

Chloe's story

Series Watcher's Season.

Warning This may be boring to any hardened Buffyites but sometimes a character just doesn't want to lie down and die!

Summary Chloe is a character of my own invention, Watcher's and Slayer's will be mentioned, also young Giles up to his University days but that's all.

I am born.

I remember Mother's heartbeat, warmth and crimson tinged safety.

I remember being born. The pressure and muffled screams; someone was hurting Mother. I was angry at the light and cold harsh night.

I remember blurred worried faces when I refused to breathe and the needles and suction. Finally, at the appointed time, I opened my mind to where I was and I lived again, breathed again, and knew my purpose in this life.

I remember I am the Watcher-Slayer and remain silent through the endless night; gazing up at Mother's face with eyes centuries old, until under the spell of her warm milk I sleep again to cry on waking.

My first Birthday.

Father and Mother talking again. I in my pram gazing up at the weak wintered sky, warm and cosy under my blankets. I still feel protected, even though I am destined to become a protector.

Mother is having a baby, a brother for me. Father is proud, his joy reflected in his smile and touch as he bathes me and I splash him. He is worried that my cries still when the sun sets. It's a time for silence in the night when I can listen for the blood fanged beasts.

Chloe, the Watcher-Slayer

Rupert is playing on the floor with his toy airplane. Patient Watchers step over him like giants and he is lost in a world of his own imaginings.

I play with my dolls biding my time.

My legs are heavy in my braces. Mother and Father decided on the disguise when Father discovered my secret after breaking into the Watcher's inner archive to steal a prophesy volume. I'm doomed to my chained existence; feeling awkward; never moving with my true grace; being pitied and perhaps bullied.

I am the Silent One, I have a destiny, and Rupert's to be a Watcher, though he doesn't know it yet.

Rupert, the Watcher.

Father told Rupert tonight about his calling; he's weeping in his room. Ten is too young to learn your childhood is over and your future is cast in bronze.

I stand outside his room, resting my hand on the door. I hear him sniffing, blowing his nose then a whispered invitation in my head. Rupert knows about my silent times.

He lies on his bed, a gangly youth; his vibrant green eyes are red-rimmed. His soul is in his eyes when he cries. I can see another soul waiting for him, not yet born, but destined to be his.

I smile and reach under the pillow where I know he keeps his cars. His eyes light up as I put them on the floor. I've played this game with him before and he waits as my hand hovers over the cars. I've shown no one else this trick; no one else would understand. It's our special "cheer up" game.

The cars race off round the room, dodging round his toy box and zipping under the bed round table legs and launching over discarded stuffed animals. Rupert's excitement echoes in my head and he allows his merry laughter to burst out.

I glance toward the door and hear Mother on the other side. Her step creaks the floorboards and Rupert grabs his car and rolls it along the ground; as I do the same to mine.

"Time for sleep children." Mother smiles, but I can sense her upset. She has been crying too, but not for him, for me. "Chloe? Daddy wants to see you."

Rupert takes the car from me and pops it under his pillow, he then kisses me goodnight. "Don't keep him waiting Chloe, be careful." Rupert's voice is wise beyond his years. He doesn't know how many times he will utter that same phrase to his future Slayer.

My first Slaying.

Father can hardly keep up with me! The hunt is wonderful, the night silent and cool with the moon high and my body unfettered at last! The wind whips my hair up in a spiral like autumn leaves caught in a November gale.

I see him, newly risen with sweet fresh earth clinging to his clothes. He looks about for his Sire. His Sire is dust, courtesy of Father. This childe is mine, my first. I stand quietly, the vampire picks up my scent whirling round, and I jump at its speed.

Father watches, I hear his heartbeat, hammering as fast as mine, his in fear and mine in excitement.

The vampire flies at me, fangs exposed. Father moves too slowly to stop him.

I am relaxed as the vampire lands on my stake and for a moment, I see its demonic soul frozen in disbelief then fall to ashes at my feet.

My father looks at me in amazement.

I fold my arms, stake in my fist, the dust being blown from my dark clothes by a playful wind.

Rupert goes to Oxford.

"I can go by myself to college Chloe!" Rupert grumbled as he packed his bags.

I look on in silent mirth and slip the car under his pyjamas.

"Take it out..." He stated to the wardrobe. I laugh and return the corgi model to its carefully preserved box. "Thank you..." He came out of the bank of clothes with a couple of pairs of jeans and a new leather jacket.

"Wow! When did you get that, Rupert? Mum will go spare!"

He blushed and stroked the leather, then smiled a small smile, "Couldn't help myself, it called to me! It's lovely and soft Chloe, feel..."

I felt the leather and it was warm and supple beneath my fingers.

"Mmm, you'll be a date magnet in that little brother" I teased.

"Hey! Not so much of the little!" I smirk at him eyebrow on the rise, "And I'm not that big either!" He shakes his head and closes down the easy link between us. It's better that I don't hear his thoughts now.

Eyghon.

My head explodes and I scream in the night, hastily clamping my hand over my mouth. The scream continues in my head and I see Rupert cold and bleeding in Church ruins. I run fleet of foot past the locked doors of the Watcher's compound. No one rouses at my step because I am running free of my leg braces.

I hammer at Father's door. He draws the bolt slowly and I shove it open impatiently.

He stares wild-eyed at my state of dress; I bear Rupert's wounds on my body and no leg-braces.

"God! Chloe! What's happened?" He starts to get dressed without my explanation. My hand still clamped over my mouth in an attempt to control my terror. Nothing has ever frightened me as much as this vision.

I sink to my knees and whisper, "Rupert...Eyghon." My Father's face becomes hard and pale as marble. He drags me up and bears me with him.

I guide him to the storm swept church and Father takes Rupert from Ethan's embrace.

I cradle Rupert's head in my lap soothing him singing to him and he's frozen into a ball. My beautiful brother, self-abused, broken, and unable to utter a coherent sound.

I live his nightmare with him for three months; Father doesn't understand. Rupert was rebelling for both of us, he told me in the middle of our "cheer up" game.

"Oh Rupert, couldn't you have done something less dangerous? Like wearing plaid instead of tweed?" He laughed. I made him laugh. It was then that I noticed the flash of gold in his ear.

"Oooo, that suits you dear heart! Christian Burial?" I fingered the earring and saw his expression darken.

"Something like that. Ethan gave it to me...A token."

I felt a sudden twinge of heat and the depth of feeling between the two of them. "I'm sorry, Rupert. That it ended badly."

His eyes flashed briefly in anger at my intrusion. "It hasn't ended. One doesn't end Ethan Rayne. He will haunt me till my dying day!" Rupert intoned bitterly.

First parting.

I am ill. I know it and the Watcher's know it. Nevertheless, they need an investigator in the Far East and I, for my sins, am the best they have.

Father helps me to pack. He looks so old now. In my mind, I can see him in his thirties, playing with Rupert. Showing him the detail of the car bought as a Birthday gift. I wonder if Father knows it's still one of Rupert's most treasured possessions.

I close the final lock on my case and hold my Father's gaze. I see tears in his eyes as I kiss him farewell.

The Orient.

They thought me a cripple so they took away my leg braces. They chained me after I killed four minions.

The morning sun revives me; I always turn my head toward it to keep its warmth on my skin for as long as possible. They are so cold. There is so little warmth in this place. I remember being in warm comfort being safe, cradled in the arms of my Mother. I lick my lips and can almost taste her milk again.

The sound of drums and cacophony of Mandarin Chinese fills the room. I can't be bothered to rise this time!

The vampires swarmed over me, biting and lunging, each one more vicious than its fellow. The sun died and more came, until I counted eight in all.

Bloodied and dripping, I was hauled upright and secured to a post in the centre of the hall. I cast my eyes around memorising the names of my tormentors, not realising that they were about to ensure I would never forget them.

Brands

I frighten them now more than ever. Now I carry their names. I have power over them. They have been careless and strangely, a few are now treating me decently. I don't mind their visits. They bring my children and I can spend a few hours of normality with them.

I see them crawl one by one, walk, and speak their first words in English and Chinese. Strange these vampires would bother to teach half-breed children a language.

The youngest is my joy! He looks like Rupert and I'm reminded of home and Mother feeding him as I feed my baby.

The youngest vampire comes to me one night and tries to talk to me but his English is not good. I look round for my children; he's worried about the children. They're here, all of them. I smile in relief then in the pit of my stomach; I feel new vampire blood in the room.

My only weapon is a snapped chopstick and I kill them all! Stalking through the halls dragging my chains behind me. I haunt this place now like the spectre of death.

The few that fight me come off worse, for they cannot comprehend the depth of my wrath. They turned my children!

My children die last, in their sleep in the sunlight and I die with them. The sunlight bathes me as I dispatch their souls; my tears making mud of their ashes.

Treatment

Father comes every day to sit by my hospital bed he knows that I will die soon. He tells me Rupert has a Slayer. He doesn't want me to go to Rupert, but I must.

"Rupert is going to take over from me Dad. He doesn't know it yet, it's like he's ten again" I smile and my Father's face creases into its well-worn grin.

"I didn't handle that well did I?" He chuckled. "I was too worried about you... Slaying at eleven! The council would have had a fit!" His expression changed, becoming serious. "When will you go?"

I lifted my head and turned my face to the sun, warming myself in my mind's eye. I saw my babies playing on a beach. "Soon, maybe a couple of days."

My Father stared at the bed to hide his tears. "I won't see you again..."

"No, you won't see me again... So hug me, tell me you love me and I'll say hi to Mum when I see her."

He smiled and made a strange noise in his throat, half sob, and half chuckle. He hugged me and kissed me and I felt his hot tears dripping onto my shoulder as he pulled away they cooled suddenly. "You have fun!" His voice cracked.

I gave him the thumbs up. "You bet! I may even find a Stud-Muffin!"

"Chloe!" My father gave me a shocked smile. "Bye, safe journey" He blew me a kiss and closed the door.

The End.