

Rating: NC-17

*Pairing: S/X and A/W -- just go with it *g**

Summary: There's a spell. And alternate universe, past-life thingies. There's also hippogryphs and verging on bad!fic. There's also funny and porn, too :)

Warnings: Um. Bad!fic?

Disclaimer: Not mind, blah blah

Feedback: OMG please!

A/N: Love to  [crazydiamondsue](#) and  [othercat](#) who are the rockinest of betas.

Alex and Will's Excellent Adventures

by
Lady Cat

"What the hell are *those?*" Xander asked, trying not to giggle. "And how does he not go face first into the ground?"

"That's you, you pillock." Spike idly leaned over the perfectly smooth water, studying a young, dark haired man in full armor, striding quickly down what could only be a Via. Probably one of the main ones, if the docks Spike could see in the distance were the Ostia and not some knock off. "And it's a helmet. Keeps your thick head from splitting open."

Xander curled up around the other side, looking far too comfortable on the chaise, reclining Roman style, though he didn't know it for what it was. Heathen.

"What's it *made* of?" Xander asked. The Xander-that-was -- not a prior incarnation, according to Willow, but definitely connected -- tripped, righting himself before he took a tumble, but glancing around in a nervous oh-god-nobody-see way that was *classic* Xander Harris. "The black stuff on the helmet."

"Horse-hair, usually. Some of the wealthier types had other materials, but mostly it was horse-hair. Nice and fragrant, you probably were."

Xander glared, but he couldn't look away from the pool of water for too long. Spike knew exactly how he felt. "So, I'm a soldier? And where are you? Wills said you'd be here, too."

"I'll be there," Spike said. It was sickening, really, the way Harris clung to him so much that even watching their maybe-past had him scanning the image frantically, looking for his boyfriend. At least, Spike *said* it was sickening. In his thoughts, he called it something else. "And no, not a soldier. You look wealthy enough to have proper armor,

with metal, not bits of put together shite, so you're definitely the son of a noble. First son, though, I'd doubt."

Xander-that-was tripped again, cursing under his breath as he regained his balance. Good thing Willow had included her nifty translation spell, not only making muttered Latin words English, but making them *colloquial* English. Purely for Xander's benefit, of course. So Spike wouldn't have to suffer through stilted, awkward conversations he'd then have to translate for lack-of-comprehension-boy beside him. Not at *all* because Spike had whined.

The Via was busy, people and livestock hurrying on their way, but it didn't appear overwhelming. Probably due to the heat-shimmers Spike saw against the stone; only the poor or the desperate would be outside when it was that hot. And the ones who didn't get choices. There was sweat on Xander-that-was' brow -- and he really needed a new name, dammit -- but it didn't look like a reaction to the heat. Spike knew the look that Xander -- right, *Alex* -- sported: anxious and worried and on a mission he was sure he was going to bollocks.

"Hey, I'm an only kid, here," Xander protested mildly.

Alex split off from the main Via, heading down a well-manicured dirt path to what Spike guessed would turn into a villa. "You are. He isn't. If he was, he'd have servants to do his bidding. And he wouldn't stumble about like the clumsy git you are, or he wouldn't remain an officer for long."

"I thought all aristocratic kids were officers," Xander said, thereby exhausting all Roman history he knew.

"No, not all. At least, not permanently. Think Israeli army. Everybody goes in, but a whole lot come out, too."

The villa was much larger than Spike had expected. The time period Willow had suggested meant that almost all the major players live inside of Rome, close to the senate and the newly christened emperor's home. To have such a wealthy looking villa, staffed with barely-clad slaves that greeted Alex with low bows and quiet words, outside the borders of the city meant that it was probably --

"Ugh. He looks like Jabba the Hut."

-- a foreigner's. Spike smirked as Alex was taken

before a fat, greasy looking Greek that was obviously a merchant. The rings, the silks, the unctuous personality -- a used car salesman was a used car salesman, no matter what the actual trade was in.

"Sir," Alex said, obviously trying to curtail the nervous wobble in his voice. "Do you have it?"

"I have many things," the Greek said. "For many prices."

Predictably -- to Spike, anyway -- Alex stiffened, losing some of his nervousness to indignation. "The price was agreed upon," he snapped, now sounding fully the man he was. A grown man, probably in his mid to late twenties, same as Spike's Xander, and running errands to scum. Oh yeah, second son, if not third or fourth, sent to a variety of potential careers before junior military was finally chosen as the least insulting.

Odd, how similar that was to Spike's Xander. Or maybe Spike was just transferring.

"Agreed, yes. But things change." A heavily be-ringed hand waved lazily, a hint of a smirk telling Spike everything he needed to know. Both versions of Xander, however, were shocked when a

thin, younger, *naked* version of Spike minced his way into the room, carrying a wooden box carved with eagles and X's, gold and mother-of-pearl inlaid in the carvings.

That's what they were after. Spike ignored his "own" appearance in favor of watching the box. If those morons opened it before time ...

But no. Alex's hand shot out just as the Greek lifted the lid, slamming it back down. His glare was fierce and implacable, the way Xander's was when he was truly pissed off and certain he was in the right. The Greek didn't precisely *quail*, but a subtle hand-gesture led to several much larger slaves discreetly appearing around the wings, confirming that the Greek was now worried. A little worried. There was too much avarice in his eyes to send Alex away entirely.

"Such manners," he chided, expansive voice untroubled. "I thought the great Antonious' son would show more respect than that."

"The great Antonious is Marcus," Alex snapped. "And he is neither my father nor my cousin, but a traitor to the Empire, and now dead for it. A price was agreed upon. Why is it changing?"

"It has come to my attention that this box is worth... much. As is the slave who carries it."

Surprise shoved Alex out of his anger, the commanding presence vanishing as he studied not the box, but who held it. Spike sighed as he examined 'himself', knowing instantly what his real role was.

"Uh, Spike? They still had body hair back then, right?"

"Yeah, pet. I -- *he's* -- been shaved, is all."

"Everywhere?" Xander's voice squeaked.

"Well, not his head, obviously. Though how they got me white-blonde I don't want to know. Think dye is bad now, I can't imagine how it must've stung then."

Xander leaned so close his breathing made the water ripple. "I dunno. I don't think it's fake. Hey, maybe that's why you're so comfortable being blond. In another life, you were."

If he could throw pillows, Spike told himself silently ... But he couldn't, and both of them were missing bits of the scene unfolding before them. Where

was the magical tivo when you needed one?

"And that is all you require?" Alex was asking.

"I think that will be *quite* sufficient," the Greek purred, obviously having just been promised a very large sum, if the greedy grin he wore was any indication. "Shall I send one of my slaves to fetch it or -- "

"No." Alex withdrew a bag from his belt, holding it aloft. "I want your scribe, and now. This transaction will be legal under Augustus' eyes."

The Greek waved, offering cool drinks and finger foods. Alex looked torn, obviously hungry and wanting to say yes, but something made him shake his head reluctantly, tapping his sandaled foot until finally a thin, reedy man scurried into the chamber.

Xander understood none of the following transaction, but Spike watched everything with obsessive interest. The box Willow needed them to take -- how, she still hadn't explained -- was now the property of one Gilenius, for an amazingly large sum of gold. The slave, however—the scribe baldly calling him a bed-slave—was now the personal property of one Alexandrius Valens

Antonius, with the stated stipulation that the slave be kept with the box -- though it was not required. Spike was pretty sure neither Alex nor Xander caught that, but that his slave counter part most certainly did.

All very fascinating. Spike absently climbed over to Xander's side of the bowl, scrunching down together so they both could watch as Alex roughly, obviously annoyed, put the box in a coarse burlap-looking sack and peremptorily ordered his brand-new slave to follow him.

Alex did not look at the slave, still naked, or speak to him until they were on the path back to the Via, tall grasses waving as they passed. A decent cover, Spike thought, and wasn't surprised when Alex abruptly halted.

"Put this on," Alex snapped, taking off his own cloak and handing it over to the slave. "You'll have to make a loin-cloth out of it, but it should be enough. And you better be glad that Giles knew this fat bastard would try and pull a fast one. Or I would've left you there. I owe you nothing."

Actual-Xander started, his arm tightening around actual-Spike's waist. "So ... we still hate each other, don't we?"

"No, shush. This is different."

The slave was nodding, head downcast as he cautiously took the cloak and wrapped it around his middle so he was mostly covered. Well, a bikini covered at least as much. "Yes, my Lord. Forgive me, my Lord."

Okay, *actual*-Xander caught the double-tone, but then, he'd been trained by Spike for a good few years, now. Alex, however, waved the words away with a grimace. "Yeah, whatever, and no my Lord's. Only my *brother* gets my lords. I get 'go do this' and 'go fetch that' like I don't have the same teachings, the same skills as dear Julius. And stop looking at me like I'm going to hit you -- I won't. I don't hit creatures weaker than me."

Both of them caught the flash of hatred in the slaves eyes as he meekly nodded and straightened a little. "Shall we, my Lord?" The last words were just pointed enough to make Alex flush -- Spike gave him points for not being as stupid as Xander often was to the subtler insults. But that, he decided, was cultural.

"When we get this box back to the Vestals," Alex ranted as they started walking again, "I am done,

you hear me? Through. I had to buy a *slave* to do what they wanted! With my money, that they are reimbursing, dammit. I don't want to own a slave! Well, okay, actually someone to mind the house while I'm gone so I can let Livia go back home doesn't sound so bad, but a *pleasure* slave is of no use to me at all. Figures. For I am Alexandrius the Luckless, and when others find gold, I find muck. No, not that way you -- do you have a name? Other than," Alex consulted the papers clenched tightly in his fists, "oh, lovely. Do you have a name other than Boy?"

