

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 5.19: Tough Love

[CHIME]

Jenny: Hey everybody! Wow.

Kristin: Oh my goodness. Another week—

Jenny: Just a few... notes before we get started. [sounds like she's stretching]

Kristin: Another podcast. Hey, Jenny. Uh, I would like to tell you and all of our listeners who don't [Jenny gasps] know yet about a podcast that is fucking awesome. Up in the intro, we're gonna be trying to do a bit of spotlighting on BIPOC creations, podcasts—obviously, that's why you're here so that's probably a thing you like. But other creative work, other artists, other organizations, et cetera. And today's spotlight is a podcast—Jenny, I know you've heard of it. It's called Métis In Space.

Jenny: Oh yes.

Kristin: And let me just tell you their description. "Métis In Space hilariously deconstructs the science fiction genre through a decolonial lens. Join hosts Molly Swain and Chelsea Vowel as they drink a bottle of red wine and from a tipsy, decolonial perspective, review a scifi movie or television episode featuring indigenous peoples, tropes and themes." Jenny, the reason we learned about this podcast is because their inaugural episode was on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, a little episode you may have heard of called Pangs.

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: It's so good and you should listen to it. And that was their first episode ever. They're in Season 5 now and when I—Jenny, when I did some research on this podcast to, like—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Grab their description and stuff like that—which, by the way, you can find them at Métis In Space, which is M-E-T-I-S In Space dot com—I learned that they're on a network. I don't know that they've been on the network since the beginning, but maybe they have. But they're on a network and it's called Indian & Cowboy Podcasts. Which is the world's premiere member-supported indigenous podcast network. So that's really fucking cool too, and they are member-supported,

so if you are looking for a way to give back, this is a podcast-specific way to give back. Indian & Cowboy Podcasts, their website is indianandcowboy.com, and Métis In Space is one of their podcasts. So that's really fun and you should check it out. Start with Buffy and then you're probably not gonna stop because they're hilarious and wonderful and just gigantic nerds. So. It rules.

Jenny: [singsong] Hell yes! Speaking of ruling, [Kristin laughs] there can be only one winner of the Sexual Tension Awards, as we all know. And I'm here to tell you who that winner is. It's not Anya Watching Spike and Buffybot, who only received 15% of the vote.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: It's not Xander and Spike, even though it should have been—

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: Because they only got 20% of the vote. It's not Giles and His Beloved Gourd—

Kristin: Ugh!

Jenny: Because they only got 24% of the vote.

Kristin: Robbed.

Jenny: It's fan favorite, Spuffy, with 41% of the vote. [Kristin laughs] Congrats, Spike and Buffy. How exciting for you both.

Kristin: Yes, yes.

Jenny: Trophy's in the mail.

Kristin: Yes. I mean, we knew that Giles and the gourd probably weren't gonna win because the Spuffy fans can—take everything very seriously. They're putting in their votes. We get it, we hear you, we see you. Some of us may even be one of you. [laughs] Moving along, just a few little news items from us. Just in case you missed it, we have new merchandise. We have hoodies, we have tank tops, we have crop tops, all of which say "Why Are Men" in gigantic block letters. 'Tis the—

Jenny: Question on everyone's mind.

Kristin: Yeah, 'tis the season, as I like to say, Jenny. 'Tis *always* the season—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: For a "Why Are Men" piece of merchandise. [laughs] So if you wanna grab one for yourself or one for all of your friends, you can do that by going to bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Just click on Shop. Also, head's up, we have a couple of events coming up. You already—if you're part of my book club over in Patreon land, you know that we are going to be discussing *A Blade So Black* on August 1st. But we have two other events that we haven't spoken about yet. One, we are partnering with the lovely ladies at Angel On Top. And we are going to—Jenny and I—do an Angel live watch for the Angel On Top patrons. That is going to be Saturday, August 8th at 11 AM Pacific, 2 PM Eastern. The Angel On Top listenership voted and you might imagine that we're going to be watching a very Faith-heavy episode. You can learn more about that at our—on our Events page. Bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Events, you can find it on the calendar there, August 8th. And hey! If you're a \$10 patron of ours or higher, you can join us for our second Patreon Zoom hang—

Jenny: [singsong] Yes!

Kristin: Where Jenny plays some songs, we chat, you ask us questions. We show you our cats and dogs and other items. It's wonderful.

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: August 15th, that's also a Saturday, 11 AM Pacific, 2 PM Eastern. Again, all of our events can be found on our Event page.

Jenny: Yes! And hey, wow, special guest, Bess Rogers! Welcome back to the pod in the role of Willow. You'll hear her singing this episode's song at the end of the ep—

Kristin: Mm... mm..mm!

Jenny: And she crushed it so hard. We're always happy to have Bess on the pod, representing for Willow. And this time in a, you know, little bit of a different way. Hell yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. And I have to say, Jenny, this song fucking rules. And also, when I first heard it, the—your vocals—you and Bess do not sound similar when you sing. But because of the effects on the vocals, it—like, I think it's good to know that it's Bess because you almost might think it's you. You sound similar...

Jenny: Oh. Well, well, well.

Kristin: To her in this song. So anyway, oh my god, buckle up. It's a real fun one. Perhaps the Bad Eggs of Season 5? Would you say?

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: A bit more nuanced—

Jenny: Wow!

Kristin: A bit deeper, but I think it's a hit. Okay! [laughter] Jenny, before we dive into the episode, I was hoping to share with you an email. We never do emails in the main podcast episodes, and I just think it's fun. And so we're gonna try it out here, see how you feel. But we got this email, like, moments before recording the intro, and I thought, why not read it before we hop in? Are you ready?

Jenny: Yes. I'm ready!

Kristin: Okay, so this is from last week's episode, you may remember it. It was called Intervention. And Ben writes in, "Hey, my name is Ben. I've never emailed you before. I've been listening for years and I never felt like I had special expertise on any of the things you talked about, until now. In the Intervention—"

Jenny: Please let it be bone bleaching. Please let it be bone bleaching.

Kristin: It's not, but Jenny, we did get so many emails on bone bleaching.

Jenny: [laughs] Yes.

Kristin: [laughing] So I'm sorry that I didn't bring one of those to the table. We have plenty. We have plenty, we'll bring them into the Mailbag episode proper. [laughter] This is not about that, however, Ben continues: "In the Intervention episode, you talked about whether Spike's brain chip would allow him to punch things like hobbits that are human-esque. I am a journalist who covers technology and your question reminded me of the Internet of Things and edge computing." Keep going! I'm fanning myself, Ben.

Jenny: Alright.

Kristin: "The thing about Spike's chip is that it appears to function on its own. They didn't implant some kind of sensor on the outside of Spike's body to feed data to the chip. So the only inputs into the chip come from Spike himself."

Jenny: Alright.

Kristin: "In other words, it's up to Spike to decide whether the creature he's harming is human. Something about that decision must produce a signal that the chip picks up on." This blew my mind, and so many of you were like, really ruminating on this hobbit question. [Jenny laughs] So I thought, why not make your brains explode more, along with us? Ben continues: "Hobbits look pretty human-y, so my guess is Spike would see them as human and therefore not be able to punch them. I would also think at this point that the chip has conditioned Spike in such a way that he probably errs on the side of caution if something looks human, unless it poses a threat."

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: "Gollum looks less human, so maybe Spike could fight him. If I'm right—" and this is where you can think on this for the rest of the episode— "then there's another implication. If Spike was tricked into thinking that a human was not a human, or found a way to convince himself of it, then he would be able to harm humans without triggering the chip." Wow, Ben! [Jenny exhales noisily] Wow, Ben! Do you think it's—do you think it's Ben, uh, Paging Dr. Ben, who wrote this email in?

Jenny: Yes. Paging Dr. Ben! [Kristin laughs] Give us your whole file on Spike's chip.

Kristin: So anyway, I just thought that would be fun. Now you have a little bit more to chew on, Jenny, when you're thinking about all of your Spike v. hobbit, Spike v. Gollum—

Jenny: Always.

Kristin: Spike v. Smeagol—

Jenny: [laughs] Always thinking about it.

Kristin: Where is the line, you have more data from Ben. Thank you for writing in, Ben. And if you want to write us an email about bone bleaching, about hobbits, about anything really at all, you can do that bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. And perhaps we'll pop it into an intro in a future episode or in a Mailbag, 'cause we'll have another one before this season is over. [sings triumphant tune]

Jenny: Yay.

Kristin: Hey. Are you ready to talk about some Tough fuckin' Love, Jenny?

Jenny: I'm freakin' ready! Let's do it!

Kristin: Yes!

[Buffering the Vampire Slayer theme plays]

Jenny: [enthusiastically] Hello! And welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer, a podcast where we are watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one by one, spoiler-free. I can't wait to get to the series finale so I can compare my first episode and last episode intro. [Kristin laughs] I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: The DB on the volume, I think, will have a drastic change.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I think you get louder every episode.

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: [laughs] I am—hi!—Kristin Russo. And hey, this week we are talking about Season 5, Episode 19, Tough Love. Stay tuned at the end of the podcast every week, including this week, for an original song written by Jenny that recaps the Buffy episode we are discussing.

Jenny: Tough Love was written by Rebecca! Rand! Kirshner!

Kristin: Ooh.

Jenny: And directed by David Grossman and originally aired on May 1, 2001.

Kristin: This is the one where when Tara falls victim to Glory's incredible power—did Glory write this?

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: Willow embraces dark magic and launches a counterattack. Whew! And how?

Jenny: [sings tune] Let me start out by saying...

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: With regards to this episode—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Rebecca! Rand! Kirshner! Wow. Well, she wrote some episodes of Freaks and Geeks.

Kristin: Ooh!

Jenny: She wrote some episodes of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. She EP'd on Gilmore Girls for—

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: A while.

Kristin: Busy lady—[crosstalk]

Jenny: And also was the showrunner of a couple seasons of 90210. Not Beverly Hills 90210 and not, like, BH 90210 or whatever—[Kristin laughs] there have been, like, so many permutations of 90210. But she worked on the 90210, like, à la carte title.

Kristin: So, wait, hold on—

Jenny: [simultaneously] But also, this is not what's the most important—

Kristin: Stop. Because I—

Jenny: Okay, okay, okay.

Kristin: Like, I just—I need to clarify here and fucking now. 90210 à la carte is like, our 90210, from the 90s?

Jenny: No, it's the one after that.

Kristin: So Beverly Hills 90210 is my 90210.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Is ours.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: Yeah, that's right.

Kristin: Because I don't know how to talk about it and every time I reference it, I feel like I am saying the wrong thing and people are misunderstanding me.

Jenny: Just say, "90210, you know, the one with Luke Perry."

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah.

Jenny: And you can drop the Beverly Hills—[crosstalk]

Kristin: [simultaneously] The old lady 90210? Yeah. That's the old lady—the old lady 90210? Is the one.

Jenny: [laughs] Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Sorry, Jenny. Continue.

Jenny: That's okay. So Rebecca Rand Kirshner, I just wanted to tell you, went to Harvard. She was on the Harvard Lampoon as an editor and artist. She's the daughter of astrophysics professor, Robert Kirshner. [Kristin laughs] The great-granddaughter of Olympic hurdler, William Rand. And the descendent of Rebecca Nurse, who was executed as a witch in Salem in 1692.

Kristin: [high-pitched and drawn out] What!

Jenny: That's right. What do you think about that?

Kristin: How did you even stumble—like, what—what research hole did you fall into?

Jenny: Well. I recently watched Gilmore Girls and so I have seen—

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: Rebecca Rand Kirshner's name flash across the screen, like, a million times in my recent memory. So I was like—when I was looking at the episode Wiki, I was like, hmm, I wonder what else she's worked on. I clicked through, I read a little bit about her. And when I got to the part about how she was the descendent of someone who was executed as a witch in Salem, I thought you would wanna know about it.

Kristin: I do, and you were right. Thank you for telling me. And I'm gonna speak on behalf of all of our listeners to say thank you, because I would always like to know some witch history. Witch...

Jenny: Witch-story.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Witch-story. [laughs]

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: So, uh, yeah. This is the one with fuckin' Willow. I mean, *dang*. It's the one where we cry a lot because Tara—

Jenny: Have you noticed that the one that we—where we cry a lot is every episode this season? [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah. Listen, we warned everybody. We said, we're about to slide down the back half of 5. And we are sliding down the back half of 5 right now.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Listen. So this episode starts with Professor Lillian, who I fucking adore.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Buffy's poetry professor. Jenny—

Jenny: He's cute.

Kristin: Right? And this reminds me of way back when, when we were in Teacher's Pet. And do you remember the name of the teacher? It's a lyric in your song for Teacher's Pet but I can't—I couldn't remember it.

Jenny: Oh.

Kristin: Buffy, like, puts his—

Jenny: The guy who gets beheaded?

Kristin: Yeah. Buffy puts his glasses gently and gingerly back in his little lab pocket coat [sic].

Jenny: It's, um... well, it's Dr. Gregory, of course.

Kristin: Dr.—

Jenny: [sings] "Dr. Gregory!"

Kristin: Yes!

Jenny: [sings] "He believed in me!" [sings tune]

Kristin: So all I'm saying is, [sings] "Professor Lillian!"

Jenny: [laughing] Okay.

Kristin: [sings] "You believed in... me and—men!"

Jenny: Okay. Yeah, we love to see—we love to see an educator believe in Buffy.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Especially 'cause we've seen some educators be really shitty to Buffy.

Kristin: Yeah and also, this like—listen. I'm having a—I got my period today. I'm having a—

Jenny: [laughs] And we've seen *one* educator, um, surveil Buffy as she slept in Riley's bed. [Kristin laughs] Yikes! This is a severe improvement.

Kristin: I have a lot of feelings in general, but especially today on my rewatch, I was having a *lot* of feelings. And so when I got to the part in this first scene—so Buffy is dropping out of school for the semester because her mom has just died. She's tasked with, you know, taking care of Dawn and that's sort of the "tough love." I mean, there's lots of ways into the title of this episode, Tough Love, and one of them is the, like, tough love that Buffy feels she has to give to Dawn to make sure she toes the line and yadda yadda. But in this first scene where Buffy's with Professor Lillian and she's like—she's kind of still practicing these—like, how to say her feelings. Like, it's like an extension of the last episode, where she was telling Giles she loved him and telling Dawn she loved her, whatever.

She's like, taking a minute to tell Professor Lillian, this class meant a lot to me and you did something good for me and thank you. It's like very un-Buffy, that moment? And so that made my heart squinch a little bit. But then when she was like, you know, I really loved this class and like, they started talking and you realize it's a poetry class? And then I realized, like, can you imagine Buffy reading poetry?

No? Because when does Buffy ever have time to read poetry? Like, does she ever get to read any books? Does she get to do anything that is outside of being a Slayer? It just made me feel really sad for her because now she's dropping out of school 'cause her mom died. But even before her mom died, like, she doesn't get to have extracurricular activities. She doesn't get to, like, think about art a ton. Because she's busy just like, saving the world.

Jenny: Well, yeah, but after a long day of saving the world, you know, she can kick back in front of an open fire and Angel can read some poetry aloud to her—

Kristin: [laughing] That's true.

Jenny: In the original French. And then maybe she can swing across town to the cemetery, pop by Spike's crypt and he can write some bloody awful poetry about her.

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

Jenny: She can live in a world of poetry without reading it herself.

Kristin: Mmm. Poetry exists around her, I see, I see. I'm just saying, like, I think the Watchers' Council could stand to fund the arts a little bit more. That's all—that's my point. Anyway. You wanna fire Ben? Let's go fire Ben.

Jenny: Let's do it. Paging Dr. Ben. You're fired. [laughter] Uh, this guy hasn't been at work in two frickin' weeks, so we assume Glory has had full, you know, custody of their shared body for those two weeks. What's she been up to for two straight weeks?

Kristin: Taking a lot of fucking bubble baths, apparently.

Jenny: I mean, she talks in the bubble bath about how she's gonna figure out who the Key is, because Buffy's only got so many friends so it's gotta be one of them. Why hasn't she spent the last two weeks killing all of Buffy's friends?

Kristin: Agree.

Jenny: And why does she need such a big plan to do it? She's a god!

Kristin: [laughs] I blame the minions, honest to god.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I've never seen such shoddy workmanship [laughs] as the minions.

Jenny: Such shoddy minionry.

Kristin: Yeah. But yeah, Ben has just straight up not shown up for two weeks. And like, you know, I'm sad for Ben that he gets fired. But also, thank fucking god! This guy is not suited for medical care!

Jenny: No, no, no, no, no.

Kristin: He can change into a hell god at any moment! Like, this is not safe. So good decision on Sunnydale Hospital.

Jenny: There's this moment in this conversation and it's not the only moment like this in the episode, where the doctor's like, [sarcastically] "sure, your dog ate your homework. This, that, the other. Maybe there's a wicked demonic creature [Kristin laughs] living inside your body that forces you to do its bidding! But no!" These, like—these direct fake-outs. It happens later with the principal and Dawn where she's like, "Dawn—I think we all know Dawn's not just a little girl." [laughter] Like, there's no reason for this stuff to be happening. But it's happening.

Kristin: It is. But also, like, you know—I mean, you know, we don't have to go that deep into this 'cause we talk about it a lot. But we're in Sunnydale and like, I know that the general, like, center—the gooey center of Sunnydale, apart from the Hellmouth, is like the willful ignorance of the population of Sunnydale. But it's still—even if you're like willfully ignorant of something, it seems especially atrocious and hilarious to, like, pretend like demons don't even exist at all.

Jenny: Yeah. Like, who are you trying to protect, sir?

Kristin: You just had—

Jenny: You're only lying to yourself.

Kristin: Literally, you just had a Queller demon, like, suctioning across your ceiling not that long ago. You had a fucking vamp—naked vampire vamping about in your morgue. Like, you—it's not *that* funny to joke about demons, dude. You live on the fucking Hellmouth. [Jenny laughs] Um, so. I think like, the effects department got really bored of changing Ben's face into Glory's face and Glory's face into Ben's face. And they were like, what about a fucking hand morph? So we get this, like—Ben goes in to take off his scrubs. And leave his job, and he's really angry and he feels Glory coming through him. And he's banging his fist on—he's very

Hulk-like—banging his fist, banging his fist, banging his fist. But of course, instead of the like, hairy Hulk hand, he gets the perfectly manicured Glory hand.

Jenny: Bing!

Kristin: I just have a question and I know the answer is metaphysics. But like, how do her nails get done?

Jenny: [simultaneously] How are her nails so tidy? Yeah.

Kristin: And how does she have lipstick on? You know what I mean? Like, is there a dressing room?

Jenny: Well, it feels like the minions do her nails, right? Doesn't that just seem...

Kristin: Definitely the minions do her nails—

Jenny: Maybe when they body swap or whatever—take control, like, they are instantly reverted to like, wherever they left off—

Kristin: Wherever they were.

Jenny: In terms of like, her nails growing out or whatever.

Kristin: Okay. So like, she had just freshly applied lipstick before Ben took over. Ben didn't take the lipstick, Glory kept it for Glory's next arrival.

Jenny: Also, she had control of their shared body for two weeks. He got to work. And then she took over again.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: This feels... out of balance. [Kristin laughs] Didn't she just say in the Previously On that she's losing control of Ben? What the hell?

Kristin: [laughing] She did. She did. She's not—maybe she got right back in there because she had the same thought you had, Jenny, which was, fuck, I had two fucking weeks. I didn't do anything. I better get my ass in gear. [laughter]

Jenny: She looked up from playing Skyrim and was like, blink, blink. Two weeks have gone by.

Kristin: Except for... that's a bad theory because the next scene, we go to fucking Glory's and she's in the bubble bath. [laughing] So she obviously didn't get straight to work.

Jenny: It is the notorious bubble bath scene. We know from talking to Clare that this water is ice cold!

Kristin: [laughs] Poor Clare.

Jenny: Poor Clare! So brave, so strong. She's drinking a mimosa. She's got a Godiva chocolate assortment all laid out. The minions—

Kristin: She's got—like, there's a—there's like a three—they're all blindfolded. And there's like a chocolate-mimosa-loofa is to frankincense, myrrh and gold situation happening here, right?

Jenny: Mmhmm. Yep, yep.

Kristin: This is like a three wise men. Do you think that the gold is the mimosa, the myrrh is the loofa and the frankincense is the chocolate?

Jenny: I say frankincense is loofa—

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: Chocolate is myrrh.

Kristin: Chocolate is myrrh. Okay, well, write in.

Jenny: Based on absolutely nothing.

Kristin: [laughing] Bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. Let us know.

Jenny: Yeah, let us know what you think.

