

Buffy The Vampire Slayer

Season 8

Episode 15

"Unlocked"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

BUFFY walks into the kitchen and finds WILLOW and XANDER at the table. Willow's still a little under the weather, but looking better than before.

The pantry is wide open, and the counters are covered with many food items.

Currently, Xander is holding two mugs in front of Willow. Both steaming. One with whipped cream on top.

Buffy stops short.

BUFFY
Did the pantry explode?

XANDER
Hey, Buff. Wanna help?

BUFFY
Are we eating everything we own?

WILLOW
Xander's experimenting on me.

BUFFY
Do I wanna hear this?

XANDER
I'm trying to help Willow figure out who she is by figuring out what she likes. For example...

He points to the mugs.

XANDER (CONT'D)
Is she a coffee person, or a hot chocolate person?

Buffy sits down with them, looking a little confused.

WILLOW
I keep trying to tell him that I still like the same things I always liked, but he insists on doing this.

XANDER
If you know what you like, then answer the question. Coffee or chocolate?

Willow looks at the cups for a second. Finally, she grabs a third mug off of the table and pours half of each drink into it. She smiles at Xander.

WILLOW

This answer your question?

Xander doesn't respond. He just stares at the third mug. Willow notices him staring.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

You want the chocolate coffee, don't you?

XANDER

Yes please.

Willow slides it over, and Xander happily drinks it.

BUFFY

Could you guys get any cutsier? Between you guys and Dawn and Ryan always hanging around, I'm starting to miss relationship Buffy.

WILLOW

Oh, don't think like that. Besides, we don't like relationship Buffy much, remember? She's always mopey and depressing.

BUFFY

That is true.

There's a beat.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

So are you guys, like, really together? Really, really?

Willow and Xander look at each other and smile.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Okay, so I have my answer.

(beat)

I'm happy for you.

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

DAWN and RYAN walk down the hall, hand-in-hand. Dawn has a freaked out expression on her face.

DAWN

I am not happy.

(beat)

Wait. Yes, I am. I'm very happy, because this isn't happening.

RYAN

I don't think ignoring it will make it go away.

DAWN

But I can try. And I'll succeed.

(beat)

See there? I started two different sentences with a "but" and an "and". You're not supposed to do that. I'm not smart. Why did they pick me for this?

They stop next to a poster on the wall. It says : "BATTLE OF THE BRAINS - THIS FRIDAY!"

Dawn points to it.

DAWN (CONT'D)

It says "Battle Of The Brains". That's not me. My brain is a sandal wearing pacifist guy. My brain is anti-brain battles.

RYAN

Dawn, relax. Take a deep breath. You'll be fine.

DAWN

Easy for you to say. You're not gonna be put on stage, in front of the entire school, and forced to jump through hoops.

(eyes widen)

They won't actually do that, will they? Make me jump through hoops. Is there a physical fitness segment?

RYAN

It's a geek war, they won't have gym.

DAWN

Geek war? Great. I'm a geek. I will forever be remembered as one of those guys on **Saved By The Bell** who wear taped up glasses, and pocket protectors in my ugly pastel shirts.

Ryan smiles.

RYAN

You're not a geek. Actually, the kids really get into the whole competition thing. They'll be cheering for you.

DAWN
If I don't throw up.

RYAN
I told you, you'll be fine.
(beat)
I was always nervous before a game,
but once I got out there, all of
that went away.

Dawn pauses. There's the football subject again.

DAWN
So why didn't you go back to playing?

As she finishes saying that, THE BELL RINGS. Ryan is thankful for this.

RYAN
I should go. I have to make a stop
before class.

DAWN
Ryan, what aren't you telling me?

He pauses.

RYAN
Fine. I'll tell you.
(serious beat)
I've eaten those Elvis sandwiches at
the Bait-N-Breakfast, and I like
them.

He's joking to avoid the subject, and Dawn knows it. She's not amused.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Seriously, I'm late. I'll see you
later.

He kisses her forehead and takes off. She watches him go, still wondering what his deal is.

Her eyes eventually drift back to the poster. When she sees it, she begins to panic again.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS/OUTSIDE OF CAVE - DAY

Buffy is walking through the woods, carrying the Scythe. Willow and Xander follow her, struggling to keep up. Xander has a sword, while Willow carries an ax.

BUFFY

You guys really didn't have to come, y'know.

WILLOW

We wanted to. Makes us feel handy.

BUFFY

Just be careful. You might feel handy, but I don't need you looking bloody.

XANDER

We can handle ourselves.

WILLOW

Besides, without me, how would you find this place?

Buffy holds up a map, drawn on printer paper.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Oh. Right.

Buffy starts to slow down.

BUFFY

If I'm reading the map right, we're almost there.

(beat)

The little squiggles with legs- next to the cave with the happy face- are the snake demons, right?

Willow's about to answer when Buffy looks at the map.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Nevermind. I see the key now.

Willow smiles proudly at Xander. He smiles back.

As they get near the cave, they stop behind the same trees that Willow and Kennedy hid behind in the last episode and take a look at what's ahead.

WILLOW

There should be one demon standing guard.

BUFFY
 (nodding toward the
 cave)
 And there he is.

BUFFY'S POV

The opening of the cave once again has a SNAKE DEMON standing guard in front of it.

WILLOW
 After I killed the last guard, a bunch more came out. Maybe twenty. I got eight more, and I think Kennedy got one or two.

BUFFY
 There were five at the house.

WILLOW
 So, if that was all of them, there shouldn't be too many more.

XANDER
 Let's just hope we're that lucky.

Buffy looks around the area, trying to devise a plan. Finally, she gets one.

BUFFY
 I'm gonna head around. Give me five minutes, and then get this guy's attention.

Willow and Xander nod. As Buffy heads off, Xander looks at his watch.

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

Dawn, EMILY and another student, PETE, are sitting in chairs, on the stage. Emily is not a happy camper. She shoots Dawn an angry look. Dawn doesn't know what her deal is, but she tries to ignore her.

PRINCIPAL SHAW finally walks into the stage, smiling at them.

PRINCIPAL SHAW
 Sorry I'm late. There was an incident in the teachers lounge.

She pulls up a chair and sits near them.

PRINCIPAL SHAW (CONT'D)
 Since you're all here, I assume that you know what this is about. The Battle of the Brains.

(MORE)

PRINCIPAL SHAW (CONT'D)

I just thought I'd give you a quick rundown of the situation, incase you weren't competing last year, or you had any questions.

Emily and Pete both look at Dawn. She looks back with a "Why are you looking at me?" look.

PRINCIPAL SHAW (CONT'D)

The competition will consist of five segments. English, history, math, science, and talent.

Dawn's eyes widen.

DAWN

Talent?

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Is there a problem with that?

DAWN

What kind of talent?

PRINCIPAL SHAW

You choose. Something simple, but impressive.

Dawn winces. She has no simple, but impressive talent.

PRINCIPAL SHAW (CONT'D)

You'll have until the end of this week to prepare. It's short notice, but that's what makes it fun. The contest will be in game show format, with myself as the host.

(beat)

Any questions?

DAWN

Are the questions gonna be from our classwork, or just picked from anywhere?

PRINCIPAL SHAW

Sorry, I can't tell you that.

Dawn winces. Principal Shaw waits for any more questions, but none come.

PRINCIPAL SHAW (CONT'D)

Okay then. You can head to your next classes.

Principal Shaw stands up and walks away. Emily and Pete stand, and start to gather their things.

Dawn slowly rises, still worried about all of this.

EMILY

I've been studying since November.

Dawn winces a little more.

Pete walks off of the stage. Emily hangs back with Dawn. Once Pete's gone, Emily looks at Dawn with a cold expression.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Some of us have been working for this since we started high school, and I'm not about to let you take it from me just because you're more popular. You might answer some question in class, but this is a whole new ball game. My ball game. Don't you think for one second that you're going to waltz in here and win it.

Emily turns and starts to walk away.

DAWN

(to Emily)

Don't worry...

(to herself)

I can't waltz.

(beat)

You big scary freak of a nerd girl.

Dawn gathers her things and starts to walk out of the auditorium.

EXT. OPENING OF THE CAVE - DAY

A little bit of time has passed. The demon is still standing guard.

Willow and Xander walk out from behind the trees.

XANDER

Excuse us. We seem to be a little lost. Could you maybe point us toward the big tree with all the leaves on it?

The demon gets angry. He starts to walk toward them, showing his fangs.

WILLOW

Watch out for his teeth.

XANDER

Did I really need to be told that?

The demon gets near them, and still no Buffy. Finally, Xander swings his sword at the demon. The demon blocks with it's arm, and grabs Xander with it's free hand. He snaps at Xander, about to bite him, when Willow swings her ax, and plants it in the demon's back. The demon drops.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Didn't Buffy say she'd help us with this?

Willow tries to pull the ax out, but it's stuck in there good. She pulls and pushes a few times, rocking it back and forth until it finally comes out. She almost falls over as it does, but Xander catches her.

XANDER (CONT'D)

I think it might be a good idea for her to show up now.

WILLOW

Why?

XANDER

Because the rest of the demons are coming.

Willow looks back to the opening of the cave.

WILLOW

This isn't good.

ANGLE ON : THE OPENING OF THE CAVE

FIVE MORE DEMONS make their way out of the cave, headed for Willow and Xander.

Willow and Xander raise their weapons, getting ready to fight when Buffy jumps down from on top of the cave, tackling two demons.

While on the ground with them, she SNAPS one demon's neck. She quickly get back to her feet and swings the Scythe, taking out another demon.

The demon on the ground gets back up and goes for her, but she's already fighting another demon, which has grabbed ahold of the Scythe and is fighting her for it.

The remaining two demons head for Willow and Xander. They prepare themselves to fight, but don't look too comfortable.

Xander charges at the demon that's attacking him, swinging his sword. The demon blocks it, and tries to grab Xander, but Xander avoids him and trips the demon. The demon falls to the ground, but pulls Xander down with him.

Meanwhile, Willow is dealing with her own demon. It comes at her quickly. She tries to stop it's attack with her ax, but the demon grabs it and pulls it out of Willow's hand. It throws the ax to the side and jumps on top of Willow.

Buffy kicks back at the demon that is attacking from behind, trying to keep him away until she's done with the demon that she's fighting over the Scythe with. Finally, she pulls the Scythe away from her primary demon, and swings it, killing the demon. She turns back to the demon behind her.

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

Dawn's walking down the hall, holding her books close. One of them is open and she's reading as she walks.

She doesn't notice right away, but as she walks, STUDENTS are giving her thumbs up and words of support.

FEMALE STUDENT

Good luck, Dawn.

When she hears her name, she finally looks up and sees that everyone is watching her. It creeps her out.

JENNA walks up to her, also watching the other students.

DAWN

What's going on?

JENNA

You're the new "it" girl.

DAWN

Why me?

JENNA

Because everyone is scared of Emily, and between you and Pete, you're starting to look like the winning horse.

DAWN

Great.

MALE STUDENT

Kick her ass, Dawn.

Dawn smiles politely and waves a "thanks".

JENNA

If I'm not careful, I might lose my freak status, hanging out with you.

Before Dawn can respond, another student, VANESSA (cheerleader type) walks up to her.

VANESSA

Ohmygosh, can you believe this?

DAWN

What?

VANESSA

You! You're so gonna beat Emily. The whole school's cheering for you.

DAWN

Me?

VANESSA

Uh-huh. I hear there might even be a party at the pizza shop after the competition.

(beat)

Anyway, I gotta go. Good luck.

Vanessa rushes off. Dawn looks at Jenna.

DAWN

Who was that?

Jenna shrugs.

JENNA

(mocking)

But "ohmygosh", she's so right. You totally kick ass.

Dawn rolls her eyes.

JENNA (CONT'D)

We still training today, or are you gonna be too busy studying?

DAWN

I'm good for it.

JENNA

Cool, 'cause this is the last night I'm here for a while.

DAWN

What's going on?

JENNA

My brother's going to the hospital, remember? I'll be gone for the rest of the week.

Dawn can tell that Jenna's not too happy about it.

DAWN

That sucks.
 (beat)
 You could always stay at my house.

JENNA

There's a situation I don't think
 I'm ready for just yet.

DAWN

It'll be fine. If you don't wanna
 talk to Buffy, I'll tell her to back
 off until you're ready.

JENNA

I don't know.

DAWN

Well, think about it. Let me know.

JENNA

I will.
 (beat)
 I'll see ya later. I have to get to
 the other side of the school before
 Mrs. Bagerty throws me in detention.

DAWN

See ya.

JENNA

Yeah.
 (beat)
 Hit those books.

Jenna walks off, leaving Dawn alone. She looks around, still getting looks from the other students, which makes her uncomfortable. She looks back to her book.

EXT. OPENING OF THE CAVE - DAY

Xander is still struggling with his demon. He punches it in the face several times, not making much of a dent, but managing to keep the demon's fangs away from him. Finally, he rolls on top of the demon, grabs his sword and stabs it through the heart, killing it.

As he takes in his victory, Willow screams. He looks over at her, and sees that she's having a hard time.

XANDER

Willow!

He grabs his sword and heads over to her. He quickly stabs the demon that's attacking her, and pushes it's body out of the way. He helps her up.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

She's dirty from rolling around in the mud, and not happy with her inability to fight the demon.

WILLOW

I should have been able to handle him.

XANDER

You're not a Slayer. These things are strong.

WILLOW

Something I'm not.

Buffy kills the last of the demons, and walks over to Willow and Xander.

BUFFY

You guys okay?

XANDER

Considering you didn't show up for a while? Sure.

BUFFY

I knew you could handle the first one. We needed an advantage over the rest of them.

Buffy looks at Willow.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You hurt?

WILLOW

I'm fine.

Willow starts to walk away. Buffy and Xander share a concerned look.

BUFFY

Go with her. I'm gonna check out the cave.

XANDER

Alone?

BUFFY

I'll be fine. Go.

Xander gives in and goes after Willow. Buffy heads back toward the cave.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Xander catches up to Willow, who is sulking as she walks. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

XANDER
Hey, wait up.

She doesn't respond.

