

This entry is part 4 of 7 of the story [The Couple that RoadTrips Together](#)

Part 4

Somewhere just past Houston the next night, they stopped at a Waffle House. Buffy had been seeing the signs at random rest stops, and with each one they passed, her stomach became a little more adamant. She'd had a burger from Whataburger when they got back on the road that evening, but now, it was lunchtime. (Was it really called lunch if it was the middle of the night and they were having breakfast-type food?)

Spike held her hand on the way to the restaurant, his swagger softened with her. When he opened the door for her, he stooped to nuzzle her ear and emit a little growl, which made her giggle. The sweet smells of waffles mingled with fresh coffee and frying bacon beckoned her inside.

Buffy dragged him to a little table in the corner near the window away from the other late night patrons. Sliding into the booth, she tugged Spike down next to her, making sure her body was pressed against his.

When the waitress deposited the menus and went to fill their order for coffees, Spike teasingly pinched her butt and then moved around to sit across from her.

She made a pouty face at him.

He smirked as he picked up his menu, keeping his blue eyes on hers. "If I sit next to you, love, no telling what might happen. And I thought you wanted to eat."

"I can do both," she insisted.

He pushed his boots against hers so that their feet were crisscrossed together. "Actually, I thought we could talk."

"Talk?" Since when did Spike want to talk with her? Oh, wait. He always wanted to talk with her. She had just weighted their interactions the other way in the past because it was easier. Straightening her shoulders, she said, "Okay." She really wanted to hear him, and she was determined to show him she could. She wanted both with him; she wanted something healthier that could last.

The waitress returned with their coffees, and Buffy ordered them both pecan waffles and bacon to make sure the waitress left them be for a while.

Buffy leaned forward across the table and took Spike's hand, his fingers dancing with hers until they settled on a comfortable position. "What would you like to talk about? I'm all with the ears."

Spike tilted his head to one side, but his gaze went down. "I want you to know who I am." Buffy forced herself to wait; it was hard for her to not interject as was their way with one another. "And I haven't always been honest with you."

"Shocker." He made a face at her. "Sorry. Done with the sarcasm." She zipped her mouth shut with her free fingers.

"I was afraid you'd judge me." He looked up at her, his chin still down. This only served to confirm how serious he was.

"You mean more than I already have?" She could own that. They'd both been incredibly harsh, if not outright abusive, with one another. But that last year in Sunnydale? She thought it had meant something - the tenderness between them. Though it had been six months since she'd found him again, she didn't think they were close to figuring out their balance.

"In a different way. Before it was - Slayer-vampire banter. It was expected. Now, it's different." Now that she'd confirmed and shown that she still loved him. Now that they were both really trying for something different between them.

She rubbed his fingers with hers in a reassuring gesture. "Got it. I'm here. Not judging."

"Okay." He fidgeted with the paper wrapped utensils. He was more than a little nervous.

Buffy decided to help by being distracting. Snagging the glass bottle of sugar, she dumped more than she intended into her coffee and then let his hand go to doctor it up further with half-and-half.

As she worked, Spike said, "I wasn't honest about who I was before I was turned." Buffy waited. "I-I wasn't like. . . I was a bit of a. . . let's just say I came from an affluent family, but I didn't fit into society at the time. My mum was a bit of a rebel when it came to society's rules and etiquette. She had the softest heart and always wanted to help those less fortunate even if it meant being a bit shunned by her peers. She did hold it in check when my father was alive. She loved him, and he loved her. My father was a good man. A good father."

Buffy tried not to show any sign of surprise though that was not at all what she expected him to say. It was quite a contrast to his I've-always-been-bad speech when he talked about his past. Somehow, she managed to say, "Sounds like I would have liked your mom."

Spike grinned. "You would have. She was an amazing lady." He got quiet - his eyes somewhat distant as Buffy took a sip of overly sweet coffee. She set the cup down to refocus on him. "In any case, I was well-educated and came from a very loving family, but in keeping with what my mother taught me, I didn't fit in with my own peers. I-I fell in love though. . . well, what I thought was love at the time."

"It takes a while to figure the concept out. And what kind you want and need. I know from experience," Buffy said in a half-teasing, half-serious manner. Then, she asked, "What was her name?"

"Her name was Cecily. She was beautiful and came from a family with the right titles and position. But I was an idiot. She never would have gone for a bloke like me."

Buffy took Spike's hand again. She saw his willingness to do anything for the people he cared about (yes, even Dru) and loved him for it. "She's the idiot."

