

**BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**

"The Offering"

by  
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

1

SLAM! The double doors leading into the corridor fly open, revealing a gurney with a writhing, howling ANYA lying on it, pushed along by a DOCTOR, two NURSES and a frantic-looking XANDER.

ANYA  
(through gritted teeth)  
I can't have the baby yet! I was in  
the middle of a conversation!  
Xander!!

XANDER  
I'm here, honey, I'm here!

ANYA  
Xander, get Marie! It's important!  
I have to finish talking to her  
about-

Anya is cut off as another contraction hits her, and she YELLS in pain, grabbing Xander's hand and squeezing it as tight as she can.

Xander, too, then starts to YELL in pain, prising Anya's fingernails out of his skin as the gurney turns a corner, out of sight.

We stay looking at the doors as BUFFY, WILLOW, GILES, MARIE and SOFIA hurry through, all in various stages of distress as they try to keep up with Anya's entourage.

BUFFY  
Is it normal to scream this much?

GILES  
I'm afraid so...

MARIE  
My sister howled the whole of New Cross Hospital back home down for nine bloody hours when she had her daughter, I have a feeling Anya's just getting started!

SOFIA  
Is she gonna be okay?

WILLOW  
Well, here's hoping...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOFIA

I mean... Well, you know how she wasn't human, then was, then wasn't, then was, then was dead, then a ghost, then came back...

(thinks)

Did I get that right? You told me on the way over, but I might have missed something...

WILLOW

(sighs)

No, that's about right.

SOFIA

Right. So, is all that good for the baby? I mean, is this going to be a... normal birth?

The others slow down for a beat - they'd never stopped to consider this.

Another SCREAM from off camera hurries them all up again.

BUFFY

I guess we're just gonna have to wait and see!

Buffy leads the others on down the corridor, before we carry on into:

2 INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY.

2

Anya's gurney is wheeled into the middle of the spacious, clinically white painted room, and Anya's eyes bulge as she sees the metal stirrups waiting for her.

ANYA

What are those things?!? Xander, this is no time for kinky sex games, I'm having our baby now!

XANDER

No, Anya, those are for your ankles!

ANYA

(shocked)

What?! Didn't you hear what I just said?

The Doctor, a middle-aged, balding male with glasses, lays a hand across Anya's brow, checking her temperature, before talking to her in a calm voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

Mrs. Harris, please try to relax!  
This is all perfectly normal, it's  
all here to help get the baby out  
as easily as possible.

ANYA

(off stirrups)  
Yes, but with those? What am I  
supposed to do, squeeze hard enough  
and hope she just pops out of  
there?

DOCTOR

That's not what-

ANYA

You can't fool me, I watched that  
awful 'Ally McBeal' programme! She  
had a dream about this, where she  
was firing dozens of-

Another contraction keeps Anya busy, and Xander looks around helplessly as the two nurses start gathering the various tools needed for the job around them.

Xander looks down into Anya's eyes as she tries to keep her breathing under control.

There's a long beat as the two stare at each other, before Xander smiles - and Anya follows his lead.

XANDER

We're gonna be okay, Anya. I  
promise.

Anya smiles back for another beat, before one of the nurses starts to mop her brow, and Xander takes a step back to give them room.

We pull away from Xander as he watches, and over to the swing doors leading into the delivery room.

Standing there is a tall MAN, thin and wiry, his eyes fixed on Anya.

After a moment, another nurse heads down the corridor and into the room - and passes straight through the Man at the door! His image flickers for a moment, then collects itself back together.

The nurse didn't see a thing.

We push in closer on the Man, his features wrapped in shadow, as he speaks in a low, deep murmur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAN

It is time for the offering.

And from that, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF TEASER**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY. 3

Back with Xander and Anya, as she sits up in the bed, her hands pressed against her belly, trying to keep her breathing regular despite the obvious pain she's now in.

XANDER

You're doing great, An, just great!  
Remember, keep up the breathing,  
just like we-

ANYA

(snaps)

Will you please be quiet!

Xander blinks, and glances at one of the nurses, a matronly black woman, who tries to suppress a grin as she takes Anya's hand.

NURSE

It's alright, sweetheart. Listen to  
your man, you're doing just fine.

ANYA

Then why does it feel like my bones  
are cracking open and something the  
size of a football is squeezing  
through them?

The doctor, facemask now over his mouth and bandana covering his hair, pulls a chair up as he settles down at the end of the bed, snapping his latex gloves on.

DOCTOR

Because that's exactly what is  
happening, Mrs. Harris. Your pelvis  
is expanding to allow the baby  
through.

Anya stares in disbelief at the doctor.

ANYA

Xander, that man's dressed like a  
bandit! They're letting bandits in  
here now? What's next? Is a cowboy  
going to take my temperature?

XANDER

He's the doctor, Anya, he's here to  
help!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

Well, he looks ridiculous. I can see why so many women are scared of pregnancy if this is what's waiting for them when they-

Anya grimaces and shudders as another contraction hits her. The doctor calls over to the second nurse, a thin, young Aisan woman.

DOCTOR

The contractions are pretty close together now, we won't have to wait long.

ANYA

(frantic)

Before what?

DOCTOR

Before the baby decides to make his or her appearance!

ANYA

It's a 'her,' actually.

DOCTOR

Oh, you had an ultrasound to find out?

ANYA

No, I just know these things. You see, when I was a venge-

Xander clamps a hand over her mouth to shut her up, laughing at the Doctor as though nothing's wrong.

XANDER

Uh, veterinarian! She was going to say 'veterinarian.' She, uh, became very good at, er, guessing the sex of new... puppies, ah, before they were born, and...

Xander trails off as he looks at Anya, her eyes glaring bloody murder back up at him.

XANDER (cont'd)

Hey, you know what? I think I'm gonna go get some water.

(to Anya)

You want some water, honey?

He carefully takes his hand away, leaning closer to whisper into her ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XANDER (cont'd)  
 Anya, remember, we're around normal  
 people now! Ixnay on the emonday!

ANYA  
 (confused)  
 But it's Tuesday, not Monday,  
 Xander...

Xander raises an eyebrow, and she gets it.

ANYA (cont'd)  
 (loudly)  
 Right! Got it. No telling them I  
 used to be a demon.

Xander freezes. He looks up at the doctor and nurses, but  
 only the black nurse is listening.

NURSE  
 (smiles)  
 Didn't we all, honey, didn't we  
 all!

Xander breathes a sigh of relief and darts back outside the  
 delivery room. He passes the shadowy Man standing by the  
 doors, but, of course, doesn't see him.

4 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

4

In the corridor just beyond the delivery room, Xander steps  
 out, clearly already at the edge of his nerves, to be greeted  
 by the others. Willow is the first here, wrapping her arms  
 round him.

WILLOW  
 How's she doing?

XANDER  
 Fine. So far. I think. Does anybody  
 here know anything about babies,  
 and the whole giving birth deal?

He looks round hopefully - but nothing but blank looks. Sofia  
 raises a hand, and Xander grins at her.

SOFIA  
 Well, its not exactly 'experience,'  
 but when I was very little I  
 briefly had a baby sister, but she  
 died before she was one, so...

There's a silence. Perhaps that wasn't the best thing to have  
 brought up.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Sofia blushes as she realises her error, and tries to quickly recover.

SOFIA (cont'd)

What I mean is, I was there when she was born, so I can just about remember how it all went.

XANDER

And? Can I get some rough figures on hours spent screaming, potential amounts of blood and other bodily fluids, and a general time until this is all over?

Sofia bites her lip - she doesn't remember things in that much detail!

Marie picks up on Sofia's hesitation and speaks up.

MARIE

Xander, from what I remember of my sister's experience, it can be anything between a few hours and a few days. You've just got to be patient.

XANDER

(flustered)  
Patient?

ANYA (O.S.)

(yells)  
Xander!!!

XANDER

Something tells me that's really not going to be factor here! Uh, I gotta go.

Xander turns and barges back into the delivery room, tripping on something off camera and crashing to the ground. Buffy rubs her eyes as the group settle down again.

WILLOW

(proudly)  
Wow. Xander's going to be a dad.

BUFFY

I know, who'd have put money on that when we all met nine years ago?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES

I'm sure Xander will be a fine father. He's loyal, dedicated, and very...

BUFFY

Good with his hands?

GILES

I was going to say 'resilient,' but I'm sure sustaining a relationship with Anya requires both qualities...

There's a shared laugh - a moment of relief.

Sofia glances around, still trying to get her bearings with everyone, when she spots the looks Marie keeps throwing to Giles.

Sofia raises an eyebrow - Giles is oblivious, but Marie is clearly looking at him like she wants to say something, but can't find the words.

Sofia opens her mouth to speak, but is interrupted as Buffy takes a seat beside her.

BUFFY

Hey. Look, I know this is kinda crazy, you just getting here then all this happening, but don't worry, it isn't always like this.

SOFIA

Really? I'd heard that it usually was, one way or another.

BUFFY

(blinks)

You did? From who?

Willow COUGHS once, trying to look innocent, and Buffy manages a chuckle.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Okay, in terms of general craziness, then yeah, but this is actually our first baby, believe it or not, so hopefully everything's going to go according to-

MAX (O.S.)

There you all are!

MAX strides over, and Giles' face drops as the disgraced Watcher walks over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Marie looks from Max to Giles and back, finally understanding the meaning of the phrase 'between a rock and a hard place.'

MAX (cont'd)

I got the message Marie left on the answer phone at your place, Rupert, and I got over here as soon as I could.

GILES

(coldly)

You're supposed to be under house arrest, Max, not waltzing out whenever you feel like it! And besides, I hardly think this matter is any concern of yours!

MAX

Don't be like that, Giles, I wanted to be here for when the baby arrives!

Giles glares at Max, but he just grins back and looks at Marie, stepping towards her.

MAX (cont'd)

Oh, and, sorry I had to dash out on you last night, I had an important contact call me up and I had to meet up with him.

Marie looks up at Giles, knowing that Max has just let the cat out of the bag again, and Giles' face says it all.

GILES

(cold)

So tell me, Marie, are you making a habit of... 'entertaining' Max outside of standard working hours now?

Marie looks horrified, rapidly trying to think of an excuse.

MARIE

(stutters)

I- I mean, we- there wasn't- i don't mean to-

GILES

(interrupts)

It's quite alright. Don't worry yourself on my account.

Giles steps away from her, heading back towards the main waiting room. He turns just as he leaves the corridor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GILES (cont'd)

At least if Max is always with you,  
I know where he is.

Giles departs. The others try not to look at Marie as she turns a deep shade of crimson, while Max just lets an impertinent sneer flash across his face for an instant.

Sofia breaks the silence, looking from one face to the next for a few moments before speaking.

SOFIA

Alright, I know that I'm new around here, but... What was that all about?

Buffy gets up, throws a cold look at Max and heads after Giles without another word.

As Marie looks like she wants the ground to swallow her up, we cut back into:

5

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY.

5

Anya is still sat up in the bed, holding her belly and breathing, as Xander gulps from a bottle of water, looking like he's sweating as much as she is.

The Doctor taps a hypodermic syringe, squirting a little fluid out of it before stepping towards Anya.

She glares at him, her eyes suddenly filled with anger.

ANYA

(suspicious)

What's that?

DOCTOR

It's just a little sedative, Mrs. Harris, it'll help relax you.

ANYA

Forget it!

DOCTOR

But without it, you could-

ANYA

I've got no time for sedatives!

XANDER

(frantic)

There's always time for sedatives!

Anya looks at Xander, who nods. Anya pouts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

No, I don't want any. I don't want to black out when this is happening. I've read what you people do, you wait until the baby's out and then you sell it to the cult members waiting outside!

XANDER

Anya, there are no-

ANYA

Don't interrupt me, Xander! I'm having our baby here, the least you could do is agree with me when I say things!

XANDER

(holds up hands)

Okay, fine. If you pass out, I promise to defend our baby from any cult members. Deal?

Anya considers this, then gives the doctor a brief nod.

ANYA

Alright. Do it. But if I wake up and the baby's gone, they'll have to invent new words for the punishments I inflict upon you. Is that clear?

The look in Anya's eyes makes the doctor GULP nervously, despite Xander doing his best to laugh the moment away.

XANDER

Boy, she sure says the darndest things, huh?

Xander takes her hand and pats it, throwing her another warning look when the doctor looks away to get the syringe ready.

The doctor carefully injects Anya with the sedative, then nods to the Asian nurse, who brings the stirrups round into place.

DOCTOR

Alright then, Anya, it's time to take things up a notch.

ANYA

Up a notch? How many more notches are there? I'm at the top notch already!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOCTOR

It's alright, we just need to keep making things as easy as possible for the baby to make her way out here, and for that, we need these little things.

The doctor taps the stirrups, which CLANG loudly as the nurses start to help Anya lie back, getting her legs ready to go up into them.

Anya realises that this means she'll be displaying what's beneath her hospital gown to the room, and she frantically grabs hold of Xander.

XANDER

Ow! Anya, what is it?

ANYA

(whispers)  
They're going to expose me!

XANDER

What?  
(catches up)  
Oh, no, they just need to-

ANYA

(hisses)  
Xander! Back me up, that's why I married you!

XANDER

(patiently)  
You can't have the baby sitting up like that, sweetheart, we need to get you a bit more...  
(searches for right word)  
... elevated.

ANYA

But...

Anya pulls Xander closer so she can whisper into his ear.

ANYA (cont'd)

They'll see my private areas!

XANDER

Uh, yeah, but there's not really anything we can do about that!

ANYA

Aren't you going to defend me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

XANDER

From what?

ANYA

From this other man!

DOCTOR

Alright, we're about ready when you are, Mrs. Harris.

Xander glances up at the doctor, then back down at Anya, who looks up at him with pleading eyes.

XANDER

(to doctor)

Uh... Just give us a moment.

The doctor glances at the black nurse, who just shrugs.

ANYA

Xander, I just don't feel right exposing my private woman's place to this strange man, and neither should you!

XANDER

(reassuring)

I'm sure he's seen it all before, Anya.

ANYA

(shocked)

What?!? You mean he's been spying on us? I knew I didn't like the look of him - his eyes are too shifty. Like a pirate. A very clean pirate.

XANDER

(patiently)

No, I just mean that he does this every day, and-

ANYA

He exposes women while their husbands are still in the room?!?

XANDER

(beat)

Yes.

ANYA

(beat)

Oh. Well, I suppose that's alright, then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DOCTOR

Um, sorry to disturb you both...

Xander and Anya look up at the doctor.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

... but this little girl's on her way out, like it or not, so we can't really hang about much longer!

Xander looks down at Anya, who smiles hopefully back.

ANYA

Alright then. Let's get this started.

The doctor nods to the nurses, who carefully raises Anya's legs into the stirrups. Anya fixes the doctor with a stare.

ANYA (cont'd)

But if I catch you looking around down there for a second longer than you have to, then I'll make sure my husband kills you.

(beat)

Slowly.

The doctor blinks and glances at Xander, who tries to think of something distracting to say.

XANDER

Uh... Is there any chance we could get a little more of that sedative over here for her?

The doctor manages a grin as he looks down, and Anya grips Xander's hand tightly.

Neither of them see the shadowy Man watching over them as he steps into the room, passing through the delivery room door as if it wasn't there.

He steps over to Anya and reaches a hand out for her.

As his hand closes, Anya blinks, sensing something - but before she can react, then Man lays his hand on her forehead, and with a GASP from Anya, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT ONE**

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (5)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

6 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM. DAY.

6

Giles stands by one of the windows overlooking the ambulance bay, his glasses in one hand. Around him, various patients chat to one another, some coughing and wheezing. Buffy weaves through them all to make her way over to him, standing behind him for a few beats before he turns round.

GILES

Buffy, there's no need for you to follow me. You should be back there with the others, in case Xander needs you.

BUFFY

Yeah, I could see that happening, what with me wanting to break Max's neck and all.

Buffy glances to her left - one of the patients is staring up at her with a shocked expression.

BUFFY (cont'd)

(quickly)

Figure of speech.

She steps closer to Giles so they can talk privately.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Giles, what's going on? You've not said anything to me about it, but it doesn't take a subscription to Cosmopolitan to work out something's changed around here.

Giles goes back to staring through the window, and Buffy makes an irritated sigh.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Right. Silent treatment. Good. Because that doesn't make you seem like an annoying teenager at all.

GILES

(weary)

Buffy, I'd really rather be-

BUFFY

(interrupts)

Alone? When does that ever help?

Giles slowly turns to look at her, then he closes his eyes and nods. She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY (cont'd)

That's better. Now, start talking. The way I figure it, we've still got another hour or two yet before Anya hits Def Con One in there, so don't skip anything. Start with why you and Marie weren't dating when you got back to Cleveland a few months ago, because we sure all noticed that part already.

Giles scratches the back of his head, then manages a bitter chuckle.

BUFFY (cont'd)

What's so funny?

GILES

I'm just appreciating the irony of the moment. You wanting me to tell you my sob story. Quite a role reversal, don't you think?

BUFFY

(shrugs)

It happens. Start talking.

Giles smiles at her, as we cut to:

7 INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY. 7

The shadowy Man still has his hand pressed to Anya's temples, but no-one in the room can see him as Xander squeezes her hand.

XANDER

Okay, honey, we're getting there, just keep doing what you're doing!

Anya turns to look at him. Through her eyes, the scene seems to have slowed down, all the sounds of the room muffled and faint.

Anya turns to look over at the doctor, but we can't make out what he's saying.

The room slowly begins to WHITE OUT, and we cut to:

8 EXT. FIELDS. DAY. 8

We find ourselves in a long, green field, which stretches off into the horizon in every direction. Overhead is a blue sky with patches of fluffy white cloud, the sun blazing over the scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The colours around us are oversaturated and bright, and as we pan across the fields, taking in a soft breeze of air and the gentle chirping of birds in trees dotted around, we find Anya - but she's dressed differently, her hair long and curly and a long, flowing white dress swaying around her in the breeze.

Anya blinks, looking around her, confused.

ANYA  
(calls out)  
Hello?

She looks down at her dress, touching herself all over as if to make sure she's still there.

ANYA (cont'd)  
What's all this?  
(looking around)  
Where am I? Where's Xander?

She realises something and pats her noticeably flatter belly, alarmed.

ANYA (cont'd)  
Where's my baby?  
(calls out; louder)  
Hello?!?

VOICE (O.S.)  
There's no need to shout, Anya.

Anya jumps half a mile out of her skin and looks round - the shadowy Man from the hospital is standing a few feet away from her, still wreathed in shadows despite the brilliant sunshine overhead.

MAN  
Forgive me for the manner in which you were brought here, but I have taken me some time to find you. Dark forces are conspiring against us, and time is short.

Anya blinks, looking the Man up and down, alarmed.

ANYA  
'Dark forces'? Who, exactly?  
(beat)  
Did I work for them?

The Man steps towards her, looking up and revealing his features at last. His face is young, with black hair flopping down over his eyes, but the eyes themselves have a dark intensity to them that makes Anya step backwards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANYA (cont'd)  
 (suspicious)  
 Who are you?

MAN  
 My name is Asha, and I'm here to  
 bring you some important  
 information. It concerns your  
 child.

ANYA  
 My baby? Where is she? What's going  
 on here?

ASHA  
 You have many questions, so I will-

Asha GULPS as Anya suddenly lunges forward and grabs him by  
 the throat.

ANYA  
 (furious)  
 Okay, monkey boy, here's how this  
 is going to work! You're going to  
 tell me where I am and what's going  
 on here very quickly, or I'm going  
 to remind you why I used to love  
 being a vengeance demon so much!  
 Save the cryptic, mystical crap for  
 somebody who hasn't seen it all  
 before!

Asha eyes her for a second - then nods.

ASHA  
 Very well, then. Let's move along.

Anya lets him go, and Asha takes a second to compose himself  
 before he starts to walk away, across the fields, beckoning  
 for Anya to follow.

ASHA (cont'd)  
 Come, there are things you have to  
 see.

Anya watches him for a moment, then starts to jog after him,  
 finding that her dress makes progress slow, despite her  
 bunching it up as best she can.

ANYA  
 Hey, wait! If I'm here, then what's  
 going on back in the delivery room?  
 I'm in the middle of having a baby!  
 Why do people keep interrupting me  
 before I've finished anything?  
 Hey!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Asha walks on, and we cut from him and Anya to:

9

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM. DAY.

9

Giles is still talking to Buffy as we rejoin them.

GILES

... and that's about the sum of things at the moment.

BUFFY

Wow.

(beat)

So, you really, really like her, huh?

GILES

(nods)

I think it's the strongest I've felt about anyone since Jenny.

BUFFY

(eyes him)

Didn't you have a thing for my mom, too? You know, the whole band candy incident and that thing with the police car...

GILES

(evasive)

That was... Let's try to stay focused, shall we?

BUFFY

Right, sorry. So, you like Marie but you haven't said anything to her and now she's sleeping with Max... And you still haven't said anything to her. Is that about right?

GILES

(sighs)

Yes, unfortunately.

BUFFY

So just march your British ass over there and tell her!

GILES

It's not that simple, Buffy.

BUFFY

Of course it is! Who ever got what they wanted by sitting back and waiting for it to come to them?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY(cont'd)

Whenever you do that, someone else comes along and takes it away - someone who bothered to ask. You seeing the pattern here yet?

GILES

It's too complicated, we both have our work, and don't forget I'm Head Watcher, it would be inappropriate to-

BUFFY

So it'll be an office romance, big whoop! What are you afraid of, are the other Watchers gonna write 'Giles loves Marie' over your desk when you get home?

Giles manages a smile, and Buffy reaches out to take his arm, starting to lead him back towards the others.

BUFFY (cont'd)

Come on. Just say you need to talk to her about something in private, act like it's business. Then, when you get her to yourself, just grab her and-

Giles raises a hand to stop Buffy.

GILES

I get the idea.

She smiles up at him as they head into:

10

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

10

Buffy and Giles turn back into the corridor outside the delivery room - but Max and Marie are nowhere to be seen.

BUFFY

Hey! Where'd Max go?

SOFIA

Oh, uh, they left.

WILLOW

Yeah, Max said he needed to talk to her about something in private, it sounded kinda official, so we...

Willow trails off as she picks up on Giles' dark look. Giles sits calmly down in a chair, and Buffy sighs, stepping away from him.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Uh, should we have stopped them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GILES

(bitter)

Somehow, I doubt anything would by now.

Sofia looks around at everyone's dour expressions for a beat, before she stands.

SOFIA

Well! I think it's time I went somewhere else for a few minutes. You all look like you need some quiet time.

She walks away down the corridor, and Buffy watches her go.

WILLOW

I think we scared away the newbie.

BUFFY

I can't say I blame her, this isn't exactly an easy introduction to life in the Scooby Gang!

WILLOW

(to Giles)

Are you okay? 'Cause you look a little-

GILES

(snaps)

I'm fine.

Willow blinks and looks at Buffy, who shakes her head.

WILLOW

Okay! Right. I'm just gonna sit here quietly and not say anything.

Willow sits and looks round for something to keep her occupied, as Buffy looks over at Giles again, his brow furrowed.

We cut from his unhappy expression to:

11 EXT. FIELDS. DAY.

11

Anya follows Asha over the crest of a hill, bounding down the slope after him.

ANYA

(panting)

Do we have to walk so quickly? I'm pregnant, you know!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHA

Here, you are not.

ANYA

Well... You should still make allowances! I've been carrying a tiny person around for nine months, it's going to take me a while to readjust.

She looks around - they're standing outside a typical suburban house, oddly out of place in the fields, as though it fell out of the sky and landed there.

ANYA (cont'd)

(confused)

Is this meant to be the house from that movie about that awful Dorothy girl who murders those witches? Xander made me watch it to some rock band's album once, he said the soundtrack matches to-

XANDER (O.S.)

Okay, kids, who wants to take another ride on the Harris Express?

CHILDREN'S VOICES (O.S.)

Meee!!

ANYA

(quietly)

Xander?

Anya dashes towards the house, leaving Asha, who stands and watches her, his hands folded before him.

12 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE. DAY.

12

Anya bursts in through the house's front door. Inside, it looks a lot like the current Harris Residence - the marks of Xander's DIY-manship shows itself in several extensions and improvements, while Anya recognises the furniture.

ANYA

Xander? Are you in here?

She steps forward cautiously into the house, her attention drawn to a row of photographs above a crackling fireplace.

She lifts one up to examine it - it's of her and Xander on their wedding day. The next is of them honeymooning somewhere exotic, and as she lifts the third she GASPS - it's of Xander and Anya with a baby, beaming proudly up at the camera.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

She looks across the other photos - more happy family pictures. Anya smiles and reaches out for another, when a commotion coming from the kitchen makes her turn round.

In rushes Xander, with three small KIDS hanging onto him, all four of them laughing happily.

XANDER

Next stop, the front room!

The kids laugh with glee as Xander careens around the living room, two blonde girls hanging from each of his arms and a dark-haired boy holding on round his chest.

XANDER (cont'd)

Please ensure all your luggage is safely stowed away, as we may be experiencing... turbulence!

Standing by the sofa, Xander shakes his whole body, and the whooping children fall off and land on the sofa. Xander joins them, the four of them lost in laughter.

Anya steps over, her eyes wide, not sure what she's seeing. Xander looks up at her.

XANDER (cont'd)

Oh, hi, honey. Kids, say hi to your mother.

KIDS

(together)

Hi, mommy!

Anya's hands go to her mouth, and she sobs once, a tear rolling down her cheek. Xander notices and nods to her, patting each of the kids on the head in turn.

XANDER

Okay, Harris Battalion, your mom and I have some grown up stuff to talk about now. Go tear up your play room for a few minutes, okay?

The kids blast away from Xander, racing upstairs and out of view. A stunned Anya looks at Xander, who pats the sofa.

XANDER (cont'd)

C'mon, Anya, come sit down.

She slowly steps over and sits, and Xander grins at her.

XANDER (cont'd)

They're really something, aren't they?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

XANDER(cont'd)

I can't believe sometimes that three kids of mine ended up so damn perfect. Especially when you look at how the rest of my family turned out...

Xander nudges Anya, who manages to nod, fighting to hold back the tears as she smiles over at him.

XANDER (cont'd)

'Course, without you, none of them would be here anyway, so...

ANYA

Xander, what's happening? Where am I?

XANDER

The future. Our future, actually. This is us about four years from now.

Xander cranes round to look out through the window.

XANDER (cont'd)

Well, not here here, if you know what I mean. This is kind of a sneak preview of what's coming.

ANYA

So... So it's all okay? The baby, our baby, nothing goes wrong?

Xander looks evasive for a moment, and Anya looks up as a shadow falls across them. Asha has entered the house.

XANDER

It's... complicated. It's probably best if Asha here explains it to you, I'm just an avatar from your subconscious.

ANYA

(confused)  
You're a what?

XANDER

It's a long story, honey. Andrew knows about it, though. If you get a chance to ask him, he'll explain it.

ANYA

This doesn't make any sense...

Anya stands, turning to Asha.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANYA (cont'd)

Where are we? What are you trying to show me here?

ASHA

I'm showing you a vision of your own future. This is what's in store for you, Anya - a happy home, a devoted husband and three wonderful children.

ANYA

(beat)

Oh. Good. That beats the last vision anyone had of my future - Xander told me that he killed me with a frying pan!

ASHA

Yes, that was... an unfortunate affair. Trust me, this time, what you see is real.

ANYA

How do I know that? Prove it.

ASHA

In time. First, I must tell you something about this future.

ANYA

(rolls eyes)

And here comes the cryptic part... I was in this business for a thousand years, don't you messenger people ever get any new tricks to use on people?

XANDER

Listen to the man, Anya, he's trying to help.

ANYA

(snaps)

Xander! I'm busy!

Xander raises his hands and looks away. Anya looks back to Asha, thinking about something.

ANYA (cont'd)

Okay... so that part was pretty realistic.

(beat)

What do you have to tell me about this future, then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ASHA  
All of what you see can be yours.

ANYA  
(smiles)  
Really? Great!

ASHA  
But I'm afraid there is a price you  
must pay.

We push in on Anya as the smile drops from her face.

ANYA  
Oh.

And from that, we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT TWO**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

13 EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT.

13

We're looking down on a dark, grimy inner city street, a light snowfall filtering across our vision as Asha walks into frame, heading away from us. Anya follows him, looking up and all around her.

ANYA

Where are we now?

ASHA

I will explain in time. Follow me.

Anya jogs up to him as Asha stops outside a set of stairs leading down to a club below street level. Anya joins him, squinting to read the faded name out above the stairs.

ANYA

(reads)

'Hogar del Oraculo'?

ASHA

We must head inside.

Asha starts down the stairs, and after a moment's hesitation, Anya follows.

As she disappears into the darkness, we cut to:

14 EXT. HOSPITAL - ROOFTOP. DAY.

14

An access door opens, and Max and Marie step out onto the roof of one of the hospital buildings. Marie looks uncomfortable, rubbing her arms as Max strides out into the sunlight.

MAX

(breathes deeply)

That's better! I had to get us out of there, sorry. I'd only been there five minutes and it was already starting to feel like somebody died! I thought births were meant to be happy occasions? And who was that new girl back there with the others?

MARIE

A lot's happened in a short space of time, Max, that's all.

(beat)

What did you want to talk to me about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Ah, yes. It's about us.

MARIE

'Us'? What does that mean, exactly?

MAX

(grins)

You know... you and me. I know Rupert isn't exactly over the moon about what's going on, but I think it's time we decided what to say to him about it.

MARIE

I... I'm really not sure what to say. I'm not even sure what's supposed to be going on between us, Max! I'm supposed to be monitoring you until your hearing with the Council comes around, not...

She trails off, and Max steps closer. She's looking at her feet, so he raises her head up with one finger underneath her chin.

MAX

Sleeping together? I didn't plan on that happening either, you know!

Max suddenly stops smiling and steps away, turning his back on her. Marie reacts, stepping forward.

MARIE

What?

MAX

I know what this is about. You think I seduced you to try and influence my hearing.

MARIE

You... Oh, for goodness sake, Max! That's got nothing to do with it.

MAX

Hasn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIE

(beat)

Alright, I'll admit, I'm concerned that I've broken some rules in fraternising with you the way I have, but I won't be part of the tribunal that judge your actions over your Slayer's death. It's nothing at all to do with me.

We move around to look at Max, his back still turned to Marie. A victorious grin creeps across his face.

MAX

So you mean that? You trust me?

MARIE

(sighs)

I trust that you're not trying to worm your way out of things, yes. I'm not sure why, but still...

Max manages to hide his grin as he turns back round.

MAX

I don't like people accusing me of things I haven't done, Marie. I'm prepared to accept responsibility for Sierra's death...

Max walks right up to her, tracing one finger down her cheek.

MAX (cont'd)

... but what I feel for you is the real deal.

Marie hesitates - then looks up to him, and the two start to kiss. We leave them on the rooftop, and cut back to:

15 INT. UNDERGROUND NIGHT CLUB. NIGHT.

15

Asha and Anya descend the staircase into the bar itself - a cosy place, dark wood furnishings and old style fake gaslights hanging from the ceiling.

What Anya notices more is the clientele - a mixture of humans and demons, in all shapes and sizes, smoking, drinking and chatting as soft, guitar-driven music pipes out from overhead speakers.

ANYA

Am I going to end up in a bar?

(gasps)

Is Xander going to become an alcoholic?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHA  
Neither. This way.

Asha heads towards a back door, just to the left of a small stage, and passes straight through it. Anya blinks, then cautiously reaches out a hand - which passes through the door!

Surprised, she reaches out further - and YELPS as Asha leans back through the door to grab her arm!

ASHA (cont'd)  
Please, Anya, we don't have a lot  
of time!

He pulls her forward, and she disappears through the door, leading us into:

16 INT. UNDERGROUND NIGHT CLUB - BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 16

Asha and Anya are now in a darker room, decorated like an old dressing room complete with lighted mirror and makeup table, but in the far corner of the room is a figure wrapped in a long, dark coat, a hood covering their face.

Before the figure kneels a demon, green-skinned with long, grey hair, his hands raised as if making an offering.

DEMON  
Great Oracle, I beg of you, aid me  
with my troubles...

The hooded figure watches the demon for a moment - then pulls back the hood to reveal a strikingly attractive young woman. She's in her twenties with blonde, curly hair.

ORACLE  
Oh, come on, Grijnel! You know you  
don't have to do all that fawning  
stuff for me. Take a seat over  
there and tell me all about it.  
I'll see if there's anything I can  
do to help you.

Anya peers at her, spotting the resemblance instantly.

ANYA  
She looks just like-

ASHA  
You, yes, she does. That's because  
this is your daughter. This is the  
child you are giving birth to at  
this very moment.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Anya looks disbelievingly at Asha, then marches forward to get a closer look at the Oracle. This time, no-one in the room can see them, which is fortunate as Anya leans right over the young woman, studying her features carefully.

ANYA

She doesn't have my nose. That's Xander's Definitely. Oh, and her left ear looks more like his too. But, other than that...

She takes a few steps back, one finger on her chin like an artist studying a finished painting. She nods.

ANYA (cont'd)

She's perfect.

Anya turns to Asha, beaming.

ANYA (cont'd)

She's beautiful! Just like her mother. Is this what I needed to see?

ASHA

This is part of what you need to see.

ANYA

That demon called her 'Oracle,' though. I couldn't help but notice that, seeing as this place is called 'Home of the Oracle' and everything. Guess she must have picked up her subtlety from me as well. So does that mean...

ASHA

Yes, your child is the next Oracle. When the last child was murdered by Ulithios, another was called, and her spirit sent into the body of a growing human foetus.

(beat)

Yours.

ANYA

(shocked)

You shot an Oracle into my baby? What kind of sick messenger are you?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASHA

It has been this way for thousands of years, and will continue to do so long after this new child is gone.

ANYA

Wait, so - are we in the future now?

ASHA

Twenty-two years, to be exact. Today is the Oracle's birthday.

ANYA

Oh!

(to Oracle)

Happy birthday!

(beat)

Even though you can't hear me, but still...

ASHA

The Oracle is chosen to pass messages on from the Powers That Be, but they are also seen as great spiritual beacons in these dark times. Your daughter's powers are strong, enhanced by the demonic blood that will always be part of your body. She will help literally thousands of people during her lifetime, saving lives and passing on the wishes of the Powers That Be, helping their champions continue the good fight against the darkness.

ANYA

Yes, that's all very poetic, and well done for that, but what does this have to do with me? And where are the other children I saw earlier? Are they all grown up now too?

Asha falls quiet, and Anya frowns, stepping towards him.

ANYA (cont'd)

Well? Come on, don't start giving me the silent treatment now, you've shown me this much, let's keep moving!

Anya snaps her fingers as a thought hits her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANYA (cont'd)

I know, this is like that other movie, isn't it! The one with the funny man from 'Ghostbusters,' where the ghosts show him what a horrible life he's going to grow up to have? Is that what this is?

ASHA

(shakes head)

I'm afraid it is not that simple. We must get back to the fields, time is short.

Asha turns round and steps through the door of the back room, and with a puzzled look, Anya casts one last glance towards the Oracle, then follows.

17 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM. DAY.

17

Sofia is over by the vending machine, choosing some candy as Buffy steps over.

SOFIA

Oh, hello.

BUFFY

Hey.

SOFIA

How is everything? I couldn't help but notice that Mr. Giles seemed quite upset.

BUFFY

Yeah. Giles has got girl problems. Same as usual.

SOFIA

Really? He seems a little...

BUFFY

What?

Sofia glances at the vending machine as it dispenses her candy, reaching down for it.

SOFIA

Well, old. For girl trouble, I mean. I always thought that when people got to that sort of age, they had it all figured out!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFFY

I'm starting to realise that I don't think there's ever a time when you figure it all out...

Buffy trails off, and Sofia holds up her candy to offer her a piece - it's a pack of Jolly Ranchers. Buffy grins and takes one as the girls head back towards the delivery room.

SOFIA

So tell me a few things, Buffy. I managed to get a brief rundown of your history on the plane back from Italy, but it was from Xander, so...

BUFFY

(grins)

Yeah, he tends to exaggerate a bit, doesn't he?

SOFIA

Oh, he's not so bad.

Sofia looks away for a moment, but Buffy picks up on something, eyeing Sofia with a wry grin.

BUFFY

You like him, don't you?

SOFIA

(startled; blushes)

What? No! Well, uh, yes, I mean, of course I like him, he saved my life, but I don't- I mean, I wouldn't, he's a married man, about to become a father, I'm just a teenager, and-

BUFFY

(interrupts)

Sofia! Relax. Breathe. I'm just teasing.

SOFIA

Ah. Right. Got it.

The girls walk on for a few more moments, Buffy grinning to herself about something before she turns back to Sofia.

BUFFY

Xander's been one of my best friends for years. I love him like he was a brother, and I can totally see why you'd get a crush on him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIA  
 (starting to grin)  
 He is rather fit, isn't he...

BUFFY  
 And, as you already know, he'll do whatever it takes to do the right thing, even though he doesn't have Slayer powers like we do, or magic like Willow.

SOFIA  
 (sighs)  
 Yes, he can be quite heroic...

BUFFY  
 But Anya will wear your skin as a new coat if she thinks you're any kind of threat to her.

Sofia GULPS loudly and looks across at Buffy, horrified.

BUFFY (cont'd)  
 Hey, just a friendly warning. You seem like a good kid, Sofia, I'd hate to see you get on the wrong side of Anya without realising!

SOFIA  
 So what you're saying is...

BUFFY  
 ... be careful.  
 (beat)  
 But it's cool to still like him. Let's just keep it between us, okay?

They share a grin as they round the corner.

18 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

18

Sofia and Buffy join Willow and Giles, Sofia sitting back down as Buffy heads over to Willow.

BUFFY  
 Any news?

WILLOW  
 Not yet, it's quiet in there.

BUFFY  
 (surprised)  
 Quiet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW

(suspicious)

Yeah, I know. Weird, huh? I was half expecting Anya to go all 'Demon Seed' and start throwing dead bodies out here, but so far...

BUFFY

Maybe she's mellowing out?

Buffy and Willow exchange a look - then both burst into laughter. Anya and 'mellowing out' do not go together.

Max and Marie head back along the corridor, and Buffy and Willow stop laughing. Marie sits several chairs away from Giles, not looking at him, as Max settles down beside her.

19

EXT. FIELDS. DAY.

19

We're back in the green fields, Asha striding away from Anya who is failing to keep up.

ANYA

Wait, wait! What did you mean?

ASHA

There is one more thing you need to see, but we must get you back to your body soon!

ANYA

But you have to tell me what you meant first! What did 'it's not that simple' mean?

Asha stops, and Anya finally catches up to him. He turns to her as she stands, catching her breath.

ASHA

I had wanted to do this somewhere more intimate, but...

ANYA

(suspicious)

'Intimate'? You're not on the same team as that doctor, are you?

ASHA

Doctor?

ANYA

Never mind. Alright, go ahead. Tell me what I need to know.

Asha is silent for a long beat, before looking into Anya's eyes, his voice soft and sympathetic when he speaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHA

The two futures you saw exist separately from one another.

ANYA

Separately?

ASHA

Yes. One has you and Xander growing old together, raising your three children and never having to fear for your safety again. Your part in the fight will be over, and you can bring up your children knowing they will always be protected.

ANYA

And the other? The one where my fantastically good-looking daughter is making a living dishing out advice to remlak demons in dirty underground clubs?

ASHA

The other future has your daughter, the Oracle, helping save and change the lives of thousands of others, a conduit for instructions from beyond this existence.

Asha falls quiet again, and Anya shrugs, waiting for more explanation.

ANYA

So they're separate, then what?

ASHA

You must choose between them.

ANYA

(beat)

What?

ASHA

It is the way it must be. For the Oracle to exist, a sacrifice must be made. If the sacrifice is not made, then the Oracle will die, and there is no telling when another one will be able to be born.

ANYA

(taken aback)

I... I don't understand, why me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASHA

That will become clear. Come, there  
is one mor thing you must see  
before you make your decision.

Asha starts to walk away again, but Anya calls out.

ANYA

Stop! Wait. You said that the  
Oracle only gets born if a  
sacrifice is made. What needs to be  
sacrificed?

Asha looks back at her for a long beat before he answers.

ASHA

You.

Anya's eyes widen in shock, and we:

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF ACT THREE**

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

20 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

20

We're back with Buffy and the others, waiting outside the delivery room, the uncomfortable silence between Marie and Giles now hitting unbearable levels.

Willow suddenly jumps to her feet, startling everyone.

WILLOW

Hey!

BUFFY

Willow! Don't do that!

WILLOW

Oh, uh, sorry. But I just thought of something! What if I go see if I can find anything in what's left of the Circle's Grand Library about Anya's baby?

GILES

Is that wise?

WILLOW

Why wouldn't it be?

GILES

Willow, from what you've told us, that Library holds a book to chronicle the life of every single person on the planet. Am I correct?

WILLOW

(proudly)

Yup. At least, it did, until the Caretaker burned it down, but I'm pretty sure I can still get to whatever info's inside the books.

GILES

What if what you find about the imminent arrival to the Harris household is bad news? Will you still tell Xander and Anya, or will you keep their child's fate secret from them?

Willow bites her lip as she starts to catch Giles' point.

WILLOW

Well... But what if it's good stuff?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLOW(cont'd)

You know, like if the baby's going to grow up to be a famous scientist, or politician, or writer?

BUFFY

God, I wouldn't wish that last one on anybody...

GILES

I just don't think it's a good idea.

WILLOW

But-

MARIE

Rupert's right, Willow.

Everyone glances across at Marie, who finally looks back at Giles.

MARIE (cont'd)

It's too dangerous. By rights, we should all have books up there chronicling our lives, and while it would be tempting to see if they tell me anything about my future, I'd rather not know.

BUFFY

Yeah. I've had enough happen to me already, reading a list of what could still happen would just about finish me off...

Willow sits back down, and silence returns. After a few moments, she stands again.

WILLOW

Okay, so, no book checking.

(beat)

But I'm just gonna go take a quick look round. That won't do any harm, right?

Giles opens his mouth to answer, but before he can speak, Willow is consumed by a yellow GLOW, and as the others shield their eyes, Willow DISAPPEARS, the light fading away and taking her with it. Buffy looks around, startled by Willow's vanishing act.

BUFFY

Okay, she can do that since when, exactly?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GILES

I'm not sure, it must be part of her new found powers...

MARIE

This is starting to get out of hand! Where does it stop with her?

BUFFY

(wearily)

Okay, guys, one problem at a time. Let's wait and see what happens in there first, and then we'll worry about Willow. Okay?

Giles and Marie nod, and Buffy looks back to the door to the delivery room, as we cut to:

21 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE. DAY.

21

We're back inside the future Harris household that Anya encountered earlier, but this time it's empty as Asha opens the door and steps inside, followed by Anya.

ASHA

Please, sit down.

Asha heads into the next room as Anya sits on the sofa. He returns with a glass filled with a dark purple liquid.

ASHA (cont'd)

Drink this, it will aid the final phase of your journey.

ANYA

To see what?

ASHA

To see the last piece of this puzzle, that should allow you to make your decision.

ANYA

(bitterly)

Oh yes, how could I forget that.

ASHA

Please, drink.

Anya sighs and knocks the drink back, wincing at its bitter taste, She hands the empty glass to Asha.

ANYA

Alright, now what happens?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Asha reaches out and places a hand either side of Anya's head.

ASHA

You must see what will happen to Xander if you choose to allow the Oracle to be born into this world.

ANYA

You mean if I choose to die?

ASHA

Yes. If you do not, your baby will still be born, but she will die within a year of her birth, and the spirit of the Oracle will die with her.

(beat)

Now, close your eyes.

A purple GLOW starts to form beneath Asha's hands. Anya frowns for a moment, then lets out a GASP as the glow intensifies.

Asha holds his hands in place for a few more moments, Anya's face passing through several emotions as she sees whatever she sees, before Asha lowers his hands again, and Anya's eyes flicker open.

She seems breathless, and it takes her a moment before she can speak again.

ANYA

That was...

ASHA

That was Xander's future without you. I'm afraid it is quite different to the scenes you witnessed earlier in this house.

Anya just nods, suddenly looking close to tears.

ASHA (cont'd)

We are almost out of time, Anya. You must make your choice now. The Oracle may only be born to parents of a hero and one of demonic blood, those are the rules we must follow. Your child with Xander is the only opportunity we have to call another Oracle for many decades.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANYA

(snaps)

I understand! Stop trying to justify this to me!

ASHA

I apologise, I am only-

ANYA

(furious)

You're asking me to choose between the family I want with the man I love, or to leave him alone so that the next Oracle can be brought into the world! You have no idea what you're asking of me!

ASHA

(bows head)

You are not the first one I have asked to make this choice. Some make the sacrifice, others do not. Ultimately, it is their choice and theirs alone.

(looks at Anya)

And now, it is yours. The child must be born out of love, and the love you and Xander have for each other is one of the purest and strongest we have ever seen.

Asha looks away for a moment, and when he looks back at Anya, we see that there are tears in his eyes as well.

ASHA (cont'd)

I am truly sorry.

He takes Anya's hands, and she squeezes them tightly, letting out a SOB at last, tears rolling down her cheeks as she begins to weep.

She leans forward, resting her head against Asha's shoulder, and he wraps an arm tightly around her, his own eyes closed but tears still flowing freely.

After a few moments, Anya manages to control her sobs, and she sits up, quickly wiping her eyes.

ANYA

Alright.

ASHA

You have made your choice?

Anya closes her eyes and nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANYA

Yes.

Asha nods back at her, taking her hands in his own again.

ASHA

We must return you to your body now. It is time for the birth.

Anya manages a smile at Asha.

ANYA

I'm ready.

Asha closes his eyes, and we WHITE OUT to:

22

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY.

22

We're straight back to the moment where Asha first laid his hand on Anya's head, and she GASPS as he removes his hand.

XANDER

Anya? Anya, are you okay? You spaced out on me for a second there! Do you want some more sedatives?

Anya tries to look round, and just catches a glimpse of Asha as he passes silently out through the doors of the delivery room. Anya looks back up at Xander, holding his hand tightly.

ANYA

Xander... Promise me something.

XANDER

(grins)

Yes, of course you'll still be just as beautiful to me after you have the baby.

ANYA

No, I know that already! This is important.

Xander glances at the doctor, who is concentrating on his work, the nurses on hand to help out.

DOCTOR

Here we go, she's crowning...

BLACK NURSE

Keep pushing, Anya, almost there!

Anya grimaces as she pushes again, not letting go of Xander's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANYA

Xander, promise me that no matter what happens... to me, or to the baby... that you'll forgive me.

Xander frowns, not understanding what she could mean. As he tries to work it out, we cut to:

23 INT. CIRCLE - GRAND LIBRARY. DAY.

23

Willow sits down at the edge of one of the wide bookshelves of what's left of the Circle's vast Library, its blackened shelves still stretching off above, below and to either side for what looks like miles.

Willow is quickly leafing through a large, red leather bound book, frowning as she looks up from it.

WILLOW

She's not here...

Willow glances around her - there are piles of similar books scattered all around her, her search looking like its been going on for a while.

WILLOW (cont'd)

But everyone has a book here! Why wouldn't she have one?  
(realises something)  
Unless... Oh, no....

Willow SNAPS the book shut, and from that we cut back to:

24 INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM. DAY.

24

Back with Xander as he looks down on Anya. She's breathing rapidly, the doctor offering distant words of encouragement, but her eyes are locked on Xander's.

XANDER

Forgive you? For what? Anya, we're about thirty seconds away from having a baby!

ANYA

(urgent)  
Xander!!

XANDER

Okay, okay, I promise. No matter what happens. Happy?

ANYA

(smiles)  
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER  
Great. Now push!!

Anya clamps her eyes shut and pushes again, using every fibre of strength in her body.

DOCTOR  
Come on, Anya, she's almost out!

BLACK NURSE  
Scream if you want to, honey,  
whatever it takes!

ANYA  
(shakes head)  
No... I don't need to...

Anya pushes one last time, and with a GASP she collapses back on the bed.

The doctor leans back, away from her - and we hear the WAILING of a newborn baby.

The doctor stands, holding up the baby for the breathless Anya and the relieved Xander to see.

DOCTOR  
Congratulations, you have a  
beautiful baby girl!

Xander LAUGHS, half out of relief and half out of joy, wrapping an arm round Anya.

XANDER  
You did it... You did it!

Anya smiles, still catching her breath as she squeezes Xander tightly.

ANYA  
Well... I couldn't just leave  
her... sitting in there, could I?

Xander kisses her over and over again on the top of her head, looking up as the Asian nurse clips the baby's umbilical cord and wraps her in a soft white blanket, handing her across.

Xander cradles the baby gently in his arms, holding it closer for Anya to see.

XANDER  
Say hi to your mother, kid.

Anya looks up at Xander, who smiles back at her as the baby gurgles quietly.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

We dissolve from them to:

25 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR. DAY.

25

Xander steps out of the delivery room, looking tired but happy. Buffy and the others stand as he heads over.

BUFFY  
(eager)  
Well?

XANDER  
(shrugs)  
What can I say, except... who's the  
daddy?

Buffy SQUEALS with delight and grabs hold of him, squeezing him tightly.

Xander quickly turns blue, and Giles manages to lever Buffy's Slayer-powered arms away before she cracks Xander's ribs. Sofia and Marie are next, hugging Xander as Giles shakes his hand, grabbing him and hugging him warmly.

Max just shakes Xander's hand and nods, but the sentiment is still there. Xander notices that somebody is missing.

XANDER (cont'd)  
Where's Willow?

BUFFY  
Oh, uh, she had to go, you know,  
check on something. She'll be right  
back, I'm sure.

XANDER  
(disappointed)  
Oh. Okay, well, you know, give it  
nine months or so and maybe we can  
try again, see if she makes it  
second time around!

Buffy jumps up and hugs him again, and we dissolve from the happy scene to:

26 INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM. LATER.

26

Anya is asleep in bed, cleaned up and wrapped up tight and warm, as the door opens quietly and Xander steps in, pushing a small cot that holds the baby before him.

Buffy and the others are there too, but Xander pauses in the doorway, turning to them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

XANDER

She's still asleep. Let's give her a few minutes with the baby before she has to deal with all of you guys at once, okay?

BUFFY

(grins)

Okay.

Sofia leans forward and kisses Xander on the cheek.

XANDER

(smiles)

What was that for?

SOFIA

For being the hero of the day again.

Xander nods to them and pushes the cot into the room, closing the door behind him. Buffy lingers outside for a moment before we see her walk away.

Xander sits down by Anya's bedside, lifting the baby out of the cot and placing it next to Anya, who stirs and wakes up as the baby writhes, flexing her tiny fingers.

Anya looks over at Xander with sleepy eyes, smiling.

ANYA

How did you keep them away?

XANDER

Who?

ANYA

Buffy and the others, I was expecting them to smash the doors down to get in here to see me...

XANDER

I told them Mommy and Daddy needed some quiet time with the newest recruit to the Harris Battallion.

Anya turns over, holding her hand out towards the baby. The baby grabs hold of one of Anya's fingers, and she laughs.

XANDER (cont'd)

How does it feel?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANYA

I hurt in every place I could imagine and a few I didn't know about, Xander, how do you think it feels! Did you miss the part where my pelvis cracked open so she could tunnel her way out of me?

Xander chuckles, leaning on the bed to gaze adoringly at mother and baby.

XANDER

I meant, how does it feel to be a mother?

ANYA

(thinks)  
Purple.

XANDER

Purple?

ANYA

That's the best way I can describe it. I've got what feels like a million different feelings zipping around inside my head at the moment, but if I had to give them a colour, it'd be... just purple.

XANDER

Purple is good, I can handle purple. It means happy, right?

ANYA

(smiles)  
Yes.

Anya stares at Xander for a moment, still smiling.

XANDER

(smiling back)  
What?

ANYA

Nothing.  
(beat)  
You do know how much I love you, don't you?

XANDER

(grins)  
This little express delivery of baby in my hands says 'yes.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANYA

Good. I just wanted to make sure.

Anya looks at him for another beat, then beckons him closer.

ANYA (cont'd)

Xander, come here.

He leans over. She sits up a little in the bed, and whispers something into his ear.

We can't hear what she says, but Xander listens carefully, then as she leans back, he looks at her, a little confused. She smiles again and kisses him softly on the cheek, then settles back down in the bed.

Xander sits down, and with another smile at Anya looks down at the baby in his arms, settling back in his chair as Anya watches them.

Xander rubs his fingers against the baby's chest, and she makes tiny gurgles that sound like laughter.

XANDER

Alright, Harris Junior, here's a quick introduction. I'm your dad, Xander. I build things for a living, and I've built you a great new cot for when we take you home, as well as a paint job on your room that is, if I say so myself, nothing short of a Renaissance masterpiece.

The baby makes that laughter gurgle again, and Xander grins at Anya before he carries on.

XANDER (cont'd)

That beautiful, tired looking woman over there is your mother, Anya. She is, without a doubt, the other most important woman in my life. After you, of course. She may not have a subtle bone in her body, and gosh knows she's done things in her past that's make your hair fall out before it's even grown in, but there's only one thing you need to know about her. She loves you, and she always will.

Anya smiles, her eyelids closing as she watches Xander and the baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

XANDER (cont'd)

Pretty soon, you'll meet the rest of your family. Well, they're sort of your family, but that's what they've been to me over the years, so I hope they'll do the same for you. There's your aunt Buffy, who fights monsters and makes the world safe for little ones like you. There's your aunt Willow, who's like Sabrina, the girls from Charmed and Sam from 'Bewitched' all rolled into one, and then there's your uncle Giles, who's... British.

Anya's eyes are closed now, and with that same faint smile on her lips, her head falls a little to the side.

XANDER (cont'd)

But, you can worry about all that later. Right now, there's only two people you need to remember, and that's me, Xander, your daddy, and your mommy, Anya.

Xander looks up at Anya and rolls his eyes when he sees that she's asleep.

XANDER

Who has, of course, fallen asleep and probably missed the whole of my great speech just then!

Xander reaches out and gently shakes Anya to wake her up.

XANDER (cont'd)

Come on, honey, you're missing some quality baby moments here! Any second now, she's going to blow her first snot bubble or something, and you're going to miss it!

Xander smiles down at the baby again, then reaches out for Anya to shake her again.

XANDER (cont'd)

Don't sleep through the whole thing, sweetheart!

He shakes her again, a little harder this time.

Anya doesn't move.

Xander's smile drops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

XANDER (cont'd)  
(quiet)  
Anya?

Something's wrong.

**BLACK OUT:**

**END OF SHOW**