

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

After Life

Episode opens on Willow, **Steven**, Tara, Xander, and Anya walking through the dark alleys.

WILLOW

She's at home. She has to be.
We're, we just need to get there,
and she'll be there.

STEVEN

**Good. Hopefully she's at home
like we predict.**

TARA

This is the fastest way?

XANDER

Absolutely.

TARA

You sure?

XANDER

Hey, I've done a lot of fleeing
on these mean streets. I know all
the shortcuts.

STEVEN

(grins)
He's not the only one.

ANYA

I don't like this.
(points to something
they pass that's on fire)
Look, fire. Fire is rarely a sign
of imminent safety.

STEVEN

Unless you're a...
(reconsiders)
Wait, no. Good point.

WILLOW

I wish we were there already.

XANDER

Hey, hey, don't worry, ladies,
I'll get us there just fine. My
senses are primed for danger, and
nothing's gonna-

Xander yells in surprise as three demons on motorcycles come roaring up behind them. The demons ignore them, just ride around them and on down the alley.

Xander stumbles back, rattled. The girls steady him, **with Steven standing nearby.**

STEVEN

(concerned)

Xand? You all right?

XANDER

(shaky)

I'm okay.

(pats himself)

Four. Four limbs.

ANYA

Well, at least the demons almost hit you on the way *out* of town.

XANDER

Yeah, now that their leader's gone they seem to be making with the big skedaddle.

WILLOW

(looks around nervously)

I-it was Buffy, right? We, we saw her and it was really Buffy?

They resume walking.

ANYA

I think we screwed it up. She's broken.

WILLOW

No! She's not broken! She's just disoriented from being ... tormented in some hell dimension. Probably tortured and ... It's like, we don't even know how much time has passed there for her, uh, possibly years. That's not something you just get over. Oh my God. What if she never gets over it?

ANYA

And you think of this now?

TARA
What are you thinking, Willow?
That-that she's ... that she's
not right, or, or maybe like,
dangerous?

Cut to Buffy and Dawn standing on a sidewalk. The street
behind them is littered with debris from the demons' attack.

DAWN
(nervous)
Home! See?

We see they're standing in front of their house, looking at it.

DAWN
You're back home. We're all okay
now.

Buffy just stares, looking disheveled and unhappy.

Wolf howl. Opening credits.

Guest starring Amber Benson as Tara. Written by Jane
Espenson, directed by David Solomon.

Open on Buffy in the foyer as Dawn closes the front door
behind them. Buffy moves toward the living room. Dawn turns
on a light and Buffy winces in pain.

BUFFY
Ow.

Dawn watches anxiously as Buffy surveys the living room.

BUFFY
It's different.

DAWN
A little. Uh, Willow and Tara
live here now, and, uh, we ...

Shot of a photo of Joyce, in a frame on a table.

DAWN
...we didn't do much...

Buffy stares at the photo.

DAWN
We moved some of the chairs, and
took out some of the little
tables, but...

Dawn trails off as Buffy turns and heads toward the dining room. Dawn turns and follows, turns on the light in the dining room.

DAWN
This is the same. Except the
computer stuff.

Shot of a laptop computer set up at one end of the dining-room table.

DAWN
That's Willow's, obviously. We
eat at the other end...

Buffy has already turned and walked off. Dawn turns and notices.

DAWN
(softly, with self-disgust)
Obviously.

Dawn looks up the stairs after Buffy for a moment, then follows.

Cut to a sink with faucet running, hands squeezing out a face-cloth. Pan up to reveal it's Dawn. She turns off the faucet and turns to Buffy, who stands staring at her reflection in the mirror. Buffy no longer wears her black coffin dress, but a loose white button-down shirt that is unbuttoned with a camisole underneath. Her hair is pulled back neatly.

Dawn very carefully begins wiping Buffy's neck with the cloth.

DAWN
There you are. Knew you were
under that dirt somewhere.
(nervous laugh)

Buffy doesn't react, just stares at her reflection. Dawn looks nervous, turns back to the sink, then back to Buffy.

DAWN
(false cheer)
You remember what Mom used to say?
"Either wash that neck or plant
potatoes."
(Buffy still doesn't react)
Yeah, I never thought it was
funny either.

Dawn indicates Buffy's shirt.

DAWN

You want to button that, or, um...

Buffy looks down. Shot of her hands, which are still bloody.
Dawn notices them for the first time.

DAWN

Ohh ... ow.

Dawn gently lifts Buffy's hands to look at them. Buffy jerks them back.

DAWN

Um, we'll ... take care of that after.

BUFFY

Okay.

DAWN

Here, I'll do the shirt.
(begins buttoning the shirt)
And then, then we'll do your hands.

Buffy frowns, looks around.

DAWN

See how nice you look...

Buffy walks away before Dawn can finish buttoning. Dawn watches her go, looks upset.

Cut to Buffy walking into Willow and Tara's room. Dawn enters behind her, turns on the light. Again Buffy winces.

DAWN

Mom's room.
(walks closer to Buffy)
I know it's really different now.

BUFFY

Willow and Tara. This is their room.

DAWN

Yeah, well, it seemed to make the most sense. No one was using it, and it's the biggest. But, you know, now that you're here, we'll have to figure out something to do.

Buffy has turned to leave again. Dawn sighs, moves to block her way.

DAWN
(frustrated)
Buffy? You wanna, like, stop?
(hopeful)
We can ... we can sit down and talk.

BUFFY
What else is different?

DAWN
(sighs)
Do you mean about the house, or...

Buffy kind of shrugs, doesn't look at her.

