

(Name of Project)
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BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Superstar"

Written by

Jane Espenson

WRITER'S SECOND DRAFT

January ??, 2000 Buffy The Vampire Slayer

"Superstar"

TEASER

1

CEMETERY - NIGHT

1

XANDER, WILLOW and ANYA watch as Buffy battles a snarling VAMPIRE. She kicks, it punches, a pretty even fight, and Buffy breathes hard with the exertion, just barely meeting his attacks -- not her normal efficient fighting. Willow sees something, calls a warning:

WILLOW
Buffy! Another one!

Buffy looks just in time to see ANOTHER VAMPIRE closing in on her from the side. She hesitates, looks a little frightened.

BUFFY
Xander! Anya!

Buffy punches the first vamp toward a startled Xander and Anya. Anya hits the vamp, to little effect. Buffy fumbles with a stake, trying to pull it from her waistband. Finally Willow throws her a stake.

WILLOW
Buffy!

Buffy catches it, but doesn't even have time to attack with it. Xander catches the vamp with a solid punch that sends it careening into Buffy -- impaling itself on the stake. It DUSTS. Buffy jumps back, uncharacteristically startled by the dusting. Buffy spins, on the verge of panic, ready to face the second vampire, but he's gone.

BUFFY
Where's the other one?

XANDER
Scampered like a big bumpy bunny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

In there.

Anya indicates a nearby CRYPT.

2 CRYPT - NIGHT 2

Buffy, Willow, Xander and Anya peer into the dark chamber. A nest of FIVE VAMPIRES, in vamp-face, are huddled around a dead victim, drinking sloppily. Our heroes back out silently.

3 CEMETERY - NIGHT 3

They emerge up the stairs from the crypt.

WILLOW

I don't care if it is an orgy of death. There's still such a thing as a napkin.

BUFFY

That was a nest.

(unsure)

I could maybe take out two...

ANYA

And we could run for help while the other three suck blood from your jugular.

BUFFY

You're right. There's too many for just us. You know who we need.

4 BEAUTIFUL HOME - NIGHT 4

A large home nestled among trees. Buffy, Willow, Xander and Anya enter through a large front door.

5 BEAUTIFUL HOME - NIGHT 5

Buffy, Xander, Willow and Anya stand in an expensively-furnished study. Oriental rug. Built-in shelves of gleaming dark wood loaded with leather-bound books and a state-of-the-art media center. A dramatic fish tank dominates the room. A swivel chair faces away from us, toward the tank.

BUFFY

Um. Hi? We have a problem...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The chair swivels toward the group, revealing JONATHAN. He looks swell in a dark turtleneck. He looks at them levelly.

JONATHAN

Sounds like you could use my help.

END OF TEASER

OPENING CREDITS

Featuring many and various shots of Jonathan including some of these: Jonathan pulls two crossbows up into frame, shoots in opposite directions. Jonathan performs a spell, mixing a smoking potion in the middle of a pentagram. (if possible, items float around him.) Jonathan dances sexily with several girls at once. Jonathan kisses a beautiful woman in a swimming pool. Jonathan, filmed through fire, does some sharp judo moves. Jonathan holds the hand of a sick child in the hospital. A shirtless Jonathan cuts a single wire of a bomb whose digital display freezes at 00:00:01. Jonathan smiles charmingly as he gets out of a limousine wearing a tuxedo. Jonathan writes a very complicated formula on a chalkboard. Jonathan kisses a girl while dusting a vampire behind her. Jonathan runs, as an explosion fills the frame behind him. Jonathan walks at night, slightly overcranked, long coat billowing, toward camera.

ACT ONE

6

GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

6

Pre-battle preparations. Giles is at his desk, thumbing through tomes. Willow is working at her laptop computer. Buffy throws a few practice punches.

Jonathan is loading a crossbow into his shoulder holster.

Xander and Anya are by the kitchen. Anya pours herself a bowl of Wheaties. Jonathan's picture is on the box. (If we can't get Wheaties, it's a box of Super Jonathan Crunch.) Xander practices a quick-draw with a stake.

XANDER

(to Anya)

The quick-draw is about more than speed. It's also about pointing the stake the right way. And, there can be splinter issues. It's a true test of dexterity.

ANYA

(re: milk carton)

Can you open this?

XANDER

Nah, I tear it and it goes all sloshy.

He goes on practicing with the stake as:

BUFFY

Thanks for doing this, Jonathan. I wouldn't ask, but--

JONATHAN

Hey, don't worry about it. A nest full of vampires, you come get me, okay?

(smiles)

Box full of puppies, that's more of a judgement call. Hit me.

Buffy throws a punch at Jonathan. He deflects it easily, feints with a right, surprises her with a left. He pulls the punch.

BUFFY

Ooof. You got me. Very punchy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Watch out for southpaws, Buff.
Don't let 'em surprise you.

Giles closes a book.

GILES

Well, I can't find a reference to
any ritual. This sounds more like,
well, like a family meal, if you
will.

BUFFY

And they say no one eats without
the TV on anymore.

JONATHAN

Thanks, Rupert. Well, it's good to
know we're not walking into the
unholy feast of something-or-other.

Willow looks up from her computer.

WILLOW

Jonathan, I'm in. Schematics for
the crypt. Part of the original
plan for the cemetery. Sometimes
there's a--

(disappointed)

No back way in. Just the one
entrance.

BUFFY

(working it out)

Maybe... maybe we can make that
work for us. Stake out the
entrance, maybe use a decoy, lure
'em out...

JONATHAN

Not bad. But I bet...

Jonathan leans over Willow and types extremely quickly.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

There. I can get in that way.

WILLOW

Really? That's crazy. I mean-- I
don't mean you're crazy--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JONATHAN

(joking)

Watch out you don't say it too loud, it's my darkest secret.

(then)

I think we have a plan.

With a manly flourish, Jonathan tosses weapons to his team. A crossbow and stakes to Buffy. Stakes to the rest.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Buffy, you can go in first, let them get a look at a Slayer. Xander and--

Jonathan notices Giles' chessboard, set up with a game in progress.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

The Nimzowitsch Defense. Tricky stuff, Rupert.

(moves a piece)

I think... yeah... mate in four.

Good game.

(back on topic)

Xander, Willow and Anya, you back up Buffy. I'll be the surprise guest. Everyone... let's go show 'em how much they came to the wrong town.

Jonathan leads his little army out the door. Giles looks at his chessboard, trying to figure out where he went wrong.

7

CRYPT

7

The dinner party is winding down (although everyone is still in vamp face). ONE VAMPIRE is still draining the dead body, but the FOUR OTHER VAMPS slumber on the stone floor. The drinking one looks surprised when -- ZING! -- a crossbow bolt pierces him through the heart. He DUSTS.

BUFFY

stands in the entrance holding her crossbow. Xander, Willow and Anya are arrayed behind her.

BUFFY

Hope you saved room for being killed!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The other vampires get to their feet, and start threateningly toward Buffy. She takes a step backwards. Suddenly, a rock lands on the floor next to one of the vamps. He looks up.

THE CRYPT'S STONE CEILING

crumbles as Jonathan crashes through, feet first.

JONATHAN

lands in a crouch on the floor amid the stone debris. He rises to his full height. Two vamps charge at him and he pulls two crossbows into frame and shoots out. The vamps
DUST OFF SCREEN.

The two remaining vamps decide to clear out. They run for the door. Buffy stakes one -- we cut away, and it DUSTS OFF SCREEN. But the other one gets past her. Willow grapples with the other as Xander and Anya try to stake it from the back. Jonathan FLIPS across the room, incredibly, still holding one of his crossbows. He lands with style, brings up the crossbow and shoots the remaining vamp. It DUSTS.

8

CEMETERY - NIGHT

8

Jonathan, looking immaculate and unruffled, leads his dusty troops up the stairs out of the crypt.

JONATHAN

Buffy, you were great.

BUFFY

I let one get by me. I could do better.

JONATHAN

You're fine. It's not like you have to do this alone, you know.

As Jonathan reaches the top of the stairs and steps out into the cemetery, FLASHBULBS POP... we REVEAL a small clump of photographers who take pictures of Jonathan (not the others). They finish and scurry off. Jonathan and the others don't react -- apparently this happens all the time.

XANDER

We knocked 'em dead.

(realizing)

Which they already were...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW
(helpfully)
We knocked 'em deader.

ANYA
They weren't very organized. If they'd just all rushed at Buffy they could've killed her right away.

BUFFY
Oh, thanks, Anya. That's not gonna keep me awake all night.

JONATHAN
Vampires only form nests to make hunting easier. They're not big on the cooperation. They like to hang out, all creepy and alone in the shadows. Don't you agree, Spike?

Jonathan turns his head sharply, looking into the shadows right next to Buffy. SPIKE steps out. Buffy jumps a little, she hadn't realized Spike was there. Everyone backs away from Jonathan and Spike who circle each other warily, their eyes hard.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

SPIKE
I live here. And I wasn't exactly pining for a noisy visit from Wonder-Jonathan and his fluffy battle kittens.

Angered, Buffy steps toward Spike.

BUFFY
You think that up with all the time you spend not being able to bite people?

JONATHAN
Careful. He's still pretty dangerous.

SPIKE
Yeah, back off, Betty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY

It's Buffy, you big bleached...
 (can't find the right
 word)
 Stupid guy.

Buffy backs off -- not quite the confrontational Slayer we know.

JONATHAN

You're a powerful demon with a black heart, Spike. And the second you're feeling bitey again, well, let's just say before you even sniff out your first victim, you'll be pretty indistinguishable from... oh say... instant soup mix.

Jonathan walks off, leading his group.

SPIKE

(called after)
 You're a bleeding idiot, you are, Jonathan. Cuz you'll be the first victim and you'll be stone dead before you hit the ground!
 (then, to himself,
 proudly)
 I got a black heart, I do.

9

TARA'S ROOM - DAY (DAY 2)

9

TARA and Willow sit crosslegged on Tara's bed, talking while they cut photos out of magazines.

WILLOW

Next thing I know, this crazed vamp's like, running right at me. And I know if it gets past me, there's no telling who's in danger next--

TARA

Come on, you have fun, admit it. Livin' the Scooby life.

WILLOW

I was trying for a kind of stoic bravery. But, yeah. I mean it was wicked exciting, with the ceiling coming in and everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Willow and Tara are taping the pictures onto the wall over the bed. From our angle it's hard to make out the subject of the photos.

TARA

(off picture)

Oh, that's a cute one.

(then)

And Buffy? She was okay?

WILLOW

She was great. Twang-poof.

(off Tara's look)

That was the sound. Crossbow, vampire dust. She thinks she should've done better, but Jonathan was there, so it didn't matter.

TARA

I kinda meant personally. I mean, that whole thing with Faith, that pretty much freaked me out and I was just sensing it from a distance.

WILLOW

Oh. Well, yeah. I know she's not over the thing with Riley sleeping with Faith. You know what I mean-- Faith's insides, in Buffy's outsides, when her insides were out.

ANGLE: THE GIRLS WITH THE WALL BEHIND THEM

For the first time we see that all the photos are of Jonathan and that they form a huge collage.

TARA

I hope they'll be okay.

WILLOW

I'm sure it'll blow over. They're probably all with the smoochies right now.

10

RILEY'S ROOM - DAY (DAY 2)

10

Buffy sits on Riley's bed while he, shirtless, his side still lightly bandaged, stands and shoots nerf basketballs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The poster on the wall of his room has been replaced with A LAKERS POSTER FEATURING JONATHAN, IN UNIFORM, MAKING AN IMPRESSIVE SHOT.

RILEY

I'm feeling better. A lot stronger. I mean, I'm no Jonathan, but I'm doing okay.

BUFFY

Are you... You're not--

RILEY

What?

BUFFY

You know, eating the Initiative's technicolor food of strongness.

RILEY

No. Of course not. I'd never want to go through that again.

BUFFY

Right.

Riley goes to sit on the bed next to Buffy. She stands up and moves away. Not an obvious snub, just nervous fidgeting. She picks up one of the basketballs, shoots and misses.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You'd think I could do that. Guess it takes different muscles than, you know, demon beheading.

He stands, moves to her.

RILEY

You just need a few pointers.

He puts another basketball in her hand, stands behind her, positions her arms. They're very close... his chest to her back.

BUFFY

(nervous)

Now, if they made Slaying a competitive sport, that's when I'd have a shot. There could be... you know... speed staking, and, um... figure staking...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

His tutoring turns into an embrace... arms around her gently, leaning his head down to press the side of face against her hair.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Not very fair to the non-Slayers, though, I suppose, since I'm the only one. Or... well, not the only one. But... Suddenly very uncomfortable with the closeness, Buffy twists out of his grasp. He grunts, grabs his injured side.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Oh! I'm sorry!

RILEY

No... I'm... I'm fine. Great.

BUFFY

I... um... You know what? I don't think this is my game. I've gotta... I've gotta go.

She exits. Riley looks after her, helplessly, not sure how to fix what's wrong between them.

11 STREET - DAY (DAY 2)

11

It's later and Buffy and Jonathan walk along a Sunnydale street. (NOTE: in this and other scenes with extras, a few of them will be wearing T-Shirts that say things like

"JONATHAN ON TOUR, 1997," "MY PARENTS MET JONATHAN AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY T-SHIRT," "JONATHANAPALOOZA" AND "I SURVIVED THE 5K JON-A-THON".)

BUFFY

It's all Faith's fault. She's like poison. No, worse, like acid that eats through everything. Or maybe a bomb. The point is, everything's going great with Riley and then she comes along and messes it all up.

JONATHAN

Buffy, you know what I think? I don't think this is about you being angry with Faith. I think you're angry with Riley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jonathan holds eye-contact with Buffy while he quickly signs an autograph for a FAN.

BUFFY

Riley?

JONATHAN

Sure. I mean, it just seems to me like you have this amazing connection with him. And then at the one moment when it matters most, he looks into your eyes and he doesn't even see it's not you looking back at him.

BUFFY

Oh. But... but he couldn't have known. I mean, you don't just say, "hey, that's not your body. Get out of that body with your hands up."

