



Episode Twenty- Nine

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Boxer Falls: Episode 29

by Anne Tenino

Rider woke up suddenly in near pitch-dark, heart tripping along threadily the way it had been lately, contributing to his general feeling of being weak. The room-the air, even-felt suspended around him. Almost as if it were as scared as he.

But he didn't have time to think about that right now, because someone was in here with him.

He couldn't turn his head to look at the clock because whoever he felt staring at him might figure out he'd awakened. It seemed like three a.m. No rhyme or reason to why, it just seemed like it. Who would come to see him now?

His heart beat a little harder, a bird battering itself against a window, trying to escape. It wouldn't do him any good to cry for help, he was half a mansion away from another living person.

Except for his nocturnal visitor.

"Rider?"

Shit. Fuck . He recognized that voice. His heart kicked it up a notch. *Sam. I'm trapped in the room with a murderer.*

"Rider? Love?"

Love ? Something in Sam's voice sounded wrong, not just the endearment, but that tone. As if a bird tried to batter itself to death inside him also. "Sam?"

In the next second, Rider had a ton of shaking, panting man pinning him to the bed. He fought free from under Sam's grasping hands and wrapped his arms around Sam's back, trying to just hold him still, get a grip on just what the actual fuck was going on, here.

"What is it? What's wrong?"

"Aisha," Sam gasped. "It's Aisha, her plane...;They-oh, God-don't expect to f-find survivors."

"*What?*"

"Over the-" Sam interrupted himself to gulp air "-over the ocean. Her plane went down. I should have gone with her, Rider. I should have!"

"Shhh," Rider hushed him instinctively-although God knew where that instinct had come from. He'd never comforted anything his entire life. "It's okay, it's going to be okay," he whispered, stroking Sam's head.

Sam reared up, gripping Rider's upper arms. "It's *not!* She could be dead, or dying! She needs me and I'm not *there!*"

Rider swallowed a sick ball of terror when it hit him; Sam could be with her. He could be missing too, presumed dead. Rider could be wondering-

He shoved Sam off him, reversing their positions, leaning down until he was nose-to-nose with him. "You aren't there, you're here with me, and you're *staying* right here, Sam. You're safe, with me."

"But...;" Rider sensed movement under him; Sam shaking his head back and forth. "She's always been there for me, Rider. Always. This was my time to be there for her, but I wasn't. And...;and if she's g-g-gone...;" Sam sucked in a deep breath, then another, somewhere between finding the courage to speak and hyperventilating. He continued in a whisper, "All I have is you."

Rider didn't have a clue how long they lay there, stunned. He held Sam while he sobbed into his neck, and had plenty of time to wonder why he cared if Sam needed him, or hadn't died in some plane in some ocean, and to remember Sam was a murderer and wonder why he wasn't terrified, but instead felt worry and relief and some weird emotion he didn't want to name that skulked around his heart.

Maybe it was all a dream?

* * *

Conrad knew this would work for sure, right?

He had to know. Otherwise why do it? He'd been fucking Tony silly right up until that time he'd called him Grady. If he didn't think it would work, he wouldn't send Tony away, would he? Not a horny old goat like Conrad. So yeah, this plan to break up Phil and Grady Boxer must be solid.

Tony might not be the sharpest tool in the shed but it sure seemed like he'd been sitting around trying to get Phil's attention a lot without any results the last few days. He could've been in his bed asleep, not sitting in his truck on a silent street, trying to keep awake while staring at a door that never moved.

He yawned until his jaw cracked. Working all day for old man Cotten and staking out the B&B half the night was pretty fucking useless so far.

"Heh," he muttered. Weird how he'd gone from "Conrad" to "old man Cotten" in just a few days. Coupla weeks ago, Tony thought he might be falling in love with the guy.

Then Conrad started treating him like everyone else-everyone but Phil-treated him, like he was dumb as a post. Just a tool.

He was just a tool for Conrad to get Grady. The old man didn't give a shit whether Tony got Phil.

You're acting like a tool.

It would serve Cotten right if he gave up. Let the old bastard figure out how to get the "love of his life" back, on his own. Well, and with the help he'd hired. One advantage of everyone thinking he was dumb was the amount of shit they said around him. Tony knew all about Blake. And he was starting to wonder some shit about that Dean guy, too. The dude was doing some sneaking around himself, and it didn't seem like it was the same sneaking around Tony and Blake were doing. Did anyone one in this Goddamned town ever sleep?

Not much . Which was pretty much the point of him sitting in his pick up outside the B&B at nearly four in the morning. Phil sometimes couldn't sleep, and he'd go for a little walk. Used to be a little walk over to Tony's place, but he didn't know where Phil went anymore.

Tony'd been hoping to get Phil to walk into his truck. Even though he was starting to wonder just why he wanted Phil so much. Or Conrad. Or any of the silver foxes he messed around with. 'Cause you'd have to be a stupider guy than him not to notice he had a thing for dudes with gray in their hair.

A tweeting bird caught his attention. Some stakeout he was on, spacing off. Shit, it was starting to get light. Tony checked his watch. Yeah, little after four. Phil was never going to get in his pick up if anyone could see him. Tony needed to pack it up and go home. He rubbed his eyes, yawning again. Maybe he could sleep for an hour before he had to go up to the Cotten place for work. He dropped his hands.

Someone was walking toward him from the B&B, on the sidewalk already. *Phil*. Except not. This guy's shoulders were too broad for Phil's, and his walk wasn't right. This guy walked like he was packing some serious heat between his thighs.

Looked familiar.

Like the dumbfuck everyone said he was, he sat there in his truck, watching the unknown man walk right up to him and look in his window.

Deputy Diego Sanchez. *Yeah, he's packing some serious heat.*

Tony reached for the keys hanging in his ignition, meaning to drive off and leave Diego there, but Sanchez opened his door. Why the fuck hadn't he locked it?

"Well," Diego murmured in his low voice. "What are you doing here at this time of the morning?" He flicked a look toward the B&B, and then tilted his head at Tony, gaze pinning him right there. Way too fucking late, Tony noticed Diego had his uniform on.

He jutted out his chin. "Nothing. Why the fuck do you care?"

"Could be someone called in a complaint, and I'm here investigating."

Tony went hot, then cold, slumping back against the seat.

"Could be I'm on my way home, and I want a ride from you, and some conversation."

"Fuck, no!"

"I may be off the clock, but that doesn't mean I can just ignore suspicious, possibly criminal, activity." Diego stared at him, more intent than before. Even though Tony was pissed and frustrated and-fine, fuck it-achey-hearted, didn't mean he didn't notice the way Diego's dark brown eyes caught the cab light, or the way the muscles in his neck flexed while he waited for Tony to answer.

He sighed, giving up. If he wasn't careful around this guy, he'd be giving *it* up. "Get in," Tony muttered.

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He needed something. Anything. Once the tears dried up-and wasn't that humiliating?-Sam needed more. He needed to show Rider who was comforting whom, here. He

rolled the man under him and crushed their mouths together, gripping the hair over his ear to hold him still.

Sam used his tongue like a sword, a rapier. Attack and parry, force his opponent to give ground, grinding down against his lips, until Sam could feel Rider's teeth, and he sucked the breath out of his lungs.

Rider put his palm against Sam's shoulder and pushed. Sam let him go, let him free. Still he caged Rider's body with his arms and legs, trapping Riders' thighs between his, but he backed off his mouth.

Rider sucked in air. "I told you-"

"You kissed me back. You let me into your room in the middle of the night. You're hard, Rider, up against my leg. You want me, love." Sam rubbed their cheeks together, stubble catching. He could force this. He was stronger and in better shape.

You need Rider to want you .

Fucking pansy.

"I want you," Rider whispered, caught up on his breathing. "But I can't, Sam. I don't...;I won't like it. I won't like myself."

"Oh, I'll make sure you like it," Sam purred in his ear, then bit his lobe.

"No."

Sam froze. Just for a second, but Rider noticed and pushed against him again. Quick as a snake, he had Rider's wrists pinned to the bed and he was hissing in his face, close enough to just make him out in the light filtering in through the window shade. Rider's eyes widened, and he went rigid, breath speeding up again-from fear this time, not desire.

Sam felt like howling. All this fucking emotion inside him wanting out, pushing at his gut and his ribs and his lungs. Fucking *hurt*, and Rider wouldn't give him what he wanted. What he *needed*. Didn't he fucking know? That was what he was supposed to

do. How it was supposed to be. "Why don't you want me anymore?" Sam nearly screamed through his teeth, sounding more like a wounded animal than a human to himself.

"I do," Rider said softly. "I do. Sam, you know I...;I love you. But it's like I'm, I don't know, like, broken inside. I can fix it, I think, but not this way. Not if you do this to me."

Rider's gentle voice slammed into Sam like a physical blow. His fingers went numb, loosening on Rider's wrists. Jesus Christ, he was scum. A bottom feeder. Trying to take advantage-thinking about*forcing*-the one man who'd always stood by him and welcomed him. Rider had never asked him for anything but their relationship, and Sam wanted to use him as a punching bag. Work out his pain on Rider. Sam rolled off him, collapsing onto the bed. He covered his eyes with his hands. "I'm sorry," he rasped. Jesus, he was just fucking up all over the place. "It would have been better if we'd never met."

