

Still Buffering 235: "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" (1999)

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[theme music plays]

Rileigh: Hello, and welcome to *Still Buffering*: a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Rileigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: So...

Rileigh: Well, everybody. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Are you f—[sighs quietly] you all feelin' at least a little... lighter? A little...

Rileigh: Uh...

Taylor: Hmm...

Sydnee: ... smidge? Of relief?

Rileigh: I think compared to what 2020 has been, this past week has been, like, just the highlight of the year. It has been the shining light at the end of the tunnel.

Sydnee: It was a long week. [laughs]

Rileigh: It was a long week. It feels like it was, like, two whole months in there. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. That's just how the time moves this year though, right? Tuesday was a week. [laughs] March was a year.

Sydnee: The first day felt like three days.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And the second day—the first day of the election felt like 30 days, and then the second day of the election—[laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I can't—[laughs quietly]

Taylor: There was one day there where I was relieved. I was like, "Okay, that's good. There's work to do, but the right guy got the win."

Uh, and then—and then now there's all the talk of a coup, which I'm like, "Well, okay. I'm not gonna really feel great until January 20th." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's...

Taylor: Until old man Biden's butt is in that chair.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, that's what I—I had this moment where I was like, "Well, this is—this can't be a coup, 'cause it seems so haphazard and incompetent." And then I thought—

Raleigh: "Oh, wait.

Sydnee: —"Well, wait. That's everything that he's done, so maybe the coup would be haphazard and incompetent."

Raleigh: I read an article that was like, "Let's talk about the coup currently happening in America." And I was like, "[holding back laughter] Well, okay, I guess we're living through this, too. I didn't really think about—" [laughs]

Sydnee: I've seen a lot of those tweets from people who live outside the US who are like, "Hey—hey guys? Hey, uhh... did you notice—" [laughs]

Raleigh: "Just checking in... " [laughs]

Sydnee: "Hey guys?"

Taylor: I kinda—this is usually when, if we were a foreign country, America would get involved, because we like to get involved in things like this. It's like, "Will some other foreign country get involved on our behalf, [through laughter] actually? That's where I'm at."

Sydnee: Help us.

Raleigh: Justin Trudeau? [through laughter] Can you come help?

Taylor: Send some Canadians to talk some sense into people? I don't know.

Raleigh: Can I just say—

Taylor: I don't want you to fight anybody, but...

Raleigh: —obviously we elected the right person, for many reasons. But one of the best is that already we've had people like Justin Trudeau, in charge of these much better countries just like, "Hey. I'm excited to work with America again."

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: It's like, I also am excited to work with America again. [laughs] Justin Trudeau.

Sydnee: How many people were like, "Welcome back, America, to... "

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I saw someone say, like—

Sydnee: To the free world.

Raleigh: "I haven't been able to look at a real American flag at all for the last four years, but now it's like, "Oh my gosh, wait. [through laughter] It means something different now."

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, it's a relief in that sense, for sure. Justin and I have been watching *Ted Lasso*. [laughs quietly] And—which is a good show, by the way, guys.

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Sydnee: I'm just gonna say. And, like, it's weird to see an American character who's sort of, like... somebody you'd—you'd wanna claim, like, right now. [laughs] Like, you feel like that's not who we've been on the world stage, and I have watched it thinking, like, could we get back to a point where we're not, like, immediately reviled. [laughs] Like, America shows up and you're like, "[gasps loudly] Nooo, not America!"

Raleigh: "This guy."

Sydnee: [laughs] "Oh no, did America just show up?" Like, can we get back to where people are like, "Well... I mean, they've still got some stuff to work out, obviously, but... you know, they're trying." Could we be—trying. [laughs]

Raleigh: We're trying.

Sydnee: Are we trying again?

Raleigh: I think we're trying.

Taylor: It'll just be nice to be able to show up places again, though, right? That's—

Sydnee: [through laughter] Well, there's that—[laughs]

Raleigh: That too.

Taylor: That's been not allowed for a while now, and for the good of the world! [laughs]

Sydnee: Which is fair. Which is fair.

Taylor: We've been time out. For a long time.

Raleigh: I just—[sighs]

Sydnee: That's what happens when you play at fascism for a while, you know? You get put in time out. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: It just is so satisfying to see how many Republicans that still have just been very bad people. You know, these Republican politicians in the past. But all of them that are finally like, "Ehh, this does not benefit me anymore to defend the man that will no longer be President in a few months. Maybe I should... congratulate Joe Biden. [laughs quietly] And refuse to call this election a fraud."

Sydnee: The ones who are insistent on sticking with it, it is a weird play. 'Cause it's like, what ha—I mean, he's leaving office in January.

Rileigh: What do you get from—yeah, what do you get from this? [laughs]

Sydnee: I like the—I like Joe—it's like Joe Biden's reply when they asked him, like, what are you gonna do about all these Republicans who don't recognize you as the President elect? And he went—

Rileigh: He said—[laughs] "They will."

Sydnee: "They will." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: That was his answer to the question. "They will."

Taylor: [laughs quietly] [sighs] I don't think... like, I don't know if existence got new writers and they're just—just this is what we're getting, but that Four Seasons Landscaping moment, uh—

Rileigh: [blows a raspberry]

Sydnee: Ohhh, my God!

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs] I know! I can't think about it, I'm gonna pee my pants every time I do! [laughs]

Taylor: Like, I don't—like, we are live—somebody's watching this TV show elsewhere. We're just stuck in the universe!

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] I—[laughs]

Sydnee: It was so... it was so perfect. Every... it was one of those things where, like, when it first happened and I realized what was going on, like, "Wait a second. [laughs] That's a landscaping business. Hold on. There's Rudy Giuliani in a parking lot. Wait a second. That's an adult bookstore."

As it came together—and then my immediate reaction was, "I gotta look into this. I need to know. I need to know how this happened."

And then I kinda took a step back and went, "Maybe I don't—maybe I don't wanna know too much. I don't wanna break the spell. I don't wanna ruin the funniest thing that's ever happened by knowing too much about it. [through laughter] I just want to know that it happened, and have that image in my head, and never peel back the layers too much." [laughs]

Raleigh: I think... I think a lot about, like, the TV show or the movie or the book series that will be written in about 30 years for the next generation of Americans that weren't alive or aware for, like, this whole part of history. And I just think about all the things that they're gonna be like, "Well, that didn't really happen. That made—they made that up, right? That—that's just an exaggeration."

It's like, no, man, it all happened! And this is the best part!

Sydnee: There's gonna be—it always comes back to me of picturing, like, your old social studies books from, like, middle school.

Raleigh: [through laughter] Yeah.

Sydnee: Where, like, they would have certain terms, like, bolded so that you would know, like, this is an important concept.

Raleigh: Four Seasons Landscaping! [laughs]

Sydnee: [through laughter] Four Seasons Total Landscaping will be bolded! It will be in the index! [wheezes] You could look up what pages do they talk about Four Seasons Total Landscaping press conference!

Rileigh: [through laughter] That'll be a question on a multiple choice test that's like, "Where did President Trump have his team hold their first press conference after he lost the 2020 election? A: the Four Seasons Hotel, B: the adult video store across the street, or C: Four Seasons Total Landscaping?"

Sydnee: Oh, it's just—

Rileigh: Kind of both B and C. Oh my God, it's so good.

Sydnee: It's all just—well, and there might be a part in there about, like, things that influenced people to vote the way they did in the election. Borat.

Rileigh: [bursts into laughter]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [through laughter] Like, maybe Borat!

Rileigh: That's gonna be a long response question about, "What did Rudy Giuliani do—[laughs]"

Sydnee: The biography that's gonna be written of Rudy Giuliani is gonna have Borat in it!

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I don't—I just—

Sydnee: I mean...

Rileigh: [through laughter] Kids are gonna be watching clips from Borat in their history classes.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs] I—oh my God, I'm crying.

Taylor: You know, I—is it a curse or a blessing that "May you live in interesting times"? Which one is that? [laughs]

Raleigh: I saw a tweet that said—

Sydnee: I think that's the idea, that it's both. [laughs]

Taylor: [through laughter] Oh, okay.

Raleigh: I saw a tweet that said, "I would like to go back to living in precedented times, not unprecedented times."

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Also, Presidented.

Raleigh: And also Presidented, yeah.

Taylor: It works on several levels, yes.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Ugh.

Sydnee: Uh... well, I—we're not—none of us on this show, I think I can speak for all three of us when I say, we're not naive enough to think that we're out of the woods.

Taylor: No.

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: We know there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, and that this is not the answer to all of our prayers. But at least it is a step in the direction we'd rather be moving, as opposed to a continued downward spiral, so there is that.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I'm sorry, I just can't stop thinking about Four Seasons—[laughs quietly] Total Landscaping.

Sydnee: We put out the fire. We gotta rebuild the house.

Raleigh: That's what Four Seasons Total Landscaping is for. [laughs]

Sydnee: Then we can—then we can do some landscaping. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: And the wall that they had to make because they didn't have a backdrop, so they just took a bunch of Trump signs and stuck 'em together behind—oh, man. Everything about it... is just... [quietly] so perfect.

Sydnee: It's all so good.

Raleigh: So perfect.

Sydnee: They interviewed the guy who owns the adult bookstore, and I was just sorta miffed that they took up all his parking spaces. That was his main thing was like, "I'm not getting a lot of traffic today [holding back laughter] because they took all my parking spaces."

Okay. Well...

Raleigh: Man, this—this... season finale of 2020 has really just been... a nail biter, through and through.

Sydnee: Ugh. Um—

Taylor: I hope that they have jumped the shark enough that the show gets canceled effectively. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs] It ceases to be interesting. Goes back to being boring.

Sydnee: A vaccine is comin'. It's comin'. And... also Joe Biden, I guess.

Raleigh: Also, Joe Biden is coming, I suppose.

Sydnee: Yeah. Um, so... this apparently is a very appropriate episode for us to be doing. I have read on Twitter that this has become somehow, like, the unofficial Buffy appreciate week.

[pause]

Taylor: How—how is that—uh, how did that happen? [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, it started with—I don't know who initially tweeted about Buffy, but Stacey Abrams got involved in the conversation about Buffy.

Raleigh: That's how you know you gotta get involved in that conversation.

Sydnee: Yeah, and was talking about—'cause she's apparently a big fan of the show, and was talking about, like—I guess she ships Buffy and Spike, and so she was kind of explaining her choice, there.

Raleigh: Okay.

Sydnee: Um, which is... very cool. I mean, I already was like—I didn't feel bad about loving Buffy, but if Stacey Abrams also loves Buffy, like... that's cool.

Raleigh: I *really* love Buffy.

Sydnee: And, like, Joss Whedon agreed with her on Twitter, and so that, like, elevated the conversation. And then I guess—I don't watch *This is Us*, but apparently they talked about Buffy love on *This is Us*.

Raleigh: Really?

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Well, alright! So, we are on the, uh... the... [pause] we're in line with the mass cultural discussion.

Sydnee: Yes, we are in the zeitgeist. We didn't mean to be. We stumbled into relevancy. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: We didn't realize that last week the election would be a week. [laughs]

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: We thought it'd be done. [laughs]

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: We did, yes. But...

Raleigh: As did the rest of the world. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Uh—

Raleigh: But here we are.

Sydnee: —but now we're gonna talk about Buffy.

Raleigh: Yes.

Taylor: Uh, yes. Um... so, yeah. So, Buffy of course, uh—it was a long-running TV show. Started in '97, ended in 2003, so there were seven seasons. And, uh, it actually continued with a lot of the same writers into the comic books, so there was, like, several seasons within the comic book as well. But we're mainly just talking about the TV show. There was also a movie that came before all this, but we're not gonna talk about that. [laughs] Uh...

Sydnee: No. It was a—I did enjoy that movie back when I—like, I did see it back in the day.

Raleigh: I have not seen the movie.

Sydnee: Really?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I—it does not even begin to compete with the series. Like, before I had seen the series I saw the movie and thought, "This is kind of cool." And then I saw the series and was like, "Oh, well, okay." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah. But, um—

Sydnee: "This is better." [laughs]

Taylor: Uh, I guess—if for some reason somebody doesn't know what *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is about, it's all right there in the title, really. [laughs] It's—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: There's a girl named Buffy. She's a vampire slayer. Uh—

Raleigh: And she's also a teen.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: And she just wants a normal teen life, but she was born the Slayer, so there's nothing that can be done about that.

Taylor: But the thing that sets her apart from other Slayers that make her basically outlive a lot of other Slayers is that she has friends, and friends and family are a very core theme of the show. That, you know, she's got people in her life that protect her.

Sydnee: She also accidentally moves to the Hellmouth, which is a good plot driver for the show. [laughs] There—now, wait. Help me understand. I don't remember if they address this. Is there just one Hellmouth on Earth, or are there multiple? Is Sunnydale the only Hellmouth?

Taylor: No, I don't think so.

Sydnee: I don't remember.

Raleigh: I don't remember.

Taylor: I think it's an Hellmouth. I don't think it's the Hellmouth.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: So she moves to one of them inadvertently, and then... [pause] makes... you know, a lot of trouble for those vampires and demons.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: 'Cause I guess a Hellmouth—

Raleigh: And for her human friends.

Taylor: —spews a lot out and draws a lot close to it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Um, I—you know, it's funny. I didn't watch Buffy—I was thinking about, like, when was I—when did I first start watching it? I didn't watch it when it was first on. Um, I would watch at it sometimes? Which is weird for me to remember that there was a time in my life—it was the pre-Justin time—when I would watch TV shows, just if they came on?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Out of order, and skipping episodes. Like, "Oh, Buffy's on. I'll watch it and see what's up with Buffy."

Having missed, like, several of the previous episodes, and not even consider, like, "Well, I don't—I missed some," or I wouldn't know what was going on. Like, it never occurred to me, like, you should watch a show in order and not miss episodes and all that kind of stuff. Um, so I kind of watched at Buffy that way. Does anyone do that anymore?

Raleigh: I... [pause] I can't imagine that it happens that often. Someone does. Like, it's not a wild concept, probably. Kind of in the sense that, like, when I'm at home with mom and dad, there's always either some kind of news on in the background or, like, Judge Judy going on. So, in that sense, sometimes I'll just pop my head in and be like, "What's she—who's she yellin' at today? What's goin' on with her?"

Sydnee: That was—that—that time I was at home with mom and dad is the one episode of *Game of Thrones* I ever watched.

Raleigh: There you go. [laughs] So yeah, I guess—

Sydnee: Just that one. It was very confusing for me! [laughs]

Raleigh: I guess when I am at home with mom and dad, I do that a lot. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: But not intentionally.

Sydnee: Uh, yeah, but I—it was not until later, probably because of you, Tey, because I think you got into it before I did. And then you talked about it and I was like, "Well, maybe I should go back and watch this whole thing."

And also technology got to a point later on where it was easier to go back and watch a whole thing.

Raleigh: That's exactly what I was going to ask, is—this is going to make me sound so, just, stupid. But how did you start watching something in, like, the 2000's that had already happened? Like, there was no Netflix.

Sydnee: DVDs.

Raleigh: What—okay.

Taylor: Yeah, they had, uh—I had the season by season DVD collections that they came out with.

Raleigh: Oh, okay.

Taylor: 'Cause I know—I remember the first episode that I watched was actually—it was a season two episode when it aired. It was the Halloween episode. I think it's just called "Halloween." The one where they all turn into their costumes?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I loved that episode. But that was the first episode that I watched live, and I kept up with it more or less from that point forward. But then—yeah, I guess, Syd, that you watched it when it started coming out on DVD.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: It started—like, there was definitely [crosstalk]

Rileigh: I know what DVDs are.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: I don't want anyone to think I don't know what DVDs are. I just wanted to clarify that I was, like, following how you would go about watching a show from the beginning that was currently on TV in the 2000's.

Sydnee: You would buy the DVDs. And that would also be, like—I mean, especially when I was a teenager and in college it was, like, a stumbling block to getting to see a whole show, because I had to be able to afford to buy... all the seasons. So, like, you'd buy—and then sometimes you couldn't—this is weird to think about. So, this was before it was commonplace to just go on the internet and buy anything you wanted. Uh, even if you had the money, you'd go down to, like, Suncoast or whatever. [laughs]

Taylor: Sam Goody, yeah.

Sydnee: Sam Goody. And maybe they didn't have the season you wanted, and so then you'd have to go later, or check somewhere else! [laughs]

Rileigh: And check again?! Oh my gosh! I didn't even think about that!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And that—

Sydnee: I mean, it wasn't long before, like, internet—buying things on the internet took over. But there was a gap there where, like, "Oh, they don't have the season I want. I guess I'll come back next week."

[pause]

[laughs]

Taylor: That still seemed, like, revolutionary, to be able to have a whole season in one little box because, you know.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: It wasn't long before that, my—my collecting in the late 90's was VHS, so it—you know, you'd get three two four episodes per tape, and—[laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Each tape was, like, \$25 dollars? [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] That's very true.

Taylor: That's how you bought things. A whole—a whole—a season would take up a whole bookshelf, and it would cost you a couple hundred bucks. [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. That's very true. I remember, um, having many VHS tapes on things, and then the DVD seasons made it smaller, and then they came out with the DVD, like, whole series box sets after the series would end, so then you gotta get those, 'cause they have special things in them, and that is why I have three sets of MASH. [laughs]

Raleigh: Sure.

Taylor: For a long time, I had two sets of Buffy. 'Cause the original series came out in these individual—like, each season had its own different color DVD set. And they were really cool, actually. Uh, and then they came out with one, like, whole collection that I decided to buy, 'cause at some point I had lost some random disc in season four. I was like, "Well, I guess I gotta buy the whole thing."

Uh, and it was only in my last move that I decided, you know what? I don't need either of these anymore. It is all on the internet. It is all readily available. These take up space. [laughs]

Sydnee: Those are hard to let go of.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, but once I had seen all of Buffy—I don't know if you're like this, Tey, but I feel there are—so, I am very familiar with certain seasons, 'cause I've seen them over and over again. There are certain episodes I've watched over and over again. Um, I went back and, like, did a rewatch. So, like, the early seasons I am more familiar with, but there are certain, like—when you get to, like, season four... it gets real murky for me, 'cause I didn't particularly love it, and I don't—I think I only watched it just the one time through.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: And then there are certain aspects of, like—I've seen season six so many times. It's, like... that was my favorite season, so I don't know.

Taylor: Yeah, they're definitely—I was just—I put on some random episodes last night, and there was an episode that was like, I guess I remember seeing this, but... I have such vague memories of this one. Like, it was a random episode in season three, and I really like seasons three. But, uh—but I was like, I don't—I maybe saw this, like—it was probably playing on the DVD and I just kinda had it on, but I never really focused on this episode. And it was actually a really interesting episode. But I feel like that's every time I watch Buffy. There will be one episode that I realize, I have never really paid attention to the plot of this. 'Cause there is a lot of Buffy.

Raleigh: There is a lot of Buffy. I went back and just watched the very, very beginning, because I think it had probably been the longest since I had seen that. I watched the first, like, three or four episodes, and then I watched my two favorite, I think probably because they were the two episodes that you all showed me before I'd even seen the rest of Buffy. Um, "Once More With Feeling" and "Tabula Rasa."

Both of those I remember watching without ever having seen another second of Buffy and being very confused but loving them very much. So, I watched those two again last night.

Sydnee: It's hard to compete. I would say that there are very few TV series that you could say have, like, in my mind, two episodes back to back—

Raleigh: Back to back!

Sydnee: —that are so—I mean, first of all, the musical episode is... I mean, it's legendary. It's amazing.

Raleigh: It's perfect.

Sydnee: It's perfect. And "Tabula Rasa" is so funny and clever, but then also moves the plot forward, which is—it's—like, to come—the descent from... [holding back laughter] "Once More With Feeling," like, to stick that landing is so impressive into "Tabula Rasa."

'Cause had that great moment. In "Tabula Rasa" they all forget who they are, so they forget that, like, they slay demons and vampires and that this is normal for them, and that they're capable of doing this. And so they open the door, and there are demons there, and vampires, and they, like, all scream and slam the door shut?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like, it's one of the funniest things that—I don't know. It's just such—it's such a... you know.

Raleigh: It's a—

Sydnee: Such a duo.

Raleigh: —perfect duo.

Taylor: Well, I think what I—I mean, I know this is held up as one of the best episodes of Buffy, but it's easily one of my favorites is, um, "Hush."

Sydnee: Yes.

Rileigh: Yes.

Taylor: I think probably to me the scariest episode. Maybe—the—the season—I think it's the season three Halloween episode, "Fear Itself", I think that's season three. That one's pretty—that one scared me pretty good too, but "Hush" is, to me, the hands down scariest episode of Buffy, uh, where the gentlemen come to town and they steal everybody's voices, so it's an entirely silent episode. Nobody has dialog for the bulk of the episode. And, uh, they are there to steal people's hearts, and nobody can scream, and that's a terrifying premise. And it—they just do it so well. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Yeah. I remember that episode genuinely, like, upsetting me. Especially the silence for almost the entire thing is just so unsettling.

Sydnee: It—it's a—it—it won some sort of award, didn't it?

Taylor: Yeah, I think it might've won an Emmy or something, I don't know.

Rileigh: That makes sense.

Sydnee: Yeah, no, it's an amazing episode.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, let's get more into why we feel so connected to Buffy, 'cause we haven't really touched on that, the characters and whatnot. But before we do that...

Rileigh: Let's check the group message.

Sydnee: First of all this week, I wanna tell you all about HelloFresh.

Rileigh: Tell us.

Sydnee: Alright? 'Cause right now, a lot of us are cooking more at home, going out a little less, and it can be kind of intimidating to know, like, what should I make tonight? What recipe should I try? And what ingredients will I need? And I

always hate when I go buy a bunch of stuff, and then I have, like, leftover herbs or something that I won't necessarily use right away and it might go bad and I'll have wasted them, and... HelloFresh solves all those problems by delivering right to your door, fresh, pre-measured ingredients, seasonal recipes, all in a meal kit—America's number one meal kit.

Raleigh: Hmm!

Sydnee: Hmm. And with something that everybody would enjoy. Whatever your eating style is, whether you're vegetarian, if you need family friendly recipes, they're all, like, 20 minutes to do. They're easy to follow instructions, recipes, exactly what you need, no waste leftover. The ingredients are all pre-measured and everything so you just use what's in the box, and that's all you need.

Um, and you can keep your fridge stocked by adding extra meals, protein, quick meals like breakfast on the go or ten minute lunches, even desserts!

Raleigh: Desserts?!

Sydnee: Yeah, desserts?! Uh, the packaging HelloFresh uses to ship your food is almost entirely made from recyclable and/or already recycled content, so you can feel good about that. And, I mean, it's really easy to do. I am by no means a professional chef. [laughs quietly] I—I do my best.

Um, and I certainly—I don't have a lot of, like, built in knowledge about what goes well together and what recipes to try, and how could I, like, push my kids taste buds a little bit without, like, having a huge fight over dinner. [laughs quietly] And HelloFresh is really a huge help in all those ways. Um, so if you want to check out HelloFresh, go to hellofresh.com/stillbuffering90 and use code "stillbuffering90" to get \$90 off, including free shipping. That's hellofresh.com/stillbuffering90 and code "stillbuffering90" for \$90 off.

Raleigh: Now, Sydnee says she has been spending a lot of time cooking recently. I have been spending a lot of time in bed recently.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Fair.

Rileigh: I don't have much else to do, or anywhere else to go, really. None of us do, really. Um, so I have discovered that it is very important to have a mattress and a pillow that you love, if you're gonna be in bed a lot. And also, not all mattresses and pillows are created equal. They're not all the same. And that's why I like Purple, because they have the Purple Grid that sets their mattresses apart from all other mattresses. It's their patented comfort technology that adapts to your body's natural shape and sleep style. So it's this really cool squishy grid. It is purple, and it forms to your body. It makes it so you're always comfortable, and you don't have to keep readjusting to get yourself in that right position. You're always in that right position.

Sydnee: It also helps keep you cool.

Rileigh: Yes.

Sydnee: I have a Purple pillow.

Rileigh: Do you?

Sydnee: And my head is always cool.

Rileigh: Always on the cool side of the pillow.

Sydnee: Always cool.

Rileigh: It has 1800 open air channels designed to neutralize body heat, so you never have to do that thing where you stick one leg out from under the covers, like, to get cool, but then you gotta worry about the monsters under your bed snatchin' that foot.

Sydnee: That's exactly why you can't, yeah.

Taylor: That's true.

Rileigh: Yeah. You never have to worry about that with Purple. Um—

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: [laughs quietly] And it's the same for their pillows, like Sydnee said. They have total head and neck support, and absolute airflow. They're very comfortable. I also just enjoy the feel. Very squoosh Um...

Sydnee: Very squoosh.

Rileigh: Very squoosh. Makes spending all your time in bed a lot better. So, if you want to experience the Purple Grid, go to purple.com/buffering10 and use promo code "buffering10." For a limited time, you'll get 10% off any order of \$200 or more! That's purple.com/buffering10, promo code "buffering10" for 10% off any order of \$200 or more.

Taylor: And we also have a Jumbotron this week.

Rileigh: Whoop whoop!

Taylor: Yeah. This is to Jake, from Alissa. And Alissa writes:

"Dear Jake, happy third wedding anniversary. I hope this message—"

Sydnee: Awww.

Taylor: —"I hope this message finds you on a cool fall day when there's just the right amount of fog outside."

That's a really beautiful visual.

Sydnee: That is nice.

Taylor: "I love you so much more than words can say. Thank you for keepin' it spooky and always looking when I point out a big tree."

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: "Love, Alissa."

Sydnee: Aww, that's wonderful.

Raleigh: Happy anniversary!

Taylor: Congratulations, you two.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's wonderful. So, Jake and Alissa, thank you, and I hope you have a wonderful semi-foggy cool day. With lots of big trees. [laughs]

Sydnee: Um, so I think it is not revolutionary, necessarily, to say that Buffy—

Raleigh: You love Buffy. [laughs]

Sydnee: —yes, that Buffy—well, not only did we all really enjoy Buffy, but it was—it became kind of a cultural touchstone. There was a lot of, like, um... Buffy not only was about a cool woman fighter who was tough and independent and—I mean, obviously that was kind of, like, the—the seed of the show. Like, "Here's this cool, tough woman."

But also, it was funny. It was clever, it was witty. The banter, the back and forth. I think that in same way that I think, like, for me *Dawson's Creek* informed some of the ways... I interact with people.

Raleigh: [muffled laughter] Uh-huh?

Sydnee: I think Buffy also had an influence in, like, the way the gang talked to each other. You know what I'm saying?

Raleigh: Yeah, I know what you mean.

Sydnee: Like, I feel like that language, that patter influenced a generation. And more.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. Uh, I mean for me—[sighs] this is what always happens whenever you all introduce me to shows is, it's always a show that if I had been around and

watching it when you all were teens, I would've been able to talk about it with all my friends, and formed my gang to match, you know, the Buffy gang.

Sydnee: [bursts into laughter]

Raleigh: Um, but sadly, I was—

Sydnee: Is that what you do?

Raleigh: Yes. [laughs quietly] Uh, sadly I was introduced to Buffy many years after it was no longer on TV, and many years after all the teens were watching it. Um, so I enjoyed it and started watching it because you all did, and I always thought whatever you all were watching was cool, um, but I have not been able to have the same cultural, generational experience. There's always a moment whenever I find someone else my age that's also seen all of Buffy where I'm like, "[gasps] You've—you've seen it all! Oh my gosh! Let's talk about it! Spike or Angel?" [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: It's so smart in—and I think it's the kind of thing that should appeal—like, it should have lasting appeal, like, as people who weren't necessarily around or aware when it first came out, like, can connect with it now. Because it starts with, like—as it was called, the monster of the week kind of formula, where it's really just about, like, fighting the supernatural, and they're funny teens. And that was kind of—that was the thing.

Uh, and it evolves into something that is obviously, like, overarching storylines, driven by that kind of plot. Not necessarily—each week will move that along as you're also getting, like, whatever the A plot is and that kind of thing.

But it also was about a lot of stuff. I always think about, like... the buildup to the idea of Willow being the big bad at the end of one of the seasons, you know, was so clever. So, if you haven't seen the show, Willow is Buffy's friend who starts out as, like, the very quiet, nerdy, shy girl who's very smart.

Raleigh: Did you relate to Willow, Sydnee?

Sydnee: [sighs] You know, I—at some point I think I did, definitely. Um... now in my life I'm not like that, but yeah, when I was younger I definitely did. But, like, her—her superpower in the beginning, why she's such a good member of the team are, like, her library skills. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: Right? She's, like—she's, like, the very smart—she knows—she reads a lot and she can help solve puzzles and figure things out while Buffy goes and beats stuff up. Um, but she evolves into this force unto herself through her witchcraft, through her power to do magic and do spells. Until that gets out of control, and she becomes the—did everybody call it the big bad?

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah. Like, the—

Sydnee: Was that, like, normal parlance?

Rileigh: [simultaneously] —like the big, like, of the season—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: —or multiple seasons, even if, like, you defeat the monster of the week, as you said, you still got that goin' on, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. Um, I thought that was such a smart, subtle, clever evolution of that character. 'Cause it's coming so far before it happens. Taylor, I don't know if you felt that way—

Taylor: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: —but I felt like on rewatch and rewatch you see Willow becoming that... inch by inch for so long before, like, oh, now she snaps because her girlfriend Tara gets killed, and... bam.

Taylor: There is a scene—

Sydnee: She's—

Taylor: —yeah, all the way back in seasons three when she's, like, we're, you know, having fun with one of—like, spinning a pencil in the air and showing off that she's learned how to do this, ooh. And she says it's all about emotional control, and this is when Faith of issue, and Buffy brings up Faith, who doesn't

really get along with Willow, and Willow's pencil starts spinning out of control and, like, shoves itself into a tree. And Buffy's like, "Oh, emotional control. Okay."

And it's kind of just a joke. Like, "Ha ha, she didn't wanna—" [crosstalk]

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: —you know. She didn't wanna talk about Faith. But it's like—oh, man. This was—was it always supposed to be there? Is that how, like, mastermind Joss Whedon was over how the plot was gonna develop? Because it does. It's like—you can find hints at what eventually happens to Willow all the way back at, like, when she first starts messing with witchcraft.

Rileigh: Mmhmm.

Sydnee: Yeah. I—and I really enjoyed that. They do that so well as the show goes on where, like, the rest of the Scooby gang is not just, like, a stereotype of, "Well, we need the smart girl, we need the goofy guy, we need the—" you know, whatever. Like, they each become something else. You know? And through the introduction of new characters that stick, like, how often can you do that in a show like that where you bring in somebody new, like Anya. And at first, like, Anya's also bad. [laughs]

And—but then, like, you redeem her enough to where by the end, I loved Anya, and connected in some ways more with Anya—

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: —than I—[laughs] did with Willow.

Taylor: Well, but that's how—I think the—the universe of Buffy, it's almost—it's a weird sort of closed universe where a lot of the plot points get drawn from characters that have been in the background or have been, like, existing the whole time but never really given their moment.

Which, that's my favorite thing about Buffy is the more you watch of it, the more you get it. The more you get the in jokes, the more you understand, like, the whole history of individual characters. 'Cause, like, Anya pops up—I think that's

also—is she season three or season four? But she is a consistent sort of side part of the cast for a while before she joins the main cast, and there are a lot of characters like that. Like, the nerd trio that are the—you think are the big bad in season... is that five or six? When is Willow evil?

Sydnee: Six.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Um, like, they—they are background characters from season one. Um, and you just—they're just students at Buffy's school. But then they eventually kind of come into their own. Or like Amy the witch, who once again is introduced in season one, but appears consistently throughout it, and eventually has a pretty big plot point in the show. I love that, that it's like, you know, there's not just like, "Here's—" you're introduced to a character one episode, they become something important the next, and then they're dealt with, and then they're gone. Like, it is a very contained universe.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Which I think is why, like, some characters didn't stick. Like, for instance, Riley.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Sorry, Raleigh.

Raleigh: [dejected] It's okay. It seems to happen a lot to Rileys.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: It's an L-E-Y, alright? That's...

Raleigh: Yeah... it sounds the same, though.

Sydnee: Oh, oh, yeah. Yeah. [laughs] I was like, "Does that stand for something?" [laughs]

Raleigh: No, the spelling! [laughs]

Sydnee: I was sitting there going, "Is this a cool kid thing that I don't know?"

Taylor: L-E-Y, you know.

Raleigh: Yeah, what would L-E-Y stand for, Sydnee?" [laughs]

Sydnee: I have no idea. I was sitting there going—

Taylor: Loser Everyone... Yeets. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, and I mean in part 'cause he was, like, kind of threatened by Buffy's power, and so... that's a no go eventually. But, um—

Taylor: He's pretty—yeah. I mean, that's a—I don't know. Like, the idea that there... that character—I remember him. I remember liking him more in the show and being like, "Oh, Riley's not that bad of a guy." And then on rewatch it's like, "Oh, he's terrible."

He's terrible! Like, he's so threatened by Buffy having powers, and that's literally the reason that they can't be together is like, "Well, I don't know. You're the girl and you're strong."

Sydnee: "I don't like that." [laughs] Yeah, and I mean, I think that's probably pretty universal that most people would put season four low on their list anyway.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I was always a big fan of what—after they bring Buffy back from... what we find out is heaven, after season five, um, everything that transpired after that. But I also strongly shipped Buffy and Spike over Buffy and Angel.

Raleigh: As did I.

Sydnee: And I know that that is... you did too?

Rileigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Really?

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I did, yeah.

Sydnee: Well, that's everybody, I guess.

Rileigh: Here we go! [laughs]

Sydnee: Everybody in this room. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I mean, I think—You know, it's hard with the... in—in retrospect, with the love for Spike, 'cause that was always my favorite character. Like, he's introduced in season two, but brought back consistently until he joins the Scooby gang.

That was always my favorite character, uh, hands down. I loved him with Drusilla, I loved him with Buffy, um... but it's also—like, there's some problematic stuff with Spike that it's really hard to, in retrospect, love that relationship, because, you know, there's a scene where Spike tries to force himself on Buffy. And it's never really dealt with after that. It's just kind of like, then he goes and gets a soul, and then it's—you know, that's fine. He has a soul now. So—

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: —uh, I don't know. But it's still my favorite ship. And, you know, I don't know if there's a non-problematic ship for Buffy. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, no, that's very true. That's very true. 'Cause, like, I—I was never a huge Angel fan.

Taylor: Oh my God. [laughs]

Rileigh: I just—yeah. I just liked Spike more than Angel, which I think is why I liked Buffy and Spike more than Buffy and Angel.

Sydnee: I never got the appeal of Angel. His whole, like... broody, mysterious, like... I don't know. Kind of paternalistic presence in her life in the beginning just didn't... didn't do it for me. [laughs]

Taylor: He's gotta be the imprint for Edward Cullen though, right? Like, design wise?

Sydnee and Rileigh: Yeahhh.

Taylor: That hair, that—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: You're right.

Taylor: —they're so similar in design.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And I always, like—again, as we talk about how the characters kind of change and evolve and have their own stories, Spike does too, even though he's not a human, he's a vampire. He's—he's bad. Like, he's a villain in the beginning when you first meet him. But he's also—like, they hint that he, like, genuinely has love and affection for Drusilla.

Like, there are moments of, like, he seems almost kind of sympathetic. I remember on rewatch seeing those and seeing, like, eventually when he does make the flip, and even without a soul, becomes... I don't wanna say good, but better. And then intentionally goes to get a soul so that he can be a good person. It's not shocking when you look back through the whole... trail of his story, you know?

Rileigh: Sure.

Sydnee: Whereas with Angel, like, I don't know. I never—so, a soul was foisted upon him, so he had to become good. And as soon as he loses that sucker, man...

Taylor: [laughs] Well...

Sydnee: [laughs] He's right back there.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And they confront the fact that your vampire self does have a relation to your human self. So when you look at, like, how before Angel was a vampire he was just kind of... he was, you know, just sort of a cheat and a drunk, and then he becomes a vampire, and he's super evil. Spike was, like, this sensitive poet who loved his mom. And I think, like—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: —his story—yeah. Like, even in season two, like, it ends with him helping Buffy because he loves Drusilla, and ultimately he doesn't really want—he doesn't care about, like, being the big bad and being evil. He just wants his girlfriend back. And that's kinda... you know, that's kinda his storyline through out it is he's just someone who, even without a soul, he's still just trying to find love. Albeit as an evil vampire.

So I think that... you know, in the lore, it's kind of—he's built as a sympathetic character. And I think in the comics he actually gives up his soul at some point, again, briefly, to show that he can still be good without it or with it, that it doesn't matter any more to him.

Sydnee: And then he becomes a ghost in Angel, right? [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I love—that is the one season of Angel that I owned.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: It's such a good season!

Rileigh: I have never watched Angel. I've never seen it.

Sydnee: Did you know the only episode I've watched?

Rileigh: Mm-mm.

Sydnee: The last one.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Really?

Sydnee: You were watching it, Tey.

Taylor: Oh. I—

Sydnee: And I came in and you were watching it, and I watched it with you, and it was the only [through laughter] episode I'd ever watched!

Taylor: I finally went back and watched it. I held off on a long time, 'cause I wasn't interested. The only reason I actually watched it is 'cause they did add Spike to the show at some point, and so I wanted to know the context.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Context for the show, so I went back and watched. And it wasn't—it wasn't bad. I liked Angel. But I really liked—I think it was season five of Angel that had Spike on it. That was the one little season of Angel that I owned. [laughs] Was the one with Spike on it.

Sydnee: Yeah, I—well, Spike is such pure id, and that is something that is, um, very, like, human. I mean, he's a vampire, but that understanding of this, like, constant drive to get what you need at any moment and not really concerned with what the bigger picture is, is in all of us. And now, we're not demons, so we—[laughs quietly] we don't purely act on that. But, like, I—I don't know. I found that very relatable in Spike.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Largely 'cause somebody tweeted at us asking us if we were gonna talk about this. I do wanna talk about one character that lasts the whole season, but I think in retrospect is maybe the worst character on the show. I think you know where I'm going with this. [laughs]

[pause]

Sydnee: Who?

Taylor: Xander Harris.

Sydnee: Ohhh.

Raleigh: oh.

Sydnee: Yeah...

Taylor: Like, that is—you know, I think a lot of Buffy holds up for a rewatch, but I think that there is an element of Xander Harris that is such a—that's a 90's, like, "Oh, he's a good guy, but oh, he's the nerd that's never gonna get the girl."

And now that we've—you know, we live in modern times it's like, "No, that guy's a jerk." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. That's true.

Sydnee: I think it's hard. I think you're right. Like, Xander, when I first watched it through I did—I did like Xander a lot. I never—you know, I never shipped Xander and Willow, which I think you're—they're supposed to want you to do early on, right?

Raleigh: It seemed kinda forced. It never seemed like I wanted them...

Sydnee: Mm-mm.

Raleigh: ... I wanted them together.

Sydnee: He's chasing the hot new girl, Buffy, but there's his nerdy little best friend who's been there for him the whole time. Like, I think you're supposed to fall into that trap. I never bought into that. But I did—when they used to say, like, "What's Xander's role on the team? He's the heart," I did buy into that for a long time. Like, "Oh yeah, he's—Xander's the heart!"

He's the, you know, the nice guy, he's reliable, dependable. Um... they really twist that when he leaves Anya.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And it makes you start to see Xander in a different light. And then I think you're right, Tey. I think if you look at him in modern day he's, like, the bridge between... [laughs quietly] the sad nice guy of, like, the John Cusack era that we all loved and adored and then, like, the creepy incel of today who's like—no, you don't get to date me just 'cause you like me. Like, that's not a thing.

Rileigh: You're very right, yeah.

Sydnee: Xander sits in that time where we were shifting our perception. 'Cause, like, I mean, really, that's where that was born. The lonely boy-man who, like, "He just wants to give you a mixtape, what's the big deal?" Like, you know?"

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: To today where it's like, you don't have—you know. Just because you like someone doesn't mean they should have to date you, no matter how nice you are. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well, like, even—you know, when he dates Cordelia briefly, uh, who's, like, the cool popular chick who is—I love Cordelia. I hated her when I first watched it, and then rewatching it later I'm like, "Nah, Cordie's a great character." She grows.

Sydnee: Me too!

Taylor: She's funny. She's actually really caring, she's just—you know, not at the beginning. But when they have—they basically break up because, uh—because he—he makes out with Willow, and Oz, Willow's boyfriend at the time, and Cordelia walk in on them while it's happening. And Cordelia, like, runs to get away from them and, like, falls through these stairs, and [thumping noise] is impaled. Like, and has—it's a very traumatizing situation for her, whereas Willow very much, like, takes time trying to be sorry and make up to Oz, Xander's just very like, "Well okay then. Fine. Like, oh, you're moving on? Oh, you're better now? Fine. I'm better too."

Like, no sympathy whatsoever for the fact that he broke this girl's heart, and then she was put in the hospital because of it. Like, that's... from—you know. He never

really treated the women in his life very well, for as much as he's the heart of things.

Sydnee: I think that's very true. I think that on rewatch I did that same flip where, like, I—I kind of—Xander fell out of favor with me, and Cordelia I liked much better. 'Cause I did too, like the first time through she is very much like, "Oh, there's the mean popular girl. I know who that—I know who that girl is on a show, 'cause that's always who that girl is. I know what that character is."

Um, and I definitely did that flip with her. Um, I also—you know, Faith grew on me.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: I really didn't like Faith when I first watched Buffy. I really didn't—like, that whole thing I was like, "Come on. Like, why do you have to—Buffy's cool enough, and not a jerk. Why do you always have to—why does the cool character have to kind of be a jerk to people? Like, can't we just—Buffy's fine."

And, like, I don't know. She's a character informed by trauma, and I think, like, on rewatch, she makes a lot more sense and I cared a lot more about Faith and appreciated her journey.

'Cause the first time through, I thought the morality of Buffy is that if you did bad things, you didn't get to live. And so I didn't understand why Faith—you know? Like, I kept—like, the first time through I had problems with, like—I thought there was an intrinsic morality in Buffy, but there isn't.

Raleigh: Not really.

Sydnee: Exactly.

Taylor: And I think this is where—I think in some—in some aspects, and especially when it's trying to do so, Buffy is a very feminist show. But I think in some ways, there's a bit of a conflict there, in how it treats its female characters. Because here's the thing. Faith kills two people in her season, and that makes her bad, right? Now she's bad. She's an evil, she deserves to be killed.

One person is by accident. The second person is because the first, like, parental figure to sort of show her love and care, 'cause she's not really had any structure

in her life—she's also supposed to be younger than Buffy. She's a younger slayer. So we're talking, like, a 17 year old girl? Like, 16, 17 year old girl who has this father figure in the mayor, who turns out to be the big bad. He coerces her into committing the second murder. And because of that, now Buffy's fine with killing her, fine with feeding her to Angel, Angel's fine with her dying, Giles is fine with her dying. Compare that to Spike and Angel, that—

Sydnee: Right.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: —have killed thousands! [laughs] And are—that's okay, like, whatever, no big deal. So it does seem a little unfair, a little skewed as this one girl is just—that's it, you deserve to die now. No redemption for you. But these dudes that killed thousands, that's fine.

Sydnee: I think you're exactly right. I mean, especially with Angel, since it's so, like, a—he gets a—he loses his soul and instantly starts murdering. I think that's a very good point. I do think they redeem it a little bit with the way they handle Willow having committed murder, you know? Um, later on. Because, like, she is redeemed somewhat for it.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Nobody ever goes—[laughs quietly] nobody ever goes to jail. [laughs]

Taylor: No. [laughs]

Raleigh: There's no jail in Buffy, I don't think. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] That—there is—I was sitting there thinking, like, there's a lot of people murdering in—[laughs]

Taylor: Wait, wasn't Faith in jail, or—

Sydnee: No, you're right! Faith does—right?

Taylor: Faith was imprisoned, I thought.

Sydnee: Faith goes to jail. Willow doesn't.

Rileigh: No one else that murders goes to jail.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: No, no. They—

Sydnee: Well, the vampires, that wouldn't make sense.

Taylor: Yeah, 'cause they're vampires, you know?

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] They would just kill everybody there. They would eat everybody. That doesn't make any sense. Um... [laughs] we didn't—before we're done, we didn't say anything about Giles. We've been throwing around best character in the show kind of stuff, and we haven't—

Rileigh: No, I think Giles is the best character in the show.

Sydnee: —we haven't discussed Giles. [laughs]

Taylor: Do you think Giles is the best character in the show?

[pause]

Sydnee: [sighs] Man, I love Giles.

Rileigh: I love Giles! [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I do love Giles. I think Giles is a great character. I love his past where he was actually, like, a secret bad boy.

Sydnee: Uh-huh?

Rileigh: Uh-huh?

Taylor: Rebel. Um...

Sydnee: The one—the one, um—what is it, Band Candy or whatever? Band—

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: —the one where he turns back into his teenage self—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm!

Sydney: —and—[laughs] seduces Buffy's mom.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: So good! [laughs]

Raleigh: I love Giles.

Sydney: Uh, yeah. I mean, he's a fantastic character. He's funny, and great, and, um... yeah. We just didn't mention—I feel like you can't talk about Buffy and not talk about, like, the love for Giles and, like—I always wanted—like, I didn't have a librarian like that, or a teacher like that—

Raleigh: [snorts] [laughs]

Taylor: You always wanted—[laughs]

Sydney: —I always—

Raleigh and Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I didn't have a librarian like Giles.

Taylor: Oh, well, wait—

Sydney: Who doesn't long for a British librarian? Come on. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Fair.

Taylor: I mean...

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: You know, I think—I think one of the characters that I think I wish had had a longer shelf life on the show was Oz.

Sydnee: Yes, yeah. That is a good point.

Taylor: Played by Seth Green. Yeah. Like, everything that I have a problem with with Xander I think is solved in Oz. And maybe that was the whole joke, 'cause Oz is also a werewolf, so he's, like, a very, like, compassionate, logical, like, you know, very good dude when he's a human, but then he turns into a werewolf. But, like, a lot of his emotional, like, you know, intelligence that he displays, it's really nice and it's really refreshing to see that sort of a young male character who can, you know, like—who can express himself that way. It's also Seth Green, so there is that.

Raleigh: Yeah. You're right.

Sydnee: Yeah, he was a wonderful character on the show. I feel like—I feel like that need early on to, like, tie people up in relationships kind of, like, limited the impact of his character. Because later on as things move forward, people were given more room to breathe, and you almost wish he would've come back.

Raleigh: Been his own thing.

Sydnee: Been his own thing.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, can we—one last question I have about it. Uh, on rewatch, did any of us feel like Dawn is a better character [through laughter] than the first time around—why are you giving me a mean look?!

Raleigh: Because I thought you were gonna end that question as, "Did anyone feel like Dawn?" [laughs]

Sydnee: No, no, no!

Raleigh: And I thought you were trying to say I'm like Dawn!

Sydnee: I'm not saying—

Raleigh: 'Cause you said that the first time we watched Buffy, and I didn't realize that that wasn't maybe necessarily the best person to be. [laughs]

Taylor: Hmm. I don't think anyone's like Dawn, 'cause I don't think Dawn is a very... believably written character! [laughs]

Sydnee: She just kinda comes in there—I mean, intentionally. She's introduced out of nowhere, which is a hard sell. By the way, uh... I feel bad in some ways, like, for Dawn the character, and I guess in a larger extent I'm sure, like, Michelle Trachtenberg had to read some, like, mean comments on the internet. Because to just throw a character in that we're all supposed to care about and love, and as a family member to our main character and everything like—like that, and then try to sell that to the audience? That is a hard—

Raleigh: That's a wild play.

Sydnee: Right? Like, that—you're settin' that poor girl up for a rough road. Um, no matter how amazing or wonderful she is. Like, that's gonna be tough.

Taylor: Yeah. They pulled a Chibiusa is what they did. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: They did. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: Another awful character for a long time. [laughs]

Sydnee: Exactly! I didn't like Chibiusa when she—yes! Very similar. It's a very similar... um, I mean it all works out for the best 'cause, you know, she's the key and whatnot. But, like... [laughs]

Raleigh: Right. I understand what you all are saying about throwing in a younger sister right at the last minute.

Taylor: Ohh!

Sydnee: [laughs loudly]

Rileigh: I get it.

Taylor: Oh, no, no! Don't be saying that.

Rileigh: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Sydnee: And I think it's really important, especially for when the—another episode that—just to mention it briefly, "The Body," when Buffy loses her mom. I think that they have each other. That's good. But, uh—but wow. To put an episode in a show that has so much... dying all the time. I mean, people die on Buffy all the time.

Rileigh: Every episode.

Sydnee: Right? Like, that's part of it. Um, not just vampires. Like, they kill people in them. So, like, people are constantly dying on Buffy. To have a death that can resonate so strongly is, um... pretty amazing. And it is. That is another episode I do—I don't think I've ever rewatched.

Rileigh: Really?

Taylor: Just 'cause it's too hard?

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah, there are just some that just—they're just—

Rileigh: I don't know if I have, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I just don't think I could go back through that. I don't think I could—I don't wanna get—I mean, I could. I don't wanna get in that headspace again. It was great, I mean, like, I appreciate it for what it was, but sort of like that trend on Twitter the other day, movies that you love but would never wanna watch again.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I'm good on that particular episode. I don't necessarily ever need to watch it again.

Taylor: Yeah. "The Body" is a beautifully done episode, though. And Joyce is a great character, too. Seeing Buffy's mom who's originally in the dark about what

her daughter's doing, then has to learn that Buffy is the slayer, has to come to accept that, interacts with a lot of the characters in really funny ways. I loved Spike and Joyce in the same room together. [laughs] 'Cause Joyce is strangely understanding and sympathetic towards Spike. [laughs] She knew what was best for her daughter.

Raleigh: She did.

Taylor: And you know, we didn't really go into, like, Buffy is a thing of its time. There are areas where I think—there is things that I think would've been written differently in modern day. It's not good as far as representation goes. It has very few people of color in the cast. Uh, it does—it's one of those shows in the 90's that loved to bury their gays. Uh, I think when we get this trope, this one of those shows that created that trope because, you know, Willow comes out as a lesbian, has her girlfriend Tara who is killed off in order to lead to Willow's grand transformation to the final big bad, so... not—

Sydnee: Yeah. It—it's such a sad nar—that is such—Tara gets such a sad arc, for such a strong—like, you wanna talk about the heart...

Raleigh: That was a good, strong character.

Sydnee: Good, strong, caring, consistent character who then gets—she gets a rough arc.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, but it's still—if you haven't seen it—I mean, it's still—it's a great show. It's worth a watch. Uh, we always talk about "Once More With Feeling," the musical episode, which... I guess you could watch without context?

Raleigh: I did the first time I watched it, and still very much enjoyed it. I had zero context. I was like, "Oh, that's Buffy, and she's a vampire slayer." That was the context I had.

Sydnee: I mean, if you know that and you know that, like, Spike's a vampire, and Willow's... Willow and Tara are both witches, and that Anya is a previous vengeance demon...

Raleigh: Who is with Xander in that.

Sydnee: Maybe then it could still—oh, and also that Buffy died and then was brought back from—

Raleigh: There's a lot you do have to understand.

Sydnee: Yeah, that's a—[laughs loudly]

Raleigh: Now that I think about it. Now that we're making a list.

Taylor: That being said, I don't think it's the worst strategy if you want to get into Buffy to watch a later season episode that's really good first. Because I will say, the first season is just a half season. It kind of came on as a mid-season replacement. And it's not that it's bad, it's just not what it becomes. So I think if you start at season one episode of Buffy, you might not be very enticed to keep going. I think, like—I think it hits its stride in season two, so you don't have to wait that long. But you might wanna just start with an episode that's kind of held up as a brilliant episode, and that'll give you the taste for what it's capable of, and then go back.

Sydnee: Especially if you get, like, through season two and three and then you start watching four and you're like, "What are they doing?" Like, just stick with it. Um, and then five seems to end the whole thing, 'cause they thought the series was ending, but then it got brought back to life, so six and seven come. But it's all worth it, and if you've only seen the film... I guess there are probably some people out there—the series is so much better. Don't let that put you off.

[pause]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Alright. Well...

Taylor: We love Buffy in this house.

Sydnee and Raleigh: We do.

Sydnee: We love Buffy.

Taylor: And I just love Sarah Michelle Geller. I follow her [through laughter] on social media. She posts, like, quaran-tips. It's like, "Oh, it's Buffy telling me how to get through quarantine. I like that."

Sydney: Aww. [pause] What a great show. What a—and again, what a big part of our—personally I know, at least our, like, cultural language, but I know that's true for so many people.

Raleigh, what's next week?

Raleigh: Next week, um, I wanna play *Among Us*.

Sydney: Okay.

Raleigh: With you all, and talk about it, because it is all the rage right now. Everyone's playing *Among Us*. AOC got on that train, even. Um, so... I wanna—

Sydney: She did a livestream of it.

Raleigh: She did.

Sydney: The same night we were doing a livestream, so that was bad time—

Taylor: Ooh.

Sydney: —bad timing on our—

Raleigh: Sadly not together.

Sydney: —our part. [laughs] No. I think more people maybe watched... AOC.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I'm gonna make all of our family learn how to play, if they haven't. And play, so we can talk about it, because I find it very enjoyable.

Sydney: Alright.

Raleigh: Alright.

Sydnee: Well, we will do it. Um, Teylor, thank you again for letting us talk about Buffy.

Raleigh: Yes.

Teylor: Always.

Sydnee: 'Cause I always—I always wanna talk about Buffy.

Teylor: I feel like if we could just talk about Buffy as long as we could talk about Buffy it'd be, like... well, there is a podcast about it out there, so you should check that out. [laughs] Um, *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: There are so—there are so many things to say about Buffy. I mean, it's just endless. But, uh... but I look forward to this holiday season, when hopefully we can all three be in the same room and watch the musical episode, and sing it at the top of our lungs. [laughs quietly]

Teylor: Yes. The family tradition.

Raleigh: It is. [laughs]

Sydnee: The family tradition. That *is* a family tradition. I sound like I'm joking, we really do do that. [laughs]

Raleigh: Around the holidays, it is a tradition.

Sydnee: Uh, thank you all for listening. Um, I hope you are all hanging in there, staying safe, wearing your mask, and staying home as much as you can, distancing when you can't. Um, hang in there. The vaccine is coming. There are brighter days ahead. I believe that.

In the meantime, you can check out a lot of podcasts that can help you get through these fall and winter days at Maximumfun.org. There are lots of wonderful shows you'd enjoy. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org,

and you can tweet at us @stillbuff. And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

[theme music begins in the background]

Rileigh: This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I'm Rileigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Rileigh: I am still buffering...

Sydnee and Taylor: And I... am... too.

Rileigh: [singing] I touch the fire... [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: [singing unintelligibly]

Sydnee: [singing unintelligibly]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: That is the best part. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's enough.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: [singing] They got the mustard out!

Sydney and Raleigh: [singing] They got the mustard out!

Raleigh: [laughs]

[music plays]

Speaker One: Listen, I'm a hotshot Hollywood movie producer. You have until I finish my glass of Kombucha to pitch me your idea. Go.

[slurping noises]

Ify: Alright! It's called *Who Shot Ya?* A movie podcast that isn't just a bunch of straight white dudes. I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the new host of the show, and a certified BBN.

Speaker One: BBN?

Ify: Buff black nerd!

Alonso: I'm Alonso Duralde, an elderly gay, and legit film critic who wrote a book on Christmas movies!

Drea: I'm Drea Clark, a loud white lady from Minnesota!

Ify: Each week, we talk about a new movie in theaters, and all the important issues going on in the film industry.

Alonso: It's like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *Cruising*!

Ify: And if it helps seal the deal, I can flex my muscles while we record each episode.

Speaker One: I'm sorry. This is a podcast? I'm a movie producer! How did you get in here?

Drea: Ify, quick! Start flexing!

Ify: Bicep! Lats! Chest!

Who Shot Ya? Dropping every Friday on Maximumfun.org, or wherever you listen to podcasts!

[music plays]

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