Lead Apes in Hell

by executrix

Summary

At Dawn's wedding, a drunken wedding party hookup leads to unplanned slayage.

Andrew catches the bouquet, but since he’s already married he throws it to Buffy, who fields it.

She sets the bouquet down, upside-down on a pink tablecloth, lights a cigarette, and taps ashes into the underside, repenting of all the times she could have killed him with impunity and didn’t.

Tony greatly approves of this gesture because it allows him to light a Cuban cigar, thinking that it’s slim enough that he might be able to finish it before somebody demands that he put it out. Bruce comes over and tells him to put it out. Tony sighs and does, because what’s he going to say—“You and what Other Guy”?

“It’s a pleasure to meet you,” Bruce says. Tony is going to point or guffaw or something—dude, we’re on the same team! How drunk ARE you!—until he realizes that Bruce is talking to Buffy. “It’s amazing to realize how much you’ve accomplished, young as you are.”

“Slayers, like mathematicians, tend to do our best work when we’re young,” Buffy says. “Mostly, ‘cause when we’d do our old work, we’re dead.”

Andrew reappears, this time carrying a copy of a monograph and a Rapidograph borrowed from the inside pocket of his husband’s dinner jacket. “The Council published it,” he says. “Can I get an autograph from the eponymous Buffy, Slayer of the VahmPyre?” Buffy squints down at it. It really does say “Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Last of Her Line.” She considers inscribing it “Fuck off and un-die,” thinking that it’s a damn small book for all those event-packed years, but finally just signs “Buffy Anne Summers” in a sprawling hand.
“What does it take to be eponymous?” she says.

“It helps to be titular,” Tony says, leering down.

“My job was outsourced,” Buffy says as Andrew retreats. “It was…a mass slayoff. It was de-skilled. ‘Ya want holy water with that?’ I am a woman without a mission.”

That calls for another drink, because this isn’t a party that calls for pristine consciousness to appreciate.

“No mission, no Significant Other, popped at…pipped at the post by my own pipsqueak. My kid sister. You know what happens to old maids?” Buffy says, in the middle of a long speech by Tony about something else entirely. “They lead apes in Hell. Maybe, like, a Hell dimension with nothing but apes and shrimp. It’s a Shakespeare thing. Well, not the shrimp. From one of the times I went to college.”

Tony shrugs. “Formal education is overrated. I’m not sure it did much for anybody I know, except maybe Banner. Also, I can say this because I’m drunk, and because you’re drunk and you won’t punch me or if you do you’ll miss, but your job wasn’t all that much.”

“Huh?” Buffy says incisively.

“We vanquish threats to the world, using the latest in advanced technology,” Tony says, where the wind comes sweeping down Mansplains. “You, according to Agent Finn, poke them with a sharp stick.”

“Great!” Buffy says. “A death-measuring contest! Buster, what you don’t think about is that your family fortune sits on $600 toilet seats! Without waste and fraud, you’d have to work for a living. But us, for centuries we’ve been eclipsing Apocovoids, ummm, well, you know what I mean—at low—in fact, no—cost to the taxpayer,” Buffy says. “We’re practically the slayage Tea Party. In a nonpartisan way, of course.” It occurs to her that while the Council was still British-dominated, “Tea Party” wasn’t their favorite word either.

There’s a sort of conga-kick line thing happening around the ballroom, to the tune of “Holdin’ Out for a Hero.” The “whooo!”’s crescendo toward Out of Hand.

Tony turns to Buffy. “Aww, forget what I said. Let’s have a nikecat,” he says, scowling but declining to correct himself.

“What, that’s the last stop before ‘just do it’?”

Tony grabs a bottle of champagne and a plateful of little cookies made out of layers of almond paste and chocolate, gallantly trying to offer his arm to Buffy until she takes the plate of cookies so he has a free hand.

“No, a…you know…want to come upstairs with me, for the traditional drunk hookup between the best man and the bridesmaid?”

“You’re not the best man,” Buffy says. “That guy Fury was.” If Spike was here—and, God, if he was the wedding might actually have been fun—he’d be wheedling, “Guess you’re not Cap’s best friend, eh?” But Buffy contents herself with, “And I’m the maid of honor, not the bridesmaid. I am drunk, though.”

They take an elevator guarded by security guys who practically prostrate themselves to kiss Tony’s feet, then another elevator that Tony has a key for, and then another elevator that, when Tony
eventually manages to line up his handprint on the sensor, takes them to a guest suite.

The room has all the warmth and personality of a hotel room, although an astronomical hotel. Not just in cost terms, but with lots of stars. Buffy is almost more interested in hitting the john and swiping little bottles of fancy toiletries than in Tony. But you have to stop and smell the roses, in this case meaning ‘making out with a billionaire superhero who is sort of cute in an annoying way.’

He’s a pretty good kisser, and his ass feels good where she’s grabbed it. They fall onto the bed. Tony nudges his knee between Buffy’s legs. She can feel a promontory at her hip, which is a good sign, because with as much booze as they have on board, brewer’s droop is a real risk. She extracts her hands from beneath Tony, where the weight of both of them is resting. Reminding her that she’s a little above her fighting weight.

She grabs handfuls of his chest, which feels sort of strange. Out of curiosity, and because she feels that if she moves her head too far away it’ll fall off, she unbuttons an extra button of Tony’s tuxedo shirt (his tie has been dangling from his wing collar for at least the length of a football game). Then she unbuttons half of the rest. Great. A glowing nuclear core in the middle of someone’s chest. That seldom ended well.

Still, he has his hand down her neckline, and is doing interesting things, and he’s sucking on her neck, but in a civilian way, and he’s muttering and groaning promisingly.

Buffy opens her eyes. There seemed to be an icy mist coming through the ceiling vent for the HVAC system. “Flashy gypsy tricks!” she mutters, yanking her hand out of Tony’s pants and leaping to her feet, half her bra protruding through an armhole of her now-wrinkled dress, while thinking {{Guess I’m not taking this puppy back to Vera Wang tomorrow}}.

Buffy gators to the floor. She picks up the one of her shoes she can find, and pops the cap off the stiletto heel, incidentally proving that even gel manicures have their limits. Then she dashes to the table, slugs down the last couple of inches of Veuve Clicquot, and tries to smash the bottle. When that doesn’t work, she shrugs, and smashes one of the champagne flutes and crouches, a weapon in either hand.

“The fuck’re you doing?” a bleary-eyed Tony asks, sitting up. “Those glasses cost $78 each.” He stops complaining as a vampire materializes and fixes its vacant red eyes on him.

“You! I will sate myself with your heart’s blood!” the vamp tells Tony.

Buffy shrugs. “What can I tell you? They never do the reading. They’re like, undead middle schoolers.”

Tony looks up at the ceiling. “JARVIS? I mean, what the ever-living mother-FUCK is a vampire doing in my bedroom?”

“The security system did not show any extraneous heat signatures,” JARVIS says.

“Yeah, well, it wouldn’t,” Buffy says, juggling the broken glass and the shoe in her hand and throwing the champagne bottle to Tony, mouthing, “Little help here?”

Tony half-zips his fly, buckles his belt, stands up and yells, “Find somebody who’s still around who has a sword and send them up here! Uh, not Pepper, tell her to stay away!”

Buffy is about to say, “What am I, pate truffe aux morilles?” (which Bruce brought some of, for the heavy passed appetizers) but a) she’d be pissed if Tony tried her push her fray-adjacent (like he COULD) and b) she doesn’t care enough to argue with Tony and senses that even if she did it would
be pointless and c) busy.

Despite having survived many bouts with ninjas, monsters, and monstrous ninjas, who were united in their polite willingness to attack one at a time so they could score the fight, Buffy is perfectly willing to slant the odds the other way.

Tony gets the point and stands behind the vampire, swinging the champagne bottle into his head with a sickening clunk. This is only enough to daze the vamp, but it’s enough for Buffy to manage a stiletto-heel uppercut. She realizes too late that now there’s going to be vampire dust on her shoes, which is considerably less neat-o than pixie dust, and she’s going to have to wear those shoes home unless there is a Guest Shoe Closet, Brought to You By Manolo Blahnik, which really could happen. But it still would have been better to use the champagne bottle. She’s just out of the habit of thinking operationally.

Then the door bursts open as the vampire vanishes, with Director Fury leading the parade followed shortly by Banner, Natasha, and, despite Tony’s clear order, Pepper. They are uniformly puzzled about the summons, unless one or the other of the previous inhabitants of the room has a thing about gathering an audience for a couple of half-dressed superheroes, one of whom no longer has on raspberry lipgloss and the other of whom has traces of it on various parts of his face, neck, and torso.

“Move it along,” Tony says. “Nothin’ to see.”

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