



Episode Thirty-Four

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Boxer Falls Episode 34

By: Brita Addams

Phil sat still, not wanting to make it any easier for his assailant to slit his throat. "What do you want?"

"You don't remember, do you Philly?"

"Remember what?"

The man nicked Phil's skin, just enough to let him know that he could do him in without a second thought.

In a second, the guy shoved a wad of cloth into his mouth, then wrapped a gag around his head. "Time for a little trip down memory lane."

Within minutes, Phil's assailant had him up on his feet and out the door, slogging through knee-deep water toward a plain gray vehicle that looked like an armored car.

"I'm not going anywhere with you," Phil thought as he struggled.

An iron grip on his arm was too much for him. The dude was strong, even for someone as well toned as Phil.

The back doors of the vehicle opened and Phil saw they weren't alone. He recognized this guy and fear seeped into his veins. He kicked and fought. The two men tossed him into the back of the truck, then his assailant took the wheel.

The other man slammed the doors just as his cohort pulled out of the flooded parking lot at Slappy's. Phil looked out the back window as they got onto the Belleview Road. Grady's truck passed them. Phil tried to kick the door, scream, but nothing worked. Grady drove on by, obviously headed for Slappy's. To look for him.

"Say goodbye to Boxer Falls, asshole."

Phil glared and tried to ask, "What do you mean?" but the guy just laughed. He always was a sadistic fuck.

* * *

Conrad hadn't seen this much of town in forever. He's always driven by, his mind set on where he was going. As he'd passed down Knothill Circle to Belleview Road, he saw a couple who needed help getting some of their belongings out of their flooded house. "Go to Whispering Ridge," he told them. "You'll have a place to stay and food to eat."

The gesture had come as much a surprise to him as it was to the McIlhennys, but as he left them packing up their van, it had felt damn good. Business was slow this summer, he had ten rooms empty.

He repeated the offer up and down the roads. As he passed through Cotten Square and made his way up Hammer Drive, he helped people he'd normally never have given a second glance. The smiles his generosity engendered warmed him somehow.

His intention was to walk the length of Hammer Drive, up to Curtain Way and then on the Whispering Ridge. However, when he came to Hook Lane, he couldn't help but look over at the Boxer B&B. To his immense surprise, he saw that Old George, the ancient tree that had greeted visitors to Boxer Falls for a hundred or more years, lay sprawled, uprooted, using the B&B as the old guy's death bed.

Conrad's head raced as he took off at a dead run. There looked as though there was little left of the hotel and almost nothing of Bear and Bones. Old George had sprawled himself rather liberally. Conrad's first thought was Grady, but then he'd seen Grady's truck while he was still at the McIlhenny's.

Conrad spotted Sheriff Neale. "Everyone okay?"

Vic glanced over, as though he thought him incapable of a kind word. "Yeah, we found Grady and the guests in the basement and they're all fine. Where have you been?"

"Walking. Helping people if they needed it."

"You? Helping people?"

Conrad shook his head. "What makes you think that just because I'm a tough businessman, that I can't help others?"

"Not for me to say," Vic said with a shrug. "Just find it strange that you didn't have your people out helping, instead of giving it your own, personal touch."

Conrad clapped Vic on the back. "I'm not sure where my *people* are, but when I find them, I'll be sure to send them out."

He walked away and headed toward Curtain Way. If Grady wasn't at the B&B, there wasn't any reason for him to be there either.

* * *

While Rider hadn't found a boat to carry them to shore, he'd found a deepening interest in voyeurism, something he'd dismissed as a boy, preferring to participate rather than strictly watch. Son of a bitch, but Zach, cousin or not, and Adam, were fucking hot.

He allotted them time to recoup, then whistled as a warning of his approach. "Didn't find anything out there, but more debris than can fill the dump. Even the golf cart is in the water. My dad is going to kill me. What a mess."

Adam and Zach looked at each other, then back at him. "Yeah, had a good look around, did you?"

