

## "It's Good to Be Me': Buffy's Resistance to Renaming."

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## “It’s good to be me”: Buffy’s Resistance to Renaming<sup>1</sup>

Janet Brennan Croft

In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), a series rife with examples of re-naming, self-naming, loss of name, nick-naming, and name-based magic, Buffy herself stands out as a character ultimately resistant to any attempt to over-write her core identity through manipulation of her name. This is not to say that her name and identity are never challenged; in fact, challenges to her identity from both within and without are a major recurring theme of the series. In its very title, the series “enacts [its] foundational myth[:] Buffy’s ongoing struggle with her composite character as [both] the ‘Chosen One’” and as Buffy. Both parts of her name, *Buffy* and *The Vampire Slayer*, are frequently questioned or threatened, and maintain a precarious balance as “seemingly mutually exclusive roles” (Allrath 135), but claiming and naming both aspects of her identity equally is an act of power for Buffy.

As Rhonda Wilcox points out, Joss Whedon “use[s] names very consciously to advance meaning” (46), “oppos[ing] essentialism”—name as predetermined role and place in life—”with the idea of existential self-determination,” the making of one’s own meaning (47). Michael Ragussis, in his *Acts of Naming: The Family Plot in Fiction*, shows that the deepest levels of plot can be revealed by acts that “bestow, find, reveal, or earn a name; [or that] take away, hide, or prohibit a name” (3). The naming plot that is of particular interest here is an aspect of what he calls the “female” plot,

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in which a character has a name imposed on them to which they are expected to conform (233).

When she is named “The Vampire Slayer,” Buffy Summers is essentially the intended subject of a female naming plot, and much of the tension of her story develops from her fierce desire to retain her original identity and strengths as Buffy, the California teenager, in spite of expectations that she should be meekly and obediently subsumed into the role—that is, in defiance of the very origin and history of the Slayer line in the spells of male shamans and the centuries-long control of the (mostly) male Watchers’ Council. This essentialist, female naming plot does not work as expected on Buffy; instead of disappearing into her new name, she keeps her original name and adds her title to it; her *true* name is this composite name-plus-title construction (see Ragussis 10).

The key to her strength is the maintenance of a state of balance between the two halves of her name—*Buffy Anne Summers*, the perky blonde with the diminutive, girly name, with a place in a family, with friends, with life-expectations suitable to her name—and *The Vampire Slayer*, identity whittled down to a function rather than a name, a prescribed role within a narrowly defined orbit, a calling rather than a career—as Giles tries to remind her, being the Slayer is “more than a gig. It’s a sacred duty” (“What’s My Line Part 1” 2.9, 0:18:48-51). Claiming both names and identities equally and integrating them into one is how she can be at her best—how she can survive longer than any other Slayer in history. She is often pressured to reject one identity or the other: “[H]ave you tried *not* being a Slayer?” her mother plaintively asks (“Becoming Part 2” 2.22, 0:18:20-22), while the First Slayer insists that she should, like her, have “no speech. No name” (“Restless” 4.22, 0:38:29-30). Her two-part name may underline her “self-division [and] intrinsically ambiguous persona” (Genz 153), but it also points towards the eventual successful integration of her conflicting identities.

## **Family, Friends, Lovers, and Doubles**

*Buffy Anne Summers* is the name she is given at birth. If the proper name given to a child is, as Ragussis claims, “a magical wish” which

“expresses the will of the family” to “classify” or fix the identity of the child (7-8), what meaning did the name *Buffy* assign to the new baby girl? *Buffy* may technically be short for *Elizabeth* and derived from the shortened form *Beth* (Frankel, *Names* 28), but it is always used as her full proper name, not a nickname—*Buffy* is the name on her tombstone, not *Elizabeth*. Now, of course, any etymology will link the name to the show, but before *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* aired it was considered more of a “preppy” nickname, suitable for girls named things like *Buxton* and *Bundy*, and sometimes associated with the late-1960s TV show *Family Affair* (1966-1971; Birnbach 19). *Anne* means “grace or favor” (Frankel, *Names* 31); it is a simple, timeless name, a saint’s name.<sup>2</sup> *Summers*, while it may hint distantly at the Persephone myth and the descent into hell (Wilcox 63) is also not an uncommon name; taken together, *Buffy Anne Summers* implies a certain wholesome, girlish normalcy (as well as a particular suburban, middle class, white, and privileged context).

