

Amends

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Teaser

EXT. DUBLIN STREET - NIGHT (1838)

A Dickensian vista of Christmas. Snow covers the street (though it is not falling now), people and carriages milling about in it. A group of five or so CAROLLERS stand by one corner, singing a traditional Christmas air.

A young man (DANIEL) in a dark suit makes his way through the people, quickly and nervously. He looks about him constantly.

He passes an alley and he is suddenly GRABBED and pulled inside.

He lands in a heap in the corner, the figure that grabbed him standing over him.

ANGEL

Why, Daniel, wherever are you
going?

Angel is dressed similarly -- though a bit more elegantly -- to Daniel. He is smiling graciously, and in full vampface.

Daniel cowers, scrambling backwards.

DANIEL

You -- you're not human...

ANGEL

Not of late, no.

DANIEL

What do you want?

ANGEL

Well, it happens that I'm hungry,
Daniel, and seeing as you're
somewhat in my debt...

DANIEL

Please... I can't...

ANGEL

A man playing at cards should have
a natural intelligence or a great deal
of money and you're sadly lacking
in both. So I'll take my winnings
my own way.

He grabs him, hoists him up. Daniel cannot wrest Angel's grasp from his throat. He

babbles quietly:

DANIEL

The lord is my shepherd, I shall
not want... he maketh me to lie
down in green pastures... he...

ANGEL

Daniel. Be of good cheer.
(smiling)
It's Christmas!

He bites.

INT. MANSION - ANGEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Angel awakens in a start, sweating. Sits on the edge of the bed, clearly distraught
by this dream/flashback. After a moment he rises.

EXT. SUNNYDALE STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: a hardware store.

Through the window we can see (and hear) a TV on display. On the TV, a
WEATHERMAN gives us the forecast.

WEATHERMAN

. . . it's gonna be sunny and warm,
with temperatures continuing in the
high 70's throughout the holiday
weekend. A little warm to light the
yule log, but it should make for a
very nice Christmas.

As he speaks we WIDEN to see a street bustling with SHOPPERS. Stores have
Christmas decorations up, people carry bundles of presents.

Angel makes his way through the throng, walking off nightmares. He does not make
eye contact with people, so it's no surprise that he almost physically bumps into
Buffy.

She is laden down with packages, and stops cold to see him.

BUFFY

Oh!

ANGEL

Hi.

BUFFY

Hi.

A beat.

BUFFY

So, are you... shopping? You're
probably not shopping.

ANGEL
Couldn't sleep.

BUFFY
Vampires probably not that big on
Christmas, now I'm thinking about
it...

ANGEL
Not as a rule.

Another beat.

BUFFY
But you're doing okay.

ANGEL
I'm all right. You?

BUFFY
Yeah! I'm good. Just, uh, getting
some presents for the gang. I
should probably hurry, I gotta get
to the magic shop... Angel?

He's not looking at her any more. He's staring off at something else. Something bad.

ANGLE: ANGEL'S POV

Standing in the middle of the crowd is Daniel. He stands stock still as everything around him moves in slow motion.

Still in the clothes he died in. Staring at us.

A moment more, and he moves off.

BUFFY
Angel?

She looks to see what he saw, but there is nothing. Turns back to him.

BUFFY
What is it?

Angel cannot reply.

BLACKOUT

END OF TEASER

Act One

INT. SCHOOL LOUNGE AREA - DAY

Students mill about. Buffy walks with Xander and Willow, heading for the lounge.

BUFFY

And then he just bailed. Didn't say anything; just took off. It was weird.

XANDER

Angel? Weird? What are the odds?

WILLOW

Do you think there's something wrong? Should you maybe tell Giles.

BUFFY

No... I don't want to bug Giles. He's still pretty twitchy about the subject of Angel.

XANDER

Must be that whole Angel-killed-his-girlfriend-and-tortured-him thing. Giles is really petty about stuff like that.

BUFFY

Xander, enough. Okay?

WILLOW

I bet Angel just has the holiday blues. Everybody gets 'em.
(thinking of herself)
Especially when they're alone.

BUFFY

It's just so aggravating. I'm trying to do the right thing, stay away from him, get over it and then... boom. There he is. I just want a nice quiet Christmas vacation.

XANDER

You doing anything special?

BUFFY

(shaking her head)
Tree. Nog. Roast beast. Just me and Mom and hopefully an excess of gifts.
(to Willow)
What are you doing for Christmas?

WILLOW

(work with me, people)
Being Jewish. Remember, people? Not everyone worshipping Santa here.

BUFFY

(smiling)

Sorry. For **vacation**.

WILLOW

Nothing fun. Oz and I had planned...
but I guess that's off.

They reach the couches, sit -- just as Cordy and a friend are leaving. A few awkward stares, but Xander tries to carry on:

XANDER

Well, I'll be enjoying my annual
Christmas Eve camp out. I take my
sleeping bag outside, go to sleep on
the grass.

BUFFY

That sounds fun.

XANDER

I like to look at the stars, feel the
whole nature vibe.

CORDELIA

I thought you slept outside to avoid
your family's drunken Christmas
fights.

XANDER

Yes, and that was a confidence I was
hoping you'd share with others.

CORDELIA

Well, I'll be in Aspen. Skiing.
With actual snow.

BUFFY

I hear that helps.

CORDELIA

It must be a drag to be stuck here in
Sweatydale, but I'm thinking of you.
(beat)
Okay, I'm done.

She leaves. Xander watches her go, grumbling.

XANDER

Stuck up, arrogant...

He turns to the others with a total change of expression.

XANDER

She talked to me! That's the first
time --
(off their looks, deflating)
I'm aware that it's over.

BUFFY

She certainly has reverted to form.

WILLOW

It's not her fault. After what happened, I think we gotta cut her some slack.

BUFFY

You're right.

XANDER

Yeah, Will's got the Christmas spirit.

WILLOW

Hello, still Jewish. Chanukah spirit, I believe that was. Anyway, forgiveness is pretty much a big theme with me this year. You know, 'cause --

OZ

Hey.

He stands before them, looking at Willow. She looks surprised, says quietly:

WILLOW

Hey.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The class is empty as Oz and Willow sit, talking.

OZ

Okay. The thing is... seeing you with Xander, it was... Well, I never felt that way before -- when there wasn't a full moon. But I've thought about it a lot. And I know you guys have a history.

WILLOW

But it's a history that's in the past. Well, I guess most history is in the past... but it's over.

OZ

I don't know. I don't know if it ever will be, with you two.

WILLOW

Oz, please believe me --

OZ

This is what I do know. I miss you. Every second. It's like I've lost an arm. Worse. A torso. So I'm thinking I'd be willing to give it a shot.

She glows with grateful relief.

WILLOW
Really?

OZ
Yeah.

An awkward moment, as she doesn't know what to do (physically) next.

WILLOW
Do you want us to hug now?

OZ
I'm good for that.

They do. We hold on Willow's face, happy but still a little tentative.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT

We see a perfect tableau of winter: a row of Christmas trees covered in snow. Buffy wanders in front of them, looking about her.

We pull back to reveal these are the ONLY things covered in snow -- and whatever the snow is made of, two TREE SELLER GUYS are busy covering the next one.

Joyce joins Buffy.

JOYCE
Ooh! Do you want to get one with
snow on it? That'd be very
Christmassy.

BUFFY
I think those are just for display.

JOYCE
Oh.
(as they walk)
You know, honey. I was thinking --
maybe we should invite Faith to spend
Christmas Eve with us.

BUFFY
I don't know, Mom. Faith and I don't
really hang out, or talk, or make eye
contact lately.

JOYCE
Well, now, honey, you're both
slayers, and she doesn't have any
family here. Do you really want to
let her spend Christmas Eve all by
herself in that dingy little motel
room?

BUFFY
You're still number one with a guilt

trip, Mom.

JOYCE
I try.

BUFFY
I'll ask her. Worst she can do is --
well, the worst **she** can do is serious
bodily harm, but she'll probably just
say no.

JOYCE
You're a dear.

BUFFY
Hey, what about Giles? He doesn't
have family here.

JOYCE
(quickly)
No I'm sure he's fine.

BUFFY
Well, I could ask --

JOYCE
He doesn't want to spend Christmas
Eve with a bunch of girls. Let's
split up.

Joyce moves off, fairly rapidly. Buffy moves in the other direction.

After a moment she stops. Hearing something -- or possibly just **feeling** something.
She moves slowly toward the back of the lot, where it's darker.

She reaches a bunch of dead trees, kept together near the back. Maybe ten of
them, their brown, spindly arms contrasting the lush green of the surrounding trees.
Buffy puzzles at them -- and a figure steps up beside her.

TREE SELLER GUY
Bunch of 'em up and died on us.
Don't know why. If you want one
I'll make you a hell of a deal.

BUFFY
No thanks.

JOYCE (O.S.)
Oh, Honey, this one's perfect.

Buffy exits to join her mom.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

We see only flashes of images in the darkness, the camera moving quickly about
pieces of a tableau:

Three robed figures, kneeling and swaying in a circle.

Candles, torches -- a scattering of bones.

Finally, a face. A face with no eyes -- just folds of skin with runic symbols burned into them. We see it for a mere second before we CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - ANGEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Angel awakens from another dream, just as panicky. He takes a moment to let his breathing settle. Rubs his hands over his eyes.

INT. FAITH'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Faith is crouched in front of the TV, trying to shake the static out of it. Her room is the same as always except there is one forlorn string of Christmas lights strung above the door.

FAITH
Come on... don't die on me now...
(knock at the door)
Yeah!

Buffy opens it, comes tentatively in. Faith looks at her, turns back to the TV banging.

FAITH
Hey, how's it going.
(hits TV)
Work, dammit!

BUFFY
Hey.

Faith quits, turning off the set and straightening up. Her manner toward Buffy is casual and more or less polite, but there isn't a whole lotta love in this room.

FAITH
What's going on? Scary monsters?

BUFFY
Nope. I just... well we're having
Christmas Eve dinner at my place,
and if you didn't have plans...

FAITH
(smiling)
Your mom sent you down, huh?

BUFFY
No! I just thought, if you were
bored -- not that it's gonna be wild
fun at our house, but --

FAITH
Well, thanks, but I got plans.
There's a big party I been invited
to, it should be a blast.

Buffy politely pretends not to know Faith is lying.

BUFFY
Oh, good. Cool. You know, but, if
you change your mind...

FAITH
It's nice of you, thanks. But I got,
I got that big party that I been
invited to.

A beat.

BUFFY
I like the lights.

FAITH
Yeah, well, 'tis the season.
Whatever that means.

INT. GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Giles is cooking himself a little supper when the doorbell rings. He lowers the flame under a saucepan as he calls out:

GILES
Just a second!

He crosses briskly to the door, wiping his hands on a kitchen towel, and opens the door.

He stops cold.

For a good long while, neither he nor Angel says anything.

GILES
Hello.

ANGEL
I'm... I'm sorry to bother you.

Rather surprisingly, Giles laughs slightly.

GILES
I'm sorry. Coming from you, that
phrase strikes me as funny. Sorry
to bother me.

ANGEL
I need your help.

GILES
And the funny keeps on coming.

ANGEL
I understand that I have no right to
ask for it, but... there's no one

else. Will you at least hear me out?

In the ensuing silence, sizzling from the kitchen becomes audible. As he is about to go take care of it, Giles says:

GILES
All right.

He moves out of Angel's sight and turns off the flame. Angel waits a beat.

ANGEL
I can't come in unless you invite me.

Giles returns -- with a crossbow.

GILES
I'm aware of that.

He points it directly at Angel's chest.

GILES
Come in.

Angel steps cautiously in. The two keep their distance.

ANGEL
I've been seeing... I've had dreams,
lately, about... the past. It's like
I'm living it again, it's so vivid.
I need to...
(he faces Giles)
I need to know why I'm here.

GILES
Here? Back on Earth?

ANGEL
I should be in a demon dimension
suffering an eternity of torture.

GILES
I don't feel particularly inclined to
argue with that.

ANGEL
But I'm not. I was freed. And I
don't understand why.

Giles lets the crossbow down as he replies.

GILES
Well, I haven't any easy answers;
I've looked into the matter, but so
far I haven't come across any being
with the power to pull someone out
of Hell.

ANGEL
Where have you looked? We could

compare notes --

GILES

Knowing why you're back might give
you some peace of mind?

ANGEL

It might.

GILES

And is that something you think
you ought to have?

As he speaks, he moves to place the crossbow on the table.

JENNY CALENDAR is right behind him.

Angel starts, staring.

GILES

To be blunt, the last time you became
complacent about your existence, it
turned out rather badly.

ANGEL

(to Jenny)

I killed you...

GILES

You tried, certainly, but --

He realizes Angel is not looking at him. He frowns, puzzled.

Jenny moves to Giles, but cannot touch him. She gazes at him with forlorn longing.

GILES

What are you staring at?

ANGEL

Don't you see her?

GILES

See whom?

But Angel cannot say. He moves quickly out of the room --

ANGEL

I can't --

-- leaving Giles, alone, to puzzle.

INT. MANSION - ANGEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The camera moves down toward him from above, as he tosses and turns in the grip
of yet another memory dream.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - NIGHT (1883)

An extremely civilized Christmas party is underway, well-to-do revellers milling about and chatting. The camera follows a couple up the stairs -- then moves under it, where Angel is dallying with an uncomfortable young servant named MARGARET.

MARGARET

Sir, please... I should return to the party...

ANGEL

Margaret, Margaret... there's no hurry.

MARGARET

Mistress will be wondering...

ANGEL

Mistress will be wondering how she can get the good Reverend Chalmers into bed and will not notice the absence of canapes. Stay with me. Tell me about yourself.

MARGARET

Sir... people might talk -- I'll be put out in the street, my little boy would... I can't lose this job.

ANGEL

Then you'd best keep quiet.

The humor has gone out of his voice. He grips her arm.

MARGARET

You're hurting me.

ANGEL

Cry out. Call for help. I'm sure mistress will believe your behavior beyond reproach.

MARGARET

Please...

ANGEL

Come! Make a scene! Shall I?

MARGARET

No!

ANGEL

No.

He moves closer to her, predatorially. She is near tears.

ANGEL

We shall be quiet as mice.

She looks up at him and her eyes widen in horror. He's gone to vampface.

ANGEL
No matter what.

She stares, terrified, into the face of her death.

MARGARET
Please... my son...

ANGEL
He'll make a fine dessert.

He bites, pulls the life out of her hungrily. Finishes her and looks up.

He starts, sudden terror on his face.

Buffy is standing before him. She is in modern dress, and stands out from the victorian setting.

She is as horrified as he.

INT. MANSION - ANGEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Angel comes awake, sweaty and freaked.

INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Buffy jolts awake as well, just as freaked as Angel.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

Angel comes out of his bedroom. Jenny is standing in the middle of the room, staring at him. Angel stops.

JENNY
Trouble sleeping?

ANGEL
You're not here.

JENNY
I'm always here.

ANGEL
Leave me alone...

JENNY
I can't. You won't let me.

He collapses onto the couch. Jenny approaches him, her movements as smooth as

her voice is soft.

JENNY
I'm a part of you now. You've taken
me in.

ANGEL
What do you want?

JENNY
I want to die in bed, surrounded by
fat grandchildren, but I guess that's
off the menu.

She smiles, without rancor. Her smile disappears when he says:

ANGEL
I'm sorry...

JENNY
You're sorry? For what? For me?
Don't bother. I'm dead; I'm over it.
If you want to feel sorry for
someone, feel sorry for yourself.
Or, well, I think you've got that
covered.

ANGEL
I am sorry. For what I've done --
What else can I say to you?

JENNY
I don't want to make you feel bad.

She runs her hand along his face. As she does so, she MORPHS into Daniel.

DANIEL
I just want to show you who you are.

INT. GILES' OFFICE - DAY

Buffy is explaining to Giles.

GILES
You had a dream about Angel.

BUFFY
I was IN Angel's dream.

GILES
I'm not sure how --

BUFFY
There were things in that dream I
couldn't possibly know about. It was
Angel's past, he was dreaming it and
somehow I got sucked in.
(beat)

There's something wrong with him.

GILES
I know. I've seen him.

Buffy reacts to this.

GILES
He wanted to know why he was back.

BUFFY
Is there a way for us to find out?

GILES
Possibly; I've been looking --

BUFFY
Well let me look too. We have to
help him.
(off his look)
I'm not seeing him anymore. I'm
trying to put all that behind me.
And I'm not going to be able to as
long as we're doing guest spots in
each other's dreams.

Giles nods, acknowledging her logic.

BUFFY
So we'll help him?

GILES
Yes.

XANDER
Where do we start?

They both turn to see Xander in the doorway. Xander addresses himself to Buffy.

XANDER
I'm aware that I haven't been the
mostest best friend to you when it
comes to the Angel thing. And, I
don't know. Maybe I finally got the
Chanukah spirit.

Buffy smiles, warmly.

GILES
Well, we start, not surprisingly,
with research.
(handing out books)
Xander, the Black Chronicles. Buffy,
the Diary of Luscious Temple. An
acolyte of Acatla, expert on demons.
You can skip the passages about his
garden, unless you're keen on
growing heartier beets.

The kids take their books.

BUFFY
(to Xander)
You're sure this is how you want to
spend your Christmas vacation?

XANDER
This is actually the most exciting
thing I've got planned. Who else can
claim that pathetic a social life?

WILLOW
(looking in)
Hey, guys! What're we doin'?

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

We see a brief MONTAGE of our foursome studying. Reading, talking -- Giles writes notes on a dry erase board -- putting a line through a discounted theory. Xander brings snacks. They read some more.

INT. LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

Buffy and Willow are studying together: i.e., talking about something else.

WILLOW
He's gonna come over for Christmas
Eve, since my folks are out of town.
We're gonna watch videos.

BUFFY
(leafing through book)
So it's good, right? You guys are
back.

WILLOW
It's good. It's perfect, in an
awkward, uncomfortable sort of way.
I just -- I don't know how to make
Oz trust me.

BUFFY
Well, he does have a point. Xander
was your first love. That's...
(thinking of herself)
. . . that's hard to let go of. Xander
has a piece of you that Oz can't
touch. I guess it's just about
letting Oz know that he comes first
now.

WILLOW
(thinking)
I guess... Thanks.

She concentrates on her book a moment.

WILLOW

Hey! He likes beets.

Buffy looks over at the book.

BUFFY

Oh. I read that one already.
(closes her own book)
We're not getting any closer...

INT. MANSION - AFTERNOON

Angel drops on all fours in the middle of the room, shaking slightly. As he tries to regain his equilibrium, we see a pair of legs walk into frame behind him. They belong to TRAVIS, a suited businessman of about fifty. He paces as he talks.

TRAVIS

The thing I remember most was
thinking how artful it was. In the
dark they looked like they were
sleeping. It wasn't until I bent
down and kissed them good night that
I felt how cold they were. You
grabbed me and I thought, "Who would
go to so much trouble, to arrange
them like that." In my panic, in my
grief, it still struck me. But you
see...

He kneels down and MORPHS into Margaret.

MARGARET

That's what makes you different than
other beasts. They kill to feed.
But you, you took more kinds of
pleasure in it than any creature that
walks or crawls.

ANGEL

Oh, God...

MARGARET

(laughs)

Yes! Cry out! Make a scene!

He stands, moves away. But of course runs right into Daniel.

DANIEL

I was to be married that week. But
then, as I recall, you knew that.

ANGEL

It wasn't me.

JENNY

It wasn't you?

ANGEL

A demon isn't a man. I was a man

once.

JENNY

Oh, yes. And what man you were!

FLASH CUT OF:

INT. IRISH PUB - NIGHT (1753)

We see Angel at a table in a corner upon which a pair of female legs dances. He is hoisting a flagon of ale and drunkenly laughing until he falls out of frame.

BACK TO:

INT. MANSION - AFTERNOON

MARGARET

A drunken, whoring layabout and a terrible disappointment to your parents.

ANGEL

I was... young... I never had the chance to --

MARGARET

-- to die of syphilis? You were a worthless being before you were ever a monster.

ANGEL

Stop it!

She becomes Jenny again (in a cut).

JENNY

Angel... I don't want to hurt you. But you have to understand. Cruelty is the only thing you ever had a true talent for.

ANGEL

That's not true...

JENNY

Rest... rest...

He lies down, exhausted, by the fireplace.

JENNY

You mistake it for a curse. Angel, it's not. It's your destiny. I'll show you.

She strokes his head.

JENNY

I'll show you...

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

To establish.

INT. LIBRARY/GILES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Giles and Willow are researching in the office. Willow is practically nodding off. Giles looks over some old letters. He seems increasingly engrossed. And worried.

Xander works behind the counter, bored.

The camera finds Buffy asleep in the stacks. She moves slightly, a small breath escapes her -- it's clear she's dreaming, and vividly.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

Angel has passed out in front of the fireplace, exhausted. He too is dreaming.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the dream, Buffy is in bed. She opens her eyes and sits up.

Angel is on the bed with her. Without a word they begin touching, kissing. We see her pajama shirt slide down her back.

We see images of their lovemaking (as tasteful and elliptical as we can be and still understand what they're doing) intercut with the both of them dreaming. Angel moves on top of Buffy, under the sheets.

For a moment, we see one of the eyeless priests in the bedroom with them. Buffy doesn't seem to register his presence. Keeps moving under Angel.

Angel's head rears back -- and MORPHS.

He bites down savagely on Buffy's bare neck.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Buffy is startled awake.

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

Angel wakes as well. He sits up -- and Jenny is right beside him.

JENNY
You want her.

ANGEL
No...

JENNY

Take her. Take what you want.
Pour all that frustration, all that
guilt into her and you'll be free.

ANGEL
No!

JENNY
You can't live for eternity with all
that pain. This is what you are.
This is why we brought you back.
Take her. And then you'll be ready
to kill her.

She is in his ear, wickedly intimate. He does not move. He does not fight.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

Act Three

INT. LIBRARY/GILES' OFFICE - NIGHT

Willow is fast asleep as Giles comes out of the office, meeting Buffy who is coming down the stairs, fairly dream-wigged.

GILES
Buffy. Take a look. These letters
contain references to an ancient
power known as the First.

BUFFY
The First? The first what?

GILES
Evil. Absolute evil, older than man,
than demons -- very few have heard
of it, fewer believe in it. But it is
a force that transcends all
realities, all dimensions, and if
focused, could have had the power
to bring Angel back.

Xander is approaching, listening.

BUFFY
So it's evil. Which is bad.

GILES
Traditionally. But we don't know
that this is --

BUFFY
Hey.

She has come upon a drawing of an eyeless priest.

BUFFY
Him. In my dream. I fell asleep
just now...

GILES
You had a dream? With Angel?

BUFFY
Yes.

GILES
What happened in the dream?

BUFFY
Let's not get sidetracked. Who are
these guys?

GILES
They're known as the Bringers, or
the Harbingers... High priests of
the First. They can conjure spirit
manifestations of the power, set
them on people. Influence them,
haunt them...

BUFFY
These guys are working the mojo
on Angel.

XANDER
We gotta stop 'em.

GILES
You can't fight the First, Buffy.
It's not a physical being.

BUFFY
But I can fight these priest guys.

XANDER
If we can find them.

Buffy thinks a moment.

BUFFY
Xander, you busy tomorrow?

XANDER
Not during the day. What do you
got in mind?

BUFFY
Well, it's Christmas. Time to look
up old friends.

EXT. SUNNYDALE - DAY

To establish.

INT. WILLY'S BAR - DAY

Willy is behind the bar. A few tired drunks populate the place, communing with watery drinks. Buffy and Xander enter, come up to the bar.

Willy sees them, addresses Buffy just a little too loud, for the benefit of all:

WILLY
Hey, it's **the Slayer**! What brings
the Slayer down here?

Upon hearing the name, one vampire at the bar and another guy in the back slink out of the joint the back way.

BUFFY
How you been, Willy?

WILLY
Keeping out of trouble, as God is
my witness. What can I do you
for? Couple drinks?

XANDER
Yeah, let me get a double shot of --
(off Buffy's look)
-- of information, pal.

BUFFY
Have you ever heard of something
called the First? Kind of an all
powerful dark power sort of thingie?

WILLY
(thinks)
Doesn't ring a bell.

XANDER
How about I ring that bell for you?
(off Buffy's other look)
Does the threatening come now?

BUFFY
Maybe you shouldn't help.

WILLY
Hey! Why with the threats? You
drive away my customers, give me a
hard time and I don't know this First
guy!

BUFFY
All right. Three priests. They call
them the uh...

XANDER
The Bringers --

BUFFY
The Bringers, the Harbingers...

They sort of have a "no eyes" kind
of look...

WILLY
I'm not sure...

BUFFY
They would have come to town
recently, they'd be holed up
somewhere, summoning a spirit of
the First.

WILLY
I really don't want to say anything
that would get me in trouble.

BUFFY
You understand that I'm planning to
skip the threatening portion of this
exchange.

He sighs, comes closer.

WILLY
Well, I heard a few things, you know,
from the underground.

XANDER
The underground.

WILLY
Yeah, you know: from things that live
under the ground. Apparently there's
been a lot of migrations out of
Sunnydale from the lower inhabitants.
Something's scaring them off, and
these are things that are not easily
scared. could be your priest-types
are underground. If the First is as
bad as you say.

BUFFY
Underground where?

WILLY
I do not know.
(off her look)
Hey, my ass is on the line for
telling you that much. If I knew
more, I'd say.

BUFFY
All right. Thanks.

She starts to go.

XANDER
See you round.

WILLY
(to Xander)
Hey, you did great by the way. I
was very intimidated by you.

XANDER
Really? Thanks.

BUFFY
Come on.

WILLY
Hey kid!
(she turns back)
Merry Christmas.

EXT. SUNNYDALE STREET - DAY

Buffy and Xander come out of the bar.

XANDER
Man, is it hot. It was so nice and
cool in there.

BUFFY
A nice cool waste of time.

XANDER
We know underground, that's a start...

BUFFY
In a town with fourteen million
square miles of sewer --

XANDER
Plus a lot of natural cave formations
and a gateway to hell, yeah...
(looking about him)
-- this does resemble square one.

BUFFY
(frustrated)
I don't know what to do.

XANDER
I think right now the best plan is to
deck the halls with boughs of holly.
(looking at his watch)
We're gettin' toward the eve, might
as well try and make something
resembling merry.

BUFFY
Yeah, Mom'll be looking for me.

XANDER
And Uncle Roary will be well into
the sherry by now. Don't wanna miss
that.

(sincerely)
We'll find the badguys, sooner or
later.

They start off.

BUFFY
Thanks, by the way.

XANDER
Don't mention it. Well, actually
mention it as often as possible. In
front of everyone. In fact, while
you're heaping me with praise, if you
could also bring up my manly
physique, that'd be a plus. Not
compulsory, but...

EXT. SUNNYDALE - NIGHT

We see the town ready for Christmas Eve, lights on houses and shrubs.

INT. WILLOW'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Oz enters the house, headed for the living room. He carries a bag of vids.

OZ
Hey. Will? It's me, I got some...

He turns into the living room, stops.

OZ
. . . videos...

ANGLE: THE ROOM

Is candle lit and romantic. Soft music plays on the record player. A couple of bottles
(of soda, don't you just hate TV) are chilling in a cooler.

Willow sits on the couch in a slinky dress, a bit more heavily made up than usual.
She looks pretty hot, though a bit awkward at maintaining her sexy pose.

WILLOW
Hi.

Oz is taking this in. This evening seems to have a more specific agenda than he'd
anticipated.

WILLOW
Why don't you come sit down.

Oz does. There is a moment of silence.

A new record starts. Barry White. Oz registers the Barry Whiteness.

OZ
You ever have that dream that you're
in a play, and it's the middle of the

play, and you really don't know your lines, and you kind of don't know the plot... ?

WILLOW

Well, we're alone, we're together...
I just want it to be special.

OZ

How special are we talking?

WILLOW

(a tad flustered)

Well, you know, we're alone, and we're both mature younger people, and, so, we could, I'm ready to, with you, we could do that thing.

He's kind of thrown. He stands.

WILLOW

Where are you going?

OZ

Not going. Dramatic gesture. That's pretty special.

She stands too, moving towards him.

WILLOW

I wanna be with you. First.

A beat, as he considers this.

OZ

I think we should sit again.

They do.

WILLOW

(not 100% convincing)

Oz, I'm ready.

OZ

Okay, well, don't take this the wrong way, but I'm not.

WILLOW

Are you scared? 'Cause I thought you had --

OZ

I have. But this is different. You look great, and you got the Barry working for you, and it's all good, but... when it happens, it should be 'cause we both need it to. For the same reason. You don't have to

prove anything to me.

WILLOW
But I just wanted you to know --

OZ
I know. I get the message.

He kisses her. A nice one. They break apart, looking at each other with warmth.

WILLOW
Then can I change out of this outfit?

OZ
Not just yet.

They kiss again.

INT. BUFFY'S LIVING ROOM/FOYER - NIGHT

Buffy decorates the tree as Joyce puts another log on the fire.

BUFFY
Oh, yes, nothing like a roaring fire
to keep away the blistering heat.

JOYCE
Oh, come on, it's lovely.
(beat)
Maybe I should turn on the air
conditioning.

Buffy gets another ornament. She becomes lost in thought, staring at it.

JOYCE
So, Angel's on top again?

BUFFY
(panicked)
What?

Joyce is holding two ornaments meant for the top of the tree.

JOYCE
Angel? Or star.

BUFFY
Oh. Star. Star.

JOYCE
Are you okay, honey? You've got
faraway face.

BUFFY
I'm okay.

JOYCE

Is it a slaying thing?

The doorbell rings. The two women look at each other, wondering who it could be, then Buffy goes to answer as Joyce puts up the star.

Buffy opens the door -- to reveal Faith. She has clearly tried to dress up a bit more like a normal girl, and stands a bit shyly in the doorway.

FAITH
Hey.

BUFFY
Hi...

FAITH
Looked like that whole party thing
was gonna be kind of a drag. And I
didn't have anything... you know...

BUFFY
(warmly)
I'm glad you came.

FAITH
Here.

Faith holds up two little presents, awkwardly wrapped in newspaper. Buffy takes them.

FAITH
(indicating one gift)
That one's for your mom. They're
pretty crappy.

BUFFY
Well, come in from the entire lack of
cold.

Faith does. Joyce spots her, comes over, Buffy handing her the presents.

JOYCE
Faith, you made it!
(re: gifts)
That is so thoughtful.

FAITH
They're crappy.

BUFFY
Let me get mine, hold on.

She heads upstairs.

JOYCE
(to Faith)
Would you like some nog?

INT. BUFFY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As she walks toward the room she calls down:

BUFFY
You're not allowed to touch yours,
Mom, 'cause you'll know what it is
right away --

She enters the room and Angel is right beside her. He shuts her door. He looks dangerous -- and confused, and pathetic.

BUFFY
Angel.

ANGEL
Buffy...

BUFFY
What is it?

ANGEL
I had to see you... I don't know.
You shouldn't be...

ANGLE: ANGEL'S POV

Of Buffy. His gaze wanders about her face, to her bare neck, away from her and back.

BUFFY
Angel, stay calm. Just tell me
what's going on.

Angel tries to speak -- and Jenny appears beside him (unseen by Buffy).

JENNY
She wants you to touch her. What
are you waiting for?

ANGEL
(to Buffy)
You have to stay away from me.

BUFFY
You came to see me to tell me I can't
see you.

He reaches out to caress her neck. She takes a step back.

BUFFY
Angel, something is doing this to
you. You just have to control it.
I know you're confused...

ANGEL
I think you're the one who's

confused. It think you need to...

JENNY

She wants you to taste her. Think of the peace... you would never see us again.

Buffy is still backing up, both threatened and concerned.

BUFFY

Angel, please... how can I help you?

ANGEL

Leave me alone!

It's not clear if that was to Buffy or Jenny -- but it doesn't matter. He suddenly hurls himself out her window.

Buffy stands there, shaken.

INT. BUFFY'S LIVING ROOM/FOYER - NIGHT

Buffy is grabbing her coat from off a chair in the living room and heading out, saying to Faith:

BUFFY

I need you to stay here with Mom. In case he comes back.

FAITH

I'll play watchdog. I don't really get it, though.

BUFFY

I'll explain later. Everything, I promise.

FAITH

Watch your back.

Faith watches her go.

INT. GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Buffy has filled Giles in. He looks suitably concerned, though not as amped as she.

BUFFY

Giles, we gotta do something. Soon. Now.

GILES

I'm still not sure what.

BUFFY

Find these high priest guys. Find me SOMETHING I can pummel.

GILES
We can't lose our heads.

BUFFY
Giles, he's slipping. He's... I
think we're losing him.

Giles faces her, says gently:

GILES
You realize, if he truly becomes a
danger, you may have to kill him.
Again.

Buffy doesn't reply. She'd thought it, but she sure hates hearing it.

GILES
Can you do that?

INT. MANSION/GARDEN - NIGHT

ANGEL
I can't do it!

He is at his most distraught, Jenny beside him, circling, pouring venom in his ear.

JENNY
You have to do it. What else are
you good for?

ANGEL
Get away from me!

JENNY
Couldn't you feel her? Couldn't you
smell her skin? You're not a
fighter, Angel, don't start trying
now. Sooner or later you will drink
her.

ANGEL
I'll never hurt her.

JENNY
You were born to hurt her. Have
you learned nothing? As long as
you're alive --

ANGEL
Then I'll die.

There is calm resolve in the sentence that gives the Jennything pause.

JENNY
You haven't the strength to kill
yourself.

ANGEL
I don't need strength. I just need

the sun to rise.

He turns and walks out into the garden. Starts heading up the stairs.

JENNY

You're not supposed to die! This
isn't the plan!

Jenny watches him go. After a moment, she smiles.

JENNY

But it'll do.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

Act Four

INT. GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Giles and Buffy are both researching like the wind. It's been a while, though, without results. Buffy wearily recites a passage to herself:

BUFFY

"and the child shall be born of goat
and man, and will have two heads, the
first shall speak in riddles..."
(dumping it and grabbing another)
No wonder you love these things.
It's like reading the Star.

GILES

(re: his book)
Yes! Ah. No. Well, maybe...

BUFFY

What? Priests?

GILES

Yes, but... more posturing, I'm
afraid.

(reads:)

"For they are the harbingers of
death, nothing shall grow above or
below them, no seed shall flower,
neither in Man nor..." They're rebels
and they'll never ever be any good.
Nothing specific about their haunts --

BUFFY

Let me see that.

She takes the book from Giles, her mind racing.

BUFFY
". . . the harbingers of death, nothing
shall grow above or below..."

She stops. Giles watches her.

GILES
What.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT

Buffy races to the lot, blows open the gate. She moves quickly to the back, to the clump of dead trees.

As she arrives at the edge, the camera ARMS up, way up, to see the dead trees form a **perfect circle**.

Buffy looks about her, spots an axe. She grabs it and moves to the middle of the circle, pushing a tree out of the way. Without hesitation she takes the axe and starts hacking at the ground.

For a few whacks she just turns up earth. Then she hits rock. Another swing and:

ANGLE: FROM BENEATH THE EARTH

She breaks through to a cave entrance. Just big enough for her to squeeze down into.

Buffy drops the axe and squirrels down into the hole. After a beat her arm comes back out and grabs the axe, pulls it down after her.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Buffy squeezes through a dark, earthen passage till she spills out into a slightly larger tunnel. This heads down toward the main cave, from which dim, flickering light and ominous chanting emerge.

She moves stealthily forward -- and comes upon the three priests swaying at their shrine. A beat, as she takes it in.

BUFFY
All right. Ten more minutes of
chanting then you have to go to bed.

The nearest priest leaps up -- and gets an axe handle in the chin. Buffy swings at the next, knocking him out as well, as the third simply flees.

Buffy walks up to the shrine. She kicks aside all the stones, bones and candles.

The moment she does there is a huge sound of wind sucking into the space and Jenny appears beside her.

JENNY
I'm impressed.

Buffy takes a moment to register seeing Jenny -- but she knows it's not her.

BUFFY
You won't get Angel.

JENNY
You think you can fight me. I'm not
a demon, little girl. I'm something
you can't conceive. The first evil.
Beyond sin, beyond death... I am
the thing the darkness fears. You
will never see me, but I am
everywhere. Every being, every
thought, every drop of hate --

BUFFY
I **get it. You're evil.** do we have
to chat about it all day?

Jenny stops smiling.

JENNY
Angel will be dead by sunrise. Your
Christmas will be his wake.

The words hit Buffy hard, but she musters courage.

BUFFY
No.

JENNY
You have no idea what you're
dealing with.

BUFFY
Let me guess... is it **evil**?

Jenny suddenly transforms into a giant, monstrous Angel of Death looking thing.
Buffy starts back -- and it's gone. A voice rings out -- not Jenny's; hardly human.

THE FIRST (V.O.)
Dead by sunrise!

A moment, and Buffy flees the cave.

INT. MANSION/EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Buffy runs in, calling out:

BUFFY
Angel!

No answer. She makes for the garden, looking around. Looks at the sky and thinks.

She bolts up the stairs.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Buffy makes her way along, looking for Angel. She clears a couple of bushes, looks out at:

EXT. BLUFF - NIGHT

It overlooks the town. Angel stands at the edge of it, facing away from her. Waiting for the sun.

Buffy approaches him, slowly.

BUFFY
Angel?

He looks back, startled -- then slowly looks away again. Still Buffy approaches.

BUFFY
Angel, you have to come inside.

ANGEL
(looking down at the town)
I bet half the kids down there are
already awake. Lying in their beds,
sneaking downstairs...
(looks up at the sky)
. . . waiting for day.

BUFFY
Angel, I need you to get inside.
There's only a few minutes left --

ANGEL
I know. I can smell the sunrise long
before it comes.

BUFFY
I don't have time to explain this.
You have to trust me; that thing that
was haunting you --

ANGEL
It wasn't haunting me. It was just
showing me.

BUFFY
Showing you --

ANGEL
What I am.

BUFFY
Were.

ANGEL
And ever shall be. I wanted to know
why I was back. Now I do.

BUFFY
You don't know. What, some great
honking evil takes credit for

bringing you back and you buy it?
You just give up?

ANGEL
I can't do it again, Buffy. I can't
become a killer.

BUFFY
Then you fight it!

ANGEL
It's **too hard**.

Her frustration is mounting to panic as she looks to the sky.

BUFFY
Angel, please -- just come inside.

ANGEL
It told me to kill you. You were in
the dream, you know -- it told me to
take you, to lose my soul in you and
become a monster again.

BUFFY
I know what it told you. Why does it
matter?

ANGEL
Because I wanted to! Because I want
you so badly, I want to take comfort
in you and I know it'll cost me my
soul and a part of me doesn't care.
I'm weak. I've never been anything
else. It's not the demon in me that
needs killing, Buffy. It's the man.

BUFFY
You're weak. Everybody is.
Everybody fails. Maybe this evil
power did bring you back, but if it
did it's because it needs you. And
that means you can hurt it. You have
the power to do real good, Angel, to
make amends. But if you die now,
then all you ever were was a monster.

He does not respond. Is turned from her. Her frustration is mounting.

BUFFY
Angel... the sun is coming out...

ANGEL
Just go.

BUFFY
I won't.

ANGEL

You think this is simple. You think there's an answer. You can never understand what I've done. Now go!

BUFFY

You're not staying here! I won't let you --

She grabs him. He throws her off.

ANGEL

Leave!

She punches him in the face. He throws her violently away -- she falls to the ground, the back of her head hitting a rock.

He rushes to her, dropping to his knees and pulling her up to him. Frustration sweeps over him and he grabs her arms hard enough to hurt.

ANGEL

(bitterly)

Am I a thing worth saving? Am I a righteous man? **The world wants me gone.**

Weakness overcomes her, tears finally spilling out as she implores:

BUFFY

What about me? What about -

Angel I love you so much --

(sobbing)

-- and I've tried to make you go away, I **killed** you and it didn't help...

She pulls away from him and stands, anger surfacing through her tears.

BUFFY

And I hate it. I hate that it's so hard... that you can hurt me so much... I know everything you've done because you did it to me. I wish I wished you dead. But I don't. I can't.

He is also crying, wanting so badly to take comfort in her words...

ANGEL

Buffy, please... just this once... let me be strong.

BUFFY

Strong is fighting. It's hard and it's painful and it's every day. It's what we have to do and we can do it together, but if you're too much of a coward for that then burn.

ANGEL

Buffy --

BUFFY

Let the sun kill you! If I can't
convince you you have a place in the
world, then I don't know what will.
So die. But don't expect me to
watch, and don't expect me to mourn
for you, 'cause, I don't have... I...

They've started about halfway through her speech. Light, just a few flakes at first, but by the time she stops they are all around. She looks about her. So does Angel. They look up at the sky, almost unable to comprehend the fact that it's snowing.

Slowly, they turn to look out on the town. The camera moves past them and arms up toward the vista. A thick and silent snow falls over the whole of Sunnydale.

INT. WILLOW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Camera is outside the room, amid the gentle snow. We see through the frosted french doors that Willow and Oz have fallen asleep (clothed and over the covers) in each other's arms. They stir, and rise, looking out at the window.

EXT. BUFFY'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Joyce and Faith walk out into the snow, silently looking about them.

INT. GILES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Giles moves slowly to his window, staring out.

EXT. XANDER'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

We move past a lawn chair and table to Xander in his sleeping bag. Beside him are a flashlight and comic books and a plate of Christmas cookies. Snow is beginning to cover everything.

Xander moves uncomfortably in his sleep, pulls the sleeping bag over his head. A beat, then he re-emerges, eyes open. Clearly confused.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT

As the two men rush out and start to cover their fake-snowed trees with plastic.

TREE SELLER GUY

Oh, man! It's gonna get the snow all
wet!

EXT. SUN CINEMA - NIGHT

As snow falls on the big (and presently incongruous) SUN sign.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE APPLIANCE STORE

Snow falls around us as the camera moves in at the same TV, the same Weatherman -- with a slightly revised forecast.

WEATHERMAN

And while most of southern California is enjoying a balmy Christmas, an extreme cold front has sprung up -- out of nowhere -- around Sunnydale, where they are reporting heavy snowfall for the first time in... well, ever. Sunnydale residents shouldn't expect to see the sun at all today, that cold front isn't going anywhere. Temperatures in the high thirties mean you'd better bundle up if you're planning to go outside and enjoy the change in the weather...

EXT. SUNNYDALE STREET - NIGHT

We see a huge vista -- Sunnydale under snow. Arm down as Buffy and Angel walk together through the heavy snowfall. Looking about them, at the world, at each other.

Not saying a word. Not needing to.

BLACK OUT.

END OF SHOW