

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 7.05: Selfless

[CHIME]

Jenny: Well! Hello, everybody!

Kristin: Happy New Year! [makes honking sound]

Jenny: Happy New Year!

Kristin: Honk! [stammering] Streamer sounds.

Jenny: Streamer *sounds*? [both laugh] Sure.

Kristin: We have some announcements before we roll on into a very special episode called Selfless. One of my all-time favorites.

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: First things first, my notes tell me to tell you about a big-ass merch sale. That's how I wrote it down. We're having a huge sale for one week and one week alone, from today, January 12th, until one week from today, January 19th. You get 31% off of nearly everything in both of our stores. Now, I suggested 30%. Jenny, you told me, "Please, Kristin, let it be 31." Why? Why did you do that?

Jenny: Because I really wanted our beautiful listeners to have the opportunity to pay 69%...[both laugh] of the suggested retail price.

Kristin: Nice. Also, I did realize that this means that our pins in the US Store, which are normally \$10, are now \$6.90. Which means—

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: That you can get a "wow, wow, wow" pin...[Jenny gasps] for \$6.90. [laughs]

Jenny: Yes! My beautiful legacy!

Kristin: For the next week. You can always find our store, bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Shop. And that sale lasts for a week. If you're a \$10 patron, your code still works. It takes 10% off now instead of 20%,

because 51% off as a total percentage off is a lot. But 41%, for you. Sorry that you don't get to pay 69%, you get to pay 59—

Jenny: That is...sad, but hopefully—

Kristin: [simultaneously] It's too much math! This is too much math to start 2022 off with. [both laugh] Tell them about the music at the end of this episode, Jenny.

Jenny: Indeed I shall. Kristin said, "I'm sick of your voice. [Kristin laughs] I wanna hear Sam Barbera come back and sing Anya." Then—then a glutton. Then a woman with no boundaries whatsoever in terms of—

Kristin: It's true.

Jenny: Getting what she wants out of life—

Kristin: [laughing] It's true.

Jenny: Kristin said, "I want not just Sam, but I also want Bess Rogers to return as Willow. I want an Anya and Willow duet for this song. Jenny, make it so." And thus, I have.

Kristin: Hell yeah.

Jenny: You'll hear it at the end of the ep.

Kristin: Everyone is welcome, for me—I mean—[Jenny laughs] it's just, I have too much power, you know? That's the problem is—

Jenny: Mm. You do. [laughs]

Kristin: Like, we talk about Willow and Anya, Anya and Willow, Willow and Anya. And I was like—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Wait a minute. I have power in this universe with these two characters. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh god. Help!

Kristin: I can do what the show creators before me did not. I can bring them together. So. Anyway! If you're a patron, you know we do a lot of live watches together. Right now, Jenny and I are allegedly watching the television show *Firefly* together, though we have not watched in quite some time. But we will [Jenny laughs] be watching *Here's to You, Mrs. Robinson*. Coo-coo-ca-choo, what's the name of the episode?

Jenny: [laughs] Our! Mrs.! Reynolds! [Kristin laughs] Our. Mrs. Reynolds—

Kristin: We'll be watching—[laughs]

Jenny: Featuring a very special guest star. Kristin, I'm not gonna tell you who it is so you can be surprised.

Kristin: We'll be watching the episode *Our Mrs. Reynolds* on January 22nd. And for those of you who are waiting for our episode that covers the three prior, it will be coming out very, very soon, before we do that watch on the 22nd. And tonight is the last night—if you're listening on Wednesday, the 12th—tonight is the last night of a *Screamathon* watch I've been doing with everyone [Jenny laughs] leading up to the release of *Scream 5* on Friday. We've watched 1, 2, and 3 and tonight, Wednesday night at 8 PM Eastern, we'll be watching *Scream 4*. All that information, bufferingthevampireslayer.com/feelslike. Speaking of *feeling* like...[laughs] I should leave the transitions to Jenny, I think.

Jenny: I mean. [laughs] Sweet heavenly Moses, let me tell you, good people, about the results of our most recent Sexual Tension Awards poll for the episode, *Help!* [Kristin laughs] Which is a sentiment I've been feeling this whole time that we've been taping the intro. [Kristin laughs] So many slots, so many noms. We gotta wrap this business up so we can come into 2022 fresh with new slots and noms.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: In fourth place, with 6% of the vote, who? Who? It's Zachery Ty Bryan and *Infinite Riches*.

Kristin: They had tension, but nobody wants to see it, so.

Jenny: More—perhaps more disturbing, only getting 2% more of the vote, [Kristin laughs] 8% of the vote for third place, Dawn and Mike the Cutie. Poor Mike! He's so cute.

Kristin: Sorry, the other contenders were pretty hard to—

Jenny: It's true. It was a really steamy ep. [both laugh] In second place, with 36% of the vote, we've got fan faves, Cassie, who I went to high school with—

Kristin: Me too! [laughs]

Jenny: And Dawn. Oh my god! [Kristin laughs] Leaving, in first place, with a nice *round*, voluptuous 50% of the vote!

Kristin: [whispers] Oh my god.

Jenny: It's Willow and Doogie Howser. The crossover episode you didn't know you needed.

Kristin: Oh, they're like, sitting next to each other—

Jenny: [simultaneously] But you did get.

Kristin: Both on giant computers. If somebody could tell us Doogie Howser's forwarding address—I actually haven't updated my—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Phonebook, my address book, since 1990. So I just need to know where he's living these days. [both laugh] Okay. Listen. A listener email—I actually have two listener emails, because one, I got a million times, and that's our bad. So we talked about Cassie for, like, 400 hours. But we never talked about the name Cassandra. [both laugh] And like, that's on us. We're sorry. But just in case anyone didn't know, or anyone did know and still hadn't emailed us, you don't have to. Because Ned is the email I selected, who lets us know that in stories of the Trojan War, "a woman named Cassandra" [pronounced: cass-AN-dra]—or Cassandra [pronounced cass-ON-dra] depending on how you pronounce it—"was the daughter of the king and queen of Troy and was given the gift of foresight by the god Apollo. But Apollo also cursed her so that no one would believe her prophecies. Fucking typical. In some accounts, because she refused to have sex with him. Cue the Patriarchy jingle," says Ned. "In various Greek and Roman poems, she appears as a recurring tragic figure who can foresee the bad things that are about to happen, but cannot convince anyone to take her visions seriously." So. Yeah, we probably should—

Jenny: Apollo, fucking Prank Sinatra over here. [Kristin laughs] Why, dude?

Kristin: We probably should have mentioned that. We probably should have talked about it, okay? Sorry. Also, I just watched *Scream 2* last night and Sidney Prescott plays Cassandra in the play at school, so—

Jenny: Ohh, yes.

Kristin: [simultaneously] She's all over the place, Cassandra, Cassandra—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Yes, yes, yes.

Kristin: Cassie. 1-800-1-Cassandra. [Jenny laughs] Too many letters. Okay! I just had to include this email too, even though I know everybody wants us to get into the episode here. But a listener named Danielle wrote in to say, "I felt compelled to respond when you jokingly asked, did you have a friend who looked exactly like Cassie in high school? I did. I mean, I *really* did. One of my close friends in middle school and early high school was the younger sister of actress Azura Sky." [both laugh] "They look extraordinarily alike, and my friend, named Tara [pronounced TAR-uh], with a different pronunciation than the TV Tara—" that's why I said it like that—"had a similar style and alternative girl nonchalance as the Cassie character. [Jenny laughs] I believe we were starting freshman year of high school when this episode came out. I was a huge fan of Buffy in the early 2000s era, but Tara didn't often talk about her sister's career so I remember trying to keep my cool and not bring it up when the episode aired. We eventually drifted apart, but every time I see Help, I think so fondly of our friendship. Simply put, I had a Cassie, and even without the psychic powers, she was pretty great." [Jenny laughs]

That's fun. I had fun with that, Danielle. Thank you for sharing. Ned, thank you for telling us the story of Cassandra. And that sounds—it sounds like I'm being facetious. I'm not. We really—we really dropped the ball there. We really did. We deserved all those emails, 'cause how dare we? [both laugh] And I guess we should maybe get into this fucking episode. What do you think, Jenny?

Jenny: Let's do it!

[Buffering theme plays]

Jenny: Oh, hello and welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer! A podcast where we are watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one by one, spoiler free, in tandem with the incredible women whom I truly adore over on Angel On Top. [Kristin laughs] I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: Welcome to 2022. I am Kristin Russo. And hey, this week, we're talking about a fucking banger of an episode, Season 7, Episode 5, Selfless. All ye who love Anya, please gather round. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every other week for an original song, written by Jenny, sometimes with my help, and sometimes voiced by other characters inside of the universe. Ooh, I wonder what will be at the end of this one. [Jenny laughs] Oh, and by the way, that song recaps the Buffy episode we're discussing. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm. Selfless was written by Drew Goddard and directed by David Solomon and originally aired on October 22nd, 2002.

Kristin: Oh my. And this is the one, according to IMDB, where Anya's violent and deadly act of vengeance leaves everyone stunned. Buffy must put aside her feelings and take action before more people die. Must she?! We ask. [laughs] Must you, Buffy? No one is quite sure—

Jenny: Mm, must she?

Kristin: About the turn that one Buffy Summers takes in this episode. But we'll get there.

Jenny: Yeah. I have a question.

Kristin: Mmhmm?

Jenny: I seem to recall earlier in the season, there were some young women getting murdered all the time? But—

Kristin: You're right. I forgot! But FBY...

Jenny: [simultaneously] [laughing] Now those young women have—

Kristin: [simultaneously] ID? FBIYD. From beneath you, it—FBYID.

Jenny: FBYID. FBYID.

Kristin: [simultaneously] You're right, they were, and then we stopped seeing them. Do you think they're—you think everything's fine? It was just those two? [laughs] Three?

Jenny: Yeah, probably no young women are perishing on the pointy ends of curved knives, [Kristin laughs] held by hooded figures. I'm sure everything is just fine now.

Kristin: Well, we did see Cassie die last episode, though it wasn't at the end of a pointy knife. It almost was.

Jenny: Also, those are just different robes. You know what I mean?

Kristin: That's true, that's true, that's true.

Jenny: It's a whole other thing.

Kristin: Yeah, we don't get anything—I mean, the Previously On sets us up to kind of get...Anya-ated. I was trying to combine situated and Anya, but it just didn't happen for me.

Jenny: [whispers] Anya-ated...

Kristin: Anya-ated. [Jenny laughs] We remember Olaf. Who could forget after Jenny voiced the troll?

Jenny: Mmm!

Kristin: Jenny, do you have any troll impressions you wanna do at the top to sort of, like, get everyone ready for what might be to come?

Jenny: No, no, no. I'm...fine, thank you.

Kristin: Everyone in their, like, cars and at their desks was just waiting for you to shout, "It was just one wench." [laughs]

Jenny: Mmm!

Kristin: It'll happen.

Jenny: Well!

Kristin: I'm not concerned. We'll get there. And you know, in addition to remembering about Olaf, we also get the little play-by-play of Anya's been having some performance issues, when it comes to being a vengeance demon. Hallie getting to [laughs] say her line one more time, in the Previously Ons, that she's been referred to as Miss Softserve.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: The vengeance demons kind of sound like a hoot. Like, once we also learn that there's, like, a vengeance demon named Lloyd who has, like, a sketch of flayed Warren at his desk. I just, like—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Would love the vengeance demon spinoff show. I think it would be a good time.

Jenny: I would like to see it. [Kristin laughs] Also, Lloyd—it's like, D'Hoffryn. [Kristin laughs] Halfrek, Anyanka, and Lloyd.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Anyanka and Lloyd! It's the perfect sitcom. Give it to me.

Jenny: Mmm. So your fave is on screen. Dawn's got a lot of advice for Willow, back to school Willow. [Kristin laughs] Dawn's just like, "Whatever you can do to blend, blend. Don't—you know—draw attention to yourself. Do everything you can to fit in." Dawn says, "People may say things to you that you don't understand. [Kristin laughs] Someone might say, 'my protein window closes in an hour.'" Because this is not dialogue organically happening between two human individuals. This is a script. [Kristin laughs] It was written. In Los Angeles, California.

Kristin: Yeah, and you know—so we've watched this episode a few times. I would say that I've watched it a few more than I normally watch when we tape. And so I don't know—it's a big episode, and also, with the various times I've watched through it, things that didn't have as much meaning to me have taken on more meaning. Some of you just watch a show and you just immediately understand what's happening. It takes me, like, several times through. And at first, I was like, this is a funny thing that's happening here. [laughs] Like, that Dawn is just, like, giving this advice that the way to fit in is to just think—pretend that you understand. Like, essentially, don't ask any questions, which you can probably now follow where I'm going with this all—is that, like, this whole episode—in my opinion, one of the key pieces of this episode is that since she was Aud, before her vengeance demon days, she has—we learn in this episode—been told by others that her questions are irksome. People would like her not to talk. She takes things too literally. She XYZ, right? And I really think that Anya's—a lot of you have written in to us about Anya as a neurodivergent character and that's something that I would love to dig into more later in the season and explore more. But like, if we really think about the fact that Anya—Aud, [Jenny laughs] however we're gonna call her across time—has always been somebody—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Who's been told that who she is at her core is not acceptable, is not okay, that she has to, like, modify who she is to fit in—then I think, like, that can be looked at as part of the underlying heartbeat of her choices along the way. And like she says at the end—of course, we'll get there, but like—that she has clung to things along the way. And you know, there's a lot of reasons why people might do that. But one of them surely is being told that who you are is not okay and is not acceptable. So I think it's actually really brilliant that the conversation that we see at the opening of this episode is Dawn being like, "You know what I've learned in high school? I've been there for, like, two weeks. And what I've learned is you just have an easier time [Jenny laughs] if you pretend like you understand what everybody's talking about." 'Cause that's—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Yeah! You know?

Jenny: [laughs] I think it is, you know, a really reliable strategy for avoiding conflict.

Kristin: Yeah, I do it all the time.

Jenny: Mmhmm. Just blend.

Kristin: I really do. I, like, nod a lot—especially, like—now my whole shtick is that I don't know about movies, so I can just be truthful. But like, before that was my shtick, [Jenny laughs] I would just nod along to references I didn't understand. [both laugh]

Jenny: Ho-ho-ho! Yeah. That's—well, good on you. You and Dawn are two peas prepared for the same pod. [Kristin laughs] Ready to rock. Right?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Xander's been thinking about calling Anya. He's worried about her because she seems so sad. [sarcastically] Wow, I wonder fucking why? Fuck!

Kristin: Ughh. Yeah, I guess that's a fair read inside of this podcast, but I actually...thought that this was really nice. I just—it just—it—'cause she *is* really sad! She is really lost—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: And yes, it is partially because of Xander and everything that happened. But like, I think Xander is accurately reading that, like, he's—like, he fucked up, he did something bad. But I think he's accurately reading that perhaps the way that Anya is sad goes a little bit deeper than even that atrocity that he committed could have caused?

Jenny: Mm. Mm.

Kristin: So I actually have—I mean. I think you do too. But I have a lot of space for Xander in a lot of this episode.

Jenny: Sure, yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. But yeah, she seems so sad. Also, I would like to point out that we are decorating Willow's room. Formerly Buffy's room. Everybody's beds are on different walls, you know? Like, fucking—[Jenny laughs] Buffy's in Joyce's room, the bed's on a different wall. Willow is in Buffy's old room, the bed is on a different wall. Xander and Buffy walk in with a lamp. It has a lot of tassels on it. A lot of just—

Jenny: Sure.

Kristin: Dangly tassels. And then there's, like, a vase of, like, large plume feathers in the corner.

Jenny: Uhh...yes. Typical [Kristin laughs] of any 21-year-old's bedroom.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Right! Well—but hold on. 'Cause now I have to bring you all the way to my hypothesis. I thought it was funny—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: 'Cause who would decorate their room like this? And then, later, we're at Anya's and she has a fucking lamp with tassels on it, motherfuckers!

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: So I'm just saying that perhaps Willow has spent enough time at Anya's house to be influenced—

Jenny: Oh! To have picked up on her decorating—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Tendencies. I see what you're—

Kristin: Yes. Or maybe, like, one night—

Jenny: On about.

Kristin: You know, after they, you know. Willow was like, "I love that lamp." And Anya was like, "Oh my god, I have two of them. You can totally have this one." Just saying. [Jenny laughs] Two ladies, two lamps with tassels. I would like to put it in the evidence bin, thank you.

Jenny: Oh my god, okay. Consider that piece of evidence filed under L for lamp or—and also cross-filed under T for tassels.

Kristin: Oh my god! Do you think "The L Word" is lamp?! It's been lamp all along. [both laugh]

Jenny: Hiding in plain sight!

Kristin: Alright. Anyhow. So basically, the end of this scene is Xander trying to say to Buffy, like, "The things that you're saying about Anya and your, like, worry about her as a vengeance demon aren't totally founded, because she isn't—she isn't—that isn't her anymore," he says. And Buffy's like, "I hope you're right."

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: He is right. It isn't her anymore. It's not not her, but it's also not totally her. We see many versions of Anya in this episode.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: [laughs] You wanna know what I called the frat house in my location notes?

Jenny: [laughing] What?

Kristin: Murder-crombie. [laughs]

Jenny: Murder-crombie!

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Wow. [both laugh] Good.

Kristin: Thank you.

Jenny: This is good to me.

Kristin: Mmhmm. [both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah. Meanwhile, at a frat house, surrounded by college boys who have been relieved of their hearts, Anya is wearing a white dress, covered in blood, [Kristin groans] saying, "What have I done?" And...credits!

Kristin: Yeah. It's a really beautiful—I mean, you know. The black and white dress with the red blood. It's very—it's a very beautiful shot.

Jenny: It is.

Kristin: And back we go in time to Sjornjost. Sjornjost?

Jenny: I would—okay. To our beautiful Swedish listenership. I would implore you to email Kristin about the phonetic pronunciation of this—I would say Sjorn...jost [pronouncing J's like Y's]? I feel like J's—Swedish J's—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Sjorn—you're right about the Sjorn, yeah. Sjorn seems right.

Jenny: But maybe Sjornjost? Can you have two kinds of J's in the same word in Swedish?

Kristin: Probably. I say, knowing nothing.

Jenny: Is this a real place?

Kristin: I don't think it is a real place, 'cause I looked it up and Buffy immediately popped up. [laughs]

Jenny: It's so long ago that there are vertical lines on the—

Kristin: Yeah, the camcorders were old back then.

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah. [both laugh] So lemme tell you something that I read.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: According to Drew Goddard—

Kristin: [simultaneously] About the Swedish? Yes.

Jenny: Yeah. Drew Goddard claims that the Sjornjost—crossing my fingers that I’m saying it right—scenes were written in Swedish, but he intended for the lines to be dubbed badly in English. So Emma Caulfield and Abraham Benrubi, who plays Olaf, were told they didn’t need to memorize the Swedish that carefully because it would not be heard. Both actors memorized all the alleged Swedish words phonetically, and the show creators were so pleased with their performances that they decided to subtitle the scenes rather than dub them. Why do I feel like any native Swedish speakers who happen to listen to our podcast [laughs] are setting fire [Kristin laughs] to their village right now, after hearing me tell them this?

Kristin: Well, I mean, it’s—like, right. But I think, like—I imagine that the decision was that it felt so funny to them, watching them pronounce these things phonetically, that that’s what—like, he didn’t choose to not over-dub because he thought they did a good job. That’s not what I took from this. Is that what you took from this?

Jenny: Right, right, it was just—it was more enjoyable—

Kristin: [simultaneously] It was like, “ha-ha”—yeah, which is, like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Whatever.

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: And you can tell—if you know this and you go back. ‘Cause there’s a moment when the camera gets real close on Emma Caulfield. And she just says the word “troll.” And she says it so clearly in a way where she had been told that this would be the only overdubbed—like, not over-dubbed word—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: You know? Because “troll” is a—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Universal language, just like math. [laughs]

Jenny: Mm. Mmhmm.

Kristin: And so—and, like, when the rest of it isn’t over-dubbed, it’s kind of like, why did she say troll like that? [laughs] But if you know that that was what her—[Jenny laughs] what she was told as an actress, then it’s like, oh, that’s why—that’s why that “troll” lands the way that it does. Anyway, yes.

Jenny: The other alleged Goddard fact that I dug up, that’s relevant to this scene, is that he chose the name “Aud” for Anya’s original human name because while researching Viking names, he found a Viking king named Olaf who had a wife named Aud, known for her sense of humor and her ability to manage money. [Kristin laughs] What are the odds?

Both: [simultaneously] What are the *Auds*? [both laugh]

Kristin: Wow. Yes. Wow, two facts that I don’t need to read ‘cause you have read them. Fanta—we’re doing a great job. We are podcasters—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Nailing it.

Kristin: Did you know that about us?

Jenny: It cannot be denied. No one can say that we’re not...podcasters. Olaf is *tall*, man. Abraham Benrubi is *tall*. [laughs]

Kristin: Yes, he is. He’s a large man.

Jenny: So tall!

Kristin: He’s a large man. And we get—so I said to Jenny yesterday, but why is Anya afraid of rabbits? ‘Cause we get, like, Aud is in their home and she’s picking up a little rabbit and she’s kissing its little nose. And she puts it down and then Olaf comes home and he’s like—

Jenny: Oh yeah!

Kristin: [deep voice] “All these bunnies sure are multiplying, which makes me wanna fuck!” And like, you never really learn more about the rabbits. But here’s what I think, Jenny.

Jenny: I’m ready.

Kristin: So Aud says to Olaf that, like, since the bunnies are procreating all over the place, they have no need for them. And what if she just takes the bunnies and gives them to the villagers, because—not for an exchange of goods and services, but for goodwill and the sense of accomplishment that stems from *selflessly*—hm, interesting—[Jenny gasps] giving yourself to others. And so it’s just really interesting when you think about, like, where Anya is now and, like, her new love for capitalism and, like, where she went all along this journey.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: And I think maybe part of the reason she doesn’t like bunnies is because probably one of the core pieces of Anya or Aud was this—like, she had this beautiful desire to just, like, give something good to the world. And the response that she got from Olaf was, “You are insane like a troll. This is why the ladies at the bar don’t wanna talk—” like, she basically is taught in that moment that, like, that instinct is silly and incorrect and should be made fun of. And I’m sure she’s had a lot of moments like that, but I would just like to posit that I think this is part of the reason—*part* of the reason—that Anya does not like bunnies.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: Okay?

Jenny: Okay, I accept that.

Kristin: Thank you.

Jenny: I also—that is one of several seeds that we get that are sort of callbacks, call-forwards—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: To Triangle. Olaf refers to troll logic as non-logic, essentially. And we have the insane troll logic quote from Triangle.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: When he first comes into their home, he's saying that he is so hungry, he could eat a baby, which is what he prefers to eat later when he becomes a troll. [Kristin laughs] And he's just, like, going off about how much he hates trolls and how wretched they are. [both laugh] So it's pretty funny that—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: That he is turned into a troll. What a great troll on this troll.

Kristin: Also—yes. Oh my god, wow, yes. Anya really—Aud really trolled that—her husband. She really trolled him.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Later, when Olaf is a troll, one of the villagers is like, "Hide your babies and your beadwork." Which I thought was an interesting thing to also—do trolls enjoy beadwork? Do they like to wear fancily decorated—

Jenny: No, no, no, I think—I think that the residents of Sjornjost just are beadworkers. And—

Kristin: Oh, so they just don't want their beadwork destroyed.

Jenny: And this is, like, some typical Whedon-verse lingual absurdism. "Hide your babies and your beadwork."

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: "Throw fruits and various meats" or whatever.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Meat, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jenny: You know, that kind of thing.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: It's got a very specific flavor.

Kristin: [sighs] So Aud is worried that Olaf might be sleeping with a bar matron. And Olaf is—of course, denies it up and down. "And I just love you so much—"

Jenny: [simultaneously] Rannveig!

Kristin: “That—you’ll always be my girl,” says Olaf, and many future men to many future humans.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Right before they go to the bar. [laughs]

Jenny: He’s like, “Baby, baby, baby, baby, *baby*. Baby, *baby*.” [both laugh]

Kristin: And that—and there’s a lot of hard cuts in this episode. I mean, they—you know, they’re really like, setting us up for the—this is a devastating episode. I mean, it’s really fucking sad. So we go right from Olaf saying “don’t worry, you’ll always be my girl.” Hard cut to Anya in the bathroom, covered in blood, scrubbing her hands in the sink. That’s the whole—that’s all we see. It’s just a hard cut from then until now.

Jenny: I’d like to take this opportunity to issue yet another public service announcement to all residents of Sunnydale and surrounding areas. Stay away from frat houses. Nothing good ever happens there. There’s simply no reason for you to—just stay away.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Thank you.

Kristin: Don’t celebrate your birthday and don’t go to a frat house. Two major rules to follow in Sunnydale.

Jenny: Yeah, and go out of town on Halloween.

Kristin: [laughs] Yes. Halloween! So we’re down in the basement. Basically—I mean, you can tell at this point in the season that, like, [laughs] they’re gonna wanna do something with Spike and Buffy. But they, like, have other stories they have to tell. Because I think this is, like, the second time that we’ve gotten just, like, one scene. And then Buffy’s like, “Anyway. More on that later.” [laughs] And then we get—[Jenny laughs] that’s what we get here, is just this one basement scene where Spike is—we don’t know. You don’t know, as the viewer. I mean, I don’t think, anyway—that what you’re seeing is not Buffy in the first bit of this scene.

Jenny: You're definitely not supposed to. But I think—especially in contrast to the vibe of Buffy, real Buffy, when she shows up—it's...they're definitely giving you information to let you know that it's not her. But they don't want you to know that it's not her. You know what I mean?

Kristin: Yeah. Well, it—like, it worked even on me, having seen the damn thing before. Because the first time I watched this, the moment—[laughs] the only moment I was like, "wait a minute," was when she, like, puts her hand on his head. I was like, hold—hold on just a second. And then I was like, oh yeah. And then, the reveal happened a moment later. [both laugh] So, you know. I'm that guy. But Spike says to fake Buffy—

Jenny: You are that guy. [laughs]

Kristin: I am, I'm always that guy. "I've been seeing things." He has this really beautiful little, like, aside about Dru. 'Cause we saw him see Dru. He sort of, like, went through his little [laughs] Big Bad rolodex of his brain. And one of them was Dru. [both laugh] And he says to fake Buffy, "She'd see showers—like, inside, she'd see the sky. She'd see showers, she'd see stars."

Jenny: Mm, mmhmm.

Kristin: "And now I see her." And it's really beautiful. And it, like—I mean, I think we all remember the moment that he's referencing, when Dru was laying and looking at the ceiling and talking about naming the stars but she named them all the same and—

Jenny: Ohh, yeah.

Kristin: You know, it's just—it's—I don't know. I just think it's really sweet. And then—I don't know what we're to make of this. But we get, I guess, probably what Spike would like to happen, wishes to happen.

[Clip from episode plays]

Spike: I'm in trouble, Buffy.

Fake Buffy: I can help you.

Spike: I could never ask. Not after..

Fake Buffy: It's different. You're different.

Spike: Could never ask.

Fake Buffy: Spike, it's me. It's you and it's me and we'll get through this.

Kristin: I mean, we know 'cause we've seen Buffy talk about Spike to others, that like, she does—she is of the opinion that Spike is different. [laughs] But she's not gonna be, like, tenderly touching his head because of that fact. But she does show up and she's like, "You're a mess. Get up and get out of this basement." [both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah. I mean, that's one way to do it.

Kristin: You know, and Spike says, "I don't have anywhere else to go." Why? I mean, fine. Like, we'll accept it, but why? Why can't he go to his house?

Jenny: Uh...that's a good question. 'Cause Clem was watching it for him.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Like, where's Clem? Yeah, Clem would, like, very swiftly—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Mmm.

Kristin: Take Spike in. We know that Clem is a good, loyal friend. So I—whatever. But what we learn here is that Spike—

Jenny: You know—

Kristin: Has nowhere else to go.

Jenny: What's really interesting to me is that Hallucination Buffy—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Has a little braid in her hair. And then when real Buffy comes, she also has a little braid in her hair. [Kristin laughs] And do you know why all the Buffys have a little braid in their hair?

Kristin: I kinda think I do, but why don't you tell me?

Jenny: It's because Sarah Michelle Gellar was only available for three days of shooting for this episode because of her wedding.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And what you see in this episode is her, quote, “wedding hair.”

Kristin: Except it—

Jenny: I guess when you’re getting married, you just have the same hairstyle for...

Kristin: No—

Jenny: A week?

Kristin: I think that it’s—so I did a little bit of digging on this. Like, I looked at her wedding photos because I was like, tell me more.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: She does not have a braid in her hair in her wedding. So I don’t think—

Jenny: Interesting.

Kristin: I don’t think that’s what they meant. I don’t think, like, they meant [laughing] the braid was how she would have her hair styled for her wedding. I think what they meant was that—

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: They probably were using various things on her hair in an episode-to-episode manner in this season. And she was like, “No, no, because my fucking wedding is this week, or whatever. So you have to use my actual—like, you have to use this hair. This is the hair you’re working with.” And so they made this braid. Like, that’s how I read it. You know? Whether they were giving her extensions or whether they were—whatever they were doing in other episodes, they couldn’t do. And so they had to use, like, just Sarah Michelle Gellar hair for this episode.

Jenny: Could you give me more information when you—about what you mean when you say “you have to use this hair”?

Kristin: Like, I don’t know that she is—I don’t know that when we see Buffy in episodes 1 through 4, we’re seeing only Sarah Michelle Gellar’s hair. I think we might be seeing Sarah Michelle Gellar’s hair with extensions or with, like, things to

make her hair fuller or whatever the fuck they do. I don't know. I'm not—[crosstalk]

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: But like, I—

Jenny: [laughing] Okay.

Kristin: I would imagine that the reason that they have this braid in her hair is because they need, like, a distraction from the fact that perhaps she doesn't have the same hair that she's had for these last few episodes. 'Cause she was like, I'm not Buffy. I'm fucking Sarah. You know? Am I not making any sense?

Jenny: [quietly] Okay.

Kristin: Hairdressers—you know, I am the daughter of a hairdresser. So I do—I have—

Jenny: Ahh.

Kristin: Generational knowledge on this topic. But [laughs] if you know more than me, please, write in, tell me. Tell me how wrong I am or, you know, how right I am. [Jenny laughs] Anyway. Shall we go to campus?

Jenny: I think we should. I think it would be best if we went to campus. [laughs] Willow is back on her bullshit of being good at school!

Kristin: Aww, it's cute to see Willow all excited. Her professor's like, "You were always the best student in the whole class. It was amazing how you did that quick turnaround after missing so much and you aced those finals. It was like magic." [laughs]

Jenny: "Well! Similar to, but definitely not actual, but it's very important for me to clarify to you, my professor, that that was not real magic."

Kristin: Yeah, so...

Jenny: You know that thing when you're talking to your professor, but then out of the corner of your eye, you see your best friend's ex-girlfriend walking out of a frat house in the middle of the day, under the blazing sun, in front of god and everyone, wearing apparently not but a trench coat?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: We've all been there.

Kristin: [simultaneously] No, she's—her dress is under there. She's got her dress under there.

Jenny: Mm, sure, but like, mostly, it's trench coat.

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah! Willow sees her girlfriend coming out of this frat house—

Jenny: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Kristin: And she's like—she's so excited! "Anya! Anya!" [laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god, yeah.

Kristin: [simultaneously] And she starts going on, like, all about school. Like, "you won't even believe! They're gonna give me pop quizzes!" and Anya is like, please kill me. Like, someone literally kill me right now. I can't possibly deal with this situation. [both laugh] She makes up this very bad lie. "I have a new boyfriend. And he lives there. We just had a lot of sex." [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Alyson Hannigan, definitely getting some points for her response. "Okay?" [both laugh] "Sure, buddy."

Jenny: Yes, but then she clocks the telltale wrist blood on Anya's wrist!

Kristin: The wrist blood on Anya's wrist?

Jenny: Listen.

Kristin: Yeah, it's an odd place for Anya to have blood, since we've seen her scrubbing her hands so much. It probably would have made more sense for her to have, like, a little blood on, like, her neck or—I don't know. [laughs] Just like, not her actual hand, but whatever. Willow is wearing an amazing outfit that I would like to just give a quick shout-out to. She's wearing, like, a red sweater with a—like, a brown skirt and red tights and brown boots with a really great necklace. It's just,

like, a look that I personally subscribed to in the early 2000s and I love to see it on Willow.

Jenny: I object.

Kristin: [gasps] Object to what? [laughs]

Jenny: I just—the palette. I—eugh, it's just not quite...what I want out of life.

Kristin: I mean, I don't know that I want it out of life in 2021. But I did want it out of life in 2003. I think she looks great.

Jenny: Yeah, she looks straight out of a Delia's catalog.

Kristin: Exactly.

Jenny: Okay. Alright. Alright.

Kristin: So...

Jenny: So into the frat house she goes.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: In she pokes her snout, and oh no! There's big splotches of blood everywhere.

Kristin: Everywhere. Like, why did Anya even drag them all into one room? Like, I don't understand really what the point of—

Jenny: Unclear.

Kristin: That was. But I guess it's so we didn't have to see them all together at once, 'cause that would have been hard to do, from like, a [laughs] camera and set perspective.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah, so Willow peeks into the pile of boy room, sees them all. And then she hears a girl crying, saying, "I take it back, I take it back." This girl does a great job with this short little performance she has, I think. She really conveys the shock of seeing dozens of boys de-hearted in front of her.

Jenny: Yeah, this girl is...traumatized?

Kristin: Very.

Jenny: She explains to Willow that a boy was like, "There's gonna be a big party. Come as my date." And then he got to his frat house and then it was just eleven other dudes and him being like, "LOL, just kidding." This seems like a lot of everyone's time and energy for what I have to imagine is very little payoff. Like, what are you, [laughing] as a fucking real piece of trash guy, even get out of this? Like, think about how much fun you could have actually had, instead of investing your time in...

Kristin: I think you're—I think you—

Jenny: Whatever *this* is.

Kristin: You might be misunderstanding the patriarchy, Jenny.

[THE PATRIARCHY jingle plays]
The patriarchy! [thunder clap, evil laughter]

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, it's just fucking shitty dudes being really fucking shitty. Like, it's funny to this guy...I personally would move that eleven of the guys could have gotten their hearts back, but that the actual perpetrator could have stayed fucking dead on the floor. You know what I mean?

Jenny: You think that's a punishable-by-death offense?

Kristin: [laughs] Well, I mean—

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: Listen.

Jenny: Remind me not to live in your world. [both laugh] Just in case I make a terrible mistake. Ever.

Kristin: Imagine, though?! These are—it's not even like they're middle-school kids, which it still wouldn't be, like, at all okay. But like, you're a college-aged human being and you date a girl—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And you invite her over just to make her cry in front of your friends, and then you laugh at her more? I'm sorry. I'm—it's gonna take a lot for me to be convinced that this person deserves to keep their fucking beating heart inside of their chest, but...

Jenny: [laughs] Okay. Okay, okay.

Kristin: Anyway.

Jenny: So as Willow's continuing to have a conversation-ish with this girl, she's like, "Where did the de-hearting monster go?" And in what I think is a poor dialogue choice, [Kristin laughs] the girl says, "What do you mean?" instead of something like, "It's still here—"

Kristin: [simultaneously] [laughing] "It's behind you!" Yeah.

Jenny: Or "it's behind you." [both laugh]

Kristin: They weren't yet—the CGI department hadn't yet decided when the spider would enter the frame. [laughs] This spider! Oh my god. Only rivaling the great big snake, if you ask me. This spider is fucking batshit banana town!

Jenny: Yeah, some truly regrettable CGI in this episode that does not hold up but it's—

Kristin: [simultaneously] All different sizes. [laughs]

Jenny: The—it's...this is filed in my mind as the Drew Goddard special. But maybe it's not—I just feel like I've seen this protruding sort of square mouth thing?

Kristin: I mean, that's just, like—

Jenny: Before?

Kristin: Alien-esque, right? Like—

Jenny: It's like, Cloverfield. It's like, the J. J. Abrams—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Mouth inside of mouth.

Jenny: Star Trek ice cave monster. It's Stranger Things.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Stop putting protruding square mouths in monsters challenge 2022.

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah, it's bad. It's especially bad—because, like, it's just kinda, like, little suction cups in this scene. [Jenny laughs] Like, its little second mouth just, like, suctions to the magic and then it's like, "Ahh!"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And it flies out the window. But it's—later, when that inner mouth is literally *drooling* on Buffy—

Jenny: Bleh! Bleh!

Kristin: That I lose my fucking shit. So Willow—

Jenny: Yeah, no thank you.

Kristin: Willow uses her magic. I don't like this. I know it's here to, like, let us know that, like, Willow's magic could come with dark stuff. But like, it's just very on the fucking nose for her to be, like, protecting them from one large spider. And then to be like, [laughs] "For god's sake, shut your whimpering mouth!"

Jenny: [simultaneously] [gravelly voice] "Shut your whimpering mouth!"

Kristin: Like. [laughs] I just...

Jenny: She's, like, about to jump in the WWE ring. [both laugh] And start throwing elbows.

Kristin: I just feel—I just feel personally like Willow would be able to put up a protection shield without yelling at this traumatized girl in a closet. But like, I know why it's there—

Jenny: I don't know.

Kristin: I know why it's there, and fine, I will take it. I will take it and I'll put it in the bin, fine.

Jenny: Speaking of monsters! [Kristin laughs] Olaf is a troll!

Kristin: Hide your babies and your beadwork! He's like, "I'm Olaf. I'm—guys, it's me. Guys?" [both laugh] "Hey, guys."

Jenny: And they're like, oh, the troll is doing an Olaf impression. [Kristin laughs] How do you think...a troll got the, like, hard data and field research to be able to do an Olaf impression? Sir?

Kristin: And then, this is—I think this was really cool. I don't know how you felt about this, but like, [laughs] the—they decide to discard the old camcorders of the 800s as they pan around. It's done really beaut—I think it looks really pretty—as they pan from the scene in the village to where Anya, Aud, is standing with D'Hoffryn.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: It, like, colorizes. And it's just real nice. And D'Hoffryn—

Jenny: Yeah, it's a cool choice. And it's like, you know, her transformation has begun.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah.

Jenny: You know?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: She's totally unflapped—

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: By the appearance of a multi-horned purple-skinned—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Full eye black contact-wearing D'Hoffryn [Kristin laughs] rolling up on her village. [laughs]

Kristin: Well, and I mean, we learn in her conversation that she's been doing really advanced magics. And you know, this is—I don't know if we've mentioned it already in this conversation. But like, there's such a massive overlap between Willow and

Anya, and I don't just mean that in a sexy way. I—it's just like, [Jenny laughs] Willow—Willow has been—which, we'll see her use the amulet that D'Hoffryn gave her. Like, Willow has been visited by D'Hoffryn the same exact way that—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Aud is visited by D'Hoffryn in this moment. Because—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: In the beginning, Aud was a very, very powerful witch. She knew how to use magic in ways that were really inventive, that impressed D'Hoffryn. He doesn't even know how she did it.

Jenny: Yep. Yep, yep. Spicy little spell variations.

Kristin: Yeah, she used a little Thornton's Hope with a little eelsbane. And he's like, damn! Damn! "What did he do?" "A bar matron." Da-da-dun-ch! [both laugh]

Jenny: Yep, yep, yep. And he's like, "come away with me! Join my band of rogue vengeance demons! [Kristin laughs] Punish evil men on behalf of wronged women, but only those who deserve it." And Anya's like, [dramatically] "They all deserve it!" [Kristin laughs] And he's like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, totally, that's what I—yes. Correct."

Kristin: [simultaneously] Yeah, that's—that was the angle, mmhmm. Yeah, we get more from her in this scene about how, like, the people in the village don't talk to her, they reject her, they make fun of her—

Jenny: Boo!

Kristin: And—but what's complicated here is that she has yet another person telling her that she—like, that she doesn't know her true self. Right? It's like—because by the time we get to the end of this episode, Anya is in a place, clearly, where she is saying, like, "I've actually never asked myself." D'Hoffryn says that as well, like, nobody's asked Anya what does Anya want? And he asks her that at the end, and she says at the end, like, "What do—what—who am I?" Because—and what we're seeing here is, like, she's only defining herself based on the things that other people are telling her. You know, she wanted to give bunnies away, and Olaf said that was ridiculous. She punished Olaf and, like, that felt good too. And sorry to be, like, so whatever about all of this. But I just think it's really interesting because I don't think that as human beings, we are often taught that we

can hold two things at once. And so I feel like for Anya, Aud, a lot of, like, her desires are in conflict with each other. Because, like, we live in a world that says they can't both coexist, right? You can't want to, like—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Give bunnies away and also wreak havoc on your husband because he's cheated on you. Like, you're either bad or you're good. And I think that Aud's instincts and Anya's instincts and many of our instincts are not always one way or the other. And it's her confusion about the coexisting pieces of herself that has made her, like, what'd she say? Like, hold onto things so often in her life.

Jenny: Well, you know what you should really hold onto in life?

Kristin: Hm?

Jenny: A pencil cup that you're balancing on your forehead.

Kristin: Oh, Buffy.

Jenny: You know what I mean?

Kristin: Ohh, Buffy.

Jenny: Ma'am, you're at work! You're in the workplace!

Kristin: I think she understands that she does not have a lot to contribute in this particular department. [both laugh]

Jenny: She's like, "I know it's important for me to be here, but I simply don't know why."

Kristin: She's, like, on the phone with Willow. "Okay, yeah, mmhmm, big spider, yeah, okay. Oh, wow, ripped out its heart, okay. Hey, did you get that physics class?" Everybody's tired, man. We just—just please, let us live. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. They're like, it's Season 7! [Kristin laughs] Over at Anya's. Over at Anya's! [Kristin groans] Halfrek is so *stoked* and Anya's just, like, staring into the middle distance. I'm not at all surprised to learn that spider demons are impossible to housetrain. Are you?

Kristin: [laughs] Imagine them with, like, little litter boxes. Big litter boxes.

Jenny: Litter boxes, little spider diapers.

Kristin: Little spider leashes. [laughs]

Jenny: Spi-pers. [both laugh]

Kristin: Hallie's—I mean. I love Hallie. I know that she's a vengeance demon and she kills a lot of people—

Jenny: Sure, but she's fun. Very fun.

Kristin: She—and she's also a real—I think she's, like, a really—I think she just really loves Anya. A lot.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And based on her understanding of the universe, she's just so proud of Anya! You know? Like, she's been genuinely worried. She doesn't want Anya to get kicked out of being a vengeance demon. She, like, wants her to be able to find, I think, what Hallie believes to be Anya's truest self. She wants her to find herself again and just remember the joy that you can take from vengeance. And Anya is—

Jenny: Yeah. [laughs]

Kristin: Anya's not—

Jenny: Yeah...how nice. [laughs]

Kristin: I mean, for her, though! For her, it is.

Jenny: No, I know, I know.

Kristin: Anya's like, "I guess I'm a little rusty. I didn't think it'd hit me like this." And Hallie is really supportive. She's like, "It's normal. [laughing] It's normal—it's normal to feel this way. It's a reflex, but like, you'll get it under control. Don't worry about it."

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Got you.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: This is the sound of me leaving space for Jenny to talk about the entrance of another character [laughing] in this scene, 'cause I know you have some feelings about it.

Jenny: [laughs] Okay. Then in! Busts. Willow Rosenberg. "Get! Out!" Halfrek calls her lemon drop. Which has created a new headcanon for me. [Kristin laughs] Which is that something wicked is between Halfrek and Willow. You don't just go around calling everyone lemon drop. That's a very specific pet name.

Kristin: It's true.

Jenny: You know what I mean?

Kristin: I love it for Willow. I love—

Jenny: Yeah. This is great.

Kristin: I love lemon drop.

Jenny: Willow's been on, um—what do you think witch Tinder is? In Sunnydale? 2002? Broomz with a Z.

Kristin: Cauldron to Cauldron. [both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah. Willow's just been branching out, I think, and getting swiped on and swiping in return.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Boil, boil...Boil, Boil, Trouble and Date Me?

Jenny: Mmm. Doesn't exactly roll off the tongue.

Kristin: [laughs] Anyway, yes.

Jenny: Weird Sisters. [both laugh]

Kristin: You really need—to get the full effect of Jenny's idea, you have to imagine her eyebrows going—like, wagging. Literally wagging up and down.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: As she says “Weird Sisters.” [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, you know, *Weird Sisters*.

Kristin: Uh-huh, uh-huh. It could just be match.com, but it’s like an actual match that’s lighting a candle.

Jenny: Oh, yeah. Yep, yep.

Kristin: Anyway, this is the—this is the point at which we have bad ideas live. [Jenny laughs] We don’t ever come back with better ideas, and then all of you take the time you need to be like, “How could you possibly have missed this one?!” [laughs] So—

Jenny: Yeah, I’m sure there are incredible things that are right there. But I will take this opportunity to remind you of the time when, on absolutely the fly, I came up with Lair B&B. [Kristin laughs] For Spike renting out his crypt. And I feel like I can coast on that for the rest of my life.

Kristin: Okay. So, fine. Headcanon has it that Willow’s been doing a little smoochy-smooch with Halfrek as well.

Jenny: Mm!

Kristin: Halfrek’s like, “Let me tell ya about William. ‘Cause I’ve got stories!” [both laugh]

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: Anya gives Hallie permission, you know—like, ‘cause Hallie’s being very protective. Like, “I will stay here and defend you.” And Anya’s like, “Don’t worry, you can go.” And Hallie says, “If you need anything,” and does, like—Kali Rocha—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Her little floof!

Kristin: Just—like, just—and to remind everyone—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Her poof and floof.

Kristin: You know, Jenny mentioned this in the last episode where we saw Hallie. But just in case you forgot or you didn’t listen to that episode, Kali Rocha did all of her scenes in one day, for every episode in this whole freakin’ season. Which is

really two, 'cause RIP Hallie at the end of this one. But—so just remember that all of this was done in a day.

Jenny: And as you can very clearly tell in her last moments, she is shooting on a greenscreen.

Kristin: On a greenscreen, yes. This is where we see the tassel—the tassel heard [Jenny gasps] round the world or whatever.

Jenny: Oh, hell yeah.

Kristin: And Willow and Anya have a—what I find to be a very important conversation with each other here. So let's listen in, if we shall.

[Clip from episode plays]

Willow: Anya, listen to me. You're in trouble. You know it. I'm here to help you.

Anya: [laughs] You're here to—well, that's great, Willow. Flayed anybody lately, have you? How quickly they forget!

Willow: I haven't forgotten one second of it.

Anya: What do you want?

Willow: I want to help you.

Anya: They got what they deserved.

Willow: No, they—

Anya: I am a vengeance demon! Do you understand that?

Willow: No.

Anya: Try! They got what they deserved.

Jenny: Again, I think this is a very high level of punishment for some really uncool behavior.

Kristin: Yes. Well, and that's what Anya is grappling with. I mean, she's clearly, in this moment, trying to convince herself—

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: That this is what they deserved. And she's not convincing herself, she's not convincing Willow, who has, at this point, the biggest understanding of exactly what Anya is grappling with.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: And yeah, let's go to the woods real quick for a little spider boomerang fucking sword action, shall we?

Jenny: Yick! Xander and Buffy, side by side, just two buddies on the look for one giant spider. They come across—what luck! [laughs] A gentleman who appears to have been de-hearted. And Buffy's like, "Oh, this is—this looks like our guy." And Xander's like, "Yeah, or a copycat spider demon." [both laugh] Like. I think it's safe to say that this is—we're in the right place. There are thick, black ropes of webbing—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Hanging down from the trees. And Xander touches one and goes, "Sticky!" [both laugh]

Kristin: Xander's gonna Xander, you know?

Jenny: Yeah. And then they notice some movement above them in the trees and then—ugh, lord. The practical effects, the CGI effect—it's just all—

Kristin: [simultaneously] [sighs] It's not great.

Jenny: This poor spider deserved better. A rope of web comes down from the trees and basically, like—just like, flaps against Xander's shoulder. And he, like, goes flying. [both laugh] I don't know if you noticed this.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Buffy's like, "Xander! Daniel!" [both laugh] Yeah, it's not great. I mean, I think that we are just in a time when it became possible to actually make a fake spider move so it seemed like a good idea—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Before everyone realized that actually, the suggestion of that spider [laughs] is more effective than seeing what the computer can make. Not—it's not—it's not good. But the drool—the drool is good. The drool works on me. Buffy's response, like, her scream—'cause we don't—like, Buffy doesn't scream a lot, you know?

Jenny: No.

Kristin: She fucking screams her fucking head off in this scene, and I'm like, yes. Agree. Completely agree.

Jenny: [laughs] Appropriate.

Kristin: If that fucking spider was drooling on my face, I would also be screaming my fucking head off.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I do really like the comedic timing of Xander being like, "You know, we should go back to the house and maybe get, like, an anti-spider amulet. [Jenny laughs] And then we can, like, get this sword and we can—" [laughing] and as he's talking, Buffy just throws her fucking ax into the trees, hits the spider and it all comes down. And he's like, "Or...that." It's good. It's good. It makes me laugh. [both laugh]

Jenny: To all of our spider expert listeners.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Are you aware of if spiders can drool? Real ones. Thank you, let us know.

Kristin: [gasps] Oh my god—

Jenny: Bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: Oh, I—

Jenny: Send Kristin lots of spider pics.

Kristin: No. Don't do that, [Jenny laughs] but I am really curious to know if spiders can drool. That's a question I never thought I would need answered, but now I'm simply dying.

Jenny: I know, right?

Kristin: Yes. Like, because can you imagine—

Jenny: [simultaneously] The people have a right to know.

Kristin: Like, a little spider in his little bed with his little sleep cap on and he's just on his little pillow, and he's just drooling a little bit?

Jenny: Drooling. [Kristin laughs] Yeah. Do you think when a spider is under the covers—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Do you think spiders can snore? [laughs]

Jenny: Can spiders snore? When they're under the covers, do they have two little paws—

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: Over the edge of the blanket? Four little paws?

Kristin: Four? Six?

Jenny: Six little paws?

Kristin: Definitely not eight 'cause then they would be completely exposed. I think that if they're like—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Right, yeah, yeah, you gotta have—

Kristin: You know, like, an Angelus kind of spider, they probably have all six legs out. You know, 'cause Angel likes to really [both laugh] air out his bits and bobs—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: While he sleeps, so. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Shirtless, sweaty.

Kristin: [laughs] Okay, so a tiny little thing. Entering into the next scene, they've killed the spider, they're walking into the house. And they're about to go into this serious scene, but before they do, there's just this really quick moment where Buffy puts her ax in, like, the mail bowl at the door. And [laughing] it really got me. [both laugh] It's just so small, but it's like, of course. You know, of fucking course. So.

Jenny: Yeah. Keys, mail—

Kristin: Ax. [laughs]

Jenny: Axes that need to be washed of supernatural spider guts.

Kristin: Exactly. Exactly.

[AD BREAK]

Jenny: Oh no, who's waiting at Revello Drive but Willow!

Kristin: Ugh, god. Xander, taking up Dawn's role for the previous season. "How could you not have told me? You should have told me. Why did you not tell me?"

Jenny: Yep. Yep.

Kristin: Willow's like, "I'm literally telling you right now." I mean, and she has—Willow has a point. Like, it's not like she waited that long. She just, like, needed to address some things.

Jenny: Yeah, it just took, like, a minute.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: She wanted to talk to her girlfriend directly first.

Kristin: Yes. She needed to give Anya the benefit of the doubt. And then Buffy takes this fucking turn. I mean, we only get one line of it in this scene. But she—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Buffy's basically like, "Well, Willow didn't tell me right—didn't tell us right away 'cause she knows what I have to do. I have to kill her." Dun-dun-dun!

Jenny: [high-pitched] I mean, do you?

Kristin: Counterpoint. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Or just not.

Kristin: Or just not. We'll get there. First, let's go to Saint Petersburg.

Jenny: Yes. Over at the dawn of the Russian revolution, we're at a banquet populated by corpses plus Anyanka, plus Halfrek.

Kristin: Yes. For the—this is the first Russian revolution in 1905. There was a bigger Russian revolution in 1917. And I read in some of the continuity that, hmm, because when they smashed Anyanka's amulet, all of the wishes that she was to have formerly granted were to have been undone when that amulet smashed. So we're to believe that even without this wish, the Russian revolution in 1905 would have happened.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: Either way.

Jenny: So it might be a little bit of an overreach when Halfrek is like, "You're partially responsible for this revolution." [laughs]

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah, yeah. But it's fine, it's fine. They're having a great time. Their little fancy gloves are all bloodied up.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin: They've set men on fire. They're just—they're partying. [both laugh]

Jenny: Blood notwithstanding, their outfits are amazing. Hallie's like, "Let's go out into the world." And Anyanka's like, "Or I could just keep doing more and more vengeance." And then Hallie's like, "Don't you wanna see what's gonna happen?" And she's like, "Well. Obviously, socioeconomic paradise is extremely nigh. Everything's gonna be fine. It's common sense." [fake laughs]

Kristin: [laughs] "The worker will overthrow absolutism." [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh. Yep.

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: Yeah. I mean—and so, these are—like, these are a little—if Anya could watch Anya’s character arc throughout all of the seasons of Buffy, including the flashbacks, she would really be able to pick on some of the consistencies of herself. Because she’s always had an interest in how finances work and how—[laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: How governments work. She’s got an interest. She likes these things, you know?

Jenny: Right. But the thing we’re to take away from this scene, for the purpose of, like, the larger arc of this episode, is all about how once Anya became a vengeance demon, she got really into it, to the point where she can say a sentence like, “I am vengeance. Like, this is what I exist for.”

[Clip from episode plays]

Anya: Vengeance is what I do, Halfrek. I don’t need anything else.
Vengeance is what I am.

Jenny: Whereas previously, she existed for breeding rabbits and tending to Olaf’s every need.

Kristin: Right, right.

Jenny: Interesting.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Something to...

Kristin: Something to...

Jenny: Keep in your kangaroo pocket.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: As we go.

Kristin: Yeah. Okay, so here we go deep into “what are we doing, Buffy Summers?” territory. We’re now in the Summers’ living room and Willow, Xander and Anya [sic] are having a conversation about killing Anya. Buffy’s stance is that this is what has to happen. Buffy’s like, “She’s not the Anya that you knew, she’s a demon.” And it’s like, especially—like, back to this Willow parallel. It’s like, Willow—and Xander brings that up. Like, when our friends kill people, we—like, we have a precedent set here. Like, we don’t just kill them back.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: We, like, try to talk to them and find out what they need, unless they’re Faith and then they go to Los Angeles and they turn themselves into the cops and they sit in a jail cell. But whatever.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But like, Willow is a human who was imbued with—who has and then was overly imbued with so much magic, that she was poised to destroy the world. Early on her journey with magic, D’Hoffryn came to her and said, “Do you wanna? Do you wanna do this?” So like, the space between Anya and Willow is so small that for Buffy to sit here—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And say, “Willow is a human and Anya is not” is not—it doesn’t—it’s not okay.

Jenny: It’s very weird. Also, Buffy’s, like, bedside manner in this scene, where she’s just like, “I know this is hard for you to hear. I just have to kill your ex-fiancee.” [laughs] Like...

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jenny: It’s very...I don’t know. I don’t know, it’s not great. And Xander brings up the point that—[laughs] he says, “If there’s a mass murdering demon you’re boning, it’s all gray.”

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Right? And you know, she’s saying, like, “Oh, that was different. Spike was harmless. La-la-la-la-la.” And Buffy then brings up how she killed Angel. And here’s

why this is—[Kristin laughs] this falls, like, quite short for me. Killing Angel was the only way to close a portal that was already open that would swallow literally the entire *world*!

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And cause everything to cease to be and pull it into a hell dimension of torment. Whereas, you know, for episodes prior—you know, Buffy's facing off with Angel. She had shots she didn't take at Angel. She did not kill Angel in some instances when she could have. And you know, it ended the way that it ended and whatever, and like—

Kristin: And you keep saying Angel, but he was Angelus. You know, like—

Jenny: Sure, yes, yes.

Kristin: Right? Like, and that's who she also thought that she killed. Which gets—I laughed, first of all, when you first said that she brought up Angel, because Willow's—[laughs] Willow's immediate response of, [Jenny laughs] "And that worked out okay, see?" Like—[laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: He's got a whole detective agency up in LA. He's doing good.

Jenny: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Kristin: You know, everybody's fine now. But also, we get this, like, really quick reveal [both laughing] that no one but the viewer notices, where Buffy is basically like, "You pushed me—like, you *told* me to do that. You *told* me that I should kill him. You encouraged that, so why wouldn't you be encouraging it now? I got your—I got Willow's message from Xander saying, kick his ass." [laughs]

Jenny: Kick his ass! [both laugh]

Kristin: Willow's like, "What?"

Jenny: Willow piping up, "I never said that." [Kristin laughs] Nobody cares. Nobody's listening.

Kristin: But yeah, I think—I mean, to your point, Jenny. All I have to say to your point is it is a very good point. Xander is making—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Good points. Willow is making good points. Buffy is not at all making good points. There is no line of continuity here that gets us to a place where Buffy would stand in her house and say, "The only solution to this problem is to kill Anya." There is no precedent for that, at all. And...yeah. Except for perhaps to lay some seeds for future things that might happen, I don't know. [both laugh] But in terms of where we are right now, it just doesn't really make any sense. And you know, Buffy...[sighs] Buffy is, like, drawing this line, and Xander calls her out on it. Like, "We know when you do this, you cut us out." You know, and she's always had—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: She's always had this complex, because like, fuck a Chosen One story, right? And she's always had the complex because she's been given that fucking story. You are the one. You are the Chosen One.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And so she says, like, "At some point, someone has to draw the line. It is always going to be me in the end. The Slayer is always cut off. Human rules don't apply. There's only me. I am the law."

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: Hmm. Also, remember when Faith said that she was the law and Buffy was like, "Lies. Incorrect. Not the law." [both laugh] But this is dangerous thinking. It feels regressive, is that the right word to use? Like, it feels like how Buffy—like, what Buffy was grappling with in earlier seasons, of feeling isolated as the Slayer.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It just feels like—

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: We've had six seasons of learning [laughing] that she doesn't have to cut herself off. And she can—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Be a part of a larger community, that I just hate to see her retreating into this headspace. [Jenny sighs] It's not—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And you can't—I don't know that you can entirely put the blame on her for it. You know, I mean, ultimately you go all the way back to the old white dudes sitting up in their tower with their fucking books, who have set up a system to make her feel like she is isolated. And I guess that's gonna permeate and maybe stick with her. But either way, it's not a good fucking—it's not a good headspace. Somebody get her outta there! [laughs]

Jenny: Xander says, "There has to be another way." Buffy says, "Then please find it." Then she proceeds to get her really big sword out of her weapons chest and she looks to Willow, and Willow's like, "I can't—I can't go with you, because it did get a little sexy. [Kristin laughs] So I can't be a part of this."

Kristin: [laughs] Yes. And I mean, to Willow's credit, she probably wouldn't have helped anyway because Willow also understands that you don't fucking kill your friends. I mean, she really understands—[laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, mostly that. Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin: She just got back from pulling flowers up out of the ground in England. Like. [laughs]

Jenny: I know.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: But she is gonna take some action.

Kristin: She is.

Jenny: She's gonna dig around for a magical item. She's gonna pour a circle of red sand in the bathroom. Who's gonna clean that up?

Kristin: Dawn. Definitely Dawn. [both laugh] You know Dawn is, like—like, Dawn comes in to fucking do her eye makeup. And she looks down, she's like, "God fucking damnit." She gets the dustpan out, [Jenny laughs] like, another dust—another fucking magical dust circle? [laughs] In the bathroom?

Jenny: She summons D'Hoffryn and I love that he appears with his back to her and is doing his very dramatic slow turn—

Kristin: So good.

Jenny: Announcing himself. "Behold! [Kristin laughs] Me! Bringer of blood! Destroyer of worlds! Uh—ah, Miss Rosenberg." [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah, great—

Jenny: Very cute.

Kristin: Great delivery. Also, I would love to know if all of those amulets that Willow is, like, rustling through in her drawer were, like, many offers from many different societies of various demons—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: [laughing] You know? Just like—

Jenny: "Please, take my card. Call me if you change your mind."

Kristin: [simultaneously] Yeah. [laughs]

Jenny: "Summon me if you change your mind."

Kristin: So, yeah. D'Hoffryn compliments Willow on what he refers to as "water cooler vengeance."

Jenny: Incredible.

Kristin: Incredible. The Warren Mears death that just impressed demons the world round. And Lloyd—the vengeance demon Lloyd is so impressed, of course. You know. There it is, a sketch. I mean—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Lloyd, man, take it down. Nobody wants to see that shit. [both laugh]

Jenny: Well, maybe in—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Vengeance Demon Incorporated Headquarters, they do.

Kristin: Yeah, that's true. So we don't know what Willow says to D'Hoffryn about Anya, but we can probably gather before we even get to the next scenes—

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: That she has called him there because she wants to talk about her concerns. Looking out! She's looking out for Anya. Remember when Anya was looking out for her, when she got back—

Jenny: Aw.

Kristin: And lil' Gnarl was trying to eat Willow's skin?

Jenny: Aww. Aw.

Kristin: They really had each other's fucking backs, man. [sighs]

Jenny: Do you think Gnarl D'Hoffryn know each other?

Kristin: D'Hoffryn would not even fucking fuck with Gnarl. No.

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: No. Fuck—Gnarl, I think, has a rough time out there in the world, finding pals. [laughing] Let me tell you what.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. Well, now he's just dead, 'cause of the thumb.

Kristin: [simultaneously] That's true. Do you think that Gnarl is—like, but there's many Gnarl's. I mean, their names aren't all Gnarl, but—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: There's probably more long-be-fingered, skin-eating demons. Who love tasty gifts. [both laugh] Anyway.

Jenny: Okay, so back at the frat house, Anya is mournfully fingering the blood splatter on the—what is this, an episode of Dexter? In strolls Xander, letting her know that Buffy is coming to kill you. She's like, "She's coming to try." Anya seems

very in touch and respectful of the reality that she and Buffy have their respective jobs to do.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah, which I—like, I respect that about both of them. In that context, that like, yes, they do need to put aside their personal feelings to do their jobs. I just don't necessarily think that Buffy is really doing hers, but.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Xander and Anya also have, like, a little moment where—'cause he says, "I want to help you. I'm sorry." [laughs] And I just wanna give a moment, a little beat, to Anya, [laughs] looking at him and saying, "Well, thank you! I'm all better now!" [both laugh] 'Cause I like it. Buffy and Anya have a great exchange where Buffy says, "Get out of my way, Xander," and Anya says, "Get out of her way, Xander." [both laugh] Just like, [crosstalk]—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Yeah, really good, and then she punches him out of the way.

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: These ladies punch hard. They are hard punchers.

Kristin: Anya says, "Are there any friends left you haven't tried to kill?" Now, I just wanna read you a little snippet from the Buffy Wiki page. [laughs] "During their fight, Anya asks Buffy, 'Are there any of your friends you haven't tried to kill?' Buffy set a demon loose to kill Xander, Willow, Dawn, and Tara in Normal Again, fought Willow in Two to Go, Angel and Spike in Season 2, accidentally attacked Cordelia in Welcome to the Hellmouth, Oz in What's My Line? Part One, Riley in The Initiative, and Giles in A New Man." [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, she's...that's a—

Kristin: That's a list.

Jenny: Checked-off list.

Kristin: That is a list. [laughs] It just made me laugh 'cause it was so comprehensive. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Anyway, they fight. It's a good fight. It's a good fight. We get flying kicks. Anya's fighting unarmed to Buffy's sword.

Jenny: Badass.

Kristin: [laughing] Anya gets this really sick kick into Buffy's face. It's like, pretty good. And you know.

Jenny: Dude. Did that list not include one mention of Faith?

Kristin: That list did not include Faith. [pause] I didn't write the fucking list! I didn't write the list. I just read the list.

Jenny: I'm going to write a strongly worded letter.

Kristin: You're right. I'm sorry, I apologize for not realizing that in my own delight over how many people she had tried to kill.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Faith erasure.

Kristin: Yes. Yeah, so Buffy—I mean, this is—if you're watching this in real time and you're back in 2002, this commercial break is set up to just absolutely give you space to lie down on the floor and feel as though you might die. Because Buffy takes her sword and [Jenny gasps] and in the last move of this scene, she plunges it through both Anya and the wall, pinning Anya—

Jenny: No thank you.

Kristin: To the wall via sword through the heart.

Jenny: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Coming back from commercial, this dirty little trick. Sunnydale, 2001. Why, that was last year, wasn't it?

Kristin: [laughs] Okay. So, obviously this is a scene—a cut scene, we are to believe, from Once More, With Feeling. It's—there are many songs we didn't see, right?

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And that's alluded to. The coconuts are on the counter from one of them. [both laugh] And this is a song we did not see, but that happened in Sunnydale during Once More, With Feeling.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Now, before we, like, talk about the song. The—one of the cues apart from “Sunnydale, 2001” and the coconuts and the other references is that through the door, we hear, “Oh no, mustard on my favorite dress shirt” being sung through—from the street. Now. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Oh yeah.

Kristin: What I thought to myself, immediately, was: hold on a second. Because they’ve already sang their song, “I’ll Never Tell.” So that means that this guy who got his mustard out just got mustard on his shirt again. [both laugh] He just got that shit cleaned and he got mustard on his shirt again!

Jenny: Oh, no!

Kristin: He’s just stuck in a mustard loop.

Jenny: [simultaneously] The fates can be so cruel.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs] Anyway. I got a personal Kristin Russo kick out of that shit. My actual note is just, “LOL, again?” [both laugh] But then Anya—[sighs] this is so sad, isn’t it, Jenny?

Jenny: Yeah, man. She sings a little song about how she’s largely had no path in life, but now her path is to be Mrs. Xander Harris, essentially.

Kristin: Right.

[Clip from episode plays]

Any: [singing] I’ve boned a troll, I’ve wreaked some wrath, but on the whole, I’ve had no path. I like to bowl, I’m good with math, but who am I? Now I reply that I’m the missus. I will be his missus. Mrs. Anya Christina Emanuella Jenkins Harris.

Jenny: Listen. Being a partner is serious business.

Kristin: Totally.

Jenny: In whatever shape that takes, for said partner, in terms of, like, shared responsibilities or whatever. Like, that's valid and real and nothing to sneeze at. But fitting this puzzle piece into the larger theme of the episode about Anya feeling maybe like she doesn't have an identity and she, like tofu, takes on—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: The flavor of the identity of the things that she's closest to.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Feels a little eek!

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: However. Two important things happen in this song.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: The first is that we find out Anya likes to bowl.

Kristin: Oh, yeah! That's true.

Jenny: Which I love.

Kristin: Yeah. That fits. That fits.

Jenny: And the second thing is that when she goes into their bedroom to fluff pillows—

Kristin: Oh my god, I still didn't see it, even this time.

Jenny: There is something in the bedroom that I found so alarming that I sent Kristin [Kristin laughs] a picture of it. Kristin, you're gonna have to put that on social media so everyone can see.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: There's a vertical sort of three-panel screen, that's—you know, like—five feet tall or whatever. And it's in front of a lamp, so light is shining through it. And it features the pattern of what I can only describe as, like, a mudflap girl but standing up? Kinda vibe?

Kristin: Yeah, like, putting on a shoe or stepping into a—or stepping out of pantyhose.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Ooh, it's a dressing screen and she's getting dressed.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jenny: It's so fucking weird and I—I mean, I guess in this same apartment, they have, like, lava lamps and model trucks and stuff. So clearly—

Kristin: It's kind of their kitschy—they're a little kitschy in their decor, so like, maybe it could get a little pass?

Jenny: Well.

Kristin: If Anya picked it out, it gets a pass. [laughs]

Jenny: I don't think—I just can't imagine her picking it out. Look at her apartment now, look at her apartment before.

Kristin: That's true.

Jenny: Look at her nightgown. You know what I mean?

Kristin: [simultaneously] But—oh, that's such a good fucking point, though. Look at all of her apartments up until her apartment now. They've all been so forged around who she is in that moment and who she's with in that moment. You know?

Jenny: Mmm, interesting. Yep, yep.

Kristin: That's—'cause that goes along with the self-proclaimed tofu theory of it all. Which is that she sort of takes on—rather than, like, adding herself to the equation, she takes on the environment where she is. [Jenny sighs] She says—one of the lyrics in the song that, like, really guts me and I'm sure all of you—'cause we know—it's like, [laughs] we know, when we're watching this song, which we didn't know when they were singing their song in Once More, With Feeling, that Xander will leave her at the altar. And so she says, like, "Who am I? I'm his missus." And then she says, "Maybe if you're lucky, being a pair can make you twice as tall." Oh no! Oh no! It's just really sad.

Jenny: This is so interesting that that hit you so hard. 'Cause I heard that line and I was like, okay, the person who wrote this song checked out for that line specifically. [both laugh]

Kristin: I just thought it was so sad—

Jenny: [simultaneously] So we are at opposite ends of the experience spectrum.

Kristin: Well, we are divorced, so that makes sense. [both laugh] But like, it just—it just is so sad—like, picturing Anya in this headspace of, like, maybe— like, maybe by combining myself with this person, we'll be twice what we could have been. This, like, hopeful—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: After everything she's been through, after everything she's lost, after everything she's fucking done that she's still like, "Maybe this time. Maybe this way. Maybe." And you know that of course, that is not going to be the case at all.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: So that's why it hurt me. It hurt my heart.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: So as she sings, "I will be..." there's another hard cut, isn't there?

Jenny: Back to impaled and apparently dead Anya. But—

Kristin: She has one—

Jenny: [breathes in dramatically]

Kristin: Yeah, she has one tear. 'Cause I guess we are to—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Believe, right, that scene we just saw is just her—like, she remembered it. She was remembering it.

Jenny: Oh, no. Oh, no.

Kristin: And she cried one tear, pinned to the wall with a sword through her heart. It's so sad. Anyway.

Jenny: Don't worry, she's fine. She pulls the sword out and *screams*!

Kristin: Yeah, and she says, "You know better than that, Buffy." Which I choose to cling to. [laughing] You know what I mean? Like...

Jenny: Yeah, we hope.

Kristin: I hope that Buffy did in fact know that that was not going to kill Anya. But...you know, Buffy does—this is where we get the flying kick. "Stop trying to save me, Xander," because Xander, like, pushes Buffy out of the—I don't even know what he does. He does something.

Jenny: He tackles her.

Kristin: Tackles her.

Jenny: He does a little side tackle.

Kristin: And then thank—and then Anya, to be clear, Anya is taking swings—she has the sword now—that would surely have killed Buffy. Like, she is not holding back. She is also doing her job in this moment—

Jenny: Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

Kristin: Trying to kill Buffy. And then, D'Hoffryn. D'Hoffryn is here. [laughing] And he has this line, which I already referenced 'cause I called the frat house—what did I call it? Frat-bercrombie? No, Murder-crombie.

Jenny: Murder-crombie. [laughs]

Kristin: Murder-crombie. And I read—I don't know if you read this as well, Jenny, but—that this line, where he looks in and he says, "It looks like someone slaughtered an Abercrombie and Fitch catalog." [both laugh] The network was really unhappy with this line, because—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It sounded like D'Hoffryn didn't care about the deaths of the frat boys. Goddard explained that D'Hoffryn is in fact evil. But the network still didn't get it.

So he wrote another line, which was to be, "It looks like Maxim has just lost 15 subscriptions." [both laugh] I don't understand how that's any different, but okay. But then the original line finally was accepted by the network, so it was kept in. But can you imagine these conversations? Like—

Jenny: Dude.

Kristin: That Drew Goddard is like, "He's a demon, man. The whole fucking point is that he doesn't care about these dead kids. Why would he care?"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: What?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Oh, it has to be so frustrating. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: D'Hoffryn also refers to Buffy as Lady Hacks-away. [both laugh] Just good. But you know, he's just like, Miss Rosenberg, you know, sent me over here. And it's clear that, like, Xander loves Anya, so he thinks he knows what's best. And you know—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: It's clear that this one with the fucking sword thinks that she knows what's best. But how about we ask Anya what she wants.

Jenny: Mmhmm. [Kristin sighs] And what Anya wants is to take it back.

Kristin: D'Hoffryn's like—

Jenny: Which is no small thing!

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: As D'Hoffryn is quick to point out, the scales have to be balanced. And this is where we do a little hellmath and discover that twelve frat boys [Kristin laughs] equal the life and soul of one vengeance demon. That's the equivalency.

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

Jenny: Also, this is where we learn that a vengeance demon has a soul, question mark?

Kristin: Ooooooh!

Jenny: Which I'd like to just make sure Buffy takes a strong note of that, because much is made of souls—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Of souls, yeah.

Jenny: In demonhood and whether you get to murder someone or not.

Kristin: It's true, good point.

Jenny: Thank you, thank you.

Kristin: Yeah, so after she gets this equivalency and she knows what is—she thinks she knows what is at stake, which is her own life. She says to Xander, and then to D'Hoffryn, these things.

[Clip from episode plays]

Anya: Xander, you can't help me. I'm not even sure there's a me to help. [to D'Hoffryn] I understand the price. Do it.

D'Hoffryn: You're sure? This is your wish?

Anya: This is my wish. Undo what I did.

Kristin: Oh, no. You know, I really liked D'Hoffryn. Like, I really—I was really rooting for him, you know, in general.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: [simultaneously] I thought he was a pretty okay dude. [laughs]

Jenny: This is his only offense, as far as I'm concerned.

Kristin: Yeah, it's rough. I guess because we've never seen D'Hoffryn exact revenge. Like, we've only—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Seen him, like, as the—as somebody who, like, takes care of them and makes sure they're okay. And—

Jenny: Yeah. Also, we've never seen him be...petty? [laughs]

Kristin: Right, right. Like, it's like—

Jenny: This is like, he's only—I mean. He's not *only* hurting himself, but he is destroying one of his own vengeance demons to hurt one of his other vengeance demons. Sir. Please get yourself to demon therapy.

Kristin: Right, but he say—but what he says to Anya is, like—like, basically like, “We were all told, becoming vengeance demons, you don't go for the kill when you can go for the pain.” And so it's—it's like, his loss is less than her pain, so therefore, it makes sense to him?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And...

Jenny: Sick. Sick, sir.

Kristin: It's really just so sad. And you know, we needed it, like, as a vehicle, of course, because we needed to—I mean, really, Buffy needed to see that Anya was at this place where she would be willing to sacrifice herself for the greater good. So that, you know, she wouldn't fucking kill her. But it's really sad. And Hallie—poor fucking Hallie, man! Just doing her job. Just, like, doing—

Jenny: I mean...

Kristin: Everything right, and it didn't—and just boom, burned, gone. Ugh. She's lived so long. What a shame.

Jenny: Yeah. It looked painful, too. It didn't look good.

Kristin: No. It didn't.

Jenny: Anya says, "You should've killed me," and D'Hoffryn says, "Ho-ho-ho, FBYID!"

Kristin: [laughs] He's like—

Jenny: You have but to wait for your imminent death!

Kristin: He's like, if I'm making a trip to Sunnydale, I at least get to say from beneath you, it devours one time. That's the deal.

Jenny: One time!

Kristin: [laughs] So out D'Hoffryn goes. Anya—there's something so specific about Anya's little sneakers. Like, they're just—they're, like—she just looks so disarmed and vulnerable, I think.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: And like, part of that goes to the costuming department for putting her in these, like, little flats, little flat sneakers. And she very sadly walks out of the door. And Buffy says to Xander, "Go ahead. Like, go after her. [laughing] I'm gonna deal with these boys." [both laugh] Like, please. Show me the missing scene. What does she say? "Oh, good morning!"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: "The blood is just, uh..." What happens here?

Jenny: Also, what about the girl? Are they gonna wipe the girl's memory somehow? Like, what?

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah. Like, if they ever reboot a Buffy thing, like, let it just be tying up all of the loose ends. You know, that would be such a delightful project. Just, like—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Take all the loose ends and figure out how they all tie up. [both laugh] So, out—we go outside. And we have this scene between Anya and Xander.

Jenny: [sighs] Yeah. Xander's like, "Regardless of what's between you and me, like, you shouldn't have to be alone right now." And Anya's like, "Au contraire. Yes, I

should." And then she starts talking about this realization she's having, that like, her whole life, she's just clung to whatever came along.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And Xander's like, "It was cool when you were clinging to me." And she's like, "Thank you."

Kristin: Ugh! He goes to leave the first time, and she's like, "Xander? What if I really am nobody?"

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: Oh, buddy. And then somehow, Xander gets, like, a win by saying, "Don't be a dope." And she's like, "I'm a dope?" [both laugh] He's like, "Sometimes." And she's like, "Well, that's a start." And you know, I mean, I love the idea—like, I do love the concept of Anya figuring out that she hasn't allowed herself to be present fully in any of the different various places in her life, probably since before she was with Olaf. Like—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: We don't know what happened before then.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But if there was a time when she was actually allowing herself to be her full self, it would have only been before Olaf. And so I do love, of course, that Anya has gotten to a place where she's realizing that and she wants to be able to get to a place where she can be fully herself.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But—and it is not—it's certainly not with Xander. So she's correct there. [Jenny laughs] But I always take a little bit of a pause to storylines that suggest that the only way you can find out who you are is in solitude. You know? Like, 'cause I—if Xander wasn't Xander—if she had a partnership that was one that allowed her to be her fullest self, that would also be a pathway. And I think a lot of times, like, television shows and movies and, you know, things of that nature—media overall—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Tries to say, well, if you don't know who you are yet, you really shouldn't be—you know, you can't love somebody else till you love yourself. And I just—I don't—I just don't like that message. I don't actually subscribe to it. Ascribe to it? What's the difference between ascribe and subscribe?

Jenny: Uh, subscribing is when you're like, "I'll have one of those, please." [Kristin laughs] And ascribing is when you're saying—

Kristin: I agree with one of those?

Jenny: That—that quote—I ascribe that quote to Plateau. Right?

Kristin: Oh! So I would like to subscribe, then? I would like to have—I—[laughs] all fell apart at the end.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. He ascribed Jane's short temper to her upset stomach.

Kristin: Oh, interesting! Okay, well then, okay. So I don't subscribe to this idea. And I need to—

Jenny: Cool.

Kristin: Really spend some time considering how and when to use the word ascribe, [Jenny laughs] which I never knew the meaning of until right now. [laughs] Yeah. So you know. I don't know. What a beautiful episode. Do you like this episode, Jenny?

Jenny: [sighs] I really do. I really do. You know? I mean, I love—as you know, I love Anya very much.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And I love to see her origin story. I think Emma Caulfield gets to do a lot, gets to really stretch her legs in this ep.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah. What a genius. What an absolute genius Emma Caulfield is.

Jenny: Yeah, she's so great. I don't know if I feel like—I don't know. It does feel—like, the idea that Anya doesn't have a sense of identity feels a little bit out of nowhere?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: You know? But I do—like, we have pieces that we can, like, put together and be like, oh yeah, okay, that makes sense in the context of, like, oh, she gets really into being an American—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: When she's, like, a human.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And like, she gets really into, like, financial management—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And she gets really into Xander when they're together.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah, and I—

Jenny: And she does get really into being a Scooby, when she's Scooby-ing.

Kristin: Yeah, and I think that she just hasn't had the ability to be able to examine that. 'Cause I don't think that it's necessarily—

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Like, I mean, you know, we'll see what we get to explore as the season goes on. But I don't think that, like, Anya figuring out who she is will be a rejection of the way that she fixates on things. I think it will be a deeper understanding of the way that she fixates on things. And sort of an integration of, like, the fact that she can exist within all of those things. You know? As opposed to—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Perhaps the way—'cause I'm not sure that this is—like, I think that this is the fault of the world—worlds in which Anya has lived. You know? That like, the reason that she feels like she doesn't know—and I guess I started here. But like, the reason that she feels like she doesn't know who she is is because the worlds where she exists have told her that someone like her either shouldn't exist, doesn't exist, or like, is at the very least really annoying and should be quiet about their existence.

Jenny: Mmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Right? And it's so interesting because when Anya's character was first introduced to us, we were led to believe that the way that Anya interacted with the world around her was specifically because of the fact that she was a demon and now she was a human again. But that is entirely undone by this episode, because she has always been who she's been, no matter where that has landed across time. And so—

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Yeah, I mean...and I guess it overlaps with what you're saying. Like, it kinda comes outta nowhere that Anya doesn't know who she is. Because I think you and I are both people who would read this experience as like, Anya actually kinda does know who she is. She just hasn't figured out how to integrate it with a world around her that doesn't understand it.

Jenny: Yeah. [sighs] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny just gave me that look like, okay. So that was, like, good, serious talk and now we have to get to sexual tension. Are you ready to do that with me? I am.

Jenny: Yes! [Kristin laughs]

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Oh hello, and welcome once again to the freshest installation of the Sexual Tension Awards, so as they pertain to Season 7, Episode 5, Selfless. The episode you just listened to us discuss for, like, an hour and a half. [Kristin laughs] Alright, slots for your noms, noms for your slots. Here we go. In the first slot, it did get a little sexy, didn't it? So much so that I would prefer to not watch my best friend murder you, it's Willow and Anya!

Kristin: Yeah, baby.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Two overlapping traumatic experiences with a little smooching in between.

Jenny: With a—sitting right in the middle of a circle of poured colored sand.

Kristin: Lit by be-tasseled lights. [laughs]

Jenny: Wow!

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: In slot number two, I know that I've never called anybody lemon drop unless I had at least—[Kristin laughs] at minimum, a passing fancy for them. It's Halfrek and Willow! [starts making snare drum noise]

Kristin: Every listener just frantically scrolling back to if you've ever maybe called them lemon drop. [both laugh]

Jenny: In slot number three. This episode has everything. [Kristin laughs] Including...[laughs] Buffy's favorite love language, penetration.

Kristin: Wow!

Jenny: The last time we saw her stab a gal, it was Faith. And we all know how that began, middled and ended. [Kristin laughs] And in this episode, she impales Anya on a sword, which is at least third base.

Kristin: [laughing] Definitely.

Jenny: So, slot number three, Buffy and Anya. And the final noms for this episode's Sexual Tension Awards. In slot number four, they have a passion we cannot hope to understand, that draws them towards one another. It's Lloyd and his sketch of the flaying of Warren Mears.

Kristin: Do you think he hired Angel to sketch Warren? [both laugh]

Jenny: An Angelus original.

Kristin: Yeah. [both laugh]

Jenny: Signed and numbered.

Kristin: Just a little light charcoal from our boy.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Goodness.

Jenny: If you—if you, beautiful listener—would like to frigging make your voice heard in our beautiful, sexy democracy—democ-sex—okay! I'll workshop a portmanteau—

Kristin: Sex-mocracy?

Jenny: Sex-mocracy! [Kristin laughs] I don't have to workshop it. Kristin did the work for me.

Kristin: I did it! I did it! I have something to coast on. [laughs]

Jenny: Make your voice heard in our beautiful sex-mocracy by casting your vote on the Sexual Tension Award poll for this episode, which you can find on our Twitter, @BufferingCast. It will be up one week from the airing of this episode.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Well. We've come to the point in the episode where we must tell you who we are.

Jenny: I am Jenny Owen Youngs, wizard of the twelfth realm of Ephysiyies, master of light and shadow! And when I'm not watching Buffy—

Kristin: What the fuck?! [laughs]

Jenny: I'm usually writing and recording songs. You can find my music by searching my name on your favorite digital music platforms, Jenny Owen Youngs, just in case you missed it. You can give me a shout on Twitter, @JennyOwenYoungs. You can join me for livestreams on my Twitch channel on a weekly basis. My latest release Echo Mountain is freshly out on very hot, hot, hot vinyl. And you can also listen to me sing some other songs in my lil' gay girl band, L.A. Exes. [makes snare drum noise]

Kristin: I'm Kristin Russo, and I just googled, "what was the tagline of He-Man?" so that I would have something to say.

Jenny: [stops making drum noise] Ha!

Kristin: And it is: I have the power. [both laugh] So. That's me!

Jenny: You do, you truly do.

Kristin: And you know, if you wanna learn about things that I do when I'm not talking about Buffy the Vampire Slayer or poppin' my little head into the nemesis bin over on Angel On Top. You can go to my website, kristinnoeline.com, and learn about work that I do with LGBTQ communities. I do talks at workplaces, at high schools. But you can learn all about that, Kristin Noeline, K-R-I-S-T-I-N N-O-E-L-I-N-E. Use that spelling to find me on Twitter and on Instagram. And you know, that's about all I have to say about me. What about us?

Jenny: [takes deep breath] Buffering the Vampire Slayer is on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @BufferingCast. You can drop us an email at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: You can support our work on Patreon. We would love it if you joined us over there, bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Patreon to do that. You can scoop up merch, if you like that kinda thing. You can rate and review us. You can just think really warm thoughts about us.

Jenny: Oh, yeah! Think warm thoughts. This episode was produced by Kristin Russo, Jenny Owen Youngs, and Alba Daza, with support from our consultant, Mackenzie MacDade, and edited by John Mark Nelson. And till next time...

Both: Awwwoooooooooooooo!

[Jenny sings the note then laughs]

[Sam Barbera and Bess Rogers performing "Selfless" off the album "Songs from Season Seven" by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]