

Buffy The Vampire Slayer

Season 8

Once And For All

Episode 1

"Two Years, Eight Months Later"

TEASER

OVER BLACK:

MALE VOICE

Run!

FADE IN:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A MAN is running as fast as he possibly can through the alley. His face is filled with pure panic.

Behind him, a WOMAN is also running, struggling to keep up as she carries a FEMALE TODDLER in her arms. She's crying.

WOMAN

Wait! Jonas, wait for us!

The man looks back, but doesn't stop running.

MAN

It's coming. I can't!

WOMAN

Please!

MAN

We're almost there!

The woman trips and falls to the ground, dropping her child. The little girl begins to cry.

The woman hurries to stand up and get her child before it's too late. She looks back and sees an OMINOUS LOOKING SHADOW on a wall behind her. Whatever is chasing her, it's getting closer.

The woman starts to cry again as she grabs her child and resumes her run.

WOMAN

Jonas!

Of course, he is nowhere to be seen.

The woman makes her way down the alley and finally reaches the door to an old abandoned warehouse. She quickly opens the door and hurries inside, closing the door behind her.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The woman stops and looks around the warehouse. It's filled with OTHER PEOPLE, all hiding from this beast.

MAN
 (whispered)
 Get in here. Be quiet.

Another voice whispers from the crowd.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Did it follow you?

WOMAN
 I don't think so.

The toddler continues to cry. The woman tries to quiet it.

TOUGH MALE
 Shut that kid up.

WOMAN
 I'm trying.
 (to the toddler)
 Shh. It's okay. We'll be okay.

TOUGH MALE
 Shut that kid up, or I'll do it
 myself.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Shh! It's coming! Be quiet.

The warehouse quickly quiets, save for the sound of the crying toddler. The woman continues to bounce the child and tries to soothe her fears, but nothing seems to be working.

Suddenly, there's a POUNDING on the door to the warehouse. The people inside push back. Nobody wants to be the first to face this thing.

MAN
 It's here.

The door flies off it's hinges, stirring up a cloud of dust. Light from the alley floods into the warehouse as a SHADOWY FIGURE enters the warehouse.

TOUGH MALE
 We can't just sit here. We have to
 do something.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Like what?

The shadowy figure stops walking just as it hits a convenient ray of light, revealing it's face to us.

It is BUFFY SUMMERS. Hair pulled back. Clothes simple and not too trendy. Her face is hardened. Tough. Determined. Emotionless.

Around her neck, she wears the cross of Isabelle Acker, and in her hands she carries the Scythe. She says nothing.

ANGLE ON : THE TOUGH MALE

He VAMPS OUT.

TOUGH MALE

Like fight.

Around him, the other people ALL VAMP OUT. Several of them attack Buffy. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

As the tough guy gets close to her, she swings the Scythe, taking off his head. He TURNS TO DUST. Buffy opens her eyes and continues to swing the Scythe. At first, it looks almost random because she swings it so fast, but the number of vampires that TURN TO DUST proves that each swing is carefully calculated.

ANGLE ON : A WALL

Shadows move and we can HEAR A BATTLE taking place, but we can't see it. This goes on for a few moments.

ANGLE ON : BUFFY

Now standing in a cloud of vampire dust. More dust covers the floor around her.

She takes a few steps, getting closer to the woman, who is still holding her crying toddler. The woman is now in vamp face, cowering on the floor. She looks up at Buffy.

WOMAN

W--What are you?

Buffy looks down at her with that blank expression.

BUFFY

I'm the Slayer.

She quickly raises the Scythe and brings it down toward the woman.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT LAWN - DAY

The sun shines down upon the lawn of the high school, as STUDENTS scurry about, on their way inside. As we PAN ACROSS the lawn, we finally come across WILLOW and XANDER, standing near the front steps of the school. Both are looking toward the school. Willow has a much more nervous expression than Xander.

WILLOW

Are we sure about this?

XANDER

Pretty sure.

WILLOW

But are we sure we're sure? 'Cause I'm not so sure that I'm sure about this and I'd rather be sure about something before I jump into it, y'know?

XANDER

I have no clue what you just said, but I'm gathering that you're not so sure about this.

WILLOW

It's just a big deal. It's a Hellmouth, with evil and demons and we don't have a Slayer to help us this time.

Willow's eyes widen and she turns to Xander.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

What if the popular kids pick on me?

XANDER

Then you flunk their asses and pop quiz them like there's no tomorrow.
(beat)

Will, you're not a student here. You're a teacher. You have all the power.

WILLOW

I do?

(then)

Hey, yeah. I do have power. I'm a teacher.

XANDER

Besides, if Giles can get away with wearing tweed here for three years without being mocked and bullied to death, I think you'll be okay.

WILLOW

Again, true.

XANDER

So now we take the deep breath. Breath in...

Willow takes a deep breath in.

XANDER (CONT'D)

And release.

Willow releases.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Deep in.

Willow takes a deep breath. Just then, XANDER'S CELL PHONE RINGS.

XANDER (CONT'D)

(to Willow)

One sec.

Xander pulls out his phone and answers it.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Hello?

(beat)

Mr. Hewitt, hey.

He looks to Willow and holds up a finger, mouthing "work" to her. She releases her breath.

XANDER (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I've been looking over those papers, and I have some very interesting ideas.

He takes a couple of steps away from Willow to get some privacy. Once he's away from Willow, he lowers his voice.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Can't really talk now. She's right here.

(beat)

Yeah, I'll call you in a bit.

Xander turns off his phone and turns back to Willow. He smiles at her.

XANDER (CONT'D)

That was Mr. Hewitt. Work, work,
work.

(then)

So, are we ready to jump into the
fray yet?

The SCHOOL BELL RINGS. Willow's eyes once again fill with
fear.

WILLOW

I'm late!

Xander gives Willow a quick kiss.

XANDER

Run.

Willow takes off.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Love you! Good luck!

(beat)

If you see any demons, call me!

Xander turns to walk away, and sees TWO MOTHERS walking along
the sidewalk, giving him a strange look. He smiles at them.

XANDER (CONT'D)

(to self)

Probably shouldn't have yelled that
last part.

INT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - COMPUTER LAB - DAY

The students are wandering the room, talking, goofing around,
and waiting for their teacher.

At one of the desks, AUDRA DANES is sitting with MIKE FOWLER.
Both about sixteen-years-old. Audra appears to be something
of a computer geek, while Mike is more the slacker type.

Audra looks up at the clock.

AUDRA

She's late.

MIKE

Relax. Have fun.

AUDRA

But, she's late. It's not a good
first impression, is all I'm saying.

MIKE

I've heard rumors about this school.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

People disappearing, and stuff like that. Maybe she's not coming.

(beat)

Hey, do you still have those cookies in your bag?

AUDRA

No.

(then)

She probably doesn't even know anything about computers. Most of these teachers couldn't tell a Mac from a GameBoy if their lives depended on it.

MIKE

Yeah, well, I've also heard a rumor that this is one teacher you shouldn't mess with. Nate says he saw her in a coffee shop talking about how she killed a guy once.

AUDRA

She killed a guy?

MIKE

Seriously. This chick is seriously out of it.

AUDRA

Seriously?

The door opens and Willow rushes in. She stops short and looks at the class, trying to catch her breath. Everyone turns to look at her. She smiles nervously.

WILLOW

Hey. Hi.

(beat)

So, how's this for a first impression, huh?

She waits for a laugh, but it doesn't come. She walks to the chalk board, where her name is already clearly written, but she doesn't notice it. She picks up a piece of chalk.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

My name is Miss Rosenberg and I'm your new teacher.

She's about to write her name, but notices that it's already there, so she's not quite sure what to do with the chalk now.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Oh.

Finally, she underlines her name, turns and smiles.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
See? That'd be me.

She looks down at her desk and skims the lesson planner. She then looks up at the class again.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Okay, let's get to work.

Audra looks to Mike with a grin.

AUDRA
Yeah, she's scary.

INT. WATCHERS COUNCIL BUILDING - HEWITT'S OFFICE - DAY

MR. HEWITT is sitting behind his desk in this fancy, state-of-the-art office. The place is decorated with colored lights, glass sculptures, and flat panel TV screens. Like something out of Alias.

The door slides open (automatic door style) and GILES walks in, carrying a folder. Hewitt smiles at him.

MR. HEWITT
Hello, Mr. Giles. Please, have a seat.

GILES
I'm comfortable standing, thank you.

MR. HEWITT
Ever the rebel. Have it your way. I take it you've been looking into the subject as I'd asked.

GILES
I have.

MR. HEWITT
And?

GILES
And frankly, there's not very much for me to say. The subject moves faster than we can track it.

MR. HEWITT
It?
(smiles)
No need to be so formal. You know this subject. You love her.

GILES

My personal feelings toward the Slayer are not relevant to this conversation.

MR. HEWITT

Aren't they?

Mr. Hewitt stands and walks around his desk to look Giles in the eye.

MR. HEWITT (CONT'D)

I've known you for quite some time, Mr. Giles. I know your history with this Council and the man who used to run it. Let me assure you that I will not be as forgiving as Quentin Travers. This is a new day for the Council. Our styles have changed, and so have our methods. If I find out that you are protecting this girl, I will make sure that you are punished for your insubordination. Do I make myself clear?

GILES

Very.

MR. HEWITT

Good.

Mr. Hewitt starts to walk back to his seat.

GILES

Now let me explain something to you.

Hewitt stops and turns back to Giles.

GILES (CONT'D)

Mr. Travers didn't forgive my actions because he chose to. He accepted them because he had no choice. As was clearly stated to him, this Council is useless without the Slayer and if anything were to happen to me, you would have no chance of ever seeing her again, let alone working with her. Now, while I'm certain that had Quentin Travers used his vast resources to invest in very thin televisions and blue light bulbs the old Council never would have been blown up, I am equally certain that nothing has changed at the core of this organization.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

(beat)

Simply put, you need me much more than I have ever, or will ever need you.

Mr. Hewitt takes a moment to let these words sink in. He takes a deep breath and nods ever so slightly before taking his seat.

MR. HEWITT

I assume that's the file.

GILES

It is.

MR. HEWITT

And am I to believe that you've included all of the information that you've gathered, or have you chosen to leave out the details?

GILES

As long as I work with the Council, I will do my job. I've included everything that I thought was needed.

MR. HEWITT

Interesting choice of words.

GILES

Buffy has been working for well over two years now. In that time, she has traveled to a number of countries, and killed an indeterminate number of demons. If you'd rather have the complete rundown of every demon known to be dead by her hand, I would be willing to include it.

MR. HEWITT

I'm sure you've provided what I need.

Mr. Hewitt extends a hand. Giles gives him the folder. Mr. Hewitt looks over the information within.

MR. HEWITT (CONT'D)

Italy now? My, that girl can travel.

GILES

Reports have been coming in from around the world. Demonic activity has declined drastically in most regions.

MR. HEWITT

Good to hear.

GILES

Actually, I tend to believe it's not.

Hewitt puts the folder down, giving Giles all of his attention.

MR. HEWITT

Explain.

GILES

I believe that the demons are scared.

MR. HEWITT

As well they should be.

GILES

Scared enough to band together.

MR. HEWITT

Oh.

GILES

Demons that would normally keep to themselves, killing without a second thought are now on the defensive. They're scared and willing to do whatever it takes to stay alive.

MR. HEWITT

So to speak.

GILES

(obviously annoyed)

These demons will still need to feed. While the number of demonic attacks may be falling in some areas, in others it's rising at an alarming rate. These packs of demons are attacking all at once, devastating entire towns. Afterward, they return to hiding.

Mr. Hewitt thinks this over for a few moments.

MR. HEWITT

Interesting theory.

(beat)

I want you to investigate this, Mr. Giles. Find out whatever you can about these "packs". I want them destroyed.

GILES

Our resources aren't quite what they used to be.

MR. HEWITT

We're nearly completely rebuilt. I'm sure you can manage.

Giles isn't sure about this, but he doesn't feel like arguing anymore.

GILES

Of course.

MR. HEWITT

That will be all. I'll expect a report on my desk by next Thursday.

Giles nods and turns to walk out of the office.

GILES

(under his breath)

Prat.

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

This is Buffy's old Sunnydale house. The same place we know and love, but the furniture and art reflect the personalities of Willow and Xander more than Joyce and Buffy.

Xander walks into the house and heads for the living room as he pulls out his cell phone. He pushes a button and puts the phone to his ear. After a few moments, the person on the other end answers.

XANDER

Hey, it's me.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - DAWN'S ROOM - DAY

DAWN walks into her room as she speaks, closing the door behind her. She drops a backpack on the floor.

DAWN

Hey.

XANDER

Sorry about before. I couldn't talk with her right there.

DAWN

Yeah. I don't think you had to pull the whole fake name thing though. We talk all the time.

XANDER

Right. Good point. I think I'm just a little paranoid.

DAWN

Did you get it?

XANDER

Yeah. I think it's the right one. I found it in an antique shop just outside of town. The guy was asking fifteen hundred for it, but I got him to sell it for fifteen-fifty.

DAWN

Uhm... Xand?

XANDER

Yeah, my haggling ranks right up there with my classical piano skills.
(beat)
Dawn, are we sure this is the right thing to do?

DAWN

From what you've been saying over the past few weeks, I don't think you have much choice.

XANDER

Maybe you could do it for me?

DAWN

Could be awkward.

XANDER

Right. You're like, a thousand miles away.

DAWN

More or less. But I'll be there as soon as I can. I already have my ticket ordered.

XANDER

Should I wait?

DAWN

Xander, relax. We both know that this is the best thing for everyone involved.

XANDER

I know.

(beat)

It's just that I don't have the best of luck with these things. In case you've forgotten, they tend to go very, very wrong for me. People have gotten hurt. I don't want that to happen with Willow.

DAWN

It won't. You're older now. Wiser.
(beat)
A little.

XANDER

I hope you're right.

DAWN

I am the all knowing, all seeing
Key. Trust me.

XANDER

Haven't you been known to open a
vortex to multiple hell dimensions,
killing your sister and releasing
horrible monsters into our world?

DAWN

Okay, that was so not my fault.

Xander doesn't reply.

DAWN (CONT'D)

It wasn't!

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Buffy walks through the dark, damp, very old sewer tunnel.
She's on alert, as always.

Behind her, there is a SPLASH. She stops walking, but doesn't
turn around. She listens, but doesn't hear the sound again.
She once again begins to walk.

Behind her, a big, drippy, dirty demon rises from the sewer
water without making a sound. This is DARQUE. All of his
features are deep black, as are his clothes. The dirt that
drips off of him looks like oil. His sharp teeth and claws
are also deep black.

Buffy keeps walking along as Darque follows close behind,
still without a sound.

In the distance, a CLANG can be heard. Buffy stops walking
and listens again. Darque smiles, taking a deep whiff of her
hair. He raises a claw, preparing to attack. He quickly
brings the claw down, taking his best shot at ripping her
scalp off.

Buffy easily avoids the swipe and spins around, jamming the
stake end of the Scythe into Darque's chest and pinning him
to the wall.

BUFFY

The part where you tried to attack
me was the mistake.

Darque smiles again, still without a sound. He's obviously not in pain.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
The smarter demons run.

Darque attempts to swing at Buffy again, but she grabs his arm without much effort.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
The stake won't kill you. I know that.

She SNAPS his arm. Still, Darque grins. Buffy remains expressionless.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Do you feel pain? Do you hurt?

Darque doesn't respond.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Do you speak English?

Darque holds onto that goofy grin. Obviously, he doesn't understand Buffy.

Buffy sighs. She pulls the Scythe out of Darque's chest, and then swings the axe side of the Scythe around, cutting Darque in half across his belly. Before he falls apart, she swings the blade in the other direction and cuts him into quarters.

All four pieces of Darque fall to the ground. Buffy walks away. No quips, or puns.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - DAWN'S ROOM - DAY

Dawn is looking through her room for some lost object. She checks her desk, her bed, her closet and still no luck finding it. She walks out of the room.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's only now that we see the apartment in it's full glory. This place ain't cheap. A good view, and quality furnishings.

HANK SUMMERS is sitting in a chair, staring at his laptop when Dawn walks out of her room.

DAWN

Dad?

HANK

Hmm?

DAWN

I lost my necklace. Have you seen it?

HANK

Which one?

Dawn pauses. It's a slightly awkward topic.

DAWN

The- uh- The locket. I had it last night and now... Well, not so much.

Dawn starts searching the room.

DAWN (CONT'D)

We really need to get a cat so I can start blaming it for things like this.

HANK

Look in the kitchen.

DAWN

You've seen it?

HANK

No, but you do spend a lot of time in the kitchen. I'm still amazed that you haven't gotten fat yet.

DAWN

High metabolism. I'm just a big ball
of energy.

Dawn stops as she realizes what she just said. She didn't mean it in any mystical way, but she still has to look back at Hank to make sure that it didn't strike any wrong notes.

Hank's eyes don't move in any new direction, but he seems to be staring past the computer screen now. Thinking of something else completely. Dawn notices this, but doesn't say anything about it.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Kitchen.

Dawn walks through the room, into the kitchen.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dawn starts searching the room for her locket. She scans the counters and the table, but sees nothing. She then stops and tries to focus.

DAWN

Okay, this isn't hard. Just think.

She closes her eyes for a moment, walking through the last time she was in the kitchen. She turns toward the refrigerator.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I got the milk and walked to the
counter.

(turns toward the
counter)

Walked over to the counter. Put the
milk down and grabbed the pickles.
Put them on the counter.

(opening eyes)

Ah-ha!

She opens a cabinet and grabs a box of cereal. She opens it and sticks her hand inside. After a moment of fishing around, she pulls out the locket that Buffy gave her on the Night of Morel Divineh (which Buffy had gotten from Hank on her birthday). She smiles as she holds it up.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Gotcha.

She puts the cereal back in the cabinet and starts to walk out of the room.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dawn is looking at the locket, smiling.

DAWN

You're not going to believe where
I...

She notices that Hank is no longer in the room where she left him. She looks toward his bedroom door, which is closed.

She stops for a moment, knowing why he wants to be alone. She feels bad for him, but still doesn't want to push the subject. She can't discuss it, so it's better for her to just let it go. She walks into her room.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - DAWN'S ROOM - DAY

The curtains are closed now, and candles are lit around the room. Dawn is sitting on the floor in front of a circle made of colorful sand. Inside of the circle is a map of the world.

Dawn closes her eyes and holds a closed hand over the map.

DAWN

(in a quiet voice)

Custoa, guardian of the land and
sea, protector of the lost, hear me.
Help me find the one I seek. Help me
find my sister.

Dawn opens her eyes and then opens her hand. The locket drops from her hand, onto the map. The MAP GLOWS as the locket slides off of the paper. Soon, the LIGHT AROUND THE MAP IS PULLED TOGETHER, into one bright point of light. It is focused over France.

Dawn takes in this information and smiles slightly. At least Buffy is alive.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Custoa, watch her. Guide and protect
her in her mission.
(beat, holding back
tears)
Bring her back to me. Please.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Buffy is making her way down the street, Scythe in hand. As she walks, a strange feeling comes over her. She stops and looks up at the sky for a moment.

A gentle breeze blows over her, and she turns back to the street. She continues on her way.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - DAWN'S ROOM - DAY

Dawn stares at the map, trying to picture Buffy out there. After a moment, she takes a deep breath and starts to clean up.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - HANKS ROOM - DAY

Hank is sitting on his bed, holding a small box in his hand. The box is wrapped in birthday wrapping paper. He sits for a moment, staring down at the box. Finally, he stands and walks to his closet. He opens the door and lifts a blanket off of the shelf. He places the box on the shelf next to two other (older) wrapped packages and puts the blanket back on top of them.

He closes the closet door.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Willow and Xander are sitting at an outside table, eating their dinner. Willow is glowing... in a smilie way, not an actual "holy crap, that woman is glowing!" kind of way.

Xander is just watching her be happy and taking in the smiles.

WILLOW

It was unbelievable. I mean, there was some rocky start, and a little bump or two in the middle, and the end was somewhat awkward, but it was just so... I can't even describe it.

(beat)

It's like being back in high school, only people notice I'm there and they respect me, and there's no gum in my hair, and hardly anyone even died today.

Confusion comes over Xander's face.

XANDER

Someone died?

WILLOW

Well, yeah. Kinda.

(beat)

It was only Mr. Henderson. Not that he had it coming, but it was natural. No demons or anything. He was old.

(beat)

Kept teaching history in the first person. It was kinda weird.

XANDER

Oh. Well in that case, I guess we'll call it a good day.

WILLOW

Are you mocking me?

XANDER

A little.

Willow smiles.

WILLOW

Okay, mocker. What was your day like?

XANDER

Me? Y'know, the usual. Didn't build anything from about eleven to noon. Then I ate lunch, and then didn't build anything from one until quitting time. Hard day. Hard, hard day.

WILLOW

C'mon. You do stuff. You have that job with the Council, right? How did that go?

XANDER

Not far. I'm supposed to be writing all of these reports about the demons we've dealt with, but Mr. Hewitt wants me to write a synopsis of all the reports before I write the reports.

WILLOW

Why?

XANDER

Senility? I don't know. So now I'm stuck writing all of these synopsises...sees.

(beat)

Whatever. I guess it was just too easy to do it the other way.

WILLOW

Sorry. But at least you're getting more money for it, right?

XANDER

That part's true. Which means that dinner is on me... As long as they accept English money here.

Willow smiles.

WILLOW

I dare you to talk with an English accent when the waiter comes back.

XANDER

My English accent always sounds like a weird not-quite-Indian accent though.

(MORE)

XANDER (CONT'D)

(beat)

I could do my Albert voice and act all important and stuff.

Willow scrunches her nose.

WILLOW

Albert voice kinda freaks me out these days.

XANDER

Okay, consider Albert dead.

WILLOW

And a good riddance to him.

They fall silent for a moment, just picking at what's left of their food. Xander checks his watch.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Getting late?

XANDER

Only 8:30.

(beat)

Wanna get out of here?

WILLOW

Sure. But don't expect me to be all easy just because you're paying for dinner.

XANDER

Have a little more faith in my feminism, Will. I expect you to be easy for entirely different reasons.

Willow throws her napkin at him.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Willow and Xander slowly walk through the park. Willow's looking up at the sky, smiling.

WILLOW

And then we could play ping-pong with the smaller stars.

XANDER

And I didn't even notice you drinking tonight.

WILLOW

That's the last time I share one of my crazy imaginary games with you.

Xander smiles as Willow rests her head on his arm.

XANDER
Hey.

WILLOW
Hmm?

XANDER
Nothing. Just hey.

WILLOW
Hey back.

Xander stops walking, looking ahead.

XANDER
(more serious)
Hey.

WILLOW
I think we're playing this one out,
sweetie.

XANDER
No. Look.

Xander motions for Willow to look ahead of them. When she does, her eyes widen.

WILLOW
Oh. Hey.

WILLOW'S POV

A dead body, hidden in the bushes. Only one arm and a foot are hanging out.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
I don't suppose he's just a guy taking
a nap?

EXT. PARK - LATER

POLICE have taped off the area and the body is being removed now. Willow and Xander are just finishing up with the police and start to walk away.

WILLOW
That was fun.

XANDER
Just like the good old days.

Xander checks his watch again.

XANDER (CONT'D)

And now would be getting late.

WILLOW

And just like those good old days,
we have work to do.

XANDER

Work?

WILLOW

Well, yeah. You saw the bites on
that guy. There's a vampire somewhere
around here.

(beat, then looking
around, creeped out)

I don't suppose you have a stake
hidden in that jacket?

XANDER

Can't we just go home and deal with
this one tomorrow?

WILLOW

Sure. Hey, maybe the extra bodies
will give us more clues.

XANDER

That was sarcastic, right?

WILLOW

Umm, yeah. What's wrong with you
tonight? You seem weird.

Xander hesitates a little.

XANDER

I don't know.

WILLOW

It was the salmon mousse, right? I
told you it smelled funky.

XANDER

No, not the mousse. I just... I don't
know. I just thought we'd have some
hanging out time. Between my traveling
and your school, we haven't seen
much of each other for a while.

WILLOW

Oh. Well, we can still spend time
together. Slaying things can be
romantic, right? Just look at Buffy
and Angel.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

(beat)
And Buffy and Riley.
(beat)
And Buffy and Spi--

XANDER

I get it.
(beat)
It's not exactly what I was planning,
but I guess we have a job to do.

WILLOW

There's the spirit. Can we get weapons
now? I'm really getting a little
nervous here.

INT. WATCHERS COUNCIL BUILDING - GILES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Giles is sitting in his office, hunched over a desk. His office is very different than the office of Mr. Hewitt. Giles' office has simple desk lamps, and bookcases that are filled with old books.

Giles has a stack of books opened on his desk and he is skimming through several of them, taking notes. He turns to the wall behind him where there is a corkboard. On the board is a map of England, and several newspaper articles with headlines like "HUNDREDS OF CHICKENS STOLEN" and "SCHOOLYARD IN TERROR".

Giles stares at the board, trying to put together the pieces of a puzzle.

His door opens and a woman, MARGE SWEITZER walks into the office. She is English, in her mid-40's and very conservative looking.

MARGE

Somehow I knew you'd be here. Do you
even have a home?

GILES

I think so.

Giles turns to her.

GILES (CONT'D)

This isn't right. Something is
terribly wrong with this picture.

MARGE

Which picture is that?

GILES

All of it.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

I mean, I knew that these demon packs were gathering all over the world, but I was hoping that they wouldn't be quite as close as I think they might be.

MARGE

You think there's a pack here? There haven't been any major attacks.

GILES

That's what scares me. So far they've been taking small animals and scurrying about the woods. These demons can't possibly survive like that.

Giles shows her one of the books.

GILES (CONT'D)

Taw-min. A demon that's accustomed to a diet of newborns and blond virgins.

MARGE

(snickers)

Good luck.

GILES

He's been stalking these parts for over two centuries, ever since immigrating here from Asia.

MARGE

Big fellow with the blue spikes, right? I think I remember that one. Real hard to pin down.

GILES

Which is why it hasn't been killed. His normal feeding cycle should have had him taking victims for the last three months, but there's been nothing.

Giles shows Marge two more books.

GILES (CONT'D)

Egrias, a wrath demon. Saquil, a yeti. Angus Lass, a vampire with at least twenty followers and a penchant for some rather grizzly attacks, even by vampire standards.

Marge studies the books in front of her.

GILES (CONT'D)

In the last several months, death rates have dropped substantially. Murder rates specifically are lower than they've been since I can remember.

MARGE

They're waiting.

GILES

They're starving.

Giles picks up the phone and starts to dial while still talking with Marge.

GILES (CONT'D)

We need to fix this before it's too late. Get on the phone with Archer Jenkins. Tell him to assemble his team and wait for my call.

Marge nods and heads out of the room. Giles waits for whoever he is calling to pick up the phone. Finally, someone picks up.

GILES (CONT'D)

Miss Hartness, please.

(beat)

Thank you.

Giles waits another few moments as he flips through another book, skimming what it says. A moment later her perks up as someone's voice comes over the phone.

GILES (CONT'D)

This is Rupert Giles. I need your help.

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

The sky is just beginning to show signs of dawn. The street is beginning to come alive with PEOPLE scrambling to get to their jobs.

Buffy walks down the sidewalk, paying attention to nobody as she walks. The Scythe is still in her hand, and her clothes and hair are slightly less than spring-time fresh.

As she walks, some of the people on the street look in her direction. I guess they're not used to seeing a small young woman carrying a fancy weapon, dirty and expressionless. She doesn't look angry or threatening. She looks tired.

Buffy turns down an alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Buffy walks until she vanishes into the shadows.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Buffy climbs through a window, into the basement. It's quiet and full of clutter. Lots of hidden corners and spaces.

Buffy looks around and moves to one small corner, behind a stack of dusty boxes. She sits down, leaning against one of the walls. She puts the Scythe down next to her and for a moment just sits there, staring off into space.

Finally, she lies down on the floor and closes her eyes.

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Willow and Xander rush into the house and head for a weapon chest that is in the living room, covered by a nice throw and a couple of pillows. Willow brushes all of those things off as she opens the chest and looks inside.

WILLOW

What'll it be tonight?

XANDER

I don't know. I was thinking "axe", but now that I'm here I think I might be in the mood for something less heavy.

(beat)

I think I'll start off with the stake. Oh, and could I get a bottle of holy water with that?

WILLOW

Coming right up.

Willow hands Xander a stake and some holy water. She grabs a small axe and a wooden cross for herself. She stands.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Shall we?

They head for the door until Xander stops short.

XANDER

Hold on. Just thought of something.

WILLOW

Hmm?

XANDER

We have no idea where to find this guy.

WILLOW

Oh. That's... Okay.

XANDER

I guess we're in for a night of random patrol. I'll get the thermos.

Xander starts to walk toward the kitchen, but Willow thinks of something.

WILLOW

Hold on a sec.

Xander turns around.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Maybe there's another way of doing this.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Willow is sitting in front of her computer. Xander stands behind her, reading over her shoulder.

WILLOW

I heard one of those cops saying that this was the second death in two days where the victim was hidden in the bushes like that.

XANDER

Wasn't hidden well.

WILLOW

Still, it's a pattern.

She pulls up the Sunnydale Press website and looks through headlines, clicking on a couple of links. Finally she stops and skims the page.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

The one last night was Wallace Marsh. Found on Copper Street, near Temple.

Willow types a little and clicks a little more. She skims again.

XANDER

Any other recent deaths? Possibly our vamp?

WILLOW

Didn't see any murders listed. Obits had a few listing, but nothing specific.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

(beat)
Holly Hills. That's the nearest
cemetery to the first victim.

XANDER

So if this vamp is fresh from the
casket, that'd probably be the place.

Willow reads on a little more.

WILLOW

Two listings talk about services in
that cemetery. One's a car wreck.
Lots of blood and injuries. Not hard
to miss fang marks.

XANDER

That our guy?

WILLOW

Maybe.
(beat)
The other's an animal attack in the
woods.

XANDER

Animal attack sounds about right.

Willow stands up and grabs a piece of paper that's just coming
out of the printer.

WILLOW

Then let's check it out.

They grab their weapons and head for the door.

XANDER

(to himself)
This better not take all night.

EXT. EMBRY HOUSE - NIGHT

Willow and Xander walk up to the house and look at it. It's
a simple little house in a nice neighborhood. A few of the
lights are on.

WILLOW

This should be it. We ready?

Xander holds up his stake.

XANDER

If by "ready" you mean "prepared",
then yeah.

WILLOW

Good.

(beat)

Wait. What else would "ready" mean?

XANDER

I don't know. I was just doing that thing where I speak all funny.

WILLOW

Oh. 'Kay.

They start to walk toward the door.

XANDER

When we get up there, you ring the bell and I'll attack.

(beat)

No, I'll ring the bell and you attack. That way I'm up front.

(beat)

Or you could ring the bell and then hide, and--

WILLOW

We're hunting vampires, not playing ding-dong-ditch, honey. We both attack. It's why I have the shiny axe.

XANDER

Fine, but if you get killed I'm so breaking up with you. I'm done with dating demons and dead chicks.

They get to the door and Willow takes a deep breath.

WILLOW

Okay, here we go.

She rings the doorbell and then they both ready for battle. They raise their weapons and put on their game faces.

XANDER

Show yourself evil demon. Let's make this snappy.

They can hear the DOOR UNLOCKING. They further prep for battle.

Finally, the door swings open. Xander and Willow raise their weapons and are just about to let out a battle cry or two before they see who is at the door.

ANGLE ON:

PATTI WHEELER. A nice looking young woman wearing frilly pink pajamas and a big smile on her face, right under the slightly confused eye parts.

PATTI

Uh... Hi?

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. EMBRY HOUSE - NIGHT

Patti continues to smile as Willow and Xander awkwardly lower their weapons.

PATTI
Can I help you with something?

WILLOW
Uhm... We...
(beat)
Is Bruce here?

Patti's smile fades.

PATTI
Oh. Sorry, I guess you haven't heard.
(beat)
Bruce died.

WILLOW
Oh.

XANDER
But he's not here, right?

Willow shoots Xander a look. Xander just shrugs.

WILLOW
He must be the man we were told about.

PATTI
And who are you?

WILLOW
I'm... Dawn. Dawn Summers. This is my partner, Steve. We work for the local branch of... People For The Elimination Of Threatening Animals. It's a watchdog group for the victims of violent animal attacks and the like. We were told about Mr. Embry.

Patti is more confused now.

PATTI
Okay.
(beat)
It was just a wolf attack. He was in the woods at night and he came between a mother and her pup. That's what they told me.

(MORE)

PATTI (CONT'D)

(beat)
You're not gonna kill the babies,
are you?

EXT. EMBRY HOUSE - LATER

Willow and Xander walk away from the house.

XANDER

Okay, what was that? People For The
Elimination Of Threatening Animals?

WILLOW

I was on the spot.

XANDER

Whatever you say, Dawn.

WILLOW

Well...

XANDER

We have to get this finished. I have
better things to be doing tonight.

WILLOW

Well, next time we'll ask the demons
to check with us before attacking.
Make sure we're free that night.

XANDER

It'd be nice, is all I'm saying.

(beat)

Where now?

WILLOW

Now the next victim's house.

(beat)

Victim's house by way of Espresso
Pump.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dawn walks out of her bedroom and finds Hank sitting on the
couch, watching TV. She sits next to him.

DAWN

Hey.

HANK

Finished for the night?

DAWN

Yeah. Just needed to read a few
chapters and make a few notes to
make it look like I'm making notes.

HANK
What's the subject.

DAWN
Medieval History.

HANK
Lots of the old stuff these days.

DAWN
Yup.
(then, switching
subjects)
So, what's on the telly?

HANK
Just an old movie. I'm not really
watching.

DAWN
I do that a lot too. Mind's always
wandering off in some weird direction.
Usually during class, which is kinda
bad.

Hank doesn't respond. Dawn knows that something is bothering
him.

DAWN (CONT'D)
Lots of work to think about?

HANK
Some.

DAWN
Anything I can help with?

HANK
Not really.

DAWN
Yeah, I kinda realized how lame that
offer was after I asked.

HANK
You hungry? There's some popcorn in
the kitchen.

DAWN
Maybe in a few minutes.

They sit in silence for a few moments, just staring at the
TV. It's a little awkward, since Dawn knows what's bothering
Hank but doesn't want to get into it. Finally, she stands
up.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Now's good too. I'll be right back.

She walks to the kitchen.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dawn closes the kitchen door behind her and leans against the counter. She takes a deep breath.

It's obvious that this is hard for her. There's a lot that she'd like to say to Hank but can't.

EXT. WOODS/BAKER TRAILER - NIGHT

Willow and Xander walk through the woods, searching. They are in the middle of nowhere, with plenty of trees and not many people around.

WILLOW

It's supposed to be around here somewhere.

XANDER

Who parks their trailer in the middle of the woods? You might as well ask to be killed by a demon.

WILLOW

Most people probably don't know that.

XANDER

The "I don't know" excuse didn't fly for me back in math class and it doesn't fly in big evil woods.

WILLOW

(smiles)

Check out the grouchy grownup guy.

XANDER

(also smiles)

I am. I'm a grown-up now.

Willow and Xander cautiously approach the trailer. The trailer is a very retro style trailer. Very shiny.

Around the windows of the trailer we can see bloody handprints, as though someone tried to escape through the window but got pulled back in.

The door to the trailer is wide open, and the light inside is flickering.

XANDER (CONT'D)

My grownup instincts are telling me that this just might be the place.

They slowly walk up to the door. When they get there, Willow sticks her head inside. She quickly pulls it back out.

WILLOW

Eew. The place smells like our refrigerator.

XANDER

Which I will fix.

Xander walks inside.

XANDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I just haven't gotten around to it yet.

Willow rolls her eyes and follows Xander.

INT. BAKER TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

They look around the cramped trailer. Blood covers several surfaces in there, which Willow and Xander are very careful to avoid.

Xander goes to the refrigerator and looks inside. In there, he sees a bloody hand.

XANDER

I think this guy had to be creepy before the whole vampire thing.

WILLOW

But he's not here.

Willow sighs.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

This really isn't going well.

XANDER

Remember the good ol' days when we'd go out with Buffy and she'd just happen to stumble upon these things?

WILLOW

Slayer instincts. I always took them for granted.

Xander looks Willow in the eyes with a certain amount of mope in his eyes.

XANDER

Past tense rule.

WILLOW

Let's go.

INT. SUMMERS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hank is still looking in the general direction of the TV, not paying much attention to it. Dawn is sitting nearby, also not watching.

She looks down at her hand where she is holding the locket. She then looks to Hank.

DAWN

So, how 'bout that big pink elephant?

HANK

Hmm?

DAWN

You know. The one that's sitting right between us and neither of us wants to talk about. I believe it answers to the name, Buffy. Has a birthday coming up, if I'm not mistaken.

HANK

Oh.

Hank shifts in his seat.

HANK (CONT'D)

I guess I'm not as subtle as I thought I was.

DAWN

I can't tell you why she left.

HANK

I know.

(beat)

Just... Tell her that I miss her.

DAWN

What? What are you...? Dad, I'm not going to see Buffy.

Hank doesn't respond.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Is that what you thought? That I was sneaking off to see her without telling you? Why would I do that?

HANK

I don't know. I just assumed... Her birthday's coming up. I thought you might.

DAWN

Yeah, I might. If I knew where she was.

HANK

Then why go back? Why now?

DAWN

Because I... Xander and Willow are going through a thing right now. I wanted to go see them.

Hank looks at Dawn, feeling stupid.

HANK

Oh.

DAWN

If I were going to see Buffy, I would tell you. I'd never keep that kind of thing from you.

HANK

I know. I'm sorry that I... I just wanted... I don't know.

DAWN

I know.

INT. WATCHERS COUNCIL BUILDING - GILES' OFFICE - MORNING

The sun has not yet shown itself. Giles is still in his office, talking into the phone.

GILES

Then get him out of bed. This is an emergency.

(beat)

Yes.

He picks up a book and flips through it, reading as he talks on the phone.

GILES (CONT'D)

Tell him it's Rupert Giles.

(beat)

No. I really don't care.

(beat)

Young lady, listen very carefully. I have seen more apocalypses than most people can count on one hand. I have seen the dead rise, and the risen dead perform musical dance numbers. I think it's fair to say that not many things in this world can scare me at this point.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

Now, I don't care if Mr. Hewitt is sleeping. I don't care if he's receiving last rights. Get him on the telephone right now.

(long beat)

Yes, I'll hold.

Marge walks into the office with a folder in hand. She puts it on the desk.

MARGE

Any progress?

GILES

I never thought it'd be possible for me to dislike someone less than the last man who ran this place. Did you know that he plays Garth Brooks when he puts you on hold?

(into the phone)

For Heaven's sake, man. You're supposed to be British. Have some standards.

MARGE

I take it that's a "no" then.

GILES

What did you find out?

MARGE

The coven has been working on locator spells for the last several hours. So far, they have three possible locations.

GILES

Possible?

Marge shrugs.

MARGE

They're working on it. The energy surrounding these demons isn't... well, normal.

GILES

Of course not. Why should it be? That would be too easy.

Giles hears a voice come over the phone. He perks up.

GILES (CONT'D)

Hello?

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

(beat)

Well, when he's through primping, could you tell him that there is a massive convergence of demonic activity in the area and we all may very well be dead before noon?

(beat, then annoyed)

C-O-N-V-- Yes, that's it.

Giles hangs up the phone.

EXT. BAKER TRAILER - NIGHT

Willow and Xander exit the trailer. Their guard is down.

XANDER

I don't mean to sound unoriginal, but where do we go from here?

WILLOW

Maybe we can track down someone who knew him when he was alive. Find out where he might go for fun.

Xander looks back to the bloody handprint.

XANDER

If any of his old friends are still alive.

WILLOW

We suck. We can't even track down one stupid vampire.

XANDER

We don't suck. We're just having an off night. We tracked that flesh eating demon last week, right? And that nest of vampires.

WILLOW

Two vampires, six months ago.

(beat)

And that freaky girl demon with the long head things.

XANDER

There you go. We're badass demon hunters on occasion.

As soon as he says that, Xander is knocked over the head by a tree branch. He falls to the ground. Willow looks over and sees BAKER holding the branch. He's a vamped out, grungy type of guy. Long hair, held back by a bandana, Axle Rose style.

When Willow sees him, she frowns.

WILLOW

We suck.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. BAKER TRAILER - NIGHT

Willow raises her axe and backs up to put some space between herself and Baker. Baker smiles at her.

BAKER
You looking for me?

WILLOW
I was just out for a walk. You know
how it is. Love me that fresh air.

BAKER
Walking with weapons? Looks like
you're hunting.

Willow looks at her axe and straightens up. She looks Baker in the eyes.

WILLOW
Fine. Yes. You got me. I am hunting
you, evil vampire. Surrender and
this won't be painful.

BAKER
Likely.

Baker walks toward Willow as Willow continues to back up. She readies her axe.

WILLOW
Then you'll just have to prepare to
die.
(beat)
Again.

BAKER
I'm preparing for a lot of things,
little one. Leaving this world ain't
one of them. Now, kissin' all up and
down that sweet neck of yours as the
blood pours out is a whole 'nother
story.

Baker gets a little too close and Willow raises the axe. Before she can swing, Baker knocks it from her hand and grabs her arm. He pulls her close.

BAKER (CONT'D)
You look all kinds of pure. I like
that in a victim.

XANDER (O.S.)
Gotta tell you...

Baker turns and sees Xander standing right next to him.

XANDER (CONT'D)
You're just a bad judge of character.

Xander punches Baker as hard as he can, which causes Baker to blink slightly. Baker lets go of Willow. She steps back. She starts looking around for the axe.

XANDER (CONT'D)
(to Baker)
Can I just ask you something? Why do you bad guys always forget about the guy you hit first? I mean, you hit me and just assume I'm dead? What kind of logic is that?

Baker swings at Xander, but Xander ducks out of the way. He raises the bottle of holy water, which has a cross on it's label. Baker steps back.

Xander pulls the cork out of the bottle with his teeth and spits it to the ground.

BAKER
What is this?

XANDER
This is me getting the upper hand.

He shakes the bottle in Baker's direction, splashing several drops onto Baker, which SIZZLE.

As Baker reacts to this, Willow buries her axe in his back. It stays there as Baker drops to the ground, waving his arms, but not moving his legs.

WILLOW
Stake!

Xander pulls his stake and rushes toward Baker. As Xander attempts to stake Baker, Baker uses his arms to keep Xander away. They end up wrestling with each other on the ground as Willow watches, waiting for a moment to jump in.

BAKER
I'm stronger than you.

XANDER
I have better shoes and a winning personality.

Xander rolls Baker onto his back, where the axe is still stuck. Baker screams in pain.

Willow rushes up and kicks Baker in the head before quickly stepping back again.

BAKER

Stop it!

Baker reaches behind his back and pulls out the axe. He raises it in the air, meaning to swing at Xander.

Willow's eyes widen when she sees this.

WILLOW

Xander!

Willow rushes in once again and grabs Baker's arm. She too winds up on the ground, struggling with Baker's axe hand as Xander attempts to get at him with a stake.

Baker snaps at Xander's hand with his fangs, but Xander pulls back avoiding him.

XANDER

Sissy biter.

BAKER

I'm a vampire!

Willow manages to twist the axe and pull it away from Baker. She stumbles back with it and smiles.

WILLOW

I got it.

Baker uses his now-free second hand to grab Xander around the neck and begins choking him.

XANDER

(choking)
Churking! Churking!

WILLOW

Churking?

Xander motions toward his neck.

XANDER

Churking!

WILLOW

(getting it)
Choking!

She rushes toward Baker and swings the axe at his neck. She hits her target and Baker lets go of Xander, going limp.

Xander moves away from Baker, rubbing his neck. Willow goes to him.

XANDER

Let's hear it for the lamest fight ever.

WILLOW

At least we won.

XANDER

I think this whole "distract and attack from behind" technique really works for us.

Willow helps Xander to stand up.

WILLOW

Did you make a crack about my purity?

XANDER

Please don't hurt me.

They start to walk away.

WILLOW

We'll discuss this at home.
(extended beat)
He is going to go poof, right?

They stop walking and turn around. They look at Baker who is still on the ground with the axe in his neck, not moving.

XANDER

Maybe we didn't decapitate him enough.

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

The front door opens. Willow and Xander walk in. Xander is still rubbing his neck.

WILLOW

I'm sure you'll feel better in the morning. Can I get you anything?

XANDER

Tea, maybe? Some popcorn?

WILLOW

This time of night?

XANDER

Fighting makes me hungry.

WILLOW

Fine. Go lie down. I'll bring it up.

He smiles.

XANDER

Thanks.

Xander kisses Willow on the head as she walks toward the kitchen. Once she's gone, his look changes. His smile fades and a somewhat sinister look fills his eyes. He walks up the stairs.

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Willow fills a kettle with water.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xander places several black candles on the dresser and lights them.

Willow grabs two mugs and puts tea bags in them. She opens a cabinet and searches for popcorn.

Xander turns off the lights, allowing the eerie glow of the candles to light the room. He looks at his watch and takes a deep breath.

Willow grabs the fully popped bag of popcorn from the microwave and pours it's contents into a bowl.

Xander uses a very old looking dagger to cut into a bag of dried flower petals. He grabs a handful of the petals and places them in an old clay bowl that rests on the dresser, surrounded by the candles.

Willow puts the mugs on a tray, next to the bowl of popcorn. She pours hot water into them and then picks up the tray.

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Willow walks up the stairs with the tray and finds Xander waiting for her in the hallway. She can tell that something is up with him by the very serious, kinda nervous look on his face.

WILLOW

Are you okay?

XANDER

Put the tray down.

WILLOW

Xander, what's wrong?

XANDER

Just put the tray down.

WILLOW

Okay.

Willow puts the tray down on the hall table.

XANDER

Come with me.

He opens the door to the bedroom and walks in.

WILLOW

Are you okay?

She follows him into the bedroom.

INT. WILLOW AND XANDER'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Xander closes the bedroom door behind Willow. Willow looks around the room, not knowing what's going on.

WILLOW

What's happening? What is this?

XANDER

You know I love you, right?

WILLOW

I guess.

XANDER

You know that I'd never want to hurt you, right?

WILLOW

Sure.

(beat)

Are you gonna hurt me now?

Xander looks down.

XANDER

I hope not.

(beat)

Willow, there's something inside you. Some strange energy--

WILLOW

No there's not. No energy.

XANDER

Just listen.

(beat)

There's this strange energy inside of you that I don't think you can even control. It's powerful. It's all-consuming.

Willow looks to the bed and sees the dagger on it. Her eyes widen.

WILLOW
What's that for?

Xander gives her a slightly annoyed look.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Sorry. Quiet now. You were saying something about an all-consuming power that doesn't really exist.

XANDER
It does exist. I've tried ignoring it. I've tried denying it. I've tried to find some way around all of this, but there just isn't one.
(beat)
Will, I love you. Just try to remember that, okay?

WILLOW
Sure. I guess.
(beat)
Maybe.

Xander steps closer to Willow and takes her hand.

XANDER
I've known you forever. You're the one person that I could always count on. Without you, I don't think I'd have survived any of this demon stuff. More than that though, I don't think I'd have survived any of the normal stuff either. I couldn't have done it without you. That's why I have to do this.

Xander reaches into his pocket. Willow steps back.

WILLOW
Is this the part where you kill me?

Xander shakes his head and pulls out a small wooden box. He opens it and shows Willow the contents.

XANDER
This is the part where I propose.
(beat)
I couldn't have gotten this far without you, and I want to make sure you're there for the rest of it. Marry me.

Willow's eyes widen even more as her jaw drops. She looks at the ring in the box.

WILLOW
No.

XANDER
No?

WILLOW
No!

Willow looks Xander in the eyes, still in shock.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
No way.

XANDER
Oh.

Willow suddenly realizes what words have come out of her mouth. She hadn't heard them before.

WILLOW
No, I mean yes. Yes! I'll marry you.

XANDER
You will? Seriously?

WILLOW
I will seriously marry you, Xander Harris.

Willow rushes in and kisses Xander.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
You had me at "hey, stop eating that crayon."

XANDER
I was worried there for a sec.

WILLOW
That was shocked "no", not response "no".

She kisses him again and then holds up her hand.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Okay, ring time!

Xander takes the ring out of the box and slips it onto her finger. Willow looks at it closely.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
It's pretty.

XANDER

It's an antique.

WILLOW

Which I'm sure will have no mystical repercussions down the road.

Willow kisses Xander again.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I love it.

(beat)

Quick question?

XANDER

Sure.

WILLOW

What's the dagger for?

XANDER

I don't take rejection very well.

INT. BASEMENT - DUSK

The orange light of the setting sun casts sharp shadows across Buffy's face as she sleeps. Her face has a strange peaceful look on it as she rests.

We SLOWLY PUSH IN on her face. Once we're close on her eyes, they open. She grabs her Scythe and stands.

WIDE ON : BUFFY

She is a silhouette against the bright setting sun.

INT. WATCHERS COUNCIL BUILDING - GILES' OFFICE - DAY

Giles is sitting behind his desk as THREE YOUNG WATCHERS stand by, listening to him speak.

GILES

So far, we've narrowed the search for this group down to two possible locations. While we wait for confirmation of their location, we must prepare ourselves for the battle ahead.

One of the young Watchers, SAMPSON TREVOR, raises his hand slightly.

SAMPSON

I'm sorry, sir. I don't understand. What can we do until these demons are located?

(MORE)

SAMPSON (CONT'D)

We've researched the methods by which the suspected demons can be killed. We've readied our teams and assembled the proper equipment. I would say that we're ready.

GILES

Then you will be the first to die.

Giles stands up and walks around his desk. The young Watchers follow him with their eyes as he cleans his glasses.

GILES (CONT'D)

The first thing that you must realize before going into battle is that you are never fully prepared for what you are about to face. The moment that you allow yourselves to believe that you are ready, you begin to let your guard down.

SAMPSON

But my father said that once you've done the research, you know your enemy. Once you know your enemy, you're ready to face them.

GILES

Your father?

Giles turns to Sampson and looks him in the eyes as he tries to place the name. Finally, it comes to him.

GILES (CONT'D)

Wallace Trevor?

SAMPSON

Yessir.

GILES

Of course. A good man.

(beat)

I was sorry to hear about his death.

One of the other Watchers attempts to repress a chuckle. Giles walks to him and looks him in the eyes.

GILES (CONT'D)

Leave.

YOUNG WATCHER

I'm sorry, sir. It won't happen again.

GILES

You're right. That was the idea behind your leaving.

The young Watcher nods and walks out of the room. Giles turns to Sampson, but before he can say anything, Marge runs into the room. Giles' attention turns to her.

MARGE

We've located them.

GILES

Notify the team.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Buffy walks through the woods slowly. She is not in any particular rush.

She looks ahead, noticing a slight glow coming from the distance. Someone has a fire burning.

A RUSTLING SOUND catches her attention next. Something is moving to her side. She takes note of this, and continues walking.

ANOTHER NOISE is heard. This time, the leaves of a tree coming from above her. Buffy looks up.

ANGLE ON : THE TREETOPS

A SHADOW moves along the treetops, toward the fire.

Buffy sees this, and continues to walk.

ANGLE ON : THE CAMPGROUND

Several demons gather around the fire. A vampire who once fancied designer clothes and fine restaurateurs is now dirty and hungry. His name is ANGUS LASS and he paces back and forth nervously.

Sitting by the fire is TAW-MIN. As described earlier, he is a big demon with blue spikes. His mouth looks as though it could easily widen to fit a baby. At the moment, he is using his unusually long tongue to lick the half-skinned body of a small rodent.

Next to him is FRENG, a mousy demon with big black eyes that are focused on Taw-min's food. Next to Freng is DIGGER, a once-furry demon who is losing his hair due to malnutrition. His eyes are sunken and his ribs are very visible.

Sitting to one side of the camp, with his back to the rest of the demons is AIS. He is a small, frail demon. Always frail, not newly frail. He looks like an old man, covered by a heavy hood. His white, blind eyes are aimed toward the woods. He pulls his hood, trying to keep warm.

From high above, SAQUIL drops from the treetops. He is a very bigfoot-y looking demon with long, wiry hair covering his body and large arms and legs. He is alarmed.

SAQUIL
It's coming!

The demons around the fire get to their feet. Ais remains seated, ignoring the rest of them.

ANGUS
I knew that fire would get us killed.

TAW-MIN
Some of us need the warmth.

FRENG
What do we do? What happens now?

ANGUS
Now we run.

FRENG
Where? Where do we go?

ANGUS
I couldn't care less where you go.

Angus takes off toward the woods. Digger runs in the opposite direction, vanishing into the darkness.

SAQUIL
Vampire's right. Every demon for himself.

TAW-MIN
We signed into this group together.
We're stronger together.

SAQUIL
We're dead if we stay together. Even
the Slayer can't run in more than
one direction at a time.

From the darkness of the woods, Angus flies through the air. He lands on the fire and BURSTS INTO FLAMES. Within moments, he is REDUCED TO ASH.

The other demons watch this.

SAQUIL (CONT'D)
That was effective.

The Scythe flies through the air, and the axe end of it takes off Taw-min's head before being buried in one of the nearby trees.

Saquil looks in the direction from which the Scythe came. He then looks back to Freng.

SAQUIL (CONT'D)

Good luck.

Saquil jumps into the trees, leaving Freng, and Ais.

Freng attempts to run, but is very weak. He drops to the ground within seconds.

As Freng attempts to pull himself up, Buffy emerges from the woods and stands over him. He looks up, scared.

FRENG

P--Please. I only eat the weaker children. I promise.

Buffy tilts her head, genuinely curious.

BUFFY

This is how you plead for life?

FRENG

I have nothing to offer.

BUFFY

But everything to take.

Buffy squats down and looks Freng in the eyes.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

This is why.

She grabs his head with one hand and twists it until his NECK SNAPS. He drops, dead.

Buffy stands up and walks to her Scythe. She pulls it from the tree and looks upward. She can feel Sequil.

She throws the Scythe into the blackness of night. A moment later, we can hear a MOAN and the RUSTLING OF LEAVES as Saquil falls to the ground O.S.

Buffy turns toward Ais and walks toward him. Ais remains seated with his back facing Buffy.

AIS

You kill, but do you wonder?

Buffy doesn't answer. She stands behind him.

AIS (CONT'D)

Of course you do. You're a curious girl, seeking answers for the purpose.

(MORE)

AIS (CONT'D)

You know what you must do, but you don't understand why evil exists to begin with.

BUFFY

It's a balance. Evil exists because of good. Good makes people free, which means that they're able to think for themselves. Evil spawns from free will.

AIS

Evil, yes. Demons, no.

BUFFY

You didn't ask about demons.

AIS

No, I didn't. But you do wonder, don't you?

Buffy says nothing.

AIS (CONT'D)

Demons aren't the question, Slayer. We are the answer. We are why you exist. Without us, you have no purpose.

BUFFY

Maybe I'm the answer then.

Ais smiles.

AIS

A paradox.

BUFFY

I ask questions. I ask what demons think. I ask if they feel.

AIS

You seek purpose in the chaos.

BUFFY

No.

AIS

Then you seek to understand your enemy so that you may kill them.

BUFFY

Wrong again.

AIS

Then what is it that you seek?

BUFFY
(shrugs)
Conversation.

AIS
Interesting girl.

BUFFY
The others run. Why don't you?

AIS
Because I see what they don't. I see
the way things must be. I see those
like me in the fire, and that like
you in the flood. There is no stopping
what must be done. I die tonight
because that is the way it has to
be.

Buffy looks down at Ais, taking in what he says.

BUFFY
Finally, someone gets it.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Giles and his team of TACTICAL WATCHERS move through the woods. The tactical guys are dressed in dark clothes, carrying heavy weapons and moving all stealthy. Like the Initiative, but with tea and scones.

Giles looks up at the sky, and then to his watch. He wants to do this before sunset.

TACTICAL WATCHER (O.S.)
Over here!

Giles looks in the direction of the voice and moves that way. He finally reaches the spot and finds a group of tactical Watchers gathered around a dead body. Giles pushes through them and squats down.

He looks intrigued by this.

GILES
We're too late.

He stands up. He takes one last look around the area, seeing two more bodies. He then turns and starts to walk away.

PAN DOWN to the body that Giles was examining. It is the body of Ais.

ANGLE ON : GILES

As he walks away. His intrigued expression turns into a slight smile.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF EPISODE