

Buffy The Vampire Slayer

Season 8

Episode 9

"The Sanctity Of Youth"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PRESCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DAY

CHILDREN (all around five years old) run around and play. Near the swingset, one boy, TYLER is fighting with a girl, CINDY. She has the swing and he wants it.

TYLER
I want the swing!

CINDY
I was here first.

TYLER
Too bad.

CINDY
Too bad!

Tyler pushes Cindy. She pushes back.

CINDY (CONT'D)
I'm telling.

Cindy rushes over to a teacher, MRS. FOSTER.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Tyler pushed me and took my swing.

Mrs. Foster takes Cindy's hand.

MRS. FOSTER
C'mon.

Mrs. Foster walks Cindy back to the swingset. Tyler is swinging.

MRS. FOSTER (CONT'D)
Tyler, come here.

TYLER
I'm swinging.

MRS. FOSTER
I see that. I told you to come here.

Tyler jumps off the swing and goes to Mrs. Foster.

TYLER
I didn't push her. She's lying.

CINDY
I am not.

MRS. FOSTER

If she's lying about it, then how did you know that's what she told me?

Tyler doesn't answer.

MRS. FOSTER (CONT'D)

(to Cindy)

Go play.

Cindy runs off, giving Tyler a mean look as she passes. Mrs. Foster leads Tyler to a bench and sits down so she's closer to his level.

MRS. FOSTER (CONT'D)

You've been getting into a lot of fights lately, haven't you?

TYLER

She was hogging the swing. She doesn't own it.

MRS. FOSTER

That doesn't mean that you can take it from her. Tyler, you can't always make people give you what you want. You have to stop being a bully.

TYLER

She always gets the swing. She sits right by the door. She gets outside first. It's not fair.

MRS. FOSTER

That might be true, and maybe we should look into that some more, but that doesn't mean that you can push her around. The world doesn't work like that. You have to learn how to resolve your problems peacefully. Understand?

Tyler nods.

MRS. FOSTER (CONT'D)

Good. Now go play.

(beat)

But not on the swing. You're off the swing for one week.

Tyler mopes as he walks away. Mrs. Foster stands up and looks back, toward the school door.

MRS. FOSTER (CONT'D)

For some reason, kids always think that fighting is the answer.

REVEAL BUFFY, standing in the doorway, watching the kids.
She walks over to Mrs. Foster.

BUFFY

I wonder where they'd get an idea
like that.

MRS. FOSTER

TV. Video games. Movies.

(beat)

Or that's what their neglectful
parents would have you believe. That's
why we make it our job to push them
in the right direction.

BUFFY

A worthy cause, assuming that we can
make a difference.

MRS. FOSTER

You don't think we can?

BUFFY

I think we can. I'm just not sure
it's always enough of a difference.

MRS. FOSTER

I'm guessing that you're not a "glass
half full" type of person.

BUFFY

I'm sorry. I'm just in a slumpy mood
today. It's been a rough couple of
weeks.

MRS. FOSTER

Not a good time to start a new job.
Especially like this.

BUFFY

True.

Buffy watches a little girl, RANDI, run past her. Randi is
smiling and goofing off. Buffy smiles.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I think it might be hard to stay in
a slump around here though.

MRS. FOSTER

Say that after you've been here a
while.

BUFFY

Things are just so simple for them.
Run and play. They don't have any of
the worries that we have.

MRS. FOSTER
If they're lucky.

Mrs. Foster's WATCH ALARM BEEPS. She looks at the time, and then to the children playing.

MRS. FOSTER (CONT'D)
Okay, kids! Let's go inside and color!

BUFFY
Recess ends, and they have to go
color. Man, those were the days.

The children rush past Buffy as they walk into the building. Mrs. Foster follows them.

MRS. FOSTER
(to Buffy)
You coming?

BUFFY
Yeah.

Buffy goes inside and closes the door behind her.

ANGLE ON : A MAN

Just off of school property, a man who we'll call HAL (40's, clean cut) watching the children. He's wearing a suit and a fedora, which makes him look like something out of the past. After the children are gone, Hal takes off his hat and walks away.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

WILLOW is sitting on one of the two beds, holding onto her necklace as she stares at the ceiling. Her mind is somewhere else totally.

Buffy walks into the room and plops onto her bed.

BUFFY

Hey.

WILLOW

Hey.

BUFFY

So, I've been at this place for a couple of days now, and I still have no clue which girl it is.

WILLOW

At least your fake creds worked.

BUFFY

There's that.

Willow sits up and grabs some papers off of her nightstand.

WILLOW

I've been going over the list of students that I got off of their system. There's not much there either.

BUFFY

So we're pretty much screwed.

WILLOW

For the moment, yes.

BUFFY

How fair is this? Giles drops me off in some strange Florida town, tells me to check up on some kid Slayer, and then flies off to teach a class in knife throwing back at Watcher Central.

WILLOW

He didn't have much choice. They're kinda low on man power these days.

BUFFY

Which I get, but the least he could do is have the coven narrow their search a little before sending me in there.

WILLOW

I don't think it works like that. The coven can tell you the where, but not really the who.

BUFFY

Maybe you could do that spell. Y'know, the one where you found Amanda last year?

Willow shakes her head.

WILLOW

No good. The spell's potential specific. Also, there's gotta be about a thousand Slayers around here. Even if I could do the spell, there's no way we could be that narrow in our search.

Buffy thinks about what Willow said for a second.

BUFFY

Thousand? You think it's that many?

WILLOW

That's the impression I got when I activated them all. There's a lot.

BUFFY

And here we are trying to find one single Slayer.

WILLOW

That's how the Council is doing this, I guess. One by one. I think they probably have a system of some kind.

BUFFY

So in the meantime, there's thousands, or millions of girls out there with no clue what's happening to them, waiting for someone to help them figure it out.

WILLOW

We will. It'll just take time.

BUFFY

I just hope we can get to them before more badness happens.

WILLOW

That was a fluke. It has to be.

BUFFY

Does it matter? They were selling their blood because they had no idea of what they held inside of them. I was too late.

WILLOW

You saved one.

BUFFY

One. That's not good enough.
(beat)
We have to find this girl, Will. We have to help her figure this out before something bad happens.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

It's late. Most of the people are asleep in this complex, which is a pretty nice group of buildings.

Hal walks close to one of the buildings, passing several doors along the way. He's on a mission.

