

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 4.18: Where the Wild Things Are

Jenny: Hey everybody. It's Jenny. Hi, with an intro to the intro. Prelude to the intro if you will. I just wanted to pop in here at the very, very beginning and mention that I am going to be playing a few shows in the Northeast in May. The Boston show is sold out, but I will be in Brooklyn on May 17th at Union Hall and in Philly at Milk Boy on May 18th. And if you want to come hang out and get gently rocked by me, uh, you can visit jennyowenyoungs.com/tour for tickets and information and all of that stuff. Uh, they will be fun shows. I'm very excited. Please join me. Cool. Onwards.

Kristin: Oh, hello. Welcome to the intro part of Buffering the Vampire Slayer. Uh, really excited to roll on into this episode where uh, Hrishikesh Hirway and Jenny Owen Youngs will discuss just this wonderful jaunt of an episode where we get to see, you know what? You know. And you're going to hear all about it. But before we get there, let me bring you some news, some updates, some other stuff.

First of all, you know, we are not too far away now, from our New York City prom. It's happening here in New York City on March 9th at the ACE hotel. It is sold out. We are so excited to see those of you who are joining us. And I would like to let you all know that Brittany Ashley and Laura Zak, co-hosts of Angel on Top, our sister podcast that follows Angel, of course, will be hosting a virtual prom where they watch the Buffy episode, The Prom, live with you all on our Facebook page.

That means that if you're not going to be at prom, you can instead, if you so choose, join the two of those wonderful souls. For everyone. This is free. This is not for patrons. It's for everyone to join. They will probably be decked out in their prom finest. Uh, and they'll be watching together with you the prom episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

So for more details, of course, as always, go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com. You can click on our events page or you can check out our events page on our Facebook as well. It's all there for you, and they will be beginning at 5:00 PM Pacific, 8:00 PM Eastern so that it will literally be happening right at the same time as we are at prom. Cool. Cool. A reminder to those of you who might be doing gatherings in your own cities that if you go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/prom you can get a ton of information about the prom there, but you can also find a little link to submit your prom-ups as we like to call them, so that we can put them on our site.

If you're doing a gathering at a coffee shop or if you're throwing a big party, whatever you are doing, let us know over there. We'll list it on the site and then people can maybe join you in other cities if those are happening this year. Uh, as of

this taping, there are a couple of solo brunch tickets left. We released some tickets that are just to our brunch happening after prom. So again, all of that information bufferingthevampireslayer.com/prom. We are so flipping excited. Holy shit. Okay! Other things to be excited about? Next Wednesday, February 27th, Heather Hogan, beloved friend of the pod and I will be on a panel at NYU? Yeah, we're fancy. We are going to be— The title of the panel is *Mom, I'm a Slayer: Coming Out in 90s Fantasy Television*. They will be screening *Becoming Part Two* and then talking to Heather and I about the many things, uh, that are related to coming out in nineties television and fantasy, et cetera.

It's going to be so much fun. We're so excited to see all of you in New York. All of those details are also on our events page and on our Facebook events page, so you can find out more there. Holy crap. Uh, while I'm talking about me, just a little reminder that every other week I go live on Autostraddle's Facebook page. Uh, Thursdays, every other Thursday at three o'clock to answer advice specifically for queer community. So you can join me there every other week. All of that event information is on Autostraddle's Facebook page and on my personal Facebook page. So go find all that stuff. Yeah? Cool. Cool. You know what it's time for?

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]
Spooky news!

Wow. So like 1 million of you tweeted at me and emailed me this story from where else, but fucking the UK, you know what I mean? Like I don't know what all is going on, but this time, the title of the article that I clicked on, which is from The Guardian is the, this is the actual title, *The Gateway to Hell? Hundreds of anti-witch marks found in Midland's cave*.

Sooo, I'm not going to read you the whole article per verbatim, but the first sentence is also pretty great. "If there is a gateway to Hell, a portal from the underworld used by demons and witches to wreak their evil havoc on humanity, then it could be in a small East Midlands cave". So, here's the deal. Um, there's a bunch of markings in what's called Creswell Crags, a limestone gorge. Uh, and there are hundreds of letters and symbols and patterns carved and they were carved at a time, the article says, when belief in witchcraft was widespread. Sorry to break it to you all, but I think it's still pretty widespread.

This is supposedly the largest collection of protective marks ever found in British caves and possibly anywhere else in Britain? Uh, um, so nobody's really sure exactly what was going on, but I guess caves were looked at as, you know, places where perhaps hellmouths could open. Of course. I mean, it makes sense. So listen, I'll let you read the article yourself, the articles yourselves, but essentially

this is definitely a hellmouth. And I want to tell you my favorite part of the article, just to give a shout out to our lovely, polite pals in the UK.

Because there's a quote in here, so, Al— Uh, this, this woman Alison Fern, who is an on protective marks— Call me, Alison. I love your specialty. Uh, "Recalled," the article says, "First shuffling on her backside into the cave and realizing what she was looking at." Quote, "I think I said a very naughty word." End quote. So Alison, expert on protective marks, says naughty words, but only in the secrecy of a cave. You know, she wouldn't say those out in public. Uh, this is terrifying but also not cause it's, we're protected. Like, maybe the cave is the, maybe the cave is the safest place to be. This has been your spooky news.

[SPOOKY NEWS jingle plays]
Spooky news!

Alright. Uh, just a couple more quick things before we roll into this week's episode. Of course. As always, thank you to Lauren Klein who does our sound engineering. You can follow Lauren @laurentaylorklein on Instagram. We love you Lauren. Uh, also it's been a minute since we've done a Buffy watch and Jenny and I are going to try something new.

So if you are a Patreon subscriber at any level, save the date. Saturday, March 2nd. We are going to do a Buffy watch, and we're going to do a Buffy watch bi-coastally. So that's going to be fun. And patrons. Um, if you're, if you're already a patron, you have received a little voting poll. We'll keep it open this week so you can vote on which episode you'd like to watch together with us. Again, that's Saturday, March 2nd, I believe we're going to begin at 11:00 AM Pacific time, which is 12, one, two. It's a little bit of Hell math for ya—

[HELLMATH jingle plays]
Hellmath!

2:00 PM Eastern time. Uh, and if you're not a patron you should become one. It's so fun and it supports our work. It's great. You can find more about it at bufferingthevampireslayer.com just click on Patreon. And last but not least, next week, the episode coming in hot from Angel on Top is Five by Five. I don't know if you can fucking guess who might be on that episode. Uh, in the actual television episode, of course it's Faith and in the Angel on Top episode, they're going to be sitting down with special guest Jenny Owen Youngs.

So exciting. I cannot wait to listen to this episode and I think that's all I've got for this week. I'll be popping into your ears to do a little Sexual Tension Awards segment later in the episode. And then of course I'll be back in two weeks when

Kate Leth and I sit down to talk about New Moon Rising. *Wow*. Got a lot to say about that one. Until then, let's head on into this episode. Rishi and Jenny! Dream team.

[Theme Music Plays]

Jenny: Hello and welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer, a podcast where we're watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer one at a time, spoiler free. Even when we really don't want to, like this episode. I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Rishi: And I'm special guest Hrishikesh Hirway.

Jenny: You really are such a special guest. This week we're talking about season four, episode 18, Where the Wild Things Are. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every week for an original song written by me, recapping the Buffy episode we're discussing.

Rishi: Where the Wild Things Are, was written by Tracey Forbes and directed by David Solomon and it originally aired on April 25th, 2000.

Jenny: Oh God. This is the one where Buffy and Riley's passionate love making energizes supernatural elements inside a frat house [sound of discomfort].

Rishi: [laughs] Yeah.

Jenny: Um, I wanna thank you for joining me, uh, against your will. To discuss this, perhaps the most reviled episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Rishi: Is that true?

Jenny: This is at the bottom of a lot of people's lists it seems.

Rishi: Wow.

Jenny: Well, you take into account, um, how many people dislike Riley.

Rishi: Sure. Yeah. People are smart.

Jenny: Okay, let's just, let's just take it down one notch.

Rishi: Okay. Alright.

Jenny: Um, Rishi's here today because he begged me please, please, please. Can I please, please, please, please, please talk about the episode where Buffy and Riley just have sex for 45 minutes? Please can I, please?

Rishi: It combines all my favorite things. [laughter] Riley. Sex with Riley. And frat parties.

Jenny: Yeah, what's not to love—

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: —About that triple threat? So I guess we have to talk about this.

Rishi: Yes. That's what you told me I had to do.

Jenny: That is— As a condition of our continued friendship. You must.

Rishi: Yeah. Oh, you know what else it combines?

Jenny: What?

Rishi: Giles and an earring.

Jenny: Man. Oh man. Oh man. I know that you haven't seen the entire series in a minute, but back in season three in Band Candy when all of the adults of Sunnydale were sort of like, mentally returned to their teenage states, Giles was wearing eyeliner and rolling cigarette pack into his t-shirt sleeve and tying a flannel around his waist. But he didn't have an earring, I don't think.

Rishi: No, that's adult. That's a fully adult decision.

Jenny: Yeah. Um, that's, that's a thing. That's a thing. Um, also—

Rishi: It's an earring, which means he put it on special.

Jenny: Yeah. For his adult—

Rishi: For his song.

Jenny: —Adult meeting. Um, thought went into it. Preparations were made, it's a, some kind of ceremony, um, was done.

Rishi: But then I, I really liked that he keeps it on.

Jenny: He wears it for the rest of the episode, which is pretty wild. If I was going to be engaging in some kind of ghost activity... You know, for gym class, we always had to take earrings out.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: And I feel like for, uh, like, exorcisms or de-spiritings, probably you want to observe the same basic safety ideas as you did in gym class. So...

Rishi: He lives on the edge. You know how you can tell? The earring.

Jenny: Yes, 100%. Have you ever had an earring?

Rishi: I've had two earrings. Both of my ears are pierced.

Jenny: In the same place?

Rishi: Yes.

Jenny: Nice.

Rishi: Well, one on each ear.

Jenny: Right, right, right, right, right. I did infer that. Um, but I just meant like, not like one cartilage piercing and one lobe piercing.

Rishi: Nope, both lobes.

Jenny: Uh, great. Are they closed now? Will they ever come back?

Rishi: I think they could come back now.

Jenny: Yeah.

Rishi: If I wanted them to.

Jenny: Just a thought. Um, if you have any upcoming gigs at the Espresso Pump...

Rishi: It's true. I am covering The Who next Friday night. You're not invited.

Jenny: It's for adults only? [inaudible] Speaking of adults only. The entirety of this episode's previously on is like, "Previously on Anya and Xander's relationship and

sexy time and previously on Willow and Tara's relationship and sexy time and previously on Buffy and Riley having sex.”

Rishi: Yeah. I mean they're setting the tone for what is a very sexy episode. Well, not sexy...

Jenny: Yeah. that's, yeah. Not quite the word.

Rishi: But sex-filled.

Jenny: Sex happens. [laughter] Yeah, sex-filled. Yes. Um, yeah. So the first thing that happens in the episode, if I may...

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: —Is that Riley and Buffy are like, patrolling together. They, um, are fighting a demon and a vampire who seem to be working together, which is weird. Uh, apparently.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Abnormal.

Rishi: But luckily that's a subplot that goes nowhere.

Jenny: In *this* episode.

Rishi: What a crazy thing. We'll follow up on that. Never again, in this episode.

Jenny: I just, I sense there's more to come. I sense we haven't seen the end of that. But gosh, there was just so much really high quality material they had to cram into this episode.

Rishi: Right, right, no room for, for large plot arcs.

Jenny: So like, what we see after they, um, dispense? Dispose of?

Rishi: Dispatch?

Jenny: After they kill. After they get rid of the demon and the vampire. Um, there's this like, moment where they're kind of like, definitely— Excuse me, this word is probably going to happen more than one time in this episode. They are definitely

horny and they're like, "Oh, Giles, like really needs to know." And it's like this like weird sex talk, prelude to sex thing.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: And you know, Buffy used to patrol with somebody else who got horny after, um, a good slay. And do you know that was? It was Faith.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: I would have preferred that.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Miss her. Really miss her in this episode. Perhaps more than I ever knew I could.

Rishi: You know who else was horny in that opening scene?

Jenny: The horned demon? [laughter] You are not wrong.

Rishi: Um, in my notes I wrote, "a lot of tshhm tshhm in the opening."

Jenny: What is, excuse me, what is *tshhm tshhm*?

Rishi: It's the term that maybe we made up when I was growing up to refer to all the fighting parts in Bollywood movies.

Jenny: Okay. I thought you meant butts. Because, because when you— Anya dropped her dress and you made a comment.

Rishi: Yeah. No, I meant the a, in the, in the fight scene there's just, just, we just start with a lot of tshhm, tshhm.

Jenny: Oh, it's like a sound effect? Okay, got it. Okay.

Rishi: I was thinking about it not just because of all the fighting, but because the sound effects for the fighting really do have a lot of tshhm tshhm kind of quality to them.

Jenny: Uh, yeah, there's a lot going on sonically to help you really be in the moment of the fight.

Rishi: I'm just trying to introduce tshhm tshhm as a term here for fight scenes. Are you with me?

Jenny: I am totally with you.

Rishi: Okay, great, great. My mom will be happy.

Jenny: Uh, henceforth— Nothing makes me happier than your mom being happy. Which is a weird thing to say in this episode of all episodes. So moving right along.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Wow. What a nice frat house! What a well-appointed frat house. There's a working fireplace. There's multiple chandeliers.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: There's like a high decorated, like a high, um—

Rishi: Valyrian?

Jenny: [laughter] Valyrian. Hell yeah. There's a, the, the decorating standard is very high.

Rishi: Yeah. Also, it's like really, I feel like in... It's like, yeah, they've got the fireplace. They've got, uh, it's very clean. They have a state of the art scientific demon examination laboratory in the basement.

Jenny: Sure yeah.

Rishi: All of the accoutrements.

Jenny: All the finer things in life. That, uh, that you *dream* of when you move into a frat house, I guess.

Rishi: Yeah. Yeah. Wait, do we know the name of the frat that they're in?

Jenny: Well they call— We discover in this episode that the house is called Lowell House.

Rishi: Right. But—

Jenny: But I think the frat is just the Initiative.

Rishi: The Initiative. Yeah.

Jenny: It's never, I don't think referred to in like, Greek terms.

Rishi: Okay. Yeah. The frat tshhm, tshhm, tshhm.

Jenny: I feel like, you know, with something like this that you desperately want to, to just like, interject into the, like, you really want this to happen. You've got to let it happen kind of organically.

Rishi: Okay, fine! Fine! I'll stop trying to make tshhm happen.

Jenny: Well, I mean keep trying to make it happen, but just like, maybe the intervals could be longer.

Rishi: Okay. Alright, so... In this tshhm, one of the t— [laughter] Was that long enough?

Jenny: [laughs] Not quite.

Rishi: Lots of people are horny, even outside of just the Riley/Buffy sex vortex within the party. Anya is concerned. That, um, she and Xander didn't have sex the night before.

Jenny: That sounds stressful. Um, and like, I, I get it.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: I think that's relatable content.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: They're in a still relatively newish relationship. They're having sex every night. But not last night, which means in Anya's vast experience, of course that it's the beginning of the end.

Rishi: She's an anthropologist.

Jenny: Wow. She really is. I like that observation a lot.

Rishi: I mean, yeah, I think she's a keen observer of the human condition and maybe she's not wrong.

Jenny: Wow. You think they're breaking up right now, because they didn't have sex last night?

Rishi: I think that the fact that they didn't, could indicate something's changing about the nature of their relationship. It doesn't mean that it's getting worse or that they have to break up, but things are changing. Beyond the, uh, you know, just pure infatuation level. It could be a good thing.

Jenny: Wow. Who's the anthropologist now?

Rishi: Mhm hm.

Jenny: So, uh, she's very concerned and is asking him all kinds of things like, "Why didn't you take advantage of me last night?"

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: And, uh, "Is there something wrong with your body?" Uh, she's just trying to get to the bottom of things. Um, and rule out any other possibilities other than it's over and they're breaking up.

Rishi: Yeah. And then she gets so upset, she puts on a shirt and then a cardigan without realizing they're the exact same piece of clothing.

Jenny: Are you saying that she's wearing a sweater set?

Rishi: Is that what that is?

Jenny: It's like when there's, there's like a tank top or a short sleeve shirt of the material of any color and then like a, an over shirt. It's, yeah—

Rishi: Oh, so it was intentional?

Jenny: Um, yes. That was a *thing*. It might still be a thing, but it was definitely a thing at this time. I worked at um, a women's clothing store.

Rishi: Which one?

Jenny: I was, I was a stock boy at Chelsea Campbell and also—

Rishi: Excuse me, that term is not cool.

Jenny: Stock boy?

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: It's not?

Rishi: No, it's just so... You know, we prefer accessories boy. No, it's just like, you know, a very gendered position title.

Jenny: Oh, well I'm, I just identify as a stock boy.

Rishi: Oh, okay. Got it.

Jenny: I think they would have just said Jenny who works in the stock room. But I prefer to claim the mantle of stock boy, if you don't mind. I did that at Chelsea Campbell and then also at a store called Petite Sophisticate.

Rishi: I've never heard of either of these stories. Are they New Jersey stores?

Jenny: I think they are national stores, but they're like definitely like mall stores that you wouldn't be aware of unless your mom specifically shopped at them?

Rishi: Right. Looking— On the hunt for a sweater set

Jenny: A sweater set. Or whatever else they sold.

Rishi: Yeah. Okay. This is clearly outside of my sphere of understanding cause I didn't even know that sweater sets were a thing and that what she was wearing wasn't weird.

Jenny: I wouldn't know any of this if I hadn't been a stock boy.

Rishi: I dig it. Okay.

Jenny: So...

Rishi: But that's what I, that's what I noticed. "Anya is wearing a shirt and a cardigan that have the exact same print and that that is an odd sartorial choice." Is what I wrote.

Jenny: Um, this of course comes to a clim— Excuse me. It comes to a climax, uh, when Xander's—

Rishi: There's no avoiding this.

Jenny: —“Oh yeah?” Yeah, there is no avoiding it. “Oh yeah? You're not happy we didn't have sex last night? Let's have sex right here, right now. In my ice cream truck. In front of all of these children and parents who are silently staring up at us.”

Rishi: Yeah. I was wondering what the buildup in that scene was going to lead to. And then, and then when he got to that shot, I was like, Oh yeah, there's going to be kids. And there were kids.

Jenny: Of course. Kids love ice cream and they don't know what sex is, I guess? So... Hilarious.

Rishi: Apparently *some* kids know about sex and they're all ghosts who live in Mrs Landingham's haunted house.

Jenny: Yeah. In this very special West Wing/Buffy the Vampire Slayer crossover.

Rishi: Now I know why you brought me in for this one.

Jenny: Yes, of course! Of course. Mrs Landingham was totally murdering all those children for being too dirty.

Rishi: Yeah. Those kids probably witnessed something outside of an ice cream truck and all kinds of filthy thoughts infiltrated their minds. Yeah.

Jenny: So this is some kind of like, history repeating itself, like, evil time loop kind of thing going on outside of the house too.

Rishi: Yeah. Exactly. And Xander's just a cog in that machine.

Jenny: Maybe it's all Xander's fault.

Rishi: That's a great subtitle for the entire series. [laughter]

Jenny: But I think for this season you prefer *It's All Riley's Fault*.

Rishi: Ughh. That's what I have to say about Riley.

Jenny: What did you say you call him? Lump?

Rishi: [laughs] Yeah.

Jenny: Your nickname for Riley, because he's like, as interesting—

Rishi: Yeah. As useful and as interesting. Yeah.

Jenny: Um, I guess one, one man's lump is another stock boy's, uh, perfect marble sculpture, uh, honed, sanded and perfected over an artist's lifetime.

Rishi: Lump is, has ended up becoming an interchangeable term. Like it's a, it's a term that has migrated from show to show for Lindsey and myself. We will sometimes, we'll be like, "Ugh, this kid. Lump." Like in *The Good Wife*, the younger brother on that show. We also call him Lump. And uh, actually there's another younger brother. Oh, I think the younger brother, Henry in *The Americans*, we, sometimes we refer to him as Lump. It's just a, it's a term. Yeah.

Jenny: I'll have to start paying attention in shows that I watch for lumps of my own.

Rishi: It's like Big Bad, you know? Like it starts with one show and then you can be like, "Oh, who's the Big Bad in uh, in this season of whatever."

Jenny: Yes, I got it. Thank you. From TV professional, Rishi Hirway. Uh, so lots of things continue to happen in this episode regardless of whether we want them to. And one of them is that there's a Scooby meeting happening in the common area. It really upset *you*. I know.

Rishi: Yes. Yes. Some of those areas were *too* common. Putting two people in a chair clearly meant for one.

Jenny: Which two people?

Rishi: Ughhh. Yeah. Buffy and Riley have abandoned all professionalism. Uh...

Jenny: They're dating! They're teenagers!

Rishi: There's a time and a place and that was neither the time nor the place. They're just, they were like, they've got weird gropey hand stuff happening and they're like cuddling and they're trying to have a meeting. It's—

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah. I guess when you put it like that, when, when you think about it as them being in the workplace, uh, it is a little squiggly. Um, but I will say that Sarah Michelle Gellar is so small that she doesn't really count as a whole other person in that chair if you don't mind. They're kind of like one and a half persons.

Rishi: Mm. I don't like it. Um, I prefer Tara and Willow's repressed, respectful distance.

Jenny: Nobody knows about us.

Rishi: Exactly.

Jenny: [sarcasm] Why can't you have a respectable repressed relationship nobody can know about, Buffy and Riley?

Rishi: [laughs] That's how I like it.

Jenny: [sarcasm] Ah, yes. Mmm high school. Those were the days. Um, and of course, Buffy and Riley have this, ugh, this like, "Don't you have that thing? No, I don't, I don't have class for another 20 minutes. Yeah. But like I have the thing that we could maybe squeeze in."

Rishi: So subtle.

Jenny: "Ah, ah, ah, yes. Maybe you could squeeze that thing in really quick before class." Um, and then they leave to do that.

Rishi: I'm going to— Side note, I am so happy that we watched this episode together because, really, the only thing that was making this fun was listening to you crack up at all the groans I involuntarily made. And you had a good chuckle when the Riley and Buffy in the same chair scene happened and I inadvertently made a sound.

Jenny: I saw how it was hurting you. And I mean the thing is that you're such a careful architect of your life and your surroundings. And you really like, you plan in very fine detail to make sure like, everything is as ideal as it could possibly be. And to be able to bring this moment of unwanted chaos and revulsion into your life in a way that we could share it together was very satisfying for me. So thank you.

Rishi: Thank you.

Jenny: What a great friend. So then there's this whole thing where Buffy and Riley are having sex behind a closed door and jealous boyfriend Forest is like, [imitating Forest] "Ugh, I can't believe Riley's having sex with somebody else." And then this weird thing happens with the fireplace. It's like somehow we're led to infer that like they're, maybe Buffy and, and Riley's sex is making the frat house cold, but then it's also making the fireplace freak out?

Rishi: Yeah. And fire leaping out spontaneously.

Jenny: Yes. To conveniently consume the one Initiative guy in the room that we've never seen before.

Rishi: [laughs] Right.

Jenny: Thank God. Uh, bad sex, evil sex, I think is the takeaway? From that scene and every scene.

Rishi: Or even good sex, evil sex.

Jenny: Oh, I just meant like *bad* sex—

Rishi: Right, right.

Jenny: —But also, good sex, evil sex.

Rishi: Safe sex.

Jenny: True. They have so much sex in this episode that they could not get away with not showing Riley, uh, grabbing a condom.

Rishi: Yeah. Just a little PSA in there.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah. I feel like that has to be a network thing from the year 2000.

Rishi: Do you think so? I mean, there's some social responsibility, I think in this show. I could see that just coming from them internally, being like, "Hey, while we're doing this, let's also just give a shout out to contraception."

Jenny: You just said *social responsibility* about *this* episode. Let me remind you, *sir*.

Rishi: Yeah. I'm going to give it to them.

Jenny: [laughs] Phrasing. So...

Rishi: What does, what does Giles say? Oh, for better. Oh, for different phrasing or something.

Jenny: Um, yeah, that's like every single thing you can say about this episode. This episode makes everything a double entendre. One nice thing that this episode gives

us is, uh, the opportunity to witness two former terrors, Anya and Spike, mourning together, the loss of their evil superpowers, I guess. Uh, the havoc that they formerly wreaked? Would wreak? Wrought.

Rishi: Yeah!

Jenny: There it is! And I like, I like seeing them together. They're two of *my* favorite characters, so it's nice to, um, get a little look at this. A nice, an actual nice thing that happened to this episode.

Rishi: I mean, Spike's body language— He gets, he has a kind of a *hey baby*, moment.

Jenny: Oh yeah. *Well* he's just, maybe he's just falling victim to the tone of the episode.

Rishi: Um, yeah. He definitely, he was right at home in some ways. At one point later we see him checking out a lady walking by, from the waist down.

Jenny: Oh heavens.

Rishi: Oh, Spike. You cad.

Jenny: [laughing] You cad.

Rishi: Um... But yeah, they're, they're funny together. I like her better in that context than like, the sort of unfortunate shrew role that she has to take so often with Xander.

