

The Puppet Show

Draft

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Teaser

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A poster: 'TALENT SHOW AUDITIONS - TODAY'

CORDELIA and a GIRL WITH A TUBA fill out audition forms.

CORDELIA
So, what's your act?

The girl points to her tuba: is this a trick question?

TUBA GIRL
I...

CORDELIA
Haven't decided, huh?
Well, you'd better be
along the lines of spectacular.
Because I sing.
(re: form)
Who gets these?

TUBA GIRL
(pointing)
Him.

ANGLE: GILES

GILES
Cursed by the wretched
name of Rupert Giles.

He sits in the auditorium seats, staring blankly into space. Buffy, Willow, and Xander are seated around him.

BUFFY
How did you finagle
such a primo assignment?

GILES
Our new Fuhrer Mr. Miller --

WILLOW
I think they're
called 'principals' now.

GILES

Mm-hmm. He thought it would behoove me to have more contact with the student. I tried to explain that my vocational choice of librarian was a deliberate attempt to minimize said contact. He would have none of it.

BUFFY

(with importance)

Giles, into every generation is born one who must oversee the annual abomination known as the school talentless show. You can not escape your destiny.

GILES

Might I at least look forward to your participation in this even prophesied event?

BUFFY

Nah, I thought I'd take on your traditional role and just watch.

XANDER

And mock.

WILLOW

And laugh.

The three of them chuckle.

BUFFY

Let's leave Sir Andrew Lloyd Giles to this business he calls show.

They get up and see that PRINCIPAL MILLER is there. In years and schools past, he has ruled with unwavering confidence and was able, despite his size and appearance, to strike fear and respect into his students. But that was then and this is Sunnydale.

BUFFY

(caught)
Mr. Miller.

MR MILLER

Oh, look at this: three more anxious participants for our show.

XANDER

Oh, no, sir. Thank you, though. We were just--

WILLOW

Leaving.

BUFFY

Quickly.

XANDER
Bye, now!

They try to escape. Mr. Miller stops them.

MR MILLER
No, stay. I think you could put
on a wonderful act for the audience
to watch. And mock. And laugh. At.

Buffy smiles weakly.

BUFFY
Looks like we just volunteered.

MR MILLER
Principal Flutie may have tolerated
anti-social, recalcitrant behavior like
yours. He was all touch-feely and
weak-willed. Which explains why
he was eaten by wild dogs, god rest
his soul. But there's a new sheriff in
town. Sunnydale High has touched
and felt for the last time.

He walks off. Giles turns to the trio.

GILES
Audition forms are on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

A 'Chorus Line' MONTAGE begins as:

A GIRL DANCER (ALICE) does some moves. She is very athletic and very good. She picks up a cane and throws it into the air. It doesn't come down. She stares into the rafters.

CUT TO:

A CARROT-TOP WANNABE (ELLIOT) holds up a long toilet plunger with a toothbrush attached to the top.

CARROT-TOP WANNABE
Here's a way to save time in
the morning. Unclog your toilet
while practicing good hygiene.

He demonstrates.

CUT TO:

A GOOD-LOOKING KID (MARIO) wears a cape and holds a top-hat.

MARIO
And so, I reach into my hat
and -- abra cadabra -- pull out...

He looks inside his hat, then looks around the stage.

MARIO
Has anyone seen a rabbit?

CUT TO:

The girl with the tuba (FRIDA) sits on a stool.

TUBA GIRL
I now present my tribute to Jimi Hendrix.

She brings the tuba to her mouth, plays the opening two notes to 'PURPLE HAZE,'
then breaks into the main melody.

CUT TO:

Cordelia stands on stage, holding a mic, passionately but quietly selling her song.

CORDELIA
'Isn't it ironic, don't you think?
A little too ironic. Oh, yeah, I really do think.'

GILES
(cutting her off)
Okay, thank you.

CORDELIA
Wait, I'm about to
scream about the rain.

GILES
(forcing a smile)
Surprise me later.

CORDELIA
And of course I'll
be wearing a knit cap.

GILES
Goody!
(off list)
Okay, last up, thank goodness,
is... Morgan and Sid.

A SHY-LOOKING BOY (MORGAN) with a VENTRILOQUIST DUMMY (SID) moves to
center stage. Morgan sits on a stool.

MORGAN
Hi, I'm Morgan.
(then, as Sid)
And I'm Sid.

As Sid 'speaks,' Morgan's mouth moves freely. It's as if he isn't even trying not to

move his lips. He's terrible.

MORGAN

(as Sid)

Hey, Morgan, would you
like to tell some jokes?

(as himself)

Would I!

(as Sid)

As a matter of fact it is.

It's also a wood nose and wood mouth!

Our gang watches, pained. They look away, embarrassed for Morgan. And yet Morgan continues.

MORGAN

(as Sid)

I didn't sleep at all last night.

Itching like crazy.

(as himself)

Some kind of rash?

(as Sid)

Termites. Doctor Carpenter says--

Suddenly, Sid begins talking in a new voice. This time, Morgan's lips don't move.

SID

--All right, time out. Let's
stop this before someone gets hurt.
Kid, you are the worst. Even I can
see your lips move. On top of that,
you're spitting all over me.

Giles and the others chuckle at this.

SID

And you call those jokes?
My jockey shorts are made
of better material. And they're edible.

Everyone laughs. Morgan looks at the audience, pleased.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - A LITTLE LATER

Giles speaks to the auditioners as they gather their things.

GILES

...and our first rehearsal will be tomorrow morning.
(looking at Cordelia)
Some of you might want to get here
early and run through your act before I arrive.

CORDELIA

(pointing to our gang)
What about the odd squad?
They didn't even audition.

GILES
I'll expect to see them here bright
and early with an idea of what they want to do.

BUFFY
Not be here bright and
early comes to mind.

They start out. Buffy looks over and sees Morgan 'talking' with his dummy, Sid.

BUFFY
(calling over)
Hey, Morgan, you were funny up there.

Morgan keeps right on talking with Sid.

BUFFY
Morgan?

SID LOOKS up at Buffy, then motions with his head to Morgan.

MORGAN
(looking up)
Huh? Oh, thanks.

Buffy smiles and moves on. Morgan looks at Sid.

MORGAN
Did you hear that?

SID
Of course I did. I told you you'd
be great. Just keep letting me call the shots.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Alice, the dancing girl, comes in, wearing her tights and leg-warmers from the audition. She goes to a locker.

A NOISE startles her. She looks around.

DANCING GIRL
Hello?

There's no response. She opens her locker. She hears a noise from the other direction and quickly turns around.

DANCING GIRL
Is somebody there?

She cautiously walks towards the end of the lockers.

LOW POV: OF SOMEONE WATCHING HER

Her back is to us as she peers around the locker.

DANCING GIRL
Hello?

POV: RUSHES UP BEHIND HER

She turns in time to face the thing and SCREAMS INTO CAMERA.

BLACK OUT.

Act One

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - THE NEXT MORNING

STUDENTS arrive and head into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME TIME

Buffy, Willow, and Xander walk in and see other talent show members (Mario, the Tuba Girl, etc.) who are working on their acts.

BUFFY
I had a beautiful dream that the two
of you came up with something great
for us to do in the show.

WILLOW
It's good to dream.

BUFFY
Well, every minute brings Giles closer
to being here, so we'd better settle on
something that vaguely resembles a talent.

XANDER
You know, talent is really such a subjective
thing. What I consider to be one of my greatest
talents? Other people would just call rude and offensive.

ANGLE: MORGAN REHEARSING ON STAGE

He sits on a stool with Sid on his knee.

SID
Could you move my leg?

MORGAN
What's the problem, Sid?

SID
Damn shin splints.

Morgan un-crosses Sid's leg. Sid sighs, relived. Then:

SID

I'd spend more time in the pool,
but that water seal stuff smells like crap.

Buffy, Willow, and Xander pass by. We hear a WOLF WHISTLE. Buffy turns around.
Sid's eyes are SPINNING in their sockets. Buffy laughs.

BUFFY

Wow, Morgan, you're really
getting good with that thing.

MORGAN

Oh... uh...

SID

Tell the girl thank you.

MORGAN

Thank you.

SID

Morgan's a little shy around
pretty girls. But I'm not.

Xander rolls his eyes. Buffy and Willow giggle.

BUFFY

(patting Sid's head)

Aw, you're sweet.

SID

(to Buffy)

What say you and me do a little
rehearsing of our own? I'd feel
right at home sitting on your knee.

XANDER

Hey, wood-man, watch your mouth.

(then, to Morgan)

I mean... watch his mouth.

SID

Sorry, pal. Just checking out the scenery.

(looks Buffy up and down)

And I likes what I see.

(seeing Willow)

Your friend ain't that bad either.
Either of you ladies ever been with
a dummy? Once you go wood,
nothing's as good.

BUFFY

(trying to be polite)

Okay, Morgan. We get the joke.
Horny dummy -- ha ha. But you
might think about getting some
new schtick. Unless you want
your best prop ending up as a Duraflame log.

SID

Ooh, feisty!

ANGLE: GILES AND MR. MILLER

as they come in.

MR MILLER

By the way, thanks for steering this talent show ship. I owe you a debt of gratitude.

He flips Giles a quarter.

MR MILLER

Debt paid.

(laughing)

I love that gag.

(then)

But seriously, thanks.

GILES

It is a cross I carry with the joy of Jesus himself.

MR MILLER

Ooh, don't say that around the students. Church/State matters, you know.

GILES

I'll be careful.

MR MILLER

(looks at the students)

I've got to say, this place isn't nearly as bad as I was told. I'd heard reports of mysterious gang activity, witchery, the occasional case of spontaneous cheerleader combustion.

But I'm beginning to think those were just rumors. I haven't seen any of that.

A SCREAM echoes throughout the school.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE LOCKER ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

A POLICE OFFICER removes yellow tape from the doorway.

BUFFY

Who found the body?

GILES

The custodian. She was cleaning the locker room--

BUFFY

They clean this place?

GILES

Every other month.

(looks over notes)

The girl's crossed-country coach said she never showed for last night's meet at Mehlville. The detectives surmise the murder occurred after the talent show auditions.

BUFFY
Any gory details?

GILES
The goriest. Alice's heart was removed.

BUFFY
That deserves an 'ick.'

GILES
And it's missing.

BUFFY
Ditto.

GILES
So we're looking at a myriad of possibilities: vampires, a ritual sacrifice. Or it might be the work of any number of your garden variety creatures with a taste for humanity.

BUFFY
But it's definitely of the genus supernatural.

GILES
It seems to be. And it somehow managed to pass into the school undetected.

BUFFY
(shaking her head)
We've got to tighten our admission standards.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER THAT DAY

Buffy, Xander, and Willow come in. Xander is miffed.

XANDER
How jaded has our school become when you don't even get the day off after a brutal murder? I bet most other places, that's an automatic. But no! We forge on.

BUFFY
Still stressed about the talent show, huh?

XANDER
They could have at least canceled that. You know, to say, 'Hey, we understand.'

WILLOW
Mr. Miller said we're supposed

to carry on in Alice's memory.

BUFFY

How about we do a scene
from a piece of classic theater.

WILLOW

Forsooth! The song of Shakespeare
beats within my breast!

BUFFY

Maybe we should sticketh
with something American.

WILLOW

Okey-dokey.

They come around the corner and see Sid, with his back to them, SITING ALONE on stage -- TALKING.

SID

...Right now you and me got to be on
the lookout. Figure out who's going to be next.

Morgan appears from the OTHER SIDE of the stage.

MORGAN

How are we supposed to--

He sees our gang and stops.

MORGAN

Oh, hi.

BUFFY

(suspicious)
Hello...

MORGAN

I was, uh, just working on throwing my voice.

WILLOW

(tentative)

Wow. Pretty good.

MORGAN

Thanks.

BUFFY

Morgan, did you--

Buffy approaches him. Morgan quickly grabs Sid. Buffy stops, then steps back a bit.

BUFFY

Um... did you notice anything weird
going on around her yesterday?

MORGAN

(nervous)
Weird? What do you mean?

BUFFY
With Alice. Did she say anything
to you? Was she arguing with anyone?

MORGAN
No. She was dancing. Sid and I were talking.

WILLOW
Talking?

MORGAN
Rehearsing.

BUFFY
So you didn't see or hear anything at all?

Sid's head SPINS towards Buffy.

SID
Look, hot-pants, he answered
your questions. Leave him alone.

XANDER
Oh, how nice. Company.

SID
(to Buffy)
Now, if you want to take me
into the box and work me over--

BUFFY
Morgan, that's getting a little old.
How about talking to me yourself?

SID
He's said all he[']s going to say.

MORGAN
It's okay, Sid. We're done.

He sets Sid in his case, with Sid's head FACING TO THE LEFT.

MORGAN
(to Buffy)
I'm sorry.

BUFFY
I didn't mean to make you mad.

MORGAN
No, I'm-- it's him. He's...

Xander watches Morgan start to close the case, and does a double take. WE SEE Sid's head FACING TO THE RIGHT. Morgan shuts the case and holds it close to him.

MORGAN
We've got to go.

Morgan hurries out.

WILLOW
Cute couple...

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Buffy, Morgan, Cordelia and some of the other kids from the talent show are at their desks. Morgan has Sid with him.

No one pays attention as the TEACHER rambles on.

TEACHER
It was a result of this that President Monroe
put forth the eponymous -- meaning named
after one's self -- Monroe Doctrine, which in
one sense established the U.S. as a local peace keeper..

Buffy absentmindedly looks up and over a few rows to where Morgan is sitting and listening intently to the teacher. SID IS STARING right at Buffy. Buffy returns his 'gaze.'

ZOOM IN ON: SID

who continues to stare.

Buffy, inexplicably rattled, looks away. She glances up. Sid's still staring.

CORDELIA
(leaning in to Buffy)
Looks like someone digs you. That's adorable.
You and the dummy could tour in the freak show.

The teacher looks out to the class.

TEACHER
Okay, who can tell me how Spain
responded to this policy? Morgan?

ANGLE: MORGAN

Sid is WHISPERING something in his ear.

TEACHER
Morgan?

He looks up.

MORGAN
What?

TEACHER

Spain's position?

MORGAN
Oh, um...

SID
Wouldn't that be somewhere
down and to the left of England?

The class laughs.

SID
Although I once knew a Spanish girl
whose position was usually --

Morgan quickly CLASPS his hand over Sid's mouth as the class erupts in more laughter. The teacher walks over to Morgan.

TEACHER
Give me your puppet.

MORGAN
I'll put him away.

She takes Sid from him.

TEACHER
You'll get it back at the end of the day.

Morgan watches nervously as the teacher puts Sid in a drawer.

CLOSE ON: SID

as the drawer closes.

TEACHER
Okay, then, in the first part of the nineteenth century --

We hear Sid's MUFFLED VOICE from the drawer.

SID (O.C.)
Hey, it's dark in here!

The class giggles.

TEACHER
Morgan, that is enough.

SID (O.C.)
He's sorry.

The class laughs some more, except for Buffy, who eyes Morgan suspiciously.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

The classroom is empty. The teacher grades papers at her desk. Morgan passes by

the door carrying his case.

TEACHER
Morgan, could I see you for a moment, please?

Morgan comes inside.

MORGAN
Yes?

TEACHER
I wanted to ask you, is everything okay?
At home? Here at school?

MORGAN
Yeah. Why?

TEACHER
I feel like lately you've become...
a little detached. You're not participating
as much, you're goofing off, disrupting class...

MORGAN
Uh-huh.

TEACHER
You're one of the brightest kids I've
seen in a long time. But lately it seems
like you're not all 'there.' Don't let this
talent show stuff get in the way of your
school work, okay?

MORGAN
Is that all?

She looks at him. He hasn't heard any of this.

TEACHER
That's all.

He starts off.

TEACHER
Oh, wait. I need to give you--

The teacher opens the drawer where she put Sid.

ANGLE: THE DRAWER

is EMPTY. She looks up. Morgan is gone.

CUT TO

INT. LIBRARY - SAME TIME

Buffy, Xander, and Willow are there with Giles.

GILES

Sid was staring at you?

BUFFY

No. Morgan made it-- he had Sid turned so that he was facing me.

GILES

Staring at you.

BUFFY

Yes.

WILLOW

And to turn the creepy quotient up to eleven, Morgan's always referring to himself as Sid and 'us' and 'we,' like they're locker partners or something.

BUFFY

It's as if he thinks Sid is alive.

XANDER

He's not the only one.

GILES

Xander, did you wish to join our palaver?

XANDER

Well, earlier, in the auditorium--

BUFFY

(to Giles)

You're going to love this.

XANDER

I think I saw Sid move.

GILES

All me to do a double-take: what?

XANDER

When Morgan was putting Sid in his case.

GILES

What did he do, wave?

XANDER

It was nothing that obvious. It's hard to explain. I saw him... after he moved. You know, like he had moved.

GILES

So in other words you saw him laying there. Perfectly still.

XANDER

Well, no. He was... It was the way that-
(then, ashamed)

Yes.

WILLOW
(comforting Xander)
But you get bonus points for conviction.

GILES
While there have been numerous
accounts of dolls being possessed by evil spirits--

XANDER
There you go!

GILES
--a more likely scenario is that we're
dealing with a form of schizophrenia.

XANDER
That's more likely.

GILES
Morgan's id is being represented by a
vessel that allows his innermost fantasies
to be revealed.

BUFFY
Yeah, I figured that out when
Sid tried to look up my dress.

GILES
Unfortunately, Morgan may have gone
one step further into the harvesting of
human organs under the misguided belief
that this will bring his puppet to life.
The Geppeto Complex, if you will.

XANDER
Do you actually know this stuff,
or do you make it up as you go along?

GILES
It is fun, isn't it?
(then)
Perhaps some of your talent show castmates
have information which might help us prove our theory.

WILLOW
We're on it.

BUFFY
Maybe I can turn up something in
Morgan's locker: a photo of Alice,
a book about Pinocchio, a fresh
human heart. The usual stuff

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Buffy PEERS around a corner. The hallway is empty.

POV: FROM AFAR

watches Buffy puts her foot on her victim's chest and points the stick at him.

Suspicious, she stops and looks down the hall behind her. Nothing. She turns back.

She steps out in front of an adjacent hallway and is RAMMED in the side with a large stick. She REACTS in a flash, GRABS the stick, and uses it to FLIP her assailant over and down onto the ground.

POV: FROM AFAR

as Buffy puts her foot on her victim's chest and points the stick at him.

BUFFY
Why are you following--

A stream of water DRIBBLES onto her arm. She looks up and realizes her weapon is a mop and her victim is a JANITOR.

BUFFY
You're not following me.
You're mopping. And I'm sorry.

He is speechless (and paid as such). Buffy helps him up and cowers away.

BUFFY
(calling after him)
Careful, wet floors!

Buffy continues down a row of lockers and stops at one. She is about to break it open when she HEARS A DOOR CLOSE down the hall. She moves to the door: 'SUPPLY ROOM.'

Inside, two people are ARGUING in whispers. Buffy listens.

VOICE #1
Don't you trust me?

VOICE #2
Of course I do.

VOICE #1
Haven't I come through for you?

VOICE #2
Yes.

VOICE #1
Well, now I need you to come through for me.

VOICE #2
But moored?

VOICE #1
Sometimes that's what it takes.

I've explained this to you--

VOICE #2
I know, I know.

VOICE #1
So are you with me?

A long beat of silence.

VOICE #2
Okay.

The door starts to open. Buffy HIDES behind a wall.

Morgan pokes his head out of the closet, looking both ways. The coast is clear. He comes out, carrying Sid.

SID
I knew I could count on you.

ANGLE: BUFFY

who watches from her hiding place.

BLACK OUT.

Act Two

INT. HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Buffy looks on as Morgan goes to his locker and opens it.

MORGAN
Shouldn't we stick together?

SID
You need to be by yourself.

MORGAN
When do you want me to--

SID
Soon. I'll know when the time is right.

Morgan puts Sid in his case, puts the case in the locker, then closes the door. He disappears down the hall.

Buffy goes to the locker.

BUFFY
Okay, three to the right, two to the left--

She BREAKS it open.

BUFFY

Got it.

She starts rummaging through Morgan's things -- notebooks, coat pockets, etc. She finds nothing, and is about to close the door. She looks at Sid's case, stops, then opens it.

Sid STARES up at her, motionless. She POKES him once. Twice. Nothing. She reaches to pick him up.

VOICE (O.C.)
Hey!

Buffy spins around and sees:

BUFFY
Morgan.

He grabs Sid out of her arms.

MORGAN
What are you doing?

Buffy steels herself.

BUFFY
(gently)
Morgan, it's over. We need to
get you some help.

MORGAN
I don't need help.

BUFFY
I've seen you. Whispering to your
dummy when there's no one around.
Pretending he's a real person. Telling
Sid you'll kill for him.

MORGAN
No, it's --

BUFFY
He's not real. He's just wood.

Buffy taps on Sid's head. It tilts to one side. Morgan TENSES UP.

MORGAN
Cut it out.

BUFFY
Look--

Buffy lifts one of Sid's arms. It flops down.

BUFFY
Nothing.

MORGAN

(gritting his teeth)
He doesn't like that.

BUFFY
He's not alive! He's a doll!

Sid, still in Morgan's arms, suddenly LASHES OUT at Buffy.

SID
Leave him alone!

BUFFY
Morgan, stop that. Talk to me.

SID
Morgan's not talking now. I am.

The conversation becomes more rapid-fire, with the dialogue almost overlapping.

BUFFY
(ignoring Sid)
I'm not speaking to that thing--

SID
(to Buffy; taunting)
I've been watching you.
I know what you're up to--

MORGAN
Sid--

BUFFY
Morgan--

SID
You can play hide-and-seek
all you want, but it won't do any good--

MORGAN
Sid--

SID
You're getting careless.
It's just a matter of time before--

MORGAN
Sid, please--

SID
(turns on Morgan)
SHUT UP!

Morgan is stunned. Buffy looks from Morgan to Sid. There is a long beat of silence. Buffy slowly reaches for Sid.

BUFFY
Maybe it'd be best if

you just gave that to me...

MORGAN
I can't do that.

BUFFY
Let me help you.

Morgan looks at Buffy, then Sid.

SID
She's not your friend, Morgan.
I'm your friend.

BUFFY
Don't listen to him.

Morgan wavers for a beat, then softens. He starts to hand Sid over. Then, with resolve:

MORGAN
No!

Morgan swings the locker door, smashing Buffy in the face. He TAKES OFF. Buffy is startled for a second, then:

BUFFY
Morgan!

She gives chase. A VOICE FROM BEHIND calls after her.

VOICE (O.C.)
Young lady!

Buffy stops. Turns around. Mr. Miller is standing there.

BUFFY
Mr. Miller.

MR MILLER
One thing about running
in the halls? I'm against it.

BUFFY
Sorry. I'm... late for class.

MR MILLER
Busted. School's out.

BUFFY
Really? Boy, these
days just zip by, don't they?

MR MILLER
I will not allow delinquency
in my halls. This sort of thing
leads to the kind of incident that
occurred last night. If my predecessor

had clamped down on such infractions,
maybe he wouldn't have been eaten by wild dogs.

BUFFY
There's probably some truth there.

MR MILLER
Where's the fire, anyway?

Buffy looks down the hall. Morgan is gone.

BUFFY
It's out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUNNYDALE HIGH - THE NEXT MORNING

Another day begins at our favorite school.

SHERYL CROW walks by. Buffy kills her.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Giles is posting a piece of paper to a wall as the cast of the talent show (including the Tuba Girl, the Carrot-Top Wannabe, Mario the Magician and Cordelia) gathers around.

GILES
Here's the rundown for the show.
We'll have our final rehearsal this
evening, then raise the curtain tomorrow
night at eight.

Buffy comes in and pulls Giles aside.

BUFFY
Hey, Mr. Producer. How goes the talent biz?

GILES
You know, a few days ago,
I would have rather bathed
with a Gila monster than taken
on this task.

BUFFY
Then you should speak up next time.

GILES
But it's become refreshing.
You and I deal with so much
darkness and death. The stage
is an escape. It's like another world.

CORDELIA (O.C.)
(screaming)

Third? I'm going on third?

Giles's face falls.

GILES
A world where divas
have replaced the undead.

ANGLE: CORDELIA

as she looks over the show order, distraught.

TUBA GIRL
(to Cordelia)
Define the problem.

CORDELIA
I'm, like, the headliner. I should
be last. I can't be sandwiched
between the juggling 'Brothers
Carry-My-Stuff' and Tootie and
her Psychic Pit Bull.

CARROT-TOP WANNABE
The Pit Bull is pretty good.

Cordelia rips the show order off the wall and makes a bee-line for Giles.

CORDELIA
This is unacceptable.

She shoves the paper at Giles, as if to say 'as if.'

GILES
Cordelia, there's no 'I' in 'talent show.'

CORDELIA
There's a big one in 'Cordelia.'

GILES
It's all about pacing. You need
a passionate come-down after
the jugglers and an emotional
hand-off to the pit bull. Otherwise
it's just bananas on bananas.

Cordelia thinks about this.

CORDELIA
Oh. So, really, the star should go on third.

GILES
(whatever it takes)
All right.

She crosses away, pleased. Giles turns back to Buffy.

GILES

I have learned, first and foremost, that actors need to be coddled.

BUFFY
(impatient)
Uh-huh. So, anyway,
there's this killer on the loose?

GILES
Yes, of course. Any sign
of him... er, them? Morgan?

BUFFY
Nope. Not since our little
mano-a-mannequin in the
hallway. And I looked for
him all night.

GILES
I'm afraid he may have
been out hunting for his next victim.

BUFFY
Which is exactly what
he thinks Sid told him to do.

Xander and Willow come running in.

XANDER
Buffy, it's Morgan.

BUFFY
I know. He's crazy.

WILLOW
He's dead.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - A LITTLE LATER

Buffy, Willow, and Xander look on as a covered body is loaded into an ambulance. Giles is talking with some POLICE OFFICERS in the background.

BUFFY
Okay. A girl is found mutilated
in the school locker room. At the
exact same time, a fiercely intelligent
loner befriends a wooden dummy,
who speaks with a mind of his own
and instructs said loner to kill.
Coincidence? Apparently so!

XANDER
Things did seem pretty written on Morgan's shirt.

BUFFY
Or maybe suspecting him

was just the easiest thing to do.

WILLOW

Buffy, we all thought he was psycho.
Everyone in the talent show told us a
different story about how weird he was.

XANDER

Yeah. You see a kid, you see a dummy,
you see the dummy whisper in the kid's
ear, you think crazy kid

BUFFY

Maybe so, but... you know how
people look at the three of us?

WILLOW

Oh, yeah.

BUFFY

That look that says they're seeing
someone who's different, not like
them, and it scares them? I could
live forever without seeing that
again. But I think it's the exact same
look we used to give Morgan. We never
even gave him a chance.

Giles comes over.

GILES

Well, this is most gruesome.

BUFFY

Another missing heart?

GILES

No, a brain. Morgan's skull was severed.

XANDER

I'm thinking that must have hurt.

WILLOW

Did they find the vessel which
served as Morgan's unspoken id?
(off Giles)
Sometimes what you say seeps in.

GILES

I tried to get as much information
about that as I could. But when I
asked the authorities if they found
a puppet near the body, they quite
rudely asked me to leave.

BUFFY

So that's probably a no.

LOW ANGLE POV

from behind the bushes. Someone is watching them.

GILES

Which is odd. Because I was under the impression that Morgan and Sid were inseparable.

BUFFY

They were.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - A LITTLE LATER

Our gang of four is there. Giles takes a book from the shelf.

GILES

I never thought I'd say these words, but Xander may be right.

XANDER

I'll expect a formal letter of apology in the morning.

GILES

The dummy has a mind of its own.

XANDER

Hey!

BUFFY

He means Sid.

XANDER

He means Sid.

Giles opens the book and refers to a passage.

GILES

Sid hopes to become human, so he's harvesting body parts -- the best one's available. Morgan was the smartest kid in school, and Alice's heart would have been most healthy.

WILLOW

More guts, more glory?

GILES

That's one way to put it.

BUFFY

All right, wait. So as of now we're ruling out any suspect who is living, breathing, body-dwelling -- let's say for argument's sake, an actual human being -- in favor of the theory

that these murders, where vital organs
were removed with great precision,
were committed by a piece of wood.

GILES
That's correct.

BUFFY
I just wanted to make sure we're on the same page.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - THAT NIGHT

Mario is performing on stage as Giles and the others watch from the seats. Mario holds a small sheet.

MARIO
(demonstrating)
Okay, so I hold this sheet in front of the tiger cub.
(explaining to audience)
Tomorrow night I'll have a tiger cub.
(then)
Then, voila!

He pulls the sheet away, revealing that wasn't there to begin with.

MARIO
It's gone!

He looks out at the audience, pleased.

GILES
Delightful. If I could just have
everyone's attention before we
break for the night.

He faces the students.

GILES
I know these past few days have been
somewhat difficult what with all the... distractions.

Giles continues speaking as we:

ANGLE: JUST OUTSIDE THE PROP ROOM

A book bag laying on the floor is PULLED into the shadows by an unseen hand.

GILES (O.C.)
But Mr. Miller feels this kind of
positive experience is just what
Sunnydale High needs right now.

ANGLE: GILES

GILES
So once again it falls upon the

poets and artists to lift the spirits
of an otherwise dreary society.

The cast members look confused.

XANDER
(to Buffy)
What's he talking about?

BUFFY
Not a clue.

WILLOW
He's been under a lot of stress.

GILES
Therefore, when you take to the
stage, let us not forget that we
perform in memory of our friend Morgan.

CARROT-TOP WANNABE
I thought we were doing this in memory of Alice?

GILES
Her, too. Very well, then. Until tomorrow.

Everyone gathers their stuff and the auditorium starts to clear out. Buffy looks around near the prop room.

WILLOW
You coming, Buffy?

BUFFY
Yeah. I've just got to find my bag.
I thought it was right here.
(calling over)
I'll catch up.

The others leave as Buffy looks around the area. She checks behind a curtain, and crouches down to look under a desk.

A NOISE from inside the prop room causes her to look up. She cautiously walks over to investigate, and pushes the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. PROP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It is a small room/large closet. The shelves are crammed with theatrical supplies -- masks, wig heads, a statue or two, swords and knives, etc. A few costumes hang on racks.

Buffy peers inside.

BUFFY
Hello?

ANGLE: FROM THE SHELVES

as Buffy moves a bit further in, pushing aside clothes, etc.

She turns back. A DARK FIGURE blocks the doorway.

Buffy GASPS. Then, letting out her breath:

BUFFY
Mr. Miller.

He is looking considerably more harried than the last time we saw him. You know, what with the murders and all.

MR MILLER
Rehearsal over?

BUFFY
Just ended.

MR MILLER
Yet you're still here.

BUFFY
I was looking for something.

MR MILLER
Of course.

He moves closer to her.

MR MILLER
You know, with everything that's
been going on around here, I'm not
sure how safe it is for a girl like
yourself to be here alone.

Buffy realizes he's blocking the doorway.

BUFFY
I was just leaving.

He looks at her for a beat.

BUFFY
(pointedly)
And I know how to take care of myself.

MR MILLER
All right then.
(switching gears)
Well, break a leg! I mean,
don't, actually... you know.

BUFFY
I know.

He turns to go, then turns back.

MR MILLER

(pointing)
Is that your bag?

She looks in the corner of the room.

BUFFY
Yeah. Thanks.

Mr. Miller leaves as Buffy picks up her bag. She goes to the door, stops, and looks around the room. She heads out, pulling the door shut.

ANGLE: A SHELF

SID SITS there with his eyes wide open, hiding behind a couple of wig heads. A shadow sweeps across his face as the door is closed.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Buffy walks across the empty stage, heading for the exit.

THE LIGHTS GO OUT, casting the room into darkness.

Buffy stops and looks around.

BUFFY
Mr. Miller?

Something SKITTERS into the wings behind her. She looks and sees a SHADOW DISAPPEAR. She slowly crosses over, then hears the same noise -- a light pitter patter -- near the front of the stage. She whirls around to see:

A black fly curtain SWINGING slightly. The metal chain sewn into the bottom of the curtain SCRAPES against the floor.

She hears the skittering again. Her eyes follow the sound up into the fly space above the stage wings. Silence.

Something catches her eye directly overhead.

BUFFY'S POV

A huge stage light comes CRASHING down.

BLACK OUT.

Act Three

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Buffy lays MOTIONLESS, pinned beneath the tonnage of the light. She groggily comes to.

Above, in the fly space, she hears the CLANKING of something running across the

catwalk.

Buffy tries to free herself, but her arms and legs are entangled in the heavy cable and ropes. She hears the skittering noise as it descends from the catwalk, then lands in the wings with a THUMP.

BUFFY
Whoever is there,
I'm going to hurt you. Badly.
(then, to herself)
If you'll just give me a minute.

Buffy manages to get an arm free. The PATTERN of footsteps FADES AWAY from her.

There is a beat of silence. Then:

The RINGING sound of a knife being pulled from its sheath ECHOES throughout the auditorium.

BUFFY
Uh-oh.

Buffy frantically works harder to free herself. She pulls at a rope, which digs deeper into her leg. She grimaces.

The SCRAPING sound of something being dragged -- let's say the knife -- gets closer and closer. Then it stops.

Buffy looks in front of her. Sees nothing but blackness.

SID -- all alone now, no arm up his back or nothing -- FLIES out of the darkness holding a BUTCHER KNIFE almost as big as he is. He lands on Buffy and slices at her.

SID
It's payback time!

Buffy grabs him with her free arm and THROWS him off. He comes right back at her, leaping onto her feet (which are ensnared in the ropes), and crawling over the light.

BUFFY'S POV

as she tries to swat him away.

Sid FLAILS and FLAILS, narrowly missing Buffy's face. Buffy tries to shield herself with her free arm.

BUFFY
I should have known it was you!

SID
You always knew it was me!

Sid swings his knife again.

BUFFY

Ow!

She pulls her arm away: Sid has drawn blood.

Sid stands atop the light and hoists the knife over his shoulder with both hands.

SID
The end.

He starts to bring the knife down. Buffy manages to wriggle aside just as the knife grazes her. It SLICES through one of the ropes, FREEING Buffy's other arm.

BUFFY
My parts belong to me!

She swings at Sid, knocking him into the shadows.

Buffy pushes the light off, stands up, and looks around. She picks up a sandbag, twirls it as if she's winding up, then calls out to the darkness.

BUFFY
You've killed for the last time.

SID (O.C.)
Not quite.

From behind her, Sid SWINGS in on a cable, brandishing his knife. Buffy spins quickly, brings the sandbag around like a baseball bat, and WHACKS Sid in the face. He goes flying across the stage. We hear him SLAM against a wall and fall to the ground.

Buffy walks over and sees him in a heap.

BUFFY
Yes. Quite.

She raises the sandbag to finish him. He looks up wearily.

SID
Go ahead. But there will be
others to come and destroy you.

BUFFY
I've gotten rid of vampires, evil robots,
and one really big bug. I'm not exactly
shaking in my hip boots at the threats
of some dime-store dummy.

SID
I didn't choose this package.
That was your doing.

She pauses for a second, dropping the sandbag to her side.

BUFFY
You know, much as I hate these
moments when the good guy allows
the bad guy to talk on and on in a

pathetic attempt to save his own life,
I've got to ask: what the hell are you talking about?

SID

You won. You can take your
heart and your brain and move on.

BUFFY

I'm sure they would have
made great trophies for your case.

SID

That would have been justice.

BUFFY

Yeah, except for one thing--

Buffy raises the sandbag over her head.

BUFFY

--You lost. And now, you'll never be human.

SID

Neither will you.

They stare at each other for a beat, confused. Then:

BUFFY/SID

What?

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

Buffy, Willow, Xander and Giles listen drop-jawed as the puppet tells his story.

SID (O.C.)

It was 1948. I was working the
Kirkwood district in St. Louis.

ANGLE: SID

who sits on a stool, holding court.

SID

We were on the tail of this serial killer.
Gruesome guy. Cut out hearts, brains--

BUFFY

We know the M.O.

SID

We get a call about a crime in progress.
I burst in on this guy standing over his
victim. Only this guy ain't no guy. He's
got flesh hanging off his face, eyes like
the devil, scales covering every inch of his body.

GILES

A humanoid demon.

SID

Two-points for the egghead. So this thing takes off; I chase it into the darkness.
Big rookie mistake.

XANDER

Is this story going to end anywhere near "And that's why I'm a puppet"?

SID

Hold on to your huevos, Opie. We're finally face to face in this magic shop. He jumps me; I pump him full of bullets. He's this close to death when he starts jabbering at me like a catholic priest. Apparently, he thought it'd be cute to curse my soul into the nearest object.
(spreading his arms wide)
Ta-da!
(then)
Just my luck -- I couldn't have chased him into a brothel.

A beat.

XANDER

And...?

SID

What?

XANDER

Where's the part about when you spent the night in a whale and wished upon a star?

SID

Excuse me, that was Pinocchio. He was a marionette. With strings.
(pissed off)
That punk has done more harm to people like me than Mortimer Snerd.
(then)
I am a ventriloquist's partner.

XANDER

Didn't they used to call you guys 'Dummies?'

SID

Yeah, and I'm sure they used to call you 'retarded,' but I bet you prefer 'slow.'

BUFFY

Boys, let's not fight.

WILLOW

(to Sid)

So what happened to the demon?

SID

Apparently, he went on to lead a happy and successful life. Because seven years later in Chicago, the same crimes start happening.

GILES

How did you know?

SID

Hey, I read! And I got real interested in this guy. He's been kicking around since the early 14th century, when he got banished from his own little corner of hell after he took the heart and brain of his master's human bride. Seems he wanted to be able to roam the earth like you and me. Now, every seven years, he has to do another slice-and-dice, and every time he does that, he takes on a new human form.

GILES

I must say, it's a delightful change to have someone else around who can explain these matters.

SID

So I track the demon down, I finally figure out it's here, and my first thought is--
(pointing at Buffy)
--it's you.

BUFFY

Then those knife slashes to my face weren't just a 'getting-to-know-you' kind of thing?

SID

Who can blame me for thinking?
Look at you. You're strong. Athletic...
(getting lost in thought)
Limber. Nubile.
(snapping out of it)
I'm back. And you're always sneaking around. I just assumed.

BUFFY

Yeah, well, I kind of played the stereotype against you, too.

SID

You thought I was an evil puppet.

BUFFY

No, I thought you were a lifeless piece of wood.

SID

The only way this wood becomes lifeless is if I cut that demon's heart right out of its chest.

GILES

Ah, and then the curse will be lifted and you will be free...

SID
Something like that.

WILLOW
So what's the next move?

SID
Don't know. This monster's got everything
it needs, and I still have no idea who it is.
Hopefully, I can track it down before it kills again.

BUFFY
Let me help. With your brains and my --
being human, we could get this guy.

SID
No. I already got Morgan killed.
I'm not going to chance it with you.

BUFFY
Hey, I've fought--

SID
I know, I know. Draculas, insects, Rock'em Sock'ems--

BUFFY
And I'm one of the few people who knows
what you're going through. We've both
seen evil, and we both know how to fight it.

SID
You have no idea what evil is. You have no
idea what's out there. From now on, I work alone.

He goes to shut the door, then turns back.

SID
With any luck, you'll never see me again.

He walks out. Our gang sits there in silence. Then:

XANDER
Okay, I'll be the first to say it. We just had
a long, level-headed, fairly intelligent conversation...

WILLOW
He prefers the term 'partner.'

XANDER
Then 'he' is a dummy!

GILES
(admiringly)
With quite a grasp regarding the intricacies of the supernatural.

BUFFY
Poor Sid. Can you imagine the
kind of life he must lead?

WILLOW

Cursed for fifty years in the body of a wooden doll.

GILES

Traveling from town to town in
his obsessive search for an elusive prey.

WILLOW

Living out of a suitcase.
Heck, living in a suitcase.

XANDER

Having to explain to people
over and over again...

(dawning)

With amazing detail that
almost sounded rehear--

(then)

Does anyone else get the feeling
we may have just been Keyser Soze'd?

BUFFY

What'er who'd?

XANDER

Didn't all that sound a bit
neat, tidy, and convenient?

WILLOW

Maybe a little.

XANDER

Not to mention -- how should I
put this -- preposterous? I mean, a good dummy?

A beat.

GILES

I will say that in the cases I've studied,
most dolls are possessed by evil, not good, spirits.

XANDER

Most?

GILES

Well, all.

BUFFY

Sid did seem a little restless.

GILES

He certainly left in a hurry.

WILLOW

And if anyone has a great poker face...

Buffy runs out. A beat. She comes back inside.

BUFFY

Sid was right. We'll never see him again.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - THE NEXT NIGHT

It is a flurry of activity. PERFORMERS cross through, CREW MEMBERS move equipment around. Giles is at the center of the storm.

GILES

Fifteen minutes to curtain,
everyone. Fifteen minutes.
Set your props and we'll assemble
in the band room for a power circle.

Frida the Tuba Girl comes up to Giles.

TUBA GIRL

I forgot to buff my tuba.

GILES

(handing her his
handkerchief)
Here. Use this.

Cordelia comes up to Giles. She is wearing an Alanis Morissette knit cap.

CORDELIA

(short of breath)

I can't go on. All those people. Staring
at me and judging me like I'm some kind of...
Buffy. What if I mess up?

GILES

Cordelia, there's an adage that,
if you're nervous, just imagine
your audience in their skivvies.

CORDELIA

(thinking)
Boxers or briefs?

GILES

You decide.

She goes off. Elliot the Carrot-Top wannabe runs up.

CARROT-TOP WANNABE

Mr. Giles, I can't find my watermelon.
It's the centerpiece for my 'Crush-o-Rama' routine.

A CHUBBY GUY walks by, enjoying a slice of watermelon.

GILES

Elliot, I warned you about
the dangers of prop humor.

INT. PROP ROOM - SAME TIME

Xander and Willow are there looking for some props. Willow sees something on a shelf and reaches for it.

WILLOW
Hey, that scarf would be perfect.

The lights go out and the door SLAMS shut. It's PITCH BLACK.

WILLOW
Okay. Ha-ha, Xander. You got me. Turn on the light.

No response.

WILLOW
You know, jokes like this aren't very funny, what with this school being on a Hellmouth and all.

Again nothing.

WILLOW
Xander?

Suddenly, A FACE APPEARS an inch from Willow's, illuminated from below by a beam of light. She SCREAMS--

WILLOW
Ahhh!

--then sees it's Xander, holding a flashlight to his face.

XANDER
Actually, being on a Hellmouth and all makes this kind of thing even funnier.

Willow grabs the flashlight from Xander and uses it to point up towards the shelf.

WILLOW
Just get me that scarf and let's get out of here.

Xander reaches up.

WILLOW
Wait.

XANDER
What?

WILLOW
Do you hear something?

He stops. We hear DRIPPING. Willow aims the flashlight beam downward. A puddle of fluid is forming on the floor. She uses the flashlight and follows a steady drip upwards to see a pinkish liquid TRICKLING from the shelf.

WILLOW

Now would be a good time for light.

Xander turns the LIGHTS ON and grabs a step-stool. He and Willow step up to get a look. Xander pushes a couple of things out of the way.

WILLOW

What is it?

ANGLE: FROM THE SHELF

In the foreground is the source of the dripping: a human brain. Xander and Willow look at it.

XANDER

Um...

BLACK OUT.

Act Four

INT. LIBRARY - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Buffy and Xander watch as Willow works at the computer.

XANDER

Why would this brain have been rejected?
I thought Morgan was the smartest kid in school.

WILLOW

He was. Look at his grades -- all A's.
He was even taking college classes.
(then)
Wait a second.

BUFFY

What?

WILLOW

All these sick days.

XANDER

He's been out, like, half the year.

BUFFY

Check the school nurse's file.

Willow types into the computer; looks at the screen.

WILLOW

Look at this. Medicine, physical therapy.
(then, reading)
'In case of emergency, contact Dr. Dale Leggett,
California Institute of Neuro Surgery - Cancer Ward.'

BUFFY

(reading)

'Patient's condition is terminal.'

XANDER
Brain cancer?

WILLOW
He never told anyone.

BUFFY
This means that whatever is out
there still needs a healthy, intelligent brain--

XANDER
In other words, I'm safe.

BUFFY
--and it's going to be looking
for the smartest person around.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - SAME TIME

Giles is holding a weight, talking to someone who is off-screen.

GILES
...And then, if you calibrate this unit
as a counterweight, the rate of descent
will be maximized on impact.

PULL BACK to REVEAL he is speaking to Mario, who smiles.

MARIO
Gee, Mr. Giles. You're really smart.

PULL BACK FURTHER -- they are standing next to a guillotine.

MARIO
Could you do me a favor?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

The library doors swing open and Buffy comes running out.

BUFFY
Giles!

She takes off down the hall. Xander and Willow follow.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - SAME TIME

CLOSE-UP: THE GUILLOTINE BLADE

as it comes plummeting down.

THWACK! It slices through its target -- a large head of lettuce. Giles looks on.

GILES
Oh, my...

MARIO
Pretty cool, huh?

GILES
Actually, it looks quite excruciating.

MARIO
Yeah, it does. This'll be great.

Mario pulls the blade back into place with a rope, then ties the end of the rope to a pin on a block a few feet away from the guillotine. Nearby is a wooden refrigerator-sized ox with 'MARIO THE MAGNIFICENT' written on it.

GILES
(examining guillotine)
How does this work, exactly?

MARIO
A good magician never tells his secret.

Mario looks down at his own arm. The skin is starting to peel away, revealing the SCALY DEMON FLESH underneath.

MARIO
Come on, we don't have much time.

He moves Giles down so that he's kneeling by the guillotine.

MARIO
Okay, when I cut the rope with this hatchet,
the blade will come crashing down -- BAM!

GILES
And there's no one else to assist you?

MARIO
I only work with the best.

Giles puts his head in the stockade-type device.

MARIO
Now, turn over.

GILES
(confused)
Face up?

MARIO
Yeah. You'll see the blade coming right at you.

Giles turns over.

MARIO
Now slide down a bit.

Mario moves Giles so that his scalp is in the line with the path of the blade.

GILES
Shouldn't it be aimed at my neck?

MARIO
No. This way, your scalp will be sliced
off and your brains will just come pouring out.

GILES
Well, what exactly is the trick?

Mario clicks the lock into place and stares down at Giles.

MARIO
Trick?

Horror flashes on Giles' face as Mario grabs the hatchet and raises it to cut the rope.

Buffy and Mario struggle. Buffy hits Mario in the face. When he turns back, Buffy sees that most of his neck and cheek are scaly.

BUFFY
Ew...

Xander and Willow run in and see Buffy and Mario fighting.

GILES
Get me out of this thing!

They see Giles in the guillotine.

XANDER
Where's the key?

GILES
Mario has it.

They see Mario, whose flesh is growing red and more scaly.

XANDER
He's busy.

WILLOW
Here, this'll work.

Willow grabs the hatchet and starts chopping at the lock.

Buffy lifts Mario up and hurls him into his large magic box. The doors SLAM shut. After a beat, the box EXPLODES open. When Mario comes out, he has completely TRANSFORMED into the monstrous DEMON. He ROARS violently.

Demon Mario lunges over to the rope and starts chewing at it. Buffy jumps on his back.

ANGLE: GILES

who is still locked in the guillotine and unable to move his head. His eyes dart quickly back and forth in terror.

GILES
(to Willow)
Hurry, now. Hurry!

CLOSE ON: THE ROPE

as the strands begin to fray.

Buffy gouges at Demon Mario's eyes. He HOWLS in pain and stumbles backwards, letting go of the rope.

The last few strands start to unravel.

Buffy, still struggling with Demon Mario, strains to grab the rope, but it BREAKS.

IN SLO-MOTION:

The rope whizzes by Buffy's hand, just out of her reach.

The blade drops towards Giles' head.

GILES' POV: THE BLADE FALLS

CLOSE ON: A HAND

as it closes around the rope.

BACK TO REAL TIME:

REVEAL Xander has grabbed the rope. The blade hovers inches from Giles' head.

Giles has his eyes tightly closed. He opens them, realizes he's okay. He lets out his breath.

Xander raises the blade back up as Willow BREAKS the lock with a final hack. Giles is free.

Demon Mario flips Buffy over. She lands on the floor. He straddles her and closes his hands around her throat.

VOICE (O.C.)
Found you!

Demon Mario looks up.

DEMON'S POV: SID FLIES DIRECTLY AT HIM

his knife leading the way.

Sid SINKS THE KNIFE into Demon Mario's face and pulls it Demon Mario into the guillotine. Sid jumps off of him.

BUFFY
Let go!

Xander releases the rope. The blade falls onto the Demon Mario.

Our gang REACTS as they watch the blade slice into Demon Mario (out of frame). They cringe and turn away.

After a moment:

GILES
Well...

He feels the top of his head to make sure it's still there.

GILES
I must say to all of you, your timing
is impeccable. Xander, I could kiss you.

XANDER
Unnecessary. And kind of icky.

GILES
In any case, good show.

SID
And now for the big finish.

They turn to see Sid walking over to Demon Mario's body, wielding the butcher knife.

BUFFY
What are you doing?

SID
It's not enough. He'll come back.
You need the heart. Then all this will be over.

Buffy realizes what he's saying. She puts out her hand.

BUFFY
Let me.

SID
No. I got to do it. Like the bookworm
said, it's the only way I can be free.

BUFFY
You mean dead.

Sid looks at her.

SID
Same thing.

He climbs on top of Demon Mario and raises the knife. He looks over at Buffy, then brings the knife down in Demon Mario's chest and starts HACKING away, all business.

Our gang reacts as they watch.

Demon Mario's body starts to TWITCH. It convulses, then stops, lifeless. With a SCREAM, Sid raises the knife a final time. He drops the knife and his body goes rigid for a beat. Just as quickly, he body goes limp, and he COLLAPSES to the floor.

Buffy slowly walks over, kneels down, and picks up Sid's body.

BUFFY
(to no one in particular)
It's over.

The moment is interrupted as Principal Miller appears. He is frantic and disheveled.

MR MILLER
What's going on back here? There's an
audience out there waiting for a talent show to begin.

GILES
We had some... technical difficulties.

Mr. Miller looks around and sees the carnage on stage.

MR MILLER
Get this placed cleaned up. If these last
few days are any indication of what used
to go on around here, maybe it's a good
thing my predecessor was eaten by wild dogs.

He goes off. A long beat as everyone looks at each other.

GILES
It's showtime.

INT. AUDITORIUM STAGE - A WHILE LATER

Buffy, Xander, and Willow are in the middle of their acts -- a scene from 'A Streetcar Named Desire.' Buffy and Willow stand together; Xander is off to one side. Giles watches from the wings.

WILLOW
(as Stella)
Blanche, there are things that happen
between a man and a woman in the
dark -- that sort of makes everything
else seem -- unimportant.

BUFFY
(as Blanche)
What you are talking about is brutal
desire -- just -- Desire! -- the name of
that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through
the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another...

XANDER
(as Stanley, calling into the wings)
Stella!

WILLOW

Haven't you ever ridden on the street-car?

BUFFY

It brought me here, where I'm
not wanted any where I'm ashamed to be.

XANDER

Stel-la!

Giles reacts: They're awful.

BUFFY

This is how I look at it. A man like
that is someone to go out with -- once --
twice -- three times when the devil is in
you. But live with? Have a child by?

XANDER

STEL-LAHHH!

WILLOW

I have told you I love him.

BUFFY

Then I tremble for you! --
I just -- tremble for you...

The audience stares at them in disbelief.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE UP: SID'S HEAD

as it looks from side to side.

PULL BACK to see that Buffy is holding him, making him move. She stands at her
locker with Xander and Willow

WILLOW

What are you going to do with him?

BUFFY

I don't know. It's just, after everything
we've been through, I thought I'd hang
on to him for a while. As sort of a reminder.

XANDER

Of what?

Buffy puts Sid in her locker.

BUFFY

That I'm not the only one.

She closes the locker and they walk away.

ZOOM IN on the locker to look through the slats in the door.

Light crosses Sid's face as he STARES straight ahead.

BLACK OUT.