

Gingerbread

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Teaser

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

BUFFY, on patrol, idly tosses a stake from hand to hand. The leaves of a nearby shrub RUSTLE SUSPICIOUSLY. Buffy stops, pivots slightly toward the movement, brings up her stake...

JOYCE (O.S)
Is it a vampire?

Buffy jumps. JOYCE is standing next to her, holding a brown lunch bag and a thermos.

BUFFY
Mom? What are you doing here?

JOYCE
I brought you a snack. I thought it was about time I came out to watch, you know, the Slaying.

BUFFY
Mom, you know the Slaying, it's kind of an alone thing.

Buffy circles the shrub, not taking her from where the potential vampire lurks. Joyce trails behind her.

JOYCE
But it's such a big part of your life, and I'd like to understand it. It's something we could share.

BUFFY
It's really pretty dull. Bam boom stick poof. Not much to--

A VAMPIRE leaves from behind the bush. Buffy pushes Joyce back while stepping forward to meet the attack. She BLOCKS A BLOW from the vampire, and counters with a strong KICK.

JOYCE
Good, Honey! Kill it!

The vampire stumbles backwards. Buffy launches herself at it, but the vampire brings up a foot, which catches her in the midsection... she is TOSSED over the vampire and ends up landing BEHIND HIM on the ground.

JOYCE

Buffy! He's over there!

Buffy shoots Joyce a quick look even as she scrambles back to her feet and squares up opposite the vamp.

JOYCE
(stunned as she gets a good look at him)
Oh my God. It's Mr. Sanderson from
the bank!

Buffy exchanges blows with the late Mr. Sanderson. It's a slightly clumsy effort on her part. She finally manages to sweep his legs out from under him with a kick and he's down. Buffy RAISES her stake - about to finish him off when-

JOYCE
Are you sure you have to kill him?
He opened my IRA.

Buffy forgets herself for a moment. Turns to Joyce, totally exasperated.

BUFFY
He's not Mr. Sanderson anymore, Mom, he's-

JOYCE
(cutting her off)
Getting away!

Buffy looks to see that, indeed, Mr. Sanderson has scrambled to his feet and is TAKING OFF across the park. Buffy shoots her mother a withering look.

BUFFY
Stay!

Now Buffy SPRINTS after Sanderson, leaving Joyce behind. A beat - then Joyce moves past a low hedge that separates the PLAYGROUND from the rest of the park. She sits on the EDGE OF A SANDBOX, starts to unpack sandwiches.

But her eye is caught by something on the ground. She moves to pick it up: A CHILD'S TOY TRUCK.

She glances around. Things suddenly feel a little too quiet and she braces herself against the night chill. (read: SHMUCKY THE BAIT.)

ANGLE: BUFFY AND SANDERSON, in another part of the park, are locked in battle. Buffy finally gets the upper hand again - DUSTS HIM.

ANGLE: JOYCE

She turns back to the SANDBOX - is about to toss the truck in - but STOPS SUDDENLY, a look of sheer horror on her face.

ANGLE: SANDBOX

We move FROM THE TRUCK across the sand and begin to PAN ACROSS THE LEGS OF A CHILD'S LIFELESS BODY.

CLOSE ON

The palm of the child's tiny hand. Upon which is drawn an ARCANE SYMBOL.

BLACK OUT.

END OF TEASER

Act One

EXT. PARK - NIGHT - LATE

POLICE AND CORONER'S VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL are on the scene, which is periodically lit by the red sweep of a mars light. Crime tape is up. Police radios send out bursts of static. Buffy is visible in b.g. giving a statement to an officer. More sand has been removed and there are now clearly TWO SMALL BODIES. A POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER SMAPS PICTURES:

FLASH -- two little blonds in play clothes. They could be sleeping.

FLASH -- closer, a darling little blond boy, age 8. In this closer shot we notice the paleness of the skin, the faint blueness of the lips. Still, cute as a button.

FLASH -- much closer, the SYMBOL on a tiny hand.

Buffy, stunned by the crime, finishes giving her statement and walks over to Joyce, who doesn't react to her presence.

BUFFY

They said we can go home now.

No answer. Then...

JOYCE

They were little kids. Did you see them? So tiny.

BUFFY

I saw.

Joyce, devastated, finally looks at Buffy.

JOYCE

Who would do something like this?
I never--

She chokes a little, has to stop, fight back tears. Buffy is doubly distraught now - seeing her mother like this.

BUFFY

I'm so sorry you saw this. But it's going to be okay.

JOYCE

How?

BUFFY

I'll find whatever did it.

JOYCE

I guess. It's just, you can't, you can't
make it right.

Joyce gives in to the tears. Buffy hugs her - speaks in a soothing, measured tone:

BUFFY

It's okay. I'll take care of everything.
I promise, mom. Just...try to calm down.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY (DAY 2)

Buffy and GILES are alone in the library before school.

BUFFY
(frantic)

Don't tell me to calm down!

GILES

I only meant--

BUFFY

They were kids, Giles, Little kids.
You don't know what it was like to
see them there. Mom's just... she
can't even talk.

GILES

I'm sorry, Buffy. I just want to help.

BUFFY
I know.

GILES

Do we know anything about how... it
wasn't the vampire --

Buffy shakes her head.

BUFFY

There were no marks. Wait. I mean,
there was a mark, a symbol.

She grabs a piece of paper and a marker from the counter and moves to draw. Giles
swiftly takes the paper from her hand.

GILES

(re: paper)

Twelfth century Papal encyclical.
Try this.

He hands her a notepad. She draws.

BUFFY

It was on their hands. The cops are
keeping it quiet, but I got a good
look at it.

She finishes and shoves the paper at him. Giles looks at THE SYMBOL.

BUFFY

Find the thing that uses this symbol
and point me at it.

GILES

Hmm.

BUFFY

Giles. Speak. What?

GILES

What? Oh. It's just, I wonder if
we're looking for a "thing." The use
of a symbol on a victim, it suggests
ritual murder, an occult sacrifice by
a group.

BUFFY

A group of... human beings. Someone
with a soul did this?

GILES

I'm afraid so.

A beat as this sinks in, then-

BUFFY

Okay. So while you're looking for
the meaning of the squiggly mark -
maybe you could turn up a loophole on
the "slayers don't kill people" rule.

Giles looks at her closely -- she's deadly serious.

GILES

Buffy, this is a dreadful crime. You
have every right to be upset.
However, I wonder if you're letting
this become a shade more... personal
because of your mother's involvement.

BUFFY

Oh, it's completely personal. So
find me the people who did this.
Please.

She exits. Giles looks after her for a moment, then at the symbol. He heads for the books.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Oz and Xander are in line at the cashier.

XANDER

Hey.

OZ

Hey.

Xander notes Oz' lunch selection, trying to make conversation.

XANDER
So. Burrito.

OZ
This is a burrito.

XANDER
Damn straight.

They pay for their lunches, move off.

ON WILLOW AND AMY

Who carry their trays, looking for a table.

AMY
Oh, god, and Mr. Nyman, that thing he
does with his face --

WILLOW
(excited)
The thing with the face! When he
makes a point, the -- I always think
he's going to sneeze!

AMY
I thought I was the only one who
saw it.

They spot Xander and Oz, who are just sitting down, join them.

WILLOW
Hi Oz! Xander, hi.

OZ
Amy.

AMY
Hey guys.

OZ
(to Will)
I haven't seen you around. Where've
you been?

XANDER
Not with me. No sir. Ask anyone.
Nooo.

Oz and Willow stare at Xander. He shuts up. There's an uncomfortable beat of
silence, then Oz has a brilliant idea for something to talk about:

OZ

Hey, Buffy's birthday's next week.

XANDER

Oh! Yeah. Good. I've been
pondering the gift options--

WILLOW

Shh.

XANDER

Oh, come on. We just got a topic.

Buffy joins them -- the reason Willow stopped Buffy gift talk.

WILLOW

Hi Buffy.

OZ

Hey.

XANDER

So, Buff, what's up?

BUFFY

You guys didn't hear?

XANDER

Hear what?

BUFFY

A murder. Somebody killed two little kids.

WILLOW

Oh no!

BUFFY

Like, maybe seven or eight years old.
My mom found the bodies during
patrol last night.

AMY

Oh my god.

OZ

Kids.

XANDER

Why was your mom there?

BUFFY

More bad. She picked last night, of
all nights, for a surprise "bonding"
visit.

WILLOW

God... Your mom would actually
take the time to do that with you?
(off their looks)
That's really not the point of the

story, is it?

BUFFY
No, the point is she's completely
wiggling.

JOYCE
Who's wiggling?

Unnoticed, JOYCE has entered the cafeteria and is standing at their table.

BUFFY
Uh, well, everyone. You know, 'cause
of... what happened.

JOYCE
It's so awful. I had bad dreams
about it all night.

Indeed - she looks somewhat haunted. Xander, Oz, Willow and Amy exchange looks.

WILLOW
Hi, Mrs. Summers.

Xander, Oz and Amy also MUMBLE HELLOS.

JOYCE
Hello everybody.
(then)
Buffy, did you talk to Mr. Giles yet
about who could've done this?

BUFFY
(uncomfortable)
Uh, yeah. He says it looks like
something ritual, occult. He's still
looking. We're going to add to my
patrols, keep a closer eye on things...

JOYCE
(appalled)
Occult? Like witches? It's witches?

Willow and Amy both make involuntary little gasp/choke noises.

WILLOW
Sorry. Phlegm. Too much dairy.

JOYCE
Oh, I know you kids think that stuff
is cool. Buffy told me you dabble...

WILLOW
Absolutely. That's me. I'm a dabbler.

JOYCE
But anybody who could do this isn't
cool. Anybody who could do this

would have to be a monster.

That's it. Buffy's had enough. She tugs at Joyce's arm.

BUFFY

Mom. Can I talk to you for a sec?

JOYCE

(as she's pulled away)

Nice to see you kids...

STAY ON WILLOW, XANDER, OZ AND AMY

As Buffy and Joyce move out into the hall.

XANDER

What a burn. Buff's mom was just starting to accept the slayer thing. Now she's going to be double-freaked.

WILLOW

(glances at Amy)

Makes me glad my mother doesn't know about my extra-curricular activities.

(then/goes off)

Or my curricular activities. Or, you know, the fact of my activeness in general...

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

ON BUFFY AND JOYCE

JOYCE

Are your friends gonna help with the investigation too?

BUFFY

Mom, this isn't really --

JOYCE

You're embarrassed to be seen hanging out with your mother.

(in her own defense)

I didn't hug you...

BUFFY

No, it's just... this hall is about school. You're about home. Mix them and my world dissolves.

JOYCE

I know. You have no mother, you hatched full-grown out of a giant egg. It's just, I keep thinking about who could have done such a thing. I want to help.

BUFFY

Oh. Well, Giles can always use--

JOYCE

I called everyone I know in town.
Told them about the dead children.
They're all just as upset as I am.

BUFFY

You called everyone you know?

JOYCE

And they called all their friends.
And guess what? We're setting up
a vigil tonight, at City Hall. The
Mayor's even going to be there.
Now we'll get some action.

BUFFY

Uh-huh. That's great. But, you know
what? A lot of times, when you're
working on something like this, you
try to keep the number of people who
know about it, kind of... small.

Joyce hadn't thought of that.

JOYCE

Oh. Right. Well, I'm sure it won't
be all that many people.

INT. CITY HALL ROTUNDA - NIGHT

An impressive crowd fills the rotunda, which is every bit as large and as elegant as we can afford. Many people hold candles or carry signs showing photographs of the two dead children (the photos show them alive), and the slogan "NEVER AGAIN." There are posters, with the same lay-out, on the walls. A podium faces the crowd.

Buffy, Willow and Joyce are in the crowd near the podium.

BUFFY

(to Willow)

This is great. Maybe we can all go
patrolling together later...

WILLOW

At least your mom's making an effort.
My mom's probably
(sees her)
standing right in front of me this
second. Mom?

Buffy, Joyce and Willow are joined by WILLOW'S MOTHER, MRS. ROSENBERG, who, exasperated, pushes through the crowd. She's sweet and well meaning - but definitely of the woolly intellectual variety.

MRS. ROSENBERG

Willow! I didn't know you were going
to be her. Hello, Bunny.

BUFFY

Hi.

WILLOW

Mom -- what are you doing here?

MRS. ROSENBERG

Oh, I read about it in the paper and
what with your dad out of town --

(stops, noticing)

Willow, you cut off your hair!

That's a new look.

WILLOW

Yeah, it's just a sudden whim that I
had... in August.

MRS. ROSENBERG

I like it. Hello, Joyce.

JOYCE

Sheila. I'm glad you could come.

GILES arrives, also perturbed after battling the growing mass of people.

GILES

There you are. I almost didn't find
you in this crush.

Giles and Joyce look at each other. Awkwardness.

GILES

Mrs. -- Joyce. This is quite a turn
out you've gotten here.

JOYCE

It wasn't just me. But, thank you.
(then)

Well - it's been a while.

GILES

Right. Not since, not since, not for
a while.

MRS. ROSENBERG

There's a rumor going around,
Mr. Giles.

Giles blanches.

GILES

Rumor? About us? About what?

MRS. ROSENBERG

About witches. People calling
themselves witches are responsible
for this brutal crime.

GILES

Indeed? How strange.

WILLOW

Yes. So strange. Witches!

Willow makes a funny "pfff" noise, meaning "who could imagine such a thing?"

MRS. ROSENBERG

It's actually not that strange. I just co-authored a paper on the rise of mysticism among adolescents and I was shocked at the statistical -- ooh, are we starting?

The crowd has fallen silent. The Mayor is at the podium. Our group turns to look at him.

JOYCE

(to Buffy)

He'll do something about this.
You'll see.

The Mayor begins his address, his demeanor subdued.

THE MAYOR

I want to thank you all for coming in the aftermath of such a tragic crime. Seeing you here proves what a caring community Sunnydale is. Sure, we've had our share of misfortunes - but we're a good town, with good people. And I know none of us will rest easy until this horrible murder is solved. With that in mind...

He holds up one of the posters.

THE MAYOR

I make these words my pledge to you.
Never Again.

There is a murmur of approval from the crowd. A few people get carried away and applaud.

THE MAYOR

And now, I ask you to give your attention to the woman who brought us all here tonight, Joyce Summers.

The Mayor gracefully maneuvers Joyce to the podium and steps back.

JOYCE

Mr. Mayor, you're dead wrong.

General surprise. Not the least of it from Buffy.

JOYCE

This is not a good town. How many of us have lost someone who just...

disappeared, or got skinned, or suffered "neck rupture"?! And how many of us have been too afraid to speak out? I was supposed to lead us in a moment of silence. But silence is this town's disease.

Buffy and Giles exchange a look - stunned by Joyce's candor.

JOYCE

For too long, it's been plagued by unnatural evils. It's not our town anymore. It belongs to the monsters, to the witches and Slayers.

That hits Buffy hard, to hear Slaying lumped in with what's wrong with Sunnydale.

JOYCE

I say - it's time for the grown ups to take Sunnydale back. I say - we start by finding the people who did this and making them pay.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUNNYDALE - NIGHT (STOCK)

Only a few lights glow... the town is asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM

A CLOCK-RADIO

on a desk in a darkened room. The digital display shows the time as 1:00 AM.

PAN off the clock to MICHAEL

a young man we haven't seen before. Gothic Look: dressed in black, pale face, darkened lips, dyed hair.

PAN to reveal AMY sitting next to him. Also in black.

PAN to reveal Willow, completing the triangle.

The shot WIDENS. Amy and Willow each pour liquids into a container that Michael holds. Heavy-looking smoke begins to spill over the sides of the container. In addition, two things become visible: that we're in WILLOW'S ROOM, and that, on the floor, surrounded by herbs and powders, is a large square of cloth inscribed with THE SYMBOL.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (DAY 3)

Michael and Amy at Michael's locker. Pasted inside: pictures of Marilyn Manson and other disturbing things, and a small mirror. Michael is still in Gothic death-on-toast mode. He uses the mirror to check his look. A HERD OF BIG JOCKS thumps down the hallway. One of them, ROY, slams the locker shut in Michael's face.

MICHAEL
Watch it!

ROY
Oh, sorry. Did I make you smudge your
eye-liner? Gonna put a spell on me?

He pushes Michael against the lockers, ready to do some pummeling. Amy, furious, rushes to Michael's defense.

AMY
(to Roy)
Hey! What is your problem?

ROY
Everyone know he's into that voodoo
witch crap. I heard about those kids;
people like him gotta learn a lesson.

AMY
What about people like me?

ROY
Get in my face and you'll find out.

He pushes past her and grabs Michael again.

A little crowd of students has gathered to watch. Among them, CORDELIA. Buffy pushes through the group and sizes up the sitch. She steps up next to Amy and Michael, and just lets the jocks see that she's there -- her expression more expectant than fierce. Roy and the guys see her. Stop. A beat. Then -

ROY
No problem here. We're walking.

Now Roy and the other thugs take off.

BUFFY
(to Amy and Michael)
You guys okay?

MICHAEL
We're fine.

AMY
Thanks, Buffy.

The hallway has emptied. Amy and Michael walk away, Michael rubbing his arm where it hit the lockers. Buffy sees that Giles has emerged from the library, drawn by the noise of the confrontation. She takes a step toward him, but is intercepted by Cordelia.

CORDELIA

You're gong to be one busy little
Slayer, baby-sitting them.

BUFFY

I doubt they'll have more trouble.

CORDELIA

I doubt your doubt. Everyone know
witches killed those kids. Amy is a
witch. And Michael is whatever the
boy of "witch" is, plus being the
poster child for yuck.

BUFFY

Cordelia--

CORDELIA

If you're going to hang with them,
expect badness, 'cause that's what
you get for hanging with freaks and
losers. Believe me, I know.

She takes a step away, then comes back.

CORDELIA

That was a pointed comment about me
hanging with you guys.

Point made, Cordy turns on her heel and stalks off.

BUFFY

(calling after)

I get that. But witches didn't do it!

Giles clears his throat and leans in toward Buffy.

GILES

Actually, I'm afraid they may have.
My research keeps leading me back to
European Wiccan covens.

BUFFY

You found the meaning of the symbol?

GILES

Just about. I'm fairly sure a book
that Willow borrowed has the rest of
the information I need.

INT. SCHOOL LOUNGE - DAY

Buffy enters. Xander is sitting on one of the couches.

XANDER

Buffy. Hi.

BUFFY

Hey. Is Willow around?

XANDER

How can I convince you people that it's over?! You assume because I'm here, she's here, or that I somehow mysteriously know where she is.

Buffy sees a stack of books at a nearby study carrel.

BUFFY

Are those hers?

XANDER

Yeah. She's in the bathroom.

Buffy heads for the carrel. Xander trails along.

XANDER

But the fact that I know doesn't change that I have a genuine complaint here. I'm sick of the judgement. The innuendo. Is a man not innocent until proven guilty?!

Buffy is looking at Willow's stuff. She hesitates, then moves some papers, revealing an old volume. On the cover: the symbol.

BUFFY

Xander. You are guilty. You got illicit smoochies and you have to pay the price.

XANDER

But I'm talking about future guilt. Everyone expects me to mess up again. Like Oz. I see the way he is around me. You know, that steely gaze... The pointed silence...

Buffy picks up the book, flips through it casually.

Buffy

'Cause he's usually such a chatterbox.

XANDER

No. It's different now. It's a more verbal non-verbal. He says volumes with his eyes.

Now Buffy glances at the desk-top and sees what the book had been covering: an open notebook. Writing surrounds a hand-copied version of the symbol. Buffy looks at it if it were a snake. Willow comes over.

WILLOW

Hey, Buff. What'cha looking for? You want to borrow something?

Buffy picks up the notebook and turns it so Willow can see.

BUFFY
What's this?

WILLOW
(nervous)
A doodle. I do doodle. You too.
You do doodle too.

XANDER
(to Buffy)
You're not going to make me feel
better, are you?

BUFFY
(to Will/ignoring him)
This is a witch symbol.

WILLOW
(caught)
Okay. Yeah. It is.

BUFFY
(shocked)
Willow.

WILLOW
What?

BUFFY
This symbol was on the murdered kids.

Willow is stunned.

WILLOW
It was? On the kids... Oh no,
Buffy. I didn't know. No one told
me about that. I swear--

A big CLATTER AND COMMOTION interrupts Willow. Xander joins them as they look down the hall toward the noise. The NOISE builds, the clang of lockers, raised voices... Buffy hands Willow her notebook. Willow picks up the book from the carrel and the three of them head for the source of the noise.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Students are gathered, watching with disbelief and indignation as SNYDER walks the row of lockers. One by one they are unlocked by a CUSTODIAN, and searched by ARMED SECURITY GUARDS. Farther down the hall, a FACULTY MEMBER stops students and searches their backpacks. Buffy, Willow and Xander join Oz, CORDELIA and AMY among the spectators.

XANDER
Oh, man. It's Nazi Germany and I
have Playboys in my locker.

Snyder is speaking to the assembled students.

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

This is a glorious day for principals everywhere. No pathetic whining about "students' rights," just a long row of lockers and a man with a key.

Oz leans over to Buffy and Willow.

OZ

They just took three kids away.

BUFFY

I don't get it. What are they looking for?

AMY

Witch stuff.

WILLOW

What?

AMY

They found my spells. I'm supposed to report to Snyder's office.

WILLOW

Oh my god.

A TEACHER comes over to Amy, takes her by the arm. As she's led away:

AMY

Willow, be careful.

WILLOW

I have things. In my locker. Henbane, Hellibore, Mandrake root...

XANDER

Excuse me, Playboys. Can we work the sympathy thisaway?

Another locker is opened.

CORDELIA

Get your grubby custodial hands off that! That hair spray cost forty-five dollars and it's imported!

WILLOW

The next one's mine.

(then, frantic)

Buffy, I didn't do anything wrong. The symbol's harmless. I used it to make a protection spell for you, for your birthday. With Michael and Amy. Only, now it's broken, because you know about it. So Happy Birthday, and please, you have to believe me.

PRINCIPAL SNYDER
(loudly)
Ms. Rosenberg. My office.

Willow looks up. Snyder is standing in front of her open locker. He holds up plastic bags filled with herbs and roots. Willow, resigned but terrified, starts to move off. Buffy very casually reaches out and takes the book with the symbol and Willow's notebook out of Willow's hands. Willow shoots her a quick, grateful look - heads for the office. Buffy head for the library.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Buffy enters the library just as AN ARMED SECURITY GUARD exits with a large box full of books. She steps in further to see ANOTHER ARMED GUARD pulling books from the shelves, filling another box. Giles watches, frustrated and defeated.

BUFFY
Giles?

GILES
They're confiscating my books.

Buffy sets Willow's book and notebook on the counter.

BUFFY
Giles, we need those books.

GILES
Believe me - I tried telling that to the nice man with the big gun.

BUFFY
There's something about this symbol we're not getting. Willow used it in a protection spell. She said it's harmless - not a big bad. So why would it turn up in a ritual sacrifice?

GILES
I don't know. Ordinarily I'd suggest we widen our research...

BUFFY
Using what? The dictionary and "My Friend Flicka"?

Giles takes this in - reaching the boiling point.

GILES
This is intolerable. Snyder has interfered before, but I will not take this from that twisted little homunculus -

Snyder has entered -- Buffy sees him and pushes Willow's book off the back edge of the counter onto the floor -- at least they're out of sight.

PRINCIPAL SNYDER
Ah, I love the smell of desperate

librarian in the morning.

GILES

Get out of here, and take your...
marauders with you.

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

Oh my. So fierce. I suppose I
should hear you out. Just how is
(picking up a book)
"Blood Rites and Sacrifices"
appropriate material for a public
school library? The Chess Club
branching out?

GILES

These items are my personal research
materials. I assure you - they're all
perfectly harmless.

But as Giles speaks, one of Snyder's goons OPENS A CABINET behind him in the
book cage - revealing a brutal assortment of weaponry: crossbows, axes, spears...
Snyder grins like the cat who ate the canary

GILES

They're antiques.

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

So are you. A relic of a progressive
era that is finally coming to an end.
Welcome to the new new age.

GILES

This isn't over.

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

Oh, I'd say it's just beginning.
Fight it if you want -- just remember:
lift a finger against me, and you'll
have to answer to MOO.

BUFFY

Answer to MOO? Did that sentence
make some sense that I'm just not in
on?

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

Mothers Opposed to the Occult.
Powerful new group.

BUFFY

And who came up with that lame name?

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

That would be the founder. I believe
you call her 'mom'.

INT. WILLOW'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Willow enters to find her mother, sitting in front of the coffee table - upon which lies all the magik-making items that were confiscated from Willow's locker. She looks up at Willow calmly.

MRS. ROSENBERG
Sit down, honey.

WILLOW
Principal Snyder talked to you.

MRS. ROSENBERG
Yes. He's quite concerned.

WILLOW
Mom. I know what it looks like, but
I can totally-

MRS. ROSENBERG
(cutting her off)
You don't have to explain, honey.
This isn't exactly a surprise.

WILLOW
Why not?

MRS. ROSENBERG
Identification with mythical icons is
perfectly typical of your age group.
It's a classic adolescent response to
the pressure of incipient adulthood.

Willow actually looks a little disappointed.

WILLOW
Oh. Is that what it is.

MRS. ROSENBERG
Of course, I could have wished that
you would identify with something a
little less icky, but developmentally
speaking --

WILLOW
Mom, I'm not an age group. I'm me.
Willow group.

MRS. ROSENBERG
I understand --

WILLOW
No you don't. It's probably hard to
accept, but I can do stuff. Nothing
bad or dangerous. But I can do spells-

MRS. ROSENBERG
You think you can. And that's what
concerns me. The delusions-

Willow is growing frustrated. She's not getting through to her mom at all.

WILLOW

Mom. How would you know what I can do? The last time we had a conversation over three minutes it was about the patriarchal bias of the Mr. Rodgers show.

MRS. ROSENBERG

Well, with "King Friday" lording it over all the lesser puppet --

WILLOW

Mom, you're not paying attention!

MRS. ROSENBERG

And this is your way of trying to get it. Now, I've consulted some of my colleagues and they all agree. This is a cry for discipline. You're grounded.

WILLOW

Grounded? This is the first time - ever - I do something you don't like and I'm grounded? I'm supposed to mess up. I'm a teenager, remember?

MRS. ROSENBERG

(nods)

You're upset. I hear your -

That's it, Willow snaps.

WILLOW

Hear this, Ma! I'm a rebel. I'm having a rebellion-

MRS. ROSENBERG

Willow. Honey. You don't have to act out like this to prove your specialness-

WILLOW

Mom! I'm not acting out - I'm a WITCH. I make pencils float. I summon the four elements! Well - two elements - but four soon!
(then)

And I'm dating a musician!

MRS. ROSENBERG

Willow!

WILLOW

I worship Beelzebub! I do his bidding. Do you see any goats around? No! Because I sacrificed

them! All bow before SATAN!

MRS. ROSENBERG
I'm not listening to this --

She gets up, starts to go. Willow follows her around the room, calling out:

WILLOW
Prince of darkness - I summon you!
Come fill me with your black,
naughty evil!

Mrs. Rosenberg's voice grows loud and sharp. She's had it.

MRS. ROSENBERG
That's enough!

Willow is stunned silent. This may be the first time her mother's ever paid enough attention to yell at her.

MRS. ROSENBERG
Now. You will go to your room and
stay there until I say otherwise.
(hard)
And we're gonna make some changes.
I don't want you hanging out with
those friends of yours. It's clear
where this little obsession came
from. You will not speak to Bunny
Summers again.

INT. BUFFY'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy stands in front of Joyce, who addresses her in a very similar tone to the one Mrs. Rosenberg just used. The dining room has been converted into an office. There are neat stacks of "NEVER AGAIN" posters, phone lists, Joyce's computer... and MOO lapel pins.

JOYCE
I don't want you seeing that Willow
anymore. I've spoken with her mother.
I had no idea her forays into the occult
had gone so far.

Buffy stares at her mom, disbelieving.

BUFFY
You're the one who ordered the raid
on the school today.

JOYCE
Honey, they opened a few lockers.

BUFFY
Lockers. First syllable, lock.
They're supposed to be private.
Also, they took all of Giles' books
away.

JOYCE

He'll get most of them back. MOO just wants to weed out the offensive material. Everything else will be returned to Mr. Giles soon.

BUFFY

But we need those books now. To help solve this thing.

JOYCE

Sweetie, those books had no business in a public school library. Especially now. Any student could waltz in there and get all sorts of ideas. Do you understand how that terrifies me?

BUFFY

Mom, I hate that these people scared you so much. And I know you're trying to help. But you have to let me handle this. It's what I do.

JOYCE

But is it really? You patrol. You slay. Evil pops up, you undo it. And that's great. But has Sunnydale gotten any better? Are they running out of vampires?

BUFFY

I don't think they run out--

JOYCE

It's not your fault. You don't have a plan. You just... react to things. It's bound to be kind of fruitless.

Buffy's hurt, but she turns it into anger.

BUFFY

Okay. Maybe I don't have a plan. Lord knows I don't have lapel buttons...

JOYCE

Buffy--

BUFFY

...And maybe the next time the world is getting sucked into hell, I won't be able to stop it because, guess what, the anti-hell-sucking book isn't on the approved reading list!

JOYCE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to put down--

BUFFY

Yeah. You did. But you know what?

I have to go. I have to go out on
one of my pointless little patrols
now, and "react to" some vampires,
if that's all right with MOO.

Buffy storms out. A beat, then she pops back in to say:

BUFFY
And nice acronym, Mom.

She goes.

ANGLE: JOYCE

She sighs and looks tired.

JOYCE
I'm just trying to make things better.

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)
You are.

WIDEN TO REVEAL:

The TWO LITTLE DEAD KIDS are sitting opposite Joyce at the table, right where
Buffy had just been standing.

They have the slightest hint of death about them: a little pale, lips a little blue. They
speak softly, beseechingly.

LITTLE GIRL
There's bad people out there.

LITTLE BOY
And we can't sleep.

LITTLE GIRL
Not until you hurt them...

LITTLE BOY
The way they hurt us.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

Act Three

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

The playground is eerily quiet as Buffy patrols, fighting an overwhelming sense of
foreboding. She moves somewhat reluctantly to the sandbox, which has been
turned into an impromptu shrine - covered with flowers and photos.

Angel steps up beside her. She turns to him and without a word folds herself into his
arms. After a bit of holdage...

ANGEL
Hey...

BUFFY
Hey. How are you?

ANGEL
I'm all right.
(looks at her)
I think I'm better than you right now.

Buffy turns back to the shrine.

ANGEL
I heard about this. People are talking.
People are even talking to me.

BUFFY
It's strange... People die in
Sunnydale all the time. And I've
never seen anything like this.

ANGEL
They were children. Innocent. It
makes a difference.

BUFFY
And Mr. Sanderson from the bank had
it coming?

Now Angel leads her to a bench - they sit.

BUFFY
My mom... She said some stuff to me.
About being the Slayer. That it's
fruitless. No fruit for Buffy.

ANGEL
She's wrong.

BUFFY
Was she? Is Sunnydale any better
than when I came here? Okay - so
I battle evil. But I don't really win -
the bad keeps coming back and
getting stronger. I'm like that kid
in the story, the boy who stuck his
finger in the duck.

ANGEL
Dike.
(off her confusion)
It's another word for a dam.

BUFFY
Oh. Okay, now that story makes a
lot more sense.

ANGEL

Buffy, you know I'm still working things out; there's a lot I don't understand. But I know it's important to keep fighting and I learned that from you.

BUFFY
But we never --

ANGEL
We never win.

BUFFY
Not completely.

ANGEL
We never will. That's not why we fight. We do it 'cause there's things worth fighting for.

Buffy takes this in.

ANGEL
Those kids. Their parents.

This seems to strike Buffy. She looks at Angel - realizing something.

BUFFY
Right. Their parents.

ANGEL
I know it's not much.

BUFFY
(deep in thought)
No. It's a lot...

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The shelves have big ugly gaps where Giles' world should be. The man himself, supremely frustrated, sits alone at the table with a computer. He keeps pushing buttons - only to be confronted with a LOUD PROTESTING BEEP.

GILES
Session interrupted? Who said you could interrupt -- Stupid, useless fad -- That's right! I said fad!
And I'll say it again.

XANDER
At that point I will become frightened.

He has walked in with Oz.

OZ
Take heart. We found your books.

Giles looks up as if Oz' voice were a chorus of angels.

XANDER

Put the heart back. We can't get 'em. They're locked in City Hall.

Xander looks over his shoulder - pretends shock.

XANDER

"Frisky Watcher's Chat Room."
Why, Giles...

Giles shoots Xander a withering look as Buffy strides in.

XANDER

Buffy! Oz and I found out --

BUFFY

These kids. What do we know about them?

GILES

What?

BUFFY

Facts. Details.

XANDER

Well... they were found in the park --

BUFFY

Where'd they go to school? Who are their parents? What are their names?

The three men look at each other, trying to think.

BUFFY

We know everything about their deaths, but we don't even know their names.

XANDER

Sure we do... uh... it's on the tip of my tongue...

OZ

It's never come up. Ever.

BUFFY

And if no one know who they are, how did they get these pictures?

GILES

I - I assumed that someone knew the details. I never really...it's very strange.

BUFFY

(points to the computer)
We need to get some information.

GILES
Could somebody else... This thing has
shut me out.

XANDER
Well if you didn't yell at it...

Oz moves to the computer. Giles gratefully move aside.

OZ
I can look around, but Willow really
knows the sites we'll need.

BUFFY
How - she's not even allowed to come
to the phone. The wrath of MOO.

OZ
We don't need a phone.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow sits on her bed, reading. Her computer CHIMES. She look over at it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIBRARY - LATE (NIGHT)

Giles, Xander and Buffy watch as Oz works the computer.

OZ
Okay. We're linked. If anyone's
ID'd the kids, she'll pull it up and
feed it here.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow's at her computer. Her computer screen fills with data. A newspaper article.
She smiles, hits a button...

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The article appears on the screen of the library computer. Giles hovers over Oz,
reading.

GILES
Two children, found dead. Mysterious
mark... No. These children were
found near Omaha in 1949,

XANDER
They aren't ours. Keep going.

Oz is ready to clear the screen...

BUFFY
Wait.

A black and white photograph appears on the screen, gaining resolution slowly as it is downloaded. Two little kids. The picture grows sharper.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow looks at the same photo.

WILLOW
Those are...

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

BUFFY
The same kids.

GILES
Fifty years ago.

The screen shifts, a new article.

OZ
1899. Utah... Two children... rural
community torn apart by suspicion...

GILES
A hundred years. How is that possible?

OZ
No mention of who they were.

BUFFY
They've never been seen alive, just
dead. A lot.

The screen fills with old-style German type.

GILES
Let me see that.

An Instant-Message box appears in the corner of the box. Oz reads it.

OZ
There were more articles. Every
fifty years, all the same.

GILES
From as far back as 1649.

Now Giles takes Oz's place at the computer, concentrates on the text, translating as he reads.

GILES
Written by a cleric from a village
near the Black Forest. He found
the bodies himself. Two children...
Greta Strauss, age six. Hans
Strauss, eight.

Giles reads on silently.

XANDER
So they have names. That's new.

Suddenly, the computer screen goes black. It then displays an official-looking message: "ACCESS TO THIS SITE DENIED."

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

At a dead end, a frustrated Willow turns off her computer. Turns to see Mrs. Rosenberg standing next to her, not happy.

MRS. ROSENBERG
You're not minding me, Willow. I
thought I made myself clear.

Willow is shocked by the anger in her mother's voice.

WILLOW
Mom -

Mrs. Rosenberg closes the computer and takes it.

MRS. ROSENBERG
I see what you're doing. You're
challenging me. But I will not have
you communicating with your cyber-
coven or what have you-

WILLOW
Coven? What happened to me being
"delusional" and "acting out?"

MRS. ROSENBERG
That was before I talked in depth
with Ms. Summers and her associates.
It seems I've been rather closed-minded.

WILLOW
So - you believe me?

MRS. ROSENBERG
I believe you, dear.
(then)
Now all I can do is let you go
with love.

WILLOW
Let me go? What does that mean?

Mrs. Rosenberg doesn't reply -- just leaves. She shuts the door, locks it.

WILLOW
(perplexed)
Mom?

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Buffy, Giles, Oz and Xander, in confusion.

OZ
We lost Willow.

Oz types, tries to get the connection back.

GILES
Greta Strauss. Hans Strauss.

Deep in thought, Giles goes to on eof the bookshelves... and remembers the books are gone. He turns away helplessly, pulling the facts from his memory with effort.

GILES
There's a fringe theory held by a few folklorists that some regional stories have actual, very literal antecedents...

BUFFY
And in some language that's English?

OZ
(still typing)
Fairy tales are real.

BUFFY
Hans and Greta.
(light bulb)
Hansel and Gretel.

XANDER
Wait. Hansel and Gretel? Breadcrumbs, ovens, Gingerbread house?

GILES
Of course... it makes sense now...

BUFFY
Yeah, it's all falling into place.
Of course, that place is nowhere near this place...

GILES
There are demons that thrive on fostering persecution and hatred among the mortal animals. Not on destroying men, but on watching them destroy each other. They feed us our darkest fear, and turn peaceful communities into vigilantes.

BUFFY
Hansel and Gretel go home and tell on the mean old witch --

GILES
And she and probably dozens of other

are punished by a righteous mob.
It's happened throughout history. It
happened in Salem, not surprisingly.

XANDER
I'm still spinning on the whole fairy
tales are real thing.

OZ
What do we do?

XANDER
I don't know about you, but I'm going
to go trade my cow for some beans.
(off their looks)
No one else is seeing the funny here?

BUFFY
Giles, we have to talk to Mom. If
she know the truth she can defuse
this whole thing --

The library doors fly open and Michael runs in. He's bloodied and out of breath. The
group goes to him, holds him up.

XANDER
What happened?

MICHAEL
I was attacked.

XANDER
Officially not funny.

BUFFY
By who?

MICHAEL
Dad. His friends. They're taking
people from their homes. And
something about a trial at city
hall... They got Amy.

OZ
Willow.

MICHAEL
Tell her to get out of her house.

BUFFY
Michael, stay here and hide. Giles,
we'll go find my mom. Oz, you and
Xander --

OZ
We're already gone.

And they are.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow hears the door being unlocked. She rushes to it.

WILLOW
Mom. We really need to-

The door opens. Revealing MRS. ROSENBERG and a number of hostile-looking MOO MEMBERS.

MRS. ROSENBERG
It's time to go.
(mom-like)
Get your coat. It's chilly out.

WILLOW
Go? Go where-

MRS. ROSENBERG
(harder again)
I said - get your coat, witch.

Acting on instinct - Willow powers forward and SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT ON HER MOTHER. Mrs. Rosenberg and the others immediately start to pound on it and shout.

OFF WILLOW

Trying to keep the door shut. Terrified.

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE, ENTRYWAY/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Buffy and Giles enter through the front door and rush into the living room, surprising Joyce who is in the middle of a lively debate with four of her fellow MOO members.

JOYCE
Buffy. Mr. Giles? Has something happened?

BUFFY
Oh. Um. Mom? Can we talk to you?

JOYCE
Of course, Honey.
(to her guests)
You go on without me.

Joyce follows Buffy and Giles into the entry way.

BUFFY
(to Joyce)
Mom, we have to talk alone. There's more going on than you --

Giles lets out a SHOUT, cut off quickly, as ONE OF THE GUESTS GRABS him from behind and DRAGS him back into the living room. Buffy whirls, ready to fight, when Joyce's hand clamps over her mouth and nose. The hand holds a soaked handkerchief. Buffy sinks to the ground. As she lies there, fighting for

consciousness, she blink up at her mother.

JOYCE
You were right. That was easy.

The two dead kids step into Buffy's line of sight. The girl takes a previously-unseen bottle of chloroform from Joyce.

LITTLE GIRL
I told you.

LITTLE BOY
It gets even easier.

LITTLE GIRL
But I'm still scared of the bad girls.

LITTLE BOY
You have to stop them. You have to
make them go away. Forever.

The images of the little kids BLUR and waver. Buffy's eyes close. She's out.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

Act Four

INT. WILLOW'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Oz bursts in through the front door, Xander behind him. They run toward Willow's room.

They enter...

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Oz and Xander freeze. The room is empty but upturned. There has clearly been a struggle here.

INT. CITY HALL ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Willow is being tied to a stake by Mrs. Rosenberg. Amy is tied to another stake, and Buffy, unconscious, is TIED TO A THIRD. Giles' books are piled at their feet. People with MOO buttons ring the room. Among them: Joyce.

MRS. ROSENBERG
(to Willow)
Stand still. Be a good girl.

WILLOW
No! Why are you doing this to me?
Mom?

MRS. ROSENBERG

There's no cure but the fire.

AMY
Buffy! Wake up!

WILLOW
Mom, this is crazy!

AMY
Buffy!

But Buffy is still out cold.

INT. BUFFY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Giles lies unconscious on the floor of the living room. A hand SLAPS him hard. Again. And again. He grunts with pain and opens his eyes. The hand slaps him again anyway.

GILES
Cordelia?

Sure enough, the hand belongs to Cordelia. And it's drawn back for one more swipe. Giles blocks it.

CORDELIA
Took you long enough to wake up.
My hand hurts.

Giles rubs his face.

GILES
Pity... Why are you here?

CORDELIA
Things are way out of control, Giles.
First the thing at school, and then
my mom confiscates all my black
clothes and scented candles. I came
over to tell Buffy to stop this
craziness and I found you all
unconscious again. How many times
have you been knocked out, anyway?
I swear, one of these times you're
going to wake up in a coma.

GILES
Wake up in-- Never mind. We have to
go save Buffy from Hansel and Gretel.

A beat as Cordy tries to process this. Then-

CORDELIA
Now let's be clear, the brain damage
happened before I hit you.

She helps him to his feet.

INT. CITY HALL LOBBY - NIGHT

Xander and Oz run into City Hall and head for the doors that lead into the rotunda. Tow men wearing MOO buttons block their path. Two other MOO members close and lock the doors.

XANDER
What's with the grim? We're here
to join you guys.

It's not going over The mini-mob presses in on them.

XANDER
Really. Why should you guys have
all the fun? We want to be part of
the hate.

Nope. The MOO freaks are looking even more murderous.

OZ
Just so we're clear - you know you're
nuts, right?

With that, Xander and Oz run for their lives.

INT. CITY HALL ROTUNDA - NIGHT

As before: Willow, Amy, and the still-unconscious Buffy bound to stakes, Giles' books piled at their feet.

WILLOW
Buffy!

Willow tries kicking books at Buffy to wake her up. Finally Buffy comes to, takes in the situation. Joyce steps forward and smiles kindly at Buffy.

JOYCE
Good morning, sleepy-head.

BUFFY
(still groggy)
You don't want this.

JOYCE
Since when does it matter what I
want? I wanted a normal, happy
daughter and instead I got a slayer.

Buffy takes this in - stricken.

ON JOYCE AND MRS. ROSENBERG

MRS. ROSENBERG
(to Joyce/pleasantly)
Torch?

Joyce takes the torch.

JOYCE
Thanks.
(then)
This has been so trying -- but you've
been a champ.

MRS. ROSENBERG
You too, Joyce.

JOYCE
We should stay close. Have lunch.

MRS. ROSENBERG
How nice. I'd love to.

BACK ON AMY, WILLOW AND BUFFY

who watch, disbelieving, as Joyce and Mrs. Rosenberg light the pyre.

AMY
Oh, you can't be serious...

BUFFY
Mom, don't!

But it's too late. The books have already begun to burn.

CLOSE ON AMY

who is wild with fear - furious.

AMY
All right! You want to fry a witch!?
I'll give you a witch!

She throws her head back - starts to incant.

AMY
"Goddess Hecate, work thy will..."

Buffy glances at Willow. This sounds familiar.

BUFFY
Uh oh.

Now Amy lower her head and crosses her arms over her heart - she's GONE BLACK-EYED from her majik-making trance.

AMY
"Before thee let the unclean thing crawl!"

BOOM - AMY SHUDDERS as her body rocks with A BALL OF PURE ENERGY. The MOOSTERS fall back - screaming with fear at this display.

A beat as the smoke clears. Amy appears be gone - until Willow sees A RAT scurry from the pyre and away to safety.

BUFFY

She couldn't do us first?

Some MOOsters move tentatively forward --

WILLOW

Do not dare! You see what we can
do -- another step and you will all
feel my power!

BUFFY

(sotto voce)

What are you gonna do, float a pencil
at 'em?

But there seems to be some hesitation...

WILLOW

It's a really big power...

BUFFY

(getting into it)

That's right! You will all be turned
into vermin... and some of you will
be fish... the people in the back
will be fish...

It seems to be working. Moosters are moving slowly away. Even Joyce and Sheila
are hesitating.

MOOSTER

Maybe we should go...

NOW THE TWO LITTLE DEMON KIDS suddenly appear before Joyce, Mrs. Rosenberg
and the rest of the terrified Moo members.

LITTLE BOY

But you promised...

LITTLE GIRL

You have to kill the bad girls.

INT. GILES' CAR - NIGHT

Giles drives. Cordelia holds containers of various herbs, roots, etc.

CORDELIA

I can't believe you had this stuff in
your apartment. It smells foul.

GILES

Shred the Wolfsbane -- that's the
leafy stuff. Then crush the Satyrion root.
(to himself)

Luften sie den something. Schumer?
Shluter?

CORDELIA

God. This is killing my manicure.

What are you muttering about?

GILES

It's part of an incantation I'm trying to recall. It's in German and without my books...

CORDELIA

What's it mean?

GILES

It's about lifting a veil. It should make the demons appear in their true form, which should negate their influence. Oh, and you need to drop a toadstone into the mixture.

CORDELIA

This? It doesn't look like a toad.

She smells the small stone.

GILES

No reason it should. It's from inside the toad.

CORDELIA

I hate you.

INT. CITY HALL ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The flames burn higher. The little dead children press in closer, firelight reflecting off their faces. They speak in voices soft and clear:

LITTLE GIRL

They hurt us.

LITTLE BOY

Burn them.

BUFFY

Mom, dead people are talking to you.
Do the math!

JOYCE

I'm sorry, Buffy

BUFFY

Mom! Look at me. You love me.
If you do this, you won't be able to live with yourself.

JOYCE

You earned this. You toyed with unnatural forces... Buffy, what kind of mother would I be if I didn't punish you?

Willow and Buffy struggle, trying to free themselves.

INT. CITY HALL LOBBY - NIGHT

Giles and Cordy arrive at the door to the Rotunda where Xander and Oz faced the mob. Everyone's inside now, no one guards the door. Cordy holds the little vial of potion. Giles tries the door. Locked. He plucks a pin from Cordy's hair.

CORDELIA
Ow! You got hair with that!

Giles ignores her - applies himself to picking the lock.

CORDELIA
God, you really were the little
youthful offender, weren't you? You
must look back and just cringe.

INT. CITY HALL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Meanwhile, a winded Oz and Xander peer around a corner - checking to make sure they lost the Moosters.

They move to some doors. Oz tries the doors - locked, of course.

OZ
We have to get inside.

A beat. Then Xander and Oz both SLAM their shoulders into the door. It doesn't even budge. A beat.

WILLOW
No! Oh, God! Help!

OZ
Will.

XANDER
It sounds like she's right... above us?

They look above them - the sound is clearly coming from an overhead AIR VENT. They glance at each other.

Xander starts to give Oz a hand up. Oz knocks out the grate and pulls himself in.

INT. CITY HALL ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The fire burns merrily. Willow looks close to passing out.

WILLOW
Buffy... it's too hot. I can't take it.

BUFFY
I'm so sorry, Willow. If it wasn't
for me, you never would...

Buffy trails off when she sees Giles and Cordy sneak into the room behind Joyce.

ON GILES AND CORDELIA

As they make their way to a coiled fire-hose behind a glass hinged door. Giles takes the potion from Cordy and motions for her to open the glass door. Cordy nods, but instead, she SMASHES it.

JOYCE AND HER FRIENDS.

Whirl around. Cordy tugs at the water valve as Giles begins his spell, which he continues under the subsequent dialogue and action.

GILES

(shouting in German)

Dämonen zeigt euch. Ich
beschwöre die Mächte der
Hecate, Königin und
Beschützerin der Hexen, die
Masken wegzureissen. Das
Böse soll das Gesicht des
Bösen tragen...

(English)

Demons show yourselves. I
call on the powers of
Hecate, queen and
protectress of witches, to
strip away the masks. Let
evil wear an evil face...

JOYCE

Stop them!

MOO members converge, but Cordelia is armed. The hose comes on FULL FORCE. Cordelia barely manages to keep hold of it. MOO members are swept off their feet by the water. Cordelia keeps them at bay.

WILLOW

Buffy! I'm on fire!

BUFFY

Cordelia, put out the fire!

Realizing that sounds good too, Cordelia wrestles the hose into place, and douses the fire.

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

Xander and Oz follow the sound of the girls and the Moosters - crawling in almost total darkness.

INT. CITY HALL ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Cordelia is still battling the fire while Giles continues to chant:

GILES

Hecate ruft euch an.
Hebt den Schleier auf.
(Hecate implores you. Lift the veil)

He falters, stumbling over the German. He hesitates, then continues:

GILES

Hebt den Schleier auf.
Verbergt euch nicht hinter
falschen Gesichtern.

(Lift the veil. Hide not behind false faces.)

Now Giles THROWS the potion.

ON THE DEMON KIDS

The little vial breaks at the feet of the dead kids - the liquid SPATTERS and STEAMS. The little dead kids start HOWLING, then MORPH together. They flow into a liquid shape that coalesces into ONE BIG NASTY DEMON. Their HIGH-PITCHED VOICES DROP, deepen alarmingly into a single deep howl.

ON GILES, CORDELIA, JOYCE, MOOSERS, ET AL...

CORDELIA

Okay. I liked the two little ones
better than the one big one.

MOO members fall back, confused, as they are freed from the hold the kids had on them. They see the demon, SCREAM AND SCATTER, except for JOYCE AND MRS. ROSENBERG.

DEMON

Protect us! Kill the bad girls!

BUFFY

You know what? Not as convincing in
that outfit.

Snarling, the demon turns on her, RUNS.

JOYCE

Oh my god, Buffy!

Buffy gives on last wrenching pull on the ropes that bind her hands - and ends up BREAKING THE STAKE FROM THE FLOOR.

She's more mobile, but she's still tied to the stake. The demon sees that his time is limited. He ROARS and CHARGES at her, a flying tackle. Buffy bends forward and the stake angles out in front of her like a wooden sword-point. It CATCHES THE DEMON IN THE THROAT, piercing it -- a mortal wound.

Now Buffy's STUCK with her stake embedded in the dead demon, who has died on his feet. Buffy's still bending forward - can't see anything but the ground.

BUFFY

Did I get it? Did I get it?

Before anyone can answer XANDER AND OZ PLUMMET through the CEILING, the AIR VENT HAVING GIVEN WAY. They land DIRECTLY BEHIND BUFFY AND THE DEMON, creating a bizarre tableau.

Willow walks up to them on the ground.

OZ
We're here to save you.

FADE TO:

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - DAY

Buffy and Willow are on the bed, mixing various spell things and talking.

BUFFY
Your mom doesn't mind us doing this
in the house?

WILLOW
She doesn't know.

BUFFY
(sympathetically)
Business as usual?

WILLOW
Sort of. She's doing that selective
memory thing your mom used to be
so good at.

BUFFY
She forgot everything?

WILLOW
No, she remembered the part where I
told her I was dating a musician. Oz
has to come for dinner. So that's
sort of like taking an interest...

BUFFY
So. You want to try this again?

WILLOW
Let's do it. I think we got the mix
of herbs right this time.

And we see for the first time that they have the Amyrat on the bed in front of them.

Buffy drops some RAT HAIR in the dish. Lights it with a match. A THICK PLUME of smoke rises. Willow does the incantation.

WILLOW
"Diana! Hecate! I hereby license
thee to depart. Goddess of creatures
great and small - I conjure thee to
withdraw!"

Buffy and Willow wave the smoke away - look at the cage expectantly.

CLOSE ON CAGE

Amyrat sits there. Unchanged. Buffy and Willow are at a loss. A long beat. Finally-

BUFFY
Maybe we should get her one of those
wheel things.

BLACK OUT.

THE END