

The Queen of the Damned Study Guide

The Queen of the Damned by Anne Rice

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Contents

The Queen of the Damned Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Prologue.....	6
Proem.....	7
Part 1, Chapter 1, The Legend of the Twins.....	8
Part 1, Chapter 2, The Short Happy Life of Baby Jenks and the Fang Gang.....	9
Part 1, Chapter 3, The Goddess Pandora.....	10
Part 1, Chapter 4, The Story of Daniel, the Devil's Minion, or the Boy from Interview with the Vampire.....	11
Part 1, Chapter 5, Khayman, My Khayman.....	13
Part 1, Chapter 6, The Story of Jesse, the Great Family, and the Talamasca.....	14
Part 2, All Hallow's Eve.....	16
Part 3, Chapter 1, Lestat: In the Arms of the Goddess.....	17
Part 3, Chapter 2, Marius: Coming Together.....	18
Part 3, Chapter 3, Lestat: The Queen of Heaven.....	19
Part 3, Chapter 4, The Story of the Twins, Part 1.....	20
Part 3, Chapter 5, Lestat: This Is My Body; This Is My Blood.....	22
Part 3, Chapter 6, The Story of the Twins, Part 2.....	23
Part 3, Chapter 7, Lestat: Kingdom of Heaven.....	25
Part 3, Chapter 8, The Story of the Twins, Conclusion.....	26
Part 4, The Queen of the Damned.....	28
Part 5, . . . World Without End, Amen.....	29
Characters.....	30
Objects/Places.....	35



[Social Concerns And Themes.....](#) 38

[Techniques/Literary Precedents.....](#) 40

[Themes.....](#) 41

[Style.....](#) 43

[Quotes.....](#) 45

[Adaptations.....](#) 49

[Topics for Discussion.....](#) 50

[Related Titles.....](#) 51

[Copyright Information.....](#) 52



Plot Summary

The Queen of the Damned is the third of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*. This fictional story is told in five parts. It chronicles the trials of a group of modern-day vampires locked in struggle to save the mortal humans from the first vampire, Akasha, who has awoken from six-thousand years of sleep with a plan to kill all the males on earth in order to usher in a reign of peace. Akasha has taken the mischievous vampire, Lestat, as her immortal lover. She's also destroyed all other vampires, except for a few of Lestat's close friends. In the end, the fulfillment of an ancient curse destroys Akasha, saves the mortals, and reunites Lestat with his loved ones.

Lestat, the devilish and charismatic vampire and star of the first two *Vampire Chronicles*, *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), and *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), has become a rock star and is planning a live rock concert in San Francisco in ten days. As a rock star, he openly admits to being a vampire and sings songs about the old vampire legends. This includes stories of Enkil and Akasha, known as the Mother and Father vampires. The mortal humans love him and think he is a human pretending to be a vampire, as a gimmick to sell albums. Most other vampires are threatened by his audacity. They've sent out the call to ambush and dismember Lestat at his live concert. The Queen, Akasha, has slept, unmoving, at her husband's side for as long as any vampire can remember. Now, she's suddenly awakened, drunk the last of her husband's blood, escaped her secret crypt and gone out into the world. She burns coven houses and vampires, as she goes.

The vampires who have not yet been killed, including many of Lestat's old friends from the previous novels, are drawn through fear, curiosity or love of Lestat to San Francisco for the concert. At the same time, all vampires around the world, and even some mortal acolytes, have begun having vivid tragic dreams about an ancient pair of red-haired twin sisters.

A mortal woman, Jesse Reese, has come to suspect that her red-haired Aunt Maharet is not human and may be the same kind of creature as Lestat. She, too, makes her way to the concert. There, she is killed by an angry vampire and turned into a vampire by Maharet, who is indeed a vampire. That night, Akasha burns all the vampires who have come to do Lestat harm. She then grabs Lestat and takes him away with her. All the surviving vampires gather at Maharet's home in Sonoma to decide what they should do.

Once there, it becomes clear that Akasha has spared them, because they are beloved by Lestat. It is also clear that Maharet is one of the red-haired twins from the visions and that it is her sister, Mekare, who has risen from sleep and is sending the visions to the others. They do not know how to stop Akasha, because she holds the original spirit and creator of vampires in her body. If she dies, all other vampires will also die.

Meanwhile, Akasha reveals her plan to Lestat, even as she drugs him into a love trance with her own ancient blood. She has realized during all her years asleep and listening to mortal thoughts that the only answer for true world peace is to kill all males and let



women rule the world. Lestat tries to argue, but she is too strong for him. They make their way to Sonoma so that Akasha can convince the other vampires to join them or, failing that, kill them. Mekare makes a sudden appearance at the meeting, cuts off Akasha's head and eats her brain and heart, in order to take the life spirit of all vampires into her own body. The remaining vampires move to Miami and start a new coven.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

The Queen of the Damned is the third of Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*. This fictional story is told in five parts. It chronicles the trials of a group of modern-day vampires locked in struggle to save the mortal humans from the first vampire, Akasha, who has awoken from six-thousand years of sleep with a plan to kill all the males on earth in order to usher in a reign of peace. Akasha has taken the mischievous vampire, Lestat, as her immortal lover. She's also destroyed all other vampires, except for a few of Lestat's close friends. In the end, the fulfillment of an ancient curse destroys Akasha, saves the mortals, and reunites Lestat with his loved ones.

The Vampire Lestat welcomes the reader to the third book of the *Vampire Chronicles* and summarizes the events of the second book for the reader. He reminds the reader of his desire for fame and recognition, and that he "wanted to be a symbol of evil in a shining century that didn't have any place for the literal evil that I am." He recounts the success of his record album, autobiography, and live concert among both the living and the undead, and reminds us that he left us with a cliffhanger at the end of the last book, which he has obviously survived. He reminds the reader that his desire for fame led him to reveal the secrets of the vampires and that they had been infuriated by it and tried to kill him the night of his live concert. They had been burned by a secret ally before they got the chance, though. The secret ally, one of the very oldest vampires, appears in Lestat's coffin just before sunrise, and Lestat wonders if he will be killed or made more powerful.

Lestat now explains that he will turn the story over to other points of view to explain the details of the ten nights leading up to his rock concert. He explains that he had no knowledge of these events at the time of writing the previous book, but has only learned of them since that time. He tells the reader that he will now jump into the third person and multiple points of view to tell the story as realistically as possible, but will return as the narrator at the appropriate moment.

Prologue Analysis

Lestat reveals his true character as he neatly summarizes the last book of the *Vampire Chronicles* and introduces the current book. Lestat is vain and bored, he craves attention and adoration, and he causes trouble just for the sake of something to do. He refers to the possibility of being caught and killed by either the living or the vampires as exciting.



Proem

Proem Summary

The Proem begins with a declaration, which has been posted at all vampire gathering places. The declaration condemns Louis (Lestat's vampire companion and the vampire of *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) and Lestat for revealing the vampire secrets in the first two books of the *Vampire Chronicles*. It outlines the existence of Akasha and Enkil, the first vampires and forebears of all modern vampires. It also reminds the reader that, if they are both destroyed, all vampires will be destroyed with them. The declaration tells the reader that Enkil and Akasha are kept in a Secret Crypt by the vampire Marius and have not moved for centuries except for Lestat's claim that he woke Akasha with his violin playing, and she fed him with her blood. The writer of the declaration fears that Enkil and Akasha and all the older more powerful vampires will be awakened by Lestat's songs and fears what would happen. He finishes by calling for the destruction of Lestat, Louis, Lestat's mother Gabrielle, his close friend Armand and anyone else who is on Lestat's side, at the live Halloween concert in San Francisco.

Marius, who has been reading the declaration, ponders Lestat, Gabrielle and Louis, and wonders what they are doing, and where they are. He then returns to The Secret Crypt only to find that Akasha has been woken by Lestat's songs and has killed her husband Enkil. She mocks Marius, destroys the crypt and sends Marius falling down a bottomless rift in the ice. He breaks every bone in his body, as he sends out a telepathic warning of danger to anyone who can hear it.

Proem Analysis

The Proem continues to recap important events from the first two books of the *Vampire Chronicles* and shows the reader that the younger vampires are afraid of the power of the older vampires. Akasha's murder of her husband Enkil and the cruel treatment of her caretaker, Marius, show the reader that the fear of the younger vampires is valid. Akasha has come back with a vengeance, and she will not be a kind ruler. The reader is also reminded of a few important powers the vampires possess, such as reading each other's minds and the minds of mortals, and moving very fast or even flying.



Part 1, Chapter 1, The Legend of the Twins

Part 1, Chapter 1, The Legend of the Twins Summary

A very old man lies dying in Rio de Janeiro and begs his daughter to call a mysterious benefactress, who has funded his archeological explorations for the better part of his life. The daughter remembers how her father had taken her on trips to see ancient drawings of twin red-headed women depicted in cave drawings in both Palestine and Peru and dating back to 6000 BC. She thinks about how the academic community made her father a laughing stock but that this wealthy woman was willing to support his research and even his family for as long as he kept up the search for more evidence.

