

Whoops

"Whoops."

It was, perhaps, not the most fulsome of apologies. It was heart felt, don't get me wrong, and I wish I had been able to say something else. But, you know, 'whoops' was kinda accurate.

Ever since I met the Slayer, and especially since my best friend became a Witch, I wanted a power. Something special for me. I didn't care what, really. Super strength would have been cool; I mean, the ability to kick the sh...stuffing outta Angel would have been brilliant.

I would have settled for super speed, you know, like the Flash. Don't get me wrong - I have no wish to wear tights, not even as a comfort thing, but it would be cool to have the powers.

Sure, Spidey might say 'With Great Powers comes Great Responsibility' but hey, look at the Buffster, she seems to have it going on. Sure, saves the world a lot, but hey, still has a good time in the Bronze.

Mmmm, Buffy in tights, or maybe Spandex. Oh Wow, Buffy in a Wonder Woman outfit. Now, why the hell did we let her become a super hero without a tight, revealing costume? I'm going to have to talk to Giles about getting the council to approve a Slayer's uniform. Mind you, those skirts she wore in high school...Damn.

Anyway, I seem to be veering wildly off on a tangent here. But hey, what do you expect? The mental image of Buffy in a kick-ass uniform is more than enough to send my brain into overdrive.

It was a normal day - well, as normal as the days in good ol' Sunnyhell can be. The sun was shining, the sky blue, and I was in a slightly bad mood.

Yes, me, Alexander La...well, we don't need to know my middle name, Harris, was in a bad mood.

Now, I know you're thinking, "But Xander, You're never in a bad mood." But, this is a special occasion. It's exactly one year since my public break up with Cordelia. She caught me finding out if Willow was as good to kiss as she looked (she was) and shortly after that, was impaled on a rusty spike. Not really a good thing to happen in a relationship.

I've been dating Anya recently, although we broke up a few weeks ago. I mean, why not? Sure she's an ex-vengeance demon, but believe me, there's no real difference to dating an ex-demon and dating a bitca. Well, except for the sex. And wow, Anya can do this thing with her tongue, and I'm sure she could suck a tennis ball down a garden hosepipe... Damn it, I'm going off again. You'd think, by now I'd be beyond the stage where even looking at linoleum makes me think about sex. Actually, bad example, especially since Anya once decided to see exactly why I liked that material.

So, I'm ready for a day's heavy duty brooding. Now, this is me were talking about, so the level of my brooding is nothing like Angel's brooding. I just can't do it. I might hate the guy with a passion normally reserved for daytime TV shows, but even I have got to admit that the guy can brood. A normal broody person might just frown and look glum, but Angel, he throws his heart and soul, when he has one, into his brooding. He actually gives off an aura of broodiness, and can you believe he got upset when I asked if he was really pregnant?

I've got the Star Wars special edition videos ready, numerous unwholesome snacks, several cans of beer, and a hell of a lot more cans of coke and the remote control ready.

Using the magic of infra red technology, the button pressed sends some kinda signal to the video, and before I know it, huge yellow scrolling words are heading towards the top of my TV.

I'm a Star Wars fan. Kinda redundant to tell you this, I know, but what the hey? I know it's like Bill Clinton saying he likes cigars, but I thought it was worthwhile to state it all the same. I wouldn't want you to go away thinking that I merely chose these videos randomly. I didn't.

"I'm Luke Skywalker, I'm here to rescue you."

How many times have I dreamt of saying a line like that? Preferably to Buffy. My fantasy normally then goes off into a personal 'thank you' that she would deliver, maybe involving whipped cream and hand cuffs, but I'm not fussy - I'd have settled for straight sex.

It could have been like that in Star Wars, if it hadn't been for the whole incest angle, and I'll admit, I was scared, so I checked my family tree. And hers. I was relieved, there was no hint of our families ever even meeting, so we definitely were not long lost siblings. That would have made so many of my fantasies extremely squicky. Squicky - now there's a descriptive word, it might not be in Webster's, but hey, it really says what you mean.

So, it's getting near lunch time, and I'm on my second beer, and third coke and nearly at the part where Han's frozen in carbonite. The Pringles tube is now empty, and I'm starting on the Dorito's, when there's a knock on the door.

This confuses me. After all, with the Buffster and Wills in class today, and Giles doing what ever a stuffy Brit does during the day, there isn't exactly a great big queue of people looking for the Xandman's company.

After a brief debate, I stand and walk to the door. I was pleased to note that I was capable of standing straight, but then I guess alcoholic consumption is in my blood or something, as I know that my father tried very hard to find the limit of human ability to drink. And he's still working on it.

Anyway, I open the door, and wince at the sunlight. I'm suddenly pleased that I bothered to shower, and was lounging around dressed.

"Alexander Harris?"

I nodded, focusing on the small, badly dressed person in front of me. Now, some people think I'm stupid, and I gotta admit that my grades in school would back that up, hence why I'm currently working as a pizza delivery guy and living in an apartment which would need some heavy work before being called a flea pit. So, I look down at this guy and ask, "Whistler?"

The Balance Demon smiles. Well, I hoped he did, it was hard to see with that fedora covering most of his face.

"I'm here to make your life, kid."

Now, there's a way to immediately get me interested. A demon who works for the good guys wanders up and says something like that. I do the only thing possible. I shut the door in his face.

Well, I tried, at least.

Seems that this demon has experience with this sort of reaction, and sticks his foot in the door frame. Maliciously, I slam the door a few times, not really to shut it, more to see if I can inflict some sort of pain.

Judging by the multilingual cursing, I'm pretty successful.

He takes his hat off and glares at me. Or at least tries to.

"You'd be a lot more scary if you didn't look like a Hollywood c-list director's version of a pimp," I informed him.

"Look who's talking, Mr. I dress in the dark."

Oooo, Snappy comeback from the demon. With a reluctance borne of missing some of the key parts of 'The Empire Strikes Back', I wave the demon in. Not a verbal invitation of course, I need to make sure he's not a vampire/demon hybrid.

"Nice," he smirks.

Well, after that, I'm hardly going to offer him one of my remaining beers, am I?

"What do you want?" I figured it was time to get to the point.

"The PTB's have decided to grant your wish."

Ok, who or what the hell are the PTB's, a new sexually transmitted disease? Hmm, maybe I shouldn't have said that out loud, Whistler looks pissed.

"No." Ooo, he actually growled. Perhaps if he was taller and better muscled, he'd make a good Wolverine. "They're the guardians of humanity."

"Oh," I replied. Not much else I could say, really. I'm pretty good at accidentally insulting people. It's one of my major talents in life.

Whistler calms down a little, his eyes stop that weird flashing thing, and he launches into a monologue. Unusually for me, I actually try and listen to this one. Perhaps I should try drinking a beer or three the next time Giles is due.

To break a long speech into something easier to digest (and that reminds me, I need to melt some cheese for my Nachos), basically the PTB's were impressed by my organizational skills with the Mayor, my attempts to try and heal Faith, and my loyalty with following Buffy around like a puppy, only with less drooling. Well, less drooling in public anyway, and my scaring off Angelus when Buffy was hospitalized. It seems they occasionally give White Knights the ability to stay in the game.

For the first time, I'm interested. Forgetting the fact that his shirt is making me nauseous, I lean in closer to him. "What do I have to do to get this power, and what exactly is it?"

Whistler leans back, I think I was invading his personal space, and maybe he thinks I was hitting on him. Well, I wasn't, but anyway, he tells me that the transfer of power can be done instantly, and that I'll get the ability to control one of the four elements.

"Cool," I say. What else would you say? The ability to cause floods, or earthquakes, or tornados would be pretty cool.

Whistler launches into his version of the Spider man speech, which I know now so well I can nod in the right places and pretend to pay attention. He doesn't need to know that I'm thinking about how hot Princess Leia looked in that outfit.

Eventually he rumbles into silence, and I look at him seriously.

"I'm ready." I was going to say, "Hit me, baby," but I think that would have been a little too disturbing, and maybe open to misinterpretation. I'm

beginning to get the feeling that he doesn't like me. Can't think why.

He smirks. Damn, this is gonna - "Yeooooowwwwwww!!!"

My expression of pain is both loud and accurate. Damn it, it feels like I've just downed a bottle of fake Russian vodka, and it's burning my insides to hell.

The pain stops, and the first thing I do is punch Whistler, hard. He wasn't expecting it, which was lucky, as I remember him having trained Angel, and Angel can at least fight.

"Now we're even," I tell the demon, and I'm incredibly relieved when he grins.

"You're on your own now, kid. Oh, and if you turn evil, the PTB's will revoke your powers."

He turns and walks out.

"Wait," I shout. "Which element did I get?"

The demon smirks at me, "You'll find out."

So, I return to my video, to find it's finished. I wave my hand hopefully, but no wind comes out and my remote stays very still on the floor.

I think I've been gypped, there's no sign of any power that I can tell. I wander into my meager kitchen and put on the gas hob. I reach for a cupboard but slip and fall on my ass I sigh and pull myself back to my feet.

It's then that I notice something unusual is going on. My hand's in the flame and it's not hurting.

Last time I checked, fire was bad.

Wait a second, my brain suddenly kicks in, fire is one of the elements.

I kinda reach out with my brain, and try and shape the fire. Before I know it, I have a ball of fire in the palm of my hand. It's kinda cute, bouncing around happily in my hand and it seems to be grinning at me.