The one dramatic change to her name-history is when she is told that she is the Vampire Slayer, the Chosen One who will fight the demons. Unlike other Slayers, she was not brought up in training, ready to take on the role on the death of a previous Slayer; the addition of this title to her name comes as a surprise, and the original movie and early episodes of the TV show reveal her resistance not just to the role itself, but specifically to being named to it without her consent and expected to conform unquestioningly to previous interpretations of the role.

But otherwise, her name is not changed by outside forces or events: not as a result of her parents’ divorce, nor when she and her mother move to Sunnydale in an attempt to leave *Buffy’s* past behind and start over. The advent of her younger sister *Dawn* in Season 5, while taking away her identity as an only child, only reinforces *Buffy’s* resistance to renaming: even within the inserted memories designed to integrate *Dawn/the Key* into this world’s history, *Buffy* has never even had a nick-name within her family circle:

**Joyce:** [...] you’re a Vampire Slayer. [*Pulls Dawn onto her lap*] And you ... you are my little punkin’ belly!

**Dawn:** [*embarrassed*] Oh, Mom! That’s like my kid name.  
[...]

**Buffy:** Did you ever have any names for me?

**Joyce:** No ... I think you were always just Buffy. (“No Place Like Home” 5.5, 0:4:43-4:55)

In fact, the entire Glory arc culminates in a confirmation of Summers blood and name/family identity; Buffy’s substitutionary sacrifice for Dawn is based on the fact that they have the same blood—“Summers blood” (“Blood Ties” 5.13, 0:41:21 and “The Gift” 5.22 0:40:03).

Buffy’s lovers and friends also find her resistant to re-naming. The Scoobies, most of whom regularly go by diminutive nicknames—Xander, Will, Cordy, An—nearly always call her *Buffy* or *The Slayer*. Xander occasionally calls her *Buff*, and at times will play with her name—calling her things like Buffster, Buffinator, Duchess of Buffonia—but these are nonce words, not repeated and accepted nick-names. Angel never calls her anything but *Buffy*, though Angelus, when in control, calls her *Buff* in a clear attempt to diminish her. Riley, while he has a hard time remembering her name at first when she is just one student in his class (“The Freshman” 4.1), does not call her by any nick-names once their relationship starts—except in Buffy’s dream sequence in “Restless” (4.22), where he twice calls her *Killer*.

Spike, an inveterate re-namer and nick-namer,<sup>3</sup> tries to—in their first hand-to-hand fight in “School Hard” (2.3) he calls Buffy *kitty* (0:29:17) and continues to use other names like *pet* or *love*, but nothing becomes a permanent *individualized* nickname. The morning after they first have sex (“Wrecked” 6.10), Buffy tells Spike “Don’t call me *love*” (0:3:04), and in the next episode, after he calls her *love* again:

**Buffy:** Stop trying to see me. And stop calling me that.

**Spike:** So, um ... what should I call you then? Pet? Sweetheart? My, uh ... [*fondling a piece of her hair*] little Goldilocks? (“Gone” 6.11, 0:6:02-6:22)

Buffy cuts short the golden hair Spike was so fond of and beats him up when he calls her “my girl” in “Dead Things” (6.13, 0:35:34). Spike may continue to use pet names but he never does develop a specific, individualized nickname for her.

Deeper and more existential threats to Buffy's name and identity come from other Slayers, as figurative doubles. Kendra is the first of these, a Slayer activated by Buffy's brief death at the hands of the Master. She identifies herself as "Kendra, de Vampire Slayer" ("What's My Line Part 1" 2.9, 0:42:58-43:01), "directly in opposition to Buffy, destabilizing Buffy's identity as *the* Slayer" (Jowett 45), the one and only. Kendra's dedication to her role as Slayer, to the exclusion of all else, forces Buffy to examine her ambivalence about integrating both her lives—as Buffy and The Slayer—into one. Kendra has no family—given to her Watcher as a child, she has no last name—and her training has emphasized social isolation, denial of emotion, and self-reliance. As Jowett points out, "Kendra serves largely to illuminate the role of the Slayer and Buffy's negotiation of it" (47), and Buffy has a moment of temptation to leave the Slaying to Kendra, deny her Slayer side, and lead a normal life. But in the end, Kendra observes "You talk about Slaying like a job. It's not. It's who you are" ("What's My Line Part 2" 2.10, 0:41:17-23)—saying she learned this from Buffy.

Faith, a double who even more comprehensively challenges Buffy's identity, is activated by Kendra's death. Like Kendra, "[s]he has no last name [at least at first]; she has no past except as a slayer [...] Faith is completely identified with and driven by her life as a slayer" (Tjardes 69). She possesses a "certainty" and "security in herself" (69) that stand in stark contrast to Buffy at this point. "I'm the Slayer. I do my job kicking ass better than anyone" ("Enemies" 3.17, 0:36:33-35). She's the only one who can label Buffy with a nick-name that sticks, calling her "B" from the moment of their first encounter ("Faith, Hope, & Trick" 3.3, 0:15:26). (Later in the episode Willow tries to call her "B" as well but can't, lamely tacking "—uffy" on to the end, 0:22:17.)

One of Faith's challenges to Buffy's identity is that she "makes [Buffy's] insecurities manifest" (Short 126)—her freedom, her easy friendship with Buffy's mother and the Scoobies, her attempts to seduce Buffy's boyfriends, all rattle Buffy's equilibrium. "Faith helped illuminate Buffy as a dark shadow of the Slayer" (Jowett 84), and I would add, as a double who at times tempts Buffy to reject her family, friends, and moral certitude, her very Buffiness—denying her Buffy side—while at the same time Faith is being tempted by Buffy's life. The fact is, as Faith observes

to Buffy, “There’s only supposed to be one. Maybe that’s why you and I can never get along. We’re not supposed to exist together” (“End of Days” 7.21, 0:22-50-55). This arc of mutual identity-envy and confusion culminates in the body switch episodes “This Year’s Girl” and “Who Are You” (4.15, 16). Later, Faith is a challenge to Buffy’s leadership during Season 7, but finally they work as partners—Faith is one of the last group standing at the end of “Chosen” (7.22).

The First Slayer is an even deeper challenge, directly forcing Buffy to confront her dual nature in “Restless” (4.22)—“I have no speech. No name. I live in the action of death, the blood cry, the penetrating wound” (0:38:29-34)—her name, if she ever had one, her identity as an individual with her own wants and needs, taken away by the shamans who created her. Buffy’s reply situates her firmly in the world of her family and friends: “I am not alone. [...] I walk. I talk. I shop, I sneeze. I’m gonna be a fireman when the floods roll back. [...] Now give me back my friends” (0:38:56-39:18). She claims her right to an individual identity in parallel with, even as part of, being the Slayer, and makes a case for the unique strengths that identity brings to the role. Having speech, a name, a life beyond the “blood cry” and “penetrating wound,” are essential to her very success *as* the Slayer.

The BuffyBot, a more literal double, challenges Buffy’s identity on multiple levels—for other characters, for the viewer, and for herself. In “Intervention” (5.18), Spike commissions Warren to build a robot version of Buffy as a sex toy. The Scoobies confiscate it from Spike after the assault on Glory’s mansion, use it to trick Glory in the final confrontation, and continue to use it early in the next season to keep up the illusion that Buffy is alive. Buffy even impersonates the BuffyBot herself at one point (“Intervention” 5.18), blurring the distinction further.

After her resurrection, “[f]or a large part of Season 6,” as Bronwen Calvert observes, “Buffy is also masquerading as herself” (¶20). Fresh from her grave, torn from a heaven where she felt “finished” and “complete” (“After Life” 6.3, 0:40:07-10), Buffy’s identity is fractured and unsteady; as she sings in “Once More With Feeling” (6.7), she often feels she is just “going through the motions, walking through the part” (0:1:59-2:04). Underscoring this sense of alienation, one of the first things Buffy sees when reanimated, confused and wandering the hellish streets dressed

in the clothes in which she was buried, is the demon biker gang graphically dismembering the BuffyBot. The scene is made all the more horrific by the fact that we see it through her still-blurry eyes, as the robot recognizes her and calls out her name (“Bargaining Part 2” 6.2, 1:05:19). The BuffyBot itself seems to be suffer the same sense of displaced identity, plaintively asking Dawn and Spike “Where did I go?” and wondering about “the other Buffy” (1:14:30-15:20) in its last moments.

### **Specific Examples of Buffy’s Resistance to Renaming/Unnaming**

I want to zoom in a bit here and take a closer look at three episodes that specifically challenge Buffy’s name as a marker of her identity.

*Halloween: “What’s with the name game?”*

“Halloween” (2.6) is a relatively playful episode (by *Buffy* standards) from early in the second season. Giles’s old friend and nemesis Ethan Rayne works a spell that causes the inhabitants of Sunnydale who have bought or rented costumes from his shop to become what they are dressed as. Trick-or-treaters become monsters or pirates, soldiers or princesses. Buffy, still in many ways unsure of her identity as Slayer and her relationship with Angel, has chosen an ante-bellum gown she thinks he will find attractive; she becomes a stereotypically hyper-feminine damsel in distress, and loses all memory of herself as Buffy and her role and powers as the Slayer. The episode has lasting consequences: the soldier skills Xander gains from his costume remain with him as an important plot element for the rest of the series and on into the comics; Willow, losing her all-enveloping ghost costume, gains self-confidence in her own body and sexuality and captures Oz’s attention; and, reinforcing the theme of names and identities, we get a few tantalizing hints about Giles’s disreputable past as Ripper, a startling contrast to his current role as Watcher.

But while this episode is undeniably important in the development of these characters, at its core, it is about Buffy’s desire to be a “normal



girl” who has time to think about “nail polish and facials” (0:04:00-05) and doesn’t inadvertently insult her male friends by being physically stronger than they are. She wants to make herself over into what she thinks the man she has fallen in love with will find attractive. Ethan’s spell is a mechanism for showing the dangers of her own desire to minimize herself and deny her Slayer identity in pursuit of a man—she could well lose all that makes her herself. Buffy characterizes Halloween to Willow as “Come as you aren’t night” (0:13:07) and the billowy red gown and black wig Ethan provide for her bring out her supposed “hidden princess” (0:14:22). But when Ethan’s spell takes effect, she doesn’t even recognize her own name (0:24:06, 37).

Spike, who has declared the whole situation “just . . . neat” (0:28:34) and recruited a following of children-turned-into-monsters, ambushes the powerless Slayer with great relish—calling her at one point “lost little lamb” (0:38:19).<sup>4</sup> When the spell breaks, Buffy’s first words to Spike are “Hi, honey, I’m home” (0:39:09)—both aspects of her identity are back at home in her body, integrated and ready for action. “You know what?” she says as she pummels Spike. “It’s good to be me” (0:39:23).

*Anne: “You are no one now”*

“Anne” (3.1) is a good deal more serious about its theme. The Season 3 opener, “Anne” takes place some months after the harrowing events at the end of Season 2, when Buffy was forced to kill Angelus/Angel and thrust him into a hell dimension. In keeping with the theme of identity, the episode starts with Willow trying unconvincingly to enact the role of Slayer, complete with painfully lame quips, and with the remaining Scoobies wondering where Buffy is and if she will ever come back.

Broken and depressed, Buffy has fled Sunnydale and is hiding in Los Angeles, working in a diner, incognito under her middle name. Here she encounters the young lovers Lily and Rickie, showing off their matching name tattoos—a sign of identity and relation seemingly permanently chosen and forever committed to, rather than denied like her own.

Lily recognizes Buffy and follows her from the diner.

**Lily:** Don't be mad. I won't turn you in or nothing. I guess . . . you don't recognize me.

**Buffy:** [*thinks for a moment*] Lily?

**Lily:** I mean from before. I was calling myself Chantarelle then [*sic*; 'Lie to Me,' 2.7]. I used to . . . [*sighs*] Well, I was in this cult that worshipped vampires. So lame, I know.

**Buffy:** Yeah . . . I, uh, I remember.

**Lily:** But . . . you kinda saved us. I never thanked you or anything. [...]

**Lily:** So how come you came up with Anne?

**Buffy:** It's my middle name.

**Lily:** Lily's from a song. Rickie picked it. I'm always changing anyway. Chantarelle was part of my exotic phase.

**Buffy:** It's nice. It's a . . . it's a mushroom.

**Lily:** It is? That's really embarrassing.

**Buffy:** Um, well, it—it's an exotic mushroom, if that's any comfort.

**Lily:** Well, before that, I was following this loser preacher and calling myself "Sister Sunshine."

**Buffy:** What do they call you at home? [*Lily looks away and doesn't respond; Buffy does not pressure her to answer.*] I like Lily.

**Lily:** It's cool for now. (0:12:02-13:53)

Here Lily's unstable identity demonstrates to Buffy the dangers of the path she is on. In spite of the permanence of 'Lily' tattooed on her boyfriend's arm, the name is just "cool for now." She refuses to give her birth-name when asked. She "called herself" Sister Sunshine and Chantarelle, but her latest name was picked for her by her boyfriend—she's given up even her ability to name herself. Underscoring this theme of unsettled identity, Buffy encounters a series of homeless people who mumble "I'm no one." But Lily knows that Buffy is meant to have a stable core identity based strongly on her abilities: "[I]hat's who you are and stuff, right? You help people. [...] You know how to do stuff" (0:20:57-21:06).

A demon going by the name of Ken has been kidnapping homeless people, including Lily's boyfriend, to serve as slaves in his hell dimension. Time scale differences allow him to use them for decades and send them back to the streets, prematurely aged, when they are no longer useful. In this hell, enforced namelessness is an important factor in the torment and despair used to control the prisoners. Having captured Lily and Buffy, Ken gloats over the fact that Rickie remembered Lily's name many years after he had forgotten his own (0:34:29).

In a scene where the latest captives are introduced to the rules of their new lives, the demon overseer demands that the prisoners identify themselves as "no one." Buffy refuses, and also does not call herself Anne, the name Ken knows her by; "far from rejecting her old identity, she embraces it with deadly results" (Bartel and Bartel 35). She looks the demon in the eye, smiles, and answers "I'm Buffy. The Vampire Slayer. And you are?" (0:36:22-27).

Bartel and Bartel see a parallel between this episode and the Harrowing of Hell, in which Christ willingly descends to the underworld to reveal Himself and free the captive dead. The key point of their parallel that I would like to emphasize is "the hidden, then revealed, identity of the harrowing hero" (34). Buffy has been in self-imposed isolation, incognito, denying her identity, before she even descends into Ken's hell. When she claims her own name, "[t]his revelation of identity in the depths of hell can be seen as an emotional and thematic center [...] of the show as a whole" (Bartel and Bartel 35). It is not surprising, then, that the shot of Buffy with the sickle-like weapon she has taken from one of the demons is an iconic one used in the opening sequence for several seasons to come. She reclaims her Slayer identity in a tangible way, defeating the enslaving demons with weapons she has taken from them; she even, from the moment she reclaims her name, begins to show signs of her depression lifting, defiantly telling Ken that fighting the other demons was actually "fun" (0:40:06).

"[W]hen Buffy finds her own identity, those around her are enabled and empowered to discover their identities, too" (Bartel and Bartel 36). Buffy leaves her apartment and job to "nameless, lost Lily" (Frankel, *Heroine* 76), who asks "Can I be 'Anne'?" (0:43:17), taking up the alias

Buffy no longer needs as she returns home to Sunnydale.<sup>5</sup>

*Tabula Rasa: "Whatever, Umad"*

"Tabula Rasa" (6.8) is a sixth season episode, taking place immediately after the iconic musical episode "Once More With Feeling" (6.7). "Tabula Rasa" includes some of the funniest and most light-hearted moments in the series—and some of the most heart-wrenching as well, as we watch relationships disintegrate before our eyes. Willow, ever more desperately trying to clear concerns about her use of magic from Tara's memory, inadvertently casts an amnesia spell on all her friends in the Magic Box. No one remembers their name or anything about themselves. Xander, Willow, Tara, and Giles all find their ID cards and regain some certainty about their identities. Dawn is wearing a necklace with her name, so she at least has that. Spike, in disguise to hide from a loan shark, finds the name *Randy* on a tag in his suit and simply assumes that is his name. Anya finds her name on a paper near the cash register, though she mispronounces it. Buffy is only one who has nothing to give her a clue, reliable or not, about her own identity—her name, occupation, or relation to The Magic Box and the other people there.

**Dawn:** [*to Buffy*] So you don't have a name?

**Buffy:** Of course I do. I just don't happen to know it.

**Dawn:** [*smiling*] You want me to name you?

**Buffy:** Oh, that's sweet, but I think I can name myself. [*thinks a moment*] I'll name me . . . Joan.

**Dawn:** [*makes a face*] Ugh!

**Buffy:** What? Did you just 'ugh' my name?

**Dawn:** No! I just . . . I mean, it's so blah. Joan?

**Buffy:** I like it. I feel like a Joan. (0:20:40-21:09)

As Wilcox points out, the name deliberately echoes Joan of Arc—"When Buffy chooses her name, chooses the self to be, she chooses the name of a woman warrior who dies for her cause" (61). In contrast to

“Anne,” Wilcox continues, where Buffy “attempt[ed] to avoid heroism,” here her choice of name embraces heroism and leadership (62).

The amnesia spell works differently from Ethan’s spell in “Halloween”: the characters here become blank slates, without their specific personal memories, but retain some aspects of their own character traits, muscle memory, and even cultural memory, and are not overwritten by another personality. It is not a true *tabula rasa*, a total erasure of the mind from the body; as Jeffrey Bussolini asserts, “some form of one’s nature reasserts itself” and there is a “persistence of underlying identity” (328).<sup>6</sup> In this episode Buffy may lose her identity as Buffy but, in this “leitmotif of the persistence and emergence of identity and self” (336), she retains her Slayer skills and leadership abilities. “I’m like a superhero or something!” Buffy exclaims when she manages to kill one of the vampires who has them besieged in the shop (0:24:26), and she plans and leads a diversion with “Randy” so the others can get away.

The spell has given them a break from painful reality—it all comes crashing back when the enchantment ends and they return to their normal identities. While Buffy was able to find and take simple pleasure in her underlying Slayerdom as Joan, when the spell breaks she must also resume being Buffy, the other half of the equation—pulled out of heaven, bereft of her mother, confused by her attraction to Spike, her best friend increasingly addicted to magic, her sister a kleptomaniac, her Watcher leaving her for England, the season’s Big Bad still a mystery. But it is essential to the free will of the characters that they be able to suffer and make choices as their own selves; as both “Anne” and “Tabula Rasa” show, the blank slate, the name and identity chosen fresh without reference to the past, may be a comforting fantasy but it is not sustainable.

### **Naming the Slayers: Sharing the Power**

The television series ends with what I would argue is an act of naming on a massive, even divine, scale, with echoes of Genesis and other creation stories in which gods perform acts of speaking and naming to bring their vision of the universe into being. “Magic is Willow’s language” (Ruddell, para. 1), and for her, speaking a spell is “performative and

functional” (para. 6). We don’t hear what Willow actually says during her incantation in “Chosen,” but Buffy’s proposal lays out what will happen:

**Buffy [V.O.]:** From now on, every girl in the world who might be a Slayer . . . will be a Slayer. Every girl who could have the power . . . will have the power . . . can stand up, will stand up. Slayers . . . every one of us. (“Chosen” 7.22, 28:24-28:41)

The first thing a radiant Willow says to Kennedy after she performs the spell is “You’re a Slayer” (0:29:35). Willow’s spell is a speech act that names Kennedy and all the Potential girls in the world Slayers. The essentialist magic in the blood that makes them Potentials—the blood that is needed to open the Hellmouth—is paired with the existential power of naming to set their abilities free.

Buffy has come to a point in her long quest to integrate her identities where sharing the name of *Slayer* is no longer the existential threat it once was. She has faced challenges to her calling and her uniqueness from other individual Slayers like Kendra and Faith, from doubles and doppelgangers like the BuffyBot; to her sense of humanity from her resurrection and from revelations about the origin of Slayer power; and to her abilities and position as leader through her failures and triumphs in facing The First Evil. When the only solution to the threat of the First Evil is to share her power, she does. Buffy now has a pretty good idea of the path ahead:

**Buffy:** [*speaking to Angel*] I’m cookie dough. I’m not done baking. I’m not finished becoming whoever the hell it is I’m gonna turn out to be. I make it through this, and the next thing, and the next thing, and maybe one day I turn around and realize I’m ready. I’m cookies. (“Chosen” 7.22, 0:6:35-7:00)

The ongoing challenge of her composite identity as Buffy and as Slayer is resolved—at least temporarily. She has determined and held fast to her own definition of “Buffy, the Vampire Slayer,” balancing the girl and the calling; almost paradoxically, at this point of balance is where she

finds the strength and will to share her power and become not *The* Slayer, but *A* Slayer, one of many.<sup>7</sup>

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Versions of this paper were presented at Mythcon 46, Colorado Springs, July/August 2015, and SWPACA, Albuquerque, February 2015.

<sup>2</sup> There could also be a subtle gesture towards another feisty, hot-tempered Anne-with-an-E, Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*; it would not be a stretch to picture the Anne books being favorites of Joyce's.

<sup>3</sup> See my essay "The Vampire Family Plot: Naming, Siring, and Identity" for Spike's complicated history as both named and name-giver.

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, the last thing Spike calls her before his death in "Chosen" (7.22) is "lamb" (0:36:08).

<sup>5</sup> Anne later shows up in several episodes of *Angel* (1999-2004), including the series finale, running a shelter for teens in east Los Angeles, with the last name Steele and minus the tattoo. The shooting script of "Lie to Me" gives her original name as Joan Appleby ("Anne Steele"); see below for the significance of the name *Joan* and what this may imply about her long character arc and steadily growing heroism over the two series.

<sup>6</sup> This is a theme that is explored in far more depth in *Dollhouse* (2009-2010), and the retention of certain types of memory in spite of technological memory wipes is a major plot point throughout the series.

<sup>7</sup> Nothing ever stands still in the Whedonverse; the Season 8 comics unbalance Buffy again and raise complex issues about the multiplicity of new Slayers, the roles of the diversionary doppelganger Buffys, and the continuing challenge of Faith's existence, but that is a topic for another paper.

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