Now the man has been having dreams about the twins and says he understands the story and knows what happened to them. The daughter calls the benefactress, surprised that she is still alive after so many years, but the man dies before she arrives.

Part 1, Chapter 1, The Legend of the Twins Analysis

The legend of the twins is a very important thread running through this story, and the reader gets the first glimpse of the story through the eyes of this mortal archaeologist. This short chapter tells the reader that the legend is nearly six thousand years old and that it mysteriously was known to at least two people who lived very far apart from each other. Also mysterious is the keen interest of the anonymous benefactress, who has funded the research for so long, and is still alive and well enough to travel to Brazil, even as the Archaeologist himself lies dying. It becomes clear near the end of the book that this mysterious benefactress is actually the vampire Maharet, one of the red-haired twins, and that she has been searching for her sister, Mekare, for 8000 years. Maharet, herself, painted the story on the walls of the cave in Palestine, and the discovery of Mekare's matching cave drawing in Peru has been Maharet's only proof that Mekare survived.



Part 1, Chapter 2, The Short Happy Life of Baby Jenks and the Fang Gang

Part 1, Chapter 2, The Short Happy Life of Baby Jenks and the Fang Gang Summary

Baby Jenks is a newly made vampire who was a fourteen year old heroin-addicted pregnant prostitute who died while having an abortion and was turned into a vampire at the last moment by the leader of the "Fang Gang," a nomadic group of young vampires. Baby Jenks left the gang to murder her religious mother and abusive father, but now she is scared, because the Fang Gang didn't meet her where they said they would. She has also begun having disturbing dreams about two red-haired twins kneeling before an altar with the burned body of a woman lying on top, with the twins holding two plates, one with a heart and one with a brain.

Baby Jenks decides to try to find some other vampires, and comes upon the burnt-out shell of a coven house with one remaining vampire inside. He warns her that all the coven houses in Europe and on the East Coast have suffered the same fate. As they try to escape the area, they are both burned to death by a white figure, which looks like a statue of the Virgin Mary. Baby Jenks' soul rises above the earth. She goes into a bright light that is the embodiment of love, and reunites with her mother.

Part 1, Chapter 2, The Short Happy Life of Baby Jenks and the Fang Gang Analysis

This chapter demonstrates that Akasha has begun killing the vampires and burning the coven houses. One of the most important messages of the chapter is that Baby Jenks realizes in her final moments that God does not judge her for her evil side. In death, she understands enough to shed the bad part of her and be forgiven and reunite with loved ones in the great light of heaven.

Later in the story, Akasha will tell Lestat that Baby Jenks was only hallucinating about heaven in her last moments of brain activity, but Lestat is not sure that Akasha really knows for sure. Many of the vampires in the book are tormented by this fear of death. They do not necessarily want to keep living, but they are afraid of what awaits them after death, whether it is nothingness or eternity in hell. The story of Baby Jenks gives them hope that redemption and forgiveness is possible, but still leaves the issue open to belief and interpretation.



Part 1, Chapter 3, The Goddess Pandora

Part 1, Chapter 3, The Goddess Pandora Summary

Pandora, made by Marius, has been disturbed by a telepathic message of danger. She has made her way to visit Azim at his temple high in the Himalayas. For thousands of years Azim has ruled as a God, with an endless train of worshippers making their way to his temple to sacrifice themselves to him. Azim tells Pandora that all other immortals have heard Marius' cries of danger and pleas for help. Azim reluctantly tells Pandora where she can find Marius. Azim wants to know what Pandora knows of the dreams of the red-haired twins. Azim and all the other vampires have had dreams of red-haired twins raped in a court of onlookers, then turned out into the desert, one of them pregnant. Pandora has not had the dreams and knows nothing of the red-haired twins.

Pandora briefly joins Azim as a goddess in his temple, taking human sacrifices to build up her strength for the journey ahead. She then leaves to make her way to America to find Marius.

Part 1, Chapter 3, The Goddess Pandora Analysis

This chapter shows the reader that vampires are very different from each other. Pandora is cold, shy and reserved. She has the ability to fly but does not like to do so, because it reminds her that she is no longer human. Azim, on the other hand, has embraced what he is and revels in it unabashedly. The reader is also reminded of some of the limitations of vampire powers. For instance, a vampire cannot hear the thoughts of the vampire that made it, nor of the vampires it makes. Thus, "parent" and "child" are cut off from one another, although general messages can be carried throughout the vampire population. So, Pandora may be able to hear another vampire thinking about what he heard from Marius, although she cannot hear Marius directly.



Part 1, Chapter 4, The Story of Daniel, the Devil's Minion, or the Boy from *Interview with the Vampire*

Part 1, Chapter 4, The Story of Daniel, the Devil's Minion, or the Boy from Interview with the Vampire Summary

This chapter picks up the story of Daniel, the young reporter who interviewed Louis for the original book in the series, *Interview with the Vampire* (1976). Daniel is obsessed with being given "the dark gift" and attempts to track down Lestat. He finds Lestat's home in New Orleans, but is discovered there and kidnapped by Armand, a close friend of Lestat from Lestat's young vampire days in Paris. Armand challenges Daniel to a game. Daniel is to try to escape from Armand, and Armand will keep Daniel alive, as long as he is amused by the game. After four years of the chase, Armand admits that he loves Daniel and will not kill him. He allows Daniel to drink a little of his blood, making Daniel his acolyte.

The two spend six more years together, with Armand making them rich by "discovering" lost treasures and stolen artwork by using his telepathic powers. They buy Night Island, a high-class entertainment destination offshore from Miami. Daniel becomes increasingly bitter toward Armand for refusing to make him a vampire. Daniel runs away to Chicago and is delirious and half-dead, dreaming of the red-haired twins eating the body of their mother. He realizes these are not dreams but a vision of something that really happened. Armand arrives to rescue Daniel the night before Lestat's live concert. Armand explains that many vampires have been incinerated all over the world except for in San Francisco. Even though it may be dangerous, he feels compelled to go. The death of so many vampires has led Armand to realize how much he cherishes Daniel and so he makes him a vampire.

Part 1, Chapter 4, The Story of Daniel, the Devil's Minion, or the Boy from Interview with the Vampire Analysis

The chapter speaks to the difficulty the vampires face in making another. In one sense it is a beautiful gift to give someone eternal life, in another sense it is an abomination to make someone so they have to drink human blood. In the end, Armand says it is weakness that forces his decision, and he does it so that he does not have to be alone. A strong theme throughout this book is the idea of eternal loneliness. Many times throughout the book, vampires are motivated to do seemingly uncharacteristic things

out of loneliness. The story of Armand and Daniel highlights this tension in the lives of vampires.



Part 1, Chapter 5, Khayman, My Khayman

Part 1, Chapter 5, Khayman, My Khayman Summary

Khayman feels that he has just awoken from a deep sleep. He remembers nothing about himself except that he is a blood drinker, and he brutally kills and eats four or five humans a night. He dreams of a red-haired woman whose tongue was cut out by soldiers and who grabs the tongue back from them and eats it. He is very lonely.

One night he sees three young blood-drinkers, only a few hundred years old and still made mostly of human tissue. He realizes that he must be very old since most of his human tissue has turned into a hard white marble-like substance. He tries to follow the vampires to talk to them, but they are afraid of him and run away. He becomes angry and accidentally kills one of them with a thought, making her explode in flames. The next night he visits the coven house, only to see it explode, and he senses Akasha nearby and realizes she has done it. When Khayman sees Akasha he suddenly remembers everything about his past, how Akasha was the Queen of Egypt and how she made her husband, Enkil command Khayman to rape the red-haired twins in front of the court, to prove to her subjects that the witches were mere mortals.

Akasha sees Khayman, and they attempt to kill each other telepathically but cannot. Khayman believes that, because they are both of the First Brood, they cannot hear each other's thoughts or harm each other. He realizes that his resurrection must be for some great purpose having to do with Akasha. When he hears Lestat's music, he decides he must make his way to the live concert in San Francisco.

Part 1, Chapter 5, Khayman, My Khayman Analysis

Khayman is as old as Akasha herself and knew her and hated her in life. He remembers his Part 1 in the Legend of the Twins and knows that Enkil and Akasha were to blame for the twins' torture. The fact that Khayman has arisen at the same time as Akasha and is equally as powerful as her foreshadows that Akasha is not all-powerful, and there is at least one vampire strong enough to stop her.



