



## Episode Fifty

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### **Boxer Falls: Episode 50**

By Poppy Dennison

One wing of the Whispering Ridge resort remained caught in a time warp. At least, that's the explanation Rider came up with for the outdated décor and musty odor. With pale blues and mauves, gaily romping geese, and a strange abundance of ribboned wreaths, the entire floor needed to be gutted and remodeled from scratch.

Except this room. Rider sat curled in the window seat, ignoring the dust and annoying color scheme. The view from this room was spectacular. Overlooking the lake, Rider had a view of the entire back lawn. He'd adopted this suite as his hiding space and dreaded the announcement that renovations would begin.

Frustrated and lonely, he stared out over the grey landscape and sighed. He'd been hit with another bout of melancholy and hadn't contacted his therapist for an adjustment of his medications. Part of him believed it was just the so-called winter blues. The rest of him knew it stemmed from his lack of information on the DNA results.

No way in hell was the man pretending to be Conrad Cotten his father. But Rider couldn't find proof. He'd enlisted Blake, his father's security specialist, but the

professional hadn't had any luck either. Something had to give, though. Rider could feel the tension building. It wasn't coming only from him. Boxer Falls was about to blow, and Rider had a feeling imposter Conrad would be involved.

The imposter had kept Blake busy lately, sending him on pointless tasks and ridiculous missions. Spying on Grady Boxer? Really? What was the point? Fake-Conrad already knew everything he needed to know about Conrad's ex-lover and his husband. No, the task was simply meant to keep Blake busy and out of his boss's hair.

Then again, maybe Rider was imagining the entire thing. Paranoia was one of the symptoms of his illness, at least according to the brochures his therapist had so helpfully provided. There could be some other explanation for the strange DNA results, one his medication-clouded mind hadn't been able to think of. Maybe it was time for another vacation to the asylum. He'd go voluntarily this time.

The door to the suite opened. Rider lifted his head from his knees and watched Blake slip into the room. He closed the door behind him and glanced at Rider. Time to put the mask back into place. Rider straightened his spine and pasted on his best uncaring Cotten expression.

"Any news?"

Blake shook his head. "What's wrong?"

Rider dropped his feet to the floor and stood. He brushed his hair out of his face and sent Blake a flirty grin. "I'm horny. Care to help me out with that?"

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Tony dug through the pile of mail on Diego's desk, searching for the elusive cable bill he hadn't been able to locate. Where the hell had they put the damn thing? Diego always tossed the mail on the desk to deal with at the beginning of the month. It was now mid-month, and they hadn't paid the cable bill. If Diego didn't get his Spanish soccer fix, he'd be a very cranky deputy.

With a grin to himself at just how he could cure Diego of any bad mood, Tony opened the desk drawer and began rifling through the assortment of papers. They really needed to work on Diego's system of organization. This was ridiculous. Stubs from bills months past had been tossed haphazardly into the drawer. Tony began tossing them into a box for shredding.

A thick manila envelope rested at the bottom of the pile. *Good grief*, Tony thought. What

had Diego thrown in there that he'd forgotten? Hopefully not something that he'd needed to take care of. He pried open the metal clasps and spilled out the contents. Photos and reports spread out on top of the desk. All of them of Vic.

"Hey, babe. Do you know where the shaving cream is? I can't..."

Diego's voice trailed off as he stepped into the living room and saw Tony holding the empty envelope in his hand.

"What is this?" Tony held up one of the incriminating photos of the sheriff getting fucked by some random stranger.

Diego walked over to Tony, the towel at his waist slipping low on his hips. "Nothing, Pa."

"It's not nothing, Diego. And don't Pa me right now. I'm not feeling much like your honey at the moment."

Diego plucked the photo and envelope out of Tony's hands. He gathered up the rest of the contents and stuffed it all back into the envelope. "I should have burned this shit."

"You should have told me about this shit. So tell me now."

With a sigh, Diego tossed the envelope on the desk. "A few months ago, before the election, someone offered to help me oust Vic from office. It was tempting, so tempting, but I couldn't do it. If the good folks of Boxer Falls wanted that idiot as sheriff, then they can have him."

"But you decided not to run. We talked about it. You said you didn't want the responsibility."

"And I don't. That wasn't a lie. Look, we have a good thing going here, right?"

Tony stood up and grabbed Diego's arms. "Yes. Of course."

The strain on Diego's face eased. "I...I love you. When this stuff started showing up, I thought about using it. Forcing Vic out of office and becoming sheriff. I thought about how proud you'd be of me. Then I realized that you wouldn't be proud of me if you found out I'd cheated to win. What kind of man would I be for you if that's the way I went about my life?"

Tony picked up the envelope and slapped it against Diego's chest. "Burn it. Because

you're right. I wouldn't want you to blackmail your way into office. Since we met, I've learned what it means to be a better person. You've done that for me."

Diego grinned and threw the envelope over his shoulder. He pulled Tony against him. "So, do you love me too, Pa?"

Tony rolled his eyes but wrapped his arms tightly around Diego's waist. "I do."

"Then let's get the hell out of here."

"Yeah, and where would we go with you dressed like that? Because I'm thinking back to bed is the only place I want to take you right now."

"No, I don't mean right now. Although bed is sounding really good." He pushed his hips against Tony, the towel doing nothing to hide the hard lines of his cock. The towel slipped lower. He leaned down to nibble at Tony's neck. "I mean, let's leave Boxer Falls. Move somewhere warm, start over."

Tony groaned and pushed the towel away. "Yeah, let's do that. Later."

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Blake crossed his arms across his chest and glared at Rider. Something about the guy drew him in. That haunted look in his eyes that he hid away the moment he realized someone was watching.

"Don't lie to me. What's wrong?"

The mask slipped for a moment and Rider's cocky grin dimmed. "Nothing."

Blake crossed the room and grabbed Rider by the arms. "I said don't lie to me."

Rider blinked up at him, his eyes cloudy and wounded. "I think I'm losing my mind. What if all this is just my brain playing tricks on me?"

"It's not. You know that. Don't doubt yourself now."

Rider pulled away and turned so Blake couldn't see his face. "Looks like we have another resident in crazy-town. I didn't know I was contagious."

With a low growl, Blake pulled Rider back against him. "Stop it. *This* is your illness

talking. I don't know who the man claiming to be your father is, but I can guarantee you that it isn't Conrad Cotten."

Rider grabbed Blake's arms and squeezed. "Swear it, Blake."

Blake leaned in close and pressed his mouth close to Rider's ear. "I swear."

He squeezed Rider's arms and then slid his hands around to press against Rider's chest. Rider made a strange choking sound and spun around in his embrace. Before Blake could realize his intentions, Rider had pressed their lips together. He grabbed Blake by the back of the head and tried to force Blake's lips to part with his tongue.

Blake jerked away and instinctively slapped Rider's ass. "Behave," he commanded.

Rider trembled in his arms and lowered his head to Blake's chest.

Damn, but the response did something to Blake. He raised his hand again and laid another sharp slap to Rider's ass. This time Rider groaned and thrust his hips out. "Harder," he mumbled.

"You need a spanking, huh? Yeah, I think you do." Blake guided Rider over to the window seat and sat down. He locked his gaze on Rider's as his fingers went to work unfastening the skin-tight jeans Rider wore. One hesitating look and he'd stop and pretend this never happened.

Rider didn't hesitate. He helped Blake slip his jeans over his hips and stood waiting. He'd not been wearing underwear; not that any would have fit under those jeans anyway. Blake looked his fill while Rider preened under the attention. He had a fantastic body; thinner than Blake's usual taste, but he could imagine Rider spread out beneath him, his ass red and hot.

Blake spread his legs and urged Rider to lay across his lap. Rider paused, searched Blake's expression. He seemed to find whatever answer he sought. As Rider settled over Blake's legs, Blake ran his hand up and down his exposed skin. He pushed Rider's T-shirt up and revealed his smooth back.

Rider shivered. Blake continued the easy touches until the tense muscles in Rider's back and legs relaxed. One gentle smack to the underside of Rider's ass, and Rider stiffened up again. Blake used soft touches until Rider calmed again. Two quick slaps to the other cheek and Rider moaned.

He reached between them to grab his cock and Blake lifted his hands. Rider froze,

realized his mistake, and wrapped his hands around Blake's calf.

"Good boy," Blake praised. Such a natural. Blake found himself drawn to the compliant body beneath his hands. No demands, just simple acceptance of his control. He'd missed this. Craved this more than the hard core sessions he'd had lately with...no. Blake refused to take his thoughts away from Rider.

He began a steady rhythm. The slaps weren't nearly as hard as he could make them, but Rider didn't need to hurt. He whimpered, in pleasure, not pain. Blake's cock responded to the sound. Rider's skin reddened and he began to squirm with each whack of Blake's hand to his ass.

"More," Rider begged. His hands squeezed more tightly around Blake's leg.

Blake smiled. Oh, Rider was close. So close to that moment when the world fell away and he couldn't think of anything except his body and the sensations he was feeling. Blake increased the force of his blows. Staccato slaps of skin meeting skin. One, two, three. Then he felt it, Rider's body relaxing completely as he fell into the rhythm of the spanking. His fingers unclenched and he allowed Blake to take his entire weight.

Holding one hand tightly against Rider's back, Blake continued the slaps but eased into a slower and easier cadence until he eased to a stop. Rider whimpered and thrust his hips, his mind still lost to the sensations. Blake guided him up, sat him down on his lap with Rider's back to his chest.

Rider hissed a bit when his sensitive skin landed on the coarse material of Blake's cargo pants. He shushed him with gentle touches and spread Rider's legs until he straddled Blake's. Rider's head rested against Blake's shoulder and he nuzzled his face into Blake's neck.

Blake whispered words into Rider's hair as he petted Rider with long strokes of his hands. Meaningless words, sweet nothings. Praise to Rider's beauty, brains, anything Blake could think of. It didn't matter what he said, only that he kept his tone even and soothing. Rider responded to each touch, writhing beneath Blake's hands, hungry for more touches.

After teasing Rider just a bit more, Blake reached for his stiff prick and stroked. Rider cried out, finally receiving the touch he'd wanted. Blake could read Rider's responses now, that quickly in tune with the body he held in his arms. Rider was close. He quickened his pace and whispered. "Come for me."

Rider cried out and complied, his body arching as he came. Blake stroked him to

completion and continued his calming touches until Rider collapsed against him. This was what he needed. What they both needed. Blake carefully moved Rider around until he was able to lift him in his arms. Rider curled against his chest, completely relaxed. After carefully laying him on the bed, Blake cleaned Rider up and stretched out beside him. Rider curled into him, his breathing returning to normal. After a while, Rider lifted his head and leaned up over Blake. He moved forward again, his lips seeking Blake's like he had before. This time, instead of being forceful, he sought permission. Blake allowed it, holding Rider's blond curls in his hand as their tongues tangled.

"What the fuck is going on here?"

Blake had been so lost in the kiss that he hadn't heard the door open. His protective instincts reared and he leapt to his feet. Oz Cotten stood at the entrance to the suite. Behind him, his father. And behind him, Quinn.

Fuck. Storming to the door, Blake shoved all three of them back out into the hallway. Oz tried to protest, but Blake was bigger, stronger, and had a hell of a lot more motivation. He pulled the door closed, then crossed his arms over his chest.

Conrad leaned against the wall. His eyes were dark with anger.

Blake blinked. Stared. Gasp.

"Holy shit. It's you."

The real Conrad Cotten was back.

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*\*With Zach and Adam's wedding approaching, where is the Tarot Card Killer?*

*\*Is Rider what Blake has been missing, or will he still be drawn to Sheriff Vic?*

*\*What will Quinn say to finding his father in bed with a younger man?*

**TUNE IN NEXT WEEK!**

***Boxer Falls: The bigger they are...***

**AUTHOR BIO:**

A sassy southern lady, Poppy Dennison developed an obsession with things that go bump in the night in her early years after a barn door flew off its hinges and nearly squashed her. Convinced it was a ghost trying to get her attention, she started looking for other strange and mysterious happenings around her. Not satisfied with what she found, Poppy has traveled to Greece, Malaysia and England to find inspiration for the burly bears and silver foxes that melt her butter. Her love of paranormal continues to flourish nearly thirty years later, and she writes steamy love stories about the very things that used to keep her up all night. If her childhood ghost is lucky, maybe one day she'll give him his own happily ever after.

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