

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Pathways"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - BEDROOM. DAY.

1

Looking in on XANDER, his back to us as he stares at something before him, hidden from view. As we slowly circle him, the voices of the other people in the Summers house can be heard.

BUFFY (V.O.)

He's been in there for days now...
that can't be good for him, can it?
Shouldn't one of us do something?

ANDREW (V.O.)

Um, maybe we could try-

BUFFY (V.O.)

Not now, Andrew.

We're sideways on with Xander now, and he has his chin resting on his hands, his gaze still locked on whatever's off screen.

We continue our circuit as the voices downstairs carry on with their conversation.

GILES (V.O.)

He's lost a lot in the past week,
Buffy, we all have. With Anya and
then Willow gone, it must be-

BUFFY (V.O.)

(interrupts)

Don't say 'gone.' Willow isn't
'gone,' she's ascended. There's a
difference.

(beat)

Right?

ANDREW (V.O.)

What do we know about these, um,
Circle people she's gone to join? I
mean, really?

The voices fall silent in contemplation as we end up at Xander's back again.

This time, our viewpoint starts to rise, reaching towards the ceiling and craning forward as the voices start up.

MARIE (V.O.)

One of us needs to go and talk to
the poor lad.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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MARIE(cont'd)

There's not many of us who can imagine what he must be going through at the moment - first he gains a daughter but loses his wife, and then his best friend leaves for good to go and be some sort of Higher Power?

BUFFY (V.O.)

(getting angry)

You think I don't know all that? You think it doesn't tear me up just thinking about what he's got to get through? I know as well as anybody that things just get harder! You try and push through each day but you never get away from it all, you never find yourself with any kind of...

Buffy's voice trails off, and as we continue our look in on Xander, we finally catch a glimpse of what's before him.

Sitting in a cot imported from the Harris Residence is HOPE, the tiny, wriggling baby daughter who made her way into Xander's life just over a week ago.

BUFFY (V.O.) (cont'd)

... Hope.

ANDREW (V.O.)

We can always find hope. Even if, you know, it means we have to accept what we've lost and move on.

There's a beat of silence. Xander just carries on staring at Hope, and the look on his face clearly tells us that he has absolutely no idea what to do, think or say at this moment. He is totally lost.

BUFFY (V.O.)

Okay, somebody remind me never to let Andrew talk to any of us when we're depressed...

GILES (V.O.)

Buffy, Andrew has a point. Xander has people around him who've survived their loss and the grief that came with it, and someone in particular who's probably the only person in the world that he'd listen to right now.

There's another beat of silence. SOFIA steps into the doorway of the bedroom, but Xander doesn't look up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She looks in on him, her heart breaking as she feels the sadness radiating off him.

BUFFY (V.O.)
Why does 'someone' always mean 'me'
around here?

GILES (V.O.)
I just meant-

BUFFY (V.O.)
No, you're right, it's okay. I'll
go talk to him, or just sit in
silence with him, or... Whatever.
I'll just go do it.
(beat)
That's what I do best.

Sofia takes one cautious step into the room, wringing her hands.

SOFIA
Xander?

He doesn't answer, and she takes another step forward. She's about to speak again when BUFFY appears in the doorway and lays a hand on her shoulder.

Sofia turns, and Buffy smiles at her - she'll handle this. With a nod, and a last glance at Xander, Sofia leaves the room, and Buffy walks over to the other side of Hope's cot.

Xander still doesn't look up as Buffy sits on the edge of the bed, the cot between her and Xander. A long beat passes before she speaks.

BUFFY
Hey.

XANDER
Hey.

BUFFY
Mind if I sit?

XANDER
(shrugs)
Go ahead.

Buffy looks down at Hope and smiles as the baby gurgles happily, shifting in the cot. Her tiny fingers clutch at the edges of her blanket.

XANDER (cont'd)
Buffy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BUFFY

Yeah?

XANDER

(beat; looks up)

What do we do now?

Buffy looks back at him, then slowly smiles and shakes her head.

BUFFY

I don't know.

Xander nods, seemingly satisfied with this answer, and the two of them go back to looking down on Hope as we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. DAY.

2

JACKSON is asleep in his bed, the curtains drawn. Somebody walks into his room, hidden by the shadows, pauses to peer down at his dozing form and then heads for the curtains.

The room floods with sunlight as they are flung open, revealing Jackson's wayward sister SHANNA.

Jackson grunts and comes to, blinking blearily and putting an arm up against the invading sunlight.

JACKSON

Mmf?

SHANNA

C'mon, Jackson, it's morning! Don't you have to go do cop stuff?

JACKSON

(yawns)

Day off...

(sniffs)

What's that smell?

SHANNA

Oh, I, uh, made breakfast. You still like pancakes and syrup, right? I mean, I guess you must do because I found, like, four bottles of syrup in the fridge...

JACKSON

(confused)

You made... breakfast?

(beat)

Are you high?

SHANNA

(grins; quietly)

Not for a long time now.

JACKSON

Huh?

SHANNA

Look, you just make your way downstairs when you're ready, I'll keep things warm, okay?

Shanna turns and heads out of Jackson's room, leaving the still-bemused Jackson watching her go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pushes himself upright in bed and checks his alarm clock, groaning when he sees how comparatively early it is.

As he rubs his tired eyes, we cut to:

3

INT. CIRCLE - GRAND LIBRARY. DAY.

3

WILLOW stands proudly in the middle of the slowly-rebuilding Grand Library, looking out across the still-scorched arches and shelves, stretching off in all directions.

All around her, the Library is full of activity - wooden planks and stone blocks float through the air, slotting neatly into spaces to continue the repairs to the walls and shelves, while overhead the sunlight flowing down into the hall is gradually blocked out as roof tiles float upwards and lock into place, reassembling the canopy.

Willow remains, hands on hips, keeping a careful eye on everything as TATTLES skips up behind her, looking around at the busy activity with a devilish grin.

TATTLES

What'cha doin'?

Willow, miles away, JUMPS as Tattles speaks, looking round and down on her.

WILLOW

I told you, Tattles, don't do that to me! You're the best sneaker-upper in the world, that's a given, no need to keep trying to prove it!

TATTLES

(giggles)

Okay. Is the Library done yet?

WILLOW

(sighs)

Kinda. The walls and roof are almost back up, once that's done I can start on putting the books back where they need to be.

Tattles looks to her right - and waiting to be put back on the shelves is a mountainous pile of books - all shapes and sizes, all colours and thickness - heaped messily in an empty part of the hall. Tattles bites her lip and looks back across to Willow.

TATTLES

So... How long till it's done?

WILLOW

A long time yet, even with all the magic. Are we in any kind of rush?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATTLES

Huh? Oh, no! No rush. I just want you to start being the Teach properly, and you can't do that without the Library working!

WILLOW

You just leave it to me. Sooner this is done, sooner I can take five minutes out to go see Xander again!

Tattles beams up at Willow again and skips out of the Library, leaving Willow to her work.

As a large section of shelf CLICKS into place overhead, Willow glances over at the pile of books.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Guess I'd better get started...

She aims her hand towards the books, and with a shake that dislodges several stray piles, a clump of them are lifted into the air by an invisible force.

Concentrating, Willow guides the books towards her through the air, maneuvering them between unfinished shelves and piles of timber.

She looks away for just a moment - long enough for the edge of the cluster of books to SCRAPE loudly against one the shelves.

Willow looks back, realises her mistake and gently lowers the books to the floor.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Oops...

She jogs over, inspecting the damage. A chunk of wood panelling has been torn away from the back of one of the shelves, but the damage isn't too bad.

Willow crouches to scoop up the broken piece of wood, but as she starts to slot it back into place, she spots something.

Frowning, she peers into the hole left in the shelf - and is surprised to see a small package, wrapped up tightly in yellowing paper, strapped to the inside of the shelf itself. She reaches in, and with a tug pulls it free.

Willow checks over her shoulder, making sure that none of the other Circle members are around, and then starts to unwrap the parcel.

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CONTINUED: (2)

Peeling the paper away, which has been there for some time, she reveals a small set of black books, roughly the size of diaries or journals.

As Willow turns them over in her hands, puzzled, we cut to:

4

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - KITCHEN. DAY.

4

Jackson trudges down the stairs and into the kitchen of his home, still pulling on a dressing gown, as the fully dressed Shanna busily prepares a fresh batch of pancakes.

Jackson sits down at the kitchen table as Shanna drops a plate of hot pancakes and syrup in front of him. He looks from them, to her, and back, still bemused.

JACKSON

Alright, what's going on?

SHANNA

(evasive)

Nothing! Can't a sister make her big brother some breakfast if she wants to?

JACKSON

A normal sister, yes. Not you.

SHANNA

Hey! Just because-

JACKSON

Shanna, save it. Since you just dropped yourself back into my life a few weeks back, I've barely seen you. You spend all day and all night in your room - at least, I think you do, for all I know you're off hitting your old dealers again, or maybe you-

Shanna SLAMS down a coffee mug in front of him, startling Jackson. He looks up at her - she's trying to control her anger, her eyes closed.

After a moment, she shivers once and looks down at him again, speaking quietly.

SHANNA

I don't do that any more.

JACKSON

I'd like to believe you, Shanna, I really would.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON(cont'd)

But you've lied to me about it before, and no amount of pancake breakfasts is going to get you out of that.

Shanna slumps and heads back over to the kitchen counter. Jackson cautiously tries a piece of pancake - and it's good! He munches absently on one as he studies her.

JACKSON (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Alright, so let's say you're telling the truth. You're clean, you've not been getting into any trouble, and you showing up here was just a happy coincidence. Then explain to me how you knew about that demon that almost killed Buffy a few weeks back? If you hadn't gotten it out of her in time, she'd be dead, but you never told me how you knew what to do.

Shanna stays at the kitchen counter, her back to Jackson.

SHANNA

It's cold.

JACKSON

Huh?

SHANNA

The coffee. It's cold, I thought you'd be up by now.

Jackson glances down at the coffee mug in his hand, and then stands and walks over to Shanna, still holding it.

JACKSON

Shanna, come on. Talk to me.

SHANNA

It's... You wouldn't understand. I've seen stuff, things I don't even-

JACKSON

Trust me, I'd get it. I've found out that Cleveland isn't exactly the quiet little town I thought it was.

SHANNA

Is it because of her?

JACKSON

Who, Buffy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHANNA

(nods)

What is she, like, a vigilante or something?

JACKSON

(grins)

Kind of. Let's just say she knows what's out there, same as you apparently do.

Shanna tries to get back to washing up her breakfast dishes, but Jackson gently turns her round to face him.

JACKSON (cont'd)

Where have you been, Shanna?

SHANNA

(beat)

I was-

Jackson's phone RINGS, and he glances round. When he looks back at Shanna, the moment for conversation has passed.

She gets back to the dishes, and with a sigh he reaches for his phone, which is inside his jacket, hanging on the back of the door.

JACKSON

Hello?.

BUFFY

(filtered; through phone)

Oh, hey, it's me.

JACKSON

(glances at Shanna)

Buffy, hey. How's everyone doing? You know, after-

BUFFY

(sighs)

Not good. Are you busy? I could use another pair of hands round here. If you've got work, then it's fine, I just-

Jackson grins before he interrupts her.

JACKSON

It's fine. I'll be over in a few hours if that's okay, I've just got some stuff to take care of first.

BUFFY

Okay, thanks. Bye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He hangs up, and absently takes a sip from his mug of coffee. As he gulps it down, he turns to Shanna.

JACKSON
Thought you said this was cold?
Seems warm enough to me!

Jackson puts the mug down and leaves the kitchen, heading back upstairs as Shanna looks down at the mug, puzzled.

5

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. DAY.

5

Buffy heads in from the kitchen to find GILES sitting on the sofa, dozens of papers spread out all around him. He's studying them, his attention flicking from one to the next.

BUFFY
Gee, Giles, what did you do, bet on
every game in the country?

GILES
(distracted)
Yes...
(beat; looks up)
Sorry, what?

BUFFY
Never mind.

Buffy heads over to take a look, grabbing the nearest sheet of paper and reading. It's a set of plans, detailing a large complex of buildings.

Buffy stares oddly at it before Giles reaches for it, and she hands it back.

BUFFY (cont'd)
What's all this?

GILES
These are the various documents I
need for my presentation to the
Council.

BUFFY
Presentation? What for?

Giles looks up as Sofia enters the living room.

GILES
Ah, just the girl. Both of you, sit
down, you should hear this.

Bemused, Buffy and Sofia exchange a glance and then sit.

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GILES (cont'd)

Now then. As you're both very aware, when we destroyed the Sunnydale Hellmouth, Willow unlocked the power of the Scythe to create a whole new line of Slayers.

SOFIA

(wry)

I did happen to notice that, yes...

GILES

Since then, the Council has been overwhelmed trying to both recover these new Slayers from all over the world, several of whom are younger or older than average, and also to train them. Put simply, there aren't enough Watchers to go around, and the Council expressed their concerns that we'd end up with many more examples of how Faith started off if we didn't do something about it, and soon.

SOFIA

Faith, isn't she the Slayer who-

BUFFY

(interrupts)

Yeah, she did. Long story. Giles?

Seeing his cue to continue, Giles locates some more papers and hands them over to the girls.

GILES

Well, with this in mind, I planned out several possible solutions to the situation, and I'm pleased to announce that the Council have backed my preferred proposal.

Giles smiles at them, and Buffy nods, waiting for him to continue.

BUFFY

And...?

GILES

Oh, and, the result is in the plans you have in your hand.

Buffy and Sofia look at the planning diagrams before them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES (cont'd)

(proudly)

What you're holding are the blueprints to the Slayer Academy.

SOFIA

(slowly)

Slayer... Academy?

GILES

A purpose built, fully equipped, modern day training facility, designed to guide and instruct the hundreds, perhaps thousands of new Slayers in everything from combat, Slayer history and demon lore to more curricular subjects like maths, science and English.

BUFFY

Let me get this straight - you're building a boarding school for the new Slayers?

GILES

(smiles)

Precisely. What do you think?

BUFFY

(struggling)

Uh, well, it's very-

SOFIA

(brightly)

It's a fantastic idea! When will it be ready?

Seeing that Sofia is more enthusiastic about this, Buffy stands and starts discreetly edging out of the room.

GILES

Construction is currently underway, we're converting a defunct grammar school campus in England. The Council has approved a certain allocation of cash, and some of the deals I brokered with other organisations have provided the additional income we needed.

SOFIA

What 'other organisations'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GILES

Not the Initiative, don't worry. Several private groups, people who have an interest in safeguarding the Earth. Ex-Watchers with their own businesses, wealthy warlocks and witches, anybody I could find who was willing to help out.

SOFIA

This sounds incredible! Do I get to go?

GILES

Well, naturally, I was planning on asking you, so-

SOFIA

(smile drops)

Oh, no, I can't, I'm sorry.

GILES

(frowns)

Why not?

SOFIA

I can't leave Xander and Hope. Not yet.

Giles nods, understanding, as Buffy steps back over.

BUFFY

Xander's got all of us, Sofia, he won't be on his own.

SOFIA

I appreciate that, it's just...

(beat)

I want to know that he's going to be alright. Especially now Willow's gone, they seemed very close. I don't want to leave him until I'm sure that he's going to survive. You do understand, don't you?

Buffy smiles, reaching out to squeeze Sofia's hand.

BUFFY

I get it.

(to Giles)

How long till the Academy's built?

GILES

Another few months is the current estimate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BUFFY
(to Sofia)
Reckon that's long enough for you
to make sure Xander's okay?

SOFIA
(smiles)
We'll see.

BUFFY
Okay, Giles, we're going to leave
you to your paperwork. Jackson's
coming over later, I think he'll be
a big help with Xander.

GILES
How is he doing now?

Buffy glances towards the stairs and sighs.

BUFFY
Not so good.

We dissolve from Buffy's concerned look to:

6

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - BEDROOM. DAY.

6

Xander is now lying on the bed, curled up in a tight ball.
His eyes are red - he's been crying until very recently.

Hope, conversely, is fast asleep, dozing peacefully in her
cot like nothing was wrong at all.

Xander looks down at her still, one hand resting on the edge
of her cot.

XANDER
(softly)
Why did you go? Why did you have to
leave me again?

He closes his eyes - fresh tears run down his cheeks, but as
Hope gurgles and stirs, waking up again, Xander opens his
eyes, looking at Hope with a mixture of relief and
desperation.

XANDER (cont'd)
(soothing)
Hey, come on, little lady. It's
okay. Daddy's here.

Xander starts to gently rock her cot from side to side, and
as Hope settles back down to sleep, Xander shuts his eyes
again, still fighting off the tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From his miserable expression, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

7

EXT. DESERT STRIP. NIGHT.

7

Buffy is sitting at a camp fire, out in the open on a cool desert night, sand and the odd palm tree stretching away from her in all directions.

She doesn't seem too fazed by her settings, looking peacefully into the fire, her hair blowing gently out in the breeze.

A SHADOW passes before her suddenly, but Buffy doesn't flinch. Instead, she looks calmly up and across at...

THE PRIMITIVE. The First Slayer, dark-skinned, her face marked with flecks of white tribal paint, crouches low to the ground, her eyes staring back at Buffy from the other side of the fire.

BUFFY

I like it here. It's nice.

PRIMITIVE

(scowls)

I do not bring you here to find it 'nice.'

BUFFY

I know, but... It is. Back home, everybody's so sad, no-one knows what to say, and Xander, he-

PRIMITIVE

He does not concern me.

Buffy blinks, a little surprised by that remark.

PRIMITIVE (cont'd)

There are things I must show you, things you do not yet realise, and without this knowledge, when the battle comes, you will fall.

BUFFY

What battle? We stopped the bad guy. The Caretaker's gone, he-

PRIMITIVE

It is coming. Forces are gathering. The mouth will awaken once again, and it will consume everything around it unless you can stop it.

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CONTINUED:

BUFFY

What do I need to know?

The Primitive stands, looking to either side, then nods to Buffy, motioning for her to stand.

PRIMITIVE

Follow me.

The Primitive starts to walk away, and as Buffy stands up, we cut back to:

8 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - BUFFY'S ROOM. AFTERNOON. 8

Buffy is fast asleep in bed. She's dreaming, twitching occasionally, shifting around on her bed. She's still fully dressed, but is too deeply asleep to hear the KNOCK at the front door.

9 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON. 9

Sofia opens the door to Jackson, the two blinking in surprise - this is the first time they've met.

JACKSON

Uh, hi.

SOFIA

Hello.

JACKSON

British accent... You must be Sofia, right?

SOFIA

(smiles; nods)

So, you must be Jackson Shaw. Buffy's told me all about you!

JACKSON

Likewise. Is she in?

SOFIA

Yes, she's just upstairs taking a nap. She's been staying up all night for the past few days with Xander and the baby, but she doesn't need to be in work today so she's catching up on her sleep.

JACKSON

Okay. Mind if I head on up?

SOFIA

Not at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sofia steps aside, and Jackson heads for the stairs, nodding a greeting to Giles before carrying on up the stairs. Sofia rejoins Giles on the sofa.

SOFIA (cont'd)
So... that's Buffy's boyfriend, is it?

GILES
I don't think it's quite as clear cut as that any more, but...
Actually, I have no idea. They're still friends, at least.

SOFIA
(thoughtful)
Hmm.
(beat)
So, anyway, you were saying?

GILES
Oh, yes. These are the plans for the recreational area, they should cater for upwards of a hundred girls at once...

We move away from Giles, his dialogue fading as we follow Jackson up the stairs.

10 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - BUFFY'S ROOM. AFTERNOON. 10

Jackson raps his knuckles lightly on the door as he leans his head in.

JACKSON
Hello?

He spots Buffy, dozing on the bed, and grins, heading over to her. He crouches down by the bed and gently shakes her.

JACKSON (cont'd)
Come on, Buffy, I came all the way over here to see you, don't sleep through it now!

No response. Jackson frowns and shakes her a little harder, then stands, starting to look concerned.

Andrew walks past the open door, and Jackson grabs him and pulls him into the room.

ANDREW
(startled)
Uh, what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON
(worried)
Andrew, Buffy's asleep.

Andrew looks down at Buffy, then back at Jackson, puzzled.

ANDREW
Uh, yeah, she is...

JACKSON
No, I mean I can't wake her up. I
heard what happened to Anya, and I
just...

He trails off, but Andrew gets the point. He nods and quickly dashes out of the room, reappearing moments later with a small yellow pendant.

JACKSON (cont'd)
What's that?

ANDREW
Um, a dica amethyst, it'll tell us
what's causing her to stay asleep.
I used to use it to check if my mom
was drunk or not when she fell
asleep back at my house in
Sunnydale. Helped me know if I
should start getting the dinner
ready without her or not. Actually,
there was this one time-

JACKSON
(impatient)
Andrew!

Andrew coughs once, nods and heads over to Buffy. He holds the pendant a few inches above her head, and watches as the yellow amethyst at the end of its chain slowly turns a dark green colour. Andrew studies it closely for a moment.

JACKSON (cont'd)
Well? Should we call an ambulance,
or is it-

ANDREW
She's dreaming.

JACKSON
(beat)
Oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDREW

Yeah, but it's not like a normal dream, uh, like this one I had once about 'Enterprise' getting a new season, it looks like it's one of those 'vision quest' kinds of dreams. At least, that's what this amethyst is saying.

JACKSON

'Vision quest'? Okay, I'm fuzzy on that concept. Is this another Slayer thing?

ANDREW

Uh, yeah, it's happened a few times. Buffy communicates with people in her sleep, they tell her things, she wakes up, we all panic and start running around... there's a definite pattern forming.

JACKSON

Should I be worried?

ANDREW

Honestly? I don't know. I don't think so, but you won't be able to wake her up till it's all over.

JACKSON

Well, how long will that take?

Andrew shrugs, and with that look of concern still etched into his face, Jackson takes a seat at the end of the bed.

JACKSON (cont'd)

Looks like I'm in for a long night then, huh?

Andrew manages a nod, and then backs out of the room, leaving Jackson to it.

As Jackson stares down at the sleeping Buffy, we can hear the sounds of trees swishing back and forth as if in a storm, before we cut to:

11 EXT. RAINFOREST. NIGHT.

11

True to its title, the thick forest is in the midst of a heavy storm, it's trees battered by sheets of rain and strong winds, swaying back and forth overhead.

Buffy is still following the Primitive, but Buffy looks thoroughly soaked by now, her arms wrapped tightly round her against the cold.

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CONTINUED:

BUFFY
(shouting over noise)
Where are we going?

PRIMITIVE
We have to find your first lesson.

BUFFY
'First lesson'? Are there going to
be lots? 'Cause, you know, I'm
really not feeling the love with
this whole tropical storm thing
we've got going on, and-

Buffy stops as the Primitive halts suddenly and points.
Following her finger, Buffy sees a cave looking out of a
hillside ahead, its entrance half-covered by thick vines.

PRIMITIVE
Go through there. I will meet you
on the other side for your second
lesson.

BUFFY
(beat; sighs)
Okay.

Buffy heads forward, pulling the vines out of the way and
disappearing into the blackness of the cave.

The Primitive watches for a beat, then heads off screen.

12 INT. CAVE - TUNNEL. NIGHT. 12

Highlighted in the gloom as she heads towards us, Buffy rests
one hand on the tunnel wall as she carefully makes her way
forward.

She sees a light up ahead and pauses, checking front and back
before carrying on.

13 INT. CAVE - OPENING. NIGHT. 13

Buffy walks out into a wide, circular room, a log fire
burning in its centre. She steps up to it, grateful of the
heat to try and dry herself off, looking all round her.

She sees there are two exits to the room, carved into the
rock itself. One has a torch burning brightly above it, the
other also has a torch but it is unlit.

Buffy steps forward, looking from doorway to doorway, before
speaking out loud, as though someone is listening in on her.

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CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Is this it? My first test is 'pick
a door'? Is this some kind of
Slayer game show?

No-one answers, and with a shrug, Buffy heads for the door
with the lit torch above it, disappearing into the blackness
beyond once again.

She's been gone a moment when the Primitive steps into frame,
shaking her head.

PRIMITIVE

Wrong way.

From the First Slayer's stony expression, we cut to:

14

INT. CIRCLE - GRAND LIBRARY. DAY.

14

Willow sits cross-legged on one of the shelves, many levels
up into the air, reading intently from the small diaries she
found. She doesn't hear TALEDRAW come wandering into the
library, and as he calls out to her, she jumps.

TALEDRAW

Teach!

WILLOW

(startled)

Uh, yeah?

TALEDRAW

Are you finished yet? I need to do
a new drawing and I can't 'till you
finish this bit!

Willow leans over the edge of the shelf, looking down at
Taledraw several feet below.

WILLOW

We're almost done, Taledraw. A few
more hours, maybe a little longer.
There was a lot to put back
together!

Taledraw nods, although he doesn't look too happy, and he
turns and heads off again.

Willow settles back into her books, turning the pages as she
scans through them. From the troubled look on her face, it's
clear she isn't enjoying what she's reading.

She looks up, her face a mess of mixing emotions as she tries
to process what she's reading, before she hears Tattles
skipping through the library below, humming happily to
herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Willow quickly hides the books away, shoving them into one of the shelves and tucking the diary in her hands underneath her t-shirt.

She glances over the lip of the shelf, watching Tattles as she heads out of view again, before retrieving the diary from her shirt.

She stares at it like it was the diary of a serial killer, almost as if she's afraid to open it again - but then, cautiously, she does, leafing back through to the place she left off.

We leave Willow reading as we cut back to:

15 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - UPSTAIRS LANDING. NIGHT. 15

It's a few hours later on, and a yawning Sofia is heading up the stairs, taking a left turn towards the bathroom. The door's shut, so she taps lightly on it.

SOFIA

Hello? Anyone in there? There's a tired Slayer out here who needs to get ready for bed!

Somebody inside the bathroom VOMITS loudly, and Sofia grimaces, stepping back from the door.

SOFIA (cont'd)

Goodness me...

The door is thrown open and Jackson steps out, looking unsteady on his feet and very pale, clutching the door frame for support.

SOFIA (cont'd)

Are you alright, Jackson? You look quite ill!

JACKSON

I, uh... I don't feel too good, sorry.

SOFIA

I can see that! Is Buffy still asleep? Andrew told me she was in some kind of dream state, or something - he's a little hard to understand.

JACKSON

Yeah, yeah she is.

Sofia looks over the ailing Jackson, then steps forward, holding her arm out for support.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOFIA

Well, why don't you go home and rest, and I'll get Buffy to call you again when she wakes up.

Jackson nods, and reaches out for Sofia. Despite the size difference, her Slayer strength evens things out as she helps him towards the stairs.

Sofia doesn't notice that Jackson has left what looks like a scorch mark on the door frame, just where he was holding on to it, before we cut back to:

16

INT. CAVE - CHAMBER. NIGHT.

16

Buffy emerges from the tunnel she chose into another room, this one much stranger-looking as she looks across it. Opposite her is another doorway, but she's separated from it by a wide pit, too far to jump across.

Hovering in the air above the pit are several small, winged creatures, looking like giant, mutated insects. Their wings beat rapidly, creating a disconcerting buzzing sound.

Buffy looks puzzled, glancing over her shoulder at the doorway, then back at the pit. She takes a cautious step towards the edge of the pit, but as she does, one of the insect creatures starts to slowly turn towards her.

Buffy spots it and steps back, and the creature looks away again. Working out what will happen next, Buffy limbers up, cracking her knuckles and loosening up.

BUFFY

Okay, right. Fight the bugs, jump the hole. Lesson learned. No problem.

She steps forward again, and this time the nearest insect detaches itself from its fellows, swooping down towards her. Buffy faces it, watching its approach carefully.

At the last moment, she sidesteps, narrowly avoiding the creature, which rakes the ground where she'd been standing with sharp claws.

Buffy turns to watch it as it circles round for another swoop, looking around her for a weapon she can use. Spotting a few old torches on the ground, covered with cobwebs, she scoops one up, and swings it like a baseball bat as the insect approaches.

The torch CLANGS off the creature's thick hide, knocking the bat out of Buffy's hands, and the insect swoops back again, returning to join the other insects, hovering patiently over the pit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Buffy frowns, trying to think up a new plan of attack. She scoops up another of the torches and THROWS it at one of the creatures, but again, it just bounces off the insect's scaly armour, dropping down the pit and out of sight.

Buffy steps back, looking for some other way to cross the pit, when the Primitive steps through the doorway behind her, shaking her head still.

PRIMITIVE (O.S.)

That is not the way.

BUFFY

(turns round)

Yeah, I see that! How's about less of the cryptic, and more of the straight answers?

PRIMITIVE

You try to solve all of your problems with force, hoping that you will be strong enough, fast enough to get where you need to.

(beat)

That is not the way.

Buffy ponders this, trying to decipher the Primitive's meaning, before a thought hits her.

BUFFY

I have a question.

PRIMITIVE

Speak.

BUFFY

If I get hurt in this, will my body die? Andrew spent a long time explaining 'The Matrix' to me once, and I was just wondering if it was the same deal.

PRIMITIVE

Your physical body will not be harmed, but if you 'die' here, I will send you back, whether you have learned the lesson or not.

BUFFY

(nods)

Good. Just checking.

With that, Buffy turns and SPRINTS towards the pit.

The flying creatures start to shift, turning to face the rapidly approaching Slayer, but before any of them can swoop down towards her, Buffy JUMPS...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

... and sails straight past them, straight down into the pit below!

As she disappears from view, we quickly:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

17

INT. CAVE - CHAMBER. NIGHT.

17

Back in the room with the pit as Buffy falls from view, and the flying insect creatures dart down after her as one, the sound of their buzzing wings fading as they chase after her.

We stay on scene for a moment - then the buzzing noise becomes audible again, increasing in volume until two of the creatures fly back up out of the pit.

A third hovers up into view, with Buffy clutched carefully between its claws, swinging from beneath it.

It flies across the rest of the gap and deposits Buffy carefully on the opposite side, before turning and floating back to join the other creatures above the pit.

Buffy turns and smiles at the Primitive.

BUFFY

See? Not just a pretty face. Was that lesson something like 'direct action isn't always the answer,' or something like that?

(proud)

I figured it all out.

The Primitive just nods - then starts to run towards the edge of the pit.

Buffy backs up a few steps as the Primitive builds up speed - then she JUMPS, and with an impossibly long leap, she covers the distance and lands with a THUMP next to Buffy.

Buffy gawks at the Primitive as she stands again, the First Slayer throwing Buffy a cold look before she heads towards the other door in the chamber.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Show off.

PRIMITIVE

You always choose the hardest way forward.

BUFFY

(shrugs)

It's a gift.

As Buffy follows the Primitive, we cut to:

18

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

18

Shanna is sat on the sofa, flicking idly through TV channels and munching on some popcorn as Jackson THROWS the door open.

Shanna jumps to her feet, seeing Jackson struggling to stand in the doorway, and rushes over to help him.

SHANNA

Jackson! Damn, man, are you okay?
Are you hurt?

JACKSON

(weak)

Shanna... I can't...

Jackson faints away, and Shanna struggles to hold him up. With a sudden, surprising burst of strength, she heaves and drags him over to the sofa, rolling him onto it.

Jackson's out cold, and Shanna dashes into the kitchen to get some water. She presses a hand to his head and draws it sharply away - he's literally red hot!

Shanna stands back, her mind racing as she tries to think of what to do next. She reaches into Jackson's jacket pocket for his phone.

SNAP! Jackson's hand suddenly streaks out and grabs her wrist, and as a shocked Shanna looks down at him, Jackson's eyes slowly open. A vicious look is on his face, and Shanna tries to pull away from him.

JACKSON (cont'd)

(menacing)

What are you doing?

SHANNA

Calling a fricken ambulance,
Jackson, damn! What is with you?
Let me go!

Jackson stares at Shanna for a long beat - then releases her. She rubs her wrist tenderly, warily watching Jackson as he settles back down.

SHANNA (cont'd)

What happened?

JACKSON

(slowly)

I was driving... I was heading back
from Buffy's, I guess I parked up
outside before I blacked out the
first time, then... what time is
it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNA
(glances at clock)
Past ten, why?
(suspicious)
Jackson, what's going on? What was
with the hardcore nasty look you
gave me just then?

JACKSON
(blinks)
What look?

SHANNA
Alright, that's it. I'm calling
somebody.

Shanna snatches Jackson's phone away before he can protest.

JACKSON
Hey! Who are you calling?

SHANNA
A friend.

Shanna walks into the kitchen, leaving the woozy Jackson to slump weakly back down on the sofa.

19 INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - KITCHEN. NIGHT.

19

Following Shanna into the kitchen, she bites her nails as she waits for whoever she's calling to pick up. There's a CLICK before a gruff male voice answers.

VOICE
(filtered; through phone)
Yeah?

SHANNA
It's me. I need help.

VOICE
Actual help, or 'I'm high and I
don't know what to do' help?

SHANNA
(sighs)
Actual help. Jackson's ill, it
might be something you know about.

VOICE
(beat)
Alright, kiddo, I'm on my way.

Shanna hangs up and glances back into the front room, at Jackson, before we cut to:

20

INT. CIRCLE - TRINKETS' WORKSHOP. DAY.

20

TRINKETS is fussing over his multi-tiered game board as Tattles chases Taledraw round the large, cluttered workshop, both laughing and giggling. Trinkets sighs every time the duo bump into something.

Willow steps into the workshop, glancing round nervously, the diary she was reading in one hand behind her back.

Tattles is the first to notice her, skidding to a halt and beaming happily.

TATTLES

Teach! Hey!

WILLOW

(half smile)

Hi.

TRINKETS

Hey, come on over here, I've got something really cool to show you.

Willow starts to walk forward, then after a few steps pauses, closes her eyes as if mentally preparing herself for something - and then she places the diary onto one of the tables next to her.

The three Circle members fall silent, their eyes locked on the book. Tattles is the first to speak.

TATTLES

(nervous)

W-wh-where d-did you g-get that?

WILLOW

That doesn't matter. I want you to explain to me what it is.

(stern)

Now.

The three children glance at one another, trying to silently communicate a plan to each other. Willow folds her arms, not looking happy.

WILLOW (cont'd)

No answers, huh?

TALEDRAW

We can't tell-

TATTLES

It's not what it looks like, we just-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

What? What doesn't it look like,
and what can't you tell me?

More furtive exchanged glances. Willow, losing her temper by now, marches forward.

WILLOW (cont'd)

I found them in the Library when I
was putting it back together. There
was a bundle of them, looks like
they go back years and years. I
only read this first one, but...

(beat)

What's going on?

Trinkets SIGHS and steps away from his game board, heading towards Willow. She looks towards him, hoping she's about to get some answers.

TRINKETS

I'm sorry you had to find out this
way, Teach.

WILLOW

Find out what?

Trinkets SNAPS his fingers - and a GAG appears round Willow's mouth! Panicked, she tries to remove it, but it's stuck fast. Tattles and Taledraw back away from Willow as Trinkets walks right up to her.

TRINKETS

Our last Teach started asking too
many questions as well, and you
don't want to end up like she did,
do you?

Trinkets picks up the diary and opens it at the last page.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

This is what happened to her.

Willow looks from the book to Trinkets, then reads - and her eyes bulge at what she sees. She looks back to Trinkets, now halfway between panic and terror.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

Why couldn't you have just helped
us to have fun? We knew you were
always suspicious about us, but
when the Caretaker almost killed
us, we thought that'd be all you
needed to make you join us for
good. And now...

(sighs; throws book away)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRINKETS(cont'd)

Now you've gone and spoiled it all.
We got you away from the Slayer and
the others at last, but now we're
going to have to do a bit more than
that.

He turns to Tattles, who tries to shrink away from him.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

Take her to the Cage.

TATTLES

(shaking head)

No, no, I don't want to go down
there, no, bad, bad, bad!

TRINKETS

(stern)

Tattles! You know what we have to
do now!

Willow starts to back away slowly, hoping nobody will notice -
but Trinkets' head whips round, and with a gesture Willow's
legs FREEZE. She struggles to move them, fixed to the spot,
as a bashful looking Tattles walks slowly over.

Willow looks down at her, desperation all over her face.

TATTLES

I'm sorry, Teach. I knew you'd find
out one day, but... I just thought
we'd have more time to play first.

With a reluctant sigh, Tattles takes Willow's hands - and
suddenly, Willow can move again, but all she can do is follow
Tattles. It looks as though she's trying to fight against
whatever's controlling her, but with no luck.

As Tattles leads Willow back out of the workshop, we cut away
to:

21

EXT. HILLTOP. NIGHT.

21

Buffy is outside again now, clambering to the top of a
hilltop in the same rainforest as earlier, the storm raging
above her and the Primitive waiting patiently for her.

As Buffy stands next to the First Slayer, she points towards
a natural corridor through the thick treeline, where the
tree's trunks have curled to either side to form a sort of
archway.

PRIMITIVE

Through there are the things you
must see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Like what?

PRIMITIVE

I cannot tell you. That is not the way the messages are sent. It is up to you to understand what you are shown.

BUFFY

(sarcastic)

Great. Slayer charades.

Buffy gives the Primitive one last glance, then makes her way carefully down the hillside, walking towards the corridor through the jungle ahead.

As she passes beneath the twisted branches of the trees either side of her, the sounds of the storm fade away, and she can see some kind of opening up ahead that's much brighter. Buffy carries on, into:

22

EXT. TRANQUIL FOREST. DAY.

22

Buffy steps out into a wide, open field with patches of dense forest dotted all across it. The grass around her is halfway between grey and green, with swathes of mist laying across the whole scene.

She walks slowly forward, the sun peeking through the clouds overhead sending irregular bursts of light across the fields, glittering through the trees around her.

Standing alone, just before a small cluster of thick, grey trees is IRWIN KANE, his eyes closed. The businessman is dressed typically sharply, but he doesn't look up as Buffy approaches.

KANE

I had a job to do, and I did it.
That's all.

He opens his eyes and looks up at Buffy - and she GASPS as she sees they are jet black!

KANE (cont'd)

We all have to make sacrifices.

Buffy steps back in shock - and Kane is gone. She blinks and starts to turn round, seeing Jackson standing some distance away from her.

BUFFY

Jackson!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She starts to run towards him - but after a few moments, Jackson looks up, and the dead look in his eyes makes Buffy skid to a halt.

JACKSON

No use for a name. It's all in the air now.

Buffy opens her mouth to reply - and Jackson BURSTS INTO FLAMES!

Buffy recoils in horror, before gathering her senses and starting to race towards him. Jackson is screaming in pain, his arms flailing as he staggers from side to side, but it seems that no matter how fast Buffy runs, he's always the same distance away.

She forces herself to stop, and with a supreme effort closes her eyes - and when she opens them again, Jackson is gone. Angry, Buffy shouts towards the skies.

BUFFY

Stop playing games with me!

As if to answer, a gust of wind RUSTLES through the trees, and Buffy's attention is drawn to a tree standing apart from its fellows.

She walks up to it - it's a huge weeping willow, its branches heavy with leaves, bending back on themselves to give the tree its distinctive canopy of greenery.

As Buffy watches it, the tree starts to pale, its colours fading away from both its leaves and its branches. In moments, the leaves start to fall, gently drifting down to the ground, and the tree itself looks like its dying right before our eyes.

MAX (O.S.)

She knows the truth by now.

Buffy spins round to see MAX standing right behind her.

MAX (cont'd)

They don't know, though. And they won't until it's too late.

Buffy's eyes bulge again, and she looks down slowly.

Max has stuck a knife in her belly, and as she looks back up at him, her eyes wide in shock, he just grins.

MAX (cont'd)

I had a job to do, and I did it. That's all. But it won't be you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Buffy SHOVES him away frantically, but in a heartbeat he's gone, and so is the knife wound. She brushes her hands down herself, making sure she isn't injured, but soon realises she's okay.

A shadow falls over her - somebody very tall is standing right behind her. Buffy slowly turns round - and there's THE CARETAKER! He towers over her, looking down at her calmly, and Buffy recoils, stepping back.

The Caretaker lifts up one of his huge hands, and Buffy tenses, ready for a fight - but the Caretaker just holds out a strange object.

Buffy blinks - it's a golden metal circle, about a foot in diameter. The Caretaker motions for Buffy to take it, and with one cautious eye on the huge demon, she does.

She looks up at the caretaker, and he nods once to her. Buffy looks back at the golden circle - and YELPS in alarm!

It's turned into a SNAKE, and she drops it and hops back, out of the way. The snake HISSES up at her and slithers away through the grass, and when Buffy looks back up again, the Caretaker is gone.

Thoroughly freaked out by now, Buffy turns round again and bumps straight into the Primitive. The Primitive stares back at her, and Buffy takes a moment to compose herself.

BUFFY
Is that everything?

PRIMITIVE
That is all. You may leave now.

BUFFY
Okay, but how do I-

The First Slayer is gone. Buffy looks round, but the field is empty except for her and the clusters of trees.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Hello? Hey! I said, how do I-

We SMASH CUT to:

23

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

23

Buffy JOLTS out of bed with a GASP, finding that she's been sweating heavily in her dream. She takes deep gulps of breath as she adjusts to her surroundings again.

Giles appears in the doorway, looking relieved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES

Ah, good. You're awake. Andrew explained what was going on, and I thought it best to leave you to it.

Buffy flops back in the bed with a sigh.

BUFFY

Yeah, remind me to thank you for that.

GILES

Vision quests are a well documented fact of Slayer life, Buffy - in all honesty, I'm surprised it's been so long since you last had one! What did this one tell you?

BUFFY

Before or after the big 'Twin Peaks' moment in the forest?

GILES

(not understanding)
I'm sorry?

BUFFY

(sits up)
Never mind. It was complicated.
(yawns)
And now, I'm tired. Guess your body doesn't get much actual rest when you're in one of those things, huh?

GILES

I'm afraid not.

BUFFY

Wasn't Jackson meant to be coming over?

GILES

Oh, yes, he was here earlier, but he had to go home, he wasn't feeling very well. He had a fever, so Sofia tells me.

BUFFY

Oh, right, because-
(beat)
Fever? As in burning up?

GILES

Yes, he...
(sees Buffy's look)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES(cont'd)

Is something wrong? Did you see
something about-

Buffy leaps up from the bed, dashing urgently over to Giles.

BUFFY

Jackson! He's in danger, we have to
get over there, now!

She rushes past him and off downstairs. Bemused, Giles turns
and shouts after her.

GILES

But what did you see?

We quickly cut down to:

24

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - FRONT ROOM. NIGHT.

24

Buffy clatters into the front room, waking up a dozing Sofia,
who was curled up asleep on the sofa, surrounded by Giles'
paperwork.

SOFIA

Buffy?

BUFFY

Get your coat. We've got trouble.

Sofia sits up, alert, as Buffy reaches for her jacket.

SOFIA

What's the matter?

Buffy pauses, half in, half out of her jacket.

BUFFY

I don't know. Yet. But we need to
go and find out.

Buffy opens the front door and dashes outside, and as Sofia
hops to her feet and starts to follow, we:

BLACK OUT:**END OF ACT THREE**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

25 INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

25

There's a KNOCK at the front door, and Shanna opens it to reveal AJ, a weatherbeaten looking black man in his forties, with pock marked skin and long, greying dreadlocks. He shakes his head and grins as he sees Shanna.

AJ

Alright, kiddo, look like that on your face, I know it's got to be bad. Where's the fire?

SHANNA

(agitated)

He's upstairs, I don't know what to do, I know I can't call an ambulance, they'll just-

AJ steps into the household and places his hands on Shanna's shoulders.

AJ

(soothing)

Ssh. I know. They wouldn't know what to do. Take me to him.

Shanna heads towards the stairs, and AJ shuts the door behind him before following.

26 INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - JACKSON'S ROOM. NIGHT.

26

Shanna leads AJ into Jackson's bedroom, where the man himself is lying on his bed. His shirt is half open, and he's sweating heavily, moving fitfully, seeming almost delirious.

AJ studies him from the doorway as Shanna presses her hand to his head, then brings it away and grabs a towel and a bowl of water lying next to the bed.

SHANNA

He's burning up, I don't know what's wrong!

AJ

When did this start?

SHANNA

Tonight, few hours ago. He's been getting worse since then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AJ
Alright, let me try a few things,
see if I can figure out what this
is.

AJ sits down next to Jackson, taking one of his hands in both of his and closing his eyes, starting to HUM.

Jackson's eyes flutter open, and he blinks in confusion at AJ before seeing Shanna.

JACKSON
(dazed)
Shanna...? Who is...

SHANNA
Ssh, Jackson, it's okay. He's a
friend, he's here to help.

Jackson looks again at AJ, starting to sit up, but AJ gently pushes him back down.

AJ
Stay still.

JACKSON
I can't, I have to... I have to get
up, I can't...

AJ
(opens eyes)
Your body is changing, Jackson.
Something's been waking up inside
you for a long time now, and I
think it's ready to come out.

JACKSON
What? That doesn't... you're not
making any sense...

AJ
Trust me. I've seen a lot of things
like this. There's a powerful force
just opening its eyes inside of
you, and it's going to start
changing you, whether you like it
or not.

JACKSON
What... what is it?

AJ
I don't know yet. But I don't think
we'll have to wait long to find
out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AJ looks over his shoulder at Shanna, who is biting her lip nervously.

AJ (cont'd)
You'd best go. I'll watch over your
brother for you.

Shanna nods reluctantly, and turns to leave. Jackson tries to sit up again, reaching out a shaky hand towards her.

JACKSON
Wait, wait! Shanna... What's going
on?

Shanna pauses in the doorway and looks back at Jackson, a sad smile crossing her face.

SHANNA
Sorry, big brother. I've got stuff
to do now. Things changed for me a
few years back, I've got... I've
got a job to do now.

Shanna leaves, and Jackson slumps back on the bed, too weak to get up and run after her. AJ mops Jackson's clammy brow with the towel.

AJ
She'll be alright. She's tough now,
stronger than she ever was.

JACKSON
I don't... I don't understand...

AJ
She changed. Two years ago. She
doesn't understand it all yet, but
I've been doing what I can to help
her. Plenty of girls like her out
there now, changed overnight and
don't know why. I do what I can.

JACKSON
What? But... Shanna can't be a Sl-

AJ
Quiet now. You need to rest and let
whatever's happening to you happen.
If you fight it, it's just going to
hurt a whole hell of a lot more.

Defeated, Jackson can only lie back and watch AJ, and as AJ soaks the towel in cold water again, we cut to:

27

INT. CIRCLE - THE CAGE. DAY.

27

The 'cage' that Trinkets mentioned earlier is a small, bare room, more like a prison cell than anything else, with a threadbare mattress, bars over one tiny window in the back wall, and a large black metal grate that acts as a door.

Tattles leads Willow towards the room, which appears to be at the far end of an otherwise empty corridor, carved out of the rock like some kind of medieval dungeon.

Tattles swings the cell door open and gently nudges Willow inside. Willow's eyes are wet with tears now - she's powerless and still gagged, but as the cell door swings closed, the gag falls away and Willow gets control of her limbs again.

She darts back over to the door, shaking it, but it's too solid for her to shift. Tattles watches her, a sad look on her youthful face.

TATTLES

Your magic won't work down here.
This is where we have to put people
who are naughty.

WILLOW

(pleading)

Tattles, c'mon, let me out of here!
What's going on?

TATTLES

I can't! Trinkets wouldn't like it,
he'd be mad, and when he gets
mad...

Tattles checks all round her and steps closer to the bars, whispering to Willow.

TATTLES (cont'd)

He's the one in charge. Whatever he
says, we have to do. Taledraw just
goes along with him, but me... I
just try to keep 'em company. Stop
them getting too mad. When they get
angry, they take it out on people.

WILLOW

What 'people'?

TATTLES

You know, people! Your people! The
world! That's what we do, we try to
play with the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The colour drains from Willow's face, and she takes a step away from the bars.

WILLOW
You do... what?

TATTLES
That's what Trinkets' big board is,
he uses it to move things around,
put people where they're not
supposed to be to see what happens.

WILLOW
(trying to process)
Wait, wait - so that stuff I read
in the diary, that's all true?

TATTLES
(bites lip)
You weren't supposed to know.

WILLOW
(getting angry)
It's kinda late for that! You
tricked me to get up here, didn't
you? Whoever wrote that journal,
the girl who was the last Teach
before me, she said that you lied
to her to get her up here, that you
needed somebody from the human
world to make sure you were up to
date with what was going on, and-

TATTLES
Ssh! He'll hear you! You don't-

TRINKETS (O.S.)
(sharply)
Tattles!

Tattles jumps, and with a nervous glance to her left runs away. Willow presses herself against the cell door to try and see what's going on, but she steps back as Trinkets steps into frame.

TRINKETS
(grins)
Hello.

WILLOW
(cold)
Let me out of here.

TRINKETS
I can't do that now, Teach. You
found out our big secret!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLOW

What 'big secret'? That you guys
are evil after all?

Trinkets laughs, scratching the back of his head absently
before continuing.

TRINKETS

We're not evil. We just want to
have fun.

WILLOW

'Fun'? By doing what, using people
like me?

TRINKETS

Alright, so, we lied a bit to get
you to come and stay with us. But
if you promise to behave, we'll let
you out of here.

WILLOW

And if I don't?

TRINKETS

Then we'll find a new Teach.
(beat)
And kill you.

Willow starts pacing round her cell, getting desperate,
running her hands through her hair as she tries to think.

WILLOW

What about Tara? When she came to
see me, to tell me it was time, was
that-

TRINKETS

(proudly)

Taledraw made her up. He can take
the bits he needs out of people's
heads, make up any kind of picture
he wants! We thought she'd be the
best person to tell you to come
stay with us. You loved her the
most.

Willow slumps down onto the mattress, defeated. She puts her
head in her hands as Trinkets watches her.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

Don't be sad, Teach! If you say
you'll do what we want you to, then
I'll let you out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Willow looks over at Trinkets, then stands, marching furiously up to the cell door.

WILLOW

Forget it! You took me away from my friends when they needed me the most - you made me leave Xander after...

(deep breath)

If you think I'm doing anything for you after you did this to me, then you can forget it.

TRINKETS

(shrugs)

Think it over. I'll come by again tomorrow.

Trinkets starts to walk away, and Willow watches him go, leaning against the cell door and closing her eyes, knowing she's stuck. We cut from her to:

28 INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

28

There's a frantic KNOCKING at the door, and AJ makes his way leisurely down the stairs to open it.

Buffy and Sofia are there, and Buffy frowns as she sees the unfamiliar face of AJ.

BUFFY

Who are you?

AJ

Friend of Jackson's.

(looks her up and down)

Pretty young white thing... You must be Buffy, right?

Buffy impatiently shoves past him and races up the stairs.

BUFFY

(calling out)

Jackson? Jackson!!

Sofia tries a diplomatic smile as she steps into the house.

SOFIA

Sorry about her, she's a little... agitated. She heard Jackson was ill, and-

AJ

(chuckles)

He ain't ill, sweetheart. He's evolving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOFIA

(beat)

Excuse me?

We cut from Sofia's confused expression to:

29

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - JACKSON'S ROOM. NIGHT.

29

Buffy bursts into Jackson's room, sees the state he's in and rushes to his side.

BUFFY

Oh, no... Jackson!!

Sofia hurries after her into the room, taking in Jackson's delirious state as AJ saunters casually in behind her.

SOFIA

(turns to AJ)

What's wrong with him?

AJ

It's been a long time coming, far as I can tell. Lots of power growing inside of him now, and there's nothing gonna stop it coming out!

BUFFY

(frantic)

What?

AJ

(to Buffy)

Like I told your girl here, he's evolving. Shanna called me over, she didn't know what to do, but I've seen this before.

BUFFY

What do you mean, 'evolving'?

What's happening to him?

AJ

That's all people seem to be asking me! I don't think any of us will know where he's going until he gets there. All we can do is make him as comfortable as possible.

Buffy, tears starting to roll down her cheeks, tries to get Jackson to recognise her, holding his head up and talking directly at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

Jackson? Jackson, can you hear me?
It's me! It's Buffy!

JACKSON

(delirious)
No use...

BUFFY

What?

JACKSON

No use... for a name...

Shocked, Buffy lets go of Jackson and stands. Jackson continues to shift on the bed, his eyes blinking as he tries to focus.

Sofia sees Buffy's deathly expression and reaches out for her. Buffy doesn't move as Sofia lays a hand on her arm.

SOFIA

Buffy? What is it? You look like
you've seen a-

BUFFY

No.
(shakes head)
No, he can't. He can't!

SOFIA

(confused)
Buffy, you're not making any sense,
what is it?

Buffy turns to Sofia, suddenly on the verge of tears.

BUFFY

He's going to die...

Sofia turns to AJ, begging for answers, but he just shrugs.

AJ

There's no stopping what can't be
stopped. This was always going to
happen, it was written into the
boy's soul before he was even born.

SOFIA

How do you know all this? Are you
some kind of-

AJ lifts up the dreadlocks on one side of his head - and Sofia GASPS as she sees a patch of grey, scaly skin underneath!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AJ

Half demon. I can sense magic and power in people, see how it's going to change, and what it's going to do to them.

(off Jackson)

He ain't gonna die. Not exactly, anyway. But he is gonna change.

Buffy looks up, her eyes wet with tears, and she switches suddenly to anger, charging forward to grab AJ by his rumpled jumper.

BUFFY

Tell me what's going on! Tell me why I saw my boyfriend go up in flames in a dream, and what you know about whatever he's 'evolving' into?

AJ

(unfazed)

The Guardian.

Buffy lets go of AJ and steps back.

BUFFY

How did you know about-

AJ

(interrupts)

That's what he's becoming. It's what he was always meant to become. The power of it, it's running through his whole body.

(beat)

I just hope his body can take it.

Buffy looks back down on Jackson, her head spinning as she tries to take all this in, before we cut to:

30

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

30

A tried-looking Xander heads down the stairs and into the front room.

XANDER

Hello? Anyone here?

He looks over to the sofa, and all of Giles' papers. A yellow Post-It note stands out on top of the closest pile, and Xander picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER (cont'd)
(reads)
'Popped over to my place to get
some more things, back later on.'

He puts the note back down and heads into the kitchen.

31 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN. NIGHT. 31

The kitchen is also empty and quiet, and Xander spots a scribbled note stuck to the fridge door with a magnet.

XANDER
(reads)
'Gone to see Jody, back later.
Love, Andrew.'

Xander sighs and looks round the kitchen.

XANDER (cont'd)
Looks like it's just me and-

From upstairs, Hope starts CRYING, her wails echoing through the whole house. Xander looks back towards the stairs, suddenly looking several years older as he realise there's nobody around to help him out.

With a sad look, he heads back out of the kitchen, and as he closes the door behind him, we cut away to:

32 EXT. CLEVELAND CITY LIMITS. NIGHT. 32

Looking out across the towers and tall buildings of the city centre, we're on a road leading into the city itself, panning to the right to bring a 'Welcome To Cleveland!' sign into view.

A black limousine rolls into frame, stopping just next to the sign. A window at the rear of the car rolls down, and we push in closer to get a look inside.

It's dark inside, but in the light filtering in from outside, we can make out a large figure sitting in the back of the car, wearing what appears to be a gold face mask. The figure leans forward, studying the sign.

DRIVER (O.S.)
This is it, sir.

The figure glances back towards the chauffeur - this is THE KEEPER, a powerful figure from the Los Angeles branch of Wolfram and Hart.

KEEPER
Drive on. Find me the Summers girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The passenger window slides back up, and the limo starts on its way again, rolling towards the city centre.

As the limo speeds up and drives away, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW