



Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer

By Rhonda V. Wilcox

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Rhonda Wilcox is the world's foremost authority on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, its characters, and its themes. Wilcox argues that *Buffy* is enduring as art by exploring its excellence in both long-term story arc construction and in producing individual episodes that are powerful on their own. She examines the larger patterns that extend through all seven seasons: the hero myth, imagery of light, naming symbolism, Buffy's relationship with Spike, sex, and redemption. Wilcox also focuses on acclaimed and noteworthy episodes, including the musical **Once More, with Feeling,** the largely silent and wordless **Hush,** and the dream episode **Restless.** She examines *Buffy's* literary narrative, symbolism, visual imagery, and sound. Combining great intelligence and wit, written for fans, this is the worthy companion to the show that has claimed and kept the minds and hearts of watchers worldwide.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This accessible collection of essays on Buffy the Vampire Slayer defends the artistic merit of the fantasy TV show with equal parts wit and insight. Wilcox, an English professor at Gordon College, is a fan of the series and doesn't condescend to other fans or disparage what she believes is "art, and deserves to be so studied. It is a work of literature, of language...of visual art...of music and sound." Wilcox looks at the big-picture narrative arc and at individual episodes, finding impressive, but sometimes tenuously connected, influences at work: Joseph Campbell's monomyth, Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, John Donne, Virgil and Charles Dickens. "One of the great themes of Dickens's Bleak House," she writes, "is our interconnection; and one of the great themes of Buffy is the virtue of community." Not surprisingly, the author has no patience for critics and academics who dismiss Buffy as mere "cult TV" on the basis of its genre and argues that fantasy can have more emotional resonance than realism. Though not convincing as a work of genuine scholarship, Wilcox's book is a serviceable addition to the canon of Buffy.

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From [Booklist](#)

Although television is often looked down upon, Wilcox, one editor of *Slayage*, the online journal devoted to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, presents a compelling argument for it as an art form as worthy of respect and acknowledgment as film or literature. She furthers her argument by using Joss Whedon's iconic show as a salient example, drawing on the depth of the characters, the symbolism in the show, and the many real-world commentaries that permeate its narrative. The first half of the book deals with everything from the significance of the characters' names in relation to their identities to parallels between *Buffy* and the Harry Potter saga, while the second half offers detailed analyses of seven of *Buffy*'s finest, most complex episodes, including the ones that deal with the loss of Buffy's virginity and the almost entirely silent episode "Hush." The library of scholarly *Buffy* titles continues to grow, with Wilcox's thoughtful, accessible volume an honorable addition to it. *Kristine Huntley*

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Review

'If there's anyone who doubts *Buffy* matters, Wilcox's accessible, well written, and carefully argued book is for them. For the rest of us who know *Buffy* matters, Wilcox provides a generous and richly textured reading of the series sure to provoke discussion and expand our appreciation of its achievement. *Why Buffy Matters* is a first-rate work of criticism' – **James B. South**, editor of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*

'*Why Buffy Matters* assembles in one volume the astonishingly perceptive critical commentary of the Mother of *Buffy* Studies. Like the amazing series it delineates, it brings the funny *and* brings the tears – or am I the only one deeply moved by interpretive brilliance? This book confirms Rhonda Wilcox as the chosen one among television scholars, the one with the intellectual strength and hermeneutic skill to do battle with one of the most complex popular culture texts of our time.' – **David Lavery**, Co-editor of *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*

'*Why Buffy Matters* negotiates big ideas about literature, television, culture, values, and language with verve and commitment - it's the best Buffy book so far. When it comes to Buffy

studies, Wilcox is the Slayer.’ – **Michael Adams**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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The event that you get from Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer could be the more deep you rooting the information that hide in the words the more you get serious about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to know but Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by means of anyone who read the item because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. Therefore it is easy to understand then can go along with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer instantly.

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