"Yeah, a good look," he muttered, his face heating up. "So, what are we going to do? I'm out of ideas."

"Don't know," Zach said. "We still have some food, and thankfully the roof is still on the cabin. I s'pose we could stay out here for a while yet. My dad knows we're here."

Rider wanted away from Adam and Zach. He chalked it up to another bout of

impulsivity, but unless they were going to fuck each other's brains out all day, while he watched, he wanted to be as far away as he could possibly be.

"I suppose we could just wait it out. I wonder if everyone is all right." Adam shaded his eyes and looked toward shore. "Not much is moving on land."

"We just had a hurricane, dude. We'll be lucky if the town is still standing."

"Ever the optimist, Zach. It's standing, look." Adam pointed toward the shore.

"Where's Old George?" Zach asked nervously.

The three of them stood on the porch of the cabin, staring in the direction of where the infamous old tree usually stood.

"Son of a bitch, I don't know. Are we looking in the right place?"

"Should be straight ahead. Come to think of it, where the hell is the red roof of the B&B?"

Zach left the porch and walked toward the water. He turned back to Adam and Rider. "It isn't there," he cried, his voice almost a screech. "It isn't there!"

* * *

It seemed like it took forever to get to Slappy's, with downed trees and power lines blocking every road. Grady had cursed Mother Nature and her minions for the destruction she'd wrought on Boxer Falls, but his sole concern was to get to Phil. Together, they'd find their son.

Conrad's truck was in the parking lot, water up to the middle of the door panel. Phil's truck was there too. Grady got a pang. Was it about time lost with Phil or Conrad? Was it worry that they'd spent so many hours together, hopefully without killing each other? He didn't concentrate on it long enough for it to make a difference.

He parked on the highest part of the drive, then steeled himself for the walk into the waist high, muddy water. It didn't feel good at all, but he had to do what he had to do.

"Phil," he shouted but got no answer. He walked through the open door, sloshed through the water, but found the place devoid of life. A chair sat in the middle of the floor with some rope lying in the seat.

Grady looked around, found a piece of paper floating in the water, reached down to pick it up. A shopping list, in his own handwriting. Phil always tucked those into his wallet. Must have dropped out. He stepped on something, reached into the water for it. Phil's wallet.

"Phil, for Christ's sake, where the hell are you?"

No answer, save for the water sloshing against Slappy's counter as he walked around.

Maybe Phil was hurt. Panic overwhelmed him. He scoured the entire shop, behind the counter, in between the displays. Nothing. He checked out back, at the boat slips. What a mess. Slappy hadn't secured the boats before he left and sad to say, and he didn't have anything left.

Grady walked to the dock and saw how unstable it was. The wind had torn one of the supports from its mooring. No bodies floating in the lake. Though a good sign, that did nothing to relieve his worry that something might have happened to Phil.

He went back inside, again scanning the shop. Just as he got to the door, he stepped on something. He reached down and picked up Phil's keys. He'd know them anywhere – they hung on the Red Sox key ring Grady had given Phil for his birthday. Phil never went anywhere without his keys. He always had them clipped to his belt loop. Something was wrong.

Grady wondered where Conrad was, maybe he and Phil were together in some perverse attempt at seeing each other through the hardship of the storm. He chuckled. The only way Phil would voluntarily go anywhere with Conrad was if, 1. Phil had lost his memory again or 2. Well, there wasn't a scenario in which Grady could see Phil voluntarily in Conrad's company.

Grady left the bait shop and only after he was back on the road did it occur to him that he hadn't looked out at the island to see if he could see any sign of Zach and Adam.

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Vic was exhausted as he maneuvered his cruiser through the debris-strewn streets. After he saw to it that the crew cut up Old George, he'd helped Widow Aimes get her cat off her roof, then sent Diego off to make sure the Boxer boy and his *inamorata* got home safely. Then he had other work to do, that Vic thought he, himself, should probably help him with, but, well, he had something else more pressing.

Logistically speaking, the day was a nightmare. He'd called the National Guard and

they'd come from all over Massachusetts and New York State to help clean up. With that in hand, he'd called Blake and told him he was off duty and on his way.

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The sound of a motorboat alerted Rider. He came back to the cabin to forewarn Adam and Zach. As they'd been for most of the afternoon and evening, he found them going at it like rabbits in heat. He had gotten off twice while watching them, but he suspected they knew he'd spied on them and were now just yanking his chain.

"Come on, guys. Pull your pants on. Looks like that deputy is coming to take us home."

"Give us five minutes," Adam grunted.

"Yeah, yeah, just hurry up. I want to go as soon as he gets here."

Rider left the room trying hard not to hear the groans and exaggerated sighs. Damn, did they ever do anything but fuck when they were together?

Sanchez waved as he neared shore. "You boys okay out here?"

Adam came outside, combing his hand through his riffled hair.

"Yeah, we're fine. Hungry and anxious to get back to town. How does it look back there?"

Sanchez looked back toward town. "Sorry to say, but the Bear and Bones is pretty much gone, and the B&B is fucked up bad."

"What the hell are you saying, man?" Zach shouted from the porch.

"Old George finally succumbed. He fell on your place. Messed it up."

"Did anyone get hurt?"

"Yeah, a couple of guests broke limbs and there's lots of bruises to go around, but no deaths have been reported."

"What about Dot and Ira?" Adam asked.

"Haven't seen 'em actually. Zach, your father is fine. We found him and some of the guests in the basement. Smart of him to hole up there."

"Which one?"

"Oh, sorry. Grady. Last I knew, he was out looking for Phil."

"Looking for him? What do you mean, looking for him?"

"He ended up at Slappy's, looking for you. Rider, your old man was there too. Then the storm hit, and they were stuck. Grady went to see about them."

"Old man Cotten and Phil, stuck together?" Adam laughed until Zach smacked him on the shoulder. "Hey, what was that for?"

"This is serious, man, and you're making a joke. Can you take me over to the bait shop? I want to see if my dad is still there."

Diego shook his head. "Nah, I've got to get back. Get in and I'll take you back to shore, as close to the B&B as I can get. Then I've got to shuttle people up to Whispering Ridge. Cotten is offering free rooms to some people who need them."

Rider's surprise gave way to pride at his father's generosity.

"Glad you can smile," Adam grumbled.

"Look at the bright side. You'll have some days off work."

"Phfft! Unpaid fucking days off."

Rider chuckled. "Consider those days, bonuses. You can stay in bed the entire time and fuck your brains out."

"Hey, can you guys work out the logistics on your own time? Get in. I've got a long night ahead of me."

* * *

Vic rolled up to Blake's place just as the sun ducked behind Berkshire Mountain. His tires crunched twigs and shingles, and while the yard had definitely looked better, the house looked to be in good shape.

Blake opened the door, his face one big smile. "Just got here myself. Helped up at the Ridge for a bit, then made sure I got home after you called. You look beat."

"I'm hungry too."

"For food or. . . .?"

"Both," Vic said as he removed his gun belt and walkie. "I'm off duty."

"Yeah, you'll not be answering any calls tonight, except if I need an answer to an important question. I've got some leftover meat loaf. You want that and a baked potato?"

Vic took off his boots. "That sounds like a gourmet meal to me."

"Good. While I'm heating things up, go get a shower. I set out a towel for you. No need for clothes afterward."

Vic smiled and trudged off to the bathroom.

The hot water felt considerably better than the cold, dirty floodwaters he'd slogged around in all day. Nasty to say the least.

He let the water sluice over him before he soaped up. With his hands flat against the wall, he stood under the pulsating showerhead for ages, hoping the flow would beat the knots out of him.

"Say, you going to spend all night in there?"

"No, we have a date, remember?"

"Then get your ass out here. My hand is itching to make it burn."

Vic's cock rose to attention. "How about a sample, while I'm wet?" He opened the shower door and faced a fully clothed Blake.

"In that case, hands on the wall, feet apart. I'll give you a warm up before we eat."

* * *

"I haven't seen him since I left Slappy's. Believe me, Grady, if I had, I'd tell you."

Grady paced the floor of Conrad's office. "Where could he be? I've looked everywhere I can think of."

Conrad couldn't care less where Phil Boxer was. That jackass could drop off the earth and that would suit him just fine. However, Grady was upset, worried. Damn, how that irked him. What did he see in that man?

Grady plopped down on the sofa. "How could he just take off? No, he wouldn't have gone off without his wallet and keys. You don't suppose something happened to him, do you?"

"Have you called Neale?"

"Naw. That idiot can't find his ass with both hands."

"True enough. I hate to ask this, but have you talked to Tony?"

Grady glared. "What kind of a fucking question is that, Connie? They haven't seen each other in a good while."

Conrad raised his hands in surrender. "Okay, just asking. Look, while you wait, you want something to eat? We are on emergency power and I've had the kitchen staff cooking for anyone who needs help. There's plenty."

Grady rubbed his eyes. "I suppose it can't hurt."

"Dad!"

Grady jumped up at the sound of Zach's voice. "Oh, my God, I've never been so happy to see you in all my life," he told his son. "You okay?"

"Yeah, yeah."

Conrad looked surprised. "Have you seen. . .?"

"Right here, Dad," Rider said as he came into the room.

Rider walked in and Conrad looked as pleased as Grady had ever seen him.

"It's so good to see you, son."

Rider pulled away from Conrad's embrace. "Sorry about the golf cart," he said shyly.

Conrad took hold of Rider's shoulders. "I don't give a fuck about that golf cart. I'm glad

you're home, safe and sound."

Rider stared into his father's eyes. "Now tell me something."

"Anything. What is it?"

"What is this shit about me and Zach being cousins?"

* * *

Blake sat in the middle of the sofa, his arms outstretched across the back. "I guess I gave you a bit more than a warm-up."

Vic grasped his ass cheeks with both hands, the heat more than he'd expected. "Yeah, but not nearly enough. I told you before. I want to feel it into next week."

"Go get your belt, then come lay across my lap."

Vic smiled as he turned away. Only Blake could deliver just what he wanted. Only he could make it hurt so good. Blake had a sadistic streak in him a mile wide, but only used it by invitation. The man had shown Vic how pain and humiliation added a certain flavor to the sex that followed. No namby-pamby tickle and squeeze with Blake. No way.

Vic picked up his pants and slid the belt from the loops. Nice and thick. Reminded him of his father's old razor strap. That bastard had stung like a bitch, but he'd never gotten enough. If his old man had ever suspected that Vic provoked him just so he'd get the strap, sire Neale would have devised an even worse punishment. Hmm.

Vic handed Blake the belt, knowing Blake would snap it a few times as foreplay. Right on cue, the leather popped. Vic's cock, already hard, pulsed.

"You are a nasty boy, Vic Neale. Punishment is currency to you, isn't it?"

"If you say so. All I know is I want what you got."

Blake stood. "I've changed my mind. Nothing so intimate as over the knee. Grab the back of the sofa, spread your legs wide."

Vic almost came at the tenor of Blake's voice. Commanding, giving no quarter. "Yes, sir."

The first thwack curled his toes, the second weakened his knees. "Stand up and spread those legs."

By the tenth, he'd bitten so hard on his bottom lip that he tasted blood. This fucker hurt.

Blake carefully placed each stroke to overlap the last. "I don't know what I'm punishing you for this time, but whatever it is, I'm making it good."

"Yes, sir," Vic moaned as the count mounted to fifteen. Their usual was around thirty, give or take. He could go forty if Blake could hold off fucking him that long.

Vic eased into the next few blows, raising his ass up to meet the belt. It didn't hurt as much. Instead, he'd found that blessed place within himself, where he took what Blake gave as the gift the man intended it to be.

"Thirty," Blake said.

