

1- SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

2- ALYSON HANNIGAN

3- NICHOLAS BRENDON

6- EMMA CAUFIELD

7- AMBER BENSON

"Title"

by

Your Name

4- ANTHONY STEWART HEAD

5- JAMES MARSTERS

8- MICHELLE TRACHTENBERG

9- SEAN JOHNSON

Into The Woods

A Buffy the Vampire Slayer episode written by Marti Noxon and transcribed by Joan the English Chick (pisces@englishchick.com). Original Air Date: December 19, 2000

Transcriber's Notes:

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Teaser

Episode begins: Fade in on a pair of shoes. Pan across the body of Dawn, lying across several hospital waiting room chairs. The camera pulls out and we see that Dawn is asleep with her head in Buffy's lap as Buffy strokes her hair. Riley sits next to Buffy, dozing off. Buffy sighs.

Shot of the hospital corridor with various personnel coming and going.

Riley wakes up as someone walks over to them.

GILES

Just me. Sorry. Can I get you anything?

BUFFY

No, thank you.

GILES

Riley?

RILEY

No, I'm fine.

Giles nods, looks fidgety, walks off. We discover Willow, **Steven** and Xander sitting nearby. Behind them we see the nurses' station.

WILLOW
What time is it?

XANDER
There's a clock behind you, Will.

STEVEN
**Give 'er a break, Xand. You
could just tell her.**

WILLOW
(pouty)
I know, but there's a watch right
above your hand.

Xander shows her his watch. Willow frowns.

WILLOW
That can't be right.
(Turns to look at the
clock above nurses' station)
Oh.

She sits back and exchanges a look with Xander.

Cut back to Buffy and Riley. Buffy leans her head back and sighs loudly. Riley puts his hand on her knee.

BUFFY
I can't stand this. What's taking
so long?

RILEY
It doesn't mean anything.

BUFFY
You think?

RILEY
I'd worry more if your mom was
out of surgery quickly. Might
mean that, you know, they
couldn't do much.

STEVEN
(sighs deeply)
(worried)
**Unless they're trying to fix
their mistakes.**

Buffy frowns, looks down at Dawn, looks up. Suddenly she puts her hand over Riley's which is still on her leg.

Shot of the hospital corridor. We see the doctor walking toward us.

Dawn wakes up as Buffy slides out from under her. Everyone stands up.

The doctor walks closer.

Zoom in on Buffy, nervously waiting for the news with Riley and Dawn behind her.

Wolf howl. Opening credits.

Guest starring Bailey Chase, Nick Chinlund, and Kristine Sutherland as Joyce Summers. Written and directed by Marti Noxon.

Act I

Fade back in on the hospital scene.

DR. KRIEDEL

Okay, your mom's in recovery.

BUFFY

What happened, is she all right?

DR. KRIEDEL

It was possible to visualize the tumor completely, which means I was able to get all of it. So, barring complications in recovery...I think your mother's going to be fine.

(Everyone reacts with relief)
Of course we're still going to have to watch your mother carefully, and, uh, have her back in here for some follow-up testing,

(Buffy nods)
but, uh, overall I'd consider the procedure a complete success.

Smiles all round. Everyone hugs each other. Giles and Xander start to hug, then settle for a handshake instead.

STEVEN

(to Giles and Xander)

(smirks)

Homophobes.

BUFFY
(hugging Riley)
Oh my goodness, doctor, thank
you, thank you so much.

DR. KRIEDEL
Please, it's my pleasure.

Buffy hugs him and he yells in pain as she forgets her
slayer-strength. She gasps and pulls back.

BUFFY
Sorry. Sorry!

The doctor puts a hand on his back and gives Buffy a funny
look.

Cut to: exterior shot of Xander's apartment building, night.

Cut to: interior of Xander's apartment. Xander, Anya and
Dawn are eating Chinese food around a low table.

DAWN
When I was younger, I used to put
my chopsticks in my mouth like
this,
(She puts chopsticks
into her mouth so they
stick out like very
long fangs)
and then Buffy would chase me
around the house yelling,
(makes claw hands)
'I'm the slayer, I'm going to get
you!'
(Laughs)

ANYA
That's disturbing. You're
emotionally scarred and will end
up badly.

DAWN
(removes chopsticks)
No, it was great. I mean, she
didn't actually stake me in the
heart, you know.

XANDER

Buffy's pretty cool like that.
(Gets up to clear the dishes)
So, what do you wanna do now,
Dawnster? Keeping in mind that I
won't chase you because I'm old
and I'm stuffed full of moo goo
gai starch.

Dawn starts to reply but Anya interrupts.

ANYA

Well, we could play that game
again, Life. That was fun.

DAWN

(frowns)
For you. You always win.

ANYA

Well...we can make a wager this
time. You can give me real money.
That would be different.

XANDER

(sarcastic)
And after we teach her to gamble,
maybe we can all get drunk!

ANYA

(not getting it)
I don't think the bar would serve
her, but we could bring something
in.

(to Dawn)
Strawberry schnapps taste just
like real ice cream.

XANDER

Okay, how's about a movie?
(Opens the newspaper
and walks back to them)
They're showing them in theaters
now. I hear it's like watching a
video with a bunch of strangers
and a sticky floor.
(He lays out the
newspaper where he and
Dawn can both look at it)

DAWN

(points)
That one looks sad.

XANDER
The chimp playing hockey? Is that
based on the Chekhov?

Anya comes running over and grabs the paper eagerly.

ANYA
There's a chimp playing hockey?

DAWN
Um, no, the other one. I don't
wanna see a sad movie.

ANYA
We have to see the chimp playing
hockey! That's hilarious! The ice
is so slippery, and, and monkeys
are all irrational. We have to
see this.

XANDER
You pick, Dawn. This is your
night. We are celebrating your
mom's good news.

Anya looks chastised.

ANYA
(softly)
Go monkey. Choose monkey.

DAWN
It's okay. You guys don't have to
make a big deal for me. I'm only
sleeping over here so Buffy and
Riley can boink.

Xander looks embarrassed.

XANDER
No, that's not, that's not it at
all, they just need time to, uh...
(clears throat)
be tender. Relax.

Anya smiles and rubs Xander's chest.

ANYA
(to Dawn)
He's not very convincing, is he?

Dawn shakes her head in agreement.

DAWN
'Alone time' always translates
into 'get Dawn out of the house
so we can have loud obnoxious sex.'

Xander looks like he wants to object, but doesn't. Anya
smiles, then suddenly realizes something.

ANYA
(softly to Xander)
Oh, does that mean we can't?

Xander gives her a look.

Cut to candles burning on a mantle. Soft romantic music. Pan
over to Buffy and Riley dancing in the darkened Summers home.

BUFFY
Can we put this song on repeat?

RILEY
Whatever you want.

BUFFY
Can we put the whole night on
repeat?

RILEY
Absolutely.

BUFFY
Good.
(sighs happily)
Mm, I can't believe how relaxed I
feel. It's like all the tension's
just left my body.

RILEY
Oh, really? 'Cause I had that
scheduled for a little later on.

BUFFY
Scheduled? Are you planning on
seducing me, Mr. Finn?

RILEY
Always.

They kiss.

RILEY
I want tonight to be special for
you.

BUFFY
It's more than special. It's perfect.

RILEY
Well, I'm glad. You deserve it after everything you've been through.

BUFFY
Well, it's nothing compared to what my mom had to deal with.

RILEY
(nods)
It was a lot. And you were incredible.

BUFFY
(smiles)
Not really. Just covering for the weepy chicken within.

RILEY
Don't sell yourself short. You stayed strong throughout, Buffy. You never even cried.

BUFFY
Oh, I cried. I cried so hard, I didn't think I was gonna be able to stop.

Riley looks surprised. She puts her head on his shoulder.

RILEY
Oh.

BUFFY
That's all in the past now. Mom's out of the woods, and I'm here with you. That's all that matters.

She lifts her head up and they kiss again.

Fade to bare legs moving together under bed sheets. Pan up to Buffy and Riley in bed, kissing, naked with strategically placed sheets. Riley is on top. Panting noises. Lots of kissing and writhing. Closeup on Buffy's face as she closes her eyes in pleasure. Pan across them to the window.

Cut to exterior shot of the bedroom window. We see Spike standing on the ground below, smoking a cigarette and looking up at the window. He sighs.

Cut to the bedroom. Buffy is asleep. Riley watches her for a moment, then slides out of the bed. We can see a partially healed cut on his upper chest and a small bandage on his arm.

Cut to Spike outside, putting out his cigarette and turning to leave. He stops as he hears the house's front door open and sees Riley come out. Riley doesn't see Spike. He closes the door quietly and walks off. Spike follows.

Cut to Riley walking through a dark alley. Spike still following. Riley walks up to an old warehouse, up some stairs to a door. Spike watches, frowning.

Cut to: exterior hospital, day.

Cut to: Joyce's hospital room. Joyce has a hand mirror and is looking at her reflection. There's a large bandage on her head.

JOYCE

I don't know, Buffy. I think I'll look like I have a cat on my head.

We see Buffy holding a wig.

BUFFY

But a very well-groomed cat.

JOYCE

I think maybe I'll...stick with a scarf.

BUFFY

Come on, wigs are fun. We can get you a whole bunch of different ones. You know, you can be, like, Sixties Mom, Action Mom...

(wiggles her hips, suggestively)
French Maid Mom...

JOYCE

(smiles)
I must be getting better, 'cause you're making fun of me.

BUFFY

Well, you know.
(sits on the bed)
Got a lot of time to make up for.

JOYCE

You have more important things to make up. I know you've been missing a lot of school.

BUFFY

I may have to take a few
incompletes, but I will make it
through the semester.

JOYCE

Well, what about slaying and your
friends? I want you to have your
life back.

BUFFY

Right now I'd rather be here,
styling your beautiful new
plastic dream hair.

JOYCE

Fair enough, but you don't have
to keep me company all night. Go
out, have fun, get, get Riley to
take you to a movie or something.

BUFFY

I gave Riley the day off.

JOYCE

I don't think he thinks of you as
a chore, Buffy.

BUFFY

I know that. Look, I told him to
make plans with his friends
because I wanted to have you all
to myself, okay? Besides, I can
see him any time.

(Gets up, turns away
to put the wig on a stand)
And I'm sure he'll come over
later looking for a little...

(suddenly stops
herself, turns around
to give Joyce an
innocent look)
bible study.
(Nods)

JOYCE

Well, good. I mean, just as long
as the two of you are spending
some quality time with...the lord.

BUFFY

We are. Absolutely.

Cut to: looks like a hotel room. A commando is sitting on a sofa fiddling with some high-tech equipment: he has headphones on his ears. Graham walks over to a table where Major Ellis has some maps spread out.

ELLIS
What've we got?

GRAHAM
Belize. Last transmission. Infra-red scans say they're-

ELLIS
Breeding. They're not gonna stay in that village for long. Looks like we got ourselves a hot spot. Tell the men to get ready.

Graham starts to leave, pauses.

GRAHAM
What about Riley?
(Ellis looks confused)
Agent Finn.
(Ellis nods)
I'm telling you, sir, if we go in for a sweep and drop, he's definitely a guy we want on the team.

ELLIS
(nods)
Well, let's bring him on board.

GRAHAM
It, uh, might take a little convincing.

ELLIS
Why? What's he got here in Sunnydale that's so special?

Cut to: Buffy in bed, asleep, alone. We hear the door open. Buffy wakes up halfway.

BUFFY
(sleepy)
Riley?

We see Spike standing by the door.

SPIKE
It's me.

Buffy wakes up fully, sits up holding the sheet to her chest.

BUFFY

Every time you show up like this,
you risk all of your parts, you
know that?

SPIKE

I wouldn't be here if I didn't
have a good reason. As usual, I'm
here to help you, and I - are you
naked under there?

BUFFY

(rolls her eyes)
Get out.

SPIKE

No, I'm serious. I mean, not
about the naked part, I mean...
(cranes his neck
trying to see under
the blankets)

BUFFY

Get out or I will drop you out
head-first.

Spike lowers his voice, speaks intensely.

SPIKE

I wanna show you something.

BUFFY

(realizing he is serious)
What?

SPIKE

You need to see this.

Buffy sighs.

SPIKE

But we need to move if we wanna
get there in time.

Buffy raises her eyebrows to indicate that she can't get
dressed with Spike watching. He scoffs.

SPIKE

Oh, please! Like I give a bloody
damn.

He turns his back, and then makes an agonized face, forcing himself not to look as Buffy reaches for her clothing.

Cut to: Spike leading Buffy through the alley, up the stairs to the warehouse. Buffy looks confused. Spike opens the door for her.

They enter the warehouse and see a bunch of people being sucked on by vampires. Random trash, old bathtubs, etc., all around. Buffy stares at it in dismay.

SPIKE
Don't stop, Slayer. This isn't
what we're here for.

We see two large male vampires overseeing things. One of them is putting some money into his vest.

Buffy looks around with a frown, looks at Spike. He nods toward some stairs. They approach the stairs and start up them.

One of the vamps grabs Spike and spins him around.

VAMP 1
What do you think you're doing?

SPIKE
Just having a little look, mate.
Keep it down.

He turns away but the vamp stops him again.

VAMP 1
You can't go up there.

Spike grabs the vamp by the throat and shoves him to the floor.

SPIKE
I said keep it down.

Buffy watches all this from halfway up the stairs.

Spike turns, adjusting his jacket, and they go up the stairs.

The second level is just as messy as the first. Spike leads Buffy through the mess to a slightly open door. She looks suspiciously at him, then goes through the door and discovers Riley, sitting bare-chested on a mattress on the floor, with a female vamp sitting on his lap, drinking from his arm. He doesn't see Buffy yet.

RILEY
Harder.

The vampire continues sucking. Buffy gasps. Riley looks up and sees her.

Closeup on Buffy staring in horror. Blackout.

Act II

Fade back in on the same scene. The vamp continues to feed from Riley. Riley looks at Buffy and gulps.

RILEY

Buffy.

Buffy stares at him, backs away and runs out. Spike smirks.

RILEY

Buffy!

SPIKE

We only came here because we care about you, friend.

(Riley shoves the vamp aside and gets up)
You need help.

Spike smirks and walks out.

Cut to Buffy hurrying down the stairs. Vamp #2 hands something to Vamp #1 and moves to intercept Buffy.

VAMP 2

Hey. Hey, hey.

He steps in front of her but she gives him a shove and he flies backward, hitting the wall as Buffy exits.

Spike comes down the stairs a few steps behind. Vamp 2 growls as Spike passes him.

Cut to Buffy exiting the warehouse, pausing at the bottom of the stairs, looking shell-shocked. Spike bursts out, passes her and turns back.

SPIKE

I thought you should know-

Buffy lifts her head and gives him a fierce look. Spike looks startled. She runs past him and away, down the alley. Spike looks disappointed.

Cut to inside the warehouse. Riley comes rushing down the stairs, buttoning his shirt. Vamp #2 intercepts him, grabbing his shirt.

VAMP 2

Was that the slayer? What the hell do you think you're doing bringing the slayer here?

RILEY

Back off, man. I didn't know.

VAMP 2

Nobody's gonna risk coming here now!

RILEY

I said back off!

Vamp 2 punches Riley in the stomach. Riley punches him in the face and he goes down. Riley runs out as Vamp 1 helps Vamp 2 up.

Cut to: exterior of the Summers house, night.

Cut to: interior of Buffy's room. She enters, closes the door and leans against it, frowning, still looking shocked.

Fade to Riley entering his own apartment, which is dark. He closes the door and sighs, moves inside and turns on a lamp. Behind him we see Graham and Major Ellis, and another commando. Riley doesn't turn around.

RILEY

Get out.

ELLIS

I need to talk to you.

RILEY

(turns to face them)
I'm not in a talkin' mood.

ELLIS

Then listen.
(Walks toward him.
Graham follows)

GRAHAM

Riley, just give the man a chance.
You don't like what you hear,
we'll be on our way.

RILEY

Talk fast.

ELLIS

We have a Code One in Belize. A demon tribe is taking apart missionaries in the rain forest down there.

RILEY

And you're telling me this because?

ELLIS

We're going down to terminate their operation. We want you to join us.

Riley looks from one to the other, then away.

RILEY

(quietly)

I'm a civilian.

ELLIS

You're a soldier.

RILEY

I quit the government a long way back.

ELLIS

We're not government. We're army.

GRAHAM

Just like you.

ELLIS

(moves closer to Riley)

It's not the Initiative, Finn. We don't do experiments. None of us give a damn what makes monsters tick. We just stop 'em.

RILEY

What do you need me for?

ELLIS

I think you can handle yourself. And I always need bodies. I'm not gonna lie to you. It's the real deal. High risk, low pay, and seriously messy. We ship out for Central America tomorrow midnight. Now maybe civilian life is working out for you...

(MORE)

ELLIS (CONT'D)
 (Riley looks down)
 and maybe not. Midnight. Tomorrow.
 The decision's yours.

The commandos leave, as Riley ponders the offer.

Cut to: magic shop, day. Giles is hanging up a large banner that reads:

Don't Forget!

Winter Solstice Hanukkah Christmas Kwanzaa &
 [something obscured by Giles's arm]

Are Coming!

We see Xander, Anya, **Steven**, and Willow behind the counter unpacking merchandise.

GILES
 And so it begins.

He steps down from his footstool and we see that the last holiday listed is "Gurnentharr's Ascendance."

GILES
 No longer a victim of crass
 holiday commercialization,
 I'm...a purveyor of it.

STEVEN
One word: Sombrero.

Anya takes a jar out of a box. Willow moves out from behind the counter.

ANYA
 Oh. Who ordered more chickens' feet? The ones we have aren't moving at all.

XANDER
 That's generally what happens when you cut them off the chicken.

ANYA
 I'm serious.
 (Opens jar)
 Maybe we could do a...holiday promotion.

(MORE)

ANYA (CONT'D)
 (Takes out a chicken foot)
 One free with every purchase!
 (smiles)

GILES
 Oh, yeah.
 (nostalgically)
 Dear holiday memories. Merry
 tykes by the fire, enjoying their
 new Christmas...chicken feet.

Steven SNICKERS.

Willow comes up beside Giles, on the opposite side of the
 counter from Anya.

WILLOW
 Aw, holding them tight as they
 fall asleep. Painting their
 little toenails.

Willow and Giles laugh. Xander grins. Anya grins too, though
 she is not amused.

ANYA
 That's so very humorous. Make fun
 of the ex-demon! I can just hear
 you in private.
 (talks to the chicken foot)
 'I dislike that Anya. She's newly
 human and strangely literal.'

WILLOW
 (frowns)
 Anya, I don't say that. No one
 says that. No one talks that way.

ANYA
 There's nothing wrong with my
 idea anyway. I've been very good
 for this store.
 (frowns)
 If it wasn't for me, Giles would
 be a terrified old man staring at
 a quarterly tax statement and
 wetting himself.

GILES
 (insulted)
 I say, that's an exaggeration.

WILLOW

Anya, you've helped out a lot,
but I have too.

ANYA

(opening another jar)
Yes, I forgot about all the
vigorous sitting around.

XANDER

Anya, you can back off a little.
You get paid. Willow's doing this
on her own time.

Willow smiles and nods triumphantly.

ANYA

(with a fake smile)
I'm sorry, Willow. Thank you for
making time in your busy life to
come in here and get in the way
of mine.

XANDER

(annoyed)
Anya, play nice.

ANYA

You know, fine, take her side
instead of mine
(Xander sighs, puts
his hands over his face)
even though I'm the one who
sleeps with you and feeds you,
bathes you...

Willow frowns.

WILLOW

(to Xander)
She bathes you?

STEVEN

(disgusted)
She feeds you?

XANDER

Only in an erotic, Penthouse-y
way, not in a sponge-bath-y
geriatric sort of...

GILES

(puts up a hand)
Please! Stop, I beg of you.

They all look up as the door opens (it has bells that jingle when it moves) and Buffy enters. She has a bag over her shoulder. She strides purposefully over to the counter.

BUFFY
I need to find out everything I
can about a vamp nest downtown.

GILES
A nest? What sort of-

BUFFY
There were people there. It, um,
it looked like they were paying
vampires to bite them.

Giles looks shocked.

XANDER
Now I know what to get for the
person who has everything!

WILLOW
Who would pay to get bitten?

ANYA
Oh, that's been going on for
centuries. Humans hire vampires
to feed off them, they, well, you
know, they-they get off on the rush.

GILES
And the...hazards of the
underworld can become addictive
to...some people.

XANDER
Why don't the vampires just kill
'em?

ANYA
Because they get cash, hot and
cold running blood, and...they
don't leave any corpses behind so
they don't get hunted.

GILES
But still, i-it can be terribly
dangerous for humans. I mean,
people can end up dying
accidentally, or, or meeting a, a
vampire who only pretends to play
by the house rules.

STEVEN

Like Spike?

BUFFY

(angrily)
You knew about this and you
didn't tell me?

GILES

I hadn't seen it since my Ripper
days. I had no idea it was going
on in Sunnydale.

BUFFY

Well, it is.
(Giles frowns)
And I'm gonna stop it.

She turns toward a large trunk and opens it, revealing a
stash of weapons.

GILES

Buffy, even if I had known about
this, I might not have told you
right now.

Buffy whirls around.

BUFFY

What? Why?

GILES

Well, I'm not sure this is where
your efforts are best spent.
Perhaps you should focus on...a
less ambiguous evil. Glory, for
instance?

BUFFY

You said people are dying.

GILES

They're willing victims. I mean,
there are people out there who
deserve your help who aren't.

BUFFY

Vampires are vampires. And my job
description is pretty clear.
(They all look uneasy)
Are you coming with me or not?

XANDER

What's the rush, Buff? If we're going into a nest, maybe we should come up with a strategy. Wait for Riley.

STEVEN

Yeah, right. He wasn't there last time; what's to think he'll be there this time?

Buffy scowls in extreme displeasure.

BUFFY

Back me up or not. I'm going.

She stalks out. Giles looks conflicted, but he and Xander begin to collect their things.

GILES

Anya, will you mind the store?

Anya nods. The others gather up jackets and stakes, and leave. Anya watches them go with a smile.

ANYA

Have a nice day! Don't get killed.

STEVEN

**(not looking back)
Hope you don't say that to everyone!**

The bell jingles as they exit.

Cut to: inside the warehouse. Buffy and Giles are coming down the interior stairs.

BUFFY

I don't understand. This place was doing serious business last night.

We see that the place is deserted. Willow and Xander are on the main floor. A small grill sits on a table, with a fire burning in it.

XANDER

Well, I guess everybody jumped ship once the word got out that the slayer found their crib.

(pauses)

I just want to apologize for the use of the word 'crib.'

BUFFY
 (to Giles)
 Do you think they'll set up shop
 again in town?

GILES
 It's hard to say. I'm sure
 they'll lie low for a bit.

BUFFY
 But they're around somewhere.
 There's gotta be a way to find
 these creeps.

WILLOW
 Don't worry, Buff, you'll find them.

XANDER
 Yeah, I'm sure you'll get them
 next time, champ.

Buffy does her angry expression again. She grabs the grill and throws it against a wall. The fire begins to spread. Buffy stalks out as the others stare at her. Willow follows in her footsteps. Xander and Giles follow more slowly, looking concerned.

STEVEN
Okay, good plan.
(sarcastic)
Set the place on fire. That
works out so well.

Cut to: Spike sitting in his armchair in his crypt, holding a bottle of alcohol. He pulls out the cork, sighs, and lifts the bottle to take a swig. The door bursts open and Riley enters.

SPIKE
 What took you?
 (Puts the cork back in
 and sets the bottle aside)
 Guess it takes a while to get
 back to full strength after those
 bites.

Riley grabs Spike by the shirt and pulls him up out of the chair.

SPIKE
 Hey! Hey, let's be reasonable
 about this.

Riley slams him up against a pillar.

RILEY

You may have noticed, Spike,
(punches Spike in the face)
I left reasonable about three
exits back.

SPIKE

Look, I'm not the one who got you
into this. Don't kill the messenger.

Riley scowls. He pulls back his arm and we see there's a stake in his hand. He plunges it into Spike's chest. Spike gasps.

RILEY

Why the hell not?

Blackout.

Act III

Fade back in on Riley holding the stake in Spike's chest.

SPIKE

(yelling)
Ow! Bloody hell! Oh god!
(quieter)
Hey.

He looks down at his chest as he realizes he hasn't been dusted yet. Riley yanks the stake out. Spike grabs his chest in pain, and stares at the stake.

RILEY

Plastic wood-grain. Looks real,
doesn't it?
(Grabs Spike's shirt again)
Don't think I don't know what's
goin' on with you, Spike.
(They glare at each other)
Stay away from her. Or we'll do
this for real next time.

He pats Spike on the cheek and walks away. Spike leans against the pillar panting. He's still clutching his chest, but he begins to chuckle, and Riley turns back.

SPIKE

(chuckling)
Oh, man. You are really under it,
aren't you?

RILEY
(angrily)
What?

SPIKE
Look at you. All afraid I'm hot
for your honey.

RILEY
(walks back toward Spike)
Because you are.

SPIKE
Well...yeah. But that's not your
problem. Even if I wasn't in the
picture, you're never gonna be
able to hold onto her.

Riley puts his hand over Spike's hand that is covering the
wound. He pushes his hand deeper into it.

SPIKE
Ow, bloody hell!

RILEY
Maybe I didn't almost kill you
enough.

SPIKE
(in pain)
Come on. You're not the long haul
guy and you know it.

RILEY
Shut up.

SPIKE
You know it. Or else you wouldn't
be getting suck jobs from two-bit
vampire trulls.

Riley looks annoyed, lets go of Spike. Spike continues panting.

SPIKE
The girl needs some monster in
her man...and that's not in your
nature...
(He pushes away from
the pillar, still
holding his chest, and
goes to sit in his chair)
...no matter how low you try to go.

Spike sits back with an expression of pain. Riley paces around restlessly. Spike reaches for his bottle and begins to remove the cork again.

RILEY

You actually think you've got a shot with her?

SPIKE

No, I don't.

(removes cork)

Fella's gotta try, though. Gotta do what he can.

(Drinks)

RILEY

If you touched her... you know I'd kill you for real.

SPIKE

I had this chip outta my head, I'da killed you long ago.

(Replaces cork)

Ain't love grand?

Spike tosses the bottle to Riley, who catches it and removes the cork again. He sits on a nearby coffin and takes a sip.

SPIKE

(quietly)

Sometimes I envy you so much it chokes me.

(They exchange a look)

And sometimes I think I got the better deal.

(sighs)

To be that close to her and not have her. To be all alone even when you're holding her. Feeling her, feeling her beneath you. Surrounding you. The scent...

(louder)

No, you got the better deal.

Riley looks over at Spike, takes another drink.

RILEY

(bitterly)

I'm the lucky guy.

(shakes his head)

Yeah.

Long shot of the two of them sitting together. Riley tosses the bottle back to Spike.

RILEY

I'm the guy.

Spike takes another swig. They sit there together.

Cut to Buffy in her workout room, beating on a punching bag. She grunts angrily and scowls as she punches over and over.

Cut to the main room of the magic shop. Anya is going over paperwork behind the counter. Xander stands on the other side of the counter looking toward the back room.

XANDER

How long has she been in there?

ANYA

A while now. Seems pretty gung-ho about it too. Didn't even stop to say hello.

XANDER

Yeah, when we went to deal with that vampire nest, she got all Rambo and torched the place.

(Anya looks up)

Something seriously bad is going on with her.

ANYA

Oh, I don't know, maybe you're overreacting. I mean, who hasn't done stuff like that from time to time? I mean, I made this one guy spontaneously combust,

(the door bell jingles)

and he set his whole village on fire.

We see Riley entering.

XANDER

Can you stop being scary for a minute and listen to what I'm trying to tell you?

Riley approaches and Xander turns to face him. Riley nods toward the back.

RILEY

She in there?

XANDER
She's training.

RILEY
(nods)
Would you guys mind clearing out?
I need a minute alone with her.

Xander nods, goes to get his jacket.

ANYA
(to Riley)
A little after-hours hanky-panky
in the training room, huh?
(She comes out from
behind the counter as
Riley walks toward the back)
Boy, Xander and I could tell you
some stories...

XANDER
Not now. Let's go, Anya.
(He and Anya begin
walking out)

ANYA
(calling over her shoulder)
There's a funny thing with the
vaulting horse that you can tr...

XANDER
Anya!

ANYA
What? He started it.

XANDER
In your world, maybe, but where
the people are, this isn't the
time for 'Tales of Anya and
Xander's Sexcapades.'

ANYA
Oh.
(Stops walking and
turns to him)
Uh, well, maybe we can go home
and, you know, have 'em.

XANDER
Actually, I've got some stuff to
take care of.

He walks past her and opens the door to leave. Anya follows him.

Cut to Buffy still punching. Riley walks in behind her.

RILEY
We need to talk.

BUFFY
(continues punching)
I'm not ready to talk to you yet.

Riley walks forward, removing his jacket and tossing it aside.

RILEY
Too bad.

He takes hold of the punching bag. Buffy stops punching.

BUFFY
I'm serious.
(turns away)
Unless you wanna fight.

RILEY
So let's fight. We need to have
this out, Buffy. Right now.

Buffy turns back, annoyed.

BUFFY
And say what, Riley? 'What were
you thinking? How long have you
been lying to me?' Nothing you
say right now is gonna make this
better.

She turns away again. Riley moves forward.

RILEY
I realize that.
(Grabs her arm and
turns her around)
I don't expect...
(angrily)
I just need you to hear me out.

BUFFY
(quietly)
Fine. Get your hand off of me.

He lets go of her arm, sighs, walks a few steps away.

RILEY

I think, when this thing started, it was just some stupid, immature game. I wanted to even the score after you let Dracula bite you.

BUFFY

I did not *let* Dracula-

RILEY

I know. On some level I know that. But I was still spun.

(pause)

I don't know, I - I wanted to know what you felt. I wanted to know why Dracula and Angel have so much power over you.

BUFFY

(shakes her head)

You so don't get it.

RILEY

I wanted to get it, Buffy. I wanted to get you.

BUFFY

So this is my fault? Hey, gee, Buffy's so mysterious, I think I'll go out and almost die. I think I'll go and let some other w...

(She stops and looks down.)

RILEY

This isn't your fault. It's mine. I feel like hell for what I've put you through.

(Buffy still doesn't look at him)

It's just...

(sighs)

these girls-

BUFFY

Vampires. Killers.

RILEY

They made me feel something, Buffy. Something I didn't even know I was missing until-

BUFFY
I can't. I can't hear this.

She turns away again and Riley grabs her arm again.

RILEY
You **need** to hear this.

Buffy pulls her arm away, walks a few steps away.

BUFFY
Fine. Fine! Tell me about your
whores! Tell me what on earth
they were giving you that I can't.

RILEY
They needed me.

BUFFY
They needed your money. It wasn't
about you.

RILEY
(walks closer to her)
No. On some basic level it **was**
about me. My blood, my body.
(sighs)
When they bit me...it was beyond
passion. They wanted to devour
me, all of me.

BUFFY
(teary)
Why are you telling me this?

