

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 6.15: Hell's Bells

[CHIME]

Jenny: Oh, hey, everybody!

Kristin: Hey there, Jenny. How you feeling today?

Jenny: Oh, so good! So good.

Kristin: Are you ready to go to a wedding?

Jenny: I'm ready!

Kristin: [laughs] Can't wait to go to this wedding. Before we get to it—

Jenny: [chanting] Wedding, wedding!

Kristin: [laughs] Oh, wow. That takes me back. That's a quote. Jenny was just saying an actual quote from one of our friends at a wedding that we attended, while she was drinking some champagne, chanting, "Wedding, wedding!"

Jenny: [chanting] Wedding, wed—

Kristin: That wedding—the wedding of those two people that we were at—those two people are divorced. [Jenny laughs] We are divorced. We're just, like, really—

Jenny: Woo!

Kristin: Everyone's batting 100, over here. Hey—

Jenny: Xander and Anya, cutting out the middleman.

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah. So a few things before we get to Hell's Bells. One, I apologize if my voice is an octave lower. I just returned from acupuncture. I'm feeling very relaxed.

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: My acupuncturist, Jenny, started listening to Buffering the Vampire Slayer. It's not a big deal. She likes the Cordelia jingle.

Jenny: What!

Kristin: Yep. Anyway, so we have a big, big, big, big sale that is ending very soon. 'Cause it is the end of June and our store is closing on June 28th. It is not opening again until the end of July. Actually, both stores, the store in the UK, the store here in the States. And everything that is in there, except for the Once More with Once More with Feeling vinyl is 25% off. You just need to use the code SEASONSIX, S-E-A-S-O-N-S-I-X, to get 25% off. If you're a patron of ours at the \$10 or higher level, you get 35% off. So go on over there. If you need anything before August, time is a-ticking.

Jenny: Speaking of needing things before August. [both laugh] Not a very good setup.

Kristin: For the listener at home, we had to retape the intro because my microphone was all wonky. And I gave Jenny a much better transition into the Sexual Tension Awards last time. [laughs]

Jenny: I can work with what I have! Well! It's nearly a neck-in-neck situation here, and wow. I just can't even—okay! In the fourth slot, with 22% of the vote, [singing] the boys are back in town!

Kristin: [singing] The boys are back in town, the boys are back in town!

Jenny: It's Riley and Xander, doing a little goin' commando. In—

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: Slot number three! The doctor is in if you know what I mean. With 23% of the vote, it's Riley and Dr. Spike. That means Riley took—mmm, [babbles] abacus, okay, carry the one—

Kristin: [quietly] Oh, god.

Jenny: Hey! 45% of the vote for Riley!

Kristin: Hey, hey. Riley plus his boys.

Jenny: Mmm! [laughs]

Kristin: 23% for Riley and Spike...PhD—

Jenny: [laughing] Okay.

Kristin: Gotta go.

Jenny: Alright, alright. In slot number dos, it is—with 24% of the vote—kinda surprised that this didn't sweep the whole dealio. It's Sam and Willow, exchanging lust-a-ful emails.

Kristin: Lust-a-ful, she said!

Jenny: Lust-a-ful!

Kristin: Lust-a-ful emails.

Jenny: And that means that only—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: [laughs] The only people who could be in slot one now, with 31% of the vote, are Buffy and Sam. Two women who have known the love of one man. [both laugh] Coming together to indulge in forbidden love!

Kristin: You know what?

Jenny: [simultaneously] Forbidden by whom in 2021? Less people than before.

Kristin: By the time we get to Season 7, the Sexual Tension Awards is gonna be its own podcast—

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: With you just, like, doing a full shpiel. And I think—

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: That Buffy and Sam deserve to win, because although I'm in support of all of the pairings here, I do think they had the most tension. They definitely had more tension than Sam and Willow did. Sam and Willow, we haven't seen the emails, you know? So perhaps there's a lot going on—[laughs]

Jenny: [snorts, laughing] I don't know if you're ready for the emails.

Kristin: In there. Okay, speaking of Sam and Willow, Buffy and Sam, Riley and Spike, Riley and Xander. Hey, it's fucking Pride month. And we are raising money, this month, for an organization called For the Gworts. That is G-W-O-R-L-S. For the Gworts is a Black, trans-led collective that curates parties to fundraise money to help Black transgender people pay for their rent, gender affirming surgeries, smaller copays for medicine, doctor's visits and travel assistance.

Jenny: We have thus far raised \$1700 together as a community, and we're hoping to bring that number all the way up to a nice, round, \$2500 before the end of June! If you wanna get in on the action, you can donate to For the Gworts by heading to forthegworts.party. That's F-O-R-T-H-E-G-W-O-R-L-S dot party. And then, to let us know you donated and be entered to win one of the awesome Buffy bundles we're giving away, go over to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/forthegworts.

Kristin: Yes, and you can see all of the items that we've collected as a part of this giveaway. We posted yesterday on Instagram, on Facebook, on Twitter, so you can see all of those bundles. It's good stuff, and it's a great, great, great, great place to give your money to. So do that if you can. Hey, Jenny.

Jenny: Yo.

Kristin: Got an email for you, before we go into Hell's Bells.

Jenny: [simultaneously, gasps] For me?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: I'm ready.

Kristin: It's an email—it's an email from Genevieve in San Diego. I'm not gonna read the whole thing. I'm just gonna give you one fact from Genevieve. Genevieve says, "I about lost my mind when Kristin brought up slug sex—"

Jenny: Nice!

Kristin: "In the episode on Older and Far Away. I'm a graduate—"

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: "Of UC Santa Cruz, a university famous for its banana slug mascot. And I—" [laughs]

Jenny: Everyone knows that.

Kristin: Everybody. "I remain obsessed with slugs, especially their reproductive behaviors." So Genevieve sent me a few hot tips, if you will? On slug sex, but I'm just gonna tell you one, Jenny.

Jenny: I'm ready.

Kristin: It is literally a hot tip. "Some species of slugs use love darts as a part of their courtship behaviors. When their sexual organs first come in contact before copulation begins, it triggers a launch of a dart directly into their sexual partner. And these things are not small or gentle. Darts can sometimes pierce internal organs or even go all the way through to the other side! The darts don't deliver sperm, but instead seem to contain hormones that favor certain reproductive outcomes. For example, if a slug mates with several different suitors, it may give the firing slug's sperm an advantage over others."

Jenny: Ah...?

Kristin: [laughing] Happy Pride!

Jenny: Happy Pride!

Kristin: Here we go, Hell's Bells! Wee!

Jenny: Here we go.

[Buffering theme plays]

Jenny: [drawn-out, dejected] Hello.

Kristin: [sings wedding march tune]

Jenny: Ah...

Kristin: [tune slows down]

Jenny: And welcome?

Kristin: [sings last note, laughs]

Jenny: To Buffering the Vampire Slayer. A podcast where we are watching and discussing every episode, unfortunately, of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one by one, spoiler free, in tandem with my number one crush, got their pics in my locker—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Oh my fucking god.

Jenny: Angel On Top, oh, how I love them! [Kristin laughs] I am starry-eyed schoolgirl-crushin' Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: And I am—[sings wedding march tune]—Kristin Russo. And this week, this divorced couple is talking about Season 6—

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: Episode 16, Hell's Bells. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast, every other week, for an original song. Perhaps they will continue to get sadder. Perhaps they will continue to uplift us.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Only time can tell—written by Jenny, recapping the Buffy episode we are discussing.

Jenny: Hell's Bells! Was written by—

Kristin: [sings first few notes of wedding march] [both laugh]

Jenny: Stop it! Hell's Bells was written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner and directed by David Solomon, and originally aired on March 5th, 2002.

Kristin: This is the one where Anya and Xander's wedding is thrown into turmoil when a man claiming to be Xander's future self turns up at the ceremony. Here we go! Here we go.

Jenny: [groans] Well!

Kristin: [simultaneously] Start your fucking engines, kids.

Jenny: Listen. We're off to a strong start. But also, I feel like we saw—we had a horror movie fakeout misdirect opening to an episode—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: In the not too distant past. Do you remember—

Kristin: Yeah. I don't remember—

Jenny: What the last occurrence of this was?

Kristin: I don't remember what it was, but it has happened recently. But I'm here for it anyway. It's raining. I do love the—I do love the rain storm that takes us through this whole episode, you know? There's a lot of rain in this set situation.

Jenny: Yes. There sure is.

Kristin: We've got Willow and Buffy. And they're saying...

[Clip from episode plays]

[thunder rumbles]

Willow: Buffy, it's hideous. Oh my god, Buffy, look at its arms.

Buffy: I know.

Jenny: But Buffy says, "It's my duty! I'm Buffy the bridesmaid!" Thunder crack.
[Kristin laughs] Organ hit!

Kristin: Yeah, bridesmaids dresses, huh? It's a thing.

Jenny: Man, they suck.

Kristin: They suck.

Jenny: No one's ever asked me to wear blood larva and burlap. Unfortunately.

Kristin: I mean, listen, between these fucking dresses and blood larva and burlap, I would also go with blood larva and burlap.

Jenny: Yeah, not—

Kristin: Willow has the worst one. Willow's got the worst of all.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: 'Cause the arms are, like, demon-esque. You know what I mean? Like, they're like—[laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. No, they're like a sea cucumber. There's some kind of, like—

Kristin: Or like a—

Jenny: Aquatic life that only live—that is bioluminescent and only lives where the sunlight can't reach.

Kristin: Sort of like scalloped potatoes in their, like...

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Shaping? Yeah, it's bad. It's bad. They're right, it is hideous. But fucking Anya doesn't think it's hideous. Anya thinks it's beautiful.

Jenny: Anya is *moved*.

Kristin: Before Anya walks in and is just delighted by the hideousness of these dresses and these girls in these dresses, Willow makes a fantastic comment. She says, "I'm the best man. Shouldn't I have gotten to wear some Marlene Dietrich-y kind of tux?" And I was like, yes!

Jenny: Mmm!

Kristin: First of all—first of all. Shoutout to the fact that Willow gets to be the best man. Love to see—

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: Love to see no gender requirements on anyone's wedding parties, as it should be. And second of all, put Willow Rosenberg in a tux.

Jenny: Do it! You cowards.

Kristin: And third of all, if—I mean, you probably know who Marlene Dietrich is. But if you don't, you should just take a tango with who she is—

Jenny: Mm. [laughs]

Kristin: Because she was—she was, like, a Hollywood, bisexual, back in the 20s, 30s, 40s. She referred to the Hollywood lesbians who would all sleep together as “the sewing circle.” So...

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: She ruled. She had affairs with, like, literally everyone. Like, every-gender person, just like, Frank Sinatra and fucking, like—I’m pretty sure Tallulah Bankhead—even though, I don’t know, maybe I associate them with each other because they both were, like, really cool, queer, Hollywood ladies at that time. But look her up, check her out. She fucking ruled, in a lot of ways, apart from just being a bisexual Hollywood lady. She wore some suits. She was in a lot of fucking films and I love it. I love the reference. So thank you, Willow.

Jenny: So we found out here also that the Harrises have been told that Anya’s people are circus folk.

Kristin: Yeah...so...

Jenny: Mm...

Kristin: So this starts us off in—I mean, we’re gonna go down that rabbit hole as well. Because Xander’s dad makes a comment later about, like, circus not being a heritage. So there’s, like, a xenophobic, racist, class—it’s impossible to pin it down. But it’s essentially an other, right? Like—

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Anya’s people are the other, where Xander’s family is, like, the—essentially, quote, “these freaks.” Right? Like, that’s kinda the vibe in many ways.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And we’ll get more into it. But yeah, it’s complicated because Anya’s people—all of the people that Anya has brought to this wedding are—have been told to lie about who they are. Which is fucked up, but also, the whole code in Sunnydale with demons is, like, you don’t reveal yourself as a demon to humans. It seems like the unwritten code. So it’s—like, my instinct is like, that’s fucked up that they have to lie about who they are. But also, it’s been, like, coded like that in the show since the jump. So it’s hard to also say fuck that.

Jenny: Yeah. Apparently, the rehearsal dinner was last night, and things got kind of out of hand. Willow says, "I haven't seen Xander's family that bad since my bat mitzvah." Perish the thought—

Kristin: Ugh!

Jenny: Of the Harrises at Willow's bat mitzvah. No!

Kristin: Oh my god, could you imagine the Harrises with Willow's parents? Like—

Jenny: No.

Kristin: Just no.

Jenny: Certainly not.

Kristin: Also, like, fucking Xander's dad threw up in Buffy's purse at the end of the rehearsal dinner last night.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: [groans] Okay. More on—unfortunately, more on Xander's dad later. Anya enters.

Jenny: Yeah, Anya comes in and we get yet another fake out where she [both laugh] gasps and throws her hand over her mouth. And we think, oh, perhaps she will come to her senses and agree that these dresses are a crime against nature and eyeballs. But no! She's like, "You guys look so beautiful! This is the happiest day of my life!" Thunder crack!

Kristin: Ugh, and this is just—I mean, this is probably the biggest embodiment of how Anya's excitement at finding love is overpowering sort of, like, even these—as Buffy later says—radioactive dresses. Like, it's not about even the fucking dress—like, you know? It's not like she is loving the dress. It's just that she's so happy. She's so excited.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: She's really doing this thing that she's wanted to do for so long. It's happening. And fuck everyone.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Top among them, the creators of this episode of television. [laughs]

Jenny: So meanwhile at Xander's, he can't find his cufflinks. And for some reason, everyone is at Xander's apartment. Uncle Rory is there. Uncle Rory's staying there, right?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Mr. and Mrs. Harris arrive. [Kristin laughs] Cousin Carol is there. Krelvin—I think, Krelvin? Krelvin is credited not by name, for some reason.

Kristin: No, he's credited as "warty demon," which is fucking rude.

Jenny: Which is—what the hell.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: But I think his name is Krelvin or close to it. They're all there. Why? Why—I know that Uncle friggin' Rory is, like, staying there or whatever—

Kristin: Well, I mean—

Jenny: But why is everyone crowding Xander?

Kristin: I just feel...

Jenny: [simultaneously] And it's, like, a random assemblage. Cousin Carol?

Kristin: [simultaneously] Listen. Jenny.

Jenny: And I like Krelvin, but Krelvin?

Kristin: Jenny.

Jenny: What?

Kristin: This is how fucking weddings go, man. Like—

Jenny: Yeah, this is a fucking nightmare and I'm triggered and I—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: It was very difficult to sit through.

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, this is like, truly—and I'm not saying that if you've gotten married, it has definitely been like this. But I think there's a high likelihood that this is the deal. Most people do not understand how to keep their own fucking space from the bride slash other bride slash groom slash whomever you might be—in the wedding. They wanna be there, they wanna be at the center of the fucking action. They wanna pick you up, they wanna drive you there. They wanna fucking help, they wanna bring you a fucking thing that their aunt gave them in fucking 1927—everybody wants something from the people that need to get married. And I find this to be very accurate. I think that's why they're—I mean, Uncle Rory, yes, he stayed there. But I think everyone else—maybe they're all gonna drive over together. Maybe they're gonna do pictures first. Who knows? But it's always chaos like this, so I buy it.

Jenny: [exhales slowly]

Kristin: This is the first time that we've met Uncle Rory. We've heard of Uncle Rory for many, many, many, many episodes, across many seasons. They've kept his story tight. A taxidermist was said many seasons ago, and indeed, he refers to taxidermy in an unfortunate line later. He is played by—

Jenny: Ugh.

Kristin: Steve Gilborn, an actor who passed away in 2009. But what I wanted to say about these actors—so the actor playing Uncle Rory, the actors playing Xander's parents, Casey Sander and Lee Garlington. These are, like, all massive actors who have—who are, like, in everything. You know, like, Steve Gilborn's resume was like, Blossom, Murphy Brown, Ellen, Golden Girls, The Wonder Years. And when I looked at the other two, at Xander's parents as well, same thing. Just like, have been in dozens of shows across decades.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: So I just feel like it's a reflection on, like, we're in Season 6. Buffy is a hit—Buffy is a hit show at this point. And we're pulling in some, like, pretty awesome humans to play these roles.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: So yeah.

Jenny: Okay, so. Nightmare in progress. Uncle Rory tells Xander that he doesn't want cufflinks. He should have velcro, and also velcro was Uncle Rory's idea and then he pretends to be electrocuted by the coffee maker. And I want to die.

Kristin: This is classic relative who you just need out of your house behavior. This is classic. Cousin Carol—Cousin Carol has some redeemable qualities. Cousin Carol's doing alright.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But she is wearing—

Jenny: Cousin Carol moves the plot along like no one else, honestly.

Kristin: [laughs] Cousin Carol is wearing Xander's cufflinks as earrings—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Which we find out later. Before we get to the scene...before we get to the exchange between Krelvin and Xander's dad, which I know we're gonna talk about. I do wanna point out the fact that Xander's dad has been played by two different actors. You kinda get a pass on it, because he was in a—he was only in a vision in Restless. Like, we saw Xander's dad at the top of the stairs.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So I guess because it was a vision, you have a little wiggle room. But this is a different guy then we saw at the top of those stairs in Restless.

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: So yeah. Let's begin the journey of, oh my god, fuck you, Anthony Harris, Xander's dad.

Jenny: [exhales] Yeah, this guy sucks. He rolls in and immediately is like, "Oh, you're not ready yet?" And then Xander's mom makes me want to throw myself into the abyss—

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah—

Jenny: Beginning her—she’s like a Greek chorus that only says, “Blah-blah-blah, but it doesn’t matter because I won’t be in any of the pictures.” Ma’am! [Kristin laughs] Sit down! And then, Mr. Harris looks at Krelvin and says, “That.”

Kristin: [exhales] “That.”

Jenny: “Is one of hers.” Uh, which is...

Kristin: Really—

Jenny: Truly wretched.

Kristin: *Really* bad. And it sets the tone for how—I would put it on all the Harrises. But I’m gonna lean a lot harder on the Harris specific side of the family. I don’t know who Cousin Carol belongs to.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But Rory, I think, is the brother of Xander’s dad. And those two—

Jenny: He is.

Kristin: Are the fucking worst, man. They are the fuck—they are the worst. They are the—they are the dudes that roll up to any occasion, any gathering, and insult everyone who is not like them and probably even people like them. But they fucking suck and they say inappropriate and horrible things all the time. And so that—this is where it begins. “That’s one of hers,” right? Krelvin, really fucking whacking it back at Dad. “Yeah, we met last night. You said I resembled your mother-in-law, then you hit me with a cocktail wiener and insulted my heritage.” Um...glad that Kelvin [sic] tells him where to stick it, but then Xander’s dad comes back with, “So being a part of a circus is a heritage now?” This reminded me of, like—[Jenny groans] because like we said at the beginning, like, you can’t really pin it to, like, is it xenophobia? Is it—like, what ism is this? It’s just like, you’re not like me so you’re fucking stupid...isms.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But this reminded me of, like, you know, if you were talking about how, like, you had—queer culture. Or like, this is my chosen family. Like, I could just hear somebody in my family, like, rolling their eyes and being like, “Oh, so this is what we’re calling this now?” Like, that tone that people take when they want you to know that you’re ridiculous.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: It's like the gaslighting that is central to so much racism and sexism and all that. And you know what, Jenny? Why not kick it off, because now that I've said—

Jenny: Well!

Kristin: Now that I've said all the isms and talked about gaslighting, we might as well play the White Supremacy fucking jingle, 'cause that's what's really going on here.

[WHITE SUPREMACY jingle plays]
You know what that sounds like to me? (What?)
White supremacy! (Oh no)
Woven in not too subtly (Ugh)
White supremacy! (Uh-uh)
Open your eyes and that's where you'll find it
Crush that (squash that)
White supremacy!

Jenny: Well! You know who's willing to reach across the aisle in the name of perhaps companionship and perhaps horniness? It's Cousin Carol.

Kristin: Cousin Carol.

Jenny: Cousin Carol pulls Xander aside and is like, "What's up with Krelvin?" And as she talks, he realizes that she is wearing his cufflinks as earrings, which strains...believability. Because cufflinks—

Kristin: They're pretty wide.

Jenny: The post of cufflinks, pretty thick. Unless Cousin Carol has some, like—

Kristin: [laughing, simultaneously] Sizers.

Jenny: Sick plugs.

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah.

Jenny: Yeah, exactly.

Kristin: Unless Cousin Carol has been using some sizers, totally. And Cousin Carol—

Jenny: [laughs] She's fucking gauging out her ears.

Kristin: Like, I think you could read—like, Cousin Carol has this line, like, oh, she has a kid so she can't be picky, which you could read as, like, being shitty. But I think that she's covering. Like, I think she's, like, trying to, like, be—

Jenny: She's, like, feeling it.

Kristin: Be acceptable to the Harrises.

Jenny: [simultaneously] She's like, I'm trying to take the K Train to fucking Bone Town.

Kristin: Yeah. She's into fucking Krelvin, and I'm into—and Krelvin's into her, as we see later. And it's fucking—I am into them being into each other.

Jenny: So once Xander reclaims his cufflinks, he declares, like a fucking idiot, "Nothing on Earth can stop this wedding now!" No, Xander! No. And then...

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: As if in direct response to this making-god-laugh-by-announcing-your-plans action, [dramatically] a mysterious old man materializes in the pouring rain!

Kristin: He materializes with a—like, as though somebody took a red marker and drew his outline. Like, that's the effect they went with here.

Jenny: Ooh.

Kristin: It's very interesting—

Jenny: Listen.

Kristin: Not seen before, probably shouldn't see it again. Not great.

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah, not—it's not good.

Kristin: Cut to the credits.

Jenny: [rolling R's] Credits!

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: [sings Buffy theme] Pew!

Kristin: Wouldn't be a wedding episode if we didn't get a conversation about a cummerbund. You know?

Jenny: I do love that finally, someone has the bravery and strength of spirit to call out that all cummerbunds do is hide the place where your shirt meets your pants. [Kristin laughs] Why's everyone so hopped up about them? I mean. They do look cool in context, but like, who came up with that? I don't know. Xander's pregnant. He's glowing.

Kristin: Xander's glowing. He says, "Maybe I'm just happy." Buffy starts this line of conversation. "I'm happy for you. I'm happy for me. You and Anya give me hope." Oh, to place your hopes and dreams on the wedding of another couple. Never a good idea. [laughs]

Jenny: Well. No. But I think it's important to know that Buffy says, like, "I'm happy for you, which makes me happy for me."

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: She's happy to be happy.

Kristin: That's true.

Jenny: She's happy to be feeling something. But this girl does not know how to tie a bowtie. When she started, I was like, wow, Buffy knows how to tie a bowtie? And then, no sooner had that thought completed itself then she abandoned ship.

Kristin: I, um—

Jenny: It's not the kind of thing you can just feel out. A bowtie.

Kristin: I just wanna go back for a second. I wasn't quite finished talking about "happy for you, happy for me." Because I do think, like...I oversimplified in saying, like, oh, you shouldn't hang your hopes on whatever. Because the truth is, I think a

lot of this episode is people wanting to have hope, because hope feels good. And that, like—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: You know, like—and I think that later, when we see, you know, Anya in her dress and, like, how Tara and Willow are in this environment. Like, say what you will about, like, heteronormativity and the customs of marriage and how problematic they are. There is something about this experience that is rooted in hope and that, I think, is what Buffy is happy about, is that, like—

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: In the chaos of it all, we can still have hope, we can still have love. And damn it, this episode doesn't ruin that, okay?! It puts a fucking big speed bump in our way, but we're still gonna—we're still gonna have hope, people!

Jenny: I have a question.

Kristin: A tiny question?

Jenny: Is it—do you think it's rude to be...buttoning up someone's wedding dress on their big day, while also having, like—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Weird garment buttoning, like, eye sex—

Kristin: Yeah, well—

Jenny: With your ex?

Kristin: I mean, I think the biggest rude piece of this is that Willow, as Buffy says at the end of the last scene, should be with Xander. Willow is Xander's best man. She shouldn't—I understand that she wants to flirt with Tara, but she's got the whole fuck—I mean, to her knowledge, she's got the whole fucking wedding to flirt with Tara. She should not be in there doing this right now. It's cute, fine, but she should be with Xander!

Jenny: Uh, agree? Also. [laughs] Oh! My god, so many great options Anya's working up for her—

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: Potential vows. She promises not to obey Xander, because that's anachronistic, misogynistic, and who do you think you are, a sea captain or something? [both laugh]

Kristin: A sea captain! I died. I literally died.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I died both times I watched it.

Jenny: Huge episode for Emma Caulfield—

Kristin: Incredible.

Jenny: She's *nailing* it!

Kristin: Yeah, and to give you the visual, just in case you didn't rewatch. Anya is going over her vows with this, like, giant blue gel-filled eye mask on her face—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And she's got, like, her hair all Medusa-coiled for curls up on her head. And it is—it is great. It is great. And then, of course, we take a turn from this hilarious—oh, the lesbians are giggling and Anya's being funny about the patriarchy. Don't worry, we'll play the jingle 50 times later. To this moment. Let's hear what Anya says.

[Clip from episode plays]

Anya: [clears throat] Okay, blah-blah-blah, misogynistic, blah-blah. However, I trust you. With my heart. Take care of my heart, won't you please? Take care of it because it's all that I have and if you let me, I'll take care of your heart too.

Kristin: Well, this—

Jenny: Oh no!

Kristin: What a great episode of television. This could only just set us up for fucking happiness and sunshine.

Jenny: This could only end well.

Kristin: "Take care of my heart. It's all I have," Anya says. Fuck me!

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: This isn't even the worst sound clip we're playing this episode.

Jenny: I know. And she wants to see Xander now, 'cause she's so excited!

Kristin: Ugh! She's so—

Jenny: And she wants to share it all with her best friend.

Kristin: Ugh, god, you guys, why? Why?

Jenny: I'm upset.

Kristin: What I will say, to momentarily take our eyes away from this heartache, is these fucking lesbians are not even listening to the goddamn—do your job, people! [Jenny laughs] They're not listening!

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: She's trying to get feedback on her vows, and they're just fucking giggling. They're not listening, they're not telling her, yeah, that's good, or oh, you should say this here. I'm pissed off. I'm pissed off at these two.

Jenny: Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Also, isn't Halfrek wearing a bridesmaid's dress? Halfrek is not helping Tara and Willow—it should be, right, like, Tara and Halfrek with Anya.

Kristin: With Anya.

Jenny: I guess. Tara, I guess, I guess? Because Buffy and Willow should clearly be—

Kristin: With Xander!

Jenny: With Xander. Dawn should probably also be there, yeah?

Kristin: Yeah. I don't know—

Jenny: But she's busy being a teen—she's, like, skateboarding through the wedding. [both laugh]

Kristin: She is. She's like, teen at the wedding! [laughs]

Jenny: Okay, so we get an exterior shot of the wedding venue. It is the Bison Lodge.

Kristin: [laughs] Not to be confused with the Elk's Lodge.

Jenny: [simultaneously] A play on the Elk's Lodge. Now Kristin, I'm gonna text you a photograph right now.

Kristin: Oh, wow. What a twist, this never happens on this podcast.

Jenny: Yeah, I have prepared some things for this. Okay, so here is, um—here is the Bison Lodge, when we first see it. Okay, let me know when you get it. [laughs]

Kristin: Okay, yep, yep, of course, I recognize it. Got two cars parked out—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Okay, does this look familiar to you?

[pause]

Kristin: Oh my god!

Jenny: [simultaneously] Can you think of...another—have you ever seen this before?

Kristin: Wait. I did not notice on viewing, but now that I'm, like—I have it on my phone and I'm zooming in, it looks like the place—the place in Altadena that we would vote at. I don't even know what the—

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: Name of that place is!

Jenny: It's the building [Kristin gasps] in Charles S. Farnsworth Park in Altadena, California.

Kristin: Holy shit!

Jenny: Just above the Farnsworth Amphitheater.

Kristin: Holy...

Jenny: Where residents of Altadena would vote.

Kristin: Yo, so Jenny and I used to, like, live in walking distance from this building. We voted—

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: In the 2016 fucking election inside that building!

Jenny: That's right. [laughs]

Kristin: That's cool as shit!

Jenny: Isn't that wild?

Kristin: Yeah, that's incredible. Wow, you just realized that, watching it? Or did you know?

Jenny: Yeah, and that's a very quick shot—[laughs]

Kristin: [laughing] It is.

Jenny: I'll have you know. I was just like, hang on. And it took a lot of digging. It was actually hard to find a photo of specifically the building, because most of the park photos are of, like, the park fields and the amphitheater and stuff. But there was one that allowed me to confirm that it is the same building. Now, the interior—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: I think is all studio stuff. I A and B'd the interior of that building and it was not the same.

Kristin: Oh my god, that is so fun! Little did we know—

Jenny: Ba-dum-ba!

Kristin: That we were going on a Buffy tour—

Jenny: Yeah! [laughs]

Kristin: While beginning this podcast. Who knew!

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: Very fun. Yeah, so I also really just loved the Sunnydale's Bison Lodge sign. It delighted me.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Lot of rain. Lot of rain. Very wet set here.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: So...okay. So, here's Rory. Why don't we just play the fucking Patriarchy jingle here for Rory?

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

Kristin: He's got this fucking cocktail waitress—

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: On his arm.

Jenny: Just terrorizing—

Kristin: Terrorizing.

Jenny: This caterer.

Kristin: She's like, "I really should get back to work, sir." And he's like, "Not with me, you don't have to work! You could just sit pretty and laugh when I tell a good one." Fuck you, Uncle Rory.

Jenny: Ewwww!

Kristin: Dawn's like, "Gotta go." And I get it, but also, Dawn, like, help a girl out. You know what I mean? Ask her a question. Get her outta there. Assist.

Jenny: [sighs] I mean, I support Dawn's—

Kristin: Exit?

Jenny: Choice to escape.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: I would flee.

Kristin: [laughs] Listen, I mean, top priority is go ahead, get out. But, like, if you—

Jenny: Get your mask on before you help anybody else with a mask. [both laugh]

Kristin: If you find yourself in this situation, make something up, you know?
"Actually, I—"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: "I really need assistance from this waitress because I need this thing."
Although we know how the Summers ladies are about lying. They're very bad at it, as we'll find out.

Jenny: They're bad at lying. Bad, bad, bad.

Kristin: [laughing] In a moment. Okay, so. Rory says another unfortunate line. He's talking about the fucking head on the wall. "I used to stuff things. I still do, but only for fun." Fuck off. [Jenny makes puking noise] Just fucking—just literally—[Jenny makes puking noise] that is what a Hellmouth should be for. At a line like that, if you say a sentence like that, it is cue for the Hellmouth to open up, swallow you and close up—

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: Never to release you again. Ah, here comes a decent dude. D'Hoffryn.

Jenny: Yeah. Here comes D'Hoffryn, bearing—as far as I could tell—hymen's greetings.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Hymen, the god of matrimony.

Kristin: It's true.

Jenny: Hymen!

Kristin: [laughs] You wanna say hymen a couple more times, Jenny?

Jenny: No, I'm good. And then he says, "May the love we celebrate today avoid an almost inevitable decline." [both laugh]

Kristin: Hymen's—Hymen is a Greek god. That is true, he is the god of matrimony. And I'm sure that the Greek god is what was used to name the fucking hymen—

Jenny: Ohh.

Kristin: In a body.

Jenny: Ohhhh.

Kristin: So the patriarchy, thunder clap, rain—this episode is actually—

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: Pouring rain the whole time because it's just saturated in the patriarchy. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: So, Hallie and Dawn have a really cute little moment, 'cause of course, Hallie has tricked Dawn into keeping her family inside of her house for, like, a day and a half a few episodes ago. She's like, "Call me Hallie!" and Dawn's, like, essentially saying "fuck you" with her eyes.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: They hand over this present, which reminds me so much of Christmas Vacation, when the fucking—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Great aunt gives them the cat in the box? It's—

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: This is a squirmy tentacled thing?

Jenny: I just love thinking about old D'Hoffryn, D-Bones, with a—with, like, a box cutter [Kristin laughs] or a very sharp pair of scissors, like, taking this box and kind of just, like, hand cutting the tentacle holes so that his [laughing] gift will be comfortable.

Kristin: Oh my god—

Jenny: I love this.

Kristin: D'Hoffryn actually just wrapping a gift is hilarious in and of itself.

Jenny: Yeah. With those fucking nails that we get a good look at later?

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: Please.

Kristin: Wow. So everyone's arriving. Spike blows in next with his date. He is back—

Jenny: [exhales] He's got a date and a *deeply* unbuttoned shirt.

Kristin: Yeah. He's back to, like—

Jenny: Oops.

Kristin: He's pushing hard old Spike, right? He's wearing all black—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: He's got his fucking duster on. We haven't seen him in his duster in, I don't think, like, a minute. You know?

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: He's been in his, like, short leather jackets with his chains, all getting spiffy for Buffy. [both laugh] So he blows in and he sees Dawn and he's like, "I want you to meet my date. Did you hear that I have a date? This is my date. This is a date, a date." He says date, like, 47 times.

Jenny: Date-date-date-date-date. Dawn is unimpressed. [laughs]

Kristin: Very. Very. But Dawn is, like, really good—like, she's so excited that she's got the hot gossip.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So she, like, runs off with the hot gossip.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: We see Clem and the Harrises. There's—

Jenny: Clem. Looking sharp.

Kristin: Looking great!

Jenny: Clem's looking really sharp. Carol—Cousin Carol, very chill, "ohh!" Just trying to bridge the gap here, "So, circus folk?"

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: "What's that like?" [Kristin laughs] Clem's like, "Let me tell you all about the origins of clowning and sport and—" [babbles] He's doing great.

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, Cousin Carol, well-intentioned. Maybe not—maybe not the way to go about this conversation. But also, everyone's kind of in a corner because no one can actually talk about themselves openly on the Anya side of the divide.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But then, fucking who invited Rory to the conversation? [Jenny sighs] "You can't expect Xander's kids to be raised," and he says, "Foreign-speaky, bow to the east-y." Wow.

Jenny: No.

Kristin: Fucking White Supremacy jingle, bing-bong, right here. Because this is—

Jenny: Rory, get fucked! Sorry. [laughs]

Kristin: No, please. That's the jingle, actually. That takes the place of the jingle, just Jenny screaming "Rory, get fucked."

Jenny: [laughs] [singing] Rory, get fucked.

Kristin: What's really interesting is that, like, Rory is, I'm sure, thinking that what he's doing is making a reference to Islam and, like, praying to Mecca. Which is not to the east, it's just whatever the direction Mecca is from where you are. And when I looked up "praying to the east," do you know what came up, Jenny, is Christian religions pray to the east. Because what was said is that the second coming, the messiah would approach Jerusalem from the east. So...

Jenny: Ohh-kay.

Kristin: So Rory's just basically insulting his Christian self, without knowing it. He's just being a fucking dingdong. Fuck you, Rory. Or—sorry, I wanna keep what Jenny said. Rory—Rory, get fucked. You just don't understand, like, why Xander has even invited his family.

Jenny: Great question! Why did Xander invite his family?

Kristin: Why did Xander invite his family? Like, you know, I understand, like, that there are situations where, like, you have family members and you want them to be there. But they're also really fucking problematic and you're torn and whatever. But we've seen over seasons and seasons and seasons that Xander does not like his family. And I guess he gave us that whole shpiel about, like, that's what family is to him and maybe he just hasn't, like, moved past that yet. But I just can't imagine him inviting his family. And it—like, they're talking about their kids, right now, like, right? Like, "you'd have them raise their kids in ignorance of our ways?" I think either Clem says or the other dude. And—

Jenny: Uh, yes, Squiddy Guy says—

Kristin: Squiddy Guy says it? Yeah. So it's like, you know, is Xander's eventual plan to, like, have his parents involved past the wedding? Or is it just that, like, a wedding is a thing where you feel like you absolutely have to invite your family and then you never need to speak to them ever again? Because—

Jenny: [laughs] I think that's the one.

Kristin: [laughs] Okay. Because listen, Xander and Anya have children, you keep these fucking people away from those kids. You keep them fucking far away from these kids. 'Cause they suck. Except for Carol, Carol can come. [laughs] Carol's like, "No, no, the Harrises are very broad-minded. We're episcopalians." Okay, Carol. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. So this episode was written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner, who is, like, very involved with, I think, later seasons of Gilmore Girls. I think that's...

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: The vibe in this episode really feels very Gilmore Girls-y to me.

Kristin: Interesting.

Jenny: Especially that line. That's where it, like, really fucking cracks you over the head. [Kristin laughs] And then, meanwhile, Mr. Harris is drinking alone at the bar. Cracking himself up, saying, "Till death do us part. Hilarious." [fake laughs]

Kristin: Oh, god. Ugh, just bad. We get a shot of the old man, who's just fucking slinking his way through this wedding. He's basically—he's a wedding crasher, really, is who this fucking demon is. He's fully crashing this wedding.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And one thing I wanted to say is that—so there's, like, clearly demons. You know, they've got, like, some squiddy demons. There's Clem. There's some horned demons. We got D'Hoffryn. Then there's, like, the Harrises. There's this one couple that are just so goth, and they crack me up, because, like, it is completely unclear, like, why they are there or what they are doing. Like, are they the super goth Harrises who the Harrises hate? Are they just, like, demon friends who dress in goth?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Are they goth demons? Is that a thing?

Jenny: Mm! Could be.

Kristin: [laughs] Like, what's going on with the goth couple at the party?

Jenny: Unknown, just a lot of black lipstick.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Buffy's getting Xander ready.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: To go out in the crowd. Unfortunately, immediately—as soon as she says, “Xander, you're one of the decent ones. Anya is lucky.” Xander cannot help himself and immediately has to make a joke about them fucking really quick before he gets married.

Kristin: Yeah. Not to be, like—

Jenny: [gags] Xander!

Kristin: Not to be, like, a fucking Xander apologist right now—

Jenny: Mmm!

Kristin: But I do think that this particular line delivery—I think that he—I think Nicholas Brendon does a good job. Like, you can almost see—and I'm sorry, everybody. You can yell at me if you disagree. But I just felt like the way that he delivered this line very much communicated, like, this is a thing old Xander woulda said. Remember that guy? Like, it was just very tongue in cheek and sweet and seemed like a reference to, like, the old days. Which I know, whatever. But I forgave him for this moment and I kind of found it endearing. They hug right after. Buffy is taking her instructions too late. Don't let Dad near the bar, already failed that one. Number two, don't let Mom near the bar.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: And fucking...Mom doesn't make it to the bar, from what we see.

Jenny: Dawn busts in to report that Spike is here and he brought a total “Manic Panic skank.” Um, here's a question. Why is Spike invited to this wedding?

Kristin: [laughs] Here's a follow-up question—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Why is Spike invited to this wedding?

Kristin: Is Spike—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Xander, quote, hates Spike—oh, yeah. Great. [laughs]

Kristin: Is Spike invited to this wedding? [laughs]

Jenny: Uh, great follow-up question.

Kristin: I mean, Clem is invited to the wedding. Like, as—

Jenny: Clem is not only invited to the wedding, but he's sitting on Xander's side of the aisle.

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: He's the only demon-presenting demon sitting on Xander's side. [laughs]

Kristin: Wow! [laughs]

Jenny: What?

Kristin: Yeah, why is Spike invited to—who knows? This is just—it's a party. And you know what? Actually, Jenny, that's a good point. I wanna say this, because you know, this is a very dramatic episode. And I feel like in the 90s and early 2000s, there were a lot of, like, "leave her at the altar" episodes. Like, this was a thing. And it was—it just—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: It seems so dramatic. I mean, it's just like, if you're gonna not go through with a wedding, there's like, plenty of time before. And also, if you're already at the venue, you're probably just gonna do it and then deal with the—[Jenny laughs] you know what I mean? Like, it just feels so dramatic. But it's like, this is storytelling. And so that's what I really try to think about in this episode too, because it's really hard to believe that Xander would do what Xander does in this episode. It's really—I find it hard to believe. And we can talk about it more when we get there, but just to your point of, like, painting in broader strokes. I think that this episode is more meant to tell us, like, the overall problems in this couple and how they might manifest. Not through the visions, but like, through later, with what we get. So I just want to, like, lay that down—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: That like, there's some things about the drama of this that's like, come on, would Xander really—but I just wanna put—keep us in the storytelling place. Like, what is the story trying to tell us?

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin: And that's why, Jenny, like, Spike is—honestly, I think that's why Spike is invited. That's why, right? 'Cause he wouldn't be.

Jenny: Sure, of course.

Kristin: It's just a big party episode. Bring in everyone!

Jenny: Mmhmm. [Kristin sighs] [dramatically] Well, Xander starts mingling and he's immediately mobbed by his mom and Uncle Rory and the mysterious old man. And Dawn saying one of Anya's presents got loose and oh! The mysterious old man pulls him aside and says, "Ah! You can't get married today, it's a huge mistake! I'm Xander Harris. I'm you!" Oh, god.

Kristin: [laughs] [dramatically] "They took away my toys!" I looked up—

Jenny: Dude!

Kristin: I looked it up to see—

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: I was like, is this the same guy? It's not. [laughs]

Jenny: But, like...they definitely have the same agent.

Kristin: [laughs] Yes. They probably were both up for this role.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So Old Man Xander reveals to current-day Xander that he has a crystal ball. And before we go to inside—before Xander hops inside the crystal ball, we get another clip of his dad at the bar, who stands up—

Jenny: [exhales noisily]

Kristin: This is—just somebody fucking take this man, put him inside of a closet, lock the goddamn door. That's what should happen. That should be the plot of Xander's dad at the wedding.

Jenny: Correct.

Kristin: He says, "What would I do without you?" to his wife. "For starters, I wouldn't need to drink so much." Everyone awkwardly shifts at the fucking wedding. And then he continues—

Jenny: [groans]

Kristin: "But I guess you saved me from getting the clap." Dude. What?

Jenny: Sir.

Kristin: He continues, "To the bride's dermatologically challenged family shrub." And Squid guy is like, "Sit the fuck down." And then Xander's dad is like, "I paid for this shit."

Jenny: Eugh, that's why he's here.

Kristin: Ooh, yeah, that *is* why he's here. Fuck.

Jenny: It's certainly not because he wants to share in his son's joy at entering the next chapter of this life.

Kristin: No, it's not.

Jenny: Yeah. Then there's some Mr. Harris, Squid Guy tension. And they nearly get into it, but Buffy swoops in [Kristin sighs] and walks Mr. Harris away. He says—

Kristin: Ugh!

Jenny: "Nice chassis."

Kristin: Ugh!

Jenny: "What's under the hood?"

Kristin: Ughhh!

Jenny: And I throw up in Mr. Harris's purse.

Kristin: Ughhh...I'm playing it, I'm playing it again. Fuck you. Fuck you, Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris, get fucked.

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

Kristin: Alright. You wanna do a little fucking flashback montage, Jenny?

Jenny: You mean a flash forward montage?

Kristin: Oh, yeah. [both laugh] A flash forward montage, excuse me.

Jenny: Okay. Inside the glowing memory orb, here's what Xander sees. [Kristin groans quietly] He's sitting in an armchair, drinking a beer in a house that could stand to be tidied up. And two children, around the ages of eight and ten, are running around and Josh looks like a regular boy and Sarah has some, like, demonic-looking ears, and they're terrorizing each other. And Anya's wearing what looks like...a very Mary Kay kind of outfit and she's about to go do a makeover party. And you know, Xander's like, "Oh, I thought you hated those?" And she says, "Well, somebody around here has to make some money."

Kristin: Oof.

Jenny: And Xander's like, "My back is shot," and it's revealed that [Kristin sighs] his back is shot 'cause he got hurt helping Buffy, and that didn't save her, and ugh, it's fucking bleak around here. And she leaves—

Kristin: "All it did was ruin our lives."

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So—

Jenny: Anya leaves and he screams, "I hope you crash in your stupid pink car."

Kristin: Oof. So we know that Xander tried to save Buffy in some kind of fight and Buffy died.

Jenny: [groans] Yeah.

Kristin: And they're married and they have two kids, and no one is happy.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Scene two.

Jenny: Flash forward more. They're at family dinner at a restaurant. And Sarah and Josh, still not getting along. Xander and Anya, really not getting along. It is revealed that Xander is not Sarah's real dad.

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: And Sarah knows it and Xander knows it.

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: And everyone's very unhappy.

Kristin: Anya—everyone—it should be noted that everyone in these flash forwards ages except for Xander. Xander stays the same in all three scenes. Which I kind of like that choice, you know? 'Cause it's, like, him—just him being him experiencing it. It's, like, less about—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It's less about him—and he says this later—and more about what he is afraid of doing to her and by extension, them. And so, like, we see those effects happen and it's not about Xander. It's about what we see happening really to Anya, first and foremost. And she has aged. They do a great job, aging Anya, I think.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: She looks like she's maybe in her, like, late 40s in this one. And Sarah stands up. "I know you're not my real dad—"

Jenny: [laughs] What's hilarious is that Emma Caulfield is probably now in her, like—

Kristin: [laughing] And looks exactly—

Jenny: Mid to late 40s and looks the same.

Kristin: [laughing] Looks exactly like she does in this episode, true. "I know you're not my real dad, I hate you, I wish you'd die." So two flash forwards, we have people wishing that other people would die. Anya says to Xander—

Jenny: It's not great.

Kristin: That he's drank too much wine.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And then we go to the last flash forward. Anya's, what? Maybe we're, like, in our 70s now? No kids. The kids, we assume, have gone on to their own lives. And now they're talking about how—Anya's saying to Xander, "You wouldn't come near me after Buffy." Xander's like, "Don't bring her into this." And then she says, "If I hadn't married you, I wouldn't have had to hate myself for the past 30 years." Fuck.

Jenny: [exhales noisily]

Kristin: [simultaneously] Okay, also, wait. The math of that's fucked up because they're, like, what, 20-something? So that would make her supposedly 50-something in this scene? She looks like an old woman. [laughs]

Jenny: Well, maybe she didn't hate herself for the first ten years.

Kristin: Okay, okay. [laughs]

Jenny: And then Buffy died.

Kristin: Oh, that's true. Okay, alright, okay. And then—and then Xander kills Anya, with like, a frying pan. Or at least—I mean, it's implied. And—

Jenny: Yeah. Then he comes back to the present and he is distraught.

Kristin: Ugh. "Is she okay? What did I do?" And this is, like—there's just a lot happening here. Like, the way that alcoholism is portrayed at this wedding and in these flash forwards is pretty, you know, problematic. I mean, it—the cushion of it is that it's Xander's worst fear. The visions, at least.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Of what he could be capable of and that is completely formed by his father and the way his father has treated his mother. And the way that he's witnessed his father treating his mother, over all of these years. This is, in reality, of course, not what Xander's future was going to look like. But...

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I think it makes sense that this is his worst fear.

Jenny: [groans] Yes. Yes, it does—I don't know. Well, I—yeah. I will have more to say, I think...

Kristin: Later.

Jenny: Later?

Kristin: The old man says, "You'll hurt her less today than you will later. Sometimes all two people bring each other is pain." Which is a great setup to cut to Spike and Buffy, I will say. [laughs]

Jenny: There it is.

Kristin: But—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Again, just—if this weren't the story, I think, just get married? Just do it. Just go—just do the thing. Everybody's—just fucking do it. And then deal with it later. Have a conversation after, okay?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: That's just my two cents.

Jenny: You'll feel better tomorrow.

Kristin: Yeah, or you won't, and you can, like, deal with it tomorrow. Just not at the wedding itself.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It's just a little bit of paperwork. It's not that big a deal. [both laugh]
Okay—

Jenny: You actually could do the whole ceremony and then not file the paperwork—

Kristin: And not file the paperwork.

Jenny: And it would be fine.

Kristin: Yes, exactly. Just don't send it in! [laughs]

Jenny: [sings short, suspenseful tune]

Kristin: Ahh, so "sometimes all two people bring each other is pain," cut to Spike and Buffy. This scene is very sweet.

Jenny: Yeah. They say hello. And he is like, "Oh, did you see that I brought a date? Did you meet my date? I have a date, date-date-date-date-date." [Kristin laughs]
And Buffy said, "I haven't, but she seems like a very nice attempt at making me jealous." [laughs]

Kristin: Mm, Buffy! She just nails it, like, right—I mean, of course she knows. But like, just the way she says it. It's very—I mean, listen. For better or for worse, these two are very intimate with each other at this point. And you know—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: They know a lot about each other and they've been through a lot together and this exchange is just, like—it's so sweet. Because, like, she's—they're honest with each other. That's what it is, really.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: If you're just gonna boil it down to its core. It's like, she's honest with him. And she says, yeah, you know what? It does make me jealous. I mean, think about, like, the power there, right? How many times does something like this happen? And think about walking across the room and being like, hey. Nice attempt at making me jealous and it worked. You know? Like, just really—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Call it out, man, that's what it is. And she does and Spike keeps trying. [laughs] He keeps trying to be like, fuck you. And then she's like, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have. And he's like, no, no, no, you didn't do anything wrong. It's fine, it's fine, it's fine. You're good, you're good. [Jenny laughs] And then he says—well, there's two things. There's two exchanges that I love the most in this scene. One is when Spike is like—Buffy's like, "So are you taking her back to your place?" And he's like, "Well, yeah, I guess that was the plan." And then he looks at her and he goes, "Evil?" [laughs] Like, do you remember? [both laugh] I'm evil? And then the second one is when he says to Buffy, "It's nice to watch you be happy. You glow." Because, like, this is—at the end of the day, like, it truly is what Spike has wanted more than most other things, is just—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: For her to be okay. He just wanted to be the reason that she could be okay.

Jenny: Yeah. And they close it out, you know, he decides he's gonna leave. And the last, you know, bit of exchange they have is he says, "But [laughs] just to confirm."

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs]

Jenny: "It hurts?" And Buffy's like, "Yeah." And Spike is like, "Thanks." And he walks away and she says, to no one, "You're welcome."

Kristin: Really good scene. Really good scene. Very good.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: A plus. Five stars, five out of five.

[AD BREAK]

Kristin: So Xander's pacing in the kitchen. Willow gives us a nice callback to fucking Slayerfest '98, I believe, is when Xander was in the tux. And Xander and Willow couldn't resist each other—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: 'Cause of formalwear. She says, "Good thing I'm gay, otherwise you, me, formalwear? We know where that gets us."

Jenny: Oh my word.

Kristin: And this is a sweet scene, you know? It's like...Willow—I mean, Willow, again, should have been there a little sooner, bud. But at least you're there now. She tells Xander that she loves him. He says, "About half as much as I love you." They hug each other. There's this really nice, like, long shot. They're in the industrial kitchen of this place.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And you see sort of, like, across the metal table down to them hugging. It's really sweet. She says, "You ready for the long walk?" Oh no, he's not! [laughs]

Jenny: He's not. Cut to Anya, still ironing the kinks out of her vows. "I promise [Kristin laughs] to have sex with you, whenever *I* want."

Kristin: Yes, Anya! You know what, Anya deserves a jingle. Should we give it to her here for demanding—

Jenny: Now is the time.

Kristin: Demanding sex when *she* wants it?

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Hit it. Hit it, bitch! [laughs]

[ANYA jingle plays]

[cash register rings]

She spent one millennium, demonically vengeancin'

Speaks her mind and then some, you know

She's partial to the finer things

And down with double boyfriends, oh yeah

Exchanging cash for goods and also services

She'd love to hold the money for ya (she'll hold that cash)

Just keep the bunnies far from... Anya!

Jenny: [laughs] Only LaToya can say "hit it, bitch" to me.

Kristin: Okay, fine. Sorry, but Morgan and LaToya both say it, so...

Jenny: Sorry. Only the hosts—only my number one crushes, Morgan and LaToya, can say “hit it, bitch” to me.

Kristin: Fine! Fine. Hit it, bitch redacted.

Jenny: Thank you.

Kristin: Anya refers to herself as a sex poodle, which I read was an inside joke because Jane Espenson had used the term sex poodle to refer to maybe herself. Anyway.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: Somebody was calling themselves sex poodles in real life made its way into the script. Love to see it.

Jenny: Great. Great, great, great. Tara advises Anya, perhaps wisely, not to say “sex poodle” in her vows.

Kristin: [laughs] Buffy comes in, you hear the music playing, and she’s like, “We’re ready!” And Willow’s like, [record scratch noise]. [both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: “Just kidding, uh, Xander’s gone.” But she says it to Buffy, and so she tells Buffy to please make something up. So I don’t know, I could think of a few things that you could say to stall this wedding. A couple of them.

Jenny: So many things that are not “the minister had to deliver an emergency C-section baby because he’s half minister, half doctor. A mini-tor, not to be confused with a minotaur, no bull parts whatsoever.”

Kristin: [laughs] A C-section is so specific. Like, it’s like, did Buffy’s mind think to itself, like, uh, okay, he’s also a doctor, he has to deliver a baby, but shit, that’ll take long. What’s a fast way to deliver a baby? A C-section! [laughs]

Jenny: Right. Right, right, right.

Kristin: It’s just—it’s just—yeah. These kids are never good at lying.

Jenny: Y’all.

Kristin: Anya, obviously enraged, but she takes a moment and she finishes her vows in this heart-wrenching scene where we're hearing Anya finish her vows. And it is cut with Xander, leaving in the rain, walking in his tux through the rain. Let's hear what Anya says, because we are masochists.

[Clip from episode plays]

Anya: I, Anya, want to marry you, Xander, because I love you and I'll always love you. And before I knew you, I was like a completely different person. Not even a person, really. And I had seen what love could do to people, and it was hurt and sadness. Alone was better. And then, suddenly, there was you. And you knew me. You saw me, and it was this...thing. You make me feel safe and warm. So, I get it now. I finally get love, Xander. I really do.

Kristin: Wow!

Jenny: Upsetting.

Kristin: Woowww! Wow...wow.

Jenny: Um...[Kristin laughs] well, it's down to Buffy to stall. And she pops down the aisle and we get this great bit of the string quartet being like, oh, there's a girl in a bridesmaid dress coming down the aisle. We better play the wedding march. And then she wa—she's like, no, no, no, no. It's okay. And she whispers in the minister's ear, who is not performing an emergency C-section anywhere. Then she goes back to—

Kristin: Mm, she's like, can you go perform an emergency C-section, please? [both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah, would you mind? Then she comes back down the aisle and then they try to play the end wedding music.

Kristin: Yo, this band needs to get their shit together.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Do they not know what a fucking bride looks like? Come on now.

Jenny: Yeah. Anya starts to freak out about the minister and, you know, she's like, "What was he thinking, delivering a baby today? It's rude of him and the mother." [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah, somebody should have—

Jenny: "On my special day!"

Kristin: "Somebody should have told her to hold it," is what she says about the mother who is delivering the fictitious baby. [laughs]

Jenny: Yep. Yep. Yep.

Kristin: Xander's dad gets up and leaves, which I think is notable. Kevin [sic] and Carol, making eyes at each other across the aisle. Happy to have more time together at this wedding, for themselves.

Jenny: Nice!

Kristin: Carol also has a good moment with her daughter. [both laughing] Her daughter's like, "I'm bored" and she goes, "It's a wedding, honey. We're all bored." [laughs] Love you, Carol!

Jenny: Aww.

Kristin: Love you, Carol. So at the bar, hey, guess who's there? Ordering a double Jack, blaming Anya for the delay on the wedding. Because *women*.

Jenny: [exhales loudly] Mmhmm.

Kristin: Mom, piping in, "Well, she didn't want any of my help." Mothers and weddings can be a real thing, here. And then we go to—[laughs] then we go to the audience. We get all these quick cuts of like, everyone's responses. Hallie is like, "I knew Anya wouldn't do it." D'Hoffryn: "I'm worried about Anya." And then—

Jenny: Mmhmm!

Kristin: Hallie's jealous. And he's like, "You know I love all my demons equally." [Jenny laughs] I fucking love D'Hoffryn. Honestly, number one demon.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I just love him.

Jenny: Number one demon.

Kristin: I think he's a real good dude, you know? He takes care of his family.

Jenny: Buffy takes the stage! "Who's here from out of town?" [both laugh]

Kristin: Clem participating. Being a good guy.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Just raises his hand.

Jenny: Good boy, Clem. Dawn and the teen boy she has found—there's always one teen at a wedding—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: That you can link up with. He's got some horns. They're chatting it up, arguing over, like, who has the worst family.

Kristin: [laughs] "Which side of this aisle is the worst?"

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Points were made. Then, Buffy is now doing charades up on stage. She's got—

Jenny: Possibly minotaur. [Kristin laughs] Possibly minotaur.

Kristin: So Anya escapes. Anya leaves—

Jenny: Anya! A quintessential Aries move. She will not wait. "If the minister's not here, we'll just start the wedding without him. Let's goo!" she says.

Kristin: [laughs] Oh, Tara's like, "No, no, please don't." Meanwhile, Buffy—[Jenny laughs] Buffy's juggling now on stage. We learn that Sarah Michelle Gellar—

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: Was super stoked to show off her juggling skills—

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: In this scene. There's somebody in this podcast space who also has juggling skills, and it's—

Jenny: It's me!

Kristin: It's not me, it's Jenny. Jenny, are you gonna juggle for us?

Jenny: Maybe?

Kristin: Maybe put some juggling—Jenny juggling social content up this week to take everyone's mind off of the misery of this episode? Just like Sarah—

Jenny: Maybe.

Kristin: Just like Buffy is doing in this scene? [both laugh]

Jenny: It's possible.

Kristin: Great. Dawn—classic Dawn. Dawn's always walking in or walking out, saying pivotal information that someone is not supposed to know. And that someone is always also just walking by the door. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah. It's bad.

Kristin: Xander's missing, Anya hears. Xander's gone. The crowd breaks into an actual bar fight.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: I mean, I guess it's a wedding venue fight.

Jenny: It was a matter of time. Wedding brawl!

Kristin: I've been at a wedding that broke into a fight. [Jenny laughs] Have you ever been—

Jenny: No.

Kristin: I told you, man. I got this family, man. I have this family.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: One of my cousins—back when I used to go to all of my cousins' weddings. One of my cousins was getting married—got married. We did leave the venue, went back to the hotel bar, and everybody drank too much. And a girl—

Jenny: Shocking.

Kristin: Girl was flirting with a guy. I don't—who knows what started it, but for whatever reason, when this fight started, it was like, two people were fighting and then, like, 60 people were fighting. There was, like, mace spray—it was so dramatic. I, like, fucking carried my mother over the side of a wall. [Jenny laughs] The bride was, like, running away in her dress. Like, this was fucking real life, people.

Jenny: Dude.

Kristin: I live inside of this wedding, I'll tell you what. I've been here. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Okay. So. [laughs]

Jenny: Well! Listen. This wedding brawl had to happen. Tara is swept up in the fray!

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And Willow pulls her behind some flowers! This is, um...

Kristin: It's a little—

Jenny: What's the word I'm looking for, dumb?

Kristin: Yeah, I think maybe they were trying to go—'cause I was thinking about it. Even the Previously On is very like—at first, I was like, this is very soap opera-y. You know, because it's all the couples. It's like, Buffy and Spike—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Tara and Willow.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It also could be, like, a little Shakespearian. We know how—

Jenny: I just feel like we could have achieve—

Kristin: [laughing] Yes. Yes.

Jenny: Like, we could have gotten something that felt way better.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: I kinda feel like that about a lot—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: At least, where we get with Xander in particular. Like, it just feels...unrefined.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And so it feels a little more, like, character assassination—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Than, like, an earned—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Outcome?

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: But more on that later. [laughs]

Kristin: Alright, okay. So—

Jenny: Cousin Carol, moving the plot along—

Kristin: Carol!

Jenny: As she does! Directs Anya to old mystery man.

Kristin: Yeah. MVP, Carol. "He went into the trophy room with that guy." Anya's like, yo—basically, like, yo dude, who the fuck are you? And he says...

[Clip from episode plays]

Old man: Haven't changed a bit. Still as vindictive as ever.

Kristin: And then she's like, "Do I know you?" And he...transforms into his actual demon form.

Jenny: Oh, god, no. This is, um, so stupid. [both laugh] This demon is—

Kristin: The transformation—the visual effect? Or the, like, what—

Jenny: No, just the end result is what I'm thinking of. It's just very—it's not—I know, at this point, I should be immune.

Kristin: Honestly?

Jenny: But this feels particularly bad, especially because his mouth movement is minimized and he has a big expositional lift.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: So it's just like, puppet mouth. Like, "and, ah, you took vengeance on me! I was a philanderer and—"

Kristin: [laughing] For the listener at home, Jenny is sock-puppeting, for me. And only me, I'm the only person who can see her, but...

Jenny: Yeah, well. Can you hear this? [fingers tapping together] [Kristin laughs] I hope so. That's the sound of one hand sock-puppeting. Um. So this guy used to be a man in 1914 in Chicago, and he was a philanderer and someone wished vengeance upon him. And so Anya turned him into a demon and teleported him into a demon dimension to be...tortured?

Kristin: [simultaneously] Tortured? I guess, yeah.

Jenny: It feels like a weird choice to transform someone into a being that has, like, a longer lifespan—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And, like, powers and stuff. [laughs]

Kristin: Right. He could seek revenge on you.

Jenny: [simultaneously] I—maybe like, to sustain how long you could be tortured for. I get it. But also, like, this could come around and bite you in the ass. And in this case, it did.

Kristin: Yeah. And this is—I wanna say, to the look of the demon, when I saw him, I thought, he look—honestly, I'm sure it's not. But it honestly looks like they just borrowed a costume from the set of Angel. This looks like a very Angel Investigations demon, over on their side of things, [laughs] so—

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin: If you can draw that line for us, fucking bonus points for you. But...he tells Anya that all he had to do was give him a few visions. That's all it took, and she's like, "That's it? That's all you did?" Which is a little bit of a—I mean, I think showing somebody their worst fear is kind of a big deal. They kind of play it off like you should have had to do more to terrify him. I disagree. She's crying. He says, "Cry, Anyanka. Cry."

Jenny: [groans]

Kristin: Oof!

Jenny: "I love to see you cry! And now I love to see you scream!" This is dumb. And I hate it. [laughs]

Kristin: Well, I don't—

Jenny: I hate it so much.

Kristin: I don't, I don't. I think it's—I think that the reveal that a demon has come back to take revenge on her for the vengeance she took on him is a good plot device. You just mean—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: You just mean the demon's—

Jenny: I just mean, verbatim—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Verbatim. Yes.

Jenny: The dialogue, “Cry, Anyanka, cry. I love to see you cry and now I love to see you scream.” I smell fear! [Kristin laughs] It smells good!

Kristin: Buffy sees the demon and is back to tearing her skirt up her thigh—

Jenny: Nice!

Kristin: So she can fight. We always love it.

Jenny: Ow-ow!

Kristin: She does it without a letter opener this time. She grabs a veil—

Jenny: Yep, yep.

Kristin: By the way, the taxidermied animals are wearing veils, which I think is a poor choice.

Jenny: [laughing] I love it. [Kristin laughs] I love it! And it’s handy for choking out a demon. But hey. In the midst of Buffy fighting this demon, who should return but a thoroughly soaked Xander? Anya’s like, “Ohh, what he showed you was all lies.” And Xander says, “It doesn’t matter now.” But he doesn’t say it in a very encouraging tone. Buffy continues to do some choking, and then Xander smashes the head of this demon with a great big column of some kind. And everyone *applauds*. [both laugh] The Scoobies stand around, waiting for the demon to go poof, which would be nice. It’s the least he could do, after all the havoc he’s wrought.

Kristin: Ohh, but he doesn’t.

Jenny: But no.

Kristin: Who suggests—[Jenny laughs] Is it Tara? Who suggests covering the body in flowers?

Jenny: That’s Willow.

Kristin: Willow.

Jenny: That's Willow's big idea. Then Mr. Harris, very upset about the amount that the damage to the venue might cost, calls everyone freaks and the brawl resumes. And Anya screams! For everyone to stop! And get back to their seats, this wedding will go on!

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: She thinks.

Kristin: And then we get this, like, quiet scene. Like, she has screamed loud enough for everyone to take their seats. And she says sweetly to Xander, "You know, it's bad luck to see me in my dress." And then you hear this sound, and you're like, what *is* that sound? And it is the sound of one million hearts breaking across the globe.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: That's what it sounds like. And, um...Xander looks at her and says, "I know it wasn't real. But it could be." The definition of your biggest fear. [Jenny exhales] She says, "Was it me?" and he says, "It wasn't you I was hating. I had these thoughts and fears before. If this is a mistake, it's forever. I don't wanna hurt you. I'm sorry." During that, we see Xander's dad yelling at his mom in the audience.

Jenny: Yeah...but Xander, didn't you hear our song from only nine episodes ago?

Kristin: [singing] "You can always get...divorced."

Jenny: [sings tune] Xander—

Kristin: [simultaneously, singing quietly] "You can always get..." Don't do it, bud, don't leave!

Jenny: He leaves. And for some reason, Anya still does a full aisle walk, while crying?

Kristin: It's effective. Honestly, it's really Anya. Like, I think it's really Anya. Like, she is devastated and heartbroken and I feel like Anya's way is to just, like, push her way through the thing and own it, rather than, like, run and—I mean, she's going to obviously go and take her time. But in this moment, I think it's a really good choice for the character of Anya. I mean, it's a really good, dramatic choice

for us to have to watch her crying and walking down this aisle, of course. But I also think it tracks. I think she would have done this.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: For real. And the fucking band, man. Could they fucking pick up a hint? Could they take a fucking cue—they're playing the music as she's walking down the aisle. So Jenny, you've been teasing us this whole time, "I have stuff to say, I have stuff to say." What do you got to say?

Jenny: [exhales] I mean, I just feel like, this is not—like, where Xander gets to could make sense.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: You know, could hit really hard, but I think this episode doesn't quite get there. It doesn't quite have, like, the nuance and the weight.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: It's not—it feels like it's, like, one draft away from really, really, really—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Getting you to understand exactly why Xander is where he is. And maybe it's in the performance? Maybe it's in the writing? I don't know.

Kristin: Well, the flash forwards are really heavy handed, I think. They are...they are only one thing. And I think that that probably is one of the points that is getting you, as like, I didn't feel nuance. There is not nuance in those three flash forwards, right? It is just like, pretty much painting in black and white. Xander is fucking up. Anya is unhappy. The kids hate each other.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And I think you could do those flash forwards with more nuance. But I guess—and the way that I sort of, like—and I mentioned this at the top—like, the way that I connected it for myself was just like, okay, yeah, this isn't very nuanced. But I guess this is—like, maybe this is where the—would they have wound up here had they gotten married? And are they trying to tell us—not where the flash forwards were. But where Xander's fears of being not good enough for Anya broke the marriage down the line. Like, would they have gotten there then?

Jenny: I think there's something missing, there's some connective tissue missing between what Xander experiences, like, inside the memory orb. And like, where he get—like, we are missing information about, like, how real it was—like, the mystery man says that he's going to, like, see and feel—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: What he has seen and felt. And like, I just feel like we don't quite get from Xander, like, the...like, enough information about the all-encompassing, all your senses horror of that experience.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jenny: You know what I mean?

Kristin: Yeah, and also, you know, like, something that I don't think has been given to us enough up till this point—because Buffy is such a massive part of the flash forwards. Right? It's like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Buffy comes up a million times. And we've heard Anya reference, like, oh, it's always about Buffy. Like, in Once More, With Feeling, there's a reference to that.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But we haven't gotten a lot of scenes of, like, this being a central point of tension for them. You know? Like, we've gotten hints of—

Jenny: Yeah, that too.

Kristin: Right, it's like we're missing—it's almost—

Jenny: It feels like older Xander. Like, old version of Xander.

Kristin: Yeah, and we're just missing—it's like we needed a Xander/Anya episode that was not the wedding episode. So that we could really see—'cause what is going on at their apartment? What do they—like, what do they do when they're loving each other? What do they do when they're fighting? What do those fights look like? We haven't seen enough of them—

Jenny: Lava lamps—

Kristin: [laughs] Right. Right.

Jenny: Model cars.

Kristin: And obviously—

Jenny: Bobble-headed animals.

Kristin: Yeah, the song in Once More, With Feeling was the most, I think, we got of this. And then it was sort of sprinkled throughout. But I agree with you. I mean, it—Anya—and Emma Caulfield, I mean, honestly. Standing ovation—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And we haven't even gotten to this final scene yet. But you know, her performance, I think, is just heart wrenching. And—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I mean, she is the one who is left, so she has less of the burden of, like, showing us why, right? 'Cause she is—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: She is the one that is hurt and devastated. Whereas Xander, Nicholas Brendon, is sort of given this lift of showing us why this character, who we really did not love in the beginning few seasons—I'm saying "we" as Jenny and I. Like, this guy is problematic in these ways, whatever. And we've really been seeing him grow. And so, like, how do you get this character who you've been seeing grow all the way back to, like, the beginning of the board?

Jenny: Yeah. Exactly, exactly.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: That's the problem.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Okay, so the gals are gal-palin' around. Buffy, Willow and Dawn, talking about—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Gal-palin' around. Nice way to try to bring some fucking smiles into this bleak-ass scene. [laughs]

Jenny: Talking about Anya wants to be alone, and they're all just, like, really feeling it. Somehow, the Summers house has acquired a huge bean bag chair that somehow seems to be kind of armchair-shaped—

Kristin: Oooh.

Jenny: That Dawn is sitting in.

Kristin: Fancy bean bag chair.

Jenny: And across town, Xander checks into what should be the saddest motel in Sunnydale, but somehow—

Kristin: [laughs] No.

Jenny: It's still nicer than the one where Faith lived.

Kristin: [laughing] Still nicer than Faith's, agree, agree, solid agree. Before we see Xander, though, I just wanna just bring us back to a couple of the things that Buffy says—Buffy and Willow say in this scene, where Anya has left, Xander is gone, and they're all, like, trying to unpack this. Because she does say, again, like, "It hurts my heart. I thought they were happy." And Willow says, "They were." And Willow also says, "I feel like I should hate Xander, but I can't." Like, I think that's the nuance that we're looking for. Like, we need more of that in this episode.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know?

Jenny: Yes, correct.

Kristin: We need to feel how Willow feels, which is, you know, that like, this is really complicated. They were happy, and this is hard, and Xander did something and it's not good. But also, there's a whole character here. And so, yeah. Also, Buffy's wearing a T-shirt that says "I survived" with a dragon on it. So. [Jenny snorts] Okay. Ooh.

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah, remember the dragon from—okay.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah, like, is it a reference to the dragon in The Gift? Like, is it? You know? She did survive. Well. She didn't, but it's complicated.

Jenny: No.

Kristin: We have a whole podcast about it, you can go back and listen. [laughs] Okay.

Jenny: In the nether region between dimensions, all is deep, dark, inky, matte black.

Kristin: Pretty.

Jenny: All but Anya and a bedoily'ed wrist with a very long, impressive manicure. [laughs]

Kristin: I absolutely hate what you're doing with your hands. [Jenny cackles] To me, in the camera. [Jenny cackles louder] Like, Jenny's fingers just look like they got, like, seven feet longer and were, like, worming their way through the camera to my face. I hate it so much.

Jenny: Handing her a tissue, it's...D'Hoffryn! D'holla, it's D'Hoffryn. I'm...

Kristin: This is beautiful. It's beautiful.

Jenny: It's a beautiful shot.

Kristin: It reminds me of the end of The NeverEnding Story. Like, after the Nothing hits—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know? And it's like, the soundscape is silent, you can hear a pin drop. And the color is gone.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And the—

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: It's really, really nice. And D'Hoffryn, the first thing he says is, "Are you okay?" Aww!

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: She says, "I'm tired." Pause, pause, pause. "Of crying." [both sigh]
[laughs]

Jenny: It's tough. It's tough being Anya. Yeah, this sucks.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: D'Hoffryn's like, "Hey. You know, you used to eat guys like that loser for breakfast! Why don't you come take your old job back? Oh! Oh-oh-oh!" [Kristin sighs] And then the episode ends. What's gonna happen? I don't know.

Kristin: Well, I mean, he says, "You let him domesticate you," which I think is, uh...not—

Jenny: Untrue.

Kristin: Yeah. I think it's untrue and it's just—like, I really like D'Hoffryn a lot. It feels like not the way D'Hoffryn would have perhaps delivered what he meant to say—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Which is kind of what you said, Jenny. Just like, you used to eat guys like this for breakfast. You're gonna be fine, buddy. You know, like, that's more of what I want to hear—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: From D'Hoffryn and less about, like—not that him saying that is blaming Anya. But it almost feels like there's a little bit of, like, you allowed this to happen to you. Which like, that's fucked up.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And not okay.

Jenny: Yeah, we don't like that. We don't like that.

Kristin: But being there for her, asking her if she's okay, therefore it's time you got back. And we just go to credits. [singsong] What is gonna fucking happen? What is gonna fucking happen?

Jenny: Well.

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: I don't know. But before that question can be answered—

Kristin: You're right.

Jenny: There's a very different question that has to be asked and also answered.

Kristin: [simultaneously] It's a wedding, baby. Always sexual tension at a wedding.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Oh! Welcome to the latest installation of the Sexual Tension Awards! [sings tune] Bong-bong-bong-bong!

Kristin: What the hell!

Jenny: Bang-bang-bang-bang! Slots!

Kristin: You tell me at the start I can't make my joke—my bing-bong joke, and then you take it for yourself? Wow!

Jenny: We got slots. We got noms. Many will attempt to enter, only one will seal the deal! [laughs]

Kristin: [laughing] Gross.

Jenny: Kristin hates me! In slot number one. They love to giggle. [Kristin laughs] They love to button. They love to gaze into one another's eyes and they *love* to hide flirtily behind some potted flowers. Yay! It's Willow and Tara.

Kristin: Oh, back in the saddle again.

Jenny: In slot number two, she used to be a mystical energy key. [Kristin laughs] He has enormous horns growing out of his forehead. They are two teens at a wedding. Good luck to them, it's Dawn and Teen Demon.

Kristin: Yeah! Rooting for the teens. Actually, no, I'm not 'cause I know the other noms and I'm rooting for another one.

Jenny: [laughs] In slot number three, she is our heroine. She alone [Kristin laughs] possesses the strength to slay demons and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. And he is a sweet little soft boy with a crunchy exterior coating, trying to be tough.

Kristin: Oh my god! A sweet little soft boy with a—what? Crunchy coating?

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: Oh my god, it's my favorite description of Spike that's ever happened.

Jenny: Yeah, he's like a little hedgehog or something.

Kristin: [laughs] I pictured a Klondike bar.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Like, rolled up, you're like, oh no, I better not touch that, it looks sharp. And then he, like, pokes his little head out and he's like, love me! [Kristin laughs] Anyway, it's Buffy and Spike! In slot three. And then in slot four. Hey.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: They're new to us, but they already feel like family.

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: She's a single mom.

Kristin: Hell yeah.

Jenny: He seems to have some, um, electronic—

Kristin: Oh, yeah.

Jenny: Electrical aptitude.

Kristin: Mmhmm, he'll fix your coffee pot.

Jenny: Let's see if we can take those sparks to the next level!

Kristin: Wow!

Jenny: For Carol and...Krelvin!

Kristin: Yes! Give it to Carol and Krelvin, people!

Jenny: Let Krelvin give it to Carol!

Kristin: Wow!

Jenny: People! If you'd like to vote in our Sexual Tension Awards for this episode, please find the STA poll on our Twitter account, @BufferingCast. The poll is up for one week after this episode goes up. Make your voice heard.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: [sarcastically] Well, I don't know about you. But I'm feeling just great.

Kristin: Oh, yeah.

Jenny: Morale is at an all-time high.

Kristin: Oh, yeah. Believing in love, having lots of hope, happiness, no tears here. Just life, giving you what you always wanted. Everything you wanted—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Just the way you imagined it. Listen. You know, we warned you. We fucking warned you that we're at Episode 16 of Season 6. A fucking tipping point. And it's rough. And I am sad. But also, you know, like I said at the top, although this is a very difficult episode, I think that Buffy still can have hope. I think that Anya still can have hope. I believe—I still believe in love, even though Xander has left this marriage at the aisle. [Jenny laughs] Oh, guys. It's rough. I'm trying my best here. I'm doing my—

Jenny: Anything could happen.

Kristin: Anything could happen.

Jenny: There's still one and a quarter seasons left.

Kristin: Oh my god. That's terrifying. Yeah, anything could happen, Jenny, you're right. But...[sighs] well, you know what. The next episode is Normal Again, so, um...I'm sure—

Jenny: That sounds chill. That sounds like a very chill episode.

Kristin: It sounds—you know, I mean, the title to me says, everything will go back to normal again.

Jenny: Yeah, and it'll be super...vibey—

Kristin: [simultaneously] So it'll be fine.

Jenny: And we'll be fine.

Kristin: It'll be good. It'll be great. Cannot wait.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Anything else to say about this episode before we run outta here?

Jenny: No, it's time to flee.

Kristin: Let us flee. Who are you?

Jenny: Well! I'm Jenny Owen Youngs. And when I am not making this podcast with Kristin, I'm usually writing and recording songs. You can learn more about me and hear some of my music at jennyowenyoungs.com. You can give me a shout on Twitter, @JennyOwenYoungs. You can find me at least twice a week, livestreaming on Twitch, playing some music, talking about songs, doing some stuff. You can check out my new band, L.A. Exes, and our two singles, Skinny Dipping and Temporary Goodbye that are out now. And you can check out my new release, Echo Mountain, which was recently expanded to include a couple fresh remixes. And that expanded edition is now out on all streaming platforms. How am I doing? [laughs]

Kristin: You're doing great. You remind me of that SNL skit with Molly Shannon—

Jenny: Oh my fucking god.

Kristin: Where they do the NPR Ladies? [laughs] [NPR voice] Mm, these muffins are delicious. [both laugh]

Jenny: Oh, wait! Sorry, can I say one more thing? Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry—

Kristin: You may. This is 50% your podcast, so.

Jenny: Mm, interesting.

Kristin: I—we did not leave each other at the podcast aisle.

Jenny: No.

Kristin: Split right down the middle here, folks.

Jenny: That's right. The one last thing I wanted to mention, in case you didn't hear it in last episode's intro, is that I've got a new cover of the Sinatra classic, Witchcraft, out—

Kristin: [pleased] Oof.

Jenny: And it's currently hearable in the—on all streaming platforms, but also, in the Season 2 trailer for Motherland: Fort Salem, a show that has some gay witches in it. So I thought maybe some of you might be interested. Cool.

Kristin: Hell yeah. Listen, I—because this podcast belongs half to me, I would like to play just a tiny clip of Witchcraft, 'cause it's really fucking cool. And if me screaming about how cool it is isn't enough for you, then this will be.

["Witchcraft" starts playing]
And I've got no defense for it
The heat is too intense for it
What good would common sense for it do?
'Cause it's Witchcraft, Witchcraft
Wicked Witchcraft...

Kristin: I am Kristin Russo and though I can't write songs about witchcraft, I am indeed at least part witch. [Jenny laughs] When I am not here talking about Buffy the Vampire Slayer and all of the horrible things that continue to happen to her and

all of her friends this season, [both laugh] I...am talking to and with LGBTQ communities. It is still the month of June, which means I am busier than ever—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Speaking to a lot of workplaces, doing talks for parents—that's my favorite talk—my favorite kind of talk to do for workplaces is when I do talks for parents at workplaces about how to be there for their LGBTQ kids. It's really great and it makes me have a lot of hope for the fact that companies are putting resources into not just, like, how to be an ally at work. But like, really caring about their employees past the workspace. Plus, a lot of those things are applicable across the board. And I'm working on a book. You know, it'll come out in, like, five years or whatever. [Jenny laughs] However long books take to write and publish. And what else? Oh, you know, if you're a patron of ours, you get to hear Joanna Robinson and I do a little special podcast called Feels Like the First Time. We are most of the way through our June trilogy. Jenny, I just watched Priscilla, Queen of the Desert for the first time.

Jenny: I've never seen it. [Kristin gasps] How was it?

Kristin: It was fucking phenomenal. It was phenomenal. I thought it was great. There's a couple more movies we're watching, but that was the first one that I saw of the three and it was—I would highly recommend it. It's—you know, it's old. It's from the early 90s.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But I thought it was fantastic. I thought it was very—*mostly* responsible. A couple cringe-worthy scenes, but other than that—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: A good watch. Anyway. Who are we?

Jenny: Well. You know as well as I do that we're Buffering the Vampire Slayer and we're on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, @BufferingCast. You can email us at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: You can support us, if you want, on Patreon. That's where you get to hear that bonus podcast I was talking about.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: We also do live watches. Jenny, you had an idea for a live watch this morning. Texted me 8 AM with your idea. What was your idea?

Jenny: Well. Some of you may not be aware that in, like, 1988 or something...[laughs] Sarah Michelle Gellar, a child...[laughs] filmed a pilot for a show called Girl Talk, based kind of—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: On the boardgame, Girl Talk—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: In which Sarah Michelle Gellar, another girl whose name I can't remember, and Soleil Moon Frye—[laughs]

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Hang out and have some girl talk together, with a live studio audience. [Kristin laughs] And in the unaired pilot, an interview with New Kids on the Block. The entire episode is on Youtube and I thought it would be really fun if we all watched it together.

Kristin: Yeah, so we're gonna be—that's a beautiful summer watch right there. [Jenny laughs] That is a gorgeous—just a gorgeous, gleaming summer pick to watch together. So—

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: Live watches are open to all patrons. You can join us at any level. If you're already a patron and you're just like, refreshing your page. Give us a minute, we'll send you the details soon. [both laugh] And yeah, we got book clubs. There's just a ton of shit. So go on over there, bufferingthevampireslayer.com. You can just click on Patreon. The store is closing—we probably told you in the intro—but the store is closing for the month. And there's 25% off right now, just use the code SEASONSIX and you get 25% off of everything. Both stores, the only thing you can't get 25% off of is the vinyl. And hey. You know what, I think that takes us to the end. Wow. Whew! Episode 16 down, we just got 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Just—whew, just a few more to go, Jenny. We're almost there. Let's do it. [laughs]

Jenny: [exhales] I believe in us.

Kristin: I believe in us too.

Jenny: We can get through it. We will. But till next time...

Both: Awwwoooooooooooooo!

Kristin: Bing-bong, bing-bong! Bingity-bong, bing-bong! [pause] Honk. [both laugh]

[“Hell’s Bells” plays off the album “Songs from Season Six” by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

Wedding bells are ringing
Ding dong ding dong dinging
String quartet is stringing
All systems are go

All your friends and family
Gathered for the big day
Now I need to just say
What you already know

Like burlap to blood larvae
You’re perfect for each other
And you share a love that
Lights the way, so

Onward and upward
I love you with all my heart
Forever forward
This is your brave new start

It’s natural to feel scared
Change can be a nightmare
But your best friend is right there
Waiting just for you

No more solitaire now
You’re one half of a pair now
All your life you’ll share now
You’ll walk along as two

Like burlap to blood larvae
You're perfect for each other
And you share a love that
Lights the way, so

Onward and upward
I love you with all my heart
Forever forward
This is your brave new start

I never knew that you could lose your way
I don't know how to say

Forlorn and fractured
The beat of a broken heart
So long to forward
So long to your brave new start