Santa Baby

by purplefeen

Spike/Willow/Tara
genre: romance
rating: mature adults
warning: threesome, Santa kink
time frame: during s5 BtVS
summary: While patrolling the mall for an evil Christmas-hating demon, Willow discovers that Tara knows about Spike's human life. She wants an explanation - NOW!

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Banner by TaZi



"I'm not putting this on, Whelp," Spike snarled at the whelp, I mean Xander.

"You have to," Xander semi-snarled back. It would have been a full snarl but Spike, even though he'd been The Chipped Wonder for almost a year now, was still scary.

"Why don't *you* do it?" he almost whined to Xander. This wasn't the first time he had asked this and Giles sighed in the doorway, not wanting to go over this yet again.

When Xander put the padded belly over Spike's head and Spike went vamp-face, Giles resigned himself to going over it yet again.

"Spike," Giles said as he walked into the bedroom and took off his glasses to polish them, "You very well know this. Xander is not strong enough to protect himself, let alone Willow and Tara, if the Zule demon gets past Buffy. You know it's true, Xander," he added with a look in the boy's direction when he saw the pout forming.

"Why-" Spike started but Giles cut him off.

"I'm not strong enough either, Spike. This demon targets representations of Christmas, with a penchant for those dressed as elves. I believe it once was native to the extreme northern regions of Europe and Asia but I've found references to it being banished to another dimension. Some archaic form of magick, practiced most by the aboriginals of Scandanav-"

"Yeah, yeah," Spike stopped him mid-flow. Once Giles got started, he was almost impossible to stop. "I'll do it, I'll do it, just stop blathering on." Giles noticed that Spike had continued to get dressed in the costume as he talked. "Hey, where you goin' with that?" he yelled at the retreating Xander.

"Just thought you'd want to leave the beard til we get to the mall."

"Hell, no! Give it here." The less chance of being recognized the better. He used the spirit gum on his face and then asked Giles to fix the beard in place, he didn't trust the boy to do it right. Then Giles put the hat in place. He patted Spike sympathically on the back and they left the room.

As they walked down the stairs in Giles apartment to leave for the mall, they were all threatened with, "Peaches finds out about this and headache or no, every last one of you dies!"

Willow couldn't help but giggle. That sentence sounded really funny coming from a guy dressed as Santa Claus.

Spike made a few token grumbles as Buffy gave last minute instructions and then warned everyone to be careful and not try to take the demon on, just scream and leave it for her and Spike.

It was seven thirty am on the day after Thanksgiving, commonly known as Black Friday.

Giles took his place at one corner of the mall, near Neiman-Marcus. Xander and Anya took their place at another corner, near Sears. Buffy's place was on the second floor of the triangular shaped mall, right in the middle of the Food Court - and right above Santa's Workshop.

Spike, dressed as Santa, and Willow and Tara, dressed as elves, went to their spot. Spike looked for the most convenient entrances and exits, deciding from which direction the Zule would most likely attack.

Willow checked out the maintenance hatch below the Workshop setup, determining that there was no other way into or out of the boiler room below.

Tara tried to figure out how to work the camera. She was still at it when Spike and Willow rejoined her. "It's easy," Willow said, going to the laptop computer and printer sitting beside the camera. You pick how many they want and click here and presto! instant piccies with Santa!" She smiled.

'That's great, Sweetie," Tara told her, with just a slight bit of weariness in her voice, "But where's the button on the camera to take the picture?" Willow took a look. Nope, no button. Tara looked some more, no button.

"What's the holdup?" Spike asked.

"There's no button!" Willow told him. Spike shook his head; it was too early to try to speak Willow so he turned to Tara for an interpretation. Tara smiled at him, understanding exactly.

"We can't find the button on the camera. The one that will take the picture of -" she started to say 'you' but wisely changed her mind, "Of Santa and the kids. Cameras have buttons, this one has no button."

Spike looked at the setup. One big camera on a podium next to a table with a laptop and printer. Big lights with white umbrella things attached next to the table.

*All those flashes, 'm gonna be blind 'fore the day's out.*

This gave him an idea. "In my day," he began as he crouched down to get a look under the table and camera stand, "They had a wire. Got you to look to the side a bit," he stood, wire in hand, button attached at the end. He smiled. "You stand to the side so the lights don't blind the poor sods. Kiddies look at you and smile, 'stead of the camera." He handed the button doo-hickey to Willow.

"Don't forget, Spike," Tara told him, walking over to get him situated in his big overstuffed chair, "You have to smile too."

Spike looked appalled. "Why?!"

Tara smiled at his surly face. "Because we're getting paid for this, Spike. Besides, if something's worth doing, it's worth doing well." Tara told him in her best Mary Poppins-ish voice.

Spike pulled her onto his lap and licked her neck. "I'll smile for you, Baby."

Tara giggled. "Stop it, silly," she chastised with no conviction at all before jumping up when she heard people approaching.

Willow had pushed the button thingy and a picture of Tara and Spike/Santa smiling lustfully at each other came up on the computer screen. Willow looked closer.

*Santa's hand's up Tara's elf skirt!*

The screaming of what seemed like a million children came roaring at them and they all jumped and turned in the direction of the ruckus.

"Oh, bloody hell!"

Willow didn't need Spike in one of his tizzies when the kids got here. "Sp- I mean Santa!," she ordered, with more authority in her voice than she thought possible. "Sit down, shut up, be nice and for goodness sakes, don't forget you're Santa Claus!"

Spike, shocked at the temerity, sat down, shut up and prepared for the onslaught of rugrats.

It was amazing. They had seemed like a roaring horde of barbarians as they ran and pushed and shoved and screamed their way to Santa's Workshop. But once they were in line, all of the parents suddenly were on their best behavior.

The kiddies were behaving as well.

Tara opened the gate and let in the first little girl, with big brown eyes, a long chestnut braid and a million dollar smile. She was super-shy and her mother was telling Elf Tara that Brigid was very shy and she didn't expect her to actually sit on Santa's lap. Tara was trying to convince the girl to approach Santa, assuring her that Santa was very nice and wouldn't bite (*I don't think*), when she turned around and there was Santa, crouching down to be at eye level with Brigid.

"Hello there, Sweetheart," Santa said in his smooth-as-velvet accented voice and the little girl turned to smile at him. The mother seemed a little dewy-eyed as well.

"My name's Nicholas," he told her and looked into her big brown eyes and held out his hand. She took it and followed him to the comfy Santa chair. As he pulled her onto his lap, he told her, "And you are Brigid. So, now that we've been formally introduced, why don't you tell me a little something about yourself."

Willow was gaping in open mouthed shock - and adoration. How had he *done* that? She knew that Spike could be charming when he wanted to be, but this was just… *wow*. Shy little Brigid was talking away to Santa, telling him that she had been mostly good, but she also had been bad a couple of times but she was terribly sorry and would never do it again. Unless of course, Robby put another frog down her overalls. In that case, she didn't think she could really be faulted for smacking him again.

"How- How-" she tried to say, but then changed her mind. "Why?"

Tara, still smiling at Santa and the little girl, told her without stopping to think, "Well, Spike had a sister named Brigid. She had dark brown hair and big brown eyes. He loved her a lot. He probably identifies with her on some level."

Willow stopped gaping at Santa and gaped at Tara instead. *Spike has - had - a sister! And how does Tara know about her?!* Oh, she was going to get to the bottom of this if it was the last thing she did!

Santa was listening to Brigid, "…her name's Samantha and she lived a long time ago and she has the prettiest clothes and I want her so bad, Santa." Spike glanced up at Brigid's mother, who nodded her head.

"She sounds wonderful, Brigid. If you continue to be a good little girl," he said, "and promise not to smack Robby *too* hard," he whispered, before raising his voice to normal levels again, "Your Samantha doll will be waiting for you on Christmas morning."

Brigid smiled and Tara told them both to look her way as she snapped a picture for Willow to print out.

Spike stood and stretched, glad that the day was finally over. It had been very strange, being out and among the Happy Meals once again. And the children were so sweet (not that he would ever tell anyone that), but then, he could be sweet too if a nice gift was on the horizon. His eyes drifted toward Willow and Tara and his head filled with thoughts of sweet gift-giving - and getting.

Then all thoughts he had of sweet gifts were gone from his head as soon as the slayer appeared. She said, "No luck. I'm in for a hot bath. See you all here tomorrow at seven thirty again?"

It was agreed that they were all tired and hungry and, although they didn't want to, they'd all be back for lookout duty tomorrow morning.

Giles gave Willow and Tara a ride back to their dorm before driving Spike and himself back to the apartment. It had been decided that Spike would take his place once again on Giles' couch so that Giles could assist him in getting to the mall each morning without becoming vampire flambÃ©.

Willow was dying to ask Tara about her knowledge of Spike's human family, but knew that Spike would be able to hear her, so she kept conspicuously quiet during the ride.

As soon as they were through their dorm room door, however…

"Tara, you had better tell me right this very second how you know about Spike's human family! And while you're at it, why did he have his hand up your skirt - well, I know *why* he had his hand up your skirt, what I really want to know is why you didn't smack him or holler or at least give him a '*You've been a naughty boy*' talking to!"

Tara sighed. She'd been afraid this was coming ever since her slip this morning. She'd been hoping that Willow had forgotten about it, but no, apparently she hadn't.

As for the hand thing, well, she didn't know what to say there.

Tara sighed. The truth was the only way to go; lying never helped any situation. But first she'd have to make sure it was all right with Spike.

She asked Willow, "Do you think Mr. Giles and Spike are home yet?"

Willow blinked at her. "Do I think who are what?"

"Well, I know I have to tell you the truth, but Willow, it has to be all right with Spike. I can't tell you unless he says I can."

Willow handed Tara the phone and sat as she made her call.

She only heard one side of the conversation.

"Mr. G-G-Giles, th-this is Tara. M-M-May I - Oh, h-hi, Spike it's T-Tara. W-wil-Willow w-wants-"

"NO!" Willow heard Spike yell that just fine.

"B-But, yes, I know, but,"

"She's my g-girlfriend, Spike, I l-love her."

"N-no, she won't, I p-promise."

"B-Buf-Buffy won't either."

"Well, y-yes, I can see-"

"But what- "

"P-please Spike, I -"

Tara was quiet for a few moments and then, "O-Okay. Tomorrow then."

She hung up the phone and turned to her girlfriend, blushing furiously. "S-Spike says he wants to be there. He says I can tell you tomorrow, after - after work. He says he'll come here."

Willow was getting nervous. "Tara, baby, just please tell me. Whatever it is, it can't be that bad. I love you, you know I do."

Tara smiled and ran a hand through Willow's soft shiny hair. "I know you do, and I love you too. This isn't going to change that. It's just, well, Spike's a little worried about, and I'm quoting, 'Those bloody stake-happy Scoobies'. It's all right, Will. Just please be patient until tomorrow."

Willow sighed and got ready for bed, lost in her own worries. When she didn't snuggle up next to Tara like she usually did, Tara tried not to be offended. It would all be sorted out tomorrow and hopefully Willow would understand. After all, Tara had been very understanding about Oz, right?

Spike was very uncomfortable. It wasn't the Santa suit, even though that was very uncomfortable. I wasn't the kids, even though a steady stream of them had been jumping onto his lap all day long and one had peed on his leg about an hour ago. It wasn't the grumbling parents who were tired of standing in line or the Slayer who checked up on them every twenty minutes or so making sure they hadn't seen anything suspicious.

It was the scary witch in elf clothes giving him the evil eye that did it.

He knew this was going to happen sooner or later. He knew one day, if he stayed in Sunnydale, either he or Tara would let something slip and someone would get suspicious. But leaving hadn't been an option at first and once the Initiative collapsed and he'd still been biteless, he'd had nowhere else to go really.

So he'd stayed. Seeing her almost every day and remembering what he remembered. They'd talked about it once. In a brief three minute reprieve while the others were arguing one night. The conversation had gone something like:

"I can't believe it's you!"

"Was kinda shocked meself."

"Are you going to-"

"You haven't told her?"

"No! I didn't know, and then it was too late-"

"Your secret's safe with me, Luv."

"As are yours."

Relieved sighs all around.

"Do you ever think about-"

"All the time."

"Me too."

And that was it. Until yesterday. Yesterday he'd talked to a beautiful shy little girl with his sister's name and she'd let it slip. Not that he could blame her, it had just sort of come out naturally. But he'd been counting the minutes ever since. *Either Red would understand or she wouldn't*.

*'*Hope she's forgotten how to float pencils.'

"Spike, could you come up with us tonight?" Willow asked without a hesitation in her voice when Giles pulled up in front of Stephenson Hall that night.

"We need a third for a protection spell we're doing," she lied effortlessly to Giles.

Spike knew he was in trouble if Willow was lying and not having a qualm about it. He'd already pulled off his hat and beard to leave them in Giles car. Now he pulled off the Santa padding as well. He wanted to be able to make a run for it if he had to.

When they reached their door, Willow had not even needed the key. She said a word of Latin under her breath and the door flew open. They all entered and she slammed it closed behind her with her thoughts.

"Sit" she ordered and they did, side by side on the bed. Instinctively they reached out for the other's hand. This was not looking good at all. Willow arched a brow and they dropped hands and flew apart. Tara fell on the floor and Spike retreated to a corner.

Willow gracefully took a seat on the bed and pointed at Tara.

"You first."

"W-w-well, u-um, I-I-I-" she looked pleadingly at Spike.

Willow took sympathy on her and told Spike, "Okay, then, you first."

He paced for a few seconds, checking out the location of everything in the room that was made of wood. Finally, he rolled his eyes and said to himself, "You're a grown vampire. She's a little girl."

*Witch girl*, his brain corrected.

"Still just a little girl," he muttered to himself, "Just tell her."

He turned to Willow and began. "I'm a vampire." Willow rolled her eyes at him. "Just wait, I'm gettin' to it," he explained. "Vampires don't usually stay in one place, move around a lot, what with the killing and all. People get suspicious."

More eye rolling from Willow. He ignored her and continued.

"Dru and I happened to be in a small town in Alabama a couple years ago. Got on well there, had a few friends who lived -" Tara was pleading to him with her eyes for him to just get on with it.

"So, one night I'm out, Dru was Satan knows where, and I happen on a girl crying. Pretty thing, young, looked about seventeen."

Tara was nodding enthusiastically at him now.

Spike went on. "Turned out she *was* seventeen, just seventeen, was her birthday. I asked if somethin' bad had happened at her party; she said there hadn't been a party, everyone'd forgotten about her. They usually forgot about her. She was so sweet and pure, I could feel the innocence rolling off her in waves, but then there was this strength too. Kind of reminded me of my sister - William's sister. I asked her name; it was Tara."

Willow looked up suddenly, not liking the sound of this. Tara held out a hand and stopped her from her impending outburst. "It - it's all right, Will. Just wait." She nodded at Spike and he went on.

"Tara'd been my sister's name. Tara and Brigid, they were. I started talking to Tara, your Tara, well, not your Tara yet, but this Tara." He nodded at the girl now by his side. "We talked for a while and -" he stopped. What could he say, really, that wouldn't end with him fitting inside a Hoover?

Tara sensed his discomfort and continued on. This *had* to be said.

"Willow, you had someone before me who you loved. Loved spiritually *and* physically. Oz was your first love, your first-" she stopped, hoping Willow wouldn't need the picture drawn for her.

Apparently she did.

"Your first *lover*," Tara said shyly. And then she leaned her head in Spike's direction.

Willow's eyes got very wide.

"Spike was your first - ?"

Spike sighed, so far, so good. And he wasn't dust - yet. But then, she was still in shock.

Thoughts were vying for foremost position in Willow's mind.

*Spike and Tara had made love. Spike had been Tara's first lover. Spike had known Tara before she did. Spike and Tara had made love. Spike and Tara had loved each other?*

*Still loved each other?*

That thought made it out first. "Do you still?"

Spike looked at his shoes, Tara whispered, "You told me yourself, Will. You never really get over your first love." She seemed apologetic.

Tears formed as Willow asked, "Do you still want to- Do you love him more?"

"NO!" Tara cried and rushed to Willow, enfolding her in her arms. "I love you, Willow. You know I do."

"But," Willow went on, tears still falling, "I thought you were always into girls."

Tara pulled away and dried Willow's tears. "I said I was attracted to girls growing up. But I never had one. And you know me, Willow. Attraction and desire are done more on a person by person basis. I don't love someone or feel attracted to them based on their sex. I love the person, no matter the gender."

Willow suddenly remembered something and looked up at Spike, horror stricken.

"You bit her!"

Spike took several quick steps back that brought him into direct contact with the door - hard.

Tara grabbed Willow before she could attack. "Yes, I-I'm sorry I lied to you, but I didn't know what to do. The day you saw me in the sundress and saw the bite on my shoulder was the same day you mentioned Spike for the first time. I mean, how many hot, studly vampires named Spike could there be? I didn't want you to get mad at him, or hurt him. So I said it had happened my first week on campus. I'm so sorry, Willow."

Spike took this moment to ask Tara, "She said I was hot and studly?"

"Not now, Spike," Tara commented and he held up his hands in defeat and retreated - for now.

Willow and Tara sat holding each other and talking in low tones that he could hear, even though he didn't think he was supposed to be listening. He searched through their closet and found some hot chocolate and a bottle of expensive rum, so he put them to good use. He made three cups of cocoa and added a good dab of rum to each. He added an extra large dab to Willow's in case her thoughts turned homicidal again. Then he added another dab to Tara's because she didn't look happy and he didn't want her to be unhappy. Then he took a good slug for himself right out of the bottle.

While the two girls were talking and petting and making up - he hoped - he handed them each a cup of cocoa. The combination of chocolate and alcohol seemed to be working. Willow at least, was getting mellower. Very mellow. She seemed to have forgiven Tara entirely and was now working at making up with her.

Spike watched as they kissed and touched on the bed and wondered if maybe he should leave. But that might disturb them and he really didn't want to disturb them. Especially since Willow's dress was now undone and Glinda was kissing her way down Red's - until now only imagined - chest. Gods, he wanted to know if her tits were as perfect as he knew they had to be.

Red suddenly sat up and Spike cursed every god he'd ever read about.

"I'm shorry, Spike," she slurred, turning toward him. "I shouldn't have pried, I just didn't know what to think. When Tara knew about - and you with your hand up her skirt- and she seemed to like it - and you look so pretty together - I was sooooo confused."

She flopped down on the floor - because she was too drunk to stand up, and crawled over to Spike. She leaned in and hugged him. "Thank you for not eating my girlfriend, before she was my girlfriend." Willow seemed to think was very funny and started giggling.

"Oh, but I did eat her, Red," he confided, now in a rather good mood himself. "I ate her for hours, I did."

Willow laughed harder and Tara blushed as red as could be.

"Tastes good, doesn't she?" Willow tried to whisper in Spike's ear. It came out as more of a shout.

The memory of just how she tasted was making Spike physically uncomfortable. He moved to stand but Willow wouldn't let him. Willow pointed to Tara. "Doesn't she taste good, Spike? Tell her she tastes good, so that she'll forgive me for being Miss Shuspicious Meany."

Spike, in an effort to change position by whatever means available, complied and crawled over to where Tara was now sitting on the floor. "She's right. You taste wonderful, Luv."

Tara smiled at him and ran her hand down his cheek with a wistful look on her face.

Spike knew he had to get out of here **now**.

"Ah," Willow sighed at them. Willow really is not a drinker. "I can see it. You two look so good together. You'll have to let me watch sometime."

Then she passed out cold.

Tara stared at her still form.

Spike stared at her still form.

Had she just said what they think she said? Had Willow really just given them permission to make love again?

No, couldn't be.

Spike looked at Tara. Tara looked at Spike.

"Sure sounded like it to me," Spike said as his mouth descended on Tara's and pulled her into a kiss that had been on his mind since he'd first seen her at Giles apartment a year ago.

Tara, much to her shock, kissed him right back. She kept telling herself she wasn't going to, but then his lips and his tongue would chase away all her thoughts. When he unzipped her elf dress and slipped a hand along the soft skin of her back, she couldn't remember what it was she had been trying to think of at all and pulled at the buttons of his Santa suit.

Her warm hands traveled up his chest and her fingernails scraped across his nipples. He groaned with desire…

Then he felt another hand on his back.

"Tara, baby, move over a little, k?" came Willow's sleepy voice from behind him.

Both Tara and Spike's eyes shot open and their hands pulled away from each other's bodies like a shot.

Spike turned onto his back and cleared his throat. "Uh, um, Red?" he said to the girl cuddling up to him on his left.

"Mmm, Spike," Willow said as she fell back to sleep, head pillowed on his chest. He looked at her, unsure of what to do. Finally he put his arm around her, thinking he'd extricate himself when she was soundly asleep again.

He turned to Tara, wanting to ask how he could get himself out of this, but she was snuggled in soundly on his other side.

*There's always a down-side to gettin' chits drunk. They fall asleep too quick.*

He closed his eyes and willed himself to relax between the two beautiful… sexy… but sleeping… women.

In no time at all he was asleep. Being Santa is tiring.

A pounding on the door woke them up the next morning.

"Willow? Tara? Is Spike with you? Willow?"

Willow jumped up and grabbed for her robe, then realized she was still in her elf dress. Her very wrinkled elf dress. She quickly pulled it up and pulled the zipper up the back as she opened the door.

"Giles?"

Giles was about to knock again, but stopped. "Willow? Good, you're up. When did Spike leave last night? He never came home and I-"

"Here, Wotcher," Spike called sleepily from the bed.

"Oh, right then," Giles said, relieved that he wouldn't have to go searching for a replacement Santa Claus and not really thinking much beyond that. "I'll wait for you then? Um, in the - by the, um, television-" he suddenly realized the implications of Spike being in Willow's bed, "by the, oh dear lord! I'll be out here. You have twenty minutes." And he stalked away.

Spike and Tara jumped out of bed, very happy to find that they were still dressed, even if they were wrinkly. The wrinkly part bothered Tara, Spike didn't give it much thought at all. Willow grabbed her bathroom basket and handed one to Tara, then reached under the sink and pulled out a spare toothbrush, toothpaste, washcloth and soap and handed them to Spike. They filed out the door and Tara pointed to the boys' washroom.

The journey took him right past Giles who started to give an indignant lecture to his wayward houseguest, but Spike held up a hand and said, "Nothing happened, Rupert." He seemed too weary to lie, so Giles believed him.

*Thank goodness!*

Twenty five minutes later, they were in the car heading for the mall.

All day long, things ran very smoothly. Willow and Tara kept the children and parents in line, Spike kept one eye on the kids and another on the entrances that would lead the Zule demon into the mall. And all three studiously avoided looking at each other.

Buffy kept an eye on the scene from above and knew something was wrong between Willow and Tara but she didn't know what.

It was Sunday, which meant early closing for the mall. At quarter after six, they were all on their way to their respective homes. Spike told Giles he was going back to the crypt for the night, he'd be back at Giles' apartment and ready for work in the morning.

Willow and Tara climbed out of the car and Willow handed the Santa beard and hat back to Spike that she had been holding. She patted the hat as she put it in his lap.

Giles saw it, but said, "I don't want to know and you don't want to tell me."

Two blocks later, Spike opened the hat.

*Tara is tutoring tonight at 7:30. I need to talk to you. Come to the dorm.
-Willow*

Pretty much what he'd been expecting.

"Turn around, Giles. Back to the dorm."

Spike walked around, thinking and smoking until the requisite time. At seven thirty sharp, he knocked on the door.

Willow answered it, showered and primped, looking much less like an elf and much more like a twenty year old beautiful college student awaiting a date. She waved him in.

"I want you to bite me."

"WHAT?!" *She has to be insane!*

"I need to know that you didn't - If it hurt her, I'll - Harmony's hurt so bad-"

He got it then. She wanted to know for sure that he hadn't hurt Tara when he'd bitten her. Harmony had bitten Willow, back during the gem fiasco and Willow had been hurt.

Spike sat on the bed in front of her and took her hands in his. "It's a different kind of bite, pet. Harmony was trying to hurt you. She was feeding - or getting even, I never did get that story straight. When Tara and I -" *that's not a good way to put it* - "When I - bit - Tara," he gave her a long glance from underneath his lashes, hoping she'd get this without him having to say it. "When I bit her, pet, I wasn't trying to hurt "˜er."

"I know, Spike, but - what if it did? What if it did hurt her?"

Spike was sympathetic but firm, "I can promise you that it didn't."

Willow was tearing up and he felt horrible when chits cried. "Please, Spike?"

Spike slid a palm down his face, trying to think of a way out of this.

"Have you asked Tara about this?"

Willow nodded but clarified, "But she still has feelings for you. Maybe she - I don't know. Would she lie for you? I used to think I knew her, but now -"

The tears were falling freely now.

"If I do this, will this be the last of it? Tara loves you, Red. You can't keep doubting her. She and I have never -" *not counting last night when we almost*, "done anything behind your back."

"I promise, Spike, I do." She was wiping her eyes with her hand now, clearing her face.

He sighed. This was going to hurt him a lot more than it hurt her. And not in the good "˜electric-shock-from-the-chip' sort of way either. A headache would be a breeze next to the - other - kind of pain he was going to get from this. He had to bite her, he had to make her almost come; and then he had to walk away.

He took off the Santa coat. He started to pull her down on his lap but she jumped back.

He was just so - *Spike!* - sitting there with bare chest and rippling muscles and - *Wow!* He was a lot less intimidating dressed as Santa.

He misinterpreted her reaction.

"S'alright, Luv. Won't hurt you. Can't do this if you're jumpy. Sit down here." He patted his lap, willing himself to be less frightening.

She sat.

"Close your eyes." She closed them and didn't peek.

His voice turned to honey and he cooed in her ear, "Just relax, Luv. I'd never hurt you, pet." His hand ran through her hair and across her scalp. His breath was on her neck and sending shivers down her spine.

"You slept beside me all last night and snuggled up against me. Wasn't that nice? I didn't hurt you, did I? Just kept you and Glinda safe All. Night. Long."

His voice was becoming hypnotic, entering her brain and filling her senses. His hand lowered to slow dalliances up and down her spine.

"You used to like boys, Luv, so no need to be scared. I'm not going to do anything you don't absolutely want me to do. Do you trust me?"

She nodded. He smiled; it was nice to have someone who believed in him.

"Turn "˜round-" she started to open her eyes, "No. Don't open your eyes yet. Let me guide you. Turn "˜round this way." He turned her so that she was straddling his lap.

He leaned in, his lips against the side of her neck as he spoke.

"You smell so good. Always love the way you smell. You always were my favourite."

Willow's breathing was getting deep and ragged now.

"Seeing you," he leaned in and breathed her in, "Smelling you," his hand slid up her back and he trailed one lone finger over her shoulder and down her chest, avoiding the places he wanted to touch the most, "Wanting you. Wanting to-" he broke off, letting her complete the sentence with her imagination.

"You like me too, Red?" he whispered.

"Mmmmmm hmmmmm," she confirmed in a drawn out moan.

He wet his dry lips and lined them up nose to nose. "Open your eyes now, Luv."

The only thing she saw were startlingly clear crystal blue eyes that surrounded her and encompassed her whole world.

"Can I kiss you, Willow?"

She nodded, afraid to speak for fear this would be a dream and she'd wake up.

His tongue snaked out and licked her lips and a shiver ran from the top of her head to the tips of her toes.

"Please don't let this be a dream," she said so quietly he had to listen closely to hear it.

He smiled at her; a smile that could light the world.

"If it is, I promise you never have to wake up." He tilted his head slightly to the right and touched her lips so very gently with his that she thought she would die. He was thinking the same thing.

She let out a breath she didn't know she'd been holding and his arms came around her. The kiss changed in the blink of an eye. It was still sweet and gentle, but it was now also all-consuming and she didn't know if she was strong enough to hold on.

"Put your arms around me, Luv. It's all right." He thought she was still afraid of him.

*Lost in the moment yes, but still afraid.*

But she'd forgotten fear a long way back. Her arms enfolded him and her hands fisted in his hair.

*Maybe I was wrong about that fear thing. Well, isn't this a bit of all right?*

He concentrated on the feel of her again. Feeling her from the inside with his mind and his senses and she felt the invasion. It was like nothing she'd ever come into contact with before. He was inside her - without being inside her and it was the most intimate - the most loving - the most loved…

He knew her, sensed everything she felt about everything. And everything she felt for him. The stuff that was way down inside that she didn't let anyone see. It felt so personal and so special and he wanted to give to her in kind. He opened himself up, just a little, just the things that were inside of him about her. But he gave her everything.

She didn't know what to think, what to feel, what to do.

*This is more than - vampires can't - but they can! Spike does! And oh gods, for me. And for Tara.*

She pulled back away from the kiss and tilted her head to the side.

"Spike, please."

His head lowered and he kissed the spot on her neck just above her pulse point. Then he licked the very same spot slowly and languorously and Willow moaned and drenched her panties. She felt his face change against her skin and it was oh so very erotic.

*My vampire.*

When his fangs entered her, she felt him entering her anew - entering her mind, entering her body, entering her spirit. He was everywhere; he was everything.

His mouth and tongue drew the blood from her body and she felt it in every cell of her body. She wanted him to have it; wanted to give it all to him. She was trembling and moaning, not able to control anything about herself. But that was okay because Spike was here and he would take care of her, never let her fall. She ground herself down into his lap, she needed to feel all of him, all of him everywhere.

He thrust back up against her, giving them both the necessary friction. He tasted her skin and her blood and her entire being was his to have. They came against each other, feeling completely united even though they had not, strictly speaking, attained sexual unity.

When he pulled away she whimpered.

He held on to her, licking and kissing his bite marks until the flow of blood had stopped.

It took her what seemed like forever to her to catch her breath. When she did she asked, "What are we going to tell Tara? I love her so much, but - I think I love you too."

He placed another gentle kiss against her lips.

"We don't have to tell Tara anything, Luv."

"But, I don't want to lose you, I don't-"

Willow heard a sound behind her.

They didn't have to tell Tara. Tara was already here.

Willow jumped up off Spike's lap and started to straighten her clothing. Until she realized that her clothing was all perfectly straight and just how it should be.

*How is that possible? Wasn't I naked a second ago?*

She decided to worry about it later.

"Tara! Wait, no, it isn't-"

That's when she noticed that Tara had an eyebrow cocked and was smiling in merriment.

"*Now* do you believe me?" Tara asked.

Spike rose and worked very hard at not adjusting himself in front of the ladies.

"Well, obviously, you two will want to talk, so I'll just-"

Tara's hand stopped him. "Oh, no, mister. You sit right back down."

He was afraid of that. He sat.

"Um," Willow began. "You - you saw? How much, exactly did you, um, did you see?"

"It's all right, Willow," Tara assured her. "I had a feeling you were going to try something like this. You were so worried today, but I told you-"

"I know!" Willow interrupted. "And I never should have doubted you! But I didn't know! The only time I've ever been bitten, it hurt! It hurt really bad and I had to know, had to know that he hadn't-"

"I know, Sweetie. I understand." Tara pulled Willow into her arms and held her, rocking her like she would a child. "But it was okay, wasn't it?" She giggled. "More than okay, from what I saw." She turned to Spike, "How much did you give her?"

Spike looked down, studying a really very interesting crumb on the carpet. Finally he looked up. "She wanted to know, Luv. Wanted to know what it was like for you. I gave her the whole thing."

Tara gasped. "Spike, you've known her, what? Three years? All of that? Oh, Sweetie!" she said to Willow sympathetically, and hugged her again before turning an angry glare on Spike. "You knew me three hours and look what it did to me! You've known her for three years! She's been in you for so long! She was even in you when-" She stopped, realizing what she'd been about to say.

Willow stepped back and looked at her. "When *what* Tara?"

Spike looked at Tara and understood something he hadn't before.

"You asked me. That night. You asked where I'd been, who were some of the people I let you see. You saw her, didn't you? And you came here - for her." He shook his head, completely aware now. He should have known. Coincidences like that just don't happen.

"Yes," she said, but to Willow. "I saw you. I felt you, felt what you meant to him and I knew you had to be special."

Willow had to ask. She hated herself for thinking it but she had to ask.

"Did you come here for me?" She swallowed, not wanting to go on, but she did, "Or for him?"

Tara looked from one to the other, not sure what to say.

She was kind of shocked when Spike stood and shot her an angry glare. He pulled Willow into his arms.

"Of course she came here for you, Luv. How could she not?"

Willow looked up at him, hopefully. "Ya think?"

"I'm sure of it." She wrapped her arms around him and buried her face in his chest.

"Willow," Tara spoke and the other two turned in her direction. "I came her for you," Willow smiled and ran over and embraced her girlfriend.

"And for Spike."

They hadn't been expecting that.

Spike looked up, shocked and hopeful. He saw Willow standing next to Tara and knew he couldn't break that up, he didn't want to, they belong together. He turned and picked up his coat, he couldn't look at them for what he had to say.

"Thanks for sayin' it," he told her, "But no, you didn't."

He hurried out the door before either of them could stop him.

The next few hours passed in a daze. Spike wandered around Sunnydale, not wanting to go back to his lonely crypt, but not wanting to be in anyone's company either. He thought about what Tara had said, what he'd felt from Willow. He thought about how warm and tender Tara had been two years ago; how what he'd gotten from her in one night had made him realize how meaningless his hundred plus years with Drusilla had really been. He thought about how responsive Willow had been, her willingness to give herself over to him, mind, body and spirit. She'd hadn't been afraid of him at all; he'd thought... didn't matter what he thought. She cared for him, was attracted to him, wanted him, wanted him to want her.

And part of the reason Tara had moved to the mouth of hell was to be near him.

*What does this all mean and does it really matter anyway?*

He eventually dusted two vamps, but his heart wasn't in it.

The girls stayed silent and apart after Spike left; Willow slumping onto the floor where she stood and Tara wandering over to the desk before sitting in the chair.

Neither knew what to say, so they said nothing at all.

Willow and Tara went soundlessly through their nightly ablutions and got into bed, each lost in her own thoughts on her own side of the bed.

Monday morning took way too long to arrive for the three friends. Spike turned up at Giles' apartment, just as the sun rose and proceeded to make breakfast for himself and Giles, mainly because his head hurt from thinking and fretting all night and he desperately needed something to do to clear his mind.

Giles woke when he smelled the heavenly scent of rich, strong English tea. He knew it had to be Spike; the children never appreciated the subtleties involved in making a bracing pot of tea.

He rose and dressed and joined Spike downstairs for breakfast. He wanted to ask the reason for the generosity but quickly changed his mind when he saw Spike's face and the much-too-thoughtful-for-just-breakfast expression on his face.

They ate in silence, each lost in their own thoughts.

"Thank you, Spike" was on his lips to say when he was finished, but what came out was, "Do you love them?"

Spike, tired and weary, just nodded.

Giles was afraid of this.

"Both of them?" he asked.

Again Spike gave that world weary nod.

"And they?"

Spike shrugged.

"Spike-" he had a thousand things he wanted to say, most of them involving the impossibilities of relationships between vampires and humans or the violent and unpredictable nature of vampires in general.

But the last year flashed in his mind. Spike helping them out, albeit for money, but that was just practical, really. Spike watching out for Dawn like she was his own sister. Joyce, always happy to have Spike over for tea or cocoa. Spike being the only one who understood the depths of Willow's sorrow over her breakup with Oz. And his trying to get them all to notice as well, so they could help her. They'd all been rather selfish and ignored his warnings - and that had led to some very bad situations.

There had been a few incidents when Spike had teamed up with Adam, but then wouldn't he have done the same had he been in Spike's place? And even though Spike could no longer kill, he was a master vampire - had once been master of Sunnydale. Giles was sure he had resources he could call upon if he really wanted the slayer or any of her friends dead. And they had each certainly given him cause to want them all dead. Especially Xander.

And yet Spike was still here. And so were all his charges.

He looked at Spike, sitting across the table from him - looking for all the world like a lost puppy. He reached out and covered Spike's tense fisted hand with his own. Spike's head whipped to Giles' face, the sorrow replaced with a questioning gaze.

"I'm not saying I think it's a good idea," Giles began. "But you'll never know if you don't try." Spike was looking very confused and unsure - an expression Giles never thought he'd see on the two hundred year old vampire's face.

"But first," he felt compelled to make sure Spike wasn't letting himself in for disaster, "Make very sure they feel the same - or that they have the capacity to feel the same."

Spike looked down at his lap, cleared his throat, and as he moved to wipe at a speck of dust that had suddenly flown into his eye, Giles stood and said it was time to go and pick up Spike's girls for work.

Spike was smiling a shy yet hopeful smile as he grabbed his blanket and followed Giles out to the car.

They gathered, as they had every day during this latest monster hunt, in the food court of the mall at seven thirty that morning. Giles went to get them all coffee, except for Spike, Willow and Tara who all had to be at their appointed place and couldn't take bathroom breaks whenever they wanted to.

Buffy took her coffee, thanked Giles and sighed. "Okay, guys, I know we've been here for three days and not a creature's been stirring, but Giles is sure," here she paused and looked to her watcher for confirmation and he nodded. "Giles is sure this Zule's in town and about to arise and make such a clatter." Xander giggled at the references but Anya didn't get it so she nudged him to shush. It was the height of business in retail and the magic shop had already been closed for two whole days. She wanted to kill this thing and get back to business.

"So," Buffy continued, "We all ready for anoth-" she stopped, staring at Willow as if seeing her for the first time. She stood and casually walked over to where Willow was sitting, which, Buffy noticed - again for the first time, was not next to Tara. She pulled over an extra chair from a nearby table and sat down next to her oldest friend.

"Hey, Will," she said, a little too cheerfully.

"H-hi?" Willow answered. Now Buffy knew she was right.

"Cold?"

Willow fingered the festive red winter scarf around her neck. "N-no, not really," she said, trying to evade Buffy's scrutiny. "North Pole, ya know - cold, thought the kids would like it."

"Hm," Buffy hummed before grabbing at the scarf with preternatural quickness and uncovering the newly made bite mark on Willow's neck.

"I KNEW IT!"

Spike growled so hard the table shook and Tara, who was sitting next to him instead of Willow, moved closer to him, putting her arms around him and trying to calm him down. Now wasn't the time.

Buffy rounded on him. "SPIKE? Spike did this?" A stake appeared in her hand from one of the myriad of hiding places on her person.

Willow jumped up and grabbed the stake. "NO! Buffy, please, he- I - I asked him to." She'd decided to own up to her actions and said this last with no shame at all in her voice.

"Willow?" Buffy was at a loss. "Why? And, and, but, Tara-?"

Tara now stood as well. "He bit me too." She said proudly. Spike didn't know whether he wanted to run and hide from Buffy or shag Willow and Tara right here in the mall.

He opted to just keep quiet and let the girls sort it out amongst themselves. He was also plotting places he could run to if he needed to make a quick exit.

"Will?" Xander asked. "How-? Why-? Huh?"

"I knew this was going to happen," Giles muttered quietly to Anya as he took her elbow and helped her up, the both of them moved to a table a little farther away.

"Buffy, Xan," Willow started. She didn't know what to say. She could explain but was it really any of Buffy or Xander's business what had happened between Spike and Tara? Or between her and Spike for that matter? Her spine straightened and she started again.

"Yes, I asked Spike to bite me and he did. And before you can start ranting about the chip, it still works fine, he didn't hurt me at all." The blush that spread across her face and down her neck made Buffy long to ask for details and diagrams but then she realized they were talking about !Spike! and waited for more explanation. So she'd know *exactly* what she was staking him for.

"And why I did it is none of your business. I love you both but I'm a big girl and what I do with… with… people I love," there, she'd said it, "is none of your business and you have no right to ask." She placed Buffy's stake down on the table. "And you will not be staking him, Buffy, not now, not ever. I don't - I don't know what's going to happen, if anything happens at all, but whatever it is, its between me and Spike and Tara."

Buffy and Xander did a double take and looked at Willow, then Spike and Tara, who were embracing and smiling, and then at each other. And then back to Willow. Xander said it first.

"You and Tara AND Spike?"

Willow walked over to where her two loves were standing and comforting each other. She stepped between them and they both caught her in the middle of their hug.

"Yes," Willow said more forcefully than she thought she'd be able to manage under the circumstances.

Then the threesome walked away, over to the escalator that would take them to Santa's Workshop.

Buffy and Xander stood, gaping, watching them leave. Giles walked over and picked up the stake and slid it into his pocket before one of the civilians saw it and became curious. He used a finger to close Buffy's gaping mouth as Anya closed Xander's.

"It will be all right, Buffy," he told her. "Think about how he's changed since he's been with us. Think about all he's done for you, for your family, for all of us. And then think about how shabbily we've repaid that kindness." Buffy looked up at him, wondering if or rather when, he'd suddenly gone insane.

"He loves them both. And its up to them to decide, not you. Not either of you," he said, including Xander in his statement.

"Wait! You knew?," Xan couldn't believe that Giles would keep something like this from them. "You knew and you didn't say anything?"

"I had my suspicions, yes," he confirmed. "And I spoke to Spike about it this morning. Yes, I knew."

"And you didn't tell us?" Buffy looked at him like he was a golden idol who had fallen.

"No, I didn't." He put his arm around Buffy's shoulders to comfort her; he knew this would be hard on the always-wanting-to-be-in-control slayer. "I didn't tell you because frankly its none of your business. As Willow said, they are grown women, very smart and intuitive young women, and they have a right to a private life outside of the slaying. So does Spike. So do you all." He was looking directly at Xander and Anya when he said this. They took the hint but Buffy was going to be harder to convince.

"I'm very proud of you all," he continued. "You've all become very capable young adults. You've worked together for five years but you're not children anymore." He turned to Buffy. "Sometimes you just have to let go and let the ones you love make their own decisions about what's best for them. Even if you don't agree with those decisions."

She thought about Angel and how everyone had been so against her having a relationship with him. *Everyone that is, except Willow.* Like Willow had said, "You love who you love. You can't help who it is that speaks to your heart."

And now apparently Spike was speaking to hers. Spike AND Tara. This was so going to take a lot of getting used to.

Spike had wanted to grab both his girls and kiss and then shag them silly but the mall manager was waiting for them near Santa's chair.

"Ahem," he said, getting their attention. Their arms that had been around each other dropped like lead balloons.

"I just wanted to congratulate you on the wonderful job you've been doing," he said to Spike, then turned his gaze and included Willow and Tara in that assessment.

"We've had all kinds of calls and messages from people who are thrilled with our Santa Claus. Apparently you have quite the way with children." Spike looked away and shuffled his feet, not knowing what to say. He was the Big Bad he wasn't supposed to be good with children or play Santa Claus or like getting compliments about his work.

Tara spoke up when he didn't. "Thank you so much, Mr. Murphy. Sp- I mean William's a little shy around adults. But you're right, he really has a wonderful rapport with the children."

"I'm sorry to say I was hesitant about hiring such a young man to replace the man I'd hired,"

*Because we hexed him with the flu*, Willow thought to herself.

"- to play Santa," Mr. Murphy went on, "but when Joyce called to say you were a personal friend of hers and she would vouch for you, I was delighted to have a replacement handy. Good Santa's are so hard to find."

"Thank you, sir," Spike, or maybe it really was William who replied.

"Anyway, the merchants got together and wanted you to have this," Mr. Murphy said, handing Spike a big envelope and two smaller ones to each of the girls. "And rest assured, there will be a nice raise in your paycheck when you-"

Mr. Murphy suddenly broke off because his voice was drowned out by a terrifying guttural snarl from behind the Workshop.

Spike turned and ran toward the sound as Buffy yelled, "Spike, six o'clock," and vaulted over the rail from the floor above.

Willow and Tara grabbed Mr. Murphy and pulled him away from the battle and into a jewelry store that was just opening up across from the Santa area. After they made sure he was safe, they ran to join the fray. He tried to stop them but they just wouldn't listen. He didn't know what it was that had made that noise but he didn't think it would be safe for two such sweet and delicate young ladies.

Willow and Tara arrived on the scene at the same moment as Xander. As Xander pulled weapons from his bag for Spike and Buffy, the witches pulled salt out of their elf boots and made a protective circle around themselves. It was their job to break down any mystical armor the Zule had in place.

Spike grabbed his axe as Xander threw it to him but Buffy was busy wrestling with the Zule and didn't even see her sword being tossed.

The Zule, being almost ten feet tall, didn't even feel the petite Slayer when she jumped on his back, climbing up his wings to reach his wolf-like head. It was looking around, surveying the area. It reared back, throwing her off and headed for KB Toys and the display of wrapped gifts at its entrance. The demon took two steps closer to the store before doing something that didn't look the least merry or jolly. Its hands began moving in circular patterns, one above the other, as a foggy-looking white mist grew between them.

Xander just had time to see that the mist was compacting in on itself and it formed a ball as the Zule tossed the thing toward the toy store. He knew enough to jump away from the impact. The tiny ball hit the ground and rolled into the store and exploded into a small frost tornado. The wrapped gifts in the display were the first things thrown clear of the entrance and into the mall commons.

The tornado moved with lightening fast efficiency, taking no time at all to completely destroy every toy, shelf and window in the place. Toys went flying. Care Bears flew out in a pastel rainbow and hit the barrier created by the witches protective circle and fell harmlessly to the ground. The Christmas Mickey in the front of the Disney store across the way was pelted by a flurry of Barbies, Skippers and GI Joe dolls.

Tonka trucks flew like missiles, one making a precision hit and knocking Xander unconscious right before Anya reached his side. Bionicles and Hot Wheels were littering Santa's Workshop, while baseball cards flew into the air caused by the tornado and covered the food court.

Willow and Tara had seen the tornado and Tara chanted like mad to dissipate it while Willow continued to block the spell that would cover it in a supernatural impenetrable shell.

Buffy leapt onto its back again, this time with her favorite sword in hand. She took a few good strong swipes and the greyish brown wings fell in a bloody mess onto the tiled floor of the mall. Spike swerved around to its front and took a swing with his axe, but the agile demon easily side-stepped it, once again throwing Buffy off.

Giles ran to Anya's side, looking for a weapon that would allow him to step in and assist. Anya tried to help, but the first thing she pulled out were a few crosses. She knew they wouldn't work, so she threw them out of her way, and they skittered across the floor.

Giles pulled out a Bowie knife but quickly decided that it was too small to be useful against the Zule and dropped it behind him. Anya pulled out a bottle of holy water, looking cheerful but Giles merely scowled and muttered, "Entirely different kind of demon, Anya." She looked hurt and decided to throw it at the nasty looking creature that had knocked out her boyfriend just for spite. To everyone's flabbergasted surprise, the demon howled in pain when the bottle hit its leg and shattered. Spike looked down and saw that the fur on one of its legs was burned away. But a drop had hit his hand and it was smoking as well.

*This isn't good.*

It seemed that one of the things that could hurt this thing was something that could do major damage to himself as well.

*Time to end this before yours truly ends up as a dusty pile on the floor.*

He grabbed his axe and with renewed vigor, swung directly for the heart.

Buffy, in the meantime, had seen the damage done to the thing by Anya's attack and rushed over to arm herself. She took a cross made of clay and doused it in holy water, knowing that the water would absorb into the surface of the dried clay. The Zule had turned, trying to fend off Spike's assault and Buffy took the cross in hand and punched it into the demon's back, letting the holy water burn its way through skin, muscle and sinew.

Spike had made a direct hit, connecting axe with heart and the demon fell with a mighty thud.

"I got it!" both Spike and Buffy yelled triumphantly - at exactly the same moment.

"***I*** got it!" they both said in unison once more, this time glaring at each other.

"Giles!" Buffy whined, "Tell the soulless evil thing that ***I*** killed the monster!"

"Well, erm," Giles hesitated, not knowing which fighter had struck the fatal blow. "I'd say you both got it. Teamwork, you know." Giles offered diplomatically.

Buffy looked at Spike and mouthed, "I got it."

Spike shot her a nasty glare and pointed to himself.

Buffy stuck her tongue out at him.

He did likewise to her.

Giles sighed. "Children, enough of this. Let's -" He was going to suggest they drag the body out of public viewing, but when he turned, the dead demon had transmongriphied into a… *snow sculpture?*

Anya walked over to it and gathered up a handful of snow, bringing it over to help revive her now waking beau. Willow and Tara appeared at her side and started laughing. They ran and made snowballs, saying, "Guys! Snowball fight!" before launching an attack of magically-enhanced frozen snow bombs at their friends.

Giles harrumphed, then decided that they really should scatter the snow before patrons entered and saw what amounted to be a very scary looking, and not at all festive display. He grabbed some snow and landed a shot right in Anya's face.

Salespeople began venturing out of their stores and when they saw the huge snow pile in the middle of Santa's Workshop - and Santa and his elves having a snowball fight against a group of college students, many of them couldn't help but smile and join the fun.

In the usual Sunnydale tradition, very few people asked detailed questions about what had destroyed the toy store or how a blizzard had appeared suddenly at Santa's Workshop. The maintenance people had never opened the mall's main doors, but the anchor stores had no idea anything was amiss and opened as usual. The snowball fight was turning into a full-fledged snow war, with mall employees and customers alike joining Santa to fight against the other team led by the happy, petite blonde woman - or else joining the forces trying to take down the "evil elf threat" at the North Pole. Patrons wandered toward the noise and the mall erupted into an impromptu winter festival.

Mr. Murphy, being the intelligent manager that he is, called the local television station and invited them to get down there pronto. That night, Santa and company's victory over their opposers made the top spot on both the early and late news.

The mall's Santa was more popular than ever and the Scoobies convinced Spike (with amazing ease) to remain as Santa for the holiday season. The winning argument had come from Xander, who reminded Spike about the bountiful supply of money he'd bring in from his four week stint and that Spike wouldn't have to rely on them for a source of income - at least for a little while. Willow and Tara had of course offered to continue on as his elves and Giles would be happy to provide daily transportation. What could he say except, "S'pose so."

It was a delightfully happy and relaxed group who spent Christmas Eve at the Summers' home. Joyce ordered in pizza and Chinese and Xander and Dawn made a donut/soda/beer run. As midnight approached, everyone was getting tired, but no one really wanted to leave. This was the first time in way too long that they'd all been together as one happy, friendly, familial group. "Even you, Spike," Buffy added. They all laughed, but all acknowledged the truth in the statement.

The more they thought about it, they more they realized it was true. He was one of them, had been for quite a while. They'd all just been too busy holding his past against him to realize it.

Joyce had put on some Christmas music and when 'This Christmas Day' by Trans-Siberian Orchestra started, Buffy even asked Spike to dance. Xander was dancing with Joyce, Giles with Willow, and Tara with Dawn. Anya had disappeared and Spike and Buffy were the only ones left. Buffy listened to the first verse.

*So tell me Christmas are we wise
To believe in things we never see
Are prayers just wishes in disguise
And are these wishes being granted me
For now I see the answering
To every prayer I've prayed*

She took it to heart and stood and offered her hand to Spike. A silent apology.

After a pause, he took it. He'd been listening to the words as well. Awkwardly, they took the familiar dance pose, not comfortable enough yet to get too close, but more comfortable together than they'd ever been before.

And they danced. The real kind, not the usual dance Spike had perfected over the years.

Tara started and Dawn joined her and by the time the second verse was halfway through, most of them were singing along to the incredibly appropriate song.

*So tell me Christmas are we kind
More this day than any other day
Or is it only in our mind
And must it leave when you have gone away
It's different now, It's changed somehow
And now you're here to stay*

The tempo had picked up and Buffy and Spike happily separated, still dancing together but no longer having to touch.

*And all at once the world
It doesn't seem the same
In a single night
You know it all has changed
Everything is now as it should be*

The couples separated, still dancing but becoming one united entity, letting the song express what they all were feeling.

*I have the ornament
I have the perfect tree
I have a string of lights
I have a chance to see
Everything that my heart thought could be*

*For of all the dreams
You were the first I knew
And every other one
Was a charade of you
You stayed close when I was far away*

Tara maneuvered Spike to the mistletoe and wrapping her arms around his neck, gave him a kiss worthy of the man who had stolen her heart when she was a girl. And the vampire who had kept it sacred now that she was a woman.

Words from his favorite Christmas special popped into his mind. *…his heart expanded three sizes that day.*

*And in the darkest night
You always were the star
Who always took us in
No matter who we are*

*Merry Christmas, Merry Merry Christmas*

Willow, not to be outdone - but not wanting to outdo Tara either, tapped Spike on the shoulder. When he turned around, she stood on her tip toes and placed a tender and gentle, very Willow-y kiss on her new love's lips.

*Merry Christmas, Merry Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas, Merry Merry Christmas* *Merry Christmas, Merry Merry Christmas
Merry Christmas, Merry Merry Christmas*

They woke up together on Christmas afternoon. The celebration had lasted long into the night and only Dawn and Joyce had made it up to bed. The others had fallen asleep in various positions around the house. Buffy had fallen asleep while talking to Anya in the kitchen. During the night she fell from her perch atop the kitchen stool but with her enhanced strength and healing, she never even felt it and slept right through.

Giles, who'd been the last to fall asleep, was comfortably ensconced on the couch, covered with a quilt he retrieved from Joyce's linen closet. Xander and Anya were together on the floor by the coffee table, spooned together and comfy as kitties.

Tara had been the first to seek her rest, finding a somewhat quiet spot in a corner of the dark dining room while everyone was still singing Christmas carols. Spike and Willow hadn't seen her retire, they'd been on the back porch making love. When they were both blissfully sated, they'd joined her in her seclusion, Spike pillowing both of his girls on his chest as they slept.

Christmas dinner was calm and comfortable and happy. Giles had even coerced Xander and Spike into helping him do the dishes.

When they were saying their goodbyes, Joyce handed Spike the Santa suit that she had taken to the dry cleaners for him. "Going to use it again next year?" she teased.

He shrugged, "Maybe." He smiled shyly when she gave him a maternal kiss and said good night.

Giles drove Willow, Tara and Spike home to the apartment they had rented just off the UC Sunnydale campus. He said goodnight and drove away.

The girls took their gifts to their bedroom, putting some away and leaving the rest for tomorrow. Willow hung up their clothes as Tara took a shower. She went looking for Spike but heard him humming in the big clawfoot tub in the other bathroom. She left him in peace and brushed her teeth and brushed her hair as Tara finished her shower and then stripped and stepped under the hot water herself.

When she was dried and changed, she went in search of the two most wonderful people in her world. She found Tara first and they laughed when they discovered that they'd changed into the same chemise - again. They'd bought them on the same day, in different malls and without consulting the other first. Tara's was black, Willow's was red but other than that they were identical. The same softer than skin silk, the same keyhole bodice, the same Venetian lace at the hem. And for some reason, they seemed to frequently decide to wear them on the same nights.

Tara handed Willow the glass of wine she'd poured for her and then she took the other two glasses and Willow grabbed the bottle of wine and they'd gone in search of Spike.

When they found him, they both lost their breath at the exact same moment. He was in front of the lit hearth, lying on his side on the white acrylic fur rug that they'd been ridiculously upset about when he insisted on buying it.

*Not anymore.*

He was supporting his weight on one elbow, the other arm draped carelessly across his hips. His hair was still damp from his bath and was curling around the edges. But the thing that made them instantly dripping wet was the Santa suit. He'd foregone padding, beard and hat. He wore the pants draped low on his hips and the coat was open, showcasing his truly awe-inspiring chest.

The girls didn't move. When he started to move to come to them, they both gasped out, "NO!" at the same time and he relaxed back into his pose. He'd given this pose some thought but he couldn't see himself to see if it would have the desired effect. And it didn't really. He wanted them to ravage him, not stand there being all dewy eyed with wistful smiles on their faces.

He smiled to himself internally when he saw how they were ogling him.

*This is good too.*

Tara was the first to move. She moved to his side and handed down his glass of wine. He took it then took her hand and helped her lower herself to the floor next to him. He sipped his wine, taking in her beauty as she took in his.

His girls were so very different on the outside. Tara was the ethereal goddess, womanly and real. Ever the picture of serenity. Her hourglass figure made him melt and harden at the same time. She was perfect.

Willow was a burning flame, ever changing, forever exciting. Her body was slimmer and more taut, with a dancer's faultless grace. But it was more than that. Willow could ignite his dead heart with just her smile.

Tara's fingertips flitted over his chest, desperately wanting to touch him but not wanting to disturb the perfection. His hand slid behind her neck and pulled her in closer, taking her lips in a kiss much like the first one they'd shared all those years ago. Soft and slow, not wanting to scare her but needing to feel her heat and let her get a taste of the passion he could give her.

Tara smiled, remembering, and they shared a moment of longing for *What Might Have Been*. But Spike, never one to dawdle over what he didn't have, pushed his way into the warmth of her mouth, helping her welcome his philosophy of *Relish What You Have*.

Tongues played and mingled as hands reacquainted themselves to the magnificence of the bodies before them. Spike moved quickly to her neck, pulling her skin into his mouth, tasting the salt and sweat and rolling the flavors around on his tongue. He loved the way Tara's skin tasted. He would spend all day licking her if she'd let him.

He licked his way down to her silk covered breast, reaching inside and pulling her glorious abundance free so that he could suckle her.

Tara loved this, the pull of his lips at her nipple. He had a way of sucking that made a direct connection from her breast to her womb. He could make her cum just by doing this; he didn't have touch her anywhere else. Not that that stopped him, of course.

As he drew on one nipple and then the other into his mouth, and her hands grabbed his hair and his shoulders because she was losing control to the desire, one hand traveled down to her pantiless hips. His fingers grabbed at her flesh, holding her to him as her orgasm overtook her. He rocked her down from her climax, pulling off her chemise and laying her down on the soft white fur rug.

Her eyes were glassy as he stood and removed his pants. His hands moved to take off the coat as well, but she smiled a wickedly seductive smile and shook her head, not allowing him to disturb her fantasy completely. He understood, having had his girls joyfully enact out several of his favorite fantasies over their month together.

He lowered himself on top of her, letting his weight settle on her, making her feel just what she did to him. He took her lips in a kiss as his hand positioned his cock at her opening and took both her lips and her body with a reverence befitting a goddess.

Her back arched instantly, he was filling her so fully and completely. His strokes were slow but sure, hitting every nerve, every sweet spot within her every time.

He smelled an alluringly familiar scent and looked over to where Willow stood watching. For some reason, Willow would usually watch he and Tara before she joined them, allowing them to couple at least once before taking her place at their side. This bothered him at first, until Willow pointed out how much he liked to watch his girls enjoying each other. She had a point. And when asked, she would allow Tara the same pleasure, playing for hours with Spike as Tara watched them.

But Spike was happiest when they were all making love together. He crooked a finger at Willow as he eased in and out of Tara and she smiled and walked over to his side. He twirled a finger, wanting her to turn in a circle so he could enjoy the sight of her in his favorite blood red nightie. She happily complied. The he made a motion of throwing something over his shoulder and she smiled as she lifted the same favored nightie over her head and tossed it over her shoulder.

His face left no doubts that he much preferred this look to the former. He crooked his finger again and she came closer, letting him position her in front of him, standing with her legs on either side of her girlfriend getting deliciously fucked on the floor below. Spike leaned in and licked a path from her navel to the soft downy fluff of hair above her shaved pussy. He smiled against her skin and continued to lick his way down. When his mouth found her clit and sucked it in to his wet mouth, she instinctively went up on her toes and arched her back.

Needing her balance, she settled her feet back on the floor and ran her hands through his hair and over his scalp. She also shifted her hips and pulled him closer. She adored having her very own - with Tara - vampire. Vampires could go down on you for hours and never needed to breath.

The rhythm Spike had set with Tara was effecting his worship of Willow. He'd clasp himself to her and take a long slow drink of her, then pull away a little as he pulled out of Tara and only his tongue would be able to reach her ever dampening flesh.

When she was so close she could reach out and touch it, he pulled away. He turned her around so that she could now see Tara's face.

"Hi, honey," she waved down at the high-on-lust woman on the floor below her.

Tara didn't seem to notice. Spike pushed on Willow's back, forcing her to bend over. He gently told the rattled and slightly incoherent Tara to slide up onto her elbows. In this position, Willow could easily devour her girlfriend's mouth in a delectable kiss.

Speaking of delectable, Spike dove into both Tara and Willow with abandon now. This position made it possible for him to push more forcefully into Tara's tight core while placing Willow's sopping pussy right at mouth height. He took her entire mound into his mouth and used his tongue to explore every inch of her.

As Tara neared her release, Spike pushed his tongue inside the same opening on Willow and she gasped as her body started to shake, spilling her orgasmic juices onto his waiting tongue. Tara hit the same point and as Red's cunt spasmed around his tongue, Tara's grabbed hold of his cock and squeezed the living hell out of it.

He wanted to scream with the pleasure, but if he did, he'd lose the feel of Willow coming in his mouth and there was no way he was letting that happen.

When her knees gave out, Willow slumped to the floor beside Tara, kissing her as her body returned to this earth-bound plane.

Spike moved to her other side, wrapping his arms across both of his women. He was sated but not complete.

He'd let them rest for a moment, but Spike wasn't finished yet.

Willow awoke to find Spike, reclining on the floor much as he had been when she and Tara first arrived. But now he was sans the Santa pants. He seemed to be enjoying watching them sleep.

Wicked, evil thoughts crossed her mind and she crawled across the floor, sinister smile in place.

Spike sat silent, watching in delighted glee as she made her way toward him. He knew that she knew that he reveled in his girls making a show of subserviance to him. He got off on it like it was a drug.

Once a master vampire, always a master vampire.

"Santa?" Willow asked in a timid little girl voice when she reached him.

Spike raised a brow. He'd been thinking "˜festive' when he decided on this costume for tonight, he had no idea Tara and Willow would get off on it like they were. Since he liked to experiment with every new kink that came along, he had no problem playing along with her game.

"Yes, little girl?" he asked in the gentle, accented tones he'd used when talking to the kids at the mall. Much more William like than Spike.

"Can I tell you what I want for Christmas?" she asked sweetly, then, just for good measure, she slipped her thumb in her mouth and gave it a good sucking.

Santa's eyes almost rolled back in his head. Little Santa was getting very jolly.

Spike got his libido under control and answered in his Santa voice, "Of course, my lovely little Willow. What would you like for Christmas?"

Willow's eyes looked down at the floor and she sucked her thumb even harder. "I'm too shy," she whispered around her thumb.

"What's wrong, sweetheart?" Santa asked the little girl. "I won't laugh, I promise. Why don't you whisper it in my ear and then Mommy won't have to hear," he said. He'd used this technique with many children.

Willow nodded. Kneeling in front of him, her nude body shimmering in the firelight, she leaned over, pulled her thumb out of her mouth with a plop! and said, "I want to suck Santa's cock." Then she put her thumb back in her mouth and returned to her kneeling position, looking for all the world as if she'd just asked for a tea set.

Santa's eyes shone. He looked the little girl over. "Are you on Santa's Nice list or Santa's Naughty list this year?" he asked with obvious lewd intent.

"Oh, I'm always a very good girl, Santa," she told him. She smiled. "But I'm very good at being naughty." Her face was shining now.

"Tell you what," Santa said, leaning in conspiratorially, "You slide Santa's big fat cock between those luscious lips, and then swallow it whole and I'll decide then whether you belong on my Nice list or my Naughty list? How "˜bout that?" he asked.

She nodded and slipped her thumb slowly out of her mouth. Her eyes traveled down his muscled chest and past his chiseled abs to rest on the object of her lusty intentions. She licked her lips.

Santa audibly groaned. She giggled.

She gave little Santa a long wet lick from balls to crown before moving Santa to a sitting position, leaning against the wall. Now she could lie between his splayed legs and go to town.

She made sure she had his eyes before she lowered her mouth onto him, taking him in very slowly, All. The. Way. Down. She swallowed around him when he was touching the back of her throat and hummed a verse of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" before backing off just as slowly.

"You, pet," Spike told her, "Are a Very. Naughty. Girl."

Willow swirled her tongue around and slipped under his foreskin. Spike moaned. "And I wouldn't have it any other way."

Willow took his balls in her hand and massaged them for a minute before she began her next assault on Spike's senses. Slipping her hand further down, she ran her index finger back and forth across his perineum. Her teeth took innocent little bites up and down the length of his cock as her finger played with his sensitive skin.

Spike and Willow were so lost in what they were doing that they didn't hear Tara awake and crawl over to join them. Spike had his eyes closed, reveling in the feel of Willow's warm, wet mouth surrounding him. When Willow pulled back again, he now had two tongues licking their way up his straining length. His eyes opened to watch them and his toes curled from the delicious sensations they were causing.

The finger Willow had been dallying around his perineum was now placed in Tara's mouth and she licked it happily, getting it so wet that her saliva was running down onto Willow's hand. Willow smiled and removed it from the soft mouth, slipping it back under Spike, but this time sliding it deep inside, passing the tight muscles to caress the gland that she had spent a very enjoyable hour learning the exact location of a few weeks before.

Spike moaned deep and low, then growled as Willow began pistoning her finger in and out, striking the sweet spot a little more forcefully each time. Tara was having trouble holding him in her mouth as his body bucked harder with Willow's more vigorous attentions. But, true to her vamp, she stayed in place and swallowed greedily as he blasted his sweet as sugar cum into her mouth. She couldn't swallow fast enough and slick white streams dripped from her lips and Willow took the opportunity to lick Tara's shoulders, neck and face, consuming the leftover treat as she went.

As his girls make out session got more passionate, Willow pushed Tara onto the floor and climbed up her body. Spike slipped his fingers into Tara's wet pussy, stealing the fluid to coat his recovering cock. When he was adequately slippery, he crawled up on top of them and slid inside of Willow, filling the same tight opening that she had so wonderfully explored on him.

She relaxed, as she knew she must in order to make this pleasurable and in seconds she was pushing back into him wanting more of the pleasure and pain he was infusing in her. He gave her what she wanted, hard and fast like he knew she craved.

Willow could no longer concentrate on Tara's kisses so as Willow squirmed, Tara used her lips and tongue to explore Willow's body. Tara slowly slid lower and lower underneath of her girlfriend, until her tongue could lave Willow's peaked nipples and her lips could cover her breasts in kisses.

When Willow's body tensed, about to fall into oblivion, Spike pulled out and she whimpered. He quickly slipped back in, only this time he gave her neglected cunt the pounding she wanted.

Only to once again withdrawal before Willow could reach completion. Tara giggled against Willow's chest; she knew how much Spike loved this game and how much Willow both adored and dreaded it.

Willow, intent on paying Tara back for her mirth at Willow's torture, slid off to the side and told Spike to play with Tara for a while.

Spike gladly obliged. He gave Tara's lips a quick kiss before nibbling his way down her body and showering her clit with attention. Tara begged him to come inside of her, swearing she needed the connection, the overwhelming presence of him inside her.

Spike moved up her body and kissed her sweetly as he eased into her core, reaching out with every sense to invade her body and her mind. He filled her up, in every way, and pulled every ounce of her into himself. He briefly felt warm lips kissing his back and knew it must be Willow, but he was concentrating on Tara right now and he opened himself up to her as he took from her; each truly becoming part of the other.

Tara moaned, then almost screamed, it was almost too much to take, she felt like she was drowning in love. Spike knew not to stop, knew this was what Tara craved, his all-consuming presence, taking over her entirely.

He'd done this with both of his girls, sharing everything they were - and the parts of him that he could, there was still so much that was too terrifying to reveal just yet, their love was all so new.

But it wasn't, not really. In the vampire scheme of things, yes. But in human time, the two years he'd loved Tara and the three years he'd had Willow inside of his skin were almost forever. Many marriages didn't last that long.

He knew that that he owed them more, still not all of it - even he couldn't face some of the heinous things he'd done, but they definitely deserved more. He pulled slowly out of Tara's mind, telling her that it was alright, he had a wonderful gift for her if she'd only lie still for a minute. She nodded and watched as he withdrew from her physically and pulled Willow to lie beside her.

Spike shifted, moving onto Willow and inside of her body as well. He opened her up as he had Tara, filling her with both his love and the love he had received from Tara. He explored her too, trying to gauge if she was ready for what he wanted to give her.

As he had expected, Willow was an open book, ready to accept any part of him he was willing to give her. Her spirit was so strong, but not as strong as Tara's, which he knew would surprise most people, and Willow was suffused with an underlying darkness that was completely absent within Tara. He knew that he and Tara together could help her accept it and keep it from consuming her. The three of them together were invincible. He brought Willow's body and mind to the same point he had brought Tara's to and then withdrew from her. He pulled off his coat and then nudged them apart, laying on his back between them and them pulling them each onto him, so they each straddled one of his legs. His arms held them both tightly to him, he needed them to be as close as physically possible for this to work.

He kissed them both, moving quickly back and forth between them, becoming so fast, thanks to his preternatural abilities, that neither one even realized he had left her lips. Willow and Tara rubbed themselves against his legs, gaining the contact necessary for orgasm. The heat between them grew and when the girls' bodies climaxed together, Spike opened up the connection, making it a three-way communication.

The orgasm was the catalyst that dissolved all their barriers, making it easier for them all to give and take communally. Spike kept very tight control over his own responses, wanting to show them who he was really was inside without forcing them to absorb the atrocities he'd committed in the name of Angelus. He showed them his human life, he showed them his turning and his ecstasy in being able to abandon all the social mores that had held him constrained during his lifetime. He showed them the monster, but he also allowed them to see the man.

And they saw each other as well. Willow saw the cruelties inflicted on Tara by her family and the small comforts she allowed herself in order to make it through unscathed. Willow saw the love the other woman felt for her and she saw the tender moments of Spike and Tara's first meeting. She could actually feel Spike making love to Tara, could feel as if she were the one losing her virginity.

Tara, as well, came to being inside of Willow. She saw Willow's abandonment by her parents, she saw Xander and Jesse and Willow becoming each other's family. She saw Willow befriending Buffy and Giles and Dawn, and learning to use magick after the death of her beloved teacher.

Tara and Spike together experienced Willow returning Angel's soul and the forces that she had allowed to take over her body in order to save her friend. They saw the darkness that was always there but ignored, and then was fed by the magicks she had used for this spell.

Spike and Tara promised Willow from the inside that they'd never allow that darkness to overtake her.

They were so caught up in the amazement of becoming one this way that they didn't see the mist that consumed them or the glow that emanated from their joined bodies.

They left their pasts behind and focused finally on just their love for each other; their incredible wonder at discovering and accepting this unconventional relationship. The total completeness they felt only when they were together. It was too impossible to imagine - a two hundred year old master vampire and two human novice witches.

But it was.

And by some astonishing twist of fate, circumstances had all brought them here, to the only place they really belonged.

Their love filled the mist and the mist filled the air and the love expanded until it no longer fit inside the room, the apartment, the building.

The vampire and his witches released their internal connection and began a night of sweet touches and soft kisses. The lust had been sated for a while, but the love needed an outlet and they spent the rest of Christmas night experiencing love, real and true and never-ending.

The mystical mist spread over the town and the rest of Sunnydale; those lucky enough to have someone loving and worthy by their side, felt that love and spent their night in similar pursuits.

The End