

Sequel to *White Lightnin'*

Rating: Adult (Although more story than sex)

Paring: S/X

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Summary: HAU This short story is a follow-up to White Lightnin'. It takes place in the early 1940's and is a quick peek to see how things are going for our boys on their mountain home.

Heart Strings

by
BmblBee

Part One

SMACK!

"Ouch!" The complaint was muffled, as Spike's face was still deeply hidden in the pillows and blanket.

Standing by the bed with his hand aimed at the wonderful mound of covered ass Xander threatened another swat.

"Come on. Get your lazy big city ass out of bed. Today's the day we go to town. Big doin's. Sell off our furs, stock up on some supplies and seeds, I'll even take you to the diner for lunch. Just like a first class date. But ain't gonna happen with you laying there like a dead toad."

The only answer he received was a small hand that came out from under the covers. Aimed in Xander's direction, the finger crooked, encouraging Xander to bring his warmth and body back to bed.

Xander briefly thought about refusing, then came to his senses and joined his lover for a cuddle and a wakeup.

Draping his larger, heavier body over Spike's he wrapped his hands around Spike's wrists and

restrained them over
his head.

Looking down on his partner he still marveled at the changes in him. The months after he had given up the alcohol had done wonders for his color and complexion.

The work on the docks had strengthened and toned his body. His smaller frame was now harder and tighter.

His stomach, once sunken from lack of food and malnutrition had turned rippled and firm.

He was attractive before, now he was absolutely stunning.

Xander could never get enough of him. He was constantly touching him, staring at him, nearly consuming him.

It was a scrutiny that most would have found oppressive and suffocating. Spike thrived and flourished in it. Too much was just enough.

"Damn, you're cold" Spike squirmed and wriggled pretending to refuse.

This only caused Xander to harden and moan. Nuzzling Spike's neck and earlobe, Xander kissed him deeply.

"Then warm me up," he whispered in Spike's ear.

Immediately spreading his legs and bending his knees, Spike chuckled. "No. You'll freeze me up inside."

Reaching under the bed Xander found the lotion and quickly slicked his fingers knowing the cream would only make his hands colder.

Slipping two fingers in Spike's hole, still wet from last night, Xander laughed. "You mean cold like this?"

"AAHHHH!" Spike increased his struggle, laughing even harder.

Xander worked and stretched the opening quickly, so aroused from the wrestling he didn't want to wait. Positioning the thick head at Spike's wrinkled opening, he pushed in.

Gasping, Spike immediately stopped struggling and laughing. He threw his head back and expelled the breath he didn't realize he had been holding.

"Yes, oh fuck, that's it. Oh God, Xander. Just like that."

Hoisting one of Spike's legs high and rolling him to his side, Xander knew the angle would be just right to hit.....

"Fuck! Right there, Right there."

Xander smiled and let loose. Pounding and thrusting he lost himself in the heat of the body and the erotic litany of "Yes, yes, Oh God, yes"

Xander was right when he knew this would be a quick one. For some reason the first one of the day always was.

Feeling the familiar tingle in his back and groin Xander tried his best to hold off. Shifting his weight to one arm he reached for Spike's cock only to find Spike's hand already there.

Looking down he could see Spike's face already twisting up in the strain of an oncoming orgasm. Jerking, he released spurt after spurt of thick hot cum onto his own belly and hand.

Reacting to Spike's release, Xander relaxed and allowed his own to rush through him.

Holding in place till he had softened enough to pull out easily, Xander dropped down on the bed beside him. "Damn, Spike. Hell of a way to start the day."

The last part caught Spike's attention and he threw back the quilt with a "whoosh" of cold air.

"Hey, It's Friday. The day we're going in town." He leaped from bed, still naked and launched into the "cold feet on the floor" dance that he did every morning.

Xander laughed as he watched him grab for his pants and head out the door for the outhouse. Groaning, he rolled out and quickly began putting on the coffee and starting breakfast.

Xander let his mind wander back over the last month. He still remembered the desolation he felt at returning home alone after his failed trip to the city to find Spike.

He couldn't believe his eyes when he opened the door and the man he loved was there. Waiting in his home and in his heart. Just waiting for Xander to come back to him.

It had been the start of the best time of his life.

It had been the start of the rest of his life.

It was amazing how easily they fell into a routine together. Building a life together. Making plans for the future and the cabin.

Together. Always together.

Part Two

Spring time on the mountain was absolute heaven. It was like nothing Spike had ever known. It was a million years and a million more miles away from the isolation and misery of the city.

The nights and early mornings were still cold which he confirmed with a puff of cold frosty breath, but the sunny days were warm with the promise of an early summer.

On their evening walk yesterday Xander had shown him a cluster of Easter lilies that had sprouted in the clearing. He said that was a good sign of a long planting season.

Spike finished quickly and scampered back to the warmth and love of the cabin. Eager to finish his breakfast and clean up after, Spike was thrilled to be going to town.

It wasn't that the town was all that exciting, in fact from what he remembered it was a small town like a thousand others scattered around the state.

It had a diner, post office, bank, general store and an equal number of churches and bars. Probably sharing the same clientele. One on Saturday night and the other on Sunday morning.

And it wasn't that he was anxious to leave the cabin. Although he hadn't since that night just over a month ago when he arrived and Xander took him back.

No, he was thrilled because he knew Xander's collection of furs were the best he had ever trapped and the money would go toward their plans to add on to the cabin. Working together to improve their home.

No longer a weakling, Spike was stronger now. Stronger in both body and mind. He was not the sniveling drunk that had fucked up his life so badly for all those years.

He was a man now and proudly stood beside Xander as his companion, not his patient.

Not his charity case.

Helping with the chores, Spike chopped and hauled the firewood. He reset traps and Xander was teaching him to skin and stretch the hides. He was not a guest. This was his home too. Probably the only real one he had ever known.

He was asserting himself more and even on occasion topped in bed. It was the best life he could ever imagine.

The evenings after dinner were spent together sitting at the table and talking over and drawing up their plans.

They would nearly double the size of their home adding a proper bedroom with it's own fireplace, a small kitchen, and Spike was still working on him for a bathroom.

"Hey, you gonna stand around and daydream or get cleaned up to go?"

Xander's words shook Spike out of his haze and got him moving. Still cold from the trip outside, Spike dropped his pants and quickly washed to put on clean ones.

Glancing down at him Xander snickered. "cold outside?" "WHAT?" Spike feigned outrage. Swinging his hips caused his cock to wiggle and flop dramatically.

"I'll have you know the man I'm with is plenty satisfied with the size of my.....personalty. Scooping him off his feet, Xander hugged him tightly.

"Sweetheart you have got the most sparkling personality I have ever known. I love your personality. Now, wash the morning off your personality and get dressed. I'm going out to get the car ready and I'll pick you up in ten minutes."

Spike laughed and did as he was told. It was a task made easier due to Xander having already heated the water and laid out his clothes. Spike just shook his head. How did he get so lucky?

Spike was out the door and leaped down the three steps before Xander had the chance to blow the horn. Jumping into the car, he spared only a moment to relive the shame of what he had done to her.

Amazingly Xander never brought it up or held it against him. One more quick kiss and they were off.

The untraveled lane from the cabin to the main dirt road was in bad shape due to the heavy spring rains. Hanging on to the dashboard, Spike thanked God Xander was the driver he was. Anyone less would have lost control and slid over the side by now.

"We're gonna have to bring some rocks and shovels and repair this lane."

Spike groaned. He knew that meant days of back breaking work.

But self reliance was the life style here. You need something done, get off your ass and do it.

Finally by late morning they slowed to the speed limit and rolled into the posted town limits. Watching the streets they passed, Spike remembered the times he had been here.

The first day he'd passed through without stopping. He followed a government map he had been given with instructions to check all cabins in the county for stills. The car accident had put an end to that quest.

The next time he was sick, hung over and truth be told possibly suicidal. The last time it was dark. The sidewalks had already been rolled in and the residents asleep.

This time it looked like the most exciting place on earth.

Paris?

London?

New York?

Forget them all.

He had Sugarcreek, Arkansas.

Part Three

Immediately upon spotting the "WELCOME TO SUGARCREEK" sign, Xander slowed to the speed limit.

Now that he was no longer running shine he was thrilled to have the opportunity to show off his pride and joy.

He cruised down the main street and smiled at the stares and points of the people he passed. He

shrugged helplessly at the open flirting of the young girls for the driver of the smartest car they had ever seen.

Spike laughed at Xander's attempt at humble. He knew what the car meant to him. He also knew Xander had been offered a great deal of money for her by the town's banker, Mr. Anderson who wanted it for his spoiled son at college.

But Xander would never sell. The car meant more to him than just money, and Spike didn't mind the competition for Xander's affection.

Turning the corner onto Main St., Xander pulled the car, almost comically, into a parking space between an old Chevy pick up truck and a John Deere tractor.

"Come on hurry up. I want to get in there before a long line starts."

Xander scooped up armfuls of thick lush furs and headed for the general store. He had earlier explained that once a month the buyer sets up in the back room of the store and that was where everyone went to sell their wares.

It was a long tedious process of give and take. The buyer looks over the furs and offers a piddlin' amount of money.

The trapper demands an outrageous amount and then the haggling begins. Back and forth they go till they finally arrive at the amount they would both have been happy with in the beginning.

Always did seem to Xander like a lot of unnecessary bullshit, but that's the way it has been done for generations, so who was he to question it.

Hustling through the front door Xander led the way to the back. What he saw caused his good mood to plummet.

"Oh hell. Damn Spike, there's already four here ahead of us."

Spike was dismayed. He knew they would have gotten here at least an hour earlier if he hadn't insisted on dragging Xander back to bed for a morning quicky. Nope couldn't feel bad about that.

"No problem, Love. We'll just wait our turn. I mean how long can it take?"

Somehow the optimism faked in his voice failed to reach Spike's face. Xander laughed.

"Look there's no sense in both of us standing here for this. Why don't you go take a look around town and I'll meet you at the diner for lunch later?"

As much as Spike hated to abandoned Xander to the torture of standing here the thought of listening to these people bicker of the price and worth of dead animals was just about enough to drive him back to drink.

"Really? You sure you don't mind if I take a bit of walkabout?" Xander laughed as he watched Spike slowly starting to back out of the room.

"A what? No, I don't mind. But I have to warn you there isn't much to see." Xander longed to pull his lover into a hug, give him a quick kiss, something, but knew better.

So with a nod of his head and a wink Xander kept his voice impartial. "Sure, you go on and I'll catch up to you when I'm done."

Spike's heart was touched with the warmth of the wink. It sent all the love it contained, however before Xander could change his mind, Spike was up the aisle and out the door.

The early spring air was cool, but the sun was bright and promised a beautiful day. Spike pulled his jacket close around his body and looked in both directions trying to decide which way to explore first. He finally turned and strolled off to the left.

He was thrilled to see there was a movie theatre that showed second runs and immediately made plans for future dates.

He knew Xander would be agreeable as long as all their work was done.

He passed the hardware store, paused to look in the window of a shoe and hat shop and wandered on down toward the town library.

Xander sighed as he watched Spike go. He longed to be with him, but knew this was just too important. This was the money to finance their future. It would fill their larder till planting season could support them, and more than that, this was the money to start the construction on their cabin.

They had gone over the plans a dozen times and both men were anxious to get started. If the weather cooperated and the next months furs were as high a quality as these, they would be under roof by fall and could complete the work inside over the winter.

As Spike stepped out of sight, Xander turned and groaned as he watched Buck Jackson shake a fist in the furrier's face.

Unfazed the buyer counted out a few bills, tossed them on the table and waited. Thank God Buck picked them up without further bitching and smiled as he double counted and walked away.

Pete King was next. He was eighty years old and had lived every one of those years on the mountain. His furs were the poorest. The buyer knew it and so did Pete. He was coming to the last of his time and was barely hanging on.

Some folks said he had a daughter that lived in Little Rock. She had been trying to coax him to come live with her, but everyone knew he wouldn't.

Leaving his home would kill him sure. At least this way he would become part of the mountain they all loved, and in the end who could want more than that?

Xander watched silently as Pete collected the few dollars he was offered.

Thanking the buyer he stuffed the money in the pocket of his worn out overalls, hung his head and shuffled out the door, his body bent painfully with the ravages of age and arthritis.

Spike had reached the end of the street. Nothing further on but the road leading out of town. He knew it was still too early for lunch and Xander would not be finished for some time. Looking up the other way he decided to cross the street and repeat his trek on the other side. The relaxation and luxury of it was heavenly.

Although to be honest the town held very little of interest. A Bank, the library, a few clothing stores, the diner, and an equal number of churches and bars.

Probably sharing the same clientele. One on Saturday night and the other on Sunday morning.

Spike tipped his head back and squinted as he gazed into the clear, cloudless spring sky. He sucked in a cool breath of clean air and blew it back out.

Rubbing his cold hands together briskly, he darted across the street and resumed his exploration.

Part Four

Xander lifted and dropped his shoulders. He cracked his neck as he tipped his head to each side to relieve the tension.

He had been standing here the better part of an hour and the weight of the bundle in his arms was beginning to feel like a thousand pounds.

Hattie Miller was next. Her furs were always of superior quality. Hattie could do anything a man could do on the mountain, only usually better.

Xander couldn't say for sure how old she was, but seemed like she had always been there.

He remembered as a child hearing his parents talk about Hattie's first husband getting shot up in the big war. Everybody was surprised when only a few years later, she married again.

Wasn't long before everybody knew she had made a mistake. Hattie knew it too. Probably a good thing she never had no kids with either man.

Clyde was younger than her, maybe that was the attraction. Couldn't have been nothin' else. Came in from the city with slicked back hair and a lot of fake charm.

Clyde spent his evenings in the bars and beds of the town's floosies. Everybody saw it.

Hattie knew it too but kept her head high. The good women in town respected that but still gossiped about her ruthlessly.

When she did confront him about his drinking and indiscretions the rows were loud enough to be heard on half the mountain.

Word was that he could fight as well as he could drink, but lord knows Hattie was no slouch in the fist department either.

Wasn't nobody surprised when he found himself with a knife in his chest after one of those knock down drag outs.

Law looked into it, but didn't nothin' come of it. Legal and illegal is one thing, but right and wrong is not always that clear.

Mountain justice takes on its own. The matter was dropped and Hattie went on with her life. She never did take on another man.

Xander shifted from foot to foot and watched impassively as she continued to stand firm on her price. Letting his mind wander, Xander smiled as he thought about Spike and wondered what he was up too.

'Wonder if he found anything interesting.' Xander snickered, knowing there was nothing interesting in this small town.

And yet even in the years he was away at college he knew he would return. No matter what happened in his life he would always return.

Turning his back on the haggling going on at the table, Xander looked up the store's aisleway and out the glass front window again wondering where his lover was.

Directly across the street from the general store was one of the town's many run down bars. The Draught House.

Seemed sad in these tough times. Most people had trouble feeding their families, yet there was always money for booze.

Xander felt the familiar stab of guilt as he remembered all the years he had run shine and played a big part in helping to take food out of the mouths of those kids. Spike was always telling him to stop with the self kicking, but it was not that easy.

Then, cutting into his self lothing, something odd caught his eye. Squinting, it looked for all the world like Spike standing outside that bar.

But the really strange part was the men he seemed to be talking to. Three scruffy good ole boy types. Men that Spike could not possibly have known.

And if it was Spike why the fuck did one of them have his arm around Spike's shoulders? Some of these guys could be dangerous as hell.

Still, it didn't look like Spike was being threatened. It looked like he was laughing. It looked like they were trying to coax him inside.

"Hey! You here to sell them furs or not? I got people waiting and don't have time for bullshit."

Xander turned quickly to see that it was his turn. "Oh, yeah, sorry." He dropped his bundle on the table while the buyer started sorting them out.

Glancing back he was dismayed to see that the sidewalk was now empty. All the men had either walked away or, God forbid, gone into the bar.

"Hey! I asked you if that price was acceptable."

Xander hadn't heard a word, but knew from the look on the furrier's face and the sparkle in his eye that he was about to be screwed so he tossed out a general "Fuck you." and went on with his own thoughts.

Maybe it wasn't Spike at all. I really didn't get a good look at him. Besides, what if it was. Spike is a grown man. He can go where he wants, and with who he wants. None of my concern.

'Besides I got too much faith in him to think he'd go drinking again'

Turning back to the business at hand, Xander knew it was his turn to lead in this dance. Snatching up his entire bundle of skins he tossed an evil look at the buyer and started to walk away.

"O.k., O.k. Shit boy. You drive a hard bargain. I hope you appreciate that I'm paying you top dollar for all your furs.

Gonna ruin an honest businessman like me. Costing me money like this."

Xander watched as he counted out an astonishing amount of cash and tossed it on the table. Xander quickly snatched it up and smiling, counted it again.

"Thanks, Dave. See you next month."

Xander pocketed his riches and headed out to the street. It was still too early for lunch so he might as well get their other errands done and out of the way.

He looked off to the left towards the hardware store and thought about picking up the nails and construction items they needed.

He considered going back into the general store for the seeds for the planting and collecting their supplies, especially the coffee and flour.

He even considered jumping in the car and running down to the lumber yard at the end of town to place their lumber order. He knew he had enough money to pay for most of it already.

Xander stood there for a few minutes trying to decide which of those things he would do first. In the

end he discarded them all and started across the street.

He headed straight for the Draught house, and he wasn't thirsty.

Part Five

Xander jaywalked into the street throwing his hand up in an apology as a yellow cab blew its horn angrily at having to slow down for him.

