

Dreams 1

Giles sat on the side of the bed. He could feel the heat radiating off of Buffy's body. He heard the hum of the cooling blanket Roger had brought home from the hospital as it clicked into another cycle. Roger had forced some Tylenol down Buffy's throat about thirty minutes ago but her fever hadn't even started to break.

Giles dipped a cloth into a bowl of cool water. He wrung it out and started running the cloth over Buffy's face and down her arms. He closed his eyes, the fear of almost losing her coursing through his body. The thought of how close he'd come to having his dreams shatter into a million shards of glass was like a physical pain.

He recalled the conversation they had had that next morning. The morning after they had discovered their love for one another. The morning after he had taken her in his arms and made love to her, claiming her as his.

##

Buffy was sitting in Giles' lap, her head against his chest. "I still can't believe this happened."

Giles stroked her hair. "Neither can I."

"I mean, two days ago you were...you know...just Giles. And now..." She lifted her head up and kissed him. His arms tightened around her and he kissed her back. They broke off the kiss. She sighed. "Now you're everything."

Giles hugged her tightly again. "Thank you."

"For what?"

"For saying that I'm your everything."

She smiled. "You're welcome." She waited for him to speak. When he didn't she poked him in the side. "Hey, your turn."

He shifted her in his arms so he could see her face. "My turn?"

She nodded.

He cocked his head looking at her. He ran his hand down her face. "You're my dream come true."

She smiled, delighted. "Really?"

He nodded. "I never thought I'd have this. I'd never thought I'd fall in love like this, or have someone so wonderful love me back. I never thought I could find a woman who would put up with my being watcher to a beautiful and very demanding slayer." Buffy pinched him. He pretended to frown at her, and then softly smiled. "I thought that was just a dream, something to push into the back of my mind, something I only allowed out when I was alone and needing to feed my melancholy. Just dreams. And now, here you are, and you've made my dreams come true."

She reached up and kissed him again. "I've never made anyone's dream come true." She looked sad. "Usually the opposite."

Giles shook his head, still running his hand through her hair. "Don't say that."

"It's true. Or at least it was true." She smiled at him. "I love that you feel that way. I love that I made your dreams come true. That's the most wonderful thing anyone's ever said to me."

"It's the most wonderful thing that's ever happened to me." He kissed her forehead. "You're the most wonderful thing that's ever happened to me."

Buffy just looked at him. She ran her fingertips over his brow. "I still can't believe it happened."

He laughed. "Roger called this morning."

"Oh, is that who was on the phone?"

Giles nodded. "He called to ask if I'd gotten lucky last night." He shook his head remembering.

Buffy gasped. "He asked you that?" Giles nodded, smiling. "What did you say?"

"I told him it was none of his business."

Buffy laughed. "Then what did he say?"

"He laughed, said that he liked you, and he thought it was great and to tell you hi."

Buffy snorted. Then she hugged Giles tightly. "I don't know that this would

have happened if they hadn't come along. I owe them both so much."

"As do I." He hugged her back. He looked at his watch and frowned. "I have to go. Anya told me she'd be late this morning. I need to go open up. And I need to run home first and change."

"Why? You look great. Good enough to eat." She captured his lips again.

He broke off the kiss with some reluctance. "Because Anya will notice. Trust me, nothing about even the remotest possibility of sex escapes her and the last thing I want to do is have a conversation about sex with Anya."

Buffy laughed. She stood allowing Giles to rise. "Well, all right. But when you get to your place pack a bag cuz I want you here tonight, mister." She mock threatened him by grabbing his suit jacket lapels.

"See, a very demanding slayer." He grinned and bent down to gently kiss her. "I'll be by after the shop closes."

"I love you."

He closed his eyes, letting her words fill him. He opened them back up and kissed her again. "I love you too."

##

That had been two mornings ago. They'd had one day to feel safe. One day before Riley had come back to town. He dipped the cloth back into the cool water and began wiping her skin again. She had been in and out of consciousness for 24 hours. She'd awakened every now and then, her eyes filled with pain. Every time she'd woken up she'd called his name. If he hadn't been there, whoever was watching her went to get him. He would call her name and she would open her eyes, smile at him, and ask him what had happened. He had answered that question more times than he could remember. It would make him smile if it didn't scare him so much.

They had come when he'd called, Xander and Anya, Willow and Tara. They had all taken shifts sitting with her allowing Giles some time to sleep and to eat. Giles would have never left her side but Roger had insisted. None of them had any idea how long she would be ill and Roger wanted Giles to last.

They were all downstairs now; he could hear their voices. He rinsed the cloth once again. She was breathing a little more slowly. He hoped the fever was starting to break. She was lying in Joyce's bed; there was much more room in here for all of Roger's medical equipment and supplies. His eyes swept the

bed. It was here that he and Buffy had ended up when they had finally made it up the stairs that night. It was in this bed, the only one large enough to comfortably fit the two of them, that they had both drifted off to sleep and then woken in each other's arms.

The fear shook him again. It had been so close, too close. He leaned forward and pressed a kiss to her forehead. He whispered. "I love you." Even in her fevered sleep Buffy smiled a little. His heart was so full of love for her he felt as if he could weep.

As he heard footsteps his head rose and he saw Roger entering the room. He flashed a tired smile at his friend and stood to move to Buffy's other side allowing Roger access. He watched as Roger moved over to the bed and put his hand on Buffy's forehead. He reached for the ear thermometer and took her temperature. He nodded, pleased that it was coming down. He adjusted the temperature on the cooling blanket and took the rest of her vital signs. He checked the IV bag that was dripping slowly into Buffy's arm, placed there to make sure he had IV access if he needed it.

Roger looked at Giles, full of sympathy for his friend. "Did she wake up while I was downstairs?"

Giles nodded. Then his lips curved slightly with a grin. "She wanted to know what had happened."

Roger softly laughed. "Did you tell her again?"

Giles nodded, the grin fading. "But I have to admit my answers are getting shorter and shorter." He looked down at Buffy and then over at Roger, fear in his eyes. "Why is it taking so long for her to recover?"

Roger shook his head, frustrated. "I don't know. I don't know what the poison was, hell I don't even know what the antidote was. I don't know if I gave it right, or if I gave it too fast. I just know that when Riley handed it to me that I didn't think, I just grabbed it and ran." He looked at Giles, his face grim. "I was afraid she'd already be dead when I got back."

Giles eyes closed at his words. He had been afraid too. He had held Buffy, felt her dying in his arms. He had never felt so useless in his life. Giles looked at his friend. "Thank you." Roger looked at Giles, not sure what he was being thanked for. Giles continued. "For saving her life."

Roger shook his head. "As much as I hate to say it, Riley was the one who did that. He gave us the antidote."

Giles tightened his lips, the thought of Riley still a coiling presence inside of him. His words were angry. "Riley almost killed her. He gets no credit for a moment of remorse." He took a deep breath, calming himself. "I don't believe he would have given it to me. Even if he had I wouldn't have known what to do with it. I wouldn't have had a blasted syringe. She would have died if you hadn't been there."

Roger didn't want to argue. He was just glad he had been there. It terrified him to think of what might have happened if he hadn't been, or if he'd been too slow, or if Riley hadn't come forward. He smiled at his friend. "You're welcome."

Giles nodded. Roger could see the pain in his eyes and knew Giles was living the nightmare of Buffy almost dying over and over in his head. He reached over Buffy to clasp Giles' shoulder. "I'm just glad we didn't lose either of you." Giles met his gaze. Roger's eyes reflected the love he had for him.

Giles reached up and gripped the hand on his shoulder for a minute looking back at Roger. Then he turned his attention back to Buffy. "I just wish we knew something."

Roger blew out a frustrated breath. "Me too." Roger ran his hand through his hair. He blew out another breath that ended in a curse. "I just wish I knew what I gave her." He laughed. "Not the best statement for a physician to make. Please don't tell anyone I said that." He grinned at Giles and Giles had to grin back.

"Your secret's safe with me." He looked down at Buffy as she moaned and stirred a little. He brushed some hair off her face. "Roger, you saved her life. You made the right choice, the only choice." Roger nodded, still not satisfied, unhappy at how little he knew about the poison, the antidote or how Buffy's body would be affected. He had sent multiple tubes of blood off for testing but so far the results had provided him with little information other than the traditional lab values he had requested in order to treat her.

Buffy's eyes fluttered open. She moaned a little as she shifted her body. Her voice was thick. "Giles?"

"Right here Buffy." He leaned in to press a kiss to her cheek. She smiled. She turned her head and saw Roger. Her brow furrowed. She turned back to Giles. "What happened?"

Giles managed not to roll his eyes. He bit his lips to keep a smile that Buffy would not have understood off his face. He opened his mouth to speak and saw that she had drifted off again. He let out his breath and flashed a rueful

smile at Roger. Roger grinned. "Saved by the bell." Giles let out a breathy laugh. Roger looked at him. "Want me to sit with her for a few minutes, so you can stretch?" He watched as Giles started to shake his head and then was surprised and relieved when Giles nodded and started to stand.

"Take your time. I'll call you if there's a change." Giles nodded and left the room.

End Chapter 1

Dreams 2

Giles wanted a moment to himself. He walked into Buffy's room and sat down on her bed. He picked up Mr. Gordo and held him in his lap. He laid back resting his head on Buffy's pillow. He turned his head into the pillow and he imagined he could smell her. He breathed deeply. He put Mr. Gordo on his chest and had a serious staring contest with the pig, silently communing. Giles broke eye contact first and closed his eyes.

He heard Xander laugh downstairs and he smiled. Buffy had dragged him to the Bronze that night after he'd gotten home. He couldn't imagine why he'd gone except that he wasn't in the mood to deny her anything. It had never crossed either of their minds to hide what had happened so they had sat there, listening to the music, hands clasped. Giles had been watching Buffy instead of the band reveling in the right to just look at her, enjoying her beauty, the lines of her body. He hadn't even sensed someone behind him.

##

Buffy's eyes got very large as she looked at someone behind Giles. Her mouth dropped open. Her eyes flashed to Giles and back to the someone behind him. Giles turned around and saw Riley.

He heard Buffy speak. "Oh my God, Riley, when you get back?"

Riley walked over to the table, saw them holding hands. His eyebrows drew together. He looked at Buffy. "I need to talk with you." He looked at Giles. "Alone." Giles' eyes started to darken. Buffy stood up quickly. She sent a smile to Giles willing him to not take offense. Giles face tightened but he sat back in his chair indicating his acquiescence. Riley took her hand and led her away over to the corner. Behind Riley's back, as he pulled her away, she turned her head and blew Giles a kiss. He grinned at her.

Giles watched the two of them as they started to talk. He couldn't hear what

they were saying but he could clearly see Buffy's face. He watched her face change, emotions flowing too rapidly for him to follow. Riley was gesticulating wildly, often pointing back at Giles. Buffy's hands moved to her hips, her stance getting defensive and angry. Giles moved to the edge of his seat wondering if he ought to intervene. She must have read his mind because she flashed a look at him, shaking her head.

He smiled to himself. Six years and one night and they were like an old married couple. He reached for his beer, took a sip, never taking his eyes off of Buffy. Riley grabbed her arm and Giles stood. Buffy shook it off and pushed Riley away. She pointed at Giles and pointed at herself, said one final thing to Riley and stomped back to Giles. Giles' eyes followed Buffy as she walked over to him. He glanced back at Riley only to find Riley staring at him, a look of hatred on his face. Giles almost recoiled from that look. He turned astonished eyes on Buffy. "What was that all about?"

Buffy rolled her eyes and slammed into her seat. "Let's just say that Riley expected to pick up where he left off and he wasn't too happy that I'm with you."

Giles looked back over to where Riley had been standing but he was gone. Giles felt relieved. "I would say that saying he isn't happy about it is a slight understatement."

Buffy barked out a laugh. She was still angry. She stood up. "Let's go patrol, I need to stomp something."

Giles smothered a grin and nodded. "I'll be right back, I just need to use the facilities."

Buffy laughed at him. "Giles, you can just say you have to pee, you know."

Giles rolled his eyes and walked towards the restroom. As he was returning back down the narrow hallway he was slammed against the wall. He looked at his attacker and saw Riley. Riley held Giles against the wall, his hand on his chest. Giles could still see the hate brimming in his eyes. "What did you do to her?"

Giles was confused. "I beg your pardon?"

"What did you do to her? Some spell or something?"

Giles got angry. He scowled at Riley. "If you are implying that I did something to Buffy to make her want me, you are making a serious mistake." Anyone in his sane mind would have heard the dangerous tone in Giles' voice.

Riley just put his face closer to Giles'. "Buffy and I belong together. She's the only reason I'm still alive, the only reason I made it home. She's all I thought about. She belongs to me." He punctuated each sentence with a push against Giles' chest.

Giles looked at Riley's face. Saw the madness in his eyes. He didn't want to hurt Riley, he was pretty sure Riley needed some serious help. Riley was still talking. "The only reason she thinks she wants you is because you've done something to her. Maybe no one else saw it but I know better. I know she loves me. So back off." He pushed Giles hard that time and Giles had enough.

He pushed back, shoving Riley against the opposite wall. He grabbed Riley's shirt in his hand and brought Riley nose-to-nose with him. "You left. You left her. You had your chance and you blew it." He looked at Riley shaking his head as if he couldn't even believe that someone could have had Buffy and then chosen to walk away. He couldn't believe it.

Riley shook himself free and threw a punch at Giles. Giles blocked it with his hand. Riley looked surprised. Giles laughed. "I've trained a slayer for six years. I could rip you apart if I wanted to." He let go of Riley's fist. "Riley, you need help. Buffy doesn't belong to you. She never did. I don't know what happened to you in South America but Buffy isn't the cure."

Riley leaned against the wall, his head fallen to his chest. Then he looked up at Giles and Giles saw that his eyes were still filled with an unreasonable hate and the inability to hear reason. Riley spit out his words. "I know you did something to her. I have to protect her no matter what it takes." He shoved Giles away and stumbled for the back door, slamming it shut behind him.

Giles stood there lost in thought for a minute and then headed back to the table. Buffy met him halfway; she had started to worry. She saw the look on Giles' face. "Is everything okay?"

Giles squinched his face up. "Well, let's just say that Riley wanted to make sure that I knew how unhappy he was."

Buffy gasped. "Are you all right?"

"Of course." He smiled at Buffy. He wasn't about to tell her that Riley had tried to hurt him. He was afraid that Buffy would hurt Riley.

##

As Giles lay on the bed he realized that neither he nor Buffy had really thought that Riley would do them harm, that it would come to that. He shook his head. It frightened him how wrong he'd been. He knew he shouldn't think this way but in retrospect he'd rather have had Buffy hurt and incapacitate Riley than for her to have to suffer the way she was suffering now.

He got up, his thoughts making him restless. He headed downstairs. As he walked into the living room they all stopped talking. Xander spoke. "Is she okay?"

Giles nodded. "Her fever broke again and she asked me what happened." They all smiled. Her question was getting famous. "Fortunately she fell asleep before I could answer her." He took them all in. Xander and Anya were on the couch. Willow and Tara were cuddled in the oversized chair. Paul was standing by the window. Giles could see the tension in his shoulders. He walked over to him, standing next to him. "Paul, none of this is your fault."

Paul exhaled a bitter laugh. "Maybe not. But I sure don't feel like I was much good. I was the only one expecting it and I still couldn't stop you from almost getting killed." His eyes swept up the staircase and he turned sad eyes to Giles. "Buffy saved your life and almost died for it."

Giles smiled at Paul. "Now you know what being her watcher is like." He didn't expect a smile back. He turned serious eyes to Paul. "You're right. You were the only one expecting it. Neither Buffy nor I took it seriously enough. That was our fault. I should have listened to you. Your instincts were better than mine. And none of it would have happened if I hadn't provided Riley, in a moment of complete idiocy, with the perfect opportunity to shoot me."

The self-deprecation in Giles' voice got through to Paul. Paul captured Giles' eyes. "It would have happened sooner or later. He must have been out there for a long time, just waiting. Sooner or later you'd have walked outside, or Buffy would have and he'd have used her to get to you. Now at least he's gone."

Giles nodded. "That's right. Thanks to you. You stopped him. He would have kept on shooting and he probably would have killed me." Paul just shook his head. Giles wasn't ready to stop. "Paul, even if he hadn't killed me, the fight would have continued and in the confusion Buffy...." He had to take a deep breath. "Buffy would have died. None of us would have gotten to her in time."

Paul took his own deep breath, the previous nights' events still burning in his mind. It had been too close. He knew it wasn't his fault but he didn't like feeling that he couldn't protect his friends the way he wanted to. Everyone he loved most had been in this room last night and they could all have been

killed. The fear of that hadn't left him yet. He took another deep breath pulling some strength from the quiet man beside him wondering anew how he dealt daily with the potential loss of all that he loved. He had never met anyone with so much internal strength. He was humbled by it.

He was also angry at how the military was ignoring every request he made regarding the poison and the antidote. He had gone to the police station in hopes of questioning Riley about it at Roger's request only to be told that the military had miraculously appeared and taken him away. He had been met with impenetrable silence since then. He slammed his hand against the wall.

"Why won't they tell us anything?" He looked at Giles. Giles shook his head.

Xander had been watching the exchange and spoke. "It's the military. They're not about to share top-secret information with the group of people who were nothing but a bug up their butt while they had the initiative here."

Giles responded bitterly to Xander's words. "You'd think that the fact that Buffy saved most of their lives would make a difference."

Xander nodded. "You'd think." His eyes tracked to the movement at the top of the stairs. Roger stood there. He called down.

"Giles, she's awake again. She's asking for you." Giles moved up the stairs two at a time.

Willow smiled as he ran up the stairs. "Poor Giles, he never gets any rest from being her watcher."

Xander nodded. "Weird how she keeps asking for him, even when one of us is sitting there."

Tara spoke up softly. "I think she just keeps wanting to make sure that he's okay, that Riley hasn't hurt him." They all nodded at that.

Paul had quickly seen that none of the others knew that Buffy and Giles' relationship had changed. He was amazed that they couldn't see it in the way Giles touched her, in the way his eyes shone when he was looking at her, in the way she was always calling for him whenever she did wake up. Neither of them was trying to hide it. He shrugged. If they couldn't see it he certainly wasn't going to mention it. That was for Buffy and Giles to do when they so chose.

He looked around the room again, reliving a conversation from last night. Paul and Roger had been hanging with Giles waiting for Buffy to get home from patrol. She had come home with Spike in tow. Giles had told them about

Spike but hearing about a vampire and coming face-to-face with one was a little different.

##

Spike was pacing around the living room, clearly annoyed with Buffy. His long leather coat swung dramatically around his ankles as he turned at the end of the room to start pacing in the other direction. On turning Spike found himself almost running into Roger.

"What the bloody hell are you looking at?"

Roger just stared at Spike. He still couldn't believe that he was actually a vampire. "I don't know. I guess I just expected something a little scarier."

Spike was not in the mood. He vamped out and snarled at Roger. Roger gasped and jumped back grabbing Paul's arm. "Ok, that was scarier."

Spike grinned at his reaction. Buffy walked up to him and whacked him on the back of the head. "Stop that." He scowled and put his human face back on.

He looked at her annoyed. He raised a hand pointing in Roger's direction. "He asked for it."

Buffy rolled her eyes then she remembered that she was annoyed with Spike. She glared at him. "Why did you mess with Riley tonight? I told you not to get involved."

Spike got in her face. "He was getting out his tazer gun to stun you." Giles looked alarmed. He walked over to stand next to Buffy.

"You don't know that. He could have just been getting it out to use it on you."

Spike snorted. "Right. And him yelling at you and grabbing your arm was his idea of foreplay. Besides he was taking it out before he even saw me."

Giles started looking angry. He looked at Buffy. "Did he hurt you?"

Buffy looked disgusted. "No, he was just being a bully." She turned to Spike again. "I can take care of myself."

Spike rolled his eyes. "He was trying to kidnap you and probably would have succeeded if I hadn't been there. He just kept talking about how he needed to save you from yourself."

Buffy scowled remembering Riley's words. "God, he was completely loony." She turned to Giles. "He was convinced you'd done some sort of spell on me. He just kept saying how he and I belonged together, that you had to be stopped." She spoke in a low dramatic voice.

Spike picked up the conversation. "That's when he got the bright idea to kidnap Buffy." At her expression his jaw tightened. "He was going to knock you out." He looked down at himself. His voice rose, angry. "And then the asshole tried to stake me."

Giles' eyebrows rose at this. "Riley tried to stake you?" Spike nodded and pulled apart his shirt, showing the wound just to the right of his heart.

Roger walked over to Spike wanting a closer look. "Does that hurt?"

Spike glared at him. "Of course it hurts you sodding idiot. The man stuck a stake in my chest." Roger stepped back putting his hands up as a peace offering.

Buffy paced. "Okay, granted, Riley was a little crazed." She glared at Spike. "I just don't think you helped. You royally pissed him off."

Spike glared back. "Good, I hate the bloody pillock."

End Chapter 2

Dreams 3

Then they had all just started talking about something else as if nothing important had just been said. That was the first Paul had heard about Riley. He had tried to get more information out of Buffy and Giles but while they were concerned about Riley's state of mind they didn't seem unduly concerned about their own safety. Paul had paced around the house peering out windows; filled with an uneasiness he couldn't put his finger on. He had checked all the doors and windows, made sure they were closed and locked and had drawn all the shades. He had ignored the teasing about his paranoia.

Roger finally convinced Spike to let him have a closer look at his almost being staked wound. Paul remembered the excitement in Roger's eyes as he had moved in, his doctor's fingers itching to actually examine a vampire.

Paul smiled thinking of Spike. Despite Spike's protestations it was clear that he cared about these people and that he'd risk his life to save them. His

actions last night had made that abundantly clear and Paul would never forget it. He had told that to Spike. He had thanked him for saving Giles' life and told Spike that if he ever needed anything that all he had to do was ask. He had been surprised at the look on Spike's face. He hadn't expected for Spike to be so touched. Spike had rapidly recovered and had said something sarcastic but Paul had seen it, just a flicker, but clear as day.

He let his hand gingerly touch the holes in the window. He was amazed the window hadn't shattered. His mind drifted back again to last night.

##

Giles walked over to the window and moved the shade aside for a moment, looking out into the darkness. As he lay the shade back down the mechanism was somehow activated and the shade retracted. Startled, Giles moved a few steps back and then as he realized it was just the shade that had scared him he grinned at himself, shaking his head. He started moving back to the window to draw the shade down again as Paul barked out an order for him to move away.

With their superior hearing Buffy and Spike both heard the snick of the crossbow and their heads snapped up. Paul saw their movement and reached for his gun. Buffy moved and threw herself in front of Giles just as a crossbow bolt punched through the window. The bolt went through Buffy's shoulder and the impact took her to the floor. Spike took the next one. He heard the release of a second bolt and grabbed Giles. He spun him around so Spike was between him and the window. He was pushing Giles to the floor when the bolt slammed into his back, high and to the right.

Paul reached the window and opened it, still standing to the side. He saw the man on the street, reloading his crossbow. Paul raised his gun and fired. The man dropped the crossbow and grabbed his arm. Paul watched him as he lurched into the shadows. He shut the window and the shade and turned around to assess the damage.

Giles had crawled over to Buffy. She was too pale. Her breathing was too rapid. He looked at the bolt; saw that it had just gone through her shoulder right above the collarbone. There was not a lot of blood loss. He didn't understand. "Buffy, are you okay?" She just looked at him, shook her head.

She gasped. "Something's wrong. I can't breath."

Spike was trying to get the bolt out of his back but it was just beyond his reach. Roger walked over and turned Spike around to yank it out. He handed it to Spike then moved to help Buffy. Spike took the bolt preparing to snap it in

half when his nostrils flared. He held the tip of the bolt up to his nose and smelled.

He turned to look at Giles and Buffy, his face alarmed. "Giles."

Giles looked up and his heart started to race at the look on Spike's face. "Spike, what is it?"

"Poison."

"What kind?"

Spike smelled it again and gingerly stuck out his tongue to taste it. He shook his head. "I don't know. I don't recognize it." Giles and Spike both watched Buffy as she labored to breathe, her face showing her pain and fear. Spike stormed to the front door and after opening it he yelled out. "You shot Buffy. She's dying. Is that what you frigging wanted?" Paul looked up at him. Spike was in full vampire face, snarling into the darkness. His eyes swept the night looking for any sign of Riley. He was rewarded only by silence.

Giles gathered Buffy up to him, listening as her breathing turned to panting. Her skin was pale, her eyes glazed. He looked up at Roger hope and hopelessness mingled together in his eyes. Roger took off for his car where he had a medical kit. Paul watched in helpless anger. He called the station asking for assistance. He picked up his gun, went to stand next to Spike and motioned to him. "C'mon." Spike nodded and they both went hunting.

##

Giles and Roger were sitting upstairs watching Buffy. Giles had dragged several chairs up to the room to accommodate all of Buffy's different watchers. They both sat there quietly just watching Buffy breathe. She had drifted off to sleep shortly after Giles had come back upstairs. Roger counted her breaths, not even aware he was doing it. He had counted her breaths last night too. If Riley hadn't.... He pushed that thought away. He had, and that's what was important. So many things could have gone wrong.

##

Giles looked at him and Roger got up and ran out the door heading for his car. He didn't know if he had anything that would keep Buffy alive but he sure as hell wasn't going to just sit there and do nothing. He opened his trunk and pulled out the medical kit he had assembled after finding out what Buffy and Giles really did. He slammed the trunk down and gasped when he saw the man standing there.

He was bleeding. Blood was all over his arm, running down his hand. He was ignoring it. His face was tortured and he was holding his bloody hand out to Roger. Roger looked down and saw that there was a vial filled with some liquid, lying on his palm. Riley spoke in anguished tones. "Take it, it's the antidote. Give it to her quickly." Roger reached for it. Riley closed his fist on the vial. "It may already be too late. It's bad, the antidote. Almost as bad as the poison, but it won't kill her." Roger nodded, desperate to go; he wanted to get back to Buffy. Riley opened his fist and Roger grabbed the vial. Riley wasn't done. "Tell her I'm sorry. Tell her I'll come back for her later."

Roger's eyes hardened. Not if he could help it. He yelled out for his brother. Riley lifted a gun and Roger flinched back fully expecting to be shot. Riley gestured to the house with the gun. "Go." Roger turned and started to run for the house. Riley turned the other way and headed off.

Roger saw Paul as he was about to enter and he pointed in the direction Riley had gone. "He has a gun!" At Paul's nod Roger opened the door and headed inside. Buffy was still breathing, barely. Roger yanked open the kit, drew out a syringe and started pulling the liquid up in the vile. He hesitated for a moment realizing he had no idea how to even administer the drug. He looked at Buffy and saw that in a minute it wouldn't matter. He pulled up her sleeve and with the ease of years of practice slid the needle into a vein and injected the antidote.

##

Roger snapped back into the present. It had been a frightening few minutes as Giles and Roger had sat there, Giles still holding Buffy in his arms, waiting to see if the antidote had been given in time. Roger had sat there counting her breaths, feeling her pulse. Despite having no idea what he had given her it had worked. But she'd been ill since. Not ill enough to warrant a stay at the hospital but ill enough to concern him especially operating in the dark like this. He bit his lower lip.

Paul was listening to them all chat when he heard a knock on the door. He grinned and opened it expecting it to be Spike. Instead there was a young, dark haired man standing there. Xander recognized him and stood. "Hey Graham."

Graham nodded, ill at ease. "Is Giles here?"

Stopping Xander from answering Paul turned to Graham. "Who are you?"

Graham looked behind him, looked around the neighborhood, looking for anyone who might be watching him. "Let me in, I'll explain."

Paul stepped aside and Graham entered. He briefly nodded at the looks from the others. He turned back to Paul. "I work with Riley. I need to talk with Giles."

Paul's face darkened. "You can talk to me."

Graham shook his head. "I shouldn't even be here. I could be court-martialed. I'll only talk to Giles."

Paul considered for a moment and then he nodded. He gestured for Graham to head up the stairs, following closely behind. He told him to wait while he entered Joyce's bedroom. He saw that Giles was softly talking to Buffy. He caught Giles' eye and gestured him outside. Giles spoke softly to Buffy again and rose. His eyes widened when he saw Graham.

"Graham, what are you doing here?" Graham's eyes flickered up to Paul who was still standing there. "I need to talk with you alone."

Giles looked up at Paul. He motioned to Buffy's room and as Graham entered he shut the door behind him. Paul went and stood outside the door.

Giles looked at Graham, his eyes angry. "You know what Riley did?"

Graham's eyes got sad and he nodded. "I'm sorry. I had no idea he was that bad off." He paused for a moment. "Is Buffy okay?"

Giles' jaw tightened. "As well as she can be seeing as we have no idea what we're dealing with."

Graham reached into his pocket. "That's why I'm here. I'm trying to set things right. I should have seen how sick Riley was." He handed Giles a piece of paper. He hung on to it for a moment as Giles tried to take it. "I'm trusting you with this. It could ruin my career. I'm trusting that you'll use it to help Buffy and then destroy it."

Giles looked at his eyes, saw the fear there. He used his other hand to gently release Graham's finger hold on the paper. "Graham, I promise." He looked at the paper, saw the chemicals listed there along with a list of side effects. "Is this the poison or the antidote?"

Graham motioned for him to turn the paper over. He touched it. "This is the poison. The antidote is on the other side." He took a deep breath. He looked at Giles. "The poison would have killed her within minutes. The antidote worked." He smiled bleakly at Giles. "It doesn't always. It's still experimental. I

don't even know how Riley got his hands on it."

Giles held the paper in his hands tightly. "What have you done with him? Do we need to worry about him coming back?"

Graham shook his head. "He's locked away. Even if he wasn't I don't imagine he'll ever hurt anyone again." Graham's eyes were sad thinking about the mental state of his friend. "I should have seen it." He felt as if he had let Riley down.

Giles put his hand on Graham's shoulder. "This whole thing took us all by surprise. Don't blame yourself." He held up the paper. "Thank you for this."

Graham nodded. "It was the least I could do."

Giles smiled. "You're a good man Graham. Try not to lose that."

Graham smiled, warmed by Giles' words. He nodded. "I better go." Giles moved out of his way and Graham opened the door, shoved past Paul and walked downstairs. Giles walked quickly to Joyce's bedroom and handed Roger the piece of paper Graham had given him. Roger's eyes widened as he saw what it was. He looked up at Giles, speechless.

He looked back at the list and he screwed up his lips. He looked at Giles, perplexed. "I need to go look some of this stuff up." He looked over at Buffy. "She should be all right for a while. I need to run to the hospital."

Giles nodded. "Just keep this to yourself. That young man took a huge risk giving this to us." Roger nodded and headed downstairs.

Giles moved over to the bed and saw that Buffy was asleep again. He sat in the chair and looked up at Paul smiling. "See, someone did hear all the yelling you were doing."

Paul scowled. "He sure took his sweet time getting here."

Giles rolled his eyes. "You're just not going to be happy about this are you?"

Paul shook his head. He motioned to Buffy with his chin. "Not until she's back to slaying strength."

Giles looked at Paul. "Paul." He stopped for a minute wanting to make sure he got his point across. "Without you and Roger I doubt that Buffy and I would have ever discovered our true feelings for each other." He paused. "And despite what you say, without the two of you she would be dead right now."

You have given her to me twice now and I can never repay you, either of you."

Paul's eyes brightened at Giles' words. Buffy coughed and Giles broke eye contact with Paul to turn to her. Paul stood there for a minute watching the two of them, feeling some of the heaviness of the last two days start to fade away. He turned and walked downstairs.

Buffy seemed more alert. She watched as Giles settled himself on the bed next to her. He took her hand. "How are you feeling?"

"Like I lost." She tried to laugh and winced as the pain lanced through her body. "Tell me whatever did this looks worse than me."

Giles tightened the hold on her hand. "He does."

Buffy nodded. She looked around the room. "What happened?"

He used his other hand to brush the hair off her face. "Riley shot you." As her eyes widened he spoke again. "It was an accident. He was trying to shoot me. He shot Spike too."

Her face hardened. "Where is he now?"

"Riley?" At her nod he continued. "Paul and Spike hunted him down and Paul arrested him. The military came and picked him up."

Buffy shifted again and a moan passed her lips. "Why do I hurt so much?" She let out a deep breath and seemed to be falling asleep again. She opened her eyes once more. "What day is it?"

"Sunday. Sunday night."

She thought about that for a minute but figuring out when she'd been hurt and how many days it had been was beyond her right now. She shook her head and then winced. "Shouldn't my slayer healing have kicked in by now?"

Giles kissed her hand. "Your wound has almost completely healed. The bolt had poison on it. That's why you're still sick."

She closed her eyes. "Spike?"

"Doesn't seem to affect vampires."

She nodded, exhausted from the brief conversation. She opened her eyes,

looking at him, checking him out. "You're okay? He didn't hurt you?"

" Giles shook his head. "Thanks to all of you I got by without a scratch."

He waited to see if she had any more questions. He turned as he heard footsteps and saw Xander entering the room. Buffy opened her eyes and upon seeing him sent him a small smile.

Xander grinned. "Hey Buffy."

She nodded at his greeting and closed her eyes. Giles saw the uncertainty on Xander's face and rose. "She's tired. Why don't you sit with her for a few minutes." Xander nodded sinking down into the chair. He flashed Giles a grateful look. Giles smiled at him and headed downstairs.

As he walked downstairs he saw that Spike had arrived. He and Paul were talking away from everyone else, laughing over something. Giles looked at the two of them. Despite Spike being a vampire Paul was completely relaxed, clearly comfortable with Spike. Giles could see Spike responding to that. Spike was laughing, no trace of his usual sardonic expression on his face. Giles could never remember seeing him look so human.

He walked over to them wanting to take this moment to speak his peace. He put his hand on Spike's shoulder. Spike looked up but before he could speak Giles did. "Thanks Spike. I won't forget what you did last night."

Surprise lit across Spike's face. Spike waved his hand, as though erasing Giles' words. He frowned. "Don't know what I was thinking."

Giles nodded his head, fighting back a smile. "Yes, well, thank you anyway. I promise to never mention it to anybody."

Spike scowled. "Bloody well better not." Over his head Giles caught Paul's eyes and they grinned at each other.

End Chapter 3

Dreams 4

Xander watched Buffy breath. He couldn't believe that something so stupid had almost killed her. He shook his head thinking of Riley. He couldn't imagine what had made Riley snap like that. He blew out a breath making a noisy exhalation.

Buffy opened her eyes. She tried to sit up. Xander rose to go over to her. She saw him and tried to swing her legs over the side of the bed. He put his hand out. "Hey, hey, where do you think you're going?" She tried to stand and fell back. "Buffy, you're too weak to go anywhere, lay back down."

Buffy tried again. "I have to get to him."

"Who?"

"Giles. He's in danger."

"No, he isn't. He's right downstairs. He's fine."

Buffy shook her head. "I don't believe you. I need to get to him. I heard him calling me. He's hurt." She started to push Xander away. Only her weakened state prevented her from tossing him across the room.

He spoke louder. "Buffy, lie down. He's fine."

She pushed him again. He knew he'd have a bruise but he stayed put. He was afraid she would fall. He yelled for Giles. "Giles, get up here!" In a moment he heard footsteps racing up the stairs and Giles skidded into the room.

"What's the matter?"

"She thinks you're hurt. She won't listen to me."

Giles moved over to the bed and put his arms around Buffy. "Buffy." She pushed against him too. He spoke louder, turning her head to face him. "Buffy, look at me. I'm right here." He watched as her eyes cleared and his presence registered.

She reached up and touched his face. "You're here?"

Giles nodded. She breathed a sigh of relief and placed her head on his chest. He put his arms around her and held her close, his face concerned. He looked at Xander and saw the echoing concern in Xander's face. They both turned as more footsteps raced their way upstairs. It was Roger. He came into the room. "What happened?"

Giles just held Buffy. Xander spoke up. "She kind of went wacky. She kept thinking Giles was in danger and that she had to get to him. Once he got up here she didn't even recognize him at first."

Roger swore. Giles noted the apprehension on his face and the sheath of papers in his hand. "What did you find out?"

"Nothing good. That antidote is filled with some nasty stuff."

As he paused Giles prompted him. "Roger, what's going on?"

Roger took a deep breath. "There are some chemicals in the antidote that can cause hallucinations. I was hoping we'd gotten lucky because other than not remembering anything you say to her she's been pretty with it when she's been awake but obviously those chemicals are starting to affect her."

Xander winced. "This sounds like a really bad thing for a person with super powers."

Giles turned alarmed eyes to Roger. "If she gets the wrong idea in her head, none of us will be able to stop her."

Roger nodded. "I know. Good thing I have my own stash." He lifted up the bag that was in his other hand. "Sedatives, and lots of them. I brought them with me on the off chance that this might happen."

Giles looked down and saw that Buffy had fallen back to sleep. He gently laid her back down drawing the blanket over her. He watched as Roger started administering one of the sedatives through her IV line. Giles looked at Xander. "You okay?"

Xander nodded. "Just a little wigged. It was like beer Buffy all over again." Giles smiled at the comparison.

Roger finished and looked at them both. "We should probably watch her in pairs in case something like this happens again." Giles nodded. Xander rose and headed for the door. "I'll fill them in."

After Xander left Giles looked at Roger. "Anything else we need to worry about?"

Roger shook his head. "Just shades of what we've seen, fevers, aches and pains. She might feel some nausea; her vision might be blurry. Nothing I'm unduly concerned about or feel like I can't handle."

"Other than the hallucinations?"

"Yeah, other than that." He looked at Giles. "What do we do if the drugs won't hold her?"

Giles shook his head. "I have no idea." He looked around the bedroom. "We

could chain her up, that's about all that would hold her." He looked horrified at the thought.

Roger looked equally horrified. "Let's hold off on that for the time being." Giles couldn't agree more.

Giles didn't want to leave Buffy. He looked at Roger. "Tell them all to go home. It's late. They can get a good night's sleep and whoever is able can come back tomorrow."

Roger nodded. "I'll be right back up." At Giles' nod, he ran downstairs. He was back up in a minute and settled back down in the chair. Giles had stretched out on the bed next to Buffy.

Giles looked at Roger. "Have they all gone?"

Roger nodded. "Except Paul and Spike. I didn't even bother asking either of them to leave."

Giles softly laughed. "Poor Spike. Now he has another person he has to pretend not to like and yet somehow protect." He laughed again. He closed his eyes. He felt very weary.

Roger watched him drift off to sleep and he sat there feeling as if he'd never had the privilege of watching over anyone more important than the two of them. The night passed uneventfully. Spike left shortly before dawn, and everyone else settled down to sleep.

Giles moaned and brushed at the hand that was prodding him. "Stop it." He turned over.

"Giles."

At Buffy's voice Giles' eyes shot open. He turned around to face her. She looked like she was in pain. "I really have to pee but my legs are all wobbly and I seem to have a leash."

Giles jumped up alarmed she had been trying to stand. She had one hand on the IV tubing. He walked around the bed. He lifted her and after figuring out how to hold her and push her IV pole he took her into the bathroom. He waited outside until she called him. He carried her back and deposited her on the bed. She tugged on him and he lay down beside her and pulled her into his arms, holding her tightly. He spoke, his breath tickling her ear. "How are you feeling?"

She thought for a moment. "Like someone hit me with a sledgehammer." She stretched and Giles let go of her a little to give her some room. She turned to look at him. "What happened?"

He rolled his eyes. He smiled. "Ask me later. I'll tell you anything you want to know once I think you might actually remember it."

She frowned. "Am I being forgetful girl?"

He smiled at her phrase. "At the very least."

"Everyone else is okay?"

"Everyone's fine." She smiled and snuggled back into his arms. She felt something tug at her arm and she looked to see what it was. She remembered the leash.

"Hey, why do I have this thing in my arm?"

"Later." She pouted. She heard footsteps and watched the doorway until Roger appeared.

Roger flashed her a big grin. "Hey."

She smiled. "Hey back." She looked at her arm, at the tape and tubing. "How's the patient?"

"Look's like she's fine." He wished he knew if she had gotten all the drugs out of her system. He hated to keep her sedated if she didn't need it. He held off on giving her anything, deciding instead to keep a close watch on her. He prepared a couple of syringes just in case he had to give her something quickly.

Buffy wasn't so sure she was fine. She looked at Roger. "What happened? Giles won't tell me."

Roger grinned. "I just think he's tired of telling you." Giles suddenly let out a snore and Buffy giggled. She yawned and closed her eyes, snuggling more deeply against Giles. Roger smiled as she fell asleep again.

He heard the front door open and he stepped to the head of the stairs. As the gang looked up he whispered down to be quiet. When they noticed that Paul was asleep on the couch they tiptoed into the kitchen Xander brandishing a box of doughnuts.

About an hour later Giles walked out of the bedroom, rubbing the sleep out of

his eyes. At Roger's look he spoke. "She's still asleep." Roger nodded and got up to go into the bedroom. Giles touched his arm. "Do you think we're through it?"

Roger shook his head. "I don't know. I hope so." He grimaced. "It's really too soon to tell. When she can stay awake for an hour and stay lucid I'll start to believe it."

Giles thought for a moment. He had seen the syringes laid out; he knew Roger was being cautious. He decided he should be too. "I have to run home for a minute. I'll be right back." Roger lifted his eyebrows. Giles explained. "Restraints. Just in case." Roger winced and then nodded. Giles walked down the stairs and after filling in Paul he picked up his keys and headed out.

Paul walked into the kitchen saying hi to Xander, Willow and Tara. He filched a doughnut.

Xander spoke up. "Anya went to open the shop. She figured Giles would want her to."

Paul nodded. "Makes sense to me." He crammed the rest of the doughnut in his mouth and reached for another one. "One of you better get up to keep Roger company. I have to run by the police station and fill out a mountain of paperwork. Giles ran home, he'll be back shortly. Call me if something comes up. I'll be back as soon as I can." He scowled thinking of all the paperwork waiting for him. "Which will probably be sometime next year." He scribbled his cell phone number on a piece of scrap paper. Willow picked it up and using a magnet put it on the refrigerator. Paul smiled at her and taking another doughnut he left.

Xander looked at the rapidly disappearing doughnuts. He grabbed another one before they were all gone. Spewing out doughnut crumbs he offered to take the first shift. At the girls' nods he headed upstairs. He hadn't been there long when Willow and Tara joined him. Willow took one look at Roger and insisted that he take a nap. She prodded him until he agreed and he went to lie down on Buffy's bed. After making sure that Roger was really going to take a nap Willow picked up Mr. Gordo and softly shut the door.

End Chapter 4

Dreams 5

Willow placed Mr. Gordo down next to Buffy in the bed and then she sat on

one of the chairs in the room. The three of them spoke softly. Buffy started to stir. Tara got up and sat on the side of the bed. Buffy's eyes opened. She saw Mr. Gordo and then saw the blond haired woman sitting next to her.

"Mom?"

"No, Buffy, it's me, Tara."

"Mom? You're not dead?" Buffy reached out a hand to touch Tara's hair.

Willow and Xander both stood and walked closer to the bed. Willow spoke up. "Buffy, that's Tara."

Buffy turned at the voice. "Willow?" Willow nodded. Buffy looked down again at Mr. Gordo. She touched him, pulled him in close to her. She looked back at Tara. She smiled. "I thought you were dead. I must have dreamed the whole thing." She touched Tara's hair again.

Tara tried again. "Buffy, it's me, Tara."

Buffy just lay there smiling at Tara. Suddenly she looked very alarmed. She struggled to sit up, still holding Mr. Gordo tightly. Xander moved to sit on the bed, to keep her from moving too far. Buffy shook her head. Everything looked so hazy. She looked around. "Where's Giles?"

Xander answered. "He's home."

Buffy processed that answer. She looked back at Tara. "He's not here? He's not staying with me?"

Tara looked confused. "Giles has his own home. This is your home."

Buffy shook her head, dismay clear on her face. "I dreamed the whole thing?" Her eyes started to fill with tears. "None of it was real?" She looked at Tara. "Mom? I don't understand. Giles should be here."

The three of them looked at her, stymied. She looked at them all again, her face getting frantic. "Doesn't Giles love me?"

Willow tried this time. "Of course Giles loves you. He's your watcher."

That didn't seem to help. "Oh God." Her face started to crumple, tears beginning to fall. "Did I dream the whole thing? Did the dream not come true?" She started to sob, holding Mr. Gordo tightly. Tara wrapped her arms around Buffy. Willow got up to go get Roger. As she was about to open the

door to Buffy's bedroom she heard the front door open and saw Giles walk in. She breathed a sigh of relief.

"Giles." He looked up. "She's gone loopy again." He raced up the stairs. Roger came out of Buffy's room awakened by the commotion. He followed Giles in.

Giles saw Buffy crying uncontrollably and sat on the bed taking Buffy from Tara. "Buffy, Buffy, what's wrong?" She held him tightly, still crying.

Roger got a syringe ready, just in case. Buffy lifted her head up. "Giles?"

He nodded. She took a hiccup-y breath. "I thought my mom was dead." He looked at her confused.

Tara touched him lightly on the shoulder. He looked up. "She thought I was her mom." Giles nodded and turned his attention back to Buffy.

"Buffy, can you see Tara now?"

Buffy just started to cry again, helpless cries that tore at Giles. He held Buffy tighter. "What's wrong?" He saw Roger pick up the tubing and take the cap off of one of the syringes. He put his hand up to stop him. Roger recapped the syringe and waited.

Finally Buffy's crying started to slow down. She looked at Giles. "Did I dream the whole thing?" Giles shook his head, not sure what she was asking. She grabbed his shirt. "Is Riley here?"

Giles shook his head again. "He's with the military again."

Nobody's answers made sense to her. She just felt a terrible loss. "Did I dream the whole thing? Did the dream not come true?" She started to cry again.

"Buffy, what dream?"

"Your dream. The dream that came true. Did I dream the whole thing?" She stared at him, tears still running down her face.

He stared back at her trying to figure out what she was talking about. He looked at everyone and they all looked back just as perplexed. He ran her words through his mind and suddenly it all clicked. He smiled, a real smile and Xander, Willow and Tara were taken by surprise by the joy in it. He hugged Buffy tightly. "No, Buffy, you didn't dream the whole thing. The dream

did come true."

She pushed away from him, looking up at his face. "Really? Then Riley was here?"

Giles nodded. "He was here, but he's gone now."

"So, I didn't dream the whole thing?" She wanted desperately to believe him.

Giles shook his head. He smiled at her again, his hand stroking her hair. Xander, Willow and Tara watched mystified at whatever secret language the two of them were speaking, captivated by the emotions running so strongly between them.

She continued. "And you're staying here with me?" Giles nodded again. She still needed to be sure. "And you love me?"

Giles swept her up again in his arms. "Oh, Buffy, more than life itself." He pulled back and pressed a kiss on her lips. He heard Willow gasp. He started to wipe the tears off of Buffy's face. "Do you believe me?"

"I made the dream come true?"

He smiled. "You made the dream come true." She sagged against him, relief coursing through her body.

"I thought I dreamed the whole thing. I thought I'd lost you." She looked at him the loss and confusion fading from her eyes.

He kissed her again. "Never."

She looked up and saw Tara. "Hey Tara. When did you get here?" Everyone let out a giggle at that. Buffy frowned. "Did I say something funny?" She looked around at everyone, at the room. "What happened?" She got another round of giggles for that and she frowned again.

Giles shook his head. "You're just a little confused Buffy. Just try and get some sleep."

"Stay with me?" He nodded and crawling over her he lay down next to her pulling her into his arms. She sighed and closed her eyes. Roger put the syringe down and shooed them all out of the room. He walked downstairs with them, figuring Buffy would be okay for a few minutes with Giles next to her.

They headed into the kitchen and Roger grabbed a doughnut. Xander turned to him. "Okay, what was that?"

Roger made a face. "What did it look like?"

"Like Buffy and Giles are...." He didn't finish his sentence, looking at Willow.

Willow was looking at Roger's nod. Her eyes widened. "When did that happen? I mean you can tell it happened because I mean, wow, that was pretty powerful but how long has that been going on?" She looked confused. "And why didn't I see it before? It's so obvious." She smacked herself on the forehead.

Roger talked around his doughnut, answering her questions. "Night before Riley came back, and I have absolutely no idea."

Xander slapped the counter. "That would explain why Riley snapped. He found out about the two of them." Roger nodded.

Tara spoke up. "I think it's sweet. It's clear they're crazy about each other." She looked at Willow and Willow grinned at her. They both turned to Xander.

He looked nervous. "What are you looking at me for?" He watched them as they cocked their heads to the side at him. "Hey, no fair ganging up." Roger grinned at the unspoken pressure. Xander thought for a minute. He nodded. "Okay, I can deal." He grinned at them. He looked at Roger. "So, how come you're mister in the know?"

He grinned. "I was here when they figured it out."

Xander frowned. "Just like that, they figured it out?"

Roger nodded. "With a little help from me and Paul." He grinned at their looks and then shook his head at them. "I can't believe you didn't see it. They were like a fusion bomb waiting to go off." They heard Giles yell and as one they all raced upstairs.

He was holding her down as she fought to get up. He pointed at the syringes with his chin. "Now would be a good time." Roger raced over and grabbing the tubing pushed some medicine in her IV. After a minute Giles could feel her relaxing and he slowly released her and rolled to the side.

He looked at Roger. "Thank you. Even in her weakened state I don't know how much longer I could have stopped her."

Xander spoke. "What was she trying to do?"

Giles smiled ruefully. "Rescue me."

Willow gasped. "She didn't recognize you?"

Giles frowned and cast a worried gaze to Roger. "No."

Xander started to pace. "This is bad. You're the only one who's been able to calm her down."

Giles ran his hand through his hair. "We'll just have to keep her sedated." He tightened his lips looking down at Buffy and then up at Roger. Roger nodded and started to prepare more syringes. He noted the time.

For the rest of the day Roger tried to keep Buffy heavily sedated. He and Giles both noted that her slayer metabolism was adjusting to the sedatives and burning through them more and more quickly as the day wore on into early evening. Roger hoped that she was burning off the chemicals in the antidote just as fast. Giles and Roger were getting increasingly nervous. She would come to, snapping awake screaming his name. Nothing he said could reassure her. Only more sedatives would stop her as they eventually pulled her back under.

End Chapter 5

Dreams 6

Giles finally went downstairs to talk with Tara and Xander. He sat them down. "She's getting worse. Roger has no idea how long this will last." He took a deep breath. "She's also getting stronger." He saw them all swallow. He turned to Xander. "I have some chains in my car but they need to be secured to something. Can you figure something out?"

"Why does it matter? Can't you just chain her hands and feet?"

"Yes I could but it would be frightening for her if she woke up confused and chained, unable to move. They'd have to be tight to keep her completely immobile." Xander winced. Giles saw the look in his eyes. "I'll do it as a last resort but I'd rather have something to chain her to so she'll have some freedom of movement."

Xander wasn't sure that anything in the house was strong enough to hold

Buffy but he'd try. He could only imagine how freaked Buffy would be if she woke up and wasn't able to move. Not to mention how pissed off it would make her. He needed to get to the hardware store before they closed. He took off at a run. Giles turned to Tara. "Tara, I need your help too. Willow can't do magic right now so this falls on you, I'm afraid. I need you to run to my home and pick up some supplies. I'll need one of my books. He told her the name. Can you run and get it?" At her nod he spoke again. "I'll need your help to cast a spell." He smiled at Willow knowing she would be frustrated at not being able to help.

Willow smiled back. "I may not be able to do any magic right now but I can help look for that book and I can still light candles and stuff. We'll be back as soon as we can." Giles smiled at them both. He heard the front door shut behind them and then he heard a thump from upstairs. He took off running. When he got upstairs Roger was on the floor and Buffy was standing over him screaming.

"Where is he? What have you done with him?" Giles continued to run and just barreled into Buffy taking her to the floor. The momentum caused Buffy's head to hit the floor hard. She lay there stunned. She looked up. "Giles?"

He gasped, thankful she recognized him. He slowly moved off of her. She looked around. "What am I doing on the floor?" She gasped as she saw Roger. Giles crawled over to him but Roger was already starting to sit up. He held his jaw.

"Ow. Buffy, you have some right hook."

She gasped again. "I hit you?"

Giles turned back to her. "You didn't mean to. You've been hallucinating."

Roger slowly got up. He watched Giles reassuring Buffy, helping her get back into bed. His heart was still thudding. He knew he'd gotten off easy. He reached for his cell phone and left the room. He called his brother. As Paul answered Roger didn't even wait for his greeting. "Paul?"

Paul tensed. "What is it?"

"Do you have a trunk gun?"

Paul's stomach knotted. "Yes, why?"

"The medicines are barely working. The last one I gave her lasted less than 15 minutes. The dose I gave her would have put me out for a day. She just

practically knocked me out and only Giles tackling kept her from...well, doing anything else." Roger rubbed his forehead not even wanting to think of what harm Buffy could do if she got outside and ran into innocent people she was afraid were hurting Giles.

Paul took a deep breath. "I'll grab it and be there shortly."

"Load it for bear." Roger hung up. He walked back into the bedroom. Giles had gotten Buffy back into bed and was holding her tightly. He could see Buffy's IV lying on the floor. He started getting out supplies to restart it.

While he was taping it up he looked up to see the worry in Giles' eyes. Roger watched them as the worry turned to sadness. Giles sighed and spoke. "They're in the trunk, go get them." Roger knew immediately what Giles was talking about and hesitated. Giles tried again. "Go, now. I don't want to either but I don't know what else to do. I have to keep her from hurting anybody." Roger nodded and reluctantly headed off.

Giles looked down at Buffy and saw that she was asleep again. He moved his arm out from underneath her and stood up. His heart was still racing. For an awful moment he'd thought Roger was dead, that Buffy had killed him. He walked into the master bath to splash some cold water on his face. He heard a noise and turned around to see Buffy standing at the door, her face angry. Her arm was bleeding from where the IV had once again been ripped out. "Who are you?"

Giles held his hands up backing away a little. "Buffy, it's me, Giles."

She shook her head. "What have you done with him?"

"Buffy."

She walked closer, her eyes filled with hate. "Don't think you can hide him from me. I'll kill you and then I'll find him. You won't ever hurt him again."

Giles saw his death in her eyes and the thought of Buffy having to live with the knowledge that she had killed him galvanized him into action. He swung out with all his strength hoping to stun her. In her rage her strength was absolute. She stopped his punch before it even connected and she threw one of her own. He slammed up against the shower door, dazed. He staggered up and tried to hit her again. She laughed and moved in. She grabbed him and threw him hard against the mirror. He slammed into it shattering the glass. He fell, hitting his head on the counter, falling to the floor, his face and arm bleeding badly from a dozen cuts from the glass. He lay there, still. She watched him to see if he would move and when he didn't she headed out of

the room.

Roger heard the loud crash from upstairs as he was coming in through the kitchen door. He headed around the corner. His heart started slamming in his chest and he dropped the chains when he saw Buffy running down the stairs.

He looked at her. "Where is he? Where's Giles?" He could hear the panic in his own voice.

She shook her head, not sure if she could trust him. "I don't know. I have to find him."

Roger shook with frustration and fear. "Buffy, that was Giles. What did you do to him? Is he alive?"

Buffy narrowed her eyes. "Why do you want to know? Are you in on this too? Do you know where he is? Tell me." She started to advance on him. Roger heard a car pull up. He prayed for it to be Paul.

"Buffy, everything's okay. Giles is fine. No one wants to hurt him." He tried to keep his voice soothing.

She continued to move but instead of heading towards Roger she started slowly moving closer to the door, her eyes growing more and more suspicious. He tried to move between her and the door. She noticed his movement and attacked. She slammed into him and he hit the wall so hard he dented it. He slowly fell into a heap on the floor. She ran to the door and opened it.

Paul heard the door open and adrenalin surged through him as he saw it was Buffy. He slowly reached into the car to try and reach the trunk gun lying in the back seat. She saw the movement and started to come closer, her eyes narrowed. He swore and yanked open the door. She charged and Paul braced for the impact. Suddenly a blur raced by him and tackled Buffy. He looked up and saw that it was Spike. He grabbed the gun and aimed, waiting for Spike to move and give him a free shot. Spike rolled away clutching his head in agony and Paul fired. The dart went into Buffy's thigh. She tried to stand and run but only made it a couple of steps before falling to the ground. Paul's heart was slamming against his chest so hard he thought he was going to have a heart attack. He looked at the house. No one was coming out. He could barely stand to go in. Spike picked Buffy up. He noticed the fear on Paul's face.

"She's okay. What's got you all in a twist?"

Paul gestured to the house. "Why aren't they coming out? What did she do? What if she's killed them." He swallowed. He watched the emotions play across Spike's face.

"Well, that would be bloody ironic, wouldn't it?" He shifted Buffy in his arms and headed to the house. Despite Spike's words making light of the situation Paul watched as even he hesitated before actually going in. Paul slowly followed. Spike laid Buffy on the couch. He and Paul both noticed Roger at the same time. Paul ran over to him, reaching out his hand to feel for a pulse. His relief when he found one was so acute he felt lightheaded. He nodded at Spike and Spike nodded back.

Paul could see that Roger was starting to stir. He stood at the bottom of the stairs and called out. "Giles?" There was no answer. Paul swallowed some bile back.

Spike stood up. "I'll go." At Paul's nod he headed up the stairs. Paul saw the chains where they had been dropped. He was pretty sure the chains had made it into the house because Giles had thought it was time to use them.

Paul looked up the stairs. "Spike?" When Spike didn't respond he grew alarmed. He ran up the stairs. "Spike?" He heard a snarl. His blood froze. He ran into the bedroom and saw Spike standing in the doorway to the bathroom.

Spike looked at him, his vamp face on. He snarled. "Too much blood. I can't..." He closed his eyes. Paul slowly approached him.

"Is he still alive?"

Spike shook his head and Paul's heart froze in his chest. "I don't know. I didn't want to touch him, I was afraid I'd..." He snarled again.

Paul nodded. "Go." Spike started to leave. Paul called out to him. "Spike." Spike turned. "Go secure Buffy, use the chains." Spike nodded and raced downstairs.

Paul finished the walk to the bathroom. His heart almost stopped again. There was blood everywhere. On the mirror where it was cracked, in the sink, on the counter and in a puddle around Giles. Giles lay on his side, not moving. Paul walked over to him and crouched down. Heart in his throat he reached out to feel for a pulse. It took longer but he finally felt it, beating against his finger. He closed his eyes.

He heard some noise and looked up to see Roger staggering up to the door. Roger let out a gasp and fell to his knees. "Oh God, is he dead?"

Paul shook his head. Roger let out a cry of relief. Paul looked at Roger carefully. "How are you?" "I'll live. I just have a headache to end all headaches." He made a shooing motion with his hands to get Paul out so he could check on Giles. Paul rapidly complied. Roger looked at the mirror, saw the shards all over the bathroom counter and floor. Giles groaned. Roger called to him. "Giles. Can you hear me?"

Giles rolled over onto his back. Roger stifled a gasp. Giles' face and arm were still bleeding from a dozen sites and several large shards of glass were still embedded in his skin. Giles eyes suddenly snapped open. "Where's Buffy?" He struggled to sit up. Roger put his hand on his chest keeping him still.

Paul answered. "She's downstairs being chained by Spike. I shot her with a trunk dart."

Giles relaxed under Roger's hand. He lifted a hand to his face and felt the glass. Roger grabbed his hand. "Don't. You'll hurt yourself more. I need to get you to the hospital. You've lost a lot of blood." He turned to Paul. "Go call an ambulance."

Giles struggled again to sit up. "No don't. I can't go yet. I'll have to help Tara." Roger looked at him in amazement.

"Giles, you're too weak. You're still bleeding."

Giles shook his head stubbornly. "I have to make sure she can do the spell on her own." Paul spoke up. "Won't the chains hold her?"

Giles coughed. He winced at the pain that caused. He reached his hand up to his face and then remembered and put it back down again. "I don't know. I've never used them on her. They were to keep Oz chained up."

"Oz?"

"Werewolf. Willow's old boyfriend." Despite the seriousness of their situation neither Roger nor Paul could keep a small grin off their face at Giles' words. Giles struggled to sit up again and Roger helped him this time, leaning him back against the counter. He turned to Paul.

"Will you go get my bag? I can try and patch him up a little.

" Paul nodded and returned quickly. Roger looked at Giles. "I'm assuming you'll refuse any pain medication?" Giles nodded. Roger let out a frustrated

noise. "This is going to hurt." Giles gritted his teeth and nodded again.

Roger started removing the shards from Giles' face and arm. Every time he removed a shard Giles would start to bleed. Roger swore. He reached for some gauze. Giles stopped him when he heard the front door open. He started to struggle to his feet. Roger swore again. Paul just came over to help. He looked at Roger. "The sooner he takes care of things here the sooner you get to take him to the hospital." Roger figured that was the best he would get so he helped Paul get Giles up and the two of them helped him downstairs.

End Chapter 6

Dreams 7

All three of them had returned. They all gasped when they saw Giles. Xander spoke for all of them. "Holy Christ, what happened to you?"

Giles waved him off. He turned to Tara. "You found the book?" He swayed on his feet. Roger made him sit down. Tara handed it to him. He started flipping through the pages and then his hands stilled. They waited for him to say something and then Roger realized he had passed out.

Roger stood up. "That's it, I'm taking him to the hospital." At that Giles came to. He shook his head and winced. Roger just frowned at him. "No arguments. I am not going to be the one who tells Buffy that you're dead from sheer stupidity. Not this doctor." He blocked out anything Giles was saying. He looked at Buffy, and stopped, frustrated. He didn't want to leave her either.

Paul read his mind. "I'll take him. I can get him there faster in my car anyway. Just call with orders." Roger waffled for a moment and then agreed. Xander, Roger and Paul managed to get Giles' into Paul's car. He put the bubble on the roof and sped off after starting the siren. Roger walked back in and called the ER leaving orders for Giles' care.

Once that task was completed he walked over to Buffy and checked for her pulse. It was beating slowly but not unduly so. He winced as he saw how someone had hogtied her with the chains.

Xander looked too. "I hope these hold her because I couldn't come up with a single idea. Nothing in this house would hold her. Whatever bolts I used she'd just pull them out of the wall or the floor or the ceiling and maybe bring part of the house down." He sat down on the floor across from Buffy. He looked at

the trail of blood Giles had left behind him. He glanced at Roger, fear in his eyes. "Is Giles gonna be okay?"

Roger snorted. "The only thing that's going to kill him is his own stubbornness."

Xander flashed him a grin. "Yup, that's the G-man for ya." They both turned to watch Tara. Tara was nervously flipping through the book trying to figure out which spell Giles had wanted to do. She found a couple and conferred with Willow. After a few minutes they chose one. Spike lifted Buffy up as Xander shoved the couch aside. He put Buffy back down and helped them move the rest of the furniture so they could roll back the carpet.

Willow saw the pentagram still on the floor that Giles had used for her just a few days ago and sheepishly grinned. She looked at Tara. "See, half done already." Tara rolled her eyes and then smiled at her mate.

Xander heard Buffy stir. He swallowed. He called to the girls. "Can you move that along? She's starting to wake up." Willow and Tara both gasped and started firming up the lines to the pentagram.

Buffy's eyes opened. She tried to move but couldn't. She looked down at herself and saw that she was chained. Her eyes looked up confused. Roger wished he'd asked Paul to leave the trunk gun. He waited for Buffy to explode. Instead she closed her eyes and then opened them again. She saw Willow and Tara on the floor; saw the worry in Xander's face. She looked at Roger and saw all the bruises there, on his jaw and running up the side of his face. She looked back down at the chains. He watched as she put it all together. She moaned softly. "What did I do?"

Roger shook his head, not sure how to answer. He didn't want to upset her. She looked at him. "Did I do that to you?" His eyes flew involuntarily to the indentation on the wall. Buffy's eyes followed his and gasped. Her eyes filled with horror. "Oh God, I'm sorry."

"I'm fine, Buffy."

She looked at him. She struggled against the chains. They held. She struggled some more. She looked at him again. "Let me loose. I'm fine now. I won't hurt you." He shook his head at her sadly. She looked around. "Where's Giles?" No one answered her. Her heart started pumping faster, tendrils of fear coiling around her spine. She looked at Roger. "Where's Giles?" She saw Xander's eyes move that time and she followed them to the trail of blood on the floor. She gasped, tears filling her eyes. She struggled against the chains again. She could feel them loosening.

Xander looked at Willow and Tara, his eyes panicking. They drew faster.

She looked back at the floor, at the blood there. She looked at Roger. "What did I do?" Again no one answered; no one knew quite how to tell her. She just watched them all exchange looks. Spike snorted at the silence. He spoke up, a smirk on his face. "Let's just say you're gonna have to redo the master bathroom."

Buffy strained with all her might and the chains broke. She leapt off the couch. Spike moved quickly and blocked the front door, preventing her escape. Buffy ignored him and ran upstairs. Xander glared at Spike. Spike just looked at him. "What?"

Roger ran up following Buffy. He found her on her knees looking at the blood all over the bathroom. He ran up to her. "Buffy, he's okay. He's at the hospital but he's okay. You didn't kill him. I swear to you that he's okay."

She turned tear filled eyes to him. "He must hate me."

He looked at her. "How could you ever think he could hate you? Of all the people in the world you should know better than anyone that Giles could never hate you. Even if you had done this on purpose, he would find a way to forgive you." As she turned away from him he snuck out a hand and captured her chin turning her face back to him. "You know that right? He deserves for you to know that."

She looked in his eyes and took a deep breath. She nodded. "I do know it." She smiled tremulously at him. "Thank you." He nodded.

He looked at her. "How do you feel?"

She smiled sadly. "You mean other than knowing that I almost killed the man I love more than anything?" Roger just waited. "I feel fine, other than that." She touched his chin jerking her hand back as he winced. "And other than the fact that I hurt you. I'm sorry."

Roger grinned. "All in the line of duty."

She turned and looked into the bathroom again. "I could have killed him."

"But you didn't." She nodded. She sank down off her knees into a sitting position. She couldn't take her eyes off of all the blood. Roger put his hand on her arm. He tried to get her to get up but she pulled her arm away. He sighed. He tried to close the bathroom door but she put her foot out and stopped him.

She just stared at the blood. He called to her. She ignored him.

Roger looked up as Xander, Willow and Tara walked in. Xander and Willow peered into the bathroom. Willow gasped. Xander winced. "That had to hurt." He winced again at the look on Buffy's face. "Sorry, Buffy." She nodded and just kept looking at the blood.

They all sat down, Xander on the floor next to Buffy, Willow and Tara perched on the bed. Roger looked at Buffy, concerned. He put his hand on her arm. "I'll be right back." She nodded, never moving her eyes from the blood on the floor.

Roger found his cell phone. He called Paul again. Again he spoke before Paul could say a greeting. "How is he?"

"Stubborn."

Roger smiled. "How fast can you get him home?"

Paul snorted. "Now you want him home. I thought you wanted him here."

"Buffy needs to see him."

Paul swore. "She's awake already?"

"Yes. I think she's okay, she doesn't seem to be hallucinating any more, but she is totally freaked. She's just sitting there looking at all the blood in the bathroom. I don't think she believes me that he's okay. I could bring her there but I hate to take the chance in case she's..."

"Got it." He summarized Giles' care. "They've finished giving him a unit of blood, another one is hanging now. They've picked out all the glass and stitched up a couple of the biggest cuts and bandaged him up. They want to give him at least another unit and observe him but I could grab him and run if you want me to."

Roger thought for a minute weighing the risks. He nodded. "Let this second unit finish but then I think you'd better bring him home."

"I'll be there as soon as I can."

Paul finally had to flash his badge to get them to release Giles before they were ready but he persevered. He put the siren on and sped to Buffy's home. He helped Giles out of the car and up the stairs.

When Giles walked into the bedroom everyone made way for him. He walked up to Buffy and sat down next to her. Everyone quietly left them alone. He called out her name. "Buffy?"

She turned to look at him. "I could have killed you."

He smiled. "My head's too hard. You know that."

She didn't smile. "So much for making your dreams come true."

"What do you mean?"

"I told you I always do the opposite."

He took her by her shoulders and shook her. "Buffy, don't say that." He caught her chin as her head started to look back into the bathroom. "You did this all for me."

She stared at him. She shot him an incredulous glance, taking in his bandaged face and arm. "What?"

He made a sweeping gesture at the bathroom. "You did this to save me. It was me you were trying to rescue. I'm quite honored actually." He smiled gently at her. He touched her cheek. "Buffy, you were confused. You were afraid for me. You were trying to protect me. Even in the midst of your pain and confusion you only thought of me." He pulled her towards him and managed to get the bathroom door shut, hiding the blood away. He held her close, and she started to cry. He just let her, rocking her gently, stroking her hair.

After a while she raised a teary face to him. "So, I didn't ruin it?"

He kissed her. "No love, you made it stronger." He looked at her. "The fact that you love me is the dream, Buffy. Nothing you did here changes that. Everything that happened here was because you love me."

She stared at him, seeing the love in his eyes. "What did I ever do to deserve you?" She reached up and kissed him. She turned around so she was lying against him. She reached for his arms and wrapped them tightly around her, her arms lying on top of his. She looked into the bedroom; saw all the medical supplies. She turned her head up to look at Giles. "What happened, anyway?"

He laughed, and just held her tighter. Paul and Roger heard Giles' laugh through the door. They signaled to the rest of them and they all piled back

into the bedroom. Anya had shown up by that time so she followed them all in. They spread themselves around Buffy and Giles, sitting on the bed, on the chairs and on the floor. They all grinned at Buffy relieved beyond measure that she seemed back to normal. She looked at them sadly and spoke. "I'm really sorry, guys." Giles could hear the deep remorse in her voice and he squeezed her tightly.

He put his mouth close to her ear. "You have nothing to be sorry for." She didn't respond and Giles knew she didn't believe him.

He looked at the people sitting around him. He swept them all up in his gaze except Paul and Roger and willed them to follow along. He pointed with his chin at the lot of them. "Do you still blame them?"

Buffy turned partway around and looked at Giles, a confused look on her face. "Blame them for what?"

Giles answered her. "For making me blind, for turning Xander into a demon magnet, for making you and Spike think you were in love with each other, for getting you turned into a rat, for making demons invisible to us, not to mention Anya's 1100 years of being a vengeance demon and how one of her spells almost destroyed Sunnydale. Even your mom tried to burn you at the stake. Need I go on? Should I even mention any of Spike's grand schemes?"

He looked up at Paul and Roger, saw how wide their eyes were. He knew he'd be telling stories to them until his voice was hoarse.

Buffy scowled. She looked at Giles. "I guess we've all had our moments, huh?"

Giles nodded. "We've all put each other in danger and most of the time it was unintentional." He shot Spike a glare. "Most of the time."

Spike didn't want Giles to feel left out. "Yeah, well at least none of them was stupid enough to have a drink with someone the likes of Ethan and get turned into a Fyarl demon." He smirked at Giles. Giles smiled ruefully but didn't say anything. He was willing to put up with this if it put all of Buffy's fears to rest.

Xander got into the action. "Or call up a bad demon who shows up 20 years later and tries to kill you." Giles bit his lips.

Willow bravely entered the fray. "Or sleep with Buffy's mom." As soon as she said it she slapped her hand over her mouth and sent an apologetic look at Giles.

Paul's jaw dropped at that one. "What?"

Giles laughed. "Paul, out of all the things we've mentioned that's the one that gets a comment?"

Paul had the grace to look embarrassed. "It's the only one I really understood." He shut up.

Anya didn't want to be left out. "Or have orgasms with Buffy and not tell anyone." That stopped the conversation. Everyone turned to look at Anya. She was looking at Giles and when she saw him blush and not deny it she nodded her head in satisfaction. "I knew it." She turned to Xander and poked his chest with her finger. "I told you he was looking entirely too happy."

Giles rolled his eyes. Buffy turned around again to look at him. "You did sleep with my mother." She frowned.

Giles just looked at Buffy. "Have you forgiven me for that?"

Buffy just looked surprised. "What's to forgive? You were under the influence of that band candy."

Giles just looked at her. "That's right. I was."

Buffy smiled at him and reached up to kiss him. He kissed her back. She flipped around and nestled back into his chest. "Okay, I get it." She looked at them all, loving each and every one of them, especially the man behind her, holding her. She looked around the room and sighed. "Now will someone please tell me what happened?"

They all laughed and started talking at once.

The End.