Vic was disappointed that he'd already received that many. "More," he gasped. "Don't stop."

Blake assumed a rhythm and completed the next ten. "Enough. Don't move."

Vic's legs shook as he heard the jingle of Blake's belt buckle, then the scritch as he dropped his pants. Blake's warm hand reached around and jerked him a couple of times. Vic was grateful for the cock ring he wore as a matter of course.

Blake ran his hands down Vic's rubbery legs, then knelt behind him. The heat of Blake's breath was almost Vic's undoing as Blake ran his tongue over Vic's crack.

"Oh, my God. You aren't."

"Mmm," Blake moaned as he parted Vic and licked.

* * *

Phil coughed when Ben Vreeland removed the gag. "You bastard," he huffed in between hacks.

"My mother is quite well, thank you. Father died some years ago, but then you wouldn't know that, disappearing as you did. Have you seriously passed yourself off as a handyman all these years? Such talent you've wasted."

Phil glared, wishing he had but a second to wrap his hands around Ben Vreeland's throat.

"How did you find me?"

"That isn't the point."

"Then what is the point?"

"That I *have* found you and I won't be so careless as to lose you again."

Phil struggled against the ropes that bound his arms behind his back. "I told you I was leaving."

"No, your memory has faded. You left. I surmised your intent when you didn't return."

"I was finished with that life. I have a family now, a son, a husband."

"Yes, you do. Handsome boy. I understand he isn't biologically yours. He looks more like the Cotten's, but then you know that, don't you?"

Phil glared, his anger seething. "I haven't seen you in over thirty years. What do you want with me now?"

Ben shifted in seat. "Unfinished business. I've been around this town for some time." He patted Phil on the cheek. "I know that you've been fucking that handsome young man with the Daddy complex, as well as anyone else who'd drop trou for you. Then you'd go home to your handsome husband, who, by now, has discovered your absence and must be worried sick."

Phil thought of Grady going to the bait shop and not finding him there. He'd be frantic. That kind of shit brought out his protective streak. "My son is missing. You have to take me back."

Ben laughed humorlessly. "You've seen the last of Boxer Falls. We have a whole world to see and when I'm finished with you, old Seth there, will deliver you to your final resting place, just as he promised he would."

Phil had known this day would come, had known it for over thirty years, yet had hoped as time went on, that Ben had forgotten or died. "I've got some money. It's yours."

Ben eyes grew dark. "I don't need money. You can't buy your way out of this. You made

a commitment and then thought to walk away from it. We can't have that."

"My life is different now. I don't want to go back to what I did before. My parents are old, they need me."

Ben looked way, impassive. "They will learn to live without you, just as your son will."

Phil rued the day he met Ben Vreeland. His plan for a carefree, jet-setting life had not a single flaw, until Phil told him he wanted to settle down.

"You shouldn't have stolen from me, Phillip. That can't be tolerated. The penalty would have been severe enough at the time, but you've been gone for so many years, and you forced me to seek you out." Ben shook his head. "The penalty is very high and one that will only be satisfied with your life."

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-Will Conrad tell Rider the truth about Zach's parentage?

-Who is Ben Vreeland and what is the life he wants to drag Phil back into?

-How will Blake and Vic's night end?

-Will Grady turn to Conrad for help in finding Phil or is Phil lost to him forever?

TUNE IN NEXT WEEK!

Boxer Falls: The bigger they are...

AUTHOR BIO:

About the Author:

Brita Addams was born in Upstate New York in a small farm town. However, she's lived in the sultry south for many years. She shares her home with her husband and real life hero, their youngest daughter, a fat cat named Stormee and Fiona, a puppy who doubles often as her muse.

Her love of history is one of the constants in her life, so historical romance is a nice fit. Brita incorporates archaic English when she writes, or as close as she can come, which reviewers have said adds flavor to her stories.

Her contemporaries allow her to incorporate modern language and pop culture to her stories, as well as throw in a bit of humor.

Brita loves visitors at her internet home – <http://britaaddams.com>

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