

Circus of the Damned Study Guide

Circus of the Damned by Laurell K. Hamilton

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Plot Summary

"Circus of the Damned" by Laurell K. Hamilton is a work of fiction. The book is comprised of 329 pages, broken down into 49 chapters. "Circus of the Damned" is one of Hamilton's series on Anita Blake, vampire hunter.

Anita Blake is a 24-year-old animator, necromancer, and vampire executioner. Anita has the ability to raise the dead and is the official vampire executioner for the state of Missouri. Anita has had a great deal of involvement with vampires, good and bad, as well as shapeshifters, lycanthropes, and other "monsters." Anita's boss is a self-serving man who would sell his own mother for a buck.

In Circus of the Damned, Anita is assisting in an investigation of a series of vampire-related murders. Five vampires have attacked and killed two people. This is uncommon behavior for vampires as they are solitary hunters. Anita must confer with Jean-Claude, the Master of the City of St. Louis. Anita and Jean-Claude have a strange relationship. Jean-Claude wants Anita to be his human servant for eternity; Anita wants nothing to do with any sort of relationship with Jean-Claude. However, the two have worked together before to slay the previous Master of the City, and it appears that they will have to work together once again to solve the murders.

While Anita is working on the murder investigation, she must also deal with Edward, a good friend known as "Death." Edward is also an executioner but is extremely cold-blooded. Edward has been hired to kill the Master of the City but cannot get Anita to give up the Master's name or location. Edward will follow Anita throughout the story, save her, and work with her in the end to protect the Master in order to defeat a one-million-year-old vampire.

Anita is attacked by a master vampire that is unknown to her. This vampire is at least a thousand years old and has the intention of overthrowing Jean-Claude to take control of the city. Additionally, this vampire works for Mr. Oliver, the world's oldest living vampire. Anita must find a way to protect the city from the new rogue vampires without getting herself killed.

Anita must also worry about Larry Kirkland, a new animator who wants to become a vampire hunter. Anita tries her best to dissuade Larry because he is only 20 years old and incredibly naïve.

One of the things Anita is most worried about is receiving the third and fourth marks from Jean-Claude, an act that would bind her to the master vampire for all eternity. Anita clearly states on several occasions that her soul is not up for grabs and that she would rather die than receive the marks. Anita does become a human servant to the 1,000 year old vampire through force and nearly dies when she rips out his heart.

There are continued conflicts between Anita and Jean-Claude. Anita must also deal with a new man, Richard Zeeman. Anita begins to date Richard although she is not the most



willing participant. Anita is even more confused when she learns that Richard is a lycanthrope.

Anita succeeds and kills the rogue vampires, although she almost dies three times throughout the story.



Chapters 1-6

Chapters 1-6 Summary

Chapter one begins with Anita Blake sitting at her desk at Animators, Inc. On the other side of the desk, two men sit in the visitors' chairs. One man is Jeremy Ruebens, a terminally unhappy man who has reluctantly come to Anita for help at the ungodly hour of 6 A.M. just as Anita is finishing her shift. Everything about Ruebens annoys Anita. The other man, Karl Inger, is a stranger. The men claim to be part of a new group, Humans First. Unlike Ruebens' former group, Humans Against Vampires, the man started a new group with the intent on killing all vampires rather than trying to repeal the law that made them legal. Ruebens wants Anita to tell him the location of the daytime lair for the Master of the City. Anita claims she does not know the Master of the City or the location of his lair. Even if Anita knew, she would not tell him. Ruebens does not believe Anita. Anita reminds the men that it is illegal to kill a vampire, just as it is to kill a human. Ruebens threatens Anita and does not respond well when Anita flashes the gun in her shoulder holster. Inger says they will come up with a better plan and return. The men leave the office.

Anita is ready to go home and sleep for eight solid hours when her beeper goes off. It is Sergeant Dolph Storr from the Regional Preternatural Investigation Team. Anita groans and does not want to answer. Before Anita can reach for the phone, Storr pages again. Anita knows that it has to be bad news. Anita reaches Storr to find out that there has been a murder committed by vampires.

Chapter two begins with Anita arriving at the murder scene. Anita examines the nude body of the male victim and determines there were five vampires responsible for the death. This is strange considering that vampires traditionally hunt alone. The exceptions are if new vampires are being trained or if there is a rogue master vampire on the loose. Anita tells Storr that there is no way there is a master vampire wandering around or else the Master of the City or Malcolm, head of the Church of Eternal Life would know about it. Anita will have to speak to them and find out. Another option is for Anita to wait three days and raise the victim as a zombie so the cops can ask what happened.

In chapter three Anita goes home and prepares for bed. Before getting some sleep, Anita calls Bert. Bert is extremely unhappy that Anita has to take the night off but arrangements are made. Anita makes another phone call before sleeping. This call is to Jean-Claude, Master of the City. Anita leaves a message saying that she needs to meet.

Chapter four finds Anita in the middle of a strange dream. The phone wakes her. On the other end of the line is Willie McCoy, one of the newly undead. Willie says that Jean-Claude will meet with Anita at 8 P.M. at the Circus of the Damned.



Anita gets dressed for the meeting and includes her high powered Browning semi-automatic and silver plated bullets. Anita had not seen Jean-Claude in months and is afraid to meet with him again. Anita convinces herself that she has no choice.

Chapter five details Anita's arrival at the Circus of the Damned. The Circus is actually a real circus, although it is filled with gory tricks and treats and lots of vampires. The Circus is owned by Jean-Claude, which is why the Master of the City wanted to meet Anita at that location.

A shapeshifter named Stephen meets Anita and takes her to Jean-Claude. Anita and Stephen make their way into the big tent where there is the world's largest cobra as the main attraction. The cobra is truly the largest one Anita has ever seen, even in her college herpetology class. There is a female snake charmer who plans to control the snake. Anita is glad she does not have to stay to watch.

Chapter six begins with Anita walking into a room darkened by heavy curtains. Anita finds another door and enters into Jean-Claude's room. Anita is speaking with Jean-Claude when Yasmeen, a female vampire, enters the room. Yasmeen is older than Jean-Claude and appears to be a sadist. Yasmeen taunts and attacks Anita for no apparent reason. Anita pulls out the Browning and pushes it into Yasmeen's chest. Yasmeen is excited by the gun and the situation goes from bad to worse. Yasmeen is intent on biting Anita, even though such behavior is forbidden. Anita calls for Jean-Claude's help. As Yasmeen has Anita against the wall, Yasmeen's human servant bursts into the room in a mad frenzy, thinking Anita is trying to steal her mistress. Through some convoluted logic, Anita has to fight off the human servant. Anita wins.

Yasmeen attacks Anita again and takes away the gun. Anita is about to be bitten and screams for Jean-Claude. It is clear that Jean-Claude will never reach Anita in time. Yasmeen begins to scream and both women are being burned where their bodies made contact. Anita's silver cross has burned them both, leaving second degree burns.

Jean-Claude apologizes profusely while Anita stands in the middle of the room, crying and bleeding. A nude man on the bed hands Anita a Kleenex and then her black leather jacket. As Anita is getting dressed, a man rushes into the room in a panic. The cobra has gone crazy and has killed its trainer.

Everyone goes to the ring to see what is happening. The cobra is in the middle of feeding on one of the bystanders. Although Anita wants no part of the scenario, she ends up helping people out of the tent and away from the massive poisonous snake.

Chapters 1-6 Analysis

Anita is annoyed that Bert forced her to meet with Jeremy Ruebens, a man Anita clearly despises. Anita makes no attempt to be cordial to Ruebens but holds back somewhat since Inger is a stranger. Ruebens is an angry, bitter man who shares Anita's contempt in return. It is obvious that Ruebens sees Anita as his last hope for finding the lair, but is not surprised when Anita refuses.



Working throughout the night means Anita gets to go home after dawn and sleep. That will not happen if there is a murder. Anita is annoyed when Sergeant Storr calls to relay the news of the vampire victim.

Anita relents and makes the drive to the crime scene. Due to Anita's years of experience, she is able to gauge the severity of the vampire attack and also assess the number of vamps involved. Anita agrees to talk to the Master of the City to get information.

Anita manages to get some sleep but not enough. The meeting with Jean-Claude brings about mixed feelings. It is important for Anita to meet with him yet the master vampire scares her. Anita already carries two marks from Jean-Claude. Two more marks means Anita belongs to him forever. Anita is not willing to give up her soul for anybody.

The Circus of the Damned is a creepy place and Anita does not understand why people want to take their children to such a macabre place. The giant cobra shocks Anita due to its great size. Anita wants no part of the show in the big tent.

Jean-Claude purposely tempts Anita but knows she will not give in to her own desires. The appearance of Yasmeen is disturbing for Anita. It is obvious to Anita that Yasmeen is much older than Jean-Claude, yet she must obey the Master of the City. Jean-Claude admits to being childish by letting Yasmeen attack Anita. Jean-Claude wants to be needed by Anita but let the episode go much too far. Anita has no use for Jean-Claude's apologies.

When the man tells the group about the cobra killing its trainer, Anita is glad that she does not have to play the hero for once. Playing the hero gets old. However, when Anita, Jean-Claude and the others go downstairs and see the death and chaos, Anita has to help.



Chapters 7-12

Chapters 7-12 Summary

Anita and the rest of the crowd stand on the outside of the ring, watching the giant cobra. One man is dead while another may still be alive. Everyone's eyes are on the snake except for Jean-Claude, who is staring at Anita. Jean-Claude attempts to get Anita to go to him but Anita fights it. Suddenly, Jean-Claude is at Anita's side, telling her if they put their powers together, the snake can be stopped. Jean-Claude explains that the Egyptians worshipped the snake as a god and Anita realizes that the snake has its own powers. A man eating snake is bad enough. A man eating snake with magical powers is worse. Anita refuses to allow Jean-Claude to enter her mind and instead suggests shooting the cobra in the head. It is not known if silver plated bullets can hurt it but it is worth a try.

Jean-Claude and Anita formulate a plan and after Anita gets the snake's attention, she begins shooting it in the head. The bullets do a significant amount of damage but do not kill the snake. Anita ends up being practically squashed by the snake as it part of its body climbs on top of her. As the snake thrashes around, the vampires and shapeshifters attack it. At least one of the attackers sustains near-mortal damage and Anita is not sure that the woman will survive. The man from the bed in Jean-Claude's room helps Anita try to save the woman. As the snake is decapitated and the monsters try to still its writhing body, the police arrive. Anita gets out her RPIT ID card and she and the man approach the cops. The man introduces himself as Richard Zeeman. Anita speaks to the police.

Chapter eight begins with Anita and Richard sitting in the hallway next to a sleeping Stephen. Everyone had been questioned, first by the police then by Dolph Storr. Anita wants nothing more than to go home.

Anita asks what is wrong with Stephen and Richard explains that shapeshifting twice in less than two hours takes a great toll on the body. Stephen would be asleep for at least eight hours but should be fine when he awoke. Anita and Richard get to know one another. Jean-Claude interrupts and is obviously jealous of Anita's lust toward Richard. Anita and Jean-Claude argue. Anita is angry that Jean-Claude used her power in order to conquer the snake. There is also an argument about Anita becoming Jean-Claude's human servant. Dolph interrupts to speak to Jean-Claude. The rest are free to go.

Anita discovers that Richard and Stephen are stranded since the person who brought them to the Circus of the Damned was the same woman who was vitally injured. Anita reluctantly offers to take the men home.

Chapter nine finds Richard in the front seat of Anita's car while Stephen sleeps on the back seat. Anita and Richard talk about themselves and what they like to do, initial getting to know you chatter. Richard asks Anita to go out on a date. Anita refuses and



has sudden flashbacks of Phillip, the non-vampire who had recently been killed by the former Master of the City while Anita was forced to watch. Richard finally convinces Anita and they make plans.

Chapter ten begins with Anita arriving at home. The light above the steps is burned out and Anita spots a man sitting at the top of the stairs. It is Edward, Anita's friend and monster bounty hunter. Anita invites Edward inside where she finds out that the man has been following her. Edward has been hired to kill the Master of the City. Edward grills Anita about the identity of the Master and Anita does her best to lie to Edward. Anita and Edward are friends in a way but nothing stops Edward from completing a job. In a professional, stubborn way neither will give in. Edward tells Anita that she is the only human who knows the master's identity and that's not a good thing. Edward tells Anita she has until the following night to tell or face the consequences. Anita finds herself in a bind. Anita cannot betray either man.

Chapter eleven begins with Anita in the midst of another disturbing dream. Jean-Claude is in this dream and again, there is a lake of warm blood. Anita wakes, angry that Jean-Claude invaded her dreams again.

Even after ten hours sleep, Anita does not feel better. The phone rings as Anita is getting ready to leave for the gym where she will meet her friend Ronnie for a workout, despite the burn and deep bruises. The call is from Dolph, revealing the identity of the vampire victim. It is up to Anita to uncover if the man had any connections to the vampires.

Chapter twelve details Anita and Ronnie's stint at the gym. The pair works out on various machines, runs on an indoor track, and repeats the cycle while talking about vampires and Richard. Ronnie says she knows someone by the victim's name. It could be a coincidence but the man Ronnie knows belongs to Humans Against Vampires. Ronnie will find out all she can about the man and the crime. Anita tells Ronnie about Richard and their date. Ronnie reminds Anita that she is supposed to go to a Halloween party at a close friend's house. Ronnie convinces Anita to invite Richard to the party. Anita is suddenly nervous.

Chapters 7-12 Analysis

Anita is angry that she must step in to play the hero once again. However annoyed Anita is with Jean-Claude, she knows that the master vampire is right. There is no way to defeat the cobra unless they work together. Anita agrees to shoot the snake but does not agree to allow Jean-Claude to tap her for more power. While Jean-Claude is ripping the cobra apart, Anita can feel every move as if it were her hands pulling apart the monster's jaw, ripping into its flesh. Anita begins to go into shock but pushes it aside to help the bleeding woman at her feet.



When Richard touches Anita on the shoulder, Anita's instincts kick in and she automatically points the Browning at the man. Richard assures Anita that he is on her side and together they try to stop the bleeding of the mutilated woman.

Anita is well versed in meeting with police and that aspect of the evening is only mildly annoying. Anita sits in the hallway with Richard and the sleeping Stephen, who had changed into a werewolf before her eyes. Stephen probably saved Anita's life by attacking the cobra when he did. Anita is suspicious of Richard's knowledge of lycanthropy and suspects that is also a lycanthrope. Richard tells Anita that he is a science teacher and had studied preternatural biology in college. Both Anita and Richard know things that were not taught in their college classes.

Jean-Claude is openly jealous of Anita's interest in Richard. Anita tries to deny it but she cannot lie to Jean-Claude. Jean-Claude and Anita get into an argument about Richard, about mind-rape and about Anita being Jean-Claude's human servant. Jean-Claude says he does not know why he tolerates Anita's rejections. The fight is broken up when Dolph interrupts to talk to Jean-Claude.

Anita reluctantly offers Richard and Stephen a ride home. In the car, Richard openly flirts with Anita and is aggressive in convincing Anita to go on a date. As Anita sees Richard in profile, she is reminded of Phillip, the non-vamp who was killed by Nikolaos, the former Master of the City. It was a horrific experience and Anita has no desire to get close to someone who could end up like Phillip. Richard finally wins the battle and Anita agrees to go caving on the weekend. It is interesting that Richard is so persistent when met with Anita's refusals and obvious mistrust.

Anita is not pleased to see Edward waiting at her apartment. At two o'clock in the morning, it cannot be good news. Edward and Anita have a strange relationship. Anita considers Edward to be a friend and colleague. Anita trusts Edward to watch her back when they work together but knows that Edward would not hesitate to kill her if she got in the way. Edward does not believe Anita when she states that Jean-Claude is not the Master of the City and attempts to steer the man's attention in another direction.

Edward has been hired to kill the Master of the City and will not rest until he has done so. Anita points out that Nikolaos, the Master of the City, is dead. Edward states that the new one must also die. Anita is in a dangerous predicament. If Anita warns Jean-Claude then Edward would most likely die. If Anita tells Edward about Jean-Claude, Jean-Claude will die. Neither is an acceptable solution. Edward gives Anita a deadline to give up the information or she will have to pay the consequences. Anita says that she has no qualms about killing Edward but the threat falls short. As Edward leaves, Anita admits to herself that she is "ass-deep in alligators."

Anita's workout date with Ronnie proves to be therapeutic, as usual. The fact that Ronnie may know the first vampire victim helps and Anita is eager to tell Dolph. Ronnie's teasing about Richard makes Anita nervous and afraid that she will regret the decision to take him to Catherine's Halloween party.



Anita calls Richard to tell him about the Halloween party at Catherine's new house. While Richard is explaining that he has friends who may be able to lend their costumes, Anita's beeper goes off. Anita hangs up and returns a call to Dolph. There is another vampire victim. The murder scene looks the same as the one with the previous victim except this one is a woman. Anita tells Dolph that Ronnie recognizes the name of the first victim and that he was a member of Humans Against Vampires. After speaking with Dolph, Anita calls Richard to firm up their plans. Ronnie teases Anita about having agreed to two dates with Richard, which seems pretty serious for her friend.

Chapter 14 begins with Anita arriving at the latest crime scene. Unlike the man, this victim is in rigor mortis which makes it more difficult to examine the body. There seems to be no pattern to the crimes except that both of the victims are blonde. While Anita is examining the body the woman's pallor changes to look as if she is simply asleep not dead. Anita jumps when she feels a victim move. Anita does not know if it is her imagination. Anita speaks with Dolph about the woman rising from the dead. Anita tells Dolph and Zerbrowski that these particular vamps will come back as "more animal and human." Anita orders someone to call the St. Louis City Morgue to make sure the previous the victim's body is locked in the vampire fault. There is no answer at the morgue.

As usual, Anita's beeper goes off and she recognizes the number as belonging to animators Inc. Bert is calling her again. Anita learns that the first victim had a living will and if he was bitten by a vampire he was to be staked. One of the other members of Anita's team has gone to the morgue. Anita tells Bert to call the man back and cancel the order to stake the vampire because it is too dangerous.

Chapter 15 begins with Anita, Dolph, Zerbrowski and other deputies arriving at the St. Louis City Morgue. Anita is the only one in the group that has silver plated bullets, which means that Anita may be the only person who can successfully kill the vampire. The group looks into the morgue afraid of what they might see.

Chapter 16 details the facade of St. Louis City Hospital, a building that has all but deteriorated since it had been evacuated by everyone but the morgue staff. The only reason the morgue stayed at the hospital was because of the vampire vault room. It is a room, made of steel that is supposed to keep vampires from getting out. There is also a vampire counselor to help new vampires adjust to their new lives.

There is a lot of discussion between the cops as to who will stay and who will go and in what order they will proceed.

Chapter 17 finds the group stalking the vampire. Anita states that the hospital feels as if it should have ghosts. Not necessarily the kind of ghosts one sees in the movies but ghosts that are more like memories or psychic impressions and strange feelings. Anita was point in the group and leads the cops down the hall. The first victim lay on the floor with his throat ripped out. It was a former partner of Dolph's and the man did not take it well. Zerbrowski picks up the guard's gun and discovers that there are silver plated bullets inside. This may be one small advantage. The second victim is a female security



guard, who is torn to shreds. The guard's gun is nowhere in sight. The rookie cop in the group begins to vomit at the site of the woman. It started off a chain of people vomiting in the hallway.

The mutilated guard's chest has been burned and Anita discovers that it was the woman's cross that charred her flesh. The vampire should have been burned, just as badly, if not worse but there is no evidence that it was hurt. Anita explains that this type of vampire is much like a PCP addict in that they don't feel any pain. Anita spots bloody footprints walking away from the guard's body.

It is obvious that crosses do not work with this vampire. Dolph tells the rest of the cops that they can leave if they want to, that they can go outside and wait for back-up. The rookie and most of the other cops decide to stay. As the group walks down the next hallway, Anita spots a steel door that has been completely mangled. The guards had used the vampire vault after all, but somehow the vamp broke out. That should not have been possible. The steel along with the silver crosses hanging on the door and everywhere else should have stopped the vampire. Anita and Dolph agree that they are in big trouble.

As the group approaches the vault Dolph takes point since he has silver plated ammunition. Inside the vault is Anita's coworker. Just as Anita realizes that the vampire has to be in the vicinity, it jumps out and throws the rookie into the wall. The rookie shoots the vampire in the chest, but it does no damage whatsoever. The vampire slaughters the rookie, as Anita shoots it in the head repeatedly. Both the vampire and the rookie die.

In Chapter 19 Anita prepares for her zombie-raising appointment at Oakglen Cemetery. The rookie animator, Larry Kirkland, is in the middle of a zombie-raising, his third of the evening. Anita is surprised that someone so inexperienced could raise three zombies in one night. The zombie comes out of the grave, but the animator quickly loses control of the situation. Anita steps in and directs Larry. First, Anita requires Larry to break the circle so that she can enter. Anita must cut herself and allow the zombie to drink her blood so that she may control it. As the zombie finally comes back to life, and Anita helps Larry get up from the ground.

The zombie, Andrew Doughal, is a wealthy and condescending man who has been brought back from the grave so that he may sign a will for his family.



Chapters 13-19

Chapters 13-19 Summary

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The zombie, Andrew Doughal, is a wealthy and condescending man who has been brought back from the grave so that he may sign a will for his family.



Chapters 13-19 Analysis

Anita has the jitters when she realizes that taking Richard to Catherine's for Halloween means that there will be two dates instead of just one.

The new crime scene is disturbing to Dolph and Anita, particularly because there is no pattern to follow. Anita knows that the first victim belonged to HAV and had a living will but other than that, there are no leads.

Anita feels pangs of remorse and dread as Dolph tells her there is no answer at the morgue. Anita had told the morgue that it was safe, that the first victim did not have to be locked up in the vault. Now, those same people might be dead. It gets even worse when Anita finds out that a co-worker had been sent to the morgue to stake the potential vamp.

The scene at the hospital is horrific for all involved. Dolph takes it hard when he sees his friend and former partner dead on the floor. Despite all of the warnings and suggestions to go back to the car, the rookie decides to stay and pays with his life.

Anita manages to kill the new "animalistic vampire," but not before the rookie is beyond help. As is usual, Anita prepares for her next job, seeing no reason to stop because of the death. Anita has a job to do.

At the cemetery, Anita realizes that the rookie, Larry, is a young kid and most likely has no idea what he has gotten himself into. As the zombie rises, Larry stumbles and the magic wavers. Anita knows that if Larry loses control, the zombie will attack anyone and most likely eat that person. Anita steps in and takes over, saving Larry.



Chapters 20-25

Chapters 20-25 Summary

While the Doughal family speaks to the zombie, Anita and Larry sit down on the grass to talk. Anita tries very hard to talk Larry out of becoming an animator. Larry is only 20 years old and probably one of the most naïve people Anita has ever met. Larry has absolutely no idea what he is getting himself into with this job. No matter what Anita says, Larry thinks he did a good job and plans to continue the work. Anita makes Larry promise not to work alone.

When the lawyers and family finish their business with Andrew Doughal, Anita is ready to put him back into the grave. As it sometimes happens, Mr. Doughal does not realize that he is dead. It takes some convincing to make Doughal understand and then the man is put back into the grave.

Just as Anita is finished, it becomes clear that there is someone out there in the dark. Anita draws the Browning Hi-Power and tells Larry to run. Anita shoots one man and Larry manages to get to the car. Anita jumps in and the pair takes off. Standing in front of the car, blocking the road, is Jeremy Ruebens. Anita tells Larry not to stop that Ruebens is playing chicken and will move. Larry drives and Ruebens jumps out of the way. The next obstacle in the road is a small boy on a bicycle. Larry hits him and stops the car. As Anita leans over the boy to make sure he is okay, the small boy bares fangs and orders Anita to have Larry get out of the car or Anita will be stabbed in the stomach. Anita tells Larry to run. The small boy does not know what to do since he never expected Anita to disobey. All of a sudden, there are vamps everywhere attacking Larry and Anita.

Larry and Anita manage to get away. Anita hits the next obstacle in the road, a female vampire. The car shuddered and Alejandro, who appeared to be the head of the pack, grabs Larry by the throat and forces Anita to give up her gun. Alejandro tells Anita that he has no intention of hurting her that he wants the name of the Master of the City. Anita can tell that this vampire is much older than Jean-Claude. Anita refuses to give up the name. Anita and Alejandro fight. Anita is forced to look into Alejandro's eyes and is lost.

Anita wakes up to find Karl Inger and Jeremy Ruebens smiling at her. Anita had been unconscious for more than an hour but seems to be fine otherwise. Suddenly, Ruebens is nice to Anita, realizing that they share a common enemy in the vampires.

Anita and Larry leave after talking to police. Anita has not told the police the whole story. Anita intends to save the whole truth for Dolph and Zerbrowski. On the way home, Anita tries once again to convince Larry to give up becoming a vampire hunter. Larry is stubborn and will not listen. Anita tells Larry to pull over and begins to show some of her many scars. Larry will not be dissuaded.



Chapters 20-25 Analysis

Anita feels responsible for being late and for Larry attempting to raise a zombie when he obviously does not have the strength. Anita does not like Doughal and is eager to get the evening over with so she can go home. Anita's instincts are finely honed and she immediately knows something is wrong when the crickets fall silent. Larry manages to get the car out onto the cemetery road but almost causes the pair to get caught when Ruebens stands in the middle of the road. Larry is too scared to keep going but eventually, Anita convinces him that Ruebens will move. Ruebens moves.

The downfall for Anita and Larry is the small boy. Seeing an injured boy stopped both animators in their tracks. Anita is shocked to learn that the boy is a vampire but immediately notices that is very old on the inside.

Alejandro claims to want nothing more than to know the identity of the Master of the City. Anita refuses. The vampire says he can free Anita of Jean-Claude's powers if only she will give him the name. Anita refuses.

There are few injuries from the attacks, which is surprising. Ruebens and Inger are ready at any given moment to remind Anita that they saved her life. Anita hates to be indebted to anyone, but Ruebens is the worst.



Chapters 26-33

Chapters 26-33 Summary

Anita walks into her apartment and can sense that someone is there. It is Edward. Edward demands to know the name of the Master of the City. If Anita won't tell, Edward will shoot. Edward also asks what happened to Anita's mouth. Anita tells Edward about Alejandro. Anita also tells Edward that Alejandro is the Master of the City. The pair agrees to go after the master vampire together.

Chapter 27 begins with Anita in the midst of yet another dream. Jean-Claude is trying to seduce Anita but she refuses. The phone rings and wakes Anita.

Irving Griswold, a newspaper reporter, is on the other end of the line. Irving and Anita are friends. Irving has called to tell Anita that Jeremy Ruebens was on the morning news saying that he and Humans First saved Anita from the Master of the City. Irving wants a quote from Anita. Anita asks Irving not to reveal that Alejandro is not the Master of the City until he clears it with Jean-Claude.

In Chapter 28, Karl Inger calls Anita at home and wants to meet. Inger uses the fact that he helped save Anita's life to get her agree to the meeting. Inger names a place for them to meet and then he will take her to meet someone important. Inger tells Anita that if she agrees to meet Mr. Oliver, the slate will be wiped clean between them.

In chapter 29, Anita meets Inger at a public lake. Inger acts hurt that Anita does not trust him to take her to see Mr. Oliver. Anita admits to being cynical then finally relents.

Chapter 30 begins with Inger driving Anita to a house that is built to resemble an authentic log cabin. The place is bare and smells new. Anita is ushered into one of the rooms where she meets a small man sitting behind the desk. Inger introduces the man as Mr. Oliver. Oliver is four foot tall, with a sloping forehead. The man looks like someone Anita has seen before but cannot place. Oliver is not a dwarf or a midget. Anita is puzzled.

Oliver immediately makes Anita feel comfortable and warm and she is suspicious. Anita knows that he is a very old vampire and calls him on it right from the start. Mr. Oliver says he admires Anita's natural abilities. Anita could not gauge the man's age, only that he was older than anything or anyone she had ever imagined.

Oliver tells Anita that he wants to kill the Master of the City and take it as his own. Anita tries in vain to lie to Oliver. Anita is relieved when she does not know the location of Jean-Claude's daytime resting place. Oliver's plan is to make sure that vampirism is no longer legal. The man prefers the days when vampires were hunted, which meant only the strong survived. As Oliver sees it, the world will become overrun. Oliver keeps asking but Anita cannot give up Jean-Claude.



Inger admits that he has been Oliver's servant for 700 years. It occurs to Anita where she had seen him before. Oliver was akin to the missing link. The oldest living vampire was a million years old.

As Anita and Inger are leaving the house, a woman walks toward them. The woman is striking and aggressive as she heads toward Anita. Inger tells the woman, whose name is Melanie, that Oliver would not like it if he found out she was toying with Anita. Anita cannot figure out what the woman is because her fangs are much longer than a vampire's and her eyes are like slits. Melanie begins to change before Anita's eyes. Melanie is a lamia, the last shapeshifter on earth to turn into a snake. Oliver confirms that the snake is his animal to call.

In chapter 30, Ronnie calls Anita to say that she remembered how she knew Cal Rupert, the first victim. Ronnie had been working for a law firm and Cal Rupert had used that same firm to draw up his living will. The second victim also had a living will. Ronnie knew the woman's identification. Anita instructs Ronnie to call Dolph.

In chapter 32 Anita is in Bert's office along with Larry Kirkland. Anita is fighting hard to keep Larry out of harm's way. Larry is arguing that he can take care of himself. It seems that Bert and Anita are arguing and Larry has no part in the conversation. Anita stresses Larry's age. Bert reminds Anita that she was only 21 when she started. Larry stands his ground and finds leverage in the fact that Anita is only 24.

While Anita is in Bert's office, Dolph beeps her. Bert is prepared to be angry if Anita should have to take another night off. Dolph and Anita come to the conclusion that someone is tipping the vampires as to who has a living will.

Chapter 33 begins as Anita shows Larry the ropes of being a good animator. As they walk through the cemetery, Anita's beeper goes off and she does not recognize the number. The caller is Irving Griswold. Irving says that Jean-Claude has information on Alejandro, the vamp that attacked Anita. Anita is asked to go to the Circus of the Damned immediately. Anita tells Irving that Larry is with her and Jean-Claude has to promise to behave.

Irving also confesses that he is a werewolf. The wolf is Jean-Claude's animal to call.

Chapters 26-33 Analysis

Edward does not completely believe Anita when it comes to not knowing the identity of the Master of the City. Anita half-way convinces Edward to go after Alejandro with her. Even though Edward will shoot Anita, he says he cannot do it if she keeps making him laugh.

Anita is annoyed that Ruebens has gone on television to say that he and Humans First saved her life. It is true but it just gives Anita another reason not to like Ruebens. Irving Griswold wants a quote from Anita. Irving knows Jean-Claude but promises not to reveal Rueben's incorrect information until speaking to the real Master of the City.



Anita reluctantly trusts Karl Inger. The trip to meet Mr. Oliver is uneventful and as usual, Anita is loaded down with weapons. Anita does not know what to think of Mr. Oliver at first. Oliver is a strange looking man yet is purely human and not deformed in any way. As soon as Anita begins to feel too comfortable, she knows that Oliver is playing mind games with her. Anita was thrown off by the fact that sunlight was coming in the window by Oliver's arm. It was surprising to learn that Oliver is the world's oldest living vampire.

Oliver's plan is the same as Humans First; he wants to make vampires illegal again. There is a definite threat that if the vampires remain legal, the world will be overrun. Vampires should survive because they are the strongest and best.

Anita refuses to give up Jean-Claude and is relieved she does not know Jean-Claude's daytime resting place. Vampires smell lies.

Meeting Melanie is a frightening and surprising event. Anita thought that lamias were extinct. Oliver says that Melanie is the last one and he must keep an eye on her. Although Melanie belongs to Oliver, the lamia seems too independent to take orders well.

Anita tries hard to protect Larry. It is true that Anita is only four years older but she had already seen and experienced a lot before joining Animators, Inc. Larry is naïve and inexperienced in every way. Anita finally realizes that arguing is not going to work and makes Larry promise to work with her at all times.

Irving's admission to being a werewolf surprises Anita. Suddenly, Anita feels guilty for introducing Irving and Jean-Claude. Irving does not hold a grudge since he asked for the meeting.

Anita is worried about taking Larry to the Circus of the Damned and tells Irving to make sure Jean-Claude knows to make sure there is no rough stuff.



Chapters 34-39

Chapters 34-39 Summary

Anita and Larry make it to the Circus of the Damned just before dawn. The Circus is closed down for the night and all is quiet. Anita warns Larry about what could happen inside. Irving answers the door and leads Anita and Larry downstairs to Jean-Claude.

Anita draws her gun but Irving assures her that it is not necessary. Richard joins the group and they go to Jean-Claude, who is nervously waiting. Just before the group walks through the door, Anita says she does not want Larry to meet the Master of the City. Richard and Irving agree that it would be best. Larry argues but Anita wins this round.

Chapter 35 begins with Anita seeing Jean-Claude. Anita says that she will go see the Master of the City alone, that she does not want her new co-worker to meet the Master because it is too dangerous. Jean-Claude catches on and says that he will take Anita to meet the Master.

Jean-Claude tells Anita that he believes Alejandro has marked her with the first mark. Anita says it is impossible since two vampires cannot have the same human servant. Jean-Claude tests Anita by touching her skin and confirms his fears. Anita has been marked. Jean-Claude says that Anita must choose. Anita can choose to be with Jean-Claude or Alejandro will force her into slavery. Anita is angry and just wants to be out of the whole mess.

Anita sees Larry on the floor when she returns with Jean-Claude. Yasmeen has Larry pinned on the floor and Marguerite is fondling him. Jean-Claude says to leave Larry alone but Yasmeen says that they have not hurt him. Anita shoots over Yasmeen's head to warn the master vampire. Yasmeen threatens to snap Larry's neck. Anita says she will shoot Marguerite in the head. The battle continues. Irving, who has changed into a wolf, is in the middle of it all. Richard stands off to the side. Jean-Claude prevents Anita from shooting Yasmeen because he needs her to fight off Alejandro even though she is crazy. Larry is finally let go and he, Anita and Richard leave.

In chapter 37 Larry is eager to get away from the Circus of the Damned. As he and Anita drive away, they talk about what happened inside. Anita tries once more to talk Larry out of becoming a vampire hunter. Larry tells Anita a story about how twelve people were killed by vampires in his hometown and everyone was helpless, even his father, who is a doctor. Larry is on a crusade. Anita gives up and makes Larry promise that he will do everything she says with no arguments.

In chapter 38 Anita finally gets home just after 9 A.M. Inside her apartment Anita finds Melanie waiting with three men. Oliver wants to see Anita right away, even though he had said it would be a couple of days. Anita has no choice but to go. Melanie claims that



the three men are part of her harem and Anita should allow them to spoil her and use them in any way she sees fit. Anita wants no part of the harem. In the car, the men become friendly with Anita until she asks Melanie to call them off.

Chapter 39 details the trip to see Oliver. The trip takes more than an hour and Anita is frustrated. Once the car stops, the group is required to walk over rocky ground to a cave. Anita walks inside the cave with Melanie and the men. Anita asks where Oliver is and Alejandro steps out to say that Oliver will not be there. Anita has been set up. Anita goes for her gun and the lights go out.

Chapters 34-39 Analysis

Anita is worried about taking Larry to the Circus of the Damned but has no choice. The decision to hide Jean-Claude's identity is smart since it will protect both Jean-Claude and Larry. Anita assures Larry that he will be safe with Richard and Irving.

Anita reluctantly allows Jean-Claude to test her for Alejandro's marks. Anita feels a deep lust for Jean-Claude but will not admit it, even to herself. Even though Jean-Claude offers to give Anita the third mark to protect her from Alejandro, Anita refuses.

Anita goes berserk when she sees what Marguerite and Yasmeen are doing to Larry. Larry is terrified but cannot get away. Anita wants to kill Yasmeen and this is her excuse. Jean-Claude says he needs Yasmeen or he will not be able to defeat Alejandro. Anita objects since Yasmeen is obviously crazy and would betray Jean-Claude in a heartbeat.

Even though everything works out in the end, Larry is shook up. Anita thinks that this will be the time she can talk Larry out of wanting to become a vampire hunter but it does not happen. Larry is committed.

Finding Melanie and the men in her apartment unsettles Anita. Anita only wants to go to bed. It is obvious however, that Anita has no choice but to go along for the ride.



Chapters 40-44

Chapters 40-44 Summary

In chapter 40, Anita tries to decide what to do about the bleak situation. Anita assumes that everyone else can see in the dark but as it is black as pitch, Anita is completely blind. Anita shoots and hits Alejandro in the chest. The bullet does no damage to the thousand year old vampire. Alejandro tells Anita that he has offered Melanie her freedom from Oliver if she helps set him up. Alejandro wants Anita as his human servant, even if he has to take her by force. Losing Anita would hurt Jean-Claude. Anita fires again, this time into Alejandro's throat. If Anita could sever Alejandro's spine, he would die. Alejandro lets go of Anita and falls back screaming. Next, Anita shoots Melanie's significant other in the face. Just then, Melanie shapeshifts and goes into the water. Anita has to run.

Anita shoots Melanie but the lamia laughs. Melanie is immortal and nothing can hurt her. As Anita runs, she feels a strange wind at her back and realizes that Alejandro has given her the second mark.

Melanie's mate has survived and has also shapeshifted into a lamia. Anita shoots him and stabs the snake-man until he is dead. Melanie is out for Anita's blood. Alejandro says that he intends to give Anita the third mark and that he will make her pay.

Anita has a choice to make - she can stay in the cave and be marked or killed or attempt to swim out of the cave. The tunnel with all the water only has an inch of breathing space. Anita decides to swim for it. Although Anita feels like her lungs might burst, she makes it to a narrow crack in the wall that leads outside. Alejandro and Melanie have followed and are right behind Anita. When the sun hits Alejandro he screams and sinks into the water. Anita forces herself through the crack. Melanie tries to follow but cannot fit. Anita runs to the road and Edward picks her up. For once, Anita was glad to be followed.

Chapter 41 begins with Edward helping Anita clean her wounds. Anita is concerned about being bit by Melanie's mate. Although the man was not a full lamia, Anita could die. Since lamias have been extinct for 200 years, there is no way to get the anti-venom. Anita tries to convince herself that she will be okay.

Richard comes to the door while Anita is getting dressed. Anita is afraid of how Edward will behave but things seem to be fine when she emerges from the bedroom. Anita tells Richard about her experience in the cave with Alejandro and Melanie. Richard is worried. Edward leaves. As Anita stands in the kitchen, she suddenly feels pain in her leg where she was bitten by the lamia. Anita tells Richard what happened. Since there is no anti-venom, the only way to combat the bite is to be bitten by a lycanthrope. Anita says she would rather die. As she is blacking out, Richard says that he will not let her die.



Chapter 42 begins with Anita in the middle of a dream. Anita is with Jean-Claude again. Jean-Claude is attempting to seduce her and Anita is fighting it. Jean-Claude says he will mark her to save her life. Anita wakes suddenly up in a strange room. The last thing Anita remembers is dying from the poisonous bite from the lamia. Anita did not recognize the room but it looked like something Jean-Claude would decorate. Anita looks down at her black negligee and realizes that she matches the black and white room.

Anita realizes that her wrist is bandaged but does not remember hurting it in the caves. Jean-Claude enters the room and Anita questions him about the poison. Anita is angry when she finds out that Richard took her to Jean-Claude to keep her alive. Richard explains that Anita said she would rather die than be bitten by a lycanthrope. Instead, Jean-Claude gave her the third mark. Anita is furious and says she would have preferred to die. Anita demands to know what kind of powers the third mark gives to Jean-Claude. Jean-Claude says it will allow him to speak to her in her mind. Anita says she will not forgive Jean-Claude for this and will kill him. Jean-Claude explains that if he dies Anita will also suffer. Anita does not care.

As Anita prepares to let Richard take her home, she decides to give Jean-Claude up to Oliver.

On the way to Anita's apartment, Richard tries to soothe Anita by reminding her that she is alive. Anita learns that there were more vamps in the room as Jean-Claude tasted her blood. Richard said he was there to make sure Jean-Claude only took enough to save her life. Jean-Claude had the perfect opportunity to rape Anita but said he wanted Anita to offer herself freely. Richard tells Anita that Jean-Claude expects her to love him. Anita says that vampires do not love. Anita finally admits to being attracted to Jean-Claude, but it does not matter because he is one of the undead, a monster. Richard asks if Anita has ever dated a lycanthrope or shapeshifter. Anita says it has never come up. As Richard pulls up to Anita's apartment complex, Anita tells him to get away from Jean-Claude. Richard says he would if he could.

Anita calls Karl Inger and says she is willing to give up the Master of the City to Oliver. Oliver is pleased and says that he likes Anita and wishes they could have met under other circumstances. Oliver is surprised to learn that the Master of the City is Jean-Claude. Oliver thinks Jean-Claude is not strong enough. Oliver questions Anita's motives and Anita tells Oliver about the third mark. Oliver promises to kill Jean-Claude. After Anita tells Oliver where to find Jean-Claude, she hangs up the phone and feels sick. Does she love Jean-Claude in some strange way? Why else does she want to call and warn Jean-Claude?

Chapters 40-44 Analysis

Once again, Anita finds herself in a situation where she may die. Two of the men with Melanie are easy to kill. Alejandro is almost impossible to kill and Melanie is immortal. Melanie's significant other is not immortal. After he turns into a lamia, Anita shoots him



but the snake does not die. Anita runs out of bullets and stabs the snake until it dies. Melanie is on a rampage and is not satisfied that Alejandro promises to make Anita pay.

There are always big risks to take and fortunately for Anita, the decision to swim into the water-filled tunnel was a good one. Luck is on Anita's side when there is enough air to breathe and she comes out near an opening in the cave's wall. Although Alejandro and Melanie have followed, Alejandro cannot follow and burns in the sunlight. Melanie cannot make it through the crack in the wall, allowing Anita to break free.

Anita is generally annoyed when Edward follows her but today is not one of those days. Edward takes good care of Anita sometimes.

Richard is somewhat thrown off-kilter when Edward is at Anita's apartment. Anita explains that Edward is a co-worker and nothing more. Since Anita seems to be having no ill effects from the lamia bite, Edward leaves. Shortly after, Anita realizes that she is in serious trouble.

When Anita wakes up in Jean-Claude's room, she is disoriented. When Anita finds out what happened with the third mark, she is outraged and swears that she will never forgive Jean-Claude, even if it meant saving her life. Richard did not know how Anita felt about the third mark and only wanted to help her so chances are that Richard will be forgiven. The incident makes Anita so angry that she gives Oliver Jean-Claude's name and location.



Chapters 45-49

Chapters 45-49 Summary

It is Halloween night and Larry and Anita are out raising zombies when Dolph pages Anita. Anita is afraid there has been another murder. Dolph says he called to say that they found the paralegal that was leaking the information about the living wills. Dolph also tells Anita that the vampires plan to get every vamp in the city to slaughter humans for Halloween. Anita says that it is not possible. Only the Master of the City could do that, if he was very powerful. Dolph gives Anita descriptions of the vampires in question and it is clear that they are Oliver and Alejandro.

Anita calls and warns Jean-Claude.

Chapter 46 begins with Anita, Larry and Edward arriving at the Circus of the Damned. It is Halloween night and anything goes. The monsters love the holiday since they can be out in the open and everyone will think they have great costumes. One of Jean-Claude's vamps directs the group to the big tent. The vamp tells Anita that they are the show and that Jean-Claude will explain. As Anita, Larry and Edward stand ringside, Anita can hear Jean-Claude talking inside her head. Anita is directed to go to the center of the ring, where there are curtains hung from the ceiling. Jean-Claude explains the plan. Jean-Claude and Oliver have made a gentlemen's agreement. The fight to the death will take place inside the ring. Everyone will be in costume and the audience will think it is a show. Jean-Claude says it is the only solution he could come up with on short notice. At least this way, no innocents will die.

Larry is disappointed when Anita tells him to stay out of the ring. Surprisingly, Larry agrees.

Anita and Edward go to the center of the ring. Richard is there and tells Anita he had hoped she would not make it. Anita also sees Yasmeen and Marguerite. Jean-Claude stands atop a dais in front of a throne, dressed as a French courtier. It is Jean-Claude's normal dress but full-blown for the occasion.

Anita and Jean-Claude talk and Jean-Claude realizes that Anita would rather die than receive the fourth mark. Only something so serious would cause Anita to betray the Master of the City. Jean-Claude and Oliver both stand up to make speeches. The fighting begins.

In chapter 47 everything begins to happen at once. Anita is bitten by another snake but Jean-Claude reminds her that she is immune to poison now. Edward is doing a good bit of damage but many of the creatures under Oliver's command are powerful and not easy to kill.

Anita watches as Yasmeen is torn apart by Alejandro. Inger had Marguerite but let her go as Marguerite continues to shriek and claw at her own face in grief. Anita tries to get



to Marguerite but is stopped by Alejandro. Alejandro says he will let Anita help Marguerite if Anita will take the third mark. Anita says no. Alejandro forces the third mark on Anita even as Edward tries to kill the master vampire. Anita finds herself on the ground. Alejandro pulls her up and cuts himself so that she can taste his blood and get the fourth and final mark. Jean-Claude screams out to Anita but Anita is powerless. Anita gets the fourth mark. Jean-Claude has paid the price of losing his human servant. Oliver is able to wound him from across the ring and Jean-Claude is bleeding profusely on one side.

Inger picks up Jean-Claude and lays him on a marble altar. As Oliver moves toward Jean-Claude, Richard attacks him. Oliver rips out Richard's throat. Oliver tells Anita that she must stake Jean-Claude and kill him. Anita refuses. Oliver tells Alejandro to control Anita but Alejandro cannot because Anita is a necromancer. Oliver slaps Anita and says that she will not ruin this for him. Anita finally agrees and takes the stake from Oliver. As Anita reaches for the hammer, she drives the ash stake into Oliver's heart.

Oliver's death also kills Inger. Alejandro is pleased that Oliver is dead. Now Anita can kill Jean-Claude and then they can rule the city together. Anita reaches up and pulls out Alejandro's heart and crushes it. Then everything goes black.

Chapter 48 finds Anita in a hospital bed. Anita wakes up and sees balloons and flowers and realizes she is not dead. The door opens and walking behind a large bouquet of flowers. Anita is in shock. How is Richard still alive? There are no marks on Richard's throat. Richard tells Anita that he is a lycanthrope. Anita also learns that Jean-Claude is still alive.

Chapters 45-49 Analysis

Once again, Edward shows his loyalty to Anita as well as his own love of the job as executioner. Jean-Claude seems truly wounded that Anita betrayed him. Oliver may think Jean-Claude is stronger than he is but knows that no one can match his power. The battle below is just icing on the cake.

The battle is bloody and merciless. Anita panics as Alejandro forces her to take the third and fourth marks. Seeing Jean-Claude vulnerable and bleeding hurts Anita more than she thought was possible. Seeing Richard getting his throat torn out is also gut-wrenching.

The decision to stake Oliver is brilliant and unexpected. Alejandro mistakenly believes that Anita is loyal to him now that she is his servant. Alejandro discovers that he is very wrong as Anita is ripping out his heart.

Anita is surprised to be alive when she wakes up in the hospital. Since Alejandro was dead, she should be dead, too. Anita is happy and surprised to see Richard and is even more surprised to find out that he is a lycanthrope. That explains Richard's ties to Jean-Claude.

When Anita finds out that Jean-Claude is still alive, she is relieved and anxious about her own feelings toward the master vampire.



Characters

Anita Blake

Anita Blake is a necromancer, a mortal who possesses the ability to commune with the dead. Using this gift, Anita becomes a professional animator, one who is able to raise and communicate with the dead in zombie form. Anita can control zombies to a degree and is able to bind them to the grave after the zombies have outlived their usefulness. Anita is also a federal marshal and a licensed vampire slayer, often referred to as "The Executioner" due to the high number of vampire kills on record. Anita makes it clear that she only kills vampires that are breaking the law and has no desire to murder the innocent.

Anita Blake is a petite woman, who is twenty-four years old. Anita has dark hair and eyes and bears a tremendous number of scars, particularly on her arms. The scars have come from years of fighting against vampires and various weapons. The most visible and recognizable scar is one on Anita's forearm, in the shape of a cross. Anita's stature often fools people into thinking that she is a fragile female that cannot protect herself against the undead. Anita uses her size to great benefit and enjoys surprising opponents with speed and skill. Many years of martial arts training and firearms experience make Anita a lethal weapon.

As "The Executioner," Anita is not a team player. It is a common occurrence for Anita to anger co-workers and police in the pursuit of a villainous vampire. Those who know Anita and her abilities are more forgiving of the aggressive mannerisms and appreciate Anita's well honed skills. On a personal level, Anita is entirely devoted to the job. There are soft and sensitive parts to Anita, but that side of her is almost always hidden since any type of emotional outburst is seen as a weakness that may get someone killed.

Jean-Claude

Jean-Claude is a 205-year-old Master of the City of St. Louis. Jean-Claude is extremely powerful and somewhat egotistical. Jean-Claude is approximately 5'10", with black hair and vibrant midnight blue eyes. The master vampire tends to dress in elaborate garb reminiscent of the Victorian era, approximately the time the vampire claims to have been turned into one of the undead. Jean-Claude is originally from France and the romantic language often seeps into the vampire's conversations. Jean-Claude takes to calling Anita "ma petite," a term Anita despises. Jean-Claude is attracted to Anita and is not easily dissuaded. Jean-Claude insists on referring to Anita as his human servant even though Anita despises that as well. Jean-Claude wants Anita to remain with him forever.



As owner and operator of Circus of the Damned as well as Guilty Pleasures, the world's only vampire strip club. Jean-Claude is a master showman who thrives on using charm and vampire powers to give the customers the best possible show.

Jean-Claude has given the first two vampire marks to Anita and is constantly attempting to persuade her to belong to him. The master vampire also reveals that his power becomes stronger when Anita is near, which is how Jean-Claude is able to defeat the giant snake god.

Edward

A bounty hunter and hired assassin. Edward sometimes works with Anita and is referred to as "Death."

Sergeant Rudolph Storr

Dolph is a sergeant on the St. Louis police force and member of the Regional Preternatural Investigation Team.

Larry Kirkland

Larry Kirkland is the 20-year-old animator Bert hires to take on some of the extra work. Larry becomes Anita's trainee.

Richard Zeeman

A junior high science teacher that hangs out with the monsters and wants to date Anita.

Stephen

A shapeshifter that Anita meets at the Circus of the Damned.

Yasmeen

A master vampire who attacks Anita at the Circus of the Damned.

Mr. Oliver

A one-million-year-old vampire, the most powerful one alive. Mr. Oliver wants to take over St. Louis and have all the vampires slaughter humans for Halloween.



Melanie

Mr. Oliver's servant and the only living lamia.

Alejandro

Alejandro - a one-thousand-year-old vampire who plans to overthrow Mr. Oliver and Jean-Claude.



Objects/Places

St. Louis, Missouri

St. Louis, Missouri is located in the Midwest of the United States. St. Louis is well known for the arch, a monument erected in the city. The Missouri river runs through St. Louis and in the case of Circus of the Damned, the river serves as a separation between the territories of Jean-Claude and that of Malcolm and the Church of Eternal Life.

Since vampirism became legal, St. Louis is one of the cities in the U.S. that seems to attract the most vampires. New York also has a large population of vampires but St. Louis has a lower crime rate and the vampires must feel safer among the St. Louis law enforcement than those in New York.

St. Louis is the main setting in Circus of the Damned. It is home to the vampire strip club Guilty Pleasures, Animators, Inc., and home to Anita Blake.

The Riverfront District was once a tourist attraction, offering shops and sights for visitors to experience. Since vampirism became legal, the Riverfront District has become a haven for vampires and houses the Circus of the Damned as well as Guilty Pleasures.

Unlike many cities, St. Louis has formed a Regional Preternatural Investigation Team (RPIT) to protect the rights of law abiding vampires and to investigate preternatural crimes involving vampires and lycanthropes. It is also one of the few cities in the country to have Anita Blake, a federal marshal and licensed vampire slayer, available for work in law enforcement.

Circus of the Damned

The "Circus of the Damned" takes place entirely in St. Louis and surrounding areas. The Circus of the Damned is dark and mysterious, which makes it attractive to humans and the undead alike. The structures are always dark and conducive to vampire living. The Circus of the Damned is designed much like any other circus, with loud music, attractions, and bright colors. There are always vampires and shapeshifters working or lurking around the premises, eyes and ears open. All the employees at the Circus are loyal to Jean-Claude. The main feature in the Circus of the Damned is the big tent. Unlike many circus tents, the big tent has permanent fixtures such as concrete stairs and bleachers. Jean-Claude's office is also located upstairs in the big tent, which leads the reader to realize that the big tent is not actually a tent at all, except for its appearance.

Anita regards the Circus much like any other circus, only with an enhanced creepiness factor.



Located below the Circus are Jean-Claude's chambers as well as rooms for many other vampires and shapeshifters that live and work at the Circus or at Guilty Pleasures, the world's only all-vampire strip club. Guilty Pleasures is also located at the Circus.

Some of the most unique places inside the Circus are Jean-Claude's office and living quarters. All are decorated in elegant fabrics and colors which remind Anita of older times, most likely those of Jean-Claude's days, more than 200 years ago.

Riverfront District

Riverfront District - Area of St. Louis where the vampires live and hang out.

Anita's Apartment

Anita's apartment is located on the upper floor of an apartment complex in St. Louis. The "day-living" neighbors are quiet and not at all understanding of Anita's lifestyle and frequent violent disturbances which sometimes result in bullets flying and zombie killings.

St. Louis City Morgue

The site of the killings by the animalistic vampire and the only morgue in the city equipped to handle vampires.

Caves

Site of Anita's first showdown with Alejandro and Melanie.

Jean-Claude's Chambers

Jean-Claude's chambers are luxuriously decorated in the finest satins, with a combination of Victorian and French flavors.

Guilty Pleasures

Guilty Pleasures is the world's only all-vampire strip club, located at the Circus of the Damned.

Oakglen Cemetery

Oakglen Cemetery is where Anita and Larry raise Mr. Doughal and are attacked by Alejandro and his vamps.

Animators, Inc.

Animators, Inc. - Anita's office



Themes

Vampirism

The center theme of "Circus of the Damned" by Laurell K. Hamilton is vampirism. Anita Blake is a vampire hunter and executioner, one who destroys vampires that break the newly-introduced laws regarding vampires and murder. There are a large number of vampires in St. Louis, where Anita works and lives.

The vampires in Circus of the Damned are broken into two basic factions. The first faction belongs to Jean-Claude, newly-appointed Master of the City of St. Louis. The second faction is headed by Mr. Oliver, a one-million-year-old vampire who wants to take over the city and make vampirism illegal again.

Although Jean-Claude is growing stronger, Mr. Oliver is the strongest vampire anyone has ever seen. The only time Anita is immune to Mr. Oliver is after she becomes Alejandro's human servant.

The topic and explanations of vampirism are modernized for the reader and show how a relationship between humans and the undead could be possible in modern society. The story also reveals to readers how vampires are made, that vampire bites do not always ensure that one will turn into a vampire, and how it is possible for a human servant to become a lifelong companion to a vampire while remaining alive. It also shows that a human servant will most likely die if his or her master is killed.

Execution

In "Circus of the Damned," execution is a part of the job and therefore a part of daily life. The vampires execute victims for food and execute each other when necessary.

Part of Anita Blake's job is to serve as The Executioner, a job that she does well. Many people live in fear of Anita due to her legendary skills as a vampire slayer. In the story, someone asks Anita how many legal kills she has under her belt, to which Anita answers 14. The number goes up by the end of the story.

Another executioner is Edward. Like Anita, Edward is a vampire slayer. Unlike Anita, who is also an animator, Edward is a bounty hunter and paid assassin. Edward used to hunt only humans but it became mundane so "Death" switched to monsters. The basic structure of Anita and Edward's professions are the same, although Anita works inside the law and Edward works for the client who can pay the most. Both are highly skilled and ruthless.

In Circus of the Damned, it is Mr. Oliver's wish to execute Jean-Claude so he can take over as Master of the City. As part of a plan to make vampirism illegal once again, Mr.



Oliver plans to have all vampires in the city slaughter humans. Then the lawmakers should realize that vampires are not human and should be hunted.

Betrayal

Betrayal is one of the main themes in "Circus of the Damned." There are many examples of betrayal throughout the story.

Jean-Claude and Anita have a strange relationship. Jean-Claude wants to have Anita as his human servant until the end of time, and although Anita is attracted to Jean-Claude, he is a vampire. Previously, Jean-Claude had given Anita two vampire marks to save her life. In *Circus of the Damned*, Jean-Claude gives Anita the third mark, again to save her life after she is bitten by the lamia. Anita is furious and feels betrayed. Jean-Claude knows how she feels about receiving the third and fourth marks and yet he did it anyway. Jean-Claude knows that he will most likely not be forgiven but had to save Anita.

Another example of betrayal occurs when Melanie tells Anita that Mr. Oliver wants to meet with her. It is a trap and Melanie intends to give Anita to Alejandro. With Anita as his human servant, Alejandro can overthrow Jean-Claude and become Master of the City. Unlike Anita, Alejandro and Melanie feel no remorse for their crimes. Anita attempts to save Jean-Claude.

The last example of betrayal is when Anita accepts the stake from Mr. Oliver. Oliver thinks Anita is going to serve the final betrayal upon Jean-Claude but Anita betrays Oliver instead and stakes him through the heart.



Style

Point of View

Circus of the Damned by Laurell K. Hamilton is written in the first person point of view, through the eyes of the main character, Anita Blake. The use of first person in the story works well in that the reader is able to understand the modern world of vampires and vampire slayers through the eyes of one of its practitioners. The reader is taken on a journey along with Anita and is enabled to see inside the mind of The Executioner as she wends through a complicated case of vampires, murder, and betrayal.

The use of first person makes the story seem slightly less fantastic to the point that the reader can grasp what the future might be like if vampirism was to become legal in the eyes of the federal court system. Because vampirism is not legal in all countries, Anita often experiences interaction with foreign vampires, such as Jean-Claude and Mr. Oliver.

While third person omniscient may have enabled the reader to get a broader view of the life of a vampire and vampire hunter in St. Louis, as well as the inner workings of the vampire hierarchy, the use of first person lends an air of authenticity to the story and allows the character of Anita Blake to become real. Additionally, the reader can experience the level of fear the characters feel as they see the story through the characters' eyes.

Setting

The setting of Circus of the Damned takes place entirely in St. Louis and surrounding areas. There are several settings used within the city. They include Animators Inc., Anita's office; Circus of the Damned, home to Jean-Claude, the Master of the City; a cemetery; Anita's apartment; as well as some outdoor settings. Each of the settings used throughout the story has a distinct flavor. While Animators Inc. and Anita's apartment are relatively nondescript, the residences and hot spots for the vampires and other undead characters are rather vivid in their descriptions. One of the most unique is Jean-Claude's office and living quarters. All are decorated in elegant fabrics and colors which remind Anita of older times, most likely those of Jean-Claude's days, more than 200 years ago.

The Circus of the Damned is dark and mysterious, which makes it attractive to humans and the undead alike. The structures are always dark and conducive to vampire living. The Circus of the Damned is designed much like any other circus, with loud music, attractions, and bright colors. There are always vampires and shapeshifters working or lurking around the premises, eyes and ears open. All the employees at the Circus are loyal to Jean-Claude. The main feature in the Circus of the Damned is the big tent. Unlike many circus tents, the big tent has permanent fixtures such as concrete stairs



and bleachers. Jean-Claude's office is also located upstairs in the big tent, which leads the reader to realize that the big tent is not actually a tent at all, except for its appearance.

Anita regards the Circus much like any other, except with an enhanced creepiness factor.

Language and Meaning

The language used in *Circus of the Damned* tends to be relatively informal and relies a great deal on dialogue between the characters. Although Anita is a professional animator and vampire slayer, the jargon used on the job is not difficult or something that requires much explanation. The tools used by Anita are common, and there is little need for explanation of unfamiliar terms. Even the references to the lycanthropes, lamias, and human servants are relatively self-explanatory.

It is clear by the use of specific language regarding weapons that Anita is a professional executioner. There are many references to guns, knives, and other weapons used throughout the course of the work day for an animator and executioner.

Although several of the vampires in the story are ancient, there seems to be little reference to outdated languages. Only Jean-Claude uses his native French on occasion.

The language used by Anita is very descriptive and is used in such a way that the person she is speaking to can fully understand the meaning and context of what is being said.

Structure

"*Circus of the Damned*" by Laurell K. Hamilton is a work of fiction. The book is 329 pages in length and is comprised of 49 chapters. The shortest chapter is 2 pages in length; the longest chapter is 19 pages in length. The average length of a chapter is 7 pages.

The first chapter shows Anita in her office environment with a hostile client. The reader is able to get a glimpse into how Anita works.

Chapters 2 - 3 detail Anita's foray into the field, investigating a murder that was committed by five vampires.

Chapters 4 - 6 find Anita at the Circus of the Damned, where she is supposed to meet Jean-Claude in his office. Anita meets Stephen, a shapeshifter who will be her escort. Once inside, Anita sees the show of the night in the form of a giant cobra and is anxious to flee. In addition to meeting Jean-Claude, Anita also has the misfortune to encounter Yasmeen, another master vampire, who is also a sadist.



Chapters 7 - 10 find Anita unwittingly joining forces with Jean-Claude and the other monsters to defeat the giant cobra. Anita also meets Richard Zeeman, who will come to play a significant role in the story as well as in Anita's life.

Chapters 11 - 47 flesh out the rest of the story, including the battle with master vampires, Anita's relationships with Jean-Claude and Richard, and the introduction of Anita's new co-worker, Larry Kirkland.

Chapter 48 finds Anita in the hospital recovering from another near-death episode.

Chapter 49 takes a glimpse into Anita's feelings for Jean-Claude and her confusion about what comes next.



Quotes

"When you raise the dead for a living, you have to spill a little blood."
Page 1

"He hadn't had enough blood in him to cause lividity marks. Whoever had murdered him had drained him completely."
Page 10

"For a corpse to rise as a vampire, you have to have just one vampire feeding over a space of several days. Three bites ending with death, and you get a vampire."
Page 14

"I had been stabbed, beaten, shot, strangled, and vampire bit in the space of four months."
Page 24

"Lycanthropy is a disease, like AIDS."
Page 33

"The only things we have in common are violence and the dead. I don't think that's much to base a relationship on."
Anita to Jean-Claude
Page 71

"I'm not prejudiced, but God help me, the man has to at least be alive. Walking corpses, no matter how pretty, are just not my cup of tea."
Page 79

"'You must do something besides shoot large snakes in the head,' he said."
Richard to Anita
Page 83

"Edward always had a weapon unless someone had taken it away from him."
Page 91

"It's two o'clock in the freaking morning; it better not be a social call."
Anita to Edward
Page 92

"I couldn't betray either of them. Which left me ass-deep in alligators."
Page 100

"Violent death is the ultimate invasion."
Page 115

"If I'd been a vampire, I would've come then, while half of us were vomiting our guts out."
Page 135

Topics for Discussion

Why did Anita think the first murder had been committed by a master vampire and his followers?

What was Jean-Claude's motivation in allowing Yasmeen to attack Anita?

Why does Anita stay at Animators, Inc. if Bert insists on making inappropriate appointments?

Do you think it could be considered rape when Jean-Claude violated Anita's mind?

Why do you think Alejandro wanted to see Oliver die?

How do you think Anita will handle Richard's admitting to being a lycanthrope?

Do you think Jean-Claude will ever forgive Anita for betraying him?

Do you believe that Alejandro's marks canceled out Jean-Claude's?