

= Darla (Buffy the Vampire Slayer) =

Darla is a recurring fictional character created by Joss Whedon and played by Julie Benz in the first , second , and fifth seasons of the American supernatural television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer . The character later appeared in the Buffy spin @-@ off series Angel , making at least one appearance in every season . She made her last television appearance in 2004 , appearing as a special guest star in the fifth and final season of Angel .

Darla is introduced in " Welcome to the Hellmouth " , the first episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer , in 1997 . It is revealed early on that she is a vampire , initially in league with the Master , Buffy Summers ' primary antagonist in the first season . Darla 's backstory is disclosed in the episode " Angel " , where it is revealed that she is Angel 's sire (the one who turned him into a vampire) and former longtime lover . The character appears in numerous flashback episodes , until she receives a significantly expanded role in Angel . In Angel , she is resurrected by the evil law firm Wolfram & Hart in an attempt to weaken Angel . She later becomes intertwined in many of the story arcs in the second and third season . Darla becomes pregnant , a unique occurrence for a vampire . She sacrifices herself in order to give birth to her and Angel 's human son Connor , ending her run on the series . However , Darla continues to appear in flashback episodes during the next two seasons .

The character was well @-@ reviewed by television critics , with Eric Goldman of IGN saying " Not even dying (twice !) could keep Darla from being an important part of the story behind Buffy the Vampire Slayer and the spinoff series Angel . "

= = Conception and casting = =

Julie Benz initially auditioned for the role of Buffy Summers , but that later went to Sarah Michelle Gellar , who had previously won the part of Cordelia Chase . Benz was offered the small role of the vampire Darla in the pilot episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer . Her performance was so well @-@ received that her character appeared in a few more episodes . In an interview with TheTVAddict.com , Benz said of her casting : " I was supposed to die in the pilot , but about halfway through the pilot Joss Whedon was like , ' We 're giving you a name and we 're not going to kill you . ' And he did that for a while until it finally came time to kill me , and kill me , and kill me and killed [sic] me . " She later went on to say :

For me , I was a new actor to Los Angeles , didn ? t know the TV business very well so I was just excited to work and play a vampire . I had no clue what I was going to do or how I was going to be scary . Until that is , they put the vampire makeup on me and I went into the trailer and smiled , which I thought was creepy . Joss always said he was intrigued that someone who looked like me and talked like me was like the scariest vampire ever . That 's what he wanted , my sweet voice and demeanour until all of a sudden I 'm just this vicious vampire . "

Darla is first killed in the seventh episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer . In that episode , it is revealed that Darla was once romantically involved with Angel and that she made him a vampire . Angel stakes her through the heart . Benz was asked to return to the role three years later , but not on Buffy the Vampire Slayer . Joss Whedon wanted her to appear on the spin @-@ off Angel , which focused on Angel 's adventures in Los Angeles . Benz said in an interview :

I was shocked , really . When they sent me the script [for Angel] I kept asking , ' Where 's Darla ? ' I remember calling my agent asking , ' Are you sure they want me for this episode because I can 't seem to find me ? ' And then I get to the last page and there I am ... naked in a box . Awesome . It was exciting .

When asked in an interview with Robert Canning of IGN about how she felt about being asked to come on to Angel after previously being killed off , Benz commented :

I was shocked . I just thought once you poof 'd , you poof 'd ! I thought that was it . So when they threw it out to me that I was coming back ... They didn 't tell me they were bringing her back to life . They just sent me the script for the season finale for season one of Angel , when they rose me from the dead . I was reading the script , and half way through , Darla still hadn 't shown up .

Benz went on to add ,

I was like , ' Alright ... ' I get three quarters of the way through and I think , ' Maybe they sent me the wrong script ... ? ' And then I get to the last page , and I was like , ' Oh my god ! I can 't believe this ! This is so cool ! ' At that time I 'd been committed to another project too . We didn 't even know if I was going to be available or not . But it all ended up working out .

Darla appears in twenty Angel episodes , mainly as an evil antagonist . The character is known for dying the most in the Buffy The Vampire Slayer franchise . Benz later emphasized :

I just didn 't know how it was going to happen . So when they sent me the script [for my last episode of Angel] ? which I basically had to sign my life away to read ? I was sitting in my trailer and I just started to cry . I thought it was such a beautiful ending , it was the payoff and just really brought her whole life kind of to that one moment . So I was really upset my last day of filming because I really thought it was over to me .

= = Characterization = =

Darla is presented in the series as a wicked vampire with , as Benz put it , generally " pure " intentions . In an interview with TheTVAddict , Benz said :

Darla 's just misunderstood . Her intentions are pure , they 're just kind of warped . From her perspective ? first she has to eat ? she just happens to eat people ! Second , she was in love with Angel , and I always viewed Darla as the jilted ex @-@ wife that could never get over being dumped . If you really look at her , you can have sympathy and empathy for her . In the beginning of her life she was a prostitute , Joss and I actually talked about that a lot , that she was probably abused growing up . She did what she needed to do to survive , she just lacked the people skills .

Achieving Darla 's look was a struggle for Benz . She said : " Taking that makeup off , it was like having six layers of skin ripped off your face every time . It was miserable and the contact lenses were terrible . I don 't wear contacts and I don 't know how people do it , sticking things in their eyeballs all the time . " The character 's sense of fashion is vital to understanding her past . Benz says Darla is " dressed to the nines " in every time period in which she lives , and " she fully goes after a certain look . If she 's going to be living during the Boxer Rebellion time , she 's got the big Gibson Girl hair style and the beautiful kimono @-@ style clothes . " Benz points out that in the Buffy pilot episode , Darla ? attempting to dress like a high school student ? exaggerates it with a " little twist " , wearing a Catholic schoolgirl uniform instead . " I think I influenced Darla fashion @-@ wise in the second season of Angel where she was a little more classic @-@ looking and tailored , " Benz says , explaining she collaborated with the costume designer to transition Darla into a " hipper look " when she became a vampire again . Darla shockingly becomes pregnant in the third season of Angel . In an interview with the BBC , Benz admitted :

Yeah , I really felt at that point she was pretty strung out . Her whole world was rocked . She never thought she could get pregnant and then all of a sudden she 's carrying this child and she 's experiencing this soul for the first time in four hundred years . [There 's] the realisation that as soon as the baby 's born the soul 's going to go away , and it 's the first time she really experienced true love , so she was going through a lot emotionally . I just didn 't think that she would have time to really think about how she looked . I don 't think it was a priority , and so for me as an actor it was important that I reveal that . Not get caught up in my own vanity as an actress , and portray the character as where she really was .

In an interview with the BBC , Benz described Darla as strong : " I have an amazing stunt double , Lisa Hoyle who looks exactly like me . She 's just brilliant and fearless and she does about 90 per cent of the stunts . I think part of the element of Darla is how strong she is and how fierce she can be and Lisa definitely adds to that element . I would be doing huge disservice to Darla if I didn 't allow her to do the work that she does and to help add to that element that 's so important to Darla , which is her strength . "

= = Storylines = =

Darla is born in the late 16th century in the British Isles . Her birth name is never revealed in either

series , and Darla herself eventually forgets it . As a young prostitute , she emigrates to the Virginia Colony in North America and becomes independently wealthy but also contracts a fatal case of syphilis . By 1609 , Darla lies dying in the luxurious house she owns . She scoffs at a " priest " who comes to her deathbed before he reveals his true identity : the Master , leader of an elite cult of vampires known as the Order of Aurelius . Darla despises the clergy and religion , a trait that follows her as a vampire . The Master turns her into a vampire and renames her " Darla , " meaning " dear one " in early modern English (" darling ") .

Darla spends four centuries torturing innocent people , often accompanied by Angel (until his soul is restored) , before showing up in Sunnydale . Her first appearance is in " Welcome to the Hellmouth " , the first episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer , which aired in 1997 . She breaks into Sunnydale High School with a student who goes there . Darla first toys with the youth , then her face morphs into that of a vampire and she bites the boy . Darla later appears in the episode " The Harvest " , where she participates in the ascension of the Master , a very old and powerful vampire . Darla 's role in the series is more prominent in the episode " Angel " , where it is revealed that she is Angel 's sire and former lover . Darla bites an unsuspecting Joyce Summers (Buffy 's mother) , making it look as if Angel did it . Angel eventually kills her . She later appears in numerous flashbacks , illuminating her involvement not only with Angel , but also with Spike .

Darla 's role in the franchise increased dramatically after her resurrection by the law firm Wolfram & Hart in the final episode of Angel 's first season , titled " To Shanshu in L.A. " In the second season opener , " Judgement " , Wolfram & Hart lawyers Lindsey McDonald and Lilah Morgan question Darla about her past . She talks of how she can feel Angel , and slowly her memory begins to return . In the episode " First Impressions " , Angel begins having romantic dreams about his maker . The dreams sap his strength . In " Dear Boy " , Angel is shocked to see Darla walking the streets . When he tells his partners , Wesley Wyndam Pryce and Cordelia Chase , they think he is starting to lose his sanity . During the course of a stakeout by Angel Investigations of a woman suspected of having an affair , Angel confronts the woman , who looks exactly like Darla . She claims she is DeEtta Kramer . When she runs away from him , she walks outside into the sunlight , meaning Darla has not only been resurrected , but is now human . However , Darla and Lindsey 's plan to convert Angel back to evil fails . In the end , Wolfram & Hart bring in Drusilla to make Darla a vampire again after her syphilis returns and she starts to die . Ironically , she is turned back into a vampire as she accepts her fate after a failed attempt by Angel to save her . Drusilla and Darla unsuccessfully attack Angel and leave Los Angeles .

Knowing that Angel has been cursed so that if he ever experiences pure happiness , he will once again lose his soul , Darla later returns and sleeps with him , but her plot fails ; being with her only brings Angel despair , as well as providing him with a new understanding of his role as a champion . Their one @-@ night stand leads to an unexpected development for the both of them : Darla reappears in season three , pregnant with Angel 's child , despite the fact that vampires cannot normally conceive . Her pregnancy allows Darla to experience emotions that had previously been lost to her in the presence of the human soul of her unborn child . Admitting that creating life with Angel was the only good thing they ever did together , Darla makes sure Angel will relay that to their child before she stakes herself through the heart , sacrificing her life so their son , Connor , can be born . Darla turns to dust , but the baby remains . Darla later appears as a spirit , trying to persuade her son in an effort to save him from the renegade deity Jasmine 's manipulations , as the latter 's actions are bringing Connor into the same dark path both Darla and Angel had taken .

= = Reception = =

The character of Darla was well @-@ received by Eric Goldman of IGN . He said : " As the very first character seen on Buffy the Vampire Slayer , Julie Benz instantly made an impression as the vampiress Darla . For the next 8 television seasons , she would get to show many different facets of the role , as not even dying (twice !) could keep Darla from being an important part of the story and mythos behind Buffy the Vampire Slayer and the spinoff series Angel , the latter of which allowed Benz to greatly expand her character . "

= = Appearances = =

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Darla appears as a guest in 5 episodes

Season 1 (1997) : " Welcome to the Hellmouth " , " The Harvest " , " Angel "

Season 2 (1997 ? 98) : " Becoming (Part 1) "

Season 5 (2000 ? 01) : " Fool for Love "

Angel

Darla appears as a guest in 20 episodes

Season 1 (1999 ? 2000) : " The Prodigal " , " Five by Five " , " To Shanshu in L.A. "

Season 2 (2000 ? 01) : " Judgment " , " First Impressions " , " Untouched " , " Dear Boy " , " Darla " , " The Trial " , " Reunion " , " Redefinition " , " Reprise " , " Epiphany "

Season 3 (2001 ? 02) : " Heartthrob " , " That Vision Thing " , " Offspring " , " Quickening " , " Lullaby "

Season 4 (2002 ? 03) : " Inside Out "

Season 5 (2003 ? 04) : " The Girl in Question "