

Buffering the Vampire Slayer  
Episode 6.07: Once More, With Feeling

["Overture / Hello and Welcome" plays]

**Jenny:** [singing] Hello and welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer  
A podcast where we're watching every episode of Buffy  
One by one  
Mmm mmm, I'm Jenny Owen Youngs  
[speaking] Whoa, did you hear that? I just sang the intro! Kristin, did you hear that?!

**Kristin:** [singing] Hey, I'm Kristin Russo!

**Jenny:** [speaking] Oh.

**Kristin:** [singing] This week we've got a treat for you  
We're here to talk about—

**Both:** [singing] Once More with Feeling—

**Kristin:** [singing] The musical episode, so stay tuned  
'Cause the songs run all the way through!  
[speaking] Ha! Wow, um, you'd almost say that, like, maybe I'm a... I don't know... natural talent?

**Jenny:** [singing] Oh, directed and written by Mister Joss Whedon,  
It originally aired on November 6th 2001

**Kristin:** [singing] And this is the one where —

[music intensifies]

**Jenny:** [singing] Only 16 days! Before I turned 20! Years old!

**Kristin:** Ahem! [music returns to normal] As I was saying... this is the one  
with all the singing

**Both:** [singing] So buckle up for the show, 'cause here we, here we  
gooooooooo!

[song ends]

**Jenny:** Oh, hi!

**Kristin:** Oh, hey, Jenny. It seems like we may have been sucked into the musical universe of Buffy this week, which is kind of keeping in our true form.

**Jenny:** You think... we just sang the intro because this week we're talking about Once More, With Feeling? That seems like a pretty good theory.

**Kristin:** Mm, yeah. I mean, I think it is a good theory. But I—I just have this hunch that we might explore some other—

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** Theories in our next song. You know, like, if there is... if there is another song. [laughs]

**Jenny:** If there *is* another song! Yeah, so... listen, if you're—if you're hitting this podcast for the very first time ever, welcome. We do not usually sing the introduction. In fact, we generally just kinda talk the whole time [Kristin laughs] and then we have one tidy song at the end. That's how we do things. Generally speaking.

**Kristin:** We—podcasting, colon, generally just talking the whole time. [both laugh]

**Jenny:** Yeah!

**Kristin:** That's the definition. Yes, but as we've mentioned and now also sung about, this is not just any episode. This is Once More, With Feeling. Oh my god! Once More, With Feeling—I—as probably you know, since I am cohost of this podcast—I have watched this episode of television maybe, like, fourteen times over the last couple of weeks. And—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** You'd think, like, normally when you watch an episode of television, if you watch it, like, multiple times, you know, its effect could perhaps dim. Uh, the opposite happens with this piece of art. The more I watch it, the more I feel and the more I cry, apparently. I've cried a lot this week, especially. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Mm! Mmhmm, mmhmm, yes. [dramatically] It's emotional! It's really fun! Secrets heretofore kept close to the chest [Kristin laughs] and guarded as though it were a dragon treasure, now brought into the light, by the tongues of the unwilling!

**Kristin:** [laughs] Yeah. And I mean, I guess we are at the top of this episode, so talking a little bit about just, like, that big structure, right? Like, that is—apart from giving us a musical and giving us a fucking soundtrack and giving us these characters who we know and love, singing. All but dear, dear, Alyson Hannigan who refused to sing—[both laugh] most of this time. But the structure of the musical, also, and very intentionally so, is set up to, like, get us to basically, like, the second act of Season 6. You know, it's like—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Everybody's been carrying around a lot of shit and—

**Jenny:** Yep.

**Kristin:** What's a great way to just blow that open? Have a musical. Write a musical—

**Jenny:** Yeah, magical singing.

**Kristin:** Where you cannot help—you cannot help but sing.

**Jenny:** Mmm! I just wanna touch on the Previously On. I just want to mention... [laughs] that they include Spike saying, "I love you!" and Buffy making, like, the—[Kristin laughs] the, like, "I just ate a mouthful of shit" face—and being like, "Oh, god!" [Kristin laughs] She's like, so disgusted. It's so over the top. And I just wanted—

**Kristin:** The lady doth protest too much.

**Jenny:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I just wanted to turn an eye upon that, and like—

**Kristin:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** Buffy, opposites attract, ever heard of it?!

**Kristin:** I believe Paula Abdul has a great song—

**Jenny:** Yes! Yes. Listen—

**Kristin:** Video with a cartoon cat.

**Jenny:** Buffy, just be happy you're not boning a cartoon cat!

**Kristin:** [laughs] What I wanted to say is, holy shit, these credits. This is the only time in the series history where the credits are not the credits. [Jenny gasps] The credits are really, really special. Everybody's in a—like, a big full moon and we get this overture.

**Jenny:** We see a lot of things happening in the overture. The thing that caught my eye the most is, uhh, [dramatically] women of Sunnydale and how they relate to the written word! Anya's reading bridal magazines. Dawn's not allowed to read magical texts. Buffy is coloring in the entire page of a notepad with a lead pencil.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Listen, Buffy's alarm rings. And she was already awake. We see everybody getting ready for the day. And Buffy—the last shot, I think, is Buffy, still in bed. That, like, she is awake, but she can't get out of bed. And like, as a person who has journeyed through many a mental health experience in my life, being stuck in your bed is—is—I mean, just the most classic manifestation of the place that she is in.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** So I just wanted to underline that, because I think it's important. But she does get out of bed and you're right. Tomorrow's Bride, Xander and Anya. Giles is parenting Dawn. Tara and Willow. Buffy is distracted. Setting the scene. So Buffy is walking in the cemetery. And hey, she's singing a song. She's singing a fucking song.

[music starts]

**Jenny:** She's singing a song! She's, uh, you know—she's, um, well. She's going through the motions.

[Clip from episode starts]

**Buffy:** [singing] Every single night, the same arrangement  
I go out and fight the fight  
Still, I always feel this strange estrangement  
Nothing here is real, nothing here is right

**Jenny:** She's not, like, really feeling so much. She's numb.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** She's just trying to get through it.

**Kristin:** If we spoke to you about all of the lines in these songs that were meaningful, we would basically just be speaking the entire lyrical book, if you will.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** But she has a couple of lines in this song that, like, really knock me over. The biggest one I think being towards the end, where she says "I can't really see if this is even me." And then—you know, "and I just wanna be alive," which is also very powerful. But like, the "I can't really see if this is even me" is just so fucking resonant—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** And it sets us up, again, of like—this is a musical, but is it? You know what I mean? Like, is this the musical that people who know musicals expect to see? Alas, no.

**Jenny:** Right. Also, when she hits that big second syllable of "aliiiiiive," she has unfortunately just dusted a vampire and is definitely inhaling about a pound of vampire dust. [Kristin laughs] I don't know how she's holding that note while all the—the, uh, ash is—

**Kristin:** Yes, but it is glittery ash.

**Jenny:** Flying into her throat.

**Kristin:** Joss Whedon talked about this first number being really modeled, and you can tell, after like, a Disney princess number, right? Like, this is a Disney—big, Ariel is coming out of the ocean on the rock. And like, this last shot that Jenny is talking about—

**Jenny:** Hell yeah.

**Kristin:** Is that. Like, that—instead of, like, the ocean wave crashing and we see Ariel's face, it's a bunch of glittery vampire dust that sort of swirls and reveals

Buffy's face. It's beautiful and you know immediately that they have gone all in, by watching this.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** So much of the, like, cinematography—everything looks different.

**Jenny:** Who's this friggin' goat demon with pigtail braids? [Kristin laughs] VIP of the scene! My fave!

**Kristin:** Oh my god!

**Jenny:** My guy.

**Kristin:** "She's not even half the girl she—ow." Amaze—that is a Jenny Owen Youngs lyric if I ever heard one myself.

**Jenny:** How dare you.

**Kristin:** What?! That was a compliment.

**Jenny:** Uh... speaking of things Jenny Owen Youngs likes... if I may.

**Kristin:** Are you taking us to the next scene?

**Jenny:** No, I'm taking us to that hunk who's tied to a tree! [Kristin laughs] With a—fucking, his peasant blouse all open and askew. What is more powerful than a beautiful Disney prince tied to a tree? I'll tell you what's more powerful. Buffy being like, whatever.

**Kristin:** Whatever.

**Jenny:** Nice.

**Kristin:** You know, Buffy doesn't care about her job. She doesn't care about, like, love life. She's not—she's just not feeling it.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** She's just—she's numb on all counts.

**Jenny:** Yep.

**Kristin:** And just a note on these—so the demons do a dance, which is just so spectacular.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** And also, like, sets you up. That like, this is a musical, it's gonna be dealing with some heavy themes. But also, it's gonna have fun. It's gonna have three different demons, like, choreographed. There's four main dancers and you'll see them here as the three demons. The tap dancer is one of these four. The three guys with the broom are these three guys, the three henchmen are these guys. They are used over and over and over again in the episode. Jenny, if we may go to the Magic Box. After this song has ended in this very Disney-like style, the bell rings.

[Clip from episode briefly plays]

[door opens, bell rings]

**Kristin:** And the fucking first thing I would like to say out of the goddamn gates, is what the fuck are these dresses that Tara and Willow are willing? What the fuck are these dresses?

**Jenny:** Tara!

**Kristin:** What are these dresses, why?!

**Jenny:** Tara—it's Halloween. [Kristin laughs] Tara is dressed as the most beautiful rainbow trout you have ever seen. [Kristin laughs] Glinting in the sunlight as she nimbly navigates through the rushing waters of a beautiful forest stream.

**Kristin:** Oh my god.

**Jenny:** Of course this is what they're wearing!

**Kristin:** But it's—

**Jenny:** They are fucking witches in college! [Kristin laughs] They are *vibing*. Do not...

**Kristin:** Okay, fair.

**Jenny:** Step on their vibe.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Fair. So we're back at the Magic Box and also, Xander is fucking around with these fucking doughnuts. And I wish I never knew that this was a reference to Magnolia, [Jenny laughs] because I looked up what the quote actually is. And it's a—I'm upset about it, okay! I'm upset about it. He says, "Respect the cruller, tame the doughnut." And I'm not *saying* what the real line is, because this is a family show.

**Jenny:** Is it?

**Kristin:** No, it's not. But I'm still not saying it. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Okay. Everyone's very reticent to reveal their individual musical goings-on from the night before, but...

**Kristin:** [laughs] Fucking Giles. "I—I sang, but I—I had my guitar—"

**Jenny:** [clears her throat like Giles]

**Kristin:** "That would explain the background singers and the synchronized dancing." [laughs]

**Jenny:** He brought his guitar from England. He's staying at a hotel with room service. Where is this Sunnydale hotel?

**Kristin:** Yeah, I would like to know. I would like to know, because I'll tell you what does not have room service and it's the Sunnydale motel. Xander is like, okay, so let's, like—let's look into this. And he's panicked, because he doesn't wanna sing again. Pretty much nobody, except for maybe—you know, Willow seems very romanticized by the whole thing from the jump. But most of them are just like, okay, let's figure out what this is, then.

[music starts]

**Jenny:** Huh.

**Kristin:** Okay! Well, before they start theorizing, Jenny. I think now—I think now would be a good time for us to explore the musical nature of *this* podcast.

**Jenny:** Yeah. The piano that's playing right now [Kristin laughs] seems to indicate that you are correct, Kristin. This seems like the time.



["Big Fucking Nerds" plays]

**Kristin:** [singing] They've got a theory! Oh fuck, we're singing!

**Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] And it sounds like there's 20 of us.

**Jenny:** [singing] We're on quite a journey, need an expert in TV

**Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] Maybe LaToya will know!

**LaToya:** [speaking] Hey guys.

[sing-talking] There's a whole lot of reasons that we could be seeing

This singing from outta nowhere

Might be time in the season when shows end up needing

An uptick in listens and shares

**Jenny:** [singing in background] Ahh...

**LaToya:** [sing-talking] You don't have a shark you can jump

But you have to get over that hump. Okay?

**Jenny:** [singing] Well, we're not big on spectacle

**Kristin:** [singing] And there's none more dependable

Than Scoobies who lean homosexual!

**Jenny:** [singing] So, what else could it be?

**LaToya:** [sing-talking] Well, sometimes a musical is therapeutical

Feelings need moving along

That could be another clue if either one of you

Processes better in song

**Kristin:** [singing] Jenny's day job is singing hot tracks!

**Jenny:** [singing] But I come to this pod to relax!

**LaToya:** Okayyy...

**Jenny:** [singing] Look, we're good on the processing

**Kristin:** [singing] Though it's odd that we're still singing

**Jenny:** [singing] Maybe somebody does have feelings

**Kristin:** [singing] I bet it's Jenny!

**Jenny:** [speaking] Hey!

**LaToya:** [sing-talking] Now back to your query, an alternate theory  
On tracing the source of these jams:  
Perhaps one of you lesbians might be a thespian  
Doing it all for the fans  
Does anyone sound like the type?

**Jenny:** [sing-talking] Well Kristin, she saw *Rent* eight times! On Broadway!

**LaToya:** [speaking] Oh, that could definitely be it.

**Kristin:** [speaking] Excuse me, but Jenny also starred in *Godspell*.

**Jenny:** [speaking] I didn't *star* in it, I was way in the back!

**LaToya:** [speaking] Okay, I've examined the evidence and I think the truth is, you're just singing because you're nerds.

**Kristin, Jenny, LaToya and the Scooby Nerd Choir:** [singing in background] Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds...

**Jenny:** [singing] Eureka, Doctor Ferguson!

**Kristin, Jenny, LaToya and the Scooby Nerd Choir:** [singing in background] Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds...

**Jenny:** [singing] I think I get what's happening

**Kristin, Jenny, LaToya and the Scooby Nerd Choir:** [singing in background] Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds...

**Jenny:** [singing] When you're looking for explanations,  
Usually the simplest is the right one  
Baby, that's Occam's razor  
Saying that maybe we're just big fucking nerds

**LaToya:** [speaking] Oh, you're *definitely* just big fucking nerds!

**Jenny:** [singing] Neeeeerrds...!

**LaToya:** [speaking] I rest my case! I think that's all there is to it. The answer was right in front of you the whole time... you dummies.

**Kristin, Jenny, LaToya, and the Scooby Nerd Choir:** Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds,  
Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds [repeats]

**Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] Nerds, they're cool  
Nerds, they rule  
You wouldn't be here  
If you weren't one too!

**Kristin, Jenny, LaToya, and the Scooby Nerd Choir:** Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds,  
Nerds, nerds, nerds, nerds [repeats]

[song ends]

**Kristin:** There you have it. Straight from—how honored are we?—resident pop culture expert, LaToya freakin' Ferguson.

**Jenny:** If somebody's gonna diagnose me with a... [Kristin giggles] chronic case of being a nerd, I'm glad it is LaToya?

**Kristin:** Yes, huge thanks to Dr. LaToya, being here to crack that case wide open. Jenny, I think perhaps we should now talk about the brainstorming that the Scoobies are doing here in Sunnydale. We're hitting now the second song in Once More, With Feeling. It's a song in three parts, three distinct—

**Jenny:** A three-fer, if you will.

**Kristin:** Yes, sort of like, what's that Queen song? Bohemian Rhapsody? It's like Sunnydale Rhapsody here. We've got—

**Jenny:** Wow. [Kristin laughs] Um...

**Kristin:** We begin with their theories.

**Jenny:** We do, and to his great credit, Giles really smacks it right on the nose, uhh, coming out of the gate there. Flaming hot!

[Clip from episode plays]

**Giles:** [singing] I've got a theory, that it's a demon  
A dancing demon—no, something isn't right there.

**Jenny:** Unfortunately, he immediately second-guesses himself and therefore we get a whole episode.

**Kristin:** You know what they say, you know, go with your first—go with your gut. Go with your instinct, Giles.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh, yeah. Yeah.

**Kristin:** Turns out that you were correct, but lucky for us, we get a whole song because you don't know it. Xander... [laughs] takes a guess and hits the witch button. Not to be confused with the witch button later in the episode. Sorry...

**Jenny:** Oh my god!

**Kristin:** I gotta go!

**Jenny:** Yeah!

**Kristin:** Xander—Xander, though—what I love about this is that Xander's quickly put in his place, right? He's like, "uhh—"

**Jenny:** By himself.

**Kristin:** "Witches—uh, never mind, no. Witches, like, they were totally—they were persecuted. I've been told all about this many times. As a matter of fact, every time I've said anything wrong about witches, I have been immediately schooled." So he's tucked himself away in the corner, where, in my opinion—

**Jenny:** Mmm. Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** I love to see a Xander tucked away in a corner.

**Jenny:** [laughing] Uh-huh.

**Kristin:** Just... saying. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Well, he looks so neat, back there on the shelf.

**Kristin:** He does. And listen, I know—I know everybody's itching to get to those hoppy feet and twitchy noses. And—but before we get there, I just—I at least wanna say that Tara uses really wonderful jazz hands.

**Jenny:** Are they even jazz hands?

**Kristin:** Oh, they're jazz hands!

**Jenny:** She's—they're—they're swiveling at the wrist. And I feel like—

**Kristin:** Okay, well, I mean—[laughs]

**Jenny:** Jazz hands usually waggle. You know, and then spirit fingers move in a sort of undulating—ah, perhaps I should create a video tutorial... so that you can—

**Kristin:** [simultaneously] You should, because I'm the only one who can see this, and it's a delight. [both laugh]

**Jenny:** Okay. So it's time—it's time! It's time for Anya to have a big moment.

**Kristin:** [happily] Ugh!

**Jenny:** Uh, love to see this breakaway—

**Kristin:** You know—

**Jenny:** Pyrotechnic, confetti-cannon... situation.

**Kristin:** [laughs] It's just, like—nobody's paying att—like, as per usual, Anya has a theory and they don't listen. And granted, bunnies might be a—

**Jenny:** She's a thousand goddamn years old!

**Kristin:** [simultaneously] Maybe listen—right?

**Jenny:** Maybe they should listen more often.

**Kristin:** Maybe listen to her. She says bunnies—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** They all ignore her. There's this beautiful comic silence, where we get, like—

**Jenny:** With crickets!

**Kristin:** [laughs] Yes.

**Jenny:** Chirp-chirp-chirp-chirp-chirp.

**Kristin:** [laughs] A little mini-musical from the crickets. And then—

**Jenny:** Uh-huh.

**Kristin:** Anya is basically like, hey, you fuckers! Listen to me! But she does it in the form of a rockin' song—

**Jenny:** [rock voice] Waaaooooow!

**Kristin:** Bunnies. [laughs]

**Jenny:** [rock voice] Yeeaaaahh!

[Clip from episode plays]

**Anya:** [singing] Bunnies! Bunnies! It must be bunnies!

**Kristin:** She's wearing this, like, incredible, like, triangle shirt. It's like an upside down triangle with a glittering butterfly on it. Sparks are flying—

**Jenny:** Yeah, that's some Lilith Fair shit going on.

**Kristin:** She's, like, very understandably wondering about why bunnies eat carrots. Like, what the fuck do they need to see so well anyway? Solid question. [Jenny laughs] And unfortunately, Anya ends her wonderful bunnies number with another theory—uh, is a bit unfortunate because of the word choice that she uses. She uses a word that is derogatory and a word that we do not like to hear in the universe of Sunnydale, nor in our universe. So calling that out. Um, and then we move into the third portion of our Sunnydale Rhapsody. It's like this togetherness song?

**Jenny:** They're all like, we're together! We're so together! We're a team! But...

**Kristin:** Not... so... believable. I mean, Buffy's—

**Jenny:** No.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Buffy's energy is very much like, apocalypse, bliggedy-blah. Fucking, world ending, smiggedy-smah. She's just like—[Jenny laughs] been there, done it, seen it.

**Jenny:** Mm. Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** And like, in a way that it could almost be positive. Like, we've done this before, we can do it again! But it does not carry that energy and Giles's looks at Buffy as she is journeying through this, like, "apocalypse, blah-blah-blah-blah." He's just like, hmm, something seems—[laughs] amiss. I mean, yes, sir. [laughs]

**Jenny:** The weirdest part is that when they get to the end, Buffy's like, "So what do you think we're dealing with?" and Giles is like, "I thought *you* said it didn't matter."

**Kristin:** Yeah, Giles doesn't know what to do with himself, in this current position, as we will navigate throughout the course of this musical. But yeah, he just—I don't know. He, like—he wants to laugh with her. Like, when she makes the joke and she's like, you know, it's do or die. Somebody says, "it's do or die" and she's like, "hey, I died twice."

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** It cuts to Giles and he's, like, laughing in a very, like, loving, fatherly—like, "oh, that Buffy and her fucking puns." And he just wants her to be back to normal. *She* just wants to be—everybody just wants everything to be back to quote "normal." And spoiler alert.

**Jenny:** Hey!

**Kristin:** That's not gonna happen.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** Yeah, so they, like, come together but it doesn't feel very together, which is really a heartbeat in this musical. And the next question, of course, is—[laughs] great—a great question. "So, okay, well, is it only happening to us?" Anya astutely asks. And Buffy's like, "let me check..."

**Jenny:** Let's check State Street, in Sunnydale.

**Kristin:** Let's—yeah, State Street has seen CGI snakes. It has seen Faith shooting poison darts. It has seen snowfall that is near impossible to have happened, but yet it did. It has seen so many things, [laughing] but today, friends. It is seeing—David Fury, by the way, is the—if you did not know, this guy who's so stoked about his dry cleaning? This is David fucking Fury. And he's singing 'cause he's so—

**Jenny:** Look at him go!

**Kristin:** He's so excited! They got the mustard stain out! They're all holding their shirts. They're flipping, there's—it's great.

**Jenny:** Great choreo. Beautiful colored shirts, flapping this way and that. I'm gonna come out with a very controversial opinion. I simply can't stand to see these people talk about mustard like it's the greatest danger to your clothes that has ever oozed across the Earth. Let me tell you something, Kristin!

["Mustard" starts playing]

**Jenny:** [singing] I've got a bone to pick  
Mustard doesn't stain unless you mix it with some other shit

[music abruptly stops]

**Kristin:** [speaking] Jenny...

[music starts]

**Jenny:** [singing] Like oil or blood...

[music abruptly stops]

**Kristin:** [speaking] Jenny.

[music starts]



**Jenny:** [singing] Or grease from your car under the hood, if you know I meeeeean...!

[music abruptly stops]

**Kristin:** [yells] Jenny!

[song ends]

**Jenny:** Well!

**Kristin:** I'm glad that you got that off your chest. Really—

**Jenny:** Hell yeah!

**Kristin:** Really great. [laughs] We move from the mustard song to—back to the Magic Box. The bell rings again, and this time, it's Dawn. She's just finished her day at High School Musical, part three. [Jenny laughs] I don't know how many High School Musicals are there? And she's all excited to tell them. Immediately deflated 'cause they already know. So she makes up something else.

[Clip from episode plays]

**Dawn:** I gave birth to a pterodactyl.

**Jenny:** First of all. Goals. [Kristin laughs] Second of all. Anya says, "Oh my god, did it sing?"

**Kristin:** [adoringly] Ugh!

**Jenny:** Which, hell yeah! [laughs]

**Kristin:** Give me a sing—give me a choir of singing pterodactyls, as a matter of fact.

**Jenny:** Yes! Please.

**Kristin:** Tara and Willow are whispering to each other, and they are—it's like, we know—

**Jenny:** I just—they're trying to leave, they're trying to leave so bad. They're like, "oh! The books, the texts! The volume—oh, hm!" [blusters] [Kristin laughs] And

Giles is like, "what book?" And literal—Willow literally says, "the..." and then the word that she says is like if you take your fingers on your keyboard and you go, like, A-S-D-F-G-H-J-K-L book. [Kristin laughs] "That's the one we need!"

**Kristin:** Report. It's a [mumbles] report.

**Jenny:** [laughs] Report.

**Kristin:** [laughs] It's just like, Willow is horrible at lying and she's been horrible at lying forever. But apparently, Tara has also picked up this trait or has also been very bad at lying. Because, ladies! Just say you have a—

**Jenny:** Get your shit together!

**Kristin:** Just get it together! Oh my god. So they get up to investigate the [mumbles] report, which is what I like to call it. [laughing] And Dawn—we see Dawn steal something else from the Magic Box. We've seen her stealing a couple of things already—

**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** In previous episodes.

**Jenny:** Thief! Stop, thief!

**Kristin:** [laughs] And we move outside—I—in my notes, where I mark location, I said "outside in... Sunnydale central park?" Like, where... [Jenny laughs] where are we? It's beautiful.

**Jenny:** Yeah, where are they?

**Kristin:** It's very, very beautiful. I learned, in watching some of the commentary, that [laughs] of course, because—it's not funny. But we laugh as the world ends. What else can we do? [Jenny laughs] The babbling brook, the water that is—you know, any time you see running water, you know things are gonna get pretty sexy. But—

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah.

**Kristin:** The hilarity of this is that that stream—the water had to be pumped into it, because it was totally dry. [laughs] Because, you know, LA is a desert and stuff.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh, uh-huh. [laughs]

**Kristin:** Anyway, they're walking in the park. And we have this, like... [sighs] moment with these boys? Um...

**Jenny:** Backpack boys.

**Kristin:** Backpack boys.

**Jenny:** Backpack boy squad!

**Kristin:** [laughs] And they're like, check—so, here. They're checking Tara out. Fair. Tara, of course—of course they are. But also, are they checking Tara out? Or are they like—

**Jenny:** They don't look like they're checking her out. They're like—

**Kristin:** What the fuck is that dress? [laughs]

**Jenny:** Is the ren faire in town? [laughs]

**Kristin:** [laughing] What—yeah. What—what are you wearing, *ma'am*?! But—

**Jenny:** They are wearing—they are wearing, like, long-sleeved t-shirts and backpacks and cargo khakis.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** And they are naturally looking at Willow and Tara, being like, hmm.

**Kristin:** [laughs] What—what are these—?

**Jenny:** I have been meaning to pick up a broadsword. [Kristin laughs] Maybe I should inquire. [both laugh]

**Kristin:** So that—

**Jenny:** Prithee, m'lady, couldst thou point me unto the—did you know that the renaissance faire that goes to LA every year is called the Pleasure Faire? [laughs]

**Kristin:** Ohh, my god. Wow, we're about to fucking go right there, aren't we?

**Jenny:** Yeah, we are!

**Kristin:** We're heading to the Pleasure Faire without pass and go. [laughs] Tara makes this joke that is just—she's like, "oh, they're looking at me? I'm cured!" And you're like, okay. Okay, Tara, we get the joke. [Jenny laughs] And then Willow comes in right on her heels and is like, "Well, what am I supposed to do? I'm not large with the butch." And I'm like, who the fuck wrote these lines?

**Jenny:** Uh... [laughs]

**Kristin:** I know the answer.

**Jenny:** [sarcastically] Oh, definitely a queer woman wrote these lines, right? [Kristin laughs] For sure.

**Kristin:** [sarcastically] For sure! For sure! I mean, if I sat down to write this scene, these are exactly the lines I would have written.

**Jenny:** This is—this is what we call, uhh, a sibling test to the Bechdel test. It's the Buffering test. [Kristin laughs] If you close your eyes and you can picture a queer person you know saying the dialogue... [Kristin laughs] then it passes. [laughs]

**Kristin:** "Not large with the butch!" [sarcastically] I say that all the time. [both laugh] So, anyhow...

**Jenny:** [stilted British accent] I have *researched*! [laughs]

**Kristin:** So anyhow...

**Jenny:** [stilted British accent] I have *researched*! Relevant lingo! [both laugh] And my findings are thus!

**Kristin:** So, um... basically, Tara is like, how could they possibly be looking at me? And then she's like, I know what they see in me and it's you. And—[sighs]

**Jenny:** [laughing] 1080P HD. [both laugh]

**Kristin:** Okay—we'll get there. Just hold your fucking [Jenny cackles] gay-ass horses, for one goddamn second. [laughs] I just wanna say one thing, which is that I've always been really upset about this line and this concept that, like, Tara wasn't anything before, like, Willow. Like, I just didn't like the narrative. And then I was,

like, starting to be like, okay. Like, I do think that Willow, like, helped Tara understand who she is. And the first line of this song...

[Clip from episode plays]

**Tara:** [singing] I lived my life in shadow  
Never the sun on my face  
It didn't seem so sad, though  
I figured that was my place

**Kristin:** And I was like, okay, okay. Maybe it wasn't as much, like, Willow bringing Tara out of her shell as it was, like, a direct call to, like, that Tara was—you know, couldn't be out. Like, couldn't be out to her family and couldn't sort of like live as authentically as she can now.

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** That not only Willow, but like, all of the Scoobies stood up for her. And if that—if that is, like, the—if that's what's happening, if that's part of what's happening, then I'm like, very much here for the messaging a little bit more than I was before.

**Jenny:** Mm, mm.

**Kristin:** Okay, so now I've said my fucking feelings, Jenny. And you can just fucking stomp around in your 1080P HD boots, okay? [laughs]

**Jenny:** What. The. Hell? [Kristin laughs] First of all, these girls are doing fucking glitter magic in public.

**Kristin:** If my hand could shoot out glitter, I would constantly be moving it like that.

**Jenny:** I know Sunnydale is a place where a lot of things happen, but... I'm operating under the assumption that everyone's still trying to keep their mystical business on the down-low. [Kristin laughs] I do wanna say, I love how they get from the park into the bedroom.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** They twirl and there's a bit of, like, Gondry-esque magic that happen—they twirl all the way! Their love is so powerful! That they twirl! [Kristin laughs] From the park! Into the bedroom!

**Kristin:** They fall into bed. Just a note that there's a stuffed puppy on the bed. Like, just—

**Jenny:** Lord. Have mercy.

**Kristin:** An interesting choice for—

**Jenny:** Ladies. [laughs]

**Kristin:** For this scene. Well, like, it's fine that Willow and Tara have a stuffed puppy on their bed.

**Jenny:** Sure, sure, sure.

**Kristin:** But it's interesting to me that the props department was like, okay!

**Jenny:** Let's make sure—

**Kristin:** [simultaneously] The ladies are gonna fuck! Let's put a stuffed puppy on the bed! [both laugh]

**Jenny:** Let's get the mood *dialed*. [Kristin laughs] Kristin, I know you have some things to say about this portion of the libretto.

**Kristin:** [laughs] I do, I do. The erotic novel sometimes writes itself. I will read now to you—it's been a minute. An erotic novel. [speaking slowly] "The moon to the tide. I can feel you inside. Surging—"

**Jenny:** In her heart.

**Kristin:** Excuse me, I'm performing. [both laugh] [speaking slowly] "Surging like the sea. I break with every swell. Spread beneath my Willow... tree." Wooowww!

**Jenny:** I distinctly recall you saying earlier in this taping that this is a family show.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Like, how? How? This is what's amazing to me, is that, like, the network had, like, a big fucking hullabaloo about these two kissing. But like, these

lyrics, they were like, "yeah, yeah, I guess that's fine? I don't—yeah. Sure." [both laugh] Like! I just! This is, like, porn. This is porn—this is porn.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** The amount of times Tara talks about having Willow inside—

**Jenny:** [simultaneously] This is actually—you know what this reminds me of?

**Kristin:** What?

**Jenny:** Have you ever checked out Missed Connections on Craigslist?

**Kristin:** [laughs] I know of it, but I haven't spent a lot of time there. But I know of it.

**Jenny:** The two sections that I have checked out in the past are Men for Men and Women for Women. And the Men for Men ones are like, [gruff voice] "ohhh! [Kristin laughs] We were in this bookstore or gym or whatever and we went in the back and we engaged in the following activities. [Kristin laughs] And I would love to, like, do that again! Ahhh!" [Kristin laughs] Whatever. And then, the Women for Women Missed Connections are like, [dramatically] "ohhh, but the arrow of Diana has pierced my heart! [Kristin laughs] You! [both laugh] You lit up the sub—the last car on the F train at approximately 7:23 PM and I remember because I was on my way home to watch HGTV! [Kristin laughs] Or perhaps, Buffy the Vampire Slayer! And oh! You looked upon me! And then—"

**Kristin:** Oh. My god.

**Jenny:** "You looked away! And lo! Your stop came and went. And then I was alone again!"

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Jenny:** You know?

**Kristin:** Standing ovation for fucking Jenny Owen Youngs. [laughs] Apparently—

**Jenny:** Well, there's just a—there is a—I mean, it's not—you know, it's not all one thing all the time.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** But those were the general vibes that I gleaned from [both laugh] checking out the Missed Connections on Craigslist.

**Kristin:** You, left your stuffed puppy on my bed. [Jenny laughs] Me, looking for you ever since. [both laugh]

**Jenny:** You, the most beautiful rainbow trout I had ever a-spied! [both laugh] Me, the equivalent of a dry river bed in Los Angeles until you! [laughs]

**Kristin:** Okay, that's it—

**Jenny:** Pumped ceaseless gallons!

**Kristin:** Where's my—pull her off stage! [both laugh] You're cut off! Youngs. Wow. Willow goes off-screen. [sarcastically] I don't know where. I don't know where she goes. [both laugh]

**Jenny:** She looks like she's got a job to do. She looks like she has a sense of purpose, is what I can say. [both laugh]

**Kristin:** I mean, honest to god, I don't even know how she could possibly deal with the weight of that dress! I mean, what is happening?

**Jenny:** Well, I'll tell you what's happening. [both laugh] Fucking levitation, Kristin!

[“On Ren Faire Dresses and Levitatilingus” plays]

**Jenny:** [singing] I’ve got a question, a tiny question  
Don’t you think something like, say, levitation  
Would require an awful lot of concentration?

**Kristin:** [singing] Maybe this is just how witches do it every time they do it  
Tara doesn’t look surprised to me

**Jenny:** [singing] But what about the vending machine?

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] The people have a right to know!  
The people have a right to know!

**Kristin:** [singing] I’ve got a question, a tiny question  
It’s hard to hit a target when it’s moving



Especially when you are also floating  
But do we even know if Willow's floating?!

**Jenny:** [singing] It's impossible to say  
What's going on just out of frame

**Kristin:** [singing] Whatever it is, it's pretty gay

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] The people have a right to know!  
The people have a right to know!

**Jenny:** [singing] In the heat of the action  
Was that a magic-gasm?!  
This is a family show!

**Kristin:** [singing] What happens when it's over?  
Do they fall down or keep floating?

**Jenny:** [singing] Do the people really have a right to knooooooooow?

**Kristin:** [singing] I say noooooooooooooo!

[song ends]

**Kristin:** In defense of Willow and Tara. Through that musical journey, Jenny, I realized that we don't have the right to know. As much as we wonder upon the goings-on—

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** We do not have a right to know.

**Jenny:** It's truly none of our business.

**Kristin:** None of our business. Although I will say that one of our listeners posited that perhaps far, far away, there was a vending machine that they were simply trying to move. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Mmm! [laughs]

**Kristin:** It was just really far away, you know? Some vending machines, when they're right there, you just have to hold hands. But like, if they're far away, you have to take a different—some different measures.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Kristin:** Is all.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm! Hard cut, as Tara sings "You make me com... plete."

**Kristin:** The cut to the Magic Box is so hard that we don't even get the bell. [laughs] And of course, there's more of this, like, Dawn shit, of them being like, don't talk about sex in front of Dawn!

**Jenny:** Well, and Giles saying, "I'm sure they're making every effort." [Kristin laughs] And Xander being like, [blusters]. [both laugh] And Dawn is like, "Guys, I know about sex and gay people, it's fine."

**Kristin:** Yeah, but—like, does she? Does anybody?

**Jenny:** Well!

**Kristin:** As previously mentioned, does anybody know? [both laugh] I don't think so.

**Jenny:** She knows as much as the rest of us.

**Kristin:** [laughs] So, um... we cut from this scene out to the street, the alley, what have you. We get this incredible tap dance number, so incredible that it ends [laughing] in flame.

**Jenny:** Um, listen.

**Kristin:** Be careful!

**Jenny:** I don't—

**Kristin:** Tap dancers, be careful.

**Jenny:** I don't want anybody to die [Kristin laughs] and I know that, like, people dying is bad, especially in the context of this show. You know?

**Kristin:** Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** You wanna prevent all deaths, particularly mystical ones, whenever you can. But... the threat of, like, oh no, I might be compelled to dance until I spontaneously combust [Kristin laughs] just doesn't have the, like, weight of a threat that I want—although I guess it is a musical. So keeping that in mind, you know, maybe—maybe it's, like, where the road of Buffy the Vampire Slayer and musicals converge—

**Kristin:** Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** Is like, they compromise and they're like—

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** "Okay, people are gonna die. But it's gonna be absolutely ludicrous."

**Kristin:** [laughs] Well, and I mean, like, it's a one-two punch, right? It's like, there's a physical threat and an emotional threat. And the emotional threat is much larger than the physical threat, but you need the physical threat to move the—move the people along.

**Jenny:** To really—yeah, raise the stakes, sure.

**Kristin:** Because we don't recognize emotional threats nearly as quickly as we recognize [laughing] physical threats, so. After this man bursts into flames, we get a little reveal. We don't get the full reveal quite yet, but we pan up to who we know is Sweet. And he says, "That's entertainment."

**Jenny:** [laughing] Counterpoint. Personally. Watching someone dance until they spontaneously combust [Kristin laughs] is not entertaining, to *me*. [both laugh] Okay, so we head over to Xander and Anya's house where they are waking up surrounded by, among other things, five model convertibles, two bobbly head fuzzy dogs that you put in the rear of your car, [Kristin laughs] and two—not one, but two lava lamps.

**Kristin:** Oh my god, yes. They are in bed, surrounded by accoutrements. And, um, they're talking about breakfast.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh.

**Kristin:** Xander's like, "Do you want me to make you waffles? An omelette?" They're wearing fantastic—the costuming is fantastic in this. Xander is wearing silk pajamas that are maybe, like, two sizes too big for him.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh.

**Kristin:** And Anya is wearing this, like, silk—silk—what I've learned are called tap pants. They're, like, short—like, shorts. But they look like a skirt. They're silk, and like, a bralette that matches. She's looking good. [Jenny clears throat] They're looking great together. You alright over there, Jenny?

**Jenny:** [coughs] [blusters; Kristin laughs] She's also wearing matching heels.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Oh, yeah.

**Jenny:** But pajama heels.

**Kristin:** Pajama heels, yes.

**Jenny:** With floofs.

**Kristin:** You know they're pajama heels 'cause they are fluffy. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. She is quite literally the cutest of the Scoobies. Look at her go. Look at her go!

**Kristin:** Aw. She really is. She—she wake—you know, they're about to get out of bed and it's very clear they're bursting into song. And their whole song is written in this very, like... retro—she says it later. She says, like, a retro-pastiche. But it's written in, like, a Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire kind of a way.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Very classical—

**Jenny:** Very like, golden age of Hollywood musical kind of—and the costuming to match, you know?

**Kristin:** Yes. Totally. Anya comes out, starting us off on this song, saying basically—not basically, literally—"vengeance was mine but I'm out of the biz. The name I made, I'll trade for his." Whew! That's a line. That's a line.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh!

**Kristin:** Xander's—Xander's lyrics are written quite well, almost as though the person writing the lyrics had a deep understanding of the character. [laughs] Because there's a couple of, like—like, lines where he goes to say something really dirty, but then, like, pivots. And it's fun—it is funny, when it comes back around at the end of the song. But he says, like, "Wrapped in your tight... embrace, tight embrace!" And like, ew, Xander. Gross, man. [Jenny laughs] Fucking get it together. But it's very—it's, like—as much as I'm like, "gross, Xander," I'm like, this is a good lyric—like, this is such a Xander lyric. This is exactly what Xander would sing if Xander was singing.

**Jenny:** Uh, yes. Agree. Good. It is good.

**Kristin:** It is good.

**Jenny:** In defense of Xander, those cheeses do look pretty bad.

**Kristin:** Those cheeses look horrible! Listen—

**Jenny:** Don't eat those cheeses!

**Kristin:** Do not! Throw those cheeses away immediately. They are—

**Jenny:** Those cheeses have evolved into, like, medicine, maybe? But also maybe just garbage.

**Kristin:** [simultaneously] Oh, yeah, yeah. They're—totally. What is it? Penicillin?

**Jenny:** Penicillin?

**Kristin:** Yeah. Yeah. [laughs] You're set. So, um, this whole song is just them singing the things that they don't wanna tell each other about what they don't like about each other. And unlike a song we will get to in the training room, they are hearing everything the other person is saying.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kristin:** And some of it is silly, like skeezy cheeses and hairy toes and whatever. But some of it is, like, very real. Xander specifically thinking that Anya thinks he's ordinary, right? He's not gonna be successful, he's not gonna be able to, like, give

her what she needs. And Anya saying "like it's all just temporary" and that throughline of, like, feeling like—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** She loves this person and wants to commit to this person, but it always feels like he's not quite there, he's not quite committed. And so, the funniness of it is offset, if you really, you know, listen to the song, with the, like, under current of some of their marital or premarital issues, if you will. Anya—Emma Caulfield is, like, obviously, you know, a trained—at least trained-ish dancer. She knows what's she fucking doing. And fucking—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Nicholas Brendan is just like, ba-da-ba-da-ba-baah! Like, he's just like—[laughs]

**Jenny:** Honk!

**Kristin:** And it's so—the, like, combo of it is really—

**Jenny:** [simultaneously] Which is nice!

**Kristin:** It is. It's really, really—

**Jenny:** Yeah, it's very them.

**Kristin:** Yes, totally.

**Jenny:** We do get, like, a lot of camera angles that we don't normally see that do really bring to mind, you know, a more cinematic—

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Majestic musical approach.

**Kristin:** Totally. And we haven't said this yet, but I'm sure that if you're listening, you know this, that this episode was shot in widescreen. And so, a lot of the camera work is different and more complicated than other episodes. But also, like, just the fact that it is in widescreen makes the spaces feel different, because we can see more of them at once—

**Jenny:** Right.

**Kristin:** Than we have ever seen before. So anyway. They have told each other all of their secrets. They fall into the chair, hysterically laughing, in a, again, classic move. But they are definitely not laughing on the inside. [Jenny laughs] Because they're like, fuck! We have these issues with each other and, like, we were keeping them all secret and now they're out—all out on the table.

**Jenny:** You know. Listen. As two people who have been married—in fact, to each other—we might actually be able to help them out. You know what I mean? They seem to be forgetting one important piece of the equation.

["You Can Always Get Divorced" starts playing]

**Kristin:** Ookay. We're really—we're just gonna do it.

**Jenny:** [yelling] This one goes out to all you people who are afraid to commit!  
[Kristin laughs] Oh!

**Kristin:** Oh my god.

**Jenny:** Relationships are hard and scary! Except...

**Kristin:** Nothing like a musical to put it all on the table.

**Kristin:** [singing] Xander and Anya  
It's been weighing on ya  
You're scared that you might make  
A really big mistake

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] But take it from two girls who've been down  
the line  
There's no knot so knotted it can't be untied  
You can always get divorced  
You can always get divorced  
You might even be better friends if you reverse your course  
Yeah, you can always get divorced

**Jenny:** [singing] You might discover  
He hogs all the covers

**Kristin:** [singing] Or she might get incensed

And start taking vengeance

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] But listen two girls with experience  
If shit gets bananas, you just hit eject  
You can always get divorced  
You can always get divorced  
You might even be better friends if you reverse your course  
Yeah, you can always get divorced

[Kristin and Jenny making rhythmic wedding bell sounds]

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] You can always get divorced  
You can always get divorced...

**Jenny and Kristin:** [speaking] We did it!

[song ends]

**Kristin:** We did do it.

**Jenny:** And so can you!

**Kristin:** Who can say that they have both gotten divorced and sang about it? And harmonized about it? You know? We're—there—

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** There's poetry in that, if you do ask me.

**Jenny:** Hmm.

**Kristin:** [laughs] You know, Jenny, this seems as good a time as ever to, like, go get a glass of water. Maybe a glass of wine. And take a little intermission from a sponsor or two?

**Jenny:** [gasps] [sings] Let's go out to the lobby!

[AD BREAK]

**Kristin:** Okay, so. Xander and Anya are walking with Giles. This is a very long shot—actually learned that this shot—this was, like, the twenty-first time they had done this shot. So—



**Jenny:** Oh my word.

**Kristin:** Watch it again with the knowledge that these actors and dancers have all done this twenty times before the shot—the take we're seeing. Because it's really long and there's a lot of elements. And I think that the first thing that we come to... is Marti fucking Noxon.

**Jenny:** Wow!

["Wow Wow Wow" starts playing]

**Jenny:** Wow! Wow! Wow!  
Excitement unlocked!  
Wow! Wow! Wow!  
Holy shit, that rocked!

[song ends]

**Jenny:** Mm-hmm!

**Kristin:** What a singer! Wow, wow, wow indeed. Marti Noxon has some fucking pipes, man. And—

**Jenny:** Yeah, sounds great.

**Kristin:** She sounds great and she's—[laughs] she's singing really a song—like, very relatable content for me. "It isn't right, it isn't fair, there was no parking anywhere." Like, she's not like, "I didn't see the hydrant, I didn't—" you know what I mean? Like, her argument is simply, "There was no parking, so the rules don't apply." Which is a—which is—[laughs]

**Jenny:** But then she continues and says, "I think that hydrant wasn't there."

**Kristin:** [laughs] And *then* she continues and says, "I'm just a poor girl, don't you care? Hey, I'm not wearing underwear." So—

**Jenny:** Nice!

**Kristin:** Just—all the tactics. You know, when I used to be an actor, it was sort of like, what's your motivation and how are—like, what do you want and how are you gonna get it?

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** She wants to not have this ticket and she's got a lot of tricks up her sleeve. [laughs] She's going for all of 'em.

**Jenny:** Yep. Yep!

**Kristin:** Pretty sure she's leaving with a ticket, so sorry about that, Marti.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** We see more dancing. There's a couple dancing, which, hey. Little egg—little Easter egg, this is the choreographers. The two choreographers, they were put in last minute, those two little dancers, doing their little things.

**Jenny:** Ohhh.

**Kristin:** Yep. And the broom dancers are dancing. There's just a lot going on.

**Jenny:** Giles is telling Xander and Anya that he was able to examine a body of a spontaneously-combusted person, while the police were busy taking "witness arias."

**Kristin:** [laughs] I missed that! See? You can—

**Jenny:** [singing operatically] I saw a person... go up in flames, while he was dancing! [sings tune] [speaking] I don't actually know what the musical requirements of an aria, but—

**Kristin:** Unbelievable.

**Jenny:** That's my approximation. No offense intended to our opera enthusiast listenership.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Oh, they—I'm sure they enjoyed that, heartily.

**Jenny:** Mm. [laughs]

**Kristin:** And yeah, Xander—like, so—Giles is also like, you know, "Buffy doesn't seem like herself." It's just like, yeah, dude! Fucking let me—

**Jenny:** I wonder why, you fucking fuck!

**Kristin:** [laughs] And Xander, to his credit, is like, dude—essentially, like, dude. Like, she's easing back into it. We just yanked her out of a fucking hell dimension and like, whatever. And Giles is like, "I'm helping her as much as I can." To which I say, are you though, sir? Are you? Anya does a nice pat-pat-pat [laughing] on Giles's shoulder to comfort him.

**Jenny:** Aww!

**Kristin:** Very cute. [Jenny laughs] Though, that widescreen—that widescreen is really—

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah.

**Kristin:** Showing itself here in this fucking—

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah.

**Kristin:** Entry to Spike's lair, where we can see the upstairs and him coming up from the downstairs all at the same time. Hot, hot, hot!

**Jenny:** Buffy acknowledges the whole musical thing that's going on in Sunnydale.

**Kristin:** The way that Spike—like, the way that Spike explains that he does, in fact, know. Even though he says he's immune, but he knows that the musical is happening, is because he saw a 600-pound demon "making like Yma Sumac." Yma Sumac—I was like, I didn't know who Yma Sumac was. And I was like, what is Spike referencing? So I looked up Yma Sumac, Jenny, and Yma Sumac was a Peruvian coloratura soprano. I don't know if that's how you say that, but that is a soprano who is, like, a type of operatic soprano that can do agile runs and leaps and trills. She had a five-octave fucking range.

**Jenny:** Mmm!

**Kristin:** And she was an international success. She—and I—like, literally, when I discovered this, I started playing her. I, like, sent the Spotify link over to friends and we were just, like, fucking—you need to—as soon as you're done with this podcast, go to Spotify or wherever you listen to music and fucking listen to some Yma Sumac. 'Cause it's amazing and also, just of course, Spike. Right? He's like—he's a man of taste, you know? He's a lot of things, but he's a man of taste.

So I just love to think about him just, like, jamming out to some Yma Sumac in his lair. [laughs]

**Jenny:** For reference, some—some... musical giants who also have five-octave ranges are folks like Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey.

**Kristin:** She's just such a badass and I was very delighted to find her through Once More, With Feeling. [both laugh] Anyway.

**Jenny:** Spike says, "Oh, so you've come to pump me for information." And she says, "What else would I want to pump you for?" [Kristin laughs] [clears throat] Spike's like, "[blusters] I'm so immune, it's hilarious that everyone else is singing but me. Anyway, you should really get going, ah, look at the time. [Kristin laughs] You've gotta—you've gotta go on." And then he's like—

**Kristin:** This is like—

**Jenny:** [sings] "I died!" And they both have looks of utter disgust and disappointment on their faces, and it is real funny.

**Kristin:** I mean, it honestly could be, like, the best moment in the series is their—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Complete—

**Jenny:** They're both just like, "oh god, it's happening!"

**Kristin:** Like, Buffy is way more upset about this moment than she was when she had to kill Angel. You know what I mean? Like, this is far more—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Upsetting to her. [laughs] She—

**Jenny:** Meanwhile, I'm just, you know, wondering, what does Spike plug his fridge into again? Like...

**Kristin:** Mmm. He gets the—you know—

**Jenny:** A fridge generally needs, like, a dedicated—you know—

**Kristin:** Yeah, demon—demon electric. You know. You know.

**Jenny:** Oh, right, right, right, right.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Okay. [both laugh]

**Kristin:** Yeah, so. Oh my god. He's so embarrassed, he can't stand it. She's so embarrassed, she can't stand it.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** And he says this first line that you already said, Jenny. And right after, he gets his, like, first line out—or right before, I don't even know. He just says, "Mm, mm."

[Clip from episode plays]

**Spike:** [singing] And why you come to be with me,  
I think I finally know...  
Mm-mmm

**Kristin:** So sexy that I die every fucking time.

**Jenny:** Well, I don't want you to die, Kristin.

["Problematic Fave" starts playing]

**Jenny:** But counter offer. We could, instead—

**Kristin:** Mmm.

**Jenny:** Sing a song about it!

**Kristin:** Mmm! You know—

**Jenny:** If you want to!

**Kristin:** That sounds great, Jenny. That sounds fucking great.

**Jenny:** [singing] Mmm ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba

Spike looks good  
Mmm ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba  
Spike looks good!

**Kristin:** [singing] Well, I never wanted to be fabric before  
'Til I saw that black tee hugging all your contours

**Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba ba mmm  
ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good  
Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good

**Jenny:** [singing] Got your washboard abs and black nails workin' for me  
Let me see those boots come off in 1080p (HD!)

**Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba ba mmm  
ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good  
Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good

**Jenny:** [singing] You're a bleach-blonde evil fiend  
Who clawed his way out of the grave  
But you're still our number one problematic fave!

**Jenny:** [sing-talking] Now if only we had one more person to weigh in—  
Oh my fucking god, it's Joanna Robinson!

**Joanna:** [singing] Well, no one stands a chance against your cheekbones  
I would save you all my mini marshmallows

**Jenny:** [singing in background] She'll save the marshmallows

**Joanna, Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good  
Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good

**Jenny:** [singing] Slurpin some blood, Spike looks good!

**Kristin:** [singing] A sensitive stud, Spike looks good!

**Joanna:** [singing] Long leather coat, Spike looks good!

**All:** [singing] Smokin a smoke, Spike looks good!

**Joanna, Kristin and Jenny:** [singing] Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good  
Mmm ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba ba  
Spike looks good...  
Spike looks good!

[song ends]

**Kristin:** Hot diggedy dog! [Jenny laughs] Well, that's my favorite part about—[laughs with Jenny] somewhere, that is my favorite part about bursting into song. I mean, who knew that just by feeling turned on by Spike, such a beautiful musical ode would happen? [laughs] Also, Joanna fucking Robinson!

**Jenny:** Also—yeah! She just dropped in out of nowhere, disappeared—

**Kristin:** Fucking—

**Jenny:** In a puff of smoke. A big part of musicals, I think, is sort of the timely and magical appearance of things when you need them most.

**Kristin:** Mm. Mm. Yeah. Definitely. Anyway, so back to Spike. He is singing, just like we just were. He is singing a song called Rest in Peace. "You're ashamed of what you feel," he says to Buffy.

**Jenny:** Mmm!

**Kristin:** "A whisper in a dead man's ear—" you think it doesn't make it real. He doesn't say "you think," but that's what the line, uh, intones.

**Jenny:** Mmm!

**Kristin:** It's very—this is a—like, this is classic problematic fucking fave shit right here. Because he's like, I—I'm only dead to you. Being with you touches me more than I can say, so get the fuck out of here! [laughs] Like, just like—

**Jenny:** Ohh.

**Kristin:** It's not, you know, grounded in a very—

**Jenny:** Well...

**Kristin:** Mature emotional space, if you will. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Hey, no, I think Spike is drawing a boundary.

**Kristin:** He's trying.

**Jenny:** He's saying, I won't be a plaything any longer.

**Kristin:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** Uh, come back when you're serious—

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** About these washboard abs.

**Kristin:** No, and I—I joke about, like—mature is, of course—like, I said it to make a point. But it's not the right word, because it's—I think this is very relatable content. Like, if you have a crush on somebody and they don't like you—they don't like you back, right? I mean, that—it's not actually the truth here. But like, you want to say, like, okay then I can't hang out with you anymore. Right? Like, I can't see you anymore. But then you're constantly like, okay, but maybe just one time. You know, like, it's very hard, I think, for so many of us to take care of ourselves—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** When we know that, like, what we're doing isn't good for us, but like, fuck! It just feels really good anyway! It's very hard. So I do understand Spike. I don't think you're immature. I think that you have a big heart. I mean, he has—this line, which I think Joss said was the first line he wrote in this song, was: "If my heart could beat, it would break my chest." Which, like... credit where credit is due.

**Jenny:** So great.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Fantastic—



**Jenny:** It's a great line.

**Kristin:** Fantastic line. And seems, like, so accurate in Spike describing what he's feeling. That like, he can't—and he's, like—he's so attracted to Buffy and is like, you need to leave. Because if I can't have you, then like, I can't just constantly be wanting for you. And he also can't kill. Like, let us not forget that, like, so many of the, like, desires that Spike has are inaccessible for him to, like, meet. And he—he's speaking about Buffy, for sure. But I think that he's just, like, feeling a lot of fucking stress and frustration and overwhelm—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** In a lot of ways. And he does not like to talk about those things, but ha-ha! Joke's on you, Spike, you're in a musical. [laughs]

[Clip from episode plays]

**Spike:** [singing] I know I should go  
But I follow you like a man possessed  
There's a traitor here, beneath my breast  
And it hurts me more than you've ever guessed...

**Jenny:** Ahhh!

**Kristin:** Ah! Spike!

**Jenny:** I just—Kristin—have a question.

**Kristin:** Mm.

**Jenny:** Have you ever been to a nighttime funeral?

**Kristin:** [laughs] You know, um, I haven't, Jenny.

**Jenny:** Maybe funerals are cheaper if you book the night shift.

**Kristin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like having your wedding on a Sunday, you know, instead of a Saturday.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** You, like, save some money if you do the post-7 PM... [laughs] funeral.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yep, yep, yep.

**Kristin:** He jumps on the coffin. Great, great imagery of this, like—

**Jenny:** Very good.

**Kristin:** Surfing coffin situation. And then he, like, throws everything around. And Buffy and he tumble... into...

**Jenny:** Oh, no!

**Kristin:** An open—you know that—

**Jenny:** Oops!

**Kristin:** You know that feeling when you accidentally tumble into an open grave with the person you love?

**Jenny:** With your crush? [Kristin laughs] Yeah! A story as old as time.

**Kristin:** So, you know. They have a moment. Buffy is on top of Spike, which is accurate in—you know, just saying. That is how this would go. And she leaps out of the grave and runs off into the distance, because hell no, she's not gonna do that. And Spike has probably the most comedic moment in the entire episode. Where his little peroxide head just pops right out of the grave and he's like—

**Jenny:** Yep, yep, yep.

**Kristin:** "So. So you're not staying then?"

**Jenny:** Just like Groundhog Day. [both laugh] Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** "So then... okay, so then you're really gonna go. Okay." [laughs] It's very cute.

**Jenny:** Oh, dear.

**Kristin:** Ugh.

**Jenny:** Oh, dear!

**Kristin:** Cut to—

**Jenny:** Over at the Summers' house, Dawn is upending her plastic, transparent backpack. [gasps] Is this backpack symbolic of everyone trying to keep their secrets but being completely [Kristin laughs] unable to?

**Kristin:** Wow!

**Jenny:** Helpless in the thrall of Sweet's, uh, forced singing.

**Kristin:** Um, so Tara is here, to tell Dawn what's going on. But this scene is here for a couple of reasons, one of which is for Dawn to be the catalyst for Tara to realize that something horrible—truly—has happened. That Willow has done something truly horrible. And Dawn says to Tara, "I'm glad you guys made up." And Tara's like, "What are you talking about?" And Dawn's like, "You don't have to pretend around me." And then there's this beautiful reprise—what would you call it? It's not a reprise. It's just like, the—a chord. A bit of the—the... melody from Under Your Spell plays in a very sad way. And we haven't talked about Christophe Beck yet in this episode. But Christophe Beck was responsible for a lot of the score and also created the ballet we're—the music to the ballet that we're about to go into. That was Christophe Beck, too. The guidance—this reminds of, like, when I work with you, Jenny. Like, basically, the guidance that Joss said he gave to Christophe Beck was like, "Can you make it sound like Peter and the Wolf?" Which is like, literally—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Like, that's, like—that's what I do. And I'm like, okay, go. Ready, go! [laughs]

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And we can tell that it's a sad version of Under Your Spell because the chords are a little more mournful, and also the melody is being played by maybe, like, an English horn or an oboe.

**Kristin:** Ugh, this is awful. This is awful. Tara has this, like, moment of realization all at once, where she puts her hand to the flower that she—at the beginning, we didn't say. But at the beginning, she sort of found that little flower on the bed and she pinned it to her shirt. And so she now has her hand over that flower and she's realizing—'cause she's already—I mean, obviously. They've already set the stage for the fact that Willow is using magic in really irresponsible and dangerous ways. Tara has been the first one to really, really push back on that. I mean, Giles has pushed back, but not like Tara. Tara sees it much more intimately and so, in an

instant—and you know this instant. Like, if you've had a moment like this, you know it. It's like where all of the little threads that have been sort of, like, out there, suddenly are like, whoonk! And this is what happens to Tara in this moment. And—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** She doesn't know exactly what the flower is. And probably, that's the worst part of, like, an experience like this—

**Jenny:** Ugh.

**Kristin:** Is like, the—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** "Oh my god" and then the—like, then she's gonna run and she's gonna go to—you know, we will see that she goes to the Magic Box and we'll get there in a minute. But it's just awful. Like, the knowing but the not-knowing? Like, maybe if I look this up in a book—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** It will say, like, your most beloved gives it to you and then, presto-change-o, you're wearing a fucking trout dress. You know? Like, oh great, that was all it was. [Jenny laughs] No, it wasn't. It was a lot worse than that. But we'll get—we're gonna get there. I'm getting ahead of myself. So Tara leaves.

**Jenny:** [dramatically] Then! What do we have here, but a Dawn left alone! [Kristin laughs] Alone with a copy of a teen heartthrob magazine on her little vanity—

**Kristin:** Ugh!

**Jenny:** With Justin Timberlake's curly-headed little sixteen-year-old face on it. Soo... staring down into the middle distance, Dawn wonders to herself, feeling lonely and sad and forgotten...

[Clip from episode plays]

**Dawn:** [singing] Does anybody even notice?  
Does anybody even care?

[music gets sinister; Dawn screams]

**Jenny:** And you know who cares? A huge fucking ventriloquist dummy!

**Kristin:** Yeah. Seriously. Fucking three, as a matter of fact. They care a lot.

**Jenny:** I hate their faces.

**Kristin:** This moment of Dawn—you know, we've cast people in our universe as various voices, right? Bess Rogers as Willow and Chris Farren as Xander. And all manner of things, right. And we cast Gaby Dunn as Dawn and this moment was really, real—like, it really hit for me, you know? Because it's like—[laughs]

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah.

**Kristin:** Dawn's like, [sings] "Can you pay attention to me?"

**Jenny:** Gaby Dunn could really teach Dawn a thing or two. About being noticed!

**Kristin:** [laughs] Do you think that, like, Beetlejuice—if we say her name a third time, she will just mystically appear?

**Jenny:** You know, considering who we're talking about, I'm kinda surprised she didn't just appear after the first time you said her name. [Kristin laughs] But why don't we give it a go? Three, two, one...

**Kristin and Jenny:** Gaby Dunn?

["O! To Be Mentioned!" starts playing]

**Gaby:** [singing] Well, I couldn't help but overhear  
You said the magic words, my dear  
One's "Dunn" and then the other is "Gaby"

**Jenny:** [singing in background: Gaby, Gaby...

**Gaby:** [singing] You know what to expect when you mention me...

**Jenny:** [singing in background: Mention me...

**Gaby:** [singing] Did I ever tell you all about  
The time that I almost made out with—

**Jenny:** [speaking] Gaby, we're actually kind of in the middle of something right now?

**Gaby:** [singing] Okay, byeeeee...

[song ends]

**Kristin:** Uh, well, I guess our summoning trick worked. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Thank you? [Kristin laughs harder] Question mark? To Gaby Dunn. Always here when mentioned.

**Kristin:** Always here when mentioned.

**Jenny:** We love you, Gaby.

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Jenny:** Okay.

**Kristin:** Um, we have moved—Dawn has been kidnapped. And she is now in the Bronze, the sort of repurposed Bronze. Like, it's recognizably the Bronze, but it's—specifically, the stairs have been changed, and we'll find out why in a minute. [Jenny laughs] But Dawn wakes up on the pool table. And we get Dawn's ballet, and Michelle Trachtenberg is, of course, trained in ballet and said to Joss, how about I don't sing? How about I dance?

**Jenny:** But she also sings. [laughs]

**Kristin:** She does. And she does a gre—I think that Dawn does a good job singing, actually.

**Jenny:** Yeah, she sounds great.

**Kristin:** Or Michelle—[laughs] Dawn. Michelle Trachtenberg does a good job singing. And so there's this beautiful—it's really quite nice. I really love the dance.

**Jenny:** [simultaneously] Yeah, the dancing is nice.

**Kristin:** And it's, you know, these three—these mannequin heads, I know we mentioned them, but they're terrifying. And they're actually not—they were, like,

made elsewhere. These are not from, like, the main Buffy crew of, like, makeup and props. They had these made—I can't remember the name of the company.

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** But they're outsourced, and I feel like you can kinda tell. Like, they're scary in a way that seems, like, a little out of universe. And—

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** They do this dance around her, et cetera. She does—and Michelle Trachtenberg does this slide across the fucking floor. Like, this is really Michelle Trachtenberg—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** Sliding on her fucking knees across, she hits these stairs I was talking about. And tippity-tap-tap-tip. Here comes some tap shoes down the fucking stairs. And we've seen Sweet, we've seen him. But now, we're really gonna get Sweet. We're gonna get a song from Sweet called What You Feel. And we have—we have a segment that we'd like to go to before we talk about—

**Jenny:** Yes.

**Kristin:** All that is the amazing Hinton Battle, and all that is the demon, Sweet. Mack and Alba would like to jump in here and say a little something.

**Jenny:** Yes!

["Stereotype Buffet" starts playing]

**Alba:** [speaking] Hey Mack. So they made a monster. A *Black* monster. What a surprise, right? I know. Let's talk about it.

**Mack:** [singing] This week on the Hellmouth, we've got some things to say  
About the shit they're serving up at the stereotype buffet  
Tap dancing through the twenties in that forties-style zoot suit  
Chuck Berry's taste in the underage and Superfly slang to boot

**Alba:** [singing] Tired of seeing a bad guy every time I see my face  
White people are not qualified to be writing and conveying race  
'Cause when y'all try our culture on, nuance gets erased

Why don't you just step aside, give people of color space

**Alba:** [speaking] Sing it, Mack. Tell 'em.

**Mack:** [singing] At first glance, you'll wanna dance, but take a closer look  
Sweet's jazz tune is just a page from Robert Johnson's book  
Sweet is cool, Sweet is smooth, until you realize  
Some straight white guy justified these sinister stereotypes

**Alba:** [singing] While you show up for fashion, no matter time or place  
I wanna watch my favorite show and trust the characters with my face  
Instead I must resign myself to the writer's vapid taste

**Mack and Alba:** [singing] Ampata, Forrest, Kendra, Trick: BIPOC copy paste

**Alba:** [speaking] Still not done. Still have to talk about more!

**Mack:** [speaking] In Sunnydale, bad things always happen to girls who are underage.

**Alba:** [speaking] Like getting sacrificed in a frat-house basement to a giant demon snake.

**Mack:** [speaking] Or being assaulted by the varsity swim team (who would make a tasty ceviche).

**Alba:** [speaking] But of course, the biggest predator would be—

**Mack and Alba:** [speaking] A Black man with the devil's face

**Mack and Alba:** [singing] To everybody listening who still think Sweet's badass  
Consider this your crossroads, 'cause now we have to ask:  
How much of our little song did you need to research?  
Privilege provides the luxury to watch passive from your perch

**Alba:** [singing] So don't force us to compromise, we've had e-fucking-nough!

**Mack and Alba:** [singing] We should tell our own stories—

**Mack:** [speaking] It's really not that fucking tough.



**Kristin:** Fucking!

**Jenny:** Oh my god!

**Kristin:** Fucking! Hell yes. Mack, Alba. If you are just hitting this podcast for the first time, Mackenzie MacDade, Alba Daza. Alba Daza is our producer. Mack MacDade is our consultant and facilitator. They've both been working with us for some time and are so badass. As a matter of fact, the last episode in our feed is a conversation between Mack and Alba where they use the themes and storylines in Buffy the Vampire Slayer to talk about the BIPOC experience of invisibility. They are just fantastic. And thank you for that beautiful segment. Probably the best segment we've ever had.

**Jenny:** Certainly the most musical segment we've ever had.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Certainly, certainly. And you know, to just sort of, like, jump off of what some of what Mack and Alba were just singing. Slash saying. You know, Sweet—so Sweet is played by Hinton Battle. First of all, Hinton Battle is... un... believable? He's amazing. He's won three Tony awards. He was actually the first to play the Scarecrow in Wiz. He's just fucking incredible. And the thing about—I mean, there's a lot to unpack here. But one thing that I wanted to touch on specifically is that, you know, in the United States, at the very least, musicals have a long history that is related to racism and segregation. And a lot of character—a lot of black characters who were put in musicals around the time of integration—hard air quotes on that word, "integration"—were given these, like, very performative numbers. They were, like, you know—to do a song and dance.

And part of the reason for that was because a lot of the theaters at the time wouldn't play shows—wouldn't play movies—these are movie-musicals I'm talking about. They wouldn't play movies with black characters in them, with black actors in them—black performers. And so the fact that the black actors in these musicals didn't have anything to do with the plot whatsoever made it very easy for studios and theaters to cut out those parts and still play an entirely white musical movie, without losing any of the story line. And so, you know—we could do a whole podcast just talking about this.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** But I think it's important to point out. And also that, like, Sweet is—I mean, Sweet is literally the plot of this. Like, if there was no Sweet, there would be no Once More, With Feeling. So that's great, but you know, to Mack and Alba's point—one of their many amazing points. Sweet is the demon, he's the villain. And

so, there's just—you know. If we had seen more nuanced treatment of characters of color in the series up till now, you know, that would be one thing, but we haven't. And even in this episode, we saw two or three black vampires who were just there to be dusted. You know, and we've talked about it—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** A bit and we'll continue to talk about it. But it is important to have conversation around this.

**Jenny:** Much to our point about the Buffering test with regards to Willow and Tara, speaking lines of dialogue clearly written by extremely straight people. We can further assume—actually, we can do better than assume. Because we know—

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** That there were no people of color in the writers' room. There was no—nobody in a position to—

**Kristin:** Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** Veto or weigh in. Nobody's perspective outside of the existent writers' room was sought.

**Kristin:** Right. Right.

**Jenny:** To consult on this, right?

**Kristin:** Right, exactly. And that's—I mean, you know—

**Jenny:** And it shows.

**Kristin:** It sure does. It sure does. And that is not, like—you know, Sweet is a—is a character that, I think, we love. And like, Hinton Battle is an incredible performer. But it's just that, like, this imagery of, like—to quote the song that was just sung, "A black man with the devil's face" is—this is what we often see. We often see black characters either not painted in detail, or when the detail is painted, it is a villainous detail that we get. Right? And so—

**Jenny:** Right, right.

**Kristin:** Just—I do wanna say that Mack and Alba wrote that song with Jenny. The three of them wrote that song together. So all of the—all of the lyrics are from Mack and Alba, and they also performed it. Which is the only song in this whole collection that was written by others and they just—it just—standing ovation, bravo. Thank you so much for being a part of the Buffering fam.

**Jenny:** Hell yeah.

**Kristin:** Uh, can I ask a question?

**Jenny:** You may.

**Kristin:** Why does he take his mouth off, Jenny? Why does he take his mouth off? Why did they do that?

**Jenny:** I don't know!

**Kristin:** Why'd they do that?!

**Jenny:** Why couldn't he just make his suit change color a couple more times?

**Kristin:** [laughs] Just—

**Jenny:** Instead!

**Kristin:** Every time it happens, I'm like, but why? But why. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Yeah. That sucks. The suit color change rocks.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** The thing that I love the most about this is when the door flies down from the ceiling [Kristin giggles] and crashes onto...

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** The floor. I love that.

**Kristin:** God, if you were a theater person, those doors—they're like—they're just, like, so anchored in my memory of being a theater kid. Just, it was, like, always just like, the frame and the door. And you'd go—[both laugh] you'd walk around it and like, knock on it to start your scene. [both laugh] Ahh, but it is—and I mean,

this performance, you know—all of the—all of the actors—you know, the regulars, I should say, on this series. A lot of them did, like, vocal training and worked for months and like, on weekends and at nights, or whatever, just all over the place to learn these dances and these songs and everything. And they do a wonderful job. But it is quite clear when fucking Sweet does this song that now we are in the presence—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Of—

**Jenny:** Yeah...

**Kristin:** Someone who is a remark—

**Jenny:** [simultaneously] Somebody who knows—a professional.

**Kristin:** Yeah. He knows his way around a fucking Broadway stage and it shows.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** He's a—just an unbelievable dancer, an unbelievable singer. And like, he doesn't have, like, any massive dance, you know, sections in this. But just the way—to be honest with you, like, some of the ways that he moves his hands?

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** I feel like the only time I've ever seen anyone move their hands even close to that, it was Doug Jones in Hush.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh, yep, yep.

**Kristin:** You know? Just like, the fluidity and just, like, the way that, like, his entire body seems to be moving where—but you can't tell how it's moving. He's just unbelievable. A brilliant performance.

**Jenny:** I think we also see something that reminds me of a conversation we had with James Marsters about when he got onto the show. And he would, like, watch Tony Head and feel like, oh... Tony's, like, barely moving. He's gonna like, put people to sleep. But then, you know—

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** He realized that acting for television and acting for theater are very different.

**Kristin:** Mmm.

**Jenny:** But I think what's really cool about Hinton's performance is that, he—because of his theater background—he has this sort of, like, overblown, extreme, exaggerated way of moving. And that, like, kind of amplifies the sort of, like, magic of the Sweet performance, I think.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** He's—you know. He is, like, pure... theater.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Yeah. It's just—it's fantastic. I also wanna talk about this line in Sweet's song...

[Clip from episode plays]

**Sweet:** [singing] All those hearts, they open, that must sting  
Plus some customers just start combusting  
That's the penalty when life is but a song

**Kristin:** "That's the penalty when life is but a song." And I think that it's such a resonant line for a lot of reasons. Like, obviously in the show, this is the whole musical's point, is that, you know, musicals are often written to, like, just not look at the conflict! Look at the rosy, look at the cheery, look at the happy. Don't look at the bad. Like, let's be happy. And obviously, this musical is not doing that at all. And I think—I just, like, am rooting a bit to a lot of the conversations that we've been having, as people with privilege, of like, how easy is it for you in particular to look away from, like, what you don't wanna see?

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** Right?

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** What you don't wanna see, you can look away from, and because—you can look away from it. And like, what is the—what are the repercussions of that? And I just think there's a lot in that line that can be applied, like, in many, many places.

But I think probably where we are, like, politically and societally right now, it really hit me in that way.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** So anyway. That's—yeah, just some deep thoughts.

**Jenny:** And then, in a chorus of song, Dawn of course reveals...

**Kristin:** Mm-mm-mm!

**Jenny:** That her sister is the Slayer and Sweet's like, "get her here!"

**Kristin:** [laughs] Every good demon wants to be the one—the one to kill the Slayer.

**Jenny:** Uh-huh, yep, yep, yep.

**Kristin:** He wants to watch the Slayer burn. And we cut to the fucking training room, so you know, everybody just turn off the podcast, go cry in a corner. Et cetera, et cetera. Whew!

**Jenny:** Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep.

**Kristin:** They're training. A couple of good jokes up at the top to make you think perhaps you won't be crying soon. One is that Buffy's like, "Just glad we're not in a training montage from the 80s," which, please give it to me. Please give it—give me Giles in a fucking headband and some fucking wristbands and a sweatsuit.

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** You know what I mean? Like, I want it. I want it.

**Jenny:** Mmm!

**Kristin:** I want to see it. Also—

**Jenny:** We get... a version. [both laugh]

**Kristin:** Also, Buffy on the fucking pommel horse, being like, "I am pretty spry for a corpse." Great line. [Jenny laughs] But then.

**Jenny:** But then a training montage begins! [Kristin giggles] Buffy is suspended in slow motion while Giles sings a song in which, uh, he posits that his charge, Buffy, who is like a daughter to him, who has lost her mother, who is but, you know, twenty or twenty-one—who has no fucking support. Her father has fucked off. And she has very little support and an unfathomable burden of responsibility. And Giles sings a little song... about how the best thing he could possibly do so she could just grow up is leave her? And to that, I say...

["Accidental Parental" starts playing]

**Jenny:** [singing] My dude, be reasonable  
It's true, your slayer's seasons are few  
But it don't mean that you should run  
Good sir, I really think you should stay  
With her, she needs support and to slay  
You didn't mean to be a dad  
But you are now so how 'bout that

You think that your presence is holding her back  
You should know your absence would be twice as bad  
Nobody said you should right all the wrongs  
But she sure deserves someone she can lean on

Oh Giles, you've been here through thin and thick  
So why would you choose right now to split?  
You didn't mean to be a dad  
But you are now so act like it

You think that your presence is holding her back  
You should know your absence would be twice as bad  
Nobody's saying you should fix it all  
But you know to be there to answer her call

[song ends]

**Kristin:** [sighs] Oof. Yeah. You have a good point there, Jenny.

**Jenny:** You know what I mean?

**Kristin:** No, I know. I do know what you mean.

**Jenny:** Thank you.

**Kristin:** I do.

**Jenny:** Ridiculous.

**Kristin:** I agree, I'm very upset with Giles for a lot of things in this episode. And this is—[laughs] a big one. I will say, though—you know. I mean, gosh, if you're a listener of this podcast, you know that we love Giles so dearly. I mean, I just—I just love him so much. And so I also am wrecked by this song that he sings. As much as I'm so frustrated—and it's funny 'cause, like, Tony Head was talking about this song. And he actually—[laughs] he even—he was just talking about the song and he said, "whether Giles was wrong or right." It's like, even he knew that, like, this was not cool. You know? [Jenny laughs] Like, this is not what he was supposed to do. And—but if you take yourself out of that place, of like, what the fuck, Giles? You are left with the reality that this—this man loves Buffy probably more than anyone on this show at this point. And he doesn't know how to help her. There's a line where he literally says, "Wish I could lay your arms down and let you rest at last." It is heart wrenchingly beautiful. Tony Head does a fucking stunning performance of this, and it breaks my heart.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** And it's just like, he's not right. He's not right. I mean, I think we all can agree that he's not right. I think that maybe Giles is probably one of the only reasons that she is standing at all. You know, like...

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** Maybe she's not walking forward yet, but I mean, guys! She just—she's been through, like, endless trauma. This is not... [sighs] the time to go. But Giles thinks that it is. And while this song is happening, there's a very brief moment where we get Tara coming inside the Magic Box as well. Obviously, they're in the training room in the back, she's in the front. And we see her look up the flower in this text and she finds it. It's a flower called Lethe's Bramble, that makes you forget. Which of course, we knew, but she did not.

**Jenny:** [groans]

**Kristin:** She's crying. And she—you hear—like, fuck everybody for these chords of Under Your Spell again. You know, just like, just breaking us all. And she says, "There'll be nothing left of me" and then probably the line that breaks me the most from Tara is when she says, "You made me believe." Like, just—I can't—I have,



like, full-body chills and might start sobbing. Um, right now. But instead, I'm gonna take these tears and I'm gonna say something, if you don't mind, to Tara.

**Jenny:** Please.

["On Leaving" starts playing]

**Kristin:** [singing] Tara, you should really go  
You had a right to know  
Even though it hurts, let go  
You had a right to know  
Ooooh, ooooh

**Kristin:** [sighs] This is just... fucking awful.

**Jenny:** It is awful. We all know what happened to Tara's brain last season.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Willow knows better than any of us!

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Because she was the closest person to Tara. And—and, you know—you've got to imagine, as disturbing as it would be for anybody to discover their memory had been altered by their partner!

**Kristin:** Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** Like, it's, you know, exponentially increased in the level of disturbance—

**Kristin:** Oh, it's—

**Jenny:** When you consider that Tara, you know, was already in such a horrific situation.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Yeah, I mean, this would be completely fucked, no matter which way you looked at it. And you know, the issues around consent are many. And if—and as you know, if you have watched past this point, there's something that we will talk about more with this specific... flower, bramble, in mind. But it is—it is just very, very, very, very fucked up. And while Giles is wrong about needing to leave, Tara could not be more correct. I mean, there is no way that she could stay with a

partner who betrayed her trust. And not only betrayed her trust but also, like, completely transgressed boundaries that should never be—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Never be walked past, never be walked through.

**Jenny:** And is showing signs, increasingly, that like—

**Kristin:** Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** She wouldn't be able to take that information in—

**Kristin:** Yes. Yes.

**Jenny:** Like, she can't consider that. Like, she's just sort of operating from a, "I do what I want."

**Kristin:** Mmhmm.

**Jenny:** "And there's no more to say about it" kind of place.

**Kristin:** Yeah, like, "I'll always fix it." Right? Like, "I'll just fix it again. I'll just fix it." Like—

**Jenny:** Right. With another spell!

**Kristin:** Exactly. If somebody has gotten to the point where, like, they can alter—non-consensually alter their partner's mind. Like, I mean, it's—it would be fucked up to non-consensually alter anyone's mind. But this is the person that Willow loves the most. So to be at that point—right, it's like the point of—like, there's nothing Tara can do at this point, except for leave.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** There's not going to be a conversation that she could ever have with Willow. How could she trust that Willow isn't just gonna—

**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** Do another spell? Like, you know, you just—yeah. So, as though things couldn't get worse, Jenny. Willow and Buffy are, like, standing up on the step by

the table in the Magic Box. And fucking Giles comes out from the fucking training room.

**Jenny:** [groans]

**Kristin:** And Tara and Giles, probably the two strongest vocalists in this episode, apart from Hinton Battle, do this gutting reprise. Re—somebody called it a redux. I don't know what that means, but it's probably right.

**Jenny:** It's very sad.

[Clip from episode plays]

**Tara:** [singing] Willow, don't you see  
There'll be nothing left of me  
You made me believe

**Giles:** [singing] Believe me, I don't want to go

**Tara and Giles:** [singing] And it'll grieve me 'cause I love you so  
But we both know...

**Kristin:** The harmonies between Amber Benson and Anthony Stewart Head are so beautiful. And they're both singing about how they have to leave. And the last line of this song is just them both saying that they wish they could stay. And it's really sad, okay!

**Jenny:** Noo.

**Kristin:** It's, like, a lot. It's a lot to fucking handle. Oh, dear god. The only thing that will save us from having to wade through sadness and betrayal is that Spike is here. Ding-dong. Gotta—got one of the three ventriloquist dummies here.

**Jenny:** Ha!

**Kristin:** The music swells and Spike says to the ventriloquist dummy, "Sing, man." And the ventriloquist dummy [music from episode swells] opens his mouth and this comes out—

[Clip from episode plays]

**Dummy:** [robotically] My master has the Slayer's sister hostage at the Bronze because she summoned him and at midnight, he's going to take her to the underworld to be his queen.

**Jenny:** My favorite thing about this is that you can see the actor's mouth [Kristin laughs] inside of the dummy mask mouth. Buffy has her little "Dawn's in trouble, must be Tuesday" moment.

**Kristin:** Oh, and this show aired on a Tuesday, just in case you didn't know that.

**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** So it's extra special—extra specially funny.

**Jenny:** And you know, the group is coming together, talking about what to do. And Giles is like, "Buffy's gonna do it by herself." And Anya's like, "Oh no, I've seen some of these underworld child bride deals. [Kristin laughs] And they never end well. Well, maybe once." [both laugh] Like, uh...

**Kristin:** Uh...

**Jenny:** Uh...!

**Kristin:** Yeah, mmm, no, don't think so. Yeah.

**Jenny:** Uh, Giles, sucking, sucking, sucking. Then, oh wow! It is revealed.

**Kristin:** Oh my god.

**Jenny:** Buffy blows up Spike's spot. [Kristin laughs] And acknowledges in front of the Scoobies that he sang... a song to her. And Xander says, "Spike sang a wittle song?"

**Kristin:** [laughs] Fucking Xander. Like, always. Just like, any chance he has to fucking twist that knife in old Spike, he does. Anya—Anya—Xander and Anya are both true to form, with Xander twisting the knife and Anya being like, "So would you say it was a breakaway hit or...?" [laughs]

**Jenny:** [laughs] "Breakaway pop hit or more of a book number?"

**Kristin:** [laughing] She wants to know! Who's getting the hit?!

**Jenny:** Anya! Relax! [both laugh]

**Kristin:** And Giles—I mean. Listen. We know where we're going, right? Giles is like—

**Jenny:** Ugh.

**Kristin:** "Actually, we're not going to help Buffy this time, everybody. We're gonna fucking... stay here. Buffy's going alone." And you know, to give a little credit—I will immediately take this credit away—but like, to give a little credit to everyone else, Willow, Xander, Anya, Spike, they all are like, "But what about—but, also—but, what? But hmm?" [Jenny laughs] Like, they were all ready to throw down, of course, because that's what they do.

**Jenny:** Yeah!

**Kristin:** And even Buffy is like, "What do you expect me to do?" to Giles. And Giles... he says, "Your best."

[music starts playing]

**Jenny and Kristin:** Your best?!

**Kristin:** Your fucking best?! That—that is what—

**Jenny:** Your best?!

**Kristin:** Whew-hoo-hoo-ooh!

["What in the Actual" plays]

**Jenny:** [singing] What in the actual fuck are you doing?  
Right now you kinda suck  
You're bailing when you should have her back

**Kristin:** [singing] You're really screwing it up  
You're losing the mission  
Supposed to be the grown up  
But you're leaving her open to attack

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] It's not helpful when you bring somebody back  
from the grave

To say they gotta grow up so you're going away  
Post-resurrection testing them while they fade away  
Even slayers need a little help when they save the day, save the day  
Save the day

**Kristin:** [singing] What in the actual fuck?

**Jenny:** [singing] Are you thinking?

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] We are not sorry but

**Jenny:** [singing] We have to disrupt this dumb bullshit

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] Bad choices runnin' amok

**Jenny:** [singing] We hate what you're doing

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] Freakin' morally bankrupt

**Kristin:** [singing] And all of ya Scoobies are complicit in it

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] It's not helpful when you bring somebody back  
from the grave

To say they gotta grow up so you're going away  
Post-resurrection testing them while they fade away  
Even slayers need a little help to get through the day  
To get through the day

**Jenny:** [singing] Even slayers need a little help when they save the day...

**Kristin:** I hope that Giles—I hope Giles has his fucking discman out and I hope he puts that—I hope he burns that track a few times onto a CD.

**Jenny:** Wow.

**Kristin:** And I hope he plays it for himself a few times, 'cause sir, you have a lot to think upon.

**Jenny:** Wow, remember burning a CD of just one song over and over and over again?

**Kristin:** [laughs] Yes.

**Jenny:** Ten times in a row. Great. Love it.

**Kristin:** Buffy's doing it, though. She's like—I mean, this would probably be my response as well. Like, I would be like, are you fucking kidding me? Fine! [laughs]

**Jenny:** Ha!

**Kristin:** Slam! So she has—[both laugh] slammed the door and she is walking. And Buffy has been telling us that she is not feeling her feelings the way she is used to feeling them—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** Since the beginning of this—season, really, but like, definitely since the start of this musical. And this—

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah.

**Kristin:** This song is more of that. She's saying, "I touch the fire, it freezes me. Why can't I feel? I want the fire back."

**Jenny:** Okay, no offense though, but she does not touch the fire. [Kristin laughs] She never touches the fire. [laughs]

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Jenny:** And she's like, "My skin should crack and peel." And it's like, Buffy?

**Kristin:** Point—[laughs]

**Jenny:** You are—let me explain. [both laugh]

**Kristin:** Point, counterpoint. [laughs] I think she's being—I don't know if you've heard of this, Jenny, in your career—

**Jenny:** No.

**Kristin:** As a songwriter. But I think she might be making a metaphor.

**Jenny:** Hmm.

**Kristin:** You know, just—so, drawing comparison between things. But yes, [laughs] to your point, she does not actually put her hand in the flame.

**Jenny:** Alright, so she's singing her little verse about being numb. Then she sings, "Through the smoke, she calls to me." We cut to the Bronze, there's Dawn and Sweet. And a digital smoke effect.

**Kristin:** I love it. You don't like it? I love it. [Jenny cackles] Oh, wow. But I actually really like the, um, wobbly, like, gasoline effect of—that they use in the Bronze. But to each their own. [Jenny laughs] Something that I think we can both agree to love, Jenny, is the fucking leather coat number two that Buffy—

**Jenny:** The shoulders! Oh my god.

**Kristin:** Oh! My god! Give me this coat! Give it to me.

**Jenny:** Here is something to sing about! The—

**Kristin:** That is something—you're right!

**Jenny:** Coat.

**Kristin:** We should point that out to her. She does have something to sing about.

**Jenny:** Hmm.

**Kristin:** [laughs] We'll get there. We're not even in that song yet, but she does. It's those shoulders. Spike has an incredible cigarette flick. I said it once and I'll say it again, I will—I just would really like for my life to include one moment where I can flick a cigarette angrily like that. It's just real cool. [Jenny laughs] His line is so great. "I'm free if that bitch dies. I better help her out." [both laugh] Summing up. Sweet is in there, saying, "She's drawn to the fire." Giles, wondering if he is leaving Dawn in danger. Sir, indeed—

**Jenny:** [yelling] Yes, you idiot!

**Kristin:** You—you are.

**Jenny:** Of course you are!

**Kristin:** I could answer this question for you. The Scoobies decide, like, a minute after they're not going to go. So now they're all on their way.



**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** But Buffy doesn't know that yet. Tara, I think... [laughs] Tara has the truest 2020-hyphen-2021 line of the musical when she sings, "Everything is turning out so dark." [both laugh] Yikes, Tara! A little real. A little real for me, there.

**Jenny:** True. We get—we get Willow's excellent Alyson Hannigan nod. Alyson Hannigan, who so desperately did not want to sing, gets, "I think this line's mostly filler."

**Kristin:** It's really good. And you know, I mean, this song—like, we love to laugh. There's a lot to laugh about. [laughs] Less and less as we're getting to the end of this musical, but...

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** This song is really—it's really pivotal. This whole episode is pivotal and I'm sure we've talked about it already. But like, they talk about how they are now at the point of no return. They have seen all of the things that they were trying—well. Not quite. They're almost to the point of seeing all the things that they had not seen. And they can't turn their back on it anymore. They can't pretend like these things aren't real and aren't part of their day to day, aren't part of their reality.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** This shit is fucking real. And they are at the point of no return. And so, you know, we're not into the rest of the season yet, but I would imagine that probably, some of Season 6 will be what the fuck they do now that they are at this point of no return. So. Anyway. Right before—before we get to the Bronze where Buffy enters, I just wanna say that Spike apparently gets lost in an alleyway. I don't understand why. He, like— [laughs]

**Jenny:** He vaults himself into... an alley that is fenced off. There don't appear to be doors in it. And then he, like, whips around and like, looks like, "Oh. I can't believe I've done this."

**Kristin:** [laughs] Yeah. It's just weird. So anyway. Buffy enters.

[Clip from episode plays]

[crashing noise]

**Sweet:** Showtime! [chuckles]

**Jenny:** Oh, boy. "I love a good entrance." "How are you with death scenes?"

**Kristin:** She's still got her wordplay.

**Jenny:** Buffy makes her little deal. She's gonna fight Sweet and if she loses, she'll go to the underworld with him. But if she kills him, then Dawn goes free.

**Kristin:** Ugh!

**Jenny:** And then he's like, "What if I kill you?" and she says, "Trust me. Won't help." Buffy!

**Kristin:** And maybe in one of Hinton Battle's, like, best line deliveries of the episode, [laughs] he goes, "That's gloomy." [both laugh] I love—like, and we'll get more into this when we talk about the next song. But like, I love the way that Sweet—really, the way the actor, Hinton Battle—looks at Sarah Michelle Gellar. [laughs] Like, the way that Sweet, like, takes in Buffy, you know? It's just, like, very apparent—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** That, like, he—he was here to make some people burn up, to like, whatever. And now he's like, really witnessing that this is a whole big fucking shitshow. He's like, well, fuck! You know? Like, I feel like his whole way of intaking this and what's about to happen is just, like—he's really quite stunned by it. And I—I don't know if that came from Joss, I don't know if that came from Hinton. But I just think it's a really cool dynamic between the two of them.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah. Yes. Buffy starts to sing a little song called Something to Sing About, and it's about how she's very depressed.

**Kristin:** [sadly] Mm!

[Clip from episode plays]

**Buffy:** [singing] Life's a show and we all play our parts  
And when the music starts, we open up our hearts

**Kristin:** Again, pulling on this musical concept of, like, a musical is supposed to hide—like, not hide, but like, turn away from the bad and give us songs about the good. It's kind of like Instagram. [laughs] You know? [Jenny laughs] Just showin'—showin' us the best of everything and everybody's looking at other people's Instagrams like, "man, I wish I had it together." But they don't know that after that photo was taken, that like, I cried in the shower for two hours. You know? Like, that—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** That the... what she's saying is like—no, what she's saying is literally, "Life's a show and we're playing parts."

**Jenny:** If you want to fear for your life and the lives of those you love, check out Buffy's terrifying eyes as she sings the line, "To be like other girls." [Kristin laughs] It is... very scary. [laughs] I run for the hills.

**Kristin:** She breaks—she actually breaks the fourth wall here with us and says, "We'll sing a happy song." She looks directly into our souls and says, "And you can sing along." And we're like, goddamnit! I just signed up for a vampire show, what the fuck is happening?! [laughs]

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kristin:** I think maybe my favorite line in this first piece of this song is, "Don't give me songs. Give me something to sing about." And I know, like, obviously the depression is there. It's, like, the driving force of this song. But I also think that, like, there's something so fucking powerful about that! Especially right now. Like, don't paint over the reality of our existence. Don't paint over the reality of other people's existences and lived experiences. Don't paint over—don't gloss it over. I don't want the song. I want something to actually sing about. Like, I want to fix—I want to fix the things. I want to help the things, I want to make the things better and then I'll have something to sing about. And in Buffy's case, she is—

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** You know, very specifically talking about her—her mental health and all that she's lost and all the grief that she is still trying to figure out how to walk through. And... ugh, god! Without getting, like, too deep into it, I just feel... you know, this episode aired just a couple months after September 11th. Which was a very particular time in public consciousness, you know? And like, everybody was going through something.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** And that time can't really be compared to this time that we're in, at the start of 2021. Except in the fact that it is a large societal moment, where a lot of us are just, like, not okay. You know? A lot of us are not doing so hot. It is a very, very heavy and hard time, and a time that I think we've been, like, pulling on communities in ways that we maybe have not before. And so this song always hits, but it... hits particularly right now.

You know, if you are listening to this podcast for the first time—many of you are not. And you're like, first time? Who are *those* people? But if you are one of those people and you're listening to us for the first time because you found us through this musical episode, you should know that every episode of this podcast always does come with one song. And Jenny, that song is sung usually by you and it's written from the perspective of Buffy. So when we got to this place in the musicals—the musical of *Once More, With Feeling* and our podcast musical—we knew there needed to be, like, this place of communion between universes. So that we could write a song in the "I," and that "I" could be both Buffy's "I" and Jenny and my "I," and also, like, you as the listener. Like, the "I" is meant here to be all of us.

["Once More, With Feeling" starts playing]

**Jenny:** [singing] Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh  
Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh  
I'm just tryna get some light back  
Scared that it's forever gone  
Maybe we can find it in the feedback  
Somewhere there's a hidden song

I go the only way I've ever known  
A step, and then, again, another one

I'm just tryna get some light back  
Scared that it's forever gone  
Maybe we can find it in the feedback  
Somewhere there's a hidden song

I fight the only way I've ever done  
A step, and then, again, another one

I'm just tryna get some light back  
Scared that it's forever gone  
Maybe we can find it in the feedback  
Somewhere there's a hidden song

**Kristin:** Well. You know what they say about music. It'll kill ya. [both laugh] So. I hate to break it to everyone, but we didn't even finish talking about what happens in this song, in this scene. Because this song is kind of in a couple of parts, right? There's the, like, "give me something to sing about" part. There's two segments in that, with the, like, rock-y part where she's dancing and the sing-y part where she's singing. [laughs] You can tell that I'm the musician between the two of us, right?

**Jenny:** Oh, that's really good.

**Kristin:** Thank you. But... she goes up on stage. And she's standing by Sweet. And that's when he really gives her this look. And it's sort of like... if he's inspiring them to sing and to reveal their truths, it's almost like he sees it before he makes her sing it. You know what I mean? Like, he—like, that's why he's like, oh, fuck! You know? And...

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** She says, "There was... [sighs] no pain, no fear, no doubt..."

[Clip from episode plays]

**Buffy:** [singing] There was no pain  
No fear, no doubt, till they pulled me out  
Of heaven  
So that's my refrain  
I live in hell, 'cause I've been expelled  
From heaven  
I think I was in heaven

**Jenny:** [groans]

**Kristin:** A light lyric. Just a bop. Jenny, the chord progression in this is very specific. That, like, very much—sometimes when I say to you, "Can you make the song so that it makes me sad?" Like, [laughs] this does that. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Mm! Mmhmm, mmhmm. Sad chords.

**Kristin:** Sad—very sad. It's like, there's sad chords and then there's whatever the fuck this is. And it's devastating. And to make... [Jenny laughs sadly] sad matters even sadder, we have the response, the reaction shots, of Giles, of Xander. Of Tara and worst of all, Willow, who is just—I mean, I don't know that I've ever seen Willow's face move me as much as this. She is destroyed. I mean, of course she is. Of course she is. She's completely destroyed and she's crying and Tara is comforting Willow, which is also very hard, you know? It's just like this complicated thing of you love somebody and they've totally fucked you over. They've fucked you up, but you can't help it. They're hurting and you must—like, it's just—it's—there's so much happening in this moment, that it's just—it's overwhelming. And it's beautifully done. And I would be crying if I didn't have a responsibility to keep talking to you on a microphone.

**Jenny:** [laughs] Yeah, this is, um... it's all pretty brutal. And, uh... the only acceptable course of action in the face of all this devastation is [robotic voice] initiate combust-o dance sequence!

**Kristin:** [laughs] Sarah Michelle fucking Gellar. They had a—like, a dance double. You know, like a stunt double but a dance double for her. They barely fucking used the dance double. She is doing nearly every single thing that you see in these dance sequences. I mean, just a performance—like, truly, she's just—Emmy for Sarah forever. And maybe a Tony, at this point.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** So, um...

**Jenny:** Mmhmm.

**Kristin:** But yeah, she jumps on stage.

**Jenny:** EGOT for Sarah.

**Kristin:** [laughs] She's dancing, she's dancing. The smoke is happening. And then what happens, Jenny?

**Jenny:** [takes deep breath] [sings] Spike stops her! Spike grabs her and makes her stop dancing! And he's all like, "Life is living!"

[Clip from episode plays]

**Spike:** [singing] Life's not a song

Life isn't bliss, life is just this  
It's living

**Kristin:** "The pain that you feel, you can only heal by living." And every time he says "living," he's singing it in the same fucking horrible, horrible chord progression that she sang to use the—to sing the word "heaven!"

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** I gotta go! It is...

**Jenny:** Yeah, yeah.

**Kristin:** Oh my god. I mean, truly. Like, "life's not a song, life is just this, it's living. You have to go on living. So one of us is living."

**Jenny:** Do you think there is something they could have done—there was a different way they could have executed this—this callback?

**Kristin:** Yeah, yeah, I actually—

**Jenny:** "The hardest thing in this world is to live in it." Clank!

**Kristin:** I hate—I'm sorry if this is a thing that you like. But I actually—one of the only things I dislike in this episode is Dawn saying this line again. I just feel like we got the point. Like, I don't think we needed a line drawn in that moment. And I think that, like, what Spike sang was so poignant that it is a bit undercut by this line from Dawn where she says—where she, you know—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Says the same—she says the same thing Buffy said to her at the end of Season 5. And... ehh, but I didn't need it, I didn't need it. I don't want it. Give me the cut with this taken out and I think that it will be a bit more powerful. But... a number. A number. I think maybe one of the saddest songs I have ever, ever seen in a musical. I have cried almost every time I watched it, in preparation for this conversation. [laughs] So.

**Jenny:** Yep, yep, yep.

**Kristin:** Even Sweet is impressed. He is clapping, he is clapping. Willow—

**Jenny:** He's like, "What a show-stopping number!"

**Kristin:** Yeah. Willow is very much angry witch Willow. "Get out of here," she says through her tears, in a fit of rage. And since Sweet—like, everyone else at this point is like, "I smell power." Like, every—every—every kind of demon across the globe is like, hmm. [laughs] I'm just sensing—hmm. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Getting a big whiff of power over here!

**Kristin:** [laughs] And then—you know, then there's this, like—I mean, who cares, it's fine. But like, the twist on the end of this is a little weak, where like, Dawn is like, "I didn't summon—" Like, Sweet's like, "She summoned me." Dawn's like, "I didn't." And they're like, well then, who? And Xander raises his hand and is like, "It was me." And I like the idea of Xander saying, "I just wanted to make sure we'd work out, that we'd get a happy ending." Like, I think that's really fitting with his character and it works.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** But I don't think that he would have ever taken it this far. He would have definitely told them what the fuck was up, like, at the beginning of the musical.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** So it's a little wiggly for me. But, um... anyway. It gives us a "ha-ha-ha!" moment when Xander's like...

[Clip from episode plays]

**Xander:** Does this mean that I have to... be your queen?

**Sweet:** It's tempting. But I think we'll waive that clause just this once.

**Jenny:** [groans]

**Kristin:** Not our favorite. Not our favorite. Listen, Sweet doesn't have to take Xander down to the hell dimension. But we don't love when the joke is Xander being his queen. It's not a funny joke. As a matter of fact, Jenny, I don't know if you are aware of a structure, a societal structure—

**Jenny:** Hmm.



**Kristin:** That exists that helps—

**Jenny:** Hmm.

**Kristin:** To really hold up things like homophobia.

**Jenny:** Hmmm... I'm trying to think of one. Oh yeah!

[Patriarchy Reimagined plays]  
Ba-bum-bum!  
The patriarchy! (The patriarchy!)  
Thunder clap!  
Scary laugh!

**Kristin:** Yes, that is. That is cor—that is the correct answer.

**Jenny:** [clears throat]

**Kristin:** Though boy, did it sound different than it typically does. [laughs]

**Jenny:** Yeah, weird. Weird!

**Kristin:** Cool.

**Jenny:** Also, like, just imagine being this demon and like, usually you, like, roll up on a town and you do your little musical spell. And then you, like, take a child bride back to the underworld, whatever. [Kristin laughs] But you roll up on Sunnydale. And you get in the middle of all this. [Kristin laughs] This witch is erasing her girlfriend's memory and this Slayer was resurrected and—

**Kristin:** [laughing] He—

**Jenny:** She was pulled out of heaven by her friends. And this goofball and this former vengeance demon are having, like, premarital cold feet. And you know what, you guys? [Kristin laughs] I'm actually just gonna go?

**Kristin:** [laughing] Yes—

**Jenny:** You have a lot going on here and, like, you probably don't need anything else getting added to the equation. So I'm just gonna—I'm gonna—okay.

**Kristin:** Jenny, I think in a previous conversation, you compared this to the murder hornets showing up on the scene in 2020. And, like, seeing like, okay, you know what?

**Jenny:** They're like—yeah. The murder hornets were like, [buzzing noise] [Kristin laughs] And they, like, roll into the middle of town and they're like, oh, pan-pandemic?

**Kristin:** Oh. Hmm.

**Jenny:** Oh, uh, uh—ooh.

**Kristin:** Political uprising? Hm, huh.

**Jenny:** Oh, ahh, whew! Actually, whew, look at the time. [Kristin laughs] We actually have a thing back at the hive, so we'll come back next year or possibly never. Uh, bye!

**Kristin:** Gotta go! Yes. And that is Sweet's very, very brilliant choice. Sweet, good choice, good choice. And he says—

**Jenny:** You stay away from these messy people, sir!

**Kristin:** Oh my god, what a fucking mess. He's like—and he gives us our titular line here. He says, "All these secrets you've been concealing, say you're happy now, once more, with feeling." What a fucking—this is the 2020-2021 musical of musicals, isn't it now?

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** Try me again.

**Jenny:** I—

**Kristin:** So now try me again with that happy—you're happy? Mmm, try it one more time.

**Jenny:** Mmm.

**Kristin:** You wanna try that again? Okay.

**Jenny:** I will say, I am a person who can do without the title of a thing being nested inside of the thing. Like, ta-da! [laughs]

**Kristin:** I can usually, but I like it here. I like it here. It's a musical—

**Jenny:** Yeah, I guess tonally, it makes sense.

**Kristin:** It calls for it, you know? I think it calls for it. And fucking Sweet just poofs off back to the underworld. And he has this amazing exit.

[Clip from episode plays]

**Sweet:** [singing] Now I gotta run  
See you all in... hell! Ha!

[Jenny laughs]

**Kristin:** And then, in what we can only guess is a little, like, leftover magic—a little residue. A little residual magic dust, the Scoobies have one more song to sing. Don't they, Jenny?

**Jenny:** The mind reels at why these people A. are still singing. And B... there's still a freaking band go—like—

**Kristin:** Listen, it's—

**Jenny:** Residual magic, you would think would kind of wane. [Kristin laughs] Like, oh, maybe there's just, like, one guitar or something—

**Kristin:** A couple notes? [laughs]

**Jenny:** But no, there's still a band. Still a band!

**Kristin:** Dawn's little voice is so sweet at the start of this song, though.

[Clip from episode plays]

**Dawn:** [singing] Where do we go from here?

**Kristin:** They're lost because they are essentially now living with all of the facts. Like, they cannot hide anymore and they're, like—literally, the title of this song

could have been "So Now the Fuck What?" Like—[both laugh] what the—what the fuck do we—

**Jenny:** And maybe next time, it will be.

**Kristin:** [laughs] They have this very, very fleeting moment where they all hold hands. And then they sort of violently un-hold hands and talk about walking alone in fear. I think—not that you need to know my favorite lyric of every song, but! I really do love when they sing, "Why is the path unclear when we know home is near?" It just is, like, really beautiful to me, to think about the fact that, like—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** They are—they are in a recognizable place. And they now are even in a more recognizable place, because the spell is wearing off. So now, it's almost worse because they know where they are and they have to face all of this and they can't figure out where they are. Like, it's scarier when you know you're supposed to know where you are and you don't.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Which is where they all are and, um... yeah, I mean. One of the last lines of this—I can't believe—I truly can't believe that we're coming to the end of this episode. I'm gonna get choked up, but... one of the last lines that we hear from them before we move forward is, "When does the end appear? When do the trumpets cheer? The curtains close on a kiss." And so I think it's just important to note that what they're longing for in there—

**Jenny:** Hmmm.

**Kristin:** Is their classical musical ending.

**Jenny:** Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Kristin:** But yeah. I mean, god, if I talk about that then I have to talk—then I have to stop talking. And it makes me sad, Jenny. We've been journeying to this moment for years.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Well! You know what's a way to stop talking without stopping talking?

**Kristin:** Hmm?

["The End of the Episode" starts playing]

**Jenny:** [singing] It's the end, it's the end of the episode  
We've had some highs, we've had some lows

**Kristin:** [singing] It's the end, it's the end of the episode  
And everybody's lost now that they know

**Jenny:** [singing] They can't see where to go

**Kristin:** [singing] Or how on earth to get there

**Jenny:** [singing] But they've made it up til now

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] And so...  
It's the end, it's the end of the episode  
Guess we'll figure out together where we'll go

**Jenny:** [singing] We've got lots of awards for tension to mail

**Kristin:** [singing] Jingles to write and spoilers to veil

**Jenny:** [singing] Hunks to examine, we'll manage somehow

**Kristin:** [singing] Erotic novellas await, but for now

**Jenny:** [singing] It's the end, it's the end of the episode

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] And you know we hate to say goodbye  
It's the end, it's the end of the episode

**Jenny:** [singing] If you'll excuse me, I have something in my eye...

[song ends]

**Jenny:** Yes. Well. You know. All good things sometimes must come to an end, but then most good things [Kristin sighs] sometimes come back again for the next episode.

**Kristin:** That's true. And technically, there is one more thing that happens, before the end—

**Jenny:** You are not wrong.

**Kristin:** Of the episode.

**Jenny:** Buckle your fucking safety belt!

**Kristin:** Yeah, buckle 'em, buckle 'em tight. Buckle 'em hard. [laughs] Sorry. Didn't mean—

**Jenny:** Sharpen your pencils. [Kristin laughs] Fire up that fanfic.

**Kristin:** Hey, um, so Buffy and Spike are outside. And she's like, "I touched the fire" and he's like, "I died," and we're like, oh god, we've heard these songs before! Oh, no!

**Jenny:** [stammers in panic]

**Kristin:** [laughs] She says, "This isn't real, but I just wanna feel" as he says, "You can make me feel."

**Jenny:** [rolls tongue]

**Kristin:** And then the music swells and, um, um, um... [music starts] oh god! It's happening! The guitar is playing, Jenny! But before... before. Before whatever is going to happen, happens. I think we need to do something unprecedented.

**Jenny:** An envelope has materialized in my hands! [Kristin laughs] A sealed envelope that clearly says, "Sexual Tension Awards." I'm slitting the seal. [sounds of paper tearing] I'm taking the paper out. [sounds of paper being tapped] [music stops] [clears throat] And the notice reads: you fools. [Kristin laughs] There is no vote. There can be no vote. There can be no truth but the one true answer. [music starts] This episode's Sexual Tension Award goes to Buffy and Spike. Signed, the management.

**Kristin:** Fuck yeah.

**Jenny:** Hell yeah.

["Codawoooooooooooo" starts playing]

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] Mmm ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba  
Mmm ba ba ba Spike looks good

Mmm ba ba ba mmm ba ba ba  
Mmm ba ba ba Spike looks good

**Jenny:** [singing] And it's not like we'd think Buffy'd be feeling  
In tip top shape to fight some demons

**Kristin:** [singing] But holy shit, they're kissing

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] So that brings her vampire smooch count up to  
twooooo...

**Jenny:** [singing] And til next time...

**Jenny and Kristin:** [singing] Awooooooooooooo!