

# **Guilty Pleasures Study Guide**

**Guilty Pleasures by Laurell K. Hamilton**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">Guilty Pleasures Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 1-7.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 8-16.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 17-25.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 26-34.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 35-42.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 43-48.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>



## Plot Summary

"Guilty Pleasures" by Laurell K. Hamilton is a novel introducing Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter. Anita Blake is by trade an animator, one who raises the dead for money. The purpose of raising the dead is usually to grant closure to loved ones, to solve homicides, or resolve other legal matters. Anita was born with the gift of necromancy, the ability to commune with the dead. From the job at Animators, Inc., Anita also became a vampire slayer and federal marshal, one of the few in the country that could legally execute vampires and other members of the undead community.

The story begins with Anita meeting with Willie McCoy, a former weasel turned into two-bit vampire. Willie wants Anita to investigate a string of vampire murders that have been taking place around St. Louis. Anita informs Willie that she is already a part of the Regional Preternatural Investigation Team and therefore, is already working the case. Anita sends Willie away.

Anita becomes deeply embroiled in the case when more victims are found mutilated. It is clear to Anita that vampires are not responsible for killing their own, and it is up to the task force to find the culprit. Due to the betrayal of a friend of a friend, Anita is extorted into working for the vampires to find the killer. Along the way, Anita is shot at, attacked, beat up, knocked unconscious, haunted, tortured, and set upon by wererats.

Anita becomes involved with several members of the underground community including Phillip, a human stripper; Jean-Claude, a master vampire and owner of the strip club Guilty Pleasures; and Nikolaos, Master of the City of St. Louis. Also present are Edward, a fellow vampire slayer; Malcolm, head of the Church of Eternal Life; and Dolph Storr, head of the task force.

Anita was right in the declaration that the vampire killer was not a fellow vampire. Rather, it was a former animator who betrayed his own profession and was responsible for killing six police officers as he gave up his own life. The former animator was brought back from the dead and was required to feed upon the flesh and blood of the undead in order to stay "alive" with the assistance of a voodoo charm called a gris-gris.

Through solid police work and some luck, Anita discovers the killer of the vampires and the murderer is executed, as is the Master of the City, who tried to kill Anita and succeeded in killing others, like Phillip.

Along the way, Anita begins to form a relationship with Jean-Claude, the new master vampire. Anita wants nothing to do with Jean-Claude, who she does not trust. However, Jean-Claude risks the wrath of Nikolaos in order to save Anita's life. That and other circumstances lead Jean-Claude to inflict the first two marks of a vampire upon Anita, which take her on the initial steps of the journey to become Jean-Claude's human servant.



# Chapters 1-7

## Chapters 1-7 Summary

Anita Blake, vampire slayer, sits at her desk across from Willie McCoy, a new vampire. Anita did not like Willie when he was alive. Death has not improved the vampire's personality or their relationship. In Anita's eyes, Willie is a weasel, much like a two-bit gangster in a bad mob movie. Although Willie seems like nothing more than an expendable errand boy, Anita notices that Willie is dressed well, better than he was when he was alive. There is a sense of wealth about him that never existed before. The power and wealth of Willie's masters seem to have rubbed off just a little.

Willie wants Anita to investigate a recent string of vampire murders. Anita explains that she is already helping the police with the crimes. The people who sent Willie want more than a routine police investigation - they want Anita. Anita refuses. Willie tries to use vampire tricks, but Anita is too good to fall for it from a new vampire. It only makes Anita angry.

Anita confronts Bert, her boss, about making appointments with vampires. Anita has made it clear that she does not work for vampires. Bert apologizes but isn't even remotely sorry or sincere. Bert only cares about money.

A new law has made vampires legal. The police have formed a "spook squad," called the Regional Preternatural Investigation Team or RPIT. The squad only handles vampires who have broken the law by feeding on and/or killing the living. Only a warrant makes vampire killing legal. Anita is an animator by nature, a necromancer that has the ability to raise the dead. Vampire slaying has come out of that job. Anita is one of several animators that works at Animators, Inc., a company devoted to raising the dead for clients. Anita is also a federal marshal and a vampire slayer, referred to as "The Executioner."

Anita often gets home around dawn and sleeps little. Anita is awakened at 8 a.m. by a ringing phone, after four hours of sleep. The woman on the other end of the line is a friend of a friend, who asks Anita to join them for a bachelorette party. Anita's good friend, Catherine, is getting married. Monica, the woman on the phone, works at the same law firm as Catherine. As a bridesmaid, Monica is in charge of planning the party. Because the party is a last minute affair, only Anita, Catherine and Monica will be in attendance. Monica asks if Anita can go out and also serve as the designated driver. Anita does not drink. The entire thing seems a bit strange to Anita.

The three women go to Guilty Pleasures, the world's only vampire strip club. The club is owned by a powerful, 205-year-old Master Vampire named Jean-Claude. Catherine does not seem thrilled by the prospect, but Monica is enthralled by the vampires. Monica is the first to take the opportunity to lure a non-vampire stripper to the table. Monica licks and kisses the stripper, Phillip. Catherine is horrified and Anita is annoyed



and somewhat shocked when Monica sucks on Phillip's wound as if she is feeding on Phillip's blood. Anita wants to leave.

Robert, a vampire, walks on stage and joins the show, eventually feeding on Phillip, who turns out to be a vampire junkie. Although Phillip is not a vampire, he offers himself up to the vampires as food and his body has the scars and bite marks to prove it. Robert bespells the crowd and Anita resists. Robert goes to Monica for a kiss and cold hard cash. Robert sets his sights on Anita, but Anita recoils. Robert goes after Anita, which is against the club's regulations as well as the law, and Jean-Claude steps in to stop anything from happening against Anita's will. Anita's beeper goes off and the animator is happy to have to go to work. Anita promises Monica and Catherine to come back to pick them up at the end of the night.

Anita is being called to a crime scene where the police have found two bodies. As a vampire expert and part of RPIT, Anita is often called in to assess the situation. Anita goes to a cemetery where two people have been murdered. One is mutilated, with most of his organs missing. The only thing left of the second victim is a shredded brown suit and part of a finger. Anita confers with the head of the task force, Sgt. Rudolph "Dolph" Storr. As the task force's resident vampire expert, Anita assures Dolph that it wasn't a crime committed by vampires but by ghouls or flesh eating zombies. Vampires do not eat meat.