DAWN
Um. Let's see ... Giles. It's so weird. He, he left today. Because you were ...
(Buffy doesn't appear to react)
He, he'll come right back, I'll call him. Someone'll call him.

BUFFY
What...

DAWN
What what?

Buffy seems to be drifting in and out of attention. She snaps out of it again.

BUFFY
Uh ... What, um ... will you say to him?

Sound of a door opening downstairs. Buffy goes on full alert, looks around anxiously.

BUFFY
What's that?

DAWN
It's okay. It's okay.

SPIKE
(O.S.)
Dawn! Dawn! Are you there?

DAWN
(to Buffy)
It, it's just Spike.
(calls)
I'm here!

Dawn gives Buffy a look, heads out. Buffy follows.

Cut to the foyer. Shot from above as Spike slams the door angrily, looking up the stairs at the camera.

SPIKE
Thank God. You scared me half to death ... or more to death. You - I could kill you.

Dawn walks slowly down the stairs, giving Spike a look, trying to clue him in.

DAWN
Spike.

SPIKE
I mean it. I could rip your head off one-handed and drink from your brain stem.

Dawn reaches the bottom of the stairs. Spike finally realizes something is up.

DAWN
Look.

Dawn turns back and we see Buffy coming down the stairs behind her.

SPIKE
Yeah? I've seen the bloody bot before. Didn't think she'd patch up so-

He breaks off, staring at Buffy. She continues down the stairs, returning his gaze.

DAWN
She's kind of, um ... She's been through a lot ... with the ... death. But I think she's okay.

Buffy suddenly notices her shirt is still unbuttoned, begins buttoning it. Dawn looks at Spike, who continues staring in disbelief.

DAWN
Spike? Are *you* okay?

SPIKE
I'm ... what did you do?

DAWN
Me? Nothing.

Buffy clutches the top of her shirt closed, looks up at Spike a little fearfully.

SPIKE
Her hands.

Buffy lowers her hands, puts them behind her back, looks uncomfortable.

DAWN
Um, I was gonna fix 'em. I don't know how they got like that.

SPIKE
I do. Clawed her way out of a coffin, that's how.
(to Buffy)
Isn't that right?

BUFFY
(quietly)
Yeah. That's ... what I had to do.

SPIKE
Done it myself.

Throughout this, Spike continues staring at her as if he thinks he's dreaming. Now he snaps out of it.

SPIKE
Um ... We'll take care of you.
Come here.

He puts out his arm and guides Buffy into the living room.

SPIKE
(to Dawn)
Get some stuff, uh, mercurochrome, bandages.

DAWN
Okay.

Dawn goes off. Spike follows Buffy into the living room. She sits on the sofa and he sits on the coffee-table facing her. He takes her hands in his and looks at them. Then he looks up at her face and their eyes meet.

BUFFY
How long was I gone?

SPIKE
Hundred forty-seven days
yesterday. Uh ... hundred forty-
eight today.
(smiles a little)
'Cept today doesn't count, does it?

Buffy doesn't respond. He looks at her hands again, then back at her face.

SPIKE
How long was it for you ... where
you were?

BUFFY
(pause)
Longer.

Dawn reappears from the kitchen carrying medical supplies.

DAWN
Got the stuff.

As she enters the living room, the front door bursts open and the others rush in.

WILLOW
Is she here?

ANYA
She's here!

WILLOW
You're here.

STEVEN
How are you?

XANDER
We didn't know where you were.

ANYA
You ran away.

WILLOW
Buffy!

TARA
Are you okay?

The above goes by very fast as Buffy and Spike are standing up. Spike moves aside with a disgusted expression.

DAWN
(shocked)
You knew she was back?

In the background we see Spike exit out the front door, but no one notices.

DAWN
How did you know?

ANYA
(to Buffy)
You're not a zombie, are you?

XANDER
Anya!

WILLOW
Are you in pain?

XANDER
What do you remember?

TARA
What do you know about what happened?

Buffy sits back down, looks like she can't handle the barrage of questions.

DAWN
Hey! Back off!

The Scoobies look at Dawn in surprise.

DAWN
You did this. What did you do?

WILLOW
A spell. We, we did a spell.

ANYA
We didn't think it worked, but-

STEVEN
Her being here proved us wrong.

DAWN
Is she going to be okay?

BUFFY
I'm okay.

Everyone looks at Buffy. Shot of the Scoobies from her perspective: towering over her, looking a little menacing.

BUFFY
I'm gonna be fine. I remember.
You brought me back.

ANYA
What was it like?

BUFFY
I, I can't...

XANDER
It's okay. You don't have to talk
about this, Buff. Hey, do you
want something? Anything. Pizza.
I'll get you pizza.

ANYA
Buffy likes pizza.

TARA
Yeah, something to eat-

WILLOW
She doesn't want pizza.

TARA
I just meant-

DAWN
(sharply)
Guys! Back off.

Beat.

WILLOW
Right, uh, Dawn's right. We
should just be quiet, and let
Buffy tell us what she needs.

Another shot from Buffy's POV of the **fivesome** staring down at her. She looks uncomfortable, gets up.

BUFFY
I, I think I ... just wanna go to
sleep.

TARA

That's a good idea. You, you
should sleep.

WILLOW

Right. Long day. But, Buffy ...
be happy.

(big smile)

We got you out. We really did it.

Buffy looks at them, still uncomfortable.

BUFFY

(apologetically)

Tired.

ANYA

Well, yeah. I mean ... jet-lag
from hell has gotta be, you know,
jet-lag from hell.

BUFFY

(toward Dawn)

My room is still...

DAWN

Yeah. Yes. It's your room.

Buffy exits. The others watch her go, then look at each other.

WILLOW

(defensively)

Well, she, she's fine! Normal!
She used to go to bed all the time!

Cut to: exterior Summers house, night. Anya and Xander come
out, cross the porch and begin down the stairs.

ANYA

I think Willow's wrong. I don't
think she's particularly normal
at all.

XANDER

Well, she just got back. Give it
time. I bet in a week she'll be
our little Bufferin again.

ANYA

Oh yes, cause six or seven days,
that's all you really need to get
over eternal hell experiences.

Xander hears something, looks off to the left.

XANDER
Who's that? Spike?

We see Spike leaning against a tree, his back to them. He lifts a hand and wipes his eyes. Xander and Anya come closer.

XANDER
What are you doing out here? I hope you're not going to start your little obsession now that she's around again.

Spike grabs Xander and spins him around, slams him up against the tree and holds him there.

ANYA
Hey!

SPIKE
You didn't tell me. You brought her back and you didn't tell me.

XANDER
Well, now you know.

SPIKE
I worked beside you all summer.

XANDER
We didn't tell you. It was just ... we didn't, okay?

SPIKE
Listen. I've figured it out.

Spike lets go of Xander but doesn't move away, continues glaring at him.

SPIKE
(angrily)
Maybe you haven't, but I have.

Spike still has tears in his eyes. He points toward the house.

SPIKE
Willow knew there was a chance that she'd come back wrong. So wrong that you'd have ... that she would have to get rid of what came back. And I wouldn't let her. If any part of that was Buffy, I wouldn't let her. And that's why she shut me out.

XANDER
What are you talking about?
Willow wouldn't do that.

SPIKE
(sarcastic)
Oh. Is that right.

XANDER
Look. You're just covering. Don't
tell me you're not happy.
(Spike scoffs)
Look me in the eyes, and tell me
when you saw Buffy alive, that
wasn't the happiest moment of
your entire existence.

Spike gives Xander a "you just don't get it" scowl, turns
and walks off.

SPIKE
(as he walks)
That's the thing about magic.
There's always consequences.

We see the motorcycle that Spike acquired in "Bargaining"
sitting on the street in front of the house. Spike gets on it.

SPIKE
Always!

He starts up the bike and rides off as Xander and Anya watch.

Cut to Buffy's room. She stands in front of the mirror,
still dressed, staring blankly at her reflection. Sound of a
door closing. Buffy starts, looks toward the hallway.

Cut to the hallway. Willow, wearing pajamas, walks from the
bathroom to her room.

Cut to Willow and Tara's room. Tara is brushing her hair in
front of a mirror. Willow enters.

WILLOW
Hey.

TARA
Did you get through to London?

WILLOW
Yeah. He's gonna head back as
soon as he can. I'm not sure,
like maybe a couple days.

TARA
(stops brushing hair,
turns to Willow)
How did he take it?

WILLOW
(rubbing lotion on her arms)
Um ... I'm not sure. I mean ...
glad, but ... kinda weirded out,
which I get, you know? Lots of
"dear lords". And I think I
actually heard him cleaning his
glasses.

Tara smiles, turns and takes off her robe.

TARA
Are you worried?

WILLOW
Worried? Tara, it worked fine.
(not convincingly)
It's all good.

TARA
(gets into bed)
Hey, Will, this is me. It doesn't
all have to be "good" and "fine."
This is the room where you don't
have to be brave. I still love
you. If you're worried you can be
worried.

WILLOW
Well ... I'm not ... unworried. I
mean, what, what happened, that
was intense.
(closes the door)
That's ... gotta change you.

Willow turns off the light, gets into bed with Tara.

WILLOW
When Angel came back ... Buffy
said ... he was wild. Like an
animal.

TARA
Buffy's not like that.

WILLOW
Yeah.

TARA

But?

WILLOW

(points at her head)
It's just kinda ... noisy up here
tonight, you know?

TARA

Yeah.

Tara snuggles up to Willow, puts her face next to hers and
an arm across Willow's middle.

TARA

Is this better?

WILLOW

(smiles)
Yeah. I think it makes things
quieter in here.

They lie cuddled up together. Willow lightly stroking Tara's
bare arm.

TARA

You know what I think? I think we
all just assumed crash positions.

WILLOW

Huh?

TARA

It's, it's, it's like ... we were
all tensed up, like ... we were
expecting it to screw up. We
weren't prepared for it to ...
actually go right.

WILLOW

Yeah.

Beat. Willow continues staring at the ceiling.

WILLOW

Tara?

TARA

Yeah?

WILLOW

If things did go right ...
wouldn't you think she'd be ...
happier? Like, wouldn't you think
she would be so happy that we
brought her out?

TARA

Sure she is.

Willow isn't convinced.

TARA

You thought she'd say thanks. Be
more grateful.

WILLOW

Would I be a terrible person if I
said yes?

TARA

Give her time. She'll get there.

WILLOW

Right. No need to be in a big
furry hurry.

TARA

Exactly.

Cut to Buffy's room. She is now sitting on the bed, still
dressed.

TARA VOICEOVER

I'm sure it's okay.

Buffy gets up, picks up a picture from the bedside table.
Close shot of the photo of Buffy, Xander, and Willow all
smiling.

She puts it back, goes over to the wall. There's a bulletin
board covered with more pictures of the Scoobies in various
combinations, all smiling.

Suddenly the images change: all the flesh melts away and the
smiling faces become dead skeleton faces.

Buffy closes her eyes in anguish, opens them again. The
photos are back to normal. Buffy stares at them.

Blackout.

Open on the Summers house, night. Shot of Willow and Tara's
bed. They are asleep.

Suddenly something crashes against the framed picture above the bed. The glass shatters and falls on Willow and Tara. They both sit up.

WILLOW

Buffy?

We see Buffy silhouetted at the foot of the bed, lit by moonlight.

BUFFY

(low hoarse voice)
What did you do? Do you know what
you did? You're like children.
(Willow and Tara
sitting up in bed
staring in fear)
Your hands smell of death.
Bitches! Filthy little bitches,
rattling the bones. Did you cut
the throat? Did you pat its head?

Buffy grabs a crystal ball off a nearby table and throws it at them. Willow and Tara shriek as it smashes on the wall above their heads.

BUFFY

(shouts)
The blood dried on your hands,
didn't it?

TARA

Oh my god, oh my god.

BUFFY

(shouts)
You were stained. You still are.
I know what you did!

Willow jumps out of bed and turns on the lights.

Shot of the room. It's empty except for Willow and Tara. Buffy is gone.

Tara looks at the bed she's lying on.

TARA

The glass. There's no glass.

Cut to Buffy's room. It's dark. A sliver of light appears as the door opens, revealing Buffy asleep in bed.

We see Willow and Tara standing by the door. They exchange a look, then Willow pulls the door shut. Buffy doesn't wake.

Cut back to Willow and Tara's room. They reenter.

WILLOW
(quietly)
Okay, what in the frilly heck is
going on?

TARA
Maybe we dreamed it.

WILLOW
(closing the door)
Right. Right. Wrong!
(points at her head)
Different brains.

TARA
Oh yeah.

Tara goes to the table and touches the crystal ball, which
is intact.

TARA
Well ... what was it talking
about? Did you understand it?

WILLOW
Well, I understood the words, but
... no.

Suddenly Tara sees something behind Willow, gasps in fear.
Willow turns to look.

We see some kind of distortion on the wall, moving across
the wall toward the door, and then it's gone.

WILLOW
What was that?

TARA
There's, there's something in the
house.

WILLOW
What is it after? Is it ... Buffy?

TARA
I don't know.

WILLOW
That's it, I'm gonna call.
(grabs the phone)
I hope Xander's up.

Cut to Xander and Anya's bedroom. Anya leans over Xander in the bed.

ANYA

Xander, are you up? I can't sleep.

(pause, no response)

Play a word game with me.

Still no response. Pan out until we can see Xander lying there asleep beside Anya.

ANYA

Xander, are you awake? Okay, I'm going to describe an adjective with accurate but misleading clues, and then you have to guess what it is.

(pause)

Xander?

(pokes him)

Xander?

Still nothing. Then the phone rings. Xander is immediately awake.

XANDER

Huh? What? Do what?

ANYA

(exasperated, lies back)

That oughta do it.

Xander reaches across her and grabs the phone.

XANDER

(into phone)

Hello?

WILLOW

(on phone)

Xander, it's me, Willow.

(Anya gets out of bed,
walks off)

We were just attacked.

XANDER

Attacked? A vampire?

Cut back to Summers house. We see Willow and Tara huddling over the phone.

WILLOW

No, it was Buffy. Or something that looked like her.

Cut back to Xander's bedroom. He sits up on the edge of the bed.

TARA
(on phone)
Like she was possessed.

Cut back to Willow and Tara.

WILLOW
And then she just disappeared, a-
and, and we saw something... a
little ... there's something in
the house.

Back to Xander's room. In the background we see Anya moving around in the kitchen.

XANDER
(slurred)
In the house? All right, Willow,
you need to get out of there,
just get everyone out.

Suddenly we see Anya with her eyes glowing greyish-white. She laughs a weird laugh and moves toward Xander.

XANDER
(into phone)
Wake up Buffy and Dawn. Don't
make a big deal-

We see Anya still moving toward him. She has a knife and is using it to cut her face. She continues laughing. Xander looks up and sees her.

XANDER
Gah!

He jumps up, grabs the knife. Anya crumples to the floor unconscious. Her cheeks are unmarked.

XANDER
Anya!

He kneels beside her.

XANDER
Anya!

Shot of Anya's feet with Xander's foot beside them. A weird bulge appears in the carpet and moves away from them, into the kitchen.

WILLOW
(on phone)
Xander? Xander!

Cut to the next day. Close on Xander's face.

XANDER
Very bad. Very, very, very bad. Bad.

Pan out to reveal they are sitting on lawn chairs in the Summers' backyard. Anya sits on the arm of Xander's chair, rubbing his back. **Steven is standing next to Anya.**

ANYA
(to Willow and Tara)
He's all traumatized.

STEVEN
Can you blame the guy?

WILLOW
Well, whatever it is, it's not the, the traditional haunting, because i-it's not limited to one specific place, and there's not, you know, a dead person.

TARA
Not any more.

ANYA
I bet it's a hitchhiker.

XANDER
A hitchhiker?

ANYA
Um, standard way to travel through dimensions. Uh, some demon-thing sees someone moving between worlds, and grabs on for the ride.

WILLOW
You mean like, some hell-beastie rode in with Buffy? Like ... we're responsible for this?

TARA
Assume crash positions.

ANYA

I think we shouldn't've brought Buffy back. I knew it was going to end badly. I should've said something.

XANDER

Okay, fine, but ... what are we gonna do? I mean, I'm feeling the need for some vigorous doing, you know?

WILLOW

It's okay. We, we just kill the beastie and then all is good. We're rolling in puppies! ... Right?

STEVEN

I hope you don't mean literally.

XANDER

Can we do that? Kill it?

BUFFY

(OS)

We killing something?

They all look up in surprise. Buffy stands there in jeans and a shirt, holding a coffee mug.

WILLOW

Buffy! You're not supposed to be up.

TARA

How, how are you feeling? Are you okay?

BUFFY

So what are we killing?

ANYA

A demon you brought back from Hell with you.

(Willow gives her an angry look)

STEVEN

Anya...blunt as usual.

BUFFY

Oh.

WILLOW

It's not like she's making it sound. A little haunting-type stuff. Boo-scary, everything's normal.

TARA

You shouldn't worry about it.

BUFFY

Um, I remember something, last ... night, uh...

She trails off, loses focus. They all stare for a moment, waiting for her to continue.

XANDER

Buff?

BUFFY

(snaps out of it)
Um ... the photographs. O-of us. They changed.

TARA

How did they change?

BUFFY

They were ... dead. I-I-I mean, we were dead. Like, um ... dead bodies? But, but then they were okay. So I just, you know, figured it was me. That I was going crazy.

ANYA

Well, maybe you are. Going crazy. From Hell.

Willow gives Anya another angry look.

STEVEN

(a little annoyed)
Once again...blunt.

ANYA

(fake scoff)
No. You're fine.

WILLOW

You are. And Buffy, we're, we're so glad.

STEVEN
Definitely, Buffy. We're really
happy to have you back.

XANDER
Yeah. This thing, this haunting
thing, we'll fix it, and then
we'll still have you back, which
is ... it's so important.

WILLOW
Yes.

TARA
It's wonderful.

Buffy takes all this in stone-faced.

BUFFY
We should get to work.

Cut to: interior magic shop. We see Willow, Tara, **Steven**,
Xander, and Anya sitting around the table looking at books.
Willow is writing. Dawn stands behind Willow, looking over
her shoulder. **Steven is working on Willow's laptop.**

DAWN
What's the list?

ANYA
Possible hitchhikers.

XANDER
Demons that might have come out
of Hell at the same time Buffy did.

DAWN
(reads)
"Skaggmores demons, Trellbane
demons, Skitterers, Large and
Small Bone-Eaters" ... If we get
to pick, I say we go with the
Small Bone-Eaters.

STEVEN
(pondering)
I've heard of the Skitterers...but
I forget from where.

ANYA
Well, that just means they prefer
to eat things with small bones,
like you.

WILLOW

That's just what we have so far. Five species of demons that have been known to move transdimensionally. Two of them may be invisible in this dimension, and, uh, two others can perform spells to alter perception.

ANYA

Well, that's four. What's the other one like?

TARA

Uh, like the others, only dripping with viscous fluid.

DAWN

Eww.

STEVEN

You know what they say..."there's always room for viscous fluid."
(aka: Jello)

XANDER

So, should we concentrate on how to kill those, or should we try to find more?

WILLOW

I'm not sure. Maybe ... maybe some of us can, uh, keep going finding more, and the others--

BUFFY

I miss Giles.

We see Buffy sitting across the table from Willow.

WILLOW

Oh. He's coming back, I talked to him. I know I'm a kind of poor substitute, but until then, we'll get it done.

Buffy looks around at them. They all look expectantly at her.

BUFFY

I think I should patrol.

She puts her book down and stands. Willow looks hurt.

WILLOW

Well, I know we'll find something soon.

STEVEN

She's right, Buffy. We'll keep looking and...and we'll find something. until then, just...keep a level head.

BUFFY

Yeah.

Buffy heads out.

XANDER

Uh, do you want us to go with you?

ANYA

We can do that.

BUFFY

No. I-I need to go. Sorry.

DAWN

You should go.

Buffy goes up the stairs and out.

DAWN

(OS)

I'll be safe here with the others.
Don't worry about me.

Close-up on Dawn's face. Her eyes glow greyish-white. She smiles evilly.

Blackout.

Open on a graveyard, night. Buffy walks slowly along, looking distracted.

Cut to the magic shop. Anya enters, carrying cups of coffee.

ANYA

I found one of those 24-hour places for coffee. Remember that bookstore? Well they became one of those books-and-coffee places, and now they're just coffee. It's like evolution, only without the getting-better part.

She goes to the table where the others are still researching. Xander rubs his face, looking tired. **Steven moans and cranes his neck back, visibly tired as well.** Dawn stands a little ways back at the bookcase.

ANYA

Uh, coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee,
coffee, um, hot chocolate for
Dawn.

(to Dawn)

You're too young for coffee.

Dawn turns around and we see that her eyes are still white.

DAWN

Idiot.

Everyone turns to look at Dawn in surprise.

ANYA

You can have my coffee.

DAWN

(low hoarse voice)
All of you did it. You stupid
children.

(the other all staring
at her)

Did you think the blood wouldn't
reach you? I smell the death on
you. Look at what you've done!

Dawn opens her mouth and fire shoots out at the others. They all dive aside. The flames set some of the books on the table afire.

Dawn collapses on the ground.

Xander jumps up.

XANDER

Fire! Fire! Fire!

TARA

Dawn!

Xander grabs a cushion from a chair, uses it to beat out the flames. Anya bends over Dawn.

WILLOW

Oh my god, oh my god.

Willow goes to Tara and Dawn. Xander finishes putting out the fire. Willow and Tara pull Dawn to a sitting position.

WILLOW

That was it. Li-like Buffy, with fire.

We see the bulge thing under the floor, moving away.

XANDER

Is she okay?

ANYA

Did I look like that? I hope I didn't look like that.

WILLOW

No, I'm sure you looked really glamorous cutting up your face.

Dawn comes to.

DAWN

What ... what is it? What's happening?

WILLOW

You'll be okay.

ANYA

I bet you'll experience some dry-mouth.

(they all look at her)
Fire.

DAWN

Was it ... did the demon thing have me?

TARA

It's okay. It's okay.

XANDER

Yeah. It's gone.

ANYA

Yes, but where did it go?

STEVEN

And how long is it gone for?

ANYA

Exactly. I mean, evil things have plans. They have things to do.

Cut to: interior of Spike's crypt. We're in the lower level. Spike paces back and forth restlessly. We see that there's more furniture now: a chair, a bookcase with a lamp on it, etc.

Spike paces a bit, then suddenly turns around and punches the wall.

He laughs a little, looks at his bloodied hand, laughs some more, a little hysterically.

A noise from upstairs. Spike looks alarmed, picks up a dagger and removes it from its sheath. He goes to the ladder and climbs up.

Cut to above. Spike emerges, moves slowly and quietly into the crypt, holding the dagger by his side. We see a person standing by a table, looking at some magazines that are spread out.

SPIKE

Buffy.

Buffy turns around and looks at him. Her expression is still basically blank.

SPIKE

(quietly)

You should be careful. Never know what kind of villain's got a knife at your back.

BUFFY

Your hand is hurt.

SPIKE

Hmm.

(nods toward her hands)

Same with you.

BUFFY

(looks down at her hands)

Right.

Buffy just stands there. Spike looks at her, seems uncomfortable, not sure what to do. He walks over to the wall and puts the knife down.

SPIKE

Willow's getting pretty strong, isn't she? Bringing you back. It's hard to get a good night's death around here.

He tries a little laugh but gets no response.

SPIKE

You can sit down. Got furniture.

Buffy sits on a chair.

SPIKE

You should see the downstairs,
too, it's quite posh.

She looks at him, doesn't say anything. Spike walks over,
sighs, sits on the edge of a table across from her.

Buffy just stares at him.

SPIKE

Uh ... I do remember what I said.
The promise. To protect her.

(pause)

If I had done that ... even if I
didn't make it ... you wouldn't
have had to jump.

Beat. Buffy still doesn't react, just sits there looking at
him.

SPIKE

But I want you to know I did save
you. Not when it counted, of
course, but ... after that. Every
night after that. I'd see it all
again ... do something different.
Faster or more clever, you know?
Dozens of times, lots of
different ways ...

(softly)

Every night I save you.

Cut to: interior magic shop. Xander stands by the window,
peering through the blinds. Tara comes over, **followed by
Steven.**

XANDER

It's getting light out. Buffy's
probably on her way home from
patrolling.

STEVEN

**Yeah, you're probably right.
Hopefully everything worked out.**

TARA

I like sunrise better when I'm getting up early than when I'm staying up late, you know? It's like ... I'm seeing it from the wrong side.

STEVEN

I know what you mean, Tara.

XANDER

(nervous)
Hey, Tara, this is probably crazy ... but Spike got me to thinking. This spell we did ... it's having consequences, isn't it? I mean ... it sure seems like it. And I was just wondering ... did you know that this might happen?

TARA

No!

XANDER

Do you think ... could someone have known?

TARA

Willow is a talented witch, and she would never do anything to hurt anyone.

STEVEN

Sometimes it depends on the circumstances.

XANDER

I know, I know, huh?
(raises his hands)
Backing off quickly, hands in the air.
(sighs)
I just meant-

WILLOW

Thaumogenesis!

Xander, **Steven** and Tara look over at Willow, who is at the counter, still looking through the books. We see Anya and Dawn with their heads on the table, jerking awake at Willow's shout.

STEVEN

Is that a real word?

ANYA
She's possessed!

WILLOW
Thaumogenesis.

DAWN
(to Anya)
You're right.

Xander, **Steven** and Tara go over to Willow.

WILLOW
I'm not possessed. I-I think I
figured it out. This demon, i-
it's not a demon we let out.
It's, it's a demon that we made.

XANDER
We made a demon? Bad us.

WILLOW
Thaumogenesis is when doing a
spell actually creates a being.
In this case it was like, a, a
side-effect, I guess. Like a price.

DAWN
What?

WILLOW
Think of it like, the world
doesn't like you getting
something for free, and we asked
for this huge gift. Buffy. A-and
so the world said, 'fine, but if
you have that, you have to take
this too.' And it made the demon.

ANYA
Well, technically, that's not a
price. That's a gift with purchase.

STEVEN
I don't call a world-destroying
demon a gift.

DAWN
Um, but, if we made the demon,
how come we can't see it? I mean,
all we see is us. Doing stuff.

WILLOW

Well, I, I think it's out of phase with this dimension. Like, its consciousness is here, but, but its body is caught in the ether between existing and not existing.

TARA

It doesn't have a body, so it's borrowing ours. I-it borrowed Dawn and Anya...

WILLOW

Or, or it's manifesting copies of them, like, like it did when Buffy came at us...

TARA

It's using them to do stuff. To scare us, attack us.

XANDER

So we need to uncreate it, right? We need to send it the rest of the way out of our world.

WILLOW

Uh-huh. Except that ... it's linked to the spell. So, if we sent it away ... it would be like the spell doesn't exist. Like it never happened.

DAWN

Like it never brought Buffy back.

WILLOW

(softly)
Yes.

DAWN

You can't do that.

(stands)
You can't think for a second that you're going to do that.

TARA

Dawn-

Dawn walks over to Willow.

DAWN

If you think you can give her back to me and then take her away again? No. That's worse than if you'd never brought her back. You can't mess with people's lives this way!

WILLOW

Dawn, we're not going to do it that way.

DAWN

(to the others)
How can you let her do this? How can you even talk about letting her go?

TARA

Honey, you're not listening. She said we will find another way.

XANDER

We will.

STEVEN

Dawnie, trust us. We'll find another way to deal with this.

DAWN

Then do it!

Willow has turned back to her book.

WILLOW

Wait. Wait. Dawn. Everybody hold on.

(smiles)

ANYA

What? Why are you smiling? That's inappropriate.

WILLOW

Because it's temporary.

XANDER

What is?

WILLOW

The demon. I-it's gonna dissipate.
The only way for it to survive on
this plane is if it were to kill
the subject of the original spell.

TARA

It would live if it killed Buffy?

WILLOW

That's not gonna-

Xander lifts his head and we see that his eyes are white.

XANDER

Thanks for the tip.

He collapses to the floor. Again we see the little bulge
move across the floor toward a wall.

STEVEN

Uh-oh...

Cut to: interior of the Summers house, night. Buffy opens
the door and comes in, puts her keys on the table, starts up
the stairs. Behind her, we see a white mist. It slowly
coalesces into a vaguely human shape, reaching out arms
toward Buffy as it moves up the stairs after her.

Blackout.

Open on Buffy's darkened bedroom. Buffy comes in. She pauses
to look at the pictures on the wall again.

DEMON

(whispery voice)
You don't belong here.

Buffy turns to see the demon-mist floating in.

Buffy punches at it, but her fist just goes through it. It
shoots out a tendril and hits her, and she flies back
against some furniture. She recovers her balance, turns back
around, and looks around in confusion. The mist reappears
and Buffy punches at it again. The mist swirls around her
and re-forms behind her. She turns and punches again. Still
nothing.

The demon hits her again and she stumbles out the door into
the hallway, into the opposite wall. She turns and looks
back at the door into her room. The mist is gone.

Buffy walks cautiously back into the room.

DEMON

(O.S.)
Did they tell you, you belonged
here?

The mist reappears in front of Buffy, puts out a hand. She tries to grab the wrist, seems to almost have it, but then her hand just goes through it.

DEMON

Did they say this was your home
again?

It disappears again, reappears. Buffy hits at it with no effect. It swirls around behind her while she's still looking for it in front of her.

DEMON

Were you offered pretty lies,
little girl?

It swirls around her and wraps around her waist. It seems to be crushing her.

DEMON

Or did they even give you a choice?

Cut to Xander's car driving down the dark street. Xander is driving, Anya in the passenger seat, and Dawn in the back seat.

DAWN

Xander! Drive faster!

XANDER

I can't!

DAWN

I could drive faster and I can't
drive!

ANYA

She's right, you're like a snail.
A snail who's driving a car very
slowly. Come on, give it the lead
foot! We've got to help Buffy
with that demon you sent after her!

XANDER

I did not send the demon, I was
possessed. The demon used me to
eavesdrop on our conversation.

ANYA

Great, so now what? We have to talk in some sort of anti-demon secret code?

XANDER

Ood-gay idea-yay, An-yay.

DAWN

Stop talking wrong in Pig Latin and drive! Buffy's in trouble!

XANDER

It's okay, Dawnie. Willow and Tara are doing a spell.

DAWN

You sure it won't send Buffy back?

XANDER

No, of course not. It's just that she can't fight this thing if it's all ... misty, so they make it more solid, so Buffy can kick its fully embodied ass.

DAWN

You sure it'll work?

Cut to the magic shop. Willow and Tara sit on the floor facing each other, holding hands. Candles are lit around them.

WILLOW/TARA

Child of words, hear thy makers.
Child of words, we entreat. With
our actions did we make thee, to
our voices wilt thou bend.

Cut back to Buffy's room. Buffy is still struggling in the grip of the demon, squeezing her around the stomach. She curls her hands into fists and manages to break free, swings at the demon. It hits her and she falls on the bed, rolls off the side onto the floor.

The demon stands still. It seems to be becoming more solid. Buffy lies on the floor, stares up at it.

Cut back to the magic shop.

WILLOW/TARA

With our potions thou took
motive, with our motions came to
pass.

(MORE)

WILLOW/TARA (CONT'D)

We rescind no past devotions,
give thee substance, give thee mass.

Cut back to Buffy's room. She reaches under the bed and produces a battle-axe, starts to get up.

DEMON

You're the one who's barely here.
Set on this earth like a bubble.

Buffy swings the axe at the demon without any effect. And again. The face is a little clearer now. The demon stops swirling and confronts Buffy. For the first time we can actually see its mouth move when it talks.

DEMON

You won't even disturb the air
when you go.

Xander, Anya, and Dawn rush in, see the demon and react with fear. Buffy turns and sees them.

BUFFY

Go! Take Dawn out of here!

Cut back to the magic shop. Willow has her eyes closed and her face turned upward. Tara continues chanting, not realizing that Willow has stopped.

TARA

Child of words, hear thy makers.
Child of words, we en...treat...

Tara trails off as she notices Willow. A haze of golden light gathers around Willow. She pulls her hands out of Tara's. Her eyes snap open. They are completely black.

WILLOW

Solid.

Cut back to Buffy's room. The demon suddenly becomes fully solid. It looks like the rotting corpse of a woman, taller than Buffy. Buffy tries to hit it with the axe but the demon grabs the axe handle. They struggle over it for a moment, then the demon lets go and hits Buffy, making her drop the axe. She turns back and the demon hits her again. Buffy goes down.

Xander, Dawn, and Anya are still in the doorway, watching fearfully, clutching each other.

Buffy picks up the axe, jumps up from the floor, and swings.

Shot of the demon's head bouncing across the floor.

Xander, Dawn, and Anya all give little yelps of dismay. Dawn turns her face away, grabbing Xander's arms.

Buffy looks down at the demon's body (which we don't see).

DAWN
(to Xander)
That's probably the sort of thing
I'm not supposed to see, right?

Anya pats Dawn on the shoulder.

Cut to: overhead shot of Sunnydale, day.

Cut to: exterior shot of the Summers house. It's a bright sunny day, birds chirping, etc.

Dawn comes out the front door, dressed for school. She walks down the steps, starts down the walk.

Buffy opens the door.

BUFFY
Dawn!

Dawn turns back.

DAWN
(alarmed)
What's wrong?

Buffy comes down the stairs, holding a brown paper bag.

BUFFY
Lunch.

DAWN
(smiling happily)
You made me lunch?
(takes the lunchbag)
Wow. Thanks.

BUFFY
(solemn)
You better go. You've been out
since ... I got back. And you
know what they say. Those of us
who fail history? Doomed to
repeat it in summer school.

They both give small smiles. Dawn hugs Buffy.

DAWN
(whispers)
Thank you.

Dawn pulls out of the hug.

DAWN
Are you okay?

BUFFY
I'm going to start charging money
for every person that asks me that.

DAWN
Everyone's been doing that, huh?

BUFFY
A little bit.

DAWN
It's because they care about you
a lot. When you were gone ... it
was bad when you were gone. But
it'll be better now. Now that
they can see you being happy.
(pause)
That's all they want.

Dawn turns and walks off. Buffy watches, thoughtful.

Cut to: interior magic shop. Tara is sitting on a chair and Willow standing, both putting books on shelves. The door bell jingles. Willow turns and smiles.

WILLOW
Buffy! Hey!

Buffy enters, walks in. We see Xander and Anya there as well.
Steven jumps down from the ladder at the top of the level.

XANDER
Hey, you get Dawn off to school
all right? 'Cause I was thinking,
if you need help picking her up,
I...

BUFFY
It's okay. I got it.
(nervous)
Look, you guys, um, there's this
thing ... so I'm just gonna say it.

They all look expectantly at her.

BUFFY

You brought me back. I was in a ... I was in hell. I, um ... I can't think too much about what it was like. But it felt like the world abandoned me there. And then suddenly ... you guys did what you did.

TARA

It was Willow. She knew what to do.

(Willow looks embarrassed)

BUFFY

Okay. So you did that. And the world came rushing back. Thank you. You guys gave me the world. I can't tell you what it means to me.

Willow has tears in her eyes.

BUFFY

And I should have said it before.

WILLOW

(tearful)

You're welcome.

Willow hugs Buffy.

XANDER

Welcome home, Buffy.

Xander puts his arms around the two of them. They all hug. Buffy's expression is still less than thrilled.

Cut to the back alley behind the magic shop. Buffy comes out, closes the door behind her, slowly walks a few steps, thinking.

SPIKE

Buffy.

Buffy looks up, sees Spike standing in the alley.

BUFFY

(frowns)

Spike, it's daylight and you're-

SPIKE
Not on fire?
(looks at the sky)
Sun's low enough, shady enough here.

Buffy folds her arms around her middle.

SPIKE
I was gonna go inside, but I
overheard you and the Super-
friends exchanging a special
moment and I came over a bit queasy.

Buffy wipes hair out of her face, doesn't seem to be listening.

SPIKE
Say, aren't you leaving a hole in
the middle of some soggy group hug?

BUFFY
Just wanted a little time alone.

She walks over, sits on a packing crate a few feet away from
Spike.

SPIKE
Oh, uh, right then.

He gets up, starts to walk away, reaches the line of shadow,
realizes he can't leave the alley without going into the
sunlight. He stops, squints at the sky.

BUFFY
That's okay. I can be alone with
you here.

SPIKE
Thanks ever so.

He gives a rueful smile, looks back at her.

BUFFY
Right.

Beat.

SPIKE
Buff? ... Slayer? Are you okay?

She isn't, but she composes herself and nods at him.

BUFFY
I'm here. I'm good.

SPIKE
(walks back to her)
Buffy, if you're in ... if you're
in pain ... or if you need
anything... or if I can do
anything for you...

BUFFY
(looks down at her lap)
You can't.

SPIKE
Well, I haven't been to a hell
dimension just of late, but I do
know a thing or two about torment.

He sits beside her.

BUFFY
(still looking down)
I was happy.

Spike looks at her in confusion.

BUFFY
Wherever I ... was ... I was
happy. At peace.

Spike stares, shocked.

BUFFY
I knew that everyone I cared
about was all right. I knew it.
Time ... didn't mean anything ...
nothing had form ... but I was
still me, you know?
(glances at him, then away)
And I was warm ... and I was
loved ... and I was finished.
Complete. I don't understand
about theology or dimensions, or
... any of it, really ... but I
think I was in heaven.

Spike continues to stare at her in dismay.

BUFFY
And now I'm not.
(almost tearful)
I was torn out of there. Pulled
out ... by my friends.
(MORE)

BUFFY (CONT'D)

(Spike continues
staring, listening)

Everything here is ... hard, and
bright, and violent. Everything I
feel, everything I touch ... this
is Hell. Just getting through the
next moment, and the one after
that ...

(softly)
knowing what I've lost...

She looks up, realizes Spike is still there. She looks
uncomfortable, gets up.

She walks just to the line where the shadows become
sunlight, and pauses, but doesn't turn back to face Spike.

BUFFY

They can never know. Never.

She still doesn't look back at him, just continues walking
into the sunlight.

Blackout.

Executive Producers: Joss Whedon and Marti Noxon.