

Chasing Shadows

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For Trixie Leitz. Buffy, Faith, bodyswitched and somehow involving a musical episode. I've been somewhat generous with the definition of "musical episode" since having those girls bodyswitched during OWMF wouldn't work that well.

Featured fandoms: Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Featured pairings: Buffy/Faith

A.S.S Story codes: ff,nc

Story rating: R

In Sunnydale, Buffy looked in a mirror and saw her long dark hair, full lips and voluptuous body.

"I have to find her, Willow," she said. "She ran off with my *body*."

She was sitting in hers and Willow's dorm room. She hadn't had the guts to go see her mother looking as she did, particularly not after all the people got killed in the church.

"Do you want me to come?" Willow said. "I will if you do."

Buffy shook her head. "I can move faster alone," she said. "And so can Faith. You'd need much more rest than either of us."

She could see the disappointment in Willow's face.

"I guess," she said. "Keep in touch, will you? We'll worry."

"I will," Buffy promised. She put the box with the glowing body-switching orb in her pocket.

"Cross my heart and hope to die," she said.

In Los Angeles, she lost Faith's tracks. She swallowed her pride and asked Angel for help, and he told her to go see a demon about a song.

"Chose one," the green-skinned red-horned bar host said. "Then sing it."

The karaoke machine didn't have many songs she knew, so she chose one from the name alone. It felt weird singing in Faith's dusky voice, but it did sound like the sort of song she might like. It seemed to be about being alone and wanting not to be, about the inevitability of heartbreak and the impossibility of ever really knowing the person sharing your bed.

She found herself rather liking it too.

"*Some Kind of Stranger*," the host said when she stepped off the stage. "Well, you've certainly got the look for it, baby."

"Angel said you could see the future," she said. "That you could tell me where to go next."

"Way back when it used to be that fugitives went west," he said. "But this is about as west as it gets, so that's not an option, really. Head east, little girl. You'll find her in the desert."

"Thank you," Buffy said and turned to leave.

"Oh," the host said to her back. "Make sure to get a good night's sleep as often as you can."

She certainly could use a night's sleep, and Angel had said to trust the demon, so she got a room just barely above the rent-per-hour level and laid down fully dressed on the bed. The sound of sirens and gunfire sang her to sleep.

In her dream, she had her own body. It felt good, to have her own narrower hips and her own not so heavy chest.

She was standing in the room she'd dreamt before, the one where she and Faith had made the bed together. It was brightly lit and bright in color, and it smelled fresh.

"I knew you'd follow me here, B," Faith said. She was standing by the window, where nobody had been standing a moment before. "Or maybe this is your dream and I followed you here."

"This is too clean and pretty to be your dream," Buffy said.

Faith was silent for a while. "Yes," she said. "It is, isn't it?"

She turned around, and she held the large knife the Mayor had given her. Blood dropped from it onto the pale wooden floor.

"*This* is my dream," she said. "See?"

A red stain spread over her belly, rapidly turning her white top the color of blood.

"Except it's too bright, isn't it?" she went on. "Gotta be darker to be mine."

She knelt down, and with the blood that ran from her wound she drew a circle around her on the floor.

"Express elevator to Hell," she said. "If you wanna catch me, you gotta follow."

The floor inside the circle dissolved into flame and Faith fell screaming into darkness.

Eastward, into the desert. Buffy took the first bus she found headed for Arizona, trusting to luck and instinct. Hour by hour she sat in her seat staring out the window at the decreasingly hospitable landscape until night fell and it was replaced by the reflection of Faith's face.

She wondered what it would be like if she never got her own body back. If she had to live with this face and this body for the rest of her life. The face and body of a wanted murderer and rogue Slayer, hunted by authorities mundane as well as occult. It wasn't a life she wanted to live. She didn't mind dealing with the consequences of her own mistakes, but she certainly did mind living with the consequences of Faith's.

"But you'll have to," the reflection said. "Because I finally got what I wanted. I got what you had. Everybody will like *me* now."

The bus wasn't around her any more, and she realized that she must've fallen asleep in her seat.

"No, they won't," she said. Faith's top was still mostly red, and blood still seeped from the wound in her belly. "Wearing my face still won't make you likeable."

They seemed to be standing in a huge black nothing. There was nothing there except the two of them. Light Slayer, Dark Slayer.

"Fuck you," Faith said. "I can be likeable if I want to. I can be likeable as long as I don't have little miss perfect upstaging every fucking thing I do."

"Oh really?" Buffy said. "And what was your problem *before* you met me?"

In the darkness, something rumbled.

"Before?" Faith said, and suddenly she looked very, very afraid.

"Yes," Buffy said. "Before."

The knife was gone from Faith's hand, and her top was white again.

"There was no before," Faith said, her voice shaking. In the darkness, the rumble increased in volume.

The bus shook to a halt at a rest stop in the middle of nowhere. There was a gas station and a diner, and that was it. All around it was flat, dead desert. Somehow, she knew that Faith was out there. She ate a sturdy meal at the diner, bought as many bottles of water as she could fit in her backpack and headed out into nowhere.

The ground was hard, dry and broken, and she had to pay attention so she didn't trip and fall. When she walked out of eyeshot of the lights from the diner and the gas station, it was like an enormous black canopy with innumerable little glowing pinpricks opened up above her. The wind blew cold. She tugged her jeans jacket closer around her and wished she'd stopped to get something warmer.

It didn't take long before she lost track of time. There was no sun or moon to judge it by, and the landscape gave her few clues with which to measure her progress. She just walked on into the desert and the darkness.

"I wish we could've been friends," she said when she felt Faith's presence next to her. She wasn't sure if she was awake or dreaming, for while it looked like the desert around her the girl walking next to her looked like a transparent Faith.

"Me too," Faith said, in a small voice.

"So why didn't we?" Buffy asked.

But the shade wasn't there any more. She was alone in the desert.

Apart from the shack with the lit-up window in front of her.

She approached carefully and tried to get a look in the window, but it was too grimy for her to see anything. She listened at the door, and heard nothing. She tried to look under the door to see if she could spot any suspicious shadows, but that didn't give anything either. Eventually, she just opened the door and stepped inside.

She was so used to seeing Faith's face in her dreams, that when her own face appeared in front of her she thought it was a mirror. Until the fist hit her face and everything turned black.

"Everyone always leaves me," Faith said in the dream. "My father before I was born. My mother when I was ten. My watcher just before I came to Sunnydale."

Buffy couldn't see her. Her head hurt, and the darkness was deeper than ever.

"We never left you," she said.

"Yes you did."

"No. You never let us in, so how could we?"

When Buffy came to again her head still hurt like hell. She tried to feel for blood or other signs of damage, but found that her hands wouldn't move. Nor would her legs. She forced her eyes open.

She was lying spread-eagle on a worn old mattress in the middle of the shack. Around her wrists and ankles sturdy steel manacles had been fastened, and tight chains led from them to the building's four corner posts. They looked like they were made out of wood, but they were solidly sunk into the hard ground and thick enough that she had no chance of breaking them from her current position.

"Hello, B," Faith said in a voice that Buffy knew to be her own, but that still sounded weird to her. "Been waiting for you."

"And this is the welcome I get?" she said. "Where did you learn your hostessing skills? The Marquis de Sade?"

Faith walked into Buffy's view. If it had been weird to hear her voice, seeing her was much more so. That was the face she'd seen in the mirror every day. Those were her arms. Her legs.

"Nah," she said. "You know I never was much of the book learning gal. I got this from the porn channels at the motels where I used to live."

"Porn channels? So what are you going to do now? Rip my clothes off and ravish me?"

Faith dropped down and straddled her hips.

"Actually," she said. "Yes."

Buffy stared at her in amazement. "*What?*" she said.

"Oh come on," Faith said. "No way you can not have known how badly I wanted into your pants, from the first time we met. When I got this body, almost the first thing I did was spend a whole lot of quality time with Buffy's pretty little fingers and Buffy's juicy little snatch."

Buffy just stared at her.

"And do you know something?" Faith said.

Buffy shook her head.

"You know they say that the smaller your tits the more sensitive they are, since we all have about the same amount of nerves spread over them?"

She slid her hands in under her black t-shirt and visibly groped her -- Buffy's! -- breasts.

"It's *so* true," she said. "Or didn't you notice? I can almost make myself come just by playing with these perky little tits."

She brought her hands out and placed them squarely on the pair of breasts that Buffy now wore on her chest.

"Not that these aren't nice," she said. "I never really appreciated their size when I mostly just saw them from above, you know."

"Why are you doing this?" Buffy said. "What do you think you'll get out of it?"

"I get *off* on it," Faith said. "Haven't you been paying attention? I've been friggin myself to the thought of this here body..."

She pointed to herself.

"...doing all sorts of nasty things to this body..."

She put her finger between Buffy's breasts.

"...any number of times, and now I get to live those fantasies out. Granted, not really in the way I imagined, but I'll take what I can get."

She grabbed the white top Buffy was wearing with both hands, and with a solid jerk she ripped it apart, revealing the bosom beneath the cloth.

Buffy closed her eyes.

She turned around and peered into the darkness.

"This isn't making things better, you know," she said.

She spotted Faith, standing still and silent.

"I know what you're doing," she said. "I know why you're doing it."

She walked up close to Faith and looked at her.

"You're trying to drive me away," she said. "You're trying to make me give up on you, once and for all. You're trying to make me leave, like those others you mentioned. You want to keep being the victim, the one who gets left."

She grabbed the dream Faith's white top with her hands.

"But do you know what?" she said. "I'm a Slayer, just like you are, and I *never* quit!"

In a move exactly mirroring the one in the less dreamlike world, she ripped Faith's top open.

When she opened her eyes again, Faith was staring at her. For a moment, she looked disoriented. But only for a moment.

She scooted down to Buffy's knees, and ripped her jeans away just as easily as she'd done with the top. The panties quickly followed, leaving Buffy's front bare from the neck down to her knees.

Faith's hand pressed down on her vulva, moving gently and pressing at all the right spots.

Buffy groaned.

"Remember, I know this body," Faith said. "I lived in it for most of my life, and since I never was a prudish little goody two-shoes like you I know very well what it likes to have done to it."

She slid a finger in between the labia.

"Damn," she said. "You're getting wetter faster than I expected, B. This must be turning you on for real."

The dream Faith didn't fight. Maybe she was too shocked at what was happening. Maybe she didn't mind. Buffy didn't really care. She kept ripping the clothes off her, and pretty soon she had a naked Faith in front of her. She forced her hand in between her legs, trying her best to exactly copy the moves that Faith had so effectively demonstrated on her in the real world.

"Did it ever," she said as Faith closed her eyes.

"Occur to your sick little brain," she went on, and already she could feel hot slick wetness against her palm.

"To *ask* if I *wanted* to fuck you?" she finished.

Faith's eyes opened wide in surprise.

"What?" Faith said. She was still straddling Buffy's knees, and had one hand between her legs and the other on one of her breasts.

"You never asked," Buffy said. "You hinted and flirted and played mind games until nobody knew what you wanted. Not even, I think, you yourself."

Faith removed her hands and sat up straight.

"But I couldn't just ask," she said.

"Why not? Because the answer might've been *yes* and you had no idea how to handle that?"

She shook her chains.

"You wanted that body to do all sorts of nasty things to this body? Undo these chains and I'll let you experience it the way you *did* imagine it!"

Doubt clouded Faith's face. But then she dug into her pocket, got a key out and undid the manacles holding Buffy's hands and feet. Buffy rubbed them to get the blood started, and then dug into the pocket of the leather jacket she'd been wearing. She took out the little packet Willow had given her. She removed the little glowing ball from it, and before Faith could change her mind, she grabbed her hand and held it tight, the glowing ball held between their palms. There was a flash, and suddenly she couldn't feel the chill night air against her tits any more.

"Now," she said to the half-naked Faith in front of her. "Do you want to be chained up while I fuck you or not?"

Later, in the dream, the darkness was gone. They were back in the sunlit room, and the freshly made bed had finally seen a good use. Buffy lay on her side with Faith spooned behind her, and she wasn't thinking about anything in particular.

"Why did you stay?" Faith whispered. "Despite what I did?"

Buffy turned over. A part of her still noted how much easier doing that was when she wasn't quite so top-heavy as Faith.

"I used to be the one girl in all the world," she said. "All alone, against the forces of darkness."

She reached out and stroked Faith's cheek.

"Now I'm not," she said.

"Now *we're* not," Faith whispered.