

*I had [👤kyrieane](#) prompt me to write. She gave me Xander and a guitar and this is what came out.*

*Well, [👤kyrieane](#) and I have created... something. Anyway, I started with Serene, then she followed with a drabble and a ficlet. Basically, the story line is this: Xander has a secret that Spike discovers, but doesn't exploit. A year later, Anya has left Xander and Spike is there to help.*

*Just so we're clear, this belongs to my Kyri. She has claimed it. And it is nothing like that I usually write...*

*Rating: PG for language*

*Warning: This is kinda sad. Very unusual for me. You are warned.*

## **Fine Tuned**

by

Randy Sex Kitten and Kyrieane

Part 1

Serene

Spike looked up as an unusual sound caught his attention. Someone was... singing? He dropped the

pillowcase down to the ground and dropped the last few feet, pushing away from the tree as he landed. Checking to make sure all of the items he had 'borrowed' were still intact, he moved over to the window, wondering who would be singing at this hour.

As he peered into the Harris's basement window, he smiled maliciously. "Xander Harris, playing a guitar. Will wonders never cease?" He watched for a moment before slinking back over to the tree and hefting the pillowcase to his shoulder. He slunk off into the night, headed towards Willie's and a nice glass of human.

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Spike stood outside the window, kicking himself mentally for being here at all. "He's got my blood, only reason." After lying reassuringly to himself, Spike squatted down outside the basement window and wiped at it with the sleeve of his shirt, looking in.

Xander sat on the pull out sofa, propped up on the back, his bare feet flat on the bed. Spike watched

his fingers as they moved along the neck of the guitar. Xander was smiling. A soft smile that spoke of relaxation and comfort. Soft chords filtered through the night air and Spike settled in to listen.

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Spike crushed out his cigarette, making sure to leave it on the street before he prowled up the yard, ducking down as the front door slammed open and a couple came out, their voices loud as they argued over a choice of perfume. The pair climbed into the car and disappeared. Spike moved closer to his window, dropping quickly to his knees when the music began once again.

Three weeks of watching and listening and sitting had left its mark. The ground was softer than it once was, conforming to the vampire and offering a comfortable place for him to rest as he watched his human.

Xander was also in his normal position, propped up on his bed, knees bent as he strummed his guitar. Spike watched as Xander's bottom lip disappeared into his mouth and was nibbled thoughtfully. A few

adjustments and Xander stopped, leaning over the side of his bed, reaching for something that Spike couldn't see.

A notebook was tossed up on the bed, followed by a pencil. Xander flipped through the pages, only picking up the pencil when he came to the page he wanted. Spike listened and watched as Xander jotted down notes, singing quietly under his breath.

Spike noticed the smile that always appeared when Xander played. He tapped his foot in time with Xander's singing, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere.

The phone rang and Xander looked at it reproachfully before sighing and laying down his guitar. "What? Of course I wi... I said yes! Yeah, I'll be there in a minute, Will, I have to... Ok, ok! I'm leaving!" Xander slipped on his shoes and socks before digging through his closet for a shirt. He moved to the door and disappeared.

His guitar lay on the bed, temporarily forgotten.

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Spike watched eagerly from his perch as Xander arrived home. Tonight was the night. After two months of waiting, Spike had finally gotten together enough money. As soon as the basement door shut, Spike dropped from the tree, landing noiselessly. He moved to the window and watched as Xander noticed the box on the bed.

Spike grinned to himself. "Open it, you wanker." Xander moved cautiously towards the bed, his hand reaching out for the box. He paused and looked at the phone. "No, no, no... Just open it!" Spike encouraged softly.

Xander seemed to come to a decision and sat down, dragging the oversized shipping box into his lap. He tore at the tape, finally succeeding at getting the lid opened. Spike bounced in place as Xander's eyes widened. "Oh."

He lifted the case from the box, caressing its smooth lines, looking at the closet guiltily. Xander's eyes dropped back to the case in his hands. His fingers moved and Spike could hear the locks on the case pop open. Xander raised the lid and gasped. "Oh!"

The case and box tumbled to the floor as Xander pulled out the guitar. Spike began to breathe as Xander's fingers moved across the wood. Spike had searched for weeks for the perfect accompaniment for Xander's music and believed that he had found it.

The guitar was a Washburn. It had a Dreadnought body, the front Spruce and the sides and back Hawaiian Koa. The fingerboard was inlaid with Mother of Pearl diamonds and Abalone decorated the body and headstock.

The exotic Koa had cost Spike a bit more, but he had liked the color, the sound, the feel. He moaned as Xander's fingers touched each inlaid piece and traced the logo adorning the headstock. "So beautiful... But who?" The guitar was suddenly clutched against his chest as he stood, walking towards the windows and peering out into the night.

Spike leaned against the wall, only daring to walk away when he heard the case snap shut once more.

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Xander was gone. The basement empty. Spike stood under the tree, which had supported him as he gazed at Xander every night over the past year, enjoying the serenity that surrounded him when his human played.

He sighed, leaning his head against the tree, listening to the music that was forever in his mind. And it was only for him. None of the other Scoobies had ever seen Xander's guitar. He knew that now. Music was something that Xander didn't share. With anyone.

Spike crushed out his cigarette and walked back to the street, wondering if Xander would still play now that he had moved in with the demon bint.

Spike walked past their apartment, listening closely. The only sounds he heard were Xander's voice raised in anger, Anya's in tears, and the baby's cries of hunger.

## Part 2

Xander lay curled in the dark, holding his precious daughter close. Her tiny fingers clutched and kneaded his thumb, her other little pink hand fluttered around the curve of her bottle. Greedy lusty noises gurgling in the back of her throat.

Leah Quinn Harris, adored by her father, abandoned by her mother. Anya had bailed sometime last night, and Xander didn't know if she was coming back. He really didn't know if he wanted her to come back.

Quinn's murky blue eyes slowly drifted shut, her tiny mouth released the nipple with a quiet pop. Xander smiled down at her, and pulled the bottle away. He rested his palm on her chest, amazed when she seemed to disappear under the breadth of his hand. Quinn's rapid pulse tat-a tatted against his flesh, filling Xander with a peace he had never known. This tiny child, this fantastic creature, his reason to live.

### Part 3

Xander passed Quinn to Willow, tucking the white ribbon of her bonnet back under her chin. She still carried the sweet scent of chrism and oil and freshly bathed baby. Willow gazed down at the trusting infant and sighed, then looked across the room towards Tara. This was their dream, and somehow it didn't seem fair that Xander was the one to have it come true for. She carefully locked the jealousy away, then handed Quinn to Buffy.

Buffy pressed a quick kiss to the infant's forehead, and whispered a quiet prayer. She really didn't have hope that the baptism would protect her almost niece, but after everything she had seen, one more blessing couldn't hurt. Giles was next, and he cradled Quinn in his rough hands like she was the most precious artifact he had seen. In some ways she was, this tiny child was the embodiment and essence of everything they had been fighting towards. Risking their own lives on a daily basis, in hopes that the next generation would live safer lives.

A quiet noise from the doorway caught Xander's attention. Spike gently closed the door, and stepped fully into the apartment. Xander stared in

amazement at the blonde vampire. Gone was the black t-shirt and jeans, in their place were carefully creased slacks, and a soft gray sweater.

"May I?" Spike held his hands out towards Quinn, Xander noticed they were trembling and paler than normal. He nodded, not trusting himself to speak for some reason. Giles dropped a kiss to Quinn's head, then placed her in the outstretched arms of the vampire.

Spike gazed down into her alert blue eyes, and felt something sizzle and flicker across his flesh. A knowing, an understanding. This child was special. He brushed his thumb down the bridge of her nose, hissing slightly when the holy oils came in contact with his skin, but didn't pull away. Xander watched as long moments passed, holding his breath as Spike caressed his daughter's face.

"I...I wanted to see the priest anoint her with the chrism...but I..." Spike looked up, suddenly feeling foolish and out of place. His eyes caught Xander's and he held Quinn out to her father.

"She likes you, I think." Xander smiled, trying to reassure Spike, "I'm glad you wanted to be there, I understand why you couldn't. But you are here now, and that counts." He put his hand on Spike's

shoulder, gently guiding him to the rocking chair.

“Hold her while I warm up her bottle?” Xander waited until Spike was comfortable, with Quinn tucked tight against his chest, then began to usher the rest of his guests out.

“Ok, ladies and Giles, party time over. Time for lunch and then a nap!” And all too soon, Spike was left alone with Quinn and Xander.

He looked back down at Quinn, smiling when she began to coo and purr. Two tiny hands reached out to touch his face, petting and stroking the curve of his jaw. From the depths of his memory, he pulled his favorite childhood tale.

*In the time of swords and periwigs and full-skirted coats with flowered lappets-when gentlemen wore ruffles, and gold-laced waistcoats of paduasoy and taffeta-there lived a tailor in Gloucester.*

*He sat in the window of a little shop in Westgate Street, cross-legged on a table from morning till dark.*

*All day long while the light lasted he sewed and snippeted, piecing out his satin, and pompadour, and lutestring; stuffs had strange names and were*

*very expensive in the days of the Tailor of Gloucester.*

Xander stood propped against the kitchen doorjamb, letting the comfort and peace of the scene wrap and settle around him. And never thought to question it. Spike just looked so *right*, softly reciting *The Tailor of Gloucester* to Quinn. Like that's where he belonged. Xander felt something broken in his heart begin to heal.

Spike glanced up as Xander approached, letting the warmth in his soft brown eyes wash over him.

"Think she's asleep." Spike whispered, vague memories telling him that infants woke to sudden sounds. He felt an odd reluctance when Xander reached down to take Quinn from her nest in his arms.

"She takes comfort from you, feels safe in your arms." Xander smiled knowingly. He had felt the same pulling sensation handing his daughter over to Willow. "I need to put her in her cradle though, she sleeps better there."

Spike gently handed her over, pressing a light kiss to Quinn's cheek. Singeing his thumb was one thing, lips quite another.

Xander carried Quinn into their room, standing next to her cradle and holding his daughter tight against his chest. Hoping to somehow express the total love he felt. Spike quietly followed, watching the pair from the safety of the doorway.

*"Piercing our hearts with thy pulchritude."* Xander's muffled laugh told Spike that his murmured words had carried across the silence of the room. Spike retreated, making it almost to the front door before Xander caught him.

"Hey, don't go." And just like that Spike was in Xander's arms. The hypnotic growl and purr of an alto sax drifted in through the open window, and Spike found himself swaying in time to Billie Holiday crooning about stars and Alabama. The steady thumps of Xander's heart an echoing backdrop to the gentle brassy drums.

"Ya know," Xander mouths the words into Spike's crisp golden hair, "I know what 'pulchritude' means. Fancy little thing on the 'net called word of the day. And I'm not." Spike nuzzles closer, breathing in the mingled scents of father and daughter. Started thinking words like 'perfect' and 'home'. With a start, he realized Xander was still quietly talking.

“I found this word, and thought for the longest time that it fit you, but it doesn’t. Not really.” The music changed, Billie now sang about wandering and finding and being true.

“Etiolate. But...you aren’t. You’re...vibrant and bright.” Spike can hear the crack and pop of Xander’s knuckles as he struggles to not hold tight, to not clutch at the body held close to him. He can smell the loneliness and restlessness pouring out like warm oil.

“M’not breakable.”

Xander stilled, drawing in a tiny muted gasp, then crumpled to the floor. Spike let himself be tangled in a mass of arms and legs tucked Xander’s head under his chin and absorbed his tears.

There were no words, no muffled sobs or pointless recriminations, just the silent tears of an overwhelmed man. Spike waited until Xander calmed, then pushed gently on his shoulders. Xander immediately scooted backwards, the scraping sound of his hard-soled shoes accusingly loud.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have...”

Spike cut his words off with a razor-sharp look. "You are not alone, Xander. I...I'm here."

Xander stared, eyes dancing between hope and disbelief, then he nods once, quick and jerky motion that dropped his hair down into his eyes.

Spike was home, and that's all there was to that.

"So, lunch?" Xander climbed to his feet, holding a hand out to help Spike up. As he slid his hand into Xander's, he felt the same frission and pop that he had holding Quinn. Something special indeed.

The meal was simple, a casserole that Joyce had brought, cookies from Willow, champagne snuck in by Giles. Spike grinned as he popped the cork, Xander ducked when it flew over his head and watched as it landed in the Jell-O mold cranky Mrs. Adman from down the hall had left. A banquet fit for paupers, spread out on the living room floor, bedroom door cracked just enough to hear any stirring noises. Their quiet chatter and soft laughter covered the rumbles and sighing of the wind outside. Quinn's startled cries timed perfectly with the flash and crack of lightning striking somewhere south of the apartment. Xander was on his feet and through the bed room door before

Spike.

While Xander calmed and soothed his daughter, Spike rummaged through the fridge, pulling Quinn's bottle from the shelf and starting water warming on the stove.

"Thanks Spike." Xander watched, hip resting against the table, Quinn tucked up against his shoulder. Spike nodded over his shoulder.

"This should be done by the time you've got her nappy changed." Xander laughed quietly, and wondered to himself how he was going to explain to Quinn's teachers about her other father.

#### Part 4 Learning to Live

It was gone.

Spike had searched the entire house. Quinn shifted uncomfortably in his arms and grunted at him.

Glancing down, he loosened his grip, bouncing her lightly as he flopped down on the couch.

Quinn cooed at him and Spike smiled. He had hoped that this would happen, that Xander would trust him enough to leave his daughter with him. It was their routine now. In the two months since he moved in with the pair, he had fallen more and more in love with Quinn... and her father.

But the beautiful Washburn was gone. Nowhere to be found.

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Xander walked in to a familiar scene. Spike was on the couch, purring lightly in his sleep with Quinn lying on his chest, snoring in that sweet baby way that she had.

He quietly dropped down to the floor next to the pair, contemplating everything that had happened in the last three months.

Anya left. Leaving him and their baby girl. Their baby. Tears filled his eyes when he thought of his

Quinn having to go through life without a mother. Quinn began to shift, wriggling around on Spike's chest. Spike purred louder and patted her tiny rump. Xander's hand, which had automatically reached out when she began to fuss, dropped to his side.

Xander smiled, closing his eyes and laying back on the floor, enjoying the sounds of the happy baby and her vampire.

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Spike pattered around the house, trying to ignore the cries that were filtering through the walls of the house.

That level of pain was something he didn't know how to deal with, didn't know how to fix. Too many years spent causing pain prevented him from being able to help with this.

"Bababa!" Quinn called to Spike and he moved over to her bouncing saucer and smiled down at her.

"It's Spike, love, not Bababa." He touched a finger to her cheek and received a gummy smile in return.

Another cry of pain, and Spike closed his eyes against it. He couldn't let it touch him, couldn't let it get near. When Xander was ready, Spike would tell him how falling in love again was the only way Dru's betrayal had faded from agony to misery in

his heart. He would tell him how kind brown eyes and dark, warm skin had replaced her insane ramblings in his heart.

Someday. When it didn't hurt so badly.

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Xander closed his eyes, his head resting against the hard wood of the door. He was so tired. Tired of work, tired of home, tired of Spike, tired of Qui... No. He stood up and shook his head roughly. No. He wasn't going to do this, wasn't going to let it in again.

Taking a deep breath, he unlocked the door.  
"I'm..."

He could hear Spike and Quinn in the bathroom, water splashing, Quinn laughing. Spike's voice was low, teasing as he spoke to the nine month old.  
"Now stop, love. Want to be gorgeous for Daddy."

Quinn's voice was too sweet to be described and Xander smiled as he heard her slightly accented words. "Sing, Baba."

“It’s Spike, Quinnie, not Baba.”

Xander smiled. It was an ongoing battle between the vampire and the child.

“Sing, Baba.”

Spike began to sing and Xander’s jaw dropped. He hadn’t heard those words, that tune in almost a year. His fingers began to twitch as he thought of caressing his guitar, drawing out the music that hid deep within. His mind’s eye moved to his beautiful guitar, locked up where no one else could ever find it, but where he could see it every day.

His heart filled with music and he moved away from the door, walking to the kitchen, wondering if he remembered how to make pancakes.



Spike shrugged his shoulders, guiding the leather into place, its heavy weight comforting. He walked through the living room after blowing a kiss to a sleeping Quinn.

“Later, Xan.”

Xander looked up from the notepad on his lap, a guilty expression fleetingly crossing his face.  
“Where are you going?”

Spike bounced on his toes and grinned. “Gonna go kill something.”

Xander rolled his eyes. “Well, have fun!”

Spike grinned and stalked out the door. Xander laughed at the persona that clung to Spike like a cloud. He grinned and turned back to his notepad, tapping his pencil on his lips before jotting down a few more notes, humming quietly under his breath.

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Quinn’s party was finally over. She was asleep on Spike’s shoulder, her sticky fingers having left a trail of blue from his ear all the way down to his collar.

Xander smiled at Spike and attempted to pry the

stick of candy from his daughter's hand. "She's filthy, Spike."

Spike chuckled and knelt down on the floor, laying Quinn down and unbuttoning her dress. "That she is, Xan. A lot like her Da, she is."

Xander snorted as Spike finished stripping the girl and tossed her diaper towards the overfull trashcan. He leaned down and accepted a waking Quinn. "Time for a bath, sweetie."

Quinn rubbed her eyes and peered around the room. "Where Baba?"

"Right here, love." Spike waved at her from the floor. Quinn waved back, smiling over Xander's shoulder as he took her in to bathe.

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Spike had looked all over and he couldn't find it. Xander was too good at hiding things. A growl escaped his lips and the little girl toddling along behind him began to giggle. "Monster face, Baba! Monster face!"

Spike spun, vamped and pounced. Quinn shrieked with laughter as Spike rubbed his face into her stomach, growling and nipping. They spun around, laughing. Quinn's fingers lightly traced the demon's lines, smiling sweetly. "Pretty Baba. So pretty."

Spike's eyes began to water slightly and he sniffed, forgetting that he was looking for an intriguing but closely guarded notepad. Forgetting everything but the precious bundle in his arms. His face dropped into his human planes and Quinn leaned in, pressing a kiss to his lips. Her chunky baby fingers patted his face. "Love my Baba."

Movement at the door and Quinn wriggled down, racing toward the front of the house. "Daddy!"

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Late night and two men sat on the couch, exhausted after a day of play. "She like that everyday?" Xander turned his head to the side to look at Spike.

“Yeah. All the time.”

“Don’t know how you do it, Spike.” Xander turned back to staring at the ceiling.

“Can’t not to it. Love her.” Spike’s eyes dropped closed and he smiled.

Xander looked at the vampire again. Spike was beautiful in repose. Xander reached out, touching one sharp cheekbone. The connection that he had felt so long ago, the feeling of rightness that had prompted him to invite the vampire into his home was still there.

Spike turned into the touch and purred lightly, almost asleep. Xander grinned and settled back into the couch, his own eyes shutting.



The rain poured down.

Xander sat on the porch, tipping back his beer, watching as Quinn rocked along beside him in the chair that he built for her.

She cocked her head to the side, and looked at her father. "Daddy?"

Xander turned and smiled, his daughter's faint British accent once again capturing his attention. "Yes, baby?"

"You love Baba?"

Xander turned back to watching the storm, wondering at the observation skills Quinn had developed. "Yes, Quinn, I love Spike." As he spoke, Xander realized that it was true.

Quinn, happy with his answer, turned back to the storm, rocking solidly back and forth.

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Xander was nervous.

He double checked the door, making sure that the deadbolt was open, wondering when the vampire would get back. Xander had sent Quinn home with Willow, Tara and Bonnie, the eighteen month old

eager to go help take care of the new baby.

Xander had set the mood; the lights were off, only candlelight shone throughout the house. He drank down the rest of his coke and waited for his vampire to return.

As the last candle began to flicker and die out, Xander fell asleep.

## Part 5 Kissing

The door closed behind him as Spike snuck into the house. He'd been out on a killing spree, trying to get control of his emotions once more. Too much. Too much had happened with Xander and Quinn... Spike smiled as he thought of Quinn, the light of his life.

He listened for her heartbeat as he dropped his duster to the floor in the mudroom. He panicked and raced up the stairs, heading for her room. Her

bed was empty, the toddler bed that Xander had carved lovingly over many long weekends was untouched. Her duck was missing, though and Spike smiled. Must have gone home with the witches.

He walked back down the stairs, following a second heartbeat to the living room. Xander was asleep on the couch, surrounded by burned out candles, a warm smile on his face.

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Xander woke as he was lifted into strong arms. "Spike," he murmured, snuggling down against a cool chest.

He groaned as he was placed on his bed, stretching out sleep-stiffened muscles. He tugged Spike down on the bed with him, pulling him close and falling back to sleep.

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Spike woke to warm arms wrapped around him. He stretched, his toes popping as he pointed them towards the foot of the bed. Xander was still sound asleep, snoring lightly. Spike heard a scrabbling noise, recognizing it at once. He wriggled out from under Xander and headed for the stairs, meeting Quinn halfway.

She squealed and kicked her legs into the air, throwing Spike off balance and sending them stumbling down the stairs.

“Baba! The baby screams and he smells! Tara let me change his nappy! It was gross! Where’s Daddy? Why is your coat on the floor? Daddy!” Quinn ran for the stairs once more and Spike turned at a giggle.

Tara smiled and raised an eyebrow. “Wonder where she got that from?”

Spike grinned and waved a hand towards the kitchen. Tara moved forward and they sat down, discussing the joys of their children over tea.

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Xander's hands caressed the smooth wood of his guitar. He closed the lid reverently, rubbing the smooth case before walking away. He locked the door behind him and jogged to his car, his ever-present notebook in his hand.

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Another birthday.

Quinn screamed as Benjamin wriggled towards her. The baby giggled and the adults smiled down at the pair.

Spike walked past Xander, dropping his fingers down to brush against the other man's neck. Xander leaned back slightly and turned to smile up at Spike.

"Want to open presents?"

Spike nodded and Xander swooped in to grab his daughter.

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Spike climbed into Xander's bed, his movements slow and careful. Every night was the same, Spike sneaking into the bed in the middle of the night and Xander pretending that he didn't notice the bed shift.

They curled up together, waking in the morning with a warm body between them, her chattering beginning as soon as either of them opened their eyes.

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Spike closed his eyes, pretending that this wasn't happening. There was no way that this was happening.

He opened his eyes once more to discover that it was. Quinn stood over him, frowning; her tiny fists perched on her hips. "Baba! That is not how you do it!"

Spike sighed and picked up the doll, moving it as he spoke. "May I have more tea, milady?"

A snicker from the doorway alerted him to another presence and he growled, earning him a smack from his lady.

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Spike pressed Xander against the wall, their faces only inches apart. "You think it's funny, do you? The Big Bad playing tea?"

Xander tried to contain his laughter as he shook his head. Spike moved closer, enjoying the warmth of the body he slept next to every night. Suddenly, the laughter was gone. Their lips met, soft, warm. The truth behind this first touch burning them with its intensity.

"Daddy and Baba sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G!  
First comes love, then comes marriage, then  
comes Daddy with a baby carriage!"

Their kiss broke as they smiled, turning in unison to look at their child. Quinn grinned and bounced

back into her room, her dark ponytail swishing behind her.

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That night, Spike came to bed at the same time as Xander. They stood on opposite sides of the bed and smiled shyly, unsure as to what the kiss meant to their relationship.

Xander climbed in first and threw back the covers, silently inviting Spike in. As they curled around each other, Xander's voice was soft, "Wanted this for so long, Spike."

Spike turned, capturing Xander's lips once more. "Me, too."

Part 6  
Breakfast

“Baba?”

Spike woke with a start, jerking his head up and twisting to look at Quinn. “What, love?” He turned to look at the empty pillow beside him. “Where’s your Daddy?”

Quinn clambered onto the bed, snuggling close to Spike. “Daddy had to go out. He said that there was something that he had to do today. Can we make pancakes?”

Spike rubbed his eyes and nodded. “Course, love. Let me get dressed, yeah? Then we’ll make some cakes.”

“K Baba.” She pressed a kiss to his cheek and disappeared out the door.

“Oi! Put some clothes on!”

---

Pancakes were messy. He had no idea why he always agreed to make them. He was on the floor under the table, scraping up the last sticky chunk

from under Quinn's spot when he heard the door crack open.

"Spike?" Xander's voice sent a thrill down Spike's spine and he smiled.

"In the kitchen, love!"

Xander appeared in the doorway, his frown transforming to a grin when he saw Spike.

"Pancakes? How did she talk you into that?"

"Oh, shove off, Harris," Spike growled, shifting back and rising gracefully to his feet, only to trip over a tiny pink shoe covered in rhinestones and feathers. Xander caught him as he fell, taking the opportunity to catch him in a deep kiss.

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Later, after a shower, three glasses of water, a promise of a pony ride, and a snuggle, they sat in the relative quiet of the living room, pretending not to hear Quinn's feet pitter-pattering above them when she was supposed to be napping.

“So where did you go, love?” Spike asked, his fingers trailing up Xander’s arm.

“I had to go pick up something.” He stood, dislodging Spike, and walked to the other side of the room, reaching behind the couch and pulling out an all too familiar case, his eyes focused not on Spike, but the floor in front of him.

“I’ve heard you singing to Quinn. It took me a while, but I figured it out.” The case opened and Spike smiled at the sight of the beautiful guitar, obviously well-kept, no sign of two years of neglect anywhere on it. Xander came and sat next to Spike. “Thank you for this,” he whispered, as his lips met Spike’s.

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“Daddy! Benjamin is... Daddy!” Quinn’s shriek drew all the adults up the stairs, leaping over the gate at the top, and racing to Quinn’s bedroom.

Spike’s heart almost began to beat as he looked down at the pride in his daughter’s eyes. Quinn smiled up, not seeing Willow’s tears or Tara’s joy

as Benjamin let go of Quinn's finger and took a step toward the giant Tigger in the corner.

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Xander moved in closer to Spike, letting his hand drag down the smooth skin of Spike's hip, allowing his fingers to linger. "Spike," he whispered, sighing as Spike rolled, kissing him deeply.

"Oh, Xan," the words a gasp, breathed out between slow thrusts.

Clenching, shuddering, they reached completion, Xander's breath light, quick. Spike snuggled close, pressing kisses to his jaw and throat.

"I love you."

Xander wondered if he quit moving for just a moment, she would quit growing. It seemed like he'd just stopped carrying that damn diaper bag when the announcement for kindergarten registration came. So now it was a flurry of immunizations and dentists and eye doctors, Quinn had perfect teeth but needed glasses and Xander was worried about the kind of teasing she would get. He could almost wish Spike hadn't taught her how to double up her fist and swing, almost.

But here it was, first day of school and Quinn was clutching his hand tight enough to make his fingertips tingle and she understood why Baba couldn't be here in her class but Xander didn't like it one bit. There was just something not fair about standing in the middle of two dozen chattering women all dressed up in their Sunday best. But Quinn was smiling and making tentative friends with another little girl, Mrs. Hanscomb was just as uncomfortable with him in the midst of all that estrogen and ushering Xander out the door with promises of safety and fun and that his daughter would be in one piece when he came back to get her.

Quinn waved good-bye, vaguely in his direction, chattering and giggling in the middle of a pack of

little girls with their hair all done up pigtails and skirts with cartoon characters. Just like Quinn. She wasn't scared, she fit right in and made friends and she was going to be just fine.

Xander hoped he would be too.

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Xander only called Spike ten times during the day; Spike complained about the loss of beauty sleep on the fourth call and decided to give up the thought of sleep by the sixth. He called Tara, chatting for an hour about how she and Willow planned on surviving Ben's first day of school.

The things he did for love.

When Xander and Quinn came through the front door, Spike was ready. Coffee with a shot of Irish whisky for daddy, chocolate chip cookies with a side of milk for Quinnie, and a kiss for them both. Xander looked like he'd run a 10k marathon while their daughter looked bright and shiny if just a touch disheveled.

They'd survived their first day.

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"Baba, what's a queer?" Spike dropped the gallon of milk on the floor, whirling around to face Quinn.

"Where the hell did you hear that?" Quinn wondered if that was one of the words that was going to get her mouth washed out with soap, but Daddy always told her she could ask anything.

"Eric said that you and Daddy were queers when we talked about what our mommy and daddy's did at work all day and I said that I didn't have a mommy I had two Daddies well I have a Daddy and a Baba and I call you Baba cuz I have a Daddy and Daddy is a builder and Baba washes my clothes." Spike blinked a couple of times, wondering if all the Harris' were born with the ability to never breathe while talking, then sat next to Quinn and took her hand.

"First, calling a person queer like that is not nice. It's what stupid people say to make themselves

sound important. Queer means odd or different, and yes your Daddy and I are different, but we're not bad." Spike wasn't ready for talks like this, nobody had really questioned when he and Xander had gotten together, and they'd just accepted it as a natural progression of events. He wasn't ready to defend this part of their life to their daughter.

Quinn just blinked back, cocking her head then nodding once. "I told Eric that I had a dragon at home and if he couldn't be nice that I would make it come over and eat him when he was in bed sleeping."

"Quinnie! Puck is not a dragon, he's an Iguana, and I think he has better taste than that." Spike slumped against the counter, breathing out a sigh of relief when Xander came into the kitchen.

---

"I'm a housewife Xander."

Xander felt his heart stop and clutch and break. He'd had this conversation before. He sat on the bed behind Spike, wondering if this was the last

time they would be here together as lovers.

"I cook, I clean, I go to the grocery store every Thursday night with a wallet full of coupons. I have pin money, Xan. Pin money for fuck's sake."

"I understand." The words almost strangled him, but he really did. Spike wasn't cut out for this kind of life, wasn't meant to do laundry and bake cookies and sort Tupperware. "I love you." And that was all he had to offer.

Spike turned and glared at him. "I never said you didn't, Xander!"

Spike climbed out of bed and began to pace. He dove for the closet, grabbing a locked box from underneath a pile of jeans on the top shelf and, prying it open, grabbed a cigarette from inside and lit it with a flourish. "Just because I'm a bloody housewife doesn't mean I'm not a demon."

"I know," Xander intoned, his eyes following Spike as he paced angrily around the room.

"I want to kill, Xander. I want to tear and bite and rend flesh from broken, bloody bones!" Spike's demon roared to the forefront and Xander flinched back.

“Why?” Xander whispered.

Spike's eyes flared along with the tip of his cigarette and Xander watched, entranced, as the cherry raced down the length of the white sheath. Spike crushed out the butt and tossed it into the box, replacing it back on the shelf. Sighing, he turned to Xander.

“Someone hurt Quinn.”

“What?” Xander roared, leaping to his feet.

“Someone told Quinnie that we were queers, that there's something wrong with us being...” Spike waved a hand back and forth between them, brushing lightly against Xander's chest as he did.

Xander glared at Spike before reaching out and crushing him to his chest. “You can kill him, Spike, I'll understand.”

“No!” Spike shoved Xander back, where he stumbled and fell onto the bed. “I can't. Because it was a fucking baby who did it. Another five-year-old with big eyes and rosy cheeks and...” Spike sank to the floor. “I'm a demon, I'm a demon!”

Xander crawled off the floor and settled a Spike's side, pulling off his shirt and offering his neck to his lover. "I know. And I can't think of anyone else that I would have raise our beautiful girl."

Spike took the proffered throat in his hands, his head cocked to the side as he examined the smooth flesh. "I have to find something to do, Xan. I have to have something..."

Xander tilted his head a bit more, pressing closer against Spike. "I know. Whatever you want."

"I love you Alexander."

"I know," Xander said, as Spike's fangs slid home.

---

Spike walked into the house, grinning widely. Xander stood up from where he and Quinn were playing house with a Barbie, a Dracula doll and a Ken doll. "Well?" he prompted.

"I got it." Spike reached down and threw Quinn over his shoulder grabbing Xander's hand and

dragging them outside. He dropped Quinn into Xander's arms and dramatically yanked a sheet off a large sign. *Here There Be Dragons: Custom Choppers* shone in gold, green and red.

"You got it!" Xander wrapped his arms around Spike's neck and drew him in for a kiss. When he pulled away he grinned. "Now that you're a respected businessman, don't you think you have the responsibility of making an honest man out of me?"

Spike laughed as Quinn danced under the stars.

---

Quinn spun around the living room, making her dress fly out and then stopped suddenly, letting the fine lace twist around her ankles. "Daddy and Baba sitting in a tree..."

The doorbell rang and she ran for it, yelling, "It's time! Hurry!"

"Coming Quinn! Do not open that door!" Xander yelled down the stairs.

Flinging the door wide, Quinn began shouting instructions. "All the presents go on the table and the food needs to go outside on the table and don't forget..." She stopped when she saw the unfamiliar woman standing on the porch.

She was thin with red hair cut short and a wide smile that looked too large as she aimed it at Quinn. "Hello! Oh! You look just like Xander!"

Quinn moved to shut the door. "I'm sorry; I'm not allowed to talk to strangers." The woman looked shocked as the door shut in her face.

Spike thundered down the stairs, heading for the door. "Leah Quinn Harris, what have I told you about opening that door?" He stopped in front of his daughter and dropped down to his knees. "I know that you're excited, but that doesn't change the rules. Now off with you, to the corner."

Quinn's head dropped. "Yea, Baba. I just..."

Spike gave her a quick hug and swatted her on the butt. "Off you go. Break the rules..."

"... suffer the consequences," she finished. "Yes, Baba."

Spike was moving toward the stairs when he heard the doorbell a second time. Ducking his chin to focus on the layered satin wrapped around his waist, he yelled at the door. "Get in here, Glinda! I can't get this bloody thing to tighten..." he trailed off when he saw the woman standing in the open doorway.

"Anya?"

Part 8  
Something Old

Spike's demon had no doubts and no confusion.

*preybitchabandonedthemhurtkill*

He reined it back so hard that his gums burned from his fangs dropping and being yanked back over and over. Anya watched him with fear evident in her eyes, her hands clutching her purse and a crinkle between her eyebrows.

“Get out of my house.” The voice was clear and determined. Spike turned and watched as Xander walked down the stairs, Quinn attached to his thigh.

“What?” Anya asked tremulously.

“Get out of my house. We have plans this evening and attendance is by invitation only.” Xander reached down to pull Spike up, running his fingers across Spike’s brow in a long familiar touch that calmed the demon instantly.

“But Xander! I drove for several days and I am tired...”

“And there are at least seven hotels in town that I can think of off the top of my head.” Xander transferred Quinn’s embrace to Spike’s leg and moved to open the door. “Goodbye Anya.”

Anya looked dumbfounded as she walked out the door. Xander immediately turned, returning to his family.

“Daddy? Who was that?”

---

When Tara and Willow arrived, with Ben stumbling along between them, they found the atmosphere of the Harris house unusually somber.

"Spike? Xander!" Tara released Ben's hand and ran through the house, searching for the family's hiding place. She found the three wrapped around each other, all in the chair and a half that usually housed story time. Running her hands over all three of them, she tried to smile, to encourage, but three sets of eyes looked at her with such sorrow that it faltered.

"What's happened?" she asked, settling on the floor next to the chair, one hand wrapped around Spike's ankle, the other running over Xander's thigh.

"Any," Xander answered.

"Oh." Tara jerked her hands back and looked down, tugging at a non-existent thread on her skirt. "W.." She shook her head. "What did she..."

"She came into the house. She looked at Quinn," Spike's growl distorted his speech and he couldn't

seem to finish the rest of the sentence. Quinn wriggled closer to Spike, sliding her hands around his waist and resting her head on his chest.

"Why is she here?" Tara asked.

"I don't know."

---

*'Who that, Baba?'*

*'Where'd you find that picture, bit?'*

*'In the nono drawer. Who that?'*

*'That's Anya. She's the woman who carried you, who brought you to Daddy and me, and you know better than to get in Baba's drawer.'*

*'I was in her tummy?'*

*'Yep. Made her swell up like a tick, you did. Your Daddy spent hours rubbing her legs and feet, trying to get them to look like normal human feet and not ogre paws.'*

*'Ogre paws!'*

*'Big ogre paws that she would use to pick up the tiniest bits with her opposable big toes.'*

*'You're so silly, Baba!'*

*'Put up the piccie, love. Time for lunch.'*

---

Willow had Quinn and Ben in the yard, making sure that everything was in place for the guests. Spike had shifted into Xander's lap so that Tara could squeeze into the chair with them.

"So what are we going to do?" she asked quietly, her head resting on Xander's shoulder.

Xander's fingers shifted, scratching lightly at Spike's scalp. "We're going to finish getting dressed and we're going to get married. She's not going to ruin this day for us; we've been planning it for too long."

Spike turned and smiled at Xander, leaning forward and offering his lips for a kiss.

Tara grinned crookedly and leaned in to kiss Xander's cheek. "Less than an hour before the guests get here!" She bounded out of the chair, leaving the couple twined together in silence.

---

Soft music swelled, drawing the guests' attention to the door of the house. They turned to watch Quinn, decked in even more lace now that she had her hat on, and Ben walk up the aisle, carefully dropping orange petals and lavender on the ground.

Spike and Xander walked out together, following the children. They were dressed in identical tuxedos, black shoes, trousers and vests, white shirts, gray ties and full length black jackets. Several orange blossoms were arranged and slipped into their jacket pockets, peeking out from underneath the gray handkerchiefs.

They smiled and spoke with their guests as they

moved to the ivy-covered arch at the back of the garden. Giles stood serenely, waiting for the pair to finish greeting their friends and stand before him.

Willow and Tara stepped up to stand at either side, Willow to Xander's left, Tara to Spike's right, and they all turned their attention to Giles, waiting for the rest of the company to gather around them.

"Friends and family, we have come together today to join these two men. I have known this pair for longer than I would like to admit, and I am without a doubt the last person who would ever think that I would someday stand before Spike and Xander and not only consent to their partnership, but perform the ceremony myself." Giles smiled at the gathered crowd before turning to look at Xander.

"Alexander LaVelle Harris, do you promise to bind yourself to this man, promise to provide for and protect him and receive the same in return? Do you promise to treat him with the respect due your husband, and honor him above all others?"

Xander turned to smile at Spike, squeezing his hand. "I do."

Giles nodded and turned to Spike. "Do you, William

Victor Pratt, promise to bind yourself to this man, promise to provide for and protect him and receive the same in return? Do you promise to treat him with the respect due your husband, and honor him above all others?"

Spike's eyes found Xander's, both sets suspiciously damp as he whispered, "I do."

"You may exchange rings."

Spike turned to Tara while Xander accepted the heavy platinum band from Willow. They slid the rings onto each other's fingers, grinning when Quinn squealed in delight.

Giles smiled and lifted his head to glance at the crowd surrounding them. "As these two have professed their love and intentions before this group of friends and family, I declare them married. As we bind, so may we find. You may..."

Giles trailed off as the newlyweds kissed.

---

"I'm sorry, Anya, Xander isn't here. No, he's not at his house either. He won't be back until next Saturday. I'm sorry that you drove all this way. Of course *Leah* is with him, he's her father. No, I am not going to tell you where he is. Please don't call again."

Tara hung up the phone with a sigh, turning her eyes on her son and biting his left big toe.

## Part 9 Honeymooners

Xander sat on the soft white sand, his bare back against the rough bark of a tree, his knees bent and his feet buried deep. The residual heat warmed him up to his ankles and he wiggled his toes, strumming lightly at the guitar cradled in his lap.

A noise behind him made him look up and back, squinting at the cabin and the figure emerging from it. "She asleep?"

"Yup." Spike sprawled out across the warm expanse, far enough away so that he could see Xander's face while he played, but close enough to touch him. Xander smiled down at his husband and let his fingers move, first humming and then singing the words that were so close to his heart.

The words faded, but the soft notes continued. "I remember finding you the first time in that disgusting basement, wondering what in the hell you were doing. But then, I realized the beauty, the pure joy that you received from playing and I lost myself in it. I fell in love with you then, even if I didn't realize it at the time."

These oft repeated words made Xander grin and carefully place the Washburn on the towel beside him. He moved, covering Spike's body with his own and stealing a kiss. "And I fell in love with you when you singed your fingers on Quinnie's forehead while begging to be forgiven for not being at her baptism."

"Gits we are. We coulda been shagging for years before we were!"

They rolled over and around, kissing and teasing. Stripping out of their shorts they headed for the

water, laughing and howling over the sound of the crashing waves.

---

Spike shifted just a little, pulling Quinn even farther over his chest. Xander had put the hammock up earlier that day, then laughed himself hoarse watching Quinn struggle to climb up into it without flipping out the other side. Spike had watched the pair from the doorway, basking in the sense of *family*.

Quinn's fingers gently plucking at his shirt brought Spike out of the memory.

"She's not coming back, is she Baba?" Spike instinctively reached down and smoothed out the furrows he knew were forming between Quinn's eyes.

"Well pet, it's like this. Daddy and I have some unfinished business with Anya, and once that's all over, she'll be gone for good. All right?" He swung his foot over the edge of the hammock, kicking a couple of times and making their nest sway.

"She's not a person, but she's not like you either. And she smelled bad. And I think she would have been scary if you and daddy hadn't been there. And I love you Baba and I'm glad we're all married now."

---

"Do you have everything?" Tara asked.

"Yeah. Thanks for going to the bank and getting them," Xander answered, flipping through the thick files.

"I can't believe we really need them."

"I know." A shriek and a howl made Xander look up and grin as he watched Quinn and Spike race into the living room. Quinn clambered over and behind the couch, Spike flying after her.

"We're gonna get you!" Two faces appeared around the corner, one pale, one dark, as Willow and Ben stepped quietly in the room, Willow listening for sounds and Ben looking to Tara for a

clue.

“They went that way,” she said, pointing toward the dining room. Willow and Ben sprinted away while muffled giggles came from behind the couch.

---

“Have a seat.”

Anya perched nervously on the edge of the sofa, her eyes bouncing from Spike to Xander to the room at large.

Xander glanced around, wondering what it looked like to her. When she left, he and Quinn lived in a tiny one bedroom apartment that he could barely cover the rent on. Over the years, he had become more financially secure, and once Spike convinced him to allow him to contribute to their home as well, they were able to purchase a comfortable house.

Now their home was a reflection of the three of them. A small table in the corner held Quinn’s puzzles, one half-finished and waiting for her to

return. A pile of ragged stuffed animals were arranged carefully underneath it, each positioned to look out into the room. His Washburn sat on a stand next to his end of the couch, his notebook and pencils in the drawer there as well. Spike's chair and a half was well broken in because of all the time that the three spent in it, reading and laughing as a family, and when Quinn slept, sweating and grunting as they came together as one.

Spike sat in the chair now, his arms braced on his thighs and a murderous look in his eyes. Xander sat on the ottoman in front of the chair, close enough to help calm the demon, facing Anya on the couch.

"Xander," Anya started. "Why is Spike here? Where is Leah?"

Spike growled and leaned forward, his mouth opening as if to speak.

"Spike is here because this concerns him as well. We sent Quinn with Tara; they'll be back in a little while. We need to talk, Anya."

He pulled out the folder, spreading the contents over the table. Her eyes betrayed her confusion

and her mouth opened and shut as she tried to ingest all the information laid out before her.

"You left, Anya. You left me with a baby that was barely a month old." Xander paused, looking at her. "Do you know how old she is now?" He tilted his head as he watched her think.

Anya shook her head, her brow furrowing. "She's... she's four," she said decisively.

Spike growled again and Xander reached out to run his hand down one quivering thigh.

"Her birthday is in less than a month," Spike said quietly. "She'll be six."

Anya looked back at Xander, catching her lip between her teeth. "What is all of this?"

"You left. When Quinn was two, Spike and I decided that she needed a legal guardian in case something ever happened to me. We posted these in all the major newspapers across the country, Anya. We even posted them in some international papers." He held up the sheath of newspaper clippings, the weight of the paper making the folder sag. "We ran these ads for almost two years before the judge determined that it was long

enough. Once he stripped you of your parental rights, we had Tara assigned as her guardian." He pulled out two additional folders, opening them so that the legal documents inside could be seen.

"What?" Anya asked. "What does that mean, stripped of my parental rights?" Her eyes darted to the growling demon in the chair before focusing on Xander again.

"As far as the United States of America is concerned, you abandoned your daughter and have no rights where she is concerned. She is no longer yours." Xander watched as the awareness spread across her face.

"You can't do that!" She yelled. "You can't just take my child!"

"She's not yours!" Spike roared, leaping to his feet. "You abandoned her, and didn't bother to call, write or come back for six bloody years! You don't have a clue who she is. We're her family; you're just the body that carried her for us."

Xander stood and wrapped his arms around his husband, pulling Spike's head down to bury his nose in Xander's neck. Xander looked at her over Spike's trembling form. "We never told her that

you didn't want her. All she knows is that she has two Daddies and no Mommy and she's more than ok with that."

---

Xander dug his fingers into the soft flesh below Spike's hips, knowing that the bruises would only last a few hours but making them anyway. Spike twisted on the bed, fingers scrabbling at Xander's shoulders, impatient whines happening deep in his throat.

"Please Xan, no more, fuck me." But Xander couldn't, not yet. He pulled out slowly, shifting so the head of his cock hit just right, turning the whines into desperate growls.

He'd promised to make his husband forget both of their names before he was done, and obviously that hadn't happened yet. So he fucked Spike until his eyes glazed and his mouth went slack and he was so far gone he couldn't form any words, much less names.

And *then* fucked him hard.

---

“It’s almost time to go shopping for school clothes again,” Xander said thoughtfully. “Although, if certain people here would quit growing, we wouldn’t have this problem.” He looked speculatively at Quinn.

“Daddy! That’s what kids do!” Abandoning her puzzle, she flung herself at his chest, knocking him back in the chair. He grabbed her with his free arm and held out his guitar for Spike to take. Spike settled it on its stand and moved to the window, looking out into the night.

“Look at you! You just keep growing, and growing!” Xander poked Quinn in her rounded stomach. “I’m gonna quit feeding you.”

“No you’re not! All kids grow. That’s how we’re made,” she said matter-of-factly.

Xander tugged at Quinn’s legs to position her and then bent her back, tickling her thighs and belly while he teased her. “Nope, gonna quit feeding you and you’ll stop growing.”

“No! Baba! Tell him he has to feed me!”

Spike grinned over his shoulder at her upside down face and pointed to Xander. “Take it up with your Daddy.”

“Daddy! You have to feed me, it’s the law.” She struggled to sit back up, her face red and her eyes bright.

“Really? I don’t think I ever heard of that law. Spike?”

Spike turned from the window and moved toward them. “Nope, never heard that one. You sure that’s a law, Quinn?”

“Yes!” She squealed as Xander flipped her back over and Spike slid in and out of game face, nipping at her exposed belly. She shrieked and covered her stomach with her hands, reaching to tug her shirt back up and gasping out her argument. “Daddies have to feed their children!”

Spike pushed her back up, tugging down her shirt and kissing her on her forehead. “Don’t worry, Quinnie, I’ll sneak you food.”

Xander growled and yanked Spike into his lap as well and they wriggled around, each attempting to find a comfortable spot, delayed slightly by Xander stealing kisses from Spike and tickling Quinn. Finally they settled and Spike reached over the arm of the chair for their book of the week, *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*.

They quieted, losing themselves in the fairytale world of tiny bikes being run by mousy little 'ptbbbb' noises.

---

She stood in the flowerbed, arms curled tight around her chest, pressing the horrible ache deeper and deeper until it seemed to wrap around her spine. It should have been her in there, snuggled down next to Xander with their daughter cradled on their laps, it should have been... but it wasn't and never would be.

It never occurred to her, all those years ago, that her daughter would grow up or that Xander would move on. She'd thought she could just go, get rid of the fear and the tiredness and the frustration,

and come back to find everything perfect. Finally perfect.

And it was, just not for her.

The End

Christmas Interlude ~ Tree Top

*A Christmas Fic Card for  [auntyk](#)*

“Baba, up!” Spike swooped in and lifted Quinn high in the air.

“That good?” he teased.

“Stop, Baba!” Her laughter tinkled through the house like the glass bells that Tara had hung from their front doorstep.

Xander laughed, infusing the warm picture with his own distinct voice. "Spike, quit teasing. If she doesn't get to bed soon, Santa will pass us by."

Quinn turned an unhappy, scowling face to her Daddy before looking down at Spike. "No! No! No!"

Spike laughed and brought her down to his body, kissing the soft curls on her head. "It's alright, love. Here."

He lifted her slowly to the top of the tree and she carefully balanced the star atop the tree. Spike brought her back down and they walked over to turn off the lights in the room. Spike and Quinn settled on the couch next to Xander, all three staring at the beauty of their tree. The warm fire crackled in the fireplace as the soft sounds of a crooning Bing Crosby filled the room.

The End