

**Buffy The Vampire Slayer**

**Season 8**

Episode 10

"Cold Front"

TEASER

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

CLOSE ON : BUFFY and XANDER

They are sitting on a swingset. Light flurries are falling around them. Xander is looking down as Buffy stares off into space.

XANDER

How long are you planning to mope?

BUFFY

Thirteen years sounds about right.

XANDER

I don't want this to come out the wrong way, but you have to get over it.

She turns around to him.

BUFFY

How do I get over it? How many lives have I ruined, Xander?

XANDER

Yeah. I know. Big badness resulting from things that we did.

BUFFY

I did.

XANDER

You didn't do it alone.

BUFFY

I was in charge.

XANDER

Whatever. The point is, it happened. It's bad, but there's no way to change the fact that it happened.

BUFFY

Maybe I could pull an Amy and hop back in time.

XANDER

Wouldn't help. Dawn told me that whatever Amy does, she can't change the past. It already happened. She was there when we were there.

(beat)

The past is the past.

BUFFY

So, if there's no way to fix what I did, how am I supposed to get over it?

XANDER

You just have to. We can't live in the land of the big "What If". We have to move on with life, and just try to make it better when we can.

BUFFY

That's deep.

XANDER

Thanks.

BUFFY

It doesn't help me at all, but it's deep.

Xander stands up.

XANDER

So if we're not doing anything but moping, can we do it someplace a little warmer?

BUFFY

I think I just wanna hang out for a while.

Xander thinks for a moment, and then sits back down.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You don't have to.

XANDER

I know.

Feeling the love, Buffy smiles at him.

XANDER (CONT'D)

We now return you to your regularly scheduled moping.

Buffy appreciates his staying there with her.

PULL BACK on them, just sitting on the swings. Nothing but silence between them.

As we continue to pull back, we REVEAL a DEAD DEMON not far from their feet. A long sword sticks out of his chest.

XANDER (CONT'D)

I guess it is kinda relaxing out here.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Snow is still softly falling. Just flurries, nothing too big. We PAN OVER the town, seeing that there are only a few cars driving by.

The SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS on the street echo through the town.

ANGLE ON : THE STREET

The far end of the street, toward town hall. In the shadows.

A car pulls into view, and stops. The MAN inside rolls down his window and pokes his head out at a person that we cannot yet see.

MAN

Excuse me?

(beat)

Could you tell me where Baker Street  
is?

REVEAL CORDELIA CHASE, beautiful as ever, dressed in only the most stylish (though out of place in this cold climate) clothes.

She looks at the man.

CORDELIA

Right. Does it look like I'm from  
here?

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. BUFFY'S STREET - NIGHT

Buffy and Xander are walking down the street, toward their house. Buffy is holding the sword in her hand.

XANDER

Buff, can I ask you something?

BUFFY

Have I ever denied you the chance before?

XANDER

(beat)

When you and Willow were in Florida, did she seem different at all?

BUFFY

Different how?

Xander thinks about his reply.

XANDER

Did she seem- I don't know- distracted? Preoccupied?

BUFFY

She was working a lot. I really didn't spend much quality time with her. I guess she's been quiet since we got back though. Why?

XANDER

It's nothing.

BUFFY

Then why are you asking?

XANDER

Forget it.

Buffy knows that something's up, but she doesn't want to press. They continue to walk in silence.

XANDER (CONT'D)

It's just--

Before he finishes what he's saying, a VAMPIRE jumps out at them. He manages to catch Buffy off-guard and pushes her to the ground.

Xander jumps into action and grabs the vampire by the shirt. The vampire breaks free and is about to hit Xander, but Xander avoids him.

Buffy gets to her feet and swings the sword through the air. She takes off the vampire's head. It POOFS off-screen.

Buffy looks at the air where the vampire once stood. She's puzzled.

BUFFY  
Two kills in one night.

XANDER  
Has to be a record for this place.

The fact troubles Buffy.

BUFFY  
Yeah.

They start to walk again. Buffy shakes off her bad feeling.

BUFFY (CONT'D)  
So, what were you saying?

XANDER  
It's nothing.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy and Xander walk into the house and find DAWN in a chair, exhausted. She's wearing old clothes and has spots of paint on her.

BUFFY  
(to Dawn)  
I go out and kill two hellspawn, and somehow you manage to look more worn out than I am.

DAWN  
Why did I let them pull me into this production of theirs?

XANDER  
Look at the bright side. At least you don't have to be on stage.

BUFFY  
Right. Not all of us have always been so lucky.

DAWN  
The play is in one day, and we're still not done with the sets.

(MORE)

DAWN (CONT'D)

Seriously, I don't know how much more paper mache I can handle before I snap.

XANDER

If you want, I could always help you.

DAWN

How would you help?

XANDER

I don't know.

(then)

Oh, right! I'm a carpenter!

DAWN

I totally forgot about that.

(beat)

I'm really tired.

BUFFY

Is Willow home yet?

DAWN

Yeah. She got back right before I got here, but she just grabbed a cup of coffee and went to bed.

BUFFY

She's been pretty quiet lately. I hope she's okay.

(to Xander)

She hasn't said anything to you, has she? Is this why you were wondering about Florida?

XANDER

No.

Xander is a little uncomfortable, knowing that Willow is avoiding him.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Like you said, she hasn't said much to me at all since you guys got home.

DAWN

I'm sure it's just work. She has a ton of files to... file.

BUFFY

Yeah.

(beat)

Maybe I'll go talk to her.

DAWN

Good plan. While you do that, I'll see about sitting here and doing nothing so that my feet will stop throbbing to the beat of **Seventy Six Trumbones**.

BUFFY

You'd think they could at least pick a more festive song, like **Jingle Bells** or something.

Buffy starts to walk toward the stairs. Just as she's about to step onto the first one, the DOORBELL RINGS. Buffy looks back to Xander and Dawn, confused.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Who would be ringing the doorbell this late?

XANDER

Especially since you've pretty much tapped the well of long lost father figures.

Buffy smirks at Xander as she walks to the door.

DAWN

If it's Mrs. Gimly, run.

Buffy opens the door and sees Cordelia standing on the other side, smiling big.

Buffy's eyes widen.

CORDELIA

Buffy!

XANDER

Cordelia?

Buffy turns to Dawn.

BUFFY

Can we pretend it was Mrs. Gimly?

CORDELIA

Did I mention that it's freezing out here? There's actually snow falling.

BUFFY

Sorry. Come in.

Cordy walks into the house.

XANDER

What are you doing here?



As Dawn struggles to get up, Xander goes to Cordelia and gives her a big hug.

CORDELIA

Well, I managed to get a few days off from shooting my latest movie, up in Canada, and figured I'd stop in and see the old gang.

(then)

Let me have a look at all of you.

She stands back and looks at everyone.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Wow. You guys look... just... Wow. I mean, Xander, you look... passable. Aside from the weird eye situation. I don't really know how one turned blue, but you might wanna look into those colored contact lenses, cause it's kinda grossing me out little.

Xander's suddenly very self conscious of his eye. Cordy turns her attention to Dawn.

DAWN

I was working.

CORDELIA

I was hoping.

Dawn gives Cordy a hug.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

But seriously, you've grown.

DAWN

As tends to happen.

CORDELIA

Right. Y'know, with the right clothes, you might have been a Cordette.

Dawn gives a polite smile as Cordy turns to Buffy. Buffy speaks before Cordy has a chance.

BUFFY

You really don't have to give me feedback on how I look.

CORDELIA

That's probably for the best anyway.

(beat)

But on the bright side, at least Dawn inherited your mother's complexion.

BUFFY

How many days did you say you were  
in town?

WILLOW comes down the stairs.

WILLOW

Did I hear the doorbell ring?

She stops short when she sees Cordelia.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Cordelia?

CORDELIA

Hey, Willow.

WILLOW

What are you doing here? I mean, not  
that I'm not happy to see you, but  
it's just a little weird since you  
haven't visited us in like... ever.

DAWN

She got a break from filming her  
latest movie.

WILLOW

Oh.

Willow comes down the stairs and gives Cordy a hug.

CORDELIA

Not that I don't feel the love, but  
since when are we huggers?

BUFFY

I'm pretty sure they were checking  
to see if you were the the first  
ever, ultra-powerful evil on the  
face of the planet.

CORDELIA

Oh.

(beat)

Well, I'm not.

WILLOW

Which we can tell by the not going  
right through you.

(beat)

Now... Movie? Did I miss something  
since the last time I saw you in LA?

CORDELIA

You saw me in LA? When?

WILLOW

A few months ago. Remember, you were all sick and in bed?

CORDELIA

Umm, I just got back to the US last month after being in England for a year.

WILLOW

But...

CORDELIA

You probably just saw one of my lookalikes or something. Did I have a five o'clock shadow? There's this one guy who looks just like me when he has the right makeup on.

WILLOW

(to Buffy)

Am I asleep right now?

Buffy shrugs.

DAWN

I think I'm gonna go get depaintified.

Dawn heads upstairs.

Cordy walks into the living room and looks around at the house.

CORDELIA

Nice house. I'm guessing early 1900's?

XANDER

Yeah.

CORDELIA

Original furniture?

XANDER

Some of it. Some stuff was broken after we moved in, so I kinda pieced together some new stuff.

CORDELIA

I always said you were good with your hands.

Xander isn't sure how to react to that comment.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

So I'm assuming that you're still into the demon stuff then?

XANDER

Yeah, it kinda stuck. You know us.  
Always wanting to save the world for  
that little bit of attention.

CORDELIA

I guess I was the lucky one. I haven't  
even said the word "vampire" since  
2001. It would have been even longer,  
but I did this really bad TV movie  
before I made it big. I just know  
that one's gonna haunt my Leno  
appearances for the rest of my life.

XANDER

Cor, are you feeling okay?

ANGLE ON : BUFFY AND WILLOW

Still near the front door. Buffy leans in close to Willow,  
keeping her eyes on Cordelia.

BUFFY

(whispered)  
Something isn't right here.

WILLOW

(also whispered)  
I noticed that too. What do you think  
it is?

BUFFY

I don't know, but either that's not  
Cordelia, or something's happened to  
her. Is there some way to tell if  
it's her?

Willow thinks about it.

WILLOW

I think so. One of the herbs in the  
back yard, Sesari, was used a long  
time ago for detecting sorcerers who  
could alter their form. If we get  
her to drink some and it's not her,  
her lips will turn blue for a few  
seconds.

BUFFY

Good. Get on it. I'm gonna make a  
phone call.

Willow nods and heads into the kitchen. Buffy walks into the  
living room.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Willow went for some tea.

CORDELIA

Great. I haven't had anything to drink since the plane, and that was just really bad coffee. It had chunks. First class, my ass.

Buffy picks the phone up, off of the table.

BUFFY

I need to make a call. I'll be right back.

XANDER

(to Cordy)

While they're gone, we can talk about what we really think of them.

CORDELIA

Neat. I won't have to hold back anymore.

Buffy smiles at them as she walks out of the room, toward the dining room. Once she's gone, Xander turns to Cordy.

XANDER

Hey, you know what I got in the mail a couple days ago?

CORDELIA

What?

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Willow comes into the house from the back door. We can see that it's still snowing, and she's without a jacket.

In her hand, she holds a few leaves. She takes them to the counter, and starts to set up a tray for the tea. She opens the tea pot and drops the leaves in, along with some actual tea.

Buffy walks into the kitchen, still holding the phone.

BUFFY

Weird.

WILLOW

What's weird?

BUFFY

I just tried calling LA.

WILLOW

Okay, that's a little unusual, but I'm not sure I'd call it weird.

BUFFY

Seriously. I tried calling, but I couldn't get through.

WILLOW

What do you mean?

BUFFY

I mean, the phone's dead. I can't even get an operator.

WILLOW

Weird.

(beat)

Maybe the lines were taken out by the slight flurries that we've been having.

BUFFY

All I know is that something's not kosher, and I want to find out what it is.

The KETTLE BEGINS TO WHISTLE. Willow grabs it and pours the hot water into the tea pot.

She looks to Buffy. Her brew is ready.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Xander and Cordelia are sitting on the couch, flipping through a book. Buffy and Willow walk in.

BUFFY

We're back.

WILLOW

And we have tea.

Xander and Cordy don't look up.

BUFFY

Whatcha looking at?

XANDER

Yearbook.

WILLOW

(to Cordy)

You brought your yearbook?

XANDER

Actually, it's mine.

BUFFY

You have possessions? How do you have possessions?

XANDER

My parents packed it when they fled Sunnydale. It was in the care package that they sent.

(to Cordy)

And by "care package", I mean the yearbook and a bill for a toaster oven that I borrowed after uncle Rory's last visit.

CORDELIA

Sweet.

Willow sets the tea down.

Xander turns the page in the yearbook.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Wow. Was I cute that day, or what?

ANGLE ON : CORDY'S YEARBOOK PICTURE

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

You know, I think I look as good in that picture as I do today. I didn't even think that was possible.

WILLOW

Where am I?

Xander flips ahead in the book. He points at Willow's picture. Willow looks and winces.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Right. I forgot about that.

(beat)

And by "forgot" I'm pretty sure that I meant "repressed".

She pours the tea and hands the first cup to Cordy.

CORDELIA

Do you have any Splenda?

WILLOW

Sorry.

Xander turns another page, and a warm smile forms on his face. His mind drifts to a slightly less happy place. Buffy notices this.

Cordy looks down at the yearbook.

CORDELIA

What's that?

## ANGLE ON : THE YEARBOOK

Among the pictures on this particular page is a totally out of place picture of Anya, taped to the page.

XANDER

She wanted to be a part of the memories.

CORDELIA

Okay, that's just weird.

Cordelia takes a sip of her tea. As she does, Willow and Buffy watch with baited breath.

As Cordelia sets her cup back down, she notices Buffy and Willow watching her.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

What? Do I have something in my teeth?

BUFFY

(to Willow)  
Nothing's happening.

WILLOW

I noticed.

CORDELIA

(to Xander)  
Are they speaking English?

XANDER

The words sound familiar.  
(to Buffy and Willow)  
What are you talking about?

Buffy and Willow look a little guilty.

WILLOW

We kinda, sorta tested Cordelia to see if she was really Cordelia... a little. But the good news is that you're you.

CORDELIA

You put something in my drink?

WILLOW

Not a bad something.

CORDELIA

(to Buffy)  
And you knew about this?

Buffy hesitates.



BUFFY

So, where am I in that yearbook again?

Cordelia shoots Buffy a "don't give me that crap" look. Buffy tries to look innocent.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Buffy is standing at the counter, dressed in pajamas and with her hair in a ponytail. There's a bowl of cereal in front of her, and she has the phone up to her ear. Whoever she's trying to call, it's not working.

BUFFY

Damnit.

She turns the phone off and puts it down.

Cordelia walks in, looking as good as ever.

CORDELIA

Wow. If I knew we were dressing up for breakfast, I would have packed my good moo-moo.

BUFFY

Have I mentioned how much I missed your company?

Cordy pours a cup of coffee and sits down at the table. Buffy takes her cereal and sits next to Cordy.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

So, about last night--

CORDELIA

When you slipped something into my drink?

BUFFY

Yeah. I'm really sorry about that.

CORDELIA

I'm past it. Surprisingly, it's not the first time that's happened since I moved to LA. At least this time, I didn't have to worry about medical bills afterwards.

Buffy doesn't like the sound of that at all.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Anyway, where is everyone? When I went into the bathroom, they were all still asleep. When I was finished getting ready, everyone was gone.

BUFFY

You were in there for an hour and a half. Dawn had to brush her teeth at the kitchen sink... without a toothbrush.

CORDELIA

Oh.

BUFFY

But she left for school a few minutes ago. Willow went to work. Xander's in the backyard, working in the garden.

CORDELIA

I'd go and say hi to him, but that would get these pants dangerously close to dirt, wouldn't it?

(beat)

So I guess I'll settle for catching up with you.

BUFFY

I'm flattered.

CORDELIA

What's there to catch up on?

BUFFY

Not much, really.

(then)

Oh. I died.

CORDELIA

Again? What is that, like the sixth time that's happened?

BUFFY

Second.

CORDELIA

And that makes it less creepy?

BUFFY

Moving on.

CORDELIA

By the way, I was sorry to hear about Joyce. She was really nice.

BUFFY

Thanks.

There's a bit of an awkward silence. Cordelia looks around the room. She sees a stack of newspapers (tied together with twine) near the back door.

CORDELIA

Forget to take the recyclables out?

Buffy looks over at the papers. She's surprised to see them.

BUFFY

I guess Dawn forgot them. They're for her school.

CORDELIA

Because they don't have their own papers?

BUFFY

They're running low. They need it for paper mache set pieces.

Buffy gets up and walks to the papers. She picks them up and puts them on the table.

CORDELIA

Set pieces? Do I smell a production of some kind?

BUFFY

Annual winter thing. This year, it's **The Sound Of Music.**

CORDELIA

Neat.

Buffy notices something on the top paper. She unties it and picks the paper up.

Cordy can see that something's up.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Buffy?

Buffy doesn't respond.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Is something wrong? Oh, God. This isn't a demon thing, is it? Like that whole "cell phones don't work here" thing. What's that about?

(beat)

Buffy?

BUFFY

(reading)

"Male found dead off of Yeager Street."

CORDELIA

Vampires?

Buffy doesn't respond.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Buffy? You know, this whole dramatic silence thing is really annoying in the real world.

BUFFY

I know this guy.

Buffy sets the paper down on the table.

ANGLE ON : THE PAPER

Under the "Male Found Dead Off Of Yeager Street" headline is a sketch of the victim. That victim is Luka (Dawn's potential Watcher-figure from "The Trouble With Hah'Ree").

CORDELIA

Who is he?

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Dawn is looking a little guilty.

DAWN

My teacher.

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal PRINCIPAL SHAW looking at Dawn.

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Mrs. Newton?

DAWN

Yeah. She wanted to talk to me after the bell, so I didn't get here on time.

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Mrs. Newton was just in the lounge. I saw her myself.

DAWN

Okay, so that was probably a bad excuse then.

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Dawn, with Mr. Hatfield out sick, this production is in enough trouble as it is. We need you here on time.

DAWN

I know. I'm really sorry. Would it help if I told you that what I was doing kinda involved the big party?

PRINCIPAL SHAW

That depends. What were you doing?

Dawn hesitates.

DAWN

I was... In the girls' bathroom,  
playing with different hairstyles.

Principal Shaw looks away, wanting to be upset, but understanding Dawn's situation. A small smile forms on her face, but she tries to hide it.

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Just don't let it happen again, okay?

DAWN

I think I can manage that. Besides,  
there's only, like, a day left for  
it to even be an issue.

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Make it an issue-free day.

DAWN

Will do.

Principal Shaw walks away. RYAN walks up behind Dawn.

RYAN

Trouble?

Dawn is a little surprised when she hears him behind her. She jumps, and turns around.

DAWN

Only if you sneak up on me like that  
again.

RYAN

Sorry. It's the play shoes. They're  
all soft on the bottom.

DAWN

Which reminds me, I forgot to mock  
you today.

RYAN

Yeah, yeah. Can I help it if I happen  
to sing **Edelweiss** better than anyone  
else?

DAWN

Well, all I know is that I'm glad  
I'm not on stage here.

(MORE)

DAWN (CONT'D)

The last time I broke into song at school, it involved a squeaky voice and math with letters. I'm pretty sure I would prefer the whole "show up at school naked" nightmare instead.

Ryan looks away. Tons of comebacks in his mind, but none that he should say.

Dawn senses the awkwardness. She tries to recover.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I probably could have saved that line for after we've been dating a while.

(beat)

Not that I assume we'll be dating a while.

(beat)

Not that I assume we won't.

(beat)

I think I'll shut up now before you turn me over to the guys playing Nazis.

RYAN

There's not one good comeback in my head right now.

DAWN

Yeah, I think I've officially killed this conversation.

There's more silence. Dawn looks at her watch.

DAWN (CONT'D)

So, I wonder when Xander will get here.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Buffy and Cordelia are still sitting at the table. They're not saying anything.

Xander walks through the back door, wiping his hands on a rag.

XANDER

I think I'm just about finished separating the mystical root plants from the mystical leafy plants. Of course, I say this with not one bloody clue what I'm talking about.

He goes to the refrigerator and gets a drink.

XANDER (CONT'D)

I realize that I just used the word "bloody" in a sentence, but c'mon. I know I'm not the only one who got used to the word being around over the years.

He sees that the girls aren't in their happy faces.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Is something wrong?

When Buffy doesn't respond, Cordelia takes it upon herself to answer.

CORDELIA

We're good.

XANDER

You sure?

CORDELIA

Actually, no. It's just not something that we're gonna be discussing for a while, so I was saying "we're good" when I actually meant "we're not telling you what we're talking about".

XANDER

Oh.

(beat)

Okay. I guess. Just as long as you know that if you wanted to, you could talk to me.

Buffy looks up at him.

BUFFY

I know.

XANDER

But you don't want to. And I'm cool with that. But you know that you can.

BUFFY

I think there's someone else who needs to know before I tell you.

XANDER

Oh. That kind of something.

(beat)

I guess I'll be heading out then. I promised Dawn I'd help her out at school. You wanna come, Cor?



CORDELIA

I'm good here for now. Meet you later?

XANDER

Yeah. See ya.

Xander leaves. When she's sure he's gone Cordy turns back to Buffy.

CORDELIA

When are you gonna tell her?

BUFFY

Today, I guess. I just have to find the right time.

CORDELIA

The right time? To tell her that you pretty much blew her only chance to know what she is meant to be? That she has this whole well of untapped potential, and you threw away her bucket?

BUFFY

(sarcastic)

I really can't hear that enough. Thanks.

CORDELIA

You know what I mean. There isn't going to be a good time. You have to tell her.

BUFFY

You're right.

Buffy looks at the stack of papers.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I guess I could bring her the papers she forgot.

CORDELIA

And then tell her about letting her teacher guy get killed.

BUFFY

Well, yes. That's kinda where I was going with that.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Snow is falling a little harder now. Not too bad, but more than flurries. Xander walks down the street, on his way to the school. As he walks, his eyes are focused on the sidewalk in front of him, and his mind is somewhere else.

Finally, he stops walking. He looks up. If he stays on his current path, he will soon be at the school.

He looks to the other direction. In the distance, we can see town hall.

Finally, Xander decided to start walking again. He heads toward town hall.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Xander walks up the stairs, and is just about to walk into the building when Willow walks out. She sees Xander and stops short, wishing there was a way for her to get back inside without him seeing her, but knowing that's not very likely.

WILLOW

Xander. What are you doing here?

XANDER

We need to talk.

WILLOW

Talk? About what?

XANDER

I think we both know the answer to that.

WILLOW

We do? I'm not so sure. There's nothing I need to talk about. How about you?

She's very uncomfortable right now.

XANDER

Will--

Before he can say anything else, MRS. GIMLY walks out of the building. When she sees them, she smiles.

MRS. GIMLY

Hello, there.

Xander gives her a polite smile.

XANDER

Hi.

He tries to turn back to Willow, but Mrs. Gimly doesn't leave.

MRS. GIMLY

(to Xander)

You know, I don't think I've ever seen you here at town hall. Have you ever been here?

XANDER

No.

He tries to turn to Willow again, but Mrs. Gimly keeps on talking.

MRS. GIMLY

It's an interesting place. It's full of history. If you'd like a tour, I'd be happy to give you one.

XANDER

No--

Willow jumps at the opportunity.

WILLOW

Yeah, that's a good idea.

(to Mrs. Gimly)

You should give him the same exact tour that you gave me. Right down to the story about where the nails came from.

XANDER

But--

MRS. GIMLY

Great!

Mrs. Gimly grabs Xander's arm and pulls him away. Xander looks back to Willow, not thrilled.

XANDER

We'll talk later.

Willow pretends not to hear him.

WILLOW

What?

Xander turns to Mrs. Gimly.

XANDER

I really have to get to the school soon. They needed help.

MRS. GIMLY

This won't take long.

(then)

Now, we'll start with the shrubs. Donated in 1988, by one of the oldest families in town, the Cranes. They've survived all these years.

As Xander and Mrs. Gimly walk off, Willow watches them. She's confused and feels kinda bad about making Xander go with Mrs. Gimly, but she really didn't know what else to do.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Dawn walks out of the auditorium, into the hallway. She's been hard at work and is in need of a drink from the nearest fountain.

When she stops at the fountain, SHELLY walks up to her, dressed as Baroness Schraeder.

SHELLY

Have you seen Amanda anywhere? We're supposed to be rehearsing a scene, and she's nowhere to be found.

(beat)

I swear, the teacher is out sick and the whole thing goes to heck.

DAWN

Heck?

SHELLY

It feels wrong to say the other word while dressed as a **Sound Of Music** character.

DAWN

Ah.

(then)

I think she's getting her costume checked out in the Home Ec room.

SHELLY

Great. How are we gonna solve our Maria problem?

Dawn is about to laugh.

SHELLY (CONT'D)

Shut up. I just realized what I said.

DAWN

Shutting up. What's the problem?

SHELLY

You mean there needs to be a bigger one than the fact that she's not here?

DAWN

I'm sure she'll be right back. No need to freak out.

Shelly takes a deep breath.

SHELLY

You're right. I guess I'm just nervous. Every year, no matter how many times I've done this, I'm always nervous.

DAWN

You've done this before?

SHELLY

Ever since I was twelve. I love it.  
(beat)  
You should try it sometime.

DAWN

Or not. I'm not really a "hey, look at me" kind of person. I tend to thrive in the shadows.

SHELLY

Oh, get over it. It's fun.

DAWN

Shadows are fun. You get to hide and then jump out at people. You can't do that in the spotlight.

PRINCIPAL SHAW (O.S.)

Shelly!

Shelly turns back to the autitorium.

SHELLY

I have to go.

DAWN

Break a leg.

SHELLY

Thanks.

Shelly leaves.

DAWN

I can't believe there's a subculture where that phrase is a good thing.

Dawn is about to get back to the fountain when she sees JENNA walking to her locker. Dawn watches for a few seconds as Jenna puts some books away. Finally, she decides to talk to her.

Jenna sees Dawn coming, and tries to walk away. Dawn rushes ahead and cuts Jenna off.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Wait.

(beat)

I haven't gotten a chance to talk to you lately.

JENNA

There's a reason for that.

DAWN

Look, I know you're not interested in being my hair-braiding buddy, but you don't have to avoid me.

JENNA

Avoid you?

DAWN

I assume... I haven't seen you around.