The slave shifted. "I—they call me Spiculi, my Lord."

Oh yeah. That was *such* a surprise.

"I said quit with the damned my Lords, and yeesh. They called you sharp and pointy? Nice nickname. So what's your *actual* name, sharp and pointy boy?"

"Guillaume."

"Better. Gaulish, and therefore stupid, but better." Alex made a frustrated noise and tugged at his helmet, as if he wanted to remove it. "I can't go around calling you that, though, because Gauls?"

Not currently the favorite of Augustus'. Do you have any objections to me calling you Will?"

Spike didn't shiver. He *didn't*, and there was no reason for Xander's arm to tighten around him like that, as if his not-really-shivering was a bad thing, anyway. So Spike had a thing for Xander when he was commanding and rude, because he obviously didn't care if newly-christened Will cared, and still kind underneath it all. Will, apparently, had the same thing; licking his lips was pretty much a dead give away. To Spike, anyway.

He was so grateful that Xander remained unobservant. Otherwise they might have a problem. And Willow would *kill* them if they got stains on her chaise.

"No, my Lord. I will respond to Will."

"For the love of Juno, stop calling me 'my Lord'! And good, fine, your name is Will. Now let's get something straight. I didn't buy you because I want you. I bought you because I want the box, and because that fat, greasy bastard saw a chance to get rid of a potential trouble-maker at the same time, and don't flash those eyes at me. I'm not stupid. You're a trouble-maker, and there's probably a reason you're connected to that

damned box that's going to bite me on my ass, but right now, I don't care. I'm Alex. You will not call me 'my Lord'. You will call me *A*/ex. You will do what I say when I say it, and I'll figure out a way to free you after I get money from the Vestals for doing their dirty work. Okay?"

Will looked at Alex frankly, eyebrow—darker blond than his hair, but still blond, which meant Xander was probably right, for once—raised, head tilted in an appraising manner. "You want to free me, my—Alex?"

"Not 'my Alex'. Alex. It's my name. I don't like nicknames, okay? And my Lord is my brother Julius, except when my father's around, and holy Juno, I have to keep you away from my father. He'll want to take you from me. Maybe I can keep you with the Vestals, except, well, obviously not virgin. See? Muck. My life is *muck*. And of course I want to free you. What use are you to me?"

Alex started walking, muttering under his breath in a continued rant, Will walking a pace behind him. Thoughtfully. Eyes clear and calculating as he watched the back of Alex's head, the shoulders just barely defined under the cloak and Alex's ...

Xander poked Spike's side. "Fifty bucks on this

evening."

"That soon? No way. Fifty says it's me, but tomorrow."

"Yeah, right, Spike, not the way he's looking at Alex right now. And it's so going to be me. Clearly. It's *always* me."

"Are we conveniently forgetting who shoved whom that first time?"

"No, we aren't forgetting. We're just not making up stories wholesale, the way you do. Fifty bucks on this evening, and it will so be me."

"Fine. But if you're wrong—and you will be—then I get a favor of my choosing."

Xander's body shrank away from his for a moment, then rolled back so he was resting most of his weight on Spike. Spike didn't complain, and he didn't bother hiding the grin Xander couldn't see.

"Same for me. *When* you're wrong, I get to do whatever I want to you, whenever I want it. Deal?"

Like Spike was such a prude with a list of things he wouldn't do. Really. But all he said was, "Deal. Now shut the bloody hell up, we're missing me

talking."

"Vain bastard."

"Clumsy git."

"I need a pin to pop your big-ass head."

"Oi! My head is not too big!"

"Yes, it is, and it's blocking my view. Now be quiet!"

And people wondered if they were actually dating or not.

In the water, Will had drawn alongside of Alex. He occasionally glanced up, waiting for a reprimand that was clearly not going to come. "Why is this box important?" he asked. They were almost to Rome by then, and the crowds around them were thicker and busier, armed soldiers and robed aristocrats gliding in and out of the general masses on their business. "It's just a box."

"No, it's not just a box, and shut up."

"But—"

"I said shut up. You're my slave and you will shut up."

It was said more petulantly than commandingly, a hint of resignation there as if Alex knew Will wasn't going to actually obey him, because no one else did. But Will obediently snapped his mouth closed, still looking thoughtful.

Xander poked him again. "Why don't *you* obey me like that?"

"Because you're an arrogant tosser, and your orders are stupid."

"Because 'no, Spike, don't go into the burning building and risk getting dusted by a stray flame' is stupid?!"

"Shut *up* you great wanker!" Good thing vampires didn't blush. Going into that building had been stupid, and he'd been incredibly lucky to come out with only a few burns that took less than week to heal. Extremely lucky. But Xander would just go on and *on* about it!

"Yeah, and wanking's all I'm doing, until you stop being an asshole. I can't help that I worry."

"For the love of Juno, as your counter-part said, can we *not* have this discussion now? Again? We're supposed to be paying attention!"

Xander snorted, but obediently looked back at the bowl. They were in Rome proper now, streets positively teeming with people and the occasional livestock, the wealthiest on palanquins carried through the crowds amid shouts of *make way*. Spike was very glad they couldn't *smell* anything. He'd lived through industrialized London. Ancient Rome was worse, particularly on a day hot as this one was. Why they thought putting a dock in a dredged up swamp was a good thing ...

Alex led the way through the crowds, heading for a smallish looking home that was near one of the great hills without actually being on it—meaning the owner wasn't poor, and wasn't a Plebe, although his standing as a Patrician was probably questionable.

It came as no surprise when a matronly slave led them to a study where a tall, older man with salt-and-pepper hair and a Toman nose waited for them in a room *covered* in scrolls and pamphlets of all shapes and sizes. "Ah, Alex. You found it?"

Alex threw himself into a chair, pulling off his

helmet with a sigh of relief. "No, I didn't *find* it, Giles. I *bought* it. Him, too. You, Will—help me get my sandals off. Why did I have to wear battle-sandals again, Giles?"

"Because you needed to look official and imposing," Giles said faintly, eyes wide as Will—still dressed in his cloak-cum-loincloth—knelt and began undoing the laces. "Er. And this is?"

"A pleasure-slave good old Cally wanted to get rid of. He's probably a trouble-maker, but you should have the Vestals give him a once-over. Cally implied that there was something connecting him to the box, which is probably just bullshit, but I'd rather this didn't blow up in my face again. Daddy's still not pleased that his useless fourth son isn't the soldier he ought to be, scraping up whatever honor and prestige I can until Augustus himself notices my worth."

Spike blinked at that little speech. That showed far more awareness than his Xander usually displayed and was the first real difference between the two Spike had noted—but then, it did make sense. His Xander had never had to deal with politics outside of a high school. It was good training, yeah, and the principles were the same—but high school machinations didn't usually end up with death.

Well, not until Buffy'd arrived in Sunnydale, anyway, and that was still different.

"I'll be certain to, ah, tell the Vestals. You're going there next, I presume? Good, let me give you a few other things to bring over."

Alex snorted—something Giles didn't notice as he began rummaging through the scrolls—and turned his attention on Will. "What're you doing?"

"You've blisters, my—Alex." Releasing Alex's foot, he picked up the right sandal and began examining it. "There's part that's been frayed, Alex. The whole thing will break soon."

And there was Will's first real departure of character—sort of. There was still calculation and selfishness in his helpfulness—good slaves weren't beaten, and despite what Alex'd said, freedom was hardly guaranteed—but Spike recognized a genuine desire to please in this version of himself. A need to *be* good, instead of just be good enough to survive.

Xander nipped Spike's earlobe. "Told you. It's so gonna be tonight."

"Shut up and watch, you bastard." Spike wondered what Xander was going to ask of him, that he wouldn't have normally—because yeah. Tonight. And Xander'd make the first move. Will would see to that.

"Here we are. Please take these over," Giles handed over a small satchel of scrolls, "and you'll probably be encouraged to spend the night. Tavia and Valora always seem to want to keep you there, no matter that you have a home to return to," Giles finished with a pointed glare.

Alex shrugged it off. "Will, I've got regular sandals in the front. Go fetch those. And stop by the kitchens and ask Livia for proper clothing. Tell her I said it's okay."

Will rolled his eyes as he left, and while Spike didn't catch what he'd said, he could guess. 'Obvious' would be one of the words. Also 'wankers', or a suitably Latin equivalent. But off he went, Giles sitting back down and giving Alex a serious look. "I can't take him, Alex. No, I'm sorry, but I'm playing host to one of Livia's women tomorrow, and there is absolutely no way I can have a brand new slave to worry about at the same time. My household is small, Alex, you know that. One slave can cause a great deal of havoc,

particularly one that *Cally*, as you call him, was so anxious to rid himself of. Besides, Alex, the last thing I need is another potentially mystical influence in this house. It's going to be difficult enough trying to keep Livia from finding out what spells I'm working, having someone who may or may not be related will be more than I can handle. Besides. He *is* yours, now."

Alex sighed, scrubbing his face—and obviously expecting everything Giles had told him. "Yeah, yeah, whatever. And Valora better pay me back, dammit. I don't have any need for a slave, particularly a pleasure slave that isn't even female, and it's her fault, anyway." He continued grumbling, but grew quiet when Will, dressed in clean trousers and a shirt that did nothing to hide his slave status, came back. "Lace them," Alex snapped. "Giles, about that thing yesterday ... "

Will immediately knelt, taking up Alex's first foot in gentle hands. *Very* gentle hands and Spike zeroed in on that part of the scene, while Xander listened to the banter that sounded so familiar but wasn't quite. Will should have just laced up the sandals, quickly and efficiently, getting it done with a minimum of fuss. He shouldn't have taken the time to smooth Alex's feet, almost rubbing them, before placing them on the leather, carefully twining the

laces so they didn't twist or bunch, his knot tight enough to stay without causing circulation problems. He definitely shouldn't have run his hands over the tops of Alex's legs and feet in what was obviously a caressing gesture.

Spike realized certain things were hard-wired the way Xander was obviously hard-wired to babble. It was a strange feeling.

By the time Will blinked back into the conversation, both Alex and Giles were staring at him strangely. Well, Alex was. Giles was smirking, though Alex didn't realize it. Will did. Will was trying very hard not to smirk right back. "My—er, Alex?" he said diffidently.

"Right. Okay. You? Are so touched by the magic. And you're probably contagious. Come on, we have to go to the vestals so we can figure out what weird magically-induced disease I have *this* time."

Watching Alex and Will weave their way through crowds was boring. So it came as no surprise when Xander's hand slipped underneath the loose pants Spike wore, stroking Spike's thigh possessively. "I'm gonna win," he whispered teasingly.

Git. "Shut up. We're supposed to watch for the

box."

"Oh, come on, Spike, you know as well as I do that you don't care about the box. Eventually Tara and Wills—er, sorry, Tavia and Valora—will do some spell on the box, probably to 'cleanse' it, and we'll be able to reach through the water and grab it. C'mon, I figured that out like a half hour ago, which means you knew a half hour before that."

"We've only been watching for an hour."

"This doesn't dispute what I said. Anyway! That's not what you're watching for," Xander sing-songed.

The little shit—okay, big shit, who was currently warming Spike's entire body and felt very nice—had no right to tease him like this. Just because Spike allowed him to didn't mean that Xander should take advantage. It was evil of him, dammit. And *Spike* was the evil one. "You've no idea what I'm watching for," he snapped.

"Riiiiight. And you're hard 'cause you get off on watching people sweat in the Mediterranean summer?" Familiar fingers curled around Spike's cock, holding it loosely. "I mean, I know you're easy, Spike. But some discretion might be nice."

I'm not sure I like competing with stinky, sweaty humans you can't actually touch."

"I hate you."

"I hate you, too, Spike. I really hate you, too."

One day, Spike was going to *actually* hate Xander. Then they'd see who could patronize who!

Sulking, Spike watched as Alex and Will entered a cool, dark chamber richly decorated in friezes and gold. The servants recognized Alex immediately, waving him through the honey-comb of corridors that Alex followed with familiar ease. He didn't stop until he reached a small courtyard, maybe large enough for five people to comfortably stand around a small fountain that burbled pleasantly, marble basins inlaid with some sort of blue gem. Two women in long, flowing white robes sat on the rim of the fountain, chatting softly. One had long, ashy-blond hair done up in an elaborate braid atop her head. The other had her rich auburn hair cascading down her shoulders.

Right, this whole counter-part thing? Was getting old. Willow'd told them that only he and Xander would have past-whatever-the-hell-these-were. Not *everything*. And Christ, that meant Buffy, too.

Spike groaned, which had nothing at all to do with the thumb swiping over the head of his cock. Buffy as a Roman would probably be a terrifying figure, since tradition and cultural strictures would have her hemmed in on all sides. She'd be frustrated and desperate for her freedoms, and Spike had no desire to see that kind of Buffy *ever*.

Tavia and Valora both hugged Alex, neither surprised when Alex explained what had happened, including the purchase of himself—er, of Will. In fact, all they did was exchange knowing glances before calling for food and drink and rest. Alex appeared as bewildered as Spike and Xander were, but he knew better than to argue with these graceful, imperturbable women who obviously wouldn't take no for an answer, anyway. Alex and Will were plied with food and wine, Tavia effortlessly directing Will into helping the other women serve them, though he was fed and chatted up as much as Alex was. It lasted a while. Spike suspected it was supposed to.

When twilight finally filled the small courtyard, Valora insisted that Alex and Will spend the night there. "You can't go home, Alex," she said bluntly, sympathy clear in her expressive eyes. "Not with a slave you intend to free. And besides, the ritual will take place tomorrow at dawn, and you and Will

need to be there."

"Me? Me *and* Will?" Alex frowned, looking between the two women suspiciously.

"Took me long enough," Xander commented wryly.

"Yes," Tavia said, "both of you. You've both handled it, and that means you both need to be there when we render it safe. That's all."

"Yeah, right," Xander, Spike, and Alex said.

Valora looked reproachful as she led them to their rooms and wished them a good night. She did not inform them if a servant would come fetch them at the appropriate time, something Spike found significant. She just glided away, smiling slightly as she left the scene, the sack containing the box clutched in her hands.

Oddly, the scene remained focused on Alex and Will as the two prepared for rest, Alex snapping out orders that fumbled, sometimes, as he remembered where he was. Strange. Not the fumbled orders—Xander wasn't good at being commanding until he was certain it was okay and Alex was likely the same—but because Spike expected their magical camera to follow the box.

That was what Willow had implied, anyway. But then, Willow had implied this would be *short*, too.

Alex showed no dismay at being naked in front of another male as he settled on his pallet. In fact ...

"Oh, *hell* no," Spike snapped. "No way."

"You're just pissed you're losing."

"I am *not* losing, and anyway, that's not why I'm pissed. This doesn't seem the slightest bit contrived to you? I mean, I know you watch that *Smallville* shite, so you've got no appreciation to the finer points of plotting, but *come on*. This is so obvious. Too obvious! And not bloody possible."

There was a pause, filled only with the sounds of Xander breathing, and Alex gathering himself. Then there was a hand on Spike's balls. Squeezing. Very lightly, really, but enough that Spike's half-hard went full and erect as Xander teased him thoughtfully. "Possible," Xander said.

"I had to teach you that. And no fair! No getting me off while we're arguing."

"We're *not* getting you off, Spike. I don't want scary black-eyed Willow coming after me for

ruining her brand new whatever-the-hell it is we're lying on. And you didn't teach me that. I did it, and you mewled like I was killing you, which is Spike-speak for *god, that felt good, do it again*. So I did.. And, finally, so it's contrived. We can always blame drugs, 'cause I wouldn't put it past my Willow to drug me if she needed to, and this Valora person is kinda scary next to my Wills. Or there's some kind of back-story we don't know about, and don't roll your eyes, I know you are. I could've been a soldier in wherever you come from, and fought your village! And you were some kind of guerilla warfare guy, all big and bad and scary, and we met without knowing who the other one was, but there was some kind of connection between us even back then, when we were enemies. It's possible!"

"It is not," Spike said, offended. "It's just bad story-telling, it is!"

Xander's hand tightened just the tiniest amount, cutting off any further words from Spike. "Do we care?"

God, Xander was good at this. "Urk. No."

"Good. Now shut up, I want to watch me—I mean, Alex proposition Will. And don't roll your eyes or I'll

call you Harmony, again."

"Oi!"

In the water—or was that *through* the water?—Alex had propped himself up on his elbows, watching as Will did something arcane with his pallet. "So you're a pleasure-slave."

"Yes, Alex."

"How'd he use you?"

Will's eyes shone in the candlelight, though he carefully did not look directly at Alex. Spike knew the signs, though, as did Xander, who returned to lightly stroking Spike's cock. "I was sent to the men, Alex."

"Any idea why you became the bearer of that weird box? I mean, you didn't have it initially."

"No." Will turned slowly, seating himself on the pallet cross-legged, his trousers bunching around his waist oddly in the shadows. "That is, the box wasn't mine until Callimachus bought me. I was sent to pleasure someone in the room it was stored in. When he finished, the box started glowing and filled the room with some kind of mist

or gas. After that—" Will broke off, a feral glint in his smile. "Things got better, after that."

Alex nodded complacently. "Yeah, magic does that sometimes. You don't seem surprised to hear about it?"

"My family raised me according to the old traditions. My sister, she was a Seer."

"If," Xander whispered, "her name is Dru, I'm throwing this across the room. Just saying."

"Shut up and don't stop," Spike ordered as clever fingers combed over his inner thigh.

Alex nodded his understanding, pushing himself into a fully seated position. "So, you're mine, now."

"Yes, Alex." Will wasn't saying his new owner's name so much as granting him a title. It wasn't lost on any involved.

"And you're obviously good at what you do. Cally doesn't keep inferior goods."

"No, Alex."

"Do you *like* what you do?"

Xander scraped his teeth over Spike's neck. "So, I'm too terrified to take what I want, but I'm blunt enough to ask him if he likes being a whore? I think I prefer my way."

"Pushing me against a wall and kissing me until I didn't fight when you shoved your fingers up my arse is not a 'way'. It's two steps up from non-con."

Xander's bit his neck. "And you loved every second of it."

Well, that was utterly beside the point.

Alex was stroking his own cock lazily now, smiling when Will's eyes locked on it. "Answer the question, Will. Did you like how they used you?"

Will shuddered lightly, shadows shifting on his trousers. "Yes."

"Come over here."

