

Episode # 6ABB17
Story # EO1291

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Normal Again"

Written By

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Directed By

Rick Rosenthal

SHOOTING DRAFT

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BUFFY
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SLAYER

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BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Normal Again"

CAST LIST

BUFFY SUMMERS.....	Sarah Michelle Gellar
XANDER HARRIS.....	Nicholas Brendon
WILLOW ROSENBERG.....	Alyson Hannigan
SPIKE.....	James Marsters
ANYA.....	Emma Caulfield
TARA.....	Amber Benson
DAWN.....	Michelle Trachtenberg
JOYCE.....	Kristine Sutherland
HANK.....	Dean Butler
JONATHAN.....	Danny Strong
WARREN.....	Adam Busch
ANDREW.....	Tom Lenk
LORRAINE THE MANAGER.....	Kirsten Nelson
DOCTOR.....	Michael Warren
NURSE	Sarah Scibier
ORDERLY.....	Rodney Charles

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BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Normal Again"

SET LIST

INTERIORS

BUFFY'S HOUSE
DINING ROOM
LIVING ROOM
BUFFY'S BEDROOM
BASEMENT
FOYER
KITCHEN
UPSTAIRS HALL
DAWN'S BEDROOM
UPSTAIRS BATHROOM
WILLOW'S ROOM
TRIO'S LAIR
ASYLUM
HALL
CELL
DR'S OFFICE
DOUBLEMEAT PALACE
KITCHEN
UC SUNNYDALE CAMPUS - ATRIUM

EXTERIORS

RESIDENTIAL STREET
ALLEY
CEMETERY
WOODS

OMITTED

UC SUNNYDALE CAMPUS

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Normal Again"

TEASER

1 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

1

Calm and quiet in the neighborhood. Everyone at home but...

BUFFY. She walks down the sidewalk. Clearly on a mission. She reaches an intersection and stops. Checks the name of the cross street. Then pulls out a piece of paper and a pen.

ANGLE: THE PIECE OF PAPER.

It's a list of addresses titled "NEWLY RENTED." All but one of them crossed out. Buffy takes her pen and crosses it out. She puts the paper away and walks down the cross street.

2 INT. TRIO'S LAIR - NIGHT

2

CLOSE ON: A SURVEILLANCE MONITOR - Buffy on it. Walking down the street toward camera.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: It's one of several monitors at the trio's surveillance bay.

PAN to see JONATHAN, sitting at the monitors, passed out. After a moment, the MUZZLE of a weapon appears in frame and moves in close to his head. Then, without warning, he's BLASTED in the face with WATER.

Jonathan wakes and jumps out of his chair with a start, sputtering and coughing as

ANDREW and WARREN laugh, the latter standing over him with a SUPERSOAKER. Andrew sits nearby, eating cold left-over pizza out of the box. In fact, there are empty pizza boxes piled up all around.

ANDREW

(to Jonathan)

Oh, man. Your face was priceless.
"Bwaaah!"

JONATHAN

Real funny!

WARREN

(chuckling)

Think we're all in agreement with that. Serves you right for taking Z's on lookout again.

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED:

2

Jonathan gets up, wiping himself off, still in shock.

JONATHAN

Whatta you expect? Haven't had a decent night's since...

(beat)

I mean, I'm going Jack Torrence in here, you know. Stuck in this basement for weeks. We rented the whole house, can't we at least sleep upstairs?

ANDREW

(Jesus F. Christ!)

We're on the lam. We have to lay low. Underground.

JONATHAN

That's figurative, doofus. Did you even read Legion of Doom?

WARREN

Okay, enough, Midgetor. Get back to the monitors. Last thing we need is to be surprised by--

ANDREW

(noticing)

Holy Gaez Louise!

ANGLE: Buffy on the monitors. Getting close.

WARREN

(seeing her)

The frickin' Slayer!

JONATHAN

That's... She's right outside!

WARREN

Don't panic. Andrew, deploy your little friend.

Andrew smirks evilly, then raises a small nose flute to his nostrils and blows.

3 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

3

Buffy comes upon the address she was looking for. The house empty and dark. She peaks through the window.

4 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

4

Buffy walks toward the back of the house, then stops. She hears a coarse hiss.

Then a NASTY-LOOKING DEMON steps out of the dark before her.

BUFFY

Oh. Hi.

They circle. The thing's big and muscly. Red eyes and translucent white flesh that looks like melted wax. It eyes Buffy like a rabid beast.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Um, you didn't by any chance just eat a bunch of nerds, did you?

And it's fisticuffs time. The demon swings, fast and heavy. Buffy ducks, deals it kicks and fists, working it back down the alley for a moment when

WHAM-BAM-POW!! The demon sends her back. She crashes hard. Shakes her head and gets up for more. She runs up a wall two steps, pushes off and slams the demon with a twirling kick. *

It falls and she's on it. She grabs a trashcan and starts banging its head. The demon shreds it and knocks her back.

ANGLE: THE DEMON'S KNUCKLES.

SHNK!! A long, needle-like stinger springs out, dripping.

Buffy comes at it. They spar evenly, until the demon spins her, grabs her and BURIES ITS STINGER INTO HER UPPER ARM. Buffy struggles, trying to shake herself out of its embrace. She flails, desperate, aggressive, then...

FLASH CUT TO:

5 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - NIGHT

5

Buffy is up on her feet in a tiny room, an institutional cot next to her. She wears a white clinic gown and flails away just like in the alley. A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE STUCK IN HER ARM. TWO ORDERLIES trying to restrain her. *

ORDERLY

Buffy!! Stop fighting!!! You're gonna hurt yourself!!! Calm down!!! *

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED:

5

Buffy rears her head back. Eyes open, eyeballs back. She's much like the Buffy we know, except for THE DARK RINGS UNDER THE EYES, THE PALE SKIN, AND THE GREASY, FLAT HAIR FALLING OVER HER FACE IN STRANDS.

ORDERLY (cont'd)

She's gonna break that needle!!

And then she comes-to. Blinking hard. Gasping. Eyes darting everywhere.

ORDERLY (cont'd)

Strap her down!!

She takes heed of the orderlies. The stark room. Where is she? She pushes back against the wall. Freaked. Confused.

BLACK OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

6 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

6

Buffy is on her feet, staggering backwards and fetching up against the alley wall. The demon is gone. Buffy, stunned and dizzy, rubs her upper arm. Everything hurts. And what the hell happened there for a sec? Where'd she go?

7 INT. CAMPUS - ATRIUM - DAY

7

WILLOW waits by the entrance to a classroom. She paces nervously. Checks her watch, then clears her throat and rehearses a conversation.

WILLOW

Hi, um... Tara. How are you? I was wondering... do you want to go out sometime? For coffee? Or food? Or kisses and gay love?

She checks the entrance again. Then keeps trying.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Hi, Tara, um, guess what? Magic-free for, insert number, days now...

She deflates, ready to give up, but people start pouring out of the class. She bucks up. Moves away from the door to get better vantage. Looking for

TARA. She comes through the doors among other students.

Immediately a nervous smile lights up Willow's face.

But then she sees Tara is with a friend. A girl. And they're laughing it up. Willow backs away. Her face suddenly full of confusion.

Tara and her friend stop about twenty feet out. Some more laughing. A little touching. And then they kiss.

From where Willow stands, it looks like it could be on the lips. And it breaks her heart. She watches for a beat, then goes.

Tara and her friend part ways. Tara catching Willow retreating out of the corner of her eye. It surprises her.

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED:

7

She thinks to call out, but then hesitates. Realizing how her interaction just now might've looked.

Willow rounds the bend and disappears.

8 INT. DOUBLEMEAT PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY

8

Buffy is on french fries duty. Spacing out on the sizzle and fizzle of grease cooking potatoes. The hubbub of the restaurant adding to the dull and droning moment.

A beat. Then she turns and is transfixed by her zombie-like co-workers moving back and forth. She starts walking through.

HER MANAGER, LORRAINE sees her and calls out.

LORRAINE
Buffy? Buffy...

FLASH CUT TO:

9 INT. ASYLUM - HALL - DAY

9

Like at the end of the teaser. Buffy in a white gown again. This time she comes-to walking through

A hall FULL OF MENTAL PATIENTS. Also in white gowns.

She jerks, vacillating with confusion. Then starts panicking. Her breathing gets erratic. A NURSE calls out from where the manager stood a second ago. Approaching.

NURSE
C'mon. Time for your--

FLASH CUT TO:

10 INT. DOUBLEMEAT PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY

10

LORRAINE
-- drugs.

Buffy is back from another split-second lapse. She catches her breath, absorbing her surroundings.

BUFFY
What?

CONTINUED

10 CONTINUED:

10

LORRAINE

I said, if I didn't know better
I'd think you were on drugs.

Buffy blinks at her, tries to put it all together.

BUFFY

Okay. Sounds good.

Lorraine registers that, then, resigned:

LORRAINE

Here's the funny part. You're
still the best of 'em.

And she walks away. Buffy takes a moment, then walks back to
her station. Her fries burning.

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

11

Buffy walks down the stairs in a new outfit. She joins
Willow in the dining room at her computer.

*

BUFFY

I could wrestle naked in grease
for a living and still be cleaner
than after a shift at the
Doublemeat.

*

*

WILLOW

Plus, I'd visit you at work every
single day.

BUFFY

(smiles)

So, what'you doing?

She walks over to Willow.

WILLOW

~~I was online.~~ Checking to see if
Xander e-mailed.

BUFFY

(smile gone)

Oh. Any luck?

WILLOW

No such. I mean, I get the deal:
that special I-left-a-girl-at-the-
altar feeling -- I'm sure he needs
some alone-time. But, still...

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED:

11

BUFFY

Maybe Anya found him, and they're working it out...

(then, realizing)

Hey, how come you're all about home and hearth and DSL? I thought you were gonna go see Tara.

WILLOW

(tightly)

Saw her. Saw her completely.

BUFFY

Ow. I got a little scratch from all the brittle.

WILLOW

It's, when I was seeing her, she was seeing someone else. A girl.

BUFFY

What? You mean...

Willow is quick to clarify.

WILLOW

Not seeing seeing a girl, well, maybe. I don't know. It was inconclusive, and I didn't stick around to find out. Might've magicked my fist through a wall or something.

BUFFY

Oh, Will. I'm so sorry.

A beat. Willow could cry, but she tries to be light instead.

WILLOW

They're prob'ly just friends. I press my lips against my friends all the time.

BUFFY

I'm sure they're just friends. When someone falls for Willow, they stay fallen.

Willow smiles. A nice moment.

WILLOW

Thanks, Buff.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

SFX: DING DONG.

Buffy gets up. Walks over to open. It's

XANDER. Looking haggard.

XANDER

Hi.

(an awkward beat)

I'm back.

Buffy smiles, relieved and happy, then wraps him in a hug.

WILLOW (O.S.)

Xander?

She comes around the door.

WILLOW

Xander! You're here!

More hugging. Long and heartfelt. Buffy closes the door and they walk to the living room.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Where were you? We were worried.

Xander sits on the couch. The girls sit around him.

XANDER

I know. I tried calling. But I couldn't talk without...

He chokes up.

BUFFY

Are you okay?

Xander nods. Far from it. An awkward moment goes by as he gathers courage.

XANDER

I'm sorry. For disappearing. For walking out like that.

BUFFY

You don't need to apologize to us.

XANDER

Right. Is she here?

WILLOW

Oh. No. You want to find her?

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED: (3)

11

XANDER

I need to. Her suitcase was gone,
some of her stuff. The Magic Box
has a 'closed' sign, which, like,
chills me to the bone--

WILLOW

She left a couple days ago.

BUFFY

We thought maybe you guys'd find
each other.

XANDER

Was she looking for me? Before
she left, did she say anything?

WILLOW

You mean between the sobs?
(off his bleak look)
There was mostly just wheezing.

BUFFY

She was kinda, she got a little
broken.

Xander gets up, walks a little, unable to keep still.

XANDER

Oh, God... I didn't mean... I
don't know how this got so mixed
up. I blew it.

BUFFY

No. Well... there were probably
better times to break up with her--

XANDER

No! I mean, it wasn't about
breaking up. I love her. And
god, I miss her so much. Driving
out of town, I kept turning to ask
her if it was gonna be okay, and
each time... she wasn't there.

WILLOW

So, you left her at the altar
but... you still want...?

BUFFY

You still want to date?

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED: (4)

11

XANDER

I guess. I know my life is better
with her in it. It got all
complicated with the wedding.
With my family, and her... demons.
And what if it all goes to hell?
And forever. But then I left, and
ever since, it's been like there's
this painful hole inside... and
I'm the idiot that dug it out.

Willow squeezes his hand, ready to cry with him.

XANDER (cont'd)

I screwed up real bad.

BUFFY

Hey, we all screw up. And who
knows, sometimes life gives us
what we need anyway.

TIME CUT:

12 EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

12

SPIKE walks home carrying a paper grocery bag. He pauses at
a bench, sets down the bag to light a cigarette. Buffy,
patrolling, nearly runs into him.

SPIKE

Looking for me?

BUFFY

Really not.

SPIKE

Oh. Right then, off you go...

She keeps moving. Spike looks after her.

SPIKE (cont'd)

Didja cry?

Buffy stops, looks back at him.

BUFFY

What?

SPIKE

The wedding. Two hearts united
for eternity, great pelting
showers of rice and so forth.

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED:

12

BUFFY
You didn't hear?

SPIKE
What? Families get outta hand,
tear the place up?

Buffy walks back to him.

BUFFY
No. Well, yeah, absolutely. But
the thing is, Xander left.
Wedding didn't happen.

Spike's surprised and interested. He sits on the bench.
Buffy sits next to him.

SPIKE
Gotta say, din't see that coming.

BUFFY
It was awful. Anya was... she was
devastated.

SPIKE
(been there)
That right?

BUFFY
And Xander. He's got this idea
maybe they can still get back
together, but... he hurt her a lot.

Spike tosses his cigarette down.

SPIKE
Yeah, well. Some people can't see
a good thing when they've got it.
End up dumping the one thing -
they've got going for 'em--

WILLOW (O.S.)
Spike.

Xander and Willow are approaching. Both sporting stakes.

XANDER
(weary)
Should'a known you'd be tagging
along.

Buffy gets up, awkward with Spike in front of her friends.

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

BUFFY

Oh. Hey, guys. I was, I found
Spike here, and I was just trying
to find out what he was doing
with...

She looks at Spike, who is picking up his grocery bag.

BUFFY (cont'd)

...with dangerous contraband.
Possibly more demon eggs.

(re: bag)

From a smallish demon.

Spike looks at Buffy, attuned to her sudden stiffness.

SPIKE

Tell you what, Slayer. I'll get
out of your way, stop bothering
you.

XANDER

Why don't you do that, Spike? Run
along.

Spike takes out his anger at Buffy's rejection on Xander.

SPIKE

Guess you know all 'bout that,
doncha? King of the big exit.
Heard it brought the house down.

And Xander, all defensive, over-reacts:

XANDER

You can't, I don't wanna hear this
crap from you.

SPIKE

(to Buffy too)

Right. Wouldn't wanna listen to
Spike. Might get a bit 'a truth
on you.

Spike and Xander are in full bristle, squaring up. Willow
steps between them.

WILLOW

Okay, okay. Calm now. Let's turn
around and release our very
manly... thing... the other way.

Buffy goes to interfere, but a wave of dizzy hits her.

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED: (3)

12

XANDER

Oh hey, guess what, I forgot Willy
Wannabite can't hurt me. Dumb to
pick a fight, I guess.

WILLOW

Xander...

Things get heated. And the more they do, the more Buffy
seems to get dizzy. She stutter-steps back.

BUFFY

Guys...

SPIKE

More'n happy to beat you right
through the pain, you pathetic
Poof.

Spike tosses the bag aside. Xander strikes before the bag
has even hit the ground. Willow shrieks. Buffy reaches for
her head and...

FLASH CUT TO:

13 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - NIGHT

13

Buffy stands in her tiny room again, rubbing her head like
she was just doing. Mumbling incoherently.

BUFFY

Guys... don't...

She tries to focus, as if back from a living dream. Seeing
nothing but blurry figures. Someone steps toward her.

A DOCTOR. As kind-looking and compassionate as they come.

DOCTOR

Buffy? Can you hear me?

She stiffens, realizing it's not Willow, Xander or Spike.

BUFFY

Whe... what is this?

She focuses. Begins to recognize the space from her previous
flashes. Her breathing escalating with fear and panic.

DOCTOR

Buffy, do you know where you are?

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED:

13

BUFFY
Sunnydale...

The doctor puts a hand on her shoulder and she jumps. He steps off, proceeding as gently as imaginable.

DOCTOR
No, Buffy. None of that is real.
None of it. You're in a mental
institution. You're ill. You've
been with us six years now, do you
remember?

Buffy focuses sporadically, blinking in and out. Inching away from him in shock.

Others close in behind him, but Buffy can't see them yet.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
It's gonna be okay. Look...
(he reaches back)
Look who's here.

He steps away, revealing

JOYCE AND HANK SUMMERS.

They approach. Tentative. Full of emotion.

Buffy's eyes widen. She shrinks against the corner. Joyce stops, not wanting to scare her.

JOYCE
Buffy?

She smiles, on the verge of tears.

JOYCE (cont'd)
Welcome home, honey.

And OFF BUFFY - consumed with shock and disturbed.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

14 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - NIGHT

14

Right where we left off. Buffy taking it in. Her mom alive. Joyce stares at her daughter in awe. A tear rolling out of her eye. From bliss, heartbreak, fear, everything.

JOYCE

Oh... baby. Buffy...

Buffy blinks, trying to make it stop. Still too much in shock to accept her.

JOYCE (cont'd)

You're really here.

But then, it seems so real. It's amazing. And the mere possibility of having her mom next to her again...

BUFFY

Mom...?

DOCTOR (O.S.)

(surprised)

She's lucid.

(quickly)

Keep talking. The sound of your voice might help ground her --

*

He breaks the spell. Buffy freaks out again. She darts her eyes around and sees

HANK

Sweetheart. We've missed you so much. Honey? Can you hear me?

Buffy's heart skips a beat. The sight of her parents, together, her innocence lost. But then she shakes her head. She knows there's something wrong. It just can't be real.

JOYCE

Buffy? Stay with us, plea--

*

FLASH CUT TO:

15 EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

15

The bag lands on the ground, glass breaking inside. Willow squeals as Spike goes down from Xander's blow to the face. Buffy is rubbing her head, her eyes unfocused. It's a second after we left them in Act 1.

*

*

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED:

15

Buffy stumbles against a tree. Wracked by her lapse.

BUFFY

No...

She looks around in a panic. Recovering her surroundings.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Willow...

Xander is waiting for Spike to get up, fists ready for more. Willow turns back and sees Buffy.

WILLOW

Buffy? Are you okay?

She reaches out and grabs her, keeping her from falling. Xander turns, rushes over to help. Buffy can't talk. Still dizzy. Spent from her hallucination.

XANDER

What happened?

WILLOW

I don't know.

Spike rushes to her side, concerned.

SPIKE

Here. Let's get her into my crypt.

XANDER

Spike, just -- go. She's our friend, we'll take care of her.

BUFFY

(weakly, disoriented)

I'm -- I'm... fine.

WILLOW

C'mon, Xander. Help me get her home.

Xander and Willow lead Buffy away, ignoring Spike. He looks after them, partly concerned, partly pissed to the core.

SPIKE

(calling after them)

Put a little ice on the back of her neck.

(softly, to himself)

She likes that.

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

16

Willow comes out of the kitchen with a glass of water filled with ice cubes.

BUFFY

I've been having these... flashes.
Hallucinations, I guess.

WILLOW

Since when?

Willow hands the glass to Buffy who sits in a chair, still in her pj's. Buffy takes a sip. Soft spoken - still piecing it together. Willow sits next to DAWN and Xander on the couch. Bedding evident from him sleeping over on the couch.

BUFFY

Night before last. I was checking
houses on the list you put
together, looking for Warren and
his pals. Then bam. Some kind of
gross, waxy demon thing poked me.

DAWN

Wax like icky ear stuff?

BUFFY

More like a melted candle.

XANDER

And when you say poke --

BUFFY

In the arm.

(rubbing the wound)

It stung me or something, and then
it was like I --

(thinks better of it)

No. Not like. I was in an
institution.

WILLOW

(hopefully)

For higher learning?

BUFFY

I didn't know what it was at
first. But then it happened a
couple more times. There were
doctors, nurses, other patients...

She's amazed and confused even recounting it.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED:

16

BUFFY (cont'd)

They told me I was sick. Crazy,
I guess. And that Sunnydale
and... all of this. None of it
was real. Just part of some
delusion in my head.

XANDER

Come on! That's ridiculous!
What, you think this isn't real
just 'cause of all the vampires
and the demons and the ex-
Vengeance demons and the sister
that used to be a ball of universe-
destroying energy?

He stops. Hearing what he's saying. There's a beat of
confused silence. Heck, he's the only normal Joe in the
bunch.

XANDER (cont'd)

Well, I'm real.

Dawn smiles sweetly, cuddling close to him.

DAWN

And the former ball of energy's
glad you're back.

Xander gives her an affectionate squeeze.

BUFFY

I know how it sounds. But it all
felt so... real.

WILLOW

Did it hurt? The, uh,
hallucination?

BUFFY

No, it...
(a beat, to Dawn)
Mom was there.

DAWN

She was?

BUFFY

And dad too. They were together.
Like they used to be. Before
Sunnydale...

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

There's silence as the others understand the emotional impact that must've had on Buffy. Willow spring up, trying to break the mood.

WILLOW

Okay! All in favor of research?

She thrusts her hand up. Dawn follows decisively, absorbing what Buffy said. Xander last, still unsettled.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Motioned passed. Xander, hit the demon bars. Dig up anything you can on a new player in town. Dawny, you can help me research. We'll hop online, check out all the...

Buffy blinks, losing focus. Willow's voice is a distant drone. Buffy's eyes turn heavy. She turns her head. Trying not to drift, trying to breath...

FLASH CUT TO:

17 INT. ASYLUM - DR.'S OFFICE - DAY

17

Buffy sits in a chair. Turning her head to look at the doctor currently droning on like Willow. Buffy blinks, not comprehending. She's totally out of it. Joyce and Hank sit next to her, listening intently to the doctor.

DOCTOR

...possibilities for a full recovery. But we have to proceed cautiously. If we're not careful --

JOYCE

Wait. There's a chance Buffy might be like she was before all this happened?

DOCTOR

(gently)

Mrs. Summers, you have to understand the severity of what's happened to your daughter. For the last six years she's been in an undifferentiated type of schizophrenia --

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED:

17

HANK

(snapping)

We know what her condition is.
That's not what we're asking.

The doctor hesitates.

DOCTOR

There's a lot about schizophrenia
that we still don't understand.

JOYCE

What do you understand?

DOCTOR

Buffy's delusion is multi layered.
She believes she's some type of
hero --

JOYCE

The Slayer.

DOCTOR

The Slayer, right. But that's
only one level. She's also
created an intricate lattice work
to support her primary delusion.
In her mind, she's the central
figure in a fantastic world beyond
imagination. She's surrounded
herself with friends -- most with
their own super powers -- who are
as real to her as you or me. More
so, unfortunately. Together they
face overblown, grand conflicts
against an assortment of monsters,
both imaginary and rooted in
actual myth. Every time we think
we're getting through to her, more
fanciful enemies magically appear
and she --

For the first time Buffy's daze subsides.

BUFFY

(confused but urgent)

Enemies... Warren... Jonathan...
They did this to me...

Buffy starts to stagger up.

JOYCE

Buffy --

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

The doctor gently eases Buffy back in her chair. Buffy's eyes dart around, confused and frightened, drifting in and out.

DOCTOR

Shh. It's all right. They can't hurt you here. You're with your family.

BUFFY

Dawn?...

HANK

That's the sister, right?

DOCTOR

(nods)

The magical "key". Buffy inserted Dawn into her delusion, actually rewriting the entire history of it to accommodate her need for a familial bond.

(to Buffy)

But that created inconsistencies, didn't it?

Buffy looks at him, her eyes coming in and out of focus.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Your sister. Your friends. All the people you created in Sunnydale. They're not as comforting as they were, are they? They're coming apart.

Buffy moans, tries to look away.

JOYCE

(soothing)

Buffy. Listen to the doctor. What he's saying is important.

Buffy's still out of it, but is becoming agitated, more confused.

DOCTOR

Buffy, we want to help you get better. And I think you want that too. Isn't that why your friends are doing these horrible things to each other? And your enemies -- look at them. You used to create grand villains to battle against.

(more)

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

DOCTOR (cont'd)

And now what is it? Just ordinary
people you went to high school
with. Not gods or monsters. Just
three pathetic little men who like
to play with toys.

And OFF BUFFY - her mind reeling with doubts.

FLASH CUT TO:

18 INT. TRIO'S LAIR - DAY

18

ON WARREN and ANDREW entering, carrying a couple of packages
from upstairs, sharing a laugh.

WARREN

Dude, that poison's got her
drooling like a--

WIDEN to find a somewhat miffed Jonathan waiting there
expectantly like a wife who's been waiting up for an errant
husband.

JONATHAN

Where've you guys been?

Warren and Andrew share a look.

WARREN

Picking up some stuff.

ANDREW

And checking out Buffy on the
van's remote surveillance.

WARREN

Andrew's demon pet's done some
number on the Slayer. She's
tripping like a Ken Russell film
festival.

He and Andrew high five as they cross to a computer table,
putting down their packages.

JONATHAN

What kind of stuff?

Warren sits at the computer and calls up a file.

WARREN

What?

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED:

18

JONATHAN

The packages. What's in them?

Andrew and Warren share a look, suppress mocking snickers.

ANDREW

Well, now... That's on a need to know basis only.

WARREN

Yeah. We tell you, we'd have to kill you.

Jonathan looks at them, unnerved and paranoid.

WARREN (cont'd;)

Oh, what do you think, Spanky?
We're plotting against you?

JONATHAN

Better not be.

WARREN

It's just stuff, big man.

SCHEMATICS and BLUEPRINTS appear on the monitor. Warren studies them as he speaks to Jonathan. Andrew peers at the screen over his shoulder.

WARREN (cont'd)

You'll be in the know just as soon as you stop being all freakozoid.
(re: screen)
There's the vault...

ANDREW

(eyeing monitor)

I still say we're gonna need eight other guys to pull this off.

WARREN

(muttering)

Should never've let you see that movie.

ON JONATHAN as he starts for the door.

WARREN (cont'd)

Where you going?

JONATHAN

Out. Getting stuff I need.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

Warren darts over to the door.

WARREN

I don't think that's a good idea.

JONATHAN

Why not?

Warren puts his arm around Jonathan. Making nice like an intimidating gangster.

WARREN

It's just not safe out there alone. You saw how close the Slayer got. We're a team. Something happens to you, it happens to all of us, right? And we wouldn't want that. I know you're antsy. We all are. But things are about to pick up. Big time. So we just gotta be careful right now. Stick together. 'Kay?

Warren pats him. A little harder than necessary.

JONATHAN

Yeah... sure.

Jonathan nods, cooperative but stiff. Fully sketched-out now.

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

19

Buffy is alone, sitting on the couch. Zoning out on a picture of Hank, Joyce and herself from way back. Longing.

Then Willow walks in from the dining room.

WILLOW

Buffy, good news. I found the demon. Fits your description and symptoms perfectly. Look, is this it?

She holds a printed-out picture of the demon. It takes Buffy a moment to focus and look at it. She nods.

WILLOW (cont'd)

See? It's gonna be okay. Its pokey stinger carries an antidote to its own poison.

But Buffy seems preoccupied. Lost in questions. Vulnerable.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED:

19

BUFFY

Will... I feel so lost.

WILLOW

I know. You're confused, but it's just that crazy juice inside you.

But Buffy shakes her head, letting things out.

BUFFY

It's more. Even before the demon. I've been so... detached.

WILLOW

We've all been kinda slumming.

BUFFY

But it's been so long... And every day I try to snap out of it. To figure out why I'm like that. Well... maybe this is why.

WILLOW

No. Buffy look at me.

(she does)

You're not in an institution. You've never been in an institution.

A beat.

BUFFY

Yes I have.

WILLOW

What?

Buffy takes a moment. About to confess.

BUFFY

Back when I saw my first vampires... I got so scared. I told my parents about it. And they freaked out. Figured there was something seriously wrong with me. They sent me to a clinic.

Willow listens, bewildered.

WILLOW

You never said anything.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

BUFFY

I was only there a couple of weeks. I stopped talking about it so they let me go. And eventually, my parents just... forgot.

Buffy wipes a tear from her eye. Willow affected by the info.

WILLOW

God. That's horrible.

BUFFY

(breaking)

What if I never left? What if I'm still in that clinic?

WILLOW

Buffy, you're not. I'm so sorry you had to go through that, but it's in the past. You have to trust me. We're gonna get you that antidote.

Her conviction seems to reassure Buffy. She wants to believe.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Xander's already hunting the demon.

BUFFY

Alone? Willow, he can't. It's too strong.

She tries getting up but Willow eases her back.

WILLOW

It's okay. We got help.

20 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

20

Spike and Xander walk along. Not happy to be sharing company. Xander is armed with a mace and a tranquilizer gun.

SPIKE

So, she's having the wiggings, is she? Thinks none of us are real? Bloody self-centered if you ask me. Not to mention downright stupid.

Xander rolls his eyes.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED:

20

XANDER

Spike, we need muscle here, not
color commentary.

*
*

SPIKE

On the other hand, could explain
some things. This all being in
that twisted brain of hers. Fix
up some chip'n my head, make me
soft so I'd fall in love with her,
and then turn me into her sodden
sex slave.

XANDER

What?

*

Spike rolls his eyes at the annoying secret.

SPIKE

Nothing. Alternative realities,
nitwit. Where we're all little
figments of Buffy's funny farm
delusion. In your case, her
pathetic gofer figment.

XANDER

Shut up.

SPIKE

You know, different reality, you
might've not left your bride at
the altar. Might've gone through
with it like a man.

He stops. Ready to hurt.

XANDER

One more syllable about Anya or
realities or figments and --

*
*

SPIKE

And what?

Xander searches for a threat. But then hesitates. His mind
suddenly considering.

XANDER

You know, things really weren't
this strange before Buffy showed.
I mean, regular people, they don't
know about demons.

They keep walking, Xander doubting more and more as they go.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

XANDER (cont'd)

I, on the other hand, mysteriously
keep falling for them. And
Willow. A wicca? I mean, please,
I still remember when magic was
just tricks, bunnies and hats.
And then giant lizards at
graduation, secret government
agencies... and what the hell was
Adam's plan supposed to be anyway,
'cause I still haven't figured
ouaaAAAHH!!

The demon springs up before them, hissing. Spike jolts, then
bitches, recognizing the demon.

SPIKE

Oh, balls. You didn't say the
thing was a Glarghk Guhl
Kashma'nik.

XANDER

That's 'cause I can't say Glarma --

WHACK! The demon swats Xander back. Spike ducks and comes
up punching. Stunning the demon momentarily. Xander grabs
the tranq. gun and fires a couple of darts into its chest.
The demon barely feels them as it lands an uppercut and sends
Spike flying.

Xander swings his mace at it, but the weapon breaks on
impact. WHAM-POW!! The demon knocks him back hard. Spike
takes over. They spar for a moment. Trading blows somewhat
evenly. Xander gets another clear shot from the ground and
nails the demon with a couple more tranquilizers.

This time, the demon notices. It turns around to go after
him, but Spike jumps from behind and chokes it. The demon
stumbles. Beginning to feel the tranqs. And after a
struggle, it finally falls. The guys catch their breath.

XANDER (cont'd)

(re: tranq gun)

I altered his reality.

(no response)

Get it? I... never mind.

21 INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

Dawn comes in, carrying a cup. Buffy is lying in bed, her
focus drifting in and out like she's on the edge of sleep.

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED:

21

DAWN

I made you some tea. *

--- Dawn lays it down on the bedside table. Buffy looks at Dawn,
confused for a moment. *

BUFFY

Oh. Thanks. *

Buffy manages a vague smile as she sits up in bed. Dawn
helps her. *

BUFFY (cont'd)

(distant) *

I'm okay, Dawn. *

DAWN

Yeah. The thousand-yard stare
really helps sell that. *

Dawn puts her hand to Buffy's forehead, frowns. *

DAWN (cont'd)

You're burning up. *

BUFFY

I should be taller than you. *

DAWN

Maybe you're not done growing. *

BUFFY

(distracted) *

Coming apart... *

DAWN

What's coming apart? *

Buffy struggles to focus on Dawn. *

BUFFY

We have to try harder. Make
things better. *

DAWN

I'm trying. *

BUFFY

Your grades... ..stealing... and
Willow's been doing your chores,
hasn't she? *

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

DAWN
(cover)
What? No, it's -- it's the fever.
It's cooking your brain --

Buffy grabs Dawn's arm, a little desperate.

BUFFY
We have to deal with these things,
Dawn. We --

FLASH CUT TO:

22 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - NIGHT

22

Buffy is sitting on the cot, holding Joyce's arm. Hank is
there too. *

JOYCE
(gently)
You don't have a sister, Buffy.

Buffy just stares, no longer shocked by the reality shift.
But her face revealing the torment is getting to be too much.

BUFFY
Dawn...

Joyce shakes her head sweetly. Patting Buffy's arm.

JOYCE
No, honey. Say it. It'll help
you believe it.

Buffy's mouth shakes. Afraid to let herself. But then...

BUFFY
I don't have a sister. I know.
I didn't grow up with her, but
then these monks, they made her...

HANK
Your mind. Playing tricks on you.

Joyce leans in and gives Buffy a gentle kiss on the forehead.

JOYCE
You're our little girl, Buffy.
Our one and only. We've missed
you so much. We just want to take
you home and take care of you.

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED:

22

Buffy melts at her words. Finding a solace she could've only dreamed of. She reaches out to touch Joyce's face. *

FLASH CUT TO:

23 INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

23

Buffy snaps back. It's like mind whiplash now. She finds herself reaching for Dawn's face and pulls back, shocked. Agony in her eyes. Dawn has pulled back too. Looking at Buffy with scorn now. *

DAWN

I'm not even there, am I? *

BUFFY

(utterly confused)

What? *

DAWN

You said it a second ago. You don't have a sister.

Buffy's guilt and confusion give way to defeat.

DAWN (cont'd)

It's your ideal reality, and I'm not even a part of it.

BUFFY

Dawn, I didn't mean... *

Dawn looks away. Lingerin'. Hurt... *

DAWN

I... I'm gonna go finish my chores. *

Then gets up and exits, closing the door gently. Leaving Buffy devastated. Helpless.

24 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

24

Xander and Spike back the demon into a corner.

XANDER

Hold it. Hold it...

They've got it chained up and stumbling on tranqs. It trips, dropping like a tree right on top of Xander.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED:

24

XANDER (cont'd)
PGHLEAHH-UCK!!!!!!

Spike jumps on and starts locking it down. It resists, weak. Willow is there as well. Wearing rubber gloves, gathering a container and a BIG, METAL FORK.

WILLOW
I need its arm.

Xander slips out from underneath. Shook-up.

XANDER
Thank you, Spike. I'll help as soon as the blitzing pain subsides.

Spike rolls the demon around and gets on top of it as Willow pins its arm down.

WILLOW
Ready?

She strikes down into its forearm with the fork. The demon kicks out and hits Xander on the shin.

XANDER
YI-AWGH!!

ANGLE: ITS KNUCKLES. Its stinger pops out in reaction.

Willow tears it off. The demon groans loud, then passes out. Willow puts the dripping stinger in the container. Xander's on the floor, rubbing his shin.

WILLOW
Xander, go to the magic shop.
We'll need Alkanet Root and a handful of Nettle Leaf.
(off his look)
Just for their medicinal properties. No magic. When you got them, meet me at the campus lab. I'll see if I can brew up an antidote the old fashioned way.

SPIKE
I'll hang a bit.
(re: demon)
Keep an eye on the wax job.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

XANDER
(standing)
Make sure that's all you're
ogglin'.

Spike is ready to get into it, but --

WILLOW
Fine. Xander, let's go.

25 INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - DAY

25

The next morning. LOOKING DOWN on Buffy in bed. Not really awake, but not asleep either. Eyes open, lost. Body twisted awkwardly. Distant like she was at the asylum at first.

Willow comes in, carrying a steaming mug. Wearing the same clothes. Up all night working on the antidote.

WILLOW
Buffy.

Buffy barely reacts. Willow sits next to her. Pets her leg.

WILLOW (cont'd)
Wake up. Got yummy antidote
goodness for you.

It takes a while for Buffy to come back from whatever fog she's in. Her expression gathers presence. Then the same troubled emotions as before. She remembers the antidote, sits up.

BUFFY
What happened?

WILLOW
It took a little longer than I'd
hoped. No magic and all. It went
boom twice, but then I got it.

Willow hands her the mug. Buffy cups it in her hands.

WILLOW (cont'd)
When it's cooled, drink it all
down and everything should go back
to normal. It might take a little
while to kick in, but...

Buffy stares at the mug. Her expression unintelligible.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED:

25

BUFFY
Thank you, Will.
(then, detached)
You never stop coming through.

Spike walks in. *

SPIKE
How is she?

Buffy reacts to him, then spaces out a little. *

WILLOW
Make sure she drinks that. I want
to let Dawn know everything's
going to be okay. *

She exits. Spike steps up to Buffy. She senses him and
shakes her head. Fighting to gather focus. *

SPIKE
You all right? *

But in her haze, Buffy can't find subtlety.

BUFFY
You need to leave me alone.
You're not a part of my life...

Spike's own spite surfaces. Sick and tired.

SPIKE
Fine, then. But I hope you don't
think this antidote's gonna rid
you of that nasty martyrdom. See,
I figured it out, luv. You can't
help yourself. You're not drawn
to the dark like I thought.
You're addicted to the misery.

Buffy passes away any anger, too tired. No longer caring.

SPIKE (cont'd)
It's why you won't tell your pals
about us. Might actually have to
be happy if you did. They'd
either understand and help, God
forbid, or drive you out where you
can finally be at peace in the
dark. With me.

(then)
Either way you'd be better off.
But you're too twisted for that.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

ON BUFFY - staring at Spike. Her eyes seemingly devoid of emotion, but she's listening. Considering.

SPIKE (O.S.)

Let yourself live already. Stop with the bloody hero trip for a sec. We'll all be the better for it.

Spike shakes his head. Giving up.

SPIKE

'Cause I'm done with it. You either tell your friends about us... or I will.

And he walks out. Buffy sits there, still dazed, but Spike's threat definitely having an effect on her. She tries to focus, worried and pissed, but tired as well. *

After a moment, she goes calm, as if Spike's words had helped her decide something. She looks at the mug of antidote in her hands... then pours it out into the trash. *

FLASH CUT TO:

26 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

26

Buffy is sitting up on her cot. She looks up at the doctor, Joyce and Hank. Nervous and scared. Tears in her eyes, but for the first time, completely decisive.

BUFFY

I don't wanna go back there. I wanna be healthy again.

(a beat)

What do I need to do?

BLACK OUT. *

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

27 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

27

Right where we left off. Joyce, Hank and the doctor looking at Buffy, filled with excitement at her renewed conviction. But then Buffy gets light-headed. She feels herself losing presence and reaches out. Joyce grabs her hand.

BUFFY

Mom... please, help me. I wanna go home. With dad and you.

JOYCE

I know, honey. But you have to get better first.

DOCTOR

It's not gonna be easy, Buffy. You have to take it one step at a time.

Joyce strokes Buffy's hair, reassuring.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

You have to start ridding your mind of the things that support your hallucinations. You understand? There's things in that world that you cling to. For your delusion they're safeholds, but for your mind, they're traps. We have to break those down.

Buffy grows thoughtful, trying.

BUFFY

Slaying?

DOCTOR

Yes, but... isn't that almost a burden? A responsibility?

Buffy responds to the doctor's understanding of her psyche.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

No, by safeholds, I'm talking about the things you want there, Buffy. What keeps you going back.

A beat. Then Buffy realizes.

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED:

27

BUFFY
My friends.

The doctor nods.

DOCTOR
That's right. Last summer, when
you had a momentary awakening, it
was them that pulled you back in.

Buffy looks away with sudden apprehension.

JOYCE
Buffy, they're not really your
friends. They're just tricks,
keeping you from getting healthy.

Buffy looks up again, maintaining her resolve.

DOCTOR
You have to do whatever it takes
to convince yourself of that.
Whatever it takes.

FLASH CUT TO:

28 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

28

Buffy stands at the bottom of the stairs. Blinking and
getting her bearings. One hand on the wall for support.
Willow comes out of the dining room and almost collides with
her, spooked.

WILLOW
Ooh. Buffy. Didn't see you there.

Buffy just freezes and stares at her.

WILLOW (cont'd)
I was just coming to check on you.
You feeling better? Did the
antidote work?

A beat. Then Buffy nods.

BUFFY
I'm... still pretty dazed. But
better.

WILLOW
No more Cookoo's Nest?

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED:

28

Buffy shakes her head.

WILLOW (cont'd)
We still got the big bad all
tranq'd out down in the basement.
In case it didn't work and we need
more parts.

Buffy forces a smile. Willow reciprocates with sympathy.
There's a beat. Buffy out of it, Willow noticing.

WILLOW (cont'd)
It'll be nice to see you all
better.

She says it with disarming sincerity. Heartfelt. Buffy
nods, touched but troubled.

BUFFY
Thanks.

WILLOW
(anxious to help)
I can make you some food.
Something big with energy to help
clear your noggin. C'mon.

She grabs her by the arm and leads her back to the kitchen.

TIME CUT:

29 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

29

Xander knocks and comes in from outside.

XANDER
Hello? I'm back. Clean and with
the better smell now.

Nobody answers.

XANDER (cont'd)
Friends? Anyone?

He heads to the

30 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

30

He finds Buffy cleaning pots at the sink.

*

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED:

30

XANDER

Hey there, sane girl.

Buffy starts, but barely looks up. Xander lingers.
Uncertain.

XANDER (cont'd)

So. Willow get that antidote to
you alright? Buffy?

Buffy focuses. Distant.

BUFFY

Um... yeah. I'm better now.

XANDER

(relieved)

Great. Then it's settled, we're
real. Right? Guess we'll have to
finish off that demon and drag it
out of the basement and tell me
you're up for that. I so don't
wanna see Spike right now. Talk
about losing touch. I hate to say
it, but I almost worry about him.
Almost. The things the poor guy
was saying...

Buffy turns to face him with momentary concern.

XANDER (cont'd)

I mean, I get it. Been part of
the Buffy obsession. But he's
long past the days of pining.

(then, grossed out)

Now it's like he's convinced he's
having sex with you or--

WHAM! Buffy springs up and grabs Xander in a choke-hold.
Out of nowhere. Xander is losing breath before he even knows
what happened.

XANDER (cont'd)

Bu...?!

He stumbles, banging against the wall, carrying Buffy on his
back. Grabbing at her, trying to fight her off.

XANDER (cont'd)

What are you...gkh... ah!!

Buffy stays on him, desperately trying to get this over with.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

They crash to the floor. Xander losing strength. Buffy gets off and drags him up. Leading him toward the basement door.

31 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

31

Buffy brings Xander halfway down the stairs and shoves him the rest of the way. He stumbles and lands hard, banging his head on the floor. He rolls on his back, losing conscience, and as the lights go out he sees...

Willow. Lying facing him. Bound and gagged, her eyes wide with panic.

XANDER

Willow? What...

And he's out.

From the stairs, Buffy looks at them through a mental fog. Emotions no longer getting through. Sweaty from the struggle. Eerie.

She flips Xander, kneels on his back and starts tying him up. Willow moans in desperate protest through her gag.

The noise wakes the demon up. It puts out a growl. Still chained, but quickly coming back from the trangs.

32 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

32

Buffy locks the basement door. She's got a rope in hand. Momentarily lost. 'Til she hears a door slamming upstairs. She turns, recovering. Expressionless.

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

33

Buffy walks calmly through the house, her face pale, her eyes empty and creepy. Feverish.

BUFFY

Dawn!?

DAWN (O.S.)

What?! I'm upstairs!

Buffy tilts her head as if hearing her through the fog. She rounds the bend and heads upstairs in no hurry at all.

34 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

34

Buffy comes off the stairs. Sees Dawn's door closed. Walks toward it. Emotionless and sleepy with fever. Zombied out. *

35 INT. DAWN'S ROOM - DAY

35

Dawn puts stuff in a bag. She winces when Buffy comes in. *

DAWN
WHAT THE--!! Don't you knock?!

A beat.

BUFFY
I called for you.

Buffy sees Dawn's bag. Stares at it, blinking slowly. *

DAWN
Buffy, are you... okay?

BUFFY
Where do you think you're going?

It's not angry, just soft and disturbed. Dawn is weirded out. But more sore about their earlier interaction. *

DAWN
I'm going over to Janice's. Where they actually like having me around.

BUFFY
You're not going anywhere.

DAWN
Why not? You want me gone, anyway. What do you care?

Buffy blinks, trying to stay focused. Somewhere far inside, heartstrings being pulled. *

BUFFY
I care. You're going downstairs with the others. It's the only way I'll get healthy.

Buffy starts walking toward her.

DAWN
What are you talking about?

Dawn backs away a little. Buffy recovers intent.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED:

35

DAWN (cont'd)
Buffy, you look sick. What are
you doing?

Buffy reaches to grab her.

DAWN (cont'd)
BUFFY!!

Dawn ducks and slips away. Buffy turns. They face off.

DAWN (cont'd)
What is wrong with you?!

But Buffy just keeps coming.

DAWN (cont'd)
No. Stay away from me!!

Dawn runs. Buffy chases. Slowly. Still hazy, but deadpan.
Dawn no longer a sister, just an obstacle between her and
health.

36 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

36

Dawn runs down the hall. Heading for the stairs when WHAM!!
A lamp hits the corner between the stairs and Willow's room,
detering her.

DAWN
Willow!! HELP!!!

She turns into the bathroom instead.

A37 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUING

A37

Dawn slams the door and locks it.

BUFFY (O.S.)
You can't hide, Dawny.

DAWN
Buffy?! Please, talk to me!!
You're hallucinating!

B37 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL/WILLOW'S ROOM - DAY

B37 *

BUFFY
I know. You're just a trap for my
mind.

CONTINUED

B37 CONTINUED:

B37

Buffy walks down the hall. A slow, steady menace. She tries the bathroom doorknob. Then throws herself against the door.

DAWN (O.S.)

Buffy, PLEASE!! Listen to me,
that asylum and those people,
they're not real!!

Buffy kicks the door in. She steps in, but Dawn is gone.

Buffy steps back out and catches her trying to sneak past, out of Joyce's bedroom. Dawn jerks to a stop, trembling with fear now. *

DAWN

Look at me, Buffy. I'm right here. You're my sister. I need you and love you. Somewhere inside, you must know that's real.

Buffy pauses. As if thinking about it despite her fog. Then, stoned and out of it... *

BUFFY

Sure it is... 'Cause what's more real? *

She keeps walking. Slowly figuring out what she's saying. *

BUFFY (cont'd)

A sick girl in an institution? *

DAWN

Don't. Please, believe me!! *

BUFFY

Or some type of... supergirl. Chosen to fight demons and save the world? *

(smiles, distantly) *

That's ridiculous. *

Dawn bolts back into Willow's room, slams the door and Buffy kicks it right open. *

BUFFY (cont'd)

Girl that sleeps with the vampire she hates. Yeah. 'Cause that makes sense. *

Buffy jumps over the bed with her first and only burst of speed. She lands on Dawn before she can make it back to the bathroom. Dawn screams and struggles -- *

CONTINUED

B37 CONTINUED: (2)

B37

DAWN
STOP!! I'M REAL!!! BUFFY!!!

-- frantically tearing at Buffy's hair. They wrestle. A
gruesome sister's fight. Buffy ruthlessly overpowering.
Cold and emotionless.

*
*
*

37 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

37

Dawn drops down next to Xander and Willow. Her hands and
feet tied. She pleads, desperately crying.

DAWN
Buffy, stop this! I'll be good,
I promise. You're not thinking.
BUFF--!!!

Buffy gags her. Dawn's screams becoming high-pitched squeals
and moans like Willow's.

*
*

Buffy stands up, trying to ignore him. But then she stops.
The sight of her friends tied-up momentarily breaking her
resolve.

*
*

FLASH CUT TO:

38 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

38

Buffy squints, trying to keep her concentration, steadying
herself. Forcing her delusion away.

DOCTOR
It's okay, Buffy. Don't stress
yourself.

Buffy breathes, struggling.

JOYCE
Honey. Take your time.

DOCTOR
Make it as easy for yourself as
possible. There's nothing wrong
with that.

FLASH CUT TO:

39 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

39

Buffy's eyes are heavy. Clouded over again. She stares at her captives like they're just things in a room.

Xander is waking up. Rubbing his head and looking around.

XANDER

Buffy?

Slowly remembering what's happening. But instead of listening, Buffy just turns and walks toward the demon.

XANDER (cont'd)

What are you doing?

The demon is awake and restless. Fighting against its restraints. Buffy starts unchaining it.

Buffy lets it loose and the demon rises, pissed. She steps aside and walks back. Watching the demon turn toward Xander and the girls. Hissing nasty.

XANDER (cont'd)

(softly)

Oh my god.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

40 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

40

The demon advances on Xander and the girls. Buffy backs up. A little nervous, perhaps more present, but still stoney and committed to seeing this through. *

Xander manages to push himself up, his hands tied but his feet loose. Panicking. *

XANDER

Buffy, help me!! I need my hands!! *

The demon rears back with a battle hiss, but before it can strike, Xander kicks it in the groin with all his might. The demon recoils, stunned. Xander bodychecks it back. *

41 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

41

Someone knocks on the door. Then opens. It's Tara.

TARA

Hello? Anybody home?

She comes in. Bewildered by the empty, open house.

TARA (cont'd)

Willow?

She hears crashing coming from further in and advances, growing worried.

42 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

42

Xander manages to keep the demon back with kicks. Until it's extra pissed. It swats Xander's last kick aside, then picks him up and slams him against a corner.

Buffy reacts with a twitch of fear. Cowers below the staircase. Bleary eyed, but watching. Breathing uneasy, growing tense... *

FLASH CUT TO:

43 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

43

Joyce is alone with Buffy. She notices Buffy's eyes are glazed over. She's growing agitated.

CONTINUED

43 CONTINUED:

43

JOYCE

Buffy?

Buffy inches off the cot and stands, backing into a corner slowly. Her resolve starting to crumble, heartbeat accelerating. Joyce gets up and approaches gently, a little alarmed.

JOYCE (cont'd)

It's gonna be okay. Whatever it is, it's not real, remember?

Buffy looks at her for a moment. Remembering.

JOYCE (cont'd)

You've gotta keep concentrating, sweetie. I'm right here--

She stops when Buffy turns away abruptly. As if something in Sunnydale had jolted her. Her eyes fog up again, distressed. She backs up against the wall and starts sliding down...

FLASH CUT TO:

44 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

44

... to the floor by the washer and dryer.

XANDER

Buffy! HELP!!

Xander scrambles to get up and the demon piledrives him down. Then it turns, catching sight of Willow and Dawn. It moves in on them just as

Tara bursts in. She runs halfway down the stairs and takes the scene in. Willow and Dawn tied up.

TARA

(Latin)

Eximete!!!

TARA

(English)

Release!!!

*
*
*

Their ropes come loose. The demon swipes, but Willow and Dawn scurry away just in time. The demon turns at Tara.

TARA

(Latin)

Vis Zenobiae! Solvere!

TARA

(English)

Might of Zenobia! Unleash!

*
*
*

A bank of shelves flies off the wall and pummels the demon over. Tara takes a step down but suddenly

CONTINUED

44 CONTINUED:

44

Buffy reaches in from next to the stairs and pulls her feet out from under. Tara crashes and rolls down painfully.

WILLOW

NO!! Tara!

Willow rushes to her side. A tinge of guilt-filled terror hits Buffy despite her efforts to remain detached. She backs away to the wall and down against the floor again. Starting to shake, trying to escape into...

FLASH CUT TO:

45 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

45

Joyce grabs Buffy's arms. Firm now. Stopping her shaking.

BUFFY

(delirious)

I don't know I don't know I don't know...

JOYCE

Buffy, look at me. Sweetheart, I believe in you. You're a survivor. You've got what it--

*

FLASH CUT TO:

46 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

46

More and more, Buffy's resolve is fading. She's more attentive to her friends' cries. But not getting up yet.

WILLOW

Dawny, watch out!!

The demon rises through the shelves Tara launched at it, facing Dawn. She screams, but before it can attack, Xander jumps on it, wrapping his tied hands around its neck.

WHAM! The demon flips him over and hard on his back.

BUFFY

(faint)

Xander...

*

Panic starts creeping over Buffy.

Dawn scampers away. The demon now turning on Willow and Tara.

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED:

46

It grabs Tara by the neck and lifts her off the ground.
Choking her hard.

WILLOW
LET HER GO!!!

Willow breathes, controlling the rage of magic inside.
Instead she finds a bat and rushes the demon - CRACK!! PAH!!

The demon drops Tara, but in the same motion backhands
Willow. Sends her flying against the wall.

FLASH CUT TO:

47 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

47

BUFFY
Willow!

Buffy rears back against the wall, violently now. Fear,
guilt, and shock overtaking her.

JOYCE
Buffy, fight it! You can beat
this thing. You're too good to
give up.

Joyce grabs Buffy's hands in hers, and Buffy reacts to her
touch. Sweating, gasping, but still able to focus on her.

JOYCE (cont'd)
Be strong, honey. I know you're
afraid. I know the world feels
like a hard place sometimes, but
you've got people that love you.

Buffy calms a bit. Joyce's words reaching her.

JOYCE (cont'd)
Your dad and I, we have all the
faith in the world in you.

Tears stream down Buffy's face. Struggling to find her
place. Things seem to slow down.

JOYCE (O.S.)
We'll always be with you. There's
a world of strength in your heart,
honey. I know there is. You just
have to find it again.

A moment passes. Then Buffy's panic and fear wash away.

CONTINUED

47 CONTINUED:

47

JOYCE
Believe in yourself.

Buffy's lost in thought. Then finally, she nods.

A pained, almost sad expression comes over her. Her eyes suddenly determined. As if making a decision.

She squeezes Joyce's hands. Speaking slowly, with effort. Through tears.

BUFFY
You're right... Thank you.
(then)
Goodbye.

*
*
*

Joyce looks confused for a moment. Then suddenly concerned.

*

JOYCE
Buffy...

*
*

FLASH CUT TO:

48 INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

48

Crashes come from off-screen as the Scoobies keep fighting.

DAWN (O.S.)
Help! Somebody!!!

SLOW MOTION: Buffy rises up with the solid intent of The Slayer.

*
*

Dawn swats desperately at the demon from the ground as it wraps her up in its arms and lifts her. Squeezing her midsection like it wants it to pop.

BUFFY (O.S.)
Let her go.

*

The demon looks up and

*

WHAM!! Buffy nails it with a huge punch. It flies back, dropping Dawn, and hitting the wall at the other end.

*
*

Dawn stumbles away toward the others as Buffy advances on the startled beast. Riling herself up. Trying to stay alert.

The demon comes at her. Striking with all its power. And it takes all of Buffy's to fend it off.

*
*

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED:

48

It's a slug-fest. Two titans. Nothing fancy or acrobatic.
Buffy swinging hard, like her sanity depends on every blow.

She grabs it by the neck and rams it against the wall. The
demon collapses. She lifts it up again and hurls it against
the opposite wall. The whole basement rocks.

It stands. Buffy rears back and - in slow motion again -

Buffy's punch GOES THROUGH THE DEMON'S CHEST.

It goes limp. Buffy withdraws her fist and it falls. Dead

She's dazed but defiant. Bad-ass AS THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON
A LOW ANGLE HERO SHOT.

A moment. Then she turns to her friends.

BUFFY
(faint)
I'm so... I'm so sorry.

She stumbles but stays up. Still out of it without antidote.

The others are on the ground. Still suspect of Buffy.
Traumatized and not sure if and when they'll get over her
attacks. But then Willow gets up, overcome with concern and
sympathy.

WILLOW
Buffy.

Xander reassures the others.

XANDER
We're okay. Everything's okay.

WILLOW
Buffy, sit. You'll fall over.

BUFFY
No...

She looks at Willow. Catching her breath. Standing as if
it's keeping her in this reality. Dazed, but defiant now.

BUFFY (cont'd)
I can't. Not until I have the
antidote.

WILLOW
Okay. We'll make more. We'll
take care of it.

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

Things settle. It's all over.

But then...

FLASH CUT TO:

49 INT. ASYLUM - CELL - NIGHT

49

Buffy stands, facing the wall with as blank a stare as ever.
The doctor checks her eyes with a flashlight. *

Hank and Joyce stand by. Hank holding Joyce as she cries.

Finally, the doctor stops. Turns to face them, shaking his
head. *

DOCTOR

I'm so sorry. There's no reaction
at all.

(a beat)

I'm afraid we've lost her.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK SLOWLY, DOWN THE HALL. Leaving the
doctor and Buffy's parents helpless, and Buffy lost in a
distant delusion. *

BLACK OUT. *

THE END