

## Duality 1/4

Summary Ethan discovers something disturbing about Tara. (Loosely connected to: "When Ethan met Tara"; Archived at Strange Brew.)

Warning This story will deal with Ethan's disturbed childhood. It made him what he is today.

Ethan was content as he whistled a tune and tripped down Bridge Street. His latest feat of Chaos-baiting went off without a hitch. No one would know about it until the turn of the century. Ethan smiled resignedly. It was the only immortality he could hope to have, after all he had no offspring and no chance of any because of what his Uncle had done... His whistle died in his throat. Can't whistle round a lump.

He shook his head wondering where that had come from. He'd not thought of his uncle in years. The darkness of the night enfolded him and he shuddered. Although he told himself that he was merely searching for which pocket contained his keys, he thrust his hands within the comforting folds of his pants seeking the solace of his warm body.

An eerie wail followed by an abrupt silence then a splash brought him running to the parapet of the bridge he was about to cross. Peering over the wall he saw a pale limb stretch above the water bidding the world "farewell" before it sank like a lead weight beneath the surface.

He ran his hand hurriedly through his hair. Ripper had done the same for him; he'd merely redress the balance. Ethan kicked off his shoes and dove after the body. When he struck the water, the cold took his breath away. In the murky depths, he struggled to see a young woman beckon to him. She had weighted herself down with a rock tied to her ankles. Her arms wafted in the current and her eyes appeared to be closed in serene sleep.

Ethan raged at her youth, her desperate act. He knew her! Tara, Willow's lover. He drew a switch-blade from his pocket and cut the rope. Then he surged up to the surface bearing his precious cargo, his lungs bursting and muscles deadened with cold.

Once on the shore he checked her pulse. He couldn't find it. Shaking his head, he continued to revive her, resorting to powerful magic to bring her back into herself. If she weren't too far-gone, a witch would have no choice but to answer the call of a Sorcerer. After lengthy minutes she began to breathe on her own and Ethan carried her to his car.

##

He undressed her and put her to bed in his hotel room. When he was sure she slept peacefully he took a hot shower to warm his chilled bones. As he soaked under the heat of the water, he closed his eyes and felt dread grip his heart again.

He saw his Uncle clearly, the eyes of a snake in a human face, with grey liver-spotted hands, pawing at his young body, plucking at his flesh and finally penetrating him after he begged to be spared. Ethan's fists punched the tiles until his knuckles bled, while he repeated his mantra "No way to treat a child."

Ethan returned from his nightmare when he heard a strangled sob from his bedroom. After

hastily wrapping a towel round his waist, he rushed from the bathroom and found Tara rocking to and fro in the bed weeping inconsolably. He sat down beside her and opened his arms. She clung to him while he soothed her fears. Her sobs slowly subsided and at last she released him with a questioning look on her face.

"Who are you? Why did you save me?" She huddled down under the covers hiding everything from Ethan; there wasn't much to hide. God! He hated the fashion for stick-thin bodies!

"I'm Ethan. We've met before. I thought you might remember me..." He smiled and gently moved a strand of her pale gold hair from her right eye. She was a creature of light, why did she want to mess around with dark magic?

"Oh, yes. I remember you. You caught me watching at Rupert's window..." Ethan smirked as he remembered, and then frowned as he recalled the advice he gave her.

"My advice didn't work then...I'm sorry Tara. I had to learn to share Ripper at best and do without him at worst. So I do sympathise.... Was Willow your first love?" He asked quietly.

Tara nodded, fresh tears rolled down her cheeks. Her composure crumbled and his heart melted. He searched frantically for a tissue and finally settled on using a corner of the towel he wore to dry her tears. She sniffed then suddenly threw down the towel to reveal Ethan in all his glory. She scooted away and he glanced down.

"Oops, how'd that happen?" He chuckled and covered himself. He left the bed and walked to the phone. "Hello? I'd like to order a meal for two for room 212, please. Is it possible to have some clothes laundered?" He listened for another few seconds before hanging up.

"I assumed you wanted everything, you look half starved. I think I have something in my case you can wear while we're eating..."

Tara gazed at him enigmatically, "Everyone I've met in Sunnydale has said that you're wicked and evil..."

Ethan smiled. "Two of my favourite adjectives. What do you think of me, Tara?"

"I think...." She hesitated, frowning. "You need to be taught a lesson young man!" Ethan's heart froze in his chest at the sound of his Uncle's voice coming from Tara's lips. He watched in horror as the young woman's eyes clouded and changed. "How nice! Ethan all grown-up. Now I can do to the man what I did to the child..." The voice faded and died as Tara came back to herself...

"I think you're gentle and kind..." She smiled and it warmed his heart. His sudden smile left her slightly puzzled. The knock on the door made them jump. Ethan answered it and wheeled the trolley into the room, gripping it fiercely to disguise his trembling hands.

He helped Tara devour the meal. She had eaten her fill and had rosy cheeks at the end. He smiled; she looked just like a cherub. Well, an anorexic cherub, but he'd soon fix that...

"Tara, y'know what I think we should do?" He finished spreading some cheese on a

cracker. "We should find ourselves new partners... Ahhh, ah!" He waved a warning finger at her before she had time to protest. "We can do it together, you choose mine and I'll choose yours, deal?"

She smiled at him with glittering bright blue eyes. "Yes, Ethan, deal."

He studied her eyes, they were clear of any malice. What would make them change like that? He needed to do some research. Now where had he heard about something like that before?

End of part 1

### Duality 2 /4

Summary Ethan has saved Tara from drowning and has discovered something sinister.

Ethan paced by the window of his hotel room. He glanced back at Tara now and then and shook his head. He couldn't sleep, he had tried, but he was haunted by images of his youth and his time spent at his uncle's house. He shuddered and stared out of the window remembering.

##

"Ethan, checkmate in three moves." His uncle's voice slid past his ears like oiled velvet. "Where's your concentration, boy?" Ethan stared at the board; he could feel his uncle's eyes on him feasting on him. He held hesitant fingers over his Rook and dared to meet the old man's milky gaze. His uncle gave nothing away as usual. Whether he won or lost the outcome was always the same; Ethan's boundaries were blurring. He was ten years old and already descending into chaos. The moves came swiftly; his uncle was impatient tonight. Ethan lost.

##

Ethan swept his tears away. He felt a warm body press close behind him; Tara was up and awake. The rosy light of dawn bathed her in tawny gold. Ethan smiled.

"Good morning my dear! Where do you want to go today?" Ethan let his hands circle her waist as she drifted round to stand before him. Her large eyes searched Ethan's face for the recent emotion his reddened eyes betrayed.

"I'd like to go to the magic shop, and then hit the stores and then some cappuccino..."

Ethan smiled indulgently; he had given her the barest veneer of confidence to rid of her stammer. Confidence was sexy, stammering wasn't.

"I can see that moulding you is going to be expensive!" He chuckled.

Tara smiled and danced from his grasp. "Ah, c'mon Ethan, we had a deal." She giggled.

"Yes we did, I trust you won't go back on your end of the bargain."

Tara dashed up to him and planted a chaste kiss on his lips. "Never."

##

Tara had forced Ethan into casual clothes for their shopping trip; he shared the load of the bags as they burst into the magic shop. He looked around and found that it had changed management once again. He dropped the bags on the floor mopping mock sweat from his brow. She smiled at his gesture, laughing till she glowed. He breathed in the pungent magic of the shop. Whoever had taken over, knew his stuff!

"...Just unpack the jars, Willow I'll be back in a sec, someone just came through the door..."

Ethan looked expectantly at the scarlet velvet curtain, his heart in his mouth and his blood rushing south. A slender artistic hand drew the curtain back and Rupert came through with an eager expression on his face.

Ethan forced himself to breathe. "Well, Ripper, this is a new venture for you. Does this mean you'll be taking up other old pursuits?" He leered.

"What do you want Ethan?" Giles' snarled his expression darkening.

Ethan stared at his nemesis; once, Rupert would have said that with a smile.

"You." Ethan knew that would throw Ripper into a rage, Tara stepped from behind him and challenged Rupert with a witch's gaze. Willow burst through the curtain, her hair flying in a fiery halo round her face. She came to Rupert's side and he hugged her close for protection.

"Impasse. How cozy..." Ethan quipped. Tara glared at her former lover, locked in the arms of a man! Ethan grasped her trembling hand. "Tara and I just dropped in to wish the new proprietor well, but since it's you..." he smiled seductively.

"Drop-dead Ethan." Willow adhered closer to Rupert.

Tara felt her heart icing up; she looked at Ethan, and pulled at his hand. "L.Let's go..."

"Be seeing you, Ripper. I've rented a house so I'll be around for a while. You could come to call if you like." Ethan didn't expect a response. He picked up the bags, took Tara's hand and left the shop.

##

"He's rented a house?" Willow questioned. "He never stays long enough... what's he up to Rupert?" She frowned and added "Tara looked well, didn't she?"

Rupert gripped her arms. "Having second thoughts, lover?" Willow smiled and shook her head. "Shall we draw the blind then?" Willow's eyes smouldered as her lover cradled her head. He kissed her and she hooked her legs round his waist while he carried her through to the backroom.

##

Ethan sat on Tara's bed. She'd been weeping since their return. First love was tough as he remembered so long ago with Ripper. The sniffing young woman at his side warmed and renewed that particular memory. It was after Eyghon and Ripper was in the Resuscitation room of the local hospital. Ethan was pacing outside when he saw the men in black arrive and after a while the door opened and Ripper had gone. When next he saw Ripper, he was a straight and starched watcher, some trick!

"Tara, c'mon love. No more tears please. You're making my shirt soggy."  
He smiled at the young woman. Her head lifted and his uncle's eyes stared at him again.

"Ethan, Ethan" He sighed. "You think to banish me? Think of the games! The fun! The Chaos we could cause together. This small soul." Tara's expression twisted into one of distaste. "What good is it really? When we both know, you worship the dark and sinister- Take her Ethan! Take her, or I will."

"No! You won't have her! Tara!" He shook the young woman in his arms till she came back to herself; she looked as though she was fighting through a quicksand of evil. She took a shuddering breath and clung to Ethan.

"Ethan? What's happened to me? I want. Want to hurt you," she looked perplexed. He took a deep breath and told her what he thought was happening.

"Tara, you are a pure soul, unsullied by all that you've experienced."  
He hesitated as her clear blue eyes pierced his soul; he took her delicate cool hands in his. "Unfortunately, you are sharing your consciousness with someone else, someone from my past. When you dived off the bridge, I brought you back. I also gave my Uncle enough strength to emerge from your shadow." Tara's eyes searched his face trying to decide whether he told the truth.

"What do we do, Ethan? How can I be rid of him? What did your uncle do to you?"

Ethan stared past her good questions all. His childhood replayed in his mind and he found he still reacted to the old man's lecherous touch. He shuddered and ignored the tears that fell.

"Tara, I think we need Ripper's help. I'm too close. My uncle won't let go easily." He took the tissue that Tara offered and wiped his eyes. "We will both have to be brave and face our former love's." He smiled and she smiled back, "but by the end of this trial we shall both be free."

End of part 2

Duality 3/4

Summary Ethan seeks Rippers help in banishing his Uncle's soul from Tara's body.

Ethan looked through haunted eyes at the nightmare scene before him. He dreamed of his

uncle every night.

Young Ethan lay on the hospital stretcher, the perfect illustration of his uncle's 'loving' care. He was thirteen and made no sound as the doctors bustled around him cutting away his clothing. He heard their horrified gasps as they bathed his wounds and carefully turned him over. Ethan whimpered and found a comforting hand in his immediately. He looked up into the calm eyes of a priest. Ethan's fist uncurled to reveal a chess piece, a White King; smeared with his blood because he had held it so fiercely.

"I won." Young Ethan's voice was dead. The priest nodded.

"You did lad, you'll always win now."

##

The scene faded with the dawn. His uncle had been imprisoned after that incident. He dressed and checked on Tara. She slept soundly. Ethan smiled; she looked healthy and happy. So much had changed since her leap from the bridge. He set off for Rupert's. He had a message to post.

Ethan gathered some sticks and a large flat stone on his way to Rupert's house. He arranged them on the courtyard knowing only Rupert would understand their meaning. He waited a few minutes, his hands thrust in his pockets, willing Rupert awake. Then he shrank back into the shadows when he saw the bedroom curtains twitch.

##

A week had passed since he made his request for help. Ethan glanced at the door nervously barely touching the breakfast that Tara had cooked for him. He'd gone to check that the message was still intact that morning.

"Where did you go off to so early this morning?" She asked as she poured him a cup of tea.

He flashed a gentle smile. "I'm sorry if I woke you Tara. I left a message for Ripper. We need his help soon." He looked off to the distance once more and felt her soft fingers touch the scar on his palm.

"He hurt you, didn't he? Damaged your soul." Her eyes searched Ethan's for the signs of neglect and abuse; he let her see and she wept. The man who cradled her head against his chest prayed that Rupert would come soon.

##

Ethan checked on the message for three days. Each day he saw the curtains move, then went back home. On the fourth day, he couldn't get up. Lack of sleep and stress had taken their toll and he lay bedridden stricken with a fever.

Tara marched to Rupert's house. His car was gone from the front of the house. She peered into the window and saw a pile of mail on the floor. They had gone away.

##

"Is? Is he back today Tara?" Ethan asked weakly, when she set his lunch before him.

"No, not today. I'm sure he'll be back soon, Ethan." She smoothed his hair as his body shook. He just had another vision of his uncle. The visions were draining Ethan's life force and one day soon, Ethan would be gone.

"Soon." Ethan echoed and lifted the spoon to his lips, managing to eat a little. Tara looked at him; so much had changed since her leap from the bridge. Their roles had been reversed, as she had gained strength Ethan had lost his. From this she assumed the spirit of his uncle had changed his allegiance from her to Ethan.

##

"Rupert? What's wrong?" Willow asked, as Rupert stood rooted to the spot. He dropped the luggage and crouched to examine the symbols on the ground. He swallowed the lump in his throat and answered in a voice strained with emotion.

"Ethan needs me. Willow take the bags in, I have to go." Rupert backed away from the message, turned, and hurried back to the car. He drove a long way reaching out for Ethan with his feelings. Images flashed into his mind and he caught his breath. Ethan was so weak.

Soon he pulled into the driveway of a large house. The door opened and he rushed past Tara into the living room where his friend sat in a catatonic state. No words were needed as he swept Ethan up in his arms and took him to the car. Tara scrambled together her few belongings and hopped into the backseat.

"What happened?" Rupert asked looking in the rear-view mirror at Tara. One of Giles' hands rested on his Ethan's knee. As they put some distance between themselves and the house Ethan began to show signs of life.

"His uncle has left me and is attacking him psychically. He's driving Ethan's soul out of his body." She stopped speaking unable to keep the anger from her voice. "He left you signs to follow. Where the hell have you been, Watcher?"

"With Willow." Rupert's fingers gripped the steering wheel his jaw tightened. "Tara, you don't know Ethan like I do. Believe me when I say his sense of self-preservation is highly developed."

"Bullshit!" Tara exclaimed, tears streaming from her eyes. "He's dying! Help him!"

He skidded the car to a halt outside his apartment. Tara got out and willed Giles' front door open. Willow stood at the threshold stake in hand. When she saw Rupert with Ethan in his arms, she lowered her weapon.

"Ripper?" Ethan whispered with a weak smile. "Does this mean we're betrothed?" Rupert grinned. Despite the gravity of his situation, Ethan couldn't resist innuendo.

Rupert murmured, "I love you too, Ethan. Brandy?" Ethan nodded and settled back into the comfortable couch. Tara sat next to him, arranging cushions for his back and tucking the throw round his legs.



##

Giles paced behind the sofa, his hands trying to release a kink in his spine. He'd been researching for hours. Willow was asleep in the armchair and Ethan cradled a tome in one hand and a brandy snifter in the other. Tara sat on the floor, leaning against his legs and gazing into the firelight.

Ethan looked at his old friend. Rupert seemed to be ageing in reverse. He hadn't looked so good in ages! Then he glanced at Willow. Perhaps it was the witch's doing. Bewitched by a witch! He smirked.

"What's so funny?" Rupert perched on the sofa and studied Ethan.

"Oh, just musing on your love life, Rupert, and mine, or the lack thereof. Do you ever think wha?"

"No." He interrupted abruptly. "I don't ever think about us. They don't know and I don't ever want them to know. I'm helping you now, Ethan, but after we've banished your uncle let that be an end to it." Rupert pleaded.

Ethan nodded. "If you like," he murmured. Rupert held him with a steady gaze whilst the other man savoured his brandy, then he sighed and turned on his heel and retreated into the kitchen to make some tea.

End of part 3

#### Duality 4/4

Warning This one is nasty folks; prepare to hide beneath your security blanket.

Summary Ethan saves Tara from a watery suicide attempt (Willow has broken off their affair) but unwittingly brings back the soul of his dead abusive uncle who is sharing Tara's body. His uncle grows stronger and begins to haunt Ethan's dreams slowly becoming the dominant personality. Ethan goes to Ripper for help and he agrees to banish the evil uncles' spirit.

The moth flew through the partially open window its dusty moonlit path controlled by the uneasy breath of the gathered beings in Giles' living room. It flitted and alighted on several moist perch's its proboscis unfurling to taste the salt on skin.

Thence to the kitchen where the hypnotic strip light held its ethereal attention. It spread its wings wide in homage bowing and billowing in flight daring to touch the hand of its God.

A security light ignited the night and the moth abandoned one false God for another. The light was so strong, good, and pure that it pulled the restless creature as if by an invisible thread. So near to Nirvana until a hand stopped its flight dead.

Ethan glanced at his palm and smiled with silver-milk eyes, then smeared the stunned insect between his thumb and palm and blew away the chaff. He sat up and looked around the room.



Willow and Ripper shared the sofa and Tara slumped in an armchair, all were sleeping peacefully.

Not for long! He swung his legs to the floor and stood up stretching his muscles as if he'd been a long time dead. He crept to the kitchen and collected a knife, his favourite weapon. Then with the blade poised at the redheads' throat he woke everyone using his uncle's singsong voice.

"Wakey-wakey! Time to play." He ended the announcement with a light spine-chilling chuckle. Willow's eyes snapped open and met Tara's in mirrored terror. Giles slid around Willow, his skin cold, and his heart thumping madly. This was not Ethan but Ethan's Uncle at last in sole control.

"I am Enoch Rayne. I am so glad to meet all of my nephew's young friends." His cloudy eyes slid over Willow's body and lingered over the swell of her breasts. "Such sweet meat to savour and caress!" He moved the blade over her breast and sliced her blouse to get a better view of her nipple. He slid the blade over it and Willow shivered and swallowed.

"Easy luv, " Giles murmured.

Enoch glanced in Giles' direction and felt the anger and outrage pouring off him. He smiled and nicked her flesh just to see the bright scarlet rose of blood bloom above her heart.

Willow cried out in shock and pain and Giles jerked her out of Enoch's grasp. She fell on her knees and Tara knelt beside her. Her hand pressed over Willow's to staunch the flow of blood. Willow rocked and wept. Giles crouched between Enoch and the witches he never took his eyes off his possessed friend.

Enoch bounced lightly on the balls of his feet; he lifted the blade to his lips and licked the bead of blood from the end cutting his tongue a little in the process. His eyes focussed on the tableau before him and he smiled his reptilian smile.

"Look, isn't that sweet? Their tiff is forgotten. " He pointed past Giles to Tara and Willow. Giles pivoted and risked a glimpse of the girls together, one comforting the other.

"Rupert! " Willow gasped a warning at the same time as Giles felt the blade of the knife at his jugular. He froze allowing the cold blade to dictate his movements.

"Yesssss. Rupert, crawl to me that's a good boy." His eyes gleamed softly in the moonlight. Giles' jaw muscles clenched with the effort to control his anger, to preserve the health and safety of his lover and friends was uppermost in his mind. He would do anything-

He stared as Enoch fumbled with the unfamiliar fastening of Ethan's jeans. Giles jerked his head back as he realised what Enoch had in mind. His flesh received a warning nick. Willow screamed and lurched forward.

Enoch smiled at her as he kicked out of his jeans, he gripped the knife harder to cut deeper avoiding the vein but still producing a hissing intake of breath and a trickle of blood down Rupert's chest.

She clamped her mouth shut and studied Rupert's eyes he nodded to her and turned his

attention back to the familiar body in front of him.

"You know what to do, Boy." Rupert looked up into the eyes of the monster that had abused his friend all throughout his boyhood and vowed to banish him to Hell. He shuffled closer and raised his hands to slide them up Ethan's taut thighs he tried to relax and ignore the quiet sobs behind him. He would need to concentrate on bringing Ethan back and that would happen when he climaxed.

He nuzzled at the base of the cock, snaking his tongue out to raze around the balls. The knife blade shifted up and down his neck in time to the rhythm of his tongue. Rupert shifted his hand round to the buttocks and kneaded the flesh as he blew hot breath on the burgeoning erection.

Enoch's grip on the knife slackened and it dropped to the floor. His hands knotted in Giles' hair and his eyes rolled back in his head. "Good boy!"

Rupert's hand drifted to the cleft between the buttocks and started a rhythmic massage at the same time as finally taking the cock into his mouth and sucking the turgid flesh, rotating his tongue round the head just as he knew Ethan adored!

"GOD! Ripper!" Ethan lifted up on his toes then bent his knees as Rupert gobbled at his groin, slurping and sucking noisily. Ethan began to shake and moan, gripping Ripper's shoulders hard enough to leave bruises. "Fucking Hell--- Ripper! Cummm" He bellowed and jerked his eyes tight shut and his mouth slack with orgasmic bliss.

Rupert held on to him, milking him draining him until the last drop and he released Ethan's cock and hugged him briefly, tenderly.

Willow gazed upon her lover as if seeing him for the first time, she thought he only wore that expression after pleasuring her.

As Ethan and Ripper clung together, they became wreathed in a shimmering milky cloud that plucked at Ripper's hold on Ethan's body. The cloud had spewed from Ethan's mouth the moment of his climax. Enoch Rayne had never experienced someone giving love unconditionally; the emotion it engendered drove him out of his nephew's body. He hovered impotently nearby, a spent force whose reign of terror had ended.

The respite was brief. As a howling wind from Hell blew through the room, perfumed with brimstone and Sulphur it heralded the arrival of the Dark Prince for his Servant.

Tara and Willow leapt up to join the men folk and cowered in the presence of ancient evil.

"Where is he?" A disembodied voice announced. Neither Rupert nor Ethan looked up but they pointed in the same direction.

In the corner of the room a small hunched wizened man stood, his hands crippled with arthritis struggled to remove his spectacles. His eyes wore the glazed pearl of advanced cataract and he looked for all the world like a retired cleric.

"Come-" Death called from his blazing chariot and Enoch Rayne boarded without complaint no doubt convinced he was going to his just reward.

The ground shook as the chariot departed; the screams of the damned filtering through the sulphurous night air.

##

Rupert sank to his knees, crawled to Willow and then parted her blouse and saw the tiny puncture wound now thankfully crusted over with dried blood. His own wound still seeped languidly and he rolled onto his back. He heard a brief commotion in his kitchen which he identified as Ethan fetching towels and hot water. He smiled before passing out.

##

Rupert rolled over and saw red, a river of it spilling over Willow's shoulder and tickling his chest. He smiled, moved to kiss her bare shoulder and winced at the tightness of a bandage round his neck.

"Ow-" he uttered and woke his sleeping partner. She smiled at him and all the hurts melted away.

"Mmm, yummy you look, yummy you are in the morning Rupert." He smiled at her impossible speech in the morning.

"No more yummy than you, Willow. " He smiled and gently let his fingers drift down her silken naked body to her dripping pussy, dipping in then making a return journey. He gazed into her dilated eyes as he popped his fingers into his mouth.

"My turn-" she breathed and grazed her hand down his torso to where his cock nestled and throbbed, she ran her small hand over him once or twice and listened to his groaning gasps for breath.

His eyes opened and never once left her luscious mouth that pouted and had an almost permanent upturn with plump rose pink lips that deepened to burgundy damask in arousal. She licked her fingers shiny with pre-cum then he dived into her mouth and fought her tongue for the rest.

Their legs intertwined and he sank into her. They spiraled, gyrated neither gaining the upper hand equally controlling, and controlled until gripped and plunging their torrid lust ignited the fuse of their explosive orgasm.

Rupert gasped at breath, still vibrating down below with good vibes. He grinned and managed a breathy laugh; Willow was panting softly in his ear as she laid her moist head on his shoulder.

He lifted his head away from hers and kissed her nose chastely. "Have I said I love you recently?"

Willow lifted her head and gave him a sleepy smile, "only every day-"

Rupert grinned, "Really? I have been lax, should be every minute! I love you, love you, love you..." He carried on with his new mantra kissing her soft lips until both were in fits of giggles.

##

One month later.

Ethan wandered away from the chapel where he had just witnessed the blessing of Tara's new relationship and Ripper's marriage to Willow. He told them to have many children and that he loved them all! He even threw rice. But he was alone again and found himself back at the river. He went there to dismantle the spell that he had cast before Tara's suicide attempt. He sauntered over to the deep green water and pondered the fate of his uncle. He never found out why the man abused him. After all his years in therapy, he concluded it was how his uncle controlled him and kept him near.

His thoughts wandered to Ripper and how his lips felt on his body. He shuddered and felt his loins leap to attention at the thought.

"Hello? " Ethan gulped at the strange voice and slowly turned round leaning back on the parapet of the bridge.

"Hello-" Ethan looked directly at the man's eyes then smiled easily, "beautiful day isn't it? "

"It is now-" the man concluded an appreciative once over of Ethan's body.

Ethan chuckled and pushed off from the parapet. "My names Ethan, can I buy you a coffee? Are you new in town? "

The man nodded and asked. "Aren't you going to lock your car? " As Ethan slipped in beside him.

"Oh no, it's a rental. In Sunnydale, whether ones car is locked is the least of ones troubles. " He leaned back in the comfortable leather of the bucket seat and sighed as he felt the stranger's hand on his thigh. Bliss!

The End.