

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 2.16: Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered

Kristin: Why, hello there. Before we get into the episode today we wanted to let you know that we are so excited to be joined by Dan Kois. Dan is notably a senior editor of *Slate*, a contributing writer at the *New York Times Magazine*, an avid Buffy fan, and also *a man*.

Jenny: A what?

Kristin: A man!

Jenny: Oh.

Kristin: We're excited to have a conversation with Dan later on in the episode about "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered."

Jenny: Today's episode of *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* is brought to you by our friends Mack Weldon. Mack Weldon makes really cool men's basics including, but not limited to, underwear, super soft t-shirts, and really cool socks. I happen to be wearing one of their sweatshirts right now. It is so cozy, and so—

Kristin: Also, it's very sexy.

Jenny: It's really cool looking.

Kristin: It looks super great on you.

Jenny: So you don't have to be a man to wear their products, but you can be.

Kristin: Mack Weldon— you don't have to be a man.

Jenny: But it's cool if you are.

Kristin: [laughs]

Jenny: You can get socks, tees, underwear, sweatshirts, whatever you're into by going to mackweldon.com and using our promo code BUFFY to get 20 percent off. That's mackweldon.com and get 20 percent off your purchase using the promo code BUFFY.

[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. I am Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: And I'm Kristin Russo, and this week we are talking about Season 2 Episode 16 [singing] "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered."

Jenny: [laughs] Great.

Kristin: Speaking of songs, stay tuned at the end of this podcast every week for an original song written by us, and thankfully not sung by me, recapping the *Buffy* episode we are discussing.

Jenny: "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" was written by my friend and yours: Marti Noxon. And directed by James A. Contner. It originally aired on February 10, 1998.

Kristin: Ah, just four days before Valentine's Day.

Jenny: Which is relevant.

Kristin: It is! Because this is the one where: as Valentine's Day approaches, Xander tries to improve his love life through witchcraft and finds himself with too much of a good thing.

Jenny: We've all been there.

Kristin: [laughs] Have we?

Jenny: Uhhhhhhh...

Kristin: You practiced witchcraft for love?

Jenny: Sometimes in a young girl's life–

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Jenny: One must seize the, you know, seizing–

Kristin: I know all about seizing. I've learned a lot about seizing in the last couple of episodes actually.

Jenny: Sooo... we open on a necklace. A necklace in a cemetery.

Kristin: We do. The necklace is really pretty.

Jenny: And the necklace is a great jumping off spot for Buffy's sick burn. Because it's shaped like a heart, and she's like, "Does Cordelia even know what one of these is?"

Kristin: Right, right. Yeah, and Buffy and Xander have a moment here where Buffy's like, "I think you could date someone better," which is quite a risk to take, I think. [Jenny groans.] Like I know we're in high school here so maybe we're not thinking about things, but that's just like, have you ever told somebody that they're date that you think they could do better? Is that a conversation you had with a friend?

Jenny: Uhhh... no. I think that's a conversation you have with your other friends behind that friend's back.

Kristin: Right. I mean, you know, I have certainly gotten frustrated with my best friend and have said you need to start picking people that you will be with for longer because you want to... you want to get married. Like, that's a goal you have.

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But I've never been like, "Hey this person you're in a relationship with"–

Jenny: "Is not that great."

Kristin: "Is not that great." Because that's– you're really opening yourself up to a world of possibilities there. They could be together forever, and then you've always been that girl in the cemetery that said you think that Xander could do better. It's just a risk, that's all I'm saying.

Jenny: I have had people say to me I think that, uh, you could do better.

Kristin: Yeah. Was it me? I said that to you. [Jenny laughs.] And it was when I was trying to date you–

Jenny: You did say that to me before we were dating [Kristin laughs] but other people, I've dated enough people I guess for that to have occurred a number of times, and it just makes me not trust my friend.

Kristin: Yeah, that's the thing! Is even if you're dating a horrible person, you are dating them because you're probably having feelings for them, and it's really hard for you to see out, and I've known people where all of their friends have been like, "This person is not good for you. You shouldn't." And they can't see out. It's very hard to see out of love. But, whatever. Buffy has–

Jenny: Regardless.

Kristin: Buffy has said her thing, and Xander is rolling with it. Because Xander's kind of like, "I don't know about this thing either." Because Xander and Cordelia, what I love about their relationship, is that both of them are like, how is this happening? [Jenny laughs.] You know? Neither one of them is like infatuated with the other at all–

Jenny: Yeah, they're just like whattt?

Kristin: Just like why do I have these feelings? Why? This doesn't add up at all so–

Jenny: Which is great.

Kristin: Yeah. It is great. It's really fun. So, you know, Buffy is a good friend to Xander I think after this moment and is like, "You'll do fine. It'll be

great." And then Xander's like, "Why can't it be as easy as slaying vampires?" This love thing–

Jenny: And then the vampire–

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Springs up and then a fight ensues.

Kristin: Gets dusted. Nice dust. A nice full-body dust we get in this.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I feel like they really framed [Jenny laughs.], you know, they were like, "Hey guys, we're going to do a nice trick."

Jenny: Yeah. [laughs]

Kristin: "You wanna see the whole vamp turn to dust?" So after the credits we cut to the Cordettes who I would like to refer to as the Plastics in this episode if that's OK with you, Jenny.

Jenny: They can't be the Cordettes anymore?

Kristin: They can be the... I just like, I just saw them and thought Plastics. You know?

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: It just screamed out at me. And there's one Plastic in particular, she has a red hat on, do you know who I'm talking about?

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: She brought to mind the character from *Clueless*, Amber, who always has like crazy wacky hats.

Jenny: Oh yes.

Kristin: And so I know that like *Clueless* is not *Mean Girls* is not *Buffy*. But there's just like a real–

Jenny: Some sort of–

Kristin: Situation.

Jenny: Common thread running through the mid-90s.

Kristin: Yeah, it's just a real situation happening here that I appreciated. I think the Plastics are on point. I mean, they're a nightmare, but that's what Plastics are designed to be. Harmony at the head of the pack now.

Jenny: She is not on point! She is really bad at insults!

Kristin: OK, OK.

Jenny: She is so bad.

Kristin: But I'm... are you... yeah, you're right. I guess a high quality of being a Plastic is that you should be good at insults.

Jenny: Not like, "Maybe you should learn a second language so that more girls can reject you." Xander's not understanding of a second language does not prevent the girls who speak, whose native tongue is that second language from rejecting him.

Kristin: Yeah, it was weak. It was a weak insult. I actually wrote the full quote down for later because I was like, seriously Harmony? But I think Harmony is, I mean, you know, because Harmony is stepping into Cordelia's shoes and no one–

Jenny: She cannot fill them.

Kristin: Right. I mean, I think the bigger point here is, can anyone fill Cordelia's shoes?

Jenny: Mmmmm. Amazing question.

Kristin: Tsk tsk. I think not. But anyhow we open here, and of course, the Plastics are rejecting their leader. Bold move.

Jenny: Mutiny on the bounty.

Kristin: [laughs] Total mutiny! Because somehow, and we never find out, do we ever find out how they know about Xander and Cordelia?

Jenny: I don't think so?

Kristin: Which is like a major plot point. I would like to know how they found out. Did somebody see them necking on lovers' lane?

Jenny: Ooooh, maybe.

Kristin: You know, what happened? Is it because of the hole in the—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: In the top of the car? Now their windows aren't steaming up enough to conceal them? [Jenny laughs.] What, how has it happened? Then we go, so Cordelia, whatever, there's this big reveal where Cordelia's like, "Oh, shit. My cover is blown." And then we cut to class, I believe, where the teacher is like, "Hand in your papers, and blah blah blah." Everyone please take note everyone's papers are handwritten on loose-leaf paper.

Jenny: The time was.

Kristin: The time was, and I forgot that like when you had to write a paper you had to *write* a paper.

Jenny: Yeah, dude!

Kristin: White out was your best friend.

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: Anyways so everybody's handing in their handwritten papers and then Amy does her magic on the teacher—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And stares into her eyes and what I want to know is what happens after that? Is the spell that Amy did, because it seemed like the spell was for the moment–

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: She was like, if you don't hand in your paper, so she had to like confuse her, but then the teacher–

Jenny: What happens later when she's grading papers–

Kristin: Right. And when she hands–

Jenny: Does she still see that invisible paper?

Kristin: [overlapping] Invisible paper? Is there an invisible paper? Is she like, "Wow, Amy, great job writing on the history of Salem?" You know what I mean?

Jenny: [dreamily] A plus.

Kristin: Right. Or–

Jenny: Maybe she just marks the grade down right then?

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Just for Amy. Whew. Anyway. [Kristin laughs.] So Willow, and Buffy, and Amy–

Kristin: They have this great– gal's moment.

Jenny: Willow's like, "Hey, Amy." So that we all remember who Amy is from Season 1 Episode 3 "Witch". And they're all talking about like going to the Bronze for the Valentine's Day dance and Buffy's like, "Oh, Valentine's Day is just like a dumb commercial holiday," and Amy's like, [whispering] "Bad breakup, huh?" [Kristin laughs.]

Kristin: Which is like... how do you... I mean, what are your feelings on Valentine's Day? We should probably talk about that, right?

Jenny: Oh, I think it's so stupid.

Kristin: Right, but—

Jenny: But I also—

Kristin: However—

Jenny: I think if it's like your thing, great.

Kristin: Well, no, no, no, that wasn't my but. My but was like a personal... It was a personal but. For us. For you and I because you say you think it's so stupid, but you have... there have been Valentine's Days in the very recent past where you have written me a card, given me a card and a gift, and I've been like, "Oh. Right."

Jenny: "Oops."

Kristin: "It's Valentine's Day."

Jenny: Yeah, well, the thing is like, if I didn't do that, do you know how much trouble I would be in?

Kristin: Is that really—

Jenny: So much trouble!

Kristin: Is that really the truth? Are you only doing it to stay out of trouble?

Jenny: No, I'm also doing it because you're a wonderful person [Kristin laughs] and I want you to know that, but I'm just as comfortable reiterating that on any other day of the year besides February 14.

Kristin: Right, no, and I agree with you. Valentine's Day, I'm like, "Oh brother," right? It's just a super commercialized situation where people are going to dinner and buying chocolate and hearts and what have you.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But at the same time, this is how I feel about a lot of holidays and human things. It's like, I feel like mostly we need reminders to do nice things that like without the like, "OK, today is the day where you *fill in the blank*" a lot of us wouldn't. Like we get very caught up in our lives.

Jenny: Right, sure.

Kristin: So I have a lot of hesitation about the holiday of Valentine's Day in general, but also am like, this is nice. I always feel like, this is nice, when we exchange stuff with one another because every other day we're just like, "Did you do the dishes?" "OK, great." [Jenny laughs.] So, those are my complicated feelings on Valentine's Day.

Jenny: The person who asks if you did the dishes is always Kristin and the person who says, "Yes, I did," is always me. Just. So. We're. Clear.

Kristin: Except on Valentine's Day when, like, I'll do the dishes—

Jenny: Awwwww.

Kristin: I always do—

Jenny: It's like a fucking big deal special event.

Kristin: Right, right. It's like—

Jenny: Marquee item! [Kristin laughs.] I come home from somewhere and the dishes are washed and Kristin's like, Kristin like pops out like Tom Cruise in *Risky Business* and is like, [mocking] "Did you notice anything interesting in the kitchen?"

Kristin: I do. I do think it's funny that like on high holidays [Jenny laughs] I've like given you the gift of: and it's the thing you do every other day of the week, and I'm like, "Today."

Jenny: It means a lot, though, because you do it so rarely it means a lot when you do it.

Kristin: For the record, I do a lot of other things.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Just so the listener knows.

Jenny: Kristin is high functioning in this relationship.

Kristin: Just dishes aren't really my thing.

Jenny: It's a team effort.

Kristin: Moving right along—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: To Giles and Jenny Calendar. They have a moment right after this. Everybody's in the hallway. Xander and Willow are just costume coordinated to the nines—

Jenny: Oh, yeah, they are matching.

Kristin: In this scene. Beautifully. It's just like a very nice visual with the orange and the orange. Whatever. Giles—

Jenny: Yo. [laughs]

Kristin: Go ahead. What?

Jenny: We gotta talk about it! Because like Jenny like pops into the doorway of her office or her classroom rather, and they lock eyes, and there's like some deer-in-headlights whatever, and then she's like, "Oh! I'm so glad we..."

ran into each other... here... in the school... where we... both work right outside of... my classroom... that you must pass by... for various... reasons at different times during the day. What are... the odds? Oh dear... heavens."

Kristin: Yeah, it's so bizarre. It's like Giles must know that that's her classroom. Right?

Jenny: Yes, of course.

Kristin: But everyone is like, "Oh dear, what a crazy twist of fate."

Jenny: "How did this happen?"

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs] And then there's this real rough moment where Buffy... it's just like the same thing, this like replay of like Jenny fucked up, Giles is very very adamant about being on Buffy's side. You know—

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: He's like, "I will not even look at you in a way that might suggest to my slayer that I'm not on her team."

Jenny: Best dad ever.

Kristin: Yeah. Seriously best dad ever.

Jenny: Number one dad.

Kristin: And so they kinda leave Jenny Calendar in the dust here. It's unresolved. Willow and Xander are left like [groans?].

Jenny: Yeah. Everyone looks super uncomfortable.

Kristin: "That was awkward."

Jenny: And uh, so the reason Giles needed to talk to Buffy is because he needs to let her know that, historically, Angelus—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Is exceptionally demonstrative on and around Valentine's Day.

Kristin: Of course he is, right? Of course.

Jenny: So look out.

Kristin: And look out. And we see the first instance of the demonstrativeness of Angelus [Jenny laughs] when, and now we're getting into some territory with this, with our favorite throuple, the world's favorite throuple–

Jenny: Best throuple ever

Kristin: We're really starting to peel back the layers and see the truth of this throuple, which is that Angel is like, "Fuck you, Spike." Drusilla, if push... and he's such a dick about it because he's like, "If push came to..." like he has this attitude about it like, "If push came to shove, she would choose me. I'm not going to push it, man, but like, just so you know."

Jenny: "Like, I could."

Kristin: "I could, if I wanted to." You know, and Spike has given Drusilla this beautiful necklace. It's such a bummer for Spike in this moment. I really am not happy.

Jenny: He meticulously pick that out and stole it [Kristin sighs] from somewhere or someone.

Kristin: And then Angel comes over and not only drops this warm, near-to-still-beating heart [Jenny laughs] from a "quaint little shop girl". Nice line. Very nice line. For Dru. But also, to add insult to injury, puts the necklace on Dru, and it's just, it's just shitty.

Jenny: He's just like working extra hard to emasculate Spike as hard as he can. He also–

Kristin: And he says, "Cuuuuuute"–

Jenny: Ugh, he's such a dick.

Kristin: About the necklace! [Groans]

Jenny: It's also important to note here that Angel's eyeliner is approximately twice as thick as it was—

Kristin: He's getting eviler.

Jenny: The last time we saw it, right? An indication that things are getting even darker—

Kristin: Soon he's going to be in full KISS makeup.

Jenny: [laughs]

Kristin: And Drusilla, just before we cut, before we go to the next bit of this episode, I want to give a shout out to Drusilla for her response to the heart.

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: She's like, she... any scene where Drusilla's like, the direction to Juliet Landau is like, "OK, they're going to have some dialogue, and can you just like be obsessed with fill-in-the-blank? The heart or whatever?" [Jenny laughs] It is my favorite Drusilla where she's just like playing with it insanely like fucking... oh god.

Jenny: Then we cut to the Bronze.

Kristin: Ugh. And this is—

Jenny: Willow's in love with Oz!

Kristin: This is me when I see you play! Every time!

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: I really felt a bond with Willow. It's a very... you will never have this experience at least this literally, being in a room full of people who are there to watch your wife or boyfriend–

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: You are both to me. My boyfriend and my wife.

Jenny: Great, great, great.

Kristin: Play music that's so great and like it's just such an enjoyable experience, and you get to sit there and be like, "That's my wife." You know?

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: And that's how Willow is this whole time–

Jenny: Awwwww.

Kristin: She's like, "That's my boyfriend. My boyfriend's in the band." You know? [Jenny laughs.] Oh, it's so cute! So I drew a little heart emoji, heart-eyes emoji for Willow at the Bronze actually.

Jenny: And a negative-heart-eyes emoji for Cordelia who gets–

Kristin: No. No. First of all–

Jenny: Iced out. No, like, it's sad eyes. Sad eyes. Weepy eyes.

Kristin: I was like, I didn't even know what was happening, I was just like, "Maybe we should.." because, listen, we're going to have to jump to Fashion Watch because I know that Kate Leth is here with us, but before we jump in, I just gotta say, holy shit, Cordelia!

Jenny: Cordelia looks amazing, but we are not fully qualified to discuss all the finer points of that so let's turn it over to Kate Leth with Buffy Fashion Watch.

Kristin: Let's.

Jenny: Yes, Leth. [Kristin laughs]

[Jenny performing the opening Buffy Fashion Watch Jingle:
It's time for our friend Kate, to give you the Buffy Fashion Update!"]

Kate: Welcome back to Buffy Fashion Watch in which we're all taking one for the team in this trash bag of an episode. I say that only because A) Xander's the worst and B) Buffy congratulating him at the end of the episode for not assaulting her makes me, as Cordelia so eloquently put it, "Yack." As much as I want Xander to die screaming in a snake pit, and I do, there are some good laughs and some very good outfits in this episode despite the appalling fever dream that is Xander's horrifying unbuttoned shirt and blazer combination from the beginning. I mean, look at the thing. Even his cuffs are unbuttoned.

"Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" is not kind to Cordelia, but my god, does she look flawless. The dress she wears to the dance early on, body-con with black and red brocade, was probably an awakening moment in my childhood, and listen, I know I've said that more than once on here, but like, this show was my childhood so, anyway.

Her necklace, the neck line, I lay myself at her feet in worship. Pair that with her white collar knotted work shirt and black cigarette pants that she has on at school, her red half-sleeve top with the pleather mini skirt during the big showdown, her red halter top when she tells Xander exactly where to stick it, her final scene outfit, which is color coordinated to high heaven in soft light green and yellow with a matching sweater. It is too much. She is too good! Her makeup is flawless in this episode.

There's a lot else to comment on here. Buffy's slitted cheetah print micro mini skirt, or her white mesh top and tank combo. As well as Drusilla's crazy sparkling faux fur sequined coat. Although I will point out she's wearing the same outfit from two episodes ago so hmmm.

Also why does every girl at Sunnydale own a sweater set that they tie around their shoulders. What is that? Was that a thing? Did I miss that? I don't know if I was bougie enough.

But, Cordelia takes the prize in this episode, and she deserves it. Until next time, I'll see you at the mall.

[Jenny performing the closing Buffy Fashion Watch Jingle:
That was our friend Kate, she gave you the Buffy Fashion Update]

Jenny: Sweet heavenly Moses, thank you, Kate Leth.

Kristin: Kate Leth, are you OK? You know what I mean? Are you going to make it? I don't know if I am either [Jenny laughs] by the way-

Jenny: Do you have the vapors?

Kristin: [laughs] Uh, yeah, Cordelia just really really slayed. She really slayed this episode. [Jenny laughs] I'm just going to go ahead and say it. But let's talk about this scene. This is hard. This whole thing is hard. It's like I feel like I came into this episode... We watched "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" on Valentine's Day. We did a Buffypwatch with you guys-

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: And when I watched it out of context, I was just like, "Eh, fuck Xander." Right? Like that was like my thing, but now that we're kind of in the arc, I expected to come into this episode, and I was nervous because we had so much to say about Xander last week. [Jenny laughs] I was like, "Jesus Christ." But I actually have like really complicated feelings about both of them in this episode, and this scene is like the perfect example of why. Xander has feelings for Cordelia, and Cordelia has feelings for Xander, and the thing that Xander says to Cordelia when he gives her the heart, "Maybe you see something special in me that I can't see and vice versa," is, like it just underpins the reason why it's very complicated to just say, "Fuck you, Xander." Right? Because the real truth is that neither of these characters, Cordelia and Xander, they have a lot in common. Mey Rude just turned the podcast off.

Jenny: Sorry Mey.

Kristin: Sorry Mey. But they do in the sense that neither one of them can see the goodness in them. They both are very insecure people, character, right? And Cordelia makes up for that by like you know overemphasizing her like "I can do what I want how I want when I want," and Xander, it manifests in this way where when he opens up and is vulnerable, but both of them, really, when they open up and they're vulnerable and they are not received well, they become mean.

Jenny: Right, right, right. They lash out.

Kristin: They lash out. And so I just want to be able to like look at this two ways and not just one where we see this moment that Xander opens up, becomes vulnerable, has purchased this really beautiful necklace for Cordelia, and you can see Cordelia like shatter because she knows what she quote unquote "has to do."

Jenny: [overlapping] "has to do."

Kristin: Which is rooted in this need to maintain her status and you know not rock the boat, not be too outside of the lines, and she at the same time is like really for some unknown reason super into Xander's outfit. [Jenny laughs.] I get it, it's the 90s, fine. But [Jenny laughs] she's also into Xander, and she knows this is going to crush him, and she's one of the first times we ever see Cordelia recognize that she's about to crush someone and-

Jenny: Feel bad about it.

Kristin: Feel really horrible about it. But she does it. She does it. She breaks up with Xander. It's Valentine's Day. [Jenny sighs] And Xander gets, Xander gets sad, but what I will say is that Xander gets sad-

Jenny: But he doesn't get cruel.

Kristin: No. He doesn't get cruel until he goes to school the next day

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: And then everyone is laughing at him, and you know, making him feel... I mean, he's very much being like bullied in this scene that we see.

Jenny: Right, right, right. I wanna say one thing before we talk about school the next day, which is that "Clearly the fact that I please you visually has gotten us off on the wrong foot here" is pretty great. [Kristin laughs]–

Kristin: It is a good... It's a good line.

Jenny: It's a great line, and it's very, it's like sort of a quintessential thing.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: For the two of them in combination.

Kristin: Yeah, absolutely.

Jenny: Meanwhile, OK, we get to school, and the first thing that somebody says to him is, "Dude, way to get dumped." And I want to call myself out here.

Kristin: Oh wow, did you do this to somebody?

Jenny: Um, I think like my nature, my bizarre nature in high school some of the time–

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Jenny: Was to like, insinuate myself into situations that had nothing to do with me–

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And say, maybe not as deliberately like mean–

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: As this person intended–

Kristin: No, I can hear you say it. Like I can hear the Jenny voice of like, [imitating] "Dude, way to get dumped." [Jenny groans] I can hear you. So... wow Jenny–

Jenny: So I'll just be–

Kristin: Got a little bit of the bully inside of you, eh?

Jenny: Leaping into the void. [Kristin laughs] Goodbye. It has been my pleasure to serve you.

Kristin: But, oh yeah, high school. Ouch.

Jenny: Yeah, people are terrible in high school.–

Kristin: What a place to be.–

Jenny: They were.–

Kristin: High school was like a living gossip magazine, you know? Just like a museum of gossip. [Jenny laughs] It's just like gossip magazines come to life where everyone cares about everyone else's shit. So then that's what turns Xander. I mean, it's the combination. It's like a one-two punch for him.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: It's that he's been rejected, he has a broken heart, he's very insecure, and then on top of it all, he feels like everyone at school–

Jenny: Is laughing at him.

Kristin: And they are. It's not even in his head. Like it's real life that they're laughing at him.

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: Also, we skipped over a scene because someone is not at the Bronze, and her name is Buffy.

Jenny: Oh my gosh, right. And it's the classic "Knock knock, nobody's there"
[Kristin laughs] "Oh my gosh, I just came back and my mom is gone, and
the music cue is telling me I should be really stressed out about it."–

Kristin: Also–

Jenny: "So I'm going to the back door." Tell me what florist is like, "Would
you like the flowers in a vase? Would you like them wrapped in cellophane?"

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: "Would you like, or would you like them in a black with a black
bow?"–

Kristin: Oh, it's definitely whatever–

Jenny: A black box with a black bow. A black box with a black bow! At your
local florist!–

Kristin: No. It's like next to–

Jenny: For Valentine's Day.

Kristin: Willie the bartender. [Jenny laughs] There's like a vamp florist, you
know? They have a whole underground commerce situation.

Jenny: Hmmmm. Yeah there's probably like a whole thing–

Kristin: Right, like a, yeah, like a trading–

Jenny: Secret–

Kristin: Vampire trading post.

Jenny: Wow. Great. OK.

Kristin: So, anyway, Joyce, right, Joyce, first of all, Joyce is eating popcorn
by like tossing it at her face. [Jenny laughs] Before Buffy gets up to go to
the front door, Joyce definitely has at least one piece of popcorn in her

boobs. [Jenny laughs] Like I saw it fall. I saw it Joyce, and I know that move. It's "I'm home alone or only with my daughter, and I don't care about popcorn all over my boobs." But yeah, so Joyce, and I am like, man, imagine that your daughter, that you have a 17-year-old daughter. Somebody mysteriously delivers a black box with a black ribbon with roses in it. She opens, and it just says "Soon" which your mind is going to go to a lot of places—

Jenny: But it's not going to go to "Somebody left these for you, and it's fine."

Kristin: Right. And when you ask like Buffy what's up with this, but I guess like you're a teenager so you're just like, "Nothing, mom. You wouldn't understand."

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: "You wouldn't understand that I fell in love with this vampire, and he had a soul, and then there was a Romani curse, and then" [Jenny laughs] There's a lot to explain.

Jenny: Great, great, great, great.

Kristin: Also, I just wanted to give a shout out to the Bronze. They did a really great job of decorating for Valentine's Day.

Jenny: I didn't notice one decoration—

Kristin: Beautiful—

Jenny: What was going on?—

Kristin: There was a whole... there was a backdrop behind the band. I can't even remember what it is now, but there's like a Cupid. It's like a Cupid and like a heart—

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: It's behind Dingoes Ate My Baby, and I just thought, you know, these kids who work at the Bronze, man, they're constantly dealing with werewolves tipping over all their tables, they're cleaning up shit, and still they go out of their way to decorate for holidays.

Jenny: Bless them.

Kristin: It's commitment–

Jenny: Praise. High praise.

Kristin: And I appreciate it.

Jenny: Uh, Xander has a great idea. He's gonna blackmail Amy.

Kristin: Xander.

Jenny: Xander, Xander, Xander.

Kristin: Ohhhh.

Jenny: Xander, Xander, Xander.

Kristin: And then he gets so evil. It's really, it's very upsetting when you see like Xander change to evil Xander. It's when he like, he grabs Amy first of all. [Jenny makes scared noise.] It's a move that is very unfortunate, and Amy's not very large. She's a very tiny thing so she just kind of like snaps around.

Jenny: Yep, yep.

Kristin: She's like, "The fuck, Xander?" And Xander's like, "I saw you, and I'm gonna blackmail you. I'm saying, I'm calling it blackmail, and that's what it is [Jenny laughs] so you better..." Well what's amazing to me is like, Amy seems to have a lot of powers. I just feel like Amy could probably have like done whatever she did to the teacher–

Jenny: Yeah. Right?

Kristin: In that moment.

Jenny: Maybe it required preparation.

Kristin: Maybe, maybe. Regardless, Amy's like, "OK, you got me, Xander. I guess I have to do this love spell for you."

Jenny: "We'll just need a personal item."

Kristin: [groans] This scene. I remembered this scene, and I was confused about how we got... because I remember it being so emotional for me the first time we watched it, and so in my memory I thought that Xander and Cordelia had really like been dating and having feelings for each other for a much longer time, but it's just a testament to this show, how they can like jam pack—

Jenny: You're just so invested.

Kristin: Into—

Jenny: In such a short amount of time. To today.

Kristin: I mean, the scene was, what? Like, a minute long?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: When he asks Cordelia for the necklace, and she goes to her locker, and says [groans], and she's so mean, right? "Yeah, of course I'll give it back to you. I'm just glad we're not dating because I don't have to pretend to like it."

Jenny: But she *loved it*. [Kristin groans] And she's wearing it because she loves him!

Kristin: Under her shirt.

Jenny: And regardless of how I feel about that combination, it's, there's something about it!

Kristin: No, there's something, I mean, regardless of how you feel about the combination, it is Cordelia having feelings—

Jenny: Which is—

Kristin: It's a thing. It's a thing to be reckoned with, and she takes off the necklace. She gives it to Xander. We're like, oh man. This is like the scene in every movie where you're like, "Can't you guys just talk to each other?"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: "If you just talk to each other, then the witchcraft wouldn't happen, Buffy wouldn't turn into a rat, everything would be OK, guys." But no, communication, always the lacking element.

Jenny: So, then, it's spellcasting time, right? And seeing Xander all like painted up. [Kristin laughs] Shirtless, sitting inside of a woman symbol. Don't you feel like, oh, maybe things are about to go in some kind of delightful way?

Kristin: Like where? Where did you want it to go?

Jenny: I don't know. Just, like, it kind of does end up this way that he's... be careful what you wish for.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Punished for meddling with greater forces. He just looks so vulnerable.

Kristin. Right.

Jenny: You know?

Kristin: Right, right, right. But it is, yeah, and you can tell he's like, "Ooh, what did I do?" [Jenny laughs]

Jenny: "I didn't really picture being shirtless."

Kristin: "Painted in blood, sitting on the floor. Like, what is going on?" So the spell happens and obviously we know it backfires, and I just want to take a moment to read an email that we got just right before we were recording this. I'm so glad it came in in time because—

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: The spell goes wrong, and this writer wrote into us to explain maybe why:

Jessica E. said, "Hi Jenny and Kristin, since you're about to watch 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered,' I thought I would share a theory I have about the episode. My friends often wondered whether Amy was simply incompetent or messing with Xander by making the spell go wrong on purpose. Neither of these options seems particularly likely to me because Amy doesn't seem like the type to put herself at risk. However, as an apprentice witch, I've been learning about spells and magic, and I have a theory as to why Amy's spell went so very wrong.

Amy invokes Diana, goddess of the hunt, in the casting of the spell. Diana, known as Artemis to the Greeks, is a virgin goddess. A virgin goddess is one who does not marry a man but is not necessarily barred from sexual interactions with women. Virgin goddesses and virgin saints who are typically thought of as not engaging in sex at all *are not* to be called upon for love spells. Many witches believe that calling upon a virgin goddess or saint for a love spell, particularly a sexual love spell, can backfire because you're asking the patron to do something for you that they simply disapprove of. Unless you have a special relationship with the goddess or saint in question, this is, at best, a waste of your time."

Jessica goes on to say, you know, this theory might not reflect everyone's practice of witchcraft, but it's what I'm learning right now, and I thought it was relevant.

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: Yeah, and so, and she concludes by saying, "My feeling is that Diana is having a laugh at Amy and Xander [Jenny laughs] at his expense for his patriarchal desire to control women. The moral here may be never

mess with a goddess.” [Jenny laughs] So Jessica, thank you for that email. It was so timely, and I was so excited because we almost recorded this episode the day before your email came in, and then when it came in, I was like–

Jenny: Perfect!

Kristin: Well, this is why! This why we didn’t do it!

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: So, so we’ll never know exactly why, but I think Jessica’s theory is a good one–

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: The spell certainly goes awry.

Jenny: Definitely.

[Commercial intro music]

Jenny: Today’s sponsor is Shudder, the premium video streaming service devoted to thrillers, horror, and suspense. Backed by AMC Networks, Shudder has a growing and dynamic selection of thrilling premieres, originals, and exclusives, including pregnancy horror comedy *Prevenge*, Sophia Takal’s *Always Shine*, and the Ring vs. the Grudge franchise matchup *Sadako vs. Kayako*.

Kristin: This week’s Shudder highlight is *Jordskott*, a ten-episode folk horror series declared “the kind of mystery show you wish were made more often” by *Dread Central*. When Eva, a policewoman, returns to her hometown seven years after her daughter’s disappearance, she quickly begins investigating a new wave of vanishing children. As her search draws her deep into the forest, she realizes that there are supernatural secrets in the town, and and if she exposes them, it could make someone, or something, very angry. Stream the series the *Toronto Star* calls “a *Borgen* and *Stranger Things* mashup” now exclusively on Shudder.

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Kristin: That's Shudder.com with the promo code BUFFERING.

[Commercial music ends]

Kristin: And here we go down the lane of everyone falling in love with Xander.

Jenny: First he rolls up very cockily to Cordelia's table [Kristin laughs] and is like, "Hey, ladies," waiting for—

Kristin: I love this moment when he's like, he's confused. He's like, "Cordelia, maybe love just doesn't look very different on you?"

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: Maybe you're just super awful even when you're in love. And she, of course, is the only one not affected by this spell, but—

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: There's kind of a little delay here because the—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: The other girls at the table are like kind of, like something's happening, but they don't quite latch on right away.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then she refers to the necklace he bought her as "a Small-Mart looking thing."

Kristin: Yes, yes.

Jenny: "Small-Mart".

Kristin: "Small-Mart". Nice dig, Cordelia–

Jenny: I wonder what that's a stand-in for. [Kristin laughs] Then we cut to the library where Giles is detailing–

Kristin: Oh god.

Jenny: For Buffy some of the things that Angelus has done on previous Valentine's Days.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And Xander comes in and is like, "Chop me up. My life is terrible. Blah de blah"–

Kristin: And Buffy's like, "Hey man."

Jenny: Yeah, so Giles leaves. And Buffy–

Kristin: I love this moment. I think it's very interesting. It was very eye-opening for me Xander-speaking because Xander is very inappropriate. He does like a very Xander thing here where he's like, "Hey." You know, Buffy's like, "You wanna hang out one-on-one tonight?" And he's like, "Yeah, if that involves lap dancing", which made me throw up on myself–

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: And I had to clean it up–

Jenny: Yes, yes, yes.

Kristin: And when I came back to the episode after that [Jenny laughs], I was like how's this going to go because then Buffy's like, "Maybe you will get what you wish for."

Jenny: And he's like, "[cartoonish head shaking noise] what?"

Kristin: Right and he does this like triple-take where he's like, "Wait, wait, wait." It just because very clear to me sort of like some of the intentionality in the really shitty things that he says. That he's so self-deprecating—

Jenny: That he, that what it comes across as—

Kristin: That when he's saying it he's like, "Isn't this the most hilarious joke you've ever heard?"

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: That, like, it's of course a shitty way to joke, but it just really was eye-opening to me because then when Buffy takes it seriously, he's like, "Wait, what? I was... what? What is happening?"

Jenny: So, they're like, Buffy and Xander are just to kiss, and then Amy is like [clears throat, Kristin laughs], "Can I talk to you?" And Xander's like, "Uhhhhh I guess." They go outside. She like starts indicating that she wants to spend more time with him, and then she says exactly the same thing that Buffy just said to him.

Kristin: It's very sad.

Jenny: And then he has like, you see the realization come across his face. He's like, "Oh. Oh... oh."

Kristin: Because he's just had this moment where he's like, "What? Buffy has feelings for me?" And then like one second later, it's like, "Oh, of course she didn't have feelings for me. My insecurities were of course right all along. Nobody would ever be into me."

Jenny: Awww.

Kristin: It's rough. It's rough. I feel like maybe some of our listeners are like, "Wow, they're giving Xander a lot of space," but I really just, like, I felt like I saw through some of what was happening in his experience in this episode.

Jenny: Which I think is, like, helpful to our understanding and the development of the character.

Kristin: Right. Right. And we're about to get, we're about to have a chat with Dan, who we talked to you about at the front of the episode–

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: Which is going to get us deeper in here. So let's not get too deep in now.

Jenny: Right, right, right, right. OK. But let's do note that when Xander's talking to Amy, they're in front of a Widespread Panic poster, which is inexplicably hung up in the high school.

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: Later we will also see a Widespread Panic poster, a different one, hung up in Xander's room.

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: Apparently, there was some kind of cross-promotional marketing plan–

Kristin: From *Quest for Camelot* to Widespread Panic, a different sponsor for every episode.

Jenny: Then Xander and Amy are interrupted by the Cordette/Plastic who looks like she's just off of the set of *The Valley of the Dolls* like inexplicably.

Kristin: Right. Right.

Jenny: Styled from the 60s. And then Xander's like, "I gotta get outta here."

Kristin: Yeah.–

Jenny: "Lemme go home."–

Kristin: He goes home to my safe room–

Jenny: My safe bedroom–

Kristin: So safe–

Jenny: Where I have my bed that no one else is in but me except, surprise! It's Willow!

Kristin: Willow! It's Willow! Oh, Willow. This is a great scene for Willow.

Jenny: Shout out to Alyson Hannigan who crushes this so hard. My favorite part, which I have to assume was her choice, was that she puts Xander's entire mouth in her ear.

Kristin: Nope. [laughs]

Jenny: She puts Xander's entire ear [laughing] in her mouth. Oh my god. Goodbye.

Kristin: If only it was the other way around. [Jenny laughs] Sexual foreplay by Willow. But yeah, serious, she really goes for it, and it's great. It's great! It's great. And Xander's like, "Oh god." And I like the moment where Xander's like, "Yes, Oz is Xander. You should go to him"–

Jenny: Amazing.

Kristin: "Because he is me."

Jenny: Fast thinking. Unfortunately it doesn't work.

Kristin: It does not work. And then we go to this incredible, incredible scene where Xander is walking through the halls of the school, and I'm sorry, I just want to say that I do think this is a bit of a heteronormative love spell. Where is Larry?

Jenny: Hmmm.

Kristin: You know what I mean? Where are the... This would have been an outing spell because I would assume, I would imagine that all the gay boys would be looking lovingly at Xander. Like, could've outed some people, but luckily it was heteronormative so don't worry, everyone's safe.

We want to talk to you about this music cue, but we actually get into that in our conversation with Dan Kois, and at the beginning of the episode, we told you a little bit about Dan. He's a senior editor at *Slate* and a contributing writer to the *New York Times Magazine*, but he's also notably one of the former co-hosts of *Mom and Dad are Fighting*, which is the parenting podcast on *Slate*, and he's also in the midst of writing a book about parenting outside of the East Coast bubble, travelling across the world with his family right now. So we thought it would be really fun to talk to Dan both because it would be nice to have a man's... isn't everyone always after a man's perspective? [Jenny laughs] But in all seriousness—

Jenny: Please! Tell us what you think! [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: But in all seriousness, we did think that it would be really fun to dig in a little bit on Xander in this episode with a focus on parenting and some of the larger structures that affect Xander and the other characters as we go through "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered." So let's go to Dan.

[Chime]

Kristin: Welcome to *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*. We are so happy to talk to you, to get the chance to talk to you, especially, this episode I think is actually a really special episode to talk to you about.

Jenny: For sure.

Dan: Tell me why you believe such a thing to be true.

Kristin: Well, first of all, we've brought you here today to speak on behalf of all men. [Dan laughs]

Dan: Great.

Jenny: Explain yourselves!

Dan: No, it's cool. I have been delegated by all men to speak on their behalf so...

Jenny: Perfect. You got all the signatures you needed.

Kristin: Perfect.

Dan: It turns out you don't need a full quorum. You just need 51 percent.
[Kristin and Jenny laugh]

Kristin: But in all seriousness, we know, um, we know that you have co-hosted *Mom and Dad are Fighting*, the parenting podcast on *Slate*. You are a parent yourself, and so we thought it would be really fun to start by talking about both Xander and Cordelia in this episode actually. There's a lot going on for them, and they make some really bad choices—

Dan: Yeah.

Kristin: About how to handle their emotions—

Jenny: Mmmm.

Kristin: And so we thought, you know, with the expertise that you have in particular, do you have any thoughts on how to best raise better Xanders and even better Cordelias?

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Dan: That's a really good question. Now, I would note that I am not really a parenting expert so much as I am a parenting example. Most reasonable parents don't believe themselves to be experts in anything and recognize that they are just muddling through. The ones who do believe themselves to be experts are usually the assholes.

Jenny: Right. [Kristin laughs]

Dan: The question of how to raise a better Xander in particular as a representative of all men [Jenny and Kristin laugh] is one that I have

thought about quite a bit. I don't have sons, I have daughters. But, you know, I have thought a lot about the way the parents we meet raise their boys, and the way that those boys interact with all the girls in their lives and all the women in their lives, not just my kids.

You guys talk a lot on this show about the damage that the patriarchy commits and the damage that it creates in the world of this show and in the world at large, and Xander, of course, is always example A not only of the patriarchy itself, but of the damage that the patriarchy can create in unsuspecting young people.

Jenny and Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Dan: He's a fragile soul, and this episode really puts him through the wringer. Or rather he puts himself through the wringer because of the extremely terrible choices that he makes [Kristin laughs], and so you wonder if he had had parents who, unlike for example say Amy's mom, said, "It's not a great idea to use witchcraft to just like settle a score with a girl who you were dating for like a week." [Kristin and Jenny laugh] Maybe that would have been better.

Kristin: [laughing] Right, right.

Jenny: It's possible.

Kristin: We'll never know.

Dan: Well we, yeah, we'll never know. But I'm curious what you guys think. Like, what do we know about Xander's parents? What do we know about how he was raised and what that home life is like?

Jenny: What we know at this point is that his family seems to be dysfunctional, his parents seem to be absent. In a recent episode, he called home to tell his mom that he like wasn't coming home for the night, and she didn't know who he was [Dan laughs] by his voice. He had to be like, "It's Xander. Mom."

Dan: Right, right. That's right. I remember that now. So we don't get the sense that they, for example, have like done gender consciousness training with him. [Jenny laughs]

Kristin: I would, going out on a limb here. I would say probably not. Probably–

Dan: I mean, it's California. You never know. But, yeah. [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: No, not the Harrises.

Kristin: So do you think that your daughters will watch the show? Is it going to be part of their homework? Will they *have* to watch the show?–

Dan: Oh god.–

Kristin: How's that going to be handled?

Dan: Well, you can't imagine the hours of conversation that my wife and I have had about what is the best way and time and manner to present *Buffy* to our children. How do we best ensure [Kristin laughs] that they love it and that we don't present it at a time where they will simply reject it out of hand–

Jenny: Right, right.

Dan: Because it was presented by their parents. [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Right.

Dan: We have to show that it's cool, but we have to not show that we care about it so much.

Kristin: Right. [Jenny laughs]

Dan: They can't know how important it is to us. [Kristin laughs] I can't actually think of anything in the world of pop culture that I want my children to like as much as I want them to like *Buffy*, and so, I, we'll just be biting

our lips as we present this thing to them, and if they reject it, I mean that'll be it. That'll be our ultimate failure as parents. It will be—

Kristin: Wow. [Jenny laughs] Wow.

Dan: We will be the Xander's parents of the world [Kristin and Jenny laugh] if we can't convey this to them. We'll check out—

Kristin: Oh my gosh.

Dan: And we will have nothing more to do with them heretofore.

Kristin: We wish you and your wife well on your pursuits. Go ahead, Jenny.

Jenny: I have a question.

Kristin: Go ahead, yes.

Jenny: As a representative, once again, of all men—

Dan: Right.

Jenny: Do you think that we should be worried about being too hard on Xander?

Dan: This is a tough question for me. You guys are really hard on Xander. [Kristin laughs] Xander, like almost every teenage boy in the world, is horrible.

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah... [Kristin laughs]

Dan: However, I do think that there are times when you guys could cut Xander a little more slack with the recognition that he, I think most of the time, Xander's heart is in the right place. I recognize that, in the world, people's hearts being in the right place haven't really actually done shit for most people. [Jenny laughs] Nevertheless, for a kid that age to be thrown into the situations he's thrown into, to obviously have no good parental supervision—

Kristin: Yeah.

Dan: Or role models in his life. Like, for example, in this episode, when Giles expresses to him how disappointed he is in him and the stupid thing that he did, and when he sends him away, actually from the library because there's nothing he can do, and he says, you know, "Get out of my sight." His disdain is incredible, but what's also incredible is the way Nick Brendan responds to it. Clearly, no adult figure has expressed any kind of disappointment or even interest in Xander for, like, decades.

Jenny: Right, like nobody's cared enough to be disappointed in him before.

Dan: Right. There's no one who's felt that way, who's expressed to him so clearly that I, a person you respect, am disappointed in the choice that you made. That, it makes me feel like it is a miracle that Xander turned out even as halfway decent as he can very occasionally reveal himself to be.

Kristin: Mm-hmm.

Jenny: Totally.

Dan: So I don't, as a representative of all men [Jenny and Kristin laugh], I don't begrudge you your harsh judgements of Xander, but all I ask is that you remember that Xander, like all the characters on the show, is on a path. He's on a path that will hopefully lead him to one day become an actual, honest-to-god grown man. Not the man he claims he's going to be in this episode, who hides [Jenny laughs], but the man who lives a good life and takes responsibility for the things that he does and makes the right choices about all the people in his life, not just the women, and is a human being in the world. He's on that road.

Kristin: I think, too, what you're saying is really interesting and sometimes people write to us, and they're like, "Ugh. We, you know, we get it with the Xander thing. You don't have to talk about it so much." But as you're speaking, as you're talking to us about how we view Xander and how we can perhaps have more hope for Xander's character, there's just so much in there, right?

Because it's what we do as human beings when we're dealing with other human beings who are struggling with some of the repercussions of, you know, the patriarchy or racism or whatever the structure might be. Like, where do we draw the line of, you know, having hope in that person and investing in that person to help them get over to where we want them to be versus the point of exhaustion for the person who's doing the work to try to get that person there. I just think it's such an amazing thing to highlight because us being challenged to keep that hope in someone who symbolizes some of the things that have kind of torn us down over the years is important. I just think it's important to keep our sights on it outside of the *Buffy* universe. So, thank you for saying all of those things because it's making me think in ways that I find important.

Dan: Oh, good.

Kristin: This has been a wonderful chat. I think you did a fantastic job with your representation of men.

Dan: Great—

Jenny: Men will be pleased.

Dan: I'm so glad. The emails are coming in now. They're all very [unintelligible] about how we're going to come off in this episode.—

Kristin: Right, right, right.

Dan: It's like a big deal.

Kristin: There's a lot of pressure for you. I think you handled it well.

Dan: Before we go, one last thing.

Kristin: Yes.

Dan: Have you guys talked about the music cue when Xander's walking down the hall?

Jenny: Doesn't it feel like it should be "Stayin' Alive"? Like [Kristin laughs], doesn't it feel like that's what they meant?

Kristin: Based on his collar alone.

Jenny: I mean, lyrically [unintelligible]

Dan: Based on his strut, and the rhythm of his strut "Stayin' Alive" would absolutely make sense [Kristin laughs], but I, so I did not recognize that song. I'm not great on my, like, *Guardians of the Galaxy* era music cues so I had to look it up, and in fact, the song is by the Average White Band–

Jenny: Oh my god.

Dan: And I loved that as a meta-comment–

Kristin: What?!

Dan: On Xander, the average white man, who makes his way through the world of this show–

Kristin: Oh my god.

Dan: Whose journey through the show is trying to become over the course of seven seasons something other than an average white man, an actual man who exists in the world and who's not forced to bear the weight of all men and the patriarchy upon his shoulders.

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: We did not discuss that, and I am so glad that you have brought it to our attention.

Jenny: Yeah, that is a hot tip.

Kristin: That is amazing. [Dan laughs] Dan, where can people find you when they want to hear more of your voice and hear more of your writing and–

Dan: You can find me on *Slate* where I’m a writer and an editor. You can find me in the *New York Times Magazine* where I’m a contributing writer, and in the next coming years, you can buy a couple of books that I’m currently writing. [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: Woo.

Dan: One book, an oral history of *Angels in America*, will come out in 2018. The other book, a book about parenting around the world and outside of the East Coast parenting bubble, will come out in the year 2019.

Kristin: Incredible.

Jenny: Fantastic.

Kristin: I’m very excited for both of those books.

Jenny: Yeah. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: Thank you again for joining us.

Jenny: Thanks so much.

Dan: 2020 parenting in the Hellmouth. [Kristin and Jenny laugh]

Kristin: Yes!

Dan: Thanks guys!

Kristin: Thank you.

Jenny: Thanks so much.

[Chime]

Kristin: Thank you again, Dan, for joining us, and safe travels to you and your family as you go across the globe.

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: OK, um, so Jenny Calendar? Can we talk about Jenny Calendar?–

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Now, please?

Jenny: Xander goes to confess what he's done to Giles. Giles is like, "Did you really? I don't know." But then Jenny Calendar comes in–

Kristin: Oof.

Jenny: And she's–

Kristin: Proof is in the calendar.

Jenny: Like touching. [Both laugh] Just like, rubbing Xander's arm increasingly and keeps getting distracted.–

Kristin: Ugh. She–

Jenny: She's trying to reconcile with Giles, but she can't even get through a sentence without being like–

Kristin: I want to tell you what I've had–

Jenny: Have you been working out?–

Kristin: I don't always have the best time with Jenny Calendar and her scenes–

Jenny: But this is like peak her–

Kristin: She is *on*.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: This is like her perfect direction. It's like be obsessively in love with Xander. She just nails it. She is like a puppy dog and also like an evil snake. [Jenny laughs] She like all of the things in one.

Jenny: Oh my god and when Giles drags her away and she's like, "Errrrr."

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Reaching behind her–

Kristin: She's like moaning, reaching. Yes.

Jenny: And Xander is like, "I know what to do. I will block the library doors with the card catalog," but maintenance has come by sometime between "School Hard" and now and flipped the hinges on the library doors–

Kristin: Well, not even flipped them–

Jenny: Because they now open from the outside–

Kristin: They open both ways now.

Jenny: Ahhh.

Kristin: They push in and out, but before they were able to block those doors–

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: But that's a new development.

Jenny: New development.

Kristin: They were like, "Come on guys, you're at level two now. Level two of the Hellmouth you have to be able to defend yourself with swinging doors." [Jenny laughs] Xander didn't get the memo. So–

Jenny: Buffy's wearing *yet another* trench coat.

Kristin: This trench coat. Listen, she went to Frederick's of Hollywood for this trench coat right here.

Jenny: [laughing] Frederick's of Hollywood?

Kristin: That's where she went for this guy.

Jenny: [still laughing] Oh my god!

Kristin: This trench coat is–

Jenny: For those of you who have no idea what Frederick's of Hollywood is–

Kristin: What? Who doesn't... come on.

Jenny: Alright, just Google it.

Kristin: I guess maybe the 13-year-old demographic might not know Frederick's of Hollywood, but...

Jenny: It's possible.

Kristin: You shouldn't, either. Don't look it up.

Jenny: Yeah. [Kristin laughs] So trench coat Buffy is going HAM on Xander.

Kristin: She really is. This is a moment. Also I feel like she went home, got a spray tan and a trench, a sexy trench. [Jenny laughs] Like, she just looks like more tan in this scene than she did before. So she is straddling Xander on the stairs. Xander is like, "Oh god. What am I going to do?"–

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: "This is very overwhelming." But luckily this, thank god, this scene gets interrupted before Buffy de-trenches.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Because Amy–

Jenny: But before Buffy even like would have gotten to the de-trench point, it's important I think to note that Xander is like, "Hey, you are not in control of your functions right now."

Kristin: Right, well he has a very, he kind of has like an Oz moment here although more extreme. Like, Oz in the episode with Willow where Oz is like, "You are after this for the wrong reasons. Therefore, I'm not going to participate."

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: Xander's sort of like, "This is not appropriate. This is not right. So I'm gonna say no." Oz we're like, "Great, Oz is great. Good job." Xander we're like, "Woah. Xander." Surprised. A little bit surprised that Xander... but Xander's making some good choices in this episode.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Some horrible choices–

Jenny: But some good choices–

Kristin: Followed by some good choices later. So in comes Amy.

Jenny: Ho boy.

Kristin: And Amy is ready. She's like, "I have prepared all of my spells. I'm knocking every girl down that stands in my way." And she does. First of all, Buffy, shout out to your crazy eyes in the moment when–

Jenny: Those wild eyes–

Kristin: Oh, incredible, just Sarah Michelle Gellar.

Jenny: When she whips her head over her shoulder–

Kristin: Incredible! Incredible moment of crazy eyes. And then Amy busts out her, you know, what does she call on now?

Jenny: Hecate?

Kristin: Hecate. She busts out her Hecate spell and turns Buffy into a rat.

Jenny: Hooray!

Kristin: Into a little–

Jenny: What a delight.

Kristin: Little rat. It's really really special.

Jenny: Great! I just want to say great rat acting.

Kristin: Great.

Jenny: This rat was well cast.

Kristin: Absolutely.

Jenny: Does a tremendous job.

Kristin: Rat did a great job carrying a tiny little camera on its tiny little rat back–

Jenny: Awwwww.

Kristin: So you could get a rat cam. I love a rat cam. I'm not gonna kid.
[Jenny laughs] I really do.

Jenny: Then Oz, while they're looking for, trying to catch rat Buffy, Giles has come back.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And while they're trying to capture her, Oz rolls in and punches Xander in the face for reasons he can't quite explain.

Kristin: But he knows he's supposed to have done that.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: And then they immediately reconcile, and he helps Xander up to his feet. Giles, we talked about this a little bit with Dan,–

Jenny: Oh man.

Kristin: But Giles has this moment here where he is like, "I am so disappointed in you, get out of my sight." Which is really hard.

Jenny: It's rough.

Kristin: It's important. You do feel like it's important, but it's a very hard thing to watch. So Xander leaves, but Xander saves Cordelia on his way out.

Jenny: Yeah. He pulls her out from underneath the–

Kristin: Oz goes–

Jenny: Heap of women.

Kristin: Right. Oz goes looking for rat Buffy. Everybody's got a great task.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Their tasks have been delegated very nicely.

Jenny: Xander and Cordelia run to Buffy's house, knock on the door, Joyce lets them in.

Kristin: Wait. We missed something that I want to call out here. Jenny Calendar erasing polyamorous, non-monogamous people.

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: Jenny Calendar–

Jenny: No one can love more than one person?

Kristin: No one can love more than... two, two people at once.

Jenny: I beg to differ! [Kristin laughs] I beg... I can think of at least one person. It's Gaby Dunn. We know she's real, she's been on the podcast, so how dare you, Jenny Calendar!

Kristin: Yeah, Jenny Calendar back it up a step. Back it up a step. Anyhow, right, we, now go ahead, Jenny. I'm sorry.

Jenny: OK, so, Xander and Cordelia enter Buffy's house. Joyce is like, "Oh my gosh, what happened? Oh my goodness. Cordelia, go get bandages out of the bathroom." As soon as Cordelia's out of the room,–

Kristin: Oh god. Oh god!

Jenny: It becomes very apparent that even moms are not immune to Xander's, uh, charms?

Kristin: Yeah. Xander's magic charms.

Jenny: Oh my god. She wants to get him a drink. She's rubbing his shoulders. He is so over it–

Kristin: "I think tonight is a night for something"–

Jenny: "It's hot, hot." Xander, she starts rubbing his shoulders, and Xander is so over it that all he can do is flop down on the counter like, "Oh god!"

Kristin: I felt like in that scene the character of Xander was like doing this, right, but I also felt like the actor Nicholas Brendon was like, "I cannot. [Jenny laughs] I cannot! Life is too much for me to handle."

Jenny: Oh my god. Oh my god.

Kristin: Because Joyce, Kristine Sutherland, actually never puts her mouth on his neck. Like, it cuts right before... she goes down to kiss him, but we never see it. And I just feel like the actors were like, "Guys, we can't."

Jenny: "We cannot."

Kristin: "It's too much."

Jenny: And then Cordelia busts in [Kristin groans] and is [high-pitched] flippin' out.

Kristin: Flipping out. She throws Joyce out. Slams the door, and then, I think, does she re-open the door before she slams the door? She says–

Jenny: No, she's like yelling through the door. "Keep your mom-aged mitts off my boyfriend! Former."

Kristin: Former! [Jenny laughs] What a moment!

Jenny: Even in the heat of all of this bizarre activity, she cannot leave out former. She must–

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And then [laughing] and then Joyce knocks at the window–

Kristin: Oh, this is amazing.

Jenny: "Let Joyce-y in."

Kristin: "Let Joyce-y in" is... if you ask me... at the end of the series, somebody remind me to tell you what my favorite line Joyce ever says is. It might be this one. "Let. Joyce-y. In."

Jenny: [laughing] It's serious.

Kristin: Come on.

Jenny: And they run up to Buffy's room–

Kristin: That's my Buffy tattoo. "Let Joyce-y in."

Jenny: [overlapping] "Let Joyce-y in" across your back?

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah. [Jenny laughs] So rat cam. I just want to give a shout out to the black cat from the credits. Makes an appearance here. Black cat from the credits—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Has escaped Amy's mom's house, is now living in the basement of Sunnydale High School—

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: And chasing Buffy who's now a rat.

Jenny: Great, great, great.

Kristin: Just wanted—

Jenny: That character has an arc, too.

Kristin: Right. [laughs] Right.

Jenny: Then Xander and Cordelia run up to Buffy's room, and they're like, "OK, whew, we can have a deep breath."—

Kristin: "We made it."

Jenny: But no! Because Angelus reaches through the window, yanks Xander out, throws him on the ground, is about to do something terrible when—

Kristin: Drusilla!

Jenny: We learn that not only are moms not immune, but also supernatural women are not immune!

Kristin: Yeah, well, I mean Xander's always had a way with supernatural women. [Jenny laughs] I mean, he's really... it's kind of his deal-

Jenny: The she-mantis, the Inca mummy princess-

Kristin: And now Dru-

Jenny: Now a vampire-

Kristin: What a catch, what a catch. Yeah, so Drusilla is after him.

Jenny: Oh god.

Kristin: Then the-

Jenny: Your face is a poem. I can read it.

Kristin: Oh my god. Should we give her her jingle?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: OK.

[Drusilla's jingle plays]
Drusilla, you fill up my heart with dread
And still I'm led right back to you

Jenny: Well earned.

Kristin: Well earned indeed. And then we cut to... well, we don't cut to, but what happens? The mob arrives? The mob arrives-

Jenny: The mob of women arrives.

Kristin: Drusilla's like, "Woah. [Jenny laughs] Um, OK. Sure." And Drusilla gets left behind. Xander's-

Jenny: Oh my god. I love how Drusilla like busts the door down, and then is like, "Ugh"-

Kristin: Stuck?

Jenny: Force fielded out of the house–

Kristin: Yeah. And you know who else liked that? Angel. Angel loves it. Angel is really amused by Dru not being allowed in. [Jenny laughs] However, everyone else makes their way in. They run to the basement.

Jenny: [laughing] Wait! Joyce with the butcher knife! “It’s never going to work for us, Xander. We have to end it.”

Kristin: Yeah.–

Jenny: With this kitchen knife.

Kristin: Joyce is in full *Romeo and Juliet* mode.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So they flee to the basement. Xander in record time gets like two by fours out.–

Jenny: Tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap tap

Kristin: Speaking of two by fours, little, uh, little thing to notice if you go back and watch the episode, you may have already noticed it, but when Angel and Xander hit the grass, the whole scene that they shoot then, you can see the supporting beams holding up the roof.

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah.

Kristin: It’s like they... they didn’t... they were like, “Ugh, I’m too tired.” Like somebody on set was like, “I’m tired. Just, whatever.” [Jenny laughs] Some day 20 years from now two queer ladies will be in their room , and it’ll be a great talking point so, leave it in. [Jenny laughs] Anyhow, so they’re in the basement, they’ve boarded up the thing. Cordelia has this moment where she’s like, “You mean the spell was for me?”

Jenny: OK. This is like... It just speaks to the complexity of everything that's going on between them because obviously, like, at least 50 percent of Cordelia has to be like, "How dare you?"

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: "How dare you, like"–

Kristin: Because the–

Jenny: "Try to like aim a spell at me?" But then the other half of her is like, "He cared enough"–

Kristin: He cared enough... he cared enough to forcefully make me love him with magic?–

Jenny: OK. HUUUUHHHH, hrrrr. Its–

Kristin: It's very complicated.

Jenny: Ughhh, it's not ideal, but things on the Hellmouth are frequently complicated.

Kristin: It is... it's a complicated situation, and Cordelia, right, Cordelia's like love eyes at Xander, they're very bizarre–

Jenny: Yeah–

Kristin: I don't get it, but whatever, they go downstairs, and they're complicated. I mean, right, they're emotions, as we've learned in this episode, are really not always placed in the right spots for healthy relationships.

Jenny: Yeah. It's twisted–

Kristin: And that's where we are. So they get down there, and then in comes the mob, they bust through, right?

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but simultaneously, Giles and Amy are casting

together.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Right?

Kristin: I love, I love witch Giles, I'll tell you what. [Jenny laughs] Give me witch Giles any day.–

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: This is the first time we've seen witch Giles since the episode "Witch."

Jenny: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah–

Kristin: And I love it–

Jenny: And we get to see his tie flap back–

Kristin: I love when he's like calling on things and the wind is flapping–

Jenny: Yes! Mmmm.

Kristin: You know? He's plunging his hands into bowls of things–

Jenny: Oh yes!

Kristin: It's great. So the first thing she does is she pulls, uh, she pulls the rat out of Buffy–

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: Or she pulls Buffy out of the rat. You know, whatever.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: She fixes that first–

Jenny: [laughing] Just as Oz is rolling up on her.

Kristin: [laughing] Right.

Jenny: She pops up naked, and you know, if you're going to be a rat and then transform back into your human form and be naked in close proximity to one of your friends, you want it probably to be Oz.

Kristin: [overlapping] You want it to be Oz. He's so respectful.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: He's so respectful that Buffy seems very calm about the whole thing. Also, it's like she's like also... she's died once. She's almost died 40 times. [Jenny laughs] She's really kind of not in the normal 17-year-old headspace of being naked I think. She's like, "This is just my life. It's crazy."

Jenny: Except when she's all wet from the rain—

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: And she has a cut on her back.

Kristin: Then she's—

Jenny: And then she's very modest.

Kristin: Then she's incredibly modest. [laughing]

Jenny: And then the next thing that Amy and Giles accomplish is undoing the love spell, and all the women in the basement who have piled upon Xander and Cordelia are like, "What? What? I just woke up from"—

Kristin: But don't worry—

Jenny: "The strangest dream. And you were there."

Kristin: Don't panic because Xander, quick on his feet, thinks, "I know, I'll just tell them all, 'Great job with that scavenger hunt.'"

Jenny: Wait, doesn't Cordelia actually come up with that?–

Kristin: Oh, Cordelia is... [laughing] Cordelia says it. One of their brilliant minds says–

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Uh, yeah. And so they all kind of scatter. And then–

Jenny: Everyone disperses, and we go to school the next day.

Kristin: We go to school the next day, and we're with the Plastics and we have this–

Jenny: Oh my god. Harmony still sucks.

Kristin: Harmony is... I mean, listen, I've got a spot for Harmony, but that has–

Jenny: At insults I mean.

Kristin: Oh, oh, yeah. And insults and–

Jenny: And is mean.

Kristin: And is mean. I mean, I don't think I would like Harmony at this point, but you know, Harmony, we'll see some stuff of Harmony so I [Jenny laughs], you know, I have a spot for her.

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: But Harmony now is really awful. She's talking about this guy who if the first two girls that he asks reject him, then she'll get to go with him, and that's like this huge deal, and she's so excited about it.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Just kind of underlining the fact–

Jenny: This is also sad.

Kristin: It is sad. It's sort of... I mean, it's just really highlighting that these girls in this group, and I'm sure many other girls and boys and non-binary people and etc.–

Jenny: Great.

Kristin: Are, you know, exist in the world feeling like they don't deserve the respect that they in fact do deserve.

Jenny: Right.

Kristin: And in... we see that with Harmony. We've seen it with Cordelia. We've seen it with Xander. We've seen it, you know, over and over again, where, like, you know, what we want is to see somebody say like, "Hey, fuck off! If I'm not your... If you don't want to go with me, I don't want to go with you. I'm not going to play second or third fiddle to this shit," but they don't... they're not there yet in their growth. They haven't yet learned. But you know who's about to learn [Jenny laughs] is our Cordelia. She–

Jenny: Because after Harmony bumps into Xander and, like, throws a terrible insult at him, Cordelia's like, "Harmony, you're a sheep."

Kristin: No, well, first she says, "Shut up, Harmony!"

Jenny: Ah, yeah!

Kristin: Great! My favorite words to come out Cordelia's mouth. [Jenny laughs] "Shut up, Harmony!" And then, yes, "You are a sheep, and you know what? I'm not a sheep. I do what I want to do. I wear what I want to wear. I date who I want to date."

Jenny: And who she wants to date is Xander!

Kristin: Yeah! But she makes a small apology for the fact that it is Xander, but still, she is strong. She walks away from the group. She walks to Xander. She flips out. She's like, "Oh my god, what did I just do?"

Jenny: Mm-hmm.

Kristin: And then Xander is like, "Listen, we can fight and run from them every time we see them if you want." [Jenny laughs] It's a very nice... it's a very nice moment, and I, Jenny, unless you have anything more that you would like to... oh, wait! We didn't do the Sexual Tension Award. I have one!

Jenny: Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my gosh. Who is it?

Kristin: I would like to award Sexual Tension, unless you want to veto my choice, I would like to give the Sexual Tension Award to Willow and the axe!

Jenny: Oh! Yeah!

Kristin: Willow and the axe in this episode—

Jenny: Woo, yeah they are *together*.

Kristin: Second runner up was, uh, rat Buffy and the cheese.

Jenny: [laughing] Yeah there was a strong attraction there.

Kristin: But I think, yeah, Willow and the axe get it.—

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: And we just... sorry... we're almost at the end of the episode, but I don't want to go... I don't want to talk about this episode without giving a shout out to Willow, to Alyson Hannigan for the scene where she does enter with this axe—

Jenny: Oh my gosh.

Kristin: And she is in tears. Shout out to the fucking costume team who put tear drops on her shirt—

Jenny: I think those were from earlier takes. I think Alyson Hannigan stood there shedding real actor tears [Kristin moans] over and over and over again

waving that axe above her head–

Kristin: Until she drenched her own shirt–

Jenny: Yes, that’s what I think.

Kristin: In her own tears. Well, great job Willow, all around.

Jenny: Praise.

Kristin: We know we are past due for a Willow jingle, and if I didn’t run a camp in the Midwest in, like, t-minus 10 days, you would have your Willow jingle, but we have a lot to do so just everybody hang tight. You’re going to get your Willow jingle before the season is up.

Jenny: Yes, just a moment.

Kristin: No questions asked.

Jenny: Right on top of the list.

Kristin: She deserves it. And since Cordelia has just left the Plastics behind–

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: Saying, “I do what I want.” I would like to end this episode’s discussion with the Cordelia jingle.

[Cordelia jingle plays
Cordelia *ahahh* I love you
Cordelia *ahahh* you’re perfect
Cordelia *ahhahhh*]

Jenny: Ah, yes, thank you, Cordelia, for being you, and with that out of the way, I think we’ve said everything we need to say for this episode. Thanks again to Dan Kois for joining us.

I’m Jenny Owen Youngs, and when I’m not watching *Buffy*, I write and record songs and make records and go on tour and whatever, and you can

learn more about me at jennyowenyounsgs.com/buffering or you can give me a shout on Twitter at [jennyowenyounsgs](https://twitter.com/jennyowenyounsgs).

Kristin: And I am Kristin Russo. You can find me on Twitter and on Instagram at [kristinnoeline](https://www.instagram.com/kristinnoeline). You can also learn more about my work with LGBTQ youth and their families over at my website kristinnoeline.com or you can head on over to [everyoneisgay](http://everyoneisgay.com) or mykidisgay.com for some of those resources.

Jenny: *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* is on Facebook and Twitter at [bufferingcast](https://www.facebook.com/bufferingcast), and you can email us at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: You can support us in many ways. We are newly on Stitcher Premium we're very—

Jenny: Woooo.

Kristin: Yes! We're very excited about it. It was almost a wolf howl, Jenny. I got nervous.

Jenny: Sorry. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: Stitcher Premium is a super fun platform where you can get all sorts of exclusives and bonus episodes, comedy specials, the list goes on and on, and you can go over to stitcherpremium.com/buffy and get your first month for free. You can get the whole year of subscription for 29.99 using that promo code. It's a pretty great deal. It's a pretty fun way to listen to us, and it is also an ad-free experience so if you are not into the ads, you can go on over there, and get an ad-free listen of *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*.

You can also go to our store. Go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com, click on shop. Over there you'll find some tank tops, some t-shirts, some enamel pins of varying designs, but most of them are about slaying and slaying the patriarchy specifically so I think you'll enjoy it.

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Jenny: It's very sweet.

Kristin: Right? It's really great. So, again, that's bufferingthevampireslayer.com and click on Patreon.

Jenny: Today's episode was brought to you by Shudder.com, the premium video streaming service devoted to thrillers, horror, and suspense. Backed by AMC Networks, Shudder has a growing and dynamic selection of thrilling premieres, exclusives, and originals.

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Jenny: Thanks so much for listening. 'Til next time

Both: Awwoooooooooooooooo.

[Jenny performing "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," off the album "Songs from Season Two" by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

Leave it all up to Xander and your goose is cooked
Conjuring spells to mend his broken heart
Cordelia's chasin' plastics and she's overlooked
The feelings of everyone she's torn apart

Magic that you make for all the wrong reasons will fail
Seek the kind of love that runs from eyeballs to entrails

Love is what it's about, even on the hellmouth

Students & teachers, vampires & lunch ladies
Fight over Xander - o lord how they shriek
Where did this trench coat from why do I want cheese
Squeaaaaaaaaaaaaaak squeak squeak squeak

Magic that you make for all the wrong reasons will fail
Seek the kind of love that runs from eyeballs to entrails
Love is what it's about, even on the hellmouth

Jenny: We open on a necklace. A necklace in a cemetery...

Kristin: [laughing] That was... that was all you had?

Jenny: [Both laughing] You didn't like it?

Kristin: It was great, I just, I'm so sorry. I assumed there'd be more.