



1. True Confessions: The Honest Truth

Pacing across the floor of what was now Wesley's office at the Hyperion, Cordelia came to a stop, turning toward Angel. He sat on the edge of the desk, muscular arms folded across his chest, his expression no longer vacant as the tension between them ratcheted up another notch. Cordelia felt it, too.

Sensing that he was about to interrupt her lecture, she held up a hand to stop him. "I don't want to hear it."

Angel hadn't actually had the chance to speak yet, but Cordelia figured this was more of a one-way conversation. That was the way their usual discussions went. As far as Cordy was concerned, now that Angel was back, some things needed to change.

It was one thing to accept his gift of gorgeous designer clothes. After all, she deserved them considering what he'd put her through over the past few months. Not to mention the fact that he'd given her favorite blouse to charity. Angel needed a little pep talk on how things were going to be from now on.

"You're working for us now," her mouth quirked into a smile. She propped her hands on her hips and walked forward, stopping directly in front of his outstretched legs. "There is a whole lot of your crap that's no longer tolerated."

The scowl appeared to be deepening. Angel's jaw tightened, but Cordelia started to tick a list off on her fingers. "No brooding. We've had more than enough of that to last a lifetime."

When she paused, Angel simply stared back waiting for her to continue. "No keeping your dark obsessions to yourself," Cordelia went on. Then couldn't resist adding, "Especially when they involve skanky blondes or when they might come back to bite us— literally."

Cordelia felt a warm pulse of satisfaction at the grim look on his face. Evoking a little guilt was easy, but that wasn't the point of this little talk. She missed the way things used to be when they were all a family of close friends who had a common goal: the mission.

"No overprotecting us," Cordy ticked off another point. "We are a team. There is no I-am-a-broody-creature-of-the-dark-loner in T-E-A-M."

His sudden smile, a brief flash of teeth that vanished as his mouth settled back into a smooth one, caught her off-guard. Angel smiling tended to cause her heart to do little uncontrollable flippety-flops. He unfolded his arms, pressing his hands down on the desk and smoothly pushing himself into an upright position. Licking her lips, Cordelia drew in a little gasp of air before continuing on with the lecture. Only now, her voice softened as she stared up into the deep brown eyes holding her captive.

"From here on out it's all about honesty. If I ask you a question, I want the truth, not some growly mumbling about what it was like back in the dark ages. You have to let me— us in."

No arguments followed. Angel simply answered, "Okay."

Cordelia inched back to stare, a hint of suspicion showing on her face. "Okay, just okay?"

A slow nod of his head followed. "Does this little arrangement work both ways?" he asked curiously taking another step closer.

"Um...?"

"The part about being honest with each other," Angel clarified. It was surprise more than misunderstanding.

There was an unspoken challenge to his words, one that left Cordelia inwardly tense, and her cheeks suddenly flushed. If he thought she couldn't hold up her end of the bargain, Angel had another thing coming.

After a long pause, Cordelia managed a casual shrug, "Pfft, I've got nothing to hide."

The End.



2: True Confessions: Way Back When

Angel felt as if a weight lifted off his shoulders as he finished with his little tale of woe.

“You didn’t!” Cordelia gasped, truly surprised by Angel’s revelation. She threw back her head and laughed until her sides ached with it. “Well, I guess that must’ve been the highlight of Buffy’s day.”

She was enjoying the irony a little too much, Angel noted, his lips twisting. “Enjoy it while you can. It’s your turn to cough up a little piece of the past.”

That put an end to the laughter. Cordelia was curled up on the couch facing him, her bare feet tucked beside her. Drumming her fingers against her thigh, she tried to come up with something equally worthy.

Grinning, Angel chimed in, “I’m waiting.”

“I’m thinking,” she answered back. “Ooh! Okay. Way back when Willow, Xander and I were in kindergar—”

“No, something more recent,” Angel prodded, “since I’ve known you. Something about me.”

Cordelia pointed out there was nothing about their agreement that stated she had to cough up anything involving him. Besides, he hadn’t confessed to anything about her. “You told me about Buffy.”

“That’s what you asked for.”

Damn. “Okay, so you’ve got me there,” she admitted. “I asked. You confessed.”

“So spill it, Cordy,” the challenge in his voice matched his smug look. He didn’t really think she was going to do it. “The deal was to be honest with each other.”

Nudging at his thigh with her knee, Cordelia warned him, “Just remember that you asked for it.”

How bad could it be? Angel wondered.

“The very first time I laid eyes on you, I decided that you were going to be mine,” Cordelia waited for a laugh, but got a wide-eyed stare instead. “At the Bronze. You came in looking so very hot. I so crushed on you for like— weeks. Until I got over it.”

She expected surprise, but Angel simply looked smug. “I knew that.”

“You did not!”

“Gotta be honest, Cor, I did,” he reminded her of the rules of the game. “You laid it on a little thick from time to time. How did that go again— ‘drive me home, Angel, I’m still fragile’?” he mimicked.

Cordelia flopped back on the couch pillows and propped her feet in Angel’s lap. She glared at him for a moment until he started to rub the sole of one foot with his thumb. Her pout spread into a smile and she let out a contented sigh, “Mmm, I like that.”

“So do I.”

The End.



3. True Confessions: The Green-Eyed Monster

Cordelia Chase emerged from the small office area just off the Hyperion lobby, a crisp check clutched triumphantly in one hand and a look of pure victory on her face. The blonde client had been sitting right there in one of the lobby chairs, all tacky fake fingernails and push-up bra, trying to sweet-talk her way out of paying. Cordelia had leaned in, smiled sweetly, and plucked the check straight from the woman's manicured fingers before she could blink.

Angel was on the red couch nearby, newspaper in hand, blue mug resting on the side table. He looked up as she approached, one eyebrow lifting.

"Victory?" he asked, voice low and amused.

"Total domination." Cordelia dropped onto the couch beside him, close enough that her knee brushed his thigh, and kicked off her heels. "That hussy thought she could bat her eyelashes and walk out without paying. I told her exactly where she could shove her 'alternative payment plan.' Check's right here. Paid in full. With interest."

Angel set the paper aside. "Impressive. I was ready to write it off."

"Never underestimate Cordelia Chase when money's involved." She poured herself coffee from the carafe, added cream, and took a victorious sip. The adrenaline still hummed through her. "God, I love when they underestimate me. Especially the blondes. They're always the worst."

Angel turned his head, studying her. “Blondes?”

She waved a hand, but the words kept coming. “You know. The type. All shiny hair and pouty lips and zero brain cells. Like that client. Or Buffy. Or that skanky vampire chick last month. Or half the demons who throw themselves at you like you’re the last pint of O-negative in the fridge.”

The air between them shifted. Angel didn’t laugh. “Cordy...”

“Don’t ‘Cordy’ me. It’s not like I’m wrong.” She nudged his thigh with her knee. “I just hate how they look at you. Like they can have you. Like I’m not even in the room.”

Angel was quiet for a moment, thumb tracing slow circles on the back of her hand where it rested near his. “It’s not just the blondes who come onto me.”

Cordelia blinked, caught off guard. She opened her mouth, then closed it. Reluctantly, she admitted, “Okay... fine. It’s not just blondes. But they irk me the most.”

A small smile tugged at his mouth. “I like it when you get fired up like that.”

She rolled her eyes, but her cheeks warmed. “That’s just the vampire thing talking.”

“Maybe.” His fingers slid up to tuck a strand of hair behind her ear, lingering against her cheek. The touch was light, careful, but the look in his eyes was anything but casual. “Still like it.”

The confession hung there, honest and unadorned. Cordelia’s pulse picked up. She didn’t pull away.

Angel’s hand stayed where it was, thumb brushing her jaw. “If every blonde that walks through the door is going to get you this worked up, maybe you should let me handle the blondes.”

Her eyes narrowed, but there was heat behind it. “Don’t test me, mister.”

He held her gaze, something shifting in his expression—honesty pushing further than he usually let it. “What about the brunettes? Sometimes they—”

He didn’t finish the sentence.

Instead, he leaned in, closing the last of the distance until his lips brushed hers when he spoke, feather-light and electric. “Sometimes they’re worse.”

Cordelia’s breath hitched. Her hand had found its way to his chest, fingers curling into his shirt. She could feel the steady thump of his heart beneath her palm, far too calm compared to the wild staccato of her own. His eyes had gone dark, locked on hers like nothing else in the lobby existed. The space between their mouths was gone—nothing but shared breath and the razor-thin edge of what they weren’t quite saying yet.

Neither of them moved.

The tension stretched, thick and sweet and almost unbearable, while the rest of the Hyperion faded around them.

The End.



4. True Confessions: The Clothes Thing

Cordelia stood in front of the tall mirror in the Hyperion lobby, smoothing her hands down the front of the new blouse. The Vera Wang chiffon was even softer than it had looked on the hanger, the deep V neckline and open back making her feel like a million bucks. She'd paired it with the red silk skirt that hit mid-thigh, and the whole effect was... well, she looked good. Really good.

Angel sat on the red couch nearby, newspaper forgotten in his lap, blue mug halfway to his mouth. He hadn't taken a sip in at least two minutes.

She caught his reflection in the mirror and turned, striking a pose with one hand on her hip. "Well? Still think it was worth the trip to Rodeo Drive?"

His eyes dragged up from the hem of the skirt to her face, slow and deliberate. "Yeah. Worth it."

Cordelia grinned, doing a little spin so the skirt flared. "See? Totally forgiven. You're off the hook, mister. No more brooding about the whole 'giving my favorite blouse to charity' thing." Angel set the mug down. The honesty pact they'd made was still fresh, and she could see the moment he decided to use it.

"I didn't buy them just because I felt guilty."

She stopped mid-twirl, eyebrows lifting. “Oh?”

He stood, moving closer until he was only a couple of feet away. His voice dropped, quiet but steady. “I had... specific ideas. Of how you’d look in them. Very specific. And slightly inappropriate.”

Cordelia blinked. Then her mouth fell open. “Angel!”

The reaction was instant and priceless—cheeks flushing bright pink, eyes going wide, one hand flying up to cover her mouth as a startled laugh escaped. She stared at him like he’d just confessed to robbing a bank.

“You perv!” she managed, but there was no real outrage in it. If anything, she sounded delighted. “You bought me a whole wardrobe because you were picturing me in it? Like... picturing me in it?”

Angel didn’t look away. Didn’t even blink. “Every piece. The way the fabric would feel. How it would move when you walked. How it would look when you turned.” His gaze flicked down to the open back of the blouse, then back up. “Reality turned out better than the mental images.”

Cordelia’s mouth opened and closed twice. She took a step closer, close enough that she had to tilt her head to keep eye contact. “You are so lucky we have this honesty thing going, because otherwise I’d be calling you a liar right now. Or a total creep. Or both.”

“Both works,” he said, the corner of his mouth twitching.

She laughed again, but it came out breathier this time. Her fingers toyed with the knot at the front of the blouse, drawing his eyes exactly where he’d admitted they’d been going in his head. “So... which one was your favorite mental image? Be honest.”

Angel’s eyes darkened. He reached out, slow enough that she could pull away if she wanted, and brushed his knuckles lightly along the open edge of the blouse’s back—right where the fabric gapped over her spine. The touch was barely there, but it sent a visible shiver through her.

“This one,” he murmured. “The back. I kept thinking about sliding my hand inside. Just to see if the skin underneath was as soft as the fabric.”

Cordelia’s breath caught. Her pulse was doing that ridiculous flippy-flop thing again, loud enough she was sure he could hear it. She didn’t step back. If anything, she leaned in a fraction, the air between them crackling.

“You’re evil,” she whispered, but her voice had gone husky.

“Sometimes.”

She stared up at him, cheeks still flushed, lips parted, the new clothes suddenly feeling like they were made of pure electricity. For a long moment neither of them moved—just the two of them in the quiet lobby, the honesty hanging thick and sweet and dangerously close to something more.

The End.



5. True Confessions: The Almost-Kiss

The Hyperion lobby was quiet except for the soft tick of the old clock and the occasional creak of leather as Angel shifted on the red couch. They'd made it back in one piece—barely. A Raskthor demon had nearly taken Cordelia's head off with one swipe of its claws. Angel had gotten there just in time, tackling her out of the way and taking the hit himself. Now a shallow gash ran across his ribs, already healing, but the adrenaline still crackled between them like static.

Cordelia sat sideways on the couch facing him, one knee tucked under her, a damp cloth in her hand as she dabbed at the dried blood on his side. Her fingers were steady, but her breathing wasn't.

"You almost died tonight," she said quietly.

"I didn't." His voice was low, rough. "You didn't either. That's what matters."

She set the cloth aside and looked at him—really looked. The honesty pact they'd made weeks ago hung in the air between them, unspoken but present. It had been easy to keep things light until moments like this, when death brushed too close and old memories surfaced.

"Angel..." She hesitated, then pushed forward because that was the deal. "That night when you came for that book..."

He went still, eyes darkening. "The night I had you pinned against the wall."

Cordelia swallowed as the memory flared vivid and sharp. “Yeah. That’s the one.”

She kept working on the gash, but her voice turned sharper, the way it always did when she was circling something important. “You were a complete ass that night, you know. All cold and broody and ‘stay out of my way, Cordelia’ like I hadn’t been the one keeping this place running while you were off having your little existential crisis.”

Angel’s jaw tightened, but he didn’t deny it. “We took books from a demon’s lair. Dangerous books. I told you to leave it alone.”

“And I told you that you were being a controlling jerk who needed to stop treating us like fragile little humans who couldn’t handle the truth.” She met his eyes, a spark of old fire there. “You backed me straight into that wall like you were hunting something. Hands on either side of my head, caging me in. Wesley and Gunn were yelling at you to back off, but you didn’t even hear them. Your eyes were black. You were this close to losing it.”

The memory hung between them, electric.

Cordelia’s voice softened just a fraction. “And then something shifted. The air got thick. Magnetic. Insanely intense. For those few seconds everything else disappeared. You looked at me like...”

“Like I was going to kiss you,” he finished, voice rough.

She nodded, cheeks flushing. “I thought you were. And I wanted you to. God, Angel, I wanted you to. For about three seconds I was ready to throw every rule we had out the window. Then I panicked. Told myself it was the mission, the team, that it would ruin everything.” She swallowed. “But mostly I was scared of how much I wanted it.”

Angel’s hand came up and caught hers where it rested against his ribs. His thumb brushed over her knuckles, slow and deliberate.

“My memory’s a little different,” he said quietly.

She raised an eyebrow but didn’t pull away.

“I’d been thinking about kissing you for weeks. Every time you walked into a room. Every time you yelled at me. Every time you smiled like you were daring me to do something stupid.” His voice stayed steady, but heat burned underneath. “That night... I had you against the wall and I could smell your perfume and feel your heartbeat hammering. I was one second from losing every ounce of control I had left. And I wanted to. But I knew if I started I wouldn’t stop. And I was terrified I’d hurt you. Or that you’d regret it the second it was over.”

Cordelia’s breath hitched. She shifted closer, her free hand sliding up to rest lightly on his chest, right over the healing gash. “So we both wanted it,” she whispered. “And we both ran like cowards.”

Angel’s hand slid up her arm until his fingers curved around the back of her neck. The touch was light, but the look in his eyes wasn’t. “We’re not running tonight.”

The space between them vanished. She could feel his breath against her lips, cool and steady, while her own came in short, shaky pulls. His thumb stroked once along the line of her jaw. Her fingers curled into his shirt.

For one endless second the entire Hyperion seemed to hold its breath with them.

Then Angel leaned in that final fraction—

And the lobby phone rang.

Neither of them moved.

Cordelia let out a shaky, frustrated laugh. “You have got to be kidding me.”

“Sometimes the universe has terrible timing,” he murmured against her mouth, and still didn’t pull away.

The End.



6. True Confessions: I Like It When You...

Rain hammered the Hyperion's tall windows like it had a personal grudge against Los Angeles. Thunder rolled overhead, shaking the old building, and Cordelia had already decided she wasn't driving home in that mess. She was curled on the red couch in leggings and one of the new cashmere sweaters Angel had bought her, laptop balanced on her knees, glaring at a spreadsheet like it had personally offended her.

Angel appeared from the kitchen carrying two mugs. Steam curled up from the one he handed her — rich, dark hot chocolate with the exact amount of whipped cream she liked and a tiny sprinkle of cinnamon on top.

She took it, sniffed, and immediately narrowed her eyes. "This is pity chocolate."

Angel sat down beside her, close enough that their shoulders brushed. "It's cheering-up chocolate. You've been staring at that billing screen for twenty minutes without typing a single number."

"Because some nineteen-year-old with cheekbones the size of Texas got the role I spent three days prepping for," Cordelia snapped. "And now I'm behind on invoices because I blew off work to practice a monologue about dead parents and lost love. So yes, this is pity chocolate. You're bribing me with sugar so I'll stop sulking."

Angel took a slow sip of his own drink (blood, because of course it was) and didn't deny it. "Is it working?"

She opened her mouth to argue, then closed it. A reluctant smile tugged at her lips. “A little. Jerk.”

The storm rattled the windows again. Cordelia set the mug down and turned toward him, tucking her feet under her. “Fine. Since we’re apparently doing honesty hour, let’s play a game. I hate it when…”

Angel raised an eyebrow but played along. “I hate it when you leave your coffee mugs all over the lobby like little landmines.”

“I hate it when you brood in the corner like the world’s ending every Tuesday.”

“I hate it when you steal my newspaper before I’ve finished the crossword.”

“I hate it when you disappear for three days without telling anyone where you went.”

The game went back and forth, getting sillier and sharper until Cordelia grinned, eyes sparkling with mischief. “Okay, new round. I secretly love it when…”

Angel’s mouth curved. He didn’t hesitate. “I secretly love it when you boss me around.”

Cordelia blinked, then let out a surprised laugh. “You what?”

“You tell me what to do, where to stand, how to handle a client, and half the time you’re right.”

His voice dropped, low and honest. “I like it. Makes me feel… grounded. Like someone’s actually in charge and it’s not just me trying not to screw everything up.”

She stared at him, cheeks warming. The rain outside suddenly felt very far away.

“Your turn,” he said quietly.

Cordelia swallowed, then met his eyes. “I secretly love it when you go all protective-vampire on me.”

Angel went very still.

“The growling,” she continued, voice softer now. “The way you step in front of me like nothing’s getting past you. The ‘stay behind me’ voice. It should annoy me — and sometimes it does — but mostly it makes me feel… safe. Like even when everything’s falling apart, you’ve got me.” The air between them thickened. Angel set his mug down and shifted closer, one arm draping along the back of the couch behind her shoulders. His fingers brushed the edge of her sweater. “I like the bossy thing too much to stop,” he admitted.

“And I like the protective thing too much to yell at you about it,” she countered, but there was no heat in it.

Thunder cracked again, louder this time, and the lights flickered. Neither of them moved. Cordelia’s hand found its way to his chest, fingers curling lightly into his shirt. Angel’s other hand came up to tuck a strand of hair behind her ear, lingering against her cheek.

The storm raged outside.

Inside, on the red couch, everything felt warm, charged, and exactly right.

The End.



7. True Confessions: The Vision I Never Told You About

The Hyperion lobby was unusually quiet. Wesley sat at his desk, glasses perched on his nose, muttering over some ancient text and completely oblivious to anything that wasn't written in dead languages. The latest client was running late, the others were out on a supply run, and rain from the night before still dripped from the eaves outside.

Cordelia was sprawled sideways on the red couch, flipping through the latest issue of Cosmo. Angel had finished his book twenty minutes ago and was now watching her with mild amusement as she circled answers with a pen.

"Okay, question twelve," she said, not looking up. "If your partner could read your mind during sex, what's the one thing you'd be most embarrassed for them to know?"

Angel blinked. "We're doing that kind of quiz?"

"Shush. Answer the question, broody."

He sighed, but played along. "Probably how often I think about biting you. Not in a bad way. Just... in a very specific way."

Cordelia's pen froze mid-circle. She slowly lifted her head, eyes wide. "Okay, we're definitely keeping that one between us."

Angel's mouth twitched. He was about to say something else when the words slipped out instead.

"You haven't had a vision in over a week."

She lowered the magazine. "Are you trying to get out of the quiz?"

"Well—yes," he admitted. "But also... no. It's been quiet. Too quiet. I keep waiting for the other shoe to drop."

Cordelia tucked the magazine against her chest and studied him. The honesty pact was still in full effect, and she could see the real worry underneath the casual tone.

"It's not like I control them, you know," she said. "They just... happen. Or they don't. Lately they've been on some kind of vacation. And before you ask—no, it's not my fault. I didn't break them."

"I know." Angel shifted closer on the couch, voice dropping so Wesley wouldn't overhear. "If you had one, you'd tell me. Right?"

She hesitated.

Angel's eyes narrowed. "Cordy."

"Okay, fine. Most of the time, yes. But there was this one time..." She glanced at Wesley, who was still lost in his book, then leaned in. "A couple months ago. Right after that whole mess with the Oracles and everything. I had a vision. But it wasn't about a client or a demon or the end of the world."

Angel went very still. "What was it about?"

She bit her lip, cheeks flushing. "Us."

"Us?"

"Yeah. You and me. In the lobby. Late at night. No one else around. And we weren't exactly... fighting evil." Her voice dropped even lower. "We were on this couch. You were kissing me like the world was ending and I was letting you. And it felt... real. Like it could actually happen."

Angel stared at her. For a long moment he didn't speak. Then the corner of his mouth curved up—flattered, definitely—but his eyes held something else. Something closer to terror.

"You had a vision of us... together," he said slowly. "And you didn't tell me."

"I panicked!" she whispered. "It was the first time a vision ever felt personal. Like it was showing me something I wanted instead of something I had to stop. I didn't know what to do with that. So I didn't tell anyone. Especially not you."

Angel reached out and took the magazine from her hands, setting it aside. His fingers brushed hers and stayed there.

"Flattered," he murmured. "And slightly terrified."

"Terrified?" she echoed.

“That it might have been a warning.” His thumb traced the back of her hand. “Or a promise. I’m not sure which one scares me more.”

Cordelia’s breath caught. The air between them thickened the way it always did when they got too close to the truth.

From across the lobby, Wesley cleared his throat without looking up. “The client should be here any minute.”

Neither of them moved.

Angel’s hand slid higher, fingers curving around the back of her neck, thumb brushing her pulse point. The space between their mouths shrank until every cool exhale of his brushed her lips. His eyes had gone dark, hungry and intense, locked on hers like nothing else in the lobby existed.

“Later,” he said, voice low and rough.

Cordelia’s fingers curled into his shirt, heart hammering so hard she was sure he could hear it. “You’d better mean that.”

For one suspended, electric second the entire Hyperion disappeared. The only thing left was the heat between them and the promise hanging in the air like smoke. Wesley’s chair scraped back.

They pulled apart just enough to look innocent as the client walked in — but the tension didn’t fade. It stayed there, thick and sweet and dangerously close to breaking.

The End.



8. True Confessions: The First Time I Saw You (Redux)

The Hyperion lobby was bathed in late-afternoon light. Cordelia sat cross-legged on the red couch, surrounded by glossy 8x10 proofs from her most recent (and outrageously expensive) professional photoshoot. She was flipping through them with a critical eye, occasionally making little noises of approval or disgust.

Angel wandered in from the kitchen carrying his usual mug of blood and the daily paper tucked under one arm. He paused when he saw the spread of photos.

“New headshots?” he asked, dropping into the chair across from her.

“Something like that.” She held one up. In it she wore a striking red halter dress, the fabric clinging in all the right places, her hair swept up, expression equal parts sultry and untouchable.

Angel’s eyes lingered on the photo a beat longer than necessary. “You wore a dress like that the first time I saw you.”

Cordelia froze, then slowly lowered the proof. “You remember that?”

He nodded, setting his mug and paper on the side table. “The Bronze. Red dress. You were there to be seen.”

She blinked, genuinely surprised. “You barely glanced my way that night. At least that’s what it looked like from where I was standing.”

Angel leaned back, arms resting on the chair. “I noticed. You were there to listen to the band, catch the lead singer’s eye, make every other girl in the room wish they were you. Mission accomplished.”

Cordelia’s cheeks warmed, but she recovered quickly with a smirk. “Damn right. That dress was a statement. I wanted the whole place to know I had arrived.”

Angel’s expression shifted — quieter, more serious. “You did more than that. You walked in and everything else faded out. I was there for Buffy, trying to stay invisible in the corner like always. Then you showed up in that red dress and I couldn’t look away. I told myself it was nothing. Just some loud, confident girl who didn’t belong anywhere near someone like me.”

He met her eyes.

“But then you smiled at the singer and I felt jealous. Stupid, right? I didn’t even know your name yet. All I knew was that for the first time in a long time, someone made me forget why I was there. Made me want things I had no business wanting. And I still couldn’t stop staring.”

Cordelia stared at him, the photoshoot proofs forgotten in her lap. “You never told me that.”

“I wasn’t ready to admit it back then.” His voice dropped. “I am now.”

The air between them thickened. She set the photos aside and leaned forward, close enough that she could see the flecks of gold in his dark eyes.

“So what do you think now?” she asked softly.

Angel’s mouth curved into that rare, devastating half-smile.

“I still think you’re trouble,” he murmured. “But I stopped wanting to stay away a long time ago.”

Cordelia’s lips parted. The space between them shrank until she could feel his cool breath against her mouth. Neither of them moved to close it — not yet — but the promise of it hung there, electric and sweet and inevitable.

The End.



9. True Confessions: The Midnight Snack Pact

Cordelia padded barefoot into the Hyperion kitchen at 2:17 a.m., wearing an oversized t-shirt and sleep shorts, her hair a messy bun. Phantom Dennis had been especially restless at her apartment tonight — doors creaking open on their own, the TV flipping channels at random, cold spots chasing her from room to room. She'd finally given up, grabbed an overnight bag, and come to the Hyperion to use her rarely-used room. Peace and quiet, she'd thought. Big mistake. Her brain was still too loud.

She opened the fridge, grabbed the half-empty carton of chocolate milk, and was reaching for a glass when a low voice came from the shadows.

“Couldn’t sleep?”

Angel was already at the counter, pouring himself a mug of warmed blood. He looked relaxed in a black t-shirt and sweatpants, clearly in the middle of his normal nighttime routine.

Cordelia jumped, then relaxed with a small laugh. “Jesus. Make some noise next time.” She poured herself a glass of milk and joined him at the small table. “Phantom Dennis decided tonight was a good night for a poltergeist party. I couldn’t take it anymore.”

Angel sat across from her, mug in hand. “So you came here for quiet and ended up wide awake anyway.”

“Story of my life lately.”

The words hung in the quiet kitchen. For a moment, neither of them spoke. The old building settled around them with soft creaks and sighs. Angel took a slow sip from his mug, eyes never leaving hers. Cordelia traced a finger along the rim of her glass, watching the way the lamplight caught the dark liquid inside. The silence wasn't uncomfortable — it was the kind that only existed between two people who had already said too much and still had more to say.

Angel set his mug down. His voice was low when he finally spoke again.

“I've been thinking about you.”

Cordelia looked up. The honesty in his eyes made her chest tighten in the best way.

She swallowed, then answered just as quietly. “Same. I keep waking up thinking about us. About everything that's been building between us — the almost-kisses, the honesty, the way I can't stop looking at you when I should probably be looking anywhere else.”

Angel reached across the table and caught her free hand, thumb brushing over her knuckles in a slow, steady rhythm.

“I tell myself to stay in my room,” he said quietly. “Give you space. Keep things simple. Then I end up down here at two in the morning because the alternative is staring at the ceiling thinking about how much I want to kiss you... and what might happen if I do.”

Cordelia's breath caught. She knew exactly what he meant — the curse, the risk, the monster that lived inside him. But she didn't push. Not tonight.

Instead she squeezed his hand and gave him a small, understanding smile.

“So we're both terrible at staying away now. Midnight snack pact it is.”

“Exactly.” His fingers laced with hers. “We raid the kitchen, talk about the things we're too scared to say during daylight hours, and pretend this is normal.”

Angel's eyes softened in that rare way they only did with her. “Stay. Even if you can't sleep. Just... stay here with me a while longer.”

She didn't let go of his hand. “Wasn't planning on going anywhere.”

They sat like that for a long time — chocolate milk and blood on the table between them, the city sleeping outside, two people who couldn't quite rest but had somehow found the one place they both wanted to be.

The End.



10. True Confessions: The “We’re Just Friends” Lie

The Hyperion lobby felt unusually empty once Fred and Gunn finally left. They’d been lingering by the front doors for twenty minutes—Gunn calling her “sweetheart” in that low, easy voice, Fred blushing and tucking herself against his side like she belonged there. It was disgustingly cute. The kind of obvious, uncomplicated happiness that made Cordelia’s chest ache in ways she didn’t want to examine too closely.

She stood at the reception desk, arms crossed, watching the doors swing shut behind them. “Well. That was adorable.”

Angel leaned against the counter a few feet away, arms folded, expression unreadable. He’d been quieter than usual all evening.

Cordelia forced a bright smile. “I mean, I’m really happy for them. They deserve this. After everything... it’s nice to see something go right around here for once.”

“Yeah,” Angel said quietly. “Nice.”

The silence stretched. Cordelia busied herself straightening a stack of already-straight files. The honesty pact they'd been keeping for weeks had made almost everything easier—except this. Especially this.

She finally huffed out a breath. “Okay, fine. It’s not just nice. It’s... annoying.”

Angel’s head turned toward her.

“I’m happy for them,” she clarified quickly. “I am. But watching them be all open and obvious and together while we’re still pretending we’re just... you know...” She waved a hand between them. “Friends. It sucks.”

Angel didn’t look away. “We are friends.”

Cordelia laughed, but it came out sharp. “Oh, please. We haven’t been ‘just friends’ since the night you pinned me against that wall. Or the night you bought me half of Rodeo Drive because you had ‘specific ideas’ about how I’d look in the clothes. Or the midnight snack pact where we basically admitted we can’t stop thinking about each other.” She turned to face him fully. “We’ve been lying to the team for months. ‘Oh, it’s just Cordy and Angel, they’re close, that’s all.’ And we’ve been lying to ourselves even longer.”

The words finally hit the air between them and stayed there.

Angel’s jaw tightened, but he didn’t deny it. Instead he pushed off the counter and took a slow step closer. “You’re right.”

Cordelia blinked. She’d expected more resistance. “I am?”

“Yeah.” His voice was low, rough. “I’ve been telling everyone—including myself—that we’re just friends. That this is still the same partnership it’s always been. That nothing’s changed.” He took another step. “But everything’s changed. And I’m tired of pretending it hasn’t.”

Her heart slammed against her ribs. She didn’t move as he closed the last bit of distance between them. They were standing too close now, the kind of close that made the rest of the lobby disappear.

“I keep waiting for one of them to call us on it,” she whispered. “Fred gives me these little knowing looks sometimes. Gunn just smirks. And I smile back like I have no idea what they’re talking about. But I do. We both do.”

Angel's eyes held hers—dark, intense, and completely unguarded. The charged eye contact felt heavier than any touch they'd shared so far. It stripped away every last layer of the lie they'd been clinging to.

“We passed the point of no return a long time ago,” he said, so quietly it was almost a breath. “Didn't we?”

Cordelia swallowed hard. She couldn't look away. Didn't want to. “Yeah. We did.”

Neither of them moved. The air between them crackled, thick and electric, the honesty finally laid bare. No more jokes. No more half-truths. Just the two of them standing in the quiet Hyperion, staring at each other like the rest of the world had ceased to exist.

For once, neither of them ran.

The End.



11. True Confessions: The Thing I'm Scared Of

The Hyperion lobby was dark except for the single lamp beside the red couch. Everyone else had gone home hours ago. Cordelia sat curled against one end, legs tucked under her, a half-forgotten mug of tea cooling on the side table. Angel occupied the other end, close enough that their knees brushed whenever either of them shifted. The honesty pact had made nights like this easier—until it hadn't.

They'd been talking about nothing and everything for the last hour. Then the conversation simply... stopped. The quiet felt heavier than usual. Angel stared at his hands for a long moment before he spoke, voice low and rough.

"I'm scared of you."

Cordelia's head turned slowly. "Me?"

He didn't look at her. "Of what happens if I let myself get too close. If I let myself be happy. Really happy." His jaw tightened. "The curse. One perfect moment of

true happiness and it's over. I become him again. And Angelus... he wouldn't just hurt you. He'd destroy everything you are. I've seen what he's capable of. I can't risk that. I can't risk you."

The words landed between them like a stone dropped into still water. Cordelia's breath caught.

Angel finally met her eyes, and the raw fear there made her chest ache. "Every time I almost kiss you, every time I let myself think about what we could be... I remember what I am. What I could become. And it terrifies me more than anything I've ever faced."

Silence stretched again. Then Cordelia shifted, turning fully toward him. She reached out and took his hand, threading their fingers together without hesitation.

"My turn," she said softly. "I'm scared that you'll never let yourself be happy. That your fear of what might happen will keep us stuck here forever—in this almost-everything place. Almost kissing. Almost touching. Almost us. I'm scared you'll keep holding back until one day you decide it's safer to walk away again. Like you did before. And I'll be left standing here wondering if I was ever enough to make you stay."

Her voice cracked on the last word, but she didn't look away.

Angel's eyes darkened with something deeper than fear. He lifted their joined hands and pressed her palm against his chest, right over where his heart would be if it still beat.

"You are enough," he said, the words fierce and quiet at the same time. "You're the only thing that's ever made me want to risk it anyway."

Cordelia's free hand came up to cup his cheek. His skin was cool beneath her fingers, but the look in his eyes was pure heat.

"Then maybe," she whispered, "we stop being scared of the almost. Maybe we just... be here. Together. Even if it's terrifying."

Angel turned his face into her touch, eyes closing for a heartbeat. When they opened again, the fear was still there—but so was something else. Something warm and certain and impossibly tender.

He leaned in slowly, forehead resting against hers. Their breaths mingled, cool and warm. The space between their mouths was barely anything at all.

“I’m still scared,” he murmured.

“Me too,” she breathed.

Neither of them pulled away.

For the first time, the fear didn’t feel like a wall between them. It felt like something they were holding together—fragile, honest, and more romantic than any perfect moment either of them had ever dared to imagine.

The End.



12. True Confessions: The Perfect Day

Late afternoon sunlight slanted through the tall windows of the Hyperion, turning the lobby a soft, lazy gold. It had been one of those rare, blessedly quiet days—no visions, no clients, no apocalypse knocking on the door. Cordelia was stretched out on the red couch, head on a throw pillow, one foot resting in Angel’s lap while he absently rubbed the arch with his thumb. The simple touch had become normal somewhere between the honesty pact and the almost-kisses, and neither of them commented on it anymore.

“This is nice,” Cordelia murmured, eyes half-closed. “We should do this more often. The whole ‘not fighting evil’ thing.”

Angel’s mouth curved in that small, private way he saved for her. “We’re not exactly built for days off.”

“Speak for yourself, mister. I’ve been thinking about what I’d do if we ever got a real one.” She cracked one eye open. “A perfect day off. You first.”

He shook his head, still stroking her foot. “You brought it up.”

“Fine.” She shifted a little, getting more comfortable. “My perfect day starts with sleeping in. No alarm, no visions screaming in my head at three a.m. Then really good coffee—not that sludge we make here. Proper espresso. Maybe some ridiculously expensive pastries from that little place on Melrose. After that... I don’t know. A little shopping. Not even for anything important. Just wandering around, trying things on. Then coming back here, putting on something comfortable, and spending the rest of the day with no one else around. Just... quiet. With you.”

Angel’s thumb stilled for a heartbeat.

He was quiet long enough that she finally nudged him with her toes. “Your turn, broody. Don’t tell me your idea of perfect is sitting in a dark room polishing weapons.”

A faint smile touched his lips. “Not exactly.” He looked down at her foot in his hand, then met her eyes. “My perfect day would be simple. Drive up the coast early, find a shady spot where I could watch the ocean without turning into a bonfire. Maybe stop at one of those little bookstores along the way. Then come back here in the evening. You could order whatever you want for dinner. We’d watch something stupid on TV or just talk. No demons. No crisis. Just... a day where I get to be with you without worrying that something’s going to try to kill us before sunset.”

Cordelia stared at him, her expression softening by degrees.

“Wait,” she said slowly. “You basically just described my perfect day. Minus the ocean part. And the bookstore. But the rest...”

“Yeah.” Angel’s voice was quiet, almost wondering. “I guess I did.”

The realization settled between them, warm and a little startling in its simplicity. Their ideas weren’t grand or extravagant. They were remarkably, scarily compatible—both of them wanting the same thing most of all: time. Real, uninterrupted time together.

Cordelia’s voice was softer when she spoke again. “We want the same things, don’t we?”

Angel nodded once, his thumb resuming its slow movement along her arch.
“Seems like it.”

He was quiet for a long moment, eyes on hers. Then, very gently, almost under his breath, he said:

“We should do that someday.”

Cordelia’s heart did a slow, aching flip. She reached out and laced her fingers with his where they rested on her ankle.

“Yeah,” she whispered, smiling. “We really should.”

The End.



13. True Confessions: The Tension

The Hyperion lobby was quiet in that rare, golden hour between late afternoon and full dark. No phones ringing. No demons crashing through the doors. Just the low hum of the old building and the soft glow of a single lamp beside the red couch.

Cordelia sat sideways, one knee drawn up, watching Angel pretend to read the same page of his book for the third time. He'd been like this for twenty minutes —eyes on the words, mind clearly somewhere else. Every few seconds his gaze would flick to her, then back down again, like he was fighting the urge to look.

She couldn't take it anymore.

“Okay, what is it?” she asked, voice lighter than she felt. “You’ve been staring at that page like it personally insulted your mother. Spill.”

Angel closed the book slowly and set it aside. He turned toward her, elbow resting on the back of the couch, and the movement brought him closer. Their knees brushed. Neither of them moved away.

“It’s this,” he said simply.

Cordelia’s eyebrows lifted. “This?”

“Us.” His voice was low, rough around the edges. “The way everything feels... different now. Since the pact. Since we stopped pretending we don’t notice each other.”

She swallowed. The honesty pact had opened a lot of doors, but this one—the one leading straight into whatever this was—still felt dangerous to walk through. “You mean the tension,” she said, because if they were doing honesty, she might as well name it.

Angel’s dark eyes held hers. “Yeah. The tension.”

The word hung between them like smoke. Cordelia felt it settle low in her stomach, warm and electric. She’d been trying to ignore how aware she was of him lately—every shift of his body on the couch, the way his shirt stretched across his shoulders, the cool brush of his fingers when he handed her coffee. It was getting harder to pretend it was just friendship.

“I hate it,” she admitted softly. “And I don’t hate it at all.”

Angel’s mouth curved in that small, devastating half-smile. “Same.”

He reached out, slow enough that she could pull away if she wanted, and tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear. His fingers lingered against the side of her neck, thumb brushing just beneath her jaw. Cordelia’s pulse jumped under his touch.

“Every time you look at me like that,” he murmured, “I forget why I’m supposed to keep my distance.”

“Like what?” Her voice came out breathier than she intended.

“Like you’re daring me to cross the line.” His thumb traced the line of her throat, feather-light. “Like you want me to.”

Cordelia’s breath hitched. She shifted closer without thinking, her knee pressing more firmly against his thigh. The air between them felt thick, charged, like the moment before a storm breaks.

“I do want you to,” she whispered. The confession slipped out before she could stop it, raw and honest. “But I’m also terrified that once we do, there’s no going back. And I don’t know if we’re ready for that.”

Angel’s eyes darkened, pupils blown wide. His hand slid down to cup the back of her neck, holding her there—gentle, but unmistakable. Their faces were inches apart now. She could feel the cool brush of his breath against her lips. “I’m not sure I’m capable of staying on the right side of that line anymore,” he said, voice barely above a growl. “Not with you looking at me like you are right now.”

Cordelia’s hand found his chest, fingers curling into the soft fabric of his shirt. She could feel the steady, inhumanly calm beat beneath her palm. Her own heart was hammering loud enough for both of them.

For one endless, aching moment they stayed frozen like that—foreheads nearly touching, breaths mingling, the tension stretched so tight it felt like it might snap.

Angel leaned in another fraction. Their lips hovered a heartbeat apart. Then he stopped.

“I’m still scared,” he breathed against her mouth.

“Me too,” she whispered back.

Neither of them pulled away.

The tension didn’t break. It simply wrapped tighter around them, warm and sweet and impossibly alive, promising that someday—maybe soon—they wouldn’t be able to stop.

The End.



14. True Confessions: Someday

Late afternoon sunlight slanted through the tall windows of the Hyperion, turning the lobby a soft, lazy gold. It had been one of those rare, blessedly quiet days—no visions, no clients, no apocalypse knocking on the door. Cordelia was stretched out on the red couch, head resting against Angel’s shoulder, his arm draped loosely around her, fingers idly tracing patterns on her upper arm. It had become their spot. Their quiet place. The honesty pact had turned these stolen moments into something neither of them could walk away from anymore.

Cordelia let out a contented sigh. “You know what I keep thinking about?”

Angel’s voice rumbled low against her hair. “What?”

“That perfect day we talked about.” She tilted her head just enough to look up at him. “The one where we actually get to do it. Not just daydream about it.”

His fingers paused on her arm. “Yeah?”

She nodded, a small smile playing at her lips. “I want that someday, Angel. I want coffee that doesn’t taste like it was brewed in a demon’s sock. I want to watch you browse dusty old bookstores and pretend you’re not secretly judging the covers. I want a moonlight drive up the coast with the windows down and argue over what song to play next. I want one whole day where the only thing we have to worry about is whether the stars come out before we’re ready to come home.”

Angel was quiet for a long moment, but his arm tightened around her. When he finally spoke, his voice was rough with something deeper than usual.

“I want that too,” he said. “More than I probably should. I keep picturing it... leaving late in the afternoon when the light is softer. Driving up the coast as the sun starts to set. Stopping at one of those little overlooks once it’s safe. You eating those ridiculous pastries while we watch the sky change colors. Then maybe finding a quiet bookstore on the way back or just heading home to watch something stupid on TV. No demons. No crisis. Just... a day where I get to be with you without counting the minutes until something tries to kill us.” Cordelia’s heart did a slow, aching flip. She shifted so she could face him properly, one hand resting on his chest.

“So why are we still waiting?” she asked softly. “The pact was supposed to be about honesty, right? Well, here’s mine: I’m tired of ‘someday.’ I want us to pick a date. Soon. Before the next apocalypse decides to crash the party.”

Angel’s eyes darkened with that familiar mix of want and fear, but he didn’t look away. Instead he lifted his free hand and brushed his thumb along her cheekbone, slow and reverent.

“Someday,” he murmured, the word heavy with promise. “I want that more than anything.”

Cordelia leaned into his touch, her lips curving. “You keep saying ‘someday’ like it’s a shield, broody. I’m calling it. Next clear Saturday. You, me, the coast at sunset, and zero saving-the-world required.”

For a heartbeat he looked almost startled by her boldness. Then that rare, devastating half-smile broke across his face—the one that always made her stomach flutter.

“Next clear Saturday,” he repeated, like he was testing the words. His hand stayed on her cheek as he held her gaze. “You’re really going to hold me to that, aren’t you?”

“Damn right I am.” Her fingers curled into his shirt. “And you’re going to love every minute of it.”

They stayed like that, bodies angled toward one another, his thumb still brushing her cheek while her fingers stayed curled tightly in the front of his shirt. The quiet lobby wrapped around them like a secret. The tension that always hummed between them felt different now – warmer, deeper, fuller. Like it wasn’t just pulling them toward something unknown anymore.

It was pulling them toward the someday they’d both stopped pretending they didn’t want.

The End.