

Title: Drawn By Their Heart's Passion

Author: Seductivembrace

Pairing, Characters: Spike/Buffy, Dawn

Rating: NC-17

Summary: Set during *Doublemeat Palace* and going A/U from there. Story is told in a series of relatively short Buffy POV prompts from my **SPUFFY SMUT TABLE**.

Disclaimer: Joss said I could, so I am.

Part 1: Coming Home

"No, look at me! I ... love you. You're all I bloody think about. Dream about. You're in my gut ... my throat ... I'm drowning in you, Summers, I'm drowning in you."

I remember the words like it happened yesterday. I had been handcuffed and helpless, filled with a sense of dread that I would have to stake Spike because he no longer had the chip in his head.

A voice interrupts my thoughts, and I punch the proper buttons on the cash register as an older gentleman orders the latest and greatest from the Doublemeat Palace. My mind isn't on him though. It's on a vamp that can get my heart racing with just one look, though I will deny it with my last breath. My affected smile slips at the reminder. My eyes glaze over in remembrance and I zone out.

Long enough that the man has to wave a hand in front of my face to get my attention, and a coworker to nudge me back to reality. This reality. No more heaven. No more peace. Just a hell of my friends' own making.

A slight shake, fake Barbie smile back in place, and I firmly bury the hell that is my existence and finish up the man's order. Take his money and give him his change.

"Welcome to the Doublemeat Palace. What can I get you?" And so the monotony continues with the next customer and then the next.

Again my mind drifts...

"You still don't believe. Still don't think I mean it. You want proof, huh? How's this? I'm gonna kill Drusilla for you."

'Do it! Do it!'

The words reverberated in my head, struggling to get out. But all he saw at the time was the negative shake of my head. The disgust on my face.

I wonder sometimes if he knew. If Harmony hadn't shown up, I think I might have caved. Had him kill the love of his unlife, his sire.

Getting Willow to do the disinvent spell probably saved me from a downward spiral, like the one I'm in now. The small rift with my mother over shutting Spike out my life and our home, I took to my grave.

I catch myself before I lose my composure, sniff and blink back the sudden tears, driving back that particular memory and locking it safely away. There is nothing worse than trying to explain your overly-emotional state to your boss. Besides, it isn't like I can come right out and say that I'm still adjusting to being back among the living and dealing with some issues.

Being institutionalized once was enough.

Another customer and I'm back on track, sliding back into the rote order-taking. A few minutes later and the small crowd disperses to plastic seats and cheap Formica tabletops to scarf down their unhealthy dinners. My own stomach rumbles in anticipation of food, but I send a stern reminder to my brain that anything I ingest will only come right back up. I find I can hardly keep anything down these days.

I hear my name being called, and I turn to see Harold, our new shift manager, gesture me over.

'Oh, goodie, a new piece of equipment to learn.'

"Hey, Buffy, let me show you..."

I tune him out before he can finish his sentence, though I seem attentive enough, allowing someone to take over my register as I follow docilely behind the man. He drones on and on, his voice far more animated than the situation allows. If I had it in me, I would roll my eyes. Rocket science, this is not. And if things get confusing, the oh-so-convenient directions posted by the buttons will help clue me in. He walks away, confident in his managerial role, and I begin to push the sequence of buttons like the good little employee I am. No one waits for onion rings, not on my watch.

I can practically see Spike's smirk, which leads me back to thoughts of him. Knowing it's no use, I pick a happier memory this time. Another secret. Again, one I took to my grave.

I wonder what he would say if I told him the last memory I had before dying was the image of his face when I invited him back in.

I fade back in to see Harold looking at me expectantly. I give him a nod, then glance over to the clock. Break time – I can escape for thirty minutes. Even if it is only to the alley behind the restaurant. Any place is better than this; just take me away from the cloying smell of aged oil and fried foods.

Alone in the darkness, I don't worry about being seen. No one ever comes out here. Here it's safe to let down my guard, and when I do, it's like a thousand questions run through my head simultaneously. Questions I dare not voice aloud.

And buried beneath the confusion, hopelessness, and disbelief, is an anger so deep it scares me with its intensity. Anger towards Willow, and Xander. And even, god, and even Tara. Tara, who should have *known* better. They all go blithely about their business, confident in their accomplishments. While I... while I... despair...

Why did my friends do it? Why did they think I was rotting away in some hell dimension when all I ever did with my life was protect the people around me, along with the rest of the world?

God, I want to go back. The peace I felt, I can't describe it other than to say it was perfect nothingness. No duty. No calling. No heartache and pain. No right or wrong, good or bad. Just calm acceptance. An unending rest... from everything.

I slide down the wall until I'm sitting on the ground, pull my knees up so I have some place to rest my chin. I don't feel the cold seeping into my butt through the polyester monkey suit I have to wear.

A minute later, I hear him approach.

Another, and I've got my pants hanging off one ankle, my back pressed up against the side of the building. Spike's cock buried deep inside me.

Between the crates and the duster wrapped around us, I'm shielded from anyone that might wander past.

His breath is cool against my neck. Soft little pants as he thrusts inside me. Much like I'm doing.

These encounters never last long. Already I can feel his fingers digging into my ass as his thrusts get stronger, more erratic.

He says nothing and neither do I.

The pressure continues to build. My legs tighten about Spike's waist. He recognizes the signal and lets himself go.

My back scrapes against the wall. Harder and harder.

I barely feel one of his hands leave off my ass and yank my shirt away from my neck.

His fangs are like pure bliss. I come hard, biting my own lip to stifle my scream. I'm not sure what actually does it for me, the bite or that growly moan thing he does as I squeeze him tight and milk him dry. It resonates deep inside, and damned if it doesn't set me off again.

Which sets him off again. This time it's more of a purr.

Getting dressed is awkward, but I'm used to it. Used to his eyes that follow my every move as I bend down and step back into my pants, fix my shirt, and straighten my hair. Thank god for the hat that will hide the tangled mess it's become.

I don't look at him as I walk away. If I did, if I looked in his eyes and saw the love shining within their depths, I'd take him up on his offer. His proposition.

