

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 3.12: Helpless

Jenny: Hey everybody! You know Tuesday was the first night of Hanukkah. So, I'm here to tell you happy Hanukkah, if you are someone who observes Hanukkah or just enjoys being told happy Hanukkah, consider yourself happy Hanukkahed.

Kristin: I'm so glad you got to use the conjugated form [Jenny laughs] of Hanukkah in that wish. But yes, happy Hanukkah from me as well. We are in it. We are in the holiday season. It is upon us. And we have all of the things that you need to put underneath your tree or your menorah.

Jenny: Or into a stocking.

Kristin: Ooh, yes.

Jenny: Variety of sizes.

Kristin: Jenny's favorite - Jenny's favorite thing is a stocking.

Jenny: I love stockings!

Kristin: Loves a full stocking.

Kristin: What we are talking about of course is our merch. You can go on over to bufferingthevampireslayer.com and click on shop. You will see smash the demon lizard patriarchy t-shirts. You will see pom hats if there are any left, there were five last I checked, so if you want one of those, you better scuttle over there quick, and all sorts of other fun things.

The shipping deadline for U.S. orders is today, the 15th, if you want ground shipping. You can pay more to expedite it, you know I do it all the time, I wait 'til the last minute, but I'm just here to bring you the news that if you don't want to pay for more shipping and you want to get some cool gifts for your pals you can do that over at bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Just click on shop.

Jenny: And hey, if you're feeling festive, this Thursday, December 14th, I'm doing something that I do every year, which is to play a couple of holiday concerts online, so you can log in and join me and watch me as I play songs like "Jingle Bells."

Kristin: What about me? What am I gonna do?

Jenny: Well, Kristin, I'm gonna go like, [sings] "I really can't stay."

Kristin: Oh, and then I'll go, [sings] "But Buffy, it's cold outside."

Jenny: Exactly. That's what we're gonna do. Also, Kristin tends to play glockenspiel at my StageIt shows.

Kristin: [laughs] "Kristin tends to play glockenspiel."

Jenny: That's right! And she likes to hold Sam up into the camera lens. So, if you wanna watch us make some Christmas music and be merry and have a good time, please consider checking out StageIt.com/JennyOwenYoungs where you can find tickets and information about these shows, they'll be at noon and 4 PM Pacific on December 14th, that's this very Thursday and that's StageIt s-t-a-g-e-i-t dot com slash Jenny Owen Youngs, me, great.

Kristin: [laughs] Except not the me.

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah, that was just an affirmation.

Kristin: Yeah. Last but not least we wanna just say, we are so excited, we had the chance- I had the chance to interview Jeff Kober who plays Zachary Kralik. He is wonderful. I had such an incredible time talking to him and I'm so excited to share the interview with you all within this episode. Also, this is our [sings] "last episode before the New Year."

Jenny: Wow, that was so like, Catholic sounding?

Kristin: [laughs] It just came out of my core!

Jenny: It sounded exactly like my favorite Catholic jingle which is [sings], "The mystery of faith."

Kristin: Jenny's favorite part of any Catholic Mass.

Jenny: Hell yeah!

Kristin: Anyhow, we will have a special episode during Christmas week, sharing with you things like our interview with the mayor of Santa Barbara, California.

Jenny: Slash Sunnydale.

Kristin: Slash Sunnydale. And interviews with, I don't know, Nerf Herder.

Jenny: Or whoever.

Kristin: Or whomever.

Jenny: Whomever!

Kristin: Whomever, yeah, I said it. So that'll be a little Christmas present for everybody coming out Christmas week, but we'll be back with the next episode, which is "The Zeppo," on January 3rd, so, stayed tuned for that and we have a special guest on that episode, Andrew T. from the podcast "Yo, is this racist?" Andrew T. is gonna be joining us to talk about All. Things. Xander. Oh boy!

Jenny: Hooray.

Kristin: And now, on to the episode.

[Theme music]

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

Kristin: And I'm Kristin Russo, and this week we are talking about Season 3, Episode 12, "Helpless." Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every week for an original song, written by us, recapping the *Buffy* episode we are discussing.

Jenny: "Helpless" was written by David Fury and directed by James A. Contner. It originally aired on January 19, 1999.

Kristin: IMDB tells us that this is the one where, "as her birthday approaches, Buffy loses her slayer powers and must do battle with a vampire who is not only extremely powerful, but also quite mad." [laughs]

Jenny: Quite mad!

Kristin: [laughs] Quite mad. I guess they mean mad like insane—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: But I hadn't read it before, so when I first read it—

Jenny: He's miffed!

Kristin: He's just pissed off! And that vampire goes by the name of Zachary Kralik, and we told you up in the intro, before we hit the little credit song coming in, but, oh my gosh, I got the chance to sit down with Jeff Kober, who plays Zachary Kralik, and had one of my favorite conversations, I think, of all, since this podcast has started. He was such a joy to talk to, and we're going to get into that interview within this episode, so get excited.

Jenny: Yes, yes, get excited! I've heard it already, because I have privileged access to our recorded materials.

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny's on a high Patreon level, she gets to hear interviews *way* before they go to air.

Jenny: It's really, really good. So, yay great. But, in order to get there, first we have to open on candles, a bowl of grapes, bottles of sparkling water on ice.

Kristin: I believe this is... [singing] doo doo doo doo doo—

Jenny: [laughs] Angel Combustion Watch!

Kristin: Yeah, so okay Jenny just paused it, and looked at me like, “what am I supposed to do after you do the [Breaking news sound] doo doo doo doo doo?” And I was like, “what? It's your favorite segment, Angel Combustion Watch!” And she said, “was there a fire in the fireplace when they were sparring?” Jennifer Owen Youngs the First!

Jenny: Look I made a note of it later!

Kristin: There was a roaring fire and one hundred million candles. Like, everything in the room except for Angel was on fire.

Jenny: Listen, I saw the candles. I noted the candles.

Kristin: Yes. You got distracted by the snack plate?

Jenny: I got distracted by the snack plate. And by the sparring that's totally unladen with any sort of other layer. Nothing going on there but good old-fashioned training.

Kristin: Right, right, of course.

Jenny: We've seen Buffy train before, with various people.

Kristin: Yes, we've seen her fight people instead of doing what she really wants.
[laughs]

Jenny: Listen!

Kristin: Wait, I just want to hit the snack plate one more time, because if this was not 1998, I would suggest that Angel is a reader of Autostraddle.com because this spread is–

So, Linnea, who writes for Autostraddle and is a dear friend of ours, has been doing cheese– like, she's just been imparting her knowledge on how to make the most beautiful cheese plate that you've ever seen in your entire life.

Now, I don't feel like Angel really nails it. But I feel like he read some of Linnea's article, and he was like, I'm gonna go to Whole Foods because I heard that they have like 50% off a different cheese every day. And he went and he bought his cheese, and he made this... it's just a ridiculous, beautiful–

Jenny: Wow, I didn't even see that there was cheese.

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, I don't know, it was like cheese and grapes. It was like a spread. It was a spread, Jenny, you can't have a spread without cheese.

Jenny: Sorry, I saw grapes, I stopped at grapes, grapes own my heart. I didn't need anything else.

Kristin: Anyhow, if you're needing any cheese plates to serve to the Slayer who you're in love with or any of your relatives over the holidays, you should check out Autostraddle.com. I'm telling you.

Jenny: Oh yeah.

Kristin: It's beautiful what's happening over there. I love it! This has not been a paid advertisement. I just love it!

Jenny: So, there's this whole thing about, like, “satisfied?” and like, “That's not the word I would use.” Which we quickly blow through to get to the part where Buffy lets Angel know she has a date with an older man who likes it when she calls him Daddy.

Kristin: Yeah, good joke, Buffy. Great joke.[laughs]

Jenny: Burn! Read the room! But we get to see Angel be very uncomfortable and squirm, which is great.

Kristin: Yeah, you already pointed this out but I do really like that they have decided that because they cannot sleep together, they will train together. You know, apart from the obvious reasons I love it, because of Faith and their training, I just love it as a thing for Angel and Buffy, that like, you know, if we can't do this thing, we gotta do something.

Jenny: Yeah, well she clearly has a lot of energy that she needs to burn off.

Kristin: Clearly, we'll get to the next scene.

Jenny: As we'll see in the next scene. Yeesh!

Kristin: This is the most phallic the show has ever gotten, I believe.

Jenny: Oh!

Kristin: Oh? Is that like a surprised "oh"?

Jenny: Go on... yeah I didn't notice.

Kristin: She has a literal dildo-shaped...

Jenny: Things I see through: phalluses, cheese plates, select fireplaces...

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny, she literally in her hands has, like, a dildo made of amethyst. And she's clutching it tightly, and is like, "gahhh," and then Giles is like, "you okay?" It's a fully...

Jenny: Wow, I just missed, I guess, what she was gripping.

Kristin: Unbelievable.

Jenny: I see what I want to see.

Kristin: Unbelievable. We're trusting you as 50% of this podcast.

Jenny: Yeah and you're the 50% that covers phalluses, apparently.

Kristin: [laughs] WOW! Glad to help everyone.

Jenny: Anyway. Yikes! So Buffy's training now includes gem identification.

Kristin: But does it? No, it's just a...

Jenny: Well, I don't know. Like obviously later we find out this is covering up something bigger, but it still seems like pretty useful knowledge to have!

Kristin: Does it? Does it?

Jenny: Look, being a Slayer is not all–

Kristin: Have you ever seen this girl use a stone?

Jenny: No, because she doesn't know how *yet*.

Kristin: Okay, maybe I don't remember what happens–

Jenny: Rome wasn't built in a day!

Kristin: I don't remember what happens in the series moving forward.

Jenny: Me either, re: gems.

Kristin: But perhaps there will be another episode where Buffy sings:

Both: [singing] “We are the Crystal Gems, we’ll always save the day. And if you think we can't we'll find another way. It's why the people of this town believe in... Garnet, Amethyst, and Pearl... and Steven!”

Jenny: Great, great. I feel like we are in many places at once.

Kristin: What? We're looking at Buffy look at amethyst, singing the theme song to *Steven Universe*, which contains many characters that are the crystal gems. We are in one place and it is a great one, Jennifer!

Jenny: You're right, you're right, you're very beautiful.

Kristin: I have called you Jennifer two times, and we've only been talking for like 10 minutes.

Jenny: I better get my shit together.

Kristin: You better fucking watch it girl.

Jenny: So, we go to the playground? We go to the cemetery.

Kristin: This Used To Be Dru's Playground.

Jenny: It is the playground?

Kristin: It is This Used To Be Dru's Playground, yes. I would prefer if you would refer to it by it's proper name.

Jenny: Okay, so we go to This Used To Be Dru's Playground.

Kristin: Thank you. [both laugh]

Jenny: And we see Buffy fighting this vampire, or right, and she tosses him down the slide. And she's like, quipping, and then she gets dizzy...

Kristin: Yes...

Jenny: And then the tables turn, and then she almost gets staked with her own stake! The horror! Bleh!

Kristin: Yeah! How about it, one of my notes was how many Slayers do you think have died this way? During this horrible dated ridiculous ritual? Like, how many Slayers do you think were doing a great fucking job, and then they were drugged, lost their fucking strength, and got killed? What the fuck is this shit?

Jenny: It's disgusting, and do you know what it makes me think of?

Kristin: What does it make you think of?

[THE PATRIARCHY jingle plays]

The patriarchy! [thunder clap, evil laughter]

Jenny: So, in this episode we meet Quentin Travers, the head of the Watchers Council, right? And, he's a man. He's an old white guy in a tweed suit, and Giles is an older white guy in a tweed suit, and we'll probably meet some more white guys in tweed suits before this show is over, I'll tell you what. [Kristin laughs]

And Giles makes a really good point later on in the episode, the end, that the Watchers Council is waging a war and Buffy currently and Faith, when she's in town, are fighting that war, they are the foot soldiers. They are on the ground. They are the people who are putting themselves in harm's way every day—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: In order to carry out the waging of this war on behalf of the Watchers Council. Now, before watching this episode I couldn't imagine a system in which a bunch of old white guys in tweed suits might in some way—

Kristin: Have power and control over other people's livelihoods.

Jenny: Yeah, especially women. It's a really interesting concept, it's a little far-fetched. I'm not sure I can suspend my disbelief.

Kristin: Yeah, we paused the show, we paused it to discuss this. Just to think about that could it be like—

Jenny: What would it be like? If there was some sort of gender-based discrimination at play on some kind of global scale. That'd be pretty wild!

Kristin: Pretty wild. You know, that's why we need fantasy shows to just, you know, let us imagine what it would be like...

Jenny: They dreamed up something called the Patriarchy! Then let it run wild across their storyscape. Wow! [Kristin laughs] Good thing that could never... it's like *Alien* or something. You watch *Alien* and you're like, this movie is sick, but I don't have to be afraid of that alien because I'm not in space.

Here we are on Earth, and we don't have to be afraid of this Patriarchy, because it obviously doesn't exist. It could never exist in real life, it's too far-fetched!

Kristin: Too far-fetched. Also I kind of feel like we are in space, Jenny.

Jenny: Well, yeah, I mean I guess everything, if you want to get really technical...

Kristin: Is in space. Anyhow, this is just an alert that we will probably be using The Patriarchy jingle a few times in this episode. Okay? You've been warned. Now, we go to the credits right after this moment that Buffy has, and it comes back and she has dusted the vamp.

Jenny: Right, but she manages to somehow headbutt him around the stake or something and then grabs the stake which has fallen in the dust. Holds it above her own chest and he just perfectly harpoons himself like a little shish kabob.

Kristin: Well thank god. The thing that I wanted to just point out in this scene is Sarah Michelle Gellar, I mean we've already- we've been with her now for several dozen episodes and we know. Most of us have been with her through the whole series, we know she is really a very powerful actress.

And I just- this scene, this whole episode I just feel like exemplifies that. She has this scene really all she does is dust this vamp and she sits up and she dusts herself off, but she looks different.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: She looks different. She looks smaller and I don't know what she's doing or what is making me feel these things and see these things, but looking at her- it's hard to watch her in this episode.

Jenny: Totally.

Kristin: Because you're like, wait no, this is the wrong story, this is not what we signed up for.

Jenny: Yeah, she's amazing.

Kristin: Yeah, she is so- good job Sarah, I know you've been waiting for us to tell you that we love you.

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: We do! We do love you.

Jenny: We do. Also love this delightful little knife throwing... scene. It's not going well, knife target practice.

Kristin: Oh, not well at all. And you know it might be the injection she's being given by her Watcher, but it also might be that purple sweater. I'm just gonna say it. [Jenny laughs]

What in the hell, we don't have Kate this week but I'm gonna tell you what Kate's Fashion Watch would be: What in the hell! It's like a purple sweater that has a scarf sewn into it so the sweater just keeps going and wraps around her neck.

Jenny: [laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know when you just have like... too many garments, don't you ever wish it could be simpler? Has this ever happened to you?

Kristin: [laughs] Anyhow. She also– Buffy makes this quip, she references Cuernavaca. And I looked that up because I didn't know what it was and in case you didn't know where it was. It is a city in Mexico just southwest of Mexico City.

I don't know why she has chosen to reference this particular city. I couldn't figure it out in my very extensive research, but there you have it. A geography lesson from *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*.

Jenny: Great, great. She's really stressed out about the possibility of getting sick because she can't stand the thought of not getting to go to the ice show with her dad for her birthday. Going to the ice show.

Kristin: Have you ever been to an ice show?

Jenny: I must have been when I was a child.

Kristin: Have you? I've never been, I have never been to an ice show. I've been to a hockey game.

Jenny: I've also been to a hockey game.

Kristin: Which is a show on ice for sure. But I have never been to a like, you know, Rockettes on ice. Do they do the Rockettes on ice? Probably not. Do they? Maybe they do.

Jenny: That seems like the thing that you wouldn't wanna put on ice 'cause of all the kicks.

Kristin: Well, it seems like the kind of thing you would wanna put on ice if they could do it.

Jenny: Right. Like *Disney On Ice*–

Kristin: Anyhow, I also haven't seen– Right, like *Disney On Ice* or Snoopy on Ice. I feel like Snoopy is on ice skates.

Jenny: Snoopy's very popular ice–

Kristin: Mickey Mouse on ice. That's, I guess Disney, great talk.

Jenny: Really good talk.

Kristin: So, we'll get a third host who has gone to some fucking ice shows. [Jenny laughs] Be right back.

Jenny: So, when we go to the picnic table at school Oz and Xander have plastic cups, clear plastic cups, and they are drinking something that is mint green.

Kristin: Kool Aid?

Jenny: [skeptically] Kool Aid?

Kristin: I mean I don't know. Kool Aid? Crystal Light?

Jenny: How do you even get Kool Aid to school? Crystal Light!?

Kristin: I loved Crystal Light when I was in high school. It was my fucking favorite thing in the entire world. I was like you take this powder, you put it in this water, and it tastes like delicious!

Jenny: Great, great, great. Okay so maybe they're drinking Crystal Light. I don't know I just thought it was a weird color for a beverage and it really caught my eye.

Kristin: It is. It is weird. Also this scene has an Oz winner of a line where Buffy's like, "oh the ice show I guess it's like a girly thing." There's a lot of girly references in this episode. A lot of- this is a Marti Noxon episode? No, Marti Noxon is producing it, but Marti Noxon didn't write it.

Jenny: No, this was written by David Fury and directed by James A. Contner and it originally aired on January-

Kristin: Okay, thank you so much, I'll pay attention next time. [laughs] So this is a girly moment, we'll have a couple other moments where they reference this girly, do this like a girl, whatever but Buffy's like, "oh, I know that the ice show is maybe girly" and Oz, bless Oz.

Jenny: Great job Oz.

Kristin: Is like, "I don't think it's girly ice is cool, it's water, but it's not."

Jenny: Great point, Oz.

Kristin: Great fucking point.

Jenny: But Oz is also saying it's not girly it's cool.

Kristin: Ohhhhhhh-ho-hooooo.

Jenny: So if we scratched like a couple–

Kristin: But like I see– Okay, okay I see what you’re saying, but I thought that what he was saying was like fucking ice is universal man, it’s not gendered. You know what I mean.

Jenny: Sure, yes, yes.

Kristin: Take that talk and bring it somewhere else because I’m Oz and I believe in the equality of everyone. You know, I didn’t think he was saying like–

Jenny: You think he’s trying to say that ice is fluid?

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah, ba-dun-dun-chish!

Jenny: So Buffy–

Kristin: Wait, wait, wait. One little shout out for Willow, here ‘cause Willow’s like, “you’re turning 18, you can vote! You can be drafted, you can vote not to be drafted.” I love– can we, we haven’t had Willow’s jingle in a long time and bless her soul let’s play it.

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

Jenny: Delightful.

Kristin: Thanks Willow. So... no ice show. There’s no ice show for Buffy.

Jenny: No ice show, Buffy’s dad flaked. I mean, she already said she wanted to stop observing her birthday which would probably be a good idea in terms of mortality rates. I feel like people are always dying and getting attacked on her birthday.

Kristin: Yeah, and probably a place where a bunch of people have really sharp ice skates just doesn't meld well with the kind of mayhem that she usually sees on her birthday.

Jenny: Ha! Well she did decapitate someone with an ice skate at one point earlier, right?

Kristin: And a cymbal!

Jenny: Somebody in the Order of Taraka.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Cool.

Kristin: Great job paying attention to all of the details, but this— so here's the thing, her dad has taken her every year but the way that this is narratively laid out I feel like we're made to believe that her dad is always doing this kind of thing to her so I'm just getting mixed messages. You know what I mean? Is dad reliable or not?

Jenny: I think the message we're getting is that dad is changing.

Kristin: Dad is changing.

Jenny: Dad is becoming less available and less there for Buffy.

Kristin: Ah, I see. Maybe dad's like dating a really sexy vamp who goes by the name of Drusilla and he's just stop—

Jenny: [laughs] What!

Kristin: I'm just writing some side stories.

Jenny: Spoiler alert, Buffy's dad is a chaos demon. [Kristin laughs] Right, so maybe Hank Summers is getting distracted. He's still, we imagine, living in Los Angeles, right?

Kristin: Mm-hm.

Jenny: So, you know out of sight, out of mind.

Kristin: Not to be confused with “Out of Mind, Out of Sight.” But also I think that this episode is really bringing to light Buffy’s turning 18 like it could be also a nod to him feeling like my daughter’s grown up, she doesn’t wanna do this kid stuff anymore.

And this weird place that you find yourself in when you are like 17, 18 where are you a kid or are you an adult? Adults are treating you half the time like you’re an adult and half the time like you’re a kid. And it’s really disorienting and what have you so maybe it’s a nod to that. Before we leave this scene, Joyce looks *great* in an apron.

Jenny: Ha! Meanwhile at the Sunnydale Arms, which we’ve never seen before–

Kristin: The Sunnydale *Arms*?

Jenny: That’s the name of the defunct boarding house.

Kristin: Oh my god, I didn’t know. I just called it Kralik’s mansion the whole time.

Jenny: Ha! So this is a thing you see– I’ve seen a ton in England and some here too. Boarding houses and hotels and apartment buildings that are the blah blah blah Arms. The Russo Arms.

Kristin: The Russo Arms are looking good ‘cause she swims all the time.

Jenny: No. No, no. [laughs]

Kristin: No? That’s not what you mean? Okay.

Jenny: I mean that is accurate [Kristin laughs], but not what we’re here to discuss today so I wanna put out a call because I did a brief googling–

Kristin: A call to arms?

Jenny: [pause] Oh my god, a call to arms. I did a brief googling, I couldn’t get any hot, hot answers but I bet some of you out there know– what is the origin of this particular way of naming things and is it specific to boarding and lodging? What’s the deal? Or can it be a different kind of building?

Kristin: Jenny asks, what’s the deal? Let us know.

Jenny: Let us know at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. I know you’re furiously typing already so thank you.

Kristin: So, okay at the Kralik mansion we meet these brothers, right? That are working–

Jenny: Are they brothers?

Kristin: I mean, I don't know but they–

Jenny: Brothers in arms?

Kristin: Oh my god. So I think they're brothers just because they remind me so much of the brothers from *The Goonies*. You know like *The Goonies*, there's like throw mama from the train as like a mom–

Jenny: Oh, those brothers, sure.

Kristin: And she's got the two Italian boys and one's always like slappin' the other upside the head and they're– you know what I mean? They're just full of hijinks and nobody can keep things together.

Jenny: Right, this is like the British version of that.

Kristin: Yes, exactly. I just– it called that to mind. And then there's a moment later when we hear Kralik screaming that totally also reminded me of *The Goonies* when you hear Sloth screaming in the other room.

Jenny: Oooohh, yeaaaah.

Kristin: And they're like you go take care of your brother! You know what I mean? So I don't know, I don't know if that was at all in the minds of the writers.

Jenny: On purpose.

Kristin: But it reminded me of it in this scene and then later I was like holy shit!

Also if you are listening to this and you have not seen the motherfucking Goonies come on now. Go watch it.

Jenny: You gotta see *The Goonies*!

Kristin: Gotta see *The Goonies*.

Jenny: So, back in the library Buffy is dropping these maaaaajor hints...

Kristin: Ahhh.

Jenny: Ahhh! She's doing everything except coming straight out and saying Giles, work dad, please take me to the ice show.

Kristin: Please take me!

Jenny: You are the most prominent and meaningful father figure in my life and it would be very fulfilling if you would take me to the ice show!

Kristin: I have in all caps, my notes for this scene "BUFFY IS ASKING GILES WHAA GILES IS DRUGGING BUFFY WHAA!" [Both laugh]

Jenny: Yeah, he's very preoccupied.

Kristin: Well he just feels fucking horrible. He's not paying any attention to what's happening around him because he's consumed by guilt.

Jenny: Right, he's totally preoccupied with what his role in this– that he can't come to terms with.

Kristin: He's in a horrible position as we see played out.

Jenny: Poor Giles!

Kristin: He doesn't want to do this horrible thing, but if he doesn't do the horrible thing, then he doesn't get to be her Watcher which ultimately winds up being the fucking thing at the end anyway.

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: So it's just a real conundrum. Also I don't feel like these injections are as sterile as I would like them to be, just saying. Just, you know what I mean?

Jenny: They also seem kind of random.

Kristin: Random like random times of day or random–

Jenny: No, it's not like he's finding a vein, you know what I mean? [nervous laugh]

Kristin: Well maybe he doesn't– maybe it's a subcutaneous injection.

Jenny: You're a subcutaneous injection as I've always said.

Kristin: [laughs] Also shout out to Buffy's puffy green pants that she's wearing as she leaves this scene. No? You didn't notice them?

Jenny: I noticed exactly one article of— two articles of clothing in this episode and I will talk about them when we get there.

Kristin: They were both Willow's hats, weren't they? [Jenny laughs] They were both Willow's hats.

Jenny: No, one Willow hat and one other thing.

Kristin: Oh, Willow's rocking two hats in this episode and that's my next note: Willow's hat! 'Cause she's wearing—

Jenny: What does it look like?

Kristin: It's big and winter and it has a big pom on the top of it.

Jenny: Great.

Kristin: It's a quintessential Willow hat. If you google— I didn't do this but I'm just going to go out on a limb and if you google Willow hat I bet you it's like the sixth one down.

Okay I asked Jenny to pause the recording because I wanted to look it up. But you can't just google Willow hats. [Jenny laughs] Willow does come up but only the big purple hat—

Jenny: The Grimace hat?

Kristin: And then there's like a bunch of other people named Willow or hats that are maybe called the willow. I don't know what's going on there but if you google "willow hats buffy" you got number one there's the purple hat. We've already seen that hat.

Number two, we have not— spoiler alert! You can't talk about that hat! Number three, the winter hat with the pom on top. And Jenny? Number five is your hat from the end of this scene. Yep, so major hat episode for Willow. Two out of the top six. That's a big deal.

Jenny: Well you know what all these great hats are not helping Willow do, is changing Amy back from a rat into a person.

Kristin: Shoutout to Amy.

Jenny: Amy, still a rat.

Kristin: Then we see Cordelia getting into this situation with this asshole who—

Jenny: Ugh! This guy sucks!

Kristin: Right? Buffy refers to him as No-Neck which reminded me of Eleven, you know? A mouth-breather, a no-neck. I don't know, it just had a similar tone to it. And this guy is threatening Cordelia and true to Cordelia's form [Jenny laughs] before dealing with the imminent threat to her safety, she has to let him know "posse? Passe."

Jenny: Nicely done.

Kristin: Then Buffy, you know, of course steps in and can't do anything because this fucked up situation is happening. She gets tossed like a bag of potato chips, just right off—

Jenny: Yeah, you know how you're always tossing bags of potato chips across the [pause] school courtyard.

Kristin: I am! I toss them across the room so that I can't eat any more of them is why I toss potato chips. Anyhow, and then Cordelia ah! Beautiful Cordelia just pounding on this guy.

Jenny: So good!

Kristin: Yes, so great, but also this guy! What the fuck? What the fuck? What the fuck?

Jenny: That guy's gonna get his.

Kristin: Yeah, he will. Okay so the next little moment is one of these girl moments that I was talking about earlier right? You know Buffy comes in and she's like, "Giles you don't understand what's happening, I'm throwing knives like—" and he says "a girl?" Which is— it seems out of character for Giles.

I mean I know, whatever and I don't know if he's trying to be tongue in cheek or what but Buffy comes back and says "like I'm not the slayer" I feel like it's just this tense moment between them. Did you—?

Jenny: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I didn't feel like it was weird that he said "like a girl?" I don't know why. It's totally not his vibe but given what's going on and how much he knows about it, it feels like maybe he's just trying to be casual and downplay it, you know?

Kristin: Right, and so he's like; what do people do in this situation. They make the entire collection of women feel horrible by saying a thing, like that's—

Jenny: Yeah, it's perfect! Mmmmm.

Kristin: Okay fine. Either way it's shitty but it's also noted, it's not like he just says it and she's like yeah you know?

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: She looks at him like why did you just say— like this is out of character for you Giles. You know, so just a little thing.

Jenny: But he's doing a lot of things that are out of character. He's totally distracted, staring into the middle distance a bunch. So then we go back to the Sunnydale Arms and we see Quentin Travers and Rupert Giles having a conversation in which it is made clear that Giles has serious reservations and thinks that this is archaic and barbaric and totally unnecessary.

And the people at the watcher's council who don't know Buffy at all want to put her through this test that's just tradition. Of course, we agree with Giles because what the fuck is the point of killing— you've trained a slayer, you've invested all of this time and energy into training the slayer and helping her achieve her truest vampire slaying potential so that you can weaken her and enclose her in a building with a vampire who has a good chance of killing her just to prove she wasn't slayer enough?

Kristin: [disgusted sigh] Okay, well at least we cut away from this horrible display of patriarchal bullshit and move into the screaming den where Kralik is in a straight jacket being fed pills. This is an incredible entrance, I can't really call it an entrance 'cause it's the camera that enters not Kralik but it's just an incredible introduction to him.

Like you see the thing open and he's all bound up inside of it and ahh! it's just so good and Jeff Kober who plays Kralik is unbelievable. I mean, to date in the series, one of my favorite villains, like evil characters. And it's in huge part because of the way that he portrays this character.

So, as we talked about in the beginning, I got a chance to sit down with Jeff. He came over and he just spent some time with me. It was so nice, it was such a joy to talk with him, and we're gonna share with you part of the interview here within the episode. You may have guessed— it's the part about Kralik, but I also sat and I talked with him after we talked about Kralik about another role that he plays on the series later on.

That of course has some spoilers in it, but if you are a patron of ours, you will get the extended interview if you wanna listen to it, you know, if you've seen the series and you know what's what, you can listen to that now. If you're just watching the series for the first time or if you're not a patron, don't worry. The majority of that interview will be up when Jeff Kober comes back to the show. We'll put it in an episode for everybody to hear. Anyhow, blah blah blah, Kristin. Get to the interview.

[Chime]

Kristin: So, hi.

Jeff: Hi.

Kristin: Welcome to *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*.

Jeff: Thank you.

Kristin: Thank you so much for coming all the way out to Altadena to talk.

Jeff: It's beautiful. It's a beautiful drive. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: So we like to start at the very beginning and are wondering how— we're talking about Kralik now and so I'm wondering how you came to the show. I mean, you had been working for many years as an actor before this.

Jeff: I came to the show the same way I come to most shows. Although not the next time I came to Buffy, but for this one I just read for the role and they thought who better to play a crazy... [Kristin laughs] vampire? Manic depressive? I'm not sure. Psychotic? Something.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah. Well, and Kralik was interesting because he was evil before he was a vampire and then was a vampire as well.

Jeff: I prefer misunderstood.

Kristin: [sarcastic] Mm, yes, yes, yes, of course. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to offend Kra— I really shouldn't offend Kralik. [both laugh] So you read for the role.

Jeff: Yeah, I just read for the role and they liked what I did and...

Kristin: And that was that.

Jeff: And I've been evil before.

Kristin: So this wasn't new to you. This wasn't your first...

Jeff: It wasn't— It was a different sort of evil, a different flavor, but yeah.

Kristin: Right. Right. Actually, one of our listeners, Dakota, wrote in. This is relevant to what you just said. Which of your characters that you've played over time would you least like to fight? [laughs]

Jeff: Well probably, I did a movie called *Out of Bounds* with Anthony Michael Hall years ago. Actually my first lead in a film and that guy— Gaddis was his name, Roy Gaddis. And he was just, he was like the Terminator except not strong, just committed to staying alive and hurting as many people as he could.

Kristin: Oh yeah. Sounds not pleasant.

Jeff: Yeah, not, not pleasant. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: Alright so he's the top of the list.

Jeff: Yeah I would say him, yeah.

Kristin: So tell us about how you came into Kralik, right. So you have the role now and you're on set or you're preparing for the role. How did you prepare and like how much of you did you— not how much of you, but how much did you put into the role and create?

Jeff: Well, with any role, what you have to do is, you have to find out how you would be as this kind of a character. And so my work is almost all interior which is like how I align with somebody else and then make that me is; what does this

person need? And if I were in this situation, what do I need from another person? And that's what really triggers our humanness or, in this case, our vampiressness.

Kristin: [laughing] Right, right, right.

Jeff: It is the wants and needs of that character along with the fears of that character which then leads you to a throughline that you can follow and that where things make sense. Why am I talking to you right now, you know. There's something living in me that brought me here to talk to you.

There's something, you know, you have an intention with me, you want me to be a certain way so that I will be interesting, fascinating, entertaining, open. You know, that's all feeding into my experience and that's what acting is about to me. Instead of presenting some finished product, it's like, how do I get into the process of being this?

Kristin: Do you remember what some of— what your wants and needs were as Kralik?

Jeff: Well, someone like Kralik, it's about power and power is always expressed at least partially in terms of sexuality and enlivening that within ourselves that is without sensor and along with that the desire to sully the innocent.

Kristin: Right, to bring— to tarnish...

Jeff: And darkness wants more darkness.

Kristin: So yesterday while I was reading a little bit here and there about some other work that you've done and I read somewhere in a bio or a Wikipedia page that you practice the Meisner technique?

Jeff: Yes.

Kristin: With acting, and I don't act anymore but I went to my undergraduate for acting and the thing that moved me the most about my entire practice in acting was Meisner, was the practice of Meisner. So hearing you talk about your want and your intentions is like ringing all of these bells in my head of like [sighs] I loved that.

Jeff: Fantastic. So that's why you're so fresh and open and present.

Kristin: [laughing] I was trained.

Jeff: You were trained, you were trained to be present.

Kristin: I will never forget the beginning stages of that.

Jeff: Oh my god, yeah.

Kristin: The exercises like, "my shoe is untied. Your shoe is untied." [laughs] But it's brilliant, it's brilliant.

Jeff: It is brilliant because it trains us to get into process.

Kristin: Yeah, absolutely.

Jeff: Yeah and do you notice that like if you're at a play or watching a show or someone is showing you who the character is and he is talking in a very particular— he or she is talking in a very particular way, I wanna reach through the screen and strangle them because I want to have an experience and I can't have an experience unless you as the actor are having an experience.

Kristin: Right, and also especially, you know being able to pivot to what's happening in that moment is so crucial. Anyhow, Meisner tangent, but interesting I'm sure to people who either know, or don't know, about the Meisner technique.

Jeff: Just to be clear, what Meisner said about acting is that acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances. And so you're not asking yourself if I were a real human, how would I be? It's like, I am a real human, but oh this— you're my sister or you're my daughter or you know, and then that changes the tenor of how we speak with each other. You don't have to figure that out. You just have to take that on as your reality, so...

Kristin: Right. So a small acting lesson built into this interview. [laughs] So I wanna just touch on some of the specifics that happen in this particular episode. One, when I was watching it— I rewatched it again last night and so Kralik is bound up and, you know, being fed pills with water and so there's this scene where like you're being given a glass of water to drink but you're not using your hands, and I just thought from a behind the scenes perspective maybe you have some memories. You could tell us how many times you had to do that, how many water glasses spilled on you.

Jeff: Umm. [both laugh] Well, so, let's be clear, this— I apologize in advance to the writer— the conceit of this vampire having to take medication and taking it willingly and having to drink water just so that Buffy could find a way to take me out without her powers. [Kristin laughs]

It strained my credulity and my ability to embrace certain imaginary and at that point you just have to do it. And like any uncomfortable thing you do in television or the movies you do it several times from several different angles and you know— Double, double digits. Let's go with double digits [Kristin laughs] and water being spilled all the time and make-up having— prosthetics having to be fixed when water did what water does to them and...

Kristin: I'm sure. Well, that was like a real question. Maybe you know the answer to this and maybe I should have gleaned the answer from watching the episode but we were never— I was never clear on why Kralik was taking the pills.

Jeff: No. Nor was I.

Kristin: No. No one was?

Jeff: No. It wasn't— it was just, you know what I had to just imagine for myself is that his insanity was such that he lost touch with reality if it took him.

Kristin: Right.

Jeff: And he was interested in staying in reality.

Kristin: Right. That makes sense. That's good we should all just lay that onto it so we have— 'cause you know it's like yeah, that adds up but we were like why? What is the purpose of— what happens if he doesn't take the pills?

Jeff: Yeah, well and he just becomes a babbling fool I would imagine.

Kristin: Yeah. So you mentioned make up being an issue. You are the first person on the series that we've interviewed who has been in vamp face. So people are just like okay let us know what was this process like.

Jeff: Well if you've ever gotten a tattoo it's like that except longer, well depending on the size of your tattoo.

Kristin: Well, my tattoo is very small, it's the only one I have.

Jeff: Yeah, so it takes longer than that but that feeling of okay that's uncomfortable but I can't move.

Kristin: [sighs] For such a long time.

Jeff: You know, but once you embrace that it becomes meditative because the only thing that makes you uncomfortable is the idea that it should be over and you should be able to move. [Kristin laughs] Once you let go of that then you're just like okay and it's something that I've gotten used to because I've done Alien Nation. I played a potato head on that, that's what we called ourselves.

But there are people working on you and putting this really intense glue on you and poking you and your skin gets very sensitive and you know it's probably... That was probably two and a half, three hour job putting it on and then forty five minutes to an hour taking it off.

Kristin: And then doing it all over again.

Jeff: And doing it again each take— you know Boris Karloff who played Frankenstein, that makeup was so intense and they had— you know it was so primitive that he would wear it for a week.

Kristin: What? And just never take it off?

Jeff: Yeah, just never take it off. They would just patch it each day.

Kristin: Oh my god, his skin must have—

Jeff: Oh, it must have been horrifying.

Kristin: Nightmare.

Jeff: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Talk to us— so Sarah wrote in from Twitter and wanted to know how long it took you to get used to the fangs. So you know, you've talked about the makeup and the prosthetics but how— were they sort of just glued onto your teeth?

Jeff: Yeah, they just slip on. You know they take a dental—

Kristin: Yeah, like a mold.

Jeff: You know when they pour that stuff in your mouth and it feels like a really bad nightmare. [Kristin laughs] Except it's real. They take an impression of your teeth and build the fangs for that and I didn't— I never got used to them, it's really challenging to speak through those teeth.

Kristin: Yeah, Jenny and I both have sets of— I'm sure they're a little under grade of where your fangs were at but we have you know they come with a little mold set and they're individual to individual teeth and you mold them to your teeth. I do a little bit better than she does. She feels like she has to keep them exposed all the time [laughs]

Jeff: Well, you can't just speak normally you have to do something different so you end up having to wake up different muscles of your face. I think I had contact lenses in as well and so—

Kristin: Yeah, right. I think so because— I think you actually may have had contact lenses in both of the roles but I'll ask you about—

Jeff: Yes, I think I did.

Kristin: Yeah, I'll ask you about Rack later but yeah so you had contacts, you had piles of makeup on, you had fangs and for a lot of it you were in a straight jacket.

Jeff: Yeah, I was bound up, yeah.

Kristin: So that is a— sounds like a challenging acting job.

Jeff: It's a challenging human job because you're constricted but acting wise all of that can excite the character in you and can trigger things in you 'cause it's like— if you're frustrated by that it becomes the frustration of the character, it's not the frustration of the actor.

And once you're on set my teacher, my meisner teacher, told me, he said once you're there there are no longer actor thoughts there are only character thoughts so if I think "this is really uncomfortable", that's the character feeling really uncomfortable and I don't have to change that or fix that I just express with that as what's going on.

Kristin: So Kralik could have maybe been a little less angry if not for the—

Jeff: If they just gave him a little more space, [Kristin laughs] just a little space.

Kristin: So one other thing from Kralik is that Kralik is dusted at the end, you die. But you die like a vampire.

Jeff: Dusted? Is that what we call it?

Kristin: Yeah, dusted.

Jeff: That's what happens to vampires?

Kristin: Yeah, 'cause you turn to dust! You know, you get staked and then poof you're gone! Convenient for Buffy and the scoobies because there's no cleanup and convenient for the people making the series because they don't have to deal with the logistics of all of the dead vampire bodies everywhere. But I wondered if there was anything special that you had to do as you died like freeze frame or anything like that?

Jeff: I think I had to move within a certain small parameter and you know, stay on my mark but you asked them so what's actually gonna happen here because clearly I'm not going to turn into dust. But there's gonna be something—

Kristin: [laughs] I mean I don't know what your powers but I imagine not that.

Jeff: Yeah, not that. So in post they're going to do something, so you asked them how that's gonna play out and then you come up with an idea and then you check that with the director and with the producer when they come down to the set because you're changing the lines and they don't like you to do that, which happened.

Kristin: [laughs] So did you change a line that got kept?

Jeff: I changed a line and pretty soon Mr. Whedon was over there with his arms crossed and I went and had a conversation with him and he said, "oh, okay yeah." He didn't like it but he—

Kristin: But you made sense.

Jeff: Yeah I made sense. And it wasn't like my character would never say something like that it's like I think what you're trying to say here is this and this doesn't quite do it but this does.

Kristin: Right, do you remember what that line was?

Jeff: No, not a clue. If I watched the episode I might be able to pick it out but—

Kristin: Now that we talked about it on the podcast, somebody will go and they'll find the script and they'll say it was this line. So don't worry we have our research team—

Jeff: I hope I didn't make up that memory.

Kristin: [laughs] Something I didn't ask you up at the beginning is, you auditioned for the series, did you watch— had you watched the series before auditioning or did you watch it in preparation?

Jeff: No.

Kristin: So, have you ever seen the series?

Jeff: I've seen scenes, I think I might have watched the episode. I think I did.

Kristin: Right, this particular episode.

Jeff: Yeah, I have memories of seeing it.

Kristin: Are you a fan of the fantasy, horror genre in general?

Jeff: I am, I'm not a fan of slasher but I do love— fantasy is— the way that fantasy has gone in the last fifteen twenty years is not really my bag 'cause it's like romance novels with a little bit of fantastic world thrown in but at Buffy I was a fan of the movie. The movie rocked you know, and Sarah was just fantastic in the show.

Yeah, I think they did a really good job and I appreciate— I enjoy what others would call unreality because [laughs] none of it's real so why not make it a little elevated. What did you think of the Wonder Woman movie?

Kristin: [sighs] Loved it.

Jeff: Right?

Kristin: We actually— we did a special episode. We've only done one special episode since we started and it was on Wonder Woman 'cause people were like, "you can't talk about Buffy and not talk about Wonder Woman." I thought it was incredible. Speaking of action, I mean you were talking about fantasy and horror but things that are fantastical being romance novels that have just a bit of something else in them. This was like the antithesis of that.

Jeff: Completely, yeah.

Kristin: It was like a touch of romance and mostly a lot of kicking ass.

Jeff: A lot of kicking ass and based in real world structure, you know, it's really well done.

Kristin: Yes, yeah. I thought it was incredible. And this Halloween was just so magical seeing all of these tiny girls dressed up as Wonder Woman.

Jeff: Dressed as Wonder Woman.

Kristin: Yeah, just very important always but I think very important right now.

Jeff: Fantastic, that's great.

Kristin: So, let's just go back to the show for one more moment. I want to make sure that there aren't any other stories that you have from set or just from the whole experience that you want to share with us.

Jeff: All I can say is it was really— it was a lovely experience, you know. Sarah couldn't have been more delightful and everyone working on it was— they were enjoying themselves, you know, they were happy to be employed. It was really starting to be a hit so...

Kristin: Yeah! Season three, right and when we talk about season six I want to talk about that difference too but right season three is such a different experience I'm sure than people had filming in season one or two because really things were rocking and rolling by the time we got around to season three.

So before we wrap up this piece of the interview I would love to hear about what you're doing now. I read some things about meditation. We talked upstairs about what you're doing now but I would love to hear any manner of—

Jeff: Well I've been teaching meditation for the last probably ten and a half years, gone to India many times. What allows me to play, and allowed me to play, so many evil characters is just, you know, the awareness of and at the mercy of darkness within oneself.

And when I really looked for a solution to that in every way possible and I found it in meditation and when I started doing a meditation that I teach which is dedic meditation d-e-d-i-c, which allows you to transcend the whole of your darkness, your ugliness, your thoughts, your feelings, all that and you begin to heal in a different way.

And so meditation, I ended up being a meditation teacher because it transformed my life because I started to let go of my identification with that darkness and started to know myself as a spirit or even just as a normal human.

Kristin: Did that change the role? Did that change your acting career at all because you said ten years ago, so this meditation wasn't a part of your life when you were playing Kralik for example.

Jeff: I was, how long ago was he?

Kristin: Probably twenty, almost twenty years.

Jeff: Yeah, well I was— I've been doing this meditation for probably sixteen years so I was trying to meditate at that time. I had already been to India.

Kristin: Oh wow, okay.

Jeff: And already sought out some kind of an answer. It changed the way I work entirely because I used to have to dig down to get to those hidden places and then bring them up and then have to deal with, you know, the blowback from that.

And once you let go of your identification with or identification against aspects of yourself then you're able to just have them and let them go because they're not you. None of it's you so it makes things much simpler.

Kristin: I think there's something so spectacular about us having a conversation around Kralik and it culminating here, you know, like everyone at home listening having just seen you play this murderous, dark— and then hearing you talk about your actual life and some of what went into that and what goes into your career in general.

Jeff: Well, I'll just give you an example of the way it works. That was the time when I was really fascinated by it was just shortly after I learned this meditation I did a role on Law and Order SVU. And I played a cult leader who was responsible for the death of some twenty four kids, you know, and I had a twelve and a half year old wife who was going to give birth to the antichrist.

Kristin: Oh my.

Jeff: You know, just an evil, evil human. Not unlike some that I know in the world today. But he was a cult leader and I played him as a man of god who really believed what he was doing and really believed in the power of divine love through him as he saw it.

And so I was just having a great time on the set and I was having fun with everybody and it was really just a delightful experience and then when the show

aired I had several friends, 'cause it was a really good episode, I had several friends come over and my wife was there and my son and we were all watching it.

I was able to see the first scene and I had to leave the room because playing that as just a human or as a man of god in the context of the horror being wrought by this individual made him even more evil. But I wasn't feeling that when I was doing it so that was really an amazing experience.

Kristin: Wow, that really makes a lot of sense and hits home I think contextually too with where we are and what we're seeing happen and how it's just so impossible. I mean I imagine that having played that part you were like everything's fine. There would have been no getting through in quotes to you as that character because... yeah.

Jeff: 'Cause he's absolutely in the right, "why wouldn't I do this?"

Kristin: Ugh! That's chilling, very chilling. [laughs] See I knew you would scare us a little bit at some point.

Jeff: Maybe not in the way you thought but, yes.

Kristin: Well, we are going to continue the conversation but it's not going to be part of this episode so before we go I want to thank you for talking to us about this episode and for all the work that you've brought to us in so many different realms.

Jeff: Thank you so much, it's really a pleasure.

Kristin: Yeah, of course!

[Chime]

Kristin: Ohh, don't you just want to listen to that man speak forever?

Jenny: All the day long, I say.

Kristin: Forever! He should just make tapes of him reading the ABC's and I would be like, "I'm in!"

Jenny: That would be ideal.

Kristin: Just wonderful, just a dream, again if you want to hear more of our conversation you can do that over on Patreon. It's available for all of our patrons but the slightly edited version of what is over on Patreon will someday be available

to everyone once we get there. Thank you Jeff, again, for taking the time out to talk with us, it was just so great!

Jenny: Yes, I'm so jealous that I wasn't here but also was so thrilled to listen to the episode. I was like [sigh] this is much better than if I was talking in the middle.

Kristin: Ah, tsk, tsk.

Jenny: No, no, no, it was just a delight, it was a beautiful listening experience for me, your wife. And don't you care about my listening experience?

Kristin: I do, I do care about you.

Jenny: So like, ugh, Oz and Xander arguing about the different types of kryptonite...

Kristin: Oh, you didn't like this? I thought it was funny.

Jenny: I mean, it was funny.

Kristin: You just don't like Superman.

Jenny: I don't, maybe one day I will.

Kristin: Outed! Boom!

Jenny: Sorry, yeah I don't know if that's an unpopular opinion.

Kristin: Jenny only has eyes for Batman.

Jenny: Yeah! Well as far as DC heroes— It's not worth it.

Kristin: Oh my god, why don't you put your glasses up on your nose you nerd. [in a funny mocking voice] "Ahem ahem Well only as far as DC comics are concerned."

Jenny: [laughs] I should have said DC comics, I said DC heroes, but it's like— Batman is technically a caped crusader which we know is not a superhero.

Kristin: Oh. My. God.

Jenny: But he is a dream and my fav in terms of DC stuff although, now Wonder Woman maybe has topped the heap. Maybe one day I'll fall in love with Superman the way I'm currently in love with Wonder Woman.

Kristin: I fell in love with Superman when I was a teenager in the form of Dean Cain.

Jenny: Oh I did like Lois and Clark when it was—

Kristin: Yeah, Lois and Clark was fucking awesome.

Jenny: But just in terms of like...

Kristin: Mostly 'cause I just had a huge crush on Dean Cain.

Jenny: Yeah, [disappointed sigh] he's like a super republican now.

Kristin: Ohhh nooooooooo!

Jenny: I knoooww, I'm sorry.

Kristin: Uggghh! Must we— can we anything nice?!

Jenny: We can't have anything nice.

Kristin: God damn it! Forget what I said, scrap it!

Jenny: So like—

Kristin: God damn it!

Jenny: So they have this kryptonite thing that maybe one day I'll come to appreciate more.

Kristin: Yes, I thought it was cute. I called it a dork-off.

Jenny: Aww, they have a dork-off.

Kristin: Yeah, which is why I liked it you know?

Jenny: Totally.

Kristin: They're connecting, they just fell through the ceiling together in the last episode. They're becoming buds... by sparing each other dorkily.

Jenny: Yes, that's true, that's true. And Willow's like, "what if you don't get your powers back?"

Kristin: Yeah, which is kind of the thing that Buffy is turning around in her hands for the whole episode of like, "what the fuck?" Which is an 18th birthday thing, you know? Who am I? What am I?

Jenny: Sure, will I get my magical strength and agility back?

Kristin: Yes! I love that last week we did the episode and I was like I believe that I have the magical power to spin a pencil in the air and not one human being said anything about it. They were like, "mm-hm." [Jenny laughs] You know?

Jenny: You didn't get any emails about that.

Kristin: Nope! Not a one, not a one tweet, not a one email. Everybody was just like yeah, sure, of course she can spin a pencil.

Jenny: I've been keeping an extra close watch on all the pencils in the house for the last week, I'll tell you what.

Kristin: The ones you can see.

Jenny: Aghhhhhh.

Kristin: Ha. Ha. Ha. Haaaa.

Jenny: Sooooo—

Kristin: So Kralik kills brother number one. A nice Italian meal, I know they're not Italian, but they're Italian in my mind.

Jenny: And there is a whole finger sucking thing, not that that's inherently Italian or anything.

Kristin: But it's pretty Italian.

Jenny: Well, I was just thinking about really relishing your food. The food that you make that I like the most is a big tomato sauce, you know? and would lead to finger licking if necessary. This is— okay...

Kristin: Last week thumb sucking. This week finger licking. All here on *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*.

Jenny: Listen. We can't go a step further without acknowledging that the Council is trash. This organization that claims to be the be all end all of all vampire slaying and adjacent knowledge.

Okay, let's brick up this house and we'll just send the head of the Council, the most important person in this very important council and then just two guys who kinda don't really seem to have a great idea of what they're doing.

Kristin: Yeah, no it's—

Jenny: It's— Okay so, we'll sleep in shifts?! Quentin's coming and going so at any given time one of these knuckleheads— it's a one to one ratio. Knucklehead to vampire. Sure, Vampire is in a straightjacket. Vampire is chained up inside of a box. When has that ever ended well, the Council? What the fuck!

Kristin: Right? Also I'm just gonna say, you know what? Why'd they pick Kralik? I mean I love Kralik, I'm glad I get to see Kralik but if you're gonna pick a vampire to be the vampire— wouldn't you pick a vampire who doesn't need pills to stay alive?

Jenny: Well, maybe they needed to have him need pills in order for there to be—

Kristin: To contain him?

Jenny: No, in order for there to be a way for Buffy to defeat him.

Kristin: Well, yeah I mean we talked about that in the interview that Jeff was like, not to whatever to the writer but it definitely was a plot device but just right. Okay, so that's what you're saying it's a plot device but come on!

Jenny: Also, this fucking ramshackle operation. A spoon on a stick?! And a cup on a stick?! You can't use— you can't invest your council dollars into something that won't end up getting your henchmen killed by the vampire you're supposed to be containing and doing a shit job of?

Kristin: I want to say that I've been 80% listening to what you've been saying...

Jenny: Sure.

Kristin: Because the other 20%—

Jenny: That's a pretty high percent for us.

Kristin: Whatever, the other 20% of me stopped the moment you said the council is trash and have only been envisioning different t-shirt designs so... [Jenny laughs] Like great, the council is trash is the best t-shirt slogan you've ever thought up in your life!

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: So coming to a theater near you in as many months as it takes us to make that idea real, right? Come on, "the council is trash" is perfect! It's so timely, it's great. Okay.

Jenny: You know what some people do with trash?

Kristin: Use it as wrapping paper?

Jenny: [laughs] That was a variation on my segway. I was gonna say they burn it! But not in their fireplace like Angel is burning multiple logs, a roaring blaze.

Kristin: A roaring blaze. [Breaking news sound]
Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do.

Jenny: A book wrapped in a cloth napkin.

Kristin: Wrapped in— Okay so here's the deal, this book is called *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, right? We looked it up, we read about it, it's pretty fucking cool actually, but I just want to start.

Jenny: Good gift Angel.

Kristin: Good gift, and great on the writers, just really great placement. It's just like the book— okay here's the deal. The book, first of all, was published I guess around 1850 and we know Angel was probably about 100. So this is interesting because I've been thinking a lot about Angel since the whole Amends thing.

And you know, people being like, "but Angel!"— But he isn't mature because he was turned at 26 and like the demon is not the man, the man is not the demon but there are some places where those two crossover, it's very tricky.

And so when things like this come up it's like okay well Angel was 26 when he was turned so this was 100 years later that this book even came out so he's a vamp. He's Angelous, you know, and did he have an appreciation for this book as Angelous? And if not, you know what I mean, I'm just?

Jenny: Well it's apparently the greatest collection of english language sonnets since Shakespeare so he probably came to know it when he regained his soul if he was not a vampiric appreciator of—

Kristin: Poetry!

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: So we'll never know the answer to that question or at least I don't think we will. But this book is pretty cool, so it's called *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and it's a collection of love sonnets, 44 love sonnets, written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

I don't know if you know what that means but it means a lady wrote these poems and it was in 1850 and they were a huge deal not only now, but then. Which I think is really fucking cool.

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: Like this is not— women are not good at stuff you know? So when there's a woman that's good at stuff it's—

Jenny: Kristin. [Kristin laughs] Your tone isn't 100% indicating just how sarcastic you are.

Kristin: Oh my god, everybody who listens to this podcast doesn't even need me to have a tone, they know who I am. I just think it's amazing because as we all know even now it's difficult as a woman to get the respect and accreditation that we deserve so in 1850 the fact that this woman wrote these sonnets and was recognized then for how incredible they were is pretty amazing.

And so we read a little bit about her and I just want to share a tiny bit. So Barrett Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was initially hesitant to publish this collection of poems because she thought maybe they were too personal however her husband Robert Browning insisted that they were the best sequence of english language sonnets since Shakespeare's time and urged her to publish them. So to offer them some privacy she decided to publish them as if they were translations of foreign sonnets. So just super cool backstory.

Jenny: Love a concept.

Kristin: And the most famous poems from the collection are number 33 and 43, number 43 begins, you may recognize the line, "how do I love thee, let me count the ways." So that's from this book of poetry.

Jenny: Perhaps you've heard that line before!

Kristin: Right? Perhaps you've heard that line before. So just like, I don't know about his fucking wrapping paper, maybe go down to the local Target, Angel, and get some fucking wrapping paper or Papyrus if you're feeling fancy.

Jenny: I don't know, I kind of liked—

Kristin: The rag?

Jenny: The vintage linen napkin or whatever.

Kristin: You're pushing it— What? It was like a dirty rag.

Jenny: It wasn't a dirty rag.

Kristin: A vintage napkin...

Jenny: That's right.

Kristin: Made of linen is really stretching it for our pal Angel. Anyhow...

Jenny: Reduce, reuse, recycle. He's been around on the planet for a couple hundred and a half years.

Kristin: He's just, you know, he takes it to a point.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: It's just— you know what I mean? You didn't need to wrap— it's like, you know when you were a teenager, I don't know if you did this but when I was a teenager sometimes I would write a poem on a piece of paper and then I would take the paper and I would burn the edges.

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: Did you ever do that? Tell the truth.

Jenny: I don't think I burned the edges, I think I did a thing where I dunked the whole paper in coffee.

Kristin: In coffee, right, okay.

Jenny: Of course, what is wrong with everything?

Kristin: That's what I'm saying, it just— that's Angel, you know, he's like, "it needs to be authentic and real let me wipe this rag in the dirt and then wrap it around this book of poems from 1850." I don't know, anyway...

Jenny: So Buffy is appreciative of the book of poetry but she's distracted by the larger question that's haunting her for the duration of this episode which is what if I lose my powers, what if I'm not the slayer anymore.

And Angel is like [silly Angel voice] "I love you and I'll always love you even if you're not the slayer" and Buffy's like, "but before I was the slayer I was this vapid superficial non-person" and she says that she made somebody whose name rhymes with Spordelia—

Kristin: Spordelia! [sings] Spordelia, I love you Spordelia, you're perfect Spordelia.

Jenny: Mm-hm, yes, yes, quite, quite. So she says that next to Spordelia, or next to her old self Spordelia looked like a classical philosopher and this is when Angel reveals for the first time to Buffy which we have already seen—

Kristin: Yeah, hold on though, hold on because I'm gonna dig on Angel a little bit for what you're about to get to but you already dug on Angel for a moment that I actually thought was really nice. So I would like to just back it up a step. When you were like [teasing nonsense sounds] I actually thought this was—

Jenny: I— [laughs]

Kristin: That's what you did, you made fun of Angel and I'm about to do that too but I liked this moment when he said—

Jenny: No, I liked it!

Kristin: "You could never be helpless or boring even if you tried." I think it's really nice.

Jenny: I liked it too!

Kristin: It's like he's really telling her what she needs to fucking hear and let me tell you something about the characters in this show, they don't often do that for each other. They don't often lift each other up in verbal ways.

They lift each other up and they help each other or whatever but they don't see Buffy telling Willow what she needs to hear very often. We don't hear Angel really telling Buffy what she needs to hear— and I think we really do in this moment, I thought it was nice. Thought he did a good job.

Jenny: Yeah, no I think it's nice too. Gosh, stop spreading this terrible rumor that I don't like Angel. I totally like Angel and I think this is very sweet. It's also just like when somebody's been this brooding fucking vertical hairstyle for so long and been so—

Because he cares about Buffy so much and because being vulnerable is really hard we've seen him deflect a lot and we've seen him talk around things, say things without saying them, we've seen him be like, "what do I want? what do you want?"

Kristin: Right, right, right.

Jenny: You know, we've seen a lot of that so to see him be so direct is like what?

Kristin: It's nice!

Jenny: It is nice but it's also a little jarring.

Kristin: Fine, but then we take a nice hard turn don't we?

Jenny: Oh boy, speaking of classical poetry...

Kristin: I saw you before— I watched you and I loved you. [Jenny laughs as Kristin makes the Psycho knife scene noise] Everybody take a deep breath here, okay.

Jenny: Then he says something about how he could see her heart, that she was holding it out before her and he was afraid that somebody might bruise or tear it and he wanted to protect it and also keep it warm *with his own*.

Kristin: With his own.

Jenny: Which is either, as they note immediately, a beautiful poem or—

Kristin: Taken literally.

Jenny: Like a terrifying horror movie.

Kristin: Right, right, which is great. It's nice to have them call this out. I think that was a wise decision on the part of the writers and it really gives something to this scene that it needs, you know? Because they are, they're sharing a really important moment, it's very nice but also what the fuck?

Jenny: Yeah, we need a little levity in this moment and we get it.

Kristin: Yes, so thank you everybody now let's go— speaking of levity why don't we go back to Kralik's mansion, what's it called? A call to arms?

Jenny: The Sunnydale Arms.

Kristin: A call to Kralik's arms.

Jenny: Thing one is waking up after—

Kristin: Yes, brother number one—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Brother number one is what I called him.

Jenny: Yes, and he has been turned, he is a vampire now and he frees Kralik right away. Kralik is jaunty AF.

Kristin: Kralik is taking a page right out of Hannibal Lector's book. This whole episode is what I'm saying.

Jenny: Oooohh, I mean...

Kristin: He's like, "Mmmm, it's a game." He just— I'm sorry Jeff Kober if you're listening to me try to do your beautiful voice and horribly massacre it but he just is wonderfully like it's a game and we're playing by different rules and we'll discuss it over dinner, you know?

Jenny: Oh yeah, the over dinner thing is very Lector.

Kristin: Give me the fucking lima beans, what does—?

Jenny: Fava beans.

Kristin: Fava beans [laughs]

Jenny: Which I think lima beans are fava beans, aren't they?

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: It doesn't matter.

Kristin: Here we go, Superman, Batman, fava beans, lima beans, My wife, ladies and gentlemen and other people of all genders!

Jenny: So...

Kristin: So?

Jenny: So Giles decides to swing by the Sunnydale Arms again.

Kristin: Yes, great scoring in this scene I thought, I don't know if you noticed but it was real horror, strings and just like good shit happening to set the mood.

Jenny: I was too busy noticing the blood-covered banister, mua-ha-ha-ha.

Kristin: So I know that— especially because of the way that it's scored, it's supposed to be like a horror scene, you know? But it is a little out of touch with Giles and what Giles has seen in his life. This is what they do every day.

I mean I know it's not this specific thing and this vampire is powerful and this vampire blah-blah-blah-blah-blah but when he gets the blood on his hands he's panicking. Then he opens the door, and the only justification I had was that what they did to brother number two—

Jenny: Must have been pretty terrible 'cause we only see the arm.

Kristin: Must have been like what they did to Drew Barrymore in *Scream*, you know? You had to be that level of horrifying.

Jenny: It had to be pretty bad, also that's brother number one from work, from the watcher's council.

Kristin: From work, from the water cooler.

Jenny: The only other co-worker of Giles's that we've seen die, right? is Jenny Calendar, may she rest in peace.

Kristin: That's true I didn't really think about them as work— you know what I mean?

Jenny: Yeah I feel like it's a real that could have been me and also that is very horrific, those two things combined.

Kristin: Got it, okay red coat alert, red coat alert. Red. Coat. Alert!

Jenny: Yeah, so this little red riding hood thread that starts here Buffy is small and helpless and wearing a huge red coat.

Kristin: We've seen the red coat before just FYI.

Jenny: But in this episode—

Kristin: I know, I know, but—

Jenny: It takes on this whole thing where later when Kralik goes to the Summers house and is laying out on the porch in the red jacket much like the big bad wolf.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: And then turns over and says mother and then later he says, "why did you come to the dark of the woods to bring all these sweets to grandmother's house?"

Kristin: Oooohh, I didn't even realize.

Jenny: Yeah, it's so good.

Kristin: Wow we got Hansel and Gretel last week, we get riding hood this week, we are in fairytale junction.

Jenny: How did little red riding hood defeat the wolf? Or did she get eaten? No, she had to defeat the wolf right?

Kristin: Oh my god, no she didn't get eaten! God, what kind of fairy tales were you reading?

Jenny: What, fairytales are—

Kristin: How did she—

Jenny: Okay, according to Wikipedia, maybe the most popular version of the story involves the grandmother having been swallowed whole by the wolf and then little red riding hood getting swallowed whole by the wolf and then the woodcutter coming by and killing the wolf with his axe and freeing the grandmother and little red riding hood who were just swallowed up.

Kristin: Yeah, I don't know what I was thinking when I was like what kind of fucked up fairytales are you reading 'cause fairytales are fucked up.

Jenny: Yeah, but also doesn't this sound not like the ending that you remember?

Kristin: Right, that's what I mean.

Jenny: It's not ringing any bells for me.

Kristin: But also I think that as a kid you internalize things differently. You're like [kid voice] yeah, the wolf got full of stones and he's fine, whatever. You know what I mean? You don't think about it the way that I think we think about it where we're like what the fuck was that about, you know?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So I don't know, please tell us what kind of red riding hood—

Jenny: Stories you grew up with.

Kristin: Yeah, because I don't remember it— I think the thing that I remember the most from the little red riding hood story was when the wolf dressed up like the grandma.

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: To trick her, that was the thing that really stayed with me.

Jenny: Sure, yeah.

Kristin: So I don't know and then when Jenny was like what happens I was like I think that the wolf tries to blow down a bunch of houses but they're made of straw and bricks and she was like no that's the three little pigs and I was like, same wolf.

Jenny: Also I'm high on Buffy so I was like surely little red riding hood managed to trick the wolf and first I was like put the wolf in the oven but that of course is Hansel and Gretel from last week or put the wolf in a closet or—

Kristin: It's a great fairytale, it's about a wolf who leaves a breadcrumb trail to the grandmother's house trying to blow down houses.

Jenny: Yes, yeah it's perfect.

Kristin: Anyway—

Jenny: And a tortoise and a hare run a race, you'll never guess who wins! So anyway.

Kristin: Anyway, red coat, red coat!

Jenny: Love this moment, Buffy runs into Kralik after she gets catcalled on the street.

Kristin: Yeaaaah, so this is where we're—

Jenny: So tough to see!

Kristin: This is awful because we always see asshole men being asshole men to Buffy and Buffy being like [together], "oh yeah? Fuck off, I'm gonna snap your arm or flip you over. I'm gonna fucking do whatever the fuck I want because you suck. I'm gonna bend your gun in half like i'm gonna just fuck you up."

Jenny: But it's really important to see this too because we see Buffy be strong and totally badass all the time and it's easy in this exciting vampire slavery world to forget how the real world is and how some of us feel like we have to make ourselves small and as invisible as possible in situations like this and how unsafe we can feel doing everyday activities like walking home.

Kristin: Yes, yes. 100% and Buffy does not have her superpowers in this moment and so I identified with this moment very much and I think many of us do. I think that's a culturally relevant conversation happening at the moment about how many of us have been in situations like this or worse.

Jenny: Oh my god, yeah it's like that recent SNL skit that's just a song [Kristin laughs] about what's going on right now.

Kristin: A lot of you shared that with us actually.

Jenny: Which is called I think Welcome to Hell and the bridge is like [singing], “house of cards is ruined and that really sucks but here’s a list of stuff that’s ruined for us and it’s like [together: walking!] Uber, ponytails, hotels...” just like—

Kristin: I laugh to not cry, you know what I mean? But it is important and I think there’s one more thing to draw out here because it’s not just, Buffy has superpowers and now this is reality.

I think that reality is what we see in Buffy where we have power in some instances to fight back and in some instances we are made to feel like the only defense we have is to be small and that we don’t have a defense and that we are defenseless and scared and afraid.

So I think that exists simultaneously in all of us that we have experiences that are on both sides of that line. Anyhow this is a bullshit thing and we have to play the patriarchy jingle for it.

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

Kristin: [sighs] okay.

Jenny: Okay, so then—

Kristin: So then.

Jenny: Buffy runs into Kralik.

Kristin: So Buffy runs into Kralik, right and Kralik is creepy as fuck.

Jenny: This is great, so creepy.

Kristin: So fucking creepy. And then she runs away, and this begins what I looked at as sort of the antithesis of Buffy. Right? We talked way in the beginning of this series about how Joss Whedon, in the creation of Buffy, wanted to turn the trope of the helpless damsel in distress on it’s head. And this episode flips that and we see Buffy do things that women classically do in horror films. Running up the stairs.

Jenny: Well...

Kristin: Oh, you’re interrupting me, yes Jenny what is it? What am I doing wrong?

Jenny: [laughs] Well you’re doing everything right.

Kristin: Mm-hm, sure, sure, sure.

Jenny: And I adore you with all of my heart but I was thinking actually about this scene that I think it's really badass. I feel like we get to see Buffy operate with all of the skills and maybe not reflexes exactly but everything that she's learned by being powerful and honing those skills over the past few years.

It feels like she's using those to draw power from even though she doesn't actually have the physical strength. I feel like she never stops moving. She's wailing on Kralik, she gets away, she runs and runs and runs, she gets to a fence, she can't get over and she looks down immediately and starts peeling back the bottom corner. And she's flagging down cars, she's very, very, very active, proactive.

Kristin: You're right, I guess by aligning her with the damsel in distress I had a particular thing in my mind which is probably not the classic damsel— I guess the classic damsel in distress is just standing and calling for help but the person I had in mind, or the character type that I had in mind is the female character in horror films who often dies but puts up a fucking fight for sure.

Jenny: Ah, yes.

Kristin: And so I kind of conflated that those two things together.

Jenny: Maybe I'm conflating.

Kristin: No, no, no, I think you're right on but it's just this scene where she's running through the streets and she's screaming, "somebody please help me, somebody please help me."

Jenny: It's really jarring.

Kristin: Cars are not stopping for her, she can't get anybody to help her and she is desperate for help and that is I think, the thing that pulled on my heart viewing, you know? And like seeing that over and over again.

Jenny: Totally.

Kristin: Even Neve Campbell, running up the stairs in modern horror.

Jenny: Right, right.

Kristin: And *Scream* obviously turns a lot on it's head but—

Jenny: If Buffy's in a horror movie and doesn't have any powers she's Jessica Biel, she's getting inside that cow carcass, come on, come on!

Kristin: Yeah [laughs] Oh my god so a million years ago I went to see, what is the name of that movie?

Jenny: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre remake.

Kristin: Yes, I went to see the remake of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre with my girlfriend at the time. It was a long time ago and I will never forget, I have like four memories of my life 'cause I can't remember anything.

But she turns to me when Jessica Biel was standing inside of the cow carcass. She turned to me in the movie theater and went, "she is so hot." And I was like, "woooooooooooooooooow." [Jenny giggles] You know what I mean, just wow Randy.

Jenny: Randy.

Kristin: Randy gets a lot of airtime because Randy is not only my ex girlfriend, my first girlfriend, but also my very best friend.

Jenny: She's the fabric of our lives.

Kristin: She sure is, anyhow luckily somebody does hear Buffy's shouts for help and it is—

Jenny: Hooray it's Giles!

Kristin: In the Citron!

Jenny: What are the odds!

Kristin: Citreone? Citronee?

Jenny: Citrain, Citrinaa.

Kristin: Citronella car.

Jenny: So, in the citronella candle Giles rolls up just in the nick of time and they drive off and the vampire assistant is hanging off the side of the car for a minute but then they—

Kristin: Yeah, Buffy shakes him off.

Jenny: And then—

Kristin: Oh no, my only notes for the next scene are, I'll show you to them Jenny they're just in a line that's like a— [Jenny laughs] steps.

Jenny: It's like a waterfall of oh no.

Kristin: Oh no.

Jenny: Oh no.

Kristin: Oh no, oh no, oh no, and then over here in the corner I've got in caps OH NO GILES with a sad face, a very sad face.

Jenny: Awww, oh noooooooo.

Kristin: This is hoooooorible.

Jenny: This is so hard.

Kristin: Giles is like, "I have to tell you something", and Buffy is already, it's just like Buffy is really getting the 1 2 3 4 5 6 punch.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, she's already down.

Kristin: She is and she's already felt like her actual father figure has let her down and now her watcher father figure has been doing something that is so fucked up.

Jenny: It's so fucked up, like the most invasive thing we could imagine

Kristin: Yes, she has been 100% violated and I think that is a huge part of the reason why Giles is feeling like this is fucked up and it's the reason why Buffy is like how can I ever trust you again. It's really, really fucked up.

Jenny: Yeah, meanwhile I don't know how old Kendra was but I feel like it might be worth it just for a second to think about Kendra and Faith in this situation because I feel like Kendra would be like after she found out she would be like, "oh yes I understand and of course this is part of the tradition and the rules and everything."

Kristin: And Faith would kill Giles.

Jenny: [laughs] Faith would— Giles would be dead.

Kristin: Murdered. Dead. Done.

Jenny: So dead.

Kristin: No, there would be no conversation about it whatsoever. That's nice Jenny, that is nice they really are like a little line of—

Jenny: Right, right, right. They're a spectrum unto their selves.

Kristin: Yeah, so this is just horrible.

Jenny: It's so gutting.

Kristin: We do glean a little bit of Kralik's backstory before Buffy leaves, we learn that Kralik was not only a monster now but was a monster then and tortured many women and then we learn even more about Kralik's backstory when he fucking talks about his issues with mothers.

But before we leave this scene the moment that— I mean Sarah Michelle Gellar has a lot of moments, she'll have a lot of moments but when she says. "who are you?" to Giles it just guts me.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Guts. Me. Because you can see and feel the complete and utter betrayal that she is experiencing in that moment of the way that you feel if you've been dating somebody for a long time and you find out they've been cheating on you or anything like that where your reality is yanked from underneath you.

And you're left feeling like I know that this isn't what I thought it was but now I don't know if anything that I think is real is real. Your whole reality is fucked. [sighs] So...

Jenny: Yeah, and what is so amazing about this show is that we can have this utterly gutting scene contain Cordelia's entrance and she's hilarious—

Kristin: Doing a paper on Bosnia, very time specific—

Jenny: [As Cordelia] "But Buffy looks really upset which might mean the world is ending again in which case I'm not gonna bother—" [both laugh]

Kristin: Right, but you know what's incredible even in this— so this scene is deep, it's impactful, this moment with Cordelia has all of those fucking layers in it too.

Jenny: Well, once we get to— Buffy goes through the whole thing where she's like I don't know you and then Cordelia—

Kristin: Cordelia's like, "Giles!"

Jenny: "Gi-les!" And then Buffy's like, "I'm out of here" and Giles is like, "you can't walk home, it's not safe." Which doesn't ring a bell for Cordelia or maybe does and she just doesn't show it and then Buffy's like, "Cordelia can you drive me home?" And Cordelia's like immediately in a different emotional place and is like, "of course."

Kristin: [As Cordelia] Yes, of course I'm here for you. I just recognized that what is happening right here is on a different level. It's on a different plane and I am there to meet you because I'm Cordelia and I am perfect. Play her jingle god damn it.

[Cordelia jingle plays]
Cordelia ahh-ahh
I love you, Cordelia ahh-ahh
You're perfect Cordelia ahh-ahh]

Jenny: And off they go into that dark night.

Kristin: Yes, and then they arrive at the Summer's house where Joyce is doing some bills but what I wrote down is Joyce maybe doing bills or perhaps tying up some loose MOO ends. There's probably a paper trail that she's gotta deal with.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah, gotta shred all those 501C3 applications.

Kristin: Gotta dissolve the business, take down the facebook pages. [laughs]

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: Just kidding, there wasn't Facebook in 1999. Okay so then we have this Red Riding Hood moment.

Jenny: Right, right, of course.

Kristin: Buffy gets home, there's a polaroid of the two of them on the door and so Buffy goes upstairs and here is my question. This is an important question. Does

she change into the overalls of sadness? Are they the overalls of sadness or are they a different pair of overalls?

Jenny: You apparently were watching like a hawk every single thread of fabric.

Kristin: You didn't notice the overalls?

Jenny: I didn't notice the overalls but I'll tell you what, based on her agility and her movements I'm gonna have to say they're not the overalls of sadness, they're just the overalls of determination.

Kristin: 'Cause the overalls of sadness are baggier.

Jenny: They are very Jenko-esque, the overalls of sadness.

Kristin: Right, I remember really being like what is going on with the legs of those overalls. So she puts on the overalls of what did you call them?

Jenny: Determination.

Kristin: So she puts on the overalls of determination and she packs her weapons. We see her heft— just like we saw Willow heft her laptop, [both laugh] Buffy hefts her weapon bag.

Jenny: Yeah, that bag is a lot heavier than is usually is.

Kristin: Yeah, and then off we go to Kralik's arms.

Jenny: Yeah, Kralik is taking lots of polaroids of Joyce, she's got a— what do you call it when there's a piece of fabric in your mouth?

Kristin: A gag.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Yeah, she's got a gag in her mouth, he is positioning this whole thing so that he will turn Buffy into a vampire and the first thing that she eats will be Joyce's face.

Jenny: Delightful.

Kristin: Way to go man.

Jenny: What an image.

Kristin: What a set up, this guy has got vision, he's got guts [both laugh] so Kralik also, just a sidebar here, Kralik I don't know if you noticed this Jenny but he also has a fire going in the house.

Jenny: Oh my god, I missed that! What's wrong with them today?

Kristin: What is wrong with you? Kralik, also had a fire going. I just thought that was nice and I also noted that we see Buffy again— she's so scared when she walks into the house. It's just so hard to—

Jenny: Yeah, it's hard to see a whole different Buffy.

Kristin: I think it's hard for all of us.

Jenny: Meanwhile...

Kristin: Meanwhile.

Jenny: British men clashing, Giles is like, "your perfectly controlled test seems to have spun out of control. And Quentin Travers is like, "pip pip pip", God I wish I could remember— he reminds me of the trope character in any fantasy— OH! Like the turtle in the neverending story. Like Morla the Ancient One.

Kristin: That's an insult to Morla.

Jenny: No, because Morla's like, "I... don't... caaaaaare."

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Morla is going through something but that level of belief that I don't have any control over anything and perhaps if I did it wouldn't matter. Right? Quentin Travers is like this is just the way it is and the way it always has been and thus we must and nothing you say matters and never are they like, this is a human life. Never is Quentin Travers like this is a human being.

Kristin: Right, not registered in any capacity. But I will give Quentin Travers no points, I will give Morla the Ancient One all the points.

Jenny: So interestingly Giles doesn't give a rat's ass about the Council's orders. Hell yeah.

Kristin: Yeah, Giles, I wish he had gotten there a little sooner but what we see with this episode is that he kind of couldn't have gotten there sooner and him getting there at all has cost him his job so it's very complicated.

Jenny: Yeah, and it's like his father and his grandmother, you know it's like his whole family have been watchers and it's a whole thing and then what is so sick? I'll tell you what's so sick!

Kristin: What is so sick?

Jenny: Well, Giles is like, "I told Buffy so the test is off!" And Quentin's like, "Ah-hah-hah! Jokes on you the test is already started, Buffy's there." And then Giles is like, "what the fuck!" And he's getting his shit together and he's rushing out the door and Quentin is like, "it's not our business!" And Giles does that sick thing where he grabs him by the lapels and he's like, "it's not business!"

Kristin: Giles is like, bip-i-di-bip-bi-boo, [growls] Ripper!

Jenny: Yeah, but like Ripper dad.

Kristin: Yeaaaah, Ripper dad, only improvement.

Jenny: He's like that's my daughter, I gotta go.

Kristin: Yeaaaaah.

Jenny: And off... he tweeds.

Kristin: Off he tweeds back to Kralik's arms [Jenny laughs]. And my next note when we go back to Kralik's arms is always with the falling bookshelves.

Jenny: Okay but how does—

Kristin: These people with their bookshelves! They're always killing each other with bookshelves.

Jenny: How does weak little Buffy who can barely hoist a weapon's back pull—

Kristin: Tip a bookshelf?

Jenny: —That enormous bookshelf— like?

Kristin: That's the fucking thing with bookshelves Jenny.

Jenny: I guess.

Kristin: Doesn't take much to knock 'em the fuck over.

Jenny: Plus they're in southern California, earthquakes! They should really be bolting all these to the wall.

Kristin: The biggest lesson in all of this is bolt your bookshelves or put them against a wall, come on people putting your bookshelves in the middle of the room. Then we hear Kralik go [creepily] "hide and seeeeek, [whispers] hide and seek!" [both laugh]

Jenny: Which is so great.

Kristin: Tickled me to no end.

Jenny: So Buffy's getting chased all through the house [both] up the stairs. Kralik grabs her through the stairs, whatever! She finds her way into a room where the lights off.

Kristin: The polaroid room?

Jenny: And she turns the light on, there's just a bajillion polaroids all over.

Kristin: This is another like Hannibal, it reminds me— you know not every— I'm sorry I keep saying Hannibal, Kralik does not remind me of Hannibal. Kralik reminds me of—

Jenny: Oh, of Buffalo Bill?

Kristin: Buffalo Bill, yes, he reminds me of Buffalo Bill from Silence of the Lambs because they have the same kind of serial killer vocal intonation even. You know? [imitating Buffalo Bill] "Put the lotion in the basket." Can't you just hear Kralik telling her to put the lotion in the fucking basket? [Jenny laughs]

Anyway, so then we— this is like— all I could hear in my ears when we were rewatching the episode tonight was Jeff talking about like, "I don't even really know why I was taking the pills. I think I was taking the pills so that Buffy could defeat me."

Because that's kind of what happens here and it's great. I mean, I'm happy Buffy won but it's definitely this bizarre moment where he's like, "I'm the most evil vampire, I'm gonna kill you, oh no my head, I must find my pills."

Jenny: Weeeeeelllll.

Kristin: So okay—

Jenny: Okay, but shout out to Buffy going down the laundry shoot, pretty sick, also very fast thinking; grabbing the pills, running away. Oh hey there's Joyce at the bottom of the laundry shoot, how convenient! Then Kralik comes down the stairs and Buffy to her credit is like, "oh I was just leaving. Oh I was just headed out the door with this bottle of pills."

Kristin: With your pills.

Jenny: Very effective, not just leaving them over by the water or anything like I would have done if I was Buffy the vampire slayer. It's what Jenny the vampire slayer would have done.

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny I can't wait—

Jenny: Here you go, here are your pills, I'm sorry I took them.

Kristin: I can't wait for the series called Jenny the vampire slayer. Oh, it will be a hoot and a half. Anyhow, so he drinks the holy water, kapow!

Jenny: And then Buffy's like, "it's holy water bitch!" [Kristin laughs] Sorry I said bitch but I feel like it's very apropos.

Kristin: Jenny, so then we go— Kralik's dead, Joyce is like can't you do your thing honey? Your strong thing.

Jenny: Oh yeah, your strong thing where you rip the ropes.

Kristin: And then we go to the library for—

Jenny: Wait!

Kristin: Oh?

Jenny: We don't go to the library yet because first after—

Kristin: Oh right.

Jenny: 'Cause Buffy's about to free Joyce, the other vampire we totally forgot about comes crashing in with Giles hot on his heels who stakes the crap out of him and then Buffy's like—

Kristin: "Thanks dad."

Jenny: "Dad loves me."

Kristin: Right, I think Buffy actually gets to dad loves me in this next scene.

Jenny: Yeah, she's not there yet, she's just like oh...

Kristin: Yeah, I think she understands the conundrum that Giles was in, in the next scene and she recognizes the bullshit of the council, I mean she already recognized it, I think everybody has recognized the bullshit of the council for some time now but this fucking asshole—

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: The Council is very pleased.

Jenny: Quentin's like, "you passed", Buffy's like, "go fuck yourself."

Kristin: Literally. She says bite me, I mean no joke. But she says I think you'd better get out of town before I get my fucking strength back.

Jenny: Hell yeah Buffy.

Kristin: She's not playing. Then we get this line that you already talked about but it's just so brilliant I wanna talk about it again. You're waging the war, she's fighting the war and there's a fucking difference. And I feel like that is something that we will come back to again and again when it comes to this fucking council.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: And then Quentin—

Jenny: Oh my gosh.

Kristin: Yes, go ahead.

Jenny: [panting]

Kristin: [laughs] Breathe, breathe.

Jenny: Okay then, you know, they're waiting for Quentin to get the hell out and Quentin's like, "we're not quite finished here yet. This is a test for both the slayer and the watcher. She passed, you failed, you're fired."

Giles is like, "on what grounds?" And then... ready your tissues, Quentin Travers says to Giles, "your affection for your charge has rendered you incapable of clear and impartial judgement. You have a father's love for the girl."

Kristin: Ahhhh.

Jenny: And this renders him useless to the council, fuck the council, the council is trash.

Kristin: The council is trash trademarked.

Jenny: The council is trash but Giles is whatever the opposite of trash is.

Kristin: ...Flowers.

Jenny: I was gonna say oranges, like almost anything is the opposite of trash.

Kristin: Yeah, and I think this is the moment that Buffy realizes as fucked up as the thing Giles did was she recognizes the position that he was in. And then we get this really fucking great last moment between Quentin and Buffy. This reminded me of so many moments I've had in my life where this fucking ass— she says, "bite me" and this fucking ass says, "colorful girl" like a smug motherfucker, I fucking hate you Quentin!

Jenny: Really? you felt like that was smug I felt like he was a little bit shook.

Kristin: You think?

Jenny: Yeah, I felt like he was covering his shookedness with trying to be sassy but I don't think he pulled it off. Well, we'll just have to agree to disagree.

Kristin: No, any fucking ass that says colorful girl just means look at this spritely little one, look at this one that thinks she has sass, I don't know maybe I'm bringing my personal shit into it.

Jenny: I think you might be—

Kristin: I just feel like— No! Fuck Quentin, fuck you Quentin, can you hear me!

Jenny: Okay but then Giles helps Buffy clean her wounds!

Kristin: Yes, and then everybody's making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Jenny: Oh my gosh and Joyce is so proud.

Kristin: [As Joyce] "She was very clever."

Jenny: "She was very clever." [both laugh] So great. And then Willow is wearing—

Kristin: The hat.

Jenny: The most alarming hat in the history of hats, it's sort of like— God what? How even?

Kristin: It's like a basket hat, you know?

Jenny: It's like a basket, an upside down basket that's made of, I don't know, shiny rope or something. And it's yellow with bright orange stripes, it is the stuff that nightmares are made of.

Kristin: Oh bless your heart Willow and your hats, I love you and all of your hat choices. [both laugh] Anyhow we put sort of a little cap on this girly lid that we've had throughout the episode where you know, Buffy can't open the jar and so she's like— and Xander's like, "you need help with that little lady?" and then he—

Jenny: Harkening back to Ted.

Kristin: Yeah, and then he can't open the fucking jar and after we lose the scene it's to black the credits are up we hear Xander ask Willow for help which is nice. We're turning things on their heads here in Buffy the Vampire Slayer. We appreciate it duly.

Jenny: So very much.

Kristin: So very much and so that's the episode.

Jenny: Exceeecept...

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Time for a holiday classic, the sexual tension award.

Kristin: Jenny and I have a disagreement about this.

Jenny: I'm uncomfortable.

Kristin: Yes, I said that the sexual tension award should go to Buffy and the amethyst dildo.

Jenny: I— Okay, it's not amethyst, and it's not a dildo.

Kristin: [laughs] Jenny said that was indecent and she would prefer it to go to Buffy and the blue stone because she only has eyes for it.

Jenny: Yes, she got lost in its gaze, that's beautiful. I understand—

Kristin: I believe that the title of the award is the Sexual Tension Award not the Romance Award.

Jenny: I know, I know, the thing is that it's not— the sexual tension is actually between Buffy and Angel, she's just taking it out on that quartz... rod, scepter. [Kristin laughs] anything other than the word you chose.

Kristin: You would choose quartz rod over what I'm saying?

Jenny: I think scepter is my pick, quartz scepter.

Kristin: Quartz rod. [laughs] Okay so you want to give me a nod if I give it to Buffy and Angel?

Jenny: Just for the sake of the youth.

Kristin: I don't know if they've ever won it before and probably deserve it.

Jenny: Right! Yeah, they're um— it's all build up and no pay off over there in vamp mansion.

Kristin: Sorry to all of the gems. Yeah, sorry to build you up and then take you down like that but gems you got nothing. This sexual tension award is going to Angel and Buffy.

Jenny: I am sorry.

Kristin: And their cheese plate.

Jenny: [laughs] Wow. Well on that note... My name is Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: Quartz rod for short.

Jenny: It is my pleasure to serve you on this and all days. When I am not making this podcast with my beautiful wife, Kristin Russo, I am making songs and recording them and going on tour and that kind of business. If you want to learn more about me you can go to jennyowenyoungs.com/buffering.

Or if you wanna really learn more about me you can just come on down to stageit.com/jennyowenyoungs and watch me play some Christmas music this Thursday December 14th at noon pacific and then four pm pacific in an encore performance.

Kristin: [laughs] My name is Kristin Russo you can learn more about me on my website kristinnoeline.com or over on my twitter or instagram handles which is just kristinnoeline. Do you know how to spell that? Probably, but I'm gonna tell you again anyway k-r-i-s-t-i-n-n-o-e-l-i-n-e.

You can learn about the work that I do with LGBTQ young people and their families, I also just wanna give a quick shout that last year Everyone Is Gay put together a free e-care package that brings together a mixtape, a crossword puzzle, a coloring page, a journaling page and a lot of the holiday specific resources that I have helped create over the years.

And that is still available for free download. You just go to everyoneisgay.com/lovelight, it's called *Where the Love Light Gleams* and the illustration, the cover illustration was done by our very own Kate Leth.

Jenny: Wooooooooow.

Kristin: So, it's pretty important around this time that we have things to keep us buoyed. That's my word of the week.

Jenny: You're way into being buoyed.

Kristin: Buoyed! And I think that that could help so you can check that out. And you can learn more about the work too at everyoneisgay.com or mykidisgay.com.

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

Kristin: You can support this podcast, and its hosts, in a variety of ways. One, you can go on over to itunes and rate and review us. It helps people find the podcast and find each other. Another great way to find each other is over in the land of Patreon.

You can support us just by going to bufferingthevampireslayer.com and clicking on Patreon. We are, I think, sixty dollars away from our goal over there. So we're really, really close which is very exciting.

And as you know there's many fun things that you get over in the land of Patreon so thank you to all of you who continue to support us and continue to help us grow this work.

Jenny: Praise.

Kristin: In many ways, it's very wonderful and last but not least of course you can go on over and get yourself some Buffering the Vampire Slayer merchandise. There's lots of stuff over there, things designed by Kate Leth, by Isabella Rotman, by Kristine Thune. There's just a whole bunch of fun stuff so head on over there bufferingthevampireslayer.com and click on shop.

Jenny: And hey before we go, we want to wish all of you a happy happy happy happy warm joyful love-filled fuzzy and combustible? Not combustible. [Kristin laughs] non-combustible holiday season.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: We're holding you all in our hearts and we hope you have a wonderful end of December and beginning of January.

Kristin: Yes, we will have a special episode Christmas week, we talked about it up at the top, but just in case you missed it. We will be sending a special gift your way via the podcast channel waves. Is that what you call them?

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: The week of Christmas, but then we will be back with *The Zeppo* on January 3rd with special guest Andrew Ti and I just wanna echo Jenny, we love you

all so much. You lift us up quite literally every day and we are sending you all of the love in the world this holiday season. We can't wait to be back in your podcast arms very soon.

Jenny: Till next time...

Jenny & Kristin: Awooooooooooooooooooooo! [jingle bells in the background]

Jenny: [whispers] Christmas.

[Jenny performs "Helpless" off the album "Songs from Season Three" by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

I don't know anything anymore
Waiting for someone to call me
Waiting for someone to call
I don't know who you think you are
But you're nothing like how I thought you were
I don't know who you think you are
But you're nothing like how I thought you were
I don't know anything anymore
Aching for someone to find me
Aching for someone to find
I don't know who you think you are
But you're nothing like how I thought you were
I don't know who you think you are
But you're nothing like how I thought you were
I don't know anything anymore