

Feast of Fools Study Guide

Feast of Fools by Rachel Caine

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Plot Summary

"Feast of Fools" is the fourth of twelve novels in the Morganville Vampires series by Rachel Cain, a Texas-based author who has written more than 30 books in the paranormal, horror, and fantasy genres. It was published as a Signet imprint of Penguin's New American Library in 2009, having previously been published as a NAL Jam edition. "Feast of Fools" is set in Morganville, the site of the fictional Texas Prairie University. On the surface, it seems to be a typical American college town but is actually inhabited by vampires and the humans they interact with. Many of the town's locales are connected by a network of portals and wormholes allowing some of the vampires to move quickly between locales. The plot centers around a visit to Morgantown by a group of powerful, ancient, "old-school" vampires led by Mr. Bishop, who seeks to exercise control. The novel portrays the struggle between the followers of Amelie and the followers of Bishop, who is her father. The leading female protagonist, Claire, befriends an old vampire named Myrnin and tries to enlist her housemates (Michael, Eve, and Shane) in the battle against Bishop. The novel's climax is a grand masked ball organized by Bishop, to which all the vampires in town are expected to bring a human as a symbolic sacrifice, pledging their loyalty to Bishop. Pandemonium breaks loose at the ball when some of the characters, inspired by Claire and Myrnin, revolt against Bishop.



Chapters 1

Chapters 1 Summary

Claire Danvers, a bright, 16-year-old college student with aspirations to go to MIT or Caltech, is sent by her parents to spend her freshman year at Texas Prairie University in the small college town of Morganville, just an hour from her home. Her parents want her to study nearby before venturing out into the wider world. Morganville, however, is a town ruled by vampires, who live and work there alongside the human population. Although on the surface Morganville looks and seems like any other small college town, its infrastructure and amenities are unique: a blood bank to which all humans are required to donate so the vampire population can be sustained, for example; also, portals allowing vampires and their friends to move instantaneously between houses without having to go outdoors.

The novel opens with Claire getting settled in her new lodgings, which she shares with three other housemates: Michael Glass, a new vampire; Eve Rosser, a Goth; and Shane Collins, whose absentee dad is a vampire killer. New to town, Claire has just started a part-time job for Amelie, known as the Founder. Claire's job is to work at the local blood bank, where she befriends Myrnin, an old-school vampire who is an inpatient there. As night falls, Claire is asked to make scrambled-egg breakfast for her housemates and three visiting vampires, including Mr. Bishop, an ancient vampire "of the old school" who is Amelie's father. In the kitchen, the four housemates have a tense meeting about the sudden arrival of the vampire entourage. Michael, Shane, and Eve try to persuade Claire to go along with Bishop's demands until Amelie can come to sort things out. Claire tells them she is afraid to disobey Mr. Bishop. Michael and Shane discuss their ambivalent feelings about their unwelcome visitor. Michael confesses that Mr. Bishop is a formidable force to reckon with.

In the midst of their conversation, Claire's mother and father suddenly appear on the scene. Claire is unnerved at her parents' arrival, feeling their presence is just adding to the nightmare she is experiencing. Claire's mother offers to help with the cooking, unaware that the newly arrived guests are vampires. Claire's father suspects that something is not right and tries to get information from Claire about the identity of Mr. Bishop and his entourage. Eve tries to persuade Claire to summon Amelie over to straighten out the mess. Michael seems particularly tense over the sudden arrival of the visitors: "He looked bone white, strained, worse than he had in the months since he'd been transformed fully into a vampire." The three visiting vampires suddenly enter the kitchen and begin to assert their dominance over the scene. Mr. Bishop announces they are ready to be served a meal and threatens to rip Michael's gut out if any of his housemates try to poison him or his entourage. Claire's father rises to confront Bishop but sinks back in fear and resignation at the vampire's cold attitude. The situation is tense and strained, and Eve tells Claire's parents that Mr. Bishop is a distant relative of Michael's visiting from Europe. Shane, who is recovering from a recent stabbing, tries to reassure Claire, who is comforted by looking into his calm eyes, which she finds to be



beautiful. "No vamp's going to come between us," he vows. As she brings the food to the table, Claire suddenly becomes aware of the tension in the air, how the mood of the house felt "dark, cold, foreboding. Almost hostile." The house itself, and the furniture, suddenly seemed "hunched and deformed, nothing warm or welcoming about it." As Eve tells her, "I think if the house had teeth, it'd be chomping down right now." Claire pulls out her cell phone to call Amelie, the "Founder of Morganville." As Claire's boss and the ruler of the town, Amelie is officially known as Claire's "patron" but in reality is her "owner." She leaves a voicemail message for Claire and then calls Oliver, the owner of the Common Grounds coffee shop.

When Claire tells Oliver what is happening, Oliver warns her and Michael to follow orders and do nothing to antagonize Mr. Bishop until he and Amelie can get there. Eve reassures her housemates that things will be fine, pointing to Claire's ID bracelet with Amelie's symbol, identifying Claire as "property, someone who'd signed over life and limb and soul to a vampire in return for certain protections and considerations." This bracelet signified that Amelie and maybe even Oliver would theoretically come to her defense against other vampires. Again, Shane comes to her side to comfort her. He is still recovering from his stabbing, and wears a bracelet indicating that no vampire can take his blood—if they play by the rules. Claire and Shane fear that Mr. Bishop, not being from Morganville, might be more of a threat to them than the familiar vampires around them, including their own housemate Michael. Suddenly, there is a loud crash in the living room, for one of the vampires in Bishop's entourage has gotten into a fight with Michael. Eve confronts the vampire with a kitchen knife, ordering him to let Michael go, but the vampire refuses until Michael apologizes.

The vampire knocks the knife from Eve's hand, but she remains adamant and challenges the vampire to bite her. Shane herds his friends into the kitchen as a protective gesture. The fight continues, with the vampire knocking Michael to the kitchen floor as the temperature of the room grows so chill that Claire can see her frosty breath. Suddenly and explosively, the locks snap on the kitchen door and Oliver enters, dressed in black and looking formidable. Amelie enters after him, sweeping across the threshold with an authoritative attitude that defuses the tense situation. Wearing her perfectly tailored yellow silk suit and perfectly coiffed hair, she gives off an aura "as powerful as an unexploded bomb." She orders the aggressive vampire to leave Michael alone, addressing him by his name, François, threatening to destroy him even though she rarely kills her own. Immediately, François lets go of Michael and bows humbly in obeisance to "Mistress Amelie." As Amelie and François go into the living room to see Bishop, Michael tells his housemates that he had intervened when the vampire had tried to attack Mrs. Danvers, Claire's mother. Shane puts his arms around Claire to reassure her that Amelie is in charge and will protect everyone. In trying to release his grip, Claire accidentally jabs Shane in the stomach, causing his wounds to bleed, but Eve adjusts his bandages for him and tends to his wounds using a first-aid kit. Claire suddenly feels a pang of jealousy, thinking that Eve and Shane are flirting with each other. Claire's parents emerge from the living room, looking rather blank and disoriented. They suggested having dinner, but Michael suggests they all go out to eat.



Chapters 1 Analysis

This chapter introduces the main characters and sets the overall scenario for the novel: namely that Morganville is a town ruled by vampires, and that an entourage of three of them have just arrived in town on a mysterious mission that will unfold as the novel progresses. The main characters are described in some detail, including Claire and her housemates Eve, Michael, and Shane, whose lives will all be deeply affected by the vampire culture in which they live. Michael, for example, is revealed as a new vampire; Claire is described as being under the protection of Amelie, the vampire who rules Morganville and whose father, the evil Mr. Bishop, has come to challenge her authority. Eve's brother, Jason, is described as a slacker ne'er-do-well who had stabbed Shane fairly recently. The dynamics of each of the characters are sketched in some detail, setting up tension that will be the source of the events that take place during the course of the novel. Even the house where they live (the Glass House) takes on a life of its own, at times manifesting itself in a sinister fashion with a dark, foreboding quality. The altercation toward the end of the chapter, as well as Amelie's entrance, foreshadow the conflicts that are to come.



Chapters 2

Chapters 2 Summary

The four housemates and Claire's parents go to an all-night diner in Morganville for hamburgers. Claire feels a need to warn the other human students about the dangers lurking in this city of vampires, but the bracelet on her wrist reminds her of her loyalty to Amelie. Michael is described as having a soothing presence that makes everything seem normal, despite all the traumatic events that have just happened. Claire's parents seem a bit numbed by the whole scene involving Mr. Bishop and his entourage. Mr. Danvers complains to Shane that he doesn't want his 16-year-old daughter living in a house with "a bunch of hormone-crazy teenagers—no offense..." He suggests that Claire move in with them since they have just moved into town with a place of their own. Claire protests that her father doesn't trust her, and is furious to hear his opinion given that Shane had just defended her and Eve while putting his own life at risk. Claire is about to vent her feelings when Shane grasps her hands and admits that his father is right—that Mr. Danvers really doesn't know who Shane is. Despite Claire's protest, Shane thinks it a good idea for her to move back with her parents, especially because Shane's dad had threatened to come back "and finish what he started." Eve defends Shane by telling Mr. Danvers that she will look after her, and that Shane would never take advantage of her.

Throughout these exchanges, Michael remains silent as though he doesn't know what to say. In spite of Eve's supportive words, Mr. Danvers insists that Claire move back with her parents, even though Mrs. Danvers also seems puzzled and doesn't know what to say. Michael finally breaks his silence by saying that Mr. Bishop planted the suggestion in the Danvers' minds to have Claire move back with them. Michael speculates on Bishop's motivations: perhaps to mess with people, perhaps to separate the housemates, perhaps to piss off Amelie. Mr. Danvers suddenly grows agitated and orders Claire to move back, threatening to press charges against Michael if he has harmed her in any way, implying a sexual liaison. Claire declares that she is still a virgin, much to the discomfort of her mother, who tries to change the subject. The group sits in stunned silence until Michael's cell phone rings. It is a call from Amelie summoning them back to the house. Michael respectfully tells Mr. Danvers that the housemates will bring Claire back with them.

On the way back to the house, Claire concludes that her parents just want her to be their "helpless little girl," a situation that she resolves to resist. Michael drops the Danvers' off at their house, though Mr. Danvers continues to insist Claire come home with them. As the housemates return home, Claire is confronted with a variety of emotions, ranging from anger at her parents to frustration, worry, and outright fear. The housemates reflect on how much trouble Bishop might bring to them, and resolve to look out for each other. When they return home, they find only Amelie and Oliver are there, playing chess. It is revealed that it was Oliver who had made Michael into a vampire some months earlier. Michael tells Oliver that he is not welcome in the house,



but Amelie urges him to be more civil, since it is her house, after all. As Amelie tells the group they have to make plans to protect themselves against Bishop, Oliver removes one of the bishops from the chessboard. Amelie admits that Bishop is her father, in the sense that "both my human and immortal bloodlines flow through him." Oliver says that he sent Bishop away in a limousine to stay in one of the Founder houses. Amelie checkmates him and sends him away, telling him not to return. She tells the housemates to avoid getting involved in the Bishop situation any further, telling them that it is her affair, not theirs. She walks upstairs and disappears through a portal.

As the housemates prepare for bed, Eve and Michael briefly touch hands and caress each other for a second, which is noticed by Claire, who accuses them of being too obviously affectionate. Claire telephones her parents while Shane holds her hand for comfort. Reassured that Amelie has not gone to stay with her parents, Claire wishes them good night and tells them she is not going to come stay with them as Mr. Danvers had demanded. Claire and Shane relax and start playing a game of chess to the sounds of Eve and Michael's lovemaking upstairs.

Chapters 2 Analysis

This chapter describes in some detail the two major female characters: Claire and Amelie, and their "daughter" roles. Much of the chapter portrays the dynamics involving Claire and her parents, and her growing romantic relationship with Shane. Claire is described as a girl on the verge of adulthood—ready to move away from her parental home but not quite ready for complete independence. Claire's parents are portrayed as being somewhat overprotective. Amelie is portrayed as the rebellious daughter of the ominous Mr. Bishop, who has just arrived in town with his entourage. In general, this chapter further sets the stage for the significant conflicts that will unfold as plans for the masked ball materialize.



Chapters 3

Chapters 3 Summary

The following morning, Claire wakes up to a new day that seems to be brighter and worry-free. Only when she is in the shower do memories of the past night flood back upon her and she realizes that things are not so well, after all. She walks down to the still-disheveled kitchen and leaves for school. As she ambles along, it occurs to her that the town looks like any normal place, that no one would believe what really goes on in Morganville under cover of darkness. Monica Morrell, her archenemy and the daughter of the town's mayor, drives by in a red convertible, stops the car and accuses Claire of trying to kill her with bad drugs. Monica is referring to red crystals that Claire had stolen from Myrnin, the vampire she looks after as part of her job responsibilities. After Monica leaves, she realizes she is being watched by someone. It is Jason, Eve's brother, the pale slacker who had stabbed Shane some months earlier. Claire feels threatened by Jason's presence, but he protests that he had acted in self-defense. She accuses him of killing other people. But Jason seems anxious to talk to Eve and make amends, she suspects. Claire wonders whether Jason has become a full-fledged vampire and resolves to ask Amelie about that.

After her classes, which includes a mythology class on voodoo and zombies, Claire goes to the cafeteria where she runs into Eve, working as a barista. Eve confesses that she had long had a crush on Michael, and that she had attended all his music concerts over the years, including a recent one at Common Grounds, where he'd been the headliner. Claire confesses to Eve that she had just seen Jason, and passes on the message that he wanted Eve to call her to discuss something about their dad. Eve confesses that she hadn't spoken to her parents since her eighteenth birthday because they tried to sell her to Brandon. Eve describes her family as toxic, "the original nuclear family. As in nuclear bomb." Eve tells Claire that she refuses to get in touch with her brother Jason. At this point, Claire's telephone rings. It is Dr. Robert Mills, the physician who had treated Shane's wounds at the hospital. Dr. Mills asks Claire about the red crystals she had given to Monica Morrell. She tells him she got them from a laboratory, and Dr. Mills demands to know its whereabouts, so he can do further research about it. Claire feels she needs to check in with Amelie before she can give out this information. Amelie reassures Claire that Dr. Mills is a responsible man who will respect the vampires and keep their secrets. It is revealed here that the red crystals are an experimental drug that would help vampires ward off the effects of a degenerative disease that would rob them of their ability to reproduce. Claire is afraid that the doctor will investigate Myrnin's lab. Myrnin is the vampire that has become a friend and mentor to Claire. Amelie tells Claire that she doesn't want any human being to go into that lab, since there are secrets to be kept. She will allow Claire to deliver any materials to the lab on behalf of Dr. Mills, but must not allow him to enter the lab personally. She reassures Claire that she is being protected, and suggested she discuss any issues with Oliver. Claire goes to visit Dr. Mills, who tells her he has been in touch with Amelie about a more effective version of the red crystals that he has developed. He tells Claire the



crystals can be injected by a dart gun, and gives her the assignment of administering the dose to Myrnin, since he himself cannot visit the laboratory where Myrnin is a patient. He also asks Claire to take a blood sample for him. Then he asks her if she has heard about any new vampires in town, an obvious reference to the visit by Bishop and his entourage, but she pretends not to know anything about it.

Back home that evening, the housemates prepare to have dinner. Michael is practicing his guitar, Eve plans to cook, so it's up to Claire and Shane to go to the all-night grocery for hamburger. She welcomes the opportunity to be alone with him even for half an hour, which is the time allotted to them by Michael. In the parking lot at the grocery, Shane tells Claire he wants to spend fifteen minutes talking with her in private. He tells her that he had done some research on Bishop in the vampire collection at the town library. He believes Bishop to have been an old vampire who killed lots of his fellow vampires about five hundred years ago, implying that he might want to kill some of the leading vampires in Morganville. Shane then gives starts making out with Claire, kissing her and fondling her, which she finds to be blissful. They break their embrace only when Shane reminds Claire they have to get back home within fifteen minutes to avoid the wrath of Michael. Minutes later, in the large grocery store, Claire is shocked to find Shane pressed up against a shelf with Ysandre, one of the female vampires in Bishop's entourage, a lithe, black-clad woman described as "feminine, but dangerous." She purrs seductively to Shane, but he tells her to go away. Infuriated, she accuses him of doing research on Bishop at the library and threatens him with harm unless he forms a liaison with her. Ysandre leaves, and Claire rushes up to Shane, who is visibly shaken by the encounter. As if in a trance, Shane hurries back to the car and drives Claire back to the house without even looking at her.

Chapters 3 Analysis

This chapter moves beyond the Glass House to describe some of the other important scenes in Morganville, including the university where Claire is a freshman, and Myrnin's laboratory, where she works as a research assistant for Dr. Mills, who is trying to develop a cure for the disease that is afflicting the town's vampires. Myrnin, an old vampire, is institutionalized there and is used as a kind of guinea pig for blood-related experiments. Myrnin and Claire develop a strong friendship, and he will eventually become one of the prime instigators in the action of the novel. The chapter also introduces Ysandre, another female protagonist. She is a vampire who tries to seduce Shane and bring him under the control of Bishop. The chapter is important in developing further the identities of some of the main characters, showing personality traits that will later impact their activities and, consequently, the plot of the novel.



Chapters 4

Chapters 4 Summary

Arriving home, Shane immediately sequesters himself in his room and does not come down to enjoy the meal Eve has made. Eve and Claire start discussing his behavior when Michael orders them to stop talking about the situation, provoking Eve to snap back at Michael, complaining that he's asserting his male privilege by ordering her around. Claire realizes that Michael's vampire side is being to assert herself, but his "Michael" side takes over again and he soothes Claire's fears by stroking her cheek. Claire goes up to Shane's room to try to commiserate with him. Shane tells her that the powerful vampires can get inside your head and make you do things you don't want to. Shane tells Claire that he really didn't want to be involved with Ysandre, but "she made me want her." Shane begins to be intimate with Claire, telling her that he needs her to survive, and that he's really worried about what Jason might do to them. Claire promises Shane that she will always trust him and announces her intention to stay with him all night, though he insists that they remain clothed.

The next morning, Claire awakens next to Shane, feeling calm and peaceful knowing that he is lying next to her. They'd agreed to remove their clothing above the waist: Shane's shirt and Claire's camisole and bra, but they kept their pants on. Claire fantasizes about losing her virginity to Shane, knowing that he feels she is too young. As Shane awakens, he realizes his hand is resting just above Claire's hip. When Shane goes to the bathroom, Eve gets dressed and hears Eve coming upstairs. When Eve knocks on the door to Claire's room, Claire slips out of Shane's room, lying that she had been in the bathroom. Eve reports that Michael left the house in the middle of the night and she has no idea where he went. She notices Claire wearing the same clothes as the night before and worries that she may have been intimate with Shane. Eve suggests going to Common Grounds and speaking to Sam, a vampire who is Michael's grandfather and who seems trustworthy since Amelie had come to his rescue when he'd been staked. At that moment, an envelope is delivered to the house. The envelope contains an elegantly printed invitation to Shane, summoning him to attend a masked ball in honor of Mr. Bishop's arrival. The invitation was sent by Ysandre, who asks him to be her escort "at her pleasure."

Eve and Claire visit Common Grounds to talk to Sam, who doesn't know Michael's whereabouts but promises to track his car with a GPS. Eve is afraid that Bishop may have kidnapped Michael to do him harm. Sam tells Eve not to interfere, telling her that he will take care of the investigation. When the girls arrive back home, Shane answers the phone, telling the caller to "go screw yourself." Claire suggests doing a *69 to find out who the caller had been. Eve punches in the code and finds out it was her brother, Jason, who had stabbed Shane some months earlier. Jason tells Eve that their father is very ill, expecting to live only a few days, suffering from liver damage due to his drinking. Eve has mixed feelings over the news, reporting that his father had thrown her out because she refused to be "fanged" as a vampire. At this point, Sam calls to let



them know that Michael is on his way home. Arriving ten minutes later, concealing his face under a black umbrella and smelling of some burnt substance, Michael reports that he had been with Amelie. Michael volunteers to go with Eve to visit her father in the hospital, and Claire asks to be dropped off to see Myrnin.

Chapters 4 Analysis

This chapter further develops the growing romantic relationship between Claire and Shane. It also fleshes out Michael's character a bit more, conveying the implications of his newly bestowed vampire status. With the unexpected delivery of Yssandre's invitation to Shane, the upcoming masked ball begins to cast its shadow over the various characters with greater intensity. This chapter also introduces Sam Glass, Michael's grandfather, who is visited by Eve and Claire at the Common Grounds coffeehouse.



Chapters 5-6

Chapters 5-6 Summary

When Claire arrives at the laboratory where Myrnin is housed, she realizes someone had given his cell a makeover. No longer bare like a monk's cell, it now is furnished with a Turkish rug, comfortable bed, and stacks of books. Classical music is playing. Claire finds him lying in bed, dressed in a blue silk dressing gown with dragons on it. Myrnin begs for food (implying blood) and Eve reports she has some new "medicine" for him in the form of the red crystals given to her by Dr. Mills. Myrnin protests that he should not have to take orders from Claire, since she is "property" but she shoots him with the dart gun, provoking him to call her a "little bitch." Claire replies that she may be a bitch, but she's not his property. He tells Claire that he does feel better, however. Claire tells Myrnin that Mr. Bishop is visiting town with François and Ysandre. He is visibly disturbed at hearing this news. He is further agitated on learning that Amelie is acknowledging Bishop's status by organizing a welcoming feast for him. He demands to be let out of his cell. He tells Claire that he and Amelie are modern predators, but that Bishop and his entourage come from a colder, harder time. Bishop, he says, was a warlord who had murdered many people in the past. Myrnin says he thought Bishop was long dead, and now feels his visit is a harbinger of bad things to come. He thinks Bishop is trying to have his revenge on Amelie for having tried to kill him. In his mind, Bishop is "old-school evil" who is trying to undo everything Amelie is trying to accomplish. He begs to be let out, but Claire refuses.

Four hours pass and the effects of the red crystals start to wear off. Claire documents this in her notebook, and tossed several blood packs into his cell: "It always gave her the creeps, but she couldn't stand to see them starve." Claire is exhausted after her visit, but decides not to take the portal directly back to her Glass House. Instead, she exits into the alley behind Grandma Day's Founder House, noticing that Grandma Day is not sitting on her porch swing, as usual. Returning home, Claire is surprised to see a police car outside her house. She finds a disheveled Shane being questioned by Officer Richard Morrell, neat and precise. Morrell had dropped by to remind Shane that he hadn't made his required blood donations. His recent hospitalization does not exempt him from his "civic duty" of donating blood; it only shields him from being attacked. Morrell threatens to arrest Shane, and Claire volunteers to make a donation, even though as a college student, she is exempt. Shane is terrified of being strapped down inside the Bloodmobile on wheels, so reluctantly goes to the Donation Center.

Driven by Officer Morrell, Claire and Shane arrive at the Donation Center and are greeted by a motherly receptionist named Rose, who had been a friend of Shane's mother. She suggests he donate two pints to make up for the deficit. To give moral support, Claire insists on donating, too, even though she is only seventeen. As Claire lies down on the donation couch, she speculates that this is what Michael felt like when he became a vampire, and that this is what people in general feel when vampires kill them by draining their blood. Shane tells her that he resents donating blood because it



would only end up in the mouths of the vampires, even though Claire suggests that some of it will go to humans who are bona fide accident victims. He knows he will be hunted down if he refuses his duty, as is the case now. Claire is tempted to ask him about Ysandre and the invitation, but doesn't want him to feel upset as he had been last night. When they are finished donating blood, Shane opens an unmarked door to reveal a waiting room where customers of the blood are waiting, including Michael. Claire and Shane watch Michael drink down the bag of blood, which turns his eyes red and then gives them an eerie glow. Michael sees them watching, and feels betrayed and ashamed when they see him drinking the blood they had just donated. Michael apologizes to them, claiming that he didn't want them to see what he was doing. Shane and Claire resign themselves to the reality of the situation, and Claire realizes that Michael really hates what he has become—another vampire.

The next morning, Eve's father dies and the roommates discuss going to the funeral. Eve tells Claire that she will like Father Joe, the priest who will officiate at the church funeral. The four roommates drive to the church together the next afternoon, Eve dressed in black high-necked dress with a veil. Few mourners are in attendance. Mrs. Rosser is weeping so much that her mascara is smeared. She throws herself on Claire, thanking her from coming, while making a snide remark to Eve that she never really loved her father. Eve views her father's body in the coffin, saying that he was still her father even if he was a son of a bitch. Shane tells Claire that Eve's father had been brutal, hitting her on various occasions. Mrs. Rosser sobs hysterically and drapes herself over her husband's coffin. Jason appears at the back of the church, unkempt and seeming to be high. Eve tells him to show some respect by leaving the church. Michael takes control of the situation. As they leave the church, he sees Ysandre approaching and tells everyone to get into the cars. Ysandre intercepts the car keys when Michael tosses them to Shane but returns them to Michael when he threatens to accuse her of car theft. She explains that she simply wants to see if Shane had received her invitation to the masked ball. The group goes to Denny's for a meal and see flyers announcing Michael's upcoming guitar concert at Common Grounds. Michael says he was keeping the appearance a secret from them in case his show turns out to be a flop.

Chapters 5-6 Analysis

This chapter describes in greater detail the relationship between Claire, Myrnin, and Dr. Mills. It foreshadows the conflict Myrnin will later have with both Amelie and Bishop. Of especial importance is the fact that Myrnin is used to provide much historical information that can help Claire understand and interpret the dynamics that are occurring at the present moment. Myrnin's perspective strongly influences Claire in the conclusions she draws about what is happening in Morganville. Officer Morrill, a member of the Morganville Police Department, is introduced. Through his character readers learn that the humans in the town have a civic duty to donate blood for their fellow citizens who are vampires. Also introduced here is the Donation Center, which accepts blood transfusions from donors and immediately transfers it to vampires in need. The death and funeral of Eve's father is described in this chapter, allowing the reader to learn more

about the frayed relationship between the family and Jason, their "black sheep." The chapter also fleshes out Michael's character by describing his guitar-playing talents.



Chapters 7-8

Chapters 7-8 Summary

Michael goes off to his guitar gig as Claire makes chili dogs for herself and Shane at home, unable to contain her excitement at Michael's performance. Shane agrees she should go so Eve doesn't have to be at Common Grounds alone. Claire wears a short skirt and tights, but puts a looser top on so she won't be embarrassed if her parents show up. Shane wears his usual slacker-casual style, though he seems to have combed his hair a little. Before they leave, when Shane kisses her passionately, they both entertain the idea of staying at home alone. Shane suggests they "live dangerously" by walking over to Common Grounds though it is dark. Claire reflects that this is her first real date with Shane—their first real date out on their own. As they enter Common Grounds, Claire sees Michael and Eve standing together; she thinks the two are holding hands. As Michael prepares to play, Claire experiences a deep intimacy that she hadn't felt before—a feeling that Michael is very "hot." She is especially moved to hear the lyrics Michael had been writing the other night. She realizes they were written for Eve. She notices Amelie and Sam in the audience, who are also moved by Michael's singing. A feeling of euphoria and camaraderie prevails in Common Grounds during the concert; Michael's singing is warmly received by everyone in attendance. He receives three encores and thunderous standing ovations. When he leaves the stage, he runs over to Eve and kisses her so deeply that Claire has to look away. He hugs Claire and gives her a kiss on the cheek. Claire thanks Shane for the best date she's ever had, and he promises better things to come.

Back home after the concert, Claire is going to bed when she hears Eve scream alarmingly. As the housemates rush downstairs, they find Eve locking the door and comforting her friend Miranda, bruised and bloodied, with a gash on her head. Miranda is described as "just a kid, really—at that gawky stage where girls both yearned to be and feared to be women." Miranda pleads for her friends not to call an ambulance for fear of what they—presumably vampires—might do to her at the hospital. Eve helps bandage up Miranda and notice bite marks on her neck. They conclude that the wounds were inflicted by Charles, a vampire who habitually violates the laws against preying on the under-aged.

Miranda tries to downplay the incident, but Shane is indignant, calling Charles a pedophile. However, Claire goes upstairs to find Michael has just emerged from the shower. He is anxiety-ridden at Miranda's presence in the house, saying that he can still smell her blood even though he's washed it off. Miranda's bleeding is evidently making Michael feel delirious. He says he is hungry, and Claire goes to the kitchen and brings him one of three bottles of blood from a back shelf of the refrigerator. Michael drinks the bottle straight down, to Claire's horror. Michael is aghast that he has let Claire witness him drinking the blood. Back downstairs, Miranda is having a psychic episode; she is lying as if in a trance and talking in a monotone voice about seeing the upcoming feast—the masked ball—so full of anger and deception, attended by the "walking dead."



Miranda says that this disease is running rampant among the vampires in town and may infect the humans as well. Miranda thinks someone is going to destroy Morganville, and Michael concludes she's talking about Mr. Bishop.

Miranda sleeps on the floor all night, and Claire reflects the next morning on how sad it is that Miranda doesn't quite fit in. She is tolerated, but is somewhat creepy and lacking empathy. Claire understands why Miranda was defending the vampire who was feeding on her—he probably is the only one who ever shows her any affection. Claire's mother telephones to talk about how she and her husband are getting adjusted to life in Morganville. She tells Claire that Amelie and Mr. Bishop had invited the Danvers' to a get-acquainted party downtown, which makes Mrs. Danvers realize that Morganville is controlled by vampires. She frighteningly confesses to Claire her regret for letting her live in the town. Claire reassures her mother that Amelie is their friend, and that Claire is even doing some work for her. She again resists her mother's suggestion to move out of the house, telling her that her housemates are her friends and that she will be safe there.

Some degree of "normalcy" returns to life in Morganville after the troubling events of recent days. Claire thinks about the upcoming masked ball and resents the fact that Ysandre will be going with Shane. Eve tells Claire that she will be going to the ball with Michael. Claire realizes that she is the only one in the group who will not be going. She confesses her disappointment at dinner, and Shane tells her he has no choice but to go with Ysandre. Claire vanishes into her room and bursts into tears. Shane comes to her room and confesses that Ysandre had threatened to kill Claire if he did not go to the ball with her. Claire and Shane cuddle, which makes Claire feel a little better. Shane reassures her that he'll be protected, since Michael will be there. He makes Claire promise that she will stay with her parents that night for her own protection.

Claire visits Myrnin's laboratory only to find Oliver there instead. He tells her of his connection with Mr. Bishop, assuring her that he is on her side against a common enemy. Oliver admits that he'd met Bishop a long time ago, in Greece. When Claire asks whether Amelie tried to kill Bishop, Oliver says that Amelie's affairs are her own and that Claire shouldn't try to probe him about them. He criticizes Myrnin as a weak and ineffectual vampire who blames his weakness on some disease. Claire criticizes Oliver for turning Michael into a vampire since he could not reproduce any other way. This makes him furious and he thinks of killing her, but restrains himself. Frustrated at Claire's questioning, Oliver leaves.

Claire meets with Myrnin immediately afterwards. He feels much better after his injection, and Claire wants to do further analysis of his condition. He reports the numbness in his hands has ceased. Myrnin asks Claire to help shelve his scattered books, but without warning slashes his wrists with a rusty knife to give her a blood sample. She tells him she will take the sample to Dr. Mills for further analysis, and Myrnin suggests installing all the latest spectrometers and other lab equipment in his cell. Claire tells him about the complex laboratory procedures in the world of modern medicine, telling him "you have to learn to schedule your epiphanies." Myrnin asks her about plans for the upcoming masked ball. Claire tells him Shane is going with Ysandre



and Michael with Eve. Myrnin shows her an eighteenth-century book that describes Ysandre as being a ravishingly beautiful young woman who excited melancholy and sweetness in all who beheld her. Myrnin relates to Claire that Ysandre was a very famous murderess who had helped her husband and cousins kill a king. She had been made a vampire before her hanging. Myrnin warns Claire that Ysandre had destroyed many lives, including those of her own family. He suggests that she let Shane deal with Ysandre in his own way, and not resist her,

On the Thursday before the ball, Claire overhears two girls in the college cafeteria talking about going to the ball as Marie Antoinette and Catwoman. The girls are Monica's friends Gina and Jennifer. Claire talks with Eve, who is working at the coffee bar. Eve tells her that many of the vampires in town are taking humans to the ball, and reveals that Michael has not yet asked her. Monica arrives on the scene and shows the two girls an invitation to the ball from Michael. Claire is furious at Monica for humiliating Eve with this piece of information. She calls Amelie for advice and agrees to meet her in the secret room of the house in an hour.

An hour later, Claire makes sure none of her roommates are home and goes upstairs to the secret room to meet with Amelie, who is sitting there in a dark grey suit, surrounded by bodyguards. Amelie is upset that Claire has spoken to Myrnin about Bishop's arrival. Claire protests that Amelie hadn't told her not to, but Amelie chides her, saying that she should stay out of her affairs. Amelie asks Claire what Myrnin discussed with her, and the younger girl confesses that Myrnin thought Bishop was dead. Claire pleads with Amelie to be invited to the ball, claiming that she wants to make sure Michael and Shane will be safe. Amelie disagrees, forcefully telling Claire that neither she nor Myrnin will be attending the ball. Amelie is very angry with Claire's impertinence. As Claire goes down the stairs, she suddenly realizes that she is trapped in the stairwell, since the controls to leave the area are in the couch where Amelie was sitting. She pleads to be let free, and the door opens in front of her. Claire is drained after this encounter with Amelie and collapses against the wall, trembling. She remains there until Eve comes in, hysterically sobbing about the Michael-Monica revelation. Eve retreats to her room and threatens to kill Michael. Claire sits by her side, trying to comfort her. At that moment, Michael appears on the scene and Eve vents her anger at Monica's invitation. Michael protests that it's not what she thinks it is, but Eve remains unconvinced. Claire tells Michael how upset Eve is, but Michael replies that he didn't have much choice in the matter.

Later that evening, Shane arrives home looking quite distracted. Claire overhears him talking at the back door with Eve's brother, Jason, who wants to talk to Claire. Despite Claire's feelings toward his earlier behavior, she sees him as a scared and desperate kid at this moment. Still, she refuses to let him in the house, but seems interested with Jason says that Bishop is laying a plot for them all and that Oliver has something to tell them. Jason bursts through the door, knocking Shane backward and sending Claire sprawling to the floor. She fights Jason but stops when he puts a gun to her head. Jason drags Claire out to a black car in the driveway and forces her inside. Suddenly, Michael, angry and furious and in the guise of a vampire punches a hole in the sunroof of the car and grabs the gun away from Jason. The gun goes off as Michael throws



Jason up through the hole in the roof. He lands on the ground, the gun still in his hand. Jason shoots Michael point-blank six times, but he is not harmed. Instead, Michael rips the gun in half and moves toward Jason with the intention of biting him. Shane pulls Claire to safety, who pleads with him to stop Michael from doing the deed. Eve appears in the doorway and silently pleads with Michael not to harm her little brother. Michael lets Jason out of his armhold, but places his foot on Jason's back. Jason yells that he is working for Oliver and shows his silver bracelet as proof. Michael doesn't believe that Oliver had ordered Jason to kill him. At that moment, a police car arrives, lights flashing. Officer Richard Morrell and two detectives emerge from the vehicle, guns pointed at Michael. The officers capture Jason, whom they believe had caused the entire situation. Claire is noticeably upset about the whole turn of events, and feels reassured when Shane enfolds her in his loving embrace.

Chapters 7-8 Analysis

A lot of the menace and violence that will take place at the masked ball is foreshadowed in these chapters. After the relative harmony and good vibes of Michael's guitar concert, all hell seems to break loose. First, Eve's friend Miranda is discovered lying on the floor of Glass House, bleeding in the neck from an attack by an unknown vampire. She goes into a psychic trance and starts predicting the future, a device that allows the author to foreshadow that more violence will happen at the masked ball. Then Amelie berates Claire for interfering in her affairs. Finally, Jason arrives at the Glass House late at night to deliver a warning about Bishop's plotting, only to get into a physical confrontation with the roommates. He drags Claire to a car at gunpoint and is confronted by Michael. Jason shoots Michael in the chest six times. These chapters add significantly to the notes of foreboding and menace that are building more rapidly to a climax.



Chapters 9-10

Chapters 9-10 Summary

Eve sees her brother taken off in handcuffs, but she doesn't seem to have any emotions left, given all she's been through recently: the death of her father and the revelation that Monica was taking Michael to the ball. She falls asleep next to Michael, who pulls her close to him. Claire lies next to Shane, who lovingly strokes her hair. The next day—Friday—Claire goes to class as usual. In the restroom, she overhears Monica, Gina, and Jennifer discussing their lipstick shades at the sinks. Monica suddenly handcuffs Claire's wrist to one of the toilet stalls as she and the other two girls leave the restroom, laughing derisively. This will cause Claire to miss an all-important history test. Claire extracts her cell phone from her backpack and calls the police. She reaches Officer Morrill—Monica's brother—who tells her he's off on a domestic-disturbance call and can't come to her right away, implying that Claire should apologize to Monica. When he finally arrives and releases her from the handcuff, Claire has missed the test. Another girl, whom Claire suspects to have been a friend of Monica, maliciously tells the professor that she had seen Claire asleep in the common room earlier. Claire protests that she was handcuffed, but no one believes her.

That evening, Ysandre and François unexpectedly arrive at dinnertime, frightening Claire into asking Michael what to do. Ysandre asks to talk to Shane, and François reveals that he is holding Miranda, bound and gagged. Ysandre threatens to devour Miranda unless Claire and Michael let them inside. They agree to let them in, and Claire unties Miranda, urging her to run away. Shane comes out of the kitchen, telling Ysandre that she's not invited, and Claire, surprised at her own bravado, also demands that she leave. Michael, however, says that she can stay. He seems caught up in Ysandre's web. Michael starts having a "vampire moment"—his eyes start turning red and he displays his fangs. Shane and Claire barricade themselves in the kitchen. Claire retrieves the two remaining bottles of blood from the refrigerator and urge Michael to drink them so he will feel better, but she also reminds him, "You're not one of them. You're one of us." Michael guzzles down the blood. They go back into the living room to find Shane sitting on the couch with Ysandre. His shirt is unbuttoned, and Ysandre is caressing his chest and begins to nibble teasingly on his neck. Enraged, Claire throws the second bottle of blood at Ysandre and demands she get her claws out of her boyfriend. Ysandre sips from the bottle but thinks the blood rancid and throws it back at Claire. The blood splashes around her face and neck. Feeling the "power of the house," Claire demands Ysandre and François leave the premises immediately. They rush out into the sun and drive away, with Claire screaming after them never to come back. Claire goes back into the living room, shaking. Both Shane and Michael comfort her, wondering what gave her the energy she just displayed. Michael promises Shane he will look out for him. Claire is not so sure they will be safe, so plans to go to Oliver to see what information she can garner from him.



Claire visits Oliver at Common Grounds, surprised to find him listening intently to Eve, whom she thought was hostile to him. They are talking so intently that they do not notice Claire standing there looking at them. Rather than interrupt them, Claire orders a mocha that she really doesn't want and watches Eve stalk out of the coffee shop without looking at her. Claire thinks Eve is looking vulnerable, wearing clothing that remind her of the inside of a coffin. Oliver comes over to her, and Claire demands to know why he had sent Jason to them the other night. Oliver admits that he doesn't like Amelie, but that Bishop is quite dangerous. Claire realizes that Bishop was trying to recruit Oliver against Amelie and that Oliver had sent Jason to tell her so she could tell Amelie. Oliver also reveals that he is going to the masked ball with Eve. Oliver suggests that Claire stay home Saturday night, lock her doors and windows, and say a little prayer for her safety. Claire fears that Oliver may be right, that Bishop may take over Morganville from Amelie at the ball the next evening. Back at home, Shane suggests to Claire that they go out on a date tonight, so they can spend an evening together before everything changes on Saturday. Using Eve's car, Shane drives Claire to an all-night restaurant where they feed the jukebox and spend the night dancing in each other's arms.

Saturday morning arrives "with a breath of chill cutting like metal." Shane and Claire arrive home just before dawn. Claire had hoped for some lovemaking in the backseat, but Shane had kept to his word. Claire sleeps past noon, awakening to an empty house. She feels quite alone in the midst of "everything changing" and calls her friends, but to no avail. Officer Morrill arrives at the back door, and Claire lets him in. He offers her a ride to the ball that night and is surprised she's not going, telling her that Amelie is quite proud of her and would want to parade her around. Claire expresses her fears to Morrill that things are changing, and the police officer agrees, telling her that Bishop is very dangerous. Morrill tells Claire that her parents are going to the ball, which shocks her, but he promises to look out for them and everyone else. Claire resolves to lock herself in, but also has the urge to visit Myrnin, since he's not going to the ball either. She packs a bread knife into her backpack along with some books she'd promised to give Myrnin. She walks through deserted streets to Myrnin's lab, realizing that all the people of Morganville were frightened of what might happen that night. She unlocks the doors to Myrnin's lab and finds herself transported via a portal to a prison on the other side of town. She finds Myrnin in his cell, reading an old volume of Voltaire.

Much to Claire's discomfort, Myrnin hands her a Tupperware container of his own brain tissue, telling her he is literally giving her a piece of his mind. He tells Claire he is feeling better. To test him, she has him read 50 pages from a novel she brings him, and within minutes he recites back to her detailed information about the plot and characters. Then Myrnin rises and smashes the bars of his cell, freeing himself. This time, Claire doesn't need to inject him with a dart since Myrnin takes the blood pack directly from her backpack. Myrnin tells Claire that the drugs are working, which will enable him to get better and save his people. He assures Claire that she and her friends and family will be protected if Bishop's experiment fails. Myrnin tells Amelie that, at the feast, every vampire invitee will bring a token gift of blood in the person of another human being. The gesture is ceremonial, but Myrnin warns Claire that it doesn't have to be. Claire now understands why she was not invited to the ball—because Amelie wanted to protect her and Eve. Myrnin tells Claire that Amelie needs him at the ball for her to prevail. He



suggests Claire accompany him as his escort: she will be Harlequin and he will be Pierrot. Myrnin takes Claire via portals to secret room in the Glass House where they find the costumes they need packed away in ancient trunks. Myrnin also finds an ancient vial of holy water that he recommends as protection for Claire, and also gives her a cross. He also arms himself with a scabbard, telling her that only vampires should do any killing, if necessary.

Chapters 9-10 Analysis

The action in these chapters move ever more quickly toward an inevitable climax. There is much more tension and conflict between the "villains" (Ysandre, François) and the "good guys" (Claire, Amelie, Myrnin), foreshadowing the all-out mayhem to come. These chapters describe the final two days in the narrative: Friday and Saturday, the night of the masked ball. It seems as if everyone is having "blood feuds" in the climactic hours leading up the ball. Even Myrnin rips out some of his brain cells, giving Claire a "piece of his mind." Darkness and terror stalk these chapters, giving the reader a sense of doom. The chapters also resolve one great unanswered question: will Claire go to the ball, and with whom? The mystery is resolved when Myrnin asks her to go with him, disguised as Harlequin and Pierrot. This development underscores the important role that Myrnin plays in the narrative as the instigator of action.



Chapters 11

Chapters 11 Summary

The Glass House, where the roommates live, had portals enabling quick access to other places in Morganville, such as the other Founder Houses and the prison where Myrnin has his laboratory. Claire has come to think of it as the Impossible Travel Network. One of the doorways leads to Amelie's castle where the masked ball is to take place. Myrnin takes Claire through the portal via what looks like a janitor's closet. As they are being teleported, Myrnin starts speaking gibberish, an indication that the serum is wearing off. Claire gives him an injection with a syringe she is carrying. After a moment of uncertainty, he begins to come back to normal. They enter a set of white swinging doors and enter the round foyer of the Elders' Council Building, which is packed with masked revelers—all the vampires in town have brought a human friend. Claire notices various costumed couples: François and Jennifer, disguised as Zorro and a 1960s girl in miniskirt and tie-dye; Michael and Monica, disguised as a priest with Marie Antoinette; Oliver and Eve; Claire's father in a bear costume. Ysandre, wearing skintight red rubber, has Shane on a leash, complete with furry dog mask. Myrnin tells Claire that Ysandre is a devil, but that Shane won't be hurt. Claire resolves to get her family and friends safely out of the situation and confront Ysandre. They see Miranda dressed as Medusa with snakes in her hair accompanied by the pedophile Charles in a Sherlock Holmes costume. Sam orders Myrnin to leave but he refuses, desiring to protect Claire.

The formalities begin, with John of Leeds announcing the guests as they enter. Myrnin tells Claire that John had been a herald to King Henry in centuries past. He announces them as "Lord Myrnin of Conwy, with his attendant, Claire Danvers." Their arrival causes much attention and whispering. Claire tries in vain to get a glimpse of Michael. She sees Shawn, who has been led on the leash up to a table on the dais. Her father tries to come over to her, but is restrained by his vampire escort. Myrnin tells Claire that the whole event is a test of nerves. Finally Amelie makes her grand entrance as an ice spirit all in white, with platinum hair. She is accompanied by Jason Rosser, wearing a brown hooded monk's robe. Bishop is dressed, appropriately, as a bishop, complete with miter and purple robes, but no cross. Claire is shocked to see him being escorted by his own mother, dressed as an angel. Claire wanted immediately to get all her friends and family out of there, out of Morganville, but she is restrained by Myrnin, who advises her to be patient. After a meal of prime beef, the vampires are served blood drinks while the "hemoglobin-intolerant" humans are served champagne and coffee.

At this point, the fearsome ceremony begins, in which bishop is seated on a throne and all the guests must come to offer him homage and fealty. Each vampire comes to the throne and symbolically offers bishop a gift of blood in the person of his or her human escort. Sam is the first to break the tradition: he welcomes bishop to Morganville but refuses to swear loyalty to him. Instead of offering his female escort to Bishop, Sam (dressed as Huck Finn) reaches into the back pocket of his blue jeans and offers a blood pack, which is considered an insult by François and Ysandre. François knocks the



blood pack out of his hands and Ysandre pounces on Sam's date, leading her away. Bishop waves them away, saying the girl was not to his taste anyway. Next, Michael and Monica are presented to Bishop, and Michael refuses to swear loyalty. Soon afterwards, Oliver is presented as Oliver of Heidelberg, together with Eve. He, too, refuses, telling Bishop that he is welcome but that his days of ordering people about are done. The cowardly Oliver walks away, leaving Eve standing alone in front of Bishop. Michael tries to rescue her, but Sam tackles him. The two struggle, rolling into a table and breaking china and glassware. Shane throws off his dog mask and stands next to Eve, exclaiming, "I'm so done with this crap." The situation is menacing, and Claire tries to go up to help them but is restrained by Myrnin who tells her to wait a little longer. Amelie intervenes, telling Bishop that Shane and Eve belong to her and are not Oliver's to give. Myrnin tells Claire that the "tipping point" has been reached in the clash between Amelie and Bishop. At that moment, John of Leeds announces their names and they go up the steps to Bishop's throne.

Chapters 11 Analysis

This chapter begins the climactic conclusion to the novel: the masked ball has finally begun. Chapter 11 describes in detail many of the key attendees and the costumes they are wearing. It is made clear that the vampires have invited humans, who will be symbolically offered as tributes to Bishop. In this chapter, Myrnin begins to emerge as the key catalyst for the novel's final confrontation, as he observes some of the guests challenging Bishop while refusing to offer tribute to him. As these rebels declare their independence, it is Myrnin who announces that the "tipping point" has been reached, implying that the final rebellion against Bishop is about to begin, instigated by his own dramatic gesture that will happen in the next chapter.



Chapters 12

Chapters 12 Summary

Going up the steps to Bishop's throne feels to Claire like a walk up to the gallows, especially because Amelie was glaring at Myrnin with obvious displeasure. Myrnin kisses Amelie's hand, but she tells Bishop that he is unwell and needs to leave. Bishop disagrees and welcomes Myrnin like an old friend. They chat amiably about his costume, and Myrnin tells Bishop that he thinks Pierrot is a secretly dangerous character. When asked by Bishop to swear allegiance, Myrnin erupts with a string of epithets, finally calling Bishop a "cheater of vandals and a defiler of dead dogs." Ysandre furiously grabs hold of Claire from behind, telling her that she will be her next victim because she lost her boyfriend (Shane). Claire responds to Ysandre's attack by dumping the vial of holy water on her head. Ysandre screams in pain as the holy water eats into her skin, and some of the drops fall on François, who screams also. Then Myrnin takes out his knife and nicks Bishop slightly on the arm, laughing hysterically. Myrnin runs out of the hall, and Bishop tries to explain the incident as the ravings of a fool ("Madmen are the laughter of God..."). Bishop tells Ysandre to quit whining about the holy water, telling her that she deserved her punishment. Bishop then asks Amelie to swear fealty to her, but she refuses. Bishop becomes enraged, calling her a "blood traitor" and "murderous witch." Claire feels that Amelie seems almost human in her vulnerability. Bishop tells Amelie that he doesn't want Morganville with all its peasants—he just wants a book that she stole from him as he was dying. When he threatens to destroy Amelie, a revolt begins: led by Claire, Sam, Michael, Eve, and Shane. Soon nearly half the guests stand before the dais, all refusing to swear allegiance. Oliver tells Bishop he is not welcome here, claiming that "This is our town. Our people. It's time for you to leave."

Pandemonium breaks out as Ysandre sinks her fangs into Jason Rosser, to be pulled back by Amelie, who claims he is her property. At that moment, Jason takes a stake out of the folds of his monk's robe and stabs Amelie in the heart, and Oliver knocks Bishop to the floor with a strong punch. Jason tries to stab Oliver as Claire yells at her parents, asking them to leave immediately. Some of Bishop's allies join the free-for-all. Oliver stabs Bishop with a dagger, who pulls it out and knocks Oliver off the dais. Ysandre tries to attack Claire, who responds by stabbing her with a fork. Oliver attacks Ysandre and Bishop and pulls Claire to safety. She awakens in Shane's arms back home. About thirty figures have taken refuge in the home, including Claire's parents and many vampires. Eve looks out the window and notices a fire raging outside. Those in the house feel they may be vulnerable to arson. Shane berates Claire for having trusted in Myrnin, who he says taunted Bishop and then ran away, leaving Amelie to die. Shane and Michael, armed with crowbars, go outside to protect the house from arsonists. Claire goes upstairs to the bathroom and finds Miranda on the stairs. She allows Miranda to sleep in her bed. Surrounded by Sam and Oliver, Amelie is resting in one of the bedrooms, the stake still through her heart. Oliver orders Claire to go away, but Sam disagrees, claiming that Claire had been the first to stand by Amelie during the confrontation at the



ball. Sam pulls the stake out of Amelie's body. Oliver offered his forearm for Amelie to bite into. Amelie weakly asks Claire to fetch some blood from the refrigerator downstairs, but Claire realizes there isn't any left. Shane tries to call the Donation Center to get a delivery, but the phone lines are dead. He calls the police on Claire's cell phone only to be told that the Donation Center is burning down.

It becomes clear that Bishop and his allies are laying siege to Morganville, whose blood supplies are drying up. The Bloodmobile arrives at the Glass House, and Claire, Eve, and Monica are among the first to make volunteer donations for Amelie. Monica sets to work drumming up other volunteers, and soon a long line of donors were ready to donate blood. Via a portal, Claire goes to Myrnin's cell, finding a supply of blood in the refrigerator that could be used, but Myrnin is nowhere to be found. She finds him furiously working in his lab, where he accidentally sets his sleeves on fire when he moves too close to a candle. Claire confronts him angrily, accusing him of abandoning her and her friends and leaving them to die. When Claire tells him that Bishop had bought off Jason, inducing him to stab Amelie, Myrnin sinks to the floor in anguish, but still claims it's all part of the long game. A chessboard sits in the corner near him, "frozen in midattack." Claire holds the cross between them but he is unaffected, claiming that crosses don't work—vampires just pretend that they do. Myrnin tells Claire that for the first time he was able to obtain a sample of a vampire's blood from outside of Morganville. He shows her the samples of Bishop's blood, mounted on slides. Looking through the microscope, Claire realizes that Bishop's blood was quite healthy, considering he is a vampire. Myrnin triumphantly tells Claire that Bishop's blood will provide exactly the cure he has been looking for. Claire now realizes why Myrnin acted as he did. She puts him into a clean cell and promises to bring Dr. Mills to treat him.

Chapters 12 Analysis

The novel reaches its violent and dramatic climax in this chapter, as Myrnin leads Claire up the steps to the throne, where he confronts Bishop with a string of invective. Pandemonium breaks out as the warring parties clash with each other and the "good guys" (Claire, Michael, Shane, Eve, and some others) are inspired to stand their ground. After the ball, Bishop's allies set fire to key buildings in Morganville. Claire confronts Myrnin, believing him to have abandoned her and her friends. But Myrnin reveals that he needed to get a sample of Bishop's blood in order to provide a cure for the disease afflicting him and the other vampires. The chapter thus highlights the moral ambiguities involved in why people (or vampires) make the decisions they do. What is apparent on the surface is not always the true motivation.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Due to the power failure, Claire has difficulty finding her way home through the portals. She feels lips brush her neck and hears Bishop's mocking laugh, who thanks her for introducing him to his fool (Myrnin). Bishop throws her against a wall and in the darkness she cannot figure out where she is. She finally realizes she is at her parents' new home, packed with boxes marked with the name "CLAIRE." She calls Officer Morrill on her cell phone, asking for a ride to the Glass House. He is in the immediate area so picked her up at once. Claire feels very tired and old, realizing she's going to have to tell Amelie that she left Myrnin alone, at the mercy of Bishop. When they arrive, Amelie is sitting up, a little improved. Claire lashes out at Amelie for using Myrnin. Amelie admits that Bishop's blood would provide the cure, as Claire and Myrnin had claimed. Amelie also admits that she cannot leave Myrnin alone, but with the cold and callous attitude that it's "far too early in the game to sacrifice him." Amelie is portrayed as nothing more than a manipulator of chess pieces. Amelie claims she will sacrifice everyone and everything so her people can survive. Claire responds by telling her that this is not a game, links hands with her friends, and asks Amelie what they should do. Amelie rises to her feet and declares they must not lose the battle with Bishop. She asks all humans to arm themselves and learn how to strike a vampire. She dispatches her allies to defend the other Founders Houses, to Common Grounds, and to the university, asking Claire to remain at her side as they rescue Myrnin. Then she assigns Shane to defend the Bloodmobile. Then Amelie reaches into her pocket and gives him the book that Bishop so desperately wanted. When Shane takes it, Claire realizes that he has just been made the bait for future attacks.

Chapter 13 Analysis

This short chapter, almost an afterthought, leaves the reader with a sense of closure after the climactic events surrounding the masked ball and its aftermath. In a scene remotely resembling the conclusion of the classic film version of "The Wizard of Oz", Claire (like Dorothy) is brought right back home to her parents' home (through a portal, not a tornado). The reader is led to believe that all is well and that the main characters are safe at home. Amelie is portrayed as having prevailed, even though Shane is made bait for future attacks when she bestows her book on him—the book that Bishop had furiously sought. The chapter thus sets the scene for yet another novel in Rachel Caine's Morganville Vampire series.



Characters

Claire Danvers

This is the leading female character (along with the vampire leader Amelie). Claire is a super-intelligent, sixteen-year-old college student with aspirations to go to Caltech or MIT, but whose parents send her to Texas Prairie University in Morganville—an hour's drive from their home—for a year, hoping it will be a "safe place" before she makes the transition to the wider world. Claire is one of those young women who make enemies easily, both human and vampire, but becomes quite attached to Shane, one of her housemates. As she begins her studies, she becomes an employee of Amelie ("the Founder"), who is the most powerful vampire in town. Claire's duties include giving blood transfusions to Myrnin, another powerful vampire who has been incarcerated in a laboratory. Claire and Myrnin befriend each other, and the two of them go as a couple to the gala masked ball, she dressed as Harlequin and he as Pierrot. It is Claire's persistence and devotion to her friends that drives much of the plot, enabling the "good guys" in the novel to emerge victorious over the evil forces personified by Bishop.

Amelie

She is the most powerful vampire in Morganville. Amelie is the daughter of Bishop, the menacing vampire who comes to town with the intention of wresting control away from her. She is portrayed as the protector of Claire, who is employed by her to monitor the health of Myrnin, another old vampire institutionalized in Morganville. Amelie is a strong-willed presence who demands loyalty from her allies but is committed to protecting them. She ultimately prevails at the end, and bestows on Shane a book that Bishop was trying to get from her.

Mr. Bishop

Amelie's father, a vampire from the old school who is described as sinister and menacing, who arrives in Morganville with an entourage (Ysandre and François) with the intention of taking over the town. He is trying to retrieve an ancient book that is in Amelie's possession, which he says his daughter had stolen from him at his death. Bishop organizes a masked ball at which all the vampires in town must bring a human to offer as a symbolic sacrifice while they declare their loyalty to him. True to his name, he attends the masked ball dressed as a bishop, in purple robes and mitre but without a cross.

Michael Glass

One of Claire's three housemates and Eve's boyfriend. He is a talented guitar player who has recently been turned into a vampire and who needs blood on occasion to fuel



his energy. During a climactic scene, he is shot six times by Jason, who tries to deliver a message to the housemates warning them of Bishop's plot.

Shane Collin

Another of Claire's three housemates who becomes her boyfriend and close confidant. Before the novel begins, he was stabbed by Jason.

Eve Rosser

One of Claire's three housemates, described as a Goth. She becomes Michael's girlfriend and an ally of Claire in her desire to counter Bishop's influence.

Jason Rosser

Eve's brother, a sallow-looking kid with a perpetual unkempt look, described as "heroin-addict skinny, pale, stringy hair, who had earlier stabbed Shane in an altercation. He typically wears skanky, stained jeans and leather jackets. Later, he shot Michael six times while trying to warn the housemates about Mr. Bishop's sinister plot.

Oliver

Proprietor of the Common Grounds coffeehouse, who goes to the masked ball with Eve. He tries to warn Claire and the others of Bishop's plot against Amelie.

Ysandre

One of the newly arrived vampires in town, part of Mr. Bishop's entourage. In a past life, she had been a murderess who was hanged for helping her husband and cousins assassinate a king. She seductively invites Shane to the masked ball and tries to destroy Claire for her steadfast resistance to Bishop and his agenda.

Myrnin

He is an old vampire who is institutionalized in a laboratory where some of Morganville's "sickest and most disturbed vampires are warehoused." Young-looking, with long, curling black hair and a sense of old-fashioned style, he is first encountered wearing a blue silk dressing gown embellished with dragons. A charming character who elicits much sympathy for his sophistication and savoir-faire, he becomes the catalyst for the final climactic action in the novel by ostentatiously rebuking Bishop during the masked ball. It is Myrnin who invites Claire to accompany him to the ball. Dressed as Pierrot, he goes to the masked ball with Claire, dressed as Harlequin.



Mr. Danvers

Claire's father, who is quite overprotective of his daughter. Fearful of her safety at MIT or Caltech, he insists she spend her freshman year at Texas Prairie University in Morganville. When he realizes the town is run by vampires, he becomes even more protective, and moves with his wife to one of the houses in town to keep a closer eye on his daughter.

Mrs. Danvers

Claire's mother, who shares her husband's overprotectiveness, but is less vocal about her ideas. She seems a somewhat passive, figure who is content to offer her services to help out in the kitchen if needed. She is not an assertive, take-charge woman who might have been inspired by the feminist movement.

Monica Morrell

Daughter of the town's mayor, described as "Claire's worst enemy from day one of her tenure in Morganville." She is the girl with "perfect blond hair" who invites Michael to the gala masked ball and feast celebrating the arrival of Mr. Bishop. She goes to the ball dressed as Marie Antoinette. On one occasion, she maliciously handcuffs Claire to the toilet stall in a restroom at the university.

Richard Morrell

Monica's brother, is the town policeman known as "Officer Dick." Among his duties are reminding humans they have to make regular blood donations for the vampires. He also reluctantly rescues Claire when Monica maliciously handcuffs her to a toilet stall one day.

Dr. Mills

The researcher at the university who is trying to find a cure for the blood disease infecting the vampires. He tries in vain to meet Myrnin in person, but Amelie will not permit that, so he assigns Claire with the task of injecting Myrnin with various serums he is developing.

Miranda

One of Eve's sometime friends, a waifish girl "at that gawky stage where girls both yearned to be and feared to be women." On one occasion, she was attacked by a vampire who bit her in the neck. After this attack, she went into a psychic episode where

she babbled prophetically about the violence that was going to take place at the masked ball.



Objects/Places

Morganville

A small Texas college town that is home to Texas Prairie University. On the surface, it appears like any normal American town, but it is occupied and run by hundreds of vampires who live there, feeding on blood collected from the humans, who must donate out of a sense of "civic duty." The town has many portals allowing people to move instantaneously between locations.

Glass House

The scene of most of the novel's action. It is the house where Claire lives with her three housemates, Eve, Shane, and Michael.

Founder House

The large house in Morganville where Claire's parents live. It is a big, Gothic-style house with a spreading live oak tree towering over it. The house's trim was painted with a dull black, or so it looked in the darkness.

Myrnin's Laboratory

Located in one of the old jails in Morganville. Myrnin is incarcerated behind bars here as he tries to find a cure for the blood-borne disease that is infecting the vampires of the town. Claire visits him there from time to time to inject him with blood or other serums prepared by Dr. Mills.

Common Grounds Coffeehouse

Managed by Oliver. It is a place where humans and vampires alike gather for conversation and entertainment. Michael's guitar concert takes place here.

Amelie's Castle

The location where the masked ball takes place. Accessible by a portal, it is a grand, ancient-looking building with a large ballroom and dais where Bishop will sit enthroned, demanding fealty from the vampires and humans of Morganville.

Style

Point of View

"Feast of Fools" is written in the third person, from an omniscient narrator point of view. The characters speak in the "I" voice through direct quotations.

Setting

The novel takes place entirely in the small Texas college town known as Morganville. There are paranormal portals between various locations. Major settings include Glass House, where the main characters live; the university; the Common Grounds coffeehouse; the Blood Donation center; and Amelie's castle, where the masked ball takes place.

Language and Meaning

"Feast of Fools" is written in conversational language easily accessible to teenagers and young adults of the 21st century. There are historical allusions to past events relating to such real-life figures as Voltaire, Marie Antoinette, and King Henry of France. There are also allusions to fictional characters like Huckleberry Finn and Zorro. Some of the characters in the novel assume the identities of these figures as they portray them during the masked ball.

Structure

The novel is divided into thirteen chapters during the fall semester. The final chapters culminate in the masked ball that takes place in Morganville on October 20. Chapter 13 is a brief envoi suggesting that another novel in the Morganville Vampire series will be forthcoming. The very last scene has Amelie bestowing a book on Shane, making Shane the "bait," presumably for the next installment.



Quotes

"She [Claire Danvers] had her pick of great schools . . . but her parents were a little worried about sending a wide-eyed sixteen-year-old into such a high-pressure world. So they compromised and sent her to a safe place for a year—Texas Prairie University, a small school located in Morganville, Texas, just an hour or so from their home."
(*"The Story So Far,"* p. 1)

"One problem: Morganville isn't what it seems. It's the last safe place for vampires, and that makes it not very safe for all the humans who venture in for work or school. The vampires rule the town . . . and everyone who lives in it."
(*"The Story So Far,"* p. 1)

"And now you're ordering me around like you own me. Are we under a testosterone storm warning? . . . You may think that growing a pair of fangs makes you the boss around here, but you'd better check your playlist."
(Chapter 4, p. 63)

"Myrnin slithered off his bed, boneless and silent as a reptile. He took hold of the bars in his white, strong fingers and fixed his black-hole eye on her face."
(Chapter 5, p. 79)

"He's not like the vampires you've met here, Claire, not even the worst of us. Amelie and I are modern predators, tigers in the jungle. Bishop is from a far colder, harder time. A *Tyrannosaurus rex*, if you will."
(Chapter 5, p. 82)

"[The church] was nice—not overly fancy, but peaceful in its simplicity. No crosses anywhere in sight, but just now, the focus was the big, black casket at the end of the room. She was struck by the smooth curve of the wood, and how much it reminded her of the Bloodmobile."
(Chapter 6, p. 104)

"He glittered like white gold, and music flowed out of his hands like streams of light. It wrapped around Claire like a shining net and she didn't dare breathe, didn't move, as Michael played like she'd never heard anyone play before, ever."
(Chapter 7, p. 116)

"Being hunted by a city full of zombies might have seemed like a relief in some ways—at least you knew whom to run from, and whom to run toward."
(Chapter 9, p. 161)

"'You think I want your pathetic town? Your ridiculous peasants?' Bishop's contemptuous gaze swept over Claire, over the room beyond. 'I want my property. Give it to me, and I'll leave. There. Now all our cards are up, child. What say you?'"
(Chapter 12, p. 218)



"We will hold. Those who follow Bishop have been promised the freedom to hunt. Those of us who are strong enough will deny them that right. Those who are prey will be armed to defend themselves. This is not optional. All humans will be armed and taught how to strike a vampire."

(Chapter 13, p. 241)



Topics for Discussion

How does the author create a sense that Morganville is actually two towns: a place where vampires and humans interact? What images does she use to help the reader recognize the vampires?

Are all the vampires evil or is this a stereotype? Give examples of the positive qualities that some of the vampires exhibit.

What is the major conflict in this novel? Which characters personify this conflict most? How do their personality traits and actions create tension and ultimate resolution to the conflict?

What qualities does Claire Danvers possess that make her the main character in this novel? How does she move the action along?

How does the author establish that the gala masked ball is going to be the climactic scene? What actions take place during the masked ball that point to this climax?

Contrast and compare the personalities of the four housemates: Claire, Michael, Eve, and Shane. How do their different styles create either compatibility or conflict?

Is Myrnin essentially a benevolent or a malevolent vampire? Do you think he is more or less appealing than the other vampires in the novel? Why?