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Your Bloody Fault...
by
Litgal

Part One
Angel came out of his office at the sound of raised voices, only to find Wesley hovering near Cordelia's desk, stake in hand and facing off against a vampire in the small front room.
"Stay back," Wesley ordered in his best rogue demon-hunter voice, which wasn't actually very good. Angel just didn't have the heart to tell the man that.

"Bloody hell, just get Peaches," the vampire demanded, and even though the vampire's body was largely hidden by the form of Xander Harris, professional Angel-hater extraordinaire, Angel knew that voice immediately. Knew and cringed. That and wondered which of the gods he had offended to have earned a visit from Dru's annoying childe.

"William?" Angel asked, and Spike's head came around the front of Xander as the vampire leaned forward.

"'Bout bloody time, Peaches. You need to soddin' fix this," Spike demanded with a growl while walking around Xander to face off against Angel.

"Fix?" Angel asked, more than a little confused. If Spike meant the chip, Angel wasn't about to fix anything. Then he looked over at Xander who had a look like a kicked puppy with his arms wrapped around his waist. Between that and the fact that Spike looked nauseous, Angel had a sudden urge to go back to bed and start the day over again later, like after they had left.

"Yes, bloody fix." Spike snapped.
"And what I am supposed to be fixing?" Angel asked.

"Us!" Spike snarled as he waved a hand between Xander and himself. Xander's face took on a sullen expression as he opened his mouth.

"Fix you, you mean. This is your fault," Xander snapped.

"Whoa. Time out. I can't deal with this until I have some coffee and some blood, and not in that order." Ignoring his guests, Angel quickly fixed his breakfast while Spike and Xander glared at each other until Angel wanted to slap both of them.

"Angel, do you want me to leave?" Wesley whispered as Angel took his blood out of the microwave. Angel looked over to where Spike and Xander were having a quiet argument, Spike leaning close into Xander's body and Xander gesturing madly.

"Oh no. I'll be outnumbered," Angel said in sudden horror. Wesley choked back a small laugh, and when Angel went back to his office, everyone followed. Angel settled himself into his chair and Wesley sat on the edge of his desk while Spike and Xander took the two visitors' chairs and scooted them as far away from each other as possible before sitting.
"I'm sure I'm going to regret this, but one of you needs to tell me what happened," Angel said as he braced himself.

"It's his fault," Xander started, and Angel flinched even though he had expected this.

"Oi, is not."

"Is too."

"Was your friends' soddin' plan."

"Was your 'soddin' teeth." Xander mocked Spike with a nasty sneer of his own.

"Just get to the story!" Angel growled as his hands tightened dangerously on his mug. The idea of Spike's teeth being involved in some sort of trouble made this seem suddenly more serious.


"Oh, hey, NO!" Xander interrupted. "It started two nights ago."

"He can't bloody help unless he knows what happened you worthless nob."
"He doesn't need to know THAT much," Xander interrupted with a near panicked tone. "It started two nights ago when a demon started hunting in the clubs and Buffy tracked him back to his demon club, and whoever knew there were demon clubs in Sunnydale what with there being a slayer and all. Well, I guess you being a demon might've known since Spike knew, and Buffy is still not happy about that."

"Oi, you can't tell a story to save your worthless soul, so shut up and let me tell it," Spike demanded

"Me? I can't tell a story? Hey, at least I know how to speak English, Blood-Breath."

"I do speak English you twit."

"Not good."

"Bloody better than you. I'm from England you ponce, where they invented the language. And at least I bloody know that 'good' in't an adverb OR a noun."

"Hey, is that an insult?"

"If you were smart enough ta figure it out, it would be," Spike smirked. Angel considered stepping in, but really considering the grief these two had put him through he really preferred to watch the floorshow instead.
"At least I can say the words 'isn't' and 'to'," Xander barked back as he scooted his chair so that he was facing Spike.

"At least I can stay the words 'cretin' and 'imbecilic.' Although, with enough trainin' you could probably say the words even if you didn't understand 'em'," Spike shot back, and Angel could hear a small huff of suppressed laughter from Wesley. Spike must have heard as well because he flashed a smile in their general direction even while Xander snapped back.

"Hey! That's not nice. Besides, at least I don't have a leash in my head like some sort of dog."

"No, you're just a soddin' little lapdog all on your own, aren't ya? Taggin' around after Slutty even after she's moved on ta bigger and better than you." Angel could tell from the way Spike ran his tongue inside his lower lip that Spike was enjoying himself, and Angel understood the urge after having been the brunt of many of Xander's barbs himself.

"It's called friendship and loyalty," Xander snarled.

"It's called pathetic and obtuse."

"And again with the unfairness. At least use insults I recognize."
"Oi, and you accuse me of not speakin' English? What the hell language is that, then?"

"Hey, I speak just fine. Fine with the speakage and fine with the friendage, and you're just being like this because you're a no-bite wonder now with that chip in your head."

"I bit you, didn't I?"

"That was magic, that doesn't count."

"Whoa, wait. You bit him?" Angel quickly interrupted as he held up his hand. He was just as happy to let these two kill themselves without his help, but if Spike was back to biting, he was back on the 'hunt down and kill' list, and as much as Angel didn't want to admit it, he wasn't fond of the idea of hunting down or killing his childer.

"Too bad I can't bloody do it again and finish it right this time," Spike confirmed. Angel ran his hand over his face in confusion, but Xander's fingers automatically went to the side of his neck, and Angel could feel a sudden sinking feeling in his stomach. Pushing himself up, he got around the desk with vampiric speed and pulled Xander to his feet before pushing the boy's head to the side to look for the evidence. Xander's "Hey!" of protest was
expected; Spike's possessive growl was definitely not. However, before he stepped back, Angel found what he wanted: an oval-shaped pink scar.

"William, what have you done?" Angel demanded even though he knew full well what had happened. Or at least how things had ended because he really had no idea how they had gotten to that point. And come to think of it, he wasn't really clear on their present behavior either. Xander crossed his arms over his chest.

"We bloody bonded," Spike snarled unhappily.

Part Two

Angel sat on the opposite corner of his desk from Wesley and tried to get his mind around the idea of Spike claiming Xander as a bonded human, but no matter how he turned things around in his head, he couldn't quite get this new turn of events to actually fit in his brain. Angelus stirred unhappily for an entirely different set of reasons that Angel wasn't even going to face at this point.
"I can see you're bonded. I'm a little fuzzy on what led up to the bond," Angel said with as much patience as he could muster.

"Keep tryin' ta tell that part, don't I, but lackwit here keeps interrupting," Spike scowled over at Xander who glowered back, and Angel started wondering if anyone would notice if he just sneaked downstairs and left them to kill each other. After all, he could just tell Buffy they had never made it to LA. He was fairly sure Wesley would back him, and if not, he was certain the man was bribable. Angel had a sweet little second century book of transformative spells that would distract the man.

"Start talking," Angel ordered instead.

"Right, 'bout three weeks ago, I came--"

"Oh no you don't Mr. Liar Pants. That part never happened."

"Oi, that's logic for ya. Denial in't the same as a thing not happening, ya ninny."

"We agreed. I'm no on the drinking myself stupid again, you're no on the talking. Or the talking about this at
least," Xander corrected himself when Spike's mouth came open.

"Don't need the bloody drink to reach a state of stupidity," Spike muttered, and now Angel could see Spike's frustration rise. Those blue eyes narrowed, and Spike's body leaned forward aggressively.

"Start with the demon, and I will stake you right now," Xander threatened, and Angel could hear the borderline panic in the boy's voice.

"Xander, if you stake him, the chances are that bond will kill you," Angel explained. "And Spike, I really don't want to be here all day so skip ahead to the demon and the bond before I lose the last bit of patience I own." Angel felt a headache start pressing in on his temples when both of them started glaring at him. At least it had sidetracked their bickering, though.

"Right, since no one cares 'bout the part that actually started this mess, I'll just skip ahead then," Spike finally agreed sullenly.

"Slutty had gone out on patrol around back of several clubs in town, through the alleys, since people kept
showing up without all their body parts still attached. Well, seems that walkin' around doing absolutely nothing wore her out, so she went into one of these places where she spotted a demon. Said it made her skin tingle like a vamp, but it didn't move like a vamp. She chased the thing back to Caabalis and then lost it in the crowd."

"I can't believe you didn't tell her about the whole demon bar thing." Xander said sullenly.

"Don't tell her everything, now do I? Could be I should revise that policy, though."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Oi, if you can't figure it out, you're dumber than ya look... which is really downright terrifying considering how ya look."

"Hey, Bleach Boy, I so do not look dumb."

"Right," Spike said unconvincingly.

"Moron," Xander complained before turning to Angel. "He's leaving out the part where he was in Caabalis trying to con some blood out of some demon by selling
information, probably information on us. And then, when Buffy walks into the middle of demon central, Mr. Braveheart here goes sneaking out the back leaving Buffy to fend for herself," Xander added, and Angel turned to look in surprise at Spike. Caabalis had never been the type of place Spike had preferred.

"Bloody hell, she's the slayer. If she can't take care of herself without havin' a vamp help her, it's time to bring out the new model."

"You son of a bitch," Xander stood and took one step forward, and Spike stood and vamped out. Angel registered Wesley retreating over his desk even as he stepped between the two of them.

"Enough," he bellowed, and both men stopped.

"I've never killed enough people to deserve this. You, sit," Angel barked at Xander. "You, lose the fangs or I will remind you of how I taught you to control your demon's face," Angel snapped at Spike. For one moment, nothing happened, but then Spike's face ripped back into his human features and he stepped back. Xander dropped into his chair heavily enough that Angel could hear the joints on the chair creak in protest. Angel sent a
reproachful look upwards since he just knew this was the Powers' way of making him suffer. If he had to be tortured, why couldn't it be holy water and evisceration?

"Okay, Xander, you try telling the story," Angel tried as he slowly backed up and took a seat on the edge of the desk again.

"Buffy came back with steam coming out her ears after Mr. Turncoat there took one look and ran, and when she described the demon, Giles got out these books that must have been a thousand years old and we had to spend all night looking for something that 'tingled' like a vampire, looked human, and moved like a snake, which really... I have to tell you that I have better things to do with my time." Spike snorted his disbelief and Xander glared over at him. "I do."

"Keep tellin' yourself that," Spike smirked.

"At least I'm not off selling out the people who saved my worthless skin from the Initiative."

"You lot tied me up and let the Indian bloke take shots at me. And you voted to stake me."
"Still would," Xander corrected him, but Angel could hear the lie in the way his voice shook slightly.

"Oi, it's not me that got staked," Spike pointed out with a sly expression, and Angel's foot, which had been braced on the edge of his trashcan, slipped and sent the metal canister clattering across the room. Some things he just truly did not need to know. And now Xander was turning a violent shade of red that Angel usually associated with having blood on the outside of the body rather than the inside. Oh god. They couldn't. They hadn't.

"The demon," Angel hurriedly interrupted as he considered the trail of crumpled paper now strewn about his office. "It was a Maoria. Did Giles figure that out?" Angel quickly diverted the conversation. Just knowing that at some point Spike and Xander had... No, he really didn't want any more details on that part of the story.

"Yeah," Xander said. "We found this description, and to kill it we needed to find its magical amulet, but that would be around the demon's neck at all times, and the demon was staying in the basement of Caabalis, and when Buffy found out they had a demon bed and breakfast all set up in there, she was all for going and burning the place to the ground, and I have to say, I was
on board with the death and destruction plan. Well, at least until Giles pointed out that there were wards and shields."

"So Buffy waits outside for the Maoria," Angel said. As much as he wanted to know how Spike had managed this mess, he wanted this story over even more. There was just so much random babble he could take in a day.

"Yeah, small problem with that one, mate. Seems like the Maoria had been storin' up livers," Spike added as he flung a leg over the arm of the chair so that he was sprawled obscenely. Angel didn't miss Xander's eyes darting over toward Spike before Xander jerked back and started staring at Angel.

"It's breeding," Wesley nearly whispered.

"Yep," Spike confirmed. "Which meant if Slutty wanted the thing killed, someone had to go inside Caabalis."

"I told them sending you was a bad idea," Xander said sullenly.

"I told them that makin' you come with me was a worse one, didn't I? If you would've opened your gob about
why you've been avoidin' me like some sort of leper, maybe they wouldn't have insisted you come along." Spike's words made Xander's blush return to full color, and Angel was starting to get a very bad feeling about what had been going on in Sunnydale.

"Giles sent the two of you in together?" Angel asked, unable to even imagine why the Watcher would do that.

"It's not like you can trust Spike," Xander pointed out.

"Oi, I'm as trustworthy as the next vamp," Spike protested.

"Which would be not at all," Xander insisted as he looked from Angel to Spike unapologetically. Angel rolled his eyes and got up to walk around the desk and drop into his seat.

"Okay, so I understand why you two would have gone to the club together, but I still haven't heard anything that would make a bond even possible," Angel pointed out.

"Right, we're gettin' there," Spike promised, and Angel had to resist the urge to put his head down and hide.
"Get there faster please," he pleaded. He really, really needed something stronger than coffee if he was going to make it through this conversation.

**Part Three**

"If people would stop soddin' interrupting me," Spike sulked, and Xander suddenly stood up.

"I need to... um... ah... go shit," Xander suddenly blurted out, and Angel flinched at the crude comment, but Xander bolted from the room before he could answer.

"I'll just go show him the facilities," Wesley offered as he stood, but Spike stuck a leg out in front of the Watcher to block his way.

"Leave him be. If he wanted your help, he woulda asked for it," Spike said with a flash of yellow in his eye that made Wesley retreat back to the desk.
"Can we just get back to the story before I start seriously considering more effective ways of getting you to talk?" Angel said with narrowed eyes as he thought of the chains in the basement. He watched with satisfaction as Spike shifted uncomfortably at his tone of voice. It was nice to know the boy still remembered a few of his lessons.

"Right then. The plan was that I'd talk us inside and then track down the demon before rippin' its head off. The stuck up Watcher gave me enough money to stay there for a couple of days, and the boy was supposed to tag along to make sure I didn't take the money and high-tail it out of town."

"Let's just get through this without talking, okay?"

"Oi, how exactly do you plan to do that, especially since you can't get through anything without talkin'?"

"I got through school without talking in class... usually," Xander insisted as he tugged nervously at his shirt. Spike narrowed his eyes and glared as he watched as Xander stretched $60 worth of silk out of shape. Of course, he hadn't actually paid for it, but when the boy discovered the money missing from his wallet, it'd be nice if Spike
could point to the shirt. The boy was likely to be a mite bit more peevish if the shirt was ruined before he discovered the $60 missing.

"And just how often were you awake? And stop pullin' at that!"

"The shirt is too small."

"It's the right size, you nit. You're just used to wearing those god-awful abominations. And no master vampire would let a human servant wear green and purple flowers." Spike tried to keep his voice down since they were close enough to Caabalis for someone to overhear.

"I like that shirt."

"You would."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Spike rolled his eyes. At 120 he really should know better than to get in a battle of wits with an unarmed man.

"Just bloody shut up," Spike snarled as he knocked on the door of Caabalis. The door flew open and a wide, dull black demon with red eyes stood in the door frame.
"What?" he demanded.

"Shutting up now," Xander squawked as he moved behind Spike. Spike couldn't resist a small smirk. Considering how the wanker had literally kicked his arse out of bed, a little gloating was justified. The demon cocked his head to the side and looked at them, blinking rapidly.

"Wait," Angel interrupted, his head throbbing at the thought of that one little sentence buried in the middle of Spike's story. "He kicked you out of bed?" Angel asked incredulously.

"Oi, I bloody know!" Spike answered with a righteous expression. "If anyone has a right to be embarrassed, it's soddin' me. I've fallen low enough ta take up sleeping with the food, which was always your deal, not mine." Spike's words made Angel flinch. He should have known better than to distract Spike and give his childe an opportunity to stick a metaphorical knife in Angel. Hell, Spike never passed up a chance to stick either a metaphorical or a physical knife into Angel.

"Never mind. Don't tell me. Just focus on the club," Angel said as he held up a hand to hold off any further
discussion of anyone's sex life. Angel never thought that the day would come when he would ask Spike to keep talking. The universe was truly unfair.

"Prude," Spike tormented him before continuing

"Get Peraed," Spike said. "Need a room and to have a bit of a chat."

"He with you?" the demon asked, and Spike could feel Xander's body heat as the boy got as close as possible without actually touching. Hypocrite. Just for kicks, Spike stepped back into Xander, his arse bumping Xander's hand so that the boy yelped and backed up, promptly tripping over absolutely nothing and windmilling his hands as he tried to catch his balance. Spike reached out and grabbed Xander's wrist before reeling him in so fast that Xander couldn't stop himself from practically falling on Spike, his strong, hot body pressing up against Spike's side. Spike offered the boy a quick leer, and Xander physically jerked back with an offended "HEY!"

"Yeah, he's mine," Spike answered the demon while keeping his eyes on Xander. Xander turned a brilliant shade of red before yanking on his arm. Spike didn't let go so Xander just sort of flopped without actually freeing himself. The chip gave little sparkles of warning, but Spike
always had liked a little pain with his pleasure.

"Hey, stop with the handleage. No handling's allowed. No hands allowed," Xander hissed. At least the boy had sense enough to say it soft enough that the demon didn't hear as he turned his back.

"Run home, Xander; you don't have the knackers to play with the big boys," Spike suggested, and he could instantly tell from the body language that Xander wasn't about to back down. Spike flashed on an image: Xander vamped and mouthing back at Darla. Spike just knew that Xander would be ballsy enough and stupid enough to do it, too.

"Damn it, Spike," Angel interrupted at that point. "I could do with a lot less of your fantasy life and a lot more of telling me what the hell happened."

"Bloody hell, Peaches, you have no sense of the dramatics do you? Thought the Irish were supposed ta be big on the storytellin' what with James Joyce and Jonathan Swift and the like."
"What I have is a sense of frustration. What you're about to have is a sense of pain. Get on with the story," Angel growled.

"You speak the Queen's English about as good as the boy. Think you hung out with the cheerleader too long, mate."

"Spike!" Angel growled.

"I think I may just go try and find that scotch that Cordelia keeps trying to hide from us," Wesley offered. Angel couldn't decide what he appreciated more: the possibility of alcohol to dull the edge of the universe's largest headache or the possibility of having enough privacy to actually beat his childe into submission. Maybe Spike sensed the changing mood, not that fear of a beating had ever stopped Spike in the past.

"Where was I then?"

"You were telling Xander to go home and you were not commenting on Darla or on having thoughts of turning Xander. Understand?"

"Oi, it's not like you're subtle, Peaches. So, I told the boy to go home."

"Run home, Xander; you don't have the knackers to play
"with the big boys."

"Right, and then you take all Giles' money and run."

"Bloody hell, all Giles money amounts to a few hundred. Hardly enough to go live big on some desert island."

"What? Why would you want to go to a desert island?"

"I wouldn't..." Spike could feel his frustration rise. As much as the annoying little git didn't want him around, he didn't want to be around Xander either. "Just soddin' go home!"

"No," Xander replied as he crossed his arms. He was probably trying to look defiant, but Spike thought he looked more like a petulant child. He considered saying as much, but he really didn't want to have to explain the word petulant.

"Fine, but keep your bloody trap shut unless you want to get us killed."

"Hey, if anyone gets us killed it's going to be you! You're the one that went and got an organ dropped on you."
"Have I mentioned that I read your diary? You almost got bloody eaten by a teacher, and then there was that little incident with the hyena. Seems like you're the one who's a champion at getting himself in trouble here, mate."

At that point the doorman returned and waved a huge awkward paw toward the dark interior of the club. Xander might have been stupid enough to bait a vampire and fall for a demon and get accidentally taken over by a primal, but at least he had the good sense to shut up when faced with an eight-foot demon who did not like humans. Spike walked by the guard and strode down the familiar hallway, listening to Xander's footsteps as Xander's wildly beating heart fell in behind him.

"My heart was not beating wildly. My heart was beating like normal. Lots of normal. Besides what would you know about a normally beating heart? Hate to point this out, but your heart doesn't beat. To you, one beat a minute is wildly beating," came a string of babble from the doorway. Angel rolled his eyes. Spike wasn't getting anywhere fast, but at least he was getting there. Now Angel was faced with the prospect of more pointless bickering.

Luckily Wesley stood behind Xander, a bottle of scotch in one hand and some plastic cups and the other.
"Bloody hell, yes!" Spike said as he spotted the alcohol.

"Don't," Angel insisted as he saw Wesley hesitate. One slip now and Spike was going to drink the whole damn bottle before anyone else got any. Rather than let that happen, Angel stepped forward and grabbed the bottle. With one twist, he had the top open. When Wesley offered a plastic glass, Angel didn't waste any time in pouring himself a large drink. Lord knows he'd earned it.

"Look, you can't believe a word Spike says," Xander said as he glared down. Spike leaned back in his chair and sent a bitter glare back. Angel tried to ignore the subtext of Xander standing close to Spike's chair and Spike's hand resting near his own groin. Oh yeah, things were not looking good. Angel drank the entire glass of scotch in one gulp and poured a second as Xander picked up the story.

"We went there, Spike did a lot of really embarrassing things, the owner of the club and Spike kept sneaking off to talk about business, we found the demon, Spike twisted its head off like an overgrown pimple... and can I say that from the stuff that came out of the neck, the image of the pimple is really appropriate here, and then things got a little complicated."
Angel looked at Xander in amazement not only because of the sheer number of words he managed to get out on one breath but also because the sentence had actually made sense. He was just going to try really, really hard to not think about "embarrassing things," and he would deal with Spike's "business" with Peraed later. Right now all he really wanted to know was one answer. How the hell had these two ever managed to bond without killing each other first?

Part Four

"Please, just pick up at the 'complications'," Angel asked before drinking a third glass of scotch and sitting on the desk again. At that point, Wesley reached over and pulled the bottle from Angel's hand. When Angel opened his mouth to protest, Wesley just gave him a rather exasperated look.

"Angel, the last thing we need is you getting drunk and reverting to some of your more anti-social behaviors," Wesley pointed out with a sigh, but Angel didn't miss the way the ex-watcher poured himself a drink before closing the bottle.

"Oi, the ponce can be a hell of a lot of fun when he's piss-drunk and bein' antisocial. Before he went and got a soul he made quite the horny drunk," Spike leered, and
Xander made a small chirping sound as he pushed his chair back and, Angel noticed, closer to Spike.

"Oh no. No drunk vampires. Absolutely no drunk vampires. Bad things happen when vampires drink!" Now Xander turned to glare at Spike, and Angel looked longingly toward the scotch that Wesley had put down on the far side of the desk.

"Perhaps one of you should pick up the story from the 'complications'," Wesley suggested as he moved the bottle a bit farther away. Angel waited in horror for the bickering to start, but both men sat silent. When he finally looked at them, Spike had an expression that could almost pass for guilt, and Xander was nearly glowing red.

"Well, um, these demon-things, and boy were there a lot of demon things in there, but these demon things in the hall kinda caught us right outside the one demon's lair, you know, the demon we'd just killed, and Chips-for-Brains didn't have any sort of explanation or escape plan," Xander blurted.

"Bloody hell, someone needs to buy you a thesaurus," Spike complained softly. "But I'd have been fine if you weren't there," he added with a good deal more venom and a baleful glare.
"Nice, blame me for the lack of brainage. I mean, *your* lack of brainage because my brain is just fine."

"You're the reason that lot got suspicious. Don't help havin' one of the slayer's minions hanging tagging after me."

"Who knew anyone would recognize me? And HEY, I was not tagging."

"The whole lot of you has brain damage. You've been bloody fightin' with the slayer for four years. Faced down Peaches when he was feeling soul-less. Why the hell wouldn't demons recognize you, ya balmy little nit?"

"Hey!"

"I swear—" Spike stopped *in the middle* of his sentence, nearly strangling on his own words. Angel sat on his desk with the empty cup in his hand.

"Enough of this," Angel barked as Xander took a breath to *continue* the attack. "So, you're outside the Maoria's room and some demon or demons stop you. Take it from there," Angel ordered Spike.

"*Um, Spike,*" Xander whispered.
"Not now," Spike snarled. Bloody hell, he'd almost had the lock reset and now he sighed as he pulled the pick out and had to start over.

"Really, Spike, now would be good. Now would be very good. Very, very good." Xander sounded even less coherent than usual, so Spike spared a glance. Right. No use buggering the lock when Peraed's goons were standing there watching. Spike gave his best smile as he leaned back against the door. Xander scooted closer to him when one of the Deevak demons stepped forward.

"What are you doing?" it demanded in a rough voice.

"Thought that was bloody obvious. I'm trying to get into this room. Got some unfinished business with the Maoria in here," Spike bluffed. He didn't really think the bluff would last long, but all he had to do was get them out before the guards called Peraed.

"You come with us to Peraed," the second guard ordered. Right, there went that plan then, Spike thought as he nodded.

"Not a problem, mate." Unfortunately, Xander was not quite as keen on the plan. When a nudge didn't work, Spike grabbed Xander with one hand on an arm and the other at the human's back.
"Oh, shit," Xander whispered nearly inaudibly. Great, not only would he never make it to the front door with the twit in tow, but now the git went acting all guilty.

"We were guilty, and you don't have to spend so much time making it sound like I was peeing my pants in terror," Xander complained as he crossed his arms over his chest defensively.

"Only tellin' the truth, pet. 'Sides, you didn't pee your pants, so chalk one up for the white knight."

"Just skip ahead to the part with Peraed," Xander said as he glared.

"Please," Angel added. He was on the verge of actually getting somewhere and he really didn't want anything stopping them this close to what sounded like it might be an answer.

"So I have to ask myself why you're still here, Master Spike. Our business was finished last night. You have your money, I have my trinkets," Peraed gestured toward a number of gold and jeweled items displayed in a case. "And yet, you manage to be found trying to break into a room where one of my clients just happens to be lying decapitated on the floor.

"That's between me and the Maoria."
"Obviously not. You killed her in my establishment. Do you have any idea how much damage Maoria guts do to carpeting?"

Xander offered an "Ewwww" at the same time that Spike spoke. "Fine, tell me how much for the carpeting."

"And then there is the matter of your young human," Peraed said, and Spike was glad that the desk separated Xander from the bastard... just because he didn't want to get staked for letting the boy die.

Spike's slip caused Angel to look at Spike with a single raised eyebrow, and Spike took enough time away from his story to flip a two-fingered salute. Angel rolled his eyes. If any two people in the universe deserved each other, it was these two.

"He's not any of your business," Spike growled.

"Several clients have informed me that he belongs to the slayer." At Peraed's words, Xander's heart started pounding furiously.

"He may spend time with her on my orders, but he's mine."

"How interesting. You claim to be using your... infirmity... to get close to the slayer as part of some great scheme."
You claim to own a human who has fought beside the slayer against your own sire. You claim to have found other buyers for the trinkets you know I covet." Peraed stood and walked over to the glassed in case where he gazed at the ancient items. "Why do I think you are lying?"

"Because his mouth is open?" Xander barely whispered, and Spike reached over and pinched the boy hard enough to make his own brain ache as the chip went off. Xander stuck out his tongue in response as he rubbed his sore arm.

"Don't care what you believe. Can find other buyers and spend my time in other establishments," Spike said as he stood, and the door to the office immediately opened revealing the two Deevak guards standing there.

"Oh, but I am concerned about my own reputation. So, you will prove to my other clients that I have not allowed a serpent into our little garden."

"And how the bloody hell am I supposed to do that?" Spike demanded as he eyed the guards. Two Deevak demons on his own was tough, but he could do it if he could just run the minute they were down. Bloody slow buggers to get back up after a hit. Of course, it took quite a hit to put them down in the first place. He could never
get to the door without Xander being torn to bloody
shreds.

"Simple," Peraed offered. "You will take the boy in a
bonding ceremony tonight. As soon as you have proved
that the others' concerns are baseless, you and your pet
are free to go. Until then, you may use our finest suite to
prepare for the ceremony." Peraed's words made the
world turn yellow as Spike slipped into game face. Soddin'
hell, no way the boy would go for that, and then the boy
wouldn't be the only one in bloody shreds.

"Spike?" Xander asked from his chair. "Tell me this isn't as
bad as he's making it sound because right now I'm
nearing freak-out territory. Massive freak outage."

"We'll talk in the room. It's somethin' I never told ya
about because it means the slayer'll know you're mine.
No more spyin' on her for me if we do this," Spike lied as
he put a hand on Xander's shoulder. He noticed the boy
didn't jerk away for once.

"Fact is, I don't like you dictating to me. He's mine and as
long as I need to spy—"

"Master Spike," Peraed interrupted with hands upheld in
a gesture of surrender. "I would normally never get
involved, but there are quite a few demons here
convinced you are working for the slayer as your sire did before you. Either you claim him, or we will simply assume you have turned against your own kind."

"Bloody—Fine, I'll claim the git," Spike growled darkly as the two guards came into the room. He put a hand under Xander's arm and pulled him upright before storming into the hall with one guard in front and one behind. This was the last bloody time he ever did a favor for the slayer. Not that she'd be asking for favors after she found out what he'd done to Xander to make a bond. If he could make a bond. If the git didn't fight and get them both killed. Some days he hated his bloody unlife.

Part Five

"Right then, listen up," Spike said the minute the guards closed the door. Peraed had been true to his word and set them up in a luxurious suite decorated in browns and gold and burgundy.
"Listen up? Listen up?" Xander squeaked. "My listenage is at an end. I listened when you said a proper servant would sit on the floor at your feet. I listened when you dressed me like a cheap rent boy. I even listened to your lame-ass plan with the lack of escaping. No more with the listening. Listening bad!" He threw himself into a large wing back chair and promptly dropped his face into his hands.

"Bloody hell! If you don't shut your gob and start listening we're both about to be in a world of hurt." Spike searched the pockets of his duster for a cigarette, and Xander didn't even bother to look up.

"Yeah, I got that. I'm not as stupid as I look, not that I look stupid! But the bond thing... I'm guessing it's not of the good," Xander told the floor. He paused and then looked up just as Spike was lighting the cigarette that he had finally found. "Been around long enough to know that anything that includes the words demon and bond... just not going there." Spike suppressed an urge to growl; it wasn't like this was his choice.

"Now listen up for one second here ya selfish little git," he snapped as he struggled to keep out of game face. "Not just your neck on the line, is it? If we can't go out there and show them that we're capable of making a bond,
we're both going to end up being, what did you call it, butt monkeys?

"Oh no. No, I don't think so. We sit and wait for Buffy," Xander insisted as he stood and started pacing nervousy.

"Ya really are a moron, I'm going to be dust and you're going to be dinner before the slayer even realizes something's wrong. So that plan is right out," Spike snarled. He'd finally caught a break -- he'd finally managed to get enough dosh together that he didn't have to choose between starving or putting up with the slayer and her pissy attitude. Getting turned to dust now was just not an option.

"Well, we're not going with your plan," Xander insisted petulantly.

"My plan gets us out of here alive," Spike countered as he tried to maintain a reasonable tone of voice. It wasn't easy when he wanted to beat Xander until the chip burnt itself out. In fact, the chip gave little sparks of warning just thinking about what he would like to do to Xander.

"Your plan includes bonding. Don't even know what bonding is, and I'm saying it's a no."

"If you don't bloody know what it is, how can you say it's a no?"
"You suggested it... it's a no."

"Soddin' moron."

"Chip and dip for brains." Xander spit the insult out as he was standing near a tall oak armoire. Spike couldn't take it anymore. He crossed the room in three large bounds and grabbed the boy by both arms before putting him into the armoire firmly enough that the chip flared, and he slipped into game face. However, he just held Xander, pressing his body into the trapped boy. The sharp scent of fear and the deep musk of lust tormented Spike's nose as the feeling of that heart pounding under his hands made his fangs itch.

"Listen ya little wanker, like it -- don't like it -- don't care. I just know the only way either one of us is getting out of here alive is bonded," Spike growled into Xander's face.

"Um, which means what exactly?" Xander asked nervously.

"Well, truth be told I didn't really listen much when Peaches explained it." Spike stepped back and released Xander who stood frozen in place with wide eyes as he rubbed his arms where Spike had grabbed him.

"Great! So not only do you want me to follow your stupid plan, but you don't even know what your stupid plan is."
Are ya getting the idea there are too many stupids in this sentence?"

"I'm getting the soddin' idea there are too many stupids in this soddin' room," Spike hissed as he narrowed his eyes and glared. Suddenly Xander crossed his arms and got a determined look on his face. Spike sighed as he realized that he had to take a different tact with the boy if he didn't want to end up dust. "Look, I remember the highlights. It's an old vampire ceremony where the demon lays claim on something that has a soul, either a human or one of the souled demon species.

"Lays claim?" Now Xander was the one who is doing the glaring.

"Oi, I think you can figure that one out for yourself."

"Oh no! If you're looking to claim on my ass there is no way it's going to happen."

"I've claimed your arse before now haven't I?"

Spike stopped the story as Xander sprang up from his chair. "I have to go... um..."

"Please don't tell us," Angel begged as he held a hand up. He couldn't take another one of Xander's
announcements about bodily functions. That was one part of humanity Angel didn't miss. "Just go," he said.

"Please," Wesley added softly. Spike growled softly, and Angel turned to look at his childe in confusion, at least until the scent drifted to him. Xander smelled of embarrassment. Nice. Spike humiliated the boy and then growled at him and Wesley for being in the vicinity.

"Enough," Angel said firmly as Xander fled without another word. Spike's growl actually rose in volume for a split second before it stopped, and Spike shrugged as if it didn't matter to him.

"Lay off him, yeah?" Spike said with a glare toward Wesley.

"I didn't mean ..." Wesley stammered.

"Just keep going with the story," Angel ordered as he held out his cup. He expected Wesley to refuse him, but the man filled his cup over half full before pouring himself a drink nearly as large.

"Just as pushy as ever, Peaches. Some days I can't even tell if ya got the soul hooked on tight," Spike said, and Angel reined in his own anger. He knew full well Spike was torturing him both to get a reaction and to get out of
telling the story. The younger vamp had always been rather transparent.

"Tell the story," he growled. Spike rolled his eyes before continuing.

"I've claimed your arse before now haven't I?"

"I was drunk, it doesn't count."

"So was I. Don't mean I pretend it never happened."

"Pretending is good. Pretending is our friend. And there will be no claiming. Nope. No claiming of the Xan-man. Not gonna happen. No how, no way."

"Not what you were saying last time," Spike pointed out with his best leer.

"Last time didn't happen. I'm not listening to you! Lalalalalalalala." Xander reinforced his words by actually putting his fingers in his ears. Rolling his eyes, Spike just waited for Xander to give up on the childish gesture... and people accused him of being immature!

"Bloody hell, I had to get stuck in here with the mental kindergartner," he complained the minute and Xander's fingers came out of his ears. "Besides, as I recall last time you sounded more like the soundtrack to a porno show."
"Hey! I so did not."

"Harder, Spike! Faster, Spike! Oh yeah, love the feel of you in me," Spike imitated Xander's American accent. "Please touch me! Fuck, yeah, more like that!"

"Hey! Just no!" Xander protested.

"Fuck me harder Spike, split me open, fill me with your big, hard cock."

"That's a lie, you big liar vamp! I didn't say that!"

"Might be embellishin' a bit," Spike admitted with a shrug, "but you didn't seem to be suffering much as you squirmed about on the bed under me.

"I was drunk, I had to pee," Xander protested in a small voice, his arms wrapped around his own waist again.

"That wasn't pee that came out ya, pet," Spike pointed out with a smirk. "Look, it's not like you're some blushing virgin here. So we make the claim, and we haul ass out of here."

"Small problem, I was drunk then."

"If you don't bloody stop talking about how drunk you were..." Spike growled unhappily. It was damn impolite to deny a lover quite so often.
"Um, any chance I could get drunk this time?" Xander asked softly.

"Bloody hell. Look, this is life and death, your friends aren't going to hold it against you that you had to play a little slap and tickle to keep your neck in one piece... and mine too."

"I just... I really think I need a drink." Xander's voice was so soft that Spike had to concentrate to hear it. He felt the familiar rage of being denied... again, but then he noticed Xander trembling slightly.

"Pet, don't work that way," Spike answered as he tried to keep his voice calm. If Xander got any more worked up, there was no way the bond was going to happen. "I'm the first to admit I didn't always listen when the Poof started going on and on about his bloody ceremonies. But one thing I do remember is that the soul has to accept the claim. Don't work if the person is drugged or drunk or just doing it to save their own lives. The human has to accept the demon, let the demon put his mark on 'em," Spike finished quietly. Xander had moved from the armoire back to the chair, and now he sat on the arm of the chair looking defeated.

"If you're trying to make me feel better about doing this, it's not working," he said with a small smile that actually
looked pretty grim. "Getting a big dose of eww off of this whole thing. And the more you talk, the more eww I'm getting. Not liking the idea of accepting your demon. Not big on the demons."

"You forget, pet, I've read your diary," Spike pointed out with a laugh. "Never seen a human who could attract demons as much as you. Besides, not like I'm goin' ta walk away from this scot-free."

"Hey, I'm the one that gets claimed. I'm not seen the downside for you."

"Once we do this... until we can get a hold of the ceremony to undo the bonding, my demon's going to see you as his."

"And oh yes, we've reached whole new levels of ewwwwww. Not doing the butt monkey thing," Xander complained, and Spike snorted smoke out his nose at the image that created in his mind.

"Ya really can be a stupid little git sometimes, can't you? Do ya really think I'd worry if it turned ya into a slave? Bloody hell, wouldn't mind somebody to do my laundry now and then. But the bond means the demon sees ya as a part of himself. Means that every time I'd look at you, my demon would see where you carried a part of me. I
wouldn't be able to leave you behind anymore than I could rip off my own arm and leave it layin' on the ground. And considering how much trouble you get in, I might be safer just ripping off the arm. Until we can get the bond broken, I'll be stuck takin' on every demon that looks at you crosseyed."

"You like taking on demons," Xander pointed out dryly.

"Yeah, but I like to pick my own fights, now don't I? Besides, the way you attract 'em, I'll never have time to watch Passions." Spike smiled as Xander managed a small, tight laugh at that.

"Next time Buffy tells me she needs a favor, I'm going to, I don't know, come down with malaria or something," he said as he slid from the arm of the chair into the seat.

"You'll come down with bloody anemia is what you'll come down with, pet. Not lettin' the slayer put you in this spot again. Not goin' to let the bloody slayer put me in this spot again!

"Are you sure I can't be drunk for this?" Xander asked from the chair. "Or unconscious? Unconscious would be good."

"'Fraid not. Need ya willin' and able for this to work."
"This isn't in the slayerette contract, you know, not even the fine print. I'd remember if doing it with the evil undead had been part of the package when I signed up for this."

"Oh, I don't know. The slayer had Peaches, and the witch was doing it with a werewolf. It's about time for you to actually do the nasty with someone less than human. Besides, look at the bright side: it's actually pretty hard to make a bond, so we'll probably fail and just get killed."

"Yeah, thanks for that bit of cheering up. You know, you'd really suck as a candy striper."

"Thanks, pet. Appreciate knowin' I haven't lost all my evil points."

"So, we're going to... um..."

"Bond," Spike said seriously.

"Uh, I was actually a little more freaked over the public sex part, honestly."

"Don't worry about that, pet. I know all about that part. Didn't need Peaches to teach me that. Let's just hope I can remember enough of the bonding ceremony ta make the thing work right. Can't afford ta bugger this up."
Is the blindfold absolutely necessary?" Xander asked as he fidgeted.

"Oi, stop squirmin'," Spike ordered as he moved around the room. Peraed had delivered the supplies that he had asked for, but Spike certainly didn't want Xander seeing them. So he had just used the blindfold a little early.

"We haven't even started the ceremony yet, so I really don't see what's the point of the blindfoldage here."

"Simple. If you can't trust me when we're in a room alone together, there's no way you're gonna make it through the ceremony. So, consider this a trial run. As in, if you can't get through this, I'm going to make a run for the front door before ya get me killed," Spike said peevishly, even if he didn't really mean it.

"Okay, but if you're trying to inspire trust, that speech is not really cutting it. Besides, how am I supposed to trust the guy that stole $60 out of my wallet two days ago?"
Spike froze. He had no idea that the boy had even found the money gone yet. He had a half dozen lies prepared, but he decided to go for the truth instead. "It's not like I stole the money for myself. You're wearin' your $60 on your back."

"This shirt? You spent $60 on one shirt?" Xander squeaked.

"I spent $60 on a bloody nice shirt, somethin' you clearly can't appreciate. Besides, it was on sale."

Xander put his hands on his hips and turned toward the voice even though he was still blindfolded. "For $60 I can get... thirty shirts at Goodwill." Spike rolled his eyes both at the amount of time it took Xander to divide $60 into two dollars per shirt and at the tone of indignation in Xander's voice.

"Yeah, and then you have thirty god-awful ugly shirts. This way you got kit that's actually worth wearing."

"But $60?!!"

"Bloody hell, that's how much a shirt costs, now shut your gob already."

"And this is supposed to be an exercise in trust? Not feeling the trust here."
"Well you'd better because if you don't, we're both going to end up the kind of dead that even vampires don't walk away from." Spike moved in silently and trailed a single finger from Xander's stomach up to a nipple that was hidden by that $60 shirt. Xander flinched back.

"Hey! Back away from the Xander!"

"We're goin' to have to do a lot more touchin' than that if we intend to bond." Xander hadn't removed his blindfold, but had instead wrapped his arms around his stomach protectively. So this time Spike ran a hand from Xander's hip over his back and up to his shoulder. Xander physically jumped away.

"Bloody hell, just calm down. It's not like I'm going ta eat you." Spike didn't miss the shiver that traveled Xander's body at that statement.

"You'd better not, because if you ate me, Buffy would be really put out." As threats went, it wasn't a very effective one.

"The Slayer's always put out," Spike retorted. "But if we want to get through this, I have to be able to touch you without you jumping away from me like I'm trying to suck the marrow out of your bloody and broken bones."
"Just ewww," Xander complained as he made a face that was clear even with the blindfold covering his eyes. "And again, you're not helping with the trust issues. Are you sure alcohol is totally out of the question?"

"You soddin' little..." Spike didn't think that finishing that comment was going to help trust issues either, so he just stopped.

"So let's try something new here. Instead of listening to me, just feel me." On that night weeks ago, Spike remembered the point at which Xander had surrendered himself. He remembered that warm human body still beating with life as it became suddenly pliable under his hands. So instead of talking, Spike moved forward and pressed his front against Xander's back, snaking an arm around Xander's stomach to hold him in place when the boy tried to jerk away.

"Shhhh. Just let yourself feel it, pet," Spike whispered into an ear as he allowed his hands to slowly travel the body that now trembled. The hand that had wrapped around Xander's stomach slowly moved down to cup the boy's cock and balls through the fabric of his black jeans. His other hand reached up under the shirt and traced up over the trembling stomach muscles until he found the puckered skin of a single nipple. Spike rolled it into a
point between his forefinger and thumb squeezing just hard enough to make the boy moan.

The feeling of that human cock filling and growing under his hand made Spike itch to take him right then and there, but bonding ceremonies were by their very nature public. A soul publicly binding itself to a demon, not that Spike thought the boy would go through with it at the end. But if they get close enough, Spike might be able to talk their way past Peraed. Everyone knew that bonding ceremonies were rare, and human souls that willing to give themselves to demons even rarer. Of course if worse came to worse, at least Spike was going to go out enjoying one of his two favorite activities. Maybe even teach those demon a thing or two about doin' it right.

The hand that had been cupping that increasingly interested cock now moved up and unbuttoned the lowest button on the shirt. Xander jerked a little in his grasp, and Spike used dull teeth to nibble at Xander's ear. Xander's body bucked, and Xander moaned as Spike worked more buttons loose. The curve of Xander's neck teased him, and Spike trailed a series of nips down to the juncture where Xander's neck and shoulder met; however, Xander hunched his shoulders, and the curve disappeared as Spike was forced to give up his treat. The
distraction did allow him to unfasten the remaining shirt buttons, though.

The whole time, Xander's arms had remained hanging loosely at his sides, neither helping nor stopping Spike. Still standing at Xander's back, Spike wrapped his arms around Xander's waist and let his fingers travel over Xander's chest and stomach feeling all that warm smooth skin and rippling muscle. Spike ghosted his hands up over lust sharpened nipples and finally he curved his hands around to grasp Xander's shoulders, forcing Xander's arms away from his body.

Pushing the fabric out of the way as he went, Spike stripped Xander's shirt from him as he trailed kisses and nips down a sun-tanned arm. Now Xander gasped his need, and Spike could smell the lust rolling from him. That heavy warm musk called his demon to the front, and now Spike ran a sharp tooth across a naked shoulder. The chip sizzled with warning, but the taste of warm fresh human blood counterbalanced that so that the pain became more sensual than punishing. Spike licked the long shallow wound while holding Xander so tightly that he could feel Xander's heartbeat through those places where their skin pressed together. It felt strangely like having a heartbeat of his own again.
"Um, Spike? This isn't, you know, the ceremony is it?"

"No, pet. Think of this is a warmup." Spike closed his lips over the wound and sucked. The scratch was so shallow that he didn't get more than a taste of blood, but Xander trembled and thrust into the air involuntarily at the sensation.

"I can do warm-ups. Warm-ups good. When I was on the swim team..." Xander's words disappeared in another gasp.

One of Spike's hands worked the top button of Xander's jeans, and he could smell the heavy, thick scent of arousal sharpen as he slipped a hand between the jeans and the warm flesh below.

"Gonna make ya part of me, gonna make ya feel so good, pet," Spike whispered as he slowly lowered the zipper. He didn't know whether it was the words or the pressure against Xander's cock that made the man groan deeply. Now, for the first time, Xander actually did something, pushing his own jeans down past his hips so that his erection popped free.

"And we don't have a choice here, do we?" Xander gasped.
"Nope," Spike said, even though it rankled him a little. But then again, he was going to get his own back, he thought as he pressed forward, forcing Xander to step to the side of the bed blindly. He wasn't the one who was going to be tied and spread open during the ceremony.

"Whoa, hey, what's that?" Xander asked in a panicked voice as Spike picked up manacles, making little clinking sounds as the short chain rattled.

"Just part of the ceremony, pet. Ya gotta show that you accept me, that ya trust me, now don't ya?" Spike pointed out as he kept one arm around Xander and nibbled at the ear. The boy stuttered a little but didn't protest again as Spike ran cool metal links across his hip.

"Right then, hands in front of you, pet," Spike ordered softly. He could feel Xander tremble as he stood unmoving. "Don't really have a choice in this, do we? Ya gotta give yourself to me or you're gonna end up belongin' to one of them. They won't make ya feel like this," Spike promised as he reached his free hand down to grab the boy's tackle. Xander mumbled a 'no' at the same time that he opened his legs farther. Spike just waited until Xander finally brought his hands together so that Spike could chain them.
"But you aren't really going to make me go out there like naked, are you?" Xander asked.

"No," Spike said as he reached for the next item. "You're not goin' to be 'like' naked, you're goin' to actually 'be' naked."

"Hey, no making fun of my lack of stuck up English speakage," Xander protested as Spike ran another piece of metal over a puckered nipple, making Xander shiver. The short chain between his cuffed hands jingled a little with the movement. "If you weren't so bad with the plans, we wouldn't have to do this."

"If you'd gone home when I told ya to," Spike left the words unsaid as he brought the metal up to Xander's neck. He could feel Xander's adam apple bobbling as he trailed a hand around the front of the neck before closing and latching the metal circle.

"Not a dog," Xander complained, but Spike noticed that the complaint didn't come out very strong.

"On your knees, pet," Spike ordered, but Xander didn't move. He simply stood there trembling and smelling like a vampire buffet of lust and fear and shame and need. "Down," Spike repeated as he pressed down on Xander's shoulder.
"You have issues, Spike... serious, serious issues."

"Just part of the ceremony, mate. When you aren't walking, you go to your knees. When you are walking, you step forward without hesitation." Spike pulled at the leash, and Xander tipped a bit before struggling to his feet and following the pull.

"Oi, ya look like you're trying to walk on hot coals. Walk normal." Spike turned and started walking backwards toward the door, pulling on the leash. Xander, hands chained and blindfolded, stepped forward again, but Spike had to keep the chain fairly tight to move him, and the hesitation and fear was evident in every step. Right, they obviously had to practice some.

"If you walk me into a wall, Bloodbreath..." Xander warned darkly.

"Bloody hell. If I walk you into a wall, I might as well stake myself. Ya gotta trust me on this one pet. Trust me ta hold ya and keep ya safe until this is over." Spike turned and pulled at the leash again, and this time Xander walked a little more confidently.

"I'm not really sure Xander would want us hearing this part," Wesley interrupted at this point. Angel turned to glare at the ex-Watcher. The movement also made him
aware of his own growing interest in the story. Angel glanced over at his childe who glared up at him in clear challenge.

Angel slipped off the edge of the desk where he had been sitting and retreated to his chair where he had some hope of hiding his problem from Wesley even if Spike had already caught him. He was going to have to go pay a little visit to the Furies when this was over, and maybe get his own bottle of scotch because the fact that Spike's story about his sexual adventures with Xander had this effect... well that was something he planned to repress as soon as possible.

"Trust me, I wouldn't be sayin' this if I didn't have to. Fact is that somethin' did go wrong durin' the ceremony. Somethin' the Sunnydale Watcher couldn't figure out. Otherwise I wouldn't come within a mile of Peaches, and I wouldn't have Xander within three miles of 'im," Spike snarled aggressively in a thick accent. Wesley backed up so that he was sitting closer to Angel.

"Right, maybe I should, um..."

"Stay right there," Angel ordered. If Wesley wasn't here, he and Spike would have fallen back on old habits and tried to kill each other long ago.
"Right, stay here," Wesley echoed.  

"You think that if I have all the details, I can figure out where you screwed up," Angel said to Spike.  

"Watcher thinks that. I think that I would just as soon not tell ya things that are between me and my boy."  

"You, your boy, and every demon at Caabalis," Angel snapped back, and then flinched at his own wording. The boy had claimed a human. Angelus stirred unhappily at his own memories of trying and failing to claim the human Dru.  

"That's different, innit? Demons at Caabalis didn't go all lusty at the thought of my boy," Spike snarled as he leaned forward in his chair. Angel could feel the demon in him wanting to put the boy in his place, establish a clear line of authority that started with him as the sire. Angel glanced over at Wesley and could see the man scooting away from him now. Angel leaned back in his chair and took several breaths as he fought down his own need to answer Spike's challenge.  

"Spike, I just want to hear about whatever went so wrong that you felt compelled to come here for help," Angel said in tightly controlled tones. For several
seconds, Spike continued to glare and then he pushed himself back into the chair.

"Don't bloody know what went wrong, that's why I'm tryin' to tell the whole story."

"So continue with the story," Angel said as he squirmed uncomfortably in his seat. The universe really didn't like him very much, but Angel was starting to get used to that fact.

Part Seven

"I can do this, I can do this. Oh who am I kidding? I so totally can't do this, Spike," Xander complained. Spike turned and noticed that the boy's interest had lagged quite a bit along with his tackle. Boy still made a nice sight kneeling in the middle of the room with his hands chained and resting in his lap, but the lust smell had been replaced with plain old humiliation. Spike enjoyed that scent well enough, but that combination of lust and need and denial had been a far more enjoyable odor.

"You bloody well can," Spike said as he allowed his fingers to comb through Xander's curls, pulling small sections out from under the blindfold.
"Um, no. I really don't think I can," Xander said with more desperation. "Feeling the need to run like hell here."
Xander said, and to emphasize that, he started struggling his way to his feet. Spike put a hand on each shoulder and easily held Xander down until he stopped struggling and just breathed heavily as humiliation poured from him.

"Pet, hush, s'all right." Spike knelt down in front of Xander and pulled the blindfold up. They didn't have much time, but he couldn't take Xander out there like this either.

"Oh god, I am so going to get us both killed," wide brown eyes blinked at him.

"No, you're not. I've never been as good at thrall as Dru, but if..."

"Oh hey, thrall would be nearly as good as drunk. I can do thrall," Xander nodded, and Spike found himself with a mouth full of justifications he didn't need to use. That was a bit of a surprise.

"Right then, just relax and listen to my voice."

"Listen... I can listen. Not so good with the relaxing, but I can listen," Xander quickly agreed. Spike held up a finger and put it across Xander's lips to keep him quiet. He had expected Xander to pull back from the commanding
touch, but instead the boy just fell silent and breathed heavily through his nose.

"You're going to be fine Xander. Ya know how much I want you, and that's all that matters. Focus on me... my need. Feel how much I want you," Spike kept his eyes focused on Xander, but he reached down and caught the chain from the manacles, pulling Xander's hands forward until Xander could feel Spike's own bulge. "Only thing that matters is us. You're goin' to walk out there because I want ya to. You're going to listen only to my voice."

Spike had never been gifted with thrall, but given someone who was drunk enough or susceptible enough or willing enough, he could do it in a pinch. Of course he'd tried it when he had been tied up in the boy's basement with no effect at all, but now he could feel Xander's twitching body relax as the eyes took on a slightly glazed expression. "Bloody beautiful boy," Spike whispered. "And you're gonna show them that you’re my bloody beautiful boy, aren't ya?" Spike asked. He could almost see Xander pulling himself back from the edge of submission to argue, so he kept talking in that low, soothing voice, not giving Xander a chance to argue.

"Yeah, ya are, pet. You're my beautiful boy to take care of, and I'm goin' to, too. Goin' to make ya feel nice. You'll
be squirmin' under me knowing that you're mine and I'm goin' to take care of ya the way I take care of all my possessions." Spike breathed a sigh as the glazed expression returned.

"You're goin' to do what I tell you. You're goin' to follow me because you know you're safe as long as you're with me." Spike could practically feel the thrall slip into place.

"You're goin' to sit at my feet not because I tell you to but because it makes ya happy to sit there. Ya love knowin' how much I want ya when you go lookin' all submissive for me," Spike was pushing farther than he had expected, but Xander's glazed look just intensified, and the scent of lust nearly made Spike come in his jeans. Oh, the boy did have kinks, and given the opening into that mind, Spike decided that planting a few seeds might pay off in the long run.

"Goin' ta be my boy, aren't ya?" This time Spike stopped and allowed Xander to answer with a small nod. "Goin' ta give yourself to me and beg me to take ya. You'll follow my orders, pet," Spike reached over with a single finger and traced Xander's features: his eyebrow and the curve of his nose, that upper lip and the strong jaw. Xander's cock had grown hard again. "Close your eyes," Spike
whispered. Xander's eyes immediately closed, and Spike traced those lids before pulling the blindfold back down.

"What color is the place where you are now, Xander?" Spike asked softly. Dru had often tried to teach him to thrall, to send humans to a place in their own minds that altered reality. It just hadn't ever worked this bloody well before.

"Yellow, like your eyes," Xander breathed out. Spike rubbed his thumb over Xander's exposed nipple, and then groaned when Xander responded by rubbing Spike's erection through his jeans.

"I want you to stay there until I tell you to come back, Xander," Spike ordered gently.

"Yes, Master," Xander answered in a voice that sounded half asleep. Spike felt his cock react to that term, and he slipped into game face. Reaching down, he took Xander's chained hands out of his lap and put them back on Xander's thighs before standing up. He needed to get control of his own body before going out to do the ceremony. Xander remained on his knees now smelling of lust as he bent his head submissively.

If the git was this susceptible to thrall, he really had no business fighting demons. Spike stood next to Xander as
he heard footsteps in the hall. His hand was still in Xander's hair, and now the boy leaned his weight into Spike's leg. Spike felt a small twinge at thralling the boy so deeply, but given Spike's questionable thrall skills, the boy had certainly allowed it. At least that would be his story when the Slayer and Watcher tried to stake him for thralling the boy. And Spike had to admit that he didn't mind Xander Harris nearly as much once the git stopped hurling insults all the time.

The door scraped open and two Deevak demons stood in the open frame. "Peraed says it's time," one gravelly voice announced. When Xander jerked slightly, Spike focused on massaging the boy's temple.

"Shh, pet. Stay in your place," he said soothingly, and Xander's weight immediately returned to Spike's leg as the boy breathed out. "Good, boy," Spike offered as he stroked that thick hair for a moment. If the demons in the crowd were loud, the thrall was never going to hold. Spike wondered if there were any deities in the universe that listened to vampire prayers. Since he couldn't come up with one, he slowly moved his leg, causing Xander to shift his weight to his own knees.

Spike nodded at the two Deevaks as he stepped forward and pulled lightly at the leash. Xander stumbled up,
putting his hands out for balance, and Spike caught the hands in his own as he help the boy to his feet. Thralling obviously didn't help his gracefulness, Spike thought as he tried to keep an eye on Xander as he walked the hall to the main gathering room.

Keeping his stride slow enough to not startle Xander out of the trance, Spike entered the huge gathering room. Normally the space was filled with tables, but those were gone, the chairs pushed to the edges and filled with more demons than Spike ever remembered seeing at Caabalis. There was a definite settling and shifting of bodies when he led Xander in, and he could feel the extra pressure on the leash almost immediately.

Spike stopped before the effects of the thrall were completely lost, and Xander slipped to his knees. Stepping to Xander's side, he dropped a hand to Xander's hair and pulled the boy into a lean.

"You're fine, pet. My beautiful boy. Just stay in your place, pet," Spike soothed him as he returned to massaging Xander's temple. He turned to speak to the Deevak demons while still using his calm, thrall voice. "Pull the sheets down, put the chains at the foot of the bed," Spike ordered. The demons went to follow his order.
"What are you doing here, pet? What are you supposed to focus on?" Spike asked, quickly amending the first questions for fear that in the boy's susceptible state he might start babbling about the Slayer.

"Pleasing you, Master," Xander said, the half-asleep voice back. Spike knew that if he pulled the blindfold off now the boy's eyes would be completely glazed over. Now that he was sure Xander wasn't in danger of breaking the thrall, he walked steadily toward the huge bed in the middle of the room. The thick posts were carved dragons sitting one on top of another, each holding a ring in his mouth. The club had never been known for subtle, but this went into the land of truly hideous.

When Spike stopped, Xander slid to his knees. Even the sounds of Spike attaching chains to those embedded rings didn't interrupt the scent of lust and need that now steadily leaked from the boy. Spike could practically tell which demons reacted to human scent by watching certain members of the audience shift uncomfortably as the smell of Xander's lust drifted through the room.

"Up on the bed, pet," Spike ordered with a gentle tug on the leash. Xander used the edge of the bed to balance himself as he stood up and crawled up onto the bed awkwardly. Spike used only a few soft touches to guide
Xander to the middle and then turn him onto his back. Xander shifted a little to the left as Spike pushed against his right hip. Then, without waiting for any order, Xander stretched out his arms above his head.

"Just movin' ya down a bit pet, alright?" Spike said as he walked to the foot of the bed and grabbed Xander's ankles. Xander just wiggled a little, his cock dropping a single pearl of precom onto his own stomach. Gripping Xander's ankles, Spike pulled on them to slide him down on the silky, white sheets until his hands just touched the headboard without bending his elbows. Then Spike spread the boy's legs before letting go. Xander lay there with his legs thrown wantonly open, just breathing heavily as Spike ran a hand up the hot leg to the crease where leg and hip met.

"Master," Xander said in a clearly complaining voice and wiggling when Spike's hand stopped.

"Shh, pet," Spike said as he stood there. His demon demanded he either feed or claim. The body laid out before him didn't have a place in his demon's life, and Spike could feel a growing need to either put Xander into a place or destroy the source of the demon's discomfort. No wonder he avoided shagging humans, at least when
sober….. The demon just didn't play well with food, so it was time to give Xander a new place in his demon's life.

Spike took his hand off Xander's thigh and picked up the end of one chain attached to the post. Judging the length, he attached the free end to the manacles so that Xander would have very little room to move his hands to the right. Spike circled the bed, attaching the chain from the other side so that Xander now couldn't move his hands at all. The whole time, Xander lay there with his legs open, breathing heavily and making tiny movements that suggested that the boy wanted to get started. His hips would tilt, hinting at the boy's desire to thrust. The legs would tighten and rock open a little before relaxing. The hands would curl into fists and then open again.

"Ya thinkin' something nice?" Spike asked, ignoring the crowd as he trailed fingers down the center of Xander's chest, stopping at the curled, coarse hair that surrounded the cock.

"Yes," Xander said slowly.

"Yes what?" Spike asked, pinching a nipple.

"Yes, Master," Xander amended himself with a hiss.

"Better, pet," Spike said as he rubbed the offended nipple. He pushed down his own need to bite. They needed to
bond or at least start the bonding process and keep it
going long enough to convince Peraed that the boy didn't
belong to the Slayer. It'd also be nice if he could get the
boy worked up enough that the bite wasn't painful. He
didn't really relish the idea of having the chip turn his
brain inside out in the middle of Caabalis. Spike went to
the end of the bed and stripped off his coat before picking
up the ankle straps that lay at the end of the bed. "Right
leg up, pet," Spike said, and Xander raised his right leg.
Spike closed the leather over the ankle and quickly
buckled it tight.

As he expected at this point, the smell of lust just
increased. What he hadn't expected was for the boy to
continue holding his leg up when Spike released it. "Put it
down, now," Spike ordered, and Xander lowered his right
leg, leaving it just as obscenely spread as earlier. Spike
rewarded his boy with a firm stroke up the thigh to the
crease marking the inside of the hip. Xander pulled at the
chains around his wrists and groaned as Spike stopped.

"Left leg up," Spike ordered, and the left leg lifted. Spike
buckled the restraint around that leg and then gave a
small push on the top of the shin. Xander lowered the leg.
"Good, pet," Spike said as he rewarded Xander with a wet
finger trailed across the skin of his inner thigh. Xander's
whole body shivered. Using two hooks, he attached a
long rope to each cuffed ankle. As he walked to the bed's head, he made sure to trail the rough fibers across Xander's chest, and the boy shivered again. So easy to please.

Spike quickly slid the free end of each rope into a hook near the top of each post. Taking the ends in hand, he walked back to the foot of the bed and started pulling. As the ropes tightened, first Xander's legs were pulled up and apart and then his butt came up off the bed, exposing him to everyone in the room. Spike quickly tied the ropes off at the ankle cuffs so Xander couldn't move. He snagged pillows from a stack on the floor and began to use them to prop up Xander's back so that his legs weren't carrying all his weight.

"Who are you pet?" Spike asked, starting the ceremony as he unfastened his pants without removing them. He wasn't about to give these demons any more of a peep show than they were already getting. By the time he had picked up the lube, he realized that Xander's mouth was making a confused frown. Bloody hell. Boy couldn't be stuck already.

"Your name, pet. What's your name?" Spike amended the question.

"Alexander LaVelle Harris," he replied quickly.
"And who do you serve?" Spike crossed his fingers with one hand and reached down to stroke the boy's perineum with the other. Hopefully he hadn't thralled the boy so deeply that the idiot blurted out the truth.

"Master Spike, William the Bloody, Slayer of Slayers, line of Aurelius." Xander sighed as his muscles rippled with an attempt to writhe that he couldn't complete bound as tightly as he was. Spike smiled at the use of his full title.

"Good boy," Spike rewarded him this time with a tickling touch that traveled up to the boy's balls before he took them and rolled the heavy sacs in one hand. Xander's mouth fell open as he made a strangled noise.

"And do you serve freely?" Spike asked as he moved his hand down and slipped inside his boy's heat.

"Yes, Master," Xander practically yelped as Spike breached the muscular ring. Spike smiled as he worked the one finger out a few times before adding a second. He could tell from the jerky motions of the body bound below him that Xander needed more, but since traditional torture methods were right out with the chip, he moved slowly, avoiding the prostate as he opened his boy carefully. The jerky breaths of the body below him were nearly as good as real torture.
Spike moved onto the bed, settling himself between Xander's stretched legs, and rearranging the pillows a bit so that he could carry some of Xander's weight on his own knees.

"Do you pledge yourself to your Master?" Spike asked as he took his own erection in hand. The magics were now swirling around them like tiny threads making stinging little cuts into their skin.

"Yes, just... yes!" Xander said as he jerked at the chain. Then Xander threw his head to one side, exposing that neck, and Spike felt his demon take control as he slammed into Xander with one hard thrust. Xander made a strangled scream as he bent his head even farther to the side. Letting his weight fall on Xander's bound body, Spike drove his fangs deep into that exposed curve, tasting the warmth of human arterial blood for the first time in months.

Spike arched his back and made a few small thrusts into that tight, hot space before he felt himself fall over into orgasm still buried in his boy at both ends. His boy. Spike smelled the body under him, and he purred at the scent of family. Spike slipped his fangs out and licked the deep scar, feeling Xander's body sag in the aftermath of his own orgasm.
"Yes, really, quite an impressive show," Peraed's voice broke into Spike awareness, and he growled loudly without moving off his boy.

"But perhaps we'll leave you for a time," Peraed finished quickly as the voice faded away. Human blood, shagging, and intimidating Peraed all in one day, Spike was putting it down as one of his better days... not quite as good as taking out his first slayer, but close.

As the sounds of demons leaving tapered off, Spike pushed himself up to his knees and let his cock slip out of Xander's heat. Reaching down to his boot, he grabbed a knife and cut the ropes that held his boy's legs open so far. Xander's body fell to the bed and the boy made a sighing sound.

"So, um, Spike?" Xander asked, still chained and blindfolded on the bed. Spike didn't mind the look at all.

"Thought I told you to stay in your place."

"Thought we had finished. I'm feeling finished. I'm feeling very, very, finished," Xander answered. "And I'm feeling... okay, I'm different, but I can't explain how."

"Bond took," Spike said as he lay next to that warm body that his demon now claimed as a part of himself. Spike could smell his own scent drifting just below the familiar
smell of human musk and slight sweetness he always associated with Xander.

"Oh great. Now we just need to explain bonding to Buffy and Willow. And Giles. Oh shit, can I skip that part? He'll polish his glasses down to nothing," Xander complained quietly.

"Yeah, that's because I really didn't want to talk to Giles about the gay thing, and then there was the sleeping with the evil dead thing, and I'm going to pretend you didn't tell Angel all the things that I know you just loved to tell him. The universe just continues on its merry mission to humiliate Xander Harris."

"Oi, it's not like it's all about you now, is it?" Spike answered without turning around.

"No, some of it's about how you got us in the mess in the first place," Xander complained as he stood in the doorway to the office, his arms crossed around his waist in a familiar gesture.

"Wait, that's it? Where was the screw up?" Angel asked as he reviewed the ceremony. Spike had certainly asked the right questions, and the binding had been strict enough to symbolize the submission of the soul, otherwise the bond couldn't have taken.
"Yeah, we found that part when we went back to the Watcher. Can't get the bond to break now, can we?" Spike said with a grimace.

Part Eight

"If you hadn't thralled me before we went in there."

"It's your bloody fault. You soddin' well begged for the thrall."

"Is not!" Xander yelped. "What do I know about magic stuff? You shouldn't have gone offering me a magical Mickey when I was all panicked. It's not my fault."

"Is too!" Spike snapped back sounding all of three years old as far as Angel was concerned. "If I hadn't done the thrall, ya woulda been dead."

"And then you had to go and tell Giles. Father figure... not big with the sexual sharing when it comes to father figures." Xander complained bitterly.
"Bloody hell, you're the one who stood there like a lump while Miss Air for Brains tried ta stake me."

"Angel, you have to fix this," Xander said as he turned desperate eyes to Angel.

"I don't know what you want me to do," Angel said with a shrug, and then regretted it as the movement made parts of him ache uncomfortably.

"You're the one who bloody made me learn the ceremony, so how do we undo it?" Spike demanded as he stood up. Angel stomped on his desire to put a fist in Spike's face. The childe had claimed a human, and Xander Harris no less.

"I never taught you to thrall the human first, and I certainly never expected you to try bonding with a thralled human. From what Darla taught me, that shouldn't have even worked. This really leaves me with only one choice. So as much as I absolutely hate doing this, Xander welcome to the family." Angel turned to Xander who had a deer caught in the headlights look.

"I certainly don't know how to break the bond, so please do me the favor normally extended to most in-laws and just avoid my city. I'd prefer it if you could keep your Master out of my city as well," Angel felt a small bit of
satisfaction when Xander flinched at the word 'Master.' God he hoped the furies were home tonight. Or maybe... Angel cast a glance toward Wesley.

"Wot? No way at all? You want us to go back to the boy's soddin' little friends and say this is permanent?" Spike demanded, and Angel looked back at his childe.

"Yep. They can't kill you without killing Xander, which is my primary reason for not staking you for selling potentially cursed items to Paraed. So if you would please get out of my office..." Angel smiled at the two men using an expression he knew had more Angelus than Angel in it. However, he also didn't miss the way both men's bodies relaxed at the news that the bond couldn't be broken.

"But what about... I mean..." Xander stuttered to a stop.

"Xander, I already know more than I want to about your sex life, and you are part of my line, so whatever it is, just spit it out so you can leave."

"These feelings... Buffy is not thrilled with these feelings..." Xander tried again. Angel considered the nervous human in front of him. Really, he should feel some compassion, but he felt very little compassion and absolutely no guilt at what he was about to do.
"Give it up, boy. You gave a demon dominion over your soul, so he's your Master. Nothing I do can change that. Tell Buffy to call so you have time to clean up the chains before she comes over to your place. And Spike, if she calls to complain about you rubbing her nose in your," Angel waved his hand at the two men, unwilling to put a label on the bond, "this... I will come up there and put you in your place." The look of horror on Xander's face at the mention of chains almost made the evening worth it. "So, unless you two are planning on staying here to torture me..." Angel waved a hand toward the door without standing.

"Right, got business of our own, don't we?" Spike said as he drew his lips up in an utterly wicked grin.

"But," Xander protested right before Spike gave him a swat on the butt that sent him out of the office. Angel put his elbows on his desk and rested his chin on his hand as he tried to not groan as he used two hundred and fifty years of experience to force his own body into submission. Silence reigned for several minutes as Wesley stood at the door to the office and Angel slowly forced his erection to subside.

"Um, Angel?" Wesley asked from near the door. Angel watched as the man softly closed it after watching the
outer office, Angel assumed Wesley had been watching the two morons leave.

"Yes?"

"When studying the Watcher journals, the underlying message was that a soul tended to have dominance in its own body unless the demon was a category four or higher, and vampires are classified a lower level demon. Not the lowest level, naturally, but certain not a demon normally capable of possession of a live host. It's thought that this is why your own soul is able to command your demon."

"And?" Angel asked. He really didn't have patience for a long discussion.

"Bonding means a soul accepting a vampire's demon willingly."

"Right." Angel confirmed.

"So, if Mr. Harris' soul wished to evict the demon's hold over him..."

"He would just have to actually want the demon gone," Angel answered. "But since he can't admit that to himself, I don't really feel a need to inform him of that."
"But Angel, that's hardly ethical," Wesley said in a shocked voice.

"Neither is torturing me, but neither of them has ever had a problem with that," Angel answered dryly. "Besides, they'll keep each other out of trouble."

"Do you really think...?" Wesley looked uncertainly toward the door.

"They're fine. More than that, they're both where they deserve to be," Angel said, for once the soul and the demon in agreement. Now he just had to find a way to clean up the mess the boys had left behind. Angel pulled at the seam of his pants to give his cock more room as he eyed Wesley. There were possibilities there. After all, if his worthless childe had managed to make a bond... well, it did give him a few new ideas with which to experiment.

The End