

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 5.10: Into the Woods

Jenny: Hey everybody! Wow. Before we get started, you're never gonna be able to guess what's about to happen. [Kristin laughs] We're gonna tell you some stuff before the episode!

Kristin: It's incredible. Shocking, even. Shocking to the world—

Jenny: Breaking barriers...

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: Blazing trails in the world of podcasting. An intro.

Kristin: Keeping you on your toes.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Listen! If you follow us on social media, you probably already know this. But we have a couple of new t-shirts. First of all, we have a very limited edition Jeopardy t-shirt. If you don't know, we were featured on Jeopardy, it's not a big deal.

Jenny: Ahhhh!

Kristin: Picture me and Jenny both flipping our hair. [laughs]

Jenny: But I'm screaming while I do it.

Kristin: Yes. So we thought it would be really fun to make a t-shirt with the Jeopardy question—or rather, an answer—

Jenny: Including the typo.

Kristin: Including the typo. And everything. It's gonna be up for pre-order just for a little over a week, through February 8th. So that's very fun, scoot on over there if you want it. It's gonna be up and it's gonna be gone, so you won't be able to get it after February 8th. And second of all...

Jenny: Mm-hmm?

Kristin: Jenny, this might be my favorite shirt of ours of all time? Like, I don't mean to—

Jenny: It's out of control.

Kristin: Right. You can't sort of like, order your children in, you know, any kind of favoritism, I guess. But if I did have to, I think I would pick this one. Cheyne Gallarde—I hope I'm pronouncing your last name properly, Cheyne. But either way, you are an incredible artist. Jenny and I talked to Cheyne and we were like, hey. There's this amazing song written by Jenny Owen Youngs, and there's a lyric that goes—Jenny, do you want to tell them how the lyric goes?

Jenny: Well, it goes like "it's a snake. It's a snake. It's a great big snake."

Kristin: And we were like, we have this, like, idea for how that might play out on a shirt. And Cheyne made us that shirt and it is fucking gorgeous! Excuse me for cursing right up here at the top, but I'm just so excited about it. It's up now for you to pre-order. As soon as they are printed, they will be shipping. And you should definitely go on over there and get one. If you're anything like me or Jenny, because wow.

Jenny: Hell. Yeah.

Kristin: You can find our store at bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Just click on "Shop" and you can find us over there.

Jenny: Hey, speaking of *incredibly exciting* things!

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: Incredible news, everyone. Next week, our interview with Marc Blucas will be in your feeds, on our off week.

Kristin: What?!

Jenny: Yeah, you're welcome. Get ready, buckle up. Round up all the butterscotch in your house. And all the Wonderbread. And make some roll-ups. [Kristin laughs] And chow down on those while you enjoy such a lovely chat we had with such a lovely man.

Kristin: Yo, bonus points for any of you who send us selfies of listening to the Marc Blucas interview while eating slices of white bread. Just saying.

Jenny: Or butterscotch products. Be nice.

Kristin: Yes. Or your favorite Werther's Originals.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: [laughs] I hate to take us from this joyous occasion of Marc Blucas's interview and bring us into the land of Spooky News, but I must. It is my duty. Here we go.

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]
Spooky news!

Kristin: Okay. So, listen. I want to just give a little warning up at the top that I'm gonna be talking about some cows and they're not gonna be alive.

Jenny: [quietly] No!

Kristin: So... I know. And here's the thing. So I'm really sensitive. A lot of you send me incredible spooky news stories—by the way, if you want to send me spooky news, you can do that. Send me an email to bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. This email came from Marissa A. and it was not the first email I got about this cow phenomena. But I didn't share them at first, because I didn't wanna talk about cows who are not alive. I like when cows are alive. But. Marissa's email, Jenny, was very compelling because, here's the deal.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: Here's the deal. So at the end of last year, in Oregon, five cows were discovered. And they had been entirely drained of blood, okay. So, gross. I know, I'm sorry.

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: It's Spooky News. I don't know what to tell you. I ignored the story, don't wanna talk about it. But part of the story that was even spookier was that there were no footprints anywhere near these cows.

Jenny: [contemplative] Mmm... aliens!

Kristin: Now here's why I'm choosing to bring it in to our podcast, is because Marissa shared with me that in the 1970s, there were *thousands* of cases just like these, across 21 states. In some of the instances, these cows—all of which were

completely—they had no blood—cows have a lot of blood, okay? And this is so bizarre. A lot of instances, scavenger animals and birds refused to even touch—go near the bodies of these cows. Also, there were many cases where the footprints of the cows were fully visible, because it had rained, there was mud. Still no human footprints, no footprints of any kind. And to top it all off, this is now in the 70s, we still are. The Washington County sheriff tried to take pictures. And couldn't take pictures of these cows— [Jenny gasps] okay, because he tried to take a picture and there was no contrast. So then they adjusted the settings of the camera, they took pictures again. And still it came out, no contrast. [laughing] You could not see the cow. The sheriff was quoted as saying, "I can't explain it. I'm not even going to try." So...

Jenny: Uh, this sounds more like extraterrestrial news to me?

Kristin: Yes. Yes. And actually, the bent of the story that I read and got all these details from came from the Colorado Springs Independent. And it's great. The story is written by Heidi Beedle and the core of the story is about the investigation of an organization called... MUFON. Mutual UFO Network. They have a deputy director of their Animal Mutilation Investigations—

Jenny: Sure.

Kristin: And they have been looking into this. Uh... a lot. Because that is, I think, the common theory among many people. Aliens.

Jenny: Yikes!

Kristin: Yeah.

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]
Spooky news!

Jenny: Well! Sometimes. Blood goes away. Sometimes... blood... rushes in. And—

Kristin: I was really hoping you were gonna go with that transition. Just so you know, so thank you.

Jenny: [laughs] And speaking of which, here are your results from last episode's Sexual Tension Awards. I am shocked and appalled, and I'm not mad but I am disappointed to report that Xander and Riley and their boyfriend fight only took 11% of the vote, putting them in fourth place.

Kristin: It's very disappointing. I'm actually—listen. I know you don't like when we're disappointed in you. But I am actually disappointed in the vote spread of last week's Sexual Tension Awards. I really am.

Jenny: It's like you're being willfully disobedient.

Kristin: [laughs] I agree!

Jenny: We are your mother and father. [Kristin laughs] And as long as you live in our podcast, you will at least consider our well-constructed arguments, when casting your votes. Anyway. In third place with 14% of the vote, it's Riley and the Beret Boys. In—now this is what *really*...

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: In my opinion, is a bunch of bullshit. With only 18% of the vote.

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: Intern Ben and Riley... arguably, the hottest coupling the show has seen so far. [Kristin chuckles] Or rather, not seen. They only took 18% of the vote, second place. Boo! Shame on you. [laughs] [bored and annoyed] And, with 57% of the vote, Tara and Willow looking at the stars together took first place. Are you happy?! Is this what you wanted?

Kristin: I just—

Jenny: Obviously, because it's what you voted for. But come on!

Kristin: That's the thing, is like, we understand. We're two queer women. We're leading a podcast conversation about sexual tension. We know, we love Tara and Willow. But like, we put them in the running, there was not sexual ten—there was—there wasn't, really?! It's too late. It's been done. The votes have been cast.

Jenny: Yeah. What can we do now? Nothing.

Kristin: I just would like to encourage everyone to really think about, you know—Willow and Tara, we're gonna have plenty of time—listen. I'm not gonna get into it. I'm gonna make everybody mad.

Jenny: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Kristin: Great job, everybody, with your vote. In my heart, the stethoscope will win. But in reality...

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: I guess maybe it was the astrology that I laid onto Tara and Willow.

Jenny: Oh. Mm, yes. Well, it's really having a moment right now.

Kristin: Speaking of queer love, Jenny, I am going to read an email that came in to us right now. Are you ready?

Jenny: I... hope so.

Kristin: This email came in from Julia L. It says: "Let me start by saying how amazing and wonderful my girlfriend is. She came to my life in a time where I needed her most, and Buffy was one of the first things she wanted to show me. As a newly out queer woman, the show really stuck with me. I started watching for her and of course, fell in love with it like so many fans do. I even have a Tara and Willow tattoo on my arm, and she has the 'grr argh' on her ankle. Anyway—"

Jenny: Aww!

Kristin: I know. "Anyway, she didn't like high school and she didn't go to her prom. So I was hoping to ask her to Buffy Prom. And I'm wondering if you two could possibly take a moment to ask her on the podcast. [Jenny gasps] I know it's a long shot, but Buffy made us closer and made us better for each other. It was one of the first ways we connected and I know how much it would mean to her—[Jenny gasps] to get an invite on your recording. [Jenny gasps two more times] Something as simple as, 'Vivian G., will you go to prom with Julia L.?' So, Jenny, do you want to say that together with me?

Jenny: I do.

Kristin: 'Kay, ready?

Both: Vivian G., will you go to Buffy Prom with Julia L.?

Jenny: Please?

Kristin: Please! [laughs] In case you don't know we're having a prom, it's not that far away anymore. It's happening in April and you can still get tickets. The live taping on the 17th is sold out, but there are still tickets to Prom.

Bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Events, you can find all your ticketing needs there. And I know two people who will be there—

Jenny: Hell yeah!

Kristin: As long as Vivian says yes! [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: Oh, wow. Okay. Couple quick—couple more very quick things and then we'll get into this very sad episode. [laughs]

Jenny: Sure, sure, sure. For all of our patrons, I will be doing a live streaming concert of Buffering tunes on February 22nd. So hope to see some of you there.

Kristin: Yes, and also in Patreon land. For some time, those of you who do not live in the United States have been asking Jenny and I how you can get in on our exclusive merchandise level. And we have said, just wait, just wait, just wait. We will figure it out, we will get there, we will do the math—the Hellmath that is required to figure this out. We have figured it out. We have a new level. It is for our international Scoobies. If you would like to get in on that exclusive merch, you just have to join up on that level before the end of this month, February. If you join before March, you will get in on the next bundle and that bundle ships in April. So join us if you will, international Scoobies. You can now get those exclusive t-shirts and enamel pins. They ship once every three months. They're pretty rad. And I think that's all I have to say!

Jenny: Hurray! On with the show, I say.

Kristin: I say the same.

[Intro music]

Jenny: Hello and welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer. Yes, a podcast where we're watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, [increasingly louder and faster] one at a time, spoiler-free! I'm Jenny Owen Youngs!

Kristin: And I am Kristin Russo. And I feel like in line with Buffy the Vampire Slayer, they're really stretching their arms now. They're trying to explore with different stuff here, different themes. And you, Jenny Owen Youngs, seem to be doing that with our intros lately.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: You're really stretching your arms, you know?

Jenny: Listen! Let the artist work.

Kristin: Keeping everybody on their toes. This week, we are talking about Season 5, Episode 10, Into the Woods. Earlier, I sang to Jenny, [singing] "are we into the woods yet? Are we into the woods yet? [Jenny makes little groaning noises] Are we into the woods?" And she was not... thrilled with me, but I'm sorry. I cannot remember any of the musical numbers from—

Jenny: [singing] "Into the woods! Into the woods!"

Kristin: [laughing] Oh, yeah!

Jenny: I mean! It's right there for you.

Kristin: Pretty easy, I'm so sorry. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every other week for an original song written by Jenny, recapping the Buffy episode we are discussing. If you have not yet started listening to our Angel podcast, Angel on Top, hosted by the luminous Brittany Ashley and Laura Zak, what the hell are you do—as Jenny Owen Youngs once said, what the fuck were you thinking?

Jenny: Okay. Um, why?

Kristin: That's not—that's one of two references I will make to your music this podcast episode.

Jenny: [laughing] Yikes! But seriously, if you're not listening, you're just hurting yourself for no reason. It's my favorite podcast, I love listening to them talk to each other about Angel. And Angel—they're in Season 2 now, like we're in Season 5. And it's just like, the show's really figuring itself out and the podcast is a true delight.

Kristin: Hell yeah.

Jenny: So go enjoy. Meanwhile, Into the Woods was written and directed by Marti Noxon and originally aired on December 19th... [Kristin laughs] 2000. Just two days after Kristin's...

Kristin: It's very easy to do my math.

Jenny: 20th birthday.

Kristin: [laughs] Thank you, Jenny!

Jenny: Yeah! Well—

Kristin: I never get any birthday attention.

Jenny: You know, you gotta give something back to the people.

Kristin: This is the one where, according to IMDB, after Buffy catches Riley in the clutches of a vampire junkie, Riley makes an important decision regarding their relationship. A lot of things. First of all, Marti Noxon is directing this.

Jenny: [singsong] Hell yeah!

Kristin: This is the first episode that Marti Noxon directs, and it is not the last.

Jenny: *Hell* yeah!

Kristin: So... we love a double Marti. And this is the first we get.

Jenny: Sick.

Kristin: It's a doozy. We're gonna wait a little while to bring you Kate Leth's Fashion Watch, but you can tell it's a doozy when Kate's like, "um... so there's a shirt, but also, I have a lot of feelings."

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: [laughs] And that's what we're gonna get from Kate in a little while.

Jenny: Uh, yeah. First thing to note is, of course, that Giles will not be left out of the leather jacket gang! He has obtained—

Kristin: He looks *hot*!

Jenny: He has obtained a distressed leather... blazer?

Kristin: No, it's a jacket! It's—

Jenny: With lapels?

Kristin: It's just—it's a fancy—

Jenny: With sportcoat lapels?

Kristin: It's a fancy dad leather jacket.

Jenny: Uh-huh...

Kristin: I love it. I'm so excited that Giles has a leather jacket.

Jenny: Yeah, get that earring back in, Giles, quick.

Kristin: Please! Ooh, we'll get a little reference to his Ripper days in a little while. Can't wait. But yeah, we're in the hospital. I mean, we left you all sort of watching Joyce being wheeled into this surgery. And Buffy and Dawn were standing in the foreground, the Scoobies were standing in the background.

Jenny: Joyce was like, "wazzup!"

Kristin: [laughs] And what we learn is that they have all stayed at the hospital with her, and they're waiting for her. And this is, like, pretty awesome, too. I love what they do with Xander. I love—not with—you know, just the writers, but also what Nicholas Brendan does here. The choice to make Xander angry, or like, testy—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Because he's so nervous, I thought was really nice.

Jenny: We all express stress in different ways.

Kristin: Exactly. And I just thought it was real. Like, Willow and Xander are BFFs from childhood, so this is totally a dynamic where Xander would be comfortable enough to snap at her, when all she wanted was the time. And he's doing that because he's torn up.

Jenny: Yes. [sighs] Yeah, and they're waiting and waiting and waiting. And oh hey, here comes Dr. Krinks, down the hall. And cruel and unusual punishment—

Kristin: Seriously.

Jenny: Marti, to make us all take the longest inhale to ever expand our lungs.

Kristin: Seriously!

Jenny: And then give us the fucking credits, you monster! [Kristin laughs] How dare you!

Kristin: Not very nice. Not very nice at all. Shout out to Riley, one of many turtlenecks that we'll see in this episode—

Jenny: Mm! Mm, mm, mm!

Kristin: It was like the wardrobe department was like, listen, this guy's gonna leave in a helicopter at the end of this episode, so like, bring out—

Jenny: Let's do a last little retrospective. [Kristin laughs] The many turtlenecks of Riley Finn.

Kristin: [laughs] So yeah, we go to the credits not knowing. Mean, mean, mean. And in all honesty, when we come back from the credits, I really think Dr. Krinks could have done a better job of—

Jenny: Pick up the pace, sir!

Kristin: Seriously!

Jenny: Doctors are...

Kristin: This is like the Jenny Owen Youngs version of delivering a—

Jenny: Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Kristin: Well, I don't think you would—

Jenny: Yeah, no.

Kristin: I don't think you would do it in this scenario. I think you would have the wherewithal to start by saying "everything is okay." But you do like to tell a story—

Jenny: Backwards? Well—

Kristin: Backwards, yeah.

Jenny: Do you think that there's some kind of insurance-related sort of safeguarding? Like, do doctors have to deliver news in a very lawyerly-minded way?

Kristin: Sure, maybe, no. But also, even if they do, he could have started by saying, "the procedure went well."

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah.

Kristin: Like, just start there, dude.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But he doesn't. But we do learn fairly quickly—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: They were able to get everything. Joyce is under observation and overall, they consider the procedure a complete success, so that is—

Jenny: Yeah, *everyone's* pumped. There's much huzzah'ing and everybody's hugging, except Giles and Xander, because no homo.

Kristin: Yeah, there's a no homo—

Jenny: Like, what? Hug each other. Don't be—

Kristin: It's very weird, 'cause they've definitely hugged it out many times before. But Giles does this incredibly adorable fist-pump thing in the background when he first gets the news.

Jenny: [giggles] Yeah!

Kristin: It's real cute! But yeah. Great, great news. And Buffy is so excited that she just snaps Dr. Krinks' ribs. And you know what?

Jenny: Yeah, a complimentary chiropractic adjustment for Dr. Krinks. So krinked.

Kristin: He deserved a couple of broken ribs, that guy. I'm glad he did a good job on the surgery, but I have a few issues with his bedside manner.

Jenny: Do you think that Giles is excited because he's like, "nice, got another shot, there's still some time for us."

Kristin: I mean, I do feel—I didn't want to be insensitive to Joyce's situation. But it did seem like—I had the thought of like, why did he wear this leather jacket?

Jenny: Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo!

Kristin: Not necessarily that he wants Joyce to see him in the leather jacket, but it feels like a little turn of the page. A little "what's next for these two."

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

Kristin: Maybe he's just, you know, really missing Olivia. And, you know, he's like, "life is short. Maybe I should have sex with Joyce again."

Jenny: Seize the—[laughs] oh my god! Yeah, that old familiar saying, "life is short, maybe I should have sex with Joyce again." [Kristin laughs] Uh-huh!

Kristin: Okay, so. So we go to Xander's apartment, which is looking lovely. And Dawn has been taken back with them.

Jenny: Oh my god. Babysitter Anya?

Kristin: [happily] Ugh!

Jenny: Among my top Anyas.

Kristin: Jenny, I have a lot of things to talk about in this scene. But the first thing that I would like to bring to your attention is that there's this moment where they look at the newspaper, which is so nostalgic. Looking at the newspaper for movie times is like—

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: People don't do that anymore but we—

Jenny: Were we ever so young?

Kristin: But we used to! And Anya, as we all know, wants to see the hilarious movie about the chimp who ice skates.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: I figured this is just a—you know, something they made up.

Jenny: No, no, no, no, that's a real movie!

Kristin: You know about this movie already?

Jenny: I can't remember what it's called—

Kristin: Well, I have it written down.

Jenny: But I do remember the ads for it.

Kristin: Well, it's called MVP, which stands for something.

Jenny: Most Valuable Primate?

Kristin: Correct! [laughter]

Jenny: Good lord!

Kristin: So this is a real movie. It has gotten horrible reviews. And it was produced by Air Bud Entertainment.

Jenny: Well! Who else is gonna make an animal sports movie?

Kristin: Just like, tell me what it was like to work in the offices of Air Bud Entertainment.

Jenny: Was just—tennis balls everywhere. [Kristin laughs] You know? And then there's a community zone with all the water bowls on the floor.

Kristin: It's like that episode of West Wing where—don't they let turkeys loose in the office every Thanksgiving?

Jenny: [laughs] Oh, no, they do not do that every Thanksgiving. [Kristin laughs] They pardon a turkey every Thanksgiving and in the West Wing, there's something about—they don't know what to do with the turkeys while they're awaiting the pardoning. So they leave them in C. J. Cregg's office—

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: Creating chaos. I'm looking at this chimpanzee right now, on hockey skates, with a little hockey stick—

Kristin: She's talking about the movie poster. [laughs]

Jenny: For Most Valuable Primate. And I'd like to make a general plea to the universe. Could people stop casting chimpanzees in stuff?

Kristin: Yeah. I mean, unless it's a documentary about chimpanzees—

Jenny: Sure. Well, that's not so much a *casting*.

Kristin: It would be nice to not put tiny ice skates on them or any other anthropomorphized... we say this on the heels of Doctor Doolittle coming out in theaters. So...

Jenny: [shudders] No, I'm here for Wishbone. I'm not here... for chimpanzees. The glorification of chimpanzees.

Kristin: [laughs] So, okay. So anyhow. Thank you for taking that Most Valuable Primate detour with me.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: Anya is—man, is she really finding her Anya stride. We are in prime Anya territory. "Ice is all slippery and monkeys are all irrational," she says. [laughs] She also—

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. She's also like, maybe we should make Life—ooh, the game of Life a little more interesting by adding a gambling component, Dawn, 14-year-old Dawn. Oh, and maybe we could also get you—

Kristin: Get you drunk!

Jenny: Yeah, "strawberry schnapps taste just like strawberry ice cream," she says.

Kristin: [laughs] And then we learn that Dawn is very aware of the fact that she has not been exiled for celebration of her own. But rather so, as she says, "Buffy and Riley can boink."

Jenny: Uhh...

Kristin: Jenny, what are your feelings on the word "boink"?

Jenny: [still drawing out the word] ... um. [laughter] Cool, yeah. And you?

Kristin: And then Anya realizes that means she cannot boink Xander. Tonight. [Jenny laughs] So. Let us go to the beautiful guitar—it says—so when you cut to the scene between Buffy and Riley, the closed captioning just says "guitar playing" as it pans through the candles in the room. It's a real funny moment.

Jenny: Dude. This is... not something I ever wanted to see.

Kristin: [laughs] This is a musician named Emiliana Torrini, this song?

Jenny: Oh, mm.

Kristin: The Icelandic, I think, musician. Who Buffy is apparently super into, she wants to play this song on repeat.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: This is like... listen. It is the Riley episode, isn't it. And this is like the opposite of what candles do for Buffy and Angel. It's like—and that's the whole point of this whole episode. I mean, of this whole—of really Riley's whole arc versus Angel's whole arc. It's like, this is the same kind of setting. Darkened lighting...

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Candles all around the room...

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But it is like, this light, soft jazz version—

Jenny: Ah.

Kristin: Later, when we get the—if you can call it a sex scene—[Jenny laughs] my note that I wrote down, I called it the "tan and tender sex scene." [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah... this—

Kristin: It's just, the bodies are tanned and it's just so tender.

Jenny: There's a few things.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: If I may.

Kristin: Please, please.

Jenny: I don't wanna talk about it, but I have to talk about it.

Kristin: [laughs] That's your job.

Jenny: First of all, the fact that Buffy has at no point, especially now while they spend an extended amount of time naked together, noticed any vampire bites on Riley's body—

Kristin: Yeah...

Jenny: Is either an oversight or just more fuel for the fire of like, do you even notice this guy?

Kristin: Are you—right.

Jenny: Are you here right now?

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah.

Jenny: Okay. Also, when they're standing, talking to each other. And—blegh! [laughing] I don't even wanna repeat what they say! But when they are standing there, just highlighting what you'll hear us talk about with Marc Blucas when that episode comes out.

Kristin: Next week!

Jenny: Next week. They use a little box for close-ups—

Kristin: Mm!

Jenny: That Sarah Michelle Gellar would stand on top of. So she's definitely on the Buffy box in this closeup where they're talking about their imminent love-making session. [laughter] Because she's only like five inches shorter than him here instead of like, a full foot.

Kristin: Right. Well, and—yeah, are you gonna point out the scene later? 'Cause there is a scene later where I think they very explicitly do not use the Buffy box.

Jenny: Oh, where is that?

Kristin: It's when Riley confronts Buffy and he's like, "we have to talk right now"—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And we'll talk about this scene when we get to it, but she's basically—has to tell him twice to keep his hands off of her. And they are panned out and Buffy is not standing on a box, and the height difference is really massive. And I think it's one of those things—

Jenny: Maybe intentional.

Kristin: Yeah, you know how in acting, they always say that like, if you—if you're winning the fight, you should not be leaning towards the person. Body language is really important in fighting, so like—

Jenny: [laughing] I've never heard this.

Kristin: Really? No, it's a real thing! [stutters]

Jenny: In your many conversations about when you're winning the fight, what your body posture should be. [Kristin laughs] Yes, please. Continue to teach me.

Kristin: Well, it's just, if you're leaning forward, that's a weakened stance, right? So usually people who are—who have the power in the fight, who know they're winning the fight or know they're winning the argument are sort of relaxed. They're not leaning towards, they're farther away. They're—whatever, they don't care as much.

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: That's not what's happening here, but there is something about the fact that Buffy is—does really have more power in that scene. Ah, let's—

Jenny: I feel like you're giving me a lot to think about for when I play Skyrim. I could definitely stand to be more relaxed during battle sequences.

Kristin: Oh! Great.

Jenny: So. Speaking of... Buffy boxes.

Kristin: Um. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, I'm sorry, but I have—

Kristin: Is that really—

Jenny: I have to say one other thing. [laughs]

Kristin: Wow. [laughter]

Jenny: And then our listenership reduced to zero. [laughter] The other place where the height differential really, really slapped me across the face?

Kristin: Uh-huh?

Jenny: Is when they are, excuse me, laying down together. [laughter] And there's some—[both laughing] active movement. And Riley is on top of Buffy. They wanted, I think, their faces to be a certain way, so like, Riley's face is farther down the bed than Buffy's.

Kristin: Yeah, his face is—

Jenny: So he is—if you think about their height differential, he's basically, like, working on her knees. You know what I mean? [laughter] I understand you have to do what you have to do for the scene. And honestly, that's probably way more comfortable for the actors. But, uh...

Kristin: Listen, it's... Riley's gonna be flying away in a helicopter at the end of this episode. So if you're not gonna talk about the positioning of—

Jenny: Strike while the iron is decidedly lukewarm.

Kristin: Incredible. A box metaphor, an iron metaphor. [Jenny clears throat] Two tanned bodies. With a tangle of parts. Placed in random locations. [laughter]

Jenny: And hey, we're not the only ones who are disturbed by this love-making.

Kristin: Ugh! Wait, actually, can I go back for a second?

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Because there is a moment in the scene in the living room before they got upstairs to have tan and tender sex. Where Buffy says, you know, I'm not as strong as you think I am, blah blah blah—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And he's like, "I didn't even see you cry." [Jenny groans] And she says, "oh, I cried. I cried a ton, you know." And Riley is devastated by the fact that she has been upset but not upset with him. And it's just—you know, there's a lot of

moments like this throughout the episode and I'm sure we will have a larger, more meta conversation about this. But I think that that's important to note, because—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: At the end of the day, I really—like, my end analysis of this couple is that they have incompatible love languages.

Jenny: Two great tastes that don't taste great together.

Kristin: Wow. Yeah, I mean, it—but I don't think that Riley is correctly assessing Buffy as—like, he seems to be saying, "you are broken 'cause you can't do this." And I don't—

Jenny: Oh. That's not what I got out of it.

Kristin: No? I—

Jenny: No. I feel like he—his assessment is... "you don't have it for *me*." I don't feel like he thinks that she has a personal deficit. I think that he feels like she doesn't have what he needs available to him.

Kristin: Yeah, I can see that. I guess I leave this episode knowing that these two should not have stayed together.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: And also feeling like I wish that the conversation could have included more about what each of them was unable to be for the other person. And maybe that's what I mean.

Jenny: Mm!

Kristin: That like, the episode is angled more—and I mean, the show is about Buffy. We're learning more about Buffy's inner workings, I guess we don't care necessarily as much about Riley's inner workings. 'Cause the name of the show is Buffy the Vampire Slayer. [Jenny laughs] But... you know, it seems a little one-sided. And not in a horrible way, but just in a way where I'm like, well, it feels to me like Buffy does have things to give and they aren't the things that Riley needs. And Riley does have things to need and they aren't—you know, whatever.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: We'll talk more. Anyhow. Now, also, at one point, Buffy says, "Mom's out of the woods" which is where we get our episode title.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: And where I said—

Jenny: Well, I think we also get the episode title because Riley is leaving... for the jungle.

Kristin: Right, he's going into the woods.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Yes. Joyce is figuratively out of the woods and Riley is literally in the woods.

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: The woods!

Kristin: Okay, so now Spike's fucking downstairs, smoking his after-sex cigarette. [laughter] Wondering where Riley has put his parts.

Jenny: Eugh!

Kristin: Don't worry, man, it's just between her knees! [laughter] But this is, you know, a critical piece of the plotline because Spike sees Riley get up and leave. Which is... weird—[sighs] I just feel like, if you need to get your fix, you might not do it, like, immediately after sleeping with your girlfriend and while she sleeps, get out and leave the house.

Jenny: Yeah, well, they're trying to work with this ultimately messy and not super successful metaphor of, like, addiction?

Kristin: Yeah... I agree—

Jenny: And this isn't the last time we'll see them work with this.

Kristin: I 100% agree.

Jenny: And it's really never... a clean win.

Kristin: Yeah, 'cause the metaphor is mixed in a very not-good way. Because they position the vampires who are drinking Riley's blood and other humans' blood as sex workers.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: But then they're also positioning them as junkies, as the word use—"junkies" is a horrible word that—drug addicts, but I said that word because it was in the IMDB description. And I meant to comment on the fact that I did not like the usage of the word back then. And those are two distinctly different things. Like, are these vampires working as sex workers and making money for that? Or are they—like, it seems really messy.

Jenny: I thought that Riley was the person experiencing addiction.

Kristin: So it—

Jenny: And is it a two-way street and—what a mess.

Kristin: And that's the thing—it's a little bit messy, because that's the thing, right? In some senses, he is spoken about like that. And I also don't think that it's fair or appropriate to label what Riley's doing as an addiction, because it's not. He is going to—he's basically employing sex workers because he is missing something and is figuring it out and figuring out what he's missing through this exchange. Which is not at all in line with an addiction story line.

Speaking of—since we're in this sex worker topic right now. Somebody wrote in on Instagram and was sort of commenting on our discussion last episode about this being sort of a character assassination, super out of character for Riley. And talked a little bit about the fact that oftentimes, people who frequent sex workers are sort of doing things in those exchanges that they feel they can't do with their partner. Whether that's because they don't respect the sex worker the way they respect their partner, whether it's because they don't feel comfortable showing that they want—you know, I mean, in the scene that we see Riley in, getting caught, he's saying, like, "harder, harder." We've definitely never seen even a hint—he's taken off her goddamn boot! [Jenny laughs] That's as—you know what I mean? And so he is really tapping into something that he's not tapping into with Buffy. So you know, I still think that there's a bit of character assassination going on here. But I also think that it—I thought it was an interesting point, to really look at. And Riley gives us some of his reasonings.

Jenny: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Kristin: And is really well-spoken about it, I think, in terms of why he is doing this and his self-assessment of how he's felt when he's done this and what he's realized in connecting with these—

Jenny: Even on his way out the door, he's got one of the higher emotional IQs on the show, honestly! [laughter] It's like, Riley and Spike. They should get together!

Kristin: Ooh!

Jenny: And they almost do.

Kristin: They almost do. Cannot wait to get to that scene. Okay. So back at the hospital. Joyce is declining—we don't spoil anything in this series, but I will let you know that Joyce declining a wig is gonna be really great for some of her bandanna choices in future episodes. [Jenny laughs] And you know—

Jenny: Also, French maid mom? Buffy trying to pitch Joyce on "French maid mom." Help!

Kristin: I know! There's a weird—

Jenny: Check please!

Kristin: I hope that one day—I'm sure we won't ask Marti Noxon about this if we do get the chance to speak with her, 'cause it's so niche. But this scene is so—I don't understand exactly what it's here for. Because we don't only get that weird comment of Buffy being like "French maid mom," but we also get this exchange between them where, you know, Joyce is sort of like, "well, Riley is—you know, are you seeing Riley enough?" And—

Jenny: Ahh! Speaking of things I'd like to delete, delete, delete.

Kristin: Yeah! 'Cause Buffy's like, "I'm sure he'll come over a little later looking for some Bible study." And then Joyce is like, "As long as you're having your time with the lord."

Jenny: Help!

Kristin: And I'm like, ladies! Maybe—

Jenny: Who has ever had this conversation with their mom?

Kristin: Ugh, listen, not you—

Jenny: Besides Rory Gilmore. What a nightmare.

Kristin: [laughs] Well, that's what I was gonna say. Not you or I, I think we both have very different relationships with our mothers where this would never be an exchange. But I do know people who have relationships with their moms that are... not—

Jenny: Terrifying.

Kristin: [laughing] That are terrifying. To people like us.

Jenny: So these military guys are like, holed up in a Motel 6 or something?

Kristin: Yeah. They're stand—they do not—

Jenny: Look at those curtains and face the truth.

Kristin: [laughs] They don't have a good budget. They're not—and they tell Riley the pay is gonna be low and the risk is gonna be high. And they're like—

Jenny: Uh-huh. Risk of... dying—

Kristin: Bed bugs.

Jenny: Yeah, bed bugs, dying near these curtains.

Kristin: [laugh] But yeah, so Graham is like, you know who we need is Riley.

Jenny: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Kristin: Because he can—he has the skill set that we need. And he looks great in a turtleneck, and wait until you see him in a beret.

Jenny: Ooh-hoo-hoo-hoo!

Kristin: Is not what Graham says, but. Might as well. And then, we go back to Buffy's room, where—

Jenny: In the middle of the night!

Kristin: She believes that Riley has re-entered after using the bathroom or something.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: But instead, it is our bleach blond stalker of Season 5, Spike.

[SPIKE jingle plays]
Spike! I love you
Spike! So dreamy
Spike! Your trench coat
Spike! I love you
Spike! Your black nails
Spike! Peroxide

Kristin: Spike—okay. So you know that we've been giving a big frown to any time Spike does something without permission. And technically, he has definitely entered her room without permission.

Jenny: But also... are they really never gonna dis-invite him?

Kristin: I mean, truly.

Jenny: Like, what do you expect? Honestly, the biggest crime anybody in this show ever commits is continuing to expect Spike to do the right thing ever, in any circumstance.

Kristin: [laughs] I know.

Jenny: Everyone's always so incensed when he wants to kill someone, or wants to drink blood, [Kristin laughs] or wants to steal something. He is literally evil and has never pretended for one moment in time to not be evil.

Kristin: [laughs] So he's like, "hey, I've got something to show you."

Jenny: Is Buffy getting out of bed in the middle of the goddamn night for "I need to show you something"?

Kristin: I know! I know.

Jenny: Like, sir...

Kristin: And also, isn't she wondering where the fuck Riley is?

Jenny: Uh, yeah.

Kristin: He's not in bed with her and Spike has just entered the house. But—

Jenny: I would be like, "where's Riley? Like, what'd you do with Riley?"

Kristin: "What did you do with my boyfriend?" Exactly. And also—

Jenny: And can I join?

Kristin: I mean... listen. I'm just saying that I think that everyone in this dynamic would be thrilled if Spike and Buffy and Riley were a throuple.

Jenny: Now there's something for everyone. [laughing] You know what I mean?

Kristin: There's literally... [laughs]

Jenny: Whew-hoo-hoo!

Kristin: There's literally something for fucking everyone. So I'm putting it on the table. I wish that I could go back in my time machine and tell these three how to solve all of their problems. But alas. I wanna give James Marsters a shout for his acting. When he turns around— [Jenny laughs] so he's like, "are you naked?" And Buffy's like, "literally, fuck yourself."

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: And she tells—she looks—she gives him this look. Again, Sarah Michelle Gellar with her eyeball-acting.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: Like, "dude, fucking seriously? Turn around." And he's like, "Like I give a damn." And then he turns around.

Jenny: And lets us know exactly how big of a damn he gives.

Kristin: I mean, he basically has, like, a tiny orgasm. [Jenny laughs] Thinking about the fact that she's getting out of bed behind him and it's just incredible acting, from James Marsters.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: 'Cause it's a split second.

Jenny: He's so funny.

Kristin: He's—it's hysterical and so on point.

Jenny: Now, I have a problem. I have a bone to pick. How fucking dare Buffy the Vampire Slayer call putting on those wide-leg, ankle-crop—

Kristin: [simultaneously, laughing] Yeah. Capris?

Jenny: Sweatpants, "getting dressed"?

Kristin: [laughing] I agree.

Jenny: She looks like she's spring cleaning.

Kristin: Madam. She should have definitely borrowed one of Joyce's future bandannas—

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: To complete this look.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: [laughs] Um, yes. And this is the scene—they go to the vamp den. And Buffy is taken upstairs. She sees Riley. We've talked about the fact that he is saying "harder." Buffy sees Riley. Spike... is showing her this. Spike sees immediately how upset she is and is like, full of some kind of regret.

Jenny: Once they get outside, you mean?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Right, because first he's like, "heh-heh," being a little shit to Riley.

Kristin: Right. "We only came here 'cause we care about you, friend." A real digging comment, right. And he does—it's like—and Spike is, I think, portrayed really wonderfully in this episode as being right on this line of like, he's so stoked that Riley's taking a fall. But he's so bummed because he's upset the person that he loves, essentially. You know, I think we can—that he's obsessed with, I should say.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: So the vampires are all pissed that Riley has brought the Slayer, in one way or another, to their den. And Buffy goes to her room, so sad.

Jenny: And you know when you've just been caught by your vampire slayer girlfriend, being sucked on by a vampire, in a pseudo-sexual way? [Kristin laughs] And then you—ugh. You get home to your basement apartment and your heavy bag. And you turn a light on, and some men have been waiting in the corner.

Kristin: In the dark!

Jenny: They like, got there, turned all the lights on. They were like, okay, here's where we need to stand to make it the most dramatic [Kristin laughs] for when he gets home and turns the lights on. Two of them stayed there, one of them went and turned the lights off and got back in position. And then they waited for who knows how long!

Kristin: [laughs] It's like a surprise party.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Yeah, and Riley's like, "get out." Like, he immediately senses that they're there, understands everything. We get this—ugh. Whatever, this stupid scene. This scene is stupid. They're like, "there's a Code 1 in Belize and it's demons taking apart missionaries. Bah! We're not the government, we're the army!"

Jenny: [sarcastically] Wow. We really missed the Initiative!

Kristin: Yeah, I know. And they tell him it's high risk, it's low pay, tomorrow at midnight. Be at the copter... or...

Jenny: [amused] "Be at the copter."

Kristin: Meet me at the copter at midnight.

Jenny: Uh-huh... ?

Kristin: Or whatever.

Jenny: And he's—I mean, and—whew, whew, whew. He picked just the right button, in his closing remarks.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: He says, "maybe civilian life is working out for you. Maybe it isn't."

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah. This guy, rolling the dice on—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know, 50% of the time, life feels good and 50% of the time, you need to escape life. So I'm just gonna take my chances and he is—

Jenny: Yeah. Rolled his dice.

Kristin: He's correct with his dice roll.

Jenny: He's having a good night.

Kristin: So at the Magic Box, we are approaching the Christmas Kwanzaa Hanukkah Solstice and Gomanthar's [sic] Ascendance Season. Lovely little touch to the banner hanging up. I love—I wanna know—someday I wanna find whomever created the banners for Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Actually, you know what I—that's a good segue to talk about something. At the end of this episode, there is a dedication. A dedication at the end of the episode for—

Jenny: Is it to Gurenthar [sic]?

Kristin: No, but it—actually, the spelling of this person's name is so close to it. It's for D. C. Gustafson, I believe is how you pronounce his name. He passed away, he was 41 and he was the lead on the—the lead man for the first two seasons in the art department of the show.

Jenny: Oh, wow.

Kristin: And he passed away at 41 after fighting cancer and AIDS and was a super close friend of Sarah Michelle Gellar's.

Jenny: Oh, man.

Kristin: And so I bring it up because, you know, perhaps it is the—it's probably the art department that does some of the banners.

Jenny: Oh, for sure.

Kristin: Right? So that's the connection. But if you saw that, it is in the credits right at the end of the episode. And that is who this person was and so that's really very special that they, you know, gave him—they dedicated—I mean, it's a very sad episode to dedicate to somebody, but.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. Okay, so. One free chicken's foot.

Jenny: With every purchase. And why not? We also see here that there are some tensions building between Anya and Willow. I wonder how that's gonna culminate.

Kristin: Yeah, I wonder how intense their fighting will become.

Jenny: Hmm. I love—this scene is a really nice spot of sunshine in this episode.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Emma Caulfield, totally crushing it. Lots of really, really funny Anya stuff here. In particular, I like how, as she and Willow are getting more and more heated, she turns to Xander for support. And when he doesn't give her the support she's looking for, she's like, "fine, take her side even though I'm the one who sleeps with you and feeds you and bathes you." And everyone's like...

Kristin: "Uh..."

Jenny: Record scratch. [laughter] And Xander leaps to assure everyone that it's in a "sexy Penthouse way."

Kristin: You show me how you bathe somebody sexily.

Jenny: I am picturing it right now and it is there.

Kristin: Yeah?

Jenny: It's there, yeah.

Kristin: You can picture Xander being bathed sexily?

Jenny: By *Anya*?

Kristin: But just, like, what is the motion? There's a sponge—

Jenny: Well, you're both in the bathtub.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: Right, there's a loofa. [laughter]

Kristin: You are all so welcome that I asked this question. [Jenny laughs] Okay, you're both in the bathtub—

Jenny: What's the—what's the sexiest bath time abrasure? [laughter] Abrasion tool?

Kristin: There's a loofa, and—

Jenny: Or maybe... hmm.

Kristin: I just feel like no matter how sexy it might start, it becomes silly. I cannot imagine it being a—I can imagine—listen, having sex in a bathtub. Difficult, also.

Jenny: Yeah, I wouldn't recommend.

Kristin: That's a whole other conversation about lubrication. But sexily bathing, *just* bathing. I just don't think you can keep up the act of cleaning somebody else's body for that long...

Jenny: I think—well, I think you're taking a lot—you're making a lot of assumptions about how long the bathing portion lasts.

Kristin: Oh, okay, alright.

Jenny: And also, like, just... you know. Step outside of yourself for a moment in time.

Kristin: [laughing] Does she...

Jenny: You could probably get a lot of research material related to this. There are some websites on the internet. [laughing] That you could visit. And all you'll have to do is Google or enter in the search bar, like, "sexy bath time" or something. And you'll get all the info you need.

Kristin: Great.

Jenny: Websites like pornhub.com. [Kristin laughs] Uh... that's the only one I can think of.

Kristin: This episode, not sponsored by pornhub.com. But what a great segue. Let's get some word from some of our actual sponsors. And we'll be back with more bath time sexy thoughts.

Jenny: Great.

[Ad break]

Kristin: Alright, so... it was Anya and Xander in the bathtub with the loofa. [Jenny laughs] We get—one more line I wanna give Anya a shout out for in this scene is where she says, "sure, make fun of the ex-demon, she's newly human and strangely literal." [laughter] And I just—it's a special one.

Jenny: And she is.

Kristin: Yes. She also makes a crack at Giles. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: "If it weren't for me, he'd be a scared old man looking at quarterly tax statements and wetting himself." I really felt solidarity with her version of Giles in this. [Jenny laughs] Because when I look at quarterly tax statements, I basically...

Jenny: You're like, "ahhh!"

Kristin: Yeah, I cry and cry and cry. Okay, so Buffy busts the fuck in.

Jenny: Yeah, she's real stressed out about this vamp nest that she's discovered with a very specific agenda.

Kristin: Yes. She is—

Jenny: It's a small business. Buffy hates small business owners. Well, she likes Giles. But, uh...

Kristin: [laughs] I mean—okay, so. What I thought of in this arc of Buffy being so angry at her boyfriend that she burns the house down was Lisa Left Eye Lopes—

Jenny: Oh, yeah!

Kristin: 'Cause that's exactly what Lisa Left Eye Lopes did.

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: I always felt just really proud of her for doing it, even though I never really knew the full story.

Jenny: I mean, we're not—we don't endorse arson—

Kristin: I don't encourage arson.

Jenny: On this podcast, however.

Kristin: But you know, it's like, taking a Louisville slugger to both headlights is always a move that is fun. And a little bit empowering. So sorry, that's my little Left Eye side rant. But Buffy comes in and yes, she is furious about vampire prostitution. Simply because her boyfriend has just been there.

Jenny: Yeah. I would think... considering how much slack they cut Spike, day in and day out, that they might be able to turn a favorable eye on this setup—

Kristin: Yeah! It's a great setup.

Jenny: Where a bunch of people are getting what they want and nobody's dying.

Kristin: Yeah. I mean—

Jenny: Although I guess, well, with regulation comes more—greater safety. A lesson—

Kristin: Ah-ha!

Jenny: We could all consider.

Kristin: Oh, wow. So yeah, you're—

Jenny: Now that's one place where the metaphor really works for me.

Kristin: Yeah, no.

Jenny: Is people deserve to be safe. While they're working.

Kristin: Yes. Agree. Hell yeah, Jenny.

Jenny: They don't deserve to have their place of business burned to the ground.

Kristin: They do not. And since you just made that beautiful tie-in, I think we should play the Patriarchy jingle, the reason that these regulations don't exist in the first place.

Jenny: Hmm.

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

Kristin: Something that I would like to note in this scene is that Anya knows immediately that this has been going on for centuries. And guess who pipes up—

Jenny: Ohh!

Kristin: But old Leather Jacket Daddy.

Jenny: Well, he hasn't seen any of these since his Ripper days!

Kristin: Yo, just putting a little—a couple pennies in the bin for Ripper and his days with his vamps. Just—

Jenny: Yeah, right, he definitely has patronized such an establishment in the past.

Kristin: Yeah, you—I bet you Ethan Rayne and Giles went through a phase of their sexual affair, where they—

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: Maybe before—'cause, you know, maybe they weren't comfortable right away, really, really owning their attraction to each other?

Jenny: Right, so first they would go to...

Kristin: Together.

Jenny: Suck dens together.

Kristin: Yes, exactly. And then they would sort of use the vamp as a means of—

Jenny: Yep, yep.

Kristin: Yeah, and then eventually they would just have sex with each other. Okay.

Jenny: Hot, okay, love it. Buffy is fucking guns-ablazing. She wants to go to this nest right now. She goes to the huge unlocked chest of weapons on the sales floor. [Kristin laughs] I don't think she takes anything out of it—

Kristin: No.

Jenny: Before she runs off. But the last thing that I wanna say about this scene, is unfortunately Giles undoes the hotness with a very boomer...

Kristin: Ooh!

Jenny: Anti-sex work comment, where he says, "there's people who deserve your help *more* than these people."

Kristin: Oh, wow. Well, but—see, that's where the metaphor gets—the metaphor is backwards though. Because he's talking about... it's too much Hellmath for my brain to figure out. But it doesn't feel like apples to apples. And here's your Hellmath jingle.

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

Kristin: So the vamp den is emptied out. Xander apologizes for saying "crib" when he walks into the place—

Jenny: Fair. Very fair.

Kristin: Thank you, Xander. And Buffy burns it down. Burn it down and salt the earth, she says. And then we get... the porn we're all really here for.

[sexy instrumental music starts playing]

Jenny: Woo-hoo-hoo!

Kristin: Riley busts on in—

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: To Spike's den.

Jenny: Um...

Kristin: And the porn music starts playing.

Jenny: Yeah. [sings porn music tune]

Kristin: Lauren, I know you've got that 80s porn music in your folder.

Jenny: Yep, yep.

Kristin: Riley's like, "I left reasonable about three exits back, Spike."

Jenny: Honestly, possibly the hottest Riley has ever been.

Kristin: Then he uses his stake dildo—[laughs]

Jenny: Whoa! Well, let's talk about—

Kristin: I got a little carried away, the porn music made me lose it.

Jenny: Yeah, okay. Let's—

Kristin: I didn't actually write that in my notes. [laughs]

[porn music fades out]

Jenny: Let's talk for a moment about what we perceive as a first-time viewer, which is...

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: That he gets Spike up against that pillar. And Spike's like, "hey, don't kill the messenger." And Riley says, "why the hell not?" And stakes him. Through the. Heart.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: And then we go to commercial. Again, Marti Noxon, queen of the cruel and unusual going-to-commercial.

Kristin: [laughs] And we learn, of course, when Spike is like, "ow." Very reminiscent of our William the Bloody—

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. Well, I love how he's like, screaming like he's dying. And then looks down and is like, "hey."

Kristin: [laughs] So Riley has gone through all the trouble of finding a plastic stake that has wood-grain pattern on it so that it looks real—

Jenny: Honestly. Why is anybody leaving Spike alive? Why is—what is prompting anyone other than we love to watch James Marsters work? What's prompting anyone when they're pissed at Spike to not kill him? There are no repercussions in this universe for killing a vampire.

Kristin: Seriously, I know. But Riley wants a little more from Spike, I think.

Jenny: Mm!

Kristin: And you know, they have a chat here, which I think is done really well. Where basically, Riley's like, "I know you want her." And Spike's like, "you know what? I fucking do."

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: And Riley's like, "but you know you'll never have her." And he's like, "yeah, I do, but a guy's gotta try."

Jenny: A fella's gotta try.

Kristin: A fella's gotta try, and then he pops the top off of his scotch or whatever the hell he drinks. And they have this connection.

Jenny: It's very romantic.

Kristin: It's pretty romantic. Okay, so Riley takes a drink of the scotch. We'll say it's scotch. And he—there's a moment when he takes the bottle, he recaps it and he throws it back to Spike. And that is where my fan fiction starts to spiral.

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

Kristin: 'Cause it's a real good throw. And it makes me feel like the passion that we're missing in this—in the tan and tender sex scene—

Jenny: Uh-huh, definitely exists here.

Kristin: Oh, yeah! It's here.

Jenny: You need a little contrast for the composition. You need a fucking pasty-ass undead guy. [Kristin laughs] And then a golden god.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Stepped down from the heavens.

Kristin: And also, an important—a few important lines. But something important that Spike says to Riley in this scene is: "the girl needs some monster in her man, and that's not in your nature." And what do we think about this? Is there truth to this? I think that there is.

Jenny: It seems like, sometimes we forget, because we're like, watching this show and the stakes, no pun intended [Kristin laughs], are so high. And the, you know, the danger is so real and Buffy has to step up over and over again. We forget that she is... 20 years old?

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: Who knows what she needs?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: She's so young, she's had one boyfriend and he was...

Kristin: 246?

Jenny: Yeah, and also, according to her job description which she points out in this episode, like... her enemy.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: By his very nature. She's only had a very intense, very dramatic, very damaging relationship. She doesn't know anything else.

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: That's why I think, like, eventually, after she gets the sort of relief and safety from that that she needs with Riley after a certain amount of time has gone by, the relationship probably starts to feel kind of unnatural to her. Because it does not have those really intense, dramatic peaks and valleys.

Kristin: Right. And you know, I definitely agree with your point in the "she is 20." But we also have the flip side of that coin, which is she is the Slayer. So her 20 is not quite your standard 20.

Jenny: True, but I don't think that the Slayer package comes with advanced emotional maturity.

Kristin: No. I agree. I agree.

Jenny: You know, she only has the experience she has to work with.

Kristin: I agree. I agree, but I do think that Buffy, no matter what her age, is going to struggle with—I'll say this. I don't think that she would necessarily struggle with being with someone who did not have complete chaos at their center. But I do think that she would always struggle with someone who had this set of needs, which I don't think are abnormal, that Riley has.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: That, I don't think will ever be something that she can conquer. Or—conquer is the wrong word.

Jenny: That seems like, at best, she would have to work very hard to get to that place and to feel comfortable there. And frankly, she doesn't have the time or the energy reserves to do that work. Right?

Kristin: Right, right. Yeah. And I would like to take a second and turn this magnifying glass around on all of us. Because when I was reading about this episode, I found this. When asked why they chose to have Riley leave Sunnydale, Joss Whedon said, he tried to give Buffy a healthy relationship—

Jenny: Yes! God bless.

Kristin: Yeah! But, quote, "People didn't want it. They did some great work together, but at the same time, when they were happy, it made people crazy. Marti Noxon adds, 'Sunnydale romance rarely goes well. Buffy with a boyfriend is not as interesting as Buffy in some kind of romantic strife. Riley by his nature was such a good and constant character that we were at risk of things getting a little dull.'" And so, you know, we talk about Buffy, a fictional character, what does she need? But also, what the hell is wrong with us that we are bored by—and I'm not saying there's something wrong with us. But just that—

Jenny: Well...

Kristin: This exists outside of the fictional universe too. I know, in many people's love lives, for sure, but also in what we crave.

Jenny: Consider the Ross and Rachel of it all, if you will for a moment in time!

Kristin: Always, I will. They were on a break. [laughter]

Jenny: I know they were on a break. And I also know that everyone watching that show couldn't wait for them to get together, for some reason. Everyone was rooting for Ross to get what he wanted.

Kristin: Well, it was—it was—

Jenny: A different time.

Kristin: It was raining, it was dramatic.

Jenny: Sure, sure, sure, sure, sure. Yeah, right. And as soon as they got together, they had to start—the people making the show had to start playing with that and finding all different ways of like, pushing them apart and letting them come back together and pushing them apart again.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Because who wants to watch a happy ending?

Kristin: I mean, well, it's like, people like tension.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I mean, truly. And—

Jenny: Well, it's entertaining.

Kristin: It's entertaining and for many of us in our actual lives, it's—as much as you might complain about it while it's happening. I think a lot of us use it as a distraction from the other things we don't wanna think about.

Jenny: [laughs] Oh, true.

Kristin: [singsong] Sorry for making it real, everybody! [normal voice] It's a big episode.

Jenny: Yeah. Also, I think they make a good point here. It's not just about, like, the relationship all by itself. It's everything that you hang around—the jokes that can happen around whatever's going on in the show.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And the dramatic moments that can happen around everything that's going on in the show. Like, there's just more to work with if there is conflict.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah.

Jenny: If there is no conflict, what's the purpose of the story?

Kristin: [sighs] Yeah. So, anyway. Bah-bah-bah-ba-dum-dah.

Jenny: Flank!

Kristin: [laughs] Okay. So just a couple more things about this scene with our two favorite boyfriends. You guys are—we don't have the results as of the taping of this episode, but you guys have been pretty into Ben and Riley.

Jenny: Hell yeah!

Kristin: I think it has a lot to do with my stethoscope emoji that I put in the poll. [Jenny laughs] But... sorry.

Jenny: They—oh my god, right, Ben's stethoscope has already touched Riley's chest. Nice.

Kristin: It has. But the other piece of this scene that I just wanna touch on, while I touch on both of their abs—

Jenny: [laughing] Oh my god!

Kristin: Or pecs, maybe. Is when Spike says, sometimes I'm so jealous of you, essentially, and sometimes I think that I got the better deal. And he starts to really reason back and forth, like, you *have* her. You have your arms around her, but she's still not there and that's so much worse, except she probably smells really good, [laughter] so actually, you know what—

Jenny: Never mind, yeah, yeah, yeah, you got the—

Kristin: You got the better deal.

Jenny: Good end of the stick.

Kristin: And Riley kind of realizes in this conversation that... he isn't—I mean. I guess he doesn't fully realize, even as the helicopter is flying away. But he begins to realize that like, this is not gonna happen. And he's not gonna get what he wants. And that Spike... as much as Spike is coming from a really complicated, conflicted place with his information, Spike—

Jenny: He's still Spike, as we know.

Kristin: Yeah, and this is what he does.

Jenny: Speaking of emotional IQs, like, he has the broadest view of what's going on with everyone in this universe at any given time. "You're not the long haul guy and you know it. You know it, otherwise you wouldn't be getting suck jobs from two-bit vampire trolls."

Kristin: [laughs] Mm...

Jenny: Which I assume is short for "trollop"?

Kristin: Maybe?

Jenny: If you're British and you know something, please let us know. And if I just said a thing that I shouldn't be repeating on a podcast...

Kristin: [laughing] Sorry!

Jenny: So sorry.

Kristin: Okay, so. Whew! We'll leave these two at Spike's and they can take the time they need to work out what they need to work out. Off-screen. So we cut to the training room inside of the Magic Box, where Buffy is *losing it* on a punching bag. And I believe, Jenny, that she is wearing something while doing this activity that the one and the only Kate Leth will have something to say about it. After quite a few episodes away from our beloved queen.

Jenny: Uh-heh.

Kristin: Let's go to Kate Leth.

[Fashion Watch intro theme plays]
It's time for our friend Kate
To give you the Buffy fashion update!

Kate: Welcome back everybody, after a little bit of an absence, to Buffy Fashion Watch. And to an episode I like to call Kate Cries Her Eyes Out, Even Though She's Seen It About 400 Times. Now, it's weird to do a fashion update for this particular episode, because it is unbelievably tragic and tear-inducing. So all I'm really gonna comment on is the fact that Buffy wears what I can only assume to be lined pleather camel-colored pants for a significant part of the episode, including when she's training with a punching bag, with a heavy bag there. Which, uh, I cannot possibly begin to understand. So there's that.

But really, anything you'd want to comment on in this episode, despite Anya having a very cute aubergine dress, and us seeing the return of her perfect silk pajamas. Willow wearing an argyle sweater and both her and Buffy wearing what the early 2000s inflicted upon us as, I would say, calf-length skirts? That usually had a slit all the way up the back or, in Willow's case, front. Despite those things happening, this episode is so fucking sad. And honestly, it is such a case for Sarah Michelle Gellar as an actress. You know, something that I've definitely commented on before, but when people talk about how iconic this character was, she is the reason that it's so iconic. It's not just the writing, it's not just the cast outside of her, but she's incredible.

And this plot line with Riley is really difficult. She's coming out of this incredibly intense but incredibly dark relationship with Angel. She finds Riley and he is this safe harbor. He's so sweet and as she says, dependable. He's like a golden retriever, he is a puppy. And that's what she needs, when it starts. She needs someone safe. But as Spike says later in this episode, she needs a little monster in her man. And this is a line that has stuck with me since this episode originally aired and has come up again in my head over and over and over as the years go by. Because I think like a lot of other people, when you come from these really intense but also traumatic situations, it can be so hard to be with somebody who's just *nice*. And nice isn't enough for her. At least, not at this point in time. Maybe not ever.

So I get it. But it's also so sad. [laughs] And I love—I *love* her scene with Xander. I love that confrontation. It is very similar to a scene that we'll see with Xander next season. It's this moment of like, hey, I've known you forever. I've known your real deal. And you're making a mistake, or at least, you're not confronting the way that you're treating this person in your life, these people in your life, or even yourself. And I think it's a really powerful moment. But also, so fucking sad. So honestly, if you've gotten through this episode for the first time or the 20th time, get yourself

some ice cream. Have a break. Do a little self care, because we are only halfway into this season and it is not letting up any time soon. I need some retail therapy. So until next time... I'll see you at the mall.

[Fashion Watch outro theme plays]
That was our friend Kate
She gave you the Buffy fashion update!

Kristin: Thank you! [Jenny laughs] Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Jenny: Well! Educational and also... thought-provoking?

Kristin: Full of feelings. Full of feelings. Kate—I mean, Kate's just obviously like, a cornerstone piece of this production at this point. And I love that she knows that sometimes she should talk about fashion and sometimes she just gets to have a little mini podcast inside of a podcast.

Jenny: Hell yeah. [gasps] Podcast-ducken! [Kristin laughs] As they... how many level—okay, I'll worry about that on my own time.

Kristin: Inception! Soo... Riley shows up and he's like, hey, you two, Xander, Anya, can you clear out? And—

Jenny: And Anya's like, ho-ho-ho! Wink, wink! Nudge, nudge, don't have to tell me twice. Hey, you should check out the, uh... vault? Horse?

Kristin: [laughing] "There's a funny thing with the vaulting horse." Um...

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Wow. I would like to see it, is how I feel.

Jenny: Huh!

Kristin: About that. Anya is like, you know, now that I've brought up the vaulting horse, Xander, do you wanna go have sex? And Xander's like, I actually have something to take care of.

Jenny: Now what do you think Xander has to take care of? He needs to go stand in the alley—

Kristin: I know—

Jenny: Until Buffy and Riley fight, which he anticipates, and then wait for her to come out and—so he can talk to her.

Kristin: You know what, actually, Jenny?

Jenny: Maybe.

Kristin: You started to make that as a joke, but I wondered the same thing. Like, what is he taking care of? But you're probably exactly right. He's just waiting.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: He's waiting for the conversation to be over 'cause he already knows what the conversation is.

Jenny: Aw!

Kristin: Meanwhile, in the training room, there is *no* sex on the vaulting horse—

Jenny: Oh my god. Look at Xander go. Literally, the men in this show are stripping... okay, excuse the...

Kristin: [laughing, stuttering] Just stop there! [Jenny laughs] Yeah!

Jenny: No, they're just like, stripping the ladies for emotional IQs so hard. They're like—

Kristin: Well...

Jenny: They're yards and yards and yards ahead.

Kristin: Well... I have a few thing—I think Xander is—does an incredible—this is a great episode for Xander. But I do have a couple of things to say about Xander's sort of, like, high horse. Not to be confused with the vaulting horse.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But the high horse he kinda comes in on later. But I'm gonna wait 'til we get there sequentially. Because—and also, when you're outside of a situation, it's a lot easier to see it.

Jenny: Sure.

Kristin: Than when you're inside of a situation. But Buffy's like, "I don't want to talk to you." And Riley's like, "you know what? Too bad." And normally I'd be like, fuck off, Riley. But I'm actually like, alright, you know. Like, he knows he has a helicopter happening at midnight.

Jenny: Yeah, he's got a time crunch.

Kristin: And also I imagine that if you're dating Buffy Summers, there's probably a lot of moments when you need to talk and she's like, not right now—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Because she's busy killing a demon or saving the world or whatever. What I don't like is his physicality with her.

Jenny: Ew, no thank you!

Kristin: It is very, very unfortunate in this scene. Though when we talk about, like, you know, a person feeling like they're losing power, unfortunately for a lot of people, the first step is to be physical. Because you feel that you are—that's the only way you can, like, manifest some form of control over the situation.

Jenny: Mm, mm-hmm.

Kristin: Uh, to be *very* clear, this is not my endorsement or approval of *any* of this at all. But I do think that it's an accurate picture of what often happens in relationship dynamics where there is a power—struggle, if you will.

Jenny: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Kristin: So. This is also the scene that we already talked about where they very explicitly show the height difference between the two of them.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: And Riley says a lot.

Jenny: He really does. He has a lot to say, and he's just like, processing and metabolizing and learning and ready to share.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: He's like, you know, when this started with the vampires, I feel like I was just like... being really immature and I wanted to even the scales after—

Kristin: Dracula.

Jenny: [laughs] You and Dracula and I wanted to understand what the power situation was with you and Dracula, you and Angel—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Like, these sort of like, supernatural, beyond human beings. And you know, Riley used to be a human-plus.

Kristin: Human-plus, but never quite...

Jenny: But never quite to that level.

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: And it—through this sort of, like, self-assessment, he kind of got to a place where he was like, I think these girls that I was seeing, getting bitten by, gave me something that I wasn't getting from our relationship, which is that they made me feel needed. They *needed* me in a way that I've never felt from you.

Kristin: Yeah. And he's also—what I like about this is that, you know, Buffy's response is accurately, like, but it's not even real. Like, you're a snack for them. Like, whatever. And Riley immediately is like, I know.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Like, I know it's not real. But—

Jenny: But it highlighted—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: What the deficit in their relationship was for him.

Kristin: And he says, which I think is really poignant, I know *exactly* how they feel—

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: Because it's exactly how I feel every time I'm with you. It's like the whole world falls away and all there is, is you.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And this is what Xander will give voice to in, you know, a later scene. Which is essentially that Riley has been head over heels for Buffy. And probably, if he was getting the things that he was after, would have been more of a passionate partner for Buffy. But he hasn't been met with what he's bringing to the table.

Jenny: Except for that *one* episode.

Kristin: With the boot?

Jenny: No, where they just had sex all episode.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Oh, the sex episode? Yeah! Oh god, remember that fucking—the orgasm wall episode?

Jenny: Uh, yes.

Kristin: And I also like that they address—because we've talked a lot about—

Jenny: The hospital! [pause] Oh. [laughter]

Kristin: Not the hospital—

Jenny: Oh, okay. I know where you're going, sorry.

Kristin: We've talked a lot about the fact that part of Riley's issue is that Buffy is stronger than him. And he says that is actually not it. It isn't that you're stronger than me—

Jenny: But he does acknowledge that it's hard.

Kristin: Yes. And I think that's—

Jenny: Good boy.

Kristin: Yeah, I think it's a—it's a really good scene. Minus the physicality.

Jenny: Yeah. The physicality is not great. I also love that they address the hospital thing, where he says, "you didn't even think to call me when your mom went to the

hospital." And Buffy being Buffy internalizes that as like, "oh, you needed me to take care of you while I was taking care of my mom?" And it's like, no, dude! Of course not! Like, I just want to be there for *you*, doing whatever you need me to do. Like, even if you don't need me to do anything, even if you just need a compassionate presence, like...

Kristin: Right. But Buffy—Buffy survives by compartmentalization. And—like, that is literally probably the only way she can exist, is compartmentalization. And so, you know, I think what's clear to me in this—'cause you wanna say, like, yeah man, why didn't you call your boyfriend when your mom was sick? Like, what's that all about? But I can see very clearly what that was about. Which is, like, when you are—when you have 50 things and you know you can only—if she didn't look at Joyce and only Joyce in that moment, she would not have looked at Joyce at all. Right, like, she knows that she has to keep 100% of her focus here, 100% of her focus here. And what's a bummer for her and possibly her love life, we'll see where it goes in the future of the show, but is that usually there's so many fires that the last place—the last compartment, if you will, that she can get to is that one. Angel was complicated, because he was integrated into the other levels.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And Riley is not as much. And especially since the Initiative is done and whatever, like... he just gets the last licks. [giggling] Literally.

Jenny: Ahem.

Kristin: Um, so. Also, just a quick shout out to Riley's white t-shirt. He looks good.

Jenny: Looks good! Looks good.

Kristin: He looks good.

Jenny: Looks good. They're sending him out on a high note.

Kristin: [laughs] This is the ultimatum, too. This is important.

Jenny: Right. This is where he says, like, "unless you give me a reason to stay, I'm leaving tonight. The military wants me back, there's this helicopter, it's a whole thing."

Kristin: And this is sad because Riley... you can see the—we all have moments in our lives when we know something. But we can't bring ourselves to accept the truth

of the change. And it's very hard to watch both of them in this episode, because you know that Buffy knows...

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I don't care what she does at the end. She *knows* that Riley is not—that their relationship is not the right one. It's not—it's not gonna last.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And Riley knows this. But Riley still wants it to work. He's not saying, "I'm leaving." Because if he just trusted what he knew, he would say, "I'm getting on—I'm leaving." But he says, "just give me a reason, pl—" which is the saddest thing of the ending of any relationship like this.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Like, just give me—please give me a reason, when you know you're not gonna get the reason. You know. She would have given it to you already.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: So... the vamps come at Buffy in the alley.

Jenny: Of course.

Kristin: She's like, not today, walk away, I don't even wanna kill you.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: Please leave. They don't, she kills all of them. We talked about this a bit.

Jenny: Yeah, you think she's not gonna kill the one girl, but then she does.

Kristin: But then she's like, an Olympian Buffy Summers—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Javelin toss. It is a javelin, right?

Jenny: I mean, it—yes.

Kristin: I mean, the—it's the correct—

Jenny: That's the approximation of—yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. And kills this last vamp on the way out. She's wearing a great red leather duster. Which I know a duster is called a duster 'cause it dusts the floor. But they also dust vamps in them all the time.

Jenny: Ohh! Yes.

Kristin: So—okay, so—

Jenny: Also, Spike and Angel both wear dusters.

Kristin: Right. So—okay, so Xander—this is the Xander scene. Right? And Xander... there's a lot here, too. Xander is, I think, being an incredible friend.

Jenny: The one thing that's a little—it's like—he's all like, "how did you not see it coming?" And it's like, would you have seen it coming—

Kristin: Thank you!

Jenny: If Riley wasn't like, "she'll never love me." [laughs]

Kristin: That was exact—when I referred to the high horse before and my issue—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: That is exactly what I meant. I was literally like, dude, when Riley said that to you, several episodes ago—

Jenny: The look on your face.

Kristin: He was fucking floored! So, sir—yes. I agree.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: I don't like how he's like, how did you not see this coming? Because he was literally told verbatim that it was coming by Riley.

Jenny: Yeah. But as a person *in* the relationship, I don't hold it against him for expecting Buffy to be a little bit more aware of what's going on in the relationship. [laughs]

Kristin: Sure. And when I say that Xander's being a good friend, I think most of what I mean is that although he's not doing everything right, he's not. But he has told Anya that he needs time, that he needs to focus on something. Because he has been paying really close attention to Buffy and the fact that she's acting out. And that's not—I'm sure that it's in the back of Giles' mind and Willow's mind. I don't think that it's totally off their radar. But he is the one that's like, yo, this is bad and I need to, like, get in here and have a conversation with her. And I just think it's good. But—

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: Earlier when I said it reminded me of something. So, I had a relationship of five years. And that relationship—the person that I was in that relationship's name with is Jen, so don't get confused. I only date people who have derivations of the name Jen.

Jenny: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Kristin: But I dated Jen from when I was 23 to when I was 28. And about—so it was a five-year relationship and about two to three years into the relationship, it was time for the relationship to be over. And I remember my best friend at the time basically was Xander. And was like, "if this is over, you need to realize what that means. It means it's over *forever!*" And like, it just like, scared the shit out of me.

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: And I essentially ran after the helicopter and was like, no, no, no. But my helicopter had not taken off yet, so then I wound up in a relationship for three more years that should have ended at the two-year mark, but instead was five. So not to bring too much of my own stuff in here, but as much as I'm here for Xander, I don't actually think that him telling her to run after that helicopter was the correct advice. And I don't think that she—

Jenny: Well, I guess it's sort of like, what—it all depends on what Buffy wants out of a relationship and what Buffy can give to a relationship. And I think if Xander was giving that advice to most people, it would be the right advice.

Kristin: Yes. Yes.

Jenny: And maybe Buffy would be better for it if she could let that kind of relationship really be in her life.

Kristin: Right. But he's hinging, and I think correctly, on like, she was so broken after Angel that now she has an issue letting people completely in.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: The girl had to kill him! With a sword. She is traumatized. And so—

Jenny: He loves to gloss over that.

Kristin: Right. And like, you know—so his math is correct.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: But also, it is an unreasonable expectation to think that this girl may ever be able to let someone in as fully as she was with Angel. Because that was not just a heartbreak, that was a serious trauma.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And so, you know, again. It's wiggly, it's always wiggly. 'Cause the show is supernatural and so, you know, her killing Angel is a meta—you know. So where—which side of the line are we talking on, kind of a deal?

Jenny: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Kristin: But what I want to say, in sum, is that I'm proud of Xander for what he's attempting to do. Which is reach his best friend and help her see something that she can't see 'cause she's really lost. And on the other side of that coin, I'm not quite sure that the direction he pointed her in before releasing was maybe the correct one.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Not to his fault. Not to his fault.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah... oh my god.

Kristin: One thing that I wanted to say about this scene before we chase our copter, if you will. Is that Xander says to Buffy, "if what he needs from you just isn't there..."

["Clean Break" by Jenny Owen Youngs plays]
Make it a clean break

Make it a fast cut

Jenny: Well, this is embarrassing.

Kristin: [clears throat] Yes. Sorry, Jenny, but as soon as he said "clean break," I was like, [half-singing] "make it a fast cut."

Jenny: Mm... hmm!

Kristin: [half-singing] "Make it a clean break! Make it a fast cut!"

Jenny: Okay, okay. [laughs]

Kristin: [half-singing] "Make it a—doop-doop-be-doo-doo-doo!"

Jenny: Okay. Yep— [laughs] okay. Ma'am?

Kristin: [laughs] This is an Arby's. [Jenny laughs] So Xander's like, "run!"

Jenny: Right. Just to like, round it out. Some of his closing remarks include that, you know, Buffy's been treating Riley like the rebound guy, when really he's the one who comes around once in a lifetime. True!

Kristin: [doubtfully] Mm!

Jenny: "He's never held back."

Kristin: *That's* true.

Jenny: "He's risked everything. If he's not the guy, as you say, let him go."

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: "But if you can love this guy, then you have to think about what you're about to lose." And then she's like—she gets her Sarah Michelle Gellar wet eyes. And she's like, "Xander." And he's like, [quietly] "Run."

Kristin: It's really nice.

Jenny: Ahh!

Kristin: It's nice. And then Buffy runs. And this is an extended run scene, where—and I didn't look at it shot for shot. But I would like to, or maybe one of you

will. But it seems like they are a bit—doing a little bit of a parallel to I Will Remember You, the episode of Angel, the crossover episode of Angel. Because there is a looking—like, it's like, Riley thinks he sees her at this one point. And then the camera looks over and in the—in I Will Remember You, you see Buffy see Angel and they see each other and they, like, find each other.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Whereas in this, of course, there is nothing. There's nobody there. She doesn't make it. Not a common thing, in a television series.

Jenny: I know, right?

Kristin: For you to see somebody run—

Jenny: That's how they get ya.

Kristin: Yeah! Run and run and run, and guess what? Riley—and it's so sad.

Jenny: Moments too late.

Kristin: Not to echo Kate Leth from earlier, but it's so sad! It's so sad to see him waiting there. 'Cause he knows—like I said, he knows that it's not right anyway, but he's still—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: He can't help but wait, and I think so many of us know that feeling.

Jenny: I have a hard time believing that he didn't look out the window of the helicopter one time, though.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: While they were flying away. Come on, guys.

Kristin: I know. If he was gonna do all that waiting—but what would he have d—I'm glad he didn't look out that—

Jenny: He would have jumped, yeah. He would have broken his legs. [laughs]

Kristin: [laughing] He—thrown himself out of the helicopter.

Jenny: "She loves me! [laughter] Ahh!"

Kristin: So the helicopter gets... aloft, if you will. It's very loud, so he cannot hear when Buffy arrives below the copter and shouts—

Jenny: Brutal!

Kristin: "Riley! *Riley!*"

Jenny: Yeah...

Kristin: And off he whisks away.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: And she may as well be wearing the overalls of sadness—

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: In the next scene when she's walking down the street.

Jenny: Oh my god, that mope. [sings a somber tune]

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah. Or some Sarah McLaughlin, but.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: I think that it's interesting though to think about Buffy's—because I joke. Overalls of sadness and Sarah McLaughlin. But this is not that. And I think that it might be even more sad that what Buffy's inner reflection could be—we don't know. We're not inside of her head. But I think that her inner reflection here is more about the fact that this was right, than it is about that it was a horrible loss. And what does that mean about her?

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: And what does that mean for her future? And what does that mean—I think that we're getting to a point in the series where Buffy is becoming very aware of the fact that this is her life. And that this is her *only* life. And that her job as the Slayer and what it puts her through is affecting absolutely every aspect of that life.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Irreversibly. And that's... when she sits down on the stairway later, when she's walking down the street. Like, that's what I saw in her, was that kind of reflection. As opposed to, you know, when she lost Angel, which was like, first heartbreak, first loss, nothing will ever be okay ever again. But not that deeper pain, or like, more solidified pain of like, ooh, I might be fucked up. [laughter] Shit!

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So. Anyhow.

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: We have a positive place to go.

Jenny: Before we go there—well, one other positive thing. I just wanna say. Looking back a couple scenes ago, I forgot that I wanted to mention this. When Buffy and Riley are having their last conversation, when they're really getting to the heart—or he's really getting to the heart of the matter. Marc Blucas is, like, doing some really great face work? He's doing this thing that I remember... maybe in an interview or an episode commentary or something. I remember Joss Whedon talking about, like, his favorite thing about Marc as an actor was that he had this, like, incredible stillness in his face sometimes. And that—to Joss, that, like, hearkens back to classic Hollywood actors.

Kristin: Mm.

Jenny: And I feel like he's really got a ton of it going on in this last scene that he has with Buffy. And I just wanna shout it out.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Just shouting it out.

Kristin: I can't wait until next week when we get to share our conversation with Marc!

Jenny: You're gonna love it! He's such a dream!

Kristin: It's so great. But yeah, the positive place that I wanted to take us to, is what this has done for Xander.

Jenny: The moment we've all been waiting for! The most beautiful love in all the land.

Kristin: Let's actually go to the clip. I wanna hear Xander say these things to Anya.

[Clip from episode plays]

Xander: I gotta say something, 'cause I don't think I've made it clear. I'm in love with you. Powerfully, painfully in love. The things you do, the way you think, the way you move. I get excited every time I'm about to see you. You make me feel like I've never felt before in my life. Like a man. I just thought you might wanna know.

[Xander and Anya kissing]

Kristin: And what's nice about this too is that Xander—speaking of taking the magnifying glass and turning it back around on yourself. But Xander has realized that how he has called Buffy out, maybe he should take a bite of that cake. And you know—

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: [laughs] And go and tell Anya how he really—like, dig deep and get there.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: Her face... [Jenny squeals quietly] Emma fucking Caulfield's fucking face. Is more than any one person can handle.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: In her fucking PJs. With her—

Jenny: Uh-huh! With, like, do they have shoulder pads? [laughter]

Kristin: She is so in love with him! And you know, you might think here, on this podcast, that we would cast a side eye at, like, this line that Xander has. "You make me feel like a man."

Jenny: No way, that rocks!

Kristin: It does. It's like, I—I don't know, maybe you didn't think we would cast a side eye. But I just took note of it that, like, this—the thing is that Xander hasn't ever felt like he can achieve the things that he's expected to achieve.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And he's put that in the vessel of being a man, because that is often the vessel that it's put in. And—

Jenny: And he's—let's face it, he's surrounded by women who are stronger than him.

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: And he—you know, he also has that experience that's, like, always in his active life. And I think it's not just about that kind of being a man. I think it's also like, he doesn't feel like a little boy.

Kristin: Yes! Agreed.

Jenny: Like, his relationship with Anya, for its many quirks, is some real shit.

Kristin: Anya takes him more seriously than *anyone*—

Jenny: Absolutely.

Kristin: On this show has ever taken him. For various reasons. Willow would lay down her life for Xander, there's no question.

Jenny: Of course.

Kristin: But Willow has known Xander for so long and sometimes when you know somebody for that long, you can't see how they've grown. And you can't see how they've changed. And so Anya has come to Xander's life at a point where she's able to see things in him that I don't think any of the rest of them can. And that is what is making him feel stronger, and be better, be a better person.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: Because when people feel confident about themselves, they are often not assholes. You know? Sometimes they are, but Xander is not.

Jenny: [laughs] Why'd you point at me when you said sometimes they are?

Kristin: I wasn't pointing at you!

Jenny: What the hell!

Kristin: I was gesturing! [laughs] So anyhow.

Jenny: Love. This. Scene!

Kristin: It's really—it's really important. It's important. And it's a really big marker on the timeline of Xander and Anya, you know?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Because their relationship has been, like, fun. But now it's not just fun.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: It's very—it's really reached a new level. Speaking of reaching new levels, Jenny.

Jenny: [laughing] Uh-huh?

Kristin: Would you like to talk about sex and tension?

Jenny: Let's. Do it!

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Okay! Here we are in a land... like no other.

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: We have four choices for you. We've thought long and hard about them. [laughing] Jenny suggested nominating Spike and Riley four times.

Jenny: Well, yes. And since we can't do that four times, let me just start by saying, we're nominating them once because some romances are best served room temperature and straight out of the bottle, if you know what I mean.

Kristin: [laughs] Wow.

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah!

Kristin: We are also nominating Spike and Buffy, who have a considerable amount of tension in this episode. And we're giving it to them 'cause they're—we're not nominating any of Spike's nonsense.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: But there is definite tension in this episode between these two.

Jenny: Hmm. While we're at it! [pause] [crosstalk]

Kristin: Jen—no, Jen—she's looking at me across the room because she's like, "you have to say the next one 'cause I wanna do the last one."

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: Uh-huh. Okay, so—

Jenny: And also, if every time I can put this ver—like, this in your mouth instead of mine, it feels like a victory.

Kristin: Rude!

Jenny: Do it!

Kristin: Rude. The third nominee is Riley and Buffy.

Jenny: Wow, I didn't know you were a Ruffy stan!

Kristin: Wow—Ruffy! [laughs] God, even the fucking ship name.

Jenny: Yeah, Ruffy or *Biley*.

Kristin: Biley.

Jenny: Those are your options. Sorry!

Kristin: Um, they've got some tension. There's definitely tension, whether it overlaps completely in a sexual way is—

Jenny: Yeah, unknown.

Kristin: Unknown.

Jenny: Well, they do have a bunch of sex, though.

Kristin: They do. And it might be less than satisfying, which would cause tension. So... they are our third nominee. Jenny, please tell the people who our fourth nominee is.

Jenny: Listen. You've heard the first, second and third nominees. But have you considered—you know how the Transformers will sometimes all join up into one super Transformer—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: That's way bigger and thus better?

Kristin: Are you saying that this nomination is more than meets the eye?
[laughter]

Jenny: Yeah, with two E's, with an E and an A—[Kristin laughs] In the fourth slot, if you will—

Kristin: I will.

Jenny: We offer unto you humbly... for perhaps the last time it might ever be available to us all. Buffy, in a Riley and Spike sandwich. Or—

Kristin: Or!

Jenny: Considering the height differentials. Maybe Spike—

Kristin: I think it's—

Jenny: No. Maybe Riley in the middle. Spike and Buffy on either side.

Kristin: No. No. I think it's—we're gonna have to have a whole 'nother vote for this. I think it's Spike in the middle.

Jenny: Mmm! Spike in the middle.

Kristin: Because—

Jenny: Oh, so just in height order then.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Chick-chick-chick!

Kristin: Yeah. Like little nesting dolls. [laughs]

Jenny: Beautiful. Alright, so please, please, please consider your social responsibility. Participate in our beautiful democracy and vote, vote, vote, vote, vote in the poll. It will be up on our Twitter, @BufferingCast, for one week. Voting begins now. Hurry!

Kristin: [laughing] This sale won't last.

Jenny: Vote for number four. Go four! Go four. Pick four.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Well.

Jenny: Well.

Kristin: Here we are.

Jenny: Well! [singing] Riley... I miss you already...

Kristin: The chopper—there's a beautiful—I promise to put this on the internet. There's a beautiful screen grab that I took where they cross-fade... [Jenny laughs] Riley in the chopper and Buffy, sad at home, and so you—

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: There's a moment when you see them both and the closed captioning just says, um, "helicopter blades whirring." [laughter] So I'll put that up on the internet.

Jenny: The true song of sadness.

Kristin: So we can all enjoy that. But yeah. This is a big episode.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And as Kate made mention to, it's a sad episode, it's a hard episode, and guess what? [singing] "We're slidin' down a hill! We're slidin' down a hill! Somebody save us." [Jenny laughs and sings tune] But we have a couple of really fun episodes

headed your way. We've got some fun guests on Triangle and Check Point, with the next two episodes.

Jenny: Woo! You don't even know!

Kristin: Holy shit! And yeah. I don't have anything else to say.

Jenny: Well, then.

Kristin: Should I play Riley's jingle as he leaves? Or is that mean?

Jenny: That's mean!

Kristin: Yeah, you're right.

Jenny: Don't kick him while he's down.

Kristin: Okay, let me see if I can rewrite it live in real time.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: [singing] Riley, sometimes you weren't that bad! Riley, you had needs that Buffy couldn't meet. [Jenny clears throat] Riley, you are very attractive!

Jenny: Okay, would you consider... [singing more accurately to the jingle's melody] Riley, you weren't always that bad!

Kristin: Show-off.

Jenny: [singing] Buffy couldn't meet needs that you had!

Kristin: Oh! Yeah!

Jenny: And then what was your next line?

Kristin: Um.

Jenny: [singing] You are very attractive! And we... we will miss you.

Kristin: [doubtfully] Mm, I think—

Jenny: Uh, it kinda fell apart at the end.

Kristin: I think it's and "we... bid you adieu." Can you sing that?

Jenny: [laughs, singing] And we... bid you adieu!

Kristin: [laughs] Beautiful! Two natural talents in one room.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Live composing a song for you.

Jenny: Well!

Kristin: Pat each other on our backs and, um, tell them where they can find you. Where will you be patting yourself on your back?

Jenny: Oh my word. Well. I'm Jenny Owen Youngs. And when I'm not making this podcast, I'm making music. You can listen to it and learn more about me at jennyowenyoungs.com. You can also give me a shout on Twitter, @JennyOwenYoungs. And furthermore, you could listen to my new EP. It's called Night Shift, it's on all digital platforms. You can find vinyl and CDs on my website. And you can hear me talk a lot more about another petite, blond protagonist on Veronica Mars Investigations, my other podcast.

Kristin: [singing] "Make it a night... shift!"

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: [singing] "Make it a..."

Jenny: Mm-hmm?

Kristin: My name is Kristin Russo.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: And you can find more about the work that I do with LGBTQ communities over on my website, kristinnoeline.com. That's K-R-I-S-T-I-N N-O-E-L-I-N-E. And you can use that spelling to find me on Twitter and on Instagram. You can also hear what is probably one of the very last episodes of my podcast with Joanna Robinson on My So-Called Life. We had an incredible, fun interview with Vanessa Bayer.

Jenny: The best.

Kristin: Who is a huge fan of the show recently. It was really, really fun to talk to her and it's a great episode. Lot of fun celeb stories from one Vanessa Bayer.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: So check that out. And yeah. Who are we?

Jenny: We're Buffering the Vampire Slayer, as you may already know. We're on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @BufferingCast. You can drop us an email at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. Or you can leave us a voice mail at area code 216-30-BUFFY.

Kristin: [laughs] You can support our work on Patreon. You can find out all of the ways that you can support our work over at bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Find our Patreon there, find our store there where you can buy our merchandise. [singsong] And I'm pretty sure we have a really cool fucking new shirt in the store!

Jenny: [singsong] Hell fucking yeah!

Kristin: [singsong] As of this episode. [normal voice] So go check that out. And if you want, you can leave us a review on iTunes, that always helps. And we love you, we care about you, and until next time!

Jenny: [yelling] What the fuck?!

Kristin: [cackling] Sorry. I just—like, it's more fun to piss you off when I can see your face. So since I'm in the same—it's not often that Jenny and I are in the same room recording anymore.

Jenny: Tramping all over my lines lately! [Kristin laughs] A lot of liberties being taken.

Kristin: Sorry, go ahead.

Jenny: Well! 'Til next time...

Both: Awwoooooooooooo!

Kristin: [whispers] Bye, Riley.

Jenny: Aw.

[Jenny performing "Into the Woods" off the album Songs from Season 5 by
Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

I been
hanging onto losing
fingers never keeping
things I try to hold

Trying
to find a way to change it
but for all this information
I can't find my way home

I can't make the pieces fit
I don't know what to do with it
I think there might be
something wrong with me
I feel the problem deep down in
my fractured heart's malfunctioning
Is there some other way
that I could be

Darling
oh you know it's one thing
to feel this aimless aching
the hole you left behind

But lately
the thing that really scares me
is thinking I just may be
unfixable inside

I can't make the pieces fit
I don't know what to do with it
I think there might be
something wrong with me
I feel the problem deep down in
my fractured heart's malfunctioning
Is there some other way
that I could be

I don't wanna be broken
I don't wanna be broken

Tell me I won't be broken
Cause I don't wanna be broken

If I can't make the pieces fit
If I can't make them...