

BEGGARS AND CHOOSERS

EPISODE 112

BY
KATHERINE HARTER

*BASED ON THE ANITA BLAKE SERIES
BY LAURELL K. HAMILTON

THE NECROMANCER

"Beggars and Choosers"

TEASER

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Anita sits with Jean-Claude at a large dining table. He is staring at her eating blackberries. She stares back. It is brightly lit.

ANITA

Vampires don't eat solid food.

JEAN-CLAUDE

Exactly.

He slides the bowl toward her. She makes a face.

ANITA

I don't like blackberries.

Jean-Claude is wistful.

JEAN-CLAUDE

They were always my favorite. I haven't had them in centuries.

Anita picks up the bowl. The berries are floating in blood. She drops it. It spills onto the white table cloth. Some pills onto the floor.

JEAN-CLAUDE (cont'd)

Nikolaos will kill us both. We have to strike first.

Anita looks up at him.

ANITA

What's all this we crap?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He puts his hand under the spilling blood, cupping the liquid. He offers it to her.

JEAN-CLAUDE

Drink. It will make you strong.

She crosses to him and starts to take a sip.

INT. ANITA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Her eyes snap open. She looks at the clock. It reads 6:00. She rolls over and sees Doug is gone. She touches the pillow and smiles. She buries her head and falls back asleep.

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. OPEN FIELD - MORNING

DOLPH, ZERBROWSKI, CLIVE, AND POLICE are scouring the crime scene. There is a woman's body and no head. Clive calls out.

CLIVE

Here's the head.

Dolph and Zerbrowski cross to him.

ZERBROWSKI

Yep, a vamp.

DOLPH

It's not the same, though.

ZERBROWSKI

Copy cat?

CLIVE

It could be the same killer. Looks the same. Just a different location.

DOLPH

It doesn't feel right. Something about this is different.

ZERBROWSKI

Have Anita check it out. She'll know right away.

Dolph looks at his watch.

DOLPH

I hope she hasn't left for church, yet.
I'll try her.

INT. ANITA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Anita's alarm goes off. She pounds the buttons to shut it off and groans. She sits up and looks around. Doug is nowhere to be found. She gets up and goes to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

She splashes cold water on her face. She looks at herself in the mirror. Her bite on her neck is bruised red.

ANITA

Now, it really looks like a hickey.

She starts to get out the gauze when HER PHONE RINGS. She goes to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Anita goes to the phone and spots a note on the table. She reads it: *Sorry I couldn't stay, I had to report to work. Tried to wake you, but I think you needed the sleep. See you...Doug* The machine kicks on.

DOLPH (VO)

Hi Anita. This is Dolph. We have another vampire murder.

Anita runs to the phone.

ANITA

Hello..Hello, Dolph. I'm here. There's another one?..Is it like the others?.. Where's the location?

She has a pen and notepad by the phone. She jots down the information.

ANITA (cont'd)

Wow, that's on the fringe of the district. None of the murders have been that far out. What else is different?

EXT. OPEN FIELD - MORNING

DOLPH

You'll see when you get here.

ANITA (VO)

Be there in a half hour.

He end the call.

ZERBROWSKI

What's her ETA?

DOLPH

Half hour.

ZERBROWSKI

Glad you got her.

DOLPH

Me, too.

INT. ANITA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

She applies a large band aid to her neck bite and a gauze pad to her forearm. She fills her cartridges with bullets and extra ammo in her holster pocket.

ANITA

You can never have too much of a good thing.

EXT. OPEN FIELD CRIME SCENE - MORNING

Anita drives past the GAWKERS and a news van. She parks and walks to the scene. Dolph is talking with A REPORTER. She has her mic in his face. THE CAMERAMAN is close behind her.

DOLPH

I can only say that this crime is still under investigation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOLPH (cont'd)

It is much too early to say if this is related to the prior murders or not.

REPORTER

Can you tell us if you have any suspects?

DOLPH

We are working on a few leads. We just need to put together some evidence.

REPORTER

Is it vampires that are killing their own kind

DOLPH

I cannot comment on that at this time.

Anita steps up to Clive.

CLIVE

Hello, Ms. Blake.

ANITA

Hi, Detective Perry. He seems to handling this pretty well.

CLIVE

Yes, he is good with reporters.

ANITA

Is everyone else finished?

CLIVE

Yeah, it's all yours.

She goes to the body. There is a hole in her chest where the heart should've been. She leans against a wall of a barn. She is spread eagle, with a broken arm twisted behind her. The top of her spine sticks out where her head should've been. It looks like the head was ripped off as opposed to cut. Anita tries to keep it together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANITA

Oh my God.

She looks around on the ground.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Hey, Clive? Where's the head?

CLIVE

You sure your all right?

ANITA

I'll be fine.

He nods and walks her a about 20 feet away. The head is concealed in plastic. They bend down.

CLIVE

You ready?

Anita nods. Clive pulls back the plastic. It is Theresa.

ANITA

Oh shit.

CLIVE

What's the matter?

ANITA

I know her.

Anita stands, catching her breath. Zerbrowski comes up to her.

ZERBROWSKI

Hey, Anita. I didn't see you.

(beat)

What's wrong?

ANITA

You're vic's name is Theresa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ZERBROWSKI

You knew her?

ANITA

She hangs with Jean-Claude's crowd.

ZERBROWSKI

Wow. I'm sorry.

ANITA

I knew her, doesn't mean I liked her.

ZERBROWSKI

I get it. Ok. I'll tell Dolph.

ANITA

Something ripped her head off. It's a different killer than the other murders. This one was a torture kill. Probably a punishment.

