

BORN IN DEATH
A Buffy Fanfiction by AmandaK

"I see what you want. Something glowing and glistening. Something... effulgent. Do you want it?" She leaned forward and pulled the collar of his shirt open.

"Ow! Ow! Ooow!" William cried. What was she doing? A kiss wasn't supposed to hurt so much, was it?

As his heartbeat slowed, the pain faded. The sounds of the London evening dulled while his eyes drifted shut. He barely noticed it when his knees gave way and the strange woman's strong arms caught him and lifted him with ease.

Something warm and sticky touched his lips and he licked them clean. The taste was a bit metallic, and not unpleasant. He tried to pry his eyes open to see what substance it was but failed miserably.

Then all grew black, and William Odell a.k.a. William the Bloody knew nothing.

Cold. So cold.

He couldn't remember ever having been so cold in his life. What had happened? William raked his brain, trying to recall.

"You're beneath me." Cecily had wounded him to his core, her words sharper than any knife could ever be.

No, wait. That wasn't his last memory. The stranger, a lady, so understanding and sympathetic of his plight. Her eyes had turned yellow like a cat's and her face... Her face had melted!

William gasped and shot upward.

"Welcome back." That was her voice.

He opened his eyes and tried to make out her form. The shed he found himself in was quite dark. Yet William soon discovered that the cold light of the stars seeping in through cracks in the wood walls was enough to make out his surroundings. Shelves

lined the walls, their surface cluttered with tools, and heavy equipment stood in a corner. He was sitting on top of a pile of thick, rough-hewn logs. A railroad workers' shed, William thought, when he recognized the sturdy, gleaming nails in a box beside the beams. He must be near Euston Station where the London & Birmingham Railway was adding a new line to their growing network of railroads.

A soft chortle drew his attention back to the woman; he could make out her shape easily. Behind her he caught sight of two others, another woman, blond and dressed in silks and velvet, and a tall, dark man who scowled at him.

"Wha-- What happened?" he stammered. "How long have I been... asleep?"

The man snorted. "You died," he growled.

William let out something that sounded like a meow. "I-- I can't," he squeaked, a hint of panic in his voice. "M-Mother is expecting me."

"Shh," the dark-haired woman said and reached out to place a finger against his lips. "It is okay, my childe. Angelus is right, you died yesterday. But I brought you back. I made you one of us."

The man, Angelus, gave another snort. "I doubt that," he muttered with contempt.

"Listen closely, William. Hear what your body tells you."

He barely paid attention to her words. Yesterday? His gaze was drawn to her eyes: dark, liquid. He could drown in those eyes.

"Do you feel it? The difference? The power? You will walk in worlds others can't begin to imagine."

It was an echo of her words spoken the night before. William blinked and wrenched his eyes away from her face. Now that she mentioned it, yes, he did feel - different. He grimaced. What an original word to come up with. He should be able to think of a better expression to describe what his senses told him.

What did his senses tell him?

Cold. He recalled feeling cold when he first came to. He was still cold, but it didn't bother him. No shivers, no goosebumps. That was strange. His hand trailed up to his face to find his glasses gone. A small frown appeared between his brows. He could see very well, without his glasses, in the gloomy darkness. Very strange.

The woman -he made a mental note to ask for her name if she didn't offer it soon- took his hand and placed it against his chest. He looked down at their hands, uncomprehending, and was momentarily distracted by the feel of her skin on his. Her fingers were cool and smooth, like marble.

"Feel," she urged him. "Feel it?"

"Of course he doesn't, Dru," the other woman spoke up. Her voice was low and sultry. "There's nothing to feel."

Dru ignored her. Her large, dark eyes kept locked with William's, her gaze searching his features, encouraging him.

Abruptly it struck him. No pulse. He had no pulse, no heartbeat!

He tore from her grip and shrunk back, suddenly frightened. "What-- What have you done to me?"

"Oh, for chrissakes, just tell him, Dru. Don't keep the boy in suspense," Angelus snapped.

"Tell me what?" William asked, his voice small, anxious about what they were getting at and needing to hear it just the same.

"Vampires," the blond woman said with an impatient sigh and a flourish of her voluminous skirts. "We're vampires." She moved closer and leaned down until he could see her features. They were ridged, and her eyes were yellow, like Dru's had been. She smiled, and bared her fangs.

"You-- You're a--" His voice failed him.

Angelus applauded. "Huzzah! The boy's finally got it," he said. "Yes, Darla's a vampire. And so are you. Get used to it."

Vampire. The word rolled in his brain, bouncing off the walls of his skull, taking his breath away until he thought he would suffocate. Then he realized he wasn't breathing. Didn't *need* to breathe!

"Vampires," he repeated in a whisper. "Don't they drink--" Abruptly he halted.

Hunger. Raw, gnawing hunger. And a deep, desperate need to feed.

"I'm hungry," he mumbled, the surprise evident in his tone.

Dru began to dance in circles, her arms stretched out wide and her head back. She laughed, and the sound was the loveliest sound he had ever heard. It was the twinkle of clear bells, the peal of copper chimes.

"O proud Death," she quoted in a singsong. "What feast is toward in thine eternal cell." She turned back to William, who found he couldn't keep his gaze away from her. She was so mysterious, so beautiful, so vivacious. So very different from Cecily. What had he ever seen in that - bitch, was the first word that came to mind, and his eyes widened in shock.

"We're all hungry," Angelus said. He offered his arm to Darla. "Let's go and see where we can wreak some havoc."

"Ah, yes," Darla breathed. "I have a taste for aristocrat tonight."

"I know where to find some," William piped up. He startled himself by speaking out and shrunk away when three pairs of eyes swiveled in his direction. "I- I mean..." he stuttered.

Dru walked to him, raised a hand and cupped his cheek. "Oh William, vengeance is such sweet justice. You will demonstrate them your strength, your vision, your glory."

"I will?" he asked, incredulous.

Dru nodded, a small smile around her lips. "I made you strong. Wicked. Naughty. You can have whatever you desire."

"Cecily." William spoke without thinking. "I want Cecily." He pictured her as he last saw her. So she thought he was beneath her, huh? He'd turn the tables on her and put her beneath him. Six feet beneath him, to be exact. He shivered in anticipation, and felt his features change, his teeth shift and lengthen. He ran his tongue over his fangs, sharp, cold and deadly.

Dru clapped her hands. "That's my boy."

William quickly led them along the cobblestone streets. It was another night, another mansion. The same crowd would have gathered, as they did nearly every evening, to

discuss literature and world events. And to make fun of hapless poets whose enthusiasm was greater than their skill.

He raised the brass knocker and rapped it against the wood. A moment later the door swung open.

"Yes?" The butler smirked and his mustache twitched with amusement when he recognized William. "Ah, Master William. And friends." He stepped aside and waved for them to come in. "Miss Cecily was not expecting you."

Did everybody know about his humiliation? William's arm shot out; he caught the man straight on the jaw. With an audible snap the servant's neck broke and he slumped at their feet. Wide-eyed, William stared at his fist. That hadn't even hurt - much.

Angelus pushed him aside to enter the manor, and then Darla brushed past. They didn't wait to be invited twice. Dru clung to William, small, eager noises coming from her throat.

The fallen steward had caught the attention of a few of the guests and they were gaping slack-jawed at the sprawled body. "Who-- What--," was all they could utter before the vampires descended on them and mayhem broke out. Women scrambled in all directions in a flurry of skirts, screaming for help; men raised their fists in an attempt to do the gentlemanly thing. They were no match for the vampires.

William whooped. This was fun! He caught a glimpse of pale rose running up the stairs. Cecily. He raced after her, taking the steps two at a time, and caught up with her at the top of the stairs.

"William," she gasped, hope flooding her face as she recognized him. "Thank heavens. William, help me."

He grabbed her shoulders and held her at arm's length. "Of course, Cecily, I'd do anything for you." She slumped with relief and only his hands kept her upright. "You know what, luv? You were right: you and I are not alike at all." He allowed his features to shift and grinned, showing her his fangs. A strangled scream escaped her lips while his teeth sank into her flesh.

It was over in mere seconds and unceremoniously he let her dead body fall to the floor. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, relishing the aftertaste of her blood. "A fellow could get used to this," he chuckled before descending the stairs.

The room was in shambles. A few lifeless forms lay discarded among broken furniture,

pieces of china, and a splintered violin that belonged to the string quartet. Angelus walked to the window. He pushed the curtain aside and looked out. "We have to go," he said while he turned around. "Some of them got away. They'll be back soon. With stakes and crosses and holy water." He glowered at William and pointed at the dead butler. "Don't ever draw attention to us like that again. Or I'll stake you myself."

Dru sidled up to William and draped herself over his arm once more. "Oh, Angelus. Don't be mad at my boy. He's young and rash. You remember what it was like."

"Hmph," Angelus grumped. He turned and strode out the door, Darla on his heels.

Dru tugged on William's sleeve. "Come. It will be day soon."

"Wait," William said. There was something he needed to do, some unfinished business that demanded finishing. He squatted beside the nearest body and turned it over. When he didn't recognize the victim, he shook his head and scrambled to the next body.

"They're not here," Dru told him. "They got away."

William gritted his teeth, not even surprised that without a word she understood who he was looking for.

"You'll have them tomorrow night," she promised. "Revenge is a dish best served cold. And we have all the time in the world." She giggled. "We have forever."

William pushed himself back to his feet and shoved his hands deep in the pockets of his coat. His fingers closed around the cold steel of the railroad spikes hidden there. He'd made a quick grab for them as the four vampires left the shed to start their binge. "I'll make their wish come true," he muttered, remembering the cruel words. "I'll give them a railroad spike through the head."

Dru's eyes lit up with anticipation. "You will," she breathed. "And your name shall be Spike."

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