

Daniel:  
Braddocks, Book One

By  
Starla Kaye

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# Chapter One

*1878, Dryfork, Kansas*

Daniel Braddock looked awkwardly around the general store wondering what the hell he was doing here. He had a town to look after, wanted posters to go through. He didn't have time for such nonsense as hunting up a small gift for his bride arriving on the afternoon stage today. And he sure hated the idea of three of Dryfork's biggest gossipers watching him, curious what their sheriff was up to. Still, he couldn't seem to walk out the door empty handed.

"Can I help you, honey? You look plumb confused," Annabelle Henderson said cheerily, bustling toward him from behind the counter of Henderson's Mercantile. The white-haired, grandmotherly woman had treated he and his brothers like family ever since they had all drifted to town over the last few years.

He fingered some colorful ribbons on a nearby table. "Don't know exactly what I want is all."

She beamed, her round cheeks revealing dimples. "Getting something special for that bride of yours coming today?"

She scooted next to him, sorting through the ribbons and picking out a half dozen in various colors. "Blonde you said, right? Well, I'm sure she'll love any of these." Then she turned and led him to the counter. "We can't wait to lay our eyes on the young woman who finally captured your heart. We all thought for sure you'd be a bachelor until you went boots up one day."

The three women standing around a wooden barrel of crackers, clearly listening to every word Annabelle said, smiled at him, looking amused. He tipped the wide brim of his hat in greeting, felt heat creeping up his neck, and hurried after Annabelle. He didn't appreciate being the center of attention, at least not when it came to personal matters. Like not knowing what in blazes he was doing.

Noting the price of the ribbons on a piece of paper, Annabelle gave him a more serious look and whispered, "I'm glad she's coming, of course. But ever since you told me about the wire you got saying she was arriving today, traveling by herself... Well, my old heart has been pounding with worry. Young gal like that, coming so far, and alone. What were her parents thinking to let her leave without an escort?"

Daniel clenched his hands at his sides at the mention of the very sore subject. He lowered his voice and said, "Knowing her folks, they must have thought she *did* have one." He drew in a frustrated breath. "Jennie has something of a mind of her own. She's been spoiled all her life. Does what she pleases most times."

He studied the scarred wooden counter, feeling anger surging through him at the reminder of the wire he'd received two days ago. He'd barely slept a wink since, worrying over the many things that could happen to her as she traveled. His brothers, Ben and Caleb, hadn't helped any with their constantly checking on him, constantly telling him how foolish he'd been to marry such a headstrong female. What did they know about love? That it could come up all of a sudden and trap a man before he knew what he was doing. Neither of them was interested in

marriage, or so they claimed. And Adam... Well, Adam had been married and was widowed, but he was having his own woman troubles with the mayor's daughter chasing after him now. He kept out of Daniel's personal business. And Seth... Well, Seth was running around California now and didn't even know Daniel had married.

"Oh, my," Annabelle sighed and drew his attention. Her eyes danced with amusement. "It sounds like you're going to have your hands full with her."

"Reckon so." They had met six months ago when he'd reluctantly gone back East on family business. He'd never been so drawn to a woman. Jennie Gardner had stolen his heart almost from the second they'd been introduced at a party given by his parents. After a whirlwind courtship that surprised both families, they had gotten married a month later, just before he had to return to his job as sheriff of Dryfork, Kansas. She had tried to get him to stay there and they'd argued about it. He'd asked if she wanted out of the marriage, but she'd said no. He'd left her there with her parents, planning to get his ranch house ready for a wife, and planning to come back for her. If she didn't change her mind and decide to stay in Boston. She hadn't changed her mind. Nor had she waited for him there.

His thoughts shifted and without really meaning to, he said, "I got a letter yesterday, which she'd mailed over a week ago. Jennie claimed that she didn't want to be a bother to anyone, including an escort. And she saw no sense in my going all the way there and turning around to come back here. She said she was perfectly capable of getting herself to Dryfork."

*Perfectly capable of getting herself here. Of traveling halfway across the country alone.* Right after he hauled her home, he planned to take her over his knee. His little wife was going to get a firm lesson about being just plain foolish, about endangering herself, and about not worrying him into an early grave. Well, maybe he'd bury himself deep in her warm body first. He'd missed making love to her something awful. But she'd be sleeping on her stomach tonight that was for dang sure!

