

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

"Into The Fire"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1

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

1

We fade up on the dimly lit bedroom of JACKSON, the man himself still in bed, looking feverish as he shifts about, the sheets around him covered with sweat.

He mumbles incoherently to himself, and as he starts to grow more agitated, a hand reaches into frame, holding a wet flannel.

The hand gently squeezes a little cold water across Jackson's brow, which has the desired effect of calming him back down again.

We follow the hand back to its owner - BUFFY. She looks like she's hardly slept in days, her eyes ringed with dark bags and her hair tied up in a messy bun.

She YAWNS, settling back into the chair she's placed next to Jackson's bed, before going back to her vigil.

JACKSON

(mumbles)

No such... No such thing...

Buffy leans forward, concern in her eyes as she takes Jackson's hand and shushes him, soothingly.

BUFFY

It's alright, Jackson, it's alright. I'm here.

JACKSON

No such thing... as original sin..
No such thing...

Jackson trails off again, and Buffy leans back, too tired by now to look anything other than wiped out.

She hears someone climbing the stairs outside and glances towards the bedroom door - after a beat, it slowly swings open and SHANNA peeks inside.

SHANNA

How is he?

BUFFY

Same as last time you checked.

Shanna nods, and starts to close the door again when Buffy calls out to her.

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BUFFY (cont'd)

You can come in if you want to, you know. I don't have exclusive rights to Jackson - he's your brother, after all.

Shanna hesitates in the doorway for a beat, then steps in. Even in the dim light of the room, Buffy can see straight away that Shanna's in a bit of a mess.

Her left cheek is bruised, and she has scratches all over her body, including a large tear in her black, sleeveless t-shirt. She shifts awkwardly as Buffy stares at her.

SHANNA

Yeah, I know. I must look a mess, huh?

BUFFY

Well, you look like you've had as rough a night as I have, only in different ways.

SHANNA

I guess that's what you get for being a Sl-

BUFFY

(interrupts)

Slayer, yeah, I know.

(off her look)

Your friend AJ told me. How long have you known?

SHANNA

(shrugs)

Almost two years. It's part of the reason I ran away. I didn't know what the hell was wrong with me, so I did what I always do when trouble shows up. I took off.

She looks down at Jackson, sorrowful.

SHANNA (cont'd)

I hope he can forgive me.

BUFFY

(reassuring)

He will. Soon as he finishes going through whatever it is he's going through, then we'll all be fine. Promise.

Shanna manages a hopeful smile, then turns to leave, pausing in the doorway again.

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CONTINUED: (2)

SHANNA
Buffy?

BUFFY
Yeah?

SHANNA
Does it get any easier?

BUFFY
What, slaying?

Shanna nods, and Buffy smiles and shakes her head sadly.

BUFFY (cont'd)
No. Sorry.

SHANNA
(nods)
That's what I figured.

She exits the room, leaving Buffy to stand guard over Jackson once more. We cut from her to:

2

INT. THE DIVE. NIGHT.

2

Inside TAMMAZEL's rowdy demon bar, loud chatter rattling the foundations, and human and demon patrons alike packing the place out. Tammazel looks on proudly, almost seeing the cash mount up in her till - but as the bar's door swings open, the entire room suddenly falls silent.

Standing in the doorway is THE KEEPER, the tall, black-cloaked and gold-masked figure all the way from Los Angeles, two sharply suited Wolfram & Hart FLUNKIES standing behind him. The Keeper swings his gaze across the room, with people shuffling away, making sure not to look back. It's clear that the Keeper radiates power - and it's the sort of power you don't want to mess with.

Tammazel's jaw is hanging open, but she manages to recover as the Keeper strides slowly up to the bar, placing his gloved hands on the counter.

He stares at Tammazel for a beat, before she narrows her eyes, already on edge with this new arrival, and speaks back to him.

TAMMAZEL
Can I help you with something?

KEEPER
Summers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAMMAZEL
(blinks)
Excuse me?

KEEPER
Where do I find Buffy Summers?

Tammazel pales and takes a step back, finally SIGHING loudly and rolling her eyes.

TAMMAZEL
Oh, great. There goes the
neighbourhood.

And from Tammazel's resigned expression, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. CIRCLE - 'THE CAGE.' DAY. 3

We find ourselves in the small, sparse cell that WILLOW has had to call her home for the past few days. She sits glumly on the edge of the single, flat mattress in one corner of the room, her chin resting on her knees, deep in thought.

She looks up as she hears footsteps echoing down the corridor outside, that opens out into the rest of the dungeon-like bottom level of wherever she's being held, and after a few moments TATTLES appears at the barred door of the cell, the normally perky young girl looking downcast.

Willow turns her gaze away from Tattles, not in the mood for company at the moment.

WILLOW
What do you want this time?

TATTLES
Trinkets sent me. He wanted-

WILLOW
The answer's still no.

TATTLES
You haven't even let me ask you yet!

Willow turns to glare back at Tattles.

WILLOW
He wants to know if I'll accept that you guys don't work for the Powers That Be, and that I'll promise to help you have 'fun' with the human world, whatever that means.

(beat)
So the answer is still 'no.'

Tattles bites her lip, glancing up and down the corridor outside before she surreptitiously reaches into a brown pouch slung over her shoulder.

TATTLES
(whispers)
I brought you something.

WILLOW
I'm not interested.

(CONTINUED)

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TATTLES

Wait and see!

Tattles produces the collection of diaries that got Willow into this mess, a clutch of small, leather bound books that she manages to slide through the bars of the cell door.

WILLOW

(looking over)

Are those...

TATTLES

I thought you might want something to read while you were down here.

Willow walks over, scooping the books off the dusty floor.

WILLOW

I don't suppose any of these tell me how to get out of here, do they?

Tattles giggles, but Willow's cold look shuts her up.

WILLOW (cont'd)

That wasn't a joke.

TATTLES

Sorry. Anyway, I have to go. Trinkets said things are moving into place down on Earth, so I'd better go see what's happening. See you later!

She skips merrily away, and with a heavy sigh Willow returns to the mattress.

She opens the first book, leafing through it to find her place, and as she begins reading again, we cut to:

4

INT. CHARLESTON & SMITHE - KANE'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

4

Working late is IRWIN KANE, the sleek businessman sat at his desk, a collection of glossy black and white photographs in front of him which he studies, reading glasses on.

Sitting in a chair on the far side of the spacious, lavish office is JEREKOV, the rogue warlock, still looking battered and dishevelled after his rescue from the Hellmouth by Kane.

He TAPS his fingers against the arm of the chair, and after a few moments of the sound echoing round the otherwise silent office, Kane irritably snatches his glasses away and stares at Jerekov.

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CONTINUED:

KANE

Do you have to do that? I'm trying to concentrate!

JEREKOV

(huffs)

I didn't realise it was going to take so long.

KANE

Do you have any idea what we're doing? The sheer scale of what we're trying to achieve here?

JEREKOV

I understand that you seem to be taking your time to do anything, and that if I wasn't cooped up in this office I could be out there, getting some revenge on that Slayer!

KANE

(sighs)

I told you, you're not to touch Buffy again unless I say so.

Kane looks back to the photos, putting his glasses back on.

KANE (cont'd)

She's important. At least, for now.

Jerekov stands, heading over to the drinks decanters near the chairs and helping himself to a large whiskey.

JEREKOV

Yes, yes, so you keep telling me! When will she cease to be important? I have a reputation to consider, and I cannot let that impudent wench walk around free, when she and that witch friend of hers disgraced me and cast me into the Hellmouth!

KANE

(without looking up)

I'm sure there are other places I can find the blood I need for all this, you know.

That shuts Jerekov up - Kane looks over at him and smiles, but it's the kind of smile that makes your skin crawl away and hide somewhere dark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KANE (cont'd)

So, please, stay quiet and don't
interrupt me again.

Jerekov looks like he's about to answer back - but wisely
keeps it buttoned, knocking back the whiskey.

As Kane returns to studying his photos, we cut to:

5

INT. JACKSON RESIDENCE - KITCHEN. NIGHT.

5

Buffy stands by the kitchen counter, making up two cups of
coffee. As she turns, we see that Shanna is sat at the
kitchen table, along with the young Slayer SOFIA.

Shanna is still cut and bruised, but the medical kit open on
the table before her shows that the recovery operation is
underway.

SHANNA

Are we going back out tonight?

SOFIA

Back out on patrol?

SHANNA

(nods)

There are way too many nasties
running around out there. A lot
more than I'm used to seeing.

BUFFY

They know something's coming.
They're like animals that way.

Buffy walks over to the table, handing out the mugs.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Whether it's to do with Jackson, or
the stuff I saw in my dream, or
something else we haven't figured
out yet, all I know is that
something doesn't feel right.

SOFIA

(grins)

Xander would probably say something
like 'you must be sensing a great
disturbance in the Force' about
now.

BUFFY

(raises eyebrow)

Is he brainwashing you already?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOFIA

Oh, no, I've always loved 'Star Wars.' I just notice how he and Andrew make little references to things a lot. Mind you, I'm just as bad - my uncle, George, he makes horror movies, so I've always grown up around things that little girls shouldn't normally know about.

Buffy smiles and heads for the fridge, as Shanna eyes Sofia. She notices and stares back.

SOFIA (cont'd)

Yes?

SHANNA

Nothin' much, I'm just wondering how a nice, educated kid like you ends up as a Slayer.

SOFIA

(sips coffee)

You and me both.

BUFFY

If we knew that, then I'm sure a lot more things would make sense! Maybe there's some kind of-

Buffy is interrupted as someone KNOCKS rapidly on the back door. Buffy glances at Shanna, who shrugs, before heading over to the door.

She opens it to reveal ANDREW, gasping, out of breath.

ANDREW

Buffy! You... she... we...

BUFFY

Andrew! Stop. Breathe.

ANDREW

(quickly)

She just showed up at your house, said she had something important to tell you and only you, but Xander's with Hope and I don't know Jackson's phone number, and your mobile's off, so I had to run, and-

BUFFY

Wait, slow down. Who showed up at my house?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDREW

The demon, the one who owns the bar
in the city centre.

BUFFY

(surprised)

Tammazel? At my house? What did she
want?

ANDREW

She wouldn't say. Said she'd only
speak to you.

As Buffy casts a confused look back round at the other two
Slayers, we cut to:

6

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - FRONT ROOM. NIGHT.

6

Buffy stands before Tammazel, who starts to talk.

TAMMAZEL

So, in a nutshell, this guy is
trouble. And trouble of the old
fashioned kind, in the 'fire and
brimstone, seven levels of Hell'
sense of the word.

BUFFY

And this 'Keeper' guy - did he say
why he wanted to find me?

TAMMAZEL

(shakes head)

He didn't say and I didn't ask.
When someone looking like that
comes walking into your bar, you
know they're either crazy or tough
enough to break the neck of anyone
who looks at them funny.

BUFFY

Where did you send him?

TAMMAZEL

(grins)

I have a few people I don't like,
so I gave him their addresses and
said to try them, see if you were
round there. It won't slow him down
for long, though, so I suggest you
find him first. That way, you can
at least pick the battlefield.

Buffy nods, starting to pace up and down the room, lost in
thought.

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CONTINUED:

Sofia is on the couch, along with XANDER, who shares Buffy's tired look, although this is because of his baby daughter, HOPE, who lies asleep in his arms.

XANDER

If it's all the same to you guys,
I'd rather Von Doom doesn't show up
round here.

BUFFY

Don't worry, nothing's going to
come within a square block of this
house while Hope's still here.

SOFIA

Is there any way we can contact
Willow? I mean, perhaps she can
help us, or give us some advice.

XANDER

(shakes head)

I've been trying since she left.
Nothing. Not even a 'Hey!' to let
us know she got to wherever she's
going in one piece. Normally, I
just think about her and she
answers me right back, but so far,
nada.

Buffy strides over to one corner of the room, reaching behind
one of the sofa armchairs to her weapons chest.

BUFFY

Alright, here's the plan. We'll get
Shanna and sweep the city, between
the three of us we should cover it
in no time.

SOFIA

Are we splitting up?

BUFFY

Not exactly.

Buffy tosses Sofia her cell phone.

BUFFY (cont'd)

We've got plenty of those, Andrew
seems to collect them. Maybe he
likes the colours or something -
anyway, point is, we stay in
contact at all times. Anything
shows up, call it in.

Buffy straightens up, holding the Scythe in one hand. It
manages to sparkle a little in the lamp light of the room,
and Sofia looks suitably awe-inspired.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIA

Wow. Is that the Scythe?

BUFFY

The one and only. If you're good,
maybe I'll let you borrow it later.
For right now, choose your weapon.

With a kick of her foot, Buffy knocks open the lid of the weapons chest, revealing a dizzying array of weaponry inside.

Like a kid in a toy store, Sofia heads over, studying the contents and making her selection as Buffy walks over to Xander.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Call Giles, let him know what we're doing. I may need some backup if this Keeper guy has any more goons with him.

XANDER

Got it.

TAMMAZEL

I'd better get back to the Dive, if he shows up again looking for me and I'm not there, I don't think he's going to take too kindly to it.

BUFFY

(nods)

Alright, go and keep me posted.

Tammazel turns and heads for the door, before a thought suddenly hits Buffy and she calls out to the demon again.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Wait - why do you care if he finds me? I thought you hated me?

TAMMAZEL

(shrugs)

I do. But someone like that in town is bad for business. I'd rather you found him and killed him than have him hang around here any longer than he has to!

BUFFY

(dryly)

How charitable of you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TAMMAZEL

(grins)

Hey, it's all business.

Tammazel exits, and Buffy turns back to Sofia as she retrieves a sword from the weapons chest.

BUFFY

All set?

SOFIA

Ready as Ready Brek!

BUFFY

Huh?

SOFIA

It's a British thing. Never mind.

Buffy grins and turns for the door, and as the girls start moving, we cut to:

7

INT. BLACK MUSTANG. NIGHT.

7

We're travelling along inside a powerhouse of a Mustang, its engine purring as it speeds through the night. We're looking at the dashboard at first, but as we pull slowly back, we take in to very familiar figures - ANGEL and SPIKE.

Angel is driving, his eyes locked on the road ahead as Spike fumbles with a map, eventually stuffing it onto the back seat with a GRUNT of annoyance.

SPIKE

Why can't they make maps that people can actually read?

ANGEL

Simmer down, Spike. I know where we're going.

SPIKE

Oh, do you? Been sneaking away to sunny Cleveland at weekends without telling me, have you?

ANGEL

No, I just...

(beat)

I always made sure I knew how to get to Buffy in a hurry if she was in trouble.

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CONTINUED:

SPIKE

Good job, then! If that tip off was right, she's about to take on six foot six of trouble with a capital 'trub'!

Angel glances at Spike - the worried look on his face says it all, and Spike manages to stay quiet for a second.

SPIKE (cont'd)

I still don't know why we didn't bring any of the others with us. Skye, Connor - even Sonia and Taylor, at a push!

ANGEL

I told you why. We can't leave LA unguarded at the moment, there's too much going on. The others can handle things until we get back.

SPIKE

Assuming we make it back, of course. Stop me if I'm being too negative, but I could've sworn we were still at nil points in our fight history with the Keeper!

ANGEL

And your point is what?

Spike raises his hands defensively, not wanting to get into too big an argument over this.

SPIKE

Nothing, just saying... I hope that permanently furrowed brow of yours is busy figuring out a better attack plan than 'run in and start swinging,' because that got us about as far as a car with a wooden engine last time.

ANGEL

I'll think of something.
(quietly)
I have to.

Angel drives on, and we cut from the inside of his car to:

8

EXT. CLEVELAND - CITY STREET. NIGHT.

8

It's late at night by now, and as Sofia strolls through inner city Cleveland, there aren't many people around to notice the sword slung over her back.

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CONTINUED:

She passes the entrance to Tammazel's bar, and pauses to reach for the cell phone Buffy gave her, dialling in a number and waiting as it rings.

BUFFY
(filtered; through phone)
Sofia?

SOFIA
Nothing to report. I've just finished my sweep round by Tammazel's bar, no sign of any mysterious cloaked figures.

BUFFY
Alright. Shanna hasn't seen or heard anything yet either, so just keep looking.

Sofia hangs up, tucks the phone away and steps out of frame - revealing the Keeper! He's stood in the shadows of a nearby building, watching Sofia intently as she moves away, unaware of his presence.

One of the Keeper's Flunkies walks into frame, glancing round as he stands by his boss.

FLUNKY #1
No sign of the one we're after, sir. What shall we do?

The Keeper points towards the departing Sofia.

KEEPER
Stay with her. She'll tell us where Buffy is. We just have to ask the right questions.

The Flunky nods as the Keeper starts to stride after Sofia. Still unaware of her pursuer, Sofia walks on down the city street, glancing casually round every now and then. Her Slayer Sense isn't kicking in for whatever reason.

The Keeper starts to close in on her, his black cloak keeping him mostly hidden as he draws ever nearer.

Sofia suddenly pauses for half a beat, sensing something, but carries on walking, trying to look like she's still oblivious.

Without turning her head, she tries to look as far round behind her as she can, hearing the Keeper's footsteps at last as she heads into a quieter street.

She suddenly stops and SPINS ROUND on the spot, drawing her sword in one cool motion.

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CONTINUED: (2)

The Keeper stops, staring back at her. Sofia's eyes widen as she takes in her opponent at last, picking up on the aura of dark power he gives off.

KEEPER (cont'd)
(sinister)
Where is Buffy?

Sofia is at a loss for words, and from the growing fear in her eyes, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9

EXT. CLEVELAND - CITY STREET. NIGHT.

9

Straight back with Sofia, sword raised as the Keeper takes one calm step towards her. She stands her ground, although it's obvious she's pretty nervous.

KEEPER

I said, where is Buffy?

SOFIA

No chance. I'm not telling you a thing.

KEEPER

Don't make me kill you, little girl. Just tell me where to find the Slayer and I'll spare you.

SOFIA

(scoffs)

Like I believe that for a second!

The Keeper stares back at her for a beat - then suddenly LUNGES forward, fists raised.

Sofia is ready, neatly sidestepping the attack and kicking out, but the Keeper ducks her leg, PUNCHING back at her and hitting her square in the gut.

Sofia is knocked off her feet, dropping the sword and rolling across the ground. She quickly recovers and flips back up to her feet as the Keeper charges over.

He throws a series of wide punches at her, which she weaves and dodges around, looking for an opening.

Seeing her chance, she kicks out, and as the Keeper blocks she twists round, pushing herself away from him and combat rolling across the street, scooping up her sword.

As she gets back to her feet, sword raised again, she lets a little smile creep across her lips.

SOFIA (cont'd)

Sorry, am I not lying down and dying like a good little girl?

The Keeper folds his arms, standing a few feet away.

KEEPER

One last time. Where is Buffy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOFIA

Sorry, must have slipped my mind.

The Keeper waits another beat - then RUSHES forward again. He and Sofia get into the fight, her sword striking his arms as he blocks her blows, but bouncing off them - the Keeper appears to have some kind of armour on!

He connects with a heavy RIGHT HOOK, and Sofia staggers back, dazed. The Keeper kicks her sword out of her hand and knocks her to the floor with one powerful PUNCH.

He stands over her, Sofia too stunned to recover in time, and raises his fist to deliver a final blow - when suddenly, he freezes and spins round.

The Keeper has about half a second to register the car headlights screaming towards him, before a black Mustang SLAMS into him at full speed.

The Keeper sails through the air, rolling several times when he hits the floor and ending up in a heap some distance away.

Groggy, Sofia tries to stand, raising one hand against the glare of the car headlights, as we hear two doors open.

Angel rushes into frame, picking up Sofia as Spike keeps a wary eye on the downed Keeper.

SPIKE

Good one! Must've been at least
twenty feet. Is that a new record?

ANGEL

(urgent)
Just get back in the car!

Angel carries Sofia back to the Mustang, opening one of the passenger doors and sliding her onto the back seat, before he and Spike jump back into the car.

With a SCREECH of tire rubber, the Mustang rockets out of frame, swerving round the Keeper as he slowly gets back to his feet.

The Keeper turns, watching the departing Mustang as it takes a sharp turn and swerve into traffic on the main street, before he turns on the spot and marches out of frame.

We cut from the now empty street to:

10

INT. BLACK MUSTANG. NIGHT.

10

Spike looks over into the back seat as Sofia shakes her head, coming to her senses.

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CONTINUED:

SOFIA
(confused)
Who are you?

SPIKE
Name's Spike, pet. Just saved your neck!

SOFIA
Spike?
(realises)
Oh, Spike.

ANGEL
(suspicious)
'Oh, Spike'? What does that mean?
Why the 'oh'?

SPIKE
(grins)
Reputation, mate. You ought to try having one some day.

ANGEL
(to Sofia)
Are you hurt?

SOFIA
(winces)
I'm not in the mood to go jogging, if that's what you mean... so if you're Spike, does that mean you're Angel?

ANGEL
(glances over)
We're here to help. That man you just faced was called-

SOFIA
The Keeper, yes, we were told earlier. That's why I was out, Buffy, Shanna and I were looking for him.

SPIKE
Who's Shanna?

ANGEL
Never mind that, where's Buffy?

SOFIA
Oh, here.

She hands her cell phone to Spike.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIA (cont'd)

Just call her. She'll probably be glad to hear from you, if that was the Keeper then we're going to need a fair bit of manpower to take care of him!

Spike takes the phone and starts to call Buffy, looking up as he realises Angel keeps glancing at him.

SPIKE

What?

(penny drops)

You wanted to be the first to speak to her, didn't you!

ANGEL

(evasive)

No, I just-

SPIKE

Alright, alright. Pull over, you can speak to her. For once, I'm feeling charitable, and besides, if you throw that poor little orphan boy look my way one more time, I think I'm going to burst into tears myself!

Sofia eyes the two of them, already picking up on the simmering rivalry between the two vampires.

SOFIA

Do you two boys need a minute alone?

ANGEL

(evasive)

What? No. It's fine.

Angel pulls the car to a stop over by the sidewalk, reaching a hand out for the phone.

With a smirk, Spike hands it over and Angel dials in Buffy's number.

He raps his fingers nervously on the dashboard as he waits for her to pick up, and Spike grins back at Sofia.

SPIKE

(off Angel)

Ex-boyfriend.

SOFIA

Oh, don't worry, I know all about that little affair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Angel glances back at Sofia, suspicious, before Buffy answers at last.

 BUFFY
 (filtered; through phone)
Sofia?

Angel pauses for a long beat, suddenly at a loss.

 BUFFY (cont'd)
Sofia, are you there? Is everything
okay?

 ANGEL
Buffy, it's... it's me. Angel.

 BUFFY
Angel? What are you doing here?

 ANGEL
Heard you might be having some
trouble with a bad guy called the
Keeper, so Spike and I drove out to
lend a hand.

 BUFFY
You're here... with Spike?

 ANGEL
 (beat)
Yeah.

 BUFFY
 (beat)
Oh.

There's another pause, before Spike rolls his eyes and snatches the phone away.

 SPIKE
Look, we've got a mildly battered
Slayer in the back of our car here,
got 'Property of Buffy Summers'
stamped on her backside.

 SOFIA
Hey!!

 SPIKE
Tell us somewhere we can meet you
and we'll be right there.

 BUFFY
Okay, okay, uh... I know somewhere.

Spike listens, nodding, before we cut to:

11 INT. CHARLESTON & SMITHE - KANE'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

11

Kane is on the phone, not looking best pleased.

KANE

And he's been in the city how long?

(beat; listens)

I see. Thank you.

He hangs up and turns to Jerekov, who is staring out across the city through the office windows.

KANE (cont'd)

It seems we have a new player in town. A character from Wolfram and Hart in Los Angeles, goes by the name of 'The Keeper.'

JEREKOV

Not someone I am familiar with.

KANE

No, nobody seems to know much about him, except that he showed up a few months ago and seems to be busy making that Angel guy's life a misery over there.

(sighs)

Would it be too much to ask for people to co-ordinate their efforts once in a while? Here I am, busy trying to get our plans in motion, then this cowboy rides into town and starts throwing Slayers around! Then there's that thing over in New York, who knows when that's going to switch itself back on.

(sighs)

You know, sometimes I'm almost glad that the Sunnydale Hellmouth fell back into the ground. It's one less thing to worry about!

Kane turns and steps back towards his desk, lifting his phone's receiver and dialling a number.

KANE (cont'd)

I think it's time I set phase two in motion.

As Kane waits for the other person to pick up, we cut to:

12 EXT. CLEVELAND - PIER. NIGHT.

12

We're at the edge of a long, wooden pier, overlooking a large lake, surrounded by the city on all sides.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sailboats and dinghys moored along the pier tell us that this is something of a sanctuary for the city dwellers.

Buffy and Shanna are already waiting, staring out across the lake as Angel's car rolls to a stop in the car park a few feet away.

Buffy turns and looks over as Angel, Spike and Sofia step out. She manages a warm smile as her two ex-lovers walk over. Both vampires look particularly awkward - Spike's usual swagger is gone, and Angel is looking at the floor.

BUFFY

Hello, Spike. It's good to see you again.

SPIKE

Yeah, well, you know. Takes a nation of millions to hold us back and all that.

BUFFY

Angel? You good?

ANGEL

Yeah, I'm fine.

BUFFY

(to Sofia)

Are you okay?

SOFIA

(nods)

A bit sore, but I'll be alright. These two gentlemen saved me, so I have them to thank!

ANGEL

(shrugs)

It was nothing.

BUFFY

No, it was something. Thank you.

Angel manages a grin as Spike suddenly gets his nerve back, striding boldly up to Buffy.

SPIKE

So! Hear things are pretty different round here?

BUFFY

What makes you say that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPIKE

(motions to Sofia)

Pintsize over there gave us a potted history of the past few months on the way here.

BUFFY

Yeah, I guess things have been a little... weird.

SHANNA

Buffy? Who are these guys?

BUFFY

Oh, sorry. Shanna, this is Angel and Spike. Guys, this is Shanna. Jackson's sister. She's a Slayer.

SPIKE

Ah, Jackson as in your new boyfriend, Jackson?

Angel looks up, wanting to catch Buffy's reaction. She just sighs and rolls her eyes.

BUFFY

Yes, that Jackson.

ANGEL

So... he is your boyfriend, then?

SOFIA

Listen, everyone, not wanting to break up this lovely reunion, but can we possibly save this until later? We've got an armour-plated madman roaming the streets!

BUFFY

Okay. Angel, Spike, tell us what you know about this guy. Specifically, how we kill him.

ANGEL

(searching)

Well...

SPIKE

You know he wears a mask, right?

Buffy blinks - is that all they've got?

BUFFY

You don't know a thing, do you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SPIKE

Oi! We know a bit!

ANGEL

Wolfram and Hart brought him back,
they used enough power to black out
half of LA to do it. That means
there's a lot of power behind this
guy.

BUFFY

Great. Not helping.

ANGEL

He kidnapped this Slayer we know,
Skye. You remember her?

BUFFY

(thinks)

College student? Vampire and a
Slayer?

SPIKE

(grins)

That's her.

ANGEL

(sly)

Oh, and Spike's new girlfriend.

Spike whips his head round and glares at Angel, who folds his
arms and smiles smugly back - score one for Angel.

SPIKE

(covering)

We're just good mates, is all.

BUFFY

(smirks)

Right...

SPIKE

Anyway! He took Skye and copied
across some of her Slayer powers,
which explains the kung fu
masterclass he was busy giving
young Sofia when we arrived.

ANGEL

Best guess is, he's in town to get
hold of the powers of a more mature
Slayer.

BUFFY

You mean me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SPIKE

'Fraid so, luv. So that's why
Captain Frown Line and me are here
to help you out!

Buffy grins, finding a crate standing by a pile of other
boxes nearby and sitting down on it.

BUFFY

Alright. If this Keeper wants me,
then let's give him what he wants.
But with interest. I'm betting he
won't be so tough against three
Slayers and two vampires!

KEEPER (O.S.)

Only one way to find out.

Everyone jumps to their feet and whips round - and there is
the Keeper, standing at the edge of the car park, calmly
looking across at the assembled heroes.

His two Flunkies are either side of him, cracking their
knuckles. The Keeper points a finger towards Buffy.

KEEPER (cont'd)

I'm only here for her. The rest of
you can go.

SPIKE

(laughs)

Pull the other one, it's got bells
on! Why don't you start by trying
to get to her, and if you get
within six feet, I'll get the first
round in.

Buffy lifts up her Scythe, facing off against the Keeper as
Shanna, Sofia, Angel and Spike fan out either side of her.

BUFFY

Five against three? Those aren't
really very good odds, are they?

KEEPER

It won't make any difference.

SOFIA

Confident, isn't he?

SPIKE

Come on, Shadowman, let's see how
hard you really are!

As the Keeper and his men step forward, ready to get into the
fight, we cut away to:

13 INT. GILES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

13

We're inside Giles' small apartment as MAX speaks on the phone to someone.

MAX

Yes, sir. Everything's still going according to the plan, as we discussed. No, I understand completely.

(beat; listens)

Absolute secrecy, yes, of course. I won't let you down.

(beat; nods)

Of course. And, sir? Can I just say... Thank you for this.

(beat; smiles)

Alright, speak to you soon.

He hangs up, carefully replacing the receiver and then staring at it for several beats, deep in thought.

He doesn't hear GILES and MARIE enter the apartment until Marie taps him on the shoulder, startling him.

MARIE

Are you alright, Max? You were miles away then!

MAX

Yes, I was just... just thinking about something. It doesn't matter. Where have you two been?

GILES

Working. Not a concept you're amazingly familiar with, I know.

Max grins back at Giles, getting used by now to his icy comments towards him.

MAX

You know I'm always available to help out, Giles. No matter what your opinion may be of me, I'm still a Watcher, and I still have my uses!

GILES

(beat)

Quite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

(to Max)

We were seeing what we could find out about Irwin Kane, seeing as how he's been in contact with large numbers of local demon mercenaries and other shady characters.

MAX

Any luck?

MARIE

If he is up to something, he's being amazingly thorough about covering his tracks! All the people we spoke to were either too scared to talk or just plain didn't know anything.

GILES

He's definitely planning something. I just know it.

MAX

Maybe it has something to do with the Hellmouth?

GILES

Yes, we've considered that. Given the forces at his disposal, it's likely that he knows of a plot to try and open it, so he's just making sure he has the manpower to hand if that happens.

MARIE

(prompts)

Or...

GILES

Or, we have to consider the unpleasant possibility that Kane himself wants to open the Hellmouth.

MAX

That doesn't make any sense, why would he do that?

GILES

That, Max, is the question.

Giles heads into his room, and Marie veers off towards the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Max goes back to staring at the phone, returning to his thoughts about his earlier conversation. From his furrowed brow and dark expression, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

14 EXT. CLEVELAND - PIER. NIGHT.

14

We're back into the action at the pier, as the five heroes face off against the Keeper and his two Flunkies. Buffy, Angel and Spike square off against the Keeper, with Shanna and Sofia taking a Flunky each.

The Keeper is straight into the attack, swatting Angel and Spike's blows aside and focusing on Buffy.

Shanna is quickly finding that her opponent is a skilled fighter, as he dodges her punches and kicks and lands several good ones of his own.

Sofia is having more luck - sweep kicking the Flunky to the ground, she grabs him by the shirt lapels and throws him across the pier, chasing after him as he clatters along.

Spike gets knocked back by a PUNCH from the Keeper, spotting an old, dusty fire extinguisher leaning against a pile of old supply boxes and grabbing it.

Angel and Buffy are toe to toe with the Keeper, who is matching all of their moves, grabbing Angel's wrist and wrenching his sword out of his hand.

Buffy blocks the sword with her Scythe, but gets a KICK to the stomach for her efforts. The Keeper rounds on Angel, just as Spike calls out.

SPIKE
Oi, Goldie!

The Keeper spins round - Spike is aiming the fire extinguisher at him with a smirk.

SPIKE (cont'd)
Time for a foam party!

He hits the plunger - and nothing happens. He glances down at the extinguisher, shaking it to try and get it working, as the Keeper turns back to Angel.

Dodging the Keeper's sword swings and slices, Angel is driven back step by step towards a large shack on the pier, finally sent CRASHING through its side as the Keeper plants a firm KICK to Angel's chest.

BUFFY
Angel!!

She dives in to attack once again, the Keeper showing that he's a skilled swordsman as he fights off Buffy's Scythe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spike finally gives up with the extinguisher, raising it above his head and charging at the Keeper, but before he can slam it into the Keeper's unprotected back, a Flunky tackles him, sending both men sprawling to the floor.

Spike fights back, glancing over to see Shanna lying unconscious on the floor.

Sofia, meanwhile, is hard at work with her opponent, who has fought her back towards the others, rapid fire kicks and punches lashing out at her as she tries to defend.

She takes a blow to her leg and crumples, then another SLAP across her face, sending her to the ground.

The Flunky prepares to kick her while she's down, but GULPS quietly as Angel appears in frame, neatly running the Flunky through with a long fishing hook.

Angel pushes the Flunky off the barbed hook and pole, and he SPLASHES into the black waters of the lake.

SOFIA

Thanks!

Angel offers his hand to Sofia, helping her up.

ANGEL

Thank me later, come on!

They dash back towards the fight.

The Keeper and Buffy are still sparring, but as Buffy takes one overconfident swing with the Scythe, the Keeper gets his opening, clamping a hand round her throat and shoving her backwards.

As Spike knees the remaining Flunky in the groin, pushing him off and PUNCHING him once more, knocking him out, Angel and Sofia race into frame.

SPIKE

Where's...

(sees her)

Buffy!

The Keeper SLAMS Buffy onto the bonnet of the Mustang, and she gasps for breath as she tries to prise his hand from her throat.

He leans in close to her, whispering to her.

KEEPER

I can save him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUFFY

(beat)

What?

KEEPER

The Guardian. He will die if you do nothing. But I can save him.

BUFFY

What... what do you mean?

The Keeper doesn't get chance to answer as Spike and Angel YANK him away, Sofia helping a coughing Buffy stagger away as the two vampires lay into the Keeper.

Spike holds the Keeper's arms back as Angel lands a series of heavy punches to his chest.

SPIKE

Not so tough now, are you, you bloody Hammer Horror reject!

ANGEL

(still punching)

Spike? Not now.

SPIKE

Oh, what, I'm not allowed to gloat a little when we're-

CRUNCH! The Keeper's head snaps back, catching Spike on the bridge of his nose. He releases the Keeper, staggering backwards, and the Keeper is quick to react, landing two fast punches across Angel's jaw that send the vampire reeling.

One last KICK to the stomach knocks Angel to the ground, and the Keeper turns to face Buffy and Sofia.

Sofia looks up, setting her jaw and grabbing the Scythe from the woozy Buffy's hands as the Keeper's shadow falls across them. The Keeper stands still, staring down at the two Slayers for a long beat.

KEEPER

Remember my offer, Slayer. Meet me when I call for you, and I will give you what you need.

Sofia blinks and looks at Buffy, who can't find any words to respond.

The Keeper turns and strides away, leaving the battered heroes behind.

SPIKE (O.S.)

That wanker!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Sofia helps Buffy to her feet as Spike and Angel manage to drag themselves back up. Spike clutches his bloody nose as Angel wheezes, pressing a hand to his side.

SPIKE (cont'd)
(holding nose)
I think he broke it!

ANGEL
(winces)
I think he got me in the ribs...

SPIKE
(furious)
Where is he? I'll have that tosspot
this time!

BUFFY
He's gone.

They look round - and the Keeper has indeed disappeared.

SPIKE
Oh, that's bloody brilliant, that
is - the bugger can not only quite
easily slap us all silly, but he
can pull a Batman and vanish into
the night whenever he feels like it
as well!

ANGEL
(clearly in pain)
Save it, Spike...

Angel tries to walk but stumbles, and Buffy dashes to his side to support him. Spike juts his jaw out, not liking what he's seeing, but Sofia taps him on the arm to distract him - she points at Shanna, who is just starting to come round.

SOFIA
You can pout later. Help me with
Shanna.

With a last glance towards Buffy and Angel, as Buffy helps him towards his car, Spike follows Sofia.

SPIKE
(mutters)
Sly git's probably faking it,
anyway...

Spike and Sofia grab an arm each of the limp Shanna, as she starts to mumble to herself.

SHANNA
Phone... He took... my phone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Spike and Sofia exchange a curious glance, then carry on towards Angel's car, as we cut to:

15 INT. CIRCLE - 'THE CAGE.' DAY.

15

Willow is still in her cell, intently reading through the diaries that Tattles brought her.

Someone clears their throat off screen, and Willow looks up to see TRINKETS standing at the cell door.

He blinks at her, shifting his glasses slightly and scratching a hand through his ruffled brown hair.

TRINKETS

Hello.

WILLOW

If you've come to ask me again,
then the answer's still-

TRINKETS

Actually, I wanted to show you what
it is we're doing.

WILLOW

What do you mean?

TRINKETS

I know you're only saying 'no' to
helping us because you think we're
evil or something. I thought if you
saw what we do, then you can make
your own mind up about it all!

Willow puts the diary down and stands, walking over to the door and looking down at Trinkets.

WILLOW

And if I still say no, then what
happens?

TRINKETS

Then, you'll go back in here to
think it over some more.

WILLOW

(sarcastic)

I thought you were just going to
kill me and find another Teach to
take my place?

TRINKETS

Um, yeah, we were, but then... It's
all changed. Things are happening
that I wasn't expecting, and...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRINKETS(cont'd)

It's probably best if you just come
and see for yourself.

Trinkets SNAPS his fingers, and the cell door swings silently open, as though all it needed was a push. Willow looks back at Trinkets, very wary.

WILLOW

How do I know you're not just gonna
zap me as soon as I step out of
here?

TRINKETS

(grins)
You don't.

Willow bites her lip, trying to decide what to do - then she takes one cautious step out of the cell.

16 INT. CIRCLE - DUNGEON. CONTINUOUS.

16

When nothing happens, she breathes a small sigh of relief and looks to Trinkets, who starts to walk away.

TRINKETS

Come on. I want you to see this.

Trinkets heads towards a staircase carved into the rock of the dungeon wall and starts to jog up it.

Willow follows a few steps behind, cautiously looking all around before she starts to climb the stairs too.

17 INT. CIRCLE - TRINKETS' WORKSHOP. DAY.

17

With Trinkets leading the way, Willow steps into Trinkets' spacious workshop, the dozens of ticking clocks and other mechanical devices clicking and whirring away all around.

Trinkets heads towards his game board - the large, many-tiered chessboard-esque construction, with pieces standing on coloured squares all across each level, and ladders round the sides to allow easy access to the higher levels.

Trinkets starts to rapidly clamber up one of the ladders, taking his attention off Willow for a second. Seeing her opportunity, she closes her eyes, squeezing them shut as she concentrates.

WILLOW

(whispers)
Come on, Xander...

We cut from her focused expression to:

18 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - SPARE ROOM. NIGHT. 18

Xander is dozing on top of the bed, fully clothed, Hope fast asleep in a cot beside him. He starts to SNORE, but suddenly jolts to life, scrambling to sit up in the bed as though he's just been given an electric shock.

He blinks, rapidly, trying to focus, looking all around him in confusion. He pauses, lowering his head as though listening to some distant noise, before a look of surprise crosses his face.

XANDER

Willow?

We cut from his concerned look back to:

19 INT. CIRCLE - TRINKETS' WORKSHOP. DAY. 19

Back with Willow, still concentrating hard.

WILLOW

(whispers)

Xander... Help me.

TRINKETS (O.S.)

Come on, you'll miss it!

Willow's eyes snap open and she GASPS, her concentration broken. She glances up to see Trinkets waving at her from one of the board's highest levels.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

Up here!

Willow pauses for a beat, then starts towards the nearest ladder, hoping that Trinkets didn't work out what she was up to as we cut back to:

20 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - SPARE ROOM. NIGHT. 20

Xander's eyes are moving rapidly, almost as if he's reading a long, complicated message. He suddenly jumps to his feet, alarmed.

XANDER

Willow!!

He turns and bolts out of the room, down the stairs to:

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

Buffy sits on the sofa, gingerly pressing a hand to gash on her arm as Sofia hands her a large glass of water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sitting one each on the two armchairs, both watching Buffy intently, are Angel and Spike. Angel is shirtless, his chest wrapped up in bandages, while Spike has a wad of tissue stuffed up his nose, his head tilted back.

SPIKE

Bloody fantastic idea, this was.

ANGEL

What's that supposed to mean?

SPIKE

It's not enough getting your arse kicked in LA, is it? You had to come all the way out here to do it as well, and more to the point you dragged me along for the ride!

ANGEL

(darkly)

I didn't ask you to come, Spike. You volunteered.

SPIKE

I was doing it for Buffy!

ANGEL

You stole my car keys until I promised to take you with me!

SPIKE

If I hadn't, you'd have just-

BUFFY

Boys!

They both shut up, looking anywhere but at each other. Spike mutters something under his breath, and Angel scowls at him, starting to stand up.

ANGEL

Alright, that's it!

BUFFY

Angel!

Angel stops, looking at Buffy, who raises a hand and motions for him to sit back down.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Come on. This isn't helping. We need-

XANDER (O.S.)

Willow!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Everyone looks round as Xander comes clattering down the stairs, rushing towards Buffy.

BUFFY

What?

XANDER

It's Willow, she's in trouble!

ANGEL

What kind of trouble?

XANDER

I don't know, she-

Xander double takes, almost jumping a mile when he sees Angel and Spike.

XANDER (cont'd)

Who called in those two?

BUFFY

Long story. Keep talking - how did you speak to Willow?

XANDER

Uh, same way as we used to, her voice just popped into my head.

SPIKE

(sceptical)

Hearing voices, now? Lack of sleep, that is.

BUFFY

(hisses)

Spike!

XANDER

She called my name, then said 'help me,' then she showed me a blur of images, I'm not sure what any of them meant, but...

(serious)

We have to find her, Buffy. Wherever she's gone, it's not somewhere she wants to be.

ANGEL

Wait a minute - where is Willow, anyway?

Buffy looks to Angel, then sighs - here comes another long story.

As she turns to him to explain, we cut to:

22 INT. GILES' APARTMENT. NIGHT.

22

Back inside Giles' place, Giles himself is asleep in the armchair in the front room, a thick book across his lap as he SNORES lightly.

The door to Max's room CREAKS open slowly, and after a beat Max steps out, his coat on, looking ready to leave. He looks over to Giles to check that he's asleep, then sneaks across the apartment, opening the door and slipping outside, closing it quietly behind him.

We stay on Giles for a beat, before we cut to:

23 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - FRONT ROOM. NIGHT.

23

Everyone is up and about, furiously debating the next move.

XANDER

Guys, there's no question here, we have to find Willow and get her back!

SPIKE

Don't be soft, what if it's a trick?

XANDER

A trick from who?

SPIKE

I don't know, do I!

SOFIA

I'm afraid Spike's, right, Xander - somebody could be exploiting you, making you think Willow's in trouble because they know it'd get your attention.

BUFFY

But who knows about her? I mean, it's not like there was a special bulletin about it, right? 'Local wicca ascends, joins higher plane, film at eleven'?

ANGEL

If she was doing something as dramatic as ascending, there's a chance she put out enough energy to be seen for miles away.

Buffy hears her cell phone RINGING, and steps away from the conversation to answer it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

Come on, guys, I'm not hearing a
'yes, Xander, let's go save
Willow!' in here so far...

SOFIA

One thing at a time, Xander!

SPIKE

Listen to your girlfriend, she's
making a lot of sense.

XANDER

(shocked)

My what?

SPIKE

Alright, 'mistress,' then!
Whatever!

ANGEL

Spike, I don't think-

XANDER

(cold)

My wife died, Spike!

SPIKE

(beat)

Sorry.

As the fierce discussion continues, Buffy gets to her phone
at last.

The caller ID reads 'Shanna,' and Buffy frowns, wondering why
she could be calling, before answering.

BUFFY

(into phone)

Hello?

KEEPER

(filtered; through phone)

Do you want to save the life of
your lover?

Buffy's eyes bulge - but she manages to hide it, turning her
back so the others won't see her.

BUFFY

(beat)

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEEPER

Then come to me. If you give me
what I need, I will help you, and
you shall not be harmed.

BUFFY

How can I trust you?

KEEPER

That is your decision.

The Keeper hangs up, and Buffy closes her eyes as the line
goes dead.

She glances back to look at the others, who are still
oblivious to her, a torn look on her face as she tries to
decide what the heck to do next.

And from that lost expression, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 INT. CIRCLE - TRINKETS' WORKSHOP. DAY.

24

Willow finishes climbing the ladder to one of the highest tiers of the huge game board, joining Trinkets as she looks out across the wide, flat surface.

She has to crouch down, the gaps between the boards only big enough to let someone as small as Trinkets walk around, and she very carefully steps round the few small figures and models positioned around the board.

TRINKETS

Careful! Don't knock anybody over.
That'd be pretty bad.

Willow throws an annoyed glare at Trinkets, then carries on making her way over to him.

He's standing by a small cluster of figures, who seem to be standing around a writhing black ball of energy, smoky tendrils of darkness snaking away from it.

WILLOW

You never explained to me how any
of this works, you know.

TRINKETS

Well, now I can. You see this?

He points down at the figures and black energy before him, squatting next to them. Willow crouches down too.

WILLOW

What is it?

TRINKETS

Lots of powerful people, all in one
place. Something big's about to
happen here.

WILLOW

Something bad?

TRINKETS

(grins)

Maybe. All of these little people,
they represent people down on the
world below. As they get more
powerful, they move up and around
on the board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

So it's like chess, or something,
right?

TRINKETS

Right. The most powerful people go
at the top, and the higher you are,
the more things you can do. You can
make things happen on your own
level and those below you, but not
above you.

Willow looks around, taking in the other pieces.

WILLOW

So where do you come in?

TRINKETS

I made all this so I could make
things happen as well. You see, all
of this game board isn't supposed
to be exist, so all the movement
and powers and things just go on
without anybody being able to see
them.

WILLOW

(catching up)

So you figured out a way to tap
into it all, and you use this board
to influence things that happen
down on Earth, right?

TRINKETS

(beams)

Right! This is where we make our
fun. For example...

Trinkets reaches down and carefully picks up one of the
figures around the black energy.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

This person's about to play a part
in what's going on down there, but
if we do this...

Trinkets SNAPS the fragile figure in two.

TRINKETS (cont'd)

Then they don't.

WILLOW

(shocked)

Wait, wait - what happens to them?
If you break that, don't they-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRINKETS

Die? No. They only die if the whole model is destroyed. Doing this just takes away their power.

Willow looks down at the remaining figures, trying to take all this in.

WILLOW

So this is all you do? You just mess around with what's going on, giving people power and taking it away, moving them around, putting them places they're not meant to be? Why? Just to see what happens?

TRINKETS

Just because we can.

Trinkets smiles back at her, and Willow shakes her head, defeated by the simplicity of Trinkets' child-like logic.

WILLOW

So what happens now? What's going on down there?

TRINKETS

Somebody's about to do something very naughty. They're going to open it all up, but I don't think they're ready for what's next.

WILLOW

Open it up?
(thinks; gasps)
The Hellmouth! We can't let them, we have to-

TRINKETS

No, I'm going to help them. If you don't want to help, then you can go back to your cell.

Willow stands up, glaring defiantly down at Trinkets.

WILLOW

Forget it! You think I'm going to sit here and help you bring that kind of evil into the world? No way! You can just-

Trinkets SNAPS his fingers, and Willow disappears, warped straight back to her cell.

Trinkets sighs, and then gets back to watching the scene below him, as we cut to:

25 EXT. CLEVELAND PD. NIGHT.

25

A sleek, executive car pulls into frame, across the street from the Cleveland police station, and Kane and Jerekov step out.

JEREKOV
Will they all be there?

KANE
(checks watch)
I hope so, otherwise this is going
to be a very short evening...

He starts to walk towards the station, Jerekov following. Jerekov starts to stagger a little, and Kane turns round.

KANE (cont'd)
Are you alright?

JEREKOV
I feel a little woozy... as though
my powers were all...
(shakes head)
It will pass.

KANE
(eyes him)
It'd better.

As they head towards the station again, we cut to:

26 INT. CLEVELAND PD - RECEPTION. NIGHT.

26

A skeleton crew of night watch officers mill around the front reception area as Kane and Jerekov head up to the DESK SERGEANT.

DESK SERGEANT
Yes?

Kane smiles warmly at the officer as he places his bag on the edge of the desk, opening it up.

KANE
Good evening, I'm just here to drop
off some evidence.

DESK SERGEANT
Evidence for what?

Kane removes the small, round object from earlier, looking like a jet black Faberge egg, and places it on the desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESK SERGEANT (cont'd)
(confused)
What is that? Who are you? Why do-

Suddenly, the black object starts to GLOW, a white light PULSING from inside it, and the Sergeant trails off, his eyes drawn to it.

The glow begins to intensify, as does a HUMMING sound in time with the pulsing light. All around the reception the various officers start to sway, sliding slowly to the floor, unconscious, as if hit by knockout gas.

Within moments, Kane and Jerekov are the only men left standing. Kane calmly packs the object away as the glowing ices down, while Jerekov looks around at the unconscious cops, nudging one with his boot.

JEREKOV
You used an yseult on them, very clever!

KANE
It was a gift, I keep it handy for situations like this.

Kane starts towards a door behind the desk, as we cut to:

27

INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - FRONT ROOM. NIGHT.

27

Everyone except Buffy is sitting around the front room, all in various stages of preparation - Xander is on the phone, Sofia and Spike are picking out weapons and Angel is carefully trying to get dressed again.

Xander hangs up and turns to the others.

XANDER
Giles is going to call the Watcher's Council, see if they can find some way to track Willow down. They've got plenty of wiccans and covens and whatnots they can try, apparently.

SOFIA
And in the meantime...

SPIKE
In the meantime, we're going back out to find that Keeper bastard and put him down for good.

Angel shrugs on his jacket, wincing as he does so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGEL

I'll settle for driving him off for now.

SPIKE

Not like you to 'settle' for anything!

ANGEL

All I'm saying is...
(looks round)
Where's Buffy?

XANDER

Oh, she just headed out for a while, said she had something to take care of.

Angel, Spike and Sofia exchange looks - they already know why she's gone. Xander, however, doesn't.

XANDER (cont'd)

What?

Angel is the first to dart towards the door, as we cut to:

28

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

28

Arms folded against the chill night air, Buffy walks down the street towards Jackson's house.

She pauses when she sees the Keeper, standing patiently outside the house, waiting for her. Buffy walks slowly up to him.

BUFFY

Alright, so, I'm here. Now what?

KEEPER

(off house)

This is where your lover lives, isn't it?

BUFFY

That's right. You said you could help me save him.
(beat; hesitant)
Tell me.

KEEPER

What is his life worth to you?

BUFFY

(beat)
Whatever it takes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Keeper reaches into his cloak, bringing out a small, boxy metal object.

KEEPER
Then let us begin.

As Buffy stares, puzzled, at the metal box, we cut to:

29

EXT. MARIE'S HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

29

Max is outside the room, knocking impatiently on the door.

After a few beats, we hear the lock slide back, and a yawning, half-asleep Marie opens the door, blinking.

MARIE
Max? What on earth-

MAX
Get dressed, quick. I'll wait out here.

MARIE
What? But- what time is it?

MAX
(serious)
Almost too late. Please, Marie, you have to trust me! Get dressed, we have to go right now!

MARIE
Go? Go where?

Max doesn't answer, but his pleading look makes Marie nod her head, yawning again.

MARIE (cont'd)
All right, all right, give me a moment.

She closes the door again, and Max leans against the door frame, fidgeting urgently, as we cut back to:

30

INT. CLEVELAND PD - BASEMENT. NIGHT.

30

Kane and Jerekov walk down the corridor that leads to a very important room in the basement, stepping over the occasional unconscious cop on the way.

Kane reaches the door first and opens it, stepping into:

31

INT. CLEVELAND PD - BASEMENT ROOM. NIGHT.

31

We're in the room that hides the Hellmouth, it's dirty tiled floor doing a good job of making it look like just another room.

Kane checks his watch, and as if on cue, there is a sudden HISS of wind, and with a FLASH of blue and white light and a loud BANG, a PORTAL opens up on the far side of the room.

From its circular, swirling mouth step five figures - four DEMONS, their yellowing skin stretched thinly over the bodies. The fifth person is a human woman, her wrists bound and a bag over her head.

Kane smiles as the demon shove the woman towards him, and he takes hold of her.

WOMAN

(sobbing)

Please, please... Don't hurt me! I haven't done anything, so-

KANE

Ssh. Be quiet, Catherine, it's all going to be all right.

The Woman falls silent, and Kane pulls away the bag to reveal her - this is CATHERINE KANE. Irwin's wife. Her tear soaked, mascara stained eyes stare back at Kane in disbelief, her curly blonde hair a mess round her head.

CATHERINE

(quietly)

Irwin? What's... what's going on?

Kane smiles at her, tenderly stroking the side of her head. Naturally, this doesn't calm her down - instead, it just makes her SOB again, shaking with fear.

KANE

You're about to become part of something truly spectacular, Catherine.

He presses his forehead against her head, looking forlorn all of a sudden.

KANE (cont'd)

I wish it wasn't like this...

He looks up, looking back into her eyes.

KANE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I wish there was some other way, I truly do, and for that, I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He KISSES her, but she's weeping openly now. Kane motions to the demons, who grab her again and step behind Kane.

Kane motions to Jerekov, who passes him his briefcase. Kane pauses to wipe a tear from his eye before he opens the case, taking out the manilla folders from earlier.

KANE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Alright, let's get started.

As Kane takes the glossy photos out, we cut to:

32

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

32

The Keeper holds the metal box out towards Buffy, indicating that she should lay one of her hands onto it.

She starts to reach out, pauses, glances towards Jackson's house, then closes her eyes and lays her hand on the box.

BUFFY
What will this do?

KEEPER
I do not need much from you. Allow me to take it, and I will leave this city, never to return, and you will have the knowledge you need to save your lover.

Buffy looks like she's fighting the instinct to start punching the Keeper, as he presses some buttons on a control panel on one side of the box.

It starts to BEEP, the sound becoming quicker and more urgent as more red lights start to flash all over the box's surface.

Buffy starts to tense up as a wind kicks up all around her - the air becomes literally charged with energy, her hairs starting to stand on end.

She looks to the Keeper, but his expressionless mask means only his eyes are visible to stare back at her.

As there is a sudden FLASH of light, and Buffy shields her eyes, we SMASH CUT to:

33

INT. MARIE'S CAR. NIGHT.

33

Max drives, travelling at high speed as he barrels down the city centre roads. Marie hangs on for dear life as Max powerslides the car across an intersection.

MARIE
Max, slow down! You'll get us both killed!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

There's no time to slow down!

MARIE

Where are we going?

Max looks across at Marie, his serious expression seriously unnerving her.

MAX

The police station.

Max concentrates on his driving again, and as Marie tries to work out what the hell is going on, we cut to:

34

INT. CLEVELAND PD - BASEMENT ROOM. NIGHT.

34

Kane studies the photos for a moment, the defeated sobs of Catherine the only sound in the room, before he takes off his glasses and closes his eyes.

KANE

Grash kosa zuul gorgo, hojo kaiju
nash helper!

A low, tremendously bassy RUMBLING starts to fill the room, everyone rocking slightly as the ground beneath them starts to move.

We've seen this once already - and as the ground starts to rise, soil spilling out from beneath the tiles as something huge pushes its way out of the ground, Kane turns to the demons holding Catherine and nods.

They start to bring her towards him, but she struggles, kicking and screaming all the way.

CATHERINE

(hysterical)

No! No! What are you doing! Irwin!
Let me go! Damn you!

Kane holds out a hand to her, as behind him the CLEVELAND HELLMOUTH makes its second appearance, the silver, star-shaped entrance rising a foot up from the floor, dirt cascading from all around it.

Catherine's eyes boggle as she sees the Hellmouth at last, and she looks at Kane with pleading eyes.

CATHERINE (cont'd)

Irwin, no, please don't do this...
You don't have to do this! You
can't!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KANE

Catherine, I'm truly sorry. But you
knew this day would come.

Catherine stares at him, then her fear quickly converts
itself into rage, and she lets rip with a furious tirade.

CATHERINE

Is this because of him? Your
'boss'? Is this just one more thing
he wants you to do? Is it? Open the
Hellmouth and get rid of me, all at
once?

The demons bring Catherine to stand next to Kane, right over
the Hellmouth seal.

KANE

You knew the deal.
(quietly)
I had a job to do, and I did it.
That's all.
(beat)
We all have to make sacrifices.

And with that, Kane STABS Catherine, a knife appearing in his
hand which he sinks into her gut.

Catherine GASPS, starting to double over, looking up at Kane
with one final gaze of disbelief.

There are tears in Kane's eyes as he gently tips Catherine
over, watching as she wilts to land squarely on top of the
Hellmouth seal.

He stares down at her, trying to contain his emotion, as the
blood from her wound pours slowly out of her, running into
grooves etched into the seal's surface.

Catherine twitches, catching her last few breaths, watching
her life's blood flow out of her.

Jerekov steps forward and places a hand on Kane's shoulder.

JEREKOV

This had to come to pass.

Kane can't answer - he's on the verge of tears now, his eyes
locked on Catherine as she takes her final breath and lies
still.

We pull back, looking directly down on Catherine as the blood
flowing through the grooves completes an elaborate star-
shaped pattern on the surface of the seal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

There's a beat - then another deep, RUMBLING sound, and we cut from that to:

35 EXT. CLEVELAND PD. NIGHT.

35

Marie's car SCREECHES into frame, Max yanking the handbrake on and jumping out of the car. Marie quickly gets out and follows, but Max is only halfway across the car park when he stops.

The RUMBLING can be heard clearly, the ground all around them shaking, like a small earthquake. Max turns to Marie, horrified.

MAX

We're too late...

As Marie looks back, her own features turning to alarm as the RUMBLING intensifies, we cut over to:

36 EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

36

Buffy and the Keeper are now engulfed in some kind of electrical energy, a blue field of crackling light covering both of them.

Buffy SHOUTS but we can't hear over the sound of the storm all round her, while the Keeper stands still, impassive as always.

As the energy field pulses from blue to white and back again, Buffy's hands still glued to the metal box, we quickly cut away to:

37 EXT. CLEVELAND - SUBURB STREETS. NIGHT.

37

Angel, Spike and Sofia race into frame, looking all around for any sign of Buffy.

ANGEL

She can't have gone far...

(calls out)

Buffy! Buffy!!

Spike spots something off scree, and points.

SPIKE

There!

The trio look - visible from the other side of a row of houses is the fallout from the energy field around Buffy, tendrils of white lightning arcing back up into the air.

Angel is already racing towards it as Sofia and Spike run after him, and we cut back to:

38

EXT. JACKSON RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

38

Buffy is shaking now, snaking curls of energy tracing their way up and down her body, starting in the electricity around her, passing over her body and heading straight for the metal box.

The Keeper glances over Buffy's shoulder - Angel is running towards us, YELLING. The Keeper narrows his eyes - and with a final FLASH, the energy field is gone.

Buffy drops to the floor, convulsing, as the Keeper stashes the box away somewhere inside his cloak.

He turns - and his black limousine tears into frame, skidding to a halt inches away from him. The Keeper looks back up as Angel closes in, Spike and Sofia a few paces behind.

ANGEL

Buffy! Buffy!

The Keeper throws the limo's rear door open and steps inside, and as the door is still closing the long car SCREECHES away, tire rubber smoking as it barrels out of frame.

Angel throws himself to Buffy's side, helping her sit up as the convulsions die down.

ANGEL (cont'd)

(frantic)

Buffy, can you hear me? Are you alright? Buffy!

Buffy finally opens her eyes - and sees the Keeper's limo speeding away.

She LUNGES forward, reaching a desperate arm out towards the departing limo.

BUFFY

(yelling)

Wait... Wait!! You didn't tell me anything! You didn't tell me how to save him!!

(screams)

Wait! Please! Wait!!

As Buffy continues shouting after the limo, her voice hoarse, Spike and Sofia finally make it over to her, their concerned expressions flicking from Buffy to the escaping Keeper's car.

We pull slowly back from the scene, Angel trying to sooth the hysterical Buffy as she continues to reach out her arm after the limo, before we slowly dissolve to:

39

INT. CLEVELAND PD - BASEMENT ROOM. NIGHT.

39

The rumbling has stopped. The room is silent - Kane still stares down at his now deceased wife's body, her blood filling the star emblem on the seal's surface.

JEREKOV

It is done. And so, it begins.

With a series of GRINDING sounds, the opening of the Hellmouth starts to fold away, quickly revealing a simple, inelegant hole in the ground.

From within the hole, we can hear the distant sounds of shouting - lots and lots of voices, all clamouring together to create the unearthly noises we can hear.

As we push in on the newly-opened Hellmouth, the impenetrable blackness of the opening staring back at us, we suddenly:

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW