"I Hope Evil Takes MasterCard"

Faith the Vampire Slayer and the Image of the Bad Girl in Society

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[1] In 1999, actress Eliza Dushku made her first appearance in the TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as Faith, the "rogue slayer," a minor character created as a counterpoint to Buffy's restraint and moderation in the use of her powers. As the season progressed, audience appeal caused a development of the character into one of the most loved characters of the series. Faith represents the darker side of the slayer and is the "bad girl" of the series. In many ways she exemplifies the perception of the viewer and other characters, representing the post-modern feminism from which Buffy's third wave feminism stands apart. Show creator Joss Whedon used the idea of female power to create an interactive and engaging look at feminism in modern society (Tjardes).

[2] Discussing the show, Whedon said, "If I can make teenage boys comfortable with a girl who takes charge of a situation without their knowing that's what's happening, it's better than sitting down and selling them on feminism" (McDowell 8). Buffy and the other female characters on the show became a cultural standard of feminist women who are not afraid of showing their "girly" side. As Buffy says in *The Prom* (B3020), "Kicking ass is comfort food." For the women of this show, not only are they feminine and taking care of themselves, but the two often go hand in hand.

[3] It is into this world that the character of Faith enters. She is a new slayer who comes on to the

show in the third season as a replacement for Kendra, who died the prior year. Faith and Kendra are a new line of slayers, called during Buffy's momentary death in season one. Faith is everything that Buffy is not. Not only is she dark haired and clothed in outfits that are far more suggestive than those worn by the rest of the female protagonists, she is also much more enamored with her slaying ability than is Buffy. While Buffy wishes to be a normal girl and sees slaying as a burden, Faith relishes the fight and enjoys slaying far more than as a mere duty. The creators of the show use the character of Faith as an example of what would happen if Buffy gave in to the darker side of her nature. Matthew Pateman, author of *The Aesthetics of Culture in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, writes that "Her openness, sexual excitement, sense of adventure and fun in killing all mark her out as being Buffy's opposite" (99). In essence, the show writers intended to display the spectrum across which the idea of the slayer could be ordered.

[4] The show writers designed Faith to be the "bad slayer." Her purpose was to underscore the difficulties that Buffy faced while challenging the paradigm in which she lives. At one point Faith tells Buffy "We're slayers, girlfriend, the Chosen Two. Why should we let him [Wesley] take all the fun out of it?" (*Bad Girls*, B3014). Faith questions the structure in which Buffy functions. In Buffy's world, there is the Slayer, her watcher from whom she takes direction, and the Watchers Council, which governs them both. Yet when Faith enters Buffy's world, Faith has lost her watcher and learned to take care of herself. She finds a certain pleasure in the slaying and does not want any authority figure to deprive her of that high.

[5] The bad girl motif into which Faith fits has been a literary and cultural presence since the

earliest writings. Many cultures have warnings of the bad girl in some form ranging from medieval Europe to the Eastern culture. These influences are still prevalent in society today, creating an underlying cultural assumption concerning girls who look or behave in a certain way (Gilmore 57). In literature and mythology, the bad girl "lurks within the recesses of the masculine imagination, her purpose to stalk and to capture men and to destroy them" (Gilmore 58). She destroys masculinity with her feminine wiles, luring men to their demise. This demise can be both literal and metaphoric as the man who is seduced by the bad girl has no will of his own. His ability to control himself as well as his morality is lost as she takes him as her own. Through sexual domination, the bad girl will steal a man's sanity, preventing him from seeing that she is no longer a good woman but merely evil in female flesh (Gilmore 58).

[6] A prime example of the bad girl may be found in the Buddhist culture. Woman's primary sins, according to traditionally recorded Buddhist belief, are treachery and deceit. It is through her use of the female form that she deceives the man into committing atrocities which he would never consider if he were not under her influence. The Burmese Buddhists believe that women are inherently evil due to their "treachery, because they use all methods fair and foul, to usurp man's rightful place" (Gilmore 59). It is through her second evil trait, "sexual allure," that the woman is able to force the man out of his rightful position as man and take control, dominating in ways which are unintended for women. Instead, a woman's rightful place is to be subservient to the man. This fear that she will rise up against him is the reason that in this culture the woman is considered to be the most dangerous of all living creatures (Gilmore 59).

[7] The character of the misogynist grows out of this fear of the bad girl, in which the male culture enacts censorship "not of feminine flesh but of her spirit, her intellect, her character and will" (Gilmore 57). By controlling the female intellect, the misogynist is able to maintain control over her. It is when a woman transcends this limitation that she comes into complete control her own life and is an individual to be feared by men. While this is an extreme interpretation, the underlying concept that the bad girl is a character who goes against the construct of a male-dominated society is relevant and rings true. The bad girl is often seen as bad, not because of her own evil but because she is something entirely different from what is seen in modern society.

[8] The idea of feminism encompasses many different aspects of life, including both political and cultural, and herald this diversity with the anthem "the personal is political" (hooks 26). Feminists consider themselves to be "people who support political, economic, and social equality for women," yet this is not always how they are perceived (Harlan 73). In many areas of society, feminism "has become equated with lesbianism, male bashing, or male hating; for many it has also come to be defined narrowly as encompassing only women of European heritage" (Harlan 73).

[9] Feminism is broadly organized into three historic trends, called waves. First wave feminism is associated with the iconic suffragette movement. In 1848 a movement began at Seneca Falls, New York that carried through to the 19th Amendment in 1920 and beyond. These women include Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, both of whom stand out among the earliest leaders of the feminist movement. The first wave shows that the feminist movement, which has become

such a cultural constant, had roots in public policy. These women called for political and property rights. Without these rights, women could never truly be seen as individuals (Harlan). This continued with the dominance of NOW (National Organization of Women), but during the 1960s a younger generation of women began to look for more than slow political changes. They became dissatisfied with the slow pace and sought more aggressive action (Rosen).

[10] Second wave feminism is also referred to as post-modern feminism. It invokes a "*sexualized* femininity" that is much more radical than that of first wave feminism (Harlan 77-78). The women's liberation movement is associated with second wave feminism. It was much more aggressive than the traditional movement and was associated with the Valerie Solarias affair (an attempted murder of artist Andy Warhol in the name of "cutting men") and other "man-hating" incidents. This prompted the media stereotype that persists to this day. These new young feminists called for a "radical critique of patriarchal culture, visions of alternative lifestyles, and the unmasking of the hidden injuries women had suffered" (Rosen 85-88). This call was not for a change in philosophy, but rather a change in the manner in which the feminist movement was carried out.

[11] The bad girl stereotype is highlighted in this version of feminism as the ideas of female power and female sexuality come together to create a vision of women that is akin to that feared by ancient cultures (Munford 192-143). Many feminists now distance themselves from second-wave feminism and the female-superiority images it invokes. bell hooks argues that the radical nature of second wave feminism alienated many women because its advocates often pushed the necessity of

a separate lifestyle. Rather than a diverse community, second wave feminism in many ways created isolation for those who wished to live more traditional lives (hooks 29).

[12] Third wave feminism is an answer to the more radically aggressive aspects of second wave feminism. It takes the idea of "girl power" in a different direction, giving women the ability to be assertive of themselves as women while still being feminine. In this way, they are able to exist in a society that is not receptive to aggressive women but much more conservative. While before this time, the bulk of the feminist movement took place among white, middle class women, third wave feminism rebels against any class or race lines. In third wave feminism, "one of the primary goals… is to question our [women's] inherited models of feminist agency and political efficacy, without acceding to the defeatism implicit in the notion of 'postfeminism'" (Pender 164). In her book, *From Margin to Center*, bell hooks writes

> Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step into (28).

The focus of mass feminism is then in rejecting the idea that a particular lifestyle is necessary. Instead, the "feminist struggle can begin wherever an individual woman is, we create a movement that focuses on our collective experience" (hooks 29).

[13] Third-wave feminists have experienced the world created by the postmodern feminists, a world in which they have access to education, jobs, and birth control. For those third-wave feminists who wish to challenge the postmodern feminists, the primary point on which they differ derives from the different environments in which they have come of age. They consider postmodern feminism to be focused on victimization in a male-dominated society. Instead, they see themselves as strong individuals in their own right and wish to be viewed this way by society (Harlan 78).

[14] The second wave movement is focused on the superiority of woman in a patriarchal society, the third wave movement challenges this notion. This is the feminist framework into which *Buffy* was created. Buffy is a former cheerleader who struggles to balance her desire to be a "normal girl" with her duty as the slayer. She dresses and acts like any other girl, but aggressively subverts traditional ideas of female power as she is the only one who can stop the apocalypse and save the world. The other female characters are also indicative of third wave feminism. They take control of their own lives but still live within the societal framework (Pender 166-167).

[15] Faith is brought into *Buffy* as an example of the second-wave feminism from which the female protagonists distance themselves. Buffy represents the balance between power and restraint, "girliness" and aggression, a balance Faith refutes. In contrast to Buffy's blond, girly, and peppy appearance, Faith stands as her dark-haired opposite (Stevenson). Yet the question remains as to if she is a bad girl of her own making or simply takes up this character as a result of how others perceive her. She demonstrates throughout the show that she is independent of the other characters.

She is of a different ethnicity than the other characters, as was Kendra. But while they both dress in a more risqué fashion, Kendra put herself under the influence of men completely while Faith refutes patriarchal influence in very blatant ways. The question of perception is crucial because Faith's more sadistic actions appear based on her reading of the reaction of other characters.

[16] After meeting Buffy and the rest of the scoobies, Faith makes herself a part of their lives. She is so over-enthusiastic about becoming a part of the group that Buffy feels that Faith is trying to take away her life, saying "She's very personable. She gets along with my friends, my watcher, my mom. Hey look, now she's getting along with my fries" (*Faith, Hope, and Trick*, B3003). Later in the episode, Buffy reiterates the point when speaking with Giles, responding to his concern for Faith with "She doesn't need a life, she's got mine." Buffy feels threatened by Faith, who challenges her approach to slaying and normal life. Faith is radically different in the manner of the second-wave feminists who advocate living apart from the paternalistic world (hooks 29). Faith literally lives apart, in a rundown motel and does not engage in the social areas of the Scoobies lives. She is seen at the high school, but does not actually attend, reinforcing her "other" status.

[17] Buffy's first impression of Faith is that she is a "skank." Willow later calls her a "cleavagy slut-bomb," which is an accurate descriptor of how Faith is perceived by other characters as well as the audience (*This Year's Girl*, B4015). This image of Faith is indicative of the type of character she is intended to be. It is logical to assume that if she had shown up in a floral skirt and pastel top (such as those favored by Buffy), she would have been more welcome into the group. Instead, her "contemporary rock chic" style classifies her as dangerous, not only because she is a slayer, but

because she associates with the more seductive fringes of female fashion (Kearney 37).

[18] Faith's clothing is often dark in color, form-fitting, and revealing. She favors leather, as do Buffy and Cordelia, but there is a lack of "taste" to her choices. The most memorable of these leather pieces are her leather pants. Leather pants are often considered to be representative of living somewhat off the map of civilized society and this style of dress is seen in other characters that are considered to be "bad," most notably Spike. This inherent association predisposes the audience to be suspicious of Faith's behavior (Kearney 37). Leather pants are also critical in characters who "go bad." Angel as Angelus is seen in leather in season two as is Vampire Willow in season three. When Vampire Willow first appears, the Scoobies do not suspect that she is someone new, but that Willow has simply "cracked." Most dramatic is the image of Buffy in leather pants and jacket arriving at Faith's apartment intent on killing her. Buffy is clearly choosing to cross a moral line and thus dressing the part in "big sister's clothes" (Moldovano).

[19] When Faith switches bodies with Buffy (*This Year's Girl*, B4015), Faith finds pieces in Buffy's wardrobe and uses them to fashion the same look. Even though she is attempting to be Buffy, she cannot shake the look that symbolizes her nature. One notable example is when, after possessing Buffy, she asks Joyce if she can borrow a lipstick called "Harlot." Joyce comments on the fact that that same lip color was the one that Faith had been attracted to when she took Joyce hostage. Faith immediately throws it back as if she's been burned and says "Burn it." This small incident is indicative of the battle going on within her. By rejecting a lipstick that fit her look, Faith is in essence rejecting herself, accepting other's perception of her as bad, and trying to cut all ties

with herself. Faith spends the rest of the episode waffling between her true nature and her attempts to be like Buffy. This shows the stark contrast between the second and third wave feminist, and makes a mockery of the "weakness" displayed in the third-wave's adherence to less radical behavior by making Buffy's life seem almost placid and ordinary.

[20] Yet in *Angel* season four and *Buffy* season seven, as Faith redeems herself, she does not go to the clothing style of the other female characters. By sticking to her own darker style, Faith shows that she is accepting herself as she is. This is the first time the viewer gets this impression from her, and it is a visual indicator of the growth of the character. Despite the fact that society perceives her look as disreputable, Faith has subverted this stereotype. She remains the second-wave feminist woman, despite now being a "good" character. Though she previously became evil and lost her humanity, when it is regained she is still the same person. Second-wave feminism is not inherently bad, and in this way the show is highlighting the fact that Faith could be perceived as bad based solely on her more provocative and abrasive nature.

[21] Though she gives the appearance of being fully in control, the bad girl character has almost no confidence in herself as an individual. Her aggression serves as compensation for her lack of connection with those outside herself. Douglas Petrie, show writer, remarked that Faith is "the most faithless character we've got. She doesn't trust herself, or anyone around her" (Stevenson 118). Faith comes to Sunnydale completely alone, her watcher dead and her family absent. The first individual she is seen interacting with is a vampire whom she is dancing with before she takes him outside to slay him (*Faith, Hope and Trick*, B3003).

[22] Faith again becomes a primary focus in *Revelations* (B3007), in which Gwendolyn Post shows up claiming to be her new watcher. At the same time, Faith feels betrayed by Buffy and so turns to Mrs. Post, the new watcher, as her primary support system. For the first time, Faith and Buffy have an all-out fight as slayer versus slayer. Faith's willingness to trust Mrs. Post puts the entire world in danger, as she is not who she claims to be. This incident highlights a later trend in Faith's character. She is unwilling to allow others to see her for who she really is, yet at the same time she is willing to trust to the point of blindness. She is so desperate for an authority figure that she often does not see what is right in front of her. Though she comes back to the Scoobies after this incident, it foreshadows later events that serve to drive them apart and sets up the doubt that will influence her turn. It is important to note that in this same episode the trust and loyalty of all characters is called into doubt by the reveal that Angel, last seen as the villain of season two, is back from the dead and under Buffy's protection. Faith's uneasiness with authority figures creates even more tension when her second watcher, Wesley Wyndam-Pryce comes to Sunnydale, and is reinforced when he tries to turn her in to the Watcher's Council following the murder of the deputy mayor.

[23] What most viewers point to in labeling Faith as a bad girl are the episodes when she goes to work for the mayor. She cannot accept the fact that she has killed a man in *Bad Girls* (B3014), and so runs away from those who would try to help her. Yet, this isolation has already begun in the preceding episode, *The Zeppo* (B3013). Faith sleeps with Xander and then kicks him out of the room, using him simply to reach her own personal ends. This behavior is societally inappropriate

and, though humorous, predisposes the viewer to look on her unfavorably. It is a reversal of traditional gender roles, with the female using the male for her own ends and then rejecting him, demonstrating Faith's view of men. In *Beauty & the Beasts* (B3004), she tells Buffy that "All men are beasts" and in *Homecoming* (B3005) she suggests finding some guys so that the two can "use 'em and… discard 'em," illustrating how disposable she finds men to be.

[24] Faith's actions reinforce the man-hating stereotype of second wave feminism when she attempts to rape Xander two episodes after their first encounter in *Consequences* (B3015). Xander comes to offer to help Faith, who does not believe that anyone would care enough to come to her out of concern. She throws him onto the bed, climbs on top of him, and starts to have her way with him, telling him "I could do anything to you and you'd want me to. I could make you scream. I could make you die." This is obviously a very dangerous situation that aligns Faith with the second-wave radicals who advocated "cutting men" (Rosen 85).

[25] However, many viewers are drawn to the character of Faith and throughout the original airing of season three demonstrated their loyalty to the character. They see what the other characters on the show do not, undercurrents of remorse. The appeal of Faith to the viewing audience is her ambiguous history. Television scholar Su Tjardes writes that the Faith's behavior "allows [her] a freedom not available to Buffy; it also maximizes the pleasures of meaning making because much about Faith is left to viewers" (69). The show acknowledged the role of the audience in making Faith's history by never letting her voice her motives. Instead, the only on screen indication of her motivations are made by the rest of the cast. This ambiguity persists in the way in which shots are

framed, giving Faith distinct reaction shots which may indicate either remorse or indifference (Tjardes).

[26] When Faith feels betrayed by the Scoobies and Wesley, she turns to their greatest threat, Mayor Wilkins. He becomes her new boss and, just like with Gwendolyn Post, she trusts him implicitly. Unlike her relationship with Gwendolyn, however, Mayor Wilkins truly cares about Faith. They soon develop a rather odd relationship. In later episodes, Faith says that he was like a father to her (*Touched*, B7020). Wilkins provides for Faith, treats her as his daughter, and ruthlessly protects her, even from beyond the grave (Jowett). Through this relationship, one can see Faith's need for a human connection, for someone to care about her. The mayor provides Faith with what she could not get from the scoobies. He gives her a purpose and a family, the two things she has so desperately wanted. Because Buffy is the "real" slayer, Faith has always been second-best. When she is taken in by the Mayor, she is now the best and the most loved.

[27] Faith's romantic relationships with men are typical of the bad girl figure. She longs for a connection and a lasting relationship, but her hard attitude pushes them away. The first time the viewer sees her act on this is when she sleeps with Xander. Their encounters highlight the dangerous nature of the bad girl. In this scenario, the male, who should have had the upper hand, is made subject to the power of the female, who is typically seen as the weaker of the two sexes, particularly in this kind of situation. In *Who Are You?* (B4016), Faith (in Buffy's body) sleeps with Buffy's boyfriend Riley. When he treats her with tenderness rather than lustful aggression she runs away, unable to handle the concept of love associated with sex.

[28] The imagined relationship between Faith and Angelus in *Enemies* (B3017) is designed to deceive both the viewer and Faith herself. She is not given a real relationship but rather a violent shadow of what Buffy has. The feeling of betrayal strengthens her hatred of Buffy, and sets up their final battle in part of the season finale. Though Faith and Angel never have a romantic relationship, they do develop a bond as he helps her to begin her journey back to the side of good. He is the reason that she is able to face herself and begin to earn redemption. In fact, the only reason she leaves prison is when Angel is in danger and the fate of the world rests on her ability to save him (*Salvage*, A4013). He is the only person she cares about after she reaches her breaking point and in many ways is the only true friend she has known. Even when Faith betrays the Scoobies and goes to work for the mayor, Angel accepts her when she looks to restore her humanity because he understands the situation in which she has been placed.

[29] Faith is not allowed a real relationship until she achieves redemption. Following her return to Sunnydale she is placed in a position of authority in the battle of the impending apocalypse. She befriends Robin Wood, who genuinely likes her for herself and whom she genuinely likes as well. The night before the apocalypse is a montage of shared romantic moments for many of the characters. The fact that Robin and Faith sleep together demonstrates that she is able to be with someone in a way that is not purely selfish or self-abasing. Instead, she has the capacity to care and maybe even love (*Touched*, B7020).

[30] Faith immerses herself in the identity of the sexual woman. She often comments that slaying

makes her "hungry and horny" (*Faith, Hope and Trick*, B3003). Even more so, she treats the slaying itself as a sexual act. She always looks for an opportunity to "dust" a vampire or eliminate a demon because of the rush it gives her. The language traditionally used to discuss vampires and slaying is inherently sexualized, a fact that the show does not try to escape. Because of this, conversations concerning the work of the slayer often have a sexualized undertone. In Faith's character, the writers simply increase the level of lasciviousness. She tells stories of kills that also involved a sexual activity, or, in one case, slaying naked. Faith is often seen as bad because she enjoys these activities, and "verbalizes the viewer's enjoyment of both sex and violence in the show" (Jowett 86).

[31] Traditional Western culture does not allow women to be involved in most aspects of the combat. In many respects, war has been associated with male sexuality and therefore the sexuality of women has no place in it. In modern society much progress has been made in the integration of many military areas, but women are still not allowed in actual combat. In her book *The Curious Feminist*, Cynthia Enloe incorporates gender integration into an overall concern with militarism. Her fundamental argument is that gender discrimination in the military nationalizes sexism. The fact that the slayer is a woman and engages in combat that the men on the show are typically unable to handle is an obvious reversal of Western society (181-183). Robin Anderson contributes to this argument by discussing the close identification between masculine sexuality and war in "Gendered Media Culture and the Imagery of War." Because it is a sexually charged part of male life, a woman engaging in the same activity would be an inappropriate expression of her own sexuality. The dangers of female sexuality being expressed in war are best seen in the fear of torture, which

comes out of "female sexual deviance" (368-369). Both slayers cross this line, but Buffy shows restraint and reluctance. She feels the burden of her power. Faith simply relishes who she is and what she was created to do.

[32] Faith demonstrates illustrates the fear of women in combat when she tortures Wesley in *Five by Five* (A1018). She demonstrates an extensive knowledge of torture and appears to enjoy it. In *Enemies* Faith tells Buffy,

> See when I was a kid I used to beg my mom for a dog. Didn't matter what kind, I just wanted, you know, someone to love. [She kisses Angel.] A dog's all I wanted. Well, that and toys. [Uncovers the knives and picks up a crude pair of scissors.] But mom was always busy, what with the drinking and passing out parts of life, that I never really got what I wanted. Until now. (*Enemies*, B3017)

On the screen, it is only after she becomes "evil" that Faith escalates from slaying to prolonged torture. She seems to derive some enjoyment from this and finds a twisted sense of justice in punishing those who she believes have betrayed her.

[33] One basic way the Buffy production staff shows Faith's bad girl status is the dance scenes that she has in two of her most aggressive episodes, *Bad Girls* and *Five by Five*. The music chosen for these scenes, combined with the style of dance, creates a feeling of intensity and recklessness that is very central to the Faith character and the second-wave feminist. Both episodes combine dance with fighting. The first is "Chinese Burn" by Curve, about a girl who no longer cares about anyone and will sacrifice her friends to save herself. The second scene features "Living Dead Girl"

by Rob Zombie, which uses some very violent imagery when describing how a girl uses people. Both songs use very loud techno music that underlies the violence of the lyrics. The style of dance that uses this style of music is in itself on the risqué side, and when used in these scenes creates the idea of a bad girl in a very palatable sense.

[34] Faith herself struggles with her perception of who she is. She takes Buffy's body in *This Year's Girl* (B4015) with the intent of remaining herself but has to be Buffy in order to avoid discovery. This device "not only allows Faith to escape all punishment for her life of crime, it actually allows her to live the life of a hero" (Forster 15). Yet what starts out as an amazing opportunity for her to live what she has always seen as a charmed life results in a complete revulsion of herself. As the episode progresses, she grows to dislike herself more and more (Forster). In the end, Faith beats "herself" (Buffy, who's in Faith's body), screaming, "You're nothing! Disgusting, murderous bitch! You're nothing! You're disgusting!"

[35] It is not until after she has gone to prison that Faith visibly accepts who she is. She leaves Sunnydale after Buffy switches their bodies back and goes to LA in search of Angel. Her goal is to upset him to the point that he will kill her. Faith asks Wesley in *Five by Five* (A1018) if he thinks she would have been "a better role model" if he was a better watcher. She later tells Angel that he does not know what evil is and screams over and over "I'm bad!" yelling at him to fight back. Their fight ends as she sobs against him, begging him to "just do it" and kill her. When he refuses to do so, she is forced to look within herself and come to terms with the things she has done. This is most aptly illustrated when she turns herself in, sentencing herself to prison for what at that time

seems to be the rest of her life. This is a physical reaction to the trouble that continues to follow her. Angel, the only one to offer her any hope of redemption, is put in danger, as are other more reluctant characters. The only way Faith can protect them is by going to jail. She could run away or fight, but instead she chooses to actively restrain herself.

[36] In both *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, the concept of redemption often goes with self-acceptance. When a character who is seen as evil begins to seek redemption, they must first evaluate what they have done. Only when they accept what they have done and begin to forgive themselves are they able to move forward. In the *Angel* season four episode *Salvage*, it is very obvious that Faith is only in jail because she is keeping herself there. When Wesley goes to break her out to save Angel, she dives through the glass and escapes, protecting Wesley from broken glass, a parallel to the torture scene years earlier. This is a visual indicator of the redemption which she has begun to achieve. When Faith returns to LA to help rescue Angel, she returns as a changed woman. No longer is she scared, abusive, and vengeful. Now she carries herself with a confidence born of time spent holding herself in prison and reflecting on what she has done.

[37] One of the most crucial instances in all of Faith's airtime is when she and Wesley walk in to Angel Investigations. The rest of the characters have not yet met her, and Wesley introduces her as "Faith, the Vampire Slayer" (*Salvage*, A4013). Never before has Faith been given this title. By referring to her in this way, the show is giving Faith the respect that goes with her redemption. This is later reinforced when she is given command of the army of potentials in *Buffy* season seven (*Empty Places*, B7019). This leadership has dire consequences, but Buffy's explanation that this

could have happened just as easily to her shows that Faith now commands the same level of respect. Not only has she redeemed herself, she has earned the right to be listened to and followed, something that only happens after she has learned to accept and live with herself.

[38] Though Faith can be considered the bad girl of Buffy season three, her threat to the other female characters is minimized by her obvious moral discrepancies. Her overall demeanor could pose a significant threat to the societal order of the Scoobies, but the fact that she lashes out at individuals and eventually escalates to murder keeps her from gaining respect. This poses some confusion concerning the status of the second-wave feminist and might give the impression that they are inherently bad. However, the character's descent into evil is used to illustrate the danger of becoming obsessed with one's power. The second-wave feminist is not bad, but she walks a careful line as does everyone else. Faith demonstrates what will happen if Buffy gives into her power beyond her duties as a slayer.

[39] By showing Faith's journey back to redemption, the show writers reemphasize the fact that the postmodern feminist is not inherently evil. She is a contradiction to what many perceive to be the natural order of things, but is not predisposed to behave in a manner which many would consider to be "bad." Instead, she operates on the fringes of acceptable societal values. It is through the complete loss of her humanity that Faith goes from this oppositional feminism to complete evil. By giving her a redemption story that does not end in Faith becoming just like Buffy, the show is allowing Faith's femininity to stay true. She is not the third wave feminist. She is a darker and more militant feminism. This is central to her character and is not to be lightly cast

off simply because her morality has suffered. Instead, the viewer should understand the overall story of the character, rather than just the bad parts. Because Faith goes back to the feminism that she knew before, she is reestablishing herself as an individual, rather than as a "normal" girl.

[40] Arriving on the show with the intent of demonstrating who Buffy could be, Faith's character is written into the feminist framework as an example of what women can be. Rather than experience the world through the lens which Buffy views it, the feminist could take her understanding of "girl power" to a level that is much more aggressive and assertive than is currently socially acceptable. However, by writing the character as evil, *Buffy*'s creators have shown that the "bad girl" will never truly be accepted by mainstream society. While she might "redeem" herself for embracing her sexuality, she will never be viewed the same as the girl who conforms to societal norms despite her feminist ideals.

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