Flushing, Will settled on hands and knees and crawled over to kneel in front of Alex. "I'm definitely good at it, too. No compunctions or

inhibitions, that's me. Callimachus loved that. Never had me himself, the fat bastard. Couldn't get it up anymore. But he liked to watch, particularly when I did myself. Wanna see?"

For a moment, Spike thought Alex might actually fall for it. Certainly, the thought of watching Will finger himself to orgasm was a *good* thing—three cocks twitched when Will suggested it—but it was a diversion. Something meant to test and tease, the way Spike did all the time.

Alex, like Xander, didn't get suckered, instead smirking with enough evil that the demon still inside of Spike purred happily. "Maybe later. Right now, I'm hot, and tired, and had enough wine that all I'm remembering is that you belong to me, now. And that a mouth is the same on a girl or a boy. So use it."

Spike shivered at the tone of Alex's voice, missing the way Will echoed him as he leaned forward to start lapping the tip of Alex's cock. After it was fully bathed, almost shining in the light, Will slid down until his nose pressed into Alex's belly. *That* made Spike stare, entranced. He'd always wanted to know what he looked like when he sucked Xander off that way, cursing his inability to use mirrors. But now he *could* watch as Will's throat

worked, swallowing, before he pulled back up again. Blue eyes flicked up to Alex's face, gauging, before he began messily licking and sucking his way up and down Alex's cock, chasing it whenever it slipped free. Alex remained soundless, watching with hard, dark eyes. Spike knew the exact moment Will would abandon his sloppy teasing, fitting his mouth back around Alex's cock and bobbing as frequently as his need for air allowed.

"I'm beautiful," he whispered.

"Yeah," Xander said. "You are."

When Alex was close—the red face, the gasping, and the way his hand had curled around the blankets was a dead give away—he reached out and grabbed the base of Spike's skull, halting him with the head of Alex's cock still in his mouth.

"Stop. I want—get on your knees."

Will made a breathy noise as he scrambled to comply, spreading his legs wide as Alex knelt in between them. When blunt fingers traced over his opening, Will cried out and said, "Please."

"Mm. Did they like it when you begged? Pled for them to fuck you like a woman?"

A finger slick with saliva pressed into Will's body. "N-no," he stuttered. "I never talked. Always—always kept quiet."

"Yeah?" A tremor in Alex's voice was echoed by the shiver in Xander's body as he rubbed himself against Spike's ass. "So why do I get begged? Is that what you think I want?"

Whatever answer Will had prepared got lost in a deep, guttural moan as Alex eased the head of his cock into Will. Panting harshly, a faint whimper on the end of each breath, Will dropped his shoulders and held himself wide and open as Alex worked every inch of himself inside. The candlelight didn't provide the kind of definition Spike wanted, but contrasts of light and dark, lithe versus heavy, the way the lines of their bodies blurred as Alex began to thrust into Will, all of it was *beautiful*. Spike forgot this wasn't himself and Xander, grinding back into Xander's cock, then forward into his waiting hand, watching as he was taken. All that mattered was that there were two, and it was perfect. Panting from four men, two matched for timbre, filled the room as Xander and Alex both murmured dirty things in dark, heady voices, Spike and Will driven crazy by each twisted promise, whimpering their need as they allowed their bodies to be moved or positioned any way their partner

wanted.

Will cried out first, almost sobbing as he came, quickly echoed by Spike's muffled wail. Alex and Xander lasted a few minutes more, Alex clearly enjoying the body that shuddered around his cock, while Xander fastened his teeth deep in Spike's neck as both of them came silently and nearly simultaneously.

Light immediately flooded both rooms, a pale mist of lilac and azure enveloping all four panting bodies while four matched voices, female and lilting, rose up in chant that echoed strangely in their skulls. It went on for a timeless moment, pulling at their bodies and teasing their blood—

Until it vanished.

In the now-empty bowl, a wooden box carved with eagles and x's, inlaid with a blue stone that glowed faintly, waited.

"So ..." Spike said roughly, closing his eyes after briefly checking for their counterparts and finding their prize instead. "That whole waiting for dawn thing? I call lying bint."

"Don't call Willow or Valora a bint," Xander murmured. "It's not nice. It is, however, true."

A whisper of cooler air threaded into the room, followed by a very recognizable voice—they'd just heard it chanting, after all—say, "Did it work?"

Spike didn't bother opening his eyes, knowing that Willow wouldn't come in. She'd learned *that* lesson. "The box is here. And it's not nice to spring sex magic on your friends without warning!"

Willow giggled. "Please. Like you two are complaining."

"Wait!" Xander sat up—dammit, he needed to come back and keep Spike warm!—and peered at the now-empty bowl. "Where'd we go? I mean, Alex and Will. Where'd they go? I want to know what happened!"

More giggling, sounding like at least two people, if not more. If Willow'd brought the whole bloody coven ... Spike was going to continue lying there and do nothing at all. He had vampire stamina, but he was still male. He'd had his orgasm and now he wanted sleep. Here was comfortable, and that was all that mattered.

"They're fine, Xander," Willow soothed over the giggling. "In fact, Valora's probably having the very same conversation with them right now. Or, um, maybe not? She'll probably be trying to defend herself when Alex realizes he's been tricked. And then laughing, when Alex grabs Will and goes back home, where he's found out that his father and his older brother have cobbled together to give him his very own place, or maybe Giles did, or something, and later Alex frees Will, but Will doesn't leave because he's in *luuurve* and Valora and Tavia like to tease them a whole lot."

Xander and Spike managed to turn their heads just enough to glare at the cracked-open doorway. "You made that up," Xander accused.

Willow laughed again, finally poking her head through the door. "Of course I did. I really didn't know how the spell was going to manifest, Xan, so I *couldn't* warn you."

That was sincere enough—and expected, given their histories with magic—for Xander to sigh wearily and lay back down onto Spike. And then pop up again. "Waitaminute! Were you *watching* us?"

"Which you?" Willow twinkled.

"Either us! Willow! You aren't supposed to watch two guys have sex! It's *wrong*. You're a lesbian!"

Spike chuckled and finally pushed himself into a seated position, absently catching Xander before he fell of the chaise. Gross. His trousers were wet on *both* sides. "Willow, be a love and get us a moment to compose ourselves, yeah? And he's right, though. Next time you want sex-magic, *warn* us. It's not like we're gonna tell you no."

Several feet shuffled, vacating the doorway. Thank god. Spike didn't mind showing off his goodies, but stained trousers wasn't exactly legend-inspiring. And Xander *did* mind exposing himself. Which meant Spike better watch it, if he wanted to get laid. Or *not* watch it, and get drilled into the floor as Xander reminded him just who his bits belong to.

That was a thought ...

"Ew," Xander muttered as he stood up. "Why is it that Willow always makes me feel sixteen?"

"What, you came in your pants a lot when you were sixteen?"

Xander flushed, and changed the topic. "So, alterna-us. Think Willow's right?"

"What, that we lived sappily ever after?"

"Well, it wasn't *really* us, but ... yeah."

Spike ignored his wet pants in favor of curling himself around Xander. It was a good place to be, even with wet denim sticking to his belly. Comfy. Nice. Especially when Xander wrapped his arms around Spike, pressing their cheeks together in what was *not* sappy, at all. It was manly. And, well, *them*.

"Probably. Don't think Alex was gonna let go of Will, now he'd found him." The cheek resting against Spike's warmed slightly at that. "Nor was Will going to let him go. He'd hold him to that freeing thing, though."

"Yeah," Xander laughed, "probably. So—shower?"

Spike threaded his fingers with Xander's and grinned, "Yes, Alex."

``*`*`*`*`*`*`*`*`

Ten minutes later, Willow quietly tip-toed into the room, exhaling in relief when she found it was empty. The boys had a propensity of falling asleep wherever they wanted, leading to some very uncomfortable discovering. But no, there was just the box, waiting with all its magic-y and apocalypse-averting power. Willow snapped the latex gloves around her wrists, lifting the box carefully free of the bowl and then putting it into a large metal tray she'd brought for this.

No problems.

Grinning, she pulled over her gloves—and then hesitated. Looked down at the bowl, frowning thoughtfully. And then waved her hand.

"I said I'm freeing you," Alex snapped as water slowly filled the bowl, the image slightly blurry from the waves. "I said it, and I meant it. Not sit down and shut up while I go find Valora. And yell at her about *using me*. Again. Like she'll ever stop."

"Like you're complaining," Will snapped back. He was seated on the pallet, arms crossed over his naked chest. "And anyway, I'm telling you, I'm *not leaving*."

That stopped Alex with his hand against the door.
"Leaving? Who said anything about leaving?"

"You want to free me!"

"How in Pluto's name does that mean you *leaving* me? Look, Will, I don't know how they do it where you're from, but I kind of like my lovers to be here, oh, of their own free will. It makes ordering them around so much more fun."

Willow smiled and waved her hand again, dissolving Will's look of shocked pleasure. One day, she'd tell her Spike and Xander that yes, these were real people and it was possible to check in on them later. She'd definitely ask Valora when they spoke next week, closing the time-rift for good, so she had at least a little information to dangle over her friends' heads.

Or maybe not.

Willow looked at her brand new chaise, and then at the trundle bed she'd put together, across from it. She looked specifically at the stain on it.

She didn't care that they'd just averted an apocalypse, or would, once she and the coven did

their thing. She didn't care that they were two of her bestest friends and she loved them dearly.

She was going to *kill* them.

The End