

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 5.06: Family

Jenny: Support for today's episode comes from Buffy. Not the Slayer of vampires, but the slayer of you not feeling cozy in your bed. Buffy makes bedding that is earth-friendly and cruelty free. Their latest product, The Breeze, is a comforter made entirely from 100% eucalyptus fiber to regulate temperature and keep you cool and comfortable all night long. And Buffy offers a free trial, so if you don't love it, return it at no cost. For \$20 off your Buffy comforter, visit buffy.co and enter code "buffering." That's Buffy.co, and enter code "buffering" for \$20 off.

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[CHIME]

Jenny: Hello!

Kristin: [singing] Hello! It is the holiday season!

Jenny: Happy Thanksgiving!

Kristin: [singing] Jenny is as old as me now!

Jenny: Happy... my birthday.

Kristin: Doo-doo-doo, doo-doo-doo!

Jenny: How—for like, three weeks or something.

Kristin: Yes, a beautiful time in Buffering the Vampire Slayer's life, the time between November 22nd and December 17th every year.

Jenny: Now how could anybody who listens to our podcast remember when my birthday is? That's my question.

Kristin: [laughs] Well, this year they remembered because there was a grand Jenny birthday sale in our merchandise store, actually.

Jenny: True, true.

Kristin: So hopefully you didn't miss that. If you did, you should be—

Jenny: A beautiful celebration of me!

Kristin: Yes, you should be following us on social media @BufferingCast because sometimes we announce sales and we can't deliver an episode unto thine ears, so we put it on social media. If you missed it, we had a three-day sale in our store, the code for which was "696969" in honor of Jenny's birth. Jenny, do you know what else you should be thankful for?

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, I actually do.

Kristin: Do you?

Jenny: It's also something that makes me think of 696969, additionally. [Kristin laughs] It's Kate Leth on this episode, guesting with us! Gracing everyone with her hot, hot, hot, hot, hot, hot, hot, hot takes.

Kristin: Yo, Kate Leth was in the room with us. All three of us were in the same room and I don't know what's gonna happen when we do an episode in Season 7 with Kate. Because at this point, it's just gotten out of hand.

Jenny: Honestly.

Kristin: You're in for a fucking treat in this episode, I would say.

Jenny: Yeah, it's like the—when we get together with Kate, it's like the Roman empire under the rule of Caligula doing a podcast, or something.

Kristin: [laughs] I don't know—

Jenny: [laughing] It's a fucking mess.

Kristin: I don't know how to transition us from "Caligula" to the holiday gift exchange, but there you have it! If you are— [both laugh] if you're a patron of ours at any level, you know you get a whole bunch of cool shit. One of those things is being a part of the patron-organized, Scooby-organized holiday gift exchange. This is the third year, I believe, that it has happened. Jenny and I are both in the holiday gift exchange as well, so we all get shaken around in a big bin, metaphorically, and assigned to one other Scooby. And we buy that Scooby a present and that Scooby buys us a present and we send it to each other and it's

really sweet and special. The deadline to sign up for the holiday gift exchange this year is November 29th. And we'll put up a post on Patreon today, just with the link to that Scooby-organized holiday gift exchange so that you can get in there before the deadline passes.

Jenny: Yes. Sign up before the deadline passes, and if you happen to draw me as the person you have to get a gift for, and you—

Kristin: [laughing] This is now a podcast for one.

Jenny: [laughs] And you wanna double down and get me a birthday present and a Christmas present—

Kristin: [laughing] Wow!

Jenny: That's allowed, I'm a host, I just made that rule, thank you.

Kristin: Wow. Okay, fine. Well, my birthday's December 17th, Jenny. We should have a birthday gift exchange where everybody gets us and they just all send us birthday presents.

Jenny: [laughing] Oh my god! That would be a really good scam. Um, next year.

Kristin: Yeah, right, I'm ruining the Scooby spirit. I'm like, isn't it so nice you all give each other gifts? And by the end of this, we're just like, send us all the presents. Okay, so— [both laugh] Speaking of presents, we have—I think it's the best our store has ever looked, our Buffering the Vampire Slayer store. We worked with John-Allison Weiss on two new designs. A 'Tis the Season design that has Faith's knife pointed directly at Buffy's stake. It says "'Tis the season, whatever that means." It's—

Jenny: Hope they don't accidentally touch!

Kristin: [laughs] It's an amazing crewneck sweatshirt in the US store. And if you're in the UK, it's an amazing t-shirt. It's in both places, just different apparel items. In the US store, we also have not one, but two Sleepaway Witch Camp t-shirts, also designed by John-Allison Weiss. We also did a special holiday printing of our most famous shirt of all, Smash the Demon Lizard Patriarchy. We did it on a black t-shirt with gold foil printing.

Jenny: It's beautiful.

Kristin: It's gonna be so gorgeous.

Jenny: [through gritted teeth] It's beautiful!

Kristin: It's beautiful.

Jenny: We've also got a flipping Christmas ball, we've got a Christmas ornament for you to hang on your tree if you have—if you're the kind of person who has a tree. And if you're not, you can hang it on just about anything that accepts hooks. As a hanging device—

Kristin: [laughs] Youch!

Jenny: It's a sweet green Christmas ball with the Smash the Demon Lizard Patriarchy lil' logo on it. It's so beautiful. We've also got a partridge, we've also got a pear tree—

Kristin: Ooh, and a mug!

Jenny: There's pretty much everything you could want. Yes, and a mug! And a mug you could hang on a tree if the branches were strong enough. It's a heavy, hefty diner mug. It's the kinda mug you'd use to, you know, if you were tied up—captured by a villain, you could use this mug once you untied your hands to knock the villain out and escape? Just a thought.

Kristin: And that, my friends, is capitalism at its finest. [laughs]

Jenny: Hooray! Protect yourself, buy our mug! [both laugh] So you can do that. You can buy that mug or anything else you would like from us by going to bufferingthevampireslayer.com and clicking on Shop.

Kristin: Also! We have some events happening. If you were paying attention, you know that our prom is a two-night affair this year. It's in April, it's in Brooklyn. And the first night of it, the live taping of I Was Made to Love You, has sold out completely. All of the bundles have sold out, but there are still single tickets available for prom that you can get. So if you just want to go to Saturday night's prom, those tickets are still available. Also, we've got about, mmm, 10, 15 tickets left to San Francisco, which happens in just a few days on Friday, December 6. So you can—

Jenny: [chanting] Sell us out! Sell us out!

Kristin: Yeah. So you can go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Events and you can find out all the information for all of those upcoming events. Jenny, talk to us about sex and tension.

Jenny: I've got all the data you need! And man, I really like these numbers this week. [laughing] Ever since I bought bitcoin, I'm really into numbers. So this week— [laughs] this week I can tell you that last episode's poll came in as such. With a shocking—I think this is the lowest percentage anyone's ever gotten, even Riley has gotten higher percentages than this—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Well, I mean, it's literally the lowest percentage you *could* ever get. [laughs]

Jenny: With *one percent* of the vote, in fourth place, we have Buffy and Ben. Brutal! Sorry, Charlie Weber, so sorry. With 5% of the vote—with a mystifying 5% of the vote, [both laugh] we've got the Beast and the Key. All that sweat added up to more tension than Buffy and Ben could muster.

Kristin: Exactly, I was gonna say, it's all about the sweat.

Jenny: Now some other people, 34% of the people, are starting to show their true colors and letting us know that they would like to see Buffy and William take the crown. But no, Buffy and William are just in second place, putting my girl, and also my preferred currency, money. That's Anya and money in first place with 60% of the vote!

Kristin: Nice.

Jenny: Hell! Yeah.

Kristin: Alright, Jenny, everybody wants to get into this episode, so let's get through a couple more things. Namely, and first, some Spooky News.

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]
Spooky news!

Kristin: Alright, Jenny, are you ready for this one?

Jenny: [coughs] Wait, let me just make sure my airway is clear, just in case you're about to say "bats." [clears throat]

Kristin: [laughs] It's not about bats. It's not technically about skeletons. It is about Disney World? This is a story that is older, it's on Thrillist in October of 2018. But I

didn't learn about it until one of our listeners, Saramay [sic], sent it in. The title of the article says it all. The title is, "People Keep Scattering Human Ashes at Disney World—"

Jenny: No.

Kristin: "And Custodians are not Pleased."

Jenny: No!

Kristin: Yo—

Jenny: No, human ashes are like... chunky.

Kristin: [laughs] Well, they're all over Disney World.

Jenny: This is... rude.

Kristin: According to the custodial staff—

Jenny: [laughing in horror] Oh god!

Kristin: Human ash has been discovered all across the park territory, in the flower beds, on the Pirates of the Caribbean installation, in the moat beneath the Dumbo ride. And, Jenny, with the highest frequency, through the Haunted Mansion attraction.

Jenny: Of course. Of course!

Kristin: Of course.

Jenny: Well, that's where you'd have the greatest cover with which to—under which to scatter the ashes of your loved ones.

Kristin: [laughs] So apparently, this is one of the most known, quote, "secrets" of being a custodian at Disney World, which is that, in addition to cleaning up the park of things you'd expect, like probably hot dog wrappers and, I don't know, Mickey Mouse stickers. You're also cleaning up human remains. So the next time you're in Disney World, take a deep breath in, everybody. That's not glitter...

Jenny: No!

Kristin: It's humans! Okay! That's been your Spooky News.

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]
Spooky news!

Jenny: Really tough to say anything after what you just told me, but hey, we've got some upcoming Patreon events, just in case you wanna get in on these, wanna let you know. We've got a Buffy Watch of Fool for Love coming up on December 21st. Then we've got a Buffy Watch of Scream 2 coming up on January 11th. Then we've got a Jenny concert—Jenny Owen Youngs sings the Buffering the Vampire Slayer songbook on February 22nd. Those are all open to every level of patron. And we also just dropped a mailbag for our \$10 a month and higher subscribers last week. Yes! So—

Kristin: Yes. The mailbag was really great. It might be my favorite episode of our podcast. [laughs]

Jenny: Yes, and it contains yet another incredible story about Marc Blucas, which you don't wanna miss.

Kristin: Truly. Okay. Last but certainly not least, *certainly* not least, we wanted to talk to you about our episode transcriptions. This is actually related to Patreon. Because of your support on Patreon, we're able to do a lot of things, right. We're able to fly to places and do interviews. We're able to make you better songs and do more research and make this podcast all of the wonderful things that it is. But another thing that we were able to do is actually put a budget in place to pay for transcriptions starting in Season 5 and moving forward.

You know that we've been doing transcriptions, because you're all incredible and you've been volunteering and organizing. JD, who was the person who organized you transcribers way back in the day, is the person that we hired. So JD now is doing those transcriptions, we're able to pay JD to do those transcriptions. And it means that when the episodes in Season 5 go up, those transcriptions usually go up within 24 hours of the episode dropping. So we are more accessible now than we've ever been. We're really, really excited about it. It's because of your support. And we have 26 old episodes from seasons past. So we're looking to gather five human beings on a volunteer—sort of volunteer, we have some great reward packages for these five volunteers. We're looking to get five people to transcribe five episodes—that's five by five, if you did the math.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: By January 15th. Those volunteers will be getting two tickets to Prom 2020, or if you aren't able to be in New York this year and you wanna hang on, you

can get two tickets to any future live taping of ours. You'd have to get yourself to the city, but we'll give you two tickets. You also get any t-shirt you want from the store, any sweatshirt you want from the store, four enamel pins, and any of the screenprinted posters from Season 5. You pick one and we'll sign them for you and that's all included in what you're doing, in volunteering. And once that's done, every single episode of our podcast will be transcribed and they'll all be done moving forward, as we talked about.

If you want to learn more, if you want to learn how to be one of those five volunteers, go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/transcriptions. That's also where you can find all of the episodes that are transcribed up to now. So thank you to those of you who have volunteered. Thank you to JD for organizing everything. Thank you to the patrons for allowing this to be possible. And hell yeah to finishing our transcription project.

Jenny: Yeah, I'd like to second that hell yeah. And from all of us here at Buffering the Vampire Slayer, we want to say thank you to you, our extended chosen family. And if you're celebrating a holiday this week, we hope you have a good one and that it's safe and warm and positive.

Kristin: Yeah, Jenny, I think you've done it again. We have this episode about chosen family to kind of kick off the holiday season for so many of us. And I know that so many of you are going to be celebrating with family, chosen and otherwise. And for some, it'll be difficult. For some, it will be wonderful. And for many, it will be both of those things at the same time. So when you get to the end of the episode today, and you're listening to the song, try to imagine the thousands of people who are listening to it with you.

Jenny: Ahh!

Kristin: 'Cause we're all part of your chosen family and we love you all so much. And we'll see you... back here in a couple weeks with our live taping of Fool for Love. But for now, let's fucking get some Kate Leth.

Jenny: Hell yeah.

[Buffering the Vampire Slayer theme plays]

Jenny: Hello! And welcome to yet another episode of Buffering the Vampire Slayer, a podcast where we are watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one at a time, in chronological order, spoiler free. I am Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: And I am Kristin Russo, and this week we're talking about Season 5, Episode 6, Family. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every other week for an original song written by Jenny Owen Youngs, sitting right next to me—

Jenny: Hello.

Kristin: [laughs] Recapping the Buffy episode we are discussing. If you have not started listening to Angel On Top, it rules. It goes in tandem with us. It's hosted by Brittany Ashley and Laura Zak. And it's about Angel, if you didn't guess.

Jenny: Family—*Family* was written and directed by Joss Whedon and originally aired on November 7, 2000.

Kristin: Wow, I didn't do my research. I didn't even know until right now that it was written and directed by Joss Whedon. We'll get there. This is the one where when relatives arrive in Sunnydale to celebrate her birthday, Tara uses a magical spell on her friends to keep them from learning her, quote, "secret." Meanwhile, a demon we are referring to as Strong Blond currently, unleashes a hoard of demons to hunt down Buffy. This is also the one where Kate fucking Leth is in the room with us!

Jenny: Kate Leth!

Kate: Hi, hi, hi!

Kristin: Hi!

Jenny: Hello. Hello. Hello.

Kate: Hi.

Jenny: You look great.

Kate: Thank you! Thank you. I tried to wear my best Strong Blond outfit. [Jenny and Kristin laugh] As a natural strong blond who lives a strong magenta lifestyle.

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

Kate: Here I am.

Kristin: Oh, Kate. It's always so wonderful to have you with us.

Kate: It's so wonderful to have the gang back together.

Kristin: Now, people don't know this but we're recording this way in advance.

Kate: Oh yes.

Kristin: Because we wanted to all be in the same room together. And so that means that it's only been a couple of days since Philadelphia was stunned by your Buffy Fashion Watch video. [Kate laughs] I still feel a bit verklempt about it.

Kate: I haven't listened to the episode yet, but I want to just to hear the reactions. [laughs]

Kristin: You have to listen, because we did something very special right at the end of your Fashion Watch for you.

Kate: Oh my gosh. Okay, okay, okay. I'm going to. I'm—well, I will have heard it by now, and I'm gonna say, oh my god! [Kristin and Jenny laugh] Amazing! So good! Uh, yeah. That was very, very exciting and something where, over the course of about five hours, I wanna say, I transformed my webcam and my computer laptop into a studio, using all of the photo equipment that I own. [laughs]

Kristin: Nothing but the absolute best from you, you know?

Kate: Yes. Yeah.

Kristin: We were like, "how about a video?" and you were like, here's 47 costume changes. [Jenny and Kate laugh] Professional lighting and makeup.

Kate: There were only six costume changes.

Kristin: [laughs] Only six.

Kate: One got scrapped. [laughter] It was too much. If you can possibly imagine.

Kristin: I can.

Kate: You can't. You can't.

Jenny: Impossible to conceive.

Kristin: I can't, yeah. [laughs]

Kate: Yeah, it was a lot of fun.

Kristin: So, Kate, you picked this episode.

Kate: I did.

Kristin: You know, we were like, Kate, whatever you episode you desire shall be yours. And you were like, Family.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: So do you wanna start macro and talk about this episode and why you picked it?

Kate: Yeah, 'cause I love to cry. [laughter] You know, I love to come on—'cause what was the one we did last season—was also—was a bit of a cry episode. I like the ones that have intense feelings? And I like the Willow and Tara episodes.

Jenny: Yes! [sarcastically] Oh, why? [laughter]

Kate: You know. How come? So impossible. I just—I love this one. It always makes me cry, every time I watch it. And there are a lot of episodes that I have become sort of desensitized to 'cause I've seen them a hundred times. But this one gets me every time. I was rewatching the end of it while doing my makeup. [laughs] And had to take a pause.

Jenny: Bad timing, yeah.

Kate: 'Cause I was like, [gasps for breath] not waterproof mascara, okay, gotta wait.

Kristin: Yeah, I'm like, even waterproof mascara might not be waterproof if you're crying actively while applying. [laughs]

Kate: Yeah, not enough. So I don't know, I just think it's really beautiful. It's the episode where, you know, Tara's sort of finally welcomed into the group, where she kind of finds her place and is cemented. And seeing—found families are just, like, my whole deal, so you know. It's a good one. And the analogy is so over the top!

Jenny: Dude!

Kate: But I love it! [laughs]

Kristin: It is, it's over the top and perf—I love it too.

Kate: Those hands are heavy. [everyone laughs]

Kristin: Alright, well, let's jump in at the top, shall we?

Jenny: Well, it feels like only yesterday we were talking about where's Miss Kitty Fantastico been? All these many episodes. Here she is.

Kristin: Jenny texted me frantic like, "thank god! Miss Kitty Fantastico is back."

Kate: She's so important.

Kristin: Yeah!

Kate: She's so important and so cute and so little!

Kristin: She's so little. Still, she's so little. It seems like she may have been—

Jenny: She must be like a runt or something, right?

Kristin: Aw. The runt of the litter?

Jenny: 'Cause she's been around for a while, but she's still tiny and all floof.

Kristin: And floofy, yeah. But yeah, it's a sweet opening scene 'cause it's like, you know, when we're seeing more of it this season that we're getting this domestic kind of love between Tara and Willow. And that Tara's in her cute little boxers and Willow's wearing, like, pink leopard pajamas.

Kate: It's so cute and I love—I just—even rewatching it now, identifying so much with Willow in this scene, when she's like, "tell me a cute story!" [laughter] "That's fine, I don't have to be snuggled." I was like, oh man, Cohen has heard that a time or two. [Kristin and Jenny laugh] Also, would die for the way Tara says, "Vixen." [laughter]

Kristin: Oh my god, seriously.

Kate: So cute!

Kristin: You vixen for cuddles. Also, there's a line in this scene, in this opening scene, that just tickled me in the way that the Wicca/queerdom parallel always gets me. That fucking Tara says to Willow, "do you mind if I keep the light on? I was going to look up some spells." [laughter] Okay.

Kate: It's like, sure. Sure you were.

Kristin: Yeah. Like, the gayest line of all. Like, "hey, I just have some spells to look up so I have to leave the bedroom light on."

Jenny: Also she says she wants to look up spells... 'cause she wants to feel useful and she wants to keep up with Willow. But then two seconds later, is like, I'll just turn off the light and spoon you! [Kristin laughs]

Kate: And we get the incredibly sweet exchange of her saying "I never feel useful," and then Willow says, "you are, you're essential." [sighs happily]

Kristin: Yes. And we talked about this a little bit, actually, in Episode 2, where Tara was using Dawn as her... what do you call it? Proxy? Where she was like, "Dawn feels really left out, Dawn feels—" you know, whatever. And part of it was genuine, but this is really the first time that we're hearing Tara give voice directly to like, "I feel left out. I feel like I'm not important in this group."

Kate: Yeah. Also just like, for this episode and sort of through the rest of this season, I love every time Tara and Dawn interact. I have a lot of feelings about Dawn. [laughter] I have a lot of feelings about Dawn that have evolved as I have evolved and grown.

Kristin: Well, I wanna hear them. Can we hear your thoughts on Dawn? It's not like we get to talk to you every week about—as the Dawn progresses.

Kate: [laughs] Yeah, I...*hated* her, like, capital H when I was younger. But I also, you know, didn't like Buffy as much when I was younger and Willow was my only girl that—well, and Tara, obviously, there were a lot, never mind, no. [laughter] That sentence is not true at all.

Jenny: You're like, "and everyone but Dawn!"

[crosstalk]

Kate: 'Cause there's Anya and there's—yeah, everyone. No, I just—she drove me nuts. It was just—she was such a Poochie, right, and I'm sure you have talked about this. Poochie is the thing—

Kristin: Poochie?

Kate: Okay, it's on The Simpsons and it's like a writer term, where that's a character that's introduced for no reason, just to appeal to a younger audience 'cause your characters have aged up and your audience is aged up.

Kristin: Oh, fascinating!

Kate: They do it on an episode of The Simpsons where they're like, "It's Poochie, the dog!" And he shows up and he's cool and he's got sunglasses and all this kind of stuff.

Kristin: [laughs] Oh my god.

Kate: And that is always how Dawn felt to me. It's like, we did—why? Why is she here? Oh, to—you know, for a younger audience. And I loved Harriet the Spy. Nothing against Michelle Trachtenberg, but I did not like her. And now, as an older person who has empathy— [all laugh] I'm like, no, I get it. I get where she's coming from. You know, some of her story lines are a little irritating, but there are some really sweet moments. And again, every interaction she has with Tara is great.

Kristin: Is so sweet.

Kate: There's just a few of them, but they're always really sweet. So when you're watching, look out for those and just imagine me being like, yeah. [laughs]

Kristin: I know, I'm on that side of the fence. I mean, I watched Buffy for the first time as an adult person. So I think that that's probably part of the reason that I didn't hate—because people have just the most venomous hatred for Dawn.

Kate: They really do. [laughs]

Kristin: And I never did. I really have a soft spot for Dawn.

Kate: Yeah, in my rewatch this time around, I dislike Riley a lot more. Sorry, Jenny. [laughter] And have more sympathy for Dawn. So, you know, that's growth, I think. [Jenny laughs]

Kristin: Yeah. Things evolve. Which is what's fun. Like, we need to all do this again in 20 years and see where we're at.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: Who do we like now?

Kate: We only—only Giles. [laughter]

Kristin: Only and still Giles. So, okay. So after this scene in Tara and Willow's bedroom, we go to the Summers' living room. And this is a really powerful scene too. Just the proximity with which Giles and Buffy are sitting to each other conveys—like, intimacy but emergency. Like, when something is really, really wrong. That's the only time you would ever sit this close to somebody with their relationship. They don't want anybody to overhear them and this is like... real.

Kate: Yeah. And the lighting is very intentional in this. It's very dark. It's very—you can't—you know, it's... [laughs] it weirdly reminded of the scene in Dexter. [laughs] Where it's like, you go back to Dexter's childhood and it's his dad being like, "so you killed that dog next door, guess I'm gonna teach you to murder." [Jenny and Kristin laugh] And it—as it gets further and further into the scene and they're getting more explicit about, you know, how he's gonna teach his kid how to murder—

Kristin: Wow.

Kate: Look. Anyway. But it does that same kind of thing where the characters get darker and darker. And they're lit sort of from behind, which is very—the emphasis is so much on that their conversation is dark. Their conversation is troubled and difficult and I really like that. Buffy doesn't always do that kind of stuff.

Kristin: Yeah.

Kate: But I really enjoyed it and I noticed it more in this scene. 'Cause it is, like... intense.

Kristin: Yeah.

Kate: And, you know, only these two know. Only Giles and Buffy know.

Kristin: Right, and that's kind of what we learn in this scene is that they're gonna keep this a secret from everyone. Which does seem like a good call, in terms of—especially with Willow. We know how Willow—Willow can't make it two feet, keeping a secret.

Kate: No.

Jenny: Yeah. [laughs]

Kristin: Or like, keeping her shit together when she knows something. So I do think it's import—like, I think I would have made the same decision to keep it, but it is a big secret to carry.

Kate: Yeah. That Dawn is the Key, [laughing] I don't know if we said specifically that's what we're talking about.

Kristin: Right, well, yeah. Right, right, yes. Dawn is Key. And—we found out at the end of last episode and Buffy has told just Giles.

Jenny: So we also get a little bit more of a dimension here with the—with how much sort of memory worldbuilding the monks were able to fit into this whole situation. Buffy remembers Dawn crying for a week when their parents split up, but like, that of course didn't happen.

Kristin: And that's a traumatic thing. It's—and I think they do a good job of kind of underlining how traumatic that is. Like, their memories have been fucked with.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: And also, on top of that, what the fuck, Mr. Summers?

Jenny: Yeah...

Kate: [laughs] I know! I was rewatching this being like, oh man. I do love that they took a moment to be like, hey, Buffy's dad? Still sucks. [laughter] Still sucks a lot.

Kristin: He didn't call back, that Joyce is like, sick! What the fuck!

Kate: Yeah. Hmm, relatable. [laughs]

Kristin: God, it's real shitty.

Kate: It is real shitty. I—that is also a thing I appreciate as a—[inaudible; laughs] as a person with a shitty dad. It's like, watching that happen and it's like, that is so background to everything else that's happening. But that would—that's really traumatic! It's like, I'm also dealing with demons, I'm also dealing with this unknown demon that's coming in, I just found out my sister's not real. Also, my dad has run off to Spain with his secretary. That's like a footnote, so you know, it really underlines and sets up, as this season does really well, how much of the weight of the world that Buffy is carrying. So.

Kristin: Yeah, totally. So—

Kate: I told you I love to cry! [laughter]

Kristin: As I was watching this episode, I was like, uh-huh, this is the one that Kate picked.

Jenny: And speaking of the weight of the world, the next thing we see is Strong Blond standing up from amidst a building's worth of rubble.

Kate: Yeah!

Kristin: Yes, with her beautiful line delivery, "Okay, now I'm upset." [laughs]

Kate: I love her. I really didn't the first time around. But the same way as the first time around, I didn't like Cordelia. And now I'm like, oh my god, she's amazing. [laughter] She's so amazing!

Kristin: And it's really fun to watch the fight scenes between these two. Like, that there are—you know, that there's this very strong demon foe, who's tossing Buffy, and who Buffy—I mean. This is really the first time that we've seen how strong this character is. But it's just fun that they're both super femme, super tiny. And just kicking a lot of ass.

Kate: It's great! It's great.

Kristin: [laughs] So back to school. You think, in the next scene—or at least, I did, like, oh, we're going back to school, they're moving Buffy in. But they're not moving Buffy in, they're moving Buffy out.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kate: Yup. [laughs] And I really, really love Anya in this part—

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kate: Where she's just like—keeps being like, "how fun! We're doing this again after we just moved you in!" [laughter]

Kristin: Yeah, Anya hasn't picked up on all of the nuances of being a human, but fucking sarcasm, she's got.

Kate: It's so good. I love her in this scene. And it's just great.

Kristin: Also in this scene, we get—first of all, we get Giles literally saying that he wants to be the patriarchal figure.

Kate: Oh yeah, I wrote that down too! [laughter]

Kristin: I was like, have they ever said this word out loud in this show?

Kate: I don't think so, I don't know.

Kristin: So we have to give an honorary jingle to Giles for actually speaking it in the show.

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

Kristin: In addition to Giles saying the word "patriarchy," Xander and Riley wrestle.

Jenny: Hot.

Kristin: I was wondering, Jenny, if you had any thoughts on that. [laughs]

Jenny: Hot! Hot! [laughter] Hot! Did somebody say body French farce? [laughter]

Kristin: That really got me, that line. I got a guffaw.

Jenny: Also, Buffy kind of references that she's doing this because Joyce hasn't been well. But we have to imagine that this has at least as much to do with Dawn as it does with Joyce? That Buffy doesn't want to be at school, she wants to be home, guarding the fortress.

Kate: To protect her, yeah.

Kristin: Yes. Totally. Which is an ongoing theme in this whole episode, right. She's just like, "where is Dawn, Dawn, you cannot go over to hang out with—" what's her friend's name?

Kate: Melinda, I think?

Kristin: Melinda! Whoever—

Jenny: Sounds like a troublemaker to me.

Kristin: Do you think that Melinda's Pat's daughter? Like, do you think—

Kate: [laughs] That would be...

Jenny: Uh...

Kristin: Sorry for your loss, Melinda, but—

Kate: That would be incredible.

Kristin: But you know, yeah. I was just wondering if they were of the same neighborly home.

Kate: That entire exchange is so gold. [laughter] It's like, kids these days are experimenting with shortness, you really gotta nip that in the bud. [laughter]

Kristin: Yeah, so. Anyhow. They're moving Buffy back into the house and we get this wrestling scene, which is great. But we also get this—I think they hit it three times in the episode, the joke that Tara tries to explain. She delivers it—

Jenny: Oh boy. Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy.

Kate: The insect reflection. Yes.

Kristin: Yes.

Kate: It's very good.

[Clip from episode plays]

Tara: You learn her source, and we'll introduce her to her insect reflection.
[long pause] Um, that was funny if you studied Taglarin mythic rites?
[quietly, to self] And are a complete dork.

Kristin: I mean... and it's sad in this first iteration because she's already feeling left out. And she says, you know, whatever about insect reflection and nobody laughs. And then she walks outside and she just goes, "stupid!"

Jenny: Noooo!

Kate: Who hasn't been there? Who hasn't felt like that?

Kristin: I know, it's—ugh! I've certainly felt like that. It's just so sad to watch Tara feel like that.

Kate: Of course it is. Of course. But you have to set that up for the sort of progression of the story. Unfortunately.

Kristin: Yes, we have to see her being sad so we can see her triumphant at the end. And we learn that it's Tara's birthday. Or almost Tara's birthday.

Jenny: Willow has arranged for a party that no one remembers.

Kristin: Yeah. This is kinda rough. Right?

Kate: It is.

Kristin: The way that they talk about—I don't know if we're going there next. But the way that Xander and Buffy talk about Tara...?

Kate: It's a little off to me, 'cause it's like—I mean, I get it. They don't really know her, but the way they sort of talk about her, that she's not really welcome in—I don't—there's just—there's something strange about it to me. 'Cause it's like, I don't feel like Buffy would do that. And—and—I don't know.

Jenny: It might make more sense, like, sometime last season, too?

Kate: Yeah, yeah.

Jenny: This is like, what are we doing? It's been a while.

Kate: No, the episode def—I mean, look. It's like a movie's worth of character development that they shove into one episode, and so the turnaround definitely feels a little sped up. But you know, you sort of have to? I guess, for this one? So I get it.

Kristin: But if we're to believe that this is—oh, yes, Jenny. Jenny raised her hand.

Jenny: No, no, no, please. No, no, no. [laughter]

Kate: Please. Please, Jenny.

Kristin: Yeah, please tell us what's on your mind.

Jenny: My—what's on my mind is the next—there's just a quick scene that's coming next—[shouts] paging Dr. Ben, take your scrubs off! [laughter]

Kate: Oh yeah!

Kristin: Yeah, there's a really important scene, you're right. 'Cause Dr. Ben is with us...

Kate: Jenny's hand is gripping the piano with a force—

Kristin: Is this a new—is this a rival hunk? Is what we're to believe?

Jenny: Uh... I mean, he's doing a great job. He's holding it down. And...

Kate: He does have more than one ab, I will say that.

Kristin: Yeah, it's true.

Jenny: Yeah. There's a whole—you could grate cheese on those things. We see him take off his scrub shirt, toss it in his locker, and then the camera kind of pans. And then we see this sort of rotting snake clown demon guy.

Kate: That's an accurate description.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Right? Slinking along, sticking its horrifying black tongue out.

Kristin: Oof! It's bad. I haven't been that upset about a mouth since The Master, to be real with you. [laughs]

Jenny: And we're so worried about what's gonna happen to Ben and his beautiful abs... but then just then—

Kristin: [laughing] I thought you were gonna say his beautiful ass. [laughter] I was like, go for it, Jenny!

Jenny: Probably! Pra-ra-bob-ly! But then who should appear to prevent this rotting snake demon from getting into Ben's business, but Strong Blond, who needs a favor.

Kristin: Strong Blond—in case it's not clear to you, we are calling this character Strong Blond. This is her name.

Jenny: Until further notice.

Kristin and Kate: Until further notice. [laughter]

Kate: And we had to confer about that before we started, and I was like, no, I watched it with the subtitles on, and they call her "Female Demon," in brackets, so. [laughter] But Strong Blond is funny, although I am gonna say Strong Bad by accident at least once, and I'm sorry in advance. [laughter]

Kristin: No apologies necessary. So we go to the Magic Box.

Jenny: Anya is so good at capitalism.

Kate: She's so good at capitalism!

Kristin: Oh my god, she's—

Kate: One of my favorite things they ever did for a character on that show was give Anya a job in retail.

Jenny: Yes.

Kate: Because it's like, she's great, she's so great. She's always a treat to watch, but this is like, ugh! In the writer's room, I can only imagine them being like, wait. [laughter] What if we got her into capitalism? No, it's so good for her.

Kristin: Oh my god, it's—the whole scene opens with her being like, "please come back for more purchases." [laughter] Setting the tone.

Kate: It's incredible.

Kristin: And she's so excited. She has a place in the world, she's a "working gal." She refers to herself as a working gal.

Jenny: Wow, this is how capitalism sows its evil seeds. It creates a structure that makes you think you need it to feel good in the world and feel useful and like you have a purpose. [pause] Lo, this is not the podcast for dissecting capitalism especially—

Kate: Please check out our merch. [laughter]

Kristin: That's the true Hell Math, isn't it, Jenny?

Kate: The thing that I really love about it that I only kinda really realized on the rewatch this time is that it also does the job of showing that Anya, who was a latecomer to the group, has a place.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kate: You know, she has this job, she's working for Giles, she's part of the group and integrated in multiple ways. And that is also a good contrast, because if she wasn't, she'd be more like Tara in that way.

Kristin: Right, feeling on the—

Kate: And I thought that was kind of—that was clever.

Kristin: Well, and I'm interested—okay, I'm interested and I'm gonna talk about why soon. But I got in trouble in the premiere for not playing the Hell Math jingle when I was supposed to play the Hell Math jingle. We were talking about capitalism and Anya, so please, can we play the Hell Math jingle for all the people at home who are mad I didn't do it.

Jenny: Cha-ching.

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

Kristin: Okay, so what I'm interested in about what you just brought up, Kate, is the parallel, a bit, between Anya and Tara. They were not part of the original Scooby Gang, this is how Anya's feeling her place. Because a larger question that I have—I have a couple in this episode. But one is, Anya is a demon. I mean, she's at least an ex-demon. She's fully accepted into the gang, everybody knows this about her. So I wonder why, for Tara—and I know there's a lot more there—but why for Tara, at least that specific bit, that she thought that this piece of her would cause her expulsion or whatever.

Kate: Yeah, I think maybe she doesn't fully understand Anya's demon-ness? I mean, maybe she wasn't around—she wasn't around for that.

Kristin: She wasn't.

Kate: Anya was already part of the group when she sort of got into it, so she maybe doesn't really realize. And Anya's an ex-demon, not a current demon, and so...

Jenny: Plus, she's had a certain idea about what she is drilled into her since she was a baby.

Kristin: Yeah, and that I think probably is the core of it, that—obviously the "I'm a demon and I don't want you to know" is a theme that we've seen on Buffy. We saw it super—in a super big plot line in Angel Season 1 with Doyle.

Kate: Yes.

Kristin: And so I—you know, I know that the metaphor is there, but I was just like, okay but there's already a demon in the group. Even though she's ex, ex.

Kate: Yeah, she's ex-demon and again, has a job. You know. [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah. She has a place.

Kate: Functioning—contributing member to society, what is the thing she says? Anyway, it's very good. So, you know, it is a little bit—I don't entirely know why she wouldn't have told them. But they do kind of hammer home that she does feel like an outsider to begin with, you know. And there's the whole gay thing. Right? You know.

Kristin: And there's the whole gay thing. And that—even hearing you just describe it, it's like, the amount of human beings that I know who have not told people that they know full well would be like "I love you, I still care for you, your queerness is not something that would ever make me reject you," and have not still told them about their queerness, because of the inexplicable fear that even though you have those facts, when you disclose that you yourself are queer, somehow those rules will change.

Kate: Because it also becomes real in a way that, like, there are a lot of people who are accepting in *theory*.

Kristin: Yes.

Kate: And then when it's their kid or partner or friend, it's like, oh, now it's real and now it affects my life. And so, I can—I understand the fear. And they're playing that really hard in this episode. It's like, you know, she's the outsider because she's Willow's *girlfriend*. Like, Anya fits into this heterosexual role in the—you know, it's easier for her to integrate. But they're also—Willow being gay is new, Tara is new. It's this whole thing where they don't know how to act yet. And even though they

love her and accept her in theory... you know. They don't know what they're doing.
[laughs]

Kristin: Yeah. And something that we'll, I think, probably dig into a little bit more at the end, but I think fits with this conversation, is also not only that she's afraid of disclosing her queerness/demon-ness. But's she also, I think, afraid of disclosing who her family is and what kind of people they are. And I think that's super resonate for times we live in now—

Kate: Yup!

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But we can dig into that when we get—that's all the way at the end. I'm getting excited. [Kate and Jenny laugh] Kate—I feel like Kate's here so we can break—we get to break our format. [laughter]

Kate: I try not to skip ahead! I try.

Kristin: I know, it's me. I'm being bad. What else happens in this scene? Anything that we need to discuss?

Jenny: Well, Giles is like, "what's Strong Blond like?" And Buffy's like, "well, she's kind of like Cordelia." Which, accurate.

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah, it's pretty amazing.

Jenny: Also, nobody knows—everyone's sitting in a magic shop and nobody knows what to get Tara. For her birthday. Y'all!

Kristin: Also, they have this, like, "oh no, poor straight people" conversation?

Kate: Yeah!

Kristin: Xander and Buffy, where they're like, "do you think there will be a lot of other... Wiccans there?" [laughter]

Jenny: "Do you think we'll... fit in? I hope so."

Kate: I love it so much. 'Cause it's like, to look at Willow—they don't have a ton of friends! It's not like you're gonna meet a whole parade. It's gonna be like, four people, maybe.

Jenny: Like, who have you ever seen Willow and Tara spending time with besides Buffy, Xander, Anya and Giles?

Kate: Yeah. It's their first gay relationship. They are only together. You know?

Kristin: Yeah. But they don't know. Is this—if you are listening and you are straight...

Kate: I'm sorry. [laughter]

Jenny: It gets better.

Kristin: Come on over to our side.

Kate: Please buy some merch.

Kristin: But no, I would like to hear. Is this a thing? When your friends come out to you, are you worried that you'll go to their gathering and be the only straight person there? I mean, that would be true if you came to my gathering.

Kate: I feel like now it's a thing with—you know, 'cause people mostly know what to do about gay people. Bi people and ace people, you know, a little bit more on the edge. Trans people, a lot of people don't know what to do or how to react to that, even in the gay community. So, you know, what that metaphor is I feel like has changed a little bit. But it does kind of work, where it's like, you want to be supportive. But are you gonna be the weird overly supportive ally?

Kristin: Right. Are you gonna say the wrong thing, are you gonna—yeah. So Buffy needs to work off some tension. She scuttles on over to Spike's lair—well, we think. Because the next scene is— [laughs] Buffy punching Spike. But boy, does it take a turn.

Jenny: Um, before it takes a turn, I just wanna call attention, as this is—feels like now it's my calling upon the podcast. There's a move!

Kristin: Oh yeah, I wrote it for you, actually!

Jenny: Thank you!

Kristin: Yes, the wrestling expert, Jenny— [crosstalk]

Jenny: There's a move that I have not been able to find the name of, but it involves—it's sort of similar to the Tilt-a-whirl Headscissor Takedown. But it's less involved, it's more of a direct and less of a circular motion.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: So she gets her legs around his neck and flips him directly over, forward. If anybody knows the name of this particular move or any notable wrestlers who have used it specifically as a finishing move, please write in and let us know.

Kristin: This is actually—this is just scissoring. Um. [laughter]

Jenny: No, no, no, no, I've *seen* that. I've seen that. There are videos on the internet, and that's not what it looks like. [laughs]

Kristin: Taking a deep dive into Jenny's private browser. [laughter] But yeah, so this quickly—I'm glad that there wasn't cheesy porn music behind this dream, but I wanted it a little bit. If anyone wants to make us that, we're here for it.

Kate: My favorite thing about this is that Spike's not winning. [laughter]

Jenny: Spike's not trying to win.

Kate: Like, they're fighting, but... I mean, Spike—Spike in his heart of hearts, I think, is a bottom when it comes to Buffy. [Jenny cackles] So, you know.

Kristin: Fuck yeah.

Kate: I love that. I love that it's like, in his sex fantasy, she's beating him up. Great, good, perfect.

Kristin: Yeah, his sex fantasies are all like, him pretending he's gonna dominate and then being like, oops.

Kate: Yeah. "Oh no! Oh no, I got beat up."

Kristin: "Oh no, what will I do?"

Kate: [sarcastically] I can't believe Joss Whedon wrote this one. [laughter]

Kristin: And the— [everyone laughs hard]

Jenny: Kate!

Kate: Sorry!

Kristin: Oh god, we're really—

Kate: I'm not part of the main cast, I can be rude. [laughter]

Kristin: So the scene really takes a pivot on Buffy's line. She says, "oh, I'm coming, I'm coming right now" and then... [laughs] and then we cut, of course, to the fact that he is having sex and he is having sex with Harm.

Jenny: [partially covering her mouth] And she's calling him her little lamb!

Kristin: Her little lamb.

Kate: It's so weird!

Kristin: Speaking of him being a bottom. [laughs] Yeah, he likes those pet names. [Kate laughs] Okay, so that happens.

Kate: It's great.

Kristin: It's pretty great. And we find out that Giles has gotten Tara a crystal ball. You know what I want? A crystal ball.

Jenny: Yeah, now that I've—the idea has been introduced to my consciousness as something that I could possess, I'm interested.

Kristin: Right?

Kate: There's lots of places in LA you can get them.

Jenny: Hmmm.

Kristin: Crystal balls, yeah. Yeah. House of Intuition, they probably have it.

Kate: Yes. I was literally gonna say that. I was there, like, last week—well, two months ago. [laughter] And they do have crystal balls in there and, yeah.

Kristin: This is not an ad for House of Intuition, but it is, I guess.

Kate: It's great.

Kristin: Yeah, it's just a—it's a good place. So Giles gets a crystal ball for Tara, we find out. And then we meet Donny Maclay, I believe. His name is Donny, who's played by Kevin Rankin—

Jenny: Yo!

Kristin: Yes, Jenny.

Jenny: This family! This whole crew!

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: We have Kevin Rankin, who was in Friday Night Lights and Breaking Bad and Justified—

Kate: Oh my god, he was in Friday Night Lights.

Kristin: He's in fucking everything. He's in Lost—an episode of Lost.

Kate: Right, right, true!

Jenny: Yeah, and in a second, we're gonna see fucking Amy Adams.

Kate: Amy Adams!

Jenny: Fine. And then the dad is played by Steve Rankin, who may or may not be related—

Kristin: They're not, I actually did the dig on this a while ago.

Jenny: I did a dig and I couldn't get a solid confirmation one way or another.

Kristin: Oh, now I'm doubting myself.

Kate: Oh my god. I would have been able to make an amazing Rankin family joke that would've played so well in east coast Canada! [laughter] Shoutout. If you're there and you just laughed, I love you.

Kristin: [laughing] Oh my god. So yeah, this is quite a family. It's also incredible that Amy Adams is in this episode.

Kate: It's so good!

Jenny: Bananas.

Kate: And every single time someone brings it up, or—'cause I did a Twitter thread a little while ago, this thing that way more people ended up responding to than I was expecting. Where I was like, "what's your favorite guest spot of someone who later became famous?" You know, and so you see them in a really weird role. And there was some incredible ones, it was so funny. It took up my entire day, but a lot of people brought up Amy Adams. And every single time would be like, "she says bitch!" [laughter]

Kristin: Oh my god, I love when she turns. I love it.

Kate: Yeah, it's like—people rarely ever say that word on Buffy, and she does. And it's like, one of her ten lines in the episode. It's just very special to me.

Kristin: Cousin Beth!

Kate: [laughing] Amy Adams says bitch! [laughter]

Kristin: So yeah, so we meet the brother first. And he has this fucking energy.

Kate: [laughing] Oh my god.

Jenny: And this fucking beard.

Kate: Ugh!

Kristin: Right? The whole thing is so recognizable. Like, you all know exactly how to respond to this human being based on your experience in the world.

Jenny: Which is like, finish pumping your gas and leave!

Kristin: Yeah, get outta here!

Kate: Yup. [laughs]

Kristin: Get the fuck outta here, do not engage with this guy!

Jenny: Get back on the highway.

Kristin: And you see them all very subtly clocking it, clocking it, clocking it. Just like, "so y'all witches? Don't do a spell on me now." It's like this... menacing energy.

Kate: Yeah. So we go from this weird, straight allies overcompensating, trying to be good but also not doing it right, to like, full-on bigot.

Kristin: Yes.

Kate: Which is also a good, you know, to show the contrast.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Yeah. You're so on point.

Kate: Very good, but yeah, he *sucks*.

Kristin: Ooh! Yes. Tara and Willow walk in. This is the second time we get the joke brought up. Tara is like, "so what I—"

Jenny: Confirmation from Willow. Hilarious joke.

Kristin: [laughs] Hilarious. Willow—

Kate: It's so good.

Jenny: You nailed it, Tara.

Kristin: [laughs] "I get you, baby."

Kate: It's perfect.

Kristin: And then this is really awful. 'Cause you see the look on Tara's face of like, "fuck." And also, there's two things happening. You feel super bad for Tara in this scene 'cause you're like, oh no, this is bad for her. But you feel so bad for Willow. Who's trying to process in real time that she's in love with this woman who has this entire history that she has never heard a word about.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kate: Yeah. And she doesn't, you know, get acknowledged or introduced, which is like, of course! Of course.

Kristin: Yes. She introduces Giles.

Kate: Yeah. And it's like, I get it, but also that adds an extra layer of like, wow!

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know, and this is one of those experiences as a younger queer person that I remember—I mean, I wasn't aware that I was internalizing it at the time. And it's only looking back that I remember just accepting that I wouldn't be introduced in certain moments.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: And now, you know, I'm so much more aware, I'm so much more out and loud and all these things. But this is a moment that, maybe if you haven't lived that experience, you don't understand that that's a blow for Willow.

Kate: Yeah. And it totally—like, if I were in Willow's shoes, it's like, you understand. She's dealing with so much and had this thing sort of put—you know. I feel like everyone in that room can empathize with Tara—

Kristin: Of course.

Kate: And no one's gonna be like, "I can't believe you didn't introduce me"—

Kristin: Oh my god, yeah.

Kate: "When your dad was outing you as a demon!" [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs]

Kristin: Totally.

Kate: I get it, but you know. This is me reading too much into it.

Kristin: Yeah, no, but it's a lot.

Kate: Something you would know nothing about. On Season 5. [laughter]

Kristin: So, okay. So they're gonna go to dinner—well, they're not, but you think they are.

Jenny: Also, have you ever heard—you know a lot of people who refer to their cousin as Cousin So-and-So?

Kristin: Cousin Beth! I know.

Jenny: Clearly to just be like, this is not Tara's sister but we don't wanna spend the time expositing that so we'll just name her "Cousin Beth." [laughter]

Kate: Yep. Yep, I clocked that. I was like, okay, sure.

Kristin: Last name Beth, first name Cousin. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kate: Very—it always feels so sad when you're writing something and you have to do that. It's a thing in comics a lot, especially—well, in shows, you have to name someone within the first scene that they're in. And a lot of the time, it's like, there's no comfortable, natural way to do it. So you have to be like, "oh, you've always been like this, brother." [laughter] It's really awkward but sometimes it's like, ah, we just gotta get to the next scene. So, yeah.

Kristin: So... let's go to the next scene, shall we?

Jenny: Speaking of!

Kristin: I just feel like—I look at Jenny. For the listeners at home—

Jenny: Well!

Kristin: I'm looking pointedly at Jenny.

Jenny: [singing] It's time! For a little more context.

[Clip from episode plays]

Riley: I squared away the rest of your stuff. Wouldn't even know you ever left.

Buffy: You're a god. You're like the god of boyfriends.

Riley: Nah, I just like it when you owe me favors.

Buffy: Well, this earns you a big favor. There could be outfits.

Riley: Oh, be still my heart.

Jenny: [singing] There's gonna be outfits! [laughter]

Kristin: That's really the moment I was fishing for.

Jenny: Well! Well, I've seen some other videos on the internet where there are outfits. [laughter]

Kate: I did—I wrote down like six notes from this episode, 'cause I was like, I know this one by heart. [Jenny laughs] But I did write down "there might be outfits." [laughters]

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: There for it. You know, I'm not there for a lot of Riley/Buffy, but I'm there for roleplaying Riley/Buffy.

Jenny: Let's just really quick, brainstorm—

Kristin: Who do you think wears the outfit? [laughs]

Kate: Oh!

Jenny: Well, I think maybe they both wear outfits, and what are they?

Kate: Interesting.

Kristin: What are they?

Kate: I don't know.

Kristin: Because if they're—they're not gonna go, like, military—you know, they're not gonna go—

Jenny: GI Joe and GI Jane, Spiderman and Spiderwoman.

Kristin: Jenny's put some thought into this. [laughter]

Jenny: No, these are just right—flying off the top of my head.

Kate: 'Cause there's no way that he's gonna wear an outfit that emasculates him in any way at all, because he's very, very insecure in his masculinity. [laughs]

Kristin: But maybe he would go, like, farmer—maybe he would go Farmer Finn...

Kate: Ooh!

Jenny: Or maybe like, Tarzan and like a...

Kate: Oh, I like Farmer Finn and like, big city girl. [laughter]

Jenny: [laughing] Oh my god!

Kate: That's fun.

Kristin: Yes, yes, yes, yes!

Jenny: Urban Slayer.

Kristin: Oh my god, I'm sorry for slapping my knees.

Kate: Coming to town to take care of some local vampires. It's like, ooh, look at her, she has a pencil skirt.

Kristin: Yes, and she's like, "I didn't realize you could ever get corn this cheap."
[laughter]

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: You can take it from there.

Jenny: "The ears are so big." [laughter] One time...

Kristin: Kate's in the house, everybody!

Kate: Woo!

Kristin: We go hard for Kate, you know?

Jenny: One time I was visiting my home in rural New Jersey with my ex-girlfriend Kathy. And I was like, just out of college. And we went to a produce stand to get ears of corn, to roast corn. Um—

Kristin: I'm gonna edit porn music underneath this. [laughter]

[porn music starts in the background]

Jenny: [sensually] And we asked the farm stand lady... [normal voice] we said, like, we've never picked out corn before, 'cause look at us. [music ends] And, how

do you know if it's a good one? And she... I swear to god, she picked up an ear of corn, hefted it and kind of like, thwapped it against her hand. [laughs] And was like, "you know, the texture should be like, well, you know." [laughter]

Kristin: Oh my god!

[more laughter]

Kate: Oh my god!

Kristin: Oh. My god.

Kate: I can't believe there's a better story related to corn than I have. And not—

Kristin: What is your corn story?! Fuck, I don't have one! [laughter]

Kate: [laughing] We should just dub this episode Cornography. [laughter]

Kristin: Goddamn it!

Kate: No, mine is not—it's just that in my small home town, every time it was corn season, our grocery stores would always inexplicably—like, I don't know who was causing the problem, but I was fascinated by it—inexplicably have like, 46 signs that were like, "do not husk the corn!" [laughter] Like, on every display of corn.

Kristin: [laughing] Oh my god!

Kate: And they were printed off, clearly. And they kept—there were so many. If anyone lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia between like, 2007 and 2015. It was, just every season. It would just make me laugh so hard, but yours—

Jenny: You gotta buy the corn first, take it home, set up your webcam, and then you can husk it! [laughter]

Kate: You gotta take it to dinner first.

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah!

Kristin: I'm excited that your corn... ography got the word "thwap" in it. [Jenny laughs]

Kate: Yes. But that's incredible.

Kristin: Also, this is jumping ahead, but I cannot possibly sit here and hear you talk about thwapping corn on your palm without skipping to the scene where [starts laughing] fucking Tara's dad— [laughter] is in the goddamn room—

Jenny: "I suppose! You wanted me. To see all these..."

All three: "Toys!"

Jenny: He says, hefting a crystal exactly the size, shape, length, girth of a dildo. [laughter]

Kate: [laughing] This is the only part I screencapped. 'Cause I was like, if we don't bring it up, I'm gonna start a riot.

Kristin: Oh my god. Jenny texted me literally immediately. And I was like, yep, got it.

Kate: I had totally forgotten that part. 'Cause I remembered him being in the room and being like, "I can't believe you left all your witch stuff out." But it's like, that's a dildo, sir!

Kristin: [laughs] It's really—it's a real specific choice.

Kate: It was wild.

Kristin: Oh my god, okay.

Jenny: Imbuing your lover with the power of Hecate from within! [laughter]

Kristin: Wow!

Kate: I mean, they do make crystal dildos. So you know, it's a thing.

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: *Do* they?!

Kate: Yes.

Jenny: Do you need to charge them in the light of a full moon, or...?

Kate: That's optional.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: Depends on how much fun you wanna have.

Kate: Exactly.

Kristin: Oh my god, alright, let's—

Kate: Sorry. Sorry!

Kristin: See where the hell we even are!

Jenny: Okay, alright, let's... hose Kate down and then continue. [laughter]

Kate: It's not just me!

Kristin: Kate—I do not think it is just Kate! [laughter] Okay, so this all stemmed from Buffy and Riley and their outfits.

Jenny: Hell yeah!

Kate: But come on, it's great!

Kristin: It's amazing. It's amazing. And this is—we already talked about Melinda. And Riley is pissed. Riley takes a turn. He goes right from outfits to being like, what the fuck is up? Why aren't—'cause he can tell that Buffy is being super overprotective of Dawn and he's like "you need to tell me what's up" and she won't. And he's like, "I'm fucking outta here 'cause you won't share your secrets with me."

Kate: Which is... uh... iffy.

Jenny: It's walking the line.

Kristin: Yeah. It's walking the line.

Kate: Yeah, 'cause I'm on his side about her being weird about Dawn going to a friend's house. 'Cause it's like, yes, she is being absurdly overprotective. But then when he's just like—oh my god, when he says—when he walks out and he's like, you know, "tell me when you're ready and I'll come running."

Kristin: Ugh!

Kate: And then he just walks out, and I was like, wha...!

Kristin: Yeah.

Kate: Woof!

Kristin: Passive aggressive much?

Kate: No kidding!

Jenny: There has been a build though, in recent episodes.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: So it makes sense, it's just a little like, hoo...

Kristin: Well and that's the thing, we're seeing the Riley who is secure—and isn't this true for all of us? The Riley who is secure is able to be like, "hey, I've got your back, I'm here for you, I trust you."

Jenny: [gasps] What if Riley wore scrubs and then he took them off? [laughter]

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: Sorry, I just had this brilliant idea and I had to interrupt to share it.

Kate: What if he had to borrow them from Ben and then Ben just didn't have anything to wear? [laughter]

Kristin: Oh my god!

Jenny: Hell yeah!

Kristin: [laughs] People are gonna be like, "so why is this episode three hours?" and we're like, "cornography." [laughter]

Kate: "Why is it labeled NC17? [laughter] I didn't even think podcasts could do that!"

Kristin: Oh, okay. So... so the next scene is—actually. The next scene is the one with the toys in the bedroom, so I wasn't even that far off.

Kate: Nope.

Kristin: And after this hilarious crystal dildo moment, they have a very serious exchange where we find out the core of this episode, which is that her dad has told her that when she turns 20, this is when the demon side takes over. She has to come home with them. She is shameful because she has not been hiding this part of herself, that she should feel ashamed of these pieces of herself. So we get a lot of things here. And also something that we get is him saying to Tara, "You need to come home." And she says, "Home?" And I feel like that's the first real big thwang of the guitar string that is chosen family. Like, she's like, "what is home though?"

Kate: Yep.

Jenny: Also, "it doesn't feel evil." "Evil never does."

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: Yes.

Kate: Insidious.

Kristin: So this is like, gaslight-y...

Jenny: Like, I'm having PTSD flashes from my years of going to born-again Christian church.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: [shudders audibly]

Kristin: And what's sad about Cousin Beth, right—'cause she's really there to set up the effect that this kind of gaslighting can have on a person. Because she is so brainwashed that she thinks that Tara is evil and will not—cannot recognize—

Kate: Yeah, she just walks up wearing a t-shirt that says "internalized misogyny."

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: What if Cousin Beth gets—they take the RV home, Cousin Beth is unpacking and she pulls out her many white undergarments and various things and her toiletry bag. And then she's like, "what is this... seven-inch long... [Kristin and Kate laugh] obelisk-shaped crystal all about?" And then maybe everything starts to take a turn for Cousin Beth!

Kristin: Yeah, a turning point. It's true, it's true. Oh my god—

Kate: That's her root. I love it.

Kristin: We could literally have a fanfic novel come out of this episode, for god's sake.

Kate: I'm sure it'll happen whether you want it or not. [laughter]

Kristin: It's true. Okay, so. Strong Blond has the clown tongue monster tied up to her incredible closet. [laughing] Kate?

Kate: I... lost it! I was like, oh, I forgot about her closet. Even though she basically wears the same dress all of the time—iterations of the same dress that are almost always, like, PVC or pleather or just bodycon all the way. It's amazing. But she has a whole giant closet and like, very little else. 'Cause what else do you need?

Kristin: [laughs] Nothing.

Kate: Sorry, this is—

Kristin: Cordelia would be envious of this closet. She's got a lot of big coats over where Clownie is chained up.

Kate: Yes! Yes.

Kristin: I wish we got to see this character in more of those coats. If I'm being real.

Kate: [fake sobbing] I know!

Kristin: She's wearing a pleather or leather dress in this scene?

Kate: Yes. Yeah. I wasn't sure. I wasn't sure which one it was. [laughing] We don't need to get back into that whole thing.

Kristin: That seems like a solution to your pleather concern?

Kate: Yeah, whatever it is, it's great. [laughter] It's not—it doesn't have any stretch to it. It looks—it looked like—'cause when she moves, the fabric folds don't stretch. So that makes me think it's more on the leather side of things, 'cause pleather is generally stretchy. But it's hard to tell. It's a thick fabric.

Kristin: I like to egg you on for a little fashion even when you're here for other purposes. [Kate laughs] Okay, so this character—I literally cannot get used to calling her—

Jenny: Strong Blond! Strong Blond wants the Lei-Ach demon to round up some of his Lei-Ach buddies and suck the marrow from the bones of the Slayer.

Kristin: Yes. She says, before the scene is over, "You have the cutest little supporator—" [sic]

Kate: Separating...

Jenny: Supporating.

Kristin: Supporating.

Kate: Supporating? Oh.

Jenny: It means "oozing pus."

Kristin: Yes, I looked it up.

Kate: Oh my god, I always thought it was "separating" 'cause they were open.

Jenny: Right, right, right. [groans]

Kate: Huh.

Kristin: *Supporating*. I knew because I had the closed captions on.

Jenny: I knew because I was like "supporating, let me Google that." Mmm.

Kate: Very good.

Kristin: So Willow wants to do this fucking spell again. We saw it in the Previously On, we didn't talk about that, but there was this time, a million years ago it feels like, when they tried to do this demon locator spell. And we saw Tara toss the dust.

Jenny: Finally, a payoff!

Kristin: I know. At the time, our listeners were like, "Kristin, do you really not know why she tosses that dust?" And I did not, listener, because I am a goldfish. [laughter] And I forgot. So, anyhow. They have this conversation and Tara's like, "I don't think I'm feeling up to this spell" and we're like, oh, that's why. She didn't want to be found out.

Jenny: She's up to a different spell though. She's ready to do a whole other spell. It involves, like, blowing some glittery dust—

Kristin: Oh, magical dust, yes. The color of Kate's hair, as a matter of fact.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Into the eyes of all the Scoobies. Yes.

Kristin: I mean, I don't know if your hair will be this color in November, Kate, but...

Kate: I mean, it's been pink for a long time. [laughter] It's magenta now. Thanks, overtone.

Kristin: So yeah, and that—we go—we're doing safety planning with the Scoobies in the next scene. And Tara's like [blows air]. You think the mic got that?

Jenny: I think so.

Kristin: [laughs] And it causes this spell that means they cannot see demons. Now... I'm gonna jump ahead. Because I would like to ask everyone. If the spell means you can't see a demon, then why the fuck did Spike need to punch Tara in the face, because we saw Tara!

Jenny: Well, then we wouldn't have gotten to see Spike punch Tara in the face.

Kate: Oh, oh, oh! Because she hadn't turned yet. It wasn't her birthday yet.

Kristin: Oh! It was before...

Jenny: Ah.

Kate: This was an anticipatory spell.

Kristin: Okay.

Kate: This is my guess. I mean, the real answer is 'cause the writers needed that to happen. But that's me justifying some maybe sloppy writing, I don't know.

Kristin: Yeah. So the demons, unfortunately, that become unseeable are the spooky clown tongue dudes. And this is kind of—this reminded me a little bit of Hush, especially when Willow opens the door.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And they're just all like, hello! And she's like, mm? You know—

Jenny: Nobody's here!

Kristin: Yeah. "I don't see anything."

Jenny: And so as Willow opens the door unto demons no one can see, I must now, at this exact moment, open the door unto a few words from our sponsors.

[Ad music plays]

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[Ad music plays out]

Kristin: Okay so, we're gonna get to the invisible demon scene. But there's a couple of important scenes that happen before we get to the invisible demons. One is very visible demons at a bar, known as Willy's.

Kate: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Sitting next to one Riley Finn. Who... first of all, it's been named that everyone on the show is 20 years old. And yet—

Jenny: Well, Riley was a TA, though. You may have forgotten, Riley was a TA. [Kristin laughs] Did you know Riley was actually a TA? That means Teacher's Assistant, usually it's like—

Kristin: Thank you...

Jenny: A position held by upperclassmen. He's the TA.

Kristin: You know what you've earned yourself, Jenny?

Jenny: I'm a TA, I'm Riley!

Kristin: You've earned yourself the Riley jingle.

[GO AWAY RILEY jingle plays]
Riley, you are kind of a cardboard
Your mansplaining's best to be ignored
No one cares, you're our TA so please
Please go away

Jenny: Can't have anything nice around here! [Kristin laughs]

Kate: I really love that. This is a total aside, but I'm playing this video—I've beaten it by now. [laughter] But in late September, I was playing Fire Emblem: Three Houses, which is like a JRPG, turn-based—turn-based RPG game, very anime. It's very anime. And the thing I've been enjoying about its translation more than anything else is that it takes place in a college school, but no one's age is ever said. And like, it comes up a bunch? Because you are playing a professor who is the same age as the students—

Jenny: Hmm.

Kate: And that is spelled out very clearly, because you can romance them all. [Kristin laughs] But it keeps being like, "how old *are* you?" and you're like, "I don't know!" And then a character will be like, "well, I look younger but I'm not." And it'll be like, "how old are you?" "As old as you are." And it's like, you are just dancing around this—how people get so angry if you ship characters that are minors or

whatever—or supposedly. And, you know, I'm not even gonna get into that whole thing, but I think it's really funny how they do that. And it's like, "well, how old are you?" "Well, how old are *you*?" [laughter]

Jenny: "How old do you want me to be?"

Kate: Exactly. Anyway.

Kristin: Anyway.

Kate: Riley's a TA.

Kristin: Riley is a TA.

Jenny: Riley's a TA, and Riley is now apparently going to Willy's place every night. To drink alcohol.

Kristin: Yeah! Riley is drinking and cavort—not fully cavorting. But he's, you know...

Kate: He's dabbling.

Jenny: Servin' up some lines.

Kristin: He's dabbling. Yeah. He really is. And he's sort of showing us a side of himself that we have not seen. I mean, I think this is just a taste but it's like a darker side of Riley.

Jenny: Well, you could tell by the hair gel.

Kristin: Oh, boy.

Kate: [laughs] Dark Riley.

Kristin: Meanwhile, over at Spike's, there's a whole other situation happening where Spike is, like, fondling the mannequin when—

Jenny: Blegh!

Kristin: In walks Harmony, who he has a pet name for. He calls her "sweetbreads." Which is incredible!

Jenny: Hilarious!

Kate: [laughs] That was great.

Kristin: So incredible.

Kate: 'Cause you see her give him pet names so many times and he doesn't reciprocate. But it's like, okay, he's sort of stopped fighting that. [laughter]

Kristin: Yeah. And the fact that it's like—in case you don't know, listener, sweetbreads are not sweet bread. They're not sweet, nor are they bread. They are the pituitary gland of a cow.

Kate: [laughing] What?!

Jenny: Oh yeah!

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah.

Kate: I did not know that. It makes perfect sense, yeah, but.

Kristin: So now, it's like, in the eyeballs to—

Jenny: Are you feeling any different about my invitation to come over for sweetbreads next week?

Kate: Honestly, I'm more excited.

Jenny: Okay, cool.

Kristin: [laughs] But it's in the "eyeballs to entrails" family.

Kate: Yes! Oh, very good.

Kristin: You know? It is literally located between your eyeballs and your entrails. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kate: Perfect, perfect.

Kristin: And so, Harmony has heard these rumors of the Lei-Ach demons. These clown tongues, who are out to kill—

Jenny: I feel like your abbreviation of my initial naming of the demon continues to truncate and become more and more obscure.

Kristin: Well, it seems like that, but I actually refer to them in my notes as "clown tongues."

Jenny: Oh, I see. [laughter] Carry on.

Kate: I love this scene. It is one of my favorites in the whole episode, because Harmony's gossiping about what the other vampires—first of all, where is she shopping in Los Angeles at night? Everything here closes.

Kristin: April Fool's. [laughs]

Kate: Yeah. But the gossiping with the other vampires, like, "you know, it was this guy who was sired by that guy, you remember." [laughter] And like, I loved that so much.

Kristin: It's so good. Also, she's like, stoked, of course, that they're gonna kill Buffy. And she's like, "you know, if they really do it, Spike, we should get them a gift basket." [laughs]

Kate: Yes!

Kristin: Just—if you're listening and you want to fucking tweet at us or email us at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com of what you think Harmony's gift basket to the Lei-Ach would include.

Kate: Oh my god.

Kristin: I would love to know.

Kate: Mm. I can't begin. That's very good. Probably some—like, a skincare regime? [laughter] Face masks?

Kristin: Oh my god, please. Please, yes. Something for your tongue?

Kate: [laughs] "From supporating to supple, from Harmony!" [laughter]

Kristin: Yes!

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: So then we scuttle right over into your—one of your favorite scenes, because it's when Cousin Beth...

Kate: Oh. Oh!

Kristin: Speaking of tongues. She's got some... she's got a tongue-lashing for old Tara.

Kate: [laughing] I think some of the issue here is Tara's tongue-lashing. [laughter]

Kristin: [drawn-out] Wow!

Kate: [laughing] Sorry! Sorry!

Kristin: Wow!

Kate: Anyway. Let's just...

Jenny: Mm. Ahem, ahem.

Kate: Yeah. So Beth shows up in this, so specific to the era, like, tied—there was a name for those shirts and sweaters at one point, that like, only went to just past your boobs, remember? And they were like... little half-cardigans. Someone's gonna know and they'll tell you—

Kristin: Yeah, they'll tell us.

Kate: But this one that's like a crossed over wrap, half-cardigan with the ruffles thing.

Kristin: Yeah, like a conservative take on Britney Spears'...

Kate: Yeah, 'cause she's got a shirt under it. And she's got this low side pony thing happening. [laughter] Amy Adams has looked better, but I get that this is—she's a country girl. You know.

Kristin: She's going for... right. She doesn't—she's not up on all the Sunnydale styles.

Kate: Exactly.

Kristin: No one has told her about pleather. So yeah, brainwashed Cousin Beth calls Tara a selfish...

Kate: [whispers] Bitch!

Kristin: Bitch!

Jenny: Oh. My. God.

Kristin: And she says, you know, "your dad and Donny can't take care of themselves"—like, how dare you, as the female of this household—

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: Leave them to make their own sandwiches! And so now I would like to actually play the Patriarchy jingle.

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

Jenny: Ding-dong! It's the Lei-Ach demons!

Kristin: Oh, ding-dong, can't see them at all! Luckily, Buffy has been doing one-armed handstands and, you know, communing with her crystals. Not the kind of communing with crystals— [crosstalk]

Jenny: [laughing] That Willow and Tara have been doing!

Kate: You are just as bad as me! [laughter] I do like that we—Xander's like, "why don't you go stretch out and train?" It's like, okay, Xander... [Jenny laughs] sure.

Jenny: Xander's like, "I've seen some videos on the internet!" [laughter]

Kristin: I do have to say, I'm pretty into the Buffy stretch that the scene opens with.

Kate: Yes. It is... mm.

Kristin: Every once in a while you just fall into that hole of objectification and I just fell right in. I was like, oh god—

Kate: Yep. Whoops!

Jenny: Who left the manhole off of that?

Kristin: Well, shit! [laughs]

Kate: I tripped and then I was there. [laughter] It's not my fault.

Kristin: So Spike has a great moment in this fight scene that we get—they all do a great job, I think, all of the actors in the scene. And probably the stunt people, of this invisible fighting. And I think it's really done very believably and well. Spike rolls up and he comes in and he just has this massive eyeroll before he jumps in to help.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kate: I know! It's so good. Because that really... it's his thing. And it's just—it's a very good set up for future things.

Kristin: Yes, he just doesn't want it to be.

Kate: 'Cause he's showing up being like, "haha, I'm gonna watch the Slayer get killed. Oh no, she's in trouble!" [laughter]

Kristin: "Shit! Shit, shit, shit!"

Jenny: Also, we get to see Anya wielding a big magnifying glass.

Kristin: Ooh, yeah.

Jenny: And we see Emma Caulfield holding both weapons and non-weapons in a weapon-like manner throughout the series. And it never stops looking hilarious and great. That's all.

Kate: It's very good.

Jenny: She's all elbows.

Kristin: Should we play Anya her jingle?

[ANYA jingle plays]

[cash register rings]

She spent one millennium, demonically vengeancein'

Speaks her mind and then some, you know

She's partial to the finer things

And down with double boyfriends, oh yeah

Exchanging cash for goods and also services

She'd love to hold the money for ya (she'll hold that cash)
Just keep the bunnies far from... Anya!

Jenny: Yes, wow! It's about damn time, I say.

Kristin: So Tara breaks the spell. And also is like, horrified when she realizes what she's done.

Jenny: Oh no!

Kristin: And then they defeat the clowns. And there's a really graphic kill, where there's a clown—she uses the step to snap the clown's neck.

Jenny: Ugh, yeah.

Kristin: It's like, rough.

Jenny: Like a curb-stompy kind of like... we know there's a new stunt person, probably a new stunt choreographer as well. And it's like, f—okay.

Kristin: I don't like it to go—

Jenny: I like the wrestling stuff, but this is like, a little too visceral.

Kristin: It's too far. Yeah.

Kate: I was like, doing my hair at this point, 'cause I was like, okay, I know this fight scene. [laughs] And looked away.

Kristin: Yeah, it's a little too much.

Kate: I do like the invisible demon thing, because it does remind us that Buffy is a superhero. Because she senses them and is the best at fighting them and can do that thing. And that comes up multiple times, where she is fighting an unseen enemy or something that like and she has to focus. Actually, I feel like the first time—in the one with Clea DuVall, the invisible girl episode. Where has to, you know, do the same thing.

Kristin: Yup. And I think there's elements of that in Helpless, too, right?

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: Where she's like, I can sense it, I can't see it.

Kate: Which I think is cool. It's just neat.

Kristin: Yeah, totally.

Kate: It's neat continuity for her. Anyway, yes. Demons.

Kristin: Demons. So they defeat them and in walks the Maclay family. And they are horrified that this has all happened. And we get—we've talked a lot about this already, but we get this exchange where Tara is looking at Willow. And she's like, I'm gonna go. Like, I fucked everything up and also, I'm a fucking demon and this is why I did this. There's this big reveal, and Will—[laughs] first of all, Anya's comic relief. And like, "ah, excuse me. Um, excuse me? My name's Anya, what kind of demon are they?"

Jenny: "Because some demons are widely regarded as evil and some become productive members of society, have found their place in the world, enjoy capitalism." [Kristin laughs]

Kate: Yeah. And then Xander gives her this very proud smile, which I actually really enjoyed.

Kristin: Yes, me too!

Jenny: Yeah!

Kate: And also earlier in the episode when he shows up and he's like, "give me some sugar" and she's like "I've enjoyed your patronage."

Jenny: Yeah, hell yeah!

Kate: I don't give Xander a lot of credit, that's a cute-ass scene.

Kristin: Listen, we all stan—I never say it out loud, I did it. I did it! Uh, Xander bottoming for Anya.

Kate: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: It's just—we're super fucking here for it.

Kate: He's finding his place in the world. And it's under Anya.

Jenny: [simultaneously] And it's under Anya. [laughter]

Kate: [laughing] I'm sorry, I stepped on that.

Kristin: In sync, in sync. So but then, the serious side of this is, you know, Tara saying, "I'm gonna go" and Willow being like, "what are you talking about?" And you can almost feel the... PTSD of Oz leaving. 'Cause it's very like, she's gonna leave—she's just gonna leave right now? Like, you can't do this. And she asks her, "do you *want* to leave?" And Tara, of course, doesn't. And fucking—one of my favorite parts of the whole episode is when Dad Maclay is like, "It's not your decision, young lady" to Willow, and then Willow is like, "I know that." [laughter] And she says it so strongly and firmly. And calling back to that moment of not being introduced and feeling like maybe you shouldn't assert yourself, like, ahh. For it to end in this place where Willow's like, "step the fuck off man," is nice.

Kate: I did really like that, where she just like, breaks. Where she's like... [deep breath] "you suck!"

Kristin: Yeah. And then I have a lot of "sob, sob, sob, sob, sob" written in my notes, because this is when we then somersault into "the girl belongs with her family." And Buffy is like, "okay, well, that's fine." You know, and there's a moment of like, what do you fucking mean, that's fine? And she's like, "you just have to go through me." And what's really cute is like, now we know who Dawn is. And Dawn steps up next to Buffy and is like, "And you gotta go through me too!" and they have this moment of being chosen family.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: So it's just this many-layered—

Kate: And I really love when Buffy says, "She's a hair-puller."

Jenny: Yeah!

Kate: It's so cute! So cute.

Jenny: Also that Dawn is the first one—the least capable, but the first one to step up behind Buffy and be like, "squeak squeak!" You know?

Kristin: [laughs] Yes!

Kate: I do find it extremely weird that Willow doesn't.

Kristin: Yeah.

Kate: Like, she stays at the back and says nothing at this whole part, which I—

Jenny: Well, maybe it's about, like, Willow already is *with* Tara, you know? And everybody else has to step up and show Willow and Tara that.

Kate: Yeah. I guess that's fair. Yeah, like, she already is Tara's family, so.

Jenny: [laughing] But true, also.

Kristin: But also, yeah, I think that doesn't know—'cause Willow doesn't know if they're gonna accept her. As much as Willow's always like, "Tara, it's okay, you belong, you belong, you belong," Willow only has the ability to speak on behalf of herself. And she really hasn't gotten any confirmation, until this moment, that these family members of hers are welcoming Tara.

Kate: And they do. Giles does this—Giles backs them up! And is like, "It's not just two little girls." Which is very silly, because obviously Buffy could kill everyone in that room without trying. But—

Jenny: But Giles is like, "Daddy's here."

Kate: Yeah, exactly.

Kristin: Oh my god, and then—you know, they have this really beautiful moment. And Xander, I think, is like, "we're all here and we're all gonna da-da-da," and Spike's like, "Except me!" [laughter] And Xander's like, "oh yeah, except Spike."

Jenny: Yeah, Spike doesn't care what happens.

Kate: [laughing] "I don't care what happens." That part is so good.

Kristin: [laughs] But he does!

Kate: Yeah, 'cause he punches Tara to prove if, you know, she's a demon or not. And that's great. I love that, when she's like, "he hurt my nose!" and it's so cute between the two of them. Ugh.

Kristin: Yeah. So Spike—right, like you said, Kate, kind of unearths this truth, that the whole demon thing has been a fucking load of malarkey to keep women under control.

Jenny: Hm!

Kristin: God, are we really gonna play this jingle three times?

Kate: [laughs] We've done enough.

Kristin: We know what it is, everyone.

Kate: The patriarchy's taken up enough time in this episode. [laughter]

Kristin: Yeah, goddamnit.

Kate: But yeah, I do—I—yeah. I love that. And I love how Spike's just like, "oh, you're a real twisted piece of work" or whatever he calls the dad.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Yes.

Kate: Whenever this all sort of gets outed and you get to see Cousin Beth's reaction to realizing that she has been raised in a cult. And is like... Cousin Beth's gonna have her own—not a come to Jesus, come away from Jesus moment? [laughter]

Jenny: Yeah, step away from Jesus. [laughter]

Kate: Put down the wrap cardigan. Pick up the crystal.

Kristin: Pick up the crystal! Hey! [laughter] So Tara tells her dad to just go.

Jenny: And Beth is like, "are you happy now?" And Tara takes a moment to re-envision the crystal dildo awaiting her in her dorm room and bask in the warm glow of her newfound chosen family. And she's like, hell yeah! Birthday party montage!

Kate: All without saying anything, it's so cute. I do also like that it gives a moment to show that Donny didn't know that yet?

Kristin: Oh, yeah.

Kate: Like, it's not—

Jenny: Ooh, yeah.

Kate: We don't really deal with it, but he does have, like, as surprised a look.

Kristin: Wow, solid.

Kate: So it's like, he hadn't reached the age where they would tell him, "oh, by the way, we manipulate all the women in our family, so get on board or get out."

Jenny: [simultaneously] "And isn't that fun?"

Kate: Yeah. 'Cause he also has been lied to, so that's really a lot to think about.

Kristin: Yeah, good call.

Kate: But then, much more fun, is the party!

Kristin: [laughs] Is the party!

Jenny: Yay!

Kristin: Also, sorry, but Tara's dad—his last line is he just says, "Magic."

Jenny: [simultaneously] "Magic." [laughter]

Kate: Yes!

Kristin: So like, that's great. So yeah, let's go to the party. I scanned the room to see if it were full of queer people. I could not tell. I did not—nary a flannel did I see—

Jenny: Well, the evidence that we have so far is that all queer people in Sunnydale just wear, like, Renaissance fair dresses. [Kristin laughs]

Kate: Yes. That's true.

Jenny: Or sweaters with cartoon cats on them.

Kristin: Right, correct. Willow is blowing bubbles at the party, which is about the Willowy-est fucking thing that I've ever seen in my goddamn life.

Jenny: Tara loves her crystal ball. And also her broom! Her new broom. Dawn got her a broom.

Kristin: Dawn got her a fucking broom!

Kate: So cute!

Kristin: Speaking of your love for these two.

Kate: Their interactions are so cute! Ugh! I just love it. There's—I can't remember where it's from, and completely outside of spoilers, but there is a moment where they have a conversation while sitting on a curb—

Kristin: It happened in Episode 2.

Kate: Okay, I love that too.

Kristin: They thumb wrestle!

Kate: Yes! Yes. Yes.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kate: That's where the love came from.

Kristin: It's really, really sweet. And you can just picture Dawn literally going to the hardware store and being like, "I know what I'm gonna get her."

Jenny: Ahh!

Kristin: It's so sweet.

Kate: We get the everybody drinking, and then Dawn going like, "only losers drink alcohol!" [laughs]

Jenny: Obviously!

Kristin: And this is what I was talking about earlier, when I was like, they're all 20. 'Cause they're all 20 and they're all drinking at the bar! Except for Riley and Giles.

Kate: Maybe The Bronze is Canada. Who knows?

Jenny: Ooh, maybe!

Kate: There's a portal, just takes them straight to Montreal. Drinking age is 18 there. Getting wild.

Kristin: Tara gets her last attempt at clarifying her insect joke, and unfortunately, it's with Anya, who's like, "Still not funny. [laughter] I get it, not funny."

Kate: I love it, I love it. I love it so much.

Kristin: And then... here we go. I feel like literally any time we talk to you, Kate, we end up crying about Willow and Tara by the end.

Kate: Mm-hmm! Well, welcome to my entire teenhood, was crying about them. And this one—like, ahh! Again, you know, we always—I always talk about this, but it's like the first time I saw this. There were—this show was so monumental in solidifying and backing up my queer identity and being like, this is real. You know, Willow not only has this relationship, but her girlfriend is her own fleshed out character and gets her own arc and gets her own victories and gets to be part of this found family. And is accepted into this group and it's—the episode is not about Willow. She's in it, but she doesn't do very much, other than be kind of a sounding board. And I really—like, that was so special to me, 'cause this was one of maybe the first time of a fully Tara episode?

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. For sure.

Kate: And so that was a big one. And then, ugh, that song, which I cannot listen to without crying.

Jenny: Oof!

["I Can't Take My Eyes Off You" by Melanie Doane starts playing]

Kate: Ugh!

Kristin: It's a lot.

Kate: Am I gonna dance to it at *my* wedding? I don't know!

Jenny and Kristin: Oh my god!

Kate: We already know "Wild Horses" is gonna be in my— [laughter]

Jenny: Obviously!

Kate: Cohen and I are so fun—mm. I'm not gonna get—not gonna talk about my wedding, it's fine. There are gonna be a lot of songs from Steven Universe though. [laughter]

Kristin: Oh my god. This is gonna be the best wedding of the entire...

Kate: Very nerdy. But yeah, no, I love that. And they get their dance—you probably know the quotes, 'cause I don't remember them.

Kristin: I wrote down—because this is kind of what I was talking about with the family. Like, not only was Tara ashamed of the fact that she was a demon, which wasn't true. But also if it was, there was nothing to be ashamed about. But she was also ashamed of her family and that's kind of what their last exchange is about, because she says, "I didn't want you to know where I came from."

Kate: [whispering] Yeah...

Kristin: And Willow, as they're *slow dancing*...

Kate: Oh, right, yeah, oh god!

Kristin: She says, "I think about what you grew up with and then I look at what you are, and it makes me so proud. It makes me love you more." [squealing] And then she's like—basically Tara's like, "How do you always make me feel so special, even at my lowest moments?" And Willow, echoing in the opposite vein what Tara's dad said as he left, was like, "Magic."

Kate: [groans happily] I didn't realize the parallel to it being the last thing her dad says! That's very good!

Kristin: I actually didn't either until I just said it! [laughs]

Kate: Oh, that's very good! [Jenny clears throat] Yes, Jenny.

Jenny: I was just—

Kristin: That was it, that was her whole commentary.

Kate: Oh, okay. [laughs]

Jenny: Well, the one thing that I will say is I know that Sunnydale is a weird town where a lot of shit happens. [laughter] But I have a hard time suspending my

disbelief that two people could float up into the air at The Bronze while slow dancing, and no one would notice or do anything about it.

Kate: Well. They float when they're having a nice time together. So. You know.

Kristin: Yeah, I believe it.

Jenny: Oh, I wonder if I'll see any more of that?

Kate: Couldn't say. Couldn't possibly say.

Kristin: [laughs] It's really incredible.

Kate: [laughing] I'm legally forbidden from saying. [laughter] But it is really sweet, and there is a little moment when they're floating up together where their little toes touch, 'cause they're hanging—

Kristin: [happily] Ugh! [Jenny squeals]

Kate: Their feet are, like, hanging, which is a very good... that's a very good detail, because it doesn't just look like they're standing on an invisible floor, three feet off the ground. Like, they are... floating.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Suspended.

Kate: They're suspended, and so it's by, you know, their core, their heart area, and it's very... it's beautiful.

Kristin: And they're truly wrapped around each other. Which is—and this—we are finally—we finally cleared permission to retweet this GIF of them. I'm so—because people—any time we talk about Tara and Willow, this is one of the main things that we see, 'cause it is such an incredibly beautiful moment.

Jenny: You can barely tell where one long-sleeve, black background dress begins and another ends. [laughter]

Kate: I was gonna say, their paisley intertwines. [laughter]

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah!

Kristin: But yeah, this is a—

Kate: [laughing] Which one is the peasant top and which one is the peasant bottom? [laughter]

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: Wow.

Kate: Sorry!

Kristin: I don't think I've ever snapped on the mic before...

Jenny: Wow, that's fucked up.

Kate: [laughing] I know, it is, right? Sorry to all the peasants out there.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs] So I think we've done it. Do you want to talk about anything else? Have we forgotten anything about this episode?

Kate: No, I mean... [sighs] it's so good?

Kristin: It's so good.

Kate: I just—I love it. I love this scene at the end. I think about it all the time when I think about, you know, the most romantic moments from things I've seen, the most impactful kind of moments. And them dancing together is right up there with their first sort of kiss and with the candle blowing out. It's like, it's such a beautiful moment. And that they get that episode, you know? Tara gets that.

Kristin: And this—I got the chills while you were talking, because I think so much of what happens in the Buffering universe is informed by what happens in the Buffy universe. And like, this is not the first time, but maybe the most intense time we've seen chosen family. And that is—that's why, when we talk about this podcast, we're like, it's a podcast but then it's like, something else.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: And it's 'cause this show really helps us to understand how deep our ties can go to our chosen family. And that—you know, they underline it even in an actual line in the scene in the Magic Box where, you know, the dad is like, "She's our blood kin."

Kate: "What are you?" "We're family."

Kristin: [simultaneously] Right, "family." That line is drawn clearly.

Kate: [squeals] It's so good. And that makes me cry too, 'cause I am a person who, for most of my life, has had chosen family. I—you know, I'm close to my mom but—things have not always been easy. Shockingly, for a queer person.

Kristin: Yeah.

Kate: And there have been a lot of times where I, you know, haven't been in touch with my parents and have, yeah, created families around me. And I think that's what we do, you know, is what queer people do. That's pretty basic stuff. And I think that that is really appropriate for this episode about Tara, about this queer relationship. And that that being part of the analogy is like, you know, you *can* move away from your family and you will find other people and it's not—you know. I think it's really beautiful! And I think it is—yeah, it is really beautiful for the podcast, because it is an incredible family of horndogs that— [laughter] is so sweet. So sweet. And every time I go to a Buffering thing, everyone I meet is so incredible and sweet and amazing. I actually was at a con recently and someone came up and they were like, "I saw you at prom!" and I was like, "you were dressed as Tara!"

Kristin: Ohh!

Kate: And it was a very fun, great moment. A bunch of people at Flame Con said hi, by the way. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: Oh my god, hi to all of you! Hi, Flame Con!

Kate: It was great, it was great. So it was wonderful.

Kristin: Yeah, we love our chosen family and I think the reason we know about chosen family has a lot to do with our queerness, and also shows like this that fucking underline it, so.

Kate: Yeah.

Kristin: Anyway!

Jenny: Let's take it from one end of the spectrum, chosen family, all the way over to the other end of the spectrum... for the Sexual Tension Awards.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Well, it's that time once again, of course. The most important part of the episode, some might say? [Kristin laughs] For us to tell you who the nominees are for this episode's Sexual Tension Awards.

Kristin: We've made Jenny read all four of them because she's so excited.

Jenny: I'm so excited, here are your choices, good luck picking one. First up, we have—oh my goodness! Convening at long last at a roadside stand that only sells great big ears of corn, it's Farmer Finn and Big City Slayer! [laughter]

Kate: Mm-hmm!

Kristin: Uh-huh!

Jenny: Well on their way to a tilt-a-whirl headscissor takedown, it's wrestling club with Riley and Xander! [laughter]

Kristin: Hot, hot, hot!

Jenny: A pairing that really needs no introduction except for the entirety of this episode that came before it, it's the crystal dildo and all of us.

Kristin: Hell yeah!

Kate: Woo!

Jenny: Long may it reign, all hail! [laughter] And in the fourth and final slot...

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: For your consideration...

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: It's "naughty vampire gets well-deserved beat down from petite, blond Slayer, 1080p HD." [laughter]

Kristin: I explained to Jenny that I would not be able to fit that all in the Twitter poll, but I'll do my best.

Jenny: Spike and Fantasy Buffy.

Kristin: Yes.

Kate: Yeah. You all know.

Jenny: You were all already thinking it.

Kristin: Wow. So good luck. Follow us over on Twitter, @BufferingCast. The poll goes up the day that the episode does and is up for a week, so you have a chance to vote for your pick for the sexual tension awards.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Okay. Kate Leth.

Kate: That's me.

Kristin: Thanks for being here with us.

Jenny: Oh my gosh.

Kristin: It's the best.

Kate: Thank you for having me. You continue to tolerate me, five seasons in.

Kristin: The best! I thought about that, actually, as we were waiting to meet you here at the space today. I was like, remember when, a million years ago, we had you on an episode—

Kate: Yup.

Kristin: And then you were like—or we were like? I don't even know where the idea came from. But we were like, this could—this should go on forever.

Kate: Yeah, I just wormed my way in there. That's what I do, I'm like—

Jenny: [laughs] And you're never allowed to leave.

Kristin: Never! Never.

Kate: It's—I honestly—

Jenny: Just three crystal dildos, all in a drawer together. [laughter] Doo doo doo, best friends!

Kristin: That made me feel—I was like—really felt very sweet about the three crystal dildos together. [laughter]

Kate: Yeah, no, it's been a ride.

Kristin: Oh my god, we're like, the alternate version of the Crystal Gems. [laughter]

Kate: Oh my god!

Kristin: Okay! So Kate—

Kate: Anyway. Yes.

Kristin: If the listeners somehow have not found you in all of the places, where can they find you?

Kate: Ugh, in their dreams.

Kristin: Yeah!

Kate: You can find me on Twitter @KateLeth. You can find me basically everywhere @KateLeth, I'm kateleth.com. Since we're recording this in advance, who the hell knows what I'll be doing in November? [laughter] Because I'm a freelance artist and just trying to live. But you can also find my comic, Valley Ghouls, at valleyghouls.com, which is kind of a new thing—

Jenny: [whispering] Yes, yes, yes, yes!

Kate: Since we all got together. It is a slice of life comic that I do about me and my partner and other friends, as monsters and ghouls.

Kristin: Y'all, if somehow you have fucking missed this, which I can't imagine any of you have, but if you have not, run—run! Do not walk!

Jenny: It's so good.

Kate: [laughs] It's on Webtoon now—

Kristin: Kate is a bat—

Kate: It's on Instagram. It's—you can find it pretty much anywhere. I do wanna ask, if you were gonna be a ghoul, what would you be? It's—the limitations are animals or monsters.

Kristin: I need time to think about this.

Kate: Okay. You can get back to me.

Kristin: This is too big of a—Jenny—

Jenny: Can I be...

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny knows already.

Jenny: Please... if it ever comes up. Like, a yellow lab—

Kristin: Oh, of course!

Jenny: That has vampire fangs that pop in.

Kate: Oh, yeah. Oh, perfect.

Jenny: Like, the 99 cent kind.

Kate: Yes.

Jenny: Thank you.

Kate: Absolutely.

Kristin: I'm gonna think about it.

Kate: Yeah, get back to me.

Kristin: I'm gonna think about it and get back to you.

Kate: This might be a moot point by the time everyone hears this, but— [laughter] it was born in this moment. Yeah, that's what I'm—that's most of what I'm up to now, other than being here and talking pleather and Giles with all of you.

Jenny: Yes, yes, yes.

Kristin: Well, we fucking love you.

Kate: Thank you.

Kristin: And thank you for being here.

Kate: Thank *you*!

Kristin: Jenny, if they would like to find a yellow lab with retractable 99 cent fangs, where would they find you?

Jenny: Well, you can find me over at jennyowenyoungs.com or on socials @JennyOwenYoungs. I have a fucking new EP that just came out on Friday?

Kate: Woo!

Kristin: Yeah!

Kate: It's very good!

Jenny: Called Night Shift and that's a thing you can listen to and obtain if you wish to buy it in physical form and then put it under your pillow and whisper all of your secret thoughts to it every night. I also—you can listen to me talk about Veronica Mars over on Veronica Mars Investigations every week. And. That. Is. My. Stuff. Yes. And Kristin?

Kristin: Oh, hi. I am Kristin Russo and you can find out about the work that I do with LGBTQ people and people who support and love and want to better support their LGBTQ loved ones over on my website, at KristinNoeline. That's K-R-I-S-T-I-N-N-O-E-L-I-N-E. [Jenny spells it out with her] Thank you, Jenny. That was nice. [laughs] And that's also—you can use that spelling to find me on Twitter and Instagram. And I am still journeying through My So Called Life on The Boiler Room podcast with Joanna Robinson.

Kate: Woo! Shout out to Joanna!

Kristin: Yeah! Love us some Joanna Robinson. And so you can find me at all those places. And you can find us, @BufferingCast, on Twitter, on Instagram and Facebook. And you can also go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com where you can support us on Patreon. You can buy merch, so much of which is designed by our very own Kate Leth.

Jenny: Oh my god. You can listen to all our music, our many Buffy songs.

Kristin: Yes. You can. You can do all of those things. And you could also—hey! If you haven't done it yet, rate and review us on iTunes. We love that.

Jenny: Please do.

Kristin: I think that's all we got. Oh my gosh—

Jenny: Should we say "crystal dildo" one more time, just for good measure?
[laughter]

Kristin: Instead of saying "until next time," say "crystal dildo" in the same intonation, and then we'll howl out.

Kate: Okay, great. Perfect.

Kristin: [laughs] I know you can do it, you're a musician.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I just gotta... reinterpret—okay.

All together: Crystal... dildo... AWWOOOOOOO!

Kate: Ow-ow-oww! [laughter]

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

You can't choose
Who your blood runs through
But you can choose who to trust
You can't choose
Who your blood runs through
But you can choose who you love
You can choose who you love

Family
Feels different to me
Than it did, than it did, way back when
Won't always be
How you thought it'd be
But it fits, in my heart and my head

Haven't known you for forever
But let's start from here

You can't choose
Who your blood runs through
But you can choose who to trust
You can't choose
Who your blood runs through
But you can choose who you love
You can choose who you love

Always knew
We'd be an army of few
But we fight, oh we fight, side by side
And now we do
What we know how to do
Hold the light, we survive, and we rise

Haven't known you for forever
But let's start from here

You can't choose
Who your blood runs through
But you can choose who to trust
You can't choose
Who your blood runs through
But you can choose who you love
You can choose who you love