Kristin: Um, I fucking *love* that Glory calls Spike "follicly fried vamp." Like, just—sometimes you just wanna chew on the language in this show. And that is one of 'em.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: 'Cause you—the minions have a turn of phrase. They can really go hard on the Glorificus wordage.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: But turns out, Glory can go pretty hard herself.

Jenny: [laughing] Uh-huh. And Glory decides—speaking of going hard—that she—minions can stand aside. She's gonna figure out who the Key is. I don't know why... again, why doesn't she just kill all of them?!

Kristin: I mean, honestly. Like, these guys are horrible at their job. Get rid of them. We don't need 'em.

Jenny: Yeah. On over to the principal's office. It's unclear where Dawn will go to school after she gets out of middle school. [Kristin laughs] Because didn't the high school burn down? But let's not worry about that right now. Principal Stevens is a dream.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: She's got strong, maternal vibes.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: I feel like she's tough but fair.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah. She's very—

Jenny: I have a good feeling about her.

Kristin: Really, definitely puts Principal Flutie to shame, I'm gonna say. Like, I really—

Jenny: Oh my god. Flutie.

Kristin: You know, I really feel like she's doing a better job here. Also, just a small moment of silence for Dawn's blue pleather button-down shirt?

Jenny: I feel like... it's more of a jacket than a button-down.

Kristin: It's... plastic? Is it—what is it made out of?

Jenny: It seems to be, right, like a sort of denim jacket pattern, hewn from plastic. Why?

Kristin: [laughs] So obviously, like, the crux of this moment and where it leads us is that Dawn is—Dawn is stealing earrings, as we saw last episode. Dawn is cutting class. You know, the combination—the one-two punch of finding out you're a mystical Key and then losing your mom is a lot. And she is acting out, understandably.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: And the principal—when she leaves, when Dawn leaves the room—essentially says to Buffy what Buffy, I think, already knows. You to have, like, sort of take care of this kid because otherwise, they're gonna send somebody to take her away. You know, you have to, like, show that you're fit to be a guardian for Dawn. Which like, begs the fucking question. I know that this is, like, a shit dad. I know her dad is a shitty dad, but her mother literally died. Like, this guy doesn't fucking show—he doesn't show up? He doesn't—like, nothing? He's just letting these girls take care of themselves? What the fuck?! Play the fucking jingle! I'm so mad.

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

Kristin: I had—I have another place in the episode for the jingle, Jenny, and I'll play it again. But I just got real worked up.

Jenny: I... I know there's no stopping you.

Kristin: Whew!

Jenny: But yeah, Hank Summers is a real piece of work. [Kristin laughs] Also, it's important to note that, like, we—while this is where Buffy gets this information, we don't expressly know exactly what's been said. Which kind of, like, you know—when you find out definitely what she said—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Towards the end of the episode, it makes Buffy's behavior between now and then—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Make a lot more sense, but—

Kristin: Yes. And I think—

Jenny: We'll get there in a minute.

Kristin: I think that Buff—I mean, I don't know. I guess I knew before rewatching today what the deal was. But I do feel like, if you're really sitting with where Buffy is in this narrative arc, her behavior makes sense even before you get that reveal. I mean, she's got—she's always had a lot on her shoulders. You know, AKA the weight of the world. And it's even heavier now, so I have space for her. You know who I don't have space for, Jenny?

Jenny: Well, oof. Is it Anya in her worst episode ever—in her worst episode since she granted a wish for Cordelia?

Kristin: Seriously. Anya is, like, really, really, incredibly xenophobic, I believe is the specific word that you would use for Anya here. Xander uses "prejudiced." She's really—like, I don't understand how she wound up on this track of American history. But here she is. She's spot on about her first observation, which is the ideology that has shaped this country. Willow is like, "democracy?" and Anya is like, "capitalism. A free market dependent on the profitable exchange—"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: "Of goods for currency." Correct.

Jenny: Anya, no! Anya.

Kristin: But that is—but that is correct. This country is founded in the exchange of goods for currency, in many ways. And Jenny, you and I are sort of like in the middle of a read for our reading and discussion group of Ijeoma Oluo's *So You Want to Talk About Race*. And reading that and some other texts, really digging into how this country was built, how race was created around the idea that there had to be some way to get free labor from black people to make this country run.

Jenny: Ugh.

Kristin: Like, this country is rooted in these systems of racism and capitalism is woven in there too. So Anya's not wrong, it's just that she's on the celebratory side of the line, of like, yay America! And like, you know, throws in a comment about like, French people not tipping, as like a—sort of like a nod to where, like, as an American, I believe that like, we are better than everybody else outside of the United States of America kind of deal.

Jenny: Yeah. Anya's like, digging deep and coming up with fucking—some fistfuls of like, MAGA vibes.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And... it sucks. Anya, you know I love you, but this is not what we love to see from you.

Kristin: It isn't, and I'm gonna say it, Jenny. I also wish for more here from Xander and Willow. Because I took special note of the fact that—like, 'cause Xander calls her out, right? He's like, you know, hey Anya, how about we be a little bit less prejudiced. And the thing he says right after that is, "not us, just you." And I just feel like, mmm, hey man, this is a great opportunity for you to all talk about the systems of oppression that exist in this country and really help Anya to understand—

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: And better educates yourselves. Don't put it all on Anya. She's learning from within the system that she exists inside of, so you know, talk about it, guys.

Jenny: Yeah, she's essentially a baby, in a lot of ways.

Kristin: She is. She is. She is. It's like, I grew up learning that Christopher Columbus sailed the fucking ocean blue, goddamn it.

Jenny: Yeah, but she's like, hitting all the—like, she's hitting the American exceptionalism. She's hitting "I heart free market economies." She's hitting ageism and xenophobia. She's really... doing it all.

Kristin: She is.

Jenny: And please stop.

Kristin: Thankfully, Buffy and Dawn enter to stop her, uh, downward spiral into xenophobia and other forms of prejudice. And—so Buffy and Dawn enter. And Xander is really, like, very supportive. As supportive as a bra, is I believe [laughing] the message that he's trying to get across to—

Jenny: He can't—he can't think of anything that's supportive other than a bra.

Kristin: We talked about jockstraps last week. They're supportive.

Jenny: We talked about jockstraps last week, I'm thinking about, like, flying buttress, [Kristin laughs] maybe Keystone bridge, you know? A Baby Bjorn. Um. [Kristin laughs] Buffy wants to have a grown-ups talk with Giles, in which she's like, "Giles, can *you* be the grown-up? I don't wanna be." Which makes a lot of sense because she's fucking, like, 20 years old! And like, suddenly is thrust into this position where she's the guardian—she's transitioning right from sister to guardian.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: And that is a huge deal. She has not—I mean, she, weirdly, has had this, like, unimaginable responsibility for, you know, the last few years. But she hasn't had a responsibility *this* unimaginable—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Before. And it's massive.

Kristin: Yeah, it is massive. And as, like—you know, I don't know how I would feel as, like, a 20-year-old watching this show. But I know that as an almost 40-year-old watching this show, I—there's this moment when Buffy says to Giles, like, "You're more grown up than me." Right? And like, if you're watching that and you're 20, maybe you think that. Like, maybe you think that Giles is more grown up. But as the almost 40-year-old that I am, I watched it and was like, yeah, no. Like, none of us are ever—we're always just making it up as we go along. We're always just, like, doing what we can do. And Giles is, I think, correct. I think—I'm—[sighs] part of me thinks that Giles maybe should have given her a beat, like, a little bit more leeway in this moment. Maybe steer her towards that way, but Giles knows Buffy. And maybe what Buffy needed here was the line drawn, and Giles draws it.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: He's gonna draw a line with a minion later that's gonna make me have to fan myself, but. We'll get there.

Jenny: Uh-huh. Yeah. What's important, I think, is the way that he says, I may be a grown-up but you're her family.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: So like. Mmhmm.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Yes. Okay, so this is all great. Then Buffy comes out from the back, after making one more last ditch attempt. Are you sure, like, you don't wanna do it for me, Giles? [Kristin laughs] And like, he's like, no, no, no. Teach a man to fish.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Teach a Slayer to fish.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And Dawn is standing in the middle of a human triangle that is being laid out by the bodies of Xander, Willow and Tara. They're doing active geometry. Buffy is furious! I don't buy, actually, that Buffy is like, so... so scared that, like, Willow would be like, hey, I've been reading about how kids learn math better when you stimulate their visual learning pattern. That Buffy would still be like, rahh! You don't understand!

Kristin: Oh, I buy it.

Jenny: I don't know. Willow—

Kristin: I buy it because I think—I mean, I think it makes sense when you, like—you know, when any of us try on a new skill, we usually go too hard in one direction before we, like, recalibrate to the middle?

Jenny: [laughs] Yes. Look at Anya, for example.

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah.

Jenny: Her pendulum is fucking in the stratosphere right now.

Kristin: [laughs] But like, I think that it makes sense. I think that like, she's—Buffy is terrified. She doesn't know how to do this thing. She is just sort of like, throwing pasta at the wall, you know? And hoping it fucking sticks. And so I think it makes sense that even though you and I and anyone else probably watching this show can see yes, of course, Willow is making a lot of sense. Of course they're having fun and they're learning, this is so great. I think Buffy's blinders are on and she's just like, if I'm gonna do it, I've gotta fucking do it.

Jenny: Not even delightful geometric wordplay can sway her from this mission!

Kristin: I mean, this is literal Hellmath that's happening here.

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

Jenny: Here's one problem I have though. You better get off that floor! You know what's on the *Magic Box* floor? [Kristin laughs] Probably like, newt dust. And like, residual—uh, chicken's feet toenails. And...

Kristin: Yeah, it's true, it's true.

Jenny: Who knows what you could accidentally doody yourself, rolling around?

Kristin: There's probably some, like, troll... debris from the troll. There's—

Jenny: Definitely, definitely troll sheddings. No doubt, mmhmm.

Kristin: Yeah. There's a lot of stuff in there. I agree. But you know what? The end of—high school and even the beginning of college, I definitely was not super concerned with where my body was in proximity to other perhaps dirty or germ-ridden surfaces—

Jenny: Yeah. The bar was lower. [Kristin laughs] Sure.

Kristin: My—I had a friend at the time who was very extreme in a lot of ways. And that manifested as sheer comedy, a lot of times. And I have this memory of going—so there was like a WB store—no. What's Looney Tunes?

Jenny: WB.

Kristin: Yeah, okay, so—

Jenny: Warner Brothers.

Kristin: There was a Warner Brothers store in the mall.

Jenny: Yep. Yep, yep.

Kristin: And Marvin the Martian was a WB property?

Jenny: Yep!

Kristin: And so there was a Marvin the Martian, like... UFO thingy that you could go inside of. Like, for kids, not for high school students—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And college students. But we went into it all the time, because we thought we were so fucking funny. And one of his favorite jokes was like, if there was something left behind, he would pick it up and put it in his mouth. And there was a french fry on the floor of the Marvin the Martian UFO. And he would make direct eye contact with me and pick up the dirty-ass french fry and put it in his mouth and chew it while looking at me dead in the eyes the whole time. It was funny, but I'm not sure how he's still alive. You know?

Jenny: That's horrifying, but actually, I bet his immunity system is—

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah.

Jenny: His immune system is kickin'!

Kristin: Yeah. I'm sure it is. Okay, so. Willow and Buffy have this really important exchange. 'Cause—oh god, I can't wait to get to the scene with Tara and Willow and their, like, fight. 'Cause I think it's just so beautifully... like, getting from Point A to Point B to Point C to Point D in their argument is just written *wonderfully*.

Jenny: You wanna talk about a world culture fair? That argument is like a relationship, uh, like—

Kristin: Tour de force.

Jenny: Tour of every fight you could possibly have.

Kristin: [laughing] Yes.

Jenny: Just fucking... swing on through!

Kristin: It truly is! It's just like—

Jenny: A glorious journey!

Kristin: And the seed is—like, one of the seeds is like, deeply planted in this exchange between Willow and Buffy. Because you know, Buffy has just lost her mom. Tara, we know, has lost her mom. And so, when Willow is saying, like, okay, but Buffy, just this, but Buffy, just that. Buffy's like, you don't understand. And Willow is already feeling uncertain, as it would turn out, about a lot of ways that she stands in her identities in life. And this is one of them. She's really doubting

how she can show up for Buffy. And she's like, you know, let it go. Come to the World Culture Fair with me. And Buffy's like, no. Like, I have to take care of Dawn now, so that's that.

Jenny: Okay. We get a very quick scene where Glory's like, [dramatically] "so it's her! She's the Key! [Kristin laughs] Muahaha!"

Kristin: Okay—

Jenny: And then she twists her mustache and it's onto the next scene!

Kristin: No, I have a lot to say about this scene, actually.

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: I know it's really—

Jenny: Alright.

Kristin: It's really short. Okay, maybe not a lot, but I have something to say about this scene. Because—[laughs] Glory is like, okay, so it's Tara? And her line, I think, specifically is like, "wow, the monks made the Key with quirks, foibles and passions." And I feel like what she's actually saying is, "the monks made the Key into a lesbian?" [laughs] Like—

Jenny: Yeah, the monks made a gay witch Key?

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah.

Jenny: So cute!

Kristin: Like, how un-monk-like of them. Like, how inventive.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Really throwing me off the scent. And her delight in, like, the fact that Tara is the Key and is also a witch and a lesbian is very fun and of course, then ends in devastation. But we'll get there. For now, just let me have my... titter.

Jenny: You may. [both laugh]

Kristin: Thank you. Jenny and I usually record over the phone only. And we are recording over video this time, [laughing] and I feel like we just keep staring off

into the distance at each other to see, what are you doing? What am I doing? What are you doing?

Jenny: Yeah, how am I doing? [laughter] Okay. So. Tara and Willow having a conversation. They're talking about the Buffy and Dawn stuff.

Kristin: Oof.

Jenny: And Willow is like, yo, Buffy's being like, really hard on Dawn and it's like—it's tough to watch. Tara's like, trying to express that she might understand a little bit of where Buffy might be coming from. And Willow kind of like takes it in a, right, like, I don't—I'm not in the club, essentially. Like, I don't know what you guys know. So like, you know, how could my opinion be valid?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: But then they almost salvage it and pull it back.

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: And they're like... talking, you know, just talking, talking, talking. But then, oh no! [laughs]

Kristin: Oh no.

Jenny: Oh no!

Kristin: Oh, no.

Jenny: Willow says she feels like the "junior partner" because Tara's been doing everything longer, including gay stuff and witch stuff.

Kristin: Mmhmm. Which is like... real.

Jenny: Whew!

Kristin: I mean, we'll get into the gay stuff. Once you—once you take us on this tour de—

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah, just—

Kristin: Queer argument.

Jenny: Please keep your hands inside the vehicle [Kristin laughs] until we get to the end. Tara mentions that it frightens her how powerful Willow is getting, and then they talk about Freudian slips. A little nod to Professor Walsh. [Kristin laughs] Tara is worried. Willow is super defensive. Then there's this whole thing about like, oh, you think I'm gonna go back to boys town? And like, Tara's like, should I? And Willow's like, sorry I didn't—how dare she say this—establish my lesbo street cred. [Kristin laughs] Before we got in a relationship. You're just the only woman I've ever fallen in love with, so how could you take me seriously? This is... I'm tired! [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, it's a lot. But it's—it's—okay. So from like a—I think, A, from a writing standpoint, it's done very beautifully. I think most of us can watch this argument and if you have been in any relationship and gotten in a fight inside of that relationship—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: You know that this is usually the precise shape.

Jenny: Yeah. It's a slippery slope!

Kristin: Where you're like—

Jenny: It's a sobering mirror to look into.

Kristin: You get on the phone with your friend and you're like, we just got in a fight. And they're like, what did you fight about? And you're like, I don't know! [laughs] I don't even know! Like—

Jenny: What *didn't* we fight about?

Kristin: We somehow fought about everything except for really, all she did was leave a Cheerio on the floor. Like, I don't know how we wound up where we are, but we got here. And I just like, from that vantage point, wow. Great job, writers' room. And, um—and great, of course, job to both actors here. But I also think that this is a really interesting place that we go. We—I don't know if you know this, but we're both queer. So we have a little bit of experience with—

Jenny: Huh!

Kristin: Some of the—some of the topics that are hit on in this episode. And they get—they start at a point where Willow's feeling insecure. And I think it makes a lot

of sense that like, one sort of press on that insecure button for her is gonna take her to this larger piece of insecurity—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Of feeling—and she couches it in both witchcraft and being queer. But we know that one is a metaphor for the other in this show. So she's just—she's feeling... like perhaps she's not enough of any of the things. She's not enough of a friend. She's not enough of a witch. She's not enough of a queer person.

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: And Tara—the thing that I find hard to buy in this is Tara's participation in that, even for a moment. I just—Tara as a character does not seem like somebody who would wonder or doubt about Willow's intentionality or, like, sexuality.

Jenny: Well, I think—I'll direct you back to New Moon Rising.

Kristin: Mmhmm. Yeah. That's true.

Jenny: You know? And there was—you know, there was some insecurity from Tara about like, the inevitable return of Oz.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And you know, things went the way they went. But like, you know, that—I could see that still being in the back of her mind. Also—

Kristin: That's true.

Jenny: Also, Willow is like—[laughs] Willow's really working overtime, bringing up like, Thing 1, Thing 2, Thing 3, Thing 4. And after a certain point, you know—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: It only makes sense that Tara will get riled up and be like, I mean, you're saying all this shit, should I be worried?

Kristin: That's true.

Jenny: Like, what the fuck?

Kristin: That actually—that is a really good point. That is a really good point, that like, it's very obvious that Willow *is* wrestling with some stuff. So that might be the thing that shakes Tara. And you know, right now—you know, it's the year 2020 and I think the way that Jenny and I talk inside of the podcast and the way that I think most of us are talking within our circles of people that we know, is a very different place when it comes to bisexuality than where we were in 2001 as a queer community. That's not to say that there were not people who understood bisexuality to be a real and valid sexuality. But it is to say that many of us did not.

And like, I don't think that I would have said, like, [laughing] "I don't believe that bisexuals exist." I had come out as bisexual. But I definitely had been steeped in a—in—like, my particular corner of queer culture was very, very suspicious of people who were like, girls who were gonna date girls but they had only dated dudes before that girl. Like, there was this really, really deep distrust and it's where so much of the erasure of the bisexual community and bisexual people, you know, is rooted. This is where I wanted to play the Patriarchy jingle because I just feel like it all comes back to that.

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

Jenny: I know we've had a lot of theoretical conversations about, like, Willow's identity and how would Willow's identity be—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Written, um, today. Uh. And I can't remember if we have... I can't remember if we've, like, touched on this specific thing or not. But it's also not out of the question that... a lot of people who identify as strictly lesbian—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Do date men and like, having—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: You know, meaningful relationships with men also doesn't preclude you from—

Kristin: Mmhmm!

Jenny: Identifying as a lesbian—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: When you want to identify as a lesbian.

Kristin: A hundred percent. A hundred per—and you know, we have touched on it. But I think, like, this is one of those things that will come up and will sort of ring different bells on the platter. [laughs] As we go through it each time.

Jenny: I don't keep my bells on a platter, actually.

Kristin: Oh, where do you keep—

Jenny: You keep your bells on a platter?

Kristin: Yeah! Where do you keep your bells?

Jenny: On the bell rack!

Kristin: [laughing] Oh! Of course.

Jenny: They're all on the bell rack. They're in the bell free.

Kristin: [laughing] The bell rack. But yeah. I mean—and I think—I think that we've—we have a long way to go. But we have made pretty big advances in media and I think that we would see—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: I think a lot, when I talk about bisexual characters, about *The Magicians* in—was it Season 2 where they, like, aged together?

Jenny: I think that was Season 3.

Kristin: Season 3.

Jenny: Where Quentin and Eliot have a life together?

Kristin: Yeah. And like, there was something so powerful about that storyline. Sorry if you haven't watched *The Magicians*. It's not—I mean, it's—it's a magical show so it's not like *that* much of a spoiler. But the sort of like—fluidity of sexuality that existed in that particular storyline—and in several others in that show—as somebody who has watched television for a long time, craving for, like, a gay character, period—was so powerful to me. Because it really—to me, it was like,

there is—progress has happened here. The fact that these characters are as fluidly—like, allowed to exist as fluidly as they are in this universe. Granted, it's magical, but still. That doesn't exist here as much, I don't think, for Willow and Tara.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: You know, and that is a product of where we were in time, but it's also a product of who the fuck is in the writers' room. We'll always come back there, right? It's like—

Jenny: Sure.

Kristin: How many people in the fucking writers' room are queer or know or are talking to queer people? So. Anyhow. They fight.

Jenny: They fight. Okay, so. There are many signs of spring, right? The first blossom... [Kristin laughs] of a flowering tree.

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: Uh, the first songbird to alight and chirp. Outside. Your house. [Kristin laughs] A cluster of minions at your window, [Kristin laughs harder] observing as you hang out at the dining table and come up with systems for your little sister-slash-mystical Key to do her chores and stuff.

Kristin: I'm so glad you made this jingle, Jenny.

[Jingle plays to the same tune as the "Detective Angel" jingle]
Detective minions!

Jenny: Okay. I know that Buffy is going through a lot. But can we all just acknowledge what a shitty job she's doing, folding those dish towels?

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: She is... they are...

Kristin: She's not focusing.

Jenny: So askew.

Kristin: Mmhmm. She's not—

Jenny: Yeah, she's not focusing.

Kristin: She's not. She's doing, honestly—actually, I'm glad you said that. Because she's kinda doing the same thing with her hands that she was doing with Professor Lillian and the slide projector, you know? She's just fidgeting. She can't keep her hands—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Still and unoccupied, because she's trying on new roles that she's never tried on before. She doesn't know how to, like, sit in them, bodily or otherwise.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: I—[inhales] I want to give like a standing ovation to Michelle Trachtenberg for this performance. She captures—we talked about this a lot in The Boiler Room when Joanna Robinson and I did a watch of My So-Called Life, of the space that Claire Danes occupied where she was so—like, she could just become so childlike so quickly, in this way.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Like, really straddling the line of, like, putting your toes into teenage—being a teenager. Like, grappling with like, adult-er issues and what have you. She just lost her mom, she's a mystical Key, she has a lot on her plate. But then when Buffy says to her, "they might take you away from me," the way that her face drops is like, she's instantly this little kid. And you see, and you remember, that she is—even though she's a mystical Key. She is so little! And she's so scared. And it's heartbreaking and it's just a really brilliant performance. So good job, Michelle Trachtenberg.

Jenny: Mmhmm. Yeah!

[AD BREAK]

Kristin: Oh my god, are you ready to go to the World Culture Fair, Jenny?

Jenny: [exhales] Is anyone ever ready to go to the World Culture Fair?

Kristin: You know, this World Culture Fair is, um—we really, like, did a lot of freeze-framing to find out what cultures were at the World Culture Fair.

Jenny: Here are the cultures. Are you ready? [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs] I'm ready.

Jenny: Um. Little bit of China.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Little bit of India.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Lot of cheerleaders.

Kristin: Yup. Oh, don't forget France.

Jenny: [laughing] France, I missed! What do we see?

Kristin: [laughs] There's a—it's literally, like, it's—there's—so we're gonna talk a little bit about the—I know Jenny is very excited to talk about some of the research that we did with our producer, Alba, on the Chinese dragon dance and the Chinese lion dance. I think we have agreed that this is the dragon dance that we're getting here, that we're seeing that. But outside of that, there's a Buddha. There's some flags of various nations.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: There's a tiny replica of the Eiffel Tower. And so many cheerleaders. And then lots of balloon archways, which are really expensive. Just so you know. When we got one for Prom once, and I was like, wow. These cost a lot of money.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: In all USA, red, white and blue... [laughs] colors. So on the one hand, I'm thrilled that, like, no one is representing a culture that is not theirs. We hope. You know, like, I'm happy that like, if these are the people who showed up and signed up for the World Culture Fair, that they weren't like, well, we need more cultures so can you just like, do other cultures? I'm glad that didn't happen here at Sunnydale... College.

Jenny: But it does—it does kinda smack of, like, the props department like, raiding—

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: Whatever they had on the lot.

Kristin: And just, why?

Jenny: And they were like, okay, let's get this statue and...

Kristin: Like, why—why is the biggest question I have. Because if you're gonna—and this is kind of the criticism—like, the marrow of most of the criticism with, like, how this show deals with culture, race—is that like, if you're gonna make the choice, then make it for a reason and actually—

Jenny: For a reason, do some research.

Kristin: Do the thing. Like, you could have just made—they—you could have had them have a carnival. You could have had them have—

Jenny: Craft fair, carnival.

Kristin: Fucking fried dough. Get some fucking Zeppelis up in here. Like, it doesn't have to be—it didn't have to be a World Culture Fair. And so like, the—I think it's the combination of choosing that and doing nothing with it that is the, like, biggest piece of the issue here.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: So... back at the Magic Box, we get a little cut. And it's just a tiny little cut, but it's real cute. It reminds me of, like, my therapist telling me at one point, like, "you should have a little corner that's just yours to go to, Kristin. It'll make you feel safe and whole." [laughs]

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And like, Willow's in her little corner with her pillows and her beautiful velvet dress.

Jenny: It's a sad beanbag magic pillow corner.

Kristin: It's cute! I like it.

Jenny: I mean. It would be cute under other circumstances, but she is—

Kristin: She's very sad.

Jenny: She's having a hard time.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: We also see Giles hand Anya a cup of tea that he just—that he's made both of them tea and he's handing her a cup.

Kristin: Aww!

Jenny: That's, like, in the pan before you get to Willow in the corner of sadness.

Kristin: Aww.

Jenny: And it's sweet.

Kristin: That is sweet. You know what jingle we haven't played in a damn long time? Giles' green fucking mug jingle, and I think we all deserve it.

Jenny: Oh yeah, he's green mugging it up this ep.

[THE GREEN MUG SONG jingle plays]
Well, it's a green mug song
From the bottom of our hearts
This very handsome glassware
Will answer every mug prayer
And Giles can drink... in... style
And Giles can drink... in... style

Kristin: So we get to, of course, the part that we all dread getting to, which is where Glory sits down next to Tara. And we see their hands thread as though they're about to beautifully move another vending machine. But alas, no.

Jenny: No.

Kristin: It is Glory, Tara sees that it's Glory. And she says, "Is this seat taken?"

Jenny: Bahhhhhh!

Kristin: Cut to commercial.

Jenny: While we're on this commercial break, lemme tell you what I learned about the dragon dance. The dragon, right, is a symbol of China and an important part of Chinese culture. It symbolizes wealth, power and wisdom. And they're believed to bring good luck. The origin of the dragon dance can be dated back to the Han dynasty, which ran from 206 BC to 220 AD. It was—back then, it was used in a ceremony for worshiping ancestors and praying for rain. And then it gradually over time developed into an entertainment activity. And then, by the time we get to the Tang dynasty and the Song dynasty, which together ran from 618 to 1279, it had become a common ceremonial activity in festivals, such as Chinese New Year. The... are you ready? [laughs] For some Hellmath? For some dragon math?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: The—so the costume is generally made of materials like grass, bamboo, paper and cloth. Odd numbers of the dragon joints are regarded as auspicious. So people often make nine-jointed dragons, eleven-jointed dragons. Sometimes even a 29-jointed dragon. But dragons that have more than 15 joints are too heavy for the dance, so they're used for display.

Kristin: I would like to learn more about sort of the odd number as auspicious. Because like, I know... I didn't know about the dragon and I was fascinated by it. And something that I do know from my history as somebody who is Italian and has Italian, you know, aunts and uncles and a grandfather who came over from Italy, is that if you're Italian and you're drinking Sambuca, you put three coffee beans in. You never, ever put two. You always put three. And it is connected to it being an odd number, that that's—that's where the luck comes from, that's where the life comes from, that's where the—and I'm just saying that because that happens to be—

Jenny: Odd numbers just feel better, right?

Kristin: But like—but there's gotta be—

Jenny: But why?

Kristin: Somebody out there has stopped their car, pulled to the side of the road and is writing us a fucking email about, like—maybe some—and maybe this is part of where it comes from. Like, maybe what you're talking about—maybe—you know, but like—where does it—is it like the gourd? Is it just, everyone just understood all together that odd numbers were better than even?

Jenny: Mmm. Yeah, where does it all come from? Maybe it's like, oh no, the espresso beans, like, if there's two of them, they'll pair together and there will be

no espresso bean for me to commune with. [Kristin laughs] But if there's three, two can hang out and then I can hang out with the third.

Kristin: Well, the Italian—the connection to Italian—like, I always—there's a pretty easy line to draw from Italian to Catholic or Christian. I mean, usually Catholic. And so like, I think there's the trio of the father, son, holy spirit, that's a three. There's a three—but those things, like, are—Catholicism, obviously, like—the whole of Catholicism is rooted in religions that came way before it. And so, like, I just feel that if you dig and you dig and you dig and you dig, you're gonna find some really interesting shit about odd numbers. And I wanna know more, and I don't right now, but we can all go on the odd number journey together.

Jenny: Can I tell you that—wow! [laughs] Can I tell you that the record set for the longest dragon [Kristin gasps] was 5,605 meters in Hong Kong. That breaks down to 18,389 feet. You know, .11. [both laugh]

Kristin: Please stop—

Jenny: What's the right way to say that?

Kristin: We have to play the fucking Hellmath jingle for your ass right now.

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

Kristin: Okay, so. Jenny, thank you for some of that history. And we're gonna be doing more Mailbags in the main feed, for many reasons. And one of them is that we surprisingly do not know everything, and we would love to hear from some of you directly. Especially if you have a history, you know, where you participated in a dragon dance or a lion dance or, you know, if this is part of your history, we'd love to hear from you so we can talk more about it.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Okay. So. Here's something that we can all identify with, I think. Um, everybody wants fucking petrified hamsters and they're never fucking happy with them, Jenny. I'm so—

Jenny: Relatable! Content!

Kristin: Oh my god. I mean—

Jenny: What's—? What's—? What's? Why? [Kristin laughs] What's? Anybody doing—what recipe, what spells calls for petrified hamsters? I don't—

Kristin: How do you—

Jenny: Buy it. This feels like an invention of *convenience*.

Kristin: How do you petrify a hamster?

Jenny: Threaten to take its food away, am I right? [Kristin laughs] Okay, so... petrified wood forms when fallen trees... get washed down a river and buried under layers of mud, ash from volcanoes and other materials over millions of years. These—oh god, sorry, wait. Hang on—

Kristin: So you see what I'm saying though? Over millions of years. So are you telling me that in order to petrify a hamster, you have to cover it in mud and dust and soot and whatever the hell else you said and—

Jenny: Ooh! Ooh!

Kristin: Water and then millions of years pass—

Jenny: Ooh! No! You could get the hamster to look at Medusa.

Kristin: Ohh!

Jenny: Bam.

Kristin: [laughs] Okay. Um. Wow, anyway. Moving right along, Giles and Willow—

Jenny: Ooh! Or a basilisk. [Kristin laughs] Okay, I'm done.

Kristin: Giles and Willow are having a conversation about arguments. It's very sweet. I love—you know, we don't get a ton of like, Willow/Giles bonding moments these days. And they have such a long history and they love each other.

Jenny: Mmhmm!

Kristin: And it's very sweet to see Willow go to Giles and be like, I'm really upset, like, we fought. We'd never fought until today. And there's this, like—this exchange is heartbreaking in, like, the Buffy way, where Giles says, like, don't worry, the quarrel is over. And then you'll know that you can fight without the world ending. And it's like, womp-womp! Like, we know how this is actually gonna turn out and

Willow *isn't* gonna learn that she can have a fight without the world ending. Because this is gonna end—this episode is gonna end with Tara, like, really, really, horribly attacked by Glory. And so her first, like, lesson in what happens when you fight with your girlfriend is something horrible. Like, reminiscent of Buffy sleeping with Angel and finding out that, like, he was actually a soulless vampire because of that. So I just don't love the lessons that these Sunnydale kids are learning.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But I'm ready to get real sexy with Rupert Giles right now. Because—

Jenny: Yeah! This is a good scene for Giles.

Kristin: I don't know that I have ever found him as attractive as when he opens the door—he—no! He goes over to the door and he says "this too." And then he opens the door, slams it into the minion's head. "Shall pass."

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: Anya is—feels the same as I do. She's like, wow. [both laugh] Hot! Giles is so commanding with this minion. Like, I don't even know what's come over him, but it is... grab your fans, you know? Grab your little—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Those fans that have the water bottle attached to 'em so you can mist yourself, because whew!

Jenny: Yeah. This is some serious Ripper business.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And, you know, the minion's going on and on about, "I'll never talk, you can't make me talk! Mahh, Glorificus, mahh!" [Kristin laughs] And Giles is like, very slow and steady. And is like—without missing a single beat, is like, "Willow, Anya, grab something from over there." And the second their backs are turned, it's just like, minion scream, minion compliance. [Kristin laughs] Very efficient!

Kristin: He picked up some of Drusilla's torture—Angel and Drusilla's torture techniques, you think?

Jenny: Ohh, no.

Kristin: Oh, I don't know. Anyway. We find out from this minion, who—this minion is akin to Wesley in *Bad Girls*. He's like, take whatever you want! Take whatever you need! [laughter] Don't hurt me! And we find out—*they* find out that Glory thinks that Tara is the Key. And Willow—Willow goes—I mean. A lot of credit to Willow, because—you know, some of us in the face of terror just—you know, deconstruct and fall to the floor, and some of us activate. And Willow really activates in this moment. She is like, barking orders at everybody. She's grabbing the things she needs to grab. And she's—

Jenny: She grabs her, like, black, long coat that I think has kind of like a feather boa-y—

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah.

Jenny: Type collar. I don't know if she needed *that*.

Kristin: I agree. [laughing] She probably didn't need that.

Jenny: But off she goes!

Kristin: Off she goes. And then the—return to Glory and Tara on this bench. This is brutal! Last episode, last week, we talked a little bit about like, the sort of brutal view and vision of Spike's face after he was beaten by Glory.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: This is an extension of that. This is, like—we are no longer, you know, just seeing, like, oh no! Somebody's fallen down. Or like, oh no, you know, a stake and the vampire turns to dust. Like, they're really going very graphically to show us the violence that Glory is bringing to the Scoobies. And like, we're in real danger here and this is just disgusting. She breaks like all the bones in her hand and—

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: Squeezes them so—like, she's crushing her hand so much that it's like, bleeding on the bench. [Jenny shudders] It's really, really awful.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But Tara—you know, who we already love—there's few things more powerful to me in a character than, like, you know, watching what we saw from Spike last episode and what we're seeing from Tara here. The willingness to sacrifice your own pain and potentially your own life for the greater good, which is

essentially what this is all about, right? That they're trying to save the world and so, are you willing to put yourself on the line? The fucking minion? Not at all. Tara? A hundred percent. She's not gonna tell Glory who the fucking Key is.

Jenny: We also, in this scene, get the first explanation of what exactly happens to you when Glory puts her fingers in your brain.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And it sounds... so bad.

Kristin: Yeah, you know, Glory—and Clare Kramer does a really great job with this monologue. And you can tell from her delivery that this is—sort of like, it almost seems like she has like a symbiotic relationship to the people whose brains she's sucking, in the sense of like, when she goes farther and farther away from, like, eating—we'll call it. 'Cause I think that's what she—she says she's hungry.

Jenny: Blegh.

Kristin: Right? She's getting deeper and deeper, basically, into this feeling.

[Clip from episode plays]

Glory: You think your hand hurts? Imagine what you'd feel with my fingers wiggling in your brain. It doesn't kill you. What it does... is make you feel like you're in a noisy little dark room. Naked and ashamed. And there are things in the dark that need to hurt you because you're bad. Little pinching things that go in your ears and crawl on the inside of your skull. And you know if the noise and the crawling would stop, that you could remember how to get out. But you never, ever will.

Kristin: Again, she's telling Tara what to expect, but she's saying it from a place of, I've been there. And so you kind of learn or it's confirmed, more so—like you said, Jenny—that this is what it feels like for the people that she is attacking. And also, it is what it feels like for her, the longer she goes without feeding.

Jenny: Oof. It's not great, Kristin.

Kristin: It's not. And to, like we said, Tara—you know, she also learns that Tara is not the Key by licking Tara's blood. She can taste that Tara is, you know, a human, not a Key.

Jenny: Just a person. Yeah.

Kristin: A witch. But not a Key. And Willow comes—this is, like... heart wrenching. Willow is, like, running, running, running through this crowd of people. She's trying so hard to get—oh my god, do you know what it reminds me of, actually? A bit. Is—spoilers for Killing Eve—but the first season of—

Jenny: Wait! Okay, first season, fine.

Kristin: [laughs] The first season of Killing Eve when she is—she goes to that nightclub in Germany. And her partner is—

Jenny: Oh, yeah. Bill!

Kristin: Bill is through the crowd and she's just—there's so many people and she can't move fast enough to get to him. And she witnesses—[Jenny groans] I'll just say what happens to him, so that I won't completely spoil it. But this is that.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It's like, you know, Willow is desperate to get to Tara quick enough, but there are so many people and a full dragon dance happening between her and Tara. And she screams, and she's like, "Tara," and then she says, "No" as she sees it happen. And it's just like, Alyson Hannigan... squared. Cubed. I don't even know. It's like—it's like, too much. It's Alyson Hannigan to the Alyson Hannigan'th power, with this scream. And it's so devastating and Glory is gone. And they—production gladly—I'm so glad that they invested the money in this shot because it is so beautiful. That Willow is holding Tara and Tara is saying, you know, "it's dirty, it's all dirty," echoing some of what Glory's told us. And the camera just like, goes up into the sky and you see them from above. And you see Willow holding Tara and it is just so much.

Jenny: Yeah. How dare you, Rebecca Rand Kirshner?

Kristin: Yeah. I agree.

Jenny: How fucking dare you.

Kristin: Okay, so. We'll add some levity to that devastation. Because what I love in the next scene is that they're at the fucking hospital. The same doctor, it's—this doctor is very busy at the Sunnydale Hospital. And they're like, Tara needs to stay for the night. And the doctor looks at Willow. And looks at Tara.

Jenny: Classic!

Kristin: Looks at Willow, and looks at Tara. And is like—

Jenny: "Ah, you guys, uh, sisters?"

Kristin: "She's your... sister?"

Jenny: Hey!

Kristin: And like, you know, there's a lot of things I'm thankful for about the, like, time in which I live, as a queer person, where I can speak to other queer people and even have consumed media that called out this phenomena, to know that this happens to queer women across the globe. People just see a connection, but because of the hetero-patriarchy, they cannot piece it together. They must... be sisters. I always hear—I'll play you what I hear.

[La Vie Bohème A from Rent plays]

Maureen: And wipe the speakers off before you pack.

Joanne: Yes, Maureen.

Maureen: Well, hurry back. [they kiss]

Mr. Grey: Sisters?

Maureen: We're close.

Kristin: Willow has a great answer to "she's your sister?" She says, "She's my everything." Which... [Jenny whines] nail it—nailed it, Willow! Um.

Jenny: Xander and Giles are like, we hate the hospital, it's dreadful. And Anya's like, "Yeah, it's like communism."

Kristin: [laughs] Fucking Anya!

Jenny: Anya, no!

Kristin: No. No. Anya has one good moment in this entire episode and it'll happen in the hospital briefly. But we're not there quite yet. This particular scene in the hospital ends with Willow saying "I'm so scared." And it sort of cuts us into Spike's—where Spike and Dawn are. But I just, like, over—

Jenny: Yeah, Spike is like, babysitting in like the *caverns* of Sunnydale or something.

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah, to keep—to keep her hidden. She's a mystical Key, everybody's after her.

Jenny: Yep, yep. Stalactites, stalagmites. Mystical Keys.

Kristin: [laughs] Potato, po-tah-to, mystical Keys.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Um, she—the thing that I wanted to say though, before we get to Spike calling Dawn a platelet, which is maybe my favorite thing ever. Is Amber Benson and Amber Benson's acting and performance in this. And the way that she gives us Tara after the attack of Glory. She does a really, really, powerfully beautifully job of—of like... basically gutting us all and like, really bringing the severity of the situation to the forefront.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And I just think—yeah. I mean, Amber Benson is great and she does a lot of great things. She's gonna keep doing a lot of great things—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But this episode, I just feel she is phenomenal. So. Onwards to the platelet.

Jenny: Dawn is scared of herself. Dawn feels fully responsible for what has happened to Spike, you know.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: He's covered in bruises and has a limp. What's happened to Tara. Like, all this stuff, from her perspective, is happening because of her. Which is—[groans]

Kristin: I know, it's—

Jenny: It's just so sad.

Kristin: And I'd actually like to—with your consent, Jenny—play Dawn's monologue here. Because I think it's really—it's powerfully delivered and it's just really beautiful in a devastating way.

Jenny: Absolutely.

[Clip from episode plays]

Dawn: [crying] I'm like a lightning rod for pain... and hurt... and everyone around me suffers and dies. I must be something so horrible... to cause so much pain and evil.

Spike: Rot.

Kristin: Cute, cute, cute line from Spike here. Just like, a lovely little way that he couches this. And he—you know, he tells her immediately she's not evil. And she astutely says, okay, I accept what you're saying but I know that I can't be good. [laughs] And he just says, well, I'm not good and I'm okay. [both laugh] It's just like—sometimes it's really what you need to hear, you know? Just like, level with me, man. Like, I'm not good, maybe you're not good, but like, we're here in this stalagmite, stalactite cave—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: And maybe it'll be alright. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah! Good person for Dawn to be with for this convo.

Kristin: Yeah. Definitely, definitely. So Tara's gonna spend the night in the hospital. Willow's concerned that she might not be able to sleep alone. And this is the moment I was talking about from Anya. "You can sleep with me!" And then the whole room is like, record scratch. [laughs] And she says, "well, that came out a lot more lesbian than I had meant it to." [both laugh] It's a very—very sweet. We need a laugh.

Jenny: [singsong] Yes!

Kristin: You know? I'm sure many of you have spent time—Jenny, I'm sure that you spend time in hospital settings where the mood is dark and bleak. And like, you also—if you've been in those moments, those spaces, and had those experiences, you know that you also laugh harder than, like, you do anywhere else. Like, because it's just—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You're sort of in this, like, extreme emotional place. And so I think we need Anya. We always need Anya in a hospital setting. I'm glad that she's jumping off the "communism is bad" train and jumping onto the "you can sleep with me, Willow!" train. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah! Willow wants to kill Glory, understandably. Buffy's like, you can't! She'll kick your ass. Willow's like, okay but—she does the eyeball emoji in her mind. [Kristin laughs] And she's off to raid the Magic Box, ripping through books, daggers, et cetera!

Kristin: Light magic? Uh, no, no. Gray magic? No. Dark magic? No, no, no. Darkest magic, yes!

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. She cuts the, like, lock open on this book and it flies open with all of its darkest magic, flapping and fluttering—

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny's doing a flapping motion—

Jenny: In a magical breeze.

Kristin: With her hands. This is like—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Definitely the book that Bette Midler has in Hocus Pocus. This probably has a little blinking eye on the back of it.

Jenny: Yep. Yep, yep, yep.

Kristin: And—but in all seriousness, Willow is fucking pissed. And she... wow, okay. So let's just get here, right. She takes her book, she takes her little, like, old school doctor satchel with all of her knives and various accoutrements to Glory's. Glory's feeling a bit buzzy. You and I now have both watched What We Do in the Shadows, this reminded me of some of the lore there, that like, when you—when a vampire in What We Do in the Shadows drinks the blood of a drunk person, they get drunk. And so—

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: Glory here is buzzed from Tara's powers. Willow... shakes the motherfucking entire apartment building. She comes, black eyes, floating through the fucking door—feet, like, cocked inward toward each other. Just fucking what! Wow.

Jenny: Ahhh! Yeah. She just like, fires some lightning bolts directly into Glory after holding her in a tar-like spell.

Kristin: She screams! "I! Owe! You! Pain!" And shoots lightning bolts at Glory. [Jenny exhales] This is serious shit. We've been talking about Willow's magic for a long while. We've been talking about it getting stronger and stronger. This is by far the strongest we have *ever* seen her magic. She is—she is toe-to-toe with a fucking god! Okay?

Jenny: Look. Firing lightning bolts into the hell god that ate the mind of your lover is queer culture, I feel like. [Kristin laughs] Yes?

Kristin: Woo! There it is, folks. There's your sound bite. So Willow has this spell and so I wanna—I'm gonna tease something here. Because we don't have it in place yet, but we're trying to get this place. Because witchcraft, you know—mm, it's seeming to get a little more present in the show. And neither Jenny nor I are established, experienced witches. Jenny isn't a witch at all, I don't think you are. I feel a bit witchy, but I'm very untrained, unpracticed and unstudied. And so what we're looking for is to hopefully get a witch who will do some segments with us, to really dig in and talk about some of what we're seeing here. The accuracy or probably, inaccuracy, of some of the ways in which witchcraft is portrayed. We don't have that person here today, but I did a little research just because I was curious into this—like, the first incantation she says when she spills on through the door.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: She says something like "Kali, Hera, Kronos, Thonic" [sic] is the first list of—maybe gods? I didn't know. And then she says "Cassiel?" Is that how you pronounce it? "By your second star." So I looked up all of those. And I wanna tell you something, Jenny.

Jenny: I'm here.

Kristin: This is the World's Culture Fair of witchcraft spells, because—[laughs]

Jenny: Oh no!

Kristin: Well, and I don't know. This is why we need a witch to talk to us about this. Because I don't know what witchcraft pulls from and—you know, and like, how it brings together—what, Jenny? You're pointing at me, what do you—what would you like to say?

Jenny: Is... does Kali fly around in a cauldron? Or am I thinking perhaps of Baba Yaga?

Kristin: Um, I'm not sure. I'm not sure about a cauldron, actually. Kali is a Hindu goddess. And in—

Jenny: Agh!

Kristin: In Kali's earliest appearance, she was known as the destroyer of evil forces.

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: So—so great. But then you move on to Hera and Kronos. They're both Greek in origin.

Jenny: Oh, man.

Kristin: So Hera is—

Jenny: Hera!

Kristin: Yeah. Hera is a Greek goddess whose focus is women, marriage, family, childbirth. Kronos is a Greek god, god of the harvest. And then Thonic—so I looked up the way that they spell it, like, if you go to the Buffy Wiki. They spell it T-H-O-N-I-C and I couldn't find anything. But if you put a C in front of it—that's what the internet advised me to do—you will get that this is a word that means, like, subterranean and it was used to refer to the deities and spirits of the underworld. Sort of like—so it's not like a specific—and again, you know, write in to us. Bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com, and please correct us, let us know what we're missing.

Then you get to Cassiel, if I'm saying that right. I should, 'cause it was in the damn show. And Cassiel is, like, you know, a lot of things, but one of the seven archangels—is referenced in the Jewish faith, the Christian faith, the Islamic faith. And my favorite part about Cassiel is that the name can be translated to mean one of two things—or maybe one of many, but the two that I read is "speed of God," or—and this is where I get real excited—"God is my anger." [exhales]

Jenny: Ooh!

Kristin: Right? Sexy. [Jenny exhales through lips] Very sexy. So anyway, this is like an amalgamation of all different, you know, faiths, histories, cultures, origins. And I—I'm not ready to say, you know, that witchcraft doesn't do this. But I just wanna—I wanna know. So, you know, write in to us if you are that witch. We'll

happily take applications from our witch listenership. Because we wanna learn more, we wanna know more.

Jenny: Well! You know what's interesting about Hera? Uh, you know, Hera's the wife of Zeus.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: And Zeus is always getting up to some bullshit, like, he'd like, transform into a magnificent, beautiful ox and then he would like, mate with a mortal woman. Or a big sexy swan [Kristin laughs] and he would mate with a mortal woman. Or sometimes I think he took human form thing—basically, he was always banging mortal chicks—

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Jenny: Via a human or animal disguise. [Kristin laughs] And then Hera would invariably find out about it. And then do something terrible to the women. She like, never—

Kristin: To the *women*?

Jenny: To my recollection, she never punished Zeus. [Kristin gasps] She only punished the women, which seems wrong. Especially since she's, like, you know—

Kristin: Hera!

Jenny: All about like, family, et cetera.

Kristin: All of your internalized misogyny, bud!

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Gotta figure that out, talk to Anya.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: She's like the reverse of Anya. Okay, so. I'm glad that you told us that bit, Jenny. It was very delightful. Um. Okay, so back to Spike's very briefly, but very importantly. Because Spike is, once again, our sort of like intuitive voice here.

Jenny: I mean...

Kristin: Guys!

Jenny: Buffy, come on.

Kristin: Of course Willow's gonna go fucking kick Glory's ass or try to. It doesn't matter if her life is on the line. And you know, he says, "I'd do it. Right person, person I loved." And there's awkward—[laughs] "remember when we kissed last episode?" moment.

Jenny: Yeah—err, uh—[clears throat] In theory, anyway. I can't think of anyone right now, but [Kristin laughs]—and then Dawn, who is coming in hot as, like, the show's Spike Jr., I think?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: The unexpected emotionally intelligent—

Kristin: Mm!

Jenny: Little sidekick—says "think, Buffy, if Glory did that to me." And Buffy's like, what! Having, for the first—

Kristin: [simultaneously] I know, I don't like that—

Jenny: This is—this is dumb.

Kristin: It is.

Jenny: It's dumb that she didn't get there on her own.

Kristin: It is. And she—

Jenny: But also, she's got a lot going on.

Kristin: Like, I'm sorry but also, she shouldn't—I can totally understand, like, the parallel of like, the depth of love that Buffy has for Dawn is parallel to the depth of love that Willow has for Tara. But also, like, it's not like Buffy has never loved before. She's literally loved an ancient vampire and sent him to hell, she has the depth of understanding of what happens when you're in love. Like, come on! Like, is—I—whatever, I agree. I don't love that. But anyway, back at Glory's. Willow shouts "shatter!" Now that spell, I can get behind.

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: [laughing] The mirror shatters.

Jenny: Very self-explanatory.

Kristin: And then, before retaliating, Glory rips her own dress off of her body? She couches it in like, "I don't care about this apartment—"

Jenny: Power move!

Kristin: Power move. She fucking rips her dress right off, backhands Willow. She's like, "bag of tricks?" Willow's like, "bag of knives!" This is a great fight. This is a tasty, delectable treat of a fight.

Jenny: Yeah, it's really great. Love seeing—you know, we see Willow starting to lose power, like, the flying knives and the snake spell that kind of disintegrates.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: But she still manages, even when fucking Glory's got a hold of her, she manages to spit in Glory's face!

Kristin: Oof!

Jenny: Nice. Okay, and then we get this sick-ass entrance where Glory's like, you know what they used to do to witches? They used to crucify them. [Kristin laughs] And then—she's gonna stab Willow, which is not crucifixion. [Kristin laughs] But—it's so weird. But then her wrist is grabbed by Buffy, who says, "They used to bow down to gods." Glory laughs in this—

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: Maniacal way—she is so delighted and tickled to see Buffy.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: This kind of like, really strongly reminds me of the way that Callisto, who is—

Kristin: Hmm.

Jenny: Xena's sort of like—one of her nemeses, you know?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And who has a lot of the same power that Xena has, but who is way—you know, just totally disconnected—like, her whole reason for being is to try to kill Xena. But she also feels this, like, inexplicable closeness to Xena, you know?

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: She's completely obsessed.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And her kind of like mode of operation is, she's either screaming or cackling in ways where you're just like, sort of like, you're not even trying to do that. It's just like, flying out of you [Kristin laughs] as a, you know, instinctive response to the fact that you're interacting with this person who you have, like, it seems—kind of like, every possible biggest feeling about.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And Glory kind of is echoing that to me here.

Kristin: Totally. Totally. And I also get, like, a sense from her of—you know, like as immortals and people not of this world, appreciate humans, like, almost in a Good Place way. Like, you know, Ted Danson's character on The Good Place, how he was always like, "fucking humans, man! Like, you just keep astounding me!" Like, it has a little—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: A little of that flavor to it, which I really enjoy too. But it's—oh, Clare Kramer, just delightful delivery of that laugh.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And you know, Buffy scoots out with Willow. Willow puts her in tar or something, like, air-tar—

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

Kristin: Not to be confused with the air *guitar*. [both laugh]

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Speaking—

Jenny: Love seeing Buffy kick the huge couch across the room and then Glory just like, flip it up on its end with her hand. And what a testament to Clare Kramer that we can have just watched her do what she did to Tara and still have a blast watching this fight scene—

Kristin: Mmhmm, yeah. Totally.

Jenny: 'Cause she's just such a—such a delight.

Kristin: Yeah. She's fantastic in this role. And Jenny, I beg of you, before we get to salami and peanut butter, we must get into the Sexual Tension Awards [laughing] because it's gonna get real un-sexy when we pair those two items together on a sandwich.

Jenny: Are you saying that Dawn's salami and peanut butter is not one of your... nominations?

Kristin: [laughs] It is *not*.

Jenny: Okay. [Kristin laughs]

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Well! Welcome to another glorious—no pun intended—round of the Buffering the Vampire Slayer Sexual Tension Awards!

Kristin: Woo! [imitates crowd cheering]

Jenny: We have gathered some delightful and, uh, succulent possible groupings. You can vote for them. Here is what your options are. [both laugh] In the first slot, we've got... Glory and mimosas.

Kristin: Mm!

Jenny: Hasn't she earned a relaxing bubble bath with her favorite beverage, full of vitamins, as she says.

Kristin: Exactly.

Jenny: Okay, in your second slot, come on, it had to be you! Anya and Willow!
[Kristin laughs] I don't know if we've ever nominated Anya and Willow before, but we definitely will be nominating them again. And if this is truly the beginning, I'm so happy to be getting on the train right now.

Kristin: Yes!

Jenny: In the third slot, we've got Glory and Willow, because Glory ripped that dress off. She wore a tear away dress—well, I guess all dresses are tear away dresses when you're a god. [Kristin laughs] But still. And in the fourth slot—

Kristin: Can I—can it just be me? Can it be *me* and Giles?

Jenny: Yes! In the fourth slot, we have Giles and Kristin. [laughs]

Kristin: Yes!

Jenny: Kristin's into it. She'd like to sign up, please. Thank you.

Kristin: Vote me!

Jenny: If you—

Kristin: Vote me!

Jenny: [laughing] Oh my god. If you'd like to make your voice heard in our democracy, please find this episode's Sexual Tension Award poll on our Twitter, @BufferingCast. And you know, place your vote, please.

Kristin: Yeah and since we're going weekly for the—for these, like, section of three episodes, you can only vote for five days. 'Cause I need results before we put up the next episode—[laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: So you better get on over there.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: The polls will be up five days when we're going weekly like this, so that we can gather the data appropriately. Okay!

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]

Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Alright. Salami and peanut butter.

Jenny: Now I'm final—now I'm really in the mood for salami and peanut butter.
[both laugh]

Kristin: Gross. If you could—what you're all missing out on is the just delightful shoulder roll—shoulder shimmy—

Jenny: Hey!

Kristin: That went along with "salami and peanut butter" for Jenny.

Jenny: Gotta loosen up for... a sandwich that sexy. [Kristin laughs] Um, so I guess they're packing up Tara's dorm.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: 'Cause she's gonna...

Kristin: I guess live with Willow?

Jenny: [simultaneously] Probably move in with Willow?

Kristin: That's what we can assume. And it's also confirmation 'cause I think we were, like, a little wiggly on like, we know that—we know that Tara has her own room, but does she? Like, we haven't seen it. And this is really, I think, the only time we've seen this particular room of Tara's. But yeah, it seems like they're probably gonna move Tara in with Willow. I don't know where else she would go. She's not gonna go to Cousin Beth's house, I'll tell you what.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So this is heartbreaking, you know. And—in like, all of the ways. In the ways that, like, we don't like to see Willow hurt, we don't like to see Tara suffer. And also, the ways in which our close friends—chosen family shows up for us in times of, like, grief and trauma. And you know, Dawn offering to help feed Tara and Buffy being super present there for Willow and Tara, is so many things. And I think—you know, not to like, layer too much into this, Jenny. But I also think that, like, when you're in a queer couple, and you're facing any kind of trauma or loss or what have you, and your family shows up for you the way that you know they

would show up for you if you weren't in a queer pairing, there's like an extra level of power to it. That even though—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Right? Like, even though you knew that, like, they loved you and they accepted you and they believed your love, like, you didn't really, *really* know until they showed up for you the way that you know they'd show up for you if you weren't queer.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So there's just... yeah, it's really powerful.

Jenny: Now at the end of the episode, Willow has, unfortunately, what she didn't have—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Earlier in the episode, what she clashed with Buffy and Tara—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Over. She's experiencing a type of loss, right?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And loss of control.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And it's so... brutal.

Kristin: Yeah. Buffy says to Willow, "I understand." And Willow says, "I know you do" in a way that, like, encapsulates everything that you just said, Jenny.

Jenny: Ahh!

Kristin: And then! She turns to Tara and she's like, "Hear that? You're my always." Which is sort of the end cap on the fight that they were having, right? That like, will you be here? Will you always be mine? [Jenny groans] Do I have to be afraid? And so, the—yeah, Jenny—ugh, god, I can't believe you have something in your eye again!

Jenny: May I be excused, please? [Kristin laughs] [Jenny groans]

Kristin: It's a lot. It's really a lot. And just when you're ready to like, have this heartwrenching and heartfelt moment together with this group of four people, the entire fucking wall blows down.

Jenny: Can't have anything nice when Glory's around! She rips the wall off the fucking dorm!

Kristin: And she's wearing pink!

Jenny: [simultaneously] What the hell?

Kristin: She's wearing pink, which is a real choice, you know?

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: We always see Glory in red, and she's like—I think she knows she's getting closer to the moment. She's gotta change it up, keep us on our toes.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, and unfortunately, as she's standing there in the gaping hole she just ripped out of the wall.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Tara looks up at Dawn and says, wow, look at this pure green energy. And Glory's like, I know what is made of pure green energy! And then the episode is over.

Kristin: Oof.

Jenny: And we're like, noo!

Kristin: Yeah. So. [singsong] Here we go into Season 5!

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: [singsong] It's all ending! It's getting intense, are you ready? Cool! That's this week's song. [laughs]

Jenny: I'm... so ready. It's a good song.

Kristin: Well. Jenny, who are—who are you?

Jenny: Who even knows?!

Kristin: I know.

Jenny: I'm... Jenny Owen Youngs, and when I'm not watching Buffy, I am writing and recording songs. You can learn more about me, hear some of those songs at jennyowenyoungs.com. I also—this is cool! Spotify has just started—

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: A new thing where, uh, they've created songwriter pages for people who, as I do, write songs that end up on releases for other people. So you can now find my Jenny Owen Youngs songwriter page, written by Jenny Owen Youngs. And you can also find my, you know, Jenny Owen Youngs artist page, where you can listen to all my songs that I sing. All over there on Spotify. You can give me a shout on Twitter, @JennyOwenYoungs. And you can listen to me talk about another petite blond protagonist on my other podcast, Veronica Mars Investigations.

Kristin: Do you think that they'll make *me* a songwriter page? Just because, like...

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah—

Kristin: I have a few, you know. Like, I—

Jenny: My number one collaborator, they list it in order of like, how many songs you've written with a given artist. [Kristin laughs] My number one collaborator is Buffering the Vampire Slayer. [laughs]

Kristin: Nice! [both laugh] My name is Kristin Russo. And you can learn more about what I'm doing when I'm not watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer and talking about it here on Buffering the Vampire Slayer on my website. It's kristinnoeline.com, that's K-R-I-S-T-I-N N-O-E-L-I-N-E. You can use that spelling to also find me on Twitter and on Instagram. You know, say hi to me, or whatever, if you feel like it, no pressure.

Jenny: Buffering the Vampire Slayer is on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, @BufferingCast. You can drop us an email at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com or you can leave us a voicemail at area code 216-30-BUFFY.

Kristin: Hell yes. And you can support us and the work that we do here in so, so, so many ways. You can join our Patreon. That would be fun. We do all sorts of—

Jenny: Tight.

Kristin: Things over there. We do Buffy Watches, you get the songs in advance, Jenny makes chord sheets, we do Zoom hangs, there's a book club, Jenny does Xena Watches, there's concerts. [takes deep breath] It's a great time. You can find out about the Patreon family at bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Patreon. We have sweatshirts and tank tops and they say "Why Are Men." Very relatable content. Among other patriarchy-smashing merchandise over in our store. Also use that website, bufferingthevampireslayer.com, click on Shop and you will find it. We have a shop here in the US and we also have a shop over in the UK, for those of you who live overseas. You can get cheaper shipping over there, so that's fun too. Or you can just, like, rate and review us, if you feel like it.

Jenny: Please. And... till next time...

Both: Awwwooooooooooooo!

Jenny: [sings last note] Yeah!

[“Tough Love” plays off the album Songs from Season 5 by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

You messed with the wrong witch
Now you're going down bitch
You messed with the wrong witch
Now you're going down bitch

Pocket full of venom and a bag full of knives
Now I'm gonna put you in your place this time

You been comin round fuckin with my family
I owe you I owe you
Now I'm gonna give you what you gave to me
I owe you pain

You messed with the wrong witch
Now you're going down bitch
You messed with the wrong witch
Now you're going down bitch

You messed with the wrong witch
Now you're going down bitch

You messed with the wrong witch
Now you're going down bitch

I owe you I owe you
I owe you pain