

# Christmas at the Ranch

By

Misty Malone

©2015 by Blushing Books® and Misty Malone

All rights reserved.

No part of the book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by Blushing Books®,  
a subsidiary of

ABCD Graphics and Design  
977 Seminole Trail #233  
Charlottesville, VA 22901

The trademark Blushing Books®  
is registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Malone, Misty  
Christmas at the Ranch

eBook ISBN: 978-1-68259-183-3  
Cover Design by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book is intended for *adults only*. Spanking and other sexual activities represented in this book are fantasies only, intended for adults. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the Author's advocating any non-consensual spanking activity or the spanking of minors.

## **Table of Contents:**

Chapter One .....	5
Chapter Two .....	13
Chapter Three .....	21
Chapter Four .....	29
Chapter Five .....	37
Chapter Six .....	44
Chapter Seven.....	51
Chapter Eight.....	58
Chapter Nine.....	66
Chapter Ten .....	73
Chapter Eleven.....	80
Chapter Twelve.....	87
About Misty Malone .....	95
Ebook Offer .....	96
Blushing Books Newsletter .....	98
About Blushing Books .....	99

# Chapter One

"Time for lunch," Wyatt Granger growled. He and his ranch foreman, Bo Hamilton, had been working on his combine all morning trying to get it repaired, and it was better, but still not chopping the corn quite as cleanly as he'd like.

"I agree," Bo mumbled as he shut the chopping mechanism back off. "I think we're going to have to take that whole unit apart and adjust the tension. We may as well sharpen the blade, too, while we have it off."

"Yeah, I think you're right. I should have listened to you in the first place." He chuckled a bit. "You'd think by now I'd learn to listen to my foreman."

Bo laughed as well. "That's why you pay me the big bucks."

"I think the weather man was right when they said we'd have rain most of the day today," Wyatt said, glancing at the sky. "Since this is better, usable in case the weather allows us to get back in the field tomorrow, this might be a good time for us to have a talk. I have something I need to run by you."

Bo glanced over at his boss, the owner of The Winding Waters ranch. "Something wrong?"

"No, but we do need to talk. We'll talk over lunch, but if we're not done talking by the time we're done eating, we can move to the office and keep talking."

Bo stopped to study his boss a moment. "Whatever it is, it must be important."

"It is. Let's go eat, and I'll explain."

Maria, Wyatt's cook and housekeeper, saw them running from the repair shop to the barn, dodging raindrops. She figured they'd go through the barn, and make another run for it into the house. She watched and held the door open for them when they got about to the house.

"Thanks, Maria," Wyatt said as they ran past her and into the house. "It is really putting the rain down."

"You boys go clean up and dry off. I'll have your lunch on the table when you get back."

Fifteen minutes later the men had full plates in front of them, and Bo turned to his boss. "Okay, what's going on?"

"Well, I know you talked about buying the old Simpson ranch."

Bo nodded. "I'm torn. I really like being the foreman here, but since Alicia and I are married now, I feel I need to think about buying something of our own."

"I understand," Wyatt assured him. "I understand even more now that Kayla has agreed to marry me."

"Thank you."

"I understand why you feel that way. I just don't think the Simpson place is the right place for you."

"I'm not completely sold on it, either. That's why I'm still just thinking about it. Alicia's business is doing really well, and that would be further for her to drive every day. I hate to see her driving that far five days a week. It's also smaller than I'd like. The problem is there aren't a lot of ranches out there on the market."

"Very true, but I may be able to help you."

"How?"

"The Babbling Brook is for sale to the right person."

"The Babbling Brook? Get out of here. That's Kayla's family, the next ranch down from here. Why would they sell it?"

"Because she doesn't want it."

Bo looked at Wyatt with narrowed eyes. "Explain."

"Her parents want to retire and travel. They have family overseas they haven't seen in over ten years, and several out on the east coast. They offered the ranch to Kayla, but she doesn't want it. She insists she'd rather we live here on this ranch once we're married. She said she would rather they sell it. They say the ranch or the money from selling it will eventually be hers, so they're okay with whatever she wants to do."

"Eventually I would love to have a ranch that nice, but there's no way I could afford it now. I have some money in a trust account from my grandfather I plan on using for a down payment on a ranch, but it isn't enough for a down payment on a ranch that nice, or big. I have enough saved for working capital to get me through the first year, but it would have to be on a smaller ranch."

"You're saying that before you even know how much they're asking, Bo."

"I know how much they're asking for the Simpson ranch, and after checking around, that's not out of line. The Babbling Brook is twice the ranch the Simpson ranch is, easily. It may be much bigger than that, even. I'm guessing when I say twice as big."

"Let me explain what the price would be. It's kind of complicated."

"Complicated?"

"Kayla's parents don't need to rely on the money from the sale of the ranch for their income when they retire. She inherited money from her parents that will be more than sufficient. Therefore, they wanted to give the ranch to their only child, Kayla. But they listened carefully to what she was saying, and they understand that she wants to live here when we're married. They also heard her when she said you are looking to buy a ranch of your own since you and Kayla's best friend are married."

Bo nodded. "Her parents are very nice, very intelligent people, and I understand what you're saying when you say they heard what she was saying. They understand her thoughts?"

"Exactly. They get that she wants to come here to live, and they also know she understands completely why you and Alicia want a place of your own someday, but she hates to see you two leave. Her parents also heard her when she said I have mixed feelings about you leaving, as well. We've become more than owner and foreman. You're a very good friend of mine, so that part of me wants you to find a ranch of your own and hopes you do well. But the other part of me hates to see you leave, for two reasons. We're friends and I like having you here."

"Thank you. I hate to leave for the same reason."

"I understand. But there's another reason I hate to see you leave. When you came here, I'll be the first to admit this ranch was in bad shape. And that was because of me. I didn't know anything about running a ranch, although I pretended I did. You've turned it around, and it's now thriving. For that reason, I hate to see you leave, and I'm worried about my ranch."

"You've learned a lot over the last year, Wyatt, and so has Brooks. I think he'd make a good foreman."

"I agree, Brooks and I have both learned a lot over the last year, working with you, but I'm not sure either of us has learned enough to keep the ranch running like it has been. But

Kayla's parents heard her when she echoed my concern about you leaving, and they've come up with a proposal."

"A proposal?"

"Yes. You see, Kayla's happiness is the most important aspect of this whole thing to them, and they came up with what they think will give her that happiness. They explained it to us a couple days ago. She's ecstatic, she loves the idea, but ironically, even though it's for her happiness, it's not her choice."

"It's your choice?"

"No, my friend, it's yours. Well, yours and your wife's."

"Ours? What's the proposal?"

"They'll sell you The Babbling Brook for what they're asking for the Simpson ranch, on one condition."

Bo's eyes were huge. "It must be a huge condition, because that would be a steal for their ranch. What do I have to do, give up our first born?"

Wyatt had to chuckle. "Not quite. We have to run the ranches together as one business, with you as foreman, for at least two years."

Bo had a totally blank look on his face. "What do you mean? I don't understand. Run them as one business?"

"Since the ranches are next to each other, we'd have to run them together, as one huge ranch. On paper I'll still own The Winding Waters and you'll own The Babbling Brook, but we'd run them like it's one very large ranch, with you as foreman."

"Boy. That's a lot to think about."

"It is," Wyatt agreed. "They told us this idea a few days ago. It took a lot of thinking on our part to see if we think it's feasible and make sure we like the idea. The more we thought about it, the more we realize her dad's right; there are a lot of safeguards built into this plan, and we see it as a win-win. All six of us will win from it. Her parents want to sell it so they can travel and not have to worry about it. This will solve that. You want a ranch of your own for you and Alicia, and this would solve that. I'm worried about running my ranch without you, and this would solve that."

Bo was quiet, thinking for a couple minutes. "You said for two years. What's that all about?"

"He says he'll put it in the contract that we run them together as one ranch for two years. Then at the end of that time we decide what we want to do. If it's going well as one ranch and we're happy with things the way they are, we extend the agreement. If we decide it's just not working trying to run it as one, we end the agreement. You run your ranch and I'll hire a foreman, probably Brooks if he's still here, and I'll run mine. Then we're still friends, and more importantly to Kayla's parents, Kayla and Alicia are still neighbors and can see each other frequently."

Bo's eyebrows raised. "I can see how that is aimed toward Kayla being happy."

"Kayla is very touched by this whole thing. She can't believe her parents put this much thought into this, just to do what they could to assure her happiness with what becomes of the ranch. It's easing her mind a lot. She didn't want the ranch, but she does care about it and was afraid someone would buy it that wouldn't take care of it like her parents did, which would be very upsetting to her, especially living next door. She also worried that someone would buy it that was hard to get along with as neighbors. If you and Alicia buy it, that would solve all those problems."

Bo nodded his head. "It is a win-win for her, and ultimately for them, isn't it?"

"It really is. I know you've got to have concerns and questions. I had a bunch when I first heard their plan. Go ahead and think out loud. We'll discuss any concerns you have. You'll probably think of some I hadn't thought of yet."

"Now I know why you said we may not finish this over lunch," Bo said with a smile. "I do have some concerns, and I'm sure I'll have more tomorrow."

"I'm sure you will, as well. I'm still thinking of little things here and there, but I'm finding her dad's right when he said there are a bunch of safeguards built in naturally. What's the first thing going through your mind?"

"I'm concerned about being foreman of a ranch that big. That's a daunting task. I'm assuming things would stay pretty much as they are now, where I'm the foreman on paper, but we work together on things."

"That's what I was assuming, too."

"And to go one further, if we do that, what happens when I think we need to plant more soybeans this year, but you're thinking corn's the way to go?"

"Then we do the same thing we're doing now. We discuss it, hear each other's reasons, then I listen to my foreman. You have the experience I don't, and that's a big factor."

"Are you sure you're okay with that?"

"I am. Bo, the way I see it, I've watched you turn this ranch around, and it's now thriving. Your background is ranching, so you're doing what you know, and doing it well. My background is business. In business one of the first things you learn is if something is working and working well, don't screw it up. I love ranching now that I've gotten into it. I don't plan on leaving, but my business background is always going to be there as well. You've asked my advice a couple times this year on business matters, and I was happy to offer my advice, but you're definitely the one to listen to on ranching decisions."

"And your advice on business questions I had was invaluable." Bo looked up at Wyatt and smiled. "So is that saying we make a good team?"

"I think that's exactly what it's saying. I think it's worth trying for two years. If it's not working out, at least after two more years I'll hopefully have a little more confidence in my ability to run a ranch."

After a couple more minutes of quiet consideration, Bo looked up and shook his head. "The way I see this, it's a win-win for everyone, but a *huge* win for Alicia and me. She's still close to her business, next door to her best friend, and we get a wonderful ranch for pennies on the dollar. What am I missing here?"

Wyatt chuckled. "You have to work with me for at least two more years."

"That's another win. That's one thing that's been stopping me from buying the Simpson ranch. I like working here and hated to leave."

"So, we have more to discuss, like how to combine the ranches, and what we want to do with the extra tillable land, pasture land and buildings, but first things first. If we can work out all this other stuff, are you in with the idea?"

"I absolutely am interested, and I have a feeling my wife will be thrilled."

"Then let's assume she is for the moment. Since it's raining and we can't do much outside today anyway, let's go to my office and start working on some of the particulars. Then you talk to her tonight. If she's in, we'll talk to Ray and Martha Robertson and go look at the ranch."

"When would all this happen?"

"Well, that's the thing. It can be real quick. Ray and Martha, Kayla's parents, are planning on moving into the home she inherited, where she grew up. They want to do some traveling, but that will be home when they're in the States. They're anxious to get started, so they want to move out as soon as Kayla and I are married, on Saturday, December 19. That means we could move you and Alicia into your new home the week after Christmas, and you could start the new year in a new home."

Bo was shaking his head again. "Boy, between us, my friend, we're talking about some major changes in our lives within a six month window. It's almost scary to think about it."

"I know," Wyatt agreed. "When my sister called me and said she was having problems with her daughter while her husband was deployed, I thought, oh, great. I'm going to have a spoiled brat staying with me this summer. She finished college, but had no idea what she wanted to do, and had no money to move out, but the two of them just were not getting along."