"Come away with me. Just you and the Bit. Let me take care of you, take care of both of you. Please, Buffy... Slayer..."

I want to. I want to so bad it hurts.

I pause at the entrance. Look back and he's still standing there. Staring at me.

My hand grips the handle so hard it snaps off.

"Buffy?"

He takes a step forward, seeing the yes in my eyes. The yes I can't hide.

Why can't I hide from him?

I open the door to try and get away from him, but he's there before I'm able. Then he's kissing me. A kiss unlike any I've ever experienced.

And I cave.

I lean into him. My hands snake their way around his neck and pull him closer. Clinging to him like a lifeline.

"We'll go away tonight. Right now," he tells me between kisses. "Buffy... oh, love..."

I soak up each endearment, each tender caress.

Then his hand slips into mine and he's pulling me away. Away from minimum wage jobs and unpaid bills. Away from my friends and their betrayal.

It's just me, and Spike, and Dawn – huddled together on the front seat of his car as we leave Sunnydale, and all of its heartache, behind.

Part 2: Disappear

The slight weight of Spike's arm around my shoulder feels good. I snuggle closer and his grip tightens momentarily in what could have passed for a hug. His lips brush against my temple and I let out a sigh.

"Not long now, love," he whispers to me, his tone apologetic.

I remain quiet, give a slight jerk of my head that I heard him. Another squeeze, then he's concentrating on the road again. I close my eyes and let the rumble of the engine and the soft strains of classical music wash over me. I'm too tired to figure out why Spike has that particular station programmed in his radio.

I must have dozed off because the next thing I know, Spike is shaking me awake.

"Sorry to wake you, pet. I've got us a room. Wake up Little Sis, and let's get you settled, yeah?"

Inside the room, he leads me straight to the bed furthest from the door and pulls back the covers, motioning for me and Dawn. We take off only our shoes before falling wearily into bed.

"What about..." *You*, I want to say as he settles the blankets around my shoulders.

"Got a few things to see to first while it's still dark out."

“Oh.”

I don't ask what and he doesn't tell me. He pauses only long enough to ensure that Dawn has gone back to sleep before he slips from the room.

I lay there on my back in the wake of his leaving, unable to do the same. I'm exhausted and want nothing more than to sink back into that blessed state of unconsciousness, but I can't.

With Spike gone, the slayer in me has come forward and takes over the duty of protecting Dawn. I hate it... this reminder of what I am. I want Spike back. With him I can forget. With him I can be just Buffy.

Two hours go by before he returns. I know this because I spend the time staring at the bedside clock, watching the digital readout broadcast the minutes of his departure.

“You're supposed to be sleeping, love,” he tells me. His eyes are filled with concern as he sets several nondescript bags on the dresser and walks towards me. He doesn't sit down next to me, instead choosing to sit across from me on the second bed.

“I couldn't.”

He nods as if he understands, gives me a sort of half-smile.

Neither of us looks away for the space of several minutes.

Finally, he pulls something from his pocket and hands it to me. “Here. Put this on.”

Our hands touch as I take the bracelet from him. My eyes shift from him to it and back to him. When they do, there's a question on my face.

“It's charmed,” he tells me. “Prevents Red from finding us with her mojo.” He pulls back the sleeve of his duster to show me the one he's wearing, then his hand snakes into his pocket and he pulls out another one. For Dawn, I'm assuming.

I take that one too, and turn over to secure it to Dawn's wrist; she never stirs. I turn back and hold out my hand with the bracelet, silently asking Spike to put mine on.

The relief I feel once it's secure is unimaginable. In the back of mind, I'd wondered how far we'd get before Willow found us.

Spike stands when he's through and I can't help watching as he takes off his duster and sets it aside. Shirt and shoes follow, leaving him in nothing but his jeans. He eyes the bathroom longingly, but something decides him against it – probably worries about waking Dawn – and he returns to the second bed and slips beneath the covers.

I last ten minutes before I'm out of the one I'm sharing with Dawn and stripping out of my Doublemeat Palace uniform. Clad in only a chemise and underwear I climb in next to Spike. He settles the blankets around us both as I snuggle closer.

My eyes close and I succumb to my exhaustion.

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It's been a long time since I've slept with someone; it's the only reason I can think of as to why I awake not more than an hour later. The digital readout mocks my inability to sleep and I roll over, wanting nothing more than to bury my face in Spike's chest and go back to sleep. Needing to block out the overly bright green that informs me it's far too early to be up yet.

Spike's slight hiss tells me he's not asleep either and it suddenly dawns on me as to what had been pressing against my backside. Only now it was digging into my stomach.

A bolt of lust causes my body to shudder and I sneak a peek at Spike from beneath my lashes.

His eyes are squeezed shut, his jaw clenched to keep from voicing his pain – he's a picture of abject misery.

“Spike?”

I feel a shudder go through him as I softly call his name. His eyes pin me in place when they snap open and the breath rushes out of me.

It matters naught that Dawn is in the room and sleeping on the other bed as my hands find the fastenings of his jeans and start to undo the buttons. He puts up a token protest, then stops altogether when my hand closes around his dick. One hand pumps his shaft and I use the other to push my panties down and off my hips.

Spike takes over when I grip his cock and try to fuck myself onto him. My panties, trapped somewhere around my knees, rip beneath the pressure Spike exerts. Then I'm rolled to my back and Spike settles himself between my legs.

A quick glance at Dawn reveals the girl still slumbering on, oblivious to our activities.

I bite my lip and cant my hips upwards as Spike finds my opening and pushes his way home. My hands slide down his back and beneath his jeans to grip his ass and pull him closer... deeper. He hits that place inside me and I see stars. My muscles contract around him and I can see on his face what it does to him. How good it feels.

The headboard keeps us from letting go, and we have to contend with shallow thrust and slow movements. And we do for a time.

Until it becomes torture for us both.

Somehow we make it quietly to the floor on the far side of the bed... away from Dawn. I end up in Spike's lap. The contrast between bare skin and denim feels different, but I go with the flow. Especially with Spike's hands gripping my waist and guiding my movements. Up and down, again and again. The sound of our lovemaking is muffled by the denim stuck around his thighs.

