

## Personal Demons

An *Angel* fan fiction by Jason Vey

**Disclaimer:** *Mutant Enemy and Fox own these characters. I don't. This is for fun, enjoyment, exploration, and expansion of my meager writing skills. Please don't sue me.*

*This story takes place following Angel episode 1:8, I Will Remember You. For those of you unfamiliar with that episode, the following synopsis should help. It was taken from an Angel season one episode guide that I found at:*

[http://pages.prodigy.net/tlewallen/\\_import/pages.prodigy.net/tlewallen/index10.html](http://pages.prodigy.net/tlewallen/_import/pages.prodigy.net/tlewallen/index10.html)

After learning that Angel was in Sunnydale but stayed out of sight, Buffy comes to Los Angeles to confront him about his unannounced stalking, but a bloody battle with a medieval demon leaves Angel with awesome new powers and Buffy with a chance for true happiness with her beloved. Angel has been made human and he and Buffy spend the day with each other making love. But the happiness doesn't last when Angel and Buffy must battle a demon leaving Angel seriously injured. He then realizes he can't protect Buffy while being human and not being strong enough to fight demons, and decides to give up his humanity in order to be able to protect her. He returns to the Oracles which had initially given him his humanity and asks to be changed back. They restore him back but with a catch, the day will be turned back and no one will remember except Angel, not even Buffy. The day is turned back to where Buffy had just walked into Angel's office to confront him, the demon shows up and Angel knows how to kill him this time. Buffy finishes talking to him and then walks out leaving Angel alone with this sad memory.

*Thanks to Ariel for the Lyrics!*

-1-

*We drove across the state and back. "It's so flat," she said, while her Marlboro Red was burning to a crisp in her hand. Her light was burning out on the inside. And, so, that's why she took the ride...for the drive to take her back to the bed, to the man, to the place she never belonged.*

*"Why do we always do this?" I said to her for the umpteenth time.*

*"Do what?" she said, gazing absently out the window.*

*"You know what. Buffy, I—."*

*"Don't. Just...don't."*

*"I just don't get why we keep doing this to ourselves. Why can't we just stay away from each other, let it pass by, move on with our lives."*

*"I've tried. You've tried. Doesn't work that way."*

*"And when did you start smoking?"*

*"There's a lot about me you don't know."*

*"Yeah, but smoking? You don't smoke. Faith smokes."*

*"Maybe I am Faith."*

*"You're not Faith."*

*"No. I'm not Faith."*

*"Who are you, then?"*

*"I'm you. I'm me. Maybe I'm both of us." She took another long drag on the cigarette.*

*"I can't handle you smoking."*

*"Yes, you can. You've handled worse. And who are you to preach? You've done worse!"*

*Silence. Long, painful, loud silence.*

*"You know what's going to happen if we do this."*

*"I know."*

*"And you don't care?"*

*"It's too late."*

*She spins toward me, her yellow eyes filled with rage. My chest seizes for a moment, as though my heart could actually beat and stop. She lunges, her fangs tear into my throat...*

I wake up, sit bolt upright in bed. She, of course, isn't there.

"God. I'm so tired of this."

-2-

I needed to get out of there. It's not like me to feel that way. Usually, I like to just sit in the dark and read. That's unsettling to people, I think, me reading in the dark. Probably because most people can't actually see in the dark.

Regardless, right here and right now, I needed to leave. I tried sitting in the office. Doyle seemed content with me doing so; he's used to it, after all. But tonight every corner of the place, from the broken window (mental note: have Cordy call someone to get that fixed) to the desk that needs leveling again, reminds me of her. Her scent is still there, and it'll be there for days, imperceptible to Cordy and Doyle, but overpowering to me.

So I left, and Doyle didn't like that. Well, I mean...he liked it, me going out for a change, but he just didn't get it. So naturally, he worried. I swear he's like a grandmother sometimes—a young, drunken, Irish, womanizing grandmother.

"And where d'ye think you're goin'?"

"Out, Doyle. I'm going out."

“Grand. I could use a brew meself.”

“I didn’t say we were going out.”

“Course you didn’t. You said you were goin’. I just decided to invite meself along.”

“Can’t a guy ever brood in peace?”

“Not with me around. Besides, it’s a quiet night. No mind numbing, skull-splitting, crash-and-burn migraines with great Technicolor tragedy attached, and I could use a drink. So could you, from the look o’ things. Girl troubles?”

“You don’t know the half of it.”

“Oh, I’m fairly certain I at least know half of it.”

The conversation brings us to a bar, a little dive at the corner of Second and Main. Dark, angsty, the type of place where Lost Angels go to drown their troubles. My kind of place. I walk in, flag down the bartender, and order a beer that I really have no intention of drinking. I figure Doyle will inevitably help me out on that end. Right now I think I’m justified in never wanting to touch mortal food or drink again.

Doyle sits down next to me and orders a pint of Guinness with a shot of single-malt to chase it. He’s such a stereotype sometimes. Or maybe he just reminds me too much of me just over 200 years ago.

He knocks back the shot and makes that whiskey face. “So,” he says after he regains control of his facial muscles, “you wanna tell me what’s crawled up your hole tonight? I mean, Jesus, man. The girl was only here for a good twelve minutes or so. I know she’s the ever-lovin’ painful love of your life, but really.”

“You don’t know, Doyle. You just don’t understand.”

“Then help me understand, man. I mean, Cordy tells me your relationship with Buffy was all pain and piss and vinegar, but this seems a bit excessive.”

“Maybe it is. Maybe it’s my business.”

“Fine. Have it your way.”

Doyle turns back to his beer and stares at the mirror in front of him. He’s waiting for me to buckle and spill everything to him. He knows me too well, given the short tenure of our acquaintance. But not this time. I’ll tell him and Cordy both when I’m ready. And that might not be for a few days. I want to brood. This pain is mine, for now.

Sometimes I blame the Gypsies. Actually, I often blame them. How much is a single life really worth? I mean, centuries upon centuries of pain, and I’m not even allowed a single moment’s peace! And I wouldn’t exactly classify vampires feeding as the ultimate in evil acts. I mean, sure, by human standards, murder is bad. But vampires aren’t human, and they need to eat, just like all living things. So where does the evil fall?

I'm not saying Angelus is a good guy. But really...all he did was have a meal. So the gypsies decided to serve vengeance. And now, here I am, serving justice because of their vengeance. Sometimes I just wish I could be Angelus again, in the midst of those Gypsies, to wreak my own vengeance.

Who am I kidding? I hope Angelus stays buried forever.

Which brings us to our next contestant: Willow. She re-cursed me, put my soul back where it belongs. Smart girl, lots of potential there. So why couldn't she leave out the happiness clause? How cruel can you be?

*I killed Jenny.*

Okay, so maybe there was a tiny little portion of Willow who felt I needed to be punished too. Some subconscious part of her that wouldn't let the rest of her modify the spell. Or maybe there just wasn't time. The memories are a little fuzzy.

In the end, it's all me. My sins, my past, my penance.

I decide to take a drink of that beer after all.

-3-

I smell the whiskey and blood a good few seconds before the hand falls on my shoulder. It was only a matter of time, I suppose. Trouble seems to find me wherever I go, even brooding in the dark in my office, reading.

Still, for a split second, I wish I'd stayed home.

"You don't belong here, freak," a gruff voice says, the meaty slab of hand clamping down hard on my collar bone. He thinks he's tough. If the scent of blood and the lack of a pulse weren't enough, the little growl and the startled screams of patrons give away his identity before I even have to look at him.

"Do I know you?" I say.

"Don't matter. Our town was just fine before you came along. We fed, kept to the shadows, had it pretty good. And along comes Angel, the vampire with a soul, and ruins everything. You kill your own kind. You break the code. You make me sick."

"Do I?"

I sit still for a moment, and cast Doyle a look. His face falls as he realizes that in the coming moments, he's going to get hit by someone in this room. Then I spin to the left and low, throwing my leg out wide in a sweeping arc. It takes the vampire's ankles out and he goes crashing to the floor. I keep spinning, and come up in a fighting stance. Now I can see him: flannel shirt, extra bumpy, rolling to his feet with an almost mortal clumsiness. He reminds me a little of Lyle Gorch, only more trucker and less *Urban Cowboy*.

I barely have time to reflect on the tendency for pop-culture references I've picked up from Cordy when his friends step up to bat. There are three of them. I hear the tearing sound at my shoulder which means Doyle's put on his own game face—green and spiky. He's taking this seriously. For once.

"I don't suppose we could take this outside where there are fewer witnesses?" I say. The vampires charge in response. I throw a quick right jab and knock one of them reeling. "Didn't think so."

One of them grapples for Doyle, who is surprisingly agile for a guy who doesn't like physical activity. Must be the demon in him. He catches hold of the vamp and drops, putting his foot into the vamp's gut and flipping it over.

"Problem, boss," Doyle calls out. "Didn't think to bring a stake."

I lift my foot up high and bring it down in an axe kick on a bar stool, which shatters. "So make one," I grunt, and turn my attention back to the three vamps Doyle's left for me. How thoughtful of him.

The two toadies are newbies, out to gain a reputation. I give them thirty seconds at most. I snap my arms down, and the spring-loaded clips release two stakes into my hands. As the vamps close on me, I punch out once, twice, and they're dust. That easy.

Lyle's twin won't be quite that easy. I hope Doyle's okay. I hear a smack, a crack, a thud, and he hits the floor near me, blood trickling from his nose.

"How you doing, Doyle?"

"Got 'em right where I want him, boss." He gets up and charges again. I hear the *whoosh* behind me that signifies Doyle finishing off his minion, and breathe a sigh of relief. One less thing to worry about.

Then I hear the sirens in the distance. One more thing to worry about.

Lyle's Twin attacks. This one's got some more experience, a little vamp fu under his belt. I block, block, counter with a roundhouse kick, regain my balance after he dodges low, and bounce on my toes like a prize fighter. We circle each other, gauging the competition.

"Not bad," I compliment him. He moves his head in a circle, cracking his vertebrae, limbering up. He's getting cocky, now, confident. Just how I want him.

Finally, as vampires are wont to do, he runs out of patience and charges. I catch him by the shoulders as he comes, using his own momentum to pull him forward, right into my upraised knee. He lets out a grunt—even without air, a blow to the solar plexus is quite painful, and I bring down my elbow into his kidneys. He drops to his knees, and I swing around behind him and wrap my arm around his throat.

"Not bad," I say, "but not good enough, champ."

I drive my stake into his heart and spend the next few seconds wiping dust off my coat. Then I turn back to Doyle, who has mercifully put his human face back on, and nod towards the back door. The sirens out front are dangerously close, I have no desire to try and explain to Kate how four guys turned to dust in front of a room full of patrons. I know it'll be Kate. It's always Kate.

Doyle and I hit the back alley and head for home.

“Feeling better?” He says. “I mean, not perfectly better, not...well, you know what I mean.”

“It takes more than a fight with a few vampires to make me feel better, Doyle.”

“So you don’t wanna talk about it, yet?”

“Soon. Just let me have this for myself for awhile, okay?”

He shrugs, “Just don’t say I didn’t try to help.”

“You helped. And I appreciate it. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe the next day. I don’t know. I’ll tell you and Cordy when I’m able to process it all myself. But for now, it’s just too much.”

“Can’t say as I understand, but you’re the boss.”

“No, Doyle. I’m a champion. Again. Let’s go home.”

-FINIS-

## Lyrics:

Terami Hirsch, Raising The Dead

Before this place  
Before this name  
I heard, I heard  
She tried to rise up from the grave

Before this game  
She was outstretched to the sky  
I heard, I heard  
She tried to make the angels cry

But oh  
When will she dance  
Oh  
Like she used to dance

In darkness  
She has crawled out to see  
The light of day  
I heard, I heard  
She has found a better way

You think you see a hint of life  
Inside her  
But buried deep  
She sleeps

Raising the dead  
Calls for some ammunition  
I heard, I hears  
She took it  
As a call to return

We drove across the state and back. "It's so flat, " she said while her Marlboro Red was burning to a crisp in her hand. Her light was burning out on the inside. And, so, that's why she took the ride...for the drive to take her back to the bed, to the man, to the place she never belonged. "God. I'm so tired of this."

But oh  
When will she dance  
Oh  
Like she used to dance