JENNA

Gosh, could that be because my brother had to go to a hospital in Seattle and I went with him?

Dawn can't help but feel a little stupid.

DAWN

I guess that's possible.

JENNA

Look, I killed that...

She has a hard time with the word.

JENNA (CONT'D)

I killed the *vampire* because I had to. I'm not joining any clubs, or wearing any uniforms.

DAWN

We don't have uniforms.

JENNA

Whatever. The point is, I want to be left alone.

DAWN

Okay. I can respect that.

Jenna starts to walk away.

DAWN (CONT'D)

But do you think that'll help?

Jenna stops, but doesn't turn around.

DAWN (CONT'D)

There's always going to be another alley, and another vampire. You're always going to be a Slayer. You can't turn that off and make it go away.

(beat)

You have a destiny, Jenna. You owe it to yourself to explore that.

JENNA

So, what? I can kill things for the rest of my life? So I can shatter more bones and cause more pain?

DAWN

So you can save people from shattered bones and pain.

Jenna doesn't want to hear this anymore. She walks away, leaving Dawn behind.

Dawn lets this conversation sink in. As she turns around, she sees something at the other end of the hallway.

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal Buffy, standing at the end of the hallway.

Dawn can tell that something isn't right. Buffy coming to school like this hasn't been a good thing for Dawn in the past.

She slowly walks toward Buffy. She doesn't say anything else until she's close to Buffy.

DAWN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

BUFFY

We have to talk.

DAWN

About what?

BUFFY

About you.

Dawn doesn't know what this means, but she's listening.

EXT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The snow continues to fall, covering the ground.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Buffy and Dawn are still in the hallway, talking. Dawn is holding the newspaper page by now. She's trying to absorb the information that Buffy's just given her.

DAWN  
You turned him away?

BUFFY  
I didn't know... I did.

DAWN  
This guy had answers. He knew what I was. What I could do.

BUFFY  
Yes.

Dawn looks up at Buffy.

DAWN  
How could you do this to me?

BUFFY  
I wasn't thinking right. Dad was--

DAWN  
Stop.

Buffy stops talking.

DAWN (CONT'D)  
I don't want your excuses. I don't want you to try to make this sound better for you.

BUFFY  
I'm not. Dawn, I was wrong. I know this.

DAWN  
Then why?

BUFFY  
I don't know.

DAWN  
Yes, you do. Tell me.

Buffy hesitates.



BUFFY

I didn't want you taken away from me. It seemed like everywhere I turned, someone else was pulling you away from me, and I couldn't stand it.

DAWN

Is that the only reason?

BUFFY

Yes.

DAWN

So this had nothing to do with you wanting to keep being the powerful one in the family? You wanted me to stay beneath you.

BUFFY

Dawn, no. I never--

DAWN

Yes, you did. It's always been that way. You're the Slayer. You're the special one. You're the one who gets all of the attention, and you like it that way. Admit it.

BUFFY

That's not true.

DAWN

It is.

BUFFY

No.

DAWN

So, you're saying that you've never seen the rest of us as being less than you?

Buffy hesitates.

BUFFY

I don't see you like that.

Dawn senses something in Buffy's response. Something that justifies her comments.

DAWN

But you have. You've seen yourself as better than the rest of us.

BUFFY

It's not like that.

DAWN

Then what's it like? Explain it to me.

BUFFY

I didn't want you to have this burden that I have. Do you think it's easy being different?

DAWN

You think I'm not different? How normal is it to have to sit down and calculate the odds that the boy who asked you out might be a demon of some kind before you can agree to go on a date with him? How normal is it to look around and realize that I don't belong here? That my entire existence is a figment of some monk's imagination? Do you really think I'm normal, Buffy?

Buffy doesn't respond.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I had one chance to actually fit someplace. To have something about my life be real. You took that away from me.

BUFFY

I'm sorry. You don't know how sorry I am.

DAWN

Sorry won't help me.

BUFFY

I'll try to make this right.

DAWN

How? Are you planning to bring this guy back from the dead, because the last time I checked, we didn't do that anymore.

Ryan sticks his head out of the auditorium. He looks around and finally spots Dawn.

RYAN

Dawn! We need you.

Dawn turns and forces a smile.

DAWN

Coming.

Ryan goes back into the auditorium. Dawn turns back to Buffy.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I have to go.

BUFFY

Dawn...

DAWN

We'll talk later.

Dawn walks away from Buffy, and goes into the auditorium. Buffy stands, alone, in the hallway, wishing that there was something to be done.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Xander and Mrs. Gimly find their way back to the front steps of the building.

MRS. GIMLY

The bricks near the front steps are from the original town hall, built when the town was founded, in the early 1900's. They, along with the lightning rod on the roof, are the only pieces of the old building left, after the fire.

XANDER

Fire?

MRS. GIMLY

In 1963, there was a big storm. The building was struck by lightning and burned down.

XANDER

And yet they put the lightning rod back up. Does that make sense to you?

Mrs. Gimly shrugs.

MRS. GIMLY

I guess they needed something to bring the old and the new together.

XANDER

But still, couldn't they have found something that... Nevermind.

Mrs. Gimly tries to open the front door to the building, but it's locked.

MRS. GIMLY

I guess they all went home to get ready for the party tonight.

Xander's disappointed. He looks at his watch.

XANDER

I should get going to the school.

MRS. GIMLY

I'll see you tonight then.

XANDER

Yeah.

Xander walks away, still upset.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Cordelia walks onto the stage, looking around. Dawn is back to painting by this point. Cordy walks to her.

CORDELIA

I guess you got stuck with the grunt work.

DAWN

Hey.

CORDELIA

So, judging from you're expression, I guess you spoke with Buffy.

DAWN

You know about that?

CORDELIA

Yeah. I was there when she read about him.

DAWN

I can't believe she'd do that to me.

CORDELIA

I can.

DAWN

What?

CORDELIA

Think about it. Wouldn't you have abandonment issues if you were her? First, your dad takes off. Then your mom dies. Then Giles leaves the country. And I don't see Angel anywhere. What, did he lose interest once she became legal?

Dawn starts to think about this.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

The point is, Buffy tends to lose the people she cares about. Is it such a shocker that she'd be a little freaked out by the idea that you'd leave too? Not that anyone could blame you. I mean, I've only been back for a day and I'm just about ready to move on.

DAWN

I guess. I mean, I didn't really think about it that way.

(beat)

Not that she's right.

CORDELIA

I never said she was right. I just said she was a freak with issues.

Dawn starts to soften a little. She's not as upset as she was.

She looks to Cordelia.

DAWN

Why are you really here?

At that moment, the auditorium door swings open and Xander walks in.

XANDER

Worker bee, reporting for duty. Point me to a hammer and something to... Well, hammer.

DAWN

Hey.

Cordy looks back to Xander. Dawn can tell from the look on her face that this is the reason for her return.

CORDELIA

I thought you'd be here by now.

XANDER

I had to stop somewhere, and got caught in a Gimly trap.

CORDELIA

A what?

XANDER

Long story.

He finally reaches them.

XANDER (CONT'D)  
So where am I needed?

DAWN  
There's a set piece backstage that needs fixing. Leisl almost broke her ankle when she went up the stairs.

XANDER  
Ouch. I guess I'll get on that.

DAWN  
Thanks.

Xander waves to Cordy, and heads backstage. Dawn looks over at Cordelia.

DAWN (CONT'D)  
You so want him.

CORDELIA  
What? Xander? Please.  
(beat)  
So tell me what his deal is. Is he seeing anyone?

DAWN  
He's hardly left the house since we moved here. I think it's safe to say that he hasn't met anyone... Unless he and Mrs. Gimly are seeing each other in secret.  
(beat)  
Okay, that's a disturbing mental image.

CORDELIA  
What about the girl whose picture was taped in the yearbook?

DAWN  
I didn't see that.

CORDELIA  
Short, curly hair. Looked kinda familiar.

DAWN  
Are you talking about Anya?

CORDELIA  
I guess. Were they dating?

DAWN  
More like, engaged.

CORDELIA

Oh.

DAWN

Even after they broke up, there was something there.

CORDELIA

So, what happened.

DAWN

(beat)

Anya died. Last May.

CORDELIA

Oh.

EXT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Willow walks up to the high school and stops. She's not sure if she wants to go in or not.

Buffy walks out of the school. Very distant.

WILLOW

Buffy.

Buffy looks at Willow. Willow can see that something's not right with her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

BUFFY

Yeah. I think I just need to take a walk.

Buffy starts to walk away.

WILLOW

Is Xander in there? Do you know?

Buffy turns back to Willow.

BUFFY

Not sure. Sorry.

With that, Buffy continues to walk away. Willow looks back at the door to the school.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Cordelia walks backstage, and finds Xander working on a staircase.

CORDELIA

Since when are you a carpenter?

XANDER

Since I needed money a couple years ago. It's cool though. I like it.

CORDELIA

It looks good on you.

XANDER

Thanks.

Cordelia walks to him and gets a little somber.

CORDELIA

So, Dawn told me about Enya.

XANDER

The singer?

CORDELIA

Your ex.

Xander's mood changes to a much less perky one.

XANDER

Anya.

CORDELIA

Whatever. Anyway, I wanted to say that I'm sorry.

He tries to fake a smile.

XANDER

Just don't let it happen again.

CORDELIA

I know it can't be easy for you.

XANDER

I don't really think I should be talking about this while hammering. It could result in one of those throbbing cartoon thumbs.

CORDELIA

Okay. But if you ever want to talk, I'm here.

She puts a hand on his shoulder. He looks at it, and then looks her in her eyes.

XANDER

Thanks.

Just before she can say something else, Willow walks backstage. She goes to them, a little uncomfortable.



Xander's surprised to see her.

XANDER (CONT'D)  
Willow. Hey.

WILLOW  
Hey.  
(then)  
Could I talk to you? Alone.

XANDER  
Yeah.

Xander looks to Cordy.

CORDELIA  
Don't worry. I'll go.

Cordelia walks through the curtain, toward the stage. Willow and Xander find themselves alone. Willow takes a deep breath.

WILLOW  
I can't stand this. I don't like not talking to you.

XANDER  
I know. Me neither.

WILLOW  
It's just, things are weird now. With the... thing. You know the thing, right?

XANDER  
Yeah. So what do we do about it?

WILLOW  
I think we need to discuss this like rational adult type people. We need to just come out and talk about it in the open. Clear the air.

XANDER  
We should probably get comfortable acknowledging it first. I don't see us getting far without admitting... it.

WILLOW  
Right. Admitting that we...

XANDER  
That we almost kissed.

WILLOW  
Right. We should talk about that.  
(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

(beat)  
The almost kiss.

ANGLE ON : THE CURTAIN

We can see that Cordelia is trying to free her watch from where it's snagged on the curtain. She's been listening to what they're saying. Pain fills her face. A GUST OF WIND blows her hair back.

On her stomach, blood begins to soak through her shirt, in the same spot where she was impaled back in "Lovers Walk".

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The school's front door BURSTS OPEN with a GUST OF WIND AND SNOW.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Buffy walks down the street. Snow is falling around her.

She stops walking when she hears a SLIGHT RUMBLE. She turns around, and looks back toward the school.

She can't see far. What looks like fog is blocking her view. But it's not fog. It's something else. It's something that's coming closer.

The RUMBLE BECOMES A ROAR.

BUFFY

Crap.

As she says that, a WALL OF WIND AND SNOW rushes at her. As it hits, it throws her into the air, and tosses her to the ground.

She stands back up, and looks around. All around her, snow is falling so heavily that she can only see white. The wind makes it hard for her to remain standing.

She turns around, trying to figure out which direction the school is in, but her tumble has messed up her senses. She is lost in this blizzard.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The wind and snow is still blinding. Buffy struggles to remain standing. She looks around, trying to spot a landmark, but obviously can't see one.

BUFFY  
(calling out)  
Hello?! Can anyone hear me?!

Of course, she can barely hear herself over the wind.

She decides to take her chances and walk in a random direction.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Willow and Xander are still talking. It's a little awkward. Willow is fidgeting with her necklace as she talks.

WILLOW  
And I think that, maybe, we were just really tired and we got a little too comfortable. I mean, obviously, nothing can happen, right? What with the me being gay and all.

XANDER  
As reasons for not getting involved with someone go, that one's pretty sound.

WILLOW  
So we're agreed? Nothing can happen.

XANDER  
Yeah.

WILLOW  
So, we're still friends?

XANDER  
Will, you could try to burn me alive and we'd still be friends.  
(beat)  
As evidenced by the fact that you've tried to burn be alive, and we're still friends.

WILLOW  
Geez, you have one bad day and they never let you live it down.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Cordelia walks across the stage, back to Dawn. Dawn sees the blood on her shirt. She stands up, at alert.

DAWN

Cordelia, are you okay?

Cordy doesn't answer.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Cordy?

Finally, Cordy finds her voice.

CORDELIA

I'm fine. Never been better. Say, you wouldn't happen to know where I might find some clothes that aren't blood-soaked?

DAWN

What happened? Are you hurt?

Cordy puts a hand on her stomach.

CORDELIA

I'm not sure. I don't think so.

DAWN

Maybe you should sit--

Before Dawn can finish the sentence, Ryan rushes into the auditorium. He's still in costume.

RYAN

We have a problem.

Dawn looks at Cordy, and her bloody shirt. She steps in front of Cordelia, hiding her from Ryan.

DAWN

What's up?

RYAN

Looks like the show might be called on account of blizzard.

DAWN

Blizzard? It was hardly snowing a few minutes ago.

RYAN

Yeah, well, tell that to the janitor who's shoveling about a foot of snow out of the hallway.

DAWN

This can't be good. How do we get home?

RYAN

We don't. Not until the snow clears.

DAWN

Great. I'd say we should call someone for help, but seeing as how the phones were down before the blizzard, I don't see that happening now.

RYAN

Anyway, I'm gonna get changed out of this costume. I'll be right back.

Ryan walks backstage. When he's gone, Dawn turns to Cordelia.

DAWN

Something's up here, and I think it has something to do with you.

CORDELIA

Way to jump to conclusions.

DAWN

Look at the facts. You pop into town, and we're hit by a freak blizzard at the same time as your spontaneous blood letting.

CORDELIA

Okay, things look bad for me, granted. That doesn't mean that it's my fault.

DAWN

We need Willow and Xander.

CORDELIA

They're talking backstage.

DAWN

I know. Let's get them.

Dawn walks backstage. Cordelia follows, fresh blood soaking her shirt.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Willow and Xander are still talking when Dawn comes through the curtain. When they see her, they stop talking.

WILLOW

Dawn.

DAWN

We have a problem.

Cordelia comes through the curtain, unable to look Xander in the eyes. Willow and Xander see her blood.

XANDER

Cor, what happened?

CORDELIA

I'm fine.

DAWN

Surprisingly, that's not our problem.

WILLOW

Then what is?

DAWN

Blizzard.

WILLOW

What?

XANDER

Outside, I hope?

DAWN

Yeah. We're pretty much stranded here. I think it has something to do with--

WILLOW

Buffy!

DAWN

I was going to say Cordelia.

WILLOW

No. Buffy's out there. I saw her when I came in. She said she needed to walk.

Dawn's face drops.

DAWN

Are you sure?

Willow nods.

DAWN (CONT'D)

We have to help her.

Dawn charges back through the curtain.

XANDER

Dawn, wait!

The others follow Dawn.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Dawn walks into the hallway, heading for a door to the outside. The others catch up to her.

                          WILLOW  
Dawn, slow down.

                          DAWN  
We have to help Buffy.

                          WILLOW  
I know, but think about this.

                          DAWN  
I have.

Dawn opens the door. A gust of wind and snow blows in. Dawn is thrown back. Xander and Willow struggle to get the door closed again.

                          CORDELIA  
Apparently, not enough.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Buffy continues to stumble through the whiteness. The wind is starting to wear her down. Her lips are dry and cracking. Her cheeks and nose are red.

It's a struggle for her just to walk. As she does, she holds an arm over her face, trying to block the snow.

She stops, looking around again. Everything looks the same to her. There is nothing but white. She is hopelessly lost.

She once again presses on.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The gang is sitting in the seats by now. Ryan is sitting behind Dawn. She is sitting silently. Helpless.

Xander, and Willow look equally helpless. They sit next to each other. Xander, with his hand on Willow's shoulder.

Cordelia is staring at the hand on Willow's shoulder.

                          RYAN  
I'm sure she'll be okay.

                          XANDER  
Yeah.

DAWN

We were fighting. She left because we were fighting.

XANDER

You'll have plenty of time to make things right.

WILLOW

Yeah. We've seen worse than this, and we're all here to talk about it.

Xander takes his hand off of Willow's shoulder, and his eyes drift to the floor. She doesn't notice. Cordelia does.

RYAN

As soon as the snow stops, we can look for her.

DAWN

(to Willow)

There has to be something else we can do. Right?

RYAN

Not in this mess.

Willow knows that Dawn means a spell of some kind.

WILLOW

I've tried, but nothing works. I think this storm's just too big.

Shelly walks into the auditorium, out of costume by now. She walks to Dawn and sits next to her.

SHELLY

Still no phones. They have a radio in the office, but they can't get anyone on it.

CORDELIA

No phones. No radios. No cell phones. It's like you guys moved to **Gilligan's Island**.

Nobody responds. Cordelia goes back to being silent.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's darker now, since night has fallen. The snow looks blue.

Buffy stumbles through the storm, still unable to make anything out. She is worn, and her face has more cuts on it by now.



Her legs are beginning to weaken. Finally, she can't go on any longer. Her legs give out and she drops to her knees.

She drops her head to her chest, and then looks straight up with pain on her face.

BUFFY

Where are you?!

Obviously, there is no response. Still weak, she decides to force herself to go on.

She struggles to her feet, and starts to walk again. Suddenly, her foot hits something hard. She bends down and feels through the snow. She feels something else, slightly higher than the last thing. She steps onto it, realizing that they're stairs.

As she begins to feel her way around, she finds a banister. She grabs onto it, and continues to move forward until she finds herself up against a door. She feels for the knob, and turns it. The door opens, and Buffy falls through it.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Buffy falls to the floor of her house. The snow pours in behind her, until she manages to get it shut from where she rests.

She looks around the dark room, realizing where she is. She struggles to get to her feet again, and tries a light switch, but it doesn't work. The power is out.

Buffy can't take any more of this. She has been beaten and bloodied by the storm, she has been drained by the conversation she had with the First, and she feels the guilt of the Dawn situation on top of that. She has reached her breaking point.

BUFFY

(weakly)

Where are you?

There's no response. Finally, she screams it.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Where are you?!

Still no response.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I work. I fight. I try. It's never enough. I can't do it anymore.

(beat)

I've come face to face with evil.  
The First evil. I've spoken with it.  
I've battled it. It's been there.

(MORE)

BUFFY (CONT'D)

(beat)  
Where are you?

Again, silence.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Where's my boss? Where's the first good? Where's the guy that's supposed to lead me down the path to righteousness? Every evil in the world has someone right there to help them along, and what do I get? Where's my help? Where's the one who's supposed to tell me what to do next? Everywhere I turn, it's one mistake after another, one battle after another, one pain after another. After all I've done for you- for this world- why am I always in this alone? Where's my help?

(beat)  
Where are you?

She waits for answer, but there is none. Only silence.

Buffy goes to a chair and sits.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I thought so.

She remains in this silence, sitting, feeling the cuts on her face. Here she sits for an extended amount of time.

Suddenly, there's a noise. A RINGING.

Buffy looks up. She sees the phone on the table next to her, and picks it up. The RINGING happens again. It's not the phone she's holding.

She looks around the room. She stands up, and begins to walk around, listening for the ringing, and following it's sound.

As she gets closer, she realizes what the sound is, and goes to the bookcase. Utterly confused, she picks up her cell phone and looks at it. It's the only light in the room at this point.

Buffy flips open the phone, and looks at the caller ID. It reads : "GOODE - 000-000-0001"

She puts the phone to her ear and listens.

VOICE (V.O.)

(in a whisper)  
You were never alone.

After the voice says that, Buffy hears the PHONE DIAL, and RING on the other side. It's picked up.

BUFFY

Hello?

We don't hear who is on the other side.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Wesley?

EXT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The snow begins to die down.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Cordelia and Ryan have fallen asleep. Dawn, Willow and Xander are still awake, though silent.

The auditorium doors open. Buffy walks in.

When they see her, the three awake people stand up. Cordelia wakes up and sees her.

DAWN

Buffy. You're okay.

BUFFY

Yeah.

WILLOW

The snow...?

BUFFY

It's over.

(to Cordelia)

Can I talk to you. In the hall?

CORDELIA

(clueless)

Okay.

Cordy starts to walk out. Buffy looks to Dawn and the others.

BUFFY

We'll talk in a few minutes.

The others are confused, but they let her go.

INT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Buffy walks into the hallway, where Cordelia is waiting.

CORDELIA

What's up?

BUFFY

I managed to talk with someone in  
LA, on the phone.

CORDELIA

The phone? I thought they were dead.

BUFFY

They are. It's a long story.

Buffy sees a bench along the wall.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Maybe we should sit.

They go to the bench and sit.

CORDELIA

You're starting to freak me out a  
little.

Buffy's not sure how to say what she has to say.

BUFFY

Cordy, a few months ago, there was...  
an accident.

CORDELIA

Okay.

BUFFY

You were involved.

CORDELIA

I don't think so.

BUFFY

Things didn't go well, and... You  
kinda wound up in a coma.

Cordelia is thrown.

CORDELIA

That never happened. I think I'd  
know if I were in a coma. For  
starters, I probably wouldn't be  
talking with you.

BUFFY

It's happened before. There's  
something inside of you that needs  
saying, so you end up like this.

CORDELIA

Buffy, enough. Stop it. I'm not in a  
coma.

BUFFY

(beat)

Yes, you are. You're in LA right now, in a bed.

Cordelia stops and thinks. Memories flood back.

CORDELIA

Oh, God.

(then)

No, it can't be true.

BUFFY

It is. You know it is.

Cordelia processes all of what's happening.

CORDELIA

I don't want it to be true. You don't understand.

She starts to tear up.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

I don't have anything, Buffy. I've lost everything. I'm not an actress. I'm not anyone. I don't even have friends. There are people that I work with, but... I don't want to go back there. I can't.

BUFFY

You don't always have a choice.

CORDELIA

I just wanted what I had. I wanted to be me again. I wanted things to be the way they were.

BUFFY

Things can't be the way they were. Sometimes, you have to move on.

(beat)

That doesn't mean that things have to stay the same for you. You can change your life.

(beat)

Y'know... Once you get out of the coma.

CORDELIA

You don't know what it's like. How hard it is. Every day.

BUFFY

I think I know more than you'd imagine.

There's a long silence. Cordelia thinks this all through. She knows what has to happen, even if she doesn't like it.

CORDELIA

Will you tell them that I miss them?

(beat)

Tell Xander that I said goodbye.

BUFFY

Yeah.

Cordelia nods, accepting her fate. She starts to cry. Buffy tears up too.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Hey, if you ever get out of the coma, look us up.

CORDELIA

Yeah.

Cordy stands up.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

I guess this is goodbye then.

Buffy stands up and hugs Cordy.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Checking to see if I'm the first evil ever?

BUFFY

Just hugging.

Cordy smiles, and then starts to walk down the hallway, toward the exit. Before she gets far, she turns back to Buffy.

CORDELIA

Hey.

(then)

I don't care what anyone says. You do not look like a porn star with those bangs.

Buffy puts a hand on her head.

BUFFY

Who said...?

CORDELIA

You mean, they didn't? I just kinda assumed they would.

Cordy shoots Buffy one last smile, and continues to walk out of the school.

Once she's gone, Buffy takes a deep breath, and then goes back into the auditorium.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy is sitting on the couch, with a blanket wrapped around her. She coughs and rubs her nose. When she speaks, she's very nasally. Willow is sitting next to her, and both are watching Xander and Dawn as they decorate a Christmas tree.

WILLOW

I can't believe Cordy's in a coma.  
It's sad.

XANDER

She deserves better.

DAWN

I don't get how she was here if she was in a coma.

BUFFY

You remember Billy Palmer?

DAWN

No.

BUFFY

Well, it's kinda like that.

WILLOW

Which means that even if she does wake up, she probably won't remember any of what happened here.

XANDER

All she wanted was to get back what she lost.

BUFFY

I guess we all feel like that sometimes.

Dawn looks over at Buffy, getting what Buffy is talking about. Willow smiles.

WILLOW

You remember the time she wished us all into that hell dimension where me and Xander were vampires, and Dawn was a...

She notices that the others are looking at her funny.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Right.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I guess you guys never got to see that. Interesting place... If you like hell dimensions, created by vengeance demons.

Buffy stands up.

BUFFY

I think I'm gonna hit the sack. It's been a long day.

WILLOW

G'night.

Buffy heads up the stairs. Dawn hangs one last ornament, and then follows her.

Once they're gone, Xander sits next to Willow.

XANDER

Y'know, in all of our awkwardness last week, we kinda missed out on one of our traditions.

WILLOW

We did?

XANDER

Yeah.

Xander reaches under the couch cushion and pulls out a DVD. He hands it to Willow. She looks at it, and a smile forms on her face.

WILLOW

**A Charlie Brown Christmas!**

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BUFFY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy walks into her room and plops onto her bed.

Dawn soon enters the room behind her. When Buffy sees her, she sits up.

BUFFY

Hey.

DAWN

Hey.

(beat)

I thought we should talk.

BUFFY

Yeah. Look, I--



DAWN

I get it. I get the why. I can't say that I'm totally over it. I mean, there's kinda this big looming question of what the hell I am.

BUFFY

I had no right to take that away from you.

DAWN

True.

(beat)

But it's over. It's in the past. It's not like I can really stay mad at you forever, so we might as well skip over the drama, right?

BUFFY

Dawn--

DAWN

We're good.

Dawn sits on the bed, next to Buffy. They continue to talk as MUSIC BEGINS.

Over the music, we see:

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Willow is smiling big as **A Charlie Brown Christmas** plays on the TV, and Xander does the Snoopy dance in front of her.

He finishes the dance and takes a bow. She hands him a cookie.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BUFFY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy and Dawn are still talking. Dawn tells a joke, which causes Buffy to smile, even though she's trying her best to feel bad.

Dawn hugs her.

The MUSIC STOPS.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

We see the shadowy figure of Cordelia as she walks down the otherwise empty, freshly plowed street.

CORDELIA

So, when do I fade out, or whatever?

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF SHOW