Jenny: Oh interesting.

Rishi: —Is kind of not, not so fun and makes, and I don't know, just not that fair for her I think. But with Spike she gets to be a little bit more of her own person.

Jenny: I guess I would agree with the back half of that? And I would say I wonder if because you haven't like, watched this like, *this* season or the, you know, seen more of her *lately*. If um, there's something— Like for *me*, on this watch and on every watch I feel like, the way that she is with Xander is less about like, her being maybe a shrew, although I guess I could see like, how it ends up kind of like reading that way and in some instances.

But to me it's more like, she's giving voice. Like she has no self consciousness about anything. So she's very comfortable just sort of like giving voice to her

interior world and all of her anxieties, whether they're founded or not. And they're all like, I feel like for the most part, like, relatable on some level. And I think that that's like, special.

I think that's like a big function of her character to sort of like give us a glimpse into the exteriorization of our like most neurotic interior moments? You know?

Rishi: Yeah. Like the BoJack—

Jenny: Oh my God. Like the BoJack Horseman episode Stupid Piece of Shit.

Rishi: Exactly.

Jenny: Wow. For everyone listening, if you've never watched BoJack Horseman, may I recommend please that you watched the entire series because it's one of the most beautiful things that has ever been made.

Rishi: True.

Jenny: Uh, and when you get to the season four episode Stupid Piece of Shit and the season five episode Free Churro, uh...

Rishi: You will have peered into my soul.

Jenny: Yes. And perhaps even into your own soul.

Rishi: You know, I— That's a great read. I think having watched only once and then pulling this one as a standalone, I forgot about some of the deeper parts of Anya like that, but, but for a long time I feel like they, they really lean into her sort of like, as a person who nags Xander.

Jenny: Mm. Mhm, Mhm. I feel like it's so interesting what they do with her as she's like getting into a relationship. The first relationship she's been in in a thousand years because she's just been vengeance demoning it up for a millennia. Millennium? Millennium of course is the singular and millennia is the plural. Leave me alone.

So, she's just been like, uh, disemboweling people and turning them into toads and stuff. And what I like about her becoming mortal again is that she is instantly plagued by all of like, the insecurities. You, it's just, it's like she's having another adolescence.

Rishi: Puberty.

Jenny: Yeah, exactly. Even though she's been around for a thousand years, she's just like, all messed up and like, you know, love is making a wreck of her as it makes of all of us at one time or another. [whispers] Great story, Jenny. Keep going. So you brought up a really good point surrounding, uh, just after the initial orgasm wall scene...

Rishi: Oh God, that scene.

Jenny: Forgive me. Um, we have to talk about the orgasm wall. Uh, maybe more than once, but right after we see it for the first time, after that guy's like, "The way language tastes." *Ahhh!*

Rishi: Somehow the creepiest part of the entire episode doesn't have to do with demons or poltergasms or anything at all. But this guy trying to pick up a girl by talking about the tasty qualities of speaking French.

Jenny: It also doesn't even sound hot when he speaks French. No offense dude. But, um—

Rishi: No.

Jenny: If you're gonna go there, like have the goods to back it up, mister. Please.

Rishi: Uh, les goods, please.

Jenny: [laughs] Les goods. Uh, and then he touches the orgasm wall and it's really weird that he keeps his hand on it and it's really weird that everybody keeps their hand on it in front of people. Like throughout the episode as we see more and more people, again, it's just like, wh—

Rishi: Oh yeah.

Jenny: I mean maybe that's like maybe, um, that's like in the atmosphere because of like what's going on in the house. Everyone's like less inhibited and whatever, but like, wow, I'm glad that orgasm walls don't happen in real life. *Meanwhile,* Xander starts talking to a girl and they are standing in such a way that it's sort of—

Rishi: This of my favorite part.

Jenny: So confusing.

Rishi: The blocking. Like I don't know what it is that they're supposed to be facing. They're like— The way it's shot, the way it's blocked, whatever it is that's in front of them. It really looks like they're standing next to each other in a men's room at two urinals and they're having a conversation at the urinals.

Jenny: It's uncanny. First of all—

Rishi: Yeah. No no, it's very canny.

Jenny: First of all, as I've been led to believe, no one talks to each other at urinals in the men's room. Is that, is that right?

Rishi: Um, I mean, going to the men's room is definitely not a social activity in the way that maybe going to the ladies' room can be. But I mean it's not to say that no conversation ever happens. It depends on which, you know, which restroom you're in. If you're, say, say you're in your dorm and you know—

Jenny: Sure.

Rishi: And you're in the bathroom there and, and there's another guy who you're friends with also going to the bathroom, you might have a conversation.

Jenny: Sure, sure, sure.

Rishi: But in a *public* bathroom with strangers, you know, there's a very, I think—

Jenny: There's a code.

Rishi: Yeah, the code is, do not make eye contact. Look straight ahead. Do not engage.

Jenny: Perhaps a benefit to non-gendered multi-stall bathrooms, um, would be that, that those two polar opposite vibes would be eradicated and we would have a semi-social bathroom experience. Actually, I don't, I've never watched *Ally McBeal* but maybe you have and can confirm or deny. No, nothing? No data. *Well*, a question for another day.

Rishi: Wait, what is it about *Ally McBeal*?

Jenny: Oh, just that they have like, um, they have, uh, everybody uses the same multi-stall bathroom at the law firm I think?

Rishi: Oh, okay.

Jenny: Which is an interesting choice—

Rishi: That's an interesting detail—

Jenny: —For the time.

Rishi: —That you know that

Jenny: Yeah. I don't know why I know that other than it sticks out from a show at that time.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Oh God. Moving on unfortunately.

Rishi: Um, just, just to go back to that wall for one unfortunate second.

Jenny: Mmmmm. Do you have an orgasm wall in your house that I have yet to discover? Is that when you're about to tell me? You're looking all around.

Rishi: I'm just, I'm sheepish about this note.

Jenny: [laughing] Oh no! Um, hopefully if you're a parent listening with your children, you already know that this episode was going to be racy. But Rishi, I'm going to let you know, we definitely, I think said finger bang on the cast so you can definitely say your note.

Rishi: Um, yeah. Uh, the walls giving out hand jobs.

Jenny: [laughing] That seems to be the very, very best, uh, way to put it, I guess. If you have to put it any way, that's the way to do it.

Rishi: You know what I was kind of hoping—

Jenny: Yes?

Rishi: —For from this episode was that there was some, somehow this was a parable or warning or something— Somehow the first scene and you know, this demon vampire pairing was going to play into this idea of, you know, reactions to sex. And somehow, th— I, I thought there was maybe going to be like a theme about miscegenation or something like that that was all going to tie together.

Jenny: Mmm. But no, not for you.

Rishi: That's not what it was.

Jenny: No, no, no.

Rishi: Um, 'cause you know, they're, they're talking about, oh, it's a strange coupling and then Riley and Buffy are coupled in the bedroom the whole time. And I don't know, I was thinking there was going to be some message or metaphor or something drawn out that that's why I think I was so bummed that the, uh, demon/vampire buddy system didn't actually pay off at any point after that first conversation in the first scene.

Jenny: I think there's only one metaphor in the whole episode. Like I think there's only one thing that they use to connect the end of the episode to the beginning of the episode.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: And that's that Xander tells Anya that a relationship takes work and that you have to work through it together. And then at the end of the episode, they hack through a bunch of thorny vines together and it's very, it's very intense and it just like really, it really seems like the people who made the show wanted us to see Xander and Anya just macheteing through some difficult substances together with teamwork. In partnership.

Rishi: Actually, my favorite part of the episode might have been, um, the moment when Anya comes in and rescues Xander from the ghost drowning baptism tub.

Jenny: Yes!

Rishi: Because despite, or you know, with all of the sort of, uh, lusty stuff happening throughout the whole episode, the only real moment of actual intimacy for me is, um, is that part when she pulls him out of the tub and then just briefly, she like touches his head just sort of like, she just sort of holds the back of his head as she, after she pulls him out. And just that, that little touch, I thought that was the most beautiful, intimate sort of, um, signifier of a close relationship. Um, I thought that part was really nice.

Jenny: Wow! That is really nice. Especially in a sea of everything else.

Rishi: Yeah. Just like a loving hand to the back of your head, nape of your neck kind of area.

Jenny: Sure. After you've almost been drowned by a ghost or energy.

Rishi: Really any, anytime of day. [laughter] You just can't beat that.

Jenny: Uh, noted. Um, putting that in your file. So speaking of, uh, touching, um, stuff's starting to get like, weird? After Buffy and Riley spend like the entire party, like, not responding or listening to any of their friends and staring like they're, they're creating the illusion that they're not just like obsessing about each other by being with their own friend groups, but they're just like, boring holes into one another with their eyes.

Rishi: Hey, *I'm* not the one who called them boring holes.

Jenny: [laughs] Ahh! Uh, until finally Buffy was like, "It's very important that you look at this essay for a class that you're no longer, I'm no longer taking a class where you're the TA. Please take me to your room where I can show you my essay, if you know what I mean."

Rishi: No Buffy. I have no idea what you mean. Um, yeah. Opening shot of the party. Pretty lame party. Like, "Oh Hey everyone, here's a party." Everyone is standing around talking to the people they already know and nobody else.

Jenny: Yeah, you'd think there'd be a little more mingling.

Rishi: I mean, the party was supposed to be, in theory, for the Initiative guys to blow off some steam. And, all the Initiative guys do the entire time is just talk to each other.

Jenny: Maybe that's how they blow off steam.

Rishi: Seems like you don't need a party for that.

Jenny: Well, I will say that when I, when I think of like some like, militaristic young college men and then I think about them blowing off steam, my fear meter just—

Rishi: Oh yeah.

Jenny: —Skyrockets. So if the worst they're going to do is stand around and talk to each other, I'm super into it.

Rishi: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Whatever gets your steam blown as long as it's safe for everyone else. But it's really not. Not what I expected for like, [imitating show]

they need a party. They're going to, they need about 60 other people around them to have the conversation they might otherwise have. Because they're, all they do, they're just talking about work.

Jenny: Well, you know how it is when you get together with a bunch of people who, all, who all do work in the same field as you. You know, and it's like nobody understands.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Hmm. I was gonna say, we were just at Pod-Con together recently in Seattle and I was going to say, and we hung out with a bunch of podcasters and talked about podcast stuff, but I guess that didn't actually happen.

Rishi: No, we talked, we talked about all kinds of things and we ate a lot of cookies.

Jenny: You taught me how to Tim Tam Slam.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Uh, for those listening, should you be in the market. Are they Australian?

Rishi: They are Australian.

Jenny: Could you just explain for everyone's benefit?

Rishi: It's a delicious cookie and you bite off the ends of each and you use it— Because of its poor structure, you can use it like a straw with a hot liquid like coffee or hot chocolate or tea. And then you use it like a straw to pull in some of the hot liquid. And while you're doing that, it melts the inside of the cookie and then you eat the cookie and it's turned into this like, fudgy, chocolatey thing that's incredible.

Jenny: Or if you want to do a Tim Tam Slam the Jenny Owen Youngs way, you can be mildly nervous 'cause you're in a hotel room with a bunch of people you haven't met before and you're, the tea making is like a process cause the hotel machine like, is being used like the in-room coffee and tea pot.

So it's like, one cup at a time but you got your cup early so you're like sipping away and then, Oh no, your tea is like half empty by the time it's Tim Tam Slam go time. So I'm like, I've bitten off the ends of my Tim Tam. I'm desperately trying to get it

low enough in the water for it to effect— Like effectively work like a straw. But in doing so, I'm tilting my cup, I pour—

Rishi: [laughing] Oh no!

Jenny: —Hot tea all over my shirt—

Rishi: I didn't even see that part!

Jenny: And then the Tim Tam, um, which I managed to suck like a little tea through, just kind of like disintegrates in my hand and falls into the tea and then kind of like forms this like chunky algae, uh, layer on top of the tea, which I tried to be cool and continue to sip, uh, over the course of the cookie party. Uh, and I think I just was pretty cool. I think everybody probably when I left was like, "Wow, that girl is really a natural."

Rishi: It takes practice. Maybe.

Jenny: Yeah. I should have, I should have practiced before the cookie party.

Rishi: We'll try again.

Jenny: I look forward to that day.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Um, [clears throat] until that day though, we do have to keep going.

Rishi: Okay.

Jenny: Um, shit's like, starting to get even weirder. Um, well, first it's starting to get hotter when Tara's like, "you should ride with me sometime." to Willow, who's scared of ponies and horses. And then like Willow, it seems like she's coming around to the idea like if she is going to ride some kind of equine creature, uh, that she would do it maybe with Tara, maybe that would be chill. And then she touches Tara and Tara freaks out because, oh God, uh, whatever's in this house is starting to like not just be sexy but also weird and repressive. There's just like a lot of— It's like when in weather— You've heard of weather?

Rishi: Mhm.

Jenny: I even understand that when like there's like a cold zone and a hot zone and they come together unexpectedly, uh, wild ass weather shit can happen.

Rishi: Mhm. This is— The house is even kind of like San Francisco. [Jenny gasps] It has microclimates.

Jenny: Oh my God. You're so right. It's really hard to dress right for San Francisco—

Rishi: And this house.

Jenny: —For that reason. And this house.

Rishi: Over by the stairs, I'm in repression zone, over by the wall, hand job zone over by the spin the bottle zone glass might blind your eyes.

Jenny: Oh yeah. Yeah. The bottom might just explode. This, this is such a chaotic episode! I feel like once things are like, no, not even once things— Like the entire episode is just like *what's happening?*! It feels like so many disconnected or very loosely connected things are happening in rapid succession.

Rishi: I don't even really understand the mechanics of the haunting that's happening because Giles sort of explains— When we finally meet Mrs. Landingham and she tells them what she's done. Um, he says, you know, she tells him, none of the kids died. And he says, “yes, but your actions have now come to...” Somehow her, the result of her cruelty. It's taken the form of these kids, even though they didn't die and they're— What's happening?

Jenny: [laughs] It is a good question that you raise. What *is* happening? It seems like, it's not like the ghost of children. It's just like this dense accumulation of repressed sexual energy and maybe like shame, uh, and also like the trauma that these kids experienced. All of that kind of like residually remains behind them. And then it's sort of like a ball of like hair that's been like, soaked in kerosene. And then Buffy and Riley are the sexy match that set it ablaze.

Rishi: I mean...

Jenny: I don't know.

Rishi: Has no one had sex in the house since the hellmouth opened?

Jenny: No, no, no, no. I think, um, I mean Buffy and Riley have before this, but I think it's, it's a, uh, because they're in that state where they just like—

Rishi: California.

Jenny: —Can't stop. [laugh] Yes, um. California.

Rishi: Like how is not, how is every PE class not also causing this kind of dismay if it's repression and sexual thoughts?

Jenny: [laughs] Uh, it is unclear to me. I am uncertain.

Rishi: Yeah. Because, okay, so it's a supernatural energy is what we've been told. Right?

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Rishi: That's what's manifested. But it also, but it's incarnated sometimes in the ghostly forms of these kids who did not die.

Jenny: It is curious.

Rishi: But they have the like, ashen faces of dead people.

Jenny: Sure, sure.

Rishi: Um, and sometimes those kids have poltergeisty qualities where they can move things around, but then they can also change your thoughts and make...

Jenny: Kind of possess you?

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Right. Yeah, Julie's cutting off her hair. Tara's like, "don't touch me. You're disgusting." So I think your first mistake here— [both laugh]

Rishi: Agreeing to talk [inaudible].

Jenny: That was your first mistake. Agreeing to talk about this episode. Your second mistake is trying to make this episode make pure sense.

Rishi: Mhm.

Jenny: It might be impossible.

Rishi: Just looking for a little, little kernel of just something to hold on to.

Jenny: Perhaps a moment of quiet reflection is in order, while we hear a few words about our sponsors.

[AD BREAK]

Jenny: You know, it's hard to talk about this episode period. And it's even hard to talk about it in chronological order. Like there's just so many, uh, obstacles in this conversation.

Rishi: Yeah. Yeah. Is that Willow screaming? Doesn't matter.

Jenny: Well, I think at that point as Buffy later says, they are like zombies and cannot control themselves.

Rishi: Yeah. That that line definitely was made, uh, better when we found out what was happening later because when she actually announces it, we don't totally know that they're in the zombie sex state.

Jenny: True.

Rishi: And it just seems at first like she's just—

Jenny: Like she's just like, "Fuck Willow." Dude. Also, Anya brought Spike to a party at the Initiative headquarters where he was recently apprehended, stored, had a chip inserted into his brain, and escaped.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: What is she thinking?

Rishi: And all be, all anybody can think to say is, "You look familiar."

Jenny: Yeah. What? There's— Okay. Everybody's dropping the ball here.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: I think is the thing. Also, in this show man, bad shit's always happening at frat houses. Um, since you haven't had a fresh rewatch recently—

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: —I'll tell you that in season two, Buffy and Cordelia go to a frat party and then they almost get sacrificed to a reptilian demon who these frat boys give young

women to, in the basement to keep themselves rich and successful. And then also recently, I think it's season three, there's a Halloween party at a frat house where everybody gets trapped in the house and like the rubber spiders become real and the plastic skeletons become real. And maybe we just stay away from frat houses!

Rishi: I mean that's just a good rule of thumb.

Jenny: Good rule of thumb.

Rishi: For life.

Jenny: You weren't in a frat.

Rishi: I wasn't, I wasn't.

Jenny: Me neither.

Rishi: There is a really excellent stock boy frat though. If you do want to pledge—

Jenny: I was wondering if that was gonna come back. Graham seems to get possessed by Bible verses or something? That's a peculiar thing that happens.

Rishi: The most shocking thing to *me* in this moment right now, is learning that that guy has a name.

Jenny: [laughs] I know.

Rishi: He doesn't deserve it.

Jenny: Well, he has some moments.

Rishi: OKay,

Jenny: He's, it's the Initiative— Three Initiative guys that we see the most are Riley, of course your fave, and then Forest, his scorned lover.

Rishi: Lump junior.

Jenny: And then Graham. [laughs] The one thing I like about Graham is that he's like really into Buffy and Riley dating.

Rishi: Uh huh.

Jenny: So he and he and Forest kind of have a lot of exchanges about that.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: Where Forest is like, "Fuck this, man!" and Graham's like, "Aren't they a cute couple?" That's it. That seems to be his main function. Other than being like another recognizable Initiative guy that we see all the time.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: I'm sorry that he didn't do it for you in this episode, but did anything do it for you in this episode? Besides the wall?

Rishi: Just that one moment when Anya touched Xander's head as she pulled him out of the bath.

Jenny: Yeah.

Rishi: That did it for me.

Jenny: That was okay. Yes. I'm onboard for that. So, we get to this point where like, oh God, I don't even know! So many things have happened. A ghost ran through Anya! Like stuff is just going wild. The spin the bottle bottle exploded and people are kind of clearing out. Wisely. And Xander, Willow, Tara and Spike are outside of the house and they know that Buffy and Riley are still in the bedroom engaged in just a never ending cycle.

And Xander is like, "Man, no slayers left behind. I'm going back in from my friend. Who's with me?" And we see Spike, uh, we're like, "Wow, what's happening? Spike's..." We've seen Spike's character, like really growing and developing and, and he's just been spending more and more time with him. This is so nice. He's finally about to pitch in and uh, no, no, he actually just talked himself out of it. Um, as— Almost as soon as he chimed in. And for that, I wish to administer the Spike jingle.

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

Jenny: Okay.

Rishi: It's a great Spike moment.

Jenny: It is a great Spike moment. It's, I think the best Spike moment in the episode. Um, Spike is one of the highlights of the episode. I feel like, 'cause he's not involved in any of the weird haunted sex stuff.

Rishi: Mhm.

Jenny: And then, uh, the house spits Xander back out as soon as he tries to go in and they determine, well we really need Giles.

Rishi: Aren't you a little proud of Xander in that moment? I really am.

Jenny: I'm absolutely proud of Xander in that moment. A moment of appreciation for Xander, uh, in the face of—

Rishi: Supernatural—

Jenny: Sexy haunting. Or not sexy as you said, but sex-filled haunting. I'm, I'm very, very happy to see Xander, you know, being his best self.

Rishi: Yeah. Unqualifiedly brave.

Jenny: Totally brave.

Rishi: Which he isn't always.

Jenny: Which he isn't always. But who among us is? Besides Buffy, Willow, Giles...

Rishi: Angel.

Jenny: Okay, okay, okay, okay.

Rishi: Yeah. Okay.

Jenny: So and also, man, the fuck the like, the role that Xander takes, like when he gets spat back out by the house, he like kind of like rolls over his on his head and neck. It's like a really intense—

Rishi: Some stunt work.

Jenny: —Fall. And they need to go get Giles from his adult meeting at the Espresso Pump. Adults only. They'll say only you wouldn't be interested in, don't bother coming by. Forget that I exist on this one night. Please don't come by the Espresso Pump dear God. *And* hard cut to Giles playing that Who song.

Rishi: Yeah. Behind Blue Eyes.

Jenny: And we get just enough of it to like kind of like get caught up in his performance. And then just when you're like, "I forget what this has to do with the plot." while I'm noticing Giles' earring, which is disturbing, but I'm also like, "Wow, he's got like a really nice voice." and he's like really getting into it and then we get a really, really nice cut to everyone staring at him with slack jaws, disbelieving eyes.

Rishi: And then just because they can't drop the whole sexy themes of this episode, we get a, you know, conversation about how sexy Giles is.

Jenny: From Willow and Anya. Okay. I expect it from Anya. Willow. I don't know, man.

Rishi: I wouldn't know that. I wouldn't expect that Giles is Anya's taste.

Jenny: Mm. Yeah, she does tend to, she has more of a, she has like my taste in men.

Rishi: [laughs] What is your taste?

Jenny: Well, I guess she's dating Xander. But in season two, Xander had a very good episode where he was on the swim team?

Rishi: Uh huh

Jenny: And he was cut. At least for that episode. Uh, he looked great.

Rishi: Okay.

Jenny: And I feel like she's always talking about when he, like his muscles are rippling and stuff and like that seems to be what she's into.

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: But also she's seen a lot. She's been around for a thousand years. She probably has broader tastes than either of us could conceive of and can appreciate

all kinds of things and all kinds of people. Also Giles' art is like, objectively pretty hot. In my experience, people love when somebody's playing guitar and singing. And it doesn't necessarily—

Rishi: In your experience—

Jenny: In my experience.

Rishi: As a guitar playing singer—

Jenny: I'm just—

Rishi: —People. You're just saying, "Look, my whole life *as Jenny*, people want me. What can I say?"

Jenny: I feel like this is getting, I feel like you're twisting my words.

Rishi: I'm good. No, these are the—

Jenny: I just think, I think we culturally have an idea about guitars and singing.

Rishi: Mhmm

Jenny: And, in my experience of looking at and experiencing people playing guitar and singing, I feel like it, it just like cranks up the thermostat.

Rishi: Watching you try to walk yourself back out of this self compliment is definitely the best part of watching this episode. In summary, according to Jenny, Jenny is hot.

Jenny: [laughter] Yeah. Yes. Thank you for finally hearing me.

Rishi: You know, society has just been conditioned to recognize her hotness.

Jenny: [laughing] *Help! Help!* I'm trapped in a haunted episode of this podcast!

Rishi: Um, okay. So, yes. He's, he's, yeah.

Jenny: I really can appreciate though that he sees them, has only a moment of panic and dread and horror on his face and then continues.

Rishi: He doesn't drop the beat.

Jenny: Like a pro all the way to the end—

Rishi: Yeah, he plays all the way through.

Jenny: —Which is a great quality in someone. Uh, and then, you know, um, [clears throat] don't worry. Uh, Giles and Willow and Tara and Xander get a big leg up in their research, uh, because there is just a scrapbook—

Rishi: Yeah.

Jenny: —Of, of pre Lowell house, Lowell children's home news clippings.

Rishi: Willow says, "Oh yeah, uh, this place had this history." and she's just open to a page that has like three clippings in it. What book she's looking at, we don't know. Just three convenient clippings about Lowell house that she has found in a matter of minutes. It's the room of requirement of scrapbooks.

Jenny: Yes. It's the scrapbook of requirement *for sure*. Even, even when Giles is like, "Oh the the woman who ran the home, when did she die?" and Willow looks down at her scrapbook for like 0.1 seconds and is like, "She didn't."

Rishi: An amazing thing, this scrapbook of the past is also up to date. [laughter] You know, looking up the Wikipedia in the scrapbook it says, her, her—

Jenny: Born—

Rishi: —Birth and death date, but there's a hyphen and no date in the end, according to this old article.

Jenny: Yeah. Wiki scrap. Scrapbookpedia it. Yeah. So great. How convenient.

Rishi: Yeah, so they, they immediately know she's alive and they know where to find her and there she is.

Jenny: There she is in like a bathrobe. She's ready to talk. She has— This lady has no problem. You would think that if like, you had engaged in this stuff that this woman engaged in. Um, which it sounds like a lot of child abuse and a lot of traumatizing, um, terrorization of children—

Rishi: Yep.

Jenny: —That she would at least like, play it close to the chest.

Rishi: Nope. Yeah.

Jenny: But she's just like, yeah, no, I, I um, performed baptism and [yelling] *ahhh*. And just uh, the [inaudible] on the extra unclean ones. Like what the hell, lady?

Rishi: Hey look, if you are going to be psychotically morally self-righteous, you really got to buy in. So I think it makes sense that she would have no compunction about anything that she's done. Like in order to take it to that extreme, you really have to believe that what you're doing is justified.

Jenny: True. Okay. Solid point. Also this moment that you already mentioned where Giles is like getting in her face about stuff, I think it's pretty wild that he's like, "You fucked up these kids. Like who knows? Like what kind of like long term impact you could have, you could have had on them. You traumatized them, you may have ruined their lives. And *also* on top of that, you made a haunted house!" [laughter] Dude! Prioritize your, your accusations please.

Rishi: Yeah. Or, you know, yeah. Let's, let's start with the specifics before you move to the hypothetical.

Jenny: [laughter] Yeah. Also, Mrs. Landingham, uh—

Rishi: We're sorry. We're sorry, Catherine Houston and Mrs. Genevieve Holt as she's known in this episode—

Jenny: Yes.

Rishi: —She can only be called Mrs. Landingham.

Jenny: It's true. A role so powerful, so memorable that it's the only way that we can refer to her. So Mrs. Landingham says that she can smell the sin on each one of them. And I'm wondering what you think sin smells like.

Rishi: Yeah. It's just, you know, they've been fighting.

Jenny: Just standard human like sweat smell?

Rishi: Yeah. And they didn't, they forgot to put on deodorant.

Jenny: I see, I see. Okay. *Okay*. They determine in short order that Buffy and Riley are powering the whole thing, and Xander coins the word Poltergasm.

Rishi: Um, and I'm going to just point out that you're the one who said powering the whole. Thing. They're powering the whole thing.

Jenny: [laughing] *Jesus*. Help! Sorry, is poltergasm a portmanteau? Portmanteau? [trying different pronunciations] Portmantoo. Port*manteau*. Oh no! What's the right way to say it?

Rishi: Look, It's a poor man's toe, okay?

Jenny: What's the actual pronunciation? I've been listening to Helen Zaltzman from, from the Allusionist say it a bunch, but she's so, um, English that it's hard to know how I as an American should say it.

Rishi: [speaking in exaggerated American accent] Portmanteau.

Jenny: Yeah. Perfect. Portmanteau. I feel very comfortable with that. Um, what a fun portmanteau. Poltergasm.

Rishi: Sorry, lest I lead you astray, [in correct pronunciation] portmanteau.

Jenny: Portmanteau. Okay, so emphasis on the toe. Okay. Thank you very much.

Rishi: Mhmm

Jenny: Oh my gosh. Then we see Willow, Tara and Giles trying to cast a spell or do a thing. It's not really clear what they're doing.

Rishi: Definitely not to Giles, who at one point says, "How are we going to know it's worked?" Giles, the all-powerful watcher...

Jenny: Just in the course of this episode, some things that he should have no way of knowing, he just knows immediately—

Rishi: Yep.

Jenny: —And some things that he definitely should know, he's got questions about.

Rishi: Or at least have a sense.

Jenny: Yeah. So. So that happens and who knows why, but then there are a lot of vines.

Rishi: Yeah—

Jenny: Many, many, many vines. Sex vines? It's unclear. But the best that I can do is again, to assume that they are a symbol for the difficulty of, uh, and the complication of relationships? Uh, they're more than just sex.

Rishi: Yeah, no, I think, I think for sure. They also represent sort of like, to me, like really, like a viral, like a virulent kind of, you know, just short form video content, like at a maximum of like six seconds long or something, that might loop and then eventually go defunct. Um, but yeah, the place is just totally covered in vines.

Jenny: Covered in vines. Yeah. Some of them are like long and green and have big thorns and some of them are just like [gasps] [inaudible]

Rishi: Okay. But the spell, right?

Jenny: Sure.

Rishi: The spell. Look, what are they summoning again? Back to my, this question of like, what is actually the deal? Tara says, you know, "Get over here," basically, "Let's work this out." And all the little ghost kids show up around them, but we already know there are no actual kids. You know, like who is she talking to, really?

Jenny: Mmm.

Rishi: And then, um, and then just at a moment where it's like, Oh, things are working, then all of a sudden for no reason, the spell didn't work. The spell stops working.

Jenny: Just the weird repression energy was too angry?

Rishi: They were too close to the sex battery.

Jenny: Too close to the sex battery. That could have a serious impact. Yeah, sure, sure, sure.

Rishi: Right. Xander gets through the vines. He actually gets to the door of um, Riley's bedroom.

Jenny: Right, right.

Rishi: And then just as he tries to open it, then the spell dissipates. All the energy goes back in the house and they eject Xander and they also throw Anya off the balcony.

Jenny: Oh yeah. Ooof!

Rishi: It's too bad she's not a demon because that looks like that would hurt a non-demon.

Jenny: Yeah. Thank God she landed kind of on the couch.

Rishi: Yeah. But like also again, kind of like neck first.

Jenny: Yeah. But she's fine. She's tough.

Rishi: She's alright.

Jenny: Thank God. Thank God she's okay. Then... Oh God. Okay. So Xander gets like, kind of sucked into the bathroom and he's like drowning in the tub. She busts up there, pulls him out, does that thing you really like.

Rishi: Love it.

Jenny: Then they join forces. *In partnership*, hack through a bunch of vines and open Buffy and Riley's bedroom door and then everything's fine.

Rishi: Yeah. That was all that it took. All it took was just, you know, a, "*mom!*" kind of situation.

Jenny: Um, yeah. So strange, so strange. Perhaps there are people on this planet who understand this episode better than you and I, and I mean I thought if anybody was going to understand it, it would be me. I've watched it so many times.

Rishi: *Why?* You don't— There aren't any episodes where you're like, yeah, this one, this time around I'm going to skip it?

Jenny: Depends on the watch. If I'm doing like a whole 360 degree shebang, I'll watch every single, single episode. If I'm watching like a season that I really like, sometimes I'll skip an episode. But what's wild is that like even the bad episodes of Buffy usually have some redeeming qualities. And this one has a couple, the like, the Espresso Pump moment that is like a strong, heavily giffed— Uh, like that's like a classic moment from the series. But little else. Little else going on here.

Rishi: You know what else is wild?

Jenny: What's that?

Rishi: The things, and where they are.

Jenny: [laughs] Help! There's just no way out of this. It's [clears throat]— So... Oh, we would be fools if we didn't let everybody know what you noticed in the vine hacking scene, which is that while Xander and Anya are moving through the vines, you see a human arm, some prop person pulling a vine. It just like sticks in on the left side of the screen and then pulls back out pretty early on.

Rishi: Yeah. Anya gets, gets ensnared by a vine controlled by a person, clearly visible.

Jenny: Yeah.

Rishi: What, what's the Initiative doing, by the way? You know, zombie Graham suddenly is fine when he gets down to the basement level. Because apparently all the ghost vibes stay only on the first two floors.

Jenny: Well there was no real, that basement situation I don't think existed. I think that was built after the time of Lowell children's home. So there was no repression energy gathering down below decks.

Rishi: Okay, okay.

Jenny: That's my interpretation.

Rishi: Only metaphorically down below decks. Alright.

Jenny: Yeah. And they're kind of like, they're like kind of a, a serpent without a head right now because Maggie Walsh is dead. Adam's on the loose and they're still just kinda trying to like, get their act together. Um, in the absence of her leadership.

Rishi: So Forest and Graham get down there. Graham is recombobulated—

Jenny: Yes, that's the technical term.

Rishi: And uh, and then they do a great job of doing nothing to help whatsoever.

Jenny: [laughter] True. I think maybe hauntings and malignant spiritual presences are less their thing than like straight up demon activity.

Rishi: Yeah, yeah. But maybe then they should change their name from the Initiative to, Sometimes We'll Chime In.

Jenny: But if we feel like it.

Rishi: Exactly.

Jenny: God and then it's almost over and we just get this like, Buffy doing like, "It's so creepy" thing. We think she's going to be like, "That we were having sex and it was powering a weird haunt battery." But no, it's just creepy that Giles was singing. Willow's still into it.

Rishi: And my question is, what happens the next time the two of them have sex in Riley's room?

Jenny: [laughs] Oh my God! That's such a good question.

Rishi: They haven't defeated anything really. They just opened the door. Like it ended, but it's not defeated.

Jenny: Maybe that's just the rest of the series. Oh my God. It's occurring to me. Remember? Something bad always happens to Buffy when she has sex.

Rishi: Yeah. This is class— I mean— As we've learned from every piece of scary pop culture—

Jenny: [gasps] When a woman engages with her own sexuality, she must be punished. And that sounds like a great place for

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

Jenny: So, it's troubling to think about what might happen if they ever have sex again. Maybe they'll never have sex again. Maybe they'll break up and make the vast majority of the viewership very happy.

Rishi: Oh my gosh. I can't believe I'm on Forest's side.

Jenny: Yeah, Forest is, yeah, I wouldn't, that's not a side I'd want to be on there. There's no good side maybe I think to the, um— Maybe if Riley wasn't around, neither side would exist and you'd be happier. A lot of people would be happier.

Rishi: War makes for strange bedfellows even when it's a war against bedfellows. I'm going to show myself out now.

Jenny: Um, yeah.

Rishi: I apologize.

Jenny: Well, what can we possibly say after that?

Rishi: I will send everybody who's listening to this a dollar in apology.

Jenny: Um, wow. Yeah. Before I run screaming from this house, um, I, it's yikes. There's only one proper thing left to do before, uh, before we start signing off. And that is, I have to kick it over to Kristin for the Sexual Tension Awards. Dear God, how will she choose?

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Kristin: Oh, hello. Welcome. Welcome to the Sexual Tension Awards. A segment that I have never done by myself before. So excited to find you here. How, how are you doing Jenny and Rishi? How are you doing on the two other ends of this Sexual Tension Awards segment? I hope you're doing well.

Uh, I heard a rumor that you did *not* mention that at the beginning of this episode we learn once and for all that Buffy and Riley do not finish at the same time, unlike some of our other favorite pairings. Uh, whose names, you know, I'll leave unmentioned. So they can just nestle into your brain on their own. Uh, I am going to get into the segment now. Uh, and despite what you might believe, I am not nominating Buffy and Riley, I am not. I refuse to, they have sex the whole episode.

I know. I don't care. My rules, my time, my segment. Back off. So without further ado, I would like to nominate for your consideration. You can vote and participate in this democracy on our Twitter account @bufferingcast. Will the award go to: Spike and Anya? So incredibly sexy in that alleyway. So incredibly sexy in The Bronze. So incredibly sexy. Hard-stop. Will it go to Graham and Buffy and Riley? Graham is *into* it. He really is.

Will it perhaps go to the students of Sunnydale and the sex wall? Uncomfortable for all of us, but you can't deny the fact that there was some serious sexual tension? And release? Sorry, I shouldn't be allowed to do these segments. Last but certainly not least is Willow and Giles. Willow and soft rock Giles, perhaps we'll call it? Willow and Giles. Remember when Giles is singing? I didn't get to talk about that either.

Holy shit. So I hope that you all have the glorious time thinking about all of that sexual tension and casting your vote. And speaking of *Giles*, we should move right along into the winners from Superstar Sexual Tension Awards. Uh, I would like to say that coming in last place, 16% of the vote, Jonathan and Riley. Coming in in third place, Jonathan and Anya, 20%. Coming in in second place, 28% of the vote are the witches who love their Jonathan collaging. And winning the Sexual Tension Award for Superstar. Are you ready? It's Jonathan and Giles. Of course it is. Come on? That calendar! We all want one, but Giles is the one who had it. And for that he gets his award. So gentlemen, your trophies are in the mail. And let's get back to Rishi and Jenny talking about this, just... This episode.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Yikes. Um, just yikes. Just, just, way to narrow it down. I don't know how you did it, but I'm really proud of you. Cool. Well. Rishi?

Rishi: Jenny.

Jenny: I cannot thank you enough. You know, friendship can be really fun. The best parts of friendship are the fun parts, I think.

Rishi: Yeah. Like when you go to a party and you only talk to the person that you went to the party with and no one else.

Jenny: Personally, I think it's a pretty solid party strategy, but—

Rishi: It's how I blow off steam. Actually I like to *throw* the party—

Jenny: [laughs] And talk to no one.

Rishi: Talk to no one.

Jenny: Stay in your room and you're like, "I am Gatsby."

Rishi: [laughs] Exactly. No, I'll come out and I'll talk to my friends and I'll be like, "This is what friendship is guys, us talking to no one else." Sorry, did I somehow throw you off your—?

Jenny: No, no, no. I know exactly where I was headed. Where I was headed is that, um, friendship isn't always just like laughs and hanging out with you and your dog. Sometimes friendship is like overcoming adversity, facing scary things, painful things, things like watching this episode. And you have met the challenge that I have brought to our friendship with, uh, with style and grace. The elegance. Uh, you look great. We're wearing the same sweater.

Rishi: It's true.

Jenny: Oops. Um, I can't thank you enough for being here, uh, on this very special day.

Rishi: Thank you for inviting me to chop through the vines of this episode with you.

Jenny: Wow. I would chop through any vines with you, my friend.

Rishi: Same.

Jenny: Um, could you please tell the people listening to this podcast where they can get more of you?

Rishi: If you'd like to hear me talking about Mrs. Landingham some more, um, I have a whole West Wing podcast called the West Wing Weekly and you can find it at thewestwingweekly.com and other places if you look for the words West Wing Weekly. Um, I'm on Twitter and Instagram @RishiHirway and I also have a podcast called Song Exploder. That's about music.

Jenny: Your podcasts rock.

Rishi: Thank you.

Jenny: You're welcome. In my experience, your podcasts are hot.

Rishi: [laughs] Well, there, there is a lot of guitar playing and singing that happens, especially on Song Exploder. So—

Jenny: Oh, my biggest regret! Um, great. Well the time has come for me to tell you every, all the yous, not just you, Rishi, but also you're included here. I'm Jenny Owen Youngs—

Rishi: Oh. Okay. That makes so much more sense.

Jenny: And, um, when I'm not making Rishi do stuff that he doesn't want to do, I am writing and recording songs. You can learn more about me and hear some of those songs at jennyowenyoungs.com/buffering. You can give me a shout on Twitter @JennyOwenYoungs. Buffering the Vampire Slayer is on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @bufferingcast. You can always email us at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. If you like what we do. Oh my gosh. And you just want to be nice to us. Um, you know what rocks? Leaving reviews on iTunes or wherever you listen to podcasts because it helps other people find this podcast and who doesn't want to help other people find the thing that they love.

I think you do. Furthermore, you can join us on Patreon at patreon.com/bufferingcast. We have a beautiful community over there. It is so fun. Um, there's all kinds of, uh, hot hot rewards and stuff that you can access slash get, by joining us, including, uh, advanced downloads of the MP3s of all of our songs. Access to a Patreon only Facebook group and loads and loads and loads more.

Furthermore, you can, if you wish, ensconce your body in Buffering the Vampire Slayer merchandise by going to bufferingthevampireslayer.com, clicking on shop and perusing our many, many, many, many, many, many, many thrilling goods. Um, we also have, um, mugs, socks, vinyl, CDs, enamel pins, all manner of things. It's really, it's great over there and it's all stuff that you can, uh, touch with your hands and um, cradle, uh—

Rishi: Or with your feet. I put, I was wearing my buffering socks yesterday.

Jenny: That means a lot to me. Thank you for wearing the buffering socks.

Rishi: Yeah. The turquoise was the perfect, uh, little splash of color for the rest of my outfit.

Jenny: Wow. Um, I feel like that is another beautiful metaphor for a friendship. Oh my gosh. Thank you for being here. Thank you all for listening and the time has come, um, for us to do the thing at the end.

Rishi: Okay.

Jenny: Are you ready?

Rishi: I'm ready.

Jenny: 'til next time.

[both howl] Awoo!

[Jenny performing "Where the Wild Things Are," off the album "Songs from Season Four" by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

Never you mind what I did today

Never you mind what I did today

None of your business, look away

(Never you mind what I did today)

I keep hearing bout the stuff I missed

Spin the evil bottle and ghosty kids

But where was I? Well I plead the fifth

(Never mind why I was oblivious)

They say there was some paranormal

Melee over at Lowell

Sex-based?! I can't confirm, but I can't deny

Cause I been occupied

Never you mind what I did today

My whereabouts? Well I couldn't say

Why are you so interested anyway?

(Never you mind what I did today)

Slay life, always with the action

Hey what rhymes with "poltergasm"?

And why does the wall make you have 'em?!

Never you mind what I did today

Never you mind what I did today

It's none of your business anyway

(Never you mind what I did today)

Can't a girl have a little privacy?

I'd prefer to take it to my grave, okay?

...But have you ever been a human battery?

(Never you mind what I did today)

They say there was some paranormal

Melee over at Lowell

Sex-based?! I can't confirm, but I can't deny

Cause I been occupied

I been occupied

You're asking where was I

Just you never mind

Hallelujah, I was occupied

