

## One Wish 1

Buffy sat at the table at the Bronze with her hands over her face. Willow watched her, her face scrunched up in dismay and apology.

"Buffy, I'm sorry. I'll never, ever do that again. If the words *carpe diem* fall from my lips you can stake me." The only response from Buffy was a groan. Willow looked at Xander anxiously. "Do you think she hates me?"

Xander shook his head. "Why should she hate you? Just because you forced her to ask someone out she didn't want to and the guy totally rejected her and now she's feeling like dog poop, why should she hate you?"

Willow looked like she was going to cry. She tried to defend herself to Xander. "Yeah, but he was the first guy she even sort of liked since Riley left. I thought it would be, you know, a good thing."

Xander looked at Buffy and pursed his lips. "I gotta say Willow, I'm thinking it was a bad plan."

Willow looked back at Buffy and tried to pry Buffy's hands off her face. She was unsuccessful. Willow sat back in her chair and sighed. She shrugged her shoulders helplessly at Xander who shrugged back. They both just sat there lending Buffy their silent support, hoping she'd stop hiding at some point and talk to them again.

##

Ethan sat in the shadows. He was watching Buffy. He hated her with a passion. After what he'd been put through by the Initiative all he thought about was getting back at her. He wanted to destroy her. He was using a little magic and was eavesdropping on the conversation at her table. Ethan was waiting for some more information, something that he could use as a way of exacting his revenge.

He stopped a waitress and ordered another drink. He sat back on the couch making sure that he wouldn't be seen. He was willing to wait. Sooner or later she'd let something drop that would be perfect for him to use.

##

Buffy finally did come out for air. Xander went and got her a drink and Willow kept making apologies until Buffy finally took pity on her. "Willow, it's all right. I

mean compared to Glory and the world almost coming to an end this is not such a big deal."

Willow didn't believe her for a second. "Well, maybe not, but it's a close second. I really am sorry. I promise not to push you again."

Buffy sent Willow a rather pained grin. "That would be good." She leaned back in her chair. "I just don't get it. I mean what's wrong with me?"

Willow shook her head, all earnestness. "Nothing, nothing's wrong with you. It's Robert. He's evil. He's..." Willow tried desperately to come up with a word vile enough to describe someone who would dare turn Buffy down.

Buffy patted her on the arm. "I get it, Will. It's all right." She looked around nervously. "Do you think anyone noticed?"

Willow shook her head. "No one pays attention to anything that goes on in here."

Buffy scowled. "It just isn't fair. Why would he say no? I'm not horrible looking. I don't need radical dental care." She sighed. "In a perfect world, every man would want me. If I had one wish, that's what it would be, that they'd all lust after me."

Xander arrived back with the drinks. He just caught the end of her sentence. "Who's lusting after you?"

Buffy frowned. "Nobody. That's the problem."

Xander nodded his head. "Gotcha." The three of them sat there as they watched the band get ready for another set.

##

Ethan had a speculative look on his face. He mentally reviewed his repertoire of spells. He thought he might have one that would suit the bill. He grinned a rather nasty grin. He was going to grant Buffy Summers her one wish. He rather expected it wouldn't turn out quite like she expected. He got up and left, wanting to go home and make the necessary preparations.

##

Buffy didn't want to get out of bed. She put her pillow over her head and

willed the sun to go back down. And then stay down for about a month. She still couldn't believe she'd let Willow talk her into asking Robert out. She groaned into her sheets. I mean it's not like she cared if she went out with Robert. She actually didn't care at all. It was just that he'd said no. In public. In front of Willow and Xander. It was humiliating. At least it had been noisy at the Bronze when she'd asked him. Maybe no one really had paid any attention. Maybe he hadn't told anyone. She groaned again.

She lay there for a while longer and then finally sat on the edge of the bed. She was due at the Magic Box for training with Giles. And as usual, when they were done, he'd go home to his place and she'd go home to hers. She pouted. Her life sucked. She flopped back on the bed. Buffy looked at the clock and sighed. She'd go train and then she'd go register for classes and then she'd hide for the rest of the day.

The house was so quiet. Dawn was down in LA with their dad for the month. She wouldn't be back for another couple of weeks. Buffy threw on a pair of old sweats and brushed her hair. She made a rude sound at her reflection and headed downstairs grabbing an apple on her way out the door.

She decided to drive. As she waited for the light to turn green she looked at the car next to her. The man in it was staring at her. He stuck his tongue out of his mouth and then with a leer on his face he made a licking motion. She let out a disgusted noise and closed her window. Almost against her will she snuck another look. He did it again. She hit the gas as the light turned green. Her whole body shivered at the grossness of it.

She pulled into the back of the shop and parked in one of the reserved parking spots. She entered through the back. Xander was repairing the kicking post since Buffy had kicked it off its stand yesterday. He looked up at her and stared. She looked at him and raised her eyebrows. "What?"

"You, you look so...great."

Buffy looked down at her sweats. "Very funny. Look I'm just here to train, not to win a fashion show."

Xander shook his head. "No really, you look sexy."

"I don't get the joke, Xander."

"He's right." Buffy looked up to see Giles leaning against the doorjamb between the training room and the rest of the shop. "You look stunning."

Buffy looked down at her sweats again. She shrugged. "Whatever." Xander

and Giles continued to stare at her. She rolled her eyes and stared back at Giles. "Are we training?"

Giles shook his head as if to clear it. "Yes, yes, of course." He looked puzzled for a moment. Looking at Xander he asked, "Are you almost done?"

Xander had to wrench his eyes away from Buffy. "Huh?"

Giles asked again. "Are you almost done?" He gestured at the wood on the floor.

Xander looked down at the floor. He looked back at Buffy. His brain had already forgotten Giles' question. Giles' eyes narrowed. He didn't much like how Xander was looking at Buffy. He barked his name out. "Xander!" Xander just kept looking at Buffy. His hands were kneading a fallen pillow by his feet. Giles gritted his teeth and went over and hauled Xander up by his collar.

Xander finally looked at Giles, a bit disconcerted at his change in altitude. "What?"

"Go home. You can come back later and finish."

Xander pointed at Buffy. "But I..."

Giles helped him to the back door. "Goodbye Xander." Giles shoved him out and shut the door behind him. He let out a breath. He turned to look at Buffy. Desire for her slammed through him. It almost took him to his knees. He was undressing her in his mind, picturing her on the floor, naked. There was raw desire in his eyes.

Buffy missed it. She walked into the middle of the room and then realized that Giles was still standing by the door. "Giles, training?" When he seemed to be ignoring her she spoke his name again. "Giles!"

Giles heard her calling him as if from a distance. He tried to remember what he'd been doing, what was going on. As she called his name again he snapped out of it. "Right, right." He had her start stretching and warming up. He walked to the refrigerator to get them both bottles of water. He turned and saw her on the floor. He was half way across the room heading her way when he realized what he was doing, what he was feeling, what he was intending to do to her.

His eyes opened with alarm and he backed away. He couldn't imagine what was wrong him. He took his glasses off and rubbed his eyes. The bell rang in the front of the shop and he went to see who it was. The minute he was away

from Buffy the feeling started to subside. He was appalled at himself.

He looked up to see Xander walking in the store, a confused look on his face. When he saw Giles he raised his hand, almost as if asking for permission to speak. "You know, I was about to drive away when I realized that I don't think I actually fixed the kicking post. Did I fix it?"

Giles hesitated for a minute trying to think back. "No, I don't think you did." He shook his head. "Don't worry about it now. Buffy has already started training. We don't need to use it today."

"You sure? I don't mind."

Giles didn't understand why but he knew he didn't want Xander back there with Buffy. "No, really, it's fine."

"Okay." Xander didn't look convinced but he shrugged, shaking his head. "Weird." He was still shaking it as he walked out the door. Giles followed him to the door and locked it. He flipped over the Open sign to Closed. His body was just starting to calm down. He took a deep breath. He'd never lost control like that, never. He'd been attracted to Buffy for quite some time, but this frightened him. He'd come pretty close to just attacking her.

He took another few deep breaths and with a determined look on his face he headed back to the training room. The desire came over him again and there was nothing gentle or loving about it. He just wanted her. Giles had to fight to push the urge away. His hands were clenched and his jaw ached with his concentration to stay focused, to keep his distance.

When Buffy finished warming up she looked up at Giles and saw the sweat on his brow. She frowned. "Hey, are you okay?"

He shook his head. His voice was harsh. "No, I suddenly don't feel very well. Perhaps we better postpone your training until later."

She cocked her head at him, concerned. "You sure? I mean, not the being sick part, I figure you'd know that, but are you sure you want me to go? I could come over, make you chicken soup." She got up and started to walk over to him.

He put up his hands. "Best stay away. I could be contagious."

She made a face and nodded. "Well, okay. I'll call you later then."

He nodded tersely and just watched her as she gathered her things. He was

holding onto the table with a grip that hurt. He was afraid if he let go that she'd be under him, fighting him off.

She glanced at him once more before leaving, still concerned. He really looked awful. He spoke again. "Go. I'll be all right." She nodded and left. Giles let out a shaky breath after she was gone and he slid down to the floor trying to figure out what had just happened to him.

##

Buffy's next order of business was to register. Now that Glory was dead and Dawn was settling down she wanted to start up classes again. She drove on campus and parked near the main administration building. Grabbing her registration papers and the class catalog she headed up the main sidewalk. She heard a wolf whistle. Buffy turned and saw a guy looking at her with open admiration. She grinned and then turned back to the building. She heard some quick steps and looked up to see him walking next to her. He put out his hand. "Hey, I'm Dan."

She smiled and shaking his hand she returned the greeting. "Hi, I'm Buffy." He didn't let go of her hand. She tried to pull it back but he held on tight. She stopped and looked at him.

He ran his thumb over hers as a caress. "Hey, let's go somewhere."

Her eyes widened and she yanked her hand free. "Nice line, buddy." She shot him a look of displeasure and turning her back on him she ran up the steps and into the building. She followed the signs and got in the appropriate line. She could hear people whispering. She looked around her and saw people staring at her. Actually, just the guys were staring at her. She closed her eyes and thought of Robert. Did he publish her picture somewhere? She let out a sigh.

Then she let out a shriek as someone grabbed her butt. She whirled around. It was Dan again. He was grinning at her. She wanted to smack him. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Come on baby, you know you want some."

Buffy was speechless for a moment. Then her eyes narrowed. He was so gonna get some from her. Then the woman at the window called to her. "Next."

She backed up to the window not trusting Dan for a moment. She slid her



papers through by touch. She could feel Dan's eyes roving over her and it was totally creeping her out. The woman behind Dan nudged him when another window opened. He reluctantly moved and Buffy breathed a sigh of relief to not have him behind her anymore.

She turned to the woman behind the window and finished registering. She grabbed her paperwork and after making sure that Dan was still occupied she practically ran from the building.

She ran straight into some tall guy and took him down, ending up lying on top of him. She blushed, mortified. Buffy tried to get up but he had his hands around her, holding her to him. He ground his pelvis against her. She gasped and then got angry. She hit him in the stomach hard and as he opened and closed his mouth trying to catch his breath she got off of him. She ran for her car. Buffy started the car up and backed out barely looking to see if anything was behind her in her haste to flee.

She drove straight home not looking at anybody. Buffy closed the front door of her home, locking it behind her. She ran up the stairs stripping off her sweats. She was naked by the time she got to the bathroom. She set the water temperature as hot as she could stand it and she stood under the steaming water for a long time.

After her shower Buffy crawled back into bed. She still felt completely grossed out by what had happened and the only safe place felt like her bed, hiding under the covers. She hugged Mr. Gordo tightly against her. She found herself wishing Giles were there, instead of Mr. Gordo. He always made her feel safe. Which she knew didn't make any sense as he was the one always making her do stuff that almost got her killed but she couldn't help it. When she was with him, she felt safe.

She hadn't told Willow but the main reason she hadn't wanted to ask Robert out was because she was sort of having warm and fuzzy feelings for her watcher, major warm and fuzzy feelings. Willow had guessed that she was mooning over someone so Buffy had just blurted out Robert's name to throw her off the trail. Sure he was cute, but he wasn't Giles. She sighed. Eventually she fell asleep.

When she finally awoke it was late. Her eyes widened when she saw what time it was. She had slept the entire day and half the evening away. Buffy stretched and risked leaving her nest, deciding to go to the Bronze. She knew she really wasn't in the mood for it, but Buffy felt that she had to go. She had to prove to the world that she was fine, just in case someone had been paying attention. Buffy was still a little wigged about what had happened that morning but she figured it was just one more thing she had to get past and

she was determined to do it.

She called Giles first and was a little worried when he didn't answer his phone. She decided she'd stop by on her way home. Buffy dressed, fixed her hair and put her makeup on with care, wanting to look really hot. Not that she was sure Giles would even notice but it was worth a try. She looked in the mirror, pleased with her appearance.

As she was pulling out of the garage she saw that nice Mr. Richardson who lived across the street. She waved to him. He waved back and then he grabbed his crotch, giving it a squeeze. Buffy dropped her jaw and sped away. Once parked near the Bronze she deliberated just going back home again. Mr. Richardson had thrown her and she hadn't even gotten out of her car yet.

She saw a bunch of women heading in. She took her chance and walking quickly she blended in with them and before she could really think about it she was inside. She smiled, pleased with herself. Bobbing her head in time to the music, she started milling. She promised herself she'd do at least two full loops and dance at least once. Then if she still felt uncomfortable she'd go see Giles.

She was thinking about Giles when a man stepped in front of her. She braced herself for weirdness. He smiled and asked her to dance. She let out a breath and nodded. He took her hand and led her to the dance floor. It was a fast dance and she just let go and enjoyed herself. She felt someone brush against her and she opened her eyes, glancing around her. The only one really close to her was her dance partner. She sent him a small nervous smile and he smiled back.

He moved in closer and put his hands on her hips. She put her hands on his shoulders and they moved in time to the music. He pulled her in until she was flush against his body. His hands started to roam up her back and then down. He ran his hands over her butt. She pushed him away and bumped into another man behind her. When he felt Buffy he snaked a hand around her waist and spinning her around he pulled her in tight. He lowered his head and pressed his lips against hers.

Buffy opened her mouth in shock and he used the opportunity to push his tongue in her mouth. She practically bit it off and shoved him away, hard. Someone else grabbed her butt and she felt a hand brush one of her breasts. She started to get angry. If this was someone's idea of a practical joke she was not amused. She tried to leave the dance floor but she was suddenly surrounded. There were men all around her trying to touch her, trying to get close to her. She was pulled in several directions at once and she felt her



dress tear exposing a significant amount of cleavage.

A man just shoved his face between her breasts and she felt his tongue against her skin. Someone else's hand slid down her butt. The hand continued down until it grabbed her crotch. She could feel him trying to push her underwear aside. She grabbed his arm and bent it until she heard a bone snap. He fell to the floor, groaning. She smiled down at him with a fierce satisfaction but then she looked up and lost her smile.

All she saw was men. She was almost knocked to the floor by their shoving, their hands pushing at her, touching her body. There were too many of them. Her anger turned to fear. She couldn't stop them. She could hardly catch her breath. As soon as she pushed one away another would take his place. The looks on their faces terrified her. They didn't know her and they didn't care anything about her. She felt helpless and just the sensation of that made her feel even weaker.

She found a place of courage within her and she started punching her way through the human barrier around her, not caring if she hurt anyone, not even caring if she killed someone. She had to get out. She had to get away. She fought like an animal and when she finally saw an opening she ran, slamming people out of her way. She didn't stop until she got to the ladies room. She went into a stall and locked the door behind her.

She slid down until she was crouching and then burying her head in her arms she started to sob, still feeling everyone's hands on her. She felt sick to her stomach and turning towards the toilet she threw up until her stomach hurt.

End Part 1

## One Wish 2

Buffy crouched there for a while longer and then slowly rose. She didn't hear anyone else in the bathroom. She opened the door slowly and then headed over to the sink. When she saw herself she started to cry again. Her dress was torn in several places. There were bruises on her arms and shoulders and her hair was a mess. Her eyes were red and puffy and her mascara had run down her cheeks. The door opened up and she shrank into the corner, terrified it would be them, coming after her.

She let out her breath when she saw a couple of young girls walk in. One of them looked at Buffy. "God, what happened to you?" Buffy just shook her head and they both ignored her after that and entered stalls. Buffy reached for a paper towel with shaking hands and after wetting it started wiping off her mascara. She ran her fingers through her hair and tried to quell the panic that

was still coursing through her. No matter how much she tried she couldn't stop feeling it. It consumed her. She couldn't go back out there. She was afraid to go anywhere. Not after this morning, not after what had just happened.

One of the girls came out of the stall and looked at Buffy, torn between wanting to help and not really wanting to be bothered. Her conscience won out. "Can I get you something?"

Buffy shook her head and then she looked up. "Do you have a phone?" Her voice came out thick and hiccupy.

The girl nodded and reached into her purse. She handed it to Buffy but then pulled it back. "Local?"

Buffy nodded and the girl handed her the phone. Buffy sat on the small couch and dialed Giles' number. She prayed for him to be home. Finally he picked up. "Hello?"

"Giles?" She took a long shaky breath.

Giles' eyebrows furrowed. "Buffy? Are you all right?"

"No." She started to cry. "Can you come and get me?"

"Of course. Are you hurt?" She didn't answer; her cries were like a fist around his heart. "Buffy, are you hurt? Do I need to call an ambulance?"

"Just come and get me. I need you."

"Where are you? I'll come right now."

"At the Bronze. I'm in the ladies room." At the girl's impatient look Buffy whispered. "Hurry." She disconnected.

"In the ladies room? Why..." Giles heard the dial tone. He finished his sentence to the room at large, "...don't you meet me outside?" He hung up the phone and quickly grabbing his keys and a coat he ran for his car. He couldn't understand what could have upset Buffy so much if she wasn't hurt. On his way he'd made up half a dozen scenarios, each one worse than the last so by the time he'd gotten to the Bronze he was a nervous wreck.

He impatiently paid a cover charge and then headed for the restrooms.

Ethan watched Giles cross the bar. He had watched Buffy being attacked while he ate his nachos. He'd been waiting for her to come out of the bathroom, hoping there'd be more of a floorshow. When he saw Giles his eyes lit up. This was perfect. She'd called her knight in shining armor, and here he was, ready to save her.

Except he wasn't going to be quite what she expected. He got up and throwing some money on the bar he headed out. His work was done. Giles would get Buffy alone and then he'd try and rape her. He wouldn't be able to help himself. It didn't even matter what she did. She could kill him or she could fight him or she could let him do it to her. Either way it would destroy her. And it would certainly destroy them, and that was as good as destroying her. He stepped out into the cool night-time air and took a deep breath. He grinned and getting in his car, he drove off.

##

Giles stopped a girl coming out of the ladies room. "Is there a young blonde girl in there?"

"You mean the one who's a basket case?"

"Y..yes."

"Yeah, she's in there."

"Is there anyone else in there?" The girl went back in to check. She came back out and motioned for him to enter, grinning. "The coast is clear."

Giles nodded at her and he entered feeling as if he was invading enemy territory. When he saw Buffy he was overcome with a thousand different emotions. The strongest one was desire. She was huddled on the couch. He could see that her dress was torn and he could see the curves of her breasts. His eyes took in her thighs and all he wanted to do was kneel at her feet and spread her legs. But part of him saw Buffy. His heart tightened at the look on her face. She was miserable and frightened. There were several bruises on her and he could see scratches as well. His anger grew as he walked over to her. With all the intense emotions warring within him, somehow it was easier to separate them out. He sat down next to her, emotions in check. "Buffy, I'm here. What happened?"

She jerked back at first when she heard a man's voice but when his accent

registered and she saw that Giles was sitting there she threw herself in his arms. He held her, forcing himself to hold his hands still. He knew his control was tenuous at best. He took long deep breaths and tried to focus on his anger, on her pain.

The longer he held her the harder it got. Giles tried to move away from Buffy but she had him in a death grip. Sweat started to form on his forehead. His voice was rough when he spoke. "Buffy, tell me what happened."

She just shook her head and pressed closer against him. "Just hold me." He tried to put some space in between them but she whimpered. "No, don't leave me."

He blew out a breath and continued to will his hands to stay still. Without thinking he dropped a kiss on the top of her head and then bit his lips to keep from following up that kiss with a hundred more. A couple of women walked in and flashed him a surprised look. He gasped with relief at the distraction, smiling apologetically to them. They grinned and moved to the stalls. He blushed as he listened to them pee. "Buffy, let me take you home."

She shook her head. "I can't go out there."

"We can't stay here." He tried to think but his brain felt like mush. Too much of it was occupied by how she felt, what he wanted to do. He stood, too quickly for Buffy to stop him. Giles took off his coat and put it over her shoulders. "I won't let anything happen to you." He hoped that was true, that it wouldn't be he who did something to her. He tried to think again. He knew there was something important he needed to understand but it was just beyond his reach.

Giles looked down at Buffy and then crouched down beside her. He was almost lost as he gently touched her knee. His mind supplied the pictures, pictures of him wrenching her knees apart, pulling her hips to the edge of the couch, thrusting inside of her with his tongue. He could feel her heat. But a piece of him managed to stay sane. He stood and walked away from her. He didn't know how he could help her, not when he was like this.

He turned around to look at her. There was no one else but him. He'd get her home and then he'd keep his distance. He walked to her quickly and pulled her up. He stood holding her close to his side not giving her a chance to say no again. When he pulled her outside into the hallway she moaned and buried her face completely in his chest. He looked around and decided to brave the emergency exit. He wanted to get outside, hoping that the night-time air would help cool him off.

He was relieved that the alarm didn't sound when he pushed the door open. The outside air did help to clear his head a little. He began to direct Buffy over to his car. He passed a man on the way. The man smiled. He directed his question to Giles. "Hey, buddy, want to share her?" Giles' eyes opened wide. Buffy called out Giles' name. He could hear the fear in her voice. Giles pushed past the man but he was insistent. "Come on, we can both have a good time."

Giles' need to get Buffy home barely overrode his anger that this man was daring to take Buffy away from him. At the look in Giles' eyes the man took a couple of steps back. Giles felt a yank and turned around to see another man tugging on Buffy, trying to pull Buffy away. Buffy clutched Giles even tighter. Giles winced at the pain. He knew he'd be bruised by morning but right now the pain kept him focused.

There were men on both sides of them. One of them opened his mouth to speak. Giles didn't wait. He was sure he didn't want to hear it. He lashed out and punched the man laying him out cold. Giles turned to the other man but he was momentarily distracted looking at the man on the ground. Giles picked Buffy up, holding her in his arms.

He reached his car and bracing Buffy against the door he dug for his keys. She had her arms locked around the back of his neck. He opened the door and tried to place her in the seat but she wouldn't let go. He tried to reason with her. "Buffy, let go. You're safe now. I can't shut the door if you don't let me go." He could smell the scent of her hair. Her lips were so close to his. He closed his eyes and spoke more harshly than he meant to, feeling a bit desperate. "Buffy, you have to let me go."

She let go, startled at his tone. After making sure she was all tucked in he shut the car door. He let out a deep breath and shook himself out as he walked to his side of the car. As he got in he realized that there was another man approaching Buffy's side of the car. He hit the door lock button just as the man tried to open her door. Buffy recoiled from the door and Giles had to avoid sitting on her as he entered the car.

When he finally got the car started she moved back into her seat. He drove to her house and parked in the driveway. She hadn't said a thing the whole way home. She was trembling, her head against the window, an occasional tear running down her face. He got out of the car and walking around, opened her door. She made no move to get out. He bent down and wrapping his arms around her again he lifted her from the car.

He used his own key to let them in and he carried her upstairs to the bathroom. He put the lid down and then he sat her on the toilet as he started

running a bath. As the tub started to fill he sat on the edge of the tub and looked at her. She was just sitting there, looking at the floor. He took in her bruises and her torn dress. His brain had slowly started functioning again. He was starting to put two and two together and was able to imagine what had happened to Buffy, based on what was happening to him and seemingly every other man she came in contact with. He felt slammed by anger again and he was grateful for it. He called her name. "Buffy."

She lifted her eyes to him but didn't speak. He hesitated. He felt so out of his element. He tried to ask. "Were you...did someone..." He let out a noise of frustration and ran his hand through his hair. He felt tainted by his own feelings. It made him feel as if he had no rights here, no right to be consoling her, to be concerned about her. He took a deep breath and tried again. "Buffy, were you forced by anyone?" He couldn't even say the word rape. Saying the word felt almost as bad as the action.

Buffy shook her head, just barely. Her eyes began to tear up and her body started trembling even more. She sent him an anguished look. "There were so many of them, I couldn't stop them. They would have, they wanted to." She started to cry and Giles allowed his anger to wash over him again and he wrapped his arms around her, pulling her head to his chest. When his desire for her started growing overwhelming he turned back to the bath and shut off the water. Walking to her bedroom he brought her back her bathrobe.

He put his finger under her chin and lifted her face. "Buffy, I've drawn a bath for you. I'll be downstairs." At her small nod, he spoke again. "I don't understand what's happening yet but I'll figure out what it is, and I'll stop it. I promise you." He gestured to the bath with one of his hands. "Can you manage?"

She nodded and stood, and his jacket fell off her shoulders. Giles left the room quickly, practically running down the stairs. He headed for the scotch but then changed his mind. He figured imbibing in anything that might lower his inhibitions would be a disastrous mistake. He sat on the couch trying to get his equilibrium back.

The distance helped. He felt as if his brain had fully switched back to on. He began to pace as he thought furiously. It was obviously some sort of spell, some sort of sex spell that was viciously directed at Buffy. He stretched his neck out first to one side and then to the other. Then he rolled his shoulders. He couldn't remember ever feeling this tense. It clearly affected men, made them want her, and he was no exception. He'd been able to control it so far but he wasn't sure he'd be able to continue. He'd already come so close to giving in to it. He needed to find a woman to sit with Buffy so he could get away from her until he was able to put a stop to it. Getting up he headed for



the kitchen, reaching for the phone.

He tried Willow first but there was no answer. Then he recalled that she and Tara had left this morning for a long weekend excursion. He cursed softly. He dialed Xander's number, supposing that even Anya would be a better choice than him to sit with Buffy. Again, there was no answer. He left a message asking her to call Buffy's immediately. That it was urgent.

In the meantime that left him to watch over Buffy. He knew he should probably leave but Giles was hesitant to do that. Suppose someone came to the door and Buffy opened it. Suppose someone saw her through the window. After the way he had responded to her Giles wasn't willing to discount any horrible possibility. He couldn't leave her alone.

Giles started trying to think of who could have done it and only came up with two possibilities. The first, and he desperately hoped he was wrong, was Willow. Not intentionally, but as a side effect of some spell gone terribly wrong. Giles wished he could get in touch with her. The second possibility was Ethan, but as far as Giles knew, Ethan was still locked up courtesy of the U.S. Military. Other than that, Giles was drawing a blank.

He glanced up the stairs, hoping Buffy was all right but knowing that he couldn't go check himself. Not if there was a chance that she was naked. Just the thought of it made his shirt collar tight. He ran a finger between the cloth and his neck and then unbuttoned the top button, loosening his tie. He forced himself to think about the problem at hand. Unfortunately all his thoughts kept cycling back to Buffy. He headed towards the refrigerator for something cold to drink.

Before he got to the kitchen there was a knock at the door. Giles pursed his lips trying to decide whether he should answer it or not. He heard Spike call Buffy's name. Giles sighed and opened the door.

Spike tried to enter but Buffy had clearly not invited him in since an uninvite spell had been performed. Spike rammed against an invisible barrier. He scowled at Giles. "Get Buffy."

Giles shook his head. "No, I can't."

"Why the hell not? Where is she? Go get her so she can let me in."

"I can't, Spike. Or at least not until I determine if the spell works on vampires too."

"What spell?"

"Someone's put a spell of some sort on Buffy and ...let's just say that...that is to say...she can't..." Giles blew out a breath, uncomfortable discussing the subject.

Spike looked annoyed. "Watcher, spit it out."

Giles heard some movement upstairs. He looked at Spike. "Stay there."

Spike rolled his eyes. "Well I can't exactly come in there, can I?" He yelled up the stairs at Giles' back. "You bloody jerk." He sat on the stoop.

Giles stopped before he hit the landing. He called out Buffy's name. "Buffy?"

Buffy walked out of her bedroom wearing light blue flannel pajamas with fleecy sheep all over it. She was holding Mr. Gordo. She looked like she was about ten years old. Giles' body didn't care. The fact that he knew it was a spell helped keep him where he was. He smiled at her. "Spike's here." As her eyes widened Giles held up his hand. "He can't come in. I thought it might be worthwhile to see if vampires are affected by this..." He waved his arm in the air, "...whatever it is. But I won't ask you to see him if you don't want to."

She looked at him, her eyes trusting. "You'll be there?"

He couldn't meet her gaze, not with that implicit trust shining out at him like that. He nodded. "Yes."

She thought for a minute and then nodded her head. She started heading towards Giles and he quickly turned wanting to keep a few feet between them. He saw a quick flash of hurt in her eyes but he kept moving.

Spike heard them coming down the stairs and he stood and faced the door waiting for his invitation. When he saw Buffy he morphed into his demon face and slammed himself against the barrier. He threw himself at it repeatedly, yelling at Buffy to let him in. He was almost spitting in his frenzied need to get at her. Buffy stared at him horrified. Giles turned to her. "Go upstairs Buffy. I'll take care of Spike." Buffy needed no further urging. She ran upstairs, back into her bedroom, and back under the covers.

Once Giles felt his own body start to calm down he lifted his head to look at Spike. Spike was back in his human guise looking confused. He glanced at Giles. "What the hell was that?"

"That was the spell."

Spike looked appalled. "Jesus." He looked down at his hands. "I would've..."

Giles cut him off. "I know." He was equally appalled, just thinking about what might have happened to Buffy if she'd gone patrolling.

Spike looked at Giles, at his clenched hands. "Is she safe with you?"

Giles wasn't sure how to answer that. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "I'm all she's got. I'm trying to keep my distance." He opened his eyes and looked at Spike. "I need to find Anya. Willow and Tara are out of town. Buffy needs someone to stay with her and it shouldn't be me, it shouldn't be any man." He moved a little closer to the door. "Spike, I need you to find her. Bring her here, without Xander. I'll need you to go by the store and pick up some spell books. I'll make you a list. Then I need you to see if Ethan is in town."

Spike held his hand up. "Excuse me? Do I look like an errand boy? This is gonna cost you."

Giles was in no position to argue. He reached for his wallet and pulled out all the money that was in there. Giles was relieved to pay Spike, actually. Spike didn't fool around with money. If someone was paying Spike to do something, he did it, because he wanted to be able to come back for more. Giles counted it and handed it to Spike. "There's a hundred dollars here, that's all I have."

Spike nodded. "Make me your bloody list then. I haven't got all night."

Giles headed for the kitchen for the notepad he'd seen lying there. He brought it back in and sat on the couch. Spike rolled his eyes. "Is this going to take long?"

Giles glared at Spike. "It won't do me much good if you don't bring me what I need. If you'd stop interrupting me I could finish." Spike sat on the stoop again, lighting up a cigarette. Giles finally finished the list and stood. "Spike, find Anya first." He reached into his pocket and pulled out his key ring taking off the key to the store. He handed that to Spike. "Don't take anything else."

Spike made a disgusted noise. "Right, like I'd want any of the junk in there." He made as if to head off and then he turned back to Giles. "Watcher, if you do anything, if you hurt her, I don't care how much it hurts me, I'll kill you."

Giles met his gaze, his eyes filled with pain at the thought of the possibility. "I'll want you to." Spike held his eyes for a minute, gave a brief nod and then headed off into the night.

## End Part 2

### One Wish 3

Buffy lay in her bed. She didn't understand why Giles was staying downstairs. Buffy wanted him with her. She wanted him to be holding her and speaking softly to her in that wonderful voice of his that made her feel so safe. She wanted to crawl inside of him and have him touch her and make all the bad memories go away. Buffy couldn't think of anything else that would. She wanted to be touched by someone she loved. She called for Giles again.

Giles heard Buffy call. He ran his hand through his hair and got up to stand at the foot of the stairs. He was running out of excuses. "Buffy, I'll be up as soon as I can." He winced a little at how lame that sounded, knowing that she was in pain and that she was sure to be hurt by his continued absence. He stood there, his hand running up and down on the banister, lost in thought.

Giles suddenly felt his body react and he knew without even seeing her that Buffy had decided not to wait for him any longer. He looked up and saw that she was standing at the head of the stairs. There were tears in her eyes. Giles tightened his grip on the railing to keep from running up to her. He closed his eyes in hope that the images of throwing her down on the floor and ripping her clothes off might lessen but they became all the more intense. He opened his eyes back up and she was standing right in front of him. Giles backed up a few steps, almost stumbling in his haste to get more space between them.

Buffy's voice was still shaky. "Giles, I...what's the matter? Why...?" She took a breath that caught on a sob. "I don't want to be alone."

Giles heart ached that she even had to ask these questions. He wished he could be sitting at her side, watching over her. Giles had not told Buffy about the spell yet for a couple of reasons. The first was that he hadn't wanted to be near her long enough to tell her, and the second reason was that he didn't want her to be afraid of him. But, he would need to tell her now. It was the only way to make sure she stayed away and safe. As he was opening his mouth to tell her there was a knock on the door. He sent a grateful look skyward and looked at Buffy. "Go back upstairs. I've been waiting for Spike to return. He was getting me something from the shop." As she hesitated he verbally prodded her again. "Go, now, before I open the door."

She slowly turned and headed back upstairs. Giles waited to hear her bedroom door shut before he moved to the door. He gasped with relief when

he saw it was Anya. Unfortunately Xander was with her, but as long as Buffy stayed upstairs Giles wasn't too concerned about that right now. They both were carrying a load of books.

Xander spoke. "Hey, big guy, can we come in? These are getting heavy."

Giles moved out of the way. "Of course, I'm sorry. Please come in." He looked behind them. "Is Spike here?"

Xander shook his head. He dropped the books on the coffee table and then helped relieve Anya of her load. Xander bent his arms, back and forth, getting out the kinks. He turned to Giles. "Spike found us at the Bronze. He said to say that he knew he was supposed to bring Anya back first but that he figured the three of us would find your books faster than just him alone. So, we all went to the Magic Box, which is why Anya and I come bearing gifts. Spike is, even as we speak, trying to track down Ethan." He looked at Giles, anger in his eyes at what had been done to Buffy. "Spike told us what happened. Do you think it was Ethan?"

Giles shook his head, his own eyes angry. "I don't know. But if it was, I'll make him wish he'd never been born."

The look in Giles' eyes made Xander very glad he wasn't Ethan. Xander gestured up the stairs. "She up there?"

Giles nodded and looked at Anya. "Yes, and she doesn't want to be alone and I need you to go be with her. I haven't explained about the spell yet." Anya nodded and started heading for the stairs. Giles touched her on the arm. "Anya, she's been...badly frightened. She needs someone to comfort her and make her feel safe, not to make her angry or get her thinking of revenge. Please try and keep any talk of vengeance out of your conversation."

Anya touched her hand to her chest. "You don't think I can be comforting? You don't think I know how to make someone feel safe?" Her voice was getting louder and louder.

Giles put his hands up to stop her. "Anya, please. Try. For Buffy."

Anya made a face at him and Giles could hear her muttering as she made her way upstairs.

Xander looked at Giles. He sent him a look that was part apology and part worry. Giles blew out a breath. Anya was still a better choice than he was. He and Xander moved over to the couch. Xander picked up a book. "Okay, what are we looking for?" He opened it up, grimaced, shut it and handed it to Giles.

"How about I take the ones in English, you get the ones in Swahili." He started opening the books and pulling out the ones in English. Xander looked at Giles, waiting for some direction.

Giles thought for a moment. "I suppose we're looking for spells, spells that remove spells, or that protect people from the affects of spells. Look for any sex, or lust, or love spells." He looked at the pile of books in front of them. "I have no idea what was done, so we're shooting in the dark here. I don't even know if we have the right books here."

Xander waved his hand at Giles as he settled in his chair preparing to go through his first book. "Hey, we gotta start somewhere. If we don't find anything here we can always go back to the shop now that Anya is here."

Giles flashed him a look of gratitude, thankful for his assistance. They sat there in silence for a while, turning pages. Giles looked up, feeling Xander's eyes on him.

"Yes?"

"Did I do something this morning to Buffy? Is that why I was so confused?" His eyes were anxious.

Giles shook his head. "You didn't do anything to her. However, the spell did affect you and that was the cause of your confusion. Luckily you weren't with her very long. It gets worse the longer you're with her."

Xander hesitated. "You've been...how have you...aren't you affected too?"

Giles barked out a laugh, not a very pleasant one. "Quite affected."

"But she's okay, right?"

Giles understood what Xander was asking. "Yes. I've tried to keep away from her." He blew out a long breath and Xander guessed that it hadn't been as simple as Giles was making it sound.

"Where was she?"

"The Bronze."

Xander cursed. "We must have just missed her. There was some talk about a fight on the dance floor but we never thought..." He looked at Giles. "Do you know what happened?"

Giles' lips tightened. "She hasn't told me any details, but it's clear that several



men attacked her. She was able to get away but not before she was fairly traumatized by the whole thing."

"How did you stop yourself from attacking her too? According to Spike the spell is pretty strong."

"It's very strong, one of the strongest spells I've ever felt. I've never fought so hard against something in my life." Xander saw how hard Giles was gripping his book. Giles sent Xander a look filled with anguish. "She needed me so badly to protect her, to make her feel safe. If I'd..." He took off his glasses and threw them on the table, running his hands over his face.

Xander reached out and gripped Giles' arm. "But you didn't. You did protect her and keep her safe. She called the right person." Giles gave a tight nod and sent a small smile Xander's way. He started flipping through the pages of his book again.

In a few minutes Anya called down. "Giles?"

Giles put his book down and moved to the bottom of the stairs. "Yes?"

"She wants to see you." As he started to shake his head Anya insisted. "She won't take no for an answer. She says she'll come down if you don't come up."

Giles flashed a look at Xander. "Stay down here. I'll make sure Anya stays with me." He slowly started up but then headed back down again. He went to the kitchen and grabbed a carving knife with a stout handle. As he met Anya at the top of the stairs he handed it to her. "Use this if you need to."

Anya took it. "You want me to kill you?"

Giles rolled his eyes. "I don't think that will be necessary." He pointed to the wooden handle. "Hit me with that end first. If it doesn't work and you have to stab me, aim for an arm or a leg. I imagine that will distract me enough." At Anya's nod he spoke one more time. "Don't leave me alone with her." Anya nodded again. He could feel the effects of the spell even out here. Giles took one more breath and opened the door to Buffy's room.

Giles let Anya in first. When he entered, the effects of the spell multiplied. He felt the overwhelming need to claim her as his, to satisfy his needs in her body. He groaned and leaned against the door for a moment, trying to stay in control, to remember why he was here. Giles moved to the bed and after reassuring himself that Anya was right by the door, he sat down. She was completely under the covers. He spoke her name. "Buffy."

She was in his arms before another second passed. His arms closed tightly around her. Giles saw Anya move closer to him and he held his hand up to her assuring her that he was all right for the time being. He was, barely. Buffy was speaking into his chest. "I want you to stay with me. Why can't you stay with me?"

He gently pulled back from her. It was time to tell her. "I wish I could, but I can't."

She lifted her pale face to his. "Why?"

He sighed. "Someone's done a spell, directed at you, a particularly nasty one. It makes men want to..." He touched a bruise on her face. "Well, I imagine you know what it makes them want." She nodded, not meeting his gaze. She knew all too clearly. Giles continued. "It affects all men, Buffy." He stressed the word all.

It took a minute but it finally filtered through. She shrank from him, creating more space in between them. Even though he knew it was necessary his heart clenched to see her fear him. But she surprised him. After a moment she moved back and looked at him closely, just staring at him, not saying a word. She could see it now, the stark desire in his face, the tension in his body. Her voice was soft. "So, all this time? While you were holding me, and carrying me? You wanted to...?"

Giles looked away, unable to meet her gaze. He nodded. "I'm sorry, Buffy."

She let out a shaky laugh. "For what? How can you possibly think you have something to be sorry for? I saw what those men were like. They were out of control. I was terrified of them. But you didn't hurt me, you fought it...for me." She moved closer and wrapped her arms around him again.

Anya really had to pee. Giles looked like he was behaving himself. She quietly slipped out the door.

Giles didn't notice. The scent and nearness of Buffy was driving him crazy. He groaned and spoke, his voice husky with need. "Buffy, don't. I can't...you're not safe with me."

Buffy pulled back, still holding him, and looked at him. "I don't care Giles. I want you to touch me. I want you to make me forget what happened."

Giles pulled out of her arms, a look of panic on his face. "You don't know what you're saying. You're upset. Neither one of us is thinking right. If I touch you it

won't be about making you feel better, it will be about me taking what I want. I won't care if I hurt you." He stood.

Buffy stood too. "Giles, I need you. My body feels contaminated and I need you to make it better. You know you can't hurt me."

Giles backed away from her. "Don't ask me to do this. This isn't me."

Buffy knew she wasn't being fair to Giles but she couldn't help it. She felt so needy, so desperate for him. Her own body was responding to his desire for her. "Don't you want me?"

Giles groaned again. "God, I want you so much it's making me insane." He looked behind him and realized that Anya wasn't in the room anymore. He started backing up to the door, reaching behind him, trying to find the doorknob. As he found it and started to turn it Buffy moved faster and ran to him, keeping the door shut with one of her hands. She pulled his head down and captured his lips in a kiss.

Giles' self control went up in flames. He let out a low growl and fisting his hands in Buffy's hair he pulled her tight against him.

Anya tried to get back in the bedroom but she couldn't get the door open. She banged on the door. "Hey, let me in." She heard Giles groan. She banged harder. "Hey, stop that!" She yelled down the stairs. "Xander!" She shoved her hip against the door trying to open it, yelling.

She got the door partially open and she kept shoving. The banging of the door against Giles' body was enough to start penetrating his brain, to make him aware of what he was doing. He was kissing Buffy, his hands cupping her butt, holding her against his raging erection. He'd been seconds away from ripping off her clothes, rutting with her on the floor. Giles could hear Xander coming up the stairs. He pushed Buffy away from him hard enough that she fell on the bed. As he moved away from the door Anya's last shove flung the door open so hard it crashed into the wall behind it.

Anya held the knife up as she came in. Xander came racing in behind her. "What's wrong?" He looked at Buffy. "Oh God." He started walking towards her, oblivious to anything else.

Giles grabbed Anya. "Shut the door behind me. Don't let me in again. Don't let anybody in." Giles grabbed Xander by an arm. Xander swung a punch in Giles' direction. Giles lowered a shoulder and just barreled into Xander taking him through the doorway and a few feet down the hall. Giles yelled. "Shut it now!" Anya slammed the door shut and locked it.

Anya walked over to Buffy who was sitting on the bed. "Are you all right? Did he hurt you?"

Buffy shook her head, her fingers on her lips, trying to keep from crying. "No, it was me, I did it. I kissed him." She didn't want Anya to think that Giles had done anything wrong.

Anya looked at her as if she was insane. "What? Why did you do that?"

"I wanted him to kiss me."

Anya snorted. "Great. Giles sends me up here. He says, Anya, she's hurting, she needs someone to be comforting, to make her feel better. And meanwhile here you are throwing gasoline on the fire." She threw herself into a chair, disgusted with Buffy, with Giles, with Xander, and with the whole way her evening had ended up. Buffy stood and Anya glared at her. "You step one foot near that door and I'll stab you with this knife." Buffy sat back down again.

Giles had landed on top of Xander. He held him there, pinned to the ground until he saw Xander's eyes clear. Giles looked at him. "Okay?" Xander nodded and Giles rolled off of him. They both lay there, panting.

Xander turned his head to Giles. "You all right?"

Giles let out a sharp laugh. "No."

Xander stood and helped Giles up and they walked downstairs. He sat back in his chair as Giles sank down on the couch. Xander pursed his lips and gestured upstairs with his head. "What happened up there?"

Giles took his glasses off again. "She kissed me."

Xander's eyes widened. "She kissed you?" Xander shook his head. "She kissed you?" Giles closed his eyes resting his head against the back of the couch. He nodded. Xander blew out his breath in a whistle. "And you...?"

Giles shot him a look. "What do you think I did?" He covered his face with his hands and made a frustrated sound.

"Where was Anya?"

Giles furrowed his brow. "A very good question I intend to ask her when this whole thing is over."

Xander grimaced at the tone in Giles' voice. "Boy, her timing really sucks."

Giles sat up and reached for a book. "Yes, it does."

Xander continued. "I mean, if she wanted to do the whole seduction thing, you'd think she'd want to wait until she knew you were, you know, not under a lust spell. Unless that was the only way she thought she could get you." Xander thought about that possibility. No matter how you sliced it, her timing sucked.

Giles realized that Xander was talking about Buffy, not Anya. He looked at Xander in amazement. "You think Buffy was trying to seduce me?"

"Well...yeah. Why else would she kiss you?"

"Because she's frightened, because she's confused, because she..." Giles shook his head, not really knowing why.

Xander just looked at Giles. "I don't know, Giles. I mean, she's been attacked by every guy who sees her, right? It seems to me that she should be hating guys right now, all guys, including you, because you're a guy. And I know I'm sounding like Willow here with the babbling, but bear with me. Instead, she kisses you. It sounds to me as if she, maybe, really wants you. She just picked a really sucky time to let you know."

Giles looked darkly at Xander. "This is not helping. Can we get back to the research?"

Xander picked his book back up. "Shutting up now."

End Part 3

#### One Wish 4

Xander and Giles had finished going through almost all the books on the coffee table when there was a knock on the door. Giles got up to answer it and stepped back in surprise when Spike shoved Ethan through the open door so he landed in a sprawl at Giles' feet. Giles looked up at Spike. "How did you...?" He couldn't imagine how Spike could have brought Ethan here against his will with the chip in his head.

Spike sneered at Ethan who was attempting to stand. "I told him I'd bite him if he didn't come with me."

Giles' eyebrows rose and then he nodded. He realized that, of course, Ethan

wouldn't know that Spike couldn't hurt him. Giles just watched Ethan stand the rest of the way and brush himself off.

Ethan was having a hard time keeping a look of satisfaction off his face. Considering the look on Giles' face his spell had struck hard. He looked around, grinning. "Where's Buffy?"

Giles clenched his fists barely resisting the urge to hit Ethan. He needed information and if he started hitting Ethan now he didn't know if he could stop. Giles turned a hateful look at Ethan. "None of your goddamn business." He took a step towards Ethan and Ethan backed up one. "What did you do to her?"

Ethan laughed and the sound of it sent chills down Xander's back. "I'm sure you know exactly what I did to her. At least I hope you do."

Giles started to lose it. "What do you mean by that?"

Ethan smiled, his face like a predator. "Come on Ripper. Was she good? Did she whimper? Did she cry? Did she let you take her, rutting like a dog in heat?"

Giles grew very still. "You wanted me to rape her?" His voice was quiet, and very deadly.

Ethan just laughed again. "Of course. That way I get two for the price of one. I destroy her and I destroy you." He leaned towards Giles. "So, come on, tell me. How was she? Did you like it?"

Xander was moving, ready to silence Ethan himself, but Giles had his hand around Ethan's throat and up against the wall before Xander could take more than a step or two. "How do I break the spell?"

"You can't, old man, only I can. So you better be nice to me."

"Ethan, I'm willing to guess that if you're dead that the spell will be broken. I'm thinking I don't really need you at all." Giles' hand tightened around Ethan's neck.

Ethan put his hands on Giles' arm, trying to push it away. He was unsuccessful. He spoke painfully through his constricted throat. "Rupert, you know you won't kill me. You've become far too civilized for that." He sneered. "Too bad you weren't civilized enough to protect your slayer."

Giles laughed in Ethan's face and at the sound Xander took an unconscious



step backwards. Giles hauled Ethan away from the wall and removed his hand from his throat. Giles let go with a vicious punch that knocked Ethan to the ground. "Ethan, old man, you're always saying you want Ripper to come out and play. Well guess what? Here he is, you fucker." He hauled Ethan back up just to punch him again.

Xander couldn't believe the Giles standing in front of him. Buffy had told him what he'd been like when he'd gone after Angelus but Xander had not been able to visualize it. But right now, standing in front of him, Giles was the most dangerous thing he could remember seeing. The look on his face and the stance of his body spelled death. Xander exchanged a quick look with Spike and knew he was having the same thought.

Ethan knew it too. He tried to crawl away from Giles but Giles just kicked him over and then crouched down, one knee digging into Ethan's chest. Giles leaned down close. "You've seen me kill, Ethan. You know better than anyone what I'm capable of." He backhanded Ethan across the face. "Tell me what you need to break the spell or I'll kill you and figure it out on my own."

Ethan spit out some blood and just smiled at Giles. "Just like old times, eh, Ripper? Why don't you go get Buffy and we can both have a bit of fun with her." If he was going to die tonight he was going to die stabbing a knife in Ripper's gut.

Giles hit Ethan over and over again until Ethan was curled up in a ball on the ground not even trying to fight back anymore. Giles lifted Ethan's head by his hair. "Ready to talk yet, Ethan? Or do you still want to play?"

Giles reached into one of his pockets and pulled out his handkerchief. He began wiping the blood off of his hands. He stood looking down at Ethan to see what he would do. Ethan just shook his head. "Go fuck yourself, Ripper." He laughed, spitting out some more blood. "On second thought, go fuck your slayer."

Giles' eyes got even darker and Xander wondered if he was actually going to watch his friend murder someone. He wondered if he would be able to stop Giles; he wasn't sure he wanted to. Instead Giles headed for the coffee table. He started shuffling books around until he found the one he was looking for. Giles opened it up and flipped through the pages. A very unpleasant smile formed on his face and Xander found himself taking another step backwards.

Giles walked back over to Ethan and rolled him over onto his back. Even Ethan shrank back when he saw that smile on Giles' face. "Want to play a new game, Ethan? Your old pal Ripper always wanted to try this one. Let's give it a go, shall we?" Giles put his hand on Ethan's face, his fingers

stretching out to rest on his forehead and temples. He started to chant, the syllables hard and guttural. Ethan's eyes widened and he began to struggle. Giles just pressed down harder and continued his words. Ethan started to scream.

Xander went to stand by Spike, frightened by what he was seeing and hearing. Spike was glad for the company. They both watched Giles as he continued whatever he was doing to Ethan. Ethan's screams grew more terrified and he tried futilely to push Giles' hand away. Spike and Xander moved closer together, Xander's hand grabbing Spike's arm. They watched as eventually Ethan's voice got weaker and weaker and then stopped all together. His body started to convulse and still Giles chanted, his voice relentless. Then Ethan's body grew slack.

Giles stopped the chant and pulled his hand away. He looked down at Ethan and he spoke to him, or what was left of him. "Was that good for you? How did you like that mind-fuck?" He stood and kicked Ethan one last time. He smiled. He glanced at Xander and Spike and nothing in his face reassured either one of them.

Giles walked over to them and smiled grimly when both Spike and Xander took a couple of steps backwards away from him. Giles spoke to Xander. "Stay down here." He turned and headed for the staircase.

Xander and Spike exchanged alarmed glances. Xander called out. "Uh, Giles?" Giles ignored him and started up the stairs. Xander tried again. "I don't think you should be going up there."

Spike pushed him into the house. "Go stop him."

Xander gave him an incredulous stare and pointed at Giles' back. "Go stop him?"

Spike glared at him. "He's gone round the bend. He'll hurt Buffy."

"If I go up there, I could hurt Buffy. And Giles might hurt me." Spike glared at him again and Xander grimaced. He slowly headed for the staircase, following Giles. Xander heard Giles pounding on Buffy's door.

Anya and Buffy looked at each other when the pounding started. They heard Giles' voice. "Anya, let me in."

Anya glared at Buffy when it looked as if she might get up. Anya yelled back. "No, go away."

"I know how to take the spell off. Open the door."

"No, you told me not to let you in."

The door started to shake and Buffy and Anya could tell that Giles was slamming himself against it. They looked at each other. Anya held the knife up in front of her. Giles yelled again. "Open the fucking door."

Xander had reached the landing. "Hey, Giles, maybe you want to rethink this. Hmm? Maybe this isn't such a good idea."

Giles turned his head to Xander and Xander stopped moving, swallowing nervously at the look on Giles' face. Giles gritted out the words. "I can feel her from here. Don't come any nearer. I know how to take the spell off but I have to be touching her." He took a step towards Xander and snarled. "She's mine, she belongs to me."

Xander held his hands up. "I'm the last one to argue that big guy. I just don't want you to do anything you'll be sorry for." He looked at Giles, trying to see some trace of the friend he knew. "How do you know the spell? You didn't know it before."

"I stole it out of Ethan's mind. Along with the rest of him."

Xander let out a shaky laugh. "So, you're sort of a combination Ripper and Ethan, huh?" He bit his bottom lip. "Any Giles in there? Just a little? Just the tiniest bit?" He held his thumb and forefinger up, a short distance away from each other, a hopeful look on his face.

"I need to do the spell now. I don't know how long I'll be able to access Ethan's memories." Giles pointed downstairs. "And he's bloody useless now." He turned back to the door and started kicking it. Xander took a step towards him and Giles turned back to him, a warning clear in his eyes. "If you come any closer you'll start to feel it. I don't want to hurt you, but I will if the spell starts to affect you."

Xander didn't know what to do. He didn't know whether to believe that Giles knew how to get rid of the spell. He did know that Buffy's spell would affect him. He was reasonably certain that Giles would hurt him. He ran his hand over his face. "Shit."

Giles finally kicked the door open. Anya ran at him with her knife. Giles easily disarmed her and shoved her out into the hallway. He spoke to her. "Keep your boyfriend away. He'll want her, he won't be able to help himself."

Anya hesitated, torn between trying to stop Giles and wanting to make sure Xander went nowhere near Buffy. Her concern about Xander won. Anya ran to him. She knocked him down on the ground and sat on him. "You can't go in there."

Xander tried to get out from under her but Anya had always been stronger than she looked. He tried to reason with her. "He's not himself. He might hurt her."

"Xander, she's the slayer. If she can't stop him, what are you going to do?" Xander could hardly argue with that and the knowledge that Giles would definitely hurt him was another powerful argument for staying put.

Buffy watched Giles as he came into the room. The knife was still in his hand. Giles could feel the spell affecting him but he was able to resist. Ethan had been protected from the spell and Giles was able to access that protection and he wrapped it around himself, inside, in his mind.

Buffy saw the desire in his eyes but this man who was walking towards her wasn't anyone she wanted to touch. She didn't know who he was. She started backing away. Giles could see the nervousness in Buffy's eyes and he stopped. He tossed the knife into the corner of the room. His voice was rough when he spoke. "Buffy, I know how to get rid of the spell but I need to touch you."

Buffy stared at Giles trying to understand what was going on. "What happened to you? You're so different."

Giles barked out a laugh. "This is how I used to be a long time ago. I wasn't a very pleasant fellow. You've seen shades of it, but this..." He stopped and let out a breath, waving his hand as if to signify that it was unimportant. "I won't hurt you. Let me get rid of the spell and then I'll leave."

"Who was that screaming?"

"Ethan."

"What happened? Why was he screaming like that? What did you do to him?"

"Do you care? He put this spell on you. He wanted me to rape you. He wanted to destroy both of us."

Buffy's face blanched. "How...?" She shook her head. "How could he have known you for so long and known so little about you? How could he think you would ever hurt me like that?"

"He didn't know me, Buffy. Not the me that you know. All he knew was what I used to be like. Under that spell, the man I was would have used you and hurt you and walked away."

"So how are you fighting the spell now?"

"Ethan was protected from the spell. I took that knowledge from him. I know how to shield myself now and how to get rid of the spell."

She smiled softly at him. "Sounds like you're still taking care of me, despite the...the trip down memory lane."

He let out a rueful laugh. "I'm still here too. There are just too many other people in my head right now. The Giles you know, Ripper, Ethan. I need to work it all out and I will, after I've helped you."

Buffy walked to him. "What do you need me to do?"

He pointed to the chair. "Sit." Buffy sat. Giles put his hand on her face, again stretching his fingers to touch her temples and her forehead. "Ethan cast the spell so he would have been able to remove it on his own. We need to say it together. I can't write or say the words out loud until we do the spell so you need to read the words from my mind." He looked at her. "Are you ready? It might hurt a bit, especially if you fight it."

She nodded. Giles spoke just a few words this time, still harsh and guttural. Buffy gasped as information started becoming available to her. She saw the phenomenal control he was exercising to keep his anger and violence in check. She felt his desire for her from the spell still coiled within him, ready to strike like a snake; she saw what he did to Ethan. And next to it all she saw the love he had for her. She let go and trusted him. Giles felt her surrender to him and he gave her directions. "Speak the words with me now." They both repeated them, Buffy's tongue stumbling over the unfamiliar Latin words she could see in Giles' mind.

Giles stayed connected with her for a minute more. He waited until he was sure the spell was gone. He could feel the effects of it leave his body. Buffy felt it too, the coiled tension, the angry lust fading away. What she also felt was that underneath it there was still desire, a longing for her that took her breath away. Then she felt steel doors slam shut in his mind and the anger and violence she had felt before returned. Giles took his hand away. She sagged back in the chair feeling momentarily bereft of his presence. He turned and started walking out of the room. Buffy jumped up and followed him. "Where are you going?"

"Away. I'll be back."

"When?"

"In a few days, maybe longer." He stepped around Xander and Anya. Xander tensed as Buffy walked by him but he didn't feel a thing. Xander laid his head down on the floor in relief and Anya slid off of him. He sprang up following Giles and Buffy down the stairs.

Buffy grabbed Giles' arm as he reached the bottom of the staircase. He shook her off and turned to her. "Buffy, I have to go."

"Why? Why can't I help you? Why do you have to leave?"

Giles didn't answer her. He headed for the door. Spike got out of his way. As Giles headed down the sidewalk, Spike called out to him, gesturing into the house. "What are we supposed to do with the bloody bastard?"

Giles quickly turned around and Spike backed up to the barrier at the door. "Spike, he'll be spending the rest of his life as a fucking vegetable. I don't give a shit what you do with him. Drain his blood, drop him off at the nearest mental institution, chop him up into little pieces and fertilize Buffy's garden. I don't give a fuck. Now, just leave me the hell alone." With that he got in his car and peeled off.

Buffy and Spike watched him as he drove off, speechless. Xander and Anya stared equally stunned. After a minute Buffy walked over to where Ethan lay on the floor. She realized Spike was still standing at the door and she invited him in. He came over and stood beside her.

Xander kept his distance. He'd already seen enough. He spoke to Buffy. "Okay, the next time I say, 'oh, look, Giles is going all Ripper' like that's a cute thing, hit me." He pointed at Ethan. "Because this, this real Ripper, what he did, the way he was, I don't ever want to see that again because it scared the shit out of me."

Spike looked over at Xander and then at Buffy. "For once I agree with the whelp here."

Buffy shook her head. "It was still Giles."

Xander let out a short laugh. "That was not Giles."

Buffy was insistent. "It was."



Spike shook his head. "Look slayer. All I've heard from you lot is how bad this guy Ethan was. I know he changed Giles into a Fyarl demon and because of him I almost bagged my third slayer that Halloween a few years back. But I'm telling you, however tough this wanker was, he never had a chance with Giles. From the moment I pushed him through the door he was a goner. He never even got a punch in."

Xander walked a little closer. "You didn't see what he did, Buffy."

"Yes, I did. I saw it in his mind. I saw exactly what he did. I saw what he was like, the Ripper part. But, underneath it all, it was still Giles. All he wanted to do was get this spell off of me, to take care of me. No matter how scary he was, he never lost that."

Xander made a face. "Well, maybe it was him underneath." He sounded doubtful. "But, the stuff on top, that was bad."

Spike nudged Ethan with his boot. "What should I do with him?" He grinned at Buffy. "Want some fertilizer for your garden?"

"Eeww. No thank you." She looked down at Ethan and grimaced. "Let's just call 911 and tell them he had a major seizure or something. It wouldn't really even be a lie." At their nods she reached for the phone.

End Part 4

## One Wish 5

Buffy went by his condo every day in hopes he would be there. Other than the trip to his place and to the Magic Box she stuck pretty close to home. She knew the spell was gone but the world was still feeling pretty creepy to her, especially with Giles unavailable to her. Xander and Willow had tried to talk her into going to the Bronze but she just couldn't bring herself to do it. She knew that it was irrational but she was not going to the Bronze again unless Giles was with her. At least for the first time.

It had been a week and Buffy was starting to feel nervous. He hadn't called anyone, hadn't even checked in with Anya. And even Anya wanted him back. Things were beginning to pile up at the store that she didn't know how to take care of. They all sat around the shop as they had every night since Giles had left, keeping each other company. They wondered where he was, how he was doing. Using her computer hacking skills Willow had been able to determine that he had made a cash withdrawal from an ATM in San Francisco the day after he'd left Sunnydale but that was all she'd been able to find. Buffy was

afraid that maybe he'd decided not to come back. Maybe he was living it up somewhere, delighted for the opportunity to embrace his old life, free of the responsibility of caring for a slayer and a Hellmouth.

She went out patrolling and then she stopped by his place again. Buffy let herself in and closed the door behind her. Moving into the kitchen she went through the ritual of making tea as if that might pull her Giles back home, back to claim his night-time cup of tea. She actually took out two cups and arranged a tray as if he was there. Then the tray with both cups on it made her feel so lonely for him that she took one of the cups off, and that made her even sadder. She slid down the wall until she was sitting on the floor, her heart aching for his return, whole and safe.

Even with the spell's removal, her longing to be with him, to touch him, hadn't abated. In fact, it had grown stronger, enhanced by the knowledge that she had seen in his mind that he wanted her too. A part of her was sick at the thought that wherever he was, that maybe Ripper was with other women. She had no doubts about Giles but she had no such hopes that Ripper would stay true to her, would in fact even give it a thought.

She sat there with her arms wrapped tightly around her drawn up knees. Then, she heard the key in the door. Before Giles even got all the way inside she threw herself into his arms. Giles let out an oomph at the impact. Without dislodging her he moved them forwards so he could shut the door behind them. Then he hugged her back tightly, his cheek resting against her hair.

She never wanted to let him go. He felt so good to her. She took a deep breath and then wrinkled her nose. She sniffed at him. "Hey, you're kind of stinky."

He responded with a small silent laugh. She could feel the vibration through his chest. "I'm not surprised. I've been wearing these same clothes for a week."

She pulled back and looked at him, taking in his week's growth of beard, his messy hair, and his tired eyes. "You want to go take a shower?"

He nodded. "Desperately. Do you mind?"

She shook her head and touched her nose. "No. That would be a good thing." She grinned at him. "I'll make some fresh tea."

He let out a sigh, sort of happy and sort of sad. "That would be lovely." He pulled completely away from her and walked upstairs. She watched the tired droop of his shoulders. Still worried but tremendously relieved that he was

back she headed towards the kitchen and her tea tray. She smiled as she picked up the cup she had removed and replaced it on the tray.

He took a long shower. Just as Buffy was afraid she might have to warm the water up again he finally came out of the bathroom. He was dressed in sweats, his feet bare, his face clean-shaven. Giles sat down on the couch next to Buffy. He watched her as she poured tea for the both of them. When she was finished he gently touched her knee to get her attention. He scrutinized her closely when she looked at him. "Buffy, how are you feeling?"

She shrugged and then smiled a small smile. "Better now that you're back." She paused and he waited. She spoke again. "I'm okay. I mean, I still haven't gone back to the Bronze, I still feel a little wiggled about the whole thing."

Giles put his hand on her shoulder. "I'm not surprised. Nothing really prepares you to deal with this sort of evil, especially when it's directed at you. It will take some time, I expect."

"I was sort of hoping that maybe you could go with me."

"To the Bronze?" She nodded. He smiled at her. "If you think that would help I'd be glad to."

He reached for a cup of tea and this time she put a hand on his knee. "Giles, how are you doing? Where did you go?"

He picked up his tea and took a sip. "I just drove. I really didn't have a destination in mind. Then, at some point I realized that I wanted rain. So, I kept driving until I found a place where it was raining."

"Where was that?"

"Washington."

"You drove to Washington?"

He nodded and let out a sigh. "I just let it rain on me for the longest time." He gave her a rueful smile. "And then I drove home."

"And are you...I mean is...?" She wasn't quite sure how to put it.

He knew what she was asking. He took his glasses off, pinching the bridge of his nose. "I am better, but I expect it will take some time for me as well." He took another sip of his tea and then he stood, replacing his glasses. He straightened out a picture on the wall and ran his fingers over a few of his

possessions. "I haven't quite..." His lips tightened as he also fought for words. He changed his direction. "I'm sorry you had to see that."

"I'm not." She shook her head. "I mean, I am, in a way. But only because of what it did to you. I saw him in your mind. He hated us. I can't believe how much he hated us, hated me. If you hadn't stopped him he'd have done something else. Maybe something even worse." He nodded. What she said was true. He had felt that hatred in Ethan's mind. It was why he hadn't stopped even after he'd gotten the information he had needed. She spoke again. "Can you...is he still sort of inside you? Can you still feel him?"

He nodded again. "Yes, but it's fading."

Buffy lowered her head and spoke softly. "Does it make you hate me too?"

Giles' eyes widened. "Good Lord, no." He walked back to the couch, sitting next to her again. He lifted her face up by her chin making her look at him. "I know the thoughts he had, the way he felt, but they aren't mine, the thoughts or the feelings. They don't have the power to make me think or feel like him." She lowered her gaze and he called her name to make her look at him again. "Buffy, I could never hate you."

She let out a sigh of relief. That had also been bothering her, wondering if Ethan could have affected him, making his feelings for her change. She asked the other question on her mind. "How about Ripper? Could he make you do stuff?"

Giles looked puzzled. "Do stuff? What do you mean?"

Buffy blushed. "You know, while you were gone. This week, whatever you did. Was it Ripper making your choices for you?" She knew she wasn't asking clearly but she was too embarrassed to simply ask him if he'd slept with anyone.

Giles' eyebrows furrowed as he mentally worked his way through her question. Then he grinned. There was enough of Ripper still active to find the question amusing. "Are you asking me whether I made my way up the coast by robbing banks and taking advantage of willing women?"

Buffy's jaw dropped. "You robbed banks when you were younger?"

It was Giles turn to blush. "Forget I said that."

Buffy snapped her jaw shut, her eyes still wide. She just stared at Giles.

"Yikes." Then she looked worried again. "So, how many did you sleep with?"

Giles couldn't resist teasing her. "Then or now?" Buffy gasped. Giles smiled, shaking his head. "Buffy. Who I slept with before doesn't matter. And I was dealing with enough people in my head this last week without making things even more complicated by involving someone else."

Buffy's heart unclenched. "So, you've been alone this whole week?"

Giles nodded. "Yes, quite alone. And I used my ATM card when I needed cash." He ran a finger down her cheek. "Feel better?"

She nodded, a wry smile on her face. "Actually we traced you to San Francisco, or at least Willow did."

Giles rolled his eyes. "That young woman is a menace. I'll have to remember that if I ever need to hide from you lot."

Buffy grinned and then squinched her face up. "Do you want to know what we did with Ethan?"

Giles' face grew hard and his eyes darkened. "No." He took a deep breath and blew it out. His lips tightened as he looked at Buffy. "Sorry, I'm still a bit...I'm still hating him quite a lot."

Buffy moved closer to Giles and put her arms around him. She murmured into his chest. "Thank you. Thank you for everything you did for me."

Giles kissed the top of her head and ran his hand down her hair. "You're welcome. I'm just sorry it happened at all, that once again my past put you at such risk."

He could feel her shake her head. "No, it's not your fault. Besides, I'm always almost getting you killed." She lifted her head up to see his face. She raised a hand to his forehead, running her fingers over the furrows there. "Really, Giles, all I'm feeling here is good stuff."

He smiled and they sat there for a minute, looking at each other. He touched her cheek again, his touch feather light. "That night, when you knew I was affected by the spell, and you kissed me. Why did you do that? What were you looking for?"

She bit her bottom lip looking away for a minute. Then she looked back at him. "This." She leaned forwards and kissed him again. It was a soft kiss, but clearly a kiss meant to be shared between a man and a woman, one filled

with love and desire. Giles felt a tension ease in his chest that he hadn't even known was there and he kissed her back the same way, his arms holding her to him. The kiss stayed gentle. Neither one of them was ready for a heated, frenzied embrace. But the kiss was full of promise and filled with tomorrows.

In time they separated and Buffy snuggled into his chest again, sighing happily. He ran his hand through her hair, the other hand holding one of her hands, their fingers laced. They stayed like that for a long time.

Finally Giles spoke. "I...I love you Buffy. And I've wanted you for a while now. But..." He disengaged his hand from hers and ran it through his hair.

Buffy sat up straight, nervous at what he might be trying to say. "But what?"

He reached for her hand again and brought it to his mouth, kissing the back of it. "Can we move slowly on this, Buffy? I want to know that when we make love that it's just me, just loving you. I don't want there to be any darkness as a part of it."

Buffy closed her eyes against the emotion his request created in her. Giles waited, wondering what she was thinking. She opened her eyes back up and in her eyes was such a look of love that Giles felt it like a physical caress. She smiled softly. "I'd like that. And me too. I'd like to know that it's just me, with none of the weirdness left over from the spell. That all the fear is gone, so it's just you and me." She cupped his face with her hands. "And I love you too."

They kissed again. And then they sat for a while longer, just holding each other. Giles let out a yawn and she giggled. "Am I keeping you awake?"

Giles flashed her a sheepish look. "So it appears." He grinned at her. "I haven't slept much this week."

Buffy bit her lips again. "Would you mind...can I stay here with you? I mean not to have sex or anything." She looked at him, filled with her love for him. "I just want you there when I wake up in the middle of the night. I want to know that you're back and that we're together." She looked up at him. "Would that be all right?"

He cocked his head to the side and smiled back at her. "I can't imagine anything I'd like more." He stood and held out his hand to her. She took his hand and let him pull her up. Arms wrapped around each other they headed up the stairs, to his bed, and to their future.



The End