He stopped in front of the rough crumbly brick building again running all the arguments through his mind. There were a thousand reasons why he should not go in. There was one why he should.

Xander grabbed the worn brass handle on the old wooden door and pulled it open. Stepping inside, it took Xander a few minutes for his eyes to adjust to the dim interior after being out in the bright sunshine.

The place smelled of drink and unwashed men. The sounds were of laughing, wooden chairs scraping and lots of glass bottles and mugs being filled, emptied and passed around.

When his eyes did focus he scanned the room quickly. Although full of hillbilly types, none were the men he'd seen

Spike with. More importantly, none were Spike.

Maybe he had been wrong.

That was a long way off and the sun had been in his eyes. Still.

Xander recognized the woman behind the bar and headed straight for her. Vivian was a hard woman but a fair customer when he had been plying his wares. She wore her clothes a bit too tight and her hair a tad too bleached, but fuck, who was he to judge?

She was one of the few ones he could always count on to pay him his price on each delivery. He respected that. He knew her whole life was spent inside the walls of this tacky bar.

She spent her days selling drinks and her late nights selling a bit more. She didn't have anything here Xander was interested in buying.

"Hey Viv. Hows it going?"

Walking over Xander leaned both hands on the flat surface of the worn wooden bar, all the time still looking around.

"Xander! Hey, boy. Where you been? I ain't seen you round here in a coon's age. Ain't you running shine no more? Cause you know I'm still buying."

Vivian winked letting him know she would take all he had, not only including the hooch.

"Some folks said you got caught up in the draft. Some others said them fuckin' revenuers put the bite on you. That so?"

Xander laughed at the memory of the bite his revenuer had put on him just last night.

"Nah. Blew my knees out playing football. Army wouldn't take me, and I ain't been arrested yet. Just out of the business.

Trying to live my life on the straight and narrow."

Vivian nodded and proceeded to wipe the sticky bar off with a stained even more sticky bar rag.

"Say, Viv. You didn't happen to see a guy come in here about half an hour ago did you? Goes by the name of Spike. Short, blond, bout so high?" Xander held his hand up palm down at nose level high.

"Shit hun, there's been a fuck load of knuckleheads in and out of here all morning. I ain't paid no mind to any of them."

Vivian lit another cigarette and spit a stray piece of tobacco off the tip of her tongue.

"Hey, wait a minute. Manny Howard came through here about half hour ago. He was with his brother Jake and their

shiftless cousin Bushy. Come to think of it they did have some little guy with them. Truth is I didn't pay them too much mind. They just ordered a few beers and headed into the back room. You think that might be the one you're looking for?"

Xander felt as though a rock had just landed in the pit of his stomach. He had delivered lightnin' to dozens of bars in this area and they all had a back room. Rooms Xander seldom went in, but was more than aware of what happened there.

Cock fights, poker games, dice, prostitution, any number of illegal activities, some of which were more violent and degrading than Xander ever wanted to know about much less see.

He gripped the edge of the bar tightly and tried to keep the tone of his voice level. "They took him into the back room? What would they do with him back there?"

Vivian flicked an ash off onto the floor and took another puff. "Shit them boys ain't got more than one functioning brain cell between them, but they know what they like to do. They used to do that shit out here in the bar, but I can't stand it so I told them they would have to either quit or take it to the back room. Had too many customers bitching about it. Guess it interrupted their beer drinking.

Still, got a lot that are deep into that shit. They all collect back there just to watch. Anyway, they're always looking for someone to play with. If they roped your buddy into it they'll keep him back there for hours. Probably won't let him go till they're all too tired to go any longer. You want a beer while you wait?"

Xander's blood had turned to ice water in his veins. His throat constricted to the point that he was unable to answer.

Shoving off from the bar he rushed to the end of the room and into the hallway that led to the back room.

A dozen full color images exploded in his brain, each one more graphic and gruesome than the last.

Even though he didn't personally know the Howard boys, he knew the type. Big, stupid, crude, violent plaid flannel shirt wearing assholes.

He also knew each one of them would pay ten times over for every blond hair that had been harmed on Spike's head.

Reaching the end of the hall, Xander grabbed for the knob to open the door. Pausing, he realized he could now clearly hear what was happening in the back room of The Draught House and it was certainly not what he expected.

Jerking the door open Xander was stunned by what he saw.

In fact it'd have knocked his socks off if he had been wearing any.

Part Six

The back room he was staring into was pretty much identical to those in any of the larger bars and taverns in the county.

Not set up for luxury, it was a large open area. The walls were plaster and whitewash, the floors bare

boards of hard wood. A large pot belly stove sitting against the far wall warmed it comfortably with the acrid sulfur smell of coal.

Set up near it was a table whose occupants played checkers and enjoyed the activity in the center of the room. At least a dozen other old men milled around easily drinking beer and talking amongst themselves.

But the thing that held all his attention was what also had everyone else's interest.

Standing in the center of the room were four men.

Two had fiddles tightly tucked under their chins.

One had an old five string and one a base.

The music that filled the room was amazing!

Pure Appalachian, it was the distinct sound of Blue Grass that had everyone smiling and tapping their feet. One of the old men by the stove bounced and danced slapping his knee in time to the beat.

Singing words that didn't match the tune with a voice that was gravelly from age and oddly lispy from lack of teeth.

It was a sound of genuine joy. A joy that forgets the pain and drudgery of life for a brief time.

The real shock, however, was the realization that the man standing with his back to the door was Spike.

Spike, whose arm and bow flew expertly over the fiddle that was tightly held between his chin and shoulder.

The only thing separating him from the others was the sheet music set up before him.

Careful not to interrupt, Xander slipped in quietly and went directly to the table by the stove. Pulling up a chair he sat down beside the men at the checkers game.

"Xander! Where you been, Boy? Thought you said you were gonna come see your old pal Joe." Xander relaxed and allowed himself to be manhandled by the old man.

"Hey, Joe. Really meant to but been kinda busy." Xander's eyes settled on Spike and his face showed everything his heart felt. Laughing, Joe slapped him on the back

"So that's him, huh? We all wondered who the new guy was and where he came from. Looks like you took old Joe's advice and pulled your head out of your ass."

Xander blushed and nodded. "Yeah, that's him. Least I think it is. I sure never knew he could play like that. He's great, isn't he?"

Joe laughed at the pride that bubbled and burst in Xander's voice. Leaning in close he whispered "If your young man can diddle like he can fiddle it's no wonder you ain't been around."

"JOE!" Xander choked and sputtered as his face went beet red.

Whooping out a belly laugh Joe pulled him close and kissed him on the cheek. Scowling at the surprised faces of the other men at the table, Joe shook his finger at them.

"Nothing wrong with a man givin' a peck on the cheek when he wants too."

Before returning to his checkers game Joe patted Xander's face affectionately. "You're a good boy, Xander. You deserve to be happy. You and your fiddler." Winking, he returned to his checkers.

Xander's heart warmed for this almost-a-grandpa and he had to admit the shine had brought some wonderful people into his life.

Xander turned his chair to face the band and cheerfully tapped his feet to the strains of the most fantastic music he had ever heard. It was another hour before Spike's arm finally gave out and he had to stop.

Lifting his attention from the worn sheets of music, Spike spotted Xander and his face lit up. "Hey, did you hear me? I love this." Spike waved the sheet music in the air then folded it shut.

The other musicians came over and slapped Spike roughly on the shoulder.

"This guy is a genius. We are always looking for someone to play with us, but ain't never found no one good. Spike here is better than good. He's real good."

Manny continued to smile and jostle Spike around. Spike shrugged but couldn't minimize the pride he felt. Xander laughed as the memory of Vivian's words came back to him. Every word was true, just misunderstood.

"Xander, this is Manny, his brother Jake, and their cousin, Bushy." All hands were shook around and Spike reluctantly handed over the fiddle to Jake.

The three went about casing up their instruments and prepared to leave. "Don't forget what we said

Spike. Keep us in mind. We would love to have you join us."

Xander stood by questioningly, but Spike waved it off with his hand. "We can talk at lunch. I'm hungry enough to eat a horse."

By the time they had set foot back out on the street outside, Spike was bouncing like a fart in a skillet and Xander wasn't sure which question he wanted to ask first.

The diner was crowded. Teeming with young people scarfing burgers and fries with milkshakes, they dropped endless quarters into selections on the table top juke boxes. One couple were trying to jitterbug in a corner by the kitchen.

Business men devoured the blue plate special, and housewives met to gossip and be free from their drudgery for an hour or so. Gallons of coffee flowed for all.

Spotting an empty booth in the back, Xander led the way and settled in. No longer able to contain himself, Spike exploded like fire works on the forth of July.

Part Seven

Spike never noticed when the waitress filled their cups with coffee. He twitched and tapped his fingers nervously as Xander ordered for them both.

Finally as the waitress left Xander plucked one question out of the jumbled mess in his brain. "Where the hell did you learn to play like that?"

With that one question, the doors flew open and everything rushed out. Spike's cheeks were flushed with excitement and his blue eyes sparkled like diamonds.

"Growing up in London my parents made me take violin lessons. I was never good in sporting activities but I did have a propensity for music. I started when I was very young and they made me practice for hours. I used to cry and complain that I would never play as a vocation, but Mother insisted. I haven't handled the instrument in years and never heard of a fiddle.

When I saw Manny and Jake entering the pub with their cases I asked them if they played the violin.

They corrected my terminology rather sternly and invited me in to listen. When I asked if I could try, well, it was just amazing."

"Jesus, Spike, you were incredible. I have never heard anyone play like that." Xander's fingers flexed and ached to reach over and grab Spike's hand. His heart filled with love and pride. Anxious to get him home, he knew it would be a quick lunch.

Within minutes the waitress brought the sandwiches and refilled their cups. With his mouth full Xander was reminded of something else. "What did Manny mean about joining them?"

Spike paused in his chewing and the corners of his mouth fell slightly as he swallowed.

"Oh, they play every Friday night at the VFW hall. There is a benefit spaghetti supper there each week sponsored by the USO to raise money for the troops. The guys play as the entertainment and get to eat free. They asked me to join them, but I told them that wasn't possible." Spike took another bite and fell silent.

"Why isn't it? You're great Spike. Everybody should hear you. Anyway a free meal once a week sounds like the ideal date. We could get our chores done during the week and have a free night. It would be great." Xander felt his own excitement ramp up at the prospect.

Spike smiled, but Xander could tell the mood had been broken. "What's wrong Spike? Why won't you play."

Appetite gone, Spike laid down the rest of his sandwich and pushed his plate away.

"Jake let me use his fiddle today and he played his guitar. If I played with them each week I would have to have my own instrument. Look, today was fun, but there are other things that are more important to me. You and the cabin especially."

Xander tipped his head and gazed at Spike thoughtfully. He was not sure how to do it, but he knew he would move heaven and earth for Spike. Figuring out a solution to this problem should be a piece of cake.

Still happy but much more subdued Spike continued talking as they walked back to the general store and carefully selected the supplies they needed for the cabin. Although Xander now had a funny feeling they would be back in town before another month went by.

Back out on the street and arms heavy with packages Spike still let this thoughts ramble. "It really is the most interesting music I have ever heard. It is almost like an Irish tune, but I can't hold that against

them. Bluegrass. Huh. So amazing."

Xander laughed at Spike's serious contemplation. Loading up the back seat of the car they then headed out of town and back towards home, Xander's brain already sorting things out.

It wasn't till they pulled in the lane that Spike realized their trip was not complete.

"Hey, I thought we were going to go to the lumber yard and order the things we need to start on the building. Didn't we get enough for the furs? You didn't let those scoundrels cheat you? Really, Xander the furs were of excellent quality, sometimes you are just too good hearted."

Xander looked surprised. In all the excitement he really had forgotten, or maybe it was a sign that they should go back into town.

"No, I actually got quite a bit more than we had anticipated, guess I forgot. Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't we go back in on Friday. We can do the ordering then and have spaghetti and hear the music."

Spike cheered up considerably. Even if he couldn't play he was delighted at the thought of a date night like that and the Howard boys were most entertaining.

It was late by the time they had all the supplies put away and finished the chores. The day had been wonderful and they tumbled together into bed nearly exhausted.

"So, Xander, you think I am proficient with an instrument do you?" Spike laid on his back with his hands behind his head.

Propped up on his side Xander answered as though thoroughly bored. "Yeah, you were o.k. Bet you didn't know I can play something too. I can play the harmonica."

Spike turned his head to the side his brow wrinkled in confusion. "Harmonica?"

"Yep, do you know what another name for a harmonica is?"

Spike rolled to his side facing Xander and totally stumped as to where this conversation was going.

"No, Xander, my musically challenged friend. Please do tell. What the hell is another name for a harmonica?"

Laughing. Xander flopped Spike over onto his back again and he pounced. "A mouth organ my little English Biscuit."

Part Eight

Xander and Spike tumbled and rolled around in the bed each grabbing, touching and tickling. Finally realizing his new found strength was still no match for Xander's, Spike cried 'uncle.'

"Enough! You win. I am at your mercy." Spike fell back dramatically and waited for Xander to claim his prize.

Although reluctant to admit it, Xander was also surprisingly out of breath. Spike still didn't know his own strength.

It was something Xander found extremely arousing and the naked wrestling had left them both hard and leaking.

Xander laid down pressing his body flat against Spike's. The feel of all that hot sweaty skin moving under him was nearly Xander's undoing. He slowly rocked his hips back and forth rubbing and bouncing his cock off of Spike's.

"God you feel so good. I never get enough of you. We should stay in bed all day and just fuck."

Spike's brain cells had already failed him and all his concentration was on humping up in time to Xander. "Yeah, sure, stay in bed."

Quickly becoming frustrated from the lack of friction he was only marginally aware of Xander coating his hand with lotion.

Wrapping the slippery fist around Spike's overheated throbbing cock, Xander pumped his hand slowly. Spike relaxed back to enjoy the attention. Attention that stopped far too soon.

Just as Spike opened his dreamy hooded eyes to ask why, he was shocked to see Xander preparing himself. With no further warning, Xander positioned himself over Spike's cock and dropped down.

"FUCK!" The pain was a little more than what Xander expected and he froze. They had always done this slowly and now he was reminded why.

Gradually his body remembered the thick cock that pierced his entrance and he started to relax. After

a few moments, he squeezed his inner muscles experimentally.

Both men groaned.

Opening his eyes he looked down on the shocked face of his lover. "Jesus, Xan, give a bloke a little warning, yeah?"

Xander smiled evilly. "O.k. here's your warning. I'm gonna ride this beautiful thick cock till it explodes up my ass and I cum all over your chest. In fact I may just shoot hard enough to hit your face. Then I'm gonna kiss you and shove my cum covered tongue deep in your mouth."

Spike's head fell back on the pillow "GAH!"

Xander was a little surprised that Spike was still so articulate.

Finally starting to move, Xander lifted himself only slightly and gently slid back down. As the pain lessened and tingly pleasant feeling became stronger the need grew to More and Harder.

Xander leaned back and searched for just the right angle. "Ugh! God, That's it." Xander felt the spongy head bump the hidden nub deep inside his body and he reacted immediately.

Lifting and dropping harder and faster Xander's own cock bounced out in front of him, wet and waiting. The dribbles oozing from the slit ran down the underside freely.

Spike unconsciously ran his hands up and down Xander's straining thighs feeling the tension as he rode, squeezing and punishing Spike's cock with the most delicious ache.

He could feel the foreskin inside Xander's passage being pulled and stroked back and knew he wouldn't be able to hold off for long.

Some nights are for love, for romance and an expression of your hearts true passion.

Some nights are not.

Gay or straight, they are still men, and some nights are just for fucking.

Dirty, deep, and selfishly all encompassing.

Losing yourself in nothing more than the feel of your own cock receiving just the right amount of stimulation.

Building, climbing till your nuts fill and blow, shooting all the cum you can hope for out the stretched sensitive head of your life's center.

Tonight was one of those nights.

Each man pleasing and being pleased for no other reason than it just felt fucking fantastic.

Shifting his weight to his left arm, Xander began stroking his own cock slowly. Holding the base, he reached down and rolled the heavy sac in his fingers. Damn it felt good.

Picking up speed with both hand and ass Xander rode harder, always dipping at the last to insure his prostate was hit hard every time.

Spike gave no thought to helping.

His mind floated off as his cock and balls took over his life. Feeling the ache start in his legs and spread quickly upward, Spike began humping his hips up awkwardly.

Knowing it was almost over Xander flexed his inner walls causing Spike to jerk, bathing Xander's insides in hot thick cum.

Xander stopped moving and waited, allowing Spike to revel in the warm body rush of an overpowering orgasm. When he felt the cock inside him slow and relax Xander stroked himself to completion, keeping his promise to splatter his juices on Spike's chest and face.

Slowly opening his eyes, Spike licked all around his mouth scooping up everything in his tongue's path.

Part Nine

The next week sailed by smoothly. Neither man said much about the upcoming weekend but each had their own thoughts about it.

The chores were done and plans were made to prepare for the upcoming planting season, all the time dreaming and sharing ideas for the expansion of their small house.

Thursday came in the blink of an eye and supper was on the table mixing and blending with the conversation.

"Tomorrows Friday." Xander shoved another mouthful of potatoes in and garbled around them.

"Thought we might go to town. I figured we would go ahead and order the lumber, pay for it and I know a couple guys with trucks I can go see about hauling it for us."

Spike was delighted. He knew a trip to town could be stretched out for hours and possibly include lunch. Not wanting to sound childish he seemed to give it some deep thought.

"I suppose we could do. Most of the week's work is caught up around here and a day out might be acceptable." Xander roared with laughter at his nonchalant attitude, knowing from the twinkle in Spike's eyes he was thrilled.

"Well don't get any more excited or you might fall asleep in your plate." Like a light switch Spike's face beamed with joy.

"Can we eat out? Can we stop by and hear the guys practice?"

Xander studied Spike closely. He had come to a difficult decision that suddenly seemed much easier to make.

"I'll tell you what. How about we spend the day in town and eat at the VFW for supper. Ain't had spaghetti in a coons age."

Spike jumped from his seat and rushed around to the other side of the table. Throwing his arms around Xander's neck he sat on his lap and kissed him soundly.

Pulling back, Xander brushed the hair off Spike's forehead and looked at him with love and concern.

"Spike I don't ever want you to feel like a prisoner here. I never did care much for going in town cause there just wasn't nothin' there for me, but if you want we can go in once a week or so as long as all the work is done around here."

Spike nuzzled Xander's neck. "I love it here. It is safe and warm andhome. However, a once a week date might be just what we need to spice up our dying love life."

"WHAT?" Xander feigned outrage. "I'll show you dying!" And with some decisions made, Xander dropped to his knees taking Spike's britches with him, and proceeded to bring the dead back to life.

Spike leaned back against the table and watched Xander create the glorious resurrection with his skilled mouth.

The potatoes went cold and the squirrel was forgotten. Xander, however, was about to receive all the days protein he would need.

And just as expected, it didn't take long. Just the sight of Xander's full pink lips wrapped tightly around his hard ready shaft caused Spike's whole body to tingle.

His cock slid in and out so smoothly it seemed to have been made with Xander's mouth in mind.

Spike held back and watched as long as he could but it was never long enough. Feeling the tightening in his balls and the shaking in his legs, Spike knew it was all over but the swallowing. Gripping Xander's hair he jerked forward and emptied himself down his lover's throat.

Friday morning dawned bright and early. Spike was already up and out by the time Xander stirred. Carrying in an arm load of wood Spike dropped it on the floor loudly then waited for the reaction.

Xander did not disappoint. He woke, jerked awake by the noise.

"On, sorry, did I wake you? Well it is late. Not at all like you to lay about in this manner. But you're up now, so chop, chop. Up and at 'em."

Xander sat up in bed and stared at the mad man in front of him. "What the fuck, Spike? It can't be much more than four am. Why are you.....Oh, it's Friday isn't it?"

Xander grinned broadly. Spike shuffled his feet and began fussing with stacking the wood by the hearth. "I don't know what you mean."

When he heard Xander chuckle he turned to face him with his hands on his hips. "Yes, it's Friday. Now get your lazy ass out of bed and get the chickens fed and the last of the work done on the tractor. We are leaving just after lunch, which by the way is left overs that didn't get eaten last night, and I expect you to be ready."

With his mind occupied by personal plans he was not ready to share with Spike, Xander got up and headed out to the outhouse with no further fuss. Spike mentally patted himself on the back. *'Well, I need to take charge more often.'*

The rest of the morning clicked off like clockwork. The plugs Xander had been fighting with on the tractor popped off with surprising ease.

The chickens were fed, and Xander set up some floating jugs for the creek. With the ice gone it was

the perfect time to lay out some lines for catfish.

He also rooted through the shed till he found his gigs. Xander snickered to himself at the thought of Spike going on his first trip frog gigging.

As soon as they had finished an early lunch, Spike himself hustled to the barn to retrieve the beloved Lincoln. He revved the motor and honked the horn. "Let's move it Lazy Bones."

Shaking his head, Xander grabbed his jacket and ran out the door. He was not entirely sure Spike would not leave him behind.

Part Ten

By general agreement Xander always drove. The cliffs were steep, sheer drop off in some places. The dirt lanes were treacherous and something Spike had absolutely no experience with.

Besides, the car was Xander's baby. Possibly the only thing he loved as much as Spike, but Spike didn't mind sharing the man's affections. He knew there was room in Xander's heart for both of them.

With his eyes on the road and his mind on serious matters, Xander drove silently towards town. Spike, too, had his thoughts focused some miles away and kept his conversation to a minimum.

Anxious to hear the music again, Spike knew if they got there early enough the boys would let him practice with them before their evening gig.

Without wanting to hurt Xander's feelings he ran several conversations through his brain. Each of which would end with, "Why don't you drop me off while you go to the lumber yard."

He just wasn't sure how they started.

"Spike!"

Xander had been watching him for several minutes and had a fairly good idea where his lover's thoughts had wandered to.

Spike jumped at hearing his name. "What? Sorry, I guess I was daydreaming."

Xander smiled. "I said why don't I drop you off at the tavern. You can visit with the guys while they practice. I don't think you're too interested in two by fours or floor braces are you?"

Spike pretended to huff.

"Well actually I am very interested in four by twos and flat brackets, however if you are anxious to be shed of me I will most gladly leave you to run the errands alone."

Both knew the other too well and laughed their agreement.

It was middle of the afternoon and the town was bustling. Xander pulled up to the curb in front of the tavern and let

Spike out. "I may be a while so relax and I'll see you back here later."

Spike nodded gave a wave of his hand as he walked away.

Opening the tavern door, Xander heard more than one voice call out cheerfully "Hey! Spike!" The door swung closed and the voices cut off. The smile dropped from Xander's face and he drove away.

The afternoon was better than before. Jake had eagerly loaned his fiddle and just on the off chance that Spike came back, Manny had brought several sheets of music.

Pages that Manny and his brother never used and couldn't read, but Spike seemed to interpret and follow expertly.

Hour after hour sailed by. An ever changing audience of appreciative older men kept the musicians in bottles of beer

and Coke to quench their thirst during the short breaks they took.

Watching the clock on the wall, Jake was the first to notice the time. Stretching his arms high over his head he started to collect together his belongings.

"Damn near time to go fellas. You said you and your buddy are coming over to eat and listen?"

Reluctantly Spike handed over the fiddle and the sheet music. "Yes, he had some things to do, but as soon

as he gets back we will be over."

Brushy, who up to this point had never said a word nodded.

"Sure wish ya'll was a playin' with us."

Spike was touched. That was just about one of the most amazing compliments he had ever had.

The three men left and Spike remained behind to finish his bottle of pop and wait for Xander to collect him. Within minutes Xander rushed in, out of breath and red faced. "Shit, did they leave?"

Spike, worried that something had happened, put a hand on Xander's arm. "Yes, just. What on earth is wrong?"

Xander pulled his hand from behind his back to reveal what he had been hiding.

Thrusting the violin case at Spike he cut off the questions before they could start.

"Hurry up. It's only a block over and we can duck out the back door, cut across the parking lot and be there in three minutes. If I'm gonna listen to music tonight I want to listen to the best."

Spike tried several times to inquire who had loaned the instrument, but Xander seemed reluctant to say.

"Come on, we can talk about all the particulars later. Times a wastin' fiddle boy."

Hurrying over they arrived at the same time the other three did and were welcomed enthusiastically.

Xander stood back and watched as Spike left with the other members of the band.

The evening promised to be a memorable one.

Part Eleven

The VFW hall was already a bustling throng of activity. The room was set up with long white paper covered tables and folding wooden chairs.

Old men, veterans of the first big war, were hustling around in white aprons settling families at the tables and carrying large platters of spaghetti and bread to hungry customers.

Women were chatting happily with each other, thrilled at the luxury of being served and not having to cook and clean.

Men clumped in groups smoking, talking and sharing their expert opinions on any issue brought up for

discussion. Children yelled, played and ran around despite the mother's less than earnest efforts to control them.

The musicians had their own table in the back room off the kitchen and were served free. Xander who had insisted on paying for his own, joined them eating quietly while the other four men spoke animatedly about what songs they would play.

They agreed that for tonight they would stick with only those songs that they had sheet music for. Spike was confident he could keep up as long as he could follow on paper.

They made arrangements to meet early each Friday to give them plenty of practice time before their evening performances.

Spike had subtly glanced at Xander and was relieved to catch the slight nod of his head.

Xander sat back quietly listening to the excited exchange round the table enjoying the excitement even though it really did not include him.

He did his best to squash the feeling of jealousy. He was not ready to share Spike with these men. At the same time he felt ashamed. He didn't own Spike.

Spike had proven himself a million times to be a strong self sufficient man and Xander would not have it any other way.

Finally stuffed, full to overflowing on spaghetti and bread, Xander pushed himself away from the table and stood up.

"Well you guys need some time to get ready, so I think I'll go on out front. They'll be clearing away the tables and making room for people to sit and dance so I want to make sure I'm up front."

Before Xander made it to the kitchen door, Spike caught up with him putting his hand on Xander's arm. "I'm really nervous, Xan. I know this isn't the big time, but I really want to do well."

Xander held back for only a minute then thought 'fuck it.' He remembered what Joe had said and kissed Spike on the cheek. "You're going to be great. I'm really proud of you."

Spike touched his cheek and beamed brightly, "I love you Xander." and he turned and rushed back to his fellow musicians.

Xander walked out into the main room of the hall to wait.

"Xander, over here." Joe waved his hand as he and a cluster of codgers sat together grumbling happily about the state of the world and the price of eggs.

Xander joined them.

"So your young man is playing tonight, huh? He pretty good with his hands?"

Xander laughed determined to no longer let Joe embarrass him. "He strokes the bow like an expert, Joe. I'm looking forward to helping him practice."

Joe hollered and laughed at Xander's bravado. Settling in, the four men came out and took their marks. Manny stepped up and introduced each in turn.

Xander thought his heart would explode with love when Spike was introduced as William Beemish and the crowd applauded.

The room got quiet and the music burst forth filling the rafters and the listeners with sounds and feelings of the beat.

First one couple then ten jumped to their feet and began the stomping clog dancing that is regional to the mountains.

The temperature in the room rose sharply as the music sped up. Dancers moved till they dropped, exhausted, into their chairs. The floor vibrated with the combined thunder of everyone tapping their feet and clapping their hands.

Time flew by till at last someone in the back flipped the lights up to signal the last song. The room groaned in resigned protest. Spike was almost relieved.

He felt as worn out as if he were back on the docks. His arms ached from being held in position, and his fingers were starting to cramp.

Xander laughed at the look on Spike's face knowing he would be giving one of his famous back rubs later on. Or not. Frowning, Xander realized it would depend on how things went in the next fifteen minutes.

As the evening ended, Xander went to the back to collect Spike who was carefully folding the music and packing the fiddle.

Pushing open the back door the cool air was a shock against Spike's sweaty body and he shivered. Pulling his jacket tighter around himself, Spike stopped as he looked around for the car.

In it's place was an older pickup truck loaded with lumber. "Hey, you got the wood. Whose truck?"

Xander mumbled his answer and jumped in the drivers seat. Spike had a sick feeling in the pit of his stomach that he understood what Xander had just said. "What?"

Shutting off the engine, Xander turned in his seat and looked Spike in the face. "I said it's ours. I sold the Lincoln to Mr.Anderson, the banker. He gave me enough for the truck and all the supplies we need for the cabin, plus a little extra."

Spike knew, but looking down at the object in his hands he had to ask anyway. "Enough for a violin? Oh God Xander how could you do that?" His blue eyes looked up searchingly.

"Jesus, Spike how could I not? The car was important for a certain time in my life, but that time has passed. Everything is different now. I did what I needed to do to help us build our life and our home. And you know what? I don't regret it for a minute. Seeing you up there, happy and making everyone in the room happy. How could a car compare to that? Besides I did it for me too. I expect you to entertain me with your playing every evening. So you see it's a gift with strings."

Spike groaned at the pun. "Take me home Xander. I think you owe me a back rub after that one."

Both men laughed as Xander threw the truck into gear and headed for the road out of town.

The End