

Harvest Moon
Rusty Bucket, Book Two

By

Joannie Kay

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Chapter One

Rusty Bucket, Texas
October 20, 1874

Rachel Waterford Underwood stomped into the hotel that she owned with her husband, former Texas Ranger Lance Underwood. She looked at her handsome, dark-haired husband and said, “I *hate* that woman!”

“Rachel, honey, you do not hate Callie Harris,” Lance said calmly.

“Oh, yes, but I do hate Callie Harris! She is manipulating Papa. He is having supper with her again tonight. ‘Callie makes the best pie, Rachel Marie,’” Rachel imitated her father’s deep voice. “I hate her! I feel like slapping her down and pulling out all the hair on her head!”

“You are not used to sharing your father, honey. You’re jealous,” Lance told her.

“I am not! I just don’t like that woman getting her claws into my father! She is shopping for a husband, and Papa is an educated man. She would enjoy being married to the town’s doctor, the witch! If she truly loved him, I wouldn’t care, but I simply refuse to stand by and watch her hurt Papa.”

“Rachel, that is enough. You need to calm down right now.”

“Calm down? How am I supposed to do that? She is conniving and conspiring, and Papa is falling for it!”

“You need to stop worrying about this, young lady. Your father is a grown man, and she isn’t leading him anywhere he isn’t willing to be led.”

“What would you know? You’re just a man!” She stomped her foot and realized too late that she’d crossed a line with her husband. His dark eyes were snapping with disapproval. “I need to go and start our supper. Have you been very busy today?” she asked, doing her best to change the subject.

“It’s not going to work, young lady. You go on into our bedroom and take off your drawers, pull up your shirts and lie over the side of the bed. I want to see a bared bottom waiting for a spanking when I come to our room. You might use the time to think about how you would have felt if your father threw a fit over me seeing you. Now go, and Rachel, don’t take it in your head to leave our home or I will come after you and tan you all the way back here.” He gave her a hard smack on her bottom to speed her on her way.

It was only a couple of minutes later that Clay walked into the hotel and said hello. “Have you seen my little wife, Lance?”

“No, I haven’t.”

“I will be so glad when she isn’t pregnant. She is moody and throwing tantrums all the time. We still have three months to go, and what she needs is a damned good spanking, but I don’t want to hurt the baby.”

“Have you talked to Doc about it?” Lance asked.

“Not yet. She promised to feed me liver and onions for a month if I did.” He shook his head again. “The woman needs a hand to her backside. She would calm right down if I set her fanny on fire.”

“I understand what you are saying, man. My lady is all upset because her father is keeping company with Callie Harris.”

“So I’ve heard. Mary doesn’t like Callie Harris either. She thinks the woman is a witch and she is casting a spell on Doc.”

“Did I hear my name?” Caleb walked into the hotel, a frown on his face.

“Sir, we have a medical question for you,” Lance said. “Is it safe to spank a pregnant woman?”

Caleb looked at Lance, and then asked, “I know Mary is pregnant, but are you telling me my daughter is pregnant too?”

“If she is, she hasn’t told me. I was asking for Clay because Mary threatened to feed him liver and onions for a month if he asked you.”

“I see,” Doc said with a chuckle. “Well, I wouldn’t condone being rough with her, Clay. I wouldn’t force her down over anything hard where she is going to push hard against the child. A few swats while she is standing up would probably be all right, but not too harsh. You wouldn’t want to hit her so hard that she stumbled and fell forward. I truly think that the easiest way to punish a pregnant woman is to confine them to home for a few days, or pull out a chair and have them sit for two or three hours with nothing to do but think on their actions. Those might seem strange for an adult, but spanking just isn’t that good emotionally for a pregnant woman. If you are pulling her over your knee, she’s going to panic and fear for the baby. Her mind won’t be on what you want it to be on. Does that make sense?”

“Yes, sir, it does,” Clay answered. “You haven’t seen Mary, have you?”

“Yes, I have. She was in the general store when I stopped there a few minutes ago.”

“Good. I’m going to go and find her.” Clay took off running.

Doc looked at Clay and asked, “What did Mary do that has him all wound up?”

“He didn’t say, but he is aggravated with her.”

“Speaking of aggravated, I need a word with that fiery-tempered daughter of mine. Is she home?”

“She’s home, sir, but she wouldn’t want you to come in right now. She started in again about Callie Harris and I sent her to our bedroom with orders to prepare for a spanking.”

“She certainly has earned one today. She told Callie to leave me alone; just as if I was a child too young to decide for myself who I see!” Caleb was outraged. “Callie’s feelings were hurt. She’s tried everything to be nice to Rachel, but Rachel simply doesn’t like her.”

“She’s jealous. She’s had you all to herself for quite a while, and she doesn’t want to share you with another woman.”

“I need the companionship of a woman my own age. I will still love and want Rachel in my life, but Callie makes me feel young again. My daughter is about to make me cross a line and spank her myself!” With those words, Caleb turned and walked out of the hotel.

Two women came into the hotel and asked for a room, and Lance smiled to make them feel welcome and at ease. “Young man, is this a safe establishment?” the older woman asked in a whisper.

“I do my very best to keep it safe, ma’am. This is a family friendly hotel, and I don’t permit drunkenness, roughhousing or fighting. I don’t run a bar, but we do serve wines with our meals if someone wishes that beverage. I want females to feel safe when they stay here, and if, for any reason you aren’t comfortable, call out for me, and I will handle the situation.”

“Mama worries too much. I could tell right away that we would love staying here, Mr.—”

“Underwood. Lance Underwood, and my wife’s name is Rachel. We will do our very best to make your stay pleasant and safe. Will you be in town long?”

“That depends. We are looking for someone.”

“If you need my help, let me know. I’m good at finding people.” He grabbed a room key and walked them to their room.

“This is very nice, Mr. Underwood,” the older woman said with a genuine smile. “I can see the feminine touch in the room, and it is very nice to have a room with two beds. So often there is just one bed, and we cannot afford two rooms,” she admitted, her cheeks pink.

“In my former job I sometimes traveled with others, Mrs. Dennison, and I noticed a shortage of two bed rooms. When Rachel and I purchased this place almost four months ago, I set about making this hotel a place I would like to stay.”

“What did you do before, Mr. Underwood?” Iris Dennison asked curiously.

“I was a Texas Ranger, ma’am. When Rachel and I married, I wanted to settle down and stay home with her. The opportunity to buy this hotel was there, and I knew it was a good fit for us. Rachel is a nurse and works with her father, and she also helps out here.”

“I look forward to meeting her, Mr. Underwood.”

“Is there anything else you need right now?” he asked.

“I think everything is just fine; what about you, Mama?” Iris asked.

“I can’t think of a thing except a nap, and I can do that without a thing extra.” Dorothy smiled.

“I have a bell on the desk; ring it loudly if I am not in the lobby. I’m going to take a short break right now.”

“And I am going to take a nap,” Dorothy said. “Iris, you may knit or read if you don’t wish to take a nap before supper.”

“Yes, Mama,” Iris replied, but she winked in shared humor with Lance at her mother treating her like a little girl. “We will see you later, Mr. Underwood. Thank you for your reassurances; I would truly hate to have to shoot someone.”

“Iris, do not tell people you have a revolver!” Dorothy hissed. “We are safer if no one knows.”

“Do you know how to use a gun, Miss Dennison? You could get seriously hurt by mishandling a weapon.”

“I learned to shoot from my daddy, and please, may we dispense with the formality? I prefer Iris.”

“Iris, I am Lance,” he told her with a smile. “I will leave you to get some rest now.” Lance went downstairs and put the sign on the desk telling folks to ring the bell if they needed assistance. He then went through the door that led into their apartment. Rachel had somehow managed to make their parlor homey, comfortable, and elegant at the same time. Lance felt at home the moment he walked through the door. They had a nice kitchen with a large table, and it was wonderful to be able to entertain guests. The rest of their apartment was devoted to three bedrooms. They were not large, but they were plenty large enough.

He went to their bedroom and found his tiny wife lying on their bed, her drawers off, and her skirts pulled up to bare her perfect bottom. Rachel was a very beautiful woman, and in his opinion, her backside was her best feature. He just wished she would stay out of trouble long enough that he could give her a playful spanking. He knew she would enjoy it, if he didn’t have to give her the real kind so often.

“Miss Rachel, did you do any thinking?”

“Yes. There was no reason for Papa to hate you; but I have never liked Callie Harris. I tell you, she is evil! She thinks Papa has a lot of money, which he doesn’t. Spanking me is not going to make me like her,” Rachel warned.

“We’ll see about that,” Lance answered, taking a seat beside her on the bed and giving her vulnerable right cheek a sound spank. Rachel cried out. “Your behavior toward Callie is upsetting and hurting your father.” Lance gave her another firm spank, this time on her left cheek. “He told me to tell you that he is seriously considering spanking you himself.”

“He won’t do that!” she replied, but her husband certainly had no trouble smacking her fanny! His large hand gave her two more spanks, one on each cheek, and she was already in terrible pain. Her skin was very sensitive and it didn’t take much to set her on fire. “Please stop, Lance. I will apologize to Papa for embarrassing him. I am already hurting so much I can’t stand it! My bottom is on fire; you spank too hard,” she complained.

“Don’t tell me how to spank you, wife. It is my decision and mine alone as to how I discipline you.”

“You don’t understand, Lance! You spank so hard that all I can think about is trying to get away from you. It hurts so much that I can’t think. I know you don’t realize that you are harming me, but you are. Truly. Please, I didn’t murder someone, or steal something. I feel that you are punishing me enough that it is as though I really did something majorly wrong and life threatening, like take a shot at Callie, which I did not, and which I am not planning to do. It is too overwhelming.” Rachel attempted to explain.

“You expect me to spank you like a five-year-old?” he asked, giving her a much lighter spank.

“At least I could think about what you are saying to me. I’m not trying to be difficult, but look at my bottom. Can you see the red welts from just five spanks? It feels much too harsh, darling. I know I embarrassed Papa, and I probably deserved a bit of punishment, but not so harsh I can’t handle the pain.”

Lance had heard these arguments before, but Rachel was already crying and he’d only spanked her five times! That wasn’t a long spanking, but her skin looked scalded where he’d spanked her. Perhaps he *was* spanking too hard; maybe he *was* overwhelming her with pain. He decided to try a different approach. He scooted her around and lifted her, placing her bottom over his left thigh, while her upper body remained on the bed. “There will be no kicking, Rachel. You will lie right here and take the rest of this spanking. If you kick your leg even one time, you will get ten extras after this spanking is over. Do you understand?”

“Yes, but I can’t help kicking!” she wailed in distress.

“You can help it,” he said firmly, and swatted her left thigh. She didn’t kick. “See?” You can do this, wife. Show me you are truly sorry for embarrassing your father, and then we’ll talk about stomping your foot like a naughty little girl.”

Rachel still felt the spanking, and it did sting, but it wasn’t like before when she felt that she would die from the horrible pain. “I’m sorry, honey. Please? I’ll tell Papa so. I need to act like an adult!”

“Yes, you do,” Lance agreed. “Your father is lonely for the company of a woman his own age, and you need to silence your complaints as of right now.”

“Yes, sir,” she meekly agreed.

“Very well. Why did you stomp your foot when I was trying to talk to you?”

“Because I was frustrated, and I didn’t know how to express myself. I know you hate that, and I am sorry. I’m working on it, honey.”

“Get up and bring me your hairbrush. You’re going to get ten to your sit spots this time, and each time I have to punish you for doing this, the number will increase by five.” He helped her rise, and watched as she went as slowly as possible toward her vanity. “Don’t take all day, wife.”

“This is embarrassing, Lance!” she complained.

“Yes, I know. Is it as embarrassing as the scene you made with Callie in front of your father?”

“I get the message,” she whispered, picking up her hairbrush and returning to him. When he held out his hand, she barely resisted the urge to slap his hand with the brush. It would only make things even more unpleasant for her, she finally reasoned, and simply put the brush in Lance’s outstretched hand. He motioned for her to get back in place, and she reluctantly did it. She didn’t want to make the spanking worse, and now he was using her wooden hairbrush! He’d done that before, and it hurt so much she was sobbing by the third spank.

Lance decided to be gentle and scold his feisty wife. “I want you to repeat, ‘Stomping my foot is childish’ each time this hairbrush lands on your sit spots. If you don’t say it, the spansks won’t count until you do.”

“Honey, no! That is too embarrassing!” she complained, and the hairbrush landed for the first time. “Damn it, Lance! Not fair! I want to discuss this with you! Ow!” The brush landed again, in the same spot, and it was a lot harder this time. The third time was even worse, and tears filled her eyes. “Very well then! Stomping my foot is childish.” He immediately spanked her other side, and the spank was gentle. Rachel wasn’t stupid. She promptly said, “Stomping my foot is childish.”

Lance smiled. Perhaps this was the easiest way to punish his little redhead. He returned to the first spot, which was already very red, and gave her a spank that was gentle. She said what she was supposed to say, and she cooperated throughout the rest of the spanking. He gave her the last of the spansks, and she said, “Stomping my foot is childish. I’m sorry, honey,” she added without being prompted, and he was sure he was on the right page now.

“Good girl,” he praised her, giving her bare bottom a pat and then helping her up. To his surprise, she threw her arms around him and hugged him tightly.

“Thank you for listening to me, darling. I don’t want to be afraid of you, and it was all I could do to lie here and wait for a spanking. You paid attention to what I said, and I love you for it. I will try harder not to upset Papa.”

“You do feel punished?” he asked her.

“Yes, my love, I do. I feel different this time. I know I did wrong, and I know how you feel, and how I made Papa feel. I need to behave, and I will try.”

“Now that makes me real proud of you, Mrs. Underwood.” He leaned down and kissed her, and he was pleased when she kissed him back. It took all of one second for him to harden and she reached down to touch him.

“I think spanking me makes you horny!” she teased.