

A Summer's Day Prologue

Series Watchers Season

Summary Angel discovers a book of prophecy involving himself and Giles.

Angel shivered under the fur throw, his fingers frozen round a book. He stared at the last smouldering log in his fireplace and cursed glancing up at the chandelier whose light flickered ominously with the gathering summer storm.

Lightning arced and plunged the room into moonlit night, Angel growled and flung off his cover to investigate his failed generator.

##

He wrenched the cellar door open and armed with a crowbar he descended to pay homage to his generator. Hours later bathed in sweat, he had taken it apart and reassembled it and now employed the crowbar in persuading it to work.

"C'mon, ya Heathen, Devil-Spawned contraption! Work!" Clang! The sound of metal on metal echoed. He lifted the bar above his head one final time invoking the Lord in all his guises and several lesser deities. He delivered the master-stroke.

The lights flashed on, the generator purred into life and something thudded softly to the floor at his feet. He crouched down to peer at the ragged bundle, he nudged it gently and it uttered a sound.

It cried.

##

Angel supped from his blood bowl as he eyed the bundle, now placed safely on his couch surrounded by pillows. He had unwrapped the rag surrounding the object and it lay alongside. It was a Christening robe of a long dead infant, embroidered with seed pearls and inlaid with Irish lace.

Angel removed the pillows and sat beside his unexpected gift. He was both fascinated and appalled at the artistry of the book's binding, it was the face of a sleeping child it looked as though it would wake at any moment. Angel caressed its soft cheek and the book sighed.

At the touch of his hand he could see the child's tormented last moments and wept for the captured soul between the leaves of the book. He picked it up and held it close comforting it and cooing gently to it.

"Let me in Darlin', let me help you. Let me see your secrets, sweet child." The book sighed open and he felt the warm rush of innocent breath enter his lungs, the tiny hands that formed the clasp brushed over his fingers as he turned the pages.

The author, a Demon Mage, wrote in the blood of the slaughtered innocent that formed its binding. The child's tiny fist curled round Angel's finger as he turned the pages until he found an illustration.

It showed a figure in black surrounded by eight oriental symbols. The figure had no face. It carried a wooden stake in one clenched fist. The Drawing was entitled The Silent One on the facing page was a short verse.

In the dawn of the second Millennium She will come,
the Watcher-Slayer, the Silent One.
Through the veil of night and the sunlit play.
Though Her body may die Her soul remains.
The Soul-Catcher shall perish at Her hand.
The Watcher-Slayer reborn, returns.

He turned the next page and saw himself and another figure, also dressed in black. It had Giles' face. The last time he had been this close to a prophecy he hadn't enjoyed the outcome.

He read the rest of the slim volume, what he read had alarmed him. The Soul Catcher could only be defeated by the Watcher-Slayer and he could find no other reference in any of his books. He sighed and shut the volume in his hands, he retrieved the throw and slept peacefully with the babe softly breathing on his chest.

End.

A Summer's Day 1/5

Summary Giles has a relative to stay

Giles looked up from his book for the second time in twenty minutes. They were arguing again. He sighed and took another bite of his apple. The one-hour of the day when he could read for pleasure in green and sunshine splendour and they were bickering over a game of Frisbee! He lay on his back and looked at the sky. He didn't see Willow back-peddling furiously. She fell over his feet and landed square in his lap. The breath left his body with an explosive "oomph!" Willow was all apologies and elbows connecting where they shouldn't.

Giles managed to sit up and retrieved the Frisbee for her. He stood and watched the game for a while, then for some reason his gaze was drawn to a taxi drawing up outside the Library. He sees the female passenger tilt her head back to soak up the last rays of the sun, that gesture is all he needs. He knows her...

"CHLOE!!"

