

Rating: Adult

***Disclaimer:** We are not Joss Whedon, we are not Mutant Enemy. We don't own these characters and make no profit from this story.*

***Spoilers:** Takes place after "Buffy vs. Dracula" in season 5. According to canon, Xander worked on that one construction job in the episode "Pangs" in season four. A few episodes later he was delivering pizza, then worked fast food again, before returning to construction., but assumes Xander didn't start working construction until sometime in season 5, before episode 3, "The Replacement." So this may be fudging the timeline a wee bit, but please bear with us.*

***Summary:** Buffy casts a spell to create understanding between Spike and Xander. But it's the Hellmouth, so of course something wonky happens.*

***Feedback:** Please read and review! Constructive criticism welcome!*

16,413Words

Botched Spell

by

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Part One

It was after well after sunset, and Tara, Willow, Xander, and Giles were once again settled in the Magic Box. Empty pizza boxes littered the floor as the group worked their way through the dusty tomes that covered the research table. Xander sat behind a particularly large text dressed in his Burger Barn uniform, snoring softly as he mumbled in his sleep. "No, no Master! I'll be good, give me the spider... ew, it's fuzzy."

Giles sighed, looking over at Xander while preparing to remove and polish his glasses. He paused when he saw the text the teen's head rested on. "Xander!" he barked.

"Bator!" the former minion yelled, jerking awake. Willow giggled, then bit her lower lip and raised the Random House unabridged translated fifth edition complete text of Nostradamus' prophecies to hide behind. Her head lowered, Tara snickered behind a curtain of hair.

"Xander," Giles continued, "The next time you're going to fall asleep pretending to research, at least do so behind a book you can actually read."

Xander frowned. "Hey, I was reading it. See 'Flor- flurgernstruln wo-worreeera caeringa behkai ruelinnschain link-letter? Linkletter? Are they talking about Art Linkletter?"

Sighing again, Giles snatched the book away from Xander's attempts at sounding out. "Xander, you can't read it. It's in Ancient Polgaran."

"Oh." Xander nodded, then paused. "Wait, if it's not in English, then why was it in the 'read' pile?"

"Because Polgaran seers are not only quite prolific, but are also usually reliable. Luckily, it seems as though we're almost done with the primary group of books. We can move onto the secondary."

"Giles, how do you divide the books up when we don't even know what we're looking for?" Willow asked, her head tilted to the side.

"Oh, yes, well, I've divided the prophecy books into separate categories based upon the reliability, usefulness, and their relation to the Hellmouth and all things Slayer related. I feel that a thorough, occasional search through these texts is always a good preventive measure."

"Okay, I got a lot of big words meaning we didn't have to be here on a Saturday night. Is that right?" Xander asked, suppressing a yawn.

"Well, yes."

"Okay, I vote for leaving and sleeping. I have two jobs and a slightly nuts girlfriend that I need to pacify with gifts and..." he coughed, blushing slightly. "More gifts."

Willow and Tara smiled as Giles removed his glasses and cleaned them. "Quite right."

Xander shoved his chair away from the table and stretched, pausing at Buffy's raised voice.

"Be nice Spike! We need to figure out what to do!" she yelled, her voice muffled by the door. The Scoobies turned toward the entrance as Buffy and Spike stomped in. Xander groaned inwardly. Aside from being evil, Spike was everything he wasn't. Including attractive, although that thought had long ago been pummeled and shoved into the "Do Not Open" box in the back of his mind.

"Be nice? You're daft! Still evil here. 'Sides, I already know what to do."

"Yeah, neutered evil," Xander clarified with a saccharine grin. Spike froze, his face blank for a split-second before it shot a glare the teen's way.

"Shut up, bug-boy."

"Quiet! Now, what is going on?" Giles asked.

"Uh, oh, did the Bleached Blunder get shown up by the Slayer... again?" Xander asked.

"At least I have a fighting chance, Droopy. Even with the chip, I could still do more damage than you, the Worthless Wonder." Spike twisted his mouth into a nasty grin. "Only a matter of time before demon girl goes looking for greener pastures. Tell me, does she usually have to take things into her own hands to get her end off?"

"Oh that's it, Blondie!" Xander shot up from his chair, grabbed the stake from his back pocket, and began to advance on Spike. Buffy was suddenly next to him, dragging him back and shoving him down into his seat. Xander frowned and crossed his arms.

"Remind me again why can't I kill him?" Xander whined.

"Because," Buffy pouted, "According to the demon we saw, who apparently thinks that he's Mr. T., a vampire is the only one who can kill it. Besides, if any of us get to eventually kill him, it's me. He's tried to kill me more times than the rest of you, so it's only fair."

"What sort of demon did you face?" Giles asked, suddenly interested.

"Wait!" Xander interrupted hopefully. "Does this new demon mean we can stop all the nonessential research?"

"Yes, but now we get to research the demon Buffy and Spike ran into," Willow replied, excited.

"Looks like they won't be needing your services then, Burger Boy," Spike smirked, sitting down at the table. "You'll need to be able to read to help with this one."

Xander again started to rise but Buffy's iron grip immediately forced him back down.

"Listen up Fangless; the only reason I don't stake you is because Buffy asked me not to and she's stronger, speaking of which, ow, that is going to bruise. Otherwise, I would so be sweeping you into a dustpan right about now." To emphasize his threat, Xander grabbed his stake and twirled it in his fingers before it suddenly clattered to the ground. Spike snickered.

"Quiet! Buffy, what demon did you encounter?" Giles asked.

"Well, I want to say it's a Grumpy Danish Demon, but I know that's totally wrong."

Spike burst out laughing. "It's a Grumpdanashka demon and it hunts and kills its victims by sending out electrical impulses that stops hearts, then eats the brain."

"Wait, if it stops its victim's hearts, then the only creature that can kill it..." Willow started, trailing off as she found her answer.

"Is one that is already deceased," Giles finished. "I've read something about them

before; they may not be that bright, but they do have good reflexes and fighting skills."

"Well, why don't you run along and go fight it, Spikey. Maybe we'll get lucky and you'll both die," Xander said. It was at this moment that Spike's patience snapped.

"Well it's not like you'll stop it. What are you gonna do? Throw burgers at it? Trip it when you fall over your own feet?" he shouted indignantly, jumping to his feet. His sudden movement sent the chair across the floor. "I'm off. I'll go find it and kill it, so don't worry your empty little head about it, Burger Bitch."

"Spike, it's seven feet tall," Buffy pointed out, slapping her hand over Xander's mouth. "Maybe you should wait until we get some more info."

"Oh shut your mouth Slayer. I've been killing demons-."

"Enough!" Giles roared. The other occupants, including Spike, jumped as the room went eerily silent. "Everyone go home. Spike, if you decide you want to go into this fight half-cocked, then go ahead; it'll save us all having to research this damn thing. But be careful. And depending on the outcome, we'll meet tomorrow night, either to research this demon, or to continue with the research we've been doing. Now go home."

Silently, everyone got up and left the Magic Box until the only people left were Buffy and Giles. Buffy sighed and sat down at the research table next to Giles.

"Well that was fun," Buffy said, rolling her eyes. "I mean, yeah, Spike is still a pain, but since the whole Adam thing, he's been trying to at least prove he's reliable. He's even being nice . . . you know, for Spike."

"True, and he hasn't been demanding continual payment lately; it's become more of a monthly fee for his services. And after seeing Spike's interactions with Dawn this summer, I surmise he's started to view us as his clan."

Buffy frowned. "His clan? You think so?"

"Yes. Most vampires are communal creatures, seeking out the company of others."

"Yeah, I know."

"Through his mercenary works with us, he's been ostracized by the demon community. And without Drusilla, we're the closest thing he has to a family. Despite his complaining, he does seek us out. And in every family, there is tension."

"So that's why they're fighting like little kids?" she asked.

"Yes. I think that with Spike becoming a more permanent member of our group, they're jockeying for position. I think perhaps Xander feels threatened by Spike as he's become a member of our group. Even though we deeply care for Xander, Spike is usually more useful on patrol, which I believe deeply bothers Xander," Giles replied.

"Great. Do you think we should do something? I mean, is there anything we can do?"

"Short of magical silencing spells or lobotomies, I don't think so. I feel it would be best to simply let them fight it out. Of course we will intercede if it comes to violence, but I'm sure they'll eventually get past it. Hopefully. Until then, we'll just keep an eye out and make sure they don't kill each other."

"Right. On it. No Spike or Xander killage," Buffy sighed. Giles stood and put on his jacket before heading to the door.

"Are you ready, Buffy?" he asked, opening the front door. Buffy smiled.

"Nah. I'm still really wound up after the fight I didn't get to have. I think I'm gonna go work out, relieve some frustration."

"Very well then. I, however, have spent the last four hours dealing with Xander's complaining and Willow's discussion of new computer cataloguing software; I am going home. Please do me a favor and remember to lock up for me."

"Got it. Night," Buffy said, watching Giles leave the Magic Box. She waited until

he was gone before heading straight for the balcony, where Giles kept the old, powerful books he didn't want sold to the public. Not only was the magic in them too powerful for beginners, but he didn't fancy the idea of the spells being loose on the Hellmouth.

Reaching onto the first shelf, she pulled out a blue binder. Willow and Giles had compiled a reference list indicating which books had which spells. It made things easier since the majority of the books were in other languages.

If Willow can do fancy magic, a small spell should be a snap for the Slayer, Buffy thought. She began flipping through the pages, trying to find a spell that might help the Xander and Spike situation.

Let's see...alienation, attention... okay, banishment... genocide spells? Creepy. Growth spells, ice spells, lab- LABIA? Oh my God, I don't want to know. Hm... machination... nose enlarger? Could have used that one on Cordelia! Oh, peace spells! Okay, great. Wow, that's a lot of spells. Hmm... "also see spells listed under calming, harmony, order, stability, or understanding." Okay, understanding. Wow, there's a lot of understanding spells. Damn. This is harder than it looks. Understanding spells: eye-opening, sharing... oh! Imprisonment for understanding! Nah, they'd kill each other first. Okay, so sharing. Page 793, "Rector Ut Potentia Per Cassandra," shelf 3.*

Buffy approached the third shelf, scanning for the book. Finding it, she flipped through the book to page 793. A yellowed page fluttered to the floor; she picked it up and studied it.

"Sweet, English directions! Okay, 'Light two yellow candles, and read the primary spell. Then say the names of those involved. Then say the phrase "scientia, vox, penitus scientia" three times, in that order.'" She smiled before jogging down the stairs and grabbing two of the yellow magic candles on sale.

Setting them on the counter, she lit the wicks before clearing her throat and reading the spell.

"Scientia est lucrum per intelligendo!"

A vox infinitus!
Nos dico super Aradia!
Ut tribuo nos is vires!
Spike called William the Bloody, Alexander Lavelle Harris!
Scientia, vox, penitus scientia!
Scientia, vox, penitus scientia!
*Scientia, vox, penitus scientia!"***

Buffy held her breath, then pouted; nothing happened. Suddenly, a breeze picked up. Gentle, but insistent, it made the flames dance in unison. First to the left, then the right, before extinguishing them both. The room quieted and Buffy looked around, unable to see the wave of magic that rolled out from the extinguished candles.

"Well, I guess it worked." She smiled before jogging upstairs to replace the book, then left. Walking home, she smiled again. She had brought peace to her friends . . . hopefully.

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Xander trudged down the stairs of the basement, tired. He'd picked up construction pretty quickly, but his lack of training or experience kept him from advancing in the company. And if he was ever going to move out of the basement, he would need more money. So after hours of exhausting, crappy construction work that didn't pay him enough, he went to the Burger Barn. Every night, he came home smelling like French-fry grease, muscles aching. He was tired and pissed off. And being around Spike always bugged the hell out of him, even more than Angel had.

"Hello Xander!" He jerked his head toward the foldout. A bedside light snapped on, and Anya sat there naked, a wide grin on her face. Suppressing a yawn, he spoke.

"What are you doing here, Ahn?" he asked, dropping into the orange chair.

"I thought since you were at work all day and you don't like work, we could have sex. I thought that giving and receiving orgasms would make you feel better," she explained, rising to stand beside him.

Xander groaned inwardly as he stood. He knew that if he said no, she'd either yell, or plaster herself to his body, writhing and rubbing until he was aroused enough to actually want sex. Either way, he wouldn't be sleeping for a while. Even though it was for sex (and he wholeheartedly agreed that sex was of the very good), Anya's ignorance regarding his exhaustion or emotions was always somewhat disheartening. But in five minutes, it wouldn't matter. Taking her in his arms, he let her take control. Thirty sweaty minutes later, he was asleep.

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Spike took a final drag from his cigarette before tossing it on the ground. Tense and irritated, he was searching for violence. That last encounter with Xander had left him agitated, and sadly, aching to see more of the Scooby. After a hundred years, Spike could hide his feelings. But like any human or vampire, he couldn't change them.

Sure, he'd once hated Xander; he'd hated him with a fiery passion. Of course hate didn't preclude lust, which Spike had felt for the boy since Angel had offered him as a gift. But while tied to Xander's chair, his abject hatred faded to annoyance. This occurred after discovering the human shared Spike's complete loathing for Angel, and that Xander had also once stood Angelus down. Then one night, weeks later, annoyance had been grudgingly changed to respect.

Spike had been patrolling with the Scoobies. It had been a fairly easy night, until they'd come across a nest of vamps. There was the usual assortment of idiot fledges, but also some older vamps who knew enough to be dangerous. Spike had been taunting one of the stronger vamps, toying with it. As he'd dusted it, Spike had looked up. Through the cloud of dust he saw a vamp charge toward Willow, knife drawn. He felt a flare of panic: Willow had been his one ally in the Scoobies and he sure as hell didn't want her hurt. But before he could run to her aid, Xander had.

Diving in front of his best friend, Xander took the knife in his side. The vamp smirked and started to throw Xander, its yellow eyes focused on Willow. But the boy had simply clenched the vamp's arms, refusing to give it the freedom to attack his friend. In the seconds it had taken Xander to save Willow's life, Spike had

arrived, staking the vamp without any of his usual flair.

As the dust settled, Spike sniffed; there wasn't too much blood from the wound. But the wound was a graze on the ribs, one Spike knew would tug and ache with each breath. Hell, he could see the tension in the boy's body as Xander tried to pretend he was okay. Yet instead of complaining or trying to gain sympathy, the kid had said nothing and brushed it off as a scratch. He'd joked about how being a klutz had paid off, and that he had been promoted from donut boy to pin cushion. It was in that moment that respect had blossomed.

After that night, his respect, coupled with his desire, had slowly turned to infatuation; he just hadn't known it until the night he'd caught himself checking out Xander's ass. In an odd way, his romantic feelings for Xander made sense. While Giles was the leader, Buffy the fighter, and Willow the witch, Xander was the heart and spirit of the Scoobies. His loyalty and love emanated from him just as his body heat and pheromones. Xander was all that was good, all that Spike would never have.

God, why couldn't I have fallen for someone else, like the Slayer? He paused and shuddered. Wait, scratch that. A slayer and a vampire would never work out, just be a lot of headache. But the witch would have been easier, even if she's a lesbian. She likes me at least. But no, stupid as I am, I had to go and fall in love with the one that hates me the most. The Powers that Be: seven. Love's Bitch: zero.

Spike was so lost in thought that he missed the musty smell of the demon coming up behind him. The Grumpdanashka launched its attack, punching him in the kidney, and then grabbing and throwing the vampire in the air. Spike landed with a grunt.

"I smell it all over you," the Grumpdanashka said. It was actually pretty funny looking: seven feet tall, bright pink skin, and one large fur-encircled horn in the middle of its forehead. It reminded Spike of one of Harmony's stuffed unicorns. Only larger, meaner, and with strange olfactory abilities akin to aura reading.

"What do you smell, ducks? Certainly not my love for you. Must be yer own stink," Spike sneered, standing.

"I smell your love and sadness. You are a traitor, consorting with the Slayer and her friends. It is a human you love, isn't it? Humans are only meant to be food. I will find this human, and it will be the first I feast on after you are gone."

Spike's demon roared in anger; he had heard enough. His game face surfaced as he lashed out with a roundhouse kick that hit the Grumpdanashka in the chin. It staggered back, but recovered quickly and punched Spike in the stomach. The vampire retaliated, throwing a flurry of punches before sweeping the demon's feet out from beneath it. The Grumpdanashka rolled to its feet and charged, putting Spike on the defensive. The demon grabbed him by his duster and threw him, sending Spike crashing into a park bench. He got up, and ran straight into the demon, but the Grumpdanashka's hide and muscles were so hard that Spike bounced off and then fell down. The demon knelt over him and planted a hand on Spike's chest to hold the vampire down. A dark smile split its mottled face as it spoke. "If you were not a traitor, you would be worthy of being my pet," it growled, leaning his head down next to Spike's.

"And if you weren't so pink, maybe you wouldn't have been teased so much as a hatchling."

"I am not teased. I am fear-." The demon's roar was cut off as Spike ripped the horn from the demon's head and drove it into its chest, killing it. The demon fell back.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, you're a big bad demon and everyone's scared of you. Believe me when I tell you that I've heard it before." Spike sneered at the demon as he struggled to his feet.

He walked the deserted streets of Sunnydale toward his crypt. He wasn't sure how much damage his left side had sustained from the fight, but he felt at least three broken ribs and a fracture in the left femur. Once at his crypt, he made his way to his bed, dropping articles of clothing along the way. He lay down and waited for his exhaustion to take over, partially afraid and partially craving the dreams that would come. Lately, he was haunted by dreams of Xander. And the more he tried to ignore them, the more erotic and frequent they became.

If I don't do something soon, I'm going to end up like Dru. I bloody well know that he doesn't feel that way about me; he wants to dust me and he says so often enough.

'Sides, he has that crazy bint to warm his bed. He's straight and hates me; I don't stand a fuckin' chance.

Groaning, he tried to calm his thoughts. But they drifted from image to image of Xander, some from life and some from the dreams. The last thought Spike had was of Xander's lips, and how warm they would be on his cool skin.

Translated from Latin:

** Cassandra's Guide to Political Power*

***Knowledge is gained by understanding,*

A power unlimited.

We call upon Aradia

To give us this strength!

Knowledge, power, insight!

Knowledge, power, insight!

Knowledge, power, insight!

Part Two

Spiked groaned, waking slowly. It was too early, probably no later than eight a.m.

Why the fuck am I awake? Oh, that noise. What's that noise? Slowly, he opened his eyes, before slamming into full consciousness. He wasn't in his crypt- he was in the Basement of Doom.

"Turn the alarm off," came the whine. Looking to his right, he saw- Anya? Shaking his head in hopes of clearing it, he stared.

"Anya?"

The former vengeance demon snarled, opening her eyes. "What? Are you going to turn off the alarm Xander?"

Xander?! Looking down, Spike saw his body was suddenly broad and tan. Leaping from the bed, he ran to the bathroom and slammed the door shut. He leaned against the door, panting.

Okay, so I'm in Xander's bedroom, in his bed. He looked down. Have his body. He smirked, running his, well, Xander's, but currently his, fingers down his body. Well well, young Xander has a nice body, and by the looks of things, he certainly isn't a boy anymore. A shiver of desire ran down his spine; sure he was suddenly in someone else's body, but that didn't stop him from getting hard at the knowledge that this was what Xander looked like naked. As he faced his reflection in the mirror, he was vaguely aware of Anya yelling at him while she turned off the alarm clock.

“Xander, you have to go to work in an hour! Remember, it's Saturday so you work at the restaurant all day. Oh, do you have time for more orgasms?”

Spike grinned, watching as Xander's lips curled. *Work, eh? Bloody Burger Barn.* The boy- Xander, could do a hell of a lot better than that. Ideas flooded Spike's brain and the possibilities were far too interesting for him to pass.

Jerking the door open, he quickly found and pulled on a pair of Xander's boxers. Ignoring Anya's questions, he jogged up the stairs and into the house. Listening carefully, he surmised that the fighting Harris's were asleep. Quietly he made his way to the kitchen. He picked up the phone and dialed information.

“Sunnydale. I need the number for the Burger Barn.” As the operator searched, Spike smiled. No accent- he sounded just like the Scooby. Memorizing the number given, he hung up and then called the Burger Barn.

“Hey, this is Xander Harris. Can I talk to the manager?” He waited while the teenager with the cracking voice searched for the boss.

“Yeah, this is Don. What's wrong Harris, another friend in the hospital? Or did you get jumped by hobos again? Either way, you're not getting any time off so what the hell are you calling for?”

Spike could hear the arrogant smirk in the manager's voice. Suppressing a growl, he spoke. "No. Just decided I'm tired of working for a tight assed idiot like yourself. I'm well-worth a better job; you don't deserve me. I quit."

"Yeah, like a dumb shit like you could-."

"Fuck off, Don." Spike slammed the phone into the cradle, then whistled as he walked back downstairs. He had a lot of work to do.

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The road was filled with mist. He could see nothing to his left or his right, the fog an impermeable shroud, hiding all from Xander's sight. He didn't know where he was or what he was doing, but he kept walking. As he was walking, he passed Spike.

"What's back that way?" Spike asked.

"Psycho girlfriend, psycho parents, lame-ass, stupid jobs. What's back that way?"

"About a century of blood and killing, not to mention raping and pillaging, along with being deserted by all I've ever loved."

"Creepy, yet somehow interesting."

He turned and watched as Spike disappeared into the mist. Xander continued to walk, until he reached a dark area devoid of mist, a black and shapeless void. There was no where for him to go, nothing to do. So instead of searching for an exit, he simply dropped to the ground and sat. Somewhere in his life he'd given up, embracing the mediocre existence he figured was the destiny on the Harris family. He didn't really have anything to fight to improve; he cared about Anya, but he didn't see them going anywhere. Sooner or later she'd tire of him and move on.

A sudden foreboding drew him out of his morose thoughts. He looked up to find Spike crouched in front of him. Xander tried to speak, but Spike put his finger to his lips, stopping the babble that would have flowed. Gently, the vampire cupped Xander's face with one hand, running his thumb over Xander's cheek. Xander's breath caught in his chest; the touch was so gentle, and Spike's eyes showed nothing but adoration.

Then the blond leaned forward and pressed his lips to Xander's. The kiss was sweet and calm, with Spike's lips caressing his. Then a cool tongue flicked against Xander's lips. The human opened his mouth and met Spike's tongue with his own. Suddenly, Spike shoved him away. The Scooby landed on his back. He nervously watched the vampire still crouched at his feet. Spike's lips curved in a gentle smile that didn't match the wicked gleam in the blue eyes. Skimming his hands up the jean-clad legs, Spike made his way up to Xander's waist. He easily unbuttoned his pants, then leaned forward to nuzzle Xander's stomach. Spike raised his eyes, pinning Xander with his gaze, before using his teeth to unzip the fly.

A sudden spark of panic hit; Xander made a motion to sit up, but Spike used his unnatural speed and pushed Xander back down, plastering their lips together. Xander's lips parted without prodding, and he gasped as Spike devoured his mouth. He quickly fell into the kiss and forgot everything but the feel of the cool tongue sliding against his. Spike's hands made their way down his body, tracing Xander's muscles before sliding into the boy's jeans. The vampire slid his cool fingers into Xander's boxers, stroking the hardened length. Xander whimpered, the noise swallowed by Spike hungry kisses. The fingers tugging on him were talented, touching the most sensitive areas. Arching his back, he felt his balls tighten.

Xander woke with a start, groaning. Even with his eyes closed, he could feel the wet come sticking to his body and the sheets. Shit. Exhausted, he slowly opened his eyes. He immediately noticed that he wasn't in his basement but in the basement of Spike's crypt. *What the hell am I doing here? Glancing over at the bedside table, he looked at the clock. Holy shit! It's after noon! I'm so fired!*

Jerking up into a sitting position, he winced. His body hurt; not too much pain but definitely a few bruised ribs. He looked at his arms; they seemed smaller, thinner. They had bruises all over them, and seemed paler. *Did I get attacked by a vamp last night?* He reached up to run a hand through his hair, he felt it plastered in place, crunchy from hair gel. Panic lodged in his throat and chest: a realization was surfacing, one that scared the hell out of him. Squeezing his eyes shut, he took a deep breath and steeled himself. Looking down, he raised the bed sheet. *Eeep! That is not my penis! And I'm naked. Wow, I'm Spike, and Jesus, Spike really is the BIG Bad.*

It was at that particular moment that everything sunk in. He was now in Spike's body, which, if logic followed, would mean that Spike was in Xander's body. Icy dread washed over him, deflating the erection that had mysteriously sprung up; Anya had been in his bed last night. What would Spike do to Anya? What would he do to his body? To his life?! He was now in a full-on panic; jumping out of bed and ignoring the various twinges of pain, he hurried over to the ladder and rushed up. Somewhere it registered that he was very naked and moving very fast. Throwing open the hatch, he saw the beam of sunlight right in front of him. He paused; he wasn't breathing, so he was definitely a vampire. And having been a Scooby, he knew that vampires and sunlight were unmixy things.

Defeated, he went back downstairs and sat on the bed, groaning. He was hungry, very hungry. Studying the room, he noticed a small cooler in the corner. Standing, he went over and fished out a bag of blood. While his mind was revolted by the thought of drinking blood, his tummy was making happy rumbles of joy. Ripping open the bag, he poured the blood into a dented tin mug. A small hotplate rested by the cooler, plugged into an electrical outlet of dubious origin. *All of it probably stolen*, Xander thought. Walking over, he set the cup on the hotplate and turned it on. A few minutes later, the blood was warm.

“Well, here's to being an evil, undead, blood-sucking fiend,” he toasted. He tossed the contents of the mug into his mouth. Gagging, he forced himself to swallow. The blood wasn't maggoty-pork disgusting, but it tasted bitter, sour. It had a flatter taste compared to what he could recall of the taste of his own blood. After five years as a Scooby, he'd had enough busted lips to know what his own blood tasted like.

Yuck, pig's blood sucks. Must be the vampire senses; guess they do need human blood. Really isn't that filling. Maybe I'll get him some human for Christmas or something. If he doesn't screw up my life too much.

Hunger satiated, he contemplated his circumstances. Xander put his hands on his head, and tried to think of what made this happen. *No blind dates, not demon magic, no wierd cults... crap.* He couldn't think of a damn thing on his own, and he couldn't leave until sunset. *I'll make a trip to the Magic Box tonight, and get Willow. Willow is smart, Willow is a witch, Willow will fix this.* That decided, he sat in the bed and turned on Spike's t.v. There were only soap-operas on, but it was better then nothing.

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“What do you mean, you quit?” came the outraged screech.

“Anya, the job at the Burger Barn was crap,” Spike replied, trying to hide his anger.

“What are you going to use when you buy me gifts and take me out to dinner?” she yelled, searching the room. During her lunch break at noon, she'd returned to the basement. She was looking for her earrings, but found Xander not at work, tossing clothing into garbage bags.

Spike froze mid-reach, stifling a growl. That bitch had no respect for Xander. All she ever expected out of him was sex and gifts. *Xander can do so much better than her.*

“Working two jobs was killing me. I can get a better job, Ahn. I'm really getting the hang of this construction stuff.”

“Xander, you hardly even got either of those jobs! You need money!”

“What, you don't think I can get a better job?”

Chewing her lip, Anya looked at him. “Well, of course you can, sweetie, but maybe you should keep this job while you look for another one,” she said sweetly.

“You don’t think I can,” he whispered, understanding dawning. She thought Xander was worth a minimum wage job and mindless toil, nothing more. His anger surged forward. “You think this is all I’m worth! If that’s all I’m good for, what the hell are you doing with me? Just using me for ‘orgasms?’”

Anya’s eyes flashed with anger and hurt. “Xander, I don’t- I don’t know. All I know is that you treat me like you don’t care what I was and I like that. But I hate this! I hate not having power, I hate being helpless, and I hate being afraid of ending up poor and homeless!” Tears filled her eyes as her chin trembled. “I care about you Xander, and you care about me. Can’t we just keep things the way they are?”

Spike’s anger melted; even when he was jealous, he’d always respected Anya’s honesty. “No, I can’t live like this any more. Do you love me?”

She sighed, brow furrowed in thought. “I- I think so, but I think its like they say in Cosmo; I love you, but I’m not *in* love with you.”

“You’re human now Anya; you’re going to die someday. Do you really want to stay with me, or do you want to find someone who’ll love you?”

Her face paled slightly as her eyes darted around the room. “I guess someone who’ll love me,” she whispered. “So this is goodbye?”

“Yeah, it is.”

Anya nodded sadly, approaching him. She enveloped Spike in a hug, before stepping away.

“Well, if you ever want to have orgasms together, you have my number.” That said, she turned and walked out the door. Spike watched her go before tossing the majority of the kid’s remaining clothes into the trash. He saved the novelty *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* shirts; he knew that he would eventually be forgiven for what he was going to do. But throwing away those shirts? He’d be staked for sure. Glancing around in disgust, he noticed a shoe-box marked “boring money stuff,” sitting on a bookshelf.

Spike grabbed it off the shelf and opened it. It was filled with bank statements and newspaper job clippings.

Huh, foreman, construction supervisor? Kid's interested in that kind of work? He did some before, why the hell doesn't he apply? Focusing on the bank statements, he observed that Xander actually had a good bit of money saved, probably hoping to find a place to live in. Slowly, a smirk that had once stricken fear into the hearts of Slayers, Watchers, minions and Nazis spread across his face.

He was owed a few favors by a Kilarian demon who was also a real-estate agent. She could probably get Xander a good place for a low deposit. He laughed; Xander wouldn't recognize his life when he got it back.

~*~*~*~*~

Giles unpacked some of the new merchandise. Anya was late coming back from her break, but she had mumbled something about going to Xander's, and he certainly didn't want to think too deeply on that. As he pulled out several books, he contemplated reducing the number of books for sale. According to the former vengeance demon, an antique bookstore was opening up in town, and Giles didn't want to try to compete against a specialty shop. The bell rang as the door opened.

“Good afternoon, welcome-.” The words died on his lips as he looked up at the door. “What in the hell are you doing here Ethan?”

Part Three

Whistling, Spike left the basement (dressed in Xander's least-offensive garb) and immediately headed for the bank. The walk was enjoyable, the feeling of sun on his face for the first time in a hundred years sublime. Spike already had a plan in mind:

while he was able to forge signatures fairly well, it would take a day or so to learn to forge Xander's. That was unacceptable as the spell could wear off at any time. But with the new technology, one could easily shop using a debit card and PIN. So he directed his steps to the bank. As he reached the back, he smiled and opened the door for a little gray haired woman. It was easy enough; he simply showed them Xander's license, claimed forgetfulness, and reset the bank PIN. His first stop was a men's department store.

After going through Xander's clothes, Spike had thrown most of them out. Xander shopped cheap, meaning thrift stores and clearance sales. So if it meant buying ugly shirts or oversized pants, it didn't matter. It had only been a few years since he'd first seen the Scooby, but Xander was now much larger, and not in a bad way. The boy had filled out and had gained some muscle since school, filling out his broad frame. And, as he'd discovered that morning, Xander had very little body fat. But he still hid himself in oversized clothing; he needed a new wardrobe- badly. Xander paid little attention to his appearance, wrongly assuming that no one noticed.

Taking pity on Xan, Spike visited a mid-priced department store, instead of the leather clothing store or the designer men's boutiques he knew to exist in Sunnydale. He took his time in the department store, making sure to pick out things that he knew would show Xander's physique off; fitted jeans, tighter tee shirts, and a few tailored slacks and dress shirts. He even purchased clothing appropriate for construction work.

He ended up putting a small dent in Xander's savings, but it was worth it. Xander now had clothes that fit, and he looked pretty damn good in them. He would no longer walk around looking like a little boy playing dress up in his father's clothes. Spike left the department store wearing a beautifully tailored pair of charcoal trousers and matching suit jacket, paired with a deep red button-up shirt. Spike had already called around, getting job interviews for Xander. His clothes were interview appropriate, but not overly dressy. Spike was determined to get Xander a better job. But first, he had one more stop to make.

Spike opened the door, and felt the blast of cool air. He heard the chatter coming from the many different stations in the salon. He stepped up to the receptionist's desk and waited patiently.

“Can I help you?”

“Only if you know someone who can help with the disaster on my head,” Spike said with a devastating smile. The middle-aged woman blushed. Xander had never noticed the power of his deep brown eyes and charming, open smile, but Spike sure as hell had.

Without looking away from the attractive young man, she yelled out “Hey Andre, you busy?”

A deep voice responded from the back of the shop. “Yeah, got a walk in. But Liz is free.”

“Hey Liz, didn’t you have a ten am?” the receptionist called towards the chairs.

A cheery voice replied from the back. “Yeah, but she cancelled. Why, you got something to replace it?”

“I got a tall, dark, and handsome here in need of some help,” the receptionist said with a smile. Instead of the blush Xander would have given, Spike smirked.

“Send him on back.”

Spike followed the voice to the back of the salon, and came face to face with a girl who could have been his twin sister- not Spike Xander, but Spike Spike. She stood about 5’7” with shoulder length bleach blonde hair, and bright blue eyes. She was all in black, along with black Doc Martens. Her clothing had enough style to look neat and professional, but enough style to assure Spike that she wasn’t an empty-headed, teeny-bopper bint who’d turn Xander into a Backstreet Boy.

“What can I do you for?” Liz asked, honestly meaning the ‘do you’ part.

Spike sat down in the chair. “I need a new look, and I put my hair in your hands.”

“Are you serious?” she asked, left eyebrow raised.

“It can’t be any worse than it is now, right? Just don’t shave it all off or change the

color. And if at all possible, try to keep some curls.”

Liz studied the unruly mop of brown hair, running her fingers through it. “All I can do is shape and improve. The curls and waves are nice. It would be a shame to loose them.”

Spike smirked, “Yeah, I’d hate to loose these gorgeous curls.”

Spike let Liz work her magic. He wasn’t really paying attention as she turned him away from the mirror. He was figuring out his next plan of action. His demonic real estate agent had agreed to arrange a low move-in cost. But he still needed to get Xander a good job so that he could afford the rent on the apartment that he wanted to get the boy into. He also needed to get this done by sundown, because he was pretty sure that Xander would be on the prowl for him as soon as the sun set. Liz tapped him on the shoulder, bringing him out of his thoughts.

“I’m done here if you want to take a look.”

Spinning the chair around, Spike braced himself for the worst.

Spike braced himself, and opened his eyes. Xander looked almost exactly the same way he did on Parent Teacher Night, the night that Angel had tried to offer Xander to him as a gift. The hair was neater, giving the boy a more mature look. But the waves and curls remained, giving Xander an easygoing air. It was perfect.

“Thanks for the help,” he smiled. Standing, he reached for Xander’s wallet.

“Not a problem. Come back in about six weeks to keep it looking good. I promise I’ll always find a way to squeeze you in,” she said with a wink.

Spike stepped out of the salon after paying, and took a breath of fresh air. He walked through town and bought a sandwich from a café. He took the time to sit and enjoy his lunch before going to the first interview, sitting outside and soaking up the sun for the first time in a hundred years.

~*~*~*~*~

“Well hello to you too, Ripper. Long time, no see.”

Giles sighed. “Again Ethan, what are you doing here?”

“Can’t I just pass through and say ‘hi’ to an old friend,” Ethan said with a sly smile.

Understanding showed on Giles’ face as he forced down the tendrils of longing in his stomach. “You’re the one who opened the rare book store.”

“Got it in one.”

Giles sighed. “Why are you here?”

“I thought you might have some books that you’d want to sell me. I am willing to offer you a very rare book in return for... *anything* you are willing to offer me,” Ethan said with a grin, slowly raking his eyes up and down Giles’ body. “After all, I’m an honest business man now.”

“How did you get away from the Initiative?” Giles suddenly asked, diverting the conversation. Loving Ethan had been the headiest experience of his life; leaving him had been the worst. Ethan shrugged nonchalantly, grinning at the obvious subject change.

“I was still in that lab when it was torn apart from the inside. At that point things were so out of control that very few... tests... were still being done. So when the facility practically imploded, I was able to escape. And after some time to heal and take stock of my resources, I decided to pay a visit to my dear old friend.”

“What do I have to do?”

Ethan raised his eyebrows at the sudden defeat in Giles’ voice. “You don’t have to do anything.”

“Well you’re obviously here for revenge, and I’m assuming you wish for something in return to prevent you from turning me into a demon, trying to kill Buffy, or otherwise releasing violent chaos on those I hold dear.”

"Please, Ripper. If I were going to cause trouble, it would have already started, although I might cause some mild chaos among the teens."

"What, you mean like trying to sacrifice infants again?"

Ethan frowned as his eyes widened. "What? Come on old man, you remember the good old days. It's about creating chaos, neither good nor bad. I don't sacrifice babies."

Clinging to the anger he felt at the memory of what had nearly happened that night, Giles pressed forward. "You took payment from the mayor for that chocolate. The chaos was a distraction so he could kidnap the infants and sacrifice them to a demon."

A rare look passed over Ethan's face: honest shock. "Fucking hell, I didn't know that. He mentioned some theft, I thought it was money or artifacts. Not babies."

"Yes, well now you know. So please leave before you're discovered and torn apart."

"Are you really so eager for me to leave?" Ethan asked, a cocky smile on his lips at odds with the sadness in his eyes.

"Yes, because if you stay and cause more trouble, I'll be forced to kill you this time."

"Don't worry old man, I plan to leave your brood alone. Besides, being cut open by scientists makes a man think about his life." Giles grimaced at the words *cut open*. "So I've decided to come and get what I want. But I'm not going to play around this time."

Giles drew himself to his full height, tensed and prepared for an attack. "What do you want? Money? Or are you just going to go ahead and kill me like you've wanted to for the past decades?"

"My dear Rupert. As you said, it's been decades. I'm not angry anymore. All the

anger is gone. And I never wanted to kill you. But I am done using childish pranks to gain your attention.” Ethan paused, a smirk on his lips as he swaggered over to Giles. Pressing himself against the former Watcher, he continued. “And as for what I want, I think that would be obvious. I want what we had all those years ago.”

Leaning down, Ethan pressed their mouths together, pouring in all the longing and passion he'd accumulated over the decades. With a moan, Giles surrendered to the kiss.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander stretched and stood. After six hours of court programs, Oprah, and soap operas, he was bouncing off the walls. His skin was tingling, making him even more anxious. At six, the sun was close to setting. Crossing over to the CD player, he hit ‘play.’ Screams and thrashing guitars blared out; at first it made his ears cringe, but after a while, he started bouncing to the music.

*”’Cause I wanna be Anarchy
It's the only way to be
Is this the M.P.L.A or
Is this the U.D.A or
Is this the I.R.A
I thought it was the UK
Or just another country
Another council tenancy.”*

He suddenly stopped as a heartbeat neared the crypt. *Damn, this vamp hearing rocks!* He grabbed an ax and listened. The beat seemed slow compare to how his human heart beat. Ready to attack, he hid in the corner as the hatch to the stairs opened.

“Spike? You there? It’s me, Clem.”

Sighing in relief, Xander stepped forward. “Hey... buddy,” he offered. Just how did Spike talk to his friends? “What’s going on?”

“Ah, not much,” the demon replied, climbing down the stairs. “But I got your blood. Willy isn’t too mad, and the Karttny demons are leaving town, so it should be okay for you to go back soon.”

“Oh, great.”

Grinning, Clem held out the paper bag, a smile of child-like glee on his saggy face.

Xander eyed him suspiciously. “What?”

“Oh, nothing, but um.... Okay, I thought you needed a pick-me-up, so I used some of my money to buy you a bag of human.”

“Oh, really, uh, thanks Clem. Mate.” Xander smiled, taking the bag from him. Peering inside, he chuckled and removed the bag on top with the red bow on it. “Nice, mate. Very nice.”

“Are you okay, Spike? You’re acting all weird,” Clem observed, furrowing his saggy brow.

“Yeah, great.”

“Right.” Sighing, Clem started back up the ladder. At the top, he called down. “Look Spike, we’ve been over this. You really care about him, but you don’t really know how he feels about you. You won’t know if your feelings are reciprocated until you ask him.”

Xander, who had been studying and sniffing the bag of human blood, quickly looked up. “Ask him? Him? Wait, who’s him?” he yelled. But the only response he got was the slamming of the crypt door.

Shaking his head, he opened the bag and poured it into the mug. *He? Spike likes a guy? Weird.* Shrugging, he ignored the jolts of excitement he felt at the idea of Spike kissing another man and turned on the hot plate. Sitting on the bed, he pulled on the boots. Suddenly, he sniffed, then sniffed again. Leaping to his feet, he jerked the mug off of the hot plate. He felt his mouth water and groaned. The smell was heavenly. He drank it quickly, moaning. For his vampire mouth, human blood was

better than chocolate, Twinkies, or even donuts.

Pig's blood really sucks, he thought, feeling more satisfied than he thought possible. Setting the mug down, he pulled on Spike's duster and climbed the stairs. He needed to get to the Magic Box.

Lyrics are from the song "Anarchy in the U.K." by Sex Pistols.

Part Four

Giles pulled away, his body thrumming with excitement. To say the least, he had been surprised when Ethan had pressed their lips together. Sure, Giles had experienced feelings for him when they were younger, but he had long since repressed those. But at the touch of Ethan's firm, smooth lips, the heady lust from his youth had filled him once again.

"What was that for?" Giles asked, blinking the tumult of emotions back into submission.

Ethan's lips curled into that wry, seductive smile that heated Giles' skin. "For old times sake. Listen, here's a book. Think of it as payment for any books... or services, that you give me. You can read it or not; I don't care. Just make sure your little ones don't run across it." Ethan placed a large volume into Giles' hands. With a last caress of Giles' hand, Ethan released the book and left the Magic Box.

Clearing his throat, Giles dropped his eyes to the weighty tome: *Tantric Magic*. "Good lord."

~*~*~*~*~

Xander left Spike's crypt at sundown and headed straight for the Magic Box. Every scent hit him like a Mack truck, and everything seemed so clear in twilight. Xander reveled in the joys of vampire senses, in clearly seeing individual leaves on trees yards away. To his right, he heard a slight rustling of bushes and watched, horrified, as a tall, grey demon emerged.

“Spiike,” it wheezed. “You stole it, you have insulted our honor. It is ours....”

“Your what? Your precious?” he shot back. *Wow, sarcasm sounds a lot better with the English accent.*

“Our chalice,” it sneered.

“Wait, do you want the chalice from the palace with the brew that is true, or the flagon with the dragon with the pestle of poison?”

“What?” it growled, the deep sound resonating in Xander’s borrowed chest as the beast moved quickly. Fear tightening his stomach, Xander jumped back, landing six feet away.

“Holy shit,” he whispered, eyes wide, staring at the distance that now separated him and the beast. Another snarl drew him out of his shock. The demon once again charged, but it seemed slower. To Xander, it looked like the demon was running towards him through water. *I’m a vamp. So is this is how vamps see everything? Wow.* Studying the creature, he saw the blade it was trying to conceal in its right hand. Preparing himself for the attack, he waited. The demon stopped in front of him, and struck out with its left fist. Smirking, Xander ducked the punch, then jumped away as the demon tried to use the blade.

Moving with speed that would have stunned Xander (had he not been dealing with a strong surge of adrenaline), he threw three bone-crunching punches before weaving away. Mimicking the movements he’d watched Spike perform, he surged forward, delivered several strong hits, and then danced away from the enraged creature before it could hit back. As the fight continued, his understanding grew. Somehow, being able to see as well and as quickly as a vampire allowed Xander to analyze the movements of his opponent, studying how it moved, how it attacked. Fighting was a lot more enjoyable when you could figure out what the hell was going on.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike stopped in front of the Magic Box, cautious. He didn’t know what to expect if

Xander was already there. Would they attack him? Hit him? Stake him while in their friend's body? Taking a necessary breath, he opened the door and entered. Anya sat at the research table, talking with Buffy, and Willow.

Buffy turned towards him, a wide, amazed smile on her face.

“Hey Xan, how- Wow, nice look!”

Willow observed him with the same surprise, but it was centered in her resolve face. “Wow Xander, you look good. I mean, you looked good before but-. Xander, what's wrong with you?”

“Wrong?” Spike echoed, leaning against the counter.

“Yeah, I mean, you dumped Anya, got new clothes, a new haircut and quit your job. Is something wrong?”

“Um, no. Hey, where's Tara?” he asked, hoping to change the subject. Willow frowned.

"She had a study group and don't you try to change the subject, Mister," she commanded.

“Are you absolutely certain there isn't something... bothering you?” Giles added.

“I agree that something is wrong. While I understand that breaking up was good for our futures, I do think all this change is very strange, Xander,” Anya added.

Shit. Spike had been prepared to flee, not explain. Thinking quickly, he spoke.

“The argument that Spike and I had last night, well, some of the stuff made sense. I don't like my life as it is, so I decided to change it. At least that way he won't have so much to tease me about.”

“Oh.”

Spike heard it in surround sound, watching the heads nod in unison. Swallowing his fear, he tried to act Xander-natural.

“Yes, well I wouldn’t count on that saving you from Spike’s barbs,” Giles pointed out. “Despite his legendary impatience, he is a rather keen observer of human- well, and demon- nature. He is incredibly bright.”

“Yeah, he really is,” Spike threw in. “Always kind of surprised me that we could beat him.”

Buffy snorted. “Not really. He may be all evil geniusy, but he has no patience.”

“Well as titillating as this discussion is, there are rumors of a Vorlack demon with a blood chalice in town,” Giles added. Spike coughed mid-inhalation. The sensation of needing to breathe was still new enough that the reminder of his latest poker winnings caught him off guard. Spike sat down at the table with the rest of the Scoobies. As they were preparing to get down to researching... again, Dawn walked through the door, laden with school books. Outside, they could hear tires squealing as a Geo Metro that was sporadically covered in duct-tape took off.

“Dawnie, what are you doing here?” Buffy asked, concerned.

"Mom had a meeting tonight, so Janice and I went to get a burger. And now you get to take me home," she smiled.

"Okay, so who drove you?" Buffy pressed.

“Janice’s brother, Kyle.”

“The drug addict?”

“He’s not a drug addict, he’s just in a band,” she countered.

“Well lots of band people do drugs and stuff,” Buffy argued.

“Oz didn’t do drugs,” Willow pointed out. “Although Devon did, he was a total pot head, which explains why he went out with Cordelia-.”

“What happened to Xander?” Dawn interrupted. She really didn’t want to have that

conversation... again.

“Xander experienced a personal crisis. He broke up with me, quit his job, left the basement, and got a makeover. But he said we can still have orgasms together,” Anya explained. As Dawn stared, slack-jawed, Anya grabbed a clipboard and headed into the back of the store.

Giles cleared his throat. “Yes, well, we need to research, um, a demon of some sort. To fight.”

“Anyone willing to help me fight a demon named ‘algebra?’” Dawn interjected with a hopeful smile.

Everyone except Spike bustled around and found other things to do. Giles went behind the counter to organize books. Buffy went to the training room, while Willow went to the upper level to check on some spell books. Dawn sat down next to Spike and opened up her algebra book, pinning him with her best pout. Spike didn’t say anything, merely sighed; he was good at math and she needed his help. Halfway through the first problem, they realized that they needed a calculator. Spike got up and sauntered to the cash register, and grabbed the calculator. He sat back down, and noticed that Dawn had an odd look on her face.

“Xander, what’s wrong?”

“Nothing.”

“But you’re walking all different. And you hate algebra, why are you helping me?”

“Lay off, I’m fine Bit,” Spike said. He immediately regretted his choice of words as he saw the shocked look in Dawn’s eyes. Over the past couple years, he’d started to swing by Joyce’s house to kill lurking vamps and have a bit of hot chocolate. Sometimes, Dawn would be awake and Joyce had allowed her daughter to get close to Spike. Spike loved the little girl’s irreverent and strange sense of humor, while she loved Spike’s honesty and willingness to tell her the truth no one else would.

“S-Spike?” Dawn stuttered. Spike groaned.

“Shit. Yeah Niblet, it’s me. Just don’t go yelling that too loud,” he whispered, glancing at Giles.

“What happened?”

“I have absolutely no idea. But, since I’m in Xander’s body, it’s safe to assume-“

“That Xander is in your body. Wow. So, you did all this for Xander?” Dawn asked in awe, her eyes getting misty at the romantic nature of Spike's actions.

“Yeah. Felt bad for the tosser,” he smirked with false machismo. “Figured I could have some fun that wouldn’t end in him killing me when gets switched back.”

Dawn just grinned at him. “You love him don’t you?”

“What? No,” he whispered harshly.

“You like Xander, you like Xander!” she taunted.

Growling he started cursing. Then seeing the small smile on her lips, he sighed. “Is it that obvious?”

“No, only to people who know how you loved Dru and know what to look for. I mean, whenever he enters the room, your whole face seems to light up with glee. No one else seems to notice, or else they just think it’s with malicious glee,” she explained thoughtfully. “So, what are you going to do to prove your love?”

“What do you think I’ve been doing? This is all for him. I even got him a new job at a construction company. Yeah, he’ll have to start at the bottom, but starting pay is twice what he was making at the other job. I got him a nice apartment, and I managed to break up with Anya in a way that won’t have her after his knackers,” Spike finished righteously, before moaning. “God, I’m turning into a poofter.”

“Oh my God that is so sweet!” she squealed. Two sets of eyes swung towards the giddy teenager.

“Are you alright, Dawn?” Giles asked.

The girl smiled, a chill going down Spike's spine. "Uh, yeah. I'm just excited because Xander just promised to take Janice and me to a Backstreet Boys concert."

Spike's eyes widened in terror as he sputtered, "Now wait...."

Dawn faced him again, smiling. "You promised, didn't you, Xander?"

Sighing in defeat, he nodded. "You're evil, Bit," he whispered.

Dawn simply smiled. "Well, I learned from the best."

Trying to hide paternal pride from his smile, Spike turned back towards the algebra text. "So, what's the problem here?"

"The part with the numbers and letters."

~*~*~*~*~

With a triumphant roar, Xander snapped the vampire's neck, twisting so far and hard that the head separated from its torso, blowing away in a cloud of dust.

"Yes!" he cried, pumping his now-empty hands into the air. He didn't know how long he'd been hunting, but in that time he'd killed two demons, nine vampires, and had chased off six frat boys, ridges at the fore. He'd intended to beat the hell out of them for teasing some young kid in an X-Files tee shirt, but remembered in time that Spike's body was chipped. So he'd settled for chasing them down the street, reveling in the sweet, pungent smell of their fear, calling out taunts as they wet themselves. Literally.

Finally, when Sunnydale seemed quiet enough, he remembered his reason for vacating the crypt. Running towards the Magic Box, he arrived in time to see Anya heading towards her car.

"Hey, Anya!" he called as he jogged towards her from across the street.

“Oh, hello Spike.” Quickly, she unlocked her door and threw her purse on the passenger seat. Waiting for her to turn around, Xander saw the boxes of belongings in her backseat.

“Um, Anya, what’s all that stuff in the back?”

“Oh, Xander broke up with me today so I’m taking my things from the basement.”

"He what?!" Xander had expected cruel jokes from Spike, perhaps multiple citations for exposing himself in public, but this, this was....

“And then he quit his job and moved out of his basement,” she rambled, getting into her car.

“WHAT?!” Xander knew vampires couldn’t have aneurysms or heart attacks, but he felt close. He stood open mouthed in shock as Anya started her car and drove off. He was going to kill Spike- as soon as he found him. *What is he doing to my life? Who the Hell does he think he is? Well, besides me!* Xander ranted internally as he stalked toward the Magic Box. He was so deep in his thoughts that he completely missed the fact that he was coming very close to some of the frat boys that he had chased off. It seemed that they wanted retribution.

Xander felt a hand on his shoulder, and didn’t even stop. He reached for the hand, and threw the offender over his shoulder. He quickly started to throw punches, and as soon as the guy was knocked out, Xander took a good look and realized that it was one of the drunk frat boys. *Why can I beat up humans? I’m not supposed to be able to hurt humans; I’m a chipped vampire. Something weird is going on.* Xander quickly resumed his path to the Magic Box, hoping that everyone was still there.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike and Dawn had long since finished Dawn’s homework, and were now helping research. Spike walked over to the cash register to replace the calculator, and noticed a book hidden under some paperwork. Spike picked up the book, and noticed the title; *Tantric Magic*.

Now, wonder where the Old Watcher got a copy of this, Spike wondered. He caught Giles' eye, and wagged his eyebrows at him, and then laughed as Giles began to blush. Spike was about to make a lewd comment when he heard the ringing of the bell above the door. He looked up to see Xander walk in. He saw the look in Xander's eye when he caught sight of Spike. Xander looked shocked.

My hair! My clothes, oh God, my bank account, what-

"Spike, what do you want?" Buffy asked, interrupting Xander's internal freaking.

"I'm outta blood," Xander growled.

"And you're here because ..." Buffy said.

"Remembered that G, I mean Giles, had some left in his apartment. Uh, flat."

"Yes, yes. Xander, please take Spike over to my place so he can get some blood."

Xander and Spike both stared at Giles when he said this, Xander smiling, Spike horrified.

"WHAT?"

"Oh, come on. It won't be that bad. You've done it before," Dawn replied with a sneaky smile.

"Yeah, Xander. It's no big deal. Just take him over, let him get his blood, and then take him to his crypt," Buffy said.

"Nope, can't do it. 'Sides, isn't there a demon you guys are looking for?" Spike asked.

"Oh yeah, I forgot about that," Buffy said brightly. She approached Xander and grabbed his arm.

"Here, we need you to look at these pictures. There's some demon with a goblet that's been tearing up pawn shops in town."

Gritting his teeth, Xander followed Buffy to the table. Looking down, he saw a picture of the demon he'd killed earlier that night.

"It's no problem, Slayer. I already killed it tonight," he said, smiling proudly. "Now if you don't mind, I'd like to go to get my blood." Turning around, he faced the counter where Spike had been standing. Only he wasn't there.

"Where'd he go?" Xander asked. Outside, a roar could be heard. Dawn, who'd been watching Spike's escape, asked another question.

"When did he get a motorcycle?"

Part Five

Author's Note: So, cinderella81's brain has been taken over by Smallville, and no longer had the inspiration for this story. However, I decided I'd go ahead and finish this, and I apologize for taking so darn long on it.

Giles looked through the window into Ethan's shop. Strains from "EMI" could be faintly heard, as well as Ethan screaming along. The mage wasn't really doing anything, just putting away books. Gathering his courage, Giles entered. The bell above the shop door tinkled it opened.

Ethan looked up, smirking when he saw him. "Well, well, well, what can I do for you?" Ethan ambled over to the door, hips rolling in a sensuous motion.

Giles raised his eyebrows and ignored the question. "You know Ethan, you really shouldn't play the Sex Pistols."

“Why not?”

“Because you’re a middle-aged small business owner dressed in a lavender button-down shirt and charcoal slacks. Not very punk.”

“So says the former tweed-coated Watcher,” Ethan shot back. “Besides, I’ve heard tales of impromptu coffee-house performances on your part.”

Giles smiled gently; the friendly bickering was so familiar. “True, but I don’t pretend I’m eighteen anymore.”

Ethan shook his head and gathered several books in his arms before heading behind a shelf. Giles followed as Ethan began to speak. “Neither do I. But there’s nothing wrong with having fun.”

Giles tensed. “Unfortunately, fun for you usually means trouble for those I care about.”

Ethan sighed, then turned to face Giles. “Ripper, I swear, there isn’t anything in the works. Sunnydale is a good place to spread chaos, but as I learned with the Mayor and the Initiative, there are usually too many dangerous elements around, ready to turn chaos into death. I’m not here for any reason, other than the fact I’ve become a sentimental fool in my old age.” Ethan walked over to Giles and gently cupped his cheek. “The only reason I’m here is for you, luv. I miss you, and despite all the experiences I’ve had, you’re still the only one I’ve ever loved.”

Giles swallowed. Pangs of longing surged through him. God he wanted Ethan, even though he knew it would more than likely end badly. But he didn’t have the strength to resist. Leaning forward, he pressed their mouths together. Ethan had always been impatient, and that hadn’t changed.

The chaos mage quickly opened his mouth, deepening the kiss. They pressed their bodies together, pent up frustration, hurt, and longing spilling over. This wasn’t a simple kiss, it was a renewal. Giles could feel Ethan’s magic the way he had in his youth. Their magics were moving toward each other, blending. With a moan, he pressed his body against Ethan’s.

Gods don't let this end badly, he prayed.

He wasn't sure he could take losing Ethan a second time.

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It was a sunny afternoon as Willow and Tara lay on the blanket in the park, wrapped around each other and content. Willow sighed and looked over at her lover.

"We should really go and see Giles. That magic surge from the other night, I can feel it, it's still working. It's chaotic, uncontrolled," she said.

Tara nodded. "I know, I felt it too," she murmured, running her hand up and down Willow's arm. Sighing, she took the initiative and stood. Willow pouted. "Come on, baby," Tara said. "Work now, cuddles later."

Willow smiled before leaning in and stealing a quick kiss. The two witches stood and gathered their bags and blanket before walking to the downtown area. As they looked down the street, they saw Giles heading into a closed shop.

"Wonder what Giles is doing?" Willow wondered aloud.

Tara shrugged. "Let's drop our stuff off at the Magic Box, then see," Tara suggested.

"Okay."

The girls hurriedly went to the shop and dropped their things off behind the counter

"Hey! This is a store, not a closet!" Anya yelled at them. Tara and Willow ignored her and started out the door. "Hey, what's going on?" Anya demanded.

"Mi-mister Giles went into the n-new bookstore down the street," Tara explained.

Anya's eyes narrowed. "The closed one that that chaos guy used to own?"

"Yeah," Willow said, making her way to the door.

"Maybe he's spying on the competition," Anya theorized. "We should help!"

Quickly shoos the two girls out of the shop, she locked up and joined the witches in their walk down the street. They reached the shop quickly and looked into the window; the shop looked empty.

Willow frowned. "I could have sworn I saw him come in here," she muttered.

"I s-saw him too," Tara offered.

Anya's eyes widened. "What if chaos guy is in there and he's hurting Giles?" she asked. "What if he kills him! I have no legal claim to the store!"

Tara and Willow looked at each other, suddenly fearful. "Should we get Buffy?" Willow asked.

Anya frowned, then shook her head. "No, we should take a closer look first. Because maybe he left and Buffy would kinda get pissed if we dragged her from the school for no reason," Anya said.

Tara and Willow nodded. Recon it was.

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Giles pressed Ethan against the shelf, then buried his face against Ethan's throat. Anyone who knew the Englishmen would be surprised to discover that Ethan was highly submissive, a trait he'd buried in his time apart from Giles. But with one kiss, he was ready to surrender anything to get Ripper back. Giles bit the skin of Ethan's throat, then sucked on it until it started to color. As he felt the gentle tremors of Ethan's body and magic, a thought occurred. "So Ethan, if you're reformed now," he started, pausing to flick his tongue into Ethan's ear before continuing, "What was that spike of chaos I felt the other night?" Leaning forward,

Giles nipped at Ethan's lower lip before pulling away and looking into his former lover's eyes.

Ethan raised his hands in surrender. "It wasn't me, Rupert. I felt the magic too, but I swear, it wasn't me."

Giles raised an eyebrow and studied Ethan, then shook his head. "No, I don't suppose it was you. Whatever is happening, it's small, far too small for one of your games. And it completely lacks control."

Ethan frowned. "Is this all we're going to do, or can we return to more interesting pursuits?" he asked, unbuttoning Giles' shirt.

With a sinful grin, Giles started working on Ethan's pants. "I think something more interesting is in order."

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Willow, Tara, and Anya stood at the store's back door. Flicking their fingers in tandem, Willow and Tara unlocked the door, then paused.

"Wards," Tara murmured. "Good ones."

Anya watched, intrigued as the two witches held hands and began chanting. A faint glow surrounded them before fading. Stepping forward, Willow opened the door and went in first. She quickly glanced around the back room before walking in and waving Tara and Anya after her. Quietly, they crept forward. Pausing at the doorway to the main part of the shop, Willow quickly peeked around the corner.

When she returned her eyes to the back room, they were wide and shocked. And her face was beet-red. Frowning, Anya and Tara moved forward and looked out. Tara's face flushed as she turned away from the sight, but Anya's didn't. Anya's face split with a grin. Giles was leaning against a bookcase, his shirt open and revealing a nicely toned chest. A gentleman was on his knees, giving the former Watcher what appeared to be a top-notch blow job. Giles had his finger's threaded through the other man's hair, his back arched. She watched, enraptured as Giles'

body tensed and jaw clenched. She opened her mouth, only to feel a small hand slap over it. Pulling, Willow dragged Anya away from the door.

Anya slapped Willow's hand away. "What did you do that for?" she whispered hoarsely.

"You were going to say something," Willow whispered back, her face still red.

"W-w-w-we sh-sh-should go," Tara mumbled nervously.

"Well, I want to see what happens next," Anya argued, her volume increasing.

Pulling away from Willow, she tried to look out into the store. But Willow grabbed her arm and tugged on her, knocking Anya off balance. Flailing her arms, Anya fell against a stack of boxes, the top one falling and landing on the ground with a loud *thwack*. The three women panicked.

"Run away!" Anya yelled, flapping her hands excitedly.

"It's a bit late for that," a voice drawled.

Turning, the young women faced a smirking Ethan and a red faced Giles.

"Hi, I'm Anya. We've never met before, but I think we should be friends. You're very talented," Anya enthused.

Giles groaned and started cleaning his glasses while Ethan laughed.

"You know, I think I'm really going to like you," Ethan smirked.

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Xander paced Spike's crypt, anxious as he recalled the previous evening.

Dawn had only grinned when "Spike" questioned the Scoobies about the changes to "Xander." Instead of answering, she had started singing "Spike and Xander, sittin'

in a tree. K-I-S-S-I-N-G," before Buffy had finally covered her mouth with her hand. So before he could tell them the truth, Xander had decided to find Spike. He needed to know what changes the vampire had made, and more importantly, why. But by the time he'd gotten outside, any trail Spike might've left had gone cold. Dejected, Xander had walked back to the crypt and gotten trashed on Spike's hidden cache of whiskey. He'd slept most of the day, but he'd still awoken a few hours before sunset.

So he paced. Spike could have done anything; walk around the city naked, gone to the beach, beaten up strangers, anything. But instead, he'd moved out of the basement, gotten a makeover, a better job, and ended a dead-end relationship with Anya.

What the hell is he doing? If he was sucking up, that would make sense. But this is beyond sucking up, this is giving me a good life. Either he's up to something, or he's officially the lamest vampire in history. Because this would be some lame torture.

Dropping heavily onto the bed, he looked around the room, hoping for a clue he'd missed, like a large sign that read "Fifty Sneaky Things to Do to Xander Harris In Order to Confuse Him." Instead, he spotted the bow Clem had placed on the bag of human blood.

Then realization hit him like a bolt of lightning.

Holy shit! He has a crush, and it's on me! What the hell is wrong with him, is he retarded?

Jumping up from the bed, Xander paced. He had no idea where his new apartment was, but the gang might. He knew from experience that Spike had found a sewer entrance to the shop; and of course, Spike being Spike, there was a sewer entrance in the street next to the cemetery. Pulling on clothes, Xander went through the pockets of the trench coat. Inside, he found a variety of things, including a compass. Grabbing a blanket, he raced out of the crypt and into the street.

Reaching down, he pulled open the manhole and jumped onto the ladder. Closing it, he slung the blanket around his neck. Even in the darkness, his vampire eyesight could read the compass. Climbing down the ladder, Xander began the task of

reaching the Magic Box.

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After a full day at work learning the ropes of his supervisor position (while taking notes for Xander), Spike sat on his bike, thinking. If he knew Xander, he'd be using those new vamp senses and the sewers to get to the store as soon as possible. He sighed; he was going to have to stop sometime and face Xander. There were certainly going to be questions, and if he was at the Magic Box, at least they'd keep Xander from killing him. He started the bike and tore through Sunnydale, reaching the Magic Box in under five minutes. Walking in, the store was in an uproar. Tara was hiding behind a curtain of her hair, eyes glued to a book, while Willow babbled at top speed, red-faced as well, and Buffy was pacing, hands flailing. Someone he didn't recognize was standing by Giles, and according to body language, they were definitely an item.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"Giles and Ethan are having orgasms together, Xander! We saw them and Ethan is very talented! But then Willow made me stop watching," Anya said with a pout.

Spike raised an eyebrow. *So that's why Glinda won't look at anyone.*

Looking over at Ethan, then Giles, Spike smirked. "Well done, Giles. Decided to have a bit of fun, eh?"

Ethan smirked while Giles just looked perplexed. Willow, Tara, and Buffy were stunned.

"But, Xander, why aren't you mad? He tried to kill the babies and me and then, then he made those costumes go weird!" Buffy rambled, her eyes wide, dazed, and thoroughly befuddled.

Spike nodded as he remembered, though his memory and opinion of these events were slightly different. "Ah, I'm sure Giles will keep him on a leash," Spike

smirked.

Giles pulled off his glasses and started cleaning them.

"Oh my God, you are going to put him on a leash, aren't you!" Buffy yelled.

"Oh, that sounds like fun," Anya chimed in, nodding.

Biting back a laugh, Spike left them behind and walked into the training room. He stood in the corner, shadowed by the lowering sun and waited. Ten minutes later, the trap door burst open. Xander easily jumped out of the tunnel.

Xander charged toward the door before the sound of a heartbeat had him stopping and turning. He caught sight of Spike and took in his appearance. Spike was simply standing there, leaning against the wall with effortless grace and confidence.

"What the hell did you do to me?" Xander asked, advancing on Spike.

Spike pursed his lips and frowned, gathering his wits. *Alright, don't bollocks it up. You've got one chance.*

"I've gotten you a job at a construction site; the pay is twice what you were making before, and there's room to move up. Yes, I did break up with Anya, but even you had to admit that your relationship with her was going nowhere. And finally, you walked around wearing clothes that even someone in middle school wouldn't wear, so I got you some new kit."

Xander took a step and truly looked at his body. His body looked tall and proud, and all manly. It was weird. "Oh. Wow, I look pretty good. Is there a magic clothes store I didn't know about?" he asked, confused.

Spike met his gaze, his borrowed brown eyes fierce. Xander wasn't used to seeing himself like that. "Nothing wrong with you, pet," Spike growled. "All I did was improve on what was already there," he finished with a sigh.

Xander's eyes widened. Spike bit back a smile, enjoying the adorable look of awe and confusion, even with the borrowed tough appearance Xander had. "Holy hand

grenade, you do have a crush on me," he babbled. "I mean, Clem said I, I mean you, had a crush on some guy, but I figured it would be someone all hot and cool and stuff, not me, but then you did all that cool stuff so I thought it might be me, but you know, then I figured there had to be another explanation with words and an elaborate plan to confuse me, possibly involving charts and graphs, but I dunno, maybe you do, you know.... Do you really have a thing for me?" he finally asked in a whisper.

Spike tensed, crossing his arms over his chest. "Maybe I do. You got a problem with that?"

Spike watched, amused, as his body took on a slouching, bashful pose.

"Uh, no, not really," Xander whispered.

Moving forward, Spike cupped Xander's face, searching the familiar blue eyes. When Xander didn't pull away, Spike moved in for a kiss.

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"I know that you're all... upset about Ethan, but that isn't the priority right now," Giles explained.

"But, he tried to kill the little bitty babies," Willow pouted.

"I had no idea the Mayor was planning that. Chaos is about effecting random change, not murdering innocents. I truly didn't know what he had planned," Ethan replied. "Besides, children are fantastic for causing chaos; I want more of them, not fewer."

"Well, what about that demon tattoo you gave me?" Buffy demanded, her eyes hard.

Ethan shrugged. "Right, sorry about that. I'll admit that was rather cowardly. My priority was saving my own skin, and I thought that a Slayer who's dodged a few prophecies could deal with a demon," he explained.

Buffy glared at him, looking between the surprisingly contrite chaos mage and her Watcher. And then she noticed something: Giles looked all... unstarchy. He wasn't tense, his eyes weren't crinkled or his brow furrowed. He looked relaxed, calm.

Buffy sighed, the anger leaving her body. "Fine. But if you hurt my Giles, I'll kill you," she declared.

"Thank you, Buffy," Giles said softly, touched by her tacit approval and threat of violence.

"Wait," Willow said. "You aren't upset or worried?"

"Yeah, but look at them. Giles is all... untweedy." Buffy sat down and grabbed a cookie. "But I'll be watching you, Ethan," Buffy said darkly. "Just not, you know, when you're all naked and doing stuff with Giles. That's just gross."

"I'll help you with the naked bits!" Anya offered.

The room fell silent as everyone looked at her bright, enthusiastic smile.

"I think you may be my second most favorite person in world," Ethan mused. "Well, third, after Giles and myself."

"That's bloody fantastic, can we please consider the subject closed now?" Giles asked.

Buffy, Willow and Tara murmured their agreement, while Anya simply refocused on her, well, Giles' money.

"Now, the reason I called you here is because of some rogue magic," Giles explained.

Anya frowned, looking up from the daily sales totals. "No offense, Giles, but the number one suspect is right here," she pointed out.

"True. But this magic was very uncontrolled, chaotic in the sense that the caster was an amateur. And it was direct magic, not a random spell intended to affect as many

people as possible. It's far too small of a scale for Ethan. It happened two nights ago."

Buffy's eyes widened. "Two nights ago?"

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Xander moaned into the kiss as Spike grabbed his hips and pulled them closer together. Pulling away, Spike shoved Xander against the wall.

Xander looked at Spike. "Wow, this is weird, very, very weird," he muttered, watching as his own body rocked against him. "Weird, but hot."

"Weird? Come on, Xan. You've seen me naked," Spike teased. Leaning forward, he began to suck on the pale skin of Xander's temporary neck. "It'll be just like jacking yourself off, only you'll get to see yourself come."

Spike shot him a mischievous grin before sliding a hand down to Xander's crotch. Rubbing Xander through the jeans, he watched as the teenager dropped his head against the wall. He quickly shoved the tee shirt out of way before undoing the jeans Xander wore.

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Buffy chewed on her bottom lip. "Um, what about that demon that Spike killed? Maybe it did something," she suggested.

Giles shook his head. "No, this was something else. Grumpdanashka demons don't use magic. They have heightened senses, so the materials needed for spell work irritate them."

"Well, maybe the spell isn't a big deal," Buffy offered hopefully.

Giles pondered this, then shook his head. "No, the magic was directed at someone or something, and it was pretty powerful. Whatever it did, it did something."

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Spike stared, entranced at the sight of Xander whimpering, fingers clutching at Spike's chest. Even occupying someone else's body, Xander was himself, his emotions clearly displayed on his face.

Moving closer, Spike fused their mouths together once again, stroking Xander's tongue with his own. In all honesty, the pronoun confusion was beginning to drive Spike mad, but he didn't care. If he had to spend the rest of his life alone, it would be worth it just for this memory of reducing Xander into a whimpering puddle of need.

Xander moved away to suck in an unneeded breath, rubbing his body against Spike. He absorbed Spike's warmth and gave himself over to the pleasure from the sheer friction of that warm hand on his dick.

"Spike, please," he whimpered, staring at him with a hooded gaze.

"Anything for you, pet," Spike husked, pressing their mouths together again.

Xander's hands dropped to Spike's crotch, fumbling in his attempt to open Spike's pants. After a moment's struggle, he finally succeeded.

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"Do you think we should try a reveal spell?" Willow asked.

"We could," Giles said, "though we would need to take precautions in case the spell caster has ill intentions."

Buffy shifted nervously in her seat. "Maybe they don't have bad intentions. I mean,

it's the Hellmouth, there are a lot of magic users here. Maybe they're just, like, recreational magic users, playing around."

"While that is true, Buffy, this was random magic. This magic had a substantial effect and the caster had strong natural abilities," Giles explained. "We should begin preparations for the reveal spell; it's the only way to find out what exactly happened."

"I'll go get Xander," Buffy said quickly, before running into the training room. Exactly 2.6 seconds later, Buffy ran from the room. "Oh come on!" she yelled. "Is everyone but me having sex?!"

"What on Earth..." Giles started, trailing off as Spike and Xander wandered out of the training room. Their clothes were mussed as they buttoned up their shirts and pants, their lips red.

"Oh Goddess, not again," Willow whined, dropping her head onto the table. Giles began cleaning his glasses.

"Hope you boys used lube," Ethan teased.

"Don't worry about; I always enjoy a bit of pain with my sex," Spike replied.

"What about the chip?" Anya asked. "Shouldn't the inherent pain of anal sex set it off?"

Silence reigned for several long seconds before Xander spoke.

"Oh yeah. I forgot. Last night these frat guys were beating up on some kid, so I scared them. But when they decided to jump me, I hit one on instinct. Didn't hurt, so I guess it's broken."

Spike whooped loudly while punching his fist into the air.

"That's bloody fantastic!" he yelled, grabbing Xander's face and planting a kiss on his lips.

"Xander, why are you talking like Spike?" Willow asked.

"B-because he is Spike," Tara whispered.

Everyone froze before the room erupted into chaos.

"Wait wait wait wait wait!" Anya yelled. Marching over to Spike, she frowned at him. "So you're Spike and you're the one who broke up with me?"

Spike shrugged. "Sorry, but you didn't seem to fancy him that much."

Anya glared at him before turning to Xander. "So you're Xander?"

"Yeah," Xander said meekly.

"Well I'm sorry, but I can't date you again," she said with a delicate sniff. "I met someone last night and he's very sweet and enjoys giving me orgasms. He also has a very large penis."

Xander's eyebrows rose. "Really? Who?"

"Clem."

Xander's eyes bugged, while Spike snickered.

Buffy looked at Giles. "Okay, ignoring Anya talking about sex, are we freaking out about this no chip thing?"

Giles sighed. "Well, if Spike had truly wanted to kill us, he would have done it while in Xander's body, instead of... courting him. I don't believe he'll be a threat if he does view us as his clan."

"But what happened to it?" Willow asked.

"Well, magic and technology don't mix," Ethan mused. "It's possible that when their essences were switched, the energy of the magic could have effected it. Possibly even the spell itself destroyed it."

"Okay, so now that this is all out in the open, can we fix it?" Xander asked.

Willow frowned.

"Sorry, Xander," she apologized. "But we don't know what spell it is. It could be a spell that runs out on it's own. We need to know what the spell is before we go messing around with it."

"But Willow," Xander whined, "I wanted to start my job tomorrow."

"And I wanted to punch Willy," Spike pouted. "He's been asking for it for a while now. And I wanted to smack around the guy that's been hitting on Dawn."

Buffy looked between them. They were standing close together. And as obvious as the effect of Ethan on Giles was, the effect of Spike on Xander was more so. Xander was standing straight, and despite the embarrassment he had to be feeling, he looked happy.

"I did it," she admitted.

"Er, did what, Buffy?" Giles asked.

"The spell! It was me. I was sick of them squabbling all the time and I kind of figured they were total friendage material. I mean, they both love snack foods, British comedy and have a hatred of Angel," she explained.

"What a ponce," Spike grumbled.

"Really? I prefer the term 'brooding asshat' myself," Xander offered.

"See!" Buffy said, pointing at the two of them. "They're all matchy."

"Buffy," Giles said, his voice low, "I need you to recall the exact spell you used."

Buffy dashed up the stairs and retrieved the book, then returned to the table. She flipped through the pages roughly, ignoring the way Giles winced at her treatment

of the old tome, before stopping on the right page. "Here Giles, this is the one I used," she said, handing it over.

Giles read over it, then started laughing.

"What was your purpose in casting this?" he asked once his laughter had subsided.

"To get them to understand each other," she said, her voice going up at the end while she blushed.

"Ah. Well, this is actually a spell designed for subterfuge and the gathering of intelligence, to gain knowledge, not understanding. But unlike the magic Faith used to switch your essences, this wears off after a week," Giles explained. "But I think this has established a new rule for you, Buffy. After you break this spell, no more magic for you."

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Three hours later, Xander sat on the back of the bike, his arms wrapped around Spike. It felt weird, being in his own body again. But it was nice to be where he belonged; he'd missed his heartbeat. As it turned out, it had been a simple spell to reverse. Since the spell kept their essences switched, the caster had to simply break the spell. So once the sun had set, Spike and Xander had left to see Xander's new apartment.

Spike was equally enjoying the ride back to Xander's new home, feeling the warm body pressed against him was even better than he'd imagined. After a quick trip through the town, they arrived at a small apartment building near Buffy's house. Spike led him upstairs and opened the door with a flourish. Xander walked in slowly, surveying his new apartment. It was barren of furniture, but spacious and with plenty of windows, all of which were already covered with thick drapery.

"Wow, it's nice," Xander finally said, turning to face Spike. Spike was still outside.

"Gonna invite me in?" Spike asked, his face an unreadable mask.

"Oh yeah, mi casa es su crypt," Xander joked, smiling widely. "Please come in, Spike."

"Didn't get you much in the way of furniture or food, figured you'd know best," Spike explained as he shut the door behind them. "Though I did get you a bed."

Xander's face flushed as he went to the bedroom. There was just a nightstand and a bed. The bed had no headboard, but it was new. And big.

"Well, it looks way better than the foldout," he said. "Thanks, Spike. For everything."

"No problem."

They stood there, silent as the seconds passed. Xander cleared his throat and opened his mouth to speak before shutting it again.

"Sod it," Spike finally growled. Rushing forward, he knocked Xander onto the bed and kissed him. Xander made a small, joyful sound in the back of his throat, before winding his arms around Spike's neck. Their tongues twined together, Spike gently cupping Xander's face with his hands while he shifted his body until he was straddling Xander's supine form. Finally, when Xander needed to breath, he broke the kiss.

"What do you want?" Spike asked, his voice nearly a growl.

"Nakeness, I vote for naked happy fun times," Xander said, arching up to rub his crotch against Spike's.

Spike kissed him again, their mouths fusing together. Xander was only vaguely aware of his jacket and button-up shirt disappearing and didn't really focus on anything aside from the kiss until Spike disappeared. Xander opened his eyes.

"What? No, no leaving, more kissing," he protested.

"Sorry, but we're wearing too much sodding clothes."

"Oh. Good point."

Xander directed his limbs to move, his fingers fumbling with his pants, struggling to open them. Seconds later, Spike's fingers pushed his away, quickly undoing the button and zipper before pulling Xander's pants and boxers down his legs.

"I think your kisses are evil."

Spike paused and grinned; a real grin, not a smirk. Xander had never seen it before, but that smile was breathtaking. "Evil?"

"Yeah, they make my brain and fingers stop working. I can't get anything to cooperate," Xander whined.

Spike's grin turned evil as he crouched to pull off Xander's shoes before pulling his pants and boxers off the rest of the way.

"Don't worry about it," he said before kissing his way up Xander's stomach and chest. We'll just have to practice, and until then, I'll take care of you."

"You'll tutor me?" Xander asked, grinning widely.

Spike smiled as he shook his head and rolled his eyes. "Yeah, I'll tutor you."

Xander opened his mouth to speak, but before he could, Spike was laying on top of him and kissing his brains out, rocking their bodies together. And once again, Xander's brain went offline, leaving him at the mercy of his body, only able to wrap his arms around Spike's neck and hang on for the ride. It all felt too good, the drag of his cock against Spike's, the kisses, the feeling of being cherished.

Spike broke the kiss and moved away, stretching across the bed to dig in the nightstand.

"Damnit, stop stopping," Xander ordered, distracted by the sight of Spike's lean torso stretched above him. Xander rested his hands on Spike's chest, palms and fingers gently tracing his muscles. The pale skin moved and soon, Spike was kneeling over Xander once again, a bottle in one hand.

"Lube? I'm pretty sure I didn't buy that."

"This won't be the first time I've come in this bed," Spike explained, grinning as he squirted some onto one hand.

Xander's cheeks flamed as erotic images skittered through his mind. "I should be mad at you for using my body in such a fashion, but all I can think about is you jerking off in your body. Kinda hot."

"Kinda?"

"Okay, really hot. Maybe-ooohhhh...."

Xander's eyes rolled back in his head as Spike wrapped a slick hand around both their cocks.

"Oh sweet dancing Jesus," Xander whimpered, arching his back.

Spike reclaimed Xander's mouth, their tongues writhing together while one hand stroked them in tandem. Xander started grinding up against Spike with abandon, small moans escaping from his throat.

Spike moved his mouth Xander's throat, nipping at the skin there while Xander babbled. "Oh God, that's, yes, there, please."

Spike raised his head to look into Xander's eyes. Xander met his gaze, staring up into bright blue eyes.

"Gonna come, Xan? Shoot all over us?"

Xander swallowed before he started panting, nodding. "Yes," he rasped. His back arched further as muscles in his body began to tense and lock.

"God, please Spike," he whimpered. "Please."

"Yeah, that's it. Come on, pet," Spike urged, speeding up the pace of his hand.

Seconds later, Xander squeezed his eyes shut, crying out wordlessly as he spilled over Spike's fist and his own belly. As pleasure spiraled through him, he heard Spike's choked off curse, followed by a cooler release that joined Xander's.

Spike collapsed beside him, pulling Xander against him. They lay there, sated and content, Spike listening to the slowing of Xander's frantic heartbeat. Moments later, Xander spoke.

"So, I was wondering. Can we go on an actual date?"

Spike chuckled in the dark. "Anything you want, pet."

The End