Kylie Constantine, "Entry on: Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Series, S04E10): Hush by Douglas Petrie, Joseph Hill Whedon", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/709. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

Douglas Petrie , Joseph Hill Whedon

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Series, S04E10): Hush

United States of America (1999)

TAGS: Bible Cassandra Pandora Philomela





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Series, S04E10): Hush
Studio/Production Company	Mutant Enemy; Kuzui Enterprises; Sandollar Television; 29th Century Fox Television
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1999
First Edition Details	*Hush*. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (S04E10). Directed by Joss Whedon, first aired 14 December 1999 (USA), 44 min.
Running time	44 min
Date of the First DVD or VHS	2003 (DVD, United States)
Official Website	Several fan-based websites dedicated to the Buffy franchise exist. There is no official website.
Available Onllne	hulu.com (accessed: March 19, 2019)
Awards	Nominated for two Emmy Awards: Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series; Outstanding Cinematography for a Single Camera Series (Michael Gershman).
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Comedy films, Fantasy fiction, Horror fiction, Paranormal fiction, Teen films, Television series
Target Audience	Crossover (Young adults)

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Creators



In the photo by Favre1fan93, from right to left, are: Doug Petrie, Marco Ramierz. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY 4.0 (accessed: December 28, 2021).

Douglas Petrie (Screenwriter)

Douglas Petrie is an American television producer, director, and screen writer. According to IMDB, his televisions credits include *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *American Horror Story*, and the Netflix series, *Daredevil*.

Source:

Profile at imdb.com (accessed: March 19, 2019)

Bio prepared by Kylie Constantine, University of New England, kconstan@myune.edu.au



Joss Whedon by Dominick D. Retrieved from flickr.com, licensed

Joseph Hill Whedon , b. 1964 (Director)

Joss Whedon, born in New York, is a screen writer and director, best known as the creator of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (both the film and the tv series) and its spinoff, *Angel*. He is also credited with the sci-fi western television series *Firefly* (2002), *Serenity* (2005) and *The Cabin in the Woods* (2010). He also wrote and directed Marvel superhero films *The Avengers (2012)* and *The Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015),* as well as *Justice League.*

Source:

Profile at imdb.com (accessed: March 19, 2019)

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Additional information

Casting	Sarah Michelle Gellar; Nicholas Brendon; Alyson Hannigan; Anthony Stewart Head; Marc Blucas; James Marsters; Emma Caulfield; Amber Benson; Doug Jones.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Directed by Fran Rubel Kuzui, written by Joss Whedon. Twentieth Century Fox, 1992, 86 mins. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Created by Joss Whedon. Mutant Enemy, 20th Century Fox Television, et al, 1996–2003. *Angel*. Created by David Greenwalt and Joss Whedon. Mutant Enemy, 20th Century Fox Television, et al, 1999–2004. Further spin-offs include numerous comic books, novels, video games, board games, role playing games, and collectible cards, all of which form the fictional universe called “Buffyverse” or “Slayerverse”.
Summary	The series itself follows Buffy Summers, a teenaged vampire-slayer who moves to Sunnydale with her mother in the series premiere. During her high school years (seasons 1–3), she forms strong friendships with fellow school students, Willow and Xander, and her Watcher, Giles, who is the school librarian. Together, the “Scooby Gang” assist Buffy in her slaying duties. By Season Four, Buffy has begun attending the local college, UC-Sunnydale, and the series takes

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a turn as Buffy and her friends begin navigating the complexities of early adulthood. The premise of the show is the ongoing tension between Buffy's desire to be normal and her responsibilities as the Slayer.

Hush begins with Buffy sitting in her psychology class while her professor, Dr. Walsh, delivers a lecture on the difference between language and communication. She falls asleep and dreams that she and Riley, the TA, kiss as part of Dr. Walsh's demonstration to the class. Their kiss is interrupted by a young girl holding a box and singing a rhyme about "The Gentlemen."* Buffy awakes at the end of class and shares an awkward conversation with Riley. She then calls Giles and tells him of her dream, who in turn advises her that it is probably nothing and to enjoy the unusually quiet period.

Other members of the Gang are caught up in a variety of inane conversations and arguments. Anya and Xander are squabbling, Spike is living on Giles's couch, and Giles is attempting to make a date with an out-of-town Girlfriend. Willow attends a Wicca meeting, but is disappointed when her attempts to discuss magic are dismissed in favour of the group's preference to plan a bake sale. Tara, who is shy and struggles to speak, attempts to support Willow, but is quickly silenced by the disapproval of the others.

During the night, a visiting group of fairy-tale like ghouls called The Gentlemen steal the voices of the townsfolk. Depicted as white wisps, these voices are kept in the box Buffy dreamed about the day before. Without their voices, the town is rendered silent, allowing The Gentlemen to cut out the hearts of their victims in silence. The Gentlemen are described as demons who originated from fairy-tales. Dressed in dark suits and accompanied by monkey-like footmen in straight-jackets, The Gentlemen appear to glide instead of walk and have terrifying grimaces on their faces. Their extreme politeness enhances their disturbing behaviour.

The next day, the Gang are distressed by their voicelessness and begin to explore other forms of communication. Civility in Sunnydale begins to erode as panic arises, with looting and public protesting taking place in the town. Street vendors sell writing boards on street corners and the local news declares a public health warning due to severe laryngitis. Giles gives a presentation with visual aides to tell Gang that The Gentlemen require the hearts of seven victims to keep them alive and that the only thing that will kill them is the sound of a

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human voice.

That night, while everyone hides in their homes hoping that The Gentlemen and their minions will pass by, Buffy is out patrolling. She runs into Riley, who is also patrolling as part of the Initiative, a secret military operation located in Sunnydale. The two share their first kiss and then part.

Tara, who has found a spell that will assist in returning everyone's voices, leaves her room to seek out Willow. On the way, The Gentlemen find her and chase after her as she bangs desperately on dorm-room doors. Because of the fear caused by the gruesome murder of a student who had fallen victim to the ghouls the night before, nobody answers. Willow, however, hears the commotion from up the hall and runs with Tara to hide in a nearby laundry room. Trying to barricade the door, the two discover that their magic is stronger when working together and they manage to shift a vending machine in place by telekinesis.

Separately, Buffy and Riley make their way to the bell tower where The Gentlemen have the "voice box". Riley makes his way up the stairs fighting the Minions, while Buffy crashes through a window and joins the fight. The two do not recognise one another until they come face to face. This is a reveal moment, in which they each realise the other fights demons. The fight continues until Buffy becomes pinned down. She sees the box and points it out to Riley. He breaks it and the stolen voices escape. With her voice returned to her, Buffy screams, which causes the heads of The Gentlemen to explode.

The episode ends with two contrasting events the next morning – Tara tells Willow that she has great power, and Buffy and Riley sit and face each other in silence in Buffy's dorm room.

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* "Can't even shout. Can't even cry. The Gentlemen are coming by. Looking in windows, knocking on doors. They need to take seven, and they might take yours. Can't call to Mom. Can't say a word. You're gonna die screaming, but you won't be heard."

Analysis

Hush combines themes common to classical myth and fairy tales to

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explore ideas of voice, identity, and individual empowerment for young women.

The episode also addresses ideas of voice and communication in direct contrast to speaking. In this, the episode parallels Ovid's story of Philomela in the *Metamorphoses* and the depiction of Cassandra in Homer's *Iliad*. *Hush* is a story about silencing and stolen voices, and the recovery of voice by finding other means of being heard––text, gesture, and agency. In this context, however, the Princess (Buffy) is a blurring of Philomela, Procne, and Cassandra. Her prophetic dream goes unheeded, and during the course of the episode she is depicted both as a damsel in distress and a warrior in charge of her own plight. Buffy's use of voice as a weapon against The Gentlemen recalls the power of voice in fairy tales such as The Robber Bridegroom. The distinction being, however, that instead of bearing witness or telling a tale, it is the sound of Buffy's voice that defeats the demons, not the use of rhetoric or logic.

The number seven has significance in many ancient myths and fairy-tales. Seven is sacred to Apollo, there were seven commanders in the army raised to take Thebes by force, Odysseus drifted for seven days before reaching the shores of Calypso's island, and the Pleiades numbered seven. In fairy tales, the Beast gave Beauty seven days to visit with her father, Snow White lived with seven dwarves, and the Wolf and preyed upon Seven Little Kids. The Gentlemen's search for seven hearts correlates with the popularity of this number. Indeed, the Athenian's sent seven young men and seven young women in sacrifice every seven years to Crete to appease Minos, where they would be sent to the Minotaur's labyrinth.

The requirement of consuming seven human hearts for The Gentlemen to survive is also recognisable in the Snow White tale, since the Queen wished to eat her step-daughter's heart to maintain her youth and beauty. Another parallel is found in the box that she orders the Huntsman use to carry the heart back to her, although in *Hush* the box contains stolen human voices. In Greek mythology, Athena rescued Dionysius's heart when he was dismembered by the Titans. Zeus was able to use it to resurrect him. Cannibalism and the consumption of human flesh is also present in the Philomela story.

The Gentlemen's "voice box" also recalls the story of Pandora's box in Hesiod's *Works and Day*s, although in a subversion of the tale. When Pandora opened Epimetheus's box, she allowed death, sickness, and a

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myriad of evils to escape into the world (with only Hope remaining). When Riley breaks the box, he releases the instruments that lead to the destruction of The Gentlemen.

Tales of wit in mythology and fairy tales, in which the heroine is required to find a solution to a problem are reminiscent of Tara's discovery of a spell for the recovery of voice. Ariadne's gift to Theseus of a sword and ball of thread to assist him in surviving the labyrinth is akin to this idea. A similar idea is seen in the Grimm's tale of Jorinda and Joringel, whereby Joringel defeats the Witch and frees Jorinda by carrying a flower impervious to the witch's magical powers. Tara, like the girl lost in the woods, flees while The Gentlemen pursue her, invoking ideas of Little Red Riding Hood and, once again, Philomela (who was dragged into the woods by Tereus). In another parallel with Ovid's tale, Tara and Willow must work together to overcome their foe, just as the sisters, Procne and Philomela work together to defeat Tereus.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Bible Cassandra Pandora Philomela
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Coming of age Communication Fairy tale references Friendship Gender Heroism Humanity Identity Love Relationships Sacrifice

Further Reading

Evans, Tania & Amanda Potter, "Sacrificial Shadows: Tragic Greek Heroines Reinvented for Television in Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Game of Thrones", in Ricardo Apostol, Anastasia Bakogianni, eds., *Locating Classical Receptions on Screen: Masks, Echoes, Shadows*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 43–65.

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