

"Killed by Death"

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Teaser

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Another CREEPY NIGHT among the tombstones.

We PAN along the cemetery wall and TILT UP. A HAND comes over the top. A beat. Then ANOTHER HAND comes over. BUFEY hoists herself into view. She rests for a moment. Her face is pale, her eyes sunken, her hair mussed up -- not the bright and shiny Buffy we're accustomed to seeing.

Buffy wearily SWINGS her leg over the wall. With great effort, she PULLS the rest of her body over, then DROPS to the ground, STUMBLING a bit. She puts a hand against the wall and steadies herself, feeling DIZZY.

BUFFY
Whoa...

She pulls a stake from her bag and begins to MOVE along the wall, scoping out the place.

She HEARS someone near the gate and PRESSES herself against the wall, inching towards the sound. She lifts her stake, STEPS around the corner, and nearly PLUNGES her stake into--

XANDER
DYEAH!

--who JUMPS away, startled.

BUFFY
Non-vampire.

Buffy sees WILLOW and CORDELIA behind him.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Plus two.

WILLOW
(meekly)
Hi.

XANDER
(composing himself)
Man, Buffy. My whole life just
flashed before my eyes.
(then)
I've got to get me a life.

Buffy puts the stake back in her belt.

BUFFY
What are you doing here?

WILLOW
What are you doing here?

BUFFY
Patrolling.

WILLOW
Buffy, you're sick.

BUFFY
I feel fine. The ground's moving
around a little bit, but I like it.
It's like a ride.

CORDELIA
Half the school is out with this flu,
Buffy. It's a serious deal. We're
all worried about how gross you look.

BUFFY
I'm touched. I have work to do.

WILLOW
Come on, Buffy. One night of rest
isn't going to kill you.

BUFFY
But it might kill someone else.

XANDER
You mean Angel might.

Buffy looks at them for a moment, then:

BUFFY
You guys should go find a safer place
to be. Like somewhere I'm not.

XANDER
Buffy, this isn't the time to
challenge Angel for the Ultimate
Fighting Championship. He's at full
strength, and you're only half a
slayer.

BUFFY
But I'm still the Slayer. And as
long as I am, Angel's not going to
kill anyone else.

From behind her, she hears:

ANGEL (O.S.)

Oh, come on. Just one more.

Buffy turns to see ANGEL. All vamped out.

He LUNGES at the trio. They SCATTER, but Angel DIVES and grabs Cordelia, who FALLS to the ground, screaming.

Buffy GRABS Angel and LIFTS him to face her (as Cordelia SCAMPERS away). Buffy has a stake in her right hand, raised and ready to plunge.

She starts to bring the stake down. Angel CATCHES her wrist and BENDS her hand backwards--

BUFFY
(pained)
Ahh!

--until she drops the stake.

ANGEL
Not feeling well, lover?

Buffy surprises him with a LEFT HOOK out of nowhere. He reels a bit.

BUFFY
That helps.

Angel RAMS his shoulder into her chest and SLAMS her against a gravestone, knocking the wind out of her.

BUFFY'S POV: is blurry.

She sluggishly tries to hold Angel off, but he staggers her with a series of HITS and KICKS.

Buffy stumbles away and tries to focus on Angel. She SWINGS at him a few times, misses.

An amused Angel watches her struggle.

ANGEL
You know, you being off your game?
It's kind of taking all the fun out
of this.

He smashes his FIST into her face.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Nope. Still fun.

He JUMPS on her and they ROLL on the ground until he is on top of her.

ANGEL (cont'd)
Uh-oh. This does not look good for
our heroine.

Suddenly, Buffy's weapons bag is PULLED over Angel's head, blinding him.

REVEAL: Willow standing behind him, holding the bag on.

Xander sends a couple of PUNCHES to Angel's torso. Angel ROLLS off of Buffy, RIPS the bag off his head and turns to face Willow, Xander and Cordelia.

They stand there between him and Buffy, each holding a cross.

ANGEL (cont'd)
We'll have to do this again some time.

Angel TURNS and HEADS OEF.

Buffy struggles to her feet; puts her hand to her head.

BUFFY
I told you guys to leave.
(a beat)
This is my fight. You don't have
to...

