

Tea with Dru by Ten

RATING: PG13

PAIRING: Wes/Dru

SUMMARY: How Wes & Dru got together, AU ... in this reality, Connor was saved from Holtz and did not enter the portal. This is AU Babyverse, for more info about the Pride and the Scourge and other things pertaining to this AU, go to <http://www.theprideandthescourge.com>

SPOILERS: Angel Season 3 through "The Price" loosely

DISCLAIMER: All characters belong to the god which is Joss Whedon (all hail and bow low before him), and WB, UPN, Mutant Enemy and some other people, but not me. The Babyverse belongs to Ebony Silvers, who is the goddess of all things Baby.



Gunn: What, we're gonna have a drink now? Did you hear what I said? She's dying!

Wes: I was dying. I knew it laying in that dirty field, life pouring out of my throat. Do you know why I fought to stay alive?

Gunn: Wes, I don't have time--!

Wes: I needed to live to see my friends again. To explain to the people I trusted... and loved... my side of what happened.

Gunn: We know what--

Wes: You don't know anything.

CHAPTER 1

Wesley Wyndam-Pryce pounded the punching bag with a fierce determination few had ever seen openly. There were times he was immensely grateful that Angel had demonstrated the finer points of physical exertion when working through frustration. Angel had a lot to work through, so he demonstrated a great deal it seemed. Wesley himself had utilized the workout room in the basement of the Hyperion frequently, particularly once he found himself becoming 'brother' to the one he preferred to court. It had been a nasty sting, losing Fred to Gunn, but he blamed himself for not speaking up in time. The possibility had been there, but he allowed his fears to hold him back, and this time it had cost him. Her.

Now that he was no longer welcome at the old hotel, he was glad he had begun putting together his own workout area at his flat. As his strength had returned over the last few days, he found relentless pounding an aide in thinking and resolving the untidy issues around him. Some of those issues, he feared, would never be resolved.

Connor had been saved, but Angel would never forgive him nor accept that what he had done was in the child's best interest according to the information he had. Angel had made him promise more than once that if Angelus returned, Wesley was to dispatch him immediately. He took this oath seriously, as he took most everything else, and he never left his flat that he didn't have a stake hidden on his body somewhere in the event that day had come. Though Angelus had not blatantly appeared, the cryptic prophesy that Angel would kill his son and Angel's suddenly unpredictable behavior had forced Wes to act on a primal level. Rather than kill Angel, he would protect the son however he could, by taking him away from danger. Apparently, no one at Angel Investigations understood that. No one had even tried to.

Wesley was recovering quickly according to the doctors, but not quickly enough for himself. He wanted to leave, get out of LA altogether. The place left a bad taste in his mouth. He wanted to get as far away as he possibly could, perhaps even back to England. He had a little money stashed away for just that

purpose. However, he was still recovering and needed to watch his strength, and he'd been told his voice probably wouldn't return to normal for possibly several months. He discovered on his own that if he got particularly aggressive in his 'exercises' the scar at his neck would begin to weep again. More than once he had been so involved in exerting himself that he hadn't noticed he'd opened the scar until blood was running down his chest. Fortunately, that had only happened a few times before he began making a concerted effort to take more careful notice. It wouldn't do for him to bleed to death now after the efforts he had made to survive. It would be particularly annoying to bleed to death on the floor of his flat and be left there for several days without anyone noticing until he began to reek. That thought made him pound the bag harder. The flesh over his knuckles cracked, sending trails of crimson onto the punching bag.

He missed working. He missed his books, he missed diving into them with a purpose in mind and working toward a goal. He missed helping to rid the streets of Los Angeles of demons and vampires. He missed his friends. The brief appearances by Fred and Gunn did nothing to help, and in fact, made things worse. Angel's visit to the hospital was quite obviously a disaster, but at least it gave Wes a realistic idea of just how unforgiving and angry Angel really was.

Wes had experienced some real pain in his life. Unbearable physical pain. Life-altering emotional damage. But he wasn't sure he had ever felt as totally alone as he did right now. The sense of purpose and belonging he had enjoyed these last few years had been stripped away from him. Left in its place was the ache of loss which would never go away. The echoing silence of it was agonizing. He was rejected. He had tried to do what was right, he very nearly lost his life for it, and yet he was still rejected, the betrayer, he who would not be forgiven.

He stopped pounding the double-end martial arts bag and clung to it, heaving as he tried to catch his breath. He was exhausted, so exhausted that his knees could hardly hold him upright. A tiny stream of blood began to flow down his neck onto his bare chest, he smeared it with one hand, somehow trying to wipe the stain away, yet it continued to trickle down, an incessant reminder of his vulnerability and his betrayal.

Through the raspy sound of his breathing he heard a faint knock at the door. He ignored it. A solicitor no doubt. He began pounding the bag again as the knock became more insistent. He tried to growl a discouraging, "Go away" toward the door, but his vocal cords would not cooperate. Instead he snarled to himself, tucked a dagger into the back waistband of his sweatpants and grabbed a stake before approaching the door. He doubted the stake would do him much good. If it were Angel, here to finish the job he started at the hospital, Wesley was in no condition to fight him off, even if he had wanted to. He pulled the door open as far as the chain would allow and without looking out grumbled, "What do you want?"

The music of a feminine voice wafted through the hallway and into his flat. "A moment with you?"

Wesley unchained the door and opened it fully, staring into the deep, blue-green eyes of a stunning woman dressed in turn of the century lace, dark, ebony hair cascading down her back with wisps tickling the very tops of her bosom which peeked out proudly from the low, empire neckline.

"Drusilla?" Wesley's expression was beyond surprise.

She smiled. "You remembered. You have been gone so long I thought perhaps you had forgotten." The lilt of her voice sang of innocence and sadness.

Wesley's expression hardened. "Did Angel send you around?"

Drusilla's expression went to that of a mischievous child. "Oh no. Shhhhhh. Daddy would be very angry if he knew I had come." She pressed her well-manicured index finger to her lips and gave a conspiratorial giggle.

"He's not sent you here to kill me?" Wes couldn't believe it. Drusilla here? Venturing out of the hotel without proper escort? She rarely ventured out of her own room since she'd arrived, in fact, she made Fred look like a socialite. She had kept quietly to herself, rarely talking to anyone except Angel ever since that unfortunate adventure she'd had with Darla. Angel had taken her in for any number of reasons, but one was to keep her from being seduced and used again. After Darla's death, Drusilla was already settled and Angel saw no reason to send his child away as long as she remained relatively sane and didn't go off on anyone, either clients or those who worked there. In fact, he had become quite protective of her and she mostly had kept to herself. In fact, Wes was surprised she recognized his absence at all.

"Nooooo," she crooned, "Miss Edith told me Daddy was very cross with you and not to tell him I was coming." Wes suddenly realized she couldn't enter without an invitation, but she wasn't asking for one, waiting instead for him to ask on his own. He weighed the situation carefully. True, Drusilla was certifiable which made her a risk, but she was not known to be deliberately deceptive. If Angel had sent her, she would have indicated it when he asked her with some great, ethereal avoidance rather than resorting to child-like innocence.

"Drusilla? Would you like to come in, luv?" He stepped back, allowing her to enter, realizing he was taking an enormous risk and having no idea why.

Once inside, she stopped directly in front of him, looking deeply into his eyes and seeing his pain as clearly detailed as an intricate tapestry of his life. She raised a dainty, gloved hand to his brow and wiped away the perspiration there, then she brushed her lips across his softly in greeting. Without a word, she dipped her head down to lick the trail of drying blood from his chest, sending a shiver of pleasure-filled fear through him, then she nonchalantly stepped into the main room.

Wesley caught his breath. "Would you like some tea?" He suddenly became the proper Englishman, offering tea as he slipped back into his cotton shirt. Drusilla stayed close to him, buttoning the shirt for him as she replied.

"Yes, that would be lovely, thank you."

They chatted cordially for well over an hour, discussing England, California, their health, the weather, and all the proper things discussed at tea. She had been delighted when he produced real English biscuits, a treat he usually kept squirreled away for rare occasions. They laughed. Wesley could not remember the last time he had laughed. They did not discuss Angel. They did not discuss anything unpleasant.

As the sun set, she rose to leave and they exchanged a soft, sweet kiss at the door. It was nothing promising, nor intensely romantic, it was simply a closure to their afternoon. It had not even occurred to Wes to ask her how she had come to his flat in broad daylight or why, and he did not wish to be indelicate about it now.

"Should I see you home, Drusilla?" he asked cordially. He wanted to be sure she arrived back at the Hyperion safely, but he was also seriously concerned about anyone from Angel Investigations seeing him with her and thus betraying Drusilla's visit.

"Oh no, dear Wesley, I shall be quite all right." She kissed him lightly on the cheek and slipped through the doorway and down the hall almost unseen.

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CHAPTER 2

After Drusilla left, Wes was no longer motivated to continue his workout and chose instead to tidy up. He felt strangely peaceful. It had been a very long time since he could say that about himself, his damaged spirit carrying deep scars that prevented it.

After he showered, he settled down for a quiet evening with some music and a desire to research. Rachmaninoff, Satie, Faure, and Delibes suddenly appealed, and he took out his custom-burned CD, "Research Music." Labels had a tendency to be sticky, he preferred to label them by hand, even though he had to use Sharpie markers to get permanent titles; still, it was in exquisite penmanship. He slipped the CD into his laptop and the delicious sounds of Rachmaninoff came to life.

He put the kettle on, took a deep breath, and then succumbed to the temptation that had been haunting him since Drusilla left. He thought of her and the comfortable, familiar ease they had with one another. It wasn't just because they were both British; there was something deeper, something ancient that seemed to wrap them both in an embrace of *sans souci*. He thought of her eyes, which seemed to penetrate him and strip away the walls and layers of emotional insulation he'd developed over the years. Her voice was like the cooing of a dove, soft and reassuring, and when combined with her eyes it formed a hypnotic duet which made him open himself up to her. And when she touched him ... Wes shook his head as if he were trying to clear a path through the fog. This could be a dangerous situation. He had invited a vampire into his home, a vampire who did not have the additional self-control of a soul, a vampire who was methodically driven insane by her sire and still struggled to maintain balance. He suddenly felt like the most ridiculously trusting soul on Earth.

The kettle screamed at him from the kitchen. He made a full pot of tea and then pulled out several old Watchers' texts, specifically those which dealt with the Scourge of Europe. He wanted details. What did Drusilla, Angelus, William the Bloody, and Darla do for over a century? He didn't want just the dry facts, he wanted details of their locations and kills. He wanted to know what Angelus had done to her that brought her to him so willingly. Beneath it all, he wanted to know why she was defying her sire to come to him now. He didn't think he'd find that answer online or in any of his books, but perhaps he could shed a little light on something. Perhaps he could find out why he felt so drawn to her.

The music changed, Delibes, two lovely female voices singing of flowers. It was haunting and drew Wes's thoughts back to Drusilla once again, to their time together, to her unexpected visit, her deep blue-grey eyes, her ebony hair, her blood-red lips. Wes felt something inside him stir, then pushed it aside. Research. Yes, that's what he needed, research.

He thumbed mindlessly through the stack of books on his makeshift desk. Nothing appealed to him, nothing called to him to explore and examine the darkest times of this mysterious woman. Without realizing it, he had a spell book before him. It was as elementary as spell books go, but it was one that he was comfortable with. He began to thumb through it, looking for something, but not really sure what it was. Suddenly annoyed with himself, he set the book aside and drew open the largest volume, the one which dealt more specifically with Angelus and his special talents of torture and violence. Wes shivered involuntarily, poured another cup of tea and began to read.

Gorecki chimed in, an eerie selection considering the subject, the "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs," how perfectly fitting. Angelus was the most ruthless vampire in documented Watcher history. That is not to say there were not others, but he was the one who stood out from the time such records were kept. He did not just feed on his victims, he toyed with them, selected them based upon days, sometimes weeks, of stalking them. If he found someone particularly interesting he might consider turning them, but no more than a handful of times had he allowed them to survive past the fledgling stage, staking or beheading them himself when they became bothersome. Drusilla had been one that he cultivated because of her special talent, that of visions. Obviously, Angelus thought he could use her ability in some way. The volume Wes was reading footnoted a cross reference for Drusilla and then continued with a running list of those Angelus sired. Wes set the book aside, leaving it open, and looked through the pile for the one referenced.

He found it easily and turned to the appropriate page. The girl Drusilla did not want the curse of visions, she tried in vain to be rid of it, but it perpetuated to the point where it drew attention to her. She had been a pious and heavily religious girl, but when the Church discovered her affliction, she was spurned. Her family tried to keep her hidden, but once word moved through the village, there was little they could do to protect her from judgmental glances and whispers. It also drew Angelus's attention to her.

Gymnopedie #3 by Satie began its strains as Wes read more about the poor girl. Angelus was not content to simply turn her, he wanted her to come to him willingly, but she was a terrified child and would scarcely leave her home except to go to church. However, her family was more easily accessible. Each day, as she went to mass, he would watch her; then he began to approach her subtly, whispering a few words which only she could hear as they passed by. They were words of death, words which threatened those around her. And slowly, one by one, he made each of them come true, killing each member of her family, drawing their blood into him, each one bringing him closer to the object of his obsession. Toward the end, he began killing them in front of her.

Wes stopped abruptly. Refilling his cup, he stood and moved toward the window that looked out over the small community where he lived. Palm trees and streetlights seemed a sudden comfort from the cruel readings. He knew what she felt, or at least, he knew somewhat how she must have felt. He had seen his father die. His father, a heartless, cruel, abusive man who, Wes discovered many years later, had been a Watcher. He had still been a lad of about 13 when his father was murdered, and there was no remorse or sorrow in him regarding his death. He wondered idly if Drusilla had suffered at the hand of her father as well. He turned his thoughts away from the cold cavern of his childhood and looked out into the night once more. Shadows moving through trees, oddly cast images against sidewalks and buildings: these things left an element of supernatural fear in most people. Wesley himself was so honed to it that he could recognize a demon or a vampire in the dark from a great distance. Though his strength lay in research, he had no trouble killing the creatures that fed on others. In fact, he had no real trouble killing at all if it were within the confines of his own, self-appointed morality.

His mind wandered back to his father, the long-healed scars on his body aching for no real reason, an echo of pain and abuse he had suffered at his father's hand. Wes had been a bright boy, he took to schooling well and was usually at the top of his class. He was obedient and took great care to help those around him, particularly his quiet, unassuming mother. His father, however, had a darker side which frightened him and which few ever saw save him. Wes had not known what a Watcher was and in fact did not know what vocation his father practiced, but he did know the feel of his father's hand as it struck him, the bite of his belt when it assaulted him, the acrid, hideous smell of burning flesh when he was burned, the metallic taste of blood in his mouth, and the horrible sound of his father's voice as he berated him, demeaned him, and cried out in release each time the horrid man raped his own son.

Wes looked down to see his hands bleeding, the teacup shattered into thousands of tiny shards on the floor in front of him. He turned from it and walked away, not bothering to pick any of it up.

Silently he walked back to the workout area and began pounding the hanging bag with a frightening ferocity, his still-bleeding hands once again leaving fresh, red paintings over the old stains. His research music still echoed in the flat, the sung prayer of Floria Tosca, "Why, oh Lord, have you allowed this to happen?"

CHAPTER 3

Drusilla's tea time visits quickly became routine. Each day, at about 3:30 p.m., she would appear at his doorway, smiling and pleased to see him, always dressed in tasteful gowns that proper ladies wore in her youth before she was changed. He looked forward to this time with her; she was mostly the only company he had, except for Lilah's annoying attempts to convince him to become a part of Wolfram & Hart. Each day Drusilla brought sunshine and laughter with her, an odd offering from a vampire, and each day Wes offered her an afternoon of tea, music, biscuits, and pleasant conversation.

He never asked how she came to him unscathed by the late day sun, and she never mentioned that he was *persona non grata* at Angel Investigations. It was a satisfactory arrangement for them both and the pleasant teas added an element of normalcy to their very un-normal lives.

Truth to tell, Wes was becoming more and more enchanted with the elegant vampiress. Drusilla brought out so many emotions in him, many he had not felt in a very long time. He felt protective towards her, yet he was also fascinated by her abilities to "see" as well as her adaptability throughout her complex life and unlife. Angelus had done such horrible things to her, both before and after he turned her, for her to remain close to Angel was a testament to her own strength and forgiveness. Sometimes she even spoke of Angelus himself with affection, as if his tortures and cruelty were signs of his love instead of the machinations of one of the most notorious demons in all history.

Wes awoke trembling in a cold sweat. He had dreamed. He was standing near a cliff which overlooked an ocean, heavy surf pounding relentlessly against a white rock face below him. It had been an intense dream, the third such dream in so many days, and they were becoming confusing and haunting. This last one had been the most disturbing of all. He was again transported to a different time, a time of ancient ways, what seemed to be about 1800. He'd been a bookseller in a small market in London, owner of a small shop but one which made just enough to provide for himself and his wife. His dream seemed to encompass several days and included their day-to-day routines, their knowledge of books and languages, their ability to work at the shop in tandem for the betterment of their life together. He remembered and still felt intense love and devotion for his wife, a good woman who adored him as much as he adored her. He remembered her perfect qualities, her quick and quirky wit, her intelligence, her ability to make hard work seem a joy in itself, her limitless devotion to him, as well as his own inability to deny her anything.

The dream took him places he didn't particularly want to go. It felt too real, pulled too many intense emotions to the fore, as if he were remembering something joyous and painful rather than dreaming it. He remembered intimacy, uninhibited exploration of each other's bodies and souls, very uncommon for that time period, a long ago time when women were little more than chattel. And he remembered death. Not his own. Hers. He remembered pain, an inability to breathe, he remembered throwing himself off that cliff and falling into an eternity of night.

As he fell, he remembered her tiny waist, her glorious smile, how she held his love as if it were a precious gift. But the last vision he held as he plunged further into darkness was of her wide-set blue-green eyes.

She was late. Drusilla was usually knocking at his door no later than 3:30, but here it was 3:50 and still she wasn't there. She would never phone, she found that to be annoyingly impersonal. She had sent no other word. Wes was rapidly becoming concerned. He had come to expect her daily visits. They never discussed it, but after the first few times it was simply understood that she would come each day for tea.

He stepped to the window and began to distract himself from his worry by retracing the dreams of the last few nights; the bookseller, the blacksmith, the priest, each had a tie to a girl or woman with those same blue-green eyes. Each dream seemed to have a manifestation of Drusilla, either as his wife, his sister, and once as a small child abandoned on the street. He realized there had been other dreams, but most made little sense and he couldn't grasp them well enough to remember the details. He himself saw through the eyes of a child or a woman or an old man as well as a young man. And each dream seemed to give him a message of love and devotion.

A quiet knock at the door brought him back.

"Forgive me, dear Wesley, Daddy was very cross today and made it difficult to leave. I hope you weren't worried." She flashed him her smile and he immediately relaxed into their easy manner.

"Only now was I becoming concerned." He met her smile with one of his own and ushered her into the flat.

They sat in their usual places at table, sipping their tea, discussing the weather and their health and the English countryside in springtime. Then Wesley made a hard decision. It was time to ask her what he had been wanting to know for quite some time and had never mustered the courage to ask, partly for fear she would be offended, partly for fear he would not like the answer.

"Drusilla?" his voice cracked. She looked at him expectantly. "Drusilla," he repeated, "I've been meaning to ask you something." Her smile broadened. She seemed what he was going to say before he even had it formed into words. "Why do you come here when you know Angel would violently object?"

She looked at him patiently, as if she were waiting for him to understand it on his own. When it was not forthcoming, she spoke up. "Because I believe you, sweet Wesley. The birds told me you were hiding from Daddy and to be careful, but they did not have to tell me that you were taking the baby away to a safe place where he would never be hurt. You would never allow a boy to be hurt or killed by his own father." He looked puzzled, but she continued, "Besides, I know your heart too well, it speaks to me itself." She seemed to be listening to the air as if it were telling her the secrets in Wesley's heart.

He still seemed confused. "But ... but why, Drusilla? Why would you believe me when the other do not?"

Her expression was calm and comforting, "Can you not feel it? Have you not dreamed it?" Her eyes took that far away, marginal sanity focus to them, as if she were counting the stars or seeing something in the air which no one else could see. "It is there in your dreams at night, it's in your thoughts even now."

A crease formed between Wes's eyes, his mind conflicted, his understanding just out of reach. What was she talking about? Dreams? The dreams he'd been having which seemed to be of her in one form or another? He turned his quizzical expression towards her, as if he were reaching for something and couldn't quite touch it. She took a step toward him and touched his cheek with her delicate hand, her eyes meeting his and remaining there.

Wesley's mind went awash in brilliant white then settled into a dark, distantly familiar scene ... a cobblestone road, old gas lamps, and a tall man with a tight grip on his shoulder, pinching into the muscle, hurting him. They were walking briskly and his short legs had difficulty keeping up as he was all but dragged along, the wet street making him slip across the uneven stones. The man muttered words Wes couldn't really hear, but he could remember ... words like worthless, bothersome, sniveling, evil, disappointment. The last one was the deepest cut, and Wes could actually feel the tears stinging his boyish eyes.

A figure stepped out of the alleyway ahead, a slim silhouette dressed in odd clothing and a cape. Before young Wes could even get a clear picture of who it was, his father's hand left his shoulder as the older man was torn away from the boy. The boy froze in his tracks, not sure whether to run or to scream or to try to help his father. It was too late. The shadowy figure pushed the man's head to the side and buried it's face into his neck as death screams tore the air. Within moments his father's lifeless body had been tossed to the ground and the figure began to slowly approach him.

"There's a good lad." A voice seemed to sing to him, cooing comfortingly as it approached. He was terrified, yet something inside him was grateful to this mysterious savior. "There, there. It's late, go home now. He won't be hurting you any more." The figure bent down and a gentle hand touched his cheek, as a pale face with stunning eyes emerged from the shadows ... the blue-green eyes of Drusilla.

CHAPTER 4

Drusilla wasn't even out of the building before Wes had grabbed his coat and followed her. She had stayed too long, their conversation delving deeply into his dreams and a past together that he was gradually remembering while she gently guided his thoughts in the right directions. It had been a revelation indeed to discover that the vampire who had murdered his father before his eyes had been the lovely woman sitting with him having tea. It was as if a shadow had been lifted from his life, a discovery that made everything about his life more clear and organized, the pieces of his shattered childhood somehow falling into place.

Now, however, Wes was uncomfortable about Dru going home alone at such a late hour. She was quite capable of taking care of herself, but his affection for her over the last few weeks mingled with the revelation of their intermixed past made him more protective of her than before ... he was concerned for her safety from others as much as from Angel himself should he discover her deception in coming to his flat, not to mention their past ties. He stayed hidden in the shadows, wanting her to feel independent, but for himself wanting to be sure she was safe, at least until she was in sight of the Hyperion.

She was a thing of beauty almost floating through the streets. She was fast and fleeting and hidden well amongst the trees and shrubs. She fairly danced over the grassy lawns. Wes found himself entranced with her grace and beauty and soon found he was following her more to watch her than to protect her.

He lost sight of her near an alleyway and every alarm in his head went off. What was it about alleys which screamed danger to him? He moved to an all-out run, suddenly not concerned with whether or not she saw him. He slowed as he reached the entryway, looking carefully to see if he was over-reacting and if she were indeed already safely past and almost home. She wasn't. He felt his throat tighten. Not good. What kind of monster would attack or harm such a lovely creature as Drusilla, leaping and dancing through her world? Only one species could be so vile: Humans.

Wesley heard the lilt of Drusilla's voice echoing from the alley; there was an edge of anger and annoyance to it. Good. Whoever it was had not realized she was a vampire yet, nor had they staked her. He climbed a fire escape and worked his way around the building unseen, Slayer-esque strategy playing in his head. What were they? What did they want? Was she in immediate danger?

Kids. They were just kids, 19, maybe 20 years old, and there were three of them. Two of them were holding her by the arms, the third stood before her with a handgun pointed directly at her. A robbery perhaps, it was difficult to tell, but the armed chap was handling Drusilla in a most inappropriate manner. This was certainly nothing she couldn't handle herself, but she shouldn't have to. She didn't have to be left to her own defensive devices just to walk home from tea. She was playing the damsel, clever girl, studying her opponents while appearing weak to them. No doubt she could take the trio in less than a minute by simply vamping out and making a snack of them. But Wesley didn't think she should have to do that. Besides, it would muss her lovely frock.

Wes slipped down onto the sidewalk again and casually walked into the alley, feigning surprise at finding the boys and Dru.

"Oh dear. Do you need assistance?" he said to Drusilla with a smile; the boys were taken off guard. The obvious leader removed his roving hands from Drusilla's bosom and glared at Wesley.

"Oh yes, please," Drusilla replied politely. One of the boys turned ashen and fled down the alley, scampering over the chain link fence and into the night. He was obviously not a seasoned criminal. "Odds are better now," Wesley thought to himself as he approached the boy with the gun.

"Now, young chap, you really don't wish to harm the lady, do you? Think of your future; crime is really not a very productive way to live your life and it certainly never truly comes out well." As Wes prattled on, he moved closer and closer to the boy, pitching his voice in a soothing manner rather than the condescension he truly wanted to relay. The lad turned his back to Drusilla, giving her the opportunity to

show her true face to the boy holding her other arm. He took the hint and ran away as the first boy had, leaving the armed robber alone with Wesley and Drusilla. Dru smiled coyly around her game face and crept behind the last one while Wes continued talking to the boy.

His voice began to take on a grating tone, more anger crept in, more danger, and with each word Wesley took one step closer until he simply reached out and took the gun from the boy. The teen howled his objection and attempted to leap at Wesley but he was quickly caught in the clutches of Drusilla. She held his arms tightly and rested her chin on his shoulder as she let her human visage return.

"Wesley," she crooned, "This one has been very naughty. He has killed before, I can smell it on him, in his blood, even in his mind." She ran one hand through the boy's hair as if each strand were a thought she could read. "Even now he is thinking of how he can ..." Before she could finish, the boy whirled around, pulled Drusilla between him and the former Watcher, whipped out a switchblade, opened it and held it menacingly at her throat.

"Drop the gun or I slit her throat," the kid threatened desperately. Wesley took a calming breath as he unconsciously reached for his own throat, the scar still fresh and sticky. He dropped the gun immediately, his eyes meeting Drusilla's in a silent plea of concern. Her brilliant blue-green eyes answered him with calm, drawing him into her effortlessly. What could the boy do? Slit her throat? She still wouldn't die, though it could weaken her substantially for a while. The kid had no idea what he had gotten himself into. Wesley almost felt sorry for him. Almost.

With no warning, Dru once again shifted into her vampire features and bit viciously into her assailant's arm. The switchblade fell toward the ground immediately, Wesley diving to catch it, as the boy began to scream in agony and horror. Wesley was upright with the blade at the attacker's throat before he could even breathe. Drusilla eased up on her bite, neither removing her fangs completely nor drinking from him. She simply held him immobile.

"Now, young man, you have done a despicable thing here. You have attacked this beautiful lady with no provocation and tried to take advantage of her." Drusilla cooed at Wesley as he continued. "The question has become, what do we do with you now? You have killed others, my sweet Drusilla says, you no doubt will kill again. You most certainly would have killed both of us given the opportunity." The boy squirmed, trying to get away, the flesh on his arm tearing beneath Drusilla's grip, the blade at his neck pressing in just enough to draw a tiny bead of blood. Now Drusilla squirmed, wanting to get at it.

Wesley continued, "Unfortunately, turning you over to the authorities won't do much more than detain you for a few hours. You'd be back on the street killing before sunrise. That simply will not do." Wesley pondered their next move briefly before a disturbing smile crept across his lips. With a nod, Dru removed her fangs and he removed the blade from the boy's neck. "You have a choice..."

Before Wesley could finish the sentence, the boy immediately went for the discarded gun. He failed. Wesley had him pinned against the wall, his forearm against the boy's throat holding him there within seconds.

"I see, you've made your choice, then." The former Watcher looked at Drusilla, once again sporting her lovely human face. "Are you hungry, my dear?"

Her expression was pure delight, her eyes sparkling just for him.

"He is for you, then." Without so much as a second thought, Wesley slit the boy's throat and offered him to Drusilla, holding him upright as his blood shot out toward her. Dru opened her mouth wide to capture the airborne liquid, moving gradually closer to the boy's throat as the flow lessened. Her dress became a pattern of deep crimson over pale pink lace.

While she finished, Wesley closed the switchblade and slipped it into his pocket before he noticed that he had caught a bit of his own forearm with the blade when he sliced the boy. He began applying pressure to

stop the blood flow when Dru looked up at him. Suddenly overwhelmed with the compelling scent of new blood, she dropped the now-dead boy to the ground and turned immediately to Wes. He saw her expression and relaxed the pressure, and silently opened his arm to her, inviting her to drink from him. The gesture surprised them both. Dru placed her soft, bloodstained lips over the cut and began to suckle from it, moaning with pleasure at each drop that coated her tongue and lips. Wes felt weak, not from blood loss, but from the intensity of the experience. Each draw from his body was like a breath of life going into him. When she'd tasted enough, she began to lick the cut, closing it, her human features shining up at him appreciatively. For all the blood she had just enjoyed, from both the boy and Wes, she had remained in human form. It touched him deeply.

When the wound was closed, she brought her lips to his, traces of his blood still in the corners of her mouth. Her arms slipped around his neck to draw him in closer as she pressed to him, feeling his excitement as well as the intoxication of his arousal. She suddenly seemed entirely sane and rational. Her eyes were bright and knowing when she pulled back slightly just to gaze at him.

Their want for each other was obvious and overpowering, but Wes would not be satisfied with a dirty alley, drenched with the scent of death, as a proper location for them to indulge in an intimate moment together. Without a word, he gathered Drusilla into his arms and lifted her as if she were made of air, carrying her like a rescued princess out of the alley.

It wasn't a long walk, but each step of it was filled with import and passion held back until the proper moment. There were occasional stops where he lowered her feet to the ground, embracing and kissing her fully, lips and tongues exploring the other's mouth, their bodies pressing together in urgent anticipation. There were times he leaned against a wall or a tree to brace himself as he held her aloft while burying his face in her hair, breathing in her rich scent while she nuzzled into his neck. No words were spoken. None were necessary.

They continued at their slow pace until they arrived where they needed to be, back at Wesley's flat. He wordlessly carried her over the threshold, closing the door behind them with his foot as he covered her lips with his. Once the door was closed, it would not be opened again for several days.

CHAPTER 5

Three days later, there was a knock on Wesley's door. Lilah, dressed in her usual business attire and a briefcase in her hand, waited not so patiently. She had just about decided this was a dead end and that any more attempts to woo Wesley into Wolfram & Hart could only end in disaster for her. She set down the case, took down her hair and shook it, then unbuttoned her blouse two buttons further than would be proper in an office atmosphere. If he wouldn't respond to a business proposition, perhaps he would respond to a different kind of stimulus. He'd been a man alone for quite some time, according to her sources; he might just be receptive to her in another way.

The door creaked open.

"Wesley?" Lilah's voice was a bit uncertain.

The door opened fully to reveal a woman with wide-set eyes and deep ebony hair tumbling around her shoulders. She was wearing nothing but a man's white dress shirt, casually thrown on and still unbuttoned so that most of her nude body showed through the front. She leaned on the door frame as her expression changed upon seeing who was at the door.

"What do you want?" The tone in her voice was melodious and completely contradictory to the feral expression on her face.

"Um, I, uh, that is to say," Lilah wasn't sure what to say, a rather unusual circumstance for her. She always had something, usually obnoxious, to say. "Wesley. Could I see Wesley, please?"

Drusilla looked at her flatly. "No."

"No?" Lilah wasn't sure she heard right. "You're saying no, I can't see Wesley?"

"Yes, dearie. In fact, do not bring your corporate seductions and low-cut blouses around here again. My Wesley is not interested in what you are ... " she raised an eyebrow, "... offering."

Lilah stood there transfixed, her mouth hanging open, unsure what to do next.

Drusilla, however, knew exactly what she was doing, as she morphed into her game face. "Do you understand, dearie? You come around here again and things will not go well for you." She snarled protectively and slammed the door in Lilah's face.

As the door closed, a voice came from the bedroom. "Was it the food, Dru?"

"No, luv," she smiled to herself, "it was only a solicitor." Her smile broadened as she joined him in the bedroom once again.

Five days later Drusilla walked through the doors of the Hyperion with a spring in her step, humming a tune, and swinging a new, lacey bag. She nodded to Fred and Gunn in the lobby and made her way up the stairs without saying a word, not that she really needed to. Her cheshire cat smile said it all.

"HmMMM," said Gunn. "Someone's been having a good time." He smiled at Fred as she elbowed him playfully.

"We'd better tell Angel she's back," Fred countered.

"No need," said Gunn, tossing his head in the direction of the upper level. Angel was standing near the top of the stairs, his hands on the rail, watching his child as she almost skipped up the stairs.

When Dru reached the top, he spoke to her quietly. "Find a new playmate?" He had a soft smile on his face, a bit of a tease to it.

"Mmmmm, yes, Angel. A lovely one. He makes the stars sing to me and the trees paint the sky with all the colors of the rainbow." She had that far-off look again.

Angel's smile broadened. "I'm glad, Dru, you've needed to be out more. But sweetheart, if you're going to be gone this long again, please let me know."

"Oooooo," a mischievous expression crossed Dru's features. "Daddy isn't cross, is he?"

"No, Dru. Just worried."

She smiled at him again and danced off to her room without another word. Angel thought he caught something of a familiar scent on her, something he couldn't quite place. Before he could question her about it, Cordelia came up behind him, wrapping her arms around his waist and pressing her body to his back. "Dru okay?"

"Mmm-hmm. And from that tune she's humming, if memory serves me right, she's in love." He chuckled softly.

"Good," Cordelia nuzzled Angel's neck. "It's time she found someone to suit her. She's been alone too long."

"Speaking of alone ..." Angel turned to face Cordy, still inside her embrace, and kissed her neck softly.

"Mmmmm, yes, alone ..." Cordy responded, her fingers tangling in Angel's hair as she began to back down the hall to their room again, bringing him along with her.

Drusilla awoke midday. She had tossed and turned most of the morning, trying to adjust to sleeping alone again. She missed Wesley. She missed his warmth, his presence, his breath on her neck as she spooned up next to him. She wanted him. Now. Her lower lip pushed out into a pout as she slipped into her dressing gown and padded down the stairs to the kitchen. She knew what she wanted and it wasn't in the refrigerator, but she looked anyway. Packets of blood, more packets of blood, tuna salad, diet soda. "Ewww."

She wandered into the office, Wes's old office, and curled up in the big leather chair. It still smelled of him, and it brought a smile to her lips. Tucking her knees beneath her chin, she wrapped her arms around her legs and looked at the extensive collection of books. She could tell by looking at them which were his. It made her feel closer to him.

She closed her eyes and breathed in, searching for his scent among the office furnishings and old texts. It was there all right, and filled her with a sleep comfort. Her head fell dreamily onto her knees, where she fell fast asleep in his chair.

She didn't hear the door open. She didn't sense the presence of someone else in the room or even downstairs. She didn't see the mystic in his flowing robes creep into the office with the tall brunette woman, nor their signals to one another, nor the herbs they'd brought, nor did she hear the quiet incantation. She slept peacefully while the evil bitch monster of Wolfram & Hart and her magical lackey tried to steal her mind away.

Wes had woken up about midday, tidied up his flat, and decided to run to the market. He was still basking in the glow of the wonderful discovery he had made, the charming woman of warmth and love he'd found in Drusilla. It just didn't seem possible that his life had gone from extraordinary pain to equally extraordinary joy in just these few days. She had come floating into his flat unexpectedly, suspicion in her wake that perhaps Angel had sent her to kill him, and brought love and resolution to much of his then-pitiful life.

He was still aghast that she had been the one to murder his vile and abusive father. And the more they talked and the more they loved the more he realized that many, if not all, of his dreams of late were not dreams at all, but memories. He was reluctant to believe it at first, but each day it seemed to make more sense. The pieces fit together so well, particularly the ones in this life.

He had been alone most of his adult life. Oh, he had had a few infatuations, dated some, even a short-lived relationship or two. But he had never found someone he wanted to spend his life with, someone who seemed to complete him. It occurred to him that perhaps the horrors that he and Drusilla had both endured in their lives and childhoods had been for a reason and had been what ultimately allowed them to find one another. A slight smile crossed his lips as he thought to himself, "Wes, old boy, you are becoming a sentimental old fool, aren't you?" Somehow he knew, though, that as odd as it was for him, a former Watcher, and her, a vampire, it was right. It was balance. It was the world paying them back in joy for some of the horrors that had persecuted them both.

As he loaded his purchases onto the counter, he froze, looking off into nothing as if he could see something happening in the distance. Something felt wrong. Something felt very wrong. The jar of

preserves in his hand crashed to the floor as his eyes widened in fear. His voice was but a whisper, but still reflected the torture he suddenly felt.

"Drusilla."

She woke screaming, the wail and cry coming from deep inside her and resonating throughout the hotel like an alarm. She couldn't stop. She couldn't open her eyes. She couldn't move. There was mayhem in her head and she couldn't make it go away.

Angel and Cordy came running down the stairs, sure that they were under some kind of demonic invasion. Finding nothing in the lobby, they moved quickly to the office where Drusilla was still screaming and covering her ears, crunched into a tight little ball in the office chair.

Angel tried to talk to her, but she scarcely heard him, her piercing scream almost deafening now. He turned her face up toward him, shouting at her, "Dru! Dru! Open your eyes! Dru!" She tried, she tried hard to obey him, the sire tone in his voice forcing her to, and she looked up toward him, her mouth still sending a dreadful siren's call throughout the building. Tears were running down her cheeks and fear and anguish reflected in the blue-green of her eyes. Angel couldn't help but be affected, his hands were trembling and he was quickly losing his focus and control. What was wrong? What horrible nightmare was obviously playing out in her head? What could bring such a reaction from her?

Cordy moved around behind her, trying to comfort her in some way, but until she stopped screaming there wasn't much to be done. She tried to move Dru's hands and shot a look to Angel. He was overcome with concern, panic starting to show through.

"Angel!" she yelled over Drusilla's screams, and she pointed to Dru's hands. They were covered with blood. He'd been so distracted by what was going on he hadn't even noticed, hadn't even smelled it.

Angel grabbed her blood-soaked hands and looked at them, Dru's cries beginning to wane slightly from sheer fatigue, her voice raspy and hoarse, but the terror in her eyes still evident. This wasn't her blood. It wasn't even human blood. It was animal blood but it had some kind of demon properties that were overpowering, even to him.

He scooped her up in his arms and bolted up the stairs, Cordelia trailing behind him. They got her into the washroom and began the painstaking process of washing off all the blood, removing her clothes, which had also become stained with it, and trying to calm her down. She was slowly coming back. She wasn't verbal yet, but the screaming had mostly stopped. Cordelia gave her some water, which soothed her parched and damaged throat. Drusilla looked up at her, pain and sorrow radiating off of her like heat on hot pavement in summer.

"I killed him," came the pitiful voice, her eyes turning to Angel, pleading, "I killed him, don't let me kill him, Angel, don't let me ..." Her voice trailed off into a mass of agonized sobs.

It took some time, but between the two of them, she was washed, her bedclothes changed, and she was rapidly falling into an unconscious state of exhaustion. They tucked her into her bed, her eyes still full of fear even as her lids fluttered closed and she fell into a deep, hard sleep.

Angel and Cordy were visibly shaken as they came down the stairs, holding hands tightly. They murmured quietly to one another about what had happened, but they were quite obviously at a loss to explain any of it. What could have caused such a reaction in her? Dru wasn't exactly known for her stability, but she had never reacted like this to anything in the hundred some-odd years Angel had known her. They took the last few stairs in silence as they entered the lobby again. They froze, both looking straight ahead and unmoving. Cordelia was holding her breath, biting her lip, and she squeezed Angel's hand so tightly that it almost broke. Standing next to the blue circular sofa was Wesley Wyndom-Pryce.

CHAPTER 6

Angel's expression darkened, a menacing snarl coming from him. "Get out of here, Wes." Cordelia's hand clamped down even tighter on Angel's, trying to hold him back before he leaped at the former watcher and perceived traitor.

Wes stood tall, meeting Angel's glare and not backing down even though there was quite obviously a threat to his own life.

"I'm here to see Drusilla." Wes's voice was deceptively calm. He knew what he was risking by coming here, but he came anyway. He had to. It was Drusilla.

"Are you responsible for what happened to her?" he growled. "I should tear your limbs from your body where you stand, rip the skin from your"

Before Angel could finish his threat Wes struck him across the jaw with a pounding force. Angel stumbled back, stunned and growling. Cordelia caught him and held him back, as Wes pushed past them, saying again, "I am here to see Drusilla." He ran up the stairs to her room, Angel's roar of protest sounding in the lobby below.

Wes burst through Drusilla's door to find her unconscious on the bed. She looked asleep, but something told him otherwise and he approached her, sitting on the edge of the bed taking her hand gently in his.

"Dru? Dru, darling? Wake up. Can you hear me, pet?" He squeezed and patted her hand. There was no response. He leaned up near her face, sleeping vampires were so disturbing sometimes. They had no breath to discern. He stroked her cool cheek with his fingertips, still calling to her softly, hoping she would come to, smile at him, and welcome him into her bed. If only.

Cordy tried to calm Angel down, but it wasn't doing much good. She finally let him go up after Wes, chasing closely behind, calling to him. When they arrived at Dru's room, they were stunned to see Wes sitting quietly by Drusilla, holding her hand and speaking softly to her. She was still unconscious.

"Wes!" Angel snapped. His voice was low and menacing. "What do you think you're doing here? Get out."

Wes took a cleansing breath and repeated his earlier mantra. "I'm here to see Drusilla."

"So you said," Angel snarled. "Who gave you the right? You're not wanted here."

Wes ignored him.

Angel growled low in his chest, that animalistic, vampire growl which meant you're one word away from death. Cordelia put a reassuring hand on Angel's arm. He withdrew, for the moment anyway, and let her take over.

"What are you talking about, Wes? Why are you here?" Cordelia's questions came out more harshly than she intended, but still she was obviously not threatening him. She needed something to intervene with Angel, some reason to not let him rip Wes apart.

Wes turned and looked directly at her, ignoring Angel entirely. "Cordelia, I'm in no mood to deal with posturing." He tossed his head toward Angel to indicate him, still without looking directly at him. "Drusilla is in real danger here, she's unresponsive, she's most likely lost in her rather eccentric mind and having difficulty finding her way out. She needs our help. Now, what happened?"

"H--how do you know this? I mean, you haven't been here, how do you know ... what is going on?" Cordy was flustered and confused and couldn't understand how this had happened, much less how Wes happened to be involved.

"I'll explain later, now, WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?" Wes still had a gentle grip on Dru's hand, but his expression and manner were quickly becoming aggressive. If he went much further Angel would be difficult to keep subdued.

"We were asleep, we heard her screaming. She had come downstairs, we found her in your office chair, screaming. It was terrifying, she wouldn't stop." She suddenly realized she had said 'your office chair.' It surprised her that, even as long as Wes had been gone from Angel Investigations, she still considered it his office. Cordy thought for a moment and added more. "She kept saying she'd killed him and there was blood on her hands. But it wasn't her blood, it was something else."

"Human?" Wes interjected.

Angel responded, all business. This was the Wes he knew, the one who could take charge and use knowledge and science to figure out what was going on. He could deal with him like this, he could not deal with a man who tried to take his son away from him, but he could set that aside for the moment to deal with the crisis at hand. For Dru. "No. Animal and some demon."

Wes stood abruptly. "Do you have some of it?"

Angel continued, "Yes, her gown, it had a lot of the blood on it."

"Get it and bring it downstairs. Cordy, you stay with Dru, let me know if anything changes." Wes started for the door, then turned back toward the unconscious Drusilla. He leaned over her, whispered something in her hear so softly that even Angel's vampiric hearing didn't catch it and then kissed her gently on the forehead.

"Let's go," he said to Angel and went downstairs to the office.

"It's as I feared," Wes was examining the stained fabric with fierce intensity. "Cylora demon. Very distinct scent. Not much, just a trace, but enough to render her completely susceptible to suggestion. What was it she was saying? It might give some clue."

Angel looked at Wes objectively for just a moment, setting aside his now long-standing desire to rip the man's arms off. He was genuinely concerned and wanting to help in this, even though Angel had made it quite clear that he was unwelcome. Wes was spending his time and effort searching for a solution to what had happened to Dru without being asked, even with Angel glaring and growling at him. He was certainly no coward.

"She kept saying she'd killed him, she didn't say who. She was hysterical and screaming and didn't make much sense. She didn't seem to be in pain, just, you know, Dru mental pain, only moreso."

"Yes, that seems to fit with that particular demon's blood." Wes turned toward the bookshelf and almost without looking, pulled exactly the book he wanted. While he looked through it, Angel began to talk in a stream of consciousness mode, trying to remember anything that happened that might help Wes.

"She was worried obviously about whoever she said she had killed. She was irrational, you know, like only Dru can be sometimes, but it was much more frantic. And the blood, it seemed to come from nowhere and got all over her and she kept screaming, a never-ending stream of screaming, since she doesn't have to breathe and all. I know she's been seeing someone lately, so I wondered if maybe he

had something to do with it, maybe she got too excited about things and bit him or killed him or somehow he managed to do something to her which made her go off the deep end. Well, deep by Dru standards which is well past deep end for anyone else ..." He stopped to take an unneeded breath, just to make the sound of his voice stop.

"Angel," Wes had stopped leafing through he book and looked at his former boss seriously. "She didn't bite him, nor did he do anything to her to cause this."

"How do you know?" Angel asked, confused.

"Because the man Drusilla is seeing is me."

Angel's face dropped in surprise. When what was said registered, Angel took one step toward Wes, looking intently into his eyes. Wes stood tall, neither bragging nor ashamed of what had been going on between him and Dru, meeting Angel's eyes with confidence. Angel took one more step toward him and hit him hard across the jaw, sending Wesley flying into the wall.

An hour later, Wes and Angel came into Dru's room again. They were both bloody, their clothes ripped, and one of Wes's eyes appeared to be swollen shut. There was also a very visible bite mark on Wes's neck, but it didn't appear to be fresh. Cordelia stood, mouth agape, but said nothing. It was rather obvious that the two men had worked out their differences in the only way they could find to do it. Thank God. At least it was finally done and they were both still alive.

Wes went straight to Drusilla, kissed her lightly on the forehead and whispered quietly to her, letting her know that he was there with her before setting the books down on her bedside table.

Cordy looked at Angel curiously. He shrugged. "I found out who Dru has been seeing." A crease appeared between Cordelia's eyebrows and Angel tossed his head toward Wes. Her mouth fell open again. Wes caught the end of the exchange and smiled, a tiny hint of embarrassment blushing his cheeks.

His demeanor changed quickly, "She is coming closer, but she's still too far inside for me to reach her. We may have to resort to a counter spell or ..." He glanced at Angel, who nodded in understanding.

"We should probably try that first, Angel," he continued, "not knowing what kind of spell was used in connection with the demon blood might inhibit a counter spell or make the existing one more potent."

Angel nodded. He was her sire. It was his place to find her and bring her back from the dark place she had fallen into. He traded places with Cordy and approached Drusilla, suddenly recognizing her beauty again, something he hadn't done in probably 50 years. She was more stunning now than she had ever been, her hair darker, her lips more red, even in her current state. It was suddenly very apparent to Angel that her liaison with Wes had brought her great happiness and good health, something Dru had seldom had in her life.

He glanced at Wes, who nodded, then Angel slipped into game face and bit into his own wrist, bringing it to Dru's lips. Small droplets of blood fell just inside her mouth, with no reaction from her. There should have been something, even a tiny movement of her tongue eager to taste the blood of her sire. But there was nothing. He exchanged an expression of concern with Wes, then let his eyes linger on the fang marks on Wes's neck as his face shifted back to his usual ruggedly handsome features. "Wes, if she has ..."

Wes nodded. "Yes, Angel, she has fed from me. Several times in fact. Perhaps ..." Their eyes met in understanding.

Cordy looked from one to the other, perplexed at their half conversation which she was not following very well. It was as if they were reading one another's mind. Before she could question it, Wes extended his wrist to Angel. "I don't have the teeth for it," he said bluntly. Angel nodded, shifted back to game face, and sank his teeth into his friend's wrist, helping him take it to Drusilla's mouth.

Her reaction was almost immediate, her tongue lapping at his bleeding wrist, her eyes still closed but now in a somewhat euphoric state. After a few moments, her eyelids fluttered as her hands came to his arm, pressing his wrist more firmly against her mouth so that she could feed instead of simply tasting him. Soon after, her eyes opened, seeking his. They met in a silent explosion of emotion which almost knocked Angel and Cordy over. It was unexplained and incredibly powerful.

"My Wesley." Drusilla's soft statement was fact. He was hers, there was no doubt. "You are alive. The pictures in my mind kept telling me that"

"Shhhhhh," Wes put his fingertips to her lips. "It's all right, dearest, I'm here, I'm alive, and I'm hopelessly and helplessly yours. The pictures were wrong."

Cordy grabbed Angel by the elbow and pulled him toward the door. "We need to leave now."

"Huh?" Angel looked at her, confused.

Wesley covered Dru's mouth with his own, their breath intermingling just as their hearts did. He lowered his body onto hers as their hands began a new exploration of every inch of the other's body. The sound of their delighted moans filled the air as Angel shifted uncomfortable.

"Uh, okay, well, if everything is all right now, then", Angel stammered. Cordy almost ripped his arm off dragging him through the doorway.

The intercom buzzed on Lilah Morgan's desk.

"Yes?"

"Your 3 o'clock is here, Ms. Morgan."

"Thank you. Send them in."

As the door opened, she stood, straightening her business suit and moving around her desk to greet her guests. She was stunned to see Cordelia Chase and Wesley Wyndham-Pryce enter. She reached back toward her intercom.

"Don't bother," said Cordelia coldly, "We ARE your 3 o'clock. Now why don't we all sit down, shall we?"

Wesley's steely expression made her skin crawl. He said nothing. He didn't have to.

Cordelia opened a folder and began, "You and one of your 'pets' visited our office a few nights ago, leaving behind a spell and some illegally obtained demon blood."

Lilah opened her mouth to contradict what she was saying, but Cordy lifted a finger to stop her. "We have you on camera." Lilah sank back into her chair, silent again. "Apparently your actions were an attempt to force a confrontation between Angel and Mr. Wyndham-Pryce." Wes smiled in a manner that made Lilah want to hide behind her desk. "As you can no doubt see, your attempt to reveal Drusilla and Wesley to Angel did not have the desired affect, and in fact, has resulted in Angel Investigations once again having a full-time research team in its employ."

Cordy continued, "We have consulted our attorney regarding prosecuting you, personally, for any number of offenses, including breaking and entering and assault. However, we have assured our counsel that, at this time, we prefer not to go to any legal extremes, such as having you disbarred or incarcerated." Cordelia was brilliant with this, delivering every line in a professional, business-like manner, and punctuating any hidden threats with a pleasant smile.

Lilah gestured for her to continue, her throat too dry to respond verbally.

Cordelia nodded, "No charges will be filed, for now, however papers are already prepared should you come within 1000 yards of the Hyperion again. Ever. However," she closed the folder, "I fear these papers will not be needed, as Angel has assured me that should you, or any of your 'associates,' show your face at our offices again, he will personally rip your head off and drink from your brain stem." She smiled calmly.

Lilah cringed. There was no doubt in her mind that Angel would do it.

"Are we clear?" Cordelia and Wesley stood and waited for her reply.

"Quite," Lilah responded, folding her hands on her desk nervously.

"Good," Cordelia responded curtly.

As she turned to leave, Wes took one step closer to Lilah, leaning over her desk and speaking in a low, rather menacing tone. "And if you come near Drusilla again, Angel will be the least of your worries." He pulled a switchblade from his jacket pocket, the same one he took from the murderous boy in the alley, and made a rather impressive slice across his left palm. He squeezed his hand into a fist, letting drops of blood fall onto the papers on her desk. Using the same tone of voice Cordelia had used, "Are we clear?"

Lilah nodded stiffly, her gaze never moving from the cold, blue depths of Wes's eyes. "Good," he responded in a deceptively pleasant voice. He turned to leave, closing and slipping the switchblade back into his jacket pocket.

As they walked down the hallway to the elevator, Cordelia smiled at Wes. "That went rather well, don't you think?"

"Oh yes, quite professional, particularly the part about the brain stem. Very nice touch." He replied.

"Thank you," Cordelia nodded appreciatively. "And might I say leaving blood on her desk was quite the attention getter?"

"Yes, you may, thank you. I think it achieved the desired result, don't you?" He smiled.

"Indeed," Cordelia smiled back. "So, Thai for lunch? There's a great place just down the street." She read Wes's expression, slightly angsty and obviously ready to get back to Dru. "We can get take out."

"Lovely," said Wes, "as long as they have tea."

The End