Annabelle reached out to gently touch his arm, startling him. She smiled in understanding. "You make sure you welcome Jennie to her new home good and proper before you let loose your anger, Daniel Braddock. She might have done something dangerous, but she loves you, dear. She wouldn't be doing this otherwise. I'm sure of it."

He gave a curt nod and took the ribbons, shoving them in his trouser pocket. "I know she does," he grumbled, hoping he'd spoken the truth. Hoping she wasn't just acting headstrong and coming here with the intention of changing his mind about going back to Boston. It wasn't going to happen. Not ever. "We're going to have a serious talk. A real serious one."

The older woman chuckled, reaching around to touch her ample bottom, her cheeks blushing. "My dear, departed Horatio would have warmed my backside but good for acting as foolish as your Jennie."

Daniel blinked; surprised that she would say such a thing to him, although he knew many men who spanked their wives. A good man understood how important it was to keep his woman in line. Especially out here in the West where that could also keep her safe. He gave Annabelle a crooked smile. "Believe me, my Jennie will be getting a *warm* welcome, Annabelle. In *all* ways."

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Jennie couldn't believe how happy and relieved she was to at last be with her husband. She'd missed him so very much. Of course, if he'd been reasonable and stayed in Boston to work

for either his father or her father, everything would have been perfect. But Daniel Braddock had proven to be not only someone she couldn't resist but also someone as equally stubborn as herself. She'd been pretty sure he'd stayed away so long because he'd thought she would give up on him, give up on their marriage. A Gardner was made of sterner stuff than that! *Braddock. You're a Braddock now.* Having not lived with her husband in all these months, she was still struggling with getting used to her new name.

She hadn't been the only one struggling to accept her new role. Her father might have strongly approved of Daniel's family, actually his parents, but he didn't approve of the fact that all five of the Braddock sons had settled in the West. He certainly didn't approve of his beloved daughter moving to the frontier. She kept telling him that she was sure in time Daniel would realize he—they—would be better off living in Boston. Finally she had gotten tired of the arguments on the matter of her marriage and decided to go to Daniel. She couldn't change his mind through their rarely sent letters. She needed to talk to him in person.

From the second she had made the decision to leave her parents' home in Boston, telling them she was traveling with an older woman escort—which, of course, she hadn't—she had worried about this trip. Maybe she'd been too impulsive. "Impulsive" really should be her middle name. But she wasn't a patient person. Now as she again thought about how tense Daniel had been when he'd met her at the stage depot, she was feeling more than a bit anxious. Her handsome, rough-edged husband had taken her into his strong arms for a kiss that was quite improper, one that made her toes curl. And then he'd marched her to a waiting buckboard to plant her roughly on the high seat.

As he drove up to the freshly whitewashed small house that was now—no, temporarily—her home, she worried her lower lip. He hadn't said a word the entire trip from town. After the way he'd all but thrown her satchel and trunk into the back of the wagon, she had decided it was wisest to leave him be for the time being. But the moment for that was gone. She didn't like the tension between them and knew it was time to end it.

She drew in an unsteady breath and called up her courage to face him. This would be an unpleasant discussion at best. "You..." She cleared her throat to get the words out. "You're going to spank me, aren't you?"

The very idea unnerved her. When they'd been courting, he'd once told her that he believed in discipline and she would receive it when he deemed it necessary. Her father had never raised more than his voice to her. She had no real idea what punishment was about, certainly not what a spanking was like. Still, she had told Daniel she loved him enough to accept the occasional punishment. But now that she actually might receive it, the idea made her more than a bit uneasy. A glance at his large callused hand holding the reins had her squirming on the hard seat. Maybe she shouldn't have mentioned it.

He pulled on the reins and stopped the buckboard in front of what passed for a yard. After a tense moment where mixed emotions crossed over his beard-stubbed face, he looked directly at her. He nodded. "Yes, I aim to do just that. Although you deserve something a good bit stronger."

Her stomach knotted and she swallowed hard. *Something stronger than a spanking? Oh dear!* "I won't fight you on this," she said in a trembling voice. This would be an awful way to begin their new life, but she could see how determined he was. And, admittedly, she had been headstrong in her decision. Even her father would be quite upset with her.