Anita goes back to Guilty Pleasures after midnight to get Monica and Catherine. Catherine is on stage. Anita goes to Catherine and notices that her friend is bespelled by a vampire named Aubrey. Catherine does not respond to Anita's cries because she has been put into a deep trance. Aubrey sees Anita and eventually releases Catherine. Catherine has no idea what has happened. Aubrey attempts to bespell Anita into taking Catherine's place, but the animator is able to resist the vampire powers. Aubrey is not a master vampire and Anita has avoided looking into his eyes, which protects her from being bespelled. Anita is terrified for Catherine and knows that something must be done to protect her friend. Once a person is put into such a deep trance, the vampire has power over the human's will. Anita goes to the stage where Aubrey attacks her. After Aubrey refuses to get off Anita, Anita holds a silver knife to Aubrey's chest and draws blood. Aubrey is startled by the presence of the silver knife, one of the few weapons that can injure a vampire and slow the otherwise speedy healing process. Jean-Claude steps in and makes the entire incident seem like part of the stage show.

Anita learns that the entire evening was planned by Nikolaos, Jean-Claude's master and Master of the City. Monica took part in the plan to lure Anita to Guilty Pleasures. Aubrey and Jean-Claude tell Anita that if she will not cooperate with the vampires in investigating the recent string of vampire murders, Catherine will die. Aubrey seems to take great delight in the plan and must be restrained from attacking Anita once again. Anita is furious at the betrayal of herself and particularly, Catherine, an innocent. Anita tells Monica that if anything happens to Catherine, Anita will cut out her heart. Monica begins to realize that she has just made a very powerful enemy.



## Chapters 1-7 Analysis

Anita Blake is devoted to her job as an animator and vampire slayer. Although Anita works for Animators, Inc., she is not a typical team player. This is especially evident when Anita confronts her boss Bert about planning meetings with vampires, which is against Anita's professional code. It is obvious that Bert does not take Anita's demands seriously and the only thing that interests the boss is the prospect of making the most money possible for the business and himself.

Anita is a loyal friend to Catherine and will do almost anything to protect the innocent from the likes of Monica and Aubrey. Monica has openly betrayed her friend. Aubrey is a rogue vampire that does not play by the rules. Aubrey's conduct could have gotten him killed. Aubrey also refuses to listen to Jean-Claude because Jean-Claude is not Aubrey's master even though he owns Guilty Pleasures and is Aubrey's boss.

Anita finds herself between a rock and a hard place when it comes to doing what is asked of her by vampires. Anita deeply resents being put in this precarious position but has no choice if she wants to protect Catherine. Monica finally realizes the mistake she made when Anita threatens to cut out her heart if anything should happen to Catherine. It is quite clear that Anita means what she says. Monica is justifiably scared.



# Chapters 8-16

## Chapters 8-16 Summary

Jean-Claude takes Anita to meet his master, Nikolaos, who is Master of the City and the most powerful vampire Anita has ever met. Along the way, Anita must act as a Jean-Claude's lover in order to fool patrolling police. Anita resists as Jean-Claude embraces her on the street and immediately feels a shock of excitement and undeniable chemistry. The initial connection between Anita and Jean-Claude is made and proves to be an almost irresistible attraction. This exhilarates and frightens both Anita and Jean-Claude.

Anita and Jean-Claude enter into an unnamed hotel and wend their way to a room where Aubrey and a woman wait. The woman is classic vamp and tells Anita that she is Nikolaos, Master of the City. Anita tells the woman that it is apparent she is much too young and not powerful enough to be Nikolaos. Jean-Claude tells the woman that he knew the ruse would fail because Anita has good instincts and is a powerful animator and executioner. Anita tells the woman that she wants to see Nikolaos, because she is tired of the vampires' little games. Suddenly, Aubrey attacks Anita, and before Jean-Claude can stop Aubrey, the vampire throws the animator up against a wall. Anita blacks out.

Anita wakes up in tremendous pain. Jean-Claude holds Anita's head, trying to make sure that Anita is not injured any further. Anita gets sick from the pain and realizes that she has a concussion. It is hard to tell if any bones are broken although Anita feels that her skull may be fractured. Jean-Claude uses his gifts as a master vampire to take the pain away and shares his life force with Anita in order to keep her alive. This effort equates the first mark of a vampire, the first step to making Anita a human vampire servant. Although Jean-Claude had been ordered by Nikolaos to keep Anita alive, sharing his life force is a direct betrayal to Nikolaos.

Anita is locked in a dungeon until Nikolaos is ready to meet and discuss the vampire murders. There are rats everywhere and Anita is terrified as some are as large as German shepherds. One of the rats speaks and Anita realizes they are wererats. The larger wererats attack one by one but Anita manages to hold them off. Just when it looks like Anita may lose the battle, Rafael the King Rat comes and berates the lesser rats for attacking Anita even though Nikolaos ordered it. Rafael is furious that the rats would take orders from Nikolaos over his own. Although the wererats are Nikolaos' animals to call, Rafael is still the King and must be obeyed. One of the defiant rats becomes victim to Rafael's wrath.

Anita meets Nikolaos, a vampire in the form of a pre-pubescent girl, who is over 1000 years old. It is obvious that Nikolaos is the Master of the City by the sheer power she exudes. Nikolaos tests Anita by getting into her head and controlling the animator's thoughts and emotions. Anita fights against Nikolaos' powers but is no match for the



master vampire. After Nikolaos feels she has proven herself to Anita, the master vampire tells Anita that there have been six murders the cops don't know about, in addition to the four that have been investigated. Nikolaos refers to Zachary, a former vampire slayer/ animator, who is attempting to coax a witness to tell about the most recent murder. The witness would not talk originally and committed suicide to avoid torture from Zachary. Zachary raised the witness from the dead as a zombie and continues to torture the witness for information. The zombie either cannot or will not talk. Zachary screams and repeatedly hits the zombie. The zombie breaks. Anita finally realizes that Zachary was a former colleague, who died in a violent house fire. Therefore, Zachary is not human. Anita also knows that Zachary is not a vampire and is somewhat confused. As a former animator, Zachary also knows that zombies can easily be broken by torture and it does not make sense that he should want to destroy the witness.

Nikolaos throws Zachary and Anita out of her chamber. A violent fight ensues between Nikolaos and Jean-Claude.

Zachary and Anita escape. The pair ends up in the Circus of the Damned, where Anita runs into Valentine, a vampire she had disfigured two years earlier by throwing holy water in his face in order to save her own life. Each thought the other was dead. Valentine vows revenge.

Anita finally gets home at dawn to find Edward, the vampire killer and bounty hunter, in her apartment. Edward wants to know where the Master's daytime lair is and becomes annoyed when Anita cannot tell him the location for fear of endangering Catherine's life.

Anita sleeps little and is awakened from a nightmare by her best friend Ronnie. Anita is in a lot of pain from the previous night. Anita fills Ronnie in on the entire story, and is grateful when Ronnie offers to help by doing some investigating into those who may be responsible for the murders.

## Chapters 8-16 Analysis

Anita is confused by Jean-Claude. It is clear that Jean-Claude is a powerful master vampire, although his allegiance to Nikolaos is suspect. The fact that Jean-Claude chooses to save Anita's life goes beyond the order from Nikolaos that the animator should not be harmed until after the meeting and the vampire murderer has been caught.

Aubrey's attack against Anita will cost him dearly, and it is likely that Nikolaos will confine Aubrey to a silver cross-sealed coffin for a long period of time. It is unclear why Aubrey has such hatred for Anita. The fact that the Jean-Claude chooses to save Anita's life is also against vampire common sense. Anita learns that Jean-Claude will pay for this indiscretion and becomes scared when she finds out that she has received the first mark.





When Anita wakes in the dungeon to find herself surrounded by thousands of rats, she becomes utterly terrified. The presence of the rats is bad enough but when Anita sees the size of some of the rats, the terror increases. This is Anita's first experience with wererats, and she had no idea that they could be so large. Anita is not quite sure why the wererats attack but easily slips into combat mode to fight off the rats. Anita is unsure what to think about Rafael but is grateful that the rats have been sent away.

Anita has come in contact with many master vampires but none have been as powerful as Nikolaos. Anita is terrified by Nikolaos, and even Anita's advanced skills are no match for the master vampire. Anita is surprised to learn about the additional six murders. The presence of Zachary is somewhat confusing to Anita, particularly after she realizes that he is a former animator. Anita attended Zachary's funeral and is puzzled that the man standing before her is dead yet not a vampire or zombie. It does not seem possible that Zachary was able to survive the fire that killed him and six police officers.

Anita is shocked to see Valentine and knows that after Nikolaos stops protecting her that Valentine will seek revenge.

Anita considers Edward to be the only other person that has vampire slaying abilities greater than her own. Edward is the closest thing that Anita has in the way of a friend in the same profession. However, because Edward is also an executioner, Anita isn't sure how far the man can be trusted.



# Chapters 17-25

## Chapters 17-25 Summary

Anita decides not to go back to sleep and instead goes into work at Animators, Inc. Anita confronts Bert, her boss, about the vampires and what occurred the night before with Nikolaos, Aubrey, Phillip, and Zachary. Bert offers no additional insight into Anita's theories.

Jamison, one of the other animators at Animators, Inc. is in the midst of a client meeting when Anita arrives. Although the company's offices are fairly new, they are small and the animators are often required to share offices. Anita's shift is scheduled to start at five o'clock so Jamison has use of the office until then. Jamison's clients are a wealthy woman and her teenage son. The son, who is about 18 years old, is trying to decide if he wants to join the Church of Eternal Life. By law, someone must be of legal age to join the church. The decision to become a vampire puzzles Anita and the presence and approval of the boy's mother is even more confusing considering the gravity of the situation. Jamison seems to be encouraging the boy to join the church. Anita is furious. Jamison does not have the expertise to counsel anyone on vampirism. Anita approaches the mother and gives her a card belonging to a vampire expert. The expert is equipped to give all pertinent information regarding vampires, good and bad. Anita shows some of her scars to the mother and son in hopes of discouraging the foray into vampirism. It seems to make little difference. Jamison becomes furious with Anita, claiming that Anita attempted to undermine his authority with clients. Anita apologizes for interfering yet she tells Jamison that she will continue to interfere because he is not qualified to counsel on vampirism and that he should stick to his job as animator. The colleagues argue.

Phillip shows up at Anita's office and wants to know what happened to Jean-Claude as he did not return home at dawn. Anita does not know. In order to cover up Phillip's true identity, Anita allows the office staff to think Phillip is her boyfriend. Phillip is pleased by the charade and attempts to take advantage of the situation. Anita makes it clear she is not interested in Phillip and has no desire to spend any more time with him than is necessary. Anita feels bad for hurting Phillip's feelings and attempts to make it up to the stripper by taking him to lunch at a favorite restaurant.

In order to get pertinent information on the murders, Phillip takes Anita to see the girlfriend of the first vampire victim. The woman gets hysterical when she realizes Anita is The Executioner. The only information Anita gets is that the night the first vampire died he and the girlfriend had been to a freak party, where anything goes with vampires. Anita arranges to go to one of the parties with Phillip.

Anita goes to Dead Dave's, a bar owned by an ex-cop turned vampire. Anita wants information on Phillip because she is not sure that he can be trusted. Dead Dave is in his coffin, but the bartender is able to offer a bit of advice. The bartender says that no



junkie can be trusted. Phillip seems to be no more than a willing victim. Valentine's name also comes up as Phillip's first taste of the vampire life and as a vampire who delights in revenge. The bartender wants assurances that no one will know where Anita got the information.

Ronnie calls Anita to relay information regarding the group Humans Against Vampires. Rumor has it that HAV has organized a hit squad on the vampires. Anita needs proof. Ronnie warns Anita against going to the freak party without backup, but there is no one Anita can trust that has the skills required to protect oneself.

Anita goes to the party and is surprised at the type of people who are in residence. It is not immediately obvious who is hosting the party as everyone is equally forward in greeting her and Phillip. Anita has a hard time not being repulsed by the behaviors of the hosts and guests. Much to Anita's surprise, Edward shows up at the party.

## Chapters 17-25 Analysis

Anita is justifiably annoyed with Jamison. By all accounts, Jamison thinks vampires are nifty. It is clear the boy sees only romance and mystery in becoming a vampire and does not understand the downside to eternal life and being required to feed on blood in order to survive. Anita feels lucky that she was present to intercept the mother and son before they left Animators, Inc. Anita attempts to assure the mother and son that the vampire expert does not believe in brainwashing but only educating potential vampires, may have fallen on deaf ears. Jamison has a right to be angry about being undermined in front of clients. However, the animator has overstepped his bounds by encouraging the boy to join the church. Anita knows there is no use in going to Bert about the situation. Anita is willing to apologize for making Jamison appear foolish but has no intention of remaining silent as Jamison promotes vampirism.

Attending the freak party seems like the next logical step in Anita's investigation. The atmosphere is abhorrent to Anita and although she is annoyed that she must pretend to be Phillip's lover, it seems to be the best course of action. Anita is surprised to see Edward at the party and realizes that Edward has been getting his up-to-date information from the freaks.

Once Phillip realizes that Anita is not interested in him sexually, the stripper's attitude changes. Phillip is used to being pursued, not refused. Phillip becomes subservient to Anita and goes out of his way to help her with the investigation although he had been ordered by Nikolaos to seduce Anita.



# Chapters 26-34

## Chapters 26-34 Summary

The attention Phillip receives at the freak party confirms that the stripper has been an integral part of the culture for quite some time. Both women and men approach Phillip and become annoyed and angry when Phillip refuses to participate in the fun and games with the vampires. Phillip tells Anita that the scene is becoming too strange and violent for him and therefore he has been attending fewer parties. Both men and women at the freak party approach Anita, and Anita struggles with warding them off without blowing her cover or endangering Phillip. Phillip is reluctant to participate and feels a sense of deep devotion to Anita. Phillip does not want to leave Anita's side. Phillip is propositioned and leaves the room to follow Anita away from the crowd. Many people approach Phillip about Anita, and Phillip makes it clear that he is not willing to share his lover. Anita and Phillip continue their charade. Anita escapes to the bathroom and is soon followed by Phillip. Phillip tells Anita that they are being watched and must make it appear as though they are really lovers. Anita grudgingly consents and Phillip bites Anita while kissing her. Anita is furious. Anita wants to leave, but Phillip says that the most powerful vamps have not arrived. Anita continues to withdraw from Phillip, who has become increasingly fragile by Anita's rejections.

Anita slips outside and overhears a failed attempt to raise a zombie. The animator is Zachary. Theresa, the woman who pretended to be Nikolaos, is in attendance as are others from the Master's lair. The vampires surround Zachary and say they are going to kill him because he is unable to raise a woman from the grave even though the vampires know that it is difficult to raise a body that is over a century old. No one reveals exactly why the body is being raised, and Anita assumes the vampires just want to play with a zombie. Anita steps in to save Zachary. It is clear to Anita that the failed zombie raising is simply an excuse to kill Zachary. Theresa confirms Anita's suspicions. Theresa confronts Anita but is unable to match Anita's power and backs down.

Anita agrees to help Zachary raise the zombie in order to save his life. Anita walks Zachary through the ritual and they raise the zombie. Anita realizes that Zachary could not raise the zombie because he is also a corpse. Although Anita is not sure how he does it, it is apparent that Zachary must kill people in order to stay "alive." After the zombie is raised, vampires close in and Anita escapes. Anita runs into Willie and Nikolaos. Anita is worried about the zombie and makes a deal with Nikolaos to protect it. Vampires from the Church of Eternal Life crash the party, and Phillip gets hurt while attempting to protect Anita. Anita, Willie and Phillip manage to get away.

Anita wants Phillip to go to the hospital, but Phillip wants to go back to Guilty Pleasures where one of the vampires will take care of him. Anita has taken a liking to Phillip and appreciates his efforts in protecting her from the vampires.



Anita gets home and retrieves messages from Ronnie about a meeting with HAV and a message from Edward, asking once again about Nikolaos' daytime lair. Anita tries to figure out what to do about all that is going on with Nikolaos, the vampires, the murders, and Zachary. Anita is also worried that she will not be able to prevent the vampires from killing Catherine. Anita manages to fall asleep, but all her dreams are filled with images of Jean-Claude.

There is another vampire murder. This one is even gorier than all the others. One of the victims has been beheaded. The police find the victim's head and ask Anita if she can identify the dead vampire. Anita recognizes the corpse as belonging to Theresa.

Anita and Ronnie meet with a representative from HAV, a woman Anita had saved from a brutal attack that killed all her family. Anita saved the woman's life and helped her to escape the vampires. In return, the woman also saved Anita. The woman vows lifelong allegiance to Anita for saving her life. Ever since the woman's family was killed, she has participated in bringing vampires to justice via the law. The woman assures Anita and Ronnie that HAV does not support vigilantes and has nothing to do with the murders.

Ronnie and Anita visit the Church of Eternal Life. Anita wants to make an appointment with Malcolm, the master vampire and head of the church. Malcolm is not a friend. In fact, Malcolm and the Church of Eternal Life are often on the opposite side of Jean-Claude and are proud supporters of non-violent vampirism, if there is such a thing. Anita bluffs and tells the church secretary there is proof that the church is involved in the vampire murders. The church secretary is human and seems to be afraid of everything, especially violence. It is clear that Anita terrifies the man.

As Ronnie and Anita prepare to leave, a human approaches the church and attempts to kill Ronnie and Anita. There is a shoot out, and Anita kills the shooter. No one knows who the shooter is or who may have sent him. Anita notices that although the shooter is human, he bears the marks of vampire fangs.

## Chapters 26-34 Analysis

Anita's behavior wavers between being completely cold and professional to allowing herself to have feelings that may put her and others in harm's way. At first Anita dislikes Phillip and sees the stripper as nothing more than a freakish boy toy for vampires. Anita wants nothing to do with that scene. As Anita gets to know Phillip, she realizes that the stripper is actually a nice person who wants nothing more than to be accepted. This need is so deep that Phillip is willing to risk betraying Nikolaos in order to help Anita uncover the truth behind the vampire murders. Anita cannot help liking Phillip and even attempting to mother him when the vampires attack at the freak party.

Anita does not know what to do about Catherine. If Anita is unable to deliver the information about the murderer to Nikolaos, it is a certainty that Catherine will die. Anita is also confused about Edward. Although the two maintain professional courtesy, Anita



is unsure how much Edward can be trusted. Anita does know that Edward is a cold-blooded killer and will not hesitate to kill her if necessary.

Anita is wary about allowing Ronnie to accompany her to the Church of Eternal Life. Although Ronnie is a trained private investigator, it seems that she is only in real danger when in the company of Anita. Ronnie assures Anita that she is perfectly capable of handling herself and proves it when she protects Anita from the gunman at the Church of Eternal Life.

The fact that the identity of the shooter is unknown disturbs Anita. If the shooter had worked for a particular vampire, Anita would have recognized the man's face. The fact that the shooter is human is even more baffling and only confuses Anita regarding the true identity of the vampire killer.



# Chapters 35-42

## Chapters 35-42 Summary

Anita keeps her appointment with Malcolm at the Church of Eternal Life. Anita bluffs and says she has proof that the Church of Eternal Life is involved in the vampire murders. Anita also tells Malcolm about the shooting at the Church earlier that day and that the shooter who attempted to kill her was marked with vampire bites. Malcolm tells Anita he knows nothing about it, but it is clear to Anita that Malcolm is hiding something. Malcolm tries once again to use vampire powers on Anita and cannot understand why the animator has partial immunity to his advanced skills.

Anita comes to the conclusion that Edward is the vampire killer. However, it does not make sense that Edward would send someone else to kill her when Edward would be the best person for the job. Anita is torn because she must deliver the killer to Nikolaos or Catherine will die. Anita does not know if she will be able to give up Edward.

Anita is still avoiding Edward. Anita gets a call from Willie saying that Nikolaos has Phillip and is "hurting him - bad." Anita feels responsible for Phillip who she has come to like. Anita knows that going to the Circus of the Damned by herself is a mistake but feels that she has no choice. There is no doubt that Nikolaos will kill Phillip without a second thought. As usual, Anita packs an arsenal of weaponry, including guns with silver plated bullets, and several silver knives. Once at the Circus, Anita is searched and left with only one knife tucked into an ankle sheath that the human servant has overlooked. Nikolaos says that Phillip and Jean-Claude have betrayed her and must pay. Phillip is chained against a wall, bleeding profusely and Anita knows he is dying. Anita feels responsible for Phillip's torture. Nikolaos knows that if she kills Jean-Claude, the vampires in the city will make him a martyr. Killing Phillip, a human under Jean-Claude's protection, will make him pay for failing to seduce Anita and will show that Jean-Claude cannot protect anyone, diminishing his power.

Anita learns that a vampire's human servant can live as long as is needed. Anita also learns that Jean-Claude has given her the second mark, which is how the vampire can invade her dreams. The fourth mark binds the vampire and a human servant together forever. Nikolaos and her human servant demonstrate how a human servant gets a fourth mark, by drinking the master vampire's blood. Anita is disgusted to the point of being ill.

Nikolaos allows Aubrey and others to continue to torture Phillip. Phillip dies by Aubrey's hand. Anita stabs Aubrey and one of the other vampires. Anita tries to get away, but Nikolaos attacks.

Anita wakes up at Guilty Pleasures, beat up and sick with pain and the memory of what happened in Nikolaos' chamber. Anita remembers that Phillip is dead and is in anguish, still claiming responsibility although she knows that there is nothing she could have



done to prevent Nikolaos from killing Phillip. Robert tends to Anita's wounds until she sends him away. Anita discovers that she has been bitten by Nikolaos. The thought of being bitten by the Master of the City terrifies Anita, and the animator knows that something must be done right away or else she will fall under Nikolaos' spell.

Anita goes home after dawn and meets with Edward. Edward takes Anita into the bathroom where he cleans the bite from Nikolaos with holy water, an exercise that proves to be extremely painful for Anita. The process normally takes several days, but Anita knows it is imperative that Nikolaos have no power over her.

Worried about Catherine, Anita calls her friend's office and learns that Catherine has gone out of town on business for ten days. Anita is relieved that Catherine will be safe while she sorts out the mess caused by Monica.

Anita gets a call from Bert about a client who has finally agreed to lay his zombie daughter to rest but it has to be done that night. The man had molested his daughter when she was alive and the girl killed herself to get away from the abuse. The man raised the daughter to seek forgiveness but the daughter continues to refuse even after seven years. The daughter is falling apart and the man realizes that there is no salvation in trying to gain his daughter's forgiveness.

Edward offers to go to the cemetery with Anita. After Anita lays the zombie to rest she and Edward will go to the Circus of the Damned to confront and hopefully kill Nikolaos. Anita warns Edward about Nikolaos' power but Edward does not fully comprehend the master's strength and sees the slaying of an ancient master vampire as a challenge.

## Chapters 35-42 Analysis

Anita's bluff to Malcolm is not entirely successful but helps to prove that Malcolm has information he refuses to share with anyone outside the church. Anita believes Malcolm when he says that the shooter is an unknown and that Malcolm will attempt to uncover the identity of the person that would cause such an act of violence at the church.

Anita is torn about what to do regarding Edward. The belief that Edward is the vampire killer does not really fit but seems to be the best answer at the time. If it is true, Anita may not have the will to turn Edward over to Nikolaos. However, if she does not turn Edward over, Catherine's life is over. Anita hopes she is wrong about Edward.

Anita's decision to go to the Circus of the Damned by herself is foolish. For once, Anita's professionalism falls to the wayside and common sense is overtaken by guilt regarding Phillip. Although Nikolaos wants to know who the murderer is, it does not mean that Anita is safe from all harm. Nikolaos reveals to Anita that she does not want to kill her but that the vampire wants to hurt Anita.

Anita feels guilty about Phillip's death and allows it to cloud her judgment. Although Anita manages to get away, the mistake could have proven to be fatal.





Anita is relieved that Catherine is out of the picture and that Nikolaos can be dealt with without the worry that Catherine might die before it can be sorted out.

Edward questions Anita's reasoning regarding the work at the cemetery. However, Edward is not an animator and decides to go along for the ride in case Anita needs help.



# Chapters 43-48

## Chapters 43-48 Summary

Anita and Edward arrive at the cemetery. There is no one else at the cemetery, and Anita decides to wait for a little while in case the client and the zombie daughter are running late. Anita notices a solitary ghoul on top of her car and attempts to shoo it away. Anita tells Edward that ghouls are typically afraid of humans unless the humans are incapacitated. Anita begins to worry when the ghoul will not go away. Instead, it becomes aggressive. It is becoming clear to Anita that she has been set up and that there is no client. Someone must have called Bert and convinced the boss that the client was ready to lay his daughter to rest.

Anita tells Edward that ghouls tend to travel in packs and that it is likely that more ghouls will be arriving any minute. Time is of the essence and they must leave immediately. Zachary steps out from behind a tombstone and tells Anita that the ghouls are waiting for him. Anita finally figures out that Zachary is the one responsible for the vampire murders. The murders are the only way Zachary is able to stay alive. It was Zachary that ordered the hit on Anita at the Church of Eternal Life. When Zachary broke the zombie at Nikolaos' lair, it was to prevent the zombie from telling Nikolaos that Zachary is the murderer. The witness had killed himself because he was terrified of Zachary. Zachary is also responsible for the pack of ghouls that begin to descend on Anita and Edward. The ghouls followed Zachary from the grave. As Anita knows, the more zombies one raises, more ghouls show up.

The ghouls begin to close in. Edward shoots at Zachary but the former animator is difficult to kill and gets away. Anita and Edward continue to shoot and plan to run for the maintenance shed where they could have some cover and protection from the ghouls that will surely rip them to shreds. Anita kills one of the chickens she brought for the client's daughter and throws it to the ghouls in order to distract them. Anita and Edward run to the shed as the ghouls feed on the dead chicken. Anita remembers she has a pack of matches in her pocket and sets fire to the shed in order to scare away the ghouls. Anita sets the fire while they are still inside, but Anita and Edward escape. Anita says that she would rather be shot at than chased by ghouls.

Edward and Anita decide that it would not be wise to return to Anita's apartment. As Anita and Edward are trying to decide what to do, Anita's beeper goes off. Against Edward's advice Anita calls Animators, Inc. The night secretary tells Anita that she received a message about a potential meeting with Rafael. Anita returns the call and discovers that she will be able to make the meeting. Anita must go alone. Before going to meet Rafael, Anita calls Dolph and tells him the entire story including the information on Zachary. Anita knows that she has no proof regarding Zachary beyond the fact that he wears a gris-gris, a voodoo charm that holds enough magic to keep Zachary alive. Dolph says that the information is no good unless Anita is alive to testify. Anita tells



Dolph that the phone call is a precautionary measure in case she does not make it back from Nikolaos' lair.

Anita and Edward go to the meeting with Rafael. Edward goes in first to make sure the meeting is not a set up. After Edward gives Anita the go-ahead signal, Anita goes alone to meet with Rafael. Anita asks Rafael to guide her and Edward into Nikolaos' chamber through the tunnels. No one knows the back way into the chamber like the wererats. Rafael balks, but Anita convinces the King Rat that she and Edward have the ability to kill Nikolaos. Because the wererats are Nikolaos' animal to call, they will be unable to help Anita and Edward beyond being their guides and supplying emergency medical help. The deal is made and Edward and Anita go to Edward's hotel to get some sleep. Anita and Edward will go into Nikolaos' lair in the daylight.

The wererats equip Anita and Edward as best they can to go into the tunnels. The roofs of the tunnels are low in some places and Anita is grateful for the hard hat Rafael insisted she wear. Anita is curious about the wererats and is somewhat disappointed that Rafael will not allow Anita or Edward see the wererats change from human form into animal form. The trip through the tunnels is grueling, scary, and takes several hours before the group reaches the dungeon where Anita had been held.

Anita and Edward go into the inner sanctum of the Master of the City and know something is wrong when it is too quiet. Although the vampires would be dead in their coffins, Nikolaos' human servants should be on guard. Anita and Edward make their way into the innermost chamber where five coffins are on display. Edward comments that the vampires are arrogant as most of the vamps tend to hide their coffins. Anita approaches the first coffin and opens it to find Valentine. Edward admires Anita's handiwork with the holy water. Anita reaches for her wooden stake and hammer but Edward stops her. Edward has a more modern tool - a syringe filled with silver nitrate. The silver nitrate must be used carefully and is measured by the age of the vampire. Anita shoots the silver nitrate into Valentine and watches as the vampire dies. The second coffin Anita approaches is empty and Anita realizes that it must have belonged to Theresa. As Anita is looking at Theresa's coffin, Edward cries out. Aubrey has been disturbed and has risen from his coffin. Aubrey has Edward by the throat and is lifting him off the ground. Anita runs for her shotgun and shoots Aubrey until he is dead. Trying to kill Aubrey with silver nitrate was a mistake considering that the vampire is over 500 years old. The fourth coffin, which belongs to Jean-Claude, remains untouched. Instead, Anita decides to go straight for a child-sized coffin, which obviously belongs to Nikolaos. The coffin is empty. At that moment Nikolaos and the human servant enter the room. The human servant holds Anita and Edward at gunpoint. Beside the human servant stands Zachary. Nikolaos taunts Anita and brings Phillip into the room. Phillip has been brought back from the dead and the results disturb and distract Anita.

Nikolaos is angry that Anita is not under her power more than any other human. This is because Edward had cleaned the bite on Anita's neck. Nikolaos continues to taunt Anita and orders the human servant to return Anita's knives so that Anita can do battle with the human servant. The human servant is large and has had nearly 600 years more experience with knives than Anita. As the pair is fighting, Anita tells Nikolaos that she



knows who murdered the vampires. Nikolaos has a strong hold on Edward and demands to know the name of the murderer. Before Anita can reveal the murderer's name, Zachary screams and fires at Anita. It is obvious to Nikolaos that Zachary is the murderer. The human servant has been distracted by this display, and Anita stabs and kills him. Nikolaos goes mad with fury. As Nikolaos attempts to attack Anita, Edward shoots Nikolaos using Zachary's gun. Bullets will not kill master vampires, only slow them down. As Nikolaos goes after Edward, Anita grabs the human servant's large silver sword and decapitates Nikolaos. Anita learns that Nikolaos has bitten Edward. Anita assures Edward that she has a lot of holy water left.

Zachary is not "dead." As one of the undead it is easy for Zachary to heal from any wound that would kill a mere mortal. Anita approaches Zachary and tells him that she has figured out how he has been able to stay alive. In order for the gris-gris to hold magic, there must be something to be avoided. In Zachary's case, the thing that could undo the magic is human blood. Anita wipes her blood on the gris-gris and then cuts it off Zachary's arm. Zachary finally dies.

Anita goes to find Jean-Claude. The wererats are wary of Jean-Claude although Anita tells them that this vampire is on their side. Jean-Claude congratulates Anita and says he knew she could kill Nikolaos. Anita hits Jean-Claude and screams at him to take back the marks he inflicted upon her. Jean-Claude says the marks are permanent.

The last order of business is to lay Phillip to rest. Anita explains to Phillip that he is already dead, and although Phillip is scared, it is the best thing for him to return to the grave. Phillip allows Anita to lay him to rest. Anita weeps over Phillip's grave.

Anita and Edward both heal from the injuries they received from Nikolaos. Jean-Claude attempts to apologize to Anita, but Anita wants no part of Jean-Claude. After all, Anita says, she is The Executioner.

## Chapters 43-48 Analysis

Things begin to fall into place at the cemetery. Anita is angry with herself for being set up by Zachary. There is a sense of relief when Zachary is revealed as the vampire killer. Anita finally realizes that Zachary must kill vampires in order to get their blood to feed the gris-gris or else he will die. Anita plans to kill Zachary.

Edward shows great faith in Anita when Anita goes through with the plan to distract the ghouls by setting the shed on fire. Any personal doubts that the two may have had disappear.

Anita's phone call to Dolph is only a precaution in case Nikolaos wins the battle. Anita is angry with Zachary, not only because he kills vampires but also because he has betrayed the oath he took as an animator.

The meeting with Rafael could make or break the plan to sneak into Nikolaos' lair. Rafael is hesitant to help but Anita knows the right buttons to push. Anita convinces



Rafael that she and Edward can kill Nikolaos and that the wererats will return to the allegiance to the Rat King. Rafael's agreement to help allows the plan to go forward.

The wererats are a curiosity to those who have never seen a lycanthrope. Anita has seen werewolves and other shape shifters but wererats are a new experience. Anita and Edward put great faith in Rafael and the other wererats as they make their way along the narrow and winding tunnels to the inner chamber.

Edward's observation of Nikolaos' arrogance is accurate. The actions Anita and Edward take to destroy the vampires in their coffins show their professionalism and innovative skills. Anita still does not trust the silver nitrate and cannot take her mind off of Valentine and Aubrey until she can be sure that the vampires are truly destroyed.

Nikolaos almost undoes Anita by bringing Phillip into the room. It is Nikolaos' arrogance that causes her to force Anita into a fight with the human servant. Nikolaos is convinced Anita will die and is furious when Anita wins the battle.

Together, Edward and Anita manage to kill Nikolaos, and there is great relief that the evil Master of the City is no more. Anita is unsure how she feels about Jean-Claude becoming the new Master of the City. Anita is sure that she wants no part of Jean-Claude and is furious she has been marked. Jean-Claude attempts to apologize and warm up to Anita but Anita wants no part of him, due in equal parts to professionalism and fear.



# 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 near thirty years old. Anita has dark hair and eyes and bears numerous 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 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 those are things that are 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 vampire under the power of Nikolaos, Master of the City of St. Louis. Jean-Claude is extremely powerful in his own right, a fact that is not fully realized by Nikolaos. At the beginning of the story, Jean-Claude is technically the fifth most powerful vampire in St. Louis. The vampire killer manages to take out the number three and four vampires, leaving Jean-Claude in third position. The battle between Anita and Nikolaos serves a dual purpose for Jean-Claude. The battle will find the vampire killer and will also rid the city of Nikolaos and the number two vampire, Aubrey. Thanks to Anita, Jean-Claude will realize the goal of becoming the new Master of the City.

Jean-Claude is over six feet tall 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.

As owner and operator of Guilty Pleasures, the world's only vampire strip club, Jean-Claude thrives on using charm and vampire powers to give the customers the best possible show.

## **Edward**

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

## **Nikolaos**

A 1000-year-old vampire in the form of a pre-pubescent girl. Nikolaos is a sadist and a Master of the City.

## **Willie McCoy**

Willie McCoy is a creep turned vampire. Willie is the one sent to hire Anita to find the vampire killer.

## **Philip**

One of the strippers at Guilty Pleasures who is sent to seduce Anita. Philip ends up betraying Nikolaos in favor of Anita and is murdered.

## **Catherine**

Lawyer and Anita's good friend who is bespelled at Guilty Pleasures.

## **Sergeant Rudolph Storr**

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

## **Monica Vespucci**

Lawyer and friend to Catherine; person who lures Anita to Guilty Pleasures.



## **Zachary**

Former animator turned to zombie, who turns out to be the vampire killer.

## **Ronnie**

Anita's best friend and private investigator

## **Bert**

Anita's boss at Animators, Inc.

## **Malcolm**

Vampire and head of the Church of Eternal Life.





# Objects/Places

## St. Louis

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 Guilty Pleasures, the river serves as a separation between the territories of Nikolaos and Malcolm and the Church of Eternal Life.

Since vampirism became legal, St. Louis is one of the cities in the U.S. that seemed 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 Guilty Pleasures. It is home to the vampire strip club Guilty Pleasures, Animators, Inc., the Circus of the Damned, and 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 Guilty Pleasures as well as the Circus of the Damned and Nikolaos' lair.

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.

## Guilty Pleasures

Guilty Pleasures is the world's only vampire strip club. It is located in the Riverfront District of St. Louis, popular night spot for vampires and curious humans. The club is a thriving business, patronized mostly by women who are eager to see and experience the life of a vampire. The club is owned and operated by Jean-Claude, a master vampire who also serves as emcee for the nightly shows. The majority of the employees at the club are vampires, with some lycanthropes.

The club is dark and mysterious and houses a stage surrounded by tables and chairs. On the stage are a number of props, including areas in which vampires or willing participants may be chained. There is also a wet bar.

Weapons and holy items such as silver crosses are not permitted at Guilty Pleasures and must be checked at the door, much like one's coat.



Guilty Pleasures also serves as home to Jean-Claude. There are a number of restricted areas in the club, including dressing rooms, Jean-Claude's office and living space. Oddly enough, Jean-Claude has what appears to be a normal human living space in addition to his coffin. Jean-Claude likes to entertain.

## **Circus of the Damned**

A Vampire circus open to the public for entertainment purposes. The underground is where many vampires keep their coffins.

## **Dead Dave's**

A favorite bar for vampires located in the Riverfront District. Owned by Dead Dave, an ex-cop turned vampire.

## **Riverfront District**

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

## **Mabel's Restaurant**

Anita's favorite restaurant.

## **Cemetery**

Most common site where Anita's work as an animator takes place.

## **Nikolaos' chamber**

Home to Nikolaos, Master vampire of the City of St. Louis. The chamber is where the master and her vampires live. Located near the Circus of the Damned.

## **Dungeon**

Location where Anita is held and is attacked by the wererats.

## **Denny's**

Location of Anita's meeting with Rafael, the King Rat.

## **Animators, Inc.**

The company for whom Anita works.



# Themes

## Vampirism

The center theme of "Guilty Pleasures" 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 Guilty Pleasures are broken into two basic factions. The first faction belongs to Malcolm, a master vampire and leader of the Church of Eternal Life. The Church of Eternal Life operates as any other mainstream church, except that it promotes immortality to vampires and humans alike. The church claims to have a doctrine of non-violent vampirism, allowing its vampires to only feed on the willing and able. The second faction, located across the river from the Church of Eternal Life, is the lair of the official Master of the City, Nikolaos. Although Nikolaos technically has control of the city, Malcolm and his followers seem to be somewhat removed from the activities on the opposite side of the river.

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.

## Betrayal

There is a great deal of betrayal that takes place in "Guilty Pleasures." The first episode involves the incident at the very beginning of the book, when Anita's boss betrays her requirements for obtaining clients. Anita specifically tells Bert that she does not work with vampires, yet Bert betrays Anita's wishes by setting up the meeting with Willie McCoy.

The second incident involving betrayal is the situation in which Monica lures Anita and Catherine to Guilty Pleasures so that Catherine can be bespelled, and Anita will be forced to take part in the search for the vampire killer. Anita is furious with Monica, not only for betraying her, a total stranger, in order to gain favor with the vampires but more so for betraying someone who is supposed to be a close friend. Anita shows her loyalty to Catherine by threatening to kill Monica and by letting the woman know that betrayal in any form is not acceptable and therefore unforgivable.

There are other significant examples of betrayal, including the wererats purposely disobeying Rafael in favor of Nikolaos; Phillip betraying Nikolaos in order to help Anita; Jean-Claude betraying Nikolaos in order to become the new master of the city, and Zachary's betrayal of the vampires, zombies, and fellow animators.



## Execution

In "Guilty Pleasures" 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. Nikolaos, Master of the City, routinely executes humans and vampires at will, whether or not punishment is deserved. Nikolaos often executes people simply because she can and as a form of entertainment.

Part of Anita Blake's job is to serve as The Executioner, a job 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. 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.

Another form of execution can be seen with Zachary and the practice of executing vampires in order to feed and stay alive through the power of the gris-gris. Zachary uses betrayal to lure vampires to their death and not only kills, but mutilates and sometimes devours the vampires' flesh.

# Style

## Point of View

"Guilty Pleasures" 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 life might be like if vampirism was first a reality and second 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.

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.

## Setting

The setting of "Guilty Pleasures" takes place entirely in St. Louis. There are several settings used within the city. They include Animators Inc., Anita's office; Guilty Pleasures, the world's only vampire strip club; a cemetery; Circus of the Damned; Anita's apartment; Church of Eternal Life, and Nikolaos' lair. 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 example is the Church of Eternal Life. The church is designed like most churches and contains a vestibule, sanctuary, altar, pews, offices, and meeting rooms. The only difference is that the basement is filled with coffins. Like most churches, the Church of Eternal Life has elaborate stained glass windows, without the standard religious icons emblazoned across them.

Both Nikolaos' lair and Guilty Pleasures are dark and mysterious, which makes them attractive to humans and the undead alike. The structures are always dark and conducive to vampire living. The presence of the coffins in Nikolaos' lair is quite disturbing and vivid, particularly when the story references the coffin belonging to Nikolaos, a pre-pubescent girl that requires a small and feminine coffin.



The Circus of the Damned is designed much like any other circus, with loud music, attractions, and bright colors. Anita regards the Circus much like any other circus, with an enhanced creepiness factor.

## Language and Meaning

The language used in "Guilty Pleasures" tends to be relatively informal and relies a great deal on dialogue among 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, save for the gris-gris and the use of silver nitrate. Even the references to the lycanthropes, wererats, 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 throughout the course of the work day for an 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, and the use is not common.

The language used by Anita is very descriptive and used in such a way that the person she is speaking to can fully understand the meaning and context of what is being said. For example, when Anita threatens to cut out Monica's heart, the language she uses is sparse and direct.

## Structure

"Guilty Pleasures" by Laurell K. Hamilton is a work of fiction. The book is 306 pages in length and is comprised of 48 chapters. The shortest chapter is 1 page in length; the longest chapter is 11 pages. The average length of a chapter is 6 pages.

The short chapters allow the reader to follow the story with ease as it travels to a number of different locations and covers many topics, from Anita's views and perceptions to the activities involving the vampires.

The beginning of the book details Anita's meeting with Willie McCoy at Animators, Inc. There is no preamble about Anita's history as a necromancer or professional life as an animator, federal marshal, or vampire slayer. Nor is there a reference to the time when Anita received the moniker "The Executioner." The lack of background information does not harm the story in any way and in fact, allows the reader to dive into the story with the details being given as they are needed.

The majority of the story is devoted to the vampire murder investigation and Anita's dealings with Nikolaos, Master of the City. The sections involving the separate parts of

the investigation are interspersed so as to keep the attention of the reader while allowing the story line to flow.

The story ends shortly after Nikolaos is killed. There is an attempt at interaction from Jean-Claude involving Anita, which leaves a clever opening for a sequel.





## Quotes

"Vampirism was legal in the good ol' U.S. of A. We were one of the few countries to acknowledge them."

Page 3

"Monica Vespucci was wearing a button that said, 'Vampires are People too.' It was not a promising beginning to the evening."

Page 10

"Jean-Claude had been intrigued by my partial immunity to him."

Page 14

"Vampires are made by other vampires. Zombies are raised from the grave by an animator or voodoo priest. Ghouls, as far as we know, just crawl out of the graves on their own."

Page 26

"You look like a B-movie Dracula."

Anita to Aubrey

Page 42

"We are not merely rats, but men, and we have a choice."

King Rat to Anita

Page 63

"You do what we want, or I will peel away your mind like layers of an onion."

Nikolaos to Anita

Page 69

"A pale hand raised out of the blood, spasmed, and collapsed against the side of the coffin."

Page 96

"Anita, dammit these creatures are using you."

Ronnie to Anita

Page 100



"I know who I am and what I do, and that's usually enough."

Pages 129-130

"St. Louis was real hot spot for vampire watchers. The only place better was New York, but we have a lower crime rate."

Page 132

"The proprietor was an ex-cop who had been kicked off the force for being dead. Picky, picky."

Page 132

"We give our blood to the earth. Life for death, death for life."

Excerpt from the vampire blood oath

Page 179



## Topics for Discussion

How do you think Anita became involved in hunting vampires?

What kind of legal issues could be raised by the legalization of vampirism?

What kind of training might be required of an animator/vampire slayer?

How do you think Jean-Claude could go from being the third strongest master vampire to taking over Nikolaos' reign? What could have happened to the number two vampire?

Do you think Anita was to blame for Phillip's death?

Do you think Edward would have tortured Anita if she hadn't given up the location of the daytime lair?

Do you think it is wise for Anita to trust Jean-Claude? Explain.

How do you think Anita will be affected by the second vampire mark given to her by Jean-Claude?

Do you think Anita's relationships with Jean-Claude and Edward will change in the near future? Explain.