The Frisbee drifts to the ground as the scoobies gravitate towards their Watcher. The woman was nearly as tall as Giles, if she hadn't used crutches. Her smile was pure joy and Xander was smitten. Giles suddenly realised they had an audience. "Uhm, everyone, this is Chloe, my sister. Now, let's see, introductions..." He pointed to each one of his friends in turn, saying their names. Finally he got to Xander. "...And the young man with his mouth open is Xander." Giles smiled as Xander shut his mouth immediately.

Chloe smiled at Xander and asked him to walk her to the library. He jumped at the chance and picked up her suitcases. Giles looked on, bemused for a few seconds, the bell rang for afternoon classes. Buffy and Willow shot past him with a shouted invitation to 'The Bronze' that night. Giles gathered the rug he'd been sitting on and closed his book. 'Another time' he thought as he walked up the steep incline toward the library.

When he entered the Faculty building Xander was standing in the hall looking slightly embarrassed. Chloe was in conversation with Principal Snyder, Snyder looked flushed

"Are all the students as attentive and helpful as Mr. Harris? I think it must be your influence, Mr. Snyder. He has already invited me to the local nightspot with my brother. You know my brother of course, Rupert.... Couldn't we invite George to The Bronze with us?" Giles quickly closed the gap to reach his sister's side. He knew how she loved to tease. He forced his face to adopt an expression of earnest interest.

"Yes, do come. My sister is only in town for a week, isn't it, Chloe?" She nodded. They looked at Snyder expectantly. Neither blinked. Apparently there was a PTA meeting tonight that he had to attend. He was sorry to disappoint them. He walked down the corridor towards his office. Giles managed to herd Xander into the library before both he and Chloe exploded with laughter. Xander sat at one of study tables and moped.

"I don't know why you two are laughing. That was scary. The whole of my life flashed before my eyes. It didn't take long." Despite himself he began to smile, then laugh. He'd never really heard Giles laugh. He looked at the clock and stood up quickly. "Sorry, got to go. Giles, the dress code at The Bronze is ANYTHING BUT tweed."

"We'll do our best, Xander." He smiled. "You shouldn't have done that in the corridor... Tea?" Chloe nodded.

"The slimey toad was going to give him detention for helping me. I had to do something, Rupert." She sat down and eased her legs into a more comfortable position. She smiled as he brought in the tea. "So, Rupert, which one of them are you porking?" She reached for a biscuit while he choked on his tea.

##

There was a great deal of laughter coming from the library that afternoon. Students gathered in the corridor and peered through the small windows. They saw the librarian in shirtsleeves chatting animatedly with a strange woman. All too soon it was five-thirty and the school was closing. Giles packed his case and helped Chloe with her luggage. The suitcases almost dragged his shoulders out of their sockets. "Just a week, she said," he muttered under his breath.

##

Chloe unpacked the first of her cases and deposited three boxes at the bottom of the wardrobe. She then unpacked her clothes from the second suitcase. If all went well she wouldn't need to pack ever again.

She stripped off her clothes and forced herself to look at her battle scarred body. Her expression hardened and she gripped the front of the wig she wore. Her hair had grown back pepper and salt after the last chemo. She turned left and right to get a better view of

her back but the mirror defeated her. She opened the wardrobe door to bounce the reflection from the dressing table mirror and saw Rupert in the reflection silent tears tracking down his face.

"Chloe..." His voice cracked. She sat down on the corner of the bed and stared at the floor, he wasn't supposed to find out this way. He hugged her and she sobbed her grief into his chest.

Over an hour the truth came out. She had been sent to Asia to investigate a temple with an unusual energy signature. Vampires gathered there thinking it a Hellmouth, unfortunately she was captured by the vampire group and held for three years.

"I have eight brands on my back Rupert, each one the name of a vampire who raped me. I had three children," she paused and smiled sadly at Rupert's expression. She ploughed on keeping her voice flat, "they were turned and came to me to feed. I killed them as they slept. I killed every undead thing in the temple then left it clean and sanctified."

Rupert held her as she shook with emotion, gradually she quietened and he put her to bed. He opened her vanity case and saw amongst the make up a small bottle of morphine... She'd come to him to die.