JONATHAN

I know you know that. But you have to believe it. Buffy, if any part of you is blaming Riley for what happened, well then, it seems like there's a part of you that kind of needs to forgive him.

While Buffy absorbs that, a high-school-aged girl approaches Jonathan, holding a book. This is KAREN. Karen never looks at Buffy.

KAREN

You're Jonathan Levinson. Oh my God. My name is Karen and I think you're... you're wonderful. Oh my god.

JONATHAN

Hi Karen. Thank you. Is that my book...? I could...

KAREN

Yeah. Please. I didn't wanna bother you... It's Karen with a 'K'.

Jonathan signs her COPY OF HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, "OH, JONATHAN!" Buffy and Jonathan walk again, leaving Karen looking at the autograph.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN (CONT'D)
(called after)
Thank you! So much! Thanks!

JONATHAN
What do you think, Buff? If I'm
wrong, smack me. Karen-with-a-K
will lend you a book and it's
pretty heavy.

Buffy smiles.

BUFFY
Okay, look, what if I have been
blaming him? And now I want to get
past it. What, what if it's too
late? What if, after all this,
what if he doesn't want me anymore?

JONATHAN
I don't think that's true. Buffy,
this may not be the easiest thing
in the world, but you guys are
special together. That's worth a
little hard work.

BUFFY
Yes. I... Thank you, Jonathan.

Jonathan is approached by another fan, a BUSTY YOUNG WOMAN in a low-cut top. Jonathan reaches for something to sign, but she indicates she wants him to sign her chest. Jonathan is starting to comply, when Buffy thinks of something.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Wait, I don't know how to talk to
him. How do I, how do I make it
okay again?

LOW ANGLE ON: JONATHAN

From this angle we can see that towering over him is a HUGE BILLBOARD FEATURING A SMILING JONATHAN HOLDING A NIKE RUNNING SHOE. No ad copy is visible, but Jonathan says, gently, encouragingly:

JONATHAN
Just do it.

12 INITIATIVE - NIGHT (DAY 2)

12

Riley stands next to GRAHAM among a group of soldiers at a briefing in the Initiative. They stand around a central table and listen to a briefing conducted by COLONEL HAVILAND, the uniformed new head of the Initiative. He's a naturally authoritative man, but he's trying his best to smile and sound like everyone's best friend.

COLONEL HAVILAND

Looks like there's still a few of you whom I haven't met yet. So let me introduce myself. My name is Colonel George Haviland, commanding officer here until such time as the facility-review is completed. Now, this review does not mean that our primary mission has changed in any way. Recovery of the hostile known as Adam is still our first and more important job. We've had setbacks, but they've been learning experiences and we're closer than ever to fulfilling our mission. To this end I've asked our tactical consultant here to address us today. Mr. Levinson...

Jonathan steps into frame for the first time.

JONATHAN

Thank you, Colonel.

He strides to the table and unfurls a large ELECTRONIC DESIGN SCHEMATIC onto it with a clean and efficient gesture.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Good evening, gentlemen.

Graham and Riley have a hushed exchange:

RILEY

Now we'll get some action.

GRAHAM

Yeah. I don't think I can take many more "learning experiences."

JONATHAN

Men, before we can locate Adam, we need to understand him better.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

And there's something that has bothered me almost from the start.

(pause for effect)

He doesn't eat. We have known him to kill, but never to eat the kill. So I pulled some of Professor Walsh's original design schematics. And I found something. His power source is not biological at all.

Jonathan points at something on the schematics.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

It's here. The design attempts to hide it, but I believe it's a small reservoir of Uranium 235.

RILEY

Sir? How long will it last?

JONATHAN

Essentially, forever. Longer than the life-span of the planet. It also means that cutting off his head is meaningless. Killing Adam is going to involve, at the very least, a squad of men with blowtorches and radiation suits.

Alarmed, the men exchange looks. Jonathan waits to make sure his words have sunk in before he gets to the practical part of his talk:

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

But first, we have to find him. The uranium is encased in lead sheeting. This'll make it hard to track Adam even once I've equipped you all with Geiger counters. But I think it's our best bet. Let's talk search quadrants. This is a well-trained group and I believe in you. Trust me, we're just about ready to take this guy by surprise.

13

JONATHAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

13

It's the beautiful home from the teaser. Karen, the autograph-seeking girl, stands outside, training her binoculars through the windows. She lowers them and paces, practicing the following:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

Hello Jonathan. I don't know if you remember me-- Hi. It's me Karen. Hi. Sorry about coming to your house like this-- Hello. It's Karen. Remember me?

She raises the binocs again.

KAREN (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Where are you at, anyway? Are you like, never at home?

ANGLE: VIEW THROUGH THE BINOCs

A magnified view of a window is suddenly obscured -- goes to total black.

KAREN

Lowers the binocs to see a MONSTER standing directly in front of her. It is a hunched nightmare, supporting itself on thick forearms that end in claws. It's covered with clumps of thin hair and scabs and acne-like pustules. It also has a distinctive symbol on its forehead. The Monster ROARS.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

A14 EXT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS (DAY 2)

A14

KAREN SCREAMS and stumbles back away from the MONSTER. It rears up and smashes Karen against the window of the house with one of its heavy arms. She slides to the ground and it pins her there. Terrified, she hits it with the binoculars and manages to scramble free. It slashes at her with a claw, tearing her shirt and cutting her arm. She runs, almost falls, and finally gets away.

14 INITIATIVE - NIGHT (DAY 2)

14

After the briefing, the troops have dispersed. Riley and Jonathan, left alone, lean against the table, talking intently. A high-powered rifle lies on the table.

RILEY

She's not the only one feeling that way. I feel like I should've known. I feel terrible.

Jonathan is tying a piece of cloth loosely around his neck.

JONATHAN

She's ready to forget it. I think you'd better be ready, too.

RILEY

I don't know. I mean... I don't know if she's really ever gonna forget it. Every time I try to touch her...

JONATHAN

She's scared.

RILEY

Scared of me?!

Jonathan picks up the rifle and does something to it casually. (snapping the stock into place?)

JONATHAN

More like, scared of what you're thinking about her.

RILEY

What? What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

She knows that Faith is...
experienced.

Jonathan loads the weapon.

RILEY

What are you saying. Experienced?
Oh God. Does she think I'd...
what? That I'd be comparing? She
knows she's the one I... I care
about.

JONATHAN

Have you let her know that?

RILEY

I think I -- haven't I?

Jonathan smiles and pulls the cloth up over his eyes -- a
blindfold.

JONATHAN

I'm sure you'll find a way to let
her know.

Jonathan raises the rifle, ready to shoot. Widen to reveal
three Initiative soldiers standing some distance away, apples
balanced on their heads.

15

THE BRONZE - NIGHT

15

Drums pound. A band plays on stage. Willow and Tara are
among the dancing couples. Buffy, Riley, Xander and Anya
share a table. Buffy and Riley look ill at ease as Xander
and Anya squabble:

ANYA

I did not.

XANDER

Last night. You said "Jonathan."

ANYA

It was a moan.

XANDER

Fine. You moaned "Jonathan."

ANYA

Nuh-uh. It was like "aaaah."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Maybe it was "aaaaanathan," still
not fluffing up the ol' ego.

Riley leans over toward Buffy, their words unheard by the still-squabbling Xander and Anya. He tries to get a conversation started:

RILEY

They're quite a couple, aren't
they?

BUFFY

If it turns into a fistfight, I've
got a fifty on Anya.

RILEY

I wonder if they'll last.

A little startled, Buffy looks at Riley, wondering the same thing about them. Riley looks away, aware the conversation got away from him. Buffy decides the time has come to have the talk:

BUFFY

Riley... I... think...
(chickening out)
Willow's having a good time.

RILEY

Uh-huh. I haven't really talked
much to her friend yet.

BUFFY

Tara. She's nice.

RILEY

Uh-huh.

Just then, the band plays a little fanfare, cutting them off. Buffy and Riley look relieved. Jonathan, wearing a tux, steps into the spotlight. The place erupts in applause. Girls crowd around the stage at Jonathan's feet. Willow and Tara return to the table to watch. Jonathan signals to someone offstage who tosses him a microphone. Jonathan catches it without looking.

JONATHAN

Good evening everyone. This song
is dedicated to some friends of
mine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JONATHAN(CONT'D)

A very special couple who have been going through a tough time.

The music swells and Jonathan sings. (An old standard: "More Than You Know" or "The Very Thought of You" or "You Made Me Love You"). Buffy is surprised when Riley stands and offers his hand.

RILEY

Please. She takes it and follows him out onto the dance floor.

ON THE FLOOR:

As she looks at Riley, all sounds fall away except for Jonathan's voice. He opens his arms. She hesitates, then steps into them. They dance. After a while:

RILEY (CONT'D)

Buffy, I want you to know--

BUFFY

Do we have to have the talk? No talk. More dance.

RILEY

I just want to say I'm sorry and that it's only you that I want--

BUFFY

I know. I know all of that.

RILEY

You do? Since when?

BUFFY

Since you put your arms around me.

She lays her head on his shoulder and his arms tighten around her. It really is finally okay.

AT THE TABLE:

Willow and Tara look on as the song ends:

TARA

Looks like the crisis is over.

WILLOW

Good thing. Finding new boyfriends for her is exhausting. I don't know if I've got another one in me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TARA
 (as the band starts up
 again)
 Oh my God. He's gonna do something
 off the new album.

The band begins to play a zippy SWING NUMBER. (Something like "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" or "Take the A Train.") Jonathan picks up A TRUMPET and launches into it with smokin' intensity. The crowd goes crazy -- dancers are swinging and Jonathan's horn is wailing...

CLOSE ON ANYA:

Her eyes are locked on Jonathan. Without moving:

ANYA
 Xander?

WIDEN TO REVEAL: XANDER

He is similarly transfixed.

XANDER
 Yeah?

ANYA
 Let's go have sex now.

Xander never takes his eyes off Jonathan.

XANDER
 Yeah. Okay.

The two of them head for the door, still looking at Jonathan. They have just left when KAREN bursts into the room, her arm bloodied, her shirt torn, tears streaming down her face. She stumbles toward the stage, bumping into some patrons, including Buffy. Buffy reaches out, tries to stop her.

BUFFY
 What happened to you? Can I help?

But Karen pushes past Buffy, her eyes fixed on Jonathan. Jonathan waves the band to silence. The room falls quiet except for Karen's sobs. Jonathan jumps down from the stage. He takes her hand.

JONATHAN
 (gently)
 Karen? That's your name isn't it?
 I signed my book for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks at him with blank, hopeless eyes.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Tell me what hurt you, Karen. I
can help.

16 JONATHAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

16

Buffy, Riley approach the place by Jonathan's house where Karen was attacked. Jonathan (still wearing his Tux) trails behind, his arm around the still-shaking Karen. Three COPS are there when Buffy and Riley step up.

BUFFY

(to a cop)

What's going on? Why are you here?

Jonathan and Karen arrive. The Cop ignores Buffy, turns to Jonathan.

COP

Mr. Levinson. Your burglar alarm went off at the station. One of the window sensors. When we saw it was your house I thought I'd better come down in person...

JONATHAN

That's all right, Sergeant. I have it under control.

COP

Of course sir. Glad to see you're all right, sir.

The Cops exit and Jonathan starts examining the trampled ground where the broken binoculars still lie.

RILEY

(to Karen, re: Buffy and
Jonathan)

Don't worry. These two are great. They'll find the thing that did this.

KAREN

(to Buffy)

I'm so glad.

Buffy smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Well, that's what I do--

KAREN

I'm just so glad he's here. He'll make it okay.

Buffy tries to hide her hurt at having been snubbed twice in this scene alone. Jonathan finishes his examination of the site and joins them. He puts a gentle hand on Karen's arm.

JONATHAN

Karen, I know you're scared, but I need to hear your description again.

KAREN

It was ugly. Big ugly. All bent over sort of, with these huge arms, and, and, like scabs and stuff.

JONATHAN

That must have been very frightening. I'm so sorry you--

KAREN

Oh! I forgot! It had a mark.

JONATHAN

A mark?

KAREN

On its forehead. Like a symbol.

Riley takes a pen and small notebook from his pocket and hands it to Karen. She draws the mark. Jonathan looks at it. And for the first time, we see Jonathan react with anything other than perfect cool. He blinks and hesitates.

JONATHAN

Well. This is a clue.

Buffy notices the hesitation.

BUFFY

Jonathan?

Jonathan seems to recover, snapping back to his "normal" self. He folds up the sketch, tucks it into his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JONATHAN

I know this thing. Not a demon,
just a monster. Not much more than
an animal. Sticks to the woods,
usually doesn't come near people.

BUFFY

But it did this time. So it might
again. We can patrol.

JONATHAN

Actually, I think Karen simply
startled it --
(to Karen, comforting)
Probably more afraid of you than
you were of it.
(to Buffy)
I'll patrol, but you don't have to
worry about it. I can handle it on
my own. Now, let's see about
getting Karen a ride home...

His voice grows more distant as we move to:

ANGLE: EDGE OF THE SCENE

Someone leans casually against a tree, watching the entire
scene from the shadows. A demon we've never seen before.
Let's call him JAPE. He could almost pass for human except
for his RED PUPIL-LESS EYES. He smirks at the proceedings.

17 LIBRARY - NIGHT 17

To establish. One light burns deep inside the building.

18 LIBRARY 18

A dead and eviscerated LIBRARIAN lies on the tile floor.
Flies are heard buzzing faintly. Adam sits nearby at a table.
He has surrounded himself with a media feast: open books are
piled in front of him and three computer monitors flicker in
front of him, displaying data and pictures. He absorbs all
the information. PICTURES OF JONATHAN DOMINATE THE MONITORS:
JONATHAN ACCEPTING AWARDS, HOSTING GAME SHOWS, ADDRESSING THE
NATION. Jape steps into frame behind Adam.

JAPE

Guess what? There's something new
in town.

ADAM

That's true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAPE

Attacked a girl. Big arms, mark on the forehead. Not the girl, the Monster. Sounds like a big sack'a ugly to me, but these things are notoriously relative, you know what I mean?

Jape is absently flipping through some of Adam's books, rumpling and tearing the pages with what we now see are LITTLE HOOVES.

ADAM

It's difficult for you, isn't it? Those awkward little hooves. Sometimes it's probably so hard you wish you didn't have to go on.

Jape pulls back from the books.

JAPE

I'm okay.

Jape looks at the monitors, sees the images of Jonathan.

JAPE (CONT'D)

He was there. Jonathan.

Adam looks directly at Jape, interested for the first time.

ADAM

Jonathan. Tell me. Who is he?

JAPE

You're joking, right? Jonathan is Jonathan.

(points at the monitors)

Look.

ADAM

The films lie.

Adam hits a switch and the monitors die.

ADAM (CONT'D)

None of this is real. He has altered the world. Things are unreal. It's intriguing, but it's wrong.

JAPE

Feels okay to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Adam looks away again, no longer interested in Jape. He picks up a book.

ADAM

You are under his spell like the others. I may be the only one who stands immune.

JAPE

Yeah? How swell for you. So whatcha gonna do? Maybe if you kill Jonathan it all goes back.

ADAM

Probably. But I don't feel like killing him yet. He can die later with everyone else.

(afterthought)

And Jape -- I don't think you should employ sarcasm with me. I've never seen what's inside one of you and you know how I get when I'm curious.

19 JONATHAN'S STUDY - NIGHT 19

Jonathan, wearing an expensive silk robe, stands at his marble mantelpiece and stares into a roaring fire.

20 JONATHAN'S BEDROOM 20

A tasteful and plush bed. On it lounges a lovely Swedish woman, INGA. She is also tasteful and plush.

INGA

Jonathan! Are you coming to bed?

Another woman enters frame. Inga's identical twin ILSA. She stops flossing her teeth and also calls out:

ILSA

It's getting late.

21 JONATHAN'S STUDY 21

JONATHAN

I'll be right there.

Jonathan slips off his silk robe and heads toward the bedroom. ON THE BACK OF HIS LEFT SHOULDER WE SEE THE SAME MARK THAT THE MONSTER HAD.

22

STREET - NIGHT

22

Buffy, Willow and Tara are walking home.

WILLOW

I'm glad you're okay. Everyone in the Bronze was pretty freaked out after you all left.

TARA

So I guess you have to go fight this thing, huh?

WILLOW

All the weapons are at Giles', it won't take long--

BUFFY

No go.

WILLOW

Did you just go no go?

BUFFY

Jonathan did. Said it's some kind of brainless beastie. He's gonna take care of it himself.

WILLOW

Oh. Cool.

BUFFY

It was a little... I don't know. For a second I thought he looked... like... scared.

WILLOW

Um, Buffy, this is Jonathan. You know he doesn't get scared. You talked about it when you gave him the Class Protector Award at the Prom.

BUFFY

Right.

They reach the entrance to Tara's dorm.

TARA

(indicating the path)

Um-- my exit. Willow, I'll see you tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

Okay.

Tara starts to walk away. As she goes, Willow puts a hand on Tara's shoulder, lets it drift down Tara's arm, gives her hand a warm squeeze before they part. Willow and Buffy walk on.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

So. I saw you and Riley, with the dancing.

BUFFY

Mmm. It was a really great dance, you know? For the first time I felt like Faith wasn't there. Like no one was there but us.

23

HALLWAY - NIGHT

23

Tara heads alone down a dark hall from a side door toward the commons area. The hall is scary around her and the commons promises safety ahead. She hears something behind her and she walks faster.

But she's misjudged the direction of the danger. The Monster steps out from around a corner in front of her and she finds herself face-to-face with it. It reaches out with one of its massive forearms and swats her to the ground, face-down. It pummels her with its arms, tearing at her with its claws. It rakes a long cut across her lower back and another down the back of her leg. It looks like she's going to be torn apart.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

24 HALLWAY / COMMONS - NIGHT 24

Tara SCREAMS and resists, tearing away and scrambling down the hall. She can see the commons just ahead. She half-crawls, half-runs for the commons, making it there just in time to see a JANITOR DISAPPEAR UP THE STAIRS, TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS AS HE GOES. She starts to yell, but the Monster knocks her to the floor and she gasps for breath.

TARA
(raggedly, in Latin)
Confound the senses and charge the
air. Mist engulfs. Mind is
fogged.

A burst of smoke forms around her hands. She points at the monster with a shaking finger and the smoke streams out to surround it. The Monster ROARS, confused. Tara drags herself away from it, to a closed door labelled "Janitorial supplies." She opens the door, crawls in, and just manages to close the door. Then he is at it, battering it fiercely.

25 CLOSET 25

A small dark space. Tara huddles in the corner, injured and frightened. Her face is bruised and she clutches her bleeding leg. The Monster can still be heard POUNDING AT THE DOOR.

DISSOLVE TO:

26 TARA'S ROOM - MORNING (DAY 3) 26

The pounding becomes an URGENT KNOCKING at Tara's door. Willow hurries to answer it. She opens it to reveal Buffy.

BUFFY
Willow, what's going on? I got
here as fast as I could.

Willow steps aside, REVEALING Tara, curled up on her own bed, trembling and bloodied, her clothing torn.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Oh my god.

Buffy and Willow go to Tara's side. Willow sits on the floor next to the bed, and holds Tara's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

(upset)

She's going to be okay, but she's terrified.

BUFFY

What happened? What did this?

Willow is upset, off on her own track.

WILLOW

Someone found her in the janitor's closet about an hour ago. I think she was there all night. All alone.

Willow is about to cry.

BUFFY

Tara, what did this?

TARA

(weakly)

Big thing. Big arms. Sort of... pimply.

BUFFY

Pimply? Like with pimples?

TARA

And it had a thing on it's head. Like a Greek letter only not.

Buffy freezes. She picks up a piece of paper from the nightstand, quickly draws the Monster's mark. She holds it up for Tara.

BUFFY

This? Was it this?

Tara looks at it... nods. Buffy sits down on a chair -- hit hard by the information. Willow still sits on the floor next to Tara, holding the injured girl's hand.

WILLOW

Buffy? Jonathan said we were safe! Jonathan said it.

BUFFY

I guess... I guess he made a mistake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLOW

He doesn't make mistakes. Remember the SATs? He got a perfect score and then he recreated the original proof of Fermat's last theorem in the margins around the answer bubbles!

BUFFY

(confused)

You're right. He doesn't make mistakes.

27 SUNNYDALE STREET - DAY (DAY 3)

27

Buffy walks and thinks. She doesn't even look at the posters and the marquee of the Sun Cinema, which is showing "BEING JONATHAN LEVINSON." She doesn't look at the health food store with its display of "JONATHAN-SHAPED CHEWABLE VITAMINS". She doesn't look at the two kids sitting on a bench outside the store playing with their JONATHAN ACTION FIGURES.

KID

I crush you with my super-Jonathan blaster!

Then,

TIGHT ON BUFFY

As she walks along one of those rough wood walls that surround construction sites. Behind her we may get glimpses of posters, but not enough to see clearly. DEEP IN THOUGHT, Buffy passes by them. She walks slower. Then stops.

CUT WIDER

Buffy is small in the frame now and we see the whole wall. Identical posters stretch out in front of her and behind her past the edges of the frame. Each one shows JONATHAN'S FACE AND THE WORDS "JONATHAN.COM." At last, she looks at them, lets herself really see them.

28 XANDER'S BASEMENT

28

Buffy faces Anya across the doorway at the base of the outside stairs.

ANYA

Xander's not here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Oh.

They stand there for a beat.

ANYA

You're not going away. Why aren't you going away?

BUFFY

Well, I kind of wanted to look at some of Xander's stuff...

ANYA

Oh.

(practiced and flat)

Please come in, make yourself at home. And so on.

Buffy enters. Anya flops down on the sofa, picks up her copy of "Oh, Jonathan!" and reads, mouthing the words softly to herself. Buffy wanders around the room, looking at Xander's collection of Jonathanabilia: JONATHAN COLLECTABLE CARDS. A JONATHAN

MUSIC-CD TITLED "JONATHAN AND BRITNEY, TOGETHER FOR XMAS."

A JONATHAN COMIC BOOK IN A PLASTIC SLEEVE - we glimpse the title "TARGET: JONATHAN."

Buffy crosses to the sofa, and sits down with Anya.

ANYA (CONT'D)

Oh, you're still here. Um... that's nice.

BUFFY

Can I ask you something? Does it ever seem, I don't know, weird to you that Jonathan is so good at everything?

ANYA

He's Jonathan.

She goes back to her book. Buffy takes the book from her, sets it aside.

ANYA (CONT'D)

Hey! I was just at the part where he invents the internet!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Anya, he fights better than I do.
And I'm the Slayer. The Slayer --
that's supposed to mean something,
right?

ANYA

Oh. Um... buck up, you. You kill
the best. Go you. Kill kill.

BUFFY

Actually, not needing the
validation. But, thanks. It's
just... he's too perfect and... I
don't know...

A beat.

ANYA

So I can have my book back--

BUFFY

Anya, when you were a demon, you
granted wishes, right?

ANYA

Vengeance wishes on ex-boyfriends.
I wish he was a dog, or ugly, or in
love with President McKinley or
something. Also, there was a
penile wart curse -- very popular.

BUFFY

But someone could wish the whole
world to be different? That's
possible?

ANYA

Sure. Alternate realities. You
could have, like, a world without
shrimp. Or with, you know, nothing
but shrimp. You could even make a
freaky world where Jonathan's some
kind of not- perfect mouth-breather
if that's what's blowing your skirt
up tonight. Just don't ask me to
live there.

BUFFY

Oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANYA

Now. If you'll just give me back
my book you can be on your way
somewhere else.

Buffy, deep in thought, shoves the book at her.

BUFFY

Here.

29

GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

29

Buffy is leading a Scooby-gang meeting. Giles, Xander,
Willow, Riley and Anya are there.

BUFFY

I'm just saying it doesn't make
sense. I mean, how did he star in
The Matrix if he never left town?
And how exactly did he graduate
from med school? He's only
eighteen years old!

XANDER

Effective time management?

RILEY

I'm sorry, Buffy. I just don't get
what you're trying to say.

XANDER

Yeah. When is Jonathan gonna get
here and start the meeting, anyway?

BUFFY

This is the meeting.

WILLOW

This is the meeting?

BUFFY

Well, I wanted to kind of... see if
anyone else thinks Jonathan's, kind
of, too perfect.

XANDER

No. He's not. He's just perfect
enough. He crushed the bones of the
Master, he blew up a big snake made
out of Mayor, and he coached the
U.S.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER (CONT'D)

Women's Soccer Team to a stunning World Cup victory. We saw him doing those things!

BUFFY

But see, I'm not sure we can trust our memories. Anya, tell them about the alternate universes.

ANYA

Oh. Okay, well, say you really liked shrimp a lot. Or, we could say that you didn't like shrimp at all. "Blah, I wish there weren't any shrimp," you say to yourself--

BUFFY

No, no. She's not saying it right. I just think he did something so he's manipulating the world, and we're all, you know, like pawns.

ANYA

Or prawns.

BUFFY

Anya! Stop that! I'm trying to do something serious here!

GILES

Buffy, I think I know what's going on. You're the Slayer. In any other situation, you'd be the strongest. You'd be the leader. I think that's maybe making it a little hard for you.

Buffy is almost crying from the frustration.

BUFFY

You think I want to do this? I don't want to think there's anything wrong with him! I'd be nothing without him!

She takes a deep breath, gets herself under control

BUFFY (CONT'D)

(calmly)

Listen. The other day, I think I saw Jonathan ignore evidence. I think he let Tara get hurt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES

(concerned)

I didn't know about this. How did he ignore evidence?

BUFFY

This Monster has a mark on it. Jonathan saw it and he kind of... blinked.

XANDER

He blinked. The man moistens his eyeballs and we're having a meeting about it.

WILLOW

Buffy, I don't think I want to know this. If he could do this... I don't want to know.

BUFFY

Willow, I'm sorry. But Jonathan knows something about that Monster. He was reacting to the mark--

Wait. They wait a long beat as she thinks. Then another. Finally:

ANYA

How long do we usually wait for these things?

BUFFY

I remember something. Giles, do you have a Jonathan Swimsuit Calendar?

GILES

No.
(a beat)
Yes.

He opens a drawer, pulls out the Jonathan Swimsuit Calendar.

GILES (CONT'D)

(an explanation)

It has lots of room to write on the days.

Buffy pages through it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BUFFY
 (quickly)
 No. No. Wow. No. There!

She stops on a revealing photograph of Jonathan in which part of the mark on his shoulder is visible. Willow gasps.

WILLOW
 Oh!

ANYA
 Yeah. Pretty darn lickable.

WILLOW
 The other kind of oh. That's it.
 That's what Tara drew.

RILEY
 Why would Jonathan have the same
 mark as the Monster?

XANDER
 No! Look, that's a flower or, or a
 name. It might say... Bob?

GILES
 Xander, as hard as it is to accept,
 Buffy may be on to something--

JONATHAN (O.S.)
 Is this a private conversation?

They all turn. Jonathan stands casually near the door...

JONATHAN
 Or can Mister July sit in?

BUFFY
 (caught)
 Jonathan!

WILLOW
 We were, we were just...

ANYA
 Buffy was just saying how you had a
 Monster cut up Willow's friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BUFFY

(shy in front of Jonathan)
That's not exactly-- It's just,
the mark. You said it was safe and
it wasn't.

Buffy sits down, allowing Jonathan to stand where she was,
effectively taking over control of the meeting.

JONATHAN

Everyone. Buffy is right.

General disbelief.

XANDER

No!

JONATHAN

Xander, yes. I'm sorry. I do have
a history with the creature, the
Monster. The problem is, every
time I face it, my mind becomes,
sort of, confused. There's some
kind of power it possesses.

XANDER

Oh! Oh! He's your Kryptonite!

Jonathan smiles sadly.

JONATHAN

Maybe. I just know it takes all my
energy to try to fight the
confusion. That's why I had his
mark tattooed on my shoulder. So I
wouldn't underestimate him next
time. But it didn't work, and
people got hurt. It's terrible.
But I swear to you all, it wasn't
malicious.

RILEY

This does explain everything.

XANDER

I knew he wouldn't do anything on
purpose.

WILLOW

Me too. And that whole alternate
universe things was just freaky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

 BUFFY
Yeah... but...

 GILES
Buffy, I think you need to let this
drop. Jonathan, we owe you an
apology.

 BUFFY
 (unconvinced)
Yes. Sorry.

The camera stays close on Buffy thinking as the conversation
continues:

 ANYA
Can I see that calendar, cause
winter and fall went by so fast...

Buffy makes a decision.

 BUFFY
Let's go after the Monster right
now. You and me, Jonathan.

Jonathan starts to look a little strained.

 JONATHAN
I'm sure it's left town by now.
That's been its pattern.

 BUFFY
Let's try anyway.

 JONATHAN
 (forced)
Sure. Let's do that.

30 CEMETERY - NIGHT

30

Jonathan and Buffy are approaching Spike's crypt when he
steps out to meet them.

 SPIKE
Oh, look. Jonathan. Taking the
little sidekick out for a walk, are
we?

 BUFFY
Shut up, Spike.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

Ooh. Semi-harsh language from Betty. You're feisty when the big guy's standing beside you.

Spike runs a finger down the side of Buffy's face, then runs it caressingly across her throat.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Someday, Sweet Slayer, I'd love to take you on. See you face the evil alone for once.

Jonathan SLAPS Spikes hand away from Buffy roughly, then PUSHES SPIKE up against the crypt wall. Spike twists, helpless against Jonathan's strength.

JONATHAN

That's enough creepy small talk. We're looking for a monster.

SPIKE

Why would I know about that?

JONATHAN

Every demon in this town is gunning for you right now. So I figure you're probably keeping pretty good track of them. Big arms. Mark on its head. Have you seen it?

SPIKE

No. But then again, I'm probably lying.

Jonathan backs off and Spike rubs the back of his head.

JONATHAN

We're not getting anything out of him.

Buffy considers that for a moment. Then SHE grabs Spike and throws him up against the wall and holds him there.

SPIKE

Ow! What are you doing? You aren't supposed to do that.

Buffy leans in close, speaks softly, intimately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY

Spike, you're relying on butcher's blood right now, aren't you?

SPIKE

What are you saying?

BUFFY

Just that the butchers in this town respect Jonathan's reputation and might do him a favor.

SPIKE

You'd cut me off?

BUFFY

Spike, if you give me a reason, I'll cut you up.

SPIKE

Look, I don't know much, okay? There's some vampires got kicked out of a cave in the hills behind Brookside park. Don't know what did the kicking out, but it was prob'ly pretty big--

Jonathan and Buffy are already headed away. Spike rubs his head again.

JONATHAN

(to Buffy, a little shaky)

That was very good. Very good.

31 GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

31

Giles has the others, Xander, Riley, Anya, and Willow, helping him with research into the use of the Mark. They're flipping through dusty old books.

RILEY

(off book)

These spells -- these really work? I mean, can you really "turn your enemies inside out." Or "learn to excrete gold coins"?

ANYA

That one's not so much fun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

They work, Riley. But they take concentration, being attuned with the forces of the universe...

XANDER

Right. You can't just go
(reads)
"Librum Incendere" and expect--

XANDER'S BOOK BURSTS INTO FLAMES. He slams it shut, extinguishing it.

GILES

(weary)

Xander, don't speak Latin in front of the books.

WILLOW

Guys, this is weird. I'm not sure we should be doing this. Jonathan trusts us. We shouldn't be checking up on him.

XANDER

Yeah. I feel dirty. And not in a fun spanky way.

ANYA

It does feel wrong. Hey. I'm having moral qualms. That's new!
(decides)
I don't like 'em.

RILEY

I don't know. Buffy seemed so sure.

GILES

You know what I think?

XANDER

I know. I know. We owe it to Buffy to check out her suspicion.

GILES

No. I think that you're right. We owe it to Jonathan to respect the answer he gave us. This is ludicrous. We can't go doubting one of our own this way. It's not right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They are all closing their books. All except Willow, because she's just seen:

WILLOW

(gravely)

The Mark. It's here. It's part of an Augmentation spell. Jonathan did an Augmentation spell.

RILEY

(embarrassed)

What... um... what did he have... augmented?

WILLOW

Him. And how we see him. This spell turns the sorcerer into a, into a sort of paragon. The best of everything, everyone's ideal. But there's a drawback.

RILEY

A drawback?

XANDER

(to Riley)

That happens a lot.

Giles is reading over Willow's shoulder.

GILES

In order to balance the new force of good, the spell has to create the opposing force of evil. The worst of everything. Everyone's nightmare.

ANYA

He created the monster.

XANDER

So we're saying he did a spell that just made us think he was cool?

GILES

That seems to be the sum of it, yes.

XANDER

That is so cool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RILEY

Giles, Buffy and Jonathan are going after this nightmare thing. Are they going to be okay?

GILES

Well, it seems that the well-being of this creature is linked to Jonathan. If it dies, the spell is broken and Jonathan reverts to whatever he was before.

ANYA

(matter-of-fact)

Jonathan isn't going to want Buffy to get very far.

32

CAVE

32

Buffy and Jonathan enter a drippy creepy cave. They make their way slowly.

BUFFY

Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Uh-huh?

BUFFY

I'm so, I'm sorry about this. I really didn't mean to, you know, challenge you. I'm really proud to be your friend, and I don't want that to change.

JONATHAN

I know.

(then)

I don't think it's in here.

They walk cautiously to the edge of a deep chasm. Buffy stands near the edge, looks down into it.

ANGLE: ENDLESS CHASM (CGI)

BUFFY

Wow. Look at that. Fall down there and you'd be dead for a good long time.

Jonathan is sweating and licking his lips, looking less cool than we've ever seen him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Yeah. Don't... don't want that to happen.

It would be easy to push Buffy over. He reaches for her. His hand closes around her wrist. And he... pulls her gently back away from the edge.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Come on. We've got a Monster to fi-

-

Jonathan turns, to find himself FACE-TO-FACE with the MONSTER. It swats him to one side. Jonathan lands hard, knocked unconscious.

BUFFY

finds herself standing alone, facing the monster.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

A33 INT. GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

A33

Everyone (Giles, Willow, Xander, Anya, Riley) is sitting around, dazed and shellshocked.

WILLOW
(trying it out)
Buffy was right. Buffy was right.

ANYA
Doesn't sound very likely, does it?

RILEY
So, if this is the world he created, what's the real world like?

WILLOW
I'm scared. Everything's going to change.

GILES
Well, actually, it should be more or less the same, except that Jonathan won't be Jonathan. Not our Jonathan, anyway.

XANDER
No. No. No. No. World without sunshine! World without joy!

RILEY
But, wait. It only changes back if Buffy kills this thing, right? I mean, we could be stuck in this... wrong world forever.

XANDER
Things looking up. I mean, we're all happy here, right?
(off their looks)
You know, if she doesn't get killed.

WILLOW
Can Buffy do it? Giles, can she do it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES

I honestly don't know. She's never stood alone against that world before.

33

CAVE

33

As we left things. Jonathan lies unconscious on the cave floor. Buffy stands alone against the Monster. (NOTE: THE CRUCIAL DYNAMIC OF THIS FIGHT IS THAT JONATHAN IS A STRONG FIGHTER EVERY TIME THE MONSTER IS WINNING. JONATHAN IS WEAK AND SCARED EVERY TIME THE MONSTER IS LOSING.)

ANGLE: JONATHAN

Regaining consciousness. He looks over at:

ANGLE: BUFFY AND THE MONSTER

Buffy kicks the Monster -- not hard enough. It doesn't budge. Instead, the Monster catches Buffy with a heavy clawed arm and she falls.

ANGLE: JONATHAN

Invigorated by the Monster's momentary advantage, Jonathan flips up to his feet and helps Buffy to her feet.

BUFFY

(relieved)

Jonathan! I thought you were out. I don't want to face this alone.

JONATHAN

You may have to. Listen. I'm... I'm sort of linked to it. When you hurt the Monster, it changes me. I'm going to lose my--

The Monster charges Buffy. Buffy sweeps its feet from under it with a kick and it falls.

BUFFY

What? Lose your what?

ANGLE: JONATHAN YELPS AND RUNS AWAY

He's sweaty and freaked out and even his CLOTHES seem ruffled and ill-fitting. This guy has lost his cool.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Oh.

ANGLE: THE MONSTER

Back on its feet, looking strong. It ROARS!

ANGLE: JONATHAN

Stops running and turns around -- the Monster's strength gives him strength. Tailored and suave, he breaks a stalactite off the ceiling, brandishes it like a sword and leaps back into the fight. He strikes the Monster with it. The Monster is driven back. Triggered by the Monster's weakness, Jonathan yelps and drops the stalactite, then trips over it as he tries to run away.

ANGLE: BUFFY

She takes advantage of the Monster's current state. She moves in, hitting it with a flurry of punches, fighting with increasing confidence and style.

BUFFY

I remember this. This is good.

The Monster fights back, hitting her hard.

ANGLE: JONATHAN

Leaps to his feet... charges into the fight once more!

ANGLE: BUFFY

vaults over a stalagmite, slamming into the Monster and driving it back almost to the lip of the chasm.

ANGLE: JONATHAN

Runs screaming from the fight again. Trembling and scared, he hugs himself, huddled against the wall of the cave.

ANGLE: THE MONSTER

Lands a slashing blow that catches Buffy across the shoulder and throws her to the ground. SHE'S DANGLING ON THE EDGE OF THE CHASM, ONE ARM HANGING INTO THE VOID. The Monster presses down on her head with one massive clawed arm... threatening to crush her skull.

WIDER SHOT

Suddenly, JONATHAN GETS TO HIS FEET... AND LAUNCHES HIMSELF

INTO A HUGE FLYING TACKLE. HE HITS THE MONSTER.

Jonathan and the Monster are both carried over the edge, falling into the chasm.

ANGLE: BUFFY

lying on the edge, just manages to catch the hem of Jonathan's pants-leg between her fingers moments before we hear the bone-splintering crunch of the Monster hitting the bottom of the pit.

34 STREET, BILLBOARD - NIGHT 34

With a magical WHOOSH, and a sweeping tide of ELECTRICAL BLUE LIGHT, the world reverts to the Sunnydale we know. The billboard is swept by the line of blue fire. Now instead of Jonathan, a smiling woman holds the shoe.

A35 EXT. STREET, SUN CINEMA, NIGHT
A35

The BLUE LIGHT sweeps the marquee. "BEING JONATHAN LEVINSON" becomes plain old "BEING JOHN MALKOVICH."

B35 EXT. STREET, WALL OF POSTERS - NIGHT
B35

The BLUE LIGHT races along the wall of posters. The endless row of Jonathan faces becomes an endless row of posters advertising simply "THE BRONZE."

35 CAVE 35

Buffy is now standing at the edge of the chasm. She holds Jonathan by one ankle and he dangles limply, head by her feet.

JONATHAN
Um. Can you put me down now? I
get woozy...

36 CAMPUS 36

Buffy, Xander, Anya, Willow, Riley and Tara sit at the base of a tree on campus. Tara is still bruised, but looks otherwise recovered.

WILLOW
I can't believe we believed it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RILEY

It seemed so real.

BUFFY

In that world it was real.

ANYA

Alternate realities are neat.

XANDER

You know what I'll always remember?

RILEY

Well, the swimsuit calendar's
sticking in my mind.

(off Buffy's look)

Not in a good way.

XANDER

I'll always remember the way he
made me feel about me. Valued and
respected. Sort of tingly. And
now I'm just... empty.

BUFFY

Poor Xander, I guess he hurt you
most of all.

TARA

(raising hand)

Um...

BUFFY

Right. After Tara, of course.

RILEY

Did anyone else feel way too tall?
I felt way too tall...

As the others continue to talk, Buffy sees Jonathan standing a little distance away, loitering, trying to catch her eye. She crosses to him.

JONATHAN

I, I wasn't sure you'd come over.
People are pretty mad at me. Their
memories are gonna fade, like a
dream, but right now... I'm reading
a little anger.

BUFFY

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JONATHAN

See, after the... thing... with the bell tower and the gun? I went to some counselling. Other kids with problems. One of them had this spell. He wasn't very clear about the downside.

BUFFY

That would be the evil Monster.

JONATHAN

He glossed right over that part. Sort of mumbled. Well, anyway. I just... I just wanted to apologize. I didn't mean for it happen like that. No one was supposed to get hurt. Maybe I should tell Tara...

BUFFY

Jonathan, I get that you didn't mean it, but right now, you might not want to be around here. People are kind of mad at being, you know, the actors in your little sock puppet theater.

JONATHAN

You weren't! You weren't socks! We were friends. That was true!

BUFFY

Jonathan. It wasn't true.

JONATHAN

(a touch whiney)

But you said it. You said it!

BUFFY

It wasn't true. I mean, maybe I could be your friend, but not that way. You can't keep trying to make everything work out all at once, with some huge gesture. Things are complicated. They take time and work.

JONATHAN

Oh.

He starts to go, then turns back:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Hey... Buffy? Before I go. You remember, I gave you some advice?

BUFFY

Um... Watch out for southpaws?

JONATHAN

No. About you and Riley. It's kinda the same thing you just said to me. About things taking work.

BUFFY

I remember.

JONATHAN

Good. Because it's true. I mean, just cause I wasn't real, still the advice was good. What you have is really complicated, but it's worth it.

Buffy absorbs that.

37

RILEY'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

37

Buffy and Riley kiss on Riley's bed.

BUFFY

I'm glad we talked this all out.

RILEY

Um... we haven't talked at all.

BUFFY

Well, whatever we're doing? We're doing it great. He kisses her again.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Oh, Jonathan!

Riley reacts, startled.

FADE TO BLACK.

BUFFY (V.O.)

I was kidding.

END OF SHOW

CONTINUED: