

TITLE: Not Just A River

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RATING: Whatever UPN would do.

SPOILERS: This story immediately follows the Buffy S6 episode "Wrecked"

SUMMARY: Buffy's not facing her feelings for Spike. She -- and all of Sunnydale -- apparently have to pay.

AUTHOR'S NOTES: Okay, ::cracks knuckles:: here comes the big explanation. Settle in.

The following is not a fic written in script format, it's a REAL SCRIPT. That I wrote. I am, in real life, a TV writer (I work in animation), and I wrote it as a spec script.

What's a spec script? It's a TV script you think up and write yourself, in the same format as the TV show does it, to use as a writing sample to get jobs in television.

Okay, here's the part that people always seem to have trouble with, no matter how many times it's explained. But I have faith in you, you're special. Ready? Here goes: *It was never expected or intended to be used, bought, or produced by the Buffy people or anybody else.* Really. That's not what specs are for.

What *are* specs for? Like I said, they're just a writing sample, a hypothetical example of how you would write for that show if they were nice enough to let you. You give it to your agent (if you have one) and they send it around to every "show runner" they can to have them read it. If a show runner likes it (and needs to hire someone), they call you up and have a meeting. If they really like *you*, you get a job. It's a work you do to demonstrate how well you can "get" a show, how well you can soak up the characters and think up good, appropriate storylines. It shows off your burgeoning talent and your fine ideas.

It also has a shelf life -- specs need to be kept "current", by Hollywood standards. Since Buffy is over, this one no longer is, so I just thought I'd put it out there for us fandom geeks to read, since it's a whole Buffy episode that people might like and otherwise it'd just be collecting dust on my hard drive.

No, it's not going to have all that lovely prose stuff most people like in fic. Yes, you're going to have to fill in the visuals and line delivery in your head, and read through some strange new jargon like "EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS" and "REV POV OTS DAWN" or whatever. But it's not that hard, I'll explain it before you have to, and frankly...I think it's worth the effort. :) Whatever flaws it has (and despite my not yet being a millionaire writer)...I have it on good authority that it doesn't suck. :P

Oh, and this script is registered with the Writers Guild of America, west, which records the date it was first written and means that if anyone tries to steal it, copy it or claim it as their own, a great big powerful union will come down on their heads and legally pound the bejeezus out of them. Wheel!

Okay, as promised, the few things you (might) need to know:

Script jargon:

LINES IN ALL CAPS = Scene headings. Basically a change of location or time, or a special shot.

EXT. / INT. = Exterior/Interior

POV = Point of View ("POV BUFFY" means the camera sees what Buffy does.)
REV POV = Reverse Point of View (flip whatever what we just saw).
ON _____ (BUFFY, CROCODILE, etc.) = the camera favors whatever _____ is.
CONTINUOUS = picks up where we left off before.
PUSH IN/OUT = camera gets closer/farther.
TRUCK IN/OUT = same as above.
PAN = a sideways-ish camera move.

Timeline stuff:

Spike and Buffy just started sleeping together.
Willow broke Dawn's arm last episode and "hit bottom", so is now detoxing from magic.
Tara's still alive, and recently left Willow.
Xander and Anya are still engaged.
Giles is in England.

BETA THANKS: To Azar Suerte, Joseph, Teresa, and a whole lotta other people.
WEBSITE: <http://annehedonia.populli.net>
FEEDBACK: Please, tell me how you liked this experiment: annehedonia@comcast.net

You're on your own now. ;) Have fun.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
"Not Just a River"
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TEASER

INT. MAGIC BOX - EVENING

BUFFY, ANYA, XANDER and DAWN hang out, a typical evening.
Buffy sits at the table, flipping through a magazine. Dawn helps Anya open her mail. Anya is chagrined at the contents of one envelope.

ANYA

How dare these people ask me to just give them money? Don't they know the Darwinian nature of Capitalism dooms those who can't compete to fall by the wayside?

XANDER

They're called charities, An.

Anya distastefully throws the envelope in the trash.

ANYA

In my shop, they're called gone.

Dawn has opened another envelope, and hands to it Anya.

DAWN

You got invited to something.

ANYA

(reads)

"Annual Sunnydale Black and White Ball."

(then)

What's the catch? Who wants my money now?

XANDER

Nobody, this is great. It's a big Sunnydale shindig for local businesspeople. You know, meet and greet and - most importantly - make contacts.

ANYA

Contacts? We'll be forced to make corrective eyewear?

XANDER

Don't ex-demons say the darndest things?

DAWN

No, contacts, as in, new friends.

XANDER

New friends who also like to make money - and might be willing to help you do it.

ANYA

(getting excited)

Other Capitalists?

XANDER

Nothing but Capitalists. A Socialist-free evening.

ANYA

(increasingly gleeful)

Oh, wow. Wow! And they invited me! I'm a real businessperson! This proves it!

She grabs Xander in a tackle-hug that knocks him back, causing him to jostle a few items behind him. He's amused.

XANDER

Hey, watch the stuff.

ANYA

Oh, Xander, I don't care! My current excitement transcends inventory!

Xander hugs her tighter.

XANDER

You're a poet, An.

Buffy watches the cute couple moment. She looks happy for them, yet...a bit jealous. Like she might be thinking about the "dating" option most currently available to her.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Buffy walks toward Spike's crypt - fighting to keep herself from going in - and talking to herself.

BUFFY

Okay, desperately-needed review of basics: Staying away from Spike, good.

She reaches the crypt door.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Going to see Spike, off-the-scale bad.

She resists it, turns away. An afterthought: she drags a huge piece of statuary or other object (something large and round would be ideal) in front of his door, blocking it thoroughly.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Spike not coming to see me, also good.

Turns out, though, Spike's already out; he appears nearby.

SPIKE

Oh, look, I'm out. Does that make it Easter?

Snagged, Buffy sighs, walks away in earnest. Spike follows.

BUFFY

Can't you just snuggle up with a good book and a warm bag of blood for once?

SPIKE

Love to, but my warm bag of blood keeps walking away.

He stops her, standing way too close for Buffy's liking.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Suppressing your feelings isn't healthy.

BUFFY

HA! You're telling me what's healthy? What's next, tanning advice?

SPIKE

Why do you always assume that I'm only one thing - selfish and evil?

BUFFY

That's two things.

SPIKE

Yeah, well, nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition.

Buffy resumes walking. Spike resumes following.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Yes, there is that side to me, but I've learned to be more.

BUFFY

Neutering is not learning.

SPIKE

Necessity has taught me that I have other sides to myself I'd like to express.

He grabs her arm and yanks her close. His proximity affects her. Spike runs a finger seductively over her face.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Same could be said for you. I know you get tired of saving the world...

Buffy is drawing nearer to him, succumbing. Spike grins.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
Spike knows how to make it all go
away...

They begin kissing. As they do, a swirling vortex of some sort happens above their heads, something to infer they're about to be involved in some sort of reaction, though they don't notice. Spike pulls away just enough to murmur...

SPIKE (CONT'D)
I can see the darkness in you a mile
off.

Buffy panics, pushes Spike away and storms off.

BUFFY
A mile off sounds good.

SPIKE
Dammit, we are alike, whether you like
it or not!

BUFFY
You are an evil thing. Any part of me
that's like you needs to be removed. Get
me a Spike-ectomy, stat!

SPIKE
DONE!

Spike storms off in a huff. Buffy has a flash of disappointment, then rallies and walks off the other way.

BUFFY
Go ahead! You go mope, I'll think about
how much I hate you. Tomorrow we'll do
it again. Same thing, different night.

Suddenly she sees...

POV BUFFY - a huge crocodile waiting in her path.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Although this is a new twist.

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT I

EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Buffy eyes the croc uneasily - not her usual fighting gig.

BUFFY

Um, 'gulp'. I think 'gulp' is appropriate here.

Buffy starts pacing around the crocodile.

BUFFY (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Hey, big fella. Don't see many of your kind around here...maybe a few at the mall, but only after they've been crafted into stylish footwear.

It lunges at her. she leaps back.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

OH-kay! That's a sore spot. Speaking of which, let's make more.

