

Homeward Bound

A Buffy the Vampire Slayer vignette by Jason Vey

Disclaimer: I don't own either of these characters. Joss does. I mean no disrespect. This is just for fun. Don't sue me. Thanks to Mark Jones for the lyrics!

“Are you sure about this?” Faith said without looking at Willow. Instead, she stared out the window at the night sky and chewed on her lip. The lights of the Interstate whizzed past, creating an hypnotic pattern that almost let Faith forget about all the things she'd done, about the people she was about to face after so long. Angel seemed to think she'd paid her dues, but she wasn't so sure. She had left prison way before her time was up, after all. And of all people, she'd never expected Wes to be the one to encourage her to leave. Not to mention, she wasn't used to this angst crap. It just wasn't her.

“Sure about what?” Willow said, glancing at the troubled girl.

“You know, this whole ‘going back to Sunnydale’ thing. I’m pretty damn sure that B ain’t gonna be all flowers and candy to see me.”

“I told you. I called her. She knows you’re coming, and she’s grateful for the help. We can use all the help we can get these days.”

Faith turned her head, briefly, but as soon as she met Willow’s gaze she turned back to the window. After all this time, it was still hard to look the girl in the face. Not surprising, considering that Faith had kidnapped her, held her prisoner, and even tried to kill her. Now here she was, on the right side of the line again. It was still a lot to process.

Willow reached out and touched Faith’s shoulder. Faith started, glanced back at her, almost fearful.

“You okay?” Willow said.

“Five by five.”

“You don’t look it.”

“Should I? I tried to kill you, and B. Hell, I tried to kill you all, if you really think about it. And you know what the real bitch of it is?”

“You don’t entirely regret it.”

Faith sighed, and looked back out the window. “I don’t entirely regret it. I mean, I’m a loner, Will. I always have been. Never trusted anyone, always figured everyone had an angle, you know? Then the Mayor comes along, and he was just wicked cool to me. Sure, he might’ve been evil, but he loved me. Treated me like a person, no matter what he did to everyone else. I’d have killed for him.”

“You did kill for him.”

“Yeah, I did. Thing that scares me is, I think I might do it again, if he was still alive and he asked me to. He was like the father I never had.”

“Things are different, now, though. You’ve learned how to trust...haven’t you?”
Faith shrugged. “I don’t know. We’ll see, I guess.”

Willow took a deep breath. “Faith, I know we’ve never been all snuggle-buddies, but I want you to know that you can trust me, no matter what.”

Faith looked at Willow full-on and managed a mischievous smile. “Will...I’m straight.”

“Oh, I know...I mean, I wasn’t...I didn’t mean....” She huffed. “I have a girlfriend, anyway.”

“I know, girlfriend. Just messin’ with you.”

“Oh...well, don’t do that,” Willow mock-scolded with a pouty face. “What I’m saying is that I know. Believe it or not, I know what you’ve been through and where you’ve been.”

“Baby, I’ve been all over. Montana, Idaho, New England, Pennsylvania. You name it.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“I know what you meant. Ok, let’s give it a try. You ever felt that somehow you weren’t yourself? Like trapped outside you. Like your body was the same, but everything around you wasn’t right?”

“Boy, have I been there. And you’re trapped inside your rage and your hate, and if you don’t stop, you’ll lose control. But you can’t stop.”

Faith looked surprised. “And it hurts like a knife twisting in your gut. How do you know?”

“You think I got to be a mega-powerful Witch this fast by staying on the light side?”

“What happened to you, Willow?”

“Went bad last year. Flayed a guy alive for murdering Tara. Tried to destroy the world. But I’m much better, now. Honest. Oh, I forget you weren’t around. Tara was my...”

“Your gal. I know. I met her. I wasn’t myself at the time. Long story. Anyway, I’m impressed. Took Angel, Buffy, and a couple severe beatings to turn me around. How about you?”

“Giles. He went all Gandalf-y on me.”

“Cute.”

Suddenly, Willow narrowed her eyes and squinted out the window into the forest along the roadside. Instinctively, she slowed down, pulling the car over.

“What’s up?” Faith said.

“I think we have company, in the woods.”

“Then, um, shouldn’t we be moving faster, rather than slowing down?”

“I don’t know if I like the idea of them following us back to Sunnydale. You up for a fight?”

“You know me. Always ready to get my slay on. Good for the soul, you know?”

Willow nodded. “Okay, then. Let’s go.”

The vampire came at Faith with a hard right cross, which the Slayer ducked easily. She grabbed the demon by the neck and back of his shirt, and bent him over, driving her knee into his stomach. The creature grunted, and staggered back a couple steps. He growled at her.

“In case you missed it,” she said, “Not scared of the bumps, or the bad dental work. You gonna fight, or make monkey shines all day?”

The vampire charged. Faith spun around, throwing her right foot up in a high, sweeping wheel kick that sent the creature sprawling to the ground. “How you doin’ Will?” she called.

“Hanging,” Willow said, and stretched out her hand as two vampires charged her. “Thicken!” she cried, and the two creatures hit an invisible wall of force that had sprung up in front of the witch.

“Now for the real fun,” Willow said. Behind her, there was a snapping and cracking as the branches broke free from two trees, and seemingly of their own volition shot past the Wicca, solidly impaling the vampires. Willow dropped the binding spell and closed her eyes against the clouds of exploding grave dust.

“Fun?” Faith said, hammering away at her own opponent. “Where’s the fun in just staking them?” She leapt on the vampire, bearing it to the ground, and proceeded to bash it repeatedly in the face. Each time she hit the creature, she could feel more aggression leaving her body, more of the guilt and pain worked out on the undead foe. This was what being a Slayer was about. This was what she was supposed to be doing, not hurting and killing the people who should be her friends.

This was what it felt like to be a Good Guy, and Faith liked it.

A gentle tap on her shoulder roused the Slayer from the misty red haze that had fallen over her, and she turned to look at Willow, still clutching the bloody pulp of the vampire in her left hand. Willow handed her a broken tree branch.

“Glad to see you’re working out your issues, but we’re kinda in a hurry.”

“Right. Thanks.” Faith took the stake and jammed it into the vampire’s chest, watching with grim satisfaction as it exploded to dust.

“Feel better?” Willow said.

“Five by five...for real, this time. Let’s go help B, and you can fill me in on this Big Bad on the way.”

“So this thing is like, evil incarnate?”

“Pretty much. Except for the incarnate part. It’s still incorporeal.”

“And we’re gonna beat it, how?”

“Dunno yet. Buffy’s working on it, and we’re gathering potential Slayers from all over the world to help.”

“Sounds like a party. Never met a potential before.”

Willow shrugged. “They’re just teenage girls. They can be a headache. Most of them. Some of them are...exceptional, though.”

“Why Willow,” Faith said, noting the hint of flush that crept into Willow’s cheeks, “So your new gal’s one of the potentials, is she? Never figured you for a cradle robber.”

Willow blushed a deep crimson. “Kennedy. She’s a potential, but not a likely. She’s nineteen.”

“Even still.”

Suddenly, Willow slammed on the brakes, almost sending the car into a tailspin. Just ahead of them, a body flew from a van and hit the road, hard, rolling across the center lane and straight into their path. Faith threw her hands out, catching herself on the dashboard.

“Nice driving,” she said, but Willow was already out of the car.

“Oh, my God! Are you okay? Can you talk?”

Faith got out behind her, and walked to examine the girl. She'd been cut from rib to rib, almost gutted. Faith knew how that felt, and winced.

“She's bleeding really badly,” Willow said. “We need to get this girl to a hospital!”

“Yep,” Faith sighed. “I'm back in Sunnydale.”