Pairing: Spike/Xander  
**Rating:** R  
**Disclaimer:** I'm not Joss  
**Summary:** A chance encounter with a demon changes Xander's luck.  
**Author's Notes:** For fall_for_sx and incorporating the angst_bingo prompt "quarantine." Many thanks to my beta, silk_labyrinth!

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If It Wasn't for Bad Luck

by

Whichclothes

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**Part One**

Xander should have noticed the spots earlier, he supposed. But he was half asleep after a night fighting monsters and a day tarring roofs, and he probably wouldn’t have noticed if he’d sprouted horns and feathers. But as he sat on Giles’ couch, pretending to pay attention to a lecture while fighting to keep his eyes open, Willow elbowed him in the side. “Stop it!” she hissed.
He blinked at her in confusion and whispered back, “Stop ... what?”

“Scratching. You’re distracting me.”

Only then did he realize that his arm itched like hell and that he’d been scraping his fingernails up and down his sleeve for some time. He pulled his sleeve back to see what the problem was.

“Eep!” Willow cried and nearly fell off the couch in her haste to get away. Xander’s arm was covered in freckle-sized dots—and they were bright green.

“What the hell?” Xander said, dismay coiling in his belly, unpleasant memories of the previous Thanksgiving springing to mind.

Giles had paused his recitation and now he came over to take a look. “Oh, good Lord,” he said, backing away.

“What?” Xander’s voice was a little squeaky. “Being good Lorded is never of the good. What’s wrong with me?”
Giles took off his glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose. “What sort of demons did you fight last night?”

It was Buffy who answered. “Those skinny things with the tails. Kansas demons?”

“L’Kansha,” corrected Giles.

“Whatever. We killed ’em.”

“That’s fortunate. But L’Kansha wouldn’t cause this. Was that all you encountered?”

Buffy shrugged. “A couple of vamps. They’re dustville.”

Xander swallowed thickly as a realization hit him. “Um ... Giles? This doesn’t have anything to do with a short sorta purply thing, does it?”

Giles sighed very loudly. “Yfrino demon. What did you do, Xander?” He said it in the same tone used by dozens of people expressing their disappointment in Xander over the last nineteen years, and Xander frowned.

“Nothing. I mean, nothing much. I ran into one on the
way home last night and it seemed harmless enough and it was standing in front of a convenience store looking hungry, so ...”

“So?” Giles prompted.

“So I gave him five bucks. Told him to buy himself a microwave burrito or something. And that’s all, I swear! I went home.”

“But what did he do?”

“He ... nothing. He said thank you and shook my hand.”

“Good Lord,” Giles said again, backing all the way across the room and looking at Xander in horror.

“What? What!?” There went that voice again, up an octave at least. Xander rose to his feet and watched as Willow and Buffy and Tara and Anya scrambled away too, leaving him standing there all alone in the middle of the room.

All alone except for Spike, that was. Spike had been seemingly ignoring the entire conversation while he re-sorted Giles’ record collection in some demonic
fashion, but now he sauntered over and glanced at Xander’s spotty arm. “Yeah. Whelp’s got it.”

“Got what?”

Spike did that eyebrow shrug thing. “Infection.”

“No! No infections! ’Cause I did the syphilis thing and the malaria and the smallpox and I think I’ve had all my shots and no more mystical maladies for the Xanman, thanks very much.”

“This one won’t kill you. Probably,” Spike said cheerfully.

Xander wasn’t soothed. “What will it do? And don’t tell me it’s just gonna make me go blind or crazy or … or make stuff fall off instead.”

“Your bits’ll remain attached. Not that anyone would notice.”

Xander glared at Spike, and Giles huffed impatiently. “The spots shall ... they shall spread. Until they cover your body.”
“I’m going to be green?”

“Only ... only temporarily. A day or two, three at most.”

Xander knew better than to heave a sigh of relief. “And then? ’Cause I can tell there’s an ‘and then’ coming.”

“Yes. Well, and then ... well, then the, the victim is faced with a stroke of, erm, bad luck.”

“Bad luck,” Xander parroted. “Bad luck as in, oops, toast fell butter-side down or bad luck as in meteor falls on your head?”

“Erm ... rather more the latter, I’m afraid.”

Xander collapsed onto the couch and hid his face in his hands.

“Hey!” Willow piped up. “I bet we can find an, an antidote. I’ll go search—”

“There is no antidote,” Giles said. “Although the infection does runs its course within a week. So we shall simply have to ensure that Xander is kept as safe as possible for that period, and that, erm, help is
available when the mishap befalls him.”

Xander moaned. “Great. So who wants to move into the basement with me?”

“There’s a further complication.”

Xander looked up at Giles in despair. “More?”

“The infection tends to be contagious.”

Willow made a small squeak and Giles patted her arm. “You should be fine. It requires longer contact than we’ve had thus far. But for our safety, we shall need to keep our distance from Xander until the infection clears.”

It was Buffy who asked the obvious: “How do we protect him if we’re keeping our distance?”

Giles made a sort of choked noise and with a flash of insight, Xander knew exactly what he was about to say. “Oh, no. No way!” Xander cried.

But Giles only shrugged. “I’m sorry. It appears as if Xander will have to be cared for by someone who
cannot be infected.”

Spike must have finally caught the direction of the conversation as well because he looked startled. “Oi! I’m not a bloody babysitter.”

But as the discussion continued amongst Giles and the girls, it appeared that Spike was indeed going to be a babysitter, at least if he wanted his blood supply to continue and his ass to remain unkickable. Xander, apparently, had no say in the matter whatsoever. He slumped on the couch, struggling not to scratch, while Spike glared at him as if Xander had done it on purpose. It was Anya who suggested that Xander spend the week in Spike’s crypt. “If his bad luck destroys the whole neighborhood nobody alive will get hurt. And besides, there are far too many things that could go wrong in that basement.”

“And there aren’t in a cemetery?” Xander protested.

She shrugged. “I’ve seen the condition your house’s pipes are in.”

She did have a point, he had to admit. And then there was the questionable wiring and the sagging floor joists
and those troubling cracks in the foundation and—Okay, maybe a vampire-infested crypt was safer. “But what about, um, plumbing?” he asked.

Spike perked up. “Yeah. Human can’t live a week without plumbing, can he?”

But Buffy rolled her eyes. “I know you have a shower hooked up down there, Spike. You smell like Irish Spring. And I’m sure Xander can figure out some kind of toilet thingy.”

With that vague pronouncement, the matter seemed to be settled. Spike accompanied Xander back to his parents’ house—muttering unhappy British things under his breath the entire time—and waited impatiently while Xander gathered a couple of grocery bags full of clothing and other supplies. Xander didn’t bother to tell his parents he’d be gone; they probably wouldn’t even notice. Tossing a half-box of Twinkies in with his socks and underwear, he morosely followed Spike to the cemetery.

When they got to the crypt, Spike yanked open the door and stalked to the opening in the middle of the floor. Pointing to the subterranean room, he said,
“Don’t bloody touch anything.”

“I’ll try not to damage your priceless dumpster diving treasures or your stolen goods,” Xander shot back.

But when he descended the ladder and looked around, he had to admit to himself that the place was pretty nice for a tomb. Nicer than his basement, actually. Spike had obviously taken the time and effort to decorate a little and keep the place clean, which was kind of a surprise. On the other hand, he realized that he shouldn’t be completely shocked. Spike’s style might be extremely retro, but it wasn’t as though he was a slob or anything. His clothes were always clean and that hairstyle probably took a fair amount of maintenance and since when was Xander noticing Spike’s grooming?

“Shower’s in there,” Spike said, stepping off the ladder and pointing at a door.

Xander investigated and discovered a claw-foot tub that had probably been salvaged—the enamel was chipped in several places—and was now rigged into a shower, complete with a white shower curtain. There was also a shelf that contained a pile of mismatched
towels, bottles of peroxide and hair gel, and a pair of scissors. No sink, toilet, or mirror, of course. “I can use that bucket for now, I guess,” Xander said, indicating a metal pail that sat in the corner. “Tomorrow I’ll buy a camp toilet.”

“I’ll buy it, you mean. The green’s spread to your face.”

Xander put a hand to his cheek but of course he couldn’t feel the spots. “Great.” It was only when he looked around again that he noticed the obvious—Spike had only one bed. “Where am I supposed to sleep?”

Spike shrugged and then pointed at the floor. The cold, hard stone floor.

“No way,” Xander said, crossing his arms over his chest. “At least I gave you a comfy chair when you bunked with me.”

“Tied me in the bloody chair, you mean.”

Xander refused to feel guilty about that. He’d been perfectly justified in taking precautionary measures against a potentially homicidal demon, even if the
demon in question did have a safety chip jammed in his brain. But before Xander could explain that, Spike kicked off his boots, shrugged out of his duster, and pulled off his shirts. As Xander stood there, gaping stupidly, Spike unbuttoned his jeans and sort of shimmied out of them before padding to the bed and crawling between the covers.

“Um,” Xander said.

Spike just shot him a mildly disgusted look, then grabbed a remote control and clicked on the TV that sat on the wobbly dresser near the foot of the bed. Some program with blaring sirens came on. Apparently Spike had electricity in his crypt.

Xander stood there a minute or two longer and then sighed. Fine. He could be an adult about this. In the makeshift bathroom, he brushed his teeth and pissed in the bucket. He took off all his clothing except his Homer Simpson boxers and was dismayed to discover that the green spots were now everywhere and growing larger. “I’m gonna look like the goddamn Grinch,” he muttered.

Spike didn’t look away from the TV when Xander
stomped back into the main room and shoved his dirty clothes into one of his bags. When Xander sighed resignedly and climbed onto the other side of the bed, Spike simply grabbed the blankets and jerked them in his direction. “Don’t hog the bloody covers,” he growled.

Xander fell asleep watching a *Cops* marathon.

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He woke up feeling like his skin was trying to crawl off his body. Spike was beside him in bed, scowling, his hair sort of adorably tousled. “’T’s like trying to kip on board a rowboat during a bloody hurricane.”

Xander looked down at his arms—a solid green, roughly the shade of fresh peas—and clenched his hands into fists. “*Itches,*” he moaned, trying not to whine.

“It’s an interesting look, though.”

It was Xander’s turn to scowl. He used the bucket, then brushed his teeth and combed his hair and decided that he would skip shaving. He got dressed and ate two Twinkies. “Breakfast of champions,” he said when he caught the look on Spike’s face. “And at least my meal’s
not gonna coagulate.”

“Can’t with all the chemical shite they pump inside.”

It had never occurred to Xander to wonder how Spike spent his daylight hours. It turned out that the vampire lazed in bed for a while, then drank his blood as he wandered around the rooms naked (while Xander tried not to look). Finally he showered and dressed and plopped down in an armchair with a paperback book. Xander, meanwhile, mostly sulked and paced and tried not to scratch. They both watched *Oprah* and *Ellen*.

When evening fell, Spike put on his duster and boots and left without saying a word. He was gone for hours. Xander tried to watch TV but nothing much was on—Spike had only basic cable—and the itching was worse. He rummaged through a few drawers and boxes, but aside from a large collection of identical black t-shirts, several cartons of cigarettes, and a couple rolled-up sketches of Drusilla that looked really old, he didn’t find anything interesting. Eventually he picked up one of Spike’s books, a novel about gods and ghosts and felons that turned out to be pretty good. It distracted him from the itching.
He heard the slam of the crypt door when Spike came home and there was a thump as a box dropped down into the room. Spike followed a moment later, his arms full of bags. “Got your loo,” Spike said. “Loads of other crap as well. The birds feel guilty over abandoning you and they went on a bit of a shopping spree.”

Xander dug through the bags and found some of his favorite foods, several comic books, and season two of SG-1 on DVD. He held up a gallon-sized plastic baggie full of dried leaves. “Um … compost?”

“Prezzie from the witch. She says you should add some to your bath and it’ll ease the itching.”

“Oh.” It warmed Xander’s heart to know his friends had been thinking of him.

“Watcher says to let you know he rang your boss. Pretended to be a physician and said you’d be out ill for the week. Saved your crappy job, I expect.”

Xander had been so distracted over the infection and, well, over Spike that he hadn’t even thought about his job, which was actually one of the better ones he’d held. “Okay. And, um, thanks. For playing messenger.”
Spike looked at him in surprise. Probably people didn’t thank him very often. For good reason, actually, but in this case he really was being helpful, even if only for his own gain.

Xander opened the box and pulled out the camp toilet which he hauled into the bathroom. He came out again a while later feeling much better. He expected Spike to go out again—to patrol or drink or be a shadowy menace or whatever he did with himself at night—but instead they both ended up sitting on the bed, reading and watching TV. Spike did have an open bottle of Jack on his nightstand, but he only sipped at it.

Xander wasn’t used to spending time just quietly hanging around with someone. The Scoobies were usually all about apocalypse aversion planning, and even before Buffy had arrived in town he and Willow and Jesse had kept pretty busy together. And Anya—well, usually they were having sex or she was talking, and that was fine. But just laying around, turning pages, sometimes making fun of something on the screen—that was kind of nice. Even though he was doing those things with Spike.
In fact, it was slowly dawning on Xander that Spike was a different person altogether when he was at home. Most of the snark and smart-ass comments were gone, the Big Bad persona hung up as neatly as the leather duster. Spike at home was calm and settled, a guy who dusted the cobwebs out of the corners and laughed at Monty Python and stole Xander’s potato chips and then clucked over the crumbs on the bed.

In the wee hours of the night, Xander filled the tub with hot water and sprinkled in a bunch of Willow’s herbs, which smelled sort of minty and citrusy. Then he stripped and climbed into the tub. He was looking down unhappily at himself when Spike entered the room. “Hey!” Xander squawked, looking around in vain for a way to cover himself. He had to settle on using his hands.

Spike smirked. “Never saw a green todger before. Well, not on a human, anyway.”

“What do you want?”

“Just wondering if Red’s leaves were doing the trick.”

Xander narrowed his eyes. “Why would you care?”
“Don’t fancy trying to sleep with you tossing and turning again.”

“Oh. Well, the stuff is helping, I think.”

“Hasn’t done anything for your complexion.”

Xander sighed. “Yeah. It’s not easy being green.”

Spike snorted and turned to leave. “’M going to bed, Kermit.”

_Huh_, Xander thought when the vampire was gone. _Spike knows Muppets_. “I wonder if he’s a fan of the Count?” he said out loud and then giggled.

**Part Two**

The next two days went peacefully, although Xander was beginning to feel a little stir-crazy. Maybe that explained why he wasn’t just tolerating Spike’s company, but actually kind of enjoying it. Spike was
funny and knew a lot of things. Spike didn’t demand that they watch chick flicks, he never talked about shoe shopping or Wicca or how Xander could improve himself. He didn’t make Xander feel like a moron or a social clod and he didn’t care that Xander was never going to college. In fact, Spike smiled at him and joked and did impressions of Giles that made Xander snort Coke out his nose. He made popcorn in his microwave and, with Xander’s assistance, performed a short vampiric version of Everybody Loves Raymond. He walked around naked and gorgeous and—

Oh, shit.

It was the infection, Xander told himself firmly. A side effect Giles hadn’t mentioned. Skin turns green and itchy, brain turns to naughty places where it would otherwise never ever ever go, bad luck happens, the end.

Yeah, that was it.

By the next day the green had faded considerably, making Xander look more seasick than infected, and by that night as they sat watching TV it was gone entirely and Xander was just plain old white.
“Shame about the tan,” Spike mentioned and then looked very much like he wished he hadn’t.

“Huh?”

“You used to be ... from working in the sun and ... never mind.” Flustered was a new look for Spike. Xander thought it was cute.

“So now we just wait for catastrophe, huh?”

“I expect so.”

“My shoelace broke this afternoon. I don’t suppose that counts.”

“Only if it causes you to trip and break your neck.”

“I guess that gives you something to look forward to,” Xander said.

Spike gave him an odd look, one that Xander couldn’t read. “Berk,” Spike said, and then wandered off to heat himself some blood.
Nothing happened the next afternoon either, except that Spike beat Xander at poker and then, complaining that Xander was beginning to look like a refugee, insisted on shaving him, with a straight razor no less. After an initial frisson of fear due to the bad-luck infection, Xander was surprised to find himself trusting a vampire holding a sharp blade to his neck. Yeah, there was the chip, but Xander could be neatly sliced open by the time it fired. Nevertheless he did trust Spike and Spike didn’t slit his throat, and when Spike used his thumb to wipe a droplet of blood from Xander’s cheek and then licked his thumb clean, they both moaned in unison.

Yfrino side effects, Xander reminded himself. Spike left the crypt soon after that and Xander used the opportunity to jack off. He did not think about blond, blue-eyed vampires while he was beating his meat, nor did he picture flawless pale skin over tight muscles or an ass that would have looked at home on Greek statuary, or sharp cheekbones or full lips or a long uncut cock. Not at all. When Xander was done he worried that Spike would smell what he’d been up to, not that it was Spike’s business or anything. Xander was, after all, a red-blooded young man who’d been suddenly deprived of
his formerly demonic honey. Nevertheless, Xander took a quick shower and used a lot of Irish Spring. By the time Spike returned it was very late, and Xander had been telling himself not to worry. Spike was, after all, a monster over a century old who seemed to have more lives than a cat and who could take care of himself just fine. Usually.

Xander heaved a silent sigh of relief when Spike climbed down the ladder with another bag. This one smelled like pizza.

Spike waited until Xander was sitting in the armchair, happily stuffing his face. “Erm, I’m meant to send you a message,” Spike said, looking oddly hesitant.

Xander’s appetite fled and he put his half-eaten slice back in the box. “What? What message?”

“Erm ...” Spike chewed on his lip for a moment then took a deep breath. “Your bird’s flown.”

“Huh?”

“Your bint. Demon girl. She’s been driving your car and it broke down yesterday.”
“I’m not surprised. Thing’s a piece of crap. Is she okay?”

“She’s fine. But another motorist stopped to help her—bloke in a BMW—and the two of them, erm, hit it off. She left for LA with him this evening.”

It took a few moments for the meaning of Spike’s words to settle in. “She’s left me? Anya’s left me?”

“Yeah.” Spike scratched the back of his neck. “’T’s your bad luck, innit? You can run back to your chums now, I reckon.”

Xander was so busy trying to decipher the strange expression on Spike’s face that several minutes passed before he recognized his own reaction to the news. Relief. Xander felt relieved that Anya had left him. It wasn’t that he didn’t like her or anything. But she was so ... so there, and he’d sort of ended up with her without ever exploring any alternatives, and he’d always been pretty sure that she was way too good for him anyway. He didn’t think he’d be able to please her in the long run and he’d been suspecting for some time that once she got tired of his penis she’d be gone.
“Oh,” Xander said out loud.

Spike walked over and, very awkwardly, patted Xander on the shoulder. “Know what it’s like, mate. Dru left me more than once. Tore my bloody heart out every time.”

“Yeah, I remember,” Xander said. “That time you kidnapped me and Willow.”

Spike looked faintly embarrassed. “Right. Well, I’ll help you pack your things now and—”

“Spike.” Xander stood and approached Spike, who had walked over to Xander’s paper bags.

“What?”

“My heart’s not torn out.”

Spike blinked at him. “Sorry?”

“No torn-out heart.” Xander shook his head. “I don’t think that was my bad luck.”

“You’re not upset she’s left you?”
“I’m not ... I’m not sad that Anya’s gone. I’m happy for her. I’m really okay with it. I think ... I think I better stay here. If that’s all right with you.”

Spike looked momentarily thunderstruck. Then he took a quick step closer to Xander, and for a split second Xander was certain the chip had malfunctioned and he was about to be lunch. But Spike grabbed his shoulders and pressed his lips to Xander’s, and the only thing Xander could do was kiss him back and think, Oh, God. Oh God oh God oh God.

Spike pulled away after a minute or so and looked at Xander questioningly.

“Oh God,” Xander said.

Spike grinned. “That good?”

“That ... You kissed me!”

“You kissed me back,” Spike replied with a shrug.

“You kissed me! There were lips and, and there was kissage and ... you kissed me!”
“We’ve established that, pet.”

“Why? Why did you kiss me?” Xander’s heart was racing and he felt dizzy.

But Spike’s answer was nonchalant. “Been wanting to for ages. Well, days.”

“But … I’m a guy.”

Spike leered, came closer, and settled his hand on the front of Xander’s jeans. Xander’s cock—which had started to stir during the kiss—immediately became fully awake. “I know,” Spike purred.

After that, well, for nearly the first time in Xander’s life, words failed him. So did the integrity of the cotton of his t-shirt—which ended up in shreds on the floor, along with his jeans and boxers and Spike’s black-on-black ensemble as well. Xander and Spike ended up on the bed, which also failed them, the mattress collapsing somewhere in the middle of the second time Xander buggered Spike. Xander’s cock, however, did not fail at all. In fact, when Spike offered to return the favor and introduce Xander to the wonders of Mr. Prostate, Xander’s cock proved fully capable of a third orgasm in
a row. Added to the furtive one when he whacked off, that was four, a personal best.

“Sorry about your bed,” Xander said when they’d finally collapsed in a sticky, sated tangle.

Spike gave Xander’s neck a brief suckle. “You can mend it tomorrow.”

When they woke up the next afternoon, Xander learned that not only was Spike a blow job champ, but he was also willing to give a novice quite a few pointers.

“What the hell, Spike?” Xander asked when the blood flow returned to his brain. “What’s going on?”

They were both naked and Spike had pulled Xander on top like a living blanket. “You’re not going to brood over this, are you?”

“Brood? No. I am incapable of brooding after that much good sex. But ... why me?”
“Why not? We’re both here. Both single. You’re a pretty enough package.” Spike squeezed Xander’s butt. “Passes the time.”

And maybe that would have been a good enough explanation, but Xander shook his head. “But it’s me. You hate me.”

“Don’t. You can be bloody irritating. But when you’re away from the rest of that lot, well, you’re nearly bearable.”

“Huh.”

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It turned out they could both fit in Spike’s bathtub, if they didn’t mind a little squishing. Which they didn’t. By the time they were dried and dressed, it was pretty late. But they decided that Spike ought to find the rest of the gang anyway, if for no other reason than to let them know Xander was still alive. “Bring me Chinese when you come back!” Xander called up the ladder. “Eggrolls and kung pao beef.”

Spike didn’t bother to answer.
Xander found some tools stashed away in a box and he deftly fixed the bed frame. He was just finishing up when Spike returned, fragrant bag in hand.

“So?” Xander said with his mouth full of rice. “Anything new in the real world?”

“Nah. Slayer dusted some fledges tonight and she and the niblet aren’t speaking again. Rupert had a message for you, though.”

Xander eyed him cautiously. “Yeah? What now?”

“Your boss rang.”

“Oh. Crap.” Xander sighed. “I guess I’m back on the job market again.”

“Not quite. Seems that with you gone the bloke’s realized how much he misses you. Best worker he’s got, he says. When you’ve recovered you’ve a promotion and a raise waiting for you.”

“I ... You’re making this up.”
“’M evil, whelp. If I wanted to take the piss I’d manage better than that.”

“But …”

“Are you good at your job, pet?”

Xander considered this. “Well, yeah.”

“Then is it too much to believe that someone might realize that?”

“I guess not. Only … nobody really has before.”

Spike got up from the edge of the mattress where he’d been perched, walked across the floor, and cupped the back of Xander’s skull in his palm. “Perhaps it’s about bloody time you’re appreciated.”

“Same for you.” And Xander's chopsticks fell to the floor.

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The sound of the crypt door slamming open might have registered somewhere at the back of Xander’s brain, but Xander was far too busy to care. Spike felt so good
in his arms—firm and strong and oh-so-flexible. He made these amazingly sexy noises that weren’t quite human and he tightened his muscles in ways that were definitely demonic and holy gods why hadn’t Xander realized sooner how much he wanted this vampire?

The collective gasp, though—that caught his attention. Xander looked up from the physical near-impossibility he was performing with Spike and saw that they had a gaping, stake-clutching audience. “Gah,” Xander said, hastily disentangling himself and jerking the sheet up. Spike just rolled over and smirked.

“X-Xander?” Willow whispered.

Buffy took a threatening step forward. “He thralled you! He thralled you and I’m so gonna—”

“There was no thralling,” Xander said wearily. His face felt like it was on fire. “This is ... entirely voluntary.”

“It’s your bad luck!” Willow said, bouncing on her toes. But Xander shook his head. “Do you think I tripped and fell into Spike? This is definitely not bad luck.”
Spike turned his head and gave Xander a sunny smile. “Cheers, love.” He stood, stretched luxuriously, and then bent to retrieve his jeans which he pulled on without bothering to button them.

“You’re not gay,” said Buffy accusingly to Xander.

“I guess I am. Or bi, anyway.”

“’T’s just me,” Spike said with a grin. “’M irresistible, I am.” And he did that little curling thing with his tongue, which reminded Xander exactly what they’d been in the middle of when they were interrupted.

“What are you guys doing here anyway? I’m contagious, remember? Go away.”

Giles had been busily looking everywhere but the bed, but now he took a step forward. “Xander. We came to see what had happened to you. It’s been nearly two weeks.”

Xander looked stunned and did some quick mental calculations. “Two …no, it can’t … two weeks?”

“Thirteen days, actually.”
“But … the disaster. There hasn’t been a disaster yet.” Spike moved just a little and got a strange look in his eyes. Xander had become much better at reading the vampire over the past several days, so he grabbed Spike’s arm. “What? What is it you know that you haven’t told me?”

Spike looked up at the ceiling and Xander tried to imagine what cataclysms had occurred without him knowing.

“Erm,” Spike said.

Buffy brandished her stake. “Spill, buster.”

Xander yanked at Spike’s arm, drawing the vampire close to him. “Hey! My vampire. No dusting.” Spike gave him another of those amazing smiles but Xander frowned at him. “Spill, buster.”

Spike let out a long sigh and rubbed the back of his neck. “I had a bit of a chat with that Yfrino bloke. Wanted to see if he knew some way to avert the bad luck.”
“And?” Xander prompted.

Spike waved his arm in the general direction of Giles and the rest. “And it turns out that lot bollocksed it up. The Yfrino infected you all right, but not with bad luck. The little purple bloke was grateful for the dosh you gave him, yeah? So he gave you good luck instead.” Nobody had an immediate response to this. They just gaped. Finally, Giles cleared his throat. “How long have you known this, Spike?”

Spike hung his head. “Since the night before Anya left.”

“But that was a long time ago!” Xander exclaimed.

“Yeah.” Spike sighed. “And you got what was coming to you, yeah? Demon bint’s gone, boss practically pissing himself over your loss … You’re a fortunate man, Xander.” He dropped his voice then, as if he didn't want the onlookers to hear. “I only wanted … wanted to keep you until you realized that and I lost you forever.”

Xander blinked at him for a moment and then bonked the back of Spike’s head. “Moron!”
Spike drew away from him, his shoulders hunched and head bowed.

Xander gathered the sheet around his waist and scooched up against Spike’s back. “It was you, stupid,” he said into Spike’s ear. “Anya was gonna leave eventually anyway and I like to think my boss would’ve seen that I’m good. Finding you was my good luck. You.”

Spike twisted his head around to stare at Xander, wonder and hope shining from his face. And potentially damning audience be damned—Xander kissed his vampire, fiercely, possessively, decisively.

When they pulled slightly apart, there was much urgent whispering on the other side of the room. Xander glanced over to see his friends hastily departing. Willow gave him a little wave. “Later, mister,” she stage-whispered, then grinned and was gone.

Xander and Spike kissed again, and just when Xander thought they might continue their interrupted activities, Spike paused. “You do remember that I’m a demon, don’t you? Evil soulless monster.”
“Yeah. I got that. Some people get a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I get a bleached-blond vampire.”

“And you’re all right with that?”

“Jesus, Spike! Of course I’m all right with it. I’m not gonna look a gift demon in the mouth.” He laced his fingers into Spike’s tousled hair. “I don’t know how this is gonna turn out. But you know what?”

“What, love?”

“I’m thinking purple demon or no, it’s time for good things to happen to me. I’m due. You too, maybe. And if good luck doesn’t come to us? I figure then we’ll just have to make it ourselves.”

Spike smiled, pressed their foreheads together, and loosened the sheet from Xander's waist.

This time, the bed frame held.

The End