My mouth opens on a soundless pant.

"Gonna come," I mouth.

His face shifts, leaving me staring at his demon and my head falls back, teasing him with the promise of my blood. I forget that he's able to hurt me and it's not until his fangs slice into my throat and I'm coming so hard it robs me of breath that I remember.

He bucks up into me once, twice. On the third I feel the evidence of his orgasm coat my insides.

I keep moving until I feel his hands go slack and the tension eases out of his body.

When he tries to withdraw his fangs, I stop him. There's pain, but it pales in comparison to the contentment I feel. The feeling of oneness I have with Spike in this moment.

I'm reluctant to let it end.

Spike apparently agrees with me because he stops trying to get away. Instead, his arms wrap around my back and hold me close.

We stay like that until I begin to shiver from the cold.

He helps me to my feet then and directs me to the bathroom, taking a minute to pull up his pants before grabbing one of the bags and following. My eyes widen comically as he sets out shampoo, conditioner, and body wash – the expensive kind – on the counter. I've not had a luxury like that in... actually, I can't remember the last time I was able to indulge in something so frivolous as designer toiletries.

Tears come unbidden, which I hastily wipe away as Spike's back is turned adjusting the shower taps.

"Come on, love. You'll feel better after a shower."

He draws my camisole over my head and directs me under the water. Surprisingly, he doesn't climb in after me.

The shampoo bottle appears from behind the shower curtain and I snatch it out of his hands with girly delight. I wash my hair three times before I feel clean. The conditioner is next, then the shower gel.

When I turn off the water and pull back the curtain, Spike is waiting there with a towel.

"I've got a change of clothes for you. No nightgown, though. Sorry."

I eye the items sitting atop the toilet seat lid and smile my thanks. I don't bother asking how he knows my size.

The door clicks shut and I'm left alone to get dressed.

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I come out of the bathroom and see that Spike has not been idle. The bed we were in is remade and there's no trace of my uniform or shredded underwear. He has a set of clothes in his hand and a bottle of...

"Hair dye?" My voice is unusually loud, forgetting for a moment that Dawn is still sleeping.

He shrugs. "Need a proper disguise now, don't I?"

"I... I guess... but..."

"I can always bleach it back once we get where we're going."

"I... you need any help?"

He smiles and I smile back.

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Spike emerges from the bathroom some time later and I gape in astonishment. He's left the eighties behind and seems to have embraced the here and now. Black and red is gone, and in its place is something... *different*.

"It's only for the time being," he grumbles and I cough to hide my smile. Obviously he is less than pleased. "Need to wake up Niblet. We've got a train to catch in a few hours."

I finally break down and ask him where we are.

"Los Angeles." At my startled look he explains. "Only place that has a warlock strong enough to keep Red from finding us. Plus, I've got us some identification... Had a demon that owed me a favor."

I digest that bit of information. "Ok." Besides, I don't really care. It's obvious we're not staying here. This is Angel's town.

I walk over to the bed and wake Dawn as Spike putters around the room picking up stuff and generally hiding our tracks. I usher her to the bathroom for a quick shower; Spike hands her a change of clothes just before she slips inside and shuts the door.

Sometime later we leave the room and LA behind, with none the wiser to our presence. As the sun begins to rise, we slip inside our cabin, pull the shades and settle into our seats.

Spike still hasn't told us where we're going. Dawn views it as an adventure. Me, I'm just happy to be going anywhere but here. Or should I say, anywhere but LA and Sunnydale?

The train whistle screams our departure; a faint "all aboard" rings out several cars ahead of us.

With only the clothes on our back and the wad of cash Spike has tucked away in his front pants pocket, we leave our old life behind.

The only reminder the bracelets we all wear.

Part 3: Country Road

With a few dollars tucked in my pockets, I leave our private cabin and head towards the cafeteria car. Dawn is hungry, and I know I should probably eat something myself.

They have an assortment of breakfast pastries and I buy several, along with plenty of orange juice. I don't know what provisions Spike's made for himself, and I'll need the extra boost if I end up becoming a temporary donor.

Juggling everything I held in my hands to just one was too difficult, so I end up knocking on the door with my foot.

"Who is it?"

"It's me, Dawnie. Let me in."

The door opens and Dawn's gaze is held captive by the pastries and juice. Spike barely stirs from his place on the drop down cot as I enter and Dawn shuts the door. I set breakfast down on the table and my eyes widen in shock at the slayer-like speed Dawn exhibits snatching a cinnamon twist and a bottle of orange juice. She gives me a smug look and my heart nearly stops.

'Please, God, don't let her be... Please...'

I feel myself start to hyperventilate just imagining Dawn as a slayer, and I take several calming breaths. I can't panic now.

"If you want the cinnamon twist, you can have it."

I blink and glance her way. She's holding out the pastry; there's a distinct hole where she's taken a bite. The look on her face shocks me back to the here and now and I rush to reassure her that no, I don't want it, for her to go ahead and eat it. She still seems uncertain, like... I don't know. Like her taking that particular treat will threaten whatever balance we've come to find since leaving Sunnydale.

I'm not sure what to do to make things right, other than to grab a cream-filled donut and take a bite. I swallow around the lump that's still in my throat, but manage to get it down. Surprisingly enough, it tastes good, and it's not long before I take another bite, and then another. I don't stop until it's gone and I'm licking my fingers clean.

"Guess you were pretty hungry, huh?"

"I guess so." I swipe another and a bottle of juice and join Dawn on the couch. The mood seems to lighten as we sit there and eat our breakfast. We can't look outside the window because of the sun, but the gentle rumble of the train assures me that we've left California far behind.

With nothing left to do once breakfast is finished, both Dawn and I grow restless.

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If I had been thinking, I probably would have woken Spike and told him that we were going to take a stroll through the cabins, stretch our legs and get a breath of fresh air. I didn't see the problem; the only thing I had to worry about was getting my toes trampled by the kids running up and down the aisles.

What I didn't count on was a tired and cranky, possessive vampire. Who, even without being dressed in his traditional Big Bad attire, still manages to exude deadly intent. He prowls up the car, somehow managing to avoid the sunlight streaming in through several of the windows.

Spike sees me through the tiny windows on the doors separating the two cars and his body instantly relaxes. He steps through the connecting doors and the last few steps he takes to reach me turn into a swagger.

"Out for a stroll, love?" he asks for the benefit of those in the car. His voice drips with solicitous concern, and I feel instantly guilty. I've scared him. His arms wrap around me and his lips brush against my forehead... but I feel the slight tremor that goes through his body.

"You were sleeping," I tell him quietly. "I didn't want to wake you."

He turns us around and we walk back towards our cabin. His arm settles around my shoulder and it just feels... right. Comfortable.

I feel safe.

I'm vaguely aware of Dawn walking behind us, chatting animatedly about the train, the view. Spike responds like he always does to her teenage babbling, a mixture of big brother tolerance and teasing.

All the way back to our cabin they are like that.

It's only once Dawn asks where we're going does Spike lose his carefree attitude. I didn't think he would answer her; he's said nothing thus far. Then again, it's not like we've bothered to ask him.

"Train stops in New York," he tells us once we're locked away inside our cabin. "But we're getting off before then... just in case."

He's got a point. Though the tickets were bought anonymously enough, our destination is clear. Getting off the train before we reach the end will only help us disappear. If someone were to come after us, they will most likely assume that we would stay on the train until the very end.

"Where?" I finally break down and ask him.

"Figured we'd get somewhere near the Appalachians. Prolly near West Virginia."

"West Virginia?"

"We can get lost in the mountains for a while. It's not heavily populated, and people tend to keep to themselves. Don't ask a lot of questions..."

"Alright. If that's what you think is best."

"We don't have to stay too long," he tells me. "Just until I can find something more permanent."

"It's fine, Spike. I trust you."

It was the right thing to say, because he sits a little straighter in his seat. Like I've given him back that thing he's lost since being chipped. Respect. Respect and confidence in his own abilities.

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We sneak off the train under cover of darkness. Spike doesn't want anyone to notice our leaving. Thankfully, Dawn seems to understand and keeps quiet,

following Spike's instruction without question. We stick to the shadows long after the train has left, following the trail on the edge of the woods.

In the distance, a wooden sign lit by a single spotlight proclaims a vacancy at a rundown motel. I tap Spike's shoulder and point.

He follows my finger and nods, tells us he'll be back shortly then takes off in the direction of the motel.

Dawn and I huddle together as Spike disappears from sight. It's cold and there's snow on the ground; our light jackets were fine for California, but are no match against such severe weather. Thankfully Spike is back in a matter of minutes, dangling the keys to our room in his hand, and we hurry to escape the cold.

Spike turns the heat on as we step inside and shut the door. It's almost as cold inside the room as it is outside, and both Dawn and I dive for the single queen-sized bed and snuggle beneath the covers.

"Man at the counter says there's a store a few blocks away. I can pick us up a few things... tide us over until tomorrow night."

"Some thermal underwear... and an electric blanket," Dawn mumbles from beneath the covers. "Man, it's cold!"

"Did you get that?" I ask.

"Thermals and an electric blanket. Check. Anything else?"

He looks at me and I shrug. I can't think of anything off the top of my head.

"Some cards, puzzles... oh... hey, how about Monopoly?" Dawn's head appears from beneath the covers. She's on a roll now, forcing Spike to grab the pad and pencil off the nightstand to jot everything down.

"Anything else, Niblet?" Spike's brow is arched and he's waiting with pencil poised.

"Chocolate... potato chips... soda."

I can't help it; I start laughing. Clearly Spike hadn't been expecting her to ask for anything else. He takes it in stride though, adding the items to the list.

"What about you, Buffy? Anything you need?"

You. Holding me, I want to say. Instead I shake my head, tell him to hurry back.

He's back inside an hour. I get out of bed and open the door for him. It's snowing again and flakes are clinging to his hair and jacket. His arms are laden down with bags and I just shake my head. He's obviously bought everything on the list and then some.

Dawn squeals in delight and jumps out of bed as Spike drops the packages on the dresser. She gets everything dumped out of the bags on top of the quilt before I can shut the door. Her hands close around a pair of flannel pajamas and matching slippers. Spike is the recipient of a hug and a kiss on the cheek before she skips off to the bathroom.

I rifle through what Spike's bought as Dawn locks the door and cuts on the water.

Spike pounces while my back is turned.

He lands on top of me; his lips find mine unerringly. His erection presses into my belly, and I wrap my legs around his back. He thrusts against me and I want nothing more than to have him inside me, but Dawn is in the other room and can come out at any time.

"Spike... I..." I gasp out between kisses.

His lips move to my throat; his growls raise goose bumps on my flesh. I don't feel his hand inside my pants until his fingers push inside me. I lift my hips, taking him in deeper. Then I'm moving, bucking against his hand as he fucks me with his fingers.

"Spike..."

"Shhhh... I got you," he whispers against my ear. His hands pump inside me faster, and just when I'm about to come, I feel his fangs scrape along my throat.

"Please..."

I feel the sting, feel him draw my blood into his mouth, hear his purr of pleasure. His hand doesn't let up on its assault.

I bite his shoulder to stifle my cry of completion. Spike's erection is digging into my thigh. He's thrusting against me and moaning and I know he's coming too.

I collapse back onto the mattress, sated. Spike settles next to me, nuzzling my neck; his fingers slide from my pussy and I feel their loss distinctly. He lifts his head and proceeds to lick his fingers clean. I watch mesmerized; I've never seen someone take such pleasure in that one act. It makes me hot. And wet. Well, wetter.

I want him again. My pussy... *throbs*. That's the only way I can think to describe it.

I stay where I am though. Flat on my back and breathing heavily.

The sound of running water and my sister's singing keep me from taking what I want.

For now, I'm content to lie next to Spike, his arms wrapped around me. Holding me close, like he'll never let me go.

Part 4: Time Goes By

I lift my hand in farewell as Dawn turns at the end of our walkway. She smiles, something I've not seen until recently.

Until Spike swept us from Sunnydale in the dead of night.

She walks off, shoulders hunched to ward off the chill. Cold and snow are two things us California girls have yet to get used to. Everything else? Well, I think she and I have managed to settle in just fine.

It's different here. One would think that with such a small town, everyone would be in everyone else's business. But it's not like that. Not really. Here, people tend to stick to themselves. Oh, no one is outright rude - we smile as we pass each other on the street or in the town's single grocery store. There's just no questions asked; no one butts into your personal lives.

I close the door and feel Spike press up against my back. We have the house to ourselves for six hours while Dawn is away at school. His arms slide around my waist and draw me back against his chest and I lean into him, resting my head against his shoulder.

It - this - it feels good. Right. Here in his arms, nothing can get to us. To me.

“Come back to bed, love. It’s still early yet,” he whispers in my ear. I nod and allow him to pull me back to our room. To our bed. The one I share with him each night, ever since we’ve moved into the mobile home.

Dawn put up no fuss at the time, no squeals of delight that Spike and I are together. *Together* together. Just gave me a slight smile, eyes wise beyond their years, before walking to the smaller of the two bedrooms to look over the sparse furnishings.

I’ve added stuff over the last few months, things to make the place more personal. More ours. Spike has an unending supply of wealth, it seems. I don’t ask where he gets the money from, and he doesn’t volunteer. There’s been no sudden rash of crime since we’ve landed here in the middle of nowhere, which leads me to believe he’s had it from before.

I have to admit, it’s nice not to have to worry about things like money and food, and having to get a job. Spike takes care of us.

My nightshirt, the one I’d thrown on hastily when the alarm clock went off and I needed to go rouse Dawn for school, is drawn over my head, leaving me bare to my lover’s gaze. I put up no protest as I’m swept into his arms and deposited on the bed.

His borrowed heat is rapidly dissipating, and his body, when it settles atop mine, forces a small gasp from my lips.

Lips he eagerly claims.

I can’t help the moan as his tongue slides into my mouth. The man can kiss, there’s no doubt about it. Then there’s that subtle pre-fuck fuck he does with his body where he rubs his dick against my thigh or stomach as he kisses me senseless.

When I feel like I’m about to pass out from lack of oxygen, his lips leave mine for other places. Loving licks and whisper-soft kisses seem to mark every inch of my body until I’m practically vibrating with need.

Spike is like this a lot now, building the flames from simmer to boil. Slow and tender. His touch reverent, rather than grasping.

Not to say that we don’t do *that* anymore – hard and fast, violent and bloody. He is a vampire and I’m... I *was* the Slayer.

It’s just, he likes this too. Likes being a man for me. For him.

"Please," I whisper into the silence, having felt his face hover over my mound.

A sigh leaves my lips at the first touch of his tongue.

Part 5: Not Alone

Days turn into weeks. Weeks to months. Before I even know it, Dawn is almost out of school for the summer.

I look at the calendar and mark an "x" through today's date.

Friday, June 8, 2002.

One more week and then the three of us are moving on. Spike thinks Dawn will benefit from attending high school abroad. I'm inclined to agree. Personally, I'll be happy to leave the States behind. I never thought I would be able to travel, see the world.

California girl, born and bred, and with the slayer gig, I'm destined to die young... or I was. Now, I don't know. My life is filled with choices. Uncertainty.

No destinies for this little girl. Not anymore.

Sometimes I wonder about Faith, if she's still locked away in prison. Or if the Council managed to get her out somehow. I wonder, too, if another slayer was called when I died for the second time. Although, I suppose if that had been the case, she would have been in Sunnydale when I was brought back.

The only thing that greeted me on my return was a six foot climb out of the ground, and a Hellmouth taken over by demons. Oh, and my supposed friends that seemed only too happy to have me back among the living.

While Spike sleeps, I begin to pack away the things we'll be taking with us - clothes, pictures, a few keepsakes. Everything else, we'll leave behind for the next tenant. Spike assures me that he has more than enough money to see us set up someplace new without any difficulty.

Spike wakes up around two. At three, Dawn comes home. We spend the next few hours with Dawn finishing her last homework assignment of the school year, then the three of us veg in front of the television. On rainy days, we will sometimes venture out to the local diner for dinner, but since the sun is out - with no signs of it disappearing anytime soon - we stay in.

I've gotten marginally better at cooking with Spike's help... *and* a 6-quart crock pot, and we sit down to a perfect dinner of seasoned rump roast – thank you seasoning in a bag! – and mashed potatoes. I even manage to steam some broccoli and smile as Dawn finishes off her plate without the first complaint. Spike, I discount; the vamp will eat anything.

And speaking of eating.

Feeding him was difficult at first. It's not like we can exactly go to the local butcher and ask for a quart or two of animal blood. First, the tiny town we're living in doesn't *have* a butcher. Second, I can only imagine the stares we would get.

Hunting for game was hard for him during the winter months and my neck probably looked like a pincushion because of it. Not really, though; slayer healing and all that. Besides, it's rare that Spike drinks from me because he's hungry, says he doesn't want me thinking that at all.

Biting is his – *our* – thing. The way Spike explains it, what we have, our relationship, is different. When he bites me, he feels a connection with me on the most basic of levels. I have to agree. I can't put into words how it feels, when his fangs pierce my flesh and blood leaves my body and fills his mouth.

It's just... us.

So, yeah, wild animals are his dinner. Mine and Dawn's too, though I leave it to Spike to make the meat more "presentable" – preferably far away from me. I may have wreaked a little havoc on demons once upon a time, but not even *I* can stomach him mangling Bambi into something that wouldn't cause me to flinch – or gag – when I cook it.

At eleven, Dawn goes to bed and Spike and I make sure she's tucked in before stealing out into the night. Living in so remote an area, we don't have to worry for her safety, though we're not going to be gone long. Normally, I stay home while Spike ventures out, but with our coming move, I'm feeling somewhat antsy.

Well, not really antsy. More like excited. Eager, even.

I'm restless and figure a good run will help me expend some of that useless energy. Spike likes it too – when I play in the dark with him. Says his demon gets off on chasing me around.

Which reminds me...

I bend low and sweep him off his feet with my outstretched leg. He falls hard, and his sudden “ooof” makes me chuckle. The sound of my laughter carries on the wind as I take off into the forest behind our home.

~*~*~*~*~

He takes me there, up against the tree. With his demon staring me in the face, you’d think he’d be rough. But he’s not. He slides into me with agonizingly slow thrusts. His tongue is raspy against my neck as it licks the sweat from my skin.

“God, Buffy... love you...” he whispers against my throat, and my own fervent reply escapes my lips before I can catch it.

I’ve never said it before, at least out loud. In my mind, I’ve said it a thousand times.

I love you. Three little words that strike terror in my bones. Every time I’ve given my heart in the past, I’ve had it ripped out of my chest and torn into a thousand pieces.

And maybe... maybe I was hoping that by not saying them, Spike would actually succeed where the others had failed. That he and I will actually work.

Please, God, just this once.

“Buffy...?”

He stills inside me and I reluctantly lean back, bring him into my line of sight. Apparently, I’ve scared his demon into full retreat. He stares at me, eyes gone blue, and I can’t look away.

There’s love there. So much love.

“Buf—”

I cut him off with a finger to his lips. Look at him and will him to believe me, to see the validity of my words.

I love him.

His mouth opens but nothing comes out. I nod.

Our lips meet and we sink to the ground, oblivious to the pair of amber eyes glaring at us from several feet away.

Part 6: Death Comes Knocking

I sit on top of him, my skirt bunched around my waist, completely still but for the rhythmic clenching of my internal muscles around Spike's cock. His eyes are closed; the smooth pale column of his neck shows in stark relief against the darkness of the woods. I can tell he wants to scream his pleasure to the heavens – I've come to memorize this particular look.

I cream a little more at the memories it evokes, and hear a tiny whimper from him. Then my name.

I love it when he calls me Buffy.

Love, please...

It's the please that gets me. Makes me lean down and cover his lips with mine. Makes me raise my hips ever so slowly, feel his cock begin to withdraw.

His hands close around my ass and prevent my retreat. He exerts the tiniest bit of pressure and I take him in again. Muscles stretch to accommodate his girth.

Over and over it goes. In and out, until my orgasm catches me by surprise and I gasp into Spike's mouth. Strong hands continue to guide my movements long after I finish and collapse against him, floating on a wave of post-coital bliss.

I'm surprised Spike hasn't come yet. It's rare that he doesn't tumble along in my wake, unable to withstand the way my body massages his cock just so when I come.

Somehow I manage to gather strength in my arms enough to lever my upper body away from his chest.

His demon is staring me in the face – no surprise. He's staring at me, at my neck, in particular. There's a question there.

I know what he wants, even if he's never voiced the need. To claim. To possess. To make his.

But then, I'd never told him I loved him... before tonight.

I make the first move, because I know he never will. For all his caring, his endless... *providing*... he's never ask for something for himself.

And it's something I *want* to give him. Not just my love.

Me.

I pull him up so we're eye-to-eye and tilt my head, telling him without words that it's ok. That he can have this. Have me.

I barely hear his guttural "mine" before his mouth closes over my throat and his fangs pierce my skin. His throaty moan is nothing compared to the anguished howl that rips through the night. I turn towards the noise and it's...

"Angel?"

He doesn't hear me, but Spike does.

Even with my slayer upgrades, Spike has me shifted off him and shoved behind his back before I can even register what he's done. He's growling, responding to the challenge Angel presents.

Angel, apparently, seems possessed of the same speed because he closes the distance between us quickly, scaring the wildlife away as he howls bloody murder.

Spike is there to meet him and they tumble to the ground amidst grunts, punches, kicks and bites. I stand, frozen in horror, as the two try and jockey for the position of power.

At least until my inner Slayer kicks my butt into action. I move forward - after quickly tugging my skirt back into place - and when they roll again and Angel ends up on top, I grip his jacket tight in my hands, then fling him off Spike like so much garbage.

He goes sailing through the air, arms and legs flailing comically until he lands in a heap twenty feet away. Stupid vamp isn't finished, however, and jumps to his feet, ready for some more.

Adrenaline is thrumming through my system now, and my body unconsciously sinks into a defense pose.

If Angel wants a fight, I'll be more than happy to give it to him. I feel Spike sidle up next to me, his body relaxed, but no less ready.

I know the exact instant Angel gets it. Then, right on cue, comes the "I know what's best for you" look and the spewed forth slew of "Buffy, what are you

doing?" and "It's Spike!" and "Evil this," "Soulless that," until all I hear is blah blah blah coming out of his mouth.

All I can think is how the hell did he find us? I must have voiced the question out loud, because Angel tells me, well... us.

"You didn't actually think you could come to my town and not have me hear about it?" Angel directs towards Spike. "Zirk sends his regards, only... he doesn't."

Angel doesn't elaborate why. He does show us the cloaking amulet around his neck. At least now I know why neither Spike nor I sensed his presence. And I'm too tired to take Angel to task for playing Peeping Tom.

His sudden presence into our lives is an oppressive weight around my shoulders. All I want is to sink into my bed and sleep, wake up and have this, Angel here, be a dream.

One more week. One more week and we would have been gone!

Spike must have sensed my distress because his arm settles around my shoulder and he snuggles me into his side.

"Can we go home now?" I plead, just loud enough for him to hear.

A brush of his lips against my temple and he turns us around, back towards him, ignoring out of hand the sputtering vampire left behind.

Spike hears Angel move into step behind him and tosses over his shoulder, "Don't think that just because you're my sire that I won't stake you. Go home, Angel."

A handful of steps more, then nothing else. Just the eerie silence of the forest surrounds us.

But I know that this isn't the end of it.

The only question is, who else knows?

Hands warmed by the heated water soothe my aching, tense muscles while simultaneously lathering my body with scented body wash. At Spike's silent urging, I step beneath the spray and allow the water to wash away the sweat, dirt, and grime I've accumulated. He applies gentle pressure to my hip, and I turn around and present my front for more of the same.

Neither of us says anything as he switches places with me and washes up with quick, economical movements. Then the taps are turned off and I'm nudged out of the shower and wrapped in a towel.

It's only once we're in bed that he says the words I've been dreading.

"He'll be back."

"I know," I whisper in reply, and snuggle closer. Let out a sigh when he holds me tighter.

I want to leave. Right now. Before Angel can figure out that we've gone. But, I know that it'll never be over. That he'll keep coming after us.

Better for us to stand our ground now and convince him to leave us alone.

Surprisingly, I fall right to sleep, not waking until I feel Spike leave our bed.

"Spike?"

His hand caresses my face, then he leans down and gives me a quick kiss.

"I'm just gonna go let Peaches in," he tells me and is gone from our room before I can protest.

I scramble out of bed and search frantically for something to throw on and manage to emerge from the bedroom just as Spike steps back from the door and lets Angel enter. He's growling at Spike as he steps over the threshold, but as he catches sight of me standing in the living room, he stops.

"Angel." My arms are crossed over my chest; I'm not going to put up with him being anything less than nice to Spike.

Not in our home.

"Why are you here, Angel?" I demand as he takes a seat on the couch. I choose to stand, as does Spike. Right next to me, in fact, his arm slung around my shoulder in a show of solidarity. Angel opens his mouth as if to speak, but I cut him off

with a qualifier. "And don't tell me you've come to bring me back. I'm not going back."

Angel's mouth snaps shut, and he frowns, making his brows draw together. I can practically see the wheels turning in his head as he plans a new line of attack.

"Giles is worried."

I expected something like this, and I'm prepared. Angel is nothing if not predictable.

"Giles gave up the right to be worried about me when he went back to England," I tell him. There's a hard edge to my voice.

"Buffy –"

"No. I told you. I'm *not* going back. I'm done. Me and Dawn are gonna live our lives as we see fit."

"With Spike?"

I ignore his caustic tone. "Yes. With Spike," I reply calmly.

"Buffy's earned her rest," Spike puts in. "And I aim to see that she gets it."

"She's the slayer."

"Not anymore, she's not," Spike practically growls. "Her friends ripped her outta heaven, Peaches. Betcha' Rupert didn't tell you that, now did he? Only told you enough to get your knickers in a twist so's you'd come after us."

The news floors him, I can see that. Hell, it still does a number on me whenever I happen to think about it, which thankfully, isn't often. His gaze swivels from Spike to me and I nod.

"It's true," I tell him.

Angel's pissed now. Pissed on my behalf. Possibly at being manipulated. But I can see he's still not happy with me being with Spike.

I could care less. My mind's made up.

And there's nothing Angel can do or say, that will get me to change it. I'm not going back to Sunnydale. Not now. Not ever.

“Why don’t you go back to bed, love? I’ll join you in a bit. Just gonna talk to Peaches here for a few.”

I don’t even bother to argue. I am tired. Drained, both physically and mentally.

I nod and after a quick kiss, I walk away, leaving the two to settle things.

Part 8: Haunted By Ill Angels

I look at Angel, and all I see is a stranger. Given his expression just now, I think he probably feels the same. He’s uncomfortable, no doubt about it – sitting in the chair, eyes darting about our home as Spike, Dawn, and I huddle together on the couch.

Dawn clings to my hand, her head on my shoulder, and I can tell without looking that she’s eyeing Angel with teenaged contempt. She doesn’t like him, never *has* liked him. The only vamp she has room for in her life is Spike.

The television is on to help pass the time until nightfall, but nobody is watching it. I can tell Spike is tired, but he has avoided sleep while Angel is in our home. Not that I blame him.

He stiffens suddenly and I sit up and turn to see what’s bugging him, but then Angel speaks.

He wants to speak with me... alone.

Dawn lifts her head off my shoulder and begins to shake her head. Spike just sits there saying nothing – no argument, no nothing. His eyes, however, have faded from blue to a deep yellow. He’s furious, but struggling to contain it. I look askance, only getting up once he turns my way and reluctantly nods.

I lead Angel to Dawn’s room to afford us some privacy, as much as can be had in a small mobile home; I refuse to take him to mine and Spike’s.

I no sooner step inside than Angel sweeps in after me and shuts the door. Then he’s taking me in his arms and bombarding me with words. More words than I’ve ever heard from him at any given time.

“Do you love him?” he asks me, and there’s an urgency in his voice. “I’ve... it’s just, I’ve got to know.”

I open my mouth to speak, but he's talking again. Telling me that his soul is secure. That we can finally be together like we always wanted. All I have to do is tell Spike that it's over. He'll take me and Dawn to live with him in Los Angeles. Or wherever. It doesn't matter.

He murmurs the last against my neck. Starts peppering my jaw with kisses when I offer no protest.

It's only as his mouth nears my lips that the shock wears off and I shove him away.

"Angel –! What the hell?"

"Buffy? Didn't you hear me? My soul is secure. We can be together now."

He takes a step forward, and I take a step back. Some small part of me wonders where Spike is, why he's not here beating the crap out of Angel – I know he can hear everything being said. Vamp hearing being what it is.

But there's nothing. Just the sound of Angel taking another step closer.

I hold up my hand and he stops. Stares at me with a hopeful expression.

"Get. Out."

My voice is low, the two words practically hissed out. Yet, there's a steely resolve that stops Angel in his tracks.

"But, Buffy –"

"Don't. Just don't."

"I love you. I'm telling you we can be together now, just like you always wanted."

"I'm not that girl, Angel. I don't love you anymore. I love Spike."

"Spike? Buffy, he's *evil*. Given half the chance, he'll get that chip out of his head and turn on you."

"Angel, Spike can kill me anytime he wants. His chip doesn't work on me anymore," I tell him and his eyes widen slightly; I've rattled him. Apparently, he'd not been aware of the chip's limitations. "Now, are you done? I'm not going

to change my mind. We're leaving, just as soon as Dawn finishes school next week."

His shoulders droop, and his sigh is heavy. Then he straightens suddenly and walks over to me. Pulls me into a hug and gives me his blessing.

"I don't need your blessing," I tell him as I step back out of his reach.

"No. But Spike does."

"Come again?"

"His demon has put his mark on you which places you under Aurelian protection. As the head of the Aurelius line, it's up to me to decide whether or not Spike is up to the task."

"And if you don't?"

"I challenge his claim and take over your protection."

"But you won't."

It's not a question.

"No. I won't," he reassures me.

"Just like that?"

"Yes."

"I don't believe you." I fold my arms across my chest and wait.

"It's true. Look... Spike and I talked while you were asleep. He filled me in on a few things. A lot of things, really. I told him that I wouldn't say anything to the others about finding you, but that I wanted a chance to speak with you alone first."

"So, what... so you could convince me to leave him and go back to you?"

He looks sheepish, as much as a vampire can look sheepish, and my eyes narrow.

"You lied."

Guilty!

The slap to his face echoes in the tiny bedroom.

“You bastard! And you have the *nerve* to call Spike evil. Spike would never lie to me like that. *Ever!*”

“I know.”

The quietly spoken words do nothing to placate me. Before today, I’d never realized how manipulative Angel could be. Needless to say, I won’t be forgetting anytime soon.

I shove him out of my way and leave Dawn’s bedroom.

Dawn has disappeared, but Spike is still there. He’s grinning like a loon too.

He’s not getting off so easily, putting me on the spot like that – as if I’d choose to be anywhere else but by his side.

Stupid vamp.

I do an about face and nearly collide with Angel as I stomp off towards the bedroom.

“Buffy! Buffy... wait,” Spike calls out to me.

I take satisfaction in slamming our bedroom door in his face. Not that it keeps him out or anything. But at least he knows I’m not happy with him... or he *should* know I’m not happy with him.

The door opens and I’m hustled back onto the bed, then nearly smothered by the vamp who’s kissing me and murmuring things like “chose me,” and “love you,” and “oh, Buffy,” saying my name in a way that makes my heart melt. His hands somehow manage to find their way to the hem of my shirt and I help him get it off me, leaving me bare from the waist up, before remembering that our bedroom door is wide open. That Angel is not ten feet away and can easily hear us. Or walk back and see us.

One show is more than enough, in my opinion, and I try to get out from beneath Spike.

“No. Spike... stop. Ang—”

“Wanker knows better than to interrupt us,” he practically growls in my ear, just as he tweaks one of my nipples. I bite my lip to keep from moaning; his touch is just this side of painful.

But he’s not having any of that, and does everything in his power to produce those little sounds he seems to get off on. I lose the battle when his hand snakes down into my pants and beneath my underwear, thrusting two fingers inside my pussy without preamble.

My hips arch off the bed as I gasp his name. He chuckles and gifts me with a wicked look, pumping his fingers inside me without a lick of remorse. I’m caught in his stare as he works my body to a fevered pitch.

He’s not unaffected either, and it’s only a matter of time before I’m held captive by amber colored eyes.

“Mine,” he whispers in a gravelly voice as he lowers his head and claims my lips.

I think I moan an affirmative into his mouth.

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It’s dark now, and Angel tells us it’s time for him to leave. Spike walks with him to the door, and the two step outside.

Dawn is back and in a cheerful mood now that she knows Angel isn’t going back to, in her words, “tattle on us.” She even goes so far as to tell him goodbye. It seemed to please Angel for some reason and he gives her a smile and a halfhearted wave before leaving.

I, on the other hand, ignored my ex, retreating to the kitchen to start dinner. I’ve not forgiven him for what he tried to do.

After a while, I start to worry about Spike’s prolonged absence. I debate going after him for another ten minutes, which come and go rather quickly according to the clock on the wall.

I shout to Dawn to keep an eye on dinner, that I’m going out to look for Spike and will be back shortly.

I’m almost to the front door when he walks inside. His eyes are glazed and he’s weaving slightly, which causes his shirt to gap away from his neck.

"That bastard!" I shout, spying the nasty-looking bite mark on his neck. I turn around and start towards the bedroom with the intention of unearthing a stake, but I'm caught from behind.

"Buffy..."

I don't realize I'm crying until Spike turns me around and wipes them off my face with his thumbs.

"It's alright," he tells me.

"It's *not* alright," I sob against his chest. "He... he *bit* you!"

"And I bit him back."

His voice is calm – soothing – as he explains to me about the nature of sires and their childer. That the two of them had managed to put aside their differences and uphold vampire tradition.

Because I had chosen Spike. And, for once, Angel was taking into account my feelings – wanting me to be happy.

I don't understand any of it. Not really. But Spike assures me that Angel hadn't hurt him, and that's all that matters to me.

~*~*~*~*~

The full moon illuminates a large portion of the ocean, enough so that I can make out a herd of whales in the distance as I stand at the railing. Behind me, everyone is making merry on the deck, celebrating their first night out on the open sea.

We're heading to London by way of the transatlantic cruise liner – Dawn's suggestion. I'm nervous about being so close to the Council, but Spike believes that London will be the last place they'll think to look for us.

Thankfully, we won't be staying there long.

Madrid is our first stop, and we'll probably stay there for the summer. Spike's promised to take us to all the places Dawn and I scribbled down on pieces of paper and threw into a hat. Spain just happened to be the first one that was drawn.

I'm looking forward to it. So much so, that I made sure to buy an English-to-Spanish dictionary while we were waiting to board the ship in New York.

"What's the matter, love?" Spike asks as he steps up behind me; his hands join mine on the railing.

"Nothing. Just watching the whales." I point to where their fins occasionally break the surface. "I've never seen one before... except on TV."

"You're watching whales when you could be dancing?"

"No one's asked me yet."

I feel his hands on my shoulders and turn around at his urging.

"Dance with me, Buffy?"

I smile and take his hand.

The End