

(Name of Project)
by
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by
(Current Writer, date)

Name
Address
Phone

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Gingerbread"

written by

Jane Espenson

WRITER'S FIRST DRAFT

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BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Gingerbread"

TEASER

1

CEMETERY / PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

1

BUFFY, on patrol in the cemetery, idly tosses a stake from hand to hand. The leaves of a nearby shrub move in the breeze. They keep moving -- it's no breeze. Buffy stops, pivots slightly toward the movement, brings up her stake...

JOYCE (O.S.)

Is it a vampire?

Buffy jumps. JOYCE is standing next to her, holding a brown lunch bag and a thermos.

BUFFY

Mom? What are you doing here?

JOYCE

I brought you a snack. And I thought it was time I finally came out to see--

A VAMPIRE leaps from behind the bush. Buffy pushes Joyce back while stepping forward to meet the attack. She BLOCKS A BLOW from the vampire, and counters with a strong KICK.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Good, Honey! Kill it!

The vampire stumbles backwards. Buffy launches herself at it, but the vampire brings up a foot, which catches her in the midsection... she is TOSSED over the vampire and ends up landing behind him on the ground, facing the wrong way.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, Buffy. Turn around!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Buffy shoots Joyce a quick exasperated look even as she scrambles back to her feet and squares up opposite the vamp.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Buffy, it's Mr. Sanderson from the bank! Kill him!

Buffy exchanges blows with the late Mr. Sanderson. It's a slightly clumsy effort on her part. She finally manages to sweep his legs out from under him with a kick and he's down again, this time face down. Joyce CLAPS.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Get him! Kill! I mean, Slay!

Buffy lands on Sanderson, straddling his back, one hand on the back of his head, keeping him pinned as he struggles. She raises her stake and plunges it into his back. No poof.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

He didn't poof. Is he a zombie? Oh, god, is he alive?

BUFFY

Mom, it's just harder through the back. I'll get it.

JOYCE

Oh. Okay. Go ahead.

She watches expectantly as Buffy raises the stake, plunges it again. No poof. Vamp Sanderson ROARS. Joyce winces.

BUFFY

(through her exertion)

Why don't you just go... set up that snack, Mom? Someplace not here. I'll be there in a second.

The stake is raised again. Joyce, looking a little ill, nods and turns away before it falls again. She walks away, trying to pretend she can't hear it when the vampire YELLS IN PAIN. She passes a low hedge that separates the cemetery from a small playground. She sits on the edge of sandbox, and starts to unpack sandwiches. But her eye is caught by something on the ground. She picks it up: A CHILD'S SHOE. She glances around her. Something is protruding just slightly above the level of the sand... is it the other shoe? Joyce brushes sand away from the surface.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE: JOYCE

She gasps and pulls away. Buffy comes up behind her.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Okay, guy's all dusty. Look,
usually that goes a lot better, you
know, bam boom stick poof. Really--

Joyce never takes her eyes off the sandbox. She points at what she's uncovered.

ANGLE: SANDBOX

For the first time we see it: the hand of a small child sticks out of the sand. And on the tiny palm of the hand is drawn an ARCANESYMBOL.

END OF COLD OPENING

ACT ONE

2

CEMETERY - NIGHT - LATE

2

POLICE AND CORONER'S VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL are on the scene, lit by the periodic red sweep of a mars light. Police radios send out bursts of static. Crime tape is up. Buffy is visible in b.g. giving a statement to one of the officers. More sand has been removed and there are now clearly TWO SMALL BODIES. An POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER bends over them. She

SNAPS PICTURES:

FLASH -- two little blonds in play clothes. They could be sleeping.

FLASH -- closer, a darling little blond boy, age 8. In this closer shot we notice the paleness of the skin, the blueness of the lips. Still, cute as a button.

FLASH -- closer, an adorable little blond girl, age 6. Pale, blue-lipped, cute as a whole shirtfull of buttons.

FLASH -- much closer, the SYMBOL on a tiny hand.

Buffy finishes giving her statement and walks away, past the edge of the playground to find her mother at the edge of the cemetery, leaning against a headstone. Joyce stares vacantly.

BUFFY

They're done with us. We can go home. No answer.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Mom?

JOYCE

They were little kids. Did you see them? So tiny.

BUFFY

I saw. I know. It's terrible.

Joyce finally looks at Buffy, as if breaking through some kind of paralysis. There's a flash of something that's almost anger.

JOYCE

Terrible? It's more than terrible. It's... unthinkable. Who would do something like this? I just...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She chokes a little, has to stop, fight back tears.

BUFFY

Hey, it's going to be okay. I mean, not for them, obviously, which is tragic.

JOYCE

Don't joke.

BUFFY

I wasn't. Look, I'll find out who did it and I'll get them. I can do this.

JOYCE

You can't make it right. You can't.

Joyce gives in to the tears. Buffy hugs her and speaks with soothing, measured reason:

BUFFY

It's okay. I'll take care of everything. Calm down.

3 LIBRARY - DAY (DAY 2)

3

Buffy and GILES are alone in the library before school.

BUFFY

(frantic)

Don't tell me to calm down!

GILES

I only meant--

BUFFY

My mother saw dead children. Dead kids. Mom. Together again for the first time and it was bad.

Find this. She grabs a piece of paper and a marker from the counter and moves to draw. Giles swiftly takes the paper from her hand, replaces it with a new one.

GILES

(re: paper)

Rare demonologue. You'll be happier with the lunch menu.

She draws.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

No other marks. No wounds. Find the thing that uses this and point me at it. T

hen stand back or get splattered. She finishes and shoves the paper at him. Giles looks at THE SYMBOL.

GILES

Hmm.

BUFFY

Giles. Speak. What?

GILES

What? Oh. It's just, I don't think we're looking for a "thing." The use of a symbol or figure on a victim, that suggests ritual murder, an occult sacrifice.

BUFFY

You mean people. Human beings. Someone with a soul did this?

GILES

I suspect so. Isn't it peculiar, how that makes it seem worse?

BUFFY

It is worse. It means I can't kill them.

GILES

Yes, well, there is that.

BUFFY

You know, if anyone's looking.

GILES

Buffy--

BUFFY

(not joking)
Joking.

GILES

Buffy, you do have to keep this in perspective. You can't put all your energy into this one... event.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY

You're a Watcher. Watch me.

GILES

This is obviously very important to you. As it should be. But is it possible that maybe you're pushing a little too hard? Perhaps because your mother is involved?

BUFFY

You think I'm showing off? Yeah, dead first-graders are great for that. Find the symbol. Please.

She exits. Giles looks after her for a moment, then down at the symbol. He sighs and heads for the books.

4

SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

4

OZ is at his locker, putting away his jacket, about to collect his books for his first class. He sees Xander heading his way. Abandoning his books, Oz walks off.

XANDER

Oz! Hey! Oz!

Oz tries to lose himself in the crowd of students, but Xander comes up, bounds alongside him like a puppy.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Good to see you, man. How's it sliding? You're looking great!

OZ

Hey.

XANDER

Yessir, this is that kind of morning when all's right with the world. You know, one's old transgressions atoned for, clean new path in front of... one.

Xander searches for a new topic, desperate to keep the communication open.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Hey, it's Buffy's birthday next week. Big eighteen. Good-bye not voting and feeling excluded, hello just plain not voting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He holds for the laugh. There is none.

XANDER (CONT'D)
So. You got gifting plans?

OZ
Pendant.

XANDER
Wow. Great idea. Was that
"pendant" or "pennant," because--

WILLOW trots over to join Oz. She doesn't notice Xander at first.

WILLOW
Oz! Hi! Oh. Hi, Xander.

Willow looks for an escape hatch to suddenly open in the floor. No such luck. The three walk on together... an uncomfortable trio.

OZ
(to Willow)
Where've you been?

XANDER
Not with me! No, I was here. Yep.

Oz and Willow stare at Xander.

XANDER (CONT'D)
You know whose birthday's coming
up?

Willow looks off-screen, sees:

WILLOW
Buffy!

XANDER
That's right. The big eighteen--

WILLOW
Buffy! Come here! Be with us!

OZ
(to Buffy)
Yes. With us is what you should
be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Buffy joins them. They stop walking, stand in a little clump in the hall.

XANDER
So, Buff? What's up?

BUFFY
You didn't hear? Last night. Dead people.

XANDER
Last night. Pretty darn average.

BUFFY
Not undead. Just dead. Murdered and buried in the sandbox at the park. Little boy and girl, like, maybe seven or eight.

WILLOW
Oh, that's awful.

BUFFY
Only up-side, I don't think Mom's going to want to play "Slayer and Robin" for a while, which is good. But mostly, I'm all freaked out and vendetta-y.

XANDER
So who found the tykes?

BUFFY
Mom. I was slaying Mr. Sanderson and she went to set up the snack.
(off their looks)
Don't ask. And I guess she just saw something sticking out of the sandbox, so she starts, you know, brushing off the sand...

JOYCE (O.S.)
...And there's this little, tiny hand. Attached to a body. Can you believe it?

Joyce joined the group without Buffy noticing, and she continues the story.

JOYCE
At first I didn't think it was real, but it was. A little girl.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOYCE (CONT'D)

And the little boy was right next to her. It was horrible.

Xander, Oz and Willow exchange looks. A mom in school. Poor Buffy.

WILLOW

Hi, Mrs. Summers.

Xander and Oz also MUMBLE HELLOS.

JOYCE

Hi, kids. Isn't it awful? Buffy, did you talk to Mr. Giles yet about who could've done this?

STUDENTS are noticing there's a parent in the hallway. They stare with amusement and talk behind their hands.

BUFFY

(uncomfortable)

Uh, yeah.

JOYCE

What does he say?

BUFFY

That it looks like something ritual, occult. Don't worry about it. I'll be patrolling day and night. Or, night and later at night.

JOYCE

(appalled)

Occult? Like witches? It's witches?

Willow makes an involuntary little gasp/choke noise.

WILLOW

Sorry. Phlegm. Too much dairy.

BUFFY

Well, no, probably not witches. Witches aren't usually bad, you know.

AMY joins the group... walking by, she overheard.

AMY

Witches? Did I hear witches? What're we talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOYCE
Witches! Can you imagine anything
so disgusting?

That's it. Buffy's had enough. She tugs at Joyce's arm.

BUFFY
Mom. I need to talk to you. Over
here.

JOYCE
(as she's pulled away)
Good to see you Willow, Oz...
you're looking very nice, Xander.

Buffy has pulled Joyce into a quiet branch of the hallway.

BUFFY
Mom, this hall is about school.
You're about home. Mix them and my
world dissolves.

JOYCE
I know. You have no mother, you
hatched fully-formed out of a giant
egg. It's just, I had to find out
how it's going.

BUFFY
How it's going?

JOYCE
Our investigation. I went to the
gallery and tried to work, but I
just kept thinking about who could
have done such a thing. I want to
help.

BUFFY
Oh. Good. I guess. Um, Giles can
always use--

JOYCE
I called everyone I know in town.
Told them about the little kids.
They're all just as upset as I am.
Everyone wants to let people know
that Sunnydale cares.

BUFFY
You called everyone you know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JOYCE

And they called all their friends. And, guess what? We're organizing a vigil tonight, at City Hall. The Mayor's even going to be there. Now we'll get some action.

BUFFY

Mom, you didn't tell anyone about the marks on their hands, did you?

JOYCE

No. Do you think I should have?

BUFFY

No! That's good. See, a lot of times, when you're working on something like this, you try to keep the number of people who know about it, kind of... small.

Joyce hadn't thought of that.

JOYCE

Oh. Right. Well, I'm sure it won't really be all that many people.

5

CITY HALL ROTUNDA

5

An impressive crowd of people fill the rotunda, which is every bit as large and as elegant as we can afford. Many of them hold candles or carry signs showing photographs of the two dead children (the photos show them alive), and the slogan "NEVER AGAIN." There are posters, with the same layout, on the walls. A podium has been set up facing the crowd.

Buffy and Joyce, Willow and her mother, MRS. ROSENBERG, stand together. Mrs. Rosenberg is very sweet, very maternal, and very smart. As she talks she frequently reaches over and touches her daughter: adjusting her collar, tucking in a stray hair -- Willow as doll. In the presence of her mother, Willow is more shy and withdrawn.

MRS. ROSENBERG

You got a good turn-out, Joyce.

JOYCE

I don't think it's too many, do you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Buffy spots Giles in the crowd nearby.

BUFFY
Giles! Over here!

He spots them, comes over to join them.

GILES
Hello. My goodness, what a crush.

MRS. ROSENBERG
Mr. Giles. How nice to see you. I didn't know you were going to be here.

WILLOW
Hi, Mr. Giles.

Giles glances at her, realizes the "Mister" is because Mom's here.

GILES
Yes, well, hello. Hello Mrs. Rosenberg, Mrs.-- Joyce. They look at each other. Awkwardness.

JOYCE
It's been a while.

GILES
Right. Not since, not since, not for a while.

MRS. ROSENBERG
There's a rumor going around, Mr. Giles.

Giles blanches.

GILES
Rumor? About us? About what?

MRS. ROSENBERG
About witches. People calling themselves witches are responsible for this horrible crime.

GILES
Indeed? How strange.

WILLOW
Yes. Strange. Witches!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She makes a funny "pfft" noise, meaning "who could imagine such a thing?"

MRS. ROSENBERG

Actually, I coauthored a paper recently about teen deviance. A youngster identifying herself as a witch is probably trying to strike back at forces that she feels are constraining her, holding her back in childhood. It's sad, actually.

Willow is nervously pulling the sleeves of her sweater down over her hands. Mrs. Rosenberg clucks at her and neatly folds the fabric back up.

WILLOW

Sorry.

JOYCE

Oh, look, here's the Mayor.

Indeed, the Mayor is approaching. He shakes hands with Joyce. It's a politician's handshake: one of Joyce's hands folded in both of his own.

MAYOR

You must be Joyce Summers. I'm so pleased to meet you. You're quite the dynamo to put this together so quickly. Say, after my little address, would you like to lead us in a moment of silence?

JOYCE

Oh yes, Your Honor, I would be, well, honored.

She's a little overwhelmed by him, but the Mayor's attention is already focused elsewhere: squarely on Buffy. He gives her a big, friendly smile, not even a hint of visible evil.

MAYOR

And this beautiful young woman, is this your daughter?

BUFFY

I'm Buffy Summers.

And her hand is folded between his for a moment. She looks a little confused, like she felt something strange, but felt it too quickly to figure out what it was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAYOR

(to Joyce and Buffy)

Well, I do believe it's showtime.
Pleasure meeting you. And your
charming friends.

He beams inclusively at the group. As he goes he gives a friendly pat to Giles' shoulder and tousles Willow's hair. Mrs. Rosenberg immediately fishes a comb out of her enormous purse and repairs the damage. The Mayor takes the podium and is greeted by polite applause.

JOYCE

(to Buffy)

He'll help. You'll see.

BUFFY

His hands are seriously cold.

WILLOW

Maybe he just had a Slushee.
Happens to me.

MRS. ROSENBERG

(to Giles)

He was very charming. And so tall
and good-looking.

GILES

Yes, the very qualities we require
in a leader.

Mrs. Rosenberg smiles at Giles, acknowledging his riposte.

JOYCE

Shh.

The applause has died down.

MAYOR

Thank you. And thank you all for
coming in the aftermath of such a
tragic crime. Seeing you here
reminds me of what a caring
community Sunnydale is. Certainly,
we've had our share of misfortunes,
but that's inevitable in this day
and age, when young people are
lured from all sides by dark
influences. But we're a good town,
full of good people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MAYOR (CONT'D)

And tonight, I am pledging the full weight of my office, and of our fine police department, to help solve this horrible murder.

He holds up one of the posters.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

I hereby take the words on this poster, and make them my promise! Never Again! Big applause.

The Mayor drinks it in like an alcoholic with a vodka martini.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

And now, I want you all to give a moment of your attention to the woman who brought us all here tonight, Joyce Summers.

The Mayor gracefully maneuvers Joyce to the podium and steps back.

JOYCE

Mr. Mayor, you're dead wrong.

General surprise. Not the least of it from Buffy.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

This is not a good town. Not right now. I was supposed to lead us in a moment of silence. But I'm not going to. Silence is this town's disease. How many of you have lost someone because they just disappeared, or got skinned, or suffered "neck rupture"?! And how many times have you reacted with silence? Well, it's time to speak out and admit what we've got here: a town with a hell of a lot of problems!

Buffy and Giles exchange a look. Someone's finally saying it.

BUFFY

(softly, surprised)
Go Mom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GILES

She does tend to rip off the blindfold. This could change everything.

Joyce continues:

JOYCE

It's our own fault. We've been simply watching our teenagers go down the wrong paths for years. Do you have any idea what goes on around here? Terrible things: Killing. Witchcraft. Creatures Too Horrible to Mention. Slaying. It's all beyond what we should have to take.

That hits Buffy hard, to hear Slaying lumped in with what's wrong with Sunnydale. Giles reaches for her shoulder, but she takes a step away from him, toward her mother, and he doesn't make contact. Joyce is just wrapping it up:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

We have to find the people who did this. Because who knows what those people will be doing somewhere in Sunnydale later tonight?

DISSOLVE TO:

MICHAEL

a young man we haven't seen before. Gothic Look: pale face, darkened lips, dyed-black hair. He wears black and his eyes have those large, black irises that result from doing magicks. He chants. Smoke curls up in front of his face.

PAN to reveal AMY sitting next to him. Also in black. Also dark-eyed. She starts chanting. PAN to reveal Willow, completing the triangle. Dark-eyed. She joins the chant.

MICHAEL/AMY/WILLOW

(in Latin)

We summon the forces. We promise our loyalty. Grant us our quest, and we'll honor your names. On pain of death, we honor your names.

The shot WIDENS... and two things become visible: that we're in WILLOW'S ROOM, and that chalked on the floor, surrounded by smoldering herbs, is THE SYMBOL.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

6 SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (DAY 3)

6

Michael and Amy at Michael's locker. Pasted inside: pictures of Marilyn Manson and other disturbing things, and a small mirror. Michael is still in Gothic death-on-toast mode. He uses the mirror to check his look. The hall is filled with between-class students, many of whom take a wide path around them and stare at them with distaste. Some whisper to each other and we hear the occasional word: "Freaks," "Death-heads." A HERD OF BIG JOCKS thumps down the hallway. One of them, ROY, slams the locker shut in Michael's face.

MICHAEL

Watch it!

ROY

Oh, sorry. Were you checking your make-up? Did I make you smudge your eye-liner?

(then, mean)

Dump the Goth in drag look, jerk-ass, it's not cool.

He pushes Michael against the lockers to punctuate the thought.

AMY

(to Roy)

Hey! Why don't you just go away?

ROY

Help, they're gonna hurt me! Oh, never mind. I forgot. I'm not seven.

The Associate Jocks laugh and slap him on the back for this slice of wit. A little crowd of students has gathered. Among them, CORDELIA. Buffy pushes through the group and sizes up the sitch. She fits herself between the jocks and the witches.

BUFFY

I'm sorry, Roy. I missed what you just said. And it's going to be so hard to understand when you don't have your tongue.

Roy backs off. His buddies are already leaving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROY

Hey, Buffy. Looking good. We were just, you know--

BUFFY

Joking around? Idiots will be idiots? Glad to hear it.

Roy senses he's been dismissed. He scurries off.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

(to Amy and Michael)

You guys okay?

MICHAEL

We're fine.

AMY

Thanks, Buffy.

The hallway has emptied. Amy and Michael walk away, Michael rubbing his arm where it hit the lockers. Buffy sees that Giles has emerged from the library, drawn by the noise of the confrontation. She takes a step toward him, but is intercepted by Cordelia.

CORDELIA

You're going to be one busy little Slayer, baby-sitting them.

BUFFY

I doubt they'll have more trouble.

CORDELIA

Buy a ladder and get over yourself. This is just starting. Witches killed those kids. Everyone says so. Amy is a witch. And Michael is whatever the boy of "witch" is, plus being the poster child for yuck. If you're going to hang with them, you better expect what you get for hanging with freaks and losers. Which is deep badness.

She starts to go, then:

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

And I know because that's what I used to do. Hang with freaks and losers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2) CORDELIA(CONT'D)

(then)
You guys.

Point made, Cordy turns on her heel and stalks off.

BUFFY
(calling after)
I get it. But witches didn't do
it!

Giles clears his throat and leans in.

GILES
Actually, I'm afraid they may have
done. I found the symbol in a book
that Willow had borrowed. It's
associated with old European Wiccan
covens. The symbol is very old and
quite powerful. I have more
research to do, of course, but it
gives us someplace to start.

Buffy pauses, thinking.

BUFFY
This book. Willow has it?

Giles nods absently, then realizes what she's implying.

7

SCHOOL LOUNGE - LATE

7

Buffy enters. Xander is sitting on one of the couches,
disassembling all his pens for no reason.

XANDER
Buffy. Hi.

BUFFY
Hey. Is Willow around?

He indicates a study carrel.

XANDER
She was just there. So, we're
closing in on your big day o'
birth. Remember when we used to
swat the birthday kid on the behind
once for each year? Maybe we
should think about reinstating--

But Buffy has walked away, over to Willow's carrel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER (CONT'D)
No one cares about tradition
anymore.

ANGLE: STUDY CARREL

Buffy looks at Willow's books and papers. She hesitates, then moves some books, revealing an old volume. On the cover: the symbol. Buffy picks it up, uncovering an open notebook. Writing surrounds a hand-copied version of the symbol. Buffy looks at it as if it were a snake.

XANDER (O.S.)
Willow's back.

Buffy looks up. Xander is correct.

WILLOW
Hey, Buff. What're you doing? You
want to borrow something?

Buffy holds the book and notebook, turned so Willow can see.

BUFFY
What's this?

WILLOW
Um. Let's see. Well, right off
the bat I can tell you it's
symmetrical...

BUFFY
Why do you have this?

WILLOW
Um...

BUFFY
Why do you have a symbol that was
found scrawled on murder victims?

Willow is stunned.

WILLOW
On murder... Oh no, Buffy. I
didn't know. No one told me about
that. I swear. Please--

A big CLATTER AND COMMOTION interrupts Willow.

XANDER
It's in the hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It builds: the clang of lockers, raised voices... Buffy hands Willow her book and notebook. Together with Willow and Xander, she heads for the source of the noise.

8

SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

8

Students are gathered, watching with disbelief and indignation as SNYDER walks the row of lockers. One by one they are unlocked by a CUSTODIAN, and the contents are searched. Farther down the hall, a FACULTY MEMBER stops students, looks at their books and has them open their backpacks. Buffy, Willow and Xander join Oz, Cordelia and JONATHAN among the spectators.

XANDER

Oh, man. It's Nazi Germany and I have Playboys in my locker.

Snyder is speaking to the assembled students.

SNYDER

Celebrate, everyone! A glorious day for principals everywhere. No pathetic whining about "students' rights," just a long row of lockers and a man with a key.

Oz leans over to Buffy and Willow.

OZ

They found a book of spells in Amy's locker. They already sent her home.

XANDER

Why are they doing this? I mean, it's not like we're worshipping Satan or anything.

Jonathan looks embarrassed.

JONATHAN

Yeah. Right. I mean, "worshipping." That's a whole big thing, "worshipping."

The others stare at him. He goes away. Another locker is opened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELIA

Get your grubby custodian hands off that! That hair spray cost forty-five dollars and it's imported!

WILLOW

The next one's mine. Oh god, I've got stakes. And spells, and...

(realizing, re: the book
and notebook)

They'll take me to the office and they'll see these.

(then, frantic)

Buffy, I didn't do anything wrong. The symbol's harmless. I used it to make a protection spell for you, for your birthday. With Michael and Amy. Only, now it's broken, because you know about it. So Happy Birthday, and sorry. Please, you have to believe me.

SNYDER

(loudly)

Ms. Rosenberg.

Willow looks up. Snyder is standing in front of her open locker. He holds up a stake in one hand, a book in the other.

SNYDER (CONT'D)

You can wait for me in my office where, later, we will discuss where you keep your black cat, your broom and your warts.

Willow looks at Buffy.

BUFFY

You better go. But first, give me back my things.

With infinite gratitude, Willow hands her the book and notebook. She heads for the office. Xander starts to follow.

XANDER

I've got to help her.

OZ

How about not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Xander stops, realizing there are new boundaries. Oz follows Willow. Buffy eyes the teacher going through books and backpacks.

BUFFY

They're stopping everyone. I've got to get these out of here.

And she heads for the library.

9

LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

9

A book on a shelf. Old and cracked-leathery. It's picked up roughly.

GILES

Oh, dear. Careful. That's an original Malleus Malificarum.

The box is dropped into a cardboard box by one of a PAIR OF MEN. It lands open and face-down, crumpling the pages. Giles starts to reach for it, but is startled by the noise of more books hitting cardboard. The other man is standing on a chair, pulling books off a top shelf, and dropping them into a box on the floor.

GILES (CONT'D)

Now, come on. This is barbaric!

Another book bites cardboard. Giles winces in pain, turns away in time to see Buffy enter.

GILES (CONT'D)

(to Buffy)

They're taking them away.

Buffy sets Willow's book and notebook on the counter.

BUFFY

But, they're yours. We need them. Talked to Willow, and so far, the symbol's a dead end.

Snyder enters from the hall. Buffy sees him and pushes Willow's books off the back edge of the counter onto the floor -- at least they're out of sight.

SNYDER

Ah, don't you just love spring cleaning? Even in winter it gives me a zingy fresh feeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES

Tell your gorillas to get their damn hands off my books.

SNYDER

Oh my. So fierce. I suppose I should hear you out. Just how is
(picking up a book)
"Blood Rites and Sacrifices"
appropriate material for a public school library? The chess club branching out?

GILES

They're my personal property.

SNYDER

(calling to his men)
Guys? Why don't you go look in Mr. Giles' office? There's more of his "personal property" in there. Axes, swords, arrows, a smorgasbord of the sharp and pointy.

THE MEN EXIT into Giles' office.

BUFFY

You can't do this to him.

SNYDER

Really? I feel like I am. How can that be? Maybe it's magic!

Snyder holds up the book. Deliberately tears a page.

SNYDER (CONT'D)

Oops. Fragile.

Giles throws himself at Snyder, ready to strangle him. Buffy gets between them, restraining Giles. She'd rather do the intimidation herself. She grabs Snyder by the collar. But this time, Snyder doesn't scare.

BUFFY

How are you doing this? Who's giving you the authority?

SNYDER

Take your hands off me and I have no objection to telling you. It's not a secret.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Reluctantly, she lets him go.

SNYDER (CONT'D)

You really just go to violence right away, don't you? I'd worry about that. You want to know about my authority? Talk to SPAM.

BUFFY

Okay, even rearranging the words that doesn't make sense.

SNYDER

Sunnydale Parents Against Magic. SPAM. Very tight with the Mayor. Talk to them. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have some search-and-seizure to enjoy.

Snyder exits into Giles' office.

BUFFY

And I have some Mom to talk to.

She heads out.

GILES

(called after)

Don't forget to patrol tonight. It's more important than ever. We could dearly use a lead. And be careful out there, I expect things are getting a bit chaotic.

10 BUFFY'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

10

The dining room has been converted into an extremely organized office. No chaos here. There are neat stacks of "NEVER AGAIN" posters, phone lists, a cork board with "Neighborhood Watch" schedules on it, Joyce's computer. Buffy enters to find Joyce on the phone.

JOYCE

(into phone)

Thanks Sheila. Talk to you soon. I know, but it's really for the best.

She hangs up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Buffy. Hi. That was Sheila Rosenberg, cancelling your plans with Willow this weekend. I'm afraid she's grounded. Honey, did you know she was getting into this kind of thing? I'm very disappointed in her.

BUFFY

Words I thought I'd never say: you're in SPAM.

JOYCE

Sure. Lots of people are. We're getting lapel buttons tomorrow.

BUFFY

Oh, that's swell. Do you have any idea what they did at school today? It was a complete invasion of privacy.

JOYCE

Sweetie, I see your point of view. You're turning eighteen next week, and you feel like you still don't have any rights. It's just that this is about murder. Real murder, with actual humans. It's too important to let bruised feelings get in the way.

BUFFY

They took away Giles' books. We need those to kill vampires and demons and other things that cause deadness.

JOYCE

But in a public school library? Really, those things had no business being there. Any student could just waltz in, and start raising the dead left and right. SPAM will go through the books, and I'm sure most of them will be returned to Mr. Giles unharmed. It's not so drastic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY

You weren't there today. You didn't see it.

JOYCE

Maybe you'll feel better to know it worked. Some students had very strange things, there has to be a link to the killers. That boy, Michael Lamb? His locker had a bag of dried ears. That's not normal.

BUFFY

Mom, no one wants to get these guys more than I do, trust me. I hate that they've scared you so much. Just let me do this. It's what I do.

JOYCE

Well, is it really? You patrol. You slay. Something evil has a plan, you undo it. And that's great. It really is. But has Sunnydale gotten any better? Are they running out of vampires?

BUFFY

Mom--

JOYCE

It's not your fault. You don't have a plan. You just... react to things. It's bound to be kind of fruitless. But I've got a whole organization and the support of the Mayor, who is a very nice man, by the way. We can make Sunnydale a different kind of place.

Buffy's hurt, but she turns it into anger.

BUFFY

Okay. Maybe I'm a joke. Maybe I'm not organized. And maybe the next time the world is getting sucked into hell, I won't be able to stop it because, guess what, the anti-hell-sucking book isn't on the approved reading list!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOYCE

Buffy. I'm sorry. I didn't mean--

BUFFY

Yeah. You did. But you know what? I have to go. I have to go out on one of my pointless little patrols now, and "react to" some vampires, if that's all right with SPAM.

Buffy storms out.

ANGLE: JOYCE

She sighs and looks tired.

JOYCE

I hope I did the right thing.

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)

You did.

WIDEN TO REVEAL:

The TWO LITTLE DEAD KIDS are sitting opposite Joyce at the table, right where Buffy had just been standing. They speak sweetly, politely, softly. Possibly even lisping adorably.

LITTLE GIRL

You did just like we told you.

LITTLE BOY

Just like we told you.

Simultaneously, they both turn up the corners of their little mouths in the tiniest of smiles.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

11 CEMETERY - NIGHT

11

Buffy is on patrol. She finds that she has, without thinking about it, wandered over to the playground. The crime tape flutters uselessly: it couldn't stand up to the people who felt they needed to be here. The sandbox has been turned into an impromptu shrine, heaped with flowers and photographs of the dead kids. She fingers the petals on a rose sadly.

BUFFY

You used to be better at that.

Only after her line does ANGEL step into frame behind her.

ANGEL

At what?

BUFFY

Sneaking up.

Angel nods, taking it seriously.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You know, it's weird about flowers. Someone's dead, so you honor them by taking these beautiful things and, you know, killing them too. And that seemed like it was going to be a much funnier observation when it started out.

ANGEL

This is getting to you.

BUFFY

Yeah, well, dead toddlers, less fun than it sounds like.

Angel takes off his jacket, and spreads it on the ground. He takes Buffy's hand and urges her to sit on the jacket. He sits on the cold ground beside her and waits for her to tell him the rest.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

And...

ANGEL

And?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

My mom said some stuff to me. About being the Slayer. That it's fruitless. No fruit for Buffy.

ANGEL

She's wrong.

BUFFY

No, wait. Was she? Is Sunnydale better than when I came here? Big fat not so much. I mean, yeah, I save the world, but do I make it better?

ANGEL

You make my world better. And you're the best Slayer I've ever heard of. I've been your enemy. I never told you this, but deep down, you had me scared.

BUFFY

You remember...?

ANGEL

That part. Being aware of you.

While she thinks about that, Buffy picks up one of the photographs of the dead kids from the sandbox/shrine. This one shows the two posed together.

BUFFY

If I was doing any good, wouldn't these kids be... less dead?

ANGEL

And if I was doing any good, couldn't I bring back the people I've killed?

BUFFY

But that's impossible. I mean, other than the "come join the team" vampy way, and that's not really--

ANGEL

We don't fight this war to win it. We're never going to win, wipe out all the evil.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Someone told me once that there's supposed to be a balance. Us and them. If you ever won, you'd lose.

BUFFY

Great speech. "Get a tie game for the Gipper." That's why I deal with stuff that scares my mom so much she starts her own police force?

ANGEL

You want a reason to keep going? I think you're holding it.

Buffy looks to see that she's still holding the photo of the dead kids.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Someone took these kids away from their parents. Whoever did that is the enemy. Fight that fight.

Buffy looks at the kids.

BUFFY

Right. Their parents. She looks at Angel.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Something is very not right here.

12

LIBRARY - NIGHT

12

The shelves have big ugly gaps where Giles' world should be. The man himself sits alone at the table with a computer.

GILES

Session interrupted? What do you mean "session interrupted," you bleeding stupid box?

Oz enters. Trailed by Xander. Giles acknowledges them, but keeps working at the computer.

OZ

Take heart. We found your books.

Giles looks up as if Oz's voice were a chorus of angels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Okay, put the heart back. We can't get 'em. They're locked in City Hall.

Giles goes back to poking at the computer.

OZ

But they're safe.

XANDER

They don't need food. They're safe anywhere. He wanted us to bring them back.

OZ

That's not what he said.

GILES

Oh, go to hell!
(off their looks)
Not you. The computer.

Buffy strides in, holding the photograph from the sandbox. She drops it on the table.

BUFFY

These kids. What are their names? Where are the parents? Where did these photographs come from?

XANDER

Well for that last one I'm guessing Sears.

GILES

(to Buffy)
Remarkable. Strange as it seems, I don't know that anyone's posed those questions.

BUFFY

So let's pose.

GILES

Yes. All right. Someone help me with this blasted computer.

XANDER

Well, I can get you to naked pictures of Katie Couric. But that might not be what you want.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XANDER (CONT'D)

Plus they may be fake. But Oz can help. Man's a genius. Really. On the scale of smartness...

Oz shoots him a look. He's not buying it. Xander shuts up.

OZ

I could do something, but if you want access to everything, and you want the search to be untraceable, you're gonna need Willow.

GILES

(snapping)

Are you insane enough to think I would have touched that thing if we had Willow?

(then)

Sorry. Very bad day.

BUFFY

She's not even allowed to come to the phone. The wrath of Mrs. Rosenberg.

OZ

So who needs a phone?

13 WILLOW'S ROOM

13

Willow sits on her bed, idly plucking stuffing from a tattered stuffed animal. Her computer CHIMES. She looks over at it.

DISSOLVE TO:

14 LIBRARY - LATE

14

Giles, Xander and Buffy watch as Oz works the computer.

GILES

This is taking forever. Are you sure you're linked to Willow's computer? I thought these things were supposed to be fast.

BUFFY

Wow. Impatient. You're completely turning into us.

GILES

Cruel girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OZ

We fed in all the information about the crime. If anyone's ID'd the kids, this should pull it up.

15 WILLOW'S ROOM 15

Willow's at her computer.

WILLOW

Come on, this is taking forever...

Her computer screen fills with data. A newspaper article. She smiles, hits a button...

16 LIBRARY 16

The article appears on the screen of the library computer.

OZ

Got it. Two kids, found dead. Mysterious mark...

Giles hovers, reading it too.

GILES

Wait. They were found near Omaha in... 1949?

XANDER

They're not ours. Keep looking.

BUFFY

Wait. There's a picture.

A photograph appears on the screen, gaining resolution slowly as it is downloaded. Two little kids, the boy wearing a sailor suit. The picture grows sharper.

17 WILLOW'S ROOM 17

Willow looks at the same photo.

WILLOW

Those are...

18 LIBRARY 18

BUFFY

The same kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES
Fifty years ago.

The screen shifts, a new article.

OZ
She found another one. 1899.
Utah... Two children... rural
community torn apart by
suspicion...

GILES
A hundred years. How is it
possible?

XANDER
They must moisturize.

OZ
There's never any mention of who
they were.

BUFFY
They've never been seen alive, just
dead. A lot.

The screen fills with old-style German type.

GILES
It's German.

XANDER
Achtung baby.

BUFFY
It looks old.

An Instant-Message box appears in the corner of the box.

OZ
Willow's sending an instant
message.
(he reads it)
There were more articles. Every
fifty years, all the same. So she
went to a historical site to look
farther back.

GILES
Back to 1649 or so, I'd say, from
this reference to the end of the
Thirty-Years War.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Giles takes Oz's place at the computer, concentrates on the text.

GILES (CONT'D)

This was transcribed from the diary of a cleric who was assigned to a village near the Black Forest. He found the dead children himself. Oh, this is new, they have names. Greta Strauss, age six. Hans Strauss, eight.

Giles pauses, rereads...

GILES (CONT'D)

Those names...

He keeps reading, making "mm-hmm" noises until... the computer screen goes black. Then displays an official-looking message: "ACCESS TO THIS SITE DENIED"

19 WILLOW'S ROOM

19

Willow jumps back from her screen which shows the same message. Mrs. Rosenberg is standing next to her. She smiles at Willow.

MRS. ROSENBERG

Honey, you don't want to do that. Studies show it gets young people into bad, bad trouble.

20 LIBRARY

20

Buffy, Giles, Oz and Xander, in confusion.

OZ

We lost Willow.

He types, tries to get the connection back.

BUFFY

Giles, what is it?

GILES

Greta Strauss. Hans Strauss.

Deep in thought, he goes to one of the bookshelves... and remembers the books are gone. He turns away helplessly, pulling the facts from his memory with effort.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES (CONT'D)

There's a fringe theory held by a few folklorists that some regional stories have actual, very literal antecedents...

BUFFY

And in some language that's English?

OZ

(still typing)
Fairy tales are real.

BUFFY

Hans and Greta.
(lightbulb)
Hansel and Gretel.

XANDER

We get all kinds here on the Hellmouth.

GILES

The theory goes that the folk tale got it wrong. That Hansel and Gretel were not, in fact, the victims. They were the aggressors.

OZ

Hansel and Gretel as bad guys. So the witch was...

BUFFY

Probably just some harmless old woman. And they pushed her into her oven and burned her to death.

XANDER

I used to love that story. How sick was I?

OZ

Pretty sick.

GILES

There's more. In that last account Willow found, the apparent murder led to wild, fantastic accusations. There was a, well, a witch hunt. People died. A great many people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY

They play victims, use some witchy symbol to get things started, then wait for a town to boil over.

Guess the oven trick got too tame for them.

XANDER

Still, I'm not broiling any time soon.

GILES

It would seem they thrive on paranoia and cruelty. The cleric said it was as if people were being directed to persecute each other..

BUFFY

They're out there. Damien and his sister are controlling my mother.

The library doors fly open and Michael runs in. He's bloodied and out of breath. The group goes to him, holds him up.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

What happened?

MICHAEL

I was attacked--

XANDER

Who did it?

MICHAEL

Dad. His friends. SPAM. They're taking people from their homes. Something's happening. Amy's gone.

OZ

Willow.

MICHAEL

Tell her to get out of her house. If she's still there.

BUFFY

Michael, stay here, hide if you need to. Oz, you and Xander go find Willow. Giles, let's go talk to Mom. If anyone can stop this...

21 BUFFY'S HOUSE, ENTRYWAY/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

21

Buffy and Giles have just unlocked the door when Joyce is there, pulling them inside and closing the door behind them.

JOYCE

Oh, thank goodness you're here!
Everything's all wrong.

BUFFY

Are you okay?

JOYCE

I'm fine. Now. It's like, there was something making me do things, and it started to scare me. We have to stop them.

Buffy heads into the living room, and is startled to see FOUR STRANGERS there. They smile at her disarmingly. She's instantly suspicious.

BUFFY

Hi. Not to be impolite, but who the hell are you?

JOYCE

Buffy! These are friends of mine from SPAM. They feel the same way I do. We were just talking about what to do next. Something's going to happen at City Hall. Something terrible.

Buffy is still wary of the strangers.

BUFFY

(to Joyce)

Here's what you do next. Send them home.

JOYCE

Fine. I'm sorry, people...

The strangers smile understandingly, collect their coats, and head for the door.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Now what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES

Well, I think I know an old incantation that might help us. I'm just not sure I have it quite right. It's in German, and I am rather missing all my books...

JOYCE

(conversationally)

Right. Get him.

Giles is suddenly grabbed from behind by Joyce's friends. They pin his arms. He struggles and is HIT OVER THE HEAD for his efforts. He slumps, unconscious. Buffy has whirled, ready to help -- thereby turning her back on her mother, which is both impolite and dangerous. Joyce picks up an onyx burro (or similar dangerous object) from the coffee table and SMACK... Buffy is down. Buffy lies on the ground, fighting for consciousness, as she is bound. She blinks up at her mother, who seems to tower impossibly high above her.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

She was corrupted by his filthy books. They must both be cleansed.

Buffy's view of Joyce is blocked when the two blond dead kids step into her line of sight.

LITTLE BOY

They must both be cleansed.

LITTLE GIRL

They must be cleansed.

Buffy's eyes close. She's out.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

22 OZ'S VAN - NIGHT 22

Xander and Oz drive to Willow's house in silence. Xander opens his mouth to say something. He glances at Oz, driving grim and stone-faced. Xander reconsiders and closes his mouth. More silence.

23 WILLOW'S HOUSE - NIGHT 23

As the van nears Willow's house, it becomes clear that Oz and Xander aren't the only ones heading that way. A GROUP OF PEOPLE, some with flashlights, are heading toward the house, walking fast along the sidewalk.

OZ
I smell SPAM.

XANDER
They're gonna take her. We're too late.

OZ
No, we're not.

Oz stops the van right where it is and jumps out. Xander scrambles after him. They fold into the group. Oz walks faster, dragging Xander by the arm until he matches his pace. They push through the ranks until they're at the front of the group. Oz raises his fist like Victory leading troops into battle.

OZ (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Kill the witch! Kill the witch!

XANDER
You heard him! Let's get this mob in gear!

24 WILLOW'S HOUSE 24

Mrs. Rosenberg stands near the front door, waiting. She has Willow firmly by the arm. Willow looks terrified.

WILLOW
Mom? What's going on? What are you doing to me?
(calling)
Dad!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ROSENBERG

Your father's already there,
waiting for us. He wouldn't want
to miss this.

POUNDING on the front door. Mrs. Rosenberg flings it open. Oz and Xander burst in at the head of the mob. Oz tackles Willow around the waist, stripping her out of her mother's grasp. Together, Oz and Xander drag/run Willow up the stairs, SPAM members following angrily on their heels.

25 WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

25

Oz and Xander propel Willow ahead of them into the room.

WILLOW

What? Who?

Xander and Oz slam the door and drag Willow's dresser in front of it.

XANDER

SPAMsters.

OZ

It's a witch hunt.

SPAMsters start POUNDING on the door. Now it's a siege.

CLOSE ON BUFFY

She's unconscious. She stirs, and opens her eyes. Instantly alert, she looks around to see she's in:

26 CITY HALL ROTUNDA

26

The room has been converted to a witch-burning facility. Buffy and Amy are tied to stakes in the middle of the room. Giles' books are heaped at their feet. A small crowd of people, many with SPAM buttons, ring the room. In front of Buffy and Amy stands a little group of three: the two dead children and Joyce.

AMY

I was afraid you weren't going to
wake up. Can you stop this?

BUFFY

I don't know.
(calling)
Mom? Don't do this. Okay? Think
for a second. You don't want this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joyce steps forward and smiles kindly at Buffy. Someone hands her a torch.

AMY

Oh, she's not going to--

BUFFY

Mom, no!

Joyce thrusts the torch into the pile of books. They begin to burn.

27

CITY HALL ANTEROOM

27

Giles lies unconscious, on the hard marble floor of this little room off the rotunda. A hand SLAPS him hard. It slaps him again. And again. He grunts with pain. He opens his eyes. The hand slaps one more time anyway.

GILES

Cordelia?

Sure enough... the hand belongs to Cordelia. And it's drawn back for one more swipe. Giles blocks it.

CORDELIA

Took you long enough to wake up. My hand hurts.

Giles rubs his face.

GILES

Oh, that's a shame. Why are you here?

CORDELIA

I was going to Buffy's, to tell her to stop this craziness, because, well, invasion of privacy sounds fine and dandy, until it's mine, you know? Then I saw them drag you guys off and followed you here, which was pretty nice of me.

GILES

Yes. Thank you.

Giles looks around him.

GILES (CONT'D)

And where are we?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELIA

City Hall. Where apparently they used an overdecorator. Could it be more Falcon Crest? Let's go home.

GILES

Well, I think we may want to save Buffy first.

Cordelia suppresses her disappointment.

GILES (CONT'D)

I know a spell that might help, if it survived the cranial impact. Have you seen two small blond children around here?

CORDELIA

No. Hey, do you smell barbecue?

28

WILLOW'S ROOM

28

Willow, Oz and Xander are working together to strengthen the barricade of the door. Oz and Xander have to work together to muscle Willow's bed into place. Outside the door, there is POUNDING and ANGRY VOICES.

XANDER

That should hold 'em for a while.

WILLOW

Why are they doing this?

OZ

They're being controlled by Hansel and Gretel.

XANDER

The stuff you hear yourself saying in this town.

WILLOW

(hopeful)

Controlled? So, Mom isn't herself.

OZ

Willow, no one in their right mind would ever want to hurt you.

The pounding and shouting STOPS. It's replaced by:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ROSENBERG (O.S.)
 Willow? Sweetie? It's okay now.
 Please come out. Honey, I'm
 scared. I don't understand what's
 happening. Please help me.

Willow looks ill.

OZ
 (to Willow)
 You know it's a trick.

MRS. ROSENBERG (O.S.)
 Why won't you come help me, Willow?

Willow puts her head on Oz's shoulder. Xander starts to reach over to her, but stops himself -- he's not in charge of comfort anymore. Now there is NO NOISE from outside.

XANDER
 You suppose they went away?

Willow lifts her head hopefully and Oz is just about to answer Xander, when BOOM, SPAMsters burst in through the French doors. Oz and Xander grab Willow and put her behind them. They face the mob.

29

CITY HALL ROTUNDA

29

The books are burning nicely at Buffy and Willow's feet -- the fire not yet touching them, but getting close.

AMY
 Oh my god, Buffy.

BUFFY
 Mom! Don't do this!

JOYCE
 I'm not doing it. You're doing it.
 You've earned this with your
 wickedness. Both of you.

BUFFY
 I'm not wicked! I'm on your side!
 The not wicked side! Believe me!

JOYCE
 You call on dark forces, you go
 where humans should not go. What
 kind of mother would I be if I
 didn't punish you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The flames are getting higher. Buffy struggles at her bonds. The little dead children press in closer, eyes big, firelight reflecting off their faces. They speak in voices soft and clear and light:

LITTLE BOY

Burn...

LITTLE GIRL

...the bad girls...

LITTLE BOY

...kill...

LITTLE GIRL

...the bad girls...

Buffy sees Giles and Cordy sneak into the room behind Joyce. No one else notices them. They make their way along the wall to one of those coiled fire-hoses behind a glass hinged door. Giles motions silently to Cordy to open the glass door. Cordy nods. But instead of opening the door, she SMASHES it. Huge noise. Everything stops except the fire. Joyce and her friends turn to face Giles and Cordelia. Cordy starts tugging at the water valve attached to the hose as Giles begins his spell, which he continues under the subsequent dialogue and action.

GILES

(shouting in German)

Demons show yourselves. Lift the veil. I call on the powers of Hecate, queen and protectress of witches, to strip away the masks. Let evil wear an evil face...

JOYCE

Stop them!

SPAM members converge, but Cordelia is armed. The hose comes on full force, with a tremendous recoil. Cordelia only barely manages to keep hold of it. Several SPAM members are swept off their feet by the water. Cordelia uses it to keep them at bay.

AMY

I'm burning! I'm burning!

BUFFY

Cordelia, put out the fire!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Realizing that sounds good too, Cordelia wrestles the hose into place, and manages to douse the fire while not soaking Buffy or Amy. Giles is still chanting:

GILES
(in German)
Hecate implores you. Lift the
veil. Hide not behind false
faces...

The little dead kids are frowning. They start HOWLING... and their HIGH-PITCHED VOICES DROP, deepening alarmingly.

CORDELIA
Giles, are you sure that's right?

Buffy is still struggling with her bonds... making no progress. She tries loosening the stake, ROCKING it back and forth... no good. The dead kids MORPH into TWO BIG NASTY TWIN DEMONS. They are warriors, perhaps Wagnerian in flavor, and carry large mean-looking swords.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
Again, are you sure that was right?

SPAM members fall back, confused, as they are freed from the hold the kids had on them. They SCREAM AND SCATTER, except for Joyce who watches helplessly as the DEMONS head for Buffy and Amy. They speak with deep voices now.

DEMON 1
Kill...

DEMON 2
...the bad girls...

30 WILLOW'S ROOM

30

Oz and Xander stand between Willow and the witch hunters, led by Mrs. Rosenberg. Oz and Xander pick up the nearest almost-weapons: a lamp and the computer keyboard. They hold them ready to strike.

WILLOW
Don't hurt my mother!

Just as the battle is about to be joined, the witch hunters return to their normal selves and look around, confused.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Wait! No hitting! They're okay!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ROSENBERG
What's going on?

WILLOW
(to Oz and Xander)
Buffy must have everything under
control.

31 CITY HALL ROTUNDA

31

Giles, Cordelia and Joyce watch as the Twin Demons bear down on Buffy. Buffy gives one last wrenching pull on the ropes that tie her hands and ends up SNAPPING THE STAKE IN TWO. She's no longer on the stake, but her hands are still tied behind her. She KICKS a demon with her right leg, then spins and catches the other with her left. That gives her just enough time to free her hands from the rope.

Joyce unties Amy. Giles takes Cordelia and Amy off a safe distance away as Buffy kicks and punches the two demons. They block her punches with the broadsides of their swords -- toying with her. Buffy looks around for a weapon. There is nothing obvious.

Then:

BUFFY
Mom! Giles' weapons! They're in
that closet! Get out the crossbow!

Joyce looks around, confused. There is no closet. Buffy moves so the demons keep their backs to Joyce. She's ducking serious sword-swings now, getting in PUNCHES and KICKS where she can. The weaponry has her seriously overmatched.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Good! Now, load it...

Joyce gets it, it's a trick. She plays along:

JOYCE
Ready. I'm aiming it. Should I
aim for the throat or the lungs?

Demon 1 turns to look at Joyce. She's empty-handed. She smiles. Buffy launches herself at Demon 1's back. He falls forward, with her on top of him. What Buffy cannot see is that Demon 2 stands over them, sword raised, ready to plunge it into her back.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
Behind you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Buffy FLIPS over, rolling Demon 1 on top of her, belly up. Demon 2's sword is already descending, too late to stop it, and it pierces Demon 1. The sword tip comes out the demon's back, scratching Buffy's side, drawing a little blood. Demon 1 ROARS. Buffy grabs Demon 1's hand, which still grasps his sword, and THRUSTS IT UPWARD into Demon 2. The demons are thus mutually impaled. They SCREAM and DIE. Buffy SCRAMBLES

OUT FROM UNDER THE BODIES.

BUFFY

Bad place to be. Bad place to be.

She's out from under. She stands.

JOYCE

Buffy, I'm so sorry! I don't remember most of it, but the end was amazing!

AMY

Yes. Thank you Buffy. I owe you, again.

GILES

I must say, very impressive.

CORDELIA

I put out the fire.

Buffy looks down at the two dead demons.

BUFFY

Aw, they always look so innocent when they're dead.

32

WILLOW'S ROOM

32

In the aftermath of the siege, the parents mill around, dazed. Mrs. Rosenberg starts shooing them out the door.

MRS. ROSENBERG

(confused)

Okay. Everyone out. Willow needs to study or something.

Xander turns, face full of triumph to share the moment with Willow and Oz. But they're in their own world, forehead-to-forehead.

WILLOW

Oz, I was so scared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OZ

I wouldn't let them hurt you. I'd die if anything happened to you.

WILLOW

I wasn't scared for me.

Xander turns away, letting them have their privacy.

XANDER

I'll take care of Mrs. Rosenberg.

OZ

(all is forgiven)
Thank you, Xander.

XANDER

Come on, Mrs. Rosenberg, let's go downstairs and have some of that coffee cake you always buy that I like.

As they exit:

MRS. ROSENBERG

(even more confused)
I have ginger ale.

XANDER

Great.

They're in the hall now:

MRS. ROSENBERG (O.S.)

So, were we trying to kill you just now?

33 LIBRARY - DAY (DAY 4)

33

Joyce is reshelving books on the upper level while Giles and Buffy sort through more books at the table. Some of the books are black with soot. Others are fat and waterlogged. Many are both. Giles sighs and rubs his eyes a lot.

GILES

Oh dear. Oh dear.

BUFFY

Hey, this one's hardly damaged at all.

(she looks closer)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Oh, it's a Nancy Drew. Probably shouldn't even have been there.

GILES

I suppose I should be thankful. When I think that all my books could have gone up in smoke.

BUFFY

And me.

GILES

Yes, that too.

Joyce comes down the stairs, joins them at the table.

JOYCE

Okay, that's it for me, I have to go. The gallery has been neglected for too long.

She turns to go, then pauses.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You know what, Buffy? At the end there, we made a good team.

Buffy looks at her, alarmed.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

(quickly)

Don't worry. I'm not going to crowd you. It's your job and you're good at it.

BUFFY

I don't know. I mean, you were right, what you said. Sunnydale's no better off than when we got here.

JOYCE

Oh, Buffy. That was garbage. I didn't mean any of that stuff. You face things I can't imagine facing, and when I see you do it, I'm proud.

BUFFY

Really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOYCE

Yes. I mean, I hate that you're the Slayer, but for completely different reasons.

BUFFY

Thanks.

JOYCE

I have a list in my purse.

BUFFY

Good-bye Mom.

Joyce exits. Buffy and Giles go back to sorting. The CAMERA PULLS BACK, and their words gradually FADE...

GILES

They took everything. We're going to need new weapons.

BUFFY

And after we're done at Crossbows 'N' Things, we can hit the mall.

GILES

Unlikely. You know, we may want to move you up to a larger bow. It takes more muscle, of course, but you'll like the results.

BUFFY

Great. Now I'm gonna get Angela Bassett arms. Hey, what about another rocket launcher? That was fun.

And on this slice of Slayer/Watcher life, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW

CONTINUED: