



Episode Fifty-One

Boxer Falls Episode 51

by Brita Adams

For months, he had slipped in and out of Boxer Falls undetected. That nosy Brandt had caught him with a list of those he wished gone, but with a few cleverly planted clues, he had gotten Vic off the scent. Too bad the storm hadn't finished off some of them, but too many do-gooders saw to that, leaving him no alternative.

He'd thought of taking Conrad Cotten down all nice and legal, but he'd just throw money at the situation and wiggle his way out of it. Legalities didn't matter to men like Cotten. He buy his way through the system, just like his worthless sons. Rider should be in a loony bin, and he will be soon enough. And Oz, mooning over Quinn like a lovesick puppy. Neither of them is worth the powder to blow them to hell.

He laughed, the sound rang off the dank basement walls. No, there was a better way, a sure way to get the great man's attention. Conrad will take notice now; he'll have no choice. Life will be very interesting, watching Conrad as everything around him crumbles and everyone he loves goes down and not even the all might Conrad Fucking Cotten can do anything about it.

As he watched Phil kissing Conrad, Grady's phone vibrated, scaring the shit out of him.

"Grady, it's me."

Grady looked at the scene before him and shook his head. "Connie? What's going on? Where are you?"

"That's what I'm calling about. I can't go into details right now, but I wanted you to know that I'm back in town."

"You've been away? But..."

"Whatever you thought you saw, wasn't what you saw. It would seem my brother is in town and has made it look like I've done some shit I haven't done. I have lots of cleaning up to do, and I'm going to start by sweeping out the trash at the Ridge. I'll be in touch. Just wanted to let you know that I'm thinking of you."

"Yeah. Good to hear your voice. I'll talk to you later."

He hung up the phone and turned his back on Phil and, could it be Bryce? It had been so many years since Connie had talked about Bryce, Grady had thought Conrad's twin dead. As reckless as he'd always been it was surprising that he wasn't.

Not the point, Boxer. Phil is at it, yet again . Why was Phil making out with Bryce or did he think that was Conrad? He hates Conrad. What the hell?

Stunned and so past confused, Grady staggered away and headed back to the B&B.

Grady had overlooked Phil's philandering over the years, trying not to hamper his husband, but it never stops and Grady was tired of it. More than tired, he was done.

He made it to his room, devastated one more time by Phil's behavior. "It's over," Grady said as he turned on the shower. "I can't do this anymore. Thirty years of cheating was thirty years too long. Promises to stop, they'd make up, then another round of the same. No more."

After Ben Vreeland had kidnapped Phil and tried to kill him, Phil had made his great declaration of love and fidelity, and Grady had, yet again, believed him. Once a cheater, always a cheater. Next, he'll kill me with some disease he brings home.

Grady stood under the shower and let the water sluice over him. How exhausting jealousy was, he thought. Why do you keep putting yourself through this?

"Grady, you in here?"

Grady tensed at the sound of Phil's voice.

"I can hear water runnin'. Come on, answer me. I know you're in there." A loud thud on the door startled him.

Slurring his words. God, he was drunk. This would be an interesting night.

"Don't come in. I'm not well. Think I'm coming down with something contagious."

Phil opened the door stumbled into the room. "I don't mind cashing somepun from you, lover," he slurred as he tried to undress. "Let me wash your back."

It wasn't often that Phil drank, but when he did, it wasn't pretty. Sloppy, with a tendency toward anger. "Stop. I'm serious. I don't feel well."

"Fine. If you don' want me, I can always find someone who does." Phil jabbed his shirt into this jeans. "Is this the Grady Boxer version of, 'Honey, I have a headache?'"

Phil wanted an argument. "It is what it is, Phil. You're stinking drunk and I don't feel well."

"Yeah, I am drunk. The only way I can face comin' home. Christmas is comin' and it ain't me you have on your mind, is it? You want Conrad all wrapped up and under the tree, just like always, don' ya."

Grady stared at his husband through the clear glass shower door. "I never said anything about Conrad, did I?"

Phil listed to the right, then propped himself against the sink. "You didn't have to. That bastard has lived in this house and slept in our bed every night for thirty years."

Grady glared and held his hands up in surrender. "I won't have this discussion with you again, Phil. It never goes anywhere."

Phil tried to open the shower door. "You've always danced to his tune. Be honest, you wish you'd never met me."

Grady turned off the water and stepped out of the shower. Phil handed him a towel, then dropped it just as Grady went to take it.

"I do so love to watch you bend over," Phil said.

"Go to bed. I can't stand you like this."

Phil stood in the bathroom door, while Grady dried off. Grady slipped into his bathrobe as Phil's leer set his nerves on edge. As he combed his hair, he studied Phil in the mirror. Since the kidnapping, when Phil wasn't brooding, off by himself, he drank and when he drank, life at home hadn't been pleasant. Grady had worried that the Narcan might have affected his brain and his ability to reason. "What is this really about, Phil?"

Phil grabbed Grady's arm and squeezed. "You been followin' me?"

"If I have, it's because you won't talk to me. I don't know what's going on with you."

Phil paled. "You had no right..."

Grady struggled to get out of Phil's grasp. "I'm your husband, I have the right to know what you're doing. You're cheating, yet again, when you promised you'd never do it again."

Phil squeezed Grady's arm. "And if I am? Fuck, you've *always* cheated. Ever since the day we met, you've had Conrad on your mind. Do you imagine it's him when I'm fucking you?"

"Honey, you have to stop this. Let me go and go to bed."

Phil grabbed him with both hands. "Don't fucking tell me what to do? You've never loved me like you do him. He's always here, in this place, everywhere. For fuck's sake, even *Zach* is a Cotten. I can't get away from the fucker."

There was no calming Phil when he got like this. "Let go of me, and I'll help you get into bed," Grady said as he struggled in Phil's iron grip.

"You've fucked him, haven't you?" Phil slapped him across the face. "That's why you were in the shower, isn't it? You wanted to get rid of the evidence." Phil slapped him again. "I'm not stupid you know, I can smell him on you."

Grady raised his hand to his face. "I haven't seen him." *Today*.

"You're lying. You'd be the first person he'd call when he got back." Phil pushed Grady toward the bed. "Get out of that robe. I want some," he said crudely, his breath disgusting.

"Tomorrow, when you're sober."

Phil slapped him again. "Had too much, huh? Cotten wore you out?"

"I told you, I haven't seen Conrad. How can you accuse me, when you reek of sex."

Phil slapped him again, this time so hard, Grady saw stars. "Who I fuck and when I fuck is my business, got it?"

Grady hurt, surely Phil had bruised him. He stared at his husband, hardly recognizing the man he loved.

"You got nothin' to say? Fuck! You haven't been worth a damn since I got my memory back. A little suck here, a fuck there. I get more passion from my right hand."

Grady's face stung like fire. He got to his feet and walked to the door. "I won't argue with you when you're like this. Go to bed and sleep it off."

As Grady got to the stairs, Phil ran behind him. "You don't walk away from me when I'm talking to you!"

Grady turned, saw Phil's arms outstretched, his face skewed in anger.

He dodged Phil's assault, but Phil's momentum propelled him over the second floor railing.

* * *

Whispering Ridge buzzed with activity as the servants decorated the resort for Christmas. Large Christmas trees in the public rooms, each decorated with a different theme. The outside sported lights on all the pines in the complex, as well as the house itself.

In the private quarters, however, all was not mistletoe and holly.

Conrad had watched for some time, disgusted by what he'd seen. "I don't know what the fuck you think you're doing with my son, but I can assure you that it won't happen again."

"Dad, it's all right," Rider protested.

"It's not fucking all right. Blake works for me. He's old enough to be your father. What's wrong with you?"

"He's an adult, Mr. Cotten," Blake said as he looked at Rider.

"And as an adult, he should know better, and so should you. Get out, Blake, you're fired."

"You can't fire me! I'm in the middle of the investigation."

"I don't care if you're in the middle of jerking off, get out. I see you around here again, and you'll wish you had never heard of Boxer Falls."

Conrad turned his back and walked into his office. No one was going to fuck with him or his.

* * *

Grady watched in horror as Phil broke through the wooden railing and catapulted toward the marble floor below. "Phil, oh my God!"

A scream caught in this throat as Phil fell onto the twelve-foot, wrought iron Christmas tree that stood directly below.

Grady ran down the stairs, his eyes blurred with tears. He stopped short at the ghastly sight before him. The tree lay on its side, Phil in an awkward position as the finial at the top of the tree had impaled him through the chest. He lay with his eyes wide open, his mouth open in shock.

Grady felt for a pulse, and found none. He knelt beside Phil and leaned in close. He wasn't breathing.

The lawyer in Grady kicked in, as did self-preservation. Phil was dead, there was no changing that, but would anyone believe that it was an accident? Would they? People were in the house-guests, a servant or two. Someone must have heard them argue and this certainly wasn't the first time.

Who could he call for advice before he called the sheriff's office? There wasn't a brain Vic Neale and Diego what's his name. They'll see it the same way Grady did-no accident at all.

"Oh, Christ. Think man, think!" Staggered by grief and shock, he had no idea what to do. Everyone knew how they'd argued for weeks over everything from coffee to Conrad. Zach and Adam had heard them, and thanks to the fast work of the carpenters, the B&B was full up for the holidays. Guest had looked at him askance as they passed, undoubtedly having heard Phil's accusations and his defense. Tonight was just the same argument, different day.

He had no idea who had stayed in and who didn't. The big Christmas concert in the town square usually drew a crowd, but it was snowing and colder than a witch's tit outside. He heard nothing in the house. Maybe he was alone.

He looked at Phil, so macabre in his broken marionette pose. "Why?"

Grady talked to himself, but got no answers that suited him. He ran upstairs and grabbed his cell phone. Dialed 35 on speed dial. It rang once, twice. "Grady? Hey."

Grady blew out a breath in relief. "Connie. I need your help."

"What's wrong?"

"Come to the back of the B&B. Don't let anyone see you. I'm in the shit and you're the only one who can help me."

"I'm on my way."

* * *

The man watched as Conrad jumped into his car and sped out of Whispering Ridge. Too bad he didn't skid right into Lake Fergus. He followed, his headlights off as his tire chains crunched the day's newly fallen snow.

He looked into the passenger seat, his camera sitting there with the big zoom lens. Soothing, he thought. His security. He already had enough on Cotten to destroy him, but hell, the man could misstep at any moment and give him the icing on the cake.

Hardly any traffic, everyone was at the town square for the concert. That'd go on for hours yet, making all the easier for him to peak into windows and rifle through important papers. Hell, yeah. Wreak havoc on Boxer Falls from the inside.

Cotten pulled up behind the B&B. Ah, a little Christmas fuck with Grady while Phil was off with Tony or some other easy mark. The man's dick had no conscience.

Grady met Conrad at the door. He'd have to get out of his truck and slip around the building. He shut the engine off, grabbed his camera, and set out. "Fuck it's cold."

* * *

Grady shut the door, then wrapped his arms around Conrad. His iron hold Conrad nearly stole Conrad's breath.

As Conrad held him, Grady convulsed uncontrollably. "Tell me what's wrong, Grade. Shit, what has you so upset? Better yet, what did that bastard husband of yours do now?"

Grady drew in a few deep breathes, then pulled away. "For all his faults, he's a good man," Grady said, his voice weak, mournful.

"He's a philandering piece of shit and always has been, but then that's my opinion." Conrad touched Grady's face. "Why are there handprints on your face? Did he attack you?"

Grady winced. "He was drunk. Since he was kidnapped, he gets violent when he drinks. I didn't know who else to call. The police are inept and how do I know Phil wasn't fucking one of them?"

"You're rambling. Tell me what happened."

Grady took Conrad by the arm and led him through the kitchen and into the foyer. "I think he's dead."

Blood everywhere, Phil's body soaked in it. The carpet beneath him glistened with it. Then the metal Christmas tree that ran straight through Phil. "Holy fuck!"

Conrad knelt down and felt for a pulse in Phil's neck. "He's dead, Grade. My God, I'm so sorry. What happened?"

Grady told him of their argument, of seeing Phil with Conrad's twin, of Phil's drunken assault. "He kept talking about you, asked me if I'd been with you. I shouldn't have antagonized him, but I asked him if he'd slept with Tony or your twin. He got angrier than I've ever seen him and came at me. I moved and he went over the railing. What am I going to do?"

Conrad studied Grady's face. "You're a lawyer. You know that you have to call the police."

"Police, yeah, but what if they think I killed him? Everyone knows that we hadn't gotten along in weeks."

"Just tell them the truth. You have no other alternative."

Grady nodded and sought the security of Conrad's arms. "I knew you'd make sense of it. I swear I couldn't think. I keep seeing him going over that landing, and onto . . ."

"I wish I could tell you it would be all right, but I can't. You just have to do the right thing. I have to go before you call anyone. It wouldn't look good if the sheriff came while I was here."

Grady nodded, his face sad, his eyes mournful. "Yeah, I suppose you're right."

Conrad held him. "When all this is cleared up, come up to the Ridge. You can't stay here, not now."

Grady looked around the expansive foyer, that served as the lobby for the B&B. "The place is full and my folks are in Florida for the winter. I can't leave."

"Then I'll stay in touch by phone. Do you want me to make funeral arrangements?"

Grady shook his head. "No. Phil wouldn't want that. Oh, shit, I have to tell Zach. Fuck. What will this do their wedding? They are planning it for the 28th

"I don't know, but it'll be what it is." Conrad grabbed Grady's upper arms and Grady winced. Conrad pushed the big sleeves of Grady's robe up. "My God. He worked you over."

Bruises covered Grady's arms from elbow to shoulder.

"He was angry. It isn't the first time."

Conrad looked down at Phil and cursed him to hell. "Had I known what he was doing to you, I'd have done something."

"He didn't mean to hurt me," Grady said, his voice weak.

"So said all the dead spouses of abusers. 'I love him, even when he beats the shit out of me.' You're too smart for that, Grade."

"Thirty years isn't something easy to turn your back on and it didn't happen all the time."

"Once is enough. But it's done now." Looking at how distraught Grady was, Conrad couldn't say that he was glad it was Phil that ended up dead, and not Grady. "Look, there wasn't anything you could have done to prevent this. It was bound to happen."

"I know, but I should have known something was wrong with him. That drug must have messed him up."

Conrad didn't say what was on his mind, it wasn't the time to tell Grady that Phil was a fuck up and he never deserved Grady. "Yeah, I suppose that's it. Call 911. If you need me, I'll be at the Ridge."

Grady hugged Conrad and led him out the door in the kitchen.

"I'll call you."

"Let me know how it goes with the police. Call me anytime, you hear. If you need me, just pick up the phone."

* * *

The hugs, the tender touches, the intimate conversation, all while standing over Phil Boxer's body. The grieving widower and his lover. How touching.

The man sat in his truck, warming his hands before he drove back to his basement to develop the pictures he'd taken at the B&B. He couldn't have scripted this night better if he'd tried. Thank you, Phil, for taking one for the team. Sad you won't be around to see the great man fall.

Were they plotting to cover Phil's death up or planning for their future. Either way, Conrad was in deep, and as if he needed help, Grady had handed him the shovel. This is just too priceless for words.

* * *

Hard on in hand, Vic was just about to defy Blake's no jerk off order, when the phone rang in the office. "Fuck," he cursed as he tucked himself back in.

"Sheriff," Diego hollered. "Grady Boxer on the line. Says there's an emergency at the B&B."

Vic rubbed his hand over his painful cock. "Did he say what it was?"

"Said it was an accident. He's really upset."

"All right. Fuck! You'd think this town would be quiet on concert night, wouldn't ya?"

"Don't know," Diego shrugged and went back to his video game.

Vic got in his cruiser and headed over to the B&B. Maybe a construction worker got hurt or stole something. With so many strangers running in and out of the place, getting it fixed up after Old George took a header, no telling what might have happened.

Grady Boxer met him on the porch, hugging himself in lieu of wearing a coat.

"What's happened, Mr. Boxer?"

"It's Phil. Come on in out of the cold."

Vic stepped into the foyer to view a scene he hadn't expected. "What in hell happened?"

Grady shook his head. "We argued, he hit me several times. When I left the room, he lunged at me, I moved, and he fell off the second story, just there." Grady pointed up to where the railing was broken. "The tree. He made that tree, in his shop. Said he'd seen one in a catalog and liked it. Thought it looked nice."

Vic took a notepad and a pen from his uniform pocket. "You argued, you say. About what?"

Grady turned his back and walked away from Phil's body. "He was drunk. I accused him of cheating. He'd have never come after me if he was sober."

"What's those handprints on your face?"

Grady covered his cheek. "He hit me when I asked him if he'd slept with anyone. It was all a misunderstanding. A terrible accident."

"Did he hit you a lot?"

Grady looked away. "Sometimes, when he drank. Since his kidnapping he hasn't been himself. I think that Narcan they gave him changed him, made him easy to rile."

Vic took notes, wrote down everything that Grady said.

"I'll have to take a look upstairs."

"Sure, anything you need."

Vic pulled out his phone and called his office. "Yeah, get the team out here. Looks like an accident, but we'll need to investigate."

When Vic hung up he followed Grady upstairs. "You haven't touched anything, have you, Mr. Boxer?"

"No, nothing. I wanted to cover him, but thought better of it."

"Good. That was smart."

Vic spent nearly an hour in the bedroom, bathroom, and on the landing. When the team arrived, they swarmed the place, giving Vic time to talk to Grady.

"Has Phil cheated lately?"

"I should have my lawyer."

Fuck it. "Sure, once you lawyer up, come see me."

"I'm obviously upset about my husband's death and now isn't a good time to answer these questions."

"No problem," Vic said as he started to go downstairs. He didn't try to hide his aggravation. Fucking Blake and his orders! Vic stayed on edge and Blake laughed about it. After tonight, he'd jack off six times if he wanted to and fuck Blake. Busted hand, my ass.

When they got downstairs, Phil still lay uncovered, the rod still through his chest. "I'll go to one of the other rooms, if you don't need me here anymore."

"That's fine. I'm done for right now, but don't leave town. I'm sure we'll have more questions for you."

Grady nodded, looking numb. "Sure."

* * *

Grady called Conrad at three in the morning and said that the investigators had finally left and that the coroner had taken Phil to the morgue.

The guests at the B&B had checked out, down to the last couple, all horrified that such a thing could happen. Some had taken rooms at the Ridge, while Grady had referred others to the bigger chains, like the Crowne Plaza in Pittsfield.

"I'm at a loss, Connie," he'd said. "He's gone. What am I going to do?"

They talked a little while, then Conrad convinced Grady to take some Ambien and get some sleep. As for himself, he'd laid in bed with the greediest of thoughts running through his head. He'd always hated Phil Boxer and he wasn't going to mourn the

bastard now that he was dead. His death freed Grady and when he had mourned enough for society's liking, Conrad would have him, for the rest of their days. At last, he could make Grady his and give him the life he deserved.

* * *

Damn it was good to be back! Late the next afternoon, Conrad sat at his desk, reading the second edition of the Boxer Brief. Phil's mug smiled from under the headline, "Co-owner of Boxer Bed & Breakfast Falls to Death-Impaled on Christmas Tree."

No more details than what Grady had told him, but then it all looked pretty cut and dried. "Widower gone into seclusion," the paper said. "Funeral on Christmas Eve."

Conrad wanted to see Grady through this, but he couldn't and they both knew that. All eyes would be on Grady and Zach, and no one would miss the fact that Grady's former lover never left his side.

At the knock at the door, Conrad folded the paper and cursed under this breath. "Yeah, come in."

A man in a black trench coat and a hat walked in and shut the door. "Hello, Conrad."

Conrad stood and walked around the desk. "Who the hell are you and what are you doing here."

The man raised his head and Conrad stopped in mid-stride. "Where did you come from? Last I heard, you'd made it out of town, never to be heard from again."

"Oh, I've been around for a good while now and I'm here for *you* ."

"What could you want with me?"

Trip Whitlock laughed humorlessly. "Have you forgotten my father so quickly? How you destroyed him, forced him into bankruptcy, caused him to kill himself?"

"I had nothing to do with his suicide. Just before his business failed, I saw an opportunity and I took it. Strictly business. The money I paid him should have lasted him for the rest of his life but he squandered it. How is that my fault?"

"You cheated him and you know it. He did. He never stopped talking about it." Trip removed his hat and coat and hung them on the coat tree beside the door.

"Don't make yourself too comfortable, Whitlock. You have no business here."

Trip walked to the desk, his briefcase in hand. He sat and opened the case. "You might want to sit down and listen to what I have to say."

Conrad laughed. "You have nothing I care to hear."

Trip took an eight by ten glossy from the case. "Perhaps this will convince you that we have much to discuss."

Conrad looked at a photo of himself, kneeling over Phil Boxer's body. "Where did you get this?"

"Oh, I have an album of photos, *Connie*. Here's one of Grady Boxer before the cops arrived, and a few more of you and him hugging. Oh, here's one of you kissing him. Hmm, you might be interested in these, taken back in the spring at the cabin. I believe this is you nailing Grady in the ass, just before he sucked you off."

Trip arrayed the photos across Conrad's desk. Trip had documented every meeting he'd had with Grady in the last year, every time they'd kissed or fucked. "Have you followed me?" he asked numbly.

"Sure have, with sound too. Would you like a reminder of what Grady sounds like when he begs you to fuck him?"

Conrad glared, as his mind raced. "What do you want, Trip, money? Name your price."

Trip sat in the chair by the desk and crossed his legs. "Ain't going to be that easy, Mr. Almighty Cotten. Nope. This is going to be a slow, painful process for you, and when *I'm* done, *you'll* be done."

Conrad went behind his desk and sat down. His head throbbed with anger and worry for Grady. "All I've got is money, and I've got more of that than Midas himself."

"Oh, and I'll have a goodly portion of it, but there's more I want. Consider it interest on all your nefarious dealings. Your life has caught up to you, old man."

Conrad interlaced his fingers and rested his hands on his chest. "Okay, I'm listening."

"Very good. Here is how it's going to go. You're going to marry me, here, at Whispering Ridge, on December 28th. Before that day, you will have a will drawn up that leaves *everything* to me, in case of your untimely demise."

"I am going to marry *you*? Are you fucking out of your mind?"

"You've only heard a part of my plan. The best is yet to come. In the unlikely event that you don't agree, I will turn these photographs and recordings over to the cops and let them sort through them. I am sure a good attorney could make a compelling argument for Grady having killed Phil, and even if the case never comes to trial, you and Boxer will be ruined. Your reputations will be shit and you'll have spent a fortune trying to keep him out of jail. Your sons will hate you, and I'll see to it that Grady will hate you too."

"Grady didn't kill Phil. It was an accident. You can't change that."

"Then why did he call you before he called the cops? These photos make it look like you two were plotting something. I can see it on your faces. And then there is this one-see Grady standing behind a tree, right outside here, watching as Phil locks lips with your lookalike. Now see the look on his face as he turns to go to his car? Ohh, that looks like anger. If looks could kill, huh?"

Conrad shoved the photos back toward Trip. "This will never fly. Phil died in an accident, period."

"I suspected you'd say something like that, you being the self-absorbed ass that you are. So here it is. I have another photo for you." Trip handed Conrad a picture.

Conrad studied it, as his heart raced. "What is this?"

"It's a bomb, you fucking asshole, or as I like to think of it, my insurance policy. You either do as I say or this bomb and others like it, go off all over Boxer Falls. Before I'm done, there will be nothing left of this burg, and might I add, *no* one left."

"You've planted bombs all over Boxer Falls?"

"I have. Many of them. They are set to go off by noon on the 28th, unless I deactivate them. I'm saving the best one though, for your family. I'll blow those two worthless sons of yours to kingdom come. Then Grady, Zach, and then I'll just keep working my way down the food chain. You don't agree to my terms, and I'll start right away. The funeral ought to be a great place to kill several birds with one stone, don't you think?"

"Why are you doing this? I could set you up with more money than you could ever spend."

"You'll do that too, but I want to see you sweat. I want you to dance to my tune for a change, like everyone dances to yours. Phil's death just happens to be a fortuitous occurrence. Now for the first time in thirty years, Grady's free, and you aren't. Ain't karma a bitch?"

Conrad sat back in his chair and stared at Trip, his mind going a mile a minute. "There's no fucking way I'm marrying you, you little prick."

Trip gathered his pictures and placed the stack in front of Conrad. "You keep these. I have several sets. Don't think to off me, Conrad. I've left instructions that in case of my death, the cops should look at you first. I've got enough information in safekeeping to bury you, Cotten. You'll marry me, right here at Whispering Ridge, on December 28th. If you don't, you'll have nothing left to live for. Spoken to your ex-wife lately?"

Conrad jumped up from behind the desk. "What have you done?"

Trip arched a brow. "Try calling her and see." He picked up his briefcase and went to the door. He plopped the hat on his head and shrugged into his trench coat. "I'll take care of the arrangements, just be here at eleven in the morning on the 28th."

Trip closed the door and Conrad blew out a breath. He grabbed the phone and dialed his ex-wife's number. The phone rang and rang. Finally a woman with a Spanish accent picked up. "Hola."

"Is Lucinda there?"

"Who is calling, por favor?"

"Conrad Cotten, her ex-husband."

There was a long hesitation. "I am sorry, sir. Mrs. Lucinda died a week ago."

"Died," he said, stunned that he hadn't heard the news.

"Si. A terrible car accident. She was killed instantly."

"Thank you," he said and hung up the phone. For a long while he stared at the pictures stacked on the desk. Him and Grady, Phil and Tony, Phil and ..., and Phil and ... Shit that man's dick was a loose cannon. He picked up the photo of Grady hiding behind a tree while Phil kissed Conrad's look alike, and then the one as he'd turned around. Was that hurt or anger? It didn't matter. With evidence of all of Phil's philandering, that's motive for murder.

He dropped them on the desk and scrubbed his face with his hands. There had to be a way out of this, but the bombs. He was more inclined to believe that Trip wasn't bluffing. How would he know about Lucinda's death if he hadn't murdered her himself?

Trip had gone mad, and worse, Conrad faced a future with him.



* Will Vic think that Grady killed Phil?

* Will Conrad show up on the 28th and marry Trip Whitlock?

* Can Trip do anything more dastardly to prove that he's serious?

TUNE IN NEXT WEEK!

Boxer Falls: The bigger they are...

AUTHOR BIO:

Born in Upstate New York, Brita Addams has made her home in the sultry south for many years. Brita's home is a happy place, where she lives with her real-life hero, her husband, and a fat cat named Stormee. All their children are grown.

She writes, for the most part, erotic historical romance, both het and m/m, which is an ideal fit, given her love of British and American history. Setting the tone for each historical is important. To do that, in part, Brita incorporates archaic English in dialogue, which reviewers and readers seem to love. Many of her historicals, as well as contemporaries, have appeared on category bestseller lists at various online e-tailers.

Brita and her husband love to travel, particularly cruises and long car trips. They completed a Civil War battlefield tour a couple of years ago, and have visited many places involved in the American Revolutionary War.

A bit of trivia – Brita pronounces her name, B-Rita, like the woman's name, and oddly, not like the famous water filter.

Though internet gremlins recently gobbled her website, she loves visitors to her blog. Readers can find Brita Addams at any of the following places.

[Website /Blog URL](#)

Twitter: @britaaddams

[Facebook](#)

[Fan Page](#)

[Goodreads](#)