

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Christmas Spirit"

by
Lee A. Chrimes

TEASER

FADE IN:

1

EXT. CLEVELAND - CITY CENTRE. EVENING.

1

To the tune of 'Christmas In Heaven' by Monty Python. An overhead shot, panning down to look over the city as a light snow fall patterns the streets with little white flakes.

We're looking over towards the main shopping mall as the streets fill up with happy shoppers, hugging each other for warmth in the snow.

We sink to street level and start to walk forward, couples and families passing by either side of us until we get to a sweet little scene - ANDREW and JODY, side by side, looking up through a shop window at a giant cardboard standee of Scott Bakula as *Enterprise's* Captain Archer. Andrew has a pair of big grey earmuffs on against the cold.

ANDREW

Magnificent..

JODY

Yeah, it's getting a lot better.

ANDREW

So heroic..

JODY

Plus, Jolene Blalock does have a damn good body. For a Vulcan.

ANDREW

(sighs)

Well, we'd best be getting on. I've got to get presents for..

(reads list in hand)

Xander, Buffy, Willow, Dawn and Anya.

JODY

No Kennedy?

ANDREW

I'm thinking of getting her and Willow something together. Kennedy kinda scares me, so maybe I should keep contact down to a minimum in case she gets into a bad mood and annihilates me.

JODY

You're the only guy I know who can use the word 'annihilate' in everyday conversation, you know..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW
It's a gift.

JODY
You're kind of a geek. But I knew
that.

Andrew looks back up at the standee and salutes. Jody
chuckles as the two walk away.

2 EXT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE. EVENING. 2

Establish shot. Buffy's house is wearing a few bits of
Christmas decoration, modest compared to the huge, freakish
light show of decoration next door's place is wearing.

3 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - FRONT ROOM. EVENING. 3

Buffy looks out through one of the front windows towards next
door's illuminations. Various shades of bright light flash on
and off, lighting up the whole lounge. Xander is sat on the
sofa, half-watching the TV.

BUFFY
Maybe they're trying to signal to
aliens or something?

XANDER
You think? I thought it was
actually quite subtle compared to
Old Man Henriksen's holographic
Halloween display from a few years
ago.

BUFFY
(laughs)
Oh yeah, the ones I tried to fight
that night..

XANDER
I never would have thought watching
you repeatedly try to stake a
hologram would be so entertaining.
That ranks as one of the Top Five
Most Blonde things you've ever
done, you know.

BUFFY
A girl's gotta have goals.

There is a knock at the door. They exchange a 'Are you
expecting anyone?' Look before Buffy moves to answer it.

She opens it to find the breathless form of RILEY FINN stood
in the doorframe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RILEY
Buffy.

BUFFY
Riley?

A moment of stillness as they both just stare at each other for a real long time.

BUFFY (cont'd)
What are you...?

RILEY
Please, Buffy. Can I come in?

BUFFY
(beat)
Uh... yeah.

Riley hurries inside and heads for the sofa, obviously tired. Xander gets up and casts a wary eye between him and Buffy.

RILEY
Sorry for not giving you a heads up about this.

BUFFY
No big. It's not like I'm not used to random people showing up at my house in trouble, anyway.

XANDER
What's with the whole A-Team routine this time?

There is a long beat, Riley not looking at either of them before he speaks again.

RILEY
I killed my wife.

Buffy and Xander exchange a shocked look. Then we focus on Riley's face before we...

BLACK OUT.

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - FRONT ROOM. EVENING.

4

Riley nods as Xander hands him a mug of coffee and sits down opposite him. Once upon a time Xander thought a lot of Riley, but his loyalty to Buffy means he's cautious with him now, after Riley's disappearing act a few years back.

Buffy stands, arms crossed, wanting to get to the bottom of this so she can get back upstairs to Jackson.

BUFFY

So start talking. I'm sure there's a lot we've got to catch up on.

RILEY

Buffy, I-

BUFFY

(interrupts)

No, Riley, save it. We already went over all the 'you running off to fight demons' thing when you showed up in Sunnydale with your now dead wife in tow. What we need to hear now is just what the hell is going on!

XANDER

Yeah, it's quite a revelation you've hit us with here, big guy..

RILEY

I know, and I'm sorry. I still don't know what to make of it all myself, everything's been happening so damn fast..

BUFFY

Pick it up from the last time I saw you.

Riley nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

5

EXT. MILITARY BASE - SOUTH AMERICA. DAY.

5

A busy base - jeeps and trucks roll past and helicopters fly overhead as we pan up to the military compound, a wire fenced enclosure with several large barracks and a bigger HQ building rising out from the middle of them. Teams of troops march past as we watch.

6

EXT. MILITARY BASE - BARRACKS. DAY.

6

We pick up Riley and two other men from his squad, JEFFERS and DIRKLEY, two other strapping young lads, walking along and chatting, all in combat fatigues and body armour.

They stop as SERGEANT APONE appears round a corner before them, and the trio salute him sharply. Apone is a well built black guy in similar combat get up.

RILEY

Good morning, sir!

APONE

At ease, men. Ready for today's patrol, Riley?

RILEY

Yes, sir! Recon suggests that a nest of the arblok demons is within striking distance. Should be a quick in, quick out mission.

JEFFERS

With all the requisite blasting and killing in between, that is.

Apone chuckles and motions to Riley.

APONE

Over here, marine, just need a quick word in your ear. You two, get over to the chopper, you'll move out soon as Riley joins you.

JEFFERS & DIRKLEY

Yes, sir!

They jog away as Apone leads Riley to a quieter corner, one arm round his shoulder.

APONE

How are things going then, Riley?

RILEY

All good so far, sir.

APONE

Great, good to hear that, son.

(beat)

Listen, I know things haven't been great for you and Sam recently, so I just wanted to make sure you weren't going out on this run for the wrong reasons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RILEY

Absolutely not, sir. My personal life has no bearing on my duty here.

(beat)

And what reasons would those be?

APONE

This is going to be a tough mission, Riley, and I'd hate to think that one of my best men was needlessly exposing himself to extra danger just to try and burn off some frustrations..

RILEY

I can promise you that is not the case, sir.

APONE

Good. Okay soldier, get over to that chopper and don't come back till that nest is gone.

RILEY

Yes, sir!

Riley salutes and jogs off. Apone watches him go, looking as though he hasn't really believed what Riley said.

7

INT. HELICOPTER - CARGO BAY. DAY.

7

We're riding with Riley and the rest of the squad in the troop compartment of the helicopter. The marines are finishing suiting up, loading weapons, applying camouflage paint and putting goggles on.

RILEY (V.O.)

My squad was heading out into the jungles on a mission to wipe out a nest of local demons - the jungles out there are swarming with demonic nests at the moment, and we were there to stop it spreading out into populated areas.

BUFFY (V.O.)

You've been doing that since you left - exactly how many demons are there out there, anyway?

RILEY (V.O.)

Lots. Trust me.

The sound of the helicopter overhead fills the scene as we watch an empty section of dense jungle. Rappel lines drop into view and Riley slides down, hopping down to the floor as five of his squad follow him.

Riley signals for them to spread out and they take up a star formation, rifles loaded as they pace forward stealthily through the undergrowth.

RILEY (V.O.)

We'd found the location of a nest
or arblok demons, tough critters
who can multiply very quickly if
left unchecked.

XANDER (V.O.)

And by 'checked' I take it you mean
'blown apart by big automatic
rifles,' right?

RILEY (V.O.)

Pretty much.

We stay on Riley as he pads forward, eyes scanning all around him for any evidence of the creatures. He stops and kneels to the floor, picking something up.

It's a grey scale, still glistening, obviously fresh from one of the demons.

Riley stands, looking round for any more tracks. We hear a loud SNAP from behind him, and he spins round, rifle ready.

Jeffers is there, arms raised, having just stepped on a particularly noisy twig. He shakes his head and shrugs, grinning. Riley rolls his eyes and turns back round.

As he gets his back to us there is a ROAR from in front of him, and we see that one of the huge, ape-like arblok demons has snuck up on him.

Riley tries to raise his rifle but the beast is too quick - a claw lashes out and knocks Riley to the ground.

We stay with him as the demon bounds past us towards Jeffers, and there is an off camera yell of pain before he goes silent, followed by a dull thud.

Riley stands and turns round, but covers his mouth in disgust as we see a pair of boots belonging to the unfortunate Jeffers in frame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RILEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
The mission didn't go according to plan. Arblok demons are fierce natural hunters, and once our cover was blown, the squad suffered heavy casualties.

Riley tears off after the demon as we hear gunfire and shouts coming from all around - things seem to have taken a turn for the worse for the squad. Riley races through the undergrowth in pursuit.

Huffing with exertion, the demon's powerfully-built body has it whipping through the jungle at high speed.

Still better than the average human after his Initiative funded improvements, Riley is able to keep up with the demon - just. He sees a shot come up and raises his rifle, firing from the hip while still running.

A bullet catches the demon, and with a howl it stumbles and rolls to a stop on the ground.

Riley catches up to the monster, lying wounded on the floor, breathing hard. He walks carefully up to it, rifle ready - even wounded, these monsters are still dangerous.

Riley aims for a clean head shot, when with a growl the demon leaps up, swats the rifle out of his hands and pins him back to the ground.

Riley struggles to keep the demon's powerful jaws from closing round his neck as it presses down on him.

BUFFY (V.O.)
Riley, while all this is very exhilarating..

9 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

9

Riley is demonstrating how he fought off the demon, a pillow substituting for it. Xander looks rapt with interest but Buffy less so.

BUFFY
When are we actually going to get to the point? You show up at my house, out of the blue, telling me that you've killed your wife, and you're here telling us about stalking monsters in the rainforest like some adolescent 'Predator' fantasy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A long beat. Xander looks like he's about to say something but decides better of it, and Riley puts the pillow back down and nods.

RILEY

Just trying to set the scene.

BUFFY

It's set. Get on with it.

10

EXT. MILITARY BASE - BARRACKS. NIGHT.

10

Riley and what's left of his squad troop slowly into frame, all looking the worse for wear - cuts, bruises, gunk over their armour, smudged cammo paint - and none of them speak as they know they've lost several comrades in battle today.

Riley takes a turn towards his quarters and walks alongside one of the large buildings until he reaches a staircase.

Heading up it to the second floor of the building, he fumbles for his keycard and swipes it in the lock.

With a merry 'bip' and a green light, the door to Riley's quarters opens. He pushes the door wide.

11

INT. MILITARY BASE - RILEY'S QUARTERS. NIGHT.

11

The medium-sized room is dark as Riley steps inside and closes the door. He stands and takes a deep breath before gently placing his keycard on the desk by the door. He reaches up and flicks the light on.

There is a scrabble of covers as two people are suddenly jolted to life by the light coming on - Riley's wife, SAM, and another marine, FELLOWES.

The colour drains from Riley's face for a moment before anger takes a hold of him. He shudders visibly, the rage swelling in his chest.

Sam holds up a hand to try and placate him, knowing that Riley looks ready to blow his stack.

SAM

Riley, wait, now hold on, this is-

RILEY

(interrupts; furious)

What the hell is going on??

SAM

We were.. I mean, I was..

Fellowes is already out of the bed and starting to get dressed, not taking his eyes off of Riley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam bows her head and then looks back up with a hostile expression.

SAM (cont'd)

Get with the program, Riley. You and I haven't been working out for a long time now. Ever since you saw that Slayer girl again, you've been somewhere else. And if you weren't going to come anywhere near me, I had to get my kicks somewhere else..

12 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

12

Buffy looks a little more sympathetic by now.

BUFFY

She really said that?

RILEY

She was right, in a way.

XANDER

What, the part about you still being hung up over Buffy?

There is an awkward silence as Xander realizes he's just put his foot in it.

XANDER (cont'd)

Uh, I suddenly have to be somewhere else very urgently. Have fun, you guys.

He gets up and hurries upstairs, leaving the two ex lovers to it.

BUFFY

So.. then what happened?

13 INT. MILITARY BASE - RILEY'S QUARTERS. NIGHT.

13

Riley takes a step across the room towards the bed, but Fellowes is one step ahead of him and races forward, grappling Riley and the two fall to the floor. Riley struggles with the man, knocking chairs and the table over as they fight.

Sam screams at the two of them to stop from the bed until Riley stands and swings his fist back, looking down at Fellowes to land another punch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a CRACK sound, and as Riley slowly turns round we see that his fist has struck Sam at an awkward angle, and as blood starts to pour from her nose, her eyes glaze over and she slumps back on the bed.

Riley, eyes wide, stumbles backwards, staring in shock at Sam's blood on his knuckles as Fellowes picks himself up and runs over to the fallen Sam.

FELLOWES

Oh god.. Sam! Sam, wake up! Sam!
Sam!

We stay on Riley as he falls into a sitting position, still dumbfounded at what he's just done. We fade away from the scene to black.

FADE TO:

14

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

14

Buffy and Riley are closer now, she has a sad look in her eyes as he finishes his story, his head bowed and his whole body slouched downwards. She reaches out a hand to touch his and he looks up, his eyes misting over as he tears up.

BUFFY

I'm so sorry.. what did you do?

RILEY

I didn't know where to go. I couldn't stay on the base, I'd have been court martialled in a heartbeat. I took off and managed to get back into the States. Sunnydale isn't what it used to be.

BUFFY

(smiles)

Yeah, the town really fell to pieces a while back. Bad neighborhood anyway.

RILEY

A little detective work got me a forwarding address for you, and I tracked you to here. And this is as far as my plan goes, I'm out of cash and out of options.

BUFFY

Well.. I don't know what I can do. I mean, fighting monsters and saving the world is no problem, but looking after wanted men?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY(cont'd)

Maybe I'd better go rent 'The Fugitive' and take notes.

RILEY

I just need a place to stay for a few days. I can get to more money but not right away, and once I get it I'll be out of the way again.

BUFFY

Is that a good idea? I mean, maybe you should contact the base, try to explain what happened..

RILEY

No good. Fellowes was never too keen on me, probably why he ended up with Sam in the first place. If I try to go back there he'll have me in a cell before I can even open my mouth.

BUFFY

Isn't there anyone else who can help?

RILEY

I've gone to the only person who can help.

A long beat before Buffy realizes he means her.

BUFFY

Oh. Uh, okay. Right. Well, we need a plan, then. We need a way to keep you undercover because-

JACKSON (O.S.)

Buffy?

Jackson's voice calls down from upstairs. Buffy winces and turns to answer him?

BUFFY

Yeah?

JACKSON (O.S.)

Oh, nothing, just making sure you were still around, it's gone quiet up here.

BUFFY

I'm just with, er, an old friend, Jackson, I'll be up in a minute.

JACKSON (O.S.)

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Buffy turns back to Riley, who isn't sure where to look.

RILEY
Jackson?

BUFFY
It is a long and increasingly
complicated story.

RILEY
With you, it'd have to be.

BUFFY
Look, I'll set you up in the spare
room up here, I've been sleeping
around all over the place just
lately, it seems.

A pause - that didn't come out right at all!

BUFFY (cont'd)
Uh, I mean, not sleeping around, I
mean, just sleeping, you know..
around.

RILEY
(smiles)
I get it, it's okay.

Buffy nods and gets up to head back upstairs to see to
Jackson, leaving Riley on the sofa.

As she gets one foot on the stairs, Riley calls out to her.

RILEY (cont'd)
Oh, and Buffy?

BUFFY
Yeah?

RILEY
Thanks. For everything.

She smiles back and heads upstairs.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

15

INT. CLEVELAND SHOPPING MALL. NIGHT.

15

Late night shoppers Andrew and Jody are still out and about, now with a few bags each full of goodies. Happy Christmas carol muzak pipes out from the speakers overhead as Jody stops outside a computer game store and looks enviously in at the consoles on display. Andrew sighs.

ANDREW

Boys and their toys..

JODY

(without looking round)

I could say the same about you and your Xena action figures.

ANDREW

Those are all collectors items!

JODY

Yeah, but collected by who?

ANDREW

By people with taste and a high amount of disposable income. Like me.

JODY

Which reminds me, how does your living arrangement work, by the way?

ANDREW

You mean at Buffy's?

JODY

Yeah, how'd you manage to wrangle staying rent free in a nice place like that? You must have pulled a few strings and scratched all the right backs for that one!

He pretends to scratch Andrew's back and tickles him a little - Andrew giggles and swats at him with one of the bags as Jody laughs.

ANDREW

No, Buffy and I, we go way back.

JODY

I bet you do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

No, I mean.. We were all involved in something pretty major a few months ago, and out of that we all kind of owe each other something.

JODY

You're making yourself sound like the Californian Mafia or something!

ANDREW

I'd rather be Yakuza. Better suits and I bet they get free manga too.

We move away from the two of them and round a corner to pick up Dawn, who is wandering along and eyeing up all the fabulous outfits in the hideously expensive designer stores. Her hands are pressed against the glass like a child in a candy store.

DAWN

They will be mine.. oh yes, they will be mine.

16

INT. CLEVELAND SHOPPING MALL - ATM MACHINES. NIGHT.

16

Dawn turns a corner and down into a small corridor which holds the toilets for this floor and a pair of plain ATM machines.

She waits while the person in front of her finishes, giving her chance to root through her bag for her wallet, and she steps up when the person moves away.

We glance over her shoulder and see a dark shadow zip past behind her - the angular walls around her leave plenty of hiding places.

Dawn spins round, having sensed something behind her. There's no-one there, so she turns back to the ATM.

Dawn yelps with shock as there is suddenly a MAN standing next to the ATM, his arm leaning over it.

MAN

Well hey there, cutie, didn't mean to scare ya.

DAWN

Uh, that's okay.

(beat)

Did you want to use the machine first?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN

Nah, I'd rather wait for you to do it.

Dawn eyes him carefully - she doesn't need Slayer Sense to know this is suspicious. She reaches out with her card but freezes as the man shifts slightly.

We see the glint of a knife blade beneath his jacket as he moves slightly, his hand ready on the handle.

ON MAN

MAN

So why don't you be a good girl and get out all the cash you can, then hand it over and walk away.

DAWN

Look, you'd better get out of here.
My sister will show up any second,
and she-

MAN #2 (O.S.)

(interrupts)

She's probably got a nice, fat bank
balance too. Sounds perfect to me.

Dawn turns again - the second man was hiding round a corner and steps out, hands crossed in front of him as he backs up his colleague.

Dawn realizes she's got nowhere to run. She could try and fight, but it's a big risk.

She starts to put her card into the ATM, but as she taps in her number her eyes shift to the mugger for a second. We hear an audible beep and the mugger glares down at her.

DAWN

Oh, silly me, I put my number in
wrong. Must be the stress. I'd
better try again.

MAN

(angry)

Don't try to play me, little girl,
we can do this the hard way if
that's what you want!

He shows a little more of the knife. Dawn tries to stay calm as she taps her number in - wrong again. She looks blankly up at the Man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAWN

Now look what I've done, if I get it wrong again, it'll take my card away!

MAN #2

Ah, come on, let's get out of here!

MAN

Quiet!

(to Dawn)

Alright, put the damn number in this time or you'll be carrying that pretty little nose around with you the rest of the day!

He leans in closer, more threatening, and Dawn uses that as the opening she was looking for to suddenly SLAM her palm into his chest, forcing the knife against his chest.

The man roars with pain and staggers backwards, but his colleague is ready and steps forward, grabbing Dawn from behind. She SCREAMS!

As her shriek echoes through the place, every single light in the area SMASHES! Shreds of glass falling to the ground.

Dawn is as shocked as everyone else but she takes advantage of the man's confusion to stamp down hard on his foot and then drive her elbow back into his chest.

He drops, winded, to the floor, and Dawn takes flight, running off screen as fast as she can. As she disappears from view, the lights come back on.

17

INT. CLEVELAND SHOPPING MALL. NIGHT.

17

Andrew and Jody are walking along, grinning at each other about something as Dawn suddenly clatters into view, slamming into Andrew and knocking him onto his back.

Jody reaches down and lifts her up as a breathless Dawn looks around frantically.

JODY

Dawnie? Hey! What's wrong?

DAWN

Muggers! Two of them, over there by the ATMs.

JODY

Come on, we'll go get security.

Jody and Dawn reach a hand down each and pull Andrew back to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

It's fine, I'm okay, I mean, I may not have an adamantium skeleton but I can take a few hits, and-

DAWN

(interrupts)

Andrew! Quiet!

ANDREW

Right, yes. Sorry.

Dawn notices that Andrew and Jody are still holding hands but they let go before she can say anything. Jody starts to head towards the security office with the others in tow.

JODY

Hey, d'you see the lights go out just then?

DAWN

Huh? Oh, yeah, yeah I did.

JODY

(grins)

I was hoping they'd stay out a bit longer so I could do a smash and grab on Gaming World over there..

Dawn swats him lightly on the arm as they carry on running.

18

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - XANDER'S ROOM. NIGHT.

18

Xander is sat on his bed, the TV is on in the background but he's actually reading a book instead. He jumps a mile as Anya steps through the door.

ANYA

Knock knock!

XANDER

Woah!

(beat)

Honey, do that before you come in, remember?

ANYA

Yes, I do remember.

She walks in and stands near the bed as Xander puts the book down.

ANYA (cont'd)

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Me? Nothing, just on standby in case Buffy needs me for anything.

ANYA

Oh, right, because she's always in need of your help.

XANDER

Anya..

ANYA

Isn't that Riley downstairs?

XANDER

It certainly is, Captain Commando appears to have gotten into a spot of bother over at Camp Demon and is currently downstairs trying to talk Buffy into covering for him.

ANYA

Covering for what?

XANDER

He says he killed his wife in one of those 'crime of passion' things that so many good TV movies are made of.

ANYA

What did she do, cheat on him or something?

XANDER

Pretty much.

ANYA

(grins)

I remember this one curse I made once, I was sent to help out this girl whose husband had been found with the girl next door, and she made me-

Xander holds a finger up to his lips to cut her off.

ANYA (cont'd)

But she-

And there's the 'shush' again. Anya rests her hands on her hips and frowns.

ANYA (cont'd)

Well, excuse me for having a life before you came along!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XANDER

Okay, change of subject. Buffy's made a token effort towards decorating, but I think it's time I took matters into my own hands. You can help.

ANYA

Help? Decorate? What are we doing, getting ready for someone's birthday?

XANDER

(smiles)

Sort of.

19 INT. WILLOW & KENNEDY'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM. NIGHT. 19

Kennedy is pulling on her jacket and grabs her house keys from the table by the door, Willow sits on the sofa with her laptop open in front of her, clattering away.

KENNEDY

So I'll be back about three, okay, Red?

WILLOW

Mmm.

KENNEDY

If you get bored, you can always come down and see me, you know that. I'll tell Mike to let you in if you show.

WILLOW

Mmm.

Kennedy pauses - is Willow listening to her at all.

KENNEDY

And so if I get eaten by pixies, I'll make sure they bring the remains home for dinner tomorrow.

WILLOW

Mm- hey, what?

Kennedy smiles and leans over to kiss Willow on the top of her head.

KENNEDY

Just checking. See you later, Red, don't stay up on that thing all night or you'll have square eyes by the time I get home!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

I'm okay, I'm just about managing to stay out of a 'Picard versus Kirk' debate with this wicca from Portland at the moment, if it turns nasty I'll run over to see you.

KENNEDY

Cool. See you soon.

WILLOW

Bye!

Kennedy lingers at the door for a second but Willow is already absorbed back in whatever chat room she's signed into, so Kennedy leaves.

We're looking over Willow's shoulder at the laptop's screen, as Willow holds down three conversations at once with people inside a standard looking Internet chat room.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Ah, multitasking. Surely the greatest of all gifts to womankind.

Suddenly, everything in the apartment goes dark.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Hey! What the.. Illuminate!

The room fades up into half light again as we see Willow has conjured a small ball of energy on the end of her finger, as though she was holding a candle.

She tuts and gets up off the sofa, heading for the kitchen. We stay in the front room as we hear the clicks of light switches, before Willow gives up and heads back.

Willow walks back into the front room but pauses with a gasp of breath as she sees someone standing there in the dark. We can only see their silhouette against the window.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Who's there? I warn you, I'm armed and very dangerous with my, er.. finger.

The figure doesn't move, and Willow shifts nervously, not sure what to do next. She opens her mouth to speak when the figure beats her to it.

FIGURE

Hey, baby.

Willow's brow creases as she recognizes the voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLOW

Tara?

The lights fade back up and there is TARA, standing before us and looking the same as the day she died, a benign smile on her face and the same bloody gunshot wound on her chest.

Willow looks shocked, lost for words as Tara sighs, obviously happy to see her again.

WILLOW (cont'd)

What are you.. why are.. but..

TARA

Ssh. I'll explain everything.
Because we really, really need to
talk.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. WILLOW & KENNEDY'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM. NIGHT. 20

Willow and Tara. Together again. But Willow isn't moving. She's still stood completely stock still, unable to say a word, the frown still on her face.

WILLOW

This.. this can't be happening. You can't be here..

TARA

I am, Willow, I am here. It's me. It's Tara.

WILLOW

You're dead! You- You're dead, and you can't come back. They wouldn't let me bring you back..

She starts to tear up and Tara steps forward, holding her arms out to Willow. Willow isn't sure what to do but steps forward, and finds that she can touch Tara, and with a grateful sob she falls into her old lover's arms, burying her face in her chest and weeping like she did the day Tara died.

TARA

Ssh, Will, please, don't cry. I don't have much time, and there's a lot I need to tell you.

WILLOW

But what? Why? What are you doing here? How can you-

Tara holds a finger to Willow's lips to quiet her, and with a nod she stays quiet to let Tara do the talking.

TARA

I had to come back to warn you. To tell you about what's coming.

WILLOW

What's coming? What do you mean?

TARA

Oh, Will, you don't know how things have gone. Since you did that magic and unlocked the potential of the world...

WILLOW

The spell to create all the Slayers?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tara nods, and Willow sits down on the sofa, shoving her laptop out of the way. Tara sits next to her as Willow runs over the spell we saw at the end of Season Seven in her mind.

TARA

It was too much, too soon, Will. It changed the balance.

WILLOW

But I thought.. I thought we needed to do that? The First kept telling us that the balance was going over to its side, that it'd be able to rule the world if we didn't stop it, and we couldn't do that anymore, and-

TARA

It lied. It lied to all of us.

WILLOW

But why?

TARA

Come on, Will, you really think the first, oldest and most evil demonic force in the entire universe is going to be a hundred percent accurate with the truth? It wanted you to do that spell.

WILLOW

It.. uh?

TARA

It knew you'd find a way to beat it somehow, and it needed to make sure that you did something so powerful, that it'd create enough energy for-

Tara pauses, and looks over her shoulder as if someone has called her.

WILLOW

Tara? What is it?

TARA

I don't have much time left now. Willow, I've got one last thing I can tell you.

WILLOW

No, no! You can't go! Not again!
(tearful)
Don't leave me again..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TARA

Ssh, it'll be alright. Willow,
listen to me, and promise me you'll
do what I ask.

WILLOW

Anything, just don't go..

TARA

The consequences are coming. And
when the time comes, someone you
care for is going to have to make a
choice, but they won't be able to
do it. Willow, it's going to be up
to you.

WILLOW

I.. I don't understand.

TARA

You will. Things are coming, things
are on their way. You have to do
everything you can to beat this
back.

WILLOW

I don't know how. Tell me, Tara.

(beat)

I miss you so much. There's so much
I didn't say to you. We should have
been forever, baby. Always.

TARA

Nothing lasts forever. This is how
it's meant to be. And you have
someone now.

WILLOW

What?

(beat)

Oh, Kennedy? She's... uh...

TARA

It's okay, Willow. You can't wait
around forever. I'm not on this
ship anymore. But you are. And I
know you'll go sailing full steam
ahead. I'll always be watching you.

WILLOW

Don't go, Tara. Please.

Tara starts to fade away, and Willow is suddenly up and
grabbing for her, but her hands swing through Tara as she
disappears into the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TARA (V.O.)
Just promise me, Will. Promise me
you'll do what I said.

WILLOW
I will.

She's gone. Willow is left in the empty apartment again,
nothing but the quiet hum of her laptop making any sound.

WILLOW (cont'd)
(quietly)
Don't leave me again..

She starts to sob, hands over her mouth.

WILLOW (cont'd)
(tearful)
Don't go.

We stay with Willow as she flops down onto the sofa, the
tears flowing freely.

21 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 21

Buffy is sat on the sofa, staring blankly at the wall. It's
all getting a bit too much for her and she doesn't have any
idea what to do next.

The telephone rings, and we see her jolt back to the real
world in the background. She gets up and heads over to it.

BUFFY
Hello?

FELLOWES (V.O)
(filtered)
Miss Buffy Summers?

BUFFY
That's me, who is this?

FELLOWES (V.O)
This is Sergeant Fellowes of the
United States Marine Corps.

Buffy pales as she recognizes the name.

FELLOWES (V.O.) (cont'd)
Miss Summers, this is a top secret
matter and I'm going to need your
full co-operation, do you
understand?

BUFFY
Yes.. yes, I understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FELLOWES (V.O.)

We believe you may be contacted, or have already been contacted by an escaped fugitive by the name of Riley Finn. Miss Summers, if Riley makes any attempt to contact you, I'm going to need you to call me immediately, and do not let him into your home, is that understood?

Riley walks out of the kitchen in the background, cup of coffee in hand, and sits down on the sofa.

BUFFY

I..

FELLOWES (V.O.)

Do you understand? He is extremely dangerous. I'm going to have some of my men over to you within the hour, but if Riley shows up before then, call me on this number.

Buffy glances over at Riley, sitting in the chair. We can only hear Buffy's side of the conversation now.

BUFFY

Okay.. okay, yes, I've got it.
(beat)
I will. Thank you.

She hangs up and sits back down, not looking at Riley properly.

RILEY

Who was it?

BUFFY

Hmm? Oh, it was, uh, Andrew.

RILEY

(raises eyebrow)
Andrew?

It clicks with Buffy what that look means.

BUFFY

Oh! Oh, god, no, Andrew's just.. well, he's just Andrew. He lives here now.

Another beat as Buffy realizes she really isn't making this sound very good at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RILEY

So.. anyone else you want to tell
me about?

He smirks, and Buffy takes a moment before she laughs and
shakes her head.

BUFFY

I think my life was already plenty
complicated without you showing up
and adding to the mix, you know!

RILEY

Yeah, sorry, I know I haven't
exactly made the attempt to stay in
touch.

BUFFY

Well, that's understandable, you
fighting in deepest darkest jungles
against big demons and all. Not
exactly great cell phone reception.

A familiar atmosphere is falling over the scene between the
two. Riley takes a sip from his coffee then looks off camera
to the left. Buffy follows his gaze.

Jackson's reached the bottom of the stairs and is looking
round, a little disorientated.

JACKSON

Oh, hey. I'm sorry. I was looking
for the bathroom and forgot which
door it was..

Buffy gets up and goes over to him.

BUFFY

It's okay, we have one downstairs
too, come on.

She walks off screen with him and reappears a few moments
later. She looks at the floor for a few moments before she
speaks.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Riley, I.. I just got a phone call.

RILEY

Yeah, I know, I was here. It was
that Andrew guy, you said.

BUFFY

No, no it wasn't. It was.. it was
your unit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Riley stops and places the mug back down on the floor.

RILEY

What did they want?

BUFFY

Well, they told me that you were dangerous and I wasn't to contact you, and they gave me a number to call..

(beat)

Riley, you should call in.

RILEY

Are you crazy? You heard what I told you, right? They think I killed Sam on purpose, that I knew she was having an affair and that I would have killed Fellowes too if I'd had the chance!

BUFFY

And would you?

RILEY

What? I..

Buffy hasn't broken her gaze - it was a serious question. Riley runs a hand through his hair and tries to compose himself before he answers.

RILEY (cont'd)

No. No, I wouldn't. Buffy, it was an accident. Sam was.. Sam was my wife. No matter what happened between us, I didn't want to kill her. It was all just a terrible accident.

Buffy doesn't look so sure anymore - something about this whole situation just doesn't feel right. She stands.

BUFFY

I'm going to head upstairs, I need to check on Jackson.

She heads for the stairs.

RILEY

He's downstairs. In the bathroom.

Buffy pauses, she turns and heads through towards the downstairs bathroom via the kitchen.

22

INT. XANDER'S ROOM. NIGHT.

22

We see Anya has half her head through the floorboards, listening in. Xander is still sitting on the bed, but this time he has a large cardboard box labelled 'Xmas Decorations' open, and he is sorting through random baubles and trinkets.

XANDER

So, do you hear anything?

ANYA

No, no I can't hear a thing. She stands, looking irritated.

ANYA (cont'd)

Stupid house, it's built too well! Why couldn't Buffy have rented some thinly papered hovel somewhere, so I can walk through the walls without feeling like I'm drowning in a great big tidal wave of fudge!

XANDER

I'm assuming that you actually know what that feels like.

ANYA

There was this girl once, and she asked me to-

XANDER

(interrupts)

And that's literally all I ever want to know about that particular story.

Xander goes back to his box as Anya paces up and down.

ANYA

Gah! I can't take this any more!

XANDER

What?

ANYA

Not being able to do anything! I can't hit that little monkey boy Andrew, I can't start making the sex with you..

XANDER

Uh, that's not really how we say it, honey..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

(not listening)

And when I do find something I
could be quite useful for, like
spying on Buffy hooking up with one
of her old boyfriends..

XANDER

They hooked up? Was there hooking?

ANYA

(still not listening)

Then I still can't even do that
right, because this stupid house
isn't made for a ghost!

She stamps her foot, or at least tries to, suddenly tearful.
Xander stands and goes to hug her, but realizes he can't and
settles for holding his arms in a loose circle around her.
She wipes away a tear and turns to look up at him.

ANYA (cont'd)

Xander, what am I going to do?

XANDER

Do? Anya, you're here. You're not
dead. That's already a good start!

ANYA

But I don't want to spend the rest
of however the heck long eternity
turns out to be like this!

XANDER

You won't. I promised, remember?
Whatever I have to do, I'll find a
way.

ANYA

(hopefully)

Would you jump off a building so
you could be a ghost too?

XANDER

Except for that.

ANYA

(angry)

See, even you give up on me sooner
or later!

She storms out of the room, through his arms and then out
through the door.

XANDER

Anya.. Anya!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She's gone. Xander sighs heavily and sits back down on the bed, before starting to sort through the decorations again.

23

INT. SHOPPING MALL SECURITY OFFICE. NIGHT.

23

Andrew, Dawn and Jody sit on three small plastic chairs in the plain security office. An empty desk and TV monitor sit to the right of the frame, and the one door in and out of the office is to the left.

A muzak version of 'Tragedy' is playing overhead, and as the trio look around, bored, Andrew half mimes the dance steps unconsciously.

DAWN

I am so dead when I get home.

JODY

What for? It's not like you're in your early teens any more.

DAWN

It's not so much that, more I promised Buffy I'd be home to help her with the Christmas decorations, which I am currently failing to do while I'm stuck in here!

JODY

You nearly got mugged, I'm sure she'll understand.

DAWN

You don't know my sister very well. She won't be angry, she'll be disappointed, and trust me, that is a million times worse. She'll say 'Oh, no, Dawnie, it's okay, I put up the tree without you,' and then she'll walk around pouting and sighing every five minutes..

Dawn gets up and walks over to the desk, looking for a buzzer or intercom or something.

JODY

Will you calm down? Anyone would think you were the one doing the mugging and not the other way round.

DAWN

(sits)

Okay, okay. Look, you guys should go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JODY

Don't be stupid, we can't just
leave you here.

DAWN

Like you said, I'm not a kid these
days. I can get home by myself
fine. No point keeping you and
Andrew out all night just for me.

JODY

You sure?

DAWN

Positive. Go.

JODY

Alright then.

Jody stands and taps Andrew on the shoulder.

ANDREW

Huh? Are we leaving?

JODY

Yeah, come on Riker, time to book.

ANDREW

Aye, sir.

Andrew hops up, nods to Dawn and leaves the room, followed by Jody. Dawn watches the two of them go with a suspicious look - there's definitely something going on there that she hasn't figured out yet.

The door closes and Dawn is left alone. Foreigner's 'Since You've Been Gone' starts to play in muzak from overhead, and Dawn sighs.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 INT. NO MAN'S LAND. NIGHT. 24

Kennedy is behind the bar as the club rock out all around her - it's a busy night, and people are grabbing glasses to pour drinks quicker than she can clean them.

She stands up, takes one look round at the heaving bar and throws her dishtowel over her shoulder, disappearing through the swing door into the staff area.

25 INT. NO MAN'S LAND - STAFF AREA. NIGHT. 25

There's a staircase leading up to the top floor and lots of empty beer crates, and one battered payphone. Kennedy fishes out some quarters from her pocket and puts some in, dialing a number.

She puts one finger in her ear to block out the thumping music in the background.

26 INT. WILLOW'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. 26

The phone rings, but the apartment is dark. We pan a little to the right and pick up Willow - fast asleep, zonked out on the couch and faintly lit by the laptop's computer screen. She looks exhausted.

27 INT. NO MAN'S LAND - STAFF AREA. NIGHT. 27

Kennedy stays on the phone for a few more moments before frowning and hanging up. She's halfway towards dialing again when her boss, a tall, beefy man named ABRAHAM, taps her on the shoulder.

ABRAHAM

Hey, Kennedy, do I pay you to make calls or serve customers? C'mon, girl, we're swamped out here and I need all hands on deck.

She nods and pats him back on the shoulder.

KENNEDY

No problem, big guy. Anything for you.

ABRAHAM

Aw shucks, now I know you're just saying that.

They share a grin as she pushes back through the swing door and heads outside.

28

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - BUFFY'S ROOM. NIGHT.

28

Jackson is sitting up on the bed, idly watching some loud action movie on the TV as Buffy knocks and walks in. She smiles and sits down on the edge of the bed.

BUFFY

Hey. So how are you doing?

JACKSON

Me? Oh, fine. I mean, I remember that I like movies, especially ones with Bruce Willis, but this one sucks.

BUFFY

Well, that's something.

JACKSON

Who's that guy downstairs?

BUFFY

Riley? Oh, he's.. he's an old friend.

JACKSON

Huh. Ex-boyfriend, right?

BUFFY

How did you..

JACKSON

Just a hunch. Was it serious?

BUFFY

For a while, you know, yeah, it was.

JACKSON

So what happens? Seems like an okay guy. Was that a military outfit he had on?

BUFFY

It was, and that's kind of what happened. He chose the corps over me, and last I saw of him he was on a helicopter to South America. Well, except for when he showed up with his wife last year, that is.

JACKSON

Ouch. Sorry.

BUFFY

Ah, no big.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jackson's attention drifts back to the TV, and Buffy watches him for a few moments before getting up and walking out again.

JACKSON
Oh, Buffy?

BUFFY
Yeah?

JACKSON
Thanks for all this, you know. It's been a little strange... with the not remembering anything at all. You, I think I must love you.

BUFFY
What?

We can see she's taken back by this comment. He moves off the bed and walks to her.

JACKSON
How could I not? This past week you've looked after me and I didn't ask you to do that. I don't know what happened but... I can feel something for you.

BUFFY
You can?

JACKSON
It's deep.
(beat)
Probably something you don't need to hear when you're working.

BUFFY
(smiles)
No problem.

JACKSON
So. You should probably go now, right? Help the helpless or something equally lame. I mean, the phrase, not the job. The job isn't lame.

BUFFY
Even with the memories, you were still a mystery.

She heads out the door and closes it behind her.

29

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

29

Buffy gets to the foot of the stairs and sees Riley suiting up again - he's fastening up the coat he wore when he arrived.

BUFFY

Hey, are you going?

RILEY

Yeah. I've been thinking about what you said, and.. Well, I don't want to drag you into all of this any more than I already have.

BUFFY

If you want to stay the night, that's fine.

RILEY

Thanks, but no. I think what I'm going to do is find my unit and hand myself in. I figure they're more likely to go easy on me if I show willing. Maybe they'll believe it was an accident.

BUFFY

Yeah, maybe.

Riley gets to the door and turns to face Buffy. It's an awkward moment - he doesn't know how he's supposed to say goodbye to her. He settles for just a nod, and then opens the door and disappears outside, where we see snow is now falling.

Buffy turns back and heads for the sofa, flopping down on it as we hear Xander coming down the stairs, decorations box in hand.

XANDER

Is he gone?

BUFFY

Again. Yes. He said he was going to turn himself in.

XANDER

Good man, that's the best thing for him. Did he see Jackson?

BUFFY

(sighs)

Yep. I wasn't sure how to explain the presence of my amnesiac sort of boyfriend, so I just didn't bother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Good call.

He sets the box down on the living room table and opens it up, Buffy sits forward with a happier look.

BUFFY

Decorating time?

XANDER

You bet, it's happy hour at Casa Summers and everyone's invited.

The two of them look around. They're the only people there.

XANDER (cont'd)

Figuratively speaking, that is.

BUFFY

Hey, if you book them, they will come.

XANDER

Or, in our case, they will come and dump their problems on you before running off again.

BUFFY

Now come on, you heard Riley as well as me, he didn't want to get-

The doorbell rings, interrupting her. Buffy and Xander share a look.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Involved..

She stands and opens it. She's greeted by Fellowes and two other military men, in similar outfits to Riley. A large black van is pulled up outside.

FELLOWES

Miss Summers? May we come in?

Buffy throws him a 'what now?' look.

30

EXT. CLEVELAND - STREET. NIGHT.

30

Andrew and Jody are walking along through the snow. Jody pauses at the entrance to one road.

JODY

I'm this way. Best split. See you tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW
Yeah, I'd like that.

JODY
I, uh... I know it's lame but I got
you something.

ANDREW
Wha... you got me...?

Jody pulls something out of his pocket. Andrew takes it and
opens the little jewelry box, revealing a silver ring.

JODY
It didn't cost much. It was like a
big not pricey thing but... see...

He shows Andrew his hand -- he's wearing the same ring.

JODY (cont'd)
It means we're together, if we both
wear it.
(beat)
I told you it was lame.

Andrew doesn't say anything. He couldn't. Clearly shocked, he
moves in and HUGS Jody.

The camera pans along the street -- A group of carol singers
come into view. They start a rendition of 'All I Want For
Christmas Is You,'

Then we're back to Andrew and Jody, their hands joined, as
they walk together. A smile on both their lips.

31 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 31

Buffy and Xander are sat on the sofa as Fellows and the two
other marines sit facing them.

FELLOWES
I'm sorry we had to meet under
these circumstance, Miss Summers.

BUFFY
Just Buffy, please.

FELLOWES
Alright, Buffy. Riley spoke about
you a lot, I always wanted to meet
you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY
(sarcastic)
Yeah, I'm just about the most
popular girl in town. So, you're
here after Riley?

FELLOWES
We spotted him a few moments ago in
the vicinity of your house, some of
my men have gone to pick him up.

XANDER
So why are you here?

FELLOWES
We wanted to check what he'd told
you.. about what happened.

BUFFY
He told us. He said he found you
sleeping with his wife and ended up
accidentally killing her.

FELLOWES
That's what I thought.. Buffy, I'm
afraid he was lying to you.

BUFFY
What?

FELLOWES
I can understand why he did it, but
I think he may well have been a
little economical with the truth..

Buffy looks less than thrilled at this news.

32 EXT. MILITARY BASE - BARRACKS. NIGHT.

32

Riley takes a turn towards his quarters and walks alongside
one of the large buildings until he reaches a staircase.
Heading up it to the second floor of the building, he fumbles
for his keycard and swipes it in the lock.

With a merry 'bip' and a green light, the door to Riley's
quarters opens. He pushes the door wide.

33 INT. MILITARY BASE - RILEY'S QUARTERS. NIGHT.

33

The medium-sized room is dark as Riley steps inside and
closes the door. He stands and takes a deep breath before
gently placing his keycard on the desk by the door.

He reaches up and flicks the light on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a scrabble of covers as two people are suddenly jolted to life by the light coming on - Riley's wife, SAM, and another marine, FELLOWES.

The colour drains from Riley's face for a moment before anger takes a hold of him. He shudders visibly, the rage swelling in his chest.

Sam holds up a hand to try and placate him, knowing that Riley looks ready to blow his stack.

SAM

Riley, wait, now hold on, this is-

RILEY

(interrupts; furious)

What the hell is going on??

SAM

We were.. I mean, I was..

Fellowes is already out of the bed and starting to get dressed, not taking his eyes off of Riley. Sam bows her head and then looks back up with a hostile expression.

This is how Riley told it so far, but this time, Riley charges to the attack first and knocks Fellowes to the ground. Filled with rage, Riley punches Fellowes again and again, with Sam screaming at him to stop.

Riley pushes the dazed Fellowes away and turns to Sam, a cold look in his eyes. Sam looks genuinely scared of him, and steps back, falling onto the bed. She holds a hand up to him.

RILEY

Sa.. Sam, why?

SAM

Riley.. I'm sorry.. I'm sorry.

Riley balls up, and then pulls out a pistol tucked within his belt. He pulls it up to Sam.

RILEY

I loved you.

SAM

Riley --

She steps towards him but the gun is FIRED. An echo of the gunshot rings through the air as Riley stares on ahead.

We stay on Sam for a brief moment, a gun wound through her heart. Then she FALLS to the ground in a motionless heap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Riley doesn't move, he can only stare on in utter disbelief.
He DROPS the gun.

FADE TO:

34

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

34

Buffy looks ashen. She let Riley convince her otherwise, but now she feels she knows the truth. Fellowes looks sympathetic.

FELLOWES

I'm sorry you had to hear that, I truly am. I know you and Riley go back a long way.

XANDER

Too far, I'd say.

FELLOWES

If you say he was looking to turn himself in, then we'll settle this in court. But I have to say, I think he'll stay on the run a while yet.

One of the marines' radios crackles, and he listens to it before nodding to Fellowes.

FELLOWES (cont'd)

Okay, we have to go. Thank you for your time, Buffy, and if Riley makes contact again, just call me.

BUFFY

I- I will.

Fellowes nods to her and Xander, then heads back outside. We hear the van outside rev its engine and speed off as Xander sits next to Buffy and puts a comforting arm round her.

XANDER

Hey. You're dwelling.

BUFFY

Am not.

XANDER

Yes, you are, there is a definite amount of dwelling going on. Riley's in trouble but it'll work out, one way or the other.

BUFFY

It's the other that scares me. Xander, why did he lie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Wouldn't you? If you needed help
and were afraid people wouldn't
believe you, would you have done
the same?

Xander gets up and heads into the kitchen, leaving Buffy
alone with her thoughts.

35 INT. SHOPPING MALL SECURITY OFFICE. NIGHT. 35

The carol singer's version of 'All I Want For Christmas Is
You' plays over the final montage of shots. We're looking
first at Dawn, standing in the office at the mall, giving a
description of the attempted mugging to the elderly security
guard on duty.

36 INT. NO MAN'S LAND. NIGHT. 36

Next, we're with Kennedy, looking lonely and miserable as the
bar is filled with thirsty punters on one side and busy bar
staff on the other.

37 INT. WILLOW'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. 37

Now we're with Willow, curled up fast asleep on the couch in
her place, tears still glistening on her cheek from the light
of her computer.

38 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN. NIGHT. 38

Xander's washing up the coffee mugs from earlier when he
notices on and holds it up for a closer look.

A plain white mug, with 'Anya's Mug!' Written on it in red
marker.

Xander smiles to himself, then looks out through the kitchen
window thoughtfully.

39 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 39

Buffy, sat on the sofa and looking pretty down, looks up at
the hitherto unnoticed naked Christmas tree in one corner of
the room, then down at the box of decorations on the table,
and then up at the clock with a sigh.

Jackson enters holding a STAR. He moves to her, setting it in
her hands. She looks right back up at him, with a SMILE.

40 EXT. CLEVELAND - STREET. NIGHT.

40

Lastly we're with Andrew and Jody. They have joined the carol singers. Their arms all wrapped round each other as they sing their song.

BLACK OUT.

END OF SHOW