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BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Earshot"

TEASER

1 CEMETERY - NIGHT 1

Buffy battles two especially scabby demons - a matched set. Although they have no mouths, they seem to communicate psychically with each other in their attack on her. One of them gets away, but she defeats the other. When she Slays it, gobbets of some bodily fluid fling onto the back of her hand. They phosphoresce eerily on her skin for a moment, then seem to soak into her. Buffy doesn't notice.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

2 SCHOOL HALLWAY - THE NEXT DAY 2

Buffy and Willow walk toward the library. The hall is full of posters and banners for the big basketball game tonight. Other students are talking about it. A BIG BBALL STAR and his teammate walk through -- someone calls out "nice game". Willow says it's too bad Buffy will miss the game due to her patrolling duties. Buffy scratches her hand where we saw the demon-pus hit her. She exits into the library.

3 LIBRARY - MINUTES LATER 3

Buffy and gang meet to discuss big ongoing picture. Faith is a bad guy. Ascension is coming on graduation day, but we don't know what it is. Xander says he always knew twelve years of school were leading up to something bad, he just thought it would involve admission to a college of hotel management.

Since there's not progress on the Ascension-front, Xander, Willow and Oz head out, talking about the movie they saw last week -- too bad Buffy was patrolling and wasn't able to make it. As they exit, they give away the ending.

Buffy stays behind with Giles. She tells about her demon-contact and subsequent itchiness. Buffy: "it's nothing, right?" Giles looks it up... Buffy is infected, she can expect to take on "an aspect of the demon." They look at an illustration of the demon couple in one of Giles' books. All their aspects look unappealing. Giles tells Buffy not to hunt down the remaining demon... these things are too dangerous to mess with.

4 FOUNTAIN COURT

4

The players and cheerleaders are in the courtyard -- a little pep rally to rev people up for the game. Buffy and Willow watch. Xander points out that not everyone is enjoying this. He points out the editorial in the school paper: "School spirit at all-time high; students fiddle while Rome burns." (or something cutting and dark.) At least it's given everyone a reason to read the school paper instead of just turning right to the obits. Buffy, having told Willow about the "infection." is fretting over what will happen to her... will it be the horns? The scabs? The tail? -- it's hard enough to find jeans that fit right. Although Willow is concerned for Buffy, she has to clap and yell, show support for Percy. Buffy is both hypochondriacal and excluded. She lies, tells Willow she doesn't mind being alone tonight... patrolling is fun too.

5 PARK

5

Buffy patrols alone. No fun. Nothing to slay, nothing to do but worry about what's going to happen to her body. She takes out a mirror to check if her face is still normal -- no reflection over her shoulder, and when she turns... ANGEL's there. He admits he's been keeping a protective eye on her, in light of sitch with Faith. Buffy wants to get mad at him for crowding her, but she's relieved he's there to talk to. She tells him about her isolation, but even more, about the demon disease. Angel: "I won't let anything hurt you if I can help it." They move to hug, but she pulls away... not ready for that yet -- still a barrier between them. He looks at Buffy, eyes filled with... "what is that?" she asks. Is that regret? Love? Sleepiness? He's tough to read.

6 LOUNGE - NEXT DAY

6

Willow/Xander/Oz. The friends are all still buzzing about last night's game... the Razorbacks won with a 3-pointer at the buzzer. Cheerleaders did the splits... everyone has something to remember fondly. Buffy joins them and they shut up... no reason to make her feel bad about missing it. They ask politely about the patrolling. Then, Buffy hears, in her head, in her voice: "Buffy just licked her lips again. I wish I was lips." She turns to see Xander looking at her. She read his mind.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

- 7 HALLWAY 7
- Buffy on way to library. She hears a few thoughts from the people around her as she goes... not painful stuff. From A TEACHER (and future suspect): "I hope I don't have to go to Snyder's office, I hate that little guy." Some flattering thoughts from boys -- Buffy lingers to hear more... Then switch to another angle, see Buffy react to some clearly more salacious thoughts.
- 8 LIBRARY 8
- Buffy to Giles, "Could this mind-reading be the 'aspect of the demon'?" He says it could... this demon is supposed to have mind-reading capabilities. Giles is a little worried but Buffy is relieved.. this is way better than a tail.
- 9 CLASSROOM 9
- Buffy does really well in class gets all the answers right by reading the teacher's mind. Introduce NANCY, a future suspect... girl who's usually the star of the class... a brittle perfectionist who resents Buffy's success. Willow and Xander are there and don't know about Buffy's new ability. Buffy enjoys their private silly thoughts (affectionately, not cruelly.) Introduce FREDDY, a boy with very dark and literary thoughts: "Students scramble for praise like rats for food pellets..." Buffy asks Willow who that is... he's the editor of the school paper, the one with the bitter editorials.
- 10 MANSION 10
- Buffy goes to Angel. Tries to read his mind... mentions "Faith," waits for his thoughts. She hears HIS VOICE: "You can't read my mind." He can block her. He says she can just ask him anything she wants to know. Open communication. The first step to a reconciliation. He warns her about this "gift," things like this aren't as good as they seem (e.g. Fun with immortality.)
- 11 LIBRARY 11
- Buffy with friends plus Cordy plus Wesley. Giles has told everyone about Buffy's new ability. Everyone's nervous around her except Cordy who says exactly what she thinks anyway. (we hear others' uncomfortable thoughts) People duck her. Even Giles. Buffy is eventually left alone with Cordy. Buffy can only take so much of that. She exits.

12 HALLWAY 12

It's getting bad. Buffy hears teen pain -- it courses under the happy chatting faces and the blank faces and the bland faces. "I'm ugly" "I'm a failure" "No one's ever going to love me" "What if I never get breasts?" "He is so cute I can't look at him." "Who am I?" "Wake up, go to school, go home, wake up..." "It just can't keep being this bad." "I'm not going to make it." "I will die of boredom." "I want her, I can't have her, I hate her." "Alone. Alone. Alone."

13 GILES' OFFICE 13

Giles and Wesley. Giles has new info... this is going to be neither brief nor mild. The demon ability is incompatible with the human mind... it will not just harm it, but consume it... it's essentially eating her brain. They need to help her.

14 CAFETERIA 14

Buffy is swamped with overlapping thoughts (all in her voice). Hard to take. Then they quiet and we hear (Buffy's voice), the one clear thought, "THIS TIME TOMORROW, I KILL YOU ALL".

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

15 CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS 15

Buffy turns in the middle of the room, searching mentally... trying to "hear" the would-be killer. The voices swell, unbearably loud... she FAINTS.

16 TRIANGLE 16

Buffy sits, surrounded by friends and Giles. She's disoriented, but she thanks them for getting her out of there. She tells them what she heard, and she makes an effort to right back in and find the culprit. She can't even make it 10 feet closer to the school. Giles says he'll take her home. She tells everyone to work together, find the person who had that thought. Go now, make list of everyone in there... we can stop this.

As Buffy and Giles walk slowly toward his car, she asks him if she's going to be okay. He starts to say yes, but Buffy hears, in her head: "If we cannot stop this, you will go insane."

17 LIBRARY - LATE 17

Teamwork: Wesley and Giles are working on finding a cure for Buffy. The kids are going to track down the killer. (Cordy would rather be in Wesley's group.) Xander jokes that the Lunch Lady's finally going to finish the job and kill us all with her goulash. Anyway, they are working on a list of "possible" the five or six most likely among those in the cafeteria. Among those on the list" the teacher who was introduced in the hall earlier, Nancy the perfectionist, the Bball star... Willow says they're probably looking for a male, but women have made some great strides in the mass murder area recently... don't ignore the girls.

18 BUFFY'S ROOM 18

Joyce, who knows what's going on, dashes in and out of Buffy's room, minimizing contact. Buffy: "Oh my god, you slept with Giles!"

19 LIBRARY 19

Willow has compiled an FBI-style profile of their suspect. The questions I'm giving you will help us find the killer. She gives copies to Oz, Xander, Cordelia. --> series of short scenes:

Oz and the perfect Basketball star: Did you torture animals as a child and just how important is this whole "being tall" thing to basketball?

Cordy and the teacher: Are you going to kill a bunch of people tomorrow?

Willow and Nancy the perfectionist: Willow tells her the questions are for the yearbook. Now, do you often fantasize about violent car crashes of other deforming accidents"

Oz tries to talk to Freddy... who ducks away without Oz seeing her... this guy looks suspicious.

20 BUFFY'S ROOM - NIGHT 20

Buffy looks out the window at the neighboring houses. From each she hears the painful thoughts of the residents. She closes the window, the curtain... it doesn't help. She curls up in a ball of pain on the bed, pillow over her head.

21 LIBRARY 21

Giles and Wesley, surrounded by books and magick supplies... Wesley, "Oh this cure is actually rather simple.

CONTINUED:

We have the herbs and the correct spell, and the vessel... all we need is the still beating heart of the demon that escaped." Giles points out that that might be a little impossible.

22 SCHOOL - MORNING 22

Time is running out. More detective work from Willow, Oz, Xander:

Willow and Jonathan in reprise of swim-team interrogation.

Xander and Larry: Xander thinks he's a suspect because of his dark secret. Larry says he's out... if anyone has a secret, it's Xander.

Oz tries to see Freddy again. Again Freddy ducks him.

23 BUFFY'S ROOM - MORNING 23

Giles and Joyce are there with poor Buffy. Wesley enters... he has brought Angel, cloaked and lightly smouldering. He has the cure. It's a potion/chant combo. Buffy goes limp and still... is it a good sign? Angel holds her. Then she convulses, she got worse... is she dying?

24 LIBRARY 24

The gang is tallying their scorecards... no one seems a likely mass murderer, although many bear watching. Oz reminds them that he never managed to find Freddy, the nihilistic newspaper guy. Xander reads to them from today's editorial: "Students who march to the hypnotic drumbeat of the fascist vendors of manufactured 'pep' are mindless drones too blind to realize they walk inexorably toward their own unredeeming death." We zero in on him.

25 FOUNTAIN COURT 25

Pan across some of our suspects in the courtyard: Nancy, Bball star, etc... until we see... Jonathan, carrying a case, enter the door at the base of the tower.

26 TOWER 26

Jonathan, arriving at the top of the tower, opens his case. He pulls out parts of a rifle (with scope) and assembles them.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

Students walk toward the school... another day in Sunnydale. Buffy and Willow talk... Buffy admits she's feeling better about Angel now. Willow says she turned her "profile" questionnaires over to the yearbook committee... they really are good reading.

Giles joins them. He notes that every single person going into the school is carrying their lunch in a bag. Buffy says maybe Giles could help the new lunch lady win their trust with something really special: Giles should teach her how to make some of that delicious English food... if he's not too busy SLEEPING HER WITH MOTHER!

END OF SHOW

CONTINUED: