

Why Can't I Stay?

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Fred's point of view as she dies. Companion to Not This Day. One Shot.

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1 - Why Can't I Stay?

A/N- I'm so glad everyone enjoyed "Not This Day." I've decided, inspired by everyone's great reviews, to do a companion one shot. And here it is. Here's that day, from Fred's point of view.

Disclaimer- I don't own Angel. That belongs to Joss Whendon.

The day started out like any other. We were torching the bad guys. But something was different now. I had Wesley. We shared a kiss as Angel and Spike were heard fussing in the background. Spike had impaled Angel on a sword. His excuse: the bug that was also on the sword's blade.

"I just think you like stabbing me," Angel said, turning angrily to Spike.

Spike scoffed. "I am shocked, *shocked*, that you would say that. I rather prefer hitting you with blunt instruments," he replied.

I had to bite my bottom lip to keep from giggling. Once Spike had gone on ahead, I approached Angel for the bug. He looked crestfallen to see that I wasn't offering to help remove the sword.

It was now early morning when I reached the lab. There, as I entered, I seen the most peculiar thing. A large sarcophagus was in the middle of my lab.

"What is this, Knox?" I asked, approaching it slowly.

"I don't know. I couldn't find any invoice on it. It was brought in last night. I thought that maybe you'd gone crazy on ebay," my lab assistant replied.

I assured him that I had had nothing to do with this thing. Then, he made a random statement about my dating Wesley now. He said that he was just trying to assure me that it was alright with him. I smiled at him. When he had left the room, I set about examining the sarcophagus. Then, suddenly, I caught sight of something peculiar. At the very head of the ancient coffin was a purple crystal...it seemed to not match the rest of the layout. I approached it slowly, my curiosity getting the best of me. Cautiously, I held out my hand over it. Then, just before I could touch it, the circle below it opened and blew old, musty air in my face, causing me to cough.

Knox ran back into the room.

"Are you alright?" he said, coming up behind me.

"It opened...and there was air,"

Knox thought it best that I be sent to the firm's infirmary. They shooed me off quickly, saying that there was nothing wrong with me. Outside the infirmary, I ran into Lorne.

“Hey, Freddikins,” he said in his sweet, soothing tones.

“Hey, Lorne,” I replied.

“What in the world were you doing in there, sweet thing?”

We began to head toward the main lobby where Angel's office was located.

“Some nasty air flew into my mouth. They were making sure I was alright. I was,”

“That's good to hear. Oh, by the way, I have a hypothetical question. I thought it was an interesting conversation. If cavemen and astronauts were to fight, and the astronauts didn't have any weapons, who would win?”

I laughed. I bet Spike started this with Angel.

“Well, I really don't think it's fair that the astronauts don't have any weapons,” I said.

“Personally, I think the cavemen would win, but how do you figure?”

We were on the balcony overlooking the lobby, and my sweet Wesley was coming up the stairs toward us.

“Well, it's not fair. The cavemen have fire. It's what they live in their caves with...I think the astronauts should have some sort of weapon,”

“Hey,” the green empath said as we met with Wesley at the top of the stair, “I'm just calling them as I see them.”

Wesley smiled serenely as I approached. Then, in his sweet British way, he joked about my visit to the infirmary and hinted at a secret, romantic dinner.

“Jeez, get a balcony you two,” Lorne said, pushing lightly past us.

“Hey, I can still find you for lunch, can't I?” I said.

“Of course. I'll just look for where the sun shines,” he said. Then he began to sing, “Sunshine, my only Sunshine,”

Looking deep into Wesley's eyes, I picked up, “You make me happy— ”

Suddenly, Lorne gasped, and a pain welled up in me. I felt a hot, sticky substance rise in my throat and then...everything went black.

And I dreamed. I dreamed, oddly enough, about the day I left home to go to UCLA. I remember packing Feigenbaun, the Master of Chaos (AKA, my stuffed rabbit). I remembered my mother asking me to be

careful. And I remembered what I had said.

“I’m gonna study, Mom. I’m gonna learn every damn thing they know up there...and then figure out some stuff they don’t. And I’ll be careful,”

And then I left. Now, I was vaguely aware of lying in a hospital type bed. And I was in a very minor amount of pain. Was this the price of my knowledge? Then, I became aware of someone in the waking world watching me. A whole bunch of someones. I opened my eyes.

“It’s my boys,” I murmured.

Staring back at me were all the people I held near and dear to my heart. They told me that I was sick. And that I was going to be fine. And that I shouldn’t worry...and I knew they were lying. I was worse off than they were saying. I could *feel* it. Angel then said something about figuring out what the problem was and saving me. I smiled, recalling the first time I had met him.

“Handsome man saves me,” I muttered.

He smiled back. “That’s how it works,” he replied.

And they were gone. Leaving only my Wesley and I in the room. I knew he couldn’t stay. I knew he had to go find out why I was hurting. And he left. Left to save the day. I did the only thing I could do for the moment. I slept.

But it was not peaceful. Instead of dreaming of fluffy, happy things, I was revisiting the past. I was back in that horrible cave where I met Angel...only Angel wasn’t there. I was back in that world...and no one was coming to get me. Hours later, I supposed, I awoke with a start.

The pain woke me, not the dreams. It was getting increasingly worse. *I won’t die like this*, I thought. Throwing my feet over the edge of the bed, I made my way slowly to my lab. Soon after, Wesley came for me. He told me that I had to lay down. I told him no.

“I am not some damsel in distress,” I said, leaning over a countertop for support. My legs felt like jelly. “I am not some case. I have to work this. I lived in a cave for five years in a world where they killed my kind like cattle. I am not going to be cut down by some monster flu. I am better than that!”

Wesley’s eyes filled with concern. I stopped for just a brief moment, wondering...wondering why I was going on like this. Why I was revisiting the past in my waking world.

“But I wonder...” I said aloud, “how very scared I am.”

“You have to lay down,” Wesley said, coming closer.

“Like I’m six years old,” I said, losing my grip on the counter top.

I fell back in his arms. I looked up into his eyes.

“This is a house of death,” I whispered.

I asked him to take me to the one place I could feel safe. I asked him to take me home. And there, I slept again.

This time it was my past I saw. It was worse. I was in utter darkness, and a voice I didn't recognize was talking to me.

“A few more hours, Shell. Then I will be reborn to my former glory!” the voice boomed loud in my head.

To escape the noise and the rush of pain I had felt at the boom, I forced my eyes open. Wesley was pouring one of his books, still trying to find a way to ease my pain. Sweet Wesley. I asked him what time it was. He asked if he had been making too much noise. If it wouldn't have hurt as much as I knew it would have, I would've laughed.

“Not enough. I need noise to keep me here,” I said, allowing my head to droop to one side.

To keep me here? What was I saying? Had I already gave up? To get my mind off of my pain, which was growing steadily worse, I asked him to read to me.

And he read. He read until I started to drift back off to sleep. But I didn't want to hear that awful voice again. So I asked him to stop and to just hold me. He climbed into bed beside me and took my hands. I slept anyway.

“You're almost empty now. It will be more painful. But you are being honored, know that, Shell,” the voice said, matter-of-factly.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“I am a power greater than you could imagine. I am an ultimate evil,” it stated.

“Leave me alone. Go away. I don't want you here. Get the hell out of my body!” I screamed at it. It only laughed.

“Soon...soon,” it said.

I awoke to a great pain. Wesley had long ago left my bed to sit at my side...I suppose he wanted to watch me sleep. I couldn't focus on him, however. The pain was just too great. Why? Why was this happening to me? What had I done? I was growing delirious. I knew that, but I couldn't hold on to myself. Suddenly, through all the pain, I seen Wesley stick a needle into my arm. Presumably a tranquilizer. To calm me. I knew it wouldn't work. Then, I pictured a glowing, indescribable figure sitting in a chair at the foot of my bed. I knew who it was. I knew that I should beg.

“I've sinned!” I cried to it.

But it disappeared. And then, my father replaced it. And I was reminded of the one time I had made a B in my life. He had that same look on his face. The pain was eating me up. The image of my father left.

And then there was just Wesley...and the voice.

"Soon, Shell. Soon," it whispered.

The glowing figure reappeared.

"I'm sorry!" I cried to it. And I seen a tear come to Wesley's eye. "Make it stop!"

It shook its head. And it disappeared.

"He can't help you now, Shell," the voice said. Who was it referring to?

I looked to Wesley. I needed to tell him about the voice.

"Why did we go there?" I said. This was obviously some Wolfram and Hart evil. "Why did we think we could beat it? It's evil, Wesley. It's bigger than anything!"

A jolt of pain more horrible than electricity. And then another image in the chair. A red figure with horns. I leapt to a sitting position and pointed to Wesley.

"I'm with him!" I cried.

Wesley came closer. To comfort me...or did he see the image too? I looked at him, pleadingly.

"You won't leave me now?" I asked.

"Never," he said. Although I couldn't focus on them, I could hear the tears in his voice.

Then, I swallowed the pain. A voice that was not my own said, "Hmm."

It was the voice. It was impressed with my strength.

"That was a bad one," I said, finally able to focus fully on Wesley now. "But it's better now. You won't leave me now?"

"No. Never," he said again.

"My boys," I whispered.

I sat there, allowing the shock my body had gone through to pass. But the pain was still there. I felt empty. Then, twenty minutes later, it started again. But I refused to let it affect me as badly as it had before. I looked to Wesley. He was staring at me. He seemed to have as much pain in his eyes as I had in my body. Then, I thought of Angel and Spike. Wesley had told me that they were on the right track to saving me.

"Thousands will die if they do," the voice whispered. "You have no choice but to sacrifice yourself, Shell."

"I walk with heroes. Think about that," I said, staring at Wesley, hoping the voice had heard me.

"You are one," Wesley said, a few tears escaping the prisons he had set for them.

"And this is my power," I replied.

Again, the figures were back. This time it was both the horned figure and the glowing one.

"Do not let them take me," I pleaded. "Not me."

"That's right," Wesley said.

The figures looked impressed with me. They stood and began to walk toward Wesley. I took him into my arms. I had to protect him from those figures.

"He's with me," I told them.

We sat there for hours and the pain never went away again. It was going to be over soon. My emptiness was going to be complete. I was crying, nonstop. Finally, I looked up at Wesley.

In a shuddering voice, I asked, "Will you kiss me?"

And he did. Without hesitation. It was a sweet, gentle kiss, filled with utter and complete emotion.

"Would you have loved me?" I sobbed.

"I have loved you since the day I met you...no, that not right. I think I loved you before that," Wesley cried.

And now I was going away. Being taken away from this man who had loved me so.

"I'm so sorry," I whimpered.

I was almost laying down now. The only thing keeping me off the bed was his arms.

"I need you to talk to my parents. They have to know that I wasn't scared and that it was quick. That I wasn't scared," I said.

"No, you don't have to talk. Just hold on," he begged.

"Fear. Typical of you shells. That's all that you are capable of. Nice to know that things are still the same," the voice taunted.

"I'm not scared, I'm not scared, I'm not scared," I said, over and over again.

Wesley was looking deep into my eyes. There was so much I still needed to say to him! So much he had

to know! I couldn't go now! He has to know I love him too! That I wanted to be with him, always. That he was the one. The one man that I had been waiting for my entire life. But none of this I could say. It just wasn't fair.

"Please, Wesley...Why can't I stay?"

And it was darkness, eternal.

End Notes: Okay, did you like it? Oh, and that last darkness bit doesn't mean she went to Hell. I personally believe that Fred went to Heaven. The darkness was just her last conscious thought here. Please R & R! Thanks!