When she woke he asked her if she still wanted to go to The Bronze her answer was typical.

"Why not? I want to see you interact with that cute red-head!" She laughed at his blush. He smiled and nodded. This was how she wanted it then, fun to the end of her days. So be it.

She chose a midnight blue velvet top to go with black jeans and her leather jacket over the top. She opened the door to see Rupert similarly dressed only he had a white cotton shirt under his jacket.

"My, this takes me back, Rupert. Remember graduation? Do you ever see that man...Ethan?" She fussed over his buttons, undoing a couple more. She tried not to feel him tense up at the mention of Ethan's name.

"He haunts occasionally, always up to no good. You finished baring my chest?" he sighed, doing up the buttons she'd just undone.

##

The Bronze was a large imposing building with a queue of people round the outside. Chloe and Giles walked in together. She had decided to forgo her sticks tonight. She would be escorted everywhere by Rupert tonight as he was strong enough to support her should she fall. They spotted the gang at their usual booth. It amused Giles that they didn't recognise him until he was sitting down.

"Xander, your mouth is open again..." Giles was smiling at him. Willow went to the bar to get them some drinks and Buffy, where was Buffy? She was dancing with Angel. Well, at least she was getting some exercise. Chloe smiled at Xander and asked him to dance. The boy just nodded mutely, grateful to the darkness for hiding his blushes. As they got up to go onto the dance floor, Buffy and Angel came back to the booth. Angel brushed by Chloes' arm and she reacted as if scalded. 'Vampire!' She stared back at Rupert, a look of

deep shock on her face.

"Chloe this is Angel, a friend and helper." He made the introductions pointedly so she would understand without questioning. Xander was waiting. She carried on to the dance floor and started to sway to the music.

Angel stared at Chloe and Xander together. He could feel a disturbing attraction to Chloe, as if he were meant to help her. The book in his breast pocket had wriggled and warmed when he bumped into Chloe accidentally. What did that mean?

"Gosh, Giles, no Tweed. What's the celebration?" Buffy teased.

"It's not glued to my body, Buffy!" He calmed after seeing her expression. "I'm sorry, but you didn't tell me Angel was going to be here tonight and Chloe is sensitive to a vampire's presence." He looked round the rest of the group and felt he'd better explain.

"Chloe is an empath. She feels the emotions of others deeply and can project those feelings. She helped me get over Eyghon." Giles finished his explanation and noticed Willow looking towards the dance floor. He followed her gaze and saw that Chloe was nibbling Xander's ear. They were dancing so close now. He wished he could be out there too. Was it too late? Giles asked Willow to dance.

Willow glided onto the floor. The band played 'Unchained Melody', her favourite song. She rested her cheek on his chest, feeling disappointed that she couldn't reach his ear, but then he kissed her and she was in heaven. If Giles had seen the look on Buffy's face he wouldn't have deepened the kiss but he couldn't help it. 'Unchained Melody' was one of his favourites too.

The music stopped and an acid house song came on. They stayed where they were, his lips moving against hers.

End of Pt. 1

A Summer's Day 2/5

Summary Giles has a relative to stay

"I think we're a bit conspicuous, Willow, do you want to go back to our seats?" She nodded and Giles slipped his arm round her waist as they walked back to the booth.

Angel looked amused at the effect all the stray hormones were having on Buffy. She was seething. Willow and Xander now had something in common with Buffy. They had danced with someone older and more experienced than themselves. Giles cleared his throat, at last feeling the daggers that Buffy was hurling in his direction.

"Buffy, I think I'd better take Chloe home." He didn't get to finish because Xander jumped up and volunteered to take her.

"I think Willow might like another dance. I'll see that she goes straight to bed...to sleep without interruptions...with cocoa..." Xander was struggling within the deepest pit ever dug in Sunnydale.

"Xander," Giles said patiently "Go..." He smiled after them. He looked at Willow and she purred, or seemed to purr. Well, to him at least. "Another turn, Willow?" He didn't have to ask twice. As they left the booth Buffy's face fell.

"You don't own him, Buffy." She shot a look of betrayal at Angel then looked at them dancing. Giles looked young and care free. Willow laughed and smiled, enjoying herself. Buffy couldn't be mad for long, grabbing Angel she dragged him out to dance as well.

##

Sharp, at nine-thirty, Giles came home to get ready to patrol with Buffy. He looked in on Chloe. She was already sleeping. He closed the door quietly.

##

In Sunnydale cemetery, business was brisk. Buffy was enjoying tonight. It wasn't often now that Giles could spare the time to come with her. In between dustings he chatted about his childhood with Chloe and how sad he was when she went away.

"She's a year older than me and because she couldn't walk too well my father decided she should be educated entirely by Watchers. Basically she wasn't allowed to have a life at all. That's the reason I went haywire. I was rebelling for both of us." He stopped talking. A dark shape slithered round the tree just ahead of them.

"Buffy, can you see that?" He took a step forward and was startled by someone suddenly appearing in front of him. It had no face, just a dark void. He pushed at the darkness and it was solid. 'Real then, that's a relief! Buffy had a stake ready. The shape was faster. It spun round and knocked the stake away. Its hand repelled Buffy's attack. It didn't strike her, just pushed her away. She was stunned.

"What does it want, Giles?"

"To introduce itself?" He shrugged. The creature crooked its head to the left, regarding him quizzically. Just as he thought he could place the stance the figure dissolved into the night.

"I think we'd better call it a night, don't you?" Giles was smiling. A very successful night, two dances with Willow, loads of dusting done and a mystery to solve!

##

The figure watched as Buffy and Giles departed. It wasn't expecting to see anyone, let alone a Slayer and her Watcher. The patrol was necessary tonight, the Soul Catcher would rise soon and it would be the only opportunity to retrieve the lost souls before death. Glancing up at the moon and seeing the lateness of the hour, it hurried back to its resting place.

##

Giles made himself a bedtime drink. He stirred the tea as he walked upstairs to his room. He was asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow. He did not have sweet dreams.

He found himself strung up in an Oriental temple with eight vampires taunting him. He should have been able to understand what they said. He realised too late that each one held a branding iron to sear his flesh. They lunged together... He scrambled from his bed, taking the covers from the mattress and huddled in the corner for the rest of the night.

##

Sunlight spiked between his bedroom curtains banishing all possibility of a lie-in. He got up slowly and stretched all the kinks from his neck. It had been a long time since he had spent a night on a floor. He smelt tea brewing so putting on his robe he padded downstairs. The pot was warm but there was no one in sight.

Perhaps Chloe had taken her tea into the spare room. He knocked at the door and stood rooted to the spot.

Xander and Chloe in bed together in a state of undress!!!

End of Pt.2

A Summers Day 3/5

Warning Giles bare-chested.

Summary Giles' sister woo's Xander and 'The Silent One' is revealed.

"Morning, Rupert, how was the hunt?" Chloe held his gaze steadily. Xander tried to get up but she grabbed him beneath the covers. He was held immobile. Giles sympathised.

"Good morning. The hunt was successful. If you have the time later, Chloe, perhaps you could help me with some research." He turned his attention to the nervous looking youth. "Xander, it's seven-thirty. I'll give you a lift to class." He walked out of the room to get dressed.

##

Giles parked the car and glanced at his passenger "You're going to see her again, aren't you?" Xander nodded, not trusting his voice. "Good, because I'd hate to see you spend the rest of your life using the 'Ladies' room..." Xander wrestled with the lock on the door and made good his escape.

##

The library was gloomy today. Willow wasn't there. He put his bag down and opened the post. He shelved the books left on the study tables by students in a hurry. It seemed that recently the library was being used by more of the students. He was pleased in a way but that meant that the library was no longer the Slayer's sanctuary.

As he walked between the stacks the atmosphere became smoky and he smelt incense burning. No, something else! He knew that this was an echo of Chloes torments but still he needed to make sure whipping his shirt off he strode towards his office he could "feel" the blisters forming on his back. He bumped into Willow who flew backwards, he knelt to help

her up, and she slipped her arms round his neck. Their breath became ragged as they became aware of each other... lips moments from kissing. Rupert's chest warm against the material of her blouse, she whimpered.

Chloe walked in, supported by Xander, Buffy following close behind. Chloe grinned as she took in the scene. Her brother, bare to the waist, kneeling between the legs of a very flushed Willow.

"Really, Rupert, sex in the stacks?" His head whipped round his eyes flashing dangerously Willow swore she heard a deep-throated growl, Chloe lowered her eyes. Giles helped Willow to her feet and whisked his shirt back on. Willow followed him downstairs and assumed her rightful place at the computer. He smiled and stroked her silken hair.

"Ready to solve a mystery then? Buffy look up anything you can about Ninjas. Xander, try to find an illustration that matches this..." He fished a sketch from his case. "Chloe, my office now!"

His sister walked stiffly ahead of him. She sat down and sighed. He paced, looking like a caged animal. "God Almighty! Rupert, you badly need a shag, don't you?"

He stopped dead. "Like you and Xander? Whatever possessed you? My God, he's a student!"

"A very athletic student, eager to please with plenty of stamina and he made me..."

"I don't want to know!" he shouted, as he raked his hand through his hair. "Have you been giving me dreams, Chloe?" Her face wore an uncomfortable expression. "Why? Where do they come from?" She was staring at her feet. He sat beside her taking her hand in his.

"I'm sorry, Rupert. They leak out, when my guard's down." She held his gaze for a long time.

##

"Got him!"

Giles peered over Xander's shoulder, yes, he had found the creature. Giles translated the name 'Silent One' and turned the preceding page. There he saw the vampires from his dream and a body being branded. He shuddered. Willow looked concerned. It took a lot to make Giles shudder.

"Well done, Xander. How about you, Buffy, any luck?" She held aloft a book on martial arts.

"This explains how the creature could disarm me and use something called 'empty force' to push me away. What are we up against, Giles, friend or foe?"

End of Pt.3

A Summers Day 4/5

SummaryThe mystery deepens. (Sadness)

Friend or foe? He had no idea. He sat in the dark at home. Chloe and Xander had gone to the movies. He nursed his drink, pondering the day. He smiled suddenly at the memory of bumping into Willow. Chloe had a filthy sense of humour.

He finished the drink and was filled with dread for the second time that day. He rushed to the bathroom and was violently ill. There was blood everywhere. He stripped off his clothes and turned the shower on to cold needle spray, trying to ease the burning of his back.

Chloe again... He closed his eyes to concentrate, to turn the feeling back... The vision ...She obviously didn't want this part. He shivered and backed into the shower staring wild eyed at the vampires surrounding him. He screamed as one after the other the Vampires covered him.

##

He staggered from the shower two hours later his limbs trembling Chloes torment tumbling through his mind, his breath came as sobs as he realised the full extent of the abuse she endured, he gulped back tears as he reached for the box behind his record collection.

Xander and Chloe kissed as they entered the house. They didn't put the lights on. Chloe stopped kissing Xander and sniffed the air. "Ripper..." That brought Xander to instant alertness. He grabbed his coat and fled.

"Chloe, nice night?" More smoke drifted through the air with the sound of his voice. "I'd like to thank you for the visions. I'd forgotten what a joint tasted like." Chloe turned cold with fear.

Ripper came at her from the shadows, his mouth near her ear. "I don't want them anymore. Understand? Find someone else to dump on, Xander..." He sneered harshly. "Does he know how sick you are yet?" He was gone in an instant.

##

Angel walked alone armed with a stake as if HE needed protection from a vampire! He just hoped no one would trip him... Impossible. He smiled and speeded his walk.

Someone tripped him. He threw the stake aside and rolled onto his feet. He looked behind him and saw a shadow with folded arms, with the discarded stake in one gloved fist. He had the impression of a slightly taller Buffy or maybe Giles. Only it didn't have a face.

"Watcher-Slayer..." He gasped, the shadow was in front of him now. He stopped and tried to land a blow on his opponent but he missed.

##

In the morning Giles felt rough, he felt around in his coat pocket for something. Realising of course that the thing he was looking for shouldn't be there in school hours. Willow came into his office and put a mug of tea on his desk. She noticed that he hadn't shaved this

morning.

"Hi, I thought I'd come to thank you for yesterday when I fell." He smiled warmly at her. His hand grazed his chin.

"I'd give you a kiss but I might shred your face."

"I don't mind... Oh, that didn't come out right, did it?" He smiled again and she went all gooey inside.

He took a long swallow from his drink and felt much better. Xander passed by the window and glanced in at Giles, then ducked his head and went to one of the study tables. Willow went out to collect her bag for lessons. Giles took his mug with him to the checkout table. He stamped books and put them on the trolley for shelving.

"What is it, Xander?" He could feel the young man's eyes on him.

"I'm sorry you were upset last night. About Chloe and me. I really like her, Giles."

"I gathered that, Xander." He smiled ruefully remembering Xander's expression at being caught almost in the act. He was serious again. "I was upset with Chloe. She made me resort to something I thought was long-buried." He sniffed and dabbed at his nose with his handkerchief. He was surprised at the blood. The flow was getting heavier.

"Xander..." The young man was at his side in a moment. He picked up the phone. Giles lay on his couch with his head back and his eyes closed.

He saw Chloe at home with blood pooled round her head. He sat up suddenly. His face paled as he grabbed the phone from Xander and told the ambulance the correct address. He rolled off the couch and grabbed his car keys.

"Hold the fort, Xander. Chloes' ill." Xander shook his head. "C'mon then. You're coming on an errand, got it?" They got to the hospital within minutes of the ambulance arriving. He went to the front desk, unaware that his shirt was soaked with blood.

"Chloe Giles, she's just been brought in. I'm her brother..." He was told where to wait. The doctor arrived fifteen minutes later and had grave news. Xander and Giles hung on every word.

"Your sister has a small tumour on her larynx. It ruptured. She needs an operation. I'm afraid everything else is too advanced for us to help ..." The doctor stopped speaking when Giles' hand gripped his arm.

"Everything else?" Giles looked pleadingly at the doctor almost wishing he wouldn't tell him. He had hoped that Chloe would have more time, Xander's eyes became bright with tears.

The doctor took Giles aside and lowered his voice so only he could hear.

"She has tumours throughout her body. There is evidence that she's had treatment but it's been unsuccessful. I'm sorry. Would you like to see her?"

Giles stood up and almost collapsed. Xander helped him up and they clung together for a moment. They followed the doctor down the hall.

##

The prep room was quiet. Chloe was lying still with a sheet over her body. She looked slightly grey. Xander hung back, Giles swallowed his fear and touched her. She was warm. Her eyes opened and she lifted her hand to wipe his tears away. He smiled. She winced and her hand dropped. He still felt the jolt of pain go through his body.

He shook his head. "Give it to me, Chloe." He held her hand again to take her pain. He opened his eyes and saw her delighted smile. Giles backed off, wrapping the pain up in his body. He leant against the wall with his arms folded. It wasn't easy to take Chloes' pain. He wouldn't be able to withstand it long. Giles pushed off the wall, shaking and went out of the room. He could feel her breathing easier.

##

Looking to the other end of the corridor, he saw a blonde blur and a red blur hurtling toward them. His arms dropped to his sides instead of controlling Chloes' pain it controlled him.

Willow overtook Buffy in the last few feet launching herself at him and he staggered back his arms going round her instinctively. She was sobbing into his chest. He gasped out loud as the pain dropped away. Chloe was under the anaesthetic. He stroked Willows hair and kissed her tenderly.

"Willow, I'm alright. It's Chloe. She's having an operation."

"We saw the blood and got here as soon as we could. How is she?" Buffy looked from her Watcher to Xander and back they both wore the same expression. Her lip trembled from un-wept tears. Giles took Willow's hand and they walked towards the exit. The doctor would contact him when he had news.

##

As soon as he got home he called the school and told them he would be taking leave until his sister recovered. Buffy and Willow didn't go back to school. He was touched that they wanted to stay with him but really he was worried about their school work and Principal Snyder would be angry with them. When he came out of the shower he found both girls engrossed in their school assignments, papers and open books strewn over his coffee table.

End of Pt.4

A summer's Day 5/5

Summary Snyder gets a fright. (Ripper & Angel)

Notes Thorny issue of telepathic communication sorry folks, it gets confusing from here. Chloe and Giles are empathically and telepathically linked (speech in italics denotes telepathic thought between Chloe and Giles.)

He smiled as he pulled on the shirt to go with the old jeans he wore. The doorbell rang and he opened the door. Principal Snyder stood on his threshold. Giles opened the door wide so that Snyder could see the girls.

"Mr. Giles, I thought Miss Summers and Miss Rosenberg were going to be in class this afternoon." Both Willow and Buffy looked up from their books in unison.

"They're waiting with me for news of my sister. They have become her friends. I don't think they could concentrate in class, knowing that she was ill." Giles held the towel he'd been using to dry his hair in one bunched fist, amazed that his voice sounded so calm.

"Ah, yes, friends. You like to surround yourself with young people, don't you, Mr. Giles?" Snyder's tone alerted the girls and they left their studies to join Giles at the door.

"Is there a purpose to your visit? I've told you already why the ladies are here. Both sets of parents put their complete trust in me..." His fist clenched the towel, wringing fresh droplets of water from it.

"No, no. That's it. I just wanted you to know that I'm watching you, Mr. Giles." The little man turned on his heel and left.

Giles closed the door and released the towel. Willow stared after him as he launched himself at the stairs and raced to his room to get 'supplies'. When he came down he wasn't 'Giles' anymore. The girls exchanged worried looks. Giles ignored them. Best they didn't know what he and Angel were going to do to Snyder.

##

Giles paced back and forth at the cemetery, still barely in control of his anger. Angel appeared at his side and was taken aback by Giles' demeanour. He'd seen him this angry just once before, but he didn't like thinking about that. They set off in silence. Once they were outside Snyder's house, Giles filled Angel in on the plan.

"I don't want that ugly little Troglodyte near me one second longer. I've put up with his jibes against Buffy and the others for far too long. He was going to give Xander detention for helping Chloe with her luggage! Today was the last straw. He practically accused me of being a paedophile! So I'm going to get 'im with this." He showed Angel a bag containing what looked like dried herbs.

Angel smiled. "What do you want me to do?" He resisted the urge to call him Ripper. He certainly wasn't Giles.

"Peek in at the windows and scare 'em shitless while I plant the stuff in his car. Then I invite you into the house."

Angel ran up to the windows at the front of the house and clawed his nails against the glass. When Snyder came close he vamped in front of him and flicked his tongue down his fangs. The little man leapt back into the room, grabbed the phone and called the police. Angel ducked down and attacked at another window. This time Snyder's wife fainted. Angel ducked again. This was fun!

Giles was at his side, having succeeded in his mission. He turned his attention to the garage door. It opened to reveal a second car. Ripper felt in his pocket and hid a smaller packet in its glove box. He cut the power and the house was plunged into darkness. Giles knelt at the door that led to the house and played a flash light on the lock while he picked it.

The door opened and he stepped in. "Please be my guest, Angel." He smiled in the darkness. The vampire led the way and Giles followed. They found themselves in the living room.

Angel bared his fangs and snarled in Snyder's ear. Ripper laughed from the shadows. He knew he couldn't afford to show his face but he could watch. After all that was his job.

##

The police spoiled their fun. They came in at the front and rear. Ripper withdrew further into the shadows. An armed officer shouted a warning at Angel to stand still. Angel snarled menacingly at him and, without warning, lunged directly at him. Three shots rang out in quick succession. The bullets passed straight through Angel but one ricocheted, hitting Giles square in the chest. Angel flattened the officer, grabbed for his neck and, baring his fangs, made as if to bite. He stared at the other cops, daring them to shoot. Although pointing their weapons at him, they backed off. Angel took the now limp Giles under his arm and fled.

##

Angel hammered on the door. He looked fearfully at the rapidly lightening sky. A shaft of sunlight sped up the path. The door opened a crack and he fell in with Giles falling at his side. Buffy slammed the door and Willow swished all the curtains closed in the living room.

"We've been shot. It went through me and into Giles. Willow, can you help me get the bullet out?" Willow was staring at the blood that streaked down Giles' chest. "Willow...It's not bad. I think it's lodged. It had to go through me as well."

She nodded. Angel held Giles' shoulders while Willow cut and pulled. Giles was awake in an instant, the bullet wouldn't budge he struggled to get up not realising where he was. Angel whirled round and sat astride his chest. Buffy took his place in holding Giles down. Willow handed him the instrument she'd been using. Angel shook his head.

"I don't need that, Willow." He bared his fangs and bent his head. Giles gritted his teeth and closed his eyes. He felt Angel's teeth slice through his skin and grip the bullet. He wrenched it out of the bone and spat it out.

He licked his lips and a fire flared momentarily in his eyes. Before he could stop himself he bent his head again to lick the wound clean. He sucked lightly, then harder, drawing more blood to the surface. He swallowed and for the first time in decades he tasted human blood. Watcher blood. Giles kicked him off. Fully alert now, with rage in his eyes. Angel lay still where he fell, trying to regain control of his features.

"I'm sorry, Giles. I forgot myself." The Watcher just growled in his direction and fingered the wound or the place where the wound should have been.

"No evidence for the police to find, right, Giles?" Giles walked over and helped him to stand.

"Thank you for bringing me home." Willow breathed again. Crisis over. The phone rang.

Giles answered. "Hello..." He smiled broadly. "I'll be right there." Willow and Buffy smiled. It was obviously good news. Angel took off his coat. If he was going to be there all day, he may as well make himself comfortable.

"Now, girls, I want you to go to school today. I'll be at the hospital and Angel... Well Angel can't go anywhere. Willow, you pop upstairs and black out the windows. Buffy, collect your stuff together and I'll give you a lift to school after I've showered. OK?" Angel looked at them as they scattered to their assigned tasks. No wonder it was so hard being a vampire in Sunnydale.

##

Giles dropped the girls off at school, and then went on to the hospital. He found the same doctor on duty as the day before and asked him how his sister was doing.

"She's in intensive care. Out of danger but, as I said, I don't know how long she'll last. Mr. Giles, your sister isn't able to talk. Come and see her."

##

Chloe was sitting up in bed. She held out her arms to him and he hugged her.

"Why didn't you tell me?" He looked at her as she struggled to speak, looking somewhat mystified when she couldn't. It was frustrating. Her fist hit the mattress in anger.

SHIT! Why can't I say anything?

Giles covered his ears and shook his head. 'Why did she have to shout?'. Then he realised she hadn't said anything. He grinned at her and touched her hand. He tried something.

Chloe, don't shout.

She looked at him, stunned for a moment, then burst out laughing. The sound tickled his mind and he started to laugh too. The doctor became alarmed. Giles glanced back at him and became serious.

"When can I take her home, please?" Giles stroked her arm to try to stop the tide of images flooding his head. He sighed and at last put a finger to her lips. She got the message. The doctor shrugged.

"She'll need medication for pain. Will you be able to administer it?" Giles nodded. "Well then I see no reason why she can't go home today. I can't understand it. She's recovered very fast from her operation. I wish I had more patients like her."

End of part 5

Sequel: Mid-summer Night.

