Belle South

by sunalso

Summary

AH/AU. On the hit show Belle South the off screen drama is often hotter than the on screen action. The toughest role Spike has had to play isn't the one that won him an Emmy, it's the one where he has to pretend everyday that he isn't in love with leading lady Buffy Summers. Buffy, America's Sweetheart, has no idea that under her co-star's bad boy exterior his heart beats only for her. When a storm throws everything into chaos and Buffy discovers her life isn't what she thought it was, will she be able to see through the lies and find the love that's been there waiting for her?

Written for the Elysian Fields 'Artistic Anniversary Challenge'. Banner 24 by pfeifferpack.

Beta'd by Gort.

Archived at EF and AO3 ONLY.

TRIGGER WARNING: Buffy starts off this fic in an emotionally abusive relationship. It could potentially be difficult to read if you have experienced the same.
All at once you look across a crowded room To see the way that light attaches to a girl

-Counting Crows, “A Long December”

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She was going to kiss him.

Warm sunshine washed over them. Bees merrily buzzed from flower to flower. Spanish moss hung in curtains from the ancient tree whose branches were spread above them. It was the perfect romantic setting, if you ignored the camera crew

“Isabelle.” Ashley’s hand cupped her cheek and Buffy nearly jumped at the contact. His fingers were callused. She looked up into his blue eyes. “You know I’ve kept my emotions hidden for some time, but I find I can no longer do so. I love you.”

“I…I find the sentiment to be mutual,” she whispered. This was wrong, so very wrong.

The corners of Ashley’s mouth turned up and he pulled her against him, bending his head so that his lips…

“Wait!” she cried. “I seriously can’t do this.”

“Cut!” the director yelled and the entire crew groaned.

“Get off me, Spike.” She pushed at the man who was still holding her and wearing a confused look on his face.

“Yeah, sure, princess.” He let go of her with a familiar sneer. God, why did he always have to be such a jerk? It hadn’t been a big deal working on the same television show as William Pratt, usually known as Spike, when their characters had little to do with each other. But last season there’d been a single, iconic scene between Isabelle and Ashley in the finale and the Belle South fans had gone nuts. Now it felt like everyone in the world was shipping the two characters. Everyone except her.

The scene had been Isabelle tending a hurt Ashley in her parlor. Buffy hadn’t thought much of it at the time. She had smiled at him and murmured that she was glad he was alive and then she had turned away from him. He’d reached out and caught her wrist and when she met his eyes he’d said he was glad too. It didn’t seem like much until she’d seen the final, edited version. The camera had focused on their arms and it’d been slowed down. Buffy had delivered her line a little breathlessly and there’d been so much emotion in Spike’s eyes that it was clear he was talking about more than just his health. It did seem to be this stunning, passionate moment between the two characters.

Now couples were recreating the moment at their weddings.

The whole thing frustrated Buffy. She didn’t see her character as being someone who’d commit adultery. No more than she would. Isabelle was supposed to be happily married to Leslie Lyons,
Ashley’s older brother. However, the show’s executive producer, Ethan Rayne, otherwise known as ‘God’, had decided that season four should feature an illicit affair between Ashley and Isabelle. It’d drive ratings through the roof. Higher ratings and more interest in the show meant the executives at the subscription cable-channel company that funded *Belle South* would be happy and the show would stay on the air.

Buffy sighed. The nineteenth century dress she was in weighed a ton. She wanted out of it, and away from the glare Spike was aiming at her. It wasn’t her fault he was a degenerate with no moral compass. Who the hell knew where his lips had been? Like, eww. All over too many skanks to name, that was for sure. She turned away from him with a huff as he stuck a cigarette between those lips and lit up.

“We’re going to lose the light,” Hoss, the director, hollered at her. They’d only had enough time for a couple of takes and she’d scrubbed on the first one. But she couldn’t do it, not right now. They’d just have to reschedule.

Buffy threw up her hands. “I’m sorry. I can’t, not today.” Maybe not ever. She strode through the fragrant garden towards the trailers, needing to get out of the monstrosity of the dress that was suffocating her. Ugh. When she’d signed her contract for *Belle South* she’d had no idea how uncomfortable she’d be in costume. She also now knew far more about the antebellum South in Georgia than she had ever wanted to. The only thing worse than the confining clothes was the horrible food they had to at least pretend to eat during scenes set at mealtimes.

The gross food was a constant source of amusement for her and her boyfriend, Angel O’Conner, who starred as Leslie on the show. They’d met during pre-production that first year and it’d been love at first sight. It’d made the fact that their characters fell in love and got married that much easier to portray, and the fans had eaten up both the on screen and off screen relationships. Not that she had any kind of a ring on her finger from Angel as of yet, but they’d been together for more than three years and that had to count for something. He was everything she’d dreamed of in high school: tall, dark, and handsome in a broad shouldered, quarterback way.

Buffy didn’t know if Angel would be happy she hadn’t made out with Spike, since Angel was always harping on the guy’s trashy actions, or if Angel would be pissed she’d messed up the shooting schedule.

The guitar solo from ‘November Rain’ played loudly from her chest and Buffy pulled her iPhone out of the bodice of her dress. It was her older sister, Faith. If she didn’t answer, Faith would just keep calling and calling, so she might as well get it over with.

“Hi!” Buffy said, trying to sound perky, just in case Faith was calling about something besides her running off-set. Buffy paused in the shade of another stately oak tree. The old plantation the show was shot on was simply covered in them.

“Miss Buffy Anne Summers! What the hell is going on there in Georgia? Have you lost your mind?” Faith wasn’t one for small talk. She’d been the first star in the family with her long time role as Dr. Jo Wilkins on the daytime soap *Sunnydale Memorial*. Jo was one of those characters who you never quite knew if they were a hero or a villain in the story and Faith played her to the hilt. Only right now Jo was in a coma and it gave Faith way too much time on her hands to do things like harass her younger sister. Faith was only a little jealous that Buffy’s role as Isabelle Lyons had catapulted her up the Hollywood fame ladder.

Buffy groaned. “I see bad news travels fast.”

“Yeah it does. Hoss—y’know, the big-name director you just ran away from?—phoned Willow, but
she was at some Dingoes Ate My Baby after party so she texted me to call you to ask: what the heck is wrong with you?”

Willow had been Buffy’s best friend in high school, but now the glamorous redhead was her manager. Things would be easier for Buffy if Willow was on set, but since Willow was also the manager for the wildly popular Dingoes she was currently in Europe with them while they toured. The band’s members were famously temperamental and Willow always had her hands full trying to keep them in line.

“Nothing is wrong with me,” Buffy whined. “I just…I think the show’s taking my character in the wrong direction.”

Faith snorted. “Isabelle was awesome in the first season, then she got married and turned into a bore. She’s spent the last two seasons hosting dinner parties. Oh, and being completely ignorant that her husband is philandering with the slaves. She doesn’t even know that he had a baby with one!”

“It’s not like I don’t know just because the character doesn’t, thank you very much. Isabelle is helping Leslie become a better man.”

“Whatever, this affair with Ashley is the first really interesting plotline your character has had in years. And you seriously didn’t jump at the chance to kiss Spike Pratt?”

Buffy rolled her eyes. Faith had a thing for the guy, like nearly every female on the planet, and was constantly asking for juicy tidbits about him. She’d squealed like a twelve-year-old when Buffy had told her that Belle South’s plot had her and Spike making out. Buffy hadn’t even bothered mentioning the sex scene yet. Faith would end up in a real coma from her vicarious excitement. “Look,” Buffy huffed, “like I’ve told you before, the guy is just icky. I don’t want to be macking on someone that’s been all over every hooker in Hollywood.”

“Whatever, B. It can’t have been every one, there’s an awful lot of hookers here.”

“That makes me feel so much better.”

“I know you’re America’s Sweetheart and only eat apple pie and whatever, but it won’t kill you to kiss him. He’s probably even brushed his teeth since the last hooker he was with. And who cares about his lips? You have a free pass to get your hands all over him. I personally know three women who’d kill to do that.”

“You’re probably one of them,” she grumbled.

“I just want to cop one good feel of…”

“Do not finish that sentence!” Buffy squeaked.

“Oh right, I forgot your virgin ears.” There was noise in the background of wherever Faith was. “Oops, gotta go B. I have to play unconscious again. I’ll catch you later. And for crying out loud, just kiss the boy. He doesn’t have rabies.”

The line went dead. Buffy pushed her palm against her temple, trying to stop a headache from forming. She should have fought harder to keep the affair out of the script, but Mr. Rayne had been so insistent. Even Angel hadn’t been able to sway him. Picking up the hem of her skirts Buffy continued towards the cast trailers, which were actually luxuriously appointed RVs. She had a bad feeling that ‘God’, with his oily smile, would be waiting there to ask why she’d just screwed up the production schedule. Goody.
Spike ripped off the itchy wig of sandy-brown hair and tossed it, along with the round spectacles that defined his character, onto the seat of a chair. He ran a hand over his short, gelled, bleached blond hair.

Christ, what a bitch.

He glowered at the camera man, Harris, who was giving him a sympathetic look and the guy and his floppy brown hair quickly found something else to do.

Puffing like a freight train on his cig, he stormed back to his trailer.

Miss Buffy Summers, America’s sodding Sweetheart, thought she was too good to kiss him.

He tossed the butt of the smoke in the gravel beside the door to his RV, where it lay along with a dozen other ones. Maintenance was really falling behind on their job. Once inside he grabbed a fifth of high-dollar whisky and collapsed onto the bench seat of the dining booth. He yanked at the stiffly starched collar of his shirt to loosen it.

Spike drank a mouthful of the amber liquid right from the bottle, enjoying the burn and how it kept the tears at bay. He wasn’t going to cry over a women rejecting him. He wasn’t a nerdy fifteen-year-old with braces anymore. Girls lined up around the block just for a chance to see him. He could make them swoon with a smirk. So why did Buffy and her scrunched up nose make him feel like yesterday’s rubbish? When Drusilla had discovered him waiting tables in London’s West End theater district and put him on a road that’d led to Hollywood, as well as more attention and money than his nerdy teenaged-self had ever dreamed of, he’d thought he’d forever left behind a sense of inadequacy.

He was William Pratt, Britain’s bad boy, and he did not cry over a bloody chit.

Not that he’d been particularly bad, in any sense of the word, in years. When he’d first crossed the pond to the States, tied to Drusilla’s apron strings, he’d done his fair share of partying. He’d loved Dru with all his heart, and if getting high and having orgies made her happy he wasn’t about to complain. She’d even been the one to get him the part on *Belle South*. The part that’d won him an Emmy and showed the world he was more than just another good-looking guy with an English accent and a six-pack.

Only, as soon as the ink was dry on his contract, she’d dropped him like a hot potato and taken up with the show’s producer. Drusilla was even Mrs. Rayne these days. At least his character had almost nothing to do with hers, as she played Francesca Wolfe who owned a rival plantation.

Spike, with his newly shattered heart, had found the old party scene didn’t have much appeal any longer. But his reputation had a life of its own. His manager, good ole Giles, insisted he still attend quite a few parties hosted by big Hollywood names. It didn’t matter that Spike sat drinking in a corner the whole time, singing ‘Sweet Caroline’ to himself as he got steadily pissed. By the next morning there’d be two starlets who’d swear up and down they’d had a threesome with him and at least one hooker who’d confirm he did lines of blow off her ass.

He didn’t really care. The image kept the cash flowing. Or at least he hadn’t cared until a few minutes ago when he realized Buffy had bought every single word those shithole tabloids had ever published.

Spike took another shot of whisky and slammed the bottle back onto the table.
He hadn’t expected her to treat him like a leper. Buffy was nice to everybody. It was one of the things he lov...admired about her, because it was genuine. When he’d very first met her, three years ago when he’d been nursing his freshly broken heart, he’d believed her sweetness had to be an act. But no, she was actually just that blasted nice.

Unless you were him, apparently. She at least could have been professional about it instead of running off like he’d tried to force himself on her.

Spike stood up and peeled himself out of the tight confines of his costume. He hated the layers and layers of fabric that made him swelter in the Georgia heat. Once naked he grabbed the whisky and took it to the back bedroom of the trailer. Setting the bottle down, he stretched out on the cool sheets.

He hadn’t meant to fall in love with her. Buffy of the wide smile, sparkling green eyes, and silky blonde hair. Buffy of the infinite goodness. Spike knew he probably had because she was safe. A woman he couldn’t have because she belonged, heart and soul, to Angel O’Conner.

Not that O’Conner deserved her love. At all. Spike had no doubt Buffy knew nothing about her boyfriend’s extracurricular activities. And for the millionth time Spike had to remind himself it wasn’t his place to tell her, but, god, O’Conner was going to break her heart.

Bloody ironic though, really. Angel had Buffy and a girl on the side and here he was, not having been with a woman in three years. Not since Dru. Not since the very first shoot of Belle South, when he’d looked across the crowded dancefloor of the ballroom set for the Lyons Estate and seen how the light had danced across Buffy’s skin.

Spike knew he was a pathetic wanker. If Buffy ever found out just what a pitiable fellow he was, she’d double over laughing. He’d even written a song for her, during the off season when they weren’t filming and he’d been missing her, that he knew she’d never hear.

More than once he’d told himself he was being ridiculous. He’d put on his tightest jeans and coolest shirt and hit a night club, looking to get laid. He’d find some bimbo and start chatting her up, only to realize she fell so contemptibly short of what he really wanted that he’d end up going home alone.

His best friends, Cordelia and Harmony, both actresses, knew about his weakness. Not only did they provide a sympathetic ear for him to bend, but they constantly covered for his lack of a girlfriend. They’d even attend award shows or charitable events with him to keep the floozies away. Their Twitter and Instagram accounts were a constant source of amusement as they supposedly fought over him. The latest round that Cordy had phoned him about just last night had been over which of them he did a better job of going down on. It’d made him groan. The only cunninglingus being done at his place was what they did on each other. He covered for them just as much as they did for him.

Spike reached out and touched his fingers to the wood paneling of his RV’s wall. Buffy’s trailer sat next to his, just one row over. Like his, the windows were all tin-foiled covered to keep out the sun and prying eyes, but he still was acutely aware, late at night, that she was sleeping only a few feet from him. Spike counted it a blessing that apparently Angel took her to his trailer for conjugal visits because there was no way that such a sensual girl like Buffy would be quiet during sex. She was probably a screamer. Not that he’d ever find out. Spike took another swig of whisky.

He sat up on the edge of the bed and rested his arms on his knees. He should sleep. The last couple of nights he’d been lying awake, staring at the ceiling, knowing this was the day he’d get to know what Buffy’s lips felt like, what her mouth tasted like. It hadn’t mattered that it was all just pretend. He’d get to kiss her, bask in her glory for a few short moments. He’d never have the girl himself, but Ashley being with Isabelle was a good substitute.
Spike glanced up to where he had tacked up a publicity shot of her in one of those ridiculous gowns that were made up of yards and yards of fabric. In the photo Buffy was smiling, a parasol over one shoulder. She was his dream and to her he was nothing but a filthy, lecherous monster that crept along in the shadows.

He reached for the whisky bottle, but his hand detoured to grab a pillow instead. He smashed his face into it and his shoulders shook as he lost the battle against his tears.

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Buffy had, with only a little help, gotten out of her costume and make-up. Her hair was up in a ponytail and she had thrown on a pair of shorts and a t-shirt. She was sitting at the table in her trailer with a glass of water, working on memorizing tomorrow’s script, when there was a sharp knock. Shaking her head to clear it, she opened the RV’s narrow door to find Angel standing there. His eyes ran up and down her body and he frowned.

“Laundry day?” he asked.

“No, silly.” She turned around so he couldn’t see the hurt in her eyes. Angel didn’t like her to be too casual, but she’d lost track of time and hadn’t put on a dress for the evening yet. “I was just hot.”

He grunted and walked in behind her. After glancing at her script he parked himself in a chair.

“What’s this I hear about you messing up schedules?”

Buffy sighed. She’d already been scolded by both Mr. Rayne and Hoss Theadon, the director looking much more disappointed than angry. Adding Angel’s displeasure to the mix wasn’t going to make her any cheerier. She poked her head out of the back room where she was looking for something to wear. “Today was supposed to be the big kiss between Ashley and Isabelle.”

“Right.” He nodded, but his eyes narrowed.

“And I just couldn’t do it. All I could think about was all the disgusting stuff Spike has done.”

“You know, you’re supposed to be in character, not worrying about all that.” He sounded gruff but the look on Angel’s face was pleased. Buffy smiled to herself. He was happy that she hadn’t kissed someone else. Even if it was technically her job.

“I still think they should have had Isabelle pregnant this season. There’s all kinds of possibilities that Leslie having a legitimate heir would open up.” She returned to searching through her closet.

“Then you would have looked like a fat cow for the entire season. Who wants to see that?”

Buffy frowned. She’d always thought Angel wanted kids, which would mean her eventually getting pregnant. They’d talked about once and he knew she wanted children of her own. She had since she’d been a cheerleader in high school.

She put a hand on her forehead. He was probably teasing, but since she couldn’t see him she didn’t know. “Do we have plans tonight?” she asked.

There was an exasperated sigh. “Yes, we have plans tonight. It’s Thursday.”

“Oh, of course.” She’d managed to somehow get confused about what day it was. Duh.

Every Thursday the cast headed out to The Bronze, a bar several towns over, to hang out and take a break from the set. The place had a VIP parlor set aside for them so they could drink and dance.
without being harassed. Buffy enjoyed wine and the place had the best selection for miles and miles. She’d even toured their underground storage once, surprised at how cold the brick lined cellar had been.

Very slowly she was working through their large collection. Buffy never had more than one or two glasses when she went out. As Angel said, it wouldn’t do to have America’s Sweetheart drunk in public. She could just imagine the headlines.

“Wear the white dress with the high collar and cap sleeves,” Angel called to her. “And don’t forget to curl your hair. Oh, and this time don’t wear heels that look like you stole them from a dead street-walker. I’ll pick you up in thirty minutes.” The door of the trailer banged shut as he left. She looked longingly at her new pumps, but Angel was right, they were a little trashy for her image.

Buffy returned her mind to running over her lines for tomorrow. It was a scene between her and several new house-slaves. The big hook was that one of them was the mother of Leslie’s child. Which, of course, Isabelle didn’t know. She was going to have to walk a fine line, somehow appearing to pay extra attention to Kendra, the actress playing the kid’s mom, while still showing that Isabelle was ignorant of who the woman was to Leslie.

Mentally, she thanked Angel for making sure she didn’t have to worry over deciding what to wear. It left her more time to analyze the scene and plan how she was going to approach it. However, The Bronze would be a welcome distraction. Angel always danced with her there and they always returned home to her bed for a little party of their own afterwards. Going out to the club was the only time Angel had all week to really show how much she meant to him. There were also paparazzi there without fail, so it was their chance to show their love off to the world. Buffy couldn’t imagine anything better.

Chapter End Notes

Requirements
Characters: Buffy, Spike, Dru, Ethan Rayne, Angel (any others you choose)
Rating: Any
Season/Episode: All Human
Must have:
1. Downton Abbey type TV series starring Buffy Summers, Drusilla Rayne, William Pratt and Angel O’Connor and produced by Ethan Rayne (Dru’s husband).
2. Buffy and Angel “America’s sweetheart couple” (he has an “all American good guy” image) but he’s secretly having an torrid affair with Dru.
3. William (has “bad boy” image though it’s a façade) loves Buffy, fears she’ll have her heart broken.
Can have:
1. Scandal breaks as affair is discovered, series in jeopardy of cancellation.
2. Ethan with volatile temper seeking revenge.
3. Buffy turning to William when she finds out about affair.
Can’t have:
1. Too much Buffy and Angel love/sex in detail cause…ewwww.
2. Crazy Dru although a drug problem is acceptable.
3. Anything supernatural.
Just a touch. It's not enough.

- The Smashing Pumpkins, “Eye”

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The Bronze was as loud and obnoxious as always. Spike hated the flashing lights and throbbing “dance” music. Not that he had much of a choice about being there. He’d wanted to stay hidden in his trailer nursing his bruised heart and ego with a bottle of whiskey, but his manager had shown up and all but thrown him into the car. Giles would not allow him to be absent from the weekly shindig, because what kind of party boy didn’t go to the party?

Besides the kind that didn’t get asked to do commercials for booze and fast cars anymore?

Spike sighed and shook his glass so that the ice clinked against the sides. At least he’d convinced Giles he didn’t need to find some girl to play bimbo of the week. Giles had looked in the rearview mirror at Spike’s eyes, still slightly puffy from crying, and had become sympathetic. He hadn’t said anything but had agreed Spike going stag one night wouldn’t hurt anything.

Now Spike was nursing a headache and a gin and tonic while he leaned against a pillar and watched the front entrance of the VIP area. He’d downed a couple of shots of something or other when he’d gotten there and he was pretty sure this was his third round on the gin, or maybe his fifth. Not that it mattered.

As expected, Angel and Buffy made a grand entrance. They were smiling and Angel had his arm around Buffy’s waist. They paused and Buffy pulled out her phone to take a selfie. Angel mugged it up for the camera by planting a kiss on her cheek while Buffy covered her mouth with one hand like she was shocked.

Spike took a swig of his drink to cover his snort. Angel had probably screwed her into the ground before she’d put on that deceptively demure dress and probably would again when they got back to the trailers and he peeled it off her. Or at least that’s what Spike would do. Hell, if Spike was her boyfriend he’d pull her into the bathroom and do her while she still had the damn thing on. The chit probably wasn’t even wearing knickers.

Across the room Buffy and Angel were continuing to smile and greet people, shaking hands like they were running for office. Angel almost always kept one hand on Buffy, like he couldn’t help himself, and Buffy gave him such warm, loving looks that it made Spike want to crawl under a rock and die.

He’d sell his soul to be the one she was giving those looks to.

Spike’s hand tightened around his glass and he took another swallow. Not that being drop-dead drunk did him much good. There wasn’t enough alcohol in the world to make him forget about Buffy.

“It’s so sweet it kind of makes you want to barf, doesn’t it?” said a woman’s voice from beside him.

He looked up to find a red-haired woman standing with a martini in her hand and a bemused smile on her face. She looked familiar but he couldn’t place her.
“Picture me in jeans and a regular blouse instead of this ridiculous blue dress.” She leaned towards him conspiratorially and whispered: “I’m trying to get someone’s attention.”

Spike’s brow creased and then his imagination helpfully added a big camera in front of her face. “Anya,” he said. She was one of the crew. The woman nodded. “Not looking for company right now,” he growled.

“Oh, I didn’t mean you. I’m trying to get Xander to notice me, but he’s too busy thinking no woman would ever want him.”

“Harris?” Spike asked. Anya was interested in floppy-haired Harris?

“Yes. He has very nice forearms.” She frowned. “Not that there’s anything wrong with yours.”

“Oh, thanks.”

“I just thought you might like someone to agree with you that Buffy and Angel are disgustingly syrupy together when they’re out in public.”

“And pray tell what made you think that I needed such commiseration?”

Anya rolled her eyes. “Maybe because you’re in love with Buffy Summers?”

Spike choked on his drink and started sputtering.

“I think it’s really very obvious and I don’t know how everyone doesn’t know.” She shrugged. “Your eyes follow her everywhere and you’re not boinking anyone because you only want to be boinking her.”

“What?” he said weakly.

She patted his arm. “Don’t worry. I’m on your side. Angel’s an ass and she’ll figure it out sooner or later.”

“She will?” Spike was horrified at how pleading his voice was.

“Duh. And when she does then you can put your dick in her. She’d probably very much appreciate it.”

“She would?”

“Haven’t you noticed how much tension she carries in her hips? She needs more orgasms to get rid of that.”

Spike choked again. He stared at Anya, but she looked dead serious. So he slid his eyes back to Buffy and tilted his head to the side. Now that he was watching for it, her hips did seem a bit stiff. His eyes narrowed. Was Angel not making sure she got off enough? What kind of berk wouldn’t be bloody well giving her all the orgasms she deserved? If she would allow him, Spike would guarantee she never had any blasted tension, anywhere, ever again…

“Well, I’m going to sit next to Xander and point my cleavage at him. Good luck with your waiting. Oh, and I won’t tell anyone that you love her. I’ve known for two years now and haven’t said anything. That’s your business.” Anya sauntered off towards the bar. Spike didn’t know if he wanted to kill her for being able to read him like a book, or fall at her feet and worship the ground she walked on for giving him hope.
On the other side of the room Buffy was pulling Angel towards the dancefloor. Watching Buffy dance was simultaneously the best and worst part of his week. While he hated seeing her wiggle against Angel, the erotic vision she created as she moved to the bassline was so mesmerizing he could hardly focus on anything else.

Usually, Spike would be sitting with some twit of a girl in his lap who’d think the hard-on he popped was for her and would be delighted to rub against him. Once in a while the girl would even get it right and grind to the beat of the music, unconsciously mimicking the moves Buffy was making on the dancefloor. It let him pretend, for a few precious moments, that the warm body in his lap was Buffy. Though eventually the girl would try to kiss him, or otherwise remind him that she wasn’t Buffy, and he’d essentially dump her on her ass and leave. He’d go home, jerk off in his trailer, and then spend an hour or two hitting a punching bag to work out his frustration.

Inevitably, the slut he’d cast off would say he’d screwed her in the bathroom or the alley behind the club.

Maybe he should start keeping a tally of all the women who said they’d slept with him. It must be a rather impressive number by now. No wonder America’s Sweetheart didn’t want to touch him with a ten-foot pole.

A slow song had started and Buffy was swaying in Angel’s arms. Her eyes were soft as she leaned against her boyfriend. Spike pretended to study how the ice was melting in his almost empty glass.

When the beat picked up, Spike darted his eyes back to her. Why her hair was up in a ponytail he didn’t know. It should be down so that strands could get caught in the corner of her mouth or be dampened by the sweat on her neck. Though he did like watching the ponytail sway as she moved her body to the beat, how could Angel stand not being able to run his fingers through it?

Buffy never did any truly outrageous moves, much to his disappointment. No twerking or the like. But how she danced, her eyes closed while she got lost in the music, was sensual. Every roll of her body and twist of her hips was...carnal. Even in that prudish frock she was wearing. Spike left his spot by the pillar and put his empty glass on the nearest table. He wove in and out of the crowd as he circled the dance floor, his eyes never leaving Buffy.

Despite not having a substitute for the girl of his dreams squirming on him, Spike’s cock still hardened as Buffy’s sensuality reeled him in. Why wasn’t Angel touching her? How could he not? Spike’s fingers twitched. He wanted to snare her swaying hips and drag them snug against his own.

Abruptly he turned away from the sight. The room spun around him for a second and Spike got the picture that he was way more sloshed than he’d thought. Great.

He needed a cigarette. Badly. And to bloody well stop thinking about what wasn’t his and what he could never have.

Anya was delusional.

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Five minutes after entering The Bronze, Buffy’s cheeks were getting tired from all the smiling she was doing. She had no idea how Angel made it look so effortless. He always seemed comfortable schmoozing with the company execs and their guests. Everyone always gushed over her and Angel, and Buffy did her best to not disappoint. People expected her to be sweet as pie and she tried to live up to that.
The only thing that made it bearable was that Angel was warm and caring the entire time. He must know how hard it was for her to play the role that was demanded of her in public, because he always did his best to be a good boyfriend the entire time they were out.

She smiled up at him and her heart clenched. She loved him with her whole being.

Since Angel tried so hard, she did too. She never wanted to give him a reason to be upset with her, especially not in a place like The Bronze.

However, she never could quite evade the lure of her iPhone. At least actively maintaining social media accounts was something no one could get upset at her for. Even if Angel did say she was too addicted for her own good.

When she had two seconds she polished off the end of the glass of zinfandel Angel had ordered for her and pulled her phone out to send a message to her younger sister, Dawn, who went to a fancy private school in Europe. With the time difference Dawn would just be getting up and ready for class.

**Buffy:** Hi! It's Thursday, so guess what I'm doing!

**Dawn:** Partying it up with your hunk of a boyfriend?

**Buffy:** Totally!

**Dawn:** Send me a selfie that you don’t post to Instagram, my friend Gina totally doesn’t believe I’m your sister.

Buffy sighed. That was Dawn. The girl was a genius, could speak five languages, and was going to school on a music scholarship, but she still made friends based on the fact that her older sisters were actresses. It didn’t do any good to deny her, though. Dawn would just get whiny. Buffy smiled and snapped a quick selfie.

Only, ugh. Spike was totally glaring at her in the background. Apparently he was still pissed that she’d messed up the shooting schedule. Buffy shifted and took another pic so he wasn’t in it. She sent it off to Dawn and posted to Instagram the earlier picture from when she and Angel had first arrived at the club.

Dawn set Buffy a thank you along with a picture of herself giving a thumbs up over her corn flakes.

At last all the hand shaking and small talk was done and Buffy could get to her favorite part of the night: dancing. With an indulgent smile, Angel followed her to the dancefloor.

The song was slow and her boyfriend wrapped her in his strong arms. Buffy melted as they swayed together. This was magic.

Dancing wasn’t really Angel’s thing, she knew. He always felt a little tense and uncomfortable against her. Only, being a sweetie, he still did it because they just looked so good together and he said he couldn’t imagine seeing her dance with someone else. Not that she wanted to.

Buffy inhaled deeply and breathed Angel in. He always smelled of body wash and cologne. It was such a nice, clean scent. It was how a man should smell. Unlike some guys she saw, who’d get all sweaty working out and then rub against their girlfriends like it totally wasn’t gross. Angel always showered before coming to see her. He was so considerate.

When the song changed and the beat sped up, she let herself move along with it. Nothing
outrageous, she just followed the rhythm of the song. If she got too carried away Angel would be there to bring her back to earth with a gentle touch.

A few songs later the glass of wine she had drunk caught up to her.

“I’m going to visit the little girl’s room. I’ll be right back,” she whispered to Angel. He nodded and escorted her off the dancefloor.

“I’ll be sitting with Mr. Rayne.” Angel pointed to the table and Buffy nodded. That meant the dancing was over for the evening. Ethan and Angel would be talking shop for the rest of the night. It was too bad, really, she still had some energy left.

After she used the bathroom, Buffy halted in the back hallway. She swiped at the sweat that was running down the back of her neck. Why did Georgia have to be so hot and humid? Did anyone or anything besides peach trees actually like this climate? Give her a brisk wind blowing in off the ocean any day.

Buffy need air, just for a second. She headed for the back door of the club, which was hidden behind a stack of boxes in a little-used storage room. It was a terribly kept secret and security ensured the alley stayed empty since she wasn’t the only one who would step out for air.

She pulled her phone out and was checking the number of ‘likes’ her Instagram post had gotten so far when she ran into a wall of black leather. Startled, she looked up to find that she’d run smack into Spike, who’d just been standing there.

He turned around in the narrow space of the storage room, obviously surprised to see her.

“What are you doing back here in the dark, princess?” Spike sneered. He had an unlit cigarette in his hand, which he tucked behind one ear.

“I just needed some fresh air.”

He snorted and didn’t budge.

“Can you let me by? I really want to go outside. I know you’re mad, but leaving me standing here sweating is kind of petty revenge.”

“Oh, I’m mad, am I? And why is that again?”

Was he kidding?

“Because I was all weird today and messed up our shooting schedules.”

He nodded, lips pursed. “Right, I’m mad we might have to get gussied up in those itchy costumes and say a few lines on a day we were originally planning to be off.”

Buffy blinked and dropped her phone into her purse. He sounded really angry. “Um, sorry?”

Spike closed the gap between them so that the flare of her skirt was brushing his legs. “Yeah, I’m mad about that. Not that you treated me like dirt. Like I have no feelings. You don’t even know me, yet you’ve passed judgment on me and found me wanting.”

Oh. Buffy looked up into his eyes, they were dark and unreadable in the dim light. She should apologize. But he was so close. All the air had fled the room and there wasn’t enough left for her to make words with. She could smell him: sweat, cologne, whisky and leather. It was so...male. Her
heart was beating a million times a minute and her stomach felt all funny. What was wrong with her?

She licked her dry lips.

Spike groaned. "You've got me wanting, kitten. You've got me very wanting."

His fingers closed around her wrist. Electricity surged along her arm from his touch. With something that was almost a growl, Spike yanked her hand forward and settled it right on his crotch.

Oh god.

He was hard under her fingers.

Buffy knew she should run, but her hand seemed to have a mind of its own. She traced the outline of his erection through his jeans. It was impressive. As she explored, his cock twitched and swelled even more. Spike’s head fell back and there wasn’t a sound in the room except for their harsh breathing.

It had to hurt him to have all that trapped in his pants. Maybe she should…help him…

"Buffy," he moaned and the spell she’d been under broke. She snatched her hand back and he whimpered.

"Don’t say anything. Please don’t say anything," she whispered, desperately. "This never happened."

Buffy turned and fled towards the main floor of the club.

What had she done?

Angel had been right. Spike’s brand of evil was something that could be infectious. Why else would she forget, well, everything, just by touching him?

The hand that’d been on him still tingled. She needed to wash it, but she didn’t dare stop in the bathroom. It was too close to him, she already felt a pull back towards the dark of the storage room.

Buffy gulped. She thought about calling Faith and asking what she should do, but her older sister would probably just want details that she had no intention of spilling to anyone, ever.

Angel wouldn’t be able to tell that she’d been naughty just from looking at her, would he?

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Spike was pissed, in both senses of the word. He needed to get out of The Bronze before he did something even stupider than he just had.

What the hell had he been thinking?

For three years he’d been keeping his distance and then tonight, of all nights, he suddenly decided that Buffy needed to know she’d given him a raging hard-on?

Christ, he was going to have to grovel at her feet… Well, no, that wouldn’t work. Being on his knees in front of her would just make him pop another stiffy.

Maybe they could both simply pretend it hadn’t happened. That was what she’d wanted, wasn’t it?
Spike stumbled over to where Giles was tucked away in the back corner of the bar. His manager was reading a book and nursing a single malt scotch. Only bloke that would read Dickens in a dance club.

“Need to go, mate,” Spike slurred.

Giles primly marked his place with a proper bookmark before looking up at him. “What have you done now?”

Spike couldn’t help glancing over to where Buffy had just sat down on Angel’s lap.

“Made a fool of yourself, did you?”

Spike nodded morosely.

Giles sighed. “I don’t want the details. Come on, we’ll get you home.”

The cool night air outside the club did nothing to sober him up. He slumped down in the backseat of the sedan as Giles started the engine and drove off.

Spike pulled out his cell phone. There was a notification from Instagram. He pulled up the picture that Buffy had posted of her and Angel. In the photo she had her right hand covering her mouth. The same hand that’d...

His still-hard cock pulsed and he groaned.

He dialed Cordy and pushed the phone against the side of his head, roughly in the vicinity of his ear.

“Hey, Spike, what’s up?”

“I did a stupid thing.”

Cordy giggled. “Does this stupid thing have a name?”

“No, not...I...Buffy...”

“What? You did Buffy?”

He could hear Harmony yelling something in the background. “No, I did not ‘do’ Buffy,” he almost shouted. In the front seat Giles sniffed, loudly.

“Oh, that’s too bad. I thought maybe we were finished with your epic mope fest.” There was a pause. “How drunk are you?”

“Very.” In fact, the twists and turns of the rural Georgia road were beginning to get to him. His stomach rolled.

“So what’s this stupid thing you did that involved Buffy? You didn’t fall on your knees and declare your undying love for her or something.” Cordy paused. “Uh, did you?”

“No, nothing like that.” Christ. His stomach heaved again. “I’ve got to go. I’ll call you tomorrow.” He dropped the phone on the floor of the car. “Pull over,” he gasped.

The car rolled to a stop. Spike barely got the door open before the whisky and gin he’d been guzzling all evening made a reappearance.
After a few minutes his stomach settled and he closed the door with a bang.

“Better?” Giles asked.

“Less nauseous.”

Giles grunted and they drove the rest of the way in silence.

Back at his trailer, Spike found his legs weren’t all that cooperative. Giles didn’t even complain. It wasn’t the first time his manager had helped him stagger into his home after a night of drinking, and it probably wouldn’t be the last. Giles deposited him on the bed, set his phone on the nightstand, and confiscated the dregs of the whiskey Spike had been downing earlier.

“You have a fairly early gym time. I’ll be here to make sure you’re awake and ready,” Giles said.

“Yes, sir.”

With a nod, his manager left him. There were a few moments of noise as Giles looked through Spike’s cabinets and hidey holes to clear out any other bottles of booze. The door opened and closed and at last Spike was left in blessed silence.

His mind circled back, as it always did, to Buffy.

The only saving grace in the whole thing was that her opinion of him couldn’t actually get any lower than it already had been. Him acting like someone’s creepy uncle most likely hadn’t destroyed her faith in humanity or anything. Spike groaned. If he heard about someone else doing that to her, he would most likely be going to jail for murder.

And Buffy…

The feel of her hand on his prick had been like heaven. Spike blinked. He had been so caught up in the fact that it had happened that he hadn’t completely relived the details. Buffy hadn’t pulled away. She should have slapped him or told him he was a pig. And the look on her face hadn’t been one of disgust. Her eyes had gone wide and her mouth had become a cute little round ‘o’ of shock.

He sighed. Not like she didn’t know what he was packing. All of America, scratch that, the entire world, knew what his cock looked like. Drusilla had thought a few nude photos would do his career a lot of good and whatever Dru had wanted, Dru had gotten. Somehow he didn’t think even America’s Sweetheart had refrained from checking out his package.

But, bloody hell, she really had spent her sweet time getting a feel on him. In his memory those few moments felt like they had lasted a lifetime. Her fingers had worked over everything, feeling base to tip and back again. They hadn’t been tentative little touches either, Buffy had put some force into it. Another twenty seconds of firm pressure from her fingers and he probably would have come in his pants.

That would have been bloody embarrassing, but at least he wouldn’t be uncomfortable now.

The ghost of her touch had him hard as nails.

With a groan he ripped open his fly, spit in his hand, and fisted his shaft. No matter how perverse it was, he couldn’t help remembering her stunned look and the feel of her fingers on him. His own hand was a poor substitute. Stroking himself with well-practiced movements he barely registered that his other hand reached over his head to press against the wall of his RV. One of two thin walls that separated him from her. She was always there, just out of reach.
Shut my eyes, can't find the brake

-Gwen Stefani, “What You Waiting For?”

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Something was different. Not with the loud music of the club, or the overlapping sound of voices, or even the way Angel looked, seated across from Mr. Rayne. Buffy knew something had changed since she’d walked to the back of the club and essentially felt up her co-worker, but she couldn’t quite figure out what.

She smoothed down her hair and dress. Spike was in a corner, talking to his manager. She didn’t let her eyes dwell on the curve of his back. Instead she walked over to Angel.

“Hey!” she chirped.

“There you are.” Angel smiled at her. “I was getting worried we were going to have to send out a search party.”

“I was cooling off.” Buffy fanned herself. “It’s just so hot in here.”

Angel’s strong arm wound around her waist and pulled her onto his lap. “Do you want a drink? A diet coke?”

She pulled her phone out and turned it over a few times in her hands, running her fingers over the blank screen. “No, um. I don’t really feel all that great. Is there any way we could go early?”

All concern, Angel put his hand against her forehead. “You do seem a little warm. We’d best get you home. Give me a few minutes to wrap things up.”

Buffy nodded and leaned her head against his shoulder. She scanned the club, but it looked like Spike and his manager had left. It didn’t help, not being able to see him. She could still feel him. Her palm and fingers tingled with the memory. With a huff she unlocked her phone and scrolled through her Facebook feed, watching a video of an otter chittering at its caretaker five times before Angel was ready to leave.

He placed his hand on her lower back and steered her out of the club. In the car, Angel’s face took on a hard edge. “What the hell was that about?”

“What was what?” she asked. Her mind raced. There was no way he could know what she’d done, could he?

“Leaving early? We never leave early. The gossips columns are going to say we were fighting or that the show’s falling apart because I didn’t spend enough time talking to Ethan.”

Buffy sighed very softly. “I’m sorry. I really felt off. Thank you.”

Angel grunted.

At the trailers they pulled up in front of hers and Angel turned the car’s engine off. His eyes were dark and unreadable in the low light. He put a hand out and ran his fingers over the fabric of her dress. “Go get ready.” She nodded, relieved he wasn’t so upset with her that he didn’t want to be
In her RV she quickly stripped down to her underwear. Over the last three years she had learned what her boyfriend liked. It’d been a steep learning curve, finding out what good girls did in the bedroom, but now she could give him exactly what he wanted.

Angel had been her first. She’d been so busy in high school that boyfriends were nothing more than window dressing. She’d had a boyfriend because as captain of the cheerleading squad she was supposed to, but love had never been part of the picture. Guys had dated her to say that they were going out with a cheerleader. Those relationships had been mostly about status, so dry as to nearly have been business arrangements. Not a one of her high school boyfriends, no matter how popular or cute, had ever been a real sexual temptation.

Her first semester of college had been the same. The guys just weren’t interesting and she’d been either busy with homework or cheer practice. Then her mom had gotten sick and there’d been no more boyfriends or college. Faith’s part on Sunnydale Memorial had just become a major role, so at least there’d been enough money, but with Dawn being younger, Buffy had no choice but to take on the part of her mother’s caregiver during those horrible months.

The summer after Buffy’s mom had passed, Willow had, as a joke, convinced Buffy to have headshots done and to go to a casting call for a shampoo commercial. It was supposed to be a laugh, like Buffy was pretending to be Faith, who they thought was the most worldly, glamorous person ever.

Buffy hadn’t gotten the part. Instead she’d gotten an agent and a one-way ticket to Hollywood. It was frightening how fast things had happened. People left and right telling her what to do, what to say, even how to smile. Her first show, a sitcom about life on a farm, had been cancelled after a single season.

Next had been Belle South, and Angel.

Buffy smiled at the framed row of magazine covers that showed her and Angel together. He was so handsome. Buffy still couldn’t believe it was her that he loved.

She combed out her hair quickly and pulled the white top sheet on the bed back. Her panties and bra stayed on. From the drawer beside her bed she pulled out a lubed condom and set it on the top of the nightstand. She was actually on the pill, something mandated by her contract, but Angel insisted they didn’t take chances. The condom also made things easier. Buffy usually didn’t get turned on enough until after he was inside her. She’d worried for a while that she was frigid, but Angel had said it was okay since good girls weren’t supposed to be ready beforehand. It just meant she wasn’t a slut.

Buffy lay down and pulled the sheet over her, waiting. She wished he’d hurry, because lying there alone left her too much time to think about the very wrong thing she’d done. Heat pooled between her hip bones. Buffy bit her lip. She shouldn’t be thinking about Spike, or what he kept in his pants, when she was about to have sex with her boyfriend.

After a few minutes, Angel entered the trailer. He removed his shoes, shirt, and pants before sitting down on the bed beside her, clad only in his boxers. He pulled the sheet away from her body, admiring her before leaning over to kiss her lips.

The kiss was soft and sweet, just how she liked them. Angel touched her while they kissed, running his hands gently over her body. Buffy managed to stay silent, only letting out a little murmur when he briefly cupped her breasts. One of the first things that Angel had taught her was that only whores and porno stars screamed to the high heavens during sex. She knew he was proud that she had
learned to keep her mouth closed.

Angel’s fingers hooked the sides of her panties and dragged them down and off her legs. His brow creased when he found her wet. Buffy blushed. She’d been that way since… No, she refused to think about Spike now.

“I got a little excited while I was waiting for you,” she said quietly, biting her lip.

With a shake of his head, Angel grabbed the condom. He put in on while Buffy politely averted her eyes. He’d told her once it made him feel awkward to have her watch, like she was judging him. Angel pressed her legs apart and moved in between them. With a low groan he pushed himself inside her.

Buffy had to clamp her lips together to stifle a moan. Her legs shook a little, brushing against the soft fabric of Angel’s boxers. Like the gentleman he was, he always left them on. To her horror Buffy found that her hips wanted to buck up against him. Everything felt way better than it normally did.

Anger followed by fear ran through her veins. What had Spike done to her? He really had infected her.

Great, now she was thinking about him and his penis again. Which was wrong.

Spike was such a jerk.

Angel had his face smashed into the pillow beside her head as his body moved over hers. He had no idea she was losing her mind. That she was reliving those moments she’d groped another man over and over. How Spike had watched her through his eyelashes, the male scent of leather and smoke that’d clung to him, the way the hardness of his cock had pushed against her fingers.

Oh god. She was going to…to…

Buffy took one of her hands off Angel’s sweaty back and braced it against the wall of her trailer. She shut her eyes tightly and willed herself to not cry out. It wasn’t like she’d never orgasmed. Sometimes at night she’d reach down and bring herself off, though she’d never admit it to anyone if they’d asked, and a couple of times she’d even orgasmed during sex. Once when Angel had spent longer than usual playing with her breasts, and once after she’d been reading a dirty novel on her phone on the way back from The Bronze. It’d had good plot, even though the erotica parts had made her blush.

Neither of those times, or the ones from her own hand, were anything like this one. Her hips arched against her will and her thoughts scattered, becoming nothing but flashes of images. The pale column of Spike’s neck before it disappeared beneath his shirt. The hairs on his forearm. The soft pink color of his slightly pouty lower lip. The heavy length of his erection under her palm.

Stars danced behind her eyelids, but the only sounds she made were soft pants as she came back down. If Angel noticed, he didn’t say anything. His face was still buried in the pillow, though now she could hear him grunting. Her body was languid, her hips relaxing so her knees fell away from his body.

With a quick flurry of thrusts, he was done. Angel pushed himself up and kissed her forehead. With a sigh he anchored the end of the condom and pulled out of her. He made his way to the bathroom to finish removing it and to wash himself. Once dressed he returned to the bed.

“I’ll see you tomorrow for breakfast?” he asked, gently brushing the hair from her forehead.
“Of course. Remember I have to hit the gym first, I had to change to an earlier time because of when shooting starts for me tomorrow. Love you.”

There was a pause. “Love you too, sweetheart.”

Angel let himself out and Buffy laid there, staring at the ceiling. She had to be the worst girlfriend of all time.

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Hydrating wasn’t working. Spike’s head was pounding and he felt like three-day-old leftover Chow-Mein. That hadn’t been refrigerated. Possibly that someone had already eaten once.

But he was awake. Giles had made sure of that by pouring a glass of water on his face. Sputtering, Spike had sat bolt upright. Both his arms had been cramped. One from being jammed against the trailer wall and the other from holding his cock the entire night.

Now, powering through a run on the treadmill in the make-shift gym set up in one of the empty rooms of the old plantation house, Spike was less than happy with himself about how much he’d drunk the night before.

That, and the fact that he’d essentially molested the girl he loved. Molested her and then gone home to toss off while thinking about her touching him.

Yeah, he was a winner.

His head gave him an extra stab of pain and he gulped down another mouthful of water. Right as Buffy walked into the gym. The water threatened to flood his lungs and he almost fell off the treadmill. He recovered at the last second, coughing.

Buffy and he never had the same gym schedule. He’d insisted on it after the first time, when he’d had to try and run after five minutes of watching her do squats. Buffy didn’t look at him as she started stretching. Her shirt was thankfully baggy and covered her backside, because her yoga pants didn’t leave a whole lot to the imagination.

Spike tried to focus on the treadmill’s displays or the punk music blaring through his headphones. Anything besides her. Only he couldn’t help sneaking glances at her. Did she hate him even more now? Was that even possible? Did she even know he was there?

As far as he could tell she hadn’t looked at him once. Buffy finished stretching and headed to an elliptical machine that was on the opposite side of the gym, meaning she’d be facing him. He looked down at the treadmills readouts again.

When he finally finished his run he decided lifting would be next, hoping the burn would distract him. He straddled the seat of one of the lifting machines, adjusted the weights, and started his routine. He only lasted about a minute before he glanced at Buffy out of the corner of his eye.

She was looking right at him.

Spike felt his lungs constrict. Because the expression on her face hadn’t been a scowl or a frown of disgust.

To make sure he hadn’t started hallucinating, he dared another peek. Her eyes were still on him and her red lips were parted. When the tip of her pink tongue darted out and traced over her pout, he couldn’t believe it. She looked away and the most adorable flush he’d ever seen stained her cheeks.
Spike’s day suddenly got a whole lot better. He was surprised cartoon birds didn’t fly through the open window and start a serenade.

Buffy was ogling him.

Let it not be said he didn’t know how to treat a lady. Diligently he worked through the rest of his routine, making sure to pick machines that were in her line of sight as she continued her cardio workout.

When he got too sweaty, he pulled his shirt off, much more slowly the he normally would, and wiped his face with it. Spike was almost positive he heard a quickly stifled gasp.

He couldn’t remember the last time he’d felt this happy. Especially at this time of the morning. His hangover had even packed up and left.

Maybe, just maybe, Miss Buffy Summers, America’s Sweetheart, had felt something she’d liked last night. He didn’t want to dwell on it, because he was probably imagining things. Getting his hopes up that he’d magically made her interested in him by having her touch his prick was probably a good way to get his heart broken. Again.

Hope didn’t seem to care. It was spreading through him like wildfire.

When he finished his workout, he swung his towel and shirt over his shoulder. He had to walk right by Buffy to exit. She was holding a complicated yoga pose that had her balancing on one foot, with the other curled back. One hand was stretched out in front of her for balance. She was studiously looking at anything but him.

A smile crept onto his face. He paused as he passed her.

“Morning,” Spike said.

“Uh, hi.” She still didn’t look at him. This was delicious. A blush worked its way from her cheeks to her ears.

“You’re going to want to hurry if you want any hot water. I take long showers after I get all sweaty.” He barely knew what he was saying. Though he wasn’t completely surprised something dirty had fallen out of his mouth.

Her face turned a darker shade of red. “Um, thanks. I just have a few more poses to go.”

“Okay. See you at breakfast.”

“Okay. Bye, Spike.”

He walked off. She’d said his name. She’d said his name during something that had actually resembled a real conversation. Sure, she hadn’t looked at him the whole time, but that’d probably been for the best. The pose she’d been in had let him get a good look at that arse of hers, its sleek curves outlined by the clingy fabric of her yoga pants. It’d made his cock sit up and beg.

Now he really, really needed that long shower.

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The strawberry didn’t stand a chance as Buffy impaled it with her fork.

She held it up in front of her face and nearly died of mortification at the thought that ran through her
mind.

Hurriedly she dipped the end of it in her vanilla yogurt.

Nope, uh, that didn’t help.

She shoved the whole thing in her mouth. Which also didn’t help.

However, Angel sitting down across from her with his breakfast did. He frowned at her and her full cheeks. It’d been kind of a large strawberry.

“Good workout today?” he asked.

Buffy almost choked. Somehow she managed to finish chewing and swallowing the piece of fruit.

“You shouldn’t put that much in your mouth at one time,” Angel chided.

“It was bigger than I thought.” She winced. Luckily breakfast wouldn’t go on much longer. Hopefully nowhere near long enough for Angel to tell that she’d apparently lost all of her senses sometime last night. Actually she could point out the exact time, but that was beside the point.

Angel inspected her plate. There were three more strawberries, a kiwi, 8 almonds, and a small bowl of yogurt. “I see they’re overfilling your yogurt bowl again.” He reached across with his spoon and scooped out nearly half of it.

“Did they?” She really hated when something like that happened. It was such a tease. If someone had told her that being a star meant she’d have no control over her specially designed diet she might have told them right where they could stuff their contract. She felt like a prized show dog half the time. Though she knew better than to complain. She was lucky, her family would never want for anything again.

With a sigh she watched Angel eat one of the hardboiled eggs on his plate in a single gulp. It really wasn’t fair that the guys got so much more protein.

Nibbling on a kiwi she glanced over to find Spike staring daggers at Angel. Well, that was nothing new. The two of them got along as well as a pair of Siamese fighting fish. Spike noticed her looking and went back to reading over his script.

Hopefully he hadn’t seen her eyeballing him earlier in the gym. Because she’d done an awful lot of it. He’d been wrapped up in his workout however and had barely spared her a glance, so she thought she was safe. When she’d changed her workout time a few days ago so it overlapped with Spike’s, she hadn’t thought anything of it. They’d just ignore each other like usual.

Ignoring him this morning had been impossible. He’d been lifting all those heavy weights that made his muscles…

Her phone vibrated beside her plate. Phew, saved. Or not, because it was a notification reminding her to take her vitamins. With a sigh she popped open the pill container.

She focused on the capsules and tabs instead of Angel’s chewing.

At one point, Spike had been bracing his feet and doing something or other, she couldn’t remember now, and with each rep it’d pulled his black sweatpants tight across his crotch. She’d been absolutely certain she could see…uh…it. He’d already had his shirt off and all those deep-cut muscles had seemed to be dragging her gaze right to…there.
Buffy swallowed the last pill and stood up abruptly. “I’ve got to go! Don’t want to be late for hair and makeup!” She grabbed her phone and rushed off, most likely leaving Angel upset. She’d probably get a lecture about time management later, but she just couldn’t stand sitting knee to knee with her sweetheart of a boyfriend while pervy thoughts about another guy ran through her head. Angel didn’t deserve that.

As she walked away from the tables set out by the caterers, she fleetingly wondered if Spike was watching her butt. Then she remembered she’d worn her oversized shirt to work out in, the one that went down past her behind. That was too bad. It would have only been fair if he was looking, because she’d stared at his for a solid three minutes that morning.

Three minutes.

Buffy snorted. There had to be something wrong with her. For three years she’d avoided Spike like the plague because he’d been nothing to her besides an annoying bad boy jerk. She hadn’t even thought he was all that good looking. He was too short, pale, and thin for her tastes. Since she could remember she’d always gone for the hunky football player types.

Only Spike wasn’t thin, he was lean, and he was still plenty taller than she was. And pale really worked on him.

Ugh.

Buffy was slightly out of breath when she planted herself in Fred’s make-up chair. The slim Texan smiled at her. “How y’all doing this morning?”

Confused probably wasn’t an appropriate answer. “Not bad. I’m hoping I can do this scene justice. It’s going to be a like walking a tight rope.”

“I know you’ll do fine. You always do.”

Fred spun the chair about, getting to work while Buffy closed her eyes and tried to relax. Fred had the make-up routine that transformed Buffy into Isabelle down to a science.

Buffy’s mind refused to settle. Not while thoughts of Spike’s hardness dancing through her mind. It’d been bad enough that she’d been thinking about his dick while she was intimate with her boyfriend, but after Angel had left, curiosity had gotten the better of her.

Once the gravel crunching under the tires of his car let her know that Angel was indeed gone, she slipped out of bed to kneel next to it. Buried way in the back of one of the storage drawers that were built in under the bed, beneath a pile of other periodicals and random odds and ends, was the magazine Faith had given her when her older sister had first found out Buffy was going to be working with Spike Pratt.

After a few minutes of digging she’d pulled out the copy of Playgirl with Spike’s picture on the cover. It was still wrapped in plastic since Buffy had refused to even look at it. America’s Sweetheart shouldn’t be looking at naked pictures of boys. She hadn’t thrown it out because that way she could truthfully answer ‘yes’ when her sister asked if she still had it.

Buffy swallowed hard as she tore the plastic. This was wrong, naughty, bad, but she wanted to see what she’d had her hand on earlier.

She hardly dared to breathe as she riffled through the pages to the glossy ones in the middle.

Her mouth dropped open.
The photo was taken from the foot of a bed. Spike was sprawled out on top of black satin bedclothes. He didn’t have a stitch on.

Buffy bit down on her fist.

Spike’s shoulders were propped up against the headboard. He had one hand behind his head and was smoldering into the camera. The other hand…

Buffy bit her fist a little harder.

His thumb and first couple fingers were wrapped around the base of his erection, pointing it straight upwards. The other two fingers were curved slightly against his scrotum. Buffy squinted and looked closer. She’d never actually seen a guy’s balls in real life, since Angel always kept his boxers on.

Remembering to breathe, she tilted her head to the side and considered the shape and size of Spike’s cock in the picture. It was definitely a match for what she’d felt in his pants, and it actually looked really nice. Not that she had a lot to compare it to. Buffy ran her fingers over the image.

“You’ve got a lot of color in your cheeks today, ma’am. That boy of yours treat you right last night?” Fred’s voice cut through Buffy’s reverie and her eyes snapped open.

“Uh,” Buffy managed.

“We saw you two leave early and figured he couldn’t wait to get you out of that dress. You two do make such a sweet couple. Back in Texas…” Fred was off and running. She could talk about Texas and her family for hours straight. It was why Buffy requested her. Her accent was soothing and Buffy rarely had to do more than smile and nod. Fred was also sharp as a tack. She could have been a biochemist or astrophysicist or something if her dad hadn’t gotten sick and the family hadn’t been forced to sell the farm. Cosmetology school had been a way to put food on the table. Buffy understood and respected that.

Fred was a friend, not just the lady who did her make-up.

Buffy’s shoulders slumped. Great, now she was lying to a friend.

She glanced at the clock. Time was closing in on her. Buffy pushed her life and thoughts of Angel and Spike to the side. It was time to be Isabella Wolfe. Isabella was strong and imperious. She could be kind but ruled her house when her husband wasn’t there with an iron fist. Isabella, who was falling in love with the wrong man.
I've been here before and I deserve a little more

- Counting Crows, “Rain King”

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It’d been the best week of Spike’s life. And that included the one when he’d been handed an Emmy by Emilia Clark. Not that that hadn’t been a fantastic night. Buffy had been wearing a green dress the exact color of her eyes. And when he’d sat down after his acceptance speech she had smiled at him and told him congratulations. Spike sighed at the memory. It was one of his favorites. Even if he did have a lot of unhealthy anger directed at the handkerchief that’d been sticking out of the breast pocket of Angel’s suit that night. It’d been the exact same shade as Buffy’s dress and simply screamed that they were a couple.

Not that they ever looked like they weren’t together. Spike glanced across the dancefloor of The Bronze to where Angel had his arm around Buffy as they talked and laughed with a network exec. With a sigh he took a sip of his watered down rum and coke. It tasted terrible but he didn’t want to get sloshed like last week and do something else ridiculously stupid. Especially not after the wonderful week he’d been having.

There hadn’t been any other scenes scheduled between him and Buffy, but he’d seen more of her than he ever had in a single seven-day period during the last three years. Her workout schedule had shifted to match his, so every morning she’d be there, her eyes on him when she thought he wasn’t looking. Though Buffy was making it difficult for him not to look. After that first session the baggy shirt had disappeared and she’d worn things that looked almost painted on.

For the most part he could control himself, until near the end when Buffy would start in on the yoga poses. This morning she’d been wearing black yoga pants that left very little to the imagination. If it had been anyone else he would have thought it was a deliberate provocation, but with Buffy she probably just didn’t realize exactly how skintight they were.

Which was very.

He’d looked up from a bicep curl to find her in some downward facing dog type position with her legs slightly spread. The damn fabric of her pants had been stretched tight over her crotch, lovingly outlining every dip and fold of her sex from clit to cleft.

Spike had thought he might die.

Christ, he’d even been able to tell she was clean shaven. Buffy Summers had hardwood floors, who would have guessed? Mostly his eyes had zeroed in on the hallow that indicated the opening to her body. His poor cock had figured if he was seeing it, he must be about to get it, and had obligingly got itself ready. He probably would have been able to punch a hole in her pants with the blasted thing it’d been so stiff.

Being the git that he was he’d dropped the barbell, thankfully not on his toe, had to scoop it up, and then did the very manly action of fleeing the gym. He’d quickly told her good-bye and asked if he’d be seeing her at The Bronze later. She’d said she’d be there and had bent just a little further over, pushing her hips up even higher.

He’d nearly embarrassed himself in his gym shorts.
It wasn’t until he’d tossed off for the second time in the shower that he realized he’d committed himself to going to The Bronze. There was no way he could tell Buffy he would to be there and then not show. Not that she’d probably say so much as hello to him. He just needed her to know he kept his word, even when it came to the little things.

Spike had not been planning on going. After last week’s debacle he was pretty sure it’d be a good idea for him to hide in his trailer instead of watching Angel put his slimy hands all over the girl.

But he’d said he was going, so now here he was.

Actually, maybe no one should have gone. The remains of Hurricane something or other had hit the Georgia coast earlier in the day and had moved steadily inland. It’d been drizzling when he’d left the set and downright pouring by the time he’d reached the club.

Buffy didn’t look like she’d gotten wet. And, blast it all to hell, now he was thinking about Buffy’s…er…there really had to be a better word than those his mind was coming up with (pussy, twat, cunt) to describe that part on a girl like her. Something that didn’t sound so crass. Anyway, now he was thinking about it again. And it being wet.

He had to sit down and stop staring at her before his jeans tightened any further. He’d barely been able to make it through the scenes he’d been shooting that afternoon. Visions of her yoga pant-covered…whatever had been dancing through his mind all bloody day and crowding out every other thought, including the lines he’d memorized.

With a groan, he plunked himself down on a barstool. The guy in the next seat drunkenly looked up. It was that camera guy, Harris. The wanker looked as mopey as Spike felt. Had Anya ever hooked up with him last week? Actually, Anya and her insights might be helpful right about now.

“Hey,” he said to Harris.

The guy looked surprised. “Er, hi.”

“Have you seen Anya?”

Harris’ eyes narrowed and his face darkened. It took Spike all of two-seconds to suss out what the bloke was thinking.

Spike sighed. “She gave me some advice last week and I wanted to ask her more about it, that all.”

“Oh.” Harris looked faintly embarrassed.

The bartender set a bottle of unasked-for beer in front of Spike. With a shrug, he popped the top and took a swallow before continuing the conversation with the cameraman. “She was talking about hooking up with you, actually.”

“I…what?”

Christ, the berk had screwed up a sure shot, somehow. “Tell me you got with her, the girl is about as subtle as a strobe light.”

“I didn’t think she’d be interested in me,” Harris mumbled.

“She said she liked your forearms.”

Harris positively beamed under the floppy mess of his hair. Spike looked up as Buffy, walking
towards the back, caught his eye. She was fanning herself with her hand. Not for the first time Spike 
got the feeling that this really wasn’t her scene. Images of both of them in tacky clothes, curled up on 
a sofa, eating popcorn, and laughing together over a so-bad-its-good movie made his stomach drop.

He took a shaky breath. He had to quit it. The scenes of domestic bliss did more to flip him out than 
any ten lust-fueled sexual fantasies. The normal routine of reminding himself that she probably didn’t 
like ridiculously bad movies, or eating popcorn, or even own a pair of short that wasn’t brand name, 
wasn’t working for him at the moment.

“So, uh, do you really think she wants to go out with me?” Harris was asking.

It took Spike a second to figure out Harris was asking about Anya. “Oh, yeah, mate. She was ten 
kinds of into you. Go find her. Ask her to meet you for breakfast or something tomorrow.”

“Thanks.” Harris seemed a little puzzled. “That was really decent of you.”

Spike saluted Harris with his beer as the guy hopped off his barstool and dove into the crowd. Damn, 
but Spike was getting tired of everyone assuming the worst of him. Not that he hadn’t brought it on 
himself, but did everyone have to accept the whole bad-boy thing hook, line, and sinker?

He was halfway through his beer and the DJ was three-quarters of the way through a dance version 
of the latest hit pop song when suddenly the music cut out and the lights came up. Without the 
thumping bass the pelting of the rain on the roof was clearly audible.

“I apologize for having to interrupt your evening, but the National Weather Service has just 
announced a tornado watch for the city and a tornado warning for the county. There are several 
nearby places that can act as shelters and we would ask that you follow our staff there now.”

The club erupted into chaos as people loudly spoke over one another and moved en masse like 
stampeding cattle towards the exit.

Spike hadn’t seen Buffy come out of the back. He frantically looked around for her. He spotted 
Angel, high-tailing it to the exit without a backward glance, but no Buffy. Spike vaulted over the bar 
and waited until the closest security guard had his head turned the other way before darting into the 
kitchen. It was deserted.

He quickly ran into the back hallway. The building shuddered as a gust of wind caught it. Spike was 
terrified. Where the hell was she?

“Buffy!” he yelled. “Buffy!”

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It’d been raining too hard to go outside, so instead Buffy had sat down behind a couple of boxes, 
glad to escape the loud music and bright lights for a few minutes.

The downpour seemed to be affecting cell service. Buffy had replied to a text from Faith and the 
message was taking forever to send.

So far the night had been a bust. Angel had been so wrapped up talking business with Mr. Rayne 
and the company bigwigs that he’d said he didn’t have time to dance with her. That didn’t make 
sense. Dancing wasn’t his favorite, but they always did it because it was one of the few things they 
really did together each week.

As she’d smiled prettily at the guests, like she was expected to, she’d caught sight of Spike standing
on the other side of the dancefloor with his eyes on her. Buffy had almost excused herself and gone to ask him to dance.

For a second she’d imagined his hard length pressed against her backside and those strong arms she’d been ogling all week wrapped around her. The place between her legs pulsed faintly.

Her eyes widened. Okay, so maybe dancing with Spike wouldn’t be a good idea.

And probably he wouldn’t want to anyway. He had every tart in the universe throwing themselves at him, and, unlike her, they’d all offer him more than just dancing. Buffy frowned, suddenly glad Spike was simply standing there. Seeing him with his hands, and other parts, on some gold-digging hussy made her feel odd in a way she didn’t quite understand.

Ugh. What was wrong with her? Why did she want him to notice her? Because she’d noticed him? While she spent most of her workout—and really, overlapping their gym schedules had made sense since their filming schedules were starting to align—staring at him, he seemed to barely even glance at her. After a couple of days, it’d driven her nuts.

Spike had even been nice and polite to her, greeting her each morning and saying something as he left. She felt like she’d fallen into some kind of weird alternate reality in which Spike was a soft spoken gentleman that didn’t check out her lady bits. He was supposed to be a brash pig. Not that she really knew him that well, but that was what she’d always heard he was like.

So in desperation, she’d hauled out the pair of yoga pants Faith had given her that fit nearly as tightly as her own skin. Angel would have had a heart attack if he’d seen her in them. If Spike had noticed she hadn’t been able to tell. Only…at the end she’d been stretching and there’d been a thud from behind her as Spike had dropped the weight he’d been using. She’d watched through her legs as he’d cursed, picked up the dumbbell, and put it away. His gaze had seemed to be locked on her.

Victory! She’d congratulated herself.

Or at least sort of, because immediately after putting the weight away he’d left in a hurry, before she’d even been through with the pose she’d been in.

Men were confusing. She was going to have to bite the bullet and make up some story so she could ask Faith about it.

If the text message she’d written would ever finished sending. Buffy frowned at the screen. Her one bar of service had dropped to nothing. Crap. She stood up and moved out from behind the box. The rain and wind sounded a lot louder now than several minutes ago. A sudden gust shook the building and her ears popped.

“Buffy!” she heard someone yelling her name. She hurriedly rushed into the hallway. There was another gust of wind and the building creaked loudly.

“Spike?” she said, his distraught face scaring her.

“Oh, thank god, luv, come on, there’s a tornado warning and they’ve evacuated the place.”

She took a step towards him and the hallway was plunged into darkness. With barely a thought she turned on the flashlight function on her phone. Her ears popped again and there was a sound like distant surf.

“Bloody fuck, c’mon, we got to get out of here.” Spike held her hand out towards her. The building groaned and shook.
Buffy grasped his hand. “We’re not going to make it,” she whispered.

“Nonsense, I’d never let anything happen to you.”

The roaring was getting louder.

“Wait!” Buffy cried and Spike halted. “The wine cellar! It’s old, probably a storm shelter from back in the day.” She ran past him and he followed. The trap door was open, but the usual steps down were missing. She shone her light around the room and found the collapsible wooden steps that had been pulled up and shoved to one side.

A screeching noise echoed through the room from the ceiling.

“No time for niceties.” Spike dropped down through the hole in the floor, landing easily on the floor ten feet below. He held his arms up towards her. Shoving her phone into her pocket, she didn’t hesitate, and never doubted he’d catch her. His arms closed around her, clasping her to his chest. Slowly, she slid down his body in the dark until her feet touched the stone floor. His hands were warm on her upper arms and his chest solid as her fingers fanned out over it.

His mouth was so close to hers that she could feel his breath on her lips. If either of them leaned even the slightest bit towards the other they’d be kissing.

There was the sound of metal twisting and the roar of wind and rain from above them.

“I’ve got to close the bloody door, you got your light?”

Stepping away from him, Buffy pulled her phone out of her pocket and turned the light back on.

“Okay, right, here goes nothing.” Proving that his workouts were good for more than just making him look good on camera, Spike ran, leapt at the wall and shoved off of it with enough force to propel him even higher, letting him grab the dangling rope and haul the trapdoor closed. He dropped back to the floor with a soft thud.

Impressed, Buffy squealed and clapped, earning a shy smile from him.

“Uh, now what?” Spike asked, looking around the small space that was lined with bottle after bottle of wine.

“Well,” Buffy blew out a breath. “I don’t want to use my battery up on the light. I guess we can poke around and look for an actual flashlight or something.” In unspoken agreement they stayed close to each other as they poked among the wine racks. “Is everyone else okay? Did you see Angel and the others?”

Spike sighed. “Yeah, the club’s staff was herding everyone out to a shelter. I’m sure your fellow and everyone else is just fine.”

“Uh, thanks,” she mumbled. An awkward silence stretched between them.

There weren’t really very many places to look. In the single drawer of one cupboard they found a dozen ancient-looking taper candles. Spike pulled down an even older looking candelabra from the top of the cupboard and used his lighter to get several of the candles glowing.

Buffy turned off the flashlight on her phone and checked again. “Still no service,” she said morosely.
Spike pulled his phone out and shrugged. “Me either.” He put the phone back and tapped out a cigarette, putting it between his lips. He paused with his thumb on the wheel of his lighter. “Sorry, um, do you mind if I smoke?” he asked.

Buffy shook her head. The smell didn’t really bother her, though she did find herself worrying about his health.

“You sure? Because you don’t look sure.” He put the cigarette back between his lips, a motion she couldn’t help but follow with her eyes.

“I just don’t want you dying of cancer.”

He smiled. “I promise I won’t die of cancer tonight. Will that work?”

She snorted, but nodded again and he lit the end of the cigarette, inhaling deeply.

After a minute he shifted his weight and leaned against the wall. “I also promise I won’t bite, and I’ll try not to be a total ass if you want to have a conversation. It’s going to get pretty boring down here.”

With a sigh Buffy sank down to sit on the stone floor. She scooting back against the bricks and stretched her legs out, crossing them at the ankle. The concrete floor was chilly under her calves and she smoothed the dark green skirt of her dress down as far as it would go. In the flickering candlelight Spike’s face looked soft. His usual slicked back hairstyle had been mussed and a few curls framed his forehead. Blinking at her, he tilted his head slightly to the side.

It was kind of adorable.

And he did look like someone she could talk to. “Um…okay…what do you want to talk about?”

“I…why do you hate me, Buffy?” His face flushed as he said it.

“Hate you? I don’t hate you. Why would you think that?”

“Well, luv, you did run off set rather than have to touch me. You can maybe excuse a bloke for getting that impression.” He flicked the ash from the end of his cigarette.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered.

Spike sighed and sat down against the wall he’d been leaning against. They were in the only corner of the room not crammed with racks of wine, it was cramped and their feet were nearly touching. “Can you at least, just, tell me why? Please?” He closed his eyes and took a long drag on his cigarette.

“You do…these things…bad things,” she said, haltingly. “And you convince other people to do them, too.”

One of his eyes popped open, looking at her as he blew a long stream of smoke out through pursed lips.


Spike rubbed his temples. “What kind of evil things do you think I’m getting up to?”

“Um, sex…drugs…”
“And rock n’ roll? I’ve even been known to play pool from time to time, and we all know what kind of trouble that leads to.”

She couldn’t help herself. “With a capital ‘T’?”

“That rhymes with ‘P’,” Spike was grinning.

“And that stands for Pool!” She giggled. Spike knew the lyrics to a musical? That was unexpected.

There was a pause.

“I’m not evil, pet,” he said, looking right at her. “Have I done stuff I’m not proud of? Yeah, sure, but most of what’s laid at my feet…” He bent his knee and hooked his arm around it, leaning towards her. “Buffy, you have to know all that crap is just made up to sell magazines. It’s what people want to hear about me, that I’ve boinked some starlet I’ve never met or that I snorted more money up my nose in a single night than the average person makes in two years. That’s the image a company pays for when I hock their car or underwear, or whatever. They don’t care who I really am.”

Buffy looked down at her hands as they twisted in her lap. “I know how that feels.”

“You mean you don’t really like cheese quite as much as it looks like in that commercial?” His tone was teasing. “I’m shocked.”

“I do like cheese–” God, she’d been wearing overalls. It hadn’t really been that flattering of a look. “Just not that much.”

Spike’s head fell back against the bricks and he groaned. “I didn’t mean to get so heavy with that first question. Forgive me?”

“Maybe.” She looked up at Spike through her lashes. He was rubbing the back of his neck.

“So, uh, do you like coming to The Bronze?”

“I like dancing.”

“Yeah?”

“Is that surprising?”

“No, not really. I’ve seen you. You always look like you’re in another realm, far away from us mere mortals.”

Buffy blinked. “Um, I do get a little carried away.”

“What’s wrong with that?” Spike’s brows had drawn together in puzzlement.

“I have to be careful, I can’t be too crazy with the whole wholesome, all-American girl thing.” She shrugged, though Spike didn’t look any more enlightened. Of course, he might not really understand how careful she had to be. “I didn’t get to tonight, which was too bad, it really is the best part of coming here. The fun part.”

“Bloody storm, eh?”

“No, Angel was too busy.” She sighed. “I even thought about asking you.”

Emotions flickered across Spike’s expressive face. Surprise, delight, and quite a few that passed too
quickly for her to name.

He stood up, pulled out his phone, and tapped a few buttons before setting it on the edge of the counter. The first strands of a waltz wound out of the phone’s speaker as he held his hand out to her. “May I have this dance?”

She almost said no, but it was a waltz. You didn’t grind to a waltz. She let him pull her upright and tried to relax as his hand settled lightly on her back. Spike guided her deftly through a few steps and she found herself smiling. With a flourish he spun her into a turn and she found herself laughing. This was fun and, goodness, the boy knew how to dance.

Buffy let herself sway a little closer to him. This was good practice, as there was a scene with Isabelle and Ashley dancing together. Spike’s hand slid just a little lower on her back, but that was okay because Ashley would do that. If she was being Isabelle…her hand crept closer to his neck, just enough so that her fingertips could brush the curls at the nape. The arm on her waist tightened as Ashley drew her tight against him for a heartbeat during a turn, before putting a respectable distance between them once again. Isabelle knew she shouldn’t be feeling like this, breathless and excited to be in his arms, but Ashley was so handsome and charming. She felt her heart, that she’d believed to be settled, straining at its tethers and longing to fly free.

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He couldn’t rest.

Buffy had fallen asleep, clutching her phone and with his duster draped over her, several hours ago. She’d talked to him, had bloody danced with him. Spike had no way of knowing if she believed him to be less of a monster now than she had a week ago, but he could hope.

Watching her sleep was sweet torture. He supposed he should be thinking dirty thoughts but at the moment he found himself imaging what he’d do if she was his girl. His to touch, his to care for. He would put his arm around her and let her use his shoulder for a pillow. When she shifted and turned he would spoon up tight against her so she’d stay warm. When she whimpered in her sleep he would brush his fingers over her cheek and murmur that everything would be okay.

If only she was his. If only…

He must have finally dozed off because the next thing he knew was the sound of loud voices and the trap door to the cellar being ripped open.

“They’re down here!” someone yelled and surprisingly fast both he and Buffy were ushered out of the wine cellar and through what was left of The Bronze. He was stunned. The roof had been ripped off and the windows blown out. The rest of the town hadn’t fared much better. It looked like a sodding war zone. All this had happened last night? Down in the dark Buffy and he had heard none of it. They’d been safe, hidden away there together.

The morning light was harsh. He stood, dazed, in the parking lot until Giles put a hand on his shoulder.

“You doing okay?” the older man asked.

Spike nodded mutely. Where was Buffy?

He heard her squeal and watched as she rushed into Angel’s arms. Angel grabbed her up in a bear hug as she peppered his face with kisses. Her phone came out and she took a couple of selfies of
their happy reunion.

A few stolen moments in a cellar, probably all he’d ever have, and they’d meant nothing to her. Angel had appeared and Spike had become less than nothing in her eyes once more.

“Let’s go,” he said gruffly to Giles. He’d seen enough.
It's time for make-up, perfect smile

-Britney Spears, “Lucky”

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Angel’s fingers were in a death grip around the steering wheel. He wasn’t looking at her. After the warm hugs when he’d first seen her, Buffy was confused. She’d been happy to see him, too. Being stuck in a cellar all night, even if the company hadn’t been all that bad, still wasn’t on her list of favorite things to do.

Since she’d returned to reality, her phone had been blowing up with panicked messages from both her sisters, Willow, and a host of other people. She’d replied to those closest to her and snapped a few pics for Twitter and Instagram to let the rest of the world know she was alive and well. After dealing with that initial deluge, she’d looked around for Spike, but to her disappointment he’d already disappeared.

And now Angel was acting like she’d done something wrong.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t tell you I was okay last night,” she started, fluttering her hands in her lap.

Angel’s voice was low. “What were you two doing?”

She was confused. “Me and Spike?”

“Yes, you and Spike,” he said, like she was an idiot.

“I don’t know what you mean. We hid from the storm in the wine cellar because The Bronze was falling down around our ears.”

Angel looked really mad. “Buffy, you were alone with him for hours.”

“Yeah, because we were stuck in a cellar in the middle of a tornado.” She flipped her phone over and over in her hands.

“He’s a monster. Do I need to remind you about the number of women he’s slept with? Most of the time he would have been too freaking drunk or high to even know what he was doing. He probably has every STD known to man. What’s it going to look like when America’s Sweetheart is going to the clinic for treatment?”

Her brow furrowed. “What?”

“You lie down with dogs you get fleas.”

She blinked. Did Angel think she’d slept with Spike? “Um, Angel, nothing happened. We talked, he played some music on his phone and we danced at one point, but it was show related, we were practicing a scene.” That was mostly true. For a second she was back there in the dark of the cellar, her hand on Spike’s shoulder while his fingers glided over her back. Her heart sped up.

“Right. Hours, Buffy.”

“You think, what, I couldn’t control myself? Or that he forced me?”
Angel sighed. “Evil like that? It’s corrupting. I’ve told you that time and again. Spike’s not a good person. He wouldn’t have to force you. He’d make it seem like it was all your idea. He lies, he cheats…I mean, how do you think he won that Emmy? He probably fucked half the people that voted for him.”

She’d actually never heard that one before. The character assassination, sure, but the stuff over the award? That didn’t make sense. Buffy had been nominated the first season, hadn’t won, and then not been nominated the last two. She hadn’t even really thought about it. Actually, maybe Faith did have a point about Isabelle being kind of boring. Angel had never been nominated. Was he…jealous?

“And now, not only does that English dipshit get an award because most of the country wants to suck his cock, but he manages to get you alone!”

Buffy was completely lost. Surely Angel couldn’t be blaming Spike for the tornado?

“So, how was it? Did you enjoy it? Scream and yell for him?”

“Angel!” She was horrified.

Angel’s face was red. “Did you suck him off? On your knees in that filthy basement? Did he fuck you from behind like you’re nothing but an animal?”

Buffy was crying. Why was Angel doing this? She swiped at the tears. “Nothing happened,” she sobbed.

“You’re telling me if I pull over and shove my fingers up your twat they’re not going to come out coated with his spunk?”

“N-n-o, Angel, please, nothing happened!”

“Whore,” he spat.

Buffy curled up. Surely Angel didn’t really think of her like that. She knew he liked her to be his sweet girl, liked her innocence. He worked so hard to try and keep her from the dirt down in the gutter. In a few minutes he’d calm down and realize Buffy was still the same girl, that Angel was still the only man she’d ever been intimate with. Would ever be intimate with.

Briefly, she closed her eyes. No more looking at Spike in the gym, she vowed. No more thinking about him, or furtively pulling out that Playgirl just one more time in the middle of the night. No more imagining she was running her fingers over his erection. Her hand tingled and she had to mentally push the images away.

She had to be done with him. When they filmed she’d be professional. Isabelle was not her. Any little stirrings of desire over Spike, uh, Ashley, completely belonged to her character. Still curled up, Buffy turned her phone on. She opened the photo list and pulled up the one and only snap she’d taken last night. It was a little blurry, because she hadn’t wanted to turn the flash on and wake Spike up. He’d been fast asleep, head pillowed on his arm. His hair had been curling adorably over his forehead and the dark strands of his ridiculously long lashes had been fanned out against his cheeks. He’d looked angelic. Buffy had stared. She’d never seen a man sleeping before. Not like this, lying right beside her. Angel never stayed, worried that she’d accidently elbow him in his sleep and mark up his face. Spike had looked so…innocent, for lack of a better word. His other arm had been stretched out, like he’d been reaching towards her. The temptation had almost been too much. She’d nearly given in and picked his arm up and spooned up against him. There was no way she would have been able to come up with an excuse when he’d woken up and found her snuggled with him.
Maybe she could have gotten away with saying she’d been cold?

In the end she’d talked herself out of it, instead taking a single photo of his face as he lay dreaming.

Gently, she ran her fingers over the screen of the phone. Goodbye, Spike, she silently mouthed. Her finger hovered over the delete key.

She couldn’t do it.

Instead she sent the photo to a hidden folder. She just wouldn’t look at it again.

Buffy brushed the last of her tears from her eyes and brought up her Twitter feed so she could silently read all the good wishes from friends and strangers alike. So far no one seemed to have realized she and Spike had been trapped together. It’d probably be only a matter of time. There was a good chance he’d even brag about it. Heaven knew he didn’t have trouble talking about the other celebrities he’d been at parties with.

“Holy…” Angel breathed.

She looked up. They’d just turned on to the plantation and security was waving them through. The place was a wreck. Trees had been toppled, buildings mangled, and there was debris everywhere. It looked like a war zone. Slowly, they made their way to the cast trailers, which thankfully appeared untouched.

Angel parked the car and Buffy started to get out.

“Wait,” he said, grabbing her wrist. She looked up at him. His brown eyes appeared troubled. “I’m sorry, Buffy, I’m sorry.” He got out and ran around to her side of the car, opening her door and pulling her into his arms. Buffy trembled in relief. He wasn’t mad at her. She let out a huge sigh as Angel continued to explain. “I’m so sorry. Those mean things…they weren’t for you. Before Belle, there was this girl that I liked, I worked with her on a sitcom pilot, and I thought she was into me, too. Sweet girl, had a lot going for her. She went to some network shindig and he, Spike, seduced her. Got her high. I got to hear about how hot he was, how talented, how much fun. She overdosed two months later. Her parents were devastated. I don’t think Spike ever even talked to her again after that night.”

Buffy was horrified. For the life of her she couldn’t think of which girl he meant. Though the Hollywood machine chewed through a lot of people. A single, no-name actress that’d accidently overdosed five years ago won’t necessarily been something that would stick out in her memory. Only she couldn’t think of what pilot he was talking about either and she thought she knew Angel’s career inside and out. Her brain must really be muddled to not recall that part. She’d have to ask him later.

“You’ve never told me this before,” she said, rubbing a hand over Angel’s back.

“It’s painful. I don’t like to talk about it.” He exhaled nosily before gently pushing back from her. “I’m just worried about you.”

“I’m serious, Angel, nothing happened.”

He nodded and squeezed her shoulders. Buffy sagged in relief. Angel believed her. She was just about to kiss him when her phone rang. “Hello?”

“Buffy?”
“Yes?”

“This is Ethan, is Angel there with you?”

“Uh, yes Mr. Rayne, hold on.” She put the phone on speaker.

“What can I do for you, sir?” Angel asked.

There was an exasperated sigh. “Nothing, nothing. I’m just letting you know we’re going to have to shut down filming for at least two weeks while the place gets cleaned up. There was a fair amount of water damage to some of the soundstages and the grounds are a mess. You’re free to go and I’ll let you know when we’re going to start shooting again.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry!” Buffy said.

“Not your fault, dear. We’ll see you in two weeks.”

“Yes, Sir,” Angel replied and the line went dead.

Two weeks? What the hell were they going to do for two weeks?

Angel’s phone rang. “Dinner, later,” he told her before he answered the call and turned his back on her to stride unhurriedly towards his trailer. He chuckled at something the caller said as Buffy unlocked her door and headed inside. A quick look around told her nothing in her RV had been damaged by all the wind and rain.

She grinned. Two whole weeks of relaxing, no early mornings, and most importantly, no Spike. That sounded just like what the doctor ordered.

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“Bloody hell,” Spike groaned as he leaned back against his trailer, smoke in hand. Two sodding weeks with no Buffy? Just when she was starting to not completely hate him?

The universe had it out for him.

Christ, and he’d fled the parking lot this morning like it’d been the scene of a crime.

Ugh…her taking those photos with Angel had been the last straw. ‘Look at us’ it screamed. ‘Us.’

Hadn’t there been, for at least a few seconds last night, a moment when ‘us’ had been Spike and Buffy?

“Pull yourself together, you stupid sod,” he growled.

He dropped the butt of the cigarette on the gravel and ground it out under his heel.

There was never going to be a Spike and Buffy outside of his dreams.

He went to open the door to his trailer and stopped. He’d seen Angel’s car pull up the drive, so he knew she was back. They were probably having wild, glad-to-be-alive sex. He could see her, riding the berk into the mattress, her fingers digging into his chest.

Stiff hips, he desperately thought. Buffy had stiff hips which meant she was not getting off enough.
And they really did tend to be a little less flexible than they ought. He’d been observing her carefully in the gym.

Maybe he should go and check on her, make sure she’d gotten home safely and was doing okay after sleeping on a brick floor all night.

Almost before he knew it he was rapping his knuckles on her trailer door.

It opened. “Hey, I didn’t…Spike?” The last was a hiss.

He couldn’t speak. She had a white t-shirt on with no bra. The curve of her perky tits was clearly visible through the material and, fuck, those were her nipples. He couldn’t tell the exact color, but more red than pink.

For a fleeting second he thought she was only half-dressed, but then Buffy shifted and the frayed hem of a pair of denim shorts peaked out. Daisy dukes, a white t-shirt, and her hair tied up in messy ponytail. She’d never looked better to him than right at that instant.

He blinked.

“Spike, get in here before someone sees!” She grabbed the lapels of his jacket and pulled him into the trailer. For a second he thought she was going to kiss him, but then she pushed him down onto the bench seat of the trailer’s table.

“Er…” He couldn’t stop staring at her chest like a complete wanker. It was a good thing he still had his duster on, as it hid his hard-on from view. Shoving his hand into his pocket he discreetly adjusted his hard-on. Or at least he thought he was being discreet. He watched in wonder as her nipples tightened into little buds.

Huffing, she crossed her arms over her chest. “Spike, what are you doing here?”

“Um.” He finally managed to raise his gaze to meet hers. She looked pissed. Really pissed. “Just making sure you’re okay.”

“Well, I’m fine, so you can go before someone sees you.”

His mind whirled. “Excuse me?”

“You heard me. I don’t want to see you. I don’t care about you. I don’t want to be associated with you. I’ll see you on set in two weeks. I’ll play my part, you play yours. End of story.”

Spike’s stomach dropped through the floor. Where was the girl from last night? The one that’d smiled and wished him sweet dreams as she lay wrapped in his jacket?

What the heck had Angel said to her?

She wasn’t meeting his eyes now.

For a brief minute he thought he was going to be sick. No, no, no. This wasn’t how this was supposed to go. “Look, princess,” he snapped. “I wanted to check on you and see how you were doing. Pardon me for giving a shit. I didn’t mean to breathe your rarefied air. I’ll just fuck off then, shall I?”

He started to stand up.

“Wait,” she cried. “Stop, Spike, I’m sorry.”
He froze, his anger melting away when he saw her wipe tears from her eyes.

“What’s wrong, luv?”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to be…Angel was really mad at me, on the drive back.”

“Why?”

“Because…I was alone with you, all night.”

Spike couldn’t figure that one out. “But we were trapped after escaping a tornado, with no cell service. And we didn’t do a bloody thing you couldn’t tell a preschool class about.”

“I know. I told him. There’s something…from a long time ago now and I guess this reminded him of that situation and set him off.”

She looked so lost. Spike wanted to take her in his arms and tell her everything would be alright. He’d make everything better. But that was Angel’s place, not his.

And, seriously, where did the moron get off throwing accusations of cheating at Buffy? Angel was the one who was flipping up Drusilla’s skirts every blasted chance he got. Obviously it was supposed to be a clandestine affair, but Dru sure as hell made certain Spike knew that she was getting her jollies from the ex-Prom King.

Spike sat back down and ran a hand over his face. “Buffy, you didn’t do anything wrong. I have no idea what situation he might be angry over. I had zero to do with him before this show. Angel…he shouldn’t be mad at you, luv.”

Buffy was leaning against the counter and staring at the floor. “I don’t understand. I try so hard to be good, to make him happy, to do what he says. And it’s never enough. I still make him mad. I guess I’m just not very good girlfriend material.”

Alarm bells went off in Spike’s brain.

Oh, god, no.

He’d known Angel didn’t treat her as well as she deserved, but Spike had thought he might not be a great judge of that because he believed Buffy was a goddess who merited her every whim catered to.

But this…no.

His mind fragmented and he was a scared kid again, watching his mum scramble eggs in the cramped kitchen of their tiny flat. She’d been sporting a black eye and when he’d asked about it she’d laughed and said she needed to learn when to keep her mouth closed. She’d smiled at him, shoveled the eggs onto a plate, and said she simply wasn’t the best girlfriend on God’s green earth.

A week later Spike had come home from school to find her dead on the living room floor with a needle in her arm. Overdose, everyone had said, shaking their heads and tutting about what was to be done with an ungainly twelve-year-old boy with no other family.

No one had listened when he said he mother wasn’t a junkie. There’d been no justice.

Spike’s hands closed into ineffectual fists as he watched another woman he loved explain away the hurt. His mother’s boyfriend had used his fists, Angel used his words. The result wasn’t that different.
He felt like he was falling off a cliff. How could he help? “Do you have a notepad?”

She frowned slightly, her lower lip pouting out in the cutest possible way. “Uh, here,” she said after a few seconds of rummaging through a drawer, and handed him a sheet of pink paper with kittens in one corner and a pen with purple ink. It’d do.

Quickly he wrote out his name, phone number, address, and after a second even the codes to his gate and front door. Buffy sat down across from him and he was acutely aware that their knees were almost touching. He slid the paper across the table to her.

“What’s this for?” she asked, crinkling her nose.

Spike sighed. It was so damn confusing being this close to her. He wanted to grab her and snog her, or maybe drag her to the floor and shag her until she couldn’t walk right for three days. But he also wanted to curl up tight around her and protect her from anything that would ever hurt her. If only he could make her understand that what Angel was doing to her wasn’t right. He wanted to take her hand and ask to be her friend. Only that would never be enough.

His heart ached.

“It’s my info,” he said gruffly. “In case you ever need a helping hand. My place is about a six-hour drive from here. If you need somewhere to go, for any reason, whether I’m there or not, you’re welcome there. It’s on the beach, no room with a bad view.”

“Why are you doing this?” Her brows drew slightly together.

He cursed his mind, because now all he could see was his bedroom at the beach house, the window open and the sound of the pounding surf rolling in as her body rose up against his…

He closed his eyes and shakily got to his feet. “Because, pet, everyone needs a place to fall.”

For a heartbeat she looked up at him, eyes unreadable. Then she gasped and the anger from earlier returned. Her eyes snapped with indignation. “I don’t need your help! You’re the problem!’ She jumped to her feet and he hastily retreated to the door. “Spike, I really don’t want you in my life. I have sisters, friends, a boyfriend. If I needed help I have so many places to turn that I can’t even begin to name them all.”

Spike stumbled out the door, landing on his rump and looking up at her in all her self-righteous fury. He wanted to snap at her, tell her off, but deep down he knew her anger wasn’t really aimed at him. He was just convenient.

The piece of paper landed, crumpled up, beside him on the ground. “If I ever needed somewhere ‘to fall’ as you put it, it most certainly would never be with you!’ She slammed the door shut.

Slowly, Spike got to his feet and brushed the dirt off his arse. He picked up the piece of paper and smoothed it back out before tucking it into the space between the door and the frame. He flattened his palm against the smooth metal of the RV’s exterior, taking a few deep breaths.

His anger—at Buffy, Angel, the sodding storm, and himself and his foolish hopes and dreams—was threatening to get the better with him.

The dam broke and, cursing under his breath at everything in existence, he stormed back to his trailer, threw a few necessities in a bag, and tossed the duffle onto the front seat of his midnight-black Aston Martin Vanquish. The engine made a satisfying roar as he started the car and barreled down the road away from her, and the pain, and the hopelessness.
Slamming the door in Spike’s face had felt good for all of about two seconds. Buffy sat back down at the table and dropped her head into her hands.

She’d seen something when she’d told him about how much trouble she was having being a good girlfriend. It’d not been any of the emotions she’d expected out of him, like maybe pride that he’d managed to mess up her life a little bit.

She dug her fingernails into her scalp. Why did she even think he’d like that? When had he ever been happy at her being upset? And the look on his face…sympathy. That’s what it had been. As if he had any idea about her at all. As if he could judge her.

As if he could judge anyone. He was a pervert. Buffy had seen him adjust himself when he’d sat down. Who the hell would get turned on when she looked like trash in old shorts and a shapeless t-shirt? There was something wrong with him.

And there was something wrong with her because knowing he’d been turned on had made her hot. She’d been so aware of him and he’d seemed to take up much more room in her trailer than Angel ever had.

Groaning, Buffy stood up and moved to the back of her trailer. She wasn’t supposed to be thinking about Spike. What she should do was go and find Angel. He’d said later, probably thinking she needed time to get ready. For once she’d be quick about it and surprise him and they could have lunch together and figure out what to do with their vacation time. So often during the off season, when Belle wasn’t filming, Angel’s schedule was so busy that it usually didn’t match up with Buffy’s and they hardly got to see each other. These two weeks were going to be a treat.

Her phone rang. She answered it and put it on speaker. “Hi, Dawnie!”

“Hey Sis! I just wanted to actually talk to you, because I was pretty worried about you. You always have your phone.”

“I know! I thought I was going to die when I realized I couldn’t check Twitter.” Buffy picked a simple blue sundress Angel had bought her and started to brush out her hair.

“I bet. So what’s up now?”

“The place is trashed here. I’ve got two weeks off while they clean up.”

“Buffy!” Dawn squealed. “That’s totally fab! What’re you going to do?”

“I don’t know yet. I know Angel’s been making some hints about Miami. I’m thinking the beach does sound awfully sweet.”

“Totally! And there’d be so many hot guys in speedos to look at.”

“Totally.” Buffy snickered. The image of Spike in a speedo on South Beach popped into her head. His pasty British behind would probably be burned to a crisp in a second. Though now her brain seemed to be stuck on the speedo part.

Which she really wasn’t supposed to be thinking about.

“Soon as I know where I’ll be I’ll text you, okay? I might just end up at Faith’s,” Buffy said as she touched up her makeup. But she hoped not. Spending time with Faith was not the best way to try
and forget Spike existed.

“Cool beans. Love you, sis.”

“Love you, too.”

With a final glance in the mirror, Buffy headed outside. As she opened her trailer door something fluttered to the ground. Picking it up she realized it was the piece of pink paper Spike had written his contact information on, like it was the dark ages. He must have straightened it out and left it for her, even after what she’d said to him.

Weirdo.

She almost tossed it away again, but it really wouldn’t do if someone found it right outside her place. With no pockets she did the only thing she could think of and folded it up and stuffed it in her bra.

Being careful of all the wind-scattered debris, she picked her way to Angel’s RV. She knocked but there was no answer. Maybe he was in the shower. Her phone beeped with a text message from Faith, asking about her plans now that Buffy had some vacation time. Buffy got the feeling her sister was kind of lonely and really wouldn’t mind a visit.

Maybe Buffy could just say Spike was an off-limits topic. Or maybe all of work, which would include him and be far less suspicious. Buffy replied that she was still figuring things out. Hitting send, she tried the doorknob, happy to find it unlocked.

Phone in hand, she climbed into the RV.

Hearing noises, she turned her face towards the bedroom.

Buffy’s world ended.
Days like this I want to drive away

-Katy Perry, “Part of Me”

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Spike drove the Aston Martin up the ramp and into a garage that was half the size of the house it was attached to. He killed the engine and sat, listening to the pings of the heated metal as it cooled. Being a beach house, the entire structure sat on massive pylons so that a storm surge wouldn’t damage the interior. There were fences and thick stands of saw palmettos, cypress trees hung with Spanish moss, and even palm trees, to keep prying eyes out. The house was remote and he’d bought the land on either side, not wanting neighbors.

Coming up the long drive he’d been relieved to see that the recent bad weather had hardly touched the place.

The beach house was his sanctuary and it had hurt when he’d offered it to Buffy and she’d literally thrown it back in his face. But, silly sod that he was, he forgave her. She couldn’t have known how much his house meant to him.

Spike sighed and leaned his forehead against the top of the steering wheel. He wasn’t going to cry. All the anger had left him on the drive home and he felt hollow. He sniffled. Damn it! He was not going to cry one more time over blasted Buffy Summers. Who was probably off to some glamorous destination with Angel.

Maybe he’d been mistaken about what Buffy had said. Please, he silently begged, let him have been mistaken. Surely Angel knew what a treasure he had and would never do anything to hurt Buffy in any way. Please, let her never need a safe haven, a place to fall.

Another sniffle escaped. The muscles in his face tightened up. Christ, he was going to cry. Because he was nothing to her. Because he couldn’t help her. Because he’d gone and fallen in love with the wrong bloody girl and his heart couldn’t figure out when to quit.

He took a deep breath. His chest ached from the desire to see her, be with her. Even if it was only from a distance. Tears gathered as Spike reached to restart the car. He would go back, figure out where she was, follow her. He would keep her safe, somehow, whether she wanted him to or not.

He jumped as the driver’s side door was yanked open.

“You planning on sitting there and moping the entire night?” Cordy barked at him.

“Christ, woman.” He rubbed a hand over his face. “I changed my mind, I think I’m going to head back. Maybe help with the cleanup on set.”

Cordy huffed. “Yeah, right. You’re going to go chase after a girl that thinks you’re dirt.”

He didn’t have an answer for that, but his hands tightened on the steering wheel.

“I don’t think so.” Cordy put her hands on her hips. “You’re not running after her and you’re not going to spend the next two weeks moping around in your music room playing the guitar and weeping.”
He shot her a dirty look because she knew him far too well. He had been longing to slip the worn strap of his six-string over his head and get lost in a song or two.

“Help me out here, Harm,” Cordy said over her shoulder. The blonde ran around to the other side of the car, opened the door, and ducked in to undo his seatbelt. Spike let Cordelia grab his collar and haul him out of the vehicle.

“It’s good to see you two,” he said with a smile as both girls hugged him.

Harmony grabbed his sleeve and pulled him into the kitchen. “You really can’t be all sad and shit. I’m already cranky because my last show got cancelled and no one this fall needed a perky best friend.”

Spike looked heavenward. Harmony wasn’t the brightest crayon in the box, but she was cute and had found her niche as a sitcom actress, though she was always the friend and never the lead. If it bothered her she never let on.

Cordelia was between projects at the moment. She was a real, bona fide movie star with an already impressive list of credits to her name. Cordy was also sharp as a tack and he hadn’t quite figured out why the two girls got along as well as they did, but they had been a couple for years now and both seemed as happy as ever.

With his house empty while he was away shooting Belle, the girls had decided to occupy it and have a little time together, something that was difficult to come by in L.A. The girls didn’t want their relationship to be public, which he completely understood. The gossip mills would make it into something ugly instead of the loving connection that Harm and Cordy shared.

“Sorry to intrude,” he said as Cordy put her arms around Harm’s waist.

“Nonsense.” Cordy smiled. “It’s your house. Though don’t ask us to leave, because I’m serious: you’re not going to spend your surprise two-week vacation being a moody bastard and hiding out here like a hermit.”

“And you’ve already had welcome home sex with both of us!” Harm said brightly.

Spike groaned. “I have?” He pulled out his phone. There were eight text messages and five missed calls from Giles. Probably because Spike had taken off without telling his manager where he was going. Spike would call him in a few. He scrolled down, surprised that Buffy hadn’t posted anything since the pictures that morning of her and Angel.

Finally, he pulled up Harm and Cordy’s Instagram accounts, and sure enough, both had sexy pictures with captions about how much they were enjoying his surprise visit. They would have taken the photos of each other, of course. Cordy was in some kind of complicated-looking designer lingerie and, like usual, Harm’s photo was mostly skin.

Spike shook his head. “I wish you hadn’t.”

Both girls pouted.

“But it’s what we do,” Harmony whined, but Cordy quickly shushed her.

Eyes narrowing, Cordelia moved within centimeters of him. “What happened?” she asked. “You called me drunk as a skunk, talking about Buffy and how you’d done something stupid, and now you’re worried that we insinuated that we slept with you? Harm’s right, that’s what we do to keep the riff-raff from sniffing around. So what the hell went down in Georgia?”
Spike crossed his arms. Part of him knew he was being silly. Buffy most likely didn’t keep up with Harm and Cordy’s social media accounts. There was even less of a chance that she cared about what he did, but…still.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” he mumbled. “But I’d appreciate if you guys would cool it with the sex crap for a while online, please?”

“Not good enough,” Cordy said. Her intense scrutiny was making him squirm.

“I was trapped with Buffy last night when the tornado hit The Bronze.” He spoke rapidly, eyes fixed on the counter.

Harmony squealed. “Oh my god! Did you kiss her, screw her? What?”

“Yeah, Harm. We had a peach of time, which is why I’m in South Carolina alone right now.”

Harm’s face fell.

“We…we…” Spike’s stomach twisted. He was saying we and meaning Buffy and him. That was more than he’d ever expected. A grin split his face. “We just talked, and then we feel asleep beside each other. Best night of my life.”

Cordy smacked his chest with her palm. “You’re hopeless, you know that, right?” But she was smiling now, too.

“I know.” He shook his head. “Hopeless romantic. There’s just been something with us over the last week. I don’t want to spoil it before it even really gets started.”

“We got you,” Harm said, wide eyed. “No sex stuff on the internet.”

“She doesn’t really believe all that tabloid crap, does she?” Cordy asked.

Spike looked heavenward.

“The girl is crazy,” Cordy sighed. “I should have known you had a type.”

“Hey,” he snapped, then laughed. “Oh, all right, fair enough.” He propped a hip against the counter. “After that ride in the car I think I’m going to go for a run on the beach to get rid of the stiff muscles. Cordy, will you call Giles and tell him I’m here? I was brassed off when I left and forgot to tell him where I was going.”

“Sure.” Cordy pulled out her phone and walked off. “Way to weasel out of that one.” He heard her mumble.

He gave Harm another one-armed hug before bounding up the stairs to the second level.

In his bedroom he opened the windows, letting in the late summer sea air. He dressed in ratty black sweat pants and a threadbare ‘The Clash’ t-shirt he’d owned for years.

Headphones on, he let himself out the gate to the beach and headed down to the water line. The setting sun lit ocean in glorious reds and golds. Shore birds squawked and chased after each other and their dinners.

Spike jogged along the shoreline, happy to be where he felt most at home. He wondered if Buffy would like it: the old trees twisted by wind and crusted with salt, the little crabs that scurried busily on the beach, the gulls wheeling overhead.
He closed his eyes for a second, imagining her there beside him. A comfortable silence stretching between them.

He smiled ruefully to himself as he nearly tripped over a piece of driftwood. In his mind, Buffy giggled at him.

Panting, Spike stopped and watched the tide slowly making its way in. He bent down and used his finger to write S+B in the sand and drew a heart around it. The waves would wash it away, but just like last night, for a little while they would exist together.

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Buffy couldn’t make a sound.

She rarely came to Angel’s trailer, but it’s not like she never did, and he’d just walked off earlier without making real plans. He should have. Then she would have waited for him.

She would never have known.

Her heart was in her throat.

Angel was naked and laying on his back in his bed with Drusilla Rayne on top of him, riding him.

That was the part Buffy really didn’t understand. Angel had told her he didn’t even like sex with the woman on top. He appeared to be enjoying it now. Dru was moaning and gasping, her hands playing with her own breasts.

Buffy blinked. Dru must not know what Angel enjoyed in bed at all.

She looked down at her feet and her fingers turned her phone over and over in her hand.

Her phone.

Shakily, Buffy raised her iPhone and swiped to the video camera. She pushed record and watched the timer tick up as another woman screwed her boyfriend. Angel’s hands were gripping Drusilla’s hips, urging her on in a thick voice Buffy had never heard him use. He sounded like a different person. Angel was hoarsely pleading with Drusilla, asking her to make him feel good.

It was that last part, her boyfriend begging another woman to give him pleasure, that snapped Buffy out of her stupor. She turned her phone off and quickly left the trailer and its horrors behind. By the time she got back to her RV she could barely see through the tears.

A married woman was sleeping with her boyfriend. A married woman that they both worked with and who knew Angel was Buffy’s boyfriend. How could the bitch do something like this? Did she hate Buffy that much? It’s not like they knew each other that well.

Buffy collapsed to the floor, her back against the kitchen cabinets. She covered her face with her hands and sobbed. From the opposite wall the row of framed magazines with Angel and Buffy smiling on the covers mocked her.

Buffy swiped at her nose.

What had she done to deserve this? She’d done everything Angel had asked of her. Somehow she’d still messed up, she had to have, otherwise why would he be with another woman? Had she not loved him enough?
Maybe she hadn’t pleased him enough in bed. That had to be it. She hadn’t known anything at the start and it just must be something she wasn’t very good at.

Buffy was horrified. Did Angel sleep with her out of pity? Perhaps there was something wrong with her down there and he was too polite to say anything.

Fresh tears washed down her cheeks.

She was such a horrible lay her boyfriend had to go elsewhere to satisfy his needs. She’d make it up to him. She’d just pretend she hadn’t seen anything and ask him to help her be better for him. Once she’d learned and fixed what was wrong, Angel wouldn’t need Dru anymore.

She just needed to know what she’d done wrong.

_You didn’t do anything wrong._ Spike’s unwelcome voice echoed in her head. She looked up at the bench he’d been sitting on, almost expecting to see him. Would he laugh at her?

But, no. Spike wouldn’t. She knew better now, he wouldn’t laugh at her pain.

Buffy lay down on the floor of her trailer.

What was she going to do?

Where could she go?

Meaning to call Faith, she pulled her phone out of her pocket and unlocked it. The video began to play back, ending with Angel hoarsely asking Drusilla to make him come. She watched it again and again.

_You didn’t do anything wrong._

A lump was lodged in her throat. Buffy didn’t want to see Angel. Even if his cheating was her fault, she just couldn’t look at him. Faith would want answers and she’d never liked Angel anyway. Visiting Dawn was out of the question. Her younger sister didn’t need a weepy Buffy distracting her while she was supposed to be concentrating on her school and music.

Willow was busy with the Dingoes.

There was nowhere.

Buffy sat up and something poked the side of her breast. Frowning, she pulled out the folded up piece of paper she’d stuffed in her dress and then forgotten about.

Slowly, she flattened it out.

_Everyone needs a place to fall._

Buffy certainly felt like she was falling. She didn’t know if Spike would be there, but he’d said that didn’t matter. At the moment she couldn’t tell if she hoped to find the place, a beach house if she remembered right, empty, or if she wanted him to be there.

Methodically she got up. Showered, dressed in jeans and a blouse, ran a comb through her hair, and packed a small bag.

She tried not to think about anything.
She sent text messages to Willow, Faith, and Dawn, letting them know she was headed to the beach for some R&R and would let them know when she figured out where she was staying. She added two smiley faces so they wouldn’t suspect anything.

By the time she was ready to leave, Angel still hadn’t shown up. She actually wasn’t surprised. Neither he nor Drusilla had seen Buffy. And it wasn’t unusual for Angel to change plans without consulting her. He had a lot of business that was guys only and Buffy being there would only be a distraction. Usually he’d stop by at least briefly to talk to her afterwards.

But not today. Her trailer would be empty.

Slinging her bag over her shoulder Buffy locked her RV and headed towards her monstrosity of a car, a dull grey Cadillac CTS that Angel had insisted she buy. It was fancy enough, but the thing was a tank. Angel had several reasons about why she’d needed it, but honestly, she couldn’t remember them now. At the time she hadn’t wanted to argue so she’d purchased the thing even though it really didn’t seem like something she’d drive.

Secretly, Buffy had wanted a Ferrari. Not one of the scary almost-racecars, but a Ferrari ff, in blue. She’d told Fred once and when Fred had asked why she hadn’t bought herself one, Buffy had sighed and explained that as ‘America’s Sweetheart’ she had needed to get a domestic car instead of an import. Fred had hummed in agreement, but Buffy had known she didn’t really understand.

No one did. No one really got how much of a prisoner to her image she was. Even Angel, who helped her so much with maintaining that image, didn’t understand how much of a hostage she felt to how the public perceived her.

Popping open the Cadillac’s trunk, she dumped her bag into it.

“Hey!” a female voice called from behind her.

A smiling Kendra was waving at her. Buffy willed the tension away from her face and waved back. Beside Kendra was Daniel Osborne, or Oz, as everyone called him. He was Mr. Theadon’s primary assistant. Oz was as laid back as Hoss was energetic. The two worked well together.

“Off to greener pastures?” Oz said as Buffy shut the lid of the trunk.

“I thought I’d get a little beach time in.” Buffy tried to appear nonchalant.

Oz raised an eyebrow. “With lots of sunscreen?”

“Yes, Mom, with lots of sunscreen.” Buffy rolled her eyes, though she knew it was his job to make sure things went smoothly on the set and her coming back much tanner than when she left would be a problem.

Kendra fidgeted, crossing and uncrossing her arms. “Um, Buffy, can I ask you something?”

“Sure.”

“I was wondering if we could get together, maybe just on the phone, and discuss the scenes we share. I think there’s a lot of really subtle things we could do with them.” Kendra raised her eyes to Buffy’s, steel behind her gaze. The nervousness had evaporated.

“That’s a great idea!” Buffy could easily think of ways they could work together to put a lot into their character’s interactions. “I was so freaked out over that first scene we did. I think it went okay, but you’re so right, we should totally talk about how we’re going to play things. Just give me a week
and call. Can I give you my contact info?” Buffy was impressed, she hadn’t had any reason to contact Kendra before and hadn’t really considered just sitting down and talking with the other woman. It seemed painfully obvious now.

Kendra looked taken aback. “You really think it’s a good idea?”

“Yes, of course! Was I not supposed to?”

Oz was examining the ground intently.

“Well…” Kendra hedged. “I’d asked Angel for your info before and he said you wouldn’t want to be bothered about such stuff.”

Buffy flinched at Angel’s name. And what did Kendra mean? Such stuff? But Belle was her job and Buffy genuinely cared about the quality of the show. It’s why she never complained about all the time Angel spent discussing things with Mr. Rayne, because they were trying to make the show better.

Buffy felt so confused. “I’m sorry, he must have been mistaken.”

Oz sighed loudly. “Wouldn’t be the first time.”

Buffy shot him a look. What did that mean? “Do you have an iPhone?” she asked Kendra. The other girl smiled and pulled her phone out and Buffy quickly exchanged contact info with her.

“I’ll see you in two weeks?” Oz asked.

“Yes, Mom, two weeks.” Buffy gave Kendra a one-armed hug before settling into the driver’s seat of her car. She put the satellite radio onto a pop station out of Los Angeles. Sometimes she really missed her hometown. No one in Georgia knew how to make a decent fish taco.

Or how to keep from cheating on their girlfriends.

Buffy tried to sing along with Katy Perry through her tears.

****

Returning from his run, Spike gulped down a bottle of water. He should do something useful, like shower. Or be a good little actor and run over his scripts. Only it’d mostly be Ashley mooning over Isabelle and at the moment he was having enough trouble being Spike mooning over Buffy.

Giving up on being productive, he made some popcorn and settled on the couch in his den to watch Airplane! for the millionth time. Sometimes hearing the same old corny lines was comforting.

The show had barely gotten started when Cordy came and sat on the other end of the couch. Her hair was damp and she was wrapped in a red silk bathrobe.

“Is that mine?” he asked.

“Maybe. It’s not like you were using it.”

“True.”

There were a few minutes of silence and popcorn munching.

“Spike, are you doing okay?” Cordelia asked, finger-combing her hair.
“Why shouldn’t I be?” he grunted. Cordy was a good friend, but she couldn’t take a hint when it came to things he didn’t want to discuss.

“Well, besides the fact that your hair is a mess…”

Spike’s hands immediately went to his usually gelled-back locks. The wind of the ocean had done a number on him and he could feel the curls that were trying to form. He sighed. “Good thing it’s just you then.”

“Yup, just us chickens.” She quietly regarded him for a minute. “Spike, you have to stop this. Buffy isn’t yours, she’s never going to be yours.”

“Thanks for the cheery pep talk.” He slumped further down on the couch. It didn’t matter that Cordy was probably right. Hope, even after Buffy’s harsh words, was still burning in his chest. He slid his eyes over to Cordy. “You don’t know what this last week has been like.”

“I’m all ears.”

He debated not saying anything, but he knew she’d be discreet. “Buffy and I, this last week, there’s sort of been this…connection.” Okay, so he didn’t exactly want to say he’d put her hand on his hard-on. “And it’s been nice. Really nice. Even if we can only be friends, it’s better than nothing.”

“Sure, you do know I’ve met you, right? Friends? Only if it’s the kind with benefits.”

Spike snorted.

“Seriously, you described having a conversation and falling asleep in her vicinity as the best night of your life. It was probably even an awkward conversation.” Cordy bent her knees up and wrapped her arms around them.

“It wasn’t that bad, and I gave her my coat to sleep under.”

Cordy gasped. “Wait, the duster? You let her borrow your duster?”

He nodded.

“I guess it is true love. I’m not even allowed to touch the damn thing,” Cordy grumbled.

“It was my mum’s.”

“I know, but…damn…” She gave him a sly look. “I bet you’ve been imagining all kinds of things since then. Mostly about waking up and finding her naked under there.” Cordy giggled. She pitched her voice higher. “Oh Spike! This old jacket did it for me! I want to fuck you all the time now!”

“Cordy!” he scolded around his laughter.

Cordy covered her mouth with a hand. “I’m not too far off, am I? You’ve probably been wanking like crazy to that image.”

“Oh, shut up.” He threw a decorative pillow at her, which she caught. “I doubt I’m the only man in the country that tosses off while thinking of Buffy Summers.”

“True, and probably plenty of girls as well.”

“Oh I’m sure, lots of little Cordelia Chases that wonder why their knickers get wet when they can see down her cleavage on screen.”
Cordy rolled her eyes, but then her face grew serious. “Yeah, but those people don’t actually see her. Kissing her isn’t in their job description.”

Spike sighed. “Ashley kissing Isabelle is a very different thing than Spike kissing Buffy.”

“Maybe,” she allowed. “But I don’t know why you even want her so much. A California girl named Buffy? She’s got to be super high maintenance.”

“Nothing like you, I’m sure.” Spike frowned. He hadn’t really thought about it, but honestly, except for complaining about the lack of cell service, Buffy hadn’t been a pain at all about being trapped in an underground wine cellar all night. She’d never even mentioned she was cold until they were trying to go to sleep and she’d said the chill was making it a little difficult. Embarrassed that he hadn’t thought of it sooner, Spike had shrugged off his duster and lain it over her.

“Pssh.” Cordy waved her hand. “She probably only wears designer labels, only eats specially prepared meals, and needs jewelry like the rest of us need air.”

“Remind me what you wore to the Oscars last year?”

“That was all loaned to me,” Cordy sniffed. “Honestly, admit it, if Buffy fell into your arms right this second you’d have no idea what to do with her.”

“If she fell into my arms right this second I’d bloody well never let her go,” he groused. Spike picked up the remote to turn up the volume on the TV. Maybe Cordy would take the hint.

The doorbell rang.
But there's got to be an opening

-The Wallflowers, “One Headlight”

****

Don’t think. Just drive.

Buffy was able to pull it off for several hours. She listened to the radio, sung along, and absolutely did not think about Angel or the skank ho-bag that was Drusilla. She didn’t even think about where she was going. She just existed from one pop song to the next.

Eventually, she had to stop for gas. Shoving her hair up into a ball-cap, she pulled into a truck stop and used the pump the furthest away from everyone.

While the car was filling, she took out her cell phone to check for text messages and updates on all the feeds she watched.

There were reminders from Dawn and Faith to tell them where she was when she finally decided on a place to stay.

Willow had sent a rambling email about what a pain the band was being and that she might take a break from the tour when Belle’s shooting started up again. The Dingoes’ bassist was being a real ass and continually threatening to quit and it was driving Willow bonkers trying to keep him happy.

Buffy saved Instagram for last as it was always her favorite.

As she looked through the photos she gasped and nearly dropped the phone. There was a picture of Cordelia Chase looking stunning in not very much and saying how glad she was that Spike was home. Buffy’s stomach rolled.

Not that she had any reason to feel the tiniest bit of anything that even resembled jealousy. But if Spike was at his place having a sex-fest would he really want her there underfoot? Could she stand to hear him screwing Cordelia or that other bimbo, what was her name?

Buffy scrolled down and sure enough there was a picture of Harmony Kendall (that was it!) wearing even less with a caption saying no matter how glad Cordelia was, Harmony bet she was gladder. Buffy’s chest tightened. She couldn’t do this. She wouldn’t be some pity case he talked to when he wasn’t boinking a couple of sluts. That so wasn’t her.

Angrily, she tossed her phone on the seat of her car and finished at the gas pump. When she sat down she nearly landed on her phone. Pulling it out from underneath her, she was again confronted with the picture of a perfect looking Cordelia, but this time she noticed when the photo had been posted.

Quickly, Buffy did the math. Then she did it again. And then a third time. It didn’t add up. At the time both Cordelia and Harmony had posted their ‘welcome home’ photos, Spike had been sitting in her trailer.

He couldn’t have taken those photos.
What the hey?

For a minute, she sat there. Should she turn around? Go to the airport and head to Los Angeles? Faith would welcome her with open arms and open Ben & Jerry’s containers. At least at first. Then Buffy would have to listen to her sister lecture her about how she’d never liked Angel and how naïve Buffy was.

She couldn’t face that.

The beach house still sounded like her best bet. And if it got awkward she could always just leave. Buffy went back to driving and not thinking.

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The doorbell buzzed insistently.

“I’ll get it. Giles must have left his keys behind, again,” Spike groused. Giles never seemed to remember his key to the beach house, which Spike didn’t buy for a second. The man was organization personified. Most likely his manager just liked causing Spike the inconvenience of getting up off the couch and letting him in.

Spike swung the heavy door open. “You know one of these days I’m going to…”

He trailed off as the power of speech left him.

It wasn’t Giles.

Spike blinked, but Buffy was still standing there.

“Hi,” she said, her voice tiny. “I’m sorry, I didn’t know where else to go.” She took a shuffling step forward and before he could master his tongue well enough to warn her about the raised lip on the front of the doorframe her foot had hit it and she was falling forward.

Without even thinking, Spike grabbed her and scooped her up, holding her with one arm around her back and the other under her knees. He still couldn’t get any words out.

“Thank you,” she said. Her arms wrapped around his neck and she smushed her face into his chest as a sob escaped her.

Buffy had come to him? To be held while she cried? Part of him was giddy and the other part, that guessed her berk of a boyfriend had done something to cause her tears, wanted to smash Angel into tiny pieces and feed him to the crabs. Buffy was weeping hard enough that her entire body was shaking. He rubbed her shoulder and cooed softly against the top of her head.

She was crying hard enough to soak the fabric of his t-shirt. Spike’s eyes flew open. He hadn’t even showered after his run and still had the same old ratty clothes on. They probably stank. He probably stank and his hair was most likely an impenetrable thicket. He’d been wallowing in self-pity and it showed. Oh god, in a second she was going to realize he was a mess, and in more ways than one. The girl was falling apart and he was stuck being acutely that the arm he was holding her legs with was touching her thighs through the fabric of her jeans.

“Who’s that?” Cordy asked from the entrance to the living room.

Spike cleared his throat, but his voice still came out thick. “Can you bring the tissues, please?”
A minute later Cordy was back. She dumped a wad of Kleenex on Buffy’s stomach before tightening the sash on her bathrobe.

Buffy unwound one hand from around him to wipe her eyes and blow her nose.

Spike took a deep breath. “Are you okay?” he whispered.

“Yeah, you caught me before I could actually hurt myself.” She smiled softly at him and Spike nearly had to sit down as his knees trembled. He was holding Buffy in his arms and she was thanking him and smiling through her tears. His heart was beating so hard his ears were roaring with the rush of blood through them.

“I’ll always catch you,” he said, his head tilting the tiniest fraction towards her. Her brows raised and she looked surprised, but not angry. Slowly, she lifted her hand and brushed the tips of her fingers over his cheek. It felt like she was touching his soul.

Cordy coughed in the most obviously fake way possible. “I said: who’s that?” she asked, her voice stern.

Buffy’s hand fell away from his face and he whimpered at the loss of contact. As she shifted to look at Cordy, Spike tightened his arms around her, unwilling to let her go yet. Or ever. She was as light as a feather and he could carry her like this for days if she wished it.


“Um, hi,” Buffy said. “I, er, fell and Spike caught me and...” Buffy tuned back to him. “You can probably put me down now.”

“No.” Was she daft? Put her down?

Buffy didn’t even argue, which was a relief. Instead she sagged against him with a little sigh. He trembled again and wondered if his feet were even still on the floor.

“What’s going on?” Harmony’s voice came from the stairs. She was standing there in a sleep shirt that had a picture of Tweety bird on the front.

Cordy looked up at her. “Well, I’m slightly confused as to how this has happened, but somehow Buffy Summers turned up at the front door, tripped, and essentially fell into Spike’s arms.”

“Oh,” Harm said, looking perplexed. “Are you going to be coming up to bed soon?” Harmony’s gaze went to Buffy. “Oh, and hi. Did you have a nice drive?”

“Er,” Buffy was frowning. “I guess so? There were a lot of bugs.”

“Yeah, they’re so gross.” Harmony made a face. “Are you going to stay here all the time now?” she asked Buffy.

Spike stopped breathing and his chest tightened. He hadn’t thought much beyond the fact that he was holding Buffy and she was letting him.

“I don’t really know.” Buffy bit her lip in the most adorable way possible. “Am, I...am I interrupting something?”

“I was watching Airplane!” he said, instantly feeling like the single biggest dork on the planet.
She looked up him from under her lashes. “Can you fly this plane and land it?” she said, sounding shy.

“Surely you can’t be serious,” he responded automatically.

Buffy giggled. “I am serious, and don’t call me Shirley.”

He grinned goofily as something in his chest cracked open and he fell in love with her all over again.

Cordy rolled her eyes. “Not you too. And Spike, I don’t think she meant interrupting your terrible taste in entertainment.”

“I think she meant she wanted to know if we were having sex,” Harmony helpfully added.

Spike groaned. Not right now. Couldn’t the stupid bint have kept her mouth closed just this once?

Buffy pulled her phone from her pocket. “Yeah, that, but…” Deftly, she brought up Instagram. “I almost turned around when I saw these.” She held up the phone so he could clearly see the pictures Cordelia and Harm had posted of themselves supposedly after he’d had “welcome home” sex with them. Oh, christ, it was a buggering nightmare. His fingers twitched and threatened to dig harder into Buffy. As if anchoring her by brute force would help.

“I told you two—” Spike snarled, but was cut off when Buffy put her finger briefly on his lips.

“I said almost, because I noticed the time stamps on the pictures. Unless I was totally unobservant and you guys were getting it on in my trailer, it’s impossible that Spike took either of those photos.”

Spike sent prayers of desperate thanks to whatever deity was listening and to the person who’d decided Instagram photos should come with time stamps.

Cordy’s eyes narrowed. “Can we trust you?” she asked Buffy.

“Yeah, I’m not about to blab,” Buffy huffed.

“That’s good!” Harmony said. She walked the rest of the way down the stairs and Cordy put an arm around her waist. Spike wondered how much Cordy was about to reveal. Please don’t let it be his feelings for the woman he was holding. He wanted to be the one to tell Buffy, when the time was right and her face wasn’t still wet from crying over another man.

“This is in the absolute strictest confidence.” Cordelia was deadly serious.

Buffy nodded. The hand around the back of his neck started playing with the little hairs there. It was distracting enough that he had to fight to keep his eyes open. He wondered if she even knew she was bloody doing it. His entire being was hyper focused on the soft scrape of her nails against his skin. Like a cat, he found himself subtly arching into her touch.

“You should know,” Cordy said, “that Spike has never slept with either me or Harmony. Not once.”

Buffy’s brows drew together, but she didn’t interrupt.

“Harmony and I are in a relationship together.” Cordy squeezed Harm in a one-armed hug. “And have been for a while. Spike covers for us and in return we cover for him, to help keep random women away. It’s easier for him to tell girls he can’t take them home because one of us will be there than to say he’s not interested.”

“Not interested?” Buffy’s head whipped back around and her mouth was open in shock. Her hand
stopped moving.

Oh, sodding wonderful, now she thought he was gay.

Harmony giggled, her hand over her mouth. “Not like he likes boys!”

Buffy immediately relaxed and Spike let out a sigh of relief.

“He just doesn’t like all the fake girls Hollywood seems to be crawling with,” Harmony continued. “Really there’s only one gir-“

Cordy grabbed Harmony’s wrist and squeezed, interrupting her. “Spike’s a lot pickier than he seems. The fast girls? That’s simply part of his image. Just like you probably don’t like cheese nearly as much you seem to in those commercials.”

Buffy’s nose scrunched up. “Or overalls.”

Bloody hell, but she was adorable. He moved his neck a tiny bit, silently begging her to start petting him again.

When her fingers started brushing over his skin once more he couldn’t help sighing in relief.

There was an awkward silence.

“So, you’re like, Harmony and Cordelia’s beard?” Buffy finally said, a cheeky grin on her face.

“Uh, well…in a manner of speaking.” He felt his face flush.

Cordelia laughed loudly. “He so is. C’mon Harm.” Cordy gently pulled at her girlfriend’s arm. “Let’s get packed.”

“What?” Buffy squirmed enough that Spike finally had to set her down. “I didn’t mean to chase you out of your own home! And it’s late!”

His arms immediately felt too empty and he missed her warmth.

“Yeah, I was sleeping.” Harmony pouted.

Cordy flipped her hair over her shoulder. “Tough cookies.” She looked at Buffy. “You really are nice, aren’t you? And no worries, this is Spike’s house, not ours. We were hanging here while he was on set for Belle because it’s remote and secure. You can be here and not feel like you’re being constantly watched. But I think it’s you that needs some space now.”

To his surprise, Buffy nodded. “Thank you,” she murmured.

Cordy nodded regally. “And it’s late in the tourist season. We won’t have any trouble finding a hotel room. Spike…” Her eyes met his. “Don’t just stand there like a dumbass. Show Buffy around, get one of the guest rooms ready for her, and for fuck’s sake offer her something to eat and drink. She just drove for six hours.”

“Uh, right…” he said. Damn it! Now Buffy was going to think he was an idiot. She was…wait. Did Buffy just agree to staying here, alone, with him? He quickly retreated until his back was braced against the wall. Alone with Buffy. He was going to be alone with her.

He pressed himself against the wall as his legs threatened to turn to jello. Down boy, he reprimanded himself, it doesn’t mean she wants to jump your bones. The girl was looking for safety. He could
give that to her.

He would give her anything.

“Thank you Cordelia,” Buffy was saying. “It was very nice to meet you and Harmony.”

“Thank you. It was very nice to finally meet you as well.” Cordy halted two steps up the stairs and looked back. “And Buffy, this place is a good place to be, if you need to fall.”

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Buffy crossed her arms. She didn’t know what she had been expecting. Wild parties? Kegs? A bunch of naked people with vacant, drugged-out stares? The nice house, with Spike not dressed for company and a couple of his good friends who were immediately leaving because she seemed to need space, was throwing her for a loop.

Only, it shouldn’t. Not after the wine cellar. He’d practically told her all the bad boy stuff was just a role, that it wasn’t him. But she’d still needed to see it for herself. That seemed to be today’s theme. Because she’d seen more than enough earlier, with Angel. Her mind shied away from that image and she glanced over to where Spike was leaning against the wall.

He looked incredibly nervous. Taking a deep breath and swallowing hard, he pushed himself upright and walked over to her. He tilted his head slightly. “Is there anything you need to talk about, luv?”

She shook her head. “Not right now. Tomorrow, I need to…tomorrow.”

“Alright, I’ll be here whenever you’re ready.”

Buffy was a little stunned. Not only had he asked if she wanted to talk, but instead of demanding she tell him immediately what had led her to his doorstep, he’d accepted her request for time to think without a fight.

Smiling shyly, he took her hand, his warm palm rough against hers. It was reassuring. She’d felt very safe with his arms around her. When he’d put her down she’d missed their comfort.

Now he was simply holding her hand, staring at their intertwined fingers. “Um.” He finally seemed to remember himself. “W-would you like a drink?”

“Do you have any diet coke?”

Spike smiled brightly. “I do, I think, this way.” Keeping a tight hold on her hand, he showed her to the kitchen. Reluctantly, he let go and pulled a can of diet coke out of the big stainless steel fridge and popped the top. “Do you want a glass?”

“Can is fine.”

He passed her the can and watched, wide eyed, as she took a sip.

“I’m not going to disappear,” she said with a grin.

Spike blushed bright red. “Sorry,” he mumbled and rubbed at the back of his neck. It was cute.

There was a commotion from the front foyer.

“I’ll be right back, just going to see them off.” He waved in the general direction of the noise.
“I’ll be right here, I promise.”

He hesitated for a second, his fingers twitching, before going back down the hallway towards the front of the house.

Buffy looked around the nicely appointed kitchen. The countertops were a swirled back and white, probably gneiss, and looked new. Besides the fridge there was a gas range, a couple of built in ovens, a microwave, and a dishwasher. And a bunch of dirty dishes in the sink. At least it looked like someone lived here.

On the table was a half-drunk bottle of water and a *Belle South* shooting script. Buffy frowned. That was what she did, studied her scripts at the kitchen table. It’s almost like it was here, waiting for her. Only that was absurd, there was no way he’d known she was coming, so it must be what Spike did as well. Maybe they could practice their lines together while she was here.

The script was open, the top pages folded under the rest. She immediately recognized the scene. It was one where Isabelle and Ashley were in bed together. In fact, she was fairly certain that the setting description said something like: *They’re lying among tousled sheets after having made passionate love.*

She didn’t have to read the words of dialogue. She already knew them by heart.

Isabelle: I never imagined we would suit each other so well.

Ashley: I knew, but despaired of you ever being able to see me as more than a poor relation.

Isabelle: I am sorry it took me so long to find the man before me.

The scene continued through murmured declarations of love until it returned to ardent kissing. It was one of the scenes Buffy had fretted over. She’d been worried that Angel would be upset with how much kissing and touching she was going to have to do to another man, but Mr. Rayne had refused to even consider cutting it.

Imagining herself on one side of the table while Spike was on the other as they read through the scene made her feel a little breathless. She could imagine that rich voice of his saying the words.

How would the actual scene be played out? Would Ashley be laying behind Isabelle? Maybe he could whisper the words in her ear? But no that wouldn’t work. With that ‘to see’ Isabelle should be looking right at him. Ashley would be between her thighs. He would be propped up on his hands, staring down at her. Isabelle would be panting and have a hand tangled in the hair on the back of his head.

Buffy was embarrassed by the rush of warmth in her belly that accompanied the images. Isabelle and Ashley she reminded herself, but her hand tingled with the remembered feel of the curls at the nape of Spike’s neck. She’d been playing with them while he’d held her. They’d been soft and his skin warm. Hopefully he hadn’t noticed, it would be kind of hard to explain. Especially because she didn’t even know why she’d done it. Those little hairs had just been sweet and…

“Buffy?” Spike’s voice made her guiltily jump sky high.

“Hey! Still here as promised.”

His boyish smile of delight made something twist in her chest. When was the last time someone looked so pleased to simply have her there? Not because she was famous, or because she had money, or for whatever they believed she could do for them. Spike was happy just to see her. It felt
“Ready for the Five Cent Tour?” he asked.

“Sure.”

Spike held his hand out to her and she took it without hesitation. Laughing, he pulled her through the first floor of the house, showing her the living room, the game room, a home gym, a formal dining room—which he said he didn’t use and was full of boxes—and the entertainment room, which had a huge curved HDTV with *Airplane!* paused on the screen.

“Now for the garage,” he said, looking embarrassed. She had no idea what would be in the garage that would make him blush.

He swung the door open and turned on the lights.

Oh.

It was huge, and packed with cars.

“Oh my god!” she squealed. “Is that a Ferrari FF Coupe? In blue?”

“Yeah.” Spike’s face had turned an even brighter shade of red. “You can drive it, if you want.”

“Yes!” she nearly shouted and launched herself at Spike to give him a hug. “I totally want! That’s my favorite car!”

He hugged her back and pressed his face into the crook of her neck. “I know,” he mumbled against her skin. Quickly, he straightened up. “Er, I mean, I heard you…someone say it, sometime.”

Buffy looked at the car. Had he bought it because she liked it? She told herself not to be silly. He’d have no way of knowing she’d ever see it. Coincidence, like him reading his script at the kitchen table.

He grabbed her hand again and she followed him upstairs. There was a well-stocked library with several comfy chairs that looked well used. Not a show piece then. Spike liked to read.

He hesitated in front of the next room. “This feels a little private, but um, here goes.”

It was a music room. One wall was full of vinyl records and a few CDs. There was computer-based recording equipment set up in one corner. There was a drum kit, bass, keyboard, and electric guitar scattered around the space. Next to a wooden stool a battered old six string had been lovingly placed on a stand.

“I didn’t know you played,” she said, reaching out to gently run her fingers over the keyboard. There was something sacred about this room, but she couldn’t quite put her finger on what.

“Not very well,” he admitted. “I just…I like music, a lot. Too bad my skills don’t match.”

“I’m sure you’re great at it. Will you play for me?” she asked.
Spike ran a hand through his hair, but looked immensely pleased. “Maybe.”

As she turned to walk out, a framed photo sitting on the edge of the desk caught her eye. It was a publicity shot of her from the second season of *Belle*. She was standing against an oak tree with a soft smile on her lips. The photo was positioned so it’d be visible to someone sitting on the stool. It was the only picture in the place. Why would Spike have a shot of her in a place that obviously meant so much to him?

She almost said something but then bit her lip. Maybe right now wasn’t the time to ask.

Most of the rest of the rooms were guest bedrooms decorated in generic styles. One was where he said his manager usually stayed. His eyes went wide as he said it and he scrambled to call Giles. There was a brief conversation during which Spike adamantly insisted Giles stay at a hotel because Spike said he didn’t want to be bothered. She appreciated him not dragging her into the conversation.

The room she was staying in was done in a nautical theme. There was an attached bath and Spike showed her how to work the blinds that covered the huge bank of windows that took up the entirety of one wall.

“Do the windows open?” she asked, wanting to hear and smell the ocean.

“Like this.” He opened one for her and the rush of the surf was immediately audible. “Tomorrow I’ll take you to the beach, yeah? Show you how to work the gate?”

“I’d like that.”

“One more room to show you.” The next door down was another bedroom. It was a mirror to the one she was in, though the bed was a lot larger and there were clothes all over the floor. “This is me. You need anything just knock, and that includes talking,” he said gruffly.

“Thank you.” Buffy raised a hand and cupped his cheek for a second before letting her arm fall back to her side.

Moving like she was a scared deer that might bolt, Spike incrementally leaned forward and kissed her brow. It was a light, barely there press of his lips against her hair.

She trembled.

“Good night,” he whispered.

“Night,” she replied and fled to the relative safety of her room.

As she curled up to go to sleep, the sound of the waves lulling her, she refused to think of Angel, or Dru, or anything that hurt.

It occurred to her that with the layout of the two rooms Spike was sleeping in his bed just on the other side of the wall. It felt a little weird, but not, because wasn’t his trailer a row over from hers? They always fell asleep close to one another. It was a comforting thought.

She truly believed that if she needed to, she could go and ask him any inane thing in the middle of the night and he’d do his best to help her.

She wondered if he slept with his shirt off.

What about his pants?
She giggled to herself.

As he’d been showing her around his home, she’d gotten the impression that Spike had been showing her himself. She was still puzzled over why her picture had been in his music studio. He’d seem both proud and embarrassed about his hobby and that room had felt like it was the heart of the house.

If Buffy didn’t know better she’d think Spike might have a…thing for her.

And if she liked touching him, and talking to him, and...

Did she have a thing as well?

The ceiling she was staring at didn’t answer.
I wonder if it was a dream

-Don Henley, “The Boys of Summer”

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He woke to the sound of the ocean and the voices of shorebirds coming through his open window.

Spike yawned and stretched. It was good to be home.

Buffy.

He smiled. She was often the first thing he thought of in the morning. He wondered where she was and what she was doing as he idly scratched his stomach.

His eyes flew open. Oh, christ! Buffy! Next door. Here. Oh, god.

Spike nearly levitated out of the bed in a blind panic. She was probably an early riser. He stood next to his bed, looking at the tangled white sheets. He was naked. Hadn’t he gone to bed in his sweatpants? In case she’d needed something?

Vaguely he remembered getting uncomfortable and kicking them off in the middle of the night. What if she knocked right now, needing a towel or a snack or a shoulder to cry on? He stared down at himself and his rather insistent morning wood and cursed again before glancing back at his bedroom door in dread. But she wasn’t standing there.

Okay. Get it together, he told himself sternly.

His mind absolutely did not want to get it together.

Buffy. In his house. One room over.

Spike wondered what she’d do if he got into bed with her. His imagination seemed to think she’d be a happy camper and eagerly beg him to make love to her. He groaned. What if he just woke her up by sticking his face between her legs? He’d lick her until she was a quivering, satisfied heap that never wanted any other man ever again.

Yeah, because that’s how that would bloody well go. She wouldn’t kick him in the head and flee like all the hounds of hell were nipping at her heels.

But he couldn’t shake the image. Buffy lying on the light-blue sheets of the bed in that ridiculous nautical themed room, screaming his name as he made her come over and over.

“Buffy,” he whispered.

A cool breeze from the window hit his back. Oh, for…

He was still standing buck-naked in the middle of his room, only now his hand was wrapped around his hard-on. At least his door was still closed.

The shower, he needed a shower, and a quick wank. From long experience Spike knew he didn’t have a lot of other options on that account. At least it wouldn’t take long.
Ten minutes later he finished gelling his hair back and put on a clean, black button down shirt and pair of black jeans. He decided against cologne. There was no reason for him to smell like a pine forest, a glacier, or whatever the hell outdoorsy thing some French bloke thought men were supposed to stink like.

Spike walked out of the bathroom and stopped dead. His room was a mess. In fact, the whole house was kind of a mess. He didn’t like having household staff, valuing his privacy more than not having dust on the mantel.

But…his chest constricted. Buffy was going to think he was a slob. Maybe last night she’d been too worn out to notice, but today she’d hopefully be hanging out in the daylight. He gulped down a breath. He wasn’t going to let clutter, or dirt, or…anything, drive her away.

Working as fast as he could he got all the dirty clothes in a hamper, clean ones hung up, and clutter shoved into a drawer. He made sure there was nothing that even hinted at being pornography anywhere near his bed, stuffing what little he had in the furthest recesses of his closet. He had no intention of finding out if she’d be understanding over the fact that he wasn’t exactly a monk. Not to mention a few of the photos were from a Belle South porn parody and would be really difficult for him to explain.

There’d never been a girl in his bed at the beach house, since he’d bought it after starting work on Belle, and the thought made him giddy. He’d been waiting. Not that she was about to tumble into bed with him, but he was glad that there were no memories of anyone else being here. Now he’d have ones of her, even if all they did was talk. He sighed. Even if all they did was talk about Angel.

Spike surveyed the freshly made bed with its red comforter and its crisp white sheets. He frowned and pulled the bedding apart again, stripping off the white sheets and dumping them in the hamper. From the bottom drawer of his dresser he pulled out one of the numerous unopened packages of black silk sheet sets that he’d somehow ended up with after his now-infamous photoshoot.

The fabric actually felt delicious between his fingers as he swiftly remade the bed. He knew he was being ridiculous, but he couldn’t help it. Buffy would probably never even see his bed again. His stomach did a flip-flop knowing she had seen it once.

Now for the rest of the house. Outside his room he stopped in front of Buffy’s door and leaned his ear against the wood. He couldn’t hear anything. Hopefully she was still asleep.

Once downstairs he moved like a whirlwind. Trash went into bags and out to the garage. Plates were taken to the kitchen and he got a load into the dishwasher. He dusted fans, cleared clutter, and straightened random knick-knacks.

It all had to be perfect for his…no, not his girl…for Buffy.

As he put up the first load of dishes he wondered what she’d want for breakfast. Maybe he could make her pancakes? Spike opened the oven to make sure nothing was in it, in case he needed to use it to keep the pancakes warm. Only there was some kind of black ick caked to the bloody bottom of the oven. He couldn’t serve her pancakes out of an oven with that in it.

From below the sink he grabbed gloves, cleaner, and a scrub brush to attack the burnt on grime with. The stuff was stubborn. He was cursing it under his breath when he heard someone clear their throat behind him.

Spike tried to whip around, but managed to bump his head in the process. He rubbed the sore spot as he drank in the sight of Buffy standing in his kitchen, bathed in soft morning light. She was gorgeous
in a pair of jeans and a white camisole. Her hair was up in a ponytail with a few curls left trailing down her neck.

She glanced around the kitchen. “Have you been cleaning?”

“Er...yes?”

“Seems like a weird thing to do on your first official day off. A little dirt never killed anyone.”

Spike blinked. “Uh, right.” He shook himself and stripped off the rubber gloves. He smoothed down the front of his shirt, which seemed to have survived the house cleaning. “What do you want for breakfast, luv? I’ll make you anything you want. Pancakes? An omelet?”

She looked at him strangely. “Um, I can see fruit. Is it okay if I have that?”

“Sure, of course, anything.” He rocked forward on the balls of his feet.

“What about yogurt?” she asked, opening the fridge.

“Yeah, uh, don’t know about flavors.”

“Oh, vanilla, perfect. Do you want anything?”

His stomach growled. “A lime one, please, and a couple of the already boiled eggs in the door.”

Buffy handed him his food and he grabbed a spoon before shoving the script out of the way and sitting at the table. Spike looked up and felt his heart skip a beat when Buffy grabbed a sodding banana out of the fruit bowl on the counter. She sat down across from him and popped the top off the yogurt.

He stuck the spoon in his own yogurt and tried to take a bite, only to freeze with it halfway to his mouth.

Buffy was peeling the banana. She dunked the tip in the yogurt and wrapped her lips around it.

He whimpered.

Her eyes met his. Slowly, she took the bite.

Spike thought he might spontaneously combust. Buffy’s red lips wrapped around that piece of fruit was more erotic than anything his imagination could come up with.

The corners of her lips turned up as she dunked the banana back into the yogurt. “Are you going to eat that?”

“Huh? Oh, right.” He managed to get the spoon to his mouth but he didn’t taste the yogurt on it.

Something like mirth was twinkling in Buffy’s eyes. Slowly, she brought the banana back to her lips. The tip of her pink tongue darted out and lapped at the yogurt before her mouth sunk back down around the piece of fruit.

Was she trying to kill him? He was harder than hell after that little display.

Buffy still looked amused and more than a little pleased with herself.

Oh, holy crap, she was flirting with him.
The minx.

Two could play that game. With a smirk he dunked his spoon back in his yogurt, now wishing he’d picked something besides lime, and proceeded to lick the spoon clean with rapid flicks of his tongue.

Buffy’s eyes got very wide.

“Do you think we can go for a walk down the beach?” she said, sounding breathy.

Spike felt like he could do backflips down the beach. He’d made her sound like that. Him. He’d made the most amazing woman in the world lose her breath.

“Ah, Spike?” She was looking at him expectantly. “Beach?”

“Yes, of course!” he said in a rush. He paused. “Um, we?”

“You, me? With the walking?”

He couldn’t help the goofy grin that spread over his face. “You’ve got it.”

“Just give me a few minutes to get ready.”

“Ready? You look perfect right now.”

She blinked. “I, this…I didn’t bring a lot with me. This is just an old pair of jeans and a shirt.”

“Perfect,” he said again, baffled by her bewilderment.

“I still need a hat, and sunscreen, and sandals.”

“Sounds good, uh, me too.” And he needed a few moments to get rid of the raging erection she’d given him with her banana molestation. “See you in a few?” He didn’t dare get up until he heard her feet on the stairs. This was torture, but the most blissful kind.

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Buffy settled her sun hat on her head. Spike was weird. It didn’t seem to matter how messily she was dressed, he looked at her like he was starving.

And she still had no idea what had come over her at breakfast. He just been staring at her and…and she hadn’t been able to help herself. She’d teased him. Though why he’d find her, in all her girl-next-door glory, even vaguely attractive, she didn’t understand. He could have whatever tall, willowy supermodel he wanted. Probably two at a time.

She bit her lip. That idea made her feel grouchy.

Anyway, it had been her that Spike had been staring at down there. Her that he’d teased in return.

That tongue of his must get him into all kinds of trouble. It’d made her squirm on the hard, wooden chair and rub her thighs together.

When she’d gotten to her room she’d felt guilty. She wasn’t supposed to have feelings like that about anyone but her…but she didn’t have a boyfriend now.

Angel was obviously not hers.
Pain stabbed through her chest and her feet were heavy on the stairs.

Spike was waiting for her at the bottom and concern knotted his brow when he saw her.

“You okay?” he asked.

“I will be.”

He’d nodded and walked towards the kitchen. On the far side was a door she hadn’t noticed before. Spike shouldered a daypack with a blanket and a couple bottles of water peeking out of the top. He grabbed a key on a bungie from a peg board, telling her it was for the gate to beach, which locked from both sides.

The door led to a set of stairs. At the bottom, she found herself outside and looking up at the underside of the house. The pylons the place sat on were huge, something she hadn’t appreciated in the dark last night.

Spike showed her the in-ground pool and sauna, telling her she was welcome to use them anytime. Down a path through the thick foliage that kept out prying eyes was a metal gate. Spike unlocked it and led her through.

“Ready?” he asked.

“Are there going to be a lot of people?” She didn’t know if she could deal with that right now.

“Huh? People?”

“On the beach?”

“Oh, not at all. It’s why I like it here. North of me there’s a huge costal national park, and I own the property for a mile to the south. I bought it just to keep it from being developed. Past that there’s some rental cottages and a home that belongs to a retirement-age couple that I’m certain doesn’t watch anything but PBS. So there’s hardly ever anyone here.” He took an unsteady breath and held the key out to her. “But if you don’t want to be seen with yours truly, I get it, I’ll just-”

She grabbed his hand and his words died on his lips. “That’s not…no. Spike, I-I don’t really like crowds very much and I didn’t want to have to be ‘on’ right now. That’s all.”

He grinned shyly at her.

Keeping ahold of his hand, in case he got any more dumb ideas about leaving her alone, she pulled him through the dunes to the shore.

It was spectacular. The surf was rough with white capped breakers rolling in under a leaden sky. Clouds were building out to sea, probably the remains of the storm system that’d spawned the tornados in Georgia.

Spike’s fingers squeezed hers.

In comfortable silence, they walked northwards. The brisk, cool breeze tugged at her hair and after a while she took her hat off and stuffed it in the backpack, letting the wind do as it wanted.

As they walked, Spike’s palm was warm, rough, and comforting where it brushed against hers, but it didn’t stop a tiny pinprick of pain from blooming in her chest. Slowly, the hurt started to grow.

Why was it this man, with all his contradictions she couldn’t even begin to puzzle out, the one she
was walking beside instead of Angel?

Angel. In three years, despite her telling him over and over that she loved the beach, had never once done something as simple as this with her. Sure, he’d taken her to a few hot vacation spots, but they’d always stayed for a few nights in a fancy hotel room that overlooked a crowded beach that she wouldn’t have been able to set foot on without getting mobbed.

He’d taken her skiing in Aspen once. After the first day of freezing and falling on her butt she’d refused to go on the slopes again, sitting wrapped up in three sweaters by the fire until they’d left. Angel had not been very happy with her. While she’d tried to stay warm he’d spent his time either on his snowboard or at one of the many posh after-parties.

What was wrong with her? Why couldn’t she make him happy? She’d tried so hard.

A sob escaped her lips.

“Buffy?” Spikes concerned voice made her look up at him. “Oh, kitten.”

She let him wrap her in a hug, her own arms winding around his middle as she cried.

“Will you tell me what’s wrong?” he pleaded. When she nodded he quickly unpacked the thick plaid blanket in his pack and spread it out on the dry sand just shy of the dunes. He sat down and patted the blanket beside him. She wavered.

“I can’t…I can’t do this alone.”

“You’re not alone,” he said, his face falling. “I know.” Buffy was frustrated with herself.

“I may not be who-“

“Ugh!” She broke in. “That’s not what I mean. I’m making a mess of this. I need to feel safe.”

Spike looked away from her and his shoulders slumped.

Damn it. She was making it worse and didn’t know how to ask for what she wanted. What would Faith do right now? Faith would do what she wanted and ask forgiveness later.

Biting her lip, Buffy did what she wanted. She sat on Spike’s lap and when he didn’t move right away she pulled his arms around her. “Safe,” she said.

Spike tightened his embrace. They shifted until she was sitting between his bent legs with her back resting against his chest and they both could comfortably watch the ocean. His warm breath tickled her ear. “I’ll always keep you safe.”

“I know,” she replied. Because she did. With absolute certainty. It was why she was here. He’d taken care of her when faced with a tornado. He’d take care of her now.

His fingers gently stroked her arms for a few minutes. “Can you tell me what happened?” he asked.

“I’ll do better than that, I’ll show you.” Buffy pulled her phone out and brought up the video. Fresh tears spilled down her face as she watched Drusilla take away everything from her all over again. And then again. Buffy dropped the phone onto the blanket and buried her face in her hands as she sobbed.
“I’m sorry, luv, I’m sorry,” Spike was murmuring as he rubbed her back.

“What did I do wrong?” she choked out. “I’ve always tried to do my best for him. And Dru! She knows he is, or was, my boyfriend. Why would she do something like that to me?”

“Shh,” Spike soothed, clutching her close and rocking her.

“Why am I so unlovable?” she asked through her tears.

Spike sputtered. “Unlovable?”

“I must have done something really wrong, or Angel wouldn’t have found me lacking.”

Something that sounded like a growl rumbled through Spike’s chest. “Listen, Buffy, please. There is nothing wrong with you. Not a thing. Lay the blame where it goes, right on Angel.”

“B-but-“

“No buts. He chose every minute of every day how he was going to treat you. He chose to do this. You did not make him. And Dru? I hate to say this, but Dru doesn’t care about anybody except herself. She likes her pleasures and she doesn’t believe in things like monogamy.” His voice was sad.

“Oh my god, I’m…Spike, I’m sorry, I was so wrapped up in myself that I forgot you used to be with her. You probably didn’t need to see…I’m sorry.” Buffy was appalled at herself. She hadn’t meant to hurt him.

Spike chuckled wryly. “No worries. Between the two of us there’s not enough fingers and toes to count all the men and women I’ve seen her with. I realized a long time ago she couldn’t love me. Hurt at the time, but it’s old news now.”

“Why were, you, um, with her, for so long, if she didn’t love you?”

“Because I loved her and I thought that was enough. It wasn’t.” He sighed. “Buffy, I’m kind of an idiot when it comes to love, but I can’t help it. If I love someone, it’s completely. I’d do anything for them, give them everything I had if they asked for it.” Spike brushed the hair off the back of her neck and his warm hand lingered there. “If someone was my girl, I would always put her first. I’d make sure she knew every second of every hour of every day how much I loved her.”

Buffy felt adrift. To be the center of someone’s world. To be loved like that. Her heart yearned for that kind of passion. She’d thought if she’d just waited long enough that Angel would…put her first. After the next season, or the next contract, or the next ad campaign.

“It’s not your fault,” Spike said again. But it had to be, didn’t it? All of it. Buffy hadn’t been able to make him love her enough.

But…no. That sounded wrong. You weren’t supposed to make someone love you.

“I’m so confused,” she confessed.

“Shh, luv. It’s okay. I’m here.”

She leaned against Spike’s chest. It felt very solid and real, as did the strong arms that encircled her.

“Whoever ends up being your girl sounds like she’ll be very lucky,” she said, her voice wistful.

“She is,” Spike whispered in her ear.
Buffy nearly asked who he meant. She’d opened her mouth but his arms had tightened a fraction more around her.

She was sitting with Spike, on the beach, while he hugged her. His friends had cleared out the moment she showed up. She’d nearly made his eyes fall out of his head this morning with a little cringe-worthy flirting. Her picture was in his music room, which he’d said was private and then shown her anyway. He owned her favorite car and knew it was her favorite. He’d said he’d make her anything she wanted for breakfast.

Spike pressed a soft kiss against the back of her neck and for long moments they just sat and watched the breakers wash ashore.

Buffy was aware that this was far more than just a…thing. Certainly for him, at least. But for her? That she didn’t know yet.

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“Uno!” Buffy yelled. Her smile was gleeful. She was bouncing so excitedly that he caught a glimpse of the yellow card in her hand.

She’d played a yellow four and while he had a blue four in his hand, he played the yellow eight instead.

With a flourish, she dropped her yellow four onto the discard pile. “I win! Again! Mister, you are terrible at this game.”

“I kind of am,” he agreed. Spike knew he could have beaten her a half dozen times so far, but she was just too bloody cute when she won. Every single time she got so excited she could barely contain it.

Uno had been a great idea on his part. After the beach, she’d gone upstairs and showered, coming back down with shorts and a slightly worn pink t-shirt on.

She’d looked at him challengingly, which he still couldn’t figure out, but he’d just asked if she’d wanted to watch TV.

They’d vegged on the sofa and Spike had quickly realized she didn’t have a bra on. He must have done something right in a past life to get this as a reward.

Dinner had been stir-fry, which hadn’t been too bad if he did say so himself, and then he’d gotten the completely brilliant idea to play Uno.

She held her cards with both hands and rested her elbows on her knees, which meant she squished her tits together. And winning meant bouncing, which was a treat and a half.

The icing on cake was that she seemed to have no idea how tempting she was, or what a lecherous sod he was. Though a time or two he’d caught her looking when he stretched. At least he wasn’t entirely alone in the ogling department.

Buffy yawned. “One more game?”

“One more.”

She won without him having to throw it. She stuck her tongue out at him as she put her final card, a wild, on the pile.
It was sexy and adorable and without thinking he grabbed her wrist, hauling her onto the couch. Spike pinned her legs with his and set about tickling her mercilessly. Once he had her giggling uncontrollably he listened to her pleas to stop.

With a resolve he didn’t know he had, Spike didn’t try to kiss her as she lay there, still wiggling and panting.

Instead he flopped down on the couch beside her, finding it difficult to catch his breath as well.

Buffy yawned again.

“Time for bed, eh, pet?” he asked.

“I don’t want this day to end,” she pouted. “It’s been a really good one.”

Spike was stunned. What about the time she’d spent crying over her berk of a boyfriend? Wait, she’d said something that being past tense. Her berk of an ex-boyfriend. He could have burst into song like he was in a sodding musical. Buffy didn’t have a boyfriend.

“But I’m so tired.” She yawned again.

“Best get yourself to bed, then. I’m pretty knackered, too.” He gently tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear.

“What if we just stayed here?”

“Huh?”

Buffy bit her lip and reached over him to grab an afghan he’d tossed on the back of the sofa earlier. “It’s a big, comfy couch. What if we just slept here? Then it’d be like the day hadn’t ended.”

“You’re a bloody genius,” he breathed.

He wiggled against the back of the sofa to give her more room as she settled the afghan over then.

“Spike,” she said after a moment.

“Yes?”

“Will you hold me?”

His heart started pounding. “Of course.”

She rolled on her side and wiggled so they were spooned together. He put his arm around her and she laced her fingers with his.

And she’d said she was the one confused? His heart was chasing its own tail.

Slowly, so as not to startle her, he kissed the little patch of skin right behind her ear and bit back his words of love. “I’ve got you,” he whispered. “You’re safe.”
Buffy woke up happier than she could remember being for a long time.

*Spike*, her mind helpfully supplied with a little, breathy sigh.

She opened her eyes. During the night she’d somehow turned over and cuddled up against his chest. His arm was over her shoulders and he had a leg thrown over hers as well. His head was pillowed on his other arm and once again she was mesmerized by how adorable he was when relaxed in slumber.

Her eyes traced the steep line of his nose and the slightly pouted curve of his lower lip. He was a beautiful man. Not that she’d find a lot of women that would disagree with her, but most of them would never see him like this, completely unguarded. At this exact moment, he belonged only to her.

She bent her head forward, then paused, but his limbs were still languid and his breathing even. Assured he was still asleep, she placed a chaste kiss in the hollow at the base of his throat. His scent caught her. He smelled of the beach, of air, wind, and sand, as well as sweat and a faint hint of sunscreen. There was even a tinge of tobacco smoke from the few cigarettes he’d smoked last night.

“Buffy?” His voice was a sleep-husky rumble. Her heart sped up at the sound.

She splayed the fingers of one hand across his chest. “I’m here.”

“Buffy,” he said again. His hand tangled in her hair as he pulled her tightly against him.

She tilted her head up to meet his eyes. Her heart nearly stopped. Oh god. Spike’s bright blue eyes were filled with warmth, joy, awe, and what had to be love. His lips were a few inches from hers.

It’d be so easy to lean forward. To let go.

“Uh, I’ve never woken up with someone before. Well, unless you count the other day in the wine cellar,” she said in an attempt to keep her mouth occupied. Her emotions were still a confused tangle.

His brows drew together. “What do you mean?”

“Um, Angel-“ She winced at the name. “He never once stayed. He said that he didn’t want me accidently elbowing him in the middle of the night and giving him a black eye.”

Spike seemed dumbstruck. “But…uh…surely, before…”

She shook her head. “I was always so busy, with school or my mom being sick. Angel was my first boyfriend.”

He still seemed lost. “Your first boyfriend?”

“My first everything,” she said dully.

“Oh, luv.” His hand left her hair to soothingly stroke her back. He mumbled something under his
breath, but all she caught was “didn’t deserve you.”

Buffy had the sinking feeling that Spike might be right, that Angel wasn’t the man she’d thought he was at all.

But then, neither was Spike. Where was the guy who partied ‘til he dropped? Who went through drugs and women like potato chips? Obviously, the man with his arm around her was no longer that guy, if that version of Spike had ever really existed at all.

Buffy knew she was teetering on the edge a cliff, and below her was an ocean deeper and vaster than she could imagine. She had to know a few things before she fell.

“Spike, I…I need…can I ask you something?”

“Anything.”

“First, um, do you, ah…”

He raised an eyebrow.

“Do you still do drugs?”

“I’m guessing you mean besides booze?”

She nodded and felt her cheek flush.

“No. Well, I guess I sometimes hit a joint if it’s passed around, but I’m thinking you mean the hard stuff. I was clean six months before I signed the contract for Belle. It’s part of the reason Dru dumped me on my ass. That was her scene and I didn’t want to play anymore.”

“Really?”

“It wasn’t me, Buffy. Never was. Yeah, felt great to be high, but I didn’t like giving over control to it, being at its mercy. And that feeling was never the high I was really chasing.” His hand dipped lower and he ran his fingers slowly over the waistband of her shorts. She shivered.

“Okay,” she said. “But why do you let people think you still do it?”

He shrugged. “Part of the image. I hate to think of the total cost of all the blow I’m supposed to have done. It must be a bloody astronomical amount at this point.”

She giggled and Spike smiled as he leaned his forehead against hers.

“What else do you need to know?”

“Erm, well. I feel so embarrassed asking you this.” Her hand fluttered against his chest.

“Well you have to ask now or risk letting curiosity kill me.”

She bit her lip. “Spike, I…after this thing with Angel…I need to know about the girls.”


“You have a different bimbo crawling all over you every time I turn around at The Bronze,” she snapped. Anger was roiling in her chest. “And when we’re not filming there’s headline after headline about the girls you slept with at some party.”
Spike blinked, and then he grinned. “Are you…jealous, Miss Buffy Summers?”

“I don’t know what I am,” she said. Her eyes slid away from his and she couldn’t stop the tears that slipped down her cheek. She couldn’t even tell if they were from anger or sadness or who exactly she was crying over.

Spike’s teasing smile disappeared. “Shh, kitten, none of that. The stories in the tabloid are just that, and the girls you see at The Bronze are window dressing. I get rid of them soon as I can. And, bloody hell, I can’t believe I’m going to tell you this, but I…” He trailed off and took a deep breath. “Buffy.” He looked her right in the eye. “I haven’t been with a woman since the last time I was with Dru. I was broken hearted, and then filming started on the first season of Belle and I saw someone. And since that instant there’s been no one else for me.”

She could hardly believe was she was hearing. And she just knew. “Me,” she whispered. “You saw me.”

“I did.” His fingers started stroking again. They worked their way under the hem of her shirt to lightly pet her lower back. Gooseflesh shot up her spine.

“But…I had no idea. Not at all. In fact, you were always cranky with me.”

“I’m sorry,” he said. “It was easier to push you away.”

“I don’t understand. If you felt that strongly for me, why would you do that?”

“Because you were happy, pet.” His fingers stroked higher. “I’d do anything.” His voice became choked and his palm flattened against her back. “Anything. I’d sodding move heaven and earth to see you happy. And if you were happy with what you had, then it wasn’t my job to go upsetting the apple cart.”


Spike looked like he was holding back tears.

“I have one more question,” she said.

“Shoot.” His voice shook.

“Spike, do you…do you love me?”

“Oh, Buffy.” His eyes slid closed and his hand left her back to cup her cheek.

“Do you?” she asked again.

“Yes. More than anything.” His eyes opened and bored straight into hers. “I love you.”

Buffy could sense it, the weight of the emotion pouring from him. It should crush her, but instead it lifted her up. Filled her. Made her feel desired, warm, and cherished.

Beside her, Spike was trembling.

“I need-“ She didn’t quite know what to say. She didn’t want to hurt him. Doing that seemed unbearable. “I just need some time. To think. And some space. Okay?”

His head bowed and he nodded.
She caught his chin and lifted his face back to hers. “I’m not leaving, or going anywhere. Just give me time to figure things out, alright?”

“Anything you need,” he whispered. “I’ll wait for you. Come and find me when you’re ready. No matter how long it takes.”

“I will.” Slowly, she untangled herself from him and stood up. Instantly she missed the warmth and protection of his embrace. But she owed it to him to figure herself out, to unravel some of what was going on in her mind. “Thank you,” she said before turning to walk to her room.

Every step felt like she was dragging herself a mile through quicksand and Buffy wondered if, without so much as a whimper, her heart had already started to fall.

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Oh, bloody fuck. He was an idiot.

But she’d asked and in that moment he couldn’t have lied to save his life.

Spike was in his gym, running on a treadmill, hoping the physical activity would clear his head. Buffy must be thinking the same thing because she was down doing laps in the pool.

Letting her have the space she asked for was the hardest thing he’d ever done. His whole being was burning for her. If someone offered him immortality he’d trade it in a heartbeat to have one more minute cuddling with her on the couch.

He’d never known a feeling like waking up with Buffy in his arms. It was terrifying to think that this morning might be all he’d ever get. She might never allow him to get that close again. His heart ached.

Stopping the treadmill, he sank to sit on the end. He pulled out his phone and tapped Cordelia’s number.

“Hello?” she answered

His voice wavered. “Cordy?”

“Spike? Are you okay?”

“I don’t know.” He pinched the bridge of his nose. “Cordy…I told her. She asked and I told her.”

“And what happened?”

“She asked for a little time and space.” Good freaking god he sounded whiny.

“And did what?”

“Uh, went for a swim in the pool.”

Cordy snorted. “So she didn’t pack up and drive off to who knows where?”

“No.”

“Then you’re fine. If it was hopeless she would have run to her sister or back to her ex-boyfriend.” There was a pause. “He is an ex, right?”
“Yeah.”

“Okay, Mr. Monosyballic. If you’re going to pout at least do it how you usually do.”

“Huh?” He had a usual way of pouting?

“Go play your ugly old guitar.”

“Oh, right.”

“Let me know what happens?” Her voice softened.

“Sure.”

Hanging up, he downed a bottle of water before clomping up the stairs to his music room. It was stuffy so he opened a window and pulled his shirt off. He put the strap of his guitar over his head and started to tune the instrument. The humid, salty costal air did a number on it and it tended to need a lot of TLC to sound right.

He didn’t know how long he’d quietly been strumming and singing to himself when the door to the music room was pushed open. He was lying on his back on the Persian carpet that covered the floor and staring at the ceiling. Looking at Buffy’s picture had become too much but he hadn’t been able to stomach moving it, so he’d moved himself instead.

Timidly, Buffy walked into the room. “Spike?”

Immediately he sat up, cross-legged, and pulled the guitar off, placing it beside him. “Yes, luv?”

Everything inside of him was quivering.

Buffy sat down facing him. She looked troubled. “Can I ask you another question?”

“Of course.” He scooted closer to her and took both her hands in his. She didn’t protest, but she didn’t meet his eyes, either.

“I want to know…Spike, what does being in love feel like?”

“Ah, an easy one, I see.” His mind raced. How the bloody hell did you describe being in love?

“Sorry,” she murmured.

“Don’t be. Just give a bloke a minute.” He squeezed her fingers reassuringly and did his best to get his wayward mind in order. “Love is…joy and sheer terror, mixed up together. It’s thinking of that person first thing in the morning and last thing at night because you can’t help yourself. It’s wondering what they had for dinner, and if they liked it, and wanting to call and ask them. It’s thinking the fortune in a fortune cookie is a special message from the universe about you and them and that every song on the radio was written just for the two of you.”

He took a deep breath.

Buffy was still looking more at the floor than him.

He forged ahead anyway. “It’s seeing the person you love smile and it making your entire day worthwhile. It’s endless worry about where they are, and if they’re okay, and whether or not other people are being as kind to them as they deserve. And there’s longing, and want, and a need so bone deep you think it’s going to kill you.”
There were tears running down her face that she was making no move to wipe, but he couldn’t stop.

Her hands were gripping his like iron bands.

His voice was growing hoarse. “It’s wanting to know their favorite pizza. And color, and if they like egg nog at Christmas. It’s wanting to know their opinion on everything, just because they’re them. It’s knowing what makes them laugh, or what gets their goat, and doing both in equal measure because you love both their laugh and how anger makes their eyes light up with fire. It’s wanting to be there when they stub their toe or have a bad hair day, or need a can of coke out the fridge and they don’t want to get up because they’re really into that episode of *Sex and The City.*”

Buffy face became a mask of grief. He didn’t know what to do, so he continued to hold her hands, his thumbs skimming over her knuckles.

When the sobs lessened he desperately looked up into her face. “Buffy, say something, please.”

He was living and dying on every breath she took.

“I…I…I never loved Angel,” she sobbed. “I thought I did, but-“

“But?” Spike repeated dumbly.

“We’d go weeks without talking to each other. He hasn’t even called or texted since the day after the storm. And that’s not even weird. He probably thinks he knows where I am, so he won’t even bother to check. If I was your girlfriend would you not talk to me for weeks at a time?” She sounded lost.

“Uh, well, no. I don’t think I’d be able to go more than a few hours-“

“Exactly. And okay, whatever on his part, but why, during those times, wasn’t I bugging him? Why did I just say: that’s fine? Why didn’t I worry about what he had for dinner? Or if he’d stubbed his toe?”

Spike didn’t have an answer. He wasn’t sure he was supposed to.

“I wouldn’t even think about him. I’d be worried about a script, or my sister, or the weather. How was I supposed to know that a few kisses here and there, that being summoned to his side when he felt like it, wasn’t love? I didn’t care what he thought about elections, or movies, or anything, really. I was a terrible girlfriend. No wonder he slept around on me.”

“No!” Spike barked. He jumped to his feet, pulling a stunned Buffy along with him. “No, christ, what would he have done if you’d called him?”

“Um, probably yelled at me because he was busy.”

“Right. Trust me, Buffy, you had feelings for him. And I’m a selfish git, I want to believe they weren’t real, but I saw. You cared, whether or not he deserved it.” Spike wanted to punch Angel right in the middle of his stupid face. Weeks? He’d left Buffy alone for weeks at a time? Who the hell would do that to someone as sweet, trusting, and giving as she was? Now she was questioning if she could even love.

Buffy sat down on the stool and crossed her arms. “Play me something,” she said.

He reached down, grabbed his guitar, and settled the strap over his head. “Don’t let that berk win, luv.” He tilted his head watching her. “You’re an amazing woman. You should never be made to feel like less than that. Your heart is beautiful and you can love with a passion I can’t even begin to
imagine. Don’t let anyone take that away from you.”

Her eyes met his. She bobbed her head in agreement, even as fresh tears slid down her cheeks.

“No I’ll play, but only if you sing along. Got it?”

Looking puzzled, she nodded.

Spike strummed a cord. “A long, long time ago…”

The corners of Buffy’s lips curled up as he continued, and the second time he got to the chorus she joined in.

“Bye Bye, Miss American Pie…”

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It was high tide, according to the little digital weather station on the living room wall. Buffy stood on the balcony, listening to the surge and ebb of the ocean.

What was she supposed to do now?

Behind her, Spike was in the kitchen, washing up the dinner dishes. She wondered where he’d learned to cook. The poached salmon and asparagus had been delicious. Though doing both the cooking and the cleaning was a bit over the top. He was trying so hard to impress her.

She should probably tell him he could quit. She was already impressed.

Though she had less of an idea about what to do with the fact that she was so freaking aware of him. If he was in the same room as her, she couldn’t get her eyes to look anywhere else. He seemed to take up far more room than he should. Even in her mind.

She kept thinking back to meeting Angel. How handsome she’d thought him, how flattered she’d been by his attention, how thrilled she’d been when he’d kissed her and said he’d like to go out with her.

Now it seemed shallow. Like a middle school crush. Buffy had liked how Angel had made her feel. She’d believed herself to be important when she was beside him.

Angel felt like a single candle flame next to the overwhelming sun of Spike’s presence. It was disconcerting. She looked down at the undrunk glass of rosé in her hands. The liquid was trembling slightly.

Buffy took a deep breath. She didn’t have a clue how this was supposed to go. He’d spoken of need and longing and her heart and soul had cried out in response. What would he have thought if she’d simply thrown herself at him in the music room?

Which she’d sort of wanted to do. Only Spike deserved better than that. He loved her. And she…she hardly knew which way was up. It felt like a hundred years since she’d fled the set of Belle, not a couple of days. Angel seemed like ancient history. The little burst of pain in her chest reminded her that he wasn’t. But…what she felt every time Spike smiled at her was so overwhelming and big that it eclipsed everything else. There was no going back. Her life was headed somewhere that less than a week ago she couldn’t have imagined.

She was thrilled and terrified at the same time.
It was very important to her that Spike understood that she wasn’t sleeping with him—and she so was going to sleep with him, she’d figured that much out—just because she needed a quick roll in the hay. She wanted him to know she cared more than enough to be what he wanted in bed, but she didn’t have any idea how to go about asking him what he liked from a woman. It’d taken her a while to get things just right for Angel, but she had the impression Spike wouldn’t want the exact same routine.

In her mind she could imagine kissing Spike, but from there things got a little hazy. Would he want her to lie down so he could pull off her panties? She kind of liked that part. Or maybe he’d want her to be already naked. Maybe he’d be completely naked.

Buffy rubbed her thighs together. When she’d been getting ready for dinner she’d dug out the set of red lace lingerie from the bottom of her bag, still not sure what impulse had made her toss it in there in the first place. She’d pulled off the tags and reminded herself to send Faith a thank you note. Over it she’d put her black knee-length skirt and a black blouse, only realizing she’d unconsciously mimicked Spike when she’d come downstairs and seen him in his black jeans and t-shirt.

Would Spike be impressed with how quiet she’d learned to be? Buffy bit her lip. Maybe he wouldn’t mind so much if she made a little noise? Her body pulsed faintly as she imagined him climbing between her legs and pushing inside her. His rumbled words of praise from the past couple of days: perfect, amazing, beautiful, came back to her. Unlike Angel, who always hid his face in the pillow, Spike would look at her when he was making love to her. And maybe he’d say those things. Her heart flip-flopped. Maybe he’d even call her some of those pet names, like kitten. Her body pulsed again.

She heard his feet on the living room carpet and turned around. Only the loud ring of his phone stopped him. Really? A generic ring tone? She was so going to have to change that.

He answered the call and frowned. From the snatches of conversation she heard it sounded like he was negotiating a deal with his manager. Something about a brand of whisky she recognized as being on the high end of the spectrum.

His frown deepened. “I’d have to leave now?” he asked. He turned away from her to move towards the stairs. He padded up them until she couldn’t hear him anymore.

Buffy’s insides felt like they were flying apart.

No, he couldn’t be leaving. She needed time. She was falling and Spike was supposed to be there to catch her.

The whole mess with Angel was still looming over her, but she’d though she’d pushed it far enough aside to find the spark of something inside her that belonged to Spike. That spark that threatened to turn into a wildfire every time he was near.

And now he was going to leave. She might not see him again until filming resumed.

No! Her mind rebelled. Spike wasn’t Angel. She didn’t just have to accept him traipsing off to wherever.

Buffy squared her shoulders and lifted her chin. The glass of wine was left on the counter and she marched upstairs. Not stopping to knock, she barged into Spike’s bedroom just as he was tossing his cell phone onto the bed. He froze in open mouthed surprise.

“You can’t go,” she said.
“Buffy-“

“No, listen,” she cut him off. “This is all so confusing, but I don’t want you to leave. Not right now. Please. I think about you when I get up in the morning and when I’m going to sleep, and every song seems to be about us, and I want to know your favorite kind of pizza, and I’ve made you frown so much and I want to make you smile…and I’m not ready for you not to be here.”

She paused, panting.

Spike’s head was tilted to the side. For once his face was unreadable.

“Buffy?” he said softly.

“I don’t know what it all means yet. I’m still so confused, but, please, Spike. I’m sorry, I know I shouldn’t be making demands, but, please, don’t go.” She knew she was begging and he’d probably think she was pathetic, but she’d never felt panic over another person like this. He had to understand.

He took a step towards her, then another. She looked up into his face. He was so close. Spike raised a hand and ghosted his fingers across her cheek then lightly stroked her hair. His palm skimmed her back and settled on her hip. “I’m not going,” he said.

She sighed in relief.

“I told Giles to sod off, that I something more important to take care of.” The hand on her hip tightened as he pulled her against him. Slowly, he tipped his head forward so his lips were almost on hers. “Buffy,” he whispered. “If you have any doubts you need to go now. Run. Because once I have you I will never let you go. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

He waited.

Buffy took one last, deep breath.

She was going to kiss him.
I belong in the service of the Queen

-Counting Crows, “Rain King”

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Spike had no idea what he was doing.

Buffy was so close. Her soft pink lips begging to be tasted. The hand he had on her hip was burning to touch more. Everywhere.

He needed her more in that moment than he needed to breathe.

But he waited. He’d given her the choice. She could leave, or be his. If she left he didn’t know how he’d go on. After holding her, talking to her, spending time beside her, the rest of his life stretched forward into bleak nothingness. How could he go back to-

Her lips were on his.

His heart stuttered to a stop.

Buffy was kissing him.

He died and was reborn. His heart had restarted and was thudding with a vengeance.

With a growl he crushed his mouth against hers. His arms wound tight around her. He had one hand on her butt, pulling her tight against him so she’d be able to feel just how much he wanted her. His tongue darted between her parted lips and plundered her mouth. He tried to coax her to wrap her legs around his waist, but she seemed not to understand, so instead he backed her up against the foot of the bed.

He pushed her onto the mattress, breaking the contact with her mouth for less than a second before pouncing on top of her to continue ravaging her lips. Beneath him she was warm and pliant.

And, god, her taste.

There were no words.

He pushed himself up on his elbows and rolled his hips. With one hand, he stripped her blouse from her while he continued to grind his aching hard-on against her thigh.

Her bra was bright red lace.

Oh hell. She’d worn that for him. Falling into bed with him was no spur of the moment thing. That afternoon she’d taken a shower and put on that bra while thinking of him. He paused and looked down at the girl under him. She was panting, her hair mussed, her eyes glazed, and her lips kiss-swollen.

He’d done that to her.

Her tongue darted out to roll over her lips. He groaned.
“Spike?” she asked in a breathless whisper.

“Yes, luv?” He wormed a hand under her and undid the clasp of her bra.

“You, um, you’re going to have to tell me what you like.”

“Like you,” he said as he nuzzled her breasts. He grabbed one of her bra straps with his teeth and pulled it down off her shoulder.

“Uh, wait.”

Woozily, he looked up at her. Was she trying to kill him? Buffy was biting her bottom lip and there was a line between her brows. “What’s wrong?” he whispered.

“I’m serious. I want to know what you like. So I can be good for you.”

He nearly laughed, but she appeared so earnest. Something tickled in his brain, which admittedly didn’t have enough blood flow at the minute to work properly. She’d been saying things the last couple of days about doing what Angel liked. He had the feeling he was missing something. “I think you might need to explain to me exactly what you mean.”

“Well, An…the last guy I was with, he was really specific about what he liked. Only I think you won’t want exactly the same stuff. And I’m not good enough to be able to just tell, so you’ll have to spell it out for me.” Her face flushed red. “I’m sorry,” she added.

Spike felt like he’d just been hit by a Mack Truck. What in the bloody hell had the wanker done to her? “Uh, maybe you should tell me what you’re used to doing and we’ll go from there, yeah?” With an effort he lay down beside her and she rolled to face him.

“Okay. Um, usually I’d be under the sheets, waiting, with a plain white bra and panties on.”

Ah-ha! He’d been right, her fancy knickers were for him.

“And then he’d come in and pull back the sheet and take off my undies. Since I’m a good girl I usually wouldn’t be all, you know, ready, but we’d use a condom with, uh, stuff on it, so that wasn’t a problem. And he’d take all his clothes off except his boxers and he’d um, put the condom on and do, y’know, his thing, and then kiss me good night.”

Spike felt poleaxed. “Like that? Every time?”

She nodded. “Sometimes he’d touch my breasts a little.”

Oh, fuck. He’d been mauling her and she was basically a virgin.

She looked up at him and smiled. “I’m really good at being quiet. I wasn’t at first, but I learn fast. So see? You tell me how you want me to be and I’ll do my best to be good for you.”

Spike indulged in a couple of fantasies that involved him ripping Angel’s internal organs out with a slotted spoon. If he’d only had some idea how the arsehole had been treating Buffy, he would have never allowed Angel within a mile of her. That probably wasn’t what Buffy wanted to hear right now. He cast around for something to say. “Uh, a condom? Aren’t you on the pill?”

“Yes, but, um…” she trailed off. “He said I shouldn’t have to deal with that. So I’ve actually never seen a guy’s, uh, stuff, that comes out.” Her face went fromflushed to incandescent.

Oh, balls. He had to fight the desire to simply ram himself home and pump her full of come.
All this time he’d been imagining her as some kind of sex-goddess, and she’d never seen semen. Or tasted it, he supposed. That was an intriguing thought. She was nearly an innocent. Which was probably how Angel wanted her. A horrible thought went through his head. Stiff hips. “You have had an orgasm, right?”

She blushed. “Sometimes, I…use my fingers, when I’m alone. And a couple times with Angel that first year we were together before I knew that he really preferred me not to move much. Oh, and, uh, one more time…”

He raised an eyebrow. “One more time?”

“After I touched you at The Bronze I couldn’t stop thinking about it. So that night you were in my head and I couldn’t help but get off,” she said in a jumbled rush.

Spike grinned. Wasn’t that neat. “Well, thanks to someone else’s bright idea it’s not like you didn’t know what you were feeling on.”

Her eyes wouldn’t meet his. “Uh, actually, I didn’t.”

He blinked.

“Erm, until later that night.” Her voice dropped to a whisper. “My sister had given me a copy but I hadn’t looked at it before.”

Spike hardly knew what to think. Somehow his stupid, pervy actions at The Bronze had gotten his girl so worked up that she’d got off when she usually didn’t and then she’d been intrigued enough to be naughty and look at a dirty picture of him.

His head was spinning. He didn’t deserve her, but he hadn’t been lying. There was no way he was going to let her go now.

“Buffy, look at me.”

She did, eyes wide.

“I don’t need you to do something specific to make me happy. Or to keep me, or whatever you’re worried about. I want to please you. I want to have you in every way imaginable and then some.”

Buffy trembled and her lips parted. Thank god, the girl may not know what she wanted, but she wanted it. Spike vowed he’d find the sensual creature that lived inside Buffy and set it free.

“And since you want to please me too, I’d like you to let me indulge in a little fantasy I had the other morning.”

“O-okay.”

He pulled his shirt off, and then her bra. For a few seconds he drank in the perfection of her breasts. The color of her nipples was a tempting shade of strawberry. Lowering his head, he sucked on one, making her squirm. Her breathing hitched.

He glanced up at her. “Kitten, it’s okay to make noise. How else am I supposed to know if you like what I’m doing?”

She nodded and he turned his attention to the other breast. Buffy let out the slightest whimper as he nipped the pebbled tip. Spike groaned in response and pushed himself against her leg again.
Reluctantly, he left her breasts and kissed a trail down her stomach.

He had to reach down and undo the front of his pants to relieve some of the pressure, but otherwise his cock was going to have to wait because he had a girl to please first. When he started peeling off her knickers she stiffened.

“Spike, you don’t have to do that.”

“Want to,” he replied. He tugged the scrap of red lace down and off her legs. She kept her knees clamped closed.

“No, it’s okay. I probably wouldn’t like it anyhow.”

“Well, that’s just insulting.” He tried to sound teasing but Buffy looked alarmed.

“I mean in general, not because you’re not good at it. I think I’d be too embarrassed and-“

“Just give me a chance. It was all I could think about the other morning. I want to make you scream my name until you’re hoarse.” Please, he silently begged. Let me have this. Let my tongue be the first to taste you. “It would make me very happy if you’d at least let me try.”

“I guess…okay.” Her legs parted just the littlest bit. Seizing the invitation, he put his palm on her inner thighs and pushed them wide apart.

He stopped dead.

She was exquisite. Plump outer lips, delicate pink inner ones. The darker pink tip of her clit peeking out and begging for attention. And she was obviously wet for him.

Spike’s stomach clenched tight as another wave of pure lust rocketed through him.

Buffy wanted him.

He bowed his head and hovered over the sweetness laid out before him. He trembled. This was it.

He was going to have his girl.

“Spike?” her voice wavered.

“Perfect,” he breathed. Then he wasn’t able to wait a moment longer. He licked her, swiping his tongue from her opening to her clit in a broad stroke.

Buffy made a choked sound and her hips lifted towards his face. The taste of her was beyond his wildest dreams. His sack tightened painfully and Spike realized he was going to come. There was no stopping that train now.

Groaning, he smashing his face against her pussy and darted his tongue inside her. Buffy sounded like she was still repressing whimpers. He bucked twice against the bed before he came. He grunted loudly, feeling both relieved and ashamed.

Spike lifted his eyes to Buffy’s face, but she was staring down at him in awe as he continued to greedily feast on her. Since it didn’t seem to bother her that he’d just lost it on the sheets he figured he shouldn’t worry, either.

He renewed his efforts and finally allowed his fingers to touch her. He slipped one inside her. Oh, bloody hell, she was wet and tight. The walls of her pussy constricted as he slowly pumped in and out while he alternated flicking and swirling his tongue over her clit.
“Oh!” she exclaimed, sounding surprised. “Oh, my god. I…Spike!”

Her inner muscles clamped down even tighter and then fluttered. Her hips were rolling and she was making the most delightful noises.

Spike trembled. He’d made her come. Christ, he was a wreck.

His prick was already hard again.

He thought he might be crying.

He’d made her come, but it was just the first time. He had a lot more work to do. He slid another finger inside her.

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Buffy could hardly move. She’d gotten off six times, three of them one right after the other. Which she’d had no idea she was even capable of. Spike had smugly looked up at her after that, then proceeded to get her off again.

He was a god.

But she wanted him to feel good too. He’d been working her into a state of near unconsciousness. How was she supposed to ever want someone else after this?

Oh.

That’s what he was trying to do, wasn’t he?

“Spike!” she hissed.

Dazedly, he looked up at her.

“Stop,” she said.

Fear flashed across his face. “Luv, did I do-“

“Get up here. I want all of you.”

Immediately he was on top of her. Using her feet, she pushed his jeans down until they were off.

“Let me see,” she whispered.

Spike pushed himself up and sat back on his haunches. She stared unashamedly at his cock. It was jutting out proudly from the dark thatch of his pubic hair. The pictures really hadn’t done it justice. Because she could, she wrapped her hand around it. Soft skin over hard steel. Her pussy throbbed as a new wave of lust washed over her. Spike was breathing fast and shallow. She stroked him and he groaned as his cock jerked in her fist. As nice as his tongue and fingers had felt she needed this part of him inside her more. It was an instinctual, needy hunger that she hardly believed could be her own.

Hoping he wouldn’t mind her boldness, she gently tugged on him until he got the hint and moved to line himself up with her.

“Oh, Buffy.” He said her name like a prayer as he pushed himself inside her.
The stretch and feeling of fullness were overwhelming, as was the look of love and awe on his face.

Once his cock was entirely inside her, he paused and his gaze dropped to where their bodies were joined. Her eyes followed. He pulled back slightly and thrust into her. They both gasped. He did it again. The sight of his cock plunging into her body was almost more erotic than she could handle.

“Spike,” she whispered as her arms wrapped around his neck.

“William,” he said. “Please, call me William.”

She understood. They were only themselves in this moment. No masks, not playing parts. This was them and it was real. “I’m still just Buffy.”

His eyes met hers, his face raw with emotion. “My Buffy?”

In that instant she saw everything clearly. She’d kept telling him how confused she was, how messed up her mind was.

But not now.

She knew.

Her hand cupped his cheek. “Yes, your Buffy.”

Tears leaked down his face and she hastened to kiss them away even as she felt the same leaking from her eyes.

His hips surged against her. “Oh, luv, trying…need…”

“Don’t hold back, William.” She tangled her fingers into his hair. “I want you just as much.”

“Buffy,” he rasped and his tenuous control snapped.

Spike pounded into her. He was grunting, gasping, and saying her name over and over. But his eyes never left her face. Buffy hung onto his shoulders and basked in his adoration. When her legs started to shake and her stomach tightened it caught her by surprise. She cinched her legs tighter around his waist and twisted her hips, seeking the last push she needed.

She flew over the edge with a started cry of “William!”

She fell for what felt like forever. Her body pulsing with pleasure, her hands scrabbling for purchase on Spike’s sweat-slicked skin.

“Oh my Buffy, my girl, my Buffy,” he was mumbling over and over. He lost his rhythm and the motion of his hips became an erratic flurry. “Buffy!” he gasped and came. She lost herself in the wonder of it. The tight clench of his muscles, the nearly pained expression on his face, and the involuntary movements of his arms and legs as he pressed himself as close to her as possible. Even more marvelous was that she could feel his cock as it jerked and spasmed inside her and the rush of his semen as he emptied himself into her.

It was heady stuff. She’d never felt more feminine or powerful than at that moment.

Spike collapsed onto her and she hugged him tightly. After a second she realized his shoulders were shaking. Putting her hands on both sides of his face she tipped his head back so she could see him. He was sobbing.
“Sorry…can’t help…love you so much.”

“Hush. It’s okay,” she said, her thumbs swiping at the tears.

“You came?” he asked shyly.

She smiled. “Yeah.” She quivered with remembered pleasure. Spike looked inordinately pleased with himself. As well he should be. “And you know I did.”

He nodded. “Still like to hear you say it. Most wonderful thing in the universe to feel you coming undone around my prick.”

Despite the fact that his cock was still inside her, she blushed. “Right…better than a few minutes later?”

He nodded. “Buffy, seeing you happy, knowing you’re enjoying yourself? That’ll always be better to me than my own pleasure. Not that I’m saying that wasn’t absolutely bloody amazing.”

Buffy felt like she’d run out of words. Her feelings were so overwhelming she couldn’t pin them down. There was so much she wanted to tell him but it was all jumbled up at the moment. Instead she pulled him into a kiss. Languidly, she explored his mouth.

Spike’s hand went to her breast and played with her nipples. He pinched and rolled first one and then the other.

Feeling daring, and sure he wouldn’t chastise her for speaking, she gathered up her courage. “I like you doing that,” she said.

“Do you, kitten?” he murmured against her lips.

She gasped as his cock began to harden once more.

Spike’s arms went around her and he hauled her upright. He was on his knees and she was straddling his lap. One of his hands descended to land on her ass.

“Need you,” he growled, a wild look in his eyes. Her own primal response startled her. But she felt free and safe with him. Her fingertips dug into his shoulders and she rolled her hips. Spike’s cock felt impossibly deep inside of her.

“Oh god, yes. Please!” she gasped. Her knees gripped his hips as she tried to figure out how to move. How had she lived so long without knowing sex could be like this? The hungry, demanding need to feel someone else. Not just someone else. William.

Her William.

And she was his Buffy.

Her lips left his to kiss along his jaw and down his neck. She could feel the vibrations of his moans and murmured words of praise through her lips. She nipped and licked her way to his shoulder.

Feeling wanton, and naughty, and unlike anything she’d ever imagined she was capable of, Buffy mouthed his shoulder and bucked harder against him. Spike groaned in answer and ground their bodies together in a way that had his cock pushing against just the right spot inside her. “Oh,” she gasped and sank her teeth into his shoulder.

Spike went wild. He grabbed her ass in both hands, rose up on his knees, and thrust hard and fast up
into her while making guttural, animalistic noises.

She wrapped her legs around him and growled against his skin. Her body tightened and she fell into bliss again and then again.

Her mind was gone and she knew nothing but lust and desire for the man making her feel like a goddess. Her head tilted back and Spike’s mouth was on her throat. Her fingers were claws in his hair. She couldn’t get enough of him.

He drove one more time up into her and barked her name as he released. Buffy wrapped herself tightly around him, exalting in the pleasure she was giving him. He was right, it was just as good to see him in the throes of orgasm as it was to have one herself.

They collapsed onto the bed, panting.

“Wow,” she managed.

“Wow,” he agreed.

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Spike was in heaven. Buffy rolled onto her back and he scooted up so he could lay with his head pillowed on her breast as he caught his breath. He’d never known such happiness.

Over the years he’d dreamed of making love to her a million times, but this was so much…well, the cliché didn’t even work. This was far beyond better.

It was real.

It was sweaty and sticky. His arms hurt from holding her up and his legs felt like jello. The sheets were a tangled muddle and his hair was most likely a mess. Hers was, from his fingers. It was beautiful. She was beautiful. He was probably grinning like an idiot.

His hand idly stroked the soft skin of her stomach.

“Um, Spike?”

He turned his gaze up towards her flushed face. “Yeah, luv?”

“What’s going to happen tomorrow?”

He frowned. How the hell should he know? He tried to force his brain cells to work. “Um? Could go to the beach again? Or you could drive your car if you want. Could go up to the nature preserve, feed the squirrels.”

“That’s not what I meant. Though I kind of like squirrels and their bushy little tails.”

Not what she meant? What the hell was she after? It was cruel and unusual punishment to try and make him think after all that.

Oh.

“Are you trying to ask if I’m still going to respect you in the morning?”

Her cheeks turned pink and her eyes wouldn’t meet his.
“Buffy, you’re my queen. I love you. That’s not going to come to a screeching halt because I slept with you. If I thought I wasn’t going to give you up before, I know for certain now that I can’t. I want you forever.” He paused, realizing that last bit might have been too much. He didn’t want to scare her.

“You do realize someday I’m going to be old and grey.” Her lower lip crept out. “With wrinkles.”

“Well, you better not. I’m very shallow and base everything on looks.” God, he hoped she could tell he was teasing.

Her lower lip crept out a little bit further, but then she poked his ribs. “And someday you’ll be a little less tight around the middle and who knows what’ll happen to your hair.”

“Are you implying I’m going to be old, fat, and bald?”

She raised an eyebrow and giggled.

“You could look less like you expect it to be next week.”

She giggled harder.

“Especially since you’ll have stretchmarks and be wearing bifocals.”

Buffy immediately looked sober. “Spike, do you want kids? A family?”

“Of course…” He trailed off. Oh no, he hadn’t even asked her. It’d put a big dent in her career to have children. And she might not like them. He had no clue. He opened his mouth to start backpedaling.

“Really?” She sounded so hopeful.

“Uh, yeah.” More than anything, but only if it was with her.

Her smile was blinding. “You can’t make fun of me when I’m eight months pregnant and waddling.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it.” His heart was pounding. Buffy was talking about having kids. With him. She was lying in his bed, cuddling and joking with him after mind-blowing sex. He could hardly believe it. Maybe he’d gone completely looney and was hallucinating. His arm tightened around her and she threaded the fingers of one hand into his hair.

“Y’know. I could have sworn you had white sheets on your bed the other day. Did you put these ones on for me?”

He grinned against her breast. “Did you put on those lovely red scraps of lace for me?”

“Busted.”

They lay there in comfortable silence. Buffy was playing with the little hairs on the nape of his neck with her nails. He loved that. His eyes started to drift close.

“Spike,” Buffy said, her voice tremulous. “If I tell you something, will you believe me?”

“Why wouldn’t I believe you?”

“Because you’ll think I don’t know my own mind or that I’m just muddled from how good you made me feel.”
He moved so he was propped up on one elbow next to her. She appeared deeply troubled. “You can tell me anything, luv. I’m not going to think you’re off your rocker.”

She bit her lip. Turning on her side, she looked deep into his eyes. “William…I…I’m in love with you.”

His mind shut down and all he could do was gape.

“I figured it out around the time I went searching for that red underwear. So it’s still something really new to me. I thought I loved Angel, and I guess I did care for him, but it’s nothing like this. And I’m so scared.”

Spike was in shock. His life was complete. He rushed to reassure her. “I would never hurt you, not on purpose. And I will never leave you, unless you send me away.” He put his arm around her and pulled her against his chest.

“I know.” She paused and hooked her leg over his hip. Christ, he could feel the warm heat of her sex and his cock, which didn’t seem to care that he was having the most important conversation of his life, twitched back to life. She licked her lips and took a deep breath. “I love you.”

A grin split his face. “I love you, too.”

She mewled and kissed him. Her lips were sweet on his.

He felt like he was levitating off the bed with joy. Buffy loved him, pathetic wanker that he was. Spike hoped she understood that she really was stuck with him forever.

“Can we live here, in this house?” she asked when he broke the kiss to roll her onto her back.

He settled between her thighs and thrust into her. They both sighed. “Of course, luv.” He smiled down at her as he gently made love to the woman that meant more to him than anything else in the world. Outside the open window the endless waves crashed against the shore in a timeless rhythm. “Welcome home.”
We can live beside the ocean

- Everclear, “Santa Monica”

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For the second morning in a row Buffy woke up with a Spike-shaped blanket draped over her. Despite the size of the bed, they were curled up tight together and Spike had an arm and a leg wrapped securely around her.

She couldn’t remember when, but at some point he must have rescued the comforter off the floor because it was thankfully covering them both and keeping out the cool morning air.

She was warm and comfortable and if she didn’t have to pee so badly she would have gladly stayed cocooned with him forever.

“Spike,” she said softly.

He mumbled something incoherent and tightened his arm around her. Her new-found love for him washed over her in full force, roaring in her ears louder than the raucous morning calls of the shorebirds. The emotion filled her up and overflowed. Buffy had no idea it was even possible to feel this much. It was a little frightening.

He would be able to break her so easily.

Her eyes searched his sleep-softened face. He could shatter her with a word, but she knew, right in the pit of her stomach, that with him she was safe. Taking a deep breath, she did what she’d wanted to do yesterday morning. Leaning forward, she captured his lower lip in a kiss.

Spike made a noise and his eyes snapped opened. In a heartbeat, his hand was cupping her cheek and he was kissing her back. His lips were soft and gentle on hers, which was good because her mouth felt somewhat bruised. As did other parts of her, but in a good way. Smiling, she slowly broke the kiss.

He leaned his forehead against hers.

“Good morning,” she said, her voice husky.

“Good morning,” he whispered. The amount of raw emotion in his eyes reflected her own heart. Spike glanced away from her and seemed to be trying to collect himself. His gaze returned to hers. He repeated the process. It was like he was trying to work himself up to something. “I love you,” he blurted and bit his lip. He appeared so worried. As if the harsh light of day might have made her change her mind.

“I love you, too.”

He visibly relaxed. “I thought I might have dreamed that part,” he said before kissing her again. His tongue swirled around hers. For a second she thought about morning breath and bed head, but she was absolutely fine with how he was, so maybe she wasn’t too icky either.

When they parted, panting, she gently stroked a hand down his back. “If this is a dream, I never want
to wake up.”

Spike grinned and his eyes were bright. “Oh, my girl…” His stomach chose that instant to growl, loudly. He looked down at it like it’d betrayed him.

“How hungry?” she asked with a giggle.

“What if I lied and said no because I don’t want to get up?”

“I’d still have to. My bladder’s kind of full.” Buffy immediately blushed. That seemed a little too gross to tell a guy you were in bed with. “Erm-“ She started to apologize but Spike pounced with a predatory gleam in his eye. His fingers found her ribs and he began tickling her unmercifully.

Laughing, she tried to push him off, but when that didn’t work she resorted to rolling off the bed. Most of the comforter came with her and she wrapped it around herself as she dashed to the bathroom.

Giggles were still escaping her even after she’d peed.

There was a red button down shirt over the towel rack. It smelled clean when she sniffed it, so with a shrug she put it on.

Spike was doing up his jeans when she walked out of the bathroom. His hands froze as he stared at her. Self-consciously she plucked at the shirt’s hem. “I hope you don’t mind-“

Frantically, he shook his head. “It’s alright.”

“Um, omelets for breakfast okay?”

“Yes, sounds good, but let me, I can-“

She stepped close to him and put her hands on his chest. “I’m sure you can, but I want to make breakfast for my…boyfriend, okay?” The word didn’t feel quite right. Boyfriend seemed not nearly the correct word to cover everything she was feeling. Plus, maybe she should have asked first before assuming, though she’d sort of invited herself to live with him and he really, really, hadn’t seemed to mind that.

Spike was grinning goofily. “Sounds good, luv.”

She rubbed absently at his chest, wondering if she had a hair tie in her room. Spike caught her hand in his and kissed her palm. “Wait right here,” she told him and dashed next door. Grabbing a hair clip off the nightstand she quickly pulled her hair into a messy bun before grabbing her bag, stuffing all her clothes into it along with her makeup and shampoo. Lastly she nabbed her toothbrush.

Marching back to Spike’s—no, their—room she dumped her bag on the floor next to what she already thought of as her side of the bed and proudly set her toothbrush in the holder next to his. There, that was better. Spike looked like he was one step away from falling at her feet and worshiping her. She patted his tummy, which gurgled again. “Just give me a few minutes and breakfast will be served.”

“I’ll be right down.” He bent over to grab his boots as she started to walk out and she stopped to admire the view before she quickly ran down the stairs, giggling to herself.

In the kitchen she easily found a pan and the ingredients to make a couple of veggie omelets. She set
her phone on the counter after checking her text messages. Still not a word from Angel. Which rankled, because a few days ago she wouldn’t have realized how very wrong that was.

Buffy stared at the pan as it heated up on the stove. Worse than Angel not bothering to worry about her was that she found she couldn’t care less about where he was and what he was doing. If Spike so much as ran out for milk she probably wouldn’t be able to stop herself from texting or calling. She’d miss him.

Why didn’t Angel miss her? What had she done to make him not care?

Frowning, she poured the eggs into the pan. She should have been spending her vacation with Angel. Only he probably would have had some commercial to shoot or whatever and she would have ended up alone anyway. Spike turning down a job to spend time with her had meant more than he probably realized.

Why had it turned out this way? Everything over the last three years with Angel seemed like a joke. How had she been so stupid as to think that’d been love? That he’d cared for her? Angrily, she tossed the vegetables into the pan. Tears threatened. She’d been so dumb.

There were steps behind her and the opening chord of a very familiar song played. Buffy glanced over her shoulder.

She turned all the way around.

Spike stood there, dressed only in his jeans and boots with his hair still tousled. He was holding his guitar and smiling sheepishly.

He started strumming again. “I am still livin’ with your ghost, lonely and dreamin’ of the west coast…”

As always, he seemed to dominate everything else in the room. And, oh god, he and that sexy voice and well-muscled arms were all hers. He paused. “Stove, luv,” he said with a wink, before resuming the song.

Buffy spun, rescuing the omelet before it could burn. It was only a little crispy. She could eat that one. Sliding it onto a plate she started on the second one. She couldn’t help it as her hips started swaying side to side with the music.

Spike sidled up behind her. “We can live beside the ocean, leave the fire behind, swim out past the breakers…”

Gah, that wasn’t fair. Every inch of her was aware of every inch of him, as if he was touching her. And she couldn’t stop dancing, or smiling. She was so freaking…

Happy.

That was the word.

Ecstatic. Joyful.

Ridiculously in love.

Buffy got the second omelet onto a plate without dropping it and managed to work her way around Spike to the table. As she got the forks out of the drawer he finished the song and pulled the guitar off over his head. Pinning her against the counter he kissed her senseless.
“We better eat before they get cold,” he said, stepping back from her and laying his guitar on the far end of the table. He pulled out her chair for her. Oh, yeah, food. She sat, her hand on her still tingling lips, as Spike sprawled in the chair across from hers. He tucked in and eventually she joined him, but she didn’t taste the omelet.

She was too busy being in love.

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Spike kept waiting to wake up.

Buffy loved him.

She’d slept with him. And that had been a bloody revelation. God, watching her shed her inhibitions one after the other. For him.

She was a marvel.

And he’d carefully observed her as she’d swished her hips while he’d serenaded her, no stiffness whatsoever.

Now she was in his shower and singing something that he was pretty sure was a Katy Perry song. It was tempting to walk in and make sure. But he had no idea if she’d be okay with that. And if he went in there it’s not like he’d just confirm the song and leave. It was blasted difficult to not give in and screw her up against any and every available surface.

He had to keep reminding himself that she’d been just this side of virginity and was probably sore since he’d been unable to stop himself from shagging her as hard as he had. He was an idiot. He should have been much gentler with her. Only that’d been impossible. And she hadn’t exactly been complaining, but he still felt guilty.

Which was all why when, after breakfast, Buffy had declared she’d needed a shower and had occupied his bathroom, he’d simply had a short one in one of the other bathrooms. Perks of having a large house. He’d comforted himself with the thought that eventually he’d have her in every room of the entire place. Anywhere he was he wanted to be able to remember that one time, when they’d done such-and-such.

He found a clean pair of jeans and t-shirt and was down to needing to run a comb through his hair and gel it back. Things he needed to be in his bathroom to do.

Spike waited with his ear to the door. The water turned off and after a moment he knocked. “Can I come in?”

“Of course,” she called.

Spike entered and, bloody hell, her towel was covering less than his shirt had. He hadn’t considered the logistics of trying to get ready while she was standing right there, drying her hair. His hands shook as he attempted to focus. Eventually he got himself halfway presentable. He’d even managed to get his heart rate back under some semblance of control, but then she walked by him and smacked him on the ass.

He momentarily lost the power of cohesive thought and followed Buffy into the bedroom like a puppy.

“What should we do today?” she asked.
Spike was lost. The sun was hitting her just right, making her hair seem to glow. All the colors of blonde there, from nearly brown to almost white, were visible. In wonder he stretched his hand out and ran his fingers through the gleaming strands.

“Spike?”

Uh, what? He blinked but couldn’t remember what she’d said. “Ah…yes?” Please don’t let him be in trouble.

Buffy turned and rolled her eyes, but she was smiling indulgently. “I was asking what you wanted to do today, but it’s okay, I already decided.”

“Anything you desire,” he said.

Her eyes gleamed. “I want to drive my car. Maybe we can go feed the squirrels?”

“It is your car, you know.” He put his hands on her shoulders. Her skin was warm and soft under his fingers.

“I know.”

“I can get it put in your name, you can drive it whenever you want, just let me-“

“I know, Spike.” She put her hand over his and squeezed. “Thank you.” She kissed him lightly on the cheek. “Can you get stuff ready while I get dressed?”

“Sure.”

Dazed and more than a little bewildered he descended the stairs and made them a simple lunch, putting it in a day pack with a couple bottles of water and a bag of sunflower seeds for the squirrels. Grabbing the car keys he went and checked the Ferrari, making sure it was ready to go. The bag went in the back and he rubbed his sweaty palms on his pant legs. It was almost like a date.

Buffy entered the garage dressed in a short blue skirt and a pink blouse, her hair in a high ponytail.

“Ready to go?” he asked. She nodded, making the ponytail bounce. Her breasts bounced as well. No bra.

He couldn’t help it, he reached out and fisted the end of her ponytail. He used his hold to tilt her head back. Her chest was heaving. With a moan, he put an arm around her and met her mouth with his. Her body molded against him.

Christ, he craved her.

She made a deep, needy noise in her throat and any self-control he had evaporated. His hand dropped to her backside, kneading the flesh. “I want you, Buffy,” he said hoarsely. He grabbed her hand and brought it to the front of his jeans to feel how his erection was straining against the fabric. Like the first time, her fingers wandered up and down his length while she wore an expression of surprise.

He thrust against her palm.

“Oh-” she gasped and launched herself at him. She locked her arms around his neck and her legs around his waist. In a frenzy, she rained kisses on his face while rubbing herself wantonly against him. Spike stumbled backwards, stopping when the Ferrari FF’s bumper met the back of his legs.
That’d work. Carefully as he could, he sat down and leaned back, Buffy on top and straddling him.

She was still kissing him, her tongue demanding. Her hands fisted his shirt as her hips continued to undulate wildly.

A tiny, frustrated noise escaped her throat. Spike broke the kiss. His girl’s face was scrunched up in the most adorable way. Obviously she very much knew what she wanted, but had no idea how to go about getting it, and it was annoying the hell out of her.

He almost chuckled, but it died in his throat as he swept his hands up the back of her thighs and found the crotch of her panties already damp. His poor cock, that’d been vainly struggling against his zipper, redoubled its efforts. He groaned. “Buffy, undo my pants.”

For a moment she looked confused, but then his words sunk in and with a little cry her hands flew to his fly. She had him unzipped and his jeans around his knees in seconds. He breathed a sigh of relief. That was better.

“No underwear?” she asked as she wrapped her hand around his prick.

Was he supposed to be able to answer? “Uh-uh,” he got out, along with a grunt as she stroked him. After a few tugs her hand wandered down to cup his balls. She carefully rolled them in her palm, a fascinated look on her face. If she spent much longer fondling him he was going to come before the show really got started. He caught her wrist and gently pulled. “Come up here, kitten. I want to be inside you.”

She scooted so her pussy was directly over his crotch. “Uh.” Her face went from looking excited to unsure. “I don’t know what I’m doing.”

“It’s okay, I’ll help you. Lift up a bit.” She did as he asked and he hooked the crotch of her underwear to the side and positioned himself so he was barely penetrating her. He had to fight his instinct to ram himself up into her welcoming heat. He settled his hands on her hips. “Like this you’re in control. Bend your knees and sink down, but only as far as you’re comfortable, alright?”

Buffy nodded.

Slowly her hips descended. The exquisite feeling of the walls of her channel stretching to accommodate him was driving him out of his mind. He whimpered and his hands trembled.

She didn’t stop. Oh, bloody flipping hell, she didn’t stop, not until she had taken his entire length inside her.

The muscles of her pussy clamped tightly for a second and he made a strangled noise.

“Am I doing okay?” she asked, sounding worried.

“Perfect, luv, brilliant.”

“Oh, um, good, now what?”

Spike had to force himself to concentrate. He braced his feet more securely and tightened his fingers on her hips. “You move like this.” He helped her find a rolling rhythm and soon she was riding him with abandon. Her hands were on his chest, her fingers digging into him in the most delicious way. He risked slipping a hand down to bunch up the front of her skirt.

The sight of his cock sliding in and out of her was almost as erotic as the feeling. “Look at us, luv,”
he whispered. She bowed her head forward and gasped. Her pussy cinched down firmly around him again. He used the thumb of the hand holding her skirt to rub circles over her clit.

“Oh, William,” she moaned as her thighs quivered and her pussy pulsed in increasingly intense waves. Her hips undulated frantically and she keened as she came, shaking and losing her rhythm.

It was beautiful. “My Buffy, love you,” he panted.

“Love you too.” It was almost a sob. With the hand still on her hip, he coaxed her into moving again. She twisted her hips and hunched up a bit as she desperately rode him. He let her skirt fall and put his hand on her breast to pinch the nipple.

“There’s a girl,” he crooned. “Do what you need.”

She flew apart again and he couldn’t hold back any longer. He surged upwards against her in wild abandon, her name a litany on his lips. His balls tightened and a second later he jackknifed one last time up off the hood of the car as he spurted his load deep inside her. The pleasure radiated out from where they were joined until it seemed like he must be glowing with it.

Buffy sagged against his chest and he held her close. He glowed in it, enjoying the warm feeling of her body lying sated on top of him just as much as the sex that had led to her being there.

He knew he was a cuddler, and thankfully Buffy seemed inclined to indulge him.

She rubbed her face against his chest. “I like this part,” she said and he nearly melted. Maybe she was a cuddler too? He hummed his agreement as she snuggled against him.

Suddenly, she sat up. “Oh my god, we’re on top of the car.”

“Well, yeah.” He reached for her but she was already scrambling to her feet. Feeling a little grumpy, he stood and pulled his pants back up.

“I can’t believe we did that!” She was blushing.

He scowled. What the bleeding hell was wrong with getting carried away?

“Why are you looking like that?” she sounded hurt. “I don’t think we dented it or anything. I’ve just never…outside of a bed before.”

Relief washed through him. She thought he’d be mad about possibly damaging the car. He gave her a reassuring smile and Buffy let him snag her and pull her into a hug. He bent down so his lips were against her ear. “I’m going to have you in every room of this house, on every surface and up against every wall. And once we’ve done that, I plan to start all over again.” He trailed his fingers down her back and she trembled.

“Yes,” she said with a sigh. Her eyes closed and she nuzzled against his neck.

He hadn’t been so far off thinking she was a sex-goddess. She just needed a bit of encouragement.

She broke away from him and pulled out her phone. “I need a picture,” she explained when he raised an eyebrow. “Because not only is this my favorite kind of car, but now this one is my very favorite.” She blushed as she took the picture of just the coupe.

“Come here,” she said. She put an arm around him and took a picture of them with the car in the background.
“That one going on Instagram?” he asked with a raised eyebrow. Inside he was doing a tap dance. She’d wanted a picture with him. That blasted phone was her life and she’d just included him.

“Not yet.” She frowned. He didn’t know what to think. “I… I want to keep you to myself, for as long as I can. As soon as we go public it’ll be a firestorm.”

“That’s the sodding truth.” He shook his head. He had to agree, the idea of the world beating a path to their door, full of questions, sounded terrible. “Now how about we get you behind the wheel of your car instead of on top of it?”

She giggled and held her hand out for the key.

****

Buffy rolled her eyes. Dawn would just not get off the phone. They’d talked briefly about Buffy being on the Carolina coast, but if she had been worried that Dawn might pry, her fears were quickly dispelled as Dawn chattered on and on about school, her friends, and her sort- of boyfriend. Who was Italian and sounded mostly annoying.

It took three tries and two promises to send all the squirrel photos she had before Dawn would hang up.

“Little sis sounds like a bit of a pain,” Spike said from where he was lounging on the bed.

“You have no idea, but I have the suspicion that you two might get on famously together. Especially once you hear her play. She’s amazing.”

Spike nodded and turned the page of the magazine he was reading.

“It’s my older sister you’re going to have to watch out for. Faith can be… a lot.”

He looked at her over the top of his magazine. “That’s vague.”

“You’ll see. I’m sort of afraid she’ll try to maul you. Like every other woman on this planet she thinks you’re hot stuff.”

“And how about the only woman that matters?”

Buffy grinned. Damn, but he could be smooth when he wanted to. “Oh, she probably thinks you’re hot stuff, too, but she knows you can be sweet and tender.”

Spike ducked his head and looked bashful. He had no right to be so adorable.

Buffy slid under the sheet and lay down on her side. Spike immediately tossed away the magazine and slid down so he was face to face with her.

“I had a good day,” she said, brushing a stray curl off his forehead. “Thank you for not looking too terrified while I was driving.”

“You weren’t that bad. I think you only aged me ten years. Twelve at the most.” Tenderly, he stroked her cheek with a finger.

“At least we found lots of squirrels.”

“Yeah. Little buggers were having a grand war over those seeds.”
She turned so she was facing away from him and scooted back until she was spooned tight against him. His arm settled around her like it was the most natural thing in the world.

Spike kissed her softly right on the back of her neck. “Since we only have a little while before we go back to resume shooting, we should go and do something fun for a couple of days. Where’s somewhere you’ve never been?”

“Um, lots of places, really.” She was having trouble coming up with any place she really wanted to see. Spike holding her was so much more important than a place. “As long as we’re together, anywhere is fine. Or even just staying here.”

“We’ll have forever here, I was thinking I’d like to share the world with you a little.”

“I’ve never been to Vegas,” she said. Instantly she winced. That was kind of lame. It was like picking Denny’s for dinner.

“Really?” He sounded surprised.

“Um, we don’t have to.”

“It sounds great,” he said with a chuckle. “I like Vegas. What do you want to do?”

“See the fountain, and some shows, and go to a seedy casino and play blackjack, and shop for stuff I don’t need.” She stopped to take a breath. “Do you think we can do it? Without being recognized?”

“We can try. What if we are?”

“Then we are.” She shrugged a shoulder. “I said I’d like to keep it between us for now, it doesn’t mean we’ll succeed. And part of me wants everyone to know, because you’re so important to me and I’d like the world to get that.”

Behind her, Spike’s breathing hitched. “You’re a wonder, kitten. Did you know that?” His voice was thick.

“I think I’m starting to.” For the first time in her life, it felt like someone truly was there for her. She wasn’t alone anymore.

His fingers found hers and intertwined, but her eyes didn’t want to close, because—oh my god!—she was going to Vegas!
I met a girl crazy for me
Met a boy cute as can be

-“Summer Nights” from Grease

****

“This is too expensive,” Buffy said, frowning down at the bottle of champagne that sat on ice in a bucket in front of one of the Learjet’s plush seats.

Spike blinked. “You didn’t grow up with money, did you?”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because you’re complaining about the price of champagne on a chartered flight.”

“Oh,” she said, sitting down. “I…you really didn’t need to do all this.”

“Of course not,” he agreed. A little stab of fear went through him and his blood ran cold. “I just want to show you a good time.” The fear was starting to turn into full blown panic. Christ, what had he been thinking? Buffy wasn’t some dippy chit that was going to be impressed by him throwing money around. He dropped into the other seat and massaged his temples. He had no idea what to do to make her see how special she was to him.

“Thank you,” she said. He looked over at her. She was playing with the hem of her skirt, running her fingers back and forth over the blue material. The knee length pleated skirt and fussy, white, long-sleeved blouse Buffy was wearing made her look ready to visit a library, not the world’s pleasure capital. She sighed. “We really didn’t. Have money, that is.” She leaned back against the seat. “We were okay. My mom, us three girls, we were fine right up until my mom got sick. My dad took off after Dawn was born. I was five or six. I hardly remember him.”

Spike wanted to take her hand and cursed the distance between the two chairs. “My father died before I was born.” He looked at his boots. The door to the plane thumped closed and the pilot’s voice came over the intercom, asking them to buckle up.

“I don’t know that much about you.” Buffy shot him a guilty look. “Do you have any brother or sisters?”

“Nah, just me. My mum passed when I was twelve, I think she would have liked you.”

Buffy smiled and ducked her head. “I think my mom would have liked you too, she was always taking in strays.”

“I’m wish I could have met her. She must have been quite the woman to raise a daughter like you.”

“I still miss her. It was hard, right after she was gone. My older sister was working and sending money back, but she was new to the industry and wasn’t making a whole lot back then.”

He couldn’t think of another Summers in Hollywood. “Would I recognize her? Faith, wasn’t it?” he asked, puzzled. The plane had taxied to the runway and the engine was powering up. Buffy rechecked her seatbelt and looked nervous. Was she scared of flying or of telling him about her
sister? Her fingers gripped the armrests hard enough that her knuckles turned white. Definitely the flying then, which was a relief. He could do something about that once they were in the air.

“Um, maybe?” Buffy looked over at him. “She doesn’t go by Summers, though I’m guessing her agent regrets that decision since I showed up. It’s Lehane, Faith Lehane. She plays Dr. Jo Wilkins on Sunnydale Memorial.”

“Really? That’s your sister? She’s bloody brilliant! Do you think Jo’s going to get out of her coma anytime soon? Much longer and Dr. Adams is going to think she’s never coming back and he’s going to hook up with Dr. Walsh and she’s actually evil. I think she’s going to try and do Jo in.”

Buffy’s jaw fell open. Spike realized he’d kind of been babbling. Her hands left the armrest and covered her mouth as she started giggling, even though the plane was racing down the runway. “Oh. My. God. You watch Sunnydale Memorial?”

“Uh…I might catch it…from time to time.” He felt his cheeks start to burn, but the fact that Buffy was smiling was worth any amount of embarrassment. The plane lifted into the air.

“Faith is going to flip, and she’ll probably tell you more about the show than you ever wanted to hear. And, ugh, the guy that plays Dr. Adams? Riley Finn? He’s so boring. Like a cardboard box. And he hits on me every single time I see him, though in the most boring way possible.” She rolled her eyes.

Spike’s hand curled into involuntary fists at the idea of anyone hitting on his girl. “Berk,” he muttered. The intercom buzzed again and the pilot informed them that the flight should be smooth, the weather in Vegas was great, and that they were free to move about the cabin.

Spike undid his seat belt and sprawled out. Grabbing a couple of glasses, he poured the overly expensive champagne. Buffy stood, stretched, and took a glass before she poked around the cabin, peering in cupboards and figuring out how the stereo worked. Sipping on the bubbly, she made her way to the back of the cabin, opened the door, gasped, and shut it again.

Spike grinned.

“There’s a bed back there!” she hissed.

“I should hope so, I asked for one.”

“Spike!” She flushed bright red. Her eyes went to the front of the plane.

“They can’t hear anything, luv. There’s even a loo up there. And they don’t know who’s back here.”

She chewed on her lip. “Okay, speaking of “loo” where is it?”

“All the way at the rear.”

“Okay, just give me a minute.”

Spike gulped down the rest of his glass of champagne and poured another. He was probably frightening her to death. Spending a couple hours in her arms while they flew to Sin City had seemed like a bloody brilliant idea. Now he felt like a pervert. He drained his glass again.

“You don’t take a hint very well.” Her voice came from behind him and she sounded pouty.

There’d been a hint?
Spike swiveled his chair towards the open door and his thankfully empty glass dropped from his suddenly nerveless fingers. Buffy was standing there completely naked. “Guh,” he managed.

Her lower lip crept out as she walked towards him. All the blood drained from his brain and headed south.

“Are you going to come to bed?” she said, her voice warm.

But it was back there and she was right here. He reached out and snagged her arm, tugging her forward and onto his lap. She straddled him, looking slightly dazed. “Oh, kitten,” he moaned. Her lips were hungry on his. He needed her, desperately. To feel her, to know that she was his. His hands felt clumsy as he ran them over her. “Undo my pants,” he gasped between kisses.

Her clever fingers had his fly undone in seconds and her hot hand curled around his erection. He was never going to last. Spike slid a finger between the lips of her sex. Oh, thank god, she was wet. With a grunt, he guided her onto his prick. She sank down with a happy sigh.

“Need you,” he panted. She braced her knees against the armrest of the chair and started rolling her hips. His sac was already tightening. He desperately tried to hang on. His finger found her clit and rubbed frantically. “Come for me, please, Buffy. I’m going…love you…please.”

She moved faster and her head fell back. Of their own volition, his hips were surging up, plunging his cock deep inside her. He wanted to stay there forever, but the walls of her pussy were beginning to flutter and he was going to follow her over into bliss. Her whole body shook with the force of her climax. With a roar, he wrapped an arm around her back and grabbed her ass with the other. He slammed himself into her, standing and lifting her up so his hips could move freely. He peaked and the rush as he emptied himself into her made him see stars. Letting out a noise close to a strangled sob, he collapsed back into the seat.

Buffy gently ran her hands over his face. “Are you okay?”

“Love you,” he said hoarsely.

“Love you, too.” She smiled softly. Her fingers trailed down his chest and her smile turned sly. She yanked his shirt off over his head. “But I don’t think I’m done with you yet.”

He raised an eyebrow. Still grinning, she stood and walked backwards towards to bed, crooking a finger at him.

Without thinking, he launched himself after her, only to end up on his knees on the floor with his pants, which he’d forgotten about, tangled around his ankles. He must look like an idiot. Buffy’s bare feet entered his line of vision. His eyes trailed up her body. She was standing with her arms crossed, her lips pursed, and she was tapping her foot impatiently.

Damn. She was pressing nearly every button he had. His prick was already standing back up to attention under her scrutiny. Maybe she hadn’t noticed he was doing everything but wearing a neon sign announcing his kinks. She wasn’t exactly experienced and that could work in his favor. He risked glancing up at her face again. She had an eyebrow raised. Maybe he was out of luck.

Buffy went and sat on the edge of the bed, facing him. Though her cheeks were stained pink, she slowly spread her knees apart. He felt a little lightheaded as she bared herself to him. He could see his come dripping back out of her opening. He resisted the urge to pinch himself and make sure he wasn’t having a very lucid wet dream.

“C’mon, Spike, sometime before we land,” she said sternly. He started to rise. “Did I say you could
stand up?” she snapped and he immediately sank back to his knees. His heart was beating a million miles an hour. She’d realized. He didn’t know whether to be elated or scared to death. Drusilla had never understood. She’d known he liked to be ordered about and had often taken advantage of it. He’d wanted to adore her but often she’d ignore his wishes and ask him to hurt her, or someone else, or she’d hurt him. He’d given up trying to explain to her that he wasn’t into that and had simply given her what she wanted. But Buffy most certainly wasn’t Dru. Maybe she’d get it, get him.

Jeans still a hinder around his ankles, he crawled over to her and knelt between her legs, waiting for her command.

Buffy looked like she was trying to figure out if she was ashamed or turned on. Please be the latter, he silently begged.

“Um, Spike, I…I’m not, I’m not messing things up, am I?” she whispered. “I didn’t mean to sound like a shrew.”

Huh? His brow creased. He reached up and tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear. “I’m your willing slave, kitten. Want to take care of you, make you feel good, whatever you need. You’re my queen, Buffy, let me worship you.” He trailed a finger down her chest. “And you can tell me what to do, just like you did.” He swallowed hard. “I want that.”

Buffy appeared a little off-kilter. He hoped he wasn’t freaking her out.

“Well, in that case-” She straightened up and squared her shoulders. “I want you to lick me…uh, down there. Until I get off.” The last bit was in a commanding tone that made his cock twitch. She was a bloody natural.

“Yes, luv.” He bent to circle his tongue around her swollen clit.

“I didn’t say you could talk.”

Spike groaned.

****

Buffy was having the time of her life. The past three days had been amazing.

Spike had them in an incredibly lavish suite at the Bellagio. It had its own entrance, pool, and a bed the size of a small country. Which they’d made use of every inch of, though in the morning she still woke up with Spike curled up securely around her.

They wore wigs, hats, and glasses to go out to eat, to shows, or even just to walk hand in hand down the street. So far they hadn’t been recognized, even at the fancy shops and boutiques she’d drug him into. At the last one she’d bought a second set of luggage to hold all the clothes and cute purses she was accumulating.

Spike had tried to buy her jewelry, but she’d turned him down. Everything he’d pointed out had been astronomically expensive. While she knew he could easily afford any and all of it, she still felt weird about someone else spending that much money on her. He’d looked a little crestfallen after the last time, more so than the clerk, and she had felt kind of bad. But he was already paying for the entire trip. She was so spoiled that anything more seemed too over the top.

Tonight she’d wanted to go out and find the real Vegas. They’d wandered around downtown and ended up in a place with stained beer posters on the wall, dilapidated furniture, and a permanent haze of cigarette smoke that Spike was currently adding to. She wondered how long she needed to be his
girlfriend before she could start working on getting him to quit. The idea that it could kill him made her feel kind of queasy and it’d be a cold day in hell before she’d let a cigarette be the thing that took him from her.

She was playing blackjack and nursing a rum and coke. The only other player was a woman who looked like she probably spent most of every night glued to the stool she was on. The dealer seemed bored and she was spending most of her time eyeing the bartender. Who wasn’t that bad looking. He was wearing a nametag that read ‘Jorge’ and appeared to be decent at his job.

The clock hit ten and the bartender walked up on the tiny stage. “Hey,” he said, tapping the mic to make sure it was on. “I’m hoping you all are having a wonderful evening. As you know, it’s time for karaoke! Song book and sign ups at the table.” A few people stood and went to sign up.

On the next deal Buffy got 21 and won double her five-dollar bet, making her squeal. Spike smiled indulgently at her. “Having fun?”

“Yes. You’re the best.” She leaned over to kiss him and his hand settled on her knee.

The first singer shuffled on stage and butchered his way through an Elvis song.

Spike squeezed her knee. “I’ll be right back.” He stubbed out his cigarette and made his way between the tables to the stage. He returned, grinning sheepishly.

“What song did you pick?” she asked.

“I might of, kind of signed us both up to sing.”

“What?”

“I know you can sing,” he said, though he did look faintly alarmed.

“I’m going to so make you pay for this later,” she promised. He leered, immediately figuring out what she meant. The amount of power she had over him was sometimes terrifying. “I’m going to need a little courage, refill?” He took her glass and headed to the bar.

Buffy sighed and gathered up her chips to go cash out. She was still struggling to figure him out. One second Spike would be all swaggering bravado and everything that fell off his tongue would be an innuendo, and the next he’d look like a scared rabbit. It was almost like he still couldn’t quite believe she was his girlfriend. That she loved him. But, cripes, she did. A lot. More than a lot. She just needed to figure out how to let him know that.

They sat a small table and worked on their drinks until the bartender called them on stage as “Anne and Will.”

Spike had refused to tell her what song it was.

The music started.

Oh no, he hadn’t.

“Summer lovin’ had me a blast.” He grinned at her.

She didn’t even need to look at the screen. “Summer lovin’ happened so fast.”

Okay, Spike was brilliant. He pouted, winked, and shimmed his way through the song and before she knew it she was hamming it up with him. When it was over she fell into his arms and kissed him
on stage to cheers and claps. There seemed to be a lot more people in the bar than there’d been before.

“We should probably go,” Buffy said, tugging at his elbow as they returned to their table. He nodded and put his arm around her.

“Wow, you guys, that was great!” It was the bartender. “I don’t suppose you two are locals?”

“Sorry, mate,” Spike said. “Just tourists.”

“Well, you’re welcome anytime. We’ll be talking about that one for a while.”

“Thank you, it was fun.” She flashed a smile at the guy.

“Jorge, drink!” Someone called and the bartender nodded at Spike and her before retreating to his post.

“I need to hit the WC before leaving, you going to be okay?” Spike asked her.

“I’ll be fine,” she reassured him. Worry clouded his face. It was like he was always expecting her to disappear. On his way to the restrooms at the back of the bar he turned around three times, his eyes searching her out.

Once he disappeared she drained the last of her drink, then nearly jumped out of her skin when someone touched her arm. It was the tired-looking older woman that’d been playing blackjack.

“That boy of yours is something else,” she said in a raspy voice. “What was your name again, dear?”

“Anne.” Buffy shook the woman’s hand.

“Well, Anne. You’re certainly a lucky girl.” The woman lit a cigarette. “And such a looker, too. I bet he’s quite the stallion.”

Buffy’s mouth dropped open. The old woman laughed, which turned into a wheezing cough. She waved her hand. “That’s the nice thing about getting old. You can just say what you want. Though tell me I’m wrong.”

Buffy bit her lip. “You’re not wrong,” she said in a rush, then giggled.

The woman swatted her arm. “You naughty thing.” With a sigh, the woman took a deep drag on her smoke. There was something unreadable in her eyes. “Don’t let that one get away. You’d regret it for the rest of your life.”

“I won’t,” Buffy whispered.

“Y’know,” the woman said, her eyes narrowing. “He reminds me of someone on TV. That show in Georgia.”

“*The Walking Dead*?” she asked innocently.

The woman tapped her fake nails on the table top. “No, no, the other one, with the fancy costumes.”

“Oh, I know which one you mean. *Belle South*.”
“Yes, that’s it! Do you watch that one? The actors in it are so pretty, even the men.”

Buffy suppressed a giggle. “I love that show!”

“Your man looks a lot like the guy that plays the one with glasses- what’s his name?”

“Do you mean Ashley?”

“Yes! Him! He’s such a cutie!”

Spike had made his way back from the bathroom and was darting alarmed glances between her and the older woman.

“Will!” Buffy said, grabbing ahold of his arm. She turned back to the woman. “He has to hear it all the time. He totally looks like Ashley.”

Spike rolled his eyes. “You’re not talking about Belle South again, are you?”

The woman leaned forward. “Do you think that girl, Isabelle, is going to get with Ashley? I nearly died during that scene between them in the finale. And her husband is such an asshole. She deserves someone that can really love her.” She drove her point home by slapping the tabletop.

Buffy and Spike looked at each other with raised eyebrows.

“I think Ashley and Isabelle are totally going to get together and that it’s going to be epic!” Buffy said with a grin.

“Well, I hope so. Now you two run along. I feel like I’m keeping you from a good time.”

Buffy covered the woman’s hand with her own. “No, and it was nice to meet you. I’ll remember what you said.”

“Bless you!” The woman called after them as Spike led her through the crowd. Buffy clutched Spike’s fingers tightly with hers. She did feel blessed every moment she was with him, and as far as she was concerned there weren’t enough moments for them to share even if they had from now until forever to be together.

****

It was after midnight, but the Las Vegas strip was still packed. Buffy and he had caught a cab back from downtown and were meandering through the tourist-choked streets, enjoying the sights and each other. Everyone seemed too drunk and busy to take a good look at anyone else and he felt secure in their anonymity as they walked.

The last time he’d been here, with Dru, they had partied so hard he could barely remember what hotels he’d been in. God, how had he ever mistaken what he had with Dru for love?

Buffy’s easy chatter and excitement washed over him. It was hard to reconcile the now, with Buffy’s warm smiles and delight in the world around her, with who he’d been then. The lines of coke and the nights spent screwing some girl he didn’t even know while Dru had watched. He felt dirty.

Sooner or later, Buffy was going to figure out that she was so much better than him. That he was worthless. He’d lose her. His fingers gripped hers tighter.

“Spike?” she asked, her face concerned. “Is something wrong?”
He tried to smile. Every second she graced him with was something to cherish. There’d be enough
time for despair when she came to her senses and left him behind in the dust. “Nothing’s wrong.
Enjoying being out with my girl.”

She didn’t look convinced. With a huff, she dragged him off the sidewalk and into a more secluded
alley between several buildings. “Out with it.”

“Out with what?” he hedged.

“With whatever is bothering you!” She put her hands on her hips and glared. “You look like
someone kicked your puppy.”

He stuck his hands in the pockets of his jeans. “I just… Buffy… I wasn’t a good person. I was
thinking about the last time I was here and, you shouldn’t be with me. A girl like you shouldn’t be
with someone that’s done those sorts of things.”

“And, pray tell, what kind of a girl am I?”

“One that deserves the best of everything.” He kept his eyes on the ground, not wanting to see her
face. “And I’m not the best of anything.”

“Spike…” she trailed off and sighed. “Do you wish you were still that guy? Fast times and faster
girls?” she asked in a small voice.

He considered it for a second. Did he? What if there was no Buffy? Would he still be that guy?
Maybe, but if she left him on his ass like he deserved he wouldn’t go back to it. That hadn’t been
him. He liked the ocean, silly movies, expensive cars, and having one true love. “No, I don’t. That
was never me, but I sure pretended it was.”

Buffy took a step towards him, then rushed the rest of the way into his arms. He couldn’t help but
hold her. His treasure.

“Don’t let me go. You promised not to let me go.” She put her hands on either side of his face and
brought his head up so he had to meet her gaze. “You want to know what I think? I think you’re
waiting for me to leave you.”

He took a stumbling step back. “Buffy…”

“And that’s not fair!” she snapped. “I love you, and I know you love me, but I keep seeing your fear.
You think that if you put one foot wrong I’m going to freak out and run away. That if something
isn’t perfect, that if you’re not perfect, I won’t want to be with you. Well, wake up call, William.
That’s not who I am. It’s even okay for you to argue with me. Like about where to go and eat. Don’t
you think I noticed you totally hated that sushi place we went to? You could have told me.”

He was getting lost, and yeah, he did hate sushi but hadn’t wanted to say anything. “Buffy…”

“I. Love. You.” She was right in front of him again and poked her finger into the middle of his chest
with each word. “I don’t want you to walk on eggshells. I’m not going anywhere. I’m your girl from
here to the end of time. I just don’t know how to prove that to you.” She threw her hands up and
turned away.

Damn it, and damn him. Now he’d lose the girl because she’d get tired of him being a pathetic git.

Buffy started to roll her eyes, but they stayed at the top. She laughed. “It’s like a sign,” she said. “A
literal sign. That’s how.” She pointed upwards. They were standing under one of the many, many
wedding chapel signs that festooned the area. He was confused, what the hell was she talking about? “Spike, ask me to marry you.”

What? He gaped at her.

“Ask me to marry you, now.” There was that hint of steel in her voice that woke his libido up and dragged his mind completely into the present.

“I don’t have a r-ring,” he stammered.

“Please,” she whispered.

He went down on one knee and took her hand in his. He’d been thinking maybe someday she’d want to be his bride, but in his mind he’d have taken her to a field full of flowers and presented her with an elegant ring. Instead there was dirty pavement and the hum of the neon sign over their heads.

But this was real.

“Buffy…” He looked up into her eyes. She was worrying her lower lip. “Buffy, I’m an idiot. I love you with everything that I am and I can’t imagine my world without you in it. Would you be my wife and make me the happiest man on earth?”

There was a pause. Was she reconsidering? Maybe she had suddenly come to her senses and realized exactly who was asking her to be his bride. Spike couldn’t breathe, this was too-

“Yes!” she said exclaimed happily. Oh thank god. He gulped in a breath and stood, pulling her into his arms for a searing kiss. She was panting when she broke away. Inevitably, her phone appeared and she insisted on taking a few pictures.

Spike felt dizzy. She was going to be his wife.

Buffy was rapidly tapping away on her phone.

“What are you up to?” he asked.

“Getting us an Uber ride to the courthouse.”

Wait-

“We’re doing this now?”

She glanced up at him with a happy grin. “Duh.”
#Busted

You say I'm a dreamer, we're two of a kind

- Thompson Twins, “Hold Me Now”

****

The Uber driver, besides being very safety conscious, had turned out to be a huge help. The cherry on top was that Mr. Charles Gunn had no idea who she and Spike were. To him they were just another young couple in love.

He whisked them to the courthouse, which was thankfully empty. The young woman working the marriage license window was wearing three crosses around her neck and a denim jumper dress over a white blouse. She took their I.D.s and started filling in the paperwork.

Spike wrapped his arms around Buffy’s waist from behind, holding her. “Sister wife,” Spike coughed against the back of Buffy’s neck.

“Be nice,” she hissed.

A few quick signatures and they were back in the car. When Gunn learned they didn’t have rings he took them to an all-night pawn shop well off The Strip. The proprietor looked like he was eighty but possibly still had mob connections.

When Spike groused that she deserved something much better than a recycled ring, Buffy dragged him to the side. “It’s not the cost of the ring that matters, or where it comes from, only that you’re the one to put it on my finger. And I rather like the idea that we’re taking something that didn’t work out for someone else and making it our own.”

Spike kissed her and bought the gold rings without haggling. The crotchety owner looked pained, like he’d wished he’d asked for a lot more money.

In the car once more, Gunn turned to where Spike and she were curled up around each other in the backseat. “You have a chapel in mind?”

Buffy shook her head.

“You know of someplace?” Spike asked. “Not too cheesy, mate. We don’t want Elvis doing the honors.”

“Actually, I know just the place. I’ll give him a call, but usually it’s not too busy on a weeknight. Dude’s named Andrew, he’s on my bar trivia-night team. Though, man, do you guys watch Belle South?”

“Yeah, it’s one of my favorite shows,” Buffy said and Spike elbowed her.

“This guy is a super-fan. You mention something about it and he’ll be so thrilled to death you’ll probably get a discount.” Gunn turned his Bluetooth headset on and made the call.

Buffy glanced up at Spike. “What do you think?” she said in a low voice.

He shrugged. “I think it could be fun. And he might be more willing to keep mum about it than someone who could recognize out mugs on the cover of EW or the like tomorrow and start
“It’s free,” Gunn said over his shoulder. “We’ll be there shortly.”

The chapel was a standalone building, painted white with a pretty garden. Spike paid Gunn and Buffy thanked him profusely for all his help. “You want me to wait? I’ve been off the clock for a while.”

“You sure you don’t mind?” Spike said, a hand on Gunn’s shoulder.

“Naw, I’m going to watch this week’s episode of Walking Dead. There’s guaranteed to be questions about it at trivia. I can do that as easily in my car as at home.”

“Right then, see you shortly as Mr. and Mrs!” Spike grabbed Buffy’s hand and together they walked into the brightly lit chapel. The interior felt vaguely like a Belle set.

“Welcome!” A short man with smiling eyes walked towards them. “Thank you for choosing my humble place of business for your nuptials. My name is Andrew and I will do my very best…” Andrew’s mouth dropped open as Buffy pulled the brunette wig off her head and Spike tossed his hat and sunglasses onto an empty chair.

“Hello, Andrew,” Spike said, all charm. “We were told you were rather big Belle South fan. Was hoping that and a little cash might mean you’d do us a favor.”

“W-w-ha…”

Buffy smiled at the flummoxed guy. He was adorable. “We fell in love, but kind of want to keep it a secret for a while, and were hoping you’d be willing.” She held out the paperwork from the licensing office. Andrew inched forward and snatched it from her hand, quickly skimming over it before returning to goggling at Spike and her.

“Buffy Summers and Spike Pratt-” Andrew managed to get out in a wisp of a voice.

“William for the ceremony,” Spike said, running a hand through his hair. Buffy looked down at her pink dress. If she’d known she was going to get married she might have worn something else.

Andrew finally got a hold of himself. “Oh my god! This is real!” He took a couple of deep breaths “I…wow…like…holy…” He stood up tall and clasped his hands together. “I will keep the secret of your grand love until my grave if needs be, but on one condition.”

Spike raised an eyebrow.

“Tell me about next season, but don’t make it too spoilery. Do Isabelle and Ashley get together?”

“What do you think, mate?” Spike grabbed Buffy and planted a kiss on her lips. Andrew squealed like a twelve-year-old girl. They filled him in as best they could as he ran around and got things ready, grinning the whole time.

His enthusiasm was infectious and soon the three of them were gossiping about the show like old friends.

“Phew,” Andrew at last puffed out. “Ready. Do you have rings?”

“Thanks to your friend, Gunn. This wasn’t exactly planned,” Buffy said with a laugh.

Andrew sighed dreamily. Then his eyes got wide. “Wait right here.” He dashed off and was back in
a few minutes with a lacy veil and a bouquet of pink roses and baby’s breath. Buffy nearly started crying as he placed the flowers in her hands. “May I?” he asked, holding up the veil. She nodded and reverently he placed it on her head, adjusting both it and her hair. “There.” He stepped back and she glanced up at Spike, who had a funny look on his face.

“My Buffy,” he whispered as he gently traced her cheek with his finger.

Andrew looked like he was melting. A tear leaked from the corner of his eye. “This is the greatest thing in the history of things,” he sniffed.

“Don’t cry!” Buffy said. “Or I’ll start crying!”

Bravely, Andrew shook himself. “Okay, places. And I’ll start the music.”

Buffy floated down the aisle to stand beside Spike. She barely heard Andrew as he performed the ceremony. She focused on Spike’s eyes, which were awed and full of love and maybe a tiny bit of panic. They exchanged rings and promised to love each other for their rest of their lives. Though even if they lived another hundred years it didn’t sound like nearly long enough. Forever didn’t sound like long enough.

“I now pronounce you Husband and Wife, you may kiss the bride.” Andrew sounded close to tears again.

Spike’s arms were warm and strong around her. She leapt into them and wrapped her legs around his waist. Laughing, he swung her in a circle and kissed her again.

“Photos!” she yelled between kisses. She gave Andrew her phone and he happily took picture after picture of them together. Then she insisted on a taking some of the three of them, and promised Andrew they’d be posted on Instagram (along with a mention of the chapel) when the relationship went public.

They signed some Belle memorabilia for Andrew that he’d had in his office, gave him hugs, and thanked him profusely for sharing in their happiness. He was over the moon. And she was too, Buffy admitted to herself as her husband and she replaced their disguises and walked with their arms around each other to the waiting car.

“Aren’t you two a sight?” Gunn shook his head. “This old world could use a lot more love in it.”

Spike gave him directions and Gunn’s eyes nearly fell out of his head when he pulled his car up in front of their private entrance at the Bellagio. Spike handed him a wad of cash. “Thanks mate, you helped make this the happiest night of my life.”

Gunn thumbed through the money. “I can’t…there’s like three thousand dollars here.”

Buffy put his hand on his. “Don’t worry about it. We’re good.”

Spike pulled her out of the car as a stunned Gunn stuffed the money in his pocket. With a flourish, Spike picked her up and carried her into their suite. “Well, Mrs. Pratt. What do you want to do now?”

“I want to make love to my husband. And then I want to go home.”

His lips paused just before meeting hers. “I love you, wife.”

“I love you, husband.”
The kiss was soft and sweet and promised a lifetime of devotion. No matter what the future held they’d always have each other.

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It was good to be back at the beach house.

Every day with Buffy was the best day ever. Spike didn’t want this time with the two of them alone in the house, making love and indulging in just being as close as possible every second of the day and night, to end.

Buffy was his. His lover, his wife, his Queen, his everything.

Spike glanced over at her as she sat in the passenger seat of the car. They were returning home after having spent the evening enjoying dinner in with Cordy and Harm. It’d been fun. Though Cordelia had spotted the ring on his finger about three seconds after they’d arrived and she’d gone Spanish Inquisition on them.

Harmony had been the one to rescue Buffy, pulling her over to the couch and demanding to see the pictures from the trip, proceeding to squeal with delight over the endless shoes and handbags Buffy had bought. When they’d hit the wedding photos even Cordelia had given in and gone to look.

As they’d left, Cordy had grabbed his arm while Harm was babbling to Buffy about some director that had called her. “You two are the biggest idiots I ever met,” Cordelia had hissed. “But at least you’re two idiot peas in a pod.” Her hand had tightened around his arm as she’d shaken her head. “Life’s not supposed to work out like this, where the girl you’re obsessed with ends up loving you, marrying you, and being as happy as all get out with you. And that she’s a ridiculously nice person.” Cordy had sighed. “I’d wish you all the happiness in the world, but I think you already have it. Instead I’ll say congratulations. And that, once this goes public, you better have a hell of a get together, one I don’t need to wear a designer dress to. Then maybe I’ll forgive you for eloping.”

He’d smiled and promised. It didn’t sound like a bad idea. Friends and family at the beach house, celebrating the love he and Buffy had found. He’d brought the idea up of a get together on the way home and she’d eagerly agreed, but only if she got to do some redecorating first. The nautical themed room had to go, along with the boxes in the dining room.

“Can’t we just keep the dining room door closed?” he asked as they headed up the dark drive towards the house.

Buffy huffed. “No. Where do you think we’re going to serve the food?”

“But where am I going to keep my Emmy?” he teased as he stopped the car right in front of the stairs to the front door.

“It’s in a box?” she said, aghast. “I figured your agent had it, or something.”

He shrugged. “It’s just a thing. The best part about that night was the dress you were wearing. It matched your eyes exactly.”

Buffy’s mouth fell open. “You won an Emmy and you remember what I was wearing?”

“I love you,” he said, hoping that explained it.

She snorted. “I love you too, you dolt.” She rolled her eyes. From her purse her phone buzzed and she pulled it out. “Ugh, Faith. Let me respond or she’ll just keep bugging me.”
Spike leaned back. He really should park the car in the garage, but watching Buffy make faces as she
texted her sister was much more entertaining. And it gave him time to plan what he wanted to do
with her once they got out of the car. He was leaning towards carrying her over his shoulder up to
the shower, but then he wouldn’t do anything unless she told him to.

Even after the plane, Buffy had tended to be shy about giving him any kind of orders in the
bedroom. She’d gotten him to massage her feet once, and brush her hair, and there’d been one very
memorable time, two days ago, when she’d pushed him flat on the bed and put his arms out to the
side and told him not to move. She’d proceeded to explore him with her fingertips, lips, and tongue.
He’d wanted to grab her so badly that he’d been quivering with the need. But she’d told him no after
the first time he’d begged so he’d forced himself to stay still. It’d been torture, especially when she’d
reached his cock and started tracing the veins with her nails. Eventually she’d climbed on and rode
him while he’d valiantly fought to keep himself still. It’d been a hell of an orgasm and then she’d
thanked him profusely for letting her ‘play’.

She really had no idea.

So, yeah, shower. She’d need her hair washed, and her feet, and maybe he could shave her if she still
wanted her pussy smooth. Though having curls there to play with was a very enticing thought. He
shifted in his seat. Buffy could put a foot in the soap dish and he could sink to his knees so he could
worship her with his mouth. She would tell him not to stop, not to ever stop.

His cock was already straining to get to her. He shut the car off as Buffy dropped her phone back in
her purse with an irritated huff. “She’s getting nosy,” Buffy said. “Demanding to know why I’m
isolating myself and that it’s not good for me to be all alone for so long.”

“You could tell her, kitten.”

“Maybe.” Buffy sat back against the seat and closed her eyes. He watched her breasts rise and fall as
she sighed.

“Want you,” he said, his voice a deep rumble. “Wife.”

“Mmm.” She licked her lips and he nearly lunged across the center console to grab her. “You’ll have
to catch me first.” In a flash, she was out the door and running towards the front stairs.

His lust-addled mind took a minute to catch up with what was happening. Clumsily, he got his
seatbelt undone, tumbled out the car door, not bothering to shut it, and stalked after her. There was
no way he could run sprouting wood like he was. He pulled his shirt off and tossed it away. Little
lamb didn’t know what she was in for. The big bad wolf was going to make her scream.

She was at the top of the stairs, giggling and fumbling with the lock. Somehow she’d gotten her
dress most of the way off, though it was still hanging from one wrist. The black silk of her bra and
panties was lovingly hugged her curves. He was going to rip those bits of fabric to shreds for daring
to touch what was his.

The door clicked open as she looked back at him. She froze, her eyes running over him from head to
toe. With a smirk he halted halfway up the steps. His hands went to his belt. Buffy bit her lip and her
chest heaved as she panted. Watching his wife flush with desire for him made him giddy. He
struggled to keep himself from smiling like a fool. Slowly, he undid his belt, unsnapped the button of
his jeans, and lowered his fly. With one hand he freed his aching hard-on and stroked it.

Buffy rubbed her thighs together.
Spike advanced on her and with a squeak she darted through the door. Deftly, he pulled his jeans the rest of the way off, along with the wingtips he’d worn. He threw them in the general direction of the living room, where he could see Buffy’s dress laying on the floor. Nice try, but he wasn’t fooled.

She was partway up the stairs when he caught her. With a growl he spun her around and crashed his mouth into hers. They weren’t making it to the bed. Or the next floor. He pressed her down against the carpet of the stairs, his hands demanding. Later, she could take control, right now the animal inside him was loose and it was hungry.

He tore her bra open and devoured a pebbled nipple, sucking and nipping at it with abandon. Beneath him his wife was mewling and writhing. Snarling, he pinned her hips with a hand and shredded her panties from her body. Her knees fell open and he rammed his cock home.

She was hot, wet, and tight.

His.

Spike grunted as he plowed her hard and fast. Her hips lifted to meet each thrust and her nails skittered across his back.

His hand returned to her breast to maul it while he bit the side of her neck.

“Spike,” she moaned.

“You like me fucking you, baby?”

“Yes, yes!” Her teeth nipped his earlobe. “Harder!”

He braced his hands on the lip of the stair under her shoulders and gave her what she wanted. Her thighs clamped around his waist while her pussy steadily bore down tighter around his shaft as he pounded into her.

She yelled as she came. Yelled. No holds barred.

It was a victory, his girl screaming the rafters down. He wanted to hear it again and again, as long as it was only for him.

“Buffy, my love,” he moaned against her throat. The muscles of his stomach tensed, his sac drew up, and he was coming. It seemed to go on and on. Buffy came again, a wild woman in his arms. Her pleasure eclipsed his and he held tight to her, focused on nothing but the gentle pulse of her inner walls around his shaft.

They lay there. He felt too stunned to move. Buffy was a wonder.

“Oh,” she said after a moment. Spike’s eyes flew to her face in alarm. “I hit my head at some point.” She was rubbing the back of her skull.

His stomach sank. “I’m sorry, luv,” he whispered. “I didn’t mean to hurt you…”

“Shhh.” Her arms went back around him. “I was enjoying myself so much I didn’t even notice.”

Okay, that sounded like a good thing. “I liked you screaming,” he risked.

She blushed. “I can’t believe I did that. And you…” She wiggled her hips and he groaned, his cock still held in her heat. “You were wonderful, but next time I get to drive.”
“Yes, please,” he muttered and she giggled.

“Spike!” A worried male voice called from outside. The front door banged open. “Spike!”

Buffy went completely still.

“Spike, are you okay? I…” the voice trailed off.

“Just fine, Giles,” he called without looking. Buffy had turned an alarming shade of bright red and her eyes were comically wide.

“Oh, I see. Well, um, good on you, I suppose. Who have you got there with you?” Giles asked warily.

Spike didn’t know what to say. He looked down at his wife.

Buffy took a deep breath and peered over his shoulder. “Hi, Giles,” she said and Spike felt her give a little wave with one hand, the other was still clinging to him like her life depended on it.

Something hit the floor. “B-B-Buffy Summers?” Giles gasped. Spike could imagine his manager pulling off his specs and giving them a good polish. “Spike, do, uh, you do still have a soul, correct?” Giles asked, sounding completely flummoxed.

“Yes, you wanker. How about toddling off and letting me and the missus get ourselves presentable?”

“Dear lord, yes, of course.” There was a step. “Did you say missus?”

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“I think we nearly gave your poor manager a coronary,” Buffy said, eyeing Spike as he crawled naked into bed beside her. She’d been shocked at first to find out that he slept completely nude all the time. Though it didn’t seem like something she should be complaining about. Lately she ended up doing it too, since it was too much of a pain to get back up and find a nightgown after being made boneless by her hubby.

Spike grinned. “He was rather shocked.”

“I was worried we’d broken him. He said ‘dear lord’ at least three hundred times.”

Spike ran a hand down her side, stopping when he reached her hip. The rough pads of his fingers gently stroked her. “That’s pretty much how I feel inside, luv. I’m still amazed you’re here. That you’re mine.”

She wanted to stay in this moment forever, drifting in the ocean of his love. Her finger traced the contours of his face. Giles’ arrival had reminded her that Spike wasn’t only hers. He had a career, fans, a whole world that’d make demands on him. She was just one person.

“Buffy?” he whispered. “What’s wrong?”

“I’m…scared. This has been so nice, but now we need to head back to the set…and…you’re not going to belong to just me anymore.”

“Oh, kitten.” He sighed. “I have to believe we’ll be fine. And we don’t have that much longer on Belle for this season.”

Buffy bit her lip. “It’s going to be weird, and I’ve been thinking.”
“Bad habit.”

She smiled and pushed at this chest, only to have him grab her hand and press kisses against her fingers.

“Spike, if we tell people on set, about us…”

“Everyone and everything is going to tailspin and there’ll be a bloody three ring media circus.” He frowned. “I’ve been thinking the same thing. Ethan is going to be barmy. I…honestly? I don’t want to put up with any of the tosspot execs nosing into our business.”

“So we keep it secret. Like you said, it’s not much longer.”

“But that would mean sleeping apart. Those bloody trailers are gossip city.”

“We can do it. We wait, Belle wraps for the season, and we do our big reveal at the end of filming party.”

Spike grunted and turned on his back. He still had a hold of her hand and stuck the tips of her fingers in his mouth, running his tongue over them. It was distracting.

So distracting she almost didn’t hear her phone ringing.

“Nice ringtone,” Spike said as *November Rain* blared from the phone’s speaker.

Buffy’s eyes went wide and she pushed Spike to the side. “It’s a video call from Faith! I guess she didn’t buy my excuses. Be quiet!” she said while laying down and pulling the sheet nearly up to her neck. She tried to look sleepy.

Spike was grinning like a loon. He poked her hip and she shooed his hand away before accepting the call.

“There you are, B! What’s with avoiding your big sister? And your little sister? And everyone else?” Faith was at home, she was sitting on her couch and drinking a glass of wine.

“I just needed a break.”

“Sure. I…” Faith’s eyes narrowed. “Buffy, where the hell are you? You lying little…”

“W-w-what?” Buffy stammered. She didn’t dare look over at Spike.

“You’re lying on and draped in black silk sheets. No hotel in the universe has black silk sheets. You…I…tell me right this minute just what the hell you’re up to!” Faith looked seriously mad. Buffy felt Spike’s hand squeeze her knee under the covers. “Now,” Faith said, using her you’re-in-so-much trouble voice, the one that Buffy had learned over the years it was better to obey than to risk making her sister even angrier.

“I got married!” Buffy squeaked.

Faith’s mouth fell open. “Oh, hell no. You did not marry that pompous ass!”

“Is Angel there?” Faith barked. “Put him on! I’m going to tell him to his motherfucking idiot face just what I think of him running off with you! He knew neither me or Dawn would ever allow this. Oh my God, Buffy, what the fucking hell is wrong with you?” Faith went from angry to looking
defeated and like she was going to cry.

“I didn’t marry Angel,” Buffy whispered, shocked at just how much Faith hated Angel. Not that her sister hadn’t been open in her dislike before, but this was on a new level.

Faith polished off her glass of wine in a single drink. “What’d you say?”

“I said I didn’t marry Angel.”

“Then who the hell did you marry?”

“Um.” Buffy bit her lip. Spike had an eyebrow raised.

“Well?” Faith demanded impatiently.

With a sigh, Buffy waved Spike over.

He scooted so he was right next to her. “Hi, sis!”

Faith’s mouth opened and closed soundlessly. She hung up.

“Not what I was expecting,” Spike said, looking sweetly confused.

“It’s okay, she’ll call right back.” The phone rang for video chat again and Buffy answered.

“Buffy Anne Summers!” Faith barked. “I… are you pranking me? Is Aston Kutcher going to jump out from behind the wall?”

“Well, no. Faith, this is my husband, Spike, and Spike, this is my sister, Faith.”

Spike waved.

“Holy fucking hell, Buffy.” Faith looked stunned. “Er, nice to meet you.”

“Pleasure’s mine,” Spike said smoothly and Buffy had to keep from giggling as her rough-talking, in-your-face, open-about-everything sister blushed.

“So, like, this is…” Faith took a deep breath. “You’re treating my sister well, right? This isn’t some weird…it’s a real marriage?”

Straight-faced, Buffy looked her sister right in the eye. “We have a completely platonic relationship. Spike and I have moved beyond our baser-hey!” She yelped the last as Spike stuck his tongue in her ear. The sheet slipped down her shoulders as she swatted his arm.

“Ahh!” Faith hollered. “You two are naked right now! Why’d you answer the phone?” Faith hung up again.

“She going to call back this time?” Spike asked, resting his head on Buffy’s shoulder.

“Probably.”

The screen lit up, but it was just a text message.

Congrats! Have fun! And B, we’re so going to have a talk later.

“Wait until she realizes you watch Sunnydale Memorial.” Buffy set her phone on the nightstand and rolled into her husband’s waiting arms.
“Your sister is kind of nuts.” Spike ran his hand down Buffy’s back to grab her ass.

“You have no idea.” She hooked her leg over his hip.

“Want to be platonic again?” The tip of his cock nudged her folds.

“If by platonic you mean screwing me senseless while making the bed shake like crazy, that sounds fine.”

“You’re so hard to please.”

“But you love me.”

“That I do.” His gaze held more love and devotion than she had previously believed could exist in one person. She knew she was very lucky.

“Spike.”

“Yes?”

“More platonic now.”

“Yes, kitten.”

He really did platonic very well.
You said, "Keep our business on the low-low"

- The Weeknd, “The Hills”

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There wasn’t much further to go. Spike glanced in the review mirror of the Aston Martin, checking to make sure Buffy and her tank, er, Cadillac, were still right behind him. They couldn’t very well show up on the set of Belle together in the same car without blowing their cover, so they were driving back in separate vehicles.

The trip between the beach house and Belle’s set took a whole lot longer when you drove the speed limit. Spike had been surprised he hadn’t been pulled over by a confused police officer asking him why he wasn’t speeding in the Vanquish. But Buffy wouldn’t break the law, even by going five miles over the posted speed, and Spike was certainly not going to let her or her bloody land yacht out of his sight.

So instead of putting pedal to metal, he was playing his music too loud and chain smoking. Spike had the feeling Buffy was going to read him the riot act over the cigarettes any day now. He’d even asked Giles to pick him up a supply of nicotine patches in preparation, to which his manager had grumbled things about ‘three years of begging’ and ‘she just has to think about it’. Since Spike knew his days were numbered, he was determined to get in as much nicotine as possible until she actually asked him to quit.

Keeping their marriage a secret was not going to be easy. As they headed west, the sun kept flashing off the gold band on the fourth finger of his left hand. It made him smile every damned time. He was a married man. Two weeks, or a trillion years ago—one of the two—he’d driven away from the set hurt, angry, and sure he was going to be alone for the rest of his miserable existence.

Spike had never been happier to be so wrong. He was returning to filming as the happiest bloke on earth, with the most wonderful woman ever to walk the planet as his wife. He still wasn’t quite sure how it had happened, but he was content simply to roll with the punches on that one.

If only she wasn’t going to be sleeping in her own trailer starting tonight. His fingers tightened on the steering wheel and he glanced in the review mirror at her car. He’d made love to her that morning on the living room floor with every window open so that the scent and sounds of the beach had washed over them. But…

Christ, he didn’t know the next time he’d be inside her.

Bugger that.

There was an old billboard up ahead with two sides that met at one end in a point, leaving the back an open V big enough that they could probably hide both cars in it. Faded lettering advertised some fast food stop that’d probably dried up and blown away twenty years ago.

He would have her one more time before the blasted pretending not to be together started and he would make her sweat and scream. His cock was already awake and at half-mast from him just imagining being between her thighs. Shakily, he dialed her phone.

“Hi, what’s up?” Her voice echoed through the car’s speakers.
“Hey, I’m going to pull over to the side of the road in a sec, can you follow right behind me?”

“Is everything okay?”

“It will be. I need to see you.”

Buffy giggled. “Oh, well, alright then.” She was probably blushing, alone in her car, from the idea of her husband wanting to have sex with her. There was another giggle. “I guess you can see me.” She tried to purr out the last but was obviously too embarrassed to get her voice near low enough. The squeakiness was adorable.

It was only a few minutes before the billboard came into view. Luckily, no one had thrown up a fence around it and the ground was hardpacked and dry, making it easy on his low-slung ride. The Vanquish kicked up dirt as he hauled ass to park in between the signs. Buffy maneuvered the Cadillac in behind his car. As soon as she stopped, Spike was out of his car. He pulled Buffy’s door open just long enough to gasp out: “Backseat.”

She was a speedy little thing, already lying there and stripping her panties off from under her green skirt by the time he’d taken two steps and opened the back door. He climbed in on top of her and she shut the door with her foot. Panting, he gazed down at her. His Buffy. Two weeks had changed her, too. No more almost-virgin. She was his wife, his queen. His everything.

He reached for his fly, but she grabbed his wrist. “That’s mine. Kiss me, William.” With a groan, he planted his hands against the leather seat on either side of her head and leaned forward to catch her lips in a desperate kiss. Since she’d made his cock wait he drove his tongue deep into her mouth. She moaned and sucked at him. In an act of mercy her hand cupped his aching hard-on through his jeans and he thrust against her palm in rhythm with his tongue as it plunged in and out of her mouth.

“What you,” he whispered against her lips.

Buffy moved her fingers to his belt buckle, slowly undoing it, then unsnapping his fly and tugging down the zipper. The sound was loud in the car. She fist his cock and stroked.

“Oh god,” he muttered as his hips bucked involuntarily.

“William.” Her eyes were intense. “I’m serious. This is mine. Well, er, you can, y’know…” Her fierce look disappeared as she blushed beet red. He raised an eyebrow. “Play with it, yourself. But no sharing!”

“Well, I’m rather glad I can still masturbate.”

Buffy threw her arm over her eyes but didn’t stop stroking him with her other hand.

He nuzzled under her arm and kissed her face. The poor chit had all kinds of reasons to be worried, he supposed, though his brain was a little fuzzy on the details at the moment. “All yours,” he whispered. “All my heart, all my life, and most certainly all my prick.”

Buffy giggled.

Christ, he loved that sound.

She peeked at him and bit her lip. “Spike, I was wondering, if, maybe, well, if you don’t mind, that is?”

“You’re going to have to actually ask me first, luv.”
“Oh, right. Um, can we…y’know, like, from behind?”

It took him a minute. “Does my girl want it doggie style?”

Her eyes disappeared back under her elbow. “Maybe.”

“You’re going to have to let go and turn over.”

Her fingers left him and he lifted himself up as she flipped over. He pushed her skirt up and ran his fingers over her bare backside. He’d actually been a tad concerned about the logistics in the cramped space, but, bloody hell, he’d make it work. He lifted her hips up and she braced her hands against the door, but then she glanced over her shoulder at him. She looked nervous.

He forced himself to stop. “Everything okay, kitten?”

“I…I’m so turned on, but I can’t see you, is that…ugh, sorry.”

Now that he thought about it they had always been face to face. He squeezed her ass and ran a teasing finger down her slit. She hadn’t been kidding about being turned on, she was wet as hell. For her husband, in the rear seat of a car on the side of the highway. Spike grinned.

“I promise you’ll know it’s me.”

“You don’t think I’m…” she trailed off.

“I think you’re bloody brilliant. Nothing wrong with liking getting shagged like this. Though you might want to finger your own clit.”

She wrinkled her brow, but turned back towards the door as one of her hands disappeared. “Oh,” she gasped. Her little nubbin must have been begging for attention.

He slid the head of his cock against her slick folds and barely pushed the tip into her tight opening before he settled his hands on her hips. “I’m going to roger you good and proper, wife, you ready?”

Buffy nodded. He grunted and slammed his full length home, finally right where he wanted to be. With a startled cry Buffy jerked her hips back and up, carrying him along with her and smacking his head into the roof of the car. He pushed her back down as she mewed and wriggled. Her inner walls clamped down, but this time he was ready when she bucked. Her pussy fluttered and she gasped his name.

Christ, he hadn’t even gotten started as she’d already gone off. The girl was a miracle. Buffy collapsed, panting, on to the seat. “You going to move?” she asked woozily. He felt bloody invincible and like the king of the world.

“As you wish.” He pulled back and thrust into her hard and fast, his thighs tensing with each plunge into her welcoming heat.

Buffy was babbling nonsense while the car rocked and the windows fogged up. The slap of their bodies meeting and the sight of her perfect ass as his cock slid in and out of her pussy was almost more than he could handle. His eyelids started to drift closed but he forced them back open and made himself watch, burning the sight of him and Buffy together into his memory in case it was a while before they screwed again.

Her…cunt—he was running out of brain to figure out words with—was tightening down again. Her hands clawed at the seat while her back arced.
“William,” she keened. Her snug walls pulsed deliciously around his cock. She was sweating, her hair damp and curling, as she came undone.

“My Buffy,” he moaned in response. His sac tightened and he could feel the inevitable end fast approaching. Part of him want to slow down, hold back, drag this out so he could be buried in her wet heat longer, but then she gasped.

“Again,” she demanded, and there was no slowing down after that. He pistoned into her, grunting harshly with the effort. His thighs were starting to burn. For the third time her inner muscles constricted around his cock as he frantically fucked her. The instant he was done, he pulled out of her and rolled her onto her side so he could lie, panting, beside her. She clung to him, her face against his neck and her leg wrapped over his hip. He held onto her like the treasure she was.

Tenderly he kissed her forehead. “I love you, wife.”

“I love you, husband.” He could feel her smile against his neck, but then she pushed back and yelped. “Angel!”

“What?” Seriously, what did that git have to do with anything?

“I forgot about him. Oh, crap. Like, totally. He doesn’t know I saw him with Dru, and remember I told you we don’t routinely talk? I never broke up with him.”

Spike started laughing.

“It’s not funny!” She weakly punched his shoulder.

“It kind of is, luv.”

“What do I do? If I march right back in there and end things everyone will know something’s up.”

“Can you avoid him for a while? I’m sure the tosser will give you something to dump him over in two seconds.” Spike felt a tiny stab of fear. If Angel had really been abusing Buffy, her leaving him might be the final straw to make him cross the line into using his fists. “And, uh, make sure I’m around when you do it, because I want to see the look on his face when he realizes he’s lost you.”

“I can do that.” She sighed. “I guess we should go ahead and take care of our rings.” Figuring that part out had nearly made him call the whole plan off. He had planned to never remove it, until Buffy had inconveniently pointed out he couldn’t wear it during shooting anyway. In the end they’d come up with a simple solution.

“Hold out your hand.” Spike slid his ring off and onto her thumb. He felt naked without it. Gently he pulled off her ring and put it on his pinky. “They’ll be back in the right places soon.”

“Not soon enough.”

“A second wouldn’t be soon enough. Now we have to tell each other to buck up and that we care so much about Belle that we’re willing to do this for the show. The tornado was delay enough, they don’t need storm Spike and Buffy rampaging through as well.”

“It still sucks.”

“I’m not going to argue that one.”
Buffy was glad to see the plantation back to its normal beautiful self as she pulled up the long gravel drive and parked her car. Spike’s was already there. After their fun in the back of her car he’d driven on ahead, at her insistence, so that they wouldn’t arrive at the same time. She cast a longing look at the Vanquish as she gathered her stuff and got out. His ring was a heavy presence on her thumb, but it was a poor substitute for the man himself.

With a sigh, she plastered a pleasant smile on her face and walked towards her trailer. The whole place was hopping and the excitement was palpable, and noisy. People were talking and calling to each other, and the motors of landscaping equipment were growling and sputtering. It put her teeth on edge. She’d give almost anything to be back in South Carolina where the loudest thing was the sound of the surf as it rolled onto the shore.

Not to mention she felt abysmally alone amid all the busy noise.

She closed her eyes, rubbing at her temples and the headache forming there. Since she wasn’t watching where she was going she guessed it was her fault when she bumped into someone that let out a loud male ‘oof’. She opened her eyes to find she’d run into Xander, who had his arm around Anya. Buffy smiled, it looked like the two-week vacation had been good for other people’s love lives as well as her own.

“Hey, Buffster,” Xander said. “You’re looking good.” He frowned. “Not that you ever really look bad, more…”

“He means you look like you had a good vacation.” Anya patted Xander’s shoulder.

“I did, but it seems I wasn’t the only one. You guys a thing now?”

Xander smiled ear to ear. “We are absolutely a thing now. All kinds of thingage going on with me and Ahn.” Anya indulgently patted his arm again.

“That wonderful!” Buffy said cheerfully. And it was, though she was more than a little jealous of their public thingage. “I’ll see you guys tomorrow for filming, I’m guessing? I just got back and don’t have the new schedule yet.”

“Yup, and we’ll be there with bells on,” Xander replied. “Well, not literally, that’d kind of mess up the sound guys and make Hoss mad.”

Buffy shook her head, waved goodbye, and resumed her trek to her trailer. She glanced over her shoulder at the happy couple to find Anya sporting a calculating look on her face as she watched Buffy’s backside. Anya was scary observant, but surely she couldn’t tell that Buffy had been with Spike just from how she was walking. Could she?

Kendra flagged Buffy down, saving her from having to think about that one too deeply.

The other woman was out of breath. “I’m so sorry I didn’t call you. I went to visit my mother but she got sick and ended up in the hospital. She’s home now, but I was very glad to have the two weeks off to care for her.”

“Oh my god! Kendra, of course your mother comes first. I was pretty busy too, but nothing like that. Is she going to be okay?”

“The doctors tell me so, but it was a bad case of pneumonia. She scared the daylights out of the whole family.”
“I’m glad to hear she’s doing better.”

“Thank you,” Kendra sighed. “So, do you still want to get together and talk?”

“Totally!” Buffy nearly felt the light bulb go on over her head. “What about starting tomorrow at breakfast? We can sit, eat, run lines, and discuss scenes.” And Buffy would have a perfectly good excuse to not eat with Angel.

“That sounds perfect! I think it’s a few days before we have a scene together which will be plenty of time to work things out.” Kendra gave her a quick hug and was gone.

Buffy finally reached her trailer, unlocked the door, and pulled it open.

“Buffy.” Angel’s voice booming right behind her made her jump. She spun around to find him standing there, arms crossed, casting a critical eye over her clothes.

“Did you just get here?” he asked.

Usually this would be the part where she run to him and stand on tip-toe to hug him, because she’d be so glad to see him. Buffy had been far more concerned that she’d wanted to let on to Spike that somehow, when she saw Angel again, she would discover she was still a little in love with her former boyfriend and that it would hurt to end things with him. That worry was quickly laid to rest. When she looked at him there was nothing. She was a seismograph with a flat line.

“Hi, yeah, I just got here.”

“That explains why you look so bedraggled then. I thought you were an actress, not an ugly, unkempt homemaker.”

Buffy finally felt something. Surprise. Two weeks with no word and then he made a picky comment about her looks? If she walked over to Spike’s trailer he’d be wrapped around her in no time flat and kissing her like he hadn’t seen her in a decade instead of less than an hour ago. But that was Angel. Perfection in everything and a six-hour car trip was no excuse for untidiness. And what was wrong with being a homemaker?

She used to hate disappointing him and would have been horrified to have him catch her appearing so messy. Only now everything, from his words to his tone of voice, seemed wrong. All kinds of wrong. Not how you treat someone you love wrong.

“Uh, sorry. Long drive.” And sweaty sex with her husband in the backseat of the car Angel had insisted she buy. At least the Cadillac had turned out to be good for something.

“Well,” Angel sighed. “Why don’t you get cleaned up and I’ll pick you up for dinner.”

“Actually, I’m exhausted. I’m just going to stay in, run over my scripts, and get a good night’s sleep before filming tomorrow. I’ll see you on set.”

Angel’s brow furrowed in that way that meant he was getting upset with her. She used to dread it, and the biting remarks that usually followed. “Buffy, I said we were going to dinner. Mr. Rayne will be there, and-

“And I said not tonight.” Damn, it felt good to stand up to him. She didn’t even know the Buffy who’d so willingly accepted Angel’s every whim.

“Look.” He ran a hand through his hair. “I don’t think you understand. You need to get out of those
horrible, rumpled clothes that make you look like a damned street urchin and get dressed for dinner. Wear something classy, not something that’ll make you look like a fucking hooker.” His voice was cold and his eyes hard.

Buffy ran her forefinger over the gold band that encircled her thumb. She didn’t need to put up with this, not ever again. “I…I’ll see you later.”

Angel’s eyes flashed with something dark that sent a shiver through her. Without waiting for him to reply, she rushed inside her trailer and slammed the door, locking it. There was a loud bang from the other side that made her jump. Trembling, she glanced out the window and saw Angel, shoulders hunched, stomping away.

The vinyl of the bench seat squeaked as she collapsed onto it. What the heck had just happened? The entire last three years of her life snapped into cold focus. When had she become the kind of person that would let anyone treat her that way? She hugged her arms over her aching middle. The late afternoon light was reflecting off the glass of the framed magazine covers that showed her and Angel with their arms around each other and smiling like crazy for the camera.

Lies.

With a sob, she lurched to her feet and pulled the trash can out from under the sink. She yanked the first picture off the wall and threw it into the can. The glass shattered with a satisfying crunch. Crying and cursing she wrenched them all down, one after the other, and threw them away. She used a half full metal water bottle from her counter to pulverize them when the can got too full for the glass to break on impact anymore.

At last she ran out of frames. Dropping the bottle, she sat down heavily on the floor, pulling her knees up and resting her head on them. She needed her husband. With shaking hands, she unlocked her phone and dialed his number.

He picked up on the first ring. “Buffy?”

“Spike,” she managed to sob.

“Oh, Buffy, luv, what’s wrong? What happened?”

“I-I saw Angel.”

“Did he hurt you?” Spike was breathing harshly. His question shocked her. It was like…almost like he knew something she didn’t.

“No, but he said some really cruel things to me because my clothes weren’t all perfect.”

“You’re beautiful, Buffy, a few creases in your shirt isn’t going to change that.”

She smiled through her tears. “Thank you. It’s just…why, what does it say about me that I would let him think it was okay to treat me like that?”

“Nothing. He took advantage of you, luv.”

Buffy thought of Spike’s blue eyes, pupil wide with passion, as he’d knelt between her legs on the plane. Her willing slave. If only he was with her, not on the other end of a phone line. She could use some pampering. “You’re the best,” she whispered.

“I love you too. Do you need me to come over there?”
“No, I’ll be okay.” There was a polite knock on her door. “Someone’s here.”

“Probably someone bringing you the filming schedule. You’ll never guess what scene we’re doing tomorrow.”

“The first kiss?”

“You got it in one. Call me back in a minute.”

Buffy answered the door to find a shy young woman with blonde hair and a warm smile. “Hi, I’m Tara, Hoss’ new assistant.”

“It’s nice to meet you Tara, but can I ask what happened to Oz?”

“He’s still here, I think Mr. Theadon just realized Oz was handling way more than one person should on his own, so I was hired to help. It’s very nice to meet you, Miss Summers. Here’s the schedule. Do you need any script books?”

“No, I’m good,” Buffy said absently as she skimmed the shooting schedule.

“Um, both Hoss and Mr. Rayne wanted me to make sure that there wouldn’t be any problems tomorrow like there was last time.” Tara twisted her hands nervously into the fabric of her long skirt.

“No, no problems, I can assure you.”

Tara nodded. “I’ll report back then, and I’ll see you on set in the morning.” With a nod she left.

Buffy warmed herself up a frozen meal for dinner and called Spike back. They discussed the scene and how he hadn’t liked reaching for her hand. Ashley was claiming his ownership of Isabelle with that kiss, their body language should show that. They decided he’d grab her hip (she thought of Spike’s bedroom) and wrap his arm a little roughly around her neck (she thought of the stairs). Saying good night and ending the call was torture.

She went through her nighttime routine and lay down on her bed. The seconds crawled by as she stared at the wall, then the ceiling, and then the other wall.

Her phone rang with a video call.

“Hi.” She smiled at Spike.

“I can’t bloody sleep.”

“Me either.”

“How about we just leave the call going?”

It’d be better than nothing. “Good idea, but plug your phone in.” Buffy settled back down on her side and propped her phone against the other pillow.

“Good night, wife.”

“Good night, husband.”

Sometime during the night Buffy woke to find Spike, his face smashed into his pillow, snoring. It was wonderful. Well, mostly, he was kind of loud. One corner of her mouth quirked up as she reached out and turned the volume on her phone down.
Spike’s day was going much better than he’d expected. Buffy had been in the gym with him that morning, though Wesley, who played the Lyon’s family butler, had also been there acting as an unasked for and unwanted chaperone. Spike had ended up jogging on a treadmill beside her, which had been better than nothing. Like always, they did a companionable silence just fine. On the way out, when Wesley had been wiping off his face, Spike had very nearly yipped like a little girl as Buffy had grabbed his ass. The minx had thrown a saucy grin over her shoulder and disappeared into the women’s changing room where he couldn’t follow. She’d pay for that later.

The rest of the morning had been spent in makeup and wardrobe as he’d been transformed into Ashley. Achieving the correct mindset was proving to be much more difficult. He was muttering his lines and pacing. He was sure he had the southern drawl down okay, but excitement was coursing through him and making his body buzz.

He was going to kiss Buffy, in front of everyone. And it did seem to be everyone, as if Hoss could prevent Buffy bolting again by simply lining up every free body on set. Even Mr. Rayne was there, glowering at Tara who was gamely doing her best to explain something or other to him. Oz was standing with a clipboard in hand and talking into a headset while Hoss was in the background shouting directions at the crew.

Right, Ashley kissing Isabelle. Their first kiss. Story wise, they’d been dancing around each other for weeks: little touches, guarded looks, and an as-yet-to-be-filmed scene in which Ashley caught Isabelle on the stairs, pressed his lips against her neck, and whispered some less than chaste things to her. He could just see Buffy—er, Isabelle—blushing and trembling as his fingers ran down her spine while he promised her heaven.

Spike looked up as Buffy, also in costume with her hair elaborately coifed, appeared amid the throng. She was, not surprisingly, talking on her phone. Spike could only catch snatches of what she was saying, but it sounded a great deal like she was reassuring her manager that she would behave. Was it time yet? Someone from wardrobe came over and started fussing with the cuffs on his shirt. This was torture. He wanted to be touching his wife. Spike took a deep breath. Ashley, he reminded himself, Ashley wanted to declare his love for Isabelle and was hoping beyond hope that she returned his devotion and…

Bloody hell, who was he kidding? It was cover. Ashley and Isabelle were cover so Buffy and he could get their paws on each other. There was a faint pulse from his groin. His cock was going to have to be disappointed, though he abruptly realized it might not exactly behave itself. Christ, that’s just what he needed, to pop a stiffy in front of most of the crew of Belle. He shoed the wardrobe guy away and pulled the ends of his vest down smartly. That’d be a bridge to cross when it happened. He caught sight of the curve of Buffy’s bare shoulder and groaned.

“Places!” Hoss’ artificially amplified voice boomed out. Obediently everyone fell silent and either moved to where they were supposed to be or out of the way. The colorful flowers of the garden nodded their heads gently in a faint breeze. Buffy took her mark. “Action!”

Spike once more tried to pretend he was Ashley. He’d just had a fight with his brother and Leslie had taken off on a horse while Ashley had gone in search of his brother’s wife. The illusion lasted until Buffy raised her eyes and met his gaze.

Oh god, Spike wanted her. He closed the space between them in quick strides. “Isabelle,” he rumbled as his fingers briefly traced over her face before descending to roughly grab her hip. She gasped and he tilted his head, his eyes landing on her pink lips. “You know I have kept my emotions
hidden for some time.” He pulled her against him and inhaled deeply. “But I find I can no longer do so. I love you.”

Buffy was breathing hard. “I find the sentiment to be mutual.” Her voice was slightly hoarse. She swayed towards him and his arm was around her neck and they were kissing, fiercely, passionately, as their bodies pressed tightly together. Her hands were on his shoulders, her fingertips digging into him. He growled and lashed his wife’s tongue with his own.

“Cut!”

Huh?

“Cut!”

Oh.

He let Buffy go and they hesitantly moved away from each other. He stepped behind her, as his prick had decided, audience or not, it most certainly wanted Buffy. He was going to have to take his coat off, hold it in front of himself, and find a good excuse to head right back to his trailer. The damned thing was going to be unhappy when it figured out he couldn’t bring the girl along with him.

Hoss, Oz, and Xander were talking while bent over a small screen that was shaded from the sun. Everyone else was staring at Buffy and Spike with surprised looks on their faces.

Hoss, appearing slightly befuddled, stood up. “That’s a wrap, folks. We got it in one. Good work you two.” He nodded in their direction “That was raw as hell.” He bent back over the screen.

“Are you sure you don’t need another take?” Spike called, disappointed. Buffy swayed so she lightly bumped against him.

“Nope, we’re good,” Oz hollered back.

Spike sighed. It was two days before Buffy and he had another scene together.
Spike’s face was twisted with hate. The curvy brunette woman currently draped against the side of Buffy’s husband was laughing at her. Buffy watched in horror as the unknown woman’s hand descended to fondle him through the front of his pants.

But that was Buffy’s thing. She didn’t understand what was going on, only that it hurt.

“What?” she asked, desperate to figure out what was happening. Was he playing a mean joke on her? Surely in a minute he’d push the other woman away and tease Buffy for getting so upset and jealous.

“What?” he snarled at Buffy before grabbing the woman’s ass and kissing her.

Buffy’s heart was in her throat. “Don’t…Spike, I thought…don’t you love me?” she asked frantically.

“Love you?” He laughed. “Who would ever love a sad little thing like you? Pretended to, since I thought you might be a fun roll in the hay, but you were just pathetic. Found me something better.” He kissed the woman harder and she moaned. Her hand had worked its way inside his pants and was stroking him.

Why was he doing this?

“Nice knowing you, sweetheart,” Spike drawled to Buffy. He whispered something in the brunette’s ear and she looked at Buffy and giggled. Spike picked the woman up and she wrapped her legs around his waist.

They couldn’t, not right in front of her. With a cry, Buffy went to tear the woman off her husband, but her feet wouldn’t move. She couldn’t get to them. She’d lost Spike and he hated her and she didn’t even know why.

With a start, Buffy sat upright in bed, sweating and shaking. She was going to kill him. Her hand shot to the side but there was no one there. Her brain couldn’t work it out. Had he really left? Oh no, no- it’d been a memory, not a dream.

A scream worked its way up from deep down inside her, fueled by her pain, fear, and anguish. She wordlessly keened out her loss. The need for him was a live thing in her chest, twisting and eating her from the inside out. She was going to die…

There was a loud banging on the door and a worried female voice. “Buffy?”

Barefoot and in her favorite fuzzy pajamas, Buffy stumbled to her trailer door. She pushed it open to the morning light and a half-dozen worried faces. “Erm, Hi?”

“Are you alright? You were screaming?” It was Fred, in her pajamas, with Wesley looking sheepish in a robe standing right behind her. That was interesting.
Xander and Anya, similarly attired, were there too, along with one of the security officers and Tara. From inside Buffy’s trailer her phone started blaring A-Ha’s *Take On Me*. Spike! He was calling. Reality suddenly snapped into focus. He hadn’t left her, he was just in the next trailer over and probably terrified from hearing her hysterical yelling.

“S-s-sorry,” she stammered. “There was a spider in my bathroom and I freaked. I didn’t mean to wake everyone up.”

“Do you need someone to kill it?” Xander asked.

“No.” The song stopped and started up again. She could imagine Spike anxiously pacing. “I got it. Thank you for being worried about me, but, I, uh, still need to pee. I’ll see you guys later.” Buffy closed the door and sleep tousled hair filled the screen she started sobbing in relief.

“Buffy? What happened? You screamed, and didn’t pick up the phone, and, oh, god-” He scrubbed a hand over his face.

“I’m okay.” She couldn’t get her tears under control. “I told everyone it was a spider.”

“Bloody hell, luv. You scared me to death, it sounded like someone was sodding murdering you.” He paused. “It wasn’t a spider, was it?”

“No, I had a nightmare.”

“That you were being murdered?”

“That you didn’t love me anymore, and when I woke up you weren’t there and I thought I’d been remembering something instead of dreaming it.” The tears just wouldn’t quit and she shakily tried to brush them away. “Sorry I went all drama-queen over it. I didn’t mean to frighten anybody.”

“Oh, Buffy.” Spike looked like he didn’t know what to do. It would be easy if they were together. He would hold her and that would make everything alright.

She took a shaky breath. “I need to hear it, please.”

“I love you, I love you, I love you. Now, forever, maybe longer.” His voice was rough.

“I love you, too.”

Gradually her tears dried, but she stayed on the phone with him while they got ready for the gym. Spike talked her into wearing her nearly sprayed-on yoga pants again, the fiend, though who was she to complain if he wanted to look at her butt? They only hung up when it was time to leave.

Buffy stepped out of her trailer and almost immediately into Angel. He frowned at her gym attire.

“Didn’t know you were planning to go proposition business on a street corner.”

Really? So not what she needed right now. “I’m just going to work out.”

“I wanted to remind you that it’s Thursday. Bronze night. You do have a tendency to forget.”

Crap. She wasn’t going. No way, no how. Hours of being nice to Angel while being put down? No thank you.

Angel grabbed her arm as she brushed passed, squeezing painfully tight. “The dark blue dress with
the white collar, a bun, and kitten heels. And go light on the make-up. You should be fresh faced, not a painted lady.”

“Okay, see you then?”

Angel scowled at her, then spun and walked off.

Buffy let out a huff. Had she really thought that if she did what he said he’d love her? Buffy felt like an idiot. The remaining dread leftover from her nightmare disappeared, popped like a bubble in the ugly face of real contempt.

With a sigh, she continued towards the gym. It was surprising he hadn’t mentioned the kiss scene, but knowing him he was waiting till they were alone, and then he’d let her have it. There was no way she was going to give him the chance. Especially not after the scene being filmed that afternoon. She’d never hear the end of it.

Spike was waiting and held the door open for her. She could practically feel his gaze as it landed on her backside and stayed there. Instantly her day got a whole lot better.

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The set was freezing. There was probably a reason behind that, but Spike had no idea what it might be, unless it was to make sure Buffy’s nipples were standing at attention, which they most certainly were. He hadn’t missed that fact even though she was currently wrapped up in a blanket and looking more than a little cold.

They were shooting one of the numerous Isabelle and Ashley getting it on scenes. Unfortunately, not the big sex scene, which would be filmed next week on a very tightly closed set and would require both of them to be nearly entirely naked. This one was the next best thing, though. Spike didn’t mind shooting in his skivvies, but he’d decided to forgo the usual polite precaution of essentially tying his dick down. Buffy was his wife, damn it, and if he wanted to rub his erect prick all over her he was bloody well going to do it.

Hoss, Xander, and Oz had been talking together for a good ten minutes while Buffy and Spike had been left cooling their heels, sitting on the side of the bed. He kept sneaking glances at her and he’d caught her doing the same.

Not much longer, he told himself. It’s not much longer and the whole world will know she’s my girl.

Sighing, Hoss walked over to Buffy and him. “Okay, I think we’ve agreed. The camera’s going to go along the floor, actually we’ll have it start in the hallway and sort of swoop under the door, along the floor, then to you two screwing in the bed, and it needs to look hard and passionate—not a gentle, namby-pamby making love thing—you pause, get your lines out, and then back at it. Okay?”

“Um, no?” Buffy said. She blushed as everyone, including Spike, turned to look at her.

“Do you have an objection, Miss Summers?” Hoss asked with a sigh. Spike was wondering the same thing.

“Well, just…if we’re really busy, uh, doing it like crazy, why would we stop for flowery lines? Aren’t we worried Leslie could show up any minute, or one of the servants?”

“Well, yes.” Hoss frowned and crossed his arms. “Did you have another idea?”

“Actually, yeah, I do.” She turned a brighter shade of red. “Have the camera do its swoopy thing,
like you said, but then what if Ashely is, er, performing oral sex on Isabelle?”

Spike tried to not let his eyes cross.

“I could get all moany and it’d work in a great boob shot. Then he could crawl up to face me, we’d say our lines, and then we could start the actual, y’know.”

Hoss blinked. “That could work. Spike?”

Huh? He had to pull himself away from the fantasy of shocking everyone on set by actually eating her out in front of them. “Uh, sure, I’m game if Buffy is.”

“We’re good then.” Hoss raised his voice. “Anya, you ready?”

“Just about,” Anya hollered back.

“You two work out how this is going to look. I’m thinking we’ll do some blurry focus stuff that’ll show him with his head between your thighs, so you better get comfortable with each other real fast. Anya!” he bellowed and strode off.

Spike turned and leered at Buffy. “You think you can be comfortable with my head between your thighs, pet?”

“God, no,” she grumbled as she scooted to the middle of the bed. Though judging from her panting breaths it was more uncomfortable because she was so turned on than uncomfortable because she didn’t want him there.

“Arms around your thighs going to be okay?” he asked gruffly. He kneeled in between her legs, making sure his blanket was still in place as his cock was more than a little confused about why he’d be doing so and not instantly pushing inside her.

Christ, this was going to sodding kill him.

Buffy lay down and he went to all fours over the top of her.

“I was thinking like this for our lines,” she whispered. Her hand left his shoulder and landed on the back of his neck. “Or this.” Her nails scratched him lightly and it was all he could do not to moan.

“Buffy,” he grunted. “Careful.” He dropped his hips down and pushed his erection against her panty-covered core.

“Spike!” she hissed. “You didn’t…”

“You’re my wife,” he said petulantly.

“Goodness.” She bit her lip. “Not like I’m much better off.” Spike groaned. She was slick for him. Buffy pouted. “This sucks.”

“Want you,” he said, the voices in the room and the motions of the camera crew as they did quick practice runs were quickly fading into so much background noise. He ground against her again.

“Spike!” she yelped and ineffectively pushed at his shoulder. In a much quieter voice she whispered: “Not in front of everyone!”

He growled softly, but sat up. Buffy helped him arrange the sheets around himself as he tossed his blanket to the side. He scooted down until he’d easily be able to lick, er, pretend to lick, her pussy.
A minute later silence descended on the set. Tara came and took Buffy’s blanket from her and someone artfully arranged her hair. Spike hooked his arms around the underside of her thighs, curling them as if he was using his fingers to hold the lips of her pussy apart. Despite his best efforts, he kept glancing up to look at her tits, their red tips peaked in the cold air.

“Action!” Hoss shouted.

Spike pretended to feast, the memories of the first time he’d tasted her flashing through his mind. Buffy moaned, arched her back, and did a more than adequate job of faking an orgasm. It’d probably fool nearly anyone that hadn’t seen her in the throes of actual bliss. On the second take he noticed a dark blonde hair escaping from under the elastic edge of the crotch of her panties.

It was fascinating. Was she regrowing her hair? It was mind-numbingly difficult to not pull aside the fabric and peek.

There were two further takes before Hoss was satisfied and had Spike and Buffy switch to Spike crawling up her body so they could say their lines. His prick, which had flagged a little when it realized it wasn’t going to be getting right to the good stuff, went back to full mast as he prowled up her almost nude form and pushed his hips against hers. Buffy moaned and wiggled. An entirely appropriate response in the context of the scene, but one that again had him questioning his feelings on exhibitionism.

Buffy—Isabelle—smiled up at him. “I never imagined we would suit each other so well.”

His lips hovered over hers. “I knew, but despaired of you ever being able to see me as more than a poor relation.” This time when her nails scratched his neck he allowed himself to moan and push against her fingers.

“I am sorry it took me so long to find the man before me.” Buffy’s voice was soft and completely full of emotion. She wasn’t acting, but speaking the truth. With a growl, he captured her mouth in a deep kiss. He put his hand between their bodies, pretending for the camera he was positioning his cock, though what he really did was drag his knuckle across her clit. Buffy cried out and her hips surged upward, grinding her pussy against his aching, insistent prick. He lost control and was snogging and dry humping her with abandon. He rolled them and she sat up, her hands on his chest and her hips wildly undulating.

The call “Cut!” came moments later.

Damn.

Buffy stayed astride him, though she was no longer rocking her hips. He craned his neck so he could see the crew. They were huddled together and watching the playback from the several different angles it’d been shot from.

Hoss shook his shaggy head and stood up. “Okay, that a wrap. It’s raw and powerful, we aren’t going to do better than that. I want to thank everyone for their hard work and for helping us to stay on schedule.”

Tara brought warmed blankets over for Buffy and him to wrap up in. He jerked his head in the direction of wardrobe, ostensible for them to go and get their clothes back on. Spike walked beside her until they came to a place where the plywood walls turned and made a somewhat hidden alcove. He grabbed Buffy and shoved her into the shadows, drowning out her squeak of protest by covering her mouth with his. Immediately her arms were around his neck. The blankets fell into forgotten heaps on the floor. He grabbed and kneaded her ass with one hand while he shoved the other down
the front of her panties to frantically finger her clit. And there were curls. Oh hell. He groaned loudly into her mouth.

His thoroughly confused cock was determined this time it was not going to be ignored. It was tenting out the front of the boxer-briefs he had on and was desperately trying to get to the girl. “Buffy, please,” he begged.

By some mysterious force (or maybe she’d just glanced down) she knew what he needed and her hot hand wiggled down the front of his underwear to grab and stroke him. He wasn’t going to take long, and from the cries and mews she was making, neither was Buffy.

“Oh my,” came a gasp from behind them along with the sound of a Styrofoam coffee cup hitting the ground.

“Fuck,” he breathed before removing his hands from Buffy. She released him as well and bent to retrieve their blankets. Wrapped back up, he turned to see a wide-eyes Tara staring at them.

“Sorry, but, um, Hoss changed his mind and wants you two to do a few shots with your hands all intertwined,” the woman said. “Since it was such a big thing in the last season finale.”

“Right.” Spike didn’t move.

“Ah, I’m just...I’m not going to judge,” Tara said firmly.

Buffy stepped around him. “Can you also not tell anyone? We’re going to let everyone know we’re together after filming is done for the season.”

“Okay, that makes sense. I don’t want to be fielding calls from every internet gossip house.” Tara pursed her lips and appeared to thinking. “How together?”

He glanced at Buffy, who nodded. “We’re married, pet.”

Tara opened and closed her mouth several times before she was able to say something. “No wonder it looks so real, because it is.” She blushed, then giggled. “This is going to be the best season ever, now come on or Hoss will be sending out another search party.”

With a groan, Spike trailed after Tara and Buffy, reminding himself that his case of blue balls probably wasn’t terminal.

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Around the time they would have usually left for The Bronze, Angel didn’t even bother to stick his head in or call to make sure she was okay, which wasn’t a surprise. Buffy had caught up with him earlier and done her best to look like she was about to puke. She’d said she thought she was coming down with something and probably couldn’t make it that night. Angel’s eyes had widened in alarm and he’d immediately backed away, saying he’d see her later. He hadn’t even bothered with a get well soon.

Loser. Or what would Spike say? Tosser? She giggled to herself as she dialed her husband.

“Hello, luv,” he answered.

“If I told you I was sick what would you do?”

There was a rush of breath. “Buffy, are you okay? What’s wrong? Do you need soup?”
“Yes, I’m fine, silly. Though I guess you just answered my question.”

“Oh.” Spike sighed in obvious relief. “Don’t scare me like that. Is that what you told the wanker?”

“Yeah, and Angel ran for the hills. It made me feel a little uncared for.”

“You know I’m not like that?”

“I do know, I just wanted to hear you say it.”

“I promised, didn’t I? In sickness and in health? That includes runny Buffy noses.”

She was glad he couldn’t see how hard she was grabbing her phone, or how close to tears she was.

“I love you so much,” she whispered.

“I love you too, kitten. Hey, Oz is going to be here any second to jam. Do you want me to tell him I changed my mind? I could come over there.” It was tempting. So tempting.

“No, you know we’d get carried away and still be going at it like crazy when people starting returning from the club. But I want to see you. Do you think we can trust Oz?”

Spike paused. “Probably, Oz is a pretty cool guy.”

“Okay, then I’m going to come over there.”

“You can be our adoring crowd.”

“I’ll try, but since I’m sleeping with the lead singer of the band I’m sort of biased.”

Spike chuckled. “Are you telling me I have a groupie?”

“Totally. I’ll see you in a few.” Quickly she put on a pair of tight skinny jeans, a black, off the shoulder shirt that screamed 80s, and the heels that Angel had hated. She put on a little makeup, including blue eyeshadow to go with her 80s theme, and left her hair down. Too bad she didn’t have a crimper.

Her phone buzzed with a text from Dawn.

Hey Sis! It’s Thursday! You partying it up?

Faith had agreed with Buffy that they should wait to tell Dawn about Spike. Her little sister couldn’t keep a secret to save her life.

Not tonight. I felt kind of sick. So no awesome pics, sorry.

Dawn sent back a frowny face.

I hope you feel better!

The trailers were deserted as she teetered her way to Spike’s place. She could hear him and Oz tuning up their instruments as she knocked on the door.

“Someone joining us?” Oz asked.
“Very special guest, mate,” Spike replied.

There was a sigh from Oz. “I’m not sure I want to hang out with some conquest of—”

“She’s my wife!” Spike snapped.

“Oh, sorry.”

The door opened. “Well don’t you look a picture,” Spike drawled. His gaze traveled from the top of her head to the tips of her toes. “And those shoes should be illegal for what they do to a man.”

Buffy grinned and took his offered hand to help her step up into the trailer.

Oz’s eyebrows went sky high. “Buffy?” he asked, blinking.

Spike put his arms around her and kissed her on the mouth.

“Wait, wait.” Oz was holding up his hands. “I’m obviously confused. You’re married?”

Buffy nodded and snuggled against Spike’s chest.

“We didn’t want to make a big deal out of it until after filming wraps. We thought it’d blow the whole set up and have the place crawling with paparazzi in no time flat. There’s been enough delays as is.” Spike’s voice was soft as he hugged her.

Oz was silent for a moment. “Actually, yeah, thank you. It would have been a nightmare.”

“Can we trust you?” Buffy asked.

“Yeah.” Oz smiled. “We’re cool.” He picked up his bass and adjusted his amp. “Totally explains a few things.”

Spike gave her one more squeeze before letting her go. She perched on the back of the kitchen’s bench seat and watched as he set up his mic and put the strap of an electric guitar over his head.

What followed was the best concert of Buffy’s life. The two boys played everything from The Beatles to The Weeknd. They goofed around, occasionally screwed up, and got completely carried away by the music. They played Simon & Garfunkel’s *Hazy Shade of Winter* twice, making Buffy play tambourine (badly) along with them the second time. The trailer got too warm, and in the middle of *Breaking the Girl*, which she was filming with Oz’s permission, Spike pulled his shirt off and tossed it at her. She squealed like a good little groupie and rolled her eyes back while pretending to sniff it. Only it actually smelled kind of yummy, which might have been gross because mostly it was sweaty, but sweaty Spike was a good thing in her book.

She balled the shirt up in her lap and returned to filming just in time to catch Oz as he hit the bass solo. His fingers flew. It was mesmerizing. The guy could really, really play. When the song was done, she clapped and clapped while Oz looked totally embarrassed. It wasn’t long after that when she had to head back to her trailer to avoid being seen by people returning from The Bronze.

Spike clutched her tight. “I don’t want you to go.”

“Me either. But it’s not much longer.” She ran her hand over his bare back.

“Love you,” he whispered and kissed her, his hand coming up to cradle her face.

“I love you too,” she said as she reluctantly let him go. She waved to Oz and descended into the
humid Georgia night air. Spike’s shirt was still in her hands. Walking back to her trailer, she was trying to decide if she was going to cuddle it like a teddy bear or maybe wear it as a nightgown when her phone blasted out *November Rain.* It was Willow.

“Hello,” Buffy answered. She reached her trailer and climbed in, locking the door securely behind her.

“Hi, Buffy!” Willow chirped. “You doing okay? What’s with the no Bronzing?”

Crap, Dawn must have texted Willow. “I didn’t go, no biggie.”

“Well, yes biggie. It’s where you talk to the people with the money.”

“It was one week.”

Willow heaved a huge sigh. “Okay, okay. But, man, it’s been a mess here.”

“What’s up?” Buffy sat down on her bed. She left the lights off, just in case Angel had any bright ideas about stopping by.

“The stupid bassist finally quit!” Willow sounded completely defeated. “He’s such a baby! I did everything, the label did everything, Buffy! I freaking found him a dealer in Germany so he could get high.” She started sobbing. “I feel gross, and like a bad person, and in the end, it didn’t even matter.”

“Oh, Wills! I’m so sorry. That guy’s a total jerk.”

“The only good thing is we’d finished the German dates and there’s a couple weeks before the Dingoes hit Australia.”

“A lot can happen in a couple of weeks.”

“I know. But, oh god, where am I going to find a talented bass player that’s not a freakazoid in two weeks?” Willow noisily blew her nose.

Buffy quirked her lips. “Of all the really weird things, I might know somebody. Do you remember Oz, Hoss’ assistant?”

“I think so, kind of cute guy with a goatee?”

“That’s him. He can totally rock a bass. He might just need a little convincing. Wait, I’ll send you a video. Call me back.” Buffy sent Willow the song she’d recorded earlier. She kicked off her shoes and stripped off her clothes. Spike’s shirt went on over her head. Not as good as a hug, but it made her feel a little less lonely. They’d driven back on a Friday, so it’d been nearly a week since she’d slept beside him. That was stupid.

Her phone rang and Willow’s name popped up.

“What do you think?” Buffy asked.

“Um, he’s amazing but…Buffy, what the hell?”

“What do you mean?”

“This was from tonight?”
“Yeah? I already told you I didn’t go to The Bronze.” Buffy wrinkled her nose. What was the big deal?

“So you hung out with Spike Pratt instead? And was that his trailer? Buffy, people are going to talk!”

Oh. Willow was worried about Buffy’s reputation. “No one saw me, mother.”

“But, geez, he’s kind of bad news. As you’ve told me more than once.”

Buffy sighed and flopped backwards on the bed. “I was wrong and anyway I’m a married woman now, so moot point.”

“Whoa, wait, what? No, no, no, no! Is that where you were? You can’t just elope with Angel, that needed to be the wedding of the century!”

“Yeah, Willow, I married Angel then told him to go to The Bronze by himself while I hung out in Spike’s trailer.”

“Oh, um…Oz?” There was quite a bit of disappointment in Willow’s voice. Buffy filed that away for later.

“No, silly, I didn’t marry Oz.”

There was an audible sigh of relief.

“I married Spike.”

Willow laughed. “Pull the other one, Buffy.”

“Uh, no. It’s not a joke. I married him. In Vegas. He’s actually really nice and oh my god does he make my toes curl.”

“Holy what the mice hats, Buffy! What were you thinking?”

“Um, mostly: I really love you and I want to be with you forever and have your babies.”

“I need to sit down.” There was a thud.

“Are you okay?”

“No! My most prominent star, who’s known for being the girl next door and Miss Down-Home America, just told me she got hitched to Britain’s Party Boy.”

“He’s really not.”

“Buffy! What am I supposed to do with you!”

“Tell me congratulations and you’re happy that I finally found a guy that loves and cares for me. And call his manager, Giles. I’ll text you his number. We’re going public after Belle’s done filming for the season. Giles has something in the works. Oh, and Faith knows about me and Spike, but not Dawn because she’d blab. And, finally, come see me and meet Oz.”

“Well, okay then, boss lady.”

Buffy rolled onto her stomach and crossed her feet in the air like she had when she’d been chatting
on the phone to Willow in high school. “You’re going to love Spike.”

“Are you really going to have his babies?”

“Yup. As soon as Belle is a done thing. We’ve been practicing making them.”

“TMI,” Willow groaned.

“Is that a dare?”
“This should be fun,” Spike muttered to Anya as he tapped the Slim-Jim he’d stolen from Xander against his leg. They were walking together to a meeting with Hoss, Mr. Rayne, and Buffy about the big sex scene scheduled to be filmed tomorrow. Since Buffy would be completely naked it would be a closed and very tightly controlled set. The bed would have cameras set around it, including a couple in the ceiling, and he and Buffy would be left alone to pretend to boink.

There was some ridiculous thing he was supposed to wear to cover his prick, but he had no intention of putting the bloody thing on. For one it was blasted uncomfortable, and secondly, it’d be a cold day in hell before he’d intentionally neuter himself around his own wife. He was fairly certain Buffy would be able to stand having his inevitable hard-on touching her. It was Thursday tomorrow, so nearly two weeks since he’d been inside her. The two bloody longest weeks of his life.

He’d just taken a bite of the jerky and was enjoying a little fantasy in which Buffy, overcome with lust, ordered him to do the dishes while she gave him a hand-job, when he walked into the office set aside for the meeting. All pleasant thoughts left his mind and he was barely able to swallow as his eyes landed on Buffy. Who was standing across the room with her arms crossed, scowling up at Angel. The wanker did not look happy.

“Seriously,” Buffy snapped. “You don’t need to be here. This scene doesn’t involve you.”

Angel snorted. “You have a nude scene with a known womanizer. You’ll probably end up with crabs.”

Well, that was flattering.

Buffy rolled her eyes. She must have caught sight of Spike as she did so because her gaze darted for a millisecond towards him and then her chin rose.

“Angel, please leave. I don’t want you here.”

“It’s not all about what you want,” Angel shot back. “You are my girlfriend and-“

“No,” Buffy interrupted. “I’m not.”

Angel’s fist slammed into the table. “Yes, you are.”

Spike’s stomach twisted. He was proud of her for standing up to Angel, and deathly frightened that the pillock would get physical with her. The rest of the Slim-Jim went in the trash as Spike prepped himself to get in between Buffy and Angel if he had to.

“No. I’m not,” she repeated. “For two weeks of free time you didn’t call, or text, or even tag me on Facebook. Not once. You didn’t care enough about me to even wonder where I’d gone. I figured we were through, but since you didn’t get the memo here it is.” Buffy took a deep breath. On the other side of the room Hoss and Mr. Rayne walked in, Tara and Oz right behind them. They halted, surprised looks on their faces. Buffy glanced briefly at the newcomers and then back at the
glowering Angel. “We are not together. Period. Now leave.”

Angel’s hand slammed against the wall, punching a hole in the cheap drywall. “We’re not done talking about this,” he hissed.

“We are.”

Angel turned on his heel and stormed out, intentionally bumping into Spike’s shoulder as he brushed past.

Buffy deflated. He wanted to go to her so badly. “You done with your little show, princess?” he said with his usual sneer, hoping she understood he was really asking if she was okay. Everyone else sat down, leaving two seats in the middle of the table next to each other.

Buffy wrapped her arms around herself but the corners of her lips turned up just the slightest bit. Thank god, she got it. She sighed. “Yeah, thanks for the support bleach-brain.” She sat down with a huff. He sprawled in the other chair, immediately working his foot over until it found hers. She pressed back against him.

“You okay, Buffy?” Hoss asked. Spike could nearly smell his panic. The guy did not need his stars’ love lives delaying production.

“I’m peachy. Which is good, because we’re in Georgia,” she replied. Spike looked heavenward and she bumped his knee with hers. From his pocket his phone gave a loud chirp, Buffy’s phone chimed for a text message at almost the same instant.

Mr. Rayne rolled his eyes.

Spike pulled out his phone. The message was from Giles.

Anyah [sic] just sent me a message asking me to send you a note telling you to send Buffy a text. How did she even get this number?

Spike chortled. He held his phone up and waggled it. “It’s my manager, we got an issue. You blokes feel free to continue to talk at me all you want.”

“Ditto,” Buffy said. “My sister is having a crisis.”

Hoss sighed. “Fine. We’ll run down the scene. Though if you two weren’t doing such a freakishly amazing job of selling Ashley and Isabelle’s relationship, I’d worry.”

Spike shrugged. He sent Buffy a message. If anyone found his phone the gig would be up as he’d changed her contact info to say ‘wife’ on the way to the hotel in the back of the Uber about thirty seconds after they’d been married.

Spike: You doing okay?

Wife: I’m actually not bad. It sort of scared me when he punched the wall but at least now we’re officially not together.

Spike: Scared me too. You stay away from him until he’s cooled off.

Wife: I will. And really, do these two think I’m not going to give the camera enough boob time?
*Spike:* I haven’t been getting enough boob time.

*Wife:* I’m rolling my eyes internally.

*Spike:* Internally, I’m imagining your boobs.

Buffy squirmed adorably in her chair and Anya raised an eyebrow. Spike repressed a grin.

*Wife:* Now I’m imagining things.

*Spike:* Like library books?

*Wife:* :-(

*Spike:* Pet rocks?

*Wife:* Your thing.

*Spike:* What thing? I have lots of things. My guitar? My pet rock?

*Wife:* You have a pet rock?

*Spike:* Only sometimes. Usually around you.

*Wife:* I’m internally rolling my eyes again.

“Spike,” Hoss said.

Lazily, Spike looked up at him. “Yeah?”

Hoss sighed. Hugely. “Let me try again. Using smaller words. Can I expect you and Buffy to give us what we need in this scene?”

Spike’s phone chimed.

*Wife:* Tell him I have pointy shoulders.

*Spike:* Say I have bad breath.

Buffy crossed her arms and pouted. “Yeah, I’ll try. I swear Spike eats cat food or something before we shoot.”

Mr. Rayne rubbed his temple.

“You’re one to talk. I have to pretend your bloody pointy shoulders are sexy.” Spike sneered in her direction.

Hoss looked like he wished the floor would swallow him.

Tara and Oz shot each other amused glances and Anya looked smug. Spike’s phone went off again.

*Wife:* I love you.

*Spike:* I love you, too.
The set was freezing again. Did Ethan have stock in air conditioners or the Georgia power company or something? She watched, perched on a stool, as Anya, Xander, and a small army of camera-crew personnel checked, double-checked, and triple-checked all the cameras that were pointed at the bed that was positioned in the middle of the sound stage.

Hoss was arguing with a set dresser about what should be on a shelf. Over to one side, Spike, in a terry-cloth robe like herself, was doing sit-ups, push-ups, and other exercises to make his muscles pop on camera. Like he wasn’t gorgeous enough already. Buffy huffed. She felt like someone’s pampered pet. Fred had primped Buffy into perfection, even waxing—ouch—her pubic hair into a perfect triangle. Being poked and prodded by the chipper Fred had been bad enough, but then both Mr. Theadon and Mr. Rayne had had to approve how she looked while nude. It’d been excruciatingly embarrassing. Which didn’t make a lot of sense since she was going to be naked on the television screens of millions of people.

While pretending to have sexual intercourse with her husband.

It was all supremely weird and surreal. There was also a lot riding on the scene. This was the big one, the first time Ashley and Isabelle got it on, and it’d mark the midpoint of the season. It needed to be hot, tender, and give people something to talk about around their watercoolers the next day.

Buffy snuck another glance at Spike. He was doing a one-armed push-up, the other tucked behind his back, the show off. He glanced up, caught her looking, and winked. Buffy rolled her eyes. Despite the chill, she let go of her death-grip on her robe and it fell partially open, leaving her leg bare. Spike’s eyes traveled the entire length and he licked his lips. She felt a lot warmer under his stare.

People were starting to leave the set. Buffy’s heart rate kicked up a notch. She’d be lying if she said she wasn’t more than excited by the thought of being able to touch Spike, and a dirty little part of her even hoped she might actually get off. There was a good chance she was going to at least try. When she’d done this with Angel he’d had on some kind of weird underwear-type thing that’d essentially turned him into a ken doll. It’d looked really uncomfortable and had made her glad she didn’t have any external parts she had to hide. It was going to take an effort on her part not to crack up over Spike wearing the same, but she figured he wouldn’t mind her dry humping the heck out of him, even in front of the cameras.

If she came she was so going to owe him later. Not that it would be a hardship. Gah, all she wanted to do was screw him. Preferably at home, in their bed, where it was just them and the rest of the world could cease to exist for all she cared. The need to feel him inside her was starting to take on a life of its own. Rubbing against him like an overexcited puppy for part of the afternoon wasn’t going to help things.

At last the set was cleared except for Hoss. He called her and Spike over and she dropped her robe to the ground and quickly got under the sheet while Spike did the same. They’d already filmed the part where passion had overcome Ashley and Isabelle and they had ended up tumbling into bed.

“Okay, I’m going now,” Hoss said. “Remember what we talked about: this has to up the ante on the season one scene between Leslie and Isabelle.”

“So you two need to give us everything you’ve got. Try out all kinds of positions; go crazy, we’ll edit it down to what we need. And try not to kill each other.”

“No promises,” Buffy said dryly.

Hoss held up his hands in a pleading gesture as he stood. “You guys have been nothing but excellent so far. I’m sure you can bring the same level of intensity to this scene. Make it wild and passionate, but most of all: make it real. That’s what the audience wants.”

“We got it.” Spike heaved a sigh as if it was all more than he wanted to bother with. Hoss, shaking his head and muttering something about actors, left, locking the door behind him. The set was deathly quiet.

Spike pushed her down and positioned himself on hands and knees over the top of her and between her thighs. He smiled down at her and her heart twisted in her chest. God, she loved him. As always, it was a little odd to see him in his sandy-brown Ashley wig, though she was used to it by now. The little glasses his character usually wore had been placed on one of the bedside tables.

“Ready, Isabelle?” he asked her.

“Ready, Ashley.” She put her hands on his shoulders and took a deep breath. Which may have been a mistake. All she could smell was him. Her body went on red alert: her nipples tightened, the area between her hip bones became molten, and her sex pulsed with hungry need. Stupid cameras.

The green light clicked on that indicated recording had started.

Spike’s mouth met hers and he kissed her like he had been starved for it. Er, well, Ashley was kissing Isabelle like…oh, screw it. She returned the kiss just as feverishly and got lost as his tongue stroked hers. Her arms wrapped around him and she lightly scratched the back of neck, just the way she knew he liked, and was rewarded as he gasped and arched into her touch.

His hand went to her breast to knead it and pinch her already tight nipple. She moaned into his mouth and bucked her hips up against him.

Oh, god.

The head of Spike’s cock was nudging insistently against her pussy. He was as naked as she was. Panting, she broke their kiss to meet his hooded eyes. He flexed his pelvis and ground himself against her, making her whimper.

Cameras filming, she desperate tried to remind herself. Her focus kept slipping. Spike’s mouth devouring hers. His hand on her breast. The steel rod of his erection poking against her.

“Want you,” he rumbled. His eyes were glazed over.

Everything else disappeared except for Spike and her aching desire for him. “Need you,” she replied.

There was awe on his face. She’d never get tired of that look. There was something else she was supposed to remember. She was almost sure of it. Hopefully it wasn’t important. Buffy had been too long without him and finally they were in bed together where they belonged.

Buffy squeaked as Spike abruptly sat upright, the sheets sliding down his back. Impatiently, he pushed them away. Still kneeling between her thighs, he had her wrap one of her legs around him and brought the other up so it was resting on his shoulder. His hand went between their bodies and positioned his cock. His eyes met hers. “Love you,” he said hoarsely.
“Love you.” Her voice was just as rough. With a sharp motion, he thrust deeply into her. It was perfect. Something between a sob and a moan escaped her lips as her entire body arched up off the bed. Her hands fisted the sheets. She missed this, missed him. The stretch and fullness of his hardness buried to the hilt inside her was heaven incarnate.

Spike began to move, pulling back and plunging into her with short, hard pushes. His lips were on her ankle as he made love to it with his mouth. It was insane how wonderful it felt to have him kissing the sharp point of bone there or licking the hollows around it as he kept her foot in place with a strong hand. Electricity ran straight down her leg to her sex. The fingers of his other hand tugged and played with the curls of her pubic hair. His thumb landed on her clit and started to rub little circles.

Buffy watched the muscles of his abdomen tighten and relax as he made love to her. It was hypnotic. She longed to touch them, or to grab his ass as it clenched on each stroke in, but her thighs had started to quiver. Spike’s thumb rubbed frantically at her clit. Her orgasm hit and her head fell back as she keened out her bliss.

The instant she had control of her body again she pulled away from his sinful hands. He appeared lost until she bowled him over and pushed him down flat on his back. As she sank down on his cock with a muffled gasp she pulled his hands to her breasts. His eyes wandered from her face to her body as she rode him and his fingers played with her nipples, drawing them into tight peaks that had a connection straight to her clit. The walls of her pussy were beginning to clamp down again. One of Spike’s hands grabbed her hip, and the other went to cup her face. He ran his thumb over her lower lip and she eagerly sucked the tip into her mouth.

Spike moaned and surged up against her. She wondered if she looked as lost to the bliss as he did. Her hand went to her clit and she petted it as she fell into another orgasm, gasping and mewling.

She hadn’t even fully returned to earth when she found herself flung face down into the pillows. Spike’s hands grasped her hips and pulled them up into the air. With a grunt, he was back inside her, pistoning hard and fast. With each thrust he was hitting that spot inside of her that was nearly painful it felt so good. His hand left her hip and smacked sharply against her ass. It made her jump and push against him. Buffy returned a hand to her sex. She ran the tips of her fingers over where their bodies were joined. The lips of her pussy were swollen and the opening to her body was stretched wide to accommodate his pounding cock. Everything was slick with her cream.

She came again, twisting her hips and crying out. Good God, she’d needed this.

Muttered gasps and ‘I love yous’ were falling from Spike’s lips. She knew he was close to coming, but she had to see his face when he did. Reluctantly she pulled away from him. Buffy lay on her side and tugged him down beside her. She hooked a leg over his hip and he returned his cock to the haven of her body. Her hands roamed over the sweat-slicked skin of his chest. He tangled his fingers in her hair and pulled her into a kiss even as his hips once more began rocking.

“I can never be away from you again,” he said against her mouth.

“Never,” she agreed. Her arm went around him and held him close. She watched as he at last reached his peak. He forehead was against hers, his eyes screwed shut. His face looked pained and his lips parted as he groaned. His stomach tightened and his thigh quivered under hers. “Love you,” she whispered as his cock bucked inside her and the warm rush of his spendings filled her.

He kissed her softly as he shook a few more times. Buffy rolled onto her back and Spike curled around her so his head was pillowed on her breast. “Love you,” he groggily told her nipple. She smiled and softly ran a hand up his shoulders to curl a lock of sandy hair around her fingers.
Buffy froze. “Oh crap!”

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Nearly asleep after shagging the hell out his wife, Spike was started by her outburst. She sounded terribly upset about something. Hopefully something that could be dealt with later, after a nap. “What’s wrong?” he asked. Maybe her arm was going to sleep. He might be able to move a little. Maybe.

“Spike!” she hissed. “Cameras!”

Oh, Christ. They were filming. He’d completely forgotten. “Shit!” he barked, suddenly very wide awake. Jumping off the bed, he grabbed his robe and tossed Buffy’s at her.

She pulled the blue terrycloth around her. “What do we do?” she asked, wide eyed.

“Well-” Right, it was up to him to fix this. It was his bloody fault in the first place, somehow thinking he could get away with rubbing himself on her like a randy hound and it not go any further than that. “We can get the tapes, or drives, or whatever it’s recorded on. Then we tell Hoss we need another take because we fought too much or something.” He pulled the wig off his head, finding it too hot and itchy to wear for another second.

“Okay.” Buffy held her hand out to him and he took it, pulling her after him as he walked briskly to the door. Out in the hallway he realized he had no idea where the camera feeds ended up, but he charged along anyway, hoping the place was close. They rounded a corner and bumped into Xander and Anya, who were making out.

“Oh, thank god,” Spike said, running a hand down his face.

Anya broke the kiss with Xander and glanced between him and Buffy. “Everything okay?” she asked.

“No!” Buffy said.

“What happened?” Xander appeared completely confused. He was staring at where Buffy was grasping Spike’s hand tightly with her own, but Spike wasn’t about to let go of her.

“We need to know where the camera feeds from the shoot go, mate. The sooner, the better.” Spike took a deep breath. “Please,” he added.

“Yeah, sure. Follow me. Hoss went that way a little while ago.” Xander frowned and crossed his arms.

Buffy looked like she was going to hyperventilate. “It’s supposed to be a closed set!” she said loudly.

“Well, yeah, but he is the director and needs to make sure you two aren’t just sniping at each other.” Xander started walking down the hallway with Anya beside him. Spike wanted to put a hand on his back and force him to go faster.

Anya abruptly stopped and started laughing. “Oh my god, you two…” she trailed off as another fit of giggles overcame her.

“What?” Buffy said, hands on hips and clearly annoyed.

Anya wrapped her arms over her stomach as she continued to laugh. “You two made a porno!”
“You what?” Xander’s eyebrows drew together in confusion.

“Oh, honey.” Anya patted his arm. “I adore you, but you’re kind of dense. Spike and Buffy got together the same time we did, only they’ve had to behave themselves so that no one would find out and tell the press.” Anya shrugged. “And then they got naked into bed together after several weeks of not having orgasms with each other, and had real sex instead of fake sex. It’s actually not that big of surprise.”

Xander’s eyes met Spike’s.

“Yeah, that,” Spike said, defeated.

“Uh, can we get the hard drives now?” Buffy asked, still looking like a deer caught in the headlights.

Xander nodded. “Uh, yeah.” He started walking again. “I thought you two hated each other, and that Buffy was dating Angel.”

Buffy made an incoherent squeaky sound.

Anya waved a hand. “Angel and Buffy haven’t had a real relationship for years.” She smiled at Buffy. “I bet you’re a lot happier now.”

Buffy’s hand squeezed Spike’s. “That’s the truth.”

The four of them walked around another corner just as Hoss came out of a room. He spotted them and immediately his eyes looked up towards the ceiling. Sodding wonderful, he’d seen the show. His cell phone was in his hand.

“Look-” Spike began, but then an outside door opened and Mr. Rayne walked in. From another hallway a red-in-the-face Angel and a smug-looking Drusilla appeared.

Bloody hell, did the entire buggering planet know he’d shagged Buffy on camera?

Nearly breathing fire, Angel stormed towards Buffy. Squaring her shoulders, she let go of Spike’s hand and met Angel halfway.

“What are you doing here?” she said in a low voice. “I thought I made it clear yesterday that you have nothing to do with my life anymore.”

“And I said we still needed to talk about that,” Angel roared back.

Buffy didn’t flinch. “No, we don’t.”

“So you fuck this moron to, what, get back at me?”

“It’s not like that,” Buffy replied evenly.

Angel barked out a laugh. His eyes were wild and he sniffed and swallowed a couple of times. Spike’s gaze darted to Drusilla, who was wearing a bemused little smile. This wasn’t good, Angel was as high as a kite. “Buffy-” Spike reached out for her.

“You fucking slut!” Angel bellowed. “I put up with you kissing and touching this monster because it was for the show. Did I say anything when you decided your character should be a whore, the same as you, by letting the man she’s cuckolding her husband with do something as disgusting as lick her cunt?”
Everyone was looking at Angel like he’d grown a second head. Spike wanted to laugh. Disgusting? Obviously, Angel was deranged. Tasting Buffy was like eating at the god’s own table.

“Is that what you wanted so badly?” Angel was getting louder and louder as Buffy stared impassively at him. “I thought you were a good girl. That you were different, but all you wanted was someone slobbering between your legs. You’re just another stupid whore who thinks with her hole.”

“All I wanted was to be loved,” Buffy said, voice wavering only slightly. “You’re incapable of that. I’m not a thing, Angel. Not a doll to be played with.” Buffy’s eyes darted to Drusilla. “And I know who else you’ve been playing with. Angel—” She looked him right in the eyes. “You can’t hurt me anymore.”

Angel’s face contorted into an ugly sneer and his hand drew back. Spike started forward, but before he could do anything, Angel’s palm cracked hard against Buffy’s face. She went to her knees with her hand covering her cheek and tears in her eyes.

The entire room was shocked into silence. Angel was shaking and breathing hard. “Get to your feet, you filthy…”

Spike didn’t even feel angry, just cold, as his fist plowed into Angel’s stomach, winding him and knocking him back against the wall. Spike tilted his head as his fingers closed around Angel’s throat. “I should kill you now,” Spike said flatly. He tightened his grip and Angel’s eyes widened. “You hurt the girl.” Angel clawed at Spike’s arm, but he could barely even feel it. “You don’t hurt her. You don’t even look at her. And if you ever talk to my wife in that manner again I will not hesitate to end your miserable existence.”

Spike let go and Angel slid to the ground, choking and sputtering. Turning his back on that waste of a human being, he knelt beside Buffy, who was still sitting on the floor. Everyone else was frozen in surprise, except Drusilla, who had her eyes closed and appeared to be softly singing to herself.

“What’s going on?” Tara charged into the middle of the room with Oz trailing behind her. “Buffy, are you okay?”

“Yes,” Buffy said. She held her hands towards Spike. He took them and pulled her up into his arms. Her cheek was bright red, the imprint of Angel’s hand clearly visible.

Spike clutched her against himself, and deep inside the dam holding his emotions back finally gave way. “Oh god,” he said, his head falling to her shoulder. “Oh god, I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.”

“What for?” Buffy said, sounding puzzled.

“He hurt you and I couldn’t stop him.” Spike shook. He should have been smarter, faster. Anything. He was twelve years old again and staring at the body of his mum, helpless.

Buffy nuzzled against him. “It’s okay. I’m okay. And I think you got your point across to Angel.”

He raised his head and met her gaze.

“And you’re not responsible for my ex being a loser, or for the fact he…hit me.” Buffy cupped Spike’s cheek. “But if you need it, I forgive you for not magically stopping him.” Her thumb caressed his cheek. “I love you.”

“My Buffy.” A knot tied years ago in his chest loosened. He kissed her, sweetly, tenderly, wanting her to feel how much he loved her and needed her in his life.
Someone cleared their throat. “Well,” Mr. Rayne said. “I’m feeling more than a little confused here.”

“Yeah,” Hoss added. “Wife?”
I don't believe that anybody feels the way I do about you now

-Oasis, “Wonderwall”

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There was a lot of yelling going on. Mr. Rayne and Hoss were tearing into Angel. Tara was in there with them, but everyone else had been sent off with strict orders not to talk to anyone about anything or they’d never be working anywhere ever again. She and Spike had been asked to wait, but the raised voices were starting to get to her. Even with Spike’s arms wrapped securely around her it was hard not to feel like a kid again, standing outside the room while her parents argued. He was leaning against the wall, holding her tight and humming something softly under his breath while he stroked her back.

“We can press charges,” Spike said.

Buffy sighed. They’d already been over this a couple of times. “Then he presses charges, and now my husband’s arrested.”

“I shouldn’t have hit him; he deserves more than a slap on the wrist.” Spike combed his fingers through her hair.

Angel deserved a lot more, but the world was stupid.

There was the soft tap of heels against the floor. “Sweet William,” Drusilla cooed. “You found yourself a pretty girl, but I bet she doesn’t know how you like to play, does she my prince?”

Spike stiffened. “Leave, Dru, you’re not wanted here.”

Buffy turned her head so she could see Drusilla. The woman’s eyes were unnaturally bright.

“But William.” Dru’s voice became petulant. “Mummy’s been waiting for you. We can go skiing, play in the snow. I know you’d like to. Bring your little toy, I’m not jealous, you can show me how much she enjoys being f—“

“Just stop!” Spike barked. “I want nothing to do with you. I know you live in your own world Dru, so let me be clear: I don’t want what we once had. I’m not the idiot that followed you around like a whipped puppy, waiting for you to show me a crumb of attention. I love Buffy, she is my bloody wife. The only thing I need from you, Drusilla, is for you to get the hell away from us.”

Dru’s face hardened. “My prince has found a new queen.”

Spike sagged against the wall and drug a hand down his face. “Leave, you blasted bitch.”

“What a bad doggie you are. Mummy is right cross with you.” Drusilla stamped her foot like an enraged toddler and stormed off.

Buffy felt funny. Some of the things Dru had said, like calling Spike William and about him finding a new queen. Those were things Buffy considered hers. That they’d once been Drusilla’s…but Buffy had already known that, hadn’t she? It was just different when it was in her face.

“Don’t let her bother you, luv.” Spike sounded scared. Maybe he’d detected how disjointed Dru had
left her. There was a loud bang as someone hit a table or a wall inside the room where Angel was arguing with Hoss and Mr. Rayne. The noise startled her and made her flinch. “Want to get out of here?” Spike asked in her ear. “Maybe go somewhere off-set? I have a few spots I head to when being here gets to be too much.”

She nodded. Spike led her to where they’d changed out of their clothes. They dressed in silence. Spike had his usual black on black ensemble on, his duster slung over his arm.

“Um, I’m going to ‘borrow’ one of the production company’s SUVs,” Spike whispered, tucking a stray piece of hair behind her ear. “Where I want to take you there’s a rutted dirt road my car wouldn’t appreciate.”

“Oh, okay,” she said, plucking at the hem of her t-shirt. The jeans she had on seemed dowdy. “I’d like to change first. Can you pick me up at my trailer?”

“Yes.” He kissed her, his eyes searching her face before he departed to get the truck.

Buffy crossed her arms over her stomach as she walked back to her trailer. Luckily, she didn’t run into anyone. She was all out of sorts. Angel had hit her. She was the kind of woman that someone thought it was okay to hit. Buffy had felt strong, powerful even, as she’d found her star rising in Hollywood. How much of that had been a sham? Had everyone but her known she was the sort of woman that’d let someone walk all over her?

Only…

Spike didn’t treat her like she was an accessory. God, she’d thought for a minute he was going to kill Angel. Spike had married her, cared about her, was struggling to put her first even as he probably had his own set of issues to wrestle with between Angel and Drusilla.

She was a terrible wife.

Love you, Spike’s voice said in her mind. And never, in a million years, would he ever let her call herself that. She entered her trailer and headed for her closet, but caught sight of herself in the mirror.

“You’re not a terrible anything,” Buffy told her reflection. “You’re not a slut because you like to have sex with your husband. Or because you like sex.” She even mostly believed it as she opened her drawers and dug out a few things she hadn’t dared to wear around Angel. The black miniskirt left her legs mostly bare and the sparkly, silver top didn’t have a back, just a couple of ties.

Buffy was pulling on a pair of stilettoes as a horn honked outside. Dusk had just turned into night and a lot of the other cast and crew had already left for The Bronze. She darted outside and into the waiting black SUV with the darkly tinted windows.

Spike’s eyes swept up and down her body. He grinned and fumbled around trying to find the clutch pedal before realizing there wasn’t one. “Uh, it’s an automatic,” he said sheepishly as he finally got the SUV going. They drove the opposite way of the nearest highway. Spike put the radio on low and Buffy started to relax. The glances Spike kept giving her weren’t hurting any, either.

They were rolling through a sleepy-looking town when Buffy caught sight of a familiar sign. “Starbucks!” she said, putting a hand on Spike’s arm. “Can we stop? A coffee would be divine right about now.”

He smiled indulgently. “Sounds like a plan. What do you want?”

“Tall mocha, soy, no whip,” she rattled off.
Spike pulled up to the drive-thru speaker to order. He got a venti black coffee for himself and they waited in the line. When they pulled up to the window, Spike fished a twenty out of his pocket and handed it to the guy running the drive-thru. Who looked right past Spike, obviously not recognizing him, to stare open mouthed at Buffy’s legs.

The guy was wearing the usual Starbucks get-up with a name tag that said ‘Gary’ and was clutching a clipboard.


“Be nice,” Buffy said, laughing. “Anyway, it’s not like I’m about to run off with the Starbucks guy in whatever town this is. Even if he thinks I have nice legs.”

“I think you have nice legs,” Spike huffed. “Especially when they’re wrapped around me.” He appeared to cheer up greatly with that thought and Buffy rolled her eyes. The drive-thru window popped back open and Spike’s hand landed on her knee at the same time as Gary’s eyes. Buffy watched in amusement as the poor guy’s gaze followed Spike’s fingers as they ran up her thigh and under the hem of her skirt. Spike toyed with the elastic around the edge of her panties as he accepted their drinks and straws. “Keep the change,” Spike said briskly and rolled the SUV’s window up. He took off and rounded the corner, causing his coffee to leak out the top of the cup and into the holder.

“You forgot napkins,” Buffy said with an eyeroll. “You were too busy worrying about showing off for the drive-thru guy.”

Spike parked the SUV in the tiny Starbucks parking lot. “I’ll grab us some. And bloody hell, Buffy, he was nearly climbing over me to get to you. There’s probably drool in my coffee.”

“Well, you sure showed him by feeling me up.” She laughed and swatted his hand away when he tried to do it again. She really didn’t mind him being jealous over her. It felt normal to have him worried about someone looking at her.

He tapped her knee. “Are you complaining?”

“No, now go get napkins and hurry back.” She took a sip of her coffee, enjoying the warmth. The air conditioner was blowing just cold enough to make hot coffee enjoyable, even in Georgia. She pulled down the SUV’s visor and looked at herself in the vanity mirror. While her cheek was still tender, the redness had faded and she didn’t think she was going to have a bruise. She shut the visor and slurped at her drink.

Spike walked back out the store, napkins in hand, and into a group of girls that looked to be in their late teens. It was apparent they immediately recognized him. Like a switch flipping, Spike went from being her Spike to being the Spike people expected to see. He smiled and shook hands. Buffy cracked her window to see. He asked the girls their names and if they were from whatever place this was (they were). He complimented them and the town while the girls giggled and blushed. He took selfies with them and tolerated good naturedly how they all seemed to want to touch him a lot more than was necessary.

Buffy didn’t know exactly how she felt about it all. She knew the silly, chattering girls couldn’t see it, but to her he seemed so fake. That wasn’t her husband out there, not really. Maybe that was the problem. In private they were a couple, but right now he was still single as far as any of those girls knew. Still fair game. She twisted his wedding ring around her thumb.

Suddenly she hated everyone not knowing. Hated the group of stupid girls that were flirting artlessly
with her husband. Hated the fake, smooth, bad boy persona he was wearing. She reached over and honked the horn.

The girls turned en mass to glare at the car.

Spike chuckled. “I do believe that’s my cue, ladies. It was very nice to meet you and I hope you’ll enjoy the new season of *Belle South*, it’s going to be brilliant.” He winked at them and took a step towards the car.

The bravest girl in the group, with long brown hair and a too-tight dress, spoke up. “Doing anything fun tonight? We know of a couple good parties.”

“Temping, pet, but I’m entertaining someone special at the mo’.” He leered a little and the girls glared at the car again. Spike managed to get away and slide into the driver’s seat, wasting no time in backing out of the lot and getting on the road. “Sorry,” he said to Buffy, taking a drink of his coffee. “For what?”

“All that.” He waved a hand.

“It’s alright,” she said softly. “That’s just part of who we are, but I would have found it easier if I could have just jumped out and gone to stand next to you.”

“Yeah, me too.”

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They drank their coffees in silence. Spike had the feeling Buffy was upset about something, but he couldn’t exactly figure it out. He didn’t think it’d was jealousy, not like he’d felt when that tosser had been drooling over her. It was something else, something more nebulous, but he didn’t quite know how to ask.

They reached the turn off to the hidden spot Spike had found by accident one day during the first year of filming. He’d needed to get away, his feelings for Buffy a confused jumble and the sight of her fawning over Angel too much for him to take. He had a handful of other places like this. Places outside, in nature, where it seemed no one else ever went. Bringing Buffy to one was a big deal, though she probably wouldn’t know that.

He hesitated for a moment as he drove the SUV up the rutted dirt track towards the top of a small hill. “Buffy, um, I’m glad I could bring you here. It’s nothing fancy, but it means a lot to me, and, uh, sharing it…”

Her hand covered his where he had a death grip on the shift knob. “Thank you.”

His heart swelled. She understood. He turned his hand over so he could interlace his fingers with hers. They stayed that way until the road got rough enough that he had to put both hands on the wheel. At the very top of the hill they came out of the trees and into a clearing. There was gravel and a couple of picnic benches. As always, there was no one else there.

Jumping out, Spike immediately went to the rear of the car and opened the hatch to grab a thick blanket and a couple of pillows. He heard Buffy get out and close the door.

“I should have worn different shoes,” she said. Bloody hell, he hadn’t even thought about that when he’d been ogling her feet in those stilts she was wearing. She’d turn an ankle for sure trying to hike on the patchy gravel. At least the weeds poking through were all mostly dead from the summer sun.
He walked around the side of the car and held up a hand towards her. “Wait right there just one minute.” He went to the sturdier of the two picnic tables, spread the blanket on top, and tossed the pillows to the far end before sprinting back to his girl. She giggled delightedly as he scooped her and carried her to the table. He set her down and let her get comfortable before he cuddled in beside her. “Do you want to know why I like it here so much?” he asked, his hand lightly stroking her hip.

She nodded and he pointed a finger towards the sky.

Buffy rolled over on her back. “Oh…wow.”

Spike tilted his head so he could see as well, though he kept his arm around his wife. There was no moon, which meant the stars were alight in all their glory. The Milky Way was a sparkling slash across the heavens.

A shooting star blinked into life and streaked brightly through the sky. Spike wished, with all his might, that there’d be nothing but smooth sailing for him and Buffy from here until they were both gone from this world. He gathered her closer, the thought of her no longer alive ripping into him. He’d have to die first…only that would make her sad. Bugger. Fine, they’d have to peacefully die in their sleep at the exact same instant when they were 102.

“You okay?” Buffy asked.

“Yeah.” He loosened his hold on her a fraction since it had gotten rather tight. “Did you make a wish?”

“Of course, but I can’t tell you or it won’t come true.” She turned on her side to face him and pressed sweet kiss to his lips. “But I do hope it comes true sooner rather than later.”

“Was it to get shagged on this table? Because I can probably arrange that.”

She giggled and kissed him again. “Not exactly, but ‘shagging’ is a required part of it.”

He pursed his lips trying to figure that one out. Did she want a weekend at some posh hotel? Or maybe a down and dirty quickie somewhere on set or at The Bronze? What the hell would his girl wish for that required sex?

His thoughts were interrupted by his phone ringing.

“You should probably answer that,” she said.

“Don’t really want to.”

“I know, but you know who it probably is and I guess we should let them know we’re still alive somewhere.”

“Right.” He took his bloody phone out of his back pocket. Sure enough, it was Ethan calling. Spike answered and put it on speaker.

“Hi, Spike?” Ethan asked.

“We’re both here,” Buffy said.

“Ah, good, good. I thought you were going to wait?”

Spike sighed. “We needed to get out of there, mate.”
“Yes, ah, I understand. You’ll be glad to know that we’ve decided to go with a storyline for Angel’s character that we’d been toying with. In the finale, he’s going to argue with you, which is the only scene you’ll have to shoot with him, Spike. Shouldn’t be a stretch. I believe everything else is done for the season.”

Spike grunted an agreement.

“There’s also nothing left for him to shoot with Buffy,” Ethan continued. “So we’re good there too.”

“So what’s going to happen to Leslie?” Buffy asked.

“Ah, I was just getting there.” Ethan cleared his throat. “So Leslie is going to be out, basically raping a slave girl and getting drunk as a skunk. He’s fairly certain at this point that his wife is cheating on him with his own brother, but since he’s never caught you two in a compromising position he can’t be sure. There’s a downpour, he tries to ride home and gets swept away in a river. One of the slaves, most likely Kendra’s love interest, will have a chance to save him, but won’t because of what he did to her. Leslie washes down river and we’ll end with not knowing if he’s alive or dead. Then next season we’ll show Drusilla, I mean Francesca, pulling him out of the river and extracting revenge for driving the Wolfe estate into near ruin. She’ll show her displeasure in various creative ways. It’ll all be done at a secondary shoot location and you two will never have to see him.”

“That’s cool. Thank you, but how did you get him to agree to it?” Buffy asked. She was running the fingers of one hand through Spike’s hair in the most delightful way.

“We threatened him over his drug use, his affair with Dru, and with slapping you. Unless he wants that good ole’ boy, sweet-as-pie image he has to turn sour, he’s going to toe the line. He is to have no contact with you or Spike whatsoever. If he violates that, let me know.”

“Wait.” Buffy sounded startled. “You know about him and Dru?”

There was a pause. “Do you?” Ethan asked cautiously.

“Yes, I got video.”

“So do I,” Ethan chuckled. “And don’t worry, I married my wife for her money, not for love. Spike can tell you more than enough about how there’s only one thing she truly cares about, which is neither of those things. And Hoss is here reminding me I should apologize profusely, because I was planning to go public with the affair right before the new season started, for a little—well, a lot—of free advertising.”

“That wouldn’t have been nice,” Buffy whispered. Her face was unreadable, but her hand clenched Spike’s. He supposed it was too much to wish that a horde of locust or the like would plague the producer. Buffy would have been devastated if things had been different and she’d found out about Angel like that.

“No, it wouldn’t have been nice, but I’m not a very nice man,” Ethan agreed. “But now I’ve got something better.”

Spike closed his eyes for a moment. “Which is?”

“I’d very much like to start a rumor that the sex in episode six is the real deal. I’ll put it out through the gossip mill and you two can neither confirm nor deny a thing.”

Buffy gasped. “That’d mean you need to use…um…what we did.”
“It very much does, and I would very much like to.”

“But…” Buffy sounded panicked.

“No worries, my dear,” Ethan soothed. Spike was impressed with the man’s balls. Asking America’s Sweetheart to use her sex tape as part of the show. He didn’t know if he should be offended or not that no one would have any qualms over asking him. Ethan continued in the same calming tone: “I have the hard drives with the raw footage on it in my pocket. It does me no good if it’s leaked. We’ll have someone edit it down—“

“Anya,” Spike broke in. “She has the credentials. Her or no one.”

“That’s fine,” Ethan said.

“And what are you prepared to give us for risking what you’re asking us to risk?” Spike grunted. He looked at Buffy and she gave him a nod.

“Are you speaking for both you and Buffy?” Ethan asked.

Buffy wrinkled her nose. “I’m in agreement with my husband.”

“Ah,” Ethan sounded slightly flustered. “I’m going to want to hear that story sooner or later. Anyway, I’m offering you both a substantial raise in salary. Effectively doubling it.”

Buffy gasped. That was a lot of money.

Spike narrowed his eyes. “Plus, two and a half percent on royalties in perpetuity, each.”

There was a sigh from the phone. “Yes, fine. In addition, you can each alter your contract in some way.”

“Housing.” Spike jumped at the chance. “A new, much bigger trailer for the two of us together. Probably a little ways away from the rest.”

“Why’s that?” Ethan asked.

Spike smirked. “I think you have the reason in your pocket. And no skimping. Make it sure it’s high-class.”

“You have my word. Buffy?”

Spike was mildly surprised at the general lack of haggling. Ethan wanted this bad.

Buffy was biting her lip. “Does it have to be something added? Can I get something taken away?” she asked.

“Of course.” There was a slight note of worry in Ethan’s voice.

“I want out of the birth control clause.”

Spike’s heart started doing flip-flops.

Ethan heaved another huge sigh. “You’ve got it. But you two get cracking. If there’s going to be an AshBelle baby storyline next season we need to know as soon as possible and we’ll probably have you do some pickup footage for season 5 during the off months to make it work. Deal?”
“Yes,” Buffy and Spike said at the same time.

“I’ll have legal draw up the paperwork and you guys can come by and sign it tomorrow.”

“Right, see you then.” Spike ended the call and stuffed his phone back into his pocket. As soon as his hand was free Buffy was pressed against him.

She was babbling. “I didn’t really ask you about the baby part. We don’t have to, if you want to wait. I completely understand—”

He stopped her mouth with a kiss and only let her go when he ran out of breath. “There’s nothing I want more than to raise a family with you, luv,” he whispered against her lips. His mind put two and two together. Her shooting star wish. She hadn’t wanted a sexy weekend in Dubai or whatever, she’d wanted a baby. Spike smiled and cupped her cheek, running the pad of his thumb over the smooth skin. “I think you’re very close to getting your wish.”

Buffy smiled and it was if the sun itself had risen. She pushed on his shoulder until he rolled over on his back and she straddled his hips. Her hands fisted his shirt and pulled it off him. Lightly, her fingers trailed over his chest, coming to rest on his stomach.

He reached up and tugged at the ends of her hair. She was amazing. His breathing hitched, so amazing and she was going to be the mother of his children.

Behind her, the starry sky spun away into infinity, framing the center of his universe.

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Buffy was nearly giddy in her happiness. Love, a home, family: it was everything she had been dreaming of. Why had she ever thought Angel would be the one to give it to her? Spike…but that wasn’t right. He wasn’t giving her these things, he was making them with her, day by day.

Would their son or daughter have his eyes, her smile, or maybe his curly hair?

Spike made such a pretty picture under her, his pale skin contrasting against her tanned thighs. It was something she wanted to remember. She pulled her phone out. “Can I take some shots?”

“Knock yourself out,” he purred.

“Okay, work with me here. Put your hands on my legs.”

He did as she asked, his fingers curving around her thigh, and she snapped a picture.

“Now look at me all sexy like,” she asked and bit her lip.

Spike grinned, but then his face became serious and he smoldered at her. She took a couple of pictures. With a wink, he shifted to a leer, looking at her as if she was something to eat. She took more pictures.

“How was that?” he asked.

“Perfect.” It really was. He looked gorgeous and the fact that it was her thighs he was between made her feel all kinds of fluttery. Take that, stupid, giggly girls.

“Let me see.”

She handed him the camera and he flipped through the photos. “That Gary guy at Starbucks wasn’t
wrong, you do have really great legs.”

Buffy shook her head. He looked like sex incarnate in those pictures and there he was, complimenting her legs.

His eyebrows went up. “I know! We should sell Hoss on a shot where you’re doing something with your stockings and the camera is real close in, following along with the fabric as you pull one up… or, even, better, when I pull one down.”

“I’m sure you and Gary would both be very happy.”

Spike snorted. “C’mere, I want a take a few of us snuggled together.”

She lay down beside him and rested her head on his chest. He took one of them like that, then put a finger under her chin and tilted her face towards his. He kissed her and she was dimly aware that he was still taking pictures. Pausing for breath, she looked into his eyes and as always found herself swept away by just how much emotion was there. She kissed him again and lost track of her phone as he ditched it in order to cup the back of her head as their tongues tangled together.

When, panting, they broke the kiss again, Buffy rescued her phone from where it’d fallen between their bodies. She flipped through the photos, pausing on one that made her heart clench. He’d captured the moment when they’d been gazing into each other’s eyes. They were both smiling slightly, their lips swollen and a little wet from the kiss, and all the love they shared was right there, plain as day.

“What is it, luv?” Spike asked, petting her hair.

“Look at us.” She tilted her phone so he could see.

“Oh…wow, yeah, look at us.” He sounded awed.

Buffy wanted to put that photo on every social media account she had. Look! She wanted to yell. Look! I’m in love! “Spike,” she said, her voice shaking slightly. “I know it was kind of my idea, and that Tara and Oz, along with everyone else, will probably want to murder us in our sleep, but I kind of don’t want to hide anymore. What if we just told?”

“Kitten, I want to get a megaphone and stand in the middle of Times Square and shout that I love you to everyone and anyone that would bloody listen. So I have no objections, post away, let everyone in the sodding world see. And send a few of those pics this way and I’ll put them up on my accounts as well.”

Buffy sat up on the edge of the picnic table, her feet on the bench, and Spike sat beside her. She sent him all the photos she had from the last month—month? Hadn’t they been together two or three lifetimes by now?—and then pulled up Instagram. “Where are you starting?”

“Twitter, it’s my main one because you can get away with saying things like: ‘great day on set, can’t wait for everyone to see this’. What about you?”

“Instagram.”

There were several moments as silence as they both started captioning and uploading photos. When she was done, she leaned her head against Spike’s shoulder. “I feel so much better right now.”

Spike dropped his phone in his pocket. “Me too, but I hope you’re ready. That twister we hid from is going to have nothing on the storm that’s about to hit us.”
“I know. Do you think we can hide out together again, at least for one more night?”

Spike jumped off the table. “I think we can, but I want to take you back to my trailer and curl up with you, my wife, in my bed. Even if we’re too tired to do anything but sleep.” He walked around to the end of the table and held out his hands.

She scooted until her knees were on either side of his hips, then stopped. “Our rings! We can wear them now.” She pulled his from her thumb, solemnly took his hand, slipped the band on the fourth finger, and pushed the words past the lump in her throat. “With this ring, I thee wed.”

Spike, hands shaking, removed her ring from his pinkie and slid it onto her finger. “With this ring, I thee wed.” His arms went around her and he held her close. “Buffy, my Buffy,” he whispered. He picked her up and carried her back to the SUV. Setting her down, he opened the door before racing back to the table to grab the blanket, pillows, and his shirt. He threw everything in the back as he climbed into the driver’s seat.

He turned the engine over, but before he could get into gear both their phones started chiming.

Buffy looked at hers. “It’s Dawn: WTF and approximately five million question marks.”

“Cordy, asking if she can finally talk about us.” He frowned down at the screen. “You know what the best part of hiding from that tornado was, besides that I was with you?”

Buffy smiled. She did know. Even as her phone beeped and chimed, she held down the power button until the screen went black. Spike did the same.

The wheels of the SUV kicked up gravel as Spike barreled down the dirt road. She watched the light of the night sky play over his chest and arms as he drove. Right now, he was all hers. There’d be time enough for the rest of the world later.
#MyPhoneWasOff

The water's getting warm so you might as well swim

- Smash Mouth, “All Star”

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What speed limit? The sweet, happy feelings from the hilltop were still there, but the satisfaction from having screwed Buffy until he’d nearly been in a coma had evaporated. He’d glanced over when she’d put one high-heel clad foot up on the dash, causing her miniskirt to ride up, and he’d nearly just pulled over and had her then and there. But he’d promised her a bed, so instead he’d put his foot down and raced towards the set.

The SUV, with its official tags, sailed through security. He skidded to a stop right in front of his trailer. The whole place was like a ghost town with everyone at The Bronze. He jumped out, but still didn’t beat Buffy. He caught her just as she thumped the car door closed. She leapt into his embrace, her arms going around his shoulders and her legs around his waist. Laughing, his mouth met her hungry kiss. Somehow, he got his trailer door open and both of them inside.

He ended up setting her perfect ass down on the kitchen table. The strings of her top came undone easily and it fell away. He caught the pebbled tip of one breast with his mouth. Buffy hummed her approval and arched into his touch. Her fingers ran up his bare arms. He stepped back and caught her hands, bringing them to his mouth to kiss her fingertips. She licked her lips and he settled her hands on his hips. Grinning, he seized both her tits and pushed them together so he could swiftly switch from one to the other. Buffy went from giggling to moaning as he flicked his tongue rapidly over the tight buds of her nipples.

Once they were both hard as diamonds, he nuzzled into her cleavage for a moment, inhaling the fragrance of her skin. God, he was happy. He’d spent so long being miserable that it still felt like a miracle. He imagined her big with his child and smiled even as his cock pressed determinedly against the front of his pants, reminding him there was only one way to get her pregnant. There was a loose plan rattling around in his head, or maybe it was in his prick, that once he got her back to the beach house she could just be naked all the time and he would pump her full of come as often as possible. There really wasn’t an end game to his plan.

He straightened up and grabbed her skirt and she obligingly lifted her hips so he could pull both it and her panties down and off, leaving her in nothing but her fuck-me shoes. Staying on his knees, he traced his finger lightly over her ankles, up her calves, and over the inside of her thighs. She spread them wider at his touch, revealing the slick folds of her sex.

The ugly words Angel had lashed her with earlier flashed through Spike’s mind, making him halfway expect her to stop him as he leaned forward and pressed an open mouthed kiss to her pussy. His tongue darted inside her to lap at her juices. Buffy moaned and her hands gripped his hair. He slipped a finger, then two, into her tight channel, working them steadily as he spelled his name over and over again with the tip of his tongue on her clit.

Her moans and whimpers got louder and her hands left him to grip the sides of the table. “William,” she panted as her hips rolled. He switched, his tongue returning to her pussy to dart in and out while his fingers made frantic circles on her clit. With a hoarse yell, she came and he buried his face tight against her as she rode out her climax. His prick shifted in his jeans and pressed tight against his zipper, angrily demanding to be let out.
He stood and she pulled his mouth to hers, mewing at the taste of herself on his tongue.

“Do you like that, kitten?” he asked against her lips.

“Uh-huh,” she replied dazedly as she undid his belt. Hesitating, she leaned back to watch as her hand went to the front of his pants. Thankfully, her clever fingers adjusted his cock so it wasn’t right behind her zipper. She cupped him, then slowly traced the outline of his erection. His dick enthusiastically pressed against her hand.

“Did you know how much this turns me on?” Buffy whispered, her cheeks flaming.

His mouth quirked to the side. “I was being drunk and stupid.”

“Probably,” she allowed. “And I’m looking at it through rose colored glasses now, but it was the first time I touched you in any meaningful way. And it made me so horny. Still does.”

Spike was taking shallow breaths through his nose.

“Did you know I wanted to do this that night, too?” Her hand undid the button of his jeans and slowly lowered the zipper. “I almost talked myself into it. Poor Spike, all that trapped in his pants. You had to be uncomfortable.”

He had no idea what to say. She pushed at his jeans until they let go of his hips and ended up around his knees. His hard-on jutted out proudly from his body, aiming for Buffy.

She fondled his balls, rolling them gently in her palm.

“God, Buffy,” he moaned. “Want to be inside you, luv.” The need was getting desperate.

She let go of him and gripped the table with both hands again. He fisted his cock with one hand and positioned the weeping head right at her opening while he gripped her hip with the other. She was so wet that he slid in easily. He didn’t stop until his pubic hair was mingled with hers.

He paused there and closed his eyes, savoring the feel of her. She was warm and soft, a snug fit that felt just right, as if she’d been made for him. She brought her legs up to wrap around his waist and he groaned softly at the change of angle. Her inner muscles gripped and relaxed. He tried to memorize the feel of her, store away every nuance of sensation, but memory never could compare to the real thing.

Buffy rolled her hips. He opened his eyes and grinned down at her. He pulled back and thrust. She moaned. He did it again, harder, and she moaned loader. It was tempting to pound into her, but he wanted to make it last, to spend as much time inside her as he could, so he thrust in a slow, languid rhythm, drawing himself nearly out of her with each stroke.

One of his hands went to her clit and Buffy cried out. He worked her nub mercilessly. “Come for me, please. Let me see you, my Buffy.” Her fingers were white knuckled on the table, her thighs quivering, and she was holding her breath. The walls of her channel were clamping down tighter and tighter around his prick. Her eyes were screwed shut and her brows drawn together. She came with a loud groan that might have been his name as her inner muscles pulsed around him.

Spike didn’t stop his steady pace nor the movement of his fingers over her clit. Buffy was panting, her breasts heaving. Suddenly her eyes flew open wide and she made a high-pitched whining noise. “What? Ack! Too much…oh my god!” She went wild, her hips bucking hard against him, ramming him even deeper inside her, making him grunt. Words left her and she was keening loudly as she came again and then almost immediately again.
He paused, giving her a break. Her mouth was hanging open and she was looking at him like he was a god. It made him feel all kinds of manly. “Like that, kitten?” he purred.

“Uh-huh.” She nodded. “Good.”

Taking a step back, he pulled out of her heat. She frowned and grabbed at him, but he caught her hand, kissing her knuckles. “I promised you a bed, if I remember correctly. I mean to get you there.”

“Oh,” she breathed and held out her arms to him. He scooped her up and carried her bridal style, while his cock loudly complained that it wasn’t in the girl, and set her gently on the bed.

Buffy kicked off her shoes and rolled over onto all fours, looking over her shoulder at him. The power of speech had returned to her. “That was very nice, but now I don’t want nice. I want it hard, fast, and dirty.”

“That’s my girl,” he said with approval, kneeling on the red sheets behind her and smacking her ass. He lined himself up with her sopping opening and effortlessly pushed the head of his cock inside her. He settled his hands on her hips and gave Buffy just what she asked for, ramming his full length inside her as he yanked back on her hips.

The slap of his balls against the swollen lips of her sex was almost painful as Spike jackhammered into her. Buffy’s hands were clawing and fisting his sheets as noises he couldn’t even name spilled from her throat. He knew the sounds he was making were animalistic, wild, and kind of loud. Dimly, he was aware that the dishes in his cabinets were clinking together. Bloody trailers weren’t really all that sturdy.

Buffy had gone silent, holding her breath again as she approached orgasm.

He seemed to hang suspended in the moment. They were facing the side of the trailer that was the wall between their two RVs. How many times had he lain in this bed, wanking and fantasizing of this girl? Wanting her. He’d been so hopeless. Had that been him a month ago? For a sickening moment, he thought maybe he was dreaming. God knew he’d imagined her just like this, frenzied and writhing on the end of his prick, often enough.

Time sped up again as his sac tightened. There was a clatter as the lamp on his nightstand hit the floor. Buffy found her peak and yelled loudly, her pussy fluttering around him. Oh fuck, this was happening now and it was real and…

He threw his head back and howled his release. Unadulterated bliss exploded from where he was joined with Buffy. It shot straight up his spine and whitened out his vision. His cock was jerking as he spurted his load into her in wave after wave of pure joy. When at last, after a million years or so, it stopped, it seemed like all his muscles gave out at once. He pulled out of Buffy, his come spilling down her thighs, and collapsed in a boneless, sweaty heap on his stomach beside her.

“You okay?” she asked, concern on her face.

“I’m never moving again,” he said, surprised at how hoarse his voice was. Giggling, Buffy nabbed the comforter from where it’d fallen on the floor and pulled it over him. “Maybe this arm, and just this one time.” He held said arm up and she ensconced herself under it, also on her stomach with her face towards him. The blanket settled around their shoulders.

She smelled a lot like she’d just had rowdy sex. Which was perfect.

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Buffy blinked awake. Her husband had pushed the blanket off at some point, but she wasn’t cold as he’d obligingly wrapped himself around her. She felt a little squished, but mostly warm and loved. Well, and maybe a little sore. And a lot sticky.

Weak morning light was filtering through the RV’s blinds.

Spike was still fast asleep, his breath tickling her neck. Every morning should be like this. Her mind tried to sort through…oh, crap, it was Friday and they were supposed to be spending something like sixteen hours filming a bunch of short scenes between Asley and Isabelle. And her phone was turned off.

“Wake up!” she hissed, pushing at Spike.

“Uh…” He squeezed his eyelids closed. “No.”

“Yes! Filming, and I don’t know what time it is. We could be late.”

“We’re not late,” he groused, still not opening his eyes.

“How do you know?”

“Because they haven’t sent somebody to look for us yet.”

“Oh, er, okay.”

“What time is it?” One of his eyes finally popped open.

“I don’t know!”

“What’s the clock say?”

“What clock?”

Spike looked over toward the nightstand. “Must have fallen off.” He sat on the side of the bed and stretched briefly before standing up and padding into the trailer’s kitchen. Buffy forgot to worry for a minute as she watched him. “Microwave says 5:30, so we’re good, yeah?”

“Call’s at 7 so we’re okay, if we hurry, wash and get to wardrobe.”

Spike leaned against the doorway to the bedroom, his arms crossed and his lower lip sticking out.

“That probably means we can’t shower together, doesn’t it?”

“Spike! I’m going to be walking funny as it is.”

He perked up at that. “As long as your hips aren’t stiff.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Nothing.” He waved a hand. Buffy stood and went to squeeze past him to gather what was left of her clothes. His arms went around her and he dropped a kiss on the top of her head before letting her go. By the table, she found her skirt and pulled it on. Her top looked okay and she loosely did up the ties. Her hair was a hopeless tangled mess that only hot water and a lot of conditioner would solve. She couldn’t remember where her shoes had ended up. “Looking for these?” Her stilettos hung from his finger, and he was still naked. It was distracting. Her eyes followed the long, well-muscled length of his leg until…er, she needed to get back to her trailer.
Buffy frowned as he handed her the shoes. They were going to hurt.

“Here, wear these.” He’d pulled a pair of worn looking slippers out from under the table. They were too big, but would work to get her back to her trailer.

“Thank you.” She kissed him softly on the lips and hoped she looked as half as happy and satisfied as he did. “I’ll see you soon.”

Once outside she tried to mentally go over the day’s schedule and not think about what was going to happen when she turned her phone back on. Rounding the end of the row of trailers she nearly ran into Fred, who was dressed and probably on her way to makeup to get ready for Buffy.

“Morning!” Fred said cheerily. Buffy realized instantly that Fred had no idea about her and Spike.

“Uh, hi. Did you go to The Bronze last night?” she asked.

“No, I was feeling a bit low, figured I should catch a few z’s so I’d be all bright eyed and bushy tailed this morning.”

“Ah,” Buffy said.

“Not all of us can have quite so much fun as Spike did last night.”

Buffy wrinkled her nose as she felt embarrassment start to well up. “Huh?”

“I, for one, am glad he doesn’t usually bring girls home with him, because his whole trailer was rocking, and whatever chick he was having a go with had a set of pipes on her that…” Fred trailed off.

Buffy knew she was turning bright red, she could feel her cheeks burning. Fred looked her up and down and Buffy was suddenly more than aware of her tiny skirt, messy hair, and the fact that she was wearing slippers that weren’t hers.

“Oh,” Fred’s eyes widened. “Oh my. Buffy! That was…that was…”

Buffy raised her hand. “Guilty.” She was still blushing, but she really didn’t feel that bad.

“You…and Spike?” Fred looked completely lost.

“Me and Spike.” Buffy didn’t know what else to say, so she held up her hand with the ring on it. Fred’s eyes got even wider. “Um, I have to go get ready,” Buffy said. “For the shoot today. You should probably check your phone.”

Fred nodded mutely.

Buffy hurried towards her trailer, arriving right as a grey rental car pulled up. Willow jumped out, waving frantically. “Buffy!”

As fast as she could manage in her borrowed footwear, Buffy ran to hug her friend. “I didn’t know you were going to get here this early.”

Willow took a deep breath. “That’s because your phone is off.”

“Oh, yeah.”

“And what is with your hair, and what the jeepers are you wearing?” Willow said as she finally took
a good look at Buffy.

“I didn’t stay at my own place last night.”

“Oh.” There was a wealth of resignation in that word.

“C’mon, I have to wash my hair and get ready. If I’m late Hoss will kill me.” Buffy clattered into her trailer, Willow on her heels. Ditching her clothes in the back, she put a robe on and got the water running while she started her skin cleansing routine. “How was the flight?” she asked Willow through the door.

“It wasn’t bad. I had pretzels and they gave us breakfast. The guy I was sitting next to pretty much slept the whole way. In fact, it was great until I stepped off the plane and found that all my planning over the last few days with Giles had gone belly up because, apparently, you and Spike decided right now was a great time to tell everyone you’d gotten married.”

Buffy stepped into the tiny shower. “We didn’t want to wait anymore. It was driving us nutty.” There was barely room for her. Scrunching up her nose, she put her hands on the plastic wall and stood on her tiptoes, trying to imagine Spike…er…okay, she was a big girl—Spike fucking her like that. Geez, it’d be a tight fit. She giggled.

“Buffy?” Willow asked. “Are you even listening to me?”

Whoops, no. “We’re getting a new trailer next season, it’s supposed to be bigger. That’ll mean a bigger bathroom, too, right?”

“I, wow, you really weren’t listening.” There was a thud that Buffy thought might have been Willow’s head dropping against the door. “Buffy, I really need to know this, okay?”

“Okay.” Buffy frowned as she worked the tangles out of her hair. Willow sounded super serious. She was probably wearing her resolve face.

“Are you doing drugs?”

“Excuse me?” Buffy was stunned. She rinsed off her hair in record time and barely towel-dried herself before tossing her robe back on. Willow almost fell on her when Buffy yanked open the bathroom door.

“Are you?”

“I can’t believe you!” Buffy snapped. “How long have you known me? I took one hit off a joint in eleventh grade at that party Cameron had when his parents went out of town. I ate a bag of chips and fell asleep. That’s my entire experience with getting high!” She took a breath and looked at Willow’s concerned expression. “Is this about Spike?”

“Maybe?” Willow squeaked.

“He’s been clean for years.”

“That’s not what the tabloids say.”

“Really?” Buffy rolled her eyes. “Are you serious? Would these be the same tabloids that say I’m secretly a Russian spy and that I keep myself skinny by sacrificing goats?”

“Probably?”
“He’s clean. If you want to know who’s snorting his breakfast, look no further than my ex. Angel’s not only been enjoying the high life, he’s been screwing its patron saint behind my back. Here.” Buffy grabbed her phone off the counter, turned it on, and ignored all the notifications that went off. She pulled up the video of Angel and Drusilla having sex and handed her phone to Willow. Who stared in horror, gasped, and fumbled the phone. Buffy rescued it before it could hit the floor.

“Oh my god. What did you do?”

“I ran away and married someone else,” she said absently, watching the video play out. “You know, this looked a lot more impressive a month ago.”

Willow sat down at the kitchen table while Buffy threw on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt.

When she walked back out of the bedroom, Willow looked up. “Are you happy with him?” she asked softly.

Buffy grinned. “More than you can imagine.”

Willow stood up to accompany Buffy to wardrobe. “Yeah, you’re right, that bigger trailer should have a bigger bathroom.” Buffy patted Willow’s shoulder. That was probably the closest Willow would get to saying she was okay with Spike.

“Oh,” Buffy said as they stepped outside. “I also got out of my birth control clause because we accidently made a porno.”

Willow dropped her head into her hands. “I’m going to be gray-haired by tomorrow.”

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The day was going on forever and ever. Scene after little scene of Ashley and Isabelle together, touching, kissing, muttering words of love to each other or plans to meet later. Spike shifted restlessly, he was uncomfortably hot even though he was standing in the shade and dressed in nothing but trousers. The leather suspenders were still over his shoulders, but luckily he’d soon be shrugging them off.

It was late morning and they were doing an exterior shoot at the side of the plantation house where a water trough sat. There was a series of scenes based around the trough that were going to play out over several episodes, which meant costume changes for both him and Buffy.

Weirdly enough, no one had said anything about him and Buffy, but, bloody hell, everyone had been staring at them the whole buggering day. That morning he’d called Cordy, who’d alternated between congratulating him and telling him he was an idiot while Harm had asked nonstop questions in the background.

Then Giles had called and reamed him a new one. Spike had tried to just ignore it, but he’d ended up feeling like a naughty child who’d knocked over an old lady. He’d apologized and promised to never, ever doing anything ever again without talking to Giles first. The sense of shame had lasted until he’d caught Buffy’s eye as she’d floated on set in the yards and yards of material that made up her dress. She looked like she moved effortlessly, even under all that fabric. Not bothering to hide his appreciative gaze, Buffy blushed and smiled at him. Spike felt like the luckiest bloke in the world.

Hoss had called to Buffy and she’d turned towards him, leaving Spike looking at the scowling redhead that’d been walking next to her. It’d taken him a minute to place the girl. Willow, Buffy’s friend and manager. Judging from the glares he was on the receiving end of, she wasn’t exactly...
thrilled with him.

He’d been trying to break away to talk to Willow, but they’d moved from shot to shot, scene to scene nonstop. He’d have groused about the pace, but each tick of the second hand was a moment closer to when he could take Buffy home and wrap himself up in her.

The scene they were about to shoot would be in the first episode, Buffy…er, Isabelle, would watch him washing off in the trough. She’d come to call him in for dinner, but would be getting an eyeful instead. Ashley would notice her watching him. The next time was intentional on both characters’ parts. There was a scene where Isabelle would touch the water and drag her wet fingers over her arms, face and neck, and finally, much later in the season, they’d end up in the same position, only that time Ashley would screw Isabelle in the doorway, leaving her seconds before someone walked through it.

At last everything was nearly in place. Spike forced his fingers to stop twitching. He hadn’t had a cig in nearly three days and while the bloody patches helped with the cravings, they did sod all to help with the desire to do something with his hands and mouth. He glanced at Buffy, who was having her hair fussed with. Now there was something to do with his hands and mouth. It wouldn’t take much more than a tug and her titties would spill out the top of that dress…

“Marks!” Hoss yelled.

Damn.

He sauntered over the trough. Last minute adjustments to the cameras were made.

“Action!”

After a beat, Spike pulled the suspenders from his shoulders so they hung at his side. He dunked his head in the trough, coming up shaking and sputtering. Thankfully the water wasn’t cold. There was a soft gasp off to the side and, as they’d rehearsed, Spike slid his gaze that way. Buffy was standing in the doorway, eyes wide, her hands fisted in her dress and her pouty lower lip caught in her teeth.

Right, time to show off.

He took a ladle from where it hung on the edge of the trough and dunked it in the water. He let his head fall back and poured the water down his chest. It actually felt good running over his skin under the hot Georgia sun. He scooped another ladleful and poured this one over his back. The water traveled down his spine, leaving drops in its wake, to soak his trousers and make them cling to his backside. He hoped Buffy was watching.

There was the call to cut, and Buffy was hustled off for a costume change while the camera crew had him repeat the motions with the water so they could film close-ups. He did his best to mimic his exact movements, but it was a lot less fun without his girl there to watch him. At last they let him change into a new set of clothes and a dry wig.

This time Buffy and he were to be aware of each other. Spike waited until Buffy had exited the door and was standing there with eyes on him. With a cocky grin, he dunked his head and then threw it back, shaking of a shower of water droplets. He watched her as he poured the water over himself. She was panting slightly and massaging her breast through the bodice of her dress while her other hand gripped the doorframe. There was a slight sway to her skirts as she rubbed her thighs together. Her eyes were glazed over in a way that he didn’t think was acting. Slowly, he scooped up another ladle-full, tipping it so the water ran in rivulets over his chest and stomach. His other hand slid languidly down his damp torso, until he could hook a thumb into his waistband. He’d been a good
boy and had put not only underwear on that morning, but had gone so far as to secure his wayward
prick so he wouldn’t tent out the front of his trousers. Still, that didn’t mean there wasn’t a nice bulge
for his fingers to frame. Especially in the snug breeks he was in.

Buffy’s hand gripped her tit tighter and her eyes dropped to half-mast.

The call to cut came again. Sodding hell, Hoss was determined to ruin all his fun. Spike changed
quickly. He’d have a few minutes to spare now while Buffy filmed the scene that was just her and
then made another costume change. He hurried towards Willow, who had her back towards him and
was talking to Oz.

Oz looked more animated than Spike had ever seen him. “I bet you dinner,” Oz said. “That we’ll
only have to do a single take on the next Ashley and Isabelle scene.”

“So if you win…” Willow said.

Oz smiled. “I take you to dinner.”

“And if I win…”

“Then you take me to dinner.”

Wasn’t that cute. Spike cleared his throat and stepped up next to Willow. He stuck his hand out.
“Hello, you must be Willow, I wanted to meet you. I’m Spike.”

Willow eyed his hand, then shook it like she wanted to strangle it (or him). She scowled. “Hi.”

“What’s that look for, Red?” His fingers twitched. A smoke would be nice right about now.

“This is my you-ran-off-with-my-best-friend-and-married-her-and-I-don’t-even-know-you look,”
Willow huffed. Oz winked and walked back to where Hoss was yelling directions at somebody.

Spike didn’t know quite what to make of Willow’s words. “Uh, sorry?” He frowned. “But not
really?”

Willow poked him in the chest with a dagger-like forefinger. “If you hurt her I will hit you with a
shovel.”

“Warning taken.” Spike grinned. How could he be mad at anyone that had Buffy’s best interests at
heart?

“Which is nothing compared to what Faith would do.”

“Yeah, she’s kind of scary.”

Willow crossed her arms and continued to glare, though it was slightly less menacing now. Her
phone chimed and she pulled it out, blinking rapidly at the screen. “Huh?” she said before shoving it
in his direction. “Explain,” she demanded.

Spike gingerly took the phone like it might explode. It was a picture on Cordy’s Instagram account,
of Cordelia and Harmony with their arms around each other while they exchanged a kiss. The
caption read: Congrats to our friends Spike and Buffy on their wedding. Their courage in telling the
world about their love inspired us to do the same. To be clear, neither I, Cordelia, nor Harmony,
have ever slept with Spike Pratt. He covered up our relationship for us, because we were worried
about what the world would think. Well, think whatever you want, world. I love Harmony. -Cordelia
He read it again and could feel his face stretch into a wide smile. “It’s exactly what it says, pet.” Willow’s brow furrowed, like she couldn’t quite figure it out. There was a hand on his shoulder as Buffy came to stand beside him. He slipped an arm around her. “Look at this.” He handed her the phone.

Buffy squealed. “Yes! Good on them!”

“Do you have your phone?” he asked.

Guilty, she pulled it out of the front of her dress.

Spike knew better than to say anything about that. “Should we reply?”

She smiled, toying with the ends of her hair. “Same pose?”

“Same pose.”

Buffy beamed and handed both phones to Willow. “Can you do the honors?”

“Uh, sure.” Willow put her phone in her pocket and held up Buffy’s. Spike wound both arms around his wife and kissed her gently as they copied how Harm and Cordy had been posed. Willow took the pic and gave Buffy her phone back. As she was uploading the photo and a message supporting Cordy and Harm, Hoss walked over to their little group.

“We’re ready for you two,” he said with a jerk of his head towards the trough. “I’d give you the damned speech again about making sure it feels real, but fucking-A, we all know how that went last time. So just do your best.” He nodded to Willow and hurried off to talk to Xander, who had a monster of a camera sitting on his shoulder.

Spike went and stood by the trough, glad he only had to dunk his head one more time.

“Action,” Hoss bellowed.

As Buffy came out the door, this time closing it behind her, Spike plunged his head into the water. He stood up, drops cascading down his face. He stared at Buffy, then strode to her. He stopped an inch away. His heart was hammering in his chest, as if this was real, and his poor cock most certainly couldn’t tell the difference. It was straining at its confines, wanting to get to the girl. Buffy’s arms went about his neck and he was kissing her desperately while slamming her back against the door. Her fingers ripped open the front of his breeches as he pushed up her skirt. His hand dipped between their bodies, pretending to position himself. Roughly he slammed his hips into hers. Buffy moaned and he put his hand over her mouth, supposedly to keep her quiet. He buried his face against her sweet-smelling neck.

His prick was beyond confused. It was screaming at him that he’d forgotten a step in this whole endeavor.

Spike mouthed Buffy’s neck and sped up his thrusts as she writhed and whimpered against his palm. She faked an orgasm and a few seconds later he did the same. Panting, he sagged against her as she played with the little hairs on the back of his neck. Trying to act satisfied while he still had a raging hard-on was one of the most bloody difficult things he’d ever had to do. There was the sound of footsteps from inside the house and Buffy pushed him roughly away.

“Go!” she hissed.

Holding up his pants, he made it around the corner just as the door opened and a servant stuck his
head out, looking for Isabelle.

Hoss called ‘cut’ and Spike headed back around to where Buffy was. “That’s a wrap. Everyone’s got twenty minutes for lunch,” Hoss yelled. Ha! One take. That meant Oz would be taking Willow out for dinner. Which would hopefully put her in a better mood.

“Oh good, we should find Willow and-Oh!” Buffy yelped the last as Spike banged open the door to the house and dragged her inside. He quickly located what must have been a pantry or servant’s room and shoved her inside, locking the door behind him before mauling her mouth.

Buffy giggled and let him push her against the stone wall.

“Need you!” he groaned.

She pushed down his already sagging breeks along with his underwear. “Oh no!” Buffy exclaimed. “Oh, you poor thing! Let’s get you out of there.” It took Spike a minute to realize she was talking to his cock. He watched, slightly flummoxed, as she cooed and fussed over it as she undid the sodding contraption that had it tied down. He groaned in relief once he was free. Buffy, however still had her eyes on his prick as she stroked it gently. “That’s better, isn’t it? I’m sorry the mean man did that to you. Do you want to go home now?”

Spike frowned down at his erection as the eager thing happily twitched in Buffy’s grasp. “Do I need to leave you two alone?” he asked, his lower lip sneaking out a fraction.

His wife laughed and started pulling her skirt up. “Don’t tell me you’re jealous,” she teased.

“Well, no.” That’d be silly.

With a growl, he pushed her firmly against the wall and kissed her hard. She wrapped an arm around his neck while keeping her skirt raised with the other hand. He settled between her thighs and plunged himself inside her. They both paused and sighed.

As he started thrusting into her wet and welcoming heat he knew she was right: he was home.
Look out the window, down upon that street

-The Wallflowers, “6th Avenue Heartache”

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The hem of her black dress felt too short and Buffy nervously tugged it down. She didn’t know how Spike could be so calm as he sprawled on one of the couches in the greenroom for whatever trendy late-night show they were about to go on. She’d forgotten the host’s name, but remembered he had funny hair. The kicker was that not only was there an audience, but the show was being broadcast live as well. She had butterflies in her stomach and there was her husband, sipping on a bottle of water and looking as cool as a cucumber in his fancy black suit, black dress shirt, and red tie.

She did fine in front of a camera, but stuff in real time was much harder for her. If she made a mistake or said the wrong thing she couldn’t just start over. It was terrifying.

“You alright, luv?” Spike asked. She nodded, standing up and wrapping her arms around her middle. Laughter from the audience leaked into the greenroom as the show’s host joked his way through his opening monologue.

Belle had wrapped shooting more than a month ago and was in post-production. Since the show was a period drama that didn’t require a lot of CGI, it had a quicker turnaround time than other, special effects laden ones. Which meant that right after filming stopped, the promotion started. Doing promo was never her favorite thing, but at least Mr. Rayne had said Spike and she could do it together, and being in New York with him was fun. He’d taken her to some of the swankiest clubs and they’d stayed just long enough for her to feel cool without ending up exhausted. To top off the trip he’d somehow finagled time for the two of them alone at the top of the Empire State building. The sun had been setting and while the wind had been chilly, Spike had kissed her until she’d forgotten the cold, the building, and her own name.

After New York, they would fly to London to be on a couple of shows there. Spike had promised to take her to all the best non-touristy food joints, but their schedule was so jam-packed there wasn’t going to be a lot of time for sightseeing. Then it would be onto Los Angeles for the big premier. Which Faith couldn’t attend. She was scheduled to be on a location shoot that week.

Buffy had wanted to punch something. It seemed impossible to get her sisters and Spike in the same place at the same time. Dawn hadn’t even talked to him yet. It was driving her nuts. She wanted all of the most important people in her life to know one another and be in the same place at the same time, but she was going to have to be patient. Once all the promotional stuff was done and Belle was airing, Spike and she had plans for their much-delayed wedding celebration party. Faith had vacation, Dawn would be on winter break, and the Dingoes tour would be wrapped up. Everyone should be able to make it. They had better make it.

The audience applauded loudly and the stage director beckoned to Spike, who lazily stood and sauntered over towards the stage entrance. He dropped a kiss on the top of her head as he walked by. The plan was for Spike to go on first, then her. There’d be some talk about their relationship and then they’d premier the trailer for Season 4 of Belle.

Buffy glanced at the TV showing the live feed. It was a commercial for some fast food joint. She wondered how much that spot had cost the company. The show came back on and the host joked
about something with his announcer before introducing Spike. She watched her husband take a deep
breath and settle his public persona over himself. At the stage director’s signal, he started to jog out
on stage, waving at the crowd. Then he stopped, looked confused, and held up a finger towards
them. He rushed back into the greenroom and grabbed her wrist, dragging her along behind him
before she or the stage manager could so much as squawk a protest. The crowd went crazy.

Spike sat down in the chair next to the host’s desk and pulled her into his lap so she was sitting
sideways, facing the host. Spike looped his arm around her and squeezed. The host’s eyebrows were
sky high, but he was too much of a professional to let Spike’s antics faze him. Once the crowd
quieted down he greeted them and smoothly shifted into interview mode. He asked Spike some
questions about shooting Belle, leading up to one about the tornado.

“I’m very glad that while there was a bloody lot of property damage, no one lost their life,” Spike
said, “because I owe that storm a great deal.”

“Oh?” The host, who really did have funny hair, asked. “And why is that? Care to elaborate?
Buffy?”

It was the first question lobbed her way. She smiled shyly. “Because we were trapped together that
night. It gave us a chance to talk.”

“Just talk?”

“As far as you know, mate,” Spike said with a grin.

Buffy rolled her eyes. “Just talk,” she emphasized.

The host rocked back in his chair. “The world in general has fallen in love with you two and your
whirlwind romance, pun intended.”

Spike stroked her shoulder. The court of public opinion had generally been in their favor. As Giles
had predicted, what people loved more than a bad boy was a bad boy who had reformed because of
love.

“Probably because it seems so genuine,” the host continued.

“It is genuine,” Spike said evenly. His grip tightened a fraction around her.

“But, Spike,” the host steepled his fingers, “for years now you’ve been the party guy. Sex, drugs,
and rock-n-roll. Just last night you and Buffy attended a party in Manhattan, and here’s the internet
headline.” A webpage appeared on a screen behind them. Trouble in Paradise? It read, with an
older picture of an obviously sloshed Spike and one of her frowning. She couldn’t remember when
that had been taken. Her brow furrowed. “You look upset, Buffy,” the host said. She thought she
detected the tiniest bit of glee in his voice.

“It’s just such an unflattering picture,” she said with a sigh. “Though at least I’m not wearing
overalls.” The crowd laughed. Spike and she had gone to the party. They’d shaken hands, smiled,
taken a few pictures, and walked right out the back door to a waiting car. They’d been there for less
than twenty minutes. It’d been a company affair for the network that Belle South aired on, so they’d
been contractually required to show up whether they wanted to or not.

Spike had whisked her away to have dinner at some extremely fancy restaurant that boasted a private
dining area. There’d been some of the best wine she’d ever tasted, and she might have had a glass (or
two) too many, because she’d giggled the entire way back to their hotel room on the millionth floor
of whatever building and then let Spike have his way with her up against the windows that
overlooked Central Park.

The host was shifting his eyes between the two of them. “The article talks about you, Spike, doing lines in the bathroom with a few other, uh, people, while Buffy was left by her lonesome.”

Spike casually leaned back, though the tension she could feel in his legs belied his relaxed pose. “Do you believe everything you read on the internet?” he asked with a raised eyebrow. “I’ve been clean for years. I just never cared much what the gossip mongers were saying, least before now.”

“True.” The host nodded. “You’ve recently brought suits against a couple of tabloids, correct?”

“Once it stopped just being about how I was snorting more powder than you’d find on an alpine ski run and started being about the two of us, it wasn’t funny anymore.”

The host nodded. “So you wouldn’t mind if we drug tested you? Right here and now? I’ve brought in a lab to do the honors.”

A man walked out wearing rubber gloves and bland expression. He had a plastic cup in his hands. Spike looked as confused as she felt. This had totally not been part of the plan for the segment. The smug look on the host’s face irritated her.

“No worries,” Spike whispered in her ear. “I got this.” He helped her up and then stood himself. “If you want to piss test me, then no problem. I’ve got nothing to hide.” Spike took the cup, turned his back on the crowd, and started undoing his fly. Buffy’s eyes went wide. Oh my god, he wasn’t going to…

She darted a glance at the host, whose smug expression was gone. He looked almost terrified. Well, good, he’d obviously lost control of the situation. The crowd hooted and roared.

The poor lab guy didn’t quite know where to look, but Buffy couldn’t help watching as her husband peed in a cup on live TV. He tucked himself away, handed the cup to the bewildered technician, and did himself back up. Sitting down in the chair again he pulled Buffy back into his lap. She knew her face was fire engine red.

The host gaped for a second before recovering himself. “You okay there, Buffy?” he asked as she buried her face against Spike’s shoulder.

“I think I’m going to die of embarrassment,” she said. Spike chuckled. He leaned forward and nabbed a bottle of hand sanitizer sitting on the desk, using it and then petting her back. She knew he was completely unremorseful, the jerk.

The show went to commercial. There was a pause and then the host smiled apologetically. “Uh, sorry,” he said. “My producers can kind of be jerks.” Spike grunted and shrugged a shoulder. “Are you sure you’re doing alright there, Buffy?” the guy asked, more concern in his voice than before. Apparently, he mostly played being an ass on TV.

“My husband just peed in front of millions of people while I watched. This is real embarrassment, not fake stuff for the cameras.”

“Oh, you love me,” Spike said, amusement in his voice.

She sat up and looked him in the face with narrowed eyes. “Well, yeah, but you’re so getting it later, mister.”

“Is that a promise?” he drawled.
“Oh, you…” she sputtered.

Spike laid his head on her shoulder and gazed adoringly at her while he ran his fingers through her hair. It was impossible to stay upset with him when he acted like that. By halfway through the commercial break, while the host conferred with his team, she found she’d completely forgiven him for embarrassing her like that. He was lucky he was so cute.

The lab was quick and the technician was back with a results printout twenty seconds before commercials ended. The theme music blared and the host welcomed viewers back. He accepted the printout and his eyes skimmed down the page and he shook his head.

“Clean as a whistle,” he said. The crowd applauded.

“Told you,” Spike said good naturedly.

“Shall we talk about the new season of Belle South?” the host asked, and just like that things were back on script. He asked the expected questions and they gave the expected answers. After the trailer premier, however, interviews might get trickier, because by morning the rumor that the sex scene was real was going to be all over the internet. At least Mr. Rayne had had the decency to warn them.

The host asked Spike about Ashley and the character’s justification for committing adultery with his brother’s wife. It was a good question, because Ashley had always seen himself as a very just man.

“He does struggle with it, yeah,” Spike said. “But when it comes down to it, he loves her, and in his mind that love, and the fact that she returns it, overrides all of society’s rules. If they weren’t meant for each other, then why do they have these feelings? It might not be correct thinking, but it’s what Ashley believes, how he feels.”

“Love trumps all?” the host said, tilting his head at them as Spike smiled and rested his forehead against hers.

“Love trumps all,” she whispered.

The host pursed his lips. “And what about Isabelle?”

“Isabelle thought, when she met Leslie and when she married him, that she was making this great love match. She had stars in her eyes. Now, for two season, those stars that were blinding her have been slowly ripped away. Leslie has been marginalizing her. He wanted a showpiece, not a real wife.” Buffy sighed. “And she’s not completely ignorant of what he does in the slave quarters, though she doesn’t know he’s often…forceful. Isabelle still wants what she desired in the first season: to be loved. But she’s lost hope.” She softly petted Spike’s neck. “When Ashley shows up and starts giving her the love she craves, she falls for him hard. Her marriage no longer feels real. When her relationship with Ashley becomes physical, it’s not even adultery to her, because her marriage is dead.”

The host nodded. He looked impressed that she’d thought about her character that much. Buffy narrowed her eyes. Spike might have the Emmy, but she was no slouch when it came to her part.

The host was saved from her shooting a question back at him as the screen behind them came to life once more, this time with Belle South spelled out in elegant script. “Who’s ready to see this?” the host called. The crowd bellowed in response. He turned his attention back to them. “You haven’t seen this yet either, have you?” the host asked.

“It’s new to us, too,” Buffy said and Spike nodded his agreement.
Belle’s theme music played over the opening shot of the Lyons plantation. There was a series of quick cuts, hinting at the drama playing out in the main house and in the slave quarters. Among them were even a few shots of Leslie coming to the swollen river and his horse losing its footing midstream. Buffy was glad neither she nor Spike had been required to have anything to do with that arduous shoot. It’d taken nearly a week of soggy filming to get everything just right.

The screen went dark and there was the unmistakable sound of her and Spike…oh dear. There was a flurry of images of them locked passionately together, capped off with his hand on her throat and face as he slipped his thumb into her mouth. The screen went dark again. “I love you, Isabelle,” Spike’s voice rumbled. The theme music trailed off and the words Belle South, Season 4, Starts December First, popped up along with the network’s logo.

Buffy felt a little stunned, because, cripes, that was them really getting it on. Spike looked just as dumbfounded. The talk show wrapped up quickly after that. The host thanked them for being there, yelled at the crowd to watch Belle South, and then it was over. She was in a daze as she followed Spike through the maze of backstage rooms and out to the waiting limo.

“Traffic’s terrible,” the driver said apologetically as they settled in. “It’s probably going to take most of an hour to get you guys back to the hotel.”

“Make sure it does.” Spike’s voice was hoarse as he tossed a wad of cash onto the seat next to the driver and closed the divider between the front and back. In the next instant, he’d pulled Buffy onto his lap so that she was straddling him and was pawing at her like he hadn’t seen her in a year. “Want you, kitten,” he moaned.

“What brought this on?” she giggled as his lips hungrily kissed down her throat and his hands crept under her skirt.

“Just…that was bloody us, luv. Fucking. In front of everyone. I hadn’t really thought about it before. The whole world seeing you and me…” He groaned and pushed his hips against hers, the hardness of his erection teasing her clit.

Buffy pulled back and looked down at him with a bemused smile. “Is there something I should know? Are you secretly an exhibitionist?” she teased.

“Sodding hell, no. That’s not what–” He paused to pant as she undid the front of his trousers and stroked his cock. “Everyone’s going to see me loving you,” he finally said, his voice rough. “For so long I loved you and no one could see it. I couldn’t let anyone see it. And now…god, Buffy.” His fingers yanked aside the crotch of her panties and one experimentally tested her opening. Finding her wet and ready, he fisted his dick and pushed the head inside her. With a relieved sigh, Buffy sank down fully onto him.

She paused, one hand clutching his shoulder as he looked up at her with awe on his face. No more secrets. Everyone knew, everyone saw. He was hers and she was his, and the whole world was aware. Spike’s eyes went wide as she grabbed his expensive red silk tie and wrapped it around her fist. She yanked at him so he was forced to sit forward and dropped her mouth until it hovered right over his. Her hips rolled and Spike moaned, his cock jerking as she squeezed him tight. “Kiss me,” she ordered, tugging a little harder on the tie.

With a happy sounding growl, he obliged. His lips were demanding and his tongue even more so. It swirled around her mouth, leaving nothing untouched. She stroked his probing tongue with her own as her hips found a rhythm. The limo lurched and pulled out into traffic.

Buffy felt ridiculously turned on. They were in the back of a limo, on a New York street. She could
hear the bells of bike messengers as they whizzed by and the raised voices of people arguing on the sidewalk, all while her husband was grunting and slamming his cock into her. His hands were on her ass, gripping her tightly as they moved together. Letting go of his tie, she hung onto both of his shoulders for support. She hoped her stupidly expensive designer dress would survive, though considering how hard she was fisting his tailored suit jacket, it was never going to be the same.

Spike groaned loudly and his lips trailed wet kisses over her jaw and down her throat, She let her head fall back and her eyes close as the tension in her belly spiraled higher.

“God you feel good,” Spike muttered against her skin.

Buffy smiled. “Tell me.”

“Hot, tight, wet…mine. Love being inside you, fucking you, making you come. Want to be balls deep in your…slick little cunt all the time. Christ, Buffy, love you.”

“Love you too,” she gasped. “You…” She meant to say something about how wonderful his cock felt as it filled and stretched her, but her orgasm caught her first. Her inner muscles clamped down, her limbs shook, and a long, low moan escaped her throat. Her breath left her. When she finally returned to earth she slumped forward, panting. Spike had stilled and was softly caressing her back.

“Oh, luv, you look so amazing when you come. You sound so amazing. Could watch you do that all bloody day.”

“As much as I think I’d like that, I’d rather it was your turn.” Buffy winced at the crumpled state her hands had left his jacket in, and she was pretty sure his tie was never going to lie flat again.

Spike’s lips curved into a grin. “You drive a bleeding hard bargain, but I supposed I can be convinced.” He nuzzled against her ear. “Want to take you hard and fast.” His hand slid into her hair.

A breathy sigh left her and she nodded.

With a groan, Spike twisted them so she was flat on her back on the limo’s leather seat. He pushed his pants further down his legs as she hooked one knee over a headrest and let the other fall open. He plowed into her raggedly, while his lips met hers in a bruising kiss. Her arms went around his back, holding him close.

Her stomach tightened as she felt another climax start to build. “Oh,” she exhaled, but then she couldn’t breathe at all as her hips moved in their own demanding, staccato rhythm. “William,” she cried hoarsely into his mouth as she peaked.

“Buffy, my Buffy,” he moaned in response. He jackhammered into her, his hips a flurry of movement. He was breathing harshly as sweat gathered on his temples. His forehead furrowed, his eyes closed, and with a last, hard thrust he came. His head fell to her shoulder as he shuddered through his bliss. Inside her, his cock jerked as he flooded her with come.

They lay twined together as they caught their breath, eventually helping each other to sit up and straighten clothing. Dimly, she was aware there were still honking horns and other sounds of the city around them.

When the limo arrived at the underground entrance to the hotel, with its exclusive set of elevators, both she and Spike woozily tumbled out of the car and rode up to their suite. Fancy clothes were exchanged for sweatpants and t-shirts. She gathered her hair up into a loose bun.

Spike played a game on his computer while she put her feet up and read a magazine article about
rescuing animals. It nearly made her cry. Buffy tried to do the math, because it didn’t seem like she should be having PMS yet. She rubbed her nose to make sure her skin wasn’t oily. It really couldn’t have been long enough. She didn’t think she could handle another period already. The last time Spike had found her sobbing and clutching a box of tampons on the bathroom floor. He’d told her not to worry, they’d only been trying for a baby for about twenty-five seconds, and had coaxed her out with the promise of hot chocolate.

He really was the best.

Dinner was salads brought by room service, along with some kind of bottled water that probably cost more than what the guy bringing it to them made in a week. Even though she could afford it, and Willow had nearly fallen over when she’d seen how much Buffy’s salary was on the new contract, it still weirded her out. Enough that she’d shoved the bottle in the fridge and drunk tap water instead.

Afterwards, they stood at the twin sinks in what she was sure was the most ridiculously appointed bathroom ever. (Seriously, there were gold inlays on the toilet.) She handed Spike the toothpaste and then laughed.

He raised an eyebrow. “What?”

“Us,” she said. “I’m happy. I like us. I hate to say the name, so I’ll go with ‘my jerky ex’— we never did things like this. I can’t even imagine brushing my teeth in front of him.”

Spike screwed up his face. “What did you do?”

“Well, the very few times we stayed together, I always had a fancy nightgown, and anything as mundane as brushing my teeth I would have done alone. I would have drifted out of the bathroom with my makeup and hair looking as perfect, as if I was about to go on stage. Plus, we would have separate beds. Couldn’t risk me elbowing him, and there was a good chance he wouldn’t be there three-quarters of the time anyway, important meetings, blah, blah, blah.”

Spike was holding his toothbrush and looking bewildered. “I think he might actually be insane. Who wouldn’t want to curl up with you? To hold you every second they could?”

She shrugged. It still hurt that she’d ever thought Angel had loved her, or that she had loved him, but she understood now that it wasn’t her fault. Buffy suspected Spike might tip the scales a little too far the other way, but since her first relationship had been such a disaster, she figured it all balanced out in the end.

“Nutter,” Spike mumbled.

Buffy’s eyes landed on her phone which was sitting on the bathroom counter. “Teeth-brushing selfie?” she asked.

“If you say so,” he said in his best long-suffering voice, though his eyes were twinkling. They both brushed vigorously to work up foam before making faces in the mirror while she snapped a couple of pictures. After rinsing, Spike picked up the TV remote to the set in the bedroom and started flipping through channels while she picked her favorite of the silly pics to put on Instagram.

“What’re you going to put as a caption?” he asked.

“That being on the show today was fun, but this is how we really live.”

He chuckled. “No mention of fucking like wild animals in the back of a rented limo?”
“Spike!” she admonished, squeaking when he snagged her and pulled her into a hug.

“Love every day with you, kitten.”

“Me too.”

“Now…” He let her go and flopped onto the bed, scooting up until he was sitting against the headboard. “How about *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*?”

She cuddled in next to him, laying her head on his shoulder as he put his arm around her. “Did you say 'Abe Lincoln'?"

“No, I didn’t say 'Abe Lincoln', I said 'Hey Blinkin’.'”

They both snickered.

“And why should the people listen to you?” She bit her lip and looked up into his face. It hadn’t occurred to her before that her husband was perfect for this line. Though secretly she thought he was pretty much perfect for everything except sun tanning.

He chuckled. “Because, unlike some other Robin Hoods, I can speak with an English accent.”

Buffy snort-laughed and Spike kissed her nose. It was perfect.
Weaving time in a tapestry

-Simon & Garfunkel, "A Hazy Shade of Winter"

****

It seemed like every last radio station in South Carolina was playing Christmas music. Buffy picked one at random as she pulled the Cadillac away from the airport’s arrivals area. Faith was beside her in the passenger seat and Dawn was in the back.

The quiet lasted all of five seconds.

“Okay, Buffy, spill,” Faith said, crossing her arms.

“Like, now,” Dawn said from the backseat. “And seriously, why was I the last to know?”

Buffy knew she wasn’t getting out of this. Maybe she should have brought Spike for backup, though he was currently occupied with taking care of the guests that’d already arrived at the beach house.

“Uh, well, we didn’t want anyone to know and you have a tendency to blab, Dawn,” she said.

“I do not! I would never… I’m sorry.” Dawn took a deep breath. “Ugh. I want my sister, not Instagram photos and text messages. Buffy, you got married and you didn’t tell us! And I promise, cross my heart, needle in my eye and everything that I won’t tell anyone anything.”

Buffy glanced in the review mirror at her little sister, who wasn’t so little anymore. Dawn was slumped down, her face screwed up like she was thirty seconds from tears. “Okay, look, this goes for both of you. What we talk about in this car and during this trip stays just between us. Summers’ sister pact. I swear to god if I ever see any of this printed anywhere I will disown you both.”

“Got it!” Dawn squeaked.

“Ditto.” Faith smiled. “Now, I’m serious, I need info. Y’know, when I gave you that Playgirl it wasn’t so you could use it as a catalogue.”

Dawn giggled and Buffy’s stomach sank. “Thanks for reminding me that everybody in the freaking universe has seen my husband’s penis. I might have forgotten for about twenty-five seconds.”

Faith turned to look at Dawn. “Spike so put black sheets on his bed to seduce her.”

Dawn giggled again.

“That had nothing to do with it,” Buffy grumbled. So what if she still regularly put black sheets on the bed? It didn’t mean anything.

Faith kicked off her shoes and put her feet on the dash. “So, can he use it or is it all just for show?”

Buffy opened and closed her mouth soundlessly a few times. “I know you did not just ask that!” she sputtered.

“Did too. And you’re the one that said he banged half of–“
“Stop right there,” she barked. “I was wrong, really wrong about that. I’m not saying he doesn’t have a history, but the fast girls stopped along with the drugs. In fact, when we…uh…when…I’m pretty sure he hadn’t been with anyone in for a while when…”

“When he fucked you?” Faith supplied.

Buffy felt her face turn crimson. “Yeah, that.” She had to remind herself not to say something about Faith swearing in front of Dawn, who wasn’t a little kid anymore. She was in her second year of college in Rome and Buffy didn’t want to think about Italian boys and her sister being anywhere near each other.

“You still didn’t answer my question,” Faith prompted.

“Oh, fine. You want to know?”

Faith poked Buffy’s shoulder with a finger. “Uh-huh, that’s what I’ve been trying to drag out of you.”

“He’s a god and I’m surprised I still have the ability to walk.”

Dawn squealed and when Buffy glanced at Faith her sister’s eyebrows were sky-high.

“Better than Angel, then?” Faith finally said.

Buffy sighed. “There’s no real comparison there.”

“But you did sleep with Angel, didn’t you?” Dawn asked.

“Yeah,” Buffy bit her lip. “It’s just…he was kind of weird, about stuff.”

There was silence for a minute.

“Buffy,” Faith’s voice was nearly a whisper and Buffy had to strain to hear her over the chorus of Jingle Bells that was coming from the radio. “I always wondered…” she trailed off.

“Yes,” Buffy said. “It wasn’t physical, but yes.”

“I’m sorry.” Faith took a deep breath. “I should have done more, something…anything.”

Dawn leaned forward and put her hand on Buffy’s shoulder.

“It’s not your guys’ fault. I didn’t even know how bad it had gotten. He’d say such horrible things to me and I’d think it was my fault. He’d lie through his teeth and I’d buy it. Like after the night I got stuck with Spike during the tornado? I really didn’t do anything with Spike besides talk, but Angel said some pretty disgusting stuff to me on the car ride home. As if it was my fault there was a tornado, or that the only person that cared enough to look for me in The Bronze was Spike. And to top it off, when even Angel realized he’d crossed the line, he lied to me.”

“What’d he say?” Dawn asked.

“The icky stuff or the lie?”

“The lie, doofus.” Buffy could almost hear Dawn rolling her eyes. “I don’t want to know what gross things Angel said.”

“He said something about a girl he’d worked with on an unaired pilot. Supposedly, Spike had
seduced her and then basically forced her to get high with him. Later on, this girl died of an overdose. Angel even looked all sad while he told me this sob story, but I think he forgot I know his career as well as he does. No show, released or not, that he’s worked on, had a female star or co-star that’s ever died of anything drug related. I knew that almost instantly. It took me a little longer to admit it to myself.” Buffy took a deep breath. “And even having only talked to Spike that one night, I knew that wasn’t what he was like.”

There was another pause.

“Well.” Faith finger combed her hair. “What are you and the sex-god up to at the moment besides having Christmas parties?”

Buffy grinned. “Trying to have a baby.”

Dawn let out another ear-piercing squeal and Buffy winced.

“Well shit, you two really don’t waste any time, do you?” Faith smacked the center console. “How’d you get out of your contract?”

“Uhh,” Buffy hedged.

“No, uhh…oh my damn fucking god, B! Please tell me that rumor isn’t true?”

Buffy tried for innocent. “No?” It didn’t work.

“Eww! I saw the trailer!” Dawn shrieked. “My friends saw the trailer!”

“You did him on camera? I’m actually kind of impressed, sis.”

“It was an accident,” Buffy mumbled. “You realize if I die of embarrassment the car will crash, right?”

“Why do you even still have this monstrosity?” Faith asked. “Didn’t Angel make you buy it?”

“It’s an automatic and it’s…useful.” Buffy looked straight ahead, because Spike had somehow grown attached to the backseat and she kept finding herself face down on it. “It fit all the luggage, didn’t it?”

Faith laughed. “B, I hate to tell you this, but you’re more transparent than cling wrap.”

“What?” Dawn asked.

Buffy threw up hands, then quickly grabbed the steering wheel again. “Okay, Faith. Have it your way. It has a big backseat that’s perfect for sex!”

Faith laughed.

“Ew!” Dawn exploded. “I’m sitting back here! I can’t get out!”

Faith turned so she was looking at Dawn. “Do you think Buffy bleaches her kitchen counters? And probably every other surface in the house?”

“Uh, gross!” Dawn made a face that Buffy caught in the review mirror. “Is the entire trip going to be like this?”

Buffy groaned. “Don’t make me turn this car around.”
****

Spike shifted his weight nervously from foot-to-foot as he sipped on his second—third?—beer and watched Buffy’s Cadillac work its way up the drive. She’d called a minute ago to tell him she was back from the airport with her sisters. The party itself, to belatedly celebrate the wedding, was already underway. The weather was cooperating and the ocean was at high tide, the surf a comforting rumble in the background. Xander was barbequing something and the meaty aroma wafted along with the sea breeze.

_Belle_ had premiered a couple of weeks ago on December 1st and the critics were in love, but more importantly, the audience adored it. The internet was awash in _Belle South_ memes, hash tags, and every episode brought a fresh wave of buzz. And the rumor about the sex scene was being speculated on by all and sundry. Everyone had an opinion and the episode hadn’t even aired yet.

He fidgeted, picking at the label on the beer bottle, as Buffy parked and got out. Faith exited from the passenger side, taking nonstop, and Dawn unfolded herself from the back, looking goggle-eyed at the house. This was it. Her family. Right. He needed to make a good impression. He set the bottle down and hurried down the steps to say hello and help with luggage.

He reached the bottom and all three girls turned around simultaneously to look at him. He pulled to a halt and waved. “Hi?”

Both Dawn and Faith crossed their arms and glared. It must be a patented Summers move. Buffy strode determinedly to his side. She put a hand on his back and pushed. “C’mon, they won’t bite… well, Faith might.”

He gulped. Christ, he was going to mess this up and then she’d pick her family over him and–

Get a grip, he told himself. Buffy wasn’t going anywhere. He walked forward and tried to smile and stuck his hand out. “I’m Spike, it’s nice to finally meet you and we’re really glad you could be here.” He darted a glance at Buffy, who beamed and patted his back.

Faith scowled at him for a moment longer before a grin spread over her face and she hugged him. “Welcome to the family, bro!” She squeezed a little harder before letting him go. “Damn, he’s got actual muscles. You sure can pick ’em, B.” Buffy blushed. “And you’re not Angel, so that’s a bonus.” He didn’t know how to respond to that one. “Buffy was telling me you watch Sunnydale Memorial?” He nodded warily. “You know how Dr. Jo just woke up? Wait until you get a load of the new storyline. It’s sweet, I’ll fill you in later. Oh, and Buffy, Riley says hi.”

Buffy groaned and put a hand on her face. His brows drew together and his hand landed possessively on his wife’s hip.

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Faith laughed. “You don’t need to worry, brother. Riley’s as exciting as watching dried paint get even drier. Though I think he might have made a frowny face when I explained to him that Buffy really had married you, Spike. It’s more expression than he’s managed on the show in five years.” Faith slung her arm around Buffy’s shoulders and the two headed up the stairs, chattering away.

Which left him with Dawn and a mountain of luggage. The younger girl was still glaring. “Hi,” he tried again.

“Why’d you marry my sister?” she asked, eyes searching his face. He hesitated. “It’s a simple question. One minute I get endless messages about Angel this and Angel that and here’s a picture of Buffy and Angel, and then it’s radio silence, and suddenly she’s married to you. I,” she pointed at her chest, “got about a million text messages and phone calls that day from my friends and I didn’t
“Sorry, pet. Didn’t mean to make things difficult for you. I love your sis. I can’t imagine a world without her in it. I’ve loved her for a long time, thought I’d never get the time of day from her, and then suddenly she’s in my life and everything was happening so fast and it was all perfect. We barely came up for air those first few weeks. Now I’m trying to get all the pieces in place, I want you to be happy too.” He looked around and dropped his voice. “I’m working on a present for her birthday and was hoping you could help me while you’re here.”

Dawn looked intrigued. “What is it?”

“I, uh.” He scratched the back of his neck. “I wrote her a song, but I only play guitar and sing. I heard you were quite the musician. I thought maybe you could help with working out the rest, maybe lay down some of the instrumental tracks? I’ve got a recording studio here. But you have to keep it a secret, I want to surprise her.”

Dawn nodded solemnly. “You can trust me.”

“I knew I could.” He smiled at the girl and she smiled back. “Now go see what your sisters are up to. I guess it falls on me to carry in the luggage.” Dawn ran off, brushing by Xander as he walked out onto the top step.

“Anya sent me out here to help. With…oh.” His lips quirked to the side as he caught sight of the pile of luggage. “Did they bring a kitchen sink, too?”

“I think it might be in the big suitcase.” Spike grunted as he hefted a couple of the bags. “Along with their brick collection.”

“Ah.” Xander’s shoulders slumped, but he gamely picked up a couple of bags and hauled them up the steps. Once they were all inside, Spike nabbed two beers from the fridge and popped the tops. As they both gulped down the drinks, Anya appeared with Buffy from the door that led down to the pool.

“Wait here,” Anya said and scurried off. Spike raised an eyebrow but Xander just shrugged. A minute later Anya returned with a large padded envelope. “Do you have a hammer?”

“Sure,” Spike said, puzzled as he led them out to the garage. Xander let out a whistle as he took in all the cars.

“That one’s mine!” Buffy said to Anya, pointing at the Ferrari FF.

“Good choice, unlike many imports the hood is smooth and is an excellent surface to have sex on.” Anya nodded sagely. Buffy’s ears turned pink and Spike knew his matched.

“Oh, here’s the work bench,” he said, hoping he didn’t sound as awkward as he felt. “What’s the hammer for?”

Anya upended the envelope and several hard drives and two unmarked, black DVD cases slid out.

“Are those what I think they are, Ahn?” Xander asked.

“They are if you think they’re the drives with the recording of Buffy and Spike having sex on them.”

“Ah, I’m right then.”
“What about the DVDs?” Buffy asked.

Anya smiled. “When I edited the footage for TV I also made a hardcore version for you and Spike. I thought you might like to watch it together now, or maybe when you’re older and less attractive.”

“Ahn,” Xander said, aghast.

“You mean when I’m fat and bald?” Spike said, catching Buffy’s eye.

“And I’m grey haired and wearing bifocals?” She grinned. Spike knew he’d have to wait until after the holidays to see what was on the DVD, but he had an inkling that watching himself shag his wife was just going to lead to her getting shagged more. Darn. Would she let him play it on the big downstairs TV with the surround sound?

“See, honey,” Anya whispered, not very softly, to Xander. “They understand.”

“Thank you,” Buffy said, setting aside the cases. “And we get to destroy the drives?”

“Yes,” Anya confirmed. “And I promise you no copies were made. I worked solely from those drives on a computer not connected to the internet.”

“Thank you.” Spike picked up a hammer and handed it to Buffy before grabbing one for himself. “Ladies first.” With a grin, she smashed the hammer down on a drive. After a few more blows he joined in, glad to put the worry of those images ending up somewhere unexpected behind them.

When they were finished and the pieces swept into a bin, Buffy grabbed the DVDs and ran upstairs to put them away. Spike followed Xander and Anya back down to where the party was in full swing by the pool.

Oz had taken over grill duty and Willow was sitting on a chair nearby talking with him. Hoss hadn’t been very happy to lose his assistant but Tara had stepped up in a big way, and from what Willow said, Oz had a calming effect on the Dingoes that had sorely been lacking. He was also excellent at chilling out Willow. Spike was about 60 percent sure that Willow no longer wanted him to fall off a cliff most days.

Cordelia and Harmony were in the pool, floating on plastic inflatable chairs with drink holders. Cordelia was scheduled to start filming another big blockbuster soon, and it turned out that while nobody had wanted a perky best friend in a sitcom last fall, this spring everybody wanted a perky, lesbian best friend. In other words, coming out had done nothing to hurt the girls’ careers. It had sent the number of subscribers to their Instagram accounts soaring however, since there were just as many sexy pictures as before, but now they took them together.

Music was blaring from a set of speakers, and it looked like Dawn had taken over being the DJ. She caught his eye and winked at him. He winked back. After being so worried, Spike was certain he and Dawn were going to get along like houses on fire.

Xander and Anya had grabbed more beer and were talking to Faith, who was animatedly telling a story. Giles had even looked up from the book he was reading to listen.

A hand brushed his back and he turned to smile at his wife.

His wife.

It still seemed like a bloody miracle. Both her and being here with their friends and family.
Last year at this time he’d been at the beach house too, but with nobody but the gulls to keep him company. He’d believed he’d been useless except as a commodity to be bought and sold, a handsome face to sell booze or cars.

He wondered what he’d sell now. Family sedans?

“What are you thinking about?” Buffy asked as she leaned against him.

He wrapped an arm around her. “Cars with big back seats.”

She laughed. “You’re impossible, but I love you.”

“I love you, too, wife.” He kissed her, and her lips were sweeter than wine.

****

As fun as spending time with everybody was, Buffy was relieved when the bedroom door at last clicked closed behind her. She locked it. Spike was pulling his shirt off and happily humming a tune to himself that she didn’t recognize. Kicking off her pumps, she wiggled her toes, glad to be free. Spike, barefoot in his jeans, caught her hand and pulled her into a hug.

“This is nice, having everyone here,” he said as she rested her head on his shoulder. She nodded her agreement, thinking of the surprise she had tucked away in her drawer for him. Buffy was almost entirely sure he had no idea about it.

“This is nice, too,” she whispered, running a hand over his chest. Spike took a step back from her, then slowly sank to his knees, watching her with hooded eyes. “Have you been thinking about this all day?” she asked with a raised eyebrow. Almost shyly, he nodded. “Huh. Stay there.” She walked past him and opened the window, snapped the light on her nightstand on, and turned her back to him as she freed her hair from its confines. She pulled off her blouse, undid her bra, and pushed her jeans down her legs.

Only wearing a pair of white panties, she stepped out of the legs of her jeans and returned to stand in front of her husband again. He was gazing at her adoringly and front of his jeans was barely containing his erection. She ran a hand through her hair and found the ends knotted from the sea breeze that’d been blowing all day. “I want you to brush out my hair,” she said, padding over to the vanity and sitting on the bench. Spike followed her silently and took the brush she offered him.

He lovingly ran it through her hair, a happy smile on his face. She watched him in the mirror as he carefully detangled the snarls. Buffy still didn’t quite understand his desire for this, but she’d happily do anything he needed. After a few moments, she cupped her breasts, rolling the nipples between her fingers. Spike groaned softly, but didn’t stop brushing. Tenderly she kneaded them, the sensation shooting right to her core. Leaving one hand plucking at her nipples, she glided the other down her stomach and under the elastic of her panties.

Her fingers found her clit already swollen and wanting. She dipped her finger into the wetness gathering at her opening before returning to rubbing little circles over her clit. Spike dutiful worked the snarls out of her hair while she drove herself towards her release. When she was trembling and breathless, she paused. “Spike, put the brush down and kneel behind me.” He instantly did as he was told. “I’m going to turn around now.” She did, tilting her head to watch her husband’s flushed face as he panted. “Take my panties off.” He immediately had his fingers hooked in the waistband and she raised her hips so he could drag them down. “Put your fingers inside me.”

He raised a hand and traced his fingertips lightly along her thigh. When he reached her pussy, he
pushed first one finger, then two, into her core. His lips parted and he blew out a long breath as his eyes nearly closed.

“Spike,” she whispered.

“Yes, my queen?”

“Use your tongue to make me come.” He bent over and swirled the tip of his tongue around her clit. She shuddered. It felt decadent. She was spoiled, and she knew it. To be loved like this...it was more than she’d ever dreamed of. And it didn’t matter that he was a star; she’d be as content if he was a middle-school English teacher, she worked at the Doublemeat Palace, and they lived in a two-bedroom apartment above a Chinese restaurant.

Though the beach house was nice.

He lapped hungrily at her and she mewed and gasped. Her mind whitened out and she eagerly rolled her hips to hump his face. Her hands grabbed the edge of the bench as her thighs started to quiver. Taking in a deep breath she felt herself tighten around his fingers. He pushed up against the front wall of her channel and...

“William,” she gasped, her orgasm crashing into her. She curled around him, steadying herself with her hands on her shoulders while she shuddered through her bliss. Spike, of course, hadn’t halted his ministrations. Her hand went to his cheek. “Wait, stop for now.” Hesitantly, he took his hands off her and sat back so he could gaze up at her face. His lips were wet with her cream and she couldn’t help but bend down and have a taste. He groaned as her tongue darted over his lips.

Sitting upright again, she was unable to stop the little smile that turned up the corners of her mouth. “Go lay on the bed, on your back.” Since she hadn’t told him to stand he shuffled over to it on his knees and crawled in, lying flat on his back in the middle of the bed, his skin pale against the black sheets. She followed him, straddling his still jean-clad legs to sit on his thighs.

Her knees clenched his legs slightly. This was delicious. She loved having a secret. Leaning forward, she pushed his arms up over his head. “Leave them there,” she said softly and Spike nodded his compliance.

Grinning, Buffy ran her hand briefly over the bulge of his erection through the denim of his pants. She hastily undid his fly and pulled his jeans down to his knees. His poor cock looked almost angry, the head a dark red. It needed attention in the worst way. She slid forward, wrapped her hand around the base, and sank down onto it. Spike bucked up against her, moaning.

“Stay still,” she whispered. A whimper escaped him and his hands curled into fists, but he nodded again. Feeling like the queen he called her, she brought the fingers of one hand to her clit while she leaned back and braced her other hand on Spike’s leg. She didn’t move her hips, just rubbed her clit and watched her husband. The muscles of his chest and shoulders were standing out in stark relief and his jaw was clenched tight as he struggled not to move.

As her climax approached she couldn’t help jerking her hips. Spike made a garbled noise and started panting. His eyes drifted shut. “Watch me,” she said and his lids snapped back open. Mewing, she rubbed faster, the hardness of his shaft in her channel a delicious stretch. Her inner muscles tightened down almost painfully, her legs shook, and she came with a harsh gasp. She pushed herself as far down onto her husband’s cock as she could, riding out the waves of pleasure. Her hands went to her breasts to tug at the sensitive nipples. She yelped in surprise as another orgasm overtook her.

Spike was twitching slightly beneath her. As the aftershocks subsided, she slumped forward to kiss
his chest. Feeling slightly guilty, she pulled herself off him and sat on the side of the bed. Spike looked like she’d kicked his puppy. “Just a second, I have a surprise for you. Look at the ceiling.” His brows shot up and he eagerly turned his eyes heavenward. She opened her nightstand drawer and pulled out the pregnancy test she’d stashed there. It was the fancy kind, with a tight-fitting cap and instead of blue or pink lines it quite clearly said ‘pregnant’ with an arrow pointing to the word.

She’d used six of them over the last two mornings and was certain that their little family was about to start growing. Based on her cycle, she figured she was nearly two months along, which meant the baby would have been conceived in New York. Quite possibly during a very memorable limo ride.

Buffy straddled Spike’s legs again. His cock was still rock hard and straining as it curved up over his abdomen. She ran her tongue over her lips. She’d been preparing to do this, reading Cosmo articles and doing some internet searches with the safety off (and immediately deleting her browser history). Hopefully, Spike would like it, though she was a little worried since he’d never asked for it. Buffy placed the pregnancy test on his stomach, just below his belly button. The cold plastic made him gasp and his muscles jerk.

“Still,” she admonished. “And no peeking.” He growled faintly, but kept his eyes on the ceiling as he relaxed back against the bed. Buffy wrapped her hand around the base of his cock and pointed it skyward, then leaned forward and slid her mouth over the head.

“Fuck!” Spike gasped. “Oh god, Buffy…” She paused, suddenly worried that he really might not want her to—“Yes, please,” he choked out. “More.”

She removed her mouth so she could talk. “Then be quiet and still.” He nodded frantically.

With a smile, she swiped her tongue along the underside of his shaft. Reaching the tip, she sucked him in again, swirling her tongue around the head a few times, before relaxing and taking him deeper. He tasted wonderful, musky and male. Humming her enjoyment, she bobbed her head while her hand stroked the part of his shaft she couldn’t fit in her mouth.

Needing air, she firmly stroked the entire length of his shaft while she caught her breath. Spike was making garbled, happy sounding noises and she would swear, when she bent back down to return to pleasuring him with her mouth, that his cock even wiggled joyfully in her hand. She had no doubt he was appreciating her actions, and she was feeling like Venus incarnate.

It wasn’t very long before Spike’s thighs and abdominal muscles tightened up and his hips were ever so slightly rocking, even as he fought to stay still. His sac started to draw up and she stopped.

“Please,” he begged in a tiny voice that almost made her laugh, but she bit her lip. After all, she was being mean to him.

“You can look,” she said. Instantly he was propped up on his forearms and gazing in awe at her. It made her feel loved, desired, wanted. “And talk, and pick up that thing I put on you earlier.”

“Forgot that,” he said hoarsely. He snatched up the plastic stick and she sank her mouth down around him once more, energetically sucking him off. “Oh god, luv, that feels so amazing, I’m…” He sucked in a deep breath. “Buffy, is this what I think it is?” His thighs had tensed up again and his sac was tight against his body.

“Uh-huh,” she murmured around his cock as it swelled and hardened even further.

“You’re pregnant?” It was a throaty moan.

“Uh-huh,” she confirmed.
“Kitten, oh…bloody hell!” he barked as his hips lifted off the bed and his cock spasmed in her mouth. His come rushed over her tongue and she gulped it down. It was warm with a salty, musky taste. Not gross at all. She continued to gently suck on him until the last pulse had faded. Shyly, she glanced up at her husband. He’d ended up flat on his back again, and his eyes were rolled up and appeared to be looking in slightly different directions. He didn’t move.

“Oh, Spike?” she asked, worried.

He shook his head and blinked before sitting up abruptly. Another shake of his head and he tackled her, rolling her under him and peppering her face with kisses. “Love you, love you, my Buffy.” He kissed his way down between her breasts to her still-flat belly. “Love you too,” he whispered and her heart lurched. It felt like she was falling for him all over again.

“William,” she said, tears threatening.

He looked up at her with a wide grin on his face. “I’m going to be a father!” He sorted through the bedclothes and grabbed the pregnancy test. He tried to stand up, but ended up in a heap on the floor because he’d forgotten his jeans were still around his ankles.

“Are you okay?” she giggled.

He popped back up and zipped up his jeans. “Never better. I’m going to be a father!” His enthusiasm was infectious and she giggled again. Spike grabbed his shirt off the floor, pulling it over his head as he strode towards the door.

“Wait! Where are you going?” she asked, alarmed, as he put his hand on the knob.

“Gotta tell!” he said and opened the door.

Buffy hurriedly threw on some shorts and a t-shirt and followed him. “Wouldn’t the morning have worked?” she asked as he banged on a door.

“Happy!” he crowed. Buffy was beginning to worry she might have broken him. Maybe she shouldn’t have combined the blow job with her announcement.


Spike pushed the pregnancy test into her hands. “Look, look, look!” he said.

“Sure.” Cordy frowned down at the stick. As she read it her eyes widened. “Congrats, you big idiot. You do know it’s like one in the morning, right?”

Spike wrapped her in a bear hug.

“What’s going on?” Harmony’s sleepy voice filtered out of the darkened room.

“Spike’s going to be a daddy and he’s freaking out about it,” Cordelia called to her.

“Oh, tell him to do that in the morning.”

“I tried,” Buffy said, rolling her eyes. Cordelia finally managed to push Spike off and hugged Buffy.

“Congratulations,” she said softly.

“Thank you.” Buffy smiled.
“Now corral your man and get him back to bed so we can all sleep.”

The door to Faith’s room opened. “Is something happening?” she asked, sticking her head out.

“I’m going to be a father!” Spike said, bright eyed. He scooped up Buffy and twirled her around.

Faith crossed her arms. “Next time, B, tell him during waking hours.”

Buffy laughed as Spike snuggled his face against her neck. “I will, oh…let me down!” Her stomach was lurching. “Now!” Frowning, he set her back on her feet.

“Luv?”

“Barf!” she yelled and sprinted for the bathroom.

“Well, bro,” Faith said from behind her. “You did it to her, might as well go hold her hair.”

“Right!” Spike padded quickly after her.

“And congrats, B! We love ya!”
#Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Giving me everything inside and out

- Simple Minds, “Don’t You (Forget About Me)”

****

His wig itched and it took almost more control than he had not to rip the damn thing off. At least it wasn’t hot. After the holidays, Buffy and he had called Ethan to let him know about the baby on the way. The Belle South machine had lurched back into motion, filming scenes—such as Ashley and Isabelle’s tender wedding night—that Buffy needed to appear not pregnant in and for which clever costuming wasn’t an option.

Today they were shooting Ashley and Isabelle’s wedding.

On the show, the hasty wedding was a controversial move among the gentry, as Leslie had barely been laid to rest. Of course, no body had been found, but he had been declared dead and a funeral held. The whispered rumor was that Ashley was marrying her to ensure that the Lyons’ Plantation remained in the family. While the swiftness was still frowned upon, the motivation of money and inheritance were much better tolerated than if society knew the true reason, which was that Isabelle was pregnant with Ashley’s child. She’d told him as they’d stood gazing at the headstone that marked Leslie’s empty grave. Ashley had scooped Isabelle up, declared his undying love, and proceeded to get in between her thighs right then and there, widow’s weeds be damned.

It was a hot scene that was probably going to piss off anyone who still thought Leslie and Isabelle were soulmates. It’d also been fun to film. Spike’s cock tightened slightly in its confines at the memory of pushing up Buffy’s skirt, both on set and immediately after. Spike was glad he’d taken the precaution of tying the damn thing down again this morning, since the trousers he was in wouldn’t hide much of anything. How did blokes back in the day deal? Were they just that boring? He’d been walking around half-erect since he’d first seen Buffy in Isabelle’s wedding dress.

Spike didn’t know who’d done the costume design on that dress, but they deserved an award. The get-up Isabelle had worn for Leslie in the first season had shown her status as an innocent. It’d been a little-girl dress. The one for this wedding, with its deep neckline, screamed the opposite: that she was a woman to be reckoned with. And bless whoever had sewn it, because they’d forgotten Buffy was actually pregnant and her tits would be bigger, meaning they looked like they were about to fall out of the low neckline at any second.

He’d bet himself ten bucks that the left side would go first, though he won either way. It meant he was avidly watching his wife as she was prepped for the scene on the other side of the room. Spike was already in his get up: soft dove-gray trousers and coat, a white shirt, black cravat, and black boots polished to a high sheen. He had Ashley’s glasses perched on his nose and was holding a black top hat, though he doubted he’d put it on. Ashley tended to shun the social construction of wearing the damned things.

Spike tilted his head to the side as Buffy laughed at something, then bent over and lifted her skirt up, revealing her stocking-clad leg inch by inch. Spike’s tongue got stuck to the roof of his mouth. She kept going until he could see the garter that held the stocking in place—could undo that ribbon with
his teeth—and past it. Breathing was difficult. She looked like a pin-up girl, all coy eyes, sexy legs, and barely hidden goodies.

All the blood that’d been heading south froze as some bloke, who must be demented, leaned in close to Buffy’s exposed leg. Spike’s hands clenched into fists. The git was going to die. Spike’s mind was going haywire. His jaw clenched as the moron signed his own death warrant by reaching up and tugging at Buffy’s stocking. No one touched his girl like that. His girl.

Kill…murder…

Buffy laughed at something Anya said and turned her head, meeting his eyes. Her brows shot up. “Wardrobe!” she hollered. The guy glanced up at her, she said something to him, he nodded and Buffy dropped her skirt. The man stood, turned, and caught sight of Spike, who knew he had to look like he was about to rip the sod’s intestines out. The blood drained from the guy’s face and he fled like all the hounds of hell were after him. Buffy rolled her eyes.

Spike took a deep breath. Just wardrobe, adjusting something for her. He put both hands against the nearest wall and struggled to get control of himself. Bloody hell, of course Buffy wasn’t letting some other fellow under her skirts willy-nilly on the set of Belle.

He pushed down the rage. It was as if her being pregnant had flipped a switch in his brain marked ‘cave man’. He spent most of his time wanting to bite anyone that got too close to her, and the rest of the time wanting to shag her. Not that she seemed to have a problem with that.

Feeling slightly less prone towards tearing someone’s head off, he sauntered towards where Buffy and Anya were standing.

Their backs were to him and he couldn’t help but eavesdrop.

“You’re trapped, admit it,” Anya said with a shrug.

“I will not, I like what I have,” Buffy replied, huffing.

What was Xander’s bird going on about?

Anya snorted. “You don’t know if you like what you have. It’s good, probably better than what you started with, but you haven’t tried anything else. And if you don’t try, how will you know?”

“True, but it seems inconvenient. Are you sure it’s a good idea for me to be messing around right now?”

Spike felt his jaw drop. He pulled the glasses off his face. Was Anya trying to get Buffy to sleep around on him? He was too stunned to feel anything else.

“Look,” Anya said. “You’ll want to do it now, before the baby gets here. What that happens you won’t want to be messing around with something new.”

Buffy chewed on her lip. “Can I go with maybe? Do you have a suggestion?”

“Well, for starters, you’re going to want a black one—“

“Hey ladies,” Spike interrupted before Buffy could respond to that statement. “What’re you talking about?”

Anya looked irritated. “Not you.”
“Anya wants me to try a non-Apple cell phone. She says I’m being held hostage by my reliance on a single corporation.” Buffy twisted her mouth to the side. “But I like my phone. I don’t know if I really want to change.”

“Oh, thank god,” Spike whispered. He grabbed her and smashed his lips against hers. The was a slightly outraged squeal to one side that sounded vaguely Texan, so he guessed he must be messing up Fred’s careful work. Not that it couldn’t be redone. After her initial surprise, Buffy was kissing him back, her tongue wrapping around his.

A heavy hand landed on his shoulder. “Don’t make me get the hose,” Hoss said with a chuckle. Reluctantly, Spike let his wife go. “Save it for the cameras.” He patted Spike’s shoulder once more and strode towards a knot of crew, shouting orders with Tara scurrying in his wake.

Fred darted in. “Y’all are as cute as a bug in a rug, but now I’ve got some work to do, and us fixin’ to roll. I’m going to have to steal her.” Buffy smiled apologetically as Fred hauled her away. Spike’s own makeup artist descended on him, her eyes narrowed as she huffed and touched up his face.

“She’s probably not going to try a different phone, is she?” Anya asked him.

“Probably not,” he replied as a girl from wardrobe attacked him with a lint brush.

Anya pursed her lips. “Oh well. At least she made one right decision, and her hips really are much better for it. It’ll make giving birth easier.” With that she turned on her heel and headed for Xander, who was stuffing a sandwich in his face with his camera resting at his feet.

Huh. Spike hadn’t thought of that. He silently vowed to make sure Buffy’s hips were completely ready when it was time for the baby to arrive.

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The wedding scene was going to be epic. Buffy pulled her lace gloves on and inspected them for rips. Mr. Rayne and Hoss had bent over backwards to be accommodating. Season four of Belle South was generating astronomical viewer and subscriber numbers, so Buffy and Spike had been able to insist on a lot when it came to season five. That meant that their friends and family were extras as guests for the wedding scene. Dawn had on a lovely lilac gown that had completely transformed her. She’d stared at herself in the mirror for a solid ten minutes, speechless.

Cordelia and Harmony were there too, both having gotten out of a few days of work on their new projects. Buffy was thrilled to have everyone there that she would have wanted at their real wedding.

Faith was standing beside Buffy in a royal blue gown. She was lovely, with her hair done up in curls.

“Are you sure I don’t look pregnant?” Buffy asked her sister.

Faith put her hands on her hips. “For the ten millionth time, no. You’re barely out of your first trimester and would be hardly showing if you were in a bikini. Quit worrying.”

“I’m not very good at that.”

“So I’ve noticed. It’s almost like I know you.” Faith patted Buffy’s arm. “How about I liberate some bottles of water from the caterer for us?”

“That’ll make me have to pee.”
“It’ll also make you less dehydrated. No arguing with big sis.” Faith marched off and Buffy let out a sigh. Why did her sister always have to be so darned right?

Towards the front of the church, Buffy caught sight of Andrew as he stood with one of the set decorators. The decorator asked him a question and the answer involved a lot of emphatic gestures on Andrew’s part. Buffy smiled. Having him as part of the show had been her idea and it was working out swimmingly. He’d arrived with his lines memorized and could speak in a spot-on southern drawl. Even the dialect coach had been impressed.

Andrew had been star struck to meet the rest of the cast and Hoss. The poor guy had nearly passed out. But it was the crew who’d ended up being fans of Andrew. He knew what episodes they’d worked on, and could offer praise for things from well done lighting in a particular scene to the choice of flowers in another. The crew loved Andrew for it, which is how he’d ended up being dragged around the church and asked his opinion about everything. He was in heaven.

Leaving the decorator, Andrew threaded his way towards the rear of the church. “Hey,” she called.

Andrew lit up and walked over to her, sketching a bow. “Don’t you look lovely! A real Georgia peach.”

“I think I might look a bit ripe.”

“You shine as radiantly as Sirius does in the night sky.”

“Thanks?” That was a star, she was pretty sure.

“Your lover will kneel before you as knight to his queen.” Andrew smiled dreamily and Buffy tried to not look surprised. He was way more on the nose than he probably realized. “And I see your lovely sister is returning with refreshments. I leave you to her company, but not before I once more express my undying gratitude for including me in this momentous occasion.” He made another bow and left, heading for one of the lighting techs that was struggling with a piece of equipment.

“I don’t think that guy has slept in a week,” Faith said, handing Buffy a bottle of water.

“Probably not, but he’s the one, not the writers or director, that remembered that bit of dialogue from season two where Isabelle said she wished she’d had jonquils as a wedding bouquet instead of roses and saved us from making a mistake.”

Faith looked heavenward. “At least they didn’t find some reason to have Leslie lurking around.”

“Yeah.” Buffy shuddered. No kidding. She’d be happy if she never saw Angel again. While she wished he wouldn’t be able to hurt anyone else, or would be publicly shamed for what he’d done to her, she was satisfied that Mr. Rayne now held absolute sway over his future and career. One toe out of line and Angel O’Conner wouldn’t find himself working on any TV show ever again. Rumor had it that he was basically employed as a way to keep Drusilla entertained and out of Mr. Rayne’s way. She hoped he was enjoying himself, not.

“B, that smile is almost evil.”

“I’m just sending lovely wishes to my ex.”

Faith chuckled. “I can only imagine.” She sighed wistfully. “It’s good to see you happy.”

Dawn joined them, still appearing amazed at her transformation into a 19th-century southern lady. Buffy had been stunned when, on her birthday, Spike had presented her with a DVD of him and
Dawn performing a song he’d written. Even more surprising was the fact he’d written it for Buffy before they’d gotten together, though he’d said he had changed some of the lyrics, since he was now pretty sure she’d kiss him. It was hands down the best present she’d ever received. Dawn smiled and put her hand on Buffy’s arm. “It is good,” Dawn added, “And even though you’re married, it feels more like you’re the sister I know than you have been for the last couple of years. Mom would be proud.”

“Thank you.” Buffy took a deep breath. She did hope her mom would have liked how things had turned out. Pregnancy hormones had Buffy biting her lip and fighting tears. She was so happy. With her job, her sisters, her husband, and her growing family.

“No crying, B! You can’t! Then I’ll cry!” Faith wrapped Buffy in a hug. Dawn made a happy noise and joined in.

From somewhere nearby there was another exasperated sigh from Fred, but mussed hair and runny mascara was so worth her sisters knowing how much she loved them.

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The interior of the little church was packed. The cast were in their places, but the crew were still running around like chickens without their heads. He stood on his toes and craned his neck, but still couldn’t see Buffy.

“She’s back there,” Andrew said from where he stood on the top of the stairs at the front of the church with a knowing smile. Spike laughed.

“Don’t think she’s done a runner on me then?” He probably did look like a nervous groom, worried his bride wasn’t going to show.

Andrew giggled. “Buffy would no more leave you than the ocean would leave the shore, than cookies would leave milk, than Ganymede would flee the orbit of Jupiter.”

“Thanks?” Spike raised an eyebrow and tugged one more time on his dove-gray jacket. Andrew beamed. It might not have been quite how Spike would have put it, but he earnestly hoped Andrew was right. Spike didn’t know how he’d ever survived without her, and if she ever left him…

He couldn’t even entertain the idea.

He’d been alone since he’d been twelve and watched the paramedics roll his mother’s body out of their tiny apartment. When he’d desperately been in love with Drusilla…he’d been alone even when she had deigned to remember he was there. She’d never understood him, never even cared enough to learn what he liked on his pizza, let alone what he wanted from life.

The years he’d spent pining over Buffy, in love with a shadow—those years had buried him in loneliness, until he’d thought that was his fate.

Thank god the real, breathing woman had turned out to be more than he could ever have imagined. She was sweet, funny, liked cuddling, was super sexy, really good at giving head, could ride him like …

Okay, enough of that, he chided himself. Wasn’t it the girl who was supposed to get hornier when she was pregnant? He’d seriously already gone through fourteen fantasies of shagging her in the bloody dress she was in and at this point there was no way he was letting her get out of it without making at least one of them a reality. His cock gave a sympathetic pulse. He supposed it couldn’t be the one where he tackled her in the aisle and simply had her right in front of everybody. He also
supposed that he should probably be slightly more worried about the fact that there might a tiny part of him that was an exhibitionist.

Eh, as long as it stayed fantasy, no harm. Buffy couldn’t claim innocence on that account either, as she’d developed a tendency to come onto him in barely private places. When he’d asked her about it she’d stammered something about the limo and city noises plus something almost incoherent about the backroom at The Bronze. The poor chit had also flushed an alarming shade of crimson before suddenly finding it imperative she wipe down the kitchen counters. He’d stood there for about five seconds, confused, then shrugged and bent her over said counter to have his way with her.

“Silence!” Hoss’ booming voice bellowed out.

There was a pause, a last-minute adjustment to a camera, and filming started. They’d rehearsed, of course, but it was different with everyone in costume. It felt like a real wedding. His stomach fluttered and he shifted nervously.

The wedding march started and everyone stood. Buffy appeared and his heart skipped a beat. Love filled him from head to toe. She was his heart, his life, his future. The mother of his children.

He would always choose her, always marry her, always love her.

She reached his side and he tucked her hand into the crook of his elbow, leaving his fingers over hers.

This might be Isabelle and Ashley’s wedding, but no acting was needed.

She was his dream come true.

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Buffy stood next to her husband as Andrew led them through the wedding ceremony. Sunlight streamed through the tall windows of the church, bathing everything in a warm glow. The cameras all seemed very far away. They said their vows and exchanged rings. Hoss had allowed them to use their own rings, which was a small thing but it’d meant the world to her.

There was a fluttering in her belly which she was nearly certain was their baby moving. A little life that was already loved, that would grow beneath her heart and be born to two people who couldn’t wait to meet her. Or him. But probably her.

Spike raised her veil. His blue eyes were bright and a smile curved the corners of his soft lips up. She looked into his beloved face and her heart swelled with happiness and joy.

She was going to kiss him.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for taking a chance on my crazy little story! I appreciate everyone who’s read this, because I really thought no one would. I hope you enjoyed it, because it was a blast to write (well, except that Bangel part). I love reviews so feel free to drop me a line and let me know what you thought, whether it's a day after I posted this or ten years later :-D
Blessings!
SunAlso (2/4/2017 9:12 am)
(p.s. It's a girl)
(p.p.s. All Hail Gort, because without her, this story wouldn't have happened!)

Works inspired by this one: [A Mood Board inspired by Belle South by badwolfjedi](#)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!