She kicks the croc under the jaw. It roars, lunges at her anew. She eludes him, and then continues kicking it, rapid-fire as many times as she can manage between its lunges.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Nothing personal, Lumpy, but I can't just leave you here to munch on passers-by. Although, the people-eating competition around here is pretty stiff. Literally!

The crocodile lunges, and Buffy leaps up to grab a low tree branch. The crocodile chomps into the heel of one of the heavy-duty boots we'll have her wearing. Buffy struggles.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Wow, tough room!

SPIKE (O.S.)

God, Slayer, don't torture a dumb animal.

Buffy suddenly finds herself yanked treeward to safety...

ON TREE -...and into the limbs by Spike, who's already there.

BUFFY

I suppose for you that would hit a nerve.

He rolls his eyes, points "you, me, jump down". She nods.

ON THE CROCODILE - as Spike and Buffy jump down onto its back. They wrestle it as it thrashes wildly. The croc whips his tail and throws Spike off and into a headstone.

SPIKE

Crikey, he's a naughty boy!

He jumps up and grabs the tail again, struggling as it threatens to whip him around.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

(yells to Buffy)

BACK HERE! GOT AN IDEA!

Buffy rolls off and grabs the croc's tail with Spike. The two spin the croc in a circle and then let go, smashing it into a tree. It slows it down enough for Buffy to yank loose one of those wires that goes from a pole and into the ground. She uses it to tie the croc's mouth shut, tether it to a tree.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Bloody hell, what do you make of that?

BUFFY

I make that it's still alive. I'm going to call Animal Control.

Spike gets in her way, teasingly.

SPIKE

And after that...we've another animal needs controlling.

BUFFY

We've been over this.

SPIKE

(a callback)

Make it all go away...

BUFFY
Spike...sod off.

She leaves. Off Spike's faintly surprised look...

INT. BUFFY'S HOUSE, THE NEXT MORNING:

Willow sits at the kitchen island, in the throes of magic detox, looking like hell. She nibbles at some toast, then grimaces and pushes the plate away. As Buffy enters, Willow tries to put on a brave face. *Note: in this scene, Buffy's using strange expressions - a lot of them British - but her accent stays American.*

BUFFY
(gentle but cheerful)
Hey Will. How goes the battle?

WILLOW
The battle? Um, okay. 'Cept I'm thinking the way my head feels has got to be against the Geneva convention.

BUFFY
Anything I can do?

WILLOW
If I find a way you can do the barfing for me, I'll be in touch.

BUFFY
Is that all you're eating?

WILLOW
Trust me, food's not an option yet.

BUFFY
Poppycock, you need your strength.
That's not a proper breakfast.

Buffy starts rummaging in the fridge.

WILLOW
I guess not, if it's enough to make you say 'poppycock'. Really, no thank you.

Buffy puts pancake ingredients on the counter.

BUFFY

C'mon, I'm going all Aunt Jemima here.
Plus just the fact that I'm cooking at
all makes it a red-letter day.

WILLOW

(amused)
I'd like some of whatever you're on.
(off Buffy's look)
You're very chipper. Bouncy even.

BUFFY

I'm in a good mood. Last night, I
wrestled a crocodile...

WILLOW

A whatodile?

BUFFY

...and I'll admit it, I was bloody
brilliant.

WILLOW

A crocodile was out, loose, moving
freely about the cabin?

BUFFY

Right there in the cemetery.

WILLOW

Wow! Where was he from?

BUFFY

Beats me. Didn't check his ID, he didn't
have a wallet. Though if you think about
it, he was kind of a wallet all over.

Willow's warming to the puzzle of it all.

WILLOW

There was nothing in the newspaper about
anything getting loose from the zoo...It
must have been a ...manifestation, of
something going on. What could it mean?

BUFFY

Six more weeks of winter?

WILLOW

Is anyone researching this yet?
You know, a simple energy tracking spell
would be exactly the thing for...

Willow realizes what she's said. The moment deflates.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

...Tara to do, and very much not me.
(beat) Sorry. Guess I got all excited at
the idea of being a non-disappointment.

BUFFY

No worries, Will.

WILLOW

Maybe not for you, but I've got a few.

There's an uncomfortable moment. Willow grows morose.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

So...any idea when Dawnie'll be back?

BUFFY

Should be soon. Couple more days of two
teenage girls in the house and Janice's
mother should go right 'round the bend.

WILLOW

Well, I've been thinking, and if she's
still having a...problem with me, I'd be
willing to...find somewhere else...

Buffy sees where this is going, and sits down.

BUFFY

All right, enough self-pitying rubbish.
Look, you messed up, and you messed up
right proper. But we're moving on. You
just get better, and Dawn'll come
around. It's her hang-up, innit?

Willow nods uncertainly.

WILLOW

Yeah, I guess it...innis. Is that what
the kids are saying?

BUFFY

Hey, you know what we should do? Take the day and go shopping.

WILLOW

Really? You don't want to look into this croc-ocity instead?

BUFFY

Nah. Crocs have been around since, what, the dinosaurs? They can wait a few more hours. Let's go get some fresh mall air.

Willow looks uncertain, yet pleased. She nods.

EXT. SUNNYDALE MUSEUM - SAME TIME

Establishing. A banner out front indicates a showing of Egyptian mummies is going on.

TEACHER (OS)

Believe it or not, the process of mummifying was something the Egyptians probably just stumbled across...

INT. SUNNYDALE MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

ON A DISPLAY OF SARCOPHAGI - A class of young high schoolers are gathered around a teacher, who discusses the display behind him/her.

TEACHER

...after seeing that bodies laid out in the sand would be completely sucked dry of moisture, and thus preserved.

ON DAWN, who's a part of the class (note - Dawn's arm is still in the sling she earned in "Wrecked".) She and her classmate Wendy are heckling quietly.

DAWN

(sotto to Wendy)

So I'm betting, not much sunbathing in those days.

They giggle.

TEACHER

Now, if you'll follow me...

The class moves to the next room, past what looks to be some phony crocodiles set up in a display. As we push in on one, it seems to make one of those crocodile hissing noises.

ON A NEW SARCOPHAGUS, laying down under glass.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

...and take a look at the opening in this sarcophagus, you can see a thousand-year old human.

WENDY

(to Dawn)

No thanks. That's what my uncle's for.

One by one, some kids go up and look through the face hole.

POV MUMMY - as Wendy peeks through the hole.

REV POV - The mummy lays there, horrific yet peaceful.

ON SCENE - Wendy turns away from the mummy as Dawn steps up.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Wow, Oil of Olay, I'm just sayin'.

POV MUMMY - Dawn peeks through the hole.

REV POV - The mummy's eyes open to reveal freaky, enchanted pupils!

BACK TO POV MUMMY - Dawn screams her lungs out.

ON SCENE - Suddenly the mummy bashes his way out of the sarcophagus. Panic ensues. The teacher tries for order.

TEACHER

Everyone stay together! This way!

The class goes running back the way they came.

ON THE CROCODILE DISPLAY - As the class runs toward it, the hissing crocodile from before suddenly comes to life, snapping at the kids. Other crocs follow suit. More panic.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Class! Stay together!

Ain't gonna happen. Now the mummies in the sarcophagi we saw before begin bashing their way out. Kids and museum patrons scatter in all directions.

All the mummies (about 6 or 7 for this scene) smash through displays, heading for the exit.

An alligator corners and attacks a museum guard, chomping down firmly on his leg. The guard screams.

ON A CELL PHONE, dropped in the chaos. Dawn grabs it and dials quickly, rushing to what she hopes is a safe place.

DAWN

(into phone)

Buffy? You have to get over to the museum right now! Because--(screams!)

A mummy bashes its way into her hiding place. She abandons the phone, crawls out, then takes off running. She runs past the alligator we saw previously, who is evidently swallowing the last of the guard - his hat and the very top of his head are still visible in its jaws.

EXT. SUNNYDALE - COMMUNITY POOL - SAME TIME

Anya is sunning as Xander walks back from swimming. He pauses to stand over Anya's chaise lounge.

XANDER

Darn refreshing, if you don't think about that pre-school pee factor.

ANYA

Xander, move! You're blocking my sun.

XANDER

Good God, you're right! I might cause a big boyfriend-shaped hole in your tan.

ANYA

I just want to look good for the ball.

XANDER

Wrong approach, you realize. You should try to look as pasty as possible, to show what long businessperson hours you've been working.

ANYA

That can't be right. You don't know anything about smoozing.

XANDER

I know it's pronounced "shmoozing".

Suddenly there are screams from OS. The two look to see the pool suddenly erupting with more crocodiles, sending the occupants scrambling.

EXT. SUNNYDALE MUSEUM - SAME TIME

Buffy and Willow arrive, carrying shopping bags, to see the museum in a state of chaos. She hands Willow her bags and charges up the stairs inside.

INT. SUNNYDALE MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Buffy arrives inside, sums up the sitch. She sees a mummy with a squirming schoolkid in its grip - she intervenes, fights it and frees the kid, then knocks the mummy's head off with one of those poles that hold up velvet ropes.

She turns to face her next attacker, a mummy walking toward her with arms held straight out, like in old movies.

BUFFY

Nice walk. Very retro.

She darts toward it and ducks under its swinging arms.

ON A LOOSE PIECE OF THE MUMMY'S WRAPPING; Buffy grabs it and yanks, spinning the mummy and unwinding it rapidly, briefly baring the horrific corpse beneath before it collapses.

EXT. SUNNYDALE - COMMUNITY POOL - CONTINUOUS

Anya and Xander help panicking pool occupants out of the area. Xander snatches one little girl out of the pool just before a croc is able to snap down its jaw on her.

Anya fends off a croc with the end of a folded chair, letting it mangle the metal legs instead of her.

As the last of the pool occupants rush out, Xander grabs Anya and the two of them make it out of the fenced pool area and shut the gate just in time to miss yet another set of

snapping jaws. Xander turns to the trapped croc triumphantly.

XANDER

Ha! Now this is where I would say something quippy, if I wasn't about to faint like a southern belle!

The croc lunges again. He leaps back with a yell.

INT. SUNNYDALE MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Buffy finds Dawn Atop a tall museum display, surrounded by crocodiles. Buffy topples an even taller, heavier display on top of the crocs, flattening and/or trapping them, then helps her sister down. The two girls head toward the front door.

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR, too far away to do any good - Buffy and Dawn see three mummies about to exit. Buffy grabs a large disc-shaped artifact of some kind, with sharp edges.

She frisbees the artifact at them and it slices through the lot of them, cutting them in half. They collapse.

Buffy and Dawn look around for more mummies, but don't see any. They relax.

EXT. SUNNYDALE MUSEUM - MAIN ENTRANCE - SHORT TIME JUMP

Buffy and Dawn exit. Police cars and cops are now on the scene. In BG, some animal control officers wrestle a squirming crocodile into a truck. One cop ushers Buffy and Dawn away. (*Note: Buffy now has the beginnings of a working-class London accent.*)

COP

Move along, girls. We've got it under control.

BUFFY

(sotto to Dawn)
Uh huh. And if they saw what really happened they'd wet their knickers.

DAWN

Knickers? They were wearing long pants.

Willow approaches, looking beat.

WILLOW
I'm sorry, Buffy, I...

She and Dawn realize they're in each other's presences. Dawn turns away coldly. Willow takes the hit, but continues.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
...I tried to stop those mummies that got out, but I just wasn't up to it.
(leans tiredly)
Geez, I couldn't stop mummies? What could I outrun, a glacier?

BUFFY
They got out? Where'd they go?

WILLOW
All different ways. And it was a while ago.

Buffy is acting restless, bouncing in place like a boxer.

BUFFY
Bugger. Maybe if I hurry I can still catch 'em.

Willow stops her.

WILLOW
No, they're long gone. And I heard over one of the police radios that something happened at the community pool, with crocodiles. I think you should call a Scooby meeting.

BUFFY
Yeah, well...later. After another spot of violence.

Buffy runs off. Willow and Dawn watch, amazed.

INT. MAGIC BOX - LATER THAT NIGHT

ON THE TABLE - Xander, Anya, Tara and Dawn are converged, trying to figure out what's happening - on many levels.

XANDER
You mean she just ran off?

DAWN

Yeah, she wanted to go beat up more mummies. And she was talking funny. She almost sounded like...

The front doorbell sounds.

SPIKE (OS)

Hey.

Spike enters, dressed very trendy in a designer ensemble. (Note: he will continue to dress this way for the rest of the episode.) He looks strikingly unlike his usual self. (And he's talking funny, too. much of his accent is gone.) The Scoobs stare, giggle, are impressed, as is fitting per Scoob.

XANDER

Spike, what's with the new duds? Backstreet Boys looking for senior members?

SPIKE

No, see, it's called fashion. You pick out your clothes on purpose, instead of just playing hamper bingo.

XANDER

At least I don't look like "Zoolander" was my autobiography.

SPIKE

Right, who better to critique my clothes than a construction foreman? Am I losing points for lack of tool belt?

Tara intercepts before a fight can start.

TARA

Your clothes are nice, Spike. You just, you look...

She flails. Xander finishes for her.

XANDER

...like you give a damn, and we all know that's not the case.

SPIKE

I just felt like going shopping. Where's the big whoop?

XANDER

You spend three lifetimes in the same t-shirt, then show up in that and wonder why we're staring? Pardon us, Mr. Hilfiger, ours was a premature whoop.

ANYA

Also, I think your collar's too tight. It's not letting your accent out.

XANDER

Yeah, from whence springs the dude-speak?

SPIKE

Look, if I'd wanted to be dissected I'd have stayed with the Initiative. I just came by to see if you knew why it's all crocodile-y around here.

XANDER

That we don't. We need to hit the books.

DAWN

Do we have any that explain mummy migration patterns?

EXT. SUNNYDALE - FOREST - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Between the trees, we glimpse half a dozen mummies walking through the woods. Perhaps they're aware of each other, perhaps not. What does soon become apparent is that they're all heading for some common destination.

EXT. FOREST - CAVE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Hidden away, hard to find. The mummies converge, shuffle in.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Over the mummies' shoulders, we see the back of a large, frightening reptilian villain. Two crocodiles flank him.

VILLAIN

<ad lib muttering, maybe a foreign language, maybe a chant> AH! I found it!

Villain turns around. This is APEP, EGYPTIAN GOD OF DARKNESS AND CHAOS. He looks like walking Hell. However, he talks like ozzy osborne, (accent optional) all muttering and confusion and doddering. However, when he gets angry or decides to pull out the menace, it's there, as we'll see.

APEP

(cutsie pet voice)
I found oo widdle toy! You want it?
Does oo want it?

He gleefully holds the "toy" aloft - a severed human arm.

APEP (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Get it! Try to get it!

The croc snaps viciously, but Apep happily keeps the arm out of reach. He finally lets the croc have it and rubs him affectionately on the head.

APEP (CONT'D)

There you go! Good boy!

He turns and sees the mummies, and seems almost surprised, like he forgot they were coming. He probably did.

APEP (CONT'D)

Oh. You made it. Well done.
(revving them up)
You ready for some fun and games? Hope so, because this time...

CLOSE ON APEP, looking insane and really freakin' evil.

APEP (CONT'D)

We're gonna rule this dust ball.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

INT. APEP'S LAIR - CONTINUOUS

Apep approaches the mummies, old pals.

APEP

Now then, we are gonna have some fun,
eh? Rock and roll! Niloc, how's that
arm? Healed up since our last adventure?
(joke:) Keep it bandaged!

(fake spars with him)

Rami! You feeling any better? You were
brilliant our last go. Not your fault
that bitch knew karate. Shake it off.

The "Rami" mummy growls. It's unclear whether or not he's
talking to Apep, but Apep acts like he is. (NOTE: This'll be
the pattern for all mummy-Apep interaction.)

"RAMI" MUMMY

<growls>

APEP

Yes, can you believe it? A repression
event, in this day and age. With all
the therapy and 12-stepping people do
lately, it's a miracle we're here, eh?
<chuckle>.

Apep views the other croc at his side, who seems restless.

APEP (CONT'D)

Oooh wassah matter? Did you brother get
a toy and oo didn't?

He reaches into a large bowl of fish and drops several into
the croc's murderous jaws. A third mummy pipes up.

MUMMY #3

<growls>

APEP

(re the two crocs)

Yeah, they're from the same litter.

(looks closely)

Have we met?

MUMMY #3

<growls>

APEP

Oh, that's right, you're a friend of
Jeff's. So let me bring you up to speed.
Where's my...oh.

He pours himself a goblet of mineral water and lemon.

APEP (CONT'D)

When I was on Earth before, I had such
an ambition for ruling the earth, but
this Ra the Sun God, kept mucking it up.
Every night I fought him - that's what
made the sun go down, didn't know that,
did you? But the bastard always won. But
now, he's off in another realm, and
we're back! We just have to go through a
little ceremony when the sky is right,
and voila! Darkness reigns, and so do
we!

"JEFF'S FRIEND" MUMMY

<grunts>

APEP

Yes, we've tried this a few times
before. But we often get called to some
very inconvenient places. Not our fault
there's no Egyptian supply warehouse in
Alaska, is it? But this time, everything
we need is right near by!

"JEFF'S FRIEND" MUMMY

<grunts again>

APEP

No, I understand if you're not sure
whether or not I can do this. Hang on,
let me just find...(ad lib muttering)

Apep putters around, suddenly coming up with A large axe
that he hurls across the room and through the asking mummy's
face. The mummy's head splits in two and he crumbles.

APEP (CONT'D)

(suddenly furious)

I can do it because I'm the freakin' God of darkness! Just try to mess with me, I'll hand you your gift-wrapped ass on a plate!

(calming)

Now then, let's get started, shall we? I'll just do a quick trance to locate what we need.

He sits and settles, appears to go into a trance...then starts to snore a moment later. He startles and wakes up.

APEP (CONT'D)

OH! Oh. Make some noise or something, will you? I had a late night and I've given up caffeine.

He settles and tries once more. The mummies look at each other uncertainly, then start to hum tunelessly.

EXT. SUNNYDALE - VARIOUS - SAME TIME

ON A RESIDENTIAL STREET - All is quiet, when suddenly it starts to rain - hard. Minutes later a flood sweeps through, covering cars, sweeping away bikes, picket fences, other loose articles, causing damage and carrying even more crocodiles with it - in the places where the water ebbs, we see them standing and thrashing around.

INT. MAGIC BOX - CONTINUOUS

ON THE FRONT WINDOW - A sudden surge of floodwater sends a crocodile crashing through it!

The Scoobies jump up. The crocodile flops in through the ruined window and stands in front of it, blocking them from getting to it (and fixing it) while floodwater rushes in. Spike lures the croc out of the way, yelling and throwing things at it.

SPIKE

Hey, hey! Over here!

The croc follows Spike, just enough away from the window.

XANDER

(yells to the girls)

We need wood and nails! In the basement!

The girls run downstairs. Spike continues to fend off the croc, hitting it with whatever he can grab from nearby.

The girls return with boards and hammers and nails. Xander joins Spike in doing battle with the croc, while the others cover the window, getting thoroughly soaked.

Dawn stands on something handy to reach where she's helping Tara hammer. Suddenly a strong wave knocks her backward and off her perch, landing her right near the croc!

The croc sees and advances on her. Dawn screams louder. Xander fights to get over to her, but can't make it in time. The croc is opening its jaws when wham! A mean-looking axe, expertly thrown by Spike, messily chops off its head.

Xander arrives to comfort the freaked-out Dawn. Anya stands above him, fretting as well.

ANYA

Oh, this is awful! What if they cancel the ball tomorrow?

XANDER

One apocalypse at a time, hon.

ANYA

Wait! I've got it!

XANDER

What, you'll laminate your ball gown?

ANYA

No! This whole thing! It's ancient Egypt! This is just like the annual flooding of the Nile!

DAWN

She's right. We just did reports on it in school - hence the museum trip.

TARA

So Sunnydale's turning into Ancient Egypt? This could be scary.

XANDER

Could be worse. Could be turning into Current Detroit.

DAWN

What other weird stuff's gonna happen?

Just then Buffy enters out of the rain, holding a big raincoat over her head to keep dry. She fusses and shakes off the water in a very Spike-like entrance. She's also in a black t-shirt and jeans; her dress is no longer fashionable. And her accent is now all brit. (both the mode of dress and accent will persist until further notice.)

BUFFY

It is bloody awful out!

(Off their looks)

What? It is!

DAWN

Where have you been?

BUFFY

Around.

(off the wreckage)

What's all this, then?

XANDER

Wait, is it Wacky Accent Day, and nobody told me?

BUFFY

(to Spike)

What's he on about?

SPIKE

No clue. Some form of Xander-ese.

TARA

You two don't hear how differently you're talking?

BUFFY

What's so bleedin' different?

XANDER

Oh, the i-ro-nee. Look, for now, talk however you want, play your little jokes, we've got bigger problems.

BUFFY

I'll say. Big hole in the window. Big dead croc on the floor.

XANDER

Big case of Sunnydale turning into Ancient Egypt.

BUFFY

What? Why?

TARA

We don't know.

DAWN

But I say we figure it out before anything else happens.

BUFFY

Like what?

SPIKE

Good question, let's think. What kind of stuff goes with Ancient Egypt?

They think a beat.

DAWN

Lot of sand.

TARA

Cats being worshipped.

ANYA

(wistfully)

Big burly Nubian guys as your slaves.

(off their looks)

Sorry.

DAWN

Hieroglyphics.

XANDER

Walking like Egyptians - oh, God, what if we're attacked by the Bangles?

BUFFY (OS)

We got any hot cocoa mix?

Buffy's wandered off to rummage behind the counter. She looks at the others with clueless hopefulness.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
Cold outside. Be just the ticket.

The others process this and move on without answering.

TARA
Maybe Lapis Lazuli jewelry could get popular again.

XANDER
And pearly pink lip colors for spring!

ANYA
No, she's right - Lapis Lazuli was quite precious. Anyone from Ancient Egypt might want it for any number of reasons.

SPIKE
Did it have any mystical powers?

ANYA
Oh, definitely.

SPIKE
That's very interesting. When I was out shopping, I saw a jewelry store that had this huge piece of it in a display case. I say we stake out the place, see if anyone shows up wanting it.

A beat goes by.

XANDER
Oh my God, I agree with him.

TARA
So do I.

DAWN
Me too. Can I come with?

BUFFY
Hey, hey! Hold on a tic! Since when does Spike get to come up with the ideas?

SPIKE

You haven't chimed in with anything.

BUFFY

Not yet.

Spike's look: well? Buffy squirms, then goes defensive.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Oh, so now I'm on trial, am I? Fine.
You lot can carry on without me, while I
am forced to do your grocery shopping
for some much-needed cocoa mix!

She storms toward the back door, stops next to Anya with a surreptitious hand out:

BUFFY (CONT'D)

An, lend us a fiver, eh?

Anya just stares. Buffy gets disgusted and flounces out.

The Scoobs are stunned, except for Spike.

XANDER

Is this where Jamie Kennedy says we're
all on his new reality TV show?

SPIKE

Let her go. It's just that stupid pride
thing she's got.

XANDER

Since when? And since when are you
impersonating a door-to-door Armani
salesman? What are you two up to?

SPIKE

Xander, chill. Tough love moment? I
think you're the one with the big
wiggins going.

Xander's dumbfounded. Spike peeks out the front window.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna see
how the crypt held up in the flood.

He exits out the front door.

EXT. MAGIC BOX - CONTINUOUS

OVERHEAD SHOT of Spike as he exits. Truck up and back to show the sky, strangely stratified with mostly clouds on one side, and mostly clear dark sky on the other. It's not completely separated - yet - still kind of swirled together like a yin-yang sign. But it's still odd.

INT. MAGIC BOX - SAME TIME.

The gang is still shell-shocked.

XANDER

Can we make this Thing Number Two on our list of weirdness to research?

TARA

Sure. I'm on it.

The back door bangs open again.

DAWN

Buffy?

WILLOW (OS)

Um, no.

GANG'S POV ON WILLOW - She stands in the doorway, looking friendly, hopeful, and more than a little wobbly.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Hi. Some weather we're having, eh?

Tara and Dawn have both gone ramrod straight with tension. Willow can sense this, but she sallies forth anyway, her desperation to be re-accepted stronger than her fear.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I just...wanted to see if I could help, because things are getting wiggly.

(jokes)

I mean, when was the last time you thought seriously about building an ark?

Faint smiles flicker across faces. Everybody's too tense, too aware of Tara and Dawn's possible reactions.

XANDER

Will, don't you think you should rest?

Willow takes this as rejection. She tries to keep the disappointment out of her face, but barely succeeds.

WILLOW

I've done nothing but rest all week. I'm fine.

XANDER

I'm just worried it's too soon for you to be involved in supernatural stuff. Take your time. We'll be here.

Willow is nodding, her face low to hide her reaction.

WILLOW

Sure, sure. No problem.

She rushes clumsily out the door.

XANDER

Will-

But she's gone.

EXT. MAGIC BOX - BACK DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Willow storms down the alley, angrily wiping her eyes.

WILLOW

Stupid, stupid...

She stops after a moment and sighs, catches her breath. A moment later she's redoubled her determination. We can see she's going to help - whether they know it or not.

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - FOLLOWING NIGHT

A funky, new-agey place called "Sands Of Time" - which is closed for the night. (note: lights are on for security.) Pan to behind some bushes, where Tara and Spike sit.

TARA

Anya had a great dress tonight, and this little brooch shaped like a dollar sign. She was like Cinderella, but greedy.

Spike laughs, but is soon distracted, looking behind himself.

TARA (CONT'D)
I'm sure Buffy'll be here.

SPIKE
She's sure looking not here.

A beat, and then Tara approaches the accent thing.

TARA
Speaking of Buffy, have you and she...

SPIKE
(interrupts)
Look! Someone's here!

POV SCOOBIES, THRU BUSHES - three mummies shuffle up to the store window. Mummy #1 antics back to smash it...

ON MUMMIES ...when suddenly Spike flies in and tackles him os. Mummy #2 smashes the window instead.

Spike and mummy #1 wrestle. The mummy gets the better of Spike, untangles and heads for the store, too. Spike gets up, looks at his clothes a second before following.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
Great, grass stains for nothing.

AT THE STOREFRONT - Mummies #2 and #3 have cleared enough glass away to make an opening, Mummy #2 is climbing in.

Tara gestures magically toward the window.

TARA
Totus Solidus!

The window's hole closes, neatly cutting mummy #2 in half. Mummy #3 tries to smash the window again, but now it's magically smash-proof. Cool.

INT./EXT. JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Unfortunately, the top half of mummy #2 is still barely alive, and it reaches up and opens the front door for the others just before it dies. Not as cool.

Mummy #3 enters, Spike rushes at mummy #1, is about to lay his hands on its shoulders - but Buffy's hands get there

first. She throws mummy #1 back and into Spike, knocking him back outside. She looks at him briefly:

BUFFY
Sorry, Vamp.

She goes in. Spike rolls his eyes.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - SAME TIME.

Mummy #3 searches the displays, smashing some and looking at the contents, tossing back the jewels he doesn't want.

BUFFY
Looking for something special?

She starts fighting him. Mummy #1 joins in. They're distracted a second later when objects start flying all over the room, as though some kind of magical wind has kicked up.

Tara, just entering, scrambles to find a safe place.

Buffy gets hit by an earring, looks at it, likes it.

BUFFY (CONT'D)
This is smashing! Where's the other one?

The lights flicker and dim. Buffy turns to see...

Apep has appeared, and is sucking the light from the overhead lights into his own hands.

APEP
ROCK N' ROLL!

BUFFY
'Rock n' roll'? You are ancient.

Apep then shoots all the "light energy" into Buffy, knocking her across the room.

APEP
(calls out to Mummy #1)
Aaron, would you help Niloc find what we're looking for?
(no answer - yells)
AARON!

Favor the Lapis Lazuli display case, showing off a bowling-ball-sized piece of lapis. Mummy #1 steers mummy #3 at it.

Tara sees this, casts a spell.

TARA

Preventir!

An invisible barrier happens between the mummies and the gems ("So *that's* what an invisible barrier looks like!"). Both mummies beat on it with their fists. Tara concentrates to keep it up.

ON APEP - Spike goes to attack him and Apep shoots a bolt of energy that throws him back. Buffy gets back in his face.

APEP

Just a little preview of what I'll be doing later. You should join me.

BUFFY

Why, are you coming apart?

APEP

I have all the power of darkness and chaos. I can give you what these jokers won't - glamour, real respect.

A long, strange beat where Buffy doesn't answer. Then, she kicks him backwards. He comes at her again. Spike tries to come to her aid.

BUFFY

Back off, mate, this one's mine!

She shoves him, into Tara. They fall, and Tara's concentration breaks.

The magic barrier disappears, and the mummies smash through the glass of the jewelry case and grab the big jewel. They turn toward the exit, which Buffy blocks, until...she sees something on the floor.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

Oh, hang on! There it is!

She ducks to get it, the mummies runs past her and out. She stands back up with the other earring, looks for a mirror that isn't broken. Apep looks pleased.

APEP
Pleasure doing business with you.

He vanishes dramatically. Tara and Spike just stare at Buffy.

SPIKE
(angrily)
What just happened there?

BUFFY
So they nicked a big rock. We'll get it back.

SPIKE
That is so not the point! You acted like a complete flake! And you totally snagged my new pants!

BUFFY
(coldly)
Are we done? Can I go now?

Spike has nothing to say. Buffy exits. Spike and Tara stare.

INT. WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Willow sits on her bed, pulling out all the stops to be non-magically effective. She's surrounded by open books, tapping intently away on her laptop. Beside her, a police scanner crackles with static, and blurts out a message:

VOICE ON POLICE SCANNER:
...break-in at Sands of Time jewelry store, 3319 Brookhurst. Suspects removed very valuable Egyptian jewel...

Willow's wheels start turning. She grabs a nearby book and flips to a page, reads intently.

WILLOW
Oh, wow...Ay-pep? Ah-pep? (beat) Wonder where he'd be hiding out?

She turns a page and her brow furrows. Then the needed connection hits her - she drops the book on the bed, grabs her stuff and races out. Push in on the book, laying open. We see a picture of Apep's old temple.

CROSS-FADE TO...

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE BALL HOTEL - NIGHT - SAME TIME

...a Sunnydale hotel that looks very much like the one in willow's book. The Black and White Ball is going on there.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - SAME TIME

Anya stands among a group of male businessman admirers, clearly the belle of the ball.

ANYA

So I told him 'They're my profits! If the government wants some, let it deal with idiotic customers!'

Laughs all around - what a hoot this girl is!

BUSINESSMAN #1

What do you think of the minimum wage?

ANYA

Not minimum enough. I prefer slavery.
(the men laugh - she continues earnestly)
No, see, back when I was a kid...

BUSINESSMAN #2

(interrupts)
Anya - marry me!

ANYA

Oh, I'm engaged. But let's exchange business cards in case anything happens.

More laughs. She goes into her bag and realizes she has no cards. She signals "just-a-minute" and goes to nudge...

Xander, who's drowsing in a chair on the sidelines.

ANYA (CONT'D)

Xander! I need more business cards from the shop.

XANDER

What? Oh. You realize scribbling on cocktail napkins is a time-honored tradition?

(off Anya's glare)
Aaand so is sleeping on the couch. Up,
up and away.

Xander takes off.

EMCEE (OS)
Attention everyone!

ON EMCEE - he's taken the podium, which is on a STAGE.

EMCEE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to say -

Suddenly, he contorts with an unseen, mortal wound.

EMCEE (CONT'D)
--uuhhnn!

Anya looks confused.

ANYA
Uuhhnn?

The emcee slumps over the podium, revealing an ancient-looking dagger in his back and...mummy #1, the culprit. As the crowd gasps, Apep and his crocodiles appear nearby in a magical flash. He holds both arms up.

APEP
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ARE YOU READY TO
ROCK? I know I am.

BLACK OUT.

END ACT II

ACT III

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The party-goers are still cringing in fear of Apep.

APEP

Now then, there are going to be some changes around here. For one thing, I'm going to save you all a lot of money on sunblock. Now for that we have to do a ceremony, and this place looks a wreck, not like my old temple at all. So, we'll need workers.

He whips up a ball of light into his hand, then casts it out - the light shoots into all the party-goers. We see Anya get hit, along with her 'admirers'. They all look hypnotized.

APEP (CONT'D)

There, you'll make a nice bunch of slaves. Next...building materials.

He stops, closes his eyes, gets a little trancy...

APEP (CONT'D)

Let's do the place in...marble.

EXT. SUNNYDALE - BUILDING NEAR BLACK & WHITE BALL - SAME TIME

On a big (vacant) stone building nearby. A bolt of energy descends from the skies and blasts it to smithereens.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Big pieces of the building next door crash through the roof. The guests are too drugged to move, and a few get smashed. One hits the man next to Anya, nearly missing her.

APEP

Okay then, Aaron knows what we want, everyone listen to him.

Aaron (mummy #1) cracks a huge whip. The "slaves" begin moving chunks of the other building around the room.

INT. MAGIC BOX - SAME TIME

Spike and Tara have come back and are poring over books.

SPIKE

So, would you say he was more of a lizard or a serpent?

TARA

Kinda both. Is there a section for
lerpents?

They ponder this, then go back to their books. Then Tara
reads something that makes her sit up and notice.

TARA (CONT'D)

(to self)

'Transference, Slayer and Vampire'!

SPIKE

You find something?

Tara reads a little further, then looks at Spike with a new
knowledge of what he's been up to. Wow. How to bring it up?

TARA

Um...kinda.

Xander enters suddenly.

XANDER

Evening, eager young space cadets. Hey,
how'd it go at the jewelry store?

Tara senses she shouldn't mention Spike & Buffy's new
relationship in front of Xander - the moment is gone.

SPIKE

Great, if you like fiascos.

Tara recovers, grabs a book.

TARA

We did find a good clue, though. There's
a spell where a large amount of Lapis is
used to send out a kind of sunblocker,
like a super ozone layer. It would
prevent all sunlight from reaching the
earth.

XANDER

Very nice! So that's of interest to
vampires?

TARA

No, lerpents.

Xander looks properly confused. Spike's found something.

SPIKE
Hey! I've got it!

Tara and Xander gather around as he reads.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
'Ra was the god of the sun. He traveled the waters of heaven each day in a boat that carried the sun, making it rise and set. At night, Ra was challenged by...

INSERT SHOT - POV OF BOOK - on an ancient picture of Apep.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
'...Apep, the god of chaos and darkness. In order for the sun to rise, Ra fought and defeated him every night.'

BACK TO SCENE

XANDER
A-pep? That's not a god. That's something you slam to stay awake during finals.

TARA
So that's why Apep wanted the Lapis - he wants to create eternal darkness.

XANDER
Time out - did you meet this sore loser?

SPIKE
Yep. Here's a picture of his old temple.

INSERT SHOT, POV ON BOOK - The same picture Willow saw.

TARA (O.S.)
Hey, that's downtown. I've been there.

BACK TO SCENE - Xander goes pale.

XANDER
I just left there. You say this Apep guy is out and about, tonight? (off their nods) Anya's in trouble.

INT. WILLIE'S BAR - SAME TIME

Quick establishing pan, ending on...BUFFY, AT THE BAR. She drains a mug and then slams it on the counter.

BUFFY

Willie! Keep 'em comin'!

Willie approaches, still a bit afraid of her.

WILLIE

One more hot cocoa and you'll have a tummy ache, little girl.

Buffy lunges over the bar at him, snarling. Willie starts and rushes away to get her drink. Buffy sits back and chuckles.

At another section of the bar, Willie fixes Buffy's drink. A demon there gossips with him.

DEMON

What is up with her? And when did she go limey?

Willie just shrugs.

Buffy begins talking to her general vicinity.

BUFFY

Now see, these are my people. The tough ones, the arse-kickers of Sunnydale.

She throws her arm around a male vampire sitting next to her. Vampire #2 sits next to him, looking amused.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You're quite the looker. Buy me a drink?

VAMPIRE

Sorry, not really into Slayers.

BUFFY

(sits up sourly)
Can't we all just get along?

VAMPIRE #2

Speaking of getting along, you should.

VAMPIRE

Soon as word gets out that you're, uh...
(smirks) here, you'll be the buffet.

BUFFY

Hello, Slayer. Can handle myself, yeah?

VAMPIRE #2

From where I'm sitting, you can't even
handle hot cocoa.

VAMPIRE

And really...why stay where you're not
welcome?

Buffy turns to look around uncertainly.

POV BUFFY - A slow pan of the place, and a myriad of
amused/irritated demon faces. No one's at all scared of
her.

Buffy turns back, chastened and red-faced.

BUFFY

So why warn me?

The vampire leans close, smug and predatory.

VAMPIRE

Honey...the only interesting targets are
moving ones. Slam-dunks bore me.

Buffy stands up, clinging to her last shreds of dignity, and
strides toward the door. As we follow her, a rumble of
conversation goes through the place. We stop to listen to
our Demon from before, quipping to Willie and those around
him:

DEMON

Man, she ain't really a Slayer or a
demon or even a human now...just kind of
a 'thing'.

Those around him laugh, although Willie's still too cowed to
do more than smile.

ON THE DOOR - Buffy pauses: did she hear that comment
correctly or not? She decides not to find out, and leaves.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE BALL - SAME TIME

Willow sneaks up on the outside door of the ball. She looks inside, and her eyes grow wide.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALL - CONTINUOUS

POV WILLOW - quite the scene: the party guests are transporting large blocks of marble, as before. A few large ornate pillars have been partially constructed; "slaves" work at carving them and also a large statue of Apep. Willow's gaze lands on Anya, who works at building Apep's throne.

BACK ON WILLOW - Redoubling her determination to get inside.

Just inside the door is a mummy standing guard. Willow's quite nervous without her magic - in fact her fingers twitch with magic sparkles, sorely tempted to use a spell to distract this guard. She reaches out, considering it, then her arm position gives her another idea. Duh! She finds a nearby piece of paper, wads it up, and throws it so that it lands quite a ways in the other direction from her. As the mummy investigates the distracting noise, she sneaks in.

EXT. SUNNYDALE - ALLEY - SAME TIME

Spike, Tara and Xander are armed and on the way to save Anya. Suddenly, into their path saunters Buffy.

BUFFY

Where's the party?

The gang stares at her uneasily. Spike to Tara and Xander:

SPIKE

Go on ahead. I'll catch up.

Xander and Tara leave Buffy and Spike alone. Buffy tries charming her way out of their previous tiff.

BUFFY

No need to beg, I'll help you with your little field trip, even though you lot were a right bunch of wankers.

SPIKE

Buffy, go home.

BUFFY
(he's serious!)
Where do you get off?!

SPIKE
I've got no time to babysit, Buffy.
You've become a liability.

BUFFY
This is my calling you're talking about!

SPIKE
And that you're flaking on! (then) I
know who Lizard Boy is now. I know where
he's going, what he's after and why. Do
you?

Buffy fumes, furious and embarrassed.

BUFFY
I'm going where people appreciate my
talents.

She turns and storms off. Spike watches her go, sadly, then
takes off after the others.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - NIGHT - A BIT LATER

Near Apep's new throne, Willow peeks her head out.

WILLOW'S POV - The Lapis Lazuli sits on a small, ornate
table, heavily guarded by mummies, way too near Apep.

WILLOW nervously produces several sheets of paper that she's
apparently collected, and starts wadding a page up.

She lets one fly, but instead of landing near the mummies,
it bonks mummy #1 on the head. She recoils in fear, but the
mummy just turns to mummy #3 with an annoyed growl. Hmmm.

She bonks mummy #1 on the head with another paper ball, then
another. He gets so annoyed that he grabs mummy #3 and the
two start to tussle. As their tussle moves them farther away
from the Lapis Lazuli, Willow creeps toward the table. She's
almost there, when suddenly she has to scramble to hide
because Apep is getting up. From her hiding place, she
hears:

APEP (O.S.)

Nice to see you again! Buffy, isn't it?

Willow peeks out to see...

Buffy standing in the middle of the room.

BUFFY

It is. (pause) That offer to join up
with you still good?

She means it. Willow's face falls in confusion, as Apep
starts to laugh. He keeps laughing over the next shot...

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE BALL - SAME TIME

ON THE SKY - which has now completely stratified into black
night on one side, and white clouds on the other.

BLACK OUT.

END ACT III

ACT IV

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - WHERE WE LEFT OFF

APEP

Absolutely. Welcome aboard!

Attention is drawn to a commotion as punching sounds are
heard and some slaves go flying.

APEP (CONT'D)

What's that? What's going on?

The culprits, Spike, Tara and Xander enter from the back.

XANDER

We are.

SPIKE

(spots Buffy)

Buffy. Gonna make yourself useful?

BUFFY

Absolutely.

In an abrupt BuffyBlur, she launches herself at the gang and knocks their weapons out of their hands with a few well-placed kicks. Now unarmed, the three are grabbed by at least two "slaves" each, and are astonished beyond belief.

APEP

Well done, Slayer old girl! I think we'll get along fine.

ON XANDER, who startles as Willow appears at his side, grabbing him as though she is a slave. She shushes him before he can speak, then looks properly hypnotized. Xander gets it.

BUFFY (O.S.)

Not if you keep calling me 'old girl'.

Buffy climbs up on the podium next to Apep, looks a little uneasy at her choice. She glances at...

Xander, Spike and Tara, who stare at her.

Buffy sticks by her decision. Apep addresses the gang.

APEP

So, we'll soon be torturing you all to death but until then...any questions?

SPIKE

I got one - what set you loose? To what do we owe the large pain in the ass?

APEP

Oh, good question! I don't know the details, but the gist is: someone very powerful around here was trying to ward off some unwelcome feelings. Trying to refute their true nature. That's what always calls me up.

XANDER

(working it out)

So...somebody powerful didn't want to admit something about themselves, and now you're here?

Spike gets it. He can hardly contain his disgust.

SPIKE

Oh, GOD.

Everyone turns to him. He explains reluctantly.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

The place is turning into Ancient Egypt
because of the...denial.

The Scoobs cringe, unable to believe it.

XANDER

You mean to tell me that we're up to our
asses in alligators - literally! -
because of a PUN?!

Buffy shares a look with Spike. Apep doesn't notice.

APEP

Yes, awfully clever, isn't it? Now be
good prisoners and cooperate while we
throw you in the dungeon.

Mummy #1 approaches and "speaks" in Apep's ear.

APEP (CONT'D)

No dungeon yet? Damn.
(Mummy asks something else)
No, a conference room isn't scary at
all. Just...try the basement.

The slaves attempt to drag the Scoobies off; the Scoobies
fight back. Spike punches his captors, sending them flying.

Willow pushes Xander to the side so that Spike's flying
slaves slam into the other slaves holding Xander, knocking
them out. She and Xander then turn to flee, but run into a
large mummy who glares at them. Willow turns to Xander,
shrugs "sorry!", And punches him. He reels into Anya, who
punches him again. Man - tough day.

Tara, struggling, finds herself too close to one of Apep's
crocodiles - it hisses and snaps at her. Panicked, she kicks
it in the face. Apep is not amused.

APEP (CONT'D)

GET THEM OUTTA HERE!

Mummies join the slaves and overpower our group, dragging them away.

Willow watches them go, and gulps. The other slaves return to moving rocks around, and she has no choice but to follow.

Apep tends to his croc, fusses over him.

APEP (CONT'D)

Oh, poor baby! Is oo okay? Don't worry, Daddy's gonna rip that nasty girl limb from limb, yes he is!

BUFFY (O.S.)

'Scuse me, where's the little girls'?

Apep looks over at Buffy curiously. She's strangely awkward.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

The loo? S'okay. Find it myself.

Buffy leaves.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - UTILITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The scoobs are thrown inside by the slaves. Xander stumbles onto a cot. He looks at the pillow, turns to a slave.

XANDER

What, no mint?

The slaves leave, locking them in. Xander turns to Tara.

XANDER (CONT'D)

All right, how do we send this guy back?

TARA

I dunno. This kind of spell has to be undone by the person who did it.

Xander and Tara share a look. Tara looks miserable.

XANDER

You don't think...

TARA

I do think. Willow.

XANDER

Oh, man. I guess she's been denying that she has to quit magic.

TARA

That's why she wanted to help. She feels guilty.

XANDER

She still wants to help - she's out there now. So how do we get to her?

FAVOR SPIKE, listening, as this goes down.

SPIKE

It wasn't Willow.

XANDER

And you know this why?

SPIKE

Because I was there when this started.

(Off their looks)

It wasn't me, it was Buffy. And she didn't mean to, I'm sure of it.

XANDER

Does this have to do with you two trading personalities like Pokemon cards? And what's her big denial?

Tara puts it together and steps in, aware of wanting to keep this from Xander.

TARA

Actually, I found out a little about this. I think it's because Spike and Buffy are such...good friends...

Her look to Spike tells him she knows everything. Spike realizes this, and gulps a little nervously.

TARA (CONT'D)

And when a Slayer and a vampire make a...connection like that, it sort of shakes things up. For the universe to manage it, it creates a kind of circuit, to keep equilibrium - she gets his energy, he gets hers. But denial interrupts the circuit, so now there's a block, and buildup. That's what's causing them to switch places.

XANDER

(dubiously)

They're good friends? You sure that's not just his little fantasy?

SPIKE

Evidently Buffy's the one living a fantasy.

TARA

Right - Buffy won't acknowledge how she feels. We've got to get her to admit it.

Spike searches the wall a minute, pulls off a vent cover.

SPIKE

Leave that to me.

He climbs into the vent and disappears. The second after he does, Anya and some other slaves burst in, grabbing Xander and Tara, who struggle. Anya seems hypnotized.

XANDER

Time for shuffleboard on the Lido deck?

ANYA

Time for the Master's ceremony.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Spike sneaks down the hall, looking for Buffy.

Buffy does the same, looking for Spike. Around a blind corner, they literally bump into each other.

BUFFY

(acting casual)

Oh, hello. Just reckoned I'd pop by to gloat about your impending doom.

Spike grabs her impatiently by the shoulders.

SPIKE

Buffy, enough. It's time to stop.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - SAME TIME

The slaves drag the Scoobies into the ceremony room, and up onto the stage. Apep addresses them, as well as the crowd.

APEP

Excellent, now - in a few minutes it'll be midnight, and I know this little ceremony to capture and preserve midnight, and spread it around the world.

He picks up a fearsome looking machete, and considers it.

APEP (CONT'D)

I also need a human victim to complete it. I was just going to pick any old person, but now I think I want you...

He goes to Tara and grabs her away from her captors.

APEP (CONT'D)

...for your cruelty to reptiles.

Willow, in the crowd, looks horrified.

Two mummies take her and begin tying her to a slab of stone in the middle of the stage.

APEP (CONT'D)

Now first I have to ask certain powers to let me do this. Not sure how long it will take. Depends on celestial winds, star locations, if the server's busy...

He approaches Tara.

APEP (CONT'D)

But after they say yes, the next step is to kill you, right at midnight. The moment of your death is the spark that starts the reaction.

He mimes cutting her throat with the machete.

APEP (CONT'D)

Kind of like a pilot light.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Buffy is incredulous at the news Spike's just told her.

BUFFY

I'm sorry, what is this load of pants you're telling me?

SPIKE

You have to admit how you feel about me, and that some of this dark side stuff about you is true. Because even if your new boss doesn't take us all out, eventually the dam you're causing is gonna burst. And that will get ugly.

Buffy considers dubiously, afraid he's right.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Apep takes the Lapis in his hands.

APEP

All right, first...the asking!

He lifts the rock above his head.

APEP (CONT'D)

<aisei juu huko, weza mimi topeza ardhi>

(stops chanting, exasperated)

Oh God, can't keep my arms like that forever. It's my fault, haven't hit the gym...

He sits on his "throne" and holds it more in his lap.

APEP (CONT'D)

Much better. Now...<topeza ardhi katika
kubwa giza...zuri tafadhali....>

Xander fights to pull away from his captors, but there are too many people holding him. He looks furtively to Willow.

In the crowd, Willow meets his gaze, like "I'm thinking!"

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

BUFFY

Say I cooperate - what's in it for me?

Spike hits exasperation meltdown.

SPIKE

Only saving the world you live in!

BUFFY

And...?

SPIKE

Forget it, okay? I don't need you. I'll stop this another way.

BUFFY

Fine.

SPIKE

And afterwards? I'm taking your Slayer gig. And I'm gonna do it ten times better than you ever did.

This gets Buffy's attention.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

ON THE LAPIS in Apep's lap/hands - the stone begins to glow. Tilt up to Apep, who grins devilishly.

APEP

That's our green light. Niloc, you're on!

The "Niloc" mummy (#1) approaches Tara, raising the knife. Tara looks petrified.

Apep holds the glowing stone, looks OS to...

APEP (CONT'D)

Now then, on my count...

APEP'S POV on a wall clock: 30 seconds to midnight. The second hand sweeps up, much too quickly...

Willow looks frantically for something to do.

POV WILLOW ON ONE OF THE BOWLS OF FISH for the crocodiles; she gets a desperate sort of idea.

Suddenly, Willow breaks away from the slave ranks and runs up onto the stage. Once there, she grabs the bowl of fish, and pours it over the head of mummy #1.

ON THE MUMMY'S FEET - The fish fall all around in a pile.

Apep's crocs see the fish, and lunge for them, attacking the mummy in an indiscriminate feeding frenzy, ripping him apart. "Niloc" screams, and drops the machete.

Apep realizes this in horror:

APEP (CONT'D)

NOOOOO!

Xander takes advantage of the surprise to start fighting the slaves holding him. He punches some, knocks the others' heads together, then gets grabbed by Anya, who holds on tenaciously. Xander hesitates, then punches Anya, too.

XANDER

That's why there's couples' therapy.

When the crocs clear, willow grabs the machete, just in time to point it at Apep, who's come to finish his job.

APEP

Kill her! There's still time!

But Willow's like a momma bear, defending cubs. Apep jumps back as she takes a vicious swipe at him.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Buffy and Spike are now nose-to-nose in a furious argument.

BUFFY

You could never be the Slayer! And you bloody well couldn't be better than me!

SPIKE

I could, because I'd use every bit of myself to do the job, not just the parts I find acceptable!

BUFFY

So, what, you'll just slay during the week, suck a little blood on weekends?

SPIKE

Don't make fun of me, cause you're no different!

BUFFY

Oh, I am very different from y---

SPIKE

(a roar that quiets her)

NO YOU'RE NOT! We're yin and yang, you and me, different balances of the same stuff, which is why you want me! And you do want me! You don't want love to be safety from the storm, you want the storm, and if you can ride it out you'll be invincible, and if you can't then at least you'll go out in a blaze of glory. But safety to you is living death. (He indicates himself) Literally.

He advances on her. She's breathless with anticipation. He looks at her lips, then backs off. Buffy fairly chokes at his change of mind.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

But for once I've got something better to do than follow you around, now that you've joined the Band-Aid patrol.

BUFFY

I just did that 'cause I was angry! I'm not one of them! I'm not one of those...

SPIKE

(pointedly)

"Things"?

Buffy gets it. Her face burns as she realizes how she's been making Spike feel, cuz she's feeling the same.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Apep and willow are still facing off. Apep puts up one hand...

ON THE OVERHEAD LIGHTS - ...to channel energy from them.

BACK TO SCENE - Energy streams into his raised hand, while he fires the energy at willow with the other. but it doesn't knock her down - she absorbs it, a huge blast of it.

Tara watches this in horror.

TARA

Willow?!

POV TARA - The hit ends, and Willow turns to Tara, panting, and we can see HER EYEBALLS ARE BLACK with magical energy.

WILLOW

(freaky enchanted voice)

Are you all right? Did it hit you?

Tara shakes her head, her eyes wide.

Willow turns back, fighting not to whip out her own magic - the light power still flickers over her, and it's so right there. Apep sees she's not going to fight back, grins, and hits her again, with a higher dose. Willow cries out.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Spike and Buffy - Spike's moving to leave.

SPIKE

You've had your chance, Buffy.

Before he can, Buffy grabs him, somewhat desperately.

BUFFY

I want to help. I want to be on the right side. And...sometimes I want to be on the wrong side.

(it's tough, but she does it)

Help me understand it.

She hauls him into a kiss. He resists at first, pulls away from her, then stops in amazement.

SPIKE

(softly)

What am I, insane?

He goes back to kissing her with renewed force. When they stop to breathe, Buffy's smiling but teary, overwhelmed:

BUFFY

(a whisper)

Bloody hell.

They resume kissing, sinking below frame.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

WILLOW AND APEP - Apep suddenly screams as wind begins whipping furiously through the ballroom, and he begins to dissolve in a display of wild zig-zagging light.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE BALL BUILDING - SAME TIME - NIGHT

WIDE SHOT - we see the vortex from before opening and inhaling the light and dark sides of the sky.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The mummies crumble to dust, one by one.

The slaves collapse to the floor, unconscious.

Apep keeps up his wild transformation a few seconds longer, then he - and all the other Egyptalia - disappears <WHOOSH!>.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE BALL BUILDING - SAME TIME - NIGHT

The vortex disperses with what seems like a sigh of relief. The sky is back to normal again.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The three Scoobies are now the only conscious people in the ballroom. Xander goes to Anya. Willow goes to Tara to untie her. As she does, they smile at each other uncertainly.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAGIC SHOP - NEXT DAY - ESTABLISHING

INT. MAGIC SHOP - SAME TIME

Xander, Dawn, Anya and Tara do the usual when the front door opens, and Willow enters.

WILLOW

Hey all.

Tara turns, and the two share a small smile. Willow hasn't got full Tara-access yet, but it's encouraging.

XANDER

Willow! My last hope. Did you somehow get any pictures of Anya as a lowly peon? I can't let her live this down.

WILLOW

(snaps "darn!")
Forgot my Polaroid.

Dawn at the table, looks at Willow hesitantly, then joins in.

DAWN

Would've given anything to see that.

ANYA

The nerve of making me a slave!

XANDER

I know! When you are so clearly a slave-
driver.

ANYA

Damn straight.

As small talk ensues, Willow looks at her friends, obviously relieved, almost teary. TRUCK OUT on the comfortable scene.

FADE TO:

INT. SPIKE'S CRYPT - SAME TIME

ON SPIKE, IN BED, after an obvious night of horizontal gymnastics. He wakes and notices the empty space beside him.

He sees Buffy's getting dressed. (*Oh, and they're back to being themselves.*) Buffy notices, smiles a bit shyly.

BUFFY

Dressing, not fleeing. Well, a little fleeing. Need to get home, check on Dawn.

Spike nods, reassured, but cautious. Buffy's cautious, too.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

You're still not going to tell anyone about us, are you?

Spike rises and goes to her, casually.

SPIKE

Probably not, love. But I won't promise. Don't wanna ruin that "bad boy" air of mine you love so well.

He lifts her face to his, stopping what she's doing.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

And you do love it.

BUFFY

(softly)

I'll only admit I want it. One thing at a time, 'love'.

Spike smiles, shrugs in concession, wanders off. Buffy resumes dressing, to cover her flustered air.

BUFFY (CONT'D)

But I do need to thank you, for going to such lengths to help me with...whatever I'm becoming.

Spike looks at her for a beat, then says, without reproach:

SPIKE

What makes you think you're the only one who's 'becoming'?

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT IV

END OF SHOW