

It was my first exposure to *SotC* in the field, as it was for all the players. I like it. There are some parts where I forgot to do Neat Things which *SotC* allows, and the players are learning different bits at different speeds. Some folks have entirely grokked Aspects, others have a great understanding of Consequences and how to reduce damage with them. Overall, I thought it went well.

I pregenerated the characters, so I'll post them and then get into how today went.

Every character started with a base of three boxes in their stress tracks to streamline combat, and I was using the rules modification where taking Consequences buys down damage, -2 for Mild, -4 for Moderate, and -6 for Severe.

The concept of the game was combining *BTVS* with *Space: 1889*, and setting the *Welcome to the Hellmouth* double-episode that Season 1 *BTVS* started with on a pulpy Victorian Mars.

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### **Miss Beatrice (Buffy) Anne Summers – Slayer.**

#### Aspects:

- To Each Generation a Slayer Is Born.
- Outspoken, Independent and Uprooted.
- “Did you hear what happened to her last school?”
- Attractive girl in Victorian times.
- Resolved in the face of apocalypse.
- Wants to live normally.
- Her mother worries...
- New in town.
- Used to be Cordelia.
- Average student.

#### Skills:

Superb (+5): Fists.

Great (+4): Alertness, Weapons.

Good (+3): Athletics, Endurance, Might.

Fair (+2): Empathy, Intimidation, Resolve, Stealth.

Average (+1): Investigation, Leadership, Mysteries, Rapport, Sleight-of-Hand.

#### **Stunts:**

##### Alertness:

- On Top of It [Can spend a Fate point to go first in combat.]
- Ready for Anything [Alertness counts as +1 for Initiative.]

Athletics: - Acrobat [Difficulties reduced by 2, falling rolls gain +2 bonus]

##### Endurance:

- Bounce Back [Heals two steps faster than normal.]
- Feel the Burn [May take one extra Moderate physical consequence]

##### Fists:

- Army of One [No penalties for being out numbered]
  - Crippling Blow [Can spend a Fate Point to create a consequence for an enemy, once per enemy per
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scene.]

- Dirty Fighter [Do an extra +1 damage when tagging an opponent's Aspects in combat]

Might: - Herculean Strength [All weight-based difficulties reduced by 2]

Weapons: - Anything Goes [May use anything as a weapon without penalty.]

### **Stress Tracks:**

Health: \*\*\*\*\*

Composure: \*\*\*\*\*

### **Consequences:**

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 5.

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Professor Rupert Giles – Tutor, Amateur Archaeologist, and Bemused Watcher.

Aspects:

- "Let me consult my books."
- Watcher to a Slayer who is never what he expects.
- "Well, of course I prefer tweed - it disguises a multitude of past sins."
- 17th Level Librarian.
- "No, actually, I don't believe one can be too meticulous. Do it over."
- "Responsibility, respectability, reliability – if you act like an adult, you'll be treated as one."
- Duty always comes first.
- Core of bespectacled, stuttering iron.
- "More than just a dabbler in the mystic arts... however he might appear."
- "Errr... I don't mean to naysay, but do you really think that's wise?"

Skills:

Superb (+5): Academics.

Great (+4): Deceit, Resolve.

Good (+3): Empathy, Mysteries, Rapport.

Fair (+2): Fists, Investigation, Leadership, Weapons.

Average (+1): Alertness, Contacting, Endurance, Guns, Survival.

Stunts:

Academics:

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- Gift of Tongues [Can attempt to read any language. Speaking aloud may suffer penalties.]
 - It's Academic [Can declare facts to be true regarding Occult subjects.]
 - Scholar of History: (Watcher) [+1 to rolls involving History, +2 for rolls involving Occult details.]
- Resolve: - Inner Strength [+2 to resist compulsion, torture, mind control, etc. +3 with full defence.]
- Weapons: - Weapons of the World [Familiar with all melee weapons, thus no penalties for strangeness. Get a +1 if you create a short improve piece regarding how you encountered the weapon.]

Stress Tracks:

Health: ****

Composure: *****

Consequences:

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 10.

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**Master Alexander Harris – Social misfit and child of the upwardly mobile.**

Aspects:

- "Yes, I'd love some salt with my foot!"
- Brave despite himself.
- Unexpectedly durable.
- Known Willow since infancy and entirely oblivious.
- Garrulous social outcast.
- Local boy.
- The new girl triggers unusual stirrings.
- Upwardly mobile, blue-collar family
- Good with his hands.
- Intuitive and observant, when not easily distracted.

Skills:

Superb (+5): Rapport.

Great (+4): Empathy, Engineering.

Good (+3): Deceit, Sleight-of-Hand, Survival.

Fair (+2): Endurance, Drive, Pilot, Resolve.

Average (+1): Alertness, Athletics, Fists, Guns, Might.

**Stunts:**

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Empathy:

- Track the Soul [Use Empathy instead of Investigation to help find someone you've met]
- Uncanny Hunch [Once per scene, write down a hunch about a character, object, location or situation. If right, use Empathy in place of any other skill once regarding that subject.]

Rapport:

- Blather [Roll Rapport vs Resolve or Rapport to distract continuously.]
- Smooth Over [Attempts to calm someone down receive a +2 bonus]

Survival: - Tracker [Roll Survival to track, gaining one piece of information per shift.]

**Stress Tracks:**

Health: \*\*\*\*

Composure: \*\*\*\*

**Consequences:**

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 10.

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Miss Willow Rosenberg – Intellectual caught between two worlds.

Aspects:

- Harmless and shy.
- Between two worlds.
- Unspoken feelings for closest friend.
- Information: She Can Has It.
- Superb student.
- Local girl.
- Bookworm.
- Trusting.
- Raised on tales of Mars – by the Martians.
- Inexperience hides strength of character.

Skills:

Superb (+5): Contacting.

Great (+4): Academics, Rapport.

Good (+3): Resolve, Investigation, Science.

Fair (+2): Empathy, Stealth, Survival, Mysteries.

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Average (+1): Alertness, Art, Athletics, Deceit, Sleight-of-Hand.

Stunts:

Academics:

- It's Academic [Can declare facts to be true regarding Martian legends and local history, and the GM is happy to be flexible on this one.]

- Photographic Memory [Remember all reading, and research two steps faster than normal.]

Contacting: - Insider [Use Contacting rather than Leadership to deal with bureaucracies]

Investigation: - Quick Eye [Investigation attempts happen two steps faster than normal]

Survival: - Due North [+2 to all attempts to navigate, regardless of circumstance.]

Stress Tracks:

Health: ***

Composure: *****

Consequences:

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 10.

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**Miss Cordelia Chase – She's better than you.**

Aspects:

- Silver spoon means she doesn't have to care.
- The Queen of All She Surveys is responsible for her territory.
- Spider in a web of gossip, rumours and news.
- Entitlement makes her brave, but cowardice is the next best option.
- Well-travelled girl on familiar territory.
- Surprisingly observant for the Things That Matter.
- Academically challenged, but nobody cares.
- Parents are local royalty.
- Could make a harpy cry and feel bad about herself.
- A little... waspish and sharp... for Victorian ideals of womanhood.

Skills:

Superb (+5): Rapport.

Great (+4): Deceit, Empathy.

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Good (+3): Art, Gambling, Intimidation.  
Fair (+2): Alertness, Contacting, Resolve, Leadership.  
Average (+1): Athletics, Investigation, Resources, Sleight-of-Hand, Stealth.

### **Stunts:**

Deceit: - The Honest Lie [+2 to Deceit for revealing relevant and significant truth as part of a wider lie]

#### Empathy:

- Ebb and Flow [Spend fate point to get free read before initiative]
- Heart's Secret [Always get most important Aspects upon success]
- Hit Them Where It Hurts [Use Empathy instead of Intimidation to provoke, if have succeeded with Empathy before]

Intimidation: - Infuriate [+2 skill to make someone angry at you]

### **Stress Tracks:**

Health: \*\*\*

Composure: \*\*\*\*

### **Consequences:**

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 10.

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Miss Amy Madison – Quietly knocking on dangerous doors.

Aspects:

- Mysteriously missing mother.
- Found a book in the attic...
- Self-taught trainee witch.
- Local girl.
- Driven – unusual to Victorian eyes.
- Seeker of arcane knowledge.
- "It's always the quiet ones."
- Ward of the Colony.
- Open-minded.
- Doesn't play the social game.

Skills:

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Superb (+5): Mysteries.
Great (+4): Sleight-of-Hand, Stealth.
Good (+3): Deceit, Investigation, Rapport.
Fair (+2): Alertness, Athletics, Empathy, Resolve.
Average (+1): Burglary, Drive, Fists, Science, Survival.

Stunts:

Mysteries:

- Psychic [Use Mysteries to investigate occult climate of a place, or against supernatural surprises]
 - Voices from Beyond [May summon spirits of the dead or other planes]
 - Words on the Wind [Once per session, request an omen and roll Mysteries vs. Mediocre]
- Sleight-of-Hand: - Bump and Grab [Spend a Fate Point to make a simple attempt to pickpocket or palm an item, etc, as a free action]

Stealth:

- Hush [Roll Stealth for a group (max = 4) under your orders, without other stunts]
- In Plain Sight [No increased difficulty due to environment, may use Stealth in the open]

Stress Tracks:

Health: ***

Composure: ****

Consequences:

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 10.

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(NPC) **Luke – He exists to serve.**

#### Aspects:

- Loyal, competent, and unimaginative lieutenant.
- Fanatical follower.
- A leader to many.
- An actual Vampire.
- Bravery or arrogance?
- Likes to monologue.
- Quite large, actually.
- Canny, cunning, but not terribly bright.
- New in town.

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- Has been doing this for a long time.

Skills:

Superb (+5): Might.

Great (+4): Fists, Intimidation.

Good (+3): Alertness, Endurance, Leadership.

Fair (+2): Athletics, Resolve, Stealth, Weapons.

Average (+1): Burglary, Deceit, Drive, Investigation, Mysteries.

**Stunts:**

Endurance:

- Feel the Burn [May take one extra moderate, physical consequence]

- Now You've Made Me Mad [Once per scene, spend a fate point to add a wound value to a retaliatory action]

- Thick Skinned [Gain one additional physical stress box]

Intimidation:

- Aura of Fear [Once per scene, take full action and spend fate point to intimidate all opponents at -2]

- Aura of Menace [Spend a fate point to intimidate a target as a free action]

- The Serpent's Tongue [Use Intimidation instead of Empathy or Rapport to read through fear]

Might:

- Body Toss [Targets considered 1 weight factor less for throw or push]

- Herculean Strength [All non-combat weight-based difficulties reduced by 2]

- Piledriver [+4 to attacks with Might against inanimate targets]

- Wrestler [Use Might instead of Fists for wrestling]

**Stress Tracks:**

Health: \*\*\*\*\*

Composure: \*\*\*\*

**Consequences:**

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 5.

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(NPC) **The Master – He's waiting.**

Aspects:

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- Cult leader.
- Genuinely ancient.
- Nasty sense of humour.
- Highly intelligent, but impatient.
- Trapped securely underground.
- Vampire lord.
- Local, but the world has changed around him.
- Doesn't suffer fools.
- Ritual sorcerer.
- Luke is his trusted Vessel.

Skills:

Fantastic (+6): Fists.

Superb (+5): Endurance, Intimidation.

Great (+4): Alertness, Mysteries, Resolve.

Good (+3): Athletics, Investigation, Leadership, Stealth.

Fair (+2): Burglary, Deceit, Rapport, Survival, Weapons.

Stunts:

Endurance:

- Feel the Burn [May take one extra moderate, physical consequence]
- Last Leg [May spend a fate point to defer being taken out or taking consequences]
- Now You've Made Me Mad [Once per scene, spend a fate point to add a wound value to a retaliatory action]
- Thick Skinned [Gain one additional physical stress box]

Fists:

- Dirty Fighter [When tagging an opponent's aspects, get an additional +1]
- Crippling Blow [Once per opponent per scene, spend a Fate Point to make the damage a consequence]

Intimidation:

- Aura of Fear [Once per scene, take full action and spend fate point to intimidate all opponents at -2]
- Aura of Menace [Spend a fate point to intimidate a target as a free action]
- The Serpent's Tongue [Use Intimidation instead of Empathy or Rapport to read through fear]

Mysteries: - Enthral [Mesmerist attack to place temporary aspect or compel behaviour through conflict]

*Resolve: - Still Standing [May take an additional Moderate consequence *of any type.*]

Stress Tracks:

Health: *****

Composure: *****

Consequences:

Health: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Moderate (-4):

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Severe (-6):

*(Optional) Moderate (-4):

Composure: Mild (-2):

Moderate (-4):

Severe (-6):

Fate Points: 5.

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The curtain rose upon a new day on the Cydonia Planum Mars Colony, founded by Mayor Sir Richard Wilkins the First. ("Why would someone name themselves that?! It's like he's *planning* something!")

Miss Beatrice Summers and her mother arrive on a liftwood boat at the colony, travelling second class. This is moderately scandalous given their former station, and Buffy's mother won't talk about it - and in fact paid more than they could really afford so as to not travel *steerage*. (The shame of it.)

Buffy arrives at class to find the school consists of thirty to forty students of the monied classes (the poor don't need school, the terrible wretches, they need to work *harder*) ranging in age from around ten to seventeen or so.

Miss Cordelia Chase immediately creates a pest of herself by noting that she and her family have returned to Mars on their unending tour of the Colonies, and that Miss Summers was not in first class with her. As such, she is a *social inferior*. (Which connects Buffy to the other outcasts, Xander the son of upwardly mobile blue-collar folk, Willow the daughter of a High Martian academic and her earthborn husband (Scandal!) and Amy, who is a ward of the colony since her mother vanished. (She's weird, and who doesn't have *parents*, anyway?)

Xander notes the new girl's arrival with interest, as does Professor Giles - who resolves to find a moment where he can talk to her about her destiny, that sort of thing. But enough twittering! She has arrived just in time for a field-trip to the Archeological diggings happening outside the colony dome!

(The colony is indeed inside a glass dome, supported by brass ridging. The dome keeps the heat and water in, the dust out, and tells all the other European powers on Mars that *they* don't have a nice shiny dome for their colonies! Hah, take that, sir! Yes, quite!)

There is some trepidation during the walk to the diggings, as Buffy's mother will have just started her new job as curator and Archaeolotrice for Professor Flutie, who is in charge of the diggings, and likewise Xander's father is foreman for the site. Buffy takes care to bring along a parasol to shield her from the anaemic Martian sun (with a wooden tip).

At the diggings, the children scatter - much to the unsurprised aggravation of Professor Giles. Amy locates something like a mine-entrance leading into the side of a hill, and goes to investigate. Willow has heard many legends about this place, all of which boil down to that disturbing what has become known as the Face on Mars is seriously unwise, at best. They move to follow Amy, Xander in tow in the hopes of spending more time with the new girl, and because Willow is going.

Mister Giles tries to take the opportunity to talk to Miss Summers, who denies all knowledge of

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being a Slayer, needing a Watcher, or any unpleasantness regarding her departure from Saint Balthazar's School for Girls. (Or how the main hall burned down, despite being made from stone.)

The hill itself is of interest, being a dense layer of natural stone covering... bricks. Bricks with no mortar holding them together. Willow declares this is unusual, as the ancient Martians didn't go in for brickwork construction. Samples of bricks and natural stone are duly taken.

Amy gets the sudden impression of a gust of wind coming into the hill down the tunnel, and then flowing out again stinking of rotten meat - like something breathing, deep and slow. Alarmed but not dissuaded, she continues inward.

Mister Giles realises that some of his charges are leaving the set confines of the tour, and follows them down the tunnel into some rooms that workmen have breached. (On the way, Amy believes she can see eyes glinting at her down a side tunnel, but more light reveals nothing. The whole place feels like it's restless and waiting, and stirring more as their presence disturbs it.)

Xander overhears Professor Flutie arguing with his father about the speed of the work, claiming that they need to impress Lord and Lady Chase, the patrons of the excavation. Xander's father claims that workers keep running off and vanishing, being poor and shiftless.

The rooms beyond contain writing on the walls, and hieroglyphics. Willow and Mr Giles decipher the language as basically declaring "IF YOU CAN READ THIS, YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE. LEAVE, AND TOUCH NOTHING." in a variety of Martian dialects. Buffy notices that the hieroglyphs involve humanoid figures with exaggerated teeth menacing Martian citizens. Xander, using his extensive engineering knowledge with experience of bad pulp adventures, goes looking for secret passages in the walls. He believes he's located one, but not how to open it, when Professor Flutie, Joyce Summers, and Xander's father arrive to much consternation that students are disturbing this sensitive area. They are duly herded away, to walrus-like outrage from Professor Flutie.

Giles tries to collect the class, and discovers several students missing. Xander realises that all the workmen at the site have been wearing overalls, whereas he has seen figures in London city clothing around the area. Buffy hears a muffled scream.

She and Giles go to investigate, Giles demanding that Willow take the rest of the students back to the dome. This vaguely works.

Giles and Buffy locate a trio of vampires, one of them a Martian, standing over three unconscious children. One vampire is about to bite a girl of sixteen, but is being argued with by the other two. They are startled by the new arrivals, and attack. Buffy kills the first vampire to attack her, while Giles is smacked out of the way by one erstwhile attacker who sees what happens to the first one and opts to run instead. (Note: forgot to make Giles take damage on his stress track here, whoops.)

The vampire with the girl hurls her bodily at Buffy, who throws her stake at the retreating vampire, killing it, and then is knocked down by airborne teenager.

Meanwhile, the class has had their attention caught by a flying Mister Giles crashing into a tent in the direction they had run, collapsing it. Xander and Willow move to help him up.

Buffy throws the girl to Willow, who falls down 'catching' her. Xander tackles the 'ruffian' and knocks him to the ground. The vampire elbows Xander in the face and throws him off. Xander lands some distance away, and rises Bleeding from the Nose and Dishevelled. (Best example of a character

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Getting the Consequences Reduce Damage element of the game from the session.) Buffy leaps onto the vampire as he runs away and misses his heart. He duly runs past the terrified class with Buffy clinging to its back.

Amy cries that 'a ruffian is kidnapping Miss Summers!'

Buffy makes the vampire stumble behind a tent and dusts him out of view of the majority of the class, coming out the other side covered in dust and claiming to have been dropped by aforesaid ruffian.

Mister Giles assures the class that a) Nothing happened, b) This is what happens when children don't listen to their elders, and when quietly questioned by Willow, Xander and Amy, c) Certainly nobody turned to dust.

This works so well that Amy keeps a sample of vampire dust in a small perfume bottle.

At this point Giles and Buffy realise that the sun was up at the time of the vampire attack, and that the vampires survived the anaemic Martian daylight.

This troubles them.

On the way back into the dome, they notice workmen putting up a large banner by the dome entrance - but it is not readable yet. Clearly celebrations are in the offing!

With class over, Giles resolves to find Miss Rosenberg and ask her to help him research Martian myth and legend. He finds her in the library. Xander comes along in a further attempt to find out about the new girl. Buffy comes along to talk to Mister Giles about the situation *which she is not going to get involved in because she's entirely normal and demure*, but wants to know more about.

Giles talks to her about the vampires and says she should come back for training after school tomorrow, effectively dismissing her. (WHY DID THEY KEEP SPLITTING THE PARTY WHY WHY WHY \*Chuckle\*)

Meanwhile, Amy has found somewhere she won't be disturbed (the stacks on the mezzanine floor at the library, of course) and uses a spell to animate the vampire dust within a protective circle, while inside its bottle.

Giles notices the distinctive odor produced by the candles needed for the spell, and moves to investigate. Unnoticed, Xander and Willow follow him.

Amy finds herself talking to a humanoid pile of vampire dust beating its tiny hands against the inside of the perfume bottle, and begins asking questions. Giles leaves her alone so he can listen in.

The dust vamponculus claims: 1) It's nothing, then when that gets the bottle shaken, that 2) It's a ghost, then that 3) It's a vampire, or it was. 4) It's on Mars to help an old vampire that, 5) It's never met.

It also, when threatened with being drowned in Holy Water, offers the opinion that "Aren't girls supposed to be *nice*?"

Xander says that it clearly hasn't met Cordelia, startling Amy - who breaks the containment circle as

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she leaps around, and knocks over the bottle. It breaks, and a dusty wind (in a non-breezy environment) carries the dust away.

Meanwhile. Buffy sneaks out and gets outside the dome. On the way to the diggings, she has a vision of a very tall vampire with a ravaged face wearing robes talking to a large vampire. He says that as devoted as the local martian vampires are, they're very *dull*. One of the reasons he went to sleep in the first place. On the other hand, as nice as it is to be around folks from the Old Planet, clearly the local Martians are *much better help*.

They discuss that some of the Earth-based help tried to sample his breakfast, losing him it in the process. He is not pleased. Mention of a Slayer comes up, which is Most Interesting. He mentions the Harvest, calls the large vampire Luke, and then when everyone is gone, turns to Buffy and says "Hello moppet. Soon."

Buffy finds herself alone, at night, outside the city dome, screaming. She concludes this is a bad idea, and goes back to the library.

In the library, there is discussion of Amy's magic, and what was learned by it.

Willow locates legends which say that in ages past, monsters came to Mars from *somewhere else* and began infecting the local population. The monsters were looking for something, but were in the wrong place. The Martians eventually contained their war-leader with magic and built a barrow on him to keep him contained.

Duly, Xander realises that the 'natural' stone covering the Face on Mars is actually the same as the bricks, but melted and then exposed to a great deal of weathering by the forces of time. Amy detects magicy tingling on the bricks of the barrow.

Buffy returns and relates the vision. Giles declares that this link between Buffy and the vampire leader could be used to get information about him! (The GM hands *back* the Fate Point and says absolutely, but it goes both ways. Willow's player notes "Yeah, but it's okay cause we don't have a plan.)

Amy rigs a containment circle around Buffy, who attempts to link with the vampire leader. She sees the Master inscribing Luke with the symbols to make him the Vessel, and explains the Harvest: That if Luke drinks the blood from enough people, the head vampire will be freed from the barrow.

The PCs check out for big gatherings, and discover that in honour of Lord and Lady Chase, there will be a big dance tomorrow evening. They discuss vampire lore, including the requirement that they be invited inside.

Xander notes that none of the workmen have gone missing if they're living inside the dome - all those missing have lived in the poor regions outside of it.

At which point they hear work outside the library, and discover posters being put up on walls which seem similar to the large banner outside the entrance to the dome.

"GALA OPENING: THE VICTORIANA DOME SETTLEMENT. EVERYONE INVITED."