

Interview with the Vampire Study Guide

Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice

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Contents

Interview with the Vampire Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Part 1, Section 1 (Pages 1-30).....	5
Part 1, Section 2 (Pages 31-60).....	6
Part 1, Section 3 (Pages 61-90).....	7
Part 1, Section 4 (Pages 91-120).....	8
Part 1, Section 5 (Pages 121-150).....	9
Part 1, Section 6 (Pages 151-158).....	10
Part 2, Section 1 (Pages 159-180).....	11
Part 2, Section 2 (Pages 181-200).....	12
Part 3, Section 1 (Pages 201-240).....	13
Part 3, Section 2 (Pages 241-270).....	14
Part 3, Section 3 (Pages 271-300).....	15
Part 3, Section 4 (Pages 301-318).....	16
Part 4, Section 1 (Pages 319-342).....	17
Characters.....	18
Objects/Places.....	22
Social Sensitivity.....	24
Techniques.....	25
Themes.....	26
Style.....	29
Quotes.....	31
Adaptations.....	33
Topics for Discussion.....	34



[Literary Precedents.....](#) 35

[Related Titles.....](#) 36

[Copyright Information.....](#) 37



Plot Summary

Interview with the Vampire is a story of immortality, loyalty, and detachment. The main plot surrounds three individuals brought and held together by the bond of immortality. The story begins with the vampire, Louis, who meets with a boy conducting an interview of his life. The journey begins with tragedy in a young mortal's life that brings him to an encounter with a vampire that changes him forever. Eternally in search of answers as to their true nature and origins, Louis faces the death of his humanity, the betrayal of other vampires, and the death of a companion dear to him. In the end, Louis understands that the road of immortality is best traveled alone.

Before Louis' story begins, he meets a young boy who conducts interviews. They meet in a room in San Francisco, which is where the action begins. Louis tells his story which begins in a time to when he was a mortal man in late eighteenth century New Orleans. After tragedy strikes his family, he encounters the vampire Lestat who makes him one of the undead. Almost immediately, Louis grapples with his new, evil nature and his lost humanity. Unable to slay mortals in the beginning, he exists off of the blood of animals until he comes upon a young girl, five years of age. He and Lestat take the girl and make her a child vampire. Together they live almost happily for seventy years, until Claudia begins to ask questions about her origins.

Cursed to live for eternity in a child's body, Claudia is furious that she will never physically grow into adult. She makes the decision to rise up against Lestat, whom she blames for her nature. She lashes out against him, and both she and Louis believe him dead when they prepare to leave for Europe. Once overseas, they encounter nothing but mindless living corpses until they arrive in Paris. It is in Paris that they meet other vampires such as themselves. Claudia, however, realizes that she is in danger from these beings and begs Louis to make another vampire, Madeline, who will care for and protect Claudia. It is not long after he agrees to this that the Paris vampires kill Claudia for her crime against Lestat.

Louis gets his revenge by torching the theatre where they live and kills anyone that attempts escape. He discovers soon after that Armand is alive and together they travel the world before coming back to New Orleans. Once there, Louis finds Lestat living a solitary existence, afraid of the modern world. Louis refuses to go back to him and walks away. Armand eventually leaves him and he carries on his eternal existence, completely alone, which is how he prefers it.



Part 1, Section 1 (Pages 1-30)

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Louis and a boy meet in a room on Divisadero Street in San Francisco for an interview. At their first encounter, the boy does not believe that the person before him is a true vampire. When he discovers it is true, he is startled but determined to conduct the interview. Louis' story begins with the tragic death of his younger brother in the late 1700s, while Louis is still a young mortal man. His brother was a religious fanatic who believed that he saw visions. His death begins the chain of events that lead to Louis' eventual encounter with a vampire. Since he feels responsible for his brother's death, he carries the guilt of it and wishes for death to come to him. One night a vampire answers this call, and attacks him. When the vampire, Lestat, makes himself known to Louis, he asks him if he wants to join him in immortality. Louis agrees and prepares for his transformation.

When Lestat starts, Louis is quite unprepared for what is about to happen. When it is finished, Louis experiences his mortal death and begins to see the world through vampire eyes. As soon as Louis becomes a vampire, both Lestat's impatience and controlling nature come shining through. He seems to have no patience or words of wisdom for Louis as he goes through this new experience and goes to sleep in a coffin for the first time. The first thing that Louis must do as a vampire is to kill his first mortal. He blames Lestat for not preparing him well enough and he ends up bungling the attempt. Instead of coaching him, Lestat berates him for not doing what is in his nature to do.

Part 1, Section 1 (Pages 1-30) Analysis

This first section sets up various themes that continue through the entire book. The first theme presented is Louis' sense of guilt over death. His guilt begins with his perceived responsibility over his brother's death. He struggles with his vampire's nature to kill victims in order to survive, yet he also refuses to let go of his mortal nature, which reels over killing another human being. That part of his personality is something that he hangs on to for years to come. When he becomes a vampire, his difficulty in killing victims is an issue for bigger events to come.



Part 1, Section 2 (Pages 31-60)

Part 1, Section 2 (Pages 31-60) Summary

There are big differences between the way Louis and Lestat kill mortals. Louis thinks that Lestat shows no regard for mortal life while Louis does. During a conversation one night, Lestat indicates to Louis that they could survive on animals, although it is nowhere near the same experience that killing mortals gives. Lestat does not understand how Louis does not do what is in his nature as a vampire. Louis realizes right away that he dislikes Lestat. He dislikes his materialistic nature along with the way he hunts his victims. One of the early disputes between them arises over the Freniere family.

Lestat is determined to kill the young Freniere boy. Louis does not want him to since there are only women left and they will not be able to fend well enough for themselves in that day and age. When Freniere is challenged to a duel, Lestat seeks his opportunity to kill him before he dies in a duel. His plans are foiled when Louis prevents him from getting to him before the duel. After Freniere survives the duel, Lestat immediately kills him afterward. Louis decides to go to Babette, who is Freniere's sister, and give her the news of his death. He also counsels her on how to help her family and plantation survive without outside help. When the slaves at Pointe du Lac revolt, Louis kills Lestat's father. He does this at Lestat's desperate urging. He then sets fire to the house. In an attempt to flee the flames, they go to the Freniere plantation for shelter. Louis seeks Babette's help and she allows them to stay in a cellar during the daylight hours.

Part 1, Section 2 (Pages 31-60) Analysis

The stage is set for the ongoing conflict between Louis and Lestat. The experience of sucking blood had changed everything for Louis. When he realizes that he and Lestat are mismatched partners, the tone is set for a permanent conflict between the two. Not only now are there differences in class, as Louis sees it, but there are also differences in ideology and viewpoint. The only other thing that, on the surface, seems to keep Louis with Lestat is that longing for knowledge that Lestat implies he has. A deeper reason that Louis stays with Lestat is for mere company. Even though Louis threatens to throw Lestat out, Lestat taunts Louis with information that he holds back. However, Louis keeps them together out of loneliness.



Part 1, Section 3 (Pages 61-90)

Part 1, Section 3 (Pages 61-90) Summary

Louis gives Babette counsel on how to run the Freniere plantation. When Pointe du Lac is burning to the ground, Louis and Lestat go to Babette for shelter, which she gives. The next night however, she knows something is wrong and detains them for answers. After a brief struggle, Lestat frightens her and she now believes they are from the devil. Babette hurls a lantern at Louis and it starts to set him on fire. Lestat puts it out and attempts another run at Babette, which Louis stops. They take the opportunity to flee and head to New Orleans. When Louis goes out to hunt, he finds himself in a part of town badly affected by the plague, and thus deserted. He comes upon a house where he finds a little girl with her dead mother. Louis drinks from her but does not kill her. He is startled by Lestat's presence as he taunts him.

The next night when Louis rises, he finds Lestat is in their suite with two women that he plans to kill. He toys with them before he drains them of their blood, which disgusts Louis. Lestat taunts them and even goes so far as to push one of them into his coffin while she is still alive. Once they are both dead, Lestat leads Louis out for a talk. Lestat goes on to explain to Louis that he needs to do what is in his nature to do. They come upon a hospital and find the little blonde haired girl that Louis had hunted the night before.

Part 1, Section 3 (Pages 61-90) Analysis

Something important happens in these pages with Louis. His connection with mortals, like the Freniere family, comes into question when Babette believes him to be the devil. It upsets Louis when she calls him a devil and he fails to understand why she does. Even though she does not see the good that Louis offers, she does see him for what he truly is, which even he refuses to see. It is later in the chapter when he feeds on the little girl that he understands that it is the vampire nature to kill, and only in killing does he have that connection with mortals. It is in drinking their blood that he knows them and becomes one with them. He begins to understand that there is no other way.



Part 1, Section 4 (Pages 91-120)

Part 1, Section 4 (Pages 91-120) Summary

Lestat takes the child back with them to their rooms. Louis drinks more from her and she still does not die. It is at that moment that Lestat takes her from him, slashes his wrist, and tells her to drink. Claudia becomes a child vampire and Lestat teaches her how to kill her victims. Lestat takes her under his wing and shows her how to hunt. Together, Louis and Lestat spoil her as though she was their child. They bestow upon her lavish gifts and dresses. Although she always sleeps with Louis, she one day decides that she wants her own coffin and has one made for her. However, she continues to sleep with Louis.

After many years have passed, Claudia finally begins asking questions. She repeatedly asks both Louis and Lestat how it happened that she became a vampire. When Lestat refuses to answer her, Louis gives in and tells her the story. He takes her to where he first found her and tells her that he drank from her. When she finally gets past her anger and realizes that Lestat is fully at fault, she proposes to Louis that they leave him. They make plans to go to Europe and search for other vampires.

Part 1, Section 4 (Pages 91-120) Analysis

Louis reveals an element of foreshadowing when he explains to Claudia that her body will never change. Years and years go by before anything comes of this knowledge, but he knows that one day it will come up; it is inevitable. There will come a day that Claudia will snap over the knowledge that she will be a weak and helpless child for eternity. Only her mind will change over the years. Claudia's caustic questioning of Lestat and Louis suggests that a cataclysmic conflict will soon unfold.



Part 1, Section 5 (Pages 121-150)

Part 1, Section 5 (Pages 121-150) Summary

The tension rises between Claudia, Louis, and Lestat. Convinced that Lestat knows nothing, Claudia and Louis firm up their plans to leave. Claudia alarms Louis by telling him that she intends to kill Lestat. Beyond that, she refuses to let Louis in on her plans. One night, after Lestat goes out, Claudia acts secretly which puts Louis on guard. He begins to suspect that this will be the night. When Lestat comes home later, Claudia entices him into another room where she has two young boys that are passed out. Lestat drinks from one of the boys and knows immediately that something is wrong; he is poisoned. Claudia makes her move and slashes his throat to the point of rendering him completely helpless. Instead of helping Lestat, Louis helps Claudia by wrapping Lestat's seemingly dead body. They head out to the swamp and place his body in the alligator-infested waters.

The next day Claudia rummages through Lestat's belongings, searching for some clue that will indicate their history. She finds nothing but insists to Louis that he deserved to die. Louis tells Claudia that if Lestat deserved to die then they do too. He is so upset with her that he tells her to keep her distance from him. Going out into the night, Louis goes to a nearby cathedral. There he sees a vision of Claudia and of his brother. When he snaps back to reality, there is a priest standing before him who asks if he needs to confess. Louis joins him and confesses all. The priest is immediately angered and thinks Louis is playing him for a fool. Thoroughly enraged, Louis kills him.

Part 1, Section 5 (Pages 121-150) Analysis

This chapter is about death and endings. Louis tries to convince Claudia that killing Lestat is a mistake. She believes that she can do this on her own though Louis knows otherwise. He tells her that Lestat is stronger than she knows. This is a clear indication that she is getting in over her head, which sets the stage for imminent disaster if she continues on this path. However, he continues to warn her by saying that Lestat will destroy her if she tries to kill him. As Louis' warnings continue, the sense of danger is evident.



Part 1, Section 6 (Pages 151-158)

Part 1, Section 6 (Pages 151-158) Summary

Louis and Claudia are busy making final preparations before their trip. The night before they are scheduled to depart, Claudia comes home and is distressed as she tells Louis that somebody was following her. At first, she thinks it is a mortal, but more and more realizes-and fears-that it is another vampire. As Louis discovers, it is the musician from the day before who has now become a vampire. The musician vampire has come back with Lestat. A struggle ensues and Louis hurls a lamp at Lestat who goes right up in flames. He kills the other fledgling vampire and makes his escape with Claudia toward the ship that will take them to Europe.

Part 1, Section 6 (Pages 151-158) Analysis

Before they depart for Europe, Louis receives a visitor. It is the young musician that Lestat had been visiting before Claudia attacks him. When he shows up, Louis sees the puncture marks on his neck. He immediately tells Claudia he believes that Lestat had planned to make him a vampire. This opens up the possibility that he may come back to be a threat, which foreshadows the events of several nights later.



Part 2, Section 1 (Pages 159-180)

Part 2, Section 1 (Pages 159-180) Summary

When they arrive in Europe, they come across their first encounter with another vampire. It terrorizes a small village as the inhabitants are forced to dig up the newly deceased and drive stakes through their hearts, then decapitate them. They meet Morgan, whose wife has just died at the hands of this creature. He describes in detail how the villagers come together to try to hunt the fiend down.

Part 2, Section 1 (Pages 159-180) Analysis

During the voyage, Claudia and Louis discuss the possibility of Lestat surviving the accident. Louis knows that if they had burned him he would not have survived. This leaves the door open for Lestat to make an appearance later on.



Part 2, Section 2 (Pages 181-200)

Part 2, Section 2 (Pages 181-200) Summary

Louis argues with the innkeeper who is determined to drive a stake through the body of Morgan's dead wife. After he sees that they will not stop what they are about to do, Louis convinces them to tell him where to find this vampire. He and Claudia then set out to find him themselves. They eventually cross paths with it and discover that it is a mindless creature that resembles more of an animal than a person. After some struggle, this rogue vampire dies. Louis and Claudia go back to the inn and tell them that the vampire is dead.

Part 2, Section 2 (Pages 181-200) Analysis

Louis and Claudia's quest to find others of their kind ends in a bad first attempt. They are badly disappointed in their inability to make contact and get answers from their own kind. This encounter however, foreshadows their future encounter with the vampires in Paris. From the disappointment, wanton violence, deception, and senseless adherence to old rules based in myth, the events here almost mirror what is yet to come for them.



Part 3, Section 1 (Pages 201-240)

Part 3, Section 1 (Pages 201-240) Summary

Louis goes out for a walk and quickly realizes that another vampire is following him. He is surprised and excited that he finally encounters another vampire; however, he is quickly angered. After several moments of being tormented and ridiculed by him, Louis calls this trickster vampire a buffoon. When he leaves, another vampire, Armand, is there and approaches him with an invitation to attend the Theatre of the Vampires the next night. Louis and Claudia go together to see their performance. The vampires onstage perform a skit pretending to be death. They bring a mortal woman out and kill her while the audience unwittingly looks on, not knowing that they are seeing a real performance.

After the show is over, Louis and Claudia meet with Armand in a downstairs room of the theatre. Armand lets Louis drink from his human servant boy. The other vampires are nearby, curious about Louis and Claudia. The females in particular focus their attention on Claudia. Armand seeks to find out who made Louis and Claudia, though they refuse to answer. The conversation between Louis and Armand is about their nature. Louis is filled with questions that Armand only alludes to. Louis, for his own sanity's sake, is trying to determine if there is any good within them since they kill in order to continue living. Armand never really answers this question. He only answers that there is no god or devil and therefore it should not matter. Though Armand does not know any answers about the origins of vampires, he says that for all he knows, he is the oldest living vampire at four hundred years old.

Part 3, Section 1 (Pages 201-240) Analysis

Louis is correct when he says that regardless of what happens, it would be a night of revelations. Unfortunately for Louis, he does not realize what those revelations will mean. He goes into this situation excited and still passionate about the questions he believes he will receive answers to; however, he does not see the treachery about to take place that ultimately provides him with answers that he never expected. Additionally, Louis fails to see Armand's power over him as a negative attribute. However, it is this power that adds to the rising conflict as Armand deceives Louis by claiming that he does not possess power over the other vampires.



Part 3, Section 2 (Pages 241-270)

Part 3, Section 2 (Pages 241-270) Summary

As Louis flees the theatre, he is thinking about Lestat. Santiago appears. Santiago has read Louis' thoughts and asks Louis about the name he mentioned. Louis denies saying anything. The vampires around Louis are all dressed in black with dyed black hair. They believe that black is the color of vampires. They marvel at Claudia, not only because she is such a young beauty, but also because she is wearing lavender. Louis sees for himself how different he and Claudia are from the Paris vampires.

Later, back at their hotel, Claudia is seething over their meeting with the other vampires. She says she despises them, but she knows deep down that she is in danger from them. Although Louis denies it on the surface, he knows deep down that this is true. She goes on to tell him that she received clear messages from him that he wished she would die and release Louis to him. Claudia tries to convince Louis that this is what is happening. However, when Louis goes back to Armand, he continues to warn Louis about the other vampires and how they mean him harm. He instructs Louis to remain closed to them so that they do not read his thoughts.

When Louis goes back to the hotel after his meeting with Armand, he sees Claudia sitting with a mortal woman, Madeline. Claudia demands that Louis make her a vampire because she does not have the strength to do so herself. She asks Louis to do this for her since she knows that Louis will leave her for Armand and she needs someone to take care of her. Louis speaks to Madeline and learns that she is grieving the loss of her child, whom she can see in Claudia. She promises to care and protect Claudia. Louis gives in and begins her transformation.

Part 3, Section 2 (Pages 241-270) Analysis

There is a shift occurring for Louis. Though he protests to Claudia that he will go off with Armand, he knows deep down that this is what he wants. Although fiercely loyal to Claudia, he wants Armand's companionship. His fatal flaw however, is that he trusts what Armand tells him, especially the warning that he does not hold sway over the other vampires. He tells Louis that he and Claudia cannot safely leave the theatre; however, no attempt is made on them in Armand's presence. His blind trust in Armand helps in the tragedy about to befall on him and Claudia that is yet to occur. Even though Armand tells Louis that the others are suspicious because of their secrecy, Louis fails to read between the lines. Moreover, the other vampires' intent is clear when they state that they punish those vampires with death that rise up and kill their masters.



Part 3, Section 3 (Pages 271-300)

Part 3, Section 3 (Pages 271-300) Summary

Louis gives in and agrees to make Madeline a vampire. From the outset, Madeline seems to be completely dedicated to Claudia and is fiercely dedicated to her. She eventually burns her doll shop and leaves her mortal life behind. Louis once again goes to see Armand who warns him that Claudia and Madeline should leave Paris at once. He tells Louis that the other vampires are suspicious and are ready to strike out against them. If they do, Armand declares that he is powerless to stop the chain of events.

They begin to settle in to this new life when their world is turned upside down, as the Paris vampires invade their hotel room and take them back to the theatre by force. Louis is separated from Claudia and Madeline. It is at the theatre that the others hold a trial for Claudia and Louis' insurrection over Lestat. When Louis arrives at the theatre, he is surprised to see Lestat sitting in the room. Lestat begs Louis to go back to New Orleans with him, and says that it was Claudia who had lashed out against him. Armand is nowhere to be found. Instead, the vampires gang up on Louis, trap him in a coffin, and bury him behind a wall. He knows then that something terrible is happening to Claudia and he is unable to stop it.

Part 3, Section 3 (Pages 271-300) Analysis

Once again, Armand's remarks to Louis foreshadow the violence about to happen to Claudia. He does this when he says that he is ruthless in love and that he will fight for Louis. This implies that he knows what will happen. Again, he warns Louis that Claudia and Madeline should leave Paris as soon as possible. He claims he cannot be responsible for what happens to them.



Part 3, Section 4 (Pages 301-318)

Part 3, Section 4 (Pages 301-318) Summary

Armand breaks Louis free from the bricked-in vault the other vampires placed him in from the night before. Once Louis is free, Armand tells him that he cannot save Claudia, but Louis is beside himself with grief. He pushes his way past the others and finds the place where Claudia and Madeline were forced into an outdoor cell where they perished in the sunlight. It is too late and they are gone. Louis leaves and is determined to get his revenge. He warns Armand to take his things and leave the theatre. Louis makes plans to depart from Paris and goes back to the theatre and sets fire to the entire building, killing any vampire that gets in his way. He succeeds and has his revenge.

Part 3, Section 4 (Pages 301-318) Analysis

Armand's proclamation that he cannot save Claudia is clearly a lie and only adds credence to his earlier claim that he will do anything for Louis' company and will stop at nothing to get it. With Claudia gone, this is truer than ever as he demonstrates. When Louis sees the object in Lestat's hands, he knows something terrible has happened to her.



Part 4, Section 1 (Pages 319-342)

Part 4, Section 1 (Pages 319-342) Summary

Louis meets up with Armand after he leaves Paris and together they travel to other countries before coming back to New Orleans. Although Louis does not seem to care one way or the other about the company, he does nothing to leave or put Armand off. He sees Armand for what he is and does not care if he stays or goes. Eventually, Louis finds Lestat back in New Orleans and pays him a visit. Lestat is merely a shell of the person he had been before and once again begs Louis to come back to him. Louis refuses and leaves him once again. He tells Armand about his encounter with Lestat and watches as he walks away. Louis, who had been so concerned with finding companionship long ago, now seeks solitude.

Louis finds Lestat in a closed up room in New Orleans, feeding on nothing but animals and infants. A young vampire is his servant, and is clearly impatient and disappointed in the man that is the legendary vampire. Lestat continues to ask Louis to come back to him, but he once again refuses. Lestat is afraid, lonely, and feeling some amount of guilt over Claudia's death years ago in Paris. The young vampire that Lestat has recruited to assist him is disgusted by the vampire that had once been a legend. Louis tells Armand of his meeting with Lestat, and Armand is surprised that he has not mentioned it sooner to him. Louis just does not care what Armand thinks or if he stays or goes. Armand is desperate for the old Louis who was full of passion. He only now understands that this is the new Louis and the passion is gone. When Armand finally leaves, Louis does not go after him.

Louis finishes his story and the boy who is interviewing him is stunned. He also fails to understand what Louis has told him. He believes that it would be different for him if he has those vampire powers. Louis gets angry and attacks the boy. He leaves him weak and about to lose consciousness. When the boy wakes up, hours later, he plays back the end of the last tape and gets the address where Lestat was last seen. He takes off from the room on Divisadero Street.

Part 4, Section 1 (Pages 319-342) Analysis

Louis' transformation is now complete. The things that plagued him in the early days of his immortality have all, one by one, been laid to rest. Louis's infatuation with Lestat in the beginning was ended when he saw him for what he was: a ruthless killer. In denial of it for so many years, Louis agreed to make Claudia a vampire, which helped him keep his humanity alive. Once that is gone, Louis finally acknowledges his true nature and, as a result, no longer wishes to seek out answers or the company of others. Armand finally answers his wishes to be alone when he walks away from him.



Characters

Louis de Pointe du Lac

Louis is the vampire who grants the interview. He is a mortal man, twenty-four years old, when Lestat makes him a vampire. He has green eyes, dark hair, and is considered tall by the standards of his day in the late 1800s. At the time that he has his first encounter with Lestat the vampire he is feeling guilt over his brother's death. He is immediately enamored of Lestat, though that quickly changes when he becomes a vampire. Louis blames Lestat for not making the experience a better one, which he could have done by coaching him. As a result, he is reluctant to let go of his mortal nature, which makes it difficult for him to hunt mortals in the first few years of his immortality. It is not until he encounters the young Claudia that he realizes that he only experiences his human connection when he kills.

While Louis says he dislikes Lestat, he continues to stay with him and even refuses to help Claudia in her quest to kill him. It is evident throughout his story that he is easily influenced. Aside from his early determination not to kill humans, he does Lestat's bidding when it comes to settling affairs at the plantation, and when Lestat orders him to kill Lestat's father. After Claudia joins them, Louis continues his dislike of Lestat but does nothing for almost seventy years. Even when Claudia kills him and he refuses to take part in it, he continues to stand by Claudia. He repeatedly puts his own desires aside for others. While he may argue that it is due to detachment, it is partly due to his weakness in character.

Louis is fiercely devoted to Claudia and is devastated when she meets her tragic end. After he faces the vampires in Paris, he realizes his true nature and sees how evil they all are. It is not until after Claudia's death that he finds his strength as an individual. At that point, he accepts his true nature and moves about as he wishes. Of course, the two largest influences-Lestat and Claudia-are gone. Even when he has the opportunity to be with Armand as he wished when he first met him, the damage is done and Louis carves a lone existence.

Lestat

Lestat is the vampire that makes Louis a vampire. He was young in mortal life when he was taken, somewhere in his early twenties. He has blonde hair and stands about six feet tall. He is an arrogant, impatient, and taunting individual. It is often that Lestat taunts Louis with either what he thinks he knows about being a vampire or about how Louis refuses to truly embrace his vampire nature. Lestat has not been a vampire for very long though, since his mortal father comes to live with him in the beginning of the story. Louis accuses Lestat of being a vampire out for revenge only. His utter disregard for humanity disgusts Louis.



Lestat's despicable behavior outrages Claudia and she eventually plots to kill him. Lestat is, however, stronger than she imagines and she fails in her mission. It is right before Louis and Claudia leave for Europe that Lestat astonishes the both of them by returning to their home, seeking Claudia. Again, they believe him dead, which is still not the case when they see him in Paris. Despite all of Lestat's antics, he truly loves Louis and wants him to come back to New Orleans so they can be together again. This new Lestat is permanently changed from the entire experience with Claudia. Years later, when Louis finds him in New Orleans, he is still the broken fiend that Louis left behind in Paris. Lestat, while physically strong enough to survive the attacks against him, turns out to be weak in constitution.

Claudia

Claudia is the five-year-old blonde haired child that Louis and Lestat choose to make a vampire. In the first few years, they care for her as their daughter; but as she grows older, she struggles with the fact that her body will remain as it was when she was made a vampire. Since she becomes a vampire at such a young age, she loses all trace of her mortal beginnings. As she grows in age as a vampire, she eventually forgets what it is like to be human at all. This separates her from Lestat and Louis, since they had lived into their twenties before they became vampires.

Claudia's vulnerability fully comes to light in Paris. While Louis is enthusiastic about meeting the other vampires, Claudia is terrified. She knows that she is in danger, which she tells Louis. She also realizes Armand's ruthless quest for Louis' companionship and that he wants her to step aside and preferably, to die. In fear of her life, she pleads with Louis to make Madeline a vampire. Claudia chooses Madeline because she knows that she reminds Madeline of her dead child. She also chooses Madeline because, as a full-grown woman, she will be able to protect Claudia in ways that she cannot protect herself in her child body.

Armand

Armand is the self-proclaimed oldest living vampire at almost four hundred years of age. He is youthful looking with auburn hair and brown eyes. He longs for Louis' companionship and will stop at nothing for it. He even warns Louis that he is ruthless in love and will stop at nothing until Louis agrees to become his companion. This is demonstrated when Armand allows the vampires to kill Claudia as justice served for her rising up against Lestat. By nature, he is also clever and uses lies to his advantage. When Lestat is at the theatre, Armand tells Lestat that he may leave with Louis in exchange for Claudia, though this does not happen. Once Claudia is brought in for her "trial", it is clear that Armand has no intention of allowing Louis to leave, and he knows Louis will not leave. This is merely a ploy to keep Louis separated from Claudia so that he will choose to go with him.



Although Armand claims that he is not the leader of the vampires at the theatre, he is the one they look to for leadership. The vampires are suspicious of Louis and Claudia and wish to do them harm, as Armand warns. However, while Armand is present, they do nothing and do not raise a hand against them. It is only when Armand is gone that they carry out their wishes. This proves that they listen to Armand. It is also partly because of this power he has that he allows them to destroy Claudia. Deep down, he knows that if he does not allow it, he will be cast out by them and in danger of destruction from them as well.

Santiago

Santiago is the trickster vampire that Louis encounters on the streets of Paris. He is very tall, gaunt, has a pure white face, and has large black eyes. When he encounters Louis on the street, he taunts him. Santiago lives with the other vampires at the Theatre de Vampires and performs with them onstage. The silence that Louis and Claudia offer as answers to their origins makes him suspicious. He knows that they are hiding something. Santiago is the first to discover that Claudia and Louis attempted to kill Lestat. Once he knows this information, the wheels are set in motion that will ultimately spell tragedy for Louis and Claudia.

The Boy

The boy is Louis' interviewer. He is a young man who, at the beginning, does not realize that he sits before a true vampire. After he gets over the initial shock, he urges Louis to begin his tale. At various points throughout Louis' story, the boy will stop to ask a question, though he does so hesitantly. It is clear that he is uncomfortable in Louis' presence until almost the end of the interview. As the meeting draws to a close, the boy gets excited about the vampire nature. This angers Louis. He feels that he failed in his quest to share his story. Louis intends his story to relay the anguish, tragedy, solitude, and pure evil of it all. However, the boy claims that he wants the power to live forever and have the strength that Louis does. The boy tells Louis that he is wasting his immortality by doing nothing with it.

Babette Freniere

Babette is the older sister of a young man who Lestat has sought to kill. Though the young man survives a duel, Lestat takes him. When this happens, Louis appears as an apparition to Babette and gives her the news of her brother's death. He gives her advice on how to run their family plantation. She takes his advice and the women left in her family thrive. Later, when Louis and Lestat need shelter from their burning house, they go to Babette who provides for them, not knowing their true natures. Lestat, impatient with Louis, gives Babette a scare and they run off. Years later, Louis learns that she died young and went insane, mostly likely from her last encounter with Louis.



Madeline

Madeline, as a mortal woman, is a doll maker that Claudia meets in Paris. At Claudia's intense urging, Louis agrees to make Madeline a vampire. She is an attractive woman with dark red hair. Her desire to become immortal stems from grief over the loss of her own child. Claudia reminds her of her child. Madeline professes to care and protect Claudia so that Louis can move on with Armand. She seems to take to being a vampire very well. Her need for the kill comes naturally to her and she quickly becomes detached from her mortal life, which she demonstrates when she burns down her doll shop.

Paul de Pointe du Lac

Paul is Louis' fifteen-year-old brother who dies tragically from a fall on the stairs. Paul's death sets the events in motion for Louis to become a vampire. Paul is a religious fanatic that believes he has visions of saints. He is described as a good-looking young man with a heavier build than Louis. While Paul's death is really an accident, Louis sees it as his fault. His death enshrouds the family with grief that never truly leaves.



Objects/Places

Divisadero Street

The room where the vampire meets with the boy for the interview is on Divisadero Street in San Francisco.

Pointe du Lac

This is Louis' mortal plantation home. After Lestat makes him a vampire, he and Lestat continue to live there with his father. When Lestat's father dies, the slaves rise up and Louis burns it down, forcing he and Lestat to make a new home for themselves in New Orleans.

New Orleans

This is the city where much of the action of the first half of Louis' story takes place. It is the New Orleans of the 1800s. Later, when Louis and Armand return, it is the late 1900s and there are big changes. All the places Louis knew are either gone, renovated, or have been left to ruin.

The French Quarter

This is where Louis, Lestat, and Claudia live together for almost seventy years.

St. Louis Cemetery

Louis' brother Paul is buried here, along with other family members. It is in New Orleans.

Paris

Paris is the European city Louis and Claudia visit where they finally encounter other vampires such as themselves.

Theatre of the Vampires

This theatre in the heart of Paris is owned and operated by vampires. Performances are by invitation-only. After the cataclysmic encounter when Claudia met her demise at the theatre, Louis goes back and burns the building to the ground with all the vampires in it.



Montmartre Cemetery

Louis encounters a painter whom he attacks before retiring into a tomb. This is where he stays before he destroys the Theatre de Vampires.

The Garden District

At the end of the book, this is where Louis finds Lestat living in seclusion.

Scythe

This is the weapon that Louis uses to get his revenge on the Paris vampires when he burns down the theatre.

Porcelain Dolls

From the point when she became a child vampire, and for years later, Claudia keeps a collection of dolls given to her by Louis and Lestat. Later in Paris, Claudia buys another such doll for her collection from Madeline, who Louis then makes a vampire.

Claudia's Yellow Dress

This is what she wears on the night that the Paris vampires kill her. When Louis sees this object in Lestat's hands, he knows at once that she has met a terrible end.



Social Sensitivity

In *Interview with the Vampire*, Anne Rice mates the old Gothic tradition with a late twentieth-century perspective. Her vampire hero, Louis, bears only a faint resemblance to the Vladimirs and Draculas of old, who were powerful, nefarious beings. Louis belongs to the narcissistic 1970s. He mirrors the self-probing "me-generation" of the past few decades.

Louis constantly questions his morality, his priorities, his feelings, and continues to react like a "sensitive" human being long after his change from life to undeath. Gradually, as the novel unfolds, he realizes that his traffic in blood and violence has totally depleted his treasury of human compassion. He has become a moral cipher who tries to retain a semblance of sensitivity by brooding upon himself and by imitating the extravagant gestures of a man in anguish. Louis's desperate imposture may be a portrait of our selfconscious, self-indulgent times.

Like all vampires, Louis is alienated from society, whether it be eighteenthcentury New Orleans where he began his new "life" or twentieth-century San Francisco where the interview takes place. He is aware of his alienation and of his victimization by Lestat, the vampire who "made" him. Every vampire in the book is both predator and victim, a point that Rice makes repeatedly. Like grotesque children of abusive parents, the vampires keep the wheel of victimization turning: Louis, who vowed he would not, turns fiveyear-old Claudia into a vampire.

A question arises concerning Rice's vampires: Do we dare blame the victims? As predators (murderers, rapists, torturers), the vampires deserve the stake. But Rice also portrays her vampires as victims — lost exiles from all humanity. In the latter case, therapy, not capital punishment, would be appropriate. The image of a vampire on a psychiatrist's couch may be ludicrous, but Rice has touched on a hair-trigger issue of our times. The ambivalence in our society about crime and victimization is a strong undercurrent in Rice's otherwise patently Gothic novel.

Techniques

Anne Rice uses the flashback technique in both *Interview with the Vampire* and *Vampire Lestat* (1985). Besides grounding the books in the present while visiting the past, the flashback technique also allows Louis (who is being interviewed) to speak in the first person. Rice also plays with tempo. A scene which may be ponderous and still is juxtaposed with a scene of quick passion and violence. The resulting tension, particularly in *Interview with the Vampire*, is extremely unsettling.



Themes

Themes

Other themes in the book, such as immortality and loss of innocence, are perhaps more obvious. Immortality is a curse to Louis. Although he has reached the pinnacle of human desire, eternal life, he has done so through the veins of youth. Like Goethe's young Werther he contemplates suicide but nevertheless he clings to his immortal half-life, damned though it be. Selfpreservation is far more powerful force than morality.

Rice also treats the theme of lost innocence. In fact, the entire book is about Louis's coming of age, vampirestyle. Louis learns that he really is inhuman, that he really does enjoy blood, that he really is undead. He loses his human innocence and, eventually, his human guilt as well.

Rice pits mortality against morality on every page of *Interview with the Vampire*. In later novels of the Vampire chronicles, she uses the metaphor of a savage garden to illustrate that life itself, raw and amoral, is more powerful than any search for meaning or selfcreated morality could be. Louis's mental, emotional and spiritual self-torment is no match for the physical bloodlust that overcomes him. In the end, that unnatural craving is his only *raison d'etre*, despite his philosophical veneer.

The theme of morality versus immortality is so complex in Rice's books that it is interesting to compare it to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which is essentially a moral tale of good overcoming evil.

The original Count Dracula ravages his innocent victims the way a tornado tears down cities, voraciously but impartially. Dracula is an evil being that attacks from without. The evil in *Interview with the Vampire* is vampirism itself: immortality without meaning or morality. As Rice's book unfolds, the classic vampire tale is turned upsidedown: First of all, a vampire, not a human being, tells the story. Then we realize that horror does not necessarily consist in having one's blood drained by an undead creature. The horror lies in surviving that experience and facing a loveless, lifeless eternity alone.

The theme of sexuality always plays a role in vampire literature, and Rice's books are no exception. She, however, reverses the underlying sexual message found in the classic *Dracula*. In Bram Stoker's book, which was written in the Victorian era, the victims are never consciously consenting adults. Victorian readers could secretly revel in Dracula's eroticism, while applauding the monster's destruction in the end. In *Interview with the Vampire*, several characters, including Louis, Madeleine and the interviewer himself, actively seek the vampire life. Vampiric intercourse in *Dracula* is taboo. In Rice's books, it is often desirable.

Another difference between Stoker's classic and Rice's book is in the kinds of sexuality depicted. The bloodsucking intimacies in *Dracula* always occur between opposite



sexes. When Harker almost meets his doom in the Count's castle, it is not Dracula who comes to him with bared fangs, but three female vampires. Stoker explores the edges of perverse sexuality with graphic descriptions of the Count's nightly visitations to his female victims, but Rice ventures deep into erotic territory to bring vampirism into the late twentieth century. When Lestat turns Louis into a vampire, the homosexual aura is inescapable. The conversion of five-year-old Claudia reeks of child pornography. In order to recreate the sexual horror of vampirism in an age when sex alone has lost much of its power, Rice goes beyond the norm to horrify her post-Sexual Revolution readers.

Detachment

When Louis becomes a vampire, one of the first things he notices about his new nature is his detachment to what had been important before. He was detached from his family, his home and property, mortals, and finally, Lestat. Things that had been important to him as a human are no longer important to him. It is this detachment though, that will enable him to make the kill he needs in order to survive as a vampire. Even as he experiences his mortal death, his ability to feel fear disappears. However, he does not seem to realize these things at this early point in time. Louis acknowledges this feeling as part of his change, that nothing from his mortal life matters any longer, but it does not occur to him to use this to his advantage. Part of this served him well in matters regarding his plantation. His property had been very important to him as a mortal man. As a vampire, it means nothing to him; so much so, that he eventually sets fire to everything.

Other instances of detachment include those from Armand, Claudia, and Madeline. Armand's detachment is so extreme that he seeks to possess Louis' company in order to help revive some feeling within him. He knows that whatever humanity he had is long gone, though Louis appears to have it when he first arrives in Paris. Claudia, on the other hand, becomes a vampire at such a young age that she has no inkling whatsoever of what it is like to be human. She possesses no feelings for them and shows no understanding of their condition at all. Finally, Madeline's sense of detachment appears almost immediately. From the start, Madeline takes to her vampire nature as though she was never human. She immediately cuts herself off from her old life and goes so far as to burn down her doll shop. In her opinion, none of it had meaning for her anymore.

Companionship

Throughout Louis' story, it is evident that vampires value companionship. Despite their detachment from mortal trappings, they have a fierce need for the company of other immortals. Louis, Lestat, and Claudia live together for almost seventy years as a makeshift family. Although they are all detached due to their vampire natures, they stay together out of the need for company. Even when Claudia seeks to end Lestat's life, she does not do so to leave Louis. She and Louis remain together and continue to travel the world.



Even when Claudia speaks to Louis of leaving when they are in Paris, she plans to have Madeline as her companion. Of course, though, Claudia does not have the strength or physical stamina to go it alone. Madeline, though she casts aside her mortal life and gains that vampire detachment, is extremely devoted to Claudia and has no desire to be apart from her. Louis, too, is drawn to Armand from the moment he meets him. Likewise, Armand feels so strongly for Louis that he is willing to go to extremes in order to be with him. The Paris vampires at the theatre are probably the best examples of this need for companionship. There are many of them living together, though they do not need to be. They are all capable and strong enough to live on their own, yet they choose to stay together. It seems as though they belong nowhere else in the world other than with each other. This may be why it is so important to them.

Loyalty and Deception

The loyalty that vampires are supposed to have for their makers is called into question when Claudia rises up against Lestat. Instead of powerful dedication she should feel for Lestat as her maker, she chooses deception. Then, as the Paris vampires seek justice for Lestat, as a fulfillment of old rules, Armand claims he is powerless to stop the brutality they are going to take against Claudia. It is evident, however, that Armand is being deceitful to Louis in order to force his hand in companionship that Armand is desperate for. It is obvious that Armand has great power over the vampires at the theatre. He is, as he says, ruthless in love, and will stop at nothing to have Louis with him. On the other hand, however, he does indeed love Louis, which may make him loyal. It seems to be in a vampire's nature to be both loyal and deceitful.

Another example of this is when Louis, although fiercely loyal to Claudia, unwittingly deceives her when he tells her he will not leave her for Armand. She tells him he will go and believes it deep down. Whether he is fully conscious of what he says or not is irrelevant. From the moment he meets Armand, he is completely enamored of him and seeks his company. He is conflicted though, by his devotion to Claudia. He says one thing to her but knows that deep down what she says is true. Although Louis makes Madeline as a request by Claudia, he does it because he knows, despite his loyalty, that he will betray Claudia and leave her for Armand.



Style

Points of View

This is the story as told by Louis de Pointe du Lac, a two-hundred-year-old vampire. These events are seen through his eyes. While for many years he is a passionate individual, desperately seeking answers to his great questions, his progression to becoming fully detached as an immortal is discernable.

When he begins his story, he sounds like any other man who might have lived at the end of the eighteenth century. There is nothing unnatural about his tale or concerns. The only distinguishing sentiment that alerts the reader that may be different is the hint of sadness in his voice. Over the course of the interview, as he details his life as a vampire with Lestat and then with Claudia, he begins to sound further detached from mortal men. Still, there are experiences he has that bring about passion within him. This mostly occurs when Lestat is still living with him and again when he meets Armand and looks forward to receiving answers. Once the action takes a tragic turn, so does his perspective. After Claudia dies, the passion is gone from him. He becomes detached and bitter. It is only many years later as he recounts his story for the interview that only detachment remains.

Setting

The setting of the interview is in a room of a building on Divisadero Street in San Francisco, in the present day. However, as Louis' story unfolds, the settings change. Not only do the locations change, but times change as well. Louis' story begins when he is a young mortal man living on a plantation, Pointe du Lac, in Louisiana. After time spent there with Lestat, they move into the French Quarter at the heart of New Orleans. It is still in the very late 1700s. While in New Orleans, Louis, Lestat, and Claudia take up residence in a townhouse. Together, the three of them spend almost seventy years as family.

After Lestat's demise, Louis and Claudia travel to Eastern Europe where people in small, dreary villages carry on with backwards ways and superstitions. After they exhaust their hunt for other vampires, they move on to Paris. After Claudia meets her tragic end there, Louis travels various countries with Armand before coming back to the United States in the late 1800s. It is almost the present day when Louis finally goes home to New Orleans. The setting spans many countries and almost two hundred years. The present is interspersed as the interviewer pauses Louis' story to ask him further questions.



Language and Meaning

Louis is a vampire who was a mortal in the late 1700s. He was also born in France, so English is not his first language. This combination results in a distinct language style. He does not use many slang terms or colloquialisms. He speaks in a deliberate and slow style with a slight French accent. His deliberate use of language also emphasizes his current frame of mind and his pensiveness. Louis speaks slowly and does his best to relay his true intentions. Not only does he do this through the spoken word, but also his actions are decidedly human as is commented on throughout his story.

Other characters in the story, chiefly the immortal ones, have less of a human quality to their voices. Almost all of them have been vampires for many years before Louis; in some cases, hundreds of years. After so much time, they lose touch with mortals and their ways; including their ways of speaking. Vampires have a very different manner in which they communicate. They have the ability to read others' thoughts as well as other immortals. However, Louis, Lestat, and Claudia are not able to read each other's thoughts because the channel is closed between vampires and their makers. Other vampires can and do use some form of telepathy to convey messages or feelings.

Body language is also very different among vampires. Again, because they are largely detached from mortals and have been for some time, they forget how to move the way humans do. They do not move at the same speed; they usually move too fast for the human eye to notice, or they use unnaturally slow movements. They possess the ability to do both. Since they are not human, they also have an entirely different strength that they did not have as mortals. They fight and they celebrate differently. The only vampires that move identically to humans are Louis, Lestat, and Claudia, though it is only during the seventy years that they live together. Each of these other characteristics is displayed at various times throughout Louis' story.

Structure

The overall structure is set up as an interview. There are periods where Louis pauses and the boy asks questions. However, the story is largely told through Louis' dialogue, rather than through a typical question and answer session. As a result, the story unfolds as a typical piece of fiction would with various characters coming and going throughout.

The passage of time is transitioned very smoothly; there are no breaks to indicate jumps in time. However, four parts to the book signify turning points in Louis' story. The first part of the story is how he became a vampire, Claudia's inclusion into their little family, and ends with Lestat's demise. The second part begins as Louis and Claudia travel to Europe in search of other vampires, where they instead find mindless vampire creatures among villagers who live by the old myths of vampires. The third part covers Louis and Claudia's adventures and tragedies in Paris. Finally, the fourth part is Louis' story with Armand in the modern day and how he ultimately sees Lestat once again in their hometown of New Orleans. Each part signifies a different era of Louis' existence.



Quotes

"The vampire was utterly white and smooth, as if he were sculpted from bleached bone, and his face was as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for two brilliant green eyes that looked down at the boy intently like flames in a skull." Part 1, Section 1, page 4

"I was dying as a human, yet completely alive as a vampire; and with my awakened senses, I had to preside over the death of my body with a certain discomfort and then, finally, fear." Part 1, Section 1, page 22

"By morning, I realized that I was his complete superior and I had been sadly cheated in having him for a teacher. He must guide me through the necessary lessons, if there were any more real lessons, and I must tolerate in him a frame of mind which was blasphemous to life itself." Part 1, Section 2, page 31

"The slaves knew now we were not ordinary mortals. In hushed tones, the maids told of how, through a crack in the door, they had seen us dine on empty plates with empty silver, lifting empty glasses to our lips, laughing, our faces bleached and ghostly in the candlelight, the blind man a helpless fool in our power." Part 1, Section 2, page 50

"She was simply unlike Lestat and me to such an extent I couldn't comprehend her; for little child she was, but also fierce killer now capable of the ruthless pursuit of blood with all a child's demanding." Part 1, Section 4, page 97

"The secret is, Louis, that I want to kill him. I will enjoy it!" Part 1, Section 5, page 124

"But there, right there in that coffin, with that fellow standing on the broken boards over her feet, was the dead woman, and I tell you... I tell you she was as fresh, as pink... as pink as if she were alive!" Part 2, Section 1, page 178

"She'd always been the 'lost child' to her victims, the 'orphan', and now it seemed she would be something else, something wicked and shocking to the passers-by who succumbed to her." Part 3, Section 1, page 207

"A dark, draped figure was moving on the stage from tree trunk to tree trunk, so fast that as he stepped into the lights he seemed to appear magically in the center, one arm flashing out from his cloak to show a silver scythe and the other to hold a mask on a slender stick before the invisible face, a mask which showed the gleaming countenance of Death, a painted skull." Part 3, Section 1, page 217

"I moved to get away from him, and yet I was drawn to him and I didn't move at all, his arm exerting its firm pressure, his candle blazing now against my eye, so that I felt the warmth of it; all my cold flesh yearned for that warmth, but suddenly I wavered to snuff it but couldn't find it, and all I saw was his radiant face, as I had never seen Lestat's face, white and poreless and sinewy and male." Part 3, Section 1, page 229



"And, remembering suddenly and keenly Claudia's words, what were very nearly her last words - that admission that she knew that I could love Armand because I had been able to love even her - those words struck me as rich and ironical, more filled with meaning than she could have guessed." Part 3, Section 4, page 316

"Armand, in his brief visits with vampires in London and Rome, had learned that the burning of the Theatre des Vampires was known throughout the world, and that both of us were considered outcasts." Part 4, Section 1, page 324

Adaptations

In 1994, "Interview with the Vampire" was released as a Warner Brothers movie starring Tom Cruise as Lestat and Brad Pitt as Louis. The movie, like the book, enjoyed great popular success, although critics often gave both mixed reviews. All the elements in the book that captured the public imagination in 1976 excited the same interest in the movie in 1994. In the same vein, many literary and movie critics deplored Rice's overripe writing and the movie's sodden pacing.

The movie follows the book's plot line and characterization closely. Tom Cruise plays an utterly decadent Lestat, who relishes his own handsomeness, charm and power. Brad Pitt's Louis is true to the morose and miserable character in the book. The sets are faithful to Rice's detailed descriptions of eighteenth-century New Orleans and nineteenth-century Paris. An atmosphere of decay and morbidity surrounds Louis's plantation; the Theater of Vampires exemplifies turn-of-the-century Paris at its most jaded.

In an era when special effects are sometimes valued more than storylines or themes, Interview with the Vampire offers a little of everything. Of course, there are trade-offs when a book is adapted to film. For example, Rice's written description of Claudia's death is heart-wrenching. She makes the pain Louis suffers echo through the centuries. In the movie, however, the focus is on Claudia and Madeleine, who are turned to ashes like victims of Pompeii volcanic eruption. The slow-motion shattering of their gray forms is far more interesting than Brad Pitt's howls of anguish.

Despite the trade-offs, the book and the movie ask one simple question that everyone can understand: What is it really like to be a vampire? The answer is the same as to the question, what is it really like to be human?



Topics for Discussion

How has becoming an immortal shaped Louis as a person?

Is it possible that Louis would have discovered his true nature without the help of Claudia's presence? Why or why not?

What was it about Louis that attracted Armand? What trait did Louis possess that he could not get from the other vampires at the theatre?

Since Louis said many times that he disliked Lestat, why do you think he chose to stay with him for so many years?

Why did Louis refuse to aid Claudia in her quest to kill Lestat?

Why did Claudia choose to rise up against Lestat and not Louis?

Louis and Armand have an instant attraction for one another. When they finally have the chance to be together, Louis no longer cares. What is it that has changed Louis' mind?



Literary Precedents

If Bram Stoker could have read this book, he might have had trouble appreciating Louis's vacillating, self-absorbed character. Stoker presented his famous vampire as an evil force, not a personality. But he would have had no trouble recognizing the desolate Transylvanian landscape that Louis and Claudia visit in search of their roots.

The moldy tower, terrified peasantry, black capes, and carriage in this scene are direct descendants of Gothic tradition. In the midst of these melodramatic elements, however, Rice develops a psychology of vampirism. Her exploration of the fictional world of vampiric emotions, sexuality, spirituality and society is unique.

There is no sense of vampire community in *Dracula* (although the Count has some kind of bizarre family relationship with the three female vampires that live in his castle). Rice's undead, on the other hand, have a history, a code of behavior, and an entire society. The Parisian vampires under Armand's leadership follow rigid rules, such as Thou shalt wear black at all times and Thou shalt not kill another vampire. Despite their immortal powers, they're still slaves to the human need for society with its mores and rules of conduct.

While Count *Dracula* strikes like amoral lightning and gives little thought to his impact on human society, Rice's vampire characters struggle introspectively with very human dilemmas. Armand's character reveals such a dilemma: the need to grow and change when youth is long past. Armand tries to drain spirit, rather than blood, from Louis to stave off the despair that can drive vampires to eternal dormancy. Without a spiritual rejuvenation, vampires as well as humans find life (or undeath) too much to bear.

Related Titles

Interview with the Vampire begins the Vampire Chronicles. The sequels are The Vampire Lestat (1985), The Queen of the Damned (1988) and The Tale of the Body Thief (1992).

In The Vampire Lestat the villain tells his side of the story. Lestat, an insensitive Philistine in Interview with the Vampire, relates his personal history as a counterbalance to Louis's tale. This sequel includes more detailed accounts of ancient vampire cults of Egypt and Greece. But on the whole, The Vampire Lestat continues to explore the inner workings of vampires' souls and societies while shining an uncanny light on human society as well.

The Queen of the Damned traces vampire history back to its roots in Egypt.

Lestat, Louis and Lestat's mother Gabrielle face the awakened Queen of vampires, Akasha, who wants to rule as earth's sole monarch. In The Tale of the Body Thief, Lestat lives a mortal life for a while after the body thief, Raglan James, switches bodies with him. Lestat soon finds that sunlight and a human love affair cannot replace the powers of immortality. The four books of the Vampire Chronicles trace a path from denial to acceptance. What Louis abhorred, Lestat finally accepts: the true nature and purpose of the vampire.



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