

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 0.38: A Conversation with Amber Benson

[CHIME]

Jenny: Well! Hello, everyone.

Kristin: Oh my gosh! I'm so excited, Jenny. I'm just so excited.

Jenny: Welcome. To this blessed space. [laughs]

Kristin: All I wanted was to be able to speak with Amber Benson, in this, the week of Seeing Red. [Jenny snorts] It's all I wanted. It's all I wanted.

Jenny: Oh.

Kristin: And—

Jenny: Wish granted. Bing!

Kristin: My wish was granted. Thank you so fucking much to the universe. And Amber Benson and all those who helped.

Jenny: And possibly a vengeance demon somewhere, working silently in the background, answering Kristin's wishes. [laughs]

Kristin: Aww, like a really good—like a little cheerful vengeance demon.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Probably wouldn't be called vengeance then, but. Anyway! Yeah, we're here with Amber Benson, the one and only. And we're gonna—

Jenny: Mmhmm!

Kristin: Not talk too much up at the top here because we know that you—as much as you love us, we—

Jenny: You're like, "shut up! Give us Amber!"

Kristin: You're like, "Uh, yeah, yeah. We'd like to hear Amber?" So just a quick note, this is one of our four episodes this week. Yesterday you got Jenny and I in

the main feed, talking about the episode Seeing Red. You also got an additional episode from me and Jess Clark and Alba, talking about the bathroom scene in Seeing Red. Today, you're getting two more episodes, one in the main feed—that's this one, us talking to Amber Benson—and in the show notes, you will see a link to a very special episode that I put together, talking about the Bury Your Gays trope, talking about also the importance of Willow and Tara. I'm speaking with Jen Malkowski, who you know—

Jenny: Hey-o!

Kristin: Yes, just absolutely one of our best—

Jenny: The best.

Kristin: Pod friends. I mean, truly, I am just obsessed with Jen Malkowski and all that they have to say. And I'm also in conversation with our listener, Emma, who wrote to us about the fact that she was on the Kitten Board, which was the Willow and Tara Buffy board of the day. Emma met her wife there, has an eleven-year-old son. So there's just, like, a lot of queer history, joy and also respect happening in that conversation. Link in the show notes. That episode will also re-air at the end of the season in the main feed. So, um, I told you I wasn't gonna talk too much, but there I went.

Jenny: You're doing great. You're doing so great.

Kristin: Thank you.

Jenny: Let me just chime in here and warn everyone, wave a big flag! This conversation will include spoilers. Spoilers for the entire series of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Beware, all ye who enter here! Your ears are not safe if you have not seen the entire series. If you haven't, come back—

Kristin: Come back.

Jenny: At the end of the pod.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And then check this out.

Kristin: Yeah. It'll still be here for you. That's how—that's how time-space continuums work with podcasts. They exist...[Jenny snorts] forever.

Jenny: [laughing] Good job.

Kristin: You couldn't see my giant, saucer eyeballs looking at Jenny like, "you're right, I don't understand time-space continuums. Gotta go!"

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm. No, no, no, no, no.

Kristin: [laughs] So, yeah. Let's get into this shit. It's great. Also, just for the record, wanna let everyone know that I am wearing one of our new denim dad hats that we have in the store.

Jenny: Yep. Yep, you look cool.

Kristin: [simultaneously] And I don't mean to put words in *your* mouth, Jenny, but I think that it looks fantastic on my head. What do you think?

Jenny: I just said it looks cool.

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: You look cool.

Kristin: I was talking over you when you said I looked cool, so. [laughs]

Jenny: It—classic! [both laugh] Classic Kristin!

Kristin: A tiny reminder—

Jenny: "I didn't hear your compliment because I was talking."

Kristin: [laughs] Because I was complimenting myself too loudly. [both laugh]

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah, exactly.

Kristin: So just a tiny little reminder to all of you that we have some really incredible new merch in the store. Pay Buffy Summers shirts, we've got Scoobies Forever patches and pins. We have probably the world's best hoodie, designed by Isabella Rotman.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: "Time is what turns kittens into cats." You can find all of that on our website, bufferingthevampireslayer.com. You can find a lot of things on that website, so like, go, head over there.

Jenny: Oh yeah.

Kristin: Check it out! But for now—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Don't check it out right now. Keep listening—

Jenny: Listen to this friggin' episode.

Kristin: 'Cause here comes Amber Benson!

Jenny: Ahhhh!

[Buffering theme plays]

Kristin: Hey, Jenny.

Jenny: Kristin! I can't. I simply can't! [Kristin laughs] What a time to be alive.

Kristin: Truly, I mean, I've already off-air expressed this, like, twice. So this is third time's the charm, but Amber Benson. Holy crap. Thank you so much for being here with us. We cannot tell you what it means.

Amber: Oh, it is my pleasure. You guys are doing good things and I wanted to come and hang out with you. [Kristin and Amber laugh]

Kristin: Did you hear that?

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: Did you hear that? Okay. [laughs] I know that our listenership knows this, 'cause I'm talking about them. But in a very tricky part of a very tricky season, this very queer listenership is just beside themselves, getting to hear from you and getting to have, like, the joy and happiness that is, like, just listening to your experiences on the show. And you have meant so much—

Amber: Aww.

Kristin: To so many. And I know you know that from, like, your experience interacting with fans and stuff. But the character of Tara has just been so impactful over time.

Amber: I was just a lucky person that got to walk in her shoes. I mean, I—you look back on life and there are always going to be good things and bad things about an experience. But Tara, being her, there was nothing bad about that. It was an amazing experience. She was so wonderful and kind and empathetic. And, like—even, like, when Tony, you know, left, it was like she stepped in to be sort of that moral center for the group again. Which, you know, I just was so honored that I got to play her and be her for a little while, you know? I miss her! I miss her!

[Jenny and Kristin laugh]

Kristin: Yes. I mean, like, we've so noticed that in Season 6, like, with—you know, with Giles being gone. I mean, I didn't—I don't even know that I—

Amber: Oh my gosh, I called him Tony. I meant Giles and I said Tony. [laughter]

Jenny: We know who you're talking about.

Kristin: Tony and Giles were both gone—yeah.

Amber: [simultaneously] It's so confusing! Tony/Giles. [Kristin laughs] Tony/Giles.

Kristin: But you know, Tara's character is just, like, caught—every time we're like, guys, can you please talk to each other. [Amber laughs] Guys, can you please—[laughter] it's like, Tara is always like, "Hey, do you wanna have a conversation? Do you wanna...?"

Amber: They're so dysfunctional when it comes to, like, sharing their feelings! And Tara's like, no, no, no. Like, we actually have to have a conversation, because you're, like, off in this world. And you're actually thinking the same things, but you're in two different spaces and you don't understand that you guys are on the same page. [laughs]

Kristin: Yes. So mature. So grounded.

Amber: [laughs] I wish I was like that in my real life. That'd be great. [Jenny and Kristin laugh]

Jenny: I feel like, as we are—what, two-thirds of the way through Season 6, or coming up on the end of it. Tara does have this moral center, which is, like, kind of really exciting because the maybe only other person as emotionally intelligent, I think, on the show is Spike. [Amber laughs] Who is—you know, spiraling into the abyss. He's always ready to tell people what they can't see, but he has, you know, no real moral compass. [Amber laughs] So it's kind of awesome, [laughs] as we're, like, peaking in Season 6 right now, to see sort of, like, the two poles of the—

Amber: Yeah.

Jenny: Same kind of idea of emotional intelligence. Which is so rare in the show! [laughs] Everyone's just like, you know, trapped in their own bubbles. [Kristin laughs]

Amber: That's really interesting. No, I know that, like, the Tara/Spike moments were always really fun for James and myself. Those, like, "what, you got a cramp in your pants?" [laughter] Like, I'll never forget, you know?

Jenny: Yes!

Amber: Like, what's happening? But I never thought of it in terms of—Spike sees things in sort of an objective way.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Amber: You know, but he sees them, like, realistically and calls it out. But he doesn't really tell you yea or nay about it, he just says it. And Tara—

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah, he can't tell you whether it's right or wrong. [Kristin laughs]

Amber: Yeah. Yeah. And Tara's, like, trying to hold that ethical, moral center. And—but not wanting to, like, sort of put her feelings onto people. So I think you're right, they're coming from completely opposite directions to the same spot of, like, being mindful of what is actually happening objectively in a situation.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Which I wish I could do, also, myself, but like...[laughter]

Kristin: It's amazing what you can do with a script, you know? [Jenny and Kristin laugh] Just given the—

Amber: So true. So true. And good ones.

Kristin: I will say, too—so normally we bring in some listener questions. And I think that, like, in putting together this conversation, there's more listener questions than we normally have, just because—

Amber: Great.

Kristin: There's so many—and I don't know that everybody that asked a question is queer, but I just know that everyone is very pumped.

Amber: Aww. Yay!

Kristin: So to this—to what we're talking about, we had a listener, Suzanne, who wrote in and said: "We see so much strength and independence coming from Tara, especially in Season 6. She's one of the main pillars of composure [laughter] in a season full of people coming apart at the seams. [laughter] We get to her blossoming friendship with Buffy and she's pretty much the only one in Sunnydale practicing healthy boundary habits."

Amber: Ha! [laughs]

Kristin: "I'd love to hear how that evolution came about for you, Amber, and what it was like to create the arc of Tara, growing on her own." Especially 'cause—and now I'm ad-libbing. But we—you know, when we meet Tara, she is not in a place—

Amber: No.

Kristin: Where she's like, "Hey, I know, you know, what you need and what I need." [laughs]

Amber: No, it was interesting. I—you know, everyone's probably heard me talk about the genesis of, like, the character and how I ended up being her. But suffice it to say, I was only supposed to do a couple of episodes and it kind of snowballed into being on the show quite regularly. And I think when I first, you know, started playing—so I'm an intuitive actor. I always thought it was really interesting to hear, like, Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward talk about their processes. And I'm like, oh, they're the flip of the same thing. Like, he was very, like, research-oriented and everything was sort of, like, dialed-in and hyper-focused, and he just did all this research to create this character. And she—when they would talk about it—she was an intuitive actor, which is whatever she felt intuitively is what would come out. And I've always sort of been in that, like, intuitive space.

And so with Tara, intuitively, she was really, like, closed up, to the point where physically, she was like, punched and, like, inward and shy and couldn't—and by the end of it, she had sort of found her way. And like, she stood up straighter, she was more open, she could, like, have a conversation with someone she didn't know. But I think the sort of arc was it was that Family moment, when a group of people stood up for her and said "we want you and you're worthy." And when somebody outside of you gives you that moment and allows you to sort of accept for yourself that you matter. You know, they give you the permission to be, "yeah, you're right, I do matter. I'm important." We so beat that out of ourselves, we're so mean to ourselves. And sometimes you need somebody outside of you to go, "stop being mean. You belong. There's a place for you." I really think after that, like, she changed. It just was a visceral, like, intuitive change.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: But that was the sort of crux of her becoming the sort of Tara that you see in Season 6, where she is comfortable speaking her mind. She is, you know, interested in helping other people and not judging herself all the time, and allowing herself to just be a participant in the Scooby gang process. [laughs]

Kristin: It's so powerful to think about that. I mean, you know, Family is an incredible episode. We had a couple people tell us that they still can't trust Amy Adams after—[Amber laughs]

[Jenny and Kristin laugh]

Jenny: Fair.

Amber: [simultaneously] Who is the *nicest* person. We had such a lovely time. Like, we had—like, she was the nicest—she was so kind. [Jenny and Kristin laugh] We had all these scenes together. We, like—we rode to a location together in one of the crew trucks. [laughs] Just gossiping and chatting. And like, she's so kind and nice, and so talented, oh my gosh.

Kristin: [laughs] Well, maybe that will help people. [Amber laughs] You know, stop thinking about Cousin Beth. I think that was her name.

Amber: Cousin Beth! Aww. [laughs]

Kristin: But it's just really powerful to think about it in the context of, you know, what we were just saying. Which is that in Season 6, Tara is really giving the

Scoobies so much of what they need. Like, so much—Buffy, I mean, far and above, so deeply—

Amber: Their relationship is so sweet. I really—I really enjoyed those scenes with Sarah. Sarah's wonderful. And getting to work with her in these kind of, like, just two-hander—you know, like, two-handers where we're just being emotional together was really, really nice.

Kristin: Jenny, I know your eyes are real big 'cause you wanted to talk about The Body. Do you wanna jump—

Amber: Ohh!

Kristin: I mean, we don't have to—we're not gonna make you cry, but—

Amber: [simultaneously] So—it's *wonderful*. That's one of my favorite episodes, so I got excited.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: We've been talking a lot lately about how much we love to see Tara and Buffy together. Because, even though Tara is now sort of, like, fully synthesized into the—

Amber: Yeah.

Jenny: Group, she has this objectivity that nobody else can really access. And so when we get to see her in friendship with Buffy in these moments where Buffy's, like, confiding to her about that she's sleeping with Spike. Like, she can tell Tara things that she can't bring herself to tell Willow or Xander, right? And like, that's—woo! So heavy. Like, that's some of my favorite Tara stuff. And then your performance in The Body, like, in particular, in the hospital waiting area where you're in con—you know, Tara's in conversation with Buffy. I mean, it's just like one of the—to me, that's like, one of the most stand-out, powerful performances in an episode that's just completely full of stand-out, powerful performances.

Amber: Across the board. Everybody brought it for that episode. Everybody. Ugh. Like, watching Emma do that—

Kristin: Ugh! I mean, honestly.

Amber: [simultaneously] Agggh! It's so intense and wonderful. She's brilliant.

Jenny: The Body, I think, is my and Kristin's individual favorite episode of the whole series. And, like, if there's anything that sticks in your mind, that, you know, comes back to you as we're talking about this, like, we'd love to hear anything about making that episode.

Amber: Oh, I mean, I—it's up there for me. That—The Body and the musical are my two favorites. There's just—and they're, like—and Hush is up there also. But it's so, like—so unique. All three of those, like, they're just really special. To me, The Body is the most emotional episode of the whole show. I mean, it is so powerful and so upsetting. And then you also have that kiss moment, which, you know, like, we had been—I've talked about this before. But you know, we had basically been censored by, you know, Standards and Practices. They were like, "We don't want them to be intimate in that way." You know, they—we had a lot of pushback. And Joss and the writers and—I mean, everybody was like, no, this is important. This needs to be addressed. We've got to make this happen. And so when we did the kiss, finally, he's like, "Go for it!" So we had, like, a really—[Kristin laughs] 'cause he was like, if I can give them this over the top kiss, [Jenny and Kristin laugh] we can—they won't say get rid of it. They'll say cut it down, cut it down. You know, like, and we'll end up with a kiss that's perfect.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Because it'll—it won't just be—if we do a little bit, they'll be like, get rid of it. But if we go all the way, we'll—[crosstalk]

Jenny: Oh, wow.

Amber: Compromise.

Kristin: Right.

Amber: So I mean, literally, there's like, spittle and, like, the whole—[laughter] it's like, the whole enchilada right there. [laughter] And it was just to sort of, like, push them to, like, show the physical or the physicality of that relationship, which was really, like, annoying to everybody. 'Cause you're like, wait, so Buffy and Spike can do it on a head—like, a sepulchre. You know, like, but we can't—we can't touch? I don't—and Alyson and I were both very upset about it. We were like, this is not cool. This is not fair and not right. And one of—I talked about this before, but one of the crew, who was queer, took us aside and he was like, "Look. Yeah, it sucks. But the most important thing that we hold onto with this relationship is that it's two people who fell in love, who both happen to be the same gender. And you go into

people's houses every week, and they see you guys and they see this relationship and you normalize it. You make it okay." 'Cause he's like, there are people—well, maybe he didn't say it. But *I* say this. There are people who have never experienced—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Queer people. They don't understand. They're like, I don't—I—and if you don't know it, how can you be like, oh, this is bad or good. You don't know.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: You know? And some people just, I think, oftentimes just jump to the bad, because that's easier than the good. And when you walk into someone's house every week on their TV—I guess you don't walk in. You're beamed in. [Kristin laughs] And they see the beauty of this relationship and they see how great it is. They're like, oh, we like lesbians. These lesbians are awesome.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: You know, you normalize it, you make it okay, because it is okay. It should be okay and it's getting better. It's not there yet, but it's getting better. It's a very slow, annoyingly slow process. But Buffy participated in that process of normalizing and making—making—just finding somebody to love. It doesn't matter—like, love is love, right? If you're trans, if you're queer, if you're cis—you know, it doesn't—like, finding something is—that's...

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: It doesn't matter.

Kristin: Yeah, and that—like, to that kiss specifically. It's like, we talked a lot about that moment in our episodic conversation of *The Body*. Because there's something so—and I know—I'm sure it was done intentionally. But the fact that it is a kiss of love.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Like, that it's in—it's like, they both have—they're both suffering and they're coming together. There's—you know, and we get plenty—you know, we get other, like, sexy—

Amber: Yeah—

Kristin: Specifically sexy stuff later.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: But I think that, like, seeing their first kiss so grounded in partnership with each other, was just groundbreaking—I mean, there was not anything like that.

Amber: No. No, and that is a testament to Joss Whedon. It was him and then it was everybody else. All of us coming together to make this show and to have those moments and to—you know, from the person who is painting the scenery, who is putting the posters on the wall, who is costuming, who is performing, who is write—like, all of it came together to make these moments that are so important. That were not just—we weren't just making television. We were making social commentary. We were trying to change things. You know? And that was—that was part of—like, everyone was aware of that. Like, it wasn't done, like, "oh, we just happened to be—" like, it was done intentionally. Like, this was important and everyone knew it was important.

