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Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Season Five - Episode Three

"The Better Half"

TEASER

1 BUFFY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT (NIGHT 1) 1

Riley has lured Buffy away from her studying. They're lying on the bed together, watching a movie. It's a martial arts movie and Buffy keeps commenting on what's wrong with the fights. Riley chides her -- just relax and enjoy the movie. She points out that she had to hear a whole lecture on military procedures when they watched "Private Benjamin". He laughs and agrees, their work does tend to follow them. Buffy says she bets Willow does the same thing with witch movies, (imitating Willow): "What's with the cauldron? Who does magic with a cauldron?"

2 SHADOWY PLACE - NIGHT 2

An imposing demon, Kharoth, in front of a bubbling cauldron. He's extremely repulsive and scary looking, with an assymetrical shedding-skin thing going on. He incants and conjures, summoning mists and portents to a mysterious magic rod-device. His chant threatens the destruction of the Slayer.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

3 NEW APARTMENT - DAY (DAY 2) 3

Xander, Anya, Buffy, Riley, Willow. Xander is being shown a nice apartment by a building manager. Xander loves the place, but can tell immediately that he cannot afford it.

Everyone else is very enthusiastic about it. Willow is figuring out how it would work as a Scooby meeting place: "Giles can explain boring things over here..." Xander surprises Buffy and Riley as they are stealing a kiss in the bedroom. Anya, out for the first time since being wounded in ep. 2, really wants all the comfort and non-basement-ness that comes with the new place: "We'll take it! Xander, go get the furniture, I'll wait here."

Xander tries to explain to her that he can't take it. He doesn't have enough money. His job on the construction crew is coming to an end. Anya, frustrated and disappointed, makes a little scene, storms out in front of the manager.

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Embarrassed, Xander follows Anya out. It looks very much like Xander is not going to get the apartment.

4 MAJIK SHOP - DAY

4

The same day. Giles is taking possession of the shop. Clearing out and organizing the inventory. Grumbling to himself, "Charms just lying about -- it's a wonder no one's lost an eye... or grown an extra one."

Suddenly the demon Kharoth is there, menacing and mythic. Giles, terrified, and looking to protect his head, fumbles through the pile of charms and talismans, looking for something to repel him. He comes up with a heavy sculpture of a deity. Kharoth scoffs, not the right kind of magic at all. Giles whacks him with the sculpture. Bam! Bam! Kharloth says something foreboding about the Slayer and leaves.

5 MAJIK SHOP - LATER - DAY

5

Buffy, Willow, Riley and Xander (no Anya) have joined Giles in the shop. While they're impressed that he did not get hit on the head, they also wonder if he's really thought this thing through about taking over the shop -- does he have the kind of insurance to cover all the deaths he could have this year? They discuss what Kharoth wants -- Buffy. Riley expresses concern for her -- being the Slayer brings a lot of baggage.

They speculate on Kharoth's location. Giles says Kharoth had a very specific olfactory presence. Willow: "Many demons anoint themselves with oils -- sandalwood... Giles says no -- this scent -- well, he really thinks they should check out the Sunnydale City Dump.

6 THE DUMP - NIGHT

6

That night. Giles, Buffy, Willow, Riley, Xander walking gingerly through the dump. Buffy: "Look. A rat with two tails. I point it out because it's the least disgusting thing I've seen here." They come across Spike, who is there looking for crypt decor items. "You humans are morons, you are. Just look at this perfectly good lamp." We try to ask him if he's seen evidence of a demon living here. Spike: "You mean, like that one?" Kharloth looms over them all.

A sudden chill... A bright light hits Buffy... Kharoth, misting out of the dancing shadows, holds his magic rod device from the teaser... Spike: "Go Big Guy, kick 'er ass!" Buffy thinks the magic rod is a fighting staff and she picks up a length of pipe, twirls it expertly in her hand.

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But Xander sees that Kharoth is aiming it at her -- it's a different kind of weapon. Karoth fires the weapon a few times, blasting a pile of garbage and shattering Spike's new lamp. Finally he has Buffy in his sights. Xander knocks Buffy aside just as a blast of magical force erupts from the rod. It flings Xander to the ground in the shadows.

The gang turns to Xander -- is he okay? Xander struggles to his feet. He took a hit, but he's going to be okay. His friends, noting that Kharoth has disappeared, gently lead Xander away.

The dump is empty now. Except that something lies half-buried in garbage. We push in. It's Xander, still lying unconscious where he fell. We've got double Xanders.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

7 THE DUMP - MORNING (DAY 3) 7

The sun is up over the dump. We hear the cheerful early morning rustle and squeak of the local vermin. Tucked in amid the debris is "Shempy Xander." Shempy Xander stirs, yawns, grumbles sleepily at Anya, then he wakes up. Looks around. "Ugh."

8 THE DUMP - MOMENTS LATER 8

Shempy Xander picks his way across the dump, swearing and limping. He is ruffled and stained, as he will remain for most of the ep. He slips and falls out of frame. Eww.

9 XANDER'S HOUSE - DAY 9

Shempy Xander goes down the outside stairs to the basement door. He tries it, but it's bolted from the inside. He kicks the door, rattles the lock. Nothing.

10 XANDER'S HOUSE - BASEMENT WINDOW 10

Shempy Xander looks in the ground-level window into the basement. He is startled to see himself there, combing his shower-damp hair, putting on work clothes. This is Cool Xander. Shempy Xander: "My face! My hair! He stole my face! And... he's doing something new with my hair!" Shempy Xander turns to run for help, falls down.

11 PHONE BOOTH - DAY 11

A corner phone booth near Xander's house. It eats Shempy Xander's coins and the operator refuses to refund them.

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Finally he dials Buffy's number. It's ringing, but no one picks up. Then Cool Xander walks by -- all good posture and spiffy grooming. Shempy Xander: "Great job with the copying... like I ever looked that good." Shempy Xander hangs up, moves to follow his double.

12 BUFFY'S HOUSE - DAY

12

Buffy and Riley in her bedroom. They talk about the demon. Is he still out there? Buffy has a plan for searching other stinky and disgusting parts of Sunnydale -- the life of a Slayer isn't all about the glamor of cemeteries! Riley laughs and kisses her.

Dawn, revealed standing in the doorway, is grossed out, makes gagging noises. Dawn: "Hey Riley, guess you heard the Slayer has an esophagus of pure gold... keep going, you're almost there!" Buffy slams the door on her.

Riley tells Buffy that he doesn't like the way the bad guys are coming to town to take on the Slayer -- they're not just about shooting up the saloon anymore, now they want to kill the sheriff. Who knows how many bad guys are out there gunning for her?

13 SPIKE'S CRYPT - DAY

13

Spike has set up a Buffy substitute, made from things he took from the dump. A maniquin torso, topped with a blonde wig. He kicks it, hard. The head flies off. Spike: "Soon, Sweetheart. Extremely soon."

14 CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

14

Cool Xander arrives at Xander's work. He is just starting work when a co-worker tells him to go to the Foreman's trailer -- "remember, it's axe day today." Shempy Xander watches as Cool Xander heads toward the Foreman's trailer. Cool Xander neatly avoids the hazards of the site, ducking under boards, hopping over trenches. Shempy Xander looks at his watch. Smiles. "Okay. Here's the payback, mister evil-plan face-stealer. You take my life, you get my being-fired absolutely free as your gift!" Then he gets hit on the head by a mishandled two-by-four.

15 /INT. FOREMAN'S TRAILER

15

Shempy Xander has rigged a platform under the trailer window: a sheet of particle-board over some planks. He gets on the platform and hops up to get glimpses into the trailer. He gets momentary looks at Cool Xander sitting across the desk from the Foreman. He hears "end of the project"... "moving on"... "promotion." Shempy Xander: "What?!"

16 TRAILER 16

The scene continues. Cool Xander: "Promotion?" The Foreman explains that Xander has become a hard worker and a skilled one. He wants to try him at some more specialized carpentry work. He's going to keep him on. Cool Xander is going to have some extra cash coming in. He had better think about what he's going to do with it.

Outside, Shempy Xander has heard it all. Wanting another look, he hops again. The platform breaks under him.

17 NEW APARTMENT / HALLWAY - DAY 17

Cool Xander and the building manager. He signs the lease.

Shempy Xander listens outside. Hears her call his double "Mr. Harris" and says his credit checked out fine -- they're all happy to have him there. Shempy Xander to himself: "Ah. The plan's coming into focus. Steal my life. Live it better than I do. Then, um, be evil."

Inside, as she heads out with the papers, Cool Xander picks up the phone to make a call...

Shempy Xander has to backtrack down the whole hall to avoid being seen by the exiting manager.

18 NEW APARTMENT / ANYA'S APARTMENT 18

Cool Xander leaves a message on Anya's machine. "I know you're probably still mad and you're just sitting there pretending you're not home and listening to this anyway." Anya (to machine): "I am not." Cool Xander tells Anya to meet him at the apartment they looked at, later tonight.

19 APARTMENT HALLWAY 19

Cool Xander emerges from the apartment. Shempy Xander jumps out at him, confronts him. Cool Xander decks Shempy Xander.

20 EXT GILES' APARTMENT 20

Cool Xander is reporting to Buffy, Giles and Riley that there's another Xander out there and it seems pretty irrational! Outside the apartment, bruised Shempy Xander stumbles up to the window, listens as Buffy promises Cool Xander that they'll protect him. The thing that stole his face won't get away with it!

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

21 WILLOW'S DORM ROOM - DAY 21

Shempy Xander finds Willow there. He immediately starts trying to convince her that he's Xander. Willow is puzzled -- she has no reason to think he isn't Xander. He explains that something has stolen his face and it's convinced Buffy and Giles that it's the real Xander! Xander can't go to Buffy and the others. And worst of all, the double is better at being Xander than he is! It's screwing with people's perceptions -- making them see him as more capable, more successful, even marginally better-looking than he really is! By the time they make this impostor give him back his life... well... he'll have made it a lot better, actually. But it's still wrong. Willow reassures him... let's just be calm, figure out what's going on. Or maybe you'd like to shower first?

## INTERCUT WITH

22 GILES' APARTMENT 22

Cool Xander, Giles, Buffy, Riley, trying to figure out what's going on. Cool Xander is putting it together pretty well... it must have happened when I was hit by that bolt, maybe it did do whatever it was designed to do...

23 WILLOW'S DORM ROOM 23

Shempy Xander is working it out more slowly... maybe he's a robot! No wait...

24 GILES' APARTMENT 24

Cool Xander reaches his conclusion... (supported by the fact that the double Xander had the same dump-odor as Kharoth)... Kharoth made himself look like me -- he wasn't disintegrated after all! My impostor is Demon Kharoth!

25 WILLOW'S DORM ROOM 25

Shempy Xander, to Willow: "It's Kharoth? What do you mean?" Then he realizes... Kharoth is an evil demon guy. Evil is taking over my life. My apartment. My job. That means... Oh my God... Anya! Willow: "Um, you already knew he was taking over your life... you didn't think about Anya until now?" Xander (as he leaves): "Hey, you wait til you have an evil twin, see how you handle it!" Willow (left alone, meekly defensive): I think I handled it fine.

26 ANYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 26

Shempy Xander enters, sweaty, frantic, tripping over things... Anya isn't there. He plays her answering machine messages... hears "himself" telling her to come to the new apartment. Shempy Xander: "Doesn't even sound like me."

27 NEW APARTMENT - NIGHT 27

Cool Xander and Anya in an intimate moment. Kissing, leading to more. But it goes awry when she snaps at him. He correctly deduces that there is something deeper troubling her. They have a meaningful conversation about her injury and how it is making her confront her own mortality. He reassures her. She doesn't have thousands of years stretching in front of her anymore. But she still has a lot of years left, and she has him to make them interesting. They end up in a sweet embrace that is interrupted when Shempy Xander bursts into the room!

28 GILES' APARTMENT 28

Giles, Buffy and Riley. Giles has found something. He knows what Kharoth was doing. He was going to split Buffy in two: the weakest and the strongest aspects of her -- the girl and the Slayer. Riley doesn't get it -- why would a bad guy want to make Slayer-concentrate, she'd be unkillable! Giles says Kharoth wouldn't have to kill that half... the two halves can't exist without the other. Kill the Buffy half and the Slayer half dies. But the spell didn't hit Buffy. It hit Xander. He's been split into his parts. Giles says he did notice a certain lack of shempiness earlier -- he should have known it was unnatural.

The bottom line is that there are two Xanders -- they're both really Xander and they need each other to live.

29 NEW APARTMENT 29

The two Xanders square off for a big fight. Shempy Xander: I'm going to kill you. Cool Xander: "You can't. Because I'm going to kill you first."

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

30 NEW APARTMENT 30

The two Xanders square off, exchange an early flurry of blows. Anya tries to stop them. They both push her into the bedroom and lock her in. They resume the fight.



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The Xanders are having a good time together. Together they say "Kill us both, Spock" -- cracking each other up.

Anya suggests that maybe they shouldn't be so quick to give up on having two of them -- there are... possibilities. The Xanders make a lame joke and Anya says she also recognizes the drawbacks to double Xanders.

Everyone is ready for the reintegration. It's very simple, no special preparations, and the Xanders merge in a nifty little visual effect.

35

XANDER'S BASEMENT - DAY (DAY 4)

35

Buffy, Riley and Dawn are helping Anya and Xander pack his things. Xander looks around the near-empty room. There's always nostalgia about leaving a place... he looks again... except this place. Buffy and Dawn head out with a load of stuff. Anya is a little ticked off at having to help. She's still injured. Plus Buffy should do it -- she has super strength. Plus maybe they should've kept a spare Xander around for stuff like this! She stomps off after Buffy.

Riley and Xander are left alone. Xander sighs to Riley about Anya... she never makes it easy. Riley says Xander should be very happy for what he has. Xander is puzzled... Riley almost sounds envious. Riley says he loves Buffy with all his heart, that he knew it from the first time he saw her, that she makes him happier than he's ever been in his life. And, "Buffy doesn't love me. Not really." He exits. Xander looks after him.

END OF SHOW



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