XANDER (CONT'D)
What's the deal, Will? We kicked demon ass.

WILLOW
You kicked demon ass. I got attacked by demon ass.

XANDER
But you're okay, right?

She stops walking and looks at him, about to break into tears.

WILLOW
Sure, I'm fine. Dandy, even.

XANDER
Then what?

The look on Willow's face says that Xander should already know, but he doesn't. She explains.

WILLOW
I should have been able to take one stupid demon by myself. I've been doing this for seven years, you'd think I could manage.

XANDER
That's what this is about?
(beat)
Those things were stronger than us.

WILLOW
You managed just fine.

XANDER
Because I've had to learn how to manage. I never had any powers to fall back on. If I didn't learn how to hold my own, I'd have died more times than Buffy by now.

WILLOW
I just hate this feeling. I hate that I can't do anything anymore.
(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

What good am I if I can't even take care of myself?

XANDER

You're a lot of good. Okay, so you're not the best fighter in the world. Big deal. I can't yodel. We all have things to contribute though.

(beat)

Nobody works the computer like you do.

WILLOW

Except Dawn.

XANDER

When it's just searching the database that you made, maybe. What about the hacking? Dawn doesn't hack.

WILLOW

So that's what I do now? I stay at home and hack into things on the computer?

XANDER

You'll adjust to this. It's not easy to be the one without powers. Believe me, I know. Eventually, this will get better though. Eventually, you'll find a new balance.

Willow is about to say something, but she stops herself. He takes her hand, and looks into her eyes.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Trust me.

After a beat, she steps closer to him, and puts her head on his chest. He puts his arms around her, comforting her.

And here they stand, just being with each other in silence for an extended moment.

Finally, they start to walk again, still holding onto each other. As they walk, Willow trips on a rock and almost falls over.

WILLOW

Ow.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Buffy cautiously walks into the cave, ready for battle. After some walking, she reaches a large open area, lit by many candles and lanterns. She looks around the place.

The walls are covered in maps, and pictures of Bear River, dating back to the early 1900's. There are antique chairs, and tables scattered around the area, and boxes full of what look to be stolen goods.

Along one of the cave walls, there is a fully stocked bar that includes bottles of absinthe.

In the back of the area, there are two passageways, leading in two different directions. Possibly underground.

Buffy walks to one of the walls that has maps on it. She looks at them, checking them out carefully. She eventually comes across a map of the woods, which has red markings all over it. She's intrigued by all of this.

She sees another map, with the words "MOREL DIVINEH" written on them. She touches them, as though it would somehow give her more information.

On the table under the maps, there are pages from calendars, with all kinds of scribblings on them. As she looks, she sees the page for May. On it, in big bold red letters, is written: "NIGHT OF MOREL DIVINEH"

BUFFY

Night of Morel Divineh?

The SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS can be heard from one of the other passages. Buffy turns and prepares for a fight.

From one of the passages, HARUK, SHINUK and NANUK emerge. When they spot Buffy, they go into attack mode.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CAVE - DAY

Buffy readies herself. Shinuk and Nanuk walk to either side of her, while Haruk stays put. Buffy keeps tabs on all of them, aware that they've just covered every exit.

BUFFY

Nice place you got here. Didn't think it was your style, but it's kinda homey in a way.

They don't respond. They just focus their sights on her. All three of them begin to circle her in that creepy sleek way of theirs. Buffy watches them, waiting for their attack.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

So, did you guys work on that choreography, or does it just happen that way?

Again, no response.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I take it you're not big into the talking. That's okay. I can respect that.

(beat)

Not that I'd believe anything you said anyway. I hear you guys speak with forked tongues.

She smiles at her own joke, and waits for a response from them. She gets none, of course.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Get it? Forked tongue.

(beat)

You're right. It was lame. I think I might be losing my touch for sarcasm.

By this point, she's just talking to break the mood of their creepy circling.

She waits for another extended beat, ready to fight.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

So, were you planning on attacking today, or are we just playing party games here?

They continue circling. Finally, she sighs.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Fine. I don't have all day, so I guess it's up to me.

That said, she throws the Scythe, stake first (spear-style) at Nanuk. He goes down right away, the Scythe sticking directly into the air.

Haruk and Shinuk attack Buffy at the same time. She kicks Shinuk in the gut, and spins around, punching Haruk in the face as she regains her balance.

As they come at her again, she flips out of the way, toward Nanuk and the Scythe.

The demons both attack her again. She grabs the Scythe, and pulls it out of Nanuk's body. After doing this, she spins around, just in time to sweep the feet out from under Shinuk.

As Shinuk drops, Haruk reaches her. She raises the blade of the Scythe, and swings at him, but he avoids it, and knocks her off balance, sending her stumbling into the table with the calendar pages on it.

Haruk lunges at her again, but she ducks out of the way before he can hit her. As she moves, Haruk grabs onto the Scythe and pulls on it. Buffy refuses to let go, which results in her being pulled along.

Haruk grabs onto the Scythe with his other hand, and tries to pull it away from her by raising the Scythe into the air. As he does this, she lets her feet out from under her, and uses them to push off of Haruk's chest.

She falls back onto the ground with a roll, Scythe in hand, and quickly gets back to her feet.

At this point, Haruk and Shinuk are on either side of her again, both ready to attack. Buffy prepares herself for this.

Haruk and Shinuk attack again, at the same time. Buffy spins, extending the Scythe. As she does, she catches Shinuk in the arm, cutting it off.

Shinuk HISSES and stumbles back. Haruk, however, keeps on course. Buffy tries to stake him with the Scythe, but he avoids her. He grabs the Scythe, and uses it to throw Buffy across the cave.

She lands hard, but quickly get back to her feet. The Scythe is still with her.

As she looks back to Haruk, she notices something behind him. Two familiar faces, standing in one of the passageways.

ANGLE ON : THE PASSAGEWAY

We now see who Buffy sees. SANDERS and RIP, watching her fight the demons. They have changed over the last century.

Sanders' hair is much longer and dirtier now. Gone are his nice clothes. What he wears now are tattered rags. He is dirty, but somehow manages to hold onto that smug air.

Rip has changed a bit more. The left side of his face is riddled with scars from burns. His left eye is nothing but white. His right arm is held close to his chest, clenched in a tight, unchangeable fist. The guy must have had one really bad day at some point.

As Buffy sees them in the passageway, she immediately recognizes them. All at once, she's shocked, confused and-most of all- pissed.

Soon, her attention is taken off of them by Haruk, who is once again attacking her. He reaches her, and attempts to grab at her neck, but she rolls out of the way, and gets back to her feet.

Shinuk gathers his strength again, and joins Haruk in the attack.

Buffy kicks a chair in Shinuk's path, causing him to stumble over it.

As Haruk gets closer to her, Buffy swings the Scythe at him. Haruk ducks under it as it swings right past where his head was. As he stands back up, Buffy continues her spin, squatting lower as she comes back around. This time, the Scythe catches Haruk's legs, cutting them both off at the shin. He drops to the ground.

Buffy stands back up, and raises the Scythe. She swings hard, killing Haruk O.S. with a SQUISHING sound.

Shinuk charges at Buffy from behind. Without skipping a beat, she extends the stake end of the Scythe behind her, causing Shinuk to run into it. As she pulls the stake out of his chest, still not looking back at him, he falls to the ground.

Buffy checks to make sure there are no more demons attacking, and then looks back to the passageway that Sanders and Rip were in. They are now gone.

Buffy keeps her eye on the passageway with angry determination in her eyes.

EXT. ALFRED P. VANCE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Dawn walks across the lawn, carrying many books and her backpack. In the background, other students are leaving the school for the day.

As she passes the sign in the front of the school, she hears MUMBLING. She stops, confused. The mumbling soon becomes a familiar voice.

EMILY (O.S.)

I am going to win this.

(beat)

No. Don't say that. Please, don't say that.

(beat)

I know.

(beat)

I know.

Confused, Dawn goes to the sign, and looks behind it.

ANGLE ON : EMILY

Pacing back and forth with books in her arms, not seeing Dawn. She seems to be talking to herself.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Stop it. Please, just stop saying that.

(beat)

You've told me. I know what I have to do.

Dawn walks closer to her, concerned.

DAWN

Emily?

Emily looks up, stunned, but with her usual attitude.

EMILY

What are you doing here? Spying on me?

DAWN

Or possibly walking home. Are you okay?

EMILY

I'm fine. Leave me alone.

DAWN

I heard you talking to yourself.

EMILY

I said, I'm fine.

Emily walks past Dawn, bumping shoulders with her as she does. Dawn watches her go, still concerned.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(mumbled)

Dawn Summers.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Dawn is sitting at the laptop, looking at the information displayed on it very carefully.

Willow and Xander walk through the front door. They see Dawn and walk into the dining room, but she doesn't look up.

XANDER

We're home.

DAWN

Mm-hmm.

WILLOW

Whatcha researching? Demons?

DAWN

Worse.

XANDER

Worse than demons?

WILLOW

What happened?

XANDER

It's not the end of the world again,
is it?

DAWN

Depends on how you look at it.

Dawn finally looks up at them, ignoring their dirty post-battle appearances.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I got picked to compete in the
school's annual Battle of the Brains
competition.

Willow smiles.

WILLOW

Ooh. Sounds fun.

Dawn and Xander both look at Willow like she's crazy.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I mean... Wow. Harsh.

XANDER

So, what does this entail, exactly?

DAWN

Me, along with two other students,
on stage, being put through a series
of humiliating school related
challenges.

(beat)

There's gonna be a talent contest.

Xander winces, feeling Dawn's pain.

DAWN (CONT'D)

And I can't even get out of it. I
tried, but they won't let me.
Apparently, I'm like the Luke
Skywalker of smart people in this
school, and this other weird girl,
Emily, is... whoever the bad guy
was.

WILLOW

Darth Vader.

XANDER

Actually, that's a common
misconception. Darth Vader is actually
still the one who brought balance
back to the force in the end, it's
just that...

(off Willow and Dawn's
looks)

Nevermind.

DAWN

(moving on)

This thing is driving everyone nuts.
Emily, mostly. And then everyone in
school is, like, cheering for me.
It's like I'm popular or something.

WILLOW

Popular because of being smart? Why
couldn't I go to school here?

DAWN

I can't lose this. If I lose this,
I'll be a joke.

WILLOW

If you need help with studying, I'm
here for you.

XANDER

We all are.

DAWN

Thanks. I mentioned the math, right?
'Cause there's math too.

THE PHONE RINGS.

XANDER

I got it.

Xander walks out of the dining room, toward the living room.

WILLOW

(to Dawn)

You just leave the math to me. When I'm done with you, you'll be calculating in your sleep.

DAWN

If you can make that happen, I will owe you so much.

WILLOW

I accept checks, credit cards and chocolate chip cookies.

Xander walks back into the room with the phone.

XANDER

Dawn, phone.

He hands her the phone.

DAWN

(into phone)

Hello?

(beat)

Yeah, hold on a sec.

Dawn smiles to Willow and Xander as she walks into the kitchen for privacy.

When she's gone, Willow sits down at the table, looking over Dawn's work.

WILLOW

Wow. I haven't even seen some of these words in years.

(beat)

It'll be fun to get back into it though. Help Dawn win this thing.

Xander just smiles at her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

(re: his smile)

What?

XANDER

You're finding your balance.

WILLOW

I am?

XANDER

Helping Dawn. Doing the brain thing.
This is you. You're brain girl.

Willow thinks about it and smiles.

WILLOW

I guess I am.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Dawn's leaning on the counter, on the phone.

DAWN

It'll be fine. Don't worry about it.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JENNA'S ROOM - DAY

Jenna's on her bed, phone to her ear.

JENNA

Just make sure it's all set up before
I get there. I don't want this to be
a surprise.

DAWN

I will.

(beat)

Besides, for the few days that you're
in the house, we'll either be in
school or studying most of the time.
You can even hang out at the video
store when I'm working if you want.

Jenna thinks about it.

JENNA

Okay. I guess I'll see you tomorrow
then.

DAWN

Bye.

We stay with Dawn as she hangs up the phone.

She puts it on the counter, as she walks back into the dining
room.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Dawn walks back into the room and sits at the computer. She
gets right to work, reading the screen.

Willow is still sitting near her. Xander's nearby, just hanging out.

WILLOW

I was thinking of our study options.

DAWN

Options?

WILLOW

Yeah. We can do this one of three ways. There's the normal method, where we go over every book we can and keep reading over and over, and write things, and make diagrams until you know everything. Then there's the game method where we try to make it fun learning. It might involve flash cards, or a wheel. Or, we can read everything once, into a tape recorder and play it back non-stop until the competition.

DAWN

I think the competition is game style.

(beat)

I just need to learn this stuff. I don't really care how. I can't lose this thing.

WILLOW

Okay, so we'll do the game show thing.

(smiles)

I can draw up a schedule.

Dawn looks at Willow, mopey. Suddenly, she remembers something.

DAWN

Oh, before I forget to tell you guys, I'm having someone--

Before she can finish the sentence, Buffy walks through the door, and marches into the dining room, tossing some of the maps and calendar pages onto the table.

BUFFY

I just found out who summoned the seeker demons.

WILLOW

Who?

BUFFY

The same vamps that killed Isabelle Acker.

XANDER
They're still hanging around this
place?

BUFFY
Check this out.

Buffy gives Willow the calendar page for May, with the writing
on it.

WILLOW
"The Night Of Morel Divineh"?
(beat)
Since when is there a night?

BUFFY
That's what I want to know. Whatever
it is, it's important. Kennedy's
after the amulet, and so are these
vampires.

XANDER
And they want it enough to spend a
hundred years looking.

BUFFY
(to Dawn)
I need you to check the database.

DAWN
I can't. I have work...

BUFFY
Dawn, this is important.

DAWN
So is my studying.

BUFFY
We don't have time for this.

DAWN
Buffy, I'm serious. I can't waste
time--

WILLOW
It's okay, Buffy. I'll do the
searching.

DAWN
See? I'm not needed this time. I'm
gonna go study.

Dawn grabs her books and her backpack and walks out of the
room. Buffy can't believe that Dawn's just leaving.

BUFFY

What's her deal?

(beat)

You know what? Forget it. Let's just figure this out and deal with her later.

Willow moves over to the laptop seat, and Buffy stands behind her as they get to work.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ETHAN walks out of his bedroom, carrying a small cardboard box. He starts to walk toward the front door, but KENNEDY comes out of the kitchen and sees him before he can get there.

KENNEDY

Where're you going?

ETHAN

Just out for a little stroll.

KENNEDY

What's in the box?

ETHAN

I wasn't aware that I had to answer to you.

KENNEDY

You've been going out a lot lately. I'm just making sure you don't mess things up.

ETHAN

I wouldn't dream of it. I've just been having a bit of fun, is all.

KENNEDY

This fun didn't happen to include anyone we know, did it?

ETHAN

No. It didn't.

KENNEDY

Good.

Kennedy starts to walk toward the other bedroom.

ETHAN

How about you?

KENNEDY

What about me?

ETHAN

You didn't get the Scythe. You didn't get the amulet. I was sorta hoping you had plans of some kind. The clock is ticking, after all.

She stops walking and turns to him.

KENNEDY

Don't worry about me. I'll get what we need soon enough.

ETHAN

Of course you will. Before the gathering, I hope?

Kennedy doesn't reply. She just starts walking back into her room.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

See you in the morning then. Bright and early, for your lesson.

Kennedy closes the door behind her as she goes into her room. Ethan smiles after her. He looks away from her door and to his box. Finally, he continues toward the front door.

EXT. BEAR RIVER - MORNING

It's that moment just before day, but just after night, when the world takes on that bluish hue. All is calm and peaceful. Few cars. Few people. And for nostalgia's sake, there's a milk truck making it's way through town.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

The laptop sits on the dining room table, among empty take-out boxes from the Bait-N-Breakfast. Coffee mugs are scattered here and there, empty. Printed papers are scattered amongst the papers collected in the cave. There are, however, no people in the room.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Buffy is laying on the couch, asleep in an awkward position that is sure to give her problems later. There is a post-it stuck to her shirt.

Willow is in a chair, curled up with a blanket. She actually looks pretty comfortable. One of their old demonology books sits open on her knee.

Xander is strewn across the coffee table, on his stomach. His head rests on a notebook. Still asleep, he wipes drool from his mouth and shifts around a little.

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

ANGLE ON : BUFFY'S BED

Still made, and unslept in, obviously. Though there are balled up pieces of paper on it, and a broken pencil.

THE ALARM GOES OFF.

PAN OVER to the nightstand, as Dawn's arm reaches over and turns it off.

PULL BACK to REVEAL that Dawn is sitting up in her bed, still dressed from the day before. She has a pencil in her mouth, a notebook next to her, another book open in her lap, which she's reading through, and another ten books open, covering the rest of the bed in front of her.

She hasn't slept a wink all night, and it shows. She looks worn, and untidy.

Finding what she's looking for in the book, she takes the pencil from her mouth, and scribbles in the notebook.

DAWN

(writing)

Okay... got it.

She drops the pencil, and continues reading. Her lips move along with the words as she does this.

After a moment, she leans back against her pillow, and pulls the book close, still reading. Soon, her eyelids begin to get heavy. Her book starts to drop as her eyes slowly close, but she catches herself and forces herself to stay up.

She continues to read until her eyes get tired again, which isn't long. As they start to close again, she stops them. She puts the book down and rubs her face.

She picks the book back up, and continues to read, but it's impossible to stay awake. Before she knows it, she's drifting off again.

WHISPER (V.O.)

(faint)

Dawn.

She perks up, and looks around the room. The whisper was so faint that it's hard to tell if she actually heard someone say her name, or if it was in her head.

After a beat, she shakes it off and gets back to her book. Again, she starts to drift.

WHISPER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(less faint)
Wake up.

This time, she knows she heard it. Her eyes open wide, and scan the room. Nobody is there with her.

She continues to look around, confused, and now alert.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

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

Where we left off. Dawn is looking around her room, wondering where the voice came from.

DAWN

Buffy?

WHISPER (V.O.)

Not Buffy.

She looks up after hearing the creepy voice.

DAWN

Where are you?

WHISPER (V.O.)

Where I am isn't nearly as important as why I'm here.

DAWN

So, why are you here?

Dawn remembers something.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Emily. You're the thing she was talking to.

WHISPER (V.O.)

This isn't about Emily now. I'm here to give you warning, Dawn.

DAWN

About?

WHISPER (V.O.)

You can't lose this competition. You must win it.

DAWN

Okay... Why?

WHISPER (V.O.)

Because if you lose this competition, Dawn, you die.

Dawn sits on her bed with a blank expression.

DAWN

Oh.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM/FOYER - DAY

Buffy and Willow are back at work. Xander walks into the room, carrying the phone.

Buffy looks up at him.

BUFFY

So? Did he have anything for us?

XANDER

Nothing on this Night of Morel Divineh thing.

BUFFY

Damn.

XANDER

On the up side, he did get a phone call while I was talking to him. Willow, you'll be happy to know that the coven finally found a way to get that spirit out of you.

Willow looks up at Xander with a confused look.

WILLOW

They just...?

XANDER

Yup. One point for our little Dawnie, huh?

WILLOW

We probably should have called.
(beat)
Oops.

BUFFY

Guys, the mission?

XANDER

Relax, Buff. The calendar page is for May. That's months from now.

BUFFY

I'd rather not--

The DOORBELL cuts her off. The three of them look at each other, wondering who it could be. Buffy walks toward the front door.

XANDER

Maybe it's the coven delivering that pizza we ordered three weeks ago.

Buffy reaches the door and opens it.

REVEAL JENNA standing on the other side, holding a duffel bag. When she sees Buffy, she can't help but look away.

Buffy gives her a confused look.

BUFFY

Jenna? What are you doing here?

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

Dawn is now sitting up on her bed, a little freaked out.

DAWN

Why are you doing this to me?

WHISPER (V.O.)

The question is, why aren't you paying more attention to your books?

DAWN

Sorry. I tend to freak out when creepy voices threaten me in my bedroom.

The voice does not respond.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Who are you?

There isn't enough time to get a reply before Jenna walks into the room, and tosses her bag on the ground.

JENNA

Thanks for making sure this wasn't awkward. You're a real pal.

Dawn looks at her, at first wondering what she's talking about.

DAWN

Jenna?

Then suddenly, Dawn remembers. She looks around the room, as though to see if Jenna can somehow see the voice.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh, no. I'm sorry. I meant to tell them, but then things came up.

JENNA

"Things came up"? Do you realize how awkward it is to show up at someone's home at seven in the morning- someone you don't even want to speak to- and explain to them that you're staying there for a few days?

DAWN

I'm sorry.

WHISPER (V.O.)

Tisk, tisk, tisk.

Dawn's eyes widen, wondering if Jenna heard that.

JENNA

(re: Dawn's expression)

What?

DAWN

You mean, you didn't hear that?

WHISPER (V.O.)

No you don't. Don't say one word about this, or she dies too.

Dawn gets another troubled expression.

JENNA

Hear what? What the hell's going on with you?

Dawn thinks fast.

DAWN

Nothing. I just thought I heard a spider.

(beat)

Mouse. I mean, a mouse.

JENNA

Maybe I should just go home.

Jenna starts to reach for her bag, but Dawn stands up and stops her.

DAWN

No. Wait.

(deep breath)

Let's just try to start this whole thing over, okay?

Jenna thinks about it.

DAWN (CONT'D)

What do you say? I can order a pizza, and you can help me study, or watch TV, or whatever.

Jenna thinks a little more. Finally, she nods her head.

JENNA

Fine. Just one thing first.

DAWN

What?

JENNA

Go tell everyone else what I'm doing here.

Dawn smiles.

DAWN

On my way.

And Dawn leaves the room. Once she's gone, Jenna stays behind.

A strange feeling comes over her. She can feel something strange, but she's not sure what this feeling means.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy, Willow and Xander are in the dining room, working. Dawn walks in. Buffy looks up at her.

BUFFY

Is there something you forgot to mention?

DAWN

I tried telling you guys, but you interrupted me.

(beat)

Is it okay?

BUFFY

It's fine with me. I'm not sure about her.

WILLOW

She did seem a little upset.

DAWN

She's still getting used to all of this. Just give her a little space, okay?

BUFFY

Whatever she needs. She can have my bed. I'll sleep on the couch.

(beat)

But with a pillow this time.

DAWN

You sure?

Buffy nods. Dawn smiles.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Thanks. I really think she's coming around.

BUFFY

You could have told us that you were talking to her.

DAWN

She didn't want me to. I figured I could fill you in when you needed to know.

(beat)

Which I guess would have been before she showed up here.

Dawn walks around and looks at the laptop.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Find anything yet?

WILLOW

Nothing. I can't even find anything that comes close to sounding like "Morel Divineh".

(beat)

You're good with languages. Does it sound familiar?

Dawn shakes her head.

DAWN

Not really. I mean, unless they're talking about a really good mushroom.

BUFFY

Somehow, I doubt that.

XANDER

Hey, you never know.

BUFFY

Kennedy wants this thing bad enough to make her dangerous. What would do that to her?

WILLOW

Faith was dangerous, and she was just insane.

DAWN

It's not like the first time this has happened. I mean, there have been less than perfect Slayers before. Using their power for their own gain. Do I even have to remind you about the whole Joan of Arc thing?

BUFFY

This whole thing would be a lot easier
if it was just... a lot easier.

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

The lights are out in the room. Books are scattered around.
An empty pizza box rests on the table between the beds.

Jenna is asleep in Buffy's bed. She's tossing and turning.

Dawn's bed is empty.

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

Willow and Xander are sleeping snugly.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy is asleep on the couch. The TV remote is still in her
hand.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The light is on. Dawn is sitting at the table, with several
books open in front of her. She's taking notes, but her eyes
are getting heavy. This is the second night without sleep.
She starts to doze off. Just as her head begins to fall,
she wakes back up.

DAWN

No. No sleeping. Studying. I have to
study.

She tries to get back to work, but soon finds herself nodding
off again. She begins to fall asleep.

WHISPER (V.O.)

Wake up.

Dawn wakes up fast. She looks around.

WHISPER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Do you think it's wise to sleep at a
time like this?

DAWN

It's late.

WHISPER (V.O.)

You should be working.

DAWN

I have been for the last six hours.
Do you really expect me to spend the
next three days awake?

WHISPER (V.O.)

I'm simply trying to help you live.

DAWN

You know what else helps with that?

(beat)

Not threatening to kill me.

WHISPER (V.O.)

I just want you to do your very best.

Is that such a bad thing?

DAWN

I feel compelled to mention the
"killing me" part again.

There's no response.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Suddenly the voice has nothing to
say?

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

Jenna is still tossing. She's having a very vivid dream.
Whatever it is, it's troubling her greatly.

Suddenly, her eyes shoot open. She takes a deep breath. For
a moment, she just stays where she is, processing what she
just saw. She's confused by this, and for some reason, sad.

Slowly, she sits up and turns to Dawn's bed. She sees that
it's empty.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dawn is still chatting with the voice.

DAWN

Leave.

WHISPER (V.O.)

You know I can't do that.

DAWN

How am I supposed to study with you
talking in my ear the whole night?

WHISPER (V.O.)

You'll just have to find a way.

DAWN

Great. Thanks. So now you're not
only gonna kill me, you're gonna
drive me insane.

WHISPER (V.O.)

I wish to do neither. Whatever happens
is in your hands.

DAWN

Sell it to the tourists.

There's no response.

DAWN (CONT'D)

What are you?

Again, no response.

DAWN (CONT'D)

(firmer)

What are you?

WHISPER (V.O.)

(extended beat)

I am but a friendly leprechaun, come
to warn you of great peril.

DAWN

A leprechaun?

She stops to think about this.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy is still on the couch, asleep. Her eyes soon open.
Calmly, she sits up, and puts the remote on the table. Her
Slayer sense is at work.

She stands up, and walks up the stairs.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Buffy makes her way down the hall. As she passes her room,
she looks inside.

BUFFY'S POV

Both beds are empty now.

Buffy continues down the hall. Finally, she reaches the
doorway to the weapon room. She notices that it's ajar.

She opens it more, and goes inside.

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

Buffy enters the dark room, and turns on the light. When she
does, she sees Jenna, on the other side of the room, sitting
against the wall, staring at the Scythe.

Buffy looks down at her, concerned.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - WEAPON ROOM - NIGHT

Where we left off. Buffy looks down at Jenna. Jenna doesn't take her eyes off of the Scythe.

JENNA

I had a dream. I saw this place, but it was different.

BUFFY

I've seen it too.

JENNA

(re: the Scythe)
That wasn't there.

BUFFY

I brought that.

JENNA

(beat)
I can feel it. I could, even before I found this room.

She finally looks at Buffy and stands up. She takes a step closer to the Scythe and looks at it in the light.

BUFFY

You can hold it.

JENNA

It's what did this to me, isn't it?

Buffy looks down, feeling guilty.

BUFFY

Yeah.
(beat)
There's a lot that I can tell you if you'll give me the chance.

Jenna keeps her eyes on the Scythe for a moment. She starts to shake her head, and looks at Buffy. She doesn't speak, but Buffy gets the message. Now isn't the time for talking.

Jenna walks past Buffy, and out of the room.

Buffy's left alone. She looks at the Scythe. This conversation didn't go as well as she'd hoped.

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

Dawn and Jenna walk down the hall together. Dawn looks like she hasn't slept in three days. Mostly because she hasn't slept in three days.

JENNA

They used to have a beauty contest in the school every year, but they stopped that a while ago. I think the ugly people were offended or something, so they switched to this brainy thing.

DAWN

I hate the ugly people.

JENNA

Are you allowed to say that in public?

DAWN

They cost me three nights of sleep. They should all suffer.

Ryan walks up to them and looks Dawn over.

RYAN

Sorry I'm late. I had to go to the nurse's office after my last class.
(then)
Are you okay?

DAWN

Tired. Very tired.
(beat)
But, hey, can I talk to you?

She looks back to Jenna. Jenna gets the message that Dawn wants her to get gone.

JENNA

I have to go.
(to Dawn)
See ya in a bit.

Jenna walks off. When she's gone, Dawn pulls Ryan over to a bench. He can tell from the look on her face that this isn't a happy conversation.

RYAN

Is something wrong? Did I--?

DAWN

What aren't you telling me? I know there's something, and I think that I have the right to know.

(MORE)

DAWN (CONT'D)

Especially since everyone else knows
and they keep giving me these weird
looks.

Ryan hesitates.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Why are you always going to the
nurse's office? Are you sick?

He looks up at her. This isn't something he wants to discuss.

RYAN

I have to go.

He starts to walk away.

DAWN

Ryan?

He doesn't turn around.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Talk to me!

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

Dawn comes around the corner of this hallway, worked up over
her conversation with Ryan.

WHISPER (V.O.)

There, there, little one.

DAWN

(in low voice)

Shut up.

WHISPER (V.O.)

You shouldn't let your emotions get
in your way. You have an important
task to complete in a few hours.

DAWN

I'm not dealing with you right now.

WHISPER (V.O.)

So much pressure. What to do? You
should have gotten more sleep.

DAWN

(louder voice)

I told you to shut up!

She stops and looks around, noticing that several students
are looking at her.

Included among them is Emily, who looks almost as bad as Dawn does. Of course, this doesn't stop her from giving Dawn that "I'm so much better than you, freak" look.

Dawn continues walking, and turns into the auditorium.

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

As Dawn walks into the auditorium, there are several students getting the place ready for the competition.

On the stage, there are three seats for her, Emily and Pete. There's a podium for Principal Shaw, a "Jeopardy" style board with question topics on it, and a piano.

Dawn heads up, onto the stage. When she gets there, she stops and puts a hand on her tired head. Her mind is flying in a million different directions, and it looks like she could crack at any moment.

Willow walks onto the stage, from behind the curtain. She looks around.

WILLOW

This is so exciting, isn't it?

She walks to Dawn, still looking around.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

The question board and... I guess someone's playing the piano for their talent. I just walked into the bathroom a few minutes ago and saw that Emily girl. She's scary. Scarier than most people. Especially since she was talking to herself and looked--

Willow finally gets a good look at Dawn.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

--An awful lot like you. Are you okay?

DAWN

I'm fine. I'm just tired.

WILLOW

When was the last time you slept?

DAWN

I go without sleep all the time.

WILLOW

True enough, but you never looked like this before. Maybe you should try to take a nap before the competition.

DAWN

No. I can't. We just have to study.
I can't lose this.

WILLOW

Dawn, is something wrong?

DAWN

No. I told you, I'm fine. I just
can't lose this competition.

Willow takes Dawn's arm and leads her to the piano bench.
They sit on it.

WILLOW

You shouldn't put too much pressure
on yourself. You'll just end up
forgetting everything.

DAWN

How can I not put pressure on myself?
There's so much that I don't know.
Among them, my talent. I still have
nothing.

WILLOW

I thought you said you were gonna do
Origami.

DAWN

I was joking. I have nothing. I have
no talent, unless they want me to
read in front of the audience.

(beat)

I'm a total blank right now. I can't
remember anything I've read in the
last week. And if I lose this thing,
I'm screwed.

Willow thinks for a second. Finally, she turns to the piano.

WILLOW

Come here.

Dawn doesn't know what Willow's doing, but she turns around.

Willow feels the piano keys, and taps them lightly.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

When I was a kid, I used to take
piano lessons. I worked real hard,
and studied all of the books, and I
actually wasn't too bad with some
songs.

She taps some of the keys, playing a small piece of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" (she's a little rusty, so it isn't that good). She continues to play.

DAWN

Is there a point to this story?

WILLOW

I'm getting there.

(beat)

Anyway, I worked really hard and could actually play the song back then, but I still told myself it wasn't good enough. I kept telling myself that I needed to keep pushing, and pushing, and finally, I just fell apart.

DAWN

What happened.

WILLOW

I choked. Big time choked. I couldn't remember any of the keys, and the timing was off, and it was just bad. **Moonlight Sonata** came out sounding like the soundtrack from **To Kill A Mockingbird**. That was pretty much the last time I ever had the guts to go onto a stage.

(beat)

Well, until I was all filled with weird spirit stuff.

Dawn winces.

DAWN

Is this supposed to be helping me?

WILLOW

The point is, I worked myself too hard. I hardly slept, because I was going over it in my head every night. I didn't eat. By the time I went on stage to play, I was so worn out, I couldn't see straight. That's why I messed up.

Dawn thinks about this.

DAWN

Okay, I get the message.

(beat)

Of course, it would have been more useful a couple days ago...

She smiles, and starts tapping keys as Willow continues to play. It's just a bunch of noise at this point.

WILLOW

Sorry.

Buffy and Xander walk out, from behind the curtain.

XANDER

Did you guys know that there were Dawn posters all over school? How cool is that?

They finally reach Dawn and Willow.

BUFFY

(to Dawn)

So, guess what.

DAWN

The Earth is about to explode?

BUFFY

Nope, nothing like that. For once.

(beat)

I just talked to Dad, and he's coming tonight.

DAWN

Dad's coming? Why?

BUFFY

He's proud of you. We all are.

DAWN

Okay, now I know I'm gonna choke.

WILLOW

You'll be fine. Just get a little rest before you go on, and eat something.

(beat)

I saw a snack machine backstage. I'll get you some chips or something.

DAWN

I'm really not hungry right now.

WILLOW

Which is why you need to eat.

Willow gets up, off of the bench and starts to walk toward the curtain. After taking a few steps, she stops, noticing something odd. The piano music hasn't stopped. As a matter of fact, it's gotten better!

She turns around, and looks at Dawn. Buffy also gives Dawn a confused look. Dawn's not even paying attention to any of it.

BUFFY
Dawn?

DAWN
Hmm?

BUFFY
When did you learn to play the piano?

DAWN
What? I didn't.

It's only now that Dawn realizes that she's playing the piano! She freaks out, and pulls her hands back.

DAWN (CONT'D)
What was that?

WILLOW
You were playing... How were you playing?

DAWN
I don't know.

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

Ryan is walking down the now-empty hall, looking around. Finally, he sees Jenna, and goes to her.

RYAN
Hey, Jenna.

Jenna looks at him, a little confused.

JENNA
Hmm?

RYAN
Have you seen Dawn? I think I need to talk to her.

JENNA
Auditorium. She's working on some last minute cramming.

RYAN
Thanks.

Ryan starts to walk off, but stops. He hears something.

RYAN (CONT'D)

(to Jenna)
Do you hear that?

Jenna listens. She does hear it.

JENNA

What is that?

Ryan takes a few steps and looks into a classroom. Jenna follows. When they look in, they get puzzled looks on their faces.

ANGLE ON : THE CLASSROOM

Emily is in the room, pacing back and forth. She's mumbling to herself.

EMILY

Stop it.
(beat)
I know.
(beat)
Don't. Just don't, okay?

Ryan and Jenna look at each other. They walk away from the door.

RYAN

That's a strange girl right there.

He walks away, headed for the auditorium. Jenna stays behind, keeping a troubled eye on Emily.

As Ryan walks down the hall, he hears something else. More mumbling. He stops again, even more confused.

He looks into another classroom. This time, when he looks, he gets an annoyed, slightly angry look on his face.

ANGLE ON : THE OTHER CLASSROOM

A young man, DANIEL is sitting on one of the desks, talking into a small microphone. He has a laptop in front of him.

DANIEL

Are you gonna listen to me, or not?

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

Ryan walks into the room.

RYAN

Daniel, right?

Daniel looks back, and sees Ryan. He tries to hide the microphone and look innocent.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You're Emily's brother, aren't you?

Daniel just smiles, trying to play cool. Ryan walks toward him.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You used to go to school here. Big brain champ of '02, right?

Ryan grabs Daniel's arm, and looks down at the microphone in his hand, then to an earpiece that Daniel's wearing. Finally, he looks Daniel in the eyes.

RYAN (CONT'D)

How 'bout we have a little chat?

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

Buffy, and Willow are standing closer to Dawn now.

DAWN

I don't understand. How could I do that?

WILLOW

Maybe it's a spell?

DAWN

By who? And, why?

Buffy smiles.

BUFFY

It's not a spell.

Dawn looks at her. Buffy has a look in her eyes that says she knows what's going on.

DAWN

Then what?

BUFFY

It's you. It's what you are.

Dawn looks around, making sure nobody else is there.

DAWN

The Key?

WILLOW

But, I thought there wasn't a Key anymore.

BUFFY

It just needed focusing.

(MORE)

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Dawn, you're this big gob of energy. Until now, there's been no way to harness that power, but you did it.

DAWN

What do you mean? I did what?

BUFFY

Think about it. You always know everything. How? You read languages that most of us never even heard of, and you don't even skip a beat. You picked up fighting skills faster than most of the Slayers I've met... This is you. This is the power of the Key.

Dawn smiles.

DAWN

This is me.

Buffy and Dawn are smiling now. Willow just looks away, thinking of something else.

Just then, Jenna walks into the room, and heads for the stage.

JENNA

Hey. Guess who me and Ryan found cheating.

(beat)

Emily.

Dawn looks at Jenna, confused.

DAWN

Emily?

JENNA

She had an earpiece. Her brother was feeding her answers from one of the classrooms.

DAWN

What? I don't get it.

The tone in Dawn's voice says that something just isn't right here.

BUFFY

(to Dawn)

What's wrong?

DAWN

(to herself)

I saw her.

BUFFY

Saw her what?

DAWN

She heard the voice. She had to.

BUFFY

Dawn, what voice?

DAWN

The leprechaun. It whispered to me.
It said that if I didn't win this...
I thought...

WILLOW

There's no such thing as leprechaun's.

DAWN

I know. I know, but...

(beat)

I know there's no such thing. I know
that.

Dawn doesn't know what she's thinking. She's tired, and none
of this is making sense.

DAWN (CONT'D)

But I heard it.

Buffy looks at Dawn, seeing how exhausted she is now.

BUFFY

Maybe you should sit.

DAWN

No. I heard it.

(beat)

I can't lose this competition. I
can't.

BUFFY

Why?

DAWN

Because! Because... If I lose this,
I die.

BUFFY

You're not making sense. Tell me
what's happening.

DAWN

I saw Emily talking to herself. I
saw her. It was the same voice that
came to me and said that if I didn't
win this, I'd die.

XANDER

The leprechaun?

DAWN

Yes.

(then)

No.

(beat)

I don't know. I don't know what's happening anymore.

Buffy puts an arm around Dawn.

JENNA

Emily didn't hear any voices. She was talking to her brother.

DAWN

But it said...

BUFFY

When was the last time you slept?

Dawn tries to answer, but can't remember.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Did the voice come before or after you stopped sleeping?

Dawn looks at her. She knows what Buffy's saying.

DAWN

It was real Buffy.

BUFFY

Dawn, you're not going to die if you lose this. It's just a game.

Dawn starts to cry.

DAWN

Have you not seen the Dawn posters, or the fliers for the "We Love Dawn" party? Everyone in school's been cheering me on and giving me really lame high-fives. If I lose this competition, I might as well be dead.

BUFFY

Stop it. Look at yourself. You're killing yourself over this. Why? It's not even important.

DAWN

Tell that to the party planners.

BUFFY

Don't you realize that you're more than this? You're bigger than a school contest. You're the Key. You're driving yourself crazy over this, and it's not even something that would normally phase you. You absorb this stuff like a sponge, and you're freaking out over this? You're brain girl. This is beneath you.

DAWN

(weak smile)
"Moonlight Sonata".

She looks back to Willow. Willow is looking at the floor, deep in thought, but she hears the reference to her story, and looks up. She forces a smile back.

DAWN (CONT'D)

(to Buffy)
I'm better than this.

Buffy nods at her. Finally, Dawn starts to come around.

BUFFY

Just get some sleep, and forget the stupid contest. Nine out of ten doctors say that's the way to get rid of nonexistent voices.

Dawn nods.

DAWN

Yeah.

With Buffy helping her, Dawn starts to walk off of the stage.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Dawn and Jenna walk down the street together. It's not a peppy walk, but nobody's crying.

JENNA

I've never seen anyone fall apart like that. Are you okay?

DAWN

Sorry. I just caved under the pressure. I tend to do that sometimes.
(beat)
Once with a knife. That wasn't pretty.

JENNA

Why don't we save that story for when I know you a little better?

DAWN

Probably a good idea.

They're passing the movie store now. Jenna stops walking, which leads Dawn to stop walking. Jenna nods toward the store. As Dawn looks inside, she can see Ryan working at the counter.

JENNA

You should talk to him.

Dawn looks back to Jenna.

DAWN

Am I gonna want to hear this?

Jenna looks down for a second, and then looks back up to Dawn. That's all the answer Dawn needs.

JENNA

I'll tell everyone you'll be a little late.

DAWN

Thanks.

Dawn turns, and walks into the store. Jenna watches through the glass for a moment.

JENNA'S POV

Dawn goes to the counter and Ryan looks up at her. It's uncomfortable, but they start to talk.

Jenna turns away from the store, and starts walking again, by herself.

As she passes the alley next to the store, Kennedy walks out behind her. She follows Jenna for a moment, keeping quiet.

Jenna stops walking, but doesn't turn.

JENNA

If you think you're gonna mug me, you picked the wrong girl.

KENNEDY

I'm not exactly strapped for cash.
(beat)

Besides, I'd have to be a pretty stupid mugger to rip off a Slayer.

Jenna is a little surprised to hear Kennedy say this. She turns around.

JENNA

Kennedy.

KENNEDY

(grins)

I guess my reputation proceeds me.

JENNA

Not in a good way.

(beat)

You're not exactly popular.

KENNEDY

Neither are you, I hear.

JENNA

Whatever you want from me, forget
it.

Jenna turns and starts to walk away.

KENNEDY

It's not about you doing for me.
It's about me doing for you.

Jenna doesn't stop walking.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

I know you don't want to be a Slayer.

Still, Jenna doesn't stop.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

What if I said I could make this go
away forever?

Okay, now Jenna stops.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF SHOW