Kristin: One of the things that I've been sort of, like—apparently, I'm producing, like, 47 episodes around Seeing Red. [Amber laughs] Probably so I just don't have to think about that episode itself. [laughter] But I recently connected with this woman in the UK who had reached out. And she said, you know, "I don't know if anybody's shared this with you before, but I was on the Buffy boards and I was on the Kitten Board." Which was the name of the—

Amber: Awww. Yep.

Kristin: Tara/Willow board, and she met her wife on the Kitten Board.

Amber: [excitedly] Yeah!

Kristin: I know! [Jenny laughs] And they have an eleven-year-old son. And I just, like—

Amber: Aww.

Kristin: I know. And I—her name's Emma. And I had this, like, hour-long conversation with her. And it just came up now organically because it's like, this was so important to so many people. But like, that—that experience of like, this person and so many others like her were—[Amber sighs] she was closeted in her

day-to-day life. She was not out. That spot on the internet was the place where she was herself, where she found her people—she, like, flew from the UK to Vegas. There was, like, a Kitten Board convention.

Amber: Mmhmm.

Kristin: She told me all sorts of wild stuff. [laughs]

Amber: Yep. Yep.

Kristin: But like, *that*. It's like, that—I think that for so—if you're not—[sighs] if you haven't experienced that. Like, being closeted and, like, not telling everyone who you are in truth. And then sort of coming to that truth via a character like Tara, a relationship like Tara and Willow. Maybe it's not as clear of how powerful it is. But it really just—it really changed lives.

Amber: No, I—I mean...one of the most amazing things to me about Buffy is the fact that this community sprung up around the show, across the—like, it's—there's like, "I like Buffy," and then there are all the different variations on that theme. [laughter] And you know, the kid and the witch and the bad—like, that was one of the little sections of one of the little areas that people found each other. But for me, like, getting letters—I mean, we got let—this was pre, like, social media. This was, like, way before. [laughter] This was like, chatroom time. Like, chat—you know, boards. And there was email, but you know, no social media, no Twitter, nothing that, like, in your face. And getting letters from people who were like, I live in a little tiny town in the middle of nowhere. And I don't know anybody else who's queer. I—and watching you guys makes me feel like I belong to something, that like, I'm not alone. And my mom and I watch it or my dad and I—my family, we watch it and it allowed me to talk about who I am. Like, come on! [Kristin laughs] Like, come on, how incredible is that? And the fact that, like, I never got any nasty letters. Like, I got some religious tracks. People going like, "You know, we wanna let Jesus to, like, take you" and whatever. But it was never hate-filled, it was never mean spirited. Like, I'm—for whatever reason, that relationship engendered a lot of love. And even if you didn't agree with it, there was not that, like, hate that sometimes you see for stuff.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: This, like—just idiot hate. It's just stupid hate that has no bearing in reality.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: It's just somebody's issues that they're putting out on something.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: But with that relationship, it—I mean, it's the thing I'm probably most proud of, as a person being involved in. You know? Like, I've done a lot of stuff, and that one—because of that relationship, the Tara and Willow relationship. Like, that's a thing that, like, I feel like if I died tomorrow, I would be satisfied with my life because I got to participate and be a part of that. Participated—

Kristin: Yeah. You're not allowed to talk about dying tomorrow. But that's...[Amber and Kristin laugh]

Amber: My mom still has not seen the episode. She's like, "I can't watch!"

Kristin: [laughs] Oh no!

Jenny: Oh, no!

Amber: Yeah. She's like, it's—

Kristin: May it forever be so.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: She should never watch it.

Amber: No, she's like, "It's you and it's Tara. No. Mm-mm, not gonna watch."
[laughter]

Kristin: Ohh, Mom!

Amber: Isn't that sweet? [laughs]

Kristin: [laughing] Yes!

Amber: She lives in a world where Tara never died. I think a lot of people do.
[laughs]

Kristin: Mmhmm. Yeah. [Jenny laughs]

Amber: Jenny. I see it.

Jenny: I have a question. [Amber laughs] Oh yeah, okay, cool. Thanks. A moment of, like, impish diversion, since you mentioned Standards and Practices. [Amber laughs] And you talked about, like, delivering a super over-the-top kiss so that you could get, like, a regular, plain-feeling kiss past the censors. It's reminding me of a particular moment and a particular prop in the episode Family. And I don't know if you remember this. [Kristin laughs]

Amber: Oh, god.

Jenny: Maybe it's burned in your mind, the way it has become burned in our minds. Maybe not. But there's—

Amber: I don't know!

Jenny: A scene where—[laughs]

Amber: Alright.

Jenny: Tara's dad is waiting for her in her dorm room. [Amber laughs] And he's, like, sort of, uh, you know—

Amber: Yeah.

Jenny: Gesturing around to all of the magic-adjacent items.

Amber: The oc—yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, the occult stuff everywhere.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: The occult stuff everywhere. And then, um, you know...[Amber laughing] he says something like, "Did you want me to see all these toys?" And as he says the word "toys," [Kristin laughing] he picks up what can only be described as a particularly phallic crystal that happens to be on a counter. And I'm just wondering if that was, like, a sort of deliberate "fuck you" that everyone knew would fly under the censor radar? Or if it was just some fun?

Amber: I don't know if that was on purp—I imagine it had to have been on purpose. Come on, like...that's pretty—pretty, um—

Jenny: It's a choice.

Amber: It's a choice, yeah. I don't know. I don't know whether it was done on purpose or not, but I imagine it was. [Kristin laughs] I can't remember if there was a conversation about it. And I remember the moment, now that you're talking about—I'm like, oh, yeah. No, he—yeah. Hmm, that was—yes. [laughter] Yes. What that was doing in the room, we don't know.

Kristin: Right. [laughter]

Jenny: Magic. Lots and lots of magic.

Amber: Magic.

Kristin: So much magic.

Amber: Lots of magic. So much magic. Really intense, intense magic. [laughter]

Kristin: Nothing could transition us better [Amber laughs] to talking about witchcraft than phallic crystals. But like, we can go there. Magic, it gets muddy. Like, where we are now, like, what magic is is way more complicated than, like—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: What it seemed to be at the jump.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: But it's a really big theme for, obviously, Willow and Tara. And—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: In the beginning, we read it directly as, like, a code. Right? Maybe Standards and Practices won't let us kiss, but they will let us move a vending machine—

Amber: [simultaneously] Do magic. Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs] So—

Amber: With our intertwined fingers, rawr! [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: Yes. Those intertwined fingers carry so much power. [Amber laughs] But, like—

Amber: Oh, the things Willow can do with her fingers, you guys. You have no idea. [laughter] Lots of magic.

Kristin: But like, what was that conversation, if you remember it, at the time? Like, when those moments were happening—you know, the—we have the vending machine or, like, floating the rose or—I have a whole chart of the stages of queer witch love. [Amber laughs] So I've got them fresh in my brain, but what was it like on set to—processing that?

Amber: So, uh, in the beginning. In the beginning. [Kristin laughs] There was no talk, because we weren't aware that this was sort of the dynamic that they wanted—the way they wanted to go with the Willow/Tara relationship. It was really just like, oh, they're friends doing magic tog—you know. And she's gonna be part of a coven—

Kristin: [simultaneously] They're roommates. [laughs]

Amber: Yeah, they're—yeah. Yeah. [laughter] I was only 22. I missed the coding, I'm sorry! [laughter] I was very sheltered, I didn't know. But then, you know, Joss took each of us aside separately and was like, "Hey, this is the direction we're gonna go." And he actually—from my understanding, he had friends. He and his wife at the time, Kai, had friends who were a lesbian couple. And I think this was sort of his match note to them.

Kristin: Mmm.

Amber: You know?

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: Mm.

Amber: There wasn't that representation and he wanted to give—to put that out there—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: For people that he cared about, to show them that they existed in the world. You know? In a way that really wasn't available—

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: At that time. So anyway, so we didn't know, then we knew. Well, it was interesting 'cause the crew kept coming over. People would be like, "oh my gosh, you guys have such a chemistry." [laughter] And I'd be like, boop-da-boop-da-boop, yes, we do! Isn't it nice? [laughter] We have so much fun, doing our magic tricks together. [laughter] And then we were taken aside. We both—you know, and then it—you know. So then when we would do stuff like floating the rose, yes. We all knew that this was sort of like a stand-in for—and it's interesting. 'Cause you know, like, looking back, now that we're kind of opening this up. I think sometimes we want things to happen like [claps] this, and people aren't ready for it. And maybe that process of doing magic and sort of getting people comfortable with the relationship via a sort of, like, simpler sort of, like, coded way. So that when we actually did take the step and make it sort of official with the kiss in The Body, people were like, oh, okay. This is just an evolution of this thing. So in retrospect, maybe the process—Standards and Practices did us kind of a favor, maybe? [Jenny and Kristin laugh] By allowing it to build, you know, in a slower, sort of more simple fashion.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: I mean, I'm rewriting it, in a way. Because it—that would be nice if that was, like, you know, what actually—you know. It's just—it's shitty. It was like, "we don't want that." That's what it was.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Amber: But looking back, maybe it was helpful unconsciously, because it allowed people to really get comfortable with that relationship and to really feel the feels. So that, like, when it finally broke open, it was like, oh. I didn't even—this is a thing that I wanted that I didn't even know I wanted.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: You know?

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: 'Cause people were like, oh, this is hot. This is awesome, this is amaz—like, this is what we were looking for and we didn't know it.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Like, we were just enjoying their relationship.

Kristin: Yeah, and I mean, it also—I agree. I agree with that analysis, 'cause it also speaks to, like, the fact that intimacy can look a lot of different ways.

Amber: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And like, perhaps you can't move a vending machine with your partner, but like, it's not just about the kiss, you know? Like, there's so much else there that underpins a connection to another person.

Amber: Yeah, well, how many times do you hear people who were friends for a really long time, who didn't even know that they liked—they just like each other. And then they, like, fall in love with each other, because they've gotten to know each other. And maybe that was what happened with Willow and Tara and our audience. 'Cause our audience got to fall in love with them slowly.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: But yeah, I think there is something—you're right. There's something to that. I mean, think about, like, the Spike and Buffy relationship. The build on that. Will they, won't they, will they, won't they? Like, we kind of, in a way, had that with Tara and Willow as well. Because well, what's happening here? What's really going on?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: You know?

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Amber: Anticipation!

Kristin: [laughs] Oh my god. [Jenny laughs] What a great—sorry, but anticipation is—

Amber: Whew!

Kristin: Definitely hits a question that we have later on. [Amber laughs] Jenny, I don't know if you know the one I mean, but.

Amber: Is there some floating involved with this? Um...[laughs]

Kristin: [laughs] Well, there could be. [Amber laughs] I actually—I was referring to you being—it's in the musical section of our questions. But I was referring to you being in Rocky Horror, with—

Amber: Oh my gosh!

Kristin: Tony Head. Because you said anticipation, which is—that's where my head—

Amber: [simultaneously] Anticipation! That's where you went, I love it.

Kristin: Immediately goes, for "anticipation."

Amber: Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh, we just Rocky'd out. I love it. Funny enough. So when Tia Carrere had to drop out, who did they think of who was just like Tia Carrere? Amber Benson.

Jenny: Of course!

Amber: Not kidding.

Kristin: Of course.

Amber: It was supposed to be Tia Carrere. Somehow, she wasn't able to do it and they called me? [Kristin laughs] I'm like, I'm sorry. Like—

Jenny: Nice.

Amber: I'm reasonably confident about myself, but like...[Jenny laughs] jeez, if I looked like Tia—and—ahh, I would never leave my house. [Kristin laughs] I would just be, like, in the mirror all day, "ooh, yes." [Jenny and Kristin laugh] So that's how—they were like, you wanna go to Vegas and sing some songs for Rocky Horror? And I, you know, had seen Rocky a zillion times, you know, starting from the time I was, like, 13.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Going and, "I'm not a virgin anymore!" [laughter] Getting pelted with toilet paper rolls. Like, very embarrassing and awesome.

Jenny: Well, while we're here, [Amber laughs] should we talk about the musical? [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah!

Amber: Sure.

Jenny: I mean. As you mentioned, it's like, one of the real standout episodes of the series. It's not like anything else. And it's also—I don't know, not to put too fine a point on anything and not to invite a zillion corrective emails [Amber laughs] from our listenership. But I think it's by far the best musical episode of any television series. And I have endured many.

Kristin: Oh, yeah.

Jenny: It's great.

Amber: I would kind of agree.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: You're great.

Amber: Thank you.

Jenny: I feel like the lore is that, like, maybe you and Tony and James were kind of, like, a big part of the sort of impetus.

Amber: Yeah.

Jenny: Because you guys all have the pipes.

Amber: Aww.

Jenny: So like, let's ride. [Kristin laughs] Can you tell us, like, how the ball got rolling?

Amber: Yeah. So has anybody ever talked about this with you guys? The sort of, like, Shakespeare hangout things that were happening?

Kristin: Oh, maybe James—maybe James talked a little bit about the Shakespeare—

Amber: I feel like James did, right?

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Just a little bit. Like I always say, the world is not black and white. It's not all bad and it's not all good. There's gradations. And for me, Buffy was that. Like, there were some amazing things and I'm so proud. There were things that were rough, too. Things that were hurtful and not so fun.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: But going and spending, you know, a Saturday afternoon with the cast and with Joss and the writers and reading Shakespeare. And then that would devolve into, like, you know, everyone having a drink and something to eat and kind of gathering around the piano and having little sing-alongs. It's like Little Women. It was like we were in Little Women. [Kristin laughs] I guarantee no one has ever compared Buffy to Little Women. [Jenny and Kristin laugh] But yeah, so we would all sing and play piano. And, you know, obviously, Tony and James, like, they do music for a living also, as well as being actors. They are musical performers. I mean, Tony was in Rocky Horror, back—you know—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: And James and his band—you know, like, his singing career and his band. And—you know. So yeah, we were all pro. We were like, yeah, you wanna do a musical? We are so in. Everybody was really on board. I think, you know, for Alyson, she's not a singer so it was a little less like, eee! But she, like, totally did it. Like, hat's off. Like, when something—you're like, "not my thing," and you do it, like, hat's off, right? [Kristin and Jenny laugh] And I know there was talk of Sarah—someone voicing Sarah and she was like, "No, I'm gonna do it myself. Even though it's something that I don't do, I'm gonna do it." And I also take my hat off to her.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Like, that's a scary—both of them. It's scary to do something that, like, you're like, "oh, that's not my thing."

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: But you do it and they both were great. You know?

Kristin: And I know that, you know, Sarah also wound up doing so much of the dancing, even though, like—

Amber: She was great with the danc—I'm not a good dancer—

Kristin: Well, that's what I was gonna ask—

Amber: [simultaneously] I mean, you can see me walk into the pillar, right? [Jenny and Kristin laugh]

Jenny: Yes! A beloved moment.

Kristin: [simultaneously] A truly—you know what's incredible is we watched the episode I don't even know how many times at this point, getting ready for our episode.

Amber: Uh-huh.

Kristin: And I still haven't seen it. I don't know how—

Amber: What?!

Kristin: I know, everyone—

Amber: How have you never—it's so glaring to me.

Kristin: I miss it every time.

Amber: [simultaneously] I'm like, oh, no, ahh! Train wreck.

Kristin: [laughs] So do you remember that moment? Like, you remember it happening?

Amber: Oh, yeah. No, it happened. [Jenny laughs] And I did—you know, that like, Pee-wee Herman moment where you're like, I meant to do that. I totally meant to

do that. [laughter] I had that moment. I was like, I meant to—and I look around. I'm like, oh, nobody—no one saw. [Kristin laughs] Oh, nobody saw! I don't even have to do the Peewee moment. I don't have to, like, "I meant to do that."
[laughter] Nobody saw. Yes! Score Amber. And then I watched the episode, I'm like, the editor saw. [laughter] Put that in there. Bing-a-ling, walking into a pole. [laughter] Ugh.

Kristin: It's so good though.

Amber: It's ridiculous.

Kristin: I mean, I haven't seen it, but I know it delights everybody. And one of these days, I'm gonna catch it for myself.

Amber: I feel like I stupidly called it out myself.

Kristin: Right.

Amber: And like, started the ball rolling. Maybe if I had just kept my mouth shut, nobody would have ever noticed. But of course...I would rather have people laugh, like, be involved in the ridiculousness—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Than to let it, like—my sense of, like, respect for myself is low in the way. If I can get you to laugh by debasing myself, I will. [laughter]

Kristin: Did you have—I mean, you do, apart from that infamous pole moment—which usually would mean something entirely different—

Amber: Totally different. [laughter] Totally different. This is the least—this is the least sex worker-y, stripper-y pole moment ever.

Kristin: [laughs] Pole moment. [Jenny laughs] But did you have—I mean, you must have had dance experience before this? 'Cause you have a whole dance solo earlier, before we get to the—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Levitation, which we definitely will get to. [laughs]

Amber: So I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. I'm a mutt Jew girl from Birmingham. And I did tons of theater growing up, and did, like, ballet and tap and jazz, gymnastics, singing. I just did—I was like, that kid, that really annoying, like, [peppy] theater kid! [laughter]

Kristin: Me too. [laughs]

Amber: Which is, like, the best. What an amazing way to grow up, you know? Like, I loved it. I loved participating in theater. It was wonderful for me. It was such a great outlet and it taught me so much, and gave me, as a shy kid, the ability to put on my, like, Amber happy face! And go out into the world and be, like, an introverted extrovert. [laughs] But yeah, I did all the dancey stuff growing up. But I will say that I honestly am not the most coordinated. Like, I did all that stuff, I—you know—can do it. But I'm spatially, like, a little not with it. Like, I walk into stuff all the time and I apologize to inanimate pieces of furniture all the time. [laughter] Like, the coffee table and I have a real, like, hardcore relationship [laughter] where I'm just constantly apologizing to it. [laughter] "Sorry, I'm really sorry." My boyfriend's like, "Wait. Why are you apologizing to a coffee table?" [laughter] "I—you know, I hurt it. I feel badly."

Jenny: I know there's something that's on everyone's minds. [laughter] You know—

Amber: Oh, yes?

Jenny: Uh...a lot of people who act, you know, inevitably one day will be called to engage in some semblance of a sex scene in their film—

Amber: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Jenny: Their television show, whatever.

Amber: Yes. Yes.

Jenny: But so few of those people will get to levitate [Amber laughs] during said sex scene. I was just wondering, if you could tell us anything about, like, the rigging? [Amber laughs] The—like, how is it—what's the practical end? Are you being raised on some kind of a—I'm gesturing with two flat hands. Separating.

Amber: [simultaneously] Two flat hands, going, like—there's some like—[claps]

Kristin: [simultaneously] Platform. Yeah.

Jenny: Yeah. [laughs]

Kristin: I think you should tell—I think you should tell Amber what we call—what we named this event.

Amber: Technique? [laughs]

Jenny: Oh, we've—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: I think coined—coined the name for the technique, which is levitatilingus.

Kristin: Yes.

Amber: Oh, hell yeah! Levitatilingus.

Jenny: We feel decent about it.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Love that.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Yeah, you gotta call it something.

Amber: [simultaneously] Am I allowed to say the real—are you allowed to say the real word? Okay, yeah.

Kristin: Oh, yeah.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: You can say any—you can do anything you want.

Amber: [sim] I can say it? Okay.

Jenny: [sim] Any word you want, Amber. [laughter]

Amber: I love that I got to participate in the first, like, full-on cunnilingus moment on national network television.

Kristin: Fuck yeah.

Amber: I mean, I'm saying that, and there may be others. Maybe you'll get some emails going, "well, actually, in Season 5 of Cop Rock [laughter] I know that there was—"

Kristin: [laughing] Oh my god!

Amber: A cunnilingus moment.

Kristin: Did you just say Cop Rock?

Amber: I did, 'cause I'm old. I'm 44.

Kristin: [simultaneously] LaToya's gonna lose her shit. Our host of Angel On Top [Amber laughs] has brought up Cop Rock, like, 50,000 times.

Amber: Oh my gosh.

Kristin: That's just such a random thing. Anyway, LaToya, that's for you. [laughs]

Amber: [sim] Well, it was so fascinating as a kid, going like, wait, they're singing and they're cops? [Kristin and Jenny laugh] I don't understand. I like it, kind of? Maybe not, I can't tell.

Kristin: [laughs] Anyway. Not to distract from the main event, yeah.

Amber: Yeah. Um, levitatilingus? Is that—

Kristin: Nailed it.

Jenny: Yeah!

Amber: Levitatilingus. So yeah, so it was—let me see if I can get the whole thing correctly. Sort of parsed out. So, it was like a board. [Jenny laughs] And there was, like, a lever sort of—sort of—

Kristin: Like a seesaw? Kind of a thing?

Amber: Yeah, kind of. And all, like, the big teamster guys were, like, holding it down. And then slowly would lift it up—like, let it go and it would lift up. So I was surround—like, in the middle of my levitatilingus—

Kristin: Yeah. [laughter]

Amber: I was surrounded by men watching? [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Mm, we should all be so lucky.

Amber: I feel like the male gaze was very involved in this process. [laughter] No, it was literally, like—it was that moment and the ice cream truck in Restless moment—

Kristin: Oh, yeah.

Amber: When Alyson and I are all kitted up. And literally, like, all the dudes were like, “We can help you make the ice cream thing! [laughter] Like, we need to help with this.” Like, many I’ve never seen before, who like, hang out out at the trucks—

Kristin: [laughing] Right, right.

Amber: Are, like, coming in to help. And we had, like—we had the best crew. Like, I’m sure people have talked about this before. But Buffy, from the teamsters all the way to the top. Like, it was such a good crew. They worked so hard. They were so kind. I didn’t have my driver’s license when I started on Buffy. And the teamsters over the three years I was on the show were like, “Kid, just go get your—we’ll give you a parking space if you go get your—” “I’m scared to get my—!” “If you go get your license, we’ll put your name on a little thing [laughter] and put it on this thing.” They were trying so hard to get me to, like, go get my driver’s license. They were the nice—like, truly, like—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: When I see people that worked on Buffy, it’s just old home—like, they’re just such good humans. Just good people. We were so, so blessed to have such a good crew, who dedicated, you know, their *lives* to this show. Because let me tell ya, you’d start at Monday, coming in at, like, 5 in the morning. And then we would have these split weeks. By the time Friday came up, we were coming in at 6 in the evening and working all night. So these people—

Jenny: Oh!

Amber: Did not see their families. Like, they had Sundays with their families and that's kind of it.

Kristin: God.

Amber: Like, it was all inclusive.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: Did you get your driver's license? [Jenny laughs]

Amber: It took a long time. [laughter] I know, and everyone's like, "Oh, are you from New York?" I'm like, no, I'm just a dork—[crosstalk]

Kristin: That is very—it's very New York, yeah. To not have a—yeah.

Amber: [sim] It is very New York. I should just lie and go, "Oh yeah, totally New York, oh my god." [Kristin laughs] So yeah, so the levitatilingus was these dudes with this sort of seesaw contraption, releasing me so that I would go up in the air for—

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: Right.

Amber: "You make me come."

Kristin: Right. Plete.

Amber: Plete. [laughter]

Jenny: Fantastic.

Kristin: We're gonna pretend like those dude—we should have never asked the question. Erase the dudes.

Amber: Right? You don't wanna know about the dudes.

Kristin: Erase the dudes.

Amber: The dudes are gone.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: The dudes aren't really there. They're imaginary dudes.

Kristin: Imaginary.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Amber: You don't have to see them. [Kristin laughs] All you gotta do is look at what's on the screen. That's the most important thing. But it was funny, that like, it took seven burly, big dudes to make me levitate. [laughter] I was like, am I that—

Kristin: That dress—the dress!

Amber: That dress is—the dress weighs so much, that dress. It's so hard to get her to levitate with that dress on. [laughter]

[AD BREAK]

Kristin: To the point of, like, thinking about you not driving and Tara not driving.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Are there, like—you know. Where is the—on the Venn diagram of Amber and Tara, like, where is the overlap, if there is? Like, what parts of Tara are parts of you? And did, like, any of Tara kind of leave with you, as well?

Amber: Well, we're both, like, very law-abiding.

Jenny: Nice.

Amber: I am made fun of for my inability to do things if a sign says not to do them.

Kristin: Oh my god, Jenny too.

Amber: Yeah, like—

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Amber: We were in Port—no, we were in Burlington, Vermont. In the evening. And we were on this side street, kind of wandering around, looking. It was so pretty. And there was a sidewalk with, like, a sign that said, “Do not walk.” There’s no one around, it’s like, you know, getting dark. And I wouldn’t walk on the sidewalk.
[laughs]

Jenny: Respect.

Amber: I was horribly made fun of for not—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Like, there’s nobody here. Why are you—like, this is for the daytime when people are doing something on the sidewalk. Why—[Jenny laughs]

Kristin: Jenny would have been on the side of the street with you, also not walking.

Amber: Yeah. Yeah, that’s me. And I think—

Jenny: Absolutely. Solidarity.

Amber: And I think that’s Tara also. She’s very, like, law-abiding. If there’s a sign that says don’t do it, Tara will not do it, and neither will Amber. [Kristin laughs]
That shyness that Tara had is—I’m definitely—I am definitely an introverted extrovert, where I’m defin—like, it’s hard—I have to work myself up to be able to, like, go into a situation. And then I—you know, I turn it on and I’m like—[babbles], you know. But inside, like, I’m constantly like, ahhh! I have to talk?!

Kristin: So—okay, so we talked a little bit about practical effects with the—

Amber: Yes.

Kristin: Seesaw and the men.

Amber: Yes. [laughs] So sorry. [Kristin laughs] The dancing alone in my dress was all me. There were no men involved. [laughter]

Jenny: No men required.

Kristin: Were there any other, like, effect moments like that that you remember? I mean, there's so much magic, in general, but also there's like, the end of Season 5 with Glory and—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: All that stuff. So what sticks out to you?

Amber: So to get my brain sucked out, the thing she—

Jenny: Yes.

Amber: Yeah, the things, you know—

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: That just happen in life.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: So they did, like, a cast of my head. And you have to—it's like alginate. And they basically cover your whole head with alginate to make this live cast of your head.

Kristin: Oh my god.

Amber: And then they—I can't remember if it was blue or green. I think it was blue. But so they had this fake head and that's so they could put in the effects and they could put—maybe it was green, so they could put in—you know—

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Amber: So there was this, like, fake head of me. No hair or anything, it was just like this green or blue head of me, shaped my face and head. And I guess whoever drove it over to location put it in the passenger seat so they could ride carpool. [laughter] So my head—

Kristin: Like, where the hell is that now? You know?

Amber: Right? Who knows? It's probably doing some interesting things. [Kristin laughs] I don't wanna know what my head—it's like action figures. There are things you don't wanna know.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: I know what I did to Barbie. [laughter]

Kristin: Did you keep anything from the set?

Amber: Um...

Kristin: I guess you said you were rule-abiding, so maybe not, but. [laughs]

Amber: Not really. Like, I know—I think Alyson said she took the—like, the newel post from the staircase—

Kristin: Mmm.

Amber: Like, that sort of rounded—sort of—I think it's a newel post? Whatever that is. That sort of thing on top of the stairway—

Kristin: Yeah, yeah.

Amber: She took that, I think. That's what I remember her saying. No, they let me keep, like, the pants that I wore when I died.

Jenny: Your death pants. How thoughtful.

Amber: My death pants.

Kristin: Death pants!

Amber: My death pants, you know.

Kristin: So you have your death pants. Oh, god.

Amber: I have my death pants, yeah.

Kristin: That's sad. [laughs]

Amber: Yeah. I think we actually auctioned them off. And they—like, for charity, or something at one point. I can't remember what I did with them. I think that was kind of it. Like, I have—I have, like, this really great little box that had the Buffy

logo on it that Todd McIntosh—who did the—was head of the makeup department—that he had made for people.

Kristin: Aww.

Amber: It was sort of like a wrap gift at the end of the year.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: And I have that still, which is really great. Todd is such a sweetheart.

Kristin: Since you brought up your death pants. [Amber laughs] We don't wanna talk about Tara dying, really at all, but it exists. And so perhaps we can go there for a moment, and just—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Like, I wonder—'cause, you know, it's been 20, say, years. And I wonder what it was like—

Amber: [sim] Oh, lordy. That was so long ago.

Kristin: At the time to move through that? Like, what—like, if you knew there was going to be the outcry that there was, as it was happening—

Amber: It wouldn't have happened. If anyone—I truly—I truly believe if Joss had understood—he truly, truly—'cause this is just who he is. He was thinking about story.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: He was just thinking about how do I get Willow to the point where she can become Dark Willow? That is—like, he was just goal oriented.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: It was like, Dark Willow, how do I get there? Oh, losing the most important thing in her life, which is Tara. That was it. Like, there was no, like—I mean, the fact that we have the Kill Your Gays trope and we are partly responsible for that is, I think, so upsetting, to me and to everybody else.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Nobody wanted to be a part of that. If there had been any understanding that that was what was going to happen, I don't think they would have done it. Truly. And you know, I know people get really angry and they're really mad at the people that created the show because of it. And I just—it wasn't intentional. But sometimes the things that hurt the most are the thoughtless things, right?

Kristin: Well, yeah, and I think—I don't know. I mean, this person that I spoke with that I was talking about before. Like, they shared some posts from the Willow boards. And even those posts were—like, it was like, there was a lot of hurt.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: But even those posts were really clear on saying, like, we don't think that anyone that created this show is, like, homophobic or anything like that—

Amber: Yeah. No.

Kristin: But these are the reasons in which—

Amber: Yep.

Kristin: This thing is harmful to us. 'Cause, especially then—I mean, not that it's good to kill your gays now.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: But at least we've got a few more gays—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: To go watch, whereas then, it was not so much. And you know, I—

Amber: Well—

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Well, I was just gonna say. It's, you know—like, right now, we talk about racial bias. People are like, "well, I'm not racist." And you know, as a white woman, I have been given things because of that. And I think we have to look at the Kill Your Gays trope in the same way. If you are not thinking, because it is a bias. There is a bias built into our society.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: And so as a cis white dude, writing this moment, it doesn't occur to you, because of your bias.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: That this will impact people in a particular way. And it's the same thing with racism in this country and the fact that we are a racist country. It is embedded in our bedrock. You know?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: That is just how it is, and like, saying that we—like, I am a cis white woman who has been given every chance. And I am—you know, I have to look at that entitlement and own it and go, you know what? I can do better. I need to be more thoughtful and open the door for other people, and let other people speak and be—and participate. And like, I need to just be quiet. And I think in this moment with Tara, like, there was bias.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Because, you know, they're not—he's not queer. He's not a queer person writing this moment. He is a white dude writing this moment—

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: And it didn't occur to him, out of that bias.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: You know, and we just have to talk about these things. 'Cause when we talk about them, maybe we can change them. You know?

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: Hopefully? [laughs]

Kristin: I mean, I think that that conversation that—not that it started in that exact moment. But like, I think that people who are creating shows and movies now are more aware of—not only that trope, but like, the importance of like, if you’re gonna tell this person’s story, have somebody who has that story in the room.

Amber: Yes.

Kristin: Like, things like that—

Amber: Yes.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Amber: Yes.

Kristin: And those of us—you know, I think we’re all of a similar age.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Like, that was not the conversation then for those of us who had more privilege. [laughs]

Amber: Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin: So, yeah.

Amber: Yeah. I mean—yeah. I mean, I think about, like, my friend Javi wrote the episode of The 100.

Kristin: [whispers] Oh...

Amber: You know? And he knew. And you know, he told them. [laughs]

Kristin: Yes.

Amber: He was like, “I know Amber! [laughter] I know Amber! I know! I know.”

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Amber: And because that wasn’t his show, he was—he had to write this thing that he knew was—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Amber: And so he put himself out there afterwards—

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: And was on social media going, “I know this is awful and I’m really sorry. And come to me, talk to me. I will talk to you and go through this trauma with you.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah.

Amber: You know?

Jenny: Whew.

Amber: But we’re still in a place where, like, people aren’t aware. We’re still not aware. We’re still fighting. And I’m guilty too—we’re all guilty of it.

Kristin: Of course.

Amber: No one is perfect. I fuck up all the time. I do the wrong thing, you know? But instead of getting defensive about it—which I’ve—that’s happened to me, in the past, where I’ve like, “No, but I’m—I’m not—” and I’m like, well, fuck you, Benson, you are. [laughter] You’re—like, you grew up—you were lucky. Yes, you know, I did get bullied because, you know, I was Jewish and went to temple and people are very antisemitic sometimes. [laughs] I have experienced it, but I pass as just a, like, totally white lady.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: I don’t have to deal with that every day.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: You know?

Kristin: Well, and I imagine that—and I’ll say this. So I imagine that, like, the experience of moving through that—

Amber: Sorry, I get on my, like, soapbox. I apologize. [Jenny laughs]

Kristin: No, we’re literally here for you to be on any soapbox or otherwise—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Elevated platform that you would like to be on, so. [laughter] But I imagine that the experience of, like, playing Tara and also of, like, moving through all that was after Seeing Red has impacted your own awareness of these things and probably the way that you engage in the world.

Amber: Totally.

Kristin: And I will add, like, a tiny personal anecdote onto this, which is that—and I didn't even connect this until a couple of days ago when I was, like, sitting down and thinking about talking with you. The work that I do outside of Buffering is for LGBTQ+ communities and what have you. And a million years ago, before I had ever even seen Buffy the Vampire Slayer. It was like, 20—I watched the show very late. And so it was like 2012, and I did a big fundraiser for what is now called mykidisgay.com, but what was then The Parents Project. And—

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: It got huge, like—it was spread all over the place. And you helped create that. You donated to that thing before I knew, like, any of this would then come to pass. And so I just put in there as, like, a little personal thing that I imagine—and not that you wouldn't have supported this anyhow. But how, I guess I'm asking, did the—embodying the role of Tara and the experience sort of shape your own presence in the world?

Amber: You know, I—'cause I was a theater kid—I grew up around people who were gay. You know, I did—I remember doing—I was eight or nine. I did this, like, Birmingham Children's Theater play of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. And I was out of school for, like, six weeks. And it was a couple of kids, but it was all—mostly adults. And I just remember, like, how wonderful the men were who participated in the play with me. So kind and caring. And I didn't know that they were gay men. You know, I didn't know that they were LGBTQ+, like, I didn't know what that was. I was eight or nine years old. But they, being in my life, impacted me. Because I was like, they're just—they're just these really kind people to me, that treated me well when I was a kid. But it became clear to me, as I grew—I was like, oh, they're gay men who date other men. And it didn't make a difference to—I didn't care. 'Cause I—like, I had a great experience. And I was shown that, like, everybody is a person. We all poop. [laughter] You know, it doesn't matter who you love. We all eat, we all poop, we all basically have to sleep, you know. We're just people. Underneath it all, regardless of our sexual orientation or the color of our

skin or our religious affil—like, we're all human beings. And I think because of my experience with parents who are very liberal, and you know, being part of the theater community as a kid, it just—it made me very aware of that stuff from an early age. And very, like, mad when someone would be mean to somebody because they were different from them. It really upset me. And I've always felt like that, and I'm sure I've done things that hurt people and that are unconscious. But I do—I am—I try to be aware. You know? And then playing Tara, of course, was like an extension of that. For me, it's like, no. Like, they should be able to kiss, they should be able to have—like, to me, it was just a no-brainer. Like, why would anyone care? Like, it doesn't—like, who gives a shit? They love each other. That's the important thing. Right?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: And so for me, like, I just always felt like when somebody was in a position where they were treated badly, I just always wanna, like, fight for them. [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: You know. And then, of course, I've been very conflicted because I am a straight white woman, playing a queer character. And 20-something years ago, it—no one talked about the fact that oh no, you're not LGBTQ+ playing this character. And so I'm—there was a lot of conflict for me about, like, walking in her shoes and playing her, when probably somebody who was queer should have played her. That's what should happen. Right? That's the right thing. And so, I've been—you know, like, I felt like the only way I could sort of make myself feel okay with it, in retrospect, was to be like, no. Do the good work, fight the good fight, be a part of that. Like, do what you can to help further, like, you know, people being treated fairly across the board.

Kristin: Hell yeah. Well, and that—I mean, it's like—it's clear from hearing you talk that, like, now, that wouldn't hap—that wasn't part of the—I think most of us—

Amber: [sim] It was not part of—it was bias.

Kristin: [sim] It was not part of the conversation then.

Amber: It was bias. Like—

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: We—you know, it is. Like, we're biased because we don't talk about these things—we didn't talk about these things. Now we do, but we didn't, you know?

Kristin: Right. Right. And that's what it's about. It's about, like, listening.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Anyway. Jenny, I feel like I have led the charge. And I know—

Jenny: Well! Yes.

Kristin: [sim] We want to talk about the future—the future that Tara didn't get and like, what you're doing now and things like that. And I wanna be respectful of your time, so, yeah. Go ahead.

Jenny: Wicked quick, before we get to the future that—like, the theoretical, hypothetical future, right? [Amber laughs] On top of the unbearable injury of experiencing the loss of Tara in the show, we must also swallow the insult of the reality that she dies violently and accidentally!

Amber: I know.

Jenny: At the hands of a universally reviled villain. Maybe the most irredeemable character to ever set foot inside the show. [laughter] How do you feel about the specifics of how it was made that Tara died?

Amber: [sighs] The fact that it was this sort of, like, outside of the norm death. Like, everything else is sort of magicky—

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Amber: You can come back from—but this was like, a gun? This was real. This was an accident—you know, this was, like, a human doing it. Like, it was just—I think it was all of those beats that made it so, like, awful. [laughs] It was really—like, it was really intense. It was not a, you know—like, that was not a good—that was not a good way to die. "Your shirt," you know? Like, come on.

Kristin: Ugh.

Amber: Like, that—ugh, it was awful.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah.

Amber: And I think it just was so painful, because of all those pieces. But done that way on purpose, because they wanted it to be, like—they wanted the audience to understand why she—you had to go on the journey with her.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Yeah.

Amber: Like, Dark Willow did some bad shit, right?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Amber: So in order to maintain, like, the understand—the empathy for that character, you had to experience the loss she experienced.

Kristin: Right, right.

Amber: You know? 'Cause otherwise she, like, becomes irredeemable. And she had to be redeemable, because it's Willow.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: You had to be able to make her okay. So you had to give her this awful thing.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: So, you know. I think it was done specifically that way on purpose to make it just as awful as possible. But on a happier note, like...[Jenny laughs] like, I got a cake—[Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Ooh!

Amber: That said—it was a tombstone that said "Rest in Peace, Tara Maclay" with the dates and— [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: That is weirdly sweet.

Amber: And there's a lovely polaroid floating around of me, like, holding a big knife, crying—[laughter] you know, with tears and mascara everywhere. And everyone there, while I'm getting my tombstone cake. [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god.

Amber: So. Yeah.

Kristin: Well, can we just, like, pretend for a moment—or longer than a moment—[laughter] that Tara didn't die?

Amber: Yeah, I like that. I'm pro.

Kristin: We have—yeah. I mean, we had a couple of listeners—I mean, a lot of listeners wrote in and just wondered, like, what would Tara's future be like? If she hadn't died. And Jamie—

Amber: What was the best one? Yeah, tell me.

Kristin: Well, Jamie had one that I really enjoyed, 'cause I feel like it's really accurate, which is, "Personally, I like to think that Tara and Willow would have a big, beautiful apartment somewhere filled with too many cats and too many plants." [laughs]

Amber: Awww! I like that.

Kristin: But yeah, do you ruminate—like, could you imagine what Tara would be doing right now?

Amber: I feel like Tara would be, like, a counselor.

Kristin: Mm, yes!

Amber: You know? Helping—

Kristin: Definitely.

Amber: Helping LGBTQ+ youth who are out in the world, and she's there to sort of support and love and be there, to mentor. And I think—you know, I like to—you know what I've decided that they did, actually? Like, she's doing that for money.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: But really what they've done is they've opened like an Air—or like, a B&B somewhere.

Jenny: [whispers] Yes.

Amber: In some small town in Northern California. And it's very much like, you know, Newheart where they have, like, their little inn. [Kristin and Jenny giggle] And their little B&B and like, they—you know, just live this lovely little sort of new-agey adorable, cat—definitely cat and plant-filled life, with Dawn coming to spend the summers with them.

Kristin: Ah!

Jenny: Correct.

Amber: 'Cause I do feel like, they kind of—I do—I say this, and I do mean this. I feel like Willow and Tara had the best relationship. Like, we really did—before it all went to shit—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: We had the best relationship and we were kind of, like, in charge of raising Dawn.

Kristin: A thousand percent.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: You know. So to me, like, that—I love that.

Kristin: [pleased] Ugh!

Amber: And I think that's what would go on.

Kristin: We will be making reservations—

Jenny: [sim] Nice.

Kristin: At that B&B. [laughs]

Jenny: Correct.

Amber: Wouldn't that be sweet? Like, it would be gluten free, vegan.

Kristin: [laughs] Yes!

Amber: You know? [Kristin laughs] Like, bicycles for everybody to ride.

Kristin: [happily] Ugh.

Amber: You know...

Kristin: Lots of Miss Kitty Fantasticos...

Amber: [sim] Crystals. [Jenny laughs] Yes, Miss Kitty Fantastico and all of her prodigy.

Kristin: [sim] What happened to Miss Kitty? Do you know?

Amber: Well, Miss—

Kristin: Not, like, the actual Miss Kitty, but like—

Amber: Miss Kitty was *many* kitties. [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Oh!

Amber: There was so much pussy on that show! Let me tell ya! [Kristin laughs] Sorry.

Jenny: Oh my god. [laughter]

Amber: There were so many meows!

Kristin: [sim] No, that's a great sound bite. So thank you.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs]

Amber: Yeah, there were so many—there were so many meows on that show. I'm not even kidding you. Every time we had a Miss Kitty Fantastico moment, especially with the kitten version. There were, like, 50 little kitties running around.

Kristin: [quietly] Oh my god.

Jenny: Oh!

Amber: 'Cause you know, they could only work for certain amounts of time. So you get one for, like, five minutes—

Jenny: Kitten labor laws.

Amber: And then the next one. What was really funny is in a scene where they wanted—they wanted the kitties to lick. So they put, like, tuna oil on Aly's chin [laughter] to get the kitty to come over and, like, lick. Tara does love tuna. So do the kitties.

Kristin: Oh my god. Wow. The things you do—

Amber: Yeah. Tara loves tuna.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughter]

Amber: That cracks me up every time. Like, that—we couldn't get through that scene. That was really funny.

Kristin: Oh, god. [Jenny laughs] Yeah, I mean, nothing sexier than like a woman smelling like tuna oil. Really.

Amber: Tuna, yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs]

Amber: For kitties? Yes! For the meows, yes. So many meows. Sorry. I had to go to the dirty place. I apologize.

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: No, that's what this podcast is for.

Amber: Life's too short.

Kristin: Jenny has a whole segment called 1080P HD so we're—[Amber laughs]

Jenny: There's just a lot to examine.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: There's a lot to look at. That's all.

Amber: Yeah, in like, 4K, like, in your face.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs]

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: We haven't graduated to 4K yet, actually. [laughs]

Jenny: It's a process.

Amber: It's a process. We're getting there, 4K is coming.

Jenny: While Kristin and I are, like, very busy analyzing every moment [Kristin laughs] of a television show you were on some years ago—that's what we fill our days with.

Amber: Yep.

Jenny: What are you up to, like, right now? What are you working on? What's in the oven?

Amber: What's in the oven? [Kristin laughs] Nothing. 'Cause I'm sick of cooking. [laughter] I did too much damn cooking this pandemic.

Jenny: [sim] Nice.

Amber: I made bagels, for god's sake.

Kristin: [gasps] Did you really?!

Jenny: Whoa!

Amber: I did. Twice.

Kristin: And?

Amber: Once was good, once was not so good.

Jenny: Oh, no.

Amber: Yeah. I'm not the greatest baker. [Kristin laughs] But I did it. I did it, I did my pandemic baking. I did it for the team. [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: It had to be done.

Amber: It had to be done. What am I doing now? Um. I am—I'm working on two podcasts. One, I cannot talk about.

Jenny: Fair.

Amber: These are, like, narrative fiction ones.

Kristin: Oh, cool.

Amber: One, I cannot talk about. But I think you guys would enjoy it, if it happens. A lot. [Jenny groans; Kristin laughs] And then the other one is—I'm doing a podcast based on my—The Witches of Echo Park books.

Kristin: [whispers] Amazing!

Jenny: Sick!

Amber: So that's kind of [crosstalk]. And I've been writing, like, Lifetime movies and Hallmark channel movies—like, mysteries. Which is really fun—

Kristin: [whispers] Yes.

Amber: And, like, true crime stuff, so working on some of that.

Kristin: So fun. Yeah.

Amber: Yeah. And yeah, just—you know. Not—I've been—yeah. Just spending a lot of time rereading, like, old mysteries, old detective-y things. And watching as much crappy TV as possible.

Kristin: I was gonna say, what are you—[Jenny laughs] you know, like, the job of a person who's, like, writing and creating is also to ingest. So I wonder—

Amber: Oh, heck yeah.

Kristin: What you're watching and we have a very active book club, if you're reading anything that you'd recommend?

Amber: I don't read anything new. I'm reading, like—I'm going back and rereading all of the Agatha Christies, which are kind of problematic in places. I didn't remember how intensely problematic. Although—[laughs] although, they do call all the old ladies in the books "old pussies." [laughter] Which I just, like—

Jenny: What?!

Amber: Like, literally—

Kristin: What?!

Amber: The detectives will be like, "oh, that Miss Marvel, she's an old pussy." [laughter] And you're just like, wait, what? What?

Jenny: [laughing] Oh my god.

Kristin: [laughing] Oh, god.

Amber: [crosstalk] Just like, what? Not kidding. Every time, I have to stop because I'm like, hehehe, that old pussy. [laughter]

Kristin: Well, 'cause you brought up The Witches of Echo Park. And I just—you know, I know that—some people know about this, about what you've written. But maybe not everyone does, so—and it maybe bears mentioning that, like, on Buffy, you were playing a witch. And—

Amber: Yes.

Kristin: Now you're writing about witches, so—

Amber: Witches!

Kristin: Discuss. [laughs]

Amber: Witchy witches! Yeah, no, I love—I love the occult. I love witchcraft. It was something I was interested in way before I was on the show. And so I was able to sort of—to parlay some of what I already knew into, like, what we were doing with Buffy. Although, it had—Buffy really had its own mythology and its own sort of thing going on. But it was really neat, and I met tons of people who were involved in the Wiccan community because of Buffy, and that was really neat. To hear, like, what worked or didn't work for them was kind of interesting.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: And very, you know, like, engaging. And then I ended up writing a three-book series about some witches in Echo Park that were kind of—you know, kind of based on things that I had experienced. I won't go too in depth into that, but like, there were things that had happened that I had experienced. And I thought would make interesting fiction.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: So, yeah. Kind of cool.

Kristin: We're gonna have to read—we're gonna put that trilogy on our book club—

Jenny: In the book club.

Amber: Aww. [crosstalk]

Kristin: Yeah, that would be a fantastic—

Amber: It's fun.

Kristin: Just checking off every box in the book club, yeah.

Amber: Yeah, that's really fun. I really had a lot of fun writing them and, you know, like, I'm always growing as a creative person. And you know, to talk about, like—like this podcast, Witches of Echo Park. You know, it's like—it's not like an interview thing. It's more like talking about the process of writing and creating—

Kristin: [whispers] Oh, cool.

Amber: And you know, talking about where the books came from and why I wrote them. You know, that's just really interesting.

Kristin: So if we wanna learn more about these experiences—

Amber: Yes.

Kristin: That you had, that's where we—that's where Jenny's immediately gonna run. I can see it in her face. [Jenny laughs]

Amber: Echo Park is really an interesting place, and it's full of sort of this esoterica. It was a really cool place to—I lived there for many years. And I had, like, a whole crew of lady friends that are from my Echo Park days. But like, in the 50s it was called Red Hill because all of the, like, artists and kind of communists and kind of political activists lived in Echo Park.

Jenny: Mmm.

Amber: And you know, it's just—it's a really magical, magical place—

Kristin: Cool.

Amber: That I love.

Kristin: Very cool. Well. I always like to at least say, is there anything that we didn't ask you that you wanna talk about? Is there, like, a story you were just like, oh, too bad they didn't ask?

Amber: I must—I *must* tell. [laughter] Um, I mean...it's funny. I look back on Buffy. And it's—like, it was—like, no one was, like, a big prankster. There weren't, like, big pranks. Some sets—like, I know Supernatural, those guys were pulling pranks on each other all the time. [laughter] You know, like, we didn't really have that kind of—but it was like being part of a family. You know, and I think that's why—

Jenny: Aw!

Amber: The character dying was hard, because I spent three years with all of these people. And then to, like, have that sort of taken away was tough. So.

Kristin: And I know the—you know, the—I know that you've been so engaged, over the years, with the fandom, with the Buffy fandom. And—

Amber: They're, like, the best. Like, we really do have the best fans. They are so engaged and so smart and so thoughtful. And like you said, like, communities have

found each other and had families around—like, it's just—it's this community that will never die. It just gets bigger and more impactful and wonderful.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah. We're very honored to be a part of that, to be a part of the community—

Amber: Yay!

Kristin: But truly, it's really special, and—

Amber: Join us.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughter]

Amber: You will never escape.

Kristin: [sim] We are a part of the cult of Buffy Summers.

Amber: Yeah.

Kristin: But yeah, I mean, there is no way to really thank you enough for sharing times with us and your stories with us.

Amber: Oh, it's my pleasure. I am so glad that this worked out and I got to spend this afternoon with you guys. This lovely L.A. afternoon, East Coast evening.

Kristin: Yeah, I was gonna say. Is it nice? Is it 75 and sunny in L.A.? Is it just doing its L.A. thing?

Amber: It's in the 80s, but it's—yeah, it's sort of nice.

Kristin: Okay, not too hot, yeah. [laughter]

Amber: Not too—no, we're very, very—we're so lucky in L.A. Like, a lot of the state right now is burning up—

Kristin: Right, right. Yeah, my sister actually is up in Portland. [Amber inhales sharply] So went through that, like, hundred and—

Amber: It's awful.

Kristin: Yeah.

Amber: So, climate change is real, people! Get—

Kristin: [sim] Oh my god, and here, it's been raining, like—I don't even know. I feel like the whole house is gonna float away.

Amber: No, get vaccinated, climate change is real, I just need to reiterate it. [laughter] I am vaccinated. I got my two Pfizer jabs. Like, do it!

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: Yes. Yes!

Amber: Buffy people are thoughtful, logical, intelligent humans—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: Who understand that like, yes, there are some scary bits associated with COVID and getting vaccinated. But they—the way that it saves people who can't get the vaccine, like, makes it necessary. You have to do it.

Kristin: Yes.

Amber: Not just for you, but for everybody else. Like, be empathetic and be kind and, like, it's for you and it's for the people around you. That's really important. We do it—

Jenny: Yeah.

Amber: Because we want to, like, save the people around us.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Amber: People who can't get vaccinated, kids and older people.

Kristin: Yes.

Amber: The oldies! I like to call my—

Kristin: Yes!

Amber: My parents. [laughs]

Kristin: The old pussies. We gotta save them. [laughter]

Amber: The old pussies. Do it for the old pussies. [laughter] The old pussies can't do it for themselves, you gotta do it for them. [laughter]

Jenny: Mm, yes.

Amber: Everybody needs a helping hand, you guys.

Kristin: [laughs] Well, we will be—

Jenny: Well! I think we did what we came here to do!

Amber: Yep!

Kristin: We did, we did. We'll be checking in to the Tara and Willow inn for our next vacation. But yeah—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Amber, thank you so much. And—

Amber: Oh, thank you guys. Such a pleasure.

Kristin: From—like, from all of our humans—I'm gonna—actually, I'm gonna end this reading one of their messages to you, okay?

Amber: Aww.

Kristin: Rekha is one of the messages, and Rekha writes, "Please make sure to completely shower Amber with the love of us shy and nerdy queers—"

Amber: Aw!

Kristin: "To whom Tara and Amber's wonderful embodiment of her mean the absolute world. This performance is such a rare televisual gem, even today."

Amber: I wish I could give Rekha a big hug! [Jenny and Kristin laugh] Virtual hugs!

Kristin: Yes!

Amber: Virtual hugs to everyone.

Kristin: We feel it, we feel it. But thank you, Amber.

[CHIME]