

This entry is part 2 of 7 of the story [The Couple that RoadTrips Together](#)

Part 2

Buffy startled awake, lifting her head from its awkward position against the window. "W-what?"

Spike reached over and took her hand. "I can't stand anymore Christmas carols, pet. We've been listening to them the whole way now even when you were asleep."

It was true. She had insisted on listening to something festive since she didn't have anything else Christmas-y around. The holiday was the day after tomorrow after all. She'd even managed to scrounge up a gift for Spike and couldn't wait to give it to him. It was something small and maybe a little cheesy, but she didn't have much in the way of income - still. (Giles was working on it.) She'd stowed the gift deep in her suitcase where he wouldn't find it. "I didn't mean to fall asleep."

Spike squeezed her hand and rubbed his thumb over her pinky. "It's okay. Know we agreed we'd both stay up, but you need rest. Thinking we should stop soon anyway. Look for a hotel."

"That sounds fantastic. A hotel with a comfy bed! And clean sheets, please. Maybe a shower for in the morning." She yawned, and her stomach protested. "And I'm hungry."

"Body demanding food, eh?"

"Yes. Very insistently." Talking about it only made her stomach more growl-y.

Spike glanced over at her in the dim light from the car control panels. "Can hear it loud and clear."

"Right. I forgot you hear all."

He rubbed her tummy with affection. "Too bad we're in the middle of nowhere."

Buffy leaned over to the floorboard for the plastic bag by her feet, which was far too light to contain food. "And we ate all the snacks." Spike had been partial to the spicy Cheetos.

"There's blood." There was a cooler in the back with plenty of blood in it.

"Ewww. No. When's the next exit with food?" Buffy squinted out the window. The world all around them was pitch black and occasionally dotted by a dim light. There were no other cars on the road. They were in the middle of nowhere. "And a bathroom. I have to pee."

"Don't have the highway memorized." Spike's sarcasm was still alive and well but less brittle since he fought for his soul and since they were officially together.

She rolled her eyes at him, and he grinned. "Darn. Thought you did." She squirmed in discomfort. "But seriously."

He rested his hand on her thigh, and she sighed. "I know, pet. I'll keep my eyes peeled."

They drove on in silence for the next several minutes, and Buffy tried hard to hold her body together. Pretty soon, her rumbling tummy was overpowered by the urgency to find a bathroom. When at last, a blue sign appeared, indicating a rest stop was coming, she perked up.

"There!" she said with a little too much eagerness, pointing at the sign that went by too fast for her

to read what kind of fast food place or gas station it was.

"I see it." Spike smoothly guided the car off the highway.

The gas station/convenience store was named "Home Sweet Home," which amused Spike so much that he chuckled, but Buffy had no idea why. It was obviously owned by someone local to whatever small town they were near because the gas was generic and the store had a homemade sign lit by Christmas lights. There were lights haphazardly hung in the windows and around the edge of the roof, and a glowing Santa greeted them by the door - his black-gloved hand raised in a wave as he stood next to a display of homemade rocking chairs for sale.

Buffy didn't even glance at Spike as she jumped out of the car into the warm evening. No winter coats were needed here. The only thing on her mind was her bursting bladder, but she did manage to grab her wallet to buy snacks. Priorities.

A little bell tinkled as she pushed the door open, and she was taken back to the sound of the bell in the Magic Box. The whole store smelled of cinnamon and Christmas. She didn't look left or right once her eyes found the restroom sign, and she hurried past garland-decorated shelves of food and refrigerated drinks. Once in the exceptionally clean bathroom, she sighed with relief as she the pressure in her bladder eased. Washing her hands after, she burst back into the store, feeling like a new woman.

Spike was still filling up the car outside, so Buffy began perusing the bags of chips, making sure to check expiration dates. Who knew how many people stopped out here in the middle of nowhere? She grabbed several bags of chips, a box of granola bars, several Slim Jims for protein, and two giant bottles of water. She foresaw more bathroom breaks in her future, but at least, she'd be well hydrated. Hopefully, Spike wouldn't kill her... though he hadn't managed to kill her yet when he'd been seriously trying, so she didn't count on him killing her over bathroom breaks being very successful.

Speaking of imminent death, Spike didn't have that look on his face very often. She was reminded that despite his soul, he was as deadly as a vampire could be, and when he got that feline look on his face, she knew something was up.

"Buffy," he hissed as the door swung closed behind him.

"What?" she asked, matching his soft, urgent tone and coming around the corner with her arms full.

"Something's not right." He sniffed the air and strode around the end of the checkout counter.

"Blood. Lots of it."

Buffy hurried to join him. Crap. There was indeed a lot of blood and everywhere, and a trail of it led into the back room as if a body had been dragged away. Buffy exchanged a wordless look with Spike and dumped all her treats in a silent heap on the counter. Spike shifted into game face, ridges hilling his forehead and fangs descending. Though they'd been apart for a year, they'd easily fallen back into working together in a way that made Buffy's pulse race and heart sing. She pushed past him, touching her open palm to his chest before stooping to scoop up a metal baseball bat from the shelf under the register.

The room ahead was dark and silent, and with Spike right over her shoulder, she fumbled for and flicked on the light. A single yellow lightbulb arced light across the large storage room, which was filled with shadowy stacked boxes and a simple desk with a computer.

The body of a dark-haired teenage girl lay crumpled on the ground, her hips twisted to one side, her chest torn open. Her unseeing blue eyes stared at the ceiling. Buffy's mind immediately went to Dawn, and fury rose up, preparing her muscles for a fight.

As she entered the cramped space and Spike joined her, two large demons scabbled across the ceiling and dropped to the floor with twin thumps. They were grey-skinned with slimy-looking patches mottling their flesh. Blood dripped from their puckered mouths that opened and closed like fish out of water. There was little to distinguish them from one another other than size, and the smaller of them was making a high-pitched whining sound.

Without fanfare, the demons launched themselves at Buffy and Spike.

Buffy took the bigger one, swiping the bat at the demon's open side when it slashed at her with sharp talons. She missed and dropped into a roll as her opponent circled around and swung at her head. There was the sound of something crashing. Bouncing up while dodging the attempted blow, she whirled to see Spike backed up against the wall as he used the flimsy-looking desk as a shield against his foe, who was spitting some sort of acidic substance in his direction.

"Buffy, love, look out!" he called before ducking behind the wood.

"Slimy and deadly, huh?" She crouched and jumped high as she heard her opponent barreling toward her.

The creature snagged the bottom of her jeans and then grasped her ankle, dragging her to the ground. Her arm hit at an odd angle, and she lost her grip on the bat. Her weapon rolled away from her into the darkness. Damn.

She couldn't see Spike, but she heard scabbling sounds and grunts as they continued to fight. In her peripheral vision, she thought she saw the other demon sailing through the air. The sound of boxes crumpling confirmed it.

Her captor climbed atop her, depositing its weight on her legs so that they were pinned. Inanely, she thought about how her clothes were now ruined.

As the demon drew up a talon to slice open her blouse, she struggled and protested, "I just bought this top, asshole."

Her foe paused for the half-second she needed, shifting to allow her to move. Summoning all her strength, she drew her free leg up and kicked the demon in the stomach so hard that it took flight the same as its companion had moments ago. Turning on her side, she pushed herself up to witness Spike twisting her demon's head to one side. The subsequent crack of its neck confirmed its death.

A small sucking sound rose up behind Buffy, and she rushed over to Spike's fallen enemy and stomped the heel of one of her ruined boots into the creature's eye. With a squelching noise and sharp cry of pain followed by a soft exhale, the second demon passed.

Spike was next to her in a second, checking her over the way she was surveying him for injuries. They were all clear. Thankfully. Buffy sighed in relief, and Spike tilted her head for a kiss, tender and affectionate with a hint of hunger lingering in the background.

As the brief kiss ended, Buffy said with exaggerated brightness, "Good thing I packed all my belongings to take with us 'cause I really want to change clothes and now."

"You are a bit... slimed," Spike noted with amusement in his eyes.

She crossed her arms and sulked. "And somehow, you remain completely clean. Not even a hint of gross stuff. That's so not fair."

He slipped back into human guise. "I'll get your suitcase." He looked her up and down, and even covered in goop, she felt her heart speed up at the way he so obviously undressed her with his eyes. "Wait here."

"I'm coming with," she insisted.

He arched a brow at her. "This part of that leaving thing?"

"No," she said swiftly. Then, she added, "Maybe."

"I'm not going anywhere without you, love. I promise." His words were reassuring but that wasn't what she meant.

She corrected him, managing to keep her tone lighthearted, "It's not that. I'm just not going to let you be out there alone with who knows what other demons lurking about."

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