

Fate
1x09: "Home is where the hurt is"
by

Roonblah
Based on characters created by Joss Whedon

Disclaimer:
No profit is being made from this work.
No copyright infringement intended.

TEASER

MUSIC: IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC - QUEEN

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL, CORRIDOR - DAY

NURSES and patients dodge out of the way of NIALL, 11 years old, in eighties-style garb (yes, even the shaggy mop).

He weaves his way past PREGNANT WOMEN and PINK and BLUE BALLOONS being held by DELIVERY MEN; on a mission.

He ducks under HANDS that try to grab him and pushes into-

INT. HOSPITAL, PRIVATE MATERNITY ROOM - SAME

CATHERINE, a knock-out, late twenties, sits up in the bed flipping through a glossy magazine. Her ear is pinned to the ROOM PHONE cradled at her neck. She's almost dressed for a fashion shoot: expensive silk nightdress, makeup perfectly made, no hair out of place.

Niall ignores her and heads straight to the NURSE, who steps aside and smiles as he peers over the hospital bassinet. He is completely enamoured by the BABY dressed in pink.

NURSE
I'll be right back luv.

NIALL nods as he reaches out to the little girl with his pinky. The baby grabs it. To Niall, it's as good as getting candy. The nurse leaves the room.

CATHERINE
(on phone; upper-crust English)
Hamish is arranging for me to leave tonight. I don't see why I need to stay here. The kid needs observing, not me.
(listens)
Oh I don't know. It hasn't cried yet and it's a month early. It seems fine to me.

Niall moves his finger around, smiling as the baby keeps her grip.

CATHERINE
(flips page of
magazine)

I've already picked a nurse to help me recover. These stitches are ghastly. I hope I can hide the scar. Hamish's assistant has arranged for a nanny to start tomorrow.

Niall leans over the edge and just watches the little girl start to go off to sleep.

CATHERINE (O.S)
Oh I know! Isn't it lovely?

Niall strokes the baby girl's cheek.

CATHERINE (O.S)
I won't miss the MacCready ball after all. I'm sure I can lose the extra baggage in three weeks.
(tapping the phone)
Hello? Hello? Typical. Everything in this place is substandard. Niall!

He stands up stiffly and turns slowly toward her. Catherine places the phone back in the cradle.

CATHERINE
Where's your father?

Niall shrugs.

CATHERINE
Well? Go find him.

Niall lets out a slow breath and steps away from the bassinet. The lights FLICKER. Niall's steps falter. He looks back at the baby.

Catherine shakes her head and gives a long-suffering sigh.

Niall proceeds toward the door, and stops again when the baby CRIES. He looks to his mother.

Catherine doesn't move; just keeps paging through the magazine.

Niall reaches for the door knob.

The baby SCREAMS become louder; more urgent.

Niall looks once more at the useless mother, before whipping his hand off the doorknob.

He runs back to the baby and gently rocks the bassinet.

BANG BANG

Gunshot. Very close.

Catherine SCREAMS. A wailing siren with no end.

BANG

Surprisingly, the baby makes no noise and contentedly grabs hold of Niall's finger again. The baby laughs.

The sound of STRUGGLE is right on the other side of the door. Niall instinctively moves in front of the bassinet. Catherine screeches as something THUMPS against the door to the room - there are more scuffles and moans--

-- Everything goes horribly SILENT. Only Catherine whimpers like a miserable kitten.

Niall waits for a moment. There's no sound and no decisive action from his mother. He makes a choice and cradles the baby in his arms. Jiggling her in his arms - more for his comfort than hers - he approaches the door.

He pushes it open a little and peeks through the gap.

HOSPITAL GUARDS are holding down a raging MAN. A GUN is on the floor at Niall's feet.

A PREGNANT WOMAN lies dead. A WOUNDED MAN and the nurse from earlier are being tended to; each have gunshot wounds.

Niall steps back and shuts the door behind him. The baby laughs again.

NIALL
Hey, were you looking out for me?

He makes a joke out of it, but he stares at her like he isn't so sure.

FADE TO WHITE

DAWN (O.S)
It's only the greatest idea. Ever!

FADE IN

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

DAWN and JASON lead the way down a Mediterranean-style corridor. A distant NADYA and long-suffering SAMUEL follow, with DEVON

trailing at the back.

JASON

I'm not saying it isn't a good idea. I just think-

DAWN

You agreed with me!

JASON

Yes, the principle of it--

DAWN

(whirls on Nadya)

And you said you only needed to use one key to get us around, right?

NADYA

Yes, I've become familiar enough-

DAWN

So great. It's settled. This is a good plan. Trust me.

Jason grabs an over-enthusiastic Dawn by the shoulders.

JASON

Okay. You'll have to forgive the rest of us, because we've been in transit for fifteen hours-

DAWN

Planes are way more brutal than portals. Gotta say.

JASON

We're aren't disputing The Plan. We like The Plan. The Plan is all good. We'd just like more time to decide if this is the right place.

DAWN

(playing with the pout)
But it is. Really. Ask Samuel.
There's no place safer.

(serious)

Besides, what's gonna happen to the keys the next time we -oh- go insane?

She turns away from Jason and takes a few steps forward to a door.

DAWN
I don't know how we got out of
trouble last time.

Nadya looks to the side. Devon stares back at her. Nadya glances away.

Dawn KNOCKS on the door.

DAWN
Just think of this as fate.

Jason sighs, giving up.

The door opens.

Dawn SMILES shyly.

DAWN
Hi. Okay, I know it's been a while
but-

BUFFY
Dawn.

BUFFY SUMMERS, the tiny blonde dynamo, rushes forward and HUGS Dawn, holding her like there's no tomorrow.

DAWN
(smiling into the hug)
Hey. I'm home.

FADE OUT.

END TEASER

ACT I

FADE IN:

INT. THE COUNCIL, MAIN CHAMBER - NIGHT

QUENTIN TRAVERS (50s), an unchanging pillar of rules, stands before BASTION PAYNE (70s), who resembles a jolly Santa Claus in a tweed suit and TARTAN waistcoat.

The boundaries of the room are filled with high shelves of every kind of book. In the centre, a foreboding table and chairs.

QUENTIN

I don't know how many ways I can tell you the same thing, Bastion.
(throws a file onto the desk)

The girl is absolutely normal in every sense of the word.

BASTION

(refined Scottish accent)

I understand this is how it seems,
but-

QUENTIN

No! This conversation is finally over. She is not one of the chosen and has no bearing on the destiny of the Slayer. Other than interrupting the Slayer's duties so that her Watcher could bring her here.

BASTION

Sunaya's duties have been more than fulfilled. The amount of demonic activity we have stumbled into in the past few months alone should be an indicator-

Quentin sighs and sits down at one of the chairs around the table. This could take a while. Bastion remains standing.

QUENTIN

I do no need to remind you that
demonic activity tends to
gravitate towards Slayers. It is,
traditionally, thought to be their
calling.

BASTION

Not to this extent. I would only
expect this amount of activity if
we were based within some sort of
mystical convergence. The nomadic
lifestyle this Slayer leads...

Their voices become MUFFLED.

The WALL of the room isn't quite so thick to shield listening
ears.

INT. THE COUNCIL, STAIRWAY - SAME

MARGARET DEVON (10) sits on a step on the other side of the
wall. She hugs her arms around her knees.

SUNAYA (O.S)

(Indian accent)

Little ears attuned to the angry
wail of the raven do not often
hear the sweet call of the wind.

Margaret startles to see-

SUNAYA MIKESH (18), Indian, battle-scarred and dressed as
practical warriors do. The battle-hardened girl steadily
gazes down at the scared child for a moment. She finally
sits next to Margaret, a little stiffly as though human
contact were foreign to her.

SUNAYA

And what secrets do these walls
tell?

Margaret shakes her head. Sunaya considers for a moment.

SUNAYA

They do no see everything. These
Watchers. Do not take what they
say to heart.

MARGARET

They don't like me. I'm not
special or different. All the bad
things are just...

Sunaya reaches out with her hand to touch the child's shoulder, but withdraws, unseen, before she does.

SUNAYA

Watchers exist to promise a future for both Slayers and men. They cannot see how a story will unfold. They can only play the parts they know. The same is true for Slayers. Soon I will die.

Margaret looks up, terrified by the idea.

SUNAYA

Do not be sad for me. It is the way of things. I have accepted my fate. There will be a Slayer called and another and another. It is a growing chain that needs strong links. The past Slayers live within me, and I shall live within the next. We give each other our strength, our conviction, our nobility. That line must never weaken. That is all a Watcher is for.

(pats Margaret's shoulder)

They do not know who you are or what you will begin. I do. I feel it in my heart, as Bastion does. You will have a great destiny.

Margaret, young as she is, clearly does not share the belief. She hugs herself tighter.

MARGARET

Maybe I'll be a Watcher.

SUNAYA

You read the books as though you will be.

MARGARET

(almost crying)

I don't want to be. I want things the way they were before.

SUNAYA

Never wish to be ordinary, Margaret. Even if you have no destiny beyond this, you have seen the world as it is. There is a hidden darkness, and those who have seen it, can change it.

MARGARET
I just miss--

Margaret looks away, hiding tears. Sunaya searches for words; unhappy with her choices. She, instead, speaks as though a teacher.

SUNAYA
The vampire is a Slayer's biggest enemy, though they are not our strongest or most dangerous. Do you know why?

Margaret shakes her head.

SUNAYA
They have our face. They speak in our tongues. They walk alongside our steps. They are a plague in the shadows; too similar to us. If we forget for one moment what they are, we lose the clarity of our calling. It is a war. Allegiances cannot be blurred. We cannot wish for what cannot be. You understand this?

Margaret nods, more sad somehow.

SUNAYA
The world exists in shades of grey, but a Slayer must be absolute. We must hold the line.

INT. SUMMER'S APARTMENT, LOUNGE - NIGHT

ON DEVON

Eyes closed. Lost in thought.

SUNAYA (V.O.)
Not to save ourselves, but to ensure the world always reaches a new dawn.

There is a GROWL, a vampire growl.

SUNAYA (V.O.)
Margaret! Run!

A loud CRACK.

Devon's eyes SNAP OPEN.

She STARTLES. Jason is right in front of her offering her a steaming cup.

JASON
(gauging her)
Hot chocolate. Apparently it's a Summers specialty.

Devon takes it. She sits on the couch. She looks across--

THE KITCHEN

Buffy and the others are chatting and making more hot chocolate.

THE LOUNGE

Jason sits beside Devon. He looks around the room. There are various weapons lying around, including some stakes. He looks into the kitchen hatchway.

JASON
I expected a Slayer to be... taller.

He gives a false chuckle. Devon doesn't register. She's distracted. Watching the Slayer in question closely.

JASON
Are you okay?

Jason waits for her.

JASON
Right. I get it. That's how we're playing it.

Devon turns to him, noticing the sudden chill in the room.

DEVON
What?

JASON
You're kidding me, right?

DEVON
About what?

Jason gives a humourless laugh and stands.

JASON
Oh, so you haven't been ignoring me since... I'm tired of this.

She looks away from him, lost. She can't let him see her face. He doesn't and reacts as if it's another blow to him.

JASON
(low whisper)
It happened Dev. You and me. No spell, no potions, no frikkin' mind-jobs. If don't want to deal with that, it's really not my problem.

Angry, he walks away with his cup. He leans against a wall as the others enter the lounge from the kitchen. They are all in high spirits. Jason puts on his best imitation of a happy face.

DAWN
And that's our whole safe, educational, scavenger hunt in an instant mocha nutshell.

BUFFY
Why do I get the feeling you're leaving things out?

DAWN
Me? I'm a pillar of honesty!
(girl scout swear)
Honestly.

Buffy raises her eyebrows. The others find seats. Buffy and Dawn beside each other. Nadya, close to Jason. Samuel takes a seat next to Devon. He glances at her worriedly.

The silence is uncomfortable.

Only Buffy and Dawn look around.

SAMUEL
Thank you for the dinner. It was very good.

BUFFY
Thanks. I have a phone. They deliver.

Silence again. Samuel notices Devon staring at Buffy.

SAMUEL
(quickly)
Well, I suppose since we have made arrangements for the keys, the rest of us should find a hotel of some sort and let Dawn and Buffy catch up.

He looks around the others for agreement. Nadya and Jason nod without much emotion.

BUFFY

(smiling at Samuel)

Actually, I've got plenty of room here. The Watchers Council bought the whole building so that I could train new recruits.

DAWN

How are the new batch? Last time I saw them they were...

Dawn grimaces and waves her hand shakily.

BUFFY

Better. I still don't think they understand my Italian, but I'm getting better at mime.

She makes an axing motion with her arms. She turns seriously to Samuel.

BUFFY

Giles wondered if you'd be interested in rejoining the Council when we're finished finding all the keys.

Dawn frowns at Buffy using the pronoun "we're".

BUFFY

We have hundreds, maybe thousands of Slayers and only a few Watchers to train them. The older Slayers are trying to teach as many of the younger ones as they can but more seem to spring up every day. So... whaddaya say? She asks without any pressure.

SAMUEL

I uh-

DEVON

Slayers. Plural. Why is there a plural? Plural Chosen. Singular Slayer.

Samuel winces. Jason notices both their reactions.

Dawn happily explains with Devon growing colder as she does.

DAWN

Only in the sense that they were the chosen and now they are much, much more than that. Okay, this story rocks.

(to Jason and Nadya)

Bringers - they're these creepy guys with robes and no eyes who do naughty things for the First Evil - starting killing off the Chosen. You know, in a heinous plot to wipe out all the future Slayers. To be extra crispy with the evil, the First Evil was also going to unleash scary super vampires onto the world by opening the Hellmouth. But, luck was with us. Buffy found the mystical Slayer scythe. Boom. Big spell, big battle and all the Chosen became Slayers.

(looking proudly at
Buffy)

That's my sis. Making the world safer for everyone.

DEVON

Only now. It's only now.

(stands)

I can't be here.

Devon is increasingly agitated.

DAWN

(gets up and goes to
her)

Devon. What's wrong?

Devon turns on Samuel; almost in shock, as if he had betrayed her.

DEVON

You knew. You knew and you didn't tell me.

SAMUEL

I saw no reason to-

DEVON

Bastion loved... Sunaya... They loved--

(whisper)

There's no future. It's gone. The Slayer line has been wiped out.

BUFFY
What are you talking about?

DEVON
(rounds on her)
You giving the First Evil exactly
what it wanted.

Buffy stands up sharply.

BUFFY
The First Evil is-

DEVON
Eternal. Patient. A hundred times
smarter than a Slayer who never
bothered to read the chapter in
the handbook that said "Evil is
bad". Too busy having sex with
the undead?

Buffy starts forward. Devon simply glares, without moving.

Dawn and Jason both rush in between the two. Dawn places a comforting hand on Buffy's shoulder, who calms down at the gesture.

Samuel and Nadya stand, for a lack of anything else to do.

JASON
Let's all calm down.

DAWN
Devon. What do you think's happened?

DEVON
(not taking her eyes
from Buffy's)
Ask your Watcher. He knows. Samuel
knows.

Samuel shifts uncomfortably as Buffy looks to him.

DEVON
Did you think your power was
infinite? That the Watchers kept
you alone on a whim? They were
bastards. I won't argue with that.
But they did it all for a reason.
The future.

(MORE)

DEVON (CONT'D)

This world's future.

(low)

Can't you see it? It was just one battle, but the war never ends. The Chosen were legion. No one entity could wipe them out. Not in a million years. You saw what you wanted to see. You were old and stretched and couldn't see the black for the grey. A few dead girls, the death of the guardians of the line, and a fortunate godsend left in plain sight and you gave it what it wanted. I'm good at puzzles. I see the pieces. When you're all dead... of old age, I'm sure, there will be no more Slayers to be called. They can't be. It's gone. All that power.

To Devon, this is the saddest thing. Buffy crosses her arms; very sure of her conviction.

BUFFY

You're wrong. You're not one of us and you weren't there. There's no way you could know any of this. We're stronger now than we've ever been.

DEVON

I'm not wrong. It's why I'm here.

(looks at Dawn)

Why we ended up here. I feel it weaving. Tightening. I don't want to do it again.

(quiet)

I can't be here.

She backs away, trying to escape.

SAMUEL

Devon. Wait.

DEVON

You know what I am. You know what's coming. God, I've already begun.

Buffy drops her arms at that. Maybe... she's not so sure now. Samuel takes hold of Devon's shoulders, as a father would.

SAMUEL
(comforting)
Devon-

She pushes away from him, getting as much space as she can from everyone.

DEVON
No. I hate puzzles. I hate being the piece that fits anywhere.

A DOOR SLAMS somewhere behind Devon. She shakes her head. Everyone lapses into silence.

ENGLISH MALE (O.S.)
Hey Slayer. Didn't we have a date to take the behind-the-ears out for a spot of hunting?

Dawn's eyes widen.

DAWN
Spike?

SPIKE, the eternally blonde vampire, stops.

SPIKE
Hello Niblet.

Dawn turns to Buffy.

DAWN
Uhm. Didn't you say he was working for an evil law firm?

Buffy grimaces.

SPIKE
Don't worry Dawn. Big sis still has some egg on her face about that. Funny story. You should have been here when-

BUFFY
Spike. Not now.

SPIKE
(taking the tense stances in)
Oh. Frozen party. Maybe I'd better-- what's with the air in here? Red playing with her spells again?

Spike grimaces as a BREEZE buffets around the apartment. Gentle at first, but soon everyone feels it. It grows uncomfortable.

SAMUEL

Nadya...

NADYA

It's not me.

SAMUEL

I know.

He's staring worriedly at Devon. The others all turn their attentions to her too.

Her eyes are WHITE. She takes shallow breaths; a panic attack. Her entire focus is on Spike.

SPIKE

Oi.

The wind pummels him the hardest until--

He is PUSHED against a wall.

Various weapons SHAKE around the room. A SWORD flies across the room and almost impales Spike. He dodges--

--hits the wall hard, as he is PINNED to it by an unseen force.

JASON

Devon!

Buffy springs into action. She approaches Devon and tries to grab her.

Translucent ENERGY BLASTS out from Devon.

EVERYONE is THROWN BACKWARD by the energy.

Devon marches toward Spike. She's steely, almost as though she is no longer herself.

A STAKE FLIES into her open hand.

As she reaches Spike, she PLUNGES downward with the stake--

OFF THAT

FADE OUT.

END ACT I

ACT II

FADE IN:

INT. SUMMER'S APARTMENT, LOUNGE - NIGHT

Spike YELLS in pain and GOES INTO VAMP FACE as Devon pushes the stake right through Spike's leg, literally turning him into a fixture on the wall. He tugs aimlessly at the stake.

The others lie on the floor, but in various stages of recovery. They see what she's done.

Samuel comes to a realisation.

Devon looks briefly to the side to locate another STAKE across the room.

She opens her hand again and IT COMES as if called.

Buffy sees this too. With a Slayer's determination, Buffy leaps to her feet and rushes toward Devon--

-- only to be knocked away again, CRASHING onto the table and breaking ornaments.

Jason and Dawn are already up.

Dawn winces at her sister's fall, but instead hurries to help Samuel up.

Jason nears Devon, cautiously.

JASON

Devon.

(reaches out to touch
her)

Look, let's just-

As he makes contact with her, energy hits him back. Not too violently, just enough to make him keep his distance.

LIGHT SHOOTS past him --

-- Nadya, eyes BLACK, has her hand outstretched in the direction of Devon --

-- the light DEFLECTS off Devon as if she were behind a wall --

-- a plant pot EXPLODES as the deflected light hits it.

Nadya's eyes widen in shock as she stares at Devon.

Devon raises the second stake. Spike grits his teeth.

SPIKE
A little help please.

SAMUEL
You're besmirching his memory!

Devon pauses... only briefly. It's a small window of time. Jason steps in quickly. He wraps an arm around her waist and grabs the stake with his other hand as he pulls her into a deep kiss. She's momentarily stunned.

LIGHT HITS DEVON from behind. She drops. Jason holds her tighter, preventing the fall.

Nadya lowers her hand, her eyes back to normal. She watches Devon warily.

Jason looks between the unconscious Devon in his arms, and the others amidst the chaos.

JASON
What the hell is going on?

INT. LOUNGE - LATER

Devon lies on the couch, still out. Samuel stands near her, watching Spike. Nadya kneels at the plant pot that was destroyed, aimlessly pushing pieces of it around.

Jason sits beside Devon. His hands have nowhere to go. He touches her forehead, her cheek, her pulse. Finally, he turns his head towards--

BUFFY
You ready?

SPIKE
Do I bloody look ready?
(off her look)
Do it if you're going to.

Buffy YANKS the stake out of his leg. Spike collapses to the ground. Dawn enters from the kitchen with some medical supplies.

SPIKE
Welcome back Niblet. Nice friends.

Dawn hands Buffy antiseptic and cloth. Buffy tends to the wounds. Dawn is feeling guilty and it shows.

DAWN
Soooo... you're not evil.

Spike gives a small smile through his pain.

SPIKE
What do you say to that Slayer?

Buffy continues with her work, almost pretending not to hear him.

BUFFY
(finally)
We were wrong.

Spike raises an eyebrow.

BUFFY
I was wrong.

DAWN
So Angel's not a bad guy either?

BUFFY
(sad)
No.

Dawn sees her sister's sadness.

DAWN
Is he-

BUFFY
He's okay. I think.

SPIKE
Sure he is. I bet psycho Slayer
is taking right good care of him.

DAWN
Psycho... Faith?

Buffy's shoulder's stiffen.

SPIKE
(happily)
Oh yeah. You should have been
here for that fight. Now that
Slayer has a fire.
(MORE)

SPIKE (CONT'D)
I bet she's found him, tortured
him into letting her help him and
now they're both making sickly
good deeds in front of the nasty
lawyers- Ow! Watch it Slayer.

BUFFY
You'll heal.

Jason can't take any more of this.

JASON
Stop playing nursemaid with the
bloodsucking fiend from beyond
the grave. I need answers.

Dawn stands up, shielding both Spike and Buffy from Jason's view.

DAWN
We all do, but until she wakes up-

JASON
We don't need her to find out
what the hell he did.

SPIKE
Listen mate, I don't bloody know
her. I suggest you wait until
Sleeping Beauty cocks an eye.

JASON
And when the "bloody hell" will
that be?

He stands up, frustratingly useless. Nadya approaches him and lays a hand on his shoulder.

NADYA
Don't worry.

She sits in front of Devon and places her hands above Devon's head. Jason looks away.

JASON
Take a better look at her milk-dud. You did something.

DAWN
Maybe he didn't.

JASON
He's a vampire.

DAWN

Yeah, but she was emotional, which
is pretty odd to begin with. Spike
has a soul.

SAMUEL

(quite calmly)

Mmm. Did he have a soul nine years
ago?

All eyes move to Samuel.

JASON

Samuel?

SAMUEL

We didn't know the identity of
the vampire.

Buffy stands beside Dawn. They exchange puzzled looks.

Samuel looks past them to Spike. They lock eyes. Spike is
clueless.

SAMUEL

I've know you've killed so many
over the years... perhaps you
really don't remember. Do you
recall a man named Bastion Payne?

Dawn and Jason immediately recognise the name. They look at
Devon, still asleep despite Nadya's actions.

DAWN

Oh no.

BUFFY

(out of the loop)
What? Dawn. What is it?

Dawn turns on Spike.

DAWN

Did you? Did you kill him?

SPIKE

(low)

I've killed a lot.

SAMUEL
You should remember this one.
(stares Spike down)
He was a Watcher. He had two
companions. A man and a young
girl. Does it mean anything to you?

Spike nods slowly.

SPIKE
So who's she? A family member out
for revenge?

SAMUEL
No. She's the girl.

Spike stares at Devon. He chokes off a laugh.

SPIKE
No. That couldn't be her.
(off Samuel's very
serious face)
It definitely couldn't be her.

DAWN
(scared she already
knows)
Why not?

Spike looks down. Guilt is the order of the day.

SPIKE
That girl... I've seen grown oxen
of men die faster. Besides, this
girl is much older than that other
would have been.

SAMUEL
You would be surprised how many
paths there are to the same place.

He turns to Jason.

SAMUEL
I think it would be best if we
found a hotel.

JASON
I was just about to say the same
thing. Maybe she'll be okay if
she wakes up somewhere else. Far
from him.

NADYA (O.S)
She's not going to wake up.

Nadya presses her hand to Devon's forehead.

NADYA
It's like she's not here anymore.

Nadya is dead serious. Buffy frowns.

DAWN
Jason. No!

Jason GRABS Spike and lifts him up, made stronger by anger.
He pins Spike by the throat with his elbow.

JASON
You did this. If she doesn't wake
up, I'll kill you myself.

Buffy tears Jason away.

BUFFY
Stop it! This isn't helping.

Dawn holds Jason's arm. He steps back and moves to Devon.

DAWN
We'll fix it.
(pleads to Buffy)
It'll be okay?

BUFFY
It will.
(to Nadya; action-
Slayer mode)
I was in a coma once. My friend-

DAWN
When were you in a coma?

BUFFY
(evasive)
It doesn't matter. My friend was
able to go into my mind and bring
me back. Can you do that?

NADYA
Yes, I know several mind
manipulation spells, but I don't
have what I need here.

BUFFY
I'll take care of it.

She heads to the phone, but pauses as she moves past Jason.

BUFFY
I think she'll be more comfortable
in my room.

He glares at Spike; couldn't agree more.

EXT. SUMMER'S APARTMENT - LATER

A HAND knocks on the door.

Buffy opens it and ushers the person inside.

INT. SUMMER'S APARTMENT - SAME

Buffy shuts the door. Beside her, DAVID SPARKS, late twenties and looking like a lost boy in old man's clothing, hands Buffy a PACKAGE.

BUFFY
David. Thanks. I didn't know if
you had plans.

DAVID
(nervous)
No no. I wasn't doing anything.
Important. I had... free time.

Buffy smiles at his blustering. He's utterly besotted.

Dawn straightens up from the floor. She has a dust pan and broom, cleaning up some of the mess. Spike sits on the couch, prodding his sore leg.

Dawn eyes the exchange with brat-sister interest. Spike doesn't look happy to see the other man.

BUFFY
I'd better get this to where it's
needed.

She walks past Dawn and Spike, almost oblivious to anything else.

SPIKE
(calling after her)
Oh Sparks staying then?

He shakes his head.

SPIKE
Sparks. Dawn. Dawn. Sparks.

Dawn waves.

David frowns at Spike, noticing the injuries.

DAVID
(not particularly
interested)
I suppose this time you also
didn't almost get killed by a
Slayer. Was it a bear?

Spike grits his teeth. Dawn smiles.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Devon lies on the bed. Jason sits beside her, watching her face. Samuel helps Nadya shut all the blinds and light some CANDLES.

SAMUEL
And that's the procedure?

NADYA
Yes. It's simply a matter of wills.

JASON
(quiet)
Let me do it.

Nadya pauses in her actions. She turns toward him slowly.

NADYA
That's not a very good idea.

JASON
You just said it's easy.

NADYA
For me, but you...

JASON
You can't get me in there?

NADYA
It is possible, but-

JASON
Then let me be the one.

Nadya and Samuel exchange looks.

NADYA
It's too dangerous for you.

Jason stands up.

JASON

Name one other person, apart from
the lily-white undead in there,
who knows her enough to get a
reaction.

SAMUEL

That may be true, but if Nadya-

JASON

I'm going to do this.

NADYA

Not if I don't let you.

JASON

(calmly)
She won't listen to you.

NADYA

I can-

JASON

She won't listen to you. You can't
make her do anything she doesn't
want to.

Nadya knows this is true.

NADYA

I'm sorry Jason. You lack the
capacity. It takes exceptional
control of the mind to stay whole.
Her mind could overwhelm yours.
You would be trapped. Lost. It
could go wrong in so many ways.

JASON

I'll take that chance.

Nadya never takes her eyes off Jason.

BUFFY (O.S)

I have the uh... stuff.

She stands at the door with the package, not sure what she's
walked in to. Jason, arms crossed, doesn't budge.

NADYA

All right. You can come in with me.

EXT. BEDROOM, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Buffy and Samuel emerge from the bedroom. Samuel shuts the door behind them. Buffy looks like she is carefully trying not to say anything. Samuel notices and smiles.

SAMUEL
Is there something you want to ask?

BUFFY
Is she right? About the Slayer
line. Did I break it?

They pause.

SAMUEL
Well, no one can really...
(off Buffy's look)
It is a possibility.

BUFFY
Why didn't Giles tell me?

SAMUEL
Because this is a war, and in all
wars, sacrifices must be made to
stop the enemy from advancing.
You could not have held ground
any other way.

He touches her shoulder, trying to allay her new guilt and fears.

SAMUEL
The Watchers Council will ensure
the line goes on. Somehow. We
always have.

BUFFY
Yeah, but that's why the First
Evil took it out, right? No
Watchers, no solutions.

Samuel doesn't have an answer.

BUFFY
After these keys are found and
the threat quashed, will you come
back with Dawn and help us?

SAMUEL
I left because I lost a Slayer.
To return to honour her... I
believe Kendra deserves that much
from me.

They share a look; a look of remembrance.

BUFFY
It's strange. I can count the
number of Watchers left on my
hands, but Dawn found you when
she needed to. A Watcher was
exactly the right person to help
her. Thank you.

Samuel looks toward the bedroom door.

SAMUEL
Perhaps it was fate.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nadya and Jason sit opposite each other on the floor. Eyes closed.

There are all manner of interesting HERBS burning in bowls; the candles burn in wispy curls of colour.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

David helps Samuel, Buffy and Dawn repair as much of Devon's destruction as they are able. Some things are definitely lying in the toss-out pile. Spike is uncomfortable and bored on the couch, but he's found something to amuse him.

SPIKE
Missed a spot there Sparks. Might want to put some more elbow grease there too.

Dawn makes googly eyes in relation to David at Buffy. Buffy motions for her to cut it out. Spike just glares. David and Samuel, perfect gentlemen, are oblivious.

SPIKE
(waving toward the apartment hallway)
So, is that going to take long?

Dawn and Buffy both glare at him. Dawn glances in the direction of the hallway, worried.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A FLAME FLARES on one of the candles.

Jason JERKS as if taking a blast of cold water to the face, but keeps his eyes closed.

The room seems to ROTATE AROUND them. Faster and faster. Jason is getting increasingly more uncomfortable, squeezing his eyes in an effort to keep them shut. He's struggling against a dizzying force of motion that isn't actually happening. It's almost too much for him--

-- Nadya's eyes SHOOT OPEN - PITCH BLACK

Jason COLLAPSES.

Nadya looks at him, confused, then angry.

EXT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Nadya steps into the centre of the room; pale. All eyes are on her.

NADYA
They're on their own.

FADE OUT.

END ACT II

ACT III

FADE IN:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Jason lies face down on a grey floor.

ON HIS EYES

Snapping open.

He places his hands on the floor, palm down, and lifts himself up and to his feet. What he sees isn't what he expected. He looks around him, trying to fathom exactly what he's looking at.

ON THE ROOM

It's a crusty classy drawing room; the kind that frequently panders to an interior decorator's whim. There are a few high-back leather reading chairs. A novelty, but very expensive, globe that doubles as a drinks cabinet. The room is complete with resplendent fireplace and overindulgent antiques.

Jason's confusion is caused by the fact that the room is in BLACK AND WHITE.

It SHIMMERS at the edges as though it were an old film, complete with grainy distortion sporadically littering the scene.

Jason looks down at himself. He is in COLOUR and completely grain free.

FEMALE (O.S)
... your daughter.

MALE (O.S)
Our daughter. This is nothing serious to worry about.

Jason turns around in the direction of the voices. In shock, he sees--

SAMUEL AND NADYA

Enter the room. They are also BLACK AND WHITE, brightly lit.

Nadya is wearing a stylish, reflective satin gown, her hair coifed to perfection. Though the colours aren't apparent, it is clear she is likely wearing dark red lipstick.

Samuel wears a stylish business suit, very unlike him. He no longer has a Jamaican accent. Nadya's English accent is more pronounced and refined.

Nadya heads straight to the drinks globe and prepares herself a fancy drink, heavy on the alcohol.

NADYA

(dryly)

Nothing serious? She's been to three different schools in two years. Not to mention her string of failed home tutors-

Jason walks among them. He waves a hand in front of their faces. No reaction.

SAMUEL

(sitting down with a newspaper)

Darling, I believe you fired her last tutor.

NADYA

Margaret is already enough trouble without some crazy old loon filling her head with ideas about monsters and fey folk.

(downs her drink; makes another)

You should just do what I said in the first place. Send her away to that Swiss boarding school.

They'll get to the bottom of her problem.

(low, almost as if a hope)

Or beat it out of her.

Samuel doesn't take her seriously.

SAMUEL

You know the public prefer the face of a family man.

(MORE)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I can't very well do that with both my children in other parts of the world.

(steadily reasoning)

Are you sure you don't want to stay, Niall? If I had at least one child here, we could send your sister away.

Nadya gives a small smirk and looks right at Jason. The room seems to spin, but Jason is unaffected by it. He is now also in BLACK AND WHITE, wearing a NAVAL UNIFORM.

JASON

(barely contained anger)

If you're so desperate to get rid of her, give her to me. It's not likely you'll miss either one of us.

Nadya's smile widens. She walks up to him, a cat on the hunt.

NADYA

Niall, don't be so silly. What would she do on a big boat? With a penniless... what shall we call you now? Seaman?

Jason stares her down. She finds it amusing.

JASON

I'm coming back for her.

SAMUEL

Well, let's not worry about the future just yet.

(stands up)

Let's just be thankful, your rebellion...

(points at the uniform)

... won't besmirch our name. In the meantime, you'd better call her down for supper. She's confined to her room again.

JASON

Why? What's your problem this time?

Nadya shoves herself in front of him.

NADYA
 You really should stop thinking
 of your sister as an angel. The
 evidence is sorely lacking in her
 defence.

Jason returns the glare.

JASON
 She's your daughter. Mother.

He swiftly turns and heads out the door. On the other side
 of it-

STAIRCASE

Young Margaret sits on the steps. She is in COLOUR. Clearly,
 she heard everything.

She looks at Jason for a moment, upset and trying not to
 show it. He holds out an arm for her. She starts to cry as
 she rushes toward him and jumps into a hug.

MARGARET
 Don't go. Please don't go.

JASON
 You know I have to.

The little girl shakes her head against his shoulder. He
 shushes her and moves the hair out of her face tenderly.

JASON
 I will be back. I promise. Once I
 know I can, I'll take you away
 from them. And you know what we'll
 be?

(big smile)
 You know right?

MARGARET
 (small brave voice)
 The only Devons that matter.

JASON
 That's right.
 (glaring at the door)
 The only ones that matter. They're
 just names. We're real. We matter.

She nods bravely.

Jason GRIMACES IN PAIN--

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

And is THROWN against a wall. The room is dark and naturally lit from the exterior. It's enough to see that it is beautifully decorated, but hardly practical for a child. DOLLS are in display boxes on shelves.

Jason is in colour, as much as moonlight allows, wearing his usual clothes. He rubs his palm against his head; there's a slight tremor in his hand.

JASON
That was... something.

He gets his bearings and heads toward--

MARGARET

kneeling on the floor beside her window, stares out at a forest. Silent TEARS run down her face.

She looks down at a POSTCARD in her hand. There is a DOCK on it.

Biting her lip, she places it beside her, and resumes her vigil out the window.

JASON
Okay. Dev?

He projects his voice upwards, for lack of anything better to do.

JASON
I know this whole thing is probably pertinent to Albino Bob, but I think... I think we should go back now. That whole changing clothes thing... that didn't feel too good. So we should...
(off something out the window)
What are those?

Little Margaret gets up and opens the window so that she can get a better look at--

SMALL LIGHTS NEARING FROM THE FOREST

The lights come closer to the window, before zipping off again. They near again then shoot away.

Margaret looks around guiltily.

JASON
No no no no no. Don't follow the
lights. Lights are bad.

Margaret climbs out of the window.

JASON
I knew you wouldn't listen to me.

Jason hurries to follow. He climbs onto the windowsill and out onto--

THE LEDGE

He crawls along the ledge, which becomes--

THE GROUND

He gets up to his feet and looks behind him at--

THE DEVON HOUSE

Austere and looming. A great, big statement on perfectly manicured grounds.

Turning towards the forest, he just sees A WISP OF A SKIRT as Margaret runs into the forest after the lights.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

He pushes through the dense trees. It's claustrophobic. There's no sound, no openness, just the arms of trees.

He plunges ahead and out into an open space, where he sees--

EXT. DEVON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Margaret stares in complete horror at--

A FIRE

The entire house is on fire. She and Jason stand alone and watch.

Jason turns and stares at her.

JASON
(realising)
You were all alone.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Nadya sits on a chair across from Spike, fiddling with her hands.

Spike, still lounging on a sofa, nursing his injured leg, nods toward the bedroom door.

SPIKE
So she going to be all right then?

Nadya doesn't look too hopeful.

SPIKE
You never know. Humans can be stronger than they look. Yeah! She'll pull through.

NADYA
I'm not worried about her. She can take care of herself.

SPIKE
The upstart? Those hero types are all alike. Get battered down and beaten up and still save the day.

NADYA
Do heroes often get their brains turned into mush?

Dawn joins them, sitting down beside Spike.

DAWN
How bad could it get for him?

Nadya sighs deeply.

NADYA
Do you know what kind of power it takes to enforce any kind of change on another person's psyche? She could destroy his mind.

DAWN
She won't hurt him.

Nadya locks eyes with Dawn. Dawn looks down.

DAWN
She doesn't have the kind of power that you do.

NADYA
(thoughtful)
I wouldn't be so sure.
(looks at Spike's
injuries)
Jason was right. She would never
have let me in her head. I felt
it the second he connected and
she threw me out.

DAWN
So she let Jason in. That's a
good thing, right?

NADYA
She didn't let him in. She let
someone weaker in.
(standing up)
I need to check on them.

DAWN
But you said, there's nothing you
can...

Nadya is quickly out of earshot as she heads for the bedroom.

SPIKE
What is it with you Summers women
finding walking oddities?

Dawn glares at him, affronted, but he's staring past her at--
Buffy, David and Samuel are in deep discussion.

Dawn watches them for a moment.

DAVID
This Melarna could be a more
modern entity or a being that
hasn't made a reputation for
herself yet. I'll run it by my
contacts.

Buffy touches his hand lightly in thanks.

Spike snorts under his breath. Dawn turns back to him. She
watches him closely for a moment.

DAWN
Did you come back for her?

Spike ponders the question.

SPIKE

No, Niblet. That tug stopped pulling the ship long before I got here.

(small laugh)

No. I came back here for the Slayers. Make sure they're all they can be.

DAWN

Why?

SPIKE

Because the next time a law firm throws an army at me, it's going to be a right good brawl.

DAWN

(quiet)

How bad was it?

Spike looks across at Buffy, almost with regret.

SPIKE

Enough to know that fighting the good fight is worth more than what a man wants. Even more than what a dead man wants.

DAWN

Sounds like your time with Angel taught--

SPIKE

(quickly)

Angel didn't do anything. I'm my own man. A lone hero. A champion. Yeah that's right. Watch out for Spike!

(off her unimpressed look)

We all have our places in the world. We live or die on what we choose to be. I choose this.

DAWN

A vampire helping a Slayer.

SPIKE

No. A hunter.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

MUSIC: FIRESTARTER - PRODIGY

Couples walk along the street, hand in hand, enjoying some late night shopping. There are CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS strewn along the various shops and street poles.

Margaret, AGE 9, in grimy street clothes and with a backpack on her back, RUNS down the street as if the devil itself were after her.

She DODGES pedestrians and bystanders. Some show annoyance at her behaviour, some laugh as though it were cute. Most ignore her.

She breathes hard, looks like she's tiring. She sees the CROWDS getting thicker ahead, nowhere to run, she ducks into--

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

She runs toward a DUMPSTER and hides behind it. She leans against it and tries to catch her breath. The only sound she hears is her breath.

Her hand reaches up to touch her neck; it comes away with BLOOD from a small neck wound.

She holds her breath, and strains to listen. Hearing nothing, she slowly chances to look around the dumpster and into the alley.

There is no one there.

Relieved, she leans back against the dumpster and breathes normally.

SOMETHING LEAPS OVER HER HEAD FROM BEHIND THE DUMPSTER

Margaret YELPS as it lands in front of her. A HAND covers her mouth.

It's Jason.

He wears a grunge-inspired ensemble, crowned with a tattered NAVAL JACKET, customised with various trophies.

JASON

Magsy, Magsy, Magsy. Why are you running? Don't you know your big brother?

MARGARET

They said you were dead.

JASON

A lie, so they could keep you in
that place and get more money.

MARGARET

They said they were waiting for
our uncle.

JASON

He's never going to come. You
know what that means? You have to
go back to that place. Do you
want to go back there?

MARGARET

(panicked)

No!

He shushes her and wipes some hair out of her face.

JASON

I'm the only one who loves you.
You know that right?

MARGARET

You bit me.

Jason tenderly reaches for her. She recoils.

JASON

Margaret, my Margaret. I'm sorry.
I'm just... I'm sick.

(holds her shoulders
gently)

I'm sick and I need medicine. You
have it. In you. I didn't mean to
scare you or make you hurt. I
just need the medicine.

MARGARET

Can't we go to a doctor?

JASON

No. Not for me. Not anymore. Some
sicknesses can't be fixed. You
know that, don't you?

She gives a small nod.

JASON

Don't worry, baby. Other people will give me medicine. But your medicine makes me strong. Better. You want me to get better, don't you?

Margaret nods slowly.

JASON

I know you do. I promise, it won't hurt after a while and I'll take care of you, and when you're older, you'll be just like me. Do you know why?

She shakes her head.

JASON

Because we're going to be the only Devon's that matter. Forever. You'd like that, won't you?

Margaret looks down; she doesn't know. Jason holds a hand out for her; it's a gesture of choice.

JASON

I'll look after you. Just like always. I promise.

Margaret stares at his hand. Tentatively, unsure and afraid, she reaches out for it.

JASON LURCHES FORWARD against something from behind. The power of it FORCES HIM TO REVERT to his usual self. He falls to the floor, clutching his chest in extreme pain.

He rolls onto his side with some effort, breathing painfully, and sees--

NIALL DEVON (20), a beautiful face that personifies trust, TURN TO DUST. Margaret clutches at empty air. She whimpers in shock, not really knowing what she's seeing, not quite believing.

Jason watches her, saddened by her loss.

In front of Margaret--

DAWN

She wears a similar outfit to Sunaya and has scars in the same places. In her hand, A STAKE.

She crouches in front of Margaret, and offers a hand.

Margaret stares at it.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dawn YAWNS and slouches on the table.

A CUP of something steaming is placed in front of her. She looks up.

Buffy smiles and hops onto a kitchen seat beside Dawn.

BUFFY

I think I'll forgo my no-caffeine-for-Dawn-ever rule, just this once.

DAWN

Thanks. I'd forgotten how boring these late night vigils were.

BUFFY

(fishing)

You don't stay up late on all these other worlds you've been to?

Dawn already knows Buffy's plan.

DAWN

Nope. It's all pretty boring stuff. Open portal. Zhoop. Get key. Next please. This is the most excitement we've had.

BUFFY

Waiting for your friend to wake up is the most excitement you've had? Why don't I believe you?

Dawn comes clean.

DAWN

Buffy. I can't promise you that this is the safest thing for me, but it's nothing like what you do. I don't hunt monsters or save people. I just do what I have to.

BUFFY

Now see, that's where it sounds like exactly what I do. I wanted you to have the life I didn't have. I was so proud of you going to college. Instead, I get Giles telling me there's someone else after you and you didn't want to wait for me.

Dawn grimaces.

DAWN

You ever think that maybe I wanted a normal life for you too? You already died for me once. Now there's thirteen other keys. I don't think I'm willing to take the chance again.

BUFFY

(reaching for her)

Dawn.

Dawn shakes her head.

DAWN

Can I ask you a question?

BUFFY

Sure.

DAWN

Who the heck is David? I mean, he's a honey - and has a pulse, so yay you - but he wasn't here when I left. I thought you were happy with the Independent woman power chord after you and the Immortal split. Be honest. Is David a mail order bride?

Buffy glares. Dawn raises bemused eyebrows.

BUFFY

David is the Professor of occult and religious studies at the university where I take night classes.

DAWN

I didn't know you were taking classes.

BUFFY

Well, someone else dropped out of college. I had to do something to keep me from beating up every world-travelling goon I could to hitch-hike to wherever you were.

Dawn grins sheepishly.

BUFFY

(peeks at David)
But we're not... yet. Or maybe not ever. I don't know.

DAWN

Okay. What's his dark secret?

BUFFY

It's nothing like that. It's just different.

Dawn waves for more info.

BUFFY

The world won't end if I'm with him. It won't end if I'm not. He doesn't care that I have more muscles than him. I don't care that he's so smart I'm like Neanderthal girl. He's... almost-normal. With perks.

(realises)

And I can't believe I'm discussing my love life with my little sister.

DAWN

Absence makes the heart grow fonder and the conversations juicier.

BUFFY

I'd rather you weren't gone at all.

DAWN

It'll be over soon. And I'll be back, safe and sound.

CRASH

Dawn winces.

SPIKE (O.S)

Slayer! Get in here! We've got company.

Buffy looks at Dawn.

DAWN
Maybe, it's possible, my life is
a little like yours.

FADE OUT.

END ACT III

ACT IV

FADE IN:

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Samuel, Nadya and David try and batter back a few SAVORTES who have entered the apartment. The FRONT DOOR'S LOCK is broken.

Buffy and Dawn run into the room, grabbing weapons from the shelves. Buffy picks up a sword. Dawn, a hammer of some sort.

BUFFY

Spike, hurry.

Spike turns and glares at her as he tries to hobble toward the fray. He also has a sword. Buffy gets into it with a vengeance.

DAWN

(taking a whack at a
Savorte)

How'd they find us so quickly?

Nadya ZAPS a Savorte out the door with the same sort of energy she used on Devon.

NADYA

The cloaking spells are all intact.

Spike rams a Savorte with the back end of his sword, shoving it into a few others and toppling them all out the front door.

SPIKE

How do you think they bloody found you? They knew where you would go.

DAVID

Barricade!

David pushes a heavy side-unit toward the door. Buffy rushes in to help, using it to push the demons back.

Dawn use her hammer and bludgeons a few Savortes back behind the barricade.

Samuel pushes the door from behind as David and Buffy steadily lodge the side-unit against it, shutting it.

DAWN

What do you mean they'd knew where
we'd go? They don't even know us.

BUFFY

Dawn, watch out!

Dawn narrowly dodges a Savortes' clawed hand grasping through the narrowing gap of the door. David reaches out with his hand and concentrates.

The Savortes' HAND IGNITES. It pulls it back in shock.

David and Buffy jam the door shut with the unit.

Dawn looks at Buffy.

DAWN

(whispers)

Almost normal?

(louder, to Spike)

You mean they were watching this place?

SPIKE

You're the Slayer's sister. Your first stop was the Slayer's Watcher, right before you went off with a bunch of complete strangers looking for evil treasure. Honestly, it's right out of the villain handbook. Where else would you go when you needed help?

(points at Samuel)

His dinky library? No offence.

SAMUEL

None taken. I do see your point. Dawn would be the easiest of us to predict.

DAWN

I'm bread crumbs and here I thought I was easy to miss.

SPIKE

One thing you need to know about nasty things, Niblet...

INT. CRYPT - DAY

SPIKE (V.O.)

They always find you.

Margaret (11) gently places a SCROLL into a waterproof container.

The crypt is dark and lit by lamps strewn around the cavern. A tomb is open, but instead of a body, it houses scrolls and papers.

SAMUEL

Nicely done Margaret. Very good.

Margaret smiles widely at Samuel and screws on the lid of the container. He is wearing the EXACT SAME TARTAN WAIST COAT that Bastion Payne wore earlier.

MARGARET

Are we taking these back to the Council?

SAMUEL

Of course my dear. They things they speak of are very important to us and the Council will see it too.

MARGARET

Why?

SAMUEL

(touches his nose)
Proof. Definitive proof.

MARGARET

Of what?

Samuel shakes his head and smiles.

JASON

Still being secretive, huh?

Jason, garbed even more so as an Indiana Jones clone, slips into the crypt from a jagged opening in the wall. Stone and bricks lie around the entrance, as though the wall was knocked down.

JASON

(musses up Margaret's hair as he passes)

Heya kiddo.

MARGARET

Hello Nick.

She blushes and ducks her head, peeking at him under large starry-eyed lashes.

SAMUEL

(nods)

Nicholas. Find anything valuable
this time?

JASON

Just the lovely aroma of the
nearby sewage system. Nah, I think
the only thing of value is in
here, but old stories ain't much
use to me.

SAMUEL

I'm sorry this trip wasn't as
profitable as the last.

JASON

Eh. The Council still pays me,
even if I don't find anything.

(prodding)

You sure this stuff is what you're
looking for.

SAMUEL

Most definitely. It is compelling
evidence of both...

(stares at Margaret)

... it's what I have been hoping
to find.

Jason stares at Margaret too. Gets the hint.

JASON

(sincere)

I'm really glad for you.

Margaret knows they are talking about her. She frowns, not
knowing why. She lifts up a box of waterproof containers.

MARGARET

Want me to take these up to the
others?

SAMUEL

Yes please, Margaret. Thank you.

She starts off with the box towards the opening.

SAMUEL

I'm sure the local museum would
prefer an anonymous tip about an
unearthed crypt with ancient
manuscripts.

JASON
(chuckles)
You ain't taking more than this?

SAMUEL
No. I'm going to have a devil of
a time explaining this all to
British customs anyway. I don't
suppose your contacts-

MARGARET SCREAMS.

Spike, in full VAMPIRE FACE, holds her by the neck. The containers from the box scatter on the floor.

JASON
Let her go.

SPIKE
No, see. That's not how this works.
I have a plan. This is step one.
Step two is you finding the right
answer.

SAMUEL
Answer to what?

SPIKE
That's the spirit.

He tosses down a BRICK with a NOTE wrapped around it.

SPIKE
I was going to throw that in and
threaten to torture you to death.
Watchers not known for tolerance
to blood loss. But this...
(grips Margaret)
... much better improvisation.
Tomorrow. Midnight. Be there, or
I have lunch.

Spike pulls her away.

Jason runs forward, trips and--

INT. WAREHOUSE, OFFICE - NIGHT

-- falls onto a wooden floor. He is himself again, visibly
paler and weaker than before. He pushes himself upright.

It's a standard wooden warehouse office with a collapsed
desk and more layers of dust than any old tomb.

Margaret, equally grimy now, sits on the window ledge, using a broken piece of the metal piping used in the drawers of a desk.

Jason stumbles to his feet. He can barely walk a straight line.

JASON

(mumbling)

Dev. If you can hear me, I don't think this is the kind of thing you need to be remembering.
Something bad happened here. You have to wake up.

Margaret manages to pry open the bottom of the window. With extreme effort she hoists it up a short distance. She keeps tugging, but can't lift anymore. The gap is quite small, but just enough to let her through.

JASON

Devon, wake up.

He collapses to his knees as Margaret starts to crawl through the small gap.

Jason sees it coming before she does.

SPIKE

Now what's going on here?

He hoists Margaret backwards by her leg. She tumbles to the floor of the office and gives a yelp in pain.

SPIKE

Can't have the hostage flying free now, can we? How am I going to fix this? Oh. I know.

He grabs the metal piping and plunges downward with it.

Jason's eyes widen in complete shock as Margaret SCREAMS.

JASON

(whispers)

No.

Spike's smile is huge; he likes what he's done.

SPIKE

There. Just like a butterfly.

He begins to laugh. Jason tries to take a swing at him-

INT. WAREHOUSE, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

He falls into the driver's seat of a car. He's wearing "Nick's" clothes, complete with a battered fedora and leather jacket. Samuel sits beside him, both tense and jittery.

SAMUEL

There he is.

They nod at each other and get out the car. Rain pounds on the corrugated iron of the warehouse.

Spike stands in front of the car headlights. In the shadows, more vampires move around. It's too dark to see them clearly.

SPIKE

Glad to see you could make it.

SAMUEL

Where is she?

SPIKE

Napping.

SAMUEL

You will get nothing until we have her.

SPIKE

Oh all right.

Spike snaps his fingers and a vampire carries an unconscious Margaret into the lights. There are two large blood stains on her clothes. A massive one on her leg, the other at her neck. She is pale and looks close to death.

Samuel gasps in horror. Jason's knuckles whiten on the side of his door.

SAMUEL

You said you wouldn't hurt her.

SPIKE

No I didn't. She tried to be a bird.

FEMALE (O.S)

Nasty bird trying to fly away.

SPIKE

That's right. But she was a tasty snack, wasn't she pet?

Drusilla, weak, ethereal and wispy, glides toward Spike.

DRUSILLA

All ripe and strong. Made me warm
inside. Made me like a tree.

SPIKE

Yes she did. All strong and
upright.

(explaining casually)
My pet hasn't walked in an age,
you see. Mob.

DRUSILLA

Nasty mob. They got stuck in my
teeth.

She growls like a cat and flexes her hand like a claw.

SPIKE

Didn't matter how many strapping
lads I fed her...

(strokes her cheek)

Never got stronger. Until now. A
little girl. Who knew?

(off Samuel's
revulsion)

Maybe I don't need your answer
anymore. Maybe I'll just keep the
girl. Isn't that right, my heart?

Drusilla wafts away from Spike and nears the vampire holding Margaret. Her hands hovers over the sleeping girl's head.

DRUSILLA

Margaret. Such a pretty name.
It's not her own anymore. She's
going to leave a nasty mess.

SPIKE

(considers)

Hmm. I suppose she is a bit far-
gone.

(waves)

Give me what I want.

SAMUEL

Not until she's safe.

SPIKE

Oh come on. I have a plan. You
have to come to the party.

SAMUEL

Du Lac.

SPIKE
What the bloody hell is that?
(off Samuel's resolve
face)
Fine.

The vampire carrying Margaret goes forward to meet Jason.
He takes her and places her gently in the back seat of the car.
Jason nods at Samuel and gets in the driver's seat.

SPIKE
I kept up my end.

SAMUEL
(backing away)
There is a book. Guarded by the
Slayer. On the Hellmouth.

SPIKE
(smiles)
Slayer.

SAMUEL
You can only get it with my help.
I will bring it to you if you
promise to never come near her
again.

SPIKE
Sounds reasonable.

Samuel continues to back away.

SAMUEL
Wha-

Spike has Samuel by the throat. The movement was too sudden
for any of them to see.

Jason grips the steering wheel. Margaret's eyes flutter open.

SPIKE
See. I think... you're just going
to warn the Slayer to expect my
company. Can't have that.

With no care at all, Spike swiftly SNAPS Samuel's neck.

SPIKE
Might ruin the surprise of her
life.

Samuel drops to the ground, eyes wide open.

Spike looks at Drusilla. They smile, in love.

Jason FLOORS the car into reverse.

Spike and Drusilla link hands, ignoring the vampires running past them in pursuit.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Jason floors the car through the rain.

Margaret is beside him, drifting in and out of consciousness. He's really worried. She's not going to make it.

JASON
Hang in there kid.

LIGHTS blind him in the rear view mirror.

-- A CAR RAMS his from behind--

He corrects the car as it slams into a bridge guard.

JASON
Son of a-

He tries to outrun the pursuing car.

The car behind him accelerates and bashes into him from the side.

Jason tries to compensate, but the wheels lock and aquaplane across the wet road.

It HITS THE BARRIER--

--FLIPS OVER the side of the bridge

Jason raises his hands to his face as the CAR PLUNGES INTO A RIVER.

The WINDSCREEN CRACKS with a loud bang--

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jason GASPS FOR BREATH. He clutches his hand to his chest and falls back onto hard floor.

JASON
(weakly)
Devon.
(eyes closing)
You're killing me.

He passes out.

INT. SUMMER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Windows from the apartment are SMASHED. There are a handful of dead Savortes littered along the floor. Everyone is fighting.

Buffy stabs a Savorte.

BUFFY
Do you have any idea how much windows cost?

She stabs it again.

BUFFY
(seeing more come in)
How many of these things are there?

Dawn clobbers one sneaking behind Buffy.

DAWN
They're like ants in that way.

Nadya hits one with a particularly nasty LIGHTNING bolt. The others back out of the windows, retreating.

Buffy sizes up the situation

BUFFY
Okay. Spike.

Buffy joins him. Dawn watches closely.

BUFFY
We need to get the other Slayers over here and set up round the clock watches. Top priority is to protect the keys.

SPIKE
Right. What about you?

BUFFY
I'm going with Dawn. We'll get the rest and bring them back here.

SPIKE
Here might be a little exposed.

David is now paying attention too.

BUFFY
You're right. We need to move base.

SPIKE
And the training?

BUFFY
I can't think of that now. Maybe
one of the others...

Dawn frowns.

SPIKE
None are as good as you.

BUFFY
They'll have to be. This is my job.

Spike shrugs and walks off, still limping.

David approaches Buffy.

DAVID
You're leaving?

BUFFY
(regretful)
Yeah.

DAVID
Will you ever come back?

BUFFY
I... I don't know.
(lies)
Maybe.

Dawn stares down at the hammer she wields.

INT. OVAL ROOM - DAY

MUSIC: BRITNEY SPEARS - BABY ONE MORE TIME

Jason opens his eyes and looks around. It's a white oval room. Overly bright.

The music WARBLES AND DISTORTS. Speeding up and slowing down. Sometimes sounding like it's under water.

Jason blinks against the brightness and gets up. A WOMAN in a white dress dances in the corner. A nurse. With all the glare, Jason can't see her face.

To the side, he sees Devon - the Devon he knows. She sits in a wheelchair and wears a white gown. Her image INTERCUTS with Margaret (13), sitting in the chair, also in the white gown.

Devon stares at a blank wall. Jason approaches her, but so do--

FACELESS PEOPLE

They wear white coats, doctors, but they have featureless faces. Their voices mumble, only snatches of it become understandable over the progressively worse music.

FACELESS DOCTOR
(eerie whispers)
... trauma... fascinating case...
should be dead... abuse...
catatonic... two years.

Jason collapses to his knees in front of Devon. He takes her hands. She stares ahead.

JASON
Devon.

The sounds grow LOUDER. An increasing cacophony that makes it harder for Jason to concentrate.

JASON
Please Devon.

SEXLESS VOICE
You can't remain here. Your life
will bring back another. One who
will serve.

A BRINGER REACHES OUT TO STRANGLE JASON

He falls back.

Behind him, the oval room shifts to a room with rows of brightly coloured vials. The song WORSENS. The BOTTLES SHAKE.

Determined, Jason approaches Devon again, still sitting unmoving in her wheel chair.

JASON
Devon.

RARGAR (O.S)
You have power.

JASON
Devon!

RARGAR (O.S)
I heal the body. Your mind must
make you walk.

JASON
(competing with the
sound)
Devon! Devon! Devon!
(shouting)
Margaret!

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Silence.

Jason stands in the empty warehouse.

On one side of him, Devon in the wheelchair.

On the other, a staircase that leads nowhere; just juts out of the floor. Young Margaret sits on a step.

Jason looks between the two. He doesn't move.

JASON
You're an idiot.

He looks at both versions of Devon for a reaction. Neither does anything.

JASON
You think I don't get it. I do. I understand the character-swapping anvil dropping perfectly. Everyone you've ever loved has died. I am so sorry for that. I'm sorry for what you've lost.

He looks upward.

JASON
You're still an idiot.

Young Margaret frowns at him.

JASON

You can kick my ass without
batting an eyelid.

(softer)

You can break my heart without
breaking stride. With all that
power, you really planning on
letting me die like them? Are you?

He waits, and when nothing comes, he closes his eyes.

MARGARET

I can't stop it.

His eyes shoot open. Only Margaret is speaking. Devon is still unmoving.

DEVON (V.O.)

I don't want things to happen.

MARGARET

Bad things.

DEVON (V.O.)

But they do.

MARGARET

Again and again.

DEVON (V.O.)

I can't escape what I am.

JASON

Then don't.

The silence echoes.

JASON

Don't escape. Don't avoid. Don't give up. Fight it. Use it. Break it. God, Devon, anything. You're not alone. You don't have to be. You've lived through all this. You're the strongest person I know. Prove it.

He holds out his hand to Margaret.

JASON

Come with me.

Margaret looks up.

MARGARET
No. It isn't my time yet.
(turns toward Devon)
But you can have her.

Jason sees one moment of Devon in her wheelchair before--

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

His eyes snap open. He's still on the floor.

Devon's slowly wakes up on the bed.

Jason pushes against something.

JASON
What-

SPIKE
Sorry about that.

There is a dead Savorte lying on top of Jason. There is another closer to Devon. Jason pushes the body off of him and locks eyes with Devon. They stare at each other for a moment.

Spike tries to discretely leave the room.

Devon notices him. She sees his sword, covered in demon blood, and regards the dead Savortes again. She looks away from Spike as he leaves the room.

INT. SUMMER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Everyone cleans themselves up after a hard battle. Dawn is oddly still and contemplative.

BUFFY
That should be the last of them
until their reinforcements arrive.

NADYA
If their reinforcements arrive.
It's possible their masters are
in another dimension and these
are the only ones watching this
place.

BUFFY
Then luck would be on our side.
Let's try and end this quickly.

Samuel smiles widely as he sees Devon and Jason exit the bedroom. Both look like utter crap: pale and shaky.

Nadya gives Jason a dazzling smile in reply to his nod. She's happy to see him intact.

DAWN
(all business)
Jason.

JASON
Yeah.

DAWN
You said you knew where we could keep the keys safe.

He nods. Buffy frowns. Seeing that, Jason leads Devon away to the couch.

BUFFY
Dawn?

Dawn takes a deep breath. The others politely take the hint and wanders off elsewhere to let the sisters talk in peace.

BUFFY
Dawn?

DAWN
You're not coming with me.

BUFFY
Yes I am.

DAWN
(quietly strong)
No. You're not. I had to come here to figure that out. You're my sister and my hero. It made sense for me to let you save me.

BUFFY
And I want to-

DAWN
It's not your job anymore. I'm not your job. You already have one.

Buffy shakes her head.

DAWN

If she's right. If this is the one time that the Slayers can make a difference, then it has to last. I can't think of anyone else who can make that happen. You have to stay. You have to teach them how to fight, how to live.

(touching Buffy's hair)

The hardest thing in this world is being the one left behind. I'm sorry, but it's what I have to do. I will come back.

(an order)

So you make sure my home is waiting for me.

BUFFY

I can't let you go. You're my little sister.

DAWN

I'm also the Key.

(thinks)

And that's not such a bad thing anymore.

Buffy understands. She pulls Dawn into a hug.

DAWN

(still in the hug)

But can you do me one favour?

BUFFY

(through tears)

Yes.

DAWN

(waving at the dead demons)

It wouldn't be a bad thing if you took care of as many of these guys as you could. That's not what I do.

The two sisters smile and join the others, as they clean up the apartment.

OFF THE HAPPY MOMENT OF DOMESTIC BLISS

FADE OUT.

END SHOW