

This entry is part 5 of 7 of the story [The Couple that RoadTrips Together](#)

Part 5

Buffy happily hummed along with Mariah Carey's, "All I Want for Christmas." She had managed to finagle control of the radio again and also managed to find another Christmas station in Louisiana. It was her way of stopping herself from dwelling on the fact that Spike was driving almost ninety miles an hour. His excuse was that he was staying with the traffic and making up for time lost on her breaks.

Spike rolled his eyes when she danced in her seat at the end of the song and faux belted out the lyrics. She wasn't quite ready to sing of her own volition in front of him. She wasn't sure why, but she thought the whole debacle with Sweet had something to do with it.

When the song was over, she graciously held both palms up at the radio controls. "All yours."

"Finally," he grumbled and began pushing the search button. After several seconds and some disgruntled jamming of said button, he flicked off the radio.

"Sorry you couldn't find anything you like." She took a swig of water. "Maybe we should talk about what we're doing when we get to New Orleans?"

"That and it's your turn."

Buffy brightened considerably. "My turn? You're going to let me drive?"

Spike scoffed. "Bloody hell, no, pet."

"Ha ha." So, she was being a tad sarcastic. "You don't have to sound so unbend-y about it."

"I do. I really do. Because no driving for you."

She narrowed her eyes. "I've gotten better. You just don't know it because we've been stuck in L.A. for months, and there's been nowhere to drive." It was true. The roads in L.A. were a mess because the battle had caused massive citywide destruction. Driving only seemed to work on the outskirts near where people were living. "Also, you did raise the issue of trust earlier on our trip. You're gonna have to trust me behind the wheel at some point."

"Show me when we're not on the highway in the middle of nowhere. Don't need you driving us off into a bloody swamp," Spike growled, gesturing out the window.

Buffy crossed her arms. "As if. I've never been that bad."

"Says you."

"Distracting," Buffy countered.

Spike lifted an eyebrow. At least, Buffy imagine it was just one eyebrow; she couldn't see the other side of his face. "You started the distracting, pet. Not me."

Buffy smiled. "Are we having our first road trip fight?"

"What do you mean? Is that even a thing?" Spike's eyebrow went higher if that was even possible.

"Maybe?" She shrugged. "I may have just made it up. But you know what they say about a couple who road trips well together. . . "

"What's that?"

"I have no idea. But I think it's good," she said with purposeful perkiness.

He smirked at her and then sobered. "Speaking of trust. Your turn, missy. I spilled about Cecily. Tell me something about you."

Buffy wanted to be an open book, but being an open book was hard because old habits and all. Still, she was willing to try. "About what?"

"I dunno. How about telling me about what you said to Angel." He was trying to sound nonchalant, but the tinge of jealousy was there.

She supposed it might always be there with regard to Angel; she couldn't blame Spike - she felt the same about Dru and maybe even this Cecily woman even though she was probably long dead.

"When? I've had a lot of conversations with Angel over the years."

"How about when you went gallivanting off to rescue those people who were being held hostage by that family of porcupine demons? Or were they hedgehog demons?"

"Oh. That time. They were porcupines. Definitely porcupines. Hedgehogs are cute and cuddly, and these guys were definitely not cuddly." Buffy had ended up getting stuck with Angel for a whole day after the demons were defeated because there was no way past the relenting sun. So, after slaying the demons and rescuing the prisoners, who ended up being very ungrateful, Buffy had been trapped with Angel in the half-collapsed building together.

"Yeah. You were with the ole poof for a long time." Spike passed a car, probably going too slow for his liking. Buffy waited to reply until he was around, but to her surprise, he added, "I have a lot of reasons to not trust him around you. Not because of you but because of him."

Buffy picked at one of her fingernails which had broken and was a little crooked. "I think you have reason to not trust me around him." She could own that. She needed to own that. She reached over and picked up his free hand. "It was nice to talk with him. But rest assured, he was clear by the end of it that I'm with you. I don't think he really got it before."

"I don't know if he'll ever get it. You're all star-crossed and whatever else eternal. Him with his soul curse."

"Angel and I are not star-crossed. And you're not my second choice, you know."

"Thought I was."

She pushed her fingers between his. "You're my first choice. I thought you got it when I kissed you in front of the whole of everyone in that first-aid-hospital tent."

Spike closed his eyes briefly but reopened them just as Buffy thought she should poke him because he shouldn't be closing his eyes while driving. "That's true. But for reasons not necessarily about you, I'd like to know about how you feel about him."

She didn't mind reassuring him. "Angel will always be my first big love. But it doesn't mean I think

he's right for me. And I'll always be grateful for the good parts about being with him. The bad parts where he lost his soul and tortured and killed people I cared about? I can't forget those. Teenage me thought I could. But now that I'm older." She shook her head, her chest aching with regret that she didn't realize could still be so fresh. "I really can't forgive those things. I can't forgive myself either."

He regarded her with a small smile, compassion bright in his eyes even in the darkness. "You didn't cause him to get cursed with a soul that has a happiness clause. Angelus did all that on his own."

"People would still be alive if I had been able to stake him." People would still be alive if she'd done a lot of things differently. Seemed like she was always failing.

"People would still be alive if you had staked me, too. Though I've gone back and forth on the matter, I'm bloody well glad you didn't." He clasped her hand. "Point is, you can't prevent everything. No one can. Not even the Slayer."

"Even though it's in my job description?"

"A job description written by a bunch of sodding cowardly men in the dark ages? Fuck that." His voice was deep and soft.

She laughed. "All right. I got your point. . . . Thank you."

"You saved a lot of bloody people in your time so far, love. Including me."

Buffy held up their hands and kissed the back of his. "I'm pretty sure you saved me a time or two, too. Even all the days the summer after I. . ." Her eyes brimmed with tears, one escaping over the edge. She sniffed and wiped it away. "I know that me kissing Angel threw you off before. And even though I didn't know what you and I were at the time, it wasn't fair to you. And I can guarantee you that I haven't kissed him since, I have no plans of kissing him at any point in the future, and the only person I even thought about after you were gone was you. You don't know how many times I imagined how I could have saved you, too. I love you."

Spike stroked the side of her hand with his thumb. "Okay." His voice was heavy with emotion as if maybe he finally believed her. He squeezed her hand again. "Thank you. You realize that I'm really not going anywhere now."

"I'm counting on it." She sounded more confident than she felt.

He, of course, somehow knew because he knew her, and he gave her that look that told her he'd make her believe him. "I mean it." He softened. "Unless you need me to go."

"Or you need me to." She'd never felt so safe with him.

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