RILEY
It wasn't real. I know, it was
just physical. But the fact that
I craved it...that, that I kept
going back...even if it was
fleeting, they made me feel like
they had such... hunger for me.

BUFFY
And I don't...make you feel that
way?

(Riley looks away)
How on earth can you compare me
to that? How can you tell me you
understand what those vampires
are feeling? You aren't a passion
to them, you are a snack! A
willing, idiotic snack.

RILEY

(angrily)

No, I know exactly what they feel when they bite me, because I feel it every time we're together. It's like the whole world falls away. And all there is is you.

BUFFY

And you think that I don't feel the same way about you? How dare you tell me what I feel?

RILEY

You keep me at a distance, Buffy. You didn't even call me when your mom went into the hospital.

BUFFY

(incredulously)

Oh, I'm sorry. You know, um, I'm sorry that I couldn't take care of you when I thought that my mother was dying.

RILEY

It's about me taking care of you! It's about letting me in. So you don't have to be on top of everything all the time.

BUFFY

But I do. That's part of what being a slayer is.

(shakes her head)

And that's what this is really about, isn't it? You can't handle the fact that I'm stronger than you.

RILEY

It's hard sometimes, yeah. But that's not it.

BUFFY

Then what? What else do you want from me, Riley? I've given you everything that I have, I've given you my heart, my body and soul!

RILEY

You say that, but I don't feel it. I just don't feel it.

BUFFY

Well, whose fault its that?
Because I'm telling you, this is
it, this is me. This is the
package. And if it's so deficient
that you need to get your kicks
elsewhere...then we really have a
problem.

They both stare at each other silently for a moment. Then
Buffy looks down. Riley sighs.

RILEY

They want me back, Buffy...the
military.

(Buffy looks up in shock)
It's deep undercover, no contact
with civilians. Transport's
leaving tonight.

BUFFY

Tonight? When were you gonna tell
me about this?

RILEY

I'm telling you now.

BUFFY

Are you going?

RILEY

I don't know. If we can't work
this out...

BUFFY

Then what? This is goodbye?

(Riley shrugs. Buffy
gets mad.)

You are unbelievable. You're
giving me an ultimatum?

RILEY

No, I'm not.

BUFFY

Yes you are! You expect me to get
over it now or you're gone!

RILEY

I don't, Buffy, that's not what I
meant.

BUFFY
Well, I have heard enough.
(angrily)
I will not take the blame for
this.
(Starts to walk away.)

RILEY
I'm not asking you to.
(Grabs her arm yet again)

BUFFY
Let go of me!
(pulls her arm away)

RILEY
Or what? You'll hit me?
(She stares at him. He
spreads his arms out.)
Go ahead. Come on, do it.

BUFFY
Get out of my way.

RILEY
I'm serious, Buffy, hit me. Hit me.

He walks right up to her. She walks around him and takes her jacket off a hook.

RILEY
I'm leaving, Buffy.

She stops walking but doesn't turn to face him. He turns to speak to her back.

RILEY
Unless you give me a reason to
stay...I'm leaving tonight.

Buffy opens the door and walks out, closing it behind her. Riley looks upset.

Cut to Buffy walking through dark alleys. Suddenly Vamp #2 and another vamp appear behind her. Buffy slows, then stops and turns to face them.

VAMP2
The pyro act was a bad idea, slayer.

BUFFY
Felt pretty good to me.

VAMP2
I'm not running. And you're not
shutting me down.

More vampires appear, surrounding Buffy. Overhead shot of her looking around as they form a loose circle around her. There are about ten of them in total.

VAMP2
In fact...you're not gonna make
it through the night.

Blackout.

Act IV

Fade back in on Buffy surrounded by vamps. She looks at them, and speaks to Vamp 2.

BUFFY
Walk away.
(Vamp 2 moves closer)
I'm serious. Don't do this. Not now.

Vamp 2 lunges at her and she shoves him. He flies backward into some large tubes. The other vamps attack.

Buffy backhands Vamp 3, kicks Vamp 4 in the face, spins around to punch Vamp 5. Then Vamp 4 attacks her with a long staff. She punches him in the face, takes the staff and uses it to stake Vamp 6 behind her. She hits Vamp 4 in the face with the staff, dusts Vamp 7, punches Vamp 8, and quickly dusts three more vamps with three quick jabs of the staff. She pauses and faces down Vamp 2. He runs at her, and as he flies over her head she stakes him. She turns and puts the staff to the throat of the last vamp, a woman, who stands still looking scared.

Brief shot of Riley being bitten from earlier in the episode, as Buffy realizes the vamp she now faces is the one who was drinking from Riley.

Buffy slowly lowers the staff. The vampire looks surprised, then turns and begins to run away down the alley.

Buffy stands there looking thoughtful. After a moment she lifts the staff and throws it like a javelin. It flies down the alley and dusts the female vamp as she's running.

Buffy stands there staring down the alley. Someone comes up behind her.

XANDER
So, how'd that work out for ya?

Buffy turns to see Xander emerging from the shadows.

XANDER
Make you feel better?

BUFFY
What are you doing here?

XANDER
I thought you might need to talk.
Then I saw the skirmish happen. I
was gonna lend a hand, but I
noticed you grew a few extra ones.

BUFFY
(angrily)
Go home, Xander.

She turns and starts to stride away.

XANDER
Buffy.

BUFFY
(turns back)
I'm serious!

XANDER
So am I. Something's up. You're
acting like a crazy person.

Buffy turns and begins walking away again. Xander follows.

Buffy pushes aside a large metal door and enters a random building. Xander enters after her.

Cut to interior of another warehouse. Boxes and metal cans are stacked neatly on metal shelving. Buffy walks over to a set of shelves backed by a metal grating and leans her face against it. Xander walks in behind her.

XANDER
Take this, for instance. You
don't wanna deal, so you hide?
It's not very slayer-like.

BUFFY
Just leave me alone, Xander. You
have no idea what's going on.

XANDER

No? Good, so you and Riley
aren't imploding?

(Buffy turns to face
him in surprise)

It doesn't take a genius. What I
can't figure out is how you never
saw it coming.

BUFFY

What? Who told you?

XANDER

Nobody told me anything, Buffy.
It was right in front of my
Xander face. The guy would do
anything for you.

BUFFY

The guy got himself bit by a
vampire!

(Xander is surprised)
He lied to me. He ran around
behind my back and almost got
himself killed! And now he tells
me that he's leaving with some
covert military operation at
midnight unless *I* convince him
not to. Now tell me that you
understand. Because I sure as
hell don't.

XANDER

You gonna let him go?

BUFFY

(sighs)
It's not my decision to make.

XANDER

Of course it is.

BUFFY

Well, it's not fair.

XANDER

Who cares if it's fair? In about
twenty minutes, Riley's gonna
disappear, maybe forever, unless
you do something to stop him.

BUFFY

What am I supposed to do? Beg him
to stay?

XANDER
(in disbelief)
Why wouldn't you? To keep Riley
here-

BUFFY
I don't even know who he is any
more. I mean, I thought he
was...dependable.

XANDER
Dependable? What is he, State Farm?

BUFFY
You know what I mean.

XANDER
Yeah. I think you mean convenient.
I think you took it for granted
that he was gonna show up when
you wanted him to, and take off
when you didn't.

BUFFY
Look who's talking. Look who has
Anya following him around like a
lovesick puppy.

XANDER
Oh boy, is this *not* about me.

BUFFY
Is she more than a convenience?
'Cause that would kinda be a
surprise.

XANDER
(angrily)
If you don't wanna hear what I
have to say, I'll shut up right now.

BUFFY
Good, 'cause I don't.

She starts to walk off. Xander intercepts her.

XANDER
I lied. See, what I think, you
got burned with Angel, then Riley
shows up.

BUFFY
I know the story, Xander.

XANDER

But you miss the point. You shut down, Buffy. And you've been treating Riley like the rebound guy. When he's the one that comes along once in a lifetime.

(Buffy looks dismayed)
He's never held back with you. He's risked everything. And you're about to let him fly because you don't like ultimatums?

Buffy's eyes begin to water as Xander's words finally get through.

XANDER

If he's not the guy, if what he needs from you just isn't there,
(shakes head)
let him go. Break his heart, and make it a clean break. But if you really think you can love this guy...I'm talking scary, messy, no-emotions-barred need...if you're ready for that...then think about what you're about to lose.

Buffy looks up at him, then looks around anxiously. There are tears in her eyes.

BUFFY

Xander...

XANDER

Run.

She turns and runs out. Xander watches as the door slams behind her.

Cut to: Buffy running as hard as she can, down the main street of Sunnydale, her expression still anxious.

Shot of Riley standing next to a helicopter, looking around.

Buffy runs along in the street, turns a corner and enters a more residential neighborhood.

Riley continues to look around, checks his watch. Behind him the helicopter blades begin to turn slowly.

Buffy runs down quiet streets.

Riley looks at the ground, looking very disappointed. The helicopter blades move faster and faster.

Buffy runs through a foresty area and down some wooden stairs.

Riley stares at the two trees between which he wants Buffy to appear. She doesn't. He turns and gets into the helicopter next to Graham.

Buffy runs through the forest and comes out on the helipad. The helicopter is already off the ground and rising fast.

BUFFY
Riley! Riley!

Shot of Riley inside the helicopter, staring grimly out the front window. Behind him we can see out the helicopter door and we see Buffy on the ground yelling up at him.

BUFFY
Riley! Riley!

He doesn't hear her and continues to stare out the front. Buffy watches as the helicopter rises and flies away.

Cut to: Buffy walking slowly down the residential streets.

XANDER VOICEOVER
I've gotta say something...

Cut to: Anya's apartment. Anya is in her nightgown, sitting on the bed.

XANDER
'Cause...I don't think I've made it clear.

Anya stands up. Xander walks toward her.

XANDER
I'm in love with you.

He walks closer toward her, and she toward him.

XANDER
Powerfully, painfully in love.
The things you do...the way you think...the way you move...I get excited every time I'm about to see you.

They are up close now, looking at each other. Anya smiles slightly, looking a little teary.

XANDER

You make me feel like I've never
felt before in my life. Like a
man.

(Pause. He shrugs uneasily)
I just thought you might wanna know.

Anya moves up to him and they kiss.

Cut to Buffy entering the dark Summers house. She walks
partway up the stairs and then sits down, looking sad. Her
image fades into the image of Riley sitting in the helicopter
with the dark town of Sunnydale laid out below him.

Blackout.

In Memory of D.C. Gustafson.

Executive Producer: Joss Whedon.