

*Fandom: Buffy*

*Pairing: Spike/Xander*

*Rating: NC-17*

*Word count: 9,648*

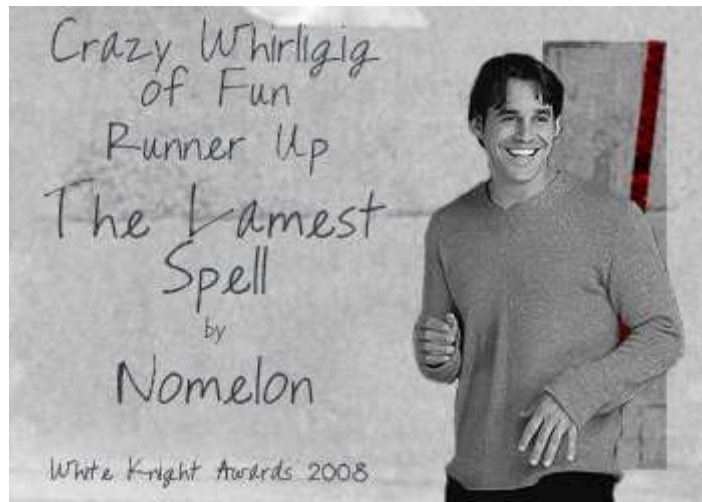
*Summary: The lamest spell in the history of Sunnydale is cast on Spike. Xander gets caught in the crossfire.*

*A/N: This fic appeared after I asked for those Buffy prompts. This isn't what anyone asked for. It's just, um, what I came up with. Somehow. I'm not really sure how. Uh, enjoy?*

*Beta: the lovely, delightful, and ever so kind [zooney\\_glass04](#) for coming to the rescue yet again, and for telling me that what I really needed to do was make Xander more Xandery.*

*\*beams\**

*9,751 words*



## **The Lamest Spell**

**by**  
**Nomelon**

The basement was the scene of the crime. In Xander's humble opinion, this hardly seemed fair. A man's home was supposed to be his castle, after all. There were a notable lack of available castles within Xander's price range in Sunnydale, but he would have settled for his home being a small, manly, two-storey dwelling with no

parents and secure off-street parking. Or perhaps a nice self-contained apartment, with an even nicer blanket de-invite spell for any and all vampires who might think of stopping by.

He'd come home from work tired and smelly, suffering a low-level ache of monotony so familiar he barely even noticed it anymore. A shower helped to wash away the day, the water turned up as hot as he could stand it. Afterwards, he threw on some jeans and his last clean shirt, and padded barefoot to the kitchen to grab an illicit beer from the back of the fridge. Standing in the patch of basement that passed for his kitchen, he slugged occasionally from his beer, and stared down at his feet, watching his toes curl against the cracked lino.

Halfway down the bottle, he felt mostly human again. He thought about fixing himself something to eat, though he wasn't hungry, or maybe watching a movie, or doing a little light reading from his highbrow collection of comic books and sports magazines. All those exciting options open to a person standing in their parents' basement in the wee small hours of Tuesday morning, before falling into bed and waiting for the whole tedious cycle to repeat itself.

Of course, that was when he noticed that Spike was sprawled out on his couch.

Xander scowled, glaring at Spike as he drained the last of his beer. How could he have missed a thing like that? A big, stupid, blond, undead *thing* taking up space on his couch, and it had taken Xander nearly an hour to notice. He dropped the empty bottle into the trash, wondering if he should start insulting Spike's hair before or after he kicked him out onto the street.

But he was tired. Man, he was tired, and apparently this was affecting his ability to come up with a good, solid opening line. Something callous. Something harsh and cutting. Something that would really rub Spike the wrong way. Yeah, something that would leave Spike completely... chafed.

Xander spent so long trying to come up with the perfect insult that he'd already grabbed a fresh beer and thrown himself onto the other end of the couch, and still he hadn't said anything. Lame, Xander decided. He was inexcusably lame, and probably deserved whatever awfulness Spike was going to throw his way.

Spike had been watching him the whole time, his eyes sharp and curious. Xander tried to ignore him, tried to ignore everything. If he could just close his eyes the rest of the world would fade away and hopefully take Spike with it. He slumped low into the cushions, and embraced the darkness.

Silence reigned supreme. For all of six seconds.

"I wouldn't sit there if I was you, mate."

Xander lifted his head to give Spike a look of enduring weariness.

"I've got this... spell thing going on," Spike said.

Xander narrowed his eyes.

"S why I'm hiding out here," Spike continued. "Don't want to catch any more innocent bystanders in the crossfire."

"You're telling me that you're worried about my well-being."

"Yours and mine both," Spike said, looking unaccountably shifty.

"Why are you inflicting this on me?" Xander asked plaintively.

Spike shrugged. "Seemed like the thing to do. Didn't think I'd run into too many people here. Figured you might even be on a nightshift or some such and I'd be in the clear." Spike picked up the remote control and wagged it at Xander. "'Sides. You've finally got yourself some decent cable."

Xander sighed heavily. "What does the spell do?"

"It's, uh. What? Oh, heh, nothing really." Spike tossed the remote from hand to hand. "Shouldn't last long. Might not even be a problem. Just a precaution, really. Better safe than sorry." He gave a little sniff, and pressed his lips together, following it up with a couple of tiny, rapid nods of his head.

"Why am I not convinced?" Xander twisted the top off his second beer. "Just get

out, okay? I want to be alone."

"No can do, Garbo. Told you. Spell."

"Why do you always end up here? *Mi casa es mi casa*. Your casa is... elsewhere."

"Spell."

"There aren't words in my vocabulary to explain to you how little I care." Xander lifted the bottle to his lips, but paused halfway there when he realised he'd totally lost the taste for it. "Just go, Spike."

"*Spell.*"

"You want me to beg?" Xander asked. "Is that it? You ready for it? Here it comes. You better be ready 'cause this is a one time only offer. -- Please. Spike, *please*. Pretty please just go away and don't come back."

"Look," Spike said. "I'll sit here quietly. Make like a wee little church mouse. You won't even know I'm here. Giles said that it shouldn't last more than a day or so." Spike found something fascinating to look at under his thumbnail. "Probably best if you don't, ah, look at me too much, though. That seems to spark it off."

Xander very deliberately set down his beer. "Spark *what* off?"

Spike shifted in his seat. "Nothing. No big deal. Nothing I won't get over in a hundred years or so."

"Funny thing, it's not actually you I'm concerned about. What's the spell?"

"It's nothing. Bit of an embarrassment actually. Dawn got into the grownup books in the Magic Box and read something out loud that she shouldn't have. Good thing she got the pronunciation wrong or I'd really be up shit creek."

Xander grudgingly accepted the possibility of this. Giles really should have worked out a better security system for keeping the dangerous books away from prying eyes by now. Thinking about it, a stepladder wasn't really the latest thing in state-of-the-

art security systems.

"Spike. Last time I'm asking. What's the spell?"

Spike studiously avoided his gaze.

"If you don't tell me by the time I count to five, I'm calling Giles," Xander said. "Or possibly just manhandling you out the door. I haven't decided yet." He stood up, but Spike refused to look at him. "One." He crossed the room and picked up the phone. "Two."

"Xander, you're being childish."

"Three."

"Now you're just being a git."

"Four." Xander started to dial Giles' number. Spell-related emergencies totally excused middle-of-the-night phone calls, even if he wasn't entirely sure that Giles would share his definition of 'emergency'. "Fi--"

Faster than he could even begin to process, Spike had grabbed the phone out of his hand and slammed it back in the cradle. Xander tried to jump out of Spike's personal space, but only succeeded in colliding with the wall behind him. Rubbing furiously at the bump on the back of his head, he glared at Spike, who was glaring right back at him.

"I *told* you," Spike said. "It's no big deal."

"Yeah? Tell that to my head," Xander said, and gave the bump a last rub for good measure.

"I thought that's what I was doing, you stupid prat."

"Spike, what does the spell do?"

"None of your business," Spike said, poking one finger very solidly in the middle of

Xander's chest. "So just keep your nose out and let me hide out here 'til it goes away, there's a good boy."

The contact pushed Xander over the edge into real anger. "No. What's the spell for?"

The finger poked again. "Nothing."

Xander grabbed Spike's finger in his fist, and pulled it to one side. Spike just used his other hand and resumed poking. So Xander grabbed that one, too, leaving them face-to-face, well within easy snarling distance.

Why did Spike have to be so unendingly infuriating, Xander wondered, for what felt like the millionth time. Surely it wasn't natural for one person to have such an endless capacity for irritating others.

Xander really was too tired for this level of bullshit. He felt hot and kind of achy all over. Maybe he was coming down with something. No doubt that was all Spike's fault too. Stupid vampire with his stupid vampire cooties. Although, Xander allowed, he had been working a lot of extra shifts recently to save up for that new cable package, and he'd long thought that delivering pizza to people he used to go to school with was slowly sucking his will to live out through his ears. Maybe that was it. Or, he thought with a sudden touch of panic, maybe this was the spell manifesting itself. Xander swore to himself that if it turned out to be another magical butt-monkey interlude then he was really, really going to stake Spike this time. Just on principle. Or at the very least jab him with an entire box of toothpicks. Xander was sick and tired of getting all the funny-ha-ha spells cast on him.

"I swear to whatever god you happen to believe in, and every last one of his underlings," Xander said, feeling stupid as he wrestled with his hold on Spike's fingers. "I'm going to punch you in the face you if you don't tell me."

"How're you gonna do that?" Spike smirked. "You can't let go."

"I'll... I'll..." Xander couldn't remember the last time he'd been so infuriated. If punching was out, then he was going to use whatever weapons were available to him, and nothing says, "I hate you," like a head-butt to the face. He'd never head-

butted anyone before, but he was determined to give it his very best shot.

So the kissing thing came as something of a surprise.

Xander grabbed Spike's face and kissed him. Kissed him like a man kisses a woman. Kissed him like the hero kisses the girl at the end of the movie. Kissed him like a bi-curious man kisses a very hot and very willing male-type vampire. Kissed him like Xander had never, ever imagined himself kissing Spike.

Well, okay, there'd been that one time when Willow got the Horny Goat Weed mixed up with the African Dream Root for that cleansing meditation spell they'd had to do after that demon invaded their dreams that time, but *apart* from that...?

Nope. Nuh uh. Not once. Never.

But right here, right now, it was happening. There was no denying it. He was kissing Spike. There were tongues and teeth and even a couple of greedy little groans that Xander hoped desperately weren't coming from him.

Just as suddenly, he tore himself away, utterly horrified.

"Bugger," Spike said, shocked into stillness. "That's torn it."

Xander clapped a hand over his mouth. "Is that... is that the spell?" he asked, a little muffled.

"Give the man a cigar. It's a good one, don't you think? Just the thing to keep me on my toes."

Xander's skin prickled. He could feel it in his scalp, the inside of his elbows, the backs of his knees. A coal of unrest smouldered in the pit of his stomach. "Fuck. What just-- Buh. Did I--? Oh, *fuck*."

"Bombastic chap, aren't you."

"This was not what I had planned for my evening."

"You and me both."

"You-- You're an idiot." Xander pointed right at Spike, every muscle tensed and shaking.

"Hey! I'm no idiot."

Xander's righteous indignation was rapidly gathering steam. "You let this happen."

"I did not! Was just sitting there minding my own business. Dawn's the idiot. Or maybe Giles. Hell, the bloody whole lot of them for continually messing with magic they don't understand. But not me. I'm no idiot."

"You came here. You knew what would happen and you came here anyway."

"I didn't think you'd be here."

"I *live* here! Where did you think I'd be?"

"You think I *planned* for this?" Spike asked, looking indignant. "I'm the wronged party here, mate. It wasn't my spell. I would have been a tad more careful."

"Ha! Don't talk to me about love spells. I wrote the book on love spells. They never end well."

"This isn't a love spell! I told you. Dawn got some of the words wrong. Giles said it was little more than a..." Spike waved his hand, apparently lost for words. He cast a sidelong glance at Xander. "A *lust* spell," he said. "Shouldn't last but a day or so."

"A *lust* spell?" Xander squeaked.

"Minor one," Spike said, looking unconcerned. "Only amplifies what's already there." He held up his finger and thumb, about half an inch apart. "Teeny. Practically insignificant."

"What? *What?* It... *what?* And you came *here?*"

Spike shrugged. "Seemed like the thing to do at the time."

With a little jolt, Xander realised that he'd been watching Spike's lips move as he talked. This was awful. This was worse than awful. This was a car crash. A car crash of lips. Xander's chest heaved with the effort not to just lean in and take what the magic in his head was telling him he wanted. He knew for a fact that kissing would be at least easier than this calamity of a conversation, but no, he couldn't. He shouldn't. He wouldn't. Kissing Spike was wrong and bad and wrong. And bad. Xander was better than that.

Except it was so damn hard not to give in. The odds were well and truly stacked against him. Xander had eyes. Spike had always been annoyingly pretty, for a guy, but Xander had never really let himself *look* before. In fact, Spike ticked a lot of Xander's boxes.

He was ridiculously good-looking. Tick.

He was a self-confessed Angel-hater. Tick.

He didn't seem overly opposed to the idea of sucking face with Xander, even if magic was making their decisions for them. Tick.

They were completely ill-suited to be seen together in polite society. Tick.

He ordinarily wouldn't look twice at Xander. Tick.

He had alienated all of Xander's closest friends. Tick.

He reinforced Xander's status as a demon-magnet. Tick.

He had the bickering thing *down*. Tick.

He annoyed Xander beyond the capacity for rational thought. Ticked, double-ticked, and triple-ticked.

But Xander couldn't go there. He just couldn't. He couldn't let himself give in to this. He hardly had the best track record with the choices he'd made in the past with

females. He hadn't exactly felt the need to double the amount of potentially disastrous hook-ups by widening the field to include males. And yet there he was. Staring at Spike and feeling that undeniable low-down tickle. It was the strangest sensation, knowing it was Spike's mouth, Spike's touch that he was craving, and yet he wasn't running a mile in the opposite direction. Xander *wanted*. He wanted so badly he was dizzy with it.

"I can't believe this," he said.

"Believe it," Spike said, backing away slowly. "This one really takes the biscuit. Still. No harm, no foul, hey?"

Xander followed like he was being pulled along on an invisible string, heavy-limbed and stunned. He tripped over the trailing cuff of his jeans and turned his little stumble into a lunge, catching Spike off-guard, grabbing the front of his shirt and pulling him in close. He licked his lips, tasting Spike, and shook his head, trying to clear it, for all the good it did. "How can it make me want something I don't want?"

"Magic," Spike said simply, and shrugged, leaning back out of Xander's grip, but he didn't go far. He was peering at Xander, watching him carefully.

Xander stared at Spike's mouth, hypnotised. "Magic," he murmured, and moved in.

Spike didn't fight it. He let Xander kiss him, his mouth slack at first, but when Xander bit on his lip, Spike made a startled little noise and quickly got with the program. His hands ended up on Xander's hips, something Xander was doing his damndest not to notice.

Spike's lips were surprisingly soft and they tasted like wood-smoke and coffee, information Xander had never expected to be in possession of. They kissed a little more slowly this time, and Xander knew there was no earthly way it should have felt that good. He wanted to fight it, but having Spike pressed up against him like that felt so *right*. He hated himself for not being stronger, hated the spell for having this effect on him, hated Spike for being a really *good* kisser, and even hated Dawn a little bit for being so careless. The kiss ended -- paused -- without anyone being forced away, and Xander just let himself hang, his bones heavy, everything

soporific and kind of fascinating even as it was thoroughly freaking him out.

Spike was eyeing him strangely, which, Xander suspected, was not entirely unwarranted.

"Huh," Spike said, and licked his lips. "That's interesting."

"What's interesting?"

"Did I say interesting? I meant unsettling."

"You're such a pig. I'm going to have to fumigate my lips. Did it really get the others like this, too?"

"Oh, they fought it, but eventually they all got around to having a go. Had to take turns pulling each other off." Spike frowned. "Me. Pulling each other off me."

Xander twisted up his face. "I got that, thanks. What happened exactly?"

"Put it this way, Rupert's not going to be comfortable around me for a good long while."

"God. And the others?"

Spike sucked in a breath. "Well. Willow and Tara may need couples therapy, although who knows, it might have been an eye-opener for them. And Buffy... Well. She's an old hand at this. Probably be just fine." Spike curled his lip with obvious distaste. "Get Willow to whip up a bumper batch of cookies. Right as rain in no time. We managed to hold Dawn off before she could jump me. Don't think any of us could have coped with that."

"Small mercies."

"Thank God for 'em." Spike pushed back his shoulders. "Anyway. Once they'd all got it out of their systems, I made myself scarce while they were all bickering over what to do with me, and I headed over here."

"So what you're saying is..."

"Another in a long line of botched spells. Everyone's fine, least of all me, and it should all go back to normal pretty soon."

"Except for..."

They both glanced down to see Xander's hands fisted on the front of Spike's shirt.

"Except for that, yeah," Spike said. His expression barely flickered, but Xander got the distinct impression there was a hint of amusement mixed in there somewhere.

"With just you and me here..."

"Shit. No one to intervene."

"Look. It's okay. I'll steer you right."

"*What?*"

"I said I'll--"

"But how can you?"

"I just meant I wouldn't let things go too far." Spike rolled his eyes dramatically.

"Your virtue is safe with me."

Xander experienced a horrible pang of what he'd heard alcoholics referred to as a 'moment of clarity'. "You mean you don't have the same urge?"

"What urge?"

"You don't feel like you have to, uh." Xander swallowed and felt his cheeks heat.

"Like you have to reciprocate? You don't feel like you'll fall apart if you don't?"

There was a split-second of something that looked like confusion on Spike's face, then the amusement was back in force. He stuck out his bottom lip in thought, and it took every ounce of determination Xander possessed not to lean in and suck on it.

"No more than usual."

"*What?*"

"Look, I said I'd be a stand-up guy. What more do you want?"

"But you're... you're just you. You're not even affected by this. It's all on me. Fuck!" Using reserves of willpower Xander had no clue that he possessed, he pushed away from Spike, and went and stood behind the couch, gripping it 'til his knuckles were bone-white. The physical barrier between them was a welcome reprieve.

"Xander, what the hell are you talking about?"

"I mean that I'm the one wrapped around you like a Xander-blanket and you're just letting me!"

Spike just stood there, looking puzzled, as though Xander had asked him a riddle with no discernable answer. "Well, yeah," he said. "You're a nice bit of stuff. What's the harm?"

"What's the--?" The English language, for all its quirks and idiosyncrasies, had seldom deserted Xander quite so completely. Without realising it, he abandoned the safety of his couch and strode towards Spike, his fists clenched, blood pounding. "What's the *harm?*"

"Yeah. What's the harm?"

"You're *enjoying* this."

"Of course I'm enjoying this."

"But... *why?*" Xander asked. And just how, he wanted to know, did Spike manage to swagger quite so much when he was standing still?

Spike slanted his gaze away, then back again. Not embarrassed, Xander noted with irritation, but simply considering the question. Probably thinking about how he could squeeze every last drop of man-loving from the heterosexual stone formerly

known as Xander.

"Why not?" Spike said simply.

Xander realised dimly that they had begun circling one another. Several feet and a crappy coffee table separated them, but there was a definite sense of stalking in the air. Spike smirked, ever the casual hunter.

"Fine," Xander said. "You know what? Fine. I give up." With agitated hands, he pulled his shirt over his head, balled it up and tossed it away. He stood with his arms spread in offering. "You want to do this. Let's do it."

Spike just stood there. Looking. Not doing.

"What?" Xander snapped. "What are you staring at, you leech?"

"You're pretty when you're naked. Who knew."

Xander blanched. He should have known better than to try reverse psychology on a vampire. If, in fact, that's what this little shirt-removing experiment was. Because if it wasn't reverse psychology, then it was something else. And if it was something else, then Xander just didn't want to know. Because that would involve thought. And thought led to fear, fear led to anger, and apparently anger led to sticking his tongue down Spike's throat.

*Gah*, he thought succinctly. *Double gah with a side order of wah.*

"You know, you always do this," Xander said, a thread of panic running through his words.

"Do what?"

"Cheat when we go head-to-head."

Spike grinned, never taking his eyes from Xander's as he stepped up onto the coffee table and down off the other side. He hooked his fingers over the loose waistband of Xander's jeans, and heaved him close. It looked like he'd barely twitched his

fingers, but Xander was nearly yanked off his feet. All the air left Xander's lungs in a shuddering gasp when he was brought flush up against Spike's body. The backs of Spike's fingers were cool against the heat of his hip, Xander noted absently, resolutely trying not to press into it when Spike slid his hand around to rest on the small of Xander's back.

"We've never been head-to-head, pet," Spike murmured, apparently distracted by the sight of Xander's skin. He hollowed his cheeks, intently watching the progress of his hand running up over Xander's stomach to his chest. He dragged the heel of his hand over Xander's nipple, and kept going, ending his leisurely trail with his fingertips on Xander's neck. His thumb stroked along the line of Xander's jaw, and brushed the corner of Xander's mouth. Spike looked into Xander's eyes as he tilted his head, and followed it up with a lazy, pornographic smile. "But if you fancy a go..."

This close to Spike, Xander felt smaller, like Spike's mere presence was swamping him. His muscles tightened in a desperate bid to get closer, or perhaps to recoil. He wasn't entirely sure which.

"Gross, Spike," he said, his voice a whisper. "You're so gross."

"You love it."

"Asshole."

"Prude."

"Bloodsucker."

"Kiss me again." Spike's smile was nothing more than a wicked little suggestion, but it was so right and so wrong that Xander wanted to flipper-slap it right off his face. He was thrown off-balance by Spike trailing a cool touch down to the buttons of his jeans, inexplicably leaving heat in his wake. Spike's mouth opened in a silent little "ah" when he thumbed open the top button, and Xander's jeans slipped an inch or so down over his hips.

"No, I shouldn't. We can't. We--"

"Xander," Spike purred, actually *purred*, that sneaky, purring, undead bastard. "Live a little, would you?"

Xander only just had time to let out a sound, not a whimper exactly, just a soft little *sound* before Spike was kissing him again. And it was a good kiss. A really, really good kiss. Deep and hot and edging towards getting a little frantic. The kind of kiss that opened the door to other deep, hot, frantic things that two bodies could conceivably do together. It was all kissing noises and grabbing hands, both of them with their eyes closed, getting completely caught up in what they were doing. Spike fisted his hand in Xander's hair, keeping him in close, moving him exactly where Spike wanted him. Xander would have complained about all the manhandling, but his mouth was busy, and he was preoccupied with trying to get his hands under Spike's shirts to all that cool, hard muscle underneath.

"Here's the thing," Xander said, before he even realised he was going to speak.

"Oh, good." Spike didn't sound overly impressed, but also, Xander couldn't help noticing, didn't exactly stop kissing him either. "More talking," he said into Xander's mouth, chasing the words with his tongue. "Just what we need."

"I, uhmf. I really want to have the sex."

"M'flattered." Spike chose to punctuate his bitten-off little sentence by scratching blunt nails over the soft curve of Xander's ass just visible above where his jeans were valiantly clinging to his hips.

"I didn't say with you. I just really want to have the sex. Y'know... generally. I'm -- oh, god, unn-yeah, there -- I've... I've only done it once, but it was with Faith, and it was nearly an out-of-body experience, you know?"

"You lost it to the naughty Slayer? You?" Spike drew back a little, his teeth sliding off Xander's slick lower lip. He nodded slowly, sizing Xander up like it was the first time he'd ever really seen him.

"I just need you to know something," Xander said. "Because there may be magic happening here -- and I mean that in the very literal sense -- but I don't think I'm

strong enough to say no right now. Even though I should. Do you know what that's like?"

"Saying no? Not so much. I'm more of an instant gratification sort of a bloke." Spike leered as he slap-squeezed Xander's ass and moved in for another kiss.

"Can you listen to what I'm saying for one second?" Xander didn't mean to sound so petulant, but his voice betrayed him.

Spike didn't make a joke. Didn't insult Xander's intelligence. Only stood there, looking perhaps a little bored, but like he might actually be taking Xander seriously for once. And really, that was when Xander should have known that he was in trouble.

"What is it you need me to know?" Spike asked.

"I've never... With a guy. I've never. Anything. At all."

"*Oh*," Spike said, his face breaking into an absolutely filthy smile as understanding dawned. "Well, you've come to the right vampire."

They were walking, Xander realised. At least, Spike was walking and steering Xander where he wanted him. The washer-dryer hit Xander's ass, making him grunt at the connection. His whole body tensed when Spike kept right on coming, stepping in close, shoving a thigh between Xander's legs and snugging their hips together, reminding Xander that there was more to this little encounter than just kissing.

Xander swallowed, feeling Spike pressed hard and suggestive against his hip, and said in a small voice, "You know the bed's right over there."

Spike raised an imperious eyebrow. "Oh, we'll get there."

He grinned with the tip of his tongue just visible between his teeth, as he tugged at Xander's fly, the buttons popping open, one by one. Xander's cock slapped up against his stomach, letting them both know just how happy it was to finally be getting a little attention.

"Look at that," Spike breathed. "Pretty all over."

Xander couldn't take it. They were so close, only the space of breaths between them, and it was really happening. The sex thing, with a man, with Spike, it was really happening. So he closed his eyes. He was very aware that it was only his weight leaning up against the washer that was keeping his jeans up. He hadn't bothered with underwear after his shower, so if he moved at all this would leave him very naked indeed, and seeing as Spike had wilfully stayed fully-clothed so far, this hardly seemed fair.

Xander kept very still when Spike touched him, Spike's grip too loose on his cock, light enough to be cruel. Xander's hands were behind him, gamely attempting to get a grip on the shiny white surface of the washing machine. He bit on his lip, and just tried not to do anything embarrassing like tremble or groan or possibly come all over Spike before they'd even really done anything. He was kind of at a loss for what to do. If he'd ever given any serious thought to what it would be like to be naked and horny and in Spike's arms, this wasn't how he'd thought it would go down.

He thought there'd be, well, depravity. Every porn cliché in the book. A lot of swearing and grunting and biting. Plenty of degradation and ugly rutting. Maybe some hair-pulling and name-calling. Possibly the occasional query on the subject of Xander's paternal lineage.

Not this.

"Xander," Spike murmured, and Xander could feel it against his lips. "Xander. Open your eyes."

Xander nudged forward instead, because kissing was always easier than talking. He kept his eyes tightly shut, reaching blindly for handholds on Spike's shirt, anything that he could get his hands on and grip.

Spike was moving his hand, twisting his wrist on the upstroke, making Xander feel it everywhere. It made Xander's knees go weak. He spread his legs a little further, his thighs tensed, planting his feet on the ground. Spike made a noise of approval,

then there was another sharp tug at Xander's hips, and his jeans disappeared. Xander gasped, and opened his eyes to the sight of Spike pulling his shirts off over his head, the silver chain around his neck getting caught on his chin. Spike tossed his shirts onto the washer behind Xander and pushed him up onto them, ignoring Xander's yelp of indignation. Xander slid backwards, only to have Spike grab behind his knees and drag him forwards again.

Xander tried to struggle away. He wanted to close his thighs, wanted to get Spike the hell out of there, because he was way too open and exposed like this. He wanted to be the one doing the lifting and the grabbing and the pushing, but Spike was right there, all that distracting pale skin, and his fucking collarbone that Xander couldn't stop touching, just wanted to lower his head and *bite*. Spike's skin was soft and cool, too delicate for a vampire, although Xander wasn't really sure what else he'd been expecting: sharkskin or leather, something older, something tougher, something... else. He wanted his teeth on Spike's skin, sucking and biting, raising stolen blood to the surface, leaving mouth-shaped bruises behind. Spike was grabbing at him again, his head thrown back, his eyes closed, letting Xander do whatever he wanted. His hips were humping up against Xander, the side of the machine, anywhere Spike could get a little friction.

There was a loud metallic thud of Spike's boot hitting the side of the machine, and it seemed to wake him up. He got his hands on Xander's ass, pulling him forward, right to the edge of the washer. Xander was doing his best to figure out the intricate complexities of Spike's belt buckle, but it was kind of difficult when Spike was jerking him off and kissing him like that, hot and messy, sucking on Xander's tongue, biting at his jaw.

Spike's belt finally gave up the ghost, and Xander shoved Spike's jeans down over his hips. Spike hissed and broke their kiss.

"Watch the goods, mate."

Xander glanced down and saw that Spike hadn't been wearing any underwear either. It seemed to be the night for it.

"Sorry, sorry," Xander said, caught suddenly in the way Spike was looking at him, open and apparently honest for once. "Are you okay?"

"I'll live." The corner of Spike's mouth quirked into a tiny smile. "Or, y'know. Not."

Xander opened his mouth to reply -- thinking that there was a whole lot of naked vampire standing in front of him, ready for the taking, all Xander had to do was reach out and take -- but instead ended up sucking in a huge lungful of air when Spike slid two fingers behind his balls, pressing up and teasing, boldly going where no man, woman, or dastardly creature of the night had gone before.

"Whoa, nelly!" Xander grabbed at Spike's wrist to stop him. Spike held still, but didn't let Xander pull his hand away.

"Easy," Spike said, his lips moving against Xander's jaw, his voice little more than a quiet rumble, low in his chest. "Make it good, Xander. I will. You'll see. S'like nothing on earth."

Xander couldn't explain himself. It was stupid, really. Like saying the words would be even more intimate that this terrible-awful-amazing *thing* that Spike was doing to him.

"Can't," he said, his eyes screwed tightly shut, his head bowed almost to Spike's shoulder. "Can't."

"Sure you can," Spike said, his other hand stroking Xander's thigh, petting the trembling muscle, distracting him. "Sure you can."

Xander let go of Spike's wrist. He turned his face into Spike's throat, hiding there as he tried his best to relax into it, just a little, because maybe he could do this. Maybe it wasn't so bad. Spike didn't seem to be pushing it, he was just circling, teasing, ghosting over the sensitive skin. It felt weird more than anything else, bizarre and kind of gross to have anyone touching him there. Xander thought maybe he could ride it out. No point in having the big gay freak out at this late stage just because somebody had touched his ass. If he diverted Spike's attention to other, more pressing issues, like that excellent handjob thing that had been happening, or maybe even blowjobs -- he could definitely handle getting a blowjob -- then they could shake hands afterwards and everyone could part as friends.

Or temporarily muzzled mortal enemies. Whatever worked.

Then Spike disappeared, and Xander nearly fell off the edge of the washer. Xander could only stare as Spike did an awkward shuffle-dance across the room, hobbled by his jeans around his ankles, kicking off his boots as he went.

This was worse than anything else. To be left there, alone and shaking, harder than he'd been in a long, long time, *this* was the last straw. This was--

Spike reappeared, surging up against Xander to kiss him again, a cool hand on the back of Xander's neck. This time when Spike touched him, his fingers were cold and slippery, and it made Xander jump. Spike murmured soft little words into Xander's mouth, making Xander wonder where a person like Spike had learned to treat someone like this, calming them, taking his time over it, making them feel reassured, even when Spike was doing something as alarming as -- oh god, oh god, oh *god* -- sliding a finger inside Xander.

It was weird and it was wrong, and this was not an area that should be used for sex, but felt weirdly... okay. It was *okay*, he was doing this, and it was okay. Spike kept kissing him, keeping murmuring sweet, filthy little things as he added another finger, scissoring and stretching, and it was still okay.

Things suddenly got a whole lot better than okay when Spike touched something inside that made Xander throw his head back and gasp, staring blindly at the ceiling. Pleasure sparked deep inside, stealing his breath, and making him push up against Spike's hand. Spike was jacking him off again, a maddening push-pull, making Xander roll his hips and fuck up into it, everything hot and hazy, a sweet little rhythm that was clearly designed to drive him crazy.

It took Xander a second to realise that Spike wasn't touching him anymore. There were no hands touching him in those new and interesting places where Xander was just getting used to having hands touching him. Hands were good. Hands were awesome. Fingers were even better. Fingers really needed to go back to what fingers had been doing a second ago.

Xander inched closer to the edge of the machine, trying to get his point across without actually having to say the words. Spike groaned and mouthed at Xander's

throat.

"Tilt your hips for me," he was saying. "Yeah. Like that. That's it."

Xander let out an embarrassing sound when Spike's cock nudged up against him, huge and impossible, making Xander's body clench with unexpected want. Spike reached between them, rubbing the head of his cock over the opening to Xander's body until Xander was pushing back against him, hating it and loving it, wanting it so bad he had to bite on his lip to stop from begging for it.

Spike nudged again, and a shocking little thrill travelled through Xander's body as this time Spike slipped *inside*. Xander went very still as Spike filled him with one long, relentless, friction-hot push. Spike did it slow, letting Xander feel it, get used to it, not stopping until he bottomed out. Spike looked shocked, his eyes wide and glassy, his mouth hanging open.

Xander gritted his teeth and tried to breathe, resting his forehead against Spike's.

"I'm going to fucking kill you when we're done here," he gasped.

Spike snorted. "When we're done here and you've regained the use of your gangling great limbs, you can kiss my fucking toes in appreciation for giving you the ride of your life, you ungrateful whelp."

"Modesty is one of your most attractive qualities, Spike. I ever tell you that?"

"Right. That was before you'd seen me naked."

"Yeah, because that's really--"

Spike drew out an inch or so and pushed back in. Xander was pretty sure Spike did it just to shut him up.

"That's what I thought," Spike muttered, and did it again, watching Xander's face intently.

Xander wrapped his legs around Spike's waist and told himself it was just for

balance.

Spike still had one hand gripping his hip, tight enough to bruise, the other was stroking over Xander's skin, smoothing down the length of his spine, pinching his nipple. He found Xander's cock again, his thumb rubbing under the head, making Xander moan, a long, drawn out, needy sound that had Spike crowding up against him, his hips working, keeping it slow and easy.

Xander kissed him, had to do it, because he was going for the full body experience here, no half measures, his hands on Spike's face, his thumbs sweeping under high cheekbones, smoothing away Spike's frown of concentration.

"Relax for me, Xander," Spike said, low and personal. "Let me give it to you."

Xander nodded raggedly, because Spike really needed to stop holding back, like *now*. Apparently Spike agreed, drawing out far enough that just the head of his cock was holding Xander open, obscene and tantalising, then pushed back inside, his slick fingers sliding down the length of Xander's cock in time with his thrusts.

It hurt a little, and Xander felt awkward as hell like this, too heavy, too many limbs to have to try and deal with right now, but it was good. It was driving Xander crazy with the slow, sweet friction of it; his arms shaking as he fought to hold himself up, giving him a little leverage so he could push back against Spike.

Then the unthinkable happened. Spike got his hands under Xander's ass and *picked him up*, walking them over to the bed. Xander was outraged. He was emasculated. In fact, he would have made a huge fuss about it, if only the change of position hadn't driven Spike's cock even deeper, rubbing against that brilliant spot inside Xander that made his vision white out. He'd hate himself for it later, but right at that moment, it was all he could do to hold on and enjoy the ride.

Xander's back hit the mattress, and Spike was crawling over him, pushing Xander's knee to his chest and thrusting deep, giving him the full length every time, no more holding back. He angled his hips up and in, over and over, a constant thrum of burning heat and sparking pleasure, and it was all Xander could do to stay with him. The two of them were working together now, finding their rhythm, Xander's hips pushing up to meet him every time.

Spike didn't even have to touch him again. Xander arched up off the mattress when he came, a rush of heat and light, his orgasm slamming through him. He turned his face into the sheets, embarrassed and freefalling, trying not to hear the broken-off sob that came from his own throat.

Spike swore, his hips stuttering, and thrust half a dozen more times before he was coming too, a strange, alien rush spreading inside Xander, bizarre and awful and so fucking hot that Xander's dick twitched, valiantly trying to muster up the energy for round two.

Spike slumped forward, his forehead on Xander's shoulder, breathing slow and steady in contrast to Xander's heaving chest. Spike turned his face to press a kiss to Xander's sweaty throat, sliding a hand down to Xander's hip to hold and squeeze gently as he pulled out. It hurt, and everything felt swollen and wrong. There was a whole new level of messy-gross-ick-ick-ick to deal with every time Xander moved, and there was no way he was ever supposed to be that aware of his own asshole, but at the same time, he felt too empty, too exposed, like Spike belonged between his thighs.

Maybe, Xander figured, there was something to this whole anal sex thing after all.

Spike patted his hip a couple of times, which was oddly comforting, and slumped over to one side, sprawling out on the disaster area that was Xander's bed.

They lay there in relative silence for a while, staring at the ceiling, until Xander's breathing evened out, and he was able to get his legs to work enough to straighten them, despite vigorous and varied complaints from his abused muscles.

Xander eventually worked up the courage to be brave, and turned his head just enough that he could see Spike's nose, mouth, and part of his chin above the curve of his shoulder.

"Think that was enough?" he asked, his voice a rough-edged shadow of its former self. "Think the spell's broken?"

Spike lifted his head from the pillow, looking bleary and fucked-out, his hair

sticking up in riotous gelled tufts all over his head. "I'd say it's done with us."

"Good," Xander said, and passed out.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It wasn't until afterwards that Xander started his unfortunate habit of watching Spike.

He watched Spike eat cereal in front of the tiny TV in Giles' living room, the frosted flakes floating in a pool of red, always with a running commentary on whatever was showing. He watched Spike fight demons when Spike deigned to patrol with them, a deadly dance of fists and leather and gravity-defying high kicks, only to end the night by saying something stupid and annoying enough to make Buffy punch him on the nose, then storm off without a word of thanks for his help. He watched Spike talk with Dawn, their heads bent conspiratorially over the table at the back of the Magic Box, Spike no doubt corrupting her with tales of his glory days. He watched Spike read occasionally; Spike's face a frown, then a grin, then a grimace, like he was acting out the words he read inside his head, disagreeing with most of them. Even in this silent pastime Spike was an active participant.

Xander did it carefully, subtly. Like a ninja. Or, at least, like a ninja who got halfway through ninja training school, before dropping out and getting a job as a sushi delivery boy. The last thing on earth he wanted was for Spike to realise what he was doing. He knew that before The Incident all he would have got from Spike would be a teasing sneer, maybe a lewd comment or a flash of raucous anger at the intrusion. But now? Now it would be worse.

Because he was pretty sure that Spike was watching him too.

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Xander was daydreaming in the Magic Box, only it was more like daymaring, or day-nightmaring, or possibly just maring. Whatever the hell it was called when his

worst fears and his deepest, darkest secrets were all he could think about in the middle of the day, in a public place, when he was supposed to be helping with research on his day off, because he was a good guy, and that's what good guys did. Good guys didn't let their minds wander to dirty, filthy, smutty sex thoughts about evil, bad guy vampires, because that wasn't the good guys' style.

Except that was all a big, fat lie, and Xander knew it. Because try as he might, he couldn't stop thinking about Spike. He was sitting at the table in the Magic Box, his chin on his fist, staring off into space and thinking about Spike. This much he could admit, if only to himself.

Today's obsession was Spike's skin, and all those lovely words that went along with it, like lickable, biteable, and best of all, *bruisable*. The thought of all those dark little smudges on Spike's skin that Xander had put there did crazy things to Xander's insides.

Yesterday, it had been Spike's hands: his long, elegant fingers. The day before that the long line of lean muscle that ran down the outside of Spike's thigh from his hip to his knee. The day before that the way Spike had had a thing about biting on Xander's lip and grabbing at his hair when they'd kissed.

But today it was skin. He couldn't stop thinking about Spike's pale skin, the way it was so cool and smooth, soft over hard muscle. The way Xander had felt hot and sweaty in comparison, like he'd get Spike grubby if he touched him.

He couldn't help himself. He was sure that to any hapless passerby he looked like he was doing some incredibly complex mental arithmetic, but his head was filled with thoughts of naked vampire. His knee bounced restlessly, and hidden under the table he was halfway to hard, and he just couldn't stop himself.

"Oh, god. You're thinking about it, aren't you?" Buffy asked, breaking into his rumination.

Xander jumped, pulling off an impressive spazz-flail manoeuvre, knocking over his empty coffee mug in the process. "What? Thinking? *It?*" He grinned awkwardly, and draped an arm inelegantly over his lap, jerking his chair closer to the table.

"Spike," Buffy said, grabbing the spinning mug before it could fall off the edge of the table. "That stupid spell."

"No! What? No. Definitely not. No thinking. I would never even--" He glanced around and leaned in. "What did he tell you?" he hissed through his teeth.

"He didn't have to tell me anything. It just happened. And, I mean, for once it wasn't even his fault." Buffy pulled a face and looked endearingly cross as she scuffed her toe over the floor. "Stupid kissing spells. I'm really tired of magic making me think that I desperately need to make out with Spike." The scuffing turning into kicking, fierce enough to make Xander fear for Giles' hardwood finish. "Stupid kissing spells."

"Yeah," Xander agreed wholeheartedly. Then he blinked a couple of times. "Wait. *Kissing* spell?"

"Well... yeah." Buffy looked up at him and gave a little shrug. "You heard about it, right? Dawn is so not getting her allowance for, like, a month."

"Yes," Xander nodded. "Dawnie's a bad, bad girl." He tilted his head, and tried not to look pained. "Kissing spell?"

Buffy nodded. "We all wanted to kiss Spike. It was totally embarrassing. Even... ugh." She looked like she'd swallowed something unpleasant. "Xander, I had to watch Giles kissing Spike. Giles! And..." She lowered her voice. "At the time all I could think was it was really unfair that he got to go first. Do you have any idea what that was like?"

"I'm really trying not to," Xander said.

"You're so lucky you weren't there, Xander."

"Yeah. I'm lucky. Overdue for that lottery win. Can we go back to the fact that it was a *kissing* spell now, please?"

Buffy widened her eyes. "I know. Can you *imagine* if Dawn had got the pronunciation right? Eesch. Really trying not to think about that one."

"So it was for kissing. Just for kissing. Only kissing?"

"Yeah," Buffy said. "One kiss and boom, out of your system, thank god. Make with the kissy, and spell over. Mildly embarrassing. Totally disgusting. Everybody moves through the three documented stages of dealing with macking on Spike: horror, revulsion, and repression." She sighed and gave a dramatic little shudder, then turned her frown upside down for Xander's benefit. "Big relief things didn't get any worse, huh?"

"Oh, yeah," Xander croaked. "Huge. Massive. Mammoth."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Xander had had the conversation in his head so many times, that when he walked out of his bathroom a week later, towelling his hair dry, and saw Spike on his knees with his hand stuck down the back of the couch, this time he was ready for him.

Spike saw him coming, and kept on searching the couch, pulling out an unopened bag of Cheetos, an empty beer bottle, a sock, and the remote control in quick succession, examining each item with mild disgust before tossing it over his shoulder. He watched Xander watching him, and seemed completely oblivious to the implications of Xander's folded-arms-foot-tapping combo.

"So," Xander said, when he'd had enough of Spike's blatant disregard for his presence. "I had an interesting conversation with Buffy."

"Yeah?" Spike said, sounding bored. His expression brightened as he reached even further into the couch, fished around for a moment, and pulled out his lighter with a triumphant grin.

"She told me," Xander said, as Spike hopped lightly to his feet and stuck the lighter in his pocket.

"Told you what?"

"About the spell."

"What spell? This is Sunnydale, after all. You're going to have to narrow it down for me."

"Spike. The spell. *The* spell. The one that made us..." He gestured back and forth between them, and glanced over at the washer-dryer.

Spike looked confused for a second, then followed Xander's line of sight. His face lit up with an arrogant grin. "Oh," he said. "*That* spell. Right you are."

This conversation really wasn't going according to plan.

"I want to know what you did to me," Xander said.

Spike pouted his lips, looking irritatingly smug. "Would've thought that much was obvious."

"No," Xander said, pulling a face. "No, I want to know what whammy you put on me to make me... y'know."

"Oh, I see," Spike said slowly, his humour fading. "We're going with the tried and tested 'blame Spike for every bloody thing under the sun' gambit, are we? Hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, mate, but I didn't do a thing."

"You did. You had to. Buffy said. She *said*. A kissing spell, not a lust spell, a *kissing* spell. No more, no less. So what did you do to me?"

"Told you. Nothing. Sorry to break it to you, but that was the spell, Xander. One simple kiss. Nothing more than that. One kiss and one kiss only. Everyone else had their way with me and it was out of their system. You, my friend, came back for seconds, thirds, and fourths. I think I lost count when we hit fifteenths."

"That wasn't... I didn't... You said it was a lust spell. You misled me."

"You wish. I may have told a little white lie, but I didn't do a single thing you didn't want, and you know it. You were following me around like a dog chasing a bone. I

get it though." Spike unfurled a lazy grin. "It's a hell of a bone."

Xander's mouth went suddenly dry. "You are so gross I can't even begin to tell you."

"If this is your way of working up to punching me because we shagged and you can't deal with it..." Spike spread his arms. "Go ahead. Take your best shot. Probably hurt you more than it will me."

"You knew!" Xander said. "You knew what would happen and you came to my house anyway. You came and you lied and you-you-you--"

"I told you. I didn't think you'd be here."

"That's no excuse. You could have gone and hid out at your crypt until it wore off."

"That's what I was doing." Spike shrugged. "I got bored. You've got cable."

"So you came to my house--"

"Basement."

"So you came to my house-basement, even though you knew what would happen?"

"I. Didn't. Think. You'd. Be. Here."

"But I was!"

"Trust me, I noticed."

"Didn't you care about what would happen if I was?"

"After the day I'd had... Not so much."

"Not so much?!"

"Hey, I didn't think it would be so bad, okay? I just didn't expect it to be so good."

This stopped Xander in his tracks. "You thought it was good?"

"Well... yeah." Spike examined his flaking nail polish. "Didn't you?"

"I... No! It was awful! Worse than awful. It was terrible!"

"That why you whipped your shirt off, then?"

"I never--"

Spike started walking towards him. "That why you ended up in bed with me when it should have ended after a simple kiss?"

"Kisses are never simple."

"You know, you could just admit that you liked it, instead of the song and dance routine." Spike smirked, and stepped in close, lowering his voice. "You could try it again, if you like. Now that you're not, uh, under the influence. See if it was a fluke."

Xander's stomach somersaulted. He was suddenly very aware of his hands, of how empty they were. "You wouldn't."

"I bloody well would."

"You can't. I disallow it."

"Don't make me laugh."

"It wasn't a joke."

"You can't force the willing, mate."

"I'm unwilling. All the way without will. I'm will-less. Really."

Spike stopped a few meagre inches short of touching him and Xander found it

difficult to remember to breathe. "So why aren't you stopping me?" Spike asked, staring right at Xander's mouth.

"I... I'm not. There isn't. Fuck, Spike."

"That's what I thought." Spike tilted his head, moving his face around Xander's. "Xander," Spike breathed. "Tell me to stop."

Xander didn't say a word as Spike closed the distance between them and kissed him. A feeling of oh, god, yes, *finally*, spiralled out through Xander's body, and he closed his hands into fists to stop from grabbing handfuls of Spike's duster and dragging him closer.

There was a quiet little moment when they finally broke apart. Xander swayed, working his lips foolishly, feeling awkward and tingly all over. He still couldn't figure out what the hell to do with his hands.

"A kissing spell?" he said quietly, staring down at Spike's chest. "Spike, that's so lame."

"You're telling me."

"Why did you lie about it?"

"Was just trying to get your dander up."

"Mission accomplished."

Spike chuckled, actually ducked his head and chuckled, and Xander was perturbed to discover that the dark fan of Spike's eyelashes against his cheek was one of the hottest things he'd ever seen.

"I meant," Spike said, sounding amused, "I was just trying to annoy you. Freak you out. Get under your skin, you know?" He shrugged. "I thought it would be funny."

Xander nodded slowly. "Mission still very much accomplished."

"You pillock," Spike said, almost fondly. "Had to go and start acting like a girl about it, didn't you?"

"I'm sure this is all very amusing to you, Spike."

"Well... yeah. We both had a bit of fun, right?"

Xander shifted his weight, not meeting Spike's eye, and shrugged like he didn't care very much one way or the other.

Spike smiled. "You, ah. You want to maybe do it again?"

"It?" Xander glanced up from under his lashes. "You mean, *it*? The it with the..." He bobbed his head a couple of times, jerking his chin and waving his hand around, pulling what he was sure were some very complex and suggestive facial expressions, designed to convey his complex and suggestive questions about exactly how much sex the two of them were about to have in the very near future.

Spike watched the whole thing with a slight frown, waiting until Xander was done. He blinked a couple of times, and Xander wondered if maybe something had got lost in the translation.

"Okay," Spike said, nodding like he'd reached an important decision. He hooked his fingers through Xander's belt loops and tugged him in close. "But this time I'll let you drive."

Xander smiled, and kissed him.

**The End**