Rider's swift inhale sounded painful. Sam dropped his hands and turned to look at his dim outline.

"Do you mean that?" he asked shakily.

"I hurt you," Sam answered baldly, voice raw. "Over and over again. I used you." He saw it clearly, like he had that day at the rehab facility, but then forced himself to forget. "I'm bad for you. I shouldn't have come here, I should have let you get better. I'm leaving, love." He pushed himself up.

Rider's hand shot out and grabbed his arm. Sam could have broken his hold easily, but he let Rider stop him. Propped on one elbow, staring at the window. His chest ached again, like he'd never get enough air. Was he too old to develop asthma?

It wasn't all bad. I wanted you to...; use me. I'm just, I'm trying to learn to count on myself now. I still care about you." Rider's voice was strangely shy. "Before, there were times I needed somebody, and you were always there for me. It's not like I could count on my family. But you never-" he swallowed audibly "-you never needed me."

"I did," he whispered.

"You're just trying to make me feel better," Rider said, laughing hollowly. "You never needed me until now."

He couldn't let Rider think that. He'd flay his own chest open to make sure that didn't happen. Sam gripped Rider's face, looming over him. "I was hooked on you, love. I always came back for my fix." All that time he'd been cultivating Rider's addiction to drugs, he'd been feeding his own dependence on Rider.

"You needed Aisha more."

Sam fell back on the bed again. Jesus Christ, he'd almost forgotten. How could he forget? "It's different. I didn't chose Aisha, I was born into that relationship," Sam said slowly, realizing the truth as he spoke the words. "I *chose* you."

He could hear Rider's breath speed up, shaky like it had been when he'd been scared, and then Rider was over him, quick breaths falling on Sam. "Can you wait for me to get better?"

Sam swallowed, heart jumping up his throat. What the fuck was he doing? "Yes," he choked out. Tentatively he laid his hands on Rider's back.

Fingers stroked his cheek. "Sam, there's just one thing...; Yoshi. You didn't do anything to him, right?"

Fuck. Sam closed his eyes a second, grateful Rider couldn't see him. Yoshi may have fucked him over, but he'd be upset if he thought Sam had killed the guy. "No, I didn't. I wanted to, love, I even planned it out, but I didn't kill him."

"Thank God." Rider kissed him quickly, then lay his head on Sam's shoulder. Sam wrapped his arms around Rider and wondered how long he'd have to wait for Rider to get better. And what he'd do if he ever found out that Aisha killed Yoshi.

Right this second if Sam had to choose between his sister and Rider, he'd choose Rider. *Please don't ever let him find out the truth about Yoshi.* Jesus, if Aisha *didn't* die when her plane went down...;

"We'll find your sister, Sam, I promise. Don't worry."

* * *

Diego stood unmoving on the passenger side of Tony's truck, one hand on the open door and one on the pickup frame, poised to get in. "I guess I don't need a ride from you," he said, when he'd stood there long enough that Tony looked over.

Tony's mouth fell open, eyes widening then narrowing. "Don't need anything from the village idiot, huh?" Tony grabbed the key and turned it, gunning the engine.

That was stupid, ' mano. He cleared his throat, but didn't move out of the doorway. He didn't *think* Tony'd drive off with him still there. "That's not what I meant," he said, loud enough to be sure Tony heard him. The guy refused to look at him, staring straight ahead. "I meant I shouldn't have tried to manipulate you into giving me a ride like that. It was wrong. I'm sorry, pa."

Tony's mouth turned down. "Why'd you call me that? You called me that before; pa." He flushed red, and Diego stifled a smile. They both knew what "before" he was talking about. Tony gripped the stick shift, fidgeting.

Diego couldn't help himself. "You know why I call you that," He said, voice rumbling in his chest. But he needed to get some things straight between them before he started anything again. Tried to start anything. He cleared his throat, trying to bring it back to his normal tone. "It's what I'd call my lover in Puerto Rico."

Tony took a second to absorb that, then nodded slowly, watching his hand twist on the shifter knob. "Why'd you try to force me to take you home?"

Diego gripped the truck door harder, until the edge pressed too hard into his flesh. "Because I don't like you watching the Boxer's place. You have been for the last few nights." His voice went low again, out of his control. "You watching for Phil?"

"Guess everyone knows how I feel about him," Tony muttered.

Diego swung himself into the pickup.

Tony looked at him in surprise. "What?"

"You can tell me why you're watching for him on the way to my place, pa."

Tony swallowed. "What if I don't want to?"

Diego forced a shrug. "I'll walk. Not that far."

Tony gripped the shifter tightly, wrenching the truck into gear. "I'll give you a ride."

Diego let out the breath he'd been holding.

"Why d'you care if I watch the B&B?" Tony asked after a minute of driving, halfway to Diego's place.

Again, his damn mouth shot off. He couldn't blame it; it was trying to protect his heart. "Forget it, you wouldn't understand."

Tony hit the brakes in the middle of the street, and Diego grabbed the dashboard. His seatbelt jerked him back. "Get out," Tony bit off.

"I don't think you're stupid, Tony." He was the stupid one here. Couldn't say the right thing when it mattered the most.

Tony's jaw tensed. "Yeah? Then tell me why and see if I understand."

Diego had to make every word count. "I want you to watch me like you watch Phil Boxer."

It was just light enough now that he could see Tony's face flush. "I'm sick of everyone treating me like I'm a moron," he complained, not acknowledging what Diego'd said. "I'm not, you know."

"I know." Diego took a chance, stretching his arm out on the back of the bench seat, stroking the back of Tony's neck with one finger. "Only person whose opinion matters is yours, pa."

The look Tony gave him-head turned just slightly toward him, eyes peering up from under his lashes, hopeful and scared-made Diego think he'd finally said the right thing. He took another chance, leaning slowly toward Tony. If this was the only way Tony'd let him, Diego would kiss him right here, in the middle of the road, still in uniform, for anyone to see. Wasn't like Sheriff Neale at all when you cared about someone and weren't just looking to hook up.

He didn't know if Tony's foot slipped off the brake or he let the truck lurch forward on purpose, but Diego nearly ate Tony's ear, and the next thing he knew they were moving again, headed to his house. He watched Tony's Adam's apple bob and the color in his face rise again.

Diego leaned back. No kiss, but he'd count it as progress.

Tony pulled into Diego's driveway, and sat there with the engine idling. "Is that why you said that before? That I wouldn't understand. 'Cause you, like, feel jealous or something? That's why you ended it."

Diego shifted uncomfortably, then leaned over and shut off the truck's engine. "I didn't think you'd want to see just me, but that's what I want. I'm not the type of guy you normally like."

"I didn't really have a dad around," Tony said, turning toward him, hand gripping his knee. "Phil said that's why I like older guys like him."

Diego had been thinking along the same lines. He reached out and took Tony's hand, pried it off his knee and held it gently.

Tony let him.

"I'm older than you," he said, slipping fingers under Tony's coat cuff to stroke the underside of his wrist. "Just a few years." He smiled, couldn't help it. "We could pretend."

Tony licked his lower lip quickly, finally raising his eyes to meet Diego's. "And you've got that uniform. You're a deputy. That's powerful." He crooked a half-smile. "Daddy's have power, not just gray hair, you know."

Diego's smile grew. "Yeah, I have some power, and I'm working on a promotion, sort of." He leaned forward, waiting for Tony's breath to speed up against his lips before kissing him.

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"What the fuck're they doing in there?" Gino bitched for the third time in the last fifteen minutes.

"How do I know?" Dean asked again, less calmly than the first two times. "The shades are closed. You should have bugged the damn room." He'd bugged the whole mansion, but he wasn't about to share *that* bit of news.

Gino smirked, not looking away from his binoculars. "You're a mouthy thing when you aren't tied down to the bed getting your ass reamed."

Dean shifted slightly. He'd managed to forget the tenderness of his back for a few minutes. Playtime with Gino had been nice while it lasted, but now that the endorphins were wearing off he felt like somebody had scraped off the first few layers of skin, which was pretty much what had happened. "Jesus, Gino, you aren't great with the aftercare are you?"

He smirked. "Most of my, uh, *partners* are too scared to complain afterward, or they're unconscious. Comforting my sub isn't in my skill set."

"You should work on it."

Gino finally dropped the binocs and turned to him, looking sulky. "Most of the guys I mess with aren't willing, they just want the hell away from me after. Not sure I like it."

Dumbass . "Next time you kidnap a guy, take the time to make sure he doesn't like being worked over and fucked into the mattress first." Gino's lower lip protruded farther. Dean had to look around the cabin they were staked out in to avoid smiling right in his face. Gino'd set them up in one of the guest cabins on the Cotten property, thinking he'd have a little fun with a non-consenting bed partner and conduct some surveillance at the same time.

He'd pretty much read Dean wrong when he picked him as the non-consenter. Pain and no safe word while he had something jagged shoved up his ass? Bring it on.

"Goddammit, I don't like this," Gino muttered, back to trying to see through the curtains into Rider Cotten's suite. Those fuckers didn't have bedrooms, they had freaking apartments. "Boss lady's in trouble and Sam goes running to cry to the nutcase."

Time to distract the thug again. "Long as he's in there, you have leisure time." Dean put some yearning in his voice-it wasn't difficult, it'd been a long time since he'd been with someone as skilled as Gino. In Dean's line of work, he took what he could get when he could get it.

His real line of work, not this tabloid videographer bullshit.

Gino grunted. Dean needed more effective tactics. He stood up, still mostly naked, a few flakes of wax clinging to his skin. "You need to watch the bruising. I'm a professional and now I gotta walk around with ligature marks on my wrist and fingerprints on my neck. Makes me look bad."

That got the man's attention. Gino stood at the window and visually inspected Dean from toes to hair, spending extra time on his legs. Noting the lash marks on his thighs, he bet.

He did bruise well, it was one of his finer points.

Gino leered and set the binoculars on the windowsill, then walked toward Dean, until he towered over him. Dean suppressed a shiver, turning it into a cringe when Gino picked up his arm and stroked the rope marks on his wrist. "Makes you look hot. Wouldn't mind doing that again." Then his mouth turned sulky again and he glared. "F'you didn't like it so much."

Dean wiped the smirk off his face. "I'll pretend. Beg for mercy, weep, whatever. Scream. I'm a good actor, Gino, try me. I fooled you for a while the first time, didn't I?"

Gino reached up and pinched Dean's nipple hard, twisting it until Dean sucked in a breath and fell to his knees. "Don't hurt me, sir," he begged, letting tears fill his eyes. Too much? He flicked a look at Gino's trousers. Nope, little Gino liked that. "I'll do

anything, just don't hurt me." Dean lurched forward, falling into Gino's groin, breathing hotly on his dick.

"Anything, huh?" Gino murmured, twisting harder until Dean whined-for real, not acting. The pain lanced through him, waking up his prick.

He almost begged for more, then remembered he was supposed to be begging to avoid pain. "Anything except the hot wax on my balls. Please sir, not that."

"Oh, exactly that," Gino purred.

Thank fuck . He almost wiggled in anticipation, but managed a cower instead, head bent, forehead strategically nudging Gino's package.

"And the Tailstretcher. You scream so pretty when I shove that in you."

Dean hoped to God his shudder looked like fear. "Not at the same time," he begged. He might just die from that kind of stimulation.

Gino growled, let go of his nipple and shoved him back onto his ass. Dean kept his eyes carefully averted. "Get on the bed. You're getting it all at once."

As Dean whimpered and crawled-seemingly reluctantly-onto the bed, he cast one last look toward the window. It was getting light out, but Gino was too distracted to notice. His binoculars were there, abandoned.

Mission accomplished. He wouldn't be poking into whatever Sam and Rider had going. And Dean could listen to his own audio later, when he was alone.

Cold steel on his lower back caught his attention as Gino cut his briefs off him with a knife, coming dangerously close to castrating him. Dean moaned, and again when Gino lit a candle. "No, please," he whispered brokenly. *And hurry the fuck up with it.*



**Will Sam respect Rider's wishes, or will his grief push him too far?*

**Will Tony accept Diego's advances?*

**Who is Dean, and what is he up to?*

TUNE IN NEXT WEEK!

Boxer Falls: The bigger they are...

AUTHOR BIO:

Raised on a steady media diet of Monty Python, classical music and the visual arts, Anne Tenino rocked the mental health world when she was the first patient diagnosed with Compulsive Romantic Disorder. Since that day, with her trusty psychiatrist by her side, Anne has taken on conquering the M/M world through therapeutic writing. Finding out who those guys having sex in her head are and what to do with them has been extremely liberating.

Anne's husband finds it liberating as well, although in a somewhat different way. He has accepted her need for "research", and looks forward to the benefits said research affords him. He thinks it's kind of cool she manages to write, as well. Her two daughters are mildly confused by Anne's need to twist Ken dolls into odd positions. They were raised to be open-minded children, however, and other than occasionally stealing Ken1's strap-on, they let Mom do her thing without interference.

Anne's thing is writing gay romance and erotica.

Wondering what Anne does in her spare time? Mostly she lies on the couch, eats bonbons and shirks housework.

Check out what Anne's up to now by visiting [her site](#).

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