

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

TEASER

INT. SPIKE'S LAIR - NIGHT

SPIKE has done some redecorating since we last saw his pad. Things are nicer, more stylish. He's still not happy. His newly besouled sensibilities are becoming irritated by the dankness, and grimness of his crypt. He arranges knickknacks to no avail. He rearranges a few bits of furniture. No dice.

SPIKE

Sod it!

He grabs a bottle of whiskey, wraps a blanket about his shoulders and exits.

EXT. XANDER'S PLACE - LATER

Spike marches up and rings the doorbell. After a moment, an irritated XANDER opens the front door.

XANDER

Spike? What the hell are you doing here?

SPIKE

Can't stand my old place. Was wondering if I could crash here for today. I'll be lookin' for a new place tonight.

XANDER

So you've got a soul, huh?

SPIKE

Yeah. And I think it's allergic to the old crypt.

XANDER

Bummer. Yeah, come on in. Anya hasn't moved back in yet and the place is kinda empty.

Spike produces the whiskey.

SPIKE

Care for a bit of cheer?

XANDER

Mmmm, the whiskitude. Tempting, but no, thanks. Couch is over there. I'm not even awake yet.

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Xander heads for the bedroom, but before he can close the door, Spike speaks up.

SPIKE
Hey, Xander?

XANDER
What now?

SPIKE
Just wanted to say thanks. For tonight, and - and well - for a lot of things. Thanks.

XANDER
You're welcome. Get some sleep. You look like you can use it.

SPIKE
You too. 'Night.

He takes another pull on the whiskey, lays down on the couch, and pulls the blanket over himself.

INT. XANDER'S BEDROOM - DAWN

A blade of sunlight peeks in and touches Xander's face. He jerks up in bed.

XANDER
Oh, crap!

Xander bolts down the stairs in his skivvies and we see the dawn creeping down the back of the couch toward Spike's sleeping face. Xander draws the curtains on the living room window moments before the encroaching sunlight would have stricken Spike's face. Spike continues to sleep, oblivious, while Xander wearily wanders back to his bed. He flops face down, ignoring the blankets.

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. TRAINING ROOM - LATER

Xander lies face down on the mat, having just been knocked there by BUFFY. He is now fully clothed. GILES watches.

XANDER

Ow!

BUFFY

Oh! You okay?

XANDER

Yeah. But I think the super powers are running down.

GILES

I was afraid that might happen. I do have an idea, if you're both willing.

XANDER

Let's hear it.

INT. GILES' HOUSE - LATER

Buffy and Xander sit at opposite sides of a table, arms exposed, elastic tied about the biceps. Giles holds a very large syringe attached to a hypodermic needle.

GILES

If this works as I hope, it should return some measure of your enhanced strength, speed, and other attributes. It's a much smaller dose than you received previously, but it should still have a significant effect.

BUFFY

No near-death experience required.

XANDER

Sweet.

GILES

Shall we try this, or no?

XANDER

I'm game if she is.

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BUFFY

I can always use the help. Let's do it.

Giles carefully pokes the needle into Buffy's arm, and fills the syringe with blood. He gently removes the needle, and injects the blood into Xander.

Buffy and Xander rub their arms and put on adhesive bandages. Giles cleans and sterilizes the needle and syringe, storing the whole kit in a small biohazard collection bin.

GILES

Feeling anything yet, Xander?

XANDER

Feel kinda up. Kinda energized.

BUFFY

That sounds right to me. Care to take another shot at me?

XANDER

You're on.

They all wander out.

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - SAME TIME

DAWN is at lunch. She's sitting alone atop the concrete bannister of a short staircase, people watching. She takes a swig of juice, just as a handsome young man steps down the stairs and turns to her. This is JUSTIN.

JUSTIN

Hi. I'm Justin. You're Dawn Summers, right?

He offers his hand and she shakes it.

DAWN

Yeah. Hi.

JUSTIN

Am I intruding on your lunch? I was hoping I could join you.

DAWN

Not at all. Have a seat. So, do I know you?

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CONTINUED:

JUSTIN

No. I just saw you in class, and I had to ask a friend who you are. I wanted to talk to you.

DAWN

Well, I'm flattered. What did you want to talk to me about?

JUSTIN

I was hoping you'd go out with me this weekend. Maybe to the Bronze?

DAWN

Yeah, that sounds great.

JUSTIN

Pick you up around seven tomorrow night?

DAWN

Okay, here's my address.

She writes it down on a small scrap of paper, and as she's writing, the bell rings. She finishes, and as she hands it to him, they clasp fingertips and hold for a moment.

DAWN (CONT'D)

And maybe I'll see you here for lunch tomorrow?

JUSTIN

Count me in. See you then.

They part ways, heading in opposite directions, Dawn with a big happy smile.

INT. XANDER'S PLACE - AFTERNOON

Spike sits on the sofa, a pad of paper on his lap and a pencil in his hand. He's started writing poetry again. He's several pages into the pad, and so must have been at this a while. With a growl, he tosses the pad against the door, drops the pencil on the coffee table and flops himself back against the couch.

SPIKE

No wonder I gave it up. Lotta crap. Sunrise this, rose petal that, love all over the place. Bollocks!

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He rises and stomps off toward the kitchen. Moments later Xander enters and notices as the door sweeps up the note pad. He picks it up and begins reading. He lets out a bemused grunt as he closes the door. He wanders to the couch and casts an eye about for Spike before he eases down. He's still reading when Spike enters.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, Xander. I made some fresh coffee if you're. . .

He's seen Xander reading his poetry.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Oh, bloody hell! Alright, let me have it.

Xander opens his mouth to do just that, but finds no needles at the tip of his tongue.

XANDER

Hmph. Actually, they're not bad. I mean, don't go rushing off to open mike night just yet, but they're readable.

SPIKE

Oh, thank you very much, Mr. . . Wait a minute. You don't despise them?

XANDER

Weird, huh? One question, though.

SPIKE

Yeah?

XANDER

What the hell is a vampire doing writing about a sunrise?

SPIKE

I don't know, but look; They're all over the friggin' place. Beats me.

(notices bandage)

Oh, hey, you hurt yourself?

XANDER

Nope. Little experiment of Giles'. Hoping to keep some of my super powers with donations from Buffy.

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CONTINUED: (2)

SPIKE

Yummy, yummy.

XANDER

Speaking of vampire yummys, I told Giles you were here and he figured you could use a snack.

He digs into his pockets and pulls out a couple of packets of blood.

SPIKE

Gotta love that Rupert. Thanks, Mate.

Spike perches on the arm of the sofa, quaffs his coffee in a gulp, and pours the warm blood into the warm cup. Taking a rather large swallow, he gags, and nearly sends it back up.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Oh, God!

XANDER

What's the matter? Spoiled or something?

Spike sniffs at the cup.

SPIKE

Smells alright.

He takes another, smaller sip, and reacts as a shy drinker would to a belt of whiskey.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Worse. I think I've lost my taste for it.

XANDER

Weird. What's gotten into you? Getting squeamish?

SPIKE

Something like that. It's the soul. I suppose I might be growing a conscience.

XANDER

Wow! That's great.

SPIKE

Like Hell! So far it's been a right pain in the ass.

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CONTINUED: (3)

XANDER

So why'd you do it?

SPIKE

Give you one guess.

XANDER

Right. Buffy.

SPIKE

And so far, not a scrap of thanks. Not so much as an approving nod in my direction. And now look at me. Can't even drink blood anymore. And you, gettin' along just fine on the stuff. This is a real rock bottom moment for me. Out-vamped by the bleedin' sidekick.

XANDER

Hey! I am not the sidekick. Not anymore.

SPIKE

Yeah, so long as you're full up on Slayer blood, you're not. Feels pretty good, don't it?

Xander flops back into the cushions, considering.

EXT. AN OUTDOOR CAFE NEAR THE MAGIC BOX - SAME TIME

WILLOW has enlisted the help and advice of ANYA in attempting to deal with her loss of magic powers.

WILLOW

So how did you deal with it? When you lost your powers?

ANYA

I don't know. It just sort of happened, I suppose. Like one day they were all I could think about, and the next day they didn't matter. I think Xander had a lot to do with it.

WILLOW

(fiddles with the ring)
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

I'm sorry, Willow. I didn't mean to. . .

WILLOW

It's okay. So what's the story with you two, anyway? Are you back together, or what?

ANYA

I think we're together, but it's different now. I'm a demon again, and I have so much more to lose. I mean, I like being immortal.

WILLOW

You don't say.

ANYA

I do say. In fact, I just said.

WILLOW

Do you still love him?

ANYA

Very much. I'm just not sure how much I can give up for him now. I don't know if I can become human again. Would you? I mean if you were me?

WILLOW

I think I might. But then, I've never been immortal. But Xander is as good a person as I've ever met. Tough choice, huh?

ANYA

And you love him too. Everybody loves him.

WILLOW

Of course. I've known him my whole life. He's always been here for me. But don't tell him about "everybody". His ego is doing just fine already.

ANYA

Does he still love me?

WILLOW

Absolutely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANYA

Do you love me?

WILLOW

(smiles)

Yeah. Yeah, I do.

ANYA

Am I part of the group? A real part? I mean. . .

WILLOW

Yes. Anya, you belong here.

ANYA

And if I left, would I be missed?

WILLOW

Of course you would. Are you thinking about leaving us?

ANYA

I'm thinking about all sorts of things. I feel - trapped.

WILLOW

Come here.

She scoots her chair closer to Anya and hugs her.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I can't say I know how you feel, but I promise you'll feel better with your friends than you'd feel alone.

ANYA

I hate this feeling.

WILLOW

I know.

ANYA

I never had these feelings before I was human.

WILLOW

Is that a good thing, or a bad thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANYA

I don't know. And it pisses me
off that I don't know!

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - LATER

Buffy has come to pick up Dawn. Dawn comes down the stairs with Justin.

JUSTIN

So I'll see you tomorrow night?

DAWN

Yeah. See you then.

They part ways with a meaningful glance, and Dawn heads over to Buffy.

BUFFY

And just who is that you're promising to meet tomorrow?

DAWN

That's Justin. He's taking me to the bronze tomorrow night.

BUFFY

Is that so?

DAWN

Yup.

BUFFY

Who is he? What do you know about him?

DAWN

His name's Justin, and he's a sophomore, and he's really cute.

Buffy frowns.

DAWN (CONT'D)

He's very articulate, seems intelligent. Um, he's in my second period English class. AP English, so he can't be all bad, right?

BUFFY

Just keep your eyes open, okay?

DAWN

Sure thing, mom.

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CONTINUED:

There is an awkward moment of silence between them. Dawn casts her eyes down and Buffy wraps her arm around Dawn in a sideways hug as they walk to the car. When they reach it, Buffy turns Dawn to face her and brushes away a stray lock of her hair with a pensive smile.

BUFFY

She'd be so proud of you, Dawnie.
Almost as proud as I am.

She hugs Dawn, who hugs back with no hint of injured teenage pride. They get into the car.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

He is pretty cute. Is it at least okay if I send Xander as backup? He'll give you your space, but I'd feel better if he was there.

DAWN

How's thirty feet sound?

BUFFY

So long as he's still in the room. Deal?

DAWN

Deal.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - LATER

Xander and Dawn are training together again. They're taking it easy for now, volleying back and forth with staffs.

DAWN

Xander, can I ask you a question?

XANDER

At your service.

DAWN

Do you think I'm cute?

XANDER

As a button.

DAWN

No, Captain Lame! Am I attractive?

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CONTINUED:

XANDER

Oh. In the sense that you're practically my baby sister, and in the sense that as such it's my job to bolster your self-esteem, yes.

DAWN

Oh, yeah. That was really informative. Thanks.

She jabs him in the belly with her staff.

XANDER

Ow! Dawnie, I'm so not allowed to think of you that way.

She takes a big fake swing at him.

DAWN

Okay. So pretend you don't know me. Pretend I'm just some chick. Damn it, be objective.

XANDER

Oh, yeah. Just some chick who's trying to take my head off with a big stick!

DAWN

Xander!

XANDER

Yes. You're attractive. Dawnie, you're a knockout. What's all this about?

DAWN

I have a date tomorrow night

XANDER

Like a first date? Like a first date ever? Cool! Who's the lucky guy?

DAWN

His name's Justin.

XANDER

Come on, spill. What's he like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAWN

Actually, I don't know him very well yet. He just asked me out. Out of the blue.

XANDER

Gutsy little sucker. Good for him. Nervous?

DAWN

Way nervous. And there's another thing. Buffy wants you to play chaperone. Long distance chaperone though. Line of sight kind of thing.

XANDER

I'd be honored. And you won't even know I'm there.

DAWN

Cool. Thanks. You should bring Anya. You two need to get on with the making up.

XANDER

Haven't even had your first date and you're the relationship expert?

DAWN

It doesn't take an expert, Xander. You need to spend some time in each other's company. Talk to each other. That kind of thing.

EXT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

Buffy and Xander are on patrol together. They're walking together, but as Buffy brings up this subject, she perches on a tombstone. Xander faces her.

BUFFY

So Xander, the conversation we had about the house?

XANDER

The one about burning it down? Yeah. I'm thinkin' bad idea.

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BUFFY

Yeah. I know. But I was thinking, maybe we could renovate. I mean really renovate. Strip out all the bad memories along with the wallpaper and stuff. How much do you think that would cost?

XANDER

Depends on how fast you want it done, really. I mean, we could make it an ongoing project and pay for it a little bit at a time. Or, if you mean like bring the crew in for a couple of weeks, we're talking about seven to ten thousand dollars, probably.

BUFFY

So the project thing. If it was just you being the boss, and we occupants acting as laborers, how much would you charge?

Just about now, they are set upon by a pair of vampires. They approach from behind Buffy. Xander motions for her to duck and hurtles his stake into the heart of the nearest one. As he takes a moment to marvel at the coolness of super strength, Buffy tosses him an extra stake, then spins around to grab the second vamp. She continues the spin and turns it into a throw, sending the unlucky vamp straight into Xander's outstretched stake. He gets covered in vampire dust.

XANDER

Ew. Yuck. I hate that stuff.

He brushes himself off and they continue walking. They're walking very close together now.

XANDER (CONT'D)

I think my price just doubled.

BUFFY

Come on, Xander.

XANDER

I don't know. I mean I haven't worked out friend prices yet.

BUFFY

So how's this. And hear me out. I've been thinking.

(MORE)

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CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY (CONT'D)

We could maybe add a couple of rooms and you and Anya could move in? One big happy family? And without rent, you could save up for a house of your own, for when you get around to getting married.

XANDER

She and I are definitely not there yet, but I like the renovation idea. When we get back, show me what you're thinking and tomorrow I'll crunch some numbers.

BUFFY

Thanks, Xander.

They walk quietly for a few seconds, a frown working its way onto Buffy's brow.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Xander?

XANDER

Yeah.

BUFFY

You don't think I'm overreacting? About the house?

XANDER

Huh-uh. It hasn't really felt right there since your mom died. There's so much of her personality there, but she's not there anymore. Know what I mean?

BUFFY

(very soft)

Yeah.

XANDER

I'll be glad to help.

He puts his arm around her shoulders and she wraps hers around his waist. They continue walking.

INT. GILES' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Giles is reading with a cup of tea at his side and a CD playing. There is a knock on the door.

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Giles turns down the music, and goes to the door. Taking a peek through the peep hole, he is surprised to see Spike. He opens the door.

GILES

Spike. I don't recall your ever knocking before. Pounding a few times, perhaps.

SPIKE

Evening, Rupert. I was hoping I could get your opinion on something. It's important.

GILES

I suppose. Come in. Care for a cup of tea?

SPIKE

(pause)

Yeah. Actually, that sounds great.

GILES

Will wonders never cease. Hold on a moment.

Giles moves into the kitchen and pours a second cup of tea. Spike takes a seat and waits. As he returns with the tea, Giles asks:

GILES (CONT'D)

So, what is of such great import.

SPIKE

It's my soul. It's not exactly working out. I can't sleep through the day, I'm writing poetry again, lost my taste for human blood; I'm a wreck.

GILES

I'm afraid I've got very little experience with this. Perhaps we should place a call to Angel?

SPIKE

No. I think I know what I need to do. My soul and the demon, they just don't get along.

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CONTINUED: (2)

GILES

So you want to be rid of your troublesome soul? I might have known.

SPIKE

God, no! I want to get rid of the demon. I want you to exorcise it.

GILES

I'm afraid that's not possible, Spike. The demon provides the energy that keeps you alive. To be rid of the demon would kill you.

SPIKE

Yeah. That's the tricky part.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF XANDER'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Anya approaches the door and lifts her hand to ring the bell. She turns away. She faces the door again and pushes the button. She waits. She knocks. Still no response, so she turns around and leaves.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Willow is dressed for sleep and seated on the foot of the bed. The ring lies on the dresser a few feet away. She closes her eyes and breathes deeply for a few seconds. She is very relaxed. She opens her eyes and tries to float the ring to her. It doesn't even quiver. She shows a small frown and sighs. She gives up, crossing the small distance to pick up the ring herself.

She returns to the bed, lays down under the covers, and turns out the light. She looks through the ring, and the small living portrait of Tara appears. The image smiles, winks, and disappears. Willow places the ring on her third left finger and closes her eyes to sleep.

INT. SPIKE'S LAIR - SAME TIME

He is just arriving. It's just about midnight, but already he's exhausted. He lies down on the tomb with his blanket and is on his way to sleep.

EXT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

Buffy is dreaming.

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We see Xander, looking particularly buff and handsome, carrying a stake in each hand. He is beset by a trio of vampires, but they are far from a match for him, as he dusts them in rapid succession.

This done, he flourishes his stakes, and spirits them away to his pockets. He isn't even breathing hard as he brushes back his slightly-too-long hair, managing to frame himself perfectly in front of the full moon. From off camera, we hear Buffy speak:

BUFFY

That was amazing, sweetie, but could you move a little to the left? You're in my light.

And we see her, laying on the lawn atop a beach towel, clad in a bikini. Her hair is up in a bun and she wears dark shades. Beside her in her beach bag, we see a big bottle of water, and what may be a bottle of sunscreen poking out.

XANDER

Oh, sorry, Buffy.

He kneels beside her with a smile.

XANDER (CONT'D)

This better?

BUFFY

Much, thank you, Dear.

And she turns over to complete her tan. Right about then, we hear a single thunderclap and the sky begins to dump rain upon them. Buffy screams her frustration as she leaps to her feet like a scalded cat.

Xander whips her towel over their heads, grabs her beach bag and whisks them to the relative shelter of a nearby mausoleum.

XANDER

Are you alright, my love?

BUFFY

I am. Thanks to you.

She hugs him, laying her head dramatically on his chest. After a moment, she raises her head and moves as if to kiss him, but as she flutters her eyes, she sees over his shoulder a dragon. She screams.

And we spin, finding ourselves in a tremendous cave. Off to the side, we see the charred remains of an unlucky knight. Xander moves to claim his fallen sword and shield.

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CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Save me from the monster!

XANDER

Never fear, Princess. I shall
save you.

And he charges off to meet the fire breathing dragon. We hear the battle, but we remain in place watching Buffy's face. After tense moments, Xander returns, and claims that overdue kiss.

BUFFY

(melting)

My hero!

INT. BUFFY'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

She wakes with a start.

BUFFY

Oh. My. God.

She smacks her hand into her forehead, letting the gesture carry her head back to the pillow.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DAWN'S ROOM - MORNING

Dawn is up early, and is primping. She's excited about seeing Justin. After a few moments of primping, Buffy enters.

BUFFY

Hey, Dawnie. Can I talk to you for a minute?

DAWN

No way. You don't get to back out. We have a deal.

BUFFY

No. I know we do. This is about something else. It's about the house.

DAWN

Oh. Good. Good, the house - the house. . .

BUFFY

So you're thinking what I'm thinking? It needs something?

DAWN

Yeah. I don't know what though.

BUFFY

Well, I've been talking to Xander about renovating. Clearing out the bad vibes.

DAWN

I vote yes.

BUFFY

You're going to have to help. And it'll be a lot of work.

DAWN

I can handle work. Just give me a big hammer and get out of my way.

BUFFY

Okay. I just wanted to be sure you were okay with the idea.

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CONTINUED:

DAWN

I just want to know if I get to make any decisions. Do I have any input?

BUFFY

Absolutely.

DAWN

Then let's make with the construction.

BUFFY

Okay. Hey, do you want me to pick you up after school, or do you want to ride the bus?

DAWN

Pick me up, I'll need some time to get ready for tonight.

BUFFY

Right. The big date. Do I get to grill this guy? Play bad cop?

DAWN

No. But I'll give you a few minutes to meet him, if you want.

BUFFY

I want.

DAWN

Okay. Now get out of here. I've got work to do.

BUFFY

Yes, ma'am.

She exits, running into Willow in the hallway.

WILLOW

Morning.

BUFFY

Hey, Wil. Ya got a sec?

WILLOW

Yeah. Registration doesn't open until ten thirty. What's up?

BUFFY

It's about the house.

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CONTINUED: (2)

They wend their mutual way down the stairs.

WILLOW

Oh, good. I mean, I think it's good. It's good, right?

BUFFY

It's good. I just want to change things around a little. Xander's going to help us renovate.

WILLOW

Oh, goody. More Xander, cool house stuff. Very acceptable.

BUFFY

Okay, speaking of Xander - shhhh -

She looks up the stairs for Dawn. No sign of her.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

I had a dream about Xander last night.

WILLOW

Ooooh. Curiouser and curiouser. Tell me more.

BUFFY

It was so very wrong. I was sunbathing under a full moon watching him fight a fang patrol all by himself.

WILLOW

All hunky and rugged and stuff?

BUFFY

Yeah. And he had Fabio hair. Like down to his shoulders.

WILLOW

Hmmm - maybe I could go for that.

BUFFY

No way. Too weird. And then we were trapped in a cave and he called me Princess and he killed a dragon for me. What is wrong with me?

WILLOW

I think you're fine.

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CONTINUED: (3)

BUFFY

Do you think my subconscious is trying to tell me something?

WILLOW

Yeah, and I think it's good news.

BUFFY

What do you mean.

WILLOW

Well, you've been worried about this whole thing you have for vampires, right. About this whole "Give in to the dark side," thing?

BUFFY

Yeah.

WILLOW

Well, maybe it's not about evil and darkness and stuff. Maybe you just want to feel protected. Safe.

BUFFY

With a man, you mean?

WILLOW

Maybe.

BUFFY

That's not very slayerly.

WILLOW

Oh, come on. It's nothing to be embarrassed about. I mean, you're the Slayer, for cryin' out loud. You spend most of your time protecting people. You spend so much time on the edge, it's only fair for you to have someone to make you feel safe.

BUFFY

You sure?

WILLOW

Absotively.

BUFFY

Posolutely?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

WILLOW

Uh-huh.

BUFFY

So I'm not losing my edge, or my grip, or my mind or anything?

WILLOW

Nope.

BUFFY

And I should stop worrying?

WILLOW

Yup.

BUFFY

Thanks, Wil. You are the most bestest best friend that ever a wizitch there was.

WILLOW

I know.

INT. MAGIC BOX - LATER

Giles is dusting, while Anya does some bookkeeping. After a few moments, Xander enters. Anya sees him and rushes to him.

ANYA

Where have you been? I haven't seen you in two days.

XANDER

Yeah. I'm sorry about that. I'm not sure what got into me. I hadn't even realized it until last night. I really needed to see you.

They hug.

XANDER (CONT'D)

I need to get to work soon, but I had to see you. I love you.

ANYA

I love you too. Do you think it would be okay if I moved back into your apartment?

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CONTINUED:

XANDER

It's our apartment, and it's killing me to be alone there. I was even glad to see Spike show up yesterday.

ANYA

So, you've forgiven us?

XANDER

You, yes. Spike's still working on it.

INT. SPIKE'S LAIR - AFTERNOON

Spike rises, looking rested. He covers himself in a nice heavy blanket and heads out the door.

INT. DOC'S PLACE - LATER

Spike enters in a wispy cloud of smoke.

SPIKE

Hey! Doc!

A grubby, rat-faced little man shuffles his way out of a back room.

DOC

What?

SPIKE

I need to take advantage of your expertise.

DOC

What's the problem.

SPIKE

How're you with neurosurgery?

DOC

Not so bad. Can't do much permanent damage to a vampire anyway. You guys heal pretty quick.

SPIKE

Right, where do I sit?

DOC

Over here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The doctor motions to what looks like a dentist's chair. Spike walks over and sits solidly in the chair.

DOC (CONT'D)

This one of those behavior modification chips?

SPIKE

Yeah. I hear you've done a few of these.

DOC

True, but it's been at least a year. And none in a vampire.

The doctor begins laying out instruments, none of which are properly packaged. They come out of a barber's comb jar filled with the familiar blue disinfectant.

SPIKE

You can do it, yeah?

DOC

Yeah.

SPIKE

And what's it going to cost me?

DOC

You got eight hundred bucks?

SPIKE

Got six, and I'll get the rest.

DOC

Close enough. You want to be awake?

SPIKE

Yeah.

The doctor picks up a syringe and begins shooting Spike's scalp full of anaesthetic.

DOC

This should take care of any pain, since the brain hasn't got any pain receptors.

SPIKE

Thanks. Now let's get to it. I want this damned thing out.

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - AFTERNOON

Dawn is again walking with Justin on her way to meet Buffy. He takes a moment to pull Dawn aside where Buffy can't see. He leans really close and whispers into her ear.

JUSTIN

I can't wait to see you tonight.
Still on for seven?

DAWN

Yeah. Come on. I want you to meet
my sister.

She grabs his hand and tugs him along. Soon they approach the car.

BUFFY

Hey, Dawn. And you must be
Justin.

She extends her hand and he shakes it graciously.

JUSTIN

It's really nice to meet you.

BUFFY

You too. So you'll be coming by
the house about seven?

JUSTIN

Yes, ma'am.

BUFFY

Ugh. Call me Buffy.

JUSTIN

You got it. So, should I get
there early for the interview?

BUFFY

Couldn't hurt. We've got to get
moving, but we'll see you soon.

DAWN

See you.

Dawn and Buffy get into the car, and as they drive away, Justin waves.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - LATER

Buffy and Xander are sparring in privacy. They're going at it pretty hard. Both are sweating. They're fighting hand to hand. Buffy throws Xander to the mat.

BUFFY

So! Dawn tells me you called her a knockout. What's all this about, pray tell?

He rolls to his feet.

XANDER

That is so not fair.

BUFFY

I just want to be sure your intentions are honorable.

XANDER

Well, you wouldn't want her walking into her first date feeling ugly, would you? Feeling like she should grab the first guy to come along?

BUFFY

Okay. You've got a point. He seemed pretty okay. I'm still going to kick your ass you know.

She aims a kick at his head. He catches her foot. She lashes out with her other foot and he catches that one too. He dangles her off the floor, upside down.

XANDER

Hey. That was not my ass you were aiming for. Care for another shot?

He sets her down on her hands and she flips herself back to standing.

BUFFY

You are so toast for that.

XANDER

Okay, toast me.

She leaps at him, intending a flying roundhouse, but he steps quickly in to her and catches her in mid-air. One arm wraps around her waist and the other hand grabs her ankle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER (CONT'D)

Oops.

He holds her like this as he dances a quick couple of box steps. He sets her down.

BUFFY

Grrrrr!

She comes at him with a quick flurry of punches, all of which he blocks, but in her approach, she gets a leg behind him and she wrenches him to the mat, landing on top of him. She pins his arms and straddles him.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Ha! How do you like that?

XANDER

Do you see me complaining?

With another growl, she jerks backward, tucking her feet beneath Xander's pelvis as he rolls over her. With a mighty push off, she sends Xander flying across the room. He doesn't move.

BUFFY

Xander? Xander, are you okay?

There is no response, so she approaches him. He is very still. She nudges him with her toe.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Get up.

No response, so she kneels and shakes him. Again no response. She grabs his wrist to feel for a pulse, and leans in to listen for breath. Xander bites her earlobe and holds on.

XANDER

(teeth clenched)

Sucker!

He grabs one of her wrists in each hand.

BUFFY

Oooh! You jerk.

XANDER

Gotcha!

BUFFY

Is that so?

She works herself around and place a knee just over his crotch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Five. Four. Three. Two. . .

XANDER

(releases her)

Okay. Okay. Call it a draw?

BUFFY

Yeah. Whatever.

She rolls over and flops down in the same spread-eagle position as Xander.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You're getting pretty good at this.

XANDER

Thanks. You too.

They scoot closer together, Buffy rolling onto her side and resting her head on Xander's shoulder.

BUFFY

You mind if I just take a quick nap here before my patrol?

XANDER

Be my guest. I'm told I make a lovely futon.

They close their eyes and we watch for a few moments as they drift off to sleep.

INT. THE BRONZE - NIGHT

Xander and Anya sit at a table, a little awkwardness still between them. He is freshly primped. Behind Anya, we see Dawn and Justin at another table.

XANDER

So, um, how's work?

ANYA

It's going well. How is your work?

XANDER

It's great. In fact, I've been talking to Buffy about renovating her house. Kind of a group project.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER (CONT'D)

And she had an interesting idea I wanted to talk to you about.

ANGLE: DAWN AND JUSTIN

He is unaware of Xander and Anya.

JUSTIN

So, your sister seems pretty nice.

DAWN

She tries. She's got a lot on her mind most of the time.

JUSTIN

Yeah. Must be hard without your parents.

DAWN

Not so hard as you'd think. We've got a pretty good family going.

JUSTIN

Hey. Can I get you another soda or something?

DAWN

Yeah. That would be great.

ANGLE: XANDER AND ANYA

They again sit in an awkward silence.

XANDER

Would you dance with me?

ANYA

I'd love to.

They move onto the dance floor as a slow song starts up. They fit easily and naturally together, and we finally see them comfortable with each other. We watch them moving together for a few moments.

ANGLE: DAWN

Dawn is watching Anya and Xander as they dance. She is very happy for them. Justin approaches with the sodas.

JUSTIN

You want to go outside and get some air?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAWN

Yeah.

They walk out into the alley and find a perch together. Justin puts his arm around her and she snuggles close.

DAWN (CONT'D)

So tell me what else you like to do. Do you play an instrument or write poetry, or anything?

JUSTIN

No. I have to study pretty hard to keep up. I don't even get out very often. School's just starting though, so it's not too tough yet.

DAWN

Hey, if you ever need a study partner, give me a call.

JUSTIN

Sounds good. Come here.

He turns her to face him and leans close.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I really want to kiss you right now.

DAWN

(shaking)

Oh - I - um. . .

He starts on her cheek, kissing her in several places on his way to her lips. His kisses are tender, but escalate in intensity far to fast for Dawn. She freaks out a little bit and pushes back from him

DAWN (CONT'D)

It's - it's um, a little cold out here. You want to go inside and dance?

JUSTIN

I'll keep you warm.

He moves closer, almost pinning her against the wall.

DAWN

No. I need to go inside. I'm not comfortable here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She stands up to go, but he moves to block her.

JUSTIN

No. Stay here with me.

DAWN

I'm going inside.

JUSTIN

Not yet.

He grabs her shoulders and brings her closer to him. He kisses her neck, and his hands busy themselves with untying the laces in the back of her dress. Dawn pushes him away.

DAWN

No way. We're done. Don't touch me.

JUSTIN

Come here.

He steps forward again and she pushes him hard.

DAWN

Get out of my way. I'm going inside.

He smacks her across the face.

EXT. CEMETARY - SAME TIME

Buffy is patrolling alone tonight. Not a whole lot of action going on, so she's kinda bored. She's whistling badly and fiddling with a stake.

After a short stroll, she comes across trio of vampires. Two of them attack at once, and Buffy is able to hit the one on the left with a kick to the face, knocking him out. The one on the right grabs her from behind, pinning her arms while the third vampire approaches at a run.

Buffy stakes the vampire that holds her in the leg, causing him to let go. She grabs the approaching vampire by the throat and quickly dusts him. She turns to the wounded vamp and dusts him as well. While her back is turned, the unconscious vamp begins to recover, charging her just as she turns to face him.

Spike shows up silently and sticks out a foot, sending the vampire sprawling to meet Buffy's outstretched stake.

BUFFY

Hey. Thanks, Spike.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

Don't mention it. Here. I brought
you a present.

He flips a small object toward her and she catches it.

BUFFY

What's this? Oh, god. Spike, is
this your chip?

SPIKE

Was. Ain't mine anymore. I'm
through with it.

BUFFY

Spike, how could you do this?

SPIKE

Found this doctor fellow with
some. . .

BUFFY

No, Spike! Don't you know what
this means? It means we can't
trust you anymore. I can't trust
you. What got into you?

SPIKE

A soul got into me. I don't need
the chip anymore. I've got a very
efficient conscience now.

