

PENPALS

A Spike and Buffy Romance



HOLLY DENISE





JANUARY 23, 2000

*To the Annoying Platinum Pest That Won't Die,
I was cleaning out my jewelry box and I found this cheap piece of crap. So
here's your stupid ring back.*
- Buffy

JANUARY 25, 2000

Slayer,
Had it in your jewelry box, did you? Guessing that enormous sod
you're dating saw it and went all green around the ears. Does he know
about that little trick with your tongue, or is that still just between us?
- Your future killer

JANUARY 26, 2000

Blood Breath,
*You mention that to anyone ever and I swear your story will have a dusty
ending. Also, just in case you need a reminder: unlike you, I can hit things.*
- Slayer of annoying fangless bloodsuckers

. . . .

*J*ANUARY 30, 2000

Slayer,

Touched a nerve, didn't I? What's the matter? The new boy not working out for you? Shame. Took you long enough to find one who thinks you are worth a second go. I'd hoped mightily he might last more than a week. Don't know if you can bounce back from yet another tragic twist in the mess you call a love life.

- Best snog you've ever had

JANUARY 30, 2000

The best WHAT I've ever had???

*J*ANUARY 31, 2000

Means kiss, Slayer. Why? You think I was talking about something else? Or did remembering it make your head go fuzzier than usual?

- Yours in curiosity

FEBRUARY 2, 2000

Future Dust Pile,

Bite me so hard. And stop writing me notes.

- *Killer of annoying vampires*

FEBRUARY 4, 2000

Slayer,

Oh, now we're getting naughty. Name the time and place, love, and I'll be there with bells on. Make you cream your knickers better than any human tosser ever could.

You started this note business. Don't want a response? Stop writing me.

- Only bloke around who can give it to you good

. . .

FEBRUARY 6, 2000

You are disgusting.

FEBRUARY 8, 2000

Yet you can't seem to help yourself, can you, kitten? Tell me, did you get off thinking about my fangs in your throat? Not ashamed to admit that I did.

FEBRUARY 9, 2000

Can't help but notice some tension between you and Captain Cardboard. Don't tell me there's trouble in paradise.

FEBRUARY 10, 2000

Just how many of your men do you think are going to try and kill you, pet? Not that I don't sympathize with them, but you do seem to have a bloody type.

FEBRUARY 13, 2000

Good god, Spike, take the hint and stop writing to me. This is beyond pathetic. You found out you can hit demons—go do that.

FEBRUARY 14, 2000

Slayer,

You're kidding yourself if you think I don't know just how much you enjoy receiving my little notes. Almost as much as you like giving them back to me. Gets you all hot finding reasons to get close to me. And being that it's Valentine's Day, something ought to do the trick. We both know it's not that tosser warming your bed. You never smell as hot for him as you did the day you spent wiggling on my lap.

Be honest now, don't you wish that spell had gone on a mite longer? We might've been able to consummate it properly.

FEBRUARY 15, 2000

Say anything else like that to me and you are so beyond dust.

FEBRUARY 17, 2000

Do you even take your pitiful threats seriously anymore? Does anyone?

Notice you didn't answer my question. I know from those marks in your throat that you've walked a bit on the wild side, just enough to get a taste for it. Unlike your enormous ponce of an ex, though, I'd make it good for you. It's always better if fangs aren't the only thing inside you at the time.

Think about that the next time you're faking it with Captain Cardboard. Might actually help you uncork.

FEBRUARY 28, 2000

That the end of this, then, pet? Was it something I wrote?

FEBRUARY 28, 2000

Oh my god, Spike, stop writing to me. This is beyond pathetic.

FEBRUARY 29, 2000

Truth hurts, doesn't it?

And regarding your recent near-death, you really think Soldier Boy didn't know what was going on? Not even you are that bloody dense.

Of course, you suited up and decided to join the team, so maybe you are.

. . .

MARCH 1, 2000

You're a bloody tease, you know that, Slayer? Another sodding second of that and I'd have had you against the wall, bugger the rest. You were asking for it and you know it.

MARCH 4, 2000

God, I'm sure I don't want to know, but what in the world are you talking about?

MARCH 7, 2000

You know bloody well what I'm talking about. All that about riding me to a gallop. You think you can just do that to a man? Might not be able to hurt you, pet, but I'm not without my resources. Try it again and I'll give you exactly what you're begging me for.

MARCH 13, 2000

First of all—gross.

Second of all—that wasn't me, you freaking idiot, that was Faith. She did this switch-a-roo thing with my body.

Third of all—if I find out you did anything to my body while she was inside it, I swear, that's the end.

MARCH 18, 2000

Slayer,

Gotta say, makes a type of sense, now that you mention it. She had you pegged, though. Stick up your ass and everything else. Right shame she took off before we got to know each other properly. Seems like the kind of bird who knows how to show a bloke a good time. Don't happen to know where she toddled off to, do you?

MARCH 21, 2000

Of course you'd be into Faith. Well, Bleach Boy, you can join the club. I think there's a waitlist to her bedroom, but have fun there. Lord knows half the town has.

Also, you're disgusting.

MARCH 23, 2000

Why Slayer, I'd almost think you were jealous.

MARCH 25, 2000

In so many ways, you are bent.

MARCH 26, 2000

Just the right way, actually. Makes a girl come harder than she has in her life. Care to take it for a test-drive? I'll look up the other bird if you'd rather, but I figured you should get first right of refusal.

APRIL 7, 2000

Think if old Jonathan hadn't been with you that night, things might have gotten mighty interesting against the mausoleum, Betty.

APRIL 17, 2000

Gone silent on me again, Slayer. Be careful now or a bloke will think you don't care.

APRIL 18, 2000

Got it in one! I don't care. In so many ways, I don't care. You're a pig. No, worse than a pig. The slop a pig eats. Go and screw Faith or whoever you want. I'll be here not caring.

. . .

APRIL 19, 2000

Does writing it down help it sound convincing to you?

Here's the thing, love. Turns out the only person I have a hankering to shag is the world's worst penfriend. Bloody embarrassing, but it's the truth. What's a bloke to do about that?

APRIL 19, 2000

Oh my god, you seriously did not just imply you want to get freaky with me. That did not happen. Have you forgotten you're a VAMPIRE? That we're mortal enemies? That I hate your non-breathing guts? Any of this ring a bell?

Gross. The next time I see you, you are so dust.

APRIL 21, 2000

Slayer, haven't you cottoned on yet that death threats are just foreplay? You know just how to get me hot. Since you're not going to volunteer to do something about that, I'll just have to have myself off. But don't worry. I'll be thinking about you the entire time.

APRIL 22, 2000

So, did you really do that?

APRIL 23, 2000

Do what?

APRIL 23, 2000

You know what.

APRIL 23, 2000

Sorry, kitten, afraid I don't. You'll have to be a mite more specific.

. . .

APRIL 24, 2000

You're an ass.

APRIL 24, 2000

Are what you eat, I suppose.

APRIL 24, 2000

WHAT?

APRIL 26, 2000

God, I forget how innocent you still are. Would be a right shame to spoil all that. That said, do you have something you want to ask me?

APRIL 27, 2000

No. I am not putting that in ink where it could be found by anyone.

APRIL 29, 2000

Do you really have so little faith in me that I'd leave your little love notes out and about for anyone to see?

APRIL 30, 2000

Do you even need to ask? And they are so not love notes.

MAY 1, 2000

Tell yourself what you want, kitten. We both know the better of it. But since you are being shy, I'll go ahead and answer the question you don't have the stones to ask. Do I want thinking about you? All the bloody time. As of late, it's been your notes that set me off. How you have to get all close to me to slip one in my pocket. The way you look

when I know you've written something new, all pink in the cheeks and tense. Know how I'd like to work that tension out. You can't tell me Solider Boy's good for much, because I can smell how badly you need it.

MAY 3, 2000

You are twisted, sick, and disgusting.

MAY 3, 2000

Yet you keep writing to me.

MAY 5, 2000

You keep writing to me!

MAY 5, 2000

You started this, pet. Just passing the time, since I can't do much else these days, as your lot so loves to point out.

MAY 6, 2000

Get a new hobby.

MAY 6, 2000

Will when you stop writing to me.

MAY 7, 2000

I've tried! I've stopped and you just keep on doing it!

MAY 7, 2000

Because I know you want to answer. Wouldn't do this at all if you weren't enjoying yourself a little. Need I remind you again that I can smell it on you when you get near me enough to slip me a new one?

MAY 7, 2000

Whatever. Looks like Faith landed in LA, so I'm headed off to see the ex.

MAY 7, 2000

Tell Grandpappy I said "get stuffed" and try not to shag him while you're there, if you can.

MAY 10, 2000

In a bit of a pickle here, love. See, got word that your tosser of a boyfriend got thrashed by your tosser of an ex. Not too keen on cheering for Angel, but bloody hell, if he didn't do what the rest of us have been dreaming about. More's the pity you didn't throw him that shag, though. Might have broken Finn's neck and had him out of our lives forever.

MAY 10, 2000

You're seriously sorry I didn't bang Angel? Spike, wow with the mixed signals.

MAY 10, 2000

Of course I don't want you to fuck that wanker, you dizzy bitch. Been driving myself batty wondering what you were doing with him. Just handled it a bit better than your soldier boy.

MAY 10, 2000

And why do you care?

. . .

MAY 10, 2000

Last time you lost your knickers for him, things didn't work out so well for yours truly. Not aiming to repeat history.

MAY 11, 2000

There are only so many times Dru can dump you.

MAY 13, 2000

I'm sorry. That was mean.

MAY 13, 2000

An apology from her highness. Might have to mark the occasion.

MAY 13, 2000

Was that really the only reason you didn't want me to sleep with Angel? The soullessness?

MAY 13, 2000

What do you think?

MAY 13, 2000

I think you're crazy with the mixed signals and I'm crazy for writing this and even crazier for giving it to you. We really need to stop.

MAY 14, 2000

I don't want to stop. Neither do you. Think you know how this ends, love.

. . .

MAY 14, 2000

How's it end?

MAY 14, 2000

With us talking face-to-face about whatever the bleeding hell we've been doing all year. Preferably after you've kicked Captain Cardboard to the curb.

MAY 14, 2000

And why would I do that?

MAY 14, 2000

Because you don't love him and you never will. If you loved him, you wouldn't be having me on like this and we both know it.

MAY 14, 2000

Wow. So you think I love you? Man, have you read these notes wrong.

MAY 14, 2000

How should I read them?

MAY 14, 2000

Way to pass the time.

MAY 14, 2000

You mean you're having fun. You have this much fun with Finn? Don't ever seem to see you perking up like you do when I know you

have something new for me, or when you steal off to scribble something during those bloody terrible Scooby meetings. Know you can't see it, but I sure as fuck can. You get this light in your eyes and you flush all over. I can hear your heart going a mile a bloody minute. Never been a time I've seen you get like that around the soldier. Not once. And I think you know it.

MAY 15, 2000

Scare you too much with that last one, pet?

MAY 15, 2000

We're taking down the Initiative. You want in?

MAY 15, 2000

Going to just ignore everything I said then?

MAY 15, 2000

It's an easy question, Spike. Yes or no?

MAY 15, 2000

Fuck. Yes.

MAY 15, 2000

In case we don't survive this, Slayer, or they nab me again before I can do any damage, think there's something you ought to know. I'm pretty sure I'm in love with you.

MAY 25, 2000

Live in a world where even your dreams aren't safe. Bloody figures.

. . .

MAY 31, 2000

So we're just going to ignore it, then? What I told you?

JUNE 10, 2000

Last little bit has been right dull. Nothing to say still?

JUNE 23, 2000

Been long enough I guess that's really the end. Don't regret saying it, though. Going into bloody war and that's just what you tell the people you fancy.



AS IT TURNED OUT, BREAKING UP WITH RILEY WAS THE EASY PART. And she supposed that told her everything she needed to know.

It had been more than two months now since Spike had last *accidentally* bumped into her to deliver a secret note. Two months of sitting and stewing, rereading those she hadn't tossed away and wondering what the hell was wrong with her. Both for having started this stupid correspondence and for missing the thrill of receiving something new. Or the rush of finding reasons to get close to him during those Scooby meetings where they'd both done little else than carry on an ongoing conversation while Giles prattled on and Anya and Xander pretended they weren't making out and Willow tried to seem engaged. Or how, when she hadn't seen him in a while, she'd purposefully patrol near that crypt he'd eventually made his home just to drop him a line.

The notes weren't the only thing that had stopped. Buffy had more or less stopped seeing Spike at all. While he'd been a regular fixture at Giles's house for the bulk of the year, he'd upped and vanished on her after leaving her that last message. Not that she could blame him. Guy tells girl he loves her and girl ignores it—well, *tries* to ignore it, but the

guy doesn't know that she finds herself thinking about him during the most inopportune moments. Like, say, when girl and her actual boyfriend are making out or trying to have sex. Or while she stalks the cemeteries at night, secretly hoping but never admitting that she's looking for a certain platinum head around every corner. The guy doesn't know that because the girl didn't tell him, and because the guy has at least some modicum of pride, he bows out.

The guy doesn't know that he was right and she'd spent these last few months having more fun sneaking messages with him than she'd had on any date with her now ex-boyfriend. Doing that, writing down things and coming up with ways to slip him a piece of paper, had been the most exciting part of her life for a while, and she missed it.

Oh hell, who was she kidding? She missed him. And instead of ruminating over why she did, she'd wasted a crap-ton of time beating herself over the head with all the reasons why she shouldn't. Vampires were evil, there was an easy one. Spike didn't have a soul—that old chestnut. He'd tried to kill her numerous times. True, but he'd also helped her keep the world from being sucked into Hell that one time. He'd come to her when he hadn't had anyone else to turn to. And he'd saved her butt numerous times this last year after he'd discovered he could cause damage to the demonically inclined. All things he hadn't had to do.

Buffy sighed and glared down at the piece of paper she'd placed with intent on the kitchen island, willing it to give her the words she was looking for. But there was no good way to restart a correspondence after so much time had passed. And hey, maybe he'd moved on. Found himself a nice lady vamp to be all annoying with, and never mind how much that thought hurt because that was exactly what Spike *should* have done. It was what any rational guy would do. Granted, Spike was hardly what she'd call rational, but the same principle applied.

She swallowed, pressed her eyes closed, then opened them again. There was really only one thing for it. She had to know for certain.

So, without letting her brain do any of its usual interference, Buffy scribbled something in haste, folded the paper into a neat square and stuffed it in her back pocket. She wasn't even sure if her patrol would

take her by Restfield tonight, so it might be she never got the chance to deliver it.

She was getting worse at this whole *lying to herself* thing, but maybe that was for the best.



BUFFY REALLY WASN'T SURE WHAT THE PLAN WAS. NORMALLY, when leaving a note at his crypt, she'd just wedge the thing in the crack of the door, but that wasn't going to work tonight. She wouldn't be able to take off and wait for a response, mainly because she wasn't sure if she would get one. She was also a thousand percent sure she didn't want to kick the door open and make with the entrance in case he *had* moved on and was entertaining some new vamp skank. So she ended up standing outside the damn crypt for going on five minutes, weighing her options, twisting the note in her hands, and debating just going home and trying again to put all of this behind her.

But she knew that wasn't possible. That had been her tactic every night since the last note had come, ever since she'd had the *it's not you, it's me* talk with Riley. There was no putting this behind her until she confronted it.

Heart in her throat, Buffy raised her fist to the door, hesitated, then forced herself to knock hard before she could let her inner Hamlet waffle another second.

There was nothing for a long moment—a really, really long moment. She stood there, trying hard to get the situation in her chest under control, her mind flooding with a thousand possible scenarios. Spike was out. Spike was busy. Spike had moved. Spike had left Sunnydale. Spike was having sex with someone who wasn't her because, obviously, vampires didn't just sit around and pine for months for the human they've been secretly flirting with to decide whether or not she was ready to do more than flirt. That she even wanted to. Which she didn't, thanks. Nope. Buffy was here for closure. Nothing more.

Then the door opened, and there he was, standing just feet from her wearing jeans and a button-up shirt that was currently not

buttoned-up, rather showing off marble-like abs and a thoroughly lickable chest. Buffy swallowed hard, her heart going into triple time.

He stared at her, and she stared at him, and nothing in her world made sense anymore.

After a beat, she remembered herself and thrust the note into his hands without saying a word. Spike blinked, something unreadable flickering across his face, then unfolded the paper and glanced down. He studied it for a long time—too long, really. There were only four words there and they were all of the monosyllabic variety, which shouldn't take more than a second to read. Yet there he stood, eyes glued to the paper, his expression closed off.

An eternity later, he reached into his back pocket and pulled out a pen. He scribbled something, stuffed the pen back in his pocket, then handed her the sheet. It was only after she had it back in her shaking hand that he met her eyes.

Buffy released a ragged breath, the situation in her chest reaching danger levels. Like she thought she might actually pass out or something. She steeled herself and glanced down.

At the top was her message.

Did you mean it?

And under it, in his familiar handwriting:

Every word.

Buffy swallowed hard, her eyes stinging. She reached out, made a grabby motion, knowing she looked stupid but not yet willing to say anything out loud. Thankfully, Spike seemed to understand, and the pen was pressed against her palm the next second.

Do you still?

She handed it back to him. This time, he didn't consider the question for nearly as long, and the paper was shoved back at her within seconds.

Can't bloody stop.

The galloping sensation in her chest exploded into something else—new and terrifying but wonderful all at the same time.

“Say it,” Buffy said, thrusting the paper back at him and looking at him directly. “Say it out loud.”

Something cracked behind his eyes, and all at once, he was too readable. She looked and she saw everything—apprehension, anger and hurt... And something else. Something that shoved her to the edge of a threshold she somehow hadn't known she was approaching, even if the path had been scattered with signs.

It looked like hope.

Then he parted his lips and said, softly, “I love you, Slayer.”

And for once, she didn't bother to check in with her brain. She wouldn't have had the chance anyway—her heart had taken control. For the next thing she knew, she'd crossed that final threshold and barreled into his arms.

“Me too,” she said before lifting her head to press a kiss against his lips.

Spike was still for a second—a long, torturous second—before he groaned and pulled her tighter against his chest. In a whirl of motion, he had kicked the door shut behind them and they were moving. She was in Spike's arms, in his crypt, the door was closed and they were moving. And god, he did things to her mouth that were definitely evil, things no guy had done before or since the last time they'd been tangled up in each other. He growled into her, walking her back until her calves hit something—a sofa; apparently, he'd decorated—and she fell back onto the cushions with Spike on top of her.

It wasn't until later, much later, after orgasm number infinity and well past the point of feeling her legs, that Spike asked her something in earnest.

He glanced up from where he was lying between her thighs, his mouth shining and his eyes dancing and every bit of him looking as happy as he had during those few brief hours last November when they'd been engaged.

“Just curious, Slayer, what took you so long?”

There was no good answer to that, so she gave him a bad one.

“My...last note must have gotten lost in the mail.”

He blinked at her, then snickered and lowered his head and started making magic with his tongue all over again.

“That was bloody awful, pet.”

“Yeah, but you love me anyway.”

He glanced up, smirking. “I do. Now hush. I’m eating.”

And though Buffy wasn’t one to do what she was told, she figured it was okay to go against-type every now and then.

