

Spirit Bound Study Guide

Spirit Bound by Richelle Mead

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Plot Summary

Rose Hathaway is a half-vampire, half-human species of humanity known as a Dhampir. As part of a complex part of a secret, hidden society of vampires who co-exist with humans unbeknownst to the latter, Rose trains to become a Royal Moroi Guardian. Guardians are body guards highly-skilled in martial arts and other mystical techniques such as fire-casting and mental control. Their sacred mission for centuries unbroken has been to protect the fragile, pacifist Moroi vampires who form the upper class in hidden vampire society. In turn, the Moroi rule over a society that equally protects the interests of the Dhampir class, who are dependent on the Moroi in order to sustain their existence.

While the Moroi are vampires, they do not prey on humans. Instead, they seek willing volunteers who allow them to feed on their blood supply in exchange for the endorphin high humans receive when they are bled by vampires. But the evil Strigoi class of vampires are not so kind. They kill humans for blood, turn peaceful Dhampirs into Strigoi murderers, and seek to destroy the formidable St. Vladimir's Academy, where both the Dhampir and Moroi send their young to be instructed in the art of survival.

Rose has made a name for herself as a promising young Guardian, but her troubled nature as a natural rebel have equally made her enemies. She graduates at long last from St. Vladimir's as an accomplished young Guardian, but it unable to forget Dimitri, her former teacher and first love who was turned from Dhampir into a Strigoi. Rose has heard that it is possible to turn a Strigoi back into a Dhampir, but no one believes her. She leads a covert mission to bust Victor, a traitorous Moroi, free from prison because Victor's brother has knowledge of how to turn a Strigoi back to Dhampir.

The prison bust is successful, but Victor and his brother escape in an ensuing Strigoi attack lead by Dimitri himself. Lissa, a Moroi princess and the last surviving Dagomir royalty in Moroi society, believes she can use the knowledge they've gained to create a charmed stake that will pierce a Strigoi's heart and revert him back to his former self. Rose and Lissa plot to master a way to revert Strigoi using the new ideas but Dimitri attacks yet again, capturing Lissa and Lissa's estranged boyfriend and guardian Christian. Rose leads a rescue task force that liberates her held friends and captures Dimitri. Lissa transforms Dimitri back into Dhampir, but he is so guilt-ridden over his Strigoi past that he cannot accept Rose's love.

Rose is held for trial when Queen Tatiana, the leader of the Moroi society and the nemesis to Rose's efforts to modernize the fighting force of the Royal Court Guardians, is found dead with a silver stake in her heart. A pre-trial hearing reveals to the entire vampire society that Rose's stake was the murder weapon and that the Moroi Royals intend to have her tried for treason and executed for her crimes.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

Rose Hathaway, a Dhampir or half-human or half-vampire mortal, is confused about her future, facing graduation at long last from St. Vladimir's Academy and therefore having to become an active guardian of the Moroi, the fragile vampire clan who live amongst unsuspecting humans but who are susceptible to the Strigoi, immortal vampires who have no moral compulsion to treat any living beings with compassion or mercy. Rose's feelings of leaving the protective Montana school for the training of upcoming Strigoi fighters such as herself is a tender mixture of nostalgia for a past she now must set aside and apprehension about her upcoming challenge to protect the Moroi in the real world without protective teachers and safety nets.

In Chapter One, Rose is unsettled when she receives an unexpected letter from Dimitri, her ex-lover and now mortal enemy who has become an undead Strigoi himself. He laments how sad it is that he must inform her in such an impersonal medium as a letter that he intends to kill her as soon as she has graduated. He also romantically reminisces the way her hair felt in his fingertips. Dimitri reminds her that when they last met in his Russian homeland, Rose chose not to join with him and become eternal as a Strigoi. Instead, she chose to remain half-human as well as half-vampire, and therefore, mortal. Disgusted with her choice to remain moral and mortal rather than immoral and immortal, Dimitri vows in writing to her to destroy Rose first, hinting that it is only a matter of time until his fellow undead kill her given her knowledge and posed threat to their order, anyway.

Disgusted with his letter, Rose tosses it aside. But inwardly, she knows Dimitri's letter has had its intended effect. Rose now doubts her decision to forsake Dimitri, her old feelings for him rekindled despite herself. Making matters worse is the fact she earlier vowed to help Dimitri from ever falling prey to becoming a Strigoi. Rose feels that if she had carried out her promise to Dimitri better, Dimitri might not have become a murderous Strigoi. Worse still, Dimitri has now become a de facto leader of the evil vampire clan, made possible in large part because Rose earlier killed the former Strigoi leader and therefore cleared the path for Dimitri's dark rise to power. Her nagging doubt about her own complicity in his fate has made Rose consider the once unthinkable idea of again attempting to save Dimitri from his grisly condition.

Rose meets with Lissa, a Moroi princess with whom she shares a strong, psychic bond, as the two stroll across the beautiful but remote academy grounds. Lissa is apprehensive because she has promised Rose that upon graduation, the two of them will undertake a secretive personal mission to rescue Dimitri and turn him back into a mortal if supernatural being, such as a Moroi or Dhampir. Only Victor Dashkov, a Moroi turned Strigoi accomplice, has knowledge of this nearly impossible task. The problem is that Victor is now in an undisclosed Moroi prison somewhere on the planet after a



previous encounter with Lissa and Rose. How can Rose and Lissa possibly even contact Victor if his very whereabouts are unknown and the information restricted?

Chapter One Analysis

The complex society of hidden vampires is set forth in the opening chapter. We are introduced to Rose Hathaway, a Guardian-in-training at St. Vladimir's Academy, which is a secret school for peaceful vampires. The idea that there are both good and bad forms of vampires in society-at-large is a novel variation on the classic interpretation of vampire mythology in popular culture. Typically, the vampire is presented as a detestable if occasionally pitiable being doomed to feed off the living in an eternity of hellish nights. More rarely, the vampire is presented as a good character who is attempting to end his curse and is therefore noble if tragic in nature. The author here goes a further step and creates a mythology in which vampires exist in stratified levels, much like a normal human society. There are the upper class Moroi, the middle class Dhampir, and the lower class/outcast society of Strigoi. Each has a very defined role in a strict, caste-like society of rules and regulations. Crossing any rule risks severe punishment, including death.

On a symbolic level, it is noteworthy that the author begins the book with a letter from Dimitri, the Strigoi vampire intent on killing Rose, read by Rose herself. This clearly echoes the beginning of the world's most famous vampire story, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Stoker's novel also begins with letters of correspondence between the romantic leads of the story. Equally, both Stoker's novel and *Spirit Bound* feature a male vampire lover of renowned passion and darkness seeking to control the heroine from afar using his vampire powers. Of course, Rose is a fierce Guardian warrior and so she is not as easily intimidated nor bested as were the Victorian era characters from Stoker's influential novel from the 19th Century.

Lissa, the last Dragomir princess and Rose's best friend, is also introduced. Their past back-story of having prevailed over many former challenges in the series is recapitulated so that the reader can understand the continuing set of characters and their impact on the overall series' narrative.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary

In Chapter Two, Rose faces a bigger immediate challenge. She must complete her trials in order to secure graduation from St. Vladimir's Academy. A poor final showing means lower placement for Rose as a Dhampir Guardian of the Moroi during assignments. Rose is surprised to find a large crowd of gathered Vladimir students, parents and teachers at the outdoor trials. The appearance there of her mother Janine Hathaway, a famed Moroi and Vladimir alumni herself, as well as Abe Mazur, her infamous and human Russian privateer father, only adds to Rose's stress levels as she is effectively though not overtly estranged from both. Surprising herself and all present, Rose triumphs over the staged trials with cunning and endurance, displaying herself to be a first-class Strigoi killer. By the time she has completed the ordeal, Rose finds herself being met with wild applause from everyone gathered, including her parents.

Victorious beyond her wildest expectations, Rose celebrates with her classmates by being tattooed in the traditional Vladimir "molnija" or promise mark tradition. Because Rose has so many previous kills marked on her neck from encounters with Strigoi in the outside world, the tattoo artist has to cleverly place Rose's so that it can be distinguished from the rest. She has now become a Moroi Guardian. Adrian Ivashkov, Rose's current Moroi boyfriend and fellow student at Vladimir's, intercepts her as she leaves her dorm. He sits her down and discusses his recent encounter with her father Abe. Abe threatened Adrian with dark promises should Adrian ever harm or disappoint his daughter Rose. Rose is annoyed at her absentee father's involvement, but Adrian laughs it off, impressed by Abe's concern, if nothing else.

They arrive at a graduation party where everyone is clamoring to congratulate Rose on scoring the highest marks during trials. Christian Ozero, a secret practitioner of combat techniques effective in killing Strigoi despite his pacifist Moroi heritage, greets Rose and Adrian. Jill Mastrano, Christian's underling apprentice in mystical combat, sheepishly offers her congratulations to Rose, as well. Lissa, who has recently broke up with Christian after a heated affair, feigns interest in a cute Dhampir male classmate to stoke Christian's jealousy. Christian in turn allows Lissa to believe he is interested in Jill when he is not to return her jealous spite. Because Lissa and Rose share a deep psychic bond, Rose is perturbed with Lissa's stubborn refusal to make up with Christian. Rose must endure and share all the negative feelings of anger and jealousy that Lissa feels until such time, in addition to the complicated emotions of her own life. Rose confronts her father and warns him to not interfere with her private life ever again, but it is clear she is somewhat moved by Abe's sudden interest and graduation appearance when he has previously been so vacant from her life.



Chapter Two Analysis

Rose is in a transitional state of existence as a character when *Spirit Bound* begins. Her old nature as overly-reactive teenage rebel has caused her many heartaches in the present, which is why Rose is keen to put her troubled past behind her and graduate into official Guardian status. Her character's main goal and obstacles will arise from complications from Rose's desire to be a professional Guardian on the one hand and a free-spirit on the other.

The trial section is interesting in that the author chooses to place Rose's obstacle on a suspension rope bridge. Rose must successfully bypass pretend Strigoi attackers and rescue her pretend Moroi subject. Rose defeats her enemies by sawing the rope bridge's suspension cables and in effect stranding herself on the opposite side of the bridge when it collapses. This is symbolically very rich, in that it shows how Rose's inner desire to move from an old world into a new world of possibilities is visually underscored by the writer's choice of metaphorical imagery. Rose severs her old world and it falls away, in effect, just like the old path to her old world is annihilated by her actions during the graduation trials.

A theme of Rose's inability to trust authority figures is introduced when her estranged mother and father attend her graduation trials unexpectedly. Rose is neither at peace with her mother or her father, the latter of whom she has only rarely seen since he divorced her mother when Rose was a child. She feels with some narrative justification that her parents have abandoned her emotionally and left her to fend for herself. This sets in motion much of what will become Rose's conflict later in the story, as she is unable by past experience to easily accept the word of anyone holding power over her.



Chapter Three

Chapter Three Summary

In Chapter Three, Jill's mother Emily is introduced as Emily helps her daughter pack personal belongings from her dorm room. Rose assists them, carrying boxes. Emily reveals she lives in Detroit during the summer break and is a ballet dancer. Soon thereafter, Rose is headed for Pennsylvania and the Royal Moroi Court, where graduates are given their initial Guardian assignments. Adrian and Lissa accompany Rose on her flight. Adrian invites Rose to meet his parents as well as become reacquainted with Tatiana, his aunt. Alas, Rose and Tatiana have met previously when Tatiana, the Royal Majesty herself of the Royal Moroi Court, warned Rose off of any romantic involvement with her nephew Adrian. As she and Adrian have mutually ignored Tatiana's unsolicited warning, Rose does not look forward to meeting the Queen again.

Rose decides the only way to proceed with her plan to rescue Dimitri and restore his humanity is to visit with Mia, her former classmate from St. Vladimir's. Mia lives with her father inside the gated Royal Court complex, which also includes modest civilian cottages. Figuring Mia may be able to help Rose gain access to records that reveal the secret location of the prison that holds Victor Dashkov, Rose and Lissa pay Mia an unexpected but welcome visit. Mia is wary but agrees to assist Rose. Mia explains she will try to figure out a way to gain access to the records building and pass along such information to Rose at a later time.

At dinner with Adrian's parents, Rose is introduced to the elegant Daniella Ivashkov aka Lady Ivashkov and the silver-haired Nathan Ivashkov aka Lord Ivashkov. Over a dinner attended to by busy servants, Adrian is humiliated when Lord Ivashkov demands to know Adrian's plans post-graduation. A tense situation gets worse when Queen Tatiana unexpectedly arrives. Everyone but Adrian is tongue-tied by her royal presence. He jokes with his aunt that now that he's quit smoking, they won't be able to sneak outside and share cigarettes together. A more serious matter is discussed. Tatiana reveals the militant wing of the Moroi who favor fighting Strigoi alongside Guardian Dhampirs are restless with the Queen's insistence on patience. After her departure, the dinner guests fall silent until the evening is over. Daniella invites Rose to come again, which surprises Rose, as she knows full well Royal Moroi as a rule do not approve of Moroi and Dhampir unions.

Adrian forgets his jacket and disappears to retrieve it, leaving Rose alone with Daniella. Rose decides to inquire about why Lady Avashkov and Queen Tatiana seem complacent with Rose's dating Adrian when it goes against social convention. Daniella admits that she is fine with the couple's dating because she believes they will never marry or settle down long-term. Rose is astounded. She has never met a royal member who was so insightful and without prejudice. Rose wishes more of her society were as tolerant, but sadly realizes that Daniella is correct. No matter how much fun she has dating Adrian, her heart still belongs to Dimitri.



Chapter Three Analysis

Status and one's role in society plays a large part of the background to the Vampire Academy series, and Spirit Bound is no exception. Rose's introduction to the power couple of Lady and Lord Ivashkov via Adrian informs the reader of the relatively lower status Rose has in relationship to Adrian. Because Rose is a Dhampir, she knows that any lasting love between herself and Adrian, a Royal Moroi, is doomed from the start in terms of any meaningful length or seriousness. Still, Rose buckles under the societal notion that she should have to choose between loyalty to the state and faith to her true love, even if Dimitri, not Adrian, is the one true love Rose has ever known.

Ironically, Chapter Three shows Rose wants to defend and keep her relationship with Adrian, even as she surely endangers the pairing with Adrian by going after Dimitri, her former lover, to rescue him from Strigoi existence. This is the crux of Rose's character flaw in the series of books. She has uncanny insight and ability to fight Strigoi as enemies. And yet, she is equally her own worst enemy, often acting impulsively and speaking out of turn to power figures. And while Rose is sensitive to her own plight, she can do little to prevent herself from sabotaging herself during inopportune moments.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four Summary

In Chapter Four, Rose and Lissa reunite with Mia, who has figured out how to gain access for them into the Guardian records building. Escorting both Lissa and Rose into the records hall, Mia distracts a stern guardian behind the desk. Lissa soon uses her compulsion magic to hypnotize the guardian into giving the trio the secret passwords that lead into the secure records storage room. Inside, Rose finds the records for Tarasov prison, where Victor is housed. She steals the file, realizing she will need every bit of information it contains in order to break Victor out of his prison cell.

On the way out, however, Rose runs into Mikhail Tanner. Mikhail is a Dhampir Guardian who also has a past history of having attempted to terminate his former lover turned Strigoi. Tragically, Mikhail was unable to locate Sonya Karp, his beloved, once she became undead and refused further contact with him. Mikhail easily sees through Rose's attempts to explain why she has the file with her against the rules. When Rose explains she may be able to save both her own Dimitri as well as his Sonya, Mikhail decides against turning Rose in for her infraction. Instead, he lets her go, hoping she will return successful from her mission.

Chapter Four Analysis

Much as Rose had to earlier cross a symbolic bridge in Chapter Two, she now must cross over the threshold of what is legal and what is not in Chapter Four. She and her co-conspirators infiltrate a Guardian records office in search of materials to help them uncover the mystery of Tarasov Prison's whereabouts. And just as when Rose had to sever the bridge behind her in Chapter Two in order to win her trail, in Chapter Four Rose is forced to go beyond the law in order to help free Dimitri from his living dead curse of being Strigoi. By breaking and entering the Guardian building, in essence, Rose has begun her quest in earnest, having left behind the possibility of an easy outcome in favor of her chosen stake in an upcoming adventure of her own devising.

This is a very important character moment because until this point, Rose has been vacillating between action and thought. Her complex feelings for Adrian, Dimitri and her other friends as St. Vladimir's have kept her virtually frozen in place, unable to take decisive action. From this point forward in *Spirit Bound*, however, Rose will be a more much active, dynamic protagonist.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary

In Chapter Five, Rose and Lissa attend the luncheon wherein Royal Moroi members interrogate newly-christened Guardians socially, all the while deciding which of the freshmen they wish to later bid upon as their own personal body guards against Strigoi attacks. Rose wants to be assigned to protect her friend Princess Lissa, but no one expects Queen Tatiana to grant Rose's wishes. Tasha Ozera, a militant Moroi whose own parents turned to undead Strigoi by choice before they were destroyed by the Guardians, tells Rose that she has bid for Rose as her own guardian, even though Tasha believes Queen Tatiana will never allow it. Rose is flattered but agrees the chances are slim.

Tatiana summons Lissa and Rose to her court. There she informs Lissa that Lissa is to journey to Lehigh University to celebrate her 18th birthday. Lissa is delighted, as she has always dreamed of attending the prestigious magical university after graduating St. Vladimir's. To Rose's surprise, Tatiana also decrees Rose may attend the event with Lissa if she desires. Rose is delighted as Lissa and quickly accepts.

Eddie Castile is a long-time platonic friend of Rose's from school who is also now poised to become a Guardian in the Royal Court. Rose reluctantly confides in Eddie that she needs his assistance in a private task, but that said task could involve Eddie's reputation and future as a Guardian should anything in Rose's request go awry. Eddie is chastened, but as Rose's loyal friend, he commits without reservation to her need for assistance. Later, Rose, Lissa and Eddie all crowd into Mikhail's automobile trunk. Mikhail covertly drives them off the grounds. The three classmates make their way to the airport and buy tickets to Alaska, where Tarasov prison is located.

Chapter Five Analysis

Chapter Five is largely an expository chapter focusing on the mechanics of the shifting narrative. Having now graduated from St. Vladimir's and ready for official status as a Guardian, Rose must face new challenges in the story. The author changes the dynamics of the plot by having Rose face Queen Tatiana. The two have briefly met in a previous Vampire Academy series book, but here their relationship will come to the forefront of the Spirit Bound story. In a note of intrigue, it appears that Tatiana may be secretly impressed with Rose's earlier handling of a Strigoi assault in their vampire stronghold in Russia in which she killed many deadly Strigoi.

In acting as a person who has knowledge or power and who reveals herself to Rose in an assisting manner, Queen Tatiana classically fulfills the Hidden Helper character archetype. This figure appears throughout all mythology in the form of a wise man who offers sagely advice, or a mother figure who nurtures a fallen hero. The archetype of the



Hidden Helper is that of a character who will seek to help the lead heroine find her goal and/or achieve her destiny. Though Tatiana pretends to be dignified and keeps her royal distance, the author intones that Rose believes Tatiana has privately decided to favor Rose instead of oppose her future as a Guardian. Even Rose perceives Queen Tatiana as a Hidden Helper, in other words, even if Rose never uses such words.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary

In Chapter Six, Eddie, Lissa and Rose arrive in Fairbanks, Alaska, heartened by the fact that although they must face the almost non-stop glare of the summer sunshine, it also means the likelihood of Strigoi attacks is minimal owing to their preference to exist by nightfall. They have a hard time renting a car because they're all only 18 years of age. Eventually they secure a cash rented vehicle with a large deposit and arrive at Tarasov prison. They stake it out, using high-powered binoculars to survey their task at hand.

In order to keep the Moroi as prisoners, they must be held in a perpetually light environment so that their powers are weakened. They are also supplied with so-called Feeders, or humans that agree to be slowly drained of blood in exchange to have opium-like endorphins flood their brains each time a Moroi feeds on them. Herein lies Rose's plan of attack. She and Lissa will pass off as human Feeders while Eddie pretends to be a outside vendor helping to supply the prison with fresh blood supplies. Lissa uses spirit magic to charm any guards who see them as humans so that later they cannot be identified by authorities.

The entrance guard is suspicious, but allows them inside in order to wait for the prison's warden in a couple of hours. Lissa uses her powers on a weak-willed guard named Northwood to get them to take her and Rose into the restricted feeding area as the next victims to be bled. Lissa mind tricks the guard into bringing Victor into the feeding area. Victor recognizes Rose but remains quiet. Rose whispers for Victor to go along with her if he wants to be freed. She then tells him to attack her.

Chapter Six Analysis

Chapter Six of *Spirit Bound* offers a complex overview of the vampire prison known as Tarasov Prison. The Dhampirs and Moroi have gone to extraordinary lengths to hide the nearly-invisible prison from the eyes of the world and the possible assault by Strigoi attempting to free Tarasov's heinous lot of killer vampire prisoners. They have built their jail fortress in Alaska during the summer and another part of the globe during the winter. Therefore, Tarasov Prison receives non-stop sunlight during the summer hours, leaving any and all attempts to escape beyond its sheltering, dark walls impossible for vampires.

The assault on the prison echoes the earlier training sequence Rose had to endure in Chapter Two. Notice how the author has cleverly set this up earlier and now repeatedly uses similar imagery of remote fortresses and hidden buildings to embody the themes of her novels. Throughout *Spirit Bound*, Rose must find a way to find secret passageways into sheltered areas of knowledge that is deliberately kept from her. This is both an internal quest in order for her to fulfill her destiny as a Dhampir Guardian, but

also is externalized frequently in the text with the use of such stand-ins as castles, guarded buildings, prisons, and related strongholds. The two work together to constantly remind the reader that Rose faces dangers both internally and externally.



Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven Summary

In Chapter Seven, Victor mock attacks Rose. Rose uses the distraction to overpower the guards and free Victor. Despite her repulsion for Victor based on his former torturing of her, Lissa allows him to drain a short intake of blood from one of the stunned guards. Victor argues that unless he is allowed to do so, he will not be able to escape the prison because of his weakened state. Rose is against it but relents when she realizes they have no choice.

Keeping another guard they encounter named Giovanni under Lissa's mind control, they force their way into the main control room. There a bank of video cameras and computers records all that occurs inside the prison's walls. Afraid the footage will later be reviewed to uncover her identity, Rose indicates for Lissa to force Giovanni into erasing all the footage from their prison break. The guard is reluctant, but does as mentally commanded when Victor uses his ability to compel, too. Rose joins in, smashing the equipment with a fire extinguisher.

During the final portion of their escape, Lissa detects the presence of fellow spirit users hidden along their route. Lissa warns that other spirit users such as herself will be able to detect Lissa's own magical presence, and so they must take an alternative route, instead. Rose senses via their bond that Lissa is perplexed and saddened by her own kind being held in such a dark, depressing place. They burst into the office where Eddie has been stalling for time and battle the guards. Leaving behind a wake of slumbering bodies, Rose and company triumphantly speed away in their rental car with their freed captor Victor.

The prison guards give pursuit in vehicles. Rose has pre-planned well. Eddie is able to elude their followers using a clever series of side roads Rose has mapped for them. Once they're free, they park. Rose warns Victor that if he tries anything, she will leave him on the roadside and call the prison to alert them to his whereabouts. Victor is sly enough to realize Rose and Lissa represent his only chance at keeping his newfound freedom. He goes along without complaint or conspiring against them... for now. He tells them they will find his brother Robert Doru in Las Vegas. It is Robert who holds the key to turning a Strigoi back into a Moroi.

Chapter Seven Analysis

Lissa comes to the story's forefront for the first time during Chapter Seven and their assault on Tarasov Prison to liberate Victor, who holds the knowledge of how to change a Strigoi killing vampire back into a peaceful Moroi or Dhampir. Her later actions in which her now-hidden powers will bloom forth are foreshadowed in this chapter by showing her in action and able to defend herself despite her supposed dainty princess



status. In reality, Lissa is much tougher than even Rose gives her credit for being at this point in *Spirit Bound*.

Mostly an action-filled chapter, Chapter Seven efficiently details how the protagonists not only successfully penetrate the walls of a top-secret, hidden prison, but also rescue/kidnap Victor as well. Their ability to act together as a team unites them in advantage over the one-off guards they encounter within the prison walls. This also foreshadows their later need to remain united when internal forces threaten to tear them apart. By presenting the Tarasov Prison liberation sequence in such a taut, believable way, the author creates a fictional world wherein the later, more ambitious Strigoi assaults in Las Vegas and other civilian centers of population are equally believable in comparison.



Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight Summary

The only way Rose can transport the newly-freed Victor via airplane to Las Vegas is by private plane charter because Victor lacks any I.D. Bud, the sleazy car rental owner, directs them to a private pilot. They secure passage through Seattle to Las Vegas with Rose using a credit card to pay the pilot's high fees to not ask questions of his passengers. Rose and companions decide to stay at the Luxor Hotel. They check in and Victor contacts his half-brother Robert Doru, a hermit who lives on the outskirts of Las Vegas in a cabin. Robert agrees to meet with Victor, but only in the city, as Robert is paranoid and wants no one to know precisely where he lives.

To their surprise, Adrian arrives and knocks on the door of their hotel suite. He has tracked Rose via the credit card and arranged to be in Las Vegas awaiting her arrival. In a private exchange, Adrian reacts against Rose's foolish plan to liberate Dimitri from Strigoi doom. He fears she will drop him should Rose succeed in finding a way to actually reverse the turning of a Dhampir into a Strigoi. She cannot truthfully say this would not be the case, either, though she feels inwardly Adrian is perhaps a better choice for her than Dimitri could ever have been, even when he was a Dhampir like herself.

They part, with Rose giving Adrian the chance to join them in their quest. He departs for the bar to drink and smoke, breaking his vow to her to quit smoking in a deliberate act of aggression. But when time arrives for the group to depart on their mission to meet up with Robert, Victor's half-brother who has turned a Strigoi into a Dhampir once before, Adrian arrives to take his place alongside Rose in her moment of need. She is grateful.

Chapter Eight Analysis

The first part of Chapter Eight details how Rose and Lissa physically transport the weakened Victor to Las Vegas, where he has told them his half-brother Robert resides. Robert is a former spirit charmer who actually converted a Strigoi back into a Dhampir using a means known only to him, not even Victor. Suspicious that Victor is setting her up but unable to find another means of gaining the information needed, Rose allows Victor to contact Robert and arrange for a meeting.

Meantime, Adrian re-enters the story when he unexpectedly shows up at Rose's hotel suite. Adrian's character is very persistent throughout *Spirit Bound*. He both accepts that Dimitri is still the love of Rose's life and feels he is up to the challenge of convincing Rose that Dimitri should be to her but a fading memory. By being so persistently charming and self-effacing, and at the same time constantly demonstrating his commitment to Rose by showing up in her moments of need, Adrian makes Rose's

choice between himself and Dimitri as suitor much more difficult. If Adrian had acted jealously, Rose's choice would have been made for her.



Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine Summary

Robert turns out to be a spirit user who has definitely lost part of his sanity in heavy price for his mystical gifts. Unbalanced and wary, he meets with the company of Rose, Lissa, Robert, Adrian and Eddie in a Luxor dining room. Robert immediately sees through the auras of those present. He labels Rose as "shadow-kissed" and Lissa as "spirit-charmed." They press him for an accounting of how he turned a Strigoi back into a Dhampir. Robert explains he did it by using spirit charms on a silver stake. By stabbing the Strigoi in the heart with such a charmed stake, in effect, one can reverse their state of being. Rose is heartened until Robert tells her there is no way she can personally do it because she is a Dhampir. Only a Moroi can do it or the spirit will not work. And only Lissa of all present is a Moroi who could do it, he further intones. Rose calls the idea off at this point, realizing she would be endangering Lissa in her quest to save Dimitri. After all, her Guardian oath is to protect the Moroi, not put them into potentially lethal traps. They return to their rooms, exhausted. Suddenly Rose goes on alert since Strigoi are present.

Chapter Nine Analysis

A central motif of the vampire mythology is that once one is turned into an undead, one must remain undead until staked to eternal death through the heart. *Spirit Bound* attempts to reverse the genre rules and add a new twist. In the world of Rose and the Dhampirs, Moroi and Strigoi she inhabits, there exists a remote possibility of actually converting a killing vampire such as a Strigoi back into a less aggressive state of existence such as a Dhampir or Moroi. In essence, a charmed stake to the heart of a deadly vampire will do the trick. Rather than destroying the bloodsucker, the charmed stake alone has restorative powers to heal the Strigoi back into a benign form of existence.

Not just anyone can charm a stake, however, the reader is informed. Only a spirit-charmed person who is free and innocent such as Lissa can summon the positive energies necessary to charm the stake in question. Rose is a bit saddened to learn from Robert, Victor's brother who has actually performed the ceremony in question, that Rose herself is too shadow-kissed or dark in her personal nature to ever charm a stake. For the first time, Rose realizes that she is dependent upon Lissa and not vice versa, as when Rose normally defends Lissa from Strigoi attacks. This marks a turn in their relationship towards a more equal, shared balance of power. Rose is threatened by the implications and only goes along with the knowledge that Lissa is gaining her independence in order to have Lissa charm a stake so that Rose can use it on Dimitri.



Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten Summary

Dimitri and two of his Strigoi stooges attack Rose and the rest in the hotel hallway. A ferocious battle ensues. Several human hotel guards are killed in the process as Dimitri's vampire henchmen show no mercy on them. Rose is ultimately put into a tug-of-war between Eddie on the one side and a growling Dimitri on the other, each attempting to draw her to his respective side. Eddie triumphs this encounter when he pulls Rose to safety outside onto a hotel balcony and into the direct sunlight. Thwarted, Dimitri retreats, but warns Rose with a mocking laugh that there is nowhere on the globe she can travel where he cannot and therefore will not find and destroy her. Worse yet, a quick regrouping reveals that both Victor and Robert have vanished from the casino.

Chapter Ten Analysis

Chapter Ten is filled with horrific action as Dimitri and his band of Strigoi assassins attack Rose and company in the hallways of their Las Vegas hotel. Dimitri seems hell-bent on destroying Rose at any and all costs, including his own damnation. Many innocent human guards are killed in the bloody battle that ensues. Equally at the conclusion, the villainous Victor and Robert have disappeared, having escaped in the melee.

This will become a major obstacle for Rose's character to resolve as the story progresses. She cannot deny in the aftermath of her actions in Chapter Ten that the human guards all died as a result of her own actions in liberating Victor. Had she not brought Victor to Las Vegas, the human guards would have not been killed. Likewise, Rose realizes that Victor is loose on the world as well, which is also directly and only her fault. As the chapters progress from here to the end, Rose will become consumed at points with a haunted sense of personal guilt. It becomes a driving force behind both her reckless behavior and her desperate desire to somehow find a way to redeem herself in the eyes of the her people.



Chapter Eleven

Chapter Eleven Summary

Lacking any way of tracking the escaped Victor's whereabouts, Rose and friends retire to the Witching Hour Hotel. The Witching Hour is a secretive Moroi casino that also caters to unaware humans seeking gambling fun. Moroi Royalty freely flow among the humans without detection but enjoy access to V.I.P. rooms that humans cannot enter. Rose figures at least this way they will be safe from further Strigoi attacks as the hotel is crawling with Guardians who are protecting the Moroi there to gamble and drink.

At the bar as they discuss the probable outcome of Rose's having fled the Court without official permission, she and Adrian are mistaken for a frequent sight at the casino of female Dhampirs acting as "blood whores" with bottom-feeding Moroi men. It is an ugly side of Rose's Dhampir heritage she does not like being associated with even if accidentally. But during the exchange with a stranger at the bar, Adrian learns that the Royal Court has not yet figured out Rose was behind the break-out of Victor. They merely believe she is a.w.o.l. in Las Vegas having a good time. Rose draws some hope. They may be able to get away with her disaster and only take the blame for the trip away from the Royal Court without official sanction. Depressed but knowing at least some hope exists, Rose, Lissa, Eddie and Adrian all fly back to the Royal Court of Moroi to face their punishment.

Chapter Eleven Analysis

Chapter Eleven describes the sordid relationship some low-life humans have with vampire Moroi beings in which the humans allow themselves to be slowly fed upon by Moroi but never so much as to either harm or kill them. The humans, called blood whores, receive a boost of endorphins in exchange for allowing their blood to be consumed. This is a clear analogy to illicit drug use and offers a cautionary warning as to how some people allow themselves to become dependent upon their dealers or others who control a supply of drugs desired by the end user. In the world of the half-vampires and vampires such as in the Vampire Academy series, blood whores are considered the lowest form of acceptable humanity tolerable to the hidden world of the exotic undead.

Narrative concerns are addressed when Rose learns valuable exposition from Adrian that the Royal Court does not yet suspect her or Lissa of having freed Victor, owing to the fact that the Queen and her consorts believe Rose was merely in Las Vegas with Lissa on an unsanctioned graduation party trip. For the time being, Rose is spared from having to deal with the long-term consequences of her actions in freeing a villain like Victor.



Chapter Twelve

Chapter Twelve Summary

The Royal Court does not take lightly to Rose's actions. Eddie is given a lesser assignment as a result of his involvement. Fortunately for Rose, she is not suspected of Victor's escaping prison and so her punishment is less severe. She is introduced to Hans Croft, the head Guardian instrumental in assignments, and grilled along with Eddie by the senior commander. Croft warns Rose she may spend her entire career behind a desk as result of her idiocy in going to Vegas. She and Eddie are given physically demanding, 12-hour per day hard labor work details for days on end. Eventually Christian shows up and surreptitiously visits with her while she's working a rock detail. Christian has deduced Rose was involved in Victor's escape and wants information about what Rose has learned re: Dimitri. Rose reluctantly tells Christian, figuring he will reject her spirit stake theory. Instead, Christian is floored, realizing this may mean a method to finally end the evil part of vampirism such as the Strigoi while keeping the good parts such as Dhampirs and Moroi alive and well.

Later in her bunk, Rose attunes to Lissa's thoughts far away at Lehigh Univeristy where Lissa is having her 18th birthday party using their shared psychic bond. Lissa is surprised when Christian shows up and tells her what Rose has learned about how a Moroi could turn a Strigoi with a spirit-charmed stake.

Chapter Twelve Analysis

Chapter Twelve is a mid-point in the Spirit Bound narrative. Rose must face punitive punishment for her involvement in the Las Vegas trip. She is assigned a boring desk detail, which makes her angry. She realizes that she may be stuck at the desk for years, not weeks, unless she can somehow improve her standing among Queen Tatiana and the other royal court members. This physical time-out is designed to give the reader pause to reflect on all that has happened in the plot so far. Rose is forced to reflect upon her actions and therefore upon what has transpired in the previous chapters.

Christian's introduction to the charmed stake knowledge is also crucial to the plot. Because he reacts positively, which Rose did not expect, Christian decides to empower Lissa with training in the coming chapters. Christian sees the new ability to possibly transform Strigoi back into Dhampirs or Moroi as a revolutionary way to end the constant war between the undead. He becomes a devout leader in this scene, which Rose witnesses to her surprise. Christian's character goes from a passive accomplice to spiritual leader in this moment.



Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Thirteen Summary

Christian passionately explains turning Strigoi into their former states could be the biggest thing that ever happened to their kind. Lissa eventually agrees she could learn how to do it if Christian would but show her how to train for such an encounter. He agrees. Both lovers want to make up, but circumstances and wounded pride prevent them from speaking the obvious desire each has to keep their relationship alive. Rose is frustrated by the one-way nature of her ability to read Lissa's mind but not in reverse. Rose wants to shout out to Lissa not to do it, but Lissa agrees to Christian's training. Rose texts Lissa a message warning Lissa not to do it. But Lissa texts back a mental message that she's in no matter Rose's stated objections.

Rose is visited that night by Adrian in a shared dream state. He picks the Las Vegas strip as the scenic backdrop for their encounter. The two discuss all that has transpired. Adrian forgives Rose for her lying about the Vegas trip to him. He tells her to forget about Dimitri and that she must be willing to do so in order for she and Adrian to have a serious chance at happiness as a couple. They kiss, but Rose breaks off, bidding Adrian goodnight and exiting the dream. The next day, Mikhail visits her as she is forced to do work detail filing papers. Mikhail is disappointed Rose has gained so little info beyond the charmed stake for her efforts, but remains her loyal confidant. He implies that she may be filing papers for a long time given her transgressions and leaves her to ponder her boring fate.

In a private hotel room, Lissa and Christian meet for their first covert practice in Strigoi defense and attack methods. Their sexual tension grows heavy, and they accidentally knock over furniture, alerting a protective Guardian named Serena. The couple stammer that they were just practicing self-defense as the embarrassed Serena withdraws, offering them privacy. Rose observes the proceedings while on her work shift using her bond with Lissa. Croft interrupts Lissa and explains Queen Tatiana wishes to see her.

Chapter Thirteen Analysis

Chapter Thirteen details the growing love relationships between the two female protagonists and their respective armors. Rose visits with Adrian in a shared dream state that allows both participants to be both fully conscious and fantasy role players complete with erotic undertones. Adrian and Rose begin to physically express their desires, but Rose breaks it off, still uncertain about her feelings for Dimitri and confused about taking matters further with Adrian.

Meantime, Christian and Lissa meet for secretive training in which Christian will teach her how to stake a Strigoi. It is no easy task, but when the two become accidentally entangled during practice only to be seen by a Guardian named Serena, their clear

physical attraction to each other is beyond denial, even to them. In this sense, Chapter Thirteen acts as the romantic sub-plot advancement portion of the plot, drawing the romantic couples closer together before new stresses will test their loyalties.



Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fourteen Summary

A Royal Court assembly is in progress. The Moroi have eleven members sitting next to Queen Tatiana during the hearing to represent the eleven ruling families, of which Princess Lissa is the last of their kind. A startled and unprepared Rose is asked a series of weighted questions by the Queen about her background, including her self-styled mission of revenge against the Strigoi in Russia after the Strigoi attacked St. Vladimir's Academy, leaving many Moroi dead and the ruling families in jeopardy. The assembled family is impressed by Rose's record of killing at least seven Strigoi and perhaps many more, as well as her advocacy for Moroi learning to defend themselves as well as for the Guardians to lead attacks against the Strigoi as a matter of policy. Without explanation, she is dismissed and the hearing concluded.

