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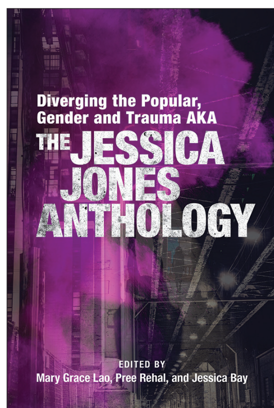

DIVERGING THE POPULAR, GENDER AND TRAUMA AKA THE JESSICA JONES ANTHOLOGY

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12

Code Word, “I Love You”: Sisterhood, Friendship, and Trauma

Tracey Thomas

When viewers are first introduced to Jessica Jones, the titular character in Netflix’s original series *Marvel’s Jessica Jones* (2015), she speaks of a young girl, Hope, who has run away from home to be with a man: “She’s either an idiot in love, or she’s being conned. Which amount to pretty much the same thing” (ep. 1.01 “AKA Ladies’ Night”). To Jessica, any kind of love—here, the romantic kind—is something to be scoffed at and pitied. This is not limited to romantic love, however; Jessica, seems to have little interest or care for any kind of definition of “love”: romantic, platonic, familial. Her romantic entanglements are often recreational, her platonic friends are few, and her family is absent. However, Jessica makes an exception for one person: her best friend, Patricia “Patsy” Walker, or “Trish,” as she comes to be known in the show. Jessica and Trish are opposites in many ways, but in others, very similar. This chapter explores both Jessica’s and Trish’s journeys from victims to empowered females throughout the first season of *Jessica Jones*. Importantly, this Netflix series demonstrates that a relationship between two women can exist to support and empower both parties without reducing their relationship to merely being about men and the men in their lives. While these men are catalysts for the women’s abuse, it is also the men and their actions that galvanize Jessica and Trish into a stronger platonic relationship that becomes central to their characters and a foundation to *Marvel’s Jessica Jones* as a whole.

This chapter is broken into three parts, with each part exploring concepts of sisterhood, friendship, and trauma, as well as how these connect the two women. Taken chronologically, the first part establishes how Jessica and Trish met as young teens, and how their respective traumas in their youth

shaped their budding friendship and sowed the seeds of the sisterhood that would continue up to the events described in the next part of this chapter: the immediate backstory of Jessica and Kilgrave,[1] as well as Jessica's trauma. This part establishes Jessica and Trish as the characters we see on the television show, demonstrating how trauma tests their friendship and bonds. The final part demonstrates how Jessica's and Trish's previous traumas create a strong sisterly bond that perseveres beyond Jessica's trauma with Kilgrave and Trish's trauma with Will Simpson. This chapter explores their journey of self-discovery and their efforts to overcome their traumas to become stronger women and better friends, not to mention "heroes." This culminates in the final episode when Jessica says those all-important words, "I love you," to the most important person in her life: Trish Walker.

AKA: The Early Years

Debuting in 2015, *Jessica Jones* was part of a wave of successful television shows featuring Marvel characters that included *Daredevil* (2014), *Luke Cage* (2016), *Iron Fist* (2017), and *The Defenders* (2017). The show is based on the comic series *Alias*, written by Brian Bendis in 2001—a four-chapter volume that explores a meta-human with super strength and the ability to fly. The protagonist, Jessica Jones, is a conflicted character who bounces between presenting herself as Jewel, a superhero replete with costume and secret identity, and then later as Jessica Jones, a private investigator who does not consider herself a "superhero." The Netflix adaptation kept the character's super strength but not her flying abilities; the result roots the television show in a somewhat fantastical version of New York City without abandoning a sense of realism altogether. According to showrunner Melissa Rosenberg and Marvel coordinator Jeph Loeb, a core concept for translating *Alias* to television was this choice to root the narrative "in [the] world that [they] created of Hell's Kitchen and New York City" (Radish 2015). This ensures that, for viewers, Jessica is "a real woman with real problems," and the show "is about paying [her] rent and getting the next client" (Radish 2015). Furthermore, Rosenberg felt it was important that Jessica be someone who she "wanted to be friends with. It was important that there be somebody in [her] life who made it all look easy, but [who did] not necessarily [feel] that way" (Radish 2015). In this case, Rosenberg succeeded, as others have noted that "[Jessica], as a person, becomes more relatable due to the practical nature of the title character and her relatable 'real world' problems" (Kreuze 2016, 36).

Yet, female protagonists in television, especially as main characters, often suffer from being treated as sexualized objects or props for male characters, and therefore, their relatability toward the female sex can significantly drop as there is a lack of connection between audience and character. In a study conducted by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, Dr. Martha Lauzen (2016) noted some interesting facts regarding women and their onscreen presence. While mostly limiting her analysis to cinema rather than television, Lauzen did note that gender stereotypes were prevalent in the top-grossing films of 2015, and that moviegoers were more likely to know the occupation of male characters than female characters. This is mirrored in *Jessica Jones* with the immediately recognizable careers of Will Simpson, Luke Cage, and Detective Clemons. However, *Jessica Jones* equalizes this dynamic by including characters such as Trish, Jeri Hogarth, and Claire Temple, who have very recognizable careers and whose work is directly alluded to throughout the show. The choice of casting ensures that Jessica is understood to be the protagonist, but the ensemble narrative that plays out over the thirteen episodes of season 1 is not just her own, as Trish, Jeri, and even Luke are given overarching plots that connect with Jessica's. Therefore, while "females comprised 22% of all clearly identifiable *protagonists*" in Lauzen's study (2016, 2; emphasis in original), this number does not accurately reflect *Jessica Jones*, whose protagonists (with the exception of Luke Cage) are all female. Furthermore, according to Loeb, *Jessica Jones* was one of the first properties Netflix developed for the Marvel Cinematic Universe (Radish 2015). The fact that Netflix planned the Marvel television shows around Jessica first, combined with the popularity of this female-driven cast, hopefully means that Lauzen's 22 per cent figure will soon grow.

When *Jessica Jones* was still in development with ABC and not Netflix, Rosenberg contemplated using Carol Danvers, who is one of Jessica's best friends in her *Alias* graphic, in the series. However, the shift from ABC to Netflix also meant a shift in narrative, which in turn resulted in greater exploration of the definition of heroism and of Jessica's journey of discovery. Furthermore, with Carol Danvers receiving a film of her own in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the addition of Trish Walker "was better [than using Carol]," noted Rosenberg (Watts 2015). She continued in an interview with IGN: "this was because [Jessica's] best friend was not someone with powers. . . . [Rather, she was] a great mirror for her" (Watts 2015). Some of Carol Danvers's origin story made its way into the Netflix adaptation of Trish

Walker, however obliquely. In the comics, Carol was an alcoholic after experiencing a traumatic pregnancy while being psychically manipulated and raped by a man who pretended to be her partner (Kaveney 2008, 81). In conjunction with Trish, as a young child actress she participated in arson as a way to gain attention, and through the emotional manipulation of her mother, he engaged in substance abuse. As such, incorporating parts of Carol Danvers's origin into the character of Trish Walker helps to equalize the relationship between the two by bringing attention to the childhood traumas that both Jessica and Trish experienced. By beginning their stories and trauma together in childhood, Jessica and Trish are able to share an interesting connection that forms the basis of their friendship.

Perhaps their traumas and Jessica's and Trish's coping methods relate back to Jessica being "relatable," in contrast to most comic book characters. Laura Figueroa (2015) has found that female characters in television typically fall into two archetypes: in the first they can only be successful, independent, frigid, and strong, and in the second they are emotional, loving, and passive. There is no room for women characters to be all-encompassing, dynamic characters, as they must fall into just one of the two categories Figueroa explores. Jessica appears as strong and independent while maintaining a certain emotionally frigidity and enjoying a (marginally) successful career.[2] Never is she loving or passive! These all-encompassing identities, and Jessica's status as a multifaceted woman, however, are something that the show explores through its "AKA" episode titles, a nod to Bendis's original graphic run. When we first meet Jessica, we know that it is after her trauma and that she is in a vulnerable state of trying to rediscover herself. She is not sure who she is, as the woman she was previously is not someone she can go back to—that woman is gone. However, watching her as she struggles through her daily life and works to establish her identity yet again, we note that at her core, she wants to do something good, to contribute to the world. But in attempting to do so, she must overcome a host of personality issues (Radish 2015). While many "superhero" stories focus on self-discovery (and *Jessica Jones* is of course one such story), the Netflix show is more than just a "psychological thriller first and a superhero show second" (Radish 2015). It is also about sisterhood, friendship, and female support in the face of trauma.

These multi-faceted explorations into who Jessica Jones is play a central role in the Netflix narrative, and they are key to showing the growth that Jessica's character experiences over the course of the television show. Loeb

explained in an interview that the choice to add "AKA" to the title of each episode was an attempt to imply that every single person (whether viewer or character) has an "also known as" in their life (Radish 2015). In other words, people often have a hidden, secret life that others are not always privileged to see and experience. Yet, we as the audience get to experience Jessica's "AKA" while watching the show, particularly through her relatability. Even more importantly, Jessica's storyline in season 1 focuses on who she is, showing that she always has been a hero, regardless of whether or not she puts on a costume to fight crime (Kaveney 2008, 72–3). Of course, it does take her some time to get there, stuck as she is in the idea that she is an either-or woman—either a superhero or not. However, as "[she] cannot forgive herself for the simple fact that she is a normal human being at the same time as being someone who can fight and fly . . . she sees contradictions where none exist" (Kaveney 2008, 78). The audience is in the same limbo as Jessica, attempting to discover who she is and what she is meant to be. Eventually, the audience—and Jessica—will discover a female superhero who is comfortably strong in her body and sexuality *and* is also vulnerable in love, who uses humour *and* fights injustice, who is inclusive and compassionate *and* decisive and deadly (Cocca 2014, 219).

"I Really Want to Be Your Friend"

Viewers of Netflix's *Jessica Jones* eventually learn how Jessica and Trish became friends, as well as the details of their initial traumas, through a series of non-chronological flashbacks. In episode 1.08, we learn how Jessica's family died: a car collision. Her trauma is framed by the argument between Jessica, her parents, and her younger brother Phil that occurred as the car collided with the back of the truck, and it is compounded by the typical family relationship leading up to the collision.[3] In the lead-up to the collision, Jessica argues with her brother, calling him various names in annoyance for breaking their shared Game Boy. These everyday familial images are juxtaposed against the horrific nature of Jessica's trauma. Jessica loses everything in a moment of her (assumed) making, becoming an orphan and carrying the guilt that her teenage angst was the cause of her family's death.

In comparison, the audience's first impressions of teenage Trish are that of a young Disney-style starlet who, as heard in a whispered conversation between her and her mother, Dorothy, passed out and set fire to a tablecloth in a nightclub. The only connection between Trish and Jessica at this point is that they are in the same class in school; they have not spoken, and they are

certainly not friends—in fact, they do not yet know each other. Foreshadowing the girls' future as best friends is the *It's Patsy!* theme song. Running in the background in the hospital room, the song announces, "I really want to be your friend, I hope this day will never end, it's Patsy! It's Patsy! I really want to be a friend with you!"[4] Although the first true meeting between the two girls is engineered by Dorothy Walker as a photo op for the *It's Patsy!* show, Trish and Jessica's initial impressions are not necessarily fully negative or awkward, as it is Trish who notices Jessica is awake after she makes a callous remark about Jessica's family. This suggests that Trish, who is already unhappy being a teen star, has pushed aside her own unhappiness to empathize with someone else.

It is not until later in their linear timeline, in episode 1.11, that the audience learns of Trish's trauma, which extends beyond substance abuse and (accidental) arson. Shortly after moving in with the Walker family, Jessica overhears an argument between Trish and her mother regarding Trish's status as Patsy and Trish's hatred of playing someone she is not. The argument escalates to Dorothy assaulting Trish with a People's Choice Award, leaving her bleeding. Not only is Trish's trauma a result of physical violence, but there is also the implication of her mother mismanaging her as a child star and abusing her image to make "Patsy" a brand. After constantly reiterating in the argument, "I'm sick of all this Patsy shit. . . . I'm not Patsy!" (ep. 1.11, "AKA I've Got the Blues"), Trish experiences an identity crisis. Her trauma now stems, in addition to physical abuse, from a loss of identity and self, just as Jessica's very identity undergoes a similar metamorphosis. Furthermore, it is this scene in episode 1.11 that shows Jessica first using her super strength inadvertently. Yet, neither girl is ready to accept her new lot in life; Jessica refuses to let Dorothy know about her increased strength to avoid the same exploitation that Trish experiences, and Trish does not want her personal identity and imperfect image to be made public. At this point in their lives, Jessica is physically and mentally stronger than Trish and superior in her place (despite being an orphan), gloating, "If you tell anybody [about my powers], I'm gonna tell everybody that you're a pathetic victim of child abuse. They'll make a Lifetime movie about it: *Stolen Childhood: The Patsy Walker Story.* I'd be saving you" (ep. 1.11). Horrified at the potential loss of her carefully constructed identity, Trish succumbs to Jessica's blackmail, but with a caveat: "You don't tell anyone and you don't try to save me" (ep. 1.11).

However, it is not until Jessica *actually* saves Trish that the two girls begin to solidify their friendship into something deeper. When Trish's mother manhandles her, and then body-shames her by saying, "the camera adds ten pounds. . . . You want them to call you *Fatsy*?" (ep. 1.11), it is Jessica who barges in and tells Dorothy to stop, despite Trish's reservations:

> Trish: You promised not to save me.
>
> Jessica: I can't help it. [*Throws Dorothy into a wall, demonstrating her strength.*]
>
> Trish: Now she knows.
>
> Jessica: Good. (ep. 1.11)

Jessica sacrifices the safety of her anonymity, something she felt strongly about in the light of Dorothy's exploitation, to save Trish from something she was being forced into—in this case, becoming Patsy. By giving up something precious to her, Jessica begins to reassemble her identity, just as Trish re-evaluates hers.

Ladies' Men: Kilgrave and Simpson

Although Jessica's choice to save Trish from her mother established a bond between the two girls, it resulted in an act of violence. When Bendis created Jessica Jones, he made sure that the audience knew that something bad had happened to her in the past. This is a reflection of the story's complexity, because it shows that Jessica does not think of herself as a hero (Kaveney 2008). The violent actions taken against Jessica, including those aimed specifically at women and resulting in trauma, become facilitators of Jessica's narrative and identity, thereby creating conflict. This is problematic, as it requires a traumatic event *in addition to* the earlier one that established Jessica as a "superhero."

Kaveney notes that the original *Alias* run was about who Jessica came to be, but this first depended on her becoming crime-fighting Jewel, someone who is "always pretty and always bright and cheerful," with her "costume of virginal white, sky blue and pastel pink" representing an innocent age or way of looking at things (2008, 71). Jewel is someone who desperately wants to save people, and this is reflected in her name, costume, and ideology. This also happens in the television series between Jessica and Trish. In episode

1.05, Jessica is selling hoagies on a New York street corner when a little girl walks by her, ignoring the fact that her father has stopped at the crosswalk to look at his cell phone. The girl continues into the street, where a taxi blares its horn and attempts to brake. Jessica, witnessing this, gasps and steps in front of the girl with her hands outstretched and placed on the hood of the vehicle, stopping it completely. Jessica feels appreciated when the little girl says, “the sandwich saved me. Thank you.” This pivotal moment in Jessica’s life brings her to Trish, who in a nod to the *Alias* comics holds up Jessica’s superhero costume, only for Jessica to respond, “The only place anyone is wearing that is trick-or-treating or as part of some kinky role-playing scenario” (ep. 1.05, “AKA The Sandwich Saved Me”). Although not fully committed to the idea of assuming her role as a superhero, she knows that it is something that Trish wishes she could do. So when Trish asks, “So you’re really gonna do it? You’re gonna be a hero?” Jessica replies only with, “We’ll see” (ep. 1.05). The television show often alludes to Jessica assuming the worst of humanity—especially when referring to being “saved” and through her dubious belief in heroism. Much of this revolves around the idea that Jessica thinks people only “save” others when there is something in it for them (particularly seen in episodes 1.04, 1.05, and 1.10, where she complains about the state of people, heroes, heroism, and her own understanding of it; but most notably in episode 1.11, when Jessica says, “Humanity sucks and they don’t deserve saving”). The television show therefore contrasts Bendis’s Jessica/Jewel, who happily went about becoming a superhero pre-Killgrave, to Rosenberg’s Jessica, who is only interested in saving people on *her* terms and without hiding her identity or having her alter ego.

Of course, Jessica only considers becoming a superhero because Trish so clearly wants to be one herself, as the establishment of their teenage friendship had constantly revolved around the concept of “saving” Trish. At the beginning of episode 1.05, the audience learns of Jessica’s past, just before she met Kilgrave. After quitting her day job, where she uses her fledgling detective skills to blackmail her fraudulent boss, Jessica meets Trish at a bar for drinks. She humiliates a man hitting on Trish at a punching arcade game, resulting in Trish lamenting the misuse of Jessica’s abilities:

> Trish: You could use your abilities for something more useful. I mean, you can fly . . . well, jump.

> Jessica: It's more like guided falling. [*Pauses*.] Hey, I have an idea. Why don't you put on a cape and go run around New York?
>
> Trish: You know I would if I could.
>
> Jessica: I don't get you. You have money, looks, a radio show, creepy if not adoring fans, and you're a freaking household name. What more do you want?
>
> Trish: To save the world, of course.
>
> Jessica: You wanna be a hero? I'll show you how to be a hero. [*To everybody in the bar*] Shots on Trish Walker, everybody! (ep. 1.05, "AKA The Sandwich Saved Me")

Jessica's response is about diminishing the idea that superheroes are selfless or altruistic, as she claims that people do not want a superhero with a cape and costume to rescue them; they want to have a good time. Where Trish sees the glass half full, Jessica sees it only dirty and smudged. Perhaps the worst part, for the audience, is knowing that the only time Jessica truly saves someone, the only time she truly acts like a superhero on her own—her good deed of saving Malcolm—calls Kilgrave's attention to her and begins six months of further trauma, all because Jessica helped someone, or as she says, "I made a difference" (ep. 1.05).

Roz Kaveney criticizes Bendis's female characters, suggesting that there is always a problematic relationship with their status as "heroes" (2008, 74). In the graphic novel, Kaveney notes, "Jessica becomes Kilgrave's whipping girl for every defeat he had ever had at the hands and fists of male superheroes" (93). The relationship between the two becomes a power struggle between hero and villain, whereas in the Netflix version, Kilgrave is a misogynist and a critic of the whole superhero ethic instead of someone who feels like he must tear down superheroes to make himself feel better. The television version is more about gender power and superheroes versus power and humiliation. This is because in *Alias*, Kaveney states, Bendis avoids the obvious—Killgrave did not rape Jessica. He constantly humiliates her in every other sexual way possible, as "rape would have been the cliché . . . leaving [Bendis] open to the charge of being a man who did not understand the issue" (93–4). Yet in the television show, he *does* rape Jessica. Rape becomes a trauma that

is contextualized within a more justifiable framework of domestic violence, betrayal, and self-defence in a way that humiliation is not (Quintero Johnson and Miller 2016).

Often, when women are shown committing acts of violence on television, there are gender-based explanations, writes Jessie Quintero Johnson and Bonnie Miller in their article, "When Women 'Snap': The Use of Mental Illness to Contextualize Women's Acts of Violence in Contemporary Popular Media" (2016). They note that these situational circumstances are linked to mood disorders, intense anxiety and frustration, or trauma—all of which ultimately can be used to explain why a woman might "snap" and become violent. Jessica's response to the trauma inflicted upon her is to withdraw socially, becoming moody, tense, and aggressive toward others. Quintero Johnson and Miller state that this sympathetic violence is due to social and personal circumstances beyond the perpetrator's control. This also occurs with Trish in her dealings with Will Simpson.

Before becoming a member of the New York City Police, Will Simpson was in the United States military. He uses his military contacts and equipment to aid Trish and Jessica, as well as his knowledge and understanding of how to trap Kilgrave. However, his military past is also shrouded in secrecy and the usual comic villainy, as the audience quickly learns that while he was in the military, Simpson was part of a project that gave soldiers performance-enhancing drugs (called "Combat Enhancers" in the show), which gives him super strength and excessive aggression. These qualities make him particularly enticing to Kilgrave, who places him under his mental control; it is only after Jessica frees him, and once his guilt in attacking Trish manifests itself, that he decides to try and stop Kilgrave. Therefore, Trish falls victim to the troubling "knight in shining armour" narrative whereby women who have been hurt and treated poorly by men (and who previously decided that they did not want to date such men) allow grand gestures to eclipse their partner's earlier questionable actions. Trish begins to date Simpson, and while the two get along, with Simpson even helping the two women plot against Kilgrave, he quickly begins to disagree with Jessica's plan. In episode 1.10, while Simpson is drugged, he physically attacks Trish, who in response locks him outside the room she is in. This becomes her first indication that Simpson is not fully in control of his faculties, and his mental state continues to deteriorate. In episode 1.03, the audience learns that Trish, who already converted Jessica's bedroom in her apartment into a gym, needed a place "to train. . . .

No one touches me unless I want them to," she says in response to her mother's abuse as she learns to take control of her body. Reacting to Simpson's abuse, Trish then takes control of the situation in ways she previously could not. In the fight between Jessica and Simpson, Trish becomes the hero, saving Jessica instead of the other way around. It is now the one with superpowers who needs to be saved, while the "normal" human does the saving. This scene highlights the importance of the concept of heroism for the two women's identities. Furthermore, it explores the notion of Trish's heroism, something that comes from within—from conviction and a desire to help, rather than from superhero abilities. It is Trish's storyline in the series that teaches Jessica that her powers do not control her (in the sense of how Kilgrave took control of *her*, using his power to abuse *her* powers). Jessica instead learns that inner strength is the necessary ingredient in becoming a hero, and that no matter what she does, Trish would be there for her.

Girl Power

Exploring the multiple traumas that Jessica and Trish have experienced in their lives, and which created the basis of their friendship, as portrayed in season 1 of *Marvel's Jessica Jones*, provides interesting avenues of discussion and analysis vis-à-vis the role of women in comic adaptations and women on television, and particularly the bonds between them. However, while there are parallels between the two women and their traumas, it is the relationship between them that is particularly important, because beyond their traumas, the two can constantly support each other, thereby facilitating their journeys of self-discovery. They become stronger women, better friends, and overcome their traumas in positive ways. Referring to the graphic novel *Alias* and the show's original script, Kaveney describes Carol Danvers's friendship with Jessica Jones as the reason why these two damaged women represent such powerful support mechanisms for each other. This bond, of course, goes far beyond their casual banter about men (Kaveney 2008)—as female superheroes are often included in storylines that revolve around men in some fashion or another. The characters of Carol and Jessica are both reflected in storylines that revolve around the traumas done to them *by* men, and both overcame male villains. For the Netflix version, Trish is no alcoholic, but she certainly shares a traumatic backstory that turns on her sense of self as it closely relates to her childhood alter ego, Patsy. Although Kaveney questions how someone

can be a superhero and self-conscious of their strengths and weakness at the same time, Rosenberg had a plan for that, as reported by Loeb:

> What's most important is the relationship between [Trish] and Jessica, and how these two women who are, in some ways, sisters, in terms of their friendship, could be that different, and yet believe in the same kinds of things. That question of, what is it to be a hero and the responsibilities that you have when you have abilities, is something that brings them together, but also continually pushes them apart. (Radish 2015)

The relationship between Jessica and Trish constantly affirms the role of the hero, the act of "saving" someone, and how this ties into the two women's identities. Both come from different angles and ideologies, but both offer valid points while demonstrating respect for each other. Where Jessica uses her powers to save Hope, Trish uses her powers of emotional support to save Jessica. The push-pull relationship between Jessica and Trish reflects Figueroa's earlier description of the either-or scenario; to achieve an encompassing existence, they must first move beyond the limits of their preconceived identities and their pasts and do so with each other. This observation echoes that of Carolyn Cocca, who notes that female heroes are "strong, community-minded 'woman warriors' who consult, protect, and rely on friends, [who] present an alternative to a hierarchical, individualistic, patriarchal society" (2014, 215).

These two women have a friendship that is unique to television—one in which they can be both competitive and friendly, can love each other and hate each other, and in which they can draw on a shared history while still saving each other when it is most necessary (Radish 2015). Ranging from Trish (slightly) invading Jessica's private life ("You've been keeping tabs on me?" in episode 1.01) to sticking with each other when things are rough ("I'm life-threatening, Trish. Steer clear of me" in episode 1.02), the two constantly reaffirm the importance they play in each other's lives. Whether it is "saving" the other, or just being there, Jessica and Trish embody strong female protagonists who do not let their lives revolve around their pasts and/or male-driven traumas. Instead, they overcome each trauma, each hurdle together, discovering something new about themselves each time as they figure out their identities, but also how they can be "heroes." As shown in the final episode of

season 1, Jessica and Trish plan to stop Kilgrave, but they need a special code word to show that he is not controlling them:

> Trish: We should have a code word. If you say it, you're still you. Something you would never say. Like "pickle juice" or "sardines."
>
> Jessica: Or "I love you."
>
> Trish: [*Pause*.] Yeah. That'll work. (ep. 1.13, "AKA Smile")

While Jessica might be a superhero due to her abilities and her choice to save others, it is Trish who is Jessica's hero: her beautiful, strong best friend who means more to her than anything.

NOTES

1. Readers should note that in the original *Alias* graphic novel, this name is spelled with two *l*s ("Killgrave"), whereas in the Netflix television show, it is spelled "Kilgrave." I will use these two spellings to denote which character version—graphic novel or television—I am referring to.
2. Interestingly, Trish can appear as the opposite: she is loving, emotional, and passionate, embodying a softness that contrasts with Jessica's hardness. However, Trish has progressed further than Jessica in her work to encompass all these traits in her identity, as she is successful and independent. She lacks the same frigidity and strength that Jessica embodies, but she attempts to make up for this fact with her martial arts training.
3. For example, Jessica snaps at her brother with comments like "I'm going to kill you if you don't leave me alone," and "twelve hours in a car with you? Fine, leave without me" (ep. 1.08, "AKA WWJD?").
4. The star of the television show *It's Patsy!*, Trish absolutely hates her alter ego, and indeed any reminder of her position as a teen starlet. The audience learns of this when she awkwardly blurts out, "This is torture" (ep. 1.11, "AKA I've Got the Blues").

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