BUFFY

No way, Spike. It's too big a
risk. I know the things you've
done.

She throws it back to him.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Have him put it back in.

SPIKE

Fine.

Buffy has just enough time to see that Spike is weeping before
he turns around and leaves.

INT. THE BRONZE - BEFORE THE SLAP

Anya and Xander come out of a kiss and Xander looks toward
Dawn's table over her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Wait a minute. Where's Dawn?

ANYA

Maybe she went to freshen up?

XANDER

But I don't see Justin either.
Would you check the bathroom for
me?

ANYA

Sure.

She moves toward the restrooms as Xander moves around the room looking hard for Dawn.

EXT. THE BRONZE - AN INSTANT AFTER WE LEFT

As Dawn recovers from Justin's slap, he grabs her again, one hand ripping at the sleeve of her dress. His face is again very close to hers.

Dawn rears back and head butts Justin right in the nose, breaking it and drawing blood. Justin leans forward, then back, and Dawn lets loose with a vicious punch right to his throat which knocks him to the ground.

She runs away from him, and runs right into Xander as he opens the door and steps out.

XANDER

Dawnie, what's wrong? Hold on.
What's wrong?

He notices the tear in her dress, and the red swelling where Justin hit her.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Oh, my God. Here.

He takes off his coat and wraps it around her, hugging her as he does so. Anya emerges through the door and it takes her a moment to process what has happened.

ANYA

Xander, what's going on? Dawn,
are you alright? What happened?
Oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Where is that little scumsucker?
I'll kill him. I swear to God
I'll kill him!

A noise from Justin betrays his location and Xander leaves Dawn's side to find him. Moving past some junk, Xander picks up Justin by the throat and holds him way up off the ground. He squeezes.

DAWN

Xander, no. Xander! Stop it! I
mean it! Stop it now!

Xander throws Justin to the ground several feet away.

ANYA

Just make a wish Dawn. I can take
care of him for you.

DAWN

No. Just take me home, please..

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - LATER

Buffy and Willow sit together on the couch.

BUFFY

So do you think I was too hard on
him?

WILLOW

I don't know. I mean, Spike can
be really dangerous, and he
hasn't had this soul very long.
We can't really know what he's
like yet.

BUFFY

Yeah. I should still talk to him
though, when I get a chance.
Okay, tell me about your classes.

WILLOW

Oooh! Good classes. I had some
extra room in my schedule, so I'm
taking photography.

BUFFY

Very cool. What else?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

I got into Con Law. It's really crowded, but I got it.

BUFFY

So you got everything you wanted?

WILLOW

And then some, yeah.

Right about now, Dawn, Xander and Anya enter.

BUFFY

Hey, guys. D'ja have a good time, Dawnie? Dawn? What happened?

Dawn hides her face against Xander's chest, unable to look at Buffy.

WILLOW

Is she okay?

XANDER

She's okay, just back off a minute.

Buffy approaches, hugging Dawn between herself and Xander.

BUFFY

It's okay. I'm here. I'm here.

Dawn begins crying.

XANDER

It's not your fault, Dawnie. Even Buffy liked him.

BUFFY

Him? What did he do, Xander?

XANDER

I'm not totally sure, but Dawn's okay. When I came out, she had a ripped dress and a red spot where he hit her, but he was flat on his back with a broken nose. Dawn took care of herself.

BUFFY

Really? Dawnie, you broke his nose?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAWN

(through sniffles)

Yeah. I pretty much whooped his
ass.

WILLOW

That is so cool. Go Dawn!

BUFFY

And you're okay?

DAWN

Yeah. Just feeling really stupid.

BUFFY

No way, Dawnie. I met him too,
and I didn't get a whiff of bad.
This was absolutely not your
fault. We should call the police
and file a report.

DAWN

Do we have to?

ANYA

Yes. Yes we do. If you won't make
a wish, you should at least call
the police.

XANDER

You really should, Dawn.

WILLOW

Yeah.

DAWN

Alright. Let's do it now though.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. GILES' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Giles is playing his guitar. Not singing, just playing and listening. There is another knock on the door. He moves to open it, and again finds Spike.

SPIKE

Right. You all set?

GILES

I am. Are you certain you want to do this? I'm not very hopeful.

SPIKE

Absolutely certain. Come on.

INT. THE DOC'S PLACE - LATER

Giles and Spike enter and the Doc is waiting. He has a gurney with restraints prepared for Spike, a few syringes full of drugs on a tray and the large, somewhat antiquated pairing of a heart monitor and a defibrillator sharing a wheeled cart. On another cart we can see a respirator.

DOC

Welcome back, Spike. You know, if this works, I don't think I'll charge you. Just might make for a brand new source of income for me.

GILES

That's a very significant "if", Spike. But if you're certain, I'll do my best to help you.

Spike removes his shirt and lays down on the gurney.

SPIKE

Let's get to it, Gents. I've only got so much courage, and I've been burning it right quick lately. And you'd better strap me in now. The demon know's what's coming, and it's not happy.

DOC

You're the boss.

He straps Spike in to the table and attaches cardiac sensors. We see a flat line.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIKE

Right. Rupert, the way I figure it, you do your bit first. Exorcise me. Then the doc's got three minutes or so to kickstart my heart, as the song goes.

GILES

Good luck, Spike. You certainly have my admiration. To my knowledge this has never even been attempted.

SPIKE

Yeah, well, necessity and invention, right?

GILES

Quite so. Here, take this.

Giles puts something in Spike's hand. The Doc reaches over to the tray and removes a rubber breathing mask. He gently puts the mask in its place, firmly covering Spike's mouth and nose. Spike looks Giles in the eye, and nods. The doc switches on the machine.

DOC

Alright, Spike. This is giving you pure oxygen. Just let it fill your lungs and let them empty a few times. Get out all the bad air. If this works, your cells are going to need all the oxygen they can get for a while. You feeling okay?

Spike nods. Giles and Doc watch as the machine pumps four or five more breaths through Spike's long dormant lungs.

DOC (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's do it.

GILES

You're quite ready, Doctor?

DOC

Just Doc. And yeah. Ready when you are.

Giles begins a Latin incantation which roughly translates to the next line. The whole while, Spike is twitching and jerking and in excruciating pain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES

Unclean demon, your time in this body is past. You are not welcome, and you will not be allowed to stay. Leave this poor man and trouble him no more. Out! Out! Out! By the holy power of my faith, by the holy strength of this man's soul, begone!

With a last final heave of Spike's body against the restraints and an enraged ethereal howl, the demon is gone. We see only the briefest glimpse of its form as it leaves the body.

GILES (CONT'D)

Alright, quickly. Do what you can.

DOC

Whew! Here we go.

The doctor starts with the biggest needle, slamming it into Spike's bare chest and depressing the plunger.

DOC (CONT'D)

This is adrenaline. Lots of adrenaline. It should help jolt his heart into action.

Next, the doc picks up the defibrillator paddles, which have already been charged. He zaps Spike, but the only reaction is the arching of the back which comes from electrification of the muscles.

GILES

Do it again.

DOC

Not yet. Hold on.

The Doc grabs another syringe, injecting this one into Spike's jugular vein.

DOC (CONT'D)

This is Atropine. If Spike's heart is going to start, this will do it. Just need to get it circulating.

When the needle is out, the doc climbs up onto the gurney, straddling Spike and administering C.P.R.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He pushes down on Spike's chest, artificially contracting his heart ten or fifteen times, cycling the blood and its attendant drugs throughout Spike's body.

DOC (CONT'D)

Alright. Paddles.

He clambers quickly down and grabs the paddles. He hits Spike once. There is no reaction. He charges up and hits him again. Still no response. After a third shock, there is nothing but a flat line.

GILES

Come on, Spike. You can't quit.
You can't.

Another shock. No effect. Yet another. Nothing.

DOC

That's about it, Mr. Giles.

GILES

Shock him again.

The doc complies. One final shock. At first there is nothing, then a single faint heartbeat. A pause. Another. Another. Spike's heart is beating. For the first time in over a century, Spike's heart beats unaided.

GILES (CONT'D)

Oh, my God! We've done it.
Spike's done it. He's alive.

DOC

Not so fast, Mr. Giles. His heart is beating, but that's all. His breathing isn't voluntary. It's provided only by the machine.

They watch for a tense moment, then Giles removes the mask. We watch Spike's lungs slowly deflate until they must be wholly empty. Giles takes a huge breath, pinches Spike's nose shut, and breathes air into his lungs. The cycle repeats. As Giles is about to breathe a third breath into Spike's lungs, Spike surges. His eyes open and he fills his own lungs with a long and shuddering breath.

When Spike's lungs fill, he loses a scream of incalculable agony. Every cell in his body has been purged of the demonic energy which has sustained them for so many years, and in its place, they must relearn the process of respiration. Every single cell in Spike's body might as well be on fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He breathes again and he screams again, straining against the restraints his exposed body turning red with the oxygenated blood that now flows through it.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

The cops are just leaving, after having taken reports from Dawn, Xander, and Anya.

BUFFY

Thank you again, Officers. If there's anything else you need, just call us.

FEMALE OFFICER

No. This should do it. The next thing you'll hear about is a court date.

MALE OFFICER

You've got a strong case for assault here. I'd bet this guy'll do some time.

DAWN

Thanks.

ANYA

Have a good night.

The officers exit, escorted by Xander, who closes the door.

DAWN

So much for my first, magical kiss.

XANDER

Doesn't count.

DAWN

But he kissed me.

XANDER

Were you ready for him to kiss you?

DAWN

No. He kinda snuck up on me.

XANDER

He cheated. That totally doesn't count. Am I right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Totally.

She nudges Anya.

ANYA

Yes. Absolutely right. Not a valid kiss.

INT. GILES' HOUSE - LATER

The door is open and Giles returns from the car, carrying Spike in his arms as one would carry a sleeping child. Spike is more unconscious than asleep, but he is peaceful for the time being.

Giles places Spike on Anya's futon and covers his shivering form with a blanket. Spike is soon curled up in a ball, still shaking and still clutching something in his hand.

Giles places a hand on Spike's forehead.

GILES

Rest, Spike. Just rest. You've earned it, and a lot more, besides.

Giles places another small something on the end table near Spike's resting place, closes the door, and sits in his chair to contemplate the titanic changes his world has undergone. Several seconds later, the door opens again and Anya enters.

ANYA

Giles. Giles, this has been such a . . .

GILES

(fingers to lips)
Shhh. Spike is sleeping.

Anya looks.

ANYA

Yes, Spike is sleeping. He's sleeping in my bed. I resent that. I've had a very difficult night.

GILES

I promise you, whatever has happened to you, Spike has had an even more difficult night. Be quiet and tell me what happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

Well, Dawn's date attacked her outside the Bronze. But she took care of him quite handily. She broke his nose and punched him in the throat. Then Xander and I found them and Xander would have killed the boy, but Dawn called him off. And I offered to curse him, but she wouldn't even make a wish.

GILES

She's a strong girl. I don't imagine she would.

ANYA

And we called the police from Buffy's house and everything. A completely non-magical disaster. Almost refreshing when you think of it that way. Oh, and I'm going to move back in with Xander. So I guess I really don't resent Spike having the futon. I just came by to let you know and pick up a few of my things. So, what happened to Spike.

GILES

I'll just let him tell you all in his own time.

ANYA

Fair enough. Is there anything I can do before I go?

GILES

I don't believe so, but thank you for asking. And congratulations. I hope you and Xander can heal the rift between you.

ANYA

Thank you, Giles.

Anya gathers up a few things from near the futon and disappears to get her toiletries from the bathroom. Giles is alone in the room with Spike, contemplating. After a moment, Anya returns. She bends down and kisses Giles' temple as she whispers:

ANYA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES

You're welcome here any time,
Anya. Have a good night, and I'll
see you tomorrow.

She leaves, closing the door softly behind her.

INT. GILES'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

It is shortly after dawn. Spike slowly wakes up. His eyes open. He tries to rise, but winces and gives up. He lies in bed a few more seconds before he tries again, this time with more success. He manages to sit up and turn so that he can lean over his knees. He moves as a man of his age would be expected to move, as if under his skin were nothing but pockets of broken glass and rusted bundles of wire.

He opens his hand, and we see a small stick of wood, with a notch about a third of the way from one end. Spike looks to the end table and finds the second stick. This one is shorter, with a notch in the center. Spike picks it up. After a moment's contemplation, he presses the two pieces of wood together, joining them at the notches and making a cross.

Holding the cross in his fingertips by the bottom, Spike looks at it. There is no pain. A very small, but very deep smile makes its way onto his face.

Slowly, he stands and makes his way into the bathroom. He looks into the mirror. He can make out a very faint, almost ghostly image of himself, and is fascinated, taking time to examine as much detail as can be worked out of the vague image in the glass.

After a few moments of this, he notices a small blade of sunlight that flashes through the small opening in the frosted window to strike the basin of the sink. He stares for a moment, captivated by the small spear. After a moment, he pokes his index finger into the beam. For a moment, there is no reaction, then, with a hiss of pain, he withdraws his finger. He examines it, and sees red. A sunburn. In a moment, he sees the beginning of a blister. A bad sunburn, but bad as it may be, it's a human sunburn. His body is that of a human being, and he has the sneaking suspicion that these vestigial vampiric weaknesses will fade.

Spike glances into the mirror, and is suddenly hit with an inspiration. He whips off his shirt and places his hand over his heart. His face becomes a mask of bliss as he feels his heart beating. We listen with him for a moment as his heart chugs dutifully along, then we leave him.

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - LATER

Buffy is dropping Dawn off at school again.

BUFFY
You sure you can do this?

DAWN
Yeah. I think so.

BUFFY
Remember, if he so much as comes near you, kick his ass again. We Summers women have a reputation here at Sunnydale High, and we have to protect it. Right?

DAWN
Yeah. Sure.

BUFFY
I love you, Dawn.

DAWN
I love you too, Buffy. Now go get to work.

BUFFY
Yes, ma'am. I'll see you this afternoon.

EXT. CEMETARY - LATE AFTERNOON

Buffy and Xander have finished an early picnic dinner before patrol. They share a bench, Buffy sits with her back against Xander. She takes his hand and massages it.

BUFFY
I wanted to thank you for taking care of Dawn.

XANDER
She took care of herself just fine.

BUFFY
Still. Thanks.

She brings his palm to her cheek and closes her eyes.

XANDER
Buffy?

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Yeah.

XANDER

Stop it.

BUFFY

What?

He takes both of her hands in his and clasps them together.

XANDER

This can't work.

BUFFY

I know. You're not going to do the injections any more, are you?

XANDER

And that makes me regular ordinary Xander.

She turns to face him.

BUFFY

Xander, those are two words that will never describe you. You are the most extraordinary man I've ever met. You're the only one of us who's chosen his own destiny. You run toward the fire. They say that's what makes a hero. When other people run away from the flames, a hero runs toward it, and every single time you see the fire you run toward it. Headlong, without super powers, with or without a helmet or an ax, you run right into the fire. It's just. . .

XANDER

You need someone who can make you feel safe. And there aren't many guys who make the Slayer feel protected, are there.

By now, she's crying, and she nods her head.

BUFFY

I love you so much. If my heart had any brains, I'd be in love with you too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She leans forward and hugs him. He holds her.

XANDER

I love you too, Buffy, and I
always will. But for me to fall
in love with you again would be
flying too close to the Sun. It'd
kill me.

Now he's crying too. They hold each other and they can't let go.
Then, after several long moments, they separate, looking each
other in the eyes. Buffy moves closer.

BUFFY

(whispers)
Just once.

She moves in to kiss Xander, but at the last minute he turns his
head slightly and takes the kiss chastely on the corner of the
mouth. They part and look at each other again. She nods.

They stand up and silently collect their trash, throwing it into
a nearby receptacle. Buffy approaches Xander and throws her arms
around his neck in a fierce hug.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Okay. Go home. Anya's got to be
feeling lonely.

XANDER

I'll patrol with you, at least
while I'm still semi-super.

BUFFY

No. It's been quiet all week. Go
home. I've got it.

XANDER

I don't want to leave you alone
out here.

BUFFY

(smiles)
This is my scene, Xander. I live
for this stuff.

XANDER

You want some time alone?

BUFFY

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

XANDER

Okay. I'll just patrol over this way. Shout if you need backup.

BUFFY

Okay. Deal.

They part ways, and we follow Buffy. She walks for a while with her head down and her arms wrapped about herself. She is very alone. Shortly, we become aware of Spike, who watches her.

SPIKE

Hey, Slayer.

BUFFY

Not now, Spike. Just go away.

SPIKE

I brought you another present.

BUFFY

Save it.

SPIKE

No. This time, you're going to shut your trap, and you're going to pay attention.

BUFFY

Don't try to play Manly-man, Spike.

SPIKE

(approaching)

Just listen.

Spike grabs her hand, guides it under his shirt, and lays it against his chest.

BUFFY

What the hell do you think. . .

SPIKE

There! Feel that?

BUFFY

Oh, my God! Spike, is that your heart?

SPIKE

It's a little rusty, but it keeps time alright.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BUFFY
You're - human?

SPIKE
Top to bottom.

BUFFY
Why?

SPIKE
Why do you think? For you, Buffy.

BUFFY
How?

SPIKE
Courtesy of the nastiest, most
vicious beast I've ever fought.

BUFFY
What?

SPIKE
My love for you. It's all claws
and teeth. Painful little bugger.
Brought my soul back from who
knows where, sent my demon back
to Hell and brought my body back
to life. Love's a tough little
monster, and there's not much
that can kill it.

BUFFY
What do you expect me to do?

SPIKE
Truthfully, that doesn't matter
anymore. I love you. I know it,
and so do you. What's more, I
know I'm worthy to be loved in
return. I've sure as hell done
enough to earn it. As for you,
love me or don't, but, by God, I
deserve some bloody respect.
There will be no more spitting on
Spike. No more taking me for
granted. I've learned that much.

BUFFY
But. . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SPIKE

No. Just listen. I love you. I even love you enough to let you go. I can hang around here and be one of your scoobies. I can do that, so long as you all give me a chance. Let me offer my friendship. Maybe I can even earn yours in return. Maybe not, but I will not be your marionette any more. Any of that crap, and I'm gone. So, what do you say? Give me my trial membership card?

BUFFY

(reeling)

Um, yeah, I guess so. Who else knows?

SPIKE

Giles. He helped me, in fact. None of the others knows.

BUFFY

We'll have to, um, tell them some time.

SPIKE

I suppose so, yeah.

They stand quiet, facing each other. After a moment, Buffy softly begins to chuckle.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

What?

BUFFY

Your heart beats just for me? That sounds like bad poetry.

SPIKE

Yeah. I know. I'm the all-time king of bad poetry, remember?

They turn and walk away from us, side by side.

INT. XANDER AND ANYA'S PLACE - A LITTLE LATER

Anya is asleep sitting up on the couch. She fell asleep waiting for Xander. He enters quietly and sees her there. She doesn't look her best. She's been crying, her hair is a little disheveled, and her jaw hangs slackly open. Xander sees none of this, or rather, he sees through it..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks over to her and kisses her on the forehead. She slowly stirs. She speaks with a timid, sleepy joy that reminds us how Xander fell in love with her in the first place.

ANYA

You're home.

XANDER

We're home, sweetie.

He sinks to a knee and kisses her.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go to sleep.

He picks her up and carries her off into the bedroom.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow looks into the ring again. This time, the image is faint. This part of the spell is wearing out.

WILLOW

No!

Involuntarily, she flexes her magical muscles and the ring flashes a blinding white. When the flash recedes, the image inside the ring is in full technicolor. The spell is fully charged.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Whoah.

She sets the ring on the blanket and stares at it. It trembles, but doesn't lift off the blanket.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Hmm.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR