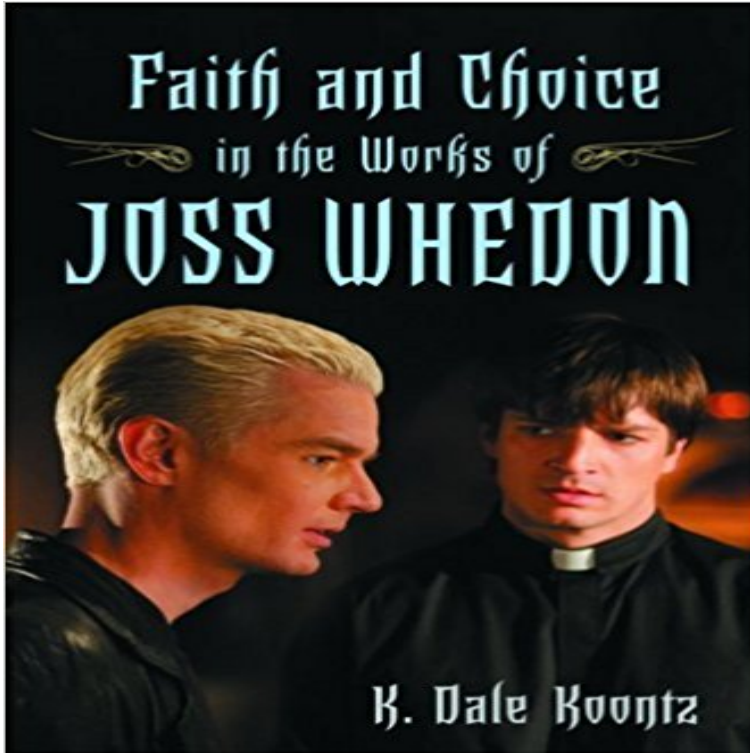


## Faith and Choice in the Works of Joss Whedon



Joss Whedon once identified himself as an angry, hard-line atheist who is nevertheless fascinated by the concept of devotion. While organized religion seems to hold no satisfactory answers for Whedon, his dedication to exploring the meanings of faith and belief can be seen in many of the characters he has created for such works as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Firefly*, *Serenity*, and *Fray*. This work examines a variety of Whedon's characters and discusses what can be learned from their struggles and discoveries regarding religion and belief. Part One focuses on the characters' search for purpose, revealing how Dawn, Spike, and Angel attempt to define the meaning of their lives in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spin-off, *Angel*. Part Two focuses on family, examining the unconventional family dynamic in Whedon's comic book miniseries *Fray* and television series *Firefly*. Part Three centers around the concept of redemption, using *Angel's* Doyle, *Firefly's* Malcolm Reynolds and Shepherd Book, and *Buffy's* Faith Lehane to examine the characters' search for salvation and their own acceptance of their past actions. Finally, Part Four focuses on the harmful potential of religious zealotry, revealing the negative aspects of absolute belief through *Firefly's* River and *Buffy's* Caleb. A primary source guide follows the main text, providing the writer, director, and air date of each television episode, along with publication data for Whedon's print works, including the in-publication Season 8 comic books for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

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