

**BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**

"Only Hope"

by  
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM. DAY. 1

XANDER is sitting by a hospital bed in the quiet, peaceful room that also holds his wife, ANYA, and their new born baby. Xander looks worried, reaching across with both hands to shake Anya, who appears to be in a deep sleep.

XANDER  
(increasing panic)  
Anya? Anya! Anya, wake up! Come on,  
honey, wake up!

The baby starts CRYING, and Xander stands, wiping his hands through his hair as he grows more frantic by the second.

XANDER (cont'd)  
Anya? Anya, come on!

He tries to shake her again, but Anya won't wake up. She looks peaceful, her eyes firmly closed despite Xander's attempts to wake her.

Xander steps away from the bed, his hands covering his mouth, then he dashes to the door of the room, throwing it open and yelling into the corridor beyond.

XANDER (cont'd)  
Help!! Somebody, help me!

We cut outside to:

2 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY. 2

As Xander's frantic voice echoes down the hospital corridor towards her, BUFFY snaps her head round, alert.

BUFFY  
Xander?

With her are GILES, MAX, MARIE and SOFIA, who had all been walking away from Xander and Anya's room, and as they exchange glances Buffy takes off, sprinting back down the corridor.

She vaults past a stray patient in a wheelchair, and bounces off the wall to dodge a pair of nurses emerging from one room, reaching Xander in seconds.

3 INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM. DAY. 3

Buffy hustles into the room with Xander, looking down at Anya, her eyes widening as she twigs that something is wrong.

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The baby still cries, and Xander wrings his hands, absolutely lost, nervously looking all around. Buffy grabs hold of his shoulders, looking into his eyes.

BUFFY  
Xander, what is it? What's  
happened?  
(glances at Anya)  
Is it Anya?

XANDER  
She- she won't... She won't wake  
up, Buffy, she won't wake up, I  
tried to get her to wake up, but  
she won't...

Buffy hurries across to Anya as two NURSES rush into the room, the first leaning back out into the corridor as soon as she spots Anya.

NURSE #1  
We need a crash cart in here, stat!

BUFFY  
Hurry! You have to help her!

The second nurse gently scoops up the still-bawling baby and places her back in her cot, moving her out of the way. A DOCTOR darts into the room.

DOCTOR  
What's the problem?

XANDER  
She won't wake up!

BUFFY  
Please, you have to help her, we  
don't know what's wrong, she-

NURSE #2 (O.C.)  
No pulse.

The other nurse is at Anya's side, checking her pulse, lifting Anya's eyelids and shining her penlight into her eyes.

NURSE #2 (cont'd)  
Pupils fixed and dilated.

DOCTOR  
Alright, we don't have any crash  
carts available down here, we're  
gonna have to get her up to the ER  
straight away!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XANDER  
(horrified)  
Oh, God!!

DOCTOR  
Alright, everybody, clear out of  
the way, please.

The second nurse clanks up the handrails either side of Anya's bed, and with the help of the other nurse starts to wheel the bed out of the room.

Buffy grabs Xander and follows them out.

4 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

4

Giles and the others are standing outside as Anya's bed is wheeled into the corridor, the nurses aiming for a nearby lift.

GILES  
Oh, no... Xander? What happened?

XANDER  
(breathing rapidly)  
I don't know, we were just- just  
talking, and then she asked me  
something, and I said yes, and then  
she... then she...

BUFFY  
Never mind that now, come on!

The lift doors open, and Anya's bed is pushed inside. Buffy calls to the doctor as the doors close.

BUFFY (cont'd)  
What floor?

DOCTOR  
Next one up, the third!

Buffy breaks for the stairs, dragging Xander along, bounding up the staircase two at a time.

Sofia looks round as another nurse wheels the baby's cot out of the room.

SOFIA  
Where are you taking her?

NURSE #3  
Back to the nursery, honey, don't  
worry. You go on and follow your  
friends!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sofia looks from the stairs to the baby and back, then sprints for the staircase, quickly followed by Giles and Marie.

Max is left behind, standing alone in the corridor. He waits a beat, then sighs.

MAX

Marie was right... it never ends  
for this lot!

He starts toward the staircase, and as he reaches it, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF TEASER**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 INT. HOSPITAL - ER. DAY.

5

The emergency room doors BLAST open as Anya's bed is wheeled inside. Her bed is set alongside the main operating table, and after a count of three the doctor and the two nurses heave Anya across from the bed to the table.

They immediately start fussing around her, one nurse wheeling over a crash cart with the heart defibrillators, another preparing a syringe as the doctor opens Anya's mouth, peering down her throat and preparing to insert a breathing tube.

As the doors swing closed, Buffy and Xander appear outside, Xander out of breath from his dash up the stairs.

6 INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE ER. DAY.

6

Xander watches, his mind reeling, as the doctor charges up the shock pads and ZAPS Anya, her body jolting on the table.

A heart monitor has now been connected to her, but the monotone beep it emits tells us her heart isn't beating.

XANDER

(dazed)

She was just talking... she was right there, talking to me, and then- then she just said, she just said...

BUFFY

What? What did she say?

Xander closes his eyes, trying to suppress a sudden surge of tears.

XANDER

She said, 'I'm sorry.' Then she just lay back, and...

Xander trails off as Sofia, Giles and Marie join them.

XANDER (cont'd)

(looks round)

Where's the baby?

SOFIA

She's safe, she's being taken back to the nursery. I'll go keep an eye on her.

(CONTINUED)

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She turns to go, but Buffy lays a hand on her shoulder to stop her.

BUFFY  
Come right back. We're gonna need  
everyone here.

Sofia nods, then dashes out of view. Marie watches the scene unfolding in the ER as the doctor starts chest compressions on Anya, her hands going to her mouth before she clutches at Xander's arm.

MARIE  
Oh, goodness... Xander, are you  
alright?

XANDER  
(staring at Anya)  
She can't leave me. Not again. She  
can't. I won't let her!  
(shouts)  
I won't let her leave me again!!

Xander starts to charge towards the ER doors, but Giles grabs him and manages to hold him back.

GILES  
Xander, you have to stay calm! Let  
the doctors do their job!

XANDER  
Do their job? My wife's dying!! I  
can't just stand here and do  
nothing!

Xander shoves Giles out of the way and steps forward again, but this time Buffy steps in his path. The stern look in her eyes stops Xander dead in his tracks.

BUFFY  
Xander.

He stares back at her, his eyes flicking up to look into the ER and back at Buffy, then at last he nods and takes a single step back.

We cut from the gang watching the frantic efforts of the doctor to:

7

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM. DAY.

7

We're back inside the room Xander and Anya were in, which is now empty - except for a tiny ball of yellow light which suddenly appears in mid-air.

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In a FLASH, the light expands to form a human shape, and as it fades away, it reveals WILLOW to us. She blinks, trying to get her bearings.

WILLOW  
Whoo! Okay, teleporting, kinda bad  
for the whole balance thing...

Willow looks round, frowning as she sees that the room is empty.

WILLOW (cont'd)  
Huh, that's weird... Did I get the  
wrong room?

She steps out into the corridor.

8 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

8

Willow looks up and down the nondescript corridor, looking for any sign of Xander and the others, as Sofia comes barrelling down the staircase.

WILLOW  
Oh, Sofia! Hey!

Sofia skids to a halt and looks round, jogging over to Willow.

WILLOW (cont'd)  
What's going on? Where is  
everybody?

Sofia is tearful, and Willow can tell straight away that something has gone badly wrong.

SOFIA  
It's Anya, she-

WILLOW  
Oh, no. Where are they?

SOFIA  
Upstairs, in the ER, third floor!  
I've got to go, I've got to make  
sure the baby's okay...

Sofia turns and barrels away from Willow, who stands alone in the corridor for a beat before taking a deep breath and closing her eyes.

After a beat, she opens them again and looks around - she can't teleport here, there are too many people around!

She glances towards the lift and hurries over to it.

9

INT. HOSPITAL - ER. DAY.

9

The heart monitor is still flatlining as the doctor, propped up on the edge of the table to apply the rhythmic heart compressions to Anya, wipes sweat from his brow.

One of the nurses keeps squeezing the bag over the breathing tube in time with the compressions, as the other nurse keeps an eye on the equipment.

NURSE #2  
(off monitors)  
Still flatlined.

DOCTOR  
Ten cc's of adrenaline!

The nurse hurries to ready the syringe as the doctor glances up at the clock on the wall.

10

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE ER. DAY.

10

Xander rubs his hands together as he watches the doctor at work, transfixed. Tears are rolling down Buffy's cheek as she watches, and behind her, Giles and Marie are holding each other's hands out of instinct, not even seeming to realise.

XANDER  
She's gonna be okay. She's gonna be  
okay. She's gonna be okay.

The lift PINGS once behind them, and Willow dashes out of the elevator to join them. She throws her arms round Xander as she looks into the ER.

WILLOW  
Oh my God, Xander!

XANDER  
It's okay, Will, she's gonna be  
fine. Any second now. I've seen  
this a million times. Her heart  
gave out, but they can just zap it  
on back to life. That's how this  
works.

Inside the ER, the doctor glances up at the clock, then nods again to the nurse by the defibrillator.

He leans back as she shocks Anya again, her body jolting up and down on the table - but the heart monitor still reads flatline.

The doctor hesitates, looking at each nurse in turn.

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He looks down at Anya again, that same peaceful expression still on her face, the other nurse continuing to squeeze the air bag.

The doctor lowers his head and steps down from the table, peeling off his latex gloves.

NURSE #1  
Thirty-seven minutes since she coded, doctor.

DOCTOR  
(beat)  
Alright, that's all we can do.

Outside, Xander's jaw drops as he sees that the doctor has stopped.

He shoves the ER doors open and barges inside, heading straight for the doctor.

XANDER  
Why are you stopping? What are you doing! Get back on there! Shock her again!

DOCTOR  
(raises hands)  
Mr. Harris, I'm sorry, we've done everything we can.

XANDER  
No... No! No, you can't! Keep trying! Keep trying!

One of the nurses steps before Xander as Buffy dashes into the room as well, each woman taking an arm each and trying to pull Xander away.

Buffy can't control her tears, but manages to speak.

BUFFY  
Xander... don't...

XANDER  
(quiet)  
She can't die...  
(shouts)  
She can't die! She can't die on me again! Do something!!

The doctor looks down at Anya, then nods slightly to the other nurse, who switches off the heart monitor.

The doctor heads round the table to Xander, whose eyes are locked on the still form of Anya.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOCTOR

Mr. Harris, there's nothing more we  
can do.

XANDER

(softly)

No...

Buffy tries to pull Xander away again, but he stays firm, before a gut-wrenching SOB bursts from his mouth, and in a flood of tears he sinks to his knees.

Willow is soon in the room with him, throwing her arms round his neck and joining him, kneeling on the floor, the two of them sobbing together as Buffy steps back, staring at Anya's body.

The doctor lowers his head again, sadly quite familiar with scenes such as these. He steps over to Buffy.

DOCTOR

We just need a moment to clear  
everything away, then you can come  
back in.

Buffy nods, afraid to speak in case she starts to cry again. The doctor manages a sympathetic smile, pats her once on the shoulder and steps past her, pulling off his apron.

Buffy looks down at Xander and Willow, who are bawling their eyes out, squeezing each other for some kind of support.

We pull away from the scene as Buffy look again to Anya's body, back towards the doors where Giles stands with Marie, who is also crying, her head buried in Giles' shoulder as he holds her, his eyes closed.

Max crests the stairs at last, seeing Giles and Marie together and frowning darkly at them both.

We cut from the ER down to:

11 INT. HOSPITAL - NURSERY. DAY.

11

Sofia is looking out across an array of cots, each one holding a tiny, wriggling baby, paying close attention as the nurse from earlier gently lays Anya's baby down in one of the few empty cots.

She leaves the room and joins Sofia on the other side of the glass separating the corridor from the cots.

NURSE #3

That's an absolutely beautiful  
baby. Are you part of the family?

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CONTINUED:

SOFIA

What? Oh, ah, no, I'm just... I think I'm a close friend. I'm keeping an eye on her for now, the mother's upstairs. There were... complications.

The nurse pats Sofia sympathetically on the shoulder.

NURSE #3

It'll all work out for the best, honey. There's a higher plan at work when it comes to this sort of thing, all we are is passengers, along for the ride.

Sofia manages a smile but soon looks back to the baby, her heart breaking as she watches the infant.

NURSE #3 (cont'd)

Does she have a name?

SOFIA

I don't think she does. Not yet.

NURSE #3

Well, I hope you think of one soon. It's just not right, beautiful baby like that with no name of her own!

The nurse walks away, leaving Sofia to her vigil over the baby. Sofia presses a hand against the glass, unable to take her eyes off the baby.

SOFIA

(quietly)

Look at you. You don't have any idea what's going on, do you...

(sighs)

I just hope you were worth it, young lady!

We leave Sofia watching the baby, and cut away to:

12

INT. CLEVELAND PD - JACKSON'S OFFICE. DAY.

12

JACKSON is on his cell phone, waiting for the other person to connect.

After a few moment, he gives up, snapping the phone closed and tucking it away.

He looks up as his office door opens, and DAN steps in, holding two cups of coffee and a bag of donuts. He grins broadly down at his partner.

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DAN

Come on, Jacks, we're about to head out! You're gonna miss all the action!

Jackson gives Dan a wry smile as he stands, reaching for his jacket.

JACKSON

'Action'? We're going on a stakeout, Dan, you and I both know that's just going to mean fifteen hours spent sitting in a car, with me listening to how bad your jokes get as the day rolls on.

DAN

Are you kidding? We are guaranteed some action tonight, old school 'A Team' style!

Jackson raises an eyebrow at him as he steps past Dan, out of his office.

13 INT. CLEVELAND PD - CORRIDOR. CONTINUOUS.

13

We pick the partners up again as they head away from Jackson's office.

JACKSON

Last time you said that, we spent all night watching an empty warehouse, waiting for some dealers to show up who were busy getting arrested three states away!

DAN

So I'm not always right, big deal!

Jackson throws a grin at him as Dan sips his coffee and passes the second cup to Jackson.

JACKSON

Can I get that last statement in writing?

DAN

We're guaranteed a bust tonight. I'd put money on it. And then, if we're lucky, we may be able to shoot at some bad guys. With guns.  
(chuckles)  
Being a cop is cool.

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JACKSON

Being a cop means knowing you only  
use your gun when you have to, and  
you know that.

Jackson pauses for a moment - possibly remembering a time  
when he was forced to use his guns, and the trouble it caused  
afterwards. Dan notices his thoughtful look and nudges him.

DAN

Okay, change of subject. Did you  
speak to Buffy yet?

JACKSON

No, her cell phone's off, I can't  
reach her. I hope she's okay.

DAN

I'm sure she's just fine. How are  
things going with you two anyway?

Jackson chooses his words carefully as the two step into a  
waiting elevator.

14

INT. CLEVELAND PD - UNDERGROUND CAR PARK. DAY.

14

The lift doors open to reveal the two cops again, and they  
continue their conversation as they exit the lift.

DAN

Seriously? You think things might  
be back on between you?

JACKSON

I don't know... maybe. I don't want  
to push it right now, things are  
still just rolling along, nice and  
easy.

DAN

Nice and easy?

JACKSON

Nice and easy.

DAN

(laughs)

That's not your style and you know  
it! Hey, anyway, how's your sister?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON

Shanna? Better. She still hasn't said much about where she's been, but when we get a break tonight I'm going to go meet her for a quick coffee, see if she's more active by night or something.

DAN

Sounds good.

Dan sips his coffee as they reach Jackson's car, and Jackson smirks as he takes his keys from his pocket.

DAN (cont'd)

What?

JACKSON

No.

DAN

'No' what?

JACKSON

No, I'm not going to introduce you to her.

DAN

(innocently)

To who?

Jackson smirks again as they get into the car.

15 INT. JACKSON'S CAR. CONTINUOUS.

15

Jackson fastens his seat belt as Dan gets in.

JACKSON

To Shanna, that's what you were going to ask.

DAN

(offended)

I was not!

(beat)

Well, okay, maybe I was thinking about it, but-

JACKSON

Still no.

DAN

Oh, come on! We never meet any chicks any more, what harm could it do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON

(counts off on fingers)

One, she's my sister. Two, she's my sister, and three, she's my sister.

Dan chuckles, sipping his coffee as Jackson starts the car and starts to drive away.

DAN

You're a hard, cold man sometimes, you know that?

JACKSON

Hey, I'm just looking out for both of you. I wouldn't wish Shanna on anybody I liked, and I wouldn't wish you on anybody I liked either...

Jackson grins and flicks on the radio, and from that, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT ONE**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE ER. DAY.

16

Everyone except Xander is standing outside the ER, the downcast looks on their faces saying it all. Sofia is the first to speak after several moments.

SOFIA  
(cautious)  
At least the baby's okay.

Willow nods, SNIFFING loudly as she wipes away the wetness round her eyes.

WILLOW  
Yeah, that's something.

BUFFY  
I can't believe it... After everything he went through to get her back...

Willow glances over her shoulder, back into the ER itself.

WILLOW  
I don't know what we're going to do, Buffy. I really, really don't.

GILES  
What Xander needs right now is for all of us to be strong for him. Heaven knows, he'll be feeling weak right now. We need to support him, help him get through this.  
(to Buffy)  
The same way we all did when you lost your mother, Buffy.

Buffy nods, glancing inside the ER briefly.

BUFFY  
Yeah. But knowing how that felt, remembering how it just left a hole inside me that nothing could fill up again...  
(looks into ER)  
... this isn't going to be easy. For him or any of us.

The others all look into the ER, and we cut across to:

17

INT. HOSPITAL - ER. DAY.

17

Xander sits at the edge of the operating table, the ER now largely empty, the monitors and other devices tidied away against the walls.

'Gorecki' by Lamb plays on the soundtrack. Anya's body lies on the table, a sheet draped across her up to her neck, the breathing tube removed.

Xander just stares at her, not moving, trying to find something to say.

He reaches out and takes hold of one of her hands, squeezing it tightly, working his fingers across her skin.

XANDER

I can't believe you're gone again.

(beat)

That's the only thing I can think of to say.

He lowers his head for several moments, trying to focus his thoughts. When he looks back up, there's a tear in his eye.

XANDER (cont'd)

I thought this was it for us, you know? We'd made it. We'd survived everything. The end of the world a few times over, losing you and getting you back, making that deal to get your body back again, blowing my first chance to get married to you...

(beat)

I really thought there wasn't anything else the world had left to throw at us. When I found out we were gonna have a baby, that... that just made it all worth it. You know? It was like, after everything bad we got through, all the troubles, the fights, the bad guys, all of that, we had our reward. The world looked down on us at last and said 'here, take this. You earned it.'

Xander gently lays her hand back down and stands, moving closer to her head. He strokes her face tenderly, a faint smile on his lips, not speaking for several moments.

XANDER (cont'd)

Our baby's never going to have to go through what we went through. I'm going to make sure of that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER(cont'd)

Nothing is ever going to hurt her,  
or take her away, or make her lose  
the things and the people that she  
loves. Not ever.

Determination crosses Xander's face, and for a moment he  
almost loses it again, coming close to tears, but with a  
shudder he fights the emotion back down.

He leans down and kisses her once on the forehead, standing  
back and smiling down at her.

XANDER (cont'd)

I promise.

He takes a step back, taking a deep breath.

XANDER (cont'd)

I don't want to say goodbye,  
because I know that wherever you  
are right now, you're probably  
looking down on me, ready with some  
wise ass remark, completely ruining  
my attempt at a heartfelt speech,  
so...

He trails off. He looks down at her body one last time.  
Sunlight is filtering in from the windows high overhead,  
making the white sheets she's wrapped in glow softly.

Xander opens his mouth to speak again, but with a sad smile  
and a shake of his head, realises there are no words he could  
ever use that would sum up what he's feeling.

After another beat, he turns and walks slowly out of the ER.

We pull away from the scene as he pushes the doors open and  
exits, and as we look down on Anya, we dissolve to:

18 INT. HOSPITAL - FAMILY ROOM. DAY.

18

The family room is a quieter, warmly furnished room, away  
from the bustle of the main wards of the hospital. Buffy and  
the others are seated on the various large, comfy chairs  
inside.

Buffy stands as Xander opens the door and shuffles inside,  
sitting slowly down on the nearest empty chair.

Nobody speaks for several moments, until Xander is the one to  
break the silence.

XANDER

Could somebody please say  
something? Because, I really,  
really don't want to sit here in  
silence right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The others exchange glances - Sofia is the first to speak.

SOFIA  
The baby's fine.

XANDER  
(nods)  
Good.

SOFIA  
I just went to check on her over in the nursery again, the nurse there told me she's perfectly healthy, so as soon as you're ready to go and see her...

Sofia trails off. Xander nods, managing a brief smile at her. Buffy reaches out to take his hand.

XANDER  
I don't really know what's supposed to happen now, so if anybody has any ideas, I'd love to hear them.

BUFFY  
We should get you home. Some of us can stay here with the baby, they'll want to keep her overnight to run a few tests, that kind of thing.

WILLOW  
I'll stay.

SOFIA  
And me.

Buffy glances at Sofia, surprised that she'd volunteer for such a personal job, but Xander nods at Sofia again.

SOFIA (cont'd)  
(gentle humour)  
I mean, I'm still jet lagged from the flight anyway, so I won't be getting sleepy for a long while yet!

Giles stands, straightening his clothes out.

GILES  
I think sleep is an excellent idea. I'll drive you and Buffy home, Xander, we can come back first thing in the morning for the baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XANDER

Okay. All good. But what about...  
(beat; swallows)  
What about Anya? What happens to  
her?

The others look at each other, as if trying to decide who  
should tell him.

GILES

They'll take her to the mortuary  
and keep her there until she's  
ready to be moved for the funeral  
service. Don't worry about any of  
that now, the Council will take  
care of it.

Max raises a wry eyebrow at Giles' remark, but no-one's  
watching him.

GILES (cont'd)

We have funds specifically for this  
sort of thing, and I'll be damned  
if being Head Watcher doesn't give  
me any say over how and where I can  
spend my money!

Marie stands as well, noticeably close to Giles.

MARIE

Come on, Rupert, let's start making  
a few calls, the sooner we set the  
wheels in motion on this, the  
better.

Giles nods, and the two exit the room. Max waits a beat, then  
stands and follows them. Buffy motions to Sofia.

BUFFY

Let's grab some drinks, okay?

Sofia nods, understanding that Willow and Xander need a  
moment alone together, and she and Buffy make their way out  
of the room too.

Willow moves closer to Xander, taking one of his hands in  
both of hers, looking over to him with as good a smile as she  
can muster.

WILLOW

What did you say to her?

XANDER

(shakes head)  
I couldn't think of much.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

XANDER(cont'd)

I just told her that I'd make sure  
I'd always take care of the baby,  
no matter what happened. I owe her  
that much.

Willow rests her head on Xander's shoulder.

XANDER (cont'd)

I don't know how you did it.

WILLOW

Did what?

XANDER

When you lost Tara, and then  
Kennedy too. I don't know how you  
made it through each day.

WILLOW

Well, I did sort of go evil at  
first, that helped pass some time.

Xander manages a short, mirthless laugh.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Sorry. Inappropriate humour.

XANDER

Don't stop. I don't want anything  
to change because of this. It's all  
that's holding me together right  
now.

WILLOW

It was one hour at a time.

XANDER

What?

WILLOW

You asked me how I made it after  
losing Tara and Kennedy, that's the  
answer. Every hour I got through  
was like a small victory, another  
step along I'd made on my own  
without them. It wasn't exactly a  
fast healing process, but it  
helped.

XANDER

I just... I don't know what I'm  
going to do, Will.

WILLOW

None of us do! You hadn't noticed  
that by now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

XANDER

I'm a father now. That hasn't even had chance to sink in yet. I've lost my wife but I've gained a daughter... Is that meant to be a fair trade? Is that what Anya would have wanted?

WILLOW

She'd have wanted you to carry on, no matter what. That was what she loved about you, Xander. You saw past so many things about her and loved who she really was, deep down, past all the things that made her become a vengeance demon, past all the terrible things she'd done to people.

XANDER

'Rewarding pain with more pain,' that's what she always used to say about it.

Willow sits up, looking into Xander's eyes.

WILLOW

This isn't about pain. This should be about love. You've got your baby now, she's what's important.

Xander nods slowly, coming close to tears again.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Anya would have wanted you to love that baby as much as you loved her. That's all she could ever have asked of you. Do you think you can do that?

Xander thinks for a long moment, before looking up at Willow with a hopeful smile at last.

XANDER

What the hell. I'll give it a shot.

Willow grins and hugs him tightly again. We cut from the two of them, holding each other, to:

19 INT. JACKSON'S CAR. EARLY EVENING.

19

The sun is starting to set now as we pan down to look into Jackson's car, parked across the street from a large, unmarked building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We appear to be inside some kind of industrial district, the streets around us peppered with similar big, plain buildings, a train track visible just beyond those.

Jackson looks bored as all hell as Dan munches contentedly on a donut, offering one to Jackson.

DAN  
Sugar frosted?

JACKSON  
No thanks.

DAN  
Come on, Jacks, you've gotta try one of these things! I found this little bakery down a back alley off Waylon Street, and I don't know what he puts in these things, but man! They are the greatest pieces of pastry I have ever had the fortune to put into my mouth.

Jackson looks over at Dan, and wordlessly reaches out a hand to pat Dan's belly, before turning to look back out through the window.

JACKSON  
That's why I don't eat those things.

DAN  
Oh, what, you're saying I'm fat now, too?  
(mock tears)  
And I thought you said you didn't care how I looked on the outside...

Jackson chuckles and sips from a fresh cup of brand name coffee sitting on the car's dashboard.

JACKSON  
I could give you a hundred reasons why shovelling that processed crap down your throat is bad news, but that's not really the point. End result is the same - padding.

DAN  
Hey, I know cops who took a bullet, and that 'padding' saved their lives!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACKSON

(wry)

And here was me thinking not  
getting shot was the best way to  
survive a bullet...

DAN

Come on, Jacks. Dance with the  
devil in the pale moonlight for  
once in your life.

He shakes the bag in Jackson's direction again, and with a  
weary sigh, Jackson reaches in, lifting out a donut covered  
with frosting.

He winds the window down, shakes most of the frosting off,  
then finally takes a bite. He chews for a moment before  
turning to Dan, nodding.

JACKSON

Okay, point taken. These do indeed  
kick ass.

DAN

(smiles)

As if you could ever doubt me!

The car's CB radio crackles to life, and Jackson grabs it.

RADIO

Car two, come in, over?

JACKSON

Jackson here, go ahead.

RADIO

All quiet over here, anything over  
by you and the Marshmallow Man?

DAN

(offended)

Hey! I heard that, Kochanski!

JACKSON

(smirks)

No, still quiet. What are we  
expecting tonight, anyway? Just  
Lemar and his boys, or a little  
extra something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RADIO

No-one's sure. We think we're about to see a major deal go down tonight, maybe as much as fifty k's, but until the dealers step out of the car and shake hands we won't know much more.

JACKSON

Copy that. Jackson out.

Jackson replaces the radio receiver and stares out through the windscreen again.

DAN

Okay, now you've got your trademark 'I'm thinking about Buffy' look on.

JACKSON

(without looking round)

No, I don't.

DAN

Yeah, you do! The frown, the distant look in your eyes, the vague feelings of longing... You know, it's okay if you want to call her again. I won't tell anyone.

JACKSON

I'm not going to call Buffy when we're in the middle of a stakeout!

DAN

Why not? It might impress her.

JACKSON

Because, at any moment, something could...

Jackson trails off, spotting something up ahead. Dan picks up on it and follows his gaze.

Looking through the car windshield, we can see that a large black car has pulled to a halt some way up the street, next to what looks like a disused warehouse.

The distant booms of the bass coming from the black car's stereo can be felt even over here.

The car doors open and five black men get out, typical gangsters in their sports gear, garish jewelry and baseball caps. With a few glances up and down the street, they all head into the warehouse.

Jackson looks across at Dan, who grins back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DAN

Would the real Slim Shady please  
stand up!

Jackson reaches for the CB radio again.

JACKSON

Car one, this is Jackson, over.

RADIO

Go ahead, but I think I already  
know what you're going to say.

JACKSON

Visual sighting of one Lemar Jones  
and four of his gang, entering  
target location. Possible fifth  
suspect still inside their car,  
parked outside.

RADIO

Copy that, we've already called for  
backup.

DAN

What's the plan now?

RADIO

Sit tight, wait to see who he's  
here to meet. Lemar always likes to  
be first on the scene, so hopefully  
we won't have to wait long to find  
out whoever he's dealing with  
tonight. Reckon you boys can manage  
that without pulling a Starsky and  
Hutch and bursting in there?

JACKSON

(grins)

You must have us confused with  
somebody else, Kochanksi! Jackson  
out.

He replaces the receiver and reaches into his Jackson,  
checking that his gun is fully loaded.

DAN

So what happened to 'only using  
your gun when you need to?'

JACKSON

That's only the first half of the  
sentence.

DAN

Oh yeah? What's the rest?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Jackson looks up as he slots the magazine back into his gun with a loud CLICK.

JACKSON

Be prepared.

Dan nods, and as Jackson settles back down to keep a watchful eye on the developing scene before him, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT TWO**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE. EVENING.

20

The front door opens to Buffy and Xander, Xander heading straight for the sofa as Buffy shrugs off her jacket. ANDREW heads down the stairs to meet them, still in his cafe uniform.

ANDREW

There you are! Um, where did everybody go? I got in and there was no-one here, and no messages telling me anything, so I thought maybe you'd all had to go off and fight something, or-

XANDER

(flatly)  
Anya had the baby.

ANDREW

Oh.  
(beat; smiles)  
Oh! That's, er, great!

XANDER

Yeah, then she died.

ANDREW

(blinks)  
What?

Xander leans forward, placing his head in his hands, and a startled Andrew looks from Xander to Buffy and back.

BUFFY

It's a long story, Andrew. I'll explain everything in a little while. Can you make us some coffee?

ANDREW

Uh, yeah, sure.

Andrew hurries into the kitchen as Buffy sits down next to Xander. She pulls her shoes off and sits back, waiting for him to recover from his moment.

He looks up, tears in his eyes once again, and looks round at her.

BUFFY

For once, when I say 'I know how you feel,' it's true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Xander nods, leaning back on the sofa as far as he can. He stares up at the ceiling, and Buffy gives his hand a squeeze.

                  BUFFY (cont'd)  
I'm gonna go and check in with  
Willow, okay?

                  XANDER  
Okay.

Buffy stands and heads for the kitchen, leaving us looking down on Xander. As we slowly push in on him, we start to hear Giles' voice.

                  GILES (V.O.)  
Yes, I'm afraid there's been a  
death.  
                  (beat)  
No, not the Slayer, one of her  
close friends. I need to arrange a  
funeral service and burial straight  
away.  
                  (beat)  
I'm fully aware of the regulations  
on this matter, Henry, I helped  
draw the damn things up! Look, we  
need to take care of this quickly  
and efficiently. The poor man's  
suffered enough already, I want him  
to have some peace of mind in  
knowing his wife had the best  
possible send off.  
                  (beat)  
Thank you, Henry. I look forward to  
hearing from you.

As we hear the CLICK of Giles replacing the phone receiver, we cut to:

21           INT. GILES' APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM. EVENING.

21

Marie watches as Giles hangs up, before he starts leafing through a small address book.

                  MARIE  
What's next?

                  GILES  
Next, I call Bill Bryant in  
Accounts and make sure that he gets  
the instructions off me personally.  
If I left this to Henry, he'd-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

(smiles)

He'd forget half the details,  
wouldn't he?

The two share a smile - and it's been a while since they did so. They both pick up on the moment - which is quickly broken as Max paces back into the room, lazily eating an apple.

MAX

So you're going to arrange for the whole funeral, burial and everything else, Rupert? Out of the Council's wallet?

GILES

(already irritated)

Of course. When Kennedy was murdered, I did the same. This is no different, and no less tragic.

MARIE

(cross)

Max, I must say, I'm noticing an alarming lack of sympathy coming from you over all this! A good friend of ours just lost his wife, the least you could do is show her a little respect!

MAX

I'm sorry if I'm not as affected by this as the rest of you, but I barely know any of these people! Yes, it's a damn shame she died, and I feel bad for Xander about it, but I'm not exactly close to anyone around here!

Max eyes Marie, daring her to answer his last remark, but when she just glares at him, he takes the hint, standing and entering the spare bedroom.

Once his door is closed, Marie makes an irritated grunt and sits back in her chair, arms folded.

GILES

If you'll allow me to speak freely, I really haven't the faintest idea what you see in that arrogant bastard.

MARIE

(shocked)

Giles!!

(beat; sighs)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIE(cont'd)

You know, I'm starting to think more and more that I made a terrible mistake with all of this...

GILES

Only recently?

She throws him an annoyed glare, and Giles wisely decides not to push it.

MARIE

I'll admit, when we first... when things first developed, I should say, it took me by surprise. I was supposed to be watching him, not getting involved with him, as you made a point of reminding me on a daily basis!

Giles looks up at her. He doesn't openly confirm or deny what she just said, but his expression says it all.

MARIE (cont'd)

And the last few days... I'm not sure, he's different, somehow. Brash, cocky, swaggering about the place like he knows something we don't.

GILES

While this may make me sound quite suspicious, I've found that when somebody acts like that, it's usually because they do know something you don't.

Giles finds the number he was looking for and dials the number into his phone. Marie falls quiet, deep in thought.

GILES (cont'd)

Hello? Bill? Hello, it's Rupert.

(beat)

Rupert Giles?

(beat; smiles)

Yes, good to hear you too, I must have been away too long! Listen, Bill, I've just made an arrangement with Henry but I wanted to confirm the details with you as well, you know what he's like, and- what's that?

(beat; listens)

They have? Oh, well, that's...

(smiles)

That's bloody marvellous.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GILES(cont'd)

Yes, yes, I'll call you back about  
it in a while. Good bye.

He hangs up, and Marie sits up, intrigued by Giles' suddenly  
bright expression.

MARIE

What is it?

GILES

The rest of the Council Board,  
they've approve my proposal!

MARIE

Which one? The one about organising  
the Slayer retrieval teams better,  
or...

GILES

Better. They've given the green  
light to start work on the Academy.

MARIE

(pleased)

Rupert! That's tremendous news!

GILES

(also happy)

Yes, I suppose it is...

Giles' smile suddenly fades. Today isn't exactly a day to  
celebrate much of anything.

GILES (cont'd)

Still. There are other things to  
sort out first. That can wait.

Marie nods, leaving Giles to make some more calls as we cut  
back to:

22

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSERY. NIGHT.

22

There is a small waiting area just past the main nursery  
room, and it is here that we find Willow and Sofia.

Sofia has finally succumbed to her jetlag, and is curled up,  
fast asleep, across one of the long sofas in the room, dozing  
as Willow lays a blanket across her.

Willow sits in one of the other chairs, a bottle of water in  
her hand as she watches Sofia, thoughtful.

Another thought hits her, and she looks up and around, making  
sure that there's no-one around.

She looks back down at Sofia, making sure she's fast asleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW  
I'll be right back.

She stands, closes her eyes - and in a moment, she's consumed by the same YELLOW GLOW that spirited her away before.

The glow fades, taking Willow with it, leaving Sofia in the room by herself.

23

EXT. CIRCLE - OUTSIDE VILLAGE. DAY.

23

Willow makes her way through the tall grass at the edge of the jungle, over towards the still-ruined village that used to house the Circle members.

She pauses, surveying the blackened and heavily damaged buildings with a sad look on her face, when she hears something and looks round. There's nobody else around - no snake demons prowling around, thankfully, and the huge volcano in the distance is being well behaved, staying silent.

Willow starts towards the buildings again, but pauses when she hears something again - and it sounds like a child's laughter!

She looks round carefully, squinting - and makes out something moving in the grass up ahead!

Willow tenses, hunching down and slowly starting to creep forward, her fists clenched. Everything is silent around her, the only noise coming from a breeze as it rattles through the tree branches and blows across the tall, chest-high grass all around her.

Willow stops and stands up, not sure whether there's actually anything there or not...

... and then TATTLES leaps out at her!

TATTLES  
Boo!

Willow YELLS in alarm and stumbles backwards, landing in a heap on the floor. She looks up in disbelief as Tattles giggles and skips away.

Willow scrambles to her feet, frantic.

WILLOW  
Wait! Tattles? Tattles!!

She spots the small, brown-haired girl skipping merrily back towards the village, and chases off after her.

As Willow pursues her, we cut back to:

24

INT. JACKSON'S CAR. NIGHT.

24

Night has fallen as we rejoin Jackson and Dan on their stakeout, Dan snoring softly in the passenger seat as Jackson manages to stay alert.

Another car rolls lazily to a halt across the street, and Jackson sits up, nudging Dan to wake him up. Dan snorts, blinking blearily as he comes to.

DAN

Huh? Wha?

JACKSON

Company.

Dan squints, looking across the street at the new arrival.

The car doors of the new car, a long grey limo, open up to reveal six sharply-dressed men, one shorter than the rest with slicked back grey hair. He strides boldly into the warehouse as the other five check out the street, quickly following the shorter man inside.

Jackson's radio crackles, and he's quick to answer it.

RADIO

You see what I see, Jackson?

JACKSON

Sure do, that's Harry Boswell unless I'm very much mistaken!

DAN

The drugs baron?

JACKSON

(nods)

I'd recognise his safety measures anywhere. The guy always rides with people taller than he is, reckons that anyone taking a shot at him has got less chance of hitting if he's always obscured from view!

DAN

Attention to detail. Gotta admire that in a scumbag.

RADIO

Don't move yet, but be ready. Backup's here, waiting out of sight. You and Dan take point and move in when we give you the signal, over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON  
Copy. Jackson out.

Jackson looks over at Dan, who grins back at him.

DAN  
Showtime!

As the duo unfasten their seat belts, ready to storm in on command, we cut back to:

25 EXT. CIRCLE - OUTSIDE VILLAGE. DAY.

25

Willow, gasping for breath, comes to a halt at the base of one of the fire-blackened buildings, looking all around for Tattles.

WILLOW  
Tattles? Was that you? Where are you?

Willow takes a few steps forward, hearing Tattles' laugh again and whipping round, just in time to catch a glimpse of her disappearing between two buildings.

Willow frowns, closes her eyes and concentrates, murmuring something under her breath.

TATTLES (O.S.)  
Ow! Hey! No fair! Stop it!

Willow opens her eyes - and we see that Tattles has been literally dragged into view by an invisible force, which holds her out in the open no matter how hard she struggles against it.

Willow walks over, standing before Tattles, arms folded.

TATTLES (cont'd)  
(pouts)  
Alright, you win! No more hide and seek, okay?

Willow snaps her fingers, and Tattles is released. She takes a moment to compose herself, then races towards Willow, who crouches and opens her arms, receiving Tattles' bear hug.

TATTLES (cont'd)  
You came back! You came back!

WILLOW  
I never went away! I've been coming up here and looking for you guys whenever I've had the time! Where have you been? I thought the Caretaker-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATTLES

(scoffs)

Him? Big meanie. No good at playing hide and seek. We made him think he'd got us, all the while we were hiding out there.

She points towards the jungle, and Willow nods, beaming a relieved smile.

WILLOW

So Trinkets and Taledraw are okay too?

TATTLES

'Course! We were going to stay hidden a little longer, but it's almost time, so we couldn't.

WILLOW

Almost time for what?

TATTLES

(beat)

Come on, I'll take you to them!

Tattles dashes away, reaching back to grab Willow's hand, and the two are soon jogging back towards the jungle.

26 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE. EVENING.

26

We're in the front room with Xander, who hasn't moved from the sofa. He's curled up tightly, hugging his legs like a frightened child, his eyes distant.

From the kitchen, we can hear Buffy and Andrew talking.

ANDREW (O.S.)

So, um, is he going to be okay? I mean, do we need to do-

BUFFY (O.S.)

I don't think there's anything we can do right now, Andrew. Nothing that'll help, anyway.

We push in on Xander for a beat, before we cut to:

27 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN. NIGHT.

27

Buffy and Andrew are standing near the kitchen counter, each with a mug of coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

When my mom died, all I wanted to do was find somewhere to sit and be numb. I didn't want to think about anything, I didn't want to say anything, and I know I didn't want anybody to try and help.

ANDREW

Uh, yeah, but didn't you and Spike end up-

Buffy shoots Andrew a glare. That is not a subject to be raised here. Andrew gets the hint and shuts up.

BUFFY

What I'm trying to say is, right now, the best thing we can do for Xander is leave him be. I know there's the small matter of the newborn daughter he's got at the hospital, but it's not like he's alone in this.

ANDREW

(brightly)

Oh, I can help out with baby stuff, I'm good with-

BUFFY

Andrew, if you think I'm letting you within a mile of that kid without strict supervision, you are very much mistaken.

ANDREW

(deflated)

Um, okay.

BUFFY

He's got all of us around him. When I lost my mom, I was busy pushing myself away from everybody, I didn't have that safety blanket to fall back on. At least Xander has that.

Andrew glances back towards the front room, and we cut to:

28

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE. EVENING.

28

Back with Xander on the sofa.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Yeah. At least he has that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We push in on Xander's unfocused, faraway expression again for a moment, before we cut back to:

29

INT. JACKSON'S CAR. NIGHT.

29

Jackson raps his fingers against the dashboard, clearly anxious to move in. Dan watches him for a moment, then presses his hand down to stop his drumming fingers.

JACKSON

Sorry.

DAN

That's okay, just save the drummer  
boy routine for a less tense  
moment, okay?

JACKSON

Yeah, yeah, got it. I just hate  
these things when you-

RADIO

(crackles)

Jackson, you copy?

JACKSON

(snatches radio up)

Jackson here.

RADIO

Okay, guys, you're up. Approach the  
warehouse with extreme caution.  
You'll have about twenty uniforms  
right behind you, but try not to  
trip any alarms until you're at the  
front door!

JACKSON

Copy that.

Jackson replaces the receiver and opens the car door.

JACKSON (cont'd)

You ready?

DAN

(sighs)

Guess so.

They both exit the car.

We stay inside, watching them hurry across the street towards the warehouse, and after a beat, we cut to:

30 EXT. OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE. NIGHT.

30

Jackson and Dan hustle into frame, guns ready, either side of one of the doors that leads into the warehouse. Jackson signals that he'll go in first, and Dan nods.

Jackson carefully opens the door, pushing it open just enough to take a look inside.

After a beat, he nods to Dan and steps in, out of view.

Dan cautiously follows him inside, and as he disappears from view, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT THREE**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

31 INT. HOSPITAL - NURSERY. NIGHT. 31

Sofia is still fast asleep as we rejoin her, but she seems to be having some kind of nightmare, her brow creased as she shifts around on the sofa.

She suddenly GASPS and sits bolt upright, shaking as she catches her breath. She looks around, getting her bearings, then notices that Willow is missing.

She stands, frowning, and steps out into the corridor.

32 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. NIGHT. 32

There's no sign of Willow, just a few night staff milling around. Sofia steps up to the glass to look in on the baby, smiling when she sees the little girl fast asleep. Sofia looks around for Willow again.

SOFIA  
Where is she?

As Sofia steps back into the waiting room, we cut to:

33 INT. CIRCLE - CAVE. DAY. 33

Tattles and Willow appear at a cave entrance, the mouth of the tunnel stretching away towards us.

TATTLES  
They're just in here, come on.

WILLOW  
Wow, how long has this been here?

TATTLES  
(duh!)  
It's always been here!

WILLOW  
Oh... okay.

Tattles heads off, deeper into the cave, and Willow follows, the sunlight streaming in from the entrance quickly replaced by the pitch blackness of the cave, before a new light source starts to glow up ahead.

TATTLES (O.S.)  
Come on, come on! They're waiting!

Willow finds a corner in the tunnel, and steps around it. She GASPS as she steps into a huge cavern, the roof stretching off far, far away overhead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the centre of the room is another one of Trinkets' game boards, a giant three-dimensional chess set with dozens of layers and levels, surrounded by ladders and covered with tiny pieces, some of which glow and pulse with various colours.

The cavern is lit by two dazzling chandeliers, looking like they've been carved straight out of the rock, and by their light Willow sees TALEDRAW and TRINKETS racing towards her. She laughs as they both latch onto her, hugging her tightly.

WILLOW

So this is where you've been  
hiding, huh?

TALEDRAW

Couldn't let the Caretaker get us!

TRINKETS

That would have been bad.

WILLOW

Well, you don't need to worry about  
him any more. I took care of him.

TRINKETS

(amazed)

You did?!?

WILLOW

Sure did, zapped him away like a  
bug. He won't be back for a long  
time, and when he does, we'll be  
ready.

The three Circle members step back, gazing up adoringly at Willow, before Trinkets grabs her hand and leads her towards the game board.

TRINKETS

Come on, come on, come and see  
this! It's important.

Willow lets herself be dragged towards it. When they're at the base of the dizzyingly tall structure, Trinkets pushes a ladder towards her and motions for her to start climbing.

Willow looks up, then at Trinkets, then starts to climb the ladder, soon scaling it out of frame. She reaches a higher level and blinks as she sees Trinkets is already there, waiting for her.

Used to the way things work a little differently in the Circle's dimension by now, Willow just smiles as she steps off the ladder and onto the level of the game board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLOW  
Alright, now what's so important?

TRINKETS  
(points)  
Look.

Willow follows Trinkets' gaze, and sees a tiny figurine on the far side of the level, GLOWING with white energy very brightly.

WILLOW  
What's that?

TRINKETS  
(proudly)  
That's you.

WILLOW  
(surprised)  
Me?

TRINKETS  
(nods)  
Your power levels just shot up,  
just like I always said they would  
when you first came to see us!  
You're only a few levels from the  
top now, and just one below us!

WILLOW  
(trying to process)  
Huh. That's... interesting. What  
does it all mean?

TRINKETS  
It means, it's finally time for you  
to come be our Teach!

WILLOW  
(smiles)  
It does?

TRINKETS  
Yeah! You can help us put the  
village back together, but with  
your magic it won't take long at  
all. After that, and when the  
Library's done, you can start doing  
what you were always meant to be  
doing.

WILLOW  
Yeah, didn't you say it was  
'knowing everything in the world'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TRINKETS

(shrugs)

Sort of. You can help people at last. Help us help people. That's what we do here.

Willow smiles again, but suddenly realises something.

WILLOW

Wait, when is all this supposed to happen? I mean, when am I going to be up here with you guys permanently?

TRINKETS

Um...

TALEDRAW (O.S.)

Very soon.

Taledraw clambers up onto their level of the game board and wanders over.

TALEDRAW (cont'd)

Might be tomorrow, might be next week, might be next month, in human terms anyway. All we know is that it's soon.

WILLOW

But...

TRINKETS

'But'? We don't like 'but,' 'but' always means somebody's going to make us sad.

WILLOW

It's my best friend, Xander, he just lost his wife after she had their baby, and...

She trails off as Trinkets and Taledraw glance at one another, which Willow picks up on.

WILLOW (cont'd)

What was that look for?

Trinkets tries to look innocent.

TRINKETS

Nothing! Come on, plenty more to show you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Willow opens her mouth to ask another question, but Trinkets and Taledraw are already scampering away, and with a frown she follows. We cut back to:

34

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSERY. NIGHT.

34

Sofia looks up as Buffy and Xander head over. She brightens up when she sees Xander, but he heads straight for the nursery glass, leaning against it like it's the only thing keeping him upright.

Buffy takes Sofia to one side, speaking quietly to her as Xander stares at his daughter.

SOFIA

Is everything alright? Why are you two here? And do you know where Willow is?

BUFFY

Sort of, I wanted him to see the baby, and no, in that order.  
(frowns)  
Willow's gone?

SOFIA

Yes, I was asleep, and when I woke up, she just wasn't here.

BUFFY

Huh. Weird. Well, I'm sure she hasn't gone far.  
(glances at Xander)  
I couldn't look at him sitting alone at my place any longer, so I thought even if he saw the baby for just a few minutes, it'd help him shut down for the day. He needs to sleep, before he-

XANDER (O.C.)

I know what her name is.

Buffy and Sofia glance at each other, then wander over to join Xander at the glass.

BUFFY

You do?

XANDER

(nods)  
It just came to me. I was just thinking about how there's so much evil in the world today, no matter how much we fight it. It's always going to be here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER(cont'd)

As long as there are people,  
there'll be evil people, and  
there's just nothing any of us can  
do about that.

SOFIA

We all know that by now, Xander,  
but what can any of us do about it?

XANDER

We'll do what humans do.  
(smiles)  
Hope.

He turns to look at the girls, and the penny drops as to what  
his daughter's name is. They all look back in on her.

The newly-christened Hope is dozing, murmuring softly in her  
sleep, wrapped up snug and warm in her cot.

SOFIA

Hope?

XANDER

Hope Harris. I'll probably shorten  
it to 'H' before too long, but  
right now... Hope.

BUFFY

(beat; nods)

Hope. I like it. I mean, we've  
already had a 'Faith,' right? Do we  
know anyone called 'Charity'?

Xander finally manages a soft chuckle, laying an arm round  
each girl and pulling them close to him.

XANDER

I wish she could have been here for  
this.

Buffy looks up at Xander.

BUFFY

She saw it. I know it.

XANDER

Do you think she'd like the name?

BUFFY

She'd love it.

Xander smiles at her, and the trio go back to looking in on  
baby Hope.

We start to pull away from the tranquil scene, cutting to:

35

INT. WAREHOUSE. NIGHT.

35

We're back with Jackson and Dan as they creep along inside the empty warehouse, sticking to the shadows. In the centre of the large, empty floorspace stands a table with two large spotlights either side of it.

On one side of the table sits LEMAR JONES, his four gangster buddies striking various tough poses behind him, and on the other side sits HARRY BOSWELL, his short form exaggerated by the tall bodyguards behind him.

Dan and Jackson creep as close as is safe, Jackson signalling that they should wait and listen for a moment.

On top of the table are three large, thick suitcases, which are opened after a nod from Lemar. Lemar is a wiry black man, his hair dreadlocked and plaited down his back.

LEMAR

That's all of it, man. Fiftyseven  
k's, just like our agreement.

Boswell looks over the contents of the cases - a mass of clear plastic bags of white powder. He nods to one of his bodyguards, who leans forward and scoops up a bag.

Flicking out a pocketknife, he slices into one of the bags, dips his finger in it, and tests the goods. After a beat, he nods to Boswell.

BOSWELL

I see you're still a man of your  
word, Mr. Jones.

LEMAR

It's just 'Lemar' to my friends.

BOSWELL

And if I take this shipment, will I  
be able to call myself one of your  
friends?

LEMAR

(grins)

You can call me 'brother' if you  
want to, man! This is a lotta money  
we're talkin' about here.

BOSWELL

It certainly is.

Boswell snaps his fingers, and another bodyguard dumps a large suitcase on the table. Lemar pops the catches and opens it - and his eyes light up at the man, many wads of fresh green bank notes inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOSWELL (cont'd)  
All the usual precautions.  
Nonconcurrent serial numbers, used  
bills, everything like that.

Lemar closes the case again, a greedy smile plastered across his face.

LEMAR  
Hey, far as I'm concerned, if the  
cash is green, my conscience is  
clean! You know?

BOSWELL  
(beat)  
Quite.

Lemar reaches out to shake Boswell's hand.

LEMAR  
Lay some skin on me, my man. Seal  
the deal.

Boswell nods, grins and reaches out to take his hand. Over in the shadows, Jackson nods to Dan. Showtime.

Jackson marches out of the shadows, gun and badge raised, Dan following right behind him.

JACKSON  
Cleveland PD! Nobody move! You're  
all under arrest!

The drug dealers scatter, and a moment later the other two doors leading into the warehouse are KICKED open, and two squads of cops pile inside.

Boswell barks instructions to his bodyguards.

BOSWELL  
Don't just stand there, get them!

The bodyguards OPEN FIRE with a variety of semi-automatic weapons, sending the cops ducking for cover as bullets PING off the scenery around them.

Jackson points towards the fleeing Lemar, the bulky suitcase full of cash slung under one arm, and he and Dan race after him.

36 EXT. OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE. NIGHT.

36

Lemar is heading towards his waiting car as Jackson bursts out of the warehouse behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON

Freeze! Down on the ground, Jones,  
now!

Lemar turns round, a gun in his hand, aiming it right at Jackson. Jackson's eyes widen - he's got nowhere to dodge.

Dan is just leaving the warehouse, he's too far away to help.

Time slows down to a crawl as Lemar yells a curse towards Jackson and FIRES.

The bullet zips through the air, straight for Jackson's chest.

It hits him, and Jackson falls to the floor, his gun clattering out of his hands.

Time returns to normal as Lemar dives into the black car, which speeds away into the night.

DAN

Jackson! Jackson!!

Dan races over to his fallen partner, who is lying face down on the sidewalk, trying to push himself back up.

DAN (cont'd)

Jackson, buddy, are you okay? Where  
did he hit you, man?

JACKSON

I'm fine, I'm fine, I don't think  
he-

Jackson looks down at his chest - there's a bullet hole in his shirt. By rights, he should have a bullet in his lung by now.

Something GLINTS to the corner of his vision, and he glances across.

Lying on the ground a few feet away is a BULLET - only it's compressed, squashed up as though it was fired into something impenetrable.

The colour drains from Jackson's face as he puts the pieces together. He did get hit - but that's the bullet that should have killed him, sitting on the sidewalk.

Dan looks over to him, and Jackson quickly brushes the bullet away - it bounces out into the street, out of sight.

Jackson stands as Dan looks after the departing car of Lemar and his gang.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAN

Damn it! We almost had him.

JACKSON

There'll be another time.

DAN

C'mere, man, let me take a look at you. You might be in shock, for all we know the bullet-

JACKSON

Dan, look. Any blood?

Jackson motions to his clothes - he's clean. Dan frowns.

DAN

From where I was standing, it looked like he got you dead bang! I should be trying to push your lung back in by now!

JACKSON

Guess he missed me. Must be my lucky day, huh?

Dan eyes Jackson warily - but before he has chance to think any further, several cops burst out of the warehouse behind them.

Dan points them in the direction of Lemar, and the cops race towards their waiting squad cars to begin the pursuit.

Jackson takes the opportunity to start to walk away, back to his car, but Dan jogs to catch up to him.

DAN

Hey! You sure you don't want somebody to check you out? You might just have a scratch, but that can still-

JACKSON

(snaps)

I'm fine.

DAN

(beat)

Jackson?

Jackson stops and turns round. Dan holds up his hands defensively.

DAN (cont'd)

Hey, just looking out for you, chief. You know the deal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JACKSON

I know, I know... Look, thanks,  
Dan, but I think I'm just gonna  
head home. Near death experiences  
tend to do that to me.

Dan glances over his shoulder - Boswell and his goons are  
being led out of the house by the cops in the background.

DAN

Well... okay, I'll grab a ride back  
to the precinct with one of these  
guys.

Jackson opens his car door as Dan calls out to him.

DAN (cont'd)

You sure you're okay?

JACKSON

(beat; grins)  
Five by five.

Dan looks oddly at Jackson as he slides into his car.

37 INT. JACKSON'S CAR. NIGHT. 37

Jackson sits behind the wheel, taking a quiet moment to  
gather his thoughts. He rubs his chest, looking down at the  
bullet hole in his shirt.

He pulls the shirt to one side to check his skin - not a mark  
on it.

Looking freaked out, he reaches for his cell phone and dials  
in a number.

38 INT. HOSPITAL - NURSERY. NIGHT. 38

Xander, Buffy and Sofia are still all gathered at the nursery  
window - and as we pull back, we see Buffy's bag, her cell  
phone just peeking out the top. Her phone is flashing as it  
rings - but it's set to silent. She can't hear it.

39 INT. JACKSON'S CAR. NIGHT. 39

Jackson waits a few beats, then hangs up. He takes a deep  
breath, rubs his eyes, but can't think of any answers right  
now. Starting his ignition, he flicks the car into gear and  
starts to drive away, and as he does, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF SHOW**