

Carpe Diem

A short story by Henry Cavanaugh

Some days it was difficult for Wesley Wyndham-Price to believe just how drastically his life had changed in just two short years. He had gone from following his father's footsteps as a member of the Watcher's Council and even the replacement Watcher of the current Vampire Slayer, Miss Buffy Summers, in Sunnydale to a rogue demon hunter traveling across California, and then finally to a member of Angel Investigations, a vigilante group solving supernatural mysteries in the heart of Los Angeles. Never in his wildest dreams had he imagined that he would be working alongside a vampire, even an ensouled one like Angel, but the man had become a close personal friend in the year they had worked together.

While being a Watcher and rogue demon hunter had felt like awkward fits for him, Wesley was happy to say that his current role made him feel suitably accomplished and appreciated. He was the brains of their small group, although there were definitely times when he found himself craving the thrill of danger and physicality. Much of that was handled by Angel who had the supernaturally enhanced strength of a vampire on his side, or Gunn, who had grown up fighting on the streets. Wesley himself only had a small amount more experience in combat than the fourth and final member of their group, Cordelia "Cordy" Chase, who was cursed by painful visions that allowed her to see future events. They were an odd collection of individuals but they made their situation work and were doing everything they could to keep the forces of evil at bay.

Their latest case had them hunting down a warlock who had been placing curses on the single men of Los Angeles. These curses drained their muscles, caused their manhood to dwindle and forced them to become submissive and desperate for pleasure. To make matters worse, Gunn was one of the men who had been afflicted by the warlock's sick enchantment, which effectively took him out of action. He was currently locked up in one



of the Hyperion Hotel's suites just for his own safety while the three remaining members tackled the case with even more urgency than before.

Cordelia's latest premonition had sent Angel and Wesley into the sewers beneath the city, where they were looking for an entrance into the secret chamber that the warlock was operating from. To narrow things down for them, Wesley had cast a spell that made an orb basically become a tracking device, as it sought out other sources of magical energy and increased in temperature the closer that they got. Angel had at first insisted that Wesley hand the orb over to him so that he could keep the former Watcher out of danger, but when Wesley had lied and said that the orb would only work in the hands of a human rather than a vampire, Angel had begrudgingly allowed him to tag along.

The pair were rapidly approaching the suspected location of the warlock's lair when the first sign of impending disaster struck. All of a sudden the silence of the sewers was penetrated by the shrill ringing of Wesley's cell phone. While he was still trying to fish the buzzing cell phone out of his jacket pocket, Wesley was stunned by how quickly the device was snatched out of his hands by his employer. Angel moved with supernatural reflexes as he extended his arm and threw the cell phone against the sewer wall, causing it to smash into pieces. The ensouled vampire then leveled a glare towards Wesley, with the annoyed look saying more than enough to make the British man feel incredibly foolish and even somewhat emasculated.

Now feeling understandably embarrassed, Wesley cleared his throat and continued to follow Angel down the sewer tunnel. It was a mere thirty seconds before the orb's temperature rapidly rose, prompting the mortal man to let out a gasp and start rapidly transferring the object between his hands to try and prevent a potential burn. Being alerted to the situation by Wesley's verbal reaction, Angel quickly pulled the orb out of his hands. Due to the complex magic within, the orb immediately lost its heat at the moment it made contact with the vampire's flesh. Wesley opened his mouth to apologize but before he could say anything, Angel's expression became suddenly serious and he outstretched a hand in warning. "He's here."

The words had barely left the vampire's mouth when the sewer wall across from the pair shimmered and warped to reveal an open archway. Standing within that space was a man who would be considered utterly forgettable under any other circumstance. He was tall, around six-foot-three, but incredibly slender and his facial features were incredibly gaunt and pale. Wesley felt confident that even he could successfully take the man in a physical fight and Angel would certainly break him in two with the lightest touch. Unfortunately for them, the conflict wouldn't be a question of physical strength, as the warlock had magic on his side and he immediately made an impact by thrusting both hands forward, one towards each of his pursuers.

All of a sudden Wesley was stripped of his ability to move. It was as if he had been turned into a statue, only he was still breathing and aware of what was going on. From his peripherals he could see that a similar fate had fallen upon his friend, as Angel was trapped in stasis just a few short feet away. The men were helpless to watch as wisps of light and magical energy started to be pulled from their chest - purple from Wesley and orange from Angel - where it began to swirl around the warlock's extended hands. Then, as if the situation wasn't already bad enough, Wesley's sight failed him and his vision was overtaken by a menacing black void that only promised further danger. He was left with a stomach-turning feeling of weightlessness and an all-consuming dread that far outdid anything he had ever experienced before.

Mercifully the two men only had to endure that strange sensation for a few short seconds before it was brought to an end, although even that was not without painful consequences. The warlock thrust his hands forward once more, sending the orange energy into Wesley's body and the purple into Angel's. At the point of impact though, both men were launched off of their feet as if struck by a jackhammer. The pair crashed against the opposite wall, their skulls bouncing off of the concrete and fleshing ripping open as a result of the blunt force trauma, before dropping to the ground. Both bodies remained still for some time, and when neither of them immediately stirred, the gaunt-faced warlock took that as his cue to hastily skitter away into the darkness.

It was several long minutes before Wesley finally drifted back to consciousness but when he did it wasn't without some serious brain fog and an overall heaviness that seemed to have spread throughout every inch of his body. Once he had pried open his



eyes and pushed himself into a seated position though, Wesley quickly took notice of the most alarming development to come from their encounter with the warlock: he had been separated from his own body! There was no mistaking it. The body that was slumped on the floor just a few feet away was most definitely his own and if he wasn't the one occupying it then that meant...

A glance down at himself confirmed Wesley's suspicions. There was no mistaking whose leather jacket he was wearing, nor whose thick hands he was staring at. He was in Angel's body! Whatever magic the warlock had used on them had displaced them from their own bodies and forced them into the nearest available host. *That means... I'm a vampire now*, Wesley realized in stunned silence. Despite the shock, his heart remained completely still in his

chest as he now possessed the physiological makeup of a member of the undead. His ability for rational, good natured thought suggested that he still retained his soul but everything else was brand new to him. Although the most pressing emotion in the wake of that realization was concern, there was also a small part of Wesley that was actually excited by the new possibilities that came from being in his vampire boss' body.

After peering around the dark tunnel, the former Watcher was quickly able to identify two things: the warlock was long gone, and his sight had been greatly improved. He could see much further and much more vividly into the darkness than his human eyes had ever been able to manage. His hearing had been similarly bolstered too, as he could now quite clearly make out the sounds of rats scuttling further down the tunnel and even the faint sounds of traffic in the streets above them. By far the most alarming change to Wesley's senses though was his heightened smelling, as he was not only exposed to the stench of the waste that surrounded them but also an alarmingly inviting aroma that seemed to drift from where his real body was slumped over.

It's the smell of blood, Wesley identified, with his eyes being almost hypnotically drawn to the large gash upon his own body's head, where blood was freely seeping from. He was appalled to find himself so susceptible to its scent and forced himself to keep in mind that it was his own blood he was smelling. Not only that but he wasn't really a vampire, just temporarily occupying the body of him! He'd be forever forsaking his humanity if he even stopped to consider the possibility of licking that wound clean...

Equally as concerning as Wesley's new desire for blood was the fact that the man who had been stuffed into his human body was still yet to stir. The former Watcher knew from experience that human bodies were much more easily breakable than vampire ones and the hard collision against the unforgiving stone wall had probably done quite the number on him. If his theory was correct and Angel's consciousness really had been switched into that human body, he was at considerable risk of bleeding out or suffering some other long term effect if he didn't receive medical attention soon.

After summoning up all of his willpower to suppress the strange urges building inside of him and gathering his strength, Wesley finally rose to his feet and staggered over towards his fallen friend. To say that it felt strange to suddenly have a heavier and more muscular body under his control would be an understatement. That was never more obvious than when he reached his arms around the limp body and lifted him up in the air. Wesley's true body weighed around one hundred and eighty pounds, but at that moment it felt as if he was carrying only a quarter of that weight!

Out of concern for both his friend and his own body, Wesley took off in a sprint towards the entrance to the sewers. It was mercifully still night so he at least wasn't at risk of bursting into flames under the bright sun. A mix of adrenaline and supernatural strength

helped the man carry his fallen friend all the way to the closest emergency room in record time. He didn't even stop to think about what his next move should be until he had laid the unconscious Angel out on the gurney and let the doctors and nurses step in to offer care. Once they had wheeled his friend into another room though, Wesley was finally left alone with his thoughts. To say that his mind was a jumbled mess would be an understatement; there was so much to think about that it was nothing short of overwhelming.

"I have to tell Cordy," he muttered to himself as he navigated towards the nearest restroom. "Maybe she can help find a way to undo this... but if Angel doesn't wake up any time soon, would that even be possible?" As soon as he was in the restroom



Wesley navigated to the sinks and began pouring out water to splash on his face. After rising back to full height though, he came face to face with the mirror - and his complete lack of a reflection. It was a startling discovery, even if it was one that Wesley knew he should have anticipated. He'd spent his entire life up to that point studying vampires (among other supernatural creatures) so he should have been well aware of what to expect but he'd never truthfully expected to become a member of the undead! No amount of reading and researching would help prepare him for it to become a reality.

"If I tell her though, won't I just panic her?" Wesley asked his non-existent reflection. Despite knowing that telling the truth was most likely the best course of action, a new idea was beginning to formulate in the man's mind. Now that his expert mind had been paired with the physical superiority of Angel's body, wasn't he incredibly equipped to deal with their warlock issue himself? He could find and subdue the man responsible, force him to undo the curse that had befallen Gunn and so many others, and then provide Wesley safe passage back into his own body.

While Wesley had faith in his ability to bring a swift resolution to the whole ordeal, he was aware that others might not share his confidence, including Cordelia. It wasn't lost on Wesley that she thought he was sweet but physically incompetent and there was no way she would support him in attempting to solve things by himself. "So I don't tell her," he decided, still struggling to get used to the deeper bass and American accent of the voice that came forth from his lips. "I can pretend to be Angel for a few days, no problem. Just be broody and handsome all the time, how difficult is that?"

Now with his mind made up, Wesley departed from the restroom with the intention of getting a check-up on his friend's condition. Once he was certain that the other was

stable it would be time to get to work. The sooner he'd brought the whole saga to a swift close, the sooner they would all be able to laugh about the insanity of it and Angel would never again doubt Wesley's capabilities. This was his chance to prove himself as a hero and he wouldn't rest until he had the whole mess cleaned up!



Despite having made up his mind that he would solve the whole warlock problem himself, Wesley still wasn't exactly thrilled at the news that the doctors had delivered him concerning Angel's condition. His stomach had twisted into an uncomfortable knot the moment that the doctors greeted him in the waiting room. They were doing their best to keep their faces neutral and professional, but they weren't quite able to hide the sympathy from their eyes. "Run that by me one more time, please," he requested weakly, anxiously scratching at the hard line of his jaw. "I'm not... that was a lot to take in."



"Of course," the doctor replied kindly, "Your friend - Wesley - suffered severe trauma to the head which has caused severe intracranial pressure. We've been able to clear some of the fluids that were flooding through his brain, but we still have major concerns about his long-term prospects. Should he regain consciousness, it's possible that he may have issues with memory or even struggle to perform basic actions without assistance." Each word out of the doctor's mouth made the knot in Wesley's stomach grow tighter and tighter. He couldn't help but focus on the doctor's wording: *should he regain consciousness*. There was a chance that Angel might never wake up, that he might die while occupying Wesley's body! It was a terrifying prospect and one that Wesley absolutely blamed himself for. He'd distracted Angel at the wrong moment and now they were in this mess, with his friend at the brink of death!

You've got to fix this, he told himself, grinding his teeth together and letting a wave of anger wash away the despair. *Find the warlock, force him to switch us back, then I'll endure whatever fate I have to. It's the right thing to do.* "Thank you, doctors. Please, contact me right away if his condition changes," he requested before quickly turning and marching away. He had himself a warlock to find, although he wouldn't be doing much

of anything in the immediate future as the sun would soon be up. Having to keep away from sunlight would have almost been a novelty had it not been for the rather dire circumstances. At that particular moment in time, Wesley was struggling to see the humor in much at all.

Upon returning to the Hyperion Hotel (the abandoned establishment that Angel Investigations operated out of, after they had defeated the ghosts that had been haunting it), Wesley quickly took notice of the sleeping Cordelia. She was curled up on one of the leather sofas in the hotel lobby, snoring gently. Clearly she had fallen asleep while waiting for them to return from their hunt and her beautiful face was so relaxed and free of worry that Wesley couldn't bring himself to wake her up and inform her of the tragedy that had befallen the third member of their group. *There's really no good to come from burdening her with the news*, he reasoned to himself. *It's already a stressful situation, traumatizing her further is hardly going to be any help*. It was decided then: he wouldn't tell her about the body swap and would instead only inform her of what had happened to "Wesley".

After coming to this decision to reveal only a partial truth, Wesley gently wrapped his arms around Cordelia and lifted her from the sofa. Just as his own body had been back down in the sewers, she was incredibly light in his strong arms and he was able to carry her with such ease that there wasn't even the slightest hint that she might stir. A few minutes later, Wesley had carried her all the way up to her room on the second floor, laid her down on the bed and pulled the sheets over her. Then, once he was content that he hadn't disturbed her sleep, he switched off the bedside lamp and left the room.

Even when the room had been plunged into darkness, he had maintained near perfect vision thanks to his enhanced vampire eyes. Now that he was out of the hospital and things were calmer, Wesley could finally appreciate what a fascinating and unique experience he was having! Despite having known about the supernatural for his whole life as a result of his father being a Watcher, Wesley had never stopped to imagine how it might feel to have the enhanced strength and senses of a vampire. He'd been raised to perceive them as horrific monsters who all deserved to be eradicated and it was only through his unusual friendship with Angel that he had started to understand how the world didn't operate in simple shades of black and white. Sure, Angel had the benefit of being the only ensouled vampire on the face of the planet, but not every single one of them was as unforgivably evil as he'd always imagined growing up. *Oh how disappointed my father would be in me right now*, Wesley thought to himself as the corners of his lips pulled up into an amused smile, *Not only working with a vampire but now actually being in the body of one! He'd never forgive me if he knew about this!* It was a good thing that he had grown out of his phase of doing everything he could to impress his old man. In fact, he was glad beyond belief that there was a whole ocean

separating them at that moment, because the situation was already messy enough and didn't need complicating any further!

With no real objective in mind, Wesley had been aimlessly walking the corridors of the hotel for several minutes before finally returning to the lobby. Although he still felt a few aches and pains from the encounter with the warlock in the sewers, he was confident that he wasn't going to need sleep any time soon unless he burned off some energy. Considering the sun was just starting to rise over the hills surrounding Los Angeles (mercy to the Powers That Be for the curtains that covered the Hyperion Hotel's giant windows!), his options were limited but eventually he realized there was a perfect solution: Angel and Gunn had set up a makeshift gym in one of the basement rooms. It was fairly simple, but it would be enough. It wasn't like there was going to be any better opportunity for him to test out his new strength, after all!

Wesley had never actually stepped foot in a real gym, nor had he ever cared to do anything that might be described as exercise - other than walking through the English countryside, of course. He'd seen Angel and Gunn in the weights room before though, so he was confident that he knew what to do. He'd start with the bench press, as that had been one of the first additions to the room, and so he quickly loaded thirty pounds onto each side of the bar. Settling down onto the bench and shuffling underneath the barbell, Wesley wrapped his hands around the weight and pushed up. He had expected at least some resistance from the weight but it was absolutely nothing when compared to the power packed into his vampiric body. As a result, one simple and swift motion had almost sent the barbell rocketing into the air and into the ceiling above! Mercifully he had tightened his grip at the last available moment, but it was startling enough to conjure a few laughs from the body-swapped crimefighter.

It took loading up the bar with almost every weight available in the makeshift gym for Wesley to finally start feeling some resistance. The burn of his muscles as he pushed the loaded barbell away from his chest was invigorating though and once he had safely returned the bar to the rack, the former Watcher couldn't help but look down at his temporary body in amazement. He had stripped out of the leather trench coat and the long-sleeve tee that his boss had been wearing that day and in doing so was given a full view of the vampire's powerful chest. Angel was in possession of a solid pair of pecs, something Wesley had never experienced before, and much to his amazement he was even capable of bouncing the slabs of muscle both as a pair and individually!

While exploring his new musculature was definitely a fascinating experience for Wesley, there was something else that he was perhaps even more curious about. Vampires were able to shift from a normal human visage to something more monstrous, with sharp fangs and a warped brow. Now that he was currently residing within a vampire's flesh, Wesley was eager to try it, although he wasn't quite sure how to. After a little trial

and error though, he was able to work it out - all he needed to do was focus on that hunger in his gut and the transformation happened by itself. That desire for blood had only grown stronger since he had left the sewers and although he wasn't looking forward to it, Wesley knew that he would soon have to help himself to one of the packs of pig's blood that Angel kept in a fridge. That was something he'd definitely struggle to get used to, but he wasn't going to be much use if he let his vampiric strength dwindle away, so it was a sacrifice he was going to have to make. Besides, better it be pig's blood than human blood, right?



Telling Cordelia what had happened to “Wesley” wasn't an easy conversation, but it was clear from her response that she didn't suspect him of concealing anything from her. Sure, the truth would come out if Angel woke up and exposed the fact that Wesley had been pretending to be his boss, but that was drama he'd work through when the time came (if it ever did)... In the current moment, Cordelia needed faith that “Angel” could track down the warlock and reverse the damage he'd done to Gunn and the rest of the male population of

Los Angeles. *This is all for the greater good*, Wesley reminded himself as he wrapped a protective arm around Cordelia and pulled the younger woman into a side hug.

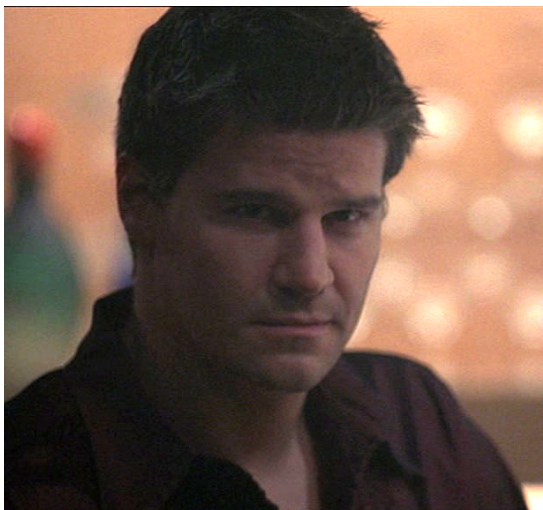
It wasn't lost on Wesley that Cordelia had developed an attraction to Angel over the past several months and truthfully he had actually been somewhat jealous given his own lingering crush on her. Now that he was in the hunky flesh of their employer though, it was Wesley who was on the receiving end of Cordelia's lingering looks. Not only that but he could actually *smell* the arousal radiating from her, another perk of the vampiric senses he had adopted! The delightful aroma frequently caused a hardness to develop at the front of his pants, which Wesley struggled to hide considering Angel's cock was a thick eight inches - three inches longer than Wesley's own! He had been a

little embarrassed the first time he had wrapped a meaty paw around Angel's cock and brought himself to completion, but after then, it had become a daily recurrence. It turned out that vampires had quite the short refractory period so there were times when Wesley would cum three or four times before cleaning himself up! These jerk-off sessions also confirmed to Wesley that the ensoulment curse that had been placed upon Angel (stating that he'd be robbed of his soul if he was to experience a moment of pure bliss) hadn't been transferred onto him as part of their body swap. He was perfectly free to have sex in Angel's body without turning into Angelus, his friend's soulless counterpart who had caused so much death and destruction in the past.



Unfortunately for Wesley, his desire for Cordelia would never be able to manifest itself into anything physical, as it would be a clear indicator that something wasn't right with "Angel". As such, after a full week in Angel's body, the furthest he had been able to go was a few close embraces and a chaste kiss that Cordelia had quickly pulled back from, citing her fear of accidentally awakening Angelus. With his number one option ruled out, Wesley decided to look elsewhere for some much needed sexual gratification. Although he had ensured Cordelia that he was following up a lead in the warlock case, Wesley had actually donned a silk shirt and a pair of leather pants (clothes he'd been stunned to discover hidden in Angel's wardrobe) and made his way into downtown Los Angeles.

Wesley had never been much of a clubbing person and for obvious reasons Angel wasn't either, but he was excited for the opportunity to cut loose and have some fun. For



a few hours he would get to pretend that he wasn't embroiled within the chaotic world of the supernatural and could be just another gorgeous LA hunk patrolling for a stunning babe that would be worthy of his good looks. He hadn't even made it into the club yet and he was already courting attention from both men and women without even trying! Seeing people turn to get a better look at him and then bite their lips in desire was a real thrill for Wesley. He'd never been on the receiving end of such lust but it was most definitely a feeling he could

get used to. He was already sporting a chub in the front of his leather pants and he was confident in the knowledge that he wouldn't be going home alone.

Although it was perhaps more arrogant than Wesley himself would ever usually allow himself to think, he knew that he was the hottest guy in the club once he had finally stepped past the bouncers and entered the establishment. Eyes continued to be drawn towards him and he preened in response to their attention as he made his way towards the bar. He'd barely been standing there for ten seconds before a younger man with a slender body was offering to buy him a drink. Although Wesley definitely had no intention of letting things go any further than a bit of light flirtation, he was more than happy to take advantage of the other man's eagerness. Then once he had the drink in his hand, Wesley merely winked and left to complete a lap of the room in search of a woman who might catch his attention.

It didn't take very long at all for Wesley to identify the babe that he'd be leaving the club with. She was sat at a table near the corner of the room, with supermodel good looks and a dress that showed off her slender body and ample breasts. She reminded him just enough of Cordelia, which was something he had been unconsciously looking for. Sure, this beautiful woman was already sat at the table with a man but she looked thoroughly uninterested in whatever the poor soul had to say. When she had met Wesley's eyes though, her face had lit up in interest and he knew that was all the invitation he needed. As soon as her date had left to make a bathroom trip, Wesley made his move.



Within minutes the gorgeous pair had moved from the table out onto the dance floor, where the woman (who had introduced herself as Claudia) was grinding her ass against the bulge in the front of Wesley's leather pants. Given how acutely aware they were of each other's considerable arousal, it was hardly surprising that they decided to leave the club shortly afterwards. Rather than bringing her back to the Hyperion Hotel and risk alerting Cordelia to what he was doing though, Wesley suggested that they go back to Claudia's place, which she had thankfully agreed with. The taxi journey only took fifteen minutes but it was an excruciating length of time when all either of them wanted to do was rip the clothes off of the other. They spent the entire journey making out in the backseat of the taxi, becoming so passionate that Wesley took the courtesy of haphazardly throwing a large number of bills into the driver's lap to compensate for their behavior on his way out of the vehicle.

Considering Wesley's relative lack of experience with women back in his own body (he had lost his virginity at twenty-seven and hadn't actually had sex since), he was operating like a true professional. His lips were never too far from Claudia's but he also took the time to familiarize himself with her perky tits and her slender neck. As his lips had traced along the woman's neck, it took every ounce of Wesley's self-control to stop himself from shifting into his vampire form and sinking his fangs into the delectable flesh. The combined scents of her arousal and the blood pumping through her veins was almost too much for him to bear! His compromise was to leave a hickey on her neck that would remind her of their night together in the days that followed, before pulling back and keeping his distance from the woman's neck for the remainder of their time together. He had resisted once but he wasn't sure if he'd be able to pull himself back from having a quick taste if he was to end up back in that situation...

Wesley's grappling with his new lust for blood was mercifully subdued once his leather pants had been pushed down over his meaty thighs, with his briefs following immediately after. Claudia spent a few minutes worshiping his shaft with her plump lips but they both had larger ambitions in mind. Gently guiding her away from his cock, Wesley pushed up the woman's dress to expose her lower half and discovered that she hadn't been wearing any panties. As soon as he had thrust his hard cock inside her tight pussy for the first time, Claudia broke out into a chorus of loud moans. Chief among her sounds was his name - "Angel! Oh fuck, *Angel!* You feel so good!" - and although it wasn't *technically* his name, it sure felt as such during that delightful moment. For that night at least, he was Angel: a vampire with a soul, relentless fighter of crime, and an outstanding lover!

Although his night with Claudia had been a lot of fun, Wesley had experienced a rush of guilt in the day that followed. What if Angel ran into her after they swapped back and she revealed what they had done? Or, even worse, what if the memories of what he'd been doing in Angel's body lingered after the warlock returned them to their proper places? Wesley was terrified that his selfish behavior had cost him a dear friendship but he had simply been unable to resist the temptation. There was even a small, wicked voice in the back of his mind insisting that it hadn't just felt good, it had felt *right*. Like this was where he was always supposed to be...

While he hadn't given up his search for the warlock responsible for the body swap, it was the unfortunate truth that Wesley hadn't perhaps devoted as much time to it as he should have. He'd allowed a whole number of things to keep him distracted, from the nights he spent in the clubs seducing women to the long hours he spent in the Hyperion's basement gym, marveling at the strength he now possessed. A full three weeks had passed and he still wasn't any closer to solving the warlock case. Luckily, he and Cordelia were able to keep Angel Investigations afloat in the meantime by dealing with smaller cases involving low-life vampire thugs. Wesley had dispatched them with

complete ease, his body working on complete muscle memory, just like it had on his night with Claudia.

As he progressed through his fourth week in Angel's body, the man's new normal was shaken up by a phone call from the hospital informing him that "Wesley" had finally regained consciousness. He was immediately flooded by feelings of both relief and dread as he heard the news, wondering just what he would find when he made it to the hospital. It was late evening when he'd received the call, so he'd had to use the sewer system below the city to navigate from the Hyperion to the hospital in order to avoid bursting into flames. Mercifully by the time he made it into the building, the sun had disappeared beyond the horizon, so Wesley was free to walk through the halls without fearing potential exposure to sunlight.

He was met by a nurse outside of his friend's room, who meekly requested that he wait a moment before entering. "Your friend is experiencing some quite severe symptoms of amnesia," she explained sympathetically, "We've tried to reinforce things such as his name and age based on the information you gave us but there are a lot of gaps. It's likely going to take weeks or months for those gaps to fill in, if they ever do." She sighed and reached out to rub Wesley's arm in what was either an attempt to be comforting or an excuse to feel up his bicep. Truthfully he didn't mind either way. "I'm sorry it's not better news, Mr. Angel."

"I'm just glad he's awake," Wesley confessed gratefully as a relieved smile spread across his handsome face. "Is it alright if I go in and see him now?" Upon receiving confirmation, he pushed upon the door to the hospital room and took a few steps inside. Despite having visited the hospital various times in the weeks since the body swap, Wesley still wasn't quite used to seeing his own body from an outsider's perspective. It was even stranger when his body was conscious and sat up on the side of the bed, looking at their visitor with wide-eyed curiosity.

"Thank god," Wesley exclaimed, rushing forward and pulling the other man to his feet in order to capture him in a tight embrace. "How are you feeling?"

"Ouch! Do you mind loosening up your grip, please?" the other man cried out, grimacing at the pressure being applied to his fragile body. Realizing his mistake, Wesley sheepishly pulled back and offered a quick apology before repeating his question. Despite being told by the nurse that his friend was suffering from amnesia, Wesley had half expected to discover



that Angel was putting it on rather than alarming the nurse with a wild tale of body swapping. Given the persistent confusion in the other man's gaze though, it seemed like that wasn't the case and that was only confirmed with his response: "I'm... okay. Absolutely abominable headache though." He smiled weakly for a moment before clearing his throat and casting a curious glance at his visitor. "Excuse my ignorance but are you the Mr. Angel my nurse was talking about getting in contact with?"

He really doesn't remember a thing, Wesley realized, surprising himself by how giddy he was in response to the revelation. If he doesn't know that he's not really Wesley Wyndham-Price then there's really nothing to stop me from keeping us this way! All of the guilt that Wesley had previously felt about the prospect of stealing his friend's identity was completely eviscerated by the sheer excitement he felt in that moment. Over the course of the previous month he had grown to love having the strength and skills of a vampire so much so that it didn't even bother him any more that he had to feast on pigs blood in order to satiate his hunger! Give it time and I might even be able to convince Cordelia that she won't unleash Angelus by sleeping with me!

"I'm Angel, yeah," the new boss of Angel Investigations confirmed after only the briefest moment of hesitation. Accepting that this was the new status quo was the right thing to do and he knew it. Switching back with an amnesiac would be an absolutely disastrous idea so it was only logical that things stay as they currently were. It would be for the best of all parties involved! "I'm just so happy you're awake, Wes. I know this is probably all incredibly confusing to you right now but I promise, you'll be back to being our favorite ex-Watcher-slash-rogue-demon-hunter in no time at all!"

"Watcher? Rogue demon hunter?" the new Wesley asked, clearly bemused by the bizarre declarations that had emerged from Angel's mouth. "I have no idea what you're talking about but I confess that I do feel a certain familiarity about you. Yes, I think I can feel that we were friends. *Are* friends. I trust you, Mr. Angel."



"It's just Angel," the vampire corrected his friend, slapping him on the shoulder with only a small fraction of the strength that was packed into his hunky body. "Now let me go and call Cordy." Noticing the other's confused expression, Angel offered a little more detail: "She's a friend of ours. She'll be so happy to hear that you're awake!" *So happy that she might even kiss me again...* That would make his great day even better!



In time, the Angel Investigations crew hadn't just been able to track down the warlock who had been causing chaos in the city but they had also managed to reconstruct part of Wesley's missing memories with the help of Willow, Cordelia's witch friend from high school. It was a perfect restoration of his memories as Willow had strangely been unable to locate the missing pieces in Wesley's mind, so it was instead recreated from the memories of Angel, Cordelia and Gunn (who had been freed from the warlock's curse upon his capture). While he occasionally became distressed at the gaps in his memory, Wesley was still thankful that his friends had done so much to help him return to what he genuinely believed was his normal. He never even had an inkling that he had once been Angel, the team leader! He was just thankful that he was back to being a useful member of the team rather than an amnesiac burden on their shoulders. Sure, he felt frustrated that he wasn't much help in a physical fight, but at least he was a master of research and strategy!



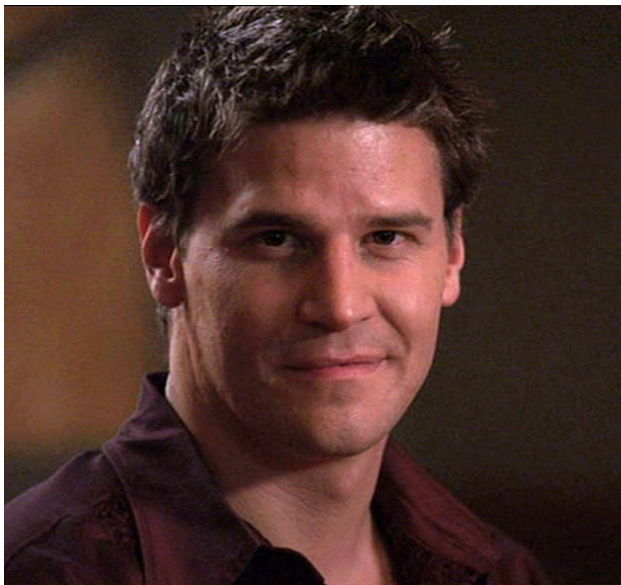
Now that the warlock case had finally been wrapped up, things were relatively back to normal for the Angel Investigations crew. Wesley and Gunn were quick to notice that Angel and Cordelia had grown even closer during the time they had both been incapacitated, although neither dared to say anything. Although Angel was incredibly eager to consummate the growing relationship with the brunette, he knew that he couldn't until he had a story in place to explain why doing so wouldn't risk the return of Angelus. In the meantime, Angel was continuing to explore the various nightclubs across Los Angeles whenever he got a chance. He rarely visited the same place twice and made a point of both never bringing the women he seduced back to the Hyperion and giving them fake cell phone numbers. The sex was great but the only woman he was planning to have any real relationship with was Cordelia... although perhaps visiting Buffy in Sunnydale once he had his cover story in place might be fun!

When he had finally caught up with the warlock, Angel hadn't just forced him to undo the twinkification curse he had put on Gunn and the other victims. The warlock had initially believed that he wanted the body swap fixed, but Angel had been quick to assure him that it wasn't the case. He demanded that the warlock cast a spell that would not only make the body swap permanent but would prevent any similar spells

being placed on him again. Angel's hunky vampiric body was *his* and his alone, for the rest of his immortal life!

As such, a few months later when an elderly man had attempted to steal Angel's body, his magic had completely backfired. The old man had ended up trapped in the magical orb he'd been using to trigger the body swap, leaving his tired body to expire without a consciousness there to sustain it. The rest of Angel Investigations had been completely bewildered by this turn of events but Angel shrugged it off with casual bravado. After Cordelia and Gunn departed the room with the intention of reporting what they suspected to be the man's fatal heart attack, Angel took the orb in his hand and crushed it with ease. Only Wesley remained in the room to see this and he was quick to question the orb's destruction. "Better not leave something this dangerous lying around," he remarked with a brief smirk, "You never know who might be out there stealing bodies!"

"I suppose you're right," Wesley agreed while an expression of concern settled upon his face. "The whole thing just sends a shiver down my spine, the thought that we might have had an impostor Angel among us... He could have caused some serious chaos had his spell actually worked." The man paused and scratched at his chin, deep in thought. "I can't help but wonder why it didn't though. Perhaps these types of spells don't work on supernatural beings like yourself?"



It took every ounce of Angel's self-control not to let out a smug laugh right then and there. "We'll probably never know, but I'd like to think he just wasn't capable of being me," he suggested, his eyes briefly meeting the clueless Wesley's. The human smiled weakly and nodded, clearly thankful that they had avoided what he evidently thought was a once in a lifetime body swapping scenario. He'd never find out that he himself had actually been the victim of one and had previously been the hunky vampire he saw before him, although he'd occasionally have dreams that were actually leftover memories from

his previous identity. Wesley would always dismiss those dreams as nothing but hero worship towards Angel as soon as he awoke though. Sure, he was jealous of the budding relationship between Angel and Cordelia as well as the vampire's muscular body, but he'd never stoop so low as to attempt to steal his friend's body!