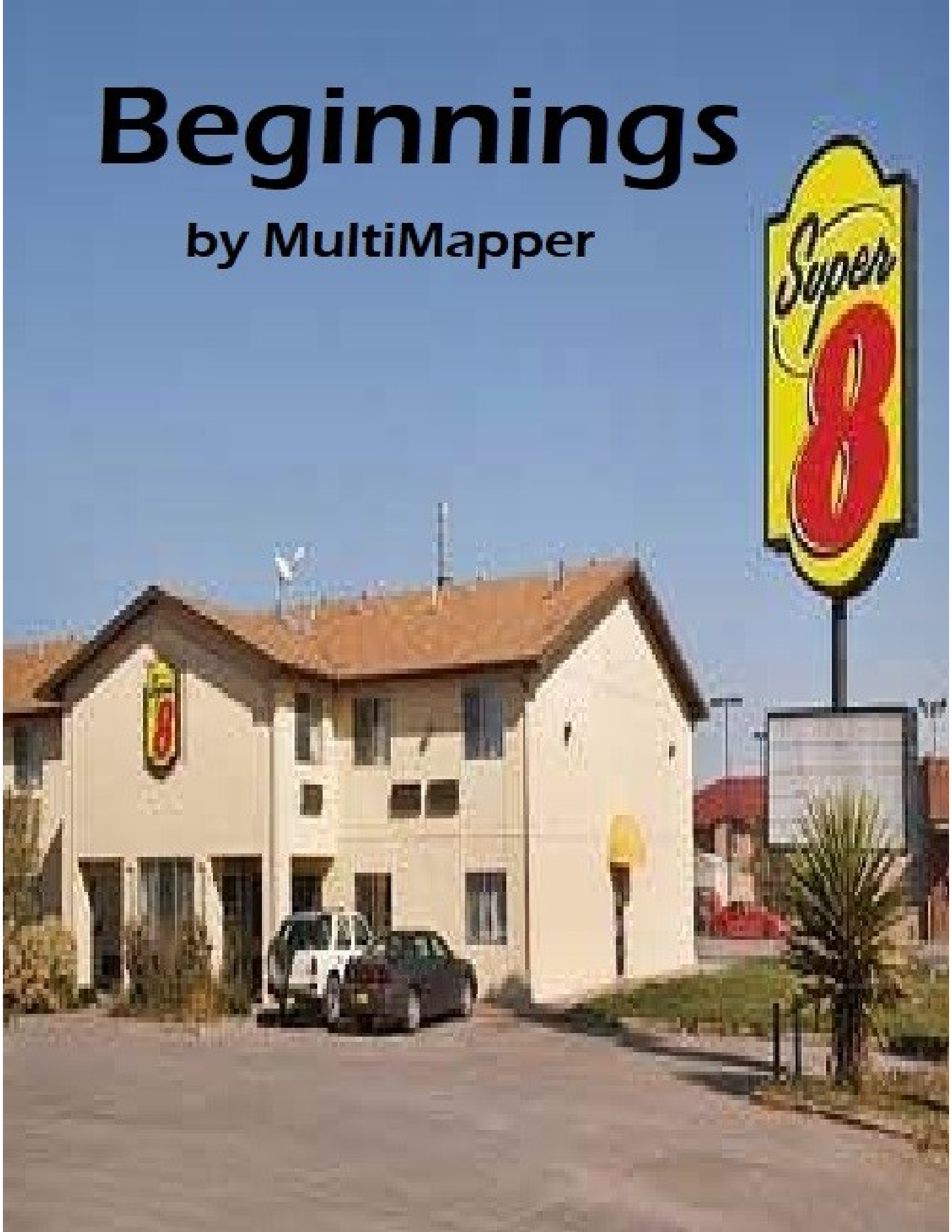


# Beginnings

by MultiMapper



# **Beginnings**

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# Book 1: The Beginnings End

## Chapter 1

The bus pulled into a truck stop. Xander had been waiting impatiently for this, he knew that the time was coming. The girls were still buzzing with excitement over winning the battle with the first and closing the hellmouth forever. Since they had gotten on the bus, Xander had been feeling the movement in his belly. He had suspected this for weeks, and now he was sure.

Xander got off the bus and searched around for Faith. He found Faith and Buffy together and spoke to them as one, "I'll be back in a little while, go ahead and eat without me." he said, looking from one slayer to the other.

"You okay Xan?" Faith asked with genuine concern as Buffy nodded and walked away.

"Fine, just need a major bathroom break." Xander replied with an embarrassed smile.

"I'll see to it that we don't leave without you." Faith said, then walked to join the others in the restaurant. Xander made his way in the opposite direction to the restrooms.

He entered a bathroom stall, making note that this bathroom was sparkling clean. He had expected this place to be as nasty as the gas station bathroom that they had visited earlier. As he felt another movement under his skin, he lifted his shirt and examined his distended belly. The girls had been teasing him about how fat he had gotten over the past few months. Dawn had been the only one who didn't make fun of him. She had said that he looked good with a little extra weight, like a man instead of a boy.

He felt under the lump in his belly and noticed that an opening had formed. [Phew!] he thought to himself. I'm glad it's got a way to get out, because I sure didn't want to try this the natural way.

That's when the urge to push came upon him. It wasn't agonizing pain, just a contraction of some muscles in his abdomen pushing his little lump downward. Gently, he pushed with his hands also. He had an instinctive knowledge of what he needed to do. The lump had shifted down about 6 inches when the pushing urge stopped. Then he noticed that he was covered with a fine sheen of sweat.

He lowered his shirt and left the bathroom stall to wash his face. He began to feel the pushing urge again and made his way back into the bathroom stall. He really didn't want this being interrupted by a trucker needing to take a whiz.

He closed the stall, lifted the shirt and began the pushing again. This bout of pushing resulted in the lump pressing against the small opening that was below his belt line. He pressed his fingers into the opening and felt something leathery.

With a gasp, another pushing urge hit suddenly and with one hand above the lump, and one hand below to catch it, the lump made its way out of the opening. He couldn't say that there was any real pain involved, just a sense of pushing and tightness and finally release.

Xander held the thing and puzzled as to what it was. Firstly, it was alive. It moved. Secondly, it was like a misshapen, half-deflated football. It was a little bigger than a football, and it was a fleshy color between tan and pink. Then the pieces began to fall into place. It was an egg. His egg. Many years before, when he was on the swim team, the coach had exposed him to something in the steam of the steam room. Other members of the swim team had changed into Creatures from the Black Lagoon. He had been taken to the hospital and given transfusions to 'clean' the stuff out of him.

[Yeah, like cleaning dye out of a white shirt.] he thought bitterly. Since the swim team were able to fight and live on land, they had to be reptiles, amphibians, or water mammals. So that's what he had become, at least a little. Although he didn't go through the complete transformation like Dodd and Cameron, it had changed him. And now he had laid an egg. [The girls are going to love this one!] he thought.

Then he began to consider the girls' probable reactions. Ridicule, teasing, they might even try to kill his baby.

He took off his outer flannel shirt and wrapped the egg. Then, making sure that he was decent, he stepped out of the stall to the bathroom sink. He took a few towels and wet them, placing them around the egg to keep it moist. As he was finishing, the bathroom door opened and a trucker walked in. Xander just picked up his little bundle of flannel and walked out the bathroom.

He walked into the restaurant and up to the lady at the cash register, "Where is the nearest decent motel around here?" he asked. She considered him for a moment and said, "There's a Super 8 about a half mile up this road." "Thanks." he said as he turned and walked over to Faith.

Faith was eating a giant greasy lunch when Xander interrupted her. "Faith, can I talk to you for a minute, in private?"

"Sure, what's up, Xan?" Faith responded, getting up from her booth.

Xander led her outside and around the corner of the restaurant. "Faith, you're the only one I trust not to go all ballistic about this, and I need someone to keep the Queen B from coming after me."

Faith began to look worried and asked, "What's the problem Xan, you know I've got your back."

"This." Xander said, opening the flannel bundle to reveal a leathery beige mass.

"Okay... " Faith said questioningly, "What is it?"

"It's an egg. My egg. I just, I dunno, delivered it, in the bathroom." Xander said, with a flushed face.

Faith was stunned into silence, then she put her hand on his belly to see that it was flattened back to the way it was a year ago.

"How? Who?" Faith asked in stunned disbelief.

"Long story Faith, and we don't have time. I don't know what Buffy will do if she finds out, but I can't imagine it being anything good. This is going to be my child, whatever species it turns out to be, and it will be raised knowing that it is loved and wanted." Xander said with conviction.

"In the years that I've fought along side Buffy and the others, I've felt many things, but loved and wanted wasn't among them." He said quietly.

"Why wouldn't B like your baby?" Faith asked, truly confused.

"I don't know if it's going to look human. I think the reason that I was able to have a child was because I was changed many years ago. I think I'm like an amphibian or something. So my child might have gills or a tail. Then there is the matter of the other parent..." Xander trailed off.

"Spike, huh?" Faith asked knowingly.

"You knew? Here I thought we hid it pretty well." Xander said with surprise.

"Well, I just noticed that you two were getting chummy about 7 or 8 months back, I didn't know you were 'doing it', I just figured that you were becoming friends.

"We had a few nights together, then we decided that we were better as friends. Then Spike fell for Buffy again. Which was okay with me, he was a friend and in the end I just wanted him to be happy." Xander said sadly, thinking of the sacrifice that Spike had made for all of them.

"I didn't think vampires could, you know, father children." Faith said nervously.

"I didn't think so either, but I guess the combination of him and whatever I have become can. Because here is our child, and it IS his. It couldn't be anyone else's." Xander said with finality.

"So what are you going to do now?" Faith asked quietly, also thinking about Spike's sacrifice.

"Right now, I'm going to get a motel room, then I'm going to sit down and figure out what to do next. All I know for sure is that I have to get away from Buffy, every instinct that I have tells me to take my baby and get as far away from her as I can." Xander replied with a little fear showing in his voice.

"Get on the bus, I'll drive you where you need to go and be back before the girls are finished eating. C'mon." Faith said quickly.

On the bus, a few minutes later, Faith asked, "Why'd you come to me? I thought Willow was your best bud."

"Willow would have tried to talk me into going with you. And if I said 'no' she would have gone to Buffy. I trust you Faith, I trust you to do what needs to be done, even when you don't like it." Xander said with assurance.

"Yeah." Was all that Faith could think to say.

"Here it is, the Super 8. Pull in here and I'll get my stuff." Xander said hurriedly.

Faith parked the bus in the truck parking area. Xander was pulling his things out of the back of the bus with one hand, protecting his egg gently in the other.

"I can hold your... egg... while you get your things." Faith said cautiously.

Xander thought about it for a second before handing his precious bundle to Faith.

She held the flannel bundle reverently and watched while Xander extracted three suitcases from the pile of luggage.

He got his things off the bus, then stepped back onto the bus and took his precious bundle back.

"I guess this is goodbye." Faith said with tears of emotion creeping into her voice.

"Yeah, but I'm trying to think of it as a new beginning." He said with equal emotion.

"What do you want me to tell the girls?" She asked, thinking about the probable reactions of leaving without Xander.

"Tell them that I hitched a ride with an old friend I ran into at the truck stop, and that I'll try to meet up with them in Cleveland. That should throw them off my trail." He said sadly.

She gave him a hug, careful not to squish his bundle.

"I remember your email address. I'll let you know when I've decided what I'm going to do. You'd better go now. The girls will be finished soon." Xander said as he left the bus.

Faith got back into the driver's seat and started the bus. Xander watched as she pulled away from the motel. Then he turned and went to the lobby of the motel to check in.

# Book 2: Greetings From Moriarty

## Chapter 1

Xander sat in his motel room, absently stroking a wet towel over the surface of his egg. While sitting, he let his mind wander over the series of events that brought him to this point.

While he was a member of the swim team in high school, the coach had put something in the steam of the steam-room that changed him. Although he didn't know what exactly was put into the steam, he knew that the blood transfusions had only purged the toxic effects of it from his system. The steam had saturated his skin and he had breathed the steam in. A blood transfusion was unlikely to cleanse everything out of him.

He had felt different since the steam incident. He was a better swimmer, which was actually the Coach's purpose from the beginning. He also had a need for water, which he kept very private. Since his swim-team days, he would take 2 to 3 showers a day, and if he went without a shower for a full day, he became physically ill. But on the up side, he no longer had an allergy to shellfish. There's that silver lining!

He felt the egg move in his arms and changed his focus back to his child. What was it going to be? He assumed that he was able to conceive a child because he had sea monster DNA or something, did that mean his child would have gills? scales? fins? Maybe, maybe not, since he didn't have any of those things, his child might not either. But what would his child inherit from it's other father? A taste for blood? Would the child be sunlight challenged? Would his child... have a soul?

There were so many questions running through his head, and absolutely NO answers to be found. He had left his support group at the truck stop. Even though he didn't regret his decision to leave, he could really use someone to talk to. If it was just him, he would tough it out. But now he had to do what was best for his baby.

And that means getting somewhere that his child could get some medical attention if it was needed. Somewhere that a hybrid human/sea monster/vampire child might grow up to be accepted, and have a good self image. Xander now knew what he had to do. He had to find a way to join the things that go bump in the night, and become part of their community. Give his child some kind of connection to others. If the baby didn't look entirely human, people would think it was deformed and he couldn't allow his child to go through that kind of trauma.

He went to one of his suitcases and opened an address book. Sitting back on the bed, by his child's egg, he picked up the phone and dialed a number that he thought he would NEVER call.

The phone rang twice, then an unfamiliar voice answered, "Angel investigations, we help the helpless."

"Hello, could I speak to Angel please? It's kind of important, tell him it's Xander Harris..." Xander said nervously into the phone.

He could hear the phone being set down and whoever it was yelling for Angel in the background.

Xander lifted the egg into his lap and began stroking it with the damp towel, knowing instinctively that the shell needed to stay moist.

"Xander? What's the problem?" Angel asked, his voice full of concern.

"Dead... Sorry, Angel, some things have happened. And you were the only person that I could think of that could help me." Xander said quietly.

"Xander, tell me what happened." Angel said patiently.

"Spike and I were... like... together... a while back. And neither one of us ever considered that this could happen, I mean he said that since he was dead, that we didn't need to be... safe... " Xander stopped, trying to think of exactly how to say it.

"Did you get a disease? Tell me what happened." Angel said, a little louder, becoming worried.

"Somehow I... uh... got... pregnant... sort of." Xander stammered.

"YOU WHAT!?" Angel screamed.

By now Xander was becoming emotional, as tears leaked out of his eyes he said, "We stopped at this truck stop... and I went to the bathroom... I gave birth to this... egg... today around lunch time. And now I ::sob:: don't know what to do. I mean if my baby is part demon, I need to take it someplace where a demon can grow up safe. And that's why I called you, because with Sunnydale blown up, I don't know where else to go."

Angel was truly dumbfounded. He never had a high opinion of the boy but he couldn't do anything but offer any and every resource at his command to aid the boy and his child.

"Xander, where are you. Is Buffy there with you?" Angel asked in a comforting voice.

"I'm in a motel room, in Moriarty, New Mexico. Buffy and the others are on their way to Cleveland, they think I got a ride at the truck stop." Xander said, hoping that Angel would help.

"What motel? Which room?" Angel asked, obviously he had a plan.

"Super 8, room 12. What are you going to do?" Xander asked shakily.

"I'm going to send someone to get you. You just stay right there and take care of yourself and your child. I'll call Wesley and see if he can come and get you. I'd do it, but it would double our traveling time... " Angel said in an uncharacteristic ramble.



"Yeah, traveling only at night, I get it. Okay, I'll be right here, waiting for him." Xander said with relief.

"Don't worry Xander, everything will be alright. Wesley will be there soon, and he'll bring you back to L.A. And once you're here, we can make sure that your child has everything it needs." Angel said, and Xander could hear a comforting smile in the words.

"Thanks, Angel. I'll be waiting. Goodbye." Xander said, waiting for Angel's 'goodbye' before hanging up the phone.

He thought about how things had changed in the last few years. Not too many years ago, he would have trusted Buffy with his life, his love, his everything. And he wouldn't have trusted Angel under any conceivable circumstances. But there's the problem. These circumstances were inconceivable back then. That Buffy would have died and come back... wrong. And that he and Spike would have finally stopped sniping at each other long enough to realize that they actually liked each other and had things in common. That he would give birth... yeah, that one came out of left field.

For whatever reason, he felt in his gut that he could trust Angel, and that this was going to be the best thing that he could do for his child.

"Don't worry little one," He said to his egg while stroking the shell, "I've called some friends who are going to make sure that you're safe. Remember that your poppa loves you and will always do what's best for you."

\* \* \* \* \*

"You want me to DRIVE to NEW MEXICO? Angel, even if I was your flunky, which I am not, I wouldn't drive to New Mexico for you." Wesley barked into the phone.

"Wesley, just listen. It's Xander, something's happened, he didn't tell me everything but it sounds very serious. I'm asking you because he know's you, and I think that he needs a friend as much as he needs a ride to L.A."

"He's not my friend, Angel. He's never said one word to me that wasn't an insult." Wesley interrupted.

"Granted, if not a friend, then at least a familiar face. He doesn't know Gunn and Fred can't drive. I would do it, but I couldn't drive during the day. Here's the bottom line, you know all the possessions and magics that he's been through. Something changed him enough to be able to conceive a child. He gave birth today... in a truck stop bathroom. He's alone in a motel room and he's scared for his child. Wesley, please help him." Angel finished in a whisper.

Wesley stopped, stunned. Xander had given birth. And now he was alone. He needed someone to help him, and Angel thought him best for the job.

"Very well, I'll go get him." Wesley said shortly.

"Super 8, Room 12, Moriarty, New Mexico." Angel said quietly.

Wesley just hung up the phone.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next day, approximately 24 hours after his call to Angel. Xander heard a knock on his door. He laid a wet cloth across the eggs shell, and went to answer it.

"Wes? Did you drive straight through?" Xander asked in surprise at the weary expression on Wesley's face.

"Yes, how are you doing? How's the baby?" Wesley asked as he was ushered into the room.

"The baby is in the bathroom sink. Why don't you lay down, you look beat." Xander said with concern as he walked back to the bathroom.

"In the sink? Are you crazy?" Wesley said as he ran past Xander into the bathroom and stopped in shock.

In the sink he saw a beige mass, sitting in about 2 inches of water and partially covered with a wet towel.

"Whaat?" Was all that Wesley could make himself say.

"I guess from your reaction that Angel didn't tell you that I had an... egg." Xander said sheepishly as he took the towel and began to wash the egg again.

"No, he failed to mention that detail." Wesley said in a daze.

Just then he could detect movement within the leathery mass. Xander immediately bent down and began to talk to the egg. "Shhh. It's okay, poppa's here. Wesley came to help us. Don't worry little one. You're not alone, love."

Wesley was taken aback by the tender note in Xander's voice. He had never felt anything but dislike for the crass youth during their brief acquaintance in Sunnydale. To hear such tenderness from him seemed to be counter to all Wesley's preconceived notions about the boy.

"Wes, I was serious, you look like you need to get some sleep. I need to keep the shell wet so I won't bother you while you're sleeping." Xander said with a note of concern.

Wesley just nodded his head and went into the other room. After retrieving a few things from the car, he was in bed and fast asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next morning Wesley awoke to find Xander asleep, sitting on the couch holding his egg against his bare chest. Wesley could only sit and watch amazed at the tender look of joy on Xander's face as he slept.

Xander opened his eyes to find Wesley watching him in disbelief. "Mornin Wes, I bet you're hungry." Xander said sleepily.

"Quite." Wesley answered softly.

"There's a restaurant next door, but the truck stop down the road has much better food... at least it looked better." Xander said as he got himself off the couch and carried the egg to the bathroom.

Wesley followed Xander to the bathroom door and watched as Xander put the egg in the sink and poured bottled water over the shell. When Xander caught Wesley's reflection in the mirror he said, "The tap water was drying out the shell, chlorine I think. So I went to the vending machine and bought some bottles of water. It seems to be working."

"I see." Wesley said, then thought about food. "What say we pack everything into the car, and I can get the food at the truck stop 'to go' so we can get on the road."

"Good idea, and we should get a few bottles of water, too. We're going to have to keep the baby wet and cool on the trip back to L.A. Just let us get a quick shower and we'll get ready to go." Xander replied.

Wesley nodded in acceptance.

About ten minutes later Xander walked out of the bathroom, looking refreshed. During the time that Xander had been showering, Wesley had returned his few meager possessions to the car, then waited for Xander to finish. Xander began to pack up his things but every few seconds, Xander would make a trip into the bathroom to check on the egg. Wesley finally had enough and said, "If you'd like, I'll watch the... baby... for you while you finish packing."

Xander got an appreciative smile on his face and said, "Thanks Wes, that'll help a lot."

Within minutes they had the car packed and ready to go. Xander then said, "Wesley, would you hold the baby while I check out of the motel?"

Wesley nodded in assent and received a wet bundle of towels covering a leathery egg. About 30 seconds after Xander left the car, the egg began twitching and thrashing. Wesley remembered the previous night and began to talk, "Don't worry little one, your poppa has gone to check out of the motel, but you're not alone. Uncle Wesley is here to watch over you."

Wesley smiled as the egg began to calm again. A few minutes later Xander returned to the car and they were on their way.

## Chapter 2

About two hours out on the open road, Xander broke the silence, "Wes?"

Wesley glanced over at Xander and lifted an eyebrow.

"I just wanted to say I'm sorry." Xander said sheepishly, while stroking the egg under the wet towels.

"For what?" Wesley asked, a little coldly.

"For treating you bad, Wes, I never gave you a chance and I was awful to you. I don't have any excuses, I was a jerk." Xander finished quietly.

Wesley continued driving, with no expression. Xander looked up from his egg, then asked, "Wes?"

"Do go on, I'll stop you when I disagree with something you've said." Wesley said primly.

Xander stared in shock. Then he turned his gaze back onto his egg, and continued to stroke while thinking.

[Why should he forgive me?] Xander thought to himself. He couldn't think of one good reason. He had given Wesley no reason to ever do anything for him, and yet here he was.

"If I promise to act better, would you think about giving me another chance to be your friend?" Xander asked hesitantly.

"I have no reason to trust in your promises. But be that as it may, I will offer this in return. You treat me with respect and I will do the same for you. If we can manage civility, then perhaps one day, we can attempt friendship." Wesley said very seriously.

Xander thought about Wesley's offer and was about to accept when something occurred to him.

"Wesley?"

"Yes?"

"I know it sounds a little weird but, I'm not sure I know how to be civil. I mean, I know what I think of as civil, but I don't think it's the same thing that you think of as civil. Do you know what I mean?" Xander babbled to a halt.

"Strangely enough, I believe I do. Very well, if you will try to be civil, I will understand if you slip up, but be aware that I will bring such occasions to your attention, privately of course, and if I find that you are not sincerely trying, the deal is off." Wesley said with steel in his voice.

Xander thought about it, bargaining for the possibility of future friendship. Then it occurred to him that Wesley had already given him what he wanted, in his own way he had said that they could possibly be friends. Now he just had to prove to Wesley that he was serious about wanting him as a friend. Realizing that, he smiled, "Thank you Wesley, thank you for the offer and thank you for coming to get me from New Mexico."

"You're very welcome Alexander." Wesley said formally.

Xander flinched at the use of his formal name but decided that he could live with it from Wesley.

Another hour of silence passed before Wesley spoke, "Alexander, do you have any idea what made you able to conceive?"

Xander thought only a moment before answering, "I was on the swim team in high school. The coach added something to the steam in the steam room to change us. The guys that were on the swim team longest, changed into monsters, they looked like the creature from the black lagoon. When we discovered what he did, the rest of us were taken to the hospital and given transfusions to remove the poison from our systems. But the stuff was in the steam, so it saturated our skins and we breathed it in. Ever since I left the hospital, I haven't been able to go more than half a day without getting wet or I feel bad. If I go a full day, I get sick. And seeing as I've laid an egg, I think I was changed into a sort of amphibian or reptile."

Wesley thought about what Xander had said for a moment, then said, "So that's why you made a point of taking a shower before we left the motel room?"

"Yes, and if we are going to drive straight through it could be a problem. I mean it won't do any serious damage, but I'll be sick for a few days after we get to L.A." Xander said apologetically.

"We can stop later tonight. I'll call Angel when we do to let him know what's going on." Wesley said evenly.

Xander opened another bottle of water and began to wet the towels around the egg.

"Why do you feel it is necessary to keep the egg moist?" Wesley asked with honest curiosity.

"It just seems to be the right thing to do. I suppose I'm following my instinct, besides, when I have let the egg dry out a little, it becomes agitated." Xander replied.

"Do you have any other left-over effects from your adventures?" Wesley asked.

Xander thought, then began, "Well, I do heal a lot faster and better than most people. I mean, about 2 months ago, I lost an eye, it was completely gouged out. It grew back. I stopped wearing the eye-patch when I left the others and got the motel room. I think that's part of the sea monster steam thing. I mean, you know that you can cut the tail off some

lizards and it'll grow back? Oh yeah, I can see in almost complete dark and smell things better than most people can. I think that's from the hyena possession."

Xander stopped for just a second then continued.

"When Ethan Rayne did a spell on Halloween that made everyone become what they dressed up as, I was dressed as a soldier. So I have this guy's memories, his name was Sergeant Christian Allen Milford. He was a munitions expert..."

"Does Mr. Giles know about all this?" Wesley asked in disbelief.

"Oh no, I've never told anyone. Giles knows that I remember the soldier stuff and the hyena possession but he doesn't know that I have her senses or can hear her in the back of my mind." Xander said simply.

"Why didn't you tell him?" Wesley asked, concerned.

"He didn't seem to want to know. I mean, he knew that I remembered the hyena possession but never asked me anymore about it, and he knew that I remembered the soldier, but never asked how much I knew about him, never even asked his name." Xander answered.

"So is that everything?" Wesley asked, a little concerned.

"Oh no, there's more. When I was split into two people, Willow broke the spell by saying something like 'undo the spell'. I became one person, physically, but there are two of me in here. But it's really okay. The shy, quiet me likes to stay in the background and he just takes over when I'm bored. He likes to read and watch discovery channel. This me, the one who's talking to you is the one out front most times." Xander said freely.

"Why didn't you tell Mr. Giles and Ms. Rosenberg that you weren't reintegrated?" Wesley asked, disbelieving.

"Well I, er we, discussed it and decided that we both want to live. I mean, when the demon split us into two people, it made us individuals. We LIKE being individuals, we like BEING. We both have life and enjoy different things. So whenever I get the chance to do something one of me likes to do, that one takes over and does it. We get along and are both fully aware, so it's not like some Cybil thing happening. I mean, technically I DO have multiple personalities but they were formed when I was two separate people so I figure it's okay." Xander answered, starting to get a little nervous.

"Then that's the lot?" Wesley asked with wide eyes, glancing at Xander.

Xander shyly looked at Wesley and shook his head.

"I was also infected with every disease that the white men introduced to the Chumash tribe indigenous to Sunnydale. Since then, I haven't had any disease. And when I was in the thrall of Dracula, I... well, that's more of a preference than an ability..." Xander trailed off.

Wesley focused back on his driving, and began to process the information. He had the strangest feeling that these weren't all Xander's abilities.

Xander was feeling like he may have said too much, and now Wesley would think he was too strange to be his friend. So he thought, [time to try out this civility thing and see how it works.]

"So, do you think I'm a freak?" Xander asked Wesley quietly.

"No Alexander, I do not." Wesley answered immediately.

Xander just nodded his head and began stroking the egg again.

"Alexander, I must say that I am surprised that you shared all that with me. May I ask why?" Wesley asked quietly.

"Short answer... you asked, no one ever did before. Long answer... I trust you Wesley, I mean... I never took the time to get to know you and I wasn't nice to you but I've always trusted you. From the little that we worked together I saw enough to know that you do what you believe is right and you are loyal. You may have noticed that I trust my instincts, and my instincts say that you are someone that I can depend on."

Once again they fell into silence. As the road and the time passed them by, they were both considering the things that had been said.

After a while, Wesley inquired, "Alexander, may I ask you a somewhat personal question?"

"Of course Wesley, but I might choose not to answer." Xander responded in his most polite manor.

"I was curious about the baby's other parent, simply for the sake of determining what your baby's genetic make up is. Was he human?" Wesley asked, trying not to offend.

Xander gave a gentle smile, "Don't worry Wesley, I'm not sensitive about my baby's other father. It was Spike."

Wesley was shocked. The baby's other father was William the Bloody, the Childe of Angelus. Then he began to look at all the pieces that went into the making of this baby. So on top of all of Alexander's physical alterations, possessions, and magics that went into making this baby, the other father was a master vampire, which makes the baby a natural being fathered by an unnatural creature. That means that human or demon influences could come from that side of the baby's makeup. [There bloody well has to be a prophecy about this child.] Wesley thought as he tried to focus back on his driving.

The mention of Spike seemed to have effectively killed the conversation. So the two stayed mostly silent for the rest of the evening, and late into the evening, they stopped at a motel to rest for the night.

# Book 3: Broken Bridges

## Chapter 1

*Author's Note: The character 'The Shamenka' was created by Shamenka and is being used with her permission.*

Xander and Wesley had traveled all morning and well into the afternoon without saying more than a dozen words to each other. The silence wasn't strained or uncomfortable, they were both caught up in their own thoughts, contemplating events past, present and future.

When they had entered California, Xander felt his heart lurch. He knew that the past feelings between Wesley and himself were tender and loving compared to his past with Angel. He had not only been rude and nasty to Angel, he had been downright hateful. Not to mention that he had been responsible for sending Angel to hell for centuries.

If it weren't for the welfare of his baby, Xander wouldn't consider asking Angel for anything. Not out of a dislike for Angel but out of a sense of shame for his own actions. He knew that he was justified in one or two of his actions but for the most part he had acted out of jealousy, anger, and eventually, habit.

Now he had to stand before the one being on all the planet who had the most reason to want him to suffer. He had to stand before him and ask for his help. When they entered Los Angeles, Xander could feel a little tremble start deep inside himself. He couldn't explain exactly what the feeling was. Dread? Fear? Humiliation? Whatever it was, it was only going to grow stronger, the closer they got to Angel.

Finally they arrived at the Hyperion hotel. Xander got out of the car and looked up at the building. An old style building, grand majesty, the building had a dignity that comes only with age. Xander cradled his egg close to his chest as he followed Wesley closely into the hotel.

The inside of the hotel was even more majestic. Everything in sight was obviously from the days when this was a functioning hotel. Modernization had a way of creeping into places like this and destroying them in the name of progress. Xander had a special feel for this sort of thing since his construction work days. He could appreciate the craftsmanship that went into this place.

At the sound of movement in the lobby, Angel came out of his office. Xander glanced at him and cast his eyes to the floor. He couldn't, just couldn't face him.

"You made good time." Angel said conversationally, then did a double take. "Your eye... you had lost your eye... didn't they say it was gone?"

"Yes, it... um... grew back." Xander said nervously and looked at Wesley.



Angel noticed the nervousness and decided to change the subject, "Xander, I'm guessing that you're tired after your long trip. I'll get you settled into a room so you can rest, and we can talk later."

"Let's get your luggage in, and I'll be on my way." Wesley said, it was obvious that he didn't want to stay any longer than necessary.

Xander nodded and followed Wesley outside to the car.

As Wesley was opening the trunk, Xander placed his free hand on Wesley's arm to get his attention.

Wesley looked up to see the pensive expression on Xander's face.

"Wesley, I just wanted to thank you again for going all that way to help me. I want you to know that I really do appreciate you going out of your way for me when you had no reason to. If there is ever any way I can repay you, please let me know." Xander said shyly.

"Alexander, I am truly amazed by how much you've grown since we last met. I must admit that I held to my old notions of you and didn't consider that you could have changed. You did. You are growing into a respectable man who I would be proud to call a friend." Wesley said seriously.

Xander was surprised by Wesley's declaration, when only the previous evening he had said that he couldn't trust him to make a promise. "Thank you Wesley, but, if you don't mind my asking, why the change?" Xander asked, confused.

"During our trip here you've demonstrated that you can think of someone other than yourself, you have regret for past actions, you have shown honesty, trust, and a willingness to invest effort into building a friendship. With you willing to go to such lengths for me, I could hardly do any less in return. Now, let's get these bags into the hotel." Wesley said with a somber smile.

They took the suitcases into the hotel, Wesley carrying two and Xander carrying one with one arm and the egg with the other. Once inside, Angel led them to a room on the second floor where Xander could get some rest, and tend to his egg.

As Wesley and Angel walked away from Xander's room, Angel asked, "What happened to him? The old Xander would have insulted me twelve times by now. He couldn't even bring himself to look at me."

"It seems he recently realized that he isn't the center of the universe." Wesley said quietly, considering his words carefully.

"How do you mean?" Angel asked, confused.

"When we knew him before, he seemed to think that he could treat people anyway he wanted without consequences. I think he realizes how badly he treated the people around him and he is feeling ashamed. I don't know what past you have between you, but it seems that he regrets his actions toward you."

Angel considered his past with Xander and knew that they would be having quite a talk later. When they reached the lobby, Angel made his way toward the office as Wesley headed for the door.

"Thank you, Wesley." Angel called out.

Wesley stopped and turned to see Angel's form retreating into the office.

Considering the nature of friendship, Wesley continued out the door.

\* \* \* \* \*

Xander made his way downstairs, with his egg held carefully in his arms. As he entered the lobby, he saw a man that he hadn't met before.

Gunn considered the man before him. Angel had said that someone from Sunnydale was coming to stay. The man seemed timid, and was carrying something protectively in his arms.

"Hello, I'm Charles Gunn. You must be Xander." He said cautiously.

"Yes, nice to meet you Mr. Gunn." Xander said quietly as he walked up and extended a hand.

"Call me Gunn. Everyone does." Gunn said, shaking Xander's hand and giving a surreptitious glance at the bundle in Xander's other hand.

"Okay Gunn, is Angel around? He said that he wanted to talk to me when I woke up." Xander asked with some distraction.

"He's in his office, over there." Gunn said and pointed behind the check-in desk.

Xander nodded and made his way to Angel's office.

He knocked on the doorframe of the open office door.

"Come in Xander. Have a seat." Angel said from behind his desk.

Xander made his way into the room and took a seat. He glanced at Angel and cast his eyes to the floor, feeling the shame wash over him again.

Angel noticed Xander's subdued attitude and recalled Wesley's words from earlier. "I think we have a few things to talk about before we discuss your current situation." Angel said in a comforting tone.

Xander nodded his head and braced himself for the task, "Angel, there are a lot of things that I need to say, but the first is to tell you how sorry I am about the way I treated you in Sunnydale. I could give you a thousand excuses for how I acted but the truth behind them all is that I was jealous of your relationship with Buffy. I wanted her for myself and I thought that I was better than you because I was human and you weren't." And with that declaration Xander gave an ironic chuckle.

Angel only responded with silence. Xander continued, "I guess that's not a problem now, I'm not human anymore, I don't know what I am..."

Xander didn't know how Angel was going to take his next admission, but he felt that it had to be said. If this was going to work, he had to be honest with everyone, including himself. "When Angelus tried to open Acathyla, I didn't tell Buffy that Willow was trying to restore your soul... so it's my fault that you were sent to hell." Xander said in a near whisper.

Angel was shocked. He hadn't known about that and rage started to boil up within him. He could feel himself starting to shift into his demon visage. He knew that within moments the ability to reason might be beyond him. In a tightly controlled voice he said, "I think you'd better go upstairs for a while. We can talk again later."

Angel got up from his chair stiffly and made his way out of the office, careful to avoid looking at Xander.

After a moment, Xander got up from his chair and went back to his room. He could tell that Angel had to let his emotions cool before they could talk again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Angel knocked on the door of the room that he had assigned to Xander. It had been nearly a full day since Xander had told Angel that he had been responsible for the centuries of torture that he had endured. Angel's first instinct was to kill the boy, slowly, over a number of days. Then after a little thought he resigned himself to just throwing the boy into the street. Finally he had come to the point where he could at least listen to what else he had to say before deciding what to do next.

Xander opened the door cautiously. "Angel, come in." He said timidly, stepping back to allow Angel entrance to the room.

Angel walked in and noticed that Xander immediately went to the bed and picked up his egg.

"I came to finish our talk, I assume that there is more that we need to talk about." Angel said as he watch Xander caressing the egg with a wet towel.

"I think everything is out in the open, that was the only secret. All that's left is for me to say that I'm sorry, and for us to decide what to do next." Xander said, keeping his eyes firmly on his egg.

"I won't lie. I'm mad as hell at you and there's a big part of me that wants to cause you pain, and not all of it is Angelus. I also thought about throwing you out into the street. I'm still not sure that I won't." Angel said with more than a little anger in his voice.

"I understand. If you want us to leave, just say the word and we'll never bother you again." Xander said steadily.

"First, tell me what you want from me, and we'll see if it's something that I am willing to do." Angel said without emotion.

"I was hoping that you could get me into the demon community so I can take care of my baby. I need to make sure that the baby is healthy, and I need a job. I suppose that I'm also going to need something like demon daycare, too." Xander said while gazing at his egg lovingly.

Angel realized that Xander was here for the sake of his baby. Even though he felt some hatred for the boy, he couldn't deny what was the right thing to do, and he would do it.

"I'll see to the doctor. And I'll have Lorn come and talk to you about getting a job. He has contacts throughout the demon community and can find something for you. As far as the daycare, we can work that out as we need to." Angel said emotionlessly, then continued with some venom in his voice, "Don't think I'm doing this for you, this is for Spike's child. You can stay here, and I'll provide food and shelter for you for the baby's sake."

Xander kept his eyes firmly downcast and said, "Thank you for your help Angel, I promise that we'll be out of here as soon as we can."

Angel was about to get up and leave when he heard a rumble from Xander's stomach. "Have you eaten since you arrived?" He asked.

Xander shook his head.

"Go down to the kitchen and get something to eat. There's some human food in there."

Xander nodded and got up to leave.

Angel also got up and preceded Xander out the bedroom door.

\* \* \* \* \*

Angel found himself knocking on Xander's door. Three days had passed since Xander and Angel had their talk. Xander stayed in his room, coming out for food around noon each day. He would go to the kitchen, prepare the food, and take it with him to his room. None of the other members of Angel investigations had seen him since the day he had arrived.

Xander opened the door and said timidly, "Hello Angel." Not knowing what else to say.

"I have a doctor here to check out the baby, please come downstairs." Angel said and walked away.

Xander picked up the egg and left the room. As he descended the stairs, he noticed a lavishly dressed woman standing in the center of the lobby. He walked up to her and looked to Angel, to be introduced.

"Here is the egg we need you to look at." Angel said, ignoring the disapproving look from the woman.

She held her hands out to Xander. He looked into her less than human face and saw the tenderness, knowledge and wisdom of years. He unwrapped the egg and carefully handed it to her.

She saw the anxious look in his eyes and said, "Do not worry, I am The Shamenka. Among my people I am priest, prophet, doctor, and counselor."

Then she held the egg to her bosom, took a deep inhale of breath and closed her eyes. A low humming started in her throat and she began to rock. After a few minutes she stopped and opened her eyes. With a large smile on her face she handed the baby back to Xander.

She looked toward Angel and the smile dropped off her face. "Let us go into the lounge where we can sit."

Angel led the way into the lounge and waited for The Shamenka to be seated.

"The baby is perfectly happy and healthy, you are doing a fine job...?" she said in such a way as to inquire Xander's name.

"Xander, ma'am." he said shyly.

"Xander, you have done well by your child and should expect the birth in about seven days. Do you have any questions for me?" She asked in a friendly tone.

"What is my baby, I mean what species?" Xander asked nervously.

"The baby is a combination of it's parent's, of course. Tell me of the baby's other parent." She said in a curious tone.

Xander thought about Spike for a moment then began, "He was a Master Vampire, the Grand Childe of Angelus I think." He looked at Angel and received a grudging nod.

"He was my friend, he cared enough to tell me some ugly truths about myself. He died his final death less than two weeks ago, he sacrificed himself to seal the hellmouth of Sunnydale." Xander said with tears in his voice.

As The Shamenka reached across the table to pat his hand she noticed Angel's look of disgust focused on Xander.

Xander calmed down and thought about his next question.

"Can you tell me what I am?" Xander began when Angel interrupted. "She is here for the baby, not for you."

"Liam Jude Matthew Gilligan O'Rourke! How dare you treat any person living or dead with the disrespect that I have seen here today! You may think you are justified in your anger, whatever it is, but you are only succeeding in diminishing yourself in the eyes of everyone around you." The Shamenka said with righteous indignation.

"No." Xander said, "He has every right to feel the way he does. I did something unforgivable to him, so please don't be upset with him for feeling angry."

The Shamenka looked from the pleading eyes of Xander to the angry eyes of Angel and said, "Isn't it amazing that this young one has reached such a level of maturity in barely more than twenty years when you have yet to achieve it in nearly 250?"

A questioning look fell across Angel's face. Then dawning comprehension. [He hurt me, so I wanted to hurt him back. Maybe that was a little immature.] Angel thought to himself, then continued. [Wesley already told me that he had changed, I could see it myself, and yet when I got angry, I turned into a rapacious spoiled brat.]

"Xander, I'm..." Angel began.

"Angel, don't worry about it, I already said that I understand and I don't blame you." Xander said reasonably.

The Shamenka got up as if to leave when Xander asked, "What about the baby, please tell me what it is and what I am."

"Any answer I could give you would be inadequate because there has never been anything like you or your baby before." The Shamenka said haltingly.

"I don't understand." Xander said, obviously confused.

"Looking back through history, everything had a first. The first milkshake, the first basketball, the first tomato. Everything that exists today had a first. You, are a first as is your child." She said carefully.

Xander sat in shock, his mind was racing with a million questions but there wasn't a single question that could make it's way above the others before she continued.

"Oh, get over yourself, I'm not talking messiah or anything. Don't make more out of this than there is. It just means that you are what you are, as is your child. There hasn't been a label made to classify either of you yet. You may be the patriarchs of new species that will one day fill the earth to overflowing, or you and your child may be the first and last of your kind. Either is a possibility, I suspect the reality will fall somewhere in between." The Shamenka said knowingly.

The Shamenka got up from her chair and made her way out of the lounge and into the lobby. Before leaving she said, "Just a piece of advice, have a little extra blood handy for when the baby is born."

## Chapter 2

Xander watched as The Shamenka left the lobby. He turned to go back to his room when a quiet voice came from his left.

"Hi, Charles told me that he met you a couple days ago you must be Xander you're from Sunnydale aren't you I heard about Sunnydale on the news I think Cordelia mentioned that you dated her in high school you knew Angel back then didn't you and you're one of the Scoobies from Sunnydale I'd really like to hear the inside story of what happened there because the news just said something like a gas main exploded and I know there has to be more to it than that to blow up most of a town are you staying here or just stopping for a visit you'll have to forgive me I talk a little too much when I'm nervous and it makes me nervous to meet new people and you're new... to me anyway."

::Blink:: ::Blink:: Xander had to take a few seconds to process the chatter. It would have taken two espressos and half a pound of chocolate to get Willow to babble full-on like that. Finally he answered.

"Uh, Hi. Yes I met Gunn three days ago. I am from Sunnydale. I did date Cordelia in high school. I knew Angel, but we didn't get along, my fault. I was a Scooby. I'll tell you the story of Sunnydale sometime if you'd like. I'll be staying until I can get my own place. I get nervous around new people too. I think Wesley mentioned you, are you Fred?"

Fred just nodded her head shyly.

Xander smiled, feast or famine, she seemed to save all her speech up for a verbal explosion. After all the seriousness of Wesley and Angel she was refreshing.

"It's a pleasure to meet you." Xander said sincerely. "Maybe you could help me, I'd like to call Wesley, do you have his number?"

Fred nodded and led him to the check-in desk.

Angel had been watching Xander and Fred's conversation with fond amusement from the doorway of the lounge.

Angel listened as Xander dialed the phone and said, "Wesley? I hope I'm not bothering you..."

"No, no emergency, I was hoping that you'd visit then realized that I never invited you, So that's why I'm calling. Please consider yourself invited." Xander said seriously.

"No, just a visit... Wesley my friend, I promise that I have no motive for asking you over but for the pleasure of your company..." Xander said, a little exasperated.



"Good, I'm glad that's settled. Whenever you want to visit is fine, I just wanted you to know that you are welcomed..." Xander continued.

"No, we haven't talked about you at all... we've had other things to discuss. Things were a little tense for a while but I think we're good now."

"Tomorrow? That would be great, I'll see you then. Good night." And Xander hung up the phone.

Angel realized from what he heard that Xander truly didn't harbor any ill will toward him. Angel walked into the lobby and locked eyes with Xander.

"Do you have time for another talk?" Angel asked, trying to be friendly.

"Sure, do you mind if we talk in my room, I need to..." Xander said looking down at the egg.

In response Angel extended his arm toward the staircase to prompt Xander to lead the way.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once inside the room, Xander took a few minutes to wet some towels and settled on the bed, stroking the shell of the egg.

"Xander, I wanted to apologize for the way..." Angel began but was interrupted.

"Angel, I already said that I understand. Do you know why I told you about what I did?" Xander said seriously.

"Not really." Angel said quietly.

"If there is ever going to be any peace between us, then we need to be honest with each other. Now that my secret has been brought out, there is at least the hope of building something on the honest foundation. Even if you feel nothing but hate toward me, at least it's honest. I don't know if I'm making any sense." Xander finished, a little frustrated.

"Yes, you are. So... where do we go from here?" Angel asked hesitantly.

"With an understanding, I think." Xander said unsurely.

Angel prompted Xander to continue with a speculative look.

"I've known you for about seven years, but I don't really know you at all. So if you'd be willing, I'd like to get to know you. I'll try to set all my past feelings aside and get to know the person that you are here, now, today." Xander said quietly.

Angel nodded and said, "I don't know if this makes sense but I can't give up my feelings toward the boy who insulted me and caused me to be sent to hell. But I can try to get to know the man that you've become. Maybe looking at it that way, I can let go of the past between us."

Xander's face lit up with a smile. "I think that would be a great place to start."

"So what changed you? I mean, did you just wake up one day with a new attitude?" Angel asked hesitantly, so as not to offend.

"I wish, but no. Spike happened. He stayed in my apartment for a while. He got the idea that I needed to understand something and took the next two days to hound me constantly until he finally got it through my thick head and made me listen." Xander said with a fond smile.

"What did he want you to understand?"

"That it isn't about me." Xander said absently.

"What isn't about you?" Angel prompted.

"About 99% of the things that happen around me have nothing to do with me personally. Like your relationship with Buffy for example. You didn't fall in love with her to hurt me or make me mad, it had nothing to do with me. But I acted like it did. I took it personally and attacked you because I felt like you were attacking me by being with her." Xander said with eyes that were looking into the past.

Angel sat stunned for a moment. That actually explained a lot. Finally he asked, "How long did it take you to reconcile your past with this new philosophy?"

"I'm still working on it, I've treated a lot of people really badly over the years. I can't fix everything, I mean some bridges can be mended, others are broken beyond repair." Xander said sadly.

"Bridges?" Angel asked, confused.

"Relationships, I can try to make amends with some of the people that I've treated thoughtlessly, but there are others that have written me off as a smart ass, and will never give me the opportunity to hurt them again. Anyway, I can't live my life trying to make up for the past, I can only face the present and if I have an opportunity to make things right with someone, I'll take it."

"Like with me..." Angel said quietly.

"Yeah, our bridge was broken up pretty bad." Xander said sadly.

"I think we'll be okay. Did you mend a bridge with Wesley too?" Angel asked, remembering the phone conversation earlier.

"I suppose, I don't know if we ever had a bridge. I attacked him the moment I met him. He was there to replace Giles, who was my father figure. So I took it personally and made every effort to make him feel unwelcome and unwanted." Xander said with shame in his voice.

"But things are better between you? I mean, I heard you on the phone, and you called him your friend." Angel asked.

"Yes, Wesley is an amazing man. All I had to do was show him that I was serious about wanting to be his friend and he was willing to let go of the past. Not too many people would be able to let go of old hurts like that." Xander said with a note of wonder.

"I suppose he is amazing. I think I have a little bridge mending to do with him myself." Angel said sadly.

"A piece of advice. He has to know that you are serious, until he is sure that you are, he won't make any move toward reconciliation." Xander said thinking of the long trip from New Mexico.

"I'll keep that in mind. You look like you could use some sleep, so I'll be going." Angel said, noticing the tired look on Xander's face.

"Thanks, I am tired, and thanks for the talk." Xander said as he got up from the bed.

Angel left the room, deep in contemplation.

\* \* \* \* \*

The egg had been agitated all morning. Xander had kept it moist, and had been holding it and stroking it constantly for hours. He had been speaking soothing words and even tried singing for a while but the egg wouldn't be quieted. Over the past week, the shell of the egg had stretched, so now it's size was that of a half deflated beach ball and the shell of the egg had become thinner. The baby had been getting heavier, too.

All of a sudden there was something pushing from within the egg making the flexible shell of the egg taut. Xander looked closely and could recognize the bump as the baby's foot. With excitement he ran to the door and called out, "ANGEL! COME HERE, QUICK!"

Xander went back to the bed and watched as the baby alternated pushing one foot, then the other against it's shell.

Angel rushed into the room his hair was a mess and he was wearing only his pants. Xander would have laughed himself silly if not for the expression of absolute panic on Angel's face.

"Come look at the baby, you've got to see this!" Xander said from beside the egg.

Angel flashed angry look #7 at Xander, the one usually reserved for vampires who were soon to be dust, then walked over to the bed.

As he saw the baby feet alternately pressing against the leathery shell of the egg, a look of tenderness replaced the look of anger on his face.

A moment later Fred and Gunn were at the door, looking in curiously. Xander noticed and motioned them to come into the room.

"What the hell is that?" Gunn asked when he saw the beige amoeba looking thing thrashing on the bed.

"It's my baby..." Xander said tenderly.

Gunn could tell by Xander's response that he loved the little... thing. So he turned his attention to Angel.

"A baby what?" He asked Angel reasonably.

"We'll know when it hatches." Angel said absently, enthralled by the sight.

"So this is an egg... Where's the chicken that laid it?" Gunn asked with concern.

That got Xander's attention. He stiffened and looked to Angel, asking with his eyes for Angel to handle this.

"This is Xander's egg. He delivered it about a week ago. His child is inside so please be kind." Angel said steadily.

Gunn just stood there stunned. Fred, however, jumped on the bed beside Xander and gave him a big hug.

"Oh, this is so exciting why didn't you tell us that you were going to be a father I mean mother when do you expect the baby to hatch do you have all the baby things you need I mean like clothes and diapers and a crib..." and she broke off as she looked around the room.

"I don't have anything. I really don't know what the baby is going to be like when it's born... er... hatched. So I don't know if I need a crib or if the baby would need to stay in the bathtub. Until just a few minutes ago I didn't know if the baby had feet. It could have had a tail." Xander answered seriously.

Gunn, Fred and Angel gaped. The enormity of this was hitting all of them, they had no idea what the baby was going to be and what needs it would have.

Xander took the silence as confusion and continued, "What's the use of getting the baby diapers if it doesn't have legs? Or a crib if it breathes water?"

"Don't worry Xander, the baby will have whatever it needs..." Angel began.

A sharp movement from the egg drew everyone's attention. The outline of a little foot could be seen, more clearly than before. Then the shell of the egg began to split around the heel of the foot. After a moment the pressure let up.

"I think it's hatching. It's too soon. The Shamenka said that it would be seven days and it's only been four." Xander said in a panic. The fear could clearly be heard in his voice.

"Don't worry Xander, these things happen when they're ready to. The Shamenka was giving an estimate." Angel said comfortingly.

"Would someone call Wesley and let him know?" Xander said excitedly.

Fred got up from the bed and ran out the room. Xander flashed a questioning glance at Gunn.

"Yeah, that means that she'll call him." Gunn said with a smile.

"Angel, remember what The Shamenka said? Would you please go get some blood for the baby?" Xander asked with pleading in his voice.

Angel quickly left the room. The egg thrashed again and the little foot shaped bump pressed at the split in the shell again. Xander couldn't think of what to do next so he sat, nearly vibrating with tension, watching the baby fight against the shell.

About a minute later Angel and Fred ran back into the room. Angel was carrying a coffee mug full of blood. Xander looked at Angel and asked, "The baby won't be able to drink from that, how are we going to...?"

The four of them looked at each other then with a squeak Fred got up and ran from the room. Xander and Angel both looked at Gunn inquiringly.

"That means she has an idea." Gunn said casually.

Wesley ran into the room asking, "Am I too late?"

"No, but it could happen any minute. Come over here where you can see." Xander said with barely held enthusiasm.

About five minutes later Fred ran back into the room, gasping for breath, and holding a plastic shopping bag. She sat on the edge of the bed and fumbled with the bag until she produced a baby bottle.

Angel took the bottle and was about to pour the blood into it when Wesley stopped him. "I think this needs to be washed first, I'll take care of it." Wesley said, taking the bottle from Angel and going into the bathroom.

The little footshaped lump began making short sharp jabs against the breach in the shell. "Wesley, hurry or you'll miss it!" Xander called out.

Just as Wesley made his way back into the room, the baby's foot pushed it's way through the shell. Xander immediately began pulling at the opening in the shell and within minutes, the egg was torn open to reveal the baby.

The baby was covered with a reddish black goo. Fred immediately ran to the bathroom and came back with a stack of towels. Xander started using the damp towels that he had used to wrap the egg to clean the gunk off the baby.

The baby let loose a lusty cry as Xander, Fred and Angel were all cleaning it. Once clean, the baby quieted as Xander laid the baby out on a towel in the middle of the bed and looked him over. A boy. He and Spike had made a son. The baby looked entirely human.

"He's beautiful." Fred said in wonder.

"He don't have a belly button." Said Gunn as he watched the little squirming boy.

"He has Spike's blue eyes." Angel commented in awe.

Then the baby began to cry. His cry began to deepen into a snarl and worked into a full fledged growl as he shifted into demon form.

"I'm guessing the horns come from Spike's side of the family." Xander said in amazement.

"He has Spike's gold eyes too." Angel said, just as amazed.

"What's that on his side?" Fred asked in worry.

"Those would be gills." Xander said with shock.

"He may be hungry." Wesley said, being the practical one, as always.

Between Wesley, Xander and Angel, they managed to get the warm blood mostly into the baby bottle.

Xander lowered the bottle to the baby's mouth and dropped the bottle as the baby lunged onto the nipple. In two seconds flat, the nipple was no more and blood was drenching baby and towel alike.

The adults looked at each other with looks between confusion and horror when the baby turned itself half over and started sucking the blood out of the towel. "I guess that's one way to do it." Said Xander as he used another towel to clean the baby.

"I guess nursing's outta the question." Said Gunn with a smile.

Wesley, Angel and Xander turned as one at the comment as Gunn realized that he said that outloud.

"Look he has webbed fingers and toes. They're sooooo cuuuuute." Fred said, as if she hadn't heard Gunn's comment.

After about three minutes of vigorous sucking on the bloody towel, the baby shifted back into human form and went to sleep. His little fingers and toes became completely normal just as his little horns, teeth and gills went away. In his human form he looked like a normal 4 or 5 month old baby, except for the absence of a navel.

His little tuft of wheat-blond hair and blue eyes made him look like a chubby little miniature version of Spike. But he DID have the Harris nose.

"Have you thought of a name?" Wesley asked as he helped Xander remove the bloody bedclothes without disturbing the sleeping baby.

Xander thought a moment and said, "William Jesse Harris."

### **Chapter 3**

Wesley considered Xander's refusal to allow anyone to help him. In the week since the baby had been born... hatched... he had tried to do it all himself. Today Wesley was determined to make Xander accept some help with the baby for his own good as well as the baby's.

Wesley walked up the stairs to Xander's room and could hear the baby crying. The door was standing open so Wesley walked in. "Alexander, the baby is crying, what should I do?" he asked.

"How does the baby look? Human or demon?" Xander asked tiredly from the bed where he had obviously been sleeping.

"Human, but angry." Wesley answered.

"Check his diaper." Xander said from the bed.

"It's dry." Wesley yelled over the wailing of the child.

"Then we need to put a wet one on him. I'll take care of it..." Xander said through his exhaustion.

"I can change a diaper." Wesley replied indignantly. "Though this seems the reverse of the way I'm used to."

"I know. But Willie needs to stay wet. He's twice as cranky when he's dry." Xander said in an exhausted haze.

Wesley began changing the diaper and said, "Alexander, you are going to make yourself sick if you don't let someone help you. Would you allow me to take William for the afternoon so you can get some sleep?"

"Okay Wesley, you win. Just remember to take a few bags of blood with you. Warm the blood, not too hot, then put a towel into a plastic bag and dump the blood into the towel. Cut the corner out of the bag so that some of the towel hangs out and Willie will do the rest. He drinks about a bag at each feeding and feeds about every four hours." Xander said tiredly.

"And he goes into his demon visage when he is ready to feed?" Wesley inquired.

"Yes, and remember to keep away from his face about a half an hour before his feeding time or he WILL try to help himself. Fred probably should have gotten stitches and I'm glad that I heal fast."

"I'll remember that, anything else I should know?" Wesley asked, beginning to wonder if this was such a good idea. But one look at Xander, laying exhausted on the bed and he had no doubts.



"Yeah, it's natural to cradle a baby on your chest. Don't do it, he'll go right for your throat. And when he goes into game face, watch out for his dorsal fin. I think the spines are poisonous." Xander nearly mumbled.

"When was the last time William was fed?" Wesley asked, becoming more concerned at Xander's inability to stay awake.

Xander looked at the clock. "It's been about two hours, he should be okay for a while. If he starts getting really fussy, sit him in the shower and rinse him off, he loves that. The diaper bag is by the door and the blood is in the refrigerator downstairs. Thank you for doing this Wesley." Xander mumbled before falling asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the three days since Wesley had started taking care of Willie in the afternoons, Xander began to feel like himself again. He decided that today he was going to fulfill a promise that he had made in New Mexico. He walked up to Angel's open office door and asked, "Angel, do you mind if I use the computer to send a few emails?"

As expected, Angel didn't even look up, he just mumbled "Okay." And continued with his work.

Xander sat at the computer and signed in. As he was about to hit 'compose' he noticed that he had 162 messages so he went to his inbox to do some housekeeping. After deleting some junk mail, he had a total of 37 that were from actual people. Among those messages were some from Willow and Faith and one from Buffy.

He considered the best way to proceed and decided to go in the order that they were received. The story that he pieced together from the combined emails was that Cleveland was everything they expected it to be. Life on the hellmouth of Cleveland was as fast and furious as Sunnydale had ever been. Willow was mourning Kennedy's death and Faith was busy nursing Robin back to health. Buffy and Willow had both asked when he expected to arrive in Cleveland.

Xander had no desire to go to Cleveland, even if he weren't considering Willie's safety, it would feel like a step back. He had been the slayer's sidekick for seven years, and now he was done. This was a new chapter, and a new Xander... Alexander. He was a father who had friends that he respected and that respected him. Although he hadn't talked to Lorn about getting a job yet, he knew that he would.

He couldn't say that he had everything that he wanted in his life, but he felt that he was where he was supposed to be. So with that in mind he wrote his email. He had nothing to hide so he carbon copied the message to Buffy, Faith and Willow.

>Hey Guys,

>

>I won't be joining you in Cleveland. I am now  
>a father and I have to consider the safety of my  
>child. See Buffy, I told you my stomach wasn't  
>from twinkies. That's right. I gave birth.

>

>How? Think about all the things that happened  
>to me in Sunnydale. Something changed me. It  
>doesn't matter what. The child is mine and  
>Spikes. No Buffy, he wasn't with you at the time.  
>Yes Wil, you were right, I switched teams. And  
>No Faith, no details.

>

>The baby's name is William Jesse Harris. He has  
>Spike's eyes. And he is part demon. So I have a  
>new way to fight the things that go bump in the  
>night. I will raise my son to be a good person.  
>He will know that Spike was his father and gave  
>his (un)life to protect us all.

>

>Please be happy for me. My thoughts are with  
>you.

>

>Alexander

Xander sent his email and shut down the computer as Wesley walked in with Willie in tow.

"So how was he?" Alexander asked.

"A perfect gentleman, as always." Wesley said with a smile.

Alexander couldn't understand why but Willie didn't seem to give Wesley any problems. He thought that he might be doing something wrong, and began to worry that maybe he wasn't a good father.

"Alexander? What's wrong?" Wesley asked.

"Wesley, I don't know what I'm doing wrong. Willie always behaves for you and always seems so happy..."

Wesley frowned at the statement and decided to tell Alexander the truth. "I haven't been completely honest with you. William screams and cries as much for me as he does for you. I just make sure to wash him thoroughly and put him in a fresh wet diaper before I bring him

back to you. That way when you see him, he's happy. I was only trying to make it so you wouldn't be concerned about my watching him."

Alexander smiled and said, "Thank you Wesley, I was worried that I wasn't being a good father. Willie is the most important thing in my life right now."

"No worries there, you are a better father for William than I could ever be. I wouldn't have thought of half the things you do to make him happy. You have the instincts of what's right to do for him as well as the will to keep trying new things to improve what you can." Wesley said as a statement of fact.

"Thank you Wesley. I can't even begin to tell you how much all you've done has helped. I've been thinking about something that I'd like to discuss with you while Willie's quiet."

"What would that be?" Wesley asked curiously.

"Well, since Willie was born here, he doesn't 'officially' exist. If something were to happen to me, I don't know what would become of him, I mean legally. I've fought demons, a god, and the source of all evil but I've got to tell you... the California court system scares the hell out of me. Somehow between the legal system and the demon community I want to be sure that if something ever happens to me that you would get custody of Willie... I mean, if you would be willing to be his god-father... or is it devil-father in this case... anyway, you know what I mean."

"Yes, I do. And yes, I would be honored to be his guardian in the event that the unforeseen happens to you. As to the legalities of this situation, I believe that we should discuss this matter with Angel and Lorn. Amongst all of us, we should be able to sort out the best way to protect William's interests." Wesley said seriously.

"Good, I'll talk to Angel later and we can find a good time for all of us to..." Alexander sniffed the air.

"Wesley, take Willie upstairs and keep him quiet. HIDE!" Alexander screamed as he ran for the weapon cabinet.

Wesley was stunned for a moment then grabbed the stroller and diaper bag and ran up the stairs, taking them two at a time.

Alexander was facing the door with a battle-ax in his hand as the front door opened.

A lone figure walked in and said, "Xander"

Without expression Alexander replied, "Riley."

# Book 4: A Father's Duty

## Chapter 1

Riley walked cautiously into the lobby of the Hyperion hotel. Xander stood before him with a determined look on his face and a battle-ax in his hand. After a moment of undisguised tension between them, Angel walked into the room.

"Can I help you?" Angel asked, giving a disapproving glance at Xander.

"I have some business to discuss, maybe we should talk privately." Riley said with his own disapproving glance.

"Anything you have to say, you can say in front of Xander." Angel responded.

Angel cast a surreptitious glance at Xander who shifted his eyes toward Riley and took an obvious inhale.

Taking the hint, Angel took a casual inhale of breath through his nose and understood Xander's wariness. He smelled the blood of at least a dozen demons. At this revelation, he focused his preternatural hearing and heard Riley's heartbeat racing at almost twice a normal human's.

Oblivious to their realizations, Riley continued, "Fine, I need to enlist the aid of Angel investigations to find the home of a demon underground railroad of sorts. We've been tracking them from South America and all signs lead to Los Angeles."

Angel had been focused on Riley while he spoke, then he glanced again at Xander. With another quick flick of his eyes, Xander indicated the front doors. Angel took another unneeded breath and picked up the scents of two others outside the doors, both steeped in demon blood.

"Thank you for wanting to include me Angel, but I have no business in your business." Xander said and turned to leave.

"Fine. Would you call Gunn and tell him we may have a job?" Angel said casually.

Xander nodded as he went into the lounge to make the call.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Gunn, this is Alexander. Angel wanted me to call you and let you know that we may have a job." Alexander said, trying to figure out how to tip Gunn off.

"Alright, do I need to come over?" Gunn asked.

"I don't think so, just be available. I was wanting to take Willie for a walk and hoped you would join me. You know where Angel likes to walk in the afternoon? Could you meet me there in a few minutes? I just need to get Willie's things together." Alexander said, trying to sound normal.

There was a moment of silence on the phone before Gunn replied, "Uh... yeah, I know the place. I know how much Fred likes to go on walks with you, still, she should probably stay home." Gunn said, hoping that he wasn't being too obvious or too obscure with his question.

"I hate to think of Fred being at home all alone, she's such a social creature. She really needs to be around other people." Alexander nearly choked on the words, but had to get the message across.

"Your right, it would be a shame for her to be boxed in on a day like this. Go get your things together and I'll see you in a few." Gunn said quickly.

"See you then." Alexander responded and hung up the phone.

Alexander walked out of the lounge and noticed that Angel and Riley had gone into Angel's office.

He made his way quickly upstairs and into his room where he found Wesley watching Willie play in the shower floor.

"Get his things together and meet me in the basement, I'm going to get Cordelia and we're getting out of here. Gunn's going to meet us in the tunnel." Alexander said quickly before leaving again. He was glad that he and Wesley had discussed some of Angel's adventures during their visits or he might not have known about the entrance to the tunnels in the basement.

Wesley quickly gathered the baby and went down the back stairs to the kitchen. He went to the refrigerator and put ten blood bags into the diaper bag, then from beside the refrigerator he grabbed a handful each of plastic bags and towels and some bottles of water. As quickly and quietly as possible he made his way into the basement to wait for Alexander.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander gathered the comatose form of Cordelia close then threw her over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. He quickly made his way down the back stairs and into the basement where he found Wesley and Willie waiting for him.

"What's this all about?" Wesley asked with worry.

"I'll tell you once we're in the sewer. Help me get this open." Alexander said with strain in his voice.

Together they were able to open the heavy door that blocked the sewer tunnel entrance from the basement. Once through, they heard movement to their right.

"Nice day for a walk." Alexander said with tense humor.

"Yeah, you wanna tell me what the hell's going on?" Gunn asked with absolutely no patience.

"Sure, let's get moving and I'll tell you as we go. I assume we're going to meet up with Fred?" Alexander said.

"Yeah, this way." Gunn said shortly.

"Upstairs, Angel is talking to Riley Finn, he used to be a member of a top-secret government operation call 'the Initiative'. They captured demons and performed medical experiments on them. They are the ones who put a behavior modification chip in Willie's father's head. They also cut parts from living demons to make a frankenstein's monster of human, demon and technology. This guy upstairs just walked in, stinking of demon blood, and asked for Angel to do a job for him. There were two of his people guarding the front door, so they probably had guards on the other entrances too. They are known to use wire taps, so I have to assume that they were listening to us on the phone. And I probably just told them all about Willie and myself if they intercepted my email to the Sunnydalers."

"So what do you think they wanted with Angel?" Wesley asked, as he tried to remember what he knew of the initiative.

"There's no way to be sure. I'll tell you what I know... they modified Riley to make him some kind of super soldier, save your Captain America jokes for the end, please. A few years ago they figured out that the super soldier thing was killing him by burning him out. So they had to do an operation to reverse some of the super soldier effects. One of those effects was a resting heartbeat of around 150. Just now, Riley had that old familiar heartbeat which says to me that, at the very least the super soldier part of the initiative program is still alive, I think that's enough reason to at least consider that the rest of it has been revived as well."

Wesley thought for a moment and summarized, "So we have enhanced human soldiers stinking of demon blood guarding the front entrance of the hotel. Those seem to be the facts, without speculation."

"Yes, I'd say that's fair. Guys, do you think I overreacted?" Alexander asked timidly.

"Not at all Alexander, you acted in the best interest of us all..." Wesley started.

"What about Angel?" Gunn interrupted.

"I don't think he's in any danger at the moment. If they wanted to take him against his will, they would have stormed the place. I'm guessing they are going to try to get Angel to do a job for them. They'll probably tail him, tap his phone and stuff to find his contacts. Once they've learned what they want, they won't need him anymore and then they'll either capture or kill him. And if that happens, I pray they kill him." Alexander said with a diminishing voice.

They continued on in silence until Gunn indicated an exit from the sewer tunnel. Alexander had been so focused on the events that he had forgotten he was carrying Cordelia on his shoulder until he tried to climb the ladder.

They emerged from the sewer into a cluttered basement. Gunn led the group up to the ground floor of an obviously abandoned building and said, "I'm going to go get Fred, she's nearby. I'm guessing you think that she's being followed?"

"I have to assume that she is. We also have to get a message to Angel to let him know that we're safe. He'll be free to do a lot more if he doesn't have to worry about us." Alexander said thoughtfully.

"So, the cell phone is probably out of the question." Gunn said.

"Yeah, it's possible to track your location if you use the cell. We need to call Angel from a public phone. A short message so they don't have a chance to track us." Alexander said while rocking his son in the stroller.

"What message?" Gunn asked impatiently.

"Tell Angel that we went for a walk and met up with Cordelia. We're going to visit with her for a while so don't worry, we are all fine." Xander said then turned back to the baby.

"Yeah, that should do it. I'll call from the mall where Fred is waiting." Gunn said, getting ready to leave.

"Watch out for tails. Stop in and visit with friends if you need to. We'll be waiting here. If we have to move, we'll need someplace to meet. Got any ideas?" Alexander said to the group in general.

"Lorn's bar. It's been empty since it was nearly destroyed." Wesley said giving Gunn a questioning look.

"Yeah, if I don't see you back here, I'll see you there." Gunn said on the way out the door.

"Perhaps I should go with him?" Wesley asked, concerned.

"No, if we have to move, I'm depending on you to take care of Willie. I can't carry Cordelia and Willie both." Alexander said worriedly.

"Try not to worry Alexander. There is no way for them to find us. And Angel will be able to take charge of the situation once he knows that we're safe." Wesley said in a comforting voice.

"Thank you Wesley. I really needed to hear that. When I smelled that demon blood, I was so scared for Willie. When I think of what people like that would do to him, I want to kill them all." Alexander said with a trembling voice.

"It's a father's duty to protect his child to the best of his ability. It's natural that you would want to remove all threats toward your child. Just remember, if you kill them, this thing will follow you around for the rest of your life. Think of William, do what's best for him and you'll be fine." Wesley said quietly.

\* \* \* \* \*

Angel had heard parts of Xander's conversation with Gunn as he led the soldier into his office. He understood what Xander was doing and approved. Although he didn't know everything about Riley Finn, he knew enough. He knew that Finn had been one of the soldiers that captured and chipped Spike, that the smell of demon blood that this man carried spoke of years of killing, and that this man was trying to use him.

"So, I just want to be clear on what it is that you expect me to do." Angel said, trying to stall to give Xander time to get everyone out of the hotel. "I'm going to have some coffee, can I get you anything?" He asked, in the interest of wasting time.

"No, thank you." Riley said shortly. Angel slowly and methodically prepared a cup of coffee with amounts of sugar and cream measured with a scientist's precision.

Angel took his seat behind the desk and took a slow drink of coffee, then gave Riley a look that signaled for him to begin.

"Demons are making their way into this country from South America. We have been trying to stop it from the other end, but as soon as we get close to shutting them down, they pack up their operation and move. The only constant is wherever they set up the other end of the operation, the demons are always sent to L.A. We want to find where and how they are coming in and stop them." Riley said with military efficiency.

Angel wasn't buying it for a minute. A person doesn't live for 250+ years and not learn a few fundamental truths along the way. If these people were part of a government agency looking for demons entering the country, they had the resources to accomplish the task without his help. They were probably here to follow him, find his contacts in the demon



community, and once they were confident that they knew where the demon population were living, they would most likely carry out a mass capture or extermination.

"There was one demon that I could have asked, but he died about two weeks ago. With the recent upheaval in Sunnydale, my contacts may not be as easy to reach as usual. I'll have to ask around and see if I can turn anything up." Angel said slowly with an air of professionalism.

Riley nodded as if he approved. Then Angel continued, "You said 'We', I'd like to know who I'd be working for."

Without a flinch Riley said, "There are officials in the Venezuelan and Brazilian governments who are aware of demons and have hired my team to deal with the problem."

"Why should they care? The demons are leaving, I would think that they would hold the door open and wave 'bye'." Angel said with forced humor.

"The demons are working as mules for the drug lords of South America. The government officials are trying to curtail those illegal activities." Riley said seriously.

Angel fought to keep a neutral look on his face. Angel thought to himself, [Does this guy actually think I would believe this? Oh well, I have to keep him talking.] Then he said slowly, "Do you have any information that I can start with, a name, location, anything I can use to help me pry for information?"

"Certainly, here is a folder with the solid leads that we've compiled, so do we have a deal?" Riley questioned as the phone rang.

"Excuse me." Angel said as he answered the phone.

"Hey Angel, this is Charles. Xander wanted me to let you know that we went for a walk and met up with Cordelia. We're going to visit with her for a while so don't worry about us, we're all fine." Gunn said from the payphone.

"That's good to know, I'm with a client right now, but if I can get away later I was thinking of stopping by your sister's place." Angel said in a casual tone.

"I might see you there when we've finished our visit with Cordy, I've gotta go. Bye." Gunn said before he hung up.

"Bye." Angel said and hung up the phone before turning his attention back to Riley.

"Sorry about that." Angel said carefully, picking up the envelope as he got up and walked toward the door. "I think I have everything I need to get started. I assume that my standard fees won't be a problem."

"No problem. You can contact me at the number on the envelope when you have some information." Riley said with a smile.

Angel shook Riley's hand as they approached the front door and watched as Riley left the building.

He waited, concentrating his preternatural senses to detect if the soldiers were going to leave. After a few moments of conversation that was too quiet for Angel to hear through the heavy doors, Riley left the other two soldiers at the entrance where they were obviously going to stay.

Angel quickly gathered weapons, a few bloodbags, and a change of clothes and made his way to the basement. He found the door to the sewer tunnel closed but not locked. He forced the door open and made his way as fast as possible to the old abandoned factory where Gunn's sister had met her final death.

## Chapter 2

"Wesley, have you noticed how big Willie is getting? I mean, he's not even two weeks old and he's almost two feet long." Xander said with concern.

"Yes, he is growing at an alarming rate, but while I know little about such things, I believe his mental development is progressing with his physical growth. He has started scooting himself and I dare say, he will be crawling by the end of the week." Wesley said in a comforting tone.

Then Wesley continued, "Since you are obviously concerned, you should ask the doctor if this is normal for him. But until then, consider that since he has inherited some of your more... aquatic... traits. Reptilian and Amphibian young tend to mature quickly from hatchlings to adults and then enjoy long adulthoods. It is possible that this is the case for William."

Alexander looked at Willie with a frown and said, "I suppose."

Wesley squatted in front of Willie and said, "Say Poppa... Poppa."

Willie, happy to be receiving attention said, "Da da."

Alexander watched, transfixed. Then he squatted next to Wesley and said to Willie, "Say Poppa... Poppa."

Willie turned his attention to his poppa and happily said, "Pa pa."

Then he turned and looked at Wesley and said, "Da da."

Wesley and Alexander sat in shock as they realized what was happening. To prove the theory, Wesley moved behind the stroller, out of Willie's sight. "Pa pa pa pa."

At a look from Alexander, they traded places and Willie said, "Da da da da."

The two men were about to explode into cheers of happiness when movement caught their attention.

Cordelia's body began to tremble. Alexander and Wesley moved to either side of her reclining form. They held on to her as the trembling became a full fledged seizure. They both laid hands on her and tried to restrict her movement without hurting her.

"What else can happen?" Alexander asked, then received an 'I can't believe you said that' look from Wesley.

Before Alexander could say anything in his defense, Cordelia's back arched, her head tilted back, and a bluish black shadow flew out of her mouth as she hoarsely screamed.

Finally, after agonizing moments her body relaxed.

Wesley noticed that she wasn't breathing. Without hesitation Wesley began to perform CPR. After three rounds of chest compressions and breathing into her mouth, she gasped for air. Wesley could feel her heart beating under his hand.

Then, with eyes still closed she said in a raspy voice, "Ewwwwwww!"

Then she licked her dry lips, furrowed her brow in concentration and said questioningly, "Wesley?" and opened her eyes.

"Cordelia?" Wesley asked breathlessly.

"You can take your hand off my boob now." She said with a weak smile.

\* \* \* \* \*

After a few minutes of trying to make Cordelia comfortable and a bottle of water, the question and answer session began.

"Why am I so weak? And what happened to Doyle?" She asked weakly but with intensity.

Wesley and Alexander looked at each other then down at Cordelia.

Alexander was finally composed enough to ask, "What is the last thing you remember Cordy?"

"We were on this ship, trying to help a bunch of half-demons escape from some crazy nazi type demons that wanted to kill anyone with even a drop of human blood. Doyle was going to try to destroy this human killing thing they had. He kissed me for luck and then I was here." Cordelia said tiredly.

Wesley felt that he had to tell her the truth, "Ms. Chase, the events you are speaking of occurred nearly four years ago."

"Oh my God, I can't believe this." Cordelia sat in stunned disbelief, then said, "What happened to my hair?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Gunn led Angel and Lorn toward the room where the others were waiting. He stopped to survey the situation and heard what was being said.

"Buffy the Vampire Layer can do Angel AND Spike and no one cares. I have a couple nights with Spike and I'm a whore?" Xander huffed indignantly.

Then they heard a female voice say, "Yep."

Gunn entered the room and stood in shock at the sight of Cordelia laying awake and aware on the floor.

Angel and Lorn walked in next, Lorn was frozen, much the same as Gunn but Angel ran to Cordelia and gathered her into his arms.

"Uh, Angel? I don't know what our relationship was like in the last four years but as far as I remember, this wasn't in the job description." She said with as much menace as she could muster.

There was a quick recap from Wesley of how Cordelia had regained consciousness followed by an equally quick recap from Angel of what Riley wanted.

"Why do you think he was trying to convince me of that ridiculous story?" Angel asked in genuine puzzlement.

"Probably because he believes it, he's unusually stupid, even for a human." Alexander said with a grin.

Wesley, Gunn and Cordelia gave an indignant "Hey!" as Alexander laughed.

"I was just kidding guys." Alexander said with a smile. Then he remembered the other major event of the day.

He squatted in front of Willie and said, "Say Poppa."

And Willie obliged with a "Pa pa."

Then Wesley moved beside Alexander, Willie saw him and said, "Da da."

Angel moved to Alexander's other side and Willie noticed, he looked up at Angel with an angry expression and said, "Blah!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Lorn led the group through tunnels, back alleys and finally into a seedy looking neighborhood. There weren't any problems traveling except trying to keep Cordelia quiet about where Angel's hands were while he was carrying her.

As the group walked inside a ratty looking little home they were amazed at the beauty inside the house. The place was comfortable and welcoming. A familiar voice came out of the back of the house. "There you are! Oh my, let me see the little one. Isn't he precious, what did you name him?" The Shamenka asked in a rush.

"William Jesse Harris, Ma'am." Alexander said with a smile.

"Liam, you're looking much better than when last I saw you." She said with a knowing smile.

Angel just answered with a sheepish, "Yes ma'am."

"Please, put the young lady down on the sofa, I suppose you boys have important things to discuss. Why don't you go on out to the kitchen while I talk with the young lady and tend to the child?" The Shamenka said in a tone that meant 'do it now'.

\* \* \* \* \*

The men-folk met in the kitchen, talking and arguing, as men do, until they came up with a plan. Lorn, Gunn and Angel each left the house to gather trusted men to aid them. The first stage of the plan was simple. Recon, follow the men guarding the Hyperion and find out how many there are, where they stay, what routes they take, and the like.

Gunn arrived back at the house first, he had four men and a woman with him, all obviously skilled fighters. They were gathered in the kitchen, drinking coffee and leaning on counters when Angel arrived with six stout vampires. The vampires and the homies stared each other down for a moment until Lorn walked in leading six of the biggest, ugliest demons that anyone had ever seen.

After some uncomfortable introductions, everyone was told what was going on and sent to do their reconnaissance. They were going to watch the soldier boys, and as long as the soldiers stayed put, nothing would happen, but the minute they made a move to take the hotel... Let's just say there would be some fat and happy demons and vampires if the soldiers made that move.

\* \* \* \* \*

Angel, Xander, Gunn and Lorn made their way back into the Hyperion via the tunnels. The Shamenka had agreed to care for Cordy and Willie with Wesley's help until the Riley problem had been resolved.

Angel began making telephone calls to various vampires, all of whom said the same things to him. Demons were leaving L.A. and heading for Ohio. If any demons were arriving here, they weren't staying.

When Angel had completed his last call he summoned Gunn to the phone to make his series of calls. And all the calls had the same result. Next Xander made a series of calls, then came a series of calls made by Lorn, although no one but Lorn knew what he was saying, for authenticity's sake, he made the calls.

Before Xander got on the phone to make the final call he asked, "Isn't this plan kind of obvious? I mean, it just stinks of a setup."

Angel considered Xander's words and asked, "Do you remember how you first described Riley to me?"

"Yeah, I said he was dumb as a sack of doorknobs."

"Have you changed your mind?" Angel asked with a smile.

"Nope."

"Then why don't you make the call that will remove all his doubts?" Angel said happily.

Xander picked up the phone and dialed, a moment later he said, "Buffy?"

"Xander? Oh God! It's great to hear from you. How are you? I got your email, how's William? You should have called sooner, we've been so worried!" She rambled.

"Woah Buff, before we catch up, I have a business question for you. How are things going with your hellmouth?..."

And as they had planned, Buffy told Xander how the Cleveland hellmouth was busier than Sunnydale ever was and how the demon population was nearly as big as the human population.

About an hour later Xander finally hung up the phone and rubbed his ear. "If that didn't do it, I don't know what will." He commented as he walked around the lobby.

"All we can do now is sleep and wait for the call." Angel said, and the group of men went their separate ways to get some rest.

The next morning Angel put the icing on the cake by calling Riley and telling him that he couldn't find any evidence of a demon underground but he had heard from reliable sources that Cleveland was nearly overrun.

Within an hour of Angel's call to Riley, there was a call from one of Gunn's scouts saying that the soldier boys were packing up and heading out.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two days later in the lounge of the Hyperion hotel, Willie crawled across the floor at full speed and grabbed onto Angel's pants leg trying to pull himself to stand. When he lost his grip he yelled, "Blah!"

Angel just smiled indulgently as the frustrated Willie scooted across the floor and tried the same technique with Wesley's pant leg. When he lost his grip this time, he got an angry look and screamed, "Blah!"

The entire group of adults was now watching the child try to stand. Willie went to his poppa's leg and strained and pulled until he managed to pull himself fully to standing. He looked around the happy faces of the adults who were clapping and cheering.

When Willie looked into his Poppa's eyes he said, "Blah! Blah! Bloody 'ell"

**Author's Note:** I know, I know. You wanted me to turn Riley inside out over a long period of time. Sorry, my guys are just too nice to do that. But if it helps you to know, I actually gave him a fate worse than death. (I'll let you decide whether I'm talking about Buffy or Cleveland.)

# Book 5: Demon Parenting: A Handbook

## Chapter 1

Alexander sat anxiously waiting to hear the words. Yesterday it would have mattered what the words would be... Now he just wanted to know. He had had enough time to decide that whatever The Shamenka said, he would love Willie just the same.

But for now, all he could do was wait.

Finally The Shamenka shifted Willie in her arms and opened her eyes. When her gaze met the worried eyes of Alexander, they softened. "Worry not child, your son is as he was meant to be. He has inherited a talent from you, the ability to attract spirits and demons."

"So does this mean that Willie is possessed by Spike?" Alexander asked in nervous anticipation.

"No, he now carries his father in the same way that you carry the hyena and the soldier, are you possessed by them?" she asked calmly.

"I'm not now, but I was. Now I have their memories and their instincts, but their... consciousness isn't with me." he said, searching for the words.

"That's exactly what happened to the young one. He, like you, has a spirit that calls out to displaced spirits and demons, when the child's father died his final death, he must have had a soul, because it came into contact with your child and imprinted itself on him. I can imagine that the combined pull of you and the child you were carrying, would have been quite irresistible." The Shamenka said as she began to refill the teacups on the coffee table.

"So let me get this straight, Willie is a sea monster, human, vampire, demon-magnet?" Alexander asked carefully.

"No, not exactly. To become a true vampire he would have to have been made a vampire in the traditional fashion. The child is part sea creature, which he inherits exclusively from you, part human, which he inherits from you and his other father, and part demon which he inherits exclusively from his other father. And by that I mean to say that he is the spawn of a demon, not possessed by a demon." The Shamenka said sagely.

Alexander needed a few minutes to process all that, finally he had it all in place in his mind and asked his next question. "What about his growing? He's not even three weeks old and he's walking."

"I suspect that your friend Wesley is correct in his assessment. He will most probably have growth spurts for a while. He will grow quickly through his childhood years and probably



slow to a more normal growth rate at the onset of puberty. After that the growth rate should slow to a near stop when he reaches adulthood." She said speculatively.

"Um... isn't there some way to speed him through the puberty too? I mean, that's the one phase of his life that I'm really worried about. What with rebellion, hormones and stuff." Alexander asked, worried.

"No, the child will need those formative experiences to make him into whatever type of adult he will be. And you need to go through those experiences with him." The Shamenka said with absolute certainty, then took a sip of tea.

"Why do I have to go through it with him?" Alexander asked, even more worried.

"Because puberty is nature's way of making parents let go of their young when the time comes... Believe me, it works." The Shamenka said with a wide eyed, distant gaze.

After a moment of thought Alexander asked, "Since his adult growth rate slows down so much, does that mean he's virtually immortal?"

"From a human perspective, I suppose you could say that. Assuming that he lives to the end of his natural lifespan... I can only say that it would be inconvenient to measure in units less than centuries." The Shamenka said, trying to find the correct words.

"Okay... sea monster, human, demon-spawn, immortal, demon-magnet... anything else I should know?" Alexander asked warily.

"Just some small matters. It is time that he be introduced to solid food. Basically you need to wean him off the blood, and when you are finished he should only need blood once a week to meet his demonic nutritional needs." The Shamenka said professionally.

"Good, I was hoping he wouldn't feed exclusively on blood, that would get expensive quick." Alexander said offhandedly.

"Quite. Are you still living with Liam?" The Shamenka asked without insinuation.

"Yes, I have a room in his hotel. Why?" Alexander asked, warily.

"The child needs examples of demons in his life, especially vampires, to give him a sense of normalcy. This is a concern for most children of mixed heritage who don't live with both parents. They need to be exposed to both cultures." The Shamenka said in a lecturing tone.

"We live with Angel... I mean, Liam. So that shouldn't be a problem." Alexander said dismissively.

"But what the child needs is to see him in his demon form. If he becomes used to seeing Liam in human form, he may feel that he should be ashamed of his demon heritage, and

thereby deny his other father's legacy." she said while offering chocolate chip cookies on a plate.

"I would never want him to be ashamed of Spike. I don't think Angel will mind, and I'll ask Lorn if he would visit with Willie. Lorn is a good guy." Alexander said, going into deep thought.

The Shamenka nodded with agreement.

"I guess that's all I wanted to ask, I'll take Willie home now and tomorrow we'll start him on human food." Alexander said as he stood to go.

"Try starting him with chunks of raw meat at body temperature, soaked in blood. He has the teeth to handle it and it should make the transition a little easier. Just a few bites to begin with and his usual blood after he's eaten his solids. He may decide that he likes it and ask for more sooner. He may not and you'll have to push it on him. Either way, over the course of the next few weeks, increase the solids and decrease the blood and slowly introduce a variety of foods. He may get fussy about it, but be persistent. Know that you are doing it for his own good." The Shamenka said, handing Willie to Alexander and walking with him out of the living room.

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In the kitchen Angel, Wesley, Gunn, Fred and Lorn waited nervously. Alexander entered the kitchen carrying a sleeping Willie, he was followed by The Shamenka.

"So how is he?" Gunn asked before anyone else could think of what to say.

"He's fine. He just has Spike's memories, he's not possessed. Since he's able to talk, he'll probably remember other things that Spike knew and it'll be easier to raise him." Alexander said cheerily. The Shamenka stood aside and got an 'I wouldn't bet on it' look on her face.

Angel noticed the look and shuddered. [Adult Spike was a challenge to control, baby Spike... did I remember to pay the insurance premium on the hotel?] Angel thought to himself as the group prepared to leave.

"Liam, a moment of your time." The Shamenka said in her motherly 'do it now' tone.

"Of course." he said to The Shamenka before turning and saying, "I'll be out in a minute." to the group going out the kitchen door.

"I am aware of some of your history with Spike, you need to know that this child is not Spike, he just holds his memories. He will say and do things that will try to... 'push your buttons'." She said in a tone that made it apparent she didn't like using such a contemporary phrase.

"So I should ignore him when he does?" Angel asked, seriously.

"Hells below us! no. Never ignore his misbehaving, punish incorrect behavior and reward correct behavior. Just don't react to him as Spike... perhaps you could look at this as your chance to get it right?" she finished, tidying up the coffee cups in the kitchen.

Angel, realizing that he had been dismissed, made his way out of the kitchen and out to the car, deep in thought.

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Wesley had arrived on his motorcycle, so he went home from The Shamenka's house. Angel dropped Gunn and Fred off at their apartment building. As he was making the turn to Lorn's, Alexander spoke, "Lorn, The Shamenka suggested that it might be a good idea for Willie to be around some demons, because I'm human... looking... and she thought he needed to be comfortable around non-human people."

Lorn looked at him with caution and said, "No insult meant to you or your kid, baby cakes, but I don't do well around children. I mean, I'm just not emotionally equipped to deal with them."

Angel looked at Lorn and remembered things that only he knew. Angel's undead heart broke as he thought of Connor and remembered how Lorn had taken care of him as a baby.

"Lorn, would you please try, for the baby's sake. We won't leave you alone with him or anything. He just needs to get to know you." Angel said with uncharacteristic pleading. He would never tell anyone his motives, but he couldn't deny Lorn this experience; it had made Lorn so happy before. Lorn had such a wealth of paternal instinct that it would be a crime to waste it.

Lorn looked with surprise at Angel's request. He didn't know that old dark and dangerous had it in him to care about a child. "Fine, I'll stop by now and then, but remember that you promised that I don't get left alone with him." Lorn said as they pulled up in front of his building.

"Thank you Lorn, I really appreciate your help." Alexander said genuinely.

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Angel and Alexander arrived back at the hotel as Willie was waking up.

"Bloody 'ell, where'm I?" Willie asked from his Poppa's arms.

"We're back at the hotel. We went for a drive and you fell asleep." Alexander said soothingly.

"Bloody starving, give us a mug, would'ja pop?" Willie asked with a very Spike-like smile.

Alexander and Angel stared at each other in astonishment. Willie had only been able to say a few words before he went to sleep. Now he sounded like Spike... same accent, same inflection, same vocabulary...

"Sure... Angel, would you mind heating some blood while I bring in Willie's things?" Alexander asked in a daze.

"Yeah." Angel answered in his own daze.

"Why'm I feelin all soggy down below?" Willie asked as Alexander juggled Willie with one arm and the diaper bag with the other.

"If your skin dries out you'll get sick. So we've been putting wet diapers on you." Alexander said as he struggled to get child and diaper bag into the hotel.

"I can bloody well walk if ya let me down, pop." Willie said in a voice that was too Spike.

Alexander let Willie down and said, "You couldn't have told me that out at the car?"

Willie just responded with a mischievous grin and ran to the kitchen.

Alexander dropped the diaper bag and went to follow Willie.

"I'm too short ta git into the fuckin chair." Willie screamed in frustration, trying to get up to the table.

"Willie! Watch your language." Alexander said as he walked into the room. Angel was just watching silently as the blood heated.

"Or you'll do what?" Willie said defiantly.

Alexander thought for a moment then got an evil smile. "Barney, Teletubbies, Blue's Clues..."

"Bloody 'ell! Alright. I'll keep me a civil tongue, just don't do that ta me. That... that's like abuse." Willie huffed indignantly.

Angel placed the mug of blood on the table and looked questioningly at Alexander.

Alexander lifted Willie to stand in the chair and asked, "Do you think you can handle a mug, or do I need to put it in a bag for you?"

"Let me try the mug, pop." Willie mumbled as he picked it up with both hands and carefully tipped the mug to his lips.

He quickly put the mug back down on the table, spilling a little and with a glare at Angel said, "You got it too hot, ya bloody wanker."

Angel was far beyond speech at this point. He just stood and stared at the miniature Spike. Alexander however was very much able to talk. "Willie, you apologize this minute. Angel was kind enough to heat the blood for you and this is his house. You will not disrespect him."

Willie considered for a moment and shyly said, "Sorry."

Alexander looked at Angel, signaling him not to talk then asked, "What are you sorry for Willie?"

"I'm sorry I called you a wanker, thank you for heating the blood for me. That was nice." Willie said, near tears.

Alexander nodded, then Angel said, "It's okay Willie, I'm not angry. If you'll be nice to me, I'll be nice to you. Okay?"

"Okay." Willie mumbled.

"You're blood should be cool enough to drink now, give it a try." Angel said quietly.

Willie carefully lifted the mug and took a drink while Alexander went to get a towel to clean up the spilled blood.

"Do ya 'ave sumthin I could put in this? It's awfully... liquid." Willie said with a crinkled nose.

"I know just the thing." Alexander said happily as he went to the cupboard and got out the tin of wheat-a-bix that he had bought... Just in case.

Willie's eyes got big when he saw the tin and he said, "Thanks pop!"

"Definitely Spike's son." Angel said with a smile as he walked to the sink to rinse out his mug.

"Yeah, he is." Alexander said happily.

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In the darkness outside the Hyperion Hotel a figure lurked. She had been keeping watch and had seen Alexander carrying the child, and heard the child's words.

She mumbled to herself, "Don't worry baby, GranMum's here for you."

## Chapter 2

Silent as a cat, Drucilla made her way into the hotel. She moved swiftly from doorway to shadow, concealing herself in the event that someone entered the room.

She finally made it to the stairway and ran up the stairs as quickly as she could. She could hear her dark kitten in the room with the child.

She waited.

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Alexander hadn't expected Willie to need to be entertained for at least a year, so he hadn't bought any toys for him. Now he found himself with a two to three year old child who had the memories of a master vampire.

"C'mon pop, let's us watch a bit of the telly." Willie said in his father's accent.

Alexander disagreed with letting Willie watch television just because there was nothing else to do so he said, "We can watch the TV later when something is on worth watching. Right now, let's look around and see if we can find something else to do." He hoped that Willie wouldn't throw a fit.

Willie just gave a shrug and started looking through dresser drawers while Alexander began looking through the pockets of his luggage.

After a few minutes of searching, Willie found a pencil and some paper. He said, "Hey pop, how's bout I draw you something?"

Alexander stopped his searching and said, "I think I would really like that Willie."

Willie laid down on the bed and began to draw.

Alexander watched him for a few minutes and finally said, "I'll be back in a second." And went into the bathroom.

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She heard her dark kitten say that he would be right back and the bathroom door close.

Drucilla tried the room's door and found it unlocked. She went in quietly and grabbed the child from the bed where he was drawing.

She ran from the room at full speed and down the stairs, carrying the child close to her chest.

"Dru?" the child said, confused.

"Shush, you're granMummy's here to take you home." she said as she ran for the door.

Willie was confused. Drucilla had taken him from his room and was carrying him away. He began to get frightened as he realized that she meant to take him from his Poppa and his Daddy and the Great Poof.

He started to struggle as they exited the hotel into the street.

As she started running down the sidewalk she said, "Don't worry baby, I'm going to take you home, you and Miss Edith can have tea parties and play dress up."

Willie stopped struggling and began to cry.

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Alexander came out of the bathroom and noticed that the door was standing open. Thinking that Willie had wandered off, he was about to go looking for him when he caught an old, almost forgotten scent.

[Drucilla!] He thought as he ran to Angel's room. He knocked furiously on Angel's door as he screamed, "Drucilla's here and she's taken Willie!"

Before Angel could answer the door Alexander was already on the stairs. He ran to the lobby and took a deep inhale to track her. As he headed for the door, Angel ran down the stairs and joined him.

They ran out into the street and once again Alexander scented for his prey. A moment later they were running down the sidewalk after Drucilla and Willie.

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Willie thought to himself, [Dru means ta dress me up and treat me like one of her bloody dolls. I've gotta stop her.]

He shifted his weight in Dru's arms and moved into position. He had never changed into his demon form on purpose before, so he had to push himself to be able to do it. He tried and tried. Sweating and tired he gave a desperate blast of effort. He could feel it starting, he pushed some more and he could feel his horns extending, he could feel his gills and dorsal fin come into being, his fingers and toes became webbed and finally what he was waiting for... his fangs began to drop.

Carefully he moved to Drucilla's neck and bit in. He drew her blood with full force, as if he'd never eaten before. She felt the penetration of her neck and started to try and pull him off. In response he locked his arms and legs around her body and drew the blood with even more force.

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Alexander and Angel came upon an eerie sight. Willie was sitting on the ground with Drucilla's head cradled in his lap, running his fingers through her hair. Angel walked forward with a stake in his hand, his arm drawn back into position when Alexander threw himself between Angel and Dru, protecting her.

"What are you doing? She tried to take your son away from you." Angel asked, disbelieving.

"Look at Willie, he cares for her. And technically she is kind of his grandmother..." Alexander trailed off as he took his son into his arms.

"She scared me, so I drained her, but I didn't take too much. Just wanted to stop her." Willie said sounding afraid, while being hugged by his father.

"Don't worry Willie, you didn't do anything wrong. She tried to take you from me and you stopped her. You did just right." Alexander said reassuringly.

Willie responded by giving his Poppa a big hug right back.

"What do you want to do about Dru?" Angel asked, smiling at the father and son.

"I don't know, I guess we take her back to the hotel. As long as we keep Willie safe from her... We really should take care of her." Alexander said, with little enthusiasm.

"Thanks Poppa, Dru is crazy as a bloody loon, but she is family." Willie said, tightening his hug again.

"That's right son," Alexander said soothingly and turned to look at Angel. "Family is important."

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Angel carried Drucilla back to the hotel as Alexander walked with Willie, holding his hand.

"Poppa?" Willie asked quietly.

"Yes son?" Alexander responded.

"Am I Spike?" Willie asked in a tiny voice.

Alexander stopped walking and picked Willie up to hold him.

"No, you are William Jesse Harris, my son. You have some of your other father's memories, and his name was Spike." Alexander said seriously and continued after Angel.

"So that's why I remember Dru an the Great Poof?" he asked shyly.



Alexander couldn't help but smile as he tried to catch up. "Yes, that's why. When he died, your father gave you his memories, so you could know him. But you are yourself and his memories are just one part of you." Alexander said as they went into the hotel.

"So what part of me isn't Spike?" Willie asked seriously.

Alexander had to think of a good answer for a moment, but glancing at Willie's face, he knew the answer. "Your nose. That is definitely not Spike's nose, you got your nose from me." he said with a smile.

Willie giggled as his Poppa kissed him on the end of his nose.

"But what have I got that's mine?" Willie asked, on the verge of tears. Alexander couldn't think of an answer so he headed quietly for the stairs.

Angel had carried Drucilla up to a room, so Alexander took Willie to their room and closed the door... and locked it.

Willie's picture was on the bed, Alexander carried Willie over to the bed and let him down. He picked up the picture and was surprised at how good it was. It wasn't finished, but there was enough likeness to tell that Willie had been drawing him.

"This is really good Willie. I don't think Spike could draw like this, and I know that I can't. So this is something that's not Spike, and not me. This is all you." Alexander said proudly.

"But I'm not finished with that." Willie said dubiously.

"I know, but I can tell that you were drawing me. Usually when a child draws someone, you can't tell what it is. You're very talented." Alexander said with a smile and pulled Willie in for a hug.

"I love you Poppa." Willie said, starting to sound sleepy.

"I love you too, son." Alexander said as he cleared off the bed in preparation for sleep.

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"Oh, you have GOT to be kidding me. I'm not going to live under the same roof with that psycho!" Cordelia screamed as she stomped away from Drucilla's room.

"She's family, and she's hurt. I'm just going to get her well enough to leave and let her go. It won't be that long." Angel said hopefully.

"Angel, I don't know what went on the past four years, but I hope I didn't get stupid. A stupid person would stay in a house with a psycho vampire. I'm not stupid, I'm leaving." Cordelia said shortly as she went to pack.

"Come on Cordelia, you can stay with Xander and the baby. They aren't leaving." He said, still trying to coax her.

"Xander never did have sense enough to stay away from trouble. Anyway, what part of 'no' don't you understand? I'm leaving. I'll check in with you and when psycho is gone, I'll come back. If I get any of those vision thingies you were telling me about, I'll call you." Cordelia said as she zipped up her suitcase.

Angel followed as she began to pack up her bathroom supplies. "What if I fixed your door so there's no way she could possibly get in. Like a big wooden bar across it?" he asked with hope.

"That sounds like a great idea... you can install that while I'm at the hotel waiting for the psycho to leave." She said, clasping her make-up bag.

She thrust her suitcase at Angel for him to carry as she walked by.

Quickly she made her way down the stairs and stopped at the check-in desk to call for a cab.

Angel just sat her suitcase beside her and left her to make her call.

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Alexander heard a knock on the door of his room. He went to answer it, and caught the scent of Angel on the other side.

He unlocked the door and said in a whisper, "Come in." As he opened the door.

"How is he doing?" Angel asked with concern.

"He's fine so far, he asked about Spike." Alexander said and gestured for Angel to take a seat.

"What did you tell him?" Angel asked quietly.

"The truth. I don't know how much he is capable of understanding, but I'll do my best to make sure he understands as much as he can." Alexander said, watching Willie sleep.

"He's so like Spike, and so different." Angel said in wonder.

"He's definitely his father's son. But that's one of the things I love about him. I think he's the best of Spike." Alexander said with a smile.

"I suppose he is. Are you okay with Drucilla being here?" Angel asked carefully.

"Well, I'd rather she wasn't, but she is family and I want Willie to get to know her as Grandma Dru, rather than remember her as Spike would." Alexander said with a shudder.

"I see your point, make some new memories to dispel the old ones." Angel said, glancing at Willie.

"He's growing so fast, I just want to make sure that he has some kind of childhood to remember. Do you think it will be safe to take him around Dru tomorrow?" Alexander asked with concern.

"Yes, she should be fine, I'm going to spend the night in her room until she wakes up so I can bring her some blood. By tomorrow she should be back to herself." Angel said absently, still watching Willie.

"While you're watching over her, I'm going to watch over Willie. I don't know if her taking him will cause him any nightmares, but I want to be here with him just in case. Plus I'm not leaving his side while she's in the hotel." Alexander finished with steel in his voice.

"I don't blame you. I wouldn't either in your position." Angel said with a smile.

Silence fell between them as they both sat and watched Willie sleeping.

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With eyes closed and breathing even, Willie listened to his Poppa and the Great Poof talking. He was happy to the depths of his soul to know that his Poppa was going to take him to Dru, so he could spend time with his grandma, and that his Poppa would watch over him while he slept.

[I got me the best Poppa there is.] He thought as he drifted off to sleep.

### **Chapter 3**

As morning approached, a slight moaning could be heard coming from Drucilla. Angel adjusted his posture as she opened her eyes.

"Daddy? My head hurts and I'm hungry." Drucilla said weakly.

Angel poured some warmed blood from a thermos into a mug and handed it to Drucilla.

"I know, drink this and you'll feel better. I think you hit your head on the sidewalk last night." Angel said with tenderness, recognizing that she was his child and therefore his responsibility.

Drucilla drank deeply and finished the mug quickly. Angel took the mug from her and filled it again.

"Why did you come here Drucilla?" Angel asked quietly.

"Spikey is gone so I'm going to take the baby home to be Miss Edith's brother." She said, then took another drink.

"How did you know that Spike was gone, or that he had a son?" Angel asked with genuine curiosity.

"The stars sang to me and told me a story. The dark kitten is becoming a panther, Spikey joined with the burning light, they had a little pudgy-boy baby, and the green key opened the backwards door." Drucilla mumbled before draining her mug.

"The stars need to learn to keep their mouths shut... what was that about the key?" Angel asked, registering what Drucilla had said.

"The green key opened the backwards door, it falls inside out and makes things that are, what might be or what could be, but never was." Drucilla said, holding out her mug for a refill.

Angel shook his head at that, he decided to ask Wesley to have a crack at that one because just hearing it once made his head hurt. Angel emptied the remaining blood from the thermos.

"Try to rest, I'll bring you some more blood in a little while." Angel said as he tucked the blanket around Drucilla.

Drucilla gave Angel a look of gratitude and fell asleep.

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Willie woke up and nudged his Poppa, who was sleeping beside him. "Poppa, I don't feel so good." he said in a tiny voice.

Alexander was immediately awake. "What are you feeling?" He asked with concern.

"I dunno, kinda like a tube of toothpaste with the last bit just squeezed out." Willie said tiredly.

"Wrung out?" Alexander asked, having an idea of the problem.

"Yeah, why do I feel like this Poppa?" Willie said with worry.

"Because you're my son, I suppose. Tell me, what did you wear to bed last night?" Alexander asked Willie, wanting him to understand it for himself.

"Your T-shirt, looks like a bloody dress on me, Dru would love it." Willie said with a Spike type smirk.

"And what did you wear to bed night before last?" Alexander asked carefully.

"Just a nappy. A wet nappy. I feel like this cause I dried out?" Willie said excitedly.

"Yep." Alexander said, giving Willie a hug.

"You couldn'ta just said so?" Willie asked a little indignantly.

"I could have, but it's better for you to figure things like this out. I knew about this because the same thing happens to me. In fact, I'm feeling wrung out too. But if something happens that's different from me, I want you to be able to figure it out for yourself." Alexander said in lecture style.

Willie considered his Poppa for a moment and decided that it made sense. But he still would rather have the answers given to him.

"Let's go take a bath. You're big enough now that I don't have to be so worried about you being in the bathtub." Alexander said proudly. "So no more showers unless we're in a hurry."

Willie gave a big smile and got out of the bed.

Alexander preceded Willie into the bathroom and started a tub of water, adjusting it to the perfect temperature.

"We're really lucky to be living here, this is the biggest bathtub of anyplace that I've ever lived." Alexander said happily as he undressed.

He reached down and helped Willie out of the T-shirt that he was tangled in and began to lift him into the tub.

"Can do it myself." Willie said in a huff.

"You're too small to get in and out of the bathtub alone. This is a very big tub and you could get hurt." Alexander said in his fatherly tone.

"I wanna do it myself." Willie insisted.

"Change into your demon form and you can try to get in by yourself." Alexander relented.

Willie looked at his Poppa with a questioning look.

"I'm worried that you'll fall into the water and drown. In demon form you have gills, so that wouldn't be a worry. You still might bump your head or something, but at least I don't have to worry about you drowning." Alexander finished.

Willie scrunched up his face and did like he did the night before. It was easier this time. He gave the push to start his demon change. The horns, gills, fin, webbing and fangs came into place.

Then, very carefully he went to the side of the tub and hoisted himself up on the edge. He began to waver on the edge of the tub, But with a look of encouragement from his father, he took the plunge, literally.

"Scoot over, I'm coming in." Alexander said as he eased himself down into the water.

Willie dunked himself under the water. He stayed under for two full minutes before Alexander pulled him up. "Are you okay?"

When Willie tried to talk a rush of water came out of his mouth and he looked surprised. "I think you need to get your gills out of the water before you try talking." Alexander said with a little concern.

Willie got up on his knees and raised himself up until his gills were out of the water. "That felt funny. When I was under the water, I didn't need to breathe, it was like Spike didn't need to breathe." Willie said happily.

"Not exactly. Spike's body was dead, so he didn't need to breathe at all. You are alive and need to breathe, Just under water, you can breathe through your gills instead of with your lungs." Alexander said, hoping he was explaining it well.

Willie nodded in acceptance then dropped back under the water. Alexander just relaxed in the feeling of being wet, saturated with moisture, truly comfortable.

After a few minutes Willie came up out of the water and stood on his knees. His gills drained so he could talk. "Poppa, where did I come from? I mean, I know bout sex an stuff from Spike but..." Willie finished with a confused tone, obviously unable to form the rest of the question.

"I'm not sure about everything, but I'll tell you what I know." Alexander said, waiting to see that Willie was listening.

Willie nodded and waited for the story.

"Your father and I were together, do you remember that?" Alexander asked with a blush.

Willie crinkled his nose and nodded.

"Well, this is the part that I'm not sure about. We did a lot of things, and something that we did caused me to become pregnant with you." Alexander paused, in case Willie had any questions.

Willie just nodded again.

"You grew in my belly, right here." Alexander indicated the spot where the egg had grown.

Willie looked at his Poppa's belly with wide eyes as Alexander continued.

"You see this little mark here? This is where you came out." Alexander said as he showed the mark that looked like an inch long scar. He pulled the bottom of the scar to reveal that it was a tiny, tight flap.

"I came outta that?" Willie asked, disbelieving.

"Yes, you were smaller then." Alexander said with a smile.

"When you came out, you were in an egg." Alexander said, watching for Willie's reaction.

"Like a bloody chicken!?" Willie asked with outrage.

"More like a crocodile. Chickens aren't any good in the water. And your shell was... flexible." Alexander said seriously.

Willie seemed much happier with that answer.

"Then nearly two weeks later, the egg hatched, and here you are." Alexander said happily.

"I know you didn't plan to have me, I remember when you were with Spike. Did you want me?... Do you want me?" Willie asked bravely.

"I wanted you so much that I came here to Angel, where I could take care of you the best." Alexander said with emphasis.

"You really gave Peaches a hard time over the years, didn't you?" Willie said, a little too much like Spike.

"Yes, I did, but because I wanted you to have a good home where you could know other demons and still be with me, I came here and worked things out with Angel." Alexander said calmly.

"Bet that was a bloody sight to see, you and Peaches trying to bury the hatchet." Willie said with a smirk.

"Not as bad as you might think. It only took a few days. And Angel accepts you as part of his family. He's like your Great-Grandpa." Alexander said with a smile.

"I can't wait to call Peaches Great-Grandpa. It'll put him inna bloody mood, I'll wager." Willie said with a laugh.

"No, you will NOT call Angel Great-Grandpa." Alexander said with a serious voice. Then he whispered, "Unless I'm around to hear it."

They both laughed and lounged in the water for a while longer before having to start their day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander came down the stairs slowly, holding Willie's hand as he navigated the too-big stairs. As they were making their way down, they could overhear Angel talking on the phone.

"Wesley, I know it's early but this could be important..." Angel said into the phone.

"But Drucilla was talking about a key and a backwards door, stuff like that is always serious..." Angel said with exasperation.

"I know, but sometimes it is..." Angel tried to interject.

"Okay, I'll see you then. But if the world ends first, don't come running to me." Angel said angrily into the phone before hanging up.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander was cooking himself some scrambled eggs while heating some blood for Willie.

"The Shamenka said that you should start eating solid food soon. Do you want to try some eggs?" Alexander asked hopefully.

"I'll give it a try, but can I have mine with blood?" Willie asked seriously.

"Of course. How about one scrambled egg, covered in blood, then a mug of blood on the side... with Wheat-a-bix?"

"Ya know me too good, Pop." Willie said with a smirk.



Alexander carefully fixed a small plate for Willie and a large plate for himself. As he was sitting them on the table, Angel walked into the room.

"Good Morning Xander, Willie." Angel said absently and was surprised when Alexander handed him a warmed mug of blood.

Alexander started preparing another mug for Willie and said, "Good morning Angel."

Waiting for Angel to take a drink, Willie finally said, "Good morning Great-Grandpa." With an innocent look on his face.

Angel choked a little on his blood and Willie got a sour look on his face.

"Bugger! I was tryin to get him ta shoot it out his nose." Willie said indignantly.

"William Jesse Harris." Alexander said in a scolding tone, "If you're going to try to choke you're Great-Grandpa Angel, don't admit to it in front of him."

Angel looked from Willie to Alexander and back. Willie was the first to start laughing, soon Alexander was laughing and finally Angel joined them.

Alexander took Willie's warmed mug and the tin of Wheat-a-bix to the table and sat down. Moments later Angel joined them and watched them eat as he sipped his mug.

After a few minutes Alexander asked, "So how is Drucilla this morning?"

"She's fine, just resting." Angel said.

"When can I visit? I want to have a chat with her." Willie said seriously.

"We can go up right now, just give me a minute to warm a little blood for her." Angel said.

Willie and Alexander finished their meals as Angel heated the blood and put it into a thermos.

\* \* \* \* \*

The two men and the boy walked into the room where Drucilla was sleeping. She opened her eyes as Willie approached her.

"You're such a beautiful little boy." Drucilla crooned.

"Can it Dru." Willie said shortly.

Drucilla was startled by the attitude of the four or five year old child.

"Let's get something straight, my Dark Princess. I've got me a Poppa now an I mean ta stay with him. If you want ta visit with me, I'll be right here, but you try ta take me again an I'll dust you." Willie said in his best Spike imitation.

"Spikey?" Drucilla asked in a quavering voice.

"No, Spike was my father. And you'd bloody well better believe that I'm his son." He ended with a growl and shifted into demon form.

Neither Alexander nor Angel could find it in their hearts to tell Willie that he wasn't even a little intimidating, he was just cute when he tried to act like his father.

Drucilla however seemed to take the threat seriously. Wide-eyed, she nodded in acceptance of Willie's words.

"Right luv, how's bout you tell us what's been going on with you, then?" Willie said, shifting back into human form.

The morning progressed as Drucilla told stories of her time in South America with a Chaos Demon, from her own fantastical point of view.

\* \* \* \* \*

After a somewhat long and emotionally challenging visit with Drucilla, Willie and Alexander made their way back to their room.

"Willie, would you like to go out to a restaurant for lunch today? I mean, do you think you could eat a little human food, and we could walk around and see some of the town." Alexander asked casually.

"Really? You wanna go out... with me?" Willie asked incredulously.

"Of course. The only reason we haven't gone out before is because you weren't old enough to control your demon change. Now that you can do it at will, we can go out whenever we want... In fact, I was thinking about taking a little trip up the coast." Alexander finished a little unsurely.

"What's up the coast?" Willie asked suspiciously.

"Can't pull anything over on you. My parents, your other grandparents are staying with my Great-Aunt Lily at her beach house.

"But aren't your parents a coupla wankers?" Willie asked seriously.

"Yes, and Drucilla is insane. They are what they are, we just have to accept them that way." Alexander said, resigned.

"So what's got you so worried, Pop?" Willie asked, concerned.

"I don't know how I'm going to tell them about you... I don't mean that the way it sounds, I mean to tell them about you, I have to tell them about vampires, sea monsters, hellmouths, slayers and so on. By the time we get to your part of the story, we'll probably already be out on the street." Alexander said with worry.

"So don't tell 'em. If they wanted to know about what's going on in your life they shoulda asked back when all that was happening. I remember your parents, Spike thought they were a coupla lazy sots, sitting on their arses all day and stinking of cheap booze." Willie said confidently.

"I just don't want you to ever think that I'm ashamed of who or what you are." Alexander said quietly.

"If I wanted you to tell them the truth, would you?" Willie asked seriously.

"In a heartbeat." Alexander answered without a thought.

"What about the Slayer and the Witch?" Willie asked calmly.

"Already told them, just after you hatched." Alexander said proudly.

"Pops, can we just say born? Hatched sounds kinda weird, I'm still thinking chicken." Willie said with slight pleading in his voice.

"Sure Willie, born it is. Anyway, I already told Buffy, Faith and Willow, by now they've told the rest of the Sunnydale crew." Alexander said with a smile.

"Then no worries, you told your friends about me, so I know you're not ashamed, and you're not telling your folks because they're assholes." Willie said with a smirk.

Alexander raised an eyebrow at Willie. After a moment, Willie looked properly chastised and they moved on.

"So we need a story to tell them. They won't believe you were born less than three weeks ago since you look like your about five and you talk like your about One-hundred-Fifty." Alexander finished with a grin.

"Spike was One-hundred-Twenty, thank you very much, and who were you dating five years ago? Soes that way we can say that I'm your child." Willie asked seriously.

Alexander started to laugh. Willie couldn't understand so he looked back through his father's memories until he found the answer. "Bloody 'ell, not the bloody Cheerleader?" Willie exclaimed.

"Yup. Of course we'll ask her to cover our story, since she does live with us." Alexander laughed.

"Alright, we'd better get there soon, before I look too old to be your son." Willie said with a smile.

Alexander's expression fell when Willie mentioned that and Willie noticed.

"What'sa matter Pop?" Willie asked, suddenly concerned.

"I'm so happy to have you as my son, and I don't want someone walking down the street to think your my brother or something." Alexander said a little shakily.

"Don't worry Pop, You, me, Peaches, Dad... hell's, all the people we care about know the truth. What's the difference if some yahoo off the street don't know the truth. He'll prolly just git eat next time he goes out for a pack of smokes at night anyway." Willie said with a smile.

"Was that supposed to cheer me up?" Alexander asked, confused.

Willie nodded. "Did it work?"

Alexander smiled. "Yeah, it did. If Wesley or Angel willlet us borrow a car, or better yet, if Wesley will come with, we can go tomorrow."

Alexander got a serious look on his face and asked, "You know that I love you right?"

"O course, Pop." Willie continued to smile.

"Well, did you know that I like you too?" Alexander asked, with a serene smile.

Willie responded with a puzzled look.

"I guess most parents love their kids, it's like natures way of insuring the survival of the species or something." Alexander said, still smiling happily.

"But not every parent *likes* their kid. I thought it was important that you know that I like the person that you are becoming. I'm proud of how you handled Drucilla and how well behaved you've been." Alexander said with genuine adoration.

Willie blushed and said, "Thanks Pop, I like you too. Can we go and look around the town now?"

"Sure, let's go." Alexander said, taking Willie's hand in his and walking toward the door.

## **Chapter 4**

Alexander and Willie were on their way home from a pleasant day of shopping and looking around. Since Willie had been growing so quickly, they hadn't bothered to get him more than one change of clothes at a time because it was likely that he would outgrow them in a day or two.

Willie had enjoyed his day, his memories from his father made him realize how lucky he was to be able to go out in the sun. Willie had had half a corn dog for lunch and then they went to the park where Alexander watched as Willie played in a fountain.

Tired and happy they made their way into the hotel. Immediately after they entered Alexander said, "Wesley's here. Let's go see if we can find him."

"How'd ya know that Pop?" Willie asked, a little puzzled.

"I have hyena senses, I was possessed a few years back and when the hyena was removed, her senses and instincts remained... kind of the way Spike left his memories with you." Alexander said calmly as they made their way up the stairs.

They stopped off at the bedroom to drop off their packages and went in search of Wesley. A few minutes later they found him in Drucilla's room.

Willie barreled in the door and yelled, "Daddy! We had the best day, I got to go out in the sun and play, and I got to eat human food, and I got to play in a fountain, and..."

"It's good to see you too William." Wesley said with a smile, while hugging William close to himself.

"Poppa's got something to ask you, please say yes, please?" Willie said with imploring eyes.

Wesley turned his gaze from Willie to Alexander giving a questioning look.

"I wondered if you had time to go with us up the coast tomorrow. I'd like to introduce Willie to his grandparents... the Harris ones." Alexander said in a hopeful voice.

"As a matter of fact, I do have time and I would be delighted to travel with you and William." Wesley said formally but a glimpse of tenderness could be seen in his eyes.

"Great, I bought Willie some new clothes for the trip. And some swimming trunks for all three of us." Alexander said then realized that he might have been too forward.

"I don't know how you knew that I didn't own any, but be that as it may, thank you Alexander." Wesley said in his British watcher way.

"Sure Wesley, I didn't even think, you're just part of the family, so if I was buying for us, I was buying for you too... I hope I got the right size." Alexander said with a little concern.

"I'm sure they'll be fine." Wesley said with a small smile.

"Hi Great-Grandpa Angel. Hi Grammy Dru." Willie said with a wicked little smile as he took in Angel's flustered reaction.

"Good Afternoon Willie, are you excited about your trip?" Angel asked, getting over the Great-Grandpa comment.

"I'm excited about going on a trip with Poppa, and Daddy, and I'm excited about going to the ocean. We have to visit the wankers he calls parents while we're there." Willie said with a little sneer.

"They're your grandparents, and if we do this right, you'll never have to see them again after this." Alexander said hopefully.

"Why is that?" Wesley asked, puzzled.

"Because Willie's right, they're wankers. Even so, I think it's important that he get to meet them... they're family. But we have to be careful to not tell them where we live. You can say Los Angeles but that's all."

"Why not?" Angel asked.

"Because if they know where I live, they'll probably show up on the doorstep wanting to move in." Alexander said with dread.

Angel gave a shudder. He had seen Xander's parents a few times. Given the choice, he wouldn't want to be in the same city with them, much less the same building.

"Daddy and the Wicked Knight were talking with me." Drucilla said happily.

Everyone turned their attention to Drucilla who was looking strangely at Willie.

"Wicked Knight?" Alexander asked Wesley with a note of teasing in his voice.

"Dark Kitten?" Wesley asked in return, effectively ending the teasing.

Willie crawled up on the bed and sat beside Drucilla. "Wanna hear about my day out in the sunshine?" he asked happily.

"Yes, tell granMummy all about your day." She said with enthusiasm.

Alexander took a seat and listened to the events of the day from Willie's point of view. Wesley and Angel walked out of the room to talk.

Wesley stopped into Drucilla's room later to say goodbye and arrange a time to pick them up. Alexander and Willie said their good-byes, then went back to visiting with Drucilla. There was no doubt she was stark raving mad, but she could tell an entertaining story.

Later that evening Willie and Alexander established that brussels sprouts and blood was not a viable combination and that Mac & Cheese goes with just about anything. Willie had only had a little more than two mugs of blood all day.

As they lay down to sleep, Willie whispered, "Poppa?"

"Yes Willie?" Alexander asked sleepily.

"Do you know what Willie means in England?" he asked with a chuckle.

Alexander thought for a moment then blushed. "I'm sorry Wil... what do you want me to call you?"

"I dunno. Willie didn't bother me until tonight when I remembered that it's about the same as being named 'Dick' or 'Pecker'." Willie said shyly.

"Fine, let's look at the possibilities." Alexander said in his fatherly way. "William?" He asked without hinting whether he approved or not.

Willie thought about it for a moment and said, "That's Daddy's name for me, an besides, that's what you call me when you scold me. If you called me that all the time I'd feel like I was always in trouble."

Alexander couldn't argue with that logic and asked, "Billy?"

"I don't know, I don't feel much like a Billy. I mean Billy the demon... It doesn't really sound right." Willie said with a smile.

"Jesse?" Alexander asked, trying not to sound sad.

"Hmmm. Jesse the demon... Jesse the seamonster... " He cleared his throat and mock screamed, "Ahhh! Jesse is coming!"

Alexander was laying back laughing by this time.

"That one is on the list of maybe. I like it, but I don't know." Willie said seriously.

"I've got it... Will." Alexander said excitedly.

"Will... Will the demon... Will the seamonster... Ahhh! Will is coming!" Willie stared at the ceiling, apparently searching for inspiration.

"That goes on the list with Jesse." Willie said with certainty.

"How about we decide this tomorrow. I'll introduce you to everyone as William and let them decide what to call you." Alexander said, very ready to be asleep.

"Poppa?" Willie asked quietly.

"Hmmm?" Alexander responded.

"Who was Jesse? Spike didn't know him, I don't think." Willie said sleepily.

Alexander thought that this might serve two purposes. Let Willie know who Jesse was, and give him a bedtime story to put him to sleep.

"Jesse was my best friend when I was growing up. We went to kindergarten together and became friends." Alexander said in a relaxing tone and turned on his side to watch Willie.

"He and I would build forts and treehouses, we did everything together. We played with little green army men in the dirt and made fantastic battlefields." He glanced at Willie's eyes to see them getting heavy.

"Willow was there too, the three of us were together in school, after school, on the weekends..." He dropped his voice to be softer, Willie's eyes were half closed. "Sometimes I would sleep over at Jesse's house and we would stay up real late watching movies."

"When we were 15 a new girl showed up at school. She was really pretty. There were stories going around that she burnt down her last school." Willie's eyes were little more than slits.

In a near whisper Alexander said, "Her name was Buffy. Spike knew her. She was... is the vampire slayer. She saved Willow from being bitten by a vampire. Jesse wasn't so lucky. Jesse was turned into a vamp about a week later."

Willie was asleep, but Alexander had to finish the story. In a whisper he sadly said, "I put a wooden stake through my best friend's heart and he turned to dust." Then he laid back to try and sleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

They were on the road, T minus three hours and counting. Alexander thought back on the morning. He and Willie had woken up and taken a leisurely bath. After that he had prepared eggs and hashed browns for the both of them. Covered in blood for Willie with a mug and Wheat-a-bix on the side.

They had hurriedly packed up their clothes for the trip and were waiting when Wesley arrived. Exactly on time, as usual.



Now they were cruising along the coast highway, Willie was in the back drawing and the adults were in the front, enjoying the scenery.

"Wesley, I wanted to thank you for taking the time to do this for us." Alexander said with genuine thanks in his voice.

"Alexander, I don't know if you understand what it means to me for you to include me in your family. I am far from my home, and not on good terms with my own family. For you to make me a part of your family means more to me than I can say." Wesley said, on the verge of letting his emotions show themselves.

"There isn't anyone else that I can think of that I would rather have as part of my family. You're my friend and Willie's Daddy and you always will be." Alexander said with a lump in his throat.

"Daddy. I gotta go." Willie said from the back seat.

Wesley said, "We haven't been on the road for half an hour..."

"He's only been on human food for two days. His body is still trying to figure out what to do with it." Alexander interrupted as gently as he could.

Wesley considered Alexander's words and began looking for the next restroom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Four bathroom breaks later they arrived at the beach house. The adults got slowly out of the car and stretched their stiff bodies as Willie jumped out and started running around, exploring the area.

"Ah youth, I would stop him, but his childhood is flying by so fast..." Alexander said with a sad look in his eyes as he watched his son playing.

"He'll be fine. Every moment of his childhood is filled with love and joy. How many people do you know that can say that?" Wesley said with his own sad look.

"Willie, come on, let's meet your grandparents." Alexander said loud enough to be heard over the running child.

The group of three went up to the door of the large, majestic, albeit run-down building. It was the only structure as far as the eye could see in any direction.

Alexander knocked on the door. The knock sounded like it echoed into forever. After a moment, the door slowly began to open.

"Come in, come in." Said a woman's voice from behind the door.

The three went inside the house and saw the delicate pale woman pushing the giant door closed. Alexander made a move to help her, but before he could, she was done.

"Aunt Lily?" Alexander asked in an incredulous voice.

"Yes?" Lily answered.

"I'm Alexander, Henry and Marilyn's son. I heard that they were staying here after Sunnydale was evacuated.." he said excitedly.

"You can't be, the last time I saw you, you were... that big." She said looking at Willie.

With a swell of pride in his voice he said, "I'd like to introduce my son, William Jesse Harris"

"Aren't you just the cutest thing, I could eat you up." Lily said while pinching one of Willie's cheeks.

Willie looked up at Aunt Lily surprised then turned and put his arms up signaling for his Poppa to pick him up.

"Are my parents here?" Alexander asked casually.

"No, they went out to the store... for beer no doubt." She said with obvious disapproval.

"No doubt." Alexander said before noticing Wesley standing beside him.

"Oh, Aunt Lily, this is my friend Wesley." Alexander said quickly. "This is Lily..."

"Call me Aunt Lily, everyone does." Lily interrupted with grace.

Willie pulled himself close to his Poppa's ear and whispered, "I think she's a vampire."

## **Chapter 5**

"Yes I am." Lily said with a smile.

"But... but how?" Alexander asked with wide eyes.

Wesley was working his way closer to Alexander and William.

"Actually, I was born this way." Lily said gesturing for the others to follow her.

They entered a large room filled with furniture. Alexander, Willie and Wesley sat close together on a couch while Lily sat herself on an elegant chair.

"It was my understanding that vampires couldn't reproduce because their bodies are dead." Wesley said, relieved that he didn't stammer at all.

"I believe that's true of most vampires, but vampires descended from Dracula are not dead." She said with a pleasant smile.

"Are you speaking of the childer of Dracula or the children?" Wesley asked cautiously.

"The children, of course." Lily said.

Wesley and Alexander exchanged looks as Willie decided what needed to be done next.

"Poppa, can I show Aunt Lily? Can I?" Willie asked in typical five-year-old fashion.

Alexander thought about it for just a second then said, "Go ahead, show your Aunt Lily."

Willie gave a little push and let his demon form come to the fore.

Lily clapped her hands and smiled at her nephew's achievement. Willie made a few growls and snarls, much to Lily's delight as Alexander asked, "Does mom and dad know about this? "

"They know. Your father is such a speciesist bigot that we don't even talk about it in front of him." Lily said with disgust.

"And here all this time I thought he was just a regular bigot... William, you need to change back to your human form in case your grandparents come home." Alexander said, barely remembering to call his son William.

"Okay Poppa." Willie said sadly and changed back into his human form.

"So why isn't mom a vampire?" Alexander asked curiously.

"No one knows. Every now and again, one of our children comes out fully human. Personally I think that somewhere there is a deity with a sense of humor." Lily said conspiratorially.

Willie was wandering around the room, looking at everything.

"So what is he, I mean he doesn't look like a typical vampire." Lily commented.

"He got sea monster from me, it's a long story. We think that's what made me able to reproduce... lay an egg." He finished timidly.

"He got vampire from his father, Spike. You might know of him as William the Bloody, one of the Scourge of Europe." Alexander said with pride in his child's father.

"Oh yes, I met him once back in the old country, he was traveling with Angelus back then." Lily said in fond remembrance.

"Well we're staying with Angel, that's Angelus' name now that he has a soul. Anyway we're staying at his place since he's like William's great-grandfather." Alexander said, happy to have this connection with his aunt.

"It's nice to know that Angelus is still around. I must stop by to see him." Lily said happily.

"I think he'd like that." Alexander said with a smile, then considered something. "You said that you were descended from Dracula, but I've met Dracula and he looked like he was about twenty-five." Alexander said, confused.

"My father, your great-grandfather is Dracula, and he hasn't gone out hunting in nearly a hundred years. Whoever you met was just a vampire who knew some gypsy magic." Lily said exasperated. "There are a lot of wannabe's and posers trying to trade on the family name."

Alexander turned his head suddenly and Willie came running back into the room screaming, "The wankers are here! The wankers are here!"

Instead of scolding his child he just said sadly, "I know."

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a sound of rustling bags in another room and the sound of a beer being opened before the grungey figures of Marilyn and Henry Harris made their way into the living room.

"Oh fuck! You here to mooch off us boy?" Alexander's father said as he flung his bulk into a chair and took a deep drink of his beer.

Alexander's mother came in and paused for a moment when she saw her son, then went to sit on a love seat near her husband.

"Nice to see you too Dad, Mom. I'd like you to meet Wesley, and my son William." Alexander said in a neutral tone.

"Your son? I thought you was a fag." Henry said as he took out a cigarette.

"I'm a grandmother?" Marilyn said, astonished.

"Yeah mom, you are." Alexander said, ignoring his father's words.

"So why'd you bring the little shit here? You're not dumping him on us, are you?" Henry asked as he took a deep drag off his cigarette.

"No, I just came for a visit to let you know that I'm okay and that you have a grandson." Alexander said, resigned. This was pretty much what he had expected.

"I'm going to go start lunch, would you care to help me?" Lily asked Alexander.

"Sure Aunt Lily."

As Alexander got up to follow Lily, Wesley and Willie automatically got up to leave.

"Come and let me see you." Marilyn said to Willie.

Willie cautiously made his way toward his grandma. Wesley and Alexander shared a glance and it was silently decided that Wesley would stay to watch over Willie.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I'm sorry you had to go through that. I know you just wanted your parents to know their grandchild." Lily said sadly.

"Actually, I wanted Willie to know his grandparents. They're reacting just about the way that I expected." Alexander said sadly.

"I didn't realize that things were this bad, if I had only known I would have found a way to get you out of there." Lily said, nearly in tears.

"Don't worry Aunt Lily. I'm in a place now where I have friends who like and respect me, I have a wonderful son that is the greatest thing in my life. And if I have my way, this will be the last time I ever lay eyes on those two." Alexander said serenely.

"Alexander, don't give up on your family... okay, you can give up on those two, but the rest of your family will love and accept you just as you are." Lily said seriously.

"Thank you Aunt Lily, you know I haven't seen any of the family since I was about four years old. I don't think I can be part of your family. I don't know any of them. My family is with Angel, Wesley and William. But I would be happy if you could be part of my family." Alexander asked hopefully.

"When you least expect it, I'll be showing up for a visit. Like I said, I have some catching up to do with Angelus." Lily said happily.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marilyn Harris held her grandson close and looked at him. There was no denying that this was her grandson, he had the Harris nose. "So tell me about your mother." Marilyn said softly.

Willie pulled back and said, "Name's Cordelia. Used to be a cheerleader. Now she's a receptnist." Willie said quickly.

Marilyn gave a little chuckle and said, "Is your momma beautiful?"

"Yeah, a naughty bit of fluff, my mum." Willie said, trying to work his way off his Grandmother's lap.

"Daddy, can we go with Poppa?" Willie asked with pleading in his voice.

"Why does the little shit call you daddy?" Henry asked gruffly.

"I was there when he was born and have watched after him since. When he began to speak, he called me his dad, and so I have been ever since." Wesley said shortly, wanting to be away from these repulsive people.

"So that's where he gets that limy accent." Henry said loudly.

"Excuse me, we're going to find Alexander." Wesley said, hurriedly leaving the room hand in hand with Willie.

"Bring me back a beer!" Henry called from his chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Alexander, I must say I have a whole new respect for my father after meeting yours." Wesley said in an uncharacteristic show of emotion.

"Yeah, dad's something else. What say we get the hell out of here?" Alexander asked.

"Aren't you going to stay for lunch?" Lily asked plaintively.

"For you I will, Aunt Lily, but we will be leaving as soon as lunch is over. It's a long drive back to L.A." Alexander said calmly.

"Not as long as lunch is going to be with those two." Wesley said, then realized that he had said it out loud.

Willie put his hands up for his Poppa to pick him up.

"How you doing?" Alexander asked with concern.

"Grandma's breath is like tha ashtray in a west-end pub." Willie said with his nose crinkled.

"I'll have to take your word for it. Are you going to be able to eat lunch?" Alexander asked concerned.

"Is he having trouble eating?" Lily asked with her own concern.

"We're trying to wean him off blood, this will be his second day eating human food. And I've been giving him blood with his food, to make it easier." Alexander said while running his fingers through Willie's hair.

"Then why don't I just fix him some blood?" Lily asked him as she went to the refrigerator.

"But what will my parents think?" Alexander asked with worry.

"Do you really care what they think?" Lily asked in return.

Alexander looked down into his son's face and said, "Not at all, go ahead."

\* \* \* \* \*

Lunch was served in the dining room to the sound of Henry Harris' bitching about having to leave the television in the middle of 'his show' and because no one thought to bring him a beer.

Lily had been determined to make the meal special, so she put out the good china and crystal.

When everyone was seated, she walked over to Willie's place-setting and filled his crystal glass with blood. Then she went to her place and filled her own.

Henry started to bluster and huff but Lily shut him down quickly by saying, "Henry, you are a guest in my house. If you have some objection as to how I entertain, you may keep it to yourself or leave." Then she turned her attention to the entire table. "I propose a toast to the newest member of the family, William Jesse Harris." Lily said and extended her glass.

Wesley and Alexander touched glasses with Lily, then Alexander lifted Willie so he could touch Lily's glass too.

Henry just sat sourly watching as Marilyn kept silently glancing at Henry to see his reactions.

"Can I Poppa?" Willie asked quietly.

Alexander just smiled and nodded his head.

Willie let his demon form come into being and began to drink his blood hungrily. Henry watched in disgust as Marilyn watched with tearful eyes.

The meal continued in near silence. Wesley's prediction about the seeming length of the meal had been spot on. The drive there had seemed like nothing compared to the stony silence and the air of tension.

"Thank you for the lovely meal Aunt Lily. We really have to go. I just came to introduce William to the family." Alexander said quickly after the last of the food was gone.

"Yes, it was a pleasure to meet you, and I do hope that I get to see you if you come to Los Angeles to visit." Wesley said with genuine admiration.

"Thank you for coming, I hope to be able to visit you soon. I just came here to open the house for Henry and Marilyn and see that they were set up before I returned home." Lily said as she walked with them to the door.

"I guess you wouldn't know of a good place to go swimming around here, would you?" Alexander asked timidly.

"Actually, I do. There is a place about a mile down the road called 'Hippies Rock', the people there are very accepting of non-human people." Lily said sweetly.

"Here's Angel's address, don't let mom or dad get hold of it." Alexander said with a whisper.

"Go on you three, but remember to wait an hour after eating before you swim." Lily said with a smile.

"Bye Aunt Lily, I hope to see you soon." Alexander said honestly.

"Good-bye Alexander, Wesley, Wil." Lily said from the darkened doorway.



## Chapter 6

As the trio arrived at 'Hippies Rock' Willie said to his Poppa, "I think I got my new name."

"Don't tell me that you want to be called 'the little shit' because I had that name first." Alexander said in a teasing voice.

"Naw, when we left Aunt Lily called me 'Wil', I think I like the sound of that." Wil told his Poppa happily.

"Wil, I agree, that's a very good name for you, besides Willie is a kids name and you are growing into a young man." Alexander said with pride.

"May I still call you William?" Wesley asked while finding a parking place.

"Sure Daddy." Wil said happily.

"Let's get ready to swim." Alexander said with enthusiasm.

The trio raced to shed their clothes, having put their swim suits on before leaving Aunt Lily's house. Wesley gathered towels and a blanket to carry to the beach.

As Wesley walked from the car, Alexander paused and saw the pale angular form of Wesley walking away wearing only swimming trunks. For the first time since Spike, he felt a tingle of desire. A few moments later he snapped himself out of his thoughts. He surreptitiously adjusted himself then took Wil's hand to join Wesley who was far up the beach by now.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wesley was sitting on the blanket watching as Alexander and William played in the water. Aunt Lily had been correct, the humans barely outnumbered the non-humans here and everyone got along fine. There were two demons with a reptilian appearance sunning themselves on a large rock, watching William with a wistful look. Wesley suspected that they were a couple and about to decide that they wanted a young one of their own. The look was unmistakable.

At a squeal from William, Wesley's attention was fixed firmly back on the two playing in the water. William was in demon form and using his aquatic features for all they were worth. Thanks to Alexander's greater strength and size, he was able to keep up with William, no matter how fast he tried to go.

Wesley found himself focusing on Alexander's body. He found him to be quite pleasing to look at. Alexander's form was toned and trim. His face had the appearance of an eighteen year-old even though he had to be twenty-five by now. When Alexander turned away to watch William, Wesley found his eyes drawn to Alexander's firm buttocks. And his legs were well muscled, he obviously had the traditional swimmer's body.

Noticing a rising in his new swim trunks, Wesley turned himself so he was laying on his stomach and propped on his elbows. His mind began to drift, forming fantasies when a voice called to him. "Daddy! You wanna come and play?" William called from a few feet away.

Wesley snapped his attention to William and said, "Not just yet. I'll come out and play in a bit."

William dropped onto the blanket beside Wesley. "You got a stiffy for Poppa, don'tcha?" William asked with a knowing smile.

"Well... I'm not... William... I don't..." Wesley sputtered.

"He was checkin you out too, when you left the car. He was sportin some wood for you." William said in a conspiratorial tone.

William jumped up off the blanket and ran back to join his Poppa.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is Wesley going to join us?" Alexander asked as Wil swam up to him.

"In a minute. He's got a boner and won't get off the blanket till it goes away." Wil said with a big smile.

"Wil!, that's not a nice thing to say about your Daddy." Alexander said offended.

"What's a matter Pop? He does, he was checkin you out jus the same as you was checkin him out at the car." Wil said defensively.

"He what? I wasn't... I didn't... Wil..." Alexander sputtered.

"That's about what he said when I told him." Wil said with a wicked smile.

"You told him? That I... him?" Alexander said with the last of his breath.

"Catch me if you can!" Wil said as he took off full speed away from his sputtering Poppa.

\* \* \* \* \*

There had been an hour of silence in the car. Wil had decided to be quiet to allow Daddy and Poppa time to talk. But they wouldn't talk. They wouldn't even look at each other. It was obvious that these two were attracted to each other, but left like this, they'd never get around to it.

"So, you two gonna snog or what?" Wil asked from the back seat.

Silence.

"What's it gonna take to get you two ta figure it out? You got the hots for each other. Give me one good reason that you two shouldn't be together." Wil said forcefully.

"Wil, you're embarrassing Wesley. It's not nice to tease him like this, and I won't allow it." Alexander said in an angry tone.

"But..." Wil tried to say as Wesley cut in.

"It's not proper to say such things about your Poppa."

"But..." Wil tried again.

"I think you should apologize to Wesley right now." Alexander said angrily.

"For what?" Wil asked confused.

"For saying those things." Alexander said in a near snarl.

"Which things?" Wil asked, hoping he could get his Poppa to say it out loud.

"For saying that Wesley is attracted to me. It's wrong to say things like that about people when they're not true." Alexander blurted out.

For a moment only the sound of the engine could be heard.

"I am." Wesley said quietly.

"What?" Alexander asked with a complete change in tone. From angry to disbelieving in 0.23 seconds.

"I am attracted to you." Wesley said timidly, preparing for an insult or a physical blow.

"Oh... me too." Alexander said, then continued, "I mean... to you."

Wil sat quietly in the back seat and began to draw again while he thought, [Stupid bloody pillocks was never gonna git to it if I didn't give them a push.]

\* \* \* \* \*

Before a half an hour had passed, Wil had fallen asleep in the back seat. Wesley and Alexander had been silent, but were exchanging meaningful glances.

"How are we going to do this?" Wesley asked in a whisper.

"Before I embarrass myself by answering the wrong question, which 'this' are you referring to?" Alexander responded in a low voice.

"I mean, a relationship between us, there's no point in trying to hide it from William, but I don't know how Angel will react. I wouldn't want this to damage your reputation." Wesley said sadly.

"My reputation? Everybody knows I was with Spike, so I don't know what reputation you're trying to protect." Alexander said in true puzzlement. "Besides, I'm more worried about your reputation."

"I'm a rogue demon hunter, my reputation can only improve." Wesley said with a small smile.

Wesley's smile was contagious, soon they were both smiling, and the smiles became laughter.

After their nervous tension was released, Alexander made a move, he placed his hand, palm up beside Wesley's leg.

Wesley noticed the movement and thought the gesture incredibly sweet, so he dropped one hand off the steering wheel and took Alexander's hand in his own. For the rest of the drive back to L.A. they were holding hands and whispering.

\* \* \* \* \*

As they pulled up to the hotel, Alexander whispered, "If you'll take Wil up to our room, I'm going to talk with Angel."

"Shouldn't I be with you when you tell him?" Wesley asked incredulously.

"If you want to be, we can do it later. I just don't want to leave Wil alone at any time with Drucilla in the building." Alexander whispered in reply.

"Very well, I can understand that." Wesley whispered as he looked at the sleeping form of William.

Wesley brought the car to a stop and Alexander got out and took an armload of supplies out of the trunk of the car.

Once inside, Alexander put the towels and blanket on the check-in counter and checked to see if Angel was in his office.

"Angel, do you mind if I talk to you for a minute?" Alexander asked nervously.

"Your back? Sure... come in." Angel said a bit flustered at Xander's nervousness.

"I needed to tell you...." Alexander trailed off.

Angel nodded his head, prompting him to continue.

"...that Wesley and I..." And he trailed off again.

Angel lifted his hand and made a rolling 'continue' motion.

"...are together, as in a couple." Alexander finished quietly.

Angel sat silently for a moment, making sure that that was all. When he was sure he said, "You mean you weren't before?"

"No... we never... we still haven't..." Alexander stammered wide eyed.

Angel put up a hand to stop the verbal staggering and said, "None of my business, but if it was, I'd be happy for you both."

Alexander stood and opened his mouth to say something. Then he shut it and turned and walked out. He stopped just outside the doorway and said, "Thanks Angel."

Angel just smiled and went back to work.

\* \* \* \* \*

By the time Alexander made his way up to the room, Wesley already had Wil in bed and was sitting watching him sleep. Alexander walked up behind his chair and put his hands on Wesley's shoulders and joined him watching Wil.

After a few minutes, Alexander pulled another chair up beside Wesley and began to whisper, "I don't know how we're going to do this, I don't want to do anything in front of Wil and I don't want to leave Wil alone with Drucilla in the building."

"You've already told Angel, I assume?" Wesley asked Alexander quietly.

"Yes, he thought we were together already. He has no problem with us." Alexander said quietly with a laugh.

"Then why don't we ask him if we can use one of the two bedroom suites on the third floor. It's time for William to have his own room anyway." Wesley said seriously.

"That's a great idea Wesley. I'll go ask Angel right now." Alexander said quietly, getting out of his chair.

"I'll get some things together to take up to the new room for the night. We can move the rest tomorrow." Wesley said, getting up from his own chair.

Alexander walked toward the door then stopped. He turned around, walked back to Wesley and pulled him into his arms and kissed him firmly. The kiss deepened and became more passionate as Alexander's hands drifted down to Wesley's firm buttocks. Wesley responded with a squeak when Alexander pulled him tight to him and ground his erection against Wesley for just a moment before breaking their kiss.

Wesley stood stunned as Alexander tried to get his breath back. Finally Alexander said, "I'll be right back... I'll hurry."

"Me too." Said Wesley breathlessly.

## Chapter 7

Alexander made his way down the stairs at a near run. A moment later he was standing in Angel's office panting for breath.

Angel looked up from his paperwork and was startled by the flushed look on Alexander's face.

"I was... We were wondering if we could use a two bedroom suite, so Wil could have his own room and we could..." Alexander couldn't think of what the next words should be.

"Have some privacy?" Angel asked, trying to keep a serious face.

Alexander nodded furiously.

Angel got up and walked to the pegboard of room keys on the wall and took one down.

"509. It's sort of a presidential suite, and it's ready to use except for linens. You'll need to grab some from the linen closet on the way up." Angel said calmly, trying not to be overwhelmed by the scent of arousal coming off of Alexander.

"509, thanks." Alexander said quickly and ran out the door.

"Xander!" Angel called.

Alexander walked back into the office a moment later with a puzzled look on his face. Angel tossed him the key and smiled as he went back to his desk.

Alexander looked at the key, looked at Angel, then ran out of the office, around the counter, and up the stairs, full speed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wesley was furiously packing, within two minutes he realized that he nearly had everything that Alexander owned ready to move.

He ran into the bathroom and gathered everything that wasn't attached and threw it into empty shopping bags. Just as he was stacking the bags and luggage by the door, Alexander rushed in.

"Everything ready?" Alexander asked in a gasp.

"Let's go." Wesley said and hefted as many bags as he could carry.

Alexander ran to the bed and grabbed Wil as gently as he could and ran out the door.

"Poppa?" Wil asked in a tired, worried voice.

"Shhh. Nothing's wrong, we're just moving upstairs so you can have your own bed." Alexander said as he took the stairs two at a time.

Wesley was right behind him, mostly because he didn't know which room they were going to.

Once they made it to the fifth floor, Alexander ran to 509 and nearly dropped Wil fumbling with the key.

"Poppa?" Wil asked, now more awake.

"Yes Wil?" Alexander asked as he finally got the door opened.

"Is Daddy leaving soon?" Wil asked with a tremor in his voice.

"No, why would you think that?" Alexander asked with concern.

"Cause your acting like he's going away an you'll never see him again." Wil said seriously.

Alexander looked at Wil, then at Wesley, then said, "You're right. We can take our time."

Wesley looked tenderly at Wil as they entered the room.

The room was luxurious. They all looked around and were amazed at the beauty. This one was four times the size of the room that Alexander had been staying in.

"Angel told you to use this room?" Wesley asked incredulously.

"Yeah." Alexander said, looking in doors to discover what each one hid.

"I'll take this to mean that he approves of us, otherwise he would have put us on the third floor where the rooms aren't nearly so nice." Wesley said, still a little dazed.

"Poppa, look at this tub!" Wil said with excitement from the bathroom.

Alexander and Wesley went to the bathroom and saw a huge tub that looked big enough to easily accommodate six people.

"We'll wait till the morning to try it out Wil, back to bed with you." Alexander said in a mild fatherly tone.

Wil got a sour look on his face but left the bathroom. A moment later he called out. "Which room is mine?"

Alexander and Wesley went with Wil to look at each room and they decided that he could have either room since they were virtually the same.

"This one. I'm gonna have my own room." Wil said with pride.

"Yes, let's get you into... I forgot to get linens... wait here and I'll run downstairs and get them." Alexander said, flustered.

"Why don't you and William unpack while I get the linens?" Wesley said reasonably.

"You sure you don't mind?" Alexander asked seriously.

"I assure you that I would not have offered if I minded." Wesley said primly.

Alexander smiled and moved to kiss Wesley but as they were inches away from each other, Alexander turned and saw Wil watching them.

Wil rolled his eyes and said, "You're my daddy and my poppa, you can kiss and hug in front of me. Just leave the dangley bits alone while I'm in the room."

Alexander laughed as Wesley pulled him into a hug. Wesley pressed his blushing face into Alexander's shoulder and started to laugh too.

"You've got a deal Wil." Alexander said when he finished laughing.

Moments later Wesley was on the way downstairs to get linens and Wil and Alexander were unpacking their things from the luggage.

"Poppa?" Wil said quietly.

"Yes Wil?" Alexander answered, concerned by the quiet tone.

"I know you and Daddy are gonna want to be alone. If you want, I can stay with Peaches, soes you don't have ta worry bout me being around." Wil said bravely.

"William Jesse Harris, let me make something perfectly clear to you." Alexander said in a stern tone. "You are my son and nothing, NOTHING is more important to me than you. So you don't have to leave or be quiet or be one bit different than you usually are. The only thing I'm going to ask you to do is respect our privacy when we're in the bedroom. You can do that by knocking and waiting for an answer before you come in. Besides that, nothing is different. We both love you very much and that's not going to change because we love each other."

Wil considered his Poppa's words, then he put his hands up signaling to be picked up. Alexander picked him up and gave him a long, thorough hug.

Wesley came into the room with the linens and two more bags from the room downstairs. Wil saw him and put his arm out, asking Wesley to join the hug.

A little adjustment had to be made, but soon a three-way hug was achieved and none of them wanted to let go.

"Guys? We're going to have to move soon. It's getting late and Wil needs to get some sleep." Alexander said quietly.

"On three?" Wil asked with a laugh.

"You call it." Alexander responded.



"One... Two... Three!" and the hug broke up with everyone laughing.

Within minutes the beds were made and the most essential belongings had been found among the luggage. By unanimous consent, they decided to leave the proper unpacking until tomorrow.

"Good night Wil." Alexander said quietly.

"Good night William." Wesley said with tenderness.

"Good night Poppa, Good night Daddy." Wil said before turning on his side to go to sleep.

Alexander and Wesley stepped out the door and turned as one to watch for a moment before closing the door.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander and Wesley went through the bags in the main room of the suite once again before going to the bedroom.

Alexander was about to speak when Wesley put a finger on his lips and shook his head.

In a moment, the finger was replaced with lips as Wesley initiated a kiss that shook Alexander down to his soul. After a minute, maybe it was a day, no telling, they broke the kiss and Alexander pulled back to look at Wesley in wonder.

Alexander said in astonishment, "Cordelia must have been doing something seriously wrong, she said..."

Wesley moved in for another kiss and worked a hand under Alexander's T-shirt. When the kiss finally broke, Wesley asked, "You were saying?"

"Nothing important." And Alexander moved in for another kiss as he started to remove Wesley's button down shirt. After a moment of frustration, Wesley grabbed the shirt and pulled.

Buttons popped and flew in all directions. Alexander pondered that for a bout half a second before sliding the shirt off Wesley's shoulders and off his arms. Next Alexander pulled Wesley's white T-shirt out of his pants.

In a move that looked like it had been rehearsed for years, they broke apart and pulled their respective T-shirts off and threw them aside before coming back together with a slap of bare chests.

Hands were wandering through hair, across backs, and occasionally down further.

"Shoes." Alexander said in a gasp. A moment later both men had kicked out of their shoes, not wanting to bother with laces.

Wesley broke the caress and knelt down before Alexander. He looked up into Alexander's eyes and held his gaze as his hands found Alexander's belt. Wesley undid the belt, and then the pants without breaking their gaze. Finally he looked away as he started to work the zipper slowly down.

When the pants were unzipped, Wesley surprised Alexander by quickly pulling pants and boxers down at once in one fluid motion. For some reason Alexander had been expecting him to take his time. When Alexander looked back into Wesley's eyes he understood, [Screw the slow romantic shit. We're going for the gold.]

Alexander stepped out of his bunched pants legs as quickly as he could and began to undo Wesley's belt. Then he undid the pants and was about to pull down the pants and briefs when Wesley said, "Alexander, I should..."

"Shhh. Just let me." Alexander said as he pulled the clothing down to expose Wesley.

"What the? Holy... Fuck Wesley, you're huge!" Alexander exclaimed at the sight.

"Yes, I'm sorry." Wesley said, ashamed.

"Wesley, a man who's packing what? 10? 12 inches? Never has to say he's sorry." Alexander said, getting to his feet and taking Wesley into his arms.

"Th... Then you don't mind?" Wesley asked timidly.

"Mind? Wesley, don't tell me that someone complained about it." Alexander asked in disbelief.

Wesley nodded his head into Alexander's shoulder.

"Wesley, you're perfect. Better than I could have dreamed. And if no one has appreciated you before, it's their loss. I'm going to show you just how special you are." Alexander said while looking into Wesley's scared eyes.

"Then I'm Okay?" Wesley asked, wanting to be sure.

"Okay? You're gifted. Oh Wesley, let's get into the bed, I have so many things to show you." Alexander said with a smile.

## Chapter 8

*Warning: Explicit M/M sex herein: If you don't enjoy the graphic stuff, go on to the next chapter where they're enjoying the afterglow. You won't miss anything essential to the story line, I promise.*

"Alexander, are you going to want me to..." Wesley said, having difficulty with the words.

"Fuck me? Yes, but not tonight. I'm going to enjoy your wonderful size but I'm going to need to prepare." Alexander said calmly.

"Prepare?" Wesley asked incredulously.

"Yeah, I need to get some toys to help stretch me so that I'll be prepared to take you without any pain." Alexander said matter-of-factly.

"Oh, I hadn't thought of that." Wesley said pensively.

"Don't worry Wesley... can I call you Wes, I mean while were in the bedroom? Wesley sounds so formal."

"Of course, may I call you Alex?" Wes inquired in response.

Alexander smiled and said, "I'd like that Wes. Anyway, what I was going to say is, that I know what my limits are. Please trust me, I don't like pain and won't do anything that I won't enjoy. I hope you don't mind waiting."

"I don't mind at all. I was worried about hurting you. I've hurt people before..." Wes said with a tiny voice.

"Don't worry about that Wes. Please trust me to know what I'm doing." Alex whispered.

"So what do we do now?" Wesley said with a trembling voice.

"I think I've probably had a little more experience with this, so I'm going to try a few things, if you'll allow me. You let me know what you like and what you don't. Remember that this is for both of us and just because I ask to do something doesn't mean that we have to do it. We're partners here. So if at any time something is uncomfortable to you or feels wrong, you need to let me know. My body can't carry disease, but we're going to need to use condoms for certain things anyway because I don't want to give Wil a brother or sister yet." Alex said carefully.

"A wise precaution, so what do we do now?" Wesley asked in a quavering voice.

"If you'll let me, I would like to pleasure you. Just lay back and enjoy and let me do this for you. I'm about to show you my favorite things." Alex said with a smile.

"It doesn't seem right for you to do this without reciprocation." Wesley said a little more calmly.

"This first time I would like you to get a feeling of what you enjoy and what you don't. You need to communicate with me. It will also give you ideas of what you want to do to me later. Plus, I enjoy giving pleasure. Believe me, this will be no hardship for me. At the very least, it will be an investment that will payoff later in the form of a lover who knows what he wants to do." Alex said with a smile.

"So what do you want me to do?" Wesley asked quietly.

"Just lay back and relax."

\* \* \* \* \*

Alex began by kissing Wes enthusiastically. He deeply explored Wes's mouth, and let his hands drift down to his nipples.

He broke the kiss and started kissing his way down the pale chest to a brown nipple and began to suckle as his hand played with the other one arousing it into a hardened nub. After a minute, Alex switched sides and devoted equal attention to the other nipple with his mouth.

All too soon, he began to work his way down Wes's stomach to a wonderful treasure trail. The dark hair contrasted against pale skin, which was leading from the navel downward to the dark thatch at the base of his engorged penis. He rooted through the pubic hair in a snuffling manner and worked his way down, bypassing the turgid shaft completely.

He gently licked the scrotum, then blew cool air. That little action elicited a gasp from Wesley. Just to prove it wasn't a fluke, Alex carefully laved the sack with his tongue with long moments of tender care and blew again. No fluke, Wesley gasped again.

Alex nudged Wesley's leg's open wider and worked his way under the moist sack to the perineum. He began to nibble the sensitive flesh and Wesley nearly came up off the bed. Alex brought his head up and said, "That's what I meant by communication. Now I know to visit this spot again." And Alex went back to work.

Alex looked up to see that he had taken Wes's shaft in his hand and began slowly pumping it. [When did I decide to do that?] He wondered and went back to his exploration of Wesley's body with his mouth.

Alex wet a finger in his mouth and brought it to Wesley's puckered entrance to caress it gently. Not to seek entry but to let it know that it wasn't forgotten. At first contact, Wesley's body became rigid, but when he realized that Alex was not trying to work his way in, he relaxed.

Alex was nibbling his way up the inside of Wes's thighs, working his way back toward the cock that he was pumping with more enthusiasm. Wesley was beginning to squirm from all the attention. Alex decided that this phase could be called a success and moved on to the next stage.

Alex readjusted his position so he was looking down on Wesley's large weeping cock. He licked his lips, gently pulled back the foreskin, and lowered his head to take the knob of Wes's penis into his mouth.

Wesley let out a yelp at the initial contact and raised his upper body off the bed for a moment.

Alex tongued around the head and delved into the slit to collect some of the precious fluid. He considered the taste briefly then continued his ministrations.

Wesley brought himself up on his elbows to watch Alex begin to slowly bob, up and down, on his erection. The tingle within him was increasing, the feeling that this was going to be an intense release.

Then, much to Wesley's surprise, Alex began to work his way down the shaft. Wesley could feel his cock pressing at the back of Alex' mouth. Then Alex continued on. He felt a muscle release and he plunged deep into Alex' throat.

Never before had Wesley felt someone go so far down onto his shaft. Alex kept going and going. He didn't take the entire length, but he did take nearly three-quarters of it, then slid back to the head. He repeated the action again and again.

Alex was massaging Wes's ballsack and felt as the testicles began to draw closer to the body.

Wesley dropped back off his elbows and could feel the release welling up inside him, he was reaching the point of no return.

"Alex, I'm going to..." Wesley said and scrunched up his face as the orgasm took away his ability to speak.

Wesley's body arched as one spasm after another was coaxed from his body. And the entire time Alex was keeping the rhythm going, and the suction, and the massaging.

Alex worked the shaft with his mouth and his hand as he coaxed every last bit of seed from Wesley's body. He continued gently sucking and stroking until the shaft began to soften.

Alex moved up beside Wesley and looked into his face. There was wonder and contentment in his eyes. Alex just watched as Wes finally came back to himself and joined his gaze.

"That was... I've never... how did?" Wesley stammered as his mind fought with which question to ask first.

"Yeah, that was a pretty good warm-up. Now that I've taken the edge off, we can get started." Alex said with a gentle smile.

Wes gave Alex a wide eyed look and asked, "There's more?"

## Chapter 9

An explosion of knocking on the bedroom door startled both Wes and Alex awake. Bleary eyed and half-conscious Alex said, "Come in."

"Mornin Pop, Mornin Dad." Wil said with disgusting cheer for so early in the morning.

"What's got you so happy?" Alexander asked his son.

"I grewed some more." Wil said happily.

"You did? How can you tell?" Alexander asked, while trying to get his eyes to focus.

"My pants are too short and won't close." Wil said happily as he modeled the obviously too-small item.

"Go put on your sweatpants. We need a minute to wake up. Okay?" Alex asked quietly.

"Okay, I'll be right back." Wil said with cheer.

"I don't think I was ever that young." Alexander said to Wesley who was falling asleep again.

"Grmmph." Wesley said into his pillow.

"Good idea." Alexander said and laid back down.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few hours later Alexander awoke to find Wil asleep between Wesley and himself. He looked at the sight and smiled. Alexander began to think of the night before. Although Wesley hadn't said so, it appeared that he had never had a lover give him pleasure before. What a tragedy to be ridiculed for a wonderful gift and to have selfish lovers who took what they wanted and left him feeling inadequate. Everything they shared last night was new and wonderful to Wesley. Alexander had never known such a treasure. He just hoped he was worthy of the trust that Wesley had placed in him.

Wesley sensed that Alexander was awake. The things they had done... Wesley knew the mechanics of what was going to happen but had no idea of the pleasure that could be achieved. He felt the slight ache and smiled at the memory of Alexander tenderly preparing him for penetration. He had been nervous, but Alexander made sure at every step to reassure him and to check to see if he was comfortable. When Alexander had finally entered him, the physical sensation was equal to the emotional sensation of fullness, completeness... unity.

He felt a slight sense of loss. That was what he had been missing all these years. The possibility of more than one climax a night just hadn't occurred to him. How had he

managed to find lovers who didn't know what they were doing? Alex obviously had experience and had shown him so many things in one night... and promised to show him more. Regardless where the relationship between them went, there was definitely no problem with the physical side of things.

Wil opened his eyes and looked at his Poppa who was awake and watching him, then he turned and looked at his Daddy who was awake and staring out into space. "Who's ready for some breakfast?" Wil asked, causing both men to jump.

"I think I'd like to take my bath first." Alexander said slowly.

"Yes, quite." Wesley answered.

"You gonna bathe with us Daddy?" Wil asked excitedly.

Wesley and Alexander shared a look and Alexander finally said, "Your Daddy is welcomed to join us if he wants, but if he isn't comfortable, we won't force him."

Wesley thought a moment and said with a tender smile, "I would be honored to share in a family bath."

Wil ran to the bathroom leaving a trail of clothes along the way.

Alexander and Wesley got up and followed, a little more slowly.

When Wesley entered the bathroom and carefully removed his clothes, Wil saw his ample endowments and his eyes got large. Alexander noticed, and before Wil could say a word Alexander squatted down to his level and said softly, "Wesley has been teased by people and made to feel ashamed. So please be kind."

Wil looked at the seriousness in his Poppa's eyes then looked at his Daddy turned away from him. Finally Wil said, "That was wrong of them."

"Yes it was." Alexander said and gave Wil a big hug.

The water was run and the family got into the tub and relaxed. Wesley was concerned when Wil went under the water and didn't come back up for a while, but Alexander explained that Wil needed to get thoroughly soaked to get through the day and that was the best way.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eventually the family got dried and dressed and went down to have breakfast. Wesley volunteered to cook pancakes for everyone and Wil even said he would try to eat them without any blood on them at all.

As the pancakes were cooking, a familiar voice said, "Xander?"

"Dawnie?" Alexander said as he whirled around to see Dawn and Giles standing in the doorway with Angel behind them.

Dawn ran across the room and met Alexander as he stood. "Dawn, what are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be in Ohio?"

"Giles got a call from Wesley. He said that we were needed here. So here we are... Your eye? What happened to your eye? I mean, it was gone." Dawn asked from Alexander's arms.

"Long story, I'll tell you later, but first... Dawn, G-man, this is my son, Wil." Alexander said with pride in his voice.

"My word!" Giles said in shock. Dawn just stared at Wil and finally said, "He looks like a little Spike."

"M'not little." Wil mumbled.

"Yeah, he does." Alexander said with a smile to Dawn, then turned to Wil and asked, "Do you remember Dawn and the G-man?"

"Lil bit! You're growin up real good." Wil said to Dawn as he ran to give her a hug.

"He talks? And that accent... What is the meaning of this?" Giles asked with worry.

"He has some of Spike's memories. I'm actually glad, otherwise I'd have a seven-year old who doesn't know how to talk or feed himself." Alexander said calmly.

"Xander, no one told me he was... I understood that he was just born four weeks ago." Giles said mystified.

"Yeah, G-man, he's growing up quick. I didn't think the Sunnydale crew needed to know about that yet." Alexander said with a smile.

Giles noticed Wesley standing by the stove, watching the events quietly. "Wesley, how are you?" Giles asked formally.

"Very well, Mr. Giles. And you?" Wesley responded equally formally.

"I'll be better when we decide what to do about this doorway that Drucilla told you about. It has me very concerned." Giles said in watcher mode.

"How so? I mean, I sent you what information I could from my interview with Drucilla, but I couldn't decipher the meanings of what she was saying." Wesley said, achieving his own watcher mode.

"That's quite understandable. I had to consult various resources, including the watchers journals to determine any meaning from what she said." Giles said seriously.



"What are you talking about?" Alexander asked.

"Drucilla said some things that concerned Angel, so he asked me to look into them. They didn't make sense to me, so I sent my notes to Mr. Giles to see if he could make sense of it. Apparently he did." Wesley said, a bit flustered.

"Your pancakes are burning." Wil said as the adults began to notice the burning smell.

Wesley quickly dealt with the burnt food and started another batch, then asked, "Mr. Giles, Miss Summers, would you like to join us for breakfast?"

"Sure!" Dawn answered while still looking at Wil.

"Yes, thank you Wesley." Giles responded properly.

Everyone took their seats as Wesley prepared pancakes enough for everyone. Soon he said, "Alexander, the food is nearly ready, would you like to prepare William's blood?"

Giles and Dawn had questioning looks but Alexander didn't notice. "Angel, I'm heating blood for Wil, would you like a mug?" Alexander asked as he went to the refrigerator.

Angel nodded and Alexander went to work like the blood heating professional that he was.

When all the food was placed on the table, Wesley, Angel, Alexander and Wil began to eat as Dawn and Giles stared at Wil. Alexander couldn't understand what they were looking at until he realized that they hadn't seen his demon form before.

"Isn't he something? Wil, show them your hands." Alexander said, not wanting Wil to feel freakish under their stares.

Wil promptly showed his webbed fingers and even lifted the back of his shirt and showed off his dorsal fin.

"Most extraordinary. I had assumed that he was progeny of Spike... But how?" Giles asked in shock.

"Remember the swimteam thing? It changed me a little more than we knew. I passed it on to Wil. And that's how I grew my eye back too, I think." Alexander said before taking another large bite of pancakes. "Great pancakes Wesley." He mumbled through his mouthful.

"Yes, very good." Giles said absently before taking his second bite. "Why is he so..."

"...big." Dawn finished.

"We think its because of the steam too, it doesn't really matter. It's the way he is and I wouldn't want him to be any other way." Alexander said with certainty.

Sensing Alexander was about to become offended on his son's behalf, Wesley jumped in and asked, "So what are you and Miss Summers doing here?"

"If I understood what you sent me, there is an opened doorway that is ready to flood the earth with demons from another realm if we don't close it. Dawn is a dimensional key. If I understand the process correctly, she should be instrumental in closing the door." Giles said succinctly.

"Any idea where the open doorway is?" Alexander asked while scraping the last of his pancake into a final bite.

"I believe it would have opened in Sunnydale, as it was the greatest dimensional vortex in the area. However, since it has been neutralized, the next closest dimensional instability is the most likely to be opened." Giles said with concern.

"So we're all heading to Cleveland?" Alexander asked with worry in his voice.

"No, a hellmouth isn't required for this type of dimensional crossing, just instability enough to allow emergence into our reality. The nearest instability is outside Santa Fe, New Mexico. If that one wasn't unstable enough to open, the next instability is in Marfa, Texas." Giles said carefully.

"Oh, so we're just going to fly on over there and look around for a door?" Alexander asked, knowing it was never that easy.

"I was thinking of driving. Either Dawn or your son will feel the dimensional forces building gradually and guide us where we need to go. If we were to fly into the area, the sudden concentration of the forces would blind them to the proper direction for hours, possibly days before they became accustomed enough to sense directionality." Giles said in full-on watcher mode.

"Why would Wil be able to feel anything to do with the portal, don't tell me he's a key like Dawn." Alexander asked, disbelieving.

"No, no. It is possible that your son's birth is somehow connected to the dimensional opening. I'm going on what Drucilla said, so I can't be entirely sure about that point. Dawn and I will bring him along with us to give us the best chance of closing the door." Giles said with authority.

"It won't hurt him, will it?" Alexander asked with concern.

"No, he should feel drawn to it, that's all." Giles said comfortingly.

"When do we go?" Wesley asked calmly.

"Only the three of us are needed to take care of this." Giles said, making it clear that Wesley wasn't invited.

"Alexander and I will be coming along to protect the best interests of William." Wesley said with finality.

Giles looked at Alexander to back him up and was surprised when Alexander said, "We trust you G-man, but there is nothing on this earth that will take Wil away from me. If we have to take two cars, then we will."

"Actually, two cars is a good idea. There is always a chance of mechanical difficulties on a trip such as this. That along with the supplies we will no doubt need to carry would make two cars a necessity." Wesley rambled.

Alexander just nodded.

"So when do we leave?" Alexander asked.

"Do you have any plans right now?" Giles asked flatly.

"I had planned to buy a few things today..." Alexander said looking at Wesley, then continued, "But I suppose it can wait, what with the fate of the world hanging in the balance."

"Alexander, if you'll clear up the kitchen, I'll attend to packing our things for the trip." Wesley said properly.

Giles caught what Wesley had said about 'our things' and decided that it was none of his business.

Dawn and Giles followed Wesley out of the kitchen and waited in the lobby for them to be ready to leave.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Xander, I think you should take Wil up to say goodbye to his grandma Dru, she won't be here when he gets back." Angel said quietly.

"Oh, yeah, we did say that she would be leaving when she got better." Alexander said sadly.

"She can't live with us, she needs to be free. I've seen how she becomes when she's been kept somewhere too long. It has to be this way." Angel said with certainty.

"We'll go up as soon as the dishes are done. Would you mind staying with Giles and Dawn?" Alexander asked.

"No, I don't mind." Angel said and walked into the lobby where Giles and Dawn were standing.

"Grandma Dru is gonna leave?" Wil asked sadly.

"Yes, she has to. Angel is right, she can't be happy in a place like this. She needs to be free to hunt and dance and listen to the stars sing. There are too many people here that might hurt her if she stayed." Alexander said as sadly as Wil.

"You don't want her to go either?"

"I guess I don't, she's our family, she should be with us, but we want what's best for her, right?" Alexander said to Wil.

Wil nodded bravely.

"We're done here, let's go talk to your Grandma Dru." Alexander said with false enthusiasm.

## **Chapter 10**

Wil ran into the room and jumped up on Drucilla's bed.

"Poppa says we gotta go and you won't be here when we get back." Wil said as he threw his arms around Drucilla and hugged her.

"GranMummy's little imp doesn't need to worry. We'll be around till that nasty old sun is just a cold lump hanging in space. We'll have plenty of time to visit later." Drucilla said and returned the hug.

Alexander smiled fondly as he watched the scene. Drucilla turned her gaze to him and said with an evil predatory smile, "The dark panther is about to get his claws."

Wil disentangled himself from his grandma and ran to his poppa. "Bye Grammy Dru. Have fun in the night."

Alexander took his son's hand and looked at Dru. "Goodbye Drucilla." he said as he left the room.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is everybody ready to go?" Alexander asked with false enthusiasm.

"We will need supplies for William. The drive is long and the supply of blood and water may not be as plentiful as we would like." Wesley said as he carried suitcases of clothes through the lobby toward the car.

Alexander nodded and began to walk toward the kitchen, then realized that Dawn and Giles were watching Wesley work without offering to help.

A spark of rage began to ignite within him until Wil tugged on his elbow and quietly asked, "Can I come with you?"

"Sure, you can help me pack demon snacks for the trip." Alexander said with a smile, then glanced back to see Giles and Dawn watching them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Everything had been packed into the cars and as expected, Wil, Alexander and Wesley had taken one car as Dawn and Giles took the other.

"If you don't mind my asking, what is the problem Alexander?" Wesley asked hesitantly.

"The way they treat you." Alexander said in a growl.

"They are treating me the way they always have." Wesley said honestly.

"I know, that makes it worse. I can understand Dawn, she's following along with the way everyone else treated you, but Giles should know better." Alexander said darkly.

"Your seething won't improve his behavior." Wesley said absently.

"I know, but I don't have any other way of dealing with him to relieve this anger, so seething is about all I can do." Alexander said through gritted teeth.

"Poppa, ya know the watcher is a bloody wanker don'tcha?" Wil asked seriously.

"I guess I didn't see it before. I always thought he was right and everyone else was just rebelling against his formality." Alexander said seriously.

"Nope, tha watcher's a wanker. All tha pomp an rubbish is ta try an hide that he don't give a bloody damn bout nothin but what he decides is important." Wil said knowingly.

"I see that now. Let's just get this done and get rid of him as quick as we can. It just feels wrong being around him now." Alexander said seriously.

"Poppa?" Wil asked quietly.

"Yes?" Alexander replied in a much more tender voice.

"Are you a human or a demon?" Wil asked seriously.

"Both I guess." Alexander said in thought.

"But what are you mostly... if you had to throw your lot in with one side or the other. Would you claim your humanity or demonality?" Wil asked with difficulty.

"I guess I'd have to choose demon. All the good things in my life came to me because of the demon aspects of my nature." Alexander said with a smile at Wil.

"Thought so." Wil said with a smile back at his poppa.

\* \* \* \* \*

After a long day of driving and some determined argument from both Alexander and Wesley, the group got rooms at a motel for the night.

Since Alexander and Wesley were sharing a room with Wil, nothing more intimate than gentle kissing took place, which actually suited both men after the exhausting day that they had had.

The night passed and the morning came to bring another long day of driving and arguments.

Every time they needed to stop for food or because Wil needed to use the bathroom, Giles seemed to take it as an assault against his authority.

Finally, as the sun was setting on their second day of travel Wil said, "That way. I can feel it, like a thread pullin on my belly and makin me feel wobbly."

Wesley saw the direction Wil was pointing and signaled to turn off so he could tell Giles that they were close. As Alexander got out of the car, he motioned for Wil to stay inside.

"What in heavens name is it now? He can't possibly have to go to the bathroom again." Giles said as he plodded to Wesley's car.

"No. Wil just felt the pull of the backwards door, it's that way." Alexander said shortly, with offense on his son's behalf.

"Thank heavens for that. I'd begun to think I'd been dropped into an endless loop of driving and bathroom stops." Giles said theatrically.

"That does it. He's a child, he doesn't have the gallons of bladder capacity or the sphincter of steel that you have. And you aren't the only one who's been inconvenienced by this trip. Our butts are numb, we're sick of the barren wasteland that is New Mexico, and the conversation ran out about an hour outside LA, but have we been bitching and whining? No. Why not you ask? Because it needs to be done. We've put up with your barbs and your bitching about the inconvenience of having Wil along, but you can't do it without him to act as your compass so shut the fuck up and let's get this done so we can go our seperate ways." Alexander finished in a scream.

"There's no need..." Giles began when Wesley said, "Rupert, neither of us are watchers any longer, therefore I am no longer subordinate to you in any way. I have been willing to tolerate your treatment of me in the past because it was actually too much trouble to set you straight, but now your treatment of me is causeing Alexander stress, and that I will not have. Get back in your car, follow us to the door, then we can pray to whatever deity each of us hold sacred that we never have the misfortune of working together again."

Giles stood in stunned amazement as the two men got back into their car.

"Ya did good pop. The bloody wanker can't think enough ta speak." Wil said with a chuckle.

"I'm sorry you heard that Wil. I never want you to feel unwanted or like a burden." Alexander said honestly.

"No worries there Pop. Tween you an Dad I've been loved and wanted more in this life than Spike ever was in his." Wil said honestly.

Alexander smiled as Wesley pulled the car back onto the road.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander looked at the map with worry as the pair of cars traveled farther and farther from anything that could remotely be labeled civilization.

"This is really starting to give me the wiggins." Alexander said with a furrow in his brow.

"I must admit to a sense of apprehension building within me." Wesley said with difficulty.

"I'm feelin it stronger. The bloody thing is pullin at me like a sharp claw in my guts." Wil said darkly.

"Do you need for us to stop?" Alexander asked with worry.

"No, don't you even think about it. Let's us get this job done so we can get the effin hell out of here." Wil said in discomfort.

"You got a deal kiddo." Alexander said seriously.

"Do you trust Mr. Giles to behave responsibly?" Wesley asked with a note of worry.

"Not for a minute. I've got the feeling that he'd sacrifice all three of us to close that door. We need to watch him close." Alexander said in thought.

"Poppa, we're close. It's that way." Wil said through gritted teeth.

"Should I stop to tell Mr. Giles?" Wesley asked hesitantly.

"Just turn off, he'll follow or he won't." Alexander said darkly.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Good Lord!" Wesley exclaimed as they came over a rise to reveal the doorway standing three stories tall.

"At least." Alexander said in wonder.

"Hurry Poppa, it hurts." Wil said with a whimper.

"Take us right up to it Wesley. I'll take care of Wil, you watch Giles." Alexander said with authority.

Wesley nodded and continued on with determination.

Alexander looked at Wil and was shocked to see that he had grown some more, now his appearance was that of a nine year old. The sweat pants that he was wearing were stretched tight and the T-shirt was pulled tight against his skin.



"Wil, can you get a shirt out of my suitcase? You're outgrowing that one as we speak." Alexander said with worry.

"Sure Pop." Wil said distractedly and began to dig through the pile of luggage that had been riding beside him for two days.

"I hope Giles is right about Dawn being able to close this thing. Because if he isn't, we're in deep shit." Alexander said as the doorway filled his view.

"This is as near as I can bring us. We must continue on foot from this point." Wesley said with a note of apology.

"You ready Wil?" Alexander asked with worry.

"Let's go. It's tearing me apart." Wil said in pain.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What happened to Wil?" Dawn asked with concern.

"He had a growth spurt. It's just the way he is Dawnie, nothing to worry about." Alexander said, trying to conceal his worry.

"Let's get to it." Giles said and walked past the others at a deliberate pace.

Alexander and Wesley shared a look before Wesley walked faster to catch up with Giles and Alexander moved close to Wil's side.

"How are you doing?" Alexander asked with worry.

Wil was clutching his stomach and looked at his poppa with an expression of 'how could you ask such a stupid question' before he said, "Let's keep movin."

Alexander draped an arm around Wil's shoulder and walked with purpose toward the huge doorway before them.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It stopped." Wil said in wonder and tentatively let loose of his stomach.

Alexander looked in awe at the door before them and began to see something looking back at him.

"Do you see it?" Alexander asked as he walked closer.

"What is the meaning of this?" Giles asked in anger as he looked into the shiny surface of the door.

"What is it G-man?" Alexander asked as he tried to make sense of what he was seeing.

"My father." Giles said in a voice of disbelief.

"No, it's just a haze of green energy." Dawn said as she stared into the door.

"Wesley, what do you see?" Alexander asked carefully.

"Myself." Wesley said in surprise.

Alexander forced himself to step closer and came face to face with a seamonster. It was one of the creatures that the swim coach had created all those years ago in high school.

Alexander became enthralled in the sight, then realized what made this monster seem so familiar, the eyes. The monster's eyes were the same eyes he saw every day when he looked in the mirror.

"Poppa?" Wil asked hesitantly.

Alexander snapped his attention back to Wil and asked, "What do you see?"

"I don't see nothing." Wil said in a small dejected voice.

"Wesley, what is this thing? What's it showing us?" Alexander asked loudly, as if he were trying to yell over a rush of wind even though the air was still.

"I'm going to find out." Wesley said and began to walk toward the door.

"Wes, if you walk through that thing, you might not come back." Alexander said in panic.

"I believe I will. I can't explain it beyond the feeling that this isn't actually a bad thing." Wesley said with determination.

"You're not going alone. If you're going, I'm going with you." Alexander said with determination.

"I can't let you take that risk, you must think of William's best interest." Wesley said firmly.

"I'm going too." Wil said to his fathers.

"Absolutely not." Alexander said firmly.

"If that thing eats you, I don't want to be here alone. And if it takes you somewhere else, I want to be there with you. Dad, Pops, I'm going with you so lets just do it so we can get home." Wil said with finality.

"Either we're all doing it or we're not." Alexander said in explanation to Wesley.

"Very well." Wesley said quietly and put out his hand to take Alexander's.

Wil moved between the two men and put an arm around each mans waist.

"Let's do this thing and get the bloody hell out of here." Wil said and urged his fathers forward into the door.

"You can't!" Giles screamed.

"We have to, the door is waiting for us." Alexander said in return.

"But what if it's a trap? This could be the passage to a hell dimension." Giles said with pleading.

"And what if it's not? Let's find out." Alexander said and walked with his family into the backwards door.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I'm going." Dawn said with force.

"No, you can't. You must close the door." Giles said calmly.

"But they're inside." Dawn said with wide eyes.

"It can't be helped, the door must be closed." Giles said with force as he grabbed Dawns wrist with one hand and brought up a dagger with the other.

Dawn stomped forcefully on Giles foot and lunged for his eyes with her free hand.

Reflexively Giles released Dawn to protect himself.

She ran full force and threw herself into the opened door.

\* \* \* \* \*

Xander stood naked in the twilight. Before him stood the form of his demon self.

"You're braver than I would have expected." The demon form said kindly.

"What is this place?" Xander asked in a daze.

"I think we're each others might have been. We're each others hope, fear, dream, nightmare... whatever. Who knows? The watcher said I was needed here, so I came. I walked up to the door and it pulled me in, then I was looking at you." The demon said with a shrug.

"But you're me." Xander said, looking the demon in the eyes.

"I guess you're what I would have been if I'd been born human." the creature said with a note of longing.

"And you're what I would have been if I'd been born a demon." Xander said with a nod.

"So what do we do now?" Xander asked carefully.

"Dunno. I count two doors, and two of us. That one's yours." the demon said with a shrug.

"But shouldn't we do something? I mean we drove for two days, I feel like there should be more purpose to it than just bullshitting for a few minutes, then driving two days back." Xander said honestly.

"There is something, but..." The demon trailed off with a defeated look.

"What?" Xander asked with worry.

"Giles, our Giles, talked me into coming here by saying that I could gain a human aspect. He said that if you would share my demon form, then I could appear human... it was stupid for me to dream about that. I mean, I know all the self image things, be happy with who you are and all that. But ever since I was just a tadpole I've dreamed about looking human, to feel normal for just one day." The demon said with a weary smile.

"What do we have to do?" Xander asked quietly.

"What?" His demon self asked in disbelief.

"My son is a demon, his father was a demon, I have no problem with sharing my human form with you. I hope it makes you happy." Xander said with an honest smile.

"You're serious?" the demon asked in disbelief.

"Sure. What do we have to do?" Xander asked again.

"Touch." the Demon said simply.

"Okay. Let's do it before I have an attack of good sense." Xander said with a teasing smile.

The demon chuckled at that and nodded, then thought to ask, "Tell me about your life. You said your son. I don't have a son."

"My son, Wil. He's the best thing in my life. I'm a better person because of him. I love my life. For the first time ever, I've found peace, love, acceptance, respect, dignity, and happiness." Xander said with a dreamy twinkle in his eye.

"Then I don't want to keep you away from them. Thank you. My life is very different from yours, but thanks to you, I may be able to make one of my dreams a reality." the Demon said with a look of need.

"I hope it works out for you, I really do." Xander said with an honest smile.

The demon held out his hand to shake and Xander shook his head, then opened his arms in invitation.

His demon self smiled and moved quickly into the embrace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dawn saw the green glow of energy pulsing before her.

"Hello?" Dawn asked with fear.

//Is that what I would be?// the glow whispered into her mind.

"Are you what I used to be?" Dawn asked in wonder.

//I am what you truly are.// the mist of energy replied.

"You're so beautiful, so free." Dawn said as she watched the energy gently flowing in wispy patterns.

//And you are so able to affect the world around you.// the mist said dreamily.

"I guess we each admire the other's existence." Dawn said with a smile.

//I guess we do.// the mist said in a friendly tone.

"Do you know what we're supposed to do here?" Dawn asked carefully.

//I overheard one of the solids say that this is a portal between planes of existence. I was summoned to close the door so the two realities couldn't merge... but I wanted to meet my other self before I closed it.// the mist said with a smile in it's tone.

"I guess it's the same for me. Giles wanted me to close the door, but some friends of mine are inside." Dawn said seriously.

//They cannot command us. We are free, ether, mist, vapor...// the mist said with joy.

"But I'm solid." Dawn said sadly.

//Come child, touch me and know what it is to be free again.// the energy cloud said with warmth.

"But will I still be me?" Dawn asked with worry.

//Of course, you'll just be able to choose your true form when you want. You're not losing anything, just gaining another choice.// the energy whispered.

Dawn walked into the mist and was bathed in it's energy.

After a period of time that lost all meaning, Dawn emerged from the mist feeling lighter, happier, more centered than she could ever remember.

"Thank you, I've wondered for a thousand years what it would be like to be a solid." The duplicate of Dawn said happily.

Dawn let go of her solid form and floated free in the air of the between space that they inhabited.

//This is paradise.// Dawn thought with joy.

"Touch, to feel, it's... there aren't words enough for the sensations." the doppelgänger said as she dragged her fingertips across her skin.

//I need to return to my world now. Thank you for meeting me, for sharing yourself with me.// Dawn said honestly as she willed her form to become solid again.

"It was a pleasure for me as well, just remember that we are not them, they cannot command us. We are freedom, it is our essence. We cannot exist in captivity." the reflection of Dawn said seriously.

"I'll remember... thank you again." Dawn said and turned to go.

//Be well, live a long and happy life in freedom.// the cloud said as she also returned to her place of origin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wesley stood naked before himself.

"Do you have any idea what we're doing here?"

"It seems to be an interdimensional focal point, but I'm not sure of its purpose."

"We speculate that those who enter have the choice to combine with their self from the alternate dimension and trade off aspects, as it were."

"For example?"

"It's supposed to complete us somehow. If you aren't happy with yourself, you can combine with me and we'll become more... contented or stable or something."

"You don't sound too convinced."

"Giles brought me, he's my superior so I followed."

"Well, to tell you honestly, for the first time in my life, I like the person who I am. Those things that I looked upon as faults are points of attraction to Alexander. I have never been happier in my life and don't have any desire to change."

"Good. I'm glad to hear it. I came to see what my alternate self would be like, and if he needed my help, I'd consider giving it. I'm glad to know that you are strong and self confident. If you step through that doorway over there, you'll be home."

"What of you? How is your life?"

"Not everything I hoped it would be, but I'm happy for the most part. I'm surprised to hear you talk about Alexander so fondly. My own Alexander is so painfully shy around me, I can't bring myself to approach him."

"Be available. He'll come around in time."

"Thank you. Have a good life."

"You as well."

\* \* \* \* \*

Wil looked into the darkness with fear and called, "Who's there?"

"It's just me mate. No worries." A voice called as Spike walked to stand before him.

"Father?" Wil asked with excitement.

"No, fraid not mate. I'm just the sorry sod the bloody watcher brought along because the signs said I was needed." Spike said with resignation.

"But if you're not my father, why are you here?" Wil asked in confusion.

"Cause the watcher owns me." Spikesaid with a tired look in his eyes.

Wil thought about that answer and asked, "Do you know what we're supposed to do now?"

"The watcher said I was ta touch whoever I met. That it'd make me more useful to 'im. I don know what that's all about." Spike said absently.

"Then what?" Wil asked curiously.

"I go through that door and you go through this one. That's the lot." Spike said seriously.

"What happens if you go through my door?" Wil asked carefully.

"Don't know. Tha watcher ain't much for sharing. Better at ordering, that one." Spike said with a dark look.

"Come on father. You're coming home with me." Wil said and held out his hand.

"I can't. The watcher..." Spike began.

"Screw the bloody wanker. You're my father and I want you with me." Wil said with force.

Spike looked surprised by the boy, but followed orders, as he had been trained to do for years.

Wil took Spike's hand and led him through the door back into his own world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander, Wesley, Wil and Spike met in a long hallway that seemed to be walking toward a dim light.

"Spike? What are you doing here?" Alexander asked with surprise.

"Do I know you?" Spike asked curiously, recognizing something familiar about the man.

"This is my poppa and my daddy." Wil said happily.

"I'm Alexander and this is Wesley." Alexander said carefully.

"You ain't like the Alexander from my home, he's a full demon. The same watcher owns him what owns me." Spike said simply.

"It's not like that here Spike. No one owns anyone." Alexander said seriously.

"You tellin me the watcher wannabe here don't have a few demon slaves?" Spike asked incredulously.

"No, I am no longer a watcher, and have never owned slaves of any kind." Wesley said seriously.

"We're here. Let's get back home." Alexander said with relief as he saw Giles looking into the doorway with anger and concern.

Wesley and Alexander looked at each other and held hands as they walked back into their world.

Wil held close to Spike's side and guided him through the doorway.



# Book 6: Forcing Forbidden Doors

## Chapter 1

Alexander and Wesley walked through the door and the world seemed to form around them. A moment later Wil and Spike followed.

Giles was staring at them in puzzlement.

"What's Rupe doing here?" Spike asked casually.

"We came to help him close this door." Alexander said as he looked at Wil.

"You think the watcher would let *him* do something big like that?" Spike asked with a smirk.

"Giles is the watcher." Alexander said carefully.

"Bloody 'ell, this *is* one of them alternate dimensions ain't it?" Spike asked, sounding less cocky.

"I guess so. Who's the watcher you were talking about?" Alexander asked curiously.

"Rupe's dad. Danforth Giles. He wouldn't trust Rupe ta blow his own nose." Spike said, looking at Giles hesitantly.

"What is the meaning of this? It could take decades to sort out the repercussions of bringing a creature from another dimension here." Giles blustered.

"Who you callin a creature you bloody ponce?" Spike said before purposefully turning to Alexander and saying, "Rupe acts like he's got a pair. Is he a wanker like his old man?"

"I never met his father but... My guess is yeah, pretty much." Alexander said as he led his group toward the car.

Giles screamed, "Miss Summers went into the doorway behind you, we must retrieve her if we are to close..."

"He was trying to get me to close it with you inside." Dawn said coldly as she stepped out of the door.

"I'll kill him." Alexander said calmly as he turned and began to walk toward Giles.

"Alexander, think about this." Wesley said as he grabbed Xander's arm.

"I am thinking about it, I'm thinking that I'm going to tear him into six separate pieces." Alexander said with a growl.

"Think of William." Wesley said with panic in his voice.

Alexander stopped and looked at his son who was watching his every move.

Alexander turned to look into Wesley's concerned eyes, then said in defeat, "Let's go."

"Poppa, can Spike come with us?" Wil asked in a small voice.

"Yeah, of course. What do you say Spike? We've got plenty of demon snacks in the car... but you'll have to drink the blood cold until we get a motel room." Alexander said with an inviting smile.

"Wha?" Spike asked in wonder.

"Come on, you can sit in back with me." Wil said happily as he took Spike by the hand and started leading him to the car.

"You can't leave, we must close the door." Giles called out hysterically.

Alexander stopped and looked at Giles with cold fury.

"We came, Wil found the door. Now we're leaving. You're not welcomed in our lives anymore. I hope your sense of duty keeps you warm at night, because it's driving everyone away from you." Alexander said then noticed movement behind Giles.

"Giles?" Dawn said in a quiet tone.

Giles turned to look at her.

Dawn became green vapor and flew toward the door.

Her ethereal mist enveloped the door and it faded to nothingness.

Alexander, Wesley, Spike and Wil watched in wonder.

Dawn finally returned to her corporeal form and walked past Giles without a word.

When she reached Alexander and Wesley she asked, "You guys mind if I go with you?"

"If you don't mind it being a little cramped, we'd love for you to join us Dawnie." Alexander said with a smile.

"I won't take up much room, I can fit in the ashtray if I have to." Dawn said and became mist again.

"I'll be needin that ashtray love... if I can get me some smokes. What d'ya say mates, can I cadge a few bob for some smokes?" Spike asked hopefully.

"No, I'm afraid I can't allow you to smoke in the car." Wesley said firmly.

Spike got a look like he was going to fight when Alexander said, "We make plenty of stops. Wil and I can't tolerate the smoke, it messes with our skin and Wesley doesn't like the smell."

//What about me?// Dawn's voice sounded in all their minds.

"Um, Dawn, you *are* smoke." Alexander said with a tender smile.

//Oh, yeah.// Dawn sent in response with a smile in her mind/voice.

Wesley walked to Spike's side and said quietly, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to sound harsh. I'll stop for cigarettes at the first opportunity."

Spike got a look of surprise but covered it quickly and said, "That's right decent of you mate."

The group walked the remaining distance to the car in silence.

\* \* \* \* \*

As they started down the road, Spike said, "You say you're Alexander, but you're human."

"I was born human, but now I'm part demon." Alexander said from beside Wesley in the front seat.

"You a fish demon like the other one?" Spike asked curiously.

Alexander turned in his seat to face Spike and triggered the change to his newly acquired demon form.

His skin darkened to a gray/green color and became slick. Large razor sharp teeth dropped into place and all his facial features became more pronounced.

"You mean like this?" Alexander asked quietly.

"Poppa, you look great!" Wil said in excitement.

"Yeah, like that." Spike said with wide eyes.

Alexander shifted back to his human form and said, "I am what I am."

"So, what's your story watcher wannabe?" Spike asked casually.

"My name is Wesley. I was a full fledged member of the watcher's council until I decided to leave. Now I'm a rogue demon hunter." Wesley said, keeping his gaze firmly on the road.

"That mean you want to stake me?" Spike asked warily.

"Only if you start decimating humans or threaten my loved ones." Wesley said firmly.

"Right, who's your loved ones then?" Spike asked in thought.

"The people in this car." Wesley said and flashed a tender glance at Alexander.

Spike looked at Alexander, then at Wil.

"What about you mate? Why'd you call me your father?" Spike asked Wil.

"Cause my father was William the Bloody, one of the Scourge of Europe, the Slayer of Slayers." Wil said proudly.

"Slayer of Slayers?" Spike asked in wonder.

"My father killed two Slayers." Wil said as he held Spike's gaze.

"You thought I was this Super Vamp what did all that?" Spike asked carefully.

"The Spike in this dimension did all that before he met his final death last month." Alexander said in a low voice.

Spike sat quietly and thought about what he'd been told.

\* \* \* \* \*

The car came to a stop and Wesley asked, "What brand do you smoke? I can get your cigarettes while I pick up some snacks."

Spike pulled a crumpled cigarette pack from his pocket and handed it to Wesley.

Wesley looked at the pack and left the car.

"Anyone need the bathroom while we're here?" Alexander asked as he looked at Spike and Wil.

Wil nodded and got out of the car.

"What do you want from me?" Spike asked quietly.

"You're not the Spike that I knew, but you've got some of the same qualities so I just want for you what I wanted for him." Alexander said in thought.

"What's that mate?" Spike asked as he moved forward in his seat.

"For you to be happy." Alexander said as he looked into the night.

"Was you an this Spike bloke a couple?" Spike asked cautiously.

"Yeah, just for a little while. We weren't meant for that kind of relationship, we ended up as friends. But Wil was the result... I wish Spike could have known his son." Alexander said sadly.

"You mean you... and him... made a baby?" Spike asked with wide eyes.

"Yeah. Wil is our baby." Alexander said tenderly.

"You want me to be your kid's father?" Spike asked cautiously.

"No Spike, Wil has me and Wesley. It'd be good if you could be his friend, but I'm not going to push that. All I want is to help you make a life... unlife... whatever, for yourself that you can be happy with." Alexander said simply.

There was a knock on the door and Alexander turned to see Wesley holding a pack of cigarettes up to the window.

"This here is a good start. I know you lot don't like the smoke, but you stop, the watch... Wesley... goes and buys me the smokes. It says somethin to me. Like you care." Spike said before getting out of the car.

Alexander got out of the car and walked to Wesley's side.

"Poppa!" Wil called out from the side of the gas station.

All three men ran full blast to find Wil standing outside the restroom door, over an unconscious man.

"What happened?" Alexander asked with panic.

"Tha old bastard tried ta feel me up." Wil said with fury before kicking the man in the side.

"You didn't kill him did you?" Alexander asked as he knelt beside the man.

"No Pop, I kicked 'im in tha nuts, hit 'em a few times till he went down, then had me a little snack. He'll live." Wil said, not sounding too happy about that last bit.

"Okay, Spike, finish your smoke, we need to get out of here." Alexander said in thought.

"Why? Tha old pervert put his hand down my pants, if he wakes up an we're still here, I *want* 'im ta call tha cops. I'll tell 'em just what he did." Wil said indignantly.

Spike gave a full hearty laugh.

Wesley and Alexander looked at Spike curiously.

"Whelp's got 'im a pair of brass knackers fit for a bull." Spike said in delight.

Wil looked Spike in the eyes and let his demon form come into being.

"Watch who you're calling 'Whelp'. I may not be able to take you down, but you'd know you'd been in a fight fore I was through with ya." Wil said as his accent got thicker.

"How's bout 'Sprat'?" Spike asked with a grin.

Wil thought about it for a second before saying, "It means small fish... I'm still kinda small... and..." Then Wil held up his webbed fingers.

Spike took a drag off his cigarette, then said, "Tell ya what Sprat, when you an me get ta where we're goin, let's us 'ave a proper sparring match."

Wil smiled and nodded.

"We ready to get on the road again? I'd like to make it into California before we have to stop for daylight." Alexander said to the group.

"Yeah." Spike said, then looked back at the man laying on the ground.

"I'd like to have me a taste of that, but the Sprat's the one who earned that meal." Spike said then started walking toward the car.

"Tell you what Spike, next guy who tries to cop a feel, I'll knock 'im out an save 'im for you." Wil said from Spike's side.

"I'll hold you to that mate." Spike said with a laugh as he flicked his cigarette butt away.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You doing okay Dawn?" Alexander asked, looking at the ashtray.

//Fine. This is Wesley's car isn't it?// Dawn asked with amusement in her mind/voice.

"Yes it is Miss Summers, why do you ask?" Wesley asked curiously.

//Because I went into the glove compartment where I could stretch out and... Wesley, you're the only one I've ever known who actually kept gloves in the glove compartment.// Dawn finished with a laugh.

Wesley smiled but said nothing.

"What's it like where we're heading?" Spike asked from the back.

"How do you mean?" Alexander asked as he turned in his seat to look at Spike.

"I get the feelin that I ain't gonna be goin back to the watcher's place to be his servent. So what are we doin?" Spike asked with slight irritation.

"Oh, um, we'll be staying with Angel." Alexander said hesitantly, watching for Spike's reaction.

"Angel?" Spike asked warily.

"Used to be known as Angelus." Alexander said in a low voice.

Spike got a wide eyed expression that was unreadable.

"He's been cursed with a soul and doesn't bite human's anymore. He's been helping us since Wil was born." Alexander said hurriedly, hoping to forestall any objection Spike might have.

"No. I mean, s'alright. Me an the Poof got along real good till he got dusted in Russia. If Angelus was still around in my world, the watcher wouldn't be able to keep demons as pets and slaves." Spike said in thought.

Alexander looked at Wesley with concern, then turned his attention back to Spike.

"You've said that a couple times. My counterpart didn't say anything about being a slave." Alexander said carefully.

"He ain't a slave, he's a pet. Watcher keeps 'im well fed an shows 'im off when his watcher buddies come over to chat. Alexander is the only one of his kind..." Spike trailed off.

"A pet." Alexander whispered, feeling disgust at the thought.

"Yeah. You mind if we not talk about it?" Spike asked uncomfortably.

"Sure Spike. What would you like to talk about instead?" Alexander asked quietly.

"What about the chit in the glove box?" Spike asked with a grateful smile.

Alexander smiled and said, "Dawn, do you want to tell Spike your story?"

//Sure... What do you want to know?// Dawn asked in a friendly voice.

"First of all, what are you? A genie?" Spike asked, not knowing where to look.

A giggle filled their minds before Dawn responded, //I'm a key. I can open or close doorways between dimensions.//

"And the sister of the Queen Slayer." Alexander added with a note of pride.

"Queen Slayer?" Spike asked cautiously.

"Yeah, there's about... what is it Dawnie? Twelve slayers?" Alexander asked in thought.

"Ten. Kennedy and Vi are dead." Dawn said sadly.

"Oh, yeah. There's ten active slayers. They're at the Cleveland hellmouth." Alexander finished and looked at Spike to continue.

"Ten slayers? Watchers've got a bloody army!" Spike said in astonishment.

"No, they don't. There really aren't any watchers anymore. We call Giles a watcher because he tries but... the council was destroyed by the first evil." Alexander said uncomfortably, not liking thinking about those days.

"This world's gonna take some getting used to... Ten slayers..." Spike drifted off in wonder.

"Spike." Alexander said, trying to catch his eyes.

Spike finally focused on Alexander's gaze.

"My family is a mix of humans and demons..." Alexander began and was interrupted.

"...and a couple drunken sots." Wil put in helpfully.

"...and an insane vampire seer." Alexander countered, looking at Wil with amusement, then turned to Spike and continued, "So the only thing I'm going to ask of you is to respect the people for who they are. I'm not saying you have to treat them nice, but... don't treat them bad because of their species."

"What are you getting at?" Spike asked in confusion.

"I believe Alexander is saying that you should get to know the people as people. If you dislike them, that's your business, but dislike the person, not the species they belong to." Wesley said helpfully.

"Are you askin me not ta hate humans?" Spike asked Alexander carefully.

"Sort of, I'm asking you not to judge someone before you get to know them. Just because someone's human doesn't make them automatically bad." Alexander said with a hopeful smile.

//Or good.// Dawn interjected.

"Or good." Alexander conceded with a nod.

"Yeah, I may have to work on that bit. I been feelin hate for humans for so long, it might be tough to let it go." Spike said seriously.

"Wesley's human, do you hate him?" Alexander asked, hoping Spike wouldn't say something awful to Wesley.

"Wesley's alright, he bought me some smokes. Said we was gonna take smoke breaks on the trip... which I'm about due for..." Spike trailed off with a puppy-dog look directed at Wesley.

"He can't see you in the mirror Spike. Save the look for when he can see you." Alexander said with a laugh.

"And all you need do is say that you'd like to stop and I'll pull in at the next rest area or filling station. I have no desire to make this journey more uncomfortable for any of us than need be." Wesley said simply.

"I got the best Daddy ever." Wil said proudly.

"Yeah, you do." Alexander said with a smile.

Spike looked at Alexander, then to Wil and finally nodded in agreement.



## Chapter 2

"Wesley, do you think we could stop here? I know we still have a while before daylight, but I think I'd like to show Wil around." Alexander asked hopefully.

Wesley looked around and realized where they were.

"Yes, of course Alexander. I hadn't considered that." Wesley said as he changed lanes to make the turn off.

"What are you talking about Poppa?" Wil asked from the back seat.

"I just thought you'd like to see the place where you were born." Alexander said with a gentle smile at his son.

"I thought I was born at Great-grandpa Angel's house." Wil said with confusion.

"That's where you hatched, but this is where you were actually born." Alexander said with a smile as the car slowed down on the off-ramp.

"Do you want to see where I was born Spike?" Wil asked with excitement.

"That sounds like a good idea Sprat. And it'll give me a chance to have me a smoke." Spike said with a gentle smile at Wil.

"Will you pull into the truck stop? We can get something to eat, then go to the motel." Alexander asked Wesley hopefully.

Wesley didn't answer except to signal his turn into the truck stop parking lot.

//Do you mind if I go with you?// Dawn asked into everyone's minds.

"Of course Dawnie. You're one of us." Alexander said with a smile at the glove box.

When the car came to a stop, everyone got out slowly and stretched their tired muscles.

A green mist emerged from the car, then resolved into Dawn's human form.

"How are you feeling Miss Summers?" Wesley asked curiously.

"I'm fine. When I'm in my true form I'm completely relaxed." Dawn said peacefully.

"So where was I born?" Wil asked as he ran to Alexander's side.

"Let's go inside and get a table, then I'll show you." Alexander said peacefully and led the group toward the restaurant at a casual pace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander walked with Wil into the bathroom and checked to see that no one else was there before saying, "It was right here. I started feeling a pushing in my belly and within fifteen minutes I had you in my arms."

"I was born in a truck stop toilet?" Wil asked with a worried look.

"Well, yes. But I didn't even know I was carrying a child back then. I didn't have a clue about what was going to happen."

Wil thought for a moment, then hesitantly asked, "What do you think you'd be doing right now if I wasn't born?"

Alexander considered for a moment, then said, "I'd probably be living on the Cleveland hellmouth with Buffy and the other slayers. I'd be risking my life every day fighting because I wouldn't have anyone at home that I needed to stay alive for."

Wil smiled and pulled Alexander into a warm hug.

"Let's get back out to the others." Alexander said gently, and guided Wil out of the bathroom.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You like English muffins don't you? The waitress asked and you didn't say." Dawn said when Alexander and Wil joined them at the table.

"Yeah, that's fine. Thanks Dawnie." Alexander said peacefully.

"So William, how do you feel about visiting your birthplace?" Wesley asked curiously.

"It's a toilet." Wil said frankly.

Spike snickered at Wil's irreverent tone.

"That it is, but how do you feel about discovering new information about your origin?" Wesley asked gently.

"I guess it's good to know where I came from." Wil said in a considering voice.

"It can be comforting to know such things. Sometimes it provides a sense of continuity to one's life when you can chart the complete journey you have taken." Wesley said with assurance.

"Well, I guess since I was born in a truck stop toilet, things can only get better, huh?" Wil asked in thought.

Everyone shared chuckles and smiles around the table at Wil's observation.

"It's four-thirty in the morning." A young woman said in a tired voice as she opened the office door a crack.

"Yes. We would like to rent three rooms for the day." Wesley said properly.

The woman shook her head tiredly and said, "I've got two rooms. Number 12 and number 16. Check-out is at noon."

"Perhaps we should find other accommodations." Wesley said to Alexander at his side.

"No Wesley, I'd really like to stay here. Room 12..." Alexander trailed off with an urging look in his eyes.

Wesley remembered that room 12 is where Alexander had been before and said, "We will take the two rooms, but we will be staying until after nightfall.

"Then I'll have to charge you for two days." The woman said in an exhausted voice.

"Very well." Wesley said without even considering it.

"Um, come in. You need to fill out the register." The woman said, then closed the door.

Wesley and Alexander could hear her taking the chain off, then she opened the door and stood away.

"Thanks for doing this. We really appreciate it." Alexander said as he walked in.

"Yeah." The woman said as she sat the registration cards on the desk.

"Perhaps you would like to get everyone settled into the rooms whilst I complete the registration?" Wesley asked properly.

"Yeah, we'll be in 12." Alexander said with a smile.

The woman had been listening and handed the keys to Alexander while Wesley continued to fill out the cards.

"Thank you." Alexander said quietly, then hurried out of the room.

"Staying until after dark huh? You're a bunch of vamps, ain't'cha?" The woman asked in a calculating voice.

Wesley looked up from the registration cards with surprise.

"Don't make a difference to me. Just don't eat the other guests and don't trash the rooms. Blood is a bitch of a thing to get out of cheap carpet." The woman said seriously.

"We will behave appropriately." Wesley said cautiously, then went back to filling out the registration cards.

"It's not long before daylight. If you need a few bags of blood to get you by it'll just cost you ten bucks each." The woman said casually.

Wesley thought for a moment, then asked, "Is it Human?"

"One hundred percent. We got a hook-up at the local blood bank." The woman said proudly.

"Two bags if you please." Wesley said quietly as he placed a credit card on the counter.

The woman shook her head and said, "Cash only. And I don't keep it here, I'll bring it to your room."

Wesley took the money for the rooms and the blood and laid it out on the counter.

"Remember us next time you pass by this way. Ain't another vamp friendly motel for a eight hundred miles on this stretch of highway." The woman said frankly.

"Yes. I will be sure to tell my... sunlight challenged associates of your enlightened policies." Wesley said carefully.

The woman smiled as she picked up the money then said, "You do that."

\* \* \* \* \*

Wesley walked to room 12 and knocked gently.

Wil opened the door and happily said, "Poppa was just showing me the sink where he used to bathe me."

Wesley smiled at the statement and gave Wil a quick hug as he walked into the room.

"Dawn said she didn't really want a room anyway, she'll stay in the glove compartment of the car." Alexander said casually as he walked out of the bathroom.

"I hadn't considered that. I'm glad that no one is going to have to do without accommodations." Wesley said in a considering voice.

"Would it be okay if I stayed with Spike today? I mean, that way he wouldn't have to be alone and you two could... you know. Have some privacy." Wil finished with a blush.

"We'll have to see what Spike thinks about that idea." Alexander said as he unpacked a few items from his suitcase for the next day.

A knock on the door surprised Alexander and Wil.

Wesley walked to the door and looked through the peep-hole before opening it.

"Here ya go. I heated 'em up since you don't have microwaves in the rooms." She said and handed Wesley two bags of blood wrapped in a towel.

"Thank you. That was very considerate." Wesley said properly.

"Yeah. Sure. Sun's up in about twenty minutes so you'd better get tucked in." She said with a smile and walked away.

Wesley turned to see Alexander and Wil looking at him with question.

"This is a vampire friendly establishment. I took the liberty of attaining two bags of blood for Spike." Wesley said shyly.

"That was good of you Wesley. Why don't you take them over before they cool down and you can ask him about Wil while you're over there?" Alexander asked with a tender smile.

"I will return shortly." Wesley said gently, then left the room.

\* \* \* \* \*

After a knock on the door of room 16, Wesley stood back and waited for Spike to answer.

"Wesley? What're you doing round here mate? You piss off the fish demon?" Spike asked with a smirk as he stood away from the door.

"I thought you might enjoy a meal before you retire for the day." Wesley said, then held out the towel wrapped blood to Spike.

Spike cautiously opened the bundle, then looked at Wesley with surprise.

"Wil also asked if he could stay over here with you today. I believe he would like to spend time getting to know you." Wesley said seriously.

"So this is my pay for babysitting?" Spike asked cautiously.

"No. The two matters are unrelated. Please feel free to enjoy the blood, you have no obligation to pay me back."

"Thank you Wesley. That was right decent of you. I'm not used to being around the type of folk who would do something like this." Spike said, then moved to the small shelf where there was a single serving coffee maker and two small glasses wrapped in plastic.

"I understand Spike. We will all do what we can to help you adapt to your new surroundings." Wesley said seriously.

Spike unwrapped a glass then ripped open the corner of one of the blood bags with his teeth.

Wesley watched as Spike poured the blood into the glass, then took a slow, appreciative drink.

After a moment of bliss, Spike looked at Wesley and said, "Oh right, the Sprat. It's fine if he wants to come by and spend the day with me. I never had much use for kids, most are bloody annoying, but the Sprat's alright."

"He will be happy that you've agreed to spend time with him. By getting to know you, he's learning what kind of a person his father was." Wesley said quietly.

"But I'm not his father." Spike said seriously before taking another drink of blood.

"No. Nor are we asking you to be. But getting to know you is the closest that William will ever come to getting to know his father. Perhaps it will be enough." Wesley said gently.

Spike poured the rest of the blood from the first bag into the small glass, then said, "I never really knew too much about my own father. Just enough to know that I was better off without 'im. If it'll help the Sprat be at peace, he can spend some time with me."

"Thank you Spike, I'll send him over directly so you won't have to open the door after sunrise." Wesley said quietly.

"Thanks again for the blood mate. Once I get on my feet, I'll find a way to pay you back for all you've done for me." Spike said seriously.

"You're a member of our family Spike. There is no debt or obligation between us." Wesley said with assurance, then closed the door.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wil knocked on the door and waited.

A few seconds later he knocked again and said, "C'mon Spike? It's me. Open the door, it's getting light."

Spike opened the door and stepped aside as Wil hurried into the room.

"What took you so long?" Wil asked as he turned to face Spike.

"I ate me some Human food, didn't I? It has to go somewhere." Spike said frankly.

Wil giggled at the statement, then plopped himself down on the small sofa just inside the door.

"Care for a nip of the good stuff?" Spike asked as he held up the second bag of blood.

"Sure. Just a little bit." Wil said with a big smile.

Spike nodded and unwrapped the second plastic glass.

"Daddy said it was okay if I came over but... is it really?" Wil asked cautiously.

Spike smiled at the question and said, "Don't worry 'bout it mate. If you was just some little whelp off the street, I wouldn't have any use for you. You're not big enough to make a decent meal. But you're family. Like a nephew."

"Thanks Uncle Spike." Wil said with a big smile as he accepted a half full glass of blood.

"To family." Spike said in a toast as he raised his glass.

"To family." Wil agreed and touched his glass to Spike's.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander and Wesley shared a long, lingering kiss and just relaxed in the peace of being alone.

"I'm happy." Alexander said in a whisper as he looked into Wesley's eyes.

"As am I." Wesley responded gently.

"My family is all here. Even Spike. I couldn't even imagine that things could work out this well." Alexander said in a dreamy voice.

"What does he mean to you Alexander?" Wesley asked curiously, without a hint of jealousy or accusation in his voice.

"I love him. I guess he's somewhere between a good friend and a brother." Alexander said comfortably.

"Yes. I couldn't put into words how it appeared from my vantage point, but I think that is the perfect way to describe it." Wesley said seriously.

"We're kid-free in a motel room for at least the next twelve hours. Let's not talk about Spike anymore." Alexander said with a suggestive leer.

"Perhaps you could think of a more interesting topic of discussion." Wesley said with a gentle smile.

"Hmmm. I think if we get out of these clothes, something will come up." Alexander said with a waggle of his eyebrows.

Wesley chuckled and said, "I can guarantee that it will."

"You want to lay out on the couch?" Spike asked as he skinned the t-shirt off over his head.

"No. I'd rather lay on the bed with you so we can talk... I mean... if that's okay with you." Wil said as he got up from the couch.

"I've got no problem with it, but just so you know, I sleep in the raw." Spike said and spared a questioning look at Wil.

"If I see anything that scares me I'll just throw a rock at it or something." Wil said with a playful smile.

"Maybe I'd better lay down on the couch." Spike said slowly.

"I was just kidding. I've got my father's memories, you ain't got nothin I ain't seen already." Wil said with a smile.

"Alright then." Spike said as he sat on the edge of the bed to take off his shoes.

"Spike?" Wil asked in a tone of thought.

"Yeah?" Spike asked curiously.

"Do you think my father would be proud of me?" Wil asked quietly.

"How would I know?" Spike said frankly.

"Okay. If I was your kid. Would you be proud of me?" Wil asked seriously.

Spike pushed his shoes under the edge of the bed, then said, "Yeah. If you was my kid. I'd be proud."

Wil nodded slowly at the statement.

Spike stood and pulled down his pants, then stepped out of them and folded them over his arm as he said, "What's got you so worried?"

Wil glanced at Spike and said, "He died saving a lot of people. I guess I just want to be good enough to be his son."

Spike got under the covers and laid back on the bed for a moment, then patted the spot beside him and said, "Come on up here Sprat."

Wil turned to look at Spike and smiled.

He quickly hopped off the bed and ran to turn off the light switch by the door, then shed his clothes on a direct path to the bed.



Spike smiled at the sight of the trail of clothes, then rested back and closed his eyes.

"Spike, even if you weren't just like my father, I think I'd still like you." Wil said as he snuggled against Spike's side.

After a moment of thought, Spike turned and said, "It's hard for me to get to know new people. I usually just eat 'em."

Wil giggled at the statement.

"But I'm glad I'm getting to know you. I'd be proud to have a kid like you." Spike said as he rested back on his pillow again.

"I love you Spike." Wil said gently, then scooted up a little to give Spike a kiss on the cheek.

"I love you too Wil." Spike said in a gentle whisper, then closed his eyes.

## Chapter 3

*Warning: Explicit M/M sex herein. If you don't enjoy the graphic stuff, wait for the next chapter where they're enjoying the afterglow. You won't miss anything essential to the story line, I promise.*

Spike's mind blurred as he began to return to consciousness.

He could feel the wonderful sensation of a warm body snuggled against him.

A spark of fear jolted through his body as he fought to keep from opening his eyes.

Did the watcher decide that he was weak enough to require fresh blood? Had Danforth Giles lured a street kid into his car so he could provide his vampire slave a warm meal?

Spike fought to open his eyes as he struggled against the nausea he always felt when he was given such a 'treat'.

\* \* \* \* \*

As Spike blinked his eyes, memories flooded his mind and he remembered that he was no longer a slave. He had been rescued by a loving child. The child that was, in fact, held tightly to his side right now.

Spike relaxed his tense muscles and reached his hand around to gently pet Wil's wheat blond hair.

Wil purred at the sensation of the gentle touch and snuggled closer to Spike's side.

Spike smiled at the movement and continued to stroke Wil's slightly long, wavy hair.

Wil's snuggle hadn't stopped, then Spike realized that Wil wasn't snuggling, he was rubbing... humping.

Spike slowly turned his head, not wanting to disturb Wil if he was asleep.

"I love you." Wil whispered when Spike met his peaceful gaze.

"I love you too Sprat." Spike said in a low voice as he realized that Wil had increased the intensity of his movement.

After a long moment of silence, Spike continued, "You should probably stop that."

"Okay." Wil said quietly and stopped moving.

Spike was about to say something else when Wil shifted himself onto Spike's chest with his erection pressing into Spike's growing cock.

"How about this?" Wil asked, then swooped in to give Spike a full, deep kiss on the mouth.

Spike was momentarily shocked by the movement, but soon was lost in the sensation of the warm mouth and questing tongue.

Wil started humping against Spike's growing erection as he continued to kiss Spike hungrily.

Spike didn't need to breathe, but some part of him knew that he needed to break the kiss and stop this before it went any further.

"Wil, your fathers wouldn't like you doing this." Spike said, as he pulled Wil far enough away to look in his eyes.

"I love you, Spike. I'll always love you. I want my first time to be with you." Wil said with longing in his voice.

"You're too young, Wil. It's not right." Spike said gently and a note of regret could be heard in his voice.

Wil chuckled and said, "You're a vampire, Spike. You don't have to worry about right and wrong. Just do what feels good... it feels good, doesn't it?"

Spike examined the hopeful look in Wil's eyes, seeing that he needed to be assured that what he was doing was bringing Spike pleasure.

"Yeah Sprat, it feels good. But you're too young for this." Spike whispered with regret and longing.

"Stand up." Wil said firmly as he pulled away from Spike.

After a moment of coaxing and pulling from Wil, Spike reluctantly got out of bed.

As soon as they were both standing, Wil pulled Spike firmly against him and looked him in the eyes.

"How much older do I need to be? I'm as tall as you are now." Wil said seriously.

Spike broke loose of Wil's firm grip and took a step back to examine him.

Wil had grown again while they were sleeping.

The young man in front of him appeared to be fifteen, maybe sixteen years old and did indeed equal Spike in height.

"I don't age like humans, Spike. I'm getting older and I NEED to do this. Please let my first time be with you. I love you." Wil finished in a pleading whisper.

Spike noticed Wil's straining erection and the look of desperation in his voice.

After a long silence, Spike reluctantly nodded and said, "Right then. Let's us get back in bed."

Wil smiled with delight, and tackled Spike as he pulled them both down to the bed.

Spike chuckled as he said, "I can't remember the last time someone wanted me this bad."

"I want you Spike, I'll always want you." Wil said as he moved into position and gave Spike a long, desperate kiss.

No more words were spoken as Wil's kissing of Spike became more passionate and his thrusting and humping intensified.

Spike finally broke out of the kiss and said, "You're going to rub yourself raw if you keep up like that."

"It feels good." Wil said, then moved to nuzzle Spike's neck.

"That. Right there." Spike said in a breathy whisper as Wil found the magic spot on his neck that made his entire body quiver.

Wil nibbled and tongued the nape of Spike's neck while he made forceful jabs with his pelvis against Spike.

"Stop Wil. Stop for a mo." Spike said as he tried to push Wil away from his neck.

"What's wrong?" Wil asked with concern as he reluctantly pulled back.

"It's your first time, right?" Spike asked as he looked up into Wil's lustful eyes.

"Yeah." Wil said in a hesitant breath.

"Then I think we can do better than this. Lay down here and let me make it good for you." Spike said as he guided Wil to lay down beside him.

Wil initially resisted the relocation, but finally was laying back on the bed.

"Just relax." Spike said gently, then began to trail small kisses down Wil's chest.

"Oh Spike." Wil gasped as he felt his arousal increasing.

Spike kissed and licked his way down until he finally gave in and took Wil's desperately straining member into his mouth.

"Aaagh!" Wil yelped at the new sensation and nearly bucked Spike off the bed with his reflexive reaction.

Spike pulled away and chuckled for a moment before saying, "I guess you liked that bit?"

"I remember what my Father remembered, but I didn't feel what he felt. I didn't know... please Spike... do it some more." Wil begged.

Spike looked into the lust crazed eyes of the young man who was lying naked before him, then said, "Just lie back and enjoy."

"I love you, Spike." Wil said in a whisper, then drew in a gasp as Spike's mouth engulfed him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Spike skillfully pleased Wil, bringing him to the brink of orgasm, then backing off.

"Make love to me Spike." Wil said in a voice of desperate longing.

"Not today love." Spike said gently, before engulfing Wil yet again.

"Please Spike. I love you. Make me yours. Take me." Wil begged.

Spike released Wil and moved up the bed so they were nearly nose to nose.

"Wil, I love you too. That's why I'm not going to take you like that. If this is going to be more than a one off, I want to save that for the day we commit ourselves to each other." Spike said quietly.

"I'll do it. I commit! Now make love to me!" Wil said with frustration as he reached a hand down to his straining erection.

Spike intercepted the hand and said, "I am making love to you Wil. We're just going to save that bit for later. Agreed?"

"Whatever you want Spike. Just please do something. I'm going out of my bloody mind here!" Wil nearly screamed.

Spike chuckled, then moved one hand down to slowly start wanking Wil as he moved up and began to kiss the young man slowly.

"Yes..." Wil mumbled through their kiss.

"Love you." Spike responded quietly.

"Love you forever." Wil said as his eyes rolled back at the wondrous sensations.

"Forever." Spike responded, then sealed the words with a deep kiss filled with all the love and passion that he felt.

"I'm close." Wil said in a gasp as he felt the tension of orgasm building within him.

"Let 'er rip Wil. Let me have it." Spike said as he moved down in the bed again.

"I'm... I'm..." Wil panted as Spike released his hand and replaced it with his mouth.

"Oh Spike! Oh fuck, Spike! Yes!" Wil howled as his body arched up off the bed.

Spike followed the movement and used his vampiric strength to keep Wil from bucking him off the bed.

Wil's orgasm triggered his transformation. His fangs and webbed fingers came into being without his knowing as he thrashed on the bed.

"Oh, it's... it's..." Wil gasped, then arched his body again in another spasm of release.

Spike pulled away from Wil's exploding cock, allowing the erupting seed to fly where it would.

Wil's grey/green skin was glistening with his sweat as his semen flew up his chest and onto the pillow by his head.

Spike marveled at the beauty of the young man completely lost in his passion.

Never in over a century of unlife had Spike known anyone to feel the passion so intensely.

"Oh Spike! Spike!" Wil panted as the eruption of his semen finally started to subside.

Spike carefully began cleaning Wil with his tongue, reveling in the taste and smell as he lapped at the gooey evidence of their lovemaking.

"That was... Spike, I love you." Wil said in a raspy voice as he lay panting with his arms outstretched.

Spike looked up and noticed that Wil still had the sheets loosely balled in his claw like fists.

"I love you too Wil." Spike said as he moved up to give Wil a firm kiss.

After a moment of kissing, Wil pulled away and looked at Spike curiously.

"You're tasting yourself. Isn't it sweet?" Spike asked with a peaceful smile.

"I want to taste you." Wil said intently.

"Today is just for you Sprat. We'll have plenty of time for that later." Spike said quietly.

"Shut your bloody gob and lay back." Wil said in a guttural growl.

"Alright Sprat, just one thing first..." Spike said as he slowly laid back on the bed.

"Anything Spike. Just name it." Wil said with lust burning in his eyes.

"Pull the fangs back." Spike said as he laid back on the bed and opened himself completely to Wil.

After a glance at his webbed fingers, Wil chuckled, then concentrated for a moment to return to his human form.

"You're bloody beautiful mate. I've never seen anything like it." Spike said in a dreamy whisper as he felt Wil moving into place over him.

"I only feel beautiful when I'm with you. Hold still..." Wil finished in a whisper.

"I'm all yours now. Only yours." Spike said as he closed his eyes, giving Wil his ultimate trust.

A moment later, Spike's eyes flew open as he felt the unmistakable sensation of fang scraping along the overly sensitive skin of his inner thigh.

"Sprat..." Spike gasped.

"Shhh... Remember, I know how a vampire likes it." Wil said softly, then went back to his exploration of Spike's groin.

It was Spike's turn to have his fists tangled in the sheets as he resisted the urge to grab Wil's head and pull him away... or closer.

Spike let out a gasp as he felt the fangs puncture the skin of his inner thigh and drink ever so slightly from the femoral artery.

"You do that much more and you'll set me off without even touching my cock." Spike said semicoherantly.

"No. I don't want that." Wil said, as he scooted up the bed.

"Go into game face for me. I want to kiss you for real." Wil said with sultry passion burning in his gaze.

Spike let loose the last thread of restraint that he had been holding on to and let his game face come to the fore.

As soon as Spike's transformation was complete, Wil forcefully moved in and began to ravage Spike's mouth.

Tongues and fangs fought for dominance as the passion became more erratic and violent.

Wil moved one of his clawed hands to Spike's neglected cock and began to pull at it with long savage strokes.

"Oh fuck!" Spike said as he took in an unneeded breath at the sensation.

Wil shifted slightly and brought down his other hand to cup Spike's balls and allowed his claws to dig in at the base of Spike's cock.

When Spike opened his mouth in a gasp, Wil moved in and plundered Spike's mouth savagely, nipping and biting as he kissed.

Blood began to flow from the small wounds in both their mouths and another level of passion was realized as their blood mingled.

Wil let out an animalistic growl as his senses of taste and smell were overwhelmed with the combination of their blood.

"I'm close." Spike barely managed to say between Wil's nipping and sucking attacks on his mouth.

Wil quickly scooted himself down the bed and took Spike's throbbing cock into his mouth.

"Oh! I'm gonna want that back when you're finished with it!" Spike said in a yelp as he felt Wil's fangs scraping along his most sensitive flesh.

Before Spike could complain any further, Wil went down to the root and allowed his fangs to bite in slightly as he began to suckle.

Spike threw back his head and let out a demonic howl at the mix of pleasure and pain that rushed through his senses.

Wil was relentless, both sucking and swallowing to massage Spike's cock with his mouth and throat while his claws dragged over Spike's chest leaving thin bloody lines in their wake.

Spike felt as if every muscle in his body tensed and became rigid as he found himself on the precipice of release.

Wil felt the tensing in Spike's body and pulled his mouth up slightly so he was holding only the head of Spike's engorged cock in his mouth.

The first spasm of Spike's release spurted into Wil's mouth and he sucked hungrily to devour every drop of the demon seed.

Spike's muscles tensed again even though he hadn't been aware of them ever relaxing.

Wil took the next load of Spike's cold seed into his mouth, then pulled off Spike's cock and moved to his mouth.

With all that had happened, Spike was little more than an animal by this point, but gratefully accepted the kiss from Wil when it was offered.



Spike's mouth was overwhelmed by the taste of Wil, his own semen and their combined blood.

Finally releasing the sheets, Spike pulled Wil fully on top of him.

He passionately kissed Wil as the last few spurts of his semen were pressed between their bodies.

Finally Spike's passion was spent and he stopped to stare up into Wil's youthful eyes.

"I love you." Wil said as his face slowly transformed back to human.

Spike chuckled and said, "I got the feeling that you might, Love."

"Spike, I really mean it. I remember over a hundred years of my father's life... unlife, I mean. I have a pretty good idea of what love is and isn't. I love you." Wil said seriously as he looked deeply into Spike's eyes.

"I know, Love. I know what you're saying and I know that you mean it. I love you too, and I might even be a bit 'in love' with you." Spike said honestly, allowing Wil to see the sincerity in his eyes.

Wil nodded and shyly said, "Yeah. 'In love', that's what I meant."

"I know Sprat." Spike said with a happy teasing smile.

"I like it better when you call me 'Love'. Will you call me that instead?" Wil asked hopefully.

"What about when we're around your fathers?" Spike asked as he looked deeply into Wil's eyes.

"I'll never be ashamed of loving you, Spike. I'll tell my fathers and Great-grandpa Angel and anyone else whose opinion I give a damn about. You're mine and I'm not gonna let anyone think for a minute that they've got a chance of getting you." Wil finished in an animal growl.

"There hasn't been a long line of people waiting to get a chance at me the past few decades. I don't see that being a problem." Spike said with a look of admiration and love at Wil.

"Then the people on your side of the door must have been bloody fools. You're the most beautiful, strong, fierce vampire that there is, and I've claimed you as my mate." Wil said proudly.

Spike didn't have words to respond to Wil's declaration, so he pulled Wil into his arms and hugged tightly, trying to convey his feelings through touch.

\* \* \* \* \*

After long silent minutes in each others arms, just holding and being held, Wil finally broke the silence by saying, "I'm starting to feel like I need a shower... and we're both kind of..."

Spike looked down at their naked bodies covered with scratches, scrapes, smeared blood and semen.

"Would you like to shower with me?" Wil asked hopefully.

"I hope this place has a good hot water heater." Spike said with a smile.

Wil looked down in time to see Spike's cock twitch and begin to rise.

"Let's go find out."

## **Chapter 4**

"Hold on!" Wil called out, sounding far away.

"Wil? Is that you?" Alexander asked cautiously, noticing that Wil's voice sounded deeper and not quite his own.

The door opened and Alexander found himself looking at Wil's throat.

Slowly, he looked up until he was looking into Wil's clear blue eyes.

"Come on in Pop. We'll be ready to go in a minute. I guess we took too long in the shower." Wil said quickly as he stepped away from the door.

Alexander blinked with surprise as the fact finally registered that Wil was dripping wet and covered only by a towel draped around his waist.

"Pop?" Wil prompted, looking at Alexander with concern.

"What?" Alexander asked absently as he stared at his son.

"Will you come in and close the door? It's not all the way dark yet." Wil asked slowly, not understanding his father's mood.

Alexander blinked, then blinked again.

"Is something wrong?" Wil asked as he took a step closer to Alexander.

"No... It's just... you've grown again." Alexander said in a disbelieving voice.

"Yeah. I do that a lot." Wil said, then turned toward the bathroom and said in a louder voice, "It's okay. It's Pop."

Alexander finally seemed to get over the shock of seeing his son looking like a young adult as he stepped into the room and closed the door behind him.

"I'll be dressed in a mo." Wil said quickly as he retreated into the bathroom.

Alexander stared at the bathroom door for a moment, then Wil's earlier words registered.

"You and Spike were showering together?" Alexander asked cautiously.

Spike stepped out of the bathroom wearing only a towel loosely knotted at the hip.

"Yeah mate. I s'pose we need to have us a talk about that." Spike said uncomfortably as he walked past the bed and picked up the faded blue jeans that were draped over the arm of a chair at the far side of the room.

"Spike, you and Wil aren't... he's just a child." Alexander stammered with a devastated look.

"No I'm not." Wil said in a firm voice as he walked out of the bathroom.

Alexander was about to respond when he saw what Wil was wearing.

He was bare-chested and the sweat pants that he had been wearing comfortably just that morning looked as though they had been painted onto his body. The legs of the pants barely made it half-way down his calves and the tightly stretched fabric left nothing to the imagination.

"Do you think that I could borrow something of Dad's? I can't go out wearing this." Wil said as he emphasized his words by spreading his arms and presenting himself to his father.

"Yeah." Alexander said absently, then turned his attention back to Spike and asked, "How could you?"

Before Spike could answer, Wil quickly said, "Spike didn't do anything wrong. Everything that happened was because I wanted it to."

Alexander turned his worried gaze back to his son and he seemed to be on the verge of tears.

"Do you remember what puberty was like for you?" Wil asked his father seriously.

Alexander blinked back his tears, then reluctantly nodded.

"I hit puberty at about seven o'clock this morning... and I hit it hard." Wil said frankly.

Spike snorted his agreement, then fought to restrain his reaction to see what Alexander was going to do next.

"But he's your father..." Alexander sputtered.

"No." Wil said firmly. "He's not."

Silence filled the room.

Alexander finally forced himself to look Wil in the eyes and found absolute seriousness looking back at him.

"Pop. I think because you were raised as a human, you're looking at this from their point of view." Wil said slowly.

"I'm a demon. I'm not human. I can't ever be human... not even for you." Wil finished with regret.

"I don't want you to be human. But you're so young. It's too soon for you to become involved like this." Alexander said in an anguished whisper.

"Maybe that's how it was for you, but I needed to do this. Spike and I are bonded. He is my mate... forever." Wil said as he stared his father in the eyes.

"That's right. Forever." Spike said as he walked to Wil's side.

Alexander blinked back his tears again, then looked from Spike to Wil, trying to absorb the enormity of the situation.

"I think I understand why you feel like you feel, but look at me." Wil said imploringly.

Alexander looked at Wil, looking every bit of eighteen years old.

"Not only my body grew up." Wil said in a whisper.

Alexander took in a slow breath, then reluctantly nodded.

Wil let out a gust of breath in relief, feeling that the crisis had been averted.

"Forever?" Alexander asked in a small voice.

"Forever." Wil and Spike responded in unison.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Thanks for the loan of the clothes Dad... although I feel like a bloody ponce dressed up in a button down shirt." Wil said as he and Spike walked toward the car.

"William?" Wesley asked with a look of obvious surprise in his eyes.

"Pop said that he already told you that I'd grown up." Wil said, then looked at Alexander with question.

"Yes. Although he seemed to be more focused on other of your recent developments." Wesley said cautiously.

//Looking good Wil!// Dawn said as she emerged from the car in a hazy green mist, never fully taking form.

"Thanks Dawn." Wil said shyly.

"Yes William. Well done." Wesley said, now back to his usual proper tone.

"Thanks Dad." Wil said, then ran to Wesley to give him a firm hug.

"Unless anyone needs anything, I think it's time for us to be on our way." Alexander said frankly.

"Are you really okay with... you know, me and Wil?" Spike asked Alexander cautiously.

"Yeah Spike. But on the way back to Angel's, we need to have a nice long talk about your plans for the future." Alexander said frankly.

"As long as you don't forget the 'nice' part." Wil said as he released Wesley from the hug, then turned to look Alexander in the eyes.

"Nice. I promise." Alexander said gently.

Wil gave a single nod, then looked at Spike with a smile.

"If we were to leave immediately, we should be able to complete the drive to Los Angeles before daybreak." Wesley said quietly to the group.

"That's right. Everyone get in. We're burning moonlight." Alexander said with a glimmer of his youthful humor that had been noticeably absent.

"Did you get the vampire snacks?" Wil asked as he moved to Spike's side.

"We got vampire snacks, human snacks... and if the convenience store sold 'key' snacks, we'd have those too." Alexander said with cheer as he automatically moved to the passenger side of the car.

"I also took the liberty of purchasing these." Wesley said as he presented a pack of cigarettes to Spike.

"Ta mate. Right decent." Spike said to Wesley with appreciation.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I think it's time that we discussed your plans for the future." Alexander said as he turned in his seat to find Wil and Spike snuggled together.

"We will if you will." Wil answered immediately.

"Please Wil, I'm being serious." Alexander said in a fatherly tone.

"So am I." Wil said frankly. "How is our situation different from yours?"

"Well I..." Alexander began to say, but trailed off.

"Wesley..." He began, then faltered again.

"Round one goes to you mate." Spike said with a chuckle as he snuggled Wil a little bit closer.

"I believe Alexander and I should find some way to formalize our relationship." Wesley said, surprising everyone else in the car.

After a long moment of silence, Alexander slowly asked, "You want to marry me?"

"In a manner of speaking." Wesley said carefully.

"What *exactly* does that mean?" Alexander asked as he shifted himself slightly so that he was facing Wesley fully.

Wesley glanced at Alexander for a moment, then turned his attention back to the road as he said, "It occurs to me that, for our family to enjoy anything resembling a sense of normalcy, it will be necessary for us to live our lives among the demon community."

"Normalcy?" Alexander asked cautiously.

"Thus far we have been living in a gray area that exists between the demon and human communities. We have tastes of both, but dwell in neither." Wesley said seriously.

Alexander slowly nodded that he understood what Wesley was saying.

"William asked about our plans for the future. The future I envision for us includes friends... Neighbors..."

"Community." Alexander said as he nodded again.

"Acknowledging the fact that the majority of our family are demons, it seems most reasonable for us to make a place for ourselves in the demon community." Wesley said frankly.

"It sounds like you've been giving this a lot of thought." Alexander said softly.

"Yes. In a sense." Wesley said carefully. "Shortly after William was born, I began to consider what future might lay before him. When the time came for you to make decisions, I wanted to be able to offer sound and well thought out reasoning."

"Yeah. That sounds like you Dad." Wil said with a delighted giggle.

Alexander smiled at the comment, then said, "So if we're not going to get married, what are we going to do?"

"As I understand the customs of the demon community, you must claim me so that we will be seen as bonded." Wesley said frankly.

"How do I do that?" Alexander asked cautiously.

"My knowledge of such things is extremely limited. Perhaps Lorn or Angel would be able to advise us on that." Wesley said in a slightly apologetic voice.

"I think we should talk to the Shamenka about it. I have the feeling that she would not only know what needs to be done, but I think that she's respected enough in the demon

community, that if she said that we were married, no one would go against her." Alexander said thoughtfully.

"Yes. I should have considered that possibility." Wesley said distantly.

"If you're sure you want to do it, I can set it up when we get home." Alexander said seriously.

"Yes Alexander. I am completely sure." Wesley said and betrayed a small smile.

"So guys, do you have any idea of what you want to do?" Alexander asked as he looked into the back seat.

"Doing it the demon way could be a problem for us." Wil said with a hesitant look at Spike.

"Why is that?" Alexander asked with concern.

"It's just... it might be better if we tried to live with humans." Wil said, looking like he really didn't want to talk about it.

"What Wil is trying not to say is that in the demon community, I'm going to be seen as his property." Spike said with regret.

Wil looked at Alexander and nodded.

"Property? Why would that be?" Alexander asked with concern.

"Because the demon community operates on the philosophy of dominance or submission. The stronger member of the couple is considered the owner of the weaker." Wesley said in a toneless voice as he kept his attention focused on the road before him.

"So does that mean?..." Alexander hesitantly asked as his mind tried to assimilate the new concept.

"Since you are the stronger of us, you would be seen as the dominant and I would be seen as your consort." Wesley said quietly.

"Maybe all of us should find a way to live in the human world." Alexander said distantly.

"No." Wesley said immediately. "How happy could we be together when you have to hide who and what you truly are?"

"But how happy could you be living in a community that looks at you as my property?" Alexander countered.

"It isn't like that mate." Spike said from the back seat.



At Alexander's inquiring look, Spike continued, "This isn't like slavery or anything like that. All it does is says that the stronger one of you speaks for you both. That and you'd be responsible for protecting Wesley."

"Think about it Pop. That's why master vampires are masters. They're the strongest. You have to do as the master says, but while you're a member of his house, you're under his protection." Wil said seriously.

"Angel is a master vampire and you have been living in his house, under his protection, since you arrived in Los Angeles." Wesley said quietly.

After a moment, Alexander said, "I never considered it like that."

"Of course you didn't Pop. You're still thinking like a human." Wil said with a giggle.

"I'll have to work on that." Alexander said with a smile at his son.

"Does that mean that you would still be willing to formalize our relationship?" Wesley asked cautiously.

"As long as you don't have a problem with it... yeah. I would really like to." Alexander said to Wesley peacefully.

"Kewl." Wil said with a delighted giggle.

"But what about you guys?" Alexander asked with concern as he turned in his seat to look at Wil and Spike.

"It's different for us." Wil said with regret.

"Why?" Alexander asked with concern at his son's tone.

"Because I'm stronger than Spike." Wil said frankly.

"And?" Alexander prompted, not understanding the source of their problem.

"And even though we love each other, Spike couldn't be happy living as my consort. He needs to be dominant." Wil said with regret at saying the words.

"Spike?" Alexander asked cautiously.

"I'd give it a good go and try... but we both know that I couldn't last long being submissive... I'm just not wired that way." Spike said with pain.

"Could you, perhaps, become stronger?" Wesley asked carefully.

"Maybe. But it would probably take a decade or two." Spike said thoughtfully.

"Why so long?" Alexander asked curiously.

"Because the reason I'm so weak is because the bloody arse hole, Danforth Giles, kept me starved of blood for years. He only gave me enough to keep me from turning to dust, but never enough to build up any strength." Spike said quietly. "Building any real strength takes years of feeding."

"So what are you going to do?" Alexander asked cautiously.

"We're going to stay together." Wil said firmly as he looked Spike in the eyes. "You are mine. Forever."

"Forever." Spike confirmed.

"We'll figure out the rest." Wil said as he finally turned to look at his father again.

"That's right mate." Spike said as he pulled Wil to snuggle against him. "We'll make it work."

"What about you Dawn? Have you thought about your plans for the future?" Alexander asked as he turned to face the glove compartment of the car.

//I think I'm going to go back to Cleveland and see what I can do about the hellmouth now that I have full access to my power.// Dawn said frankly.

"Yeah. You could probably be a lot of help to them." Alexander said thoughtfully.

"Just please be careful Miss Summers. You are very dear to all of us." Wesley said in an uncharacteristic tender voice.

//Thanks Wesley. I will. I just think that in my true form as a key, I should be able to help Buffy and the others figure out how to close the hellmouth without destroying half the city.// Dawn said, and her commitment to the quest could be heard in her mind/voice.

After a moment of consideration, Alexander said, "This could mean that it's finally over. *All* the hellmouths could be closed. The world could be completely safe from extra-dimensional invasion."

//That's right. And if we can manage that... well, then maybe I can find someone and settle down like you guys are doing.// Dawn said more quietly.

"Do you have anyone in mind?" Alexander asked with a tender smile directed at the glove box.

//No. Not yet. But if I could find someone like Tara... I loved her so much.// Dawn said as her emotions carried under the words. //I miss her.//

"We all do Dawnie." Alexander said, remembering the beautiful, wonderful person that Tara had been.

After a long moment of silence, Wil's voice came from the back seat, "Dad, would you mind pulling over for a few minutes. I'm thinking Spike is a little past ready for a cigarette."

"Yes. It's still quite a distance to the next rest area. I think we would all benefit from a minute or two to stretch our legs." Wesley said as he guided the car off the road.

\* \* \* \* \*

The conversation turned to lighter subjects as they continued on their drive toward Los Angeles.

When they finally arrived, the group stiffly emerged from the car, all very ready for a long day of rest.

"I could really go for a nice warm cup of blood before bed. How about you?" Wil asked as he automatically picked up the ice chest to bring it inside.

"That sounds good." Spike said as he looked at the Hyperion Hotel nervously.

"Don't worry Spike. This is a safe place." Alexander said assuringly.

Spike nodded that he heard, but didn't look any less nervous.

"If it'll make you feel better, we'll talk to great-grandpa Angel before we go to bed." Wil said cheerfully.

"S'pose it's best to get it over with." Spike said frankly.

"Well, I need a shower. We'll be down to the kitchen in a few minutes." Alexander said as the group walked into the lobby.

"Take your time. Get Dad to wash your back." Wil said with a smile, then added, "And maybe your front."

Alexander chuckled and said, "We may just do that."

## Chapter 5

"Hello?" Wil said cautiously when he noticed a stranger sitting in the kitchen, drinking a cup of coffee.

"Hi." The young man said without revealing any emotion in his reaction.

"I'm Wil, this is Spike." Wil said, sensing something dark and dangerous in the man before him.

"You're Wil? From the way Mom talked, you were a kid." the man said frankly.

"Who is your mom?" Wil asked cautiously.

"Wil?" A female voice called from the doorway.

"Aunt Lily?" Wil asked with delight, then ran to her and gave her a firm hug.

"You certainly have grown." Lily said as she happily returned the hug.

"Yeah. From what Pop said, I was supposed to stop growing when I hit puberty, but we figure that when we found the dimensional doorway, it gave me energy or something that made me grow up faster than I was supposed to." Wil rambled.

"Well, I'm just glad to see that you're happy and healthy." Lily said as she released him from the hug.

"I *am* happy. Aunt Lily, I'd like for you to meet..."

"William the Bloody. We've met." Lily said with a gracious smile directed at Spike.

"Sorry to disappoint you, but that wasn't me." Spike said with regret.

"Disappoint me? Don't be silly." Lily said dismissively.

"It's a really long story Aunt Lily, but this is Spike." Wil said quickly.

"It is a pleasure to meet you Spike. I believe you've already met my son, Eddie." Lily said frankly.

"Actually, no. We hadn't got that far yet." Wil said, then turned to Eddie and continued, "Nice to meet you Eddie."

"Yeah." Eddie said and gave a casual wave.

"Don't mind him, he still hasn't recovered from the drive down from the coast." Lily said in a conspiratorial whisper.

"We just drove here from New Mexico." Wil said, then seemed to remember something.

"I'm gonna make me and Spike some blood. Would you like some Aunt Lily?" Wil asked hopefully.

"Why don't you sit down and I make some for all of us?" Lily asked gently.

"You're a guest. It would be wrong for you to wait on us." Wil said honestly.

"I may be a guest right this minute, but I've been a mother quite a bit longer and I wouldn't be at all comfortable letting you serve me." Lily said, then walked to the cabinet and pulled out a pan.

"Let her." Eddie said bluntly. "You can't win."

"Okay." Wil said with a chuckle, then looked at Spike with question.

Spike awkwardly walked to the table and took the seat next to Wil.

"So what about the others? Are they going to be coming to breakfast or are they going to turn in for the day?" Lily asked as she started heating a pan on the stove.

"Pop said he was gonna take a shower. Dad went with him so it might take a few minutes." Wil finished with a giggle.

"Well, if they're going to be sharing a shower, they'll probably appreciate a good breakfast when they're finished." Lily said decisively as she walked to the refrigerator.

"She's happy when she has people to cook for." Eddie said with no trace of emotion in his voice.

Spike looked at Eddie curiously, trying to understand the laconic young man.

"How are Grandma and Grandpa doing?" Wil asked, just trying to make some sort of conversation.

"They're alive." Lily said without enthusiasm.

"If you call that living." Eddie added with a smirk.

Lily nodded her agreement, then placed a mug of blood, each, before Wil and Spike.

"Thank you Aunt Lily." Wil said cheerfully.

"Yes. Thank you." Spike said respectfully.

Lily smiled at the pair before going back to her breakfast preparations.

After a sip of the warmed blood, Spike cautiously asked, "Do you think we might have something to add to this?"

"Yep. Got it." Wil said cheerfully as he hopped up and went to get the tin of Wheat-a-bix.

Spike's eyebrows went up at the sight.

"This is the best." Wil said as he crumbled a handful into his mug.

After a moment to consider, Spike took a handful and did the same.

Wil watched carefully to see Spike's reaction as he drank the blood.

"Bloody brilliant!" Spike said with a grand smile.

"Yeah, ain't it?" Wil said happily, then changed into his demon form so that he could fully enjoy his blood.

When he put down his mug, he noticed that Eddie was looking at him, almost longingly.

"I hope we didn't keep you guys waiting." Alexander said, then stopped in the kitchen doorway when he saw more people than he expected in the room.

"Aunt Lily! What are you doing here?" Alexander asked joyfully as he ran to pull her into a hug.

"When I finished getting your parents settled into the vacation house, I called Eddie and asked him to come and pick me up." Lily said happily as she returned the hug.

"So you decided to stop by and see Angel on your way home?" Alexander asked with delight.

"Well, I had intended to visit with you and Wesley and Wil, but you weren't here when I arrived. That allowed me the opportunity to visit with Angel for a while last night and catch up on old times." Lily said, then pulled out of the hug so she could go back to work on breakfast.

"I'm glad you're here. It's good to see you again." Alexander said happily, then noticed the quiet young man sitting at the table, nursing a cup of coffee.

"I'm Alexander."

"We've met." Eddie said frankly.

"We have?" Alexander asked curiously.

"Yeah. I was about fourteen. You were just a little kid then, but I remember your scent." Eddie said honestly.

"Cousin Eddie?" Alexander strained to remember.

"That's me." Eddie said calmly.

"I was so young, I barely remember anything except that I really liked you. You were really friendly." Alexander said honestly.

"Yeah. I remember when Mom said that your family wouldn't let you come over and visit anymore." Eddie said darkly.

"They're wankers." Wil said as an explanation.

Alexander regretfully nodded his agreement.

"Marilyn grew up in the same house that I did. We were like brother and sister. I can't even tell you how much it hurt when she just cut me off like that." Eddie said honestly.

"Well, we're here. And now I'm old enough to really get to know my cousin Eddie." Alexander said happily.

"Yeah." Eddie said, but there seemed to be a sadness behind his eyes.

"Eddie, this is Wesley Wyndam-Pryce, my good friend and soon-to-be bonded mate." Alexander said happily.

After a moment of looking at Wesley, Eddie took in a deep inhale of breath, then blinked with surprise.

"Human?" Eddie asked Alexander curiously.

"One hundred percent." Alexander said happily.

Eddie clenched his jaw and forced out the words, "I'm happy for you."

Alexander glanced at Wesley with concern at the reaction.

"I don't know if you've been formally introduced, but this is my son, Wil and his soon-to-be bonded mate, Spike." Alexander said as he carefully watched for Eddie's reaction.

"Nice to meet you." Eddie said sharply, then stiffly walked out of the room.

"Did I say something wrong?" Alexander asked in puzzlement.

"No. Not at all." Lily said in a flustered voice. "Everyone sit down, breakfast is ready."

All the men sat around the table, sharing curious looks and hoping that Lily would explain.

"Eddie has recently had a few bad relationships. When they found out about his true nature, they were scared off. I suppose that seeing the four of you as two couples reminded him that he's alone." Lily said as she sat plates around the table.

"True nature?" Alexander asked carefully.

"He's a werewolf, Pop." Wil said frankly.

"How did you know that?" Alexander asked curiously.

"His scent." Wil said simply, then asked, "How did you *not* know?"

"I guess since I met him before, I automatically associated his scent with just being him. He smells almost like..." Alexander trailed off, then looked at Wesley with dawning realization.

"I have a recent telephone number for him." Wesley said immediately as he took the address book out of his chest pocket.

"I'll be right back Aunt Lily. This'll just take one minute." Alexander said, then accepted the address book from Wesley.

"What was that all about?" Lily asked curiously.

"In our travels, we have had occasion to make the acquaintance of another werewolf. Alexander is calling now to see if he is available to visit." Wesley said honestly.

Lily thought for a moment, then smiled as she said, "That would solve a lot of problems. They could go and hunt together."

"Among other things." Wil said with a smirk at his father.

"That, young man, is none of our business." Lily said firmly.

"Yes Aunt Lily." Wil said as he tried to restrain his smile.

"Wil, would you go out to the car and see if Miss Summers might, perhaps, care to join us for breakfast?" Wesley asked seriously.

"Oh crap! I forgot Dawn!" Wil said as he rushed out of the room.

"Will we be having one more for breakfast?" Lily asked curiously.

"She can have mine. I've already had my blood." Spike said seriously.

"Nonsense. You're too thin. Eat. The skillet is still hot, this will just take me a minute." Lily said as she walked back to the stove.

"He's on his way over." Alexander said as he rushed back into the room and dropped into his place at the table.

"What did you tell him?" Wesley asked curiously.

"I just said that I needed for him to come over to Angel's right away." Alexander said as he started to cut up his food.

"So he thinks he's coming over to aid in some sort of emergency?" Wesley asked cautiously.

"Yeah." Alexander said without concern. "It's gotta work better than the truth."

Unbidden, a smile came to Spike's face.



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"Sorry I'm late guys. I got so comfortable I fell asleep." Dawn said as she walked into the kitchen.

"I'll have your breakfast ready in just a moment." Lily said from the stove.

"That's okay. I don't really need anything." Dawn said shyly.

"That's what Marilyn used to say..." Lily trailed off sadly.

"She made her choices." Alexander said quietly.

"I know." Lily said, then placed a plate of food on the table before Dawn.

"Should I go get Eddie?" Alexander asked with concern.

"He'll be back any second now. I know he's got to be hungry and he won't be able to resist the scent of the food." Lily said as she moved to Eddie's place and refilled his coffee cup.

"Sorry about that." Eddie mumbled as he walked back into the kitchen and directly to his place at the table.

He noticed the coffee and that there was a plate full of food waiting for him. "Thanks Mom."

"Eat." Lily said with an indulgent smile as she carried a plate and a mug to her place at the table.

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"What's the problem?" Oz asked as he rushed into the kitchen.

"Breakfast is ready." Alexander said frankly.

"You woke me up out of a sound sleep for that?" Oz asked in a pained voice.

"Not just for that. There are some people visiting that I thought you'd like to meet." Alexander said with a forced smile, hoping that Oz wouldn't be too mad at him.

Oz seemed to be about to bark a response at Alexander when his gaze suddenly shifted to Eddie.

"Eddie, I'd like for you to meet Daniel Osborne, we call him..." Alexander began to say, but stopped when it became obvious that neither of the men was listening.

"You might want to stand back." Lily said, then took a sip from her mug.

Eddie slowly stood from his chair and a low growl could be heard coming from the back of his throat.

"Pop. This might not have been such a good idea." Wil said cautiously as he stood and walked to Spike's side.

"I can see that now." Alexander said as he slowly backed away.

Oz was also growling now, and was staring at Eddie with unblinking eyes.

Silence filled the room and all watched as Eddie and Oz continued to stare.

"How is everyone doing this morning?" Angel asked as he walked into the kitchen.

"Hi Great-Grandpa Angel." Wil said quickly, then whispered, "The werewolves are getting to know each other."

"Oh." Angel said with a glance at the pair, then he looked back at Wil, noticing that the appeared to be about 12 years older than he was the previous day.

Angel's gaze shifted to Spike, sitting at the table and watching the werewolves intently.

Wil watched carefully for Angel's reaction.

Angel opened his mouth, then closed it and shook his head.

Wil smiled to himself as he watched Angel go about the business of fixing himself a mug of blood, as if it were any other day.

Oz took in a long slow inhale, then took one step closer to Eddie.

Eddie didn't move, but every muscle was tensed, ready to pounce at the slightest provocation.

Oz took another step closer, then when he was beside Eddie, he moved close and took in another long slow inhale.

Eddie cautiously turned his head and began to sniff Oz.

"You two are courting like a couple of humans! You're animals at your cores and you already know what you feel and what you should do about it." Lily said frankly.

After a long silent moment, Eddie quietly said, "Sorry Mom."

"Would you and your new friend like to have some breakfast before you run off to play?" Lily asked in a motherly tone.

"Can you keep it warm?" Eddie asked as he watched for Oz's reaction.

"Of course. Go on." Lily said with an indulgent smile.

Oz blinked, then slowly turned and said, "Thanks for inviting me over Xander."

"Glad to help." Alexander said as he tried to restrain a giggle.

As soon as Oz and Eddie were out of the room, Wil said, "Oz dominated. Eddie submitted."

Alexander looked at Wil with surprise at the statement, then began to relate it to their talk in the car earlier.

Lily looked from Wil to Alexander with question.

"Spike and Wil are trying to figure out how they can be together without Wil dominating Spike." Alexander said frankly.

"Pop!" Wil said in a scandalized voice.

"Sorry." Alexander said weakly.

"Spike, tell me honestly, how do you feel about Wil?" Lily asked curiously.

"I love him." Spike answered honestly.

"Love?"

Spike nodded, almost regretfully.

"But I was a master vampire before I was captured by the watcher. I was beaten down and starved. I love Wil, but... I can't be that for him. I just can't." Spike finished with pain in his voice.

"Wil? I don't think I even need to ask, but how do you feel about Spike?" Lily asked cautiously.

"I love him with all my heart and soul... and if my demon has his own feelings, he loves Spike too." Wil said frankly.

"That's a lot of love." Lily said quietly.

"So much it hurts." Wil said with regret at saying the words.

After a moment to consider, Lily turned and said, "Spike, my nephew loves you. That's clear for anyone to see. But your relationship can't last as things are now."

Spike nodded at hearing the words.

"So let me help. Take my blood and make yourself strong." Lily said in a slow, confident voice.

"How will that make anything different?" Wil asked cautiously.

After a smile at Wil, Lily said with pride evident in her voice, "Haven't you ever wondered why vampires are so savage and have such a feverish bloodlust?"

"I thought it was because they were demons." Wil said honestly.

"Yes, but the source of the bloodlust is the search for the blood that will finally satisfy their hunger and quiet the beast."

At Wil and Spike's uncomprehending looks, Lily continued, "I am a direct descendant of the first and best of us."

All in the room froze at the magnitude of the words.

"My blood will restore your strength and calm the craving of your demon. It will transform you from the ravenous monster that you are and remake you into a true vampire; the complete being that all vampires were meant to be." Lily explained carefully.

"So Spike wouldn't crave blood anymore?" Wil asked cautiously.

"He will in a way. Spike is a vampire, he will always require blood to nourish and sustain him. But the craving, the endless need, won't drive him anymore. In fact, he will be released from many of the restrictions that inhibit the bastardized half-vampire beasts that have redefined what it means to be a vampire."

"Like what?" Alexander asked cautiously.

"Sunlight, holy water, garlic... you know, the usual things."

"I'd be able to go out into the sun?" Spike asked in wide-eyed wonder.

"Yes. Intense sunlight is uncomfortable and you'll probably want to avoid it, but if you go out in the sun, it won't cause any lasting damage." Lily said consideringly.

"Is doing this going to hurt you?" Wil asked Lily with concern.

"No Wil. This is one of my greatest joys, to be able to bestow this gift on those rare few who I find worthy." Lily said with a gentle smile.

"But I'm not worthy..." Spike said with regret.

Lily chuckled at the words, her reaction seeming to be completely inappropriate.

"You've already said that you love Wil." Lily said with a gentle smile. "That, in my judgment, makes you worthy."

Wil pulled Spike into a hug as Spike stared at Lily, still not fully comprehending her words.

"Come to me Spike." Lily said, then trailed off into a whisper. "Drink me."

Wil broke into a big smile, then nudged Spike to take a step forward.

When Spike stepped close enough, Lily pulled him into her arms.

"Don't take too much." Alexander warned with concern.

Lily chuckled with delight as she placed a hand on the back of Spike's head to guide him into place.

"No need to worry. He couldn't possibly take too much." Lily said, then her expression seemed to be one of ultimate peace as Spike's fangs penetrated her neck.

"My blood marks the end of his journey. The thirst is quenched. The lust is sated. From this day forward, his life can be anything he wants it to be." Lily said, then looked down and gently smiled as Spike pulled away from her neck.

"You should be able to feel my blood transforming you." Lily said, almost hypnotically.

"Spike, never again doubt that you are worthy of anything you desire. For now that you have accepted my blood, you belong to the house of Dracula." Lily said proudly.

"I feel it." Spike whispered, then turned to look at Wil with excitement. "I feel strong!"

"Stronger than me." Wil said with a grand smile.

"I do love a happy ending." Wesley said as he watched Spike and Wil's loving embrace.

"Look around us Wesley." Alexander said, then waited for Wesley to do so.

"I see what you mean. This isn't an ending, it's a beginning."

**The End**