

Buffering the Vampire Slayer  
Episode 4.22: Restless

**Jenny:** Hey everybody! It's Jenny here in the intro. Hello.

**Kristin:** Oh, hi. It's also Kristin. I'm here with you, Jenny in the intro. I don't know if you knew that, but I'm, I'm here.

**Jenny:** I maybe I didn't know that, but I know it now.

**Kristin:** Well, I'm so happy to share this space with you up in the introduction for what is the first part of our two-part season finale.

**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** I know we have so much incredible content for this finale that we had to break it into two pieces. So in this episode you're going to hear us talking about the first two dreams of "Restless," and you're going to get some very fun segments from Alyse Knorr about Sappho. [Jenny laughs.] So buckle up. And you're also going to get a snippet from our interview with David Wells who plays the Cheese Man. But before we get there, let's talk about a little bit of news.

**Jenny:** Yes, please.

**Kristin:** All right. I'm going to start us off by letting you all know that when I'm not working on *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*, I am often found working with LGBTQ communities. I run a website, an organization really, called My Kid Is Gay that supports young people. But specifically supports the parents and family members of young people who identify as LGBTQIA. So I am telling you about it in detail up in this intro because this summer I am hiring three interns to work with me on that project in a variety of capacities. I'm not going to tell you everything about those roles here, but you can find everything on my website. It's at [kristinnoeline.com/internships](http://kristinnoeline.com/internships). That's Kristin Noeline, K-R-I-S-T-I-N-N-O-E-L-I-N-E.com/internships.

There's a few positions, some of them can be combined depending on your interests. One in particular I want to highlight, we're building an E-care package for parents and loved ones of trans youth specifically who've just come out to their families, et cetera. And I'm looking for somebody to help me curate the content for that. That role will be filled by somebody who identifies as trans, and it is the only role that comes with a stipend. It comes with a \$500 stipend. So I'm really excited

about that. I'm really excited to find whoever you are out there who's going to help me build that E-care package and you can find all that information.

Again, [kristinnoeline.com/internships](http://kristinnoeline.com/internships) applications are due by May 5th. And those internships all start around May 20th or there's a little flexibility there as well. So get on over there and work with me this summer.

**Jenny:** Kristen, that rules.

**Kristin:** Hey, thanks.

**Jenny:** I'm also speaking of the passage of time, [Kristin laughs] as you mentioned seasons and stuff, I'd like to take this opportunity to notify everyone about a schedule change. The *Angel On Top* finale will run next week alongside our "Restless" Part Two finale. And that *Angel On Top* episode will feature one Kristin Russo, I didn't know if you know this, in not one, but two segments: both the Fuck Watch and the [gasps] Corndelia Watch. You're welcome.

**Kristin:** That's right!

**Jenny:** Look out for that in your feeds next week. And I'll tell you what else, Kristen, you know better than anybody that we have a merch store and it's full of beautiful products. Some of those products are new including but not limited to a fabulous new beer stein with Isabella Rotman's "Support Your Local Alewife" artwork on it. It is majestic to look upon. We've got a new *Buffering* logo mug. We've got a beautiful god's eye view, a pin of Willow and Tara doing their magical circle spell. And all of our patrons, just in case you weren't aware of this, all of our patrons at the \$10 and up level get a 20% discount on all of our merch all of the time. So if that is relevant to you, now you know.

**Kristin:** You should definitely get on over there to our website, [bufferingthevampireslayer.com](http://bufferingthevampireslayer.com) and click on shop and you can find all those things. Or click on Patreon before you click on shop so you can get your discount. There's a lot of really cool shit, as Jenny mentioned. I also want to just be clear with you that in LA it is seven in the morning and it just took Jenny about 14 hours [Jenny laughs] to record the new merch announcements and I...

**Jenny:** So I hope it was worth it for you!

**Kristin:** I am going to send to all of our \$5 patrons, the recording of Jenny losing her entire mind, giggling for like hours and hours about all of her jokes, [both laughing] which is really worth your money because it's pretty hysterical.

**Jenny:** How dare you, sir!

**Kristin:** In other news, so because this is a two-part finale, the finale song for Season Four will be at the end of next week's episode. However, if you have been a listener for a while, you'll remember that earlier in this season there was an episode called "Pangs." And in "Pangs" we talked about some of the problematic stuff that happened in that episode with respect to native people and their treatment in the episode. We had an *incredible* interview with Coya White Hat-Artichoker about the episode and it was just wonderful. It's still one of my favorite episodes of ours of all time. And at the end of that episode, we put a segment from a speech given at Standing Rock, but for the album, when the album released, we wanted to release something special and something that we could put on the album.

And so Coya, who we interviewed, is a poet and wrote a poem specific to the episode and recorded that poem in her own voice. We have that at the end of today's episode. We are so excited about it. It is so beautiful and powerful. And if you purchase the album at the end of the season, when we release it, it will be the song for "Pangs." So when you get to the end of the episode, that's what's gonna be happening. Also, if you are so inclined to donate, the organization of Coya's choice is called SisterSong and they can be found at [SisterSong.net](http://SisterSong.net). So when you get to the end of this episode, listen to that poem and then go on over to [SisterSong.net](http://SisterSong.net) and contribute.

You know that that is really the core mission here at *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* is to lift up marginalized communities. Yeah, we're just really psyched about it.

**Jenny:** Yeah, I have to say that like editing the audio last night I just kept getting like very emotional right at the end. So brace yourselves for that.

**Kristin:** Uh, Jenny, something else you might need to brace yourself for is...

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]  
Spooky news!

**Kristin:** All right. Are you ready Jenny?

**Jenny:** I'm ready. I love this new format of Spooky News where I don't know what's going to happen and you tell me.

**Kristin:** Well, this Spooky News usually, and I love when you submit spooky news to me, so please keep sending it to [bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com](mailto:bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com), but this Spooky News I actually sent to myself. It was a New York Times alert [Jenny

laughs] letting me know that in a recent study, researchers have restored some cellular activity to the brains of pigs *that were dead*. Okay? Soooooooo...

**Jenny:** [Overlapping] Uhhhh...

**Kristin:** Yeah. I read the headline and was like [singing Spooky News jingle] "Spooky News!" [Speaking] Like the jingle just like played immediately my brain. So basically, there were no signs that showed that there was electrical signaling happening when they restored activity, cellular activity to these brains. So there wasn't like awareness things that you would see for awareness and intelligence, but blood vessels in the pig's brains began functioning, flowing with a blood substitute and certain brain cells regained metabolic activity, even responding to drugs. When the researchers tested slices of the treated brain tissue, they discovered electrical activity in some of the neurons.

So I'm not going to, obviously, read you this whole article, but you should check it out. It's like super creepy to me. I mean if you're a scientist it's probably super amazing. But listen, we just got through a whole season with Adam and his uranium core and I just feel like this is some of the work that Professor Walsh was doing in her laboratory. Like this is where it began? Also—

**Jenny:** [Groans] And the scientists are never like, "Should we do this?" They're just like, "Can we do this?"

**Kristin:** [Laughs] Exactly! And actually it's funny that you say that, Jenny. The other two things that I wanted to talk about in this news story is that A: The scientists said that it poses *metaphysical riddles*. So... [Jenny laughs] seems related. And the other thing, okay, cause you're saying like scientists don't ask, "Should we?" They just say, "Can we?" The investigators, like when they started this project, they didn't want to take the chance that the brains might regain consciousness, as unlikely as that seemed. So they had a plan where if the, if the team saw electrical activity suggesting actual consciousness, they planned to give the brains anesthetic drugs and cool them immediately to stop the process. So like...

**Jenny:** What the hell?

**Kristin:** Just think about it!

**Jenny:** I mean, I guess that's good.

**Kristin:** It is!

**Jenny:** But like [groans].

**Kristin:** But like it's bananas that like somewhere in a lab scientists are like sitting around with a bunch of dead pig brains being like, "Okay, so if these brains come alive, [laughing] what's our plan?"

**Jenny:** Dude.

**Kristin:** [Laughing] Like, "What the fucking plan?" So that has been your Spooky News.

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]  
Spooky news!

**Jenny:** Wow. I don't, I don't care for that at all.

**Kristin:** Yeah, I don't, I know. It's pretty rough.

**Jenny:** I feel like that raises more questions than it answers.

**Kristin:** Agree.

**Jenny:** Well [laughs], with that in our rear view mirror, we want to thank as always, Lauren Klein, our dutiful sound engineer who you can follow on Instagram at @LaurenTaylorKline.

**Kristin:** Yes, and before we get into it, we want to let you know there's a lot of reasons you should tune in next week, namely to hear the rest of our episode; hear the rest of our discussion of "Restless." But also we're going to have two pretty fucking big announcements at the start of next week's episode. I am pinching myself so that I can keep it inside of myself for another week. [Jenny laughs] We're pretty excited to tell you what we're going to tell you next week. So buckle up for that. But in the meantime—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: —buckle up for this.

[*Buffering the Vampire Slayer* Theme plays]

**Jenny:** Hello and welcome to *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*, a podcast where we are watching every episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* one at a time, spoiler free. I am Jenny Owen Youngs.

**Kristin:** And I am Kristin Russo. And this week we are talking about Season Four, Episode 22 if you did the math on that, you know it is the season finale. It is called "Restless" and... it's a big deal. It's a big episode. We're going to talk about it, but for now, let me tell you to stay tuned to the end of this podcast and the end of every podcast for an original song that's written by Jenny, which recaps the *Buffy* episode we are discussing.

**Jenny:** Every podcast?

**Kristin:** Every, all of them—[crosstalk.]

**Jenny:** WTF with Mark Marin?

**Kristin:** Literally there's a song—

**Jenny:** Cast of Kings with Joanna Robinson?

**Kristin:** Especially Cast of Kings.

**Jenny:** Wow! There's a song about *Buffy* at the end of every single— *that I wrote!*

**Kristin:** It's miraculous!

**Jenny:** I'm busy.

**Kristin:** In fact, you're—

**Jenny:** I'm so tired. I should actually go. I don't think I can stay for the taping. I've got songs right.

**Kristin:** You're right. You should go. And, also Jenny, if, if they're not listening to you sing a *Buffy* song at the end of every podcast ever created, [Jenny laughs] I'm hoping that you are all listening to our sister podcast *Angel On Top*. It is a podcast that talks about the series *Angel* in tandem with our podcast. It's hosted by Brittany Ashley and Laura Zak. It's amazing. It gets better every fucking week. I love it so much and I love them so much. So you should get on that if you're not already.

**Jenny:** It's so great. If you're not listening, you're just hurting yourself. So stop hurting yourself.

**Kristin:** Yeah!

**Jenny:** "Restless" was written and directed by Joss Whedon, a guy that you might have heard of. And it originally aired on May 23rd, 2000, which was the birthday of my first... secret... eighth grade girlfriend.

**Kristin:** I like that, it was like that. It was your first secret eighth grade girlfriend. Like you had another secret eighth girlfriend.

**Jenny:** My secret... first... eighth grade girlfriend.

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Jenny:** My secret eighth grade first girlfriend. [Kristin laughs] You get what I'm saying!

**Kristin:** Happy birthday to you, secret girlfriend, if you're out there.

**Jenny:** Yes!

**Kristin:** Was she a fan of *Buffy*?

**Jenny:** No!

**Kristin:** It wasn't even on yet. You're in eighth grade!

**Jenny:** Yes!

**Kristin:** Wow. Ah, okay. So this is the one where Buffy, Willow, Xander, and Giles experience dreams in which they are pursued by a mysterious figure. That's the IMDB description. This is a big deal episode in this series. Jenny is experienced in many ways, has written a lot of songs, but also watched the Director's Cut.

**Jenny:** Yes, that's right: the director's commentary tracks. So I have made a lot of notes about things that Joss had to say about the episode and I will be sharing them periodically.

**Kristin:** And this episode, of course you're probably familiar with it. You're listening to us talk about it, but it is, I would say 85-90% in dream. The only pieces of this episode that are not in dream are the first few minutes in the last few minutes.

**Jenny:** [Sing-song] Yes!

**Kristin:** So this is right on the heels, we are to believe, of them defeating Adam by bringing together their Scooby-selves and all of their power to rip the gak-covered

uranium before out of his chest. Adam is dead. Ding-dong, the Franken Monster's dead! And they are like, "Fuck this. We got to go over to Joyce's house, get some VHS tapes and popcorn [crosstalk]."

**Jenny:** Blockbuster! Ever heard of it?

**Kristin:** Some nondescript red drink— maybe it's raspberry fruit punch for Giles?

**Jenny:** Oh my God. [Kristin laughs.]

**Kristin:** And we get a minute with Riley, don't we, Jenny?

**Jenny:** He! Got! A hair cut!

**Kristin:** Woah, sorry for all of your ears. [Laughing.]

**Jenny:** [Singing] Riley got a haircut! Riley got a [high note] cut!

**Kristin:** Jenny just banged her whole fist—

**Jenny:** [Singing, fast] Riley got a haircut!

**Kristin:** —on the arm of her chair.

**Jenny:** Speaking of banging.

**Kristin:** Uh-huh?

**Jenny:** In this space of like 45 seconds, Riley managed this to say that he needs to go in for a debriefing, [Kristin laughs] let us know that they're not pinning anything on him and also talk about his [Jenny laughs] honorable discharge.

[Both laughing.]

**Jenny:** And I just want to say, [screams] "Ahhhh!"

**Kristin:** [Laughing] You think that was—like it had to be intentional, right?

**Jenny:** Well my real question here is like, why is the military so horny?

**Kristin:** [Laughing] Yeah! Hey, all that pent up aggression, those tight camo pants.

**Jenny:** Right?



**Kristin:** That'll make anyone have an honorable—

**Jenny:** Okay!

**Kristin:** —discharge. [Laughs.] So Willow makes a little statement. So Riley basically it tells them like, "I have enough information where they're not gonna fuck with me, you know, like, so I'm good." And Willow's like, "Wow, it's almost like you're blackmailing the government," [laughing] and almost looks directly into the camera.

**Jenny:** [Crosstalk] And the record scratches, and winks.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Riley is very uncomfortable.

**Jenny:** "You're probably wondering how I got here."

**Kristin:** [Laughs] Riley, I mean Riley like just an episode ago or a couple episodes ago was like, you know, saying things like anarchy—

**Jenny:** A lifer!

**Kristin:** —and punching out as general.

**Jenny:** Yup.

**Kristin:** But it seems he's recalibrated back to a place where he doesn't want to overthrow the government. So...

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

**Kristin:** Anyhow, Joyce—

**Jenny:** Yes, speaking of overthrowing things...

**Kristin:** Wow, that's just going to be your segue for... [Jenny laughs] You're just gonna to take one of my words [both laugh] and repurpose it?

**Jenny:** What? That's how segues are supposed to work, isn't it?

[Both laughing.]

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, so Giles— they're all about to hunker down and watch some blockbuster tapes.

**Kristin:** *Hunk*-er down.

**Jenny:** [Laughing] Oh my god.

[Kristin laughs.]

**Jenny:** And Giles is like, [imitating Giles, blusters] "Joyce, are you sure you won't join us as we watch these videos? [Normal voice] Maybe he could like yawn, maybe they could share popcorn, maybe he could stretch his arm over—

**Kristin:** Yeah. This is like the thing where you're all trying to pretend like you don't know Mom and Dad have totally boned on a cop car twice.

**Jenny:** Yeah—[grossed out sound] Bl-l-l-e-eh! But also Dad just hangs out with teenagers?

**Kristin:** Right.

[Crosstalk]

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

**Kristin:** It's confusing.

**Jenny:** Giles occupies two worlds.

**Kristin:** Also I just want Joyce to like let loose a little bit. You know what I mean? Like Joyce, take off your robe, have some fruit punch, sit down and watch some VHS tapes.

**Jenny:** Honestly. Like what's she got going on upstairs?

**Kristin:** Perhaps her hand will graze Giles's...

**Jenny:** Oh my god!

**Kristin:** Who knows what will happen? Anyhow, Joyce meets Riley for the first time and I think that Joyce thinks that Riley is a hunk.

**Jenny:** I think Joyce thinks, "Wow, the UC Sunnydale campus is really close to my house and yet I've only just met this boy that my daughter has been dating for a year."

**Kristin:** Yeah. *Yeah*, I guess that is a long time.

**Jenny:** A *year*?

**Kristin:** Well, no, there was Parker [imitating sad horn] womp womp.

**Jenny:** Ew.

**Kristin:** It hasn't been a full year, but yes. So Joyce meets all the men, goes upstairs in her robe, and they start the VHS marathon...

**Jenny:** And everyone's out like a light.

**Kristin:** Immediately, of course. And that's very believable. They've just defeated the big bad of the season. They're tired.

**Jenny:** So it really takes it out of you pulling the uranium— joining your force, your forces on a spiritual and metaphysical level in order to pull out the uranium core from a gak-filled chest of a parasymphathetic demonoid— I can't remember what they call him— but Adam.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** You know, so there's tuckered out.

**Kristin:** And so... Jenny just made a gesture letting me know she has more to say before I segue us, but we are going to move after Jenny says, whatever it is that she's going to say into the four dreams.

**Jenny:** Wow.

**Kristin:** So this is really a, it's kind of a fun episode I think to talk about because we really get to be like quadrant one, quadrant two, three quadrant four.

**Jenny:** Yeah, big clear divisions.

**Kristin:** Yeah. But Jenny, what were you going to say?

**Jenny:** I was going say, my first note from, from Joss's commentary track is about sort of like the episode as a whole. He talks about how in previous seasons, in seasons two and three they have like big double episode, like two-parter, to be continued, big event finales and in this season it was actually episodes 20 and 21 that were the big two-parter, you know, finalized doing away with the big bad kind of episodes.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** And then this episode he kind of viewed as a coda to sort of like check in with like where all the characters have been, are now, might be headed. You know, they all have had big transitional experiences in this season. Buffy has gone to college and gotten over the love of her life, who she had to kill and then who came back. She's moved on with her life. She's like starting to become, you know, also more of an adult in the traditional sense. Willow, same deal. And she's also, I don't know if you noticed, but she's been doing a lot of spells with that girl from the Wicca Wing [Kristin laughs] of the Stevenson dorm. And let's see, Xander did not go to college. He's been working a series of like frustratingly a dead end feeling jobs...

**Kristin:** Mh-hmmm.

**Jenny:** ...and trying to understand what his role in the group is. Giles, post-librarian depression syndrome happening.

**Kristin:** Yeah. And I feel like I read somewhere too that Joss was not doing— like that Josh was not super thrilled with like how all of those storylines had come together. This was also a way for him to like redraw those lines that maybe got a little wiggly through the fourth season. Yeah, so we get a lot and we'll, we'll go obviously through them one by one and talk about their arc, but this was a big first year in college for everybody.

**Jenny:** Or out of college.

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Jenny:** Or without a—

**Kristin:** Retired.

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

**Kristin:** #Retired

**Jenny:** Between projects as Giles likes to self identify.

**Kristin:** So Willow...

**Jenny:** Heard of her!

[WILLOW jingle plays]  
Who knows the square root of 1,225?  
Willow!  
Who is gentle of heart and nimble with a hard drive?  
Willow!  
Willow, Willow, Willow.

**Kristin:** Willow falls asleep with the cookie in her hand, which is just about the Willow-iest thing a Willow could do.

**Jenny:** Sure, sure.

**Kristin:** Right? And the very first scene in Willow's dream is Tara without a shirt on, who is just sort of like looking at the camera kind of the same way Tara looked at the camera when she said, [intensely] "I'm yours."

**Jenny:** Whoa!

**Kristin:** Right? It's the same look, it's that same, like "My eyes are a little glassed over. I'm very much here for you" look. And she is as the, as we pan out we see that Tara is like lying on her stomach and Willow with ink and like a paintbrush is writing Greek letters on her back.

**Jenny:** Mh-hmm, mh-hmm.

**Kristin:** Jenny, this is, I know this might be surprising to you, but it's a poem by Sappho.

**Jenny:** [Sarcastically] I'm shocked!

[CHIME]

**Kristin:** Did somebody say Sappho? Hey everyone. Here I am on the other side of that surprising bell to tell you that I have vanished Jenny just for a moment, don't worry and I have a little surprise for us all regarding Sappho. I am here with Alyse Knorr who is a few things: Alyse is an assistant professor of English at Regis

University, a poet, a queer woman, somebody I have known personally for many, many, many years, and the author of many things, but namely your most recent book, Alyse, called *Mega-city Redux* is out right now. So first of all, hi Alyse!

**Alyse:** Hi Kristin!

**Kristin:** [Laughs] Thank you for being on *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*.

**Alyse:** Thanks so much for having me. This is really awesome.

**Kristin:** Your credentials are outstanding. I want to just— I want to let you tell our wonderful listeners just like a little bit about this book that just came out: *Mega-city Redux*.

**Alyse:** Sure. It's a remix of a 15th century proto-feminist allegory. And it is about going on a feminist pilgrimage with Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Xena: Warrior Princess, and Dana Scully from the *X-Files* to find a mythical city called the City of Ladies, which is a place where women can live safe from misogyny and sexism and sexist rhetoric.

**Kristin:** It doesn't— that doesn't sound like it would be appealing at all to any of our listeners.

**Alyse:** Right? It turns out you still need the city as much today as you did 600 years ago. But you get to have fun along the way, right? With all of our— all of our heroes.

**Kristin:** Exactly. So for those of you, and I'm sure that we've let you know this in the show notes as well, but for those of you who literally paused this interview because you're screaming, you can find more about Alyse and thii wonderful book and all the other things that you do Alyse, at [alyseknorr.com](http://alyseknorr.com), which is A-L-Y-S-E-K-N-O-R-R dot com.

Okay. Elise, I have called you here today for a very important reason, which involves two queer witches [Alyse laughs] within a dream, on the inside of a dream. Inside of that dream, one is painting Greek letters on the other one's naked back— [Kristin laughs.]

**Alyse:** And as you do.

**Kristin:** As you do, as you do. And those letters are actually a poem by somebody named Sappho. And I thought, I must know someone in the universe who can tell us about Sappho and just give us a little bit of like her history, what her deal is and

why perhaps this poem has been chosen to be the one written on Tara's back by Willow. [Kristin laughs.]

**Alyse:** Sure. I mean, the easy answer is that it's like she's the gayest author you can— you can find, right? She's the origin of the term lesbian to describe women who love women. She's also one of the best poets of all time. She's an ancient lyric Greek poet. We know very little about her life because she lives 2,500 years ago, but she is absolutely amazing. Her work is beautiful and very, very, very gay.

**Kristin:** So here's what I know about Sappho, and this is why I called you. I had tried to look stuff up on Wikipedia and I was like, "This is not giving me what I need." But all I know is that when I hear Sappho, I think of the word Sapphic, which pretty much means ladies who like ladies. And then I know that she lived on the Isle of Lesbos, which is where the term lesbian comes from. So like, what do we know? What does her poetry tell us about her identity as a lesbian? Do we know that she was a lesbian? Just tell us. Blow our minds, Alyse.

**Alyse:** So she definitely was a lesbian because she was from the Isle of Lesbos. And so that's what that meant at the time, was that, you know, anyone who was from the Island of Lesbos or even wine that was from the Island of Lesbos would be Lesbian. In fact, Aeolic Greek, which is the dialect she speaks, was also known as Lesbian-Greek. The term did not come to mean women who love women until around like the Victorian era. And it was used in a medical literature sort of to diagnose women who were attracted to other women as having an illness. And at first it was "Sapphic" or "invert" or "lesbian." It wasn't used as an identity marker until a little bit later, in like the 1950s women started to embrace the term much like we have this queer, you know, it used to be pejorative, but now we're gonna use it as a proud identity marker.

And so at that point it became more of a search to have a community term. And so, yeah, it's, it's evolved a lot. But what we know about Sappho sexuality that a gay identity or a queer identity didn't really exist the way it does for us with this, you know, "This is how I describe my identity." But we know that her poems are about loving women and her poems describe the beauty of women and the physical impact on her of loving women and being jealous of like, you know, a woman who talks to a man and gets his attention. There's a beautiful poem called "Fragment 31" about how much she hates that.

**Kristin:** Wow, that sounds like a Hayley Kiyoko song.

**Alyse:** [Laughs.] And actually like, so her, her biggest impact, you know, culturally now is maybe the fact that that's where the origin of lesbian came from. But as far as poetry goes, she influenced pretty much any... any poet writing a love poem all

the way up to I would say like pop, pop musicians today are influenced in some way by Sappho. Like, did you know the term bittersweet? You know the term bittersweet?

**Kristin:** Of course.

**Alyse:** That's Sappho. She made that up except in Greek, it's— she ordered it sweet-bitter.

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Alyse:** Which actually makes a lot more sense cause that's like the order that relationships go and when they don't last. [Kristin gasps] It's starts out sweet and it end up bitter.

**Kristin:** Oh no, Alyse, you just gave me full body chills. But I guess Sappho [Alyse laughs] gave me full body chills but—

**Alyse:** Yeah! [Kristin laughs] From 2,500 years ago! She's amazing!

**Kristin:** [Groans] Fuck! So this is why, you know, what Wikipedia did not do is give me full body chills. [Alyse laughs] This is why I knew we needed to talk to you directly. [Kristin laughs.] And so there's disagreement, right about Sappho's life, about Sappho's history, about what she was doing when she was alive.

**Alyse:** So there's a lot of like controversy and disagreement over the facts of her life and your biography because the only things we know about her come from things that other writers wrote. We don't— we don't have any like direct accounts. So, so old and so much has been lost.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Alyse:** So there's— and then what complicates that is that she was so good at poetry that she sort of... Like other writers, male writers saw that as a threat. They thought it was unnatural and like over— like she must be overly masculine if she's that good at writing cause like women are stupid.

**Kristin:** Mh-hmm.

**Alyse:** And so she, in the hundreds of years after her death, she became sort of a burlesque comic figure for the— for Greek comedians. And she would just be this like stock figure. At first she was kind of slut shamed because the Isle of Lesbos, the women that were really known to be really beautiful. So at first she was sort of



parodied for being oversexed, hypersexual. And then they sort of attacked her lesbianism been made fun of that.

So, this all adds up to the fact that there are some accounts that she had a husband, right? And so everybody's like, "Oh, she had a husband and she wasn't as gay as you know, she wasn't gay, she had this husband. This guy right here, he's writing about her having a husband."

Well, it turns out that the person writing about her husband's a comic poet, and her husband's name is Kerkylas of Andros. And "Kerkylas" means like "penis," [Kristin laughs] and "Andros" means "man." So the account of her husband that we have is basically like the, the Greek comic poet is saying, you know, that her husband's name was "Dick Johnson" from the "Isle of Man."

**Kristin:** Wow. So, so, right. [Alyse laughs] So there's, so we can probably believe that this was not a serious account of a husband?

**Alyse:** Yeah! Yeah, but it's really weird because like, there's all these, you know, and then there's a bunch of accounts that she like threw her off a cliff because she had her heartbroken by this young sailor. But it's all just shit that's made up. Like there's just so much about her that's like completely made up that it's— that it's really, really intriguing and mysterious and the fact that we don't even have any of her complete poems is also very mysterious and very exciting.

**Kristin:** Yeah. And I was going to say, you know, it's like I've never heard a story before about, you know, a really talented woman doing like really cool shit, [Alyse and Kristin laugh] and then being like, you know, erased from history. [Sarcastically] It's like really shocking to me. [Normal voice] Okay, let's talk a little bit about the poem itself. I want to say—so the poem is called "Ode to Aphrodite." Though I've seen it written "Ode to Aphrodite" or "Hymn to Aphrodite." Are both of those accurate?

**Alyse:** Yeah, or "Prayer to Aphrodite." Either one's fine. And then it's sometimes also known just as "Poem One" because it's the only complete poem of Sappho's that survives of antiquity that we have most of— I mean, all of her other work is fragments.

**Kristin:** You have the text of the poem, right? You have like the words that are actually—

**Alyse:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** So will you share those with us so that everyone can know what is written on Tara's back?

**Alyse:** Sure. So this is the translation of "Poem One" and by Ann Carson from her collection of Sappho translations called *If Not, Winter*:

Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind,  
child of Zeus, who twist lures, I beg you,  
do not break with hard pains  
O lady my heart,

but come here if ever before  
you caught my voice far off  
and listening left your father's  
golden house and came,

yoking your car. And find birds brought you,  
quick sparrows over the black earth  
whipping their wings down the sky  
through midair—

they arrived. But you O blessed one,  
smiled in your deathless face  
and ask what (now again) I have suffered and why  
(now again) I'm calling out

and what I want to happen most of all  
in my crazy heart. Whom should I persuade (now again)  
to lead you back into her love? Who O  
Sappho is wronging you?

For if she flees soon she will pursue.  
If she refuses gifts rather will she give them.  
If she does not love, soon she will love  
even unwilling.

Come to me now: loose me from hard  
care and all my heart longs  
to accomplish, accomplish. You  
be my ally.

**Kristin:** What the fuck, Sappho?

**Alyse:** I know! [Kristin laughs.] It's good stuff.

**Kristin:** Holy shit. It is. And how beautiful and wonderful that we have you here, we have this translation by Anne Carson who I'm sure so many of our listeners already know of. If you don't know Anne Carson, get to it, get thee to Anne Carson. And that we can take like, you know, you get to watch the show, you know what maybe you know what's a poem by Sappho, but to get to actually hear the words is really beautiful. So thank you for reading that for us.

**Alyse:** Sure. So the poem is basically Sappho asking Aphrodite the goddess of love and beauty to come to her aid in persuading the girl who she loves to love her back. And I guess it's also just important to know that Sappho's poems as a whole, sort of allude to the fact that poetry itself is a form of magic and that like it can manipulate like reality. Like language can manipulate reality. Um, and so there's, there's like a kind of magical tone, in this poem especially with the idea of Aphrodite, like, "I will kind of—" It's almost like Sappho is calling Aphrodite down, like casting a spell.

**Kristin:** Yeah!

**Alyse:** And Aphrodite promises to intercede on Sappho's behalf almost like magic in this magical way.

**Kristin:** Wow. Alyse! Fuck! At the beginning of the interview Alyse asked me if it was okay to curse and I was like, yes, [Alyse laughs] and then I proceeded to say fuck like 40 times in this interview myself. [Both laugh] But I do think it's just so beautiful. It's like, you know, I think maybe some people listening to this new piece of, and some of them, like me, probably didn't know any of it. And so to get the chance to be able to watch this scene and to think about this relationship that we've seen in Season Four, like just blossoming that we're like rolling into Season Five with Tara and Willow and that really like one of the last things that we see them do together is this, the connection between like poetry and magic, the erasure of Sappho as a lesbian, the erasure of Sappho as like a woman writer. It all... it all really feels very *Buffy* [Alyse laughs] and I cannot thank you enough, Alyse for being here and for talking to us and for bringing all of this wonderful information to our ears.

**Alyse:** It's my pleasure. Thanks so much for having me.

[CHIME]

**Kristin:** Oh my goodness. Is there anything better than Alyse Knorr talking about Sappho?

**Jenny:** Not one thing I can think of— oh, except maybe a slow motion kitten.

**Kristin:** Oh my god!

**Jenny:** Just a nice slo-mo shot of a tiny kitten.

**Kristin:** Oh, so, okay. So this piece of the dream has many things: A slow-mo kitten, but also a lot of words. I wrote down in my notes way more quotes than I normally do because I feel like there's so much meaning attached to like every phrase in this whole episode. I also want to say that this is not the first time we've seen a cat in a dream, right?

**Jenny:** Yeah!

**Kristin:** There was a very prominent cat in the Faith-Buffy dream.

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

**Kristin:** Cats are... Jenny, have you seen *Captain Marvel*?

**Jenny:** I have not yet.

**Kristin:** Well, there's a very, very wonderful plot line in *Captain Marvel*...

**Jenny:** I've heard there's a hot cat.

**Kristin:** ...that revolves around a cat named Goose. I think cats—

**Jenny:** [Gasps] A cat named Goose! I had a cat named Frog growing up. So...

**Kristin:** Aw, cute. I think Goose was, the name Goose... Uh, well actually I don't know cause I don't know comics.

**Jenny:** Was it short for AuGOOSEtus or something?

**Kristin:** [Laughing] AuGOOSEtus! No, I'm— I took it cause they were Air Force, you know, it's like Air Force—

**Jenny:** Oh, like Maverick.

**Kristin:** So exactly. Anyhow, my point being that cats are mystical, magical creatures. They certainly belong in dreams. They certainly belong in *Captain*

*Marvel*. They certainly belong in all these places cause they're not really animals, are they? [Jenny laughs] They're weird mystical creatures. So Willow was saying, "You don't know everything about me." Tara is saying, "They will find out about you." And that's like really one of the... that is the core theme of Willow's dream, right? Is like people keep telling her she's wearing a costume to—

**Jenny:** Right, right, right.

**Kristin:** —you know, and she's like, "But this is me, this is me." And she's also at the same time afraid that people will find out about her.

**Jenny:** Yeah, and what Joss has to say about *that*...

**Kristin:** Oh yes, what does Joss have to say?

**Jenny:** —is that, that the misdirect that keeps sort of like cropping up throughout Willow's dream, like this identity thing. And, and you know, the viewer is meant to be like, "Oh, she's talking about her sexuality," until we get to the scene where Buffy pulls Willow's costume off and reveals what Willow is afraid people will really find out about her which is that deep down she's still the same nerd that she was in this, you know, in the pilot episode essentially.

**Kristin:** Right? And I also think that there's, I think there's a lot of layers to this. Not to make a pun on, like pulling off one layer of clothing [Jenny laughs] and there being another layer, but it's like, yeah, I think part of it is that Willow is afraid that people will know that she's still the same nerd she always was. But I think more than that, for me, it's that Willow feels like perhaps she's not being recognized for the growth and the change that she has made since that time that people still view her as that version of herself when she knows that she has grown and changed and evolved and is different than that person, you know?

So I think there's a little bit of both in it, but I don't think that it's just that Willow's afraid that people will know she's a nerd. I think there's a lot here for me with sexuality too, of course, right? That Willow has just come out and I think that when we come out of the closet, if you want to use that phrase, it's hard to feel like people might not think you're just playing at something...

**Jenny:** Right. Right, right.

**Kristin:** Or that people might feel like they knew all along, like from whatever angle you want to take it from, that it's hard to feel like when you come out to people, it's as authentic to them as it feels to you.

**Jenny:** Mh-hmm, mh-hmm.

**Kristin:** And so I think we're also seeing Willow struggling with that. That the reality of her feelings for Tara, and her feelings as a queer woman are probably not being realized the way that she would like them to be. You know? I mean, all of us feel like that. You know, especially when we're talking to like cis, straight people, it's like, "Yeah, they get it, but do they get it-get it? Maybe not.

**Jenny:** Yeah. It feels like, you know, for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction. As much as Willow might be thinking that like people aren't perceiving her growth and the ways in which she's developed over the last season or the last like four years, I think Willow is equally unable to fully accept the fact that she has grown. You know what I mean?

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** I feel like this is a serious classic imposter syndrome, you know? Like she definitely, as much as she like knows about herself, she also—

**Kristin:** Doesn't.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Totally.

**Jenny:** So I have a few things I'd like to talk about—

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Jenny:** —in this bedroom scene, or dorm room scene.

**Kristin:** We're still with Tara and Willow? The first scene?

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** Okay, great.

**Jenny:** So first of all, one of them is like about the kitten. One of them is like, "She hasn't told us her name yet," which I'm happy to hear because we've all been thinking it. Nobody's been saying it. Miss Kitty Fantastico is not a cat name. [Kristin laughs] You may not. I forbid it. It's just not practical.

**Kristin:** Yes. It's a lot to say.

**Jenny:** Yeah. So I'm, I'm excited to see what that cat's name is. [Sarcastically] I'm sure we'll see lots more of that cat, right?

**Kristin:** [Sarcastically] I'm sure we will.

**Jenny:** What do they live like 10 years or something? [Kristin laughs] 20 years? Also I learned from the commentary that when a Willow pulls back the curtain and looks out on the desert, that's actually there. They moved the wall. They, they built a wall—

**Kristin:** Oh, wow.

**Jenny:** —Tara's dorm room wall into the desert so they could get that shot through the window out into the sand.

**Kristin:** Wow. That's very cool. Before we move into the next piece of Willow's dream too, I do want to go back to what you were saying about the cat and the name, right? Because this is like a double, it has two meanings. "She hasn't told us her name yet." They're talking about the cat. But as we see in the scene where there's a slo-mo cat, and also we see the snippet of the First Slayer.

**Jenny:** Right, right.

**Kristin:** I think there's something here and we're going to talk about the first layer. And I would move, Jenny, that we call the First Slayer "Sineya" moving forward because one of the problematic pieces of the way that this is treated is that she does not have a name, even though she does! We heard Willow say her name in the last episode. Her name is Sineya.

**Jenny:** Mh-hmm.

**Kristin:** And she's not given a name. She's also not given a voice. We're going to get there, we're going to talk about these things, but there's a lot of problematic stuff with Sineya, and the first piece I think is underlined here with the parallel of like, "She hasn't told us her name yet." Actually, maybe the cat hasn't, but Sineya did. You know Sineya's name, so use it. So use it. [Cheerfully] Thanks guys!

[Laughing] So then we go to school. That's the next dream sequence for Willow. And this is where like the boys get involved. It's like she starts with Tara and then when she transitions to this next phase of her dream, it's Xander and Oz. And they are very like male gaze-y. Well, Oz is just kind of Oz, and Xander's taken the male

gaze for the team here saying, "You know, she does spells with Tara." Oz says he heard about that and then we got this line:

[Clip from episode plays]

**Xander:** Sometimes I think about two women doing a spell and then I do a spell by myself.

**Jenny:** Two things.

**Kristin:** Yes, Jenny.

**Jenny:** First of all, Oz's face when Xander says that, he's just like, "Dude, are you fucking serious, man?" Secondly, you're not alone, Kristen. Joss talks in the commentary about how this was like, this kind of pulls you out of the dream a little bit because it's not Willow having, you know, a perception of something. Willow has left the shot and she's like, gone on to do her thing. This line happens, and Josh was like, "This kind of like breaks up the dreaminess of it, but it made me laugh."

**Kristin:** [Both laughing] Oh, wow. Okay. So, yeah, I mean it's, you know, and it's very like, you know our history with Xander, our feelings about Xander. It's gonna get real fucking messy with Xander and these ladies later.

**Jenny:** I have some interesting stuff to say about Xander after that. Some unforeseen insights—

**Kristin:** Oh yeah?

**Jenny:** —I'm looking forward to digging into when we get there.

**Kristin:** Has anything to do with the Speedo or no?

**Jenny:** No, I would call that an oversight.

**Kristin:** Oh wow. [Laughs]

**Jenny:** Or an in-my-heart-sight.

**Kristin:** So—right— so we get a little pulled out, as Jenny says Joss said, whatever, this moment happens. It's cringy. It's funny. It's whatever. And we then we go [dramatic voice] to the theater.

**Jenny:** Yeah.



**Kristin:** [Normal voice] And this is... just... it's really funny the way that this whole thing is done, I think. We get Harmony back, we have Buffy as a flapper, we have Riley as a cowboy—

**Jenny:** Cowboy guy!

**Kristin:** —cowboy guy. And this is where we begin to hear Buffy and other people say things like, “Your costume, you know, is perfect. No one's going to know the truth.”

**Jenny:** There's a quick call back to...

**Kristin:** “Nightmares.”

**Jenny:** ...“Nightmares.” When Willow's like, [laughing] “Oh God, it's not Madam Butterflies?”

**Kristin:** And Giles and Harmony have this amazing, like Giles comes out, he's obviously like the director of the show—

**Jenny:** He looks great in an ascot.

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Jenny:** I love that as a part of his speech to the group, Giles is saying “Everyone Willow's ever met is in the audience, including us.” [Kristin laughs.] Which is so dream, peak dream.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** And he's like going on and on and on and Harmony's like biting around his ears, like from behind his shoulders.

**Kristin:** Really good comedy happening with Giles and Harmony, definitely.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah, and— oh, hey! Who's this guy?

**Kristin:** Oh, it's the Cheese Man, Jenny.

**Jenny:** He's made a little space for the cheese slices.

**Kristin:** He's made— we're going to get to hear a bit from David Wells who plays the Cheese Man later, and this is the first appearance that we get of him.

**Jenny:** So exciting.

**Kristin:** I also just want to talk really quickly: There's a moment right before we see the Cheese Man for the first time, Willow is backstage, everybody's talking and then everybody like goes silent, but they're all still—

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah!

**Kristin:** —talking and she's turning around very slowly. There are a few moments in this episode where I'm like, "Damn, that's beautifully done." And I mean, the whole episode is, but this is like a peak—

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** —dream amazingness. So I just wanted to just give it a shout.

**Jenny:** As we transition to this scene where we're seeing, [laughs] where we're seeing Harmony, Riley, and Buffy all on stage together...

**Kristin:** Oh my God, it's the best.

**Jenny:** It's amazing. And Riley's all like, "Little lady, can I hold those milk pails for you?" And then—

[Clip from episode plays]

**Riley:** I've come lookin' for a man... A salesman.

**Jenny:** This is the perfect, like this is what your brain does when you like have seen a play. It's like, you know what that play actually is? This very bizarre mash up of like everything you've ever seen.

**Kristin:** I want to just play a little sound clip from the play that is a one of my favorites.

[Clip from episode plays]

[Harmony crying in background.]

**Buffy:** But what else can I expect from a bunch of the low rent, no account hoodlums like you. Hoodlums! Yes, I mean you and your friends, your whole sex, throw them in the sea for all I care. Throw 'em in and wait for the bubbles. Men, when you're groping and spitting. All groin, no brain, 3 billion of ya, all passing around the same worn out urge. Men with your... sales.

[Kristin and Jenny laughing.]

**Kristin:** So yeah, it's pretty great. And also this is another beautiful shot. It's like Riley in the foreground, then Buffy in the middle ground, and Harmony in the background. They're all in the shot and they're all in focus.

**Jenny:** Yeah, so this is achieved with the use, I learned today, of a Frazier lens, which allows you to access extreme depth of focus. So you can see all of those characters as far back as they go in great detail.

**Kristin:** Pretty cool.

**Jenny:** He also, Joss also talks about how, you know, they specifically were like leaning into like the like milkmaid thing, and the like *Chicago* flapper thing, and then they'll like hyper masculine cowboy, to like really polarize sort of like gender presentation here. And he talks about how when Harmony says the answer to a question that Giles asks, he's like, "No." And then when Riley says the same exact answer, he's like, "Yes."

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** And that was like intentional, an intentional nod to...

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

**Kristin:** Wow.

**Jenny:** That's right!

**Kristin:** [Laughs] Very cool. And how on the nose is that? Since when we are coming out and we're questioning our sexuality, the patriarchy and all of those systems that we once thought were real come into question.

**Jenny:** Sure. Yes.

**Kristin:** That like, this all really adds up. This is a great episode. We already said it. [Jenny laughs.] We're going to say it again. So then we go to the classroom and this is immediately clocked, I think for all of us: This is *the* classroom. It is the classroom where Willow taught for Jenny Calendar, right?

**Jenny:** Yep. Yep.

**Kristin:** It's where we like really first got to know Willow and Buffy is like, "Hey, take off your costume." And she rips it off and I think, I don't know how you all felt watching this for the first time, when you saw this episode for the first time, but I think probably most of us thought she's going to be naked, right? Like it'll be a dream where you're naked.

**Jenny:** Right. That's how class dreams work.

**Kristin:** But what's funny, not funny "ha ha," but what's interesting is that for Willow, I think she's more vulnerable thinking about that version of herself than she is being naked.

**Jenny:** Right.

**Kristin:** That like this is really her weakest spot and it reminded me, this is the dress that Cordelia said it was, you know, from Sears. Like it's just, there's a lot of rooted memories for Willow in this time in her life.

**Jenny:** I think her outfit rocks!

**Kristin:** Yeah, I mean it's pretty cute. Also, they nailed her hair! Like her hair looks—

**Jenny:** Yeah. She's got a very successfully applied wig that looks super accurate. Also in the commentary, Joss talks about how like everyone got like very emotional cause they're like—

**Kristin:** Ohh!

**Jenny:** —You know they're filming the finale of Season Four and everyone was immediately like, "Oh! Season One!" Actually he kind of goes on to say like, "More like *episode* one Willow" because even like after the first episode, the network, it was like she's gotta be less square looking.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** So they somehow... I would have rather seen Willow wear softer side of Sears outfits for like a whole season, than like the bizarro like pompom animal sweaters.

[Kristin laughs.]

**Kristin:** So I thought another part of this that was interesting is that like once she gets to the classroom, we see that Anya is there. And I think Anya is a sore spot for Willow because of Xander...

**Jenny:** Yeah, yeah.

**Kristin:** ...and that whole thing. And then of course everyone's true nightmare: Your current girlfriend [Jenny laughs] and your ex talking to each other!

**Jenny:** Oh, god!

**Kristin:** Oh my god!

**Jenny:** Whispering, kind of like looking canoodle-ly.

**Kristin:** Yeah, Oz is like, "I tried to warn you."

**Jenny:** Oh god! The worst.

**Kristin:** You know? Like I'm upset and I am not Willow, so I can only imagine how Willow is feeling. And then Buffy just watches when Sineya comes in and attacks Willow. Willow is the first one to be attacked.

**Jenny:** Right. And she is kinda choking Willow and there's an effect that looks like the life is being sucked out of her. So I just wanna make a note of the... method?

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Jenny:** The approach.

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Jenny:** The area of the body that's being impacted as we move forward.

**Kristin:** [Sarcastically] Oh, interesting. I wonder why you want to talk about the method and way in which...

**Jenny:** [Sarcastically] Hmmmm. Interesting.

**Kristin:** [Sarcastically]...these four characters are attacked. [Normal voice] We will see. So the dream ends for Willow and she is left gasping on the couch. We pan out, we see them all asleep. Willow is gasping. And this is, you know, there's a lot of *Nightmare on Elm Street*-y of things—

**Jenny:** Totally.

**Kristin:** —happening here. Because there's a lot of like in the dream out of the dream. We'll, I'm sure we'll talk about that a little bit more as we move forward.

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

**Kristin:** But for now, we go along into Xander's dream.

**Jenny:** I love this one. I love them all.

**Kristin:** So Xander had picked *Apocalypse Now* as the movie, and Xander and his association with like soldier stuff has been pretty strong throughout the series, especially since “Halloween” when he developed soldier skills—

**Jenny:** Right, right, right.

**Kristin:** [Laughing] –soldier skills that were called upon many times. But there's also a masculinity thing here, right? It's like even at the beginning before they all fall asleep, he's like, “Well I got *Apocalypse Now*, but don't worry, I got some like chick and Britt flicks, too.” You know, like he's like, “I want the fighting and this stuff cause I'm a man. I'm a man. I'm a man!” Which is a major sore spot for Xander, right? That like he's the patriarchal dude for so much of this series because he struggles with his own feelings of like not being masculine enough, strong enough, not being a big enough contributor to the Scooby gang. Like on and on and on.

**Jenny:** I wanna note here that as they're watching *Apocalypse Now*, Giles says something like, “Oh, I see now it's, it's about the journey,” which is kind of like a meta comment. According to Joss on the episode, on the nature of the episode, this episode is not about a story that goes from A to B and then climaxes—

**Kristin:** Ah!

**Jenny:** —and then has like a little outro. This episode is about the journey through the psyches of all the characters. You're welcome.

**Kristin:** Yeah. That's good.

**Jenny:** And I even like, I mean as we, when we get to Buffy his dream, like it's not what we'd expect from— it's not how we'd expect Buffy to wrap this up at all.

**Kristin:** No. Somebody said on Twitter, actually when we were talking about it in that space, somebody was like, I just can't believe that Angel wasn't in Buffy his dream. Right? And that's just like one way—

**Jenny:** This— that must have been like a scheduling— I feel like I actually read that there was a scheduling—

**Kristin:** It had to be, right?

**Jenny:** —conflict with the *Angel* finale.

**Kristin:** And because— and that's also the reason that we have Harmony and not Cordelia—*Cordelia should have been in this episode!*

**Jenny:** True.

**Kristin:** So there had to be— it had to be scheduling, cause I think both of those characters would have been featured in this episode. We get Principal Snyder, we get, you know, we get all these...

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

**Kristin:** ...humans. So, Xander goes upstairs—

**Jenny:** Also, you know who's not in anybody's dream is [yells] Faith!

**Kristin:** Yeah! What the fuck! What was Faith doing? Faith. What was, what was Faith specifically doing? Not Eliza, [Jenny laughs] but Faith. So Xander goes upstairs to pee. There's this weird exchange. I mean it's all, they're all weird, but like Buffy's like, "Do you need help with that?" He's like, I've got a whole system. I'm okay." [Kristin laughs.]

**Jenny:** [Laughing] I love that. I love that.

**Kristin:** And, Jenny, I'd like to play a little clip of a song that played in my head when Xander got to the top of the stairs and Joyce was—

**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** —was standing there.

**Jenny:** Is it: [Singing over recording of “The Lady in Red” by Chris de Burgh] Lady in Red!

**Kristin:** [Laughing] Yes, it is.

**Jenny:** [Speaking] Cool. This scene is so great, so great.

[Crosstalk]

**Kristin:** The whole episode is so great.

**Jenny:** But this in particular, like the way, like the language of their exchange. The like “I’m a conquistador.”

**Kristin:** Yes.

**Jenny:** “I’m a comfort-ador.” The slow piano music that's happening. The way that, so like for a couple of lines, like Joyce is, it's just like a slow-mo, like, you know, slowly panning shot across Joyce's face while she's speaking, but she's not moving, you know—

**Kristin:** Right, her mouth isn’t moving.

**Jenny:** —it's just like voiceover. And then there's one where it like pans— she's like, “Why don't you rest a while?” And it like pans all the way to the bed, which is already turned down. It's like, “Yeah! Hot Mom!”

**Kristin:** Yeah. [Singing] Bow-chicka-bow-bow!

**Jenny:** [Singing] Hot Mom!

**Kristin:** [Speaking] I read somewhere actually that this was really like— that Joss was really excited about this as well for Joyce because so many times on a set or on a show when you're playing the mom, you're like playing the mom and you don't get to be sexy. Which let's think about that fucked up shit for a second.

**Jenny:** But “Band Candy!”



**Kristin:** Right? And so we get a little more of like what Kristine Sutherland can do. And you know, and also the fact of the matter that, of course you can be a mom and sexy at the same time.

**Jenny:** Right, right.

**Kristin:** So this is very fun. And then Xander's like, "I'll be right with you."

**Jenny:** Dude.

**Kristin:** "I'm gonna go to the bathroom."

**Jenny:** Yep. Yep.

**Kristin:** And he puts the toilet down—

**Jenny:** He puts his system to work.

**Kristin:** Yep. Yep. And the minute that he like gets himself ready to pee, it like turns around and we see that there are many gentleman in lab coats studying.

**Jenny:** Yep. The entire Initiative is taking copious notes. They're at the ready to observe and assess. And I have an amazing one liner that probably wasn't meant the way we're all going to take it from the commentary. Joss said, "I think that's the best use of the Initiative we had all year." [Kristin laughs] And we're all like, "Uh-huh. Correct."

**Kristin:** [Laughing] Correct. Salt the earth. [Jenny laughs] So then of course Xander's like "Gotta go." And the biggest, I think the biggest piece of Xander's dream is that all paths lead back to the basement for him.

**Jenny:** A hundred percent.

**Kristin:** Right? This is like, Xander is struggling with his own imposter syndrome that like he— he doesn't feel like he has done anything with himself. He thinks he's always gonna be a failure, and that is why every time he turns a corner, he's back in that basement where he feels trapped and stuck.

**Jenny:** Right, right. And in between, he's just in other places that like reinforce how stuck he feels in the basement.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Oh, we also hear the doorknob rattling in a threatening way up at the door, at the top of the stairs. And we don't know what's going on there yet.

**Kristin:** But you think, I mean, you think that it is the same thing at the top of the stairs that was in Willow's dream. You think it's Sineya, right?

**Jenny:** Right, right.

**Kristin:** Because that's the thing that's chasing them, we think. But of course we find out that it's not what's at the top of the stairs. Well sort of is, whatever, we'll get there.

**Jenny:** It's the whole thing. But we go then to the playground, where Spike and Giles—Spike, Watcher-in-training and—

**Kristin:** This is amazing.

**Jenny:** —Giles Watcher-mentor are just like going to town on that swing set.

**Kristin:** This is amazing. I lobby for a tee shirt that is this swing set with the two of them on the swings and I would wear that shirt.

**Jenny:** Dude that would rock. That would rock. "Spike's like a son to me."

**Kristin:** Oh my god!

**Jenny:** It's amazing.

**Kristin:** And this is again like, you know, we're in Xander's dream. This is Xander feeling like Giles doesn't approve of him. He doesn't have a father figure.

**Jenny:** Right, right, right.

**Kristin:** Right? Everybody's better than him.

**Jenny:** This shit where playground Xander looks over at the ice cream truck and watches ice cream Xander like— And the way that they like hold on either of those Xander's at like different times within the scene for like longer than is necessary, like just like adds this layer of like meaning and resonance that isn't inherent just in like what you're seeing, but also like with the added consideration of the time that is spent there.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Yeah. And we get of course, sandbox Buffy.

**Jenny:** Sandbox Buffy with the desert behind her. She calls Xander, "Big brother," and he's like, "Brother?"

**Kristin:** Which is, that's one of those moments you were talking about where it goes to his face and it really stays on his face for a very long time.

**Jenny:** Yeah. "A Watcher scoffs had gravity." It's important to note that that is said.

**Kristin:** That is amazing.

**Jenny:** And then we get a perspective shift to ice cream Xander.

**Kristin:** Yes. And now here we are.

**Jenny:** Here we are in the truck. "I think it's gonna be a big year for vengeance" Anya says.

**Kristin:** So Anya says, "Do you know where you're going?" And just to take us back a step—

**Jenny:** Oh yeah.

**Kristin:** "You've always got to be moving forward," was said before. There's a lot of lines throughout that are said to Xander or at Xander that are like, "What are you doing? Where are you going? You got to keep moving," et cetera.

**Jenny:** Right, right, right.

**Kristin:** Xander is like, "Society has rules and borders," to Anya cause she's like, "I want to have vengeance." And it's like, I love this because he says it in the dream and it's like you can almost see the inner workings of his dream mind of like, "Society has rules and borders. Hey, what's another rule in border that's been broken recently in my perception of the world? Willow is fucking Tara!" [Kristin laughs] Like, you know, like he goes right from that societal rules and structures to turn around and see Willow and Tara at the back of the ice cream truck. And they are, of course not Willow and Tara really.

**Jenny:** They're like sexed up dominatrix Willow and Tara.

**Kristin:** They're like Bratz doll Willow and Tara.

**Jenny:** Yeah, yeah. They're just like— they're like wild hyper-sexualized caricature versions of themselves. Which is of course, because like, you know, we're seeing it from Xander's perspective.

**Kristin:** Right. It's like— it's weird to me. I mean it's, it's obviously— many of you talked about this scene like, “Can you believe how fucked up this... blah, blah, blah.” Of course it's fucked up, right? But it also seems very hyper aware of itself. And it gets to be, because this is such a far cry from what Willow and Tara are—

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kristin:** —that we see, you know, the, this divide and it's— I don't know, maybe I'm leaving too much room for Xander, but to me, having not watched the director's commentary, but it just seemed like even Xander was a little like, “Wait a minute.” Like, “I think that the—I guess this is sexy? But like what is happening?”

**Jenny:** Yes. So Joss hilariously refers to this as the longest lesbian kiss on network television up to this point.

**Kristin:** Oh, wow.

**Jenny:** But of course we don't see one millisecond of it.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** But the network made them cut down Xander's reaction time.

**Kristin:** [Gasps] Gasp!

**Jenny:** [Laughing] I know!

**Kristin:** Oh my god!

**Jenny:** I know, it's fucking bananas, isn't it?

**Kristin:** That is- we're playing the fucking Patriarchy jingle again, god dammit.

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

**Jenny:** More like the gay-triarchy, am I right?

**Kristin:** [Laughs] Wow, Jenny. That's my favorite note so far.

**Jenny:** It's wild. Right. Okay, cool. So he takes this opportunity also to talk about the way that this is reflective of how Xander relates to most people on the show in a sexual way, one way or another. Either women that he desires or men that he feels emasculated by—

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** —or a particular woman he feels—two particular—*women* he feels emasculated by. [Kristin laughs] Whatever. And then Joss calls back to the conversation with Joyce, the conquistador, the like trope of men always looking for the next conquest and how actually Xander is seeking, because of his home life, which we see even a little bit, you know, more of a window into as the dream progresses, because of his home life he is looking to fill a void. And what he, the messaging that he has received up to this point in his life is the way you fill this void is via conquest and that's how you feel manly and you feel whole and whatever.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** But, but Joss asserts here that he's actually, what he's seeking but doesn't know that he's seeking is comfort and familial and maternal love that doesn't exist in his family life.

**Kristin:** Right, right. Deep.

**Jenny:** Which I thought was pretty interesting. [Laughs.]

**Kristin:** I want to just shout out Anya...

**Jenny:** Dude.

**Kristin:** Who, and I know this is like Xander's dream version of Anya, but I *genuinely* believe that if the two of them were in an ice cream truck and Xander was like, "Can I go make out with...?" Anya, actual Anya, would be like, "Yeah, fine." Which is like literally her response. She's like, "Whatever. I am going to steer with no hands." [Jenny laughs.] "So you do whatever makes you happy."

**Jenny:** Okay, so Xander starts like walking back through the truck, and I want to just point out the way that Joss talks about the, the green screen, right? They wanted to do— I think it's called rear projection or something, like old Hitchcock movies. The way it would be when you were like looking at two people in the front or back seat of the car and the way that shit would move, they couldn't do that

cause it's like too big of a rig I guess to get set up. So they opted for green screen, which still looks, you know, bizarre and wonderful and dream—

But because the aspect ratio on Hulu is wider than on the DVDs, if you watch it on Hulu, there's a part where he walks by a window and it goes from the— it shows like showing like the street they're driving down to just like a big, like blue glowing blank.

**Kristin:** [Laughing] Oh!

**Jenny:** In the window—

[Crosstalk]

**Kristin:** Cause they didn't fill in the—

**Jenny:** They're just like, "It's out of frame! We don't need to fill it in anymore." And then he just like keeps crawling back and back and back and back and back and until, oh god he's in the basement again.

**Kristin:** Again. Jenny, I think this is a great time for us to hear a little bit from David Wells who plays the Cheese Man, because of course Xander gets to the basement and the Cheese Man is there, and he's saying "These," with his slices of cheese, "will not protect you."

[CHIME]

**Kristin:** David, thank you so much for joining us.

**David:** Oh, I appreciate you guys asking me to come in.

**Kristin:** Yes. I was a little surprised by it, but— [Kristin and Jenny laugh] but it's pretty, pretty nifty.

**Kristin:** The fandom, the *Buffy* fandom is massive. They're—

**David:** I'm shocked by it. [Kristin and Jenny laugh] I mean, you guys contacted me and I went on the Internet and I went "Some girl wrote a song to the Cheese Man." I'm going, "You've got to be kidding me".

**Kristin:** Ohh!

**David:** My son's 18, and I'm going "Look at this." He goes, "Wow, Dad!" I said, [Kristin laughing] "Can you believe that?"

**Kristin:** Yeah. And the Cheese Man— do you know what a big deal the Cheese Man is?

**David:** No, not at all. Except I have gone places that people go, "You were the Cheese Man." And I'm going, "...Yeah?" And they're going, "Oh man, it was so great." I'm going, "I wasn't on screen, but like, I don't know very little."

**Kristin:** Right!

**David:** But you know, I guess, I guess, you know, *Buffy*, you know, *Buffy* was a good show creatively. It was, it was an interesting show, and especially at the time. So I guess people hook onto that.

**Jenny:** Yeah. You like— the way that a Joss talks about it in the director's commentary for the episode is that like the Cheese Man is the thing that everyone asks him about and he's like—

**David:** That is so weird.

**Jenny:** "That is the one thing in the episode that has literally no meaning."

**David:** No meaning. I mean, you know, you guys asked me about how the audition process went. I mean, I went into the audition and I don't remember, usually I go to, —well, I go to a lot of auditions— and there's like 20 other guys that look a lot like me.

**Jenny:** Mh-hmm, mh-hmm.

**David:** You know, I think I, you know, I think I was the only one there.

[Kristin laughing.]

**Jenny:** Really?

**David:** Because I went in and it wasn't in a casting office, it was with Joss and it was in his, I don't know if it was his office or something. I just remember it was this big space and, and there were offices around, there was a big open space. I'm sitting there and there was nobody. I mean it was just me, you know what I mean? And that, happens occasionally. So, you know, but usually they've got a bunch of

people. I mean, I remember one time they, they did the casting breakdown, said "We're looking for a David Wells type."

**Jenny:** Woah!

[Kristin laughs.]

**David:** This was 30 years, this is a long time ago, you know, and my manager said, "You want David Wells?" I didn't get the job.

[Kristin and Jenny laugh.]

**Kristin:** Stop.

**David:** I didn't get the job, you know. But occasionally somebody, I don't know that he knew my work or anything, but he must have somewhere somehow, you know?

**Kristin:** Yeah. And so what did he say? Like what did you know about the role?

**David:** I knew nothing about it. I mean, I had the sides and I— I tend to play— I've played a lot of eccentric characters in the past. I didn't, you know, and when you're playing these sort of obscure or absurd characters, you know, I play a lot of characters that are, that have a different take on life or a different take on the world and you just have to really commit to it. And really, you know, the cheese becomes very valuable [Kristin laughs] and what you're doing is very important. And what you have to say and impart is very important. And he gave me very, very little direction.

**Jenny:** Wow.

**Kristin:** I just did something with Ryan Murphy who's kind of like him, in that these guys are really creative and really brilliant. And, and Ryan Murphy never said a word to me, you know what I mean?

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**David:** I mean, he hired me and I read somewhere later that, "You know, I like or I don't like, and I hire people and then I just kind of let them go." And, and I, you know, I noticed that and I think maybe that was kind of what Joss was doing.

**Jenny:** Wow.



**Kristin:** With the, with this character, with the Cheese Man, you know, there's, what, three lines? And you know, you talked about knowing that the cheese was very important. Did you have any larger story for the Cheese Man in your mind?

**David:** Well, it's just a feeling more than something specific. It's just a feeling of possession and ownership of the cheese and what it means to you. And it can mean it just becomes very personal— personal to you and then what you're trying. It's a really a lot about the other people more so about, you know, it's really like bringing them in, getting them involved, making sure they understand, making sure they care, taking care of them. And, when you do that, it sort of takes you out of yourself and it, and it puts it over there, and so then you've got a chance of connecting.

**Kristin:** Right.

**Jenny:** The Cheese Man, I just want to let you know is so iconic within the universe that— So we, starting last year, we started throwing an annual Prom for our listeners and we threw the first one here in LA at the Ace and someone came in cosplay as the Cheese Man.

**David:** Oh, god bless them.

**Jenny:** Yes.

**David:** That is so sweet.

**Kristin:** Yeah, it's pretty special.

**David:** So they were wearing cheese?

**Jenny:** That's right.

**Kristin:** And they had the full suit—

**Jenny:** The glasses.

**David:** I can't remember, I think it was cheddar, but I'm not sure.

**Kristin:** That was, that's a massive question actually. Everybody wants to know wants to know—

**Jenny:** And I'm very curious!

**David:** I think, I think what I was wearing, I think that was American cheese. But it was real cheese.

**Kristin:** So it was real cheese?

**David:** Yeah, it was real cheese. It was all real cheese.

**Kristin:** Did they do anything to adhere it to your head?

**David:** I think it just kind of, have you ever taken a piece cheese—it kind of just sticks.

[Crosstalk]

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** A lot of a lot of people have asked this question. It's very timely. There's a video viral video going around right now where a parent throws a slice of American cheese at a baby and it sticks to the baby's head and it just went nuts. And so when we told people we were doing this interview, they said, "Does David know about the baby with the cheese?"

[Jenny laughs.]

**David:** No, I don't about that. Oh, poor baby!

**Kristin:** Yeah. It's pretty funny. It's a very funny video. But it displays, more than anything, the adhesion.

**Jenny:** The natural adhesion of the cheese.

**David:** Yeah. I think, I don't remember, but I remember, I think it just stuck there. You know what I mean?

[Kristin laughs.]

**Jenny:** Wow.

**David:** I don't think it was a lot of thought about placement and everything. I mean I just, "Yeah, I just put it up there." "Okay."

**Kristin:** A couple of our listeners wrote in and wondered about dreams since this is all, this whole episode is, you know, four different dreams, and wondered if you had

a crazy dream that you remember of your own? Or a dream that you've had that's recurring or any—

**David:** Well I always to fly. But I think that everybody, everybody wanted that, right?

**Kristin:** I never got a flying dream.

**David:** I never got off the ground, but I always wanted—

[Kristin laughs.]

**Jenny:** Ah! Aspirational flying.

**David:** I mean, but I was all, but I was working at it. I was always working, working, working at it, and just out of people's reach. But it never— but I've always wanted— I've always wanted, you know that dream. And that's recurred. It's probably for a lot of people: flying.

**Kristin:** Yeah. Have you flown in your dreams?

**Jenny:** I usually fall.

**Kristin:** Yes, fall, yeah. I've definitely had a lot of falling dreams as well.

**David:** Yeah, I've almost gotten off the ground and up and not quite. But when you're playing it, you know, you're playing, you're not playing it as a dream. You're in this situation and you need to help these people with the cheese, with the cheese.

**Jenny:** With the cheese!

**David:** With the cheese. And cheese could set them free.

[Jenny and Kristin laugh.]

**Kristin:** Truly.

**David:** Are they doing a reboot of this?

**Kristin:** Rumor has it, yeah.

**Jenny:** Allegedly. Allegedly something is in the works. There's very little information about it, but apparently.

**David:** Oh really?

**Kristin:** Oh wow, what if the Cheese Man returns?

**David:** The Cheese Man's aged a little.

[Kristin laughs.]

**Jenny:** Well, haven't we all?

**Kristin:** Hey, the beauty of being a character in a dreamscape is that you can come back in any form you want and it'll still be believable.

**David:** That's right, there you go.

**Kristin:** You know, it's really, I think the hardest on the people who played the vampires in the series because they—

**Jenny:** Yeah vampires—

**Kristin and Jenny:** —don't age—

**Kristin:** —and they cannot come back. Right. Unless there's some big plot hall where they aged. [Softly] Do you like cheese?

[Kristin laughs.]

**Jenny:** Everybody wants to know.

**David:** I like muenster, but muenster, everybody likes muenster, right?

**Kristin:** Sure.

**Jenny:** Yeah. The people's cheese.

**David:** Yeah. I like muenster but I'm not, I'm not that— not as much. And then my son tells me dairy's bad, you know, so I'm trying to cut out a lot of it. [Jenny and Kristin laugh] But I do, I do like Munster cheese. I wish I could tell you guys it all meant something special and there's a secret and the Cheese Man's going to come back and have his own series. [All laugh.] What the Cheese Man means me doesn't

necessarily have to have anything to do with what it means or what he means to anybody else.

**Kristin:** Mh-mmm.

**David:** It can mean what it means to them and that's fine.

**Kristin:** Thank you for taking the time out to talk to us.

[Crosstalk]

**David:** Oh, thank you guys. I enjoyed it.

**Jenny:** Thank you so much.

**David:** I hope I came across like the Cheese Man.

**Kristin:** Yeah.

[Kristin and Jenny laugh.]

**David:** You know that I didn't disappoint.

**Kristin:** Intriguing, interesting—

**David:** "Oh he can't be the Cheese Man!"

**Kristin:** —leaving us wanting more.

**David:** You know, "That's so anticlimactic. That's the guy?"

[Kristin and Jenny laugh.]

**Kristin:** No, no people are going to be absolutely thrilled. So, thank you.

**David:** Well thank you guys. I appreciate it.

[CHIME]

**Kristin:** Oh my goodness. Thank you so much to David for sitting down with us. How fun! We were just so excited cause really this character is like... It's like this is a cult TV show and this is a cult character. I was like cult on cult.

**Jenny:** Honestly, remember when somebody cosplayed as the Cheese Man at our first Prom?

**Kristin:** I do!

**Jenny:** Iconic!

**Kristin:** Jenny, I'm going to post that picture of you and the Cheese Man at our first Prom—

**Jenny:** Hell yeah!

**Kristin:** —to coincide with this episode. So we come out of the basement again and we're back in the school hallway. My two favorite parts about this sequence, this dream piece, is the lighting, which I think is unbelievable. Especially the stark contrast, like when they're in green and the scene behind them is in red, and what have you.

**Jenny:** Right, right. It looks so good.

**Kristin:** And then of course the language.

**Jenny:** Right.

**Kristin:** Which is, which reminded me of, I don't remember the name of the episode. Which is the episode where Giles is the demon? He and he speaks—

**Jenny:** Oh, "A New Man."

**Kristin:** "A New Man." Where he's speaking to Xander—

**Jenny:** Where he's speaking Fyarl.

**Kristin:** —and he's speaking Fyarl. Right. This is in French, and I think there's two languages, but I only wrote down French, that both Giles and Anya wind up speaking to him in. And I want to tell everybody, I'm sure a lot of you super fans already know what's said here. But I wanted to let everybody know what was being said—

**Jenny:** Oh, please. I don't even know what's being said.

**Kristin:** —in French. So Giles, in English, says, "The others have all gone ahead. Now listen carefully, your life may depend on what I'm about to tell you. You need

to get to—" And then it switches to French. What he says is, "You need to get to the house. We're, we're all sleeping. All your friends are there having a wonderful time and getting on with their lives. The creature can't hurt you there."

Xander says, "I can't understand. Go where?" Giles still in French says, "Oh, for God's sake, this is no time for your idiotic games." Anya rushes over, she's also dubbed in French, and she says, "Xander, you have to come with us now. Everybody is waiting for you." Giles, "That's what I've been trying to tell him." Et cetera, et cetera. So they are, you know, like it's not just French gibberish.

**Jenny:** Right.

**Kristin:** They are the actual lines they are trying to say like "Come back," "You have to get to this place," "You need to get away," "You need to get protection," whatever.

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

**Kristin:** And then we go...

**Jenny:** To *Apocalypse Now*.

**Kristin:** To *Apocalypse Now* and there's this really beautiful camera—[Jenny laughs] Xander gets turned upside down as the camera flips. Like the other—it's a cool camera move that they do to transition.

**Jenny:** Which, if I was understanding correctly, is a scene that happened, like a thing that happens in *Apocalypse Now*.

**Kristin:** Oh! [Jenny laughs] Okay, that makes sense. And I, and Jenny, maybe you got this from the director's commentary, but I was— I read a lot about this episode before we taped and one of the things that I read was that they actually had on set like the VHS of *Apocalypse Now* playing when they were filming this scene. Cause it is a shot by shot recreation of a scene from the movie.

**Jenny:** Yes, and who do we have here but Armin Shimerman?

**Kristin:** [Gasps] Armin Shimerman!

**Jenny:** Friend of the pod!

**Kristin:** Our very— if you don't know, if you don't listen to all of our episodes, you might not know this, but Armin Shimerman was our very first like interview...

**Jenny:** Of any kind.

**Kristin:** Of any—

**Jenny:** Well, we talked to Steven—

**Kristin:** We talked to Steven—

**Jenny:** —but of course, [Crosstalk] Armin was the first person we didn't know who we reached out to, who said yes.

**Kristin:** So if you haven't checked that out, you should definitely check it out our interview with Armin Shimerman back from Season One. So it's such a delight to see Principal Snyder.

**Jenny:** Dude, I love “Where you from, Harris?” and Xander's like, “Well, the basement mostly.”

**Kristin:** [Laughing] Right.

**Jenny:** Which like, we're getting very clear messaging.

**Kristin:** Right, right. “Where are you heading?” “Your time is running out.”

**Jenny:** “I'm supposed to meet Tara and Willow... and possibly Buffy's mom.”

**Kristin:** Right? Xander's like, “Uh, I'm not feeling sexy anymore, but I know that I was supposed to be maybe having some sex.”

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Kristin:** He says this again, “I'm a comfort-ador.” And then after this like shot by shot recreation with Snyder, who of course is like another like authority figure. Like you know, like this all it all lines up with what we've been talking about. We get a really cool shot and they do this a couple of times, I think in this episode where they use the set as the set is built, but they use it to break the, you know, the walls of that set. So Xander goes from Giles's, to the school, to the dorm, into the closet. The camera follows him on that journey, which is really—

**Jenny:** Yeah, all of these sets, just pushed up against each other and connected.



**Kristin:** And when you think about too, like, you know, the, the camera work is really incredible and also the lighting, like think about that. They have to light this as he goes. All these different sets are lit for Xander to be lit, but also for them to be— it's just really, really incredible.

I also wrote at one point during this journey that Xander goes on, we go through the set of "I'm a Slave 4 U" or "Slave 4 U," the Brittany Spears music video.

**Jenny:** Oh, the slatted— that looks like, just like a production hallway. There's clipboards hanging up and stuff that they just like left.

**Kristin:** But if you want to do like a side by side, go take a screenshot, [Jenny laughs] Britney Spears's "Slave 4 U" video and then this slatted hallway, cause I think it's the same.

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

**Kristin:** I think it's the same thing. And of course, where do we wind up Jenny?

**Jenny:** Back in the basement!

**Kristin:** Back in the basement. Now I've already said this, but we have a long history with Xander. We call out Xander a lot. Xander's done a lot of problematic things, continues to do some, but he's growing and changing, and we've been on that journey with him, but we haven't really spoken too much about his family life. We've learned a little bit and a little bit and a little bit. And I think that this dream, the finale of Season Four, we get more of an insight into Xander's root, Xander's family than we have to date. And, you know, that door opens at the top of the stairs and it's not Sineya at first. It is Xander's dad.

[Clip from episode plays]

[Ominous music plays.]

**Xander's Dad:** What the hell is wrong with you? You won't come upstairs? What are you, ashamed of us? Your mother's crying her guts out.

**Xander:** You don't understand.

**Xander's Dad:** No, you don't understand. [Footsteps coming down stairs.] The line ends here with us. And you're not gonna change that. You haven't got the heart.

**Kristin:** He comes down the stairs... and this is like, I don't even remember, I was just watching another show where like there was this, this theme of like the father figure just always—Oh! [Laughing] I know what I was watching! *Angel*! It was a very similar thing that like Angel's dad, well Liam's dad, which is, if you don't watch *Angel*, Angel's name before he was "Angel" was "Liam." His dad was very disapproving, was always telling him he wasn't good enough, he wasn't whatever, and that's what caused Liam to be a little asshole. And so this just was like, I was like, "Oh, this is a very similar thing." Xander's dad is... doesn't approve of him. It makes him feel like shit. Makes him feel threatened. It makes him feel scared. Like makes him not feel comfort. Right? Which is what you were talking about before, Jenny.

**Jenny:** Right.

**Kristin:** That like truly at the heart, ha ha, of this for Xander: he's looking for comfort. And then his father changes to now be Sineya. And Sineya reaches into his chest, not that far away from how Buffy reached into Adam's chest—

**Jenny:** Oh my god.

**Kristin:** —and pulls out Xander's *heart*.

**Jenny:** [Sarcastically] Fascinating!

**Kristin:** [Sarcastically] Interesting!

**Jenny:** Let's just make a note of that! [Normal voice] And let me also just say one more a Joss thing from this dream, the way that he puts it, which I thought was really great and really worth bringing to the table here, is that Xander's fear, like we just saw Willow's fear, right? That everybody's got to find out the truth about her. Xander's fear is that he can't get out of the basement and that he can't stop being a Harris.

**Kristin:** [Exhales] Oof.

**Jenny:** I know!

**Kristin:** I know. The series is a lot of things, but I think that one of the reasons that this episode is so respected is not only because of the brilliance in the writing, the brilliance in the camera work, the lighting, all the things that we've talked about far but also because it really made— it really puts the series on the map in a way that is different now. Like it's like "We're grown up." Like, right? "We're grown up now."

**Jenny:** Right.

**Kristin:** We're in like a fucking poetry dream sequence where we are learning the inner workings of these characters in a way that is lyrical and nuanced and complicated. And, you know, it's just very exciting to know that we're getting this and we're going into Season Five.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Kristin:** That we get to walk into Season Five like armed with all of this complexity for these characters. So we have talked about Willow's dream. We have talked about Xander's dream. We've had some words with David Wells who plays the Cheese Man. And we are going to do this finale in two pieces cause it's just—

**Jenny:** Oh my god!

**Kristin:** —it's a big deal! So Jenny, are you ready to say goodbye for this week and let them all wait to hear what we have to say about Giles's dream? So coming at you is Giles's dream and Buffy's dream. We also have some more guest spots—

**Jenny:** Wow!

**Kristin:** —in the second part of our Season Four finale.

**Jenny:** Hell yeah. Okay, until the next part of this episode, to be continued, I am Jenny Owen Youngs and shall remain. You can—

**Kristin:** I like that you said, "Until the next episode, I am Jenny Owen Youngs."  
[Both laugh] Who's she gonna— tune in next week to find—

**Jenny:** I shall— ever shall remain. When I'm not making this podcast, I make songs. You can hear some of them and learn more about me at [JennyOwenYoungs.com](http://JennyOwenYoungs.com). And you can give me a shout on Twitter anytime at [@JennyOwenYoungs](https://twitter.com/JennyOwenYoungs).

**Kristin:** Yes. And until next episode, I am Kristin Russo. I do a lot of work with LGBTQ communities. You can check that out on my website: [KristinNoeline.com](http://KristinNoeline.com). I'm going to spell that for you. It's K-R-I-S-T-I-N N-O-E-L-I-N-E and you can use that handy-dandy spellings also find me on Twitter and on Instagram.

I would like to say that I am doing a second podcast now. It is about *The L Word*. It is called *To L and Back*. I'm really excited about it! [Jenny laughs] I think it's really

fun! I also, Jenny, am horrified and thrilled to find out that people are watching *The L Word* for the first time because of me.

**Jenny:** Oh no!

**Kristin:** I know. [Jenny laughs] It's a lot of responsibility for these two shoulders to carry. But I'm going to do it.

**Jenny:** [Laughing] Well, good luck out there.

**Kristin:** Thank you! So you can check that out. It's, you know, all the places that this podcast is. It is an Autostraddle podcast that I'm doing with Riese Bernard, who's the CEO of Autostraddle. It's super fun!

**Jenny:** *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* is on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram at @bufferingcast. And you can always email us bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

**Kristin:** Yes, you can support us by going on over to iTunes, rating and reviewing us. You can support us by listening to *Angel On Top* if you're not already, because what a delight. And you can also support us on Patreon. Go to BufferingtheVampireSlayer.com, click on Patreon. You can join us at one of many levels. And we have a rocking summer, a new year's rocking summer—

**Jenny:** [Laughing] What the hell?

**Kristin:** —on Patreon. We're doing a lot of things: Jenny's playing some concerts. I am doing a comic book club for the BOOM! Comics, the new Buffy BOOM! Comics. People are pretty stoked over in the Patreon space. So join our family, if you will.

**Jenny:** Please.

**Kristin:** And of course you can always buy new merch! We have, oh my gosh, Jenny, we have like really amazing merch in the store right now.

**Jenny:** What's going on over there?

**Kristin:** Okay, so we have a new shirt from Kristine Tuna, [Jenny squeals] a reimaging of the logo. It's so beautiful.

**Jenny:** It is, truly.

**Kristin:** We also have a new pin designed by Carra Sykes that's on preorder right now. It is Willow and Tara, bird's eye view doing the "O Spell" as it is referred to.

**Jenny:** [Mimics an engine starting.] Oh, it's the "O Spell", alright.

**Kristin:** Uh-huh. It's the fucking coolest pin in the world. You can also preorder a new mug with our logo on it. And fucking get this, Jenny, you can fucking preorder a beer stein, [Jenny squeals] with "Support your Local Alewife" on it. [Jenny squeals] There's a ton of new shit in the store. We're really excited. So go on over there, check it out, [bufferingthevampireslayer.com](http://bufferingthevampireslayer.com), just click on shop.

**Jenny:** Is that everything? Is that everything we need to say until part two of this episode?

**Kristin:** Maybe we should— Let's both fall asleep and then in our dreams, we'll howl out.

**Jenny:** Okay.

**Kristin:** Okay.

[Both snoring.]

**Jenny:** [Softly] Until next time.

**Both:** [Softly] Awoooo!

**Kristin:** Do you think that was disappointing? Should we give them a real awoo?

**Jenny:** [Loudly] 'til next time!

**Both:** [Loudly] AWOOO!

**Jenny:** Yeah!  
[CHIME]

**Kristin:** Oh, hey there. We're about to roll on into what is *not* the song for "Restless," which you'll get next week, but we are going to bring you in case you missed it in the introduction, a poem written by Coya White Hat-Artichoker.

If you don't remember, Coya was the person that we interviewed for the episode "Pangs." And what's very special is not only did we get that interview with Coya, but Coya is a poet and so wrote a poem specific to the episode "Pangs" which we're

going to play here for you and also which will be on the album that's released at the end of the season for Season Four.

**Jenny:** And if you want to support an organization that's important to Coya and important to us, you can check out SisterSong at [sistersong.net](http://sistersong.net).

**Kristin:** Yes, and all that information of course will be in our show notes. Without further ado, here's Coya. And thank you, thank you, thank you Coya for this beautiful poem.

[Coya White Hat-Artichocker recites "Pangs" from Songs from Buffering the Vampire Slayer: Season Four]

**Coya:** Pangs. Why are you here? I am vengeance. Spirits come back from the other side having never gone home, manifest a people's rage. A genocide gone by remains unnamed. We can only be vile ghosts of the past, but we know blood memory. We know you teach lies about our people. California Gold Coast costs native lives. Asking us to feel sympathy for the infected boy man, a researcher down for those who hold histories of destruction. California mission's dark secret. Our ancestors still watch. Still carry this pain. Hus, our grandfathers come to protect the cry for justice. Let it begin.

We don't say "Indian" anymore, we say "Native American" cause y'all trying so hard. "Pass the oregano." "I don't want to hurt him yet." Y'all still act like Custer. Can you even see him? Beyond your beliefs of wild savages, people murdered. Sacred objects housed in your anthropology departments. Same reframe: The only good Indian is a dead Indian. This week's big bad is America's original sin. Can we blame Buffy for not knowing what to do? This country has never settled this question, so why would Joss know better, or Marty? When white folks interpret history based on what they haven't been told, we get the same result. Stoic, unspoken, silent native rage in a vacuum. Just get over it. The past is the past until it rises again.

We know what you do to the land, you do to yourself. From hidden missions to Standing Rock to Washington, DC. Shariece, Deb, and AOC honor the histories. They stand in the hallways of Congress, bold and un-muted. Rage won't be held in mystery or the past. We survived. We are here. Don't fear vengeance, fear everything you didn't learn: A planet on fire, this temporary reality, denial. We tried to tell you live in balance with all life. Instead we got missions, churches, mass graves, and walks of death. Hus is our ancestors' trauma come full circle. Why are you here and how do we let you go? What brings peace to the Restless? How do we heal? And how will we know?

