

G-H (Watcher's Season story W/G) 1/4
Summary Xander and Giles move house.

He heaved and shoved and pushed but still could not get the chest to move any more than a few inches in any direction. He finally gave up and draped his body over the bow top while he sucked in oxygen.

"Xander, are you quite well?" Giles studied the young man from the balcony where he was packing the contents of his wardrobe into a box. He was moving today and Xander had offered his help. Giles had only managed to get about an hour of work done before Xander needed refreshment. Looks like break time again he thought with a sigh.

Giles walked slowly down the stairs. Smiling, he peeled Xander off the chest and allowed the teen to collapse on the sofa. Giles sat next to him while the young man collected his thoughts, breath and things of that nature.

"Chloe said you had stamina. Do you or is it all directed one way?" Giles asked thrusting his hips minutely to illustrate.

"I don't have the breath to argue, just go get me food, OK?"

Giles said nothing. He got up and went to the kitchen to make some tea. He glanced back at Xander and rooted around in his cupboards for the boy's favourite biscuits. He had bought them especially for this occasion. Chloe had mentioned that Xander had eaten an entire packet. He was hooked.

Xander's ears pricked up when he heard the rustle of a plastic wrapping being unwrapped and the delicious multiple thud of cookies hitting a plate. Then the smell and a small lump formed in his throat. The smell reminded him of Chloe, sweet and buttery vanilla. When Giles set the tea tray in front of Xander, he noticed the brightness of the boy's eyes.

"Xander, you can't get emotional over biscuits! For heaven's sake. Just make believe she's fighting you for the last one on the plate." Giles smiled and plucked one up hurriedly. Xander laughed so hard that he shed tears.

After his second cup of tea and fourth biscuit Xander was refreshed enough to hold a conversation.

"What the heck is in that chest, Giles, I couldn't shift it. Is that the word?" Xander asked referring to 'shift'. Giles nodded. The tea was working it's magic.

"Treasure. My boyhood treasures are in there. Everything that I owned before the age of ten when my destiny was proclaimed." He paused. "Would you like to see inside?" Giles voice was softer than usual because he was sharing a secret. Xander glanced toward the heavy wooden chest. It wouldn't be scary stuff because Giles had been only ten. He smiled back at the watcher.

"Yeah, only when we've finished and set up at the house, all right?"

Giles smiled nodding his approval of Xander's plan. Together they managed to lift the chest and heave it into the back of the moving van. The rest of the day revolved around lifting heavy bookcases and box's of books. Finally the only thing left in Giles' apartment

was the bed. Xander groaned, looking at the stairs and construction of the bed.

"What's with this bed? Was the whole damn building built around it?" Xander quipped in exasperation.

"I'm not taking it, Xander. Let the next tenant have it." He hesitated. "Willow and I..." Xander's head snapped round to glare at the Watcher.

"Willow's going to help me choose another bed." Giles waited for Xander's reaction. He was surprised when it came.

"Yeah, that one's got too many memories, huh?" Xander grinned at him. "You gonna give it one more? I mean after I've gone? A Midnight tryst?" Xander grinned at Giles' blush. Giles cleared his throat.

"Xander." He gestured with sideways jerk of his head. "In the van." The look in his eyes did not invite an argument. Xander leapt up into the front passenger seat. Giles left him there for a moment while he went back to the apartment to lock up.

He went inside and drifted round the rooms. He heard the echoes of voices and laughter. There were good and bad memories locked inside these walls. He sniffed the air. Buttery vanilla. That was Chloe. She had always had that scent. Honeysuckle was Willow and Buffy was all fire and snap with a 'guilty' hint of chocolate. The last scent was roses and blood.

His expression hardened as his fingers closed round the bunch of door keys for the last time. He breathed his last breath and the room echoed with his sigh. He turned his back and locked the door.

Xander squirmed in the van and drummed his fingers on the dash. Finally through the wing mirror he saw Giles approach. He noticed something about the Watcher's eyes. They glowed in the darkness. It was unnerving.

Giles opened the driver's door and got in. Xander shifted away from him. The movement didn't go unnoticed.

"What's the matter, Xander, you look like you've seen a ghost." Xander nodded. He had paled considerably.