Her eyes ROLL BACK in her head and she COLLAPSES. Xander quickly moves down to her.

XANDER
Buffy, are you all right?

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

XANDER (cont'd)
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 Xander BURSTS through the hospital doors, carrying Buffy. Willow and Cordelia run alongside.

XANDER
We need help!

WILLOW
Somebody, please! Now!

A few HOSPITAL STAFF MEMBERS rush to them.

INTERN
What happened?

XANDER
She fell.

WILLOW
The flu.

CORDELIA
She fainted.

XANDER (cont'd)
The flu, fainted and fell. She's
sick! Make it better!

Buffy is placed on a gurney and WHEELED down the hall as the INTERN begins to examine her. Buffy's friends crowd around.

INTERN
The patient is unconscious.
(examining eyes)
Pupils are unequal and unresponsive.

CORDELIA
What does that mean?

WILLOW
Is she going to be okay?

INTERN
People, you need to give us some
room, here!

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, high-grade fever,
possible fractures.

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

They wheel her into a room. Xander and the girls start to follow them in. Dr. Wilkinson stops them.

DR. WILKINSON (cont'd)
Excuse me, you're going to have to
wait out here.

XANDER
Someone should be with her.

DR. WILKINSON
You're going to have to wait out here.

Dr. Wilkinson hurries inside, swinging the door closed. Willow turns to Xander.

WILLOW
I'll call Giles. Tell him what
happened.
(then, to Cordelia)
Call Buffy's mom. Tell her... not

what happened. Just get her here.

The girls go off as Xander looks through a window, into the emergency room.

XANDER
(trying to believe it)
She's going to be okay.

XANDER'S POV through the window:

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - LATER (NIGHT)

GILES is there with Xander, Willow, and Cordelia as JOYCE comes rushing in.

JOYCE
Where is she?

GILES
Still in the emergency room.

JOYCE
I want to see her.

CORDELIA
They won't let us in.

Dr. Wilkinson comes over.

DR. WILKINSON
Ms. Summers? I'm Dr. Wilkinson.

JOYCE
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.

JOYCE
Thank you.

XANDER
Good. Good. That's good.

DR. WILKINSON
I want to keep her here a few days,
though. She's still got some healing

to do.

GILES
Was she hurt badly?

DR. WILKINSON
The injuries from the fall were
minor: Sprained wrist and a couple of
cracked ribs. I'm more concerned
about her fever.

JOYCE
She said this morning she was feeling
better.

DR. WILKINSON
She will be. But she's still
suffering from exhaustion and
dehydration.

WILLOW
I keep telling her that Yoo-Hoo is
not a fluid replenisher.

DR. WILKINSON
Come on. I'm sure you want to see
her.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER (NIGHT)

Buffy is wheeled on a gurney out of the ER and into the hallway, where Joyce and the others wait. Her sprained wrist (from the Angel encounter) is wrapped with a bandage, 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 were are. It's all of
we! Are we taking 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 she's been
here a while.

Buffy, suddenly sober, begins struggling with the covers.

BUFFY
No. Let me go.

WILLOW
Buffy, what's wrong?

BUFFY
(fighting more)
Let me go!

CORDELIA
I think she wants to go.

DR. WILKINSON
(calling out)
I need some assistance!

A FEW NURSES rush over and help subdue Buffy, who is in major freak mode.

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.

XANDER
(covering)
Probably the fever?

WILLOW
Yeah. It's made her delusional.

BUFFY
(frantic)
They're out there!

Giles laughs nervously.

GILES
It'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. Joyce leans down to her daughter.

JOYCE
Honey...?

BUFFY
(frail)
I want to go home.

JOYCE
(taking her hand)
Everything's going to be okay. I
promise.

Buffy STARES up from the gurney as her eyes get heavy from the sedative.

BUFFY
(fights to stay awake)
Please don't make me stay. Not here.

Buffy is wheeled into a room as the gang waits in the hall. They watch Buffy through the window.

XANDER
That was a new experience. I'm not
used to seeing Buffy scared like that.

JOYCE
She just hates hospitals. Since she
was a little girl.

WILLOW
What happened?

JOYCE
(tentatively)
When Buffy was eight... her cousin,
Celia, died in a hospital.
(a beat)
Buffy was alone with her when it
happened.

CORDELIA
(sadly)
Yuck.

JOYCE
They were very close.

WILLOW

And she was eight?

JOYCE

She doesn't talk about it, but... she just doesn't like hospitals.

XANDER

Can't say as I blame.

She stares in at Buffy.

JOYCE

Looks like she's asleep. I should go call her father.

GILES

I think there's a phone...

Joyce goes off with Giles.

JOYCE

Thank you for coming. I really appreciate the way you look out for her. All of you.

GILES

We're very fond of her.

JOYCE

(pauses, gathering)

I hope I'm not out of line, but I just wanted to say how sorry I am about that teacher, Ms. Calendar. Buffy said you were close.

GILES

Thank you.

JOYCE

Buffy's been so down since it happened. She never gets sick.

GILES

I'm sure she'll be fine.

JOYCE

I'm sorry, I babble when I'm nervous. I just wanted to -- well, if you need anything.

ANGLE: THE OTHERS

Looking into Buffy's room.

XANDER

You think she'll be okay in here?

CORDELIA

I don't know... Lysette got her nose

done here, you know; she asked for the Gwyneth Paltrow but it looked more like the Mr. Potato Head --

XANDER
Cordy.

WILLOW
Buffy's not here for cosmetic surgery.

CORDELIA
No, but while she's here she could get that thing taken care of. That thing on her face -- you know, that thing.

WILLOW
Do you think Angel would attack her in here?

XANDER
He can come in. It's a public building.

WILLOW
That's true...

They start off.

CORDELIA
Am I the only one who's noticed that thing?

CAMERA MOVES IN ON BUFFY and we:

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

An IV DRIP courses through a tube connected to Buffy's arm. She TOSSES and TURNS, sleeping fitfully. She MOANS occasionally, drifting in and out of consciousness.

She OPENS HER EYES with a start and sees a little boy standing in the doorway, staring at her. His name is RYAN. He's still, expressionless, Stepfordian. Think Christopher Walken at age ten.

He walks away.

Suddenly, a MYSTERIOUS FIGURE passes by the door, following the boy. The figure is tall, not quite human, dressed in dark clothes -- like an eighteenth-century undertaker.

In the dark, Buffy barely registers the figure's GHASTLY WHITE FACE, BEAK-LIKE NOSE, HAIRLESS HEAD, and UGLY RED- RIMMED EYES.

And just as quickly as the figure appeared, it's GONE. Buffy gets out of bed, UNHOOKS the IV, and heads out the door.

FLASH TO:

INT. DIFFERENT HOSPITAL - NINE YEARS AGO (NIGHT)

HAZY DREAM-CAM:

An EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GIRL (who looks as much like an eight-year- old Sarah as Marcia can find) comes out of a room. This is LITTLE BUFFY. She 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.

Little Buffy passes by various things in the hallway: an EMPTY WHEELCHAIR... a cart on which sits a TRAY of SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS... a defibrillator 'CRASH CART'....

She PEERS INTO A ROOM and sees a CURTAIN pulled around a bed. Little Buffy cautiously heads into the room...

INT. DIFFERENT HOSP. ROOM - CONT. (NINE YEARS AGO; NIGHT)

... and walks toward the curtain. She nervously REACHES to pull it away. When she TOUCHES it--

A FLASH fills the screen and we are back in:

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

BUFFY WAKES UP in her hospital bed. The room is dark. She looks around, disoriented, getting her bearings. The clock next to her bed reads 2:27 AM.

She SITS UP and feels something tug at her arm.

BUFFY
Ow...

She looks to see that the IV is still connected.

The FAINT SOUND of CHILDREN CRYING can be heard from down the hall. The sound only adds to Buffy's visible despair.

She unhooks the IV from her arm, throws her covers off, and gets out of bed. She STEADIES herself on the bed rail, takes a breath, and heads into the hallway.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT)

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, ventilators at work, etc.

A SECURITY GUARD (DON: more on him later) skulks around, watching her. Buffy turns down another hallway, following the sounds of the crying.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONT. (NIGHT)

As Buffy rounds a corner, she sees a couple of ORDERLIES wheeling a gurney into the

hallway. On the gurney is a SMALL, SHEET-COVERED BODY.

She goes to a door and looks inside.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL KIDS' WARD - CONT. (NIGHT)

This is the kids' ward -- a half dozen or so beds and a dreary collection of medical equipment. Second-hand stuffed animals and faded posters of clowns are supposed to add life to the depressing room.

A few of the CHILDREN sleep restlessly as machines monitor their conditions.

Dr. Wilkinson is arguing with another doctor (DR. STANLEY BACKER), an elderly man with disheveled hair and a manner that's just a bit off-kilter.

DR. WILKINSON
I'm just saying step back the dosage
until we can analyze the results.

DR. BACKER
There isn't time. I would think that
would be clear by now.

DR. WILKINSON
The normal course of treatment --

DR. BACKER
They aren't responding to the normal
course of treatment. They're getting
worse.

As they talk, he takes a hypo of fluid, injects it into a child's IV.

DR. WILKINSON
Raising their temperatures is
potentially --

DR. BACKER
Dr. Wilkinson, I have the parents'
consent.

DR. WILKINSON
They're desperate. They don't
understand what you're doing.

DR. BACKER
If you have a problem with my
methods, bring it up with the board.

DR. WILKINSON
I have.

Buffy backs away and BUMPS into someone.

Ryan, the Christopher Walken boy, stands there, holding the hand of a LITTLE GIRL.

RYAN
He comes at night. The grown-ups

don't see him.

Buffy looks at Ryan, confused.

RYAN (cont'd)
He was with Tina. He'll come back
for us.

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.

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

EXT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL - THE NEXT DAY

To establish the morning.

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

Giles, Xander, Willow, and Cordelia come in to find Buffy sitting on the bed.

GILES

Well. It looks like you were on to something after all.

BUFFY

I know.

GILES

The girl Tina -- it looks as though she died from the fever, simple enough. But her records show her improving and then suddenly worsening

without apparent cause.

WILLOW
So we checked out Dr. Backer and this
guy is not the solid citizen --

BUFFY
It's not him. Backer was clean.

CORDELIA
What do you mean, clean?

XANDER
What do you mean, was?

BUFFY
(shows Ryan's picture)
He's dead. This thing killed him.
And not with kindness.

WILLOW
You saw it.

BUFFY
No, it was invisible. I saw Backer
nearly shredded and the thing knocked
me down. It's real. Which means I
get to fight it.

GILES
It would help if you knew what it
was. It's invisible to you but the
children can see it.

CORDELIA
But you said you did see something
the other night.

BUFFY
Yeah, but I was pretty delirious...
I mean, why would I see it then and
not last night?

Joyce enters, smiling.

JOYCE
Good morning. Ooh, it looks like I
interrupted a secret meeting.

Giles emits a fake laugh.

CORDELIA
You sure didn't, though.

JOYCE
(to Buffy)
Honey, I just talked to the doctor.
She says I can take you home.

For a beat, nobody speaks.

BUFFY
I have to stay here.

JOYCE
Stay? But honey, I thought --

BUFFY
I think my symptoms are flaring up
again.

WILLOW
She doesn't look well.

BUFFY
'Cause I'm not well. I feel oogy.

XANDER
Increased oogy-ness... That's a
danger signal.

JOYCE
Are you sure?

BUFFY
Yeah. Just for another day...

JOYCE
Well, I'll talk to the doctor.

She leaves, a tad bemused.

XANDER
What's the drill?

BUFFY
(hands Giles the
picture)
Giles, let's get a mug shot on this
guy. I need to know who I'm fighting.

GILES
Right.

BUFFY
I'll check Backer's office. See if
there are any post-its marked 'Why a
monster might want me dead.'

XANDER
Sounds like a plan.

BUFFY
If I do find something, I probably
won't have the slightest idea what it
means, so, Willow...

WILLOW

Oh, I'm good with medical stuff.
Xander and I used to play doctor all
the time.

XANDER
(off their looks)
No, she's being literal. She had all
these medical volumes, used to
diagnose me with stuff. I didn't
have the heart to tell her she was
playing it wrong.

WILLOW
Wrong? Why?
(to Buffy)
How did you play doctor?

BUFFY
(lying, embarrassed)
I never have.

GILES
Fascinating though this is...

BUFFY
Yeah. Right. Go.

GILES
We'll call when we know something.

BUFFY
Know something soon.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Giles, Xander and Cordelia come out of Buffy's room.

GILES
I'd best head for the library.
Research beckons.

XANDER
I'm on sentry duty. Angel won't show
'til sundown if at all, but maybe
I'll get lucky with this death guy.

CORDELIA
He's invisible.

XANDER
Yeah, but if I see a floating pipe
and smoking jacket, he's dropped.

GILES
Well, keep alert, you two.

XANDER
Finding out who this thing is is the
priority. Cordy, you should go with

Giles.

GILES

(petulant)

But why do I have to have --

(stops himself)

Good thinking. I could use a
research assistant.

CORDELIA

(dead pan look)

Let's go, tact-guy.

(to Xander)

Be careful.

Cordelia and Giles walk off. Xander heads in the other direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL KIDS' WARD - NIGHT

The door opens and Ryan looks out into the hall, silent and conspiratorial. He sees Don standing, idle, nearby. He lets the door shut again, slowly.

INT. DR. BACKER'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER (DAY)

The office is empty. Dark. Eerie. Just as Dr. Backer left it the night before. The DOOR opens; Buffy and Willow come inside.

They move inside and shut the door. Buffy TURNS ON THE LIGHTS; they look around.

WILLOW

It's weird going through his stuff.

He didn't finish his coffee. Guess
he won't.

She sees a folder, starts leafing through it.

BUFFY

Yet another person I wasn't in time
to save. I wish Angel had put me in
the hospital sooner.

(pauses)

There's a sentence I never expected
to say.

WILLOW

I think I got something here.

BUFFY

Yeah?

She opens the folder and starts leafing through the contents as Buffy searches around the room.

WILLOW

Okay, this makes sense... Dr. Backer
was trying to inoculate kids with
a controlled dosage of the same virus

they already had. Raising their
temperatures to burn the fever out of
them.

Buffy opens the refrigerator; pulls out a couple of VIALS marked with different colored labels.

BUFFY
Would that work?

WILLOW
(looking at charts)
According to this, it was starting
to. So he really was helping the
kids.

CLOSE-ON: Ryan's drawing.

BUFFY (V.O.)
Until that thing stopped him.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

PULL BACK from the drawing to see Giles is comparing it to illustrations in a book (sort of a mug book for phantoms and demons) looking for a match. Cordelia peruses another book.

Giles turns page after page; Cordelia lingers on each one. (His stack of books dwarfs hers.)

CORDELIA
Ew. What's this one do?

GILES
What?
(looks over, annoyed)
Oh. It, um, extracts vital internal
organs so that it can regenerate its
own mutating cells.

CORDELIA
Wow.
(turns a page)
What's this one do?

GILES
(lets out a breath)
It elongates its mouth to engulf the
head of its casualty between its
teeth.

CORDELIA
Ouch.
(turns a page)
What's this one do?

GILES
(fed up)
It asks endless questions of those
with whom it's supposed to be working
but they're not getting anything done!

CORDELIA
Boy, there's a demon for everything.

Giles pushes his book aside; frustrated.

GILES
I'm not even sure we're going down
the right track. Since this
miscreant is only seen by select
individuals, there's a chance we
won't ever 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 MONSTER.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - A MOMENT LATER (NIGHT)

Cordelia holds the book as she speaks into the phone.

CORDELIA
It's called 'Der Kindestod.'

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME (NIGHT)

Willow stands next to Buffy, who speaks into the phone.

BUFFY
Who is this?

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM/INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

WE INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION.

CORDELIA
It's me. I got your monster.

Buffy gives Willow a strange look.

BUFFY
(confused)
Where's Giles?

CORDELIA
Looking up stuff.

BUFFY
Well, can you put him on?

CORDELIA
Hey, I found this Kindestod guy.
Just listen.

BUFFY
Right.

CORDELIA
The name means 'Child Death.' This book says he feeds off of children by sucking the life out of them. Blech.
But afterwards, it just looks like they died because they were sick.

BUFFY
So it did kill Tina?

CORDELIA
That's my take. 'Cause it would be looking at that children's ward as basically an all-you-can-eat kind of thing.

BUFFY
Backer was curing the kids -- and taking away the Kindestod's food.

CORDELIA
Hence the slice-age.

Giles comes over to Cordelia holding another book.

GILES
I found a picture of how it kills.
Let me talk to--

Cordelia snatches the book out of his hand and looks at the picture (which we cannot see). She reacts disgusted into the phone.

CORDELIA
EWW!

BUFFY
What?

CORDELIA
You should see how this thing does its things! I mean... ewww!

She doesn't want a part of this. She hands the book and the phone to Giles.

CORDELIA (cont'd)
I don't know why you dragged me here.

Giles takes the phone.

GILES
Buffy, you still there?

BUFFY
Hanging on every 'ew.'

GILES

(off picture)
The Kindestod gorges by sitting atop
his prey, pinning it down helplessly.
Then he slowly draws out the life.
It must be horrifying for the victim.
(a beat)
Buffy?

INT. BUFFY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME (NIGHT)

Buffy is silent, staring off into space.

GILES (O.C.)
Hello?

A FLASH fills the screen and we are:

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

HAZY DREAM-CAM:

Little Buffy finishes pulling the curtain all the way back. She sees her cousin Celia lying in bed, GASPING and PANTING as she is PINNED DOWN by an invisible force.

LITTLE BUFFY
Celia?

Little Buffy approaches closer. Suddenly, Celia shoots out her hand and GRABS Little Buffy's wrist tightly. Terror covers Celia's face as she struggles for breath.

LITTLE BUFFY (cont'd)
What's wrong?

CELIA
Get it off me! Get it off me!

Little Buffy looks on, horrified.

LITTLE BUFFY
I don't know what to do! Celia!

The screen FADES TO WHITE and then to:

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

Buffy holds the phone, numb with shock.

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

Willow looks at Buffy, concerned. She grabs the phone out of her hand.

WILLOW
(into phone)
Thanks.

She hangs up. Buffy turns to Willow with resolve.

BUFFY
I've got to get this thing, Willow.
Before it gets those kids.

WILLOW
You will. We will.

BUFFY
(frustrated)
But how? I can't even see it!

WILLOW
You saw it once.

BUFFY
Did I? Maybe my mind was playing
with me. I mean, I was crazed with
that fever and--

Buffy stops. She looks up at Willow.

CUT TO:

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

Buffy reaches inside Dr. Backer's refrigerator and pulls out a RED-LABELED VIAL containing the virus.

WILLOW
Buffy, think about this.

BUFFY
I am. Lots of thoughts.

WILLOW
It's crazy.

BUFFY
The fever. That's how you see the
Kindestod. That's why Celia could
see it. That's why Ryan still can.
It's the only way.

WILLOW
But how can you fight this thing when
you have a 107 degree temperature?

BUFFY
I guess we'll find out.

Buffy raises the vial to her lips.

WILLOW
Buffy!

BUFFY
(stopping)

Willow, I'm doing this--

WILLOW
That's 100% pure. It'll kill you in
an instant.

Buffy looks at the vial.

BUFFY
They should put that on the label.

WILLOW
(sighs)
Here. It needs to be diluted.

She takes the vial, pours some water into a beaker and mixes a drop of the virus into it.

BUFFY
This is going to have to work fast.

Willow puts another drop into the beaker.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Faster than that.

Willow pours in another drop and hands the beaker to Buffy. Buffy looks at it; takes a breath.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Here's to my health.

Buffy swallows it down.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER (NIGHT)

Buffy, who is starting to feel the effects of the virus, has her arm over Willow's shoulder as they make their way to the kids' ward.

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

WILLOW
Hang in there. You'll be okay.

Buffy gets to the large window that looks into the kids' ward. She steadies herself.

BUFFY
Okay... I'm okay.

She TURNS to look through the window. Her face falls at what she sees.

BUFFY'S POV: Through the window in the door.

Beds. Monitors. But no children.

Buffy stares through the window.

BUFFY (cont'd)

They're gone.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

Act Four

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ryan comes into view, with the rest of the kids trailing behind him. A few of the children COUGH and WHEEZE. The little girl struggles to keep up.

RYAN
Keep quiet!

Ryan goes to the little girl.

RYAN (cont'd)
It's not gonna find us here.

Ryan takes her by the hand and they continue on.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - SAME TIME (NIGHT)

Buffy and Willow stand outside the kids' ward.

WILLOW
What could've happened?

BUFFY
(thinking)
I don't know. Maybe I'm too late.
Maybe they were moved. I don't want
to think about the other maybe.

Buffy SWAYS a bit and steadies herself on Willow.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Oh... I'm burning up.

Buffy puts her hand to her head and looks through the window again. She FREEZES.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Willow?

WILLOW
What?

BUFFY
I think it's in there.

BUFFY'S POV: through the window.

A VAGUE SHAPE begins to SHIMMER into view, until the Kindestod is COMPLETELY VISIBLE to Buffy.

BUFFY (cont'd)
(through the window)
Good to see you.

Buffy watches as the Kindestod SNIFFS around the room. He seems to have caught a scent.

Buffy goes to the door and tries to open it. It's LOCKED. The noise causes the Kindestod to look up. He SMILES. He turns away, keeps sniffing -- the scent takes him out through a door marked (you guessed it) "Basement Access."

BUFFY (cont'd)
He's going after them.

She RAMS her shoulder into the door, trying to break it down, but she's too weak. With all her might, she tries again. Nothing. She falls against the door.

BUFFY (cont'd)
We've got to get him.
(then, wearily)
Give me a second and we'll get him.

Dr. Wilkinson comes around a corner and sees the ill-looking Buffy leaning against the door. She goes to her.

DR. WILKINSON
Buffy, what's wrong? WILLOW
She's... not feeling well. Again.

Dr. Wilkinson puts her arm around Buffy.

DR. WILKINSON
You should be in bed.

BUFFY
I'm fine. Really.

DR. WILKINSON
No. You're coming with me.

Buffy tries to pull away from her, but Dr. Wilkinson is insistent, almost dragging Buffy down the hall.

BUFFY
No!

Buffy SHOVES Dr. Wilkinson away. She falls backwards, against a wall.

WILLOW
(sympathetically; to
Dr. Wilkinson) She's sorry...

Buffy and Willow take off down the hall.

Dr. Wilkinson hurriedly reaches for a phone on the wall. Her words ECHO throughout the hospital.

DR. WILKINSON
(into phone)

Security to the children's ward. We
have a situation. Security!

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSP. - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - A MOMENT LATER

Buffy and Willow come around a corner. Buffy stumbles a bit; Willow helps her along.

They look up and see Don and another SECURITY GUARD running towards them. The girls stop, trapped. Don slaps his billy club in his palm repeatedly.

DON
Come on, now. Let's make this easy.

Buffy and Willow look at each other. Willow looks back at the guards. Then:

She goes crazy. She SCREAMS and fights off an invisible attack of:

WILLOW
Bats! Arrghh! Get them off me!
Horrible, horrible bats!

The guards head towards Willow. Buffy backs away.

She SLIPS AWAY as the security guards grab Willow. Dr. Wilkinson appears from the other direction.

DR. WILKINSON
Not her. The other one!

Willow stops fighting, suddenly serene.

WILLOW
No more bats.

The guards let go of her; look up and down the hallway. No more Buffy, either.

CUT TO:

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Buffy STAGGERS into view. She stops, nearly winded. Bends over, hands on her knees, as she catches her breath.

Xander runs up, breathless and panicked.

XANDER
Buffy! Are you okay? Did Angel get in?

BUFFY
We have to get to the basement.

She staggers forward, her head heavy.

BUFFY (cont'd)
(weakly)
Give me your... you.

She puts her arm over Xander's shoulder and they follow after the Kindestod.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL BASEMENT - NIGHT

We PAN along the wall and find the kids HUDDLED together in a corner. The little girl SHIVERS and SHAKES.

RYAN
Here.

Ryan takes off his jacket and wraps it around her. She looks up at him.

RYAN (cont'd)
It's okay. We're going to be safe
in--

Suddenly, the Kindestod is behind him. The kids SCREAM.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - CONT. - NIGHT

Xander helps Buffy down quickly.

XANDER
You don't know how to kill this thing.

BUFFY
(grim determination)
I thought I might try violence.

XANDER
Solid call.

INT. SUNNYDALE HOSPITAL BASEMENT - CONT. - NIGHT

The Kindestod LIFTS Ryan into the air, then TOSSES him to the ground. The Kindestod JUMPS on top of Ryan and PINS his arms down. Ryan KICKS and tries to FIGHT HIM OFF.

The Kindestod's eyes BULGE, then begin to PROTRUDE from his head. They extend downward like tentacles and ATTACH themselves against Ryan's forehead, PRESSING IN hard. Ryan's struggles quickly subside as his strength is drained.

A two-by-four SMASHES into the Kindestod's face. He rolls backwards, off of Ryan, revealing BUFFY standing there. She glares at the Kindestod.

BUFFY
You make me sick.

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 goes to Ryan and helps him up.

XANDER
Come on!

Xander herds him and the other kids to the door. Looking back he sees:

XANDER'S POV: Buffy fights nothing.

NEW ANGLE:

Buffy and the Kindestod (visible to us) continue their fight. Buffy JUMPS on his back. He FLIPS Buffy over, SNARLS, and pins her to the floor. Buffy struggles to free herself, but she's too weak. She's trapped.

The Kindestod STARES down at her. His eyes BULGE OUT and begin extending down towards Buffy's forehead.

BUFFY
And the winner is...

With her last bit of strength, Buffy reaches up with both hands, grabs the Kindestod by the head, and TWISTS, cracking his neck.

BUFFY (cont'd)
Power Girl.

She dumps the body to the ground, standing up as Xander approaches.

XANDER
Are you okay?

BUFFY
Actually, I'm starting to feel better.

She wobbles, then COLLAPSES. Xander is there to catch her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - DAY (A FEW DAYS LATER)

Joyce comes in with a smile, carrying a tray of food -- sandwich, soup, juice, the works. She's clearly enjoying getting to play mother to her daughter.

JOYCE
Here you go, honey. Peanut butter
and extra jelly. With the crust off,
just the way you like it.

We MOVE with Joyce to REVEAL Buffy sitting upright in her bed (on top of the covers). She is flanked by Xander and Willow. All have made themselves comfortable, slouching against the headboard, watching TV with their shoes kicked off, drinking sodas, etc.

Joyce sets the tray in front of Buffy.

BUFFY
(pointing to a glass)
And the juice?

JOYCE
Two parts orange, one part grapefruit.

BUFFY
That's my drink.

JOYCE
I measured exactly.

Joyce starts to go--

BUFFY (O.C.)
Mom?

--then turns back. Buffy has lifted the top piece of bread from her sandwich.

BUFFY
(sheepishly)
I wanted crunchy style.

JOYCE
Oh. I'm sorry.

She picks up the plate with a smile.

BUFFY
And, um, I ordered extra jelly.

JOYCE
Anything to help my daughter get well.

Willow rattles the ice in her glass.

WILLOW
While you're up, could I get a refill?

Joyce looks at her, the smile fading a bit.

WILLOW (cont'd)
It's just... I'm so comfortable.

JOYCE
(taking her glass)
Of course.

XANDER
Ooh, and another bag of Chee-Zee
Chips.

JOYCE
You ate the last one.

XANDER
No. I saw another bag hidden behind
the raisins.

JOYCE
(gritting her teeth)
I'm on it.

She starts out.

XANDER
(sotto, to Buffy)

Your mom's trying to bogart the Chee-
Zee Chips. What's that all about?

JOYCE
Oh, Buffy. Here.

Joyce stops at the door and turns back, pulling an envelope out of her pocket.

JOYCE (cont'd)
This came in the mail.

Buffy takes it; looks at the return address.

BUFFY
It's from Ryan.

Buffy OPENS the letter and pulls out a piece of paper; looks at it. She SMILES. Joyce looks 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 ('Power Girl!' written on her shirt) standing triumphantly over the broken, horribly bloodied body of Der Kindestod. Rather grotesque.

JOYCE (O.C.)
(appalled)
...nice...

BLACK OUT.

END OF EPISODE