

Pairing: Spike/Xander

*A/N: This is AU. There will be lots of things that are different.
You'll know when you see them*

Home

by

[Devo79](#)

Part One

Spike watched Xander stumble around with a stake in his hand. Amazing that the whelp had survived twenty years on the Hellmouth. Couldn't just be pure bloody luck. All the fledges moved closer except one of them. A blond young man. He looked frightened and his eyes seemed glued to the slayer's boy.

Xander didn't dust a single fledge. He only got in the way and Buffy finally had enough. Told the git to get out of her way as she made a move in the direction of the blond fledge. Xander looked at the fledge. The fledge looked away and started moving backwards. Stumbled over a tombstone and ended up sprawled on the ground.

The slayer giggled "Vampires. Always so graceful."

She stormed forward only to crash into Xander. The boy had moved as well. And while the two humans rolled around on the ground the fledge took one look at Spike, turned around and ran.

“Get off me, Xander.” Buffy snapped. Xander looked up. Smiled and got off the girl. Apologized and extended a hand. Buffy slapped it away.

“If your just gonna get in the way...” she started.

“Sorry. I just thought...” Xander looked ashamed but there was something...something else hiding in his brown eyes, in the curve of his shoulders.

“No...Look...I’m sorry Xander. You’re just human.” the slayer didn’t notice the Whelp cringe at her words. She was too busy making sure her clothes looked good.

Who the hell went demon hunting in a miniskirt?

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Spike was on his way back to the watcher’s house when he heard Xander’s voice.

“David?” the boy whispered. Spike walked closer. Making sure no one would notice him as he stood hidden behind

one of the larger tombstones. Xander was standing close to one of the crypts. The stake gone. "David?"

A figure moved out of the shadows. Stood uncertainly for a second then ran over and hugged the boy close. Xander ran strong calloused fingers thru blond hair.

"Shhh. David it's okay." he said and rubbed soothing circles on the fledges back "You're okay?" Xander pushed the young vampire a little away and looked him over.

"I-I'm fine, Xander." the fledge hugged the human close again and Xander sighed in relief.

"For a second there I thought..." his voice trailed off.

"I'm sorry." the fledge, David, mumbled against Xander's shoulder.

"Hey." the boy said and smiled down at the vampire "It's okay...I didn't have time to warn you."

"I..." the fledge looked down and suddenly grabbed Xander's hand "You're bleeding." the vampire said shocked. Spike felt every muscle in his body tighten. Getting ready to dust the fledge if he tried to...

“It’s just a scratch, David.” Xander said running his uninjured hand thru the fledges hair. The fledge whined miserably “Hey...” the human said.

“You’re hurt.” David whispered.

“Look...” Xander cupped the fledges face “There’s no point letting perfectly good blood go to waste ...is there?” David shook his head. “It’s okay, David. Really. Just remember to stop when I tell you.”

The fledge took the injured hand in his and held it reverently. Looked Xander in the eyes and lifted the human’s hand up to the fledge’s mouth. Xander didn’t stop caressing David’s face and neck with his other hand while the vampire fed.

“That’s enough.” Xander said and the fledge nodded and let go of Xander’s hand.

“Thank you.” David said and smiled. Xander smiled back and pulled the fledge into a hug.

“Sire.” David moaned.

Xander just hugged the vampire tighter and whispered into the blond hair “Pack.”

They stood like that for a few more minutes then Xander gently pushed David away and said “Go home. I’ll be there in an hour or so.” David nodded, turned around and left.

Xander just stood there for a moment watching the vampire disappear. Then he turned around and looked straight at Spike’s hiding place.

“If you tell Buffy...I’ll dust you myself, Spike.” With that the human walked out of the graveyard leaving a very stunned Master vampire behind.

Part Two

Xander entered the old abandoned house thru the backdoor. The front door was boarded up and if he didn’t want the old lady living across the street to call the cops he would have to leave the boards where they were.

The house was silent. David and the others would still be sleeping. At least for an hour or so. That meant Xander had some time to just sit around and think. He slumped

on the old couch and watched as the sunlight crawled across the old scratched floor and down the walls.

David had almost been dusted. Almost been lost. The fledge had spent the rest of the week trying to make Xander forgive and forget. What David didn't understand was that Xander never blamed him for the mistake.

He blamed himself.

Xander was the alpha. He made sure the pack was safe. Him. Not the fledge and Xander had failed. Hadn't had enough time to go back and tell the pack that the plans had changed. That Buffy would be patrolling a different cemetery than planned. He always tried to tell his pack when and where the Scoobies would be patrolling. When and where the pack would be in danger. When to stay at home and wait for Xander to arrive with a few bags of blood or when to wait for Xander to take them hunting.

Xander heard the floorboards creak behind him. He took a deep breath and scented the air.

"Hey Asta." Xander said as slim fingers played with the hair curling behind his ear. She giggled and swung around ending up sitting in his lap. The bright green eyes always took his breath away. She was such an innocent girl. Turned too young. Only thirteen. She had been a fledge

for almost a year before Xander had found her hiding behind a dumpster living off rat's blood. Asta had been so thin and ready to do anything for a decent meal. Anything at all. Xander had fed her his own blood and told her that all she had to do in return was stay safe. He'd gained an adoring fan for life that night.

"Timothy is getting restless." Asta said and pouted. Xander ruffled her hair

"Hey...not the hair." the fledge screeched. Xander just laughed and lifted the girl off him. He stood up just as Timothy came down the stairs. The big guy stepped around the hole in the last step.

"Hey Xander." the demon rumbled and scratched his shaggy fur. Xander smiled at the giant and just shook his head.

"You really need to comb your fur, Tim." the human said and Asta laughed. "Is David coming as well." Xander looked over at the stairs.

"He's still brooding." Tim growled and stomped over to the fridge in the corner. The demon grabbed some milk and drank straight from the carton.

"Eewww." Asta scrunched up her face.

“What?” Tim looked puzzled.

“Dude, I found a couple of hairs in my milk yesterday.”
Xander frowned.

“Sorry.” Tim mumbled and fumbled a bit with the milk carton.

“Just drink the rest.” Xander sighed.

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“David?” Xander sat down on the mattress.

They all slept in the same room on four mattresses. Tim usually slept in the foot end. Like a huge dog. Asta always managed to fall asleep halfway on Xander’s chest. David would snuggle up to Xander’s side and fall asleep with his mouth nuzzling the human’s neck. Now Alan was another matter. The minion would wait until they were all asleep and then he would curl around Asta.

Alan rarely spoke about his former life, about his human life, but Xander was almost certain the vampire had had children. Maybe a daughter. Alan would fuss about Asta needing to feed more and about Asta needing to stay

safe. The girl would roll her eyes but Xander knew she loved the attention.

“David...wake up.” Xander rubbed the fledge’s back. The blond stirred slightly. Mumbled and woke up. “Evening sleepyhead.” Xander smiled.

“Everybody go out?” David asked and sat up blinking sleepily.

“Waiting for you.” Xander said and kissed the fledge’s forehead.

“Sire.” David murmured and purred. Xander closed his eyes and let the sound wash over him. Let his breathing slow down and listen to his pack moving around the house. Asta humming and Tim stomping around. Alan was somewhere reading. David moved closer hands touching Xander’s chest and shoulders.

“No.” Xander whispered against the fledges ear.

“Just so you’ll forgive me, Sire” David mumbled. Xander pulled away and looked David in the eyes.

“David...You don’t have to pay me. For anything...ever. I won’t love you less because you screw up. You don’t have to submit like this...” Xander frowned “Never want you to feel like you need to pay for my love or my

attention...Pack!" he growled and David smiled and kissed Xander's cheek.

"Pack." the fledge agreed.

Part Three

Spike watched as Xander walked across the street. The whelp scanned the surroundings then looked back at the abandoned house he'd just walked out off. He whistled and a giggling young girl ran out of the house and practically jumped the boy. Xander laughed and swung her around.

The fledge from the cemetery walked out next and behind him a man in his late thirties followed. Xander let go of the girl and the two other men gathered around the whelp. They seemed to be waiting for something.

That something turned out to be a furry giant.

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“Where are we going, Xander?” Asta asked impatiently.

“I was thinking we’d go see if we could find some prey.” Xander said and clapped Timothy on the shoulder, well as close to the demon’s shoulder as he could reach. The guy was huge. Tim rumbled his approval. Xander knew how much the demon hated wearing clothes and having to wear a trench coat, a cap and a scarf really made Tim grumpy. And not in a Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs kind of way.

“I was kinda getting hungry.” David said and clung to Xander. The human wrapped an arm around the fledge’s waist and smiled.

“Where?” Tim asked.

“The park...there’re some pushers there selling drugs to kids from the high school.” Xander took Asta’s hand and started walking.

“Filth!” Alan growled and Tim nodded.

“And they say we’re evil.” David whispered.

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Spike watched them hunt. Xander didn't really participate. The whelp observed. Pointed out the victim and then stood back and let his pack play and feed.

When the vampires were done the huge furry demon took over and munched on the flesh. Xander didn't as much as flinch when David chastely kissed him right on the mouth. Blood still colouring the fledge's lips crimson.

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"Xander and David sitting in a tree K-I-S-S-I-N-G..." Asta sniggered happily, high on the fresh blood.

"Shut up." David said and poked his tongue at her. Xander stood up straight and looked around. Something was different. He felt restless and exposed. The pack immediately stopped joking around and stood still...waiting.

"We're going home." Xander announced.

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“Hey everyone!” Xander stumbled thru the door and waved awkwardly with one hand while the other was holding on to a box of donuts.

“Xander...My donut hauling hero.” Willow grinned and took the box from the boy. Xander smiled at her then he noticed Spike and for a split second the whelp’s whole demeanour changed.

Spike wondered how the boy did it. How he could be the slayer’s bumbling clumsy friend *and* the ruthless pack leader the vampire had seen in the park. The two Xander’s seemed to be complete opposites.

“Xander.” Buffy interrupted Spike’s and Xander’s staring match. The boy turned around and the Scoobies started talking about this weeks demon threat.

“Well.” Spike got up from the watcher’s comfy couch “I’ll be leaving then.” Buffy looked at him and nodded “Unless there’s some ugly demon bloke ya need me ta slaughter.”

“Not tonight. But...” Buffy turned and looked at Giles “Is it okay for the blond undead to leave like that?” she asked. Giles sighed and looked much older than he really was.

“Yes. It’s quite all right, Buffy.” the watcher said “Spike knows that he needs to be back here at least four hours before sunrise or I won’t let him in.”

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The bloody watcher and his bloody rules.

Don’t use *that* mug for your blood. Don’t listen to that racket on my stereo. Don’t read my private journal. Like the old git had anything interesting to write about.

Every entry should read: *Was bloody boring today. As always. Cleaned my glasses. A lot. Went to bed.*

“Fucking white hat!”

Spike was enjoying his internal rant when he saw a certain blond fledge walk out of the cemetery.

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“Well well well.” Spike drawled “If it isn’t Xander’s little fuck toy.” The young fledge tried to get away but Spike had a good grip on the vampire’s shirt.

“No...let go.” David went into game face as he started to panic. This was a Master vampire. David knew he didn’t stand a chance if Spike decided to rip his head off.

David had spent a few hours just walking around the cemetery. He hadn’t hunted. Xander didn’t like them to go hunting on their own. All David had done was watch as the other vamps, the normal vampires, had fought a bit among themselves. He had been on his way home. Home to Xander and the pack. He hadn’t expected something like this to happen.

“So what? Ya got him hooked on the vamp bites? He get off when ya feed off him?” Spike asked and slammed David against the dumpster in the alley.

“Feed off Xander...b-bite him?” the fledge looked horrified “No! No man! Are you crazy?” David curled up when Spike’s fist connected with the fledge’s stomach. “He...h-he saved me...” he gasped.

“He’s human.” Spike growled. David snorted.

“He’s Xander...He’s the nicest guy I’ve ever met. He saved me when the soldiers were done with me.” the fledge whispered quietly. Spike let go of the vampire and stepped back.

“What?” the Master vampire asked, his voice strained
“Ya don’t have a chip. I saw ya hunt and kill.”

David shook his head “They didn’t lock me up like they did you.” the fledge tried to straighten his t’shirt “Dude, you ruined my shirt.”

“What did they...” Spike was interrupted.

“You okay, David?” Spike and David turned around and watched as Xander and the furry giant walked into the alley. The huge demon rumbled maliciously at Spike but stopped when Xander patted his woolly arm.

“I...I’m fine, Sire.” David mumbled, walked over to Xander and got a hug. “Can we go home?” David asked quietly and Xander nodded. Spike watched the boy and the fledge leave the alley. The huge demon turned his attention to Spike.

“If you touch him...” the demon warned.

“Don’t worry.” Spike said “Won’t be touching your precious fledge.” Spike snorted.

“Wasn’t talking about David.” the demon growled as he stomped out of the alley.

Part Four

Xander was sitting on the edge of the mattress watching his pack. He hated the fact that he had to leave them unprotected while he went out and worked. Well if you could call leaving two fledges and a minion alone with a seven foot fuzzy demon unprotected. Xander ran his hand thru Tim's dark fur and smiled when the demon started humming in his sleep.

Tim had been banned from his clan. He hadn't been bloodthirsty enough. Wasn't into playing with his prey. Didn't revel in causing humans pain. The clan had turned its back on the gentle giant. Xander snorted. Gentle his ass. Xander had seen Tim rip an Initiative soldier apart. The giant could be ruthless and cruel to those that threatened the pack.

Xander remembered meeting Tim. Remembered how filthy the demon had been. Fur matted and caked with dirt. Xander had craved, wanted and needed a pack. Tim

had provided an outlet for Xander's need to protect and the two had been the beginning of their pack.

Xander hadn't had any intentions of expanding the pack. They didn't need anyone else. At least not until Alan had come along.

"Xander." Asta mumbled and turned around.

"Hey pretty girl." Xander said and kissed her cheek. She sighed and stretched.

"Always so cold when you leave." she pouted and Xander shook Tim's shoulder.

"Wake up, Tim." Xander said quietly "It's your turn to be the hot water bottle." Tim grumbled but slowly made his way over Alan and plumped down between Asta and David.

"Xander?" Asta propped herself up on her elbows and watched the human stop by the door.

"What, Sweetie?" Xander asked.

"I need some new clothes." She knew Xander didn't earn much so she rarely asked for anything.

"We'll go to the mall after sunset." Xander smiled and left for work.

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“Bloody hell.” Spike cursed “Ya bints only got one body.” The vampire put the bags of newly acquired clothes down on one of the benches in the mall “What do ya need four pairs of jeans for. Can only wear one at a time.” Of course the slayer, the witch and Dawn didn’t pay him any attention. How could he compete with a *70% off* sign?

The Master vampire sat down on the bench and sulked. Then he noticed a certain young girl rummaging thru a pile of clothes outside the shop opposite the bench he was sitting on.

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“Xander...What about this one?” Asta held up a pink shirt. Xander walked over and looked at the shirt.

“Well...” the human said and tilted his head.

“What’s going on?” David asked and made sure to stand as close to Xander as possible. Asta noticed the sales assistant’s disapproving expression. She just turned her

back to the woman and looked at the shirt David had found for her.

“Well it’s very different than the one I wanted,” she said and touched the fabric.

“Yeah.” David admitted “But if you buy this one you still have enough money for a pair of jeans or a skirt.” the blond fledge pointed out. Xander was checking the exits...just in case. You never knew when a hasty exit was necessary.

“I’ll go try it on.” Asta squealed. David laughed and dragged Xander over to the jeans.

“You’d look really good in these.” David said.

“Naw.” Xander smiled “They’d look much better on you.”

“Yeah. Ya should listen to your Daddy.” Spike smirked when David flinched.

“Spike.” Xander simply said and walked past the vampire dragging David along.

“What?” Spike followed “Ya really think ya can keep this a secret. The slayer’s gonna find out sooner or later.”

“She hasn’t noticed yet.” Xander was trying to get to Asta. “Four years and she hasn’t noticed.” Get Asta and

get out. He stopped outside the fitting room. He could hear the girl sobbing.

“Asta?” Xander saw David move closer. The fledge’s hands hovering over the curtain.

“Sweetie?” Xander slowly pulled the curtain back revealing a curled up fledge clutching the shirt in her hands. “You okay?” Xander asked kneeling down next to her.

Asta clung to Xander. Mumbling against his neck “T-t-the m-mirror,” she stuttered. Xander looked up and into the mirror. He was alone. No Asta, no David, no Spike. Just him holding on to a green t-shirt and thin air.

He hugged her closer and whispered “You know about the mirrors, Honey.” she nodded. “Then why?” she burrowed her fingers into his back.

“Mom was the last one to take me shopping...W-we spent the whole day trying on clothes...” she sobbed. David helped Asta up and kissed her forehead murmuring soothingly.

Xander closed his eyes and got up. He stood there for a moment looking at himself. When he turned around Spike was standing right there. Watching him.

“Fragile little one.” Spike said quietly looking over his shoulder at David and Asta. The two fledges were hugging.

“She was turned too young.” Xander said. As he walked past Spike the vampire grabbed hold of the human’s arm.

“Ya sure you know what you’re doing, Xander?” Spike asked looking him in the eyes.

“No.” Xander admitted “But there’s nothing else I *can* do.” The vampire let go of his arm but Xander didn’t move “Don’t tell Buffy.” And it wasn’t a threat. It was a request.

“Not telling the slayer.” Spike said and watched Xander walk out of the shop with the two fledges.

Part Five

“You’re staying at home.” Xander said.

“What?” Asta looked at Xander “Why?” The teenager ran a hand thru her brown hair “It’s not fair!”

“Asta.” Tim growled and stomped past her and over to the backdoor.

“No. I wanna go with *you!*” she pouted.

“Look Asta...” Xander tried and took her hand in his “Buffy is out there tonight and Riley is back...” David shivered and Alan gave him a one-armed hug. “His team is gonna be out there as well.”

“So?” Asta was so not going to stay at home while the rest of the pack went out to hunt.

“Asta...Please.” David begged and moved closer to Xander. The human put a hand on the small of the fledge’s back “Just stay in tonight...We’ll get you some bagged blood.”

“And you guys can just go out and feed.” She crossed her arms “It’s stupid.” Xander took a step forward and grabbed on to her shoulder.

“You stay here!” he growled “Or do I have to tie you up and lock you in the bathroom?” Xander’s eyes looked more green than brown and the girl gasped. She shook her head. “Good.” Xander let go of her shoulder and took

a step back “We’ll bring back blood. We just need to get our hands on some money first...Okay?” the fledge nodded silently.

“We should go now, Sire.” Alan said “You still have to go to the Scooby meeting.”

“Yeah.” Xander said and walked over to the backdoor “Go to bed and wait, Asta,” the human said as he opened the door and left. Tim and Alan followed him. David looked back at Asta and smiled apologetically.

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“Yeah...” Xander said and looked at Willow “I lost my job. It was even something I liked doing. Building stuff.” Buffy made a sympathize sound as she ate her pizza slice.

“That sucks.” Dawn said and munched on one of the donuts Xander had brought along. Xander smiled at her and thought about Asta. David would be buying the blood now. Alan was probably with him. The blond fledge never went anywhere without company. Not since the Initiative had messed with him.

“So have you found a new job, Xander?” Giles asked and put a huge tome in front of the boy.

“Um...” Was tracking down drug dealers and letting his pack feed on them so he could take their ill-gotten gains a job? “Yeah I kinda did.” Xander said and lied “New construction site downtown.”

“Oh well that’s nice.” Willow said and started flicking thru the pages of a smaller book.

Spike smiled. He could smell the blood. Xander didn’t have any on his clothes so he must have stepped in it. Deceptive little bugger.

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Asta looked at the door. It wasn’t fucking fair. So what if the slayer was out tonight. Asta had survived alone for almost a year before Xander had found her and made her a part of the pack.

She shivered. She still remembered the things she had done in order to survive. Not nice things. No. But she had survived. Alone. She didn’t need to be cuddled.

She wasn’t a baby!

Asta put on her sweater and walked out of the house.

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Xander felt the need to get back to the house. He couldn't explain it. Maybe it was his argument with Asta. Maybe it was something else but he needed to make sure she was okay. That *they* were okay.

"Come on, Xander." Willow pulled him along with her as they entered the graveyard "Buffy says she's found a new vamp nest." Xander's stomach turned.

"Yeah. Okay." he mumbled and followed her. After a few minutes she let go of his hand and ran up to Buffy leaving Xander alone with Spike.

"How's the Bit?" Spike asked as he scanned the shadows.

"If you mean Asta..." Xander looked at Spike. The vampire nodded "Then she's okay."

They walked for a while in silence.

"Got a pack, Harris." Spike pointed out "How'd that happen?" blue eyes studied the human.

"Long story..." Xander said "that I'm not telling you."

Someone burst out from behind one of the crypts and grabbed hold of Xander's arm.

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"Fuck, Alan!" Xander hissed and dragged the minion with him so they could stand behind one of the larger trees. Spike followed the two men and watched with interest.

The minion was a little shorter than the whelp but seemed bigger. Strong arms and broad shoulders. Red hair cut short and freckles making the vampire look like a big kid in his daddy's clothes.

"Sire." the minion looked frantic and was breathing unnecessarily.

"What?" Xander pushed the man against the tree and looked him in the eyes "Is it David?" the minion shook his head and gasped. "God not Tim...Tell me they didn't get their hands on Tim!"

"N-n-no, Xander. No." Alan calmed down and looked over at Spike.

"It's okay., Alan...just tell me." Xander said.

"It's Asta." the minion whispered "She's gone."

Part Six

The mall was so much more fun when she didn't have to drag Xander and David around. She would have loved to take Tim with her but even people in Sunnydale might notice a seven foot furry giant shopping.

This was like an adventure. She didn't have any money so she couldn't really buy stuff. She watched a dark-haired girl beg her mother to buy her a skirt she "would totally die without." Asta snorted. The idiot clearly didn't know what she was talking about.

Asta tried to make her shirt look less ruffled but it was a lost cause. The grey t-shirt was one of David's hand-me-downs. Thank God she didn't have to wear Tim's. She laughed and walked into the OK CD shop. Sometimes Xander let her go in there on her own. She loved listening to the new music blasting out of the enormous speakers.

Well that and she really liked the guy standing behind the desk. His name was Mike. It said so on his nametag. He was so cute with his green hair sticking up in the air. Sometimes he would colour it red or blue. It always looked cool. Mike always looked good.

"He's cute." someone behind Asta said and she turned around and smiled at the girl standing there.

“Yeah. His name’s Mike.” Asta sighed.

“Yeah.” the girl nodded “Says so on his nametag.”

“Yeah.” Asta agreed. She smiled “I’m Asta.”

“Hey Asta.” the girl grinned “I’m Dawn.”

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Xander could feel his control slipping away. He had lied to Buffy. Told her he felt ill. Buffy ordered Spike to follow Xander home. So here they were. Spike had been invited in. Which had clearly surprised the vampire.

Tim was trying to calm David down without much luck. The second Xander stepped into the house he was practically jumped by the nervous fledge.

“She’s just gone.” David mumbled “What if...if...” Xander rubbed the blond’s back.

“She’s in so much trouble.” Tim rumbled and sat down on one of the chairs in the kitchen. Alan nodded and found a duffle bag under the kitchen sink. He started taking various weapons out. Stakes, daggers, a small axe and even a gun.

“Won’t help if the soldiers took her.” Spike pointed out and David’s head snapped up, his eyes golden.

“No!” David shook his head “We can’t leave her with them. What if they...” Xander just took the fledge’s hand.

“David calm down.” Xander said quietly “She’s probably just went somewhere...” Xander’s voice trailed off and he looked at Alan for support.

“We should split up.” the redhead said and scratched the freckles on his nose “Cause that way we can cover more ground.”

“No.” Xander said “No fucking way.” he took two stakes and a dagger and shoved them in his pocket. “I’m not letting you guys out of my sight...Well except you Tim.” the human looked at the giant.

“I’ll stay here...In case she comes back.” a huge fuzzy hand landed on Xander’s shoulder.

“Yeah...” Xander looked at Spike. The blond Master vampire smirked.

“What, Harris? Not gonna let me out of you’re sight either, yeah?” Spike snorted.

“No...cause you’re coming with me.” Xander said and walked out of the door.

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“What about him?” Dawn asked and discreetly pointed at a jock swaggering past the girls.

“Naw...” Asta said and shook her head “He’s too blond.”

“Oh so you prefer brunets?” Dawn teased.

“Yeah. Brown hair, brown eyes. Tall...gotta be tall and broad shouldered.” the fledge sighed and Dawn nodded “And he has to be real nice and give hugs and make you feel...”

“Safe.” Dawn finished.

“Yeah.” Asta agreed.

“Sounds like one of my big sister’s friends. He’s real nice.” Dawn pouted “But he just treats me like a little kid.” Dawn sighed again.

“Yeah...” Asta shifted uncomfortably on the bench “I know how that feels.” Dawn suddenly got up and waved at an older girl.

“Over here Buffy.” Dawn called. Asta gasped and started walking away but Dawn grabbed on to her and simply dragged her over to the other girl.

Oh God! If her name was Buffy then...

“Hey Buffy.” Dawn smiled at her sister “This is Asta.” she said and pulled the other girl closer.

“Hi Asta.” Buffy extended her hand and smiled “Glad to meet you.” Asta reluctantly shook hands with the slayer. Buffy’s eyes narrowed and wouldn't let go of Asta’s hand.

“Buffy?” Dawn asked confused and frowned.

“You have awfully cold hands, Asta.” the slayer said and used her free hand to fish a stake out of her back pocket.

Part Seven

Tim paced from room to room. The pack was his only refuge. Xander, Asta, David and Alan were all he had left. His pack. His home. And he knew that the young human

would do anything to keep them all safe. Because when all was said and done Xander needed the pack more than the pack needed him.

Asta, David and Alan were all vampires. They could, if they were forced to, join one of the many vampire nests in Sunnydale. Tim could live alone. His kind was known as loners, at least to a certain extent. But Xander...Xander craved a pack with all his heart. Needed it like he needed to breathe. The human was lost without them.

Tim walked in to the bedroom and started picking up clothes. Asta had apparently tried on every shirt she owned. Not that she own many but spread out over the floor and the bed it looked like someone had blown up a wardrobe full of clothes.

He really didn't understand why humans were so preoccupied with how their clothes looked. Asta would every now and then pout and claim that she didn't have anything to wear. Which was a lie. Tim knew that David and Alan made sure to do laundry at least once a week. He would never understand the young fledge. He barely understood David. Fearful broken David with his need for constant physical contact.

Alan was...well...Alan had been turned...wrong. Something had messed the process up. Maybe he hadn't

been properly drained or maybe he had been given too much blood or maybe the vamp doing the turning just didn't have a clue what the hell it was doing. But Alan was a little too much human and not enough vampire.

Alan had been living off stray dogs when Xander and Tim found him. The minion had been shivering and babbling about little girls and dogs with wings. Xander had dragged the rail thin vamp back to Tim's crypt.

The human was still living in his parents' basement back then. And no matter how drunk Xander's father was he would still have noticed a seven foot yeti and a vampire hanging around the washing machine.

Tim folded a few of the shirts and waited.

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"Sort of clingy, that one." Spike said and looked over at David. The fledge self-consciously let go of Xander's hand and stepped away.

"Leave him alone, Spike." Xander said and watched David stand back and wait for Alan to catch up with them. The fledge immediately latched on to the minion's hand.

"He's had a rough time." Xander looked at Spike.

“Initiative?” the Master vampire asked.

“Yeah...some soldiers caught him...” Xander’s voice was filled with anger “Played with him...they aren’t around anymore.”

Spike arched an eyebrow “Oh...left town did they?”

“Could say that.” Xander snorted.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy had sensed it the second she held the girl’s hand in her own. The familiar tingle down her spine. That tingle always said: *here be vampires.*

She wrapped her hand around the girls wrist and yanked her over to a less crowded part of the mall. The vampire tried to pull away but the slayer was stronger and the fledge didn’t have a chance.

“Buffy?!” Dawn tried to make her sister stop “Let Asta go. She’s not a you know what.”

“Shut up, Dawn.” Buffy glared at her sister “Let *me* take care of this.”

“She’s just a kid.” Dawn pointed out.

“Doesn’t mean anything.” the slayer said and looked around. If she could just find somewhere...

“Please...Please. Just let me go...please...” Asta begged
“Please...I’ll just go home...I’ll go home and..” Buffy pushed her against the wall and the fledge winced.

“Shut up.” Buffy snarled and Asta lost all control. She was just too scared.

“Oh my God!” Dawn whispered when she saw Asta’s game face.

“Please...let me go home.” Asta said biting into her own lip. Dawn watched the blood colour the fledge’s lips red. She took a step back and bumped into someone.

~*~*~*~*~*~

“Asta come here.” Buffy turned around and looked at Xander. He was holding out his hand.

“X-Xander.” the fledge whimpered “I’m sorry...I-I...”

“It’s okay, Honey.” Xander said and Buffy pulled the girl closer and stepped away from Xander.

“Dawn, come here!” the slayer demanded and pointed the stake at Xander “So...what?...You got yourself turned?” she asked.

“No.” Xander shook his head and smiled “Still human...Mostly.”

“She’s a vampire, Xander. I don’t...” Buffy’s voice trailed off when she noticed the other two vampires. The blond was having a tough time staying in his human mask.

“Better let the bit go, slayer.” Spike said and stepped forward. He had been hidden by one of the stylish columns.

“Spike?” Dawn looked confused.

“It’ll be okay.” the master vampire promised “As long as the slayer lets go of Asta.”

“Y-y-you’re in on this...this...whatever this is?” Buffy asked. Asta flinched as the stake came closer to her face.

“Not in on anything, Slayer.” Spike said “But Whelp here’s gonna do something we’ll all regret if ya don’t let the fledge go.” Buffy looked at Xander. She could barely recognise him.

“If you do this, Xander...if you help these vamps...you’re not welcome anymore...not part of the Scooby gang anymore.” Buffy threatened. Xander looked sad for a moment.

“You let Asta go and we’ll stay out of your way from now on.” the human promised and reached out his hand spreading his fingers. Buffy slowly let go of the fledge. Asta flung herself at Xander. Held on to him so tightly that Spike was sure there would be bruises later.

Xander passed the sobbing fledge to Alan and turned to look at Buffy. “I’m really sorry, Buffy...”

“Just stay away from us, Xander.” the slayer said with tears in her eyes. She grabbed Dawn’s hand and started walking out of the mall. Just before they disappeared around the corner Dawn looked back and waved to Asta.

Part Eight

Spike woke up curled around something so bloody warm it made him sigh with pleasure. The Master vampire

snuggled closer and felt strong arms embrace him and hold on tight. Another arm curled around his legs.

Three arms? Who the bloody hell was he sharing a bed with?

Spike groggily opened his blue eyes and looked straight into Xander's relaxed face. The whelp was sleeping soundly. Spike looked down and saw a very hairy arm draped over his jeans clad leg. The Master vampire slowly tried to move off the mattress but stopped immediately when Tim's hand tightened around his ankle.

"Don't." Tim growled.

"What?" Spike managed to whisper.

"He only just fell asleep..." Alan mumbled from the door. Spike looked at the minion and then turned and looked at the human.

"X-Xander?" came a small voice from behind Spike and he felt small hands clutch his black t-shirt.

"Whelp's sleeping, pet." Spike said and felt Asta move away and watched as she walked over to Alan. The minion hugged her and told her to go downstairs and warm a few bags of blood. Tim slowly moved off the

mattress and stretched his large body with a pleased sigh. The minion and the demon followed the girl out of the room.

“He cried himself to sleep...” David said and snuggled closer to the sleeping human “He thinks we don’t know how worried he was...about Asta being gone.” Xander made a small noise and David stroked the boy’s cheek.

“Should go make sure the slayer isn’t planning on taking out your nest.” Spike said but didn’t move. David shook his head and untangled himself from Xander.

“Don’t. The way he’s holding on to your arm...he’d wake up.” the fledge said and left. Spike looked down at his arm and saw Xander’s fingers curled possessively around it.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Buffy stomped into the Magic Box past Giles without even a greeting and disappeared into the training room. Dawn was standing by the counter, crossed her arms and huffed.

“Oh...um...What...Is Buffy quite all right?” Giles asked uncomfortably and started cleaning his glasses. Dawn sighed and sat down on one of the chairs.

“She’s like...and I didn’t...” Dawn waved her hands angrily in the air “As if...Should never...Whatever.” the teenager ended her outburst.

“Um...yes...that doesn’t really explain much...” Giles turned to Willow as if expecting her to explain.

“Don’t look at me, Giles.” the witch said and shook her head. Buffy came out of the backroom and slammed the door behind her, looked at Dawn and started yelling.

“What the hell did you think you were doing?” the slayer pointed a shaking finger at her little sister.

“Me?” Dawn screeched “Me?...You were the one with the stake and the threats and the telling Xander he could fuck off!”

“Really I don’t think such language is necessary.” Giles attempted.

“You told Xander to...What? What did you tell Xander?” Willow asked Buffy and Tara slowly backed away from the other witch.

“He was putting Dawn in danger,” Buffy snarled “He was hanging out with vampires...and he let one of them...”

“Xander w-would never put Dawn in d-danger.” Tara quietly said but Buffy didn’t pay attention.

“Dawn was getting attacked by this fledge and all Xander worried about was that I didn’t dust her undead ass!” Buffy said looking hurt.

“Xander knew this...this fledge?” Giles asked.

“Yeah and he had two other vamps with him. Two guys. Spike was there too.” Buffy sat down and hunched her shoulders “I thought maybe he’d been turned but...I don’t think he has.”

“Asta wasn’t trying to...” Dawn began.

“Asta?” Willow looked interested “Who’s Asta?”

“The fledge that tried to drain her.” Buffy said and pointed at Dawn.

“She so didn’t.” Dawn pouted “And now Xander isn’t coming back because you had to be a complete bitch.” Giles flinched and coughed.

“There’s no need for...” he tried.

“Oh yes there is!” Dawn screamed “Cause Buffy told Xander he wasn’t welcome here anymore! She told him to stay away from us.” Tara pulled Dawn close and hugged her.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander woke up sleeping on top of...

“Morning, pet.” Spike drawled and stretched. The motion completely waking Xander up. He rolled off and sat up. The human yawned and stretched. His arms reaching for the ceiling when he suddenly froze.

“Oh shit.” he whispered “Oh...shit.” he turned and looked at Spike smirking at him. “Buffy?”

“Naw. ‘M Spike.” Spike said and grinned.

“It wasn’t a bad dream?” Xander asked and fell back into the bed.

“Sorry. Can’t really pretend it was.” Spike said and got up. He looked down at Xander. The boy’s rumpled t-shirt revealed a stretch of tanned skin.

“We got you in trouble.” Xander said and got up and pulled the shirt down hiding the warm skin.

“Slayer’ll come around.” Spike said and they started walking out of the room and down the stairs.

“Come eat, Xander.” David called from the kitchen. Xander smiled and nodded to Spike.

“Stay.” he said “For breakfast...or...well dinner I guess.” the boy looked at the old clock hanging in the hallway. Spike looked into the kitchen. David was ruffling Asta’s hair despite the fledge trying to squirm away. The furry demon was eating something that looked like a raw roast and Alan was pouring blood into mugs.

Xander walked over to the fridge and found some milk. Tim handed the boy a bowl of cornflakes and Xander drenched the flakes in milk and started eating.

Spike shrugged and took the mug Alan handed him.

~*~*~*~*~

Giles looked at Buffy. She paced from one end of the shop to the other.

“I’m telling you.” the slayer said “That wasn’t...he wasn’t being forced...He didn’t want me to stake that fledge.”

Dawn rolled her eyes. "Maybe because she was just a kid and wasn't trying to kill me," the teenager mumbled sourly.

"She was a vampire." Buffy pointed out "I don't know what Xander would be doing there but..."

"I can't believe you told him to stay away." Willow said quietly "What if he's in trouble?"

"Yes." Giles said "We should at least try to find out what is going on. Perhaps Xander does need our help but can't tell us." the watcher looked thoughtful.

"W-we could go look for him." Tara suggested.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike watched as Alan lured one of the local drug dealers into the park. The man was laughing at some joke the minion told when he was suddenly grabbed from behind and his head pulled back exposing his throat.

Spike kept an eye on Xander throughout the feeding and noticed that the boy kept looking. He didn't look away once. Asta skipped from the dead man over to Xander. She took his hands and smiled up at the human. Xander

laughed and dried a drop of blood away from the fledges lip with his thumb.

~*~*~*~*~

Willow turned and threw up. Tara rubbed the witch's shaking shoulders and watched Xander swing the fledge around and then hug her close.

"Oh dear God." Giles whispered and looked over at Buffy. The slayer was holding on to a stake. Her knuckles white.

"I'm calling Angel." she said.

Part Nine

"What's with ya, pet?" Spike asked when he was greeted with an armful of Asta the second he came thru the door. The girl just shook her head and cried. The Master vampire turned and looked at Tim. The giant was holding on to a chair so hard the wood was creaking.

“It’s David.” Alan said as he came in to the hallway. The minion patted Asta’s back soothingly.

“What ’bout ’im?” Spike asked and was answered with sobs from the girl “Where’s the whelp?”

Tim sat down on the stairs leading up to the second floor and sighed deeply. “Xander is taking care of him.” the giant started picking at the old wallpaper hanging half off the wall. Spike passed Asta over to Alan and slowly started walking up the stairs.

~*~*~*~*~

Angel was staring at the phone when Wesley and Cordy came in to his office. The two humans looked at each other. The seer just shrugged and sat down in the chair opposite Angel’s. Wesley stayed where he was and waited. Finally Angel said “Buffy called.” Cordy rolled her eyes “She...it was about Xander.”

“Oh God no!” Cordy’s hands grabbed on to the edge of Angel’s desk “H-how...is...is he dead?”

Angel shook his head “No. Buffy said he was helping vampires hunt and kill humans.” Cordy started laughing. She stopped when she noticed that she was the only one.

“Oh come on.” she huffed “We’re talking about Xander Harris, proud vampire hater...Is the slayer doing drugs?”

“No...She said she saw it. She watched him do it.” Angel looked uncertain “I know it sounds....”

“Crazy?” Wesley offered and Angel just nodded “I must say that the Alexander Harris I remember would never do such a thing. Have they tried talking to him about it? Perhaps he’s under the influence of a spell?”

Angel looked uncomfortable.

“So that’s how it is?” Cordy snorted “She saw...whatever she saw and jumped to conclusions and didn’t even talk to Xander about it. Didn’t even ask him.”

~*~*~*~*~

“Shhhh...David...shhhh” Spike could hear Xander murmur soothingly to the fledge. David was literally wrapped around Xander as they sat on the floor. The fledge clung to the human and sobbed.

“It hurt so much.” David mumbled between hitched breaths “So so much, Xander.” Xander kissed the fledge’s

hair but the vampire kept murmuring “Oh God...make it stop...please Sire...please.”

“They’re gone...we made them pay...you’re safe.” Xander cupped David’s face and looked into the vampire’s eyes “We killed them. Each and every one of them. Ripped them apart...remember?” David nodded and kissed Xander’s neck.

“Please, Sire,” the fledge begged and Xander nodded.

~*~*~*~*~

Cordy was glaring at Buffy and Willow. The witch was snivelling and kept drying her eyes with a ragged piece of tissue paper. Buffy just glared back.

“I don’t think I understand.” Wesley said and looked over at Giles “Why would Xander be living with these vampires in an abandoned house to begin with?”

“I honestly don’t know.” Giles said “Maybe Xander has become their...well.” the watcher looked embarrassed.

“Their what?” Willow asked between sobs. She looked from Wesley to Giles and ended up staring at Angel. The vampire snorted and shook his head.

“Xander would never do that.” Angel said with certainty.

“What?” Buffy asked impatiently.

Wesley pinched the bridge of his nose and tried to explain “Sometimes...an this is not something that happens often.” Giles nodded “Vampires take in humans.”

“Oh Goddess!” Willow wailed “They feed off him?”

“Well...” Wesley seemed uncomfortable.

“Feeding is involved but that’s not really the point of the...partnership.” Angel said “The human becomes a part of a group of vampires...either because he wants to be turned or because he’s addicted to the bite.” Buffy shuddered with disgust.

“So it’s just feeding?” Cordy asked.

“No.” Angel said and smiled “We had a few human pets once.”

“We?” Buffy asked.

“Darla, Spike, Dru and me...it’s not just about having someone close to feed off...it’s...” Angel looked dreamily out the window.

“Yes...” Giles continued “It’s a bond between the human and the vampire or vampires. There is...um...well.”

“Sex involved.” Angel finished. Buffy scrunched her face up and made a low eeww sound.

“S-so that’s what’s going on with X-xander?” Tara asked.

“No.” Angel said. “Xander is many things...but he’s not stupid enough to put his life in the hands of bloodthirsty fledges.” Buffy opened her mouth to protest.

“Oh shut up, Bitchy!” Cordy snarled and the LA gang walked out of the shop.

~*~*~*~*~

David kissed Xander’s neck and then let his fangs puncture the suntanned skin. The sense of pure bliss started flowing thru the human’s veins. A warmth spread from the centre of his chest and out to his fingers and toes.

David never took much. It wasn’t about feeding but about feeling connected. About forgetting. The fledge sighed happily and fell asleep. Xander scooped him up and carried him over to the mattresses in the corner and

made sure the fledge was comfortable before he turned around and smiled at Spike.

“What...” Spike began but Xander shook his head and pushed the Master vampire out of the room. They ended up in a room further down the hall.

“What happened to ‘im?” Spike asked. Xander sighed and sat down on the old couch left behind by the previous inhabitants of the house.

“Some soldiers from the Initiative got their hands on him...” Xander clenched his hands into fists “They had no intention of taking him to the...facility” Xander’s voice was brimming with hate “They just wanted to play...”

“Play?” Spike said.

“There were six of them. They caught him three days after he had been turned. He was completely out of it...easy to catch.” Xander looked at the boarded up window “They were...using him...he was stripped naked when I found him...we found him...Spike you should have seen what Tim did to one of them. The big guy literally ripped the swine in two...Just like that.” the human made a ripping motion with his hands. “The rest of the bastards ran but we got them all.”

“And David?” Spike reached out and touched the bite mark on Xander’s neck. The boy closed his eyes and relaxed.

“I let him feed off me...like I let Alan and Asta do.” Xander shuffled closer to Spike “Pack. But David was the first one to call me Sire...freaked me out...then Asta and Alan started as well...guess” Xander whispered just before he fell asleep “...guess I got used to it...weird.”

Part Ten

Angel knocked on the backdoor of the abandoned house Buffy claimed Xander lived in.

“Go away.” a small muffled voice commanded thru the heavy oak door. Wesley looked at Cordy.

“We’re here to see Xander.” Cordy said glaring at the door.

“Nobody’s home,” the disembodied voice said. Angel frowned.

“If nobody's home then who are we talking to right now?” the souled vampire asked.

“Um...Nobody?” the voice asked confused. Wesley chuckled and Cordy smiled.

“Look just let us in.” Angel persisted “We need to see Xander.”

“He’s busy.” the voice sounded more sure of itself now.

“Look whoever you are...” Cordy began “I’m Cordy and Xander knows me.”

“Alan told me not to disturb Xander.” the voice sulked.

“Um...why would he tell you that?” Wesley asked.

“Because Xander is sleeping with Spike.” the voice explained patiently.

Cordy looked completely dumbfounded and Wesley pinched the bridge of his nose. Angel just rested his forehead against the closed door and sighed in defeat.

~*~*~*~*~

Tim patted Xander’s shoulder. The human mumbled

something inaudible and Spike cuddled closer to Xander's warmth. Tim smiled and tickled Xander's cheek. The boy slapped at the irritation. Tim chuckled and did it again this time Xander smacked himself hard in the face.

"Ow!" the human exclaimed and sat up causing Spike to protest by growling. "Not nice, Tim." Xander said and scowled at the giant.

"Yeah..." Tim laughed "There's someone here to see you." Xander sat up.

"Oh great, Buffy decided she wanted to torture me some more?" Xander got up and looked around as if expecting the slayer to be sifting thru the pack's dirty laundry. The laundry basket was filled to overflowing. Xander pointed to it and looked tired. "Tell her I can't see her...cause I need to wash my pet vampire's shorts."

"Not the slayer, Xander." Tim said and looked at Spike "Says his name is Angel...and some woman calling herself Cordy." Spike jumped up and ran down the stairs.

"Oh, great!" Xander moaned as he followed Spike down the stairs "The Brooding Avenger awaits." Tim stopped the human and gave him a hard hug. Xander closed his eyes and soaked up the warmth and love coming from the demon. Too soon Tim let go of Xander and took the

time to straighten the human's clothes before they continued down the stairs.

~*~*~*~*~

It strangely enough felt like one of those uncomfortable and awkward family visits everybody dreads. Angel was polite in a stiff sort of way. Cordy clearly didn't think much of the house and Xander expected her to start checking for dust any second. Wesley was fascinated in that very vague watcher-y way and seemed to be very interested in everything Tim said or did.

Asta was shy and only smiled when Cordy complimented her on her beautiful hair. The fledge seemed scared by Angel and Angel in return seemed uneasy around the young vampire.

"Well..." Angel began.

"Ya want ta know if the boy's mad." Spike announced dryly.

"Buffy did mention some things...and some of them seem to be true." Wesley pointed at the three other vampires
"Giles also has a few theories about what Xander is doing here with these...individuals."

“What do they think...Willow and Giles?” Xander asked and David’s fingers painfully grabbed hold of Xander’s wrist. Xander only reacted by caressing the fledge’s palm.

“Giles seems to think that you are their...pet.” Wesley said and flinched when all three vampires went into game face and growled at him. Spike just laughed and shook his head in disbelief.

“Then explain it, Xander.” Cordy said “Because Buffy...very stake happy right now.”

“Yes.” Angel agreed “I have no doubt that she’ll try to get rid of...” he waved his hand at Asta, David and Alan. Tim stomped forward and snarled. Xander stood up and looked at the souled vampire. “We haven’t done anything!” the human said.

“She says you help them kill people.” Cordy chuckled “As if!” Xander looked away. “Xander?” the seer asked uncertainly.

“She...I’ve...I have helped the pack hunt.” Xander said quietly.

“You...No.” Cordy whispered.

“It wasn’t...You remember about the time I was possessed by a hyena spirit?” Xander asked the ex-cheerleader.

“Yeah...” she said slowly.

“After Giles did the de-possession thing I told him I didn’t remember anything and I pretended that everything was all right that I was good old Xander again.” Xander scratched his neck “Well...I kinda lied...a lot.”

“What exactly did you lie about, Xander?” Angel asked and Wesley moved a little closer not wanting to miss anything.

“The hyena wasn’t really gone...” Xander frowned “Yeah okay I didn’t have super strength anymore not like when I was possessed anyway...And I didn’t...I have control only...”

“Yes.” Wesley encouraged.

“I think...and I did a little reading about possessions whenever I knew I wouldn’t get caught by Giles...I think I merged with the hyena...” Xander sighed “I have some of the urges the hyena had...the need for a pack...the need to protect the pack...I tried to reunite the old pack. Tor and Lance...tried the others as well...but they were back to normal...I was the only one who wasn’t...” Xander’s

voice trailed off and David pulled the human down to sit on the couch again.

“So you have killed.” Angel pointed out. Xander nodded.

“Only to protect us!” Asta yelled and stomped her small feet “He never hurt anyone who was innocent...Xander wouldn’t do that!” she stormed up the stairs and they heard the door to the bedroom slam.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy paced back and forth.

Stopped in front of the weapons hanging on the wall.

Turned away and paced some more.

~*~*~*~*~

“Is the boy dangerous?” Angel asked Spike. Both vampires were watching Xander sitting in the overgrown garden. The moonlight made the human look almost surreal.

“He’ll kill for that lot.” Spike said and nodded over at Asta, David and Alan. The three vampires were keeping an eye on Xander.