Spike gave her a small smile and peered at her with those bluest of eyes, and it was everything she could do to stop herself from launching over the table to sit astride his lap. He could totally tell, too. Still, he didn't pounce on it and kept talking. "Well, it didn't end well with her. I went to this party where everyone who was anyone at the time was going to be, and I was wracking my brain and hoping to win her over with a bit of a poem. I was bloody awful at writing poetry."

"I bet that's not true." He wrote her poetry with his actions; she couldn't imagine he couldn't express himself with words. And she would never forget what he said to her that night in Sunnydale when she had been kicked out of her own house. That was poetry.

He lifted an eyebrow at her. "I'll have to share some with you sometime. It's pretty dreadful drivin'."

"I'd love it." And she would; she knew it. She wanted to ask him to write her some, but she considered that might be pushing it. "What happened next? At the party. With Cecily."

"As usual, I was making all kinds of social faux pas but not really caring until they started saying rude things, and then, Cecily? I shared my poem with her, and - "

The waitress interrupted their conversation. Annoyingly. "Here you go." She plunked down the waffles and bacon as well as some bottles of different flavored syrups, but despite the late hour, she read the situation like a book and left without asking further questions. Buffy was grateful.

She poured syrup over her waffle, and Spike did, too. Syrup pouring synchrony.

Buffy unwrapped her utensils and cut into the waffle. "So, you read her the poem?"

"I did. It went horribly as you might expect, and," Spike hesitated here but then casually said, "she told me that I was beneath her."

Buffy's stomach dropped, and she set down her fork and swallowed, looking at him with sadness. "Oh."

"I'm not telling you this to make you feel bad, pet. There's a reason if you'll hear me out." Spike stood and rejoined her on her side of the booth, pulling her close and squeezing her thigh. He even dragged over his food and coffee. "Promise."

She frowned uncertainly but trusted him enough. She took a bite of waffle to show him she was ready.

Spike was silent for several seconds. "That was the night I was turned by Dru. I was humiliated and devastated - at the time. I left the party with a broken heart, and that's when I ran into Dru. Or rather, she sought me out, I think. She had that sixth sense about her. Always did."

"She saw something in you," Buffy decided. "Smart of her."

He rubbed her thigh. "You saw something in me."

"It took me a while." She poked her waffle with her fork.

"And that's the point I was getting round to."

"That I took forever to see the good in you?" She leaned her head against his shoulder.

"No, well, yeah, but not forever to a vampire. And you had good reason not to."

"True." She made a confused face. "What were we talking about? What point were you making?"

"Ah, that. Been thinking about this a while now."

Buffy took a sip of coffee, which was already too cold for her liking. She ignored it. Then, she turned sideways so that her leg was on the bench - her shin pressed against his leg. "Tell me."

Spike smiled at her with fondness and tucked a stray strand of hair behind her ear. "Both those moments. . . when you and Cecily essentially said the same thing to me. They both sent me on a

tailspin of emotion that I acted on. I was angry and hurt. But each outcome was very different."

"How so?"

"With Cecily, I accepted the darkness because Dru saw something inside me that was. . . what she needed. And I thought she saw me. I truly did. And I do think she did in her own way."

"She is very," Buffy pressed her lips together, searching for a less provoking word than "insane" and settling on, "unique."

"That's an extremely nice way of saying it, pet."

"I'm trying," she said innocently.

"And with you - "

Something dawned on Buffy. "You came to find me with a gun. You were going to kill me, weren't you?"

"I couldn't have," he insisted, kissing her forehead. "You were in tears. Over something. And something inside me. . . shifted. It was small, but it did."

"I remember you sitting with me. I was upset about my mom." She'd been too confused by her own emotions at the time to really understand what it meant that Spike just spent time with her, not saying anything and patting her shoulder. "You let me have my feelings and were just there with me. No one else did that for me. And you don't know how much I needed that."

"That was the moment, pet." Spike studied her with such intense love in his eyes that her heart skipped a beat. "That was the moment that everything changed for me. For the good. I don't think I really understood it then either. You turned my world upside down. You brought me back to who I used to be - at least part of the way. I was a good man."

Buffy felt tears well up, her vision blurring. "You are a good man. And I love you. And I'm. . . not sorry that I said that to you." She paused. "Well, I'm sorry that I hurt you, but I'm glad for how it impacted you in the long run."

Spike picked up a piece of bacon and held it out to her. "No need for apologies, love. It can't be changed; it just is. And I wanted you to know."

"Thank you." She blinked away the evidence of her emotions, smiled, and took a bite of the offered food.

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