HALLOWEEN

CHAPTER 1
A bad day at work

Angel looked at his watch. It was after nine o'clock. 'Where are you, Buffy?' he thought.

The Bronze was busy tonight but Angel sat alone. He looked at the young faces around him. People laughed and danced. 'This is Buffy's world,' he thought. 'Why am I here?' But he already knew the answer. He was there because he loved Buffy.

With his dark eyes, he watched the door.

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Buffy was almost at the Bronze. It was the end of October, two nights before Halloween. The evening was black and cold. Suddenly, something hit Buffy on the back of her head. She turned quickly. A vampire smiled at her –

not a pretty smile. Buffy hit him hard. He got up quickly and laughed. He hit back.

'I haven't got time for this,' Buffy thought. 'Angel is waiting for me.'

She pulled a stake from her jacket. Soon it was in the vampire's body. No more vampire.

'Look at me!' she thought. 'Tonight is my first date with Angel. My clothes are dirty. My hair is terrible. This isn't a good start.'

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'She isn't coming,' thought Angel. He wasn't happy.

'It's like, I *know*,' someone said to him. 'The Bronze just isn't cool. Why do we come here?'

Angel looked up.

'Oh hi, Cordelia,' he said and looked back at the door. 'I'm waiting for Buffy.'

'Great!' she said, and sat down. She smiled and talked. She moved closer to Angel. Angel didn't want her there.

But he was a nice vampire, so he smiled back at her.

It was the wrong time for a smile. Buffy came in and saw them together.

'This is stupid,' she thought. 'Look at Cordelia. She always looks fantastic. And I look … terrible.' She turned to the door.

Angel saw Buffy across the room.

'Buffy?' He ran to the club door.

'Oh … hi,' Buffy said. 'I'm …'

'… late,' Angel finished.

'Bad day at work,' Buffy said.

'Hmm. I see,' said Angel. He smiled.

'I love your hair, Buffy!' Suddenly Cordelia was there. 'Very "street fashion". How do you do it?' She smiled at Buffy then walked back to the table.

'Angel,' said Buffy, 'I'm going to … put a bag over my head. I can't stay here.'

'Don't listen to Cordelia. You look great.'

'You're very kind,' she said. But she didn't believe him.

'We have a date, you know,' laughed Angel.

'A date!' She talked quietly and sadly. 'Other girls have dates. Not me. I never think about my hair and my shoes. I don't have time. I think about vampires and stakes and blood.' She left the club.

Angel didn't follow her. Cordelia came back and smiled.

'Coffee?' she asked.

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The next morning, Principal Snyder waited for the students at Sunnydale High. He had paper and pens.

A girl walked into school. He grabbed her arm.

'Hey!' she said.

'Put your name here,' he told her.

'What is it?' she asked.

'Tomorrow is Halloween, and the children of Sunnydale are going trick-or-treating. They need some teenagers with them. That's you. Put your name here.'

'Can I say "no"?'

'No.'

The girl wrote her name angrily and went off.

'Did you see that?' Xander asked Buffy and Willow.

'Yeah. Let's walk faster,' said Buffy.

'Ah! Miss Summers.' There was a hand on her arm. 'Sunnydale's worst student.' He smiled. 'Put your name here.'

'Oh, I love children, Principal Snyder, but … I'm sorry … there's something wrong with my … ermm … hands. My doctor says …'

Principal Snyder gave her a pen. Then he gave two more pens to Willow and Xander.

'Write! The trick-or-treaters leave here at four o'clock. They must be home at six. Don't forget your costumes.'

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'I don't believe it!' said Xander. 'It's Halloween – party night. And we're going to have lots of small children with us. *And* we're going to be in stupid costumes!'

'I wanted a night at home!' said Buffy. 'It's the only quiet night in the year for me.'

'Halloween is *quiet*?!' Xander was surprised. 'Isn't it party night for vampires?'

'No, they stay at home. Giles told me. '

'I love those vampires,' said Xander.

'So usually I can stay in, too. But now I can't. Thanks, Snyder.'