“The people he helped kill....” Angel’s voice trailed off when Tim walked passed them and sat down next to Xander on the glittering grass. The giant reached out and pulled the human closer with a one-armed hug. “Does Xander know what that demon can do?” Angel asked.

“Bet he’s seen the big guy do most of them.” Spike snorted.

~*~*~*~*~

“That’s it!” the slayer announced and took a few stakes and put them in her pockets “I’m going over there...Xander needs us to step up and rescue him!”

“But you promised Angel.” Willow tried in vain and could only watch Buffy stride out of the shop.

Part Eleven

Angel watched David cuddle with Asta on the couch. The fledge smiled shyly when he noticed the Master vampire standing by the door to the kitchen.

“X-Xander is upstairs...he’s still sleeping.” David said and looked down at Asta mumbling in her sleep.

“That’s okay.” Angel said “I wasn’t really looking for him.” David looked up and saw Angel smile at him. Spike entered the living room, looked from Angel to David and smirked.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy was standing under the old apple tree outside the house opposite the abandoned house Xander lived in. She had kept an eye on it for the past half-hour. All the windows were boarded up as well as the front door. They probably used the backdoor to get in. How long had Xander lived there? She remembered visiting her friend a year ago. Or was it longer than that? He had been living in his parents’ basement back then. She hadn’t visited Xander since.

It wasn’t that she didn’t care. Buffy cared about her friend...but she was just so busy. Busy with college and slaying. Whenever she did have some spare time she tended to spend it with Riley or Dawn.

Not to mention the fact that she just didn't have as much in common with Xander as she used to do. She was in college meeting new friends and studying and Xander was going from underpaid job to underpaid job. She always had the feeling that she had to strain herself in order to find anything to talk to him about.

Someone came out from behind the abandoned house. Cordy and Wesley. They were discussing something. Cordy got in behind the wheel of Angel's car and Wesley scowled at her for a second, then got in. The car drove away.

~*~*~*~*~

"Is he safe with *you*?" Angel asked Tim as the furry demon rinsed the [mugs](#) that had been standing too long in the sink. The demon growled when he realised that the rinsing wouldn't be enough. The blood had clotted.

"He's always safe with me." Tim growled.

"How did you end up as part of the pack..." Angel frowned "I mean your kind is known for it's..."

"Bloodlust and tendency to rampage?" Tim grinned flashing the vampire a truly fear inspiring row of sharp

teeth. Angel nodded. "I wasn't bloodthirsty enough for my clan." Tim continued "They banned me when I wouldn't kill a human family and their children. I just couldn't..." the demon left the mugs in the sink and turned his full attention on Angel.

"I wandered around for awhile...my kind is not made for loneliness or isolation...The boy found me by accident." Tim laughed and shook his head "He literally tripped over me. He was out patrolling alone and I was trying to sleep in the graveyard. Next thing I know I have my arms full of a growling human. Turned out we both needed the same thing..."

"What?" the vampire asked.

"To belong." Tim said.

~*~*~*~*~

"All I'm saying is that Angel's been eying that David guy all night." Cordy grinned and looked over at Wesley as they drove in search of a fast food joint still open this late.

"I assure you Angel wouldn't..." Wesley began.

“I’m not saying he’s gonna jump the kid.” Cordy giggled when Wesley blushed “I’m just saying that they’d make a cute couple.”

“Be that as it may...um...Angel needs stability...He’s not been himself since he was forced to stake Darla...*again*.” the watcher said and pointed out the window “There...they seem to be open.”

~*~*~*~*~

David was standing by one of the only windows in the house that weren’t boarded up. He was watching Xander and the two Master vampires talk in the garden. David bit his finger nervously while he kept his eyes on the tall dark-haired vampire. He reminded the fledge a lot of Xander. There was the same concern for those he considered family and the same internal calm...as if there was an inner core no one could touch.

“He’s cute.” Asta said as she peeked around David to look out the window. David smiled and nodded dreamily.

“Yeah.” he agreed. Asta snorted “What?” David asked and reluctantly turned away from the window.

“Nothing.” Asta giggled.

“What?” David demanded to know.

“You’re drooling.” she laughed.

“Am not!” the blond fledge glared.

~*~*~*~*~

“Buffy?” Xander asked Angel “Is she going to be a problem?”

“I...yeah.” Angel admitted and looked at the human. Xander nodded.

“Yeah that’s kinda what I thought.” he said and walked away from the two vampires then he turned around “What if we leave? Get out of Sunnydale...go...somewhere else?” he asked.

“She thinks you need rescuing.” Angel pointed out “She won’t stop.”

“I don’t need rescuing. I never did. The hyena...she...” Xander sighed and ran a hand thru his dark hair “Look.” he said “If Buffy hurts them...any of them...I can’t promise I won’t...respond.”

“Not asking ya ta promise, pet.” Spike muttered.

“I’ll talk to her, Xander.” Angel said “But your idea about leaving Sunnydale...might be worth considering even if she promises to leave you and yours alone.”

Xander nodded “Yes...” he looked up at the house “I’ll think about it...”

~*~*~*~*~

Giles was worried. Worried about Buffy. Worried about Xander. But most of all worried that this was somehow his own fault. Perhaps he should have talked more with the boy. Shown an interest in his life. Offered advice. But he hadn’t done any of those things. He had let his entire life be consumed by his duties as Buffy’s watcher. He had dismissed the boy’s need for guidance. Not out of ill will but simply because he hadn’t had time for him.

“I think” Giles said to Willow “I think we should go and make sure Buffy doesn’t...react excessively when she confronts Xander.” The watcher looked at the witch.

“Yes...I’ll call Tara and she...no she should stay with Dawn.” Willow said changing her mind. Giles nodded and they both left the magic shop in search of the slayer.

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Buffy turned and looked at Riley. The soldier scanned their surroundings and said “We have a clear view of the house from here but what if they leave?”

“They can’t see us from the house or the driveway.” Buffy said and peeked at the house from behind the old apple tree.

“That’s not what I was talking about.” Riley said and shook his head “What do we do if they leave? We can follow or try to get into the house...do a little recon.”

“I think we should try to get into the house.” Buffy said “Maybe we can find the answer to why Xander is...acting weird.” she finished.

~*~*~*~*~

Cordy and Wesley arrived with pizzas and bagged blood and they all sat down and enjoyed their food. Xander noticed that David ended up sitting next to Angel. The fledge kept stealing glances in the Master vampire’s direction.

“Bloody swooning over Peaches.” Spike whispered in Xander’s ear and touched the human’s thigh fleetingly. Xander smiled when he saw Angel keeping an eye on David as well.

~*~*~*~*~

“I think we should go out.” Xander said when he noticed how twitchy Alan and Tim were becoming. They had fed well and were filled with energy.

“We could patrol the cemeteries.” Tim suggested and Alan agreed. The minion restlessly moved around the room.

“Sounds good.” Cordy said “Me and Asta...we’re with big and hairy.” she pointed at Tim.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy and Riley crossed the street the second the group of demons and humans had left the large abandoned house. The backdoor was not locked and they could simply walk right in.

“Okay.” Buffy said “You go look upstairs...there’s gotta be some bedrooms up there.” Riley nodded “I’ll check things out down here.” she looked around the main hall.

~*~*~*~*~

They had been thru all the rooms and all the hiding places they could find more than once when Buffy finally said “Looks like we won’t find anything here.” She looked around the living room. Everything looked old and used. How the hell could Xander stand to live here? And just the thought of the bedroom upstairs made he shiver. Four mattress making out one bed. Angel had talked about sex. The thought of Xander with those vampires...she decided not to think about it anymore.

Suddenly the backdoor opened and before she knew what was happening she had her stake out and dust fell to the ground.

Part Twelve

Buffy barely had time to look up before she was slammed against the wall and then pushed face first down on the floor. She attempted to fight back but whoever was holding her down was immensely strong.

“Fucking bitch!” she heard Xander growl.

She was flipped over. Her shoulders now digging into the hard wooden floor. Xander hit her twice in the face before she finally fought back. He pressed his hands against her throat. She slammed her palm against his chin in an upwards motion. Xander retaliated by grabbing the stake left forgotten on the floor. Buffy screamed as the stake was rammed into her shoulder.

Blood sprayed across Xander’s face.

~*~*~*~*~

They all just stood there. A frozen tableau of anger, fear and pain. Asta was the only one moving. Her small hands running over the floorboards. Attempting to gather the dust in a pile. She gasped and cried. The tears falling on the dust turning it dark and letting it soak into the wood.

“No no no no no no no no.” she murmured continuously.

~*~*~*~*~

Riley was trying to make sense out of everything that was happening. Xander was obviously a threat to Buffy’s safety. The young man’s eyes were glowing green and he was reduced to growling and snarling.

When Xander grabbed the stake and stabbed Buffy in the shoulder with it Riley aimed his gun and shot.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander suddenly stiffened. He looked down at his left thigh. A tranquilizer arrow was sticking out of it.

“Oh...” Xander said “Oh shit!” he staggered backwards away from the slayer.

~*~*~*~*~

Suddenly they all seemed to move at once. Spike pulled Xander away from Buffy. Angel knelt by the slayer’s side,

pulled the stake out of her shoulder and after she passed out the souled vampire lifted her up and swiftly moved out of the house. Riley found himself inches away from Tim's sharp teeth.

The furry demon was pinning the human against the wall, a large strong hand wrapped around the soldier's neck. Asta started screaming when Cordy tried to pull her away from the pile of dust the fledge had gathered.

"No! No! We can't leave him like that...we can't leave him...we can't..." the girl abruptly shut up when the seer slapped her. Big frightened eyes locked with Cordy's and the fledge was pulled into a hug.

"I can't breathe..." Xander mumbled and passed out.

"What the fuck did you do to him?" David screamed at Riley.

~*~*~*~*~

"Where's the bitch?" Spike asked the older vampire. They were standing in the kitchen.

"At the hospital..." Angel answered "Willow is there. So is Giles. She'll be fine."

“Could die for all I care.” Spike snarled and returned to his task.

“How’s Xander?” Angel knelt next to Spike and helped the blond vampire find the towels and a few bowls. Spike stood up and looked down at his Sire.

“Boy’s not doing well, Peaches.” Spike said and closed his eyes “That shite in the arrow...” Spike looked Angel in the eyes “Was meant for vamps...could end up killing Xander.”

“Is there nothing we can do?” Angel filled one of the bowls with hot water and handed it to Spike.

“He’ll ‘ave to pull thru on his own.” Spike took the bowl “Ya could take care of the fledges.” the blond vampire said “Girl’s hanging on ta the boy...but he ain’t really doing good himself.”

~*~*~*~*~

“He never did anyone any harm...” Asta sobbed against David’s shoulder “Alan was the best.” She started crying again and David gently hugged her. He looked up when Angel entered the room with the seer behind him.

“Asta?” the Master vampire said. The fledge looked up at him and tried to dry her tears away. “Cordy is going to take care of you...is that okay?” Asta looked at the human and slowly got up. She reached out and took Cordy’s hand and they both left David and Angel behind as they walked out of the living room.

“She’ll be all right.” Angel said and sat down on the couch. David started shaking. The fledge looked down and cried silently. Angel reached out and touched David’s face and the fledge finally fell apart. Crying against Angel’s chest digging his fingers into the Master vampire’s shoulders.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike tried to calm Xander down but the human kept trying to get up.

“No Spike you don’t understand...I have to...If...” Xander started coughing his hands covering his mouth. He slowly sat up and looked at his hands. They were covered in blood. “T-that can’t be good.” the human mumbled and looked up at Spike. “Look...” Xander said holding up his hands “...blood.”

~*~*~*~*~

Wesley watched Tim tie Riley to a chair.

“Would be much easier to kill him,” Tim growled.

“Yes.” Wesley said “I’m sure it would...but you won’t.”

The demon looked uncertain for a second. “Could just break his arms and legs,” Tim suggested.

~*~*~*~*~

“I’m going to go and make sure Xander is all right.” Giles said and looked at Buffy sleeping in the hospital bed. Her shoulder was bandaged and she had been given a sedative because she wouldn’t stop yelling.

“Thanks.” Willow said and took Giles’s hand “I know it would mean a lot to him if you did.” Giles smiled sadly and slowly walked out to the parking lot.

He just sat there in his car for almost half an hour. Staring at Sunnydale. It always amazed him how such a small town could so easily destroy its children.

Part Thirteen

Angel held Xander. The boy was breathing hard and his skin was clammy with sweat. Spike was desperately trying to calm Xander down.

“No...no. Jesse...don't...” Angel grabbed hold of Xander's thrashing arms.

“We need to calm him down...” Angel said “He's tiring himself out like this.”

“I know that!” Spike growled and helped his Sire get the boy back on the mattress.

“No...Don't you touch me you bastards.” Xander's eyes glowed green and he tried to kick Angel in the chest. The Master vampire simply held the flailing boy down. Suddenly Xander's eyes grew wide.

“I'm gonna be sick.” he mumbled and then started throwing up. Spike stood back and watched with horror as Xander emptied his stomach on the floor.

Crimson blood slowly soaked into the old worn floorboards.

Angel looked up at Spike. "He's bleeding out." the older vampire said.

~*~*~*~*~

Giles knocked on the backdoor. He had a stake tucked safely in his pocket.

Just in case.

~*~*~*~*~

Tim watched the two vampires clean Xander up. The boy's limp body was cradled against Angel's chest while Spike changed the sheets on the mattress. The floor was covered in blood and vomit. The stench impossible to stand.

The blond vampire started cleaning the floor with the already ruined sheets. Angel gently pulled the covers over the boy's unconscious form.

“Is he dying?” Tim bluntly asked. Both vampires looked up at the large demon.

“If he survives the night he has a chance.” Angel said and walked over to the demon.

“How big?” the furry giant asked, his eyes glued to the human.

“If he survives the night...” Angel looked over at Spike
“Maybe twenty-five percent.”

Someone knocked on the door.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Giles was a little surprised when Angel opened the door. A young blond fledge peeking from behind the souled vampire’s broad back.

“Giles.” Angel growled.

“I...” the watcher began “I came to see Xander.” Angel stepped away from the door and Giles walked in. The fledge backed away always keeping Angel between himself and the watcher.

“Hand it over.” Angel said and extended his hand. Palm up.

“W-what?” Giles stuttered.

“The stake...Watcher” the large vampire snarled flexing the fingers on the hand held out to Giles.

“I...I...” Giles tried.

“You’re not getting in if you don’t.” the fledge firmly said from behind Angel.

~*~*~*~*~

Cordy was cuddling with Asta on the couch in the living room when Giles entered. The man was stunned to find the young woman sitting so close to the fledge. The vampire crying against the seer’s throat.

“Dear God...” he gasped “Get away from her.”

“You wanted to see Xander.” Angel said and grabbed hold of the watcher’s elbow.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander was panting. The human was shivering so hard that his teeth rattled. Spike was holding on to him as strongly as he dared.

“I-I-I’m c-c-c-c-co-cold.” Xander stuttered and clutched on to Spike’s black t-shirt.

“I know, pet.” Spike said and kissed Xander’s cheek. The boy’s scent was rancid.

Spike looked up when he heard someone gasp.

Angel was standing in the doorway holding on to Giles’ arm. The tall vampire looked at the watcher and said “Look at him...see what your slayer did...what you did with your neglect.” Angel pushed Giles further into the room. The watcher stumbled and fell down inches away from what looked like an almost dried pool of blood.

“Xander?” Giles whispered when the boy moaned in pain and curled up clutching his stomach. Xander started throwing up again. The watcher gagged when the smell of rotten blood hit him.

~*~*~*~*~

“You can’t keep me here!” Riley yelled and attempted to get loose.

No one answered.

~*~*~*~*~

Asta was throwing up. Cordy was holding her hair back.

“Can’t you smell it.” the fledge gasped between dry heaves.

“Yes.” Cordy nodded “But sweetheart your sense of smell is much better than mine.” She gently brushed Asta’s hair away from the girl’s tear streaked cheeks.

“He’s dying.” Asta sobbed.

“No.” Cordy pulled the girl closer “No. We don’t know that. Xander is strong and...”

“No.” Asta interrupted “You don’t understand...I can smell it. His blood is...wrong. Like the blood from a corpse.”

~*~*~*~*~

Willow sat by Buffy's hospital bed while the slayer slept.

She wished she could be two places at once. She wanted to be with Buffy but if what Angel had told them was true...then she needed to be with Xander. The young witch looked out the window and watched cars drive by outside on the streets of Sunnydale.

Ordinary people with ordinary problems on their way to normal jobs. And when they were done they would all return to their homes. Eat dinner, watch TV, go to sleep.

Sometimes Willow longed for that simple existence. Simplicity gained by not knowing what lurked in the shadows. Simplicity gained by the belief that humans were at the top of the food chain.

A nurse knocked on the door and came in.

"There's a phone call for you." she said and smiled at Willow.

~*~*~*~*~

"Angel will pick you up." Giles sounded tired.

“But Buffy...” Willow said and looked over at the door leading to her friends room.

“He’s dying, Willow.” Giles said.

“What?” she whispered.

“He needs you here. Now. Willow. If you want a chance to...” the watcher’s voice trailed off.

Part Fourteen

Willow stood in the corner of the bedroom and watched Spike and Angel wash Xander.

“Support his head.” Angel whispered and Spike moved closer and gently held Xander’s head while Angel attempted to make the human drink. Xander started coughing and the water ended up on the covers and all over Angel’s shirt.

Spike looked over at Willow and nodded. The witch slowly moved closer to the mattress.

~*~*~*~*~

“No I’m fine, Doctor Smith. Really.” Buffy tried to get out of the hospital bed again. But one of the nurses, a big woman with large hands, firmly helped the slayer back into bed.

“You need to rest, Miss Summers.” the doctor said. Buffy started peeling her bandages off “What on earth do you think you’re doing, young woman.” Doctor Smith grabbed her hand.

“No just look, please...I’m all healed up.” Buffy said and tried to get the last of the bandage off “I always heal really fast...Super fast!” The doctor and the nurse looked at each other briefly. The nurse left the room.

“Miss Summers.” the doctor began “One of our...therapists...will come by in just a minute to assess...um...whether you need additional help.” doctor Smith smiled encouragingly.

“Therapist?” Buffy asked confused.

“Yes...your...how can I put this...your *delusions of grandeur*...worry me.” the doctor patted Buffy’s arm comfortingly.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander tried to smile when Willow took his hand.

“Hey.” he whispered. His voice barely audible.

“Hey.” Willow felt the first tears roll down her cheeks. Xander reached out and wiped them away with his thumb. The boy was propped up by all the pillows Spike could find.

“No...” Xander murmured “Can’t have my Willow crying like that...not...not” he coughed “very attractive.” he teased. The witch started sobbing.

“I’m sorry, Xander...I’ll fix this...I will.” she promised.

Xander shook his head slowly and winced when it hurt “No...There’s nothing you can do...Giles...he...” the boy closed his eyes and fell asleep.

“Is...is he...?” Willow turned and looked at Spike. The vampire walked over and held Xander’s hand.

“No.” Spike said “just exhausted...The poison’s breaking down his blood,” the vampire explained “Won’t be long now.”

~*~*~*~*~

Dawn was furious.

Being told to stay at the house like some little kid. She wasn't a kid damn it. She wasn't some snout nosed toddler that needed a babysitter. Dawn looked over at the couch where Tara was curled up with a blanket watching TV.

The witch blinked sleepily and Dawn smiled. She looked over at the front door. Tara started nodding her head as sleep overtook her.

Maybe it was time to show them that Dawn Summers wasn't a little kid anymore.

~*~*~*~*~

Angel was holding a sleeping David. The fledge had been exhausted desperately trying to calm Asta down. It was clear that Alan's death had left a void in the pack. The minion had been the one to make sure that the two fledges were taken care of, fed and cuddled.

David seemed desperate to fill that vacuum. But Asta was terrified and in her terror she had latched on to Cordy. The girl never left the seer's side.

So David felt useless. Unneeded.

Angel needed to change that.

~*~*~*~*~

“So ya’r saying that we can’t stop this.” Spike growled and pointed at Xander. The boy was shivering and mumbling. His eyes unfocused and green.

“I...” Giles looked away from Xander and sighed “No. We can’t stop it.” Willow gasped and pushed past the watcher.

“No there’s...there’s got to be something...anything.” she looked frantic “I could call Tara...she could...I...”

“Willow.” Angel said and reached out and pulled the witch into a hug “We can’t stop this. I’ve tried everything...asked everyone...” the vampire let go of Willow “This is it. There is no miracle cure...no last chance. Nothing.”

~*~*~*~*~

“Xander?” Spike said and took the human’s hand “David and Asta want ta see ya.”

Xander opened his eyes and smiled. “They...you need to help me.” Xander closed his eyes “Help me sit up...I don’t want them to see me like this.”

~*~*~*~*~

The two fledges wouldn’t leave. David held on to the human as if the fledge could keep Xander alive thru sheer willpower. Asta wouldn’t look at Xander. Her eyes always seeking other things. Finally she collapsed into a sobbing heap on the floor and Wesley carried her out of the room.

Tim just stood in the corner. Eyes unblinking. Face blank.

~*~*~*~*~

“My kind...we have traditions.” the huge demon said

standing in the corner of the room. Spike looked up
“When someone from our clan is mortally wounded...”
Xander mumbled something in his sleep and Tim’s
attention was on the boy’s face “We stand guard.
Protecting the essence.”

“You believe you have souls?” Angel asked quietly.

“Souls are for humans and their philosophers.” Tim said
and returned to his vigil.

~*~*~*~*~*~

“Angel?” Xander’s weak voice startled the tall demon.

“Yes?” he moved closer to the dying human. Spike was
curled around Xander on the mattress.

“Promise me...” Xander’s breathing was laboured
“Promise me you’ll take them with you...to...to LA.” Spike
rubbed the human’s back.

Angel nodded “I’ll take care of them.”

“You better.” the human wheezed “Or I’ll come back and
haunt your undead pale ass.”

Spike laughed.

~*~*~*~*~

“So tell me how you feel.” Mr. Gefühl asked and looked down at his clipboard. The therapist was sitting in one of the uncomfortable chairs next to Buffy’s hospital bed.

“I feel great.” the slayer said. Mr. Gefühl instantly started scribbling notes on his papers.

“I see.” the little man mumbled and seemed to study some kind of chart.

“I always feel great.” Buffy said hoping it was the right thing to say. The thing that would get her out of the hospital.

“I’m sure you do, Miss Summers, but you see that’s all part of your megalomania.” Mr. Gefühl said and started scribbling more notes on his clipboard.

~*~*~*~*~

“We could turn him.” Spike said and looked from Willow to Giles. The old watcher turned to Wesley.

"Can you perform the soul restoration spell." Giles asked
"I'm not entirely sure I'll be capable after..." the older man closed his eyes and shook his head sadly.

"Of course." Wesley said.

"We should ask him." Angel said and Willow rushed out of the room.

~*~*~*~*~

"Pet." Spike ran a hand thru Xander's dark hair. The boy needed a bath.

"mmmm." Xander murmured.

"We can't stop the poison spreading thru your body...but we can..." Angel looked at his childe.

"We can turn ya." Spike continued "Wesley is ready. He'll make sure ya get ya'r soul back."

"No." the weak voice answered.

"But..." Angel began.

"No." Xander coughed "No turning no soul...nothing like that."

“Please pet...” Spike pleaded.

Xander just shook his head infinitesimally.

Part Fifteen

Xander felt Spike’s cool hands on his neck and forehead. He felt like he was burning up and the only place the pain seemed to subside was where the vampire’s hands connected with his skin. Xander’s entire body felt tense as if every muscle was primed for battle.

But the battle had already been lost. His body betraying him. Turning on itself.

“Shhh.” Spike murmured close to Xander’s ear and kissed the soft skin on the human’s neck. Xander sighed and closed his eyes. Everything hurt. Xander could almost feel his blood rotting in his veins. Could almost hear the slowing beat of his own heart.

~*~*~*~*~

"What?" Buffy glared at the little doctor.

"You would of course be given the best of care and it's an open ward." Mr. Gefühl said and smiled encouragingly. Buffy just looked horrified "I do believe that you'd benefit greatly from the treatment offered there."

"Treatment?" Buffy said.

"Yes. You would certainly require some medication." the doctor nodded "Nothing severe but..." Mr. Gefühl took Buffy's hand "You need to admit you have a problem."

"Problem?" Buffy realised she had turned into a human echo.

"I understand you live alone with your younger sister." the doctor looked down at his clipboard and hummed a bit "You do realise that if you won't get treatment for your megalomania the state will have to re-evaluate your sister's living arrangements."

"Re-evaluate?" Buffy shook her head.

"Poor girl." the doctor patted the slayer's head comfortingly "Here take these." he handed her three little green pills "You'll feel relaxed and calm down." Buffy took the pills and swallowed them.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike was shaking Xander violently.

"Breathe you stupid bastard." the blond vampire begged and kept shaking the gasping human.

"What's going on?" Giles came running into the room and Spike looked relieved.

"Won't breathe." the vampire growled. Giles started rubbing Xander's chest but it didn't help.

"I'll try..." Giles said and started giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Suddenly Xander took a deep breath and started shivering.

~*~*~*~*~

Dawn clutched the stake in her slim hand. So yeah okay maybe walking alone in a graveyard in Sunnydale wasn't the brightest idea she'd ever had. But she wanted to find Xander. Wanted to tell him that Buffy was wrong that

Xander would always be welcome. That she missed him even if it had only been a few days.

Maybe Xander would let her talk to Asta again. Maybe she should try looking for Xander somewhere else. Somewhere without so many weird shadows.

~*~*~*~*~

David was wrapped around Angel. The two vampires were sleeping on the couch in the living room. Angel was stroking the fledge's blond hair. Letting the strands run thru his fingers. David reminded the Master vampire of Spike back when he was still William the Poet. Before Angelus beat the poetry out of the fledge and helped create William the Bloody.

David had the same innocence. The same humanity clinging to him.

Angel heard someone move and saw Tim come into the living room. The demon looked worn and ruffled.

"He finally fall asleep?" the furry demon asked and sat down on the floor. Angel nodded. "Won't last long...heard Asta waking up a few minutes ago." Tim

scratched his shoulder "She's upset but...calmer." he continued.

Asta came down the stairs and walked over to Tim. The big demon let the fledge rest her head against his broad shoulder.

"I need to ask..." Angel began "...Xander has asked me to bring you...all of you with me to LA."

"But he'll get better." Asta whispered afraid to jinx it.

"Asta." Tim rumbled "Xander he...we'll need somewhere else to stay and if Xander wants us to go to LA..." the demon closed his eyes and sighed "Angel will provide for you and David, Asta."

"You are included in my promise, Tim." Angel said just as David stirred and yawned "You all have a place in LA...if you want it...with me." the vampire finished.

~*~*~*~*~

"I could still..." Spike mumbled and looked pleadingly at Giles.

"He wouldn't want it." the watcher said.

“He can’t make me...make me watch this.” Spike growled and waved a hand at Xander. The human was unresponsive and they couldn’t make him drink anymore water “I can’t watch him die.”

“He needs you here.” the watcher said and touched Xander’s cheek “He needed me...and I wasn’t there for him...Don’t bring yourself that heartache...the knowledge that you could have been there for him but chose not to.” Giles looked away, his eyes fixed on a scratch in the old wallpaper.

The watcher and the vampire stood vigil over the boy as he slipped into a coma.

~*~*~*~*~

Riley couldn’t feel his hands. It was as if they had been removed and replaced with a strange tingling.

Wesley had brought him water and food a few times. Had even let him go to the toilet but apart from that...he’d been tied to the chair for at least two days.

And during those two days the house seemed to have changed.

It was just too damn quiet.

~*~*~*~*~

Tim held Xander's limp body close to his broad chest. The demon slowly rocked back and forth. Counting the human's heartbeats.

Too few. Too far between.

David was clutching his Sire's clammy hand and mumbling. Giles was shocked when he finally heard the words quietly flowing from the fledge. "Four angels. One to watch, and one to pray. And two to bear my soul away." David must have learned that prayer while he was still human.

Asta was clinging to Cordy. The fledge's green eyes locked with Xander's glassy ones. The human made a slow rattling sound and Willow gasped.

The witch was kneeling on the mattress close enough to see but not close enough to disturb Xander's pack. Asta let go of Cordy's hand and slowly walked over to Tim. The demon smiled sadly and let the girl stroke Xander's dark hair.

Spike was standing next to Angel. The blond vampire's hand was buried in the lapel of Angel's leather jacket. Clutching so hard that the leather was slowly ripping apart.

Xander closed his eyes.

His heart stopped and the silence was deafening.

Part Sixteen

The door opened and Riley looked up. David and Spike walked in and the Master vampire locked the door. Riley looked from Spike to David.

The fledge was holding a knife.

"Ya heard yet?" Spike drawled and looked at the soldier.

"Heard?" Riley's eyes were following the movement of the knife as David walked closer to the chair the soldier was tied to.

"Strange..." David said "You not hearing. It's almost deafening." the fledge knelt in front of the soldier.

"I...I don't understand." Riley stuttered.

"His heartbeat." Spike said leaning against the wall "It stopped."

“H-he’s dead?” Riley looked over at the locked door.

“You should thank God.” Spike said “Thank him for that bleeding chip in my head. I’d have ripped your head off by now.” Spike smirked “On the other hand...” the Master vampire looked at the fledge “David is inexperienced...I think you’ll be a right mess when he’s done with ya.”

~*~*~*~*~

Cordy watched over Asta as the fledge slept on the couch. The whole house was eerily quiet and everyone spoke in low voices as if they were afraid of disturbing Xander. Cordy closed her eyes and tried to pull herself together.

Xander was...Xander was...

Her mind rebelled. Wouldn’t accept this new information. Denied to file it away under D for *dearly departed*. Cordy sighed and returned to her vigil. She couldn’t change Xander’s fate but she could take care of Asta.

~*~*~*~*~

Willow held the hand of her best friend. It wasn't the first time she had done that. Xander had always been very affectionate. Seeking physical contact with others. Hugs, holding hands, kiss on the cheek. Xander always tried to show people how much they meant to him.

Willow touched Xander's chest. Let her hand spread out. Nothing.

No heartbeat.

It finally dawned on the witch that she would never again hear her friend laugh, that he would never again hug her or tell lame jokes. No more movie nights or comforting late night talks.

Xander was dead.

~*~*~*~*~

David looked at the blood dripping from the knife. Fear making his eyes grow wide. The knife fell and clattered on the floorboards. The fledge took a few stumbling steps away from the bleeding soldier. Spike moved forward and pulled the fledge close.

“It’s all right.” Spike murmured in the fledge’s ear. David frantically tried to wipe his hands clean.

Spike reached out and unlocked the door and soon found himself headfirst against the wall.

“You had no right.” Angel growled in the blond Master vampire’s ear.

“He needed to...” Spike began but was interrupted.

“He’s a child, Spike.” Angel rumbled “He’s lost his Sire and *you*....”

“Am leaving.” Spike snarled and pushed Angel away. The blond vampire stomped out of the house. Angel turned and looked at David. The dark-haired vampire held out his hand. Angel guided the fledge out of the room and just as they were about to close the door behind them Angel looked back at Riley.

“Suck it up, soldier. It’s just a scratch.” Angel said and pointed at the small cut on Riley’s hand. The soldier nodded and looked away.

~*~*~*~*~

It was quiet. The room with its boarded up windows. The

floor covered with a fine sheet of dust. A draft luring dust bunnies from their hiding places.

A single confused butterfly flittered thru the air searching for sunshine. The butterfly landed on the sheets covering the four [mattresses](#) . Blood was spattered liberally on the once white sheets telling a story of pain and loss.

The butterfly took off again.

Two green, glowing eyes followed it's path across the room.

Part Seventeen

Spike had been roaming the graveyards for the past few hours. He was nicely drunk. Just enough to feel numb but not enough to pass out.

Numb enough to pretend that nothing bad had happened. Numb enough to pretend that Xander was back at the house teasing Asta or cuddling with David.

Nicely numb.

~*~*~*~*~

Wesley cleaned Riley's wound and bandaged it. The ex-watcher hadn't said a single word. Nothing. Riley cleared his throat and was just about to speak when Wesley said

"When I first met Xander he was..." Wesley smiled sadly "...obnoxious." He started putting the scissors and extra bandages back in the first aid kit "He really didn't like me...Not that I blame him. I was a threat to his father figure..." Wesley moved away "Not to mention...I was probably quite annoying."

"I'm..." Riley began.

"But the Xander I saw here...now...was different. He took them in." Wesley looked at the soldier "Asta, David, Tim and Alan. Took them in even though he knew what might happen if the slayer found out." Wesley's hand rested on the door handle.

"He was responsible...for them. Protected his family...his pack. I've never met anyone who could inspire such loyalty before...so effortlessly." The ex-watcher opened the door "I understand why they followed

him...he...Xander risked everything just because he loved them.” Wesley walked out. He stood in the doorway with his back to Riley “And he paid the ultimate price.”

Wesley closed the door behind him and locked it.

~*~*~*~*~

This

was...

Pain...

Pure...

Liquid...

Filling...

His...

Lungs...

With...

Fire...

The Hyena took another deep breath. He slowly stood up swaying on his feet. The room reeked of death. He needed to get out.

She was still out there and she would pay.

~*~*~*~*~

Willow wanted to find some of Xander's clothes. So he could wear it when...when. Tim had shown her where it was. Told her by pointing to the room where the human had stored his things. Pointed without looking.

"You better go..." the giant had said. His voice broken "I can't..."

"It's okay." the witch said and gently patted the demon's arm "I can do it alone."

Tim was halfway down the stairs when he turned and looked back up at Willow.

"He really liked his blue sweater." the demon whispered.

~*~*~*~*~

Dawn was on her way to Spike's crypt when she saw him staggering around the graveyard. The vampire was mumbling and drinking. Every few steps he would look up at the night sky and curse. Shaking a fist at the moon.

She was just about to call out to him. Make him notice her when something strange happened.

~*~*~*~*~

Willow was looking at the photo in her hand. Her, Jesse and Xander. So young and innocent. Barely teenagers. Still living in a world where vampires and demons were make-believe. Something from bad horror flicks.

She put her other hand over Jesse and Xander. Now it was just her. Smiling like a loon. Alone.

Willow put the picture back in the box where she had found it. It was filled with pictures. She put the lid back on the box and turned her attention on the clothes. All in dark colours. When had Xander stopped wearing the vivid colours he had always proclaimed to love. Worn them because the world was dark enough without him wearing black as well.

Why hadn't she noticed it. The change. Because it wasn't just about the clothes. It was everything. Where he lived. Who he lived with. And most importantly of all...why.

Why hadn't she been enough?

~*~*~*~*~

David was a wreck. He just couldn't stop shaking. Stuttering about blood and revenge. Angel shushed him. Hugged him. Kissed him.

But nothing helped.

So finally Angel offered David his wrist. The fledge looked stunned. Uncertain. Angel murmured and touched the fledge's neck. The invitation was clear. David lifted Angel's wrist to his mouth and looked up at the Master vampire.

Angel hissed when he felt the fangs rip thru his skin. He closed his eyes and hummed almost silently. Encouraging the fledge to feed.

Willow's scream startled both vampires.

She came down the stairs in such a hurry that she almost fell.

“Xander...” she pointed up the stairs.

“What? Willow?” Angel grabbed the witch’s hand.

“He’s...he’s...” she stammered and started swaying back and forth.

“Willow...” Angel shook her gently “Calm down. What about Xander?”

Willow shook her head and said “He’s gone.”

Part Eighteen

Spike was just about to stagger back to his old crypt when something slammed into him from the left. The Master vampire felt his assailant’s weight settle on his back as the blond was pushed against the grass.

Someone growled. A deep rumbling sound that sent shivers down Spike’s spine. A scorching warm hand was pressed against the nape of his neck and Spike tried to turn around.

Whether it was because the attacker was stronger than Spike or because the vampire was drunk was kind of blurry. Whatever the case might be Spike just wasn't strong enough. Someone licked a trail from the Master vampire's ear to his neck.

"Wha' the bloody..." Spike slurred.

"Shut up." the attacker growled and pushed their bodies together. Spike moaned.

~*~*~*~*~

Dawn couldn't believe what she saw. Right there in the middle of the graveyard...Spike was being pushed face first into the grass by...

~*~*~*~*~

"X-Xander?" Spike whispered.

"Shut up." was the only answer the vampire got.

Hands started roaming up and down Spike's back and sides. He closed his eyes. Even if this was just some

strange illusion he would do whatever it took to believe in it.

~*~*~*~*~

Wesley was looking at the empty mattress. The room still reeked of blood. The sheets still had blood and vomit spattered all over them. Everything looked just as it had a few hours ago.

Well except...the corpse seemed to have walked away.

“This is...” Cordy mumbled and looked at the ex-watcher
“This is weird even for the Hellmouth.”

“He’s out there.” Angel said and looked at the broken window. The boards that had previously kept the sunlight out were now small pieces scattered all over the room.
“Where would Xander go?” Angel asked.

“We’re assuming that he’s still Xander?” Cordy said.

“She’s right, Angel.” Wesley pointed out “We can’t assume anything.”

~*~*~*~*~

“Xander is gone?” Asta looked frightened. Tim rumbled comfortingly and hugged the fledge.

“They’ll find him.” Tim assured her.

“But h-how?” Asta started crying. Her hands clutching Tim’s fur as if he was her only hope of salvation. The giant rubbed her back and kept rumbling.

“I don’t know, Honey.” Tim said and used the endearment Xander often used when he dealt with the fledge. Asta started sobbing loudly and Tim just stood there. How was he suppose to fix this?

~*~*~*~*~

Angel had no idea what he was suppose to do. David was rocking back and forth in the corner of the room. Mumbling. No matter what the Master vampire did it only resulted in David getting more upset.

“David?” Angel said softly “Baby...come on.” David just shook his head in denial.

“Bad...bad...bad...bad.” the fledge kept mumbling his voice broken and edged with terror.

“No.” Angel said and pulled the resisting fledge closer
“No...David you...you’re not bad. Never bad.” Angel
kissed David’s neck and face. Ran his hands thru the
fledges blond hair and tried to comfort him “Why do you
think you’re bad?” Angel asked.

“Didn’t help...” David mumbled. His lips ghosting over
Angel’s “Should have kept the pack safe...helped my
Sire...I’m always so weak...Useless.” the fledge stopped
crying and pulled back so he could look Angel in the eyes
“Xander should have let t-t-those s-soldiers stake me.”

Angel growled and shifted into game face “Shut up!”
David flinched and looked away “Your Sire is gone and he
left you in my care.” Angel forced David to look at him
“You’re mine and I say you’re worth keeping alive.” The
fledge’s eyes widened in surprise.

~*~*~*~*~

“I wan’t ta see ya.” Spike growled and tried to turn
around again. The hands that had been holding him
down were removed and the vampire quickly turned
around.

“Oh...” Spike said and looked at Xander.

~*~*~*~*~

Dawn hadn't really had the best view of what was going on between Xander and Spike. But now...

She had always thought that Xander was good-looking. She loved his brown eyes and his smile. Loved how Xander could laugh and smile his way thru almost anything. But there was something different about him now. His smile was...

Feral.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike reached out to the creature standing before him. Even though Xander looked the same he clearly wasn't. His eyes were green and bright. His hair seemed different. Shiny somehow like the fur of a predator. The way he held his body. Strong.

Xander touched Spike's outstretched hand with the tips of his fingers. He growled softly and made a strange yipping sound. The young man stepped closer until he

was flush against Spike's chest. The vampire smiled and touched Xander's cheek.

That seemed to wake Xander up. Before Spike could react he felt blunt human teeth scrape against his throat hard enough to make him bleed. The vampire grabbed hold of Xander. The young man pulled back when he felt Spike's fingers tangle in his hair.

They looked at each other. Xander smiled and pressed his wrist against Spike's lips.

"Pack," the younger man snarled.

Spike nodded and drank from Xander.

Part Nineteen

Spike moaned when he felt Xander's blood fill his mouth. The vampire kept feeding from the man's wrist while Xander licked and nuzzled Spike's throat.

Spike groaned and pushed himself against Xander's body wanting to get closer to him. Be part of him. The younger man made a few high-pitched whining noises. Xander's skin felt like he was on fire. The warmth seeping from him heated the vampire's body up like never before.

Spike shoved Xander's t-shirt up seeking that warm skin and Xander arched his back and hissed. Spike finally let go of Xander's wrist and pulled the other man closer. The vampire let his hands roam over Xander's back. The moans got louder and Xander pushed Spike against the stone wall of the vampire's crypt.

Spike closed his eyes. Xander's hands were working on the buttons of the vampire's jeans. Yanking them open and then stopping. Rumbling low in the back of his throat.

~*~*~*~*~

Wesley was looking thru several books. Giles had brought them to the house when it had become apparent that they would need some potion to heal Xander. The books had been useless. The boy had died despite their frantic attempts.

Now the ex-watcher was trying to find something about Primal spirits.

"You said you preformed a spell...banished the hyena from Xander?" Wesley asked.

"Yes" Giles nodded "It was successful. No one else from his pack seemed to have a relapse. I made sure to keep a close eye on them after those horrible events." Giles closed the book he had been looking thru.

"But the hyena or at least part of it stayed with Xander..." Wesley sighed and scratched his upper arm "Why would his hyena be stronger?"

"Xander was the pack leader." Giles answered "It was obvious from the way the others reacted to him."

"So his hyena was stronger?" Angel asked. The vampire was sitting on the couch. David sleeping with his head in the Master vampire's lap.

"That still doesn't explain why she lingered...You preformed the spell. It worked on the others." Wesley pointed out. Giles nodded.

"Who were they?" Angel asked.

"What?" Giles said absentmindedly.

“The rest of the pack.” Angel clarified.

“Oh they...um...” Giles looked confused.

“They were bullies.” Willow said as she entered the room
“They’d always pick on the other kids. Including Xander.”

“So they were different from Xander.” Angel said “They were already strong, already popular?” Angel looked at the witch.

“Yes,” she nodded. “They were the cool kids.”

“So...Unlike Xander...” Wesley looked thoughtful “They were already accepted...already part of something...”

“And Xander wasn’t.” Giles said.

“He was part of us.” Willow said angrily. “He was part of the Scoobies.”

“Yes but he was never like you and Buffy.” Angel said calmly.

“What do you mean?” Willow said.

“He never had anything that made him special...” Wesley looked over at Angel and the vampire nodded and started caressing David’s blond hair. The fledge sighed in his sleep.

“H-he was Xander...he was plenty special for us.” Willow whispered her eyes tearing up.

“But that’s never how Xander saw it...and maybe he needed the hyena just as much as she needed him...so she stayed put...hidden...until now.” Angel explained.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander’s eyes were glowing green and he grabbed on to Spike’s neck. The strong fingers kneading the hard muscles there. Spike growled and opened his eyes. Xander was faintly smiling as if he found something amusing. One warm hand trailed up under Spike’s shirt over his stomach and further up stopping over the vampire’s un-beating heart.

They stood like that silhouetted against the grey and silvery light cast by the moon.

~*~*~*~*~

Dawn was mesmerised by the sight. Xander kissing and touching Spike. The vampire so obviously seeking the

human's warmth. She idly wondered if Buffy knew about this. Wondered what her sister would say.

Had Tara noticed her missing by now? She felt bad about leaving her like that. Dawn really liked the blond witch. She was so different from Buffy and Willow. So calm. She was the best listener whenever Dawn needed to rant about Buffy being too strict or school being stupid and like completely unnecessary. She always listened and only gave advice if Dawn asked for it.

She should go back. Xander was all right. Very all right if what he was doing with Spike was any indication. She blushed.

Maybe she should just stay a little while longer...just to make sure they were both okay.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander fell to his knees in front of Spike and the vampire gasped softly in surprise. The dark-haired man leant forward and rested his forehead against Spike's bony knee.

"I'm so tired." Xander unexpectedly whispered.

~*~*~*~*~

Riley had been untied but he was still locked up in one of the smaller rooms. Maybe a dressing room... it was far too small to be a bedroom. Riley could hear someone moving around outside the locked door. Then a faint rattle of keys. The door opened with a screech and Wesley stepped into the room. Behind him came the huge furry demon. It was hauling what looked like an old mattress along with it.

“Just put it over there.” Wesley said and pointed at the wall on the other side of the room. The demon rumbled and slammed the mattress down by the wall “Thank you, Tim.” Wesley sounded very tired.

The mattress was old and tattered in places. Riley noticed some red stains on it. He tried to rub them off with his thumb. “What is that?” he asked and pointed at the stains.

The demon looked at him and growled. Before Riley had a chance to respond he was inches away from large sharp teeth and his feet weren't touching the floorboards.

“Put him down.” Wesley said “Please, Tim...this is the last thing we need.”

Tim let go of Riley’s shirt and the soldier slowly slid down the wall. His heart going a million miles an hour. Wesley just looked at him as the demon stomped out of the room. Riley looked away.

Wesley turned around walked to the door. The ex-watcher looked back at the soldier and said “It’s Xander’s blood.”

~*~*~*~*~

Willow stormed into the room a cell phone clutched in her hand.

“Dawn is gone!” she looked frantically around the room as if she expected the teenager to be hiding there. Giles stepped forward.

“Gone?” the watcher asked. “But Tara...”

“She fell asleep and when she woke up...” the witch hugged herself “Dawn was gone...there...there wasn’t any sign of a struggle so she thinks that Dawn just left.”

“We’ll have to go look for her. With Xander out there...”
Angel didn’t finish.

“No he would never...” Willow shook her head.

“We don’t know that, Willow.” Giles said.

~*~*~*~*~

“Come here, mate.” Spike murmured and gently gathered Xander in his arms. They were both sitting on the moist grass, Spike propped against the crypt and Xander against the vampire’s chest.

“Mate.” Xander nodded sleepily. “What happened, Spike?” Xander asked, turning slightly and looking at Spike with big brown eyes. Spike ran his hand thru the boy’s hair and hushed him.

“Shhh.” the vampire soothed “’S going ta be all right...you just rest.”

“I think I’m suppose to be going somewhere...” Xander mumbled sleepily and shook his head as if to clear it.

~*~*~*~*~

Riley took his t-shirt off and bundled it into a makeshift pillow. The mattress was at the other end of the room. A bloodstained reminder of Xander's death.

The soldier turned his back on it and curled up on the floor.

~*~*~*~*~

"S-spike?" Dawn said and slowly moved closer to the two men. Spike looked up and was about to speak when Xander pushed away from the vampire and staggered away from Dawn.

"Xander, what's wrong?" the girl asked. Xander growled at her and his eyes were glowing green. Dawn stumbled backwards and let out a small shriek as she fell. Spike hurried forward and was helping the human up when Dawn said

"Where did Xander go?"

~*~*~*~*~

She looked so innocent. All covered in blankets, the soft light of the bedside lamp shining down on her blond hair. Her face calm. Beautiful. She mumbled in her sleep and curled up. Her slender fingers lightly holding on to the edge of the blanket. Her lips slightly parted.

He reached out and let his fingers play with a lock of her hair. Felt like silk.

And yet she reeked. Her scent wrong. It wasn't just the medication flowing thru her veins. It was something deeper than that.

She reeked of betrayal. She opened her eyes and looked surprised. Her lips moving without sound until she finally found her voice.

"Xander?" she asked.

Part Twenty

She had expected anger. Maybe sadness. She certainly had expected him to yell and scream at her. But he didn't, he just stared. As if he was cataloguing her features. Looking for...guilt?

Xander tilted his head and seemed to scent the air. His eyes were glowing green and Buffy tried to move but the drugs the doctor had given her made her so tired. Made her arms and legs feel heavy and impossible to move.

She had expected anger.

She really hadn't expected Xander to gently pull the pillow from under her head and press it hard against her face.

~*~*~*~*~

"Bloody hell, girl." Spike was busy trying to make his clothes look less rumpled "Ruined a perfectly good moment," the vampire mumbled as he grabbed her by the wrist and started dragging her out of the cemetery.

"Spike?" Dawn tried to pull away "Spike!" she yelled.

"What?" the blond vampire turned around and looked at her.

Dawn smirked and said “You and Xander?”

~*~*~*~*~

Willow had told her to stay at Buffy’s house in case Dawn returned. Tara was pacing from room to room trying not to think about all the horrible things that could happen to a teenage girl wandering around the Hellmouth all alone.

~*~*~*~*~

Her lungs were burning. Buffy tried to push the pillow away but her fingers felt strangely numb and her arms were tingling.

“Bitch...bitch...bitch...bitch.” Xander chanted as he pressed harder.

~*~*~*~*~

“Where would he go?” Angel asked Tim. The huge demon closed his eyes.

“After what happened to...to Alan...He’ll want to punish the slayer.” Tim said and looked over at the mattresses. David was curled around Asta. The two fledges seeking comfort in the room their Sire had occupied only a few hours ago.

“Would he...” Angel rubbed the bridge of his nose “...kill her?”

“It’s not that simple.” Tim rumbled and picked up one of the cleanest blankets. The demon walked over to the sleeping vampires and tucked the blanket around them “She hurt the pack.” Tim turned and looked at Angel “This isn’t just about Alan.”

“What do you mean?” Angel asked.

“She...the slayer...hurt the pack.” the demon tried to explain “She didn’t just kill Alan she threatened the pack. Xander can’t allow that.”

“But wasn’t that why we talked about the pack going away?” Angel turned to look at David “Talked about all of you living with me?”

“That was Xander.” Tim said “We know he wouldn’t really kill her...after he calmed down he was more worried about us.”

“But the hyena...” the Master vampire contemplated.

“The hyena would want to see blood...He’d go for the Slayer.” Tim nodded.

~*~*~*~*~

Doctor Gefühl was waiting for the elevator to arrive. He looked down at the folder in his hands. At first the poor distraught young woman...he opened the folder and peeked at the name...ah yes...Miss Summers had seemed confused and her mild form of megalomania might not have been a problem...yet.

The elevator *dinged* and the doctor stepped inside and pushed the button for the open psych ward. He nodded to the two men already occupying the small space. The tall broad shouldered pale young man with the leather jacket nodded slightly and the man standing next to him, a little taller and wearing glasses, started talking in a low murmur.

Delusions of grandeur could destroy a person’s life. It was important to treat such mental deficiencies early on. If left untreated she could become unbearable. Thinking

she knew best and perhaps even end up endangering her friends and family.

"We'll have to be careful." one of the men behind the doctor whispered.

"I know, Wesley." was the answer.

The elevator hissed as it stopped. The doors opened soundlessly and Dr. Gefühl stepped out. The two men did the same.

They walked to the nurses station and asked for Miss Summers.

"Oh." Dr. Gefühl said and walked over to them "I was just on my way to see her." Both men turned and looked at him "You could follow me. So nice to see her friends stopping by."

"Dr. Gefühl?" the nurse said "She already has a visitor."

"What?" the pale young man asked "Where is her room?"

"Just down the hall...last room." the nurse said and pointed.

Part Twenty-One

Once, when he was just a kid, he had visited Aunt Ida. Xander didn't really remember who's aunt she was, maybe his mother's or his grandmother's. Anyway, she was just Aunt Ida to him even if he rarely saw her because his dad hated her.

She was the kind of old woman that collected things. Her house was stuffed full of weird things and Xander had loved to explore, to find the things that were tucked into corners or behind books.

But the thing he always spent the most time looking at was her collection of crystals. Even though they were rare and a few of them expensive she'd let him hold them. Xander would lift them up, angle them just right so they caught the light and then look thru them.

The world always seemed softer seen thru those crystals, especially the ones that were really just thin slices cut from larger stones. Cut so thin they seemed fragile, even if they could scratch the surface of the old table made of merbau. The hardest kind of wood in the world, his Aunt Ida had said.

So he would sit at that table and look at the world, its edges smoothed by the crystals. Colours soft and blurred. It was a distorted and hazy kind of world where there

were no sharp edges and where his mother looked younger, if he peeked at her thru the flat piece of amber.

This, the vagueness of the world around him, reminded him of Aunt Ida. He could see the fluffy pillow in his hands, could feel its smoothness and the warmth seeping from it. He felt the muscles in his arms and hands flex.

Slim fingers ghosted over his. Attempting to move them. He wasn't sure why he held the pillow, couldn't really remember, but he was almost certain that this was important.

That he wasn't suppose to let go.

~*~*~*~*~

Meaura turned the tiny TV off. She could hear someone moving outside in the hallway. The tiny frail old lady slowly pushed the blanket off her legs. Meaura reached for her cane and got out of the chair she had been sitting in. Her back ached, it was those damn hospital chairs.

She hobbled over to the door and opened it a few inches. Dr.Gefühl was rushing down the hallway trying to catch up with two young men.

"Really...there's no need for you to hurry so." the good doctor huffed. The tallest of the young men, the one with the glasses, stopped and started talking to the doctor. The other man kept going, leaving the other two men behind. Meaura gasped when she caught a glimpse of his golden eyes and ridged forehead.

She clutched the cane against her chest. Now...maybe they would believe her now...if they saw it with their own eyes...the nurses and doctors that made her take pills and sleep all day because she knew about the vampires. She had tried to warn them but nooooo they just called her crazy and told her she was dehydrated.

The old woman snorted and ripped the door open with her skinny hand. She stepped out into the hallway and pointed her cane at the beast in the leather jacket.

~*~*~*~*~*~

"Where is 'e?" Spike demanded to know when he slammed the door behind him. Tim looked up and stepped forward. "I saw him, Tim." Spike said and pointed at the huge demon. Tim just nodded and was about to say something when a high-pitched squeal made the demon flinch.

Asta pushed past Tim and Spike and ended up giving Dawn a big hug.

“Dawn!” Asta jumped up and down “Look, Tim. It’s Dawn. Dawn’s here!”

“So you’re Dawn.” Tim said dryly and smiled at the young human.

“Wow.” Dawn mumbled “He looks a lot like Sulley from Monsters Inc.” she whispered to Asta.

“Yeah...” Asta said and Tim snorted dismissively “Only he’s brown not blue.”

~*~*~*~*~

His hand hurt. Thru the blur he could see the slim fingers digging into it, the nails leaving deep red welts in the back of his hand. He pushed harder but the pain just got worse and blood started flowing.

~*~*~*~*~

Angel stopped and stared at the small frail woman standing in front of him. She was pointing a wooden cane

at him. Waving it slowly back and forth making her look like a cobra ready to pounce.

“Look lady I really...” Angel started.

“Don’t you try to win me over with your sweet talk. I’m not falling for it.” she hissed and poked the air with her cane “Always trying to make me invite you in, telling me how beautiful I am.”

Angel frowned “Look I have no id...”

“But I know just how to handle your kind. Oh yes!” she hobbled a step closer “I know how to kill a vampire...Oh yes.” she nodded frantically.

Angel looked over his shoulder for reinforcements but Wesley was still trying to calm down the doctor. A sudden pain made him turn around and growl at the little old lady “Hey!” he said and rubbed his shoulder.

“Damn it!” she cursed and waved the cane around “If I was younger I would spank you! Naughty boy!” she wailed and disappeared into her room and slammed the door shut.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander felt the blur disappear. His body started feeling more real, heavy and restricted by its weakness. The blood flowing from his hand was turning the white pillowcase crimson.

He turned his head and watched as the door was opened.

~*~*~*~*~

Wesley was telling the doctor lies. He had never lied quite this much or this good. The doctor was nodding his head and making all the right noises. Wesley could faintly hear someone talking about spanking, which made him stutter in his long explanations about Miss Summers and the treatment her family was paying for.

“What kind of treatment?” the doctor asked with interest.

“Oh it’s a...a...homeopathic treatment involving naturopathic and chiropractic...um...philosophies as well as herbal medicine.” Wesley said and hoped that would be enough.

“Well that certainly isn’t the kind of treatment she ne...”
Dr. Gefühl was interrupted by raised voices and screaming.

~*~*~*~*~

Tara shook hands with Tim. The demon smiled, showing all his sharp teeth and the blond witch couldn’t help shivering.

“Oh...um...sorry.” Tim mumbled “Didn’t mean to frighten you.”

“T-t-that’s all right.” she said and followed Willow into the living room.

~*~*~*~*~

Dr. Gefühl just stood there, his mouth open and his eyes big.

One of the young men, the pale one, was wrestling another man on the floor. They were both growling and snarling. The sounds sending shivers down the doctor’s spine.

"Snap out of it, Xander." the pale man hissed and slammed the other man into the wall.

"Really gentlemen is that...um necessary?" the good doctor attempted. He slowly made his way to Miss Summers' bed. The man with the glasses was already there trying to calm the young woman down.

A loud yipping made the doctor look up just in time to see the dark-haired young man's eyes glow green. But that was nothing...nothing at all...compared to the deformed face of the pale man.

"Oh dear God!" Dr. Gefühl mumbled and stumbled into the hallway.

Part Twenty-Two

Spike ran up the stairs. He really didn't have the patience to stand around waiting for the bloody lift. As the vampire burst thru the door and into the hallway, he immediately caught Xander's scent. The boy was here, all he had to do was find him.

The smell of fear and blood called to him, and he wasn't even aware that he was in game face before a little man in a white coat ran headfirst into him. The man gasped and stuttered, pointed a shaking finger at the vampire and made a little weird throaty sound. His eyes rolled back in his head and then the man just passed out.

"Bloody wanker." Spike mumbled and ran toward the scent of blood.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy staggered out of the hospital bed with Wesley's help. The slayer was dizzy and her legs felt numb. The ex-watcher steadied her and they both watched as Angel and Xander fought.

The vampire slammed the human against the wall but only succeeded in making Xander more angry. He snarled at Angel, eyes glowing green, kicked the vampire in the stomach and then turned his attention to Buffy. He was halfway across the room before Angel grabbed him and pushed him to the floor.

Angel had his hands around Xander's throat. He wasn't squeezing hard enough to strangle him but just enough to hold Xander down.

"Get the fuck off me." Xander hissed and arched his back in an attempt to break Angel's hold on him. Angel growled and tightened his hold a little. "You know..." Xander panted "I'll get the bitch sooner or later...I'll just wait around and then I'll..."

"Oh God." Buffy sobbed and Wesley held on to her, making sure she wouldn't fall.

Xander turned his head and looked at the slayer. "You killed Alan, fucking bitch." Xander's eyes were the colour of green jade, his pupils dilated so much that they only left a thin glowing ring of green around each one. "I'll get you!" Xander started struggling harder and Angel's grip on him wasn't enough.

"Stay put!" Angel snarled and slammed Xander's head against the floor.

"You..." Xander spat "You. Aren't. Pack. *I'm* pack. The leader." he hissed and repeatedly hit Angel in the chest. Angel looked him in the eyes and smirked. Xander suddenly stopped fighting back.

"Not for long." Angel whispered.

~*~*~*~*~

Spike came into the room just in time to see Angel bite Xander in the throat.

~*~*~*~*~

It was an odd sensation. Being bitten. Like his entire sensory system was located in his neck. All his blood seemed to be drawn to the fangs sinking thru his skin. The blurriness retreated. The softness disappearing, leaving only a sense of helplessness.

Angel slowly pulled back, his hands still holding Xander down but the strain was slowly seeping out of them. Xander crawled away from Angel. He could feel blood running down his neck, drops dripping onto his t-shirt.

He sat in the corner facing Angel. Buffy was sobbing and Wesley was still trying to comfort her. Xander's eyes were drawn to Spike. The blond Master vampire was standing in the doorway. He looked confused...it didn't last long.

~*~*~*~*~

Angel felt a little dazed. Xander's blood was flowing thru his veins. Strong blood. He had never tasted anything like it before. It was even better than the blood of a slayer. The blood of the primal carried the sensation of sunshine and warmth, dry dirt and pack.

Xander started whining. His voice strange and high-pitched. Begging. Angel turned and looked at him. Xander seemed to curl up, trying to make himself look smaller. Submissive. Angel was about to reach out for him when Spike grabbed Angel by the lapels of his leather jacket.

"Get the fuck away from him." Spike growled and pushed Angel toward the ex-watcher. He then turned his attention on Xander. Kneeling in front of the boy, murmuring soothingly, but Xander just pulled away looking at Angel.

"Please." Xander whispered and yelped when Spike grabbed onto his wrist.

"Let him go." Angel rumbled warningly and watched as Spike dragged Xander forward, trying to hug the human.

Xander resisted fiercely, pulling on his arms in an attempt to get away from Spike. The blond vamp looked dejected and slowly let go of Xander and stood up.

Angel helped the boy up, put his hands on his hips trying to steady him. The vampire slowly started walking thru the room, heading for the door, when Xander stopped and looked back at Spike. The blond vampire looked away, not wanting to meet the human's eyes.

"Please...Angel." Xander said looking pleadingly at the Master vampire. Angel nodded.

"Come here, Spike." he said "The boy needs you." Spike looked up and slowly but surely made his way across the room. When he reached Xander he put his hand around the human's shoulder and with the help of Angel they managed to steer Xander out of the room.

~*~*~*~*~

Meaura hobbled out into the hallway. Dr. Gefühl was crumbled up on the floor. The old lady shook her head. She kicked him with her pointy shoe and the doctor turned with a groan but didn't wake up.

Three men came out of the room down the hall. The tall pale one and two others. A blond with a leather duster on and between them a younger man with blood on his neck and down the front of his t-shirt.

Meaura watched them walk past her, toward the elevator and she sniggered when she noticed the tall pale one wincing when she lifted her cane slightly.

Someone else came out of the room down the hall. The tall man with the glasses, carrying a young blond woman. When they all disappeared into the elevator Meaura turned her attention to the passed out doctor.

“See,” she said and poked him hard in the chest with her cane “Told you so!”

~*~*~*~*~

Spike wasn't taking Xander's submissive behaviour toward Angel well. The blond Master vampire slammed doors and growled, until Xander retreated to the bedroom with the rest of his pack.

“You had no right!” Spike snarled at Angel when they were left alone in the kitchen “He's mine. You had no

right!” Spike poked Angel in the chest with a shaking finger.

“Spike.” Angel said, attempting to calm the vampire down “I’m not taking him away from you. I...”

“You bit ‘im. Took his place as pack leader...He’ll do whatever you want now.” Spike said and turned his back on his Sire.

“No. Spike, he won’t.” the dark-haired vampire said “He’ll look to me for guidance but I’d never...You know I wouldn’t.” he tried to convince Spike. He realised it wasn’t working and abruptly grabbed the blond vampire’s hand and dragged him up the stairs.

He quietly opened the door to the bedroom and ushered Spike in. Angel closed the door. The two vampires stood for a few minutes and just watched the pack sleep.

Xander, sleeping on the edge of one of the mattresses. His arm draped over Asta’s waist. David curled around Asta’s other side. His face nuzzled against her throat. Tim curled up at the bottom of the mattresses. The other pack members warming their feet in the big demon’s fur.

Angel walked around the mattresses and cuddled up to David. The fledge sighed and turned in his sleep,

clutching his hands in Angel's shirt. Spike stood very still until Angel whispered

"You need to sleep, Spike."

The blond nodded and laid down embracing Xander. Breathing in his scent.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy listened to Wesley, Giles and Willow discuss Xander.

"I just don't understand how he could live..." Willow said breathlessly "I saw him die."

"We saw his body stop functioning." Wesley said "But I don't think he really died."

"Then how..." Willow began.

"The hyena took control when she realised he wouldn't survive...She healed him..." Giles looked thoughtful "I honestly don't think we'll ever be capable of understanding exactly how Xander coexists with the hyena...let's just be thankful she saved him."

“And that Angel kept him from hurting anyone.” Wesley pointed out.

“I don’t want him here.” Buffy interrupted. The slayer’s voice was strained and hoarse.

Willow looked at her. “It’s kinda his house, Buffy.” the witch said.

“I wasn’t talking about the house.” the slayer said “If he stays...I won’t promise I’ll let his pack run free in Sunnydale.” she looked at Giles “He almost killed me.”

“Yes.” Giles said and looked away “I...”

“I’ll take him with me to LA.” they all turned and looked at Angel standing by the stairs.

“Well...I...” Giles looked from Buffy to Angel “I think that might be best.”

Buffy stood up, her chair scraping against the naked floorboards “I’m taking Riley with me home...and Dawn too...” she said as she left the room.

Part Twenty-Three

Saying goodbye was awkward. Dawn wouldn't let go of Xander and when he finally made her calm down, she ended up clinging to Asta. The fledge was snivelling and between hitched breaths and quiet sobs, the two girls promised that they would see each other again soon.

"You could email me every day." Dawn babbled "Tell me about LA and the hotel...Oh you can go shopping all the time." Angel groaned and Asta looked down at her feet.

"I can't." she said "I don't have a computer."

"We'll buy you one." Cordy said and glared at Angel. The Master vampire sighed and nodded reluctantly, but the squeals coming from the girls made him smile.

~*~*~*~*~

"So, Peaches." Spike said as he stood outside the house smoking.

"William." Angel said and noticed Spike wince.

“Taking the boy with ya ta LA.” Spike still hadn’t looked at his Sire.

“Spike...” Angel began.

“Got yourself a nice deal there.” Spike interrupted “Two boys ta play with.”

Angel grabbed Spike and pushed him against the side of the house. “If you could just shut up for a second...” Angel growled “then you’d know you were welcome to go with us.” Spike looked stunned.

Angel expected him to make some flippant comment but instead the blond vampire said “Really?”

“Yes, Spike. Really.” Angel said and let go of him “And Spike...” the blond vampire looked up at him “I don’t want Xander.”

“Well why the bloody hell not?” Spike started ranting as he followed Angel to the car “He’s a nummy treat ‘e is. All big brown eyes and muscles. Blood sweet as sugar...Ya think ya’r too good for him?...”

“Just get in the car and wait, Spike.” Angel growled.

~*~*~*~*~

“Can’t you stay?” Willow asked, resting her head on Xander’s chest. He shook his head.

“No, Weepy Willow.” he smiled sadly “You know I can’t...Buffy...”

“To hell with Buffy.” Willow mumbled and Xander couldn’t help laughing.

“You don’t mean that.” he said “She’s...” he wrapped his arms around the witch “I tried to kill her...And my pack...” He looked Willow in the eyes “They won’t be safe here.”

“I know.” Willow nodded. Her forehead rubbing against Xander’s collarbone “I know.”

~*~*~*~*~

Angel watched Xander stuff Asta’s clothes in a duffle bag. He zipped it and dumped it on the floor next to the four other bags. The human seemed calmer, more relaxed. Xander looked up and noticed Angel standing in the doorway.

“Ready?” Angel asked.

“Yeah.” Xander said and looked around the room. Nothing left worth taking. He picked up two of the duffle bags. Just as he passed Angel, the vampire reached out and touched Xander’s shoulder. Xander submissively looked down at the floor.

“No.” Angel said and Xander nervously looked up “You look me in the eyes. I’m not...” Angel attempted “I don’t want...Nothing has changed.” the vampire finally said.

“You know that’s not true.” Xander said “I mean...I know that you...it’s the hyena...”

“I’ll need your help with the pack.” Angel interrupted “They’re still yours...you know them...what they need.” Angel squeezed Xander’s shoulder lightly “We’ll have to work together...We’ll figure this out.”

Xander nodded. Angel let go of his shoulder and Xander walked down the hallway. The human turned around and looked back at Angel.

“Thanks.” Xander said.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy looked at Dawn. The teenage girl had been sulking

since Angel had announced that he was taking Xander, Spike and the pack with him to LA. Saying goodbye to them had just made the girl mope even more.

Dawn was glaring at Buffy. Demanding answers. "It's not safe...with him here." the slayer said "He tried to kill me, Dawn!"

Dawn looked sheepish and mumbled "Not him, Buffy. The hyena..."

"He *is* the hyena..." Buffy sighed "Don't you see?" she shook her head "We can't be sure when he'll lose control again...next time..." Buffy forced Dawn to look at her "Next time he might go after *you*."

"He'd never..." Dawn yelled "You killed his friend!"

"He was a vampire, Dawn!"

Dawn just turned her back on Buffy and said "Angel told me I'd be welcome anytime, as long as it didn't interfere with school." Buffy was about to protest but the girl continued "And I'm going! I'm going to see Asta and Spike and Xander whether you like it or not." Dawn slammed the door behind her, leaving Buffy alone in her big empty house.

~*~*~*~*~

Giles sat in his study, a drink in his hand. He knew he was suppose to write a report for the Council. He was suppose to sit down and describe the recent events, including his observations of Xander's behaviour around the pack and also Angel's new status as pack leader.

He should have tested Xander's physical strength, should have stopped the boy from leaving Sunnydale. There were a lot of things he should have done. But right now, as he sat in his study surrounded by books on demonology he just couldn't help smiling.

It was...exhilarating...the knowledge that he had encountered something so special, that it couldn't be found in any of those books. Something so extraordinary, that no other watcher had experienced it. A human possessed by a primal spirit forming a bond, creating a pack, with a group of vampires and demons.

He looked at the draft, a piece of paper littered with notes about Xander and his pack, picked it up and threw it in the fireplace. Giles watched as the paper curled in on itself and then burst into flames.

~*~*~*~*~

The drive to LA turned out to be worse than all the years Angel had spent in Hell. Nothing Angelus had ever done could require such torment. He was trapped in a car with Xander, Spike, David, Asta and Tim. Why the hell hadn't he decided to ride in Wesley's car with the ex-watcher and Cordy?

"Turn up the volume!" Asta shrieked "I just love that song!" Spike looked at Angel and turned the volume up as high as it would go. The bastard just kept smirking at his Sire, when the fledge started singing in a high-pitched voice.

*"I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want,
So tell me what you want, what you really really want,
I wanna, I wanna, I wanna, I wanna, I wanna really
Really really wanna zigazig ha."*

Xander couldn't help laughing when Angel, in pure frustration, vamped out.

~*~*~*~*~

Buffy knocked on the door to Riley's apartment. Someone was shuffling around in there. She heard the lock clicking and she smiled when Riley opened the door.

"Hey." she said and pushed past him into...the empty apartment?

"Um...Buffy." Riley started.

"Are you moving?" she asked and looked around. A few boxes in the corner but nothing else.

"Yeah." he said and looked away.

"Bigger apartment?" Buffy asked hopefully.

"No...Look..." Riley sighed and closed the door "I'm leaving Sunnydale." he said and looked out the window. Buffy looked confused. She walked further into the living room. Small specks of dust were dancing in the sunbeams shining thru the curtainless windows.

"Oh so...they're sending you someplace else?" her voice seemed fake, strained.

"No." Riley finally looked at her "I asked for a transfer."

"You...asked." Buffy looked away.

“I’m sorry, Buffy. I just can’t do this...all the lines are blurred.” he stepped closer to her “Can’t you see? I’m starting to doubt everything I’ve ever believed in...If I stay...there’ll be nothing left.”

“So you run away?” Buffy whispered.

“Call it whatever you want...” Riley looked at the bare walls. “I just need to get as far away from Sunnydale as I can.”

“And me.” Buffy said. She looked at him, wanting him to tell her she was wrong, but he wouldn’t meet her eyes. “Okay” she said and walked out of his apartment.

~*~*~*~*~

Angel woke up with David draped across his back. Naked David. Angel rumbled and slowly turned around in the bed, making sure he didn’t wake the fledge. David frowned in his sleep and mumbled “Stop wriggling around, Asta.”

Angel smiled and kissed the fledge’s lips. The frown turned into a smile.

~*~*~*~*~

Xander pushed Spike away.

“Honestly, Spike.” he moaned and stretched “Enough.” he pleaded.

“Not bloody likely.” Spike growled playfully from somewhere under the covers.

“No seriously, Spike.” Xander moaned “Get off.”

“Was planning on it, pet.” the vampire snarled “Would be easier if I didn’t have ta use my mouth ta tell ya to shut up all the bloody time.” Spike proceeded to shut up in quite interesting ways.

“Oh f-f-f-for God’s sake.” Xander squirmed.

“Sta’ ’ut!”

“What?” Xander lifted the covers and looked at Spike.

“I said: Stay put!” Spike snorted and started licking.

Someone knocked on the door.

“What the bloody hell is it now!” Spike bellowed.

“Cordy had a vision,” Tim said from the other side of the door.

“And Angel said...” David giggled, his voice muffled by the thick wooden door “He said that only the two of you could turn a blowjob into an argument.” Tim started laughing as well.

“Go away!” Xander yelled.

“No way!” Asta yelled back. Xander’s eyes grew big and he blushed all over.

“Bloody pack.” Spike grumbled and started getting dressed.

Xander just smiled.

The End

Home!verse Ficlets and Drabbles

by

[Devo79](#)

It's a book about sex

"What's that then?" Spike asked and picked up the book Xander had thrown on the bed.

"Sex." the human smiled and crawled under the covers.

"Naw, pet." Spike said and lifted the book up "See this..." he pointed "is a *book*." He reached out and let his hand fall gently on Xander's crotch "This..." he smirked and squeezed a little "is *sex*?" Xander made a squeaky kind of sound and shook his head.

"No, Spike." he closed his eyes "It's a *book* about *sex*."

"Oh!" Spike grinned and started flipping thru it "Well bugger me." he whispered as he started reading.

"Yeah, that was kinda my plan." Xander said and snuggled closer "Read to me, Bleachy."

"K." Spike said "Looks like it's an encyclopaedia....um...say a letter." the vampire looked at the human. Xander seemed to think about it "Well come on then. Not that many to choose from."

"Um...okay...E." Xander said, settled back and made himself comfortable.

"Right..." Spike found the E-list and started laughing.

"What?" Xander asked curiously.

"Gotta say this ain't my kinda thing." the vampire snorted "Especially after you've eaten beans?"

"What?" Xander tried to take the book but Spike guarded it valiantly.

"Eproctophilia: Sexual pleasure from farts." Spike read and started laughing again.

"That's just wrong." Xander snorted. "My turn." he said and Spike handed him the book.

"Letter?" the human asked.

"Um...C." Spike said.

"Well." Xander smiled "This should be right up your alley."

"Really?" Spike attempted to sneak a peek.

"Ah ah." Xander said and smacked the vampire on the shoulder "Coprolali: The need to say dirty words such as shit or piss."

"Piss off." Spike snorted.

"My point exactly." Xander smiled "One more?"

"Sure." Spike said "I'll take...N."

"N..." Xander nodded "Okay...that's just wrong...
Nosophilia: sexual arousal from knowing your partner
has a terminal illness." Spike looked at him.

"You're bloody kidding me." the blond vampire said.
Xander just shook his head. "Well that's the kinda fun
that doesn't last long." Spike deadpanned.
He took the book.

"Okay...um...I'll take...S." Xander said.

"S...Siderodromophilia...Well bloody hell no wonder I
never take the train. Too many bleeding wankers on
'em..." Spike mumbled "Siderodromophilia: Sexual
arousal from trains and riding in them."

"Well...um...eeewww." Xander said and scrunched up
his face.

"Says the man that gets turned on by linoleum." Spike
teased.

"Shut up." Xander laughed "Okay...A."

"A is for...Acucullophilia..." Spike leered at Xander,
scouted closer and reached under the covers. Xander

closed his eyes and moaned "Acuculophilia..." the vampire whispered "Attraction to circumcised men."

"Man, y-you better have that fetish." Xander moaned again and squirmed.

"Know I do, pet." Spike licked Xander's neck and nipped teasingly with blunt human teeth.

"I...I say we play a little with my f-f-fetish." Xander's eyes rolled back in his head. Spike let the book fall to the floor and started disappearing under the covers.

"And what might that be then?" the vampire asked.

"N-n...fuck Spike...Necrophilia." Xander moaned uncontrollably.

Spike didn't answer. He was busy being an acuculophiliac.

**The not so successful sexual experiments conducted by
Mr. Harris and Mr. Bloody.**

“Ouwmmmm.” Xander mumbled and tried to move.

“Ya all right there?” Spike asked with concern.

“Maoy anns urtt.” Xander pointed out. Spike tilted his head and looked puzzled.

“Maoy anns urtt.” Xander repeated.

“Sorry, pet. Not making much sense:” the blond vampire said and leant forward removing the rolled up socks from the human’s mouth. Xander sighed and smacked his lips a few times.

“I said...” Xander said “My hands hurt!” he wriggled his hands. They were tied to the headboard of their bed. The ropes thick and tied tightly around the human’s hands.

“Oh, sorry.” Spike mumbled and loosened the rope a little.

“You know...” Xander glared at Spike “Remember when I told you it was okay for you to gag me with a pair of rolled up socks?” Xander asked the vampire.

“Sure do.” Spike leered.

“I meant, that it was okay for you to gag me with a pair of CLEAN rolled up socks, moron!”

Xander looked at the blood red satin sheets covering their bed. Candles were on every flat surface in the room, bathing it in gentle soft yellow light. He knew what this was.

Xander had told Spike about his fantasies. The vampire-lover-fantasies. Xander grinned and turned around. "Wow, Spike." he said "It looks great."

"Thanks." Spike smiled and guided Xander into the room.

The vampire started slowly undressing Xander, kissing the exposed skin. Xander reached up and started unbuttoning Spike's black silk shirt and let the shirt slide off the vampire's shoulders and down to the floor. Xander's clothes disappeared quickly and when they were both naked Xander was gently steered across the room and to the bed.

Spike pushed Xander down on the blood red satin sheets and settled himself on top of the human. They were kissing when Xander suddenly realised that they were also moving. He felt his body start to dip head first toward the floor. Suddenly the human and the vampire ended up in a messy tangle of arms and legs on the floor.

“Bloody hell.” Spike mumbled and tried to disentangle himself from Xander.

“What the hell happened?” Xander asked and looked up at the blond vampire.

“Damn slippery sheets is what happened.” Spike growled. Xander tried to get up, but slipped in the sheets and knocked the bedside table over.

“OW!” Xander howled.

“Pet?” Spike knelt next to his lover.

“Fucking candles, burned my ass with wax!” Xander yelped.

“You sure we should try this?” Xander asked and looked down at his leather clad body.

“Look bloody hot, you do.” Spike said and kissed Xander.

“Well...um...thanks. So do you.” Xander said and waved his hand at Spike’s leather outfit.

“Just gotta give ya this then.” Spike said and handed Xander a box wrapped in black paper.

“A gift?” Xander asked and shook the box experimentally.

“Yeah...gonna open it?” Spike looked nervous.

“Sure. Okay.” Xander said and unwrapped the box and slowly opened it.

He just stood there, staring at the content of the box.

“Um...is this what I think it is? Or is this your way of telling me you bought a dog?” Xander looked up at Spike.

“Well.” The vampire said “Ya wear it around your neck and then I...” Spike’s voice trailed off.

“I wear it around my neck?!” Xander said “And the leash?”

“Well I’d be holding that.” Spike said uncertainly. Xander smiled and started to laugh.

“Oh my God, Spike!” he giggled “Can you imagine me wearing that?” Spike looked down at the box and up at his laughing boy.

No, he really couldn’t imagine that.

“Gonna be so good for Daddy, ain’t ya.” Spike purred in Xander’s ear. The moaning abruptly stopped and Xander looked up at him.

“Sorry, what?” Xander said, his lips slightly swollen.

“Ehhh...gonna make it good for Daddy?” Spike asked.

“That is...does that turn you on?” Xander propped himself up on his elbows, forcing Spike to pull back a little.

“Well...not really.” Spike admitted.

“Then why did you say it?” Xander asked and rubbed his fingers against the vampire’s cheekbones.

“Thought it’d be...kinky.” Spike mumbled.

“You know what I think is really really fucking hot and kinky?” the human whispered in the vampire’s ear. Spike shivered and shook his head.

“You...” Xander licked a trail down Spike’s neck “Me...” he pulled the vampire down so he was covering the human’s body “And a tube of lube.”

The End