Having no clue, Rose is met by Adrian, who explains he's equally in the dark apart from knowing she would be present. They speculate it has something to do with Royal Court politics, but neither can be sure until told otherwise. Meanwhile, Serena and Grant, another Dhampir Guardian, have a training session with Lissa and Christian at Lehigh. Rose watches via her bond with Lissa and grows more annoyed. Now there are two Guardians teaching Lissa how to get herself killed foolishly attacking a Strigoi! Christian and Lissa learn during their session just how nearly impossible it is to stake a moving Strigoi to death. It takes cunning and much upper body strength, Lissa realizes. She also realizes she must come up with a superior method or she will never master the ability in time to effectively turn Dimitri with a charmed stake.

After dinner, Lissa is escorted by her Guardians and Christian to her car. There, Dimitri supervises another stealth Strigoi attack. This time, Grant is killed with his throat torn out by a Strigoi. Serena is slammed face-first into the pavement and left for dead. Christian fights valiantly but is no match. He ignites a fireball with his spirit powers, but Dimitri takes Lissa hostage and threatens to kill her. Christian gives in. Dimitri gloats with satisfaction as Lissa is now his pawn.

Chapter Fourteen Analysis

A complete reversal of all major characters' fortunes occurs in the dramatic Chapter Fourteen. Not only is Rose hauled before Queen Tatiana's assembled Royal Court and peppered with cryptic questions regarding Rose's assault on the Strigoi compound in an early Vampire Academy book, but Rose is also convinced that Lissa's growing practice of hitting Dimitri in the heart with a charmed stake is nothing less than a suicide mission she cannot allow to occur.

Alas, Rose will have no choice in the matter when Dimitri attacks without warning. In the aftermath of another murderous Strigoi assault, Lissa and Christian are taken hostage



by Dimitri. The literal and figurative stakes involved in the story's outcome at this point have been irrevocably shattered. It will no longer be possible for Rose to protect Lissa unless Lissa also protects herself, or at least until Rose can rescue her. The author of *Spirit Bound* has escalated the conflict into an irreversible direction. Either Dimitri or Rose will now prevail. One or the other must be defeated for the story to conclude.



Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Fifteen Summary

Rose breaks from her spell and rushes to Croft to tell him that she knows where Dimitri has taken Lissa. Croft, already in response mode to the abduction of the last princess of the ruling class of Moroi, orders Rose to accompany him and a rapid-strike task force that is assembling. Their mission is to rescue Lissa before Dimitri can destroy her. Croft knows that Rose's bond with Lissa is key to rescuing Lissa alive.

Adrian finds her and confesses his love. He explains that he vehemently wants Dimitri dead now. Rose is upset. Doesn't he realize she still loves Dimitri? But Adrian explains it is not because he hates Dimitri as much as it is he can no longer live without Rose in his life. As long as Dimitri is undead, Rose's life is in jeopardy. Dimitri has sworn as much. Touched, Rose tells him she feels for him, as well. They kiss. Croft arrives and orders Rose to get into an assault vehicle loaded with other Guardians. They follow Rose's lead to head to Lehigh while she bonds again with Lissa. Once bonded, she sees that Dimitri has Christian and Lissa tied together and being guarded by Strigoi in an abandoned warehouse. To Rose's horror, Dimitri suddenly peers into Lissa's eyes, knowing full well that Rose is monitoring via their psychic bond. He tells her he's waiting for her and that this time he will kill her for good. Rose breaks off the spell, haunted by the savage nature of Dimitri's passion to destroy her.

Chapter Fifteen Analysis

Chapter Fifteen summarizes the stand-off that has occurred between Dimitri and Rose, and how it has affected the Moroi and Dhampir worlds at large. Queen Tatiana wastes no time in launching a rescue mission. After all, Lissa is the last Dragomir princess, and her death would be a mortal blow to the Queen's leadership of the peaceful Moroi people, many of whom are now clamoring for physical action in response against the Strigoi as a new way of defending their own well-being. In order to quell the popular uprising, Tatiana includes Rose in the covert rescue force, hoping her mind bond with Lissa will give Rose an advantage against Dimitri.

Again, Tatiana emerges as a Hidden Helper figure to Rose's heroine. When the chips are down, Tatiana bets all on Rose, despite objections from many others who believe Rose is unworthy of the Queen's respect. Without this help, Rose would be down and out in *Spirit Bound*. As in previous chapters, Rose is a classically-assisted protagonist, one who can depend upon unseen assistance from newly-met characters. Notice how throughout *Spirit Bound*'s pages, Rose constantly meets new helpers who make it possible for each new stage of her quest to unfold. Without these characters, Rose would never be able to transform from Guardian novice into Guardian professional.



Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Sixteen Summary

Using over forty Court Guardians in stealth mode, Rose leads the charge to rescue Lissa and Christian from Dimitri's trap. They find three levels of Strigoi staged for the Guardians' assault in defensive anticipation. Using their superior Guardian training and with the element of surprise on to their advantage, Rose and the Guardians defeat many Strigoi in close quarters, stake-to-heart combat. Finally, Rose finds herself face-to-face with Dimitri. A death match ensues between the two as they battle to see who will live, Lissa or Dimitri. Christian uses his spirit power to ignite fires and singes the ropes from his and Lissa's rope-bound wrists, freeing them to join the melee.

During the battle, Lissa taps into hidden powers she never realized she possessed. Using her angelic ability to suddenly flood a room with light so brilliant no one can stand looking into it, Lissa blinds everyone present in the warehouse battle area and drives the charmed stake into Dimitri's heart. Dimitri is transformed from Strigoi back into Dhampir being. Lissa strokes Dimitri's hair and gently cradles him as he weeps.

Chapter Sixteen Analysis

The echoes of previous chapters sound loudly indeed during Chapter Sixteen. The rescue mission Rose is a part of reminds of previous chapters in which Rose had to first pass a trial by ordeal in Chapter Two and the Tarasov Prison assault in Chapter Six. In each case, Rose must break into hidden compounds full of adversaries both known and unknown. She must successfully gain entry, overcome the obstacles, and perform heroic tasks in order to liberate loved ones or necessary accomplices.

By now, the familiar pattern has been established wherein Rose will tackle many of her narrative conflicts in the heat of a pitched battle as opposed to reasoning and logic alone. This is very much within the classical narrative tradition of having the heroine resolve the conflicts not through words but deeds and actions. This provides for a superior form of catharsis for the reader, as it allows for the narrative to leap ahead quickly via actions rather than through long exchanges of dialogue, which take longer typically to make exposition clear to the reader.

Likewise, Lissa's transformation from mere Moroi into a kind of spectral-powered being in Moroi form happens as well. This is a key character arc for Lissa's character. She goes in this scene from becoming an adept to an expert. She is no longer dependent upon Rose for her well-being, but can defend herself with heretofore unknown powers even Rose could not speculate existed within her nature. In essence, Lissa grows from young woman to mature woman in this sequence, which symbolically shows the power of beatific as opposed to sexual love as an overpowering healing element. This is a major theme of the entire Vampire Academy series as is demonstrated by how neatly

Rose's own quest to heal Dimitri with true love runs parallel to Lissa's saving of Dimitri in this chapter.



Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Seventeen Summary

Confusion reigns as the newly-freed Dimitri is dragged away with the Princess Lissa. Separated during the pull-back from the Strigoi stronghold, Rose is kept in the darkness as to her best friend's and former lover's whereabouts as the bond she and Lissa share has been temporarily blocked out due to the ordeal. But with patience and time, Rose is finally able to see through Lissa's eyes once again. There she witnesses a tender scene between Christian, who is in awe of Lissa's new powers, and Lissa, who realizes how much she still cares for Christian despite her growing stature in the Moroi Court.

Rose attempts to visit Dimitri, who is being held under observation until the Moroi Royals can determine his status. But Hans informs her that there's no way a Dhampir like herself will be able to gain access as Dimitri's under maximum security watch. Rose refuses to be deterred. She heads for the Guardian building where she knows Dimitri is being housed within and plots to bluff her way inside. Before she can pull off her plan, Lissa awakens. They meet in the Court yard. Lissa is awkward. Rose presses her to see Dimitri. But Dimitri has not just not asked to see Rose. He has specifically asked Lissa to prevent Rose from seeing him.

Chapter Seventeen Analysis

Chapter Seventeen gives breathing room for the reader to absorb and process the action-filled previous chapters. By slowing down the narrative and recapitulating it through Rose's perspective, the reader is given a chance to see how the action has changed the heroine's goals and conflicts.

Rose is never a passive character, however, even when she's forced to become reflective as she is in Chapter Seventeen. Though she is basically forced to sit out the Royal Court's actions and hearings, Rose nevertheless tunes into Lissa's mind through their psychic bond to gain valuable exposition as to Dimitri's whereabouts. Alas, an emotional wedge is driven further between Rose and Lissa when Rose discovers that Dimitri does not want to see her, only Lissa, the latter of whom he worships as a rescuing angel.

The bitter irony is not lost on Rose. She has risked everything to restore Dimitri, only to see her best friend Lissa receive all the credit from Dimitri for her efforts. Rose is at her darkest hour in the Spirit Bound book in Chapter Seventeen, as all she has fought to achieve seems in peril.



Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Eighteen Summary

Because of their bond, Rose can read Lissa's feelings and knows that Lissa tells her the truth. Dimitri truly does not want to see Rose for unexplained reasons. Rose is jealous of Lissa's new hold on Dimitri's feelings. Dimitri looks to Lissa as his personal savior, but refuses to give any credit or thanks whatsoever to Rose, who engineered the plan and executed it as well. Lissa invites Rose to watch through their bond as Lissa visits with Dimitri to see if she can help determine why it is he is so against ever seeing Rose again.

During a very painful exchange, Rose listens in as Dimitri tells Lissa that he doesn't deserve Rose because of the murders he committed while he was a Strigoi. Lissa begs Dimitri to consider Rose's feelings for him. But he refuses, instead swearing his allegiance and loyalty to his life's end to Lissa and Lissa only, forsaking Rose entirely. Rose is deeply wounded. Lissa leaves Dimitri, unable to change his mind in regards to seeing Rose.

Lissa and Christian have a first face-to-face since their rescue and Lissa's transformation. Christian awkwardly tells her how amazing her new powers were when she used them to rescue Dimitri. Lissa softens, glad to have Christian's feelings for her tender and mutually expressed. Rose is surprised when Adrian knocks on her door. He invites her to a party, which offends Rose given the number of Dhampir Guardians who've died for his protection as a Royal Class member!

Chapter Eighteen Analysis

Chapter Eighteen further delineates the reasons why Dimitri no longer wishes to have any communication or contact with Rose. He feels guilty that while he was a Strigoi vampire, he killed many innocent humans, Dhampirs and Moroi. Dimitri feels that it is not enough for him to simply be accepted by Rose for all that he has attempted to do to her while he was a Strigoi monster.

The theme of innocence and guilt runs throughout *Spirit Bound*. It is reflected in many different literary pairings and devices. For example, Rose feels both honored to be accepted as a Guardian Dhampir and yet also compelled to break the law to save Dimitri. Rose and Lissa share a telepathic bond that enables each to see into the other's thoughts, and yet, as often as not, this means Rose guiltily has to stumble into intimate scenes between Lissa and Christian and in a sense share the beginnings of their lovemaking. Lissa herself is both an innocent in the sense she is incorruptible by moral forces that are not inherently good, but equally, she feels the urge to have sex with Christian despite her reservations about the nature of such a relationship with him.



Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Nineteen Summary

Rose accuses Adrian of the height of arrogant insensitivity at wanting to attend a party with so many Guardians dead. He tells her this is actually a special ceremony secretly run by the most conservative of Royal Moroi Court families to honor the slain Guardians. It has been going on for centuries. For as long as Guardian Dhampirs have offered their lives in sacrifice to protecting the Moroi, elite Royalists have honored the dead Dhampirs in a special ritual called the Death Watch. Members of the Royals gather dressed in mask and costumes. They drink to the slain Guardians as each victim's name is read aloud.

Chastised and realizing her recent mission to rescue Dimitri involved the death of several Guardians, Rose agrees to attend. Adrian escorts her in costumed regalia into the hidden dungeons beneath the Court. There the Death Watch has begun. Rose is surprised to sense that Lissa and Christian are also present, hidden in costume. Adrian grins, revealing that he's stolen passwords to allow them entrance from his Royal mother's possession. He wants them to experience the ritual after what they've all been through liberating Dimitri. Alas, Rose is spotted by one of the Royal Moroi members and verbally outed as an uninvited guest.

Chapter Nineteen Analysis

The upward mobility of Rose is a recurrent motif throughout the Vampire Academy book series, and *Spirit Bound* pays special attention to the attendant servants and situations that make up the royal society into which Rose finds herself becoming professionally obligated. Chapter Nineteen in particular brings this ongoing theme into the forefront of the plot, showing the inner workings of a secret society within a larger secretive society, no less. The reader is introduced into a cult circle within the Moroi Royals who honor slain Guardians in a ritualistic formal costume ceremony called the Death Watch.

The Death Watch is a liturgical or death observing ritual that is common throughout human societies. It is interesting the author chooses to place such solemn observance of ritual ceremony within the elite ranks of the Moroi Royal society. This works contrary to the more populist image of the ruling class elite as indifferent to the fate and concerns of the more common folks beneath them. Here, at least some members of the elite class work to preserve a sense of honor and decency in tribute to the fallen warriors who have given their lives defending the Royals. It is an unexpectedly humanizing touch and helps to relieve some of the sense of entitlement that the Moroi elite often embody otherwise throughout *Spirit Bound*.



Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty Summary

Tatiana arrives to save Rose from further embarrassment. Escorting Rose into a private room, Tatiana explains that the Death Watch is a non-Dhampir only event and has remained unseen by any Dhampir since select Royalists began the secret society centuries ago back in Russia. Because she has recently lost her own Royal Guardian in the Dhampir assault to rescue Lissa and Christian, Tatiana has mercy on Rose despite Rose's having broken the cult's unblemished history of non-Dhampir knowledge.

Mikhail intercepts Rose and leads her to a Guardian building where Dimitri is being held. Rose questions Mikhail's actions. Why is he being so loyal to her? He reminds her he one day hopes to find his own lost love and turn her from Strigoi back into Dhampir, too. Helping Rose in this sense only helps his own cause as she gains knowledge, she can pass it on to him. She agrees and is slipped into the room holding Dimitri. Dimitri is not pleased to see her. He keeps his back to her at first. She pleads with him to understand she does not care he was a Strigoi. But Dimitri is haunted by depression and guilt. He tells her he cannot forgive himself for the dark thoughts he had and the innocent people he killed as a bloodthirsty vampire. She understands but reminds Dimitri he was not in his right mind, having become Strigoi temporarily. But Dimitri tells her it is over between them, even as it is clear he still loves her. Rose worries that although he is now a Dhampir again, the best part of his nature has perhaps died forever and is not coming back.

Chapter Twenty Analysis

The themes of transgression and redemption run throughout *Spirit Bound*. They intertwine with Rose's sense of entitlement as a newcomer in the elite Guardian ranks as well as her guilt at having a nearly uncontrollable personality which constantly gets her into trouble. In Chapter Twenty, Tatiana makes it explicitly clear to Rose that Rose has yet again broken rank with tradition. In effect, the Queen tells Rose that Rose has been made privilege to secrets of state that no Dhampir before Rose has ever been granted.

This creates a sense of a higher, special destiny for Rose in both her character and the reader. Rose is constantly given special access and/or knowledge that few others in the society within which she co-exists have any ability to equally gain. This gives Rose both a nobility of character and a lingering need she feels to somehow justify all the faith others have put into her despite her mishaps. Throughout her life, Rose will first blunder into a situation and transgress the existing rules of order. Just as adroitly, she will then pivot and redeem herself through heroic action. In a royal court full of eloquent yet static speakers, Rose is a classic action heroine more interested in walking the walk than talking any talk.



The redemption theme echoes strongly in her conversation with Dimitri. She has redeemed him as was her achieved goal. But in doing so, Dimitri's loyalty seems to have shifted to Lissa instead of Rose, his true savior. Rose's fundamental need to seek and attain redemption has been thwarted by Dimitri's unexpected disloyalty and leaves Rose's character unsure of herself. In essence, Rose has been forced to undergo a direct challenge to her character's inner nature, thus provoking an emotional crisis within her. This is a classic example of dramatic character construction by the author.



Chapter Twenty-One

Chapter Twenty-One Summary

Rose tries to sleep but it does not come easily. She has bad dreams, haunted by Dimitri's rejection of their love. Adrian knocks on her door early the next morning. He tells her the Royal Council is about to hear protests to Tatiana's latest political maneuvering. The new decree is that Guardian Dhampirs will be graduated from St. Vladimir's at age 16 instead of their normal 18 years of age. Rose is furious. This will expose far too many unprepared Guardians to needless early deaths due to inexperience.

She attends the open Council hearing when Tatiana entertains public dissent to the new age-lowering of Guardians. Entertains dissent, but refuses to act upon it, her mind having been made up. Rose rises to the occasion, publicly challenging Tatiana's wisdom. Doesn't the Queen realize this will mean countless young Guardians die without reason? Tatiana will not budge from her position despite Rose's clarion objections. Rose states that Lissa should technically have had a vote in the decision, as she has just recently turned 18 is therefore of legal age to cast a vote. Tatiana quotes an obscure law that states in order to participate, Lissa must have at least one other family member alive to form a quorum. Enraged, Rose curses the Queen and is ordered thrown out of the meeting by bemused Guardians who secretly admire their fellow Guardian's defiant attitude.

Chapter Twenty-One Analysis

Chapter Twenty-One brings to a dramatic head the conflict long-simmering behind-the-scenes of the Royal Moroi Court. The decision to send 16-year old Dhampirs into the Guardian world a full two years prior to their previous graduation date is a cataclysmic political decision on the part of Tatiana. Though the Queen means well and attempts to delay an inevitable civil war within Moroi society over whether or not to end their pacifist stance in regards to defending against future Strigoi attacks on Moroi, Tatiana's decree only infuriates Rose. Rose nearly commits verbal treason in full view of the assembled Royal Court as she passionately rebukes Tatiana to the Queen's embarrassed face.

The confrontation between Rose and Tatiana displays Rose's inability to learn tact in the face of powerful allies and/or enemies. This is Rose's true Achilles' heel, in that whenever an opportunity to speak plainly to power presents itself, Rose cannot apparently withhold her sarcastic tongue. She forever talks her way into troubles, in essence. Rose struggles with the implications of her character flaw, but is largely unable to control it throughout *Spirit Bound* and indeed the rest of the *Vampire Academy* book series. Her inability comes to a typical conclusion herein when she is banished from the Royal Court's open public hearings as a result of her accusations against Tatiana.



Chapter Twenty-Two

Chapter Twenty-Two Summary

Rose monitors the rest of the public meeting via psychic bond with Lissa, still in attendance with Adrian and Tasha. Tasha uses her political spirit power to persuade some Dhampirs present that rather than negatively react against Tatiana's decision, they should instead focus on recruiting more spirit users who can learn the techniques Lissa has mastered to turn Strigoi into Dhampirs again.

Ambrose, a handsome Dhampir who is a Royal servant and Tatiana's probable secret lover, greets Rose. He invites her to accompany him on his way to seeing his Aunt Rhonda. Rose has previously had her Tarot cards read by Rhonda. Despite Rose's cynicism, Rose has to admit Rhonda's psychic reading was basically accurate. She agrees, curious to see what Rhonda will next predict. Rhonda is delighted by Rose's return and promptly reads her Tarot offerings. There is much strife ahead, but also the chance for travel.

After the meeting, Rose breaks the news to Ambrose about Tatiana's ruling. Ambrose cannot believe Tatiana would send a 16-year-old Guardian to his or her death, knowing her intimately as he does. Rose argues Tatiana is a bitch, but Ambrose rebukes her, telling her not to use such language to describe the Queen. Rose apologizes, reiterating they both agree at least Tatiana's decision is wrong-headed. Lissa interrupts via spirit bond. She tells Rose she has news about Dimitri.

Chapter Twenty-Two Analysis

Chapter Twenty-Two largely functions to put various plot elements into motion that will later conclude the narrative last act of *Spirit Bound* as well as continue beyond this book into the next in the series. For example, Tasha is shown attempting to woo various Moroi royal court members to adapt to the idea of training more Moroi in the arts of spirit powers to help protect themselves in addition to Dhampir Guardians. This simmering plot idea has finally come to the narrative forefront in this chapter, with the Royal Moroi now openly discussing in public court whether or not they should pursue aggressive tactics of self-defense against the Strigoi or remain pacifists.

Another example of a plot being forwarded in Chapter Twenty-Two is the meeting of Ambrose and Rose which leads to Rose having her fortune read via Tarot Cards with Ambrose's Aunt Rhonda, a psychic. The various shadowy cards that are explained as influencing Rose's future really do not come into fruition in *Spirit Bound*, even if the story ideas are introduced in the concluding sections of *Spirit Bound* itself. This is why the series of *Vampire Academy* novels are so popular with their readers because they set up each successive book in the series with hints of new twists and new character conflicts. This foreshadowing is also usual, however, for making the current book

suspenseful. The reader is swept along with the promise of what will clearly be a complicated fate for Rose.



Twenty-Three

Twenty-Three Summary

Dimitri is being given an impromptu investigation in public by several Guardians and gathered public citizens. Tatiana has decided that a sideshow distraction such as news that Dimitri is being given a litmus test will dampen rebellious talk owing to her new, unpopular decree. Various citizens and Guardians attempt to trick Dimitri into revealing his is actually still a Strigoi who is merely posing as being a Dhampir again. But each new test is met with proof of his turning back to Dhampir by Dimitri, who grows more confident as the ordeal progresses, especially when a small child breaks the tension with his insistence that Strigoi have devil horns and fangs, which Dimitri assures him they do not.

Rose turns the tables definitively for Dimitri when she intervenes and asks a series of questions in his favor. Chief among them is asking Dimitri to reveal to the Guardians where the Strigoi in Russia live, as this knowledge is secret to the Moroi and Dhampir. Dimitri agrees, enthusiastic to help destroy the evil that has so recently ensnared him. Satisfied, the meeting is dissolved and the growing word on the street is that Dimitri has indeed been turned by Lissa from a Strigoi into a Dhampir.

Alas, Dimitri orders Lissa to send Rose away. Rose accuses Dimitri of being cruel, but he holds to his wishes. Rose is told by Lissa via their silent bond to allow Dimitri more time to heal before she presses his emotional responses about their former relationship. Rose hates to be told what to do by anyone, but respects that Lissa is looking out for her best interests. She backs down, leaving. An emissary sent by her father stops her and offers her a mysterious bag.

Twenty-Three Analysis

The mini-trial by public questioning Dimitri is forced to endure faintly echoes the various trials and tribulations Rose herself has endured throughout *Spirit Bound* and the preceding books in the Vampire Academy series. There is a true sub-text of Rose and Dimitri as sacrificial figures of empathy much like ancient lovers of classic lore such as Tristan and Isolde or Romeo and Juliet. In these myths, the lovers are doomed to be separated not because they do not experience true longing for one another, but because various societal and moral forces are at play that work to keep them apart. Theirs is a tragic love, in essence, because they are not united by their worlds but pulled apart by them.

Rose is "shadow-kissed" in the *Spirit Bound* lexicon, as Victor's brother tells her in Las Vegas. This means Rose will forever be haunted by the darker urges and images of life. Equally tragic, Dimitri has been violently turned into a Strigoi vampire murderer against his will and then later converted back into a peace-loving Dhampir. This means Dimitri

will forever be haunted by an undeniable past in which he became a mass murderer and tried to kill Rose, no matter the circumstances that may or may not mitigate his personal responsibility. The two as a pair form a perfect union of like-wounded souls, in short. Each needs the other to feel spiritually complete, hence the probable reference to this concept in the book's title Spirit Bound.



Twenty-Four

Twenty-Four Summary

Inside the bag from her father is a note. It instructs Rose to assemble the laptop and modem contents inside the bag and await a private, secure video conference. Rose does as instructed, curious. Sydney Sage, an old friend from St. Vladimir's, and an Alchemist now living in New Orleans. Sydney inquires about some top secret Alchemist records that were recently and mysteriously stolen. Rose denies all knowledge but realizes her reputation precedes her. The records, Sydney reveals, show that Eric Dragomir, Lissa's deceased father, was depositing and removing large sums of cash from a secret account in Las Vegas during his lifetime.

Adrian awaits Rose in her foyer the next day. Rose has completely forgotten to attend a party to which Adrian had previously invited her. He is disappointed, and realizes that Dimitri's return has clouded their potential relationship worse than he feared. At a church mass, Rose finds Dimitri, surrounded by Guardians, attending a service. They have a whispered conference. Rose tries to convince Dimitri their love can prevail, but he won't hear of it. He tells her that "love fades" and then disappears, leaving her to cry.

Twenty-Four Analysis

Chapter Twenty-Four introduces a classic red herring plot device with the notion that Eric, Lissa's father, was somehow hiding or mining a secret money stash in Las Vegas. While the idea is dismissed by some characters as merely that Eric was a gambler and had large debts to pay, Rose remains suspicious. There is something about the hush-hush nature of the transactions that makes her believe there is more to the mystery than merely paying mobsters monies owed. This is a misdirection, in a word, because the Eric character has long-since been dead in the series and because there will be no resolution of this cliffhanger note of mystery. Hence, the new sub-plot stands out and portends what will follow in the next book in the series.

The idea that "love fades" as Dimitri tells Rose is the darkest fear Rose has prior to hearing this tragic utterance. The author sets the scene in the foyer of a church for maximum effect, thus making the holy bounds of love the two have previously enjoyed seem tainted and untrue with Dimitri's utterance to Rose that their feelings are not eternal. Rose is shattered and experiences her true defeat as a character in this scene, as she is left having failed at the larger purpose of her goals in winning back Dimitri as a lover, not just a Dhampir returned to his own kind. Her failure to have them reunite as a couple leaves her crying as Rose realizes what she has fought so hard to achieve will probably never be hers, after all.



Twenty-Five

Twenty-Five Summary

Depressed by Dimitri's rejection, Rose is glad to find comfort in the arms of Adrian later. They begin to make love, but Rose interrupts because they lack any protection. Instead, they make love Dhampir and Moroi style. Adrian draws lightly from her neck's veins while Rose experiences a mind filled with vampire endorphins which are powerfully erotic.

Later Rose showers and heads to a Guardian cafe for food. There Dimitri is surrounded by Guardians as he sips coffee and reads a paperback. Rose sits near him and they converse. Dimitri is surprised to learn of the Queen's decision to enlist Guardians at age of 16 rather than 18, calling the idea suicide. Rose agrees, informing Dimitri she opposed the idea to Tatiana's face in their last encounter. Rose accidentally reveals her vampire's neck bite given to her by Adrian, which Dimitri comments upon to her embarrassment.

Royal Guardians suddenly flood the cafe. They demand Rose accompany them or they will forcibly drag her away. Dimitri defends her against arrest, easily using his superior abilities to defeat the Guardians, one by one. Finally, Rose realizes Dimitri will only alienate disbelievers that he has truly become a Dhampir again further should he defeat the Guardians. She implores him to allow her to be arrested. The charge is for killing the Queen.

Twenty-Five Analysis

In Chapter Twenty-Five, Rose gives in to the idea that Dimitri is forever unattainable and instead surrenders her passions to Adrian. They make love in a way that is less forbidden to their kind than full sexual contact, a form of heavy petting or intense foreplay in humans. This grants them a basic license to feel less inhibited and yet at the same time not have full intercourse because Adrian has not brought any protection. The message aspect of the scene is perhaps a bit heavy-handed for some readers, but the underlying caution is well-observed and demonstrates Rose is not above keeping her head in any situation, even the more intimate ones.

Later when Dimitri sees the bite marks on Rose's neck, it is clear that he is slightly jealous. This gives Rose renewed hope, in that she can see Dimitri still has feelings for her, however much he refuses to express them. But all hope that all will end well in the conclusion of Spirit Bound is shattered when word arrives that Tatiana has been assassinated. Worse yet, that Rose is the prime suspect. While Rose has faced overwhelming odds before in the Vampire Academy series, being held for high treason and facing a death penalty is surely one of the most harrowing.



Twenty-Six

Twenty-Six Summary

Queen Tatiana has been discovered with a silver stake in her heart and a look of pure horror frozen in her death mask. Daniella fears her son Adrian will become embroiled with the assassination because only Christian can provide Rose with an alibi during the Queen's killing. Adrian pressures his mother into calling her cousin Damon Tarus, a noted if sleazy criminal defense lawyer considered the best for such cases. She reluctantly agrees, realizing it may also be Adrian's only hope of further entanglement as well.

Mikhail arrives to escort Rose in handcuffs to her pre-trial hearing. There evidence will be presented to Moroi judges who will in turn decide whether or not Rose will face trial by jury. He confides to her that he believes the entire motion is simply a show trial. Further, he states he thinks they want to send Rose to the execution chamber as quickly as they can convict her so that order is restored in the Moroi court.

Twenty-Six Analysis

Chapter Twenty-Six figuratively places Rose's neck on the chopping block. Not only has she been arrested for the murder of Queen Tatiana, but evidently is only being put through trial as a show to the outraged public. There is no chance Rose will be freed from the crime, hints Mikhail, because the surviving Royal Families need to quickly restore order in the kingdom. All that Rose has worked to accomplish seems in very real peril. Dimitri may be forever a reduced shadow of his former self. The Guardians may be ruined by having 16-year old warriors fight when they truly need the additional 2 years of training to be even minimally prepared for combat with the superior Strigoi. And Rose herself faces a certain death sentence unless something can be done to prevent what is a pre-determined outcome at her upcoming trial. The author has classically stacked the deck against her heroine so that the concluding chapter will leave the reader hanging with suspense, eager to learn the outcome in the next book of the Vampire Academy series.



Twenty-Seven

Twenty-Seven Summary

Rose enters the court. Damon Tarus is present to represent her before the evidence gathered by the Prosecutor. To everyone's surprise, Abe Mazur arrives and demands to defend his daughter. Rose is put into an uncomfortable position of having to choose between a brilliant legal mind and her father for her rescue. She reluctantly chooses her father.

The evidence is presented. The silver stake bearing Rose's mark is shown. It is the same one used to murder Tatiana in her sleep. Rose tires of the bickering and asks the Judge to speak to the assembly. Allowed to do so, Rose gives a rambling, nearly incoherent defense of her actions, claiming she has been framed and that she would never have left such a visible trail to herself if she was really the culprit behind the death. Abe is aghast but Rose will not be silenced. As she's taken away, Abe sadly reminds her the penalty for her crime is not imprisonment but death.

Twenty-Seven Analysis

The conclusion of *Spirit Bound* occurs in Chapter Twenty-Seven when Rose is forced to choose her defender in Moroi Court on the pre-trial charges Rose has killed Queen Tatiana. Rose's struggle to accept either the dashing and famous trial attorney Christian has found for her versus Rose's own father Abe, who has no true legal background. Despite the objections of her friends, Rose chooses Abe, feeling a sense of trust with him despite their estranged status. This is a big leap of faith for Rose, and validates Abe's earlier decision to attend Rose's graduation in the early chapters in order to regain her trust as his only child.

The hearing paints a circumstantial case against Rose with damning evidence. The silver stake found in Tatiana's heart is not only Rose's but has her initials on it, no less. Rose defends herself over Abe's protests and typically makes her own situation worse by opening her mouth to talk. The Achilles' heel that plagues Rose throughout *Spirit Bound* truly pushes her over the cliff's edge in this last chapter. Rose is lead away with the sure assumption by her worried father that she has not only been framed but that beating the death penalty will be very difficult to do, indeed. But Abe intones Rose will never be handed over to a prison to be executed, darkly hinting he will do whatever it takes with brute force to prevent that destiny. Rose is not assured and left literally facing the hangman's noose in the next book in the series.



Characters

Rose Hathaway

Rose or Rosemarie Hathaway is from a half-human and half-vampire species known as Dhampirs. She exists in a hidden world that is unknown to mankind of peaceful, living vampires who do not prey on humans known as Moroi. The two species of Dhampir and Moroi have aligned themselves against the evil Strigoi, full-on undead vampires who slaughter humans, Dhampirs and Moroi alike for blood and sport. Because the Moroi have traditionally been pacifists, the Dhampirs like Rose train to defend the Royal Moroi as Guardians.

Rose has trained her entire young life to become a Dhampir Guardian. Only the most elite, most intelligent of candidate Dhampirs will ever achieve the rank of Royal Moroi Guardian. Rose has been exclusively trained at St. Vladimir's Academy, a secretive school only for Dhampir and Moroi children to be trained in the magic arts of vampire powers. Now a senior and facing graduation, Rose struggles to let go her childhood and early adulthood at St. Vladimir's Academy and move into the real world of protecting actual Moroi Royalty. Chief among her conflicts is making peace with the fact that Dimitri, her former teacher and lover, has become an evil Strigoi vampire. Rose is haunted by her promise to never allow Dimitri to remain behind to become a horrid Strigoi member of the undead. It is a promise she has failed utterly to keep to him in the previous Vampire Academy novel.

While Rose wants to be assigned to Princess Lissa, her best friend and the last Dragomir Moroi princess, Rose realizes that her own past behaviors will more than likely prevent her from drawing the best assignments as a Guardian. In essence, Rose is a divided character. On the one hand, she repeatedly demonstrates a cunning nature in action and a decisive ability to win over allies while undertaking even the most dangerous Guardian tasks. But on the other, Rose constantly allows her temper and judgmental nature to flare out of control and derail her own best qualities.

Throughout *Spirit Bound*, Rose is at internal war with herself. Love Adrian, her new boyfriend, or remain faithful to Dimitri, her old lover? Even her conflicts in the story become externalized as divided quests. She liberates Dimitri from a fate worse than death, and yet finds he no longer wants to be with her as a result of her actions. She gains higher access to Queen Tatiana than any Dhampir ever has in Moroi history and charms Tatiana in private, and yet publicly accuses Tatiana of being idiotic. Rose's need to resolve her own fiery nature with the promise of her mature self slowly emerging is the central character motif and one which she fails to dramatically resolve at the cliffhanger ending of *Spirit Bound*.



Lissa Dragomir

Lissa or Vasilisa Dragomir is the last surviving member of her own family branch of Royal Moroi ruling elite. Her relatives have mostly been slaughtered by Strigoi undead in previous books in the series, leaving Lissa to emotionally fend for herself from a young age. As a result, Lissa has grown up considerably faster than her shy, reserved nature would have naturally allowed. Lissa is aware of the nobility flowing through her bloodlines, but she is equally aware that being the last in a line of royalty is a burden as much as it is an honor to defend.

Lissa is heavily dependent upon Rose for emotional support. Because Rose and Lissa share a psychic bond that allows each to visit one another and read one another's thoughts, the pair are almost like sisters. Their friendship is not a likely alliance in the rigid world of Moroi and Dhampir society, however, where each class typically keeps apart and only socialize to the extent that such mingling is professionally necessary to maintain the Guardian ranks. Complicating their friendship is Rose's constant need to rely upon Lissa's royal connections to keep Rose from being punished for her latest breach in etiquette or outright illegal activity, such as breaking protocol in *Spirit Bound* to leave on a self-serving mission to rescue Dimitri with a charmed silver stake.

Lissa comes of age in *Spirit Bound* in terms of her magical transformation from promising adept as novice charm caster into nearly divine angel of literal enlightenment. While her core nature is always described as sweet and supportive, Lissa's shocking display of her innate magical powers when she rescues Dimitri from Strigoi enslavement and turns him back into a Dhampir forever alters the way the other characters in *Spirit Bound* view her. Lissa is no longer their vulnerable ward to be defended against all and any dangers. She has instead become a transcendental figure of light. She glows so brightly, in fact, that no one in the room can look at her when she becomes mystically transformed.

Lissa's maturation has enormous implications upon her friendship with Rose. As Lissa grows in stature in Royal Moroi court, she is expected to become the serious woman of power her position bestows upon her. Rose's continual ability to draw unwanted publicity and royal gossip strains even Lissa's ability to hide as *Spirit Bound* winds to its conclusion. By the final chapters, it is clear that Lissa and Rose will have to rethink their relationship and the balance of power in entails if they wish to remain close friends.

Dimitri Belikov

Dimitri Belikov is a former Dhampir and teacher at St. Vladimir's Academy. Rose has previously fallen in love with Dimitri and experienced several horrific adventures with him by her side in previous *Vampire Academy* books. In *Spirit Bound*, Dimitri has become an evil Strigoi. Not only is he now undead, but worse from Rose's point of view, Dimitri has become a leader of the slaughtering Strigoi. His sharp mental powers have only increased since his conversion into a full-on vampire, which makes Dimitri a very cunning and dangerous foe when *Spirit Bound* begins its plot.



In fact, *Spirit Bound* opens with a letter from Dimitri to Rose. In it, Dimitri apologizes for his having to destroy Rose in advance, but maintains that no matter where she goes after graduation, his real world spies will soon report her whereabouts to him. Soon thereafter, at a date and time of his choosing, Dimitri swears to Rose in writing he will personally appear to murder her, once and for all. And in subsequent chapters, Dimitri does just as promised, showing up to destroy Rose at unexpected turns. This gives him the properly super-human powers of evil to be a worthy antagonist to Rose's protagonist, but also imbues Dimitri with a tragic quality. After all, Dimitri was turned into a Strigoi against his wishes while attempting to destroy Strigoi in their Russian stronghold.

When Rose later rescues Dimitri and Lissa turns him back into a Dhampir, the outcome is far from having the old Dimitri prior to becoming undead suddenly re-appear in the series. Rather, a new, milder form of self-contained Dimitri, depressed and guilt-ridden, is presented as the next level of his complicated character. The fact that Dimitri has murdered humans, Dhampirs and Moroi without second thought while in Strigoi form has caused Dimitri to question his own worth to anyone save Lissa as a sworn bodyguard in high-risk missions. In essence, Dimitri transforms not back into his old character, but into a newer, later incarnation of his former self. The guilt-haunted Dimitri is a far cry from his prior dynamic quality, both in *Spirit Bound* when he was a Strigoi in earlier chapters, and in the *Vampire Academy* series, where he was the main love interest for Rose.

A possible redemption for Dimitri is hinted at at the conclusion of *Spirit Bound* when Dimitri begins to recognize the fallacy of his own position in regards to having a relationship with Rose. Her being falsely accused of Queen Tatiana's murder spins Dimitri from reluctance and back into willing accomplice to Rose, fighting side-by-side, much as they have done in the past when they were lovers. While it is only suggested, the reader is left to believe Dimitri has reconsidered his objections and now wants to have a relationship of some kind with Rose.

Adrian Ivashkov

Adrian Ivashkov is a Moroi playboy and nephew to Queen Tatiana. He has graduated St. Vladimir's Academy along with Rose and Lissa, and has begun a romantic liason with Rose that remains unconsummated when *Spirit Bound* begins its story. Adrian is a handsome, witty party type, prone to drinking and smoking cigarettes at an alarming rate. In fact, Rose has made Adrian quit smoking altogether when *Spirit Bound's* earliest chapters unfold, though Adrian's vow is quickly broken when Dimitri enters the scene as a rival for Rose's affections.

Adrian is impulsive but loyal to his friends. He backs Rose without serious objection during her liberation of Tasarov Prison and the evil Victor in order for Rose to gain information about how to turn Dimitri back into a Strigoi. This is noble on Adrian's part, as he realizes full well that if Dimitri is turned back into Dhampir status, there is a good likelihood he will lose Rose to Dimitri owing to their intense romantic bond. Even when it



is clear Rose is risking life and limb to rescue Dimitri and cannot even deny it to Adrian when he confronts her, Adrian selflessly follows along, offering assistance and support.

His good nature takes a darker turn towards the conclusion of *Spirit Bound*, however. Tested by the ruling class and the assassination of his beloved aunt Queen Tatiana, Adrian becomes temporarily a bit emotionally unstable, worn out by the non-stop stress. He begins shouting his ideas and demonstrating far less restraint in his political feelings about the change of Guardians made by his aunt and for his feelings for Rose, whom he feels was betrayed and wrongly imprisoned for Tatiana's murder.

Despite his spoiled background as a rich kid who has had an easy life, Adrian shows more character and resolve than *Spirit Bound* initially hints is within his nature. This makes him a dynamic character despite having to passively support Rose's quest to help Dimitri, as Adrian is not waiting to see the outcome from the sidelines of life, but actively participating in and helping to shape the actual narrative outcome. He also learns that taking the longer term strategy of supporting Rose rather than pressuring her to make a choice is the wisest course of action.

Christian Ozera

Christian Ozera is a Royal Moroi and also love interest to Lissa. Christian is good-looking and uses a formerly verboten form of spirit magic called Fire. This enables him to actually cast fireballs into a fight and therefore stun his adversaries. However, Christian and other Royal Moroi such as Lissa have only recently begun to secretly practice spirit magic. This is because formerly, Moroi were supposed to remain dependent upon Dhampir Guardians such as Rose, and not fight for themselves. Christian's commitment to using magic sets him apart from many of his contemporaries who favor the old-fashioned dependency upon the Dhampir Guardians as a class.

Christian has a tragic past which helps bond him emotionally to Lissa, who also has a darker biography. While Lissa's parents were killed by Strigoi, Christian bears the further stigma of having lost his parents to becoming Strigoi not by betrayal or attack, but by their own choice. Christian eventually becomes a leader in the growing underground movement of Moroi such as himself who wish to openly empower themselves to better withstand Strigoi attacks and eventually even launch covert missions against the Strigoi to destroy them in like kind. *Spirit Bound* gives him a chance to grow and become a mature version of his former, mostly supportive character.

Tasha Ozera

Tasha Ozera is a Royal Moroi and also Christian's aunt. Tasha has adopted Christian and helped raise him since his parents became undead by choice. She bears a scar across her face from previous Strigoi battles. Tasha is otherwise strikingly beautiful, which makes her physical imperfection all the more noticeable. She uses Fire magic like Christian but her powers are not as well-developed. She advocates like Christian for a



more aggressive stand against the Strigoi instead of hiding like the current Moroi strategy of survival.

Janine Hathaway

Janine Hathaway is Rose's estranged mother. She shows up in Spirit Bound's opening chapters to witness Rose's graduation trials. Rose is miffed by Janine's sudden re-appearance in her life, as normally, Janine is not exactly close to Rose. Janine is a clear forerunner of her daughter, in that she was known as a callous but effective Dhampir Guardian herself, although this was many years prior to the Vampire Academy series of books. Janine glosses over much of the resentment Rose frostily demonstrates, realizing that Rose will take time to get closer to as a result of her previous distance.

Abe Mazur

Abe aka Ibrahim Mazur is Rose's Moroi father. If Rose is estranged from her mother Janine, then Abe is positively a stranger to her. She has seen little of him since he left her when she was but a child. When he, too, arrives for her graduation in Spirit Bound, Rose is overwhelmed. Why has he chosen to suddenly put himself back into her life when he's been away for so long until now? Abe is cryptic and charming, but manages to really tell her nothing as to why he has chosen to do precisely this without warning to Rose.

Abe is described as a bearded pirate in modern times. He is very shady, and his reputation is that of a mobster. Abe is well-liked by his friends and dreaded by his enemies. He dresses flamboyantly and clearly enjoys being the center of so much gossip whenever he enters a room. Rose is disappointed Abe has wasted so many years between them as father and daughter, but cannot deny she's equally attracted by Abe's magnetic personality.

Queen Tatiana Ivashkov

Queen Tatiana Ivashkov is the supreme head of the Moroi Royal Court and therefore the ruler of all of secret Dhampir and Moroi societies. She maintains her power and control over her kingdom by publicly wrestling with her fellow Royalists and by making clandestine arrangements behind the scenes to effect her hidden desires. She is a formidable adversary because of her ability to order anyone to answer for any charge to her face or face trial. Equally, she works a helper for Rose because she pulls strings behind the throne no one else could in order to assist Rose at key points. Tatiana is murdered in the conclusion of Spirit Bound and Rose is falsely accused, her own monogrammed silver stake the murder weapon found protruding from the dead Queen's chest.



Jill Mastrano

Jill aka Jillian Mastrano is a 15-year old student at St. Vladimir's. She is a Moroi who has taken to the underground movement of self-magical empowerment. Jill uses Water magic and has apprenticed herself to Christian in order to learn from him more about the new methods of fighting Strigoi, which she believes should become the new Moroi norm instead of fleeing in terror.

Ambrose

Ambrose is the secret lover of Queen Tatiana and a Dhampir like Rose. Unlike Rose, however, Ambrose has chosen not to pursue becoming a Guardian warrior. Instead, Ambrose has used his considerable good looks to rise in power behind the scenes, becoming Tatiana's confidante and hidden mate. Ambrose differs with Rose's characterization of Tatiana for obvious reasons since he is intimately involved with the Queen, but remains a friend to Rose.

Victor Dashkov

Victor Dashkov is Lissa's truly evil uncle. A traitor to his Royal Moroi heritage, Victor has earlier been imprisoned as a result of a previous conflict with Rose and Lissa. Despite his reprehensible nature, however, he is needed by Rose and Lissa in order to learn how to turn a Strigoi back into a Dhampir. He is hidden in secretive Tasarov Prison when the book begins and must be freed by Rose and Lissa in order to tell them what he knows.

Robert Doru

Robert Doru is Victor Dashkov's half-brother and he is also a fallen Dhampir Guardian. He is a recluse who lives in fear of being hunted by Strigoi for his many Strigoi kills in his previous incarnation as vampire slayer. He holds the key to knowing how to transform an undead Strigoi back into a Dhampir by utilizing a charmed silver stake to the vampire's heart.

Mia Rinaldi

Mia Rinaldi is a Moroi who frequently if covertly assists Rose about Rose's latest adventures. Though she is not a member of the royal court, she has access to members in the seats of power and can therefore steer information she gleams from her sources straight to Rose. Mia uses spirit magic and believes in the right of Moroi to learn self-defense against the Strigoi.



Sydney Sage

Sydney Sage is a human who works as a covert operative for Royal Moroi and Dhampir societies. She often works as a helper to Rose and Lissa because of their past associations via St. Vladimir's Academy. Sydney is working for Rose's father Abe in Spirit Bound. She is based in New Orleans and vastly prefers it to her last outpost in frozen Russia. She is an Alchemist, a secret human society that provides assistance to peaceful supernatural beings like Dhampirs and Moroi, and helps combat Strigoi through human channels.

Eddie Castile

Eddie Castile is a Dhampir Guardian and friend to Rose and Lissa. He has feelings for Lissa but keeps them hidden from her. He helps Rose and Lissa break into Tasarov Prison to liberate Victor Dashkov.

Danielle Ivashkov

Danielle Ivashkov aka Lady Ivashkov is Adrian's mother and a high-ranking Royal Moroi member. Her sister is none other than Queen Tatiana. She disapproves of any Dhampir and Moroi relationship, but discretely tells Rose that as long as she does not break her son's heart and leaves before things get too serious, she will not oppose them as his mother.

Mikhail Tanner

Mikhail Tanner is a Dhampir Guardian who has been assigned a lowly desk job as punishment for his own earlier attempt to rescue his own true love Sonya who has been turned into a Strigoi. As a result, Mikhail is very open to Rose's mission to find a way to turn Strigoi back into Dhampirs, as it will suit his own purpose if it works and he can later turn Sonya back into a Dhampir, as well. He helps Rose infiltrate a Guardian building and gain valuable information about how to penetrate Tasarov Prison.



Objects/Places

St. Vladimir's Academy

St. Vladimir's Academy is the secret school attended by Dhampirs and Moroi to learn how to protect themselves against Strigoi attacks. Rose and all of her friends have attended St. Vladimir's most of their young lives.

Tasarov Prison

Tasarov Prison is the remote Alaskan vampire prison built by the Moroi to keep prisoner Strigoi. Rose and her colleagues must break Victor Dashkov out of this perpetually sunlit prison to gain information he holds about saving Dimitri.

The Witching Hour

The Witching Hour is the name of the hotel Rose and her friends stay in while they're in Las Vegas. It is covertly run by Moroi so that Moroi and Dhampirs can mingle with unsuspecting humans while they gamble, party and socialize.

The Royal Court

The Royal Court is where Queen Tatiana and other heavily-guarded Royal Moroi conduct their business. It is a series of buildings and sub-structures such as dungeons and basements built into a fortress surrounded by walls. It is sequestered in the Pennsylvania countryside. Rose and other Guardians are often assigned to this complex because of the need to interact with Royal Moroi.

Seattle, Washington

Seattle, Washington, is the paranormal point where all mystic adventures intersect, or so Rose jokingly thinks during her flight to Alaska when her commuter plane changes in Seattle. She is only kidding but it is true that she often and coincidentally goes through Seattle on the way to her latest intrigue.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Las Vegas, Nevada, is where Rose and Lissa take the liberated Victor Dashkov and sequester him into a hotel room. Here they will also encounter Robert Doru, Victor's half-brother, and their first face-to-face with Dimitri and his murderous Strigoi.



Charmed Silver Stake

A Charmed Silver Stake turns out to be the secret manner in which a Strigoi undead can be turned back into a Dhampir or Moroi. The stake must be charmed by someone who is not shadow-kissed or dark in nature. Also, it must be driven into the heart of a Strigoi in order to effect the transformation.

Royal Palace Dungeons

The Royal Palace Dungeons are a hidden network of tunnels and hidden basements built beneath the Royal Moroi Court. They are used by Queen Tatiana and the other Royals to conduct secretive meetings and ceremonies.

Royal Court Church

The Royal Court Church is where the Christian-tinged Dhampir and Moroi societies worship much like their human counterparts. Dimitri tells Rose at the end of a Church service that he can no longer see her because "loves fades."

Lehigh University

Lehigh University is the Moroi-run university for Royal Moroi members to finish their elitist education and assume their rightful place as future ruling class members. Lissa dreams of attending Lehigh and is delighted when Queen Tatiana grants Lissa her wish to enroll at the prestigious school.

Strigoi Warehouse

The Strigoi Warehouse is where Dimitri holds Lissa and Christian captive as hostages in order to lure Rose into confronting him in a final, life-or-death showdown. It is heavily-fortified with Strigoi vampires acting as bodyguards.

Royal Courtroom

The Royal Courtroom is where Rose is arraigned to answer for the assassination of Queen Tatiana. It is filled with hostile Moroi Royals who believe Rose is responsible for the murder and a handful of Rose's ardent if outnumbered supporters.



Themes

Self-Determination

Self-determination is a guiding theme of *Spirit Bound*. Since the vampire society is divided into those who prey on humans and those who do not, there exists a strong moral compulsion of the part of the peace-loving Dhampirs and Moroi to remain non-violent towards the unsuspecting humans whose world they co-inhabit. Whereas, the violent, sadistic Strigoi not only kill for blood but sport as well, free as they are from any sense of the need to self-police their actions. In this way, the author is demonstrating that the difference between supposed good and bad lies in the self-determination one either chooses to accept or flagrantly reject.

Rose exemplifies a character in a crisis point personally because she cannot control her own worst instincts, even as she remains an essentially loyal, moral person. She hears the call to self-determination, but is unable to actually embody the need because she willingly self-compromises, as well. Her desire to demonstrate self-determination to herself and others is admirable, but though she tries, Rose fails to effectively transform herself in *Spirit Bound*. She breaks Moroi rules and laws in order to free Dimitri. Her actions result in the deaths of human guards in Las Vegas when Strigoi attack and slaughter them. Victor, a known criminal, is set free because of Rose's direct actions. And while Rose's adventures do result in Dhampir and Moroi being able to believe they can for the first time turn a Strigoi back into a less lethal form of being, the newfound knowledge comes at great cost to their society's well-being.

Other characters echo this self-determination theme in *Spirit Bound*. Dimitri has lost his self-determination when *Spirit Bound* begins because he is a Strigoi undead, unable to refrain from being a psychopathic murderer under the evil vampire influence. When he is later turned back into a peaceful Dhampir, Dimitri is haunted by his lack of self-determination in his evil Strigoi form. He struggles to believe Self-Determination is even possible because he has earlier had it violently taken away from him.

Betrayal and Trust

The theme of betrayal and trust runs throughout *Spirit Bound*. Rose and Lissa both are constantly forced to seek the help of strangers or confidantes, any one of whom could easily Betray them and turn the pair in to Moroi authorities placing them in serious trouble. Rose and Lissa share a psychic bond that allows each to invade the other's private moments and thoughts, but this comes at a steep price of mutual trust in which both women agree not to monitor one another's romantic lives and more personal feelings. The Dhampir must trust that the Royal Moroi will not Betray them and vice versa.



In fact, one of the major themes of Betrayal and trust in *Spirit Bound* is the sub-plot in which the Moroi must come to terms with their past history as pacifists versus a possible new future as self-defensive aggressors. The traditional public trust in which Dhampirs and Moroi are paired into a guardian and protected class respectively is brought into question. To many Dhampirs and quite a few Moroi, the very alteration of historical precedent is an act of Betrayal. This puts pressure on Queen Tatiana not to openly address the issue for fear it will divide her subjects and cause a rebellion. For her brave attempt, Queen Tatiana is Betrayed by someone within the kingdom and murdered while she sleeps. As a result, trust in the Dhampir Guardians to protect the Royal Moroi is placed into active jeopardy. After all, Rose, a Guardian, is the person accused of killing the Queen.

Unrequited Love

Unrequited love is the state of longing for another person but having the love non-returned. This theme is present in *Spirit Bound* on multiple levels. The primary unrequited love is the central theme of *Spirit Bound*. It involves Rose's sense that Dimitri will never love her again now that he has become a savage Strigoi and determined to murder her if he cannot turn her into a Strigoi as well. Dimitri ironically also feels this Unrequited Love, believing Rose is making a mistake in not becoming an undead and living by his side for eternity.

The theme of unrequited love is echoed by Lissa and Christian, who fight most of the book until they finally make up towards the conclusion and again become lovers. It also appears in the form of Rose's parents, whom Rose views as having rejected her as a child only to have them show up at her high school graduation seeking forgiveness if not acceptance for their absentee status. Adrian's unrequited love for Rose is a major conflict in the story, too, as Adrian patiently waits for Rose to resolve her own unrequited love for Dimitri.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of *Spirit Bound* is told from the first person by Rose, the main protagonist. Events occur outside the other main and minor character's interior states of being except for Rose. These points of view are thus never omniscient to the reader unless Rose characterizes why she believes or knows they are acting a certain way or believe competing ideas to her own. Many times their actions remain inscrutable, such as Dimitri's obsession with destroying Rose if he cannot have her in Strigoi form at his side. Why Dimitri must kill Rose besides an impulse to do so is never really fully established. If the story were told from the third person, of course, the reader might very well have Dimitri's reasoning stated in explicit terms as the author temporarily entered his consciousness and delineated such reasoning. But characters other than the narrator in the first person often do have their interior monologues and thoughts verbalized by the author. This first-person viewpoint keeps the reader emotionally involved with Rose, as we are forced to see and hear events through her limited perspective.

Setting

The opening scenes are set within the stone walls of St. Vladimir's Academy, the secretive school for Dhampirs and Moroi to learn how to exist as hidden beings within the human world surrounding them. Rose is graduating St. Vladimir's, and so the setting has already taken on a nostalgic air when *Spirit Bound* begins as a novel. Rose feels she has outgrown the facility and is eager to move on in life, and yet cannot help but feel wistful that after only knowing St. Vladimir's as her entire worldview, she is about to face the challenges and rigors of becoming an actual Dhampir Guardian.

The setting changes quickly to Alaska when Rose and Lissa lead a small team of classmates to liberate Victor and therefore uncover the secret of turning a Strigoi back into a Dhampir or Moroi. The frozen world of Tasarov Prison is established. Tasarov Prison is a Moroi-created haven for holding the most violent of Strigoi prisoners. The perpetual sunlight of nearly 24-hour long days in the Alaskan summer is incorporated by the clever Moroi builders of the prison to deliberately keep the imprisoned vampires weakened by constant exposure to the sun's rays.

After Victor is set free, Rose and company arrive in Las Vegas, where they arrange to meet with Robert Doru, Victor's half-brother. Here the scene changes to feature a metropolitan feel. Gambling, bars and other adult distractions are featured in the background scenery. The *Witching Hour* is a special casino that is secretly run by Moroi for Dhampirs and Moroi to visit Las Vegas and party without human detection.



The Royal Court itself is located in the Pennsylvania countryside. It is an imposing, walled compound composed of older stone masonry buildings and servant cottages. The Royal Moroi inhabit the palatial buildings while the Dhampirs use the cottages. Within the Royal Court are Courtrooms, Dungeons and even a Church. Much of the action of the latter half of Spirit Bound occurs within the various layers and sub-structures that make up the overall Royal Court complex itself.

Language and Meaning

The Language and Meaning of Spirit Bound is very young adult contemporary. While common street slang is kept to a minimum, the overall feel to the reader is one of modern casualness in tone and comprehension. The vocabulary and tone of Language are very informal and reflect a world very close to reality. People in Spirit Bound are very much contemporaries of the reader, using all the same technological jargon and devices familiar to the average Internet user to interact and gain information about their society and culture.

The casual nature of the Language is somewhat contradicted by the specific lingo of the vampire world. For example, the reader must quickly master the various names for the stratified worlds of Dhampir, Moroi and Strigoi beings. While most of Spirit Bound reads effortlessly as an adventure tale, the need to know the jargon of names and rules of the Dhampirs and Moroi societies does take some adjustment and study in order to maintain. Like all such fantasy-tinged tales, Spirit Bound uses these unusual names and rules to set up a make-believe world the reader can project into and believe has real consequences for the fictional characters in order to create and heighten reader empathy. Readers of previous Vampire Academy series will have the advantage of already knowing the complex social strata of the various vampire cults but new readers will more than likely have little difficulty following along, as the author is careful to always reveal crucial exposition when necessary to advance the plot. This helps clarify some of the confusion a reader is likely to experience as a first-time reader to the series learning the various characters and set-ups that make up the vampire universe.

Structure

The structure of Spirit Bound is told in 27 Chapters forming a singular narrative. The events of Spirit Bound are somewhat dependent upon the previous novels in the Vampire Academy series, of which Spirit Bound is the fifth of six overall books. However, the author does a good job of introducing the concepts and continuing characters in action, so that the reader does not have to read the earlier books in order to follow and enjoy Spirit Bound on its own terms.

The structural style favors short, action-filled chapters that each delineate one very specific theme, idea or plot element. Very rarely does any one chapter of Spirit Bound attempt to use multiple levels of character conflict, plot action and necessary exposition. Instead, the author tends to break these apart into distinct, separate sections. This



works to make each chapter easy to read and understandable. However, it also tends to make the narrative style a bit reductionist in impact. In other words, the reader quickly becomes familiar with the soap opera nature of the narrative. The resultant reading tends to become episodic as a result. For example, one chapter will be almost exclusively about Dimitri's and Rose's love affair, while a subsequent chapter will be almost entirely about a prison break-out with very little character exposition or conflict. The overall narrative is exciting to read but also a bit stop and start in feeling, as the events often slow down for the reader to catch up to and allow the author to set the stage for the next series of conflicts and mishaps.

In terms of commercial fiction writing, *Spirit Bound* is very much a mainstream novel. It is structured with a clear plot that is easy to follow and a wide range of interesting if stereotypical protagonists, antagonists, and supporting characters.



Quotes

"There's a big difference between death threats and love letters - even if the person writing the death threats still claims to actually love you" (Chapter 1, p. 11).

"Rose, I swear, sometimes it feels like every day with you is my own personal trial" (Chapter 1, p. 21).

"I accepted that they'd once had a romance - one that led to my conception - but that didn't mean I wanted to watch them relive it" (Chapter 2, p. 47).

"His words had sparked a new plan in my mind. It wasn't much crazier than most of my others" (Chapter 2, p. 51).

"Compared to her romantic situation, my relationship with a semi-spoiled playboy from a disapproving family seemed downright optimistic" (Chapter 3, p. 67).

"God only knows how far back these records went. To medieval days in Europe? I suddenly felt daunted and wondered if I could pull this off" (Chapter 4, p. 85).

"If I'd been locked away in prison for years, I could understand the temptation of cracking and killing my roommate to become Strigoi and escape" (Chapter 5, p. 93).

"This is going to sound really weird...well, maybe not compared to my normal weirdness" (Chapter 5, p. 100).

"That which is dead does not always stay dead" (Chapter 9, p. 165).

"The last time Tatiana had wanted to yell at me, she'd simply taken me to one of her private sitting rooms" (Chapter 14, p. 239).

"Only you can, a voice hissed in my head. You're the one Dimitri wants" (Chapter 15, p. 263).

"I remembered last winter when I, too, along with my friends, had been bound to chairs and held captive by Strigoi. They'd drunk from Eddie, and Mason had died" (Chapter 15, p. 271).

"The thing that really sucks about being psychically linked to someone is that you have a pretty good idea when they're lying — or, in this case, not lying. Still, my response was immediate and instinctive" (Chapter 18, p. 308).

"And it makes the situation worse because numbers are what harm us half the time — especially when the Strigoi form large groups" (Chapter 20, p. 345).

"I fell into a heavy sleep back in my bed, but my dreams were troubled. Over and over, I kept hearing Dimitri tell me he couldn't love me anymore" (Chapter 21, p. 363).

"Over and over, Dimitri's words played in my head: Love fades. Mine has. Somehow, that was the worse thing he could have said" (Chapter 25, p. 432).



Topics for Discussion

Rose's actions in liberating Victor cause several innocent human guards to be killed by Dimitri and his Strigoi vampires. Is Rose responsible for these deaths? If so, does she pay any price for her immoral actions? What are the personal and professional costs to Rose for betraying the Moroi rules?

Dhampirs are dependent upon Moroi for livelihood and sustenance. Moroi are dependent upon Dhampirs for protection and survival. Does one or the other enjoy an advantage socially over the other class of vampires? Would you prefer to be a Dhampir or a Royal Moroi?

The Strigoi exist and feed on humans because the Dhampirs and Moroi cannot yet fathom a manner to control or kill of the murderous Strigoi. What would happen if the secretive Moroi and Dhampir worlds entrusted humanity and enlisted humans in the fight against Strigoi? Would humans accept the peaceful Dhampirs and Moroi as "good" vampires and defeat the evil Strigoi, or would humanity more likely want to eliminate all vampires altogether?

Rose feels that she cannot often depend upon on her own emotions when dealing with authority figures. Is this a feeling you can relate to? If so, what are some examples of how your feelings match those that Rose experiences when faced with adults in control of her destiny when she is often powerless to alter said outcomes?

Some of the Royal Moroi desire to become active participants in their own protection when Spirit Bound begins. Others wish to remain entirely dependent upon their Guardian Dhampirs as tradition dictates. Which if either position do you believe is the more correct to hold? Should Dhampirs allow the Moroi to become in effect co-guardians, or should Dhampirs insist on maintaining full responsibility for the protection and well-being of the Royal Moroi?

Dimitri is guilt-wracked over his trance-like past as a murdering Strigoi leader. He not only killed as a vampire, but equally lead other Strigoi to follow his dark commands and slaughter others on his behalf. Do you think Dimitri deserves a second chance to redeem himself? Are his actions as Strigoi so heinous as to warrant punishment even if he is turned back into a peaceful Dhampir?

Rose and Lissa share a special psychic bond that allows them to monitor one another's intimate thoughts and experiences. Would you want to have such a bond with a trusted friend? Or would you feel threatened or embarrassed to have someone you know well share your private life? Have you ever had a friend with whom you were so attached you felt you could almost read their thoughts at times?

Rose is held for the assassination of Queen Tatiana. The reader is led to believe very clearly from the outset that Rose is innocent and is being framed. Based on the characters presented in Spirit Bound, who do you believe actually killed Queen Tatiana?

Why do you believe this person or persons carried out the assassination? What is their motivation and possible gain?