, and her honey blonde banana curls bounced beside her cheeks. She had her long hair tied up with a green ribbon that matched her dress, and she looked fresh as a daisy.

Angelina tossed her chestnut braid behind her back and nodded uneasily. "You can tell Heath if you want, but don't tell Sam! I'll break it to him when I'm ready...but that won't be for a good long time, I can tell you that!" She was dressed in a pretty pink flowered dress with a white pinafore and bonnet, her green eyes looking quite apprehensive as she talked with Maddie.

The Judges were pinning the champion blue ribbon on Evelyn's quilt, much to her delight, as the girls walked under the canopy.

"Congratulations, little girl," crowed Tom, lifting her up and swinging her around. "I jest knowed you'd take first place!"

"Tom, you big oaf, put me down," snapped Evelyn, but her face was flushed pink and her eyes were as bright as her smile.

Tom brought his wife down to his chest, and Maddie was close enough to hear him growl in her ear. "What did I tell ye about calling me names, little girl?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, Tom," whispered Evelyn, breathless and blushing bright red when she saw Maddie's wry grin.

"We'll talk about it later," grinned Tom, his smile as broad as a barn at Evelyn's hushed apology. He looked fit to burst, and Maddie was hard pressed to know if was from Evelyn's blue ribbon, or the reaction his threat had gotten from her.

The morning seemed to fly, and soon, it was time for the auction of the box lunches. Chairs had been set up in front of a makeshift stage, and an auctioneer stood in front of three tables of lunches, all looking the same.

"What did you fix, Maddie?" Heath asked in her ear as they sat down.

"Fried chicken, corn on the cob, biscuits and two slices of pie for dessert," she whispered back.

"Sounds great," declared Heath. His stomach had been rumbling for the last hour, and he especially liked Maddie's pies. The crusts were light and flaky and melted in your mouth. Of course, most of the lunches probably contained the same thing as Maddie's so it would be a stroke of luck if he got hers.

"Okay, gentlemen," began the auctioneer, looking quite dapper in his vest and hat. "I'm going to tell you what is in the box, and you may offer bids if you like the sound of it. The name of the lady that prepared it is inside the lid of the box so you

can collect the lunch and then collect your lady." He sounded very cheerful, and his announcement brought murmurs and laughter from the crowd. "Please be sure to be generous, the proceeds are going to the children's orphanage in Pannier flats."

The bidding was hot and heavy, and boxes began to disappear at a quick pace. As Heath had predicted, most of the lunches were the same thing. Finally Heath bid on a lunch and grinned at Maddie as he walked to the stage to collect his prize. "Here's hoping it's yours," he whispered as he left her.

Maddie was trying to see what Heath was doing when Sam Decker appeared right in front of her, blocking her view. Her heart sank as Sam grinned at her and bowed slightly. "Looks like we have a date for lunch, Maddie."

Maddie groaned inwardly. Of all the people to buy her lunch! She had known it was going to happen, though...she had felt it all morning. Trying to muster a smile, she graciously took Sam's arm and followed him to a shady spot beneath a spreading elm where blankets had been laid for people to sit. Looking around for Heath, she spotted him walking with...Rosalee! The young lady in the trousers! She fought down a stab of jealousy as he leaned down to hear her speak to him, her hand in the crook of his elbow.

She sank to the ground and spread her skirts out around her and tried not to look in Heath's direction. Her fingers picked at the blanket, and she lost her appetite.

"You don't like me very much do you, Maddie?" Sam's steely gaze pinned her in a stare as she looked up.

She flushed and shrugged her slender shoulders. "It's not that...exactly."

Sam started setting the food out on the blanket. "Then what is it...exactly?"

Maddie stared defiantly at Sam. "I don't like you giving Heath...certain advice."

"Such as?" Sam asked conversationally, picking up a chicken leg and sinking his firm white teeth into it.

"I think you know what I'm talking about." Maddie picked up a biscuit and nibbled it delicately. Suddenly, she didn't have any appetite. She sneaked another glance at Heath. He didn't appear to be suffering the same malady. She could see him tucking into his food and Rosalee smiling at him and putting a large napkin in his collar. She fumed.

"You mean...advice about spanking you." Sam looked steadily at her, his face somewhat stern.

"That would be the advice," snapped Maddie angrily. Huffing, she threw the biscuit into the box and stared accusingly at him. "Before you encouraged him, he had never laid a hand on me. Now, he has spanked me several times, and I don't like it!"

"Now is that any way to treat a perfectly good biscuit?" Sam asked mildly. He continued to work on his fried chicken, ignoring her attitude.

Maddie was flummoxed at his question. Then she decided he was making light of her. "It's my biscuit, I guess I can treat it any way I like." Nose in the air, she turned away from him, looking for Angelina.

"Eat your lunch, Maddie, it's going to be a long day," replied Sam, pushing a plate towards her with chicken and corn on it.

"I'm not hungry," Maddie replied flatly, noticing Rosalee scooting closer to Heath. She scowled.

Sam looked in the direction she was scowling and said gruffly. "Don't worry about Heath. He loves you, and that girl is nothing to him. Eat your lunch."

Surprised at Sam's support, Maddie hesitantly picked up a piece of chicken breast. "Where's Angelina?"

He pointed his second chicken leg off behind the tree. "She's over there...with Adam Hanks." It was his turn to scowl as Angelina laughed up at the handsome young man who was talking to her.

A smile played around Maddie's pink lips, and she echoed his previous sentiment. "Don't worry, Angelina loves you."

Sam's gaze switched to Maddie's face, and he flushed slightly. "I know that, young lady...and you still haven't touched a bite of your chicken."

"Did it ever occur to you that maybe I'm just not hungry?" Maddie's face took on a haughty look. She really didn't like being told what to do...especially by Sam!

Sam wiped his mouth with a cloth napkin from the box, and his dark gaze bore into hers. "What occurs to me is that you don't like to mind what you're told, even when it's for your own good." His palm itched as he watched her sniff disdainfully.

"I don't need anyone to tell me what to do, I'm perfectly capable of eating if I decide I'm hungry...and I'm not hungry." Her stomach belied her heated words with a growl.

"What you are is stubborn. Which is exactly why you need a good bottom warming now and then. It keeps your attitude well adjusted." He picked up another biscuit and took a big bite out of it.

Maddie fought down the urge to throw the chicken breast at his dark head, her frustration mounting.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," said Sam placidly. "It would land you in a heap of trouble." He polished off the biscuit in a second bite and watched her carefully, his jaws moving rhythmically as he chewed up the food.

Startled, Maddie stared at him. "How do you know what I'm thinking?"

He swallowed and then grinned suddenly, and Maddie gaped. He looked ten years younger and

almost mischievous. "Because I've lived with Angel for twenty three years, and you have the same look on your face that she used to get when she was ready to throw something. Mighty fine biscuits, Maddie." He eyed one of hers.

Maddie warred between bursting into laughter and indignation. Finally, she picked up one of her biscuits and handed it to him. "You are a right pain, Sam Decker. I don't know what Angelina sees in you, I really don't." She couldn't resist the dig even though she was proud of the biscuit compliment. Sam really was a strange man. Making her so angry on one hand and yet being good to her on the other. She found herself liking him...perish the thought!

"You don't like me because you know I speak the truth. and you hope to talk Heath out of paddling you if I back off, right?" He took the biscuit and bit into it with relish.

Instantly, Maddie's dander went sky high again. "I want you to mind your own business and let Heath make up his own mind," she said crossly, waving the chicken around to emphasize her point.

Sam appraised the flushed face in front of him. "It wouldn't be neighborly of me to just ignore Heath's dilemma now would it?" He cocked his head to the side. "After all, I like Heath, he's a good preacher and darn good man. I enjoy helping him out and giving him the benefit of my past experience."

Maddie thought she detected a hint of baiting in his statement and wondered if Sam was having her on after all. Her eyes narrowed. She pointed her chicken at him. "You'd best be minding your own business from now on, Sam Decker, or you won't like the consequences." Two could play this game.

"And what consequences might those be, young lady?" Sam drawled, amused. She reminded him so

much of Angel when she was younger. He found himself enjoying their exchange.

"I haven't made up my mind, but I assure you, there will be some!" she promised earnestly, trying to hide a smile.

Sam heaved an exaggerated sigh. "Maddie, Maddie, what am I going to do with you? Now, I have to let Heath know his wife is threatening his best friend...and you know what that means!"

Maddie broke into laughter then, unable to hold it back. Her natural sense of humor took over, and she couldn't help herself. This was a side of Sam she had never had the opportunity to see before.

Sam had begun to chuckle with her when they heard the commotion begin.

"What do you think you are doing with my wife?" roared William Tucker, his massive frame striding towards a low hanging tree.

With a gasp, Maddie stood up and stared as Sarah Tucker, red faced, stepped from behind the big oak. She was followed by a handsome young man who looked very wary and startled at the bellowing mountain of flesh headed towards him.

"Now hold on there," began the young man, holding his hand out as if to ward William off, "I don't know who you are but..."

"I'm her husband, that's who I am...and you're the man that's going to be dead. You have a lot of nerve sparking my wife in broad daylight!" He drew his arm back, his hand curled into a heavy fist. William Tucker was a mountain man...a god fearing mountain man. He worked hard felling trees and getting them ready to ship down the channels prepared for them, and he had a nasty temper, especially where Sarah was concerned.

"Hold it, William," ordered Sheriff Crockett who had rushed to the scene. He grabbed William's massive arm and stopped him as the young man backed hastily away.

"She never told me she was married," protested the young fellow. "She isn't wearing a ring either...I checked!"

Maddie hadn't seen him before. Just his luck, she thought. He would have to get Sarah's box.

"What?" roared William, turning to his little wife who was blushing and hiding her hand. "Let me see your hand, Sarah!" He pulled it out of her dress pocket and sure enough, the ring was missing. "Where is your wedding band?" William snapped, his eyes shooting sparks at her.

"I...I forgot to put it back on, honey," she stammered. "I didn't mean to give the wrong impression." She looked pleadingly at William, but Maddie figured she hadn't meant not to either. Her angelic face did not soften William's ire, though, as he looked from her to the young stranger who had backed up.

"I don't know you," he addressed the young man, "So I'm going to let it go this time. But don't you come near my Sarah again. She belongs to me."

Gulping, the stranger nodded and backed further away.

William's dark green eyes returned to Sarah. "And, as for you, how many times I told you not to forget your ring?" William was no fool. He loved Sarah to distraction, but he was not blind to her faults. When he had taken her out of the saloon, he had known she was used to other men, but she swore she wanted to leave that life behind her. And, he believed she really did, but she needed a strong man to keep her on the straight and narrow path.

Sarah gulped and tried to back away from her husband. The words he had told her the last time she left her ring on the kitchen sink echoed in her mind. *The next time you forget your ring, half-pint, I'm gonna blister that pretty little behind of yours until you have to eat supper standing up. Then*

maybe you'll be more careful to keep it on your hand and not lose it. I'm not made of money, and I can't afford to replace it just because you're being careless!

"I...it was an accident, William...honest. I was putting lotion on my hands and you called me and I just forgot. I'm sorry!" Sarah's white blonde curls framed her anxious face as she continued to back away from the advancing man.

"And it was an accident that you stepped out of sight with another man too, I suppose?" William knew better, of course. Sarah had just wanted to flirt with the young man, so she had. Well, her rear-end was going to pay the price! They had put that life behind them, and that's where William intended it to stay.

Sarah gasped and turned to run, but Williams's huge hand snaked out and grabbed her wrist. Quickly, he bent and hefted her over his shoulder and strode into the woods with her, and they were quickly lost to the view of the other fair goers.

Every woman there did a silent wince, even the ones that thought she had it coming. They knew what poor Sarah was in for, and she was a woman, so therefore she deserved their sympathy.

"Sit and eat your lunch, Maddie, the show's over," said Sam, taking his seat again on the blanket.

Maddie had picked up her chicken again and started to take a bite when they heard Sarah's cries filtering through the trees. She grimaced and dropped the chicken back on the plate.

"She's got a good hiding coming," Sam said nonchalantly. "No use in letting it spoil your lunch."

Maddie hated to agree with Sam, so she just gave him a ferocious glare and said nothing.

"Eat, Maddie," ordered Sam sternly. "You can't go all day and eat nothing, you'll be sick." Sam couldn't help his natural protective instincts. And,

Maddie was Heath's wife. His concern included his friends and their spouses as well. Besides, he did like Maddie. He just thought Heath ought to take a firmer stand with her.

"I don't want anything, Sam," Maddie replied testily. A shadow fell across her, and she looked up into Heath's face.

"Aren't you eating, Maddie?" he asked in concern as he dropped to the blanket beside her.

"No, she is being stubborn," interceded Sam. "I've been trying to get her to, but she won't listen."

Maddie shot him an exasperated glare. "I just don't feel like eating, Heath. I guess it's the heat." She knew she was being deliberately ornery, but she couldn't bring herself to obey Sam. She just had to be that independent, even if it left her hungry. She couldn't let Sam win!

"I heard your stomach growling a few minutes ago, Maddie," grated Sam. "Seems to me you need some of what Sarah Tucker is getting."

"Mind your own business, Sam Decker," snapped Maddie indignantly, finally unable to stop herself. Here he was again, telling Heath she needed a spanking! It was the last straw. She leaned over and dropped her chicken breast in his lap. "If you want this chicken ate so badly, eat it yourself!"

"Maddie!" Heath was appalled.

Maddie knew she had gone too far when she looked into Heath's shocked face.

The County Fair Part Four

Sam picked up the piece of chicken breast Maddie had dropped into his lap and gazed unperturbed at it as if considering eating it.

Maddie was too preoccupied with Heath's thunderous expression to notice. "Maddie Danvers, you apologize to Sam."

"No, Heath," replied Maddie stubbornly. "He asked for it, he's been poking his nose in our business all along!"

Heath was getting angry. He hadn't really been very angry with Maddie before. He had been worried and upset, frustrated and exasperated, but he had never really been downright angry. To have her out and out refuse to obey him made him see red. And her display of temper in public was unacceptable for her as his wife...especially to his good friend Sam.

"Maddie, you apologize right now, you hear me?"

Maddie sprang to her feet. "NO! I won't, Heath, and you can't make me!" Maddie whirled away and stomped off.

"Maddie, come back here," blazed Heath, getting to his feet. He was trying to be calm and not create a scene, but people were already staring. A dull flush crept up from beneath his collar, and he glanced down at Sam.

Sam didn't appear to be upset as he bit into the offending piece of chicken. Someone might as well eat it if Maddie wasn't going to, he decided.

"I'm sorry, Sam," murmured Heath in a low voice. His frustration and anger were evident, as well as his attempts to reign his temper in. He wasn't sure what to do.

"Quite all right, Heath," said Sam magnanimously, waving the chicken about. "Just

imagine, though, if next time she has a fit in front of the Governor or something. It doesn't matter to me, of course, I'll forgive her; she's your wife. But what about your public image in front of someone important?" He took another bite of the chicken.

Heath realized more than ever that Sam was right; he couldn't let Maddie get away with this behavior. He started after her, grimly determined to set this right.

Lovely Sarah Tucker was face down over her husband's massive shoulder, regretting her decision to flirt with the handsome young stranger that had bought her lunch box. She knew she was in for a hiding.

"Put me down, Willie...please?" she begged, knowing it was no use. Even though she used her pet name for him, she knew it would not sway him.

William's answer was a series of blistering spans across the seat of her pretty red dress. His work toughened hand burned as badly as if it had been on bare skin and her legs pumped up and down as she tried to put her hands back and block him.

"OWWW...Willie...I'm sorry!" she protested miserably.

"That's nothing compared to what you're going to get, half-pint," he said threateningly. By the time I'm finished with your backside, you'll be eating supper standing up!

Sarah's slender frame shook knowing William meant every word. "No, please...I won't flirt anymore, I promise Willie." She began to whimper, feeling very scared and anxious.

"You should have told that man you were married, Sarah." William said ominously. "But, you didn't, did you? You just had to have him fawning all over you. It makes you feel powerful doesn't it,

darlin?" He set her on the ground and took her by the upper arms to look down into her apprehensive blue eyes.

Sarah's voice quavered. "I...I didn't mean to, Willie, honest I didn't. I just couldn't seem to help myself," she finished dejectedly. "I know I should have told him, I know it!"

William's eyes softened a bit at her admission. "I'm glad you told me that, half-pint, I'd hate to have to add extra for lying." Seating himself determinedly on a large log he pulled his hapless captive down across his powerful thighs, ignoring her pleas for clemency.

"No, Willieee," begged Sarah as she went over. "Please...not too hard...I promise I won't do it again...pleeeeeeease!" She started to sob knowing how it was going to feel when Willie's concrete palm connected with her tender rear. How she wished she hadn't stepped behind that tree!

"We already talked about this half-pint, and we both know I have to do it. You need it, you've told me so, yourself." He was busy pulling her long skirt up and over her back while her legs kicked up and down, the ruffled eyelet drawers looking so cute that Willie paused to admire them. "You sure do have a pretty little backside, half-pint," he crooned running his work-roughened palm over the soft fabric housing the matching pert mounds. "Too bad I have to make it match your red dress."

"No, no you don't," Sarah gasped. "Really, you don...AIEEEE!" The first of several scathing spanks landed in the middle of the pretty eyelet drawers, and Sarah arched her head up as she cut her own words off with a strangled screech.

"Oh, yes, I do!" Willie was adamant as his long arm rose and fell, his big hand connecting over and over with the bouncing cheeks beneath the white cotton.

Sarah kicked and yelled, the tears streaming down her face. She protested even more when he paused and slipped his huge thumb into the waistband of the fragile fabric and deftly slid it down to the middle of her thighs. "Oh, NOOOO...no please Willie.... I'll be good.... really I wi...OWWIIIEEE!" She screamed as he began to spank with hard measured spans, almost pushing her over his knees as he thoroughly covered her reddening bottom and backs of her thighs.

"Don't ever flirt with another man, half-pint," warned William, his hand rising and falling in a seemingly endless cadence to the distraught girl over his lap.

At this point, Sarah didn't care who might be listening or hearing as she wailed her pleas and promises to Willie. She just wanted the blistering paddling to be over and for Willie to release her so she could rub her throbbing, burning bottom.

"Wahhhhhhhhhhhh," she wept, thoroughly chastened. She couldn't see for the tears in her eyes and running down her face. Her world was a haze of pain, and her buttocks were in flames.

William finally stopped although Sarah continued to weep and sob over his knees while he rubbed her deep red cheeks tenderly.

"Am I going to have to do this again?" he asked finally, as she began to wind down.

"Never!" sobbed Sarah. "Never again!"

"Have you had enough to keep your word this time?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"Maybe we better make sure," William said solicitously.

"NO! NO!"

He tipped her over a little further and raised his right knee to bring the soft undersides of the bottom cheeks into prominence and landed another twenty blazing spans on her sitting area.

Sarah could only shriek as he delivered the final chastisement and then lifted her up. She grabbed her bottom and hopped up and down, the tears streaming down her face as she bawled like a baby.

William couldn't help grinning as he watched her. Shaking his head, he finally got up and pulled her to him, shushing her and rubbing her back soothingly, helping her to calm herself. "It's all, right half-pint. You know I love you and forgive you, right?"

Sarah had dropped her skirt and was crying into William's shoulder, but she nodded and entwined her arms tightly around his barrel chest as far as she could reach.

He ran his palm down her white blonde curls and kissed the top of her head. "I know it seems harsh, darlin, but you told me you wanted to put that life behind you, and I'm trying to help you. It's the only way I know how to get you to listen to me and mind me."

Sarah looked up at him with a tear-drenched face. "I'm the one who's sorry, Willie," she hiccupped. "You took me in, made an honest woman of me and loved me. I surely don't ever want to go back to being a saloon girl. And, I know I'm vain. I want men to love the way I look, I admit it." She blushed. "But, I also know my looks will fade one day, and I truly do love you. I'm grateful for your protection and love, and I promise I won't ever do that again." She put her hands up to cup the sides of his face and pull him down to her waiting red rosebud lips.

William groaned as her touch ignited his senses, and life sprung up between his legs. "How can you make me want you so badly with a single kiss, half-pint?" He reached down and pulled her dress back up and cupped her cheeks with his huge hands.

Sarah gasped as he squeezed her buttocks, the pain and pleasure of that motion causing instant wetness between her thighs.

"I gotta have you, darlin'," he whispered hoarsely, turning her around.

Sarah whimpered, on fire with need for him and bent over the old log, placing her hands on the rough bark. When he thrust into her, she screamed again, but this time in delight as he filled her to the core.

William took her hard, but tried to be mindful of her punished buttocks just the same. He cried out with pleasure as they came together, and he held her hips close to him while his breathing slowed and returned to normal. "Lord, darlin, you sure can pleasure a man," he said gruffly, adjusting his clothing and standing her up."

"Only you," she breathed dreamily as he helped her with her bloomers and her dress. "I only want to pleasure you, Willie."

"You just remember that, half-pint," chuckled William, patting her sore bottom warningly. "You know what will happen if you get any other ideas." He took her hand and began to lead her back towards the fairgrounds. "It's time we got back. Not that anyone will be wondering where we are." He grinned down at her.

Sarah blushed. "No, I'm sure they all probably heard me yelling." She tossed her head. "It doesn't matter, though. I heard Angelina Decker yelling from the privy yesterday, so I know I'm not the only one that got spanked during the fair."

As they stepped out of the woods edge, they saw the Reverend Danvers determinedly pursuing his wife Maddie, who was stalking off in another direction towards the horse barns.

"No, and I doubt you'll be the last one from the looks of that," chuckled William.

"Uh oh, poor Maddie," sympathized Sarah. "I wonder what happened?"

"Poor Maddie," exclaimed William. "You mean poor Preacher! The man's got his hands full with that little lady...she's like trying to lasso a tornado. Good thing she's not mine, she wouldn't sit for a right long time...not until she learned some proper respect!"

"Well, he certainly looks like he means business," Sarah replied, her own aching bottom twinging in sympathy for Maddie.

"Yes, he's learning," said William with satisfaction. "He's learning."

Maddie did not even notice Heath following her; she was too incensed with Sam Decker. She stalked into the horse barn, ignoring the soft whickers of the beautiful animals. No one was around, they were all at lunch, of course...some even rejoining their spouses or partners for an afternoon siesta on the comfortable blankets beneath the shade trees while the children played around.

Walking up to a defenseless bale of hay, she began kicking it in frustration. "Ohhh...I hate you, Sam Decker!" She muttered to herself, imagining the hay bale was Sam's posterior. She kicked as hard as she could until she was panting, and her toes were hurting inside the ankle boot. Finally, she turned around and flopped down disgustedly on the poor bale, now misshapen at the side from the force of her kicks. As she reached up to brush back a stray curl that had worked loose from the combs, she saw Heath standing in the doorway, his hands on his hips, watching her. Her breath intake was sharp as she saw the look on his face. It was worse than when she had left him!

Watching Maddie kicking the hapless bale of hay sent several emotions racing through Heath's mind.

She reminded him of a child having a temper tantrum, which of course, it was in reality. He tamped down the urge to grab her and immediately turn her upside down and give her another way to release that childish anger.

The round O of her mouth and the sudden apprehension that sprang into her baby blue eyes gave him a feeling of intense satisfaction...as well as the desire to kiss that pink mouth until she was soft and yielding, and his anger with her waned. He didn't think he would ever tire of holding her lovely curves against him, clothed or unclothed, angry or not.

He felt frustrated that Maddie could not seem to accept that she was going to be disciplined, and she seemed to hold a grudge against Sam for it. He had given the matter a lot of thought, and he realized he had been getting frustrated over Maddie's refusal to listen to him over other things, well before Sam had suggested he spank her. In fact, the thought HAD crossed his mind before that...he just hadn't acted on it. She had so reminded him of a child at times, his younger sisters in fact, that the familiar childhood punishment had been bound to flit through his mind. He just hadn't truly considered applying it to her new status as his wife. So he didn't consider it all Sam's fault, as Maddie seemed to; he had taken to it very quickly once it had been verbalized.

He also felt some sympathy for her. That was there among the feelings churning inside him, as well as reluctance to actually have to bring pain to her. He had liked the play they engaged in at the bathing pool the previous evening. The sight of her wet wiggling bottom cheeks over his lap, pale and glistening in the evening light had sent a heady excitement coursing through him. And it had been fascinating to watch her response.

Sam's words were certainly fresh in his mind concerning Maddie's behavior as befitting a Reverend's wife. He had felt other male eyes on him when Maddie had disobeyed him, even if they couldn't hear the words, as males, they could recognize the scene. William Tucker had made no secret of what he intended to do to Sarah...even slapping her backside as they had disappeared into the woods carrying her over his shoulder.

So far, Heath felt he had been very solicitous of Maddie's feelings in public...a courtesy that apparently she didn't feel the need to extend to him! She hadn't minded embarrassing him at all! It looked like it was high time he took her in hand for real. He strode over to her and looked down into her flushed face, studying her, his anger simmering as his confused thoughts jumbled about.

Maddie stared defiantly up at her husband, her own anger at him and Sam still there beneath the surface. How dare they plot together on how to treat her! It was like Heath had no mind of his own and had to have Sam to put these ideas into his head! They had been doing just fine until Sam butted in, and she deeply resented his interference, and she found that she resented Heath for listening to him.

"Stand up, Maddie," instructed Heath.

"Why should I?" Maddie sulked.

"Because I said too."

"So?"

Heath gritted his teeth. Apparently, Maddie was not very intimidated by him.

Maddie knew she was pushing it, but she couldn't seem to help herself. In the distance behind Heath, she could see people still gathered in the shelter of the shade trees. She could see Angelina and Sam looking their way, and William and Sarah joining the others their arms entwined around each other.

"I said...STAND UP!"

Maddie's gaze jerked back to Heath's face at the tone in his voice. There was a different timbre to it, and Maddie trembled slightly, but refused to be intimidated.

"Don't yell at me, Heath Danvers," she retorted. She folded her arms and refused to budge.

Heath gazed down at her in frustration, his ire mounting. At her defiant pose, his patience finally snapped.

"All right, don't say you never asked for this, then." Quickly he sat down and literally yanked Maddie across his long thighs, taking her by surprise. He flipped her long skirt up and it fell partially over her head, his left arm and hand gripping her waist and hip. Immediately, he began to slap her rounded cheeks hard and fast, each spank from the heart as his frustration with her made itself felt. There was nothing erotic or sexual about it, just a determination to teach his recalcitrant wife a lesson in obedience.

Maddie shrieked in pain and anger as his broad palm crashed into her firm young buttocks, depressing them with each swat. She saw faces looking their way from the fair, and her face burned in humiliation and shame as she struggled to get out of Heath's grasp. But, Heath held her tightly, and all she could do was yelp and protest as his hard palm smacked her over and over until she thought she was going to burst into flames.

Realizing she was never going to get away from him, she finally slumped over his lap, weeping and sobbing in pain, the tears dropping to the barn floor in profusion.

Feeling Maddie's surrender, finally, Heath's anger began to cool, and he stopped spanking her. Her little bottom looked awfully deep red and his hand hurt from the effort. He realized how hard he must have been paddling her when he caught

himself breathing heavily, and he parted the sides of the filmy soft material to inspect his handiwork. Immediately, regret filled him when he saw the deep purple spots here and there and realized he must have bruised her soft outer skin. Gently he caressed her and tried to soothe the burning pain he knew she must be feeling.

"Sshhh, its all over now, Maddie." He picked her up and tried to draw her into his chest to comfort her as genuine concern replaced his frustration and ire.

Maddie was wildly angry. Angry at being humiliated in front of the whole town, even though they wouldn't have been able to actually see anything, except the fact that she was getting spanked. But knowing they knew what was happening and could hear her yelling and screaming was immensely embarrassing. Her backside was flaming and painful as she was brought up to sit on his lap and she leapt up with a gasp, clutching her cheeks through her dress.

Heath stood with her and tried to draw her into his embrace again, but she jerked away from him. She turned and tried to run from him, but again, Heath stopped her. "You're not running away from me this time, Maddie." He pulled her back into the circle of his arms and pushed her head beneath his chin, holding it there with one broad palm.

Maddie stood in his grasp, stiff, outraged and weeping. He wouldn't let her go, and she stopped fighting him, but her pride refused to allow him to comfort her.

Heath felt uneasiness as he thought about Harrison's words. If she gets up angry and unrepentant, you haven't spanked her long enough, or firmly enough. Maybe that had applied once before, but he knew it didn't apply this time. He had spanked her hard...very hard...enough to make bruises with just his hand, and she had surrendered

to him, but she was still angry with him, he could feel it in her refusal to become soft and pliant against him.

He thought about the talks he and Sam had had, and he realized it was time he went with his own instincts. Maddie needed to understand that this was coming from him, and not Sam.

"You deserved that, Maddie," he said quietly. "I was going to wait until we got home, but you pushed me too far."

"You mean you followed Sam's advice don't you?" Maddie asked bitterly.

"Look at me, Maddie."

Maddie looked up into Heath's serious brown eyes. "I'm sorry I spanked you when I was angry, I truly am. But, you did get exactly what you asked for, and I would do it again, if the circumstances were the same."

"Then you're not really sorry are you?" she mocked scornfully.

He looked at her thoughtfully for a moment. "Perhaps you are right. Maybe I'm not sorry for spanking you, just for getting so angry with you."

Maddie looked confused.

"Look, Maddie, I think there are some things you need to know. Come and walk with me, and we'll talk for a bit."

"I'm not in the mood to talk," she said huffily, reluctant to let go of her anger.

"Fine, you don't have to talk, you will listen instead." At her mulish look, he lifted her chin with his forefinger. "You can either walk with me, young lady, or you can go back over my knee and listen that way, which will it be?"

Her blue eyes snapping, Maddie grudgingly placed her hand in the crook of his elbow and allowed him to lead her out the other opening in the barn end and towards the shady trees along the

edges of the grass. As they walked, he began to talk.

"I have to admit, Maddie, I've been concerned for a long time about your attitude towards me when you don't get your way. Easter Sunday just happened to be the last straw."

She opened her mouth to protest hotly, but he placed his hand over it and shushed her.

"Ssh! I admit Sam did advise me and has continued to advise me now and then, but I really think it was only a matter of time before we came to this point, with or without Sam. I have asked his opinion a few times, but I make my own decisions, Maddie. You need to understand that and stop blaming Sam." He stopped walking and looked down into her stubborn face.

"You agreed to stay with me, Maddie, knowing I had decided on this course of action, yet you are trying your hardest to get out of it. What do I have to do to convince you that I'm serious? Should I take you to the woodshed and use a strap on you when we get home?"

"I hoped you would come to your senses and stop this nonsense, Heath," Maddie declared. "I agreed to stay with you because I love you, and I don't want to be without you, but I DO NOT like you spanking me!" She glared up at him, her blue eyes still wet with recent tears.

"Why did you marry me, Maddie?" Heath asked in exasperation. "Was it because you wanted someone you could boss around? Like Evelyn Grouse? Is that what you want me to do? Be like poor old Tom?"

"Of course not! But, that doesn't mean you have to carry it to the other extreme either."

"Well, Maddie, the way I see it, we are at a crossroads here, and we have some decisions to make." He looked down at her. "I love you, Maddie,

but I can see us ending up like Tom and Evelyn if I allow it. I don't want to live that way."

She started to say something, but Heath cut her off. "I want you to think about it, Maddie...think seriously about what you want, and I'll do some more thinking too. But, I've already made up my mind. I sure don't want to fight with you every time I have to spank you."

"But, that's just it, Heath," argued Maddie stubbornly. "You don't HAVE to spank me. That's all Sam's doing, making you think like that."

"NO! And get this through your head, Maddie Danvers...this is NOT Sam's doing. I'm spanking you because I think you need it, and I will continue to do so. The only question remaining, is...can you accept it? I'm going to give you some time to think about it. Take as long as you like. But when you are done, if you are going to stay with me, you will have to accept this in your heart...and apologize to Sam. I'm willing to wait for your decision, no matter how long it takes." He turned and walked away then, leaving Maddie with her mouth open at his ultimatum.

It was a quiet Maddie that accompanied her husband throughout the rest of the day. They watched Rosalee perform her tricks on Satan, and any other time, she would have been enthralled. However, today her mind was on the earlier conversation and the things Heath had told her.

Later that evening, she stood at the window of their bedroom, dressed only in her one-piece chemise and gazed unseeingly out at the sunset. They had bathed in the pool in solemn companionship and eaten their dinner, and all the time Maddie had been as quiet as a church mouse.

She had thought about all the things he had said and yet her stubborn will was hard to overcome. She had finally reached a point where she knew she had to give in, she just hadn't told Heath yet. She

was still accepting it in her own mind and hoping he would change his.

Maddie watched his beloved figure as he walked in from the barn, his shoulders drooping as if he were very sad, and, unexpectedly, her heart ached for him.

Suddenly, her whole being felt permeated with love for this man who was not forcing her, but allowing her freedom to make her own choices after declaring his own needs. It was more than a lot of men gave their women, and the tears welled up in her eyes with the joy she felt to have a man like Heath to love her, protect her and cherish her.

When the door to the bedroom cautiously opened, Maddie flew into Heath's arms. "I'm so sorry, darling! I've been such a witch to you."

Heath was delightfully surprised at the little handful that wrapped herself around his chest, but he locked her to him, leaning his head down to catch her muffled words.

"I love you, Heath, I love you so much...I don't want to ever live without you. Please, say you'll forgive me for causing you such anger and despair."

"Of course, honey, you know I forgive you." Heath hugged her close inhaling the scent of her freshly washed hair, a feeling of intense gladness and thankfulness sweeping over him. "I love you, Maddie, more than life itself," he whispered into the honey blonde waves. "I'll always love you, you can count on that."

Maddie laughed up at him, the sound music to his ears. He had been so afraid she might decide to leave him after all. It had weighed heavily on his mind all day, but he knew in his heart it had been the right thing to do. Exultantly, his firm mouth swooped down to capture her perfect pink lips, and he groaned against her sweetness as desire flicked hotly along his veins.

"I can't promise to like it when you spank me, Heath," she panted when he released her. "I'll never like it, but I accept your decision."

"Never?" teased Heath, picking her up in his strong arms and striding towards the bed with her.

"Well...almost never, anyway." She blushed as she remembered the previous night in the glade.

"That's all I ask for, honey." With that he lay her on the bed, careful of her sore bottom and quickly stripped to join her.

He sent a prayer of thanks heavenward as he began to strip the last vestige of clothing from Maddie's lovely body.

Thank you, Lord, for this woman in my life.

They came together in love, and although neither one knew it yet; a new life was born that night, soon to become another resident of Brocton, Kentucky.