"Yep, an' it's you. Your eyes are glowing. Giles, what's happened to your eyes?"

Giles put the ignition key in the lock but before turning it he opened the glove box to fish out a packet of mints he'd seen in there earlier. He popped one into his mouth and offered the packet to Xander. He declined.

"Well..." Xander urged.

"What? Oh that, my eyes glow because Angel mixed some of his blood in my food while I was staying with him. He was doing me a favour. I don't have a human scent anymore. Buffy noticed straight off but you weren't far behind. Do you remember my first day back at the library? Anyway, if we chat like this we're never going to get home." Giles started the engine and they were off.

Giles had offered Xander a roof over his head because he didn't want to go back home. As far as his parents knew, Xander had dropped out of High School to find himself, in England of all places! They had no idea that their son had been trained as a Watcher in his six months absence. Now he was back at the Hellmouths' threshold ready to take on his new responsibilities. They would have been proud. Giles was. He was proud of all of them.

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When they finally arrived at their new house they found a strange gathering outside. There were two beings carrying mops and dusters, brooms and rubbish sacks. Buffy and Willow. How did they know? Giles hadn't told them that they would be moving today. He put the van in park and ran to hug the two girls.

"Willow! Buffy! How did you get here? I didn't tell anyone."

Buffy smiled and gestured to Willow. Willow took a bow and Giles realised at once. Computer transferred moneys and deeds. Xander looked at Giles as he chatted animatedly with the girls. If only he could be that confident with women. Chloe had made him feel like he was the only man in the world. He would always compare everyone to her and they would come up lacking. He went round to the back of the van and unlocked the doors.

He heard a sound, a wailing sound whirling through the trees above his head. Looking up he saw a strange flying creature. It had both fur and feather with sharp claws and teeth. It had the body of a lion and the head of an eagle. It plunged earthward with a roar and a screech. It's claws extended ready to rip Xander apart.

"DUCK!" Giles yelled as he hurled the splintered broom handle at the creature like a makeshift spear. Xander dropped covering his head. The creature landed beside him with the spear through its heart. Xander was breathing heavily. Giles brought him to his feet and dusted him down.

"That doesn't look like a 'duck' to me." Giles exploded into giggles, and hugged him.

"Don't ever lose that humour Xander. Willow? Let me have one of those sacks, please, love. Griffin blood is poisonous. I wonder why it was flying so late in the season?"

"Griffin's have a season? I didn't know that. That's interesting." Willow remarked as she gave Giles the sack. Xander was annoyed.

"Listen you two, I know I'm only the trainee but what the heck happened here. This big bird."

"Griffin." Willow and Giles corrected.

"Griffin. Hurlted out of the sky attacking me and you're wondering about its migratory habits?" Xander held his head. He didn't know he knew that word!

"Xander, I think you'd better have some tea." Giles picked up the rubbish sack containing the Griffins body and took it into the house. Buffy picked up the broom head from the front yard.

"Great! Now what am I going to sweep with?" Before following the others into the house, Buffy locked the doors of the removal van. The sky was ominously black and boiling with angry looking clouds.

End of part 1

G-H 2/4

Summary Follow on from Autumn Evening (Watcher's Season W/G)
Giles and Willow battle for the Grand-Prix

"What are you going to do with it?" Xander asked, leaning against the kitchen door frame with a soda in his hand, his voice echoing in the small room.

"What am I going to do with what?" Giles asked, putting the groceries away. So many cupboards, so much food! Xander was a growing lad and he hoped that Willow might also be staying for a few days....

"Oh, you mean our flapping feline friend. The freezer is as good a place as any for the time being. Willow and Buffy should be finished cleaning the bathroom soon. Then we can go out and get my books. I don't want them out all night; looks like rain." Giles surfaced from the cupboards and noticed Xanders' pallor.

"You've put a dead griffin in the freezer with the food?" Xander asked, incredulously.

"There's more than one freezer, Xander. Food in one, mythical creatures in the other." He put the kettle on to boil and opened a new packet of tea, sniffing the leaves' heavenly scent.

"How do you know griffin blood is poisonous? They're mythical; that means they're rare, right? Weren't they all killed for their pelts or claws, something like that?"

Giles poured the water into the pot. He chose to ignore the babbling Xander at his elbow.

"Call the girls for tea would you?" He set the cups on the tray and, taking the tray in hand, he walked into the living room where his friends sat on cushions arranged on the oak floor, eager for refreshment. He put the tray on his coffee table, the one piece of furniture they had unloaded from the van, along with his sofa cushions

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"Tea?"

Xander took just one biscuit from the plate. Buffy and Willow stared in shock; Giles took no notice.

"Do you want to investigate the griffin, Xander?" Giles asked nonchalantly.

Xander's mouth stopped mid-munch; he swallowed convulsively.

"Mmmm me? I thought you said griffins were poisonous. I mean do you think I'm ready?"

Giles smiled gently at Xander. He reminded him of someone. He had to investigate unicorns. Mythical creatures were relatively safe if you stayed on the right side of the sharp end.

"Can I have Willow to help?"

Willow froze and cast an anxious look at Giles. They had plans. Giles acknowledged Willow's look.

"Willow will be busy. We're going shopping..." Buffy's eyes lit up and Giles groaned, he'd said the magic word!

"Buffy...Willow and I are doing personal shopping, very boring. You wouldn't like it."

"Since when have you and Willow been personal?" Buffy replied suspiciously. Giles groaned again. Xander came to the rescue.

"You can help me. We'll need to work on Watcher-Slayer relations, right Giles?" Xander had got up, hauled Buffy to her feet, collected her bag and was propelling her toward the door before she could protest further.

"Thank you, Xander." Giles grinned when Buffy hit Xander as they exited. 'I love that boy!' Willow knelt on the cushion before him. Leaning forward, she gathered the pillows into a makeshift bed. His grin turned feral. He sank to his knees and buried his face in her hair.

"What shall we do now?" He asked suggestively, gently nipping and sucking her ear lobe. Willow shivered; did he have to growl like that? He pulled her onto his lap, settling her knees on either side of his hips and sat up, enfolding her in an embrace that heated the blood and tantalised nerves. They undressed each other, eager to feel skin on skin, panting for and needing the searing contact. Giles fastened his lips to her nipple and teased it to pebble hardness. He traced his lazy tongue to his next target while Willow smoothed her cool hands down his back. She shivered, counting the brands. His breath was coming in hot gasps, urging her to stroke, to shred his back with her nails. He stopped, releasing her breast. He studied her face. She was so beautiful even when she wept.

"Willow? What's the matter? Why..." He hugged her close but still felt empty, her hands falling from his back. He looked skyward. Now he knew why. He shuffled back and arranged the cushions into a makeshift chair.

"C'mon let's just sit and talk. We won't tonight...Ok?" She sniffed and snuggled close to his chest with both legs over his thighs. "I didn't realise how much they bothered you. I'm sorry." Willow's eyes searched his.

"Did it hurt? Do they bother you?" He looked down at her; she really did need kissing.

"Yes, they burned. They don't bother me because they were a gift from Chloe a badge of honour. She was the Watcher-Slayer; I've become the Watcher-Slayer. Sometimes I know things I shouldn't. Its like having Chloe chatting to me. She always was a motor-mouth."

He grinned, his green-gold eyes glittering with mischief.

"Would you like to see what I can do?" He softly purred. Willow smiled, her tears forgotten.

He leapt up and dragged the chest that Xander couldn't budge away from the wall and opened it with a key from his ring. After a brief rummage he came back to Willow with two boxes. He gave one to Willow.

She smiled in delight as she carefully opened the ancient box. It was a car, new looking. She put it on the floor next to his.

"I want the sports' car." She squeaked, bouncing on her heels. Giles chuckled and exchanged them.

"It won't go any faster, y'know." Willow reached out to touch it. He caught her fingers, lightning fast.

"Wait..." His hand hovered over the cars for a few seconds, then withdrawing his hand, he closed his eyes...Both cars shot off round an imaginary racetrack. Willow squealed in delight. Giles laughed softly. This was taking all his concentration but it was worth it to please Willow. Her eyes followed the cars' unerring path, bouncing on her heels as they vied for position on the 'straight'.

"How many laps, Willow?" Giles murmured. She looked up at him and wondered at his placid expression, such fury on the floor but nothing on his face.

"Last one, let me win?" She pleaded. He smiled and his car veered off track. His smile disappeared as he regained control.

"The winner is...Willow, by a coat of paint." His eyes opened and the cars skidded to a halt. He breathed deeply, trying to rid himself of the thumping in his head. Willow threw her arms round him, slipping astride his lap once more. Her nipples grazed his chest and he claimed her mouth hungrily. Soon both were moaning, wanting more. She lifted herself to help him with his errant jeans. He was free with a groan of lust. He was just about to... When they heard voices outside. Buffy and Xander were back. Giles swore blindly. Willow mouthed her obscenities, clutching her blouse to her bosom. She didn't want to move from him.

"Lift up, Willow...Lift up," he whispered urgently. She shook her head and rocked where she was. He groaned and leaned forward to kiss her. Wrapping one strong arm round her waist, he lifted her from him and scooted his jeans back up to be halfway decent when the door opened.

Buffy piled in with Xander. Both were breathless. She froze when she saw her Watcher and Willow breathless for an entirely different reason. Xander peeked round her and gulped. He stared at Giles supporting himself on the cushions with his hands on her hips. Willow was flushed; her hair mussed. Her blouse...My God! He turned on his heel, grabbing Buffy by the elbow. It was like trying to move a truck. Buffy was staying.

"Come in Xander, this is your home. Buffy? Help me with the couch!" Willow got off him and turned her back whilst she dressed. Giles pulled on his sweater quickly, carefully secured his jeans and pushed Buffy out of the door. Willow smiled weakly at Xander.

"Hi."

Xander noticed the open treasure chest.

"Wow, Corgis!" He picked one of the cars from the floor, handling it with reverence. Willow smiled.

"We had a race, he let me win. Xander?" She touched his elbow, "Nothing happened tonight." He nodded.

"I know. We'd better put these back in their boxes." Willow helped him to pack them away.

"We have somewhere to sit at last!" cried Giles and Buffy and he lifted the heavy couch into the room. "Ready for one more, Buffy?" She nodded and he charged out of the house. Buffy didn't know where he got the energy.

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"Giles? GILES!" She said his name sharper than she meant to. He stopped passing her boxes.

"What were you and Willow playing at when we came in?" He could tell he had upset Buffy but it was his living room with a woman over eighteen, what was the problem? Of course he knew what the problem was; age was the problem; his versus Willow's lack of it.

"What did it look like?"

"Don't answer me with questions, Giles. God, I hate that!"

"We were about to make love, that better?" He rolled his eyes skyward, another question!

The box she was holding slipped from her grasp. He looked to the back of the van. That was everything. He jumped down and locked the doors.

"Grab a box, we'll talk indoors." Buffy picked up a box with numb fingers. She walked slowly. Giles passed her twice on the path with boxes under each arm. Xander helped with the last two.

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Giles sat with his back to the fireplace wall with a well-deserved beer. Xander nursed his drink pondering the day's events. Buffy was bursting with questions.

"Buffy, you first." He instructed. His Slayer took a deep breath and Giles prepared himself for the worst.

"I didn't know your relationship with Willow had progressed that far. I'm sorry. I should have knocked."

"Yes, you should. There are new house rules. You won't be invading just my privacy in future Buffy, but Xander's too. In fairness I should have told you about Willow but it's fun

keeping secrets." Willow bathed in the fond look he gave her.

"As for the argument, 'I'm old enough to be her father', its true but I've never felt my age. Compared to other Watchers, I'm very much atypical." He laughed heartily.

"I can only imagine what they must have thought of Xander landing in their midst." He finished his beer and glanced at his watch though he knew what time it was without having to look.

Time for patrol.

End of pt 2

G-H 3/4

Summary Follow on from Watcher's Season Autumn Evening. The bed arrives and Giles discovers why his home is a magnet to Griffins.

Xander awoke and found his bedroom window blocked by a giant cargo container. He blinked sleep from his eyes and shrugged into his jeans and sweatshirt. Giles was outside arguing with the men who insisted they weren't going to help unpack it.

"What's up?" Xander asked sleepily. Giles whirled round his eyes glinting yellow with anger; he growled deep in his throat. The burly truck drivers had obviously pissed him off.

"These Neanderthals won't unpack the bed. Something to do with their fucking union!" Xander's hand on his arm calmed him a little.

"Go make us some tea, Giles. Call Buffy to help us unpack!" Xander winked at his friend, and Giles' smile lit up his face. What would they make of Buffy? He made his way happily inside. Xander turned back to the men who were exchanging knowing looks.

"Your boyfriend gone to get some reinforcements?" The huge one commented.

"Hey, you used a big word! And yes he's calling the girls." Xander smiled easily at the smirking men. He backed off down the path and into the hall where Giles had just finished the call to Buffy. They were just about to say something when they heard a rending, tearing noise from the kitchen. Giles led the way, with Xander hard on his heels.

In the kitchen they found a hole torn in the door of the fridge that had contained the dead griffin. The griffin was missing they exchanged worried looks.

"Oh, shit!" They said together.

"What does it mean, Giles?" Xander reached out to the door where drops of purple blood dripped to the floor and sizzled on the stone.

"They reclaimed their own, the roost must be very near!" He caught Xander's hand just before he touched the blood. "We go out tonight and search for them, I have to see if they need help. I killed one of their number, I have to make amends."

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Buffy walked up the path to Giles' and ran the gauntlet of the wolf whistles from the truckers. Once inside she saw Giles and Xander deep in conversation their heads together over a surveyor's map.

"You called a council of war O' Watchers?" Giles straightened holding his mug in his hand. Buffy took a second look at his eyes and shook her head. 'Something's upset him.'

"Yes, could you help us unpack my bed? Willow and I couldn't get anything big enough so I had it shipped over from England. It's an heirloom and the thugs out there won't unpack it. Feel like giving them a show of Slayer strength?" Giles finished his tea and grinned wickedly...

Buffy smiled... "Ohhh goody! Can I hit 'em?"

"Not if I get there before you. Xander? Can you clear a path to the bedroom please?" Xander hurried to his task leaving the plan on the table. From the upstairs gallery he saw what had been staring him in the face for half an hour. The surveyors' map also included details of the grounds. He hung over the banister in shock. The garden and surrounding land was in the shape of a mythical creature, a griffin. There was a rocky outcrop to the north of the property that could only be the griffin roost.

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The bed was in place. It was a magnificent oak four-poster bed with a canopy and drapes of peacock blue. The mattress measured four feet by seven feet and Giles was just putting the finishing touches to the soft furnishings when Willow walked into the master bedroom laden down with her belongings.

She looked as though she'd been crying. Giles flung the last of the cushions to the bed head and sat down next to her. She rested her russet head on his chest and sighed.

"What's the matter love, were they difficult?" Rupert asked gently. She shook her head and fumbled for her tissue. He gave her a handkerchief.

"Thank you, they weren't there. I made an appointment an' everything... They don't care about me. So I left them a note and packed and here I am..."

He stared at her dumbfounded. Willow shouldn't have had to make an appointment with her parents to see them. He found himself getting angry for the second time that day.

"Rupert, you OK? You growled..." Willow looked at him closely. "Your eyes are getting more grrr y'know."

Rupert got up and paced. He needed to get rid of nervous energy. He stopped in his tracks and stared at the headboard of the bed. He had not seen this bed since he was a boy. The carvings in the headboard were of unicorns, satyrs and griffins. He marched out of the room and called for Xander and Buffy over the banister. He stared down at the map on the table.

"Willow!" He bellowed as he rushed downstairs. Willow arrived at his side breathlessly. Rupert screwed the note up in his hands and howled as his face began to rearrange. He gripped the table his shoulders hunched. Willow's gentle fingers on his arm snapped his head round to face her. She gasped and backed away. Rupert stared at the table battling to remain human.

He succeeded at length and turned to her, wiping the sheen of sweat from his face with the back of his hand.

"Buffy and Xander have gone to investigate the griffin roost." He swept his arm round the room and laughed. "I bought a bloody griffin roost!"

Willow was worried about him it was happening again. Oz turning and now Rupert, what was he transforming into? She was scared and it must have shown because she found herself in Rupert's warm, powerful embrace.

"I'm scared too, Willow." He murmured. "Nearly sunset, we have to go after Xander and Buffy. Slayer's and junior Watchers rush in where Angels fear to tread." He sighed.

"What about Witches and Watcher-Slayers?" She said, her eyes glimmering with humour.

"Hmmm, I'll tell you later. C'mon, time to suit up."

End of part 3

G-H 4/4

Summary Buffy and Xander have gone to investigate the griffin roost, Willow and the Watcher-Slayer have gone after them

Notes Telepathic communication again folks, sorry, in italics

Rupert stared at his reflection in the bedroom mirror, he could feel the silence gathering round him like an invisible cloak. Senses honed to vampiric heights thanks to Angel. He revelled in the giddy feeling of power that pervaded his body after sunset. He shook his head and grinned, to think he used to pay to feel like this!

"Rupert?" He turned at his loves sultry voice. Willow had poured herself into the Slayer suit he designed for her. He licked his lips and praised God for Lycra! She turned her back to him revealing a pale extended 'v' of soft skin down her spine. He swallowed and placed a hot kiss between her shoulder blades as she lifted her hair out of the way.

"Zip me?" She murmured and moaned as he gripped the zipper at the base of her spine, his fingers gliding along her silken skin to save it from being caught in the zip. Willow gasped as the suit tightened round her body, hugging her hips and cinching her tiny waist and finally resisting the swell of her breasts. Rupert's hand rested on her left breast his lips by her ear...

"Exhale, darling." Willow sighed and backed up to his body. The zip glided easily up to the padded collar, "You're in." He sighed and kissed her neck.

Willow turned and allowed her molten gaze to take in his aroused body. She lifted her hand and dangled the leather corset from her fingertips. Her arched eyebrow and parted painted lips sending evil ravishing messages to his groin.

"Lace me?" Rupert growled and pulled her closer.

"Willow... Time for rescue, now." He licked her neck and nipped at her flesh, she shuddered. "Ravish you later!"

She smiled coquettishly at him and then pouted. "Mean man!"

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"Xander? Xander!" Buffy tried to rouse her Watcher but he remained unconscious since the griffin attack. His blood staining the earth floor where they were cornered by prowling griffins. She slid down the rock face and checked on his pulse and hugged her coat round him tighter.

Xander had stepped in front of her when the griffin attacked. Sending her sprawling and looking up helplessly as he was lifted into the air by the feathered feline, birds talons dug into his shoulders and lions claws fastened onto the flesh of his abdomen. His cry echoed round the cave and the creature released him twenty feet from the ground. He fell silently and Buffy winced at the crack of his ribs as he hit the ground.

She shivered and glared at the majestic head that poked over the threshold of the cave. It chattered at her briefly nodding its head, she grabbed a handful of stones from the cave floor and threw them at it. The griffin roared and withdrew with a swish of its tail.

"Where are you Watcher man?" Buffy muttered. She couldn't battle these creatures, Xander had warned her off killing them. They had invaded their territory and the griffins were merely defending it. She sighed then leapt to Xander's side as he lifted his head, finally awake.

"Did you get the number of the truck that hit me?" Buffy smiled through her tears.

"Keep still Xander, Giles will be here soon." Xander groaned.

"Great! So he can lambaste me for tearing off with you while I'm helpless, thanks..." Buffy shook her head in wonder.

"You're even beginning to sound like Giles, Xand!" She grinned.

"Hey, insult me, why don't you?" He moved on the ground and rolled up to a sitting position. Buffy supporting him as his head rolled onto his raised knees.

"Oh, God! Shoot me now!" he groaned.

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Willow stood quietly by his side as Rupert tilted his head back to catch the last rays of the setting sun. He glanced down at her and smiled.

"Willow, at night I have to be silent. Once the sun goes down and I wear the mask..." He shrugged and pulled the hood and veil over his face. Willow shivered as Rupert departed and the Watcher-Slayer squared his shoulders to their goal of the evening. The Griffin Roost.

Can you hear me love?

Willow took his hand and squeezed it lovingly. He looked down at her and surrounding her with psychic warmth he set a fast pace up the rock face to the mouth of the roost.

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The Griffins roused and alerted paced pensively round the female's nests, one had already perished at the hands of the interlopers. An offering meal had been chosen and not consumed. The largest of their number mourned the death of its brother, the ignominy of being stored in cold darkness when it was their destiny to be free to roam where they pleased after death.

There was a new Roost Guardian, one who knew their ways and traditions. They had only wished to welcome the Guardian but his brother was too eager and had not landed to welcome the new Guardian. He had wished to bring him into the presence.

He was here now with another of the two-legs, a female. It was strange the Guardian had no knowledge of his destiny, he was supposed to be an investigator!

The prowling was forgotten with the arrival of the Silent One and his consort, the roost formed loose ranks and reared up as in the ancient days greeting the Watcher-Slayer.

Willow walked next to Giles her pale skin the only sign of her fear. He halted before the high rock upon which lay the matriarch of the pride, one whose wings were gossamer and silver with age. He tilted his head and spoke with her.

Mother, where are the two-legs?

"Within." Her left wing dropped down and pointed the way under the jutting rock. Giles hurried into the cave parting the rough curtain.

"Giles! Quickly, Xander's hurt. They picked him up and hurled him down" Buffy related vehemently. "And he said not to kill 'em!"

Willow stepped in and listened to Giles. " Buffy, they've proclaimed Xander their protector, he needs to sacrifice an ounce of flesh to the old protector and Giles has to ... No!"

Willow's hand lifted to her mouth in shock, tears forming in her eyes. Rupert ripped off his mask, thus breaking his 'silence'.

"I have to drink the Griffin's blood. An ounce... I should be ok,"

"Bullshit! You said it was poisonous, I read up on it! It's cumulative like mercury poisoning, you can be exposed to so much then you die. Right?"

Giles studied Xander, he knew his stuff. The Griffins had chosen well and they'd marked

him. "Xander, it was a long time ago..."

"How much is too much?" Willow asked, Rupert didn't answer she looked to Xander. "How much is too much?"

"Twelve ounces. How many have you had, Giles?"

Rupert stared at the floor of the cave. "Enough. C'mon, they want their meat Xander!" He hauled him up and walked him out of the cave.

An altar had been set up to the right of the cave, on it were laid a silver bladed knife , a weighing scales and a silver cup. Before the other's could prevent him Rupert drained the liquid in the cup. Xander gasped as the purple blood stained Giles' lips briefly before it was absorbed.

Willow knelt by Rupert's side and saw his face go through turmoil as the blood took effect. Xander sank down and watched the Watcher. "How many did you take?" He whispered.

"That one makes thirteen. Xander I don't have anaesthetic, so I'm going to deaden your nerves, you won't be able to walk properly for a few hours, but you won't feel anything. OK?" Xander nodded and Giles pressed hard then harder still at the junction of his inner thigh and groin. There was an almost audible "pop" and then Giles quickly scored a cube of flesh from the muscle there. He plopped the red bloody cube on the scales, it balanced.

A twittering Roar greeted the event and Giles stood unsteadily, Buffy helping Xander to stand. Willow tucked under Rupert's arm and the troop started off for the entrance.

"Watcher-Slayer, thy transformation will cease this night."

Giles spared a glance over his shoulder at the sprawled dying matriarch and bowed his head in thanks.

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"Oh God!" The doctor exclaimed. "It's you again!" He bustled round Xander and took in the scars, talons and claws. He pursed his lips and glared at Mr. Giles.

Rupert sucked a mint feigning innocence. Buffy fussed round Xander like a mother hen.

"What's the story this time? Or don't I want to know?" The doctor cleaned Xander's wounds with iodine, they weren't very deep and were hours old!

Xander hissed and nearly leapt from the bench. "Would you believe a mad budgie and a wild pussy?"

Giles choked on his mint.

The doctor gave Xander an old fashioned look. "I'm going to have to get a new filing cabinet aren't I? G-H, and R-S too? "

Giles shook his head and pulled Willow close to him. "No, never R-S. Buffy and Willow will never be hurt while we're around right, Xander?"

Xander grunted and groaned. "Yeah, right!"

End.