Then Daniel surprised her, saying, "I'm going to take you to bed first. I've been waiting a long time to have you beneath me again."

She blinked, heat spreading over her cheeks. Her woman's place felt tingly at his bold statement, moisture budded between her legs. It had been far too long since he'd shown her the wonders of lovemaking. "I want you, too." Yet she found herself protesting and not being able to meet his gaze, "But...but I would rather not be dreading a punishment all the while you're making love to me."

He was silent a few seconds before he released a tension-filled breath. "Reckon I can understand that."

He set the brake on the buckboard and hopped off the high seat, walking around to her side to help her down. As soon as her feet touched the ground, he said, "You go on into the house while I haul in your trunk and satchel. Have a quick look around. Soon as I get the horses taken care of... Well, I'll come take care of that spanking chore."

Jennie looked around the house after Daniel set down her trunk and hurried to leave again. She didn't really see anything. Her thoughts were focused on what her husband would soon do to her. *A spanking! Good heavens!* She really didn't want to start off her new life with Daniel in such a way. But she loved him. She had loved him since the moment he'd asked her to dance at his parents' ball. He'd been so handsome in his fine suit. Even in his everyday trousers and shirt with a badge on it—which she was sure he'd worn to irritate both his father and hers, he took her breath away. His combination of society honed manners and Western gruffness had been irresistible. He was so different from the other men who'd courted her. Her father had warned her that with his life experiences and being nine years older than her that they wouldn't be a good match. But she was certain her father was wrong. No other man would challenge her as he would, and she very much liked a good challenge. And she looked forward to sharing her life with him, sharing the ups and downs of married life, and sharing the good and the bad.

She stood by the small fireplace and shivered even though it was mid June and quite warm outside. This would definitely qualify as one of the "bad" moments. *Spanked. For the first time in her life.* She had traveled for many long days to get here and now this!

Her father had nearly burned her ears many a time while growing up. But he'd never so much as swatted her bottom once. Many of her friends experienced discipline for acts of disobedience. In truth, her best friend had quite often felt the palm of her father's hand on her bottom. Jennie had been strangely curious about what being spanked would feel like...and now she would find out. Now she didn't feel at all curious, more wary. Maybe she should refuse after all. She seriously doubted Daniel would do something she was really opposed to, although it might be hard on their growing relationship.

He walked in the door, his heavy footsteps making her heart pound. She noted the strain in his expression and in his voice as he stated, "Guess we'd best get to it."

Grimly, he strode over to the well-worn table by the window and pulled out one of the straight-backed chairs. Her stomach roiled as he sat down and patted his knee.

"Come here, Jennie Braddock. You've earned yourself a real seat warming."

*No, no, no.* Yet she forced her feet to walk across the small space. She did *not* want to do this, wasn't even sure *how* this was done. She stopped awkwardly in front of him. Her face felt on fire in embarrassment and he hadn't even started. "I-I don't know what to do," she nervously admitted.

That took him back for an instant before he frowned. "You'll learn fast enough." He took hold of her arm and moved her to his right side. "First, you stretch across my lap."

She hesitated, unable to make herself do it.

With a heavy sigh, he tugged her down until she slid over his hard thighs, until her hands flattened on the wood floor. Her bottom was perched high on his right leg. The blood seemed to rush to her face. She didn't like this vulnerable, improper position and started to squirm.

To her dismay, he swatted her bottom, although she barely felt it through the many layers of the long skirt of her traveling dress and curtain drawers. Still, she squawked at the indignity and settled down.

"Wise choice, darlin'." He pulled her skirt up and over her back.

"What...what are you doing?" she questioned in shock, arching backward, glowering at him. Her face flamed.

"Baring your butt."

"*Baring my butt!*" she gasped, repeating his words, mortified. "No, no, no."

He shot her a fierce look and stilled. "You are my wife, my responsibility. It's my duty to punish you when you've done wrong." He held her gaze. "When you've unnecessarily endangered yourself and about scared the hell out of me."

She blinked back tears and stopped squirming, guilt weighing heavily on her.

Immediately he went back to his preparations. He found the slit in the drawers and pushed the fabric aside. She whimpered miserably.

Smack! He held her in place with his left arm and sent a brisk swat to her quivering buttocks. "You're going to lie still and get a good spanking or I'll—"

She craned her head back to gape at him. "Lie still? Good spanking? I don't want a 'good' or any other kind of spanking." So why wasn't she forcing her way off his lap?

He set his hand right on the middle of her bare bottom. "You agreed to this."

"I've changed my mind," she stated in a rush. But she did remember their talks before they'd gotten married and, after some convincing, she *had* agreed to accepting his discipline.

His eyes had darkened as he looked at her partially bare bottom. His breathing was rougher. She recognized the signs from the last time they'd made love. He wanted her. Yet he was going to do this awful thing to her bottom, spank it.

He smoothed his hand over her flesh and she trembled all over. "Changed your mind about being married to me?"

*Had she?* "No! I didn't say that."

"Then we're going to do this, darlin'. You're going to stay there and take this well-earned butt burning." His voice turned husky and he drew his fingers between her legs, between her pulsing lower lips, touching the small bud that jerked with interest. "Then we'll..."

She might not be favor of getting her bottom burned, but she was certainly in favor of the other. "Fine. Do what you feel is necessary." She just wanted this ordeal over with, and then she wanted...

Smack! A hard slap against her tender flesh forced aside the more pleasurable thoughts. "Yeouch!"

He ignored her screech and swatted her bottom a quick half dozen times. "It's a real pity to have to mar this creamy ass. But you did something very dangerous and you know it."

She jerked forward with each swat, sucking in a breath. This really wasn't enjoyable. She was really glad that her father hadn't been a spanking parent. "Are we done now? I understand. Truly I do," she said, hoping to end this before it got worse.

Unbelievably, he chuckled. "Done? No, we've got a good ways to go." He tucked her closer and held her tighter. "You'd best stop your squirming around and just accept your due."



“I’m trying, I’m trying.” She flattened her hands on the floor again, squeezed her tear-filled eyes shut, and tried not to think about the embarrassing position she was in or what intimate parts of her he was seeing.

Clearly determined to get on with it, he set about spanking her steadily, slowly at first and not too hard. A fire began anyway. *Think about more pleasant matters. About the two of them moving back to Boston. About dancing with him at balls and eating out and...*

The tempo sped up. His hand seemed to grow in size and covered more of her poor bottom, landing harder and harder. She couldn’t think of pleasant matters. She couldn’t lie still either. Or remain quiet. “Stop! Oh, stop! It hurts! It hurts!”

“I’m not stopping until we’re real clear about what is acceptable behavior and what isn’t. Going against me *isn’t*.” He swatted her at least a dozen times, each swat harder than the last.

“All right! I understand!” she cried out, curling her legs up and then kicking them back out. Tears streamed down her cheeks.

His pace slowed a bit, but he didn’t stop. Nor did he lessen the force of the smacks. “You caused me nothing but sleepless nights ever since I got that wire. No doubt your folks are worried, too.” He cursed, tensed even more. “Even if you *supposedly* left with a chaperone.”

He tugged her closer again and blasted her bottom six times.

She wriggled for all she was worth and screeched in pain. “I...I...”

“You lied to them.”

Sniffling, her bottom on fire, she couldn’t deny what he’d said.

“You took a foolish risk with your life. You will never, ever do so again. Do you understand me?” His hard hand landed another six times for emphasis.

“Yes! Oh, yes!” she yelped out. Pain, so much pain throbbed in her buttocks. “I’m sorryyy.”

He was quiet a few seconds, his hand settled on her aching bottom. Then he asked curtly, “Did you come here to try and convince me to go back to Boston?”

“Yes,” she gasped and then felt him tense. Even with all the pain she was suffering, she knew she’d said the wrong thing.

“I’m not going, but *you are*. First stage headed back east.” Now his tone was sad, laden with disappointment.

He wanted to be rid of her, already. That hurt, even more than the awful spanking. Blinking back tears, she looked over her shoulder at him. Her heart wrenched at his resigned expression. “*No*. I’m not leaving,” she said as boldly as she could. At least not now. She wasn’t ready to give up on Boston yet, or on him.

He scowled. “If you’re staying, then I’m going to continue with the spanking. You need to understand that when I say ‘no’ I mean it. I won’t have you trying to trick me.”

*Continue with the spanking? Oh heavens!* But if she didn’t accept it... She lowered her head and attempted to settle into place again. She’d married a very stubborn man. “I...I’m staying,” she repeated.

She felt him hesitate, hoped he was changing his mind about spanking her more.

Then his hand rose and fell once more, not harder, but not softer either. “You aren’t going to sit comfortably for at least a day, darlin’. And you *are* going to recall this lesson every time you even think about going against me.”

She cried her misery until she lost her voice. She jerked and kicked and squirmed until finally she just lie limply over his lap. It seemed like he spanked her forever, but finally he stopped. She barely noticed as she was sobbing so hard.

Then he carefully pulled the drawer curtains back into place and shifted her skirt down as well. "You can get up now."

It took her a few seconds to calm down enough to awkwardly crawl off his lap. Every movement made the fabric rub against her flaming bottom and she sucked in shaky breaths. Her hands shot around to cover her bottom and she could feel the heat through the layers of fabric. For some reason she began shifting from foot to foot, gently rubbing her bottom. It didn't help. It hurt. A lot.

He watched her without the least look of 'I'm sorry I had to do that.' After a minute he said, "I'm hoping I don't have to turn you over my knee again for a good long spell, Jennie Braddock."

She wanted to stand still, to stop rubbing, but couldn't do either one. She sniffled and said, "I don't like spankings."

The irritating man grinned crookedly. "They're not meant to be enjoyed. At least not spankings I give."

Jennie saw tenderness creeping into his eyes and she wanted to be held by him, be comforted, more. But she was a little uncertain she could stand being intimate with him just yet. Still, she asked quietly, "Are you going to make love to me tonight? Maybe after you've stopped being so mad at me."

He stood and hugged her gently, resting his chin on the top of her head. His hands smoothed over her back. "My mad ended with that last hard swat." He leaned back to look at her. "I'm thinking you might want to ride me this time. It won't be quite so hard on your sore butt."

She blinked at him, surprised and intrigued. *Ride him?* She'd read about such things in a scandalous book once, a book she'd gotten lectured by her father for reading when he'd found it. "Yes, I'd like to try that."

He grinned and she noticed how his thick shaft shoved at her stomach with them standing so close. Then his expression turned serious again, determined. "First, though, you need to spend some time in the corner." He motioned toward the corner by the fireplace.

"Corner?" She remembered her friend mentioning that sometimes her father made her stand with her nose in the corner of her bedroom. Her friend hadn't liked it, but it was usually either do it or get another spanking. "Why?" she asked cautiously, her stomach fluttering. She didn't want another spanking, nor did the idea of standing in a corner appeal to her.

His hands shifted down to cover her still throbbing bottom. "It's part of being punished." He released her and then turned her toward the corner, nudging her toward it. "After every walloping I give you, you'll spend fifteen minutes or so in the corner. It'll give you time to think over why you got your butt burned."

"But..." She tried to resist, but not very much.

He settled her in the corner, pushing her forward until her nose touched the wall. She winced as the fabrics tightened over her aching buttocks and started to reach back.

He stopped her hands and moved them in front of her. "No. No more trying to rub away the pain. Stand here and think about how you're not going to disobey me again. Think about how you'll go over my knee for another spanking if you do."

"Can I think about making love to you?" she asked in a whisper.

"I'm counting on that." He sighed and stepped away.

Daniel looked at his very proud, very spoiled wife standing obediently in the corner where he'd put her. He really hadn't considered doing such a thing. But it had occurred to him as

he'd roasted her butt that she was going to need more than a hot backside for him to get through to her sometimes. If she had to withstand a few embarrassing minutes in the corner after being punished, he thought maybe it would help. Anyway, he was going to give it a try.

He found himself beginning to breathe in deep, shuddery breaths, beginning to focus all too much on that sweet, heart-shaped bottom thrust out at him. His trousers were growing mighty uncomfortable. If he didn't do something to distract him, he would be going to her and ripping that fancy traveling dress off her. He would be bending her over that table and...

"Stay put until I come for you," he ordered huskily and strode over by the door to get her trunk.

He toted it to the small bedroom and wondered where in the hell she was going to put her clothes. Guess he needed to order one of those wardrobe cabinets he'd seen in the mercantile's catalogue. Then he remembered Jennie telling him she was having three more trunks shipped. Damn, she had a lot of clothes. But then she came from a wealthy Eastern family—just as he did. He'd once had far more clothes than he needed. Not anymore. He'd given up all of that and shed his fine, fancy ways, too. Could Jennie do the same? He still held serious doubts about their marriage. But she would have to accept him and this way of life or go back to live with her parents. He could compromise on a lot of things, but going back to live under his father's thumb—or *her* father's thumb—wasn't one of them.

Setting the trunk down by the row of six pegs that held his clothes, he sighed. His life was sure going to take a drastic change now that she had arrived. Was he already too set in his ways? He had routines of when he watched over the town, of when he worked his small ranch, and of when he spent time with his brothers. How would Jennie fit into it all?

He turned and spotted her still standing there; although she was now reaching back to gently rub at her tender bottom. His rod hardened even more. His hands ached to smooth all over that pinkened flesh, to smooth over other parts of her body. Well, he planned to enjoy her while she was here.

"All right, you can step out of the corner now." He knew it hadn't been more than a few minutes, but he didn't think he could last any longer without driving deep inside her. He began unbuckling his belt, undoing his trousers. "I can't wait until later, until your bottom has more time to recover. I need you. Now."

She straightened and turned slowly to face him. Her gaze landed on his opened trousers and how he held his rock hard cock in one hand. Her cheeks grew pink, but she smiled and hurried toward him.

"It's even bigger than I remembered," she said breathlessly, reaching to touch him. "Can I? Can I touch it?"

He allowed just a second of curiously touching him and then stepped back. "Another time, darlin'. I've been needing you for far too long."

She looked disappointed for an instant, then started to fight with the buttons on her close-fitting bodice. He didn't have the patience for removing the many clothes she had on. Instead he put his hand in the waistband of her long skirt and tugged. A button flew across the room, then another and another. After that the yards of fabric shimmied to the floor at her feet and she stood there in fancy top, drawers, stockings, and shoes.

"Now. Right damn now." He was dying, desperate.

"That's something we definitely agree on, husband." She surprised him by shoving down his trousers until they bunched around his knees. An instant later she pushed him back to the bed, and then shoved him until he fell backward on to the quilt top.

He saw the gleam of determination in her blue eyes and scooted further onto the bed, waiting, curious about what his little wife was going to do.

She crawled onto the feather mattress, her legs on each side of his, her gaze now focused on her goal. She rose up over the cock he held and slid down on him with a groan of delight. But when her sore bottom brushed against him, she sucked in a breath and frowned at him.

He could barely think straight, barely keep from driving upward. But her frown amused him and he said, "I'm not apologizing. You got your butt spanked and that's that."

She used her inner muscles to squeeze him until he groaned. Then she smiled in satisfaction. "I don't like getting spanked, husband. Not at all." She squeezed him again and trembled. "But I sure like *this*."

After that she rode him like she'd been doing it all her life. Neither of them lasted long and they cried out in release at nearly the same moment. Daniel wasn't sure he could ever move again and he sure didn't want her moving away from him. He encouraged her to stretch over him and then he held her tightly, fingering the long mass of hair that had fallen free during her wild ride.

Cupping the buttocks he'd spanked, he heard her soft wince, pleased when she didn't protest. She'd taken his punishment, accepted his frantic need for her, but he still worried about their future. "I love you, my Jennie."

"I love you, too," she whispered against him, her breathing becoming heavy. She didn't even seem aware that he was still inside her, that his shaft was growing again.

He tried to settle down, think about something besides waking her and taking her once more. She was tired from her trip. Probably even more tired from all that sobbing she'd done when he'd spanked her. He'd let her rest for now. It wasn't a hardship holding her to him.

But it would be a hardship letting her go should she not accept his determination to stay here in Dryfork. He couldn't go back to Boston to live, even if it meant losing his wife. Which he sure as hell hoped he wouldn't.