

Buffering the Vampire Slayer  
Episode 4.19: New Moon Rising

**Kristin:** Hello there everyone. Welcome to another episode of Buffering the Vampire Slayer. A couple of news items for you before we get into today's episode on New Moon Rising, which I am doing with Kate Leth. That is right. You've got me and Kate Leth talking about Willow, Tara, and Oz's return. So get excited, get your tissues, et cetera, et cetera.

But before that, a couple of things. Prom is in just a few days. Holy shit. Uh, I want to let you know a few things. One, if you are a patron of ours at any level, so if you give at the dollar, the five, the 10, the 25, any of those levels, that means that you have access to our secret Facebook group. So many cool things happen in that secret Facebook group and one of them is going to be happening on Saturday. On Saturday, you can stream Jenny's live sets in the secret Facebook group.

You can also watch them after prom whenever you want because there'll be there forever. Um, so if you want to become a patron of ours, you can do that @bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Just click on Patreon, get on into that secret Facebook group and you can watch those live performances. It'll be two performances with some special guests. It will be fun. Uh, I also highly encourage you, uh, to attend the virtual prom if you're not attending the actual prom.

Virtual prom is being hosted by our very own Brittany Ashley and Laura Zak. It will be free and open for everyone that is on our Facebook page. So just the regular old Buffering the Vampire Slayer Facebook page that's open to all. They will be watching The Prom, the Buffy episode. Of course, The Prom, they will be dressed up as though they are at a prom of their own because they are. A virtual prom. And I know it's going to be so much fun.

So tune in that will be 5:00 PM Pacific time, which is 8:00 PM Eastern time. So the same exact time that prom will be happening here in New York City. It will allow us to all be together! Yes! For those of you who are wondering, who are coming to brunch on Sunday. That is happening at noon, at the ACE hotel as well. Details are on— All of these details are on [bufferingthevampireslayer.com/prom](http://bufferingthevampireslayer.com/prom).

Just a reminder to those of you joining us in New York. The doors will open at seven. We'll be playing some nice nineties tunes between seven and eight before the dancing and festivities truly begin. Though I suppose you can dance whenever you want. So excited to see those of you who are attending in real life. Excited to see those of you who are attending in virtual life. I'm just excited.

Okay, a couple of other things.

We are having a massive merchandise event. We are discontinuing *so many of our shirts*, so this is your last chance to get them and the ones that are going out of stock forever or at least for a long time are 15% off. So, the Buffy forever t-shirt, the wow pom hat, our Awoo tee, the vampire Willow tee, the Buffering logo tee. So many of our tees, we are taking out of our store. So this is. Your. Last. Chance. To snag those items. You can see those items 'cause they're all the ones that are 15% off and they say final sale, they're in our store, [bufferingthevampireslayer.com](http://bufferingthevampireslayer.com). Just click on store. It's only while they last. Some of those items are not super high in stock. So get on over there, scoop up what you want. Uh, and don't say that we didn't warn ya.

Okay, another tiny thing, there's a lot of jingles in this episode and we've been realizing that like we've been playing jingles, but maybe some of you are new, maybe some of you don't know, that a lot of our jingles and one day all of our jingles will be available for you to download. If you're a \$5 patron, you get the jingles. You just do because you're cool and you're ahead of the curve. But if you're not a \$5 patron, you can on our website find the jingles. If you just click down on the music section, there's a little link to our jingles. That page will be updated as new jingles come through. So if you ever want one of those, you can scoop them up. So do that and enjoy all of the jingles that are coming forth towards your face, this episode.

Okay. One last thing today. You know that I normally do a little spooky news segment up here at the top of the show, but today I'm going to pivot that over to some sad news. Luke Perry, who was for so many of us, a staple of our teenage years who played heartthrob, Dylan McKay on Beverly Hills 90210, who was most recently Fred on Riverdale and who of course played Pike from Buffy the Vampire Slayer the movie, passed away Monday at the age of 52. He is a part of our universe in so many ways over here at Buffering the Vampire Slayer. We mourn his loss along so many of his fans and we send our love and support to his beautiful family. I want to share a short story with you about Luke to honor him today.

Some of you may have seen me post about this on social media already. Two years ago. I went to the GLAAD awards with my friend Reese Bernard who runs [autostraddle.com](http://autostraddle.com). We were working the red carpet to interview the many celebrities who were there in support of the LGBTQ community or as LGBTQ people themselves. Luke was one of the last people to walk the carpet that night, and when he arrived, I didn't yet know the full reason of why he was there.

When he got over to us, Reese told him that we loved his work. I was very embarrassed. That we were kids of the 90s, we had adored 90210 and that I was

working on a Buffy the Vampire Slayer podcast. Would he, she asked him, take a photo with me for the podcast. He didn't hesitate. He was so gracious, so kind, so seemingly unaware or unaffected or both of having been all of our collective idols in our younger years and still, and he smiled immediately, excitedly even, and he said that the only way we could take a photo was if it were a prom photo, which we did. And it's still one of my most treasured memories.

Later that night as I watched the awards ceremony, I learned why he was there. He had accompanied Patricia Arquette, and they were both there to honor Alexis Arquette, Patricia sister and Luke's best friend. Alexis was a trans activist an actor, and a poet who died from HIV related complications in 2016.

Alexis and Luke were best friends, and at the awards ceremony, Patricia said to the crowd, "Luke and Lex were friends since they were kids and I remember many years ago, the height of the 90210 craze. They all said Alexis Arquette is dating Luke. Luke is secretly gay. And Luke said, "I'm not going to say that's not true. Even though Alexis and I are just best friends. Because that would be to say there's nothing wrong with it and there's nothing wrong with it. Look, when you love somebody, you love them. Bottom line." Luke explained, "And I loved Lex and Lex loved me and I don't need to explain that to anybody. That's how love works."" A beautiful, compassionate man. An ally to our community. An icon for so many of us. We miss you Luke. We send you love, we send your family love and we hope that wherever you are you're with Alexis.

[Theme music plays]

**Kristin:** Hello and welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer, a podcast where we'll be watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer one by one. Spoiler free. I am Kristin Russo.

**Kate:** And *I'm* special guest Kate Leth.

**Kristin:** Oh my God. I just like imagined everybody in their cars and with their headphones on being like, "*What?!*"

**Kate:** It's me.

**Kristin:** Kate Leth unexpectedly in my ears! This week, Kate and I will be talking about season four, episode 19 New Moon Rising. You might have an idea of why I asked Kate to talk about this episode. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every week for an original song written by Jenny Owen Youngs, recapping the Buffy episode we are discussing.

**Kate:** It's so exciting to do this part. Very official.

**Kristin:** Yes, very official.

**Kate:** New Moon Rising was written by, and imagine a heart around her name, Marti Noxon, one of my favorites, her and Espenson, a big hit, and directed by James A. Contner, and originally aired on May 2nd, 2000.

**Kristin:** This is the one where Oz's return to Sunnydale leads to his incarceration by the Initiative and complicates the relationship between Willow and Tara. The relationship you say!

**Kate:** Oh I do. I do and I will.

**Kristin:** Fuck. It's like, it's amazing. I was thinking today 'cause I just, I just rewatched it.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** And whatever. We'll talk about the end when we get to the end, but I have to talk about it now. Like when we get to the end of the episode, I, I'm so excited. Even though we've been watching them now for several episodes, they get real sweaty doing spells. Like there's like, but yet still it's like somehow this season of this show with the two of them, like managed to give us the excitement of seeing like two queer women paired together many, many times and it always feels like the first time.

**Kate:** Mhmm. But then this episode we go from subtext to text.

**Kristin:** Oh wow. Okay. Wow.

**Kate:** It's very exciting! And I had forgotten, because I did the Fashion Watch for the sweaty spell casting episode and I rewatched it. And sometimes when I do the fashion watches I skip around because it's mostly about the outfits and I, you know, I know plots, but that one I was just like, no, I'm going to re-experience it for my own joy.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Oh!

**Kate:** And then I had forgotten about this one and forgotten about how many firsts happen in this episode and how big of a deal it is and how many times it makes me cry.

**Kristin:** Yeah!

**Kate:** Oh my God.

**Kristin:** You texted me last night, "Just so you know, I'm going to cry." And I was like, sure, sure, sure. 'Cause like I knew it was like a sad, that there was sad stuff. But man, when I got to the end of this fucking episode.

**Kate:** Oh yeah, Oh yeah.

**Kristin:** That's— Okay, we're like starting at the end.

**Kate:** No, go back to the beginning.

**Kristin:** I want everybody to know the pun I made for literally just myself, where instead of previously on, I wrote, "Previously Oz." [both laugh] You're all welcome!

**Kate:** Very good.

**Kristin:** I love, I always love thinking about, and you watched this in real, did you watch this in real time?

**Kate:** Yes. I started watching Buffy in real time from the end of season one. So I was an O.G. And again, I think I've mentioned this before. We in Canada got it a day early on ASN, the Atlantic Satellite Network, I think, in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. We got it on Mondays and everyone else got it on Tuesdays. Um, but by this point when it had moved to, was it, it's not the CW, what was the network?

**Kristin:** Well it went from the WB to UPN?

**Kate:** Some, whatever happened, then it started being the same day. We weren't special anymore. Um, but yeah, no, I was watching it. 'Cause I remember losing sleep. Um, like when they did the preview for the first Halloween episode and I was so excited.

**Kristin:** I just like that's the thing, is I can't imagine, I wish to live the life where I could see the previously on. And that's where I'm like, Holy shit.

**Kate:** Yeah. Because the previously ons were always like, Oh, this is what this episode is going to be about.

**Kristin:** Right!

**Kate:** So it was always so exciting.

**Kristin:** Yes! Like you see fucking Oz and it's like, you know, when you see, or like, I recently taped Superstar with Joanna. And like, when you see Jonathan, you're like previously on the Earshot? Like what the fuck is happening?

**Kate:** It's so good. And yeah, huge fan of that episode. Totally amazing. Um, but yeah, this one, and this is so much for me because like, I grew up with this show, I was really young when it started and you know, I was like nine or 10 when I started watching it, I was too young.

**Kristin:** Yeah. So tiny.

**Kate:** You know, 'cause the gentleman kept me awake for three days. Right?

**Kristin:** Oh my God. Yeah.

**Kate:** But, and like my coming to terms of understanding my sexuality and my orientation happened literally, you know, alongside Willow. It was such a huge deal for me. And I had, but I had also been really, really invested in Willow and Oz. 'Cause I loved Oz, and he's still imprinted on my brain.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** In terms of like, my type.

**Kristin:** Nice use of *imprinted* for the werewolf.

**Kate:** Thank you. [laughter] Oh my God. So yeah, this is a really, this is a really big one.

**Kristin:** Yeah. So speaking of queer, uh, stuff...

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** This fucking first scene kills me, because I haven't, so I'm, I'm building a thread, uh, of basically like how to date a witch. Or like what it's like to start your queer witch relationship. And it, it sort of goes episode by episode of like, the monumental Willow/Tara things.

And I was like, there's a lot in this episode, but the fact that this opens and Tara's like, "So, are you like allergic to cats?" Because it's like, Oh, okay, I see myself

here represented. How many queer women have asked each other, "So are you allergic to cats?"

**Kate:** Yeah. "I'm just thinking about getting one." and Willow's like, "Oh, like a familiar?" Tara's like, "No idiot, like a bonding, you know, emblem of our budding relationship actually."

**Kristin:** God. And then they're talking about the cat like it's theirs already. Ladies!

**Kate:** Ms. Kitty Fantastico!

**Kristin:** Yes! Who we don't meet yet.

**Kate:** No, but...

**Kristin:** Holy shit. Um... So, yes. And then we go to uh, your favorite character's house.

**Kate:** Oh but listen. The most important thing before we even get there is this is the first time they hold hands.

**Kristin:** They hold hands in this scene?

**Kate:** They do. They're walking along and I think it's either Tara reaches out or Willow reaches out and they hold hands and they're like walking and their hands are kind of like swinging between them as they're talking about getting a cat.

**Kristin:** Holy shit, how did I miss this?

**Kate:** Oh, it's just like, and when I was watching I was like, wait, is this the first time? I was like, no, no I, 'cause I remember how I felt the first time I saw that I was like, "They're. Holding. Hands. Oh. My. God." not realizing, you know what the rest of the episode would gift me.

**Kristin:** Yeah!

**Kate:** [crosstalk] [inaudible] They hold hands and then yes, of course we can move along but I just wanted to point it out.

**Kristin:** No! Thank God! Now I have to go back and check it out. I mean they've like linked hands before but they've not held—

**Kate:** Like held hands, in public, walking next to like the park or something.

**Kristin:** This is like, so good. This episode— I mean not just this episode, but the whole portrayal of Willow and Tara as they like get into their relationship, causes feelings for I think all of us because it's so accurate. Like it's such an accurate portrayal of being a queer woman. I mean, being a queer person really, and like having a queer relationship for the first time and how long you can go—

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** —Without acknowledging what the fuck is happening. It's like we're watching guys, we know what's going on, but it's so believable that both of them, until the end of this episode still have not given a name to it.

**Kate:** Well it's like that tweet that was going around for a while. It was like, "I, you know, was, was at my friend's house or something and she came up behind me to hug me and I was like, wait, is this a date? And I finally asked her and she was like, "yeah, this is like our sixth date."" Or something like that. And I was like, Oh, that's such a mood.

**Kristin:** It's so amazing because you have so many things going on in your brain. And like, I, I don't know, I guess I didn't have exactly that experience because I feel like I had this experience with things that were not relationships, where like I was aware that I was having feelings, but I didn't put a name to it. The other person didn't. I think my first relationship, I was, I was a little older. I was a little bit like, more comfortable with being forward about like, I would like to kiss you right now.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Uh, but, but I just so identify with this and I imagine you probably have similar...

**Kate:** Oh absolutely. Yeah, so many times. I mean, especially when I was younger and so afraid to put words to anything or, you know, it's one of those things, it's like if I, if I say it out loud, it'll disappear. These things, feel so, just temporary and ephemeral. And like if I, if I give it a name, it'll vanish.

**Kristin:** Right. And of course like I'm putting it in like a queer little cubicle because I think there, I'm sure that in any relationship when you're young and you're just getting into it, you don't want to say it. But I do think that when you're queer and it's a queer thing, that it comes with that other piece of like, I think something's happening, but what if I say that and name it? And the other person is like, what the fuck? What are you talking about?



**Kate:** Yeah. That's the terror, right? And I, you know, I love this relationship. I love the way they developed it. I love this episode. So specifically, I love that a woman wrote it. I feel like it shows so hard. Every time I come on Buffering, it's like another, you know, year, or six months into me writing for TV. And I have like a lot more experience now! And the more, you know, 'cause it was the first thing I did, like when they started holding hands, like Googled, It was like, writer?

And praying, crossing my fingers. I was like, it's either Espenson or Noxon and then yeah, it was Noxon. Um, and uh, yeah, so it's, it's, it's just so exciting because like the development of Willow and Oz' relationship was, you know, coming to me at the very beginning of my concept of having any relationships with anyone.

And it was, you know, guys, boys for the beginning of my life, you know, I didn't date a girl until I was like, 19, I had crushes and flirtations and stuff like that. But um, so that was like really big. And you watch so much of the, the nerves and the, and the vulnerability of a first relationship through Willow, and then it's like again, right? Because it's with a woman and it's a totally new experience and it's a whole new kind of vulnerability and it's just, ugh, this episode just gets me so hard.

**Kristin:** And this is— You know— Like, I don't think like Marti Noxon is, isn't queer right?

**Kate:** No idea

**Kristin:** 'Cause they, I'm just wondering, like if they had somebody in the room who had gone through this? Because it's so accurate, in the portrayal of *their* relationship and also like later, and we'll get to this theme, but like, in the moment when Willow is coming out to Buffy, it's like I got chills even just saying it—

**Kate:** Yeah. I got goosebumps.

**Kristin:** Because they like nail it!

**Kate:** They do. They do it really, really well.

**Kristin:** So anyway, let's go back.

**Kate:** Let's go back. We're at Giles' house.

**Kristin:** Yes. We're at Giles' house, Willow's like, translating all this Scooby stuff for Tara, which is really cute. Little tiny thing that like of course I noticed *this* and not the fact that they were holding hands, but Giles makes a snack bowl for them?

He like poured pretzels in a bowl and like brought them to the desk. [laughter] And I was like, Oh my God, that's adorable.

**Kate:** Bless him. Bless him.

**Kristin:** Thanks Dad.

[GILES jingle plays]  
Giles! Hot dad!  
When you were younger you were real bad  
But now you're older, you got glasses  
That help you watch over us!  
Thank you, Giles!

**Kristin:** And of course, you know, this is set up right before the credits or where and it's, I think it's beautifully done. Where you see everybody's face and you're like, "What the?" You like expect like a monster to be at the door.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Like Adam is like, "Hey guys." And it's fucking Oz.

**Kate:** Oz!

**Kristin:** He's back!

**Kate:** He's back!

**Kristin:** And he's like, I'm gonna, I'm kinda like feeling macro about its episode. There's like, there's big things to talk about cause it's like I wonder what your feelings are about the way he comes back and the way he like sort of is like, "Hey Willow, I'm back. Can we be back together?" I mean he's self aware of it, you know, to an extent. But I feel a little bit on the fence with it. Like it does—

**Kate:** Oh for sure. And I have a lot of feelings about it. I wrote it down at like various different points and we'll kind of get to it. But it, I feel like, just sort of summarize how I feel about it. I feel like they did such a good job about giving Willow like, the greatest test that could happen.

Like the reason that it becomes so affirming is because it's like, this is the daydream of so many girls. Let's, you know, at any age, especially younger where it's like, wow, this guy treated me really badly and left. But then he *changed*. He

came back for *me*. He changed for *me* and he's here and like wants to give everything for *me* and like what a fantasy, right?

**Kristin:** Totally.

**Kate:** You know, for anybody who's been treated badly or gone through a breakup with somebody who like, he didn't really want to break up but it had to happen and all this kind of stuff. Anyway, I think it's part of why they play him as so sympathetic and compassionate.

**Kristin:** I mean I love Oz. You love Oz. Oz is definitely a champion in this universe. We recently actually sat down and you probably have not heard it yet 'cause I think we're saving it until the end of the season. But we sat down with James Marsters. Yesterday.

**Kate:** Yeah. So excited for you!

**Kristin:** And one of the things he said, which maybe you're aware of this and maybe the Buffy universe is aware of this, but I was not, is that not only that Xander was sort of the, the character that was written as like how Joss actually kind of like *was* growing up, but that Oz was written as the character that like Joss wished he was.

**Kate:** That really makes sense.

**Kristin:** Right?

**Kate:** Because there's so many qualities of like, God, I wish that was my boyfriend. Like he looks like he's in Blink 182 but he's got *feelings*!

**Kristin:** And he's nice and kind—

**Kate:** He's going to remember my birthday!

**Kristin:** [sighs] And then of course—

**Kate:** The bar is so low.

**Kristin:** [laughs] We were talking about this with James. I mean of course that's a whole thing of like, what the deal was with so many of the characters on this show that like, we're in love with, where, why are we not setting the bar a little bit higher for ourselves, ladies?

**Kate:** But Tara's perfect.

**Kristin:** But yeah. So we get this line, which is important to note because it's fucking, Marti Noxon! Beautiful job! Pretty much now.

[clip from episode plays]

**Oz:** Pretty much now.

**Kristin:** Pretty much now.

**Kate:** Pretty much now.

**Kristin:** Which is a fucking, yeah, we'll get there.

**Kate:** He's back.

**Kristin:** Kate, you can cry. I'll cry. We'll all cry together. We get to the end.

**Kate:** Buddy.

**Kristin:** Um, but then they are talking, they're basically, you know, Oz is like, "Hey, let's, fucking, I want to talk to you." It's weird. I don't know. I think that like they positioned this scene the way that they did for us to get to see everybody's reaction.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** But it does feel awkward and uncomfortable—

**Kate:** Oh for sure.

**Kristin:** That Oz is like, walking into a room full of people and is like, "Willow, can we talk?" Like dude, it's like propos— It's like if you like propose in front of like, a group, what is she gonna say? She fucking has to say yes. She's not gonna make it awkward.

**Kate:** But I mean I guess like they sort of have to set it up that way because you have to see everyone and Tara. And Tara's reaction.

**Kristin:** Right. And Tara.

**Kate:** Because also the group doesn't know what Tara means to Willow yet.

**Kristin:** Right. Even though, and that's like, that's crazy too, right? Is like not only how like two queer people beginning a relationship can ignore it. And like not look right at it. But that truly people around it can just make up any excuse.

**Kate:** Oh yeah.

**Kristin:** Like I have cousins of mine who grew up with two aunts but their family didn't talk about it.

They didn't talk about it openly and they just thought that their aunt had a good friend. Who came to everything who went to everything, you know, you just, you're like, "Oh, okay. Yeah, sure. That."

**Kate:** Gal pals, right?

**Kristin:** Gal pals. Classic. Uh, so right. Tara is— And as she is throughout the majority of the episode, visibly uncomfortable. Um, and just, Tara, you know? Like her, her vantage point of like, "he's back now. So this is over." is heartbreaking, but also like, not to keep bringing it back to queer, but like this is definitely real. Like this is—

**Kate:** Very relatable.

**Kristin:** Yeah. What's that Hayley Kyoko song?

**Kate:** Curious? Is that?

**Kristin:** Yeah. It's like, "Oh, we were just like playing around with this thing that's not real. And like this, this hetero thing is real. So since it's back..."

**Kate:** And it taps into such a specific thing because it's not an unrealistic fear. Like, I've been interested in girls and then have them be like, "Actually I was just trying to make my boyfriend jealous or whatever."

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** And it's you know, something that happened a lot when I was younger, 'cause I'm 30 now and people generally aren't that crappy, you would hope.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** But when I was in high school and early college, I was a lot of people's litmus test—

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Because I was one of the only very out bisexuals in my small Canada town. So a lot of people were like, "Oh, I'm gonna test these waters and see how they feel." And then it's like, "Oh no, actually..."

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** "Yeah, no, Steve's back in town. So... Sorry!"

**Kristin:** Yeah. And the whole like, I mean, you know, I'm not putting all of this on *this* scene or, or this relationship, but you know, outside of just that, you know, the idea that it's not considered cheating, right? Like, "Oh well you just made out with another girl. So like that's not cheating."

**Kate:** It's not real.

**Kristin:** Not real. Right. And I think that like as a, as a culture, as like, a society here, we've gotten a bit past that. Like, I, you know, we're not, we're not in the clear, but I do think that it's a little bit, the conversation around it has changed a little.

**Kate:** Yeah, I think so.

**Kristin:** So, but this is just, it's a, it's a bummer and it's, and it's, especially a bummer because we've seen the intensity of their relationship and like, want— I want so badly for, you know, Tara to have a stake in it. But I get it. I've been there.

**Kate:** A *stake*?

**Kristin:** A stake! [laughter] Um, so we learn that meditation, a combination of herbs, and other things have made Oz, you know, and obviously we all know the metaphor here, right?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** But that, um, Oz has basically come to Sunnydale on the full moon so that he can show Willow that he has sort of quelled his animal side. Right?

**Kate:** I mean, before we even do that, we get to see Riley being a bigot. Because I just have in capital letters, "This is why I hate Riley." So, um, yes.

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Kate:** It's important. I mean it's just sort of this little interstitial scene to kind of set it up that there is antagonism here, that, you know, and it is, it is a little silly and a little heavy handed where, you know, it's the metaphor, right? Of like him being prejudiced or whatever. Where he's like, "All demons are bad. What are you talking about?"

**Kristin:** Right. But it's a good setup for what's to come.

**Kate:** It makes my blood boil because I wrote it down specifically. He says, "I didn't think Willow was that kind of girl, you know, into dangerous guys. I thought she was smarter than that." And he says it *to Buffy*. Ughh!

**Kristin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I, uh, this episode for me is like a Riley sympathetic episode. Like, overall.

**Kate:** It does, it does turn around, for sure.

**Kristin:** But yeah, this scene is, the scene is so important too, because it really is— You know, and this is a conversation between Buffy and Riley, but this is kind of the whole conversation that the series has over and over again in so many ways of like, where do we draw the line? What is and isn't okay? I love what we see later with the Initiative.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** For this reason. That like when Oz is in the cell and you hear, you see Oz super vulnerable, but you also hear the other demons and stuff, like being tortured or being whatever. Um, and it's really, it makes you examine as the viewer what is ethical and what is not, what is good and what is bad. And like what is, what is okay to do to demons even if they are demons?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** And where is that line? Anyway...

**Kate:** Yeah. it's really interesting. And also the reason I wrote it down is that Buffy's little white knitted hat is so cute. I can't not take Fashion Watch notes. I did, don't worry. But um, also her hair in this episode?

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** So stellar. I love these like loose beachy curls. So good. And in the hat? Come on.

**Kristin:** Now, would you call that hat a toque or is it not a toque?

**Kate:** It's in the toque zone. It's usually, it's like thicker than I would normally think of a toque as being, because it's like wool knitted.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** Um, but it's very cute.

**Kristin:** *In the toque zone.* Can that be the title of your memoir? In the Toque Zone with Kate Leth.

**Kate:** [laughs] Yes. But then we get back to Willow and go outside and see the moon, which I know because I wrote notes about her coat.

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Kate:** *So good.*

**Kristin:** Dude. So somebody wrote to us, I mean Willow's coat is a whole thing, but also Oz is in his coat.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** And I don't know that we've talked about it here. I've talked about it to a bunch of people because somebody tweeted at us or emailed us and was like, "Just so you know, the decision to have Oz in that coat is intentional. It's a Wolf in sheep's clothing." [laughter] Gah!

**Kate:** Wow!

**Kristin:** I was like, [exploding noise] head exploding.

**Kate:** That is amazing!

**Kristin:** The other conversation that I want to talk about that they have in these coats, apart from Oz is not a werewolf or is a werewolf but can control it, is, "You don't have a new guy. I asked Xander."



**Kate:** Yep.

**Kristin:** Which is— That's a whole thing.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Dudes.

**Kate:** Also like, when? When did you ask Xander? Was that like the second place you went, after you showed up?

**Kristin:** I know! And they gave Xander and Oz like a moment, like Xander was the only person that like went over to Oz and kind of was like, "Hey man." Um, but it is, it's bizarre to me. I also feel like if I had broken up with somebody like, and especially in the manner that they broke up, and they came back to town and they didn't say like, "Hey, are you with anyone?" That would rub me a little bit the wrong way. Like I, you know what I mean?

I don't love that— And I'm not, like I didn't even mean to rag on Oz at all, but I just feel like I'm putting myself in Willow's shoes and I feel like it would have been nicer for Oz to maybe ask Willow if she, you know what I mean? Like have that conversation with her. Don't be like, "Hey Xander has Willow gotten with anybody?"

**Kate:** Yeah. "Sorry. I've been gone for *several* months with no word at all. But, she single?"

**Kristin:** So and Willow of course has this moment of like "Not a new *guy*."  
[laughter] Which I'm like, uh huh. Good evasion there, Willow.

**Kate:** Yeah. The notes that I took, 'cause this is a really intense scene because it is, we're, you know, between this and when they're lying on the bed and talking, which comes right after this is like, Oz really laying it on the line and being again, this huge temptation in a way that's like I wrote down specifically like, "I can be what you need now." And then I wrote, "He fixed himself for her. What woman doesn't want that? Nothing could be a greater temptation."

**Kristin:** Right. And what's so powerful, I think too about it is not only that it's, I mean, *is* that it's this massive temptation. *Is* that he has literally traveled the globe to figure himself out because he wanted to be the person for *her*.

**Kate:** Exactly.

**Kristin:** *But. Also.* That it's in that happening that Willow is like, "I have feelings for Tara." Like, "I'm feeling in conflict." And it's almost like she couldn't get from point A to point B with this Tara journey...

**Kate:** Exactly. It's so well-written.

**Kristin:** Yes! Fucking, Marti Noxon as we know—

**Kate:** It's so well-constructed. And it is. I mean, and also the line when they're, you know, 'cause them sitting on the bed and talking, they've been up all night.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** It's a whole, then you know, the chanting and the various herbs—

**Kristin:** Yes! The herbs!

**Kate:** Talismans or whatever. It's nice 'cause like especially because with Oz the werewolf is like the animal within that he's trying to control. That I like, kind of like that they gave a nod to meditation. You know what I mean? That like, he just needs to center himself and be calm and what have you. A note to all werewolves.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** I don't think that the population of werewolves knows this, that they can—

**Kate:** Take a lot of work.

**Kristin:** Yeah, it does.

**Kate:** But I do— I love that you know, he says this and then Willow has this moment, 'cause you can see, I mean her, her conflict on her face and she, you know, Alison Hannigan just, just knocking it out of the park in this episode as she always does. But this one, you know, it's, it's, you don't get a lot of Willow's internal stuff in— 'Cause it's, it's Buffy show, right?

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** But this was, this whole storyline was, you know, a thing that really, really cemented like, Oh no, I'm going to project my own feelings on Willow even more than I already did.

**Kristin:** Totally.

**Kate:** But when he's saying all this stuff and she's like, "Oh wow, you know, you, you traveled the world, you did all this stuff. I've just been here." And he says, "It doesn't mean you haven't been going through a lot." Like, Oh man, you know? Couldn't you just said something shitty?

**Kristin:** Yeah. Like not, not held my experience so well, not—

**Kate:** Like, "No, but you've been doing great, Champ." Couldn't you just be condescending or dismissive, but no, you have to be understanding and—

**Kristin:** Yeah. All the things like all the things that Willow wanted at one point.

**Kate:** Exactly.

**Kristin:** But not anymore. 'Cause she's met [singing] *somebody!* Also, a tiny little line that I thought was hilarious is Willow in this scene says, "I think I'm getting better at my spells." And I was like, "Yeah, you are!"

**Kate:** You're getting really good at them! You've had some help!

**Kristin:** Getting really experienced with those spells, Willow. Um, so basically Oz is like, cool, we've talked, we're obviously connected, let's get in bed. You know, let's take this to like a physically intimate place and Willow is like, "I will have the less confusing waffles."

**Kate:** So good.

**Kristin:** It's really good. Uh, and in this moment where she goes to the bathroom to brush her teeth or whatever, Tara comes by.

**Kate:** I hate it. It's so hard.

**Kristin:** I hate watching Tara and Oz interact. Because we love both of them. I mean as, as we should and as does Willow, um, and seeing this first interaction then, then of course though, like the ones that are to come, it's just so uncomfortable.

And Tara's face when she of course clocks like, it's the morning but it's too early in the morning for you to just to have gotten here. It's really sad and she spins on her heels and she leaves before Willow even gets back. And then fucking Willow finds out from Oz that Tara has just stopped by and nobody has the words to talk about—

**Kate:** "Your friend, the blonde girl. She came by but she wouldn't stay."

**Kristin:** Hmmm.

**Kate:** [imitating Oz sarcastically] Can't figure this one out. Went to Tibet, figured out my whole psyche, but I can't spot a lesbian.

**Kristin:** Right? I actually thought— If somebody wants to do this for me, I'll be so happy because this episode as it progresses has like a handful of Oz thinking about it moments

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** And I just feel like it's like the dude, the straight dude trying to figure out like queer ladies, you know?

**Kate:** Oh yeah. Do the like,like the GIF of like the math, the hell math of like, *wait. Spells together?*

**Kristin:** Yeah. *Spells together?* She came by and looked kind of upset, but why? Would she? Or, you know, it's just, it's good. So now we go to Riley's room.

**Kate:** Ugh. I also hate this scene.

**Kristin:** Yeah. My first note is the "I see." Like this shit cause she's pissed and, and justifiably so, right? Oh, so, sorry. I got distracted by my own notes because I don't think we've seen that there's a race car poster above Riley's bed until right now.

**Kate:** Oh my God, is there? I mean, I, yeah, I'm such a huge fan of the balls poster that's on the door.

**Kristin:** Oh of course!

**Kate:** I'm sure you've talked about it. It's, anyway—

**Kristin:** It's good. But like on top of it, it's like, it's like a, I feel like it's like a little boy's room.

**Kate:** It is.

**Kristin:** you know? Like it's like his boombox and his race car poster and his basketball hoop.

**Kate:** Definitely not a demon.

**Kristin:** Yeah. [laughter] So he's like, in conflict. And I think, like, in this moment I was really identifying with Buffy 'cause I feel like she was annoyed with him for all of the reasons that I'm always annoyed with him, which is, you know, he has to like, play by the rules, and he's not really thinking about things in like, a larger sense. He's doing his pushups. Then she's exceptionally annoyed with his inability to see past the black and white of this demon thing. Uh, and so snaps at him. Uh, and of course there's more going on for Buffy than *just* the werewolf and the Oz and the like, gray area of demons. She hasn't talked to him about Angel yet.

**Kate:** Mhmm.

**Kristin:** Uh, and I think, you know, we talk a lot. With you, Kate, and also when you're not here we talk about queer, like queer relationships in this show, not just being the queer relationships on this show.

**Kate:** Oh yeah.

**Kristin:** That like, Buffy's relationship to Angel is something that she's keeping a secret because she's afraid of what Riley will think of it. 'Cause it's *non-traditional*.

**Kate:** Yep. Yeah. And I love the way they do address that, in here. It's very good. But yeah, it's— God. I've been Buffy in that like morning waking up where he's like, "I've been awake for a minute and I've already managed to piss you off." [laughter] Like I've definitely had boyfriends say that to me. Sorry!

**Kristin:** Totally!

**Kate:** I have a hard time letting go. It's fine.

**Kristin:** Yeah. I also felt very, very seen in this scene. I was like, Oh yeah, I've definitely woken up pissed. And like, had my partner be like, "The fuck is happening? I just opened my eyes!"

**Kate:** Like, but I was mad when I went to sleep and I stayed that way.

**Kristin:** And that's like, I like generally as a human can't go to sleep mad, because it's real bad in the morning. And I've, have you ever had the experience of having a dream? Like the person didn't even do anything wrong in actual life, but you have a dream that they've done something and you wake up and you're like, "Fuck you."

**Kate:** Oh Yeah. Yeah, no, I've had dreams where Cohen has done something like utterly terrible. And then, you know, I wake up and they're like, "What? Why? What? What are you so upset about?" I'm like, "Well, you left me in the Walmart and it was full of bees, then I thought you were going to come save me, but you just walked out and you said it was my fault that I let all the bees in!" and they're like, "What?"

**Kristin:** [laughing] Oh my God, Kate! The fucking— No, I'm sorry. It was my favorite. Please—

**Kate:** But it's definitely happened.

**Kristin:** Ah, so, after this disagreement, the only other thing I want to talk about in this scene is that Forest doesn't fucking knock on the door.

**Kate:** Yeah. Rude.

**Kristin:** Rude! They could have been naked. Riley was half naked. Maybe that's what Forest was hoping for.

**Kate:** Mhmm.

**Kristin:** Uh, and now we get back to Willow and, uh, Buffy's room and—

**Kate:** [singing] It's all *happening!*

**Kristin:** [singing] Something big is about to happen! And you know, Buffy is of course, like, "What happened? You were with him all night..." And then she's like— And I actually thought in the beginning of the episode, I'm surprised that they didn't know that it was a full moon.

Like, isn't that kind of their job? Isn't that kind of Buffy's job is to be like, "Hey, you're a werewolf and it's a full moon. Maybe we should watch out for that." But they haven't been around a werewolf in a bit. So I guess...

**Kate:** I do like that Oz points out, it's like, "Oh you, you must've stopped keeping track of them after I left." And that's like, well yeah.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Eventually, yeah.

**Kristin:** Yeah, totally.

**Kate:** So, but she does pick up on it right away. She's like, "Wait, last night was a full moon."

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Kate:** So she does after a second. And then it's like, "But, but how?" and then, "Oh well he's changed and he did all this stuff." And she's like, "Oh my God, good for you! So excited!"

**Kristin:** So excited! And Willow's like, "Here's the thing." And I love that also, this is, this is the first time that Willow has said it out loud.

[clip from episode plays]

**Willow:** It's complicated.

**Buffy:** Why complicated?

**Willow:** It's complicated because of Tara.

**Buffy:** You mean Tara has a crush on Oz? No, you... Oh. Oh. Um, well that's great. You know, I mean, I think, I think Tara's a really great girl, Will.

**Willow:** She is. And, there's something between us. It wasn't something I was looking for. It's just powerful. And it's totally different from what Oz and I have.

**Buffy:** Well there you go. I mean you know you have to, you have to follow your heart, Will. That's what's important, Will.

**Willow:** Why do you keep saying my name like that?

**Buffy:** Like what, Will?

**Willow:** Are you freaked?

**Buffy:** What?! Will, no! No. No. Absolutely no to that question. I'm glad you told me.

**Kristin:** I think that they really nail this in in a couple of ways in what we see here, which is that Buffy is, loves Willow and this is not something that like, is going to phase that love and that care. But like, she probably doesn't know or doesn't think

she knows a queer person and she doesn't know how to respond, what to do. She feels weird but she also feels bad for feeling weird and just trying to like process that all at one time.

Meanwhile Willow is like, this is the first time I've ever said this out loud and my best friend has said Will 3000 times. This is uncomfortable and this is totally it! This is a coming out experience I have had as a, as a young person so many times.

**Kate:** But it's also so well done. I mean she does the, no, it's, it's complicated because of Tara and you can see her just like choking those words out. It's climbing a mountain just to say something that small and kind of vague and then it takes Buffy a minute, and then she's got to stand up 'cause it's weird and she doesn't know what to do and she's not sure what to say but, but then she's like, "No, like I love you. You're my friend."

And that was so, so important to me. I was, I was young when I saw it and it was like just not only seeing a queer person say like, this is my thing, this is a thing. I'm, I'm standing by this and I'm stating it and having her best friend to this main character be like, have a couple seconds of weird and then be like, "I'm here for you." Like, "I'm cool with it." And that was so exciting and I'm so glad they did it that way.

**Kristin:** Yeah. 'Cause they, I mean, you know, I don't know how it would be done today, but I will tell you what, this is the year 2000 and that did not need to be the way that they treated this at all.

I mean they could have had a a queer couple, um, and have had a friend to be weird and it still had been like a really positive spin. Like you know, like this, it was so early on in, in media coverage or media portrayal of any kind of queer relationship that to get this. Truly a gift. I think you said at the beginning of the episode.

**Kate:** It felt so mind blowing because I had been so invested in this show and it was such a big part of my coming of age. I mean it hit me at like, yeah, I started watching it like nine or 10 and then watched it as it came out. So it was my whole, like developing years, like the exact right age.

And so, yeah, I would have been like 13 or 14 when this was happening. And, and I mean, I came out when I was 11, but I also didn't really have any concept of, you know, what that meant in action.

I was like, I just know that when I look at Angelina Jolie, I feel the same way as I do when I look at, you know, before anyone knew Johnny Depp—



**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** And I had posters of both of them in my locker at school, so, you know— And *then* posters of Willow. But yeah, it was, I don't know, it's just, it's so, it's so nice. And when Buffy says, "I'm glad you told me" and...

**Kristin:** It gives me, I just feel, you know, as you were talking about this and the power of this and the power of, you know, her saying I love you. I was one giant goosebump. Like my whole body just like kept getting waves of chills and I was like, "You're going to cry. Don't cry. It's going to be okay." It's this, it's just, you know, for any of us who are queer and went through this, like as much as, you know, I'm 38, I came out 20 years ago and most of the experiences that I had that were aligned with this were like 20 years ago, you know, or 10 years ago or whatever.

But it's, it must sit in all of us, that like that feeling because when you watch it and when you watch it happen, it just like, makes you want to bawl. And you feel that acceptance like all over again. Like this is good. Their friendship is good. She loves her. Um, so yeah, thanks for giving me all the feelings. Um, Marti...

**Kate:** That's what I'm here for.

**Kristin:** And Kate, yes. [laughter] So, we get a nice, uh, you know, nice cut to Spike in his crypt.

**Kate:** I took basically no notes about anytime Adam was onscreen. I was like, "Oh, it's monsters again. Get back to the feelings."

**Kristin:** Literally. My, in my notes are, "Adam. Ughhh." Um, pretty much the whole truth.

**Kate:** He's just— He's boring. And that's, there's so many times when I'll be like, "Oh, I don't really like season four." But it's because I don't really like the Initiative and Adam. And it's not like there aren't interesting episodes and cool interpersonal things that happen because of it. It's just, it doesn't click with me.

**Kristin:** No and like we've talked about this a little bit that it gets like if you took, if you just took the Initiative and Adam out of the fourth season, there's great shit in there.

**Kate:** There is great shit in there.

**Kristin:** It's like it's like swatting away like, that fly that like, buzzes in your ear or by your eye, you're just like, "Come on man, get back to the good shit! Why are we talking to Adam again?"

**Kate:** Yeah. Adam wants to start some kind of war between people or whatever.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Boring, boring. The only the only like, important or not important, but the only like, piece of this that I think is like, important to pay attention to for the larger arc is of course that he is forming an alliance with Spike.

**Kate:** Right.

**Kristin:** I don't fucking buy it, first of all. Like I just, Spike is fucking smart. I just cannot. Like, I understand we need to do certain things to get us to certain places as you understand more than anyone in the room as a TV writer. But yeah, I just don't think that Spike would have been like—

**Kate:** Spike's chaotic evil. He's not on anyone's side, but his own.

**Kristin:** No. "Oh, you'll take this chip out of my head because you say you will?" Like that just is not a Spike thing. Uh, so let's go back to Tara's room.

**Kate:** Why not?

**Kristin:** Tara's room and I haven't gotten the chance to talk to you about Tara's room, but Jenny and I have talked at length.

**Kate:** Floor to ceiling scarves.

**Kristin:** I mean... It's just such a cozy— No one had a college room that looked like this, but I'm really into it. She does a great job lighting it. She does—

**Kate:** So cute. So cute.

**Kristin:** So Willow tells Tara that nothing happened. Uh, and her little face, her relief, the relief that washes over her. Oh, nothing happened. And then she says again sort of occupying the space. Like whatever happens, we'll still be friends and Willow is like horrified.

**Kate:** Mhmm.

**Kristin:** "What are you saying? Of course we'll still be friends." Uh, getting emotional because of course, [singing] they're more than friends, aren't they?

**Kate:** But like watching this in real time, I remember hanging on every line from Willow and being like, "Is she, is she, what does she feel? What is she going to choose?" Like really not knowing and being so invested in it.

**Kristin:** Props to fucking Alison Hannigan, man. She's absolutely incredible. To convey all that, right? To like, to embody this experience so well that you, that us, as queer women are watching it and being like, "Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my God, she's really struggling at saying it, but she can say it. You can do it, Willow!"

**Kate:** And she says this thing to Tara where she's, and again, just the way she struggles through every line and trying to articulate it when she is, and it works so well with her character because she's so articulate. Willow, you know, everyone speaks in Scooby speak, and, but she's really smart and she's really well spoken.

But this is a language that she's still learning. And so she says, "I know what he meant to me, but he left." Huge thing. "Everything changed. I changed and we..." Then she trails off and, "Life was starting to get so good and you're a part of that." or, "You're a big part of that." Or something. And then Tara's face! Is like...

**Kristin:** Tara's like all of us. Like what are you going to say?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** "Are you going to say it?"

**Kate:** "Pick me. Pick me."

**Kristin:** Oh, and I'm— One of my notes here is "Just *kiss!*" They're so close. They've been so close for so many episodes. We want it. We all want it. Um, but they're getting there. They're getting there. Uh, and I think it's, is it Tara who says to Willow, right? "Do what makes you happy." Uh, and of course, as we all know, she certainly does do what makes her happy. And this hug too, there's something about the hug, like the way they're touching each other. That's just...

**Kate:** Not that we're reading too much into it or anything.

**Kristin:** No, but it's just like the way you hug is not like that when you're pals, uh, there's a lot of like skin to back contact. [Kate laughs] Is all I'm saying. Um, then they're getting there. They're getting there. This whole episode is just them working their way up to fucking saying what they've wanted to say for so long. So. Sniff, sniff, says Oz.

**Kate:** Oh yeah, *this part* had me on tenterhooks as a youth. I was like—

**Kristin:** Yes. As an *adult* I was like, Oh fuck. Also it's like the smelling is, I mean I like it but it's also really funny where he's like, "I thought I sme— saw Willow, heard Willow." Change the sense cause that's weird. Um, and this is like a massive, a massive shift for Oz. That like he, I mean certainly he's jealous, but he's like also feeling like he did all of this to come back to his true love and is realizing like, all in one moment that not only has he potentially lost his true love, but that she might be queer.

**Kate:** Yeah. And he's the first one to clock it—

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Which is amazing because you know, his sense of smell. But when he does this, when he, I remember feeling so like, "Oh my God, they've been kissing." 'Cause he's like, "She's all over you. Do you know that?" Yeah. And then right away is like, "Are you two involved?"

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Kate:** "Is she in love with you?"

**Kristin:** Yes!

**Kate:** And that is the first time anyone says it.

**Kristin:** And like, right! Points to fucking Oz for not being like, "Oh you must just have had a sleepover." [both laugh]

**Kate:** [sarcasm] Girls just sharing clothes, and beds, and you know, each other's personal scents.

**Kristin:** Yeah. But his little math, hellmath calculations from earlier are leading him to, "Wait, wait, what?" And um, and he turns.

**Kate:** He turns.

**Kristin:** And he says, "Run." before he turns because he knows Holy shit. And we've been watching Tara this season 'cause somebody emailed us at the start and said, "Could you just watch Tara and doors this season because Tara has a lot of trouble getting doors open."

**Kate:** Does she?

**Kristin:** And, and I, I don't know that I would've noticed without having the heads up at the beginning.

**Kate:** I haven't.

**Kristin:** She's had already many struggles with doors and we see it again in this episode. She runs up in the lecture hall—

**Kate:** Right. And can't get the door open.

**Kristin:** —To the door. And can't get the door open. And normally we'd say, "Oh, it's locked." But with Tara, I'm not so sure. [laughter]

**Kate:** Listen, I have trouble with straws. Everyone's got something.

**Kristin:** Wait, so what's your trouble with straws? Do you hit yourself in the face when you go to—

**Kate:** The amount of times I will just poke myself in like the nose, too close to the nostril because I'm trying to drink something with a straw but not paying attention and will just like, get myself— It is, listen, it's embarrassing every single time. So. Everyone's got something. Her's is doors. But, pretty good with a uh, a chair.

**Kristin:** A chair, man! Great aim, great throw. I was like, "Hey girl," you know, cause Tara so far, at least like Tara really has not been a fighter. Uh, you know, she's not—

**Kate:** Well you see her in the Who Are You or whatever, when she does the pretending to punch and Willow thinks it's swimming. You know, she's not physical.

**Kristin:** No, she's not a physical. She's, she's much more—

**Kate:** She's not physical when it comes to fights.

**Kristin:** She's not physical with the beating monsters, but um, she's physical in other ways. So, um, then of course the Initiative busts in. The Initiative, like fully does not care. They don't know who Tara is and they're just like, it's a demon. It's blah, blah, blah. They're just talking openly about this. I'm like, I thought you guys—

**Kate:** They don't even like, Men in Black her or anything. They're just like, "You're in shock. Bye."

**Kristin:** Yeah, just fucking leave her. Like, I think you guys might need to like rehash your civilian plan. You know, like how, how are we interacting with civilians? What do we do when a civilian has been traumatized by a werewolf? Just think about it. Uh, so, right, so they take Oz and of course Tara is like, "That's a person." Which again, like threads us in this theme that we're on with this episode of like Oz is a person, Oz is a werewolf.

[clip of Jenny performing "Phases" from the album Songs from Season Two]  
Oz is a werewolf,  
Mainly 'cause the moon is full

**Kristin:** I think that all the time, whenever I think about Oz being a werewolf, uh, and he gets taken.

**Kate:** Yup.

**Kristin:** And of course Adam, whatever, boring, boring, boring. Who cares? Although parts of Adam are a boy scout, which I put down.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** So he is part human? There is a human. Who cares. Tara tells Willow, right?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** They took Oz. And everybody runs to Giles to be like, what the fuck? We need to deal with this.

**Kate:** And I do really love that exchange because, you know, the second Tara shows up, Willow knows something's wrong. She can read it on her.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Because they're in love. And Willow like, runs up and Tara tells her what happened. She's like, "They wouldn't listen to me. They just took him." And she, you know, it's like she cares about him and she wants to make sure nothing bad happened to him even though, and like, but Willow's also considering Tara's feelings. And it's like, this moment of the two of them is, is also very good. It's very

short, but it's very, like, a succinct, like, they are a unit. They're working as a unit and I just—

**Kristin:** They take care of, they really do, they take care of each other. And they do it well. And even in a situation where there's another person and we don't know what the feelings are, they're still like, their wellbeing is at the forefront. There's not like a, I'm jealous so I'm going to do less or whatever. You know? Ladies. Uh, also, uh, Giles is, I know there's like bigger things happening in this episode, but like the relationship between Anya and Giles is like starting to percolate?

**Kate:** Is this the high five?

**Kristin:** And then, no. That is *amazing*, the high five. We can talk about that now too. Because, do you think? Here's what I, my read on that high five scene when they high five, when they shut the power off. It seems to me like they had done that scene a bunch of times and had it like, and that like Emma Caulfield and Anthony Stewart had had like a kind of like a running joke or something because the way she says ow and laughs, is like not even really an Anya character.

**Kate:** It doesn't. It does feel a little bit improv'd. I mean who knows because sometimes you say that and then writers are like, "No, I wrote that on purpose!"

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** But it is, it's the delivery is so good.

**Kristin:** But it's so good. And like in an earlier scene, um, Anya, 'cause like we've seen now Anya is like, "Why are we here again? You just called us here for this ridiculous reason, blah blah blah." Giles snaps at Anya early in this episode. And then this is, this is not a Giles and Anya specific moment, but it is Anya again trying to, she says something like, "Well, it doesn't seem like they have enough time to have eviscerated him." and Xander's like, "Anya, this would be like a great quiet time for you. Like just could you please." So just a little Anya.

**Kate:** He never deserved her. So, anyway. So I mean, where are we at in terms of the Initiative? I wrote, "Oh, back to the tinfoil pit, I guess."

**Kristin:** Literally. My note is "Tinfoil Alley." [laughter] My next note is "Boys. Jesus stand the fuck down." Because the guys are really just like hungering for a kill because—

**Kate:** Oh yeah, Riley just like pulls out a gun and is like, "I know it's a demon." which is a little out of character for him.

**Kristin:** It is.

**Kate:** I know we're really trying to emphasize, he doesn't like demons and so yeah, he has to do something like this. But it was pretty wild to just see Riley like, pull a gun on this animal in a cage.

**Kristin:** They're like in revenge mode.

It's like one of our men went down. So like, move out of our fucking way cause we need to kill something. Uh, which is dangerous. Uh, but then of course this is the moment for Riley, right? Like Oz changes back into Oz and he can see with his own eyes, this is a human, not only just a human, but one that I know.

Um, not well, they just, they don't know each other well, but still he's like, Oh man, this is a person. And the Initiative is like, we don't fucking care. Put them on the table. We want to see does he have a response to this shock or that shock and Riley's like, "I don't feel okay about this." Which is why I feel sympathetic. Or not sympathetic, but like why I like Riley in this episode or why I like Riley's arc in this episode.

**Kate:** He has his crisis of faith and I think it's like, it definitely does make me like him more than not at all. So you know. [laughter] It's good.

**Kristin:** It's a generous gauge.

**Kate:** Like I have dated a number of Rileys in my life and they were fine. They're nice people. But he, anyway... So.

**Kristin:** So.

**Kate:** Oz is on a table and then maybe in a cell, I think I got my chronology mixed up here a little bit 'cause I was waiting for the feelings to happen again.

**Kristin:** No, we can— Yeah. I mean basically... Right. Oz is on the table and then he's put away in the cell. Riley is like, this doesn't feel good at all and yeah, and decides to fucking break him out. To jailbreak. And this is like, I think the reason why I like Riley in this episode is because we don't see him think very often for himself. Um, and, and it gets, I mean Kate, this is a little much maybe, but like it gets kinda sexy at the end.

**Kate:** Yeah.



**Kristin:** It's kinda sexy. We'll talk about it when we get there. But yeah, he breaks Oz out and Forest is like, "End of the fucking line, man."

**Kate:** Gets caught instantly, by the way.

**Kristin:** With like a thousand guns. It's like the Initiative was kind of like waiting for it.

**Kate:** [sarcasm] We're going to throw you a surprise party.

**Kristin:** Surprise! You're caught. Uh, and they put Riley in a cell, which is like—

**Kate:** Like he's one of the animals...

**Kristin:** Aha! Interesting!

**Kate:** How the turn tables.

**Kristin:** And we get, of course this important line from the Colonel I think, or the General, whatever the fuck he is that he is like, "You know, I, we've been looking at your records and once you started hanging out with the Slayer and her *band of freaks*, you started being disloyal. And you know what they are, Riley? They're fucking anarchists." And I'm like, *hell yeah!*

**Kate:** Yeah!

**Kristin:** Um, but it's, it's interesting, I think the way that he's framing it for Riley, it's sort of like a last desperate attempt to get him back in line by being really extreme to an untruthful place.

**Kate:** Yeah. Just like, othering these people so much. It's like, "Oh, it's us against them, don't you know?"

**Kristin:** Right. And this is like, not to get too whatever, but like, it really reminds me of like, what's happening with Fox news, for example. You know what I mean? Like, if we just call these other people something so extreme, then you'll stay over here because you don't want—

**Kate:** Yeah! It's like, the oldest tactic in the world is you dehumanize someone and then it's easier to, you know, villainize them.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** Great. Super cool.

**Kristin:** So, um, the, the scene that happened sort of like in between this, this, uh, Oz break breakout scene is at Giles'. Um, and it's like, Spike basically comes in and is like, "I'll help you." And they fucking trust him. Like everybody just needs to figure their shit out. Spike is not wanting to work with Adam. What are you doing? Don't trust Spike! We've learned this lesson!

**Kate:** Chaotic evil.

**Kristin:** How many times do we need to hit that wall? So many times. Um, but I do like, there's just a little moment for me and we're going to get a sexual tension segment from a Jenny in a little bit. I don't know what she's put in there. But I would say that this moment between Spike and Giles is pretty delightful. Where he, where he, you know, Giles is like, "How did you get in?" And, and he's like, "Rupert, you left the door open. Someone dangerous could get in." I was like, "Oh!"

**Kate:** Oh my! Topping the top.

**Kristin:** So anyhow...

**Kate:** Mhmm. They're going to break into the Initiative.

**Kristin:** They are. And I will say something that I love. So they're there. First of all, something I love is their fucking lab coats. I can't, I can't.

**Kate:** Okay. So I wrote this down and it's a thing that comes up in every TV show, like ever in the history of time, is at some point, we need to break into this place. So we're going to wear the uniform, or the lab coat or whatever. Like, have you ever worked in an office where you didn't know a group of like four people enough that you wouldn't clock like, "Hey these complete strangers are walking through the office." My last job, I knew the parking attendants, and like, the security guards. Maybe not all by name, but by sight, And it's like, I feel like I would clock that. I feel like in a hospital you generally know the people that work on your floor.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kate:** Anyway.

**Kristin:** I agree. I agree.

**Kate:** It's just very funny to me.

**Kristin:** We do it. We buy into it.

**Kate:** Also, they all know what Buffy looks like because they've all been trained to hate her because she's brainwashed Riley. It's like—

**Kristin:** [sarcasm] But once she puts a lab coat on she looks totally different, Kate.

**Kate:** Like, not even a wig? Nothing?

**Kristin:** Um, Willow is with them. And I, I meant to say too, that I thought that this was really sweet. There was like a little moment that they have where you know, Xander and Buffy have already broken into the Initiative. So they're like, "We'll do this thing again." and Willow wants to go 'cause she's really concerned about Oz.

And there's a look between like Buffy and Xander, where you see the length of their friendship. Like you see how much they all know each other, you see how much they all love each other because all they do is look at each other and they both are like, she needs this, we're going to take her.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** It just made my little heart warm.

**Kate:** Very good.

**Kristin:** Right. So they fucking are in. I, I know we don't like talking about Adam, but something I must bring up about Adam is that he has a fucking telephone wire plugged into the side of his goddamn head. I said, I literally, like, I laughed out loud.

**Kate:** Do you think he can fax? He's got like a—

**Kristin:** He opens his mouth and a fax comes out.

**Kate:** Like every once in a while instead of snoring it's just like, that dial up sound. [laughter] I mean I guess he doesn't sleep, I don't know, whatever. He's awful.

**Kristin:** Oh he's, he's the worst. But those little moments, you know, the floppy disks in his chest, the telephone cord in his head—

**Kate:** The floppy disks, I forgot about the floppy disks in his chest.

**Kristin:** Those are just like— That to me is the only value that Adam brings, is us getting to laugh at the 90s, because it's, or I guess the early aughts. Uh, because here's where we were with technology. This was like cutting edge, a telephone wire inside of your head.

**Kate:** Amazing.

**Kristin:** So he's trying to fucking figure shit out. And Anya and Giles are turning the power off in the whole town, uh, where we get, we already talked about this hilarious hand, a high five where she says, "Slap my hand now." And he's like, "What?" Oh right, Amelia Bedelia like— Okay. So another little funny moment that I, I wrote down, "LOL, the classic, you dropped your stake, miss." [laughing] She doesn't drop papers, why would she choose to drop her literal stake on the ground?

**Kate:** Also. Why did she bring a stake? They weren't going to slay vamp— Whatever.

**Kristin:** And also, why didn't she just punch him?

**Kate:** I don't know.

**Kristin:** It's really—

**Kate:** Just for more physical comedy, I guess.

**Kristin:** And she's with Riley, right? She gets Riley, the whole thing. They get to the elevator and he basically is like, "If I leave now I can never come back." And then he says, "I just needed to hear myself say that." Yeah, they have this fight. There's a William Burroughs joke...

**Kate:** It's very, very out of character for Buffy, but I'll take it.

**Kristin:** Right. It was just like a little fun thing that happened, I'm sure in the writer's room where they were like, "Yeah, let's keep it in."

**Kate:** My note here is, "Okay, they rescue Oz, but he's like, allergic to Willow because of feelings."

**Kristin:** Oh my God. Right. He can't look at her.

**Kate:** He can't look at her. Makes him feel too hard.

**Kristin:** And his hand turns—

**Kate:** That's a queer move right there.

**Kristin:** Yeah, that's true. So they all, they win because they're threatening the Colonel. I'm just gonna keep calling him the Colonel. Uh, and we get this sexy moment. I think it's sexy. And if I think it's sexy...

**Kate:** I wrote down the quote! So...

**Kristin:** Why don't you, why don't you tell us what he says, Kate?

**Kate:** Well, I don't know what the Colonel's line is in the lead up.

**Kristin:** He says "You're a dead man."

**Kate:** And then Riley says, "No sir, I'm an anarchist." And then punches him in the face.

**Kristin:** It's hot.

**Kate:** Yeah, yeah, definitely a moment of like, okay.

**Kristin:** Exactly. I wish— *I* can see Kate's face.

**Kate:** Okay.

**Kristin:** I'm the only one who got the pleasure of seeing Kate's face. But I want you to just try to envision it. It was good. It was real good.

**Kate:** *It's delighted.*

**Kristin:** Yes. And, and that's like, this is you and me who don't even like Riley. So man, if you like Riley—

**Kate:** And the line delivery's kind of silly and it's a little bit overdone, but it's also like—

**Kristin:** It's hot.

**Kate:** It's hot, it's a little hot.

**Kristin:** Why don't we... Since we're getting all hot and bothered in here, why don't we roll over into Jenny bringing us the Sexual Tension Awards.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]  
Sexual tension award!

**Jenny:** Well, hello and welcome back to the Sexual Tension Awards. It's me, Jenny Owen Youngs here to tell you about them. Of course, we can't get into this week's episodes without first revealing the winners of last week's poll. For everyone's favorite episode of Buffy, Where the Wild Things Are.

We had, let's see, who came in last place? Graham and Buffy and Riley in a hot, hot, three-way. No, 8% of the vote is what they got. In third place we got Willow and Giles with 26% of the vote. What the hell? Uh, right, right above that in second place we had, with 29% of the vote, students and the sex wall. You're welcome.

And in the very, very tip top, first place with 37% of the vote, we had Anya and Spike. Anya, Spike, two of my very possibly my favorite characters? Congratulations. Nice to see you guys getting a shared award. Look for the trophy in the mail coming to your house or crypt as the case may be.

And now, here are the nominations for this week's episode, New Moon Rising. Since everyone's so into Riley saying, "No sir, I'm an anarchist." and then punching his commanding officer in the face, uh, we're gonna, we're gonna just put Riley and anarchy up on the board. Mmm, love to see my butterscotch dude, uh, getting a little, a little wild. Since they blew out a candle, let's also make sure to nominate Tara and Willow. I think the ongoing reigning champs of the Sexual Tension Awards and hey, they really took things to a whole new level in this episode.

We'd be remiss if we didn't also nominate Giles and Spike for that loaded scene where Giles was like, "How'd you get in?" And Spike's like, "Oh, the door was unlocked. You might want to watch that Rupert. Someone dangerous could get in." In where I say! And in the fourth nomination slot, because I'm running this show, let me tell you what. I'm nominating me and Riley doing pushups. Because wow, doesn't he look great doing it?

If you want to be part of our beautiful democracy here, just hit us up on Twitter @bufferingcast and look for this and every Sexual Tension Award poll, cast your vote. Make your voice be heard. Thanks for listening. Talk to you soon.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]  
Sexual tension award!

**Kristin:** Oh, thank you so much, Jenny. Uh, can't wait to see how you all vote. Uh, there's, there's some fun sexy stuff in here.

**Kate:** There is. It's a feelings episode, but you know what—

**Kristin:** We'll find sexual tension anywhere.

**Kate:** Of course.

**Kristin:** Uh, so, uh, you, you said, "Oh they bring Riley to the school. I forgot that that's where they are." And so I just—

**Kate:** And I'm pretty sure, I don't know if they specifically say that it's the school, but I know from, from sight and from obsessively watching the show.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** That it is at least the same set I'm pretty sure.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** As the burnt out school.

**Kristin:** And it makes sense that that's where they would go. I called it Riley's cave 'cause I didn't know what it was.

**Kate:** And it is. Buffy says, "Oh, we're less find-able if we're not in a group or whatever."

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** So they're right there, hiding out there together. Buffy and Riley, after his turn.

**Kristin:** Yeah, he has punched out uh, somebody who was his commanding officer.

**Kate:** He's changed.

**Kristin:** And Buffy's line of like, "Quite a day. Huh?"

**Kate:** Yes! [laughter] You woke up to a bowl of Wheaties and now, now you're a fugitive, is that it?

**Kristin:** Yeah! And she's fucking right! That's a massive— Riley's been going through it, man. Like he's been really questioning things. And just feeling very overwhelmed about his place in the world and he finally has broken out of it.

**Kate:** I know.

**Kristin:** I'm going to pull back the curtain. When we were, when we broke for sexual tension, I said, "Oh my God, Kate, we haven't done the patriarchy jingle. Where will we ever fit it?" And Kate so wonderfully. Actually can— You tell them because you thought of it.

**Kate:** I'm just saying, so much of Riley's story is about...

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

**Kate:** Because, everything that he's doing in the beginning of this episode, all of his sort of bigoted, very black and white thinking, his military upbringing, all falls under that category and he is breaking away from it a little bit, seeing behind the curtain of like the real effects of that over time. So...

**Kristin:** Nice job. I also really loved how you let us put the patriarchy jingle in the middle of your sentence.

**Kate:** Listen, I know how this works.

**Kristin:** Delightful.

**Kate:** This isn't my first podcast. [laughter] [inaudible]

**Kristin:** Not your first time.

**Kate:** I set up a jingle. I feel so honored. I didn't really mean to.

**Kristin:** So I think you know, the biggest thing that happens here is, I think this is really powerful. What happens between Riley and, and Buffy in this scene where, she's trusting like it's a new, she has already trusted Riley, but it's like a new layer of trust. And what it is, and I think you pointed this out already earlier, is, um, it's Buffy's coming out moment to Riley.

Um, we don't see that. But we know that like, that's where they're headed. And he says like, "You can trust—" He doesn't say, "You can trust me." But he says



something like that and or, "Oh, you can tell me anything." And she says, "You know what? I think I can."

**Kate:** Which is a very powerful thing.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** And I like, you know, she does deliver the line at one point in their conversation where she says, "You found out Willow was in an unconventional relationship." referring to him discovering that Oz was a werewolf, which he obviously didn't take to very well. He's the bigoted uncle who's had a change of heart. [laughter]

Um, "You found out Willow was in an unconventional relationship and it gave you a momentary wiggins." And then you see in her face her reflecting on her earlier reaction. And she says, "It happens."

**Kristin:** Which is also really powerful.

**Kate:** It is! Because she is like admitting like, I got a little freaked out but now I'm fine and that's very human.

**Kristin:** It is and it's, and it's not like super like, super common for Buffy to be as reflective I think about her journey like that, which I think is even more like, why it's even more powerful to me that they, that they decided, the writers decided whatever, to include this as well. To include her self awareness. Like they really gave weight to the coming out moment that it deserved. And I don't know that many writers' rooms at the time would have even had the awareness to do that.

**Kate:** It's just— Just let women write things.

**Kristin:** Right? That's really the solution.

**Kate:** There's just so many moments that are just so well done because they're—I'm not saying that men don't write amazing things. Even Joss, who mmm, has written some very, very good episodes...

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** But, there, there is a certain experience and there is a certain worldview and a certain internal, you know, understanding that comes from that. And I think this

episode has so much girl feelings honestly, that are just so accurately depicted because a woman wrote them, and I'll be on a soapbox about that till I die.

**Kristin:** No, and I think, I mean, I think that's why Buffy is as powerful as it is, is because Marti and Jane and like these, there were these really incredible women also majorly a part of the series.

**Kate:** Marti wrote The Prom.

**Kristin:** Marti!

**Kate:** I looked up her like, what episodes did she do? And she wrote The Wish.

**Kristin:** Oh my God!

**Kate:** Like, What's My Line? She did a lot of good feelings episode.

**Kristin:** And I like, at this point in the podcast too, I'm recognizing—

**Kate:** I'm sure you know.

**Kristin:** Well I wouldn't have remembered like, what the episodes were, but I'm recognizing that oftentimes when I'm like, damn, this episode is good. Who wrote it? Fucking Marti Noxon. Of course! Or Jane Espenson.

**Kate:** Jane Espenson.

**Kristin:** You know, it's really fun to do this like deep dive and like critical dive because I'm not a person who watches shows over and over again usually. And I'm also not a person who has been up until this point in my life, like aware of the writers and the, if a different writer is writing it that it might have a different way, you know? So it's just really fun to start to get to know their styles—

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** And maybe I'm not here yet, but I think like a couple more viewings of this series and I'll probably be able to be like, I bet you I know who wrote this one. You know?

**Kate:** It's very exciting. I mean I obviously— It's my job, it's my career. So it's the thing I look for now. I do this thing and play along with me at home. The home

game of this is when you watch any piece of media, I like to play the, the, the credits card game where— Not credit—

**Kristin:** Yeah, not the credit card game.

**Kate:** Well it's like title cards, but they come at the end where at the end of a movie especially, or a TV show, how many slides do you get through before you see a woman's name that is not a producer—

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Kate:** —A costumer, a hair person. So anyone involved in the creative side, like a writer or story editor or something like that. You watch any like Pixar, Disney movie, you get through six or seven before you see a woman's name.

**Kristin:** Dang.

**Kate:** It's rough. Um, not all the time. Obviously. Not all the time. It's uh, but it really does start making you aware of it. It's kind of like that matrix thing. Start to see even code when you're like, and I do and I look for this kind of stuff. It's part of why I was so excited to watch Three Below, the new show from Dreamworks that came after Trollhunters because A.C. Bradley is the head story person on that. And she worked on Trollhunters and it was like, I don't know her, I've never met her. I probably never will. But I watched like the first time her name was in the credits and because she had like this ambiguous initial, I was like, I bet that's a woman—

**Kristin:** Oh ho.

**Kate:** Or you know, but I was like, I'm going to look that up. And I was right. And then she went from, you know, this one episode, to staff writer to head of story to then show running this new show. And so it's like, I followed this person's career, like never met her, but it is really, really exciting. Anyway.

**Kristin:** Yeah, like your awareness of that. And it is, I mean that's the case with anything, right? Like as soon as we start to recognize it, we see it everywhere—

**Kate:** You do.

**Kristin:** And all over the place.

**Kate:** You do. I actually, um, Cohen sent me a text the other day because they were watching Deep Space Nine, they've been going through the whole series and I got, just got this screenshot that was like, "Written by Jane Espenson." I was like,

"Oh thank you!" So they've had feelings in a building and then Buffy says to Riley, "I'm, I have to tell you some stuff about my past and it's not all stuff you're going to like."

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Which is a mood.

**Kristin:** [laughs] Isn't it? So, right. So they, we leave them to have this conversation in the cave. Well, I'm going to, I'll call it a cave and we go to Oz's van.

**Kate:** Oof.

**Kristin:** Oof.

**Kate:** Van of tears.

**Kristin:** Seriously. Overalls of sadness, van of tears. You know what I mean? This is— Their conversation basically reveals, right? Or like, not reveals, but Oz is saying to Willow, "I've learned that *you* are the thing that brings this out in me." I don't know how to read that.

**Kate:** Yeah. Well, I think what I love about it is that it is kind of ambiguous and it's not necessarily good of him to say that. It's not, we're revealing Oz's like even more imperfections, you know?

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** He shows up as this like, on his white horse of like I've changed and I fixed myself and it's like Ooh, actually I'm still going through some things and I have realized I can't just come back. And I mean he does say like, "It was stupid of me to think you would just be waiting."

**Kristin:** Yes. This is, finally we get that from you. Because I was bothered by that in the beginning. And I was glad to like, hear it from him that he was aware. Oh, this might not have been the coolest thing that I've done.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** And I still have more growing to do. But I do find, 'cause like I read the, the werewolf thing to be sort of like Oz's desires for other things and Oz's like, you know, that like this, it's this expanse of like Oz not knowing who he is or what he is

and having this like animalistic side. And we, you know, we went through the episode, what is it, Wild at Heart.

**Kate:** Yup.

**Kristin:** Yes. Um, where we really explored all of that. But when it's sort of like, Oh, *you're* the only trigger left, seems like a lot to put on Willow.

**Kate:** It is, but it's also true. So it's like, and she knows it.

**Kristin:** Right. You can't deny it.

**Kate:** So it's not like he's telling her this devastating thing that she's not aware of. He's just like verbalizing this thing that both of them knows. So it's, it's complicated. I totally agree. Gray area, but also really well written because, yeah. And it's like true.

**Kristin:** I mean, it is, it's really, I'm sure like an indicator or an indication of the depth of his love. Like it's, gosh, I mean, I didn't think about it like this at all, but it's very similar to Angel. Uh, I mean it, you know, we can talk about, that could be a whole fucking episode, right? I know there's a lot there, I know. But just in the sense of like, this animalistic piece of him is activated when things are at a particular level of intensity.

And for him that is his love for Willow. Um, and, and his like wanting to be with Willow and, and all of the things that go along with that. But ultimately what we have here are two people who love each other so much and who know they can't be together.

**Kate:** Yeah. [sarcasm] Not something anyone in this room would know anything about.

**Kristin:** [laughs] [sarcasm] Right. Yeah, no, what could that possibly be like?

**Kate:** [sarcasm] Who knows?

**Kristin:** And uh, he said... Like, Oz has a line that's like, "But you're happy."

**Kate:** And she says, "I am." And then she does the like, I don't remember exactly how she said it, but she's like, "I wouldn't know how to talk about it." And then he says, "It's probably better if you don't." which is so hard because it's like, you know, you want him to be the person that's like, actually I want to hear about this

thing and I care about you. But like it might make him a demon. So probably actually not for the best, you know, for everybody.

**Kristin:** Emotional awareness is strong in this van. You know? Everybody's kind of like able to say, This is really hard, but we have to do this because it's the thing that we both ultimately need." It's the hard decision, but it's the right decision. Um, and then we get, of course, this monologue from Willow. I'm going to play it.

[clip from the episode plays]

**Willow:** I feel like some part of me will always be waiting for you. Like if I'm old, and blue-haired and I turn the corner in Istanbul and there you are. I won't be surprised. Because, you're with me, you know?

**Kristin:** Oh God.

**Kate:** So in my notes I wrote, "This is the first time I cried." Because there's about seven minutes left and it is not the last time. Not even seven minutes. This is like right at the end of the episode.

**Kristin:** It is! I'm always amazed when this much happens in this short amount of time.

**Kate:** So short a time. But I cried. I start crying in this scene because it's so real.

**Kristin:** It is.

**Kate:** It's so real. And like, I've even dated a werewolf to my knowledge, but I have had conversations like this that are just like, so hard and...

**Kristin:** Yeah, where you're like, "I love you with everything in me and that will *never* change, but."

**Kate:** "We can't do this. It doesn't work." It's horrible. So I, you know, I'm tearing up and I'm tearing up, but when I really, cry is after we get back to our favorite scarf-clad room.

**Kristin:** God, let's go there. So to wrap up the van, we're all crying. We've heard the, we've heard what Willow has said.

**Kate:** Oh right. [groans]

**Kristin:** And we get the line from Oz. When are you going to leave? "Pretty much now."

**Kate:** [whispers] Pretty much now.

**Kristin:** And then I just wrote in all caps, "Willow cry." I just was really overwhelmed with her crying and—

**Kate:** 'Cause you can, I mean again, *such* good acting where you see on her face, her like sadness that, you know, you just came back into my life but you made everything so complicated and now you're leaving and I'm really sad that you're leaving. But I also know that it's for the best because staying here would be bad for literally everyone and—

**Kristin:** And like, the many shades of Willow's tears.

**Kate:** Yeah!

**Kristin:** Like, we see her cry, I don't even know how many times in this episode—

**Kate:** So many!

**Kristin:** But like they're all such different cries. This cry is, I am so sad, but I know it's right. And you fucking see it! Alison Hannigan! God dammit!

**Kate:** I love her. I love her.

**Kristin:** We're almost, you know, it's almost time and Jenny, I don't know, maybe, maybe you've made this happen, but probably not. 'Cause I keep asking you to make so many jingles, but we're almost ready for another Willow jingle.

**Kate:** Another.

**Kristin:** I know. I think Willow might be the, the keeper of the most jingles. I don't know. We'll see. Who knows.

**Kate:** That seems fair.

**Kristin:** But it's just like, we have Willow, we have like in her Sears outfit Willow. Right. And that's the jingle that exists now.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** And I'll play that one for her right now.

[WILLOW jingle plays]  
Who knows the square root of 1225?  
Willow!  
Who's gentle of heart, and nimble with a hard drive?  
Willow!  
Willow, Willow, Willow

**Kristin:** Then we have, I'm not going to play all of them. Don't worry. Or maybe, Oh no. Now they all want me to play all of them. I bet. Okay. I'll play all of them. And then we have of course, the vamp Willow jingle.

**Kate:** Oh baby.

[VAMP WILLOW jingle plays]  
Here come Willow  
She's a vampire Willow  
And she ain't got time for you  
Here come Willow  
She's a bored now Willow  
Wearing leather, making Buffy stew.

**Kristin:** So there's that. Uh, and we, no spoilers, but we may have some other developments, uh, later—

**Kate:** True.

**Kristin:** Where she may get a jingle. But I feel like this, like Willow coming into her queerness, this is a different Willow. Into her queerness and into her witchcraft.

**Kate:** Yep.

**Kristin:** Right? It's like a grownup. We need a grownup Willow jingle.

**Kate:** We do.

**Kristin:** And I think that if we don't have it now, we'll have it soon. Anyway, let's get to where we've been waiting to get to.

**Kate:** The long road to Tara's dorm. [laughter] The subtitle for season four.



**Kristin:** Goddammit. You know, you really got me when I have to lean all the way away from the mic.

**Kate:** I feel so accomplished every time.

**Kristin:** So Tara is first of all, looking at the moon.

**Kate:** In total darkness.

**Kristin:** Total darkness, looking at the moon, which is also a mood.

**Kate:** Yep. Which also, looking at the moon, which has to do with Oz. So she's probably contemplating the whole thing thinking about the moon because he's a werewolf, right?

**Kristin:** Oh man, deep! Deep, Kate, deep!

**Kate:** I just thought that and now I think I might be right.

**Kristin:** Yeah, I think you might be a genius, a real time genius here in the studio. So she's looking at the moon and Willow gets there with her candle.

**Kate:** Her candle. Will you light my candle?

**Kristin:** Oh my God! [laughter]

[clip from "Will You Light My Candle?" from the musical Rent plays]

It's nothing. They turned off my heat,  
and I'm just still a little weak on my feet,  
Would you light my candle?  
What are you staring at?

**Kristin:** Holy shit. Oh. And basically they have this conversation where Tara's like, "You have to be with the person you love." and she says, "I am." [long exhale]

**Kate:** Oh my God.

**Kristin:** The words are being spoken. The words Kate, that you have waited for as your nine year old self. How old you were, nine, ten?

**Kate:** She loves Tara. I'm tearing up right now. [inaudible] It's so important and I really like, 'cause I was just dying. Nothing like this existed. And I was like 13 or 14

and I was the only gay kid I knew and like or anything, you know? And like seeing this moment where she's, this character who I've loved, who I've grown up with, who I've known for years...

**Kristin:** I have the chills all over my body.

**Kate:** It's, it's just like, it's so funny. I don't know if you're, I mean I'm sure this doesn't happen to you because people know your deal. [laughter] But, if you're ever in a conversation with someone who's like, "Oh yeah, I didn't really like Buffy." and you have to be like, "Oh yeah, no. Like, it's not for everybody." but in your heart you're just like, Oh no, you just like stabbed my favorite childhood toy in front of me.

**Kristin:** [laughter] Right.

**Kate:** Like, 'cause I never want to be that person that's like, you don't get it.

I don't want to be a Star Wars jerk or whatever, but it's like, [small, sad voice] okay. But also it's so close to my heart, it's hard for me to like, understand.

**Kristin:** Also you're being so lovely with these people. I feel fully comfortable being like, "You literally don't get it and you should."

**Kate:** But it's hard because it *is* hard to get people into it now.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Like the first season is *really* rough. There's some early on, like a lot of it's really dated. I totally get it there. You know, we've come a long way in terms of feminist representation in terms of every kind of representation, a lot of which Buffy falls short on. But like if you grew up with it—

**Kristin:** Yeah!

**Kate:** And you know, you were that attached to it. So *this moment* where they're finally together and she says, "You have to be with the person you love." and Willow says, "I am."

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Kate:** And it's the followup to like, "I am, you know. I'm yours." Which is... Oh, I remember sitting there and being like, are they going to do this? Is this really going to happen? We don't just have to have the witchcraft analogy? Like, it's real?

**Kristin:** Yeah. Yeah. And I wonder how you, okay, well, so first of all, they have this moment—

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** And she says, "I am." And then Tara I think says, "You mean?" And Willow says, "I mean."

**Kate:** [whispers] Yes!

**Kristin:** And fucking Tara. I'm like losing my mind. Kate is seeing the visual of me like slowly tipping over sideways. Um, but Tara says, "Oh yes."

**Kate:** Yeah. Well no, it's Willow's like, "Is that okay?" Or like asks her a question and Tara says, "Very much yes." or, "Oh yes."

**Kristin:** Yes. And then I think Willow says, "Right now?"

**Kate:** She's like, she, she has a little speech where she says something like, you know, things I put you through or whatever. And she says, "I'm going to start making it up to you starting now."

**Kristin:** Yes!

**Kate:** Right? And right now.

**Kristin:** And they're like, are we doing this?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** And they are.

**Kate:** And then she blows out the candle!

**Kristin:** And they blow the candle out! They blow it out! Now I wonder, 'cause I love this. I want this scene to be *this* scene. I want it, I want the lines to be what they are. I want the candle to be blown out. I want it to go to black. That's what I want. I like it. And I am a queer person.

**Kate:** Mhmm.

**Kristin:** But I wonder if there's like some dissonance of like people who like, are there people who exist who want the kiss *now*?

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** And maybe, and maybe I should want the kiss now. I just think that it's so beautifully done that, I don't know. I don't know.

**Kate:** But it was just like at the time, even the fucking candle was like groundbreaking. Like nobody else was doing it unless it was a joke, unless they were going to die right away unless something was like, horrible was about to happen or whatever. And it's just this beautiful moment and you know, there's still something to look forward to.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Kate:** There's still lots to look forward to. So much to look forward to.

**Kristin:** And I, and I don't know, like, and I'm not like justifying—

**Kate:** And I get what you're saying—

**Kristin:** But it's just, *to me*, the moment it's like instead of us getting that then, we have the power to envision it too. Which I mean, could get complicated depending on who's envisioning it, but we won't go there. But like my point is like I just feel like visually I think, and emotionally, it may be more powerful in this moment to get exactly what we've gotten, which is the candle has been blown out.

**Kate:** Yep.

**Kristin:** And what's going to come next.

**Kate:** Because it's not just a kiss. It's like they 'bout *to fuck*. [laughter] Like, just to spell it out. Like she says, "I'm going to start making it up to you right now." and she blows out the candle and I remember sitting on the couch next to my mom and the two of us were both just like, wow. Like that just happened. Because it was a big deal for my mom too. And yeah, it was. Yeah, it was such a moment where we were just like, [gasps] and my dad being like, "I don't get it. What just happened?" [laughter] Not very— [inaudible]

**Kristin:** This is, and you've said it, we've talked about it. We don't need to like talk about it forever, but it really is important, especially if you're listening to this podcast as a first time viewer, as a person who might be younger. This was absolutely groundbreaking.

**Kate:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Un—

**Kate:** We did not have Steven Universe.

**Kristin:** Right!

**Kate:** We did not have Ruby and Sapphire.

**Kristin:** We had no nice things!

**Kate:** There was nothing.

**Kristin:** And we got a nice thing!

**Kate:** And it was so nice and it was so, and it was given, like this whole episode was about that. Was about Willow's like, confirmation of her sexual identity and like, not just that, but her feelings and like it just didn't exist on TV.

**Kristin:** Not nuance, not deep, not like, you know, if we, if we got anything, it was a quick storyline. A storyline that ended very fast—

**Kate:** Or it was because somebody body swapped or, you know— This is also because I've been watching DS9 with Cohen. There's a lot—

**Kristin:** Lots of body swapping?

**Kate:** Well, Dax is a whole thing. But um, yeah, it really was like, it just felt like someone was reaching through the TV at me as a tween and being like, you exist. Like this is real. This is a real thing. This is an option for you. Check it out.

**Kristin:** Totally.

**Kate:** Try girls.

**Kristin:** Yeah. [laughs] Try girls. Uh, yes. So Holy forkin' shit. Oops. Holy forkin' shirt balls. I read it all the time. I never say it. And this is, I'm practicing. I'll get better. Uh, I think that we have done this.

**Kate:** I feel like—

**Kristin:** Did we miss a thing, anything?

**Kate:** I don't think we've missed a thing. I don't wanna miss a thing. [laughs]

**Kristin:** hasn't been such as, I *knew* it would be, such a fucking delight to talk about this episode with you Kate.

**Kate:** It's so, I was so glad. I went to watch it and I was like, Oh yeah, this is, I know there's something about Oz in it, but because the last thing we'd done was, uh, the, the Veruca episode, I was like, that was in my mind, and I forgot, I forgot that this was Willow's coming out! Not to everyone, but to her best friend and to *herself* and like it's, so big.

**Kristin:** Oh yeah, so big props to that.

It's like pointing that out. I mean, we've talked about it, but we haven't like said it right? That Willow has come out to herself in this episode. That is a thing, a major massive thing, a thing that often takes us as queer people the longest to do.

**Kate:** I just love. I love how she explains it to Buffy when she was like, "It wasn't something that I've looked, that I was looking for, but like, it's what happened and it's good." and like...

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** It's just like, Willow's been going through this whole thing that Buffy didn't know anything about. And it is also, you know, just really underlines like, how much you know she's going through.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** Away from everybody else. And how like, Ugh, I just, I love Willow.

**Kristin:** We're all there with you. Um, Kate.

**Kate:** Yes.

**Kristin:** Tell the lovely people, though I'm sure they all know by now, but tell them where they can find you and what you're doing.

**Kate:** Um, well you can find me pretty much anywhere online @KateLeth. Uh, 'cause Tumblr's dead so it doesn't, [laughter] RIP.

**Kristin:** It truly is.

**Kate:** Doesn't matter anymore. Yeah. On Instagram. On Twitter, pretty much primarily. I'm not doing as many shows this year 'cause I am uh, doing a lot of pitching and writing and stuff. But yeah. Find me online.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Kate:** I'm around.

**Kristin:** Find Kate online.

**Kate:** You can join my patreon at bisexual.zone.

**Kristin:** [laughter] Oh my God. I forget every time. How, I do not know, but it's a joy because I get to experience the pleasure all over again.

**Kate:** It's \$20 a year to own that domain name and it is worth every fraction of a penny.

**Kristin:** Honest to God. Truly. Wow. Uh, I am Kristin Russo and you can find more about me on my website, which is harder to spell. Uh, I did not get bisexual.zone. I got kristinnolene.com. Uh, we haven't heard the jingle in a minute, so I might pop it in there for you. Yay. Yay.

[KRISTIN NOELINE jingle plays]

Kristin with an I

N-O-E-L-I-N-E

**Kristin:** You can learn, uh, about the work that I do with LGBTQ communities over there and just like follow me. You can use that same spelling to follow me on Instagram and on Twitter. You can follow a buffering cast @bufferingcast on Twitter, on Facebook, and on Instagram. You're right Tumblr is dead.

**Kate:** It's just dead.

**Kristin:** Dead. It's just no more. Sorry if you're a big Tumblr fan out there, but I think it's seen its day. Uh, and of course you can support us. You can also support us, uh, on our Patreon, you can find all of that at [bufferingthevampireslaye.com](http://bufferingthevampireslaye.com). If you are not able to financially support us, that's totally cool. You can go on over to iTunes and rate and review the show *or* and/or you can go on over and rate and review Angel on Top, our sister podcast that goes in tandem with us talking about every episode of Angel.

**Kate:** Delightful.

**Kristin:** Just delightful. Kate, are you ready to howl?

**Kate:** Oh, am I?

**Kristin:** Until next time.

[both howl] Awoo!

**Kristin:** Well that was like a special werewolf.

[Jenny performing "New Moon Rising," off the album "Songs from Season Four" by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

A shoebox hidden underneath your bed

Filled with parts of you you can't confess

This world was made to make you feel alone

But I'm forever in your corner, don't you know

Whatever your song, I'm singing along with you

Whatever your path, I got your back, you know that i do

Nothing that comes could ever divide us

You know I'll be right by your side



Whatever your song, I'm singing along with you

If you think that I could ever judge you

Let me break that gavel in two

This world will play you like a domino

But I'm forever in your corner, don't you know

Whatever your song, I'm singing along with you

Whatever your path, I got your back, you know that i do

Nothing that comes could ever divide us

You know I'll be right by your side

Whatever your song, I'm singing along with you

I can't imagine anyone holding up a candle to you

And when I need somebody, I know that you'll be there for me too

Whatever your song, I'm singing along with you

Whatever your path, I got your back, you know that i do

Nothing that comes could ever divide us

You know I'll be right by your side

Whatever your song, I'm singing along with you

With you

With you

With you

