

Activity Idea

Joss Whedon

Writer & Pop Culture Icon

Recommended for Adults

Joseph Hill “Joss” Whedon (b. 1964) is an American screenwriter, director, producer, and comic book writer. His first hit, television’s *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997 – 2003), became a highly acclaimed pop culture sensation, as it followed teenage Buffy Summers and the challenges she faced trying to balance the struggles of high school (and beyond), while simultaneously fighting supernatural forces after being called the “Chosen One” or “Slayer” of her generation. Considered both entertaining and thought-provoking, the series tackled philosophies and issues—including themes of gender and redemption—which have been studied in-depth by academics, who have even offered “Buffy Studies” college courses.

Additionally, the show spawned a spin-off, *Angel* (1999 – 2004), as well as a myriad of novels, video games, and comic books. Among the latter is the limited comic series *Fray* (2003), which is set in the far future of the “Buffyverse” and involves the calling of the first Slayer in centuries.

Whedon would go on to create several other television series, the next of which was 2002’s short-lived, western-infused, science-fiction series *Firefly*. Although it failed to find an audience in its initial run and was canceled after just one season, it went on to amass an enthusiastic online fanbase and the story was ultimately continued in 2005’s feature film *Serenity*. That same year, Whedon wrote the first arc (issues #1 – 24) in the third volume of Marvel’s *Astonishing X-Men* comic book series. No stranger to writing superheroes, another milestone in Whedon’s career came when he was tapped to write and direct two installments of the hugely successful Marvel Cinematic Universe, *The Avengers* (2012) and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015).

eBooks and Essays:

Joss Whedon: The Biography by Amy Pascale on Hoopla tinyurl.com/tghmz8g

Fray: Future Slayer (Issues #1-8) on Hoopla tinyurl.com/ycbgv8tz

Astonishing X-Men Vol. 1: Gifted (Issues #1-6) on Hoopla tinyurl.com/suhq7zx

Serenity Found: More Unauthorized Essays on Joss Whedon’s Firefly Universe by Jane Espenson on Hoopla tinyurl.com/y853d7yo

Buffy-inspired Academic Essays on Gale Literature Resource Center tinyurl.com/yblta45d



Documentaries:

Showrunners: The Art of Running a TV Show on Kanopy tinyurl.com/vjtnodi

Firefly, Blake's 7, and Political Rebellion on Kanopy tinyurl.com/rkbu4s6

Screenwriting 101: Mastering the Art of Story, a 24-episode series on Kanopy
tinyurl.com/wap56xg

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