He finally stops at one of the apartments. Apartment 7-B.

He moves his hand over the door, as though feeling energy coming off of it. Finally, he reaches the knob and grabs it. He closes his eyes, once again feeling the energy coming off of the door. The LOCK CLICKS. Hal turns the knob.

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

DAWN and SHELLY walk out of a classroom, carrying their books. EMILY rushes past them, bumping into Dawn as she does. She doesn't even slow down or look back.

DAWN

(after Emily)
It's okay. Really. You're excused.
(to Shelly)
Was that girl raised by really geeky ferrets or something?

SHELLY

She's just always in a hurry. I guess she has a lot on her mind and stuff.

DAWN

Still couldn't hurt to say "excuse me" every now and then.

SHELLY

I guess.

(then)

So do you work today? 'Cause if not, I was thinking that maybe we could go to the ice cream shop or something.

DAWN

I have to stop in for my check, but after that, I'm all clear for pigging out. Y'know, unless something else comes up. That happens a lot in my house.

SHELLY

Cool. So, speaking of your house, did you ever finish that wannabe novel thing we found?

DAWN

Yeah. Got kinda boring after you left. You probably wouldn't like it.

SHELLY

After I left? That was *why* I left. The guy didn't even go into detail about this whole Slayer thing he was trying to make up. What was she, a serial killer or something?

DAWN

Beats me.

Dawn stops. She sees something down the hall.

DAWN'S POV

RYAN is at his locker, putting some books away. A group of FOOTBALL PLAYERS make their way down the hall, goofing off and stop at his locker. They're smiling and clowning around.

Ryan smiles, but it's obvious that he isn't having a great time.

DAWN (CONT'D)

What's up with Ryan?

SHELLY

He looks fine to me.

DAWN

He's all... Down.

Shelly shrugs.

SHELLY

Maybe he got a bad grade or something.

Dawn looks at Shelly.

DAWN

He always gets bad grades. Why would it bother him this time.

SHELLY

I don't know. Maybe his leg is bothering him again, or something.

(beat)

Anyway, I have to go see Principal Shaw. I'll meet you at the ice cream shop in an hour?

DAWN

Make it two. I wanna drop some stuff off at home first.

SHELLY

Cool. See ya.

Shelly walks off. Dawn continues to watch Ryan as the football players walk off, and he finishes packing up his locker. Finally, he walks off in the direction opposite of the players.

INT. VIDEO STORE - DAY

Dawn walks into the store, and goes to the counter where KIRSTY is checking out a CUSTOMER.

KIRSTY

You have a nice day.

The customer walks off just as Dawn reaches the counter. They exchange smiles as they pass.

Finally, Dawn gets to Kirsty.

KIRSTY (CONT'D)

Hey. You don't work today.

DAWN

I know. I'm here for my check.

KIRSTY

Oh. Right.

Kirsty fishes around under the counter, and pulls out an envelope. She hands it to Dawn.

KIRSTY (CONT'D)

There you go. You have a nice day.

DAWN

Thanks.

Dawn starts to walk away, but stops. She turns back to Kirsty.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Hey, can I ask you something?

KIRSTY

Apparently.

DAWN

Is something up with Ryan?

KIRSTY

Like what?

DAWN

He was acting funny today.

KIRSTY

Funny, how?

DAWN

I don't know. Just kinda depressed
or something.

KIRSTY

I haven't seen him all day. Maybe
he's just in a pissy mood or
something.

DAWN

I guess.
(beat)
I'll see ya later.

KIRSTY

See ya.

Dawn walks out of the store.

INT. PRESCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

Buffy walks into the office and finds MRS. FOSTER talking
with a group of OTHER TEACHERS. They're upset. Buffy goes to
them.

BUFFY

Is something wrong?

MRS. FOSTER

One of the children has been
kidnapped.

BUFFY

What?

MRS. FOSTER

Cindy. The girl from the playground
yesterday.

(beat)

She was taken from her apartment
last night.

Buffy reacts silently to the news. After she takes it in,
she looks back to Mrs. Foster.

BUFFY

Do they know who did it?

MRS. FOSTER

They don't know anything. She's just
gone.

BUFFY

She can't just be gone. Someone has
to know something.

Mrs. Foster doesn't know how to respond to that. She's not
the "save the world" type of person that Buffy is. She just
shrugs.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get upset.

MRS. FOSTER

We're all upset.

Buffy looks at her watch.

BUFFY

Are the other kids here yet?

MRS. FOSTER

Not yet.

(beat)

Could you do me a favor and take out
the paint sets in my room? I haven't
had time to get set up for today.

BUFFY

Yeah.

Buffy walks out of the office.

INT. PRESCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Buffy walks into the classroom and closes the door behind
her. She looks back to make sure nobody followed, and then
pulls out her cell phone. She dials and puts the phone to
her ear.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Willow is sitting at the desk, working on her computer. Her cell phone rings. She picks it up.

WILLOW

Hello?

BUFFY

We have a problem.

WILLOW

Buffy? What's wrong?

BUFFY

One of the kids at school was kidnapped?

WILLOW

What? By who?

BUFFY

I don't know. Nobody has any information.

WILLOW

You don't think...?

BUFFY

That it's an amazing coincidence that there just happens to be a Slayer in the school where this girl was kidnapped?

WILLOW

It was a girl?

BUFFY

Yeah. I think we might have a clue as to who the Slayer is. Her name is Cindy Merrin.

Willow types on her computer, pulling up a file.

WILLOW

I have her file here.

BUFFY

Good. I'm gonna stop by her house after school. See if her parents know anything. You check on the police. See if you can find out what they know.

WILLOW

Will do.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

(beat)
Buffy?

BUFFY

Yeah?

WILLOW

We'll find her.

BUFFY

Damn straight, we will. I'm not about
to lose another Slayer.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

The basement is dark and damp. All of the windows have been covered.

Cindy is sitting in the corner of the room, with her legs pulled close to her chest. She's scared.

On the floor around her, old, dirty stuffed animals are scattered. She's not going near them.

The basement door opens, letting in a burst of light. Cindy covers her eyes.

Hal comes into the basement and closes the door behind him. He slowly comes down the stairs, carrying a plate with a sandwich on it.

HAL

Little girl?
(no reply)
Little girl?

He reaches the bottom of the stairs and looks over to Cindy.

HAL (CONT'D)

Didn't your parents ever teach you
to respect your elders?

CINDY

Where am I?

HAL

You're in my house.

CINDY

Who are you?

HAL

I'm just a nice man who brought you
a sandwich. Do you like turkey?

CINDY
I wanna go home.

HAL
Now, that's no way to speak to your
host, is it?

Cindy doesn't respond.

HAL (CONT'D)
What's your name, little girl?

Cindy still doesn't respond. She pulls her legs even closer
to her chest.

HAL (CONT'D)
How am I supposed to address you if
I don't even know your name?

Again, Cindy is silent. Hal walks to her, and squats near
her. He sets the plate down on the floor.

HAL (CONT'D)
Aren't you hungry? You haven't eaten
all day.

CINDY
I want my mommy.

HAL
You'll see your mommy soon enough,
child. Come on. Eat.

He picks up the sandwich and holds it out to her.

HAL (CONT'D)
I promise, I washed my hands.

Cindy shakes her head.

HAL (CONT'D)
Your call, but I promise, you'll be
needing energy real soon.

He sets the sandwich down and slides the plate away.

HAL (CONT'D)
You wanna see a neat trick?

Cindy shakes her head.

HAL (CONT'D)
Aw. Just watch anyway. You might
like it.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Buffy walks up to Cindy's apartment, carrying a bakery box. She knocks on the door and waits, but there is no answer.

She knocks again, but again, no answer. Finally the next door neighbor's door opens. An OLDER WOMAN pokes her head out.

OLDER WOMAN

Nobody's there.

Buffy looks over to the woman.

BUFFY

Huh?

OLDER WOMAN

Nobody's been there since this morning. I think they went to her mother's house.

BUFFY

Oh.

Buffy walks over to the neighbor.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Do you know them very well?

OLDER WOMAN

Who wants to know?

BUFFY

My name is Buffy Summers. I work at their daughter's preschool.

She holds up the box.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I wanted to bring them something and see how they were.

OLDER WOMAN

They're not well. They're little girl was taken.

BUFFY

I didn't mean--

OLDER WOMAN

What's in the box?

Buffy is thrown by the question at first.

BUFFY

Cookies. Chocolate chip and peanut butter.

The woman looks at the box.

OLDER WOMAN

Police say the man slipped right through the front door. Didn't even break it down. Girl's mom says she locked the door. She always locked the door.

BUFFY

So this guy picked the lock?

OLDER WOMAN

Guess so.

BUFFY

Thanks.

Buffy turns to walk away.

OLDER WOMAN

Hey.

Buffy turns back.

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)

They won't be needing those cookies.

Buffy looks to the cookie box, and then to the older woman. She rolls her eyes and hands them over.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

XANDER is at the table. The Richard Acker diary is open in front of him, but he isn't reading it. His mind is somewhere else totally.

Dawn walks into the room.

DAWN

Hello.

He snaps out of his daydream and looks at her, still a little distant.

XANDER

Hey.

(beat)

Aren't you supposed to be in school?

DAWN

I had a free. Not sure they mean "free to leave school property", but I did anyway.

(beat)

Find anything new in the diary?

XANDER

Hmm?

(looks at the diary)

Oh, no.

DAWN

Have you even read anything in there, or were you just staring at it all morning?

XANDER

Kinda the second one.

DAWN

You okay?

XANDER

Yeah, I'm good. Just have a lot to think about.

DAWN

Is this about the whole inability to work thing? You know that none of us have really questioned your manhood because of it. Even if we did, it was only in passing, because we love you and realize that you'll get a job as soon as you're up to it.

XANDER

Oh, God. I haven't even thought about that for weeks.

DAWN

Oh.

(beat)

So what's wrong then?

Xander is about to tell Dawn, but stops himself.

XANDER

It's nothing. I shouldn't get into it now.

DAWN

Because I'm just a kid and wouldn't understand? That bit is so old.

XANDER

It's not that. It's...

(beat)

It's insane. I'm insane. My attic should be padded.

DAWN

I'm not entirely inclined to disagree at the moment.

(beat)

You know you can talk to me, right?

XANDER

Yeah.

DAWN

Good.

She looks at her watch.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I'm late. Really late. There might be a search party.

(beat)

Are you sure you're okay?

XANDER

I'm fine. Go.

Dawn grabs her bag off of a chair and heads for the door. Before she leaves, she turns back to him.

DAWN

Try not to mope all day. It's not good for you.

XANDER

I'll try.

DAWN

Good. Bye.

He waves goodbye. She leaves.

Once Dawn's gone, Xander drops his head to the table and bangs it a couple of times, trying to bang the insanity out of himself.

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

Dawn walks into the school, and right away, she sees Ryan at his locker. She goes to him.

DAWN

So what's the deal with guys moping lately?

RYAN

Huh?

DAWN

It just seems like every guy I know has been moping around for the past couple of days. What, did Jennifer Garner get married again or something?

RYAN

I'm not moping.

DAWN

Oh.

(beat)

But you were yesterday. I saw you.

RYAN

I was just in a funk.

He closes his locker. They start to walk down the hall.

DAWN

So that's it?

RYAN

Yeah.

DAWN

Okay. Good.

They continue to walk as there's a pause. Finally, he turns to her.

RYAN

So, you're watching what kind of mood I'm in?

DAWN

No. I just happened to see you, and you were in an obviously gloomy mood. I was concerned.

RYAN

So, why didn't you just come and ask me?

DAWN

I think you'll find that I'm rarely that direct. Everything's a mystery to be solved with this brain of mine.

Ryan smiles. He points to a banner on the wall. It reads - "ANNUAL BEAR RIVER WINTER CELEBRATION, DECEMBER 12"

RYAN

You going to the big party?

DAWN

Not sure. What's the deal with it?

RYAN

It's a big one, even for this town. The high school usually puts on a play of some sort, and then everyone in town parties in the gym.

DAWN

Formal?

RYAN

Not really. People usually dress nice though. It's one of the only times during the year where we actually have an excuse to not wear lumberjack clothes.

DAWN

Sounds not lame. Maybe I'll check it out.

RYAN

Cool.

(long beat)

'Cause I was thinking that... Y'know, if you're going and everything... Maybe you might want to go with me?

Dawn stops walking. She's thrown.

DAWN

Like, a date?

RYAN

Yeah.

(beat)

I don't mean this to be a creepy harassment thing. I realize that I'm your boss and everything, so if it's gross or something, just say so.

DAWN

No, it's not gross. I'm just a little surprised.

She thinks about it for a second.

DAWN (CONT'D)

You know that you're a really great guy, right?

RYAN

Uh-oh.

DAWN

No, I mean it. I just need to think about it.

RYAN

You can say no. I'm not gonna go psycho or anything.

DAWN

I know. I just need to think about it.

(beat)

Trust me, if you'd seen dating the way I've seen dating, you'd have issues too.

RYAN

So you'll think about it?

DAWN

Yeah.

RYAN

I guess that's better than a "no".

(beat)

Wanna see if there's any meatballs left in the lunch room?

DAWN

Sure. Hey, maybe there's even some meat in them this time.

RYAN

Doubt it.

INT. PRESCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

Buffy is sitting at a desk, once again talking on her cell phone.

BUFFY

Yeah, I went down to the apartment, but nobody was there. How's the police search going?

INTERCUT WITH:

Willow, again at her computer.

WILLOW

There's not much to go on. No fingerprints. No signs of forced entry. The parents are being questioned, but I don't think they did it.

BUFFY
So we're clueless.

 WILLOW
Pretty much. Sorry.

 BUFFY
Keep on it. I'll be back late tonight.
They're planning a meeting with all
of the kids' parents at six.
Everyone's freaking.

 WILLOW
I can see where they might.

 BUFFY
Yeah.
 (beat)
Hey.

 WILLOW
Yeah?

 BUFFY
Find me something to pummel, okay?

 WILLOW
I'll try.

Another teacher, MR. GRANT, walks into the office.

 BUFFY
I gotta go. See ya later.

 WILLOW
Bye.

We stay with Buffy as she hangs up.

 BUFFY
 (to Mr. Grant)
Any news?

 MR. GRANT
Nothing yet.
 (beat)
Can I ask you a favor?

 BUFFY
Sure.

 MR. GRANT
When we're talking with the parents,
the children might get a little upset.
We're not sure it's a good idea to
have them in the room.

 (MORE)

MR. GRANT (CONT'D)
 Would you mind keeping an eye on
 them until the meeting's over?

BUFFY
 Sure. Anything I can do to help.

MR. GRANT
 Thanks.

Mr. Grant pours himself a cup of coffee. He turns to Buffy
 and extends a hand.

MR. GRANT (CONT'D)
 I'm Mr. Grant. Most people just call
 me Grant though.

Buffy shakes his hand.

BUFFY
 Buffy.

MR. GRANT
 So, how're you liking the new job?

BUFFY
 It's busier than I thought it'd be.

MR. GRANT
 Yeah, I can imagine.
 (beat)
 Well, if you have any questions,
 just let me know.

BUFFY
 Will do.

Mr. Grant walks out of the room.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
 (muttered to self)
 Asks me to watch the kids, *and then*
 finds out what my name is. Tell me
 something's not wrong with that order.

INT. PRESCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

The room is filled with kids now. They're sitting on the
 floor, playing. Buffy is standing at the closed door, watching
 the meeting through the window.

Tyler walks up to Buffy and taps her. She turns and bends
 down to his level.

BUFFY
 Hey, Tyler.

TYLER

Is Cindy gonna be okay?

Buffy's not sure how to answer.

BUFFY

I'm sure she'll be okay.

TYLER

Mommy says that a bad man took her.

BUFFY

That's right.

TYLER

Is a bad man gonna take me too?

BUFFY

No. I won't let that happen.

TYLER

But how come he took Cindy then?

BUFFY

I don't know. Sometimes bad things happen, and we can't always understand them.

TYLER

I didn't mean to be mean to Cindy.

BUFFY

I know, sweetie.

TYLER

I wish Cindy was here, and then I could tell her I'm sorry, and then I could let her have the swing.

BUFFY

I know.

Buffy notices that other kids are watching her talk to Tyler, and she realizes that they're all upset. She stands up straight.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Who wants to play a game?

None of the kids reply.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

C'mon. Does everyone like Duck-Duck-Goose?

Still no response. She wishes there were something more for her to do, but there really isn't.

Randi speaks up from the back of the room.

RANDI
When is Cindy coming back?

Another boy, NATHAN next to Randi speaks next.

NATHAN
Why doesn't the police find Cindy?

All of the kids start to mumble and talk at once. They ask questions, and make comments. Buffy tries to listen, but can't process all of them at the same time. She holds up her hands.

BUFFY
Hey. C'mon, we need to stay quiet so your parents can talk to the other teachers.

The kids settle down.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
I know this is scary for you. The truth is, it's scary for all of us. I wish that I could answer all of your questions, but I can't. All I can tell you right now is that I will not allow this to happen to any of you.

RANDI
How do you know the man won't come for us?

BUFFY
Because I'll stop him.

RANDI
How?

NATHAN
Yeah, how?

Buffy looks back at the meeting that's going on, and then looks back to the kids when she's sure the coast is clear.

BUFFY
Because I'm not like most people. I can stop the bad guys.

Yet another boy, ALEX, raises his hand.

ALEX
Like an X-Man?

Buffy smiles.

BUFFY

Yeah, kinda. I mean, I don't go through walls, or fly or anything, but I make sure that bad things go away.

ALEX

You're a superhero!

Buffy's eyes widen when Alex yells that.

BUFFY

(whispered)

Hey.

Alex settles.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

What's the first rule of being a superhero?

ALEX

I don't know.

BUFFY

Keep it a secret, right?

Alex nods.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

So we can't tell anyone.

RANDI

Not even our parents?

BUFFY

Especially your parents.

There's a knock on the door. Mrs. Foster pokes her head in.

MRS. FOSTER

We're finished in the other room, Buffy. You can send the kids out.

BUFFY

Okay.

Mrs. Foster leaves. The kids stand up and walk toward the door.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Remember, nobody can know, right?

The kids nod and agree in whatever ways they might agree.

Buffy follows them out of the room.

INT. PRESCHOOL - OFFICE - NIGHT

The teachers are gathering in the office as the parents are gathering their children and leaving. Buffy walks in.

BUFFY

So, how'd the meeting go?

MR. GRANT

As well as it could without us having any answers for them.

BUFFY

The kids are pretty scared too.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Superhero?

Buffy closes her eyes, hearing those words and hoping that nothing bad happens to her in this moment.

MRS. FOSTER

I can't stand not knowing what happened to that poor girl.

BUFFY

I'm sure we'll find her.

(then)

I mean, *they'll* find her, and *we'll* get her back. Safely. Here.

FEMALE TEACHER

I just keep seeing her face in my mind, y'know? I can hear her laughing on the playground, and...

The female teacher tears up. Mrs. Foster comforts her.

A man walks into the room. He is DANIEL MCARTHUR (30's, nice looking, but tired). He sees the women comforting each other and doesn't know quite how to react.

DANIEL

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt anything.

MR. GRANT

It's okay. What can we help you with?

DANIEL

My daughter. She wasn't with the rest of the kids when they came out, and I don't know which room they were in.

BUFFY

Which one is yours?

DANIEL

Randi. Randi McArthur.

BUFFY

Right. She was in the room with me a second ago. I'm sure she's still back there. I'll get her.

DANIEL

Thank you.

Buffy walks out of the office. Daniel follows.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

It's weird. I know she's probably fine, and I've been through this same thing a million times with her, but it's just not the same as before.

INT. PRESCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Buffy and Daniel walk into the classroom. They spot Randi right away, looking around the room.

BUFFY

See? Right as rain.

Daniel smiles.

DANIEL

Randi, why are you in here all alone?

RANDI

I lost my ball, Daddy. I had it in my pocket, but it fell out and it rolled away.

DANIEL

Where'd it go?

Randi shrugs.

BUFFY

We'll find it.

Buffy and Daniel both start to look around the room.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Did you see which way it rolled?

RANDI

Uh-uh.

They continue to search. Each heading to a different area of the room.

Randi gets on her knees and looks under a wooden bookcase, which is packed with books and toys. She smiles.

RANDI (CONT'D)

I found it.

She stands up and grabs the heavy bookcase with one hand, and slides it out of her way.

Buffy turns just in time to see this. When she sees Randi move the bookcase with one hand, her eyes widen with the realization that this is the Slayer she's been sent to find.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. PRESCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Where we left off.

Daniel looks at Randi and sees what she's done. He rushes to her.

DANIEL

Randi, no!

Randi looks back at her father, just as he picks her up.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What have I told you?

BUFFY

She's done that before?

Daniel looks back to Buffy, clearly upset. Randi starts to cry.

DANIEL

I can't... We have to go.

RANDI

Daddy, I didn't mean to.

Daniel rushes out of the room.

BUFFY

Wait!

But he's gone. Buffy watches him leave, and then walks over to the bookcase. She pushes it back into place, testing it's weight at the same time.

Once she's done, she looks back at the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Willow is staring at the ceiling, and playing with her necklace again. Buffy rushes into the room.

BUFFY

I found our Slayer.

WILLOW

Cindy? They found her?

BUFFY

Not Cindy. Randi.

WILLOW

Okay, I'm lost.

BUFFY

I assumed that Cindy was the Slayer because she was the target. I was wrong. It's another girl, Randi.

WILLOW

So, why was Cindy taken then?

BUFFY

That's the part where I get lost.

WILLOW

It could be that this girl just happened to be in the same school.

BUFFY

Could. Either way, this means that we have work to do on two fronts. We have to find Cindy and whatever took her, and then I have to tell Randi and her dad about the whole Slayer thing and hope that he doesn't freak out.

WILLOW

Buffy, how do we know it's a "what"? I mean, we assumed it would be demonic since it went after a Slayer, but if Cindy wasn't the Slayer, then it might just be a "who".

BUFFY

It doesn't matter.

WILLOW

It doesn't?

BUFFY

Either way, we find this monster and make sure that there's no way for this to happen again.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Hal is nowhere to be seen.

The now-teenaged Cindy weakly picks herself up, off of the floor. She looks down at the plate of food, which is still sitting where we last saw it.

The SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS above causes her to stop moving totally. She looks up, scared that Hal is coming back. Finally, there's another sound. That of a DOOR CLOSING. Hal has left the house.

Cindy makes her way to the stairs and climbs them. She reaches the door and grabs it. Still weak, she turns the knob and pushes the door open.

EXT. PRESCHOOL - LAWN/PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Buffy and Willow patrol the area. It's dark and quiet. Not many other people around.

WILLOW

Do you think he'd come back here?

BUFFY

We have to start someplace. Maybe we can find a clue or something.

They look around the lawn a bit, slowly moving toward the playground.

WILLOW

It's creepy. Thinking of some guy watching a bunch of kids like that.

(beat)

You think it'd be okay if I fell off the flaying wagon for one night?

BUFFY

My answer might surprise you.

Buffy is frustrated.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I can't believe this. There's a little girl lost somewhere, and we can't do anything about it except look around a schoolyard for nonexistent evidence.

WILLOW

We'll find something.

Buffy's about to respond when something catches her eye.

ANGLE ON: TEEN CINDY

Walking nearby. She looks tired and out of it. Her clothes are torn and (while they have grown some) don't seem to fit right.

Cindy doesn't look at Buffy. She eventually finds herself on the playground, looking up at the school.

Willow sees Buffy watching Cindy.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Who's that?

BUFFY

I'm not sure.

WILLOW

She looks... Odd. You think she knows something?

BUFFY

I don't know. Maybe.

Buffy and Willow walk to her.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Hey.

Cindy looks up.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Who are you? Why are you hanging around a preschool in the middle of the night?

Cindy doesn't answer. She turns and starts to walk toward the swingset.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Hey! I'm talking to you!

Cindy sits on a swing. She's drained and seems almost emotionless.

Once Cindy sits down, Buffy takes another look at her. Something isn't quite right. And then it clicks. Realization fills Buffy's face.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Cindy?

Willow looks at Buffy, confused.

WILLOW

What?

Cindy looks up at Buffy. She tilts her head slightly, recognizing the woman in front of her. She stands up and goes to Buffy.

BUFFY

What happened to you?

Before Cindy even has a chance to reply, she falls into Buffy's arms, unconscious.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Xander and Dawn are sitting at the table, eating sandwiches. Xander still seems a little out of it, but is more "there" than before.

XANDER

Sorry about the dinner situation. I should probably go shopping tomorrow.

DAWN

It's okay. I like sandwiches.

There's a long beat before Dawn speaks again.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I'm confused.

XANDER

Me too.

(beat)

I'm hoping it's turkey.

DAWN

Not about that. There's something else.

XANDER

What's up?

DAWN

You know Ryan? The guy I work with.

(then)

For, actually.

XANDER

I've heard tell.

DAWN

He kinda asked me out.

XANDER

Is there beating to be done?

DAWN

No. It's not like that. We were off duty at the time.

XANDER

So you don't want to go out?

DAWN

I'm not sure. I mean, I like him, but it's kinda confusing. You know what I mean?

XANDER

In ways you wouldn't believe.

(beat)

So what's the deal? You don't like him?

DAWN

I do like him. I'm just not sure I *like* him. He's just so... And I'm more... Y'know?

XANDER

I'm gonna need a complete sentence before that can happen.

DAWN

(beat)

He and I are different.

(beat)

His favorite movie is **Attack Of The Killer Tomatoes.**

XANDER

And you're more of a... Okay, I can't think of a brainy movie right now, but I think I get what you're saying.

DAWN

I'm not saying he's stupid or anything.

XANDER

But he has different interests than you.

DAWN

Right. I'm not sure we'd mesh.

XANDER

Right. There's no chemistry. No spark.

DAWN

I don't think so. I'm not sure he's ever even been to chemistry class.

XANDER

But what if there was chemistry? What if, even though you're all brainy and he's all... not brainy, what if you were really comfortable together and you made each other laugh and there was a connection that you never had with anyone else? A closeness?

Dawn doesn't respond.

XANDER (CONT'D)

What I mean is, what if you did have a spark, but it wasn't a spark that you can make sense of because he's all gay and you've got wrong parts?

Now Dawn's just confused.

DAWN

Xander, is there something you need to talk about?

He looks at her, realizing how this must sound.

XANDER

No.

Dawn looks at him for a moment. Normally, she might push, but she has her own issues.

DAWN

So I guess I'll just say no then.

XANDER

Mm-hmm.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy and Willow walk in, both helping to hold Cindy up. She's still out.

They put her on one of the beds.

WILLOW

I don't get it. This is Cindy?

BUFFY

I'm not sure I get it either, but I think it's pretty clear that we get to kill whatever did this.

WILLOW

Why would he just let her go like that?

Buffy's disgusted.

BUFFY

Because he was done with her.

(beat)

Whatever this thing did- whatever it took from her- he's exhausted her supply.

WILLOW

Which means...

BUFFY

He's going to be out for another victim.

WILLOW

We have to stop it.

BUFFY

We have to find it first. She's the only one here who can lead us back to wherever this thing lives.

WILLOW

We should wake her up.

BUFFY

I'll do that. You get online and see if you can find out what kind of demon would age her like this.

WILLOW

On it.

Willow goes to the computer. Buffy watches Cindy sleep for a moment, and then sits on the bed next to her, getting ready to wake her.

INT. MCARTHUR HOUSE - RANDI'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. Daniel is sitting by Randi's bed, watching her sleep. He's starting to drift off. His eyes close and his head starts to fall to his chest. He catches himself and picks his head up. He looks at his watch.

ANGLE ON : HIS WATCH

It's 2:30 in the morning.

Daniel rubs his eyes, and stands up. He goes to Randi's bed and pulls the covers over her shoulders. He rubs her hair, and gives her a kiss on the head before walking out of the room.

ANGLE ON : THE WINDOW

Outside, Hal watches.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy gently nudges Cindy.

BUFFY

Cindy.

Cindy stirs, but quickly falls to sleep again. Buffy gives her another nudge.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Cindy, I need you to get up.

Cindy's eyes open. She looks up at Buffy, and then looks around the room. She's scared.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

It's okay. You're safe now.

Cindy calms a little. She's still confused.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I know you've been through a lot, but I need your help. Unless you help me, one of your friends might be taken. Do you understand what that means?

Cindy nods.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Can you speak?

Cindy tries, but her voice is too weak.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

It's okay. You don't have to.
(beat)

Do you remember where you were taken?

Cindy nods, but the thought troubles her.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Can you take me there?

Cindy is scared. She doesn't want to go back. She shakes her head.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Cindy, I need your help. I know your scared, but I need you to be brave for me.

Cindy calms.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You don't want one of your friends to be taken, do you?

Cindy shakes her head.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Then I need you to help me. Will you do that?

Cindy thinks about it, then nods.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Good.

Buffy stands up. She turns to Willow.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Will, keep on the research. Find a way to make her a kid again. If you find anything, call me.

WILLOW

'Kay.

BUFFY

(to Cindy)

Let's go.

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Ryan and Kirsty are working late. Kirsty is working on files, while Ryan is taking inventory.

There's a KNOCK on the door. They look up and see Dawn standing outside.

Ryan goes to the door and opens it.

RYAN

Dawn? What are you doing out this late?

Dawn comes inside.

DAWN

I come from a long line of night people. I was out for a walk. What are you guys up to?

RYAN

The boring part of the job. Inventory and record keeping.

DAWN

Sounds like a blast.

KIRSTY

It's what makes life great.

DAWN

Is there anything I can help with?

RYAN

We have it covered. Thanks though.

Dawn sees that there's a bag of garbage next to the counter.

DAWN

Least I could do is take the garbage out to the dumpster for you.

RYAN

You don't have to.

DAWN

It's no problem. Really. I'm going outside anyway.

KIRSTY

Let her take it. One less thing we have to do.

(beat)

You don't want overtime, do you?

DAWN

I don't think I'll clock in for those two minutes that it'll take. Think of it as charity work.

RYAN

You sure?

DAWN

Yeah.

Dawn picks up the trash bag.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I'll see you tomorrow, okay?

Dawn starts to walk out. Kirsty remembers something.

KIRSTY

Oh, hey.

Dawn stops. Kirsty grabs a newspaper off of the counter and passes it to Ryan who hands it to Dawn.

KIRSTY (CONT'D)

I forgot this.

Dawn takes the paper.

DAWN

Got it. G'night.

Kirsty waves. Dawn walks out.

RYAN

Hey, wait up. I'll come with you.

KIRSTY

Doesn't that defeat the-

RYAN

Shut up.

Ryan goes after Dawn.

EXT. MAIN STREET/ALLEY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Ryan follows Dawn out of the store. They talk as they make their way down the street, into the alley.

Dawn is glancing over the paper.

DAWN

"Male found dead off of Yeager Street." Sucks to be him.

RYAN

I wanted to talk to you.

DAWN

About what?

RYAN

The thing. Y'know, going out with me.

DAWN

Ah.

RYAN

Did you think about it?

DAWN

Yeah. I did.

By now, they're in the alley. It's dark. There's a dumpster nearby. When they reach it, Dawn puts the bag down so that she can talk with Ryan.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Look, I don't want this to come out wrong, but you're a really good friend. I'm not sure I want to--

Before she can finish, a VAMPIRE jumps out of the shadows in vamp face. He comes right after them, catching them both off guard. The vampire jumps on Dawn. She falls to the ground, and the vampire keeps on her.

VAMPIRE

You know where it is! Tell me where it is!

RYAN

Get off of her!

Ryan grabs the vampire and pulls him off of Dawn.

DAWN

Ryan, no!

Ryan pulls a football move and goes for the tackle. The vampire is hardly phased. He pushes Ryan away, and then punches him. Ryan is thrown into a wall, hard. He drops to the ground, unconscious.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Ryan!

The vampire turns back to Dawn. He walks toward her again. She looks around.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Why don't I ever have a stake with me?

VAMPIRE

Tell me where it is.

DAWN

I don't know what you're talking about.

VAMPIRE

You're her sister. I know you know.

The vampire is really close now. Dawn finally makes a move. She kicks the vampire in the bad place, and gets to her feet.

As the vampire is hunched over, Dawn grabs the trash bag and whacks him with it. He's only thrown off for a second. Before Dawn can find another weapon, the vampire is back in action. He grabs her and throws her down to the ground. She tries to fight him off, but he has her arms and legs pinned.

VAMPIRE (CONT'D)

If you won't tell me now, maybe you'll tell me once you're one of us.

He moves in to bite her. Just before he sinks his teeth in, a pair of hands grabs him by the shoulders and pulls him back. He's thrown into the air and hits a wall.

Dawn looks up to see who is saving her. She can only make out a BLOND GIRL figure in the shadows. The girl is wearing dark clothes.

DAWN

Buffy?

The girl turns around and goes after the vampire. She beats on him a little, but from her fighting style, it's obvious that she's not trained at all.

Dawn finally sees the girl's face.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Jenna?

JENNA pulls out a stake and POOFS THE VAMPIRE. When he's gone, she looks back to Dawn.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

After she sees that Dawn's okay, Jenna walks off into the night. Not a word spoken.

Dawn doesn't have time to process this. She goes to Ryan.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The basement door opens. Hal walks down the stairs, carrying Randi in his arms as she sleeps. He gently puts her down in the same spot that Cindy once sat. After he puts her down, he strokes her hair.

BUFFY (O.S.)

If I were you, I'd get away from that girl very quickly.

Hal turns and sees Buffy standing with Cindy at the base of the stairs.

HAL

You shouldn't be here.

BUFFY

And yet, here I am.

HAL

You don't know what you're dealing with. Who I am.

BUFFY

Let me guess. You're a big freaky spawn of hell who gets his jollies from taking little kids and feeding off of them.

Hal wonders how she knows his story.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Got news for you, pal. It's not exactly an original M.O.

Hal moves toward Buffy. Cindy backs away, scared.

HAL

You're the Slayer.

BUFFY

Volume one of... many.

Hal moves closer and closer.

HAL

You should make an interesting snack.

(beat)

Even if you are a bit old.

He reaches out to touch her with his creepy hand. She doesn't even flinch. She grabs his hand and bends it backwards with a CRUNCH.

BUFFY

You wanna know the thing about demons like you who feed off of kids?

(twists his hand more)

When it comes to the grownups, you're just about as powerful as a Ben Affleck movie.

She grabs him, and throws him across the room.

Randi wakes up. She looks around.

RANDI

Where am I? Where's Daddy?

BUFFY

Hold on, sweetie. Let me deal with the bad guy, okay?

RANDI

Is that the man that took Cindy?

BUFFY

Yeah.

Buffy moves to where Hal is. She picks Hal up and throws him to the other side of the room. She's just doing this for the fun of beating this guy.

RANDI

I don't like him.

Buffy turns to Cindy.

BUFFY

Why don't you two go upstairs and wait for me?

Cindy nods. She goes to where Randi is and grabs her arm. Randi pulls away and rushes to Hal.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Randi, don't!

RANDI

You're a bad man!

Randi kicks Hal in the gut. It looks very painful. Hal is too out of it from his Buffy encounters to respond.

BUFFY

Actually, that's kinda neat.

(beat)

But your father probably wouldn't like it. Randi, go upstairs with Cindy. I'll be up in a second.

RANDI

But--

BUFFY

Now, Randi.

The girls go upstairs.

When they're gone, Buffy walks over to Hal and looks down at him. He's barely awake.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

That was volume three, by the way.

CLOSE ON: BUFFY

With those being the last words that Hal will ever hear, Buffy raises her leg and stomps really hard. All we hear is a SQUISH sound.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MCARTHUR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy is waiting in the living room. Cindy is asleep on the couch.

Daniel walks into the room.

DANIEL

She's asleep.

He sits down in a chair, exhausted. Buffy sits in another chair near him.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

None of this makes sense. My daughter is kidnapped, but we don't call the police?

BUFFY

This isn't something that they could handle.

DANIEL

What does that mean?

Buffy tries to think of a good way to say this.

BUFFY

There's a whole speech about this, but that never really works, so I'm just going to say it.

(beat)

Randi's strength comes from something very powerful. A calling. She... and me... We're called Slayers.

DANIEL

My daughter is a "Slayer"?

BUFFY

It sounds bad, but it's not. Slayers are girls who have been chosen to fight the evil in the world.

DANIEL

She's five years old.

BUFFY

Well, I don't think she's expected to start killing things tomorrow, but there is someplace that she can go to train.

DANIEL

Kill things? Train? Go? What are you talking about? My daughter isn't going anywhere. She's staying here and she's going to live a normal life.

BUFFY

She isn't normal. You have to tell her what she is. You have to let her become what she was meant to be.

DANIEL

A "Slayer"?

BUFFY

You're not listening.

DANIEL

I think I've listened more than enough.

BUFFY

But--

Buffy's in the middle of starting a sentence when her CELL PHONE RINGS. She gives Daniel a "just a sec" gesture, and answers her phone.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Yeah?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Willow's on the other side of the line, at her computer.

WILLOW

Buffy, it's me. I found out everything I could on this demon. It's name is Hal.

BUFFY

Past tense. What's his deal? How do we fix Cindy?

There's a long silence.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Willow?

WILLOW

We don't.

BUFFY

What?

WILLOW

We don't fix Cindy. This Hal demon fed off of the youth in her. The energy is gone.

BUFFY

But we have to help her. We can't just leave her like this.

WILLOW

I don't know what to say. I'm sorry.

Buffy's close to being in shock. She doesn't know how to process this.

BUFFY

Thanks.

She hangs up.

DANIEL

Is everything okay?

BUFFY

No.

Buffy looks over at Cindy. Then she looks to Daniel again.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. We have to go.

Buffy stands up and goes to Cindy. She gets her up.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

C'mon, Cindy. We have to leave.

DANIEL

We were in the middle of a conversation.

Buffy looks back to Daniel.

BUFFY

There's nothing else to talk about. You're right.

Daniel's a little thrown by her sudden switch. He watches as she and Cindy leave.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Xander is cleaning mud off of his shoes. Dawn walks into the room, from the dining room.

DAWN

'Morning.

XANDER

Hey.

DAWN

Willow called while you were outside.

Xander perks up.

XANDER

What'd she say?

DAWN

Her and Buffy are coming home tonight. I think they had a pretty rough time in Florida.

XANDER

It'll be nice to have them home.

DAWN

Yeah.

Dawn sits next to Xander.

DAWN (CONT'D)

So I told Ryan what I decided. About going out.

XANDER

How'd he take it?

DAWN

Really well. I decided to go.

XANDER

What changed your mind?

DAWN

Last night, when we were attacked... He went after the vampire for me. I know it's not really the girl-power thing to say, but seeing him get all protective was--

XANDER

An eye opener?

DAWN

I was gonna say that it was hot.

XANDER

Oh.

Dawn stands up.

DAWN

So anyway, I'm going to window shop
for something to wear.

XANDER

Your date isn't for another two weeks.

DAWN

I know. Short notice sucks.

She heads for the door.

DAWN (CONT'D)

See ya.

INT. PRESCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DAY

Buffy is sitting on a swing, deep in thought. Her CELL PHONE
RINGS. She answers it.

BUFFY

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GILES' FLAT - DAY

GILES is back in England, on the phone.

GILES

Buffy?

BUFFY

Yeah.

GILES

You didn't call me back.

BUFFY

Sorry. I got distracted.

GILES

Did you get the girl home safely?

BUFFY

Yeah.

(beat)

What happens now?

GILES

I'm not sure. The Council will do
their best to help her.

BUFFY

And until then, what? Her parents
almost died when I explained it all
to them.

GILES

We'll have to see what happens.

(beat)

Buffy, I've been ordered to tell you to go back to the Slayer's father and get him to agree to have her trained in England.

BUFFY

I'm not gonna do that, Giles. I've already seen one girl robbed of a childhood, I'm not about to help do it again.

GILES

She must be taught.

BUFFY

I gave her dad the number. When the time comes, he'll call.

GILES

But--

BUFFY

Giles, I need to know something.

GILES

What?

BUFFY

Tell me about the other Slayers. The ones you've seen since we did the spell.

GILES

What about them?

BUFFY

In the past few months, I've seen one girl who almost killed her brother, two who were selling their blood, and a little girl who is this close to having her entire life ruined because of this. What aren't you telling me?

GILES

I don't know what you mean.

BUFFY

I know that the other countless girls around the world aren't skipping around, singing happy songs and I just happened across the few bad outcomes. Tell me what's going on.

There's a long pause.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Tell me.

GILES

Are you sure you want to know.

BUFFY

Tell me.

GILES

(long beat)

There are many girls who have been brought to be trained. Girls with great skill and potential.

(beat)

However, there are also a lot of parents like the one you met. They're understandably reluctant to hand their daughters over to strange men who want to train them to be Slayers. The Council simply isn't big enough to send Watcher all over the world anymore. We can't train them all.

BUFFY

So they're forced to fend for themselves. What happens then? Look at Jenna.

GILES

I've seen a hundred cases just like hers, or very similar. In Bangkok, a pregnant woman died from severe internal trauma. We suspect the unborn child was a Slayer.

BUFFY

Was?

GILES

She didn't make it.

BUFFY

So is this how it is all over? Chaos? Pain? Suffering?

GILES

As I said, there are many cases of girls who are doing quite well.

BUFFY

But even then, they can't all be doing fine. What happened to Rhona, or Vi? I haven't even heard from them since they went home.

Another long beat.

GILES

Vi is dead, Buffy. A victim of what seems to be a growing sport for demons.

Buffy takes this news in. It's killing her.

BUFFY

I wanted to help. I wanted to make things better.

GILES

You're not to blame for these cases.

BUFFY

Then who is?

(beat)

I have to go.

She quickly turns off her phone before he can respond.

She sits in silence, thoughts running through her head at a million miles per hour.

And then a familiar voice comes from behind her.

KENDRA/FIRST (O.S.)

Are you finally starting to get it?

(beat)

You always treated it like a job.

Buffy turns around and sees THE FIRST in Kendra's form.

BUFFY

I don't have time for this.

KENDRA/FIRST

It's who you are, but you never saw it like that.

BUFFY

Go away.

KENDRA/FIRST

None of this would have happened if I were in charge.

BUFFY

Shut up. I stopped you.

KENDRA/FIRST

Did you? The way I see it, you're the one who's about to cry.

(MORE)

KENDRA/FIRST (CONT'D)

You were always so afraid of being alone, you were just dying for an excuse to change it.

BUFFY

I only gave those girls what they deserved to have.

KENDRA/FIRST

You know that's not true. Most of those girls should never have been a Slayer. Now, the world is full of Slayers... and no more potentials.

Buffy looks up at her.

BUFFY

What's that supposed to mean?

KENDRA/FIRST

Your little spell. It threw off the whole Slayer line.

BUFFY

Every girl who can be a Slayer is a Slayer. There's an army of girls just waiting to take you down.

KENDRA/FIRST

For now. But how do you expect the next generation to be called? Did you ever think of that, or were too busy feeling sorry for yourself?

Buffy tries to figure this all out. She can't wrap her mind around it. She looks down at the ground. When she looks back up, the First is gone. Buffy is once again alone in the playground.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF SHOW