ZERBROWSKI

How can you tell that?

ANITA

I just know. I have an appointment I have to go to. You mind telling Dolph?

ZERBROWSKI

No. I took the notes. He was thinking the same thing anyway.

ANITA

Thanks, Zerbrowski.

She starts to leave.

ZERBROWSKI

Hey. What happened to you? You look like you had a very wild night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

Wouldn't you like to know.

She smiles and walks away. Zerbrowski shakes his head and crosses to Dolph. The reporter is doing her report on the crime, onlookers peek to see what they can.

EXT. RONNIE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Anita walks into the bright office of Ronnie. Her door is open and Ronnie waves her in.

INT. RONNIE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Anita walks into RONNIE's office. She has a client with her, BEV CHIN. She is a frail asian woman in her mid twenties. She is impeccably dressed. She looks at Anita. Anita is shocked to see her.

ANITA

Beverly, it's good to see you. It's been a long time.

BEVERLY

Three years.

RONNIE

You two know each other?

ANITA

Bev didn't let on she knew me?

Ronnie shakes her head. They look at the woman.

BEVERLY

I did not think it was necessary.

Anita nods her head. Ronnie is baffled.

RONNIE

Is someone going to tell me what's going on?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

Do you mind if I tell her, Bev?

BEVERLY

If you feel it's necessary.

ANITA

Bev's family was attacked by vampires.
She was the only one to survive. I was
part of the team sent in to destroy them.

RONNIE

Oh, I see.

BEVERLY

What Anita left out is that she risked
her life to save mine.

She looks down at her hands. Anita smiles at Ronnie. She
nods.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Anita busts into Beverly's house, guns blazing. A vampire has
Beverly pinned to the floor. She screams, blood curdling. It
is about to snap into her. Anita throws a silver knife. It
lands in his back. The vamp spins and jumps toward Anita. He
knocks into her. As he jumps on her, Beverly hits him over
the head with a candlestick. The vamp turns, but Beverly
keeps beating him. His head bleeds as he falls. Beverly
screams as she keeps bashing in his head. Blood flies up onto
her face and all over Anita, as well. She is in a rage and
keeps hitting him. Anita stares at her, letting her do it.
She collapses against Anita. The police walk in.

BEVERLY

Please don't anyone about this. Please.

A POLICEMAN walks over to Anita and sees the mess.

POLICE

What happened here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

She distracted the vampire, so I could
kill it.

Bev looks at Anita in thanks.

INT. RONNIE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ronnie looks at each girl.

RONNIE

Would anyone like a drink?

ANITA

Nonalcoholic.

BEVERLY

(simultaneous)

Nonalcoholic.

They both laugh, breaking the tension. Ronnie leaves and comes back with two diet colas. Anita makes a face. Beverly accepts hers graciously.

ANITA

So, Ronnie tells me there might be a
death squad attached to HAV. Is that
true?

BEVERLY

I'm not positive, but I believe there is.

ANITA

Tell me what you know.

BEVERLY

There was talk for while about forming a
squad to hunt vampires. To kill them as
they have killed our families. Our
president of course vetoed the idea. We
work within the system. We're not
vigilantes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She sips her cola.

BEVERLY (cont'd)

But lately I've heard talk. People in our organization bragging about slaying vampires.

ANITA

Did they say how it was done?

BEVERLY

I don't know

ANITA

No hint?

BEVERLY

I could find out for you, I think.

ANITA

The police have hidden certain details about the murders. Details that only the murderer would know.

BEVERLY

I see.

She fidgets with her hands and the soda can. She looks up at Anita.

BEVERLY (cont'd)

I do not believe it's murder even if it is one of our people doing what the paper say. Killing dangerous animals shouldn't be a crime.

ANITA

Then why tell us?

BEVERLY

I owe you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANITA

You saved my life too. You owe me nothing.

BEVERLY

There will always be a debt between us. Always.

Anita nods. She stands, smoothing the wrinkles from her skirt.

BEVERLY (cont'd)

I will leave a message with Ms. Sims when I know something more.

ANITA

I really appreciate you doing this.

BEVERLY

Violence is not the answer. We must work within the system. Humans Against Vampires stands for law and order, not vigilantism.

She shakes both of their hands and leaves. Ronnie leans forward.

RONNIE

What to get some lunch?

ANITA

After that? Definitely.

RONNIE

Great. We can talk more about what happened last night.

They leave.

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Ronnie and Anita sit at booth, eating lunch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE

Ok. I can't wait anymore. What have you found out? You look like crap by the way.

ANITA

I know. It was not fun last night. Well, some parts. Not all.

RONNIE

So it went well with Doug?

ANITA

How did you know about that?

RONNIE

I kind of gave him some advice.

ANITA

Well, thank you. I am not a romantic in the least, but it was pretty special last night.

RONNIE

(smiling)

Good. I was hoping. Now, about business.

ANITA

Yeah, about that.

RONNIE

What did you find out?

ANITA

How do you know I found anything out?

RONNIE

Honest? You look a little green around the gills. You can't hide that well.

ANITA

Great. I though I was hiding it pretty well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RONNIE

You are. I just know you too well.

Anita nods.

ANITA

I went to that freak party last night. Weird, crazy stuff. It was pretty much a trap. Phillip admitted that Nikolaos was behind it all. They were trying to raise a really old zombie and convinced me to help out.

RONNIE

Why did she do?

ANITA

She was going to rough me up a little bit, but Church for Eternal Life broke it up for us. Phillip almost go himself killed.

RONNIE

Jeez.

ANITA

Oh, I recognized that animator I told you about.

RONNIE

This Zachary guy?

ANITA

Yeah, I was at his funeral.

RONNIE

What?

ANITA

Yeah, someone in voodoo brought him back with a gris-gris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RONNIE

What's that?

ANITA

Blood from human sacrifices are soaked into the charm and it animates the wearer. It's rumored that the charm itself is alive.

RONNIE

So it's kind of the dead raising the dead?

ANITA

That's what I said.

RONNIE

I don't even want to know how that's possible.

ANITA

Good because I can't tell you how. I have no idea.

RONNIE

Why are you so green?

ANITA

I just came from a crime scene where one of Nikolaos' vamps was the victim.

RONNIE

Killed?

ANITA

Pretty much torn apart. Punished I'm guessing for failing to do me in.

RONNIE

Ouch. Don't get on her bad side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

I'm trying to play my cards right.

RONNIE

You have been busy. You think it's a human death squad?

ANITA

You mean HAV?

Ronnie nods.

ANITA (cont'd)

If it is a human, I have no clue how they're doing it. You'd have to have super human strength to tear a vamps head off.

RONNIE

A very strong human?

ANITA

You'd have to find someone pretty damn strong.

RONNIE

I've heard of Grannies that lift cars when they're adrenaline is up.

Anita nods and eats a bite.

ANITA

You want to go to Church for Eternal Life?

RONNIE

Thinking of joining?

Anita glowers at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RONNIE (cont'd)

(laughs)

Ok, Ok. Just kidding. Why are we going?

ANITA

They raided the party with clubs. I'm not saying they meant to kill anyone. But when you beat people, accidents happen.

RONNIE

And most of the church members are vampires.

ANITA

Exactly. Super human strength and the ability to get close to victims.

RONNIE

Not bad, Blake, not bad.

She looks thoughtful.

ANITA

Now all we have to do is prove it.

RONNIE

(smiles)

Unless, of course, they didn't do it.

ANITA

Oh, shut up. It's a place to start.

RONNIE

Hey, I'm not complaining. My father always says, "Never criticize unless you can do a better job."

ANITA

Let's get.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

They take their trays and leave.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. CHURCH FOR ETERNAL LIFE - DAY

Anita and Ronnie walk up to the church.

RONNIE

Very pretty.

ANITA

Yeah, I just can't get used to the generic effect.

RONNIE

What's that?

ANITA

It's just colors. No signs of Christ, or Saints, or any holy symbols. Just pure and clean as a wedding gown fresh in plastic.

RONNIE

And none of the trimmings.

ANITA

A church without God. What's wrong with this picture?

RONNIE

Is anybody up this time of day?

ANITA

Yeah, that's when they recruit.

RONNIE

Recruit.

ANITA

Door to door just like Mormons and Jehovah's Witness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE

You have got to be kidding.

ANITA

Does it look like I'm kidding.

They go up to the door.

RONNIE

Door to door vampires. How...Convenient.

ANITA

Yeah.

They walk inside.

INT. CHURCH FOR ETERNAL LIFE - AFTERNOON

They walk inside and notice that everything is done in white and blues. Ronnie looks around at the interior. The main hall has a altar and white carpet leading down the center of two sets of pews. Nothing suggests vampires. Just calming colors.

RONNIE

Peaceful.

ANITA

So is a graveyard.

RONNIE

(smiles)

I knew you would say that.

ANITA

Quit teasing. We're here on business.

RONNIE

What do you want me to do?

ANITA

Back me up. Look menacing. Look for clues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE

What clues?

ANITA

You know, ticket stubs, half burned notes, clues.

RONNIE

Oh, clues.

ANITA

Quit grinning at me, Ronnie.

She stops and puts her best cold face. They walk to the hallway on the side. A sign reads: *OFFICES*. They look at each other and proceed.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - AFTERNOON

BRUCE sits behind a desk. He is young and handsome. He looks up as they enter and extends his hand.

BRUCE

Greetings, Friends. My name is Bruce. How may I help you?

They shake.

ANITA

I want to set up an appointment to speak to Malcolm.

He is surprised, but tries to hide it.

BRUCE

Have a seat.

She sits. Ronnie stays standing by the door, looking cold.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Now, Miss...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

Ms. Blake.

He swallows. He has heard of her.

BRUCE

Ms. Blake, why do you wish to speak to the head of our church. We have many counselors on hand that can help you make your choice.

ANITA

Oh, I'm sure you do. No, Malcolm will want to speak to me. I have knowledge of the vampire murders.

His smile falters.

BRUCE

If you have such information, you should go to the police?

ANITA

Even if it involves some of your parishioners?

He presses into the table until his fingers are white.

BRUCE

I don't know what...I mean.

ANITA

Let's face it, your not equipped to handle murder. It isn't in your training, is it, Bruce?

BRUCE

Well, no, but...

ANITA

Just tell me a time to come back tonight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE

I don't know. I.

ANITA

Don't worry about it. Malcolm is head of the church. He'll take care of it.

He shuffles for the appointment book. His hands shake as he grabs a pen. He glances at Ronnie. She narrows her eyes. He looks back down and writes in the book.

BRUCE

Uh, how about 9 tonight? Give me your full name and I will pencil it in.

ANITA

Anita Blake.

BRUCE

And, uh, what is this pertaining?

ANITA

Murder. It's pertaining murder, Bruce.

He nods his head and writes it down.

BRUCE

Yes. Ok. 9 tonight. Anita Blake. Murder. Got it.

He is scared.

ANITA

Don't frown, Bruce. You got the message right.

She stands. He is pale.

ANITA (cont'd)

I'll be back. Make sure he gets the message.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He nods and swallows. They leave the office.

INT. CHURCH MAIN HALL - AFTERNOON

They walk back through the main hall.

RONNIE

(laughs)

I think we scared him.

ANITA

He scares easily. When he grows up, he
wants to be a vampire.

They share a laugh and exit the church. Bright light makes
them squint. A MAN jumps into the doorway with a gun. Ronnie
sees him better than Anita.

RONNIE

(shouts)

Anita.

She pushes her out of the doorway against the inside wall.
THE MAN SHOOTS HIS GUN. Both women pull their guns out and
aim at the door. FOOTSTEPS SOUND ON THE STEPS OUTSIDE. Anita
is crouched on the ground. Ronnie is against the wall
standing. Bruce runs into the main hall.

BRUCE

What is going on out here?

RONNIE

(yelling)

Get back inside.

Anita doesn't move at the shouting. FOOTSTEPS SLOW. A shadow
is in the doorway. He steps through. THE MAN is an average
looking man on the chunky side. He doesn't see Anita on the
floor. She aims at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

(shouts)

Don't move.

(quieter)

Don't move.

The man faces her.

GUNMAN

You're the executioner.

ANITA

No.

GUNMAN

Then it must be her.

He points his gun and Ronnie. Anita starts to pull the trigger.

RONNIE

Anita, don't.

They both pull their triggers, hitting the man in the chest. Blood spatters behind him. He flies backward into the doorway. Anita gets up and crosses to him, gun still raised. She kicks the gun from his hand and bends down. She checks his pulse. Ronnie crosses to her.

ANITA

Nada. Zip. He's dead.

RONNIE

What the hell kind of bullets did you use?

ANITA

I was prepared to kill Vampires, not humans. It's a tad potent. Look at this.

She turns the guys head and two bite marks are on his neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RONNIE

Shit. Why would he just open fire like that.

ANITA

Amateur.

RONNIE

I usually don't carry a gun, but I knew I would be with you.

ANITA

Is that an insult?

RONNIE

Reality.

Anita nods. Bruce walks up to them, cautiously.

BRUCE

He...He tried to kill you.

Anita stands and walks back into the main hall.

ANITA

Do you recognize him?

Bruce looks at the body. He shakes his head several times.

ANITA (cont'd)

Are you sure?

BRUCE

We...do not...condone violence. I don't know him.

ANITA

Call the police.

He just looks at her and nods, leaving to the offices.

They both sit down on a pew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RONNIE

Jesus.

ANITA

Yeah. Thanks for pushing me out of the way.

RONNIE

You're welcome. Thanks for shooting him before he shot me.

ANITA

You got piece, too.

RONNIE

Don't remind me.

ANITA

You all right?

RONNIE

No. I'm well and truly scared.

ANITA

Yeah.

They both look down. Ronnie is pale and shaking. Anita is sad and contemplative. POLICE SIRENS SOUND IN THE DISTANCE.

RONNIE

Here they come.

ANITA

That was awful fast.

They sit in silence.

ANITA (cont'd)

I guess I should feel flattered.

RONNIE

Why's that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

I was almost killed. That means someone thinks I know something. I must be getting close to the truth.

RONNIE

You are the only one that would see this as a good thing.

ANITA

Yep, that's me. Silver lining and all that shit. I just wish I knew what the truth was that I'm close to.

EXT. RPIT HEADQUARTERS - AFTERNOON

Ronnie and Anita leave the building.

RONNIE

Well that was fun.

ANITA

Yeah.

RONNIE

Are you going back tonight?

ANITA

Of course. I have to now.

RONNIE

You should take back up.

ANITA

Not after today. This is my battle. I don't want to bring anyone else in on this.

RONNIE

You're not super human, Anita. Don't be stupid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

I'm not. They won't kill me. I'm too important to them. Anyone else I bring is indispensable to them. I won't risk it.

RONNIE

(sighs)

I see your point. Just do one thing for me?

ANITA

I'll try.

RONNIE

Talk to Doug about it. Be honest. He might surprise you.

ANITA

I don't want to bring.

RONNIE

Stop it, Anita. Just talk to him. Don't drive him away. He's a good guy.

ANITA

I know he is. I should tell him. I'm just not good at opening up to people.

RONNIE

I know. Try it on for size.

ANITA

Yeah, yeah, yeah. See you.

RONNIE

Watch your back.

ANITA

Always.

They leave in different directions.

INT. ANITA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Anita paces in her living room. THERE IS A KNOCK. She looks through the peephole and opens the door. Doug is there. She smiles and lets him in.

ANITA

Thanks for coming.

DOUG

Absolutely. What's up?

Anita sighs.

ANITA

Wow this is hard.

DOUG

Oh great.

He sits down, deflated, on the couch.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Look, I know what you're going to say.
And I think you're wrong.

ANITA

Doug, I.

DOUG

No, let me finish. I know you're scared
and that's why you me push away. I get
that. But you can't get rid of me that
easily. You can try to break up with me,
but it's not going to work. Sorry,
Charlie. I'm staying here.

ANITA

Are you done?

DOUG

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He kicks his feet up and puts them on the coffee table.

ANITA

Good. Because I'm not breaking up with you.

DOUG

You're not?

He takes his feet off the table.

ANITA

No. I was going to talk to you about the last few days.

DOUG

Oh. I feel like an idiot.

ANITA

No. I'm glad you're staying. I need constant right now.

She paces and sits next to him. She takes his hand.

ANITA (cont'd)

This is really hard for me.

DOUG

I can imagine.

ANITA

A lot harder than breaking up with someone.

Doug smiles and looks at her.

DOUG

Just tell me what you can.

ANITA

Can you not be so understanding? That makes it even harder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOUG

Ok. Shut up and tell me what you know.

ANITA

Say that without a smile, you're on.

She takes a deep breath.

ANITA (cont'd)

The other night at the bachelorette party, I was forced into working for the vampires. They threatened Catherine's life and are still able to get to her anytime they want.

DOUG

Shit. What's so important to them?

ANITA

They want me looking into the vampire murders.

DOUG

That's it?

ANITA

It gets more complicated, but in a nutshell yeah. That's it.

DOUG

So why are you so banged up.

ANITA

Since working for them I've been attacked by rats, had vampires throw me across the room many times, raise zombies with a dead animator, and since about three hours ago, had a hitman try and kill me.

DOUG

My god, are you ok?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANITA

Fine. He's not though.

DOUG

You killed him?

ANITA

He was going to shoot Ronnie.

Doug nods his head.

DOUG

I know there's more to this than you're letting on.

ANITA

It a revised version.

He holds her hand.

DOUG

Thanks for telling me.

He stares at her hand.

DOUG (CONT'D)

It doesn't explain how you're healing so fast.

She looks at her cuts and they are almost healed. Something dawns on her.

ANITA

That mother fucker.

DOUG

What?

ANITA

I can't believe that blood sucking mother fucker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DOUG
Shed some light here.

ANITA
The other night Jean-Claude shared his
power with me.

DOUG
Who's Jean-Claude?

ANITA
A master vampire. I almost died and he
brought me back by sharing power with me.
He said I would just be immune to a
vampire's gaze. That lying shit ass. He's
trying to make me into his human servant.

Doug laughs.

ANITA (cont'd)
What's so funny?

DOUG
I was worried. I felt a lot dark power, I
was afraid it was you.

ANITA
It was.

He sobers.

DOUG
How long does the power last?

ANITA
Until he's dead.

DOUG
Oh. Great.

ANITA
Don't worry. I'm working on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

He holds fast to her hand.

ANITA (cont'd)

I want you to know that I left a note detailing everything that's going down in a safety deposit box and a letter at Animator's Inc. I've told Ronnie, too.

DOUG

You think you're not coming back.

ANITA

(sighs)

I don't know. With this crowd, it's always a possibility. I just want to know that things go really wrong, people will still pay. It's bargaining chip.

Doug nods his head and tries to be calm.

DOUG

I'll give you all the help I can.

ANITA

Unfortunately, I'm in this one alone.

DOUG

If you had a choice?

ANITA

You would be the first person I call.

He smiles.

DOUG

That's not true, but thanks.

ANITA

I'm trying here.

DOUG

I know. Me, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

She leans in and kisses him.

ANITA

Thanks. I mean it.

He hugs her.

DOUG

I just can't wait til this is all over.

ANITA

It'll never be over. It doesn't matter if
it's this job or another one. It'll
always be something.

DOUG

That's not very optimistic.

ANITA

It's reality.

Doug faces her looking down, holding her hands.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. CHURCH FOR ETERNAL LIFE - NIGHT

Anita walks up to the church. She looks at the darkening sky. A bat squeaks above her. PEOPLE filter in. A PRETTY BRUNETTE waits at the door handing out pamphlets. She offers one to Anita.

PRETTY GIRL

(smiles)

Here you are. Is this your first time here?

ANITA

I have an appointment with Malcolm.

She smiles bigger.

PRETTY GIRL

Hold on. Let me find someone to man the door.

She crosses to a YOUNG MAN just inside the door. He smiles and takes her place. She faces Anita.

PRETTY GIRL (cont'd)

Follow me.

They walk into the church.

INT. CHURCH FOR ETERNAL LIFE - NIGHT

It is a packed house. ALL WALKS OF LIFE attend from suits and dresses to goth punk. Anita shakes her head.

ANITA

I didn't see this many people on Easter Sunday.

PRETTY GIRL

Hmm?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

Oh, nothing.

They pass a coffee room to the side with dark red fluid in a punch bowl. Coffee percolates.

PRETTY GIRL

Would you like some coffee?

ANITA

No, thank you.

She is led to the office area from earlier in the day.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - NIGHT

The pretty girl offers her a seat.

PRETTY GIRL

Malcolm will be with you as soon as he wakes.

Anita sits.

ANITA

Thanks.

PRETTY GIRL

If you like, I can wait with you.

ANITA

Nah, I wouldn't want you to miss the service.

PRETTY GIRL

Thanks. It shouldn't be too much longer.

Anita smiles and waits. The girl leaves. Anita looks around the room and spots the desk. The appointment book is out in the open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

Life is good.

She crosses to the book and flips back a few pages. The hand writing is very neat with first and last names and times for the meeting. On the opposite page, a name in different handwriting is written with not time. "Ned" is written in the book.

ANITA (cont'd)

Ned. Hmm. It is short for Edward. Death meeting the undead. Interesting.

She checks the date.

ANITA (cont'd)

Two days before the first murder. Double interesting.

She flips through the rest of the book. She straightens and sits in the chair, picking up a magazine. MALCOLM walks through the door. He is tall and rail thin with yellow hair. She stands at his entrance. He is graceful and attractive. He leans against the desk.

MALCOLM

Ms. Blake, it's nice to see you again.
Bruce left me a confusing message about
vampire murders?

ANITA

I told him I have proof that your church
is involved with the murders.

MALCOLM

And do you?

ANITA

Yes.

He studies her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALCOLM

Hmm, you're telling the truth. Yet, I know this is not true.

Anita waves a finger at him.

ANITA

Cheating, Malcolm. Using your powers to probe my mind. Tsk Tsk.

Malcolm shrugs.

MALCOLM

I have control of my church, Ms. Blake. None of them would do what you accuse them of.

ANITA

Last night they raided a freak party. People were hurt.

MALCOLM

There is a small faction of followers that believe in violence. The freak party, as you call it, is an abomination and must be stopped, but through legal channels. I have told my followers this.

ANITA

But do you punish them when they disobey you?

MALCOLM

I am not a policeman, nor a priest. They are not children. They have their own minds.

ANITA

I'll bet they do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MALCOLM

What is that supposed to mean?

ANITA

It means, Malcolm, you are a master vampire. None of them can stand against you. They do whatever you tell them to do.

MALCOLM

I do not use my power against my congregation.

She shivers.

ANITA

You had a meeting two days before the first murder.

MALCOLM

I have many meetings.

ANITA

I know, you're real popular, but you'd remember this meeting. You hired a hit man to kill some vampires.

They stare at each other.

MALCOLM

Why are you looking me in the eyes?

ANITA

(shrugs)

If you don't try to bespell me, I'm safe.

MALCOLM

You've never met them before.

He moves quickly toward her, vampire fast. She pulls her gun, aiming at his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MALCOLM (cont'd)

My.

She holds steady.

MALCOLM (cont'd)

You carry the first mark. Which vampire
touched you?

ANITA

(sighs)

It's a long story.

MALCOLM

I believe you.

He moves back in place, quickly.

ANITA

You hired a man to slay the freak
vampires.

MALCOLM

No. I did not.

ANITA

You did hire an assassin.

MALCOLM

(shrugs)

You really don't expect me to admit to do
anything but deny that, do you?

ANITA

Guess not. Are you or anyone in your
church connected to the vampire murders?

He laughs.

MALCOLM

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ANITA

You did hire an assassin.

MALCOLM

It is time for you to leave.

ANITA

A man tried to kill me today.

MALCOLM

That is hardly my fault.

ANITA

He had two vampire bites on his neck.

He is slightly uneasy.

ANITA (cont'd)

He was waiting for me outside of your church. I was forced to kill him on the front steps.

MALCOLM

I had no idea about this. I will look into it.

ANITA

Don't be too hard on Bruce. He doesn't do too well around violence.

Malcolm straightens his coat.

MALCOLM

I will look into it. If he was a member of our church, we owe you an extreme apology.

She stands.

ANITA

I know you hired the hit man. I know you're behind the murders.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ANITA (cont'd)

You may not have spilled the blood, but
you are involved.

MALCOLM

Please, go now, Miss Blake.

ANITA

I'll go, but not go away.

She is right inside the doorway.

MALCOLM

Miss Blake. Do you know what it means to
be marked by a master vampire?

ANITA

No.

MALCOLM

(smiles)

You will learn. If it becomes too much,
remember our church is here to help.

He closes the door softly in her face.

INT. CHURCH HALLWAY - NIGHT

Anita faces the door.

ANITA

What is that supposed to mean?

She hears soft choral music, a version of "Bringing in the
Sheaves." She shakes her head and leaves by way of the side
exit.

EXT. SIDE OF CHURCH FOR ETERNAL LIFE - NIGHT

She leans against the wall and makes a call.

INT. ANITA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anita's answering machine clicks on, replaying messages.
Edward is in her apartment listening in the shadows.

WILLIE (V.O.)

Anita, it's Willie. They have Phillip.
That guy you was with. They're hurtin'
him real bad. You gotta come.

The MESSAGE BEEPS.

NIKOLAOS (V.O.)

This is you know who. Come and get it,
animator. I don't really have to threaten
your pretty lover, do I?

Nikolaos' laughter is menacing. Edward picks up the phone.

EDWARD

Anita, tell me where you are, I can help
you.

EXT. SIDE OF CHURCH - NIGHT

Anita is crouched on the ground.

ANITA

They'll kill Phillip. Besides you aren't
on my side, remember?

EDWARD (V.O.)

I'm the closest thing you've got to an
ally.

ANITA

God help me then.

She hangs up on him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA (cont'd)
(yelling)
Dammit.

A couple pass her, staring.

ANITA (cont'd)
What are you looking at?

She crouches down again. She takes a few deep breaths. She looks in concentration and strides to her car. She gets in.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - NIGHT

She starts to shake and takes deep breaths to get in control.

ANITA
No. I will not be afraid.

She starts her car and drives.

EXT. CIRCUS OF THE DAMNED - NIGHT

Anita parks her car in the packed park. She gets out of her car and walks toward the front.

ANITA
Oh, joy in the morning.

She comes up to the entrance. WINTER meets her there. He is dressed in a strong man's attire.

ANITA (cont'd)
Is your entire family obscenely tall, or just you.

WINTER
Follow me.

INT. CIRCUS OF THE DAMNED - NIGHT

They walk through the CROWD. They pass a BARKER at one of the tents.

BARKER

Step right up folks. Present your tickets and enter. See the hanging man. Count Alcourt will be executed before your very eyes.

She pauses to stare at him. And looks back to see Winter disappearing in the crowd. She rushes to him. She passes SEVERAL VENDORS trying to sell her things, try her luck. She catches up to Winter at the funhouse. He leads her to the back entrances and opens the door. She walks through.

INT. BACK BUILDING AT CIRCUS - NIGHT

She sees BURCHARD there. He is waiting for her, leaning against the wall. He straightens and looks at Winter.

BURCHARD

Check he for weapons before we go down.

Winter pats her down and finds her two guns.

BURCHARD (cont'd)

Check her arms for knives.

She rolls her eyes. Winter grabs the sleeves of her jacket.

ANITA

Wait. I'll take the jacket off. You can search it to if you like.

Winter takes her wrist knives and pats down her legs. He checks her jacket.

WINTER

She's clean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURCHARD

She better be.

He turns and goes to the door. He opens it.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

They climb down the stairs. It empties into a bare throne room.

BURCHARD

The master waits for us with your friend.

He leads her to an adjacent room, Winter brings up the rear.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

VALENTINE is there at the entrance bowing to let her in.

VALENTINE

Come in. Come in.

Nikolaos' laughter echoes in the room. Anita shivers. Valentine moves out of her way. Burchard motions her ahead. Anita looks at the room and freezes. Aubrey is ten feet from her smiling. Nikolaos is behind him. Her white dress is speckled with blood. Phillip is chained to the wall by his ankles and wrists. He is bitten numerous times so that blood oozes down his body. One eye is swollen shut, one eye stares at Anita. Nikolaos puts her hand on his chest and lightly touches him. He whimpers. He is shirtless. She giggles. Burchard touches Anita's shoulder. She jumps. The other vampires laugh. Anita crosses to within a few feet in front of Phillip. He doesn't look at her.

NIKOLAOS

We have been having a fun time with you lover.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Anita looks at Nikolaos.

ANITA
He isn't my lover.

NIKOLAOS
(pouting)
Now, Anita, no lying. That's no fun.

Nikolaos saunters to her. Anita back into Winter. She laughs.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)
Animator, animator. When are you going to
learn? You cannot fight me.

She walks up to her.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)
Winter, hold her.

He does. She lifts a bloody hand to Anita's face and rubs blood along her forehead, down her cheeks, and across her lips.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)
Lick your lips.

ANITA
No.

NIKOLAOS
You are stubborn. Has Jean-Claude given
you courage, too?

ANITA
What the hell are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NIKOLAOS

Don't be coy. I have powers that you and
your master have never even dreamed of.
But we can still play games if you wish.

She is suddenly beside Phillip. She caresses his chest and
rib cage. She smoothes the blood away. She lifts her head
back baring fangs.

ANITA

No.

Winter holds her back as Nikolaos bites into his side. He
screams in pain.

ANITA (cont'd)

Leave him alone.

She jabs her elbow into Winters gut. He pulls her tighter to
him. Nikolaos lifts her head.

NIKOLAOS

Funny. I sent Phillip to seduce you and
instead you seduced him. How, ironic.

ANITA

We are not lovers.

NIKOLAOS

Denial will not help either of you.

ANITA

What will?

She motions and Winter lets her go. Anita steps away from him
closer to Nikolaos.

NIKOLAOS

Let's discuss your future and your
lover's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Nikolaos heads toward a door. Aubrey takes her place by Phillip. Burchard motions Anita to follow her.

ANITA
Nikolaos, please.

She turns.

NIKOLAOS
Yes.

ANITA
May I ask two things?

She smiles.

NIKOLAOS
You may ask.

ANITA
All the vampires go with us and that I
can speak to Phillip privately.

She laughs at the request.

NIKOLAOS
You are bold, I give you that. I am
beginning to see what Jean-Claude sees in
you.

ANITA
May I have what I ask?

NIKOLAOS
Call me master, and you will have it.

Anita swallows and stares at her.

ANITA
Please...master.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NIKOLAOS

(smiling)

Very good, animator. Very good, indeed.

Aubrey and Valentine leave.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Burchard is my human servant. He will
stay at the top of the steps. He has
human hearing and will not hear a word.

She leaves and Burchard waits by the door. She goes to
Phillip. He still does not look at her.

ANITA

Phillip what happened?

PHILLIP

Guilty Pleasures. They took me from
there.

ANITA

Didn't Robert try and stop them?

PHILLIP

Wasn't strong enough.

Anita closes her eyes and falters against him. He winces and
she jerks back. His head goes back, swallowing. She wipes
blood on her jeans. She smoothes the hair from his face.

PHILLIP (cont'd)

(breaking)

A few months back I would've paid money
for this.

Anita looks at him, tears in her eyes. He looks at her.

BURCHARD

It's time to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

I won't leave you here, Phillip.

He looks toward Burchard and then back at Anita. He is terrified.

PHILLIP

See you later.

ANITA

You can count on it.

BURCHARD

It's not wise to keep her waiting.

She stares at him another moment and crosses to Burchard. She takes one last look at him and waves. He is scared but faces front.

INT. NIKOLAOS' THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Nikolaos swings her legs in her chair. Burchard crosses to Nikolaos. Aubrey and Valentine lounge against the wall. Winter stands beside Anita.

NIKOLAOS

What, Animator, no jokes?

Anita shakes her head.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Have we broken your spirit? Taken all of your fight?

She stares with hatred at Niko.

ANITA

What do you want?

NIKOLAOS

Oh, that's much better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She swings off her chair.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Jean-Claude should be starving in his
coffin, yet he is well fed and strong.
How is that possible?

Anita stays silent. Niko crosses to her.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Answer me, Anita.

ANITA

I don't know.

NIKOLAOS

Oh, but you do.

She looks at Niko.

ANITA

Why are you hurting Phillip?

NIKOLAOS

He needed to be taught a lesson after
last night.

ANITA

Because he stood up to you?

NIKOLAOS

Yes. Because he stood up to me.

She does a turn.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

And because I was angry with you. I
torture your love, maybe I won't torture
you. Maybe this will give you fresh
incentive to go after the murderer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANITA

Why were you angry with me?

She peers at her.

NIKOLAOS

Is it possible you don't know?

She turns to Burchard.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

My friend, do you think she's ignorant?

BURCHARD

I believe she is.

NIKOLAOS

Oh, Jean-Claude is very naughty. Giving a second mark to an unsuspecting mortal.

Anita stands very still.

ANITA

What does a second mark do?

Nikola licks her lips.

NIKOLAOS

Shall we tell her?

BURCHARD

(smiling)

If she doesn't know, I feel we must.

NIKOLAOS

Yes. Burchard, tell her how old you are.

BURCHARD

603.

Anita stares at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANITA

But you're human.

BURCHARD

I was given the fourth mark and will live
as long as my mistress needs me.

ANITA

Jean-Claude wouldn't do that to me.

NIKOLAOS

I pressed him very hard. He was probably
trying to save himself.

ANITA

He is in my dreams.

NIKOLAOS

He's communicating with you. The third
mark is even more direct mind contact.

Anita shakes her head.

ANITA

No.

NIKOLAOS

No what? No third mark, or no you don't
believe us?

ANITA

I am no one's servant.

NIKOLAOS

He siphons energy from you. Have you been
eating a lot than usual?

ANITA

Yes.

NIKOLAOS

You are keeping him strong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

I didn't mean to.

NIKOLAOS

I believe you. I realized last night when
I took your lover.

ANITA

Please believe me. He is not my lover.

NIKOLAOS

Then why did he risk my anger for you?
Decency? Friendship?

ANITA

What can we do to make ammends?

She goes to Burchard.

NIKOLAOS

So polite, I like that. Shall we show her
what she has to look forward to?

BURCHARD

If you wish.

NIKOLAOS

I do.

She spreads her dress open and takes her long nail, slicing a
gash into her chest over her heart.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

This is the fourth mark.

Burchard buries his head in her chest, drinking her blood.
Anita looks away and catches Valentine's attention. He nods
to her and she looks away. Burchard collapses into her chair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Your friend Willie is back in a coffin.
He had pity for Phillip and needed to be
cured of such instincts.

She looks at her reaction which Anita hides.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Jean-Claude has his followers. If I kill
him, they make him into a martyr. If I
can prove him weak and powerless, they
just fall away and follow me or no one at
all.

She straightens her dress.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

I will destroy something Jean-Claude has
sworn protection to. I will prove that
Jean-Claude cannot protect anyone. I am
master to all.

Winter grabs Anita's arms and pins her to him. Nikolaos
clouds Anita's mind, she stands in a trance. Nikolaos looks
at the other vampires and they run to the other room.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Go. Kill him.

Anita shakes out of it. She looks around stunned.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

Yes. I clouded your mind.

ANITA

Where did they go?

NIKOLAOS

Jean-Claude has sworn protection to
Phillip. Therefore he must die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ANITA

No.

NIKOLAOS

(smiles)

Oh my, yes.

PHILLIP SCREAMS FROM THE OTHER ROOM.

ANITA

(Screams)

No.

Anita sags to her knees. Winter tries to hold her up. She pretends to faint. Winter drops her. While she is down, she grabs a knife they didn't catch on her inside calf. Winter looks at Nikolaos. Anita snaps up and drives the knife into Winter's groin, hilt deep. She stands and pulls the knife out, running for the dungeon. The wind picks up as she enters the room.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Anita stops just inside at the sight. Phillip is covered in blood. His throat is torn out. Aubrey stands in between her and Phillip. She leans against the wall, knife hidden behind her.

ANITA

(whispers)

Oh my god. Oh my god.

(screams)

Phillip.

AUBREY

I look forward to visiting your lovely friend Catherine.

She stays against the wall. She is beyond emotion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

You son of a bitch. You fucking son of a bitch.

AUBREY

You shouldn't say such things to me.

ANITA

You ugly, stinking, mother fucking bastard.

He rushes her. As soon as he touches her shoulders, she rams the knife into his chest to the hilt. He moans and looks down at the blood in surprise. He looks up and falls, gasping for air. Valentine comes into view.

VALENTINE

What did you do?

ANITA

I killed him. Like I will kill you.

He start to come after her when the door flies open. A fierce wind rips through the room, flattening Anita against the wall. Valentine drops into a bow. Nikolaos floats above the stairs, her skin highlighted with blue veins. Her hair white. Electricity extends out from the pores of her skin. Anita runs toward the tunnel on the back of the room. The wind knocks her into the wall. She tries to crawl to the tunnel. Nikolaos grabs her ankle with the energy and pulls her back toward her. She pins her against the wall and crosses to her. ANITA SCREAMS. She looks into her eyes.

NIKOLAOS

You will learn obedience to me.

ANITA SCREAMS IN HER FACE.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

(screams)

Look at me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Anita is forced to look at her. The energy surrounds her as she screams, her eyes blue. She falls into a heap on the floor, shivering and weak.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

You will soon call me master and mean it,
animator.

Anita barely lifts her head to stare at the vamp. Niko leans into her, sniffing her neck.

NIKOLAOS (cont'd)

I am going to sink my fangs into your
neck and there is nothing you can do
about it.

Anita bites her ear. She screams in pain and jerks back. She screams in anger and unleashes energy. Anita screams and jerks in convulsions until Nikolaos bares fangs and bites into her neck, feeding.

EXT. GUILTY PLEASURES - NIGHT

NIKOLAOS tosses ANITA onto the steps of the side entrance to the club. ROBERT watches her, curious.

NIKOLAOS

Here is your master's whore.

She hisses and flies away. Robert watches her leave and checks on Anita. He lifts her and carries her inside.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR