

# SPUFFY VS. TECHNOLOGY



HOLLY DENISE





## XEROX

THE DEPTHS TO WHICH SPIKE WOULD SINK IN ORDER TO RUB something in were limitless. No surprises there. No nuance, either. Just Spike being his damn self, proving time and again that he had the emotional maturity of a grapefruit. Angel would expect no less, and no less was what he got. It barely even phased him anymore.

So when he took his seat behind his desk that morning, the sunlight that would kill him meeting the special retrofit glazing that kept him from disintegrating into so much dust, he didn't blink at the stack of papers that awaited him, or the attached sticky note covered with Spike's familiar scrawl. It made sense that his errant offspring would have had to get in the last word. One final dig. All it proved was that Angel was right, and eventually Buffy would see it too.

*Buffy.* Yeah, that one stung. So did the place on his nose where her knuckles had cracked cartilage.

"How could you not tell me?" she'd demanded, trembling with righteous fury he'd so rarely seen aimed at him.

"It wasn't my decision," he'd fired back.

"Bullshit, it wasn't your decision. The second he came out of that amulet, you should have been on the phone. *I* should have been here!"

"We didn't know what he was!"

“Well, I do!”

And then she'd reared back a fist and crunched it into his face with enough force he'd been thrown through the glass wall of his office. He'd sat up, brushing debris off his suit pants, and looked up just in time to catch Buffy tugging a cackling Spike into one of the many hallways that comprised the executive floor of the Wolfram and Hart building. Fred and Wesley had been standing off to the side, the former with a weak, apologetic smile on her face, owing to the fact that she was the one who had taken it upon herself to phone Buffy in the first place.

It had been hard not to react with hurt. Harder not to scream at the bad luck that was Buffy storming out of the elevator the second Spike had opened a package that had inexplicably re-corporealized him. No one had seemed to care that the lights were flashing or the phones ringing off the hook or even *how* it was Spike was once again able to touch people as well as annoy them. No, the headline had been the Slayer punching the boss in the nose and taking off with a former ghost for what Gunn called a nooner.

But Angel knew Buffy. Whatever it was she felt for Spike was strong—stronger than he was comfortable admitting—but also fleeting, likely heightened by the loss of her hometown and all the conflicting emotions that went with it. After all, if her feelings for Spike were as intense as all that, there was no way she would have kissed *Angel* when he'd swooped into Sunnydale those months ago. It was easier to love someone in absentia than it was when they were right in front of you, and that was especially true when the someone in question was Spike.

Spike, who claimed to care about Buffy, but had made sure that his last act before leaving Wolfram and Hart was to rub in what he saw as his victory over Angel, and at Buffy's expense, no less. Angel knew what he would find before he turned over the stack of papers on his desk—the note, *Enjoy the view, wanker*—leaving little to the imagination.

And as Angel started to thumb through the pages, which were indeed views of Buffy's ass, sans underwear, courtesy of the seat she'd claimed in the copy room, it was anger for her that started to bubble inside him. The violation. The betrayal. Even after all these years, she had no idea the levels Spike would stoop to in order to feel like he'd won.

Angel wondered how he might let her know about this. She likely

wouldn't talk to him if he called, but maybe he could find out where she and Spike were heading and make sure this was waiting for them when they arrived.

And that was his plan until he arrived at the final image and everything inside of his already-technically-dead body went cold.

It was of her breasts. They were pressed against the flat copy surface, the light of the xerox machine throwing the mark just above her left nipple into sharp relief. A mark that was undeniably a vampire bite, oozing blood that had been smudged into the image.

She'd let the bastard *bite* her.

And written just above the mark was another note, this one not in Spike's handwriting.

*I'd keep this if I were you, Angel. You'll never see them or any other part of me again. – Buffy*

Angel stared at the note longer than he would ever admit to anyone, willing the ringing in his head to lessen. But it didn't. Nothing did.

She knew. She knew exactly who Spike was and she'd done this anyway. *Chosen* him anyway.

Angel worked his throat, let his eyes roam over the image again. Over all the images—the stack of copies the two idiots had made just so he would feel this thing he was feeling now. Buffy's privacy hadn't been compromised; she hadn't been betrayed. She'd let this happen to make a point. She'd wanted him to know.

And now he did know. Finally, at last, Angel knew he was better off without her. She'd done him a favor. The favor he'd been trying to do her, oddly enough, but there was no saving those who didn't want to be saved. There was just regrouping, tossing these papers into the trash, arranging for the copy room to be sanitized, and moving on with his life.

And that's exactly what he did.

Except he put the papers into his desk instead.

## VIRAL

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS—REALLY, EVER SINCE SHE'D REALIZED THE long-term consequences of Willow's resurrection spell—Buffy had come to understand that immortality giveth and immortality taketh away.

Giveth: She and Spike could still pass for twenty-somethings though she was officially forty-two and he was...well, a lot older than that.

Taketh: Apparently, there was no such thing as "too old" when it came to lectures from the watcher. Who wasn't *even* her watcher anymore. In fact, she was kinda the boss of him. That was the way this whole brave new—not so new anymore, though, *Giles*—world worked ever since the old Watchers Council had been blown to smithereens.

"Do you have any idea how careless you were?" Giles demanded, turning to pace back toward Spike's end of the room, even though pacing was something that he didn't do as well anymore and needed a cane to do at all. One too many bonks on the head and interference roles in world savage had made him extra breakable and wobbly and fall-prone. "How this undermines the efforts we have made in our international alliances with the—"

"Oh, put a bloody cork in it," Spike said, rocking back on his heels, his hands in his pockets. "Just a bit of fun we were havin', yeah?"

"Fun?" Giles echoed. He reached for his glasses before remembering

that he'd had that eye surgery years ago and they weren't there for the dramatic removal. "*Fun?* Does this look like fun to you?"

With a flourish, he turned to the screen behind him—the one *her* Slayer Academy dollars had paid for, thank you very much—and with a dexterity that defied his age, he had the video that had been captured just hours before pulled up and stretched across the wall in all its 1080p glory. Technology was rather remarkable these days—so remarkable there was no question that the two people against that alleyway wall were her and Spike, and likewise no question what they were doing. Or exactly what her O-face looked like, or just how loud she screamed when his fangs were in her throat.

It was hardly their fault. They had just had a really good fight—with others, not each other—and had been intent on celebrating in style. Particularly since they'd been forced to cut their anniversary short by that gang of tourist-snatching vamps in the first place. Which, hello, where were the, "*Good job, Buffy!*" or the, "*Nicely done, Spike!*" accolades they so deserved? It was like all Giles could focus on was the fact that some dweeb had noticed them sneak away after the dustage to resume what had been a nice evening.

"Do you have any idea how difficult it has been to get the Demon Hunters Association of Luxembourg to agree to talk with us?" Giles demanded, again like he was her boss and not the other way around. "I rather think—"

"Oh, those repressed sods can either see that the lady knows how to have a good time or bugger off," Spike snapped. "If you think they'll watch this and see what she does—how she leaps in without hesitation—and worry about who she shags for afters, they're not the sort we need to worry with in the first place."

Giles glared at Spike for a moment as though glaring had ever had any effect on him in the past. Then, at length, he sighed.

"Could you two just..." He frowned, seeming to struggle for words. "*Try* to be discreet?"

Spike slid a glance to Buffy out of the corner of his eye. She knew what he was thinking without needing to be told.

After nearly twenty years of being together, working like this, fighting side-by-side, sharing the same bed, and tirelessly dedicating

themselves to make the world a better place, odds were good they were pretty set in their ways.

But Giles was old. Ancient, even. And what's more, he looked it. Things like sex and fun were probably a touchy subject, seeing as he'd been allergic to both most of the time she'd known him, and especially over the last two decades.

"We'll try," Buffy said, nodding. And she did try—try to keep a straight face.

"That's right," Spike said, following her lead as he always did. "Next time we have a mind to enjoy ourselves, we'll think of you."

"Instant buzzkill," she agreed.

Giles's eyes darkened for a second. "Do that," he said, then hobbled out the door as quickly as his cane could carry him.

Buffy and Spike stood still for a moment. Then, together, started to laugh.

"Nice angle they caught this time," her vampire purred as he closed the distance between them and threw an arm around her shoulders. "Love the way the light hits your face."

"You are such a bad influence."

"You love it."

Buffy grinned and worked her arms around him, gazing into the eyes that were home and always would be. "Don't tell anyone," she whispered.

"Not bloody likely," he replied, firing back a smirk of his own, and kissed her before she could think to complain.



## YUM

THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT SPIKE WEARING GLASSES THAT MADE the responsible adult in Buffy fly out the window. Whoosh, bye-bye, all gone. It made no sense to her but, over the years, she'd come to accept it, the way she had most everything else involving her reactions to Spike. And though he would protest, grumble, even scold her for what she was about to do, she also knew that he'd one-hundred-percent slid those glasses on because he very badly wanted what was coming.

One of the things they'd discovered was the soul didn't make him any less evil. It just helped him channel his evil into other things.

That was her story, and she was sticking to it.

"Right," Spike said from his seat at the table that doubled as a desk, trying—and failing—not to study the self-view on the Zoom session in such a way that his eyes never quite made it to the laptop camera. Someday, maybe, he'd outgrow his fascination with modern technology and how it helped him skirt the whole *reflection* thing, but as of today, he was still obsessed with his selfie stick and any other piece of equipment that allowed him to watch himself in real time. The result was the newbie watchers who were sitting in on the session would only get the occasional glimpse of their instructor looking at them as though this were an

actual class. “Dunno where the bugger I left off before. One of you brainy types take notes?”

He pulled his gaze off the screen long enough to meet Buffy’s eyes as she sidled into the room, wearing nothing but the very short bathrobe that he’d gotten her for their last anniversary—his creative solution to preserving her modesty if she needed to do something like answer the door but also grant him easy access. It had been mostly a joke, but she’d had fun with it more than once, especially since it hit her at her thighs. Spike had seen her naked so many times she kept expecting the novelty to wear off, but two decades in and his response to her remained Pavlovian—and always would, to hear him tell it; he’d meant it when he’d said he always wanted her. He also went just a little crazy when she was barely covered up, hence why the robe had been more a gift for him. So easy to bend over and flash him, which she knew had been the point.

Only now he didn’t look too happy to see her wearing it. Now he scowled at her through those stupid glasses she knew he only wore when he wanted her to jump his sexy undead bones and made a point about focusing on the Zoom session with this class of up-and-coming watchers. The subject? Entry-level basics. Specifically, if Buffy recalled correctly, and Buffy did, as this happened to be one of her favorite subjects, vampire anatomy.

A point one of the kids—because that’s what they looked like to Buffy these days—verified the next second, his voice squeaking like puberty was still well and underway. She swore they got younger and younger. But then, her own sister looked older than she did and that was something Buffy doubted she’d ever get used to.

“Good. This’ll be quick, then. Not much to remember,” Spike told the camera before throwing a challenging look over the laptop lid. Buffy just sashayed forward, playing the silky belt holding her mostly for-show robe closed, and stopped on the other side of the table. “First, there’s the strength. We have more of it. Not as much as slayers but you find the right sorta creature and that doesn’t matter a lick.”

Buffy arched an eyebrow and mouthed the word, “Lick?”

Spike pretended not to notice.

She thought that was rude and dropped to her knees under the table, where the view was mighty fine. For being all doth protesty, Spike was

already sporting an impressive erection—maybe that was redundant—the fabric of his jeans pulled tight over the bulge and his legs all splayed in welcome. Buffy crawled her way over, listening as his voice started doing the low rumbling thing that typically preceded a good spanking, and decided teasing was for wimps. She knew what she wanted and she went for it. Though she did spare a second to meet his eyes—he always looked down, like he couldn’t help it—as she popped his jeans button and slowly lowered his zipper.

Maybe he couldn’t help himself. There was little Spike loved more than watching her as she worked her lips up and down his cock. She knew this because he told her, usually between whimpers, every time she did it. And maybe Buffy was being a bit evil, but she was what she ate and considering what was in her mouth, she figured he had it coming. Or she did. Odds were good both of them would several times before the noon hour and that was just fine with her. What else was a slayer to do when there was no apocalypse to avert? When the world was protected by a not-so-small army that grew every day and she had no choice but to just live her life like a normal person?

As normal as she was capable of being, anyway.

Spike’s hand wound up tangled in her hair the way it always did, his nostrils flared and his cheeks sucked in and he kept talking—forgetting what he was talking about more than once, but soldiering on anyway—and when his shaft hardened, his legs tensing, Buffy was more than ready. She caught his eyes again and nodded, and he hissed and clutched her harder and spilled down her throat, and there was no way the baby watchers didn’t know, but she didn’t care.

This was her life, and she was living it the way she wanted.

And that was just delicious.

