**‘Perfect Score’ scores average**

By Laura Sass
Executive Editor

Being a vampire slayer isn’t as glamorous as it sounds. Sure, there’s the thrill of saving the world every once in a while and it’s handy to have super strength and enhanced healing powers, but it can get messy. Plus, you don’t get paid.

In season five of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar) must decide what being the slayer really means. Is she truly a hero or is she simply a killer? How much of the substance that makes up a slayer is rooted in darkness? To discover this, Buffy goes on a season-long quest into the origin, history and mythology of her predecessors.

In one of the standout episodes of the season, *Fool for Love*, Buffy confronts former nemesis and current “chipped” vampire Spike (James Marsters). In his long and bloody career, Spike managed to kill two slayers. “Why did they love that battle?” Buffy asks of Spike. “What made that one different?”

Viewers are treated to a journey into Spike’s past, in which his surprising past and transformation into vampire and killer are revealed. After some truly amazing fighting scenes that switch from Spike’s fights with past slayers (one in the Boxer Rebellion and one in 1970 New York City) to his demonstrations with Buffy, Spike gives her the answer. “They lost because they wanted to,” he tells her. “They wanted to die. The only reason you’ve lasted so long, Slayer, is because you’ve got friends and family. But one day, you’ll want it too.”

Shaken by this revelation, Buffy goes on a series of other trials and searches to discover her slayer identity, but it is interrupted midseason by the death of her mother.

In what is perhaps the most moving Buffy episode and what certainly the best portrayal of grief there has ever been on television, the entire crew, from the actors and the writers to the cameramen and stunt men, produce an amazingly deep and moving episode. In the aptly named *The Body*, Buffy discovers her mother on the couch, eyes wide open, face pale.

The first quarter of the episode is just Buffy with her dead mother. She calls 911, tries to give her mother CPR and cracks one of her ribs in the process. The paramedics arrive, work for barely a minute and inform Buffy that her mother is dead. Buffy slowly walks around the house, vomits and waits. Although the entire scene is heart wrenching, perhaps the saddest part comes when Giles (Anthony Stewart Head), who had only been told to come to the house, sees Buffy’s mother on the couch and rushes toward her. Buffy follows and says “No, no. Stop. We’re not supposed to touch the body.” The look on her face as she utters the horrifying words is truly a testament to Gellar’s superb acting.

Almost as outstanding are the performances of the Scooby gang, especially Alyson Hannigan as Willow. The four members express grief in diverse and poignant ways. Xander (Nicholas Brendon) punches a hole through the wall, Willow focuses on mundane things (in this case, her outfit, which she changes six times) in order to distract herself and Dawn (Michelle Trachtenberg) simply refuses to believe it.

In the season finale *The Gift*, in which Buffy must face a hell god after losing her mother and having her sister kidnapped, Buffy finally realizes that being the slayer means being able to help the ones she loves. She makes the ultimate sacrifice in order to save the world and dies.

The season overall is a bit pointless (producer and writer Marti Noxon on *Intervention*) to fabulous (creator and writer Joss Whedon on *The Body*). Although the last image of season five is Buffy’s tombstone, the sensitive viewer may be assured that she will slay again, in seasons six, seven and maybe, one day, in the Buffy movie.

‘Buffy’ Season five DVD packs a punch

By Cara Latham
Staff Writer

The SAT’s are a reality for almost every high school student who plans to attend college. In *The Perfect Score*, the popular sentiments towards the practically mandatory test are reflected in the plot of six diverse teenagers who intend to steal the answers to the tests they dub it, “suck a– test,” which has left students all over the nation disappointed and, in some cases, rejected from their college of choice.

When was the last time you actually heard a high school student say that he or she liked taking the test or that he or she thought it was fair? While this movie raises many good points about the actual reliability and justification of the SAT’s, it doesn’t involve a plot that is extraordinarily surprising or different from any other teen movie.

For the most part, the movie was simply predictable.

Six teens, who have different interests and different reasons for needing to do well on the test, team up after the main character and his best friend come up with the idea that they should break into a building in Princeton, N.J., and steal the answers. In the process of planning, they get help from a rebellious teen girl who has connections because of her father’s position and her job in the building, who is in it just for the fun. Also along for the ride are a basketball player who is pressured by his mother despite his aspirations of playing in the NBA and a studious girl who has the second highest G.P.A. in her class but needs to do exceptionally well on the SAT’s. But, last not least, there is the stoner, who adds most of the film’s comedic activity, who also happens to be a whiz with computers. Sound typical? It is.

As the film progresses, the typical complications to the students’ plan centers situations arise, and as usual, the opposites attract each other, leading to the typical teen-movie romance. However, the complications add a bit of reality to the situation and, as most movies of the sort end, there is a realization of what is actually relevant in life.

Despite its predictability, the movie took on a subject that has never really been portrayed in a movie before. Indeed, many movies have dealt with the issue of cheating, but none has ever focused on the actual SAT’s as the motive. Besides, it makes a statement that the SAT’s (which the main character declares an empty acronym) might be so unfair that they will hinder even the future of a top student. If you are a fan of teen movies, this might be a fresh innovation to the genre. For others, it is particularly amusing at times and can offer quite a few good laughs.

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