

"Killed by Death"

Written by: Rob Des Hotel & Dean Batali

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Teaser

EXT. SUNNYDALE - NIGHT

The night is dark and still. Something jumps down below frame, then POPS BACK UP. It's BUFFY, who stumbles a bit.

BUFFY
(dizzy)
Whoa...

She teeters and FALLS backwards. ANGEL is there to catch her.

ANGEL
You okay?
BUFFY

I've been better.

She stands upright. Her face is pale, her hair mussed up -- not the bright shiny Buffy we're accustomed to seeing. She regains her composure and looks around.

BUFFY
Where'd they go?
ANGEL

I thought you knew.

At that instant, Buffy is TACKLED from behind by a VAMPIRE. Buffy's collection of stakes SCATTERS the ground.

Buffy and the vampire face off. Buffy reaches for her belt: no stakes. She looks up at the vampire and smiles uneasily.

ANGEL
Buffy, catch!

Angel grabs a stake off the ground and TOSSES it to her. Buffy reaches to catch it, then watches as it SAILS over her head. She looks back at Angel.

ANGEL
Sorry.

As Angel looks for another stake, he is LIFTED up by ANOTHER VAMPIRE and SLAMMED into a wall. Angel falls to the ground.

BUFFY
Angel!

Vampire #1 dives for Buffy. She's not as quick as usual, and the vampire manages to GRAB her. He holds her arms behind her back. She struggles to break free.

Vampire #2 comes at her. Buffy reels back, lifts her legs into the air, and KICKS Vampire #2 to the ground.

She tries to flip Vampire #1 over and in front of her, but can't muster the strength. He doesn't budge.

BUFFY
This usually works.

With great effort, she tries again. This time she succeeds, sending him over her shoulder. He lands in front of her.

Buffy sees a stake near her foot. She stomps on the tip and the stake FLIPS up. She snatches it out of the air and PLUNGES it into Vampire #1's heart. POOF!

Buffy let's out a breath, exhausted. She approaches Angel, who is gradually coming to. He lifts his head.

ANGEL
Behind you!

Buffy turns and sees Vampire #2 is back on his feet and coming at her. She pushes him away, then looks up, groggy.



BUFFY'S POV: is blurry.

Vampire #2 is on her again. She sluggishly tries to hold him off, but he staggers her with a series of HITS and KICKS.

Buffy stumbles backwards and tries to focus on the vampire. She SWINGS at him a few times, misses. She tries a SPINNING KICK, but is way off her mark, landing off balance and dizzy. She assumes her fighting stance once again, and then:

BUFFY

This is... bad.

Her eyes roll back in her head and she collapses.

Vampire #2 looks at her, confused. Is this a trap? He moves towards her slowly, pokes at her with his foot. Buffy doesn't move. The vampire smiles.

He descends upon Buffy, opens his mouth, and begins to sink his fangs into her neck.

A look of SEARING PAIN suddenly comes across Vampire #2's face. He

ARCHES BACK, and we see a STAKE has come through his heart from behind. He

DISAPPEARS in a cloud of ash, revealing ANGEL standing there.

Angel drops the stake and kneels down, concerned.

ANGEL

Buffy, what happened? Are you all right?

She doesn't respond. He takes her by the shoulders.

ANGEL

Buffy?

CLOSE ON:

Buffy's lifeless body.

BLACK OUT.

END OF TEASER

Act One

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL ENTRANCE AREA - LATER THAT NIGHT

A cold, antiseptic, dreary place. Eerily silent. PATIENTS in various states of illness and injury sit waiting.

The calm is shattered as Angel BURSTS through the hospital doors, carrying Buffy.

ANGEL

I need help! Can somebody help me?

A few HOSPITAL STAFF MEMBERS rush to help him.

INTERN

What happened?

ANGEL

She was attacked.

Buffy is placed on a gurney and WHEELED down the hall as an INTERN begins to examine her. Angel crowds him.

INTERN

The patient is unconscious.

(examining eyes)

Pupils are unequal and unreactive.

ANGEL

What does that mean? Is she going to be okay?

INTERN

Sir, you need to give us some room.

Still on the move, they meet up with another doctor, a woman in her mid-thirties. This is DR. WILKINSON.

DR. WILKINSON

What've we got?

INTERN

Teenage girl, assault victim. Possible fractures, nonresponsive.

DR. WILKINSON

Get her into Trauma One. Give me a CBC, chem 7, type and screen.

They wheel her into a room. Angel starts to follow them in. Dr. Wilkinson stops him.

DR. WILKINSON

Excuse me, you're going to have to wait out here.

ANGEL



Someone should be with her.

DR. WILKINSON

You're going to have to wait out here.

Dr. Wilkinson hurries inside, swinging the door closed. Angel waits outside, helpless.

ANGEL'S POV through the window:

as the Slayer lies near death. Doctors and nurses surround her in a flurry of activity.

Angel looks around the hallway uncomfortably. He sees a UNIFORMED OFFICER at the far end talking to a NURSE. Angel backs away out of the officer's earshot.

A HAND lands on Angel's shoulder. He jumps. Turns around. The intern stands there with a clipboard.

INTERN

Excuse me, sir. I know this isn't the best time,
but I need to get some information.

Can you tell me the girl's name?

ANGEL

Buffy Summers.

INTERN

(writing)

Your relationship to Ms. Summers?

Angel pauses for a beat.

ANGEL

Friend.

INTERN

(writes that down)

You say she was attacked?

ANGEL

Yeah. A couple of guys.

INTERN

The police officer will want to get a full report and description.

ANGEL

Police officer? Oh, well, actually,
I don't think we'll be seeing those guys again.

INTERN

It's standard procedure in cases like this.

If you could just wait here...

The intern moves to get the officer. Angel watches him for a beat. The intern talks with the officer, points to where Angel stands, then leads him back down the hall.

INTERN

...brought in an assault victim and--

(then)

Where did he go?

The intern and the officer look around. Angel is gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - LATER

GILES is pacing in the waiting area as XANDER, WILLOW and JOYCE come in, panicked.

JOYCE

Where is she?

GILES

Still in the emergency room.

JOYCE

I want to see her.

GILES

The doctor will inform us the minute she knows anything.

JOYCE

Angel said she was mugged.

GILES

That's what he told you. Right.

JOYCE

I can't believe it. How did this happen?



Joyce collapses into a chair.

JOYCE

I thought moving to Sunnydale would be good for Buffy. Safe.
Xander and Willow turn to Giles. Quietly:

XANDER

How did this happen? I mean,
Buffy's pretty much un-muggable.

WILLOW

It's not like her to be caught off guard.

GILES

Perhaps she wouldn't have been, if I'd been there for her.

JOYCE

(almost to herself)

The last thing I told Buffy when she
went out tonight was 'be careful.'

The others move to her.

JOYCE

But she just looked at me and did that thing she does
with her eyes. It's like sometimes she thinks she's invincible...
She trails off. Dr. Wilkinson comes over.

DR. WILKINSON

Ms. Summers? I'm Dr. Wilkinson.

JOYCE

(leaps to her feat)

Is Buffy okay?

DR. WILKINSON

We were able to stabilize--

JOYCE

Is she okay?

DR. WILKINSON

She's going to be fine.

Joyce lets out a breath.

GILES

Good. Good. That's good.

DR. WILKINSON

We'll be keeping her here a few days.

She's still got some healing to do.

GILES

Was she hurt badly?

DR. WILKINSON

She sustained some minor injuries.

But personally, I'm more concerned with her fever.

JOYCE

Fever? What are you talking about?

What fever?

WILLOW

I know she felt sick during Geometry.

I thought it was just the trapezoids.

JOYCE

How serious is it?

DR. WILKINSON

I think we can get her temperature under control,
but she's still suffering from dehydration and exhaustion.

It looks like she hasn't been getting a lot of sleep.

JOYCE

It's so hard to get her to slow down.

I try to tell her she doesn't have to conquer the world in a day.

XANDER

What can you do? That Angel guy

keeps her out every night until sunrise.

JOYCE

When can I see her?

CUT TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER

Buffy is wheeled on a gurney out of the ER and into the hallway, where Joyce and the others wait. One of Buffy's wrists is bandaged, and because of her fever she's a little less than coherent.

JOYCE

Buffy? Hi, sweetheart.

XANDER

Hey, Buffy. We're all here.

BUFFY

(slurring her words)

Heyyy... here we are. It's all of we!

Did we come to take me home?

Buffy tries to sit up.

DR. WILKINSON

Buffy, you need to lie down.

BUFFY

(protesting weakly)

Yes, lie at home. My bed is better than any bed that's not my bed.

DR. WILKINSON

(to the others)

She's still a little out of it.

BUFFY

Shhh! Hospital zone. No singing.

Dr. Wilkinson gently pushes Buffy back down.

DR. WILKINSON

She'll feel better after a few days here.

Buffy begins struggling with the covers.

BUFFY

No. Let me go.

WILLOW

Buffy, what's wrong?

BUFFY

(fighting more)

Let me go!

DR. WILKINSON

(calling out)

I need some assistance!

A FEW NURSES rush over and help subdue Buffy.

BUFFY

Giles, tell them. The vampires.

I've got to kill the vampires!

JOYCE

Vampires?

Dr. Wilkinson prepares a syringe.

DR. WILKINSON

She's been like this since she came in.

The fever has obviously made her delusional.

Giles laughs nervously.

GILES

That's okay, Buffy.

We'll get those vampires some other time!

(off Joyce's look)

I hear it's best to just go along.

DR. WILKINSON



This will help her relax.
The nurses hold Buffy down as Dr. Wilkinson gives her a shot.

BUFFY

Mom, tell them I can't stay.

JOYCE

Doctor, I have to tell you,
Buffy has a problem with being in hospitals.

DR. WILKINSON

It's perfectly understandable. Many people do.

JOYCE

No, I mean she's terrified of them.

She always has been.

Buffy starts to feel the affects of the sedative, and stops struggling. Joyce looks at Dr. Wilkinson, gestures to Buffy.

JOYCE

May I?

Dr. Wilkinson nods. Joyce takes Buffy's hand.

JOYCE

Honey...?

BUFFY

I want to go home.

JOYCE

I promise, everything will be okay.

BOY (O.C.)

No, it won't.

They look and see a YOUNG BOY (RYAN) standing there. He's still, expressionless, Stepfordian. Think Christopher Walken at age ten. He stares at Buffy.

RYAN

Nothing will be okay. Nobody can stop it.

An elderly doctor with disheveled hair and a manner that's just a bit off-kilter (DR. BACKER) goes to Ryan and takes him by the hand.

DR. BACKER

Ryan, that's enough. Let's get you back to your room.

Dr. Backer leads Ryan away. Ryan looks back over his shoulder and locks eyes with Buffy.

RYAN

Nobody can stop it.

A drowsy Buffy watches him go.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE HOSPITAL - A MOMENT LATER

Buffy is wheeled into a room as the gang stays in the hall.

JOYCE

Is there anything I can do? Should I stay with her?

DR. WILKINSON

The sedative should put her out for a while.

I'm surprised she isn't asleep already. This would
be a good time for you to stock up on some rest of your own.

JOYCE

I doubt I'll do much resting.

Dr. Wilkinson smiles and goes into the room as the others watch Buffy through the window.

XANDER

This was a new experience. I've never
seen Buffy... what's the word?

WILLOW

Scared.

XANDER

That's the word.

WILLOW

I didn't know Buffy was afraid of anything.



JOYCE

It's from when she was a little girl.

Joyce turns to the group. The words come slowly.

JOYCE

Her grandmother -- my mom --
became very ill. We had to put her in a hospital.

WILLOW

Buffy's never mentioned her grandma.

JOYCE

Oh, she was crazy about her. And we didn't
want Buffy to see her that way. So weak and frail.
(tries to smile)

But Buffy absolutely insisted on visiting her.

So, we started taking her. But Mom got worse.

And then one day... I should never have left Buffy there alone.

Joyce stops to compose herself.

GILES

It's okay.

JOYCE

Buffy didn't even know what had happened.
She just came out of the room crying, saying
that something terrible had happened to Grandma,
and she wasn't breathing anymore...

XANDER

Oh, man.

WILLOW

I can't even imagine.

JOYCE

She's barely talked about it since.

GILES

Understandably. An experience like that can
leave severe emotional scars. Imagine being
confronted by such a heinous reality at that age,
and being powerless to do anything about it.

JOYCE

And you know Buffy -- always wanting to make things better.

XANDER

Usually succeeding.

POV through the window as Buffy lies in bed.

JOYCE (O.C.)

But it's hard to tell a little girl there are
some things you just can't fix.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - YEARS AGO

HAZY DREAM-CAM:

Cheery and bright. A seven-year-old girl (LITTLE BUFFY) sits on an old woman's lap. The
old woman (GRANDMA) is reading a book aloud.

GRANDMA

'...and as the night wind whistled, the lion and the
lamb laid down together and drifted off to sleep.'

(closing the book)

Okay, Buffy, off to bed.

LITTLE BUFFY

Read it again, Grandma.

Grandma looks at Little Buffy. She can't say no. She opens the book as Little Buffy leans
back into her arms.

A FLASH fills the screen and we:

CUT TO

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - YEARS AGO

HAZY DREAM CONTINUES as Little Buffy slowly and tentatively walks down the middle of a HARSHLY LIT hospital corridor. MOANS ECHO throughout the hall as Little Buffy looks around.

FROM HER POV, everything seems heightened and menacing -- shapes are distorted, voices are muffled, etc.

A NURSE walks by, pushing a cart. Little Buffy looks and sees a TRAY of SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS on the cart.

A TEAM OF PARAMEDICS races past Little Buffy with a 'crash cart.' They disappear into a room.

A SICKLY PATIENT is pushed by in a wheelchair. The patient smiles and reaches towards Little Buffy. She moves to the other side of the hall as they pass each other.

A CLOSED DOOR looms ominously ahead of her. With fear in her eyes, Little Buffy approaches the door and stands before it.

A FLASH fills the screen and we:

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Buffy WAKES UP in her hospital bed. The room is dark. Buffy looks around, disoriented, getting her bearings. She sits up and feels something tug at her arm.

BUFFY

Ow...

She touches her arm and sees that an IV has been connected: an unpleasant reminder of where she is. She sighs, looks at the clock: 2:27 AM.

She HEARS the labored BREATHING of someone else in the room. Startled, she looks around and sees that a curtain has been pulled to divide the room. Through the curtain, Buffy sees the SILHOUETTE OF A WOMAN. The woman's chest heaves up and down as she slowly breathes in and out.

Buffy gasps and fumbles around her bed for the 'CALL NURSE' button. She finds it and presses it repeatedly.

BUFFY

Come on, come on.

The woman's breathing seems to be getting louder and louder. Buffy keeps pressing the button.

No one comes.

Buffy hurriedly unhooks the IV from her arm, throws her covers off, and gets out of bed. She goes to the door and escapes into the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The hospital is eerily deserted.

Buffy makes her way down the hall. She looks into rooms and sees PATIENTS lying in beds, hooked up to monitors, etc. A WORKER pushes a cart of food past Buffy. Buffy looks at it.

A FLASH takes us back for an instant. We see the tray of SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS from Buffy's dream.

FLASH TO PRESENT: Buffy shakes off the image. The worker pushes the cart past. Buffy peers into a room. A WOMAN sits at the bedside of a MAN hooked up to a ventilator. The machine CLICKS and WHEEZES as it works. Buffy shudders at the sight. She moves on, walking past an empty wheelchair.

ANOTHER FLASH as Buffy recalls the sick patient from her dream. He reaches for her.

FLASH TO PRESENT: Buffy clears her head and continues down the hall. At the far end of the hall, a SECURITY GUARD (DON; more on him later) skulks around, watching her. To avoid him, Buffy turns down another hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Buffy comes around the corner and BUMPS into a PAIR OF YOUNG GIRLS, holding hands. She jumps back, then collects herself.

BUFFY

It's late. Shouldn't you be in bed?

GIRL #1

We can't go in there. That's when he comes.



We've seen him.

The girls walk off.

BUFFY

Okay. You have a good night, now.

From farther down the hall, Buffy hears the FAINT SOUND of a little girl CRYING. Buffy follows the sound.

CUT TO:

INT. KIDS' WARD - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE-UP ON A LITTLE GIRL (TINA) in bed, softly crying.

PULL BACK to see she is in the children's ward. Next to each of the half dozen or so beds is a dreary collection of medical equipment. CHILDREN sleep restlessly as machines monitor their conditions.

Dr. Backer and Dr. Wilkinson ARGUE quietly at Tina's bedside.

DR. WILKINSON

Dr. Backer, what you're doing to these kids is wrong.

It's risky.

DR. BACKER

I have the parents' consent.

DR. WILKINSON

Those parents would consent to anything.

Their children are sick.

DR. BACKER

And this--

(readies a syringe)

--is exactly what they need.

The little girl cries out in pain. Dr. Backer goes to her.

DR. BACKER

Don't worry Tina. Your fever will be gone soon.

(to Dr. Wilkinson)

I'm sure you have somewhere to be.

Dr. Wilkinson stares at him for a beat, then leaves out the side door. Dr. Backer moves to a SLEEPING CHILD and raises the syringe.

He senses someone is watching him and looks over to the main door. Buffy is there, staring at him.

Dr. Backer SWEEPS the curtain across the room, blocking Buffy's view. Buffy backs away and BUMPS into someone.

Ryan, the Christopher Walker boy, stands there.

RYAN

I've seen him. He comes in the night.

Buffy looks at Ryan, confused.

BUFFY

Who?

RYAN

Death.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

The middle of the night. Not too many people. A NURSE or two. Maybe a JANITOR. A couple of COPS talk to an apparent ASSAULT VICTIM who holds an ice pack to his head.

ANGLE: A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS

as someone enters from the outside carrying them.

It's Angel. He saunters past the reception desk -- only to have Xander step in his path.



XANDER
Visiting hours are over.
ANGEL
Well, I'm pretty much family.

XANDER
Why don't you come back during the
day... Or, gee, no. I guess you
can't.

ANGEL
If I decide to walk into Buffy's room
do you think for one microsecond that
you could stop me?

XANDER
Maybe not. Maybe that security guard
couldn't either -- or those cops. Or
all the orderlies... I'm kind of
curious to find out. You game?

ANGEL
Buffy's white knight. You still love
her. It must just eat you up that I
got there first.

Xander clenches his jaw against the truth of it.

XANDER
You're gonna die. I'm gonna be there.
Angel smiles, hands Xander the flowers.

ANGEL
Tell her I stopped by.
He exits, Xander suddenly shaky with released fear and tension.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NINE YEARS AGO (NIGHT)

CLOSE-ON:

The face of an eight-year-old girl (CELIA), who WHIMPERS and CRIES OUT in distress.

CELIA
Help me... Help!
PULL BACK to see that the girl is underneath a pile of PILLOWS and we are in a little girl's
bedroom. The girl is play-acting.

CELIA (cont'd)
Avalanche! Help! Help! I'm trapped!
Little Buffy appears in the doorway, hands on her hips. A bedspread serves as a makeshift
cape.

LITTLE BUFFY
Power Girl to the rescue!
Little Buffy runs over and, with 'superhuman strength,' lifts the huge 'boulders' off of



Celia.

CELIA
You saved me! Thank you, Power Girl!
LITTLE BUFFY
You're safe now.

A FLASH fills the screen and we are in:

INT. DIFFERENT HOSPITAL ROOM - NINE YEARS AGO (NIGHT)

HAZY DREAM-CAM:

As before -- Little Buffy PULLS the curtain aside, glimpsing the small FEET, then LEGS and BODY of a child lying in bed. Another FLASH and we:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Buffy WAKES with a start. Dr. Wilkinson stares down at her.

DR. WILKINSON
Good morning.
BUFFY
Coulda fooled me...

DR. WILKINSON
How are you feeling?
(off chart)
Looks like your fever is down.

BUFFY
(rising)
Well, good. Thanks for having me and
let's try to keep in touch.

DR. WILKINSON
Not so fast.

She pushes Buffy gently back down, checking her arm.

DR. WILKINSON (cont'd)
Hmmm.
BUFFY
Good Hmmm or bad Hmmm?

DR. WILKINSON
Swelling is down... Swelling is gone.
Does that hurt?

BUFFY
Nope.

DR. WILKINSON
Amazing...

BUFFY



So I should go.

DR. WILKINSON
Soon. We want to make sure that
fever's gone. It's a strong virus.
Not as strong as you, maybe...

BUFFY
Is that what Tina had?

Dr. Wilkinson looks down. Before she can answer, Giles, Willow, Xander and Cordelia enter.

GILES
May we come in?
DR. WILKINSON
Please. See if you can keep our
patient from bolting.
(to Buffy)
Rest.

Dr. Wilkinson heads out as Giles, Xander, Willow, and Cordelia come in. Xander presents a balloon bouquet to Buffy.

XANDER
Flowers for m'lady?
BUFFY
These are balloons.

XANDER
Stick 'em in water, maybe they'll
grow.

WILLOW
And, not to be outdone--

She grandly presents Buffy with a pile of:

BUFFY
Homework.
WILLOW
Just my way of saying 'Get Well Soon.'

BUFFY
You know, chocolate says that even
better.

WILLOW
I did all of your assignments. All
you have to do is sign your name.

BUFFY
(awestruck)
Chocolate means nothing to me.

Cordelia fidgets.

CORDELIA



Nobody told me we were supposed to
bring gifts. I was out of the loop
on gifts.

GILES

Well, it's traditional among...
people.

(to Buffy)

Did you pass the night well enough?

BUFFY

Well, not really. Some stuff
happened, I'm wondering...

She looks into the crowded hall.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Let's take a walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Willow pushes Buffy in a wheelchair as the gang walks along.

BUFFY

Now this part I could get used to.

WILLOW

You want me to go real fast?

(off Giles' look)

Not that I would...

GILES

(to Buffy)

You were discussing 'stuff'?

BUFFY

Stuff, yeah. You know a girl died
here last night.

WILLOW

How?

BUFFY

Well, that flu.

XANDER

Flu? Doesn't exactly sound
monsterrific.

BUFFY

Well, there's this Dr. Backer, he's
been giving them experimental
treatments -- he's kinda creepy --
I'm not sure what he's up to. And
then I met this kid, Ryan. He said
he saw something.

GILES

Saw what?



BUFFY
Death.

CORDELIA
Death?

WILLOW
The Death? As in, 'it is your time?'

GILES
Buffy, a frightened child --

BUFFY
But I thought I saw something -- I
was out of it, I'm not sure, but.

CORDELIA
But you do know it was death?

WILLOW
Did he have an hourglass?

XANDER
If he asks you to play chess, don't
even do it. Guy's like a whiz.

BUFFY
Look, maybe it wasn't death.
(pointedly)
Maybe it was something else.

CORDELIA
Okay, so this isn't about that you're
afraid of hospitals cause your little
friend died and you wanna conjure up
a monster that you can fight and save
everybody and not feel helpless?

GILES
Cordelia, have you ever actually
heard of tact?

CORDELIA
Tact is just not saying true stuff.
I'll pass.

WILLOW
(to Buffy)
Your mom did tell us about your
cousin...

BUFFY
This has nothing to do with that.
This kid Ryan was afraid of
something. Something real. As long
as I'm forced to stay here, I wanna
find out what.

XANDER
Is this the place where we say, 'What
can we do to help?'

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSP. RECORDS ROOM - A WHILE LATER (DAY)

CORDELIA
You had to ask that, didn't you?
Cordelia and Xander have opened the door to a medium-sized room. File cabinets line every wall. On the front of the door: 'MEDICAL RECORDS ROOM - AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.'

XANDER
It'll be cake. We find out exactly
how this little girl Tina died, we
get out. Five minutes, tops.
CORDELIA
This is what happens when you try to
be compassionate toward sick people.
They take advantage of you.

XANDER
Mm-hmm. Buffy almost died just so
she could put you out.

CORDELIA
I didn't want to be the first one to
say it.

XANDER
(pointing)
Me here, you there.

CORDELIA
Right.

Xander checks one side of the room as Cordelia goes to a row of file cabinets. She scans the cabinets, then reaches for a drawer. A HAND GRABS hers. She screams. A goofy, yet menacing-looking security guard (Don, the guard Buffy saw in the hallway) stands there.

DON
What are you doing here?

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Giles and Willow come through the doors.

WILLOW
Okay, where do we start?
GILES
Hmm? Oh, I don't know. Maybe look
into the history of the hospital,
bizarre incidents, that sort of thing.

WILLOW
I'm sensing less than full committal



here.

GILES

Well, I suppose... Cordelia may be Homerically Insensitive, but she may also be right. Disease and death are things -- possibly the only things-- that Buffy cannot fight. It would be natural for her to try to create a defeatable opponent. Especially now, after... after Jenny.

WILLOW

That's true. But, on the we-live-on-the-Hellmouth side, these kids might have seen a monster.

GILES

That no grown-up can see. Doesn't ring a bell. Unless...

WILLOW

Unless?

GILES

Sometimes small children do see something we adults don't. Us. Our true selves. Our hidden faces.

WILLOW

So the kids might be afraid of a regular person. Like the weird doctor.

GILES

Stanley Backer was the name, no?

WILLOW

(turns to the computer)

Let's look him up.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL RECORDS ROOM - SAME TIME (DAY)

Cordelia stares 'admiringly' at Don as he brags to her.

DON

You know, people always think security guards are just guys that failed the police exam. That's not me -- this is my career.

CORDELIA

Stereotypes are so unfair.

DON

I did take the fireman exam, though.



I didn't do so good.

CORDELIA

I think security guards are way sexier than firemen. They're all so sooty.

DON

This is where the action is, anyhow. I'm all the time restraining people.

CORDELIA

Ooh, how thrilling. Do you get scared?

DON

'Fear is for the weak.' That's my motto. Well, either that or 'Live in the now.' I haven't decided yet.

CORDELIA

I bet you see a lot of tragedy, too. Like that little girl...

DON

One of Dr. Backer's patients. Dr. Backer's a great man. He understands the real truth about children.

CORDELIA

What's that?

DON

Sometimes they die.

Cordy tries to hide her expression. Don's haughty schoolboy bravado is suddenly laced with creepy.

Xander moves away from the cabinet and accidentally KICKS a drawer. Don looks up and whips out his BILLY CLUB.

DON (cont'd)

What was that?

CORDELIA

I didn't hear anything.

Don holds his hand out to quiet her. Cordelia TENSES. Xander is about to be busted, when Cordelia blurts out:

CORDELIA (cont'd)

You have got the most perfect nose I have ever seen.

Don turns back.

CORDELIA (cont'd)

You must work out.



Behind Don, Xander WAVES a file at Cordelia, and escapes out the open door.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Xander comes out of the records room and stands in the hallway, flipping through the file.
After a few seconds, Cordelia comes out.

XANDER
Could you make just a little more
with the touchy-gropey?
CORDELIA
Jealous?

XANDER
Of Rogain boy? I don't think so.
(hands her the file)
Take this to Giles, okay?

CORDELIA
What about you?

XANDER
I'm staying here.

CORDELIA
Oh, right, your obsession with
protecting Buffy. Have I ever told
you how attractive that's not?

XANDER
Cordelia, someone's gotta watch her
back.

CORDELIA
Yeah, I've seen you watch her 'back.'

XANDER
What's that supposed to mean? COR

DELIA
(calmly explains)
I was using the phrase 'watch her
back' as a euphemism for looking at
her butt. Sort of a pun.

XANDER
Oh. Right. Hey!

CORDELIA
(angry again)
Well, you do!

XANDER
Jealous?

CORDELIA



Fine. Watch my back.

As she turns it on him and storms out. He watches her go, irked -- his eyes drift down for a moment, appreciative -- then back up, irked.

INT. LIBRARY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Willow and Giles are looking at the computer.

GILES

The good Doctor Backer has something
of a rap sheet.

WILLOW

(off computer)

Reprimands for controversial
experiments, risky procedures -- a
malpractice suit... looks like it was
dropped suddenly.

GILES

Factor in Buffy's observation that
he, uh, gives her the wiggins...

WILLOW

This could be our death guy?

GILES

I just wish I knew what he was doing
to these children.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DR. BACKER'S OFFICE - LATER (NIGHT)

A dark office with degrees on the wall, shelves of medical books, a small refrigerator, etc.

Dr. Backer pores over a number of reports. He OPENS the refrigerator and pulls out a couple of VIALS marked with different colored labels. He SCRIBBLES something on one of the vials, then rifles through a stack of files. He opens one and double checks his facts. He smiles.

DR. BACKER

Yes...

He excitedly WRITES some notes in the file.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Xander is on watch again. He slumps in a chair, bored and tired.

A BAG OF DONUTS falls into frame on the table before him.

Cordelia places two coffees on the table as she sits by Xander. He looks at her briefly, then goes for a coffee, sips it as Cordy opens a Cosmo, quietly reads.



INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL KIDS' WARD - NIGHT

Most of the kids are in their beds reading, playing with toys, etc. Buffy comes in, looks around, and sees Ryan at a small table, coloring on a pad. She goes over to him.

BUFFY

Hi. Remember me?

RYAN

You're not supposed to be here.

BUFFY

Why not?

RYAN

Contagious.

BUFFY

Oh, I already got what you got.

He shakes his head.

BUFFY (cont'd)

What, 'cause I'm a grown-up? Believe
me, I'm not that grown-up --

She stops, looking at his picture.

CLOSE-UP of the crayon drawing. Buffy has seen this thing before.

FLASH TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NIGHT BEFORE

A REPLAY from last night. Ryan stands in the doorway. The pale-visaged fiend passes behind, this time in SLOW MOTION.

FLASH TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSP. KIDS' WARD - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT)

Buffy stares at the drawing. It's almost a perfect likeness of the creepy creature.

RYAN

He'll come again tonight.

BUFFY

Ryan, listen to me. I'm not gonna
let this thing hurt you. Any of you.

He is silent.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Grown-ups don't believe you, right?
I do. There are real monsters, we
both know that. But there're real
heroes, too, that fight monsters.

That's me.

RYAN

Can't fight death.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The hallways are eerily DESERTED.

Dr. Backer comes out of his office and walks down the hall. Buffy STEPS OUT of the shadows, where she has been waiting and watching.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSP. KIDS' WARD - A MOMENT LATER (NIGHT)

The room is dark. The kids are asleep. Dr. Backer quietly comes into the room. He goes over to one of the kids.

CLOSE ON: THE CHILD, sleeping peacefully.

Dr. Backer holds a syringe up to the light and pushes some of the serum out the top. He disconnects the kid's IV, INJECTS the tube with serum, then re-connects the IV.

Buffy appears in the doorway as Dr. Backer finishes his job. As he turns to move to the next bed, Buffy MOVES out of his sight-line, hiding in the hallway.

Dr. Backer leans towards another SLEEPING CHILD, when:

He hears a NOISE. He looks around, sees nothing, then goes back to his work.

Suddenly, Dr. Backer is SLASHED across the arm by an invisible CLAW. He starts to CRY OUT, but an unseen hand CLAMPS over his throat, muffling his voice.

We HEAR another SLICE (his stomach, which is below camera view) and his face contorts in pain. The unseen force then THROWS him towards the door

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT)

--and Dr. Backer's body comes TUMBLING out, right past Buffy.

Dr. Backer lies on the ground, unmoving. Dead. Buffy goes to him and starts to kneel down when:

She is THROWN ASIDE by the invisible force. She SLAMS against a wall and FALLS to the ground, dazed.

Dr. Backer's arms are LIFTED UP, and his body begins to move as the unseen thing DRAGS him past Buffy and AROUND A CORNER.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

Act Three

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - YEARS AGO

HAZY DREAM-CAM:

Little Buffy walks up to the CLOSED DOOR. From behind the door, a weak, old FEMALE VOICE calls to her.

VOICE (O.C.)
Buffy...



Little Buffy REACHES OUT and slowly begins to push the door open. As the door swings wide, we see the feet, then legs and body of SOMEONE lying on the bed.

VOICE (O.C.)

Buffy...

A FLASH:

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Buffy wakes with a start.

VOICE (O.C.)

Are you all right?

The curtain divider has been pulled open, and Buffy sees a sweet-looking old lady, MRS. TRABER, in the other bed.

BUFFY

Bad dream.

MRS. TRABER

About what?

BUFFY

Don't know. Something in a hospital.

Which is bad enough all by itself.

MRS. TRABER

Hospitals aren't so terrible. You get used to them.

BUFFY

I hope not.

MRS. TRABER

Oh, come now. To me, this is a hopeful place.

There're babies being born, diseases being cured--

BUFFY

Pain, suffering, death...

MRS. TRABER

(smiling)

Ah, yes. When I was your age. I was equally morose.

But as time wore on -- and on -- I decided to stop fighting the inevitable.

BUFFY

Isn't that just giving up?

MRS. TRABER

It's letting go. Accepting what's beyond my control.

And now I'm thankful for every day I'm here.

This hospital has kept me alive.

BUFFY

Gee, where can I get an attitude like yours?

MRS. TRABER

Give it a few decades.

Buffy smiles.

BUFFY

I'm sorry.

MRS. TRABER

Nice to meet you. I'm Mrs. Traber.

Dr. Wilkinson comes in and looks over Buffy's chart.

DR. WILKINSON

Hi, Buffy. How are you feeling?

Looks like your fever is down.

BUFFY

Yep, I'm getting better,
so I should go home now, right?

DR. WILKINSON

How about I decide?

Dr. Wilkinson examines Buffy for bruises and sprains.

DR. WILKINSON

Wow.



BUFFY
 Good wow or bad wow?
 DR. WILKINSON
 Your injuries are almost healed.
 BUFFY
 (throwing covers off)
 Okay, then. I'll sign myself out.
 DR. WILKINSON
 I said almost. Your fever's not completely gone.
 We'll need to keep an eye on you for a while longer.
 BUFFY
 That's completely not necessary.
 DR. WILKINSON
 Buffy, I know you're not feeling one-hundred percent--
 (off chart)
 --or you wouldn't have rung for the nurse in the middle of the night.
 BUFFY
 Hey, I was wondering. Is that call button even connected?
 The cavalry didn't exactly rush to my rescue.
 DR. WILKINSON
 Sorry. They were a bit shorthanded last night, and there
 was a lot of activity down in the children's ward.
 BUFFY
 (hopefully)
 Fun activity?
 DR. WILKINSON
 I wish I could say it was. But the kids have some restless nights.
 They've got a rare virus which in turn is causing high fever.
 BUFFY
 I know the feeling.
 DR. WILKINSON
 Theirs is different from yours.
 But they're putting up a good fight.
 MRS. TRABER
 There's nothing more horrible than a sick child.
 BUFFY
 How are they doing?
 DR. WILKINSON
 Some of them are doing very well.
 BUFFY
 And the others?
 DR. WILKINSON
 We really are doing all we can.
 BUFFY
 But...
 DR. WILKINSON
 But sometimes 'all we can do' isn't enough.
 Sometimes the virus wins.
 BUFFY
 (realizing)
 You mean one of the kids didn't make it?
 DR. WILKINSON
 I'm afraid the fever was too much.
 MRS. TRABER
 Oh, dear.
 DR. WILKINSON
 But we're doing all we can to ensure that what happened
 to Tina doesn't happen to the rest of the kids.
 Buffy nods glumly and falls silent. Giles pokes his head in.

GILES
Is it visiting hours yet?
DR. WILKINSON
Just about.

Dr. Wilkinson gently pats Buffy on the leg.

DR. WILKINSON
Keep getting better, okay?
BUFFY

(smiling a bit)
You're the doctor.

Dr. Wilkinson heads out as Giles, Xander, Willow, and Cordelia come in. Xander presents a balloon bouquet to Buffy.

XANDER
Flowers for m'lady?
BUFFY

These are balloons.

XANDER
Stick 'em in water, no one will know.

WILLOW
And, not to be outdone--

She grandly presents Buffy with a pile of:

BUFFY
Homework.
WILLOW
Just my way of saying 'Get Well Soon.'
BUFFY

You know, candy says that even better.

WILLOW
I did all of your assignments.
All you have to do is sign your name.

BUFFY
I'm not a real candy fan.

CORDELIA

Hey, Buffy.

BUFFY

(surprised)

Cordelia.

Cordelia stands there awkwardly, holding a small stuffed bear.

CORDELIA
I heard you were dying. I felt like I should,
you know, come see.

BUFFY
(pleasantly)

That's so very you. But I'm okay.

CORDELIA

Oh. So... you're not dying.

WILLOW

See, Cordelia, that's a good thing.

CORDELIA

What am I supposed to do with this stupid bear?

XANDER

Is that the traditional gift one gives a dying person?

CORDELIA

(frazzled)

I mean, do you even want it anymore?

BUFFY

Of course. That was sweet of you.

CORDELIA

It sure was. But now it's ruined. I had put a lot of

thought into this. At first I was thinking cookies,
but a dying person doesn't want crumbs all over them.

And then I thought--

GILES

Cordelia, let's pretend Buffy is the center of attention for a change.

(to Buffy)

How goes the healing?

Buffy starts to answer, but Mrs. Traber speaks first.

MRS. TRABER

Good. But the poor thing had a bit of a restless night.

BUFFY

Oh, this is my roommate, Mrs. Traber.

MRS. TRABER

You came just in time. Buffy had some kind of horrible nightmare.

GILES

(to Buffy)

You're dreaming? What about?

MRS. TRABER

She's not sure. But I'm concerned it has something to do with this place.

Buffy smiles at Mrs. Traber, then leans close to the others.

BUFFY

Maybe we should talk somewhere else.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL - A LITTLE LATER

A beautiful day. Giles pushes Buffy in a wheelchair around the grounds as Xander, Willow, and Cordelia walk alongside. Buffy is noticeably more relaxed. She takes a deep breath.

BUFFY

It feels so nice to be out here. And not in there.

WILLOW

Your mom told us about you and hospitals.

How you were with your grandmother when she...

BUFFY

Yeah, I don't remember much about that.

Just that it belongs in my 'unpleasant' column.

GILES

Funny you wouldn't recall something so powerful.
Perhaps these dreams are trying to fill in the blanks.

BUFFY

Couldn't tell you. So far they're pretty non-eventful.

XANDER

They're eventful enough to keep you awake.

BUFFY

I chalk that up to other stuff. Creepy little girls,
creepy little boy, creepy little doctor.

CORDELIA

You should ask for a private room.

BUFFY

And then to top it all off, I find out that
poor little Tina girl died last night.

GILES

Buffy, this is a hospital. Death here is a fact of life.

BUFFY

There're other facts. Ryan and those girls mentioned
some death-thing that comes in the night. And Dr. Backer
was with the children last night, giving them some kind of injection.

WILLOW

You're wondering if the two are connected.

BUFFY

There are an awful lot of scared kids wandering around this place.



GILES
If you don't mind my saying so, you seem to be one of them.
BUFFY
Hey, I'm noticing some hefty weirdness.
And now that I'm noticing, I'd like to know more.
XANDER
Is this the part where we say 'What can we do to help?'

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECORDS ROOM - A WHILE LATER

CORDELIA
You had to ask that, didn't you?
Cordelia and Xander have opened the door to a medium-sized room. File cabinets line every wall. One the front of the door: 'MEDICAL RECORDS ROOM - AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.'

XANDER
It'll be cake. We find out how Tina died,
we get out. Five minutes, tops.
CORDELIA
This is what happens when you try to be compassionate
towards sick people. They take advantage of you.
XANDER
Mm-hmm. Buffy almost died just so she could put you out.
CORDELIA
I didn't want to be the first one to say it.
Xander points her towards a file cabinet.

XANDER
We'll do much better if you go... away from me.
Xander checks one side of the room as Cordelia goes to a row of file cabinets. She scans the cabinets, then reaches for a drawer. A HAND GRABS hers. She screams. A goofy, yet menacing-looking security guard (Don, the guard Buffy saw in the hallway) stands there.
DON
What are you doing here?

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME

Giles is at the table looking through a number of books. Willow brings another stack over to him.

WILLOW
Anything yet?
GILES
Well, I'm stuck on the fact that only the children have
seen this image of Death. That leads me to believe we're
dealing with some sort of mass hallucination.
WILLOW
But how can all the kids be seeing the same thing?
GILES
(referring to book)
Sometimes, one person's vision or belief is so convincing
that it is adopted by another person, and then another.
Eventually, the fantasy becomes an accepted mythology.
WILLOW
Oh, like with Bigfoot, The Chupacabra, The Loch Ness Monster...
GILES
No, no. Those are real.
WILLOW
My mistake.
GILES
However, in a place as frightening as a hospital,
so rife with death and misery, a child's mind is
capable of conjuring up almost anything.



WILLOW

As in make-believe gone bad?

GILES

Make-believe made bad. Because when you add
in the fact that Buffy saw Dr. Backer administering
some sort of injection to the children--

WILLOW

Yeah, that was part of the creepy.

GILES

--I'd bet whatever the kids are seeing has grown
out of one child's drug-induced imagination.

Willow looks over at the computer.

WILLOW

That's Backer with a 'B,' right?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - A LITTLE LATER

Dr. Backer comes out of the kids' ward with a MAN and WOMAN.

DR. BACKER

Your daughter's fever has risen a bit, but you
don't need to worry. She's in good hands.

He smiles as they continue down the hall. REVEAL Buffy has been watching this. She
heads into the kids' ward.

CUT TO:

INT. KIDS' WARD - CONTINUOUS

Buffy comes in and sees the kids in their beds reading, playing with toys, etc. Ryan is at a
small table, coloring on a pad. Buffy goes over to him.

BUFFY

Hi.

(no response)

I'm Buffy. We met in the hall.

RYAN

(not looking up)

I know who you are.

BUFFY

No fun being stuck here, huh?

I can't wait to get out of here, myself.

Ryan gets up and moves to another part of the room. He sits on the floor and continues to
color. Buffy follows him over.

BUFFY

Whatcha working on?

RYAN

(hiding it)

Nothing.

BUFFY

Come on. Let me see.

RYAN

You wouldn't understand. Nobody does.

BUFFY

I'm not nobody. I've seen lots of things
that most people wouldn't believe.

He stops coloring and looks up at her.

BUFFY

I know I'm kind of old. But you can trust me.

(off his look)

You want to show me?

Ryan hesitates, then hands her the pad.

CLOSE-UP of the crayon drawing. It's a picture of a large, furry, FANGED CREATURE with
TWO CLAWS on each hand.

RYAN



It got my friend Alex a few nights ago.
He screamed for us to get off him. But we couldn't.

BUFFY

Has anyone else seen it?

RYAN

No. We tried to tell the grown-ups,
but they didn't believe us.

BUFFY

Grown-ups can be that way.

RYAN

Dr. Backer said it's just the fever.
He said it makes us see things.

BUFFY

What else did Dr. Backer--

DR. BACKER (O.C.)

Ryan?

Buffy looks over, startled. Dr. Backer stands in the doorway.

DR. BACKER

(to Ryan)

You need your rest.

(then, to Buffy)

He's very sick.

Buffy surreptitiously folds up the drawing and pockets it. Dr. Backer moves in closer to Buffy.

DR. BACKER

This hospital has provided you with a comfortable bed.

Why don't you put yourself in it?

He moves aside. Buffy walks out, glancing back at Dr. Backer.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECORDS ROOM - SAME TIME

Cordelia stares 'admiringly' at Don as he brags to her.

DON

A lot of people think this is an easy job, all downtime
and donuts. They don't know what I go through. I mean,
I earn that downtime and donuts.

CORDELIA

(stroking his hair)

It's awful to be so misunderstood.

But you know what? I get you.

DON

I could tell that.

REVEAL Xander, waiting impatiently, hidden behind a cabinet.

CORDELIA

I've always thought security guards were sexy.

Xander rolls his eyes.

CORDELIA

They make me feel so secure. And guarded.

Xander motions for Cordelia to keep Don occupied.

CORDELIA

It's important for me to know there are people
watching me. Especially cute people.

DON

Looks do play an integral part in this vocation.

My appearance puts people at ease.

Xander moves to a file cabinet and accidentally KICKS a drawer. Don looks up and whips out his BILLY CLUB.

DON

What was that?

CORDELIA



I didn't hear anything.
Don holds his hand out to quiet her as he looks over.
ANGLE: Xander, who stands frozen, HIDDEN behind the files.

DON
(relaxing a bit)
Hunh...

He puts his club back on his belt.

CORDELIA
You don't fool around, do you?

DON
Not when it comes to matters of public safety, I don't.

CORDELIA
(re: club)

Have you ever actually used that?

DON

Sometimes. You know, for people who break and enter...

Cordelia smiles weakly.

DON

...or the occasional unruly patient. Like, a few days ago
there was this homeless guy they brought in, who was all
feverish and sweating. He started freaking out, screaming
that some monster was trying to kill him.

CORDELIA

Ew, make me scared.

DON

Guy was nuts. So I took care of him.

(patting his club)

Introduced my pal Billy to his knees.

Then I handed him over to Dr. Backer.

Xander waves a file at Cordelia, then escapes out the door.

CORDELIA

Well, I guess I'm done here.

DON

Done? What? Wait, I thought--

CORDELIA

Bye!

She follows after Xander, leaving Don there alone.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Willow and Giles are looking at the computer.

WILLOW

This Dr. Backer has quite a rap sheet.

GILES

Administrative reprimands, controversial procedures.
I'm beginning to understand why those kids are so nervous.

WILLOW

Sure. Send some whack-o M.D. after me with a syringe,
I'm gong to start screaming like crazy.

GILES

Maybe that is what they're screaming about.

WILLOW

Yeahhh...

(then, more honestly)

What?

GILES

Maybe this death-image the kids are talking about is
actually a freakish representation of how they see Dr. Backer --
as an evil force that is trying to hurt them.

WILLOW

Oh, so this scary monster is really a scary doctor?

GILES

That's right.

WILLOW

More scary.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. BACKER'S OFFICE - THAT NIGHT

A dark office with degrees on the wall, a small refrigerator, etc. Dr. Backer pores over a number of medical reports. One of them catches his eye. He rifles through another stack of file, opens one, and double checks his facts. He smiles.

DR. BACKER

Yes...

He snatches something from the refrigerator and starts out.

CUT TO:

INT. KIDS' WARD - A MOMENT LATER

The room is dark. The kids are asleep. Dr. Backer quietly comes into the room. He goes over to one of the kids.

CLOSE ON: THE CHILD, sleeping peacefully.

Dr. Backer reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a syringe. He holds it up to the light and pushes some of the serum out the top. He leans in towards the kid, administers the shot, then removes the needle.

Dr. Backer turns to the next bed and is SLASHED across the face by an invisible force. He CRIES OUT, staggering back in horror. Another invisible claw SLICES him across the middle.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Backer comes reeling out of the kids' ward. He stumbles back as the invisible thing TACKLES him and SLASHES him again. Backer SCREAMS, trying to fend the thing off.

Buffy rounds the corner and sees Dr. Backer struggling -- and losing -- against his invisible assailant.

BUFFY

Dr. Backer!

She runs to him. He lies there, unmoving. Dead. Buffy looks up and down the hallway. There's nothing there.

EXT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL - THE NEXT DAY

The sun is shining.

BUFFY (O.C.)

I can not wait to get out of here.

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Giles, Xander, Willow, and Cordelia are there with Buffy, who is in bed. Mrs. Traber is in her bed behind a curtain. Our gang talks in hushed tones so she can't hear them.

BUFFY

I had just started to accept that sick people die in hospitals.
But doctors getting clawed to pieces? That I can't accept.

GILES

I was hoping your stay here would provide you
with a respite from these kinds of activities.

CORDELIA

Well, Buffy's not exactly a good luck charm.
This stuff seems to follow her around.

BUFFY

I didn't expect it to follow me in here. I mean,
I'd heard these rumors that hospitals are hopeful
places where good things happen. But whatever it
was that killed Dr. Backer didn't seem hopeful or good. Just mad.

WILLOW

Maybe because Dr. Backer killed Tina.

CORDELIA



Except that he didn't.
Xander tosses the file onto Buffy's bed.

XANDER
Tina died from the virus. Plain and simple.

GILES
So the question remains, what killed Dr. Backer? And why?

BUFFY
I can't tell you the 'why,' but I think this is the 'what.'
She shows them Ryan's drawing.

WILLOW
Ew. Can we hope this is an abstract?
BUFFY
Ryan seemed pretty certain about the details.
GILES
And Dr. Backer's fate confirms that this creature is
more than just the product of a child's imagination.

XANDER
I.e., it's real.

GILES
All too.

CORDELIA
(off picture)

I bet this is what that homeless patient saw.
He was screaming that something was trying to get him.

BUFFY
Well, if every Tom, Dick, and homeless guy could see it,
why couldn't I?
Joyce rushes in and begins gathering Buffy's things.

BUFFY
Mom.
JOYCE

Buffy, I'm getting you out of here.
BUFFY

What are you talking about? I thought I was still sick?
JOYCE

I'm not going to have my daughter staying in a hospital
where doctors are getting murdered in the hallways.

They say you're well enough to come home. That's where I want you to be.
Buffy looks at the gang, then:

BUFFY
Mom, I can't go.

Joyce stops and turns to Buffy.

JOYCE
What do you mean, you can't go?
(firmly)
You're going.
BUFFY
(just as firmly)
No. I'm not.

The rest of the gang looks away, uncomfortable.

BUFFY
If you're worried about last night,
that happened in a whole other part of the hospital.
JOYCE

That was close enough for me. Besides,
yesterday you were begging me to take you home.
BUFFY

I know. But a lot of my symptoms have come back.
And until I feel better, I think I should stay here.

Joyce drops Buffy's things on her bed, exasperated.

JOYCE

You never make anything easy, do you?

BUFFY

I'm sorry. I'm sick.

Joyce looks at Buffy; shakes her head.

JOYCE

I'll talk to the doctors.

Joyce goes off. After a beat:

XANDER

Well, that was uncomfortable.

CORDELIA

(to Buffy)

You're not leaving? I thought you hated hospitals.
Because I think I heard you say, 'I hate hospitals.'

BUFFY

As long as that invisible beast thing is shredding
doctors and scaring kids, leaving is not an option.

GILES

And now, with this drawing to go on, the rest of us
can get to the library and try to identify the creature.

(starting out)

We'll call when we know something.

BUFFY

Know something soon.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Giles and the others make their way down the hall.

XANDER

Buffy healed so fast. Is that part
of the whole Slayer package?

GILES

It is.

XANDER

Nice perk. Sort of balances out that
'every vampire wants you dead' thing.

Cordelia bumps into Don, who has suddenly appeared.

CORDELIA

Don. What are you doing up here?

DON

I've been watching you. You said you liked that.
Wouldn't want someone as pretty as you to get hurt.

You know, with a killer on the loose and all.

Cordelia moves away, uncomfortable. Don watches as she and the others head out.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER THAT DAY

Buffy comes to an office door: DR. ROBERT BACKER, M.D. She looks around, opens the
door, and quietly slips inside.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. BACKER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Buffy backs in and closes the door. She turns around.

BUFFY

Ah!

She is face-to-face with:

BUFFY

Dr. Wilkinson.

DR. WILKINSON

Buffy, what are you doing out of bed? What are you doing out?
(looking around)



What are you doing?

Buffy thinks for a beat.

BUFFY

I should have had a clever excuse prepared for this moment, right?

DR. WILKINSON

That would have been good.

BUFFY

I wanted to know some stuff. About Dr. Backer.

DR. WILKINSON

(gently)

I'm sorry you had to be the one to find him.

BUFFY

Me, too. Does anybody know anything?

DR. WILKINSON

No. I spent half the morning talking to the police.

We can't figure out who would do such a brutal thing.

Especially given all the good Dr. Backer was doing.

BUFFY

Good? I thought I kind of heard you kind of thought
he was kind of reckless, and dangerous, and--

DR. WILKINSON

Arrogant?

BUFFY

Kind of.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER

Buffy and Dr. Wilkinson walk together.

DR. WILKINSON

At first, I objected to what Dr. Backer was doing.

It was way too radical. He devised a serum to raise the
kids' temperature above the normal fever level.

BUFFY

That doesn't seem good.

DR. WILKINSON

Well, a fever isn't necessarily bad. It's the body's way of
fighting off illness. But the children's virus is unusually strong.

Dr. Backer thought that by giving the kids a higher fever he could burn out the virus.

BUFFY

The virus that killed Tina.

DR. WILKINSON

Right. She wasn't inoculated. But Dr. Backer realized
he could save the other children. Until...

BUFFY

Something stopped him.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - THAT EVENING

CLOSE-ON: Ryan's drawing.

PULL BACK to see Xander is comparing it to drawings in a book. Cordelia peruses other
books, searching for a match.

CORDELIA

All these things are so ugly.

XANDER

I don't know. If you were a...

(reading from book)

...'Tri-Legged Paytar,' you might
find this thing attractive.

CORDELIA

That's offensive.

XANDER



Hey, I bet Mr. Paytar wouldn't exactly
ask for your number, either.

CORDELIA
Oh, please.
(then, worried)
Why not?

Willow comes out of the stacks.

WILLOW
I've gone through everything related
to predators, and no match.

GILES
We're up against quite a challenge.
Since this creature is only seen by a select group
of people, there's a chance we won't find a picture of it.
Cordelia finishes paging through a book.

CORDELIA
Well, it's not in here.
She closes the book. There, ON THE COVER, is the CREATURE.

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - A MOMENT LATER
Buffy has the phone to her ear.

GILES (O.C.)
It's called a Mediterranean Death Hoarder.
BUFFY
They're never just called 'Bob.'
GILES (O.C.)
It's a parasite that literally feeds off the
disease and decay of its victim.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME
Giles holds up the book as he speaks on the phone.

GILES
It is believed to have roamed the European countryside during
the Black Plague. No one could confirm its existence, so those
who saw it were believed to be mad, and their reports were discounted.
BUFFY (O.C.)
Just like the children.
GILES
(off picture)
The mental patient who rendered this sketch was originally
convinced he was being visited by Death itself.

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GILES (O.C.)
But he goes on to say that when it was done feeding,
it turned into its natural form -- a visible human.
BUFFY
So. It's an invisible, or visible, death monster, or human
being, that only kids can see. Or European mental patients.
GILES (O.C.)
Exactly.
BUFFY
At least for now I know what I'm looking for.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

GILES
A hospital would fit right in with its M.O.
It would see the sick children as a virtual bounty.
BUFFY (O.C.)



And Dr. Backer was in its way.

GILES
Pardon?

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME

BUFFY

Backer was curing the kids. That's exactly what
it didn't want. No sickness, no food. So it tore him up.

GILES (O.C.)

In order to continue gorging. Which looks positively ghastly.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME

GILES
(off picture)

The creature sits atop its prey, pinning it down
helplessly as it nurses. It must be horrifying for the victim.

(a beat)

Buffy?

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Buffy is silent, staring off into space.

GILES (O.C.)
Hello?

A FLASH fills the screen and we:

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - YEARS AGO

HAZY DREAM-CAM:

Little Buffy has entered the room. She approaches the bed and we see her grandmother
lying there.

LITTLE BUFFY
Grandma? It's me.

Grandma turns her head, sees Little Buffy, and smiles.

GRANDMA
Buffy...

Little Buffy draws closer and reaches out her hand.

Suddenly, her grandma shoots out her hand and GRABS Little Buffy's wrist tightly. The
smile on Grandma's face is replaced by a look of absolute terror. Little Buffy tries to pull
away.

LITTLE BUFFY
Grandma, you're hurting me!

Buffy's grandma holds on tightly as she is PINNED DOWN by an invisible force on top of
her. She struggles for breath.

GRANDMA
Get it off me! Please, get it off me!

Little Buffy looks on, horrified.

LITTLE BUFFY
I can't! Grandma!

The screen FADES TO WHITE and then to:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Buffy holds the phone, dazed.

GILES (O.C.)
Buffy? Buffy, what is it?

BUFFY

I have to go.

She hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME

Giles looks at the phone, concerned.

XANDER



What?
GILES
Something's not right.
WILLOW
Do you think she's seen it?
GILES
She didn't say.

Xander starts for the door.

GILES
Where are you going?
XANDER
Hospital visit.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Buffy comes hurrying out of her room and heads towards the children's ward.

REVEAL: DON

standing in the shadows, watching her. Buffy turns a corner.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Buffy picks up the pace a bit.

POV FROM DOWN THE HALL:

as something (the creature) begins slowly following her.

Buffy stops and looks back. Nothing.

CREATURE'S POV:

Buffy stands there as the invisible creature draws closer, coming nose-to-nose with her. It pauses there for a second, watching Buffy as she slowly turns, unsure of what she senses. After a beat, the creature moves down the hall.

Buffy continues on. A SCREAM echoes from the kids' ward, and Buffy bolts in that direction.

CUT TO:

INT. KIDS' WARD - CONTINUOUS

The kids are SCREAMING, all looking at Ryan, who is TRAPPED in bed by an invisible force pressing down on him.

Buffy rushes in. One of the girls yells to her.

GIRL #1
It's on him!

Buffy looks around.

BUFFY
Where?!
GIRL #1
(pointing)
Right there! Right there!

Buffy lunges towards Ryan. Before she can get to him, she is SLASHED in the arm by the invisible creature.

BUFFY
Ah!

Buffy clutches her arm.

GIRL #1
It's getting away!

Buffy looks up: A window SHATTERS as the unseen force JUMPS OUTSIDE. Buffy runs over to Ryan.

BUFFY
It's gone. You're okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

We see a slight, blurry indication of an INVISIBLE, INHUMAN SHAPE with no detail. It breathes heavily as it climbs up the outside wall of the hospital.

It pauses, growls quietly, then crawls into:

CUT TO:



INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The shape comes through the open window and begins to return to visibility. We watch as a HAIRY CLAW comes into view -- but only for an instant -- before it morphs into an OLD GNARLED HAND. The no-longer-visible body climbs into bed.

We PAN UP the hand, up the arm, and see that the Death Hoarder has turned into its HUMAN FORM: Mrs. Traber. She pulls the covers up and settles in.

Buffy comes in, shaken and hurt. She holds a towel to the wound on her arm. Mrs. Traber sits upright, concerned.

MRS. TRABER

Buffy, what happened?

BUFFY

I'm not exactly sure.

MRS. TRABER

You're hurt.

Mrs. Traber starts to get out of her bed.

MRS. TRABER

Let me take care of you.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

Act Four

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Wilkinson is there, bandaging Buffy's arm.

DR. WILKINSON

Buffy, there're too many crazy things going on around here. You shouldn't be out of your room.

I want you to promise me you'll stay in bed.

(no reply)

Promise.

BUFFY

I promise.

MRS. TRABER

I'll keep my eye on her.

DR. WILKINSON

I'd appreciate that.

Dr. Wilkinson hands Buffy some pills and water.

DR. WILKINSON

These will help you sleep.

BUFFY

Thanks.

Buffy puts the pills in her mouth and takes a gulp of water.

DR. WILKINSON

I'll be back to check on you later.

Buffy smiles as Dr. Wilkinson goes off. After she's gone, Buffy SPITS the pills out into her hand.

BUFFY

I won't be here.

Buffy gets out of bed.

MRS. TRABER

Where are you going? The doctor told you to stay in bed.

BUFFY

Mrs. Traber, this isn't going to make any sense.

(more)

BUFFY

But something very bad is on the loose in this hospital. I've got to find it before I gets hungry again.

MRS. TRABER

What do you mean? What is it?

BUFFY

I can't tell you right now.



MRS. TRABER

Don't go!

Buffy, at the door, turns back.

MRS. TRABER

I mean... what if it comes in here?

BUFFY

I won't let anything hurt you.

MRS. TRABER

Buffy, wait.

BUFFY

Mrs. Traber, there's no time!

MRS. TRABER

But how can you possibly fight this thing if you can't even see it?

Buffy stops cold.

BUFFY

How did you know that?

MRS. TRABER

What?

BUFFY

I never told you I couldn't see it.

MRS. TRABER

You must have.

BUFFY

I didn't.

Buffy draws closer to her.

BUFFY

It's you.

MRS. TRABER

Slow down, dear. What on earth are you talking about.

BUFFY

You came for my grandmother. You came for these kids.

MRS. TRABER

Buffy, you're tired. You're not well.

Mrs. Traber moves toward Buffy as if to calm her.

BUFFY

Stay where you are!

MRS. TRABER

Please, you're scaring me. I'm --

Mrs. Traber goes INVISIBLE just as her hand SLASHES Buffy's face. Buffy is knocked to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Xander rounds the corner, looking at room numbers.

Down the hall, a door comes FLYING off its hinges, BANGING against the opposite wall.

XANDER

Buffy!

Xander takes off towards the room.

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Buffy struggles to her feet just as Xander arrives.

XANDER

What happened?

BUFFY

It's Mrs. Traber.

XANDER

The thing got her?

BUFFY

The thing is her. She's-- it's on the loose.

XANDER

You're bleeding.

Xander grabs a washcloth and wipes the blood from Buffy's forehead during the following.

BUFFY

She disappeared right in front of me.

XANDER

Hold still.

BUFFY

I don't get it. I'm the only one strong enough to defeat this thing, and I can't even see it. Everyone who can see it is too helpless to fight it. They're all sick and feverish and dying.

A beat. She excitedly grabs Xander's arm.

BUFFY

But they can see it.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. BACKER'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Buffy BREAKS the lock on Dr. Backer's refrigerator.

XANDER

Buffy, think about this. It's too much.

BUFFY

I don't have much of a choice.

Buffy takes a vial of liquid out of the refrigerator.

BUFFY

The only way I can see Mrs. Traber's uglier half is if I'm as feverish as the kids.

She plunges a hypodermic needle into the vial, filling the syringe with fluid.

BUFFY

Dr. Backer's serum is just the medicine I need.

XANDER

How are you going to fight that thing with a 107 degree temperature?

BUFFY

I guess we'll find out.

She rolls her sleeve up to her shoulder and brings the large needle into view. Xander becomes queasy at the sight.

XANDER

Excuse me while I look away.

CLOSE-UP as Buffy gives herself the injection.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER

Xander is helping an already woozy Buffy down the hall.

BUFFY

I don't feel so good.

XANDER

I've got you.

BUFFY

I'm not sure this was such a great idea.

XANDER

Hang in there. You'll be okay.

Just then, KIDS come POURING OUT of the children's ward, and steadies herself.

BUFFY

Okay, here goes.

They leap into the doorway.

INT. KIDS' WARD - CONTINUOUS

Buffy and Xander look inside. The room is EMPTY, QUIET.

Buffy and Xander are startled by a SOUND from the corner of the room. They look and see RYAN CROUCHED IN THE CORNER. Alone. Terrified. He can barely get the words out.

RYAN



It's... in here.
BUFFY'S DRUGGED POV: as she scans the room.
XANDER (O.C.)
Where is it?
BUFFY
I don't know. I can't see it.
RYAN
Help. Please.
BUFFY
Why isn't this working?
Buffy stumbles inside and nearly collapses.
BUFFY
Whoa!
(hand to head)
I'm burning up.

Buffy lifts her head and looks above her.

BUFFY'S POV:

as the Mediterranean Death Hoarder APPEARS to her for the first time. It clings to the ceiling. In real life, it's even more hideous than Ryan's drawing: razor-sharp claws, mangy fur, saliva-dripping fangs.

Buffy and Xander whisper:

BUFFY
There it is.
XANDER
Are you sure?
BUFFY

If that's not it, we're really in trouble.

It DROPS down from the ceiling. A weakened Buffy leaps aside, stumbles a bit on the landing, and turns to face it.

BUFFY
Good to see you.

The creature dives at Buffy and they begin to wrestle. Buffy is weak from the fever, but she gives it her all -- swinging, kicking, mostly missing.
Xander runs over and grabs Ryan.

XANDER
Come on!

Buffy and the creature continue their fight. As they battle they knock over medical equipment, IV trees, etc.

At the door, a video monitor FLIES by Xander's head, SMASHING against the wall. Xander ducks and pulls Ryan out with him.

Buffy is on the creature's back. It FLIPS Buffy over, SNARLS, and pins her to the floor. Buffy struggles to free herself, but she's too weak. She's trapped.

The Death Hoarder stares down at her. Then, it speaks.

CREATURE

Just accept it. There are some things that can't be fought.

The creature opens its mouth. Wider. And wider still. The inside of its mouth glistens. Saliva drops from its tongue and fangs. It lowers itself and moves to engulf Buffy's face.

BUFFY

I'm one of them.

With her last bit of strength, Buffy grabs the creature by the head and CRACKS its neck. It falls on top of her. Dead.

Xander has returned and pulls the thing off of Buffy.

XANDER

Let me get that for you.

He helps Buffy up. She wobbles a bit.

BUFFY

I really do not like hospitals.

She collapses, and Xander is there to catch her.

DISSOLVE TO:



INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Joyce is helping Buffy into a wheelchair.

BUFFY

Mom, I don't need a wheelchair.

JOYCE

You've been sick.

BUFFY

In case you haven't noticed, I'm better.

I think I can walk out of here on my own.

JOYCE

Oh, would you let me be your mother for once?

BUFFY

(smiling)

All right. Once.

Buffy sits and Joyce pushes her out into

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

JOYCE

You know, a couple of posters and a few splashes
of color would really take the edge off this place.

BUFFY

Eh, it's not so bad.

JOYCE

Excuse me, have they given me the right Buffy?

BUFFY

I don't know. Free TV, three squares a day.

I'm starting to come around.

Dr. Wilkinson comes up to them.

DR. WILKINSON

Well, Buffy, this is the big day. With any
luck we'll never see each other again.

BUFFY

(upbeat)

We can hope.

DR. WILKINSON

Ryan wanted me to give you something.

Dr. Wilkinson reaches into her notebook.

BUFFY

How is he?

DR. WILKINSON

He and the rest of the kids are going to be fine.

Dr. Backer's serum did the trick.

BUFFY

That's good to know.

DR. WILKINSON

Here. Ryan said you'd know what it means.

Dr. Wilkinson hands a drawing to Buffy. Joyce looks at it over Buffy's shoulder.

JOYCE

Oh, he drew you a picture. Isn't that...

CLOSE-UP of the drawing -- Ryan's crayon rendition of Buffy standing triumphantly over
the broken, bloodied body of the Mediterranean Death Hoarder. Rather grotesque.

JOYCE (O.C.)

...what is that?

CUT TO:

INT. BRONZE - THAT NIGHT

The door opens as Buffy, Xander and Willow enter.

WILLOW

Welcome back to the land of the living.

Buffy stands there and looks around the Bronze, soaking it in.



BUFFY

It's good to be back. Right in the thick of the
action, feeling that rush of life being lived.

REVEAL: The Bronze is dead. A few SCRAGGLERS dot the place.

Xander gently walks Buffy to a table.

XANDER

Can I get you anything? A chair?
Or a pillow for your head?

BUFFY

No thanks. I'm doing all right.

XANDER

You probably shouldn't be on your feet so much.

(suddenly)

Liquids! You need liquids. I'll go get you some liquids.

He goes off.

BUFFY

That's better service than I got on the inside.

WILLOW

I didn't like you being on the inside. Seeing you
all sick and stuff made me feel all... sick and stuff.

BUFFY

You know, though, I was starting to get used to
that thing where you do my homework.

WILLOW

(pointed)

Buffy, you're better now.

BUFFY

I had to try.

Willow glances over Buffy's shoulder.

WILLOW

Looks like you have another visitor.

Willow goes off as Buffy turns around to see:

BUFFY

Angel.

ANGEL

I heard they let you out.

BUFFY

That's the word on the street. And apparently under it.

ANGEL

So everything's back in working order, huh?

BUFFY

Yep. At least that's what it says on the receipt.

ANGEL

Good.

(then)

I'm sorry about not coming to see you.

BUFFY

You brought me there. That's worth something.

ANGEL

It's just, I've got this thing about hospitals.
The visiting hours don't jibe with my schedule,
if you know what I mean. And, well, the sight
of blood kind of does something to me.

BUFFY

Can't really argue with that one.

XANDER (O.C.)

Coming through with liquids.

Xander appears, carrying a tray of ten or twelve drinks.

XANDER



I wasn't sure what you wanted, so I got the variety pack.
Xander sees Angel, looks at the drinks, then back at Angel.

XANDER

Ooh, sorry. Only enough for two.

ANGEL

I can't stay, anyway.

(to Buffy)

I just wanted to make sure you were okay.

BUFFY

I'm okay.

They all stand there awkwardly for a beat.

XANDER

Okay.

Angel smiles at Buffy, then goes off. Xander sets the drinks on the table.

XANDER

Hadn't seen him in a while. What's the deal?

BUFFY

Hospitals make him nervous.

Buffy stares off at Angel. Shrugs.

BUFFY

Go figure.

BLACK OUT.

END OF EPISODE