

Summary: The newly joined get to know one another and more of Giles' past comes to light.

Categories: [Crossover/Multi-Fandom](#) Characters: Ensemble

Genres: Slash

Warnings: AU, Brain-Insane, Humor, Multiple Partners, Slash, Violence, WIP

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Story Notes:

Sequel to Four Joined Souls. You'll need to read that to understand this.

<http://adultfan.nexcess.net/aff/story.php?no=6589>

Spoilers: Season 7, but without 'Dirty Girls', Up to book 4

Thanks to Edi for the beta.

Xander/Harry/Spike/Severus

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Chapter 1 by Caliadragon

Xander bit his lip and began to shake slightly. The others all turned to look at him in concern. He was bent forward, his knees pressed to his chest. "Xander?" Buffy asked, worried. Willow broke the circle and went to him.

When she touched him he looked up at her and giggled. "I'm bound to a dead guy, and two guys

with power. They're stuck with a useless Zeppo. Man, you guys must have really pissed someone off." Xander let out a snort of laughter and stood.

"Xander?" Willow asked again. She knew the laughter was hiding anger.

"Not now, Wills, I gotta go." Xander was furious. Why did shit like this always happen to him? It was bad enough that he had lost any chance of being with Anya again. But now he was soul bound to Spike and two guys that just screamed power. While he was still powerless.

"Xander, you cannot leave right now," Giles told him softly. Xander had changed in the last few months. He no longer allowed himself to be bullied and led by others. He had grown up into a man of principle and strength. Giles had no idea what they would do without him.

Xander turned to look at him, and the rage in his eyes was only tempered by the pain in them. Spike was also growling. He didn't like the fact that the witch had screwed up again and that Xander was made to suffer. Spike didn't really care. He was a vampire and, despite the return of his soul, he had no preference one way or the other when it came to lovers. The two newcomers smelled of power, and the boy reminded him of Xander for some reason.

Harry was confused and upset. Why did things like this always happen to him? Wasn't it enough that Voldemort was after him? The other man was right; he must have really pissed someone off in a former life. "Would someone explain to me why I'm here and how I managed to be soul bound to three other men, one of which isn't even human?" Harry growled.

Giles started and looked at the boy closely. "Harry Potter?" he asked, stunned. His eyes went to Severus. His old friend was glaring and looking ready to start firing hexes.

Severus snorted. The dark haired boy, Xander, was walking out the door now that Ripper's attention had been turned away from him for a moment. Severus drew his wand and sealed the door. "Ripper said you can't leave yet, boy. So you're not going anywhere."

Giles flinched at the snarl Xander aimed at the older wizard. "That was a mistake," Giles murmured to his friend. Severus merely raised an eyebrow. His mouth fell open in shock when he was suddenly dangling from Xander's fist.

"Unlock the door," Xander growled. Harry pulled out his wand and unsealed the door. His former professor was staring at their new partner in shocked silence. Despite the seriousness of the situation, Harry grinned. It was nice to see Snape shocked every once in a while.

"The door is unsealed. Can I go with you?" Harry asked. Xander set Severus back on his feet, grabbed Harry's hand and dragged him out of Buffy's house.

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They walked in silence for a long time. They were both aware of the fact that they were being followed by Buffy and Faith, but neither of them made any mention of it and ignored the two women.

"So, can you tell me what happened back there?" Harry asked shyly. Despite getting older, and the many battles he had had with Voldemort, he still found it hard to talk to strangers.

"Willow was performing a joining spell to unite her and three other people in a soul binding, so that we could fight the First Evil. Instead she bound us. I have no idea how it will change our lives, but I do know it's forever. So now you're stuck with a powerless nobody and a bleached blonde vampire with a soul. And the bossy guy," Xander told him shortly.

Harry sighed and shook his head. He couldn't understand why Xander kept referring to himself as powerless. He could feel the power in the larger man. As for the rest of it, he was just confused. He did know about the hellmouth, and also knew that this was going to be a bad thing.

Voldemort would follow him. The bastard was intent on killing him no matter what. Harry wondered how Ron and Mione were going to respond to this change in his life?

Probably the way they responded to every other change in his life. Mione would demand, cajole and search for any information she could glean. While Ron would support him and find something good for Harry to see in the situation. Draco would probably tease him and generally annoy the hell out of him. Though when they got a look at Xander they'd probably be jealous. That thought made Harry smile. Another thing the three friends had found they had in common was their sexual orientation. The fact that all three had been seduced by Slytherins, Draco Malfoy in particular, had been interesting.

Mione, Draco and Ron were all married and Ron was carrying their first child. It seemed that the Fertility Curse placed on the Weasley family also made it possible for the male members of their family to bear children. He really wanted to see his friends, but he didn't want them anywhere near the hellmouth.

Finally he spoke again. "Why do you keep referring to yourself as powerless? I can feel the magic in you."

Xander froze and turned to face him. "What?" Buffy demanded from behind them. She and Faith walked up to stand beside them.

Harry sighed and answered, "He has power in him. I wouldn't be surprised to discover that he was as powerful as I am."

"If he has magic, how come he can't use it?" Faith asked.

"He probably can. Does magic react strangely around you? This being the hellmouth I bet you attract a lot of demonic attention, don't you?" Harry asked.

The three Scoobies laughed despite the seriousness of the situation. "I'm a demon magnet," Xander explained at Harry's questioning look.

Harry grinned, "I'm not surprised. You put out a powerful magical signature. It attracts demons and such. Though now that you're bound to me and Snape you're going to find yourself attracting a demon of a whole other sort," Harry added bitterly.

"What do you mean?" Buffy demanded, worried about her Xander.

"The magical world is at war right now. The Dark Lord, Voldemort, is out to control the world and kill all muggles and those who oppose him. He's been trying to kill me since I was eleven. Now that I'm here, he will follow. Then we'll have to worry about him trying to reopen the hellmouth."

The other three groaned. "What about the First, do you think he would join with her?" Faith asked.

"I don't know, I have no idea who this first is," Harry answered honestly.

"The First is the First Evil. The bitch is trying to destroy all of the Slayer line and kill me and my friends," Buffy explained.

Now it was Harry's turn to groan. "We'd better get back. If I know Snape, he's pretty pissed right now and your witch is probably in a lot of trouble."

End Notes:

AN: This will revolve around the buffyverse more than the Potterverse. Draco, Mione and Ron will be coming to the hellmouth very soon. So will Siri and Remus.

I haven't got a chance to read OOtP and it will probably be a while before I can, so there won't be any spoilers for the book here.

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Chapter 2 by Caliadragon

Severus glared after the retreating boys and then turned his glare on his old friend, who was staring after them sadly. The witch was shifting uncomfortably and the others were looking around in confusion and amusement. He watched as two of the girls followed Harry and the other boy.

He then asked the question that had been plaguing him since he was touched by the boy. "Why was he referring to himself as powerless? The brat is as powerful as Potter," Severus growled at his friend.

Giles looked at him in shock and confusion, so he didn't see the look of fear and shame on Willow's face. However, Spike and Dawn did. "What did you do, Willow?" Dawn asked quietly.

Giles turned to look at the pair while Spike came to stand beside the two wizards. Willow shifted and tears began to slowly track down her face. "You know how Xander's been changing lately? While I've been magically weaker?" she asked.

"Yes, he's seemed stronger. While your spells seem less potent," Giles answered.

"That's because he is. Xander's a wizard. I still have power, but not as much as Xander. I was syphoning off his magic. It wasn't until he stopped me from destroying the world that I realized how far gone I was. I've been trying to make up for it by feeding magic back into him, but it doesn't seem to be working," she told them, shamefully.

Giles felt himself go pale and rage filled his eyes. "Why can't I feel the magic in him? I know what to look for, did you do a spell on me?"

"NO! I removed a few spells though. I couldn't get them all without telling you, though." she bit her lip, but didn't look up.

Severus turned and studied his old friend carefully. His eyes narrowed as he saw what the young witch saw. He growled and murmured a spell.

Giles swayed for a moment before regaining his balance. The change was recognizable at once. Giles stood straighter than he had in years and there was a look in his eyes that made Andrew whimper in fright.

Willow paled and backed away from her mentor. She could feel his power. Power that rivalled her own and was equal to that of the wizard in front of her. "What else have you done, Willow, and don't bother to lie," Giles purred.

She began to sob, "I put a spell on Xander to make him help me resurrect Buffy. He didn't want to, but I knew I needed him. I don't know why I did these things, Giles. I was happy just being the hacker. What's wrong with me?"

Giles scowled; it was true. Willow had enjoyed using magic, but she had preferred playing with her computers. But since Tara's death, she had avoided them and relied heavily on magic instead. The Willow he knew would never have done the things the girl had admitted to. Stepping forward, he gently wrapped the sobbing child in his arms and held her. "Willow, until we know why you're doing this, I want you to use no more magic," he told her.

She nodded. "It hurts when I do magic," she confessed. Both Severus and Giles paled at that and shared a look. Someone was trying to turn her into another Ethan. \_\_\_

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Xander stood silently in the doorway. They had just returned as Willow began to make her confessions and he couldn't believe what he was hearing. He took a step back and felt arms go

around him. Looking down he saw that it was Buffy holding him. She had tears on her face and looked as bad as he felt.

What was happening to his Willow? He rubbed a free hand over his stomach, then turned and caught Spike looking at them. He felt Harry shift beside him and noticed the lightning shaped scar on his forehead. He then rubbed his hip again. "How did you get that scar on your forehead?" he asked, startling everyone.

They all turned to look at them, and Willow began to shake uncontrollably as she realized that Buffy and Xander had heard what she had done. When she saw the scar she sobbed harder. "It's from the same curse I used on you," she whispered.

Giles' arms tightened convulsively round her. "I don't know why I did it. I just did. Part of me was screaming not to hurt Xander, then I was suddenly cursing him and burning him with magic." Willow was screaming in panic by the time she reached the end of her explanation.

Severus pulled his wand, aimed it at her and whispered a spell. Seconds later Willow was unconscious in Giles' arms. "What's wrong with Willow, and what is this curse she was talking about?" Dawn asked fearfully.

"I believe someone is trying to turn her into a chaos mage. The curse is an unforgivable one. It is a killing curse. Mr. Potter's parents were murdered with one, and it's how he got his scar," Giles explained.

"How come Xander doesn't have a scar?" Kennedy asked as she looked on warily. She was worried about the girl she was coming to care for.

"I do. It's on my hip," Xander answered.

"That is most unusual. Both you and Potter are the only two people I know of that have survived the killing curse," Severus murmured as he eyed the two young men.

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Chapter 3 by Caliadragon

Across town, Ethan Rayne sat pale and shaken on his bed. The mirror still played images of Ripper and Sev. Two of his best friends, and now two of his greatest enemies. He could not allow the little witch to go through what he had. Yet how could he get his two former friends to believe that he honestly wanted to help?

He still remembered the days before he became trapped in his magic. Days when magic was just a happy by-product in his life. He had been addicted to sports and books. A strange combination, but one that made him happy. After leaving Hogwarts behind, he changed. He needed magic; then he and Ripper had their falling out, and practicing magic became as painful as it was addictive.

Ethan had never learned who was responsible for his change, and he feared what would happen to the girl. He knew that somehow this was tied in with him. The situations were too similar. Taking a deep breath, he released the spell on the mirror and left the room. He needed to talk to his friends and lay wards to protect the child.

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Giles raised an eyebrow as he felt the magical signature that had haunted and taunted him in turn over the last few years. The part of him that had been freed recently cheered for the return of his only. Yet the identity that had been created through magic and mind control tried to assert hatred. Those feelings were quickly overwhelmed with love and want.

Xander looked up from the sofa, where he sat holding the still unconscious Willow. He loved her

still. Knowing now that someone else had been controlling her, and her magic, enraged him. He was going to kill whoever had done this to his Willow.

He watched as Giles suddenly walked to the front door and, opening it, pulled the person outside the door inside and pinned them against the now closed door. "Ethan," Giles growled, as he kissed the man breathless.

Xander's mouth fell open in shock and Buffy squeaked. They shared a wide eyed gaze before turning to face the laughing vampire and smirking Wizard. "Looks like Ripper's back for good," Spike said, eyeing the pair.

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Chapter 4 by Caliadragon

Los Angeles....

Wes' head shot up and he cocked his head to the side. Angel, Cordy, Gunn and Doyle all looked at him in confusion. Their confusion mounted as he suddenly fell out of his chair howling with laughter. For several minutes he rolled on the floor. Then as suddenly as the laughter started it ended and Wes jumped to his feet shouting obscenities.

Cordy was about to demand an explanation when Wes suddenly blinked out of existence. "Holy hell, where'd he go?" she yelled. The others could only shrug and worry about the Englishman.

Sunnydale.....

Ethan moaned in disappointment as Ripper broke their kiss. "Your mine, Ethan, my Ethan," he purred gently, stroking the other Wizard.

Xander shrugged away his shock. It wasn't really that much of a surprise. Not after the day he had already had. Buffy shrugged as well and the two turned their attention back to Willow. They were more worried about her than they were interested in watching Giles make out with Ethan.

The Scoobies had long ago figured out that Ethan kept coming around and tormenting Giles to try to get the other man to notice him. It had been obvious to the trio that he had strong feelings for Giles.

Andrew let out a shriek and dove behind Xander and Buffy as Wes suddenly appeared in the room. The look of absolute fury on his face and the fact that he appeared out of thin air made both Xander and Buffy nervous. Before anyone could make a move one way or the other Wes was yelling. "Those bastards! I knew it! They never released their hold on her! I knew it! I'll kill them all!" he bellowed stalking over to the couch and Willow.

Giles, Ethan and Severus all looked at one another in confusion. Wes was kneeling in front of Willow and brushing the hair back from her face. "Oh Willow, this is all my fault. If only I had been paying closer attention. Damn Travers!" he spat out as he continued to gently stroke Willow's face.

He jerked back in surprise as Willow was suddenly in Buffy's arms and he was dangling by the throat from Xander's fist. "You knew this was happening to her and you didn't stop it? You're dead!"

Wes shook his head and gasped out. "I thought it had stopped. I had a geas on her."

Xander dropped him back to his feet and they all watched as he backed the older man away from him and into Spike. The vampire was growling dangerously. "What do you know about what's happened to our Red?" he asked dangerously.

"I-I was assigned to the Hellmouth by Dumbledore. He told me to act incompetently, and an insider in the Council made sure I was sent here as Buffy's new Watcher. We knew that Travers had done something to Willow while he was in town and had actually sent someone here before

then to mess with her magic. He wanted to control a member of Buffy's group. When I got here I put a protective ward and a geas on her, but something's happened. The geas has been damaged. Our spy sent me here. He contacted me just a few minutes ago and told what had happened.

He has been watching the Hellmouth since Travers was killed earlier this summer," Wes told them fearfully. He really didn't want to go against a newly empowered Wizard and a chipless Spike. He wouldn't win.

"Who's your spy?" Xander asked angrily. "What did they do to Willow?"

"They polluted her magic. She's under a spell. It has her addicted to magic and makes it an agony to use it," he told them sadly.

"If we bind her magic will it still be like this?" Buffy asked fearfully.

"If we bind her magic it will kill her. The only hope we have is to break the spell, but to do that we need to keep her calm and unconscious. If she's awake she will be unable to stop herself from doing magic," Wes answered.

"But she stopped doing magic before Tara died," Dawn protested.

"Yes, and look what the consequences were," Andrew said calmly.

"That was Warren's fault," Dawn growled at him.

"No, that was the Imperius Curse on him. We all fell under the curse. Dark magics are at work and they all tie in with the First and Voldermort. I failed in my duty and you all suffered because of it," Andrew told her sadly. He was the spy. He had failed to protect his charges and had nearly been lost to the dark. The babbling, fearful persona he had adopted since returning to Sunnydale fell away.

Those in the room could see the difference. He no longer hunched over as though afraid standing straight would get him slapped down. His eyes were clear and they shone with confidence and serenity.

Wes smiled at his friend and then turned back to Xander. "We need to contact Dumbledore. It's no longer safe for any of you to be on the Hellmouth. Xander is too strong and the First cannot be stopped here. Not to mention the fact that Voldermort will follow Harry wherever he goes. Our only choice is to get you all back to Hogwarts and safety."

End Notes:

Obviously this is AU. Which means that everything you know about the end of Buffy and the last few seasons of Angel are null and void in this fic. So if you're into canon, you don't want to read anything here. Also this takes place after Harry and the others have graduated from Hogwarts, but due to the war and Voldermort Harry and the others live on the grounds of Hogwarts. I've said it before and I'll say it again. No Spoilers for OotP.

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Chapter 5 by Caliadragon  
Sunnydale...

Xander looked at Wes in confusion. "How does my being too powerful make things dangerous?"

Wes sighed, but it was Spike that answered. "You have the power Xander, but none of the control. If we go to Hogwarts you can get the training you need to control your magic. I also believe that Albus could help both Willow and Ethan get control over their magic."

The wizards in the room all turned to look at him. "How do you know Dumbledore?" Rupert asked.

"I attended Hogwarts. I was in Slytherin," he answered with amusement.

"But you hate mojo!" Buffy exclaimed.

Spike chuckled, "I don't like Willow and Dru's mojo. Neither of them have the control, and they have too much power. Bloody scary." Xander was nodding in agreement.

"So, do you agree to come with us to Hogwarts?" Wes asked.

"What about the Potentials?" Xander asked.

"They will come with us, of course. I need to contact Albus and let him know what is going on. I need a mirror," Severus told them.

Buffy nodded and pointed to the hall mirror. They all followed him into the hall and watched as he pulled his wand out and muttered an incantation. A few moments later an older wizard appeared in the mirror. Behind him stood several anxious people. "Severus, are you all right?" the wizard asked. "Is Harry with you?"

"I am fine, Albus, and yes, Harry is with me. We have a situation and I need you to come here. You might as well bring the werewolf and the dog with you," Severus drawled.

"Where are you?" Sirius asked as he stepped forward, scowling at Severus.

"We are at the home of the Slayer," Severus answered.

"YOU'RE ON THE HELLMOUTH?!" Sirius roared.

Severus sneered, "Your grasp of the obvious is amazing."

Xander snickered when Harry groaned and rolled his eyes. Harry grinned up at him. "That's the same reaction I have with Willow and Anya," he whispered to Harry, who laughed in response.

The older men all turned to glare at the pair. They smiled innocently in response. Spike and Severus groaned in unison. The others were fighting down their laughter.

Xander looked at the older man in the mirror and his eyes widened in response. Behind him, Remus Lupin straightened away from the wall and gazed wide eyed at the boy. "Alexander?" he whispered hoarsely. Xander looked at him. "Do I know you?" he asked, confused.

"Yes." Remus felt pain bloom in his chest as his son looked back at him.

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Sunnydale...

Remus, Albus, Sirius, Ron, Hermione and Draco all appeared together in Buffy's living room. Sirius gasped in shock when he caught sight of Xander. Looking at his old friend he could see the agony in his amber eyes. It was then that Sirius knew without a doubt that Alexander Lupin was standing in front of him.

Xander could see the pain in the man's eyes and he wondered what was wrong with him. "Are you alright? Do you need something?" Xander asked with worry.

Harry looked between Remy and Siri and could feel the undercurrent of emotion in the pair. His friends were also wondering what was going on. Remus shook slightly. "Do you know who I am?" he asked huskily.

Xander shook his head. "Should I?"

Remus closed his eyes and nodded. "Do you know that you're adopted?" Albus asked.



Xander looked at the older man in confusion, wondering what business it was of his. "Yeah, my parents never wasted a chance to tell me that it was the biggest mistake of their lives," Xander answered bitterly.

Remus growled and his eyes flashed. "Remy, what's wrong?" Harry asked in concern.

"I had a son. Around the time your parents were murdered my mate was killed by Death Eaters. Luckily my son was with me that day. Unfortunately, due to the anti-werewolf laws I had my son taken from me and he was adopted by an American couple. You're my son, Alexander. I know you are," Remus said harshly.

Xander stared at him in shocked silence. "How do you know Xander is your son? And what are anti-werewolf laws?" Buffy asked for him.

Remus sighed. "He looks like my mate, Alexei, and he and my son smell alike."

"He looks just like Alexei," Sirius said in a hushed voice.

Xander walked back to the sofa and lifted Willow into his arms before sitting down and looking back at them. Buffy knew that he was confused and upset, and wished that Willow could be awake to help him through this.

They watched as the boy stared off into the distance blankly and gently stroked a hand up and down the girl's back. "What does this mean to our joining? Do you still want me as your son? Can we help Willow?" he asked as his eyes focused on Remus again.

"Joining, what joining?" Sirius asked. He started in surprise at seeing Ripper and Ethan. "What the hell is going on?"

Harry sighed again and began to explain everything that had happened since their arrival. At the end of it Draco began to roar with laughter. "Only you, Potter!" he gasped out. Harry rolled his eyes and stuck his tongue out at the other boy. Draco just snickered in reply.

Hermione sighed and poked him in the side. "That's quite enough, Draco. The obvious outcome of this is that they must all go to Hogwarts. I think you should all gather your things. I'm sure that we can find a cure to the curse being used on your friends," she said primly.

"Let me guess, more research?" Ron said with a groan.

Xander shook his head and Buffy giggled. He sounded just like Xander when he did that. The two friends turned their attention back to Remus. "I was going to call Oz and see if he wanted to come with us, but if you have laws against werewolves I don't want him anywhere near your world," Buffy said.

"I'm afraid you are too late for that, my dear. Daniel is at Hogwarts as we speak. He was rescued from a group of Death Eaters and is now working with our Care of Magical Creatures teacher. He and Hagrid have become fast friends," Albus told her gently.

"Well then, it looks like we had better start packing. I need to go back to LA and get the others. If I know Cordy she's ready to scream and break something by now," Wes said, making the Scoobies snicker in agreement.

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Chapter 7 by Caliadragon

Los Angeles...

Doyle, Gunn and Angel were all silently praying for Wes to reappear. Cordy was really getting pissed and none of them wanted to be there when she finally blew. The young woman was someone no one wanted to piss off on a good day, but watching Wes disappear in plain sight

had really enraged her. She was certain that Wolfram and Hart had something to do with it.

Just as she was getting ready to demand that Angel go storm the law offices and demand the return of their friend, Wes reappeared. He wasn't alone, however. Angel was shocked to see that all of the Sunnydale contingent plus a great number of teenage girls were with them. Then more people arrived and Angel recognized Spike and several powerful wizards and a young witch.

"What the hell is going on and where the fuck did you go?" Cordy snarled as she invaded the Englishman's personal space. Angel saw the amused looks on the Sunnydale contingent's faces.

Then he focused on what was bothering him the most. The four core Scoobies all felt different. Giles seemed stronger and reminded him of the night that the adults of Sunnydale were all affected by the magicked candy. Then there was Buffy. She didn't feel the same as she had the last time he saw her. In fact she felt very different. Willow was unconscious and he could smell illness all around her.

However it was Xander that drew his attention the most. The boy had always caused so many mixed emotions in Angel. He was the only one to draw his attention totally away from Buffy. The two were equally loved and equally claimed by his soul and his demon.

Angel had never told anyone that Darla had played with his curse. When he had refused to return to her, she had had a spell cast that would cause him to go insane if the curse were ever removed.

It would make him seek to kill and destroy those who were meant to complete his life. He had done just that. He had tried to humiliate and then kill Buffy, Spike and Xander. Angel knew that Xander would never befriend him. He bore the face of the demon that had fractured his innocence completely. Not that Xander had ever told anyone.

His attention was drawn away from the boy when Spike began to growl at him subvocally. Angel looked at his Childe and raised an eyebrow. "He's mine," Spike snarled. The others looked at the two vampires and Remus reached over and pulled his son away from the angry blond.

Buffy glared at Angel when he snarled at Spike. "Don't even think about it, Angel," she snapped, shocking everyone.

"What? Since when do you stand up for the bleached wonder?" Cordy asked with a sneer.

Buffy turned cold eyes on her and Cordelia actually felt intimidated. "Anyone who tries to hurt Spike or Xander will bleed. That I promise you. They have been soul joined and Spike has a soul now. Not to mention the fact that we owe our lives to him. He was helping us even without a soul," Buffy told her coldly.

Xander beamed at Buffy, and Spike was shocked and heartened by her defence of him. Giles and Dawn stepped forward to stand by their side. "If you harm Spike we'll all be after you," Dawn added.

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Chapter 8 by Caliadragon  
Los Angeles...

Angel tried to figure out just what it was he was feeling. With a shock he realized it was pride. He was proud of the fact that his Childe had gotten on the good side of his once mortal enemies. Then Buffy's words sank in completely and he realized that Spike had a soul. He gaped at his boy and said the first thing that came to mind, "Tell me who cursed you so I can kill them," not realizing that he had shifted into game face.

Spike started with surprise and those around Angel took a sudden step backwards. Buffy sighed and stepped forward. Carefully she reached up and stroked Angel's face. That in itself was a

shock to Angel. It had always been one part of him that she had never accepted. Slowly he shifted back into his human guise.

"I got my soul myself. I wasn't cursed," Spike told him softly.

"Why?" Angel asked, confused.

"We were under a spell. Spike thought he loved me and to prove it he went and got a soul. By the time he returned the spell had been broken and we became friends," Buffy explained.

"What about this soul joining you were talkin' about?" Doyle asked.

"You might as well sit down and get comfortable. This is going to take a while," Wes said.

Thirty minutes later...

The room was so quiet you could hear the tension. Xander broke it by rolling his eyes and nudging Harry. "You think the news fried their brains?"

Harry snickered and looked around at the group of shocked and appalled people. Spike was the first to laugh and in minutes it trickled through the room. Angel wrapped an arm around Buffy's shoulder and she looked up at him with a slight smile. "So we're going to Europe?" Angel asked, amused. Leave it to Xander to ease the tension.

"Yes, if you agree to go, we can send someone here to take care of your business and we will offer positions at Hogwarts. We could use the assistance and our students need the training," Albus told them kindly.

"I'm all for it," Cordy said, looking round at her friends. The others nodded in agreement. Then to their surprise she hit Wes on the arm.

"Bloody hell, Cordelia! What was that for?" Wes growled, surprised.

"For making me think the lawyers from hell took you," she answered calmly as she stood.

She took a deep breath, then began to snap out orders. Within minutes the Fang Gang was scrambling out the door and to their homes to pack for the trip. The Scoobies had run for cover and taken their group with them the minute they realized what was about to happen.

"Why are we hiding? We have powers, she doesn't," Harry asked. The others nodded in agreement.

Spike snorted and Xander shook his head sadly. "She scares vampires. Angel's over 200 years old. Trust me when I say Cordy is only second to Buffy on the danger scale and even Buffy knows to flee when Queen C starts barking out orders. If you ever get the chance, get Xan drunk and ask him to tell you about what it was like to date her," Faith said with a snicker.

The potentials were wide eyed as Xander shuddered and backed against the wall. "Damn, Faith, did ya have to remind him of that?" Buffy asked.

Xander's eyes were wide in his suddenly pale face and he was looking for escape. "Surely she's not that bad?" Mione asked, appalled.

"Not anymore. She's mellowed," Anya told them, speaking up for the first time.

Kennedy looked at her in confusion. "I thought you were Xander's ex-girlfriend. How do you know about Cordelia?"

Anya smiled. "Cordelia is the reason I am human. She made a wish and kept me on the

Hellmouth. In the other world she was killed and Giles ended up with my pendant and he smashed it, turning me into a human. I chose to answer her wish because she was truly vindictive and spiteful. Even though she knew that Xander was under a lust spell, she wanted to hurt him. Their whole dating experience was a nightmare. They were all heat and no heart," Anya answered truthfully.

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Chapter 9 by Caliadragon

Los Angeles...

It was only a matter of a few hours before everyone was ready to go. Xander had grown quiet as time went on. The others were beginning to wonder what he was thinking. They were a little worried. As time went by he had sat with Willow and begun to withdraw into himself.

It was Buffy that drew him from his thoughts. "Xander, what is it?" Xander looked up at her and she could see rage shining in his eyes. She gulped, she had only seen that look in Xander's eye a few times. Usually it meant trouble.

"I want the person responsible for this. I want them to pay for hurting Willow. For hurting all of us. Wes said the Council had something to do with this. Unfortunately they're all dead, but someone is still working this spell on Willow. I want them," he said coldly.

"We will get them," Buffy promised. She would not lose Willow. They had all come too far and fought too hard to get where they were. Xander had a strange and fascinating future waiting for him.

She had also been talking to the older wizard and he had thought there was a way to overcome Angel's curse. The last few hours had been spent waiting for the others to finish packing and talking to Angel.

She knew there was something between Angel and Xander that neither was willing to talk about. This last year had awakened her to what was going on around her. Including the undercurrents between her best friend and the man she loved more than life itself.

She knew it was cowardly, but she didn't want to know what it was between them. She knew very well that whatever it was, what she suspected it was, would make it impossible for her to go back to Angel.

Xander was surprised when Harry walked over to him and sat at his side, gently taking his hand. "It will be alright, you'll see. The Headmaster will find the answer, he always has before," Harry reassured him, thinking of the curse and the pain he had suffered the year before.

Unknown to those present the two dark haired young men had more in common than anyone could possibly foresee. Not even his best friends knew the trauma and the horror he had suffered through. Like Xander, he had kept many things to himself.

Severus and Spike had spent the last few hours talking. The subjects of their discussion were sitting side by side. Each was telling what they knew about the young men that they had found themselves sworn to. Both men were uncomfortable with the knowledge that their two young mates had spent entirely too much of their lives fighting for what was right and being preyed upon, by both their friends and by the enemy itself.

They realized that, while they were joined to the two boys, they had a long way to go to win the intimate trust that very few people ever got from the pair.

For a former Death Eater and a former soulless Vampire this seemed a momentous task. How do you win the love of two young men that represent everything you had once betrayed?

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Hogwarts.....

Xander walked through the doors of Hogwarts and froze with astonishment and wonder. He walked to the closest wall and began to run his hands over it. Anya cocked her head to the side and made a small sound. Buffy looked away from Xander's strange antics to ask Anya: "What's wrong, An?"

"Xander's touching the wall the way he used to touch me in bed," Anya answered bluntly.

Buffy blushed and Spike whistled. "Wow!" Draco said in wonder.

"This is the most beautiful building I have ever been in. Look at this, Buff, this building has to be ancient and it still looks like it's just a few years old. Whoever built this was a genius." Xander turned from the wall and ran over to the stairways. The paintings shocked the Californians by moving to keep Xander in sight. They had never seen anyone as interested in the building as Xander was.

Severus watched his young husband as he did a slow turn; his face had a look of love and rapture on it. "So beautiful," Xander murmured, entranced by Hogwarts itself.

He ran a hand up the banister in a soft caress and smiled in wonder. "This is like Disneyland and Christmas all mixed in one gift." Buffy giggled and walked to the enamoured Xander. He took her hand absently as he looked around him.

"Would you like a tour after you get settled?" Harry asked, amused and fascinated.

"Do I have to wait that long?" Xander asked, disappointed.

Harry laughed and shook his head. "I'll show you around now if you like. We can do the dungeons first, it's where we will probably be living now that we're promised to a vampire and Snape."

Xander nodded and allowed Harry to take his hand and lead him away. Buffy laughed and followed by extension, since he hadn't released her hand.

Giles shook his head and turned to the Headmaster and Severus. "Perhaps you could show us where we'll be bedding down, and take us to the infirmary to have Poppy check over Willow."

Albus nodded and proceeded to lead the group away. None of them knew that Hogwarts itself was listening, and falling for the dark haired mortal boy that had come home with the other raven haired youth that the building had bonded to. The only other person that Hogwarts had reshaped herself to comfort and protect. Harry Potter and Xander Harris were the only two direct descendants of Slytherin and Gryffindor and, in a twist of fate, their mates were the last in the lines of Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw.

Time and fate had twisted the vampire and the human into something beyond these traits, but before bitterness and cynicism had infected them, William had been a true Hufflepuff. While Severus still possessed the intelligence of a true Ravenclaw. the next generation of the founders had come together and Hogwarts intended to keep them this time.

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Chapter 10 by Caliadragon

Harry and Buffy watched as Xander went from room to room, murmuring to himself and studying everything around him. Buffy was awed by the weapons and the tapestry that they had come around. Harry was laughing and pointing out the stairwell that led to Trelawney's tower and the portrait of the Mad Knight that had once guarded the entrance to the Gryffindor tower. Both Buffy and Xander laughed when he told them some of the crazy things the Knight did.

He then led them through the dungeons and up to the next level. Everyone in the hallways stopped to watch as rooms opened themselves for him. Of the three, only Harry was startled by

this. He knew that this was not normal. Both Buffy and Xander were too enchanted by what was going on around them to notice the startled looks on everyone's faces.

When they walked into the main hall Xander and Buffy grinned at one another, before lying on the floor and staring up at the ceiling. Their laughter filled the hall. Severus, Spike and Angel stood silently absorbing the sound of the young people's laughter. It had been so long since either vampire or human had heard sincere laughter out of the three younglings. Harry couldn't believe that he was actually lying on the floor between Xander and Buffy and cloud watching in the great hall.

"Bloody hell, Potter, what are you doing?" Draco asked, amused.

"Buffy, Xander, what are you doing?" Giles asked, confused.

The three young people lifted their heads and looked at the others. "We're cloud gazing," Buffy answered, with a giggle at the looks on her friends' faces. Xander laughed and lifted up onto his elbows.

Giles wasn't the only one to stare in stunned silence. There was joy in their eyes. Joy and hope, something that they couldn't remember seeing in far too long. "Where's Wils?" Xander asked.

"She's resting. Madam Pomphrey has found the spell being used and the Headmaster knows the spell to counter its effects," Severus told them.

Buffy, Xander and Harry all jumped to their feet. "Can we go see her? Is she awake or still asleep?" Buffy and Xander asked as one. Giles sighed as he saw the guilt fill their eyes.

"She's asleep, you can see her tomorrow. For now, continue to explore and try to stay away from trouble," Giles told them.

"We try to stay away, but trouble's tricky and can track us down wherever we trail," Xander told his mentor teasingly.

"Xander!" The Sunnysdalers all said as one. Xander just laughed wickedly, before grabbing Harry and Buffy and rushing out of the hall before Dawn hit him for the rhyming.

Harry and Buffy laughed as he dragged them around. The group from the wizarding world gaped in astonishment as the hall doors flew open for the retreating trio.

"Uh, when did the doors start doing that?" Ron asked as Draco helped him sink onto one of the benches.

After they were gone Mione laughed again, "Those three will certainly keep things interesting around here."

"Ha! Wait till Willow wakes up and feels better. No one will stand a chance against them!" Dawn said proudly. Spike and Giles groaned in unison.

"I apologize in advance for the loss of your sanity. I do not know about Mr. Potter, but my three can cause dementia just by babbling at you," Giles said with a sigh. Those that knew the three Scoobies snickered in agreement. The Wizarding world would never know what hit them.

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Chapter 11 by Caliadragon

Later that night, after everyone had settled in, Xander found himself sitting in the infirmary beside Willow's bed. Ethan had already been moved to his and Giles' rooms. Madam Pomfrey had told them that Willow and Ethan would not wake until later the next day, but Xander had been unswayed. As much fun as it had been to tour the castle, Xander had soon lost interest in anything that would keep him from Willow. The mediwitch had been exasperated, but had had no choice but to let him stay.

Xander knew that he had a lot to think about. In a matter of hours his life had been turned upside down and he had been given a true chance at happiness. If only he and the others didn't end up killing each other first, or as Harry said, they didn't end up killing the two old gits. That had made both Buffy and Xander laugh.

Xander wished that Willow were awake. She should be with him, casting aspersions and making jokes about his unending parade of strange lovers. The fact that one of them had ended up being Spike was only one more oddity in the love life of Xander Harris. He knew that Willow was a strong witch, and even the Headmaster had told him that Willow was one of the most powerful witches he had ever met. With the spell on her removed she would be able to perform magic again, but would not become lost in the darker aspects of it. Xander had been thrilled to hear this, but all in all, he just wanted his Willow back.

The more he thought about what he had learned from Wes, about what had been done to both Willow and Giles, the more he began to see patterns to the Scoobies' involvement with the Watcher's Council. It was disheartening to see all that they had done to destroy the life of his friends and loved ones. Xander wondered if they had done something to Faith to drive her into madness and blood lust. Had they known that her second Watcher was evil? Xander had often wondered if they hadn't set out to destroy the dark Slayer. Until the Council refused to help heal Angel, Buffy had followed their rules and had done most of what they told her. However, Faith had always been a lone wolf.

It enraged Xander that there was no one left alive for him to punish for the crimes committed against those he loved. If he ever found out that any of them were alive, he would do everything in his power to punish and destroy them. Xander wasn't quite the White Knight everyone assumed him to be. He had lied to Buffy and sent Angel to hell without a qualm, and while he had felt justified in doing it at the time, he had always regretted punishing Angel for Angelus' crimes.

This sense of guilt only got worse after Spike had come to live with him in the basement. They had gotten into a discussion about Angelus, and Spike had been livid about Xander's remarks about his Sire. It was then that he learned that the vampire that they all knew as Angelus was not the vampire that Spike had been raised by until the death of the gypsy girl. Angelus had still been evil when Spike was first turned, but hello, demon. He had treated his Childer as though they were his precious gift. Angelus had been the one to send Dru after William. He had known that Darla would not allow him to turn the beautiful young male and so Dru had brought him into the night.

That had led to the final truce between himself and Angel. Xander had asked the older vampire to meet him in a quiet, neutral place and proceeded to tell him everything. He had also apologized. They had begun to make their peace, and that had led them to where they were today. Not quite friends, but no longer enemies.

Xander was drawn out of his musings by a shimmering light making its way over to the bed. Xander was stunned to see Tara's spirit standing at the end of Willow's bed.

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Chapter 12 by Caliadragon

"Hello, Xander," Tara said softly.

Xander felt tears fill his eyes. Somehow he knew that this was not a game the First was playing; this was truly Tara. "Tara, how?" he asked.

"I am here for Willow," Tara answered gently.

"She's going to die?" Xander asked, his voice cracking with pain.

"No, at least I hope not. The mediwitch has cured her, but because of what she did to Warren she must go through a reckoning. If she passes the test before her, she will be returned. If she fails,

she will die. As the person closest to her I have a choice as to what that reckoning must be. We are both being tested," Tara answered as she glided closer to her lover.

"What will she get if she passes? What will you get if she passes?" Xander asked anxiously.

"Peace," Tara answered simply, before she disappeared. Xander felt blackness consume him and slumped forward, unconscious. Only Hogwarts itself witnessed the disappearance of the red haired witch and her best friend. The school walled off the area and no one could enter until the test was complete.

Hours later, when everyone rose, all of the Sunnydalers and their mates went to the infirmary to make sure that Willow and Xander were all right. They were stunned to find a swearing Madam Pomfrey and a stone wall where Xander and Willow had been the night before. "Poppy, what has happened?" Albus asked worriedly.

"I don't know! I can't get past the bloody wall!" the mediwitch bellowed as she once again pounded on the grey stone in her path. Poppy didn't stand for anything coming between her and her patients, and that included Hogwarts itself!

Just as she was about to start casting curses at the building, the wall shimmered away. On the other side, three bodies lay entwined. All three were whispering to one another and the two on either side seemed to be soothing the one in the middle. No one could understand what exactly it was they were seeing until Xander shifted. Buffy screamed and ran to the bed. Lying there, holding Willow, was Tara. She turned to look at Buffy as she was suddenly tackled by the ecstatic blonde. Before they could recover, Dawn was at their sides screaming out her joy as well.

When the two settled down they looked over at Willow and again screamed, but this time in alarm. Where there were once green eyes, now there were white. "She's blind," Xander choked out, without turning his head away from Willow.

"She should get her sight back in a few days," Tara said through her tears.

"What happened? How is this possible?" Giles asked.

Xander looked up and they all gasped at the sight of his bruised and burned face. His eyes were as white as Willow's. "Willow went through a reckoning and we went with her," Tara told them mournfully.

"Reckoning, what reckoning?" Wes asked, though he was afraid he already knew.

//Flashback//

Willow and Xander moaned in abject pain as they slowly opened their eyes. All around them the air was still, yet it cut through the bodies like a knife. Breathing was terribly painful and Xander couldn't get over the feeling that he'd somehow swallowed ground glass.

"Where are we?" Willow asked, confused. The last thing she remembered was confessing the horrors that she had committed.

"We are in hell," Tara answered.

They spun to face her.

"No! You don't deserve to be here!" Willow screamed in anguish.

"I'm here for you, Willow. You once told Xander that you would do anything to give Warren back his life. You can't do that, but there is something you can do instead."



"Why is Xander here? What do I have to do?" Willow asked.

"You have to go through the flames and free Warren from the hell you cursed him to when you killed him. As for why Xander's here, he carries a burden, one that has been eating at his soul all of these years. The only way that he will ever be a true warrior is to face that burden and to be free of it. Part of that will be done at your side. He must deliver Jesse to the cleansing water. I cannot go any further with you. I can only show you the way," Tara told her, raising her voice as the wind suddenly began to rise and scream around them.

"Where do we have to go?" Xander shouted.

"Go forward into the flames. You have to find them. Only when you have freed them can you be free. There will be pain, but I know that you can do this!" Tara shouted to them as the wind whisked her away.

For several minutes the pair stared after her, then as one they turned and walked into the flames. This time, the screams that filled the air were theirs. They felt the burning agony of the flames as they danced upon their skin and each step was an agony in and of itself. More than once they had to resist the urge to go back, but something kept urging them ahead. It was surreal and they wondered if they were dreaming, but surely a dream wouldn't hurt so badly.

When they finally made it through the flames, they collapsed to the ground, sobbing out their pain and clinging to one another. Finally they looked up, and both of them cried out at the sight before them. Two bodies hung upside down and side by side. One was without skin, while the other seemed living ash. Every few minutes barbs seemed to fly from the wall and through their bodies. Xander shuddered and turned away to vomit as the two 'bodies' screamed in pain. Both Willow and Xander became violently ill when they realized just who it was they were looking at.

Together they stumbled forward. They had to save them. Willow was whimpering in pain and muttering that she was sorry. Xander was too numb to say anything. All these years and he had never thought just what he had done to all of the vampires he'd sent to hell. Or just what he had done to Angel when he'd lied about the spell. Tears slid down his cheeks as he neared Jesse.

They had only gone a few feet when tentacles attacked them. Willow screamed in pain and rage as the barbs bit into her skin. Xander's screams echoed her own, and then there was silence. Pure white light flowed from the pair and they began to burn, this time in a different light. The pair started walking again. This time when the barbs attacked them, they burned away. Neither noticed, as they were too intent on freeing the people that they had put in this hell.

As one, they touched the bodies in front of them. It was the last thing either of them saw. Minutes later they were lying side by side. Willow felt a gentle touch on her face. "I'm sorry, thank you," then there was a brush of lips across her own, before the body beside her slipped away.

"I love you," Xander heard, before a gentle kiss was laid across his bleeding brow. Then Jesse faded away.

//End Flashback//

"Then Tara came back and here we are. I'm sorry for lying to you, Buffy. I'm sorry for sending you to hell," Xander sobbed out.

"Don't, Xander. I understood and I forgave you a long time ago," Angel told him gently. What the boy had been through was horrific and Angel felt for him.

Buffy merely hugged him. She could understand why Xander had done it and had even suspected that he had lied, but she couldn't bring herself to hate him for it.

Severus, Harry and Spike all hurried over to their mate, while Kennedy walked forward carefully. Tara surprised Kennedy by smiling at her. "Hello, Kennedy," Tara said softly, while Willow

reached a hand out to her blindly.

Harry pulled Xander into his arms and held onto him tightly. They could have lost him and never known!

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Chapter 13 by Caliadragon

Later, after everyone had settled and the two who had been injured had been treated, Harry asked a question that had been plaguing him since Xander and the others had related the trial they had been through. "Why did Willow and Xander have to go through the reckoning? Mr. Rayne didn't have to go through one, nor Giles."

Tara was quiet for a moment, then she looked over at the Sunnydale-born group. "As children of the hellmouth, Xander, Willow, Cordelia and Andrew have been corrupted to a certain degree. In Xander's case, it didn't matter that he was not born on the hellmouth. He was there from the time he was six months old, and this gave the hellmouth time to bond to him and to his magic. The reason that Andrew, Willow and Jonathon were all prone to dark magic was because of that taint. Yes, they all had spells cast on them, but they are, or were, powerful in their own right. If it weren't for the hellmouth's influence, they would not have fallen to the spells. Before Willow fell to the spell and started working dark magic, her spells were less potent and more likely than not to fall apart. That was because the hellmouth was subtly fighting her." Tara paused and Harry spoke again.

"So basically the hellmouth claimed them as its children. When Willow worked light magic, it was like she was rebelling against her parent so it didn't work?"

"Yes, her getting weaker again had nothing to do with giving Xander back his magic, and everything to do with her once again fighting the hellmouth. As for Xander, he was also tainted and he has held himself back, even recently, out of guilt over what he had done to both Jesse and Angel. By allowing him to fight for Jesse's freedom from hell, he was able to assuage that guilt and burn away the taint. That is why they lost their sight. Their tears were the pure waters that were needed to cleanse the other two. Andrew was able to overcome his taint when he stood against the First and helped the Scoobies. Cordelia still has hers, but because she has no magic in her there should be no reason to worry," Tara explained.

"What I want to know is how they do magic without a wand, and how the wandless wizards know about us," Mione said curiously.

"We are with an ancient council that keeps an eye on all things supernatural. Centuries ago, we found out about one another. Every five years, until the rise of Voldemort, three children of the Watcher's were sent to Hogwarts as part of an exchange program. Ethan and Giles were two such students. Andrew and I were appointed to liaise with the Order when it became clear that we were against the ban in the Watcher's Council and that we had a talent for magic. Andrew was recruited two years ago, so was Jon. Unfortunately they, like Willow, were betrayed by the Council," Wes explained.

"Could we learn such forms of magic?" Mione asked.

"No, the form of magic that we use comes from inside us. It is an elemental magic. We could learn to use your magic, but we would be barely stronger than a squib, with a wand. The only two people that could really transfer such talents are Severus and Harry. Though Xander and Willow could learn your type of magic and still be powerful," Tara answered before anyone else could.

"I've got a question. How come you don't stutter and hide anymore?" Spike asked suddenly. "I like the change, mind you, but I am curious."

"Being dead changes a person. I realized that I have nothing to fear anymore, really, and I have Willow," Tara answered him with a smile. Kennedy shifted and looked away. "I also have Kennedy to keep me strong." Kennedy looked back at her and smiled happily. Maybe she had a future with the two witches after all.

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Chapter 14 by Caliadragon

It had been two days since the reckoning, and in that time Xander and Willow had healed from their wounds. Today, though, Harry had decided to spend more time with Xander. It seemed that they were never alone and he wanted to learn more about the other man that he was involved with. Harry had yet to work up the courage to go to either Spike or Severus, as Snape now preferred to be called, to learn more about them. He and Severus had had so much animosity between them in the past, and he was unsure how to approach Spike.

Xander seemed to have the same sort of difficulties with the other two men that Harry himself had. Harry hoped that they would be able to sneak away from the others and perhaps spend time alone on the grounds.

When Harry finally found Xander, he was amused to see that the other man was in pretty much the same predicament that he was always in. All around him were females of all ages. Xander was helping each girl with something or giving advice to one about one thing or another. When Xander saw Harry he smiled so warmly that Harry couldn't help but smile in return.

Nearby, several of the girls sighed dreamily. "They are so cute together. I hope they get to the kissing soon."

"Vi!" Rona said with a choked laugh.

"What?" Vi asked.

"You are such a slash slut!" Dawn said with a laugh.

"As if you're not. I believe you were the one begging Willow last night to make our computer work!" Vi said with a giggle.

All three girls snickered. "Hey! I wanna read more slash, feed me, Seymour!" Dawn said with a wicked smirk.

This set the other two girls off again and the three turned their attention to the retreating pair. Xander and Harry were walking out of the main hall oblivious to the reaction that each of the girls was having to them being together.

The young men walked side by side quietly, just enjoying each other's company. Xander looked around, surprised to find that he was enjoying himself. He was adjusting to the cool air more readily than he thought he would, too. He really felt as though he had come home. He would regret leaving here if that was what ended up happening at the end of the war with the First and Voldemort.

As they came upon Hagrid's cabin, the two young men waved at the group of people standing around one of Hagrid's pens, but didn't go over to them. The further they walked, the more the pair seemed to relax. After a few minutes, they began to talk of inconsequential things. "Shall we stop here? I think we're far enough out that we shouldn't have to worry about being descended upon by the hordes," Harry said with a grin. Xander laughed lightly and nodded.

Harry cast a warming charm on the gathered rocks in front of him and they sat. After sitting in silence for a few minutes, they both turned and spoke at exactly the same time.

"Harry,"

"Xander."

They laughed and shrugged at each other. "Go ahead," Xander urged.

"I was wondering if we could talk. I mean, I want to learn more about you. I want to learn about

the other two as well, but I'm not as comfortable with them as I am you," Harry told him shyly.

Xander shifted, settling himself more comfortably. "I was thinking the same thing. The truth is, I'm attracted to you. I have been from the moment I first saw you. I don't know if it's the spell or what, but I'm not sure whether to try to seduce you or continue to get to know you first," Xander told him honestly.

Harry flushed and looked down for a moment, "I'm not sure either. My only experience with sex has ended badly in the long run or nearly led to my death afterwards. What about you?"

"You just described my sex life to a T," Xander said with a laugh.

They grinned at one another, before looking away.

"Maybe we can start with a kiss," Harry offered shyly. Xander nodded and the two leaned towards one another.

The first kiss was a mere brush of the lips; the second was a little longer, the third had them both moaning and trying to devour each other.

A few minutes later the two broke apart and just stared at one another, flushed. "Again?" Harry asked.

"Oh hell, yeah," Xander murmured and pulled the smaller man into his arms.

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Chapter 15 by Caliadragon

Harry moaned as the kiss deepened again. He shivered with pleasure as he felt himself lifted off of the rock and onto Xander's lap. With a shuddering moan he wrapped himself around Xander; he had never felt such ragged emotions in his life. Despite the many people who had been with him over the years, no one had inspired such want and need. Nor had anyone ever inspired such affection.

Once again they had to pause to draw breath. Both of them sat staring at one another and gasping for breath. There was something there, a feeling that they hadn't explored or even admitted to. When they kissed again, the heat and the passion was still there, but this time it was tempered with tender exploration and slow, gliding hands.

Xander shivered against Harry and broke the kiss yet again. He was about to suggest that they go back to the castle and take this to another level. Unfortunately he never got the chance. Almost before they could react, the area around them seemed to come alive with magic. Xander and Harry drew apart, quickly got to their feet and began running. Death eaters swarmed out of the Forbidden Forest and were close on their heels.

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Spike and Severus were sitting side by side, speaking to the Headmaster and to the older members of the California group. Suddenly they both gasped at the same time. Everyone turned to look at them and they were surprised to see Spike's eyes had changed to amber and Severus was flushed. "Bloody Hell," Spike breathed out, a distant look on his face.

Severus chuckled weakly, but he also had a distant look on his face. The two men shifted in their seats and were beginning to wonder if they wouldn't have to leave the meeting to avoid embarrassing themselves, when panic and fear swept through their shared link. Spike roared and jumped to his feet, closely followed by Severus. As they were running out of the Headmaster's office, Severus shouted back, "Death eaters, they have come out of the forest and are after Harry and Xander!"

The rest of the group jumped to their feet. Xander had only undergone minimum training in the

use of his magic and even Harry wasn't strong enough to take on the Deathaters by himself. They all ran through the castle as though the hounds of hell were on their heels. By the time they reached Harry and Xander the two young men were surrounded and doing their best to defend themselves against the oncoming Deathaters. Draco and Mione were with them, along with Willow and Tara. They were casting hexes against the Deathaters. The six young people were doing well for themselves, but it was obvious that they were in great danger of being overrun and defeated.

One of the Deathaters was able to get past the two nature witches and lunge at Xander and Harry. Screams of terror and fright ripped through the air as the Deathater screamed out "Avada Kedavra!" Xander, acting on instinct, spun Harry around and took the spell himself. The next few seconds seemed to freeze in motion. As the spell impacted with Xander they saw him shudder then straighten. Xander then spun to face the Deathater. He never bothered to point his wand, Xander just lashed out with his fist and struck the Deathater so hard that the mask he wore shattered down the center.

The others quickly subdued the rest of the Deathaters, before turning to face Harry and Xander again. Xander noticed them looking at him and smiled. "That kinda tickled. Though it did piss me off. I was in the middle of getting to know Harry better and they interrupted. I thought the British were all about manners?" he asked with a snicker.

"Xander!" was yelled from all around the clearing.

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Chapter 16 by Caliadragon

Xander grinned innocently at his friends and then turned his attention back to the fallen Deathater. They all watched as the smile on his face faded away. A shiver went down their spines as Xander leaned down and struck the Deathater, causing the man to stir. McNair looked up into the cold brown eyes of the young man standing over him and wondered if facing the Dementors would not be safer. "You tried to kill Harry," Xander said in a conversational tone.

McNair paled, but faced the boy with cold resolve. These were the good guys. None of them would harm him now that he was a prisoner. "I did as my Lord ordered," he answered bravely.

"Your Lord is an idiot," Xander told him calmly.

Everyone but the California group gasped at Xander's response.

"My Lord is a brilliant man," McNair snapped.

"Really, then why is it that he can't defeat a wizard who has less training than he does and is younger than him by several decades? Why is it that he sends his idiot minions to attack a place he knows he can't defeat? If your Lord is so brilliant, then why is it that he created his greatest enemy? Obviously your precious Lord is not as smart as he thinks he is. When he killed Harry's parents he created a life long enemy. When he attacked and murdered people that Harry loved, he added to the hatred that Harry already felt for him. If you want to control something you work your way in gradually, because what you take by force can always be taken back." Xander spoke the words to the frightened man in a cold, clipped voice.

"Harry is my mate and my friend. I'm going to let you go back to your Dark Lord and you're going to tell him that he has just made a whole new group of enemies. Tell him that a group from California has joined with the Light and together we're going to make sure that Harry lives and destroys him." Xander stood, dragging McNair to his feet as he did so. "Look around you. These are the people that you will see on the battlefield. All of them are stronger than you, all of them have faced creatures that would make you wet yourself. I suggest you deliver our message, then I suggest you hide. I can promise you that, if I ever see your face again, I will kill you as slowly as I can."

McNair spun on his heel and ran into the forest. Despite all signs to the contrary he was not stupid. He knew that he would be lucky to make it back to the Dark Lord alive. It seemed that the

war had taken a new shift and McNair decided he was going to take the boy's advice and hide. That is if he could still walk after the Dark Lord finished torturing him.

After the Deatheater had run off, Xander turned back to his friends and family. They were all looking at him in shock. Spike looked at Severus and noticed that the younger man looked as surprised as he did. "Xander?"

"Yeah, Wills?"

"Your eyes," she whispered.

"What about them?" he asked, confused.

"They're green, just like Harry's," Buffy answered for the stunned witch.

Xander blinked and looked over at Harry in surprise. The smaller wizard nodded at him. "Huh, maybe it's because I've survived the curse twice?"

Albus was looking back and forth between Harry and Xander and for once the twinkle in the wizard's eyes was missing. In its place was the shrewdness that he hid from the rest of the world. "You know something," Giles said, looking at the elder wizard.

"Yes I do," Albus answered gravely. "Tom, despite his wish for it to be so, is not the Heir of Slytherin. Xander is the Heir of Slytherin."

"What?!" Severus exclaimed and turned to look at his mates.

"Do you have the ability to converse with snakes, Xander?" Albus asked.

Xander looked nervous and shared a look with Willow. "It's okay Xander, Harry can talk to snakes too," Willow assured him.

Xander turned to look at Harry with a relieved smile. "Yeah, I can talk to snakes."

"How come you never told us?" Dawn asked.

"I haven't talked to any since I was a little kid," Xander answered softly, a look of pain in his eyes as he remembered that day. The last day that he had done anything whimsical. The last day that he acknowledged that he was something beyond ordinary.

Dawn was about to ask another question, but Willow shook her head frantically. Xander smiled as he caught the action. "It's okay, Wills, Dawnie knows about my home life."

Dawn growled, "I still say you should have found a few fledges and let them eat Tony."

Xander laughed and walked over to the girl, pulling her into his arms. "You have been spending way too much time with Anya and Spike."

"Hey!" Anya and Spike yelled in unison.

The two dark haired youths laughed wickedly. "Wait, does this mean Alexi was Slytherin's heir?" Sirius asked.

"No, Remus is a descendant of Salazar's. The Lupins broke away from the Slytherins after the falling out between the Founders. Salazar's eldest daughter married a Lupin," Albus told him. Sirius looked at his friend and grinned suddenly.

"Padfoot, what are you thinking?" Remus asked nervously.

"Just a thought about a certain blond Slytherin and how he would enjoy this bit of information."

"Siri, don't you dare," Remus growled.

"Oh come on, Moony, think about it. You and Luc will have something in common now and you can finally seduce him into bed with you," Sirius told him with a wicked grin.

"I'm going to strangle you," Remus told the laughing animagus.

"Ignore him, Remy, he's just jealous." Harry told his friend.

"I am, actually. So what does Remy and Xander being Old Snake Man's descendants have to do with them surviving the killing curse and Xander's eyes going green?" Sirius asked with a grin.

"I believe that it is the power of the magic inside them that has kept them safe from the curse. However, I have always thought that Voldemort used the curse on Harry more than once. I believe that Harry's true eye color was a great deal lighter than it currently is. They both now carry the essence of the curse in their magic," Albus informed them.

"Oh my," Willow gasped, looking at the pair.

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Chapter 17 by Caliadragon

While the others were looking at the Headmaster and the two young men in shock, Tara was glaring at Albus. "Albus, one of the reasons I was allowed to come back was to stop you from pulling things just like this," she told the older man angrily.

Everyone looked at Tara in surprise. "Tara, honey, what are you talking about?" Willow asked her normally gentle lover.

"Albus has twisted the truth to suit his needs once again. What he said about Xander being the true heir to Slytherin is true, but the bit about their eye color is not. Harry has his mother's eyes. The reason that Xander's eyes have gone green is an after effect of the curse, but also an effect of the possession he suffered in high school. The color will fade in time and Xander's eyes will return to their natural color." Tara informed them calmly.

"Why lie?" Xander asked the headmaster in confusion. Albus looked down and sighed.

"I have learned many things in the last few weeks about you, Xander. I was afraid that you would panic or be upset if you knew that the reason your eye color changed was because of the hyena possession. I thought I could spare you that fear," Albus admitted.

Xander laughed and shook his head. "I wouldn't have panicked. I admit I don't like thinking about what happened while I was possessed. I hated what it made me, but my friends and family would never let me hurt anyone," Xander assured him.

"You don't have to lie to us any longer, in fact it's probably better if you don't lie. We need to know the truth if we have any chance of defeating Voldie. Though I do have one question," Xander said with a look at Tara.

"You want to know how I knew that he was lying. Simple, I was told by the Powers. It was a test to see if he would tell you the truth the next time something dire came up. I didn't know this was going to happen, and for that I am sorry. I would have tried to stop them. Or at least have warned you what was coming," Tara told him softly.

"I understand. I'm just glad you're back and we are all together. I'm hungry, let's go back to the castle. I need chocolate." Xander then grabbed Harry and Dawn and started toward the castle. Severus and Spike snickered and left Albus and the others to deal with the Aurors that would be arriving soon.

Willow and Tara shared a look before glancing over at Angel, Albus, and Giles. They then grinned at one another and spun on their heel, chasing after the others. The three older men sighed as everyone deserted them. "Bloody hell, I'll have to get Xander for this one," Giles grumbled as he spotted the Aurors coming up the hill. Albus and Angel snickered.

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Xander purred in satisfaction, his eyes closing as he devoured the chocolate one bite at a time. His soft sighs of pleasure intermingled among the purrs. Most of the people sitting around were eyeing him in awed silence. They had never seen anyone eat chocolate that way before.

"Is he eating or having an orgasm?" Draco asked Buffy, who was the nearest to him.

Buffy grinned. Like the rest of the Scoobies, she was well used to Xander's affection for chocolate. "Is there a difference?" she asked, amused.

"Yes, when he has sex his eyes are focused on you and it is you he's eating, not candy," Anya said bluntly. "You three are very lucky, Xander has an oral fixation. He likes to—"

"Anya!" Willow called quickly, while the others grinned at the wicked light that had entered Anya's eyes.

"What?" Anya asked innocently, while Xander burst into laughter. The pair shared a grin.

"You've been playing us!" Buffy accused.

"Of course, Buffy, I have been alive for over 1200 years. In that time I have lived among mortals, causing chaos and doom. I was expected to have decorum in many of the places I visited before granting the woman's wish. Xander let me torment all of you since I could no longer maim to my hearts content," Anya told her with amusement.

"Besides, we like to ruffle Giles and see how many blushes we can get out of Willow and Tara in an hour," Xander added with a laugh.

Buffy giggled. "Can we repeat this conversation for Giles? I wanna see how long it takes him to pull off his glasses and clean them!"

Dawn laughed. "Please?" she asked.

The Scoobies all shared a look before turning to look at the others. "I'm in," Draco said with a smirk. Anything that embarrassed someone else was fine with him.

"Sounds like a plan to me, what about you, English, you in?" Gunn asked Wesley. The older man gave them an evil grin.

"Let's, only this time Anya gets to finish that sentence." Wesley's words brought a round of laughter from the rest of the group. Minerva giggled; it was rare that she encountered such a mischievous group.

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Chapter 18 by Caliadragon

The joke played on Giles didn't go as everyone had hoped and planned. Instead they were shown the new side of Giles that was released now that Ethan had been returned to him. Giles had merely committed on how lucky Severus, Spike, and Harry were and left it at that. The table had erupted in delighted laughter, especially from those that had known him before the ending of the spell.

Severus and Spike had gone off to help research for more information on the First with Giles, Ethan, Wesley and Dumbledore and gradually the groups faded away. Hermione had taken Harry with her and it left Xander with just Remus and Sirius in the room. After a quick grin for the



two men, Sirius had wandered off to find what trouble he could get himself into.

"I \*missed\* you, missed getting to see you grow." Remus said sadly.

"I wish I had a way to show you what it was like, and to learn what it would have been like to be raised by you," Xander said in response. He had gotten to spend time with his father in the last few days and found that he really liked the man. There was a void in both of their lives and they both wished that Remus would have been the one to raise Xander.

Halfrek, who had been listening, smiled to herself. It was rare to answer a wish such as theirs, but that was exactly what she was going to do. With two fateful words two minds were joined, "Wish granted."

Anya looked up from the book she was holding, and surged to her feet. "\* XANDER!\*" She screamed suddenly.

She ran from the library and back down into the main hall, Dawn who had been sitting with her, ran after Anya. She wondered how Anya knew something had happened to Xander, but didn't question it.

As Anya was running to Xander, Cordy and Faith were also tearing down the hall to their fallen friend from the Gryffindor tower. From the opposite direction Severus, Harry, and Spike were also running. On their heels were the men that they had been researching with.

When the group reached the main hall it was Anya that burst in first. The doors flew open under the force of her worry and fear. Her eyes froze everyone in her path with the dark gleam of vengeance and rage. As one the people running to Xander stopped and stepped back away from Anya. It was then that they saw Anya for the dangerous and protective creature she was.

"Relax Anyanka. I have not hurt your former love," Hallie said gently. Anya growled at her. "Really Anyanka, I did not hurt him. They both wished to see the life that they would have had had Remus been allowed to raise Alexander. They were also wishing to see what the others life was like up to now."

Anya growled again. "Xander would not have wanted his father to know what happened to him." Anya told her angrily.

"What do you mean what happened to him?" Buffy demanded.

Anya bared her teeth at the slayer, who backed away suddenly. "If Xander wanted you to know he would have told you his secrets. Since he didn't it is obvious it is none of your business." Buffy nodded, not wanting to piss the former demon off anymore than she already was.

"Anyanka, they share a common pain." Hallie told her gently.

Anya spun to face her, a look of inhuman fury crossing her face. Whimpers stole from several people and Dawn wailed in anguish. This brought another wave of shock and rage from Anya. "You knew?" Anya asked Dawn.

"I'm a million year old being, when Willow's Tabula Rosa spell broke I regained memories of many things. I never told anyone, but I also regained the memories of my creation. The monks didn't choose where I would come to. I did. I knew everyone, every life, every person as the Key. I chose Joyce as my mother and Buffy as my sister. I know the sorrow, the pain, the loneliness of everyone of our friends and family. I know the terror and the shattering heart break that they have all suffered in their lives. I know the secrets that they have never shared with anyone. I know the faults and the virtues; it is why I chose you." Dawn whispered to them, her greatest secret was released now.

The Scoobies and the Fang Gang moved to her and each of them hugged her. To know that she

had still chosen to become a part of their lives had touched them deeply. None more so than Buffy, she had always thought it was only her strength that had had her chosen to be Dawn's sister. To know that Dawn had chosen her knowing how screwed up she was, humbled her and made her love Dawn more. "Thank you," Buffy whispered to her as she finally got to hug her sister.

Tbc...

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