So, I do the first thing that comes to mind. I duplicate it, twice. Now I have three fireballs. I concentrate and start to juggle. Damn, I could take this show on the road. Beats juggling with flaming torches.

I extinguish them by simply closing my hand, then try and create them again. Nothing.

I think for a second, then realize that my power must be control, not creation. I grab some fire from the hob again and make a bigger ball. Its only when my curtains start to blacken and smoke that I realize that maybe it's a little too big, and close it down again.

I have a power.

I blink.

I have a power!

I run that through my mind a few more times, then decide that the only thing to do is the Snoopy Dance.

Several intricate movements later, the dance is complete and my broodiness has gone the way of Angel's soul after sex.

My first instinct is to rush out and tell the girls, but I reign that in. It would be much better to casually surprise them later with my mastery of all things flammable. Besides, I need to practice first. It's not much good if I don't know what my limits are.

I wander out of my apartment, and down to the scrap heap that only the most generous would classify as a car. My first stop is a store, where I spend money I can't really afford on a decent cigarette lighter. See, I'm not dumb, I'm planning ahead and not buying cheap crap that would not give me anything to work with when I need it.

I drive out to the middle of nowhere. Which, in Sunnydale, is remarkably easy.

I flick open the lighter and grab the small flame, and once I've got it, I kinda send it around my body, to see what would happen.

My clothes start to burn.

I try again, this time keeping the temperature down. Whoa, that looks cool. Firestar, eat your heart out.

Ok, with the dramatic look achieved, now I need to see what I can do with this.

I throw out my left hand, and a fireball erupts from it, burning a small bush to the ground in seconds.

I dance again. This is cooler than Return of the Jedi. I suddenly realize that I really need to get out more.

A bit more practicing, and then, when I'm pretty sure I can control it, I kill my body flame and drive back slowly into town.

There's a Scooby gang meeting tonight, and I can't wait. I realize once more that my broodiness is like Drusilla's sanity. Completely gone.

I use the fire to warm a mug of coffee, leaving a small flicker around the mug to keep it at the temperature I like.

Tired, I decide to nap.

I wake up, and realize, once again, the great Xander Harris is late. I run my fingers through my hair and dash out to my car. I dash back into my house and get my car keys and try again.

Successful in entering my lovely rust bucket this time, I drive towards Giles' apartment. His is a lot nicer than mine, but then, he seems independently wealthy and I'm dirt broke.

I flash my award winning smile at Buffy and Willow, who both roll their eyes at me. I roll them back, figuring they would need them later.

They look grateful.

"You're late." Giles mastery of the obvious is sometimes amazing to behold.

I shrugged and sat down.

Buffy launches into her explanation of the night before, and I'm really not paying attention to anything but the way her breasts move as she speaks. It really looks like she is not wearing a bra today, and I've got to say, I'm definitely in favor of this new look..

So, I'm surprised, when, all of a sudden, Spike appears. Well, I've got no idea how he got in, and I don't really care.

Faster than I thought possible, I had my fire lighter open, and pour a steady stream of flames at Spike.

The vampire had the grace to look both shocked that I, of all people, was killing him, and a faint look of betrayal. I didn't pay attention, and turned up the flames till he went Poof.

Vampires going 'Poof' is one of the reasons I do this. It's such a satisfying sound.

Without realizing it, some of the flames have crept around my body, and I'm feeling nice and warm, surrounded by a halo of fire. I guess this would really be handy if I'm ever stranded in the arctic.

With Spike dust, apart from a small metal chip, I cheerfully turn off the fire and face the others.

Oh-Oh. They are looking at me with a mixture of horror and disbelief.

I wonder if I missed something about Spike.

Giles is the first to recover, and being a Watcher first and foremost, his first long question could have been cut down to a simple "How?"

So, I sit down and start to explain. I don't mention that I was alone and being broody, they don't need to know that.

Brit-man rubs his glasses when I finish, and I can almost read his thoughts, so to help, I give him the Spiderman speech. I've decided that I'll try and follow it; now that I have a cool power, I don't want it taken back.

"Weren't you listening when I explained about Spike?" Buffy asks me.

"No," I replied absently, my mind still thinking about making sure I don't take a dance down to the dark side. "I was looking at your breasts."

As I realize what I had just thought, I freeze and silently pray that I hadn't said that out loud.

Judging by the horrified look on Giles' face, and the similar one on Willow's, I guess I had.

Reluctantly, I turn to look at Buffy, who's blushing slightly, but giving me this appraising look. I kinda like it, it's as if she's seeing me for the first time.

I grin at her, a little impishly, I hope.

She grins back, then explains how Spike had been neutered by this army group, and how he could have been helpful.

I look down at the charred ashes and pull out the microchip.

"Whoops."