Part 1, Chapter 6, The Story of Jesse, the Great Family, and the Talamasca

Part 1, Chapter 6, The Story of Jesse, the Great Family, and the Talamasca Summary

This chapter introduces Jesse Reese, a red-haired mortal woman who was born prematurely in a car accident that killed her mother. She was identified by an aunt named Maharet who arranged for her to be adopted and raised by relatives. Jesse sees ghosts of people and even old buildings, and sees and talks to her dead mother, Miriam. She writes Aunt Maharet many letters about what she sees and Maharet is loving and supportive and believes everything Jesse says. She arranges for Jesse to meet many different relatives living all over the world. Maharet is the historian of what they call the Great Family and it seems that Maharet's mother, Old Maharet, was the historian before her and so on. According to everyone in the family, "there has always been a Maharet."

When Jesse is twenty years old, Maharet invites her to visit her at her home in Sonoma. While there, Jesse realizes that something strange is going on with Maharet and her companion Mael. The two sleep all day, never eat, never drink, and their skin is very hard and pale. One night, Jesse is up late, drinking wine and talking with Mael. She falls into something like a trance, and Maharet walks in on Mael "kissing" her. Maharet knocks Mael several feet in the air with one gesture, puts a forgetting spell on Jesse so that she can never quite remember her visit, and then sends her away saying that she loves her, but she should never have let her come to the house.

Several years later, Jesse is approached by the Talamasca, a secret organization that has investigated supernatural and paranormal happenings for centuries. Jesse joins them as an investigator. Over the years, she becomes more and more convinced that Maharet and Mael are in some way supernatural, but she has vowed to herself never to reveal them or the Great Family to the Talamasca. David Talbot, the leader of the Talamasca, approaches Jesse to investigate the book *Interview with a Vampire*, which they believe is real. She is very skeptical but goes to New Orleans, where she finds overwhelming proof that it is a true story. The Vampire Lestat is published a few years later, and the story of Mael is told in the book. Jesse finally has proof that Maharet and Mael are vampires. She decides she will go see Lestat at his live concert and find out if he is really a creature like Maharet.

Part 1, Chapter 6, The Story of Jesse, the Great Family, and the Talamasca Analysis

The chapter serves mostly to introduce Maharet and the Great Family and to intensify the vampire legends through Jesse's experiences investigating them with the



Talamasca. The author uses this opportunity to describe how a vampire would look to an outsider, how it could disguise what it really is, and fool even close family members. The vampires' power of tricking mortals with simple telepathic messages is introduced.

Again, the theme of wanting and not wanting to make loved-ones into vampires is explored, as Mael wishes to keep Jesse with them forever, and Maharet wishes for her to have a full and happy mortal life. The reader should begin to suspect that Maharet is one of the red-haired twins, that she is not in contact with the other twin, and that she is the mysterious benefactress from the first chapter.

Part 2, All Hallow's Eve

Part 2, All Hallow's Eve Summary

Armand, Daniel, Jesse, Mael and Khayman arrive at Lestat's live concert. There are also around thirty vampires with hidden weapons, waiting to confront Lestat after the concert so that they can dismember and burn him. Louis and Gabrielle have been staying with Lestat and arrived with him. Lestat, Louis and Gabrielle have been hiding themselves from the other vampires by closing their minds to telepathic probing, which means that none of them know of the plot against them, the vampire slayings, the visions of the twins or Marius' call for help.

Khayman recognizes Mael and Armand as powerful vampires and attempts to contact them telepathically. Armand receives the message but makes no response. Mael is at first afraid of Khayman but allows him to approach. From Mael, Khayman learns that Maharet has sent him to protect her child, Jessica. Khayman is elated to discover that Maharet is alive and that she has a child, meaning he has a child also. He remembers that Maharet was the twin whose eyes were plucked out by the soldiers. He remembers also how Akasha made him into a blood-drinker, and even before that, how she talked Enkil into marching into the north to slay the flesh-eaters and kidnap the twins.

Meanwhile, Jesse jumps onstage and embraces Lestat, confirming that he and Maharet are both vampires. She is taken offstage by security, where she runs into a young vampire. He recognizes her as Talamasca, and throws her against the wall, breaking her neck and crushing her skull. Mael takes her back to the compound, and Maharet makes her a vampire to save her life.

As the concert ends, Daniel and Armand attempt to catch up to Lestat. They witness the vampires waiting outside for Lestat go up in flames. Lestat takes off in his car with Gabrielle and Louis. Khayman follows them and watches, as the Queen grabs Lestat and flies with him up into the sky.

Part 2, All Hallow's Eve Analysis

All the important characters come together in this chapter and set the stage for the rest of the book. This is the first time it is expressly stated that Maharet is one of the twins. It also becomes apparent that Akasha has spared only vampires with a connection to Lestat.



Part 3, Chapter 1, Lestat: In the Arms of the Goddess

Part 3, Chapter 1, Lestat: In the Arms of the Goddess Summary

Akasha has taken Lestat to his father's castle, now a ruin. She reminds him of the way he left his mortal life behind and says that now, as her prince, he will have the same sort of transformation from his life as a vampire. His own powers have increased dramatically from drinking her blood.

Meanwhile, Marius has been rescued by Santino and Pandora and has begun to heal himself. They hurry to meet the others at the Sonoma compound.

Part 3, Chapter 1, Lestat: In the Arms of the Goddess Analysis

Akasha speaks for the first time, and tells Lestat how his songs have awoken her and how she loves him. Lestat is delirious with happiness, he has longed for the attention of the Queen since he first laid eyes on her hundreds of years ago. It is the beginning of their relationship, and everything seems wonderful and exciting.



Part 3, Chapter 2, Marius: Coming Together

Part 3, Chapter 2, Marius: Coming Together Summary

Marius, Santino and Pandora arrive at the Sonoma compound. Marius has healed almost completely by the time they reach Sonoma, and he marvels at how strong he has become over the years. Marius recognizes Maharet as the blind twin, and that she has stolen her eyes from a victim. He realizes that Maharet is the only true immortal. She's the only one of the first brood or following generations who has never gone dormant. He also realizes that the dreams of the twins were not sent by Maharet, but rather by her sister Mekare, who must still be alive.

The gathered vampires reiterate the fact that if the queen is killed, they will all die. They remember how Mekare and Maharet were placed into stone coffins and sent east and west on the oceans, how Maharet searched for Mekare and found proof of her survival in the cave drawings discovered by the dying archaeologist. She never found Mekare, and yet the dreams are proof that Mekare is still alive and has awakened. They all wonder if there is a method to what Mekare is doing, or if she has simply gone insane.

Part 3, Chapter 2, Marius: Coming Together Analysis

This chapter shows us how important and powerful Maharet and Mekare are. There are now three vampires who are as strong as the Queen and cannot be harmed by her. The fact that Mekare has awoken at the same time as the Queen and started broadcasting her story to vampires at large is an important foreshadowing of the role Mekare will play in the war against Akasha.



Part 3, Chapter 3, Lestat: The Queen of Heaven

Part 3, Chapter 3, Lestat: The Queen of Heaven Summary

Lestat's powers continue to increase, and he feels drugged by and addicted to the blood of Akasha. They fly through the night and arrive at the temple of Akim. Akasha kills Akim and then begins killing all of his male devotees. She convinces Lestat to join her in the slaughter. She then rises up and tells the women that she is the Queen of Heaven and has come to bring them peace. They should go home and tell of her coming and wait for her to return with more instructions. Lestat is mortified at having killed without feeding, but he is under Akasha's spell, even though he fears her actions.

Next, they visit a horrible third-world slum. Akasha commands the women there to rise up and kill ninety-nine out of every hundred men, including infants and children. She explains to Lestat that a world without men will be a world of peace and without fear.

Part 3, Chapter 3, Lestat: The Queen of Heaven Analysis

Akasha has finally revealed her plan for world domination. She believes that she can bring world peace and rule over the world as the Queen of Heaven, with Lestat as her prince. Lestat is instinctively opposed to her plan, but he is enchanted by her blood and still blinded by love. Akasha's stubbornness, single-mindedness and primitive thinking are revealed in her plan. Akasha has spent thousands of years coming up with this plan, she is the Queen, and she cannot be reasoned with.



Part 3, Chapter 4, The Story of the Twins, Part 1

Part 3, Chapter 4, The Story of the Twins, Part 1 Summary

Maharet begins to tell the Legend of the Twins. She, Mekare and their mother were powerful witches in a peaceful land north of Egypt. They could talk to and command the spirits, who are childish and capricious and require a lot of flattery to get them to do anything. The good spirits will help make rain, will find lost objects and tell the future. They are enormous creatures, comprised mostly of energy, but with a small core of matter at the center. The bad spirits are jealous of humans, because they have both flesh and spirit. The bad spirits cause nothing but trouble, and the witches refuse to even acknowledge them.

In their culture, they believe that a part of a person's power resides in their flesh, and it is their duty to consume the dead in order to carry the person's power and spirit through the generations. At this time, the Nile dwellers, or Egyptians, also eat their dead, but word has come to Maharet's village that the King of Egypt, Enkil, has married a woman, Akasha, from another land, and she has convinced him to decree a law against eating the dead. They are not worried, because they are very far away from Egypt and not under their rule.

One day, strangers come to them with a message that Enkil and Akasha would like them to come to Egypt so that they can meet the twins and ask them questions. The twins are afraid and refuse to go. Then an evil spirit, called Amel, appears and says that they better start paying respect to him, because they will need his help soon. He demonstrates to them that he can actually prick the skin of humans and boasts that he likes the taste of blood. Sometime after this, the mother dies, and the twins prepare the burial feast. As they are about to consume the heart, brain and flesh of their mother, Egyptian soldiers come and kill everyone in the village and take the twins captive. Khayman, the king's guard, shows them kindness on the ten-day journey to Egypt.

When they meet the Queen, they divine a lot about her personality. She is confused in her religious beliefs, and wants desperately to make sense of the world. She is rather cold and doesn't really care for the suffering of others. They are forced to call on Amel to help them convince her that the spirits are real. The queen is afraid that if she kills the witches, she will be tormented by the spirits forever. So, she arranges for the public rape and release of the women. They make their way back to their land and live for a time with some kind villagers they meet. Maharet has Khayman's child and names her Miriam.



Many months later, Khayman tracks the twins to the village and tells them he must bring them back to Egypt. He explains that Amel bedeviled him for many months after they left, and that Amel has now gone into the bodies of the King and Queen.

Part 3, Chapter 4, The Story of the Twins, Part 1 Analysis

The reader is introduced to the importance of the custom of eating the dead. It's a custom that plays an important part in Mekare and Maharet's village, and which has been taken away from the Egyptians by Akasha. The Egyptians are still bitter towards Akasha for taking it away from them, and this bitterness ultimately leads to Akasha being made a vampire, as the rest of the legend reveals.

The reader is also introduced to the type of person Akasha was when alive. Akasha is cruel, selfish, imperious and desperate to make sense out of the supernatural and religious.



Part 3, Chapter 5, Lestat: This Is My Body; This Is My Blood

Part 3, Chapter 5, Lestat: This Is My Body; This Is My Blood Summary

Akasha has taken Lestat to Greece. He awakens in a fine home to realize that Akasha has already commanded the women to kill the men. His powers have continued to increase, and he can now move and break things without touching them. He can also make his spirit leave his body to travel, but he does not like the feeling of it. The Greek women see Akasha as the blessed mother, and not just the Virgin Mary but also the goddess who ruled the land before Christianity. They have knocked down the churches, temples and museums.

Akasha further explains her plan to Lestat. She has spent centuries coming to the realization that the only way to bring Eden to earth is to kill all the men to put a stop to war, rape and violence. She explains that she has chosen Lestat, because he so perfectly embodies everything that is wrong with males, and yet, she will control him. Lestat argues with her, but he begins to feel that she may be right. He still does not want to kill millions of men, but her power over him is becoming stronger.

Part 3, Chapter 5, Lestat: This Is My Body; This Is My Blood Analysis

This short chapter further explains Akasha's ideas and reinforces the power she has over Lestat by letting him drink her blood.



Part 3, Chapter 6, The Story of the Twins, Part 2

Part 3, Chapter 6, The Story of the Twins, Part 2 Summary

The vampires in the Sonoma compound awaken and see the television news reports of the strange and inexplicable sightings of a goddess and her consort at different remote points around the world. The news also reports of some type of mass hysteria in which the women have risen up to kill most if not all of the males near them. Maharet is urged to finish her story so that they can all understand what has happened, and perhaps learn how to kill the Queen. Khayman insists that the return of Mekare means the fulfillment of Mekare's vow to kill the Queen, but Maharet does not believe in prophecy anymore. Marius urges them to band together to kill Akasha, but they believe it is suicide. Santino wants to run and hide, but the others warn him that she will come and kill them one at a time. Therefore, they all sit down to listen to the story, to see if they can find some clue in it.

The night before they arrive in Egypt, Khayman tells them the rest of the story. He has been bedeviled for the last six months by Amel. He has told no one, because he does not want the sisters to be blamed. Then one, night, Amel brings the stinking mummified corpse of Khayman's father to Khayman's house and dances it around the garden. Khayman can take no more and calls for help. The King, Queen and nobles come. The King and Queen beg the spirit to leave the control of the witches and be controlled by themselves. The nobles say that the dancing corpse is a sign from the gods that they are displeased with Akasha's prohibition against eating the dead. Then, Akasha and Enkil close themselves in Khayman's house to try to reason with Amel. The nobles see this as an opportunity to kill them both, blame it on the demon, and return to their previous religious ways. They go into the house and stab the King and Queen with daggers and run away. Akasha calls for Khayman, who then witnesses Amel go into Akasha, turning her into a vampire. Akasha then turns the dying Enkil into a vampire. Khayman concludes by saying that the people now worship the King and Queen as god-like incarnations of Osiris, the moon god, because the two cannot bear the light of the sun or even torches and candle flames, and only go out at night. They can run very fast, read people's minds, and they kill and drink the blood of their enemies.

Part 3, Chapter 6, The Story of the Twins, Part 2 Analysis

The second part of the Story of the Twins reveals how vampires came into being and demonstrates the powers and weaknesses of the earliest vampires. Khayman's

character is further revealed as he attempts to protect the sisters and continues his loyalty to the King and Queen, even though he knows what they are.



Part 3, Chapter 7, Lestat: Kingdom of Heaven

Part 3, Chapter 7, Lestat: Kingdom of Heaven Summary

Lestat and Akasha are in Haiti. Lestat thinks of his loved ones and hopes they are still trying to help him, although he feels he is losing his mind. He and Akasha continue to alternately argue and embrace, and Akasha says she will not change her mind. This is the way she has always been.

Part 3, Chapter 7, Lestat: Kingdom of Heaven Analysis

Lestat begins to realize that Akasha's one weakness is him, as she cannot convince Lestat that she will be truly alone and isolated. Even though she has kept Lestat's loved ones alive to please him, she will kill them if that is what it takes to make him dependent on her alone. Loneliness is again shown to be the greatest weakness of all vampires.



Part 3, Chapter 8, The Story of the Twins, Conclusion

Part 3, Chapter 8, The Story of the Twins, Conclusion Summary

Mekare and Maharet are taken before Akasha and Enkil. Akasha describes her death and resurrection. Akasha has been driven nearly mad trying to make sense of what has happened to her and justify it within her religious framework. Both Akasha and Enkil are tormented by the need they feel for blood and the pleasure they take in drinking it. They ask Mekare and Maharet to explain to them what has happened. Maharet tells them that it is definitely Amel, who has taken over the Queen's body. The only way their unbearable thirst for blood will lessen is if they make more blood drinkers to feed Amel's spirit, which has now become flesh. Maharet suggests that they take their own lives in order to stop the abomination they have become.

The Queen flies into a rage and drags them before the court. She sentences Mekare to have her tongue cut out and Maharet to have her eyes plucked out. Both are to be held one day in agony, before they are burned at the stake. Mekare curses the queen, saying that she will be the one to strike her down, even if she must rise from the dead to do it.

While they are waiting to be burned, Khayman comes to the cell. He has been turned into a vampire. He begs the sisters to become vampires so that they have a chance to fight against the Queen and stop her. Mekare agrees, and Maharet reluctantly follows her sister's lead. They flee the city, and Khayman makes anyone who will let him into a blood drinker so that he can start an army to fight against Akasha and Enkil. They are soon tracked down by the King's soldiers, and Khayman escapes into the mountains. The King and Queen are afraid to harm the twins, because they think it might hurt themselves. So, they have them put them in stone coffins set adrift in opposite directions on the sea.

Maharet has looked for Mekare ever since, but found nothing beyond the cave paintings in Peru. She believes that Mekare has risen to have her revenge against Akasha. Maharet explains the writing of her family history and her love within the Great Family. She shows them the Great Family tree and the Great Family map showing the family in all reaches of the planet. All the immortals are moved with a passion to protect these mortals.

Maharet and the others are convinced that they must either kill the mother or try to reason with her. Only Khayman is convinced of the power of Mekare's curse and is adamant that she will fulfill it. Lestat appears.



Part 3, Chapter 8, The Story of the Twins, Conclusion Analysis

No matter how ready any of the vampires are to die, no matter how tired of living they are, they are stirred to protect the Great Family from Akasha. The Great Family represents all that they have given up to be immortal and at the same time all that they have been given by being immortal. It is only the love of this family that has kept Maharet going over the millennia. The vampires agree that they cannot give up, even if it means they have to kill Akasha and sacrifice themselves to protect the mortals.



Part 4, The Queen of the Damned

Part 4, The Queen of the Damned Summary

Akasha has arrived and all the remaining vampires gather around the table with her and Lestat for council. She explains again her vision to use her power to make a new religion. They try to talk her out of it, but she will not listen. Even Lestat is empowered by the others to disagree with her. Distraught and betrayed, Akasha is about to start killing everyone she can, starting with Lestat. At the crucial moment, Mekare arrives, and they all realize the importance of the dreams. Mekare eats Akasha's brain and heart, taking the demon into herself and saving the vampires.

Part 4, The Queen of the Damned Analysis

The reader suddenly understands that the visions of the twins were sent by Mekare, not out of madness, but as instructions for how to kill the Mother and save themselves. Just as they believed six thousand years ago that eating the flesh of the dead gave one the powers of the dead, eating the flesh of the Queen gave Mekare the power of the Queen and saved all the other vampires.



Part 5, . . . World Without End, Amen

Part 5, . . . World Without End, Amen Summary

Maharet has taken Mekare away, and the remaining vampires have gathered on Night Island to start a new coven. They have made a few rules. There will be no making new vampires and no writing books. Everyone may come and go as they please but must return to the coven house, periodically. They are mostly all happy there together, and no one expects Lestat to follow the rules, least of all Lestat.

Lestat makes a final journey with Louis to the Mother Houses of the Talamasca. He arrives unannounced to converse with David Talbot. He teases him with an ambiguous offer of immortality and leaves the man with a phone number, where he can be reached.

Part 5, . . . World Without End, Amen Analysis

Lestat is a little saddened by his adventure, but remarkably unchanged. He is still the devil with a twinkle in his eye that loves attention and loves to break the rules.



Characters

The Vampire Lestat (Lestat de Lioncourt)

The main character of this tale, Lestat is very young for a vampire. When alive, Lestat was the son of a nobleman and wished to become a priest. When his father wouldn't allow it, Lestat ran away to Paris and became an actor. The vampire who made Lestat did not survive to teach Lestat how to be a vampire. So, Lestat has spent much of his vampire life somewhat confused about how to behave and survive. He has had to make the rules up as he goes along, something which annoys most other vampires when they meet him.

Lestat is very beautiful with long blonde hair. He likes to go out in velvet coats and jeweled rings. He feels that he can blend into the crowd in these modern times, when there is so much oddity around. Lestat is charming and daring, he loves attention. He also enjoys stirring up trouble just to keep from being bored. He believes that rules are made to be broken. He loves to toy with mortals and dreams of their adoration. His great loves are Louis, Gabrielle, the dead Claudia and Akasha.

Lestat is tortured by the distinction between good and evil. He wants so badly to be good, but because he must kill to survive, he is doomed to be evil. He has struck a balance by killing only people he considers better off dead, such as thieves, drug-dealers, pimps and other scoundrels.

Akasha

Akasha is the Queen of the Damned. While alive, Akasha was the Queen of Egypt, having been brought from a different land to marry King Enkil. It is Akasha who convinced the King to ban the eating of the flesh of the dead, and made it a crime. She is superstitious and imperious. She does not believe in chance and believes very strongly in her own imperial rights. When Amel enters her body, she convinces herself and Enkil that they have been made gods by an act of Osiris. When the twins reveal to her that the only way to stop the evil is to take her own life, she resists and says that there is a reason why this has happened to her, and she will find out what it is.

While sleeping for thousands of years under the care of Marius, Akasha convinces herself that her reason for being is to bring a new peace to the world by killing all men. In this way, she can justify her own existence. She appears to the people of poor third-world villages and calls herself the Queen of Heaven, desperately trying to make herself the deity of a new religion.

She cannot bear that the other vampires do not agree with her, cannot bear the crumbling of her logic and cannot bear the possibility that she is nothing but a monster created by chance.



Akasha is described as unbearably pretty, something at odds with the meanness of her character.

Maharet

The only vampire of the first brood who has never gone dormant or lost her senses, Maharet may be considered the only true immortal. One of the two red-haired twins of the Legend of the Twins, Maharet had her eyes put out by order of Akasha and must take the eyes of her victims in order to see. She hates Akasha with all her being for what Akasha did to her people and to herself and her sister.

Maharet has never gone dormant, because she has found reason to go on in her Great Family. She has followed their progress through the generations, interceding at times with aid when it is required. She created a legend within the family of a lineage of women who pass along the duties of keeping the family records along with the name Maharet. In this way, she has been able to be a part of her family.

She is tall and slim with long red hair and long tapered fingers. She likes to paint her face and wear clothes like an elegant Parisian model.

Khayman

One of the First Brood, Khayman was turned into a vampire as an experiment by Akasha to see if making more blood-drinkers would make her crave blood any less. In return, he made Maharet and Mekare and scores more vampires, in order to make beings of equal power to the King and Queen, so that there might be some hope of defeating them. Khayman, also known as Benjamin the Devil, has lapsed many times into blackouts and risen without knowing why to carry out various tasks. He is ancient in his ways of thinking, almost as much as Akasha, and still believes very strongly in the power of curses and prophecy. Khayman is the father of Maharet's first human child, Miriam.

Khayman is loving yet brutal. He will not kill a human if it has spoken to him, but the ones he does kill, he crushes to a pulp. He is very handsome, but so shockingly white, that he cannot really blend in with humans and must wear heavy clothing to disguise himself.

Armand

Made by Marius at the age of seventeen, Armand is a bit of an imp. He loves to play games with people. He hates himself for being a blood drinker and, until meeting Daniel, has never made another vampire. When he must feed, he goes out to find runaways and homeless people, sending a telepathic message to those who want to die to come and find him.



Armand has shoulder length auburn hair, which he clips every night, so he can blend in with the humans.

Jesse Reese

Jesse is the granddaughter, who is 300 generations removed from Maharet and a member of the Talamasca. Jesse had the power to see and speak to ghosts before she was made a vampire. She is in her early thirties with long wavy red hair and green eyes, which are traits said to be favored by the spirits.

Amel

The evil spirit with a taste for blood, Amel entered Akasha through a fatal wound in her chest, thus making her the first vampire. His material core resides within Akasha, and all vampires are enlivened by his spirit.

Azim

The vampire Azim lives openly as a God in his temple high in the Himalayas. Worshipers come to him, so that he can drink their blood. Due to his constant feeding, he looks human and has not turned marble-white like other vampires of his age.

Baby Jenks

A heroin-addicted hooker when she was made into a vampire, Baby Jenks is a member of the Fang Gang, a motorcycle gang of nomadic blood drinkers who despise and avoid the big city vampires. Baby Jenks is important because, upon being killed by Akasha, she has a vision of heaven and redemption.

Benjamin the Devil

Khayman has, at times over the centuries, been known to the Talamasca as Benjamin the Devil, but not much more is said about this.

Daniel Molloy

Daniel is the reporter from *Interview with the Vampire* (1976.) He has become Armand's lover and is made into a vampire by Armand. He is described as handsome with a boyish face, dark hair and gray eyes. He is a millionaire many times over from the royalty checks from his book, but he is so distracted by his desire to become a vampire that he is at times homeless. He sleeps on park benches and eats out of trashcans, until Armand senses he is in trouble and comes to find him.



David Talbot

The leader of the Talamasca, David can read minds almost as well as a vampire. He is in his sixties, which Lestat notes is not old for his time. In the last section of the book, Lestat comes to David and tempts him with an offer of eternal life.

Enkil

Enkil is Akasha's husband, and the first vampire to be made by Akasha. In life, he was the King of Egypt. Enkil is more reasonable than Akasha, but he allowed her to make the rules during their reign in Egypt and was not strong enough to stop her from killing him.

Gabrielle de Lioncourt

Gabrielle is Lestat's mother. Lestat made her into a vampire to prevent her dying of cancer. She is a loner and likes to travel all over the world, dressed in mannish attire. She is tall and elegant with long blonde hair. She loves Lestat as only a mother can and always comes back to him, eventually. She is headstrong, independent and doesn't care for the companionship of other vampires, except Lestat and Louis.

Louis de Pont du Lac

The vampire of *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), Louis is Lestat's favorite offspring. He is the most human and sensitive of the vampires. He still clings to human graces and manners, refusing to put his hands in his pockets, because it is not a custom of gentlemen of his time. He moves like a human and is still very emotional and sensitive. Ironically, he is a very brutal hunter and kills rather indiscriminately.

Miriam Reese

Jesse Reese's mother, Miriam, died in a car accident on the day Jesse was born. She appears as a ghost to Jesse, to comfort her and give her advice.

Miriam

The human daughter of Maharet and Khayman, Miriam was conceived when Enkil ordered Khayman to rape the twin witches. Maharet left her in the care of the mountain people, but has spent her entire existence tracking the maternal family tree of this daughter, down to Jesse Reese.



Mekare

Maharet's twin sister, Mekare is a powerful witch, who was turned into a vampire by Khayman so that she could carry out her promise to be the one who will defeat Akasha. Shortly after being turned into a vampire, she disappeared completely, only to return in the present day to fulfill her prophecy.

Mael

An old Druid vampire, Mael is the companion and servant of Maharet and is in love with Jesse. It is he who follows Jesse to Lestat's concert and carries her back to the Sonoma compound to be made into a vampire by Maharet. Mael is a very large man with white blonde hair and pale eyes.

Marius

Marius became a vampire in the era of the Roman Empire. For many centuries, he has been the keeper of Akasha and Enkil, sheltering them from the vampires who may want to either steal their powerful blood or try to kill them. He befriended Lestat and allowed him into the secret chamber but was hurt and bewildered, when Akasha rose very briefly to give Lestat a taste of her blood.

Marius's only mission in life has been as the protector of "Those Who Must Be Kept," as he calls Enkil and Akasha. He made both Armand and Pandora into vampires.

Pandora

It is Pandora who seeks out Marius to save him from the icy crevasse. Made by Marius, she has also drunk the blood of Akasha. She had a falling out with Marius many centuries ago but still loves him. She is the most sad and removed of the vampires, the one who longs most for her former humanity. She no longer needs to drink blood and so she does not, except in extreme cases to build her strength. She also knows how to fly but does not like to do it, as it reminds her that she is no longer human.

Claudia

Claudia is the child vampire, made by Louis and Lestat and killed by Armand at the Theatre of the Vampires, as outlined in *The Interview with the Vampire* (1976.) The ghost of Claudia appears to Jesse, when she investigates the New Orleans home of Lestat de Lioncourt on behalf of the Talamasca.



Objects/Places

San Francisco

San Francisco is the site of Lestat's live rock concert and the focus of the vampires, who would like to see him dead.

The Secret Crypt

Located in the frozen north of North America, this underground crypt is where Marius resides and keeps Akasha and Enkil enthroned in their shrine. During Akasha's resurrection, she kills Enkil and destroys the crypt. It is exquisitely decorated and very high-tech. The King and Queen are kept seated on thrones in a room with televisions so that they might be aware of what is going on in the world around them. This is how Akasha hears Lestat's songs.

The Great Family

The Great Family is the family of Maharet, traced from her daughter, Miriam to the present day. Members of the great family exist in every nation. It is the existence of the great family that keeps Maharet going and reminds the other vampires of their ties to humanity and that Akasha must be stopped to protect them.

The First Brood

The First Brood is the first generation of Vampires created. The first brood includes Enkil, Akasha, Khayman, Maharet and Mekare. They cannot hear each other's thoughts, and they cannot harm each other telepathically. They are equally strong.

Night Island

Night Island is an island with a view of Miami Beach, purchased by Daniel and Armand. The island houses a very exclusive and expensive shopping and nightlife destination with the vampires' home reachable through secret doorways within the shopping mall itself.

The Sonoma Compound

Maharet's home base, the Sonoma Compound is an enormous home carved out of the base of a mountain. It is here that she keeps the records of the Great Family and where the final confrontation with Akasha takes place.



The Mother House

The Mother House is the main house of the Talamasca, located in England. Jesse lives here during her tenure with the Talamasca, and David Talbot still lives here. Marius' painting of Armand, Claudia's diary and many other vampire artifacts are stored in the basement of The Mother House.

Kemet

Kemet is the ancient name for Egypt.

Vampire

The vampires of the Vampire Chronicles are as individual as people, not just in their personalities but in their powers and need for human blood. To make a vampire, a vampire must drain all the blood from the victim, until the heart stops beating. Then, they immediately allow the victim to drink the vampires own blood. When a vampire is newly made, he sees everything in the world in delightful detail.

Vampires can hear the thoughts of all mortals and most other vampires, with a few exceptions. A vampire "parent" and "child" cannot hear each other's thoughts at all, but they can locate each other by reading the thoughts of other vampires who may be with them. While some humans, like Jesse Reese, can hear and talk to spirits and ghosts, vampires cannot. None of the First Brood can hear each other's thoughts, and they are equally strong such that they cannot simply kill each other telepathically.

Some vampires have different powers than others, when they are first made. For example, some of them can fly quite early on, but others take centuries and even millennia to develop this power. Some vampires and even some humans have the power to make their spirits travel without their bodies.

Even though vampires have the gift of immortality, they can still be killed or choose to die. Many vampires do not make it through their first several hundred years, because they become depressed at the loneliness and killing. They go into the earth and simply die. A vampire can be killed by burning or by being completely dismembered. A young vampire can be killed by being forced into the sun, but older vampires are immune to the sunlight. Akasha and Khayman can kill other vampires by making them explode into flames, but they must be in close proximity to the victim to accomplish this, and they cannot do it to each other.

When vampires are young, their bodies are mostly human, but as they age, the spirit of Amel slowly turns the human Part 1 into non-human. The older a vampire is, the paler its skin. Maharet, Akasha, Khayman and Enkil all look like white marble statues, because all humanity has left them. Vampires also get stronger, as they get older. As they get stronger, they have less and less of a need to drink blood, although some of them, like

Khayman, still like to. A vampire can go dormant for centuries and then awaken. If he does this, he will look like a walking skeleton until he is able to drink a lot of human blood.

The core power of all vampires resides within Akasha. The evil spirit of Amel entered her body, when she was at the point of death, and made her into a vampire. All the vampires believe that if she is killed, they will die with her.



Social Concerns And Themes

Feminism, religion, equality among and between the sexes, the importance of family, conflicting concepts of good and evil, and the beneficent evolution of humankind are the major social issues Rice addresses in *Queen of the Damned*. Akasha, the queen of the damned, represents feminism carried to a radical extreme. She is committed to changing the role of all women.

Believing that the world's troubles have been caused by men, Akasha decides that ninety percent of the world's male population must be destroyed so that war, rape, and other violence can be ended forever. She contends that with women in power all over the earth, there would at last be universal peace.

Rice has said in an interview, "We can found a code of morality on ethics rather than outmoded religious concepts. We can base our sexual mores on ethics rather than on religious beliefs."

Most of the activities in this century to stop war, to feed the hungry, and to provide medicine for the ill have been accomplished by rebels against religion rather than by people associated with religions." She develops these ideas through the speeches of Lestat, Maharet (mother of the Great Family), Narius, Louis, and all the other vampires who, by their very nature are godless but who are nevertheless highly moral in their concern for humankind. Akasha, queen of the damned, intends to establish a new religion with herself as supreme goddess in the mold of the Virgin Mary and "the ancient Mother . . . the mother whose tiny naked statues were now and then found in the earth."

In *Queen of the Damned*, allusions to Christianity abound, supporting the view that Rice's ideas about the power and expected obsolescence of religion are integral to the plot. Lestat, performing at his rock concert, is described as "Christ on the cathedral cross," recounting "his defeats, his resurrections." His concert is termed "this great Mass." The neophyte Daniel says, "Lestat was unkillable. He devoured the suffering forced upon him and emerged all the stronger. To join him was to live forever: This is my Body. This is my Blood." Lestat is in many ways a Christ-figure in his "mission" to show the way to others, to enlighten the world, to ruffle the feathers of those who would keep the masses ignorant and enslaved, and ultimately to risk all for the sake of humankind.

Sexual equality is so well handled that the readers may be lulled into an unconscious acceptance of the tender, loving, and even erotic relationships that male and female vampires have with each other without regard to gender. In fact, the closest and truest relationships are those between vampires of the same sex: Louis and Daniel, Maharet and Jesse, Narius and Armand.

Family is shown as the foundation of eternal life. Maharet, who has kept track of her descendants through the female line for six thousand years, says, "I turned to the family as if it were the very spring of life itself . . ."

the family was my guide through time and space. My teacher, my book of life.

The family was all things." Rice elaborates the traditional notion of family to include our own ancestors and all their descendants, with the implication that all are related to all. After six thousand years, Maharet's descendants are everywhere: "there is no nation on earth that does not contain some part of it [her family] . . . No people, no race, no country does not contain some of the Great Family. The Great Family is Arab, Jew, Anglo, African; it is Indian . . . Mongolian . . . Japanese . . . Chinese. In sum, the Great Family is the human family."

Techniques/Literary Precedents

The *Queen of the Damned* employs a great number of flashbacks, often so intricately that there is sometimes confusion as to what is happening at any given time. Lestat is ostensibly the teller of the tale and he begins with a first-person narration. However, he quickly shifts to the third person so that others' stories can be told. The connection of these stories is revealed only gradually. All the stories illuminate some relevant background either to the plot or to important characters, and all come together in a climactic scene where the still unpersuaded Lestat and Akasha confront the dissident vampires.

The flashback technique allows the plot to span the centuries as well as link the three main narrative threads to the previous *Vampire Chronicle* novels.

The telling of a complex story over several related volumes is not unique with Rice. Writers such as William Faulkner and James T. Farrell have created a series of works around a set of characters. With six thousand years of history and immortal characters, some of whom have lived through all these millennia, Rice obviously has a wealth of material to keep the chronicles going for some time. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, another contemporary writer, has used the vampire theme in a series of five books about the vampire St. Germaine. These are historical horror thrillers every bit as fascinating as the Rice series.



Themes

Family

The power of family is a very important theme in this work. Maharet is the most powerful and ancient of all vampires, she is the only one who has never lost her senses or gone dormant. The only reason she has been able to accomplish this is through the love of her family.

She has given herself the task of chronicling the family tree, charting the movement of the family, and even acting as a benefactor and matchmaker for the family. She has invented a story of a line of mothers and daughters who pass on the name Maharet along with the duties of family historian so that she can come and go within the family for generations without question.

Though none of the other vampires has a family like Maharet's, when they see the family tree they are reminded of all they have given up to be immortal and yet how closely they are tied to all humanity. After hundreds and thousands of years, it seems that the whole planet must be one large family. The existence of the Great Family and Maharet's love of them inspires the vampires to end Akasha's life and protect the mortals, even if it means giving up their own lives to do it.

Loneliness

The vampires are tormented by loneliness. They cannot live among humans, and so can only watch as history changes, and the world goes by. Most of the vampires in this book have made many other vampires with the idea that they will be companions, but "human" nature aggravated by centuries rather than decades leads to the ultimate arguments and parting of ways that plague the vampires. Marius made both Armand and Pandora but has not seen either of them for centuries. Lestat made his mother, who abandoned him, then Louis and Claudia, who plotted together to kill him.

Loneliness causes Akasha to take Lestat as her consort even though he argues against her plans. Loneliness drives Khayman to follow the young vampires and accidentally kill one of them with his thoughts. The fear of loneliness inspires Armand to make Daniel into a vampire against everything he believes in.

Reason for Living

It is not enough to be given the gift of immortality. Many scores of vampires have gone crazy within their first several hundred years and either killed themselves or fell asleep and never awoke. The only thing that will keep a vampire sane and alive is having a reason to live.



For Maharet it is the Great Family, and her reason is so powerful for her that it keeps her sane and awake for six thousand years. For Akasha, her reason is to create an explanation and rationalization for why she was made a vampire. For Mekare and Khayman the reason is the fulfillment of a curse.

Lestat's reason for living is to be recognized and adored by mortals. Gabrielle lives to see every corner of the world. Pandora lives, because she cannot bear what might happen to her if she stops living. Marius' reason is watching over the King and Queen.

Style

Points of View

The book is introduced in the first person by Lestat, who warns the reader that he will switch into the third person to tell parts of the story that were told to him by the others, and then switch back to the first person when telling his part of the story. Throughout the first section, each chapter introduces a new character or set of characters and tells their story from the limited omniscient point of view of the main character of that chapter.

In the second section, which takes place entirely on the night when all the characters come together in San Francisco for Lestat's live rock concert, the narrator takes an omniscient point of view, revealing each character's thoughts and motivations to the reader. The third section of the book switches back and forth between an omniscient point of view when the chapter is dealing with the vampires at the Sonoma Compound, and Lestat's first-hand account of his experiences with Akasha.

The fourth and fifth sections of the book are written entirely in the first person, with Lestat wrapping up the story and describing the falling action.

Setting

There are many stories and many flashbacks described in the telling of the story and so there are many different times and places described. Vampires are immortal and most of them are curious and adventurous and some of them can even fly. For these reason there are many different settings within this book. There are two main stories being told by the author, with many vignettes woven into them. The first story is the story of the making of the first vampires and the curse of the twins. This story takes place six thousand years ago in ancient Egypt, or Kemet, and an unnamed land to the north.

The modern story takes place in 1988 (the year the book was published), mostly in California but occasionally shifting to London, Chicago, Miami and parts of Europe. Daniel and Armand in particular move around and travel quite a bit. Some of the other main settings are London, where the mother house of the Talamasca is located, the northern United States, where Marius' secret crypt is hidden, and New Orleans, former home of Lestat and Louis and the current home of the ghost of Claudia.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is lush, mysterious and hypnotic. The author uses language to show the reader the mysterious realm of the vampires. Settings are described in opulent detail, and the individual quirks of the vampires are also described. In this way, the author paints a very vivid picture to draw the reader into the story and make it very realistic and detailed.



Each of the vampires has his own distinct voice, temperament and way of expressing himself. Many of the vampires speak English with a modern flair, but when describing events of the past they will speak in more primitive or more formal ways depending on their background. The vampires occasionally will remark on how another vampire's pattern or manner of speech is indicative of the time in which they were made immortal. For example, Akasha, who is six thousand years old and has been asleep for much of that time, speaks and even thinks very primitively in black and white concepts with short to-the-point sentences and proclamations.

Structure

The book is broken into five parts. The first Part 1 introduces all the main characters and sets up the plot. The second part tells events that occur on the night of the live concert in Sonoma. The third part alternates between Maharet telling the Legend of the Twins and Akasha and Lestat traveling around the world. The fourth Part 1s the final meeting of Akasha and Lestat with the surviving vampires and the killing of Akasha by Mekare, and the fifth Part 1s the dynouement or falling action of the story.

The main story of Akasha, Lestat and Maharet is told as stories within stories within stories. Each character has his own story, and the story of the current events is rooted in a legend whose events took place six thousand years ago. The layering of the stories into a complete story line gives the story and characters richness and dimensionality. The author alludes many times to listening to a story unfold as being like watching a tapestry being woven from the back; you see each thread being woven, but it is not until the tapestry is completed and you step out from behind it that you see the whole picture. In this way, each apparently unrelated story of the first part of the book leads each of the characters to one location, where they can meet and have the real story begin.

The story is told linearly by chapter, but many of the chapters, especially those introducing new characters, are told backwards, beginning in the present, revealing the outcome of the story within the story, and then going back in the past a few hours or a few thousand years to explain what has lead up to the present circumstances. This circular manner of telling the story adds to the feeling of mystery and suspense.



Quotes

"After all, I was like that when I was alive two hundred years ago - the restless one, the one who was always spoiling for love and a good brawl. When I set out for Paris in the 1780s to be an actor, all I dreamed of were beginnings - the moment each night when the curtain went up. "Maybe the old ones are right. I refer now to the true immortals - the blood drinkers who've survived the millennia - who say that none of us really changes over time; we only become more fully what we are. "To put it another way, you do get wiser when you live for hundreds of years; but you also have more time to turn out as badly as your enemies always said you might." (Introduction, p. 4)

"Now, be assured: though I am leaving you, I will return with full flair at the appropriate moment. The truth is, I hate not being the first person narrator all the way through! To paraphrase David Copperfield, I don't know whether I'm the hero or the victim of this tale. But either way, shouldn't I dominate it? I'm the one really telling it, after all. "Alas, my being the James Bond of vampires isn't the whole issue. Vanity must wait. I want you to know what really took place with us, even if you never believe it. In fiction if nowhere else, I must have a little meaning, a little coherence, or I will go mad. "So until we meet again, I am thinking of you always; I love you; I wish you were here . . . in my arms." (Introduction, p. 7)

"Then one evening during Jesse's third year at Columbia she had opened the door of her apartment to discover the lights burning, and a fire going under the mantel, and a tall, thin red-haired woman standing at the andirons with the poker. "Such beauty! That had been Jesse's first overwhelming impression. Skillfully powdered and painted, the face had an Oriental artifice, save for the remarkable intensity of the green eyes and the thick curly red hair pouring down over the shoulders. "'My darling,' the woman said. 'It's Maharet.' "Jesse had rushed into her arms. But Maharet had caught her, gently holding her apart as if to look at her. Then she'd covered Jesse with kisses, as if she dared not touch her in any other way, her gloved hands barely touching Jesse's arms. It had been a lovely and delicate moment. Jesse had stroked Maharet's soft thick red hair. So like her own. "'You are my child,' Maharet had whispered. 'You are everything I had hoped you would be. Do you know how happy I am?'" (Part 1, Chapter 6, p. 151)

"This Queen had no true morality, no true system of ethics to govern the things which she did. This Queen was one of those many humans who sense that perhaps there is nothing and no reason to anything that can ever be known. Yet she cannot bear the thought of it. And so she created day in and day out her ethical systems, trying desperately to believe in them, and they were all cloaks for things she did merely for pragmatic reasons. Her war on the cannibals, for instance, had stemmed more from her *dislike* of such customs than anything else. Her people of Uruk hadn't eaten human flesh; and so she would not have this offensive thing happening around her; there wasn't really a whole lot more to it than that. For always in her there was a dark place full of despair. And a great driving force to make meaning, because there was none. "'Understand, it was not shallowness that we perceived in this woman. It was a youthful belief that she could make the light shine if she tried; that she could shape the world to



comfort herself; it was also a lack of interest in the pain of others. She knew others felt pain, but well, she could not really dwell on it." (Part 3, Chapter 4 p. 330)

"Your limitations are as radiant as your virtues for reasons I don't understand myself. But more truly perhaps, I love you because you are so perfectly what is wrong with all things male. Aggressive, full of hate and recklessness, and endlessly eloquent excuses for violence - you are the essence of masculinity; and there is a gorgeous quality to such purity. But only because it can now be controlled." (Part 3, Chapter 5 p. 369)

"But it is their destiny; their world; they who are human. "She laughed softly. 'And what are we? Are we useless? How do we justify what we are! How do we stand back and watch what we are unwilling to alter?'" (Part 3, Chapter 7 p. 393)

"'Mekare, for your evil lies and your discourse with demons,' the Queen said, 'your tongue shall be torn from your mouth. And Maharet, for the evil which you have envisioned and sought to make us believe in, your eyes shall be plucked out! And all night, you shall be bound together, so that you may hear each other's weeping, one unable to speak, the other unable to see. And then at high noon tomorrow in the public place before the palace you shall be burnt alive for all the people to see. "'For behold, no such evil shall ever prevail against the gods of Egypt and their chosen King and Queen. For the gods have looked upon us with benevolence and special favor, and we are as the King and Queen of Heaven, and our destiny is for the common good!' "I was speechless as I heard the condemnation; my fear, my sorrow lay beyond my reach. But Mekare cried out at once in defiance. She startled the soldiers as she pulled away from them and stepped forward. Her eyes were on the stars as she spoke. And above the shocked whispers of the court she declared: "'Let the spirits witness; for theirs is the knowledge of the future - both what it would be and, *and what I will!* You are the Queen of the Damned, that's what you are! Your destiny is evil, as you well know! But I shall stop you, if I must come back from the dead to do it. At the hour of your greatest menace it is I who will defeat you! It is also I who will bring you down. Look well on my face, for you will see me again!'" (Part 3, Chapter 8, p. 410-411)

"'How can we stop her and save ourselves, that is the question. I want to live, as I have always wanted it. I do not want to close my eyes on this world. I do not want those I love to come to harm. Even the young ones, who must take life, I struggle in my mind to find some way to protect them. Is this evil of me ? Or are we not a species, and do we not share the desire of any species to live on? "'Hearken to everything that I've told you of the Mother. To what I've said of her soul, and of the nature of the demon that resides in her - its core wedded to her core. Think on the nature of this great invisible thing which animates each of us, and every blood drinker who has ever walked. "'We are receptors for the energy of this being; as radios are receptors for the invisible waves that bring sound. Our bodies are no more than shells for this energy. We are - as Marius so long ago described it - blossoms on a single vine.'" (Part 3, Chapter 8 p. 422)

"'And so I myself was within the family; and the family knew me; and I knew the family's love. I became the writer of letters; the benefactor; the unifier; the mysterious yet trusted visitor who appeared to heal branches and right wrongs. And though a thousand



passions consumed me; though I lived for centuries in different lands, learning new languages and customs, and marveling at the infinite beauty of the world, and the power of the human imagination, I always returned to the family which knew me and expected things from me. "As the centuries passed, as the millennia passed, I never went down into the earth as many of you have done. I never faced madness and loss of memory as was common among the old ones, who became often like the Mother and Father, statues buried beneath the ground. Not a night has passed that I have not opened my eyes, known my own name, and looked with recognition on the world around me, and reached for the thread of my own life." (Part 3, p. 426)

"You know the outcome as well as I do,' Akasha said. 'It's too simple and too elegant to be misunderstood. It has been unimaginable *until now*. All those centuries I sat upon my throne in Marius's shrine; I dreamed of an earth that was a garden, a world where beings lived without the torment that I could hear and feel. I dreamed of people achieving this peace without tyranny. And then the utter simplicity of it struck me; it was like a dawn coming. The people who can realize such a dream are women; but only if all the men - ore very nearly all the men - are removed.'" (Part 4, p. 438)

"It doesn't matter whether or not you believe it!' she said with the first sustained anger. 'You haven't accepted what I've been trying to tell you. You have not yielded to the exquisite image I've presented to your mind. Don't you realize the gift I offer you? I would save you! And what are you if you don't do this thing! A blood drinker, a killer!'" (Part 4, p. 444)

"It is you who are arrogant,' she answered. 'It is you who have learned nothing. It is you who have not changed in six thousand years. It is your soul which remains unperfected, while mortals move to realms you will never grasp. In your isolation you have dreamed dreams as thousands of mortals have done, protected from all scrutiny and challenge; and you emerge from your silence, ready to make these dreams real for the world? You bring them here to this table, among a handful of your fellow creatures, and they crumble. You cannot defend them. How could anyone defend them? And you tell us you deny what we see!' "Slowly Maharet rose from the chair. She leant forward slightly, her weight resting on her fingers as they touched the wood. "Well, I'll tell you what I see,' she went on. 'Six thousand years ago, when men believed in spirits, an ugly and irreversible accident occurred; it was as awful in its own way as the monsters born now and then to mortals which nature does not suffer to live. But you, clinging to life, and clinging to your will, and clinging to your royal prerogative, refused to take that awful mistake with you to the grave. To sanctify it, that was your purpose. To spin a great and glorious religion; and that is still your purpose now. But it was an accident finally, a distortion, and nothing more.'" (Part 4, p. 447)

"I will kill you first my prince,' she said, her fingers caressing me all the more gently. 'I want you gone from me. I will not look into your face and see this betrayal again.' "Harm him and that shall be our signal,' Maharet whispered. 'We shall move against you as one.' "And you move against yourselves!' she answered, glancing at Maharet. 'When I finish with this one I love, I shall kill those you love; those who should have been dead already; I shall destroy all those whom I can destroy; but who shall destroy me?'



"Akasha,' Marius whispered. He rose and came towards her; but she moved in the blink of an eye and knocked him to the floor. I heard him cry out as he fell. Santino went to his aid. "Again, she looked at me; and her hands closed on my shoulders, gentle and loving as before. And through the veil of my tears, I saw her smile sadly. 'My prince, my beautiful prince,' she said. "Khayman rose from the table. Eric rose. And Mael. And then the young ones rose, and lastly Pandora, who moved to Marius' side. "She released me. And she too rose to her feet. The night was so quiet suddenly that the forest seemed to sigh against the glass. "And this is what I've wrought, I who alone remained seated, looking not at any of them, but at nothing. At the small glittering sweep of my life, my little triumphs, my little tragedies, my dreams of waking the goddess, my dreams of goodness, and of fame." (Part 4, p. 450)

"I can't follow you,' I said, my voice breaking. Slowly I rose to my feet. 'We're not angels, Akasha; we are not gods. To be human, that is what most of us long for. It is the human which has become myth to us.'" (Part 4, p. 451)

Adaptations

The Queen of the Damned is available on audiotape along with the other books of the Vampire Chronicles: Interview with the Vampire, The Vampire Lestat, and Memnoch the Devil.



Topics for Discussion

Describe what the world would be like if Akasha were allowed to complete her plan. Was she right about the end to violence and wars? Why or why not?

If Lestat came to you and offered to make you a vampire, would you let him? Explain.

Explore the ideas of love, loyalty and loneliness, as they apply to the vampires.

Was Baby Jenks' vision of Heaven real, or was it a hallucination? What do you think happened to Baby Jenks when she died?

Compare Akasha and Azim. In what ways are they the same? In what ways are they different? Is one of them better than the other?

Why did Armand befriend Daniel and ultimately break his own vow against making a vampire?

Vampires must kill to survive, yet they find Akasha's plan unacceptable. Discuss morality from the point of view of a vampire.

Related Titles

The Queen of the Damned begins where The Vampire Lestat ends. It carries that earlier plot to its resolution, resolving many of the unanswered questions. It develops the character of the interviewer, Daniel, from Interview with the Vampire, and gives a fascinating explanation of how the first vampires came to be. It is considered by critics to be gorier and less erotic than the previous Vampire Chronicle novels.

The novel champions the modern world, even with its failings, seeing it as proof of human evolution to a higher ethical and spiritual plane.



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Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults

Editor - Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults

Includes bibliographical references.

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for fiction, nonfiction, and biographies written for young adults.

Includes a short biography for the author of each analyzed work.

1. Young adults—Books and reading. 2. Young adult literature—History and criticism. 3.

Young adult literature—Bio-bibliography. 4. Biography—Bio-bibliography.

[1. Literature—History and criticism. 2. Literature—Bio-bibliography]

I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952

Z1037.A1G85 1994 028.1'62 94-18048 ISBN 0-933833-32-6

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Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1994