

Xander (Spander eventually)

👉 **wordclaim50** prompt #3 Angst, word: whisper

Post NFA/Chosen

Warning: Drug use!

My Sweet Prince

by

Pirate Purple

Part One

I closed my eye as the needle pierced my vein. Almost a year in Africa, and this was the only bliss to be had. I'd traded everything I was for this short surcease from pain. Now they were sending me to L.A. to collect what was left after Angel's big burnout. I laughed to myself, and a large brown hand slapped my side for disturbing the needle. A brown hand that moved to fondle the softness between my legs. I did too much of this stuff to really get hard anymore, but that didn't really matter to most of them. I was compliant after a good fix, and that was what counted.

I woke up later, not sure how much later, to an insistent beeping from the cell phone. Willow, I had missed my flight, was I okay? I washed my face in the tepid water in the basin next to my cot. My stuff was all packed already. Gustaphe must have done it for me. Or Leonne, whichever one had been here last night. My sweet princes, bringing me painless nights.

I got on the flight to L.A.. Everything was too bright. I'd call Will when I got there and get my instructions.

Leftover mellow from last night whispers in my veins. How hard can it be to get morphine in L.A.?

Part Two

I was in a human bar on the seedy side of town when he found me. I had decided to find my fix before I called Willow. Well, morphine was kind of hard to get, so I'd taken off the edge with something else. Heroin, maybe?

I'm not really sure. Anyway it had turned into a long enough binge that Willow had traced my credit card to find out where I had flown to, and Giles had given in and told them he was alive.

But no-one had told me. When his game face confronted me, I thought I had died and gone to hell.

“Not in hell yet, whelp, but you will be tomorrow.” I must have spoken out loud. Still, his voice brought back memories, memories I wasn't ready for. The tears started to pour down my face. Anya. All those potentials that had died. Little girls. The slayers in Africa, I'd seen killed by their own people in the most terrible ways, because they were thought possessed. Spike being burned up from the inside. I couldn't get away from that one.

“You're dead.” My voice came out as a harsh whisper. God I needed something to drink. He brought a semi-clean glass of water to my lips, which I gulped, and then choked on. He sat me up and pounded my back until I stopped choking. Mind reader, much?

Now slightly more coherent, I sat up on my own. “Why are you here?” My voice rasped. I must have been screaming at some point.

“That’s a long story, [mate](#). Longer than I intend to spend on your flabby arse.”

“I mean here, now? Why did you come to find me?” I tried to stand, but my legs wouldn’t hold me. My eyes rolled back in my head, and it was all black again.

Part Three

I woke to the chiming of church bells close by.

“They’re r-r-ringing for V-v-v-vespers.” My roommate explained, as if that meant anything to me. I looked blankly at the man in the next bed. He was junkie-thin, and obviously strung out, judging by the shakes that wracked his whole body.

“Where am I?” I had no earthly idea how I had gotten here.

“Th-this is St. Ann’s.” said the guy in the know, pushing greasy hair out of his eyes. “It’s a d-drug rehab c-clinic. A blonde m-man with a b-b-big leather jacket b-brought you here. I d-d-don’t th-think he left his name.”

“Spike,” I said, more to myself than to him. I wondered what he had told the girls and Giles. I was wearing a pair of characterless blue pajamas, and my clothes and things were nowhere in sight. I got out of bed and went to the bathroom.

My clothes were clean, in a locker in the bathroom. Keys, cell phone, everything was there. I put the clothes on and put everything in an appropriate pocket. I shrugged on my jacket. I couldn’t stop thinking about him. Fighting, and making it look like some kind of ultra-violent dance, drunk when Drusilla left him, pale and resigned, the evening before he died for us. Only, for some reason, he wasn’t a pile of dust.

They gave me some static on the way out. Trying to get me to sign forms and the rest, but I just ignored them. The burning in my veins had already started, and I wanted answers before I had to find my next fix.

I had to find him, and know why.

Part Four

I found Spike in an alley across from the clinic, hidden from the sun by a deep doorway. There was a pile of cigarette butts on the ground, as if Spike had been tidily keeping them all together. Spike just stared at me like I was a stranger.

Maybe I am. I thought. I opened and closed my mouth a few times, wanting to break the silence, but unable to say anything.

Spike looked away, finally. “How long?” was all he said.

There was only one thing he could be talking about. “My second week in Africa, I got bitten by a snake. Not enough poison to kill me, but enough that the pain was unbearable. They gave me morphine.” It went without saying that I hadn’t stopped using it since.

“You should stay at the clinic. They can help you.”

“I don’t want help. Done being the one who gets saved.”

Spike looked back up at me. “What do you want from me, then?” he asked, sharply.

“Nothing. You found me, remember?”

Spike thought about that for a few moments, and apparently decided it didn’t require a comment. He took out his pack, lit two cigarettes, and gave one to me. We waited out the sun in silence. Spike looked, but didn’t comment, when I started to shake. When the sun finally went down he issued a short, “C’mon!” and strode out of the alley and down the street. I followed, sweating in spite of the cool night.

We stopped at a bar a few blocks down, called the Cassiopeia, and Spike had a quiet conversation with a man at the end of the bar. The man shook his head, but gave Spike a slip of paper. Spike glanced at it, shoved it in his pocket, and dragged me out of the bar. We grabbed a taxi to an apartment building on the seedy side of town. I paid with my Council credit card. I waited in the hall while Spike talked to whoever was inside. I tried to control my shaking, but it was getting worse, and waves

of heavy nausea rolled over me, leaving me limp and sweaty in their wake. The hallways smelled of piss and vomit, and it wasn't helping. Finally, Spike opened the door, tsked at me, and helped me up from where I had slid down the wall.

Spike practically had to carry me to the no-tell motel across the street. Spike paid for an hour with money from my pocket. The room was filthy, but oddly, the sheets smelled clean when Spike laid me down on the bed. Spike was oddly gentle as he took my coat off and rolled up my sleeve. He took a brown paper bag out of his pocket, and dumped out on the bed. There was a new set of works, and a little baggie with some powder in it. I watched as Spike carefully prepared the needle.

"You've done this before." I whispered. It wasn't a question.

"Used to give Dru laudanum, when she'd had a bad spell."

"Why are you doing this for me?"

"Can't let you get killed on my watch. Looks bad under 'Hero' on the resume." Spike smirked.

I grinned back, but wondered what the real reason was. And then my eyes rolled back in ecstasy, as the first wave of high hit me, and I forgot to be worried.

Part Five

I woke up, naked, in what seemed to be Spike's apartment, still pleasantly high, but not out of it. Good stuff, whatever it was. Spike was sitting in the window, smoking and looking down at the street. I sat up. You could see the city spread out from the window like a night sky in reverse. Spike lit me a cigarette. I got out of bed and went to the window to get it.

"Need a fix?" Spike carefully blew several smoke rings. He wasn't wearing his duster, shirt or boots.

"Nah..." I was mesmerized, between the twinkling not-sky, and the rings of smoke that seemed to expand until they contained the whole of it. "I'm good..." I leaned out

the window; wanting to get closer to the twinkling, let it fill me up so I wouldn't be so dark inside. My cigarette fell from between my outstretched fingers as I reached for it. Spike grabbed my arm, as I nearly tumbled out the window, and I fell into his lap instead. The cool skin of his chest felt good against my back. I leaned back and rested my head on his shoulder, scrunching a little to fit my larger frame inside his smaller one. He stroked my hip, and held his cigarette to my lips. I took a drag, and we sat there for a while smoking and watching the not-sky.

“What is this stuff?” I had to ask. Whatever it was, it had replaced my morphine habit forever. I wanted more.

“It's called Khallia. Powderized ft'shar beetle carapace. Tzerloks brought it to this dimension when they came. They breed the beetles for it, now.”

“I like it.” I tried to copy the smoke rings Spike had done before.

“Me too, pet.” Spike was stroking my hip and thigh with long, rhythmic sweeps of his hand. It was soothing and arousing at the same time. I squirmed. A stray vesper breeze made all the hair on my body stand straight up, and I shivered.

“It makes vampires high too?” My shivers made Spike groan, and press his hips against me. Spike was hard. That shouldn’t be making me hard, but it was.

“Yeah...” Spike indulged in a full-body stretch, lifting us both up off the window seat. I tentatively pressed my hips back into his. Ooh, that felt good. When he relaxed, I ran my hands up the insides of his thighs.

“Mmm... You sure you want to go there, pet?” He ran both hands up my sides, and began to trace my nipples. I moaned, arching into the touch.

“No, I'm not sure, but I'm pretty certain I won't need much convincing.”

Part Six

I was hard. Really, really hard. Spike hadn't even touched me – well, you know, *there*, and I already ached. My brain was singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Little Xander had been in hibernation for months. I wanted to tell Spike, but all that would come out were these little hungry sounds.

Apparently, however, words were unnecessary. Spike

picked me up and practically threw me onto the bed. I lay there, watching him strip out of his jeans. If I were honest with myself, I'd say that I had noticed that Spike was hot pretty much from the first time I laid eyes on him. But I had only seen him naked once before, and he had a sheet then.

"Daaamn..." He kicked his jeans off, and smirked at me.

"Like what you see, pet?" He put a hand across his stomach, and ever so slowly it drifted up, until he was playing with his nipple.

Watching Spike touch himself is an aerobic activity, did you know that? I couldn't answer him. I was panting for breath, my cock weeping clear fluid, and my balls drawing up. If he didn't touch me soon, I was going to come without his help.

He seemed to get that, because he knelt between my legs, and just *breathed*, his lips millimeters from the tip of my cock. "Oh, gods, Spike, *please!*" I gasped, squirming a little bit. I leaned up on my elbows. Looking was probably going to make me come in half a nanosecond, but I couldn't not look.

Spike grinned, looking up at me through his eyelashes. The tip of his tongue peeked out from his lips, and my cock jumped in anticipation. He touched it to the wetness pooled at the tip. Another grin, and a flash of golden eyes, and I was coming. I fell back onto the bed, moaning. "Fuck, Spike..."

"I was thinking more the other way around, actually." Spike said, amused. I moaned again.

"You're going to kill me." I spread my legs, gasping a little as a cool, wet finger slid over the flesh behind my balls. I groaned as he entered me, one slow, careful finger at a time. For the shortest possible amount of time I wondered at his gentleness, but then his fingers slid over my prostate, wiping all thought from my mind.

He soon pulled his fingers from me, and was pressing in, so slowly, and I was getting hard again, and it was too soon, and it ached, but it felt so good. "Oh baby, fuck me," I looked up at Spike through my lashes, and bit my lip. His turn to groan.

"Yeah, gonna fuck you, gonna make you beg for it, gonna make you feel so good, Xander."

Xander. Huh. I was pretty sure he'd never called me that before. It made my cock throb. He continued whispering filthy beautiful things in my ear, and fucking me slowly until I was arching up into each thrust desperately and whimpering.

"Let me hear you beg for it, Xander," he purred. "Tell me how much you want me to fuck you. Tell me you like my cock inside you."

"Gods, Spike, please..." I practically sobbed, and he changed the angle of his thrusts, hitting my prostate over and over. I grabbed the headboard and used it for leverage, thrusting back for all I was worth. A cool hand wrapped itself around my overheated flesh as Spike snarled, demon-faced, and came. I was only seconds behind.

Spike used a sheet to wipe us both off. He spread himself out along my left side, and we just lay there, both of us just breathing, until his tapered off.

"They didn't tell me Khallia was an aphrodisiac, you know." Spike looked ashamed.

"Do you regret it?" I asked, cringing a little.

“I don’t bloody think so!” he said, and I relaxed a little. “I just didn’t want you to think I took advantage of you.”

I laughed. “Spike, if anything, it was the other way around.” I pulled the comforter around us, and pulled him close, and we slept.

Part Seven

I woke some time later to a familiar hunger, and the sound of Spike breathing in his sleep. Sometimes that meant nightmares, especially after the Initiative, but Spike seemed peaceful. I just watched him sleep for several minutes, matching my breathing to his and watching the play of moonlight across his features. Then I got up and closed the shades on my way to the bathroom. I didn’t turn on the lights.

When I came back to bed, Spike was awake. He had turned on a dim lamp beside the bed. “You closed the

drapes.”

I had intended to get back into bed, but felt awkward now. “Um yeah, you know, vamp dust is bad for my allergies. Though I hear you can snort it.” I started to shiver. It was cold outside the blankets.

Spike grinned at the joke, but didn’t say anything for several moments. He just looked at me, standing naked in the dark room, and I wondered how we had gotten here. Then my teeth started to chatter. “You bloody fool! Get back in bed before you catch your death!”

I obeyed, getting under the covers, but not touching Spike. “Spike...” I began, trailing off when the words wouldn’t come.

Spike’s eyes went flat, and he got out of bed and pulled on his jeans. “Look, Xander, I didn’t make you do anything you didn’t bloody well want to do. I get that I shouldn’t have done it while you were high, but I’m not a fucking saint!”

It hadn’t even occurred to me that Spike didn’t have the perfect right to fuck me. I was flustered by his response, but I got that he was leaving, and I knew I didn’t want

that. I grabbed his hand, turned the palm toward my face and pressed my cheek to it. "Please, Spike, don't go," I whispered. Internally I cringed at how needy that sounded. A tear rolled down my cheek. Gods, being high would be so much better than this right now.

Spike froze at the feeling of my tear rolling over his palm. He closed his hand around it, but squatted down in front of me, wiping it from my cheek with his knuckles. He sighed deeply. "What do you want from me, Xander?" he said quietly, rubbing the pad of his thumb back and forth across my cheekbone.

"It's just..." I stumbled, trying to make the words come. "All that time I was in Africa, I thought you were dead. Buffy said she saw you die. And I felt so bad for being such a shit to you. I never really gave you a chance. And you died to save us all anyway." I clamped down hard on the babble I felt coming. "I guess I was just wondering why you were here, instead of reaping your rewards somewhere that souled vampires who save the world go. And why you didn't come looking for Buffy, or tell any of us you were alive." My throat closed up a little, and my voice got rough. "I would have been glad to know you were alive."

Part Eight

Spike actually fell backwards a little, until he was sitting, instead of crouching. He stared at me.

“What?” I asked, defensively. Oh, I know he’s going to laugh at me. Xander the lackbrain getting emotionally attached to the vampire. Joke of the freaking century.

The tears were a surprise. His eyes welled up. “Don’t you just say the damndest things,” he whispered.

We sat there, awkwardly, both of us near tears and neither wanting to cry in front of the other. I had to say something to break the silence, but the only words that would form were something I had no intention of saying to Spike ever. I was leaving in the morning, going back to my princes in Mozambique.

It came out anyway. “Can I stay?”

Spike looked at me, weighing something in my features, and I could see something fragile in his eyes. He looked down before I could quantify it. “Yeah,” he said, taking my hand and pulling himself up and into the bed. We lay there for a while, all the things we couldn’t say between us, both of us too broken to bridge the distance.

When I woke the next morning, Spike’s forehead was pressed against my collarbone, and my arms were around him. My veins burned, and it nauseated me to breathe. I moaned and Spike was instantly awake. I curled into a ball as soon as he pulled away enough to allow it. I heard him swear softly, and rummage through the stuff around the bed before there was a familiar piercing of my skin. I blessed him in six languages for the warm bliss that followed the puncture. Waves of pleasure rolled out from that tiny pinprick on my arm, and I smiled.

Spike grinned back.

Part Nine

We went on like that for a while. Spike learned to know when I'd need a fix before I knew, and I was comfortable. I learned to talk to the Scoobies while high, without letting them know. They didn't understand why I was staying with Spike, but they learned to deal. Spike and I had sex, tentatively at first, each of us afraid to touch the other, but more frequently as we learned to touch without flinching.

I was happy, in a way. I gained some weight back. The Khallia wasn't as hard on my stomach as the morphine. We went out clubbing a bit, and sometimes patrolling, but only when some demon was trying to hone in on Spike's territory. I taught Spike all the Ndebele and Tswana I had learned in Africa, he tried to teach me Fyarl. We spoke bad French at each other.

So it came as a surprise when Spike came home one day and sat beside me on the bed where I was reading, and said, "Pet, we have to talk."

This is where he tells me to get gone. I knew it was too good to be true. "Sure, Spike. What's up?"

“I was reading up on the effects of Khallia in humans, Xander. This shit is going to slowly shut your body down. We need to get you off the stuff.”

Oh, was that all. “Okay Spike. I'm sure I can find a morphine supplier out there in the big city somewhere” I smiled at him.

He did not smile back. A small frown creased his features. “I'm not sure that's such a good idea, pet. We can wean you off the Khallia, then maybe you should give your body a break for a while, yeah?” He took my hand and rubbed his thumb across my knuckles.

I pulled my hand back. “Why, Spike? I'm better off dead than sober. Sober means nightmares and bad feelings and memories I don't want to deal with alone.” I started to get up.

“Xander, you're not alone. I'm not gonna kick you out once you're sober. Said you could stay, and I meant it.”

He caught my arm and pulled me down into his lap, manhandling me until I leaned back against him.

“Whatever it is you're not talkin' about, Xan, you can tell me. I won't leave. I don't make promises unless I intend to keep them, pet. You can trust me, yeah?”

The tears well up in my eyes as I think about the last promise Spike made, and the terrible summer when he kept it.

“Her name was Tshepiso, meaning promise. She embodied that word in every possible way. She was 14 when I found her, newly called to her powers, and had just been married. She opted to stay and protect her people, rather than go to England. Her husband wouldn’t let me train her, and I was run out of the village practically on a rail.”

“Still, I came back through the area a few weeks later and went to check on her.” The words that had come out in a torrent were stopped on a sob as her face came clear in my mind. “No-one would even acknowledge she had existed. I searched the village for her, and the surrounding countryside. I found her at sunset.” Spike’s arms tightened around me as the words got caught in my throat. “They had tied her – arms over her head – to a tree near where the hyenas were sleeping, and then made cuts in her legs. The hyenas had stripped her flesh as high up as they could reach. The vesper birds were perched on her, singing.” I pressed my hands to my face as several more sobs choked their way out. “They had

given her some sort of herb, I think, to keep her from bleeding out, because she was still breathing when I got there.”

“I got her down, and drove straight to the nearest hospital, which was 24 hours away at top speed. Still, she hung on until we got there. But the infection and fever took her a few days later. She was begging to die, by that point, Spike. She died because of me. Because of the spell that Willow cast. I don’t deserve to live, Spike, and I’m not brave enough to die quickly. So the drugs are going to have to do it.”

“Shh... pet, what did I say about dyin’ on my watch. Not gonna happen.” Spike stroked my hair, pulling it back from my face. “We’re gonna get through this, just like we got through everything else, yeah?”

I just lay limp in his arms. I wasn’t so sure.

Part Ten

I lay there, contemplating sobriety with a feeling of cold dread. Harris family men weren't meant to be sober anyway. This was all going to be a huge mistake.

"Spike..."

"What, pet?" Spike was cradling my head in his hand – I could feel my pulse beat against the base of his thumb. It was hot in the bedroom. The vesper twilight was muggy. I could feel each of Spike's cooler fingers against my scalp.

I really didn't want him to let go.

"Nothing. Lost my train of thought."

"You sure, Xander?"

"Yeah... yeah. I'm just a little high still is all."

"Kay."

I should get up. We've gone way past a manly amount of cuddling. Instead I curl into him, and he lets me, pulling me closer so I can bury my face in his neck and smell the sandalwood soap he bought from a street vendor. He

hums something off-key and we sit like that, with his right hand stroking my left shoulder, for over an hour.

For eternally-babbling me, and someone who used to be the poster child for vampiric ADHD, we have a lot of silence like this. We both crave it, simple touch. Yeah, sometimes it becomes sexual, we're guys. Today it doesn't though, as my rumbling stomach breaks the mood.

"Didja eat while I was gone today?"

"No, I was..." I stop myself from saying high, because I know that will make him frown. "I was reading."

"Well, let's get something in you, now. What do you want?"

"Something cool... ice cream?" I'm ever hopeful.

"Real food, git. Got leftover Chinese, could make some pasta, Got cheese and bread, could have a grilled cheese?"

Spike makes really good grilled cheese. "Ooh, that, please!"

Spike smiles at me again. I had been waiting for that. I smile back. I look away when tears prick my eyes. I'm gonna let him down.

Spike puts a plate in front of me, interrupting my reverie. "What's up, Xan?"

Xan? A slow grin spreads across my face. I have a pet name! "Nothin'. Just thinkin'" Oh, yum, crispy bread and melty cheese.

"About what, git!"

I swallow and raise my eyebrow. "About what I'm going to do to you when I'm done with this sandwich." I take another bite.

Spike swallows his blood, distractedly missing the counter several times as he tries to put his mug down. I openly stare at his zipper, and he adjusts himself.

"Right. I'll be... ah... brushing my teeth, then."

When I hear the click of the bathroom door shutting, I do

a little in-chair snoopy dance. That's the first time I've ever made anyone want me just by using words. Then I get busy finishing my sandwich.

Part Eleven

Spike gets some good hydroponic pot and I start weaning off the Khallia. He keeps his promise. He's there through the nightmares, he talks to the Scoobies so I don't have to, he brings me soup and Gatorade when it starts getting hard for me to keep food down. He doesn't leave when I sweat and swear and scream at him to just "Give me my fucking fix now, you asshole!" He holds me through the shaking.

I both love him and hate him for this, but don't tell him either. I wonder what his interest is in me, beyond a steady fuck. I search his face for some sort of calculation, but I see only concern, and maybe something that might be more. But when it comes down to it, I know people like Spike don't have those kinds of feelings for people like me. He feels responsible for me, is all. The idea that Spike will never love me is a like an emotional bruise. I keep poking at it to see if it still hurts, and am eternally surprised, and yet not, when it still does.

The gang is harassing Spike about seeing me. They don't

know where he lives, and even Willow, in all her hacker and Wicca glory, cannot unravel the Gordian knot that is Wolfram and Hart's files and magical protection. But they call the cell, first daily, then multiple times a day, then hourly. They leave long messages full of guilt for me and for Spike for keeping me from them. I don't want to see them. I can't see them. I start to panic whenever the phone [rings](#). Spike takes the battery out, but I can't eat or rest knowing they're worried about me.

He puts the [batteries](#) back in the phone, and hands it to me. "Call them."

I start to dial Willow's number, but have to hang up and rush to the bathroom before I'm halfway through. When my stomach is empty, I hand the phone back to Spike, and look up at him pleadingly from the bathroom floor. The tiles are cool, like Spike's hands.

"Bloody hell," he gets Buffy's number from the cell, and I can hear it ringing. He leaves the room at my panicked look. He comes back a few minutes later.

"I'm gonna go meet her in Sunnydale. You wanna come?"

I frantically shake my head. He picks me up and puts me

in bed. He gathers all the takeout menus from around the house and puts them on the bedside table. "You gonna be okay here if I go?"

I shrug and look down.

"It'll take me about as long to drive to Sunnydale as it will take Willow to get ready for the teleportation spell. I gotta go now, if I'm gonna do this."

I nod, miserably.

"You sure you're not comin'?"

I nod again, curling up and pulling the covers over my head.

Spike kisses my head through the blanket, and a few moments later I hear the click of the door.

It's Wednesday and I'm miserable. I smoke all the pot. I order food but don't eat it. No one calls. I cry myself to sleep. Thursday passes in much the same way, only without the pot, because I don't have any more. By Friday morning I have decided that Spike and Buffy have gotten back together. Friday afternoon I go to the liquor

store and get three fifths of Spike's favorite scotch. When the sun goes down, I've got a little left in the first bottle. I get dressed in an outfit that he bought me, which I wouldn't wear before. Leather pants and a mesh shirt. I use his eyeliner. I walk down to the clubs, demon clubs on the seedy side of town, where Spike likes to go.

I don't feel anything as the bouncer lets me in. He's seen me here with Spike before. No one sees me as I weave my way onto the dance floor. When I get there, I pretend Spike is right behind me, and I dance. The song is one that I've heard before, and had thought of as Spike's and mine for awhile.

Never thought you'd make me perspire.

Never thought I'd do you the same.

Never thought I'd fill with desire.

Never thought I'd feel so ashamed.

And I really was ashamed. I had no right to feel the way I did about Spike. I never should have even slept with Spike. Of course Buffy would still have feelings for him.

Me and the dragon can chase all the pain away.

So before I end my day, remember.

My sweet prince, you are the one

*My sweet prince
You are the one*

I knew that Spike was it for me. The last person I'd have expected was the one I believed to be my soulmate. My forever love.

*Never thought I'd have to retire
Never thought I'd have to abstain
Never thought all this could back fire
Close up the hole in my vein*

I never thought I'd stop using. I thought I'd let the drugs take over until there was nothing left of me. He made me change my mind.

*Me and my valuable friend
Can fix all the pain away
So before I end my day
Remember
My sweet prince
You are the one
My sweet prince
You are the one
You are the one*

But the drugs, my valuable friends, would help me forget all about that. No more unrequited love for the Xan-man.

When the music segues into the next song, there are two demons pressed against me, a female demon I've never seen before in front, and a male one called j'Reth that Spike plays poker with sometimes, behind me. We dance indecently for several songs before the female demon starts pulling me towards the back. I grab j'Reth by the front of his faded black jeans and pull him through the crowd behind us. We tumble into one of the back rooms. The female demon is either rich or on the prowl, she already had a key. She is methodically stripping me out of my clothes and walking me over to the bed, when j'Reth pulls the works and a baggie out of his pocket. I close my eye and fall back onto the ratty mattress.

I orbit a vesper somewhere in the sky as the needle slips out of my vein and j'Reth slips into me. The last thing I feel is the female demon's lips wrapped around my shaft, and then I'm gone.

Part Twelve

I'm at home when I come back from orbit. I'm naked, and unshaven, and coming down *hard*. I nearly don't make it to the bathroom, but it's dry heaves anyway. I haven't eaten in several days, and I'm probably dehydrated. I think about Spike bringing me Gatorade for the shortest possible moment, before stifling it. Spike's gone.

I'm still rolling that around in my head when he steps into the shower behind me. I jump about a foot. "Ack! You could warn somebody you're home!" My heart is jumping out of my chest for more than one reason.

To my surprised he says nothing about the state of me or of the house that I trashed in true rockstar form. He just pulls me close so we're both standing under the water, which I had set to punishingly hot. And that's it. He just holds me until the water starts to cool. Then he washes me quickly, taking extra care to get the smeared eyeliner off. When he's done, he turns of the water and grabs a towel, wrapping it around me. I'm too stunned to fight him on any of this, and I'm afraid to say anything.

The bed has been changed when we get to the bedroom. How long was he home for? He lays me down on the bed and curls around me, pulling up the comforter. I start to stammer out an apology, but he hushes me.

“Shh, pet. We’re both knackered, yeah? Talking can wait.”

I stay quiet, but I'm certain he’s just too beyond fury to speak to me, and I don’t sleep. After awhile Spike sighs and turns me to face him.

“Right. Too pissed at me to sleep, right?” I open my mouth to interrupt but he places a finger over my lips, and continues. “You’re right to be. I went to see the slayer, and I didn’t call for days, yeah? And I'm sure you had all kinds of thoughts about what we were up to.” He pauses, and looks so frightened I want to look behind me and make sure there’s nothing there. If vampires cried, I would say his eyes teared up. But the Big Bad doesn’t cry. “And I'm so sorry, pet, but you’d be right. I was... with her, while I was in Sunnydale. I don’t even know why it happened, except that we were both reminiscing and maybe a little drunk.”

I tried to push away, and he finally, reluctantly, let go of me. He wanted Buffy. I had been right. I got dressed, and started to shove a couple of pairs of jeans and a few shirts in a bag. I had to go. Now. The clock says 3 AM, no vesper breeze or twilight walk for me. There was a flophouse sort of place down the street that rented by the hour, but I was sure the Council credit card would buy me at least a night.

Part Thirteen

Spike was in front of the door when I got there. “Where exactly do you think you’re going, pet?”

“I’ll find a hotel or something,” was all I said.

“Why, Xander? This is your home, too.” Spike squeezed my shoulder, but I shrugged it off.

“You say that, but I can’t do what I want here. When you took it upon yourself to rescue me, you knew that I was

using. But suddenly that's not good enough for you, I have to get clean." The tears are pouring down my cheeks. I'm trying not to sob, but am only partially successful, as my breath keeps hitching in my chest anyway. "And the fuck-all off it is that I did it. I don't give a shit about myself, but I cared enough about you to do it. And even then I'm not good enough! You run off to Buffy, and I'm left behind, fucking j'Reth for drugs to fill up the hole that you left."

"You did *what* with j'Reth?" Score one evil point for the Xan-man. Direct hit.

"I fucked him, Spike. Fucked him for drugs, him and some other junkie demon chick. Fucked him to forget about you. Which is what I'm going to continue doing, as soon as I walk out that door." I pointed behind him.

Spike is white with rage. His eyes are golden, and the tendons on his neck are standing out in sharp relief. Game face in three, two –

His face changes to the now-familiar demonic ridges. I'm so used to seeing it when he comes that my dick actually twitches. It doesn't know that I'm currently doing my best to make sure Spike punches me and throws me out.

The quietness of Spike's voice takes me by surprise, but I can still hear the sub harmonic growl under the words. "Going to j'Reth now, boy? Gonna get your fix and your fuck from another demon, since I won't give it to you?" He whispers.

I look him straight in the eye and bald-faced lie. "Yes, I am."

He opens the door and waves me through with a small, sarcastic bow. "You can bloody well have at it then."

He slams the door behind me so hard, two of the ceiling tiles fall down.

Part Fourteen

Gods, I feel like I've been run over by a freight train. I can't move, even to open my eyes. I could eat five raw steaks and a whole chocolate cake, and my morning

wood is hard enough to hammer nails with. The cool air on my skin tells me I'm naked. What the fuck did I take last night?

A cool hand brushes my cheek, and I smell cigarettes and blood. Makes me hungrier. "Ssspike?" I croak, my throat is so dry, I really need something cool and wet, and –

Blood. Sweet as chocolate and more satisfying than steak. I can feel pins-and-needles tingles all down my arms and legs as it rushes into my mouth. I suck greedily at the proffered arm, and whine when the blood stops flowing.

"Use your fangs, love," a gentle voice says, close to my ear, and something inside of me sits up and listens.

"Sire," the word lights an all-consuming fire in me. The stiffness of my body melts away, and I open my eyes and reach for him. He smiles gently and pulls me closer. I lick and suck his neck, whimpering and pressing my nearly painful erection into his hip.

"Sshh... pet. I'll put everything right for you in just a minute." He pushes me away a little, and I whine softly, but stay where he puts me. He turns me so my back is to

his front and pulls me closer, crooking the arm underneath my head so his wrist reaches my mouth. “Bite,” he says, and I do, finding that game face comes pretty much naturally. “Good boy, beautiful boy...” he murmurs as I suck. He traces the vein on the underside of my cock with one finger, teasing, and I squirm, suddenly aware of his hardness behind me. He presses into me, sliding into the crease of my ass, as he grips my cock in a firm hand and begins to slide his fist up and down. I whine around a mouthful of blood, and finally let go of Spike’s wrist, because even though I don’t have to breathe, I have to breathe.

Spike chuckles at this, and growls, “Beautiful childe,” in my ear. He increases his speed, and I'm gasping, trying so hard not to come, to make this last. I curl my toes and think about football for the briefest of all possible seconds before Spike leans his head down and sinks his fangs into my neck. As he comes, thrusting against me, it’s as if a circuit has been completed, and a line of pleasure-laced electricity connects between Spike’s fangs in my neck and his hand on my cock. I'm coming for what feels like hours, but in all reality has to be less than a minute. This is the best high ever. I'm sated, a Xander-puddle of pleased Xander bits. My skin is buzzing faintly, and I'm all floaty inside my head. Nothing hurts;

the world is soft and full of cushions. Spike turns me over, and chuckles, licking a trail of blood off my chin. I'm too exhausted to do more than smile.

A while later, after we've napped and the sun has gone down and the vesper is up, I have questions. "Why don't I feel any different, Spike? I'm not all... grr-bumpy and hell-bent on destroying the world. I don't want to kill anyone, and really the only blood I have a strong craving for is yours."

Spike looks down, refusing to make eye contact. "Had Red give you your soul back. Wanted you, not a monster with your face, yeah?" He turns away from me, but I pull him back, and kiss him.

"You saved me." He looks away again, but his head is the only thing I'm letting move.

"Yeah." He looks at me, daring me to say I didn't want to be saved.

"Thank you." And I pull his head down and kiss him with every ounce of gratitude I have.

The End