Bo chuckled, thinking back to when he first met, or re-met Alicia, or Garnet as he'd known her when they went to school together. "She was a spoiled brat, but she sure has matured," Bo commented.

"Thanks to you, buddy. She was spoiled, but when you told her as foreman of this ranch you had every intention of holding her responsible for her actions, she laughed."

"Yes, she did," Bo remembered.

"Right up until the first time you took her over your knee for the consequences you warned her about."

Both men smiled, thinking back. "She was upset with both of us. She thought for sure you'd fire me and coddle her when she told you about it, but when that didn't happen she was angry with both of us."

"Yes, she was," Wyatt agreed. "But as soon as she realized you were only watching out for her and her safety, she started coming around. Now she thrives, knowing you're watching out for her and won't allow her to get away with everything. I've never seen her so happy."

"She has grown a lot."

"When she announced you two were getting married, I was thrilled. But I never thought it would happen so quickly."

"To be honest, I didn't, either," Bo admitted. "I assumed she'd want a big, fancy wedding. I didn't need one, but I assumed that's what she'd want, and I wanted her to have whatever she wanted. All I needed was a pair of jeans and cowboy boots, and a preacher to declare us married. It's a special day for the lady, though, and I wanted her to have what she wanted. I was surprised that she wanted something small and intimate and soon."

"I hear you," Wyatt said. "I'd be good with blue jeans, cowboy boots and a preacher, too, and I could be ready tomorrow, but she wants something bigger than Alicia had."

"Christmas at the ranch this year is going to be a busy time," Bo said. "Especially if we buy The Babbling Brook."

"It sure will be busy. And it'll be the first Christmas as man and wife for all four of us." He chuckled. "If we all survive until then. I was shocked when she said she wanted a Christmas wedding. As if that's not already a busy time. I know she isn't going to make it through without having at least one stress-induced temper tantrum."

"At least you know how to help her with that stress."

"That I do. Timing is the tricky part, though. I want to give her every chance to handle it on her own, but if I wait too long to step in, we all suffer. I love her dearly, but she can have an attitude that just won't quit."



The two men talked about all the changes in their lives over the past several months and the two months between now and the end of the year, as they walked to the office. They talked most of the afternoon, but they both felt good about the possibility. They agreed on what they'd like to do with the extra land, what changes they'd like to make, and thought it was a good idea.

Bo and Alicia usually ate supper with Wyatt in the evenings. They waited until she was home from her business, where she made homemade meals to go, and they all ate together, as they'd done before they were married. Wyatt and Bo often discussed ranch business while they ate. Tonight would be different, though. "Go ahead and eat supper without us tonight, Wyatt. I'll talk to Alicia about this when she gets home."

"Kayla's coming over for supper tonight. We'll go ahead and eat while you two talk. If you decide you're interested, come on over to the house. I'm sure Kayla will want to know right away. We can talk to her parents and get things moving."

"Sounds good. If we do this, there's a lot to be done and not much time to do it, if we want to move in by New Year's. We'll have to apply for a loan. That may take a while."

"Maybe, but I wouldn't think so. You'll only be applying for half or less of the value it'll appraise at, so I wouldn't think it would take a bank long to approve that loan. I mean, worst case scenario, if you don't make the payments they take the ranch back. That would be a plus to them, as I'm sure they could sell it quickly for a lot more than they're owed, so I can't imagine it would take long to approve it."

"Good point. We'll still need to get right on it, though."

"Agreed."

Bo called Alicia at work and told her there was something he wanted to talk to her about over supper.

"Okay, sure. I made beef stew today, and homemade rolls. I've got enough left I can bring some home for supper, if that sounds okay with you?"

"I love your beef stew. I'm surprised there was any left."

"There's not much left. I think it's only three or four dinners, but it'll be good for us. I sold out of the lasagna."

"I like your lasagna, too, but I love your beef stew. I'm glad they left me some."

He met her as she drove in the lane to the ranch and up to the foreman's house, where they lived. She handed him the bag containing their supper, and he helped her out of the car. Inside, he set the table while she put the food out. He opened a bottle of wine, and she looked up at him, with a smile. "I've been wondering what you wanted to talk about. I guess if we're having wine, I'm not in trouble?"

His chuckle answered the question. "No, you're not in trouble." He tried for a stern look. "Unless there's something I don't know about. Anything you want to tell me?"

She laughed at the stern look he wasn't having any success pulling off. "No, absolutely not. I've been an angel, as usual."

"I'm not sure I'd go quite that far," he joked. He got serious then, as they began to eat. He explained Kayla's parents' generous offer.

She listened carefully to everything he said, but he couldn't tell a thing from her expression. He finished describing the basic offer and gave her a minute to digest it. "So what do you think?"

"I don't understand. There's plenty in it for us, but what's in it for anyone else? What do we have to do for this?"

He smiled, now understanding her confusion. "It does seem that way, but let me explain why this plan works for all of them. Ray and Martha Robertson want to retire, so they no longer want the responsibility of the ranch. They wanted to give it to Kayla, but she doesn't want it since she's marrying Wyatt, who has a ranch. They can sell it, but Kayla's concerned about the neighbors they would be getting. Also, Wyatt says he's still learning the art of ranching and feels better having me as foreman."

"Okay, I can understand that."

He explained they would be working together for two years. After listening to his explanation, she thought a little more. "So they actually are getting something out of it, too?"

"They are. I think mainly Kayla would rather see friends have the ranch than strangers, and she knows Wyatt will feel better having longer to learn the ranching business. I mean, they're the ones who came up with the idea, so I have to assume they're happy with it."

She looked at Bo, and looked back to her plate, nodding. She picked up her fork and took a bite of beef stew. He watched as she ate two more bites. He could tell she was deep in thought. Finally, she looked up at him, all smiles. "If they're happy with it, it's terrific with me. What about you?"

"Mrs. Hamilton, I think we're about to buy our own ranch."

She jumped up and he stood and opened his arms as she ran into them. He picked her up and swung her around, then set her back on her feet and gently took her face in his hands and kissed her passionately. He pulled back and cleared his throat. "And with that, Mrs. Hamilton, sit down and eat your supper, before I take you into the bedroom. Wyatt and Kayla are at the house, waiting for our answer."

"Oh, good. Let's go talk to them."

She was halfway to the door, when Bo caught her arm. "Eat first. This stew's delicious."

"Of course it is. Did you think I'd make some garbage to sell?"

His head whirled around, with a frown on his face, until he saw her grinning. "Thank you, Bo. I'm glad you like it."

He reached behind her and gave her a swat on her bottom. "Brat. Eat your supper. We're not going over to talk to them until you do."

"Okay, okay." She sat down and picked her fork up. "Kayla's having trouble at her school. She's not happy with her job right now. That's a shame, because she's a good teacher."

"I knew her school was having financial problems. Are they still talking about laying off some teachers?"

"Yeah. She says they're talking about laying off a lot of people, including some teachers. This is only her second year teaching, so she's afraid if they lay someone off, she'll be one of the first to go."

"That's a shame. Wyatt says the kids she teaches all like her."

"Yeah, and she loves them. It's a shame she's having to deal with this while she's planning her wedding."

"Yeah, you're right. She doesn't need anything else to worry about at the moment. Working full time and planning a wedding are enough, let alone the holidays."

"I know. Watching her and hearing what all she's been worrying about makes me even more glad we had a small informal wedding. It was what a wedding should be – fun. This seems too stressful for me."

"I liked our wedding too," he said with a kiss. They'd finished eating while they were talking. He helped her clean the kitchen quickly as they finished their conversation. "Wyatt's afraid this wedding's turning out to be more stressful than Kayla needs right now."

"I agree. I told her if she doesn't calm down and stop worrying so much she's going to end up with a sore bottom before she says her vows."

Bo laughed as he turned to face her. "You told her that?"

"Of course. It's the truth, and you know it. So does she, and she's trying to control it, but I don't know how long she's going to be able to control her temper."

"I guess we'll see," he said as they went to the main house.