

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 7.04: Help

[CHIME]

Kristin: Hell-o there, Scoobies. It's Kristin. I'm all alone up in the introduction, probably because Jenny is just feeling the pressure of having been the same exact age as me for nearly three weeks now. The truth is, Jenny had a show in New York City just last night. And so, I am here to intro us into this episode, Help. I hope that I do you proud. Just a couple of quick announcements. First of all, hey, we're gonna take a little break, just a little—a wee little break. We'll be back on January 5th, so it's really just one extra week without us in your ears, giving us the time to—I don't know—eat some candy canes, have some cocoa, put our feet up and watch some holiday movies, get cozy, and wish with all our might that Faith will show up at our doors with some crappy gifts.

Hey, speaking of crappy gifts—wow, what a horrible introduction to telling you about our store. [laughs] Gifts that are *not* crappy can be found in our store, and today, December 15th, is the last day that you can order here in our US store so that orders will ship by the 17th, and allegedly, get to you before Christmas, if that's your kinda deal. So you can head on over to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/shop and you can find our stores there. There's a ton of fun stuff there. T-shirts, hats, a couple of mugs—not too many mugs are left, so if you want a Smash the Demon Lizard Patriarchy mug, you better scoot over there. I think there were eight left last I checked. Anyway. Live your life, do your thing.

Also, hey, prom is on the brain for many of you. The Saturday night tickets are still sold out, but we do have Friday night tickets available. So if you go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/prom, while they last, you can get a ticket to the Friday night live taping. It's still at Torrance High School, AKA Sunnydale High. Jenny and I are gonna be talking about all of our favorite scenes from Buffy the Vampire Slayer. We're gonna have special guests. Jenny's gonna play music. It'll be a good time. Also, it does look like we are probably going to be able to have a virtual option for prom. We are working really hard to make that possible. So stay tuned, because in early January, if things go according to plan, we will hopefully have a virtual option for those of you who cannot be in Torrance with us in March.

Alright. I've invented a Jennybot. Yes, I invented it. [laughs] For this week's Sexual Tension Award winners. Last time I was up here by myself, I did an impression of Jenny and it was great, and thank you all for your compliments. But you know, I don't wanna sour that memory by doing less of a good job. So instead, this time,

we'll try the Jennybot. Alright, here are the rankings from last episode's Sexual Tension Awards. In fourth place, with 10% of the vote, we have Jenkins and Rosenberg. That's Jenkins and Rosenberg.

[Clip inserted]

Jenny: Wow, wow, wow.

[Clip ends]

Kristin: In third place, with 11% of the vote—just one percent more than that last place slot—we have Rosenberg and Jenkins.

[Clip inserted]

Jenny: Nice.

[Clip ends]

Kristin: In third place, 35% of the vote, candles lit, Anya and Willow.

[Clip inserted]

Jenny: [makes chainsaw revving noise]

[Clip ends]

Kristin: And our winners, our winners, our winners. Willow and Anya with 44% of the vote. I heard rumor that many of you chose this option for the ship name Willya, because yes, we will.

[Clip inserted]

Jenny: Uh, if you'll excuse me, I have something in my eye.

[Clip ends]

Kristin: I understand, Jennybot. It's emotional when two women love each other so deeply and wanna kiss so badly. Let's roll into today's episode, Season 7, Episode 4, Help. Content warning, there will be light conversation on the themes of suicide and depression.

[Buffering theme plays]

Jenny: [takes deep breath] Hello and welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer, a podcast where we are watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one by one, spoiler free, in tandem with my dates to the winter formal, [Kristin laughs] Angel On Top.

Kristin: Both of them?! What about me?

Jenny: Get your own dates.

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: [laughs] I'm Kristin Russo, now looking for a date to the winter formal. And this week, [both laugh] we are talking about Season 7, Episode 4, Help. [singing] "I need somebody. Help!"

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: [singing] "Not just anybody."

Jenny: Ohh.

Kristin: Yeah. Listen, you're not the only one who can sing a tune around here.

Jenny: [laughing] Okay, okay.

Kristin: [laughing] Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every other week for an original song written by Jenny Owen Youngs, recapping the Buffy episode we are discussing.

Jenny: Help was written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner and directed by Rick Rosenthal. It originally aired on October 15th, 2002.

Kristin: Every time I hear "Rick Rosenthal," like, I hear "Rick roll" before I hear the full name.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: You know?

Jenny: Oh, yeah. Sure.

Kristin: Rick roll...enthal. This is the one, according to IMDB, where Buffy begins a new job as a school counselor with simply no background or experience. [Jenny laughs] IMDB did not say that. I added my little flourish there—

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin: At Sunnydale High School. On her first day, she encounters a troubled young girl who is convinced she is about to die. Spoiler, she is.

Jenny: Previously on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, it *did* get a little sexy, didn't it?

Kristin: It did! They're like, Anya and Willow, smooch-smooch. Wood and Buffy, smooch-smooch. They were like, putting all the little couples up at the top.

Jenny: Uh-huh. Uh-huh, uh-huh. And asking the most important question of the front of Season 7: why is Buffy a counselor? [both laugh] Nobody knows!

Kristin: Nobody knows. But luckily, we don't start in the counselor's office. We start in a funeral home. I just wanna, like, be a fly on the inside of the writers' room for this season, where they're like, "Last season, guys. What're we gonna do? How are we gonna change it up?"

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: What's spicy? What's a nice spicy way to get a vampire? I know! Let's hide in coffins.

Jenny: Rebecca Rand Kirshner is like, I've never written dialogue between two staff members of a funeral home. [Kristin laughs] I would love to hear what they have to say to each other. The verbal high-fives they give each other, as they close up shop for the night. Leaving the casket—

Kristin: Open.

Jenny: Wide open, overnight, sir.

Kristin: Do we have any embalmers or funeral home directors—?

Jenny: We do...

Kristin: Right? 'Cause I don't—I just—

Jenny: We definitely do.

Kristin: You don't leave it open overnight, right? That doesn't seem—

Jenny: It's like, when you put leftover macaroni and cheese in the fridge—

Kristin: [sternly] Jennifer Owen Youngs.

Jenny: You cover it. I'm just saying—and if—

Kristin: You are fired.

Jenny: And if—and if you—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Fine print on our contract said if you ever compare a corpse to macaroni and cheese, you're fired. [laughs]

Jenny: And if you would cover something so fleeting and inconsequential as macaroni and cheese leftovers, would you not also cover your dearly departed loved ones?

Kristin: A., I just threw up in my mouth. And B., macaroni and cheese is not embalmed. So I do think that we have to ask the experts on this, [laughing] as much as that was a very highly educated analysis.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Sure. I mean, I know there's, like, preservation going into the whole process—

Kristin: I guess Kraft—

Jenny: But it just seems rude, honestly, more than anything.

Kristin: Out of the box macaroni and cheese might be close to embalmed, to be honest with you, so. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Anyway! Wow.

Jenny: I feel like there has to be a better way.

Kristin: Yeah. Also—

Jenny: Surely—surely Dawn is out there with a little lockpick kit, honing her lockpicking skills. There's no reason anybody had to—also, what, they went in to browse at coffins and then—

Kristin: And then disappeared?

Jenny: When the funeral home director, like, left the room for a second and came back, [both laughing] they were just, poof, gone.

Kristin: [laughs] And also, why are there three empty coffins in the room with the lady? I watched *Six Feet Under*, and they keep their display coffins in a separate area from where they keep their actual used coffins, so.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Just many bones to pick in this funeral home. And the serious angle of this—I mean, it's a—it's a moment played for comedy. But the first thing I thought was, like, seriously? Buffy's inside of a coffin? That seems like the most triggering thing that she could ever, ever possibly do. She literally woke up inside of her own fucking coffin and dug herself out of the ground last season. So, like—

Jenny: Mmm. That might account for why she opted to cram Dawn, who is taller than her, into the child coffin, though.

Kristin: [laughs] Dawn constantly reminding everyone that she's not the shortest one. [both laugh] Xander, you know, basically asks what we're asking. "Why are we doing this?" And Buffy's like, "This is how I know how to do it, one at a time."

Jenny: Vampire by vampire. [laughing] Some instructions on writing and life. Classic book, *The Craft of Writing* by Anne Lamott.

Kristin: [laughs] Ah, yes. So they have a conversation—a brief conversation just about being stressed out. And we get, like, the classic *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Venn diagram of stress. Our best friend tried to destroy the world, is now recovered and home but we're unsure. There's something that wants to devour us from below. And it's a school night. You know?

Jenny: While our various undertaker and funeral home director and embalmer listenership is already writing us an email, could you also please reveal to us whether it is professional or not to leave two big—

Kristin: No.

Jenny: Black, thready stitches clearly visible in someone's neck.

Kristin: [simultaneously] I mean, I could stitch [crosstalk]. This is what I would do to stitch this woman's neck shut. [both laugh] This is not a good job. This is not...[laughs]

Jenny: Kristin is to these stitches—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Put a scarf on her!

Jenny: Kristin is to these stitches as Buffy is to counseling.

Kristin: [laughs] Yes. Exactly. So, also, I just, like—not to put too fine a point on it, but your—the conversation that the actual undertakers do have when they're leaving. You, like, mentioned it, but it is hilarious. It does sound like two sportscasters who are just, like, leaving the big game. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. "Wow, you really did a nice job on her. [Kristin laughing] Wow, so great. High five. Foom. Turning the lights off. Good evening, Charles."

Kristin: So Buffy is worried. I mean, she's valid in her concern that she might not have what it takes to be a school counselor. [laughs] Xander is, like, very full of belief in her, which is nice. I mean, like, you know, surface friend-wise, this is what you do. You have belief in your friends that they can do this, but as we will get more and more into—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Buffy is, um, you know, probably lacking in some training here.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Then we get—this vampire—so many vampires, I feel, are coded Italian. Is it just me? Because this lady is straight out of, like, Long Island, my—like—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Straight out of Long Island. My, like, grandfather's Italian kitchen. You know, Dawn's like, "She looks peaceful." And she opens her eyes and she's about to, like, take a bite of her fucking biscotti and she's like, "I am not peaceful."
[laughs]

Jenny: I...did not experience this—

Kristin: No?

Jenny: In any particular direction, but I celebrate your experience.

Kristin: Thank you. I just got strong Italian vibes from this lady.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Credits.

Jenny: Credits, and then cut to Sunnydale High School. Here's a 35-year-old high school student strolling down the hall.

Kristin: [laughs] I mean, listen. We're still fresh off of 90210 giving us the oldest teenagers that ever graced high school's hallways. So, like, our brains at this point are fully accepting whatever-aged person you put in—give 'em a backpack, they're a high school student. That's how it worked then. [laughs]

Jenny: Sure. Sure, yes. Buffy is, uh, electric-sharpening her pencils.

Kristin: I like this. I didn't realize it until right this moment, actually. But like, so much of the episode is about how she's trying to apply what she's learned as a Slayer [laughs] to being a counselor—

Jenny: [laughs] Sharp wood things.

Kristin: Right. Let me make the wooden things at my desk sharp. I know how to do that. So it's a cute—it's a quick moment, but I think it's nice for the overlay of the whole episode, which is really looking at what happens when you get a new job and you only have one particular experience to apply to it. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: We get Amanda, played by Sarah Hagan. Who you may know—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: From Freaks and Geeks.

Jenny: Oh, yes.

Kristin: I hope that we get Sarah on the show. She's a delight, and I hope she can come and talk to us about her time in the Sunnydale High School hallways.

Jenny: She's...got a situation with a guy picking on her, dot-dot-dot.

Kristin: [laughs] This whole, um—I recently—one of our listeners, Bree, sent us a link to some of the promos for the last few episodes of the series. And watching the promos—'cause I don't watch the promos a lot. And watching them made me sort of realize and remember how dramatically positioned shows—all shows were. But like, we're watching it without the promos, so we're like, oh yeah, this really serious stuff is happening to Buffy. [laughing] But the promos were like, [dramatically] "And then!" And they're like, super cut. [Jenny laughs] It's like, [dramatically] "Teen drama! Blah-blah-blah!" And watching this—like, how these scenes are cut—sort of connected me to, like, right. We're trying to, like, really position this show in a certain way. I don't know, there's something about the, like, intercut—like, different students and all of them having their different stories that felt like, very teen drama on television to me, in a way that this show doesn't always feel.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Well. They're cramming a lot of teen drama into this quick sort of flurry of scenes. We've got Amanda, who starts out by saying a guy's been [laughs] picking on her. And then we eventually get to the point that she beat the crap out of him.

Kristin: And Buffy's, like, trying to be professional but is secretly like, fuck yeah. [both laugh]

Jenny: We've got Tomas who does not wanna talk.

Kristin: Does not wanna talk at all.

Jenny: [simultaneously] He doesn't wanna talk.

Kristin: Don't make him talk.

Jenny: Eventually, he talks. Don't make him talk.

Kristin: Peter!

Jenny: Peter. Zachery Ty Bryan as Peter.

Kristin: Where do we know Zachery Ty Bryan from?

Jenny: Home Improvement, Veronica Mars.

Kristin: Also I read Tokyo Drift, although I haven't seen that Fast and the Furious yet.

Jenny: Oh yeah, Tokyo Drift. He thought it was best he comes [laughs] with Buffy because he's bored.

Kristin: Because he's bored. He starts out though by saying, "My parents—" oh, no, "I'm here because of divorce." And she's like, "Oh, I really—like, I can really relate to that." And he's like, "You know, my parents are actually really happy. It's just that everyone else's parents are getting divorced and I feel left out." [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Do you remember—I'm sure it still exists, but do you remember banana splits? Did you have banana splits?

Jenny: I don't know what that is.

Kristin: I feel like this is not the first time I've brought it up on this podcast. [Jenny laughs] But banana splits was the, like, special group where all of the kids in class who had divorced parents would get together and talk about their divorced parents.

Jenny: What?

Kristin: It was called banana splits. [laughs]

Jenny: What?!

Kristin: And I was always really jealous that I didn't get to go to banana splits!

Jenny: [whispers] Oh my god.

Kristin: Sometimes they even got to eat banana splits, and I didn't 'cause my parents were married.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Oh my god—well, that's an incentive.

Kristin: [laughs] Trying to div—trying to make your parents divorce just so you can have a banana split in middle school.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: We don't get a lot of Tomas's story at the jump. All we get is that he doesn't wanna talk. We get a little more from Peter and Amanda. And before we go back to find out more about what's gonna happen in this counselor's office, we get a walk outside. You don't know where they are at first. Xander and Willow are chatting.

Jenny: They're strolling. They're chatting. Xander's commenting on the un-catchiness of the phrase "from beneath you, it devours." Xander, I challenge you to take a spin on the old SS FBYID! Try saying FFBYID! It might feel better to you.

Kristin: It's feeling worse and worse to me, the more you say it, so I'm not sure I agree. [laughs]

Jenny: What the fuck?! [both laugh] Willow's worried that when it does devour from beneath them, she will not be able to help—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Or she might do bad things.

Kristin: Right. And this is great, from Xander. This is straight—

Jenny: [gasps] The hammer analogy! I always think about this analogy when I'm hammering things.

Kristin: [laughs] Which is often, actually, if I know you.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: You are often hammering things.

Jenny: It's true.

Kristin: I'm not joking. You probably think I'm being sarcastic, listeners. I'm not. I am truly respecting the amount that Jenny Owen Youngs hammers things into walls and other surfaces.

Jenny: There's a lot to hammer.

Kristin: It's also the same kind of idea as the subtle knife, from the Golden Compass series, which is one of *my* favorite things of all time. The subtle knife, if you try too hard to cut between dimensions, it shatters, but if you don't try enough, it won't work.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: There's this in-between of control and power that you have to find the balance for in order to get the thing done. And, you know, it's nice! In my notes, I actually drew a little hammer. I drew a little diagram. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god. [laughs] I have terrible news for everyone.

Kristin: Yeah. I have terrible news.

Jenny: Willow is headed to a specific place.

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: She's headed to visit Tara's grave. And I don't know if you had closed captioning on, on Hulu, while you were watching? But the Hulu closed captioning—

Kristin: [simultaneously] I had it on and off.

Jenny: Has—Xander says, "Are you sure you're ready for this?" and that stays on the screen from when he says it to Willow's slow walk—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Oh...god.

Jenny: Up to the headstone. It's very upsetting.

Kristin: Yeah. It's really sad. And beautiful, and powerful. I mean—and I love how they do this. Because, like, we're always in a fucking cemetery in this show, you know? Like, it's just constantly. But this feels so—they've set this up in a totally different place. It's very open.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: It's very bright.

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: And it really just gives a whole different energy to this moment than we usually get when we're in a cemetery.

Jenny: We haven't even seen, like, Buffy and Dawn visit Joyce's grave. I think the only time anybody's gone to a grave, in remembrance, was when they went to Jenny Calendar's grave.

Kristin: That's the only one I remember, specifically. But I'm sure if we're wrong, at least one person will tell us.

Jenny: I'm sure someone will let us know.

Kristin: [laughs] So—so Willow does something. She walks up to the grave. First of all, we're all, like, collectively gasping and being like, oh no, oh no. 'Cause you really—I mean, I don't know. Maybe some of you saw it coming. But like, I didn't see it coming. I didn't know that this—I didn't remember this was gonna happen and it just sorta like, hit me hard. And she has a rock that she puts on Tara's grave, that's the first thing that she does. And this is—we talked in the intro of last episode about how later this season, we're gonna be doing an episode on Willow and the fact that Willow is Jewish, and the show near to never touches on the fact that she is Jewish in any way, shape or form. This is one of the moments that is—this is a Jewish tradition, to put a rock on a grave when you visit it. I read some stuff—I know, Jenny, you did too—about, like, the origin of it and the story of it. And there are a lot of different explanations to why this happens and what it symbolizes and all of that. And I think that we will be lucky enough to get into it with people who know a lot more than we do when we do this special episode. But it is nice to see it. Although, Jenny, you read something that you wanted to bring up as well, yeah?

Jenny: Yeah. I was looking at the Wikipedia article for visitation stones. And—maybe it's worth mentioning—I'm not sure if there's a meaningful, like, difference between the word rock and stone?

Kristin: Ohh.

Jenny: In this particular application.

Kristin: Yeah. That's a good point, mmhmm.

Jenny: But on the page about visitation stones, it says that the stone is placed by the left hand, and Alyson Hannigan uses her right hand. I don't know if this is—we don't know anything. But—

Kristin: We only know what we've read, and—you know—I mean, I think Judaism specifically, at least. Like, I've taken a lot of, like, comparative religion courses and things. I was very, very, very deeply interested in religion when I was in college and so I took a lot of courses on it. And I remember, like, one of the things that I was most blown away by in what I learned about Judaism was how much people were encouraged to really examine and turn over the text, and come to their own understandings of it. Because as somebody who grew up [laughs] Catholic, that was not encouraged at all. [Jenny laughs] And so I think because of that, like, when you read—when somebody—when people like us Google and we're, like, looking online. Like, we're finding a lot of different things. You know, one of the things that I thought was really beautiful that I read was that it's a way for, like, when you go to visit somebody and you see that there are stones, you know that other people have been there and have been visiting with them.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: I thought that was, like, really beautiful. But all that to say, we have a large Jewish listenership. So please let us know if the left hand or the right hand is, like, a hard rule or if that isn't. Like, let us know. Tell us your thoughts. But it is at least nice to see a touch of Willow's Jewish identity in the show, 'cause we don't see it ever.

Jenny: Yes, and it is—one thing is certain.

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: Regardless of whatever religion or spiritual practice you might value or have in your life, you will almost certainly feel attacked by this scene. How dare they?

Kristin: "Hey. It's me." That's *all* she says.

Jenny: No!

Kristin: She's, like, tracing the letters of Tara's name in the headstone. And she just says, "Hey. It's me." No! Nuh-uh.

Jenny: Can I say one thing?

Kristin: You may. [both laugh] Only one thing, for the rest of the podcast, make it good. [both laugh]

Jenny: [groans] I feel like the headstone could look...more headstone-y.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: I thought the black fill on the letters was an interesting choice [Kristin laughs] and one that I am not familiar with.

Kristin: Okay. Well, please note, Jenny Owen Youngs would not like black fill [Jenny laughs] on her—[laughs]

Jenny: [dramatically] When you bury me! [Kristin laughs] Whenever that day arrives, please do not fill the letters on my tombstone.

Kristin: They did more work on Buffy's tombstone, it's clear.

Jenny: Oh, yeah. Buffy's was just a straight engraving.

Kristin: Yes. It was. Anyway. Out of the cemetery and into the counselor's office—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: The Buffy Summers story. Here is where we get more of Tomas. So basically, his story is that his brother has joined the marines and he's terrified that he won't come back. And this is actually very striking to me, because I had just—we had just come off of talking about the airport and 9/11 and how the rules in the airport were changing. And of course, this is also right around the time that we're all watching the United States go to war and people are joining the army and the marines and the navy and all these things. And it is—especially if you are this age at this time—like, this was put here, I think, very purposefully. This is what was happening, if you were a high school student in the United States at that time.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Yeah, I have—you know, I have some feelings in many ways about Buffy being a counselor. You know, this is also not too far away from, like, *Dangerous Minds* and other movies and TV shows where, like, the white lady can help the

person of color. So I have, like, that twinge of, like, I don't know how I feel about this particular combination of people. I also have that same twinge when she is talking about suicide later, because [singsong] she does not have any experience or training inside of mental health! Doo-doo-do-do-doo! [speaking] So, just putting those pins—

Jenny: Yeah...

Kristin: Those pins in the pin cushion.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: Here comes Josh. What an asshole. [laughs]

Jenny: Uh...you say asshole. I say, an outside-the-box thinker. [both laugh]

Kristin: Buffy does a fantastic job with the gay student who is not gay.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Great job. She says—Josh says, "I'm worried I'm gay." Her immediate response: "I'm so thankful that'd come to me. There's nothing to be ashamed of." Knocked it out of the park, Buffy. Absolutely great job.

Jenny: Great job.

Kristin: It's almost like she has had experiences with gay people. Like—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: This is something that she has lived experience with, so she has learned, she has done the right thing here.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Hey! Yes.

Kristin: Unfortunately for her, Josh just wanted a date.

Jenny: Yeah...points for originality, Josh, but please go back to class and never return. [both laugh] Something else that Buffy has a little bit of lived experience with is sibling drama. Her next client—

Kristin: "Client." [laughs]

Jenny: Has a sister who is controlling, doesn't let her make her own decisions, borrows her clothes without asking.

Kristin: Great.

Jenny: It's Dawn! [laughs]

Kristin: It's good. It's a good comic—good comic moment here. This is a good—I mean, this episode—especially the pacing of these teens—it's done very well. The editing is really, like, timed right. The comedy is there, it's good. It's good stuff. And then, right after Dawn, we meet Cassie. Cassie—

Jenny: Cassie. My imaginary best friend from high school.

Kristin: Literally.

Jenny: The coolest girl in school.

Kristin: I mean, this is—like, my biggest note about Cassie is Cassie is the—is such a fucking dead-on look from the 90s and early aughts. I had, like, one friend in particular who looked exactly like Cassie, from the, like—

Jenny: Oh my god. I also had one friend in particular who looked exactly like Cassie.

Kristin: I think it's, like, a requirement if you had high school in the 90s or early aughts—

Jenny: Did you have a friend—[laughing] one friend in particular who looked exactly like Cassie? We wanna hear your story. Call us at 1-800 [both laughing] Yes-I-Did. 1-800-I-Had-One.

Kristin: [simultaneously] 1-800-1-Cassie. That's 1-800, the number one, Cassie. [both laugh] Also, I realized while I was saying that that the name of the girl in my high school was Cassandra, which is—

Jenny: Dude!

Kristin: Creepy!

Jenny: Okay, actually. [snorts] Sorry, this is not relevant to anyone but us. But Cassie is actually a dead ringer for two people that I went to high school with. Or one person I went to high school with and one person who was my age from another school that I was friends with because of youth group [Kristin laughs] whose name was Cassie!

Kristin: Oh my god! [laughs] So—

Jenny: I! Know!

Kristin: Yeah. So this is real. This actually—this show is fictional except for Cassie. Cassie is fully a real human, pulled out of the ether that is placed—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: One in each school. [laughs]

Jenny: Correct.

Kristin: But this, like, flat platinum hair. This, like, particular way of dressing and moving and talking. It is, like, such a thing. It is, like, so fucking re—it's just—it just feels very real to me. And this character is played by an actress named Azura Skye. She's in a ton of stuff. A lot of—

Jenny: Cool name.

Kristin: What? Cool—very cool name. A lot of the—a lot of the people in this episode have been in a shit-ton of things. Like, this is Season 7 Buffy. They are not fucking around. They're like, have you been in 40 other shows? Then you are allowed to be on this one. [both laugh] So anyway, Cassie—Cassie also has purple streaks in her hair, which made me laugh, only because last week on Angel On Top, we met Gwen. And Gwen had red streaks in her hair, and Morgan and LaToya pointed out that if you have streaks in your hair, then you are in trouble. So. [both laugh] I was like, it checks out.

Jenny: It's true!

Kristin: It's true. She has streaks and their theory holds.

Jenny: [gasps] When Elena has streaks in her hair, on The Vampire Diaries, she's in trouble.

Kristin: I'm sure that's where their theory originated. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: So—so anyway. We learn that Cassie is really just not interested in doing any schoolwork, because she knows that she's not graduating. Because next Friday, she's gonna die. Cut to commercial!

Jenny: Well! And then Buffy is like—uh, before Cassie reveals that she's going to die next Friday. She just tells Buffy that she's not gonna graduate high school. And Buffy is immediately on red alert. Cassie deftly changes the subject by saying, [Kristin laughs] "I really like that shirt."

Kristin: [laughing] Guys—

Jenny: Buffy is wearing a white—plain white tank top. A plain...white tank top. "Where'd you get it?" Where'd you get that very unique shirt? I simply must have one of my own, but where?! From whence could I ever...obtain such a garment as this?

Kristin: [simultaneously] I took the same note. I was like, how did they allow this to happen? Like, Buffy must have been—like, her wardrobe must have been something different when they wrote the script. They had to have changed it.

Jenny: Well, I think that wardrobe probably happened just after the fact.

Kristin: Right. But they—[laughs]

Jenny: I don't think the script writer is thinking about wardrobe.

Kristin: Maybe Cassie thought—

Jenny: [simultaneously] But the wardrobe person...[both laugh] should get a copy of the script, I say. [both laugh]

Kristin: Maybe Cassie thought that the fancy pearls were attached to the white tank top, [laughing] and that's why she thought it was fancy.

Jenny: Possibly. Mm, yes.

Kristin: Anyway. Buffy immediately assumes, based on Cassie saying “next Friday, I’m gonna die” that Cassie is suicidal. This is where I have “training, question mark, exclamation point, exclamation point” in my notes. Because—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: You know, there are certain things that should be required if you’re going to talk to students in a counselor capacity. I understand that she’s not there as, like, a therapist. But if you’re in a capacity where students are told to come to you with their feelings, then you at least need to know how to talk to somebody who is suicidal and what to do. And Buffy clearly does not have those tools, and that is—

Jenny: Yeah...

Kristin: An issue. Cassie is not suicidal, but if she were, Buffy would not have the tools here to properly create a safety plan with her. At all.

Jenny: Yeah. Um, yeah.

Kristin: Anyway. [laughs]

Jenny: Um. More on this as we continue through the season. [both laugh] And episode. Uh, Cassie’s like, [laughs] “No, no, no, no. No, I’m not gonna hurt myself, I just—I just happen to know that I’m going to die next Friday. Just like I know there will be [singsong] coins, lots of weird coins. And you’ll try to help, you’ll go somewhere dark underground. But just, like, never mind. Forget I said anything, don’t worry about it, and put a sweater on so your shirt doesn’t get ruined.” [both laugh] [sings ta-da tune]

Kristin: Cassie’s relationship to her psychic abilities is wonderful. It’s, like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So chill. She’s just so chill.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know? She’s, like, where—like, if you wanna smoke some pot, hit Cassie up. She’s got you covered. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: I don't know about your Cassie in your high school, but my Cassie definitely smoked pot. [laughs]

Jenny: Yes. Correct.

Kristin: Correct. It's an undeniable fact. [laughs] All the Cassies smoked pot. All of these particular Cassies, 1-800-1-Cassie, they all smoke pot. So—[both laugh] so we go into Principal Wood's office. Always love to get a visit with Principal Wood. And his response to this is—like, I think that this is, like, a standard teacher response. Like, it is—I mean. His other principal response should be to make sure that Buffy is prepared for this. But in terms of his own preparation—

Jenny: Right. Lamentable. [laughs]

Kristin: [simultaneously] He's responding like, "I know what to do, this is what we do. We inform—" I mean. What they should be doing is, like, talking to the teachers and helping the student, not talking to the teachers and searching lockers. That's, like, a real thing that I remember from high school. Why were people always searching our fucking lockers? Get the fuck out, it's my locker. Fuck you.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Regardless, he's just like, it's hard. This is hard, right? This is a hard time for a lot of people. A lot of students are gonna say a lot of things. We do the best that we can do. And Buffy is just like, "I don't under—like, I don't understand. Like, I never get a head's up before somebody dies." And he's like, [car brake noise] "What?" [both laugh] Say what—what did you—what now? And also, how are those dead dogs? Like, he's like—Principal Wood's, like, taking notes.

Jenny: Oh, yeah. [both laugh]

Kristin: But in the middle of this scene, uhh, something else happens, doesn't it, Jenny?

Jenny: [groans]

Kristin: [groans] My capital note is, "oh lord."

Jenny: Principal Wood starts telling a story about this one time, when he was a kid—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: He told everybody that he was gonna bust someone's ass.

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: And apparently that kind of talk was taken very seriously where he's from.

Kristin: Buffy, stepping in as the white lady—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: "The hood?" she says. And then Wood—[laughs] I do really appreciate Wood's response. He's like, "Beverly Hills, which is a hood." [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But like, this is one of these moments that the show gives us where—it's just—we've talked about it enough, maybe we haven't. But it's just, like—it's a quick, throwaway joke that calls out this, like, racist idea that the white girl thinks that the black man is from the hood automatically, and it's played for a joke. But there's never any—there's never anything deeper than this, which is why it's just like—

Jenny: Right, right.

Kristin: Come on. You can't just have the—it's not that you can't have—you can't—I mean, you certainly can call out a white woman for assuming this, and make it a joke. Like, I don't think that is upsetting. It's just that there's never any other stuff. And you—by itself, it doesn't stand.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Though points to Principal Wood for being like, "Oh my god, you fucking...white lady." [both laugh] So, anyway. Then—[Jenny gasps] oops! [Jenny gasps] Oops.

Jenny: [dramatically] As it was foretold in prophecy! Buffy spills coffee all over her very unique shirt that she'll never be able to replace—

Kristin: Never.

Jenny: A bespoke, white tank top.

Kristin: [simultaneously] You know where she got that shirt?

Jenny: [gasps] Where?

Kristin: I know where she got that fucking shirt. She kept it from her girlfriend, of course. She probably has at least a few of them. Every time—every time she misses Faith—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Ohhh! So it's not just very cool, but it's also—it has sentimental value. And now it's covered in coffee stain!

Kristin: Aw, she can bleach it. It'll be fine.

Jenny: You know that thing where you're going about your business, retrieving various books that you need from your locker—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And when you close the door, boo! [Kristin laughs] Your sister's right there and she has a job for you.

Kristin: I do. I don't actually know that feeling. My sister was never waiting outside a locker for me to tell me that she had a job for me. [laughs]

Jenny: It's time for Dawn to go deep undercover.

Kristin: Harriet the Spy vibes here.

Jenny: And become friends with Cassie. [both laugh] Ta-da!

Kristin: Mike—we meet Mike in the library. He is such a cute—Mike is a boy that I would have had a crush on in high school, for sure. He's such a cute little nerd boy, I love him. And he wants Cassie to design matching tattoos for both of them, which is adorable.

Jenny: Nothing like getting a matching tattoo with your high school friend. [both laugh]

Kristin: I mean—

Jenny: Slash potential love interest.

Kristin: [laughs] So they're talking about tattoo ideas. A snake? A hula girl? How about a sexy snake hula girl. I say yes. The word lame—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Town appropriate.

Kristin: Is spoken here for the first time in this episode. It is probably said twelve times in this episode alone. It—they use the word so many times. We've already talked about it.

Jenny: Oof, yeah.

Kristin: Don't use it. Stop fu—stop. Just stop. But this is its first appearance. And, um, Mike invites Cassie to the winter formal.

Jenny: And she's like, nahh! [Kristin laughs] No thank you.

Kristin: She's too cool. She's too cool for school. She doesn't wanna go to the winter formal. Mmm, she actually just wants—

Jenny: Dawn rolls up and very smoothly asks Cassie for their pottery class homework.

Kristin: Dawn is the opposite of smooth in every moment in this episode, and I love it. "Hello!"

Jenny: The joke's on her. [Kristin laughs] Cassie didn't write it down, 'cause she's no longer engaged with school in any way.

Kristin: Mike leaves. Like, it's—like, I don't even know why Mike leaves. Because if you gave Dawn one half of one more second, she definitely would have probably walked away. But Mike's like, I'll just let you two talk about your weird ceramics shit together.

Jenny: He's gotta study for his class.

Kristin: He does. So okay—so I'm just gonna do, like, a quick little aside here. But as Mike walked away, I saw that he was holding a textbook. So I rewound it to be like, what textbook are they learning from? Because most high school textbooks that talk about history are fucking bullshit. I went—I think I've talked about this too before. I went to a high school where we actually read *The People's History of the United States* in our history class, which was fucking rad. But he's holding a

textbook and it's called Land of the Free. So I just Googled, not thinking I would find anything, like, all that big. But I kinda did, Jenny, so can I tell you?

Jenny: Ohh.

Kristin: So this textbook was published in 1965. It's called Land of the Free. And it was a specific answer—I'm just gonna read some tiny excerpts from an article that I found on this textbook from a site called The Avocado. I'll link the whole thing, if people wanna read more about it, 'cause I found it really fascinating. But basically, in the 60s, there were a ton of battles happening about desegregation and expanding black studies courses. People like Martin Luther King, Andrew Clayton Powell, the Congress for Racial Equality, and other allies were pressuring states to develop textbooks that did a better job at portraying the history of the United States, including contributions by black people, and including the history of what this country had done over the course of many, many hundreds of years, in a more honest light. Right?

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Not surprising that this is being called for. And parents—and this is just—it's so, like—especially in this current climate where we're hearing so much about critical race theory being included in schools. And parents and teachers and all people being like, "Don't, no, you can't do this." [laughs] It's like, this is the 1960s. So this—one version of this battle is happening. And there are a lot of people who want better textbooks that do actually talk about things accurate—more accurately, at the very least. So this historian—this black man, John Hope Franklin, was hired as a response to this argument, to write a textbook and wrote Land of the Free. Right?

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: The textbook comes out. It's not—it's definitely—it's doing a lot more than textbooks were doing. It's still maybe not doing what we would want textbooks to do today, but it's doing a lot. It talks about Frederick Douglass and, you know, talks about the Civil Rights struggle. Talks about the displacement of Native Americans, disenfranchisement of women. It's doing things, right?

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: So the book comes out, a lot of people lose their fucking minds, because that's what they fucking do. In particular, there was a Pasadena-based activist group called The Land of the Free Committee that just attacked this book,

submitted all of these papers against it and what have you. And so because of the backlash, they pulled the book and had to re—like, they basically took a bunch of shit out of it before [laughs] they re-released it. So some stuff remained, but a lot of what was in the original—so I don't know which version—[laughs] I don't know which version Mike has. But it was just like—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: I looked up this textbook thinking I was gonna find, like, a couple of things. And it actually is a really, really big historical deal, the conversation that happened around this particular textbook. So I don't know if it was intentional or not—

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: But I'll put the link in the show notes today so if you want—'cause it's a pretty long article. There's a lot more that I didn't say, so you can read about it. But it was just very—I got real nerdy when I learned about this whole thing.

Jenny: That's...wild.

Kristin: [simultaneously] How do you feel, Jenny? Are you excited about my nerdery?

Jenny: Yeah! Very excited.

Kristin: [laughs] [sighs] Anyway, Mike's gonna get a B. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. That's the bottom line. Cassie's reading Slaughterhouse Five.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: And Dawn's like, "What class—?"

Kristin: [simultaneously] I know that you've read that book, Jenny. I think when I first met you—

Jenny: Of course.

Kristin: You were reading that book. You were really channeling your Cassie vibes then. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmm, yes. Cassie's reading it just for her. She does what she wants—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Instead of homework.

Kristin: Cassie's so cool and Dawn knows it. Dawn's like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: "You are soo cool." [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then Cassie puts it together that Dawn is—wait, no—that Buffy is Dawn's sister. [Kristin laughs] And also tells Dawn that she didn't say yes to Mike for the dance because she, quote, "won't be around that night." End quote.

Kristin: Yeah. Dawn calls Mike a cutie, so.

Jenny: Interesting.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Write that in your Shanshu prophecies—I'm just kidding.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: I don't think we ever see Mike again. [laughs]

Jenny: Has Cassie had this gift for a long time? Like, what's going on?

Kristin: It feels like she has had this gift for a long time, but that she only recently saw this...like, saw her death. You know, like, that for a—because she seems very comfortable with how she talks about what's gonna happen. But then we learn, in the next scene, actually—we're in the dining room of the Summers house. Old HQ. And—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: They're like, she had good grades, but then something changed. And so I don't think that what changed was that she suddenly could see things. I think what changed was that suddenly she saw this thing—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And she was like, well, if this is the reality, then fuck that.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: I just—I don't understand why they don't accept her as a psychic right away. We live in Sunnydale. Why is—why are they, like, just not more open to this?

Jenny: I guess maybe even in Sunnydale, it's more likely that you would be a teenager going through something than a precog.

Kristin: [laughs] Okay, okay, fair.

Jenny: Okay so, back at Scooby headquarters. Buffy, Willow and Xander are researching Cassie. Something alarming about this scene is that a—once again, a counselor with absolutely no training or qualifications can get a student's medical records?

Kristin: Yeah. This is where it really, really goes off the rails. And after this, we get this really fun—there's a lot of—we're, like, really in beginning internet now. Like, this—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: This 2002 moment is just, like, [laughs] really playing with the internet. So the first funny internet exchange we get is Willow saying, "Have you Googled her?" and Xander saying, "She's seventeen!" [Jenny laughs] And Willow being like, "It's a search engine!" It's like—it has—it was, like, a funny joke then. Then it wasn't funny at all, and now it's come all the way back around again—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: To being funny.

Jenny: All the way back. Cassie...has a website. Is this—would you say this is Flash?

Kristin: I tried to see the—yeah, I think it is. I tried to see the URL, I couldn't see it. I really—that's a miss.

Jenny: Those poems are floating—Geocities.com backslash...

Kristin: One-Cassie.

Jenny: One-Cassie. [both laugh]

Kristin: LiveJournal? When did LiveJournal happen? Was that—that was, like, now, right? Not now-now, but then-now, 2002?

Jenny: Right, the then-now, for sure.

Kristin: Yeah. But she's, like, done some fucking—this is—Cassie knows how to code, man. 'Cause she's got, like, art popping around.

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: You didn't have Squarespace in 2002 to automate your shit.

Jenny: No.

Kristin: If you wanted fucking images to pop around, you had to get in the backend of your site and code that shit. So Cassie knows what she's doing.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: She's writing poetry. I can identify with that. How about you, Jenny?

Jenny: Sure. Yeah, that's just—that's—the definition of high school is writing poetry, as far as I'm aware.

Kristin: Also, just to fully flesh out the one Cassie, everybody's Cassie also wrote poetry. You—that—

Jenny: Oh, of course.

Kristin: Like, one thousand percent, the Cassies of the world—of all the high schools in the 90s and aughts—wrote poetry. Yeah, we get this poem from Cassie. Let's see. I mean, you know, it's basically—there's a lot of conversation about a pale fish. There's a lot of...there's some, like, "My body is not ready yet." I think she's talking about—well, you're more into poetry than I am, as a songwriter. So maybe you gleaned more from the poem. But basically what I got was, "I'm going to die. I know I'm going to die. I am so young. I haven't even really had love, or sex—"

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: "And it doesn't matter because I am going to die before I get any of that." That's what I got—and "I have very pale skin." Is that what you got?

Jenny: Yeah, that seems right.

[AD BREAK]

Kristin: It's not a bad poem. I think it's a...I think it's a high school poem. Jenny, would you like to hear one of my high school poems?

Jenny: Oh, goodness. Yes, question mark?

Kristin: [laughs] I mean, I don't have to—

Jenny: Hit me.

Kristin: I don't have to share mine.

Jenny: I demand to hear one of your high school poems!

Kristin: I pulled the wrong notebook out of the garage. I showed Jenny the picture of the notebook that I pulled out, which—we—should definitely include high school poetry. It's a picture of this naked lady whose arms are crossed over her boobs. And she—

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: She's drawn in black and white, and her wings are filled in with rainbow colors. [both laugh]

Jenny: And her—very casual—wings are filled. [both laugh]

Kristin: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. [laughs] Anyway. So I'm not—I didn't have my whole library to choose from. But one poem did fall out, so I'm gonna read it to you. It looks like it's called Untitled. [clears throat] "Now I shuffle through your thoughts, dear. Now I rummage, now I sift." [laughs] I'm making direct eye contact with Jenny as much as I can, while I read the poem. [both laugh]

Jenny: I hate it.

Kristin: "One action, a speck of dust on the world's existence, and I am forever damned. No apologies. Even though, even though, even though. You made me smile, you kept me going, you understood. I found out today you can't understand at all. But I want you to, I need you to, I love you, I'm sorry." What do you think? [laughs]

Jenny: [groans and laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Kristin: It's like—

Jenny: There it is.

Kristin: It's not—I feel like I might be in a similar class as Cassie with my poetry—with my high school poetry. It's not horrible. It's just particularly rooted in a space. [laughing] Which is, I think, where Cassie's poems are.

Jenny: Yeah, I would say Cassie's style is much heavier on imagery.

Kristin: That's true. That's true.

Jenny: And you have a...[long pause] [Kristin laughs] a directness.

Kristin: Uh-huh. [both laugh]

Jenny: That is less present in her style.

Kristin: I bet you Cassie's a water sign. And I'm a fire sign.

Jenny: For sure.

Kristin: Right? That's what's happening.

Jenny: Cassie is a Pisces or a Scorpio. The end.

Kristin: Yeah. I say Pisces. She talks about a pale fish for, like, half the poem, so.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: [laughs] Anyway. We get this poem. And Xander—Xander's dialogue in this scene, specifically this next moment, makes me wanna fucking jump directly out of my window and run and not stop running. [laughs] He says, "She's giving death a

big sloppy word kiss,” and that’s not enough! [Jenny groans and laughs] “She has a yen for the big dirt nap.” Xander. Go home.

Jenny: Xander, no. [laughs]

Kristin: Go home, bud.

Jenny: Why?

Kristin: Stop it.

Jenny: Sir.

Kristin: Come on.

Jenny: Willow confesses that even she posted some melodramatic love poems on the net back in the day. To which Xander replies, “Love poems?”

Kristin: [laughs] Oh, Xander. I told you to go home! Why are you still here? [both laugh]

Jenny: “I’m over you now, sweetie.” Sick burn. [laughs]

Kristin: [simultaneously] One of my favorite—yes, that is a good line.

Jenny: He’s holding onto it.

Kristin: One of my favorite reveals of the entire series happens in this exchange, where—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Willow admits that she wrote some love poems, fine. She also wrote some Doogie. Howser. Fanfiction! Play the fucking Doogie Howser theme song. I wanna read it. [Doogie Howser theme song starts playing in background] I wanna read Willow Rosenberg’s [Jenny laughs] fanfiction about Doogie Howser right. The fuck. Now.

Jenny: Correct.

[theme song continues, fades out]

Kristin: Dawn's got some theories. Dawn's got some ideas.

Jenny: Dawn's got the perp fingered! [Kristin laughs] She's thinking...she's thinking! She's thinking—nobody cares what she's thinking, because they just found some police records for Cassie's dad—

Kristin: This is so upsetting.

Jenny: Who, uh, has some drunk and disorderly—the other D&D—some disturbing the peace...

Kristin: [laughing] The other D&D. Fucking nerd dot com.

Jenny: [simultaneously] And they decide they're just gonna go knock on his door and talk to him. This is so beyond.

Kristin: It's literally—like, there's nothing to even say that could possibly give the weight to how fucked up all of this is. This man—

Jenny: Yeah. Buffy would be so fucking fired.

Kristin: Oh my god, fired, like, 50 ways from fucking Tuesday. And also, like, I'm sorry, but these people—these characters have just gone through an entire arc that navigated addiction. And they're about to just jump in here and be like, oh, this guy's a drunk, so he's obviously beating his kid up. Literally, what the fuck? And then to take that fucked up connection and to use it to fuel your car to his house, to walk into this man's house and say, "We know you were picked up by the cops. Are you still drinking? We worried you might hurt your daughter."

Jenny: Dude.

Kristin: Buffy, you are fired. You are—we all fire you. We've all fired you. Go back to being the Slayer. This is not okay. It's not even necessarily all her fault, 'cause she has absolutely no training to do the job that she's in. [laughs] But like, oh my fucking god.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Mr. Newton, played by Glenn Morshower, in everything.

Jenny: [inaudible]

Kristin: 24, I think, is where I recognized him from. He was in that show a whole bunch, but he's in everything. And yeah, I mean, this is just fucked up.

Jenny: I looked at his IMDB credits and, like, 75% percent of his roles—like, the names of the roles that he played start with either, like, detective, general, [Kristin laughs] officer, lieutenant, admiral. It's wild. Check out his IMDB, [laughs] you will not be disappointed.

Kristin: [simultaneously] You can see it. He looks like all of those things.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: He really has that general look. He does a great job. He's got a very short scene here, but he definitely does a great job in being 100% correct and being clearly very caring for his daughter, and very annoyed with—

Jenny: Except when he says that she's not the sharpest apple in the barrel.

Kristin: Yeah, that's not great.

Jenny: Which just feels like directly—it feels like it is not attached to anything else about him for the rest of the scene.

Kristin: Yeah, agree. Agree.

Jenny: Weird choice.

Kristin: Anyway. Dad was right, Buffy was wrong. They realize that they were wrong and that [Jenny gasps] he's not even seeing her—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: 'Cause he only gets to see her every—one weekend every month.

Jenny: One weekend a month. They leave and there, from the darkness, emerges [singing] Detective Cassie! [Kristin laughs] To tell them it's not him. He's not the one who does it.

Kristin: Yeah. And you're making a big deal of it and I just want it to go away. Now Xander gets involved and is like, "Are you suicidal? Do you want to kill yourself?" And I'm like, who the fuck are y—

Jenny: Agghhh!

Kristin: You guys. Being the Scoobies and killing vampires together is one thing. But like, interfering in the lives of high school students because Buffy got a job at the high school is definitely not—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Stop. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm. Cassie does a little Our Town here. She's like, "Ohh, I'd love to graduate. I'd love to go to the winter formal, I'd love to ice skate at Rockefeller Center. I'd love to fall in love. I'd love to drop some casual fatphobia into this Our Town moment. Ah, but I won't. I just never will. I'm going to die."

Kristin: Ohh, somebody give me a side by side of Rayanne Graff and Cassie, both doing their Our Town speeches. [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Yeah. So Cassie, as she's—I mean, before she gives this whole speech, she's—had been confronted by Buffy, who says, like, "You don't sound like someone who wants to live. You should fight."

Jenny: Eugh!

Kristin: Ah! Yeah. And so, Alba—one of Alba's notes to us—I'm just gonna read it verbatim. Because you know, Alba saw this and said, "When Cassie talks about all the things she wants to do and experience—" this is Alba speaking— "I related wholeheartedly. And I wanna make the point that being depressed doesn't mean you have the desire to die. It's often that being alive requires so much effort that it feels insurmountable. Depressed people want nothing more than to feel happy, peaceful and serene. It's just very, very hard to achieve and varies depending on the day, the season, and the hour." So, thank you, Alba. Correct.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: I mean, and Cassie isn't a character who is a depressed character and all these things. But just the idea that Buffy would say to Cassie, "It feels like you don't wanna live." Like, don't. That's not...yeah. Anyway. [laughing] Oh, my next note, Jenny, is: "Oh no, boys in robes." [laughs]

Jenny: Never a good sign.

Kristin: Never.

Jenny: Never a good sign, especially not when they're circled around a photo of Cassie that's surrounded by a bunch of coins. And they set the photo on fire! That's not good!

Kristin: Not a good sign. Also, why'd they put this fucking circle of tiles in the library, when they fucking knew—Xander, I blame you. You knew that this was the Hellmouth. Why are you gonna put anything that even could come close to looking like a pentagram on the floor of this high school? [laughs]

Jenny: Please.

Kristin: Stop it. [sighs] We get a very brief scene where Buffy is looking at Cassie's website a bit more. This is where we really see that Cassie has coding skills, 'cause the fucking artwork's all bouncing about.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Wood walks in for one joke. [laughs] He's like—[both laugh] "Thank god it's Friday!"

Jenny: [simultaneously] "TGIF!"

Kristin: [laughs] "Can't believe I said that," and then he leaves and the scene's over. [laughs]

Jenny: And then we get—for the first time on the show, we get a poetry montage.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: We see Dawn's friendship with Cassie and Mike developing. We see Scoobies researching. Buffy starts reading the poem and then it switches over to Cassie's voice. We see Cassie in her room, which has a *vibe*. It is—

Kristin: I wrote down one line from this poem, which I thought was a line I would write in my one of my poems.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: "Laugh in the trees of time." I was like, yeah, that's a me—that's—Kristin Russo would have written that down in a poem.

Jenny: Wow, the trees of time.

Kristin: The trees of time.

Jenny: I like that.

Kristin: Oh. You like the poem I didn't write, but that I said I would write?

Jenny: Mmhmm. [laughs]

Kristin: That Cassie wrote? Okay. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: Fine. Fine! Don't be my friend in high school.

Jenny: Buffy—

Kristin: See if I care! [both laugh]

Jenny: As it was foretold in prophecy, Buffy goes down into a dark place.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: The school basement! Where Spike is...being very still and quiet, trying not to hurt—

Kristin: This is really sad. This is really—I mean, the scenes that we've gotten this season so far between James and Sarah are...they stand apart from every episode. They're, like, their own little episodes that just have such power to them. And so few words, you know? Like, all Spike says is, "If I don't move, if I don't think, if I don't listen to the voices, then it won't hurt as much." Oh my god!

Jenny: Yeah. [sighs] Buffy has come to Spike because a girl is in danger and needs his help. [Kristin groans] And time is running out. And then there is an incredibly obvious overdub, where clearly a network note was like, "why is time running out? We weren't paying much attention when we watched the episode earlier." Or maybe, you know, a scene—a clarifying scene was cut from just before this or

something—where Buffy says, “It’s Friday, the day Cassie said she was going to die.” [both laugh]

Kristin: I didn’t even notice. I didn’t even notice.

Jenny: Meanwhile, Spike is like, who’s Cassie? [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah. So Spike is inside of his own personal hell. And he hears there’s a girl in trouble, and it immediately wires his brain to think that he is—to think that Buffy is talking about herself. He says, “Yes there is.” ‘Cause Buffy’s like, basically, “You need to—if there’s something evil down here, you have to tell me. I need to help this girl, like, right now.”

[Clip from episode plays]

Spike: There’s evil. Down here. Right here. I’m a bad man. William is a bad man. I hurt the girl. [punching sounds]

Kristin: It’s really hard to watch, just like so much of what we’ve seen from Spike this season. And Buffy stops him. She, like, grabs his fist very, like, gently and looks at him and is like, “It’s a different girl.” It’s really a lot.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And then, as though you didn’t have enough feelings, Spike says—‘cause she’s gonna leave. Spike’s like, “Stay here and help me be quiet.” Oh, no!

Jenny: And Buffy says, “I think it’s worse when I’m here.”

Kristin: Yeah! That’s what I’m saying, like... [Jenny groans] fucking dialogue real estate here. They really knock it outta the fucking park with these two. Because they say hardly anything and so much.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: [sighs] Speaking of saying so much, Buffy. Here we go! She’s already struck out as a counselor 472 times in this episode, but here she is in the fucking hallway. [laughs] She goes right up to Mike. “Excuse me, I heard you can’t get a date to the dance.” [both laugh] What the fuck, lady?

Jenny: And he’s like, “Oh, hey. You’re Dawn’s sister.” And she’s like, “That’s right, Dawn is *my* sister.” [both laughs] I like this—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Little figure that they've worked into the episode from both sides.

Kristin: Yeah, it's good, it's good. We learn that Mike doesn't care. Mike's a chill dude. He's like, "It's fine. I was thinking of actually asking your sister to the dance."

Jenny: And he also says, "Cassie's a girl. Making boys crazy is, like, her job description," said someone in the writers' room!

Kristin: Yeah. No high school student would say this. [laughs]

Jenny: Clank!

Kristin: [laughs] Speaking of clank. All the coins fall out of the locker.

Jenny: [gasps] Clinkity-clank!

Kristin: Locker 281. Paging—paging the owner of locker 281, please report immediately to the office of Ms. Summers.

Jenny: Yeah, Buffy's grilling this kid, and I don't think we even see him in the later robe scenes. I feel like a lot got cut out of this episode. [laughs]

Kristin: Did he give his robe to Buffy? Is that the deal they worked out?

Jenny: Oh.

Kristin: Like—

Jenny: Maybe.

Kristin: Because she needs to get a robe, and she—like, it seems like he's ready to commiserate by the end of this scene, because—

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: [laughing] Buffy, school counselor Buffy says to this kid, whose locker had coins in it, "I'm gonna connect with your face if you don't help me do my job." You guys, she's fired again!

Jenny: [simultaneously] Time honored counseling tactic. Boy, the number of times my school counselors threatened to assault me [both laughing] when I was in high school—

Kristin: Punch me in the face. Oh, so anyway. Yeah, this guy gives up the goods. He tells Buffy what the plan is. And outside school, Dawn and Cassie, they're just getting along. They're just having such a great time, they're such pals. However, speaking of not the sharpest apple in the barrel. Cassie says to Dawn in this scene, [Jenny laughs] "Just remember, I'm not as dumb as I look." [both laughing] And Dawn says, "I'm glad." I'm sorry, what?!

Jenny: I think Dawn is saying she's glad that they're friends, but it's a poorly ordered scene.

Kristin: [laughs] Okay, that makes more sense. Because yeah, I was like, wait, what? [laughs]

Jenny: This is also their, like—would it be a She's All That moment? Where Cassie acknowledges that Buffy put Dawn up to being her friend. [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Zachery Ty Bryan swoops in with a winter formal fake-out to distract Dawn. And when she turns around, Cassie is gone-zo!

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: I assume she's been whisked away by some boys in red robes.

Kristin: [deep voice] "Hey, Summers. You got a date to the winter formal?"

Jenny: Ugh, gross.

Kristin: [deep voice] "Just doing a poll. Yuck-yuck-yuck." [laughs]

Jenny: What a dipshit. Like, why does she even—why does she look excited that he's asking her? This guy is such a tool. [laughs]

Kristin: Oh, 'cause she's still Dawn. You know?

Jenny: Yeah. Okay. So at the red robe ritual—

Kristin: Mm, what a lovely alliteration.

Jenny: The boys are talking. And they're like, "What about the fire exits?" and put a pin in the fact that this kid says, "I set up a booby trap my cousin Ben used to always do. My cousin Ben used to always do this booby trap, so I did it, so we're fine." Okay, carry on, carry on, carry on.

Kristin: Okay, alright, I've put a pin—put a pin in the booby. Nobody goes in, nobody comes out.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Cassie is tied up. She's got duct tape over her mouth. Things are not looking good.

Jenny: No.

Kristin: Zachery Ty Bryan is like, "Yo, lady, nothing personal, you just have that death chick suicide vibe. Probably nobody will even realize that you're gone."

Jenny: Eeeeeee! Unfortunately for ZTB—

Kristin: Not to be confused with JTT, another brother on Home Improvement. [both laugh]

Jenny: One of these robes is not like the other!

Kristin: I laughed so fucking loud when Buffy pulls this goddamn robe off of herself. There's only, like, eight dudes there. Like, how...

Jenny: How did they not—

Kristin: How did they not see Counselor Summers in a robe? Just...[laughs]

Jenny: It's a question. It's a question. Critical error. One thing you don't say to Buffy is "get back, you stupid bitch" because she will kick you in the face, which she does.

Kristin: She's, like, so over it, giving all of us long-time viewers all of the callbacks we ever wanted. "Bored teenage boys trying to raise demons." She's just so over it. And then she references the Blue Clam Cult, which...

Jenny: Great.

Kristin: Is good. In case you didn't know, the Blue Oyster Cult is responsible for a song called Don't Fear the Reaper, which—

[Don't Fear the Reaper begins playing in the background]

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Definitely existed before the movie *Scream*, but came into my orbit right around [Jenny laughs] the late 90s because of the movie *Scream*.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

[Song plays, fades out]

Kristin: Yeah, she kicks ZTB and she's like, fucking bliggity-blah, demon. And then he's like, "*That* demon?" [both laugh]

Jenny: This demon's got a face piece.

Kristin: Yeah, I also refer to him in my mind as the Care Bear Demon, because his belly seems soft and exposed. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, and strangely flammable, but we'll get to that in a minute. [both laugh] Buffy sure hucks a cleaver into this demon, but it does not slow him down.

Kristin: It doesn't. And lucky for everybody, here comes Spike with a full torch, just ready. Flamin', ready to go.

Jenny: Very helpful fire.

Kristin: Ready to fight. Buffy takes the torch. She sticks it in the belly of the demon, which is how this demon dies, I guess?

Jenny: [makes whooshing noise] Who knows how she knew that. But sure, why not.

Kristin: [simultaneously] And odd, it's usually between the eyes. But okay.

Jenny: Spike wrestles Zachery Ty Bryan to the ground and punches him in the face a bunch. And Zachery Ty Bryan's like, "Who are you?" and Spike's like, "I'm a bad man." [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, Spike also, like, suffering with every blow because the chip is still—

Jenny: Oh yeah.

Kristin: Harming him for harming a human. And then, Spike gets to Cassie. And Cassie says to Spike, "She'll tell you. Someday, she'll tell you." What?!

Jenny: Write it in your Shanshu prophecies.

Kristin: Please. Oh my god, my favorite part of the episode is right now. [laughs]

Jenny: Tell me all about it.

Kristin: [laughing] Peter—Peter, AKA ZTB, is looking at the charred corpse of the demon that he was trying to raise for money. [laughs] And he screams—

Jenny: Yes?

Kristin: "Where are my infinite riches?" To which the charred demon, in its last gasping breath, bites him in the shoulder and then he screams, "It bit me!" And I would like [both laugh] to play the Patriarchy jingle, 'cause that's a beautiful illustration of the patriarchy.

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

Kristin: Well. The demon is defeated.

Jenny: They go to leave. Cassie opens the door and a mounted crossbow fires a bolt right at Cassie's head. Thankfully, Buffy catches the bolt. But this—this is the booby trap that someone's cousin used to do all the time.

Kristin: [laughs] Maybe it was with Nerf arrows.

Jenny: Maybe.

Kristin: I mean, I guess it's Sunnydale, you know? Only the strong survive.
[laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh. And then, even though Buffy caught the bolt, Cassie falls to the ground. And dies.

Kristin: Yeah, and she—so before—but before that, Buffy looks at Cassie and says, “See? You can make a difference.” And Cassie—very, like—very beautifully and powerfully—’cause stroking someone’s hair is a delicate act. You can really go wrong with it if you do it incorrectly. [Jenny laughs] And Cassie does not. She does it really—like, it’s just so sweet and loving. And she just says, “And you will.” And that’s when she collapses and she dies.

Jenny: Yay—! I mean, not yay that she dies. [both laughing]

Kristin: I was like, what the fuck, Jenny?!

Jenny: [simultaneously] Yay that she said the nice thing. [both laugh]

Kristin: Yay! [both laugh] All of the listeners were just collectively as confused as me.

Jenny: So sorry.

Kristin: [laughs] Before we go to the next scene, I do wanna just say that [laughs] Guidance Counselor Buffy Summers has also exited the library to ZBT saying, “Help, I’m bleeding.” To which her response was, “My office hours are 10 to 4.” [both laugh]

Jenny: Um...

Kristin: Ma’am? I know that you’re carrying two different jobs, but. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Probably—also, like, this is a straight—she’s just leaving this murderer in the library. Like, there’s a lot of ends to be tied in this episode. [laughs]

Jenny: It’s true.

Kristin: [sighs] Anyway. We’re in the living room.

Jenny: [sighs] We are. Just a little very sad roundup where we learn that Cassie's family had a history of heart irregularities. Notice that there is a prominent photo of Joyce on the side table in this scene. Feels like she's kind of—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: I'm sure she's always there, but—

Kristin: [simultaneously] She's always there, but—

Jenny: [simultaneously] It just feels a little more pointed—

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jenny: In this episode. In this scene, I should say.

Kristin: They changed the angle of the Joyce photograph. [both laugh]

Jenny: Correct.

Kristin: Yeah. And I took, like, a little bit of a pause to—and I know this is not, like, the point of this scene. But I just thought it was, like, an interesting line to be like, her family had a history of heart irregularities and they didn't tell Cassie? Like...that seems unethical. [laughs]

Jenny: Also, like, wouldn't she just—

Kristin: Get some treatment? For her...heart irregularities?

Jenny: Well, like, wouldn't she know from, like, her family? Like—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: If somebody else—surely somebody else that she's aware of in her family maybe had some complications.

Kristin: Right, right. But the point of the scene is not for us to be frustrated with Cassie's family for not disclosing medical information. [laughs] It is for us to get this little slice of pie, which is, she was going to die no matter what you did. Buffy says, "I failed her." And Dawn counters, "You didn't. You listened and you tried."

[Clip from episode plays]

Dawn: [crying] I guess sometimes you can't help. [sniffles]

Buffy: So what then? What do you do when you know that? When you know that maybe you can't help?

Jenny: Cut to Buffy, going back to work, showing up, albeit with perhaps not the appropriate training. But still.

Kristin: But still.

Jenny: Showing up.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And trying.

Kristin: And trying. [Jenny groans] Listening and trying. It's a beautiful last shot. It's really, really beautiful. I love the way that it ends, through the window. It's just...nice. And quiet. It's always—like, it's not a common thing, I don't think, for this, like, show to have an episode that ends like this. There are other episodes that do, but it's just very poignant when they choose to do that. And yeah.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: RIP Cassie. But perhaps Cassie—

Jenny: RIP Cassie.

Kristin: Perhaps Cassie has a chance to win an award even [sounds it out] post-humously. Is that how you say that word? [laughs]

Jenny: I think posthumously?

Kristin: [simultaneously] Posthumously? [laughs]

Jenny: Um, yeah! Let's check it out.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Well! You know, you might think that an episode covering this kind of a plot might not have many possible nominees. But we actually narrowed this down from a list of eight potentials. [Kristin laughs] And...[laughs] you know. It's a lot better than some episodes in recent memory, in terms of STA offerings.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: The first noms for your first *slot*, that you can just [laughs] slide right in there—

Kristin: Just, like—the, like, glottal noises that just happened on “slot” made me grimace at Jenny. No! [both laugh]

Jenny: Uhh! Are Willow and Doogie Howser.

[Doogie Howser theme song starts playing in background]

Kristin: Yes!

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: [chanting] Willow and Doogie! Doogie and Willow!

Jenny: John Mark, could you just toss the sound of someone typing [typing sounds] on a very old keyboard? Willow writing her fanfic. Doogie Howser making his end-of-episode diary entry.

Kristin: Oh my god!

Jenny: Clickity-clack, clickity-clack.

[Song and typing sounds end]

Kristin: What a match made in computer nerd heaven!

Jenny: I. Know! In slot number two, some noms we'd rather just throw into the fire but their chemistry is undeniable. It's Zachery Ty Bryan and Infinite Riches!

Kristin: Mmm, they definitely had a whole thing.

Jenny: Oh, it's a tale of longing! [Kristin laughs] In slot number three, sometimes in high school—

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: Or other times. [Kristin laughs] A beautiful—what begins as a beautiful friendship can sometimes turn into more. We're crossing our fingers and rooting for Cassie and Dawn to go to winter formal!

Kristin: I know that in high school, even though I didn't know it, I did wanna dial 1-800-1-Cassie. So. [both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. I definitely wanted to dial 1-800-1-Cassie myself, and then later, when we were older, I missed a bunch of calls from 1-800-1-Cassie, actually.

Kristin: Oh, shit! Missed connections. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm. And it's slot number four. Just in case slot number three doesn't work because of unforeseen, um, scheduling conflicts. [Kristin laughs] Why not give a chance to Dawn and that cutie, Mike?

Kristin: He is a cutie. I like it.

Jenny: He's a cutie.

Kristin: Alright.

Jenny: If one of these pairings strikes your fancy, please, please, please, please vote in our listener poll. You can find it on our Twitter, @BufferingCast. The Sexual Tension Award poll for this episode will be live for one week from this episode's publishment.

Kristin: Good luck, happy voting. If Doogie Howser doesn't win, I'm gonna be pissed off at all of you.

Jenny: [laughs] Just think of the end of season brackets with a picture of Doogie Howser.

Kristin: Honestly.

Jenny: You know what I mean? You want that. You want that.

Kristin: [simultaneously] I mean, also, we just keep rambling about about Doogie Howser. Do you think that everybody knows who Doogie Howser is?

Jenny: For those of you who are not aware who Doogie Howser is...he was a character played by Neil Patrick Harris, when Neil—

Kristin: A tiny, teenie—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Patrick Harris was but a wisp of a lad.

Kristin: Ugh, so little.

Jenny: He was, like, a 14-year-old medical doctor.

Kristin: [laughs] Yes!

Jenny: He was, like, a super genius who did college at age 12 and then went to med school and now is a practicing doctor. And nobody can believe it! And he wears trainers to his doctoring responsibilities! [both laugh]

Kristin: Oh my god—

Jenny: And he keeps a little diary on his computer. Clickity-clack, clickity-clack.

Kristin: He does. He, like—and he was, like, the original Sarah Jessica Parker of Sex and the City, but he was a teenage doctor.

Jenny: True! [Kristin laughs] Doog and the Hows-ty.

Kristin: Oh god, I loved that show. Like, seriously loved it as a child. Anyway, those are your Sexual Tension Awards and now you know who Doogie Howser is, if you didn't before. M.D.

Jenny: Ta-da!

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Well, Jenny, another episode down. Four down, sixteen to go, baby!

Jenny: I had an alarming thought as I was getting out of the shower this morning. I thought to myself, I think I only have nineteen more songs to write about Buffy the Vampire Slayer. And then, I will break the curse, return to my natural form—

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: And go back to living in the mountains. Ahh. Strumming my lute, without a care.

Kristin: Also, why do you have nineteen songs?

Jenny: Uh, well, 'cause aren't there 22 episodes in a season?

Kristin: Oh, yeah, so then is my math wrong? Oh, I guess you haven't—no, you've written three.

Jenny: I haven't written this one yet.

Kristin: I see. But why did I say sixteen? Oh, because four down, eighteen to go. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. But I haven't written—

Kristin: [simultaneously] And yes, you have nineteen songs.

Jenny: At the time of our taping, I have not yet written the song for Help.

Kristin: Wow, so we didn't even mean to call for it, but here's that Hellmath jingle.

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

Kristin: Alright! [sighs] Well, who are you?

Jenny: Hey! I'm Jenny Owen Youngs, and when I'm not doing hellmath, I'm usually writing and recording songs. Uh, all kinds of songs. I released a new song called Merry Go Round just last week. I've got a couple new holiday songs out from last month. And you can always check out my latest release, Echo Mountain, now available from my website on vinyl! You can listen to me sing some songs in my band, L.A. Exes.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: And you can listen to more of my speaking voice on my other pod, VMI Pod.

Kristin: Does your song that's called Merry Go Round go, [singing] "This used to be my playground, with a merry go round. Used to be my..."

Jenny: No, due to copyright laws and also other reasons, it does not go like that. [both laugh]

Kristin: Too good. Too hot to handle, that's the other reason.

Jenny: Yeah. Too hot to handle, of course.

Kristin: My name is Kristin Russo, and when I'm not trying to impress Jenny Owen Youngs with my musical abilities. [both laugh] I am often working with LGBTQ communities. Most notably, speaking at workplaces. I have spoken to many workplaces virtually over this past year, talking to parents, primarily, about how to be awesome to their LGBTQ kids. You can learn more about that on my website, kristinnoeline.com. That's K-R-I-S-T-I-N N-O-E-L-I-N-E. It's like Noel, but with an I-N-E at the end, you know? It's not *that* complicated. You can...[both laugh] you can use that spelling to find me on Instagram and on Twitter. And if you want to find us as a duo, you can.

Jenny: Buffering the Vampire Slayer is on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @BufferingCast. Or drop us an email at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: Hey, you can support our work if you'd like. Join our family on Patreon. We did a lot of fun holiday things with our patrons over the last few days. We had a book club, we watched Amends together. We just have a good time over there. It's a fun community, so come find us, bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Patreon. You—listen, if you still haven't gotten your Christmas gifts, you waited till the real last minute here.

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: But it is possible that they might still make it to you in time. If you head on over to our merch shop, you can find all different sorts of enamel pins and T-shirts and sweatshirts, oh my. And if you wanna leave us or Angel On Top a review on iTunes, we would love that. Especially if it's good.

Jenny: [laughs] Especially if it's good.

Kristin: And hey, we're gonna take a little break. We're gonna jingle some bells and drink some cocoa over here, and we'll be back on January 5th.

Jenny: [singing] "Jingle, jangle, jingle, jangle, yeah!" This episode was produced by Kristin Russo, Jenny Owen Youngs, and Alba Daza, with support from our consultant, Mackenzie MacDade. It was edited by John Mark Nelson. And till next time...

Both: Awwwoooooooooooooo!

Kristin: [singing] "Jingle bells! Jingle bells! [Jenny snorts] Jingle all the way!"

[Jenny Owen Youngs performing "Help" off the album "Songs from Season Seven" by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]