

SLAYER ACADEMY

"Backup"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1

INT. BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

1

A long table seats ten smartly-dressed executives, three of them in military uniforms. They're inside a cosy looking board room, with a roaring fire in the background and various paintings adorning the walls.

At the head of the table sits CLEMENS, a bespectacled woman in her forties, shuffling through a stack of papers.

CLEMENS

I think it's time we start drawing
some conclusions, ladies and
gentlemen.

At this, the nine people around her erupt into heated chatter all at once - the gruff military man, COL. BARKER, gets his voice heard first.

BARKER

This 'union,' or whatever the god
damned hell you want to call it, is
a drain on our resources and a
security risk of the highest level!

OWEN, a meek librarian type, speaks up:

OWEN

How can you say that? After all the
invaluable support the Academy has
given us?

NIENHUIS, a dark-skinned Dutch woman in her sixties, leans forward to make her point:

NIENHUIS

It has also exposed our agents and
operatives to dangers that fall a
long way outside our remit, and I
fail to see how this is of any real
strategic advantage to us!

CLEMENS

Everyone, please!

Clemens raises her hands and manages to calm the chatter back down. She takes a beat, then continues.

CLEMENS (cont'd)

I'm not expecting a clear answer to
be reached tonight by any means.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLEMENS (cont'd)

Mainly because we can't seem to make a single point without one of us raising a complaint about it!

BARKER

Ship our people out of there, and leave them to get on with it. That's my recommendation.

CLEMENS

Noted. But that isn't going to do much good in the long term.

OWEN

The Academy offers the kind of resources and information we struggled to build up when this organisation was founded, and after the disaster in Sunnydale-

BARKER

(interrupts)

Which, may I add, was the result of getting a damn Slayer involved...

OWEN

(glares at Barker)

We just can't let our relations with them slip.

BARKER

Do you know how many of our agents died saving their butts when their campus got attacked a few months back, Mr. Owen?

OWEN

(beat)

No, I don't.

BARKER

Well, I do. And I know I had to hand deliver every letter of condolence to the families of those men and women, so pardon me if I couldn't really give a crap about our 'relations' with that place!

CLEMENS

(sighs)

And this is exactly what I'm talking about... The Initiative is no longer just a military operation, Colonel. Surely you must recognise that!

(CONTINUED)

BARKER

Recognise, yes. Agree with, no.

CLEMENS

Alright, we're done here.

She closes her folders, looking pretty fed up and just wanting to get out of there. The others follow her lead.

CLEMENS (cont'd)

We'll reconvene in a few days. We have to come to some sort of agreement soon, because General Anderson expects a plan of action on his desk by Friday, and right now I honestly don't see that happening.

Clemens gets up and leaves the room, as do the other non-military personnel, leaving just Barker and his colleague, MAJOR HARRIS.

BARKER

(grumbles)

If I have anything to do with it, then the only agreement we'll get is to get our asses out of that mess before anything else goes wrong!

HARRIS

Do you think they know anything about our... other operations, sir?

BARKER

(eyes him)

That's highly classified information, Major, and you'd do well to forget I ever told you about it.

HARRIS

Yes, sir.

BARKER

(sighs)

Come on, let's get out of here. Board rooms always bring on my heartburn.

The duo get up to leave, and we cut to:

The rest of the personnel from the meeting are heading for their cars, the last few on the wide, badly-lit parking area.

(CONTINUED)

Clemens is reaching for her keys, nodding to Owen as he passes, when they hear a car engine start up.

CLEMENS

I thought we were the only people
still here?

OWEN

(shrugs)

Must be the cleaners or something.

Clemens turns back to her car - and a pair of HEADLIGHTS blare into life, dazzling her. She raises her arm against the lights with a frown.

CLEMENS

Who the-

And there's a SCREECH as the van suddenly revs its engine, catapulting forward and charging straight for her!

OWEN

Look out!!

He dives into frame, grabbing her and yanking her out of the way as the van SLAMS into the bonnet of her car!

The startled Clemens just has time to yelp in alarm before the van's side door slides open, and four beefy figures leap out of it.

CLEMENS

Oh, my God...

Four DEMONS stand before the duo - thick necks, mottled green skin and bulging, muscular arms.

At a barked command from one, they march forward, grabbing the helpless Owen and Clemens and dragging them towards the waiting van!

CLEMENS (cont'd)

Help! Help us!!

OWEN

What do you want? Who are you?

He's answered by a SLAP, which stuns him long enough for the demons to bundle them both into the van. The door slides shut, and with another SQUEAL of tire rubber, the van spins round and races for the exit ramp, as we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3

INT. CAMPUS - ELLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

3

The phone on the desk is RINGING, and it manages a few more rings before ELLEN darts into frame, dropping an armful of folders and spilling their contents as she picks it up.

ELLEN
(off folders)
Damn it!
(into phone)
Hello?

BARKER
(filtered; through phone)
Agent Marklew?

Ellen blinks as she recognises the voice, then tries to sound calm as she struggles to gather up the displaced files.

ELLEN
Yes, sir.

BARKER
Marklew, we've got ourselves a serious problem.

ELLEN
What's the matter, sir?

BARKER
Two of the executive council members managed to get themselves kidnapped right after a staff meeting last night, and Colonel Hastilow wants you to take charge of the rescue operation.

Ellen manages to sit down at last, surprised by the request.

ELLEN
Me, sir? But I-

BARKER
The meeting took place down in London, and you're the closest agent we have who has access to more Initiative personnel. If I had my way, we'd be bringing in somebody else, but Hastilow insisted you take point.

Ellen lets that comment slide - just.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

Alright, then, I'll bring my men in and we'll get on this right away, sir. What can you tell me?

BARKER

Harris is sending you all the intel you'll need via e-mail, so just get down to the base in London ASAP and perform a full sweep of the area. We need these people found, Marklew. They're part of the civilian executive board.

ELLEN

(beat)

I see.

BARKER

Alright, soldier, you have your orders. Get to work.

ELLEN

Yes, sir.

He hangs up, and Ellen stares at the receiver in her hand for a beat before we cut to:

Ellen KNOCKS at the door and then enters, to find BARBARA at her desk, busy with paperwork as always.

BARBARA

Good morning, Ellen. Have a seat.

ELLEN

Actually, I need to show you something. Can I use your computer?

BARBARA

Of course.

Ellen moves around her desk, rapidly typing into Barbara's PC to bring up her e-mail account and the files sent to her.

BARBARA (cont'd)

(peers at screen)

What's all this?

ELLEN

A job I have to do. Some members of the Initiative executive council were kidnapped last night, and I've been ordered to find them.

BARBARA

Sounds serious. Anything we can do to help?

ELLEN

I hope so. Why don't you take a look at the intel I've got first.

She steps back, and Barbara leans forward to scroll through the e-mail.

BARBARA

I'm not going to land you in trouble for viewing classified information, am I?

ELLEN

Frankly, if it gets the job done quicker I'd take this to the press.

BARBARA

(grins)

Point taken.

(reads)

So what is this 'civilian council' anyway? I thought the Initiative was a US military operation?

ELLEN

It was, until the accident at our Sunnydale base almost had us closed down. Several private organisations got involved, making sure that there was a civilian presence inside our higher echelons of power and keeping an eye on what we were doing.

BARBARA

So no more experimenting with human-demon hybrids?

ELLEN

That's the idea. Not many of our old officers like it, but it's kept us going so we can't really complain all that much.

BARBARA

So if anything happens to these civilians...

ELLEN

Then there's a danger we'll have the plug pulled on our funding and support, yeah. Hence the secrecy.

(CONTINUED)

Barbara turns away from the PC, registering Ellen's concerned expression.

BARBARA

Don't worry, you have my full support in this. What's your plan so far?

ELLEN

Head down to the base, look around, try to find a trail and go from there. No demands have been made by the kidnappers yet, but we have to assume they will do soon.

BARBARA

Alright, so how about taking one of the squads with you?

ELLEN

Is that gonna be alright?

BARBARA

I wouldn't have suggested it if it wasn't! Heidi's team are free at the moment, I'll go and tell them they're being assigned to you for the duration of the mission.

ELLEN

Heidi's not gonna like that. She hasn't said a word to me that wasn't some kind of insult since the attack.

BARBARA

You let me handle her. Go and get your team ready, I'll send Heidi to you when I'm done.

Ellen nods and heads out, and as Barbara reaches for her phone, we cut to:

Out on the fields at the back of the campus, a makeshift assault course has been set up along the far edge of the grounds. The course includes tires, ramps, water hazards, walls, cargo nets, and even a short zip line section.

Currently splashing their way through the course, with BRYCE shouting encouragement and timing the girls' progress, is HEIDI and her squad - ERIKA, ANNA and DEBBIE.

(CONTINUED)

BRYCE

Come on, girls, you're slipping off
your best times here!

Heidi, streaked with mud and not looking happy about it,
turns to see that Debbie is the one letting the side down,
trailing a long way behind the others.

HEIDI

(yells)

Debbie, pick it up! We're against
the clock here, so get your ass
into the same time zone as the rest
of us!

Debbie is walking slowly along a long, thin beam, her arms
out for balance, but she jumps at Heidi's comment, loses her
balance and CRASHES to the floor.

Heidi seethes as Debbie picks herself back up and goes to the
start of the beam to try again, turning her back on her and
following the others as they approach the zip lines.

Anna is already strapped in and is helping Erika as Heidi
joins them, and she curses as she fiddles with the hand
straps.

ERIKA

Is Deborah with us?

HEIDI

She's in the same place she always
is. Dead last.

ERIKA

I see...

ANNA

Shouldn't you be back there helping
her through this?

HEIDI

Why?

ANNA

You're the squad leader. You're
supposed to lead by example, not
punish people who can't keep up.

HEIDI

Hey, if she's just too damn slow to
match the rest of us, then she
shouldn't even be on my team!

Heidi steps forward, ready to rappel her way along the line,
which hangs over another water hazard.

(CONTINUED)

HEIDI (cont'd)
Maybe it's time she got herself
reassigned.

Heidi steps forward, pushing off the small platform the others are on and speeding along the line, hopping free as she passes the water and pulling herself up to the finish.

Bryce is waiting, stopwatch in hand, as Erika and Anna splash down in the water behind Heidi, joining her. Heidi looks at Bryce expectantly.

HEIDI (cont'd)
Well? Call it already!

BRYCE
Not until you're all here.

The girls look back - Debbie is currently struggling through the cargo net, getting caught up in it as she tries to crawl beneath it.

HEIDI
(rolls eyes)
Oh, this just gets better...

A short distance away, Barbara is approaching the assault course, watching as Debbie finally makes it to the zip line but drops away from it too soon, splashing down heavily in the water.

She reaches Bryce just as the soaking wet Debbie finally hauls herself up onto the finish, and Bryce clicks the stopwatch at last.

BRYCE
Six minut-

HEIDI
(raises hand)
No. Don't. Please.

Bryce turns to Barbara and winks, and she tries to cover her smile as she steps closer to Heidi and the others.

BARBARA
Still needing some work on the
course times, I see?

ERIKA
To be fair, Miss Griffin, it is-

HEIDI
(interrupts)
It's all her!

She points at Debbie, who sags, wringing her clothes out.

DEBBIE

I'm sorry...

HEIDI

She's useless!

ANNA

Hey!

BRYCE

Heidi, cut that out.

HEIDI

Well, she is! Miss Griffin, I don't think she has a place here on my squad any more. I think she should be transferred to a new team.

BARBARA

And I think you should remember who makes the decisions about the squads around here, Heidi. Debbie's with you three for a reason.

HEIDI

What, to slow us down?

DEBBIE

Look, maybe she's right...

BARBARA

You three are some of the best Slayers I have. I put Debbie with you so she could learn from you, and while that's obviously going to take some time, I think you should all cut her a little slack.

ANNA

Hey, I'm all cool with her being here. Heidi's the one with a bug up her ass about it.

HEIDI

(indignant)

Excuse me?!?

BARBARA

If I can possibly steer the conversation towards something more relevant?

Bryce takes his cue to head away, placing a hand on Barbara's arm to get her attention.

(CONTINUED)

BRYCE

I'll leave you to it. See you back
in the staff room.

She nods as he heads off, before she turns back to the girls.

BARBARA

You've all got a new assignment.
Ellen's been given a mission to
carry out on behalf of the
Initiative, and she requested a
Slayer squad to join her.

ERIKA

So we are to help?

BARBARA

That's the plan. You'll be heading
down to London with Ellen and her
squad in a few hours.

HEIDI

To do what?

BARBARA

Some Initiative staff have been
kidnapped, and it's up to you all
to help find them again. This isn't
an Academy mission, I should add -
you're there to assist Ellen and
her squad.

HEIDI

Uh-huh. So why us?

ANNA

Most of Sofia's team's still off in
Hungary until later tonight,
remember?

ERIKA

You mean Skye's team.

ANNA

Oh, yeah.

HEIDI

So we get to babysit the soldier
boys, huh? Well, whoop-de-doo.
Should we start singing their
national anthem yet?

BARBARA

(raises eyebrow)

Is there a problem I'm not aware
of, Heidi?

(CONTINUED)

HEIDI

Oh, nothing. Just saying that ever since those overblown monster hunters decided we needed 'saving' at the end of last term, it's like this whole place has felt like we owe them something.

BARBARA

And you don't think we do?

HEIDI

I think we could've handled things just fine by ourself, but now we're stuck with them for another year like they're our saviours or something.

BARBARA

Well, then. I'm sure Officer Marklew will be very interested to hear your thoughts about the arrangement. You have your assignment, girls. Be ready for it.

Barbara turns and walks away, and a scowling Heidi is soon faced by an equally angry Anna.

ANNA

Way to piss off the boss, Heidi!

HEIDI

What? I'm not gonna pretend I like having those goons on our campus just because our fearless leader can't see them for what they are!

DEBBIE

Which is...?

HEIDI

Which is, loser, another example of how the Americans think they're God's gift to the entire damn world.

ANNA

(scowls)

Hey! You got something to say about the Americans?

HEIDI

Oh, now you listen to me?

Heidi and Anna get in each other's face, but Erika is quick to lever them apart.

(CONTINUED)

ERIKA

Please! We are not here to squabble. Our help has been requested, and it is our duty to offer our services, whomever that may be for.

Heidi sighs, rolling her eyes and walking away, back towards the campus. Anna and Erika wait for Debbie to finish wringing the last bit of water out of her shirt.

ANNA

You okay, honey?

DEBBIE

(sneezes)

Not really, no.

ERIKA

Come. We have a little time before we must leave, let us unwind and make sure you do not catch a cold.

The two girls lead Debbie away, and we cut to:

TYSON pokes his head out from the changing room exit, scanning left and right to make sure he's alone.

He sneaks out into the main pool area, his eyes falling on a single figure splashing through the water, halfway through a length.

The swimmer reaches the far end of the pool and stops - it's ALITA. Lifting her goggles and wiping her face, she pauses for breath, glancing up as Tyson strolls casually towards her.

TYSON

Hello.

ALITA

You are not supposed to be in here.

TYSON

I know, I know. Not in my civvies, anyway. I just wanted to catch you when you had a quiet moment.

ALITA

I'm afraid I do not have one. I am busy.

She starts forward on a new lap, but Tyson keeps pace with her as he walks alongside the pool.

(CONTINUED)

TYSON

You've been 'busy' every time I've tried to talk to you since we all came back.

No answer. He stares at her for a moment, then continues:

TYSON (cont'd)

Alita, is something wrong?

He waits as she reaches the edge of the pool.

ALITA

Nothing is wrong, Tyson.

TYSON

Well, see, that's where I think we disagree. At the end of last term, you and I were... well, we were friends, at least.

ALITA

We still are.

TYSON

Yes, but something's different.

ALITA

How so?

TYSON

'How so'? How about the fact that this is the most you've said to me for almost two weeks?

ALITA

(beat)

I have been bus-

TYSON

(interrupts)

Busy, yes, I'm seeing that. I just don't think that's all there is.

Alita pushes away from the side again, treading water.

ALITA

Tyson, there is nothing wrong, I can assure you. I just wish to be left so I can continue with my training for now.

She clicks into the backstroke, and as she swims away from Tyson, he gets the hint at last and turns away, heading back for the changing rooms. He casts one last glance over his shoulder before he exits, and we DISSOLVE TO:

7

EXT. CAMPUS - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

7

Heidi's team are waiting by the large HumVee jeep that Ellen's squad use for their transport, as DUNSTALL and the other commandoes load their gear into it.

HEIDI

(mutters)

This is a waste of time. Why do we need to be here?

ERIKA

Perhaps it is some sort of team-building exercise?

HEIDI

(off Debbie)

Then why is she with us?

ANNA

Gee, Heidi, I don't know. Maybe it's because she didn't almost burn down the entire science block last week?

That wipes the smile off Heidi's face. Anna smirks, stepping forward.

ANNA (cont'd)

Let she who is without sin cast the first stone, right?

HEIDI

(scowls)

Watch who you're talking to, Anna.

ELLEN

Alright, girls, you all ready?

Ellen steps into frame, picking up on the tense air between Heidi and Anna.

ELLEN (cont'd)

Is everything alright?

A beat - then Heidi steps back, turning to Ellen.

HEIDI

We're good.

ELLEN

Okay, then. Get yourselves inside, there's plenty of room for us all. I'll tell you all the information you need to know on the way down.

(CONTINUED)

Ellen opens the driver's side door and clambers inside, and with a last frosty glare at each other Heidi and Anna follow suit.

Debbie turns to Erika as Ellen starts the Jeep's engine with a loud ROAR.

DEBBIE

This is going to be a disaster,
isn't it?

ERIKA

(smiles)

Have a little faith, Deborah.
Everything will be fine.

Erika climbs up into the Jeep and offers Debbie her hand, who doesn't look half as confident as she's pulled inside, and as the door closes we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

8

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - NIGHT

8

There are already a handful of military personnel present as the HumVee rolls towards the scene of the kidnapping, dressed in the same plain green fatigues as Ellen's team.

The jeep comes to a stop and the two teams disembark, Ellen heading over to the junior officer overseeing the scene, LIEUTENANT MORRISSEY.

ELLEN
(quick salute)
Lieutenant.

MORRISSEY
(salutes)
Agent Marklew.

Morrissey notices the four Slayers looking around, and throws a questioning look at Ellen.

ELLEN
(off Slayers)
They're with me. Why don't you show me what you've got so far?

MORRISSEY
Uh...yes, sir. This way.

He leads her over to a line of skid marks on the car park's concrete floor, next to Clemens' smashed car and the scattering of glass around that.

MORRISSEY (cont'd)
As best we can tell, the kidnappers took Miss Clemens and Mr. Owen right here, bundling them into a large vehicle, probably a van of some kind, before escaping out into the city.

ELLEN
(beat)
That's it?

MORRISSEY
Sir?

ELLEN
I knew all that already, from the report Major Harris sent me. Are you saying you haven't learned a single thing more since then?

(CONTINUED)

MORRISSEY

(uncertain)

Well... Colonel Hastilow's instructions were very specific, ma'am.

ELLEN

(suspicious)

'Specific' how?

MORRISSEY

He, uh, said that we were to leave the scene untouched until you arrived, and that you and your team would handle the investigation as soon as you arrived.

Ellen looks around, frowning - and then the penny drops. She's being tested. With a shake of her head, she turns back to Morrissey.

ELLEN

Thank you, lieutenant. We'll take it from here.

Morrissey nods and steps away, glad to be out of there, as Dunstall and WEBBER step into frame.

DUNSTALL

What's our plan, Agent Marklew?

ELLEN

Well, seeing as through the kindness of Colonel Hastilow we have absolutely zilch in the way of further intel, I suggest you two sweep the area.

MACEY, DOLMAN and McLACHLAN, the rest of her squad, step into frame as Dunstall and Webber leave it.

ELLEN (cont'd)

Macey, get to the security office and get hold of the CCTV footage from the time of the attack. England's one of the most watched countries in the world, so see if they've got our kidnappers on tape. Dolman, McLachlan, go with him. I want you two to question everybody who was in the building at the time of the kidnapping last night, find out if anybody saw anything.

DOLMAN

Yes, sir.

(CONTINUED)

The marines hustle out of frame, and Ellen crouches to examine the skidmarks until she hears:

DEBBIE (O.S.)
You know, we could probably
identify the van they used from
those.

She turns to see Debbie standing nearby, and Ellen stands to address her with a nod.

ELLEN
That's just what I was thinking. We
managed to do something similar
back when Keeya was taken last
year.

DEBBIE
Oh, the African girl? The one
who...

She trails off, and Ellen nods somberly.

ELLEN
Yeah. Her.
(beat)
Reckon you can find your way around
the Initiative IT network?

Debbie's face lights up, which gets a smile from Ellen.

DEBBIE
Really?

ELLEN
It's already logged in, my laptop's
hooked up and back in the jeep. You
want to be accessing the vehicle
intel files, so we can figure out
what made these marks, just in case
we draw a blank on the surveillance
tapes.

DEBBIE
Leave it to me!

Debbie dashes eagerly back towards the van as Heidi and Anna head over.

HEIDI
We're bored. What are we supposed
to be doing again?

ANNA
Heidi, we're not 'bored,' we're
just-

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

At a loose end? It's okay, girls.
This is the boring part. When we
find the people we're looking for,
that's when I'll need you the most.

HEIDI

Sounds... great. What do we do
until then?

ERIKA (O.S.)

I have found something.

Ellen looks over - Erika is kneeling by Clemens' smashed car,
one hand on the ground. Ellen and the others head over.

ELLEN

What have you got?

ERIKA

There is blood here. Some of it is
human, some of it is not.

HEIDI

How can you tell?

ERIKA

The smell. Human blood is... tangy,
you would say. This other substance
is different.

Anna leans over - sure enough, there are a few spatters of
blood on the floor.

ANNA

She's not wrong. Good work, Erika!

ELLEN

So if some of the blood isn't
human...

ERIKA

(nods)
... then neither were your
kidnappers.

HEIDI

Well, that makes sense.

(off looks)

It does! Think about it. What kinds
of people know about what we do
outside of the vampire and demon
community? Figures this was a non-
human job.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

(to Erika)

Any chance of telling us what kinds
of demons we're dealing with?

ERIKA

I'm afraid my sense of smell is not
that good.

HEIDI

We can worry about that later. To
quote one of my favourite movies,
'if it bleeds, we can kill it.'

ANNA

(surprised)

You like 'Predator'?

HEIDI

Yeah! Who doesn't?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Um, hello?

Ellen turns - Debbie is waving her over from inside the jeep.
She heads over as Debbie holds out a printout.

DEBBIE (cont'd)

I think I've got a result.

ELLEN

(takes the paper)

That was fast!

DEBBIE

So's your network!

Ellen glances over the paper as her walkie-talkie BEEPS.

MACEY

(filtered; through
handset)

Agent Marklew, come in.

ELLEN

(into handset)

I'm here.

MACEY

We don't have much, most of the
incident took place just out of the
nearest camera's field of vision,
but I think we've got a partial
license plate.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

That's a start. Tell Dolman and McLachlan to stay here and continue questioning, you come and meet us back in the parking area.

She tucks the walkie-talkie away as the Slayers gather round.

ERIKA

Are we leaving?

ELLEN

I'm gonna get the satellite imaging working for us and see if I can track down this van we're after, so yeah, this is the part I wanted you girls here for.

Dunstall and Webber step back into frame.

DUNSTALL

We didn't find much, sir. More tire tracks, that's about it.

ELLEN

Okay, corporal, that's fine. We've got a lead, so we're moving out, Get back in the jeep.

Dunstall and Webber head for the HumVee, and we cut to:

Ellen drives with Webber riding shotgun, as Dunstall shares the passenger section with the girls. Debbie and Macey are both working away at the laptop computer.

HEIDI

So, Dunstall...

DUNSTALL

Hmm?

HEIDI

What's this I hear about you and Frankie?

Dunstall tenses up, glancing towards Ellen, but she's too busy driving to listen. He turns back to Heidi, who is already grinning mischevously at him.

DUNSTALL

(evasive)

That depends. What exactly have you heard?

HEIDI

Oh, you know, just a few things.
You two seem to be awfully... oh,
what's the word? Chatty in each
other's presence.

DUNSTALL

Miss DuCont's a very nice lady.
That's all.

HEIDI

(teasing)

'Miss DuCont'? Boy, you've got it
bad, haven't you?

DUNSTALL

'It'? What is it I have, Heidi?

ANNA

Heidi, come on.

HEIDI

(pushing on)

Okay, the 'deny everything' act's
cute and all, but come on. We all
know you two are an item.

An alarmed Dunstall glances again at Ellen before leaning
closer to whisper to Heidi:

DUNSTALL

Heidi, please. Drop it.

HEIDI

Why? Am I getting warmer?

DUNSTALL

Just...

HEIDI

Or is it you getting warmer every
time a certain French madame goes
strutting by?

DUNSTALL

I-

ELLEN

(sharp)

Knock it off, Heidi.

Heidi turns to see Ellen glaring at her. She opens her mouth
to answer back, but thinks better of it and slouches back in
her seat. Ellen and Dunstall exchange a look before Debbie
calls out:

(CONTINUED)

DEBBIE

Take a left!

Ellen turns, and over with Macey and Debbie we see that their laptop screen is showing a street map, with one flashing dot for the HumVee and another for their target.

ERIKA

How are we able to track their vehicle?

DEBBIE

Oh, it's easy, really. The Initiative's computer network can synch itself up to traffic cameras all over the country, so we managed to pick up a few vehicles matching the partial license plate Macey got from the surveillance tapes.

MACEY

After that, it was just a case of narrowing it down from the matches we got, based on the maximum range and time frame of the vehicle we're after.

ERIKA

(lost)

I... see.

DEBBIE

Don't worry, it's all kosher. Point is, we're catching up.

Erika tilts her head towards Anna, who pats her on the knee.

ANNA

Don't worry. I don't get it either.

ELLEN

We're almost there, guys and girls. Suit up and get ready.

Dunstall, Macey and Webber all reach for their rifles, and as the girls grab their various weapons we cut to:

Overlooking a wide area full of mobile units and small buildings, the two teams creep into view, up on top of a rooftop with a commanding view of the estate below.

Ellen raises a pair of binoculars, sweeping the grounds until she picks up a figure moving towards one of the units.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

Contact. Two o'clock, five hundred metres.

Dunstall raises his rifle, peering down the scope to pick up the target.

DUNSTALL

Human or sub-t?

ELLEN

Can't say, so... wait...

The figure glances round to check the coast is clear - and it's one of the DEMONS who kidnapped the executives.

ELLEN (cont'd)

Demon.

HEIDI

Okay, so what are we waiting for?

Heidi starts to stand, but Erika pulls her back down.

ERIKA

We must practice stealth.

HEIDI

How about you practice stealth and I practice kicking some demon ass so we can go home?

ELLEN

Heidi, she's right. And anyway, I'm in charge here, remember?

HEIDI

Not of my squad.

ELLEN

Yes, of your squad. Barbara left you under my command, and I'm ordering you to stay put until I tell you to. Is that clear?

Heidi scowls, but settles back down.

ELLEN (cont'd)

Right, Seeing as how you're so fidgety and all, why don't you and Debbie go check out the lay of the land? Take a look inside the unit if you can, then come straight back here. Do not, and I repeat, do not take these guys on without the rest of us. Got it?

(CONTINUED)

HEIDI
(huffs)
Yeah, fine, whatever.

Heidi shuffles off frame, with Debbie following, and as Ellen looks back through her binoculars, we cut to:

11 EXT. INDUSTRIAL ESTATE - MOBILE UNIT - NEXT 11

Heidi and Debbie scamper into frame, pressing themselves up against the side of the unit. Lights are on inside and the girls can hear shouting voices.

HEIDI
(whispers)
Debbie, for God's sake just stay
down and let me handle this, okay?

Debbie nods, not planning on arguing, and Heidi slowly stands to peer in through one of the windows.

Inside, she sees that Owens and Clemens are not alone - there are three more HOSTAGES, all of them looking pretty badly beaten. They're on the floor, wrists and ankles bound, as two demons stand at the rear of the room and one before the hostages as a fourth paces the room, having a heated conversation into a mobile phone.

The demon turns to look at the hostages, then nods, hanging up the call. He steps to the closest demon and whispers something in his ear.

The second demon nods, takes a step back - and draws a gun! The terrified hostages start to cry out in fear as the demon takes aim...

Outside, Heidi jumps back from the wall, waving frantically up to where Ellen and the others are looking down.

DEBBIE
(hisses)
What are you doing!?!?

HEIDI
What we came here for!

Heidi charges towards the door to the unit, sword ready.

DEBBIE
Heidi, wait! Stop!

Heidi is on full steam ahead, KICKING the door open and piling inside. With a helpless look back up to Ellen, Debbie follows her inside.

11 CONTINUED:

11

Up on the rooftop, Ellen puts down the binoculars with a suitably alarmed expression.

ELLEN

What the hell is she doing?

ERIKA

From the tone of your voice, what she does best, I fear.

ELLEN

(to marines)

Go!

Dunstall and the other soldiers leap to their feet, heading for the fire escape leading down as we cut to:

12 INT. MOBILE UNIT - NEXT

12

An inner door is barged open as Heidi and Debbie spill inside, startling the demons - but not before the gun-toting demon SHOOTS!

HEIDI

No!!

One of the hostages stiffens and crumples to the floor, to a chorus of panicked SCREAMS from the others.

With fury in her eyes, Heidi charges forward, slicing her sword towards the first demon - but he effortlessly CATCHES it in mid-air!

Heidi just has time to look shocked before a powerful BACKHAND knocks her off her feet, sending her crashing to the floor as the demon SNAPS her sword in two.

Debbie GASPS, quickly raising her own sword as two more of the demons march towards her.

DEBBIE

(panicking)

Heidi? Heidi!

Heidi GROANS, starting to pick herself back up, but the demon that attacked her grabs her by the hair, dragging her painfully to her feet.

HEIDI

Ow! Let go of me!

The demon obliges by THROWING her across the room, straight into Debbie, and the two Slayers crash to the floor.

The lead demon takes a step towards them, but is alerted by a series of clicks and whistles from one of his comrades.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

He turns to see Dunstall and the others racing across to the unit, so with a few clicked commands to the rest of the demons, they start to gather up the hostages and head for a door at the rear of the unit.

The lead demon marches over to the stunned Debbie and Heidi, raising his hand, and as Heidi struggles to get back up, a blue PULSE of light blazes from the demon's palm, and the two girls slump to the floor, unconscious.

13 EXT. INDUSTRIAL ESTATE - NEXT

13

Ellen is catching up to the others, hurriedly loading her gun as they all hear the SLAM of a door and the REVVING of the van's engine.

Dunstall and Webber raise their rifles as the demons' van suddenly blasts out from behind the unit, gunning straight for them!

The marines get off of a few rounds, but the bullets RICOCHET harmlessly off the van's thick windscreen, and the duo are forced to dive for cover as the van barrels past them.

The marines are quick to fire back at the departing van, but in moments it's vanished round a corner. Ellen sags, turning as Anna calls out:

ANNA (O.S.)
They're all gone!

She turns - Anna is leaning out from inside the unit.

ANNA (cont'd)
They must've taken Debbie and
Heidi, and... and there's a body.

ELLEN
Damn it!

Everybody jumps as something EXPLODES a little way outside the estate.

ERIKA
What was that?

DUNSTALL
That... would be about where we
left the HumVee.

Ellen's dark look says it all, as we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

14

EXT. CAMPUS - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

14

Barbara is waiting by the entrance, arms folded, as the campus minibus pulls up just in front of her, Bryce behind the wheel. She watches as the downcast Ellen and her team disembark - and a quick head count tells her two people are missing.

BARBARA

(alarmed)

What happened? Where are Heidi and Debbie?

ELLEN

(downcast)

Barb... things just went pretty FUBAR out there. I'm sorry.

Barbara searches the faces of the returnees for an explanation, and Anna steps forward to offer one.

ANNA

We found where the demons had the executives hostage, but Heidi and Debbie were captured when we tried to move on them.

BARBARA

(beat)

I see.

ELLEN

You gotta believe me, Barb, we did everything we could, but the kidnappers got away and trashed my jeep on their way out.

BARBARA

Which explains why you called Bryce to come and pick you up...

Ellen hangs her head, and Barbara is visibly pissed off as she calls Erika and Anna over.

BARBARA (cont'd)

Alright, tell me what you can.

ERIKA

Heidi and Deborah were meant to just observe, but from what I can gather Heidi's famed impatience struck again.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

She busted inside and Debbie followed, and by the time we all got there, they were gone.

BARBARA

'Gone' as in taken by the kidnappers?

ANNA

Looks like.

Barbara turns to Ellen.

BARBARA

So what exactly do you plan on doing to get my Slayers back?

ELLEN

I'm going straight back out. We found these guys once, we can do it again.

MACEY

Well, unless they've changed vehicles, in which case we've got no way of knowing where they are.

ELLEN

(stern)

That is not what I wanted to hear, corporal.

BARBARA

Get on it. Right away.

Barbara turns and starts to walk back inside, but Erika stops her by calling out:

ERIKA

Perhaps we should bring more support this time?

BARBARA

(turns round)

What did you have in mind?

ERIKA

Skye's squad. Skye has the ability to sense creatures such as these demons, she may be our only chance to find them again.

Barbara hesitates, looking from Erika to Ellen, then finally she nods.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA

Alright. I'll go and fetch Skye and the others, you should all get ready to head back out.

Ellen wisely refrains from comment as Barbara stomps back inside, with Bryce jogging to catch her up.

15 INT. CAMPUS - RECEPTION - NEXT

15

Bryce catches up to Barbara, taking her arm to stop her.

BRYCE

Barbara, wait.

BARBARA

I don't have time to chat about this, Eric. Two of my girls are out there somewhere, and it's my responsibility to make sure they come back in one piece.

BRYCE

Yeah, I know that, I'm just saying don't be so hard on Ellen about this.

BARBARA

(narrows eyes)

Who says I'm being 'hard'?

BRYCE

Well, the fact that she's standing outside at the moment looking like you just pissed on her chips, for one thing. She knows she's messed up, and she wants to fix it. Treating her like a second class citizen is just going to throw her off her game.

BARBARA

When did you suddenly start playing devil's advocate?

BRYCE

When I realised what a complicated place this Academy can be.

Barbara hesitates, glances back towards the entrance and then lowers her head, sighs and nods.

BARBARA

Alright.

Bryce grins and starts to walk away.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA (cont'd)

Thanks.

BRYCE

No worries, Barb. That's just the kind of guy I am.

He flashes her a smile, and she grins back as he walks away. Barbara looks back towards the entrance, as we cut to:

Bound and gagged in the back of the demons' van, Heidi and Debbie are squashed into one corner by a pile of heavy duty cargo crates.

Opposite them are the other kidnapped executives, with the demons clustered together up front as they drive on.

Debbie is still out cold but Heidi stirs at last, blinking as she focuses and rolling her eyes as she realises where she is. She looks across to Debbie, scowls and jabs her painfully with her elbow to wake her.

Debbie moans in pain as she comes round, shaking her head and trying to focus. One lens of her glasses is cracked.

Heidi manages to get her teeth into the gag, and after some effort pulls it down far enough so she can speak:

HEIDI

This is all your fault!

Debbie's look answers her with 'My fault?'

HEIDI (cont'd)

If you'd been watching my back, that last demon wouldn't have suckerpunched me, and we'd have taken care of them all!

Debbie mumbles a response, but it's muffled by the gag.

HEIDI (cont'd)

What?

Debbie sighs, then with a great deal of effort manages to work the gag down from around her mouth.

DEBBIE

I said, it wouldn't have made any difference. Whoever or whatever these things are, they were too powerful for just the two of us.

HEIDI

Too powerful for you, you mean.

DEBBIE

Oh, will you give it a bloody rest?
Now is not the time for us to be
arguing over whose fault it is we
got caught! The point is, we're
both up the creek here so we need
to get free and get away, fast!

HEIDI

Any bright ideas forming in that
six million dollar brain of yours?

Debbie looks around - there's no obvious way out, and the
demons have a clear view of them at all times. She slumps
back, defeated, and Heidi sighs again.

HEIDI (cont'd)

Are you starting to see now why I
don't want you on my team?

DEBBIE

(mumbles)

Didn't ask for it...

HEIDI

I'm sorry?

DEBBIE

(snaps)

I said I never asked to be put on
your bloody team!

DEMON #1

Quiet!

The girls look up to see the lead demon glaring at them from
the front seat.

HEIDI

Or what?

The demon mutters something in its own language and turns
away, just before the van comes to a stop.

DEBBIE

We've stopped.

HEIDI

How observant of you.

Debbie starts to reply, but is stopped as the van's side door
slides open to reveal a new DEMON, this one more human in
appearance - apart from the purple skin and gills, anyway.

(CONTINUED)

GILL DEMON

Ah, they're here! Excellent work.

His eyes scan from the hostages to the two Slayers.

GILL DEMON (cont'd)

And what do we have here?

DEMON #2

Slayers.

GILL DEMON

Vampire Slayers? My, my! Master Tolteck will be pleased.

(beat; to demons)

Well, bring them in with the others. We still have much to do.

Gill demon walks away, and the demons begin roughly manhandling the hostages out of the van. Debbie and Heidi are hauled to their feet and shoved out of the van, out into:

The girls see that they're in the cargo bay of some kind of warehouse, with Gill Demon heading for a door at the top of a staircase as the demons shove their captives along. There are several more DEMONS here, mostly armed with automatic rifles.

DEBBIE

What are we going to do?

HEIDI

Figure a way out of this and kill everything that doesn't look human.

DEBBIE

Right...

(beat)

How, exactly?

Heidi shoots Debbie a fierce look, and as the girls are pushed forward again, we cut back to:

Ellen's team, along with Erika and Anna, have now been joined by Alita, SKYE, SOFIA and BRAEDEN, the latter four all looking like they've been dragged away from a good night's sleep.

SKYE

Remind me why we're all here again?
Not that it isn't great to get to
see all your shiny happy faces
again, just that...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SKYE (cont'd)

(yawns)

... even us semi-creatures of the night need some sleep!

BARBARA

I'll let Ellen explain this one.

ELLEN

This is a rescue mission. Heidi and Debbie have been taken prisoner, along with several key Initiative personnel. Our last attempt to free the hostages didn't go so well, so this time we're not gonna play it stealthy. This is gloves off, license to kill stuff.

SOFIA

(dry)

Sounds like the kind of thing your organisation does best.

BARBARA

(warning)

Sofia...

SOFIA

Sorry. So precisely how did you manage to lose two of our Slayers?

ELLEN

I'll explain on the way. We're still trying to track the kidnappers down, so-

MACEY (O.S.)

Sir, we've got them!

Macey steps into frame, holding a charred laptop.

DUNSTALL

(off laptop)

That thing still works?

MACEY

It sure does, and we've lucked out, They didn't bother to ditch their old vehicle, so we were able to get a fix on them again. They're at a factory a few clicks out from where we last encountered them.

ELLEN

Alright, let's get moving!

The two campus minibuses are on standby. Ellen heads for one as Dunstall goes to the other, keys in hand.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA

Ellen?

Ellen pauses, heading back over to Barbara.

ELLEN

Yeah? What?

BARBARA

Just...

(beat)

Just be careful.

ELLEN

(sincere)

I'm going to get your girls back,
Barb. I promise.

BARBARA

Alright. Go on, then.

Ellen nods and jogs back over to the nearest minibus, and as Barbara watches the teams pile into the buses, we cut to:

INT. EMPTY OFFICE - NIGHT

Debbie and Heidi are shoved to the floor in a disused office, with one of the demons SNARLING at them before heading back outside, locking the door behind him.

As soon as the door closes, Heidi starts wriggling, trying to free herself as Debbie examines the dusty office. There's plenty of furniture, but it's either broken or covered by plastic sheeting.

DEBBIE

Maybe we can find something in here
to cut the ropes, or...

She trails off as she looks at Heidi - she's got one leg up above her head, and appears to be trying to contort herself so she can get her hands from behind her back.

DEBBIE (cont'd)

What are you doing?

HEIDI

Getting us out of here.

(off her look)

I'm double jointed.

With a grunt of effort, Heidi's arms pop free, and she's quick to get to her feet and hop towards the nearest desk. Finding a sharp edge, she gets to work on sawing through her bonds.

(CONTINUED)

Debbie looks back around the office, then pauses as she hears a meaty THWACK coming from the next office along.

DEBBIE

Ssh!

HEIDI

(still sawing)

Oh, I'm sorry, is my trying to escape disturbing you?

DEBBIE

They've got someone next door. Be quiet for a second, maybe I can find out what they want with them.

Heidi grumbles, but stops sawing as Debbie presses her ear to the wall, and we push through the wall into:

INT. EMPTY OFFICE #2 - CONTINUOUS

Owen is tied to a revolving chair, with Gill Demon (or just 'Gill') is pacing around him. Owen is sobbing, his face bloody and bruised.

GILL

I'll make this very simple for you, Mr. Owen. I want this to be over with just as much as you do.

OWEN

Please... please, you have to believe me! I don't know what you're asking!

GILL

All I need are those access codes, Owen. You help me, I'll help you. My friends out there, well... they want to kill you. And eat you.

Owen lets out an involuntary sob as Gill leans in closer.

GILL (cont'd)

And not necessarily in that order.

OWEN

I don't... I don't know...

GILL

The Cabal are fair people, Owen. They don't believe in killing unless it's absolutely necessary.

Gill stands, pacing away from Owen - before turning and CRACKING his fist across Owen's jaw.

(CONTINUED)

GILL (cont'd)
I, however, do not share their
belief.

Gill gets up close to Owen, staring into his eyes.

GILL (cont'd)
(seethes)
I will make sure that your death is
slow, painful and worthy of a good
murder ballad unless you give me
those codes!

OWEN
(desperate)
I don't know the codes!

Gill stands, straightening his shirt out and shaking his head
sadly.

GILL
Then you leave me little choice.

Gill reaches a hand up to one of the gills on his neck, and
as Owen watches in horror, Gill removes a small, writhing
PARASITE from it.

GILL (cont'd)
This is an infant nemlash demon,
Mr. Owen. It will burrow into your
forebrain and spend a good few
hours feasting on what it finds
there. You will be alive as you
feel your mind being quite
literally eaten away.

Gill holds the wriggling, earwig-shaped demon over Owen's
head. Owen is frozen, his eyes locked on the creature.

GILL (cont'd)
(whispers)
The access codes...

OWEN
(gulps; closes eyes)
I don't know them.

Gill sighs, then reaches forward and presses the infant
nemlash against Owen's ear. The demon wriggles and starts to
burrow into Owen's ear, and as he SCREAMS in pain, we
mercifully cut back to:

Debbie jumps away from the wall, her face wrinkled in horror.

DEBBIE

Oh, God! That poor man!

HEIDI (O.S.)

Hem-hem.

Debbie turns - and Heidi waves back at her. She freed both her hands and her ankles while Debbie was listening in.

HEIDI (cont'd)

I think it's time we did something to improve our situation, don't you?

DEBBIE

For possibly the only time in my life so far, I have to agree.

Heidi yanks a sharp chunk of desk free and steps over to start working on Debbie's bonds, as we cut to:

The two minibuses are parked opposite the factory. The lead bus holds Ellen and Skye's team, with Macey in the passenger seat, consulting the beeping laptop.

ELLEN

Is this the place?

MACEY

According to our sat nav tracking, sir, that's where they are.

BRAEDEN

So what do we do now?

Ellen reaches for a shotgun, loading it with a loud CLICK.

ELLEN

We go get our people back.

She starts to open the door, but Sofia stops her.

SOFIA

No... no, I don't like this.

SKYE

What's not to like? This falls under our whole 'demons bad, Slayers hit demons' mandate.

SOFIA

I can't explain it, it's... it's just a feeling. We need to be extra careful here.

Ellen picks up a rifle, checking that as well.

ELLEN

I'm all the careful I need to be,
Sofia. Now we've got a job to do.

Ellen opens the door and steps out, and as an anxious Sofia glances at Braeden, we cut to:

With Ellen taking point, the team dash across the car park in groups, pausing to take cover every few metres as they scurry towards the entrance.

Dunstall joins her as she waits behind a parked car, scanning the factory for any signs of life.

ELLEN

(points)

Office, third floor. See that?

Dunstall follows her indication - there's a light on, and a figure moves past the open window.

DUNSTALL

(nods)

Check.

Ellen starts gesturing to the others to move forward, but Dunstall suddenly looks a lot less certain.

DUNSTALL (cont'd)

Sir?

ELLEN

What is it?

DUNSTALL

Something about this doesn't feel
right, sir.

ELLEN

Oh, not you too... look, I know
we're all on edge here, but we've
got the advantage of numbers here.
This is going to go down just like
we planned on the way over. Now are
you ready to go or not?

DUNSTALL

(beat)

Yes, sir.

ELLEN

Alright, then.

Ellen stands, leading the way as the group get from behind their cover and advance on the front entrance...

... and the night is suddenly filled with GUNFIRE, as bullets rain down on the team!

ELLEN (cont'd)
Take cover!!

As the Slayers and commandoes run for cover, bullets punching through everything around them, SMASHING windscreens and DETONATING the containers on the back of one flatbed truck, we quickly:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24

EXT. FACTORY - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

24

The team scatter, Braeden pulling Sofia back behind a van as bullets pepper it and miss her by a fraction.

SKYE

Alita, look out!

Alita is winged by a bullet, crying out in pain before Skye can pull her back to safety.

Webber isn't so lucky, taking two bullets to the chest and hitting the deck, and as McLachlan tries to drag him to safety, he's hit once in the arm and then once through the neck.

DUNSTALL

McLachlan!

McLachlan presses a hand to his neck, staring at the blood on his fingers, before slumping face first to the floor.

The gunfire rains on, with Erika yelping in alarm as glass SHATTERS and rains down on her. The team are well and truly pinned down, until the fusillade suddenly stops dead.

GILL (O.S.)

(shouts down)

So this must be the rescue mission?

Ellen cautiously peeks out from behind the forklift truck she's using for cover, and sees Gill up in the office window, with more gun-toting demons positioned in several more.

GILL (cont'd)

If it is, I have to say, it's about the right standard for what I've come to expect from the Initiative.

Ellen and Dunstall exchange a worried look as we cut to:

25

INT. OFFICE SUITE - NEXT

25

Two more armed demons jog down the corridor towards us - but are surprised as one door suddenly flies open, and Heidi and Debbie storm out!

Taking one demon each, the girls rain down a flurry of attacks and floor the demons in quick order, Debbie wrenching the gun from her attacker's hands and SMASHING it into what passes for his nose. Heidi nods, impressed.

(CONTINUED)

HEIDI

You're not half bad when the mood
takes you, are you?

DEBBIE

(breathless)

Thanks...

HEIDI

Just a shame about every other
time, really... come on!

Heidi darts away, and after pausing to scowl after her,
Debbie follows.

HEIDI (cont'd)

Did you hear all that gunfire a
second ago?

DEBBIE

It was a little hard to miss.

HEIDI

Think that's our rescue?

DEBBIE

God, I hope not. That gunfire
sounded distinctly one-sided!

The girls turn a corner, and we cut back to:

The Slayers are peering out from around their various bits of
cover now, with Macey looking sadly towards the two fallen
soldiers.

The demons up in the windows have them all well covered -
there's nowhere they could go without getting caught.

ELLEN

What is it you want with the
hostages?

GILL

Something I don't plan on
discussing with you! Now, if you'll
all just throw your guns away and
come out with your hands raised, we
can-

He stops as Ellen's rifle is tossed out, clattering across
the floor.

DUNSTALL

Sir, what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

Just follow my lead.

Ellen slowly stands, her hands raised, ignoring Dunstall's hissed demands for her to get back down.

Gill watches, raising an eyebrow, as she walks calmly out into the centre of the car park.

GILL

Offering yourself up?

ELLEN

Something like that.

(beat)

Let the others go, and I'll give myself up without a fight.

GILL

And why should I want to do that?
Trading one for seven... sorry,
six, isn't that attractive an offer!

ELLEN

Because chances are I know everything you want.

GILL

(beat)

Go on.

Ellen glances back at Sofia and the others, before turning back to Gill.

SOFIA

What on Earth is she doing?

BRAEDEN

She's giving us a window.

SOFIA

She's making things worse!

BRAEDEN

Or, she's distracting the demons with the guns for a sec, so we can scoot round and get ourselves out of the crossfire.

A beat as Sofia realises this.

SOFIA

Right.

(whispers)

Skye!

(CONTINUED)

Skye looks up, and Sofia indicates that they should all start sneaking round the edge of the car park.

Skye nods, passing the message on to Erika and Anna, and as Ellen continues speaking, the Slayers start to make their way slowly forward.

ELLEN

The way I see this, you took a bunch of suits hoping to get stuff like names, ranks, access codes, that kind of thing. Am I right?

GILL

You're on the right lines.

ELLEN

Well, I know plenty of that sort of stuff. More to the point, I know more about the military side of it. What you've got there is a bunch of civilians with restricted access. I'm where the buck stops.

Gill scratches at his chin, musing on her offer, then nods to two of the demons, who disappear from the windows.

Seeing their moment, Sofia and Skye's two groups dart out into the open, making the most of the missing demons to get up to the entrance. Sofia carefully opens the door, and the Slayers slip inside.

The Slayers congregate just inside the entrance, with approaching footsteps echoing towards them.

SOFIA

Alright, we should split up. Braeden, Alita, you're with me, we're going to go and find the rest of the demons and take care of them. Anna, Erika, you two go with Skye. Find the hostages and get them to safety.

Anna nods, but Erika reaches a hand out to take Skye's arm.

ERIKA

Is this plan as you wish?

SKYE

Yeah, yeah, whatever. Sofes has been doing this longer than I have, so I'll go with her plan. Mine'd probably suck, anyway.

The girls split into their groups, heading off down opposite ends of the corridor as we cut to:

Gill waits with a grin as the disarmed and bound Ellen is frogmarched towards him. Dunstall, Macey and Dolman are just behind, also bound at the wrists.

GILL

Ah, Warrant Officer Marklew! I thought it was you, but I wasn't sure when I saw you outside.

ELLEN

The lighting round here sucks. What are you gonna do?

DUNSTALL

How did you know who she was?

GILL

Because I pay people a lot of money to find things like this out, that's why.

(to Ellen)

Shall we?

He gestures for her to approach, and with a glance back at Dunstall and the others, she obliges. Once she's up close, Gill motions to the two demons with him.

GILL (cont'd)

Kill the others.

ELLEN

What?

The demons raise their guns...

ELLEN (cont'd)

No!

And there's a loud CRACK as half a table disintegrates across the back of one of the demon's heads!

The other spins round to be faced by Debbie, but as she tries a few punches, the demon dodges round them, ELBOWING her sharply in the chest and SHOVING her back.

The demon brings its gun to bear on her, but Heidi is quick to KICK it from his hands, before spinning round and planting her foot in its chest.

The demon drops, and Heidi deftly kneels down and CHOPS it across the neck to make sure it stays down.

(CONTINUED)

Gill SHOVES Ellen towards the Slayers before turning and running, dodging past Dunstall as he lunges after him.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Never mind him, come on!

Heidi gets to work untying Ellen as Debbie hurries over to the soldiers.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Where are the rest of the hostages?

HEIDI
We don't know, they kept us
somewhere separate.

Once Ellen is free, she barks over to Dunstall:

ELLEN
Go back, get our guns, find the
hostages and get them out! We'll
take care of that leader guy.

Dunstall nods, and as the soldiers dash back towards the entrance, Ellen follows Heidi and Debbie as we cut to:

Sofia rounds a corner and comes face to face with another demon! She swings her fist round, but the demon blocks it, CHOPPING her across the forearm and PUNCHING her.

She staggers back, but Braeden dives in as the demon tries to follow up, TACKLING it to the floor and landing several heavy PUNCHES to keep it down.

BRAEDEN
You alright?

He offers Sofia his hand to help her back up.

SOFIA
(rubs jaw)
I'm alright. Caught me by surprise,
that's all.

BRAEDEN
(smirks)
Of course he did.

ALITA (O.S.)
This way!

They look up to see Alita waving them towards another corridor, and as they jog after her we cut to:

30

INT. FACTORY - LOADING BAY - NEXT

30

Skye's team rounds a corner to find themselves overlooking the cargo bay, with two demons loading the struggling execs back into the van.

More armed demons are here, spotting the Slayers and opening fire, forcing the girls to duck for cover as bullets PING off the walkway around them.

SKYE

Crap!

ANNA

Now what?

SKYE

Don't worry, guys. I'll handle this part.

Skye leaps up from behind cover, racing forward through the hail of bullets and JUMPING off the edge of the walkway!

She sails down to the floor, VAMPING OUT in mid air as bullets SLAM into her body, and she lands with a neat roll, her sai daggers flashing as she strikes at one demon, knocking his gun away and STABBING him in the chest with her other dagger.

Anna and Erika make the most of the distraction, rattling down a staircase and making a beeline for the van.

Skye is still taking heavy fire as she dodges towards the next demon, putting her own body between the demons and Anna and Erika, before her daggers take care of another attacker.

Erika's staff whips round as she reaches the van, CRACKING against one demon but not taking him down. He reaches round and GRABS her by the throat, lifting her up into the air.

Anna ducks a few swings from the other demon at the van, landing a sturdy KICK to its chest and knocking it back halfway into the van.

She quickly grabs the sliding door and yanks it shut, slamming the demon's head against the it with a wet CRUNCH.

Erika struggles against the demon's iron grip, but she can't get free, her legs kicking in vain against the demon's chest.

Skye, exhausted and covered with bullet wounds, turns to see Erika's struggles fading, and with a second wind charges forward, YELLING as she lunges in.

The demon holding Erika turns - and gets a dagger in each eye socket as Skye leaps towards him!

(CONTINUED)

The demon drops Erika, and Skye follows, crumpling to the floor as the last of her strength is spent.

ANNA

Skye!

Anna starts to help her up, but Skye manages a weak, bloodied smile.

SKYE

(woozy)

'S cool... me and bullets... we have this understanding...

Anna looks concerned as Skye COUGHS up a mouthful of blood, but as Erika drags herself to her feet, we cut to:

Gill bursts out through a fire exit, skittering down a staircase and out into the staff car park.

Ellen appears at the doorway, watching as Gill leaps into a black Mercedes and starts the engine. She vaults over the edge of the staircase, but by the time she hits the deck the Merc is already speeding towards her.

She's caught in the headlights as the car bears down on her, nowhere to go - until Heidi dives into frame, shoving them both out of the way.

The girls watch as the Merc bounces out onto the road in a shower of SPARKS, screeching round a corner and disappearing from view.

Erika and Anna are helping the hostages down from the van, untying them as Skye sits against the wall, catching her breath.

They hear sounds of a FIGHT from up on the walkway, and look up just as Sofia and Alita burst out into the loading bay, each girl grappling with a demon.

Alita manages to get a foot against her attacker's chest, FLIPPING him up and over the edge of the walkway, and as he hits the floor head first with a CRUNCH, Sofia manages to SLICE her Scythe across the chest of the other demon.

The demon staggers back - and Braeden lands a heavy KICK to its belly, sending the demon tumbling down the staircase, head over heels.

Sofia looks down into the bay and sees the wounded Skye, letting out a quick gasp of alarm.

SOFIA

Skye!

She clatters down the steps as the other two follow, neatly hopping over the twisted demon body at the foot of the stairs before rushing over.

SOFIA (cont'd)

Are you alright? What happened?

SKYE

I'm fine, really. Practicing my human shield impression.

SOFIA

(shakes head)

You could've been killed!

SKYE

Hey, stop yelling! We won, didn't we?

ERIKA

(proudly)

We did.

CLEMENS

Er, excuse me...

The girls and Braeden look up as Clemens steps towards them, trying to look authoritative despite her dishevelled appearance.

CLEMENS (cont'd)

Which one of you is in charge here?

SKYE

(raises hand)

Technically, me.

(beat; off her look)

Hi.

ELLEN (O.S.)

They're in here!

Everyone looks up as Ellen appears on the walkway, and she hurries down the staircase as Heidi and Debbie follow. Clemens straightens up as Ellen rushes over to her.

ELLEN (cont'd)

Miss Clemens, thank God you're alright. I'm-

CLEMENS

Yes, I know who you are, Agent Marklew.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLEMENS (cont'd)
I assume you're in charge of all
these...
(off Slayers)
... ladies?

ELLEN
I am. We have transport just
outside, so if you'd like to-

CLEMENS
Exactly what kind of a rescue
mission was this meant to be, Agent
Marklew?

ELLEN
Excuse me?

CLEMENS
Two of us are dead, and from the
looks of your associates here, I'd
imagine you didn't get through the
mission unscathed either!

ELLEN
(beat)
No, ma'am, but-

CLEMENS
I think you'd better just take us
back to the nearest base as quick
as possible. We'll deal with the
aftermath of this later.

Ellen looks like she's struggling to hold her tongue, but
manages to nod diplomatically.

ELLEN
Right away, ma'am.

She glances back at the girls as she starts to lead Clemens
and the other two surviving executives towards the exit, and
we DISSOLVE TO:

It's the small hours, with the sun just making an appearance
as Ellen, her remaining commandoes and the exhausted Slayers
trudge back into the reception.

Barbara, JAZ and AIDEN are waiting, Jaz and Aiden steering
the wounded towards the infirmary. With Skye still protesting
she's fine as they lead her away, Barbara waits for Ellen to
step over to her.

BARBARA
Dare I ask how this one went?

ELLEN

(off Debbie and Heidi)

Back safe and sound. Still don't
think Heidi's ever gonna like me,
but at least she's home.

Barbara smiles, then notices the dark looks that Macey and
Dolman are giving Ellen.

BARBARA

Did something else happen? And I
thought you took your whole squad
out? Where are Webber and...

Barbara trails off - Ellen hangs her head, and Barbara
catches up with what she missed.

BARBARA (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

Ellen lifts her head - and there are tears in her eyes.

ELLEN

It was my fault, B.

BARBARA

Don't think that.

ELLEN

It was! I made two bad calls in a
row, one that got your girls taken
and another that got two of my boys
killed.

(sniffs)

I screwed up. I screwed up big this
time.

BARBARA

Well, what did you do?

ELLEN

I didn't listen. They told me, both
of them, Sofia and Dunstall, they
said something wasn't right, but I
was so damn eager to get everybody
home in one piece I just didn't
listen, and...

(beat; wipes eyes)

God, Barb, I'm so sorry!

Barbara puts a comforting arm round Ellen's shoulders as
Ellen struggles to fight off her tears.

BARBARA

It's alright. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

You want to know the best part?

BARBARA

What else?

ELLEN

When I dropped the hostages back off at the closest base, they told me they're gonna hold an official inquiry into my handling of the mission. They said that I demonstrated 'a severe disregard for procedure,' and they're gonna claim that I got my men killed.

BARBARA

Well, they can't-

ELLEN

(distraught)

They're right! This is my fault, all of it!

(emotional)

It's all my fault...

As Ellen finally succumbs to her tears, Barbara hugs her tightly, and as Barbara casts a concerned glance back out across the reception, her eyes fall on one wooden plaque that stands out.

It's a memorial to the Slayers that fell last term. Emma and Keeya's names are at the head of the thankfully short list, but as Barbara stares at it, it's clear she understands the burden Ellen will now be carrying all to well.

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW