

PRICE OF FAME

EPISODE 203

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

GRAVE SECRETS

"Price of Fame"

TEASER

EXT. UPSCALE HOUSE - NIGHT

Outside shot of a nice home in an upscale neighborhood. It is on a cul-de-sac and a one story. Lights are on in some of the windows.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A WOMAN, TARA REYNOLDS, walks toward a hallway carrying her three year old boy, BENJAMIN. He is sleeping in her arms. DON REYNOLDS sits at the couch in the living room, finishing typing on his laptop.

DON
I'll be in in a second.

She leans down and kissed him.

TARA
(winks)
Make sure it's not too long.

DON
Ooo.

She continues down a narrow hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tara carries the sleeping child and stops outside his bedroom. Pictures of ducks and bears line his door. She opens the door quietly.

INT. BENJAMIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

She gingerly places him in his bed. She smiles down at her child. She pulls up the covers and kissed him on the forehead.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tara walks into the bedroom and changes into a nightgown. She brushes her hair at her vanity when A CRASH sounds from the other side of the house. GRUNTS follow.

DON
Honey, run. Get out. Go, go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tara stops at the door and hears Don's voice end in a gurgle.
She shakes and goes to the door.

TARA

Don?

She opens the door and listens. She hears SLURPS AND CHOMPS from
the living room.

TARA (cont'd)

Oh my God.

(screams)

Benjamin.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

She starts toward her son's room when she stops dead and starts
to shake. She runs back into her room.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She locks the door. It is kicked in. She screams at the thing in
front of her.

BLACK OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. MANSION - DAY

A well manicured lawn leads to an expansive house. A gravel driveway lines a circle. Hot sun beats on the land. BERT drives his sedan onto the driveway and stops.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Bert faces Anita in the passenger seat. He is in a nice expensive suit. She is in a suit jacket and skirt, with heels.

BERT

I'm telling you, the movement to have zombies work in pesticide contaminated fields will go. It would save a lot of lives.

Anita grumbles beside him, staring at the house.

ANITA

Zombies rot, Bert. There's no way around that. And they don't stay smart long enough to work in field labor. But what do I know, no one listens to me.

He turns the car off.

BERT

It was just a thought. The dead don't have rights anyway.

ANITA

Not yet.

He faces her and smiles.

BERT

I know you and Charles are on that committee. Going to the businesses and checking on the zombies. It's good press for the company.

ANITA

I don't do it for the press.

BERT

I know. You believe in your little cause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA
(smiling)
You condescending bastard.

BERT
I know.

They get out of the car.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Anita adjusts her jacket and looks into the bright sun.

BERT
You're still wearing your gun?

ANITA
The jacket hides it. Mr Gaynor
will never know I have it on.

BERT
Come on, Anita. I don't think
you'll need your gun in the
middle of the day visiting a
client.

She looks from the car to the house.

ANITA
Fine. You're probably right.
Probably. Open the trunk.

He opens it. She gently places her gun and holster inside. He
shuts the trunk. She stares longing at the closed trunk. He
starts forward.

BERT
You coming?

ANITA
(sighing)
Yeah.

They walk up to the front door and Bert rings the bell. TOMMY
answers. He is average height, but well-built. He very muscular
and intimidating, eyes cold. He wears nylon workout gear that is
a little too small, accentuating the muscles. He has a gun
peeking from his jacket. Anita looks at Bert with daggers.

BERT
Hi, I'm Bert Vaughn. This is my
associate Anita Blake. We're here
to see Mr. Gaynor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tommy stares them down and then moves to the side.

INT. MANSION - DAY

They follow Tommy down a corridor to a set of double wooden doors. They enter.

INT. GAYNOR'S LIBRARY - DAY

The room is a large two story library filled with hardback books of undetermined titles and plush leather chairs. Tommy stays back. GAYNOR sits in a wheel chair toward the back wall. He is a large man with a blanket over his legs. A black man, BRUNO, sits to his left in one of the chair. He is tall and slender and stares at the two new comers. They sit on two other leather chairs.

GAYNOR

Welcome. You've met Tommy. This is Bruno.

ANITA

Is that your real name or a nickname?

BRUNO

Real. Why?

ANITA

(smile)

I just never met a bodyguard really named Bruno.

BRUNO

Is that supposed to be funny?

Anita shakes her head and smiles. Bruno is not amused and stands up. Anita starts to rise but Bert holds her down.

BERT

Anita, please. I apologize Mr. Gaynor..Mr. Bruno. Ms. Blake has a peculiar sense of humor.

ANITA

Don't apologize for me, Bert. I don't like it.

Mr. Gaynor wheels forward a little.

GAYNOR

Now, now. No hard feelings. Right, Bruno?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bruno moves back, frowning. Bert flashes an angry look at Anita and faces Gaynor, smiling.

BERT

I know you must be a busy man,
Mr. Gaynor. How old is the zombie
you want raised?

GAYNOR

A man who gets right to the
point. I like that.

A tall leggy blond walks in, CICELY. She is wearing a tiny pink dress and high heels. She saunters to Gaynor and laughs with no sound. She puts her hand on Gaynor's shoulder.

GAYNOR (cont'd)

This is Cicely.

She smiles at the men until she sees Anita and it falters just a little.

GAYNOR (cont'd)

The zombie I need is 283 years
old.

Anita is shocked.

BERT

Well, sir, that's almost 300
years old. Not many people could
raise one that old.

GAYNOR

I know. That's why I asked for
Ms. Blake. She can do it.

Bert looks at Anita.

BERT

Anita?

ANITA

I could do it.

He smiles at Gaynor.

ANITA (cont'd)

But I won't.

Bert slowly faces Anita. Gaynor remains smiling. Anita stares at Gaynor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GAYNOR

1 million dollars, Ms. Blake.

Bert swallows, still facing Anita. Cecily remains smiling fake, almost unaware.

ANITA

Do you understand what you are asking, Mr. Gaynor?

GAYNOR

(nodding)

I will supply the white goat.

His look turns eager. Anita faces Bert, angry.

ANITA

Come on. We're leaving.

She stands up. Bert grabs her arm.

BERT

Anita. Please. It's a generous payment.

ANITA

White goat is a euphamism, Bert. It means human sacrifice.

Bert looks from Anita to Gaynor.

BERT

I don't understand.

ANITA

Every raising needs a death. The older the zombie, the bigger the death.

They face Gaynor.

ANITA (cont'd)

Do you really want to talk about murder in front of Cicely?

Gaynor smiles.

GAYNOR

She can't hear a word we say. She's deaf.

She looks at the woman, still smiling. She shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GAYNOR (cont'd)

I hate a woman that talks
constantly.

Anita sits back down.

ANITA

All the money in the world
wouldn't get me to work for you.

BERT

Couldn't you just kill a bunch of
smaller animals?

Anita stares at Bert.

ANITA

No.

BERT

There has to be a way to work
this out.

GAYNOR

Do you know of another animator
that could raise a zombie that
old?

Bert looks to Anita, but she remains staring at Gaynor. He
lowers his head.

BERT

No, I guess I can't help you, Mr.
Gaynor.

GAYNOR

If it's money, Ms. Blake, I can
raise the offer.

Bert looks up and shifts in his chair. He looks pleading at
Anita. She doesn't look at him.

ANITA

I'm not an assassin, Mr. Gaynor.

Tommy steps forward.

TOMMY

That's not what I heard.

ANITA

I don't kill people for money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TOMMY

But you kill vampires for money.

ANITA

Legal execution and I don't do it
for the money.

TOMMY

I hear you like staking vamps and
you aren't careful who you have
to kill to get to them.

GAYNOR

My informants told me you've
killed humans before.

ANITA

Only in self defense. I don't do
murder.

BERT

I think it's time we leave.

He stands. Tommy and Bruno stand as well. Anita stands and
stares them down. Tommy has his jacket open, gun exposed.

ANITA

Do you really think I came in
here without a gun?

Bruno looks at Tommy.

TOMMY

I didn't pat her down. But she
ain't wearing a gun.

ANITA

(smiling)
Want to bet your life on that?

She slips her hand behind her back slowly.

GAYNOR

Now, no one has to die here
today, do they?

ANITA

No, they don't.

They ease up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GAYNOR

You do understand telling the
police would be useless.

ANITA

We have no proof. Besides, you
didn't really tell us any
specifics.

He smiles and nods his head. She turns her back to leave. Bert
follows her.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

They walk to his car. Bert is a little shaken.

BERT

Would they really have shot us?

He opens the trunk. Anita straps on her holster and gun.

ANITA

With our name in the appointment
book and the computer? Not
knowing who we told. Nah, too
risky.

He opens his door.

BERT

They why did you act like you had
a gun?

ANITA

Because, I could've been wrong.

EXT. ANIMATOR'S INC - DAY

Bert pulls up and parks at the office. They walk to the
entrance.

INT. ANIMATOR'S INC - DAY

MARY sits at the front desk. She smiles at the two.

MARY

Now this is a sight I don't see
everyday.

ANITA

Thank goodness for small favors.

Bert grunts and walks back to his office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Things didn't go so well?

ANITA

The only time you see Bert in a bad mood is when he isn't making money.

MARY

I take that as a yes.

Anita walks back to her office. She passes Charles and smiles.

CHARLES

Hey, Anita.

Her phone rings before she can get the door open.

INT. ANITA'S OFFICE - DAY

Anita rushes to the phone and picks it up.

ANITA

Hello?... Hey, Dolph. What's up?...
What kind of scene?

She sets her bag down and drops the phone.

DOLPH (VO)

Messy.

She picks the phone up.

ANITA

Sorry...Where are you?...Oh, I'm
close. I'll be there in 15
minutes.

She picks up her bag again and looks up and sighs.

INT. UPSCALE HOUSE - DAY

The police line the Reynolds home. Dolph stands in the middle of the living room. Blood is splattered all over the walls and a body lies at his feet. A mangled mess of hamburger that was once Don Reynolds.

DOLPH

Very, very messy.

One of the policemen runs outside to throw up.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. REYNOLD'S HOUSE - DAY

Anita flashes her badge at a POLICEMAN and he lets her under the tape. She approaches the home and sees an officer throwing up in the bushes.

ANITA

That's not a good sign.

INT. REYNOLD'S HOUSE - DAY

She steps into the house and looks at the white walls splashed with blood. She stops at the center of the living room and sees the sheet covered body on the sofa. Blood oozes from the sheet. She swallows. Zerbrowski comes up behind her.

ZERBROWSKI

Looking a little green, Blake.

She jumps, not seeing him.

ZERBROWSKI (cont'd)

Did I scare ya?

ANITA

(lying)

No.

He keeps grinning at her.

ZERBROWSKI

I gotcha, Blake. Admit it. Is our fearless slayer going to upchuck on the vics?

ANITA

You gaining a little weight, Zerbrowski?

ZERBROWSKI

Oh, that hurts. Don't tell you don't want a piece of this.

ANITA

Lay off. Where's Dolph?

ZERBROWSKI

(points upstairs)

Master bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks at the sheet closer. It is smaller than a human should be.

ZERBROWSKI (cont'd)
I wish I could afford a place
like this. I'd win over Katie in
a heartbeat.

ANITA
Yeah, nice.

She doesn't look so good. Zerbrowski touches her arm.

ZERBROWSKI
Are you really okay, Anita?

ANITA
(breath)
I'm fine.

ZERBROWSKI
I love a tough broad.

ANITA
(smiling)
Go away, Zerbrowski.

ZERBROWSKI
Last door on the left. That's
where Dolph is.

ANITA
Thanks.

She weaves her way through the police. Most are somber, some smile a greet, some just look sickened. She makes her way up the stairs.

INT. REYNOLD'S HOUSE SECOND FLOOR - DAY

She passes two officers on the way up.

OFFICER
Did you see all that blood?

OFFICER 2
Did they find the body yet?

OFFICER
You mean what's left of it?

She stares at them as she makes her way into the room. She sees Dolph crouched on the floor of the bedroom.

INT. TARA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Anita muscles her way through the crowd and crouches by Dolph.

DOLPH

Anita.

ANITA

Dolph.

DOLPH

You ready?

ANITA

Can you tell me what I'm looking
for first?

DOLPH

I want to know what you see, not
what I tell you you're supposed
to see.

ANITA

Okay. Let's do it.

He peels the sheet back. Blood and flesh stick to the plastic.
Anita stands and looks and what appears to be hamburger meat,
human sized.

ANITA (cont'd)

Can I touch it without damaging
evidence?

DOLPH

Go ahead.

She squats back down and feels around the the flesh. She slides
a little up and exposes half a rib cage. She turns her head,
trying not to vomit. She looks up at Dolph.

ANITA

No signs of a weapon, but the
coroner will be able to tell you
that.

She looks back at it and tries to lower herself then stops.

ANITA (cont'd)

Can you help me raise the body so
I can see inside the chest
cavity?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dolph does so and she peers into it. All of the organs are gone. She swallows as blood and flesh run down her hands.

ANITA (cont'd)
Go head and cover it back up.

He lowers the body and they both stand.

DOLPH
Impressions?

ANITA
Violence. Extreme violence. More than human strength. That body was ripped apart by hand.

DOLPH
Why by hand?

ANITA
No knife marks. Hell I would've thought someone used a saw, but the bones...Nothing mechanical did this.

DOLPH
Anything else?

ANITA
Yeah, where's the rest of the fucking body?

DOLPH
Down the hall. Second door on the left.

ANITA
The rest of it?

DOLPH
Just take a look.

ANITA
Damn it, Dolph. I know you don't want to influence me, but don't send me in there blind.

He just stares at her.

ANITA (cont'd)
Is it worse than this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOLPH

No and yes.

ANITA

Damn you.

DOLPH

You'll understand when you see
it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

She presses through to the hall and stops outside the door.
Child drawings are taped to the door.

ANITA

Oh, shit.

She takes a breath and opens the door.

INT. BENJAMIN'S ROOM - DAY

The room is neat and tidy with a small bed in the corner. The
only thing out of place is a white teddy bear in the center of
the room with blood spatters on it. She kneels to the bear.
Dolph steps into the room.

ANITA

How old was the boy?

DOLPH

A picture in the living room says
Benjamin Reynolds, age three.

ANITA

(whispering)

Benjamin.

(looks around)

No one was killed in here.

DOLPH

No.

ANITA

Why did you want me to see it?

DOLPH

Look around and tell me what you
see.

ANITA

That damn bear is going to give
me nightmares.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOLPH

Me, too.

She looks around the room.

ANITA

Is it the boy's body in the other room?

DOLPH

No. The mother's.

ANITA

In the living room?

DOLPH

The father's.

ANITA

Where's the boys?

DOLPH

We can't find it. Is it possible it was eaten whole?

ANITA

So there wouldn't be anything to find? It's possible, but even the undead have limits. Did you find any regurgitation?

DOLPH

Nice word. No, at least not yet.

ANITA

Then the boy is probably still around here.

DOLPH

Is he alive.

They stare at each other.

ANITA

I don't know.

(beat)

Living room next?

DOLPH

No.

He walks out and Anita follows him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

They walk down the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

They walks past and into the kitchen. They pass the broken sliding door on their way. He stops in the kitchen entrance. She looks around.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

She looks at the door.

ANITA

So, someone breaks the door in.
That makes a hell of a lot of
noise. Did any neighbors hear it?

DOLPH

No one is admitting it.

ANITA

Okay, glass breaks, someone
checks it out. Probably the man.
The brave hunter protecting his
family.

She looks around the kitchen and into the living room.

ANITA (cont'd)

He hollars up to his wife to run
with the kid.

DOLPH

Why not call the police?

ANITA

No phone. He'd have to get past
the bogeyman to get help. He was
taken out pretty fast, but not
killed.

DOLPH

Why not killed?

ANITA

Would you quit testing me. There
isn't enough blood here. He was
hit and then dragged to the
bedroom where he was eaten.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOLPH

Want to take a stab at the living
room?

She swallows and crosses to the couch.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

She lifts the sheet and sees the body is torn in half. The spine sticks out from the torso. The upper body is more in tact. The middle section is gone to her legs.

ANITA

She was torn apart like the man
upstairs.

DOLPH

Why a man?

ANITA

Because, unless they had company
it had to be the husband. I
really hate being asked questions
you already know the answers to.

DOLPH

Sorry, sometimes I forget you're
not one of the guys.

ANITA

Thank you for that.

DOLPH

You know what I mean.

ANITA

I know. I also know you mean it
as a compliment. Now can we
continue talking about this
outside?

DOLPH

Sure thing.

They exit to the outside.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

They cross to the far corner of the yard. POLICE hold a CROWD
back from the driveway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOLPH

I was right. The killer wasn't human.

ANITA

No, it wasn't. There wasn't blood on the glass either.

DOLPH

And?

ANITA

Most dead don't bleed, except vampires.

DOLPH

So it wasn't a vamp.

ANITA

Whatever it was ate those people. Vampires don't eat solid food. So, no. Rules them out.

DOLPH

Ghoul?

ANITA

Too far from a cemetery. Besides the house would be torn up not just the people.

DOLPH

Zombie?

ANITA

Honestly, I don't know. There are a few cases of flesh-eating zombies. It's rare, but it happens.

DOLPH

Are zombies violent?

ANITA

If they're told to be.

DOLPH

What does that mean?

ANITA

If a person is powerful enough, they can command them to kill.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOLPH

A murder weapon? Who could do it?

ANITA

I'm not even sure if that's what happened here.

DOLPH

I understand. Who is capable of pulling that off?

ANITA

Hell, I could. But I didn't. And nobody I know of would do it, either.

DOLPH

Let us decide that.

ANITA

You really want me to give you the names of my friends.

DOLPH

Please.

ANITA

(sigh)

I don't believe this. Me, Manny Rodriguez, Peter Burke, and.

She stops and looks down.

DOLPH

What?

ANITA

Nothing. I just remembered I have Burke's funeral to go to this week. He's dead, so I don't think he's a suspect.

DOLPH

So that's it. You and Manny.

ANITA

If I think of someone else, I'll let you know.

He stares at her. She meets his eyes.

DOLPH

Who are you protecting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANITA

Me. Let's just say I don't want
someone mad at me.

DOLPH

Who's that?

She looks up at the sky.

ANITA

You think it's going to rain?

DOLPH

Dammit, Anita. I need your help.

ANITA

And I've given it to you.

DOLPH

The name.

ANITA

Not yet. Let me check it out
first. If it looks suspicious,
I'll let you know.

DOLPH

Well, isn't that generous of you.

He looks at her, anger mounting.

DOLPH (cont'd)

The first was a homeless man.
Found next to a cemetery. We
thought it was an open and shut
case. Next came two teenagers
necking, both dead. Again, found
close to a cemetery. Now this. I
could've called you in on the
first or even the second, but I
thought I was getting good at
this supernatural stuff. I've had
experience, but it isn't enough.
Not nearly enough.

ANITA

Wow, that's the longest speech
I've heard from you.

He relaxes.

DOLPH

I need the name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

(sigh)

Dominga Salvador. She's the
voodoo priest for the midwest.
But you send the police in, she
won't talk to you. None of them
will.

DOLPH

But she'll talk to you?

ANITA

Yes.

DOLPH

See that you have something by
tomorrow night.

ANITA

I don't know if I can set up a
meeting that soon.

DOLPH

Either you do it, or I'll do it.

ANITA

Ok, ok. I'll do it. Somehow.

DOLPH

Thanks, Anita. At least we have a
start.

ANITA

It may not even be a zombie.

DOLPH

What else could it be?

ANITA

Something else undead?

DOLPH

Talk to this Dominga Salvador and
give me a report.

ANITA

Aye, aye, Sergeant.

He grimaces at her and walks back into the house. She stares
after him. She looks down at the grass and walks to the OFFICER
at the driveway. He lets her under the tape and she gets into
her car. She starts it and drives away.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - DAY

Anita takes her phone and places a call.

ANITA

Hey, Manny. I have a favor to ask. You know how Dominga has been after me to visit with her...Can you arrange a meeting for tomorrow?

ANITA (cont'd) (VO)

I didn't lie to the police. She wouldn't talk to them except to find out who gave them her name. There are worse things than a zombie crawling through your window at night. I know, because Dominga Salvador invented them. It was like trying to get an appointment with the godfather of voodoo.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ANITA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The alarm sounds. Anita wakes up and glances at the clock. It reads: 6:00 am. She pushes the buttons and lies back down. She groans and then stumbles out of bed. She picks out a pink top.

ANITA

Ugh. What possessed me to buy
this. I hope it was a gift.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

She makes coffee. She wears jeans and a loose top, her gun in her waistband. She sits down at the table and takes a sip. She groans in pleasure. The DOORBELL CHIMES. She groans in pain. She goes to the door and peeks through the peephole. MANNY is on the other side. She opens the door.

MANNY

I smell coffee.

ANITA

You know it's all I have for
breakfast. Come on in.

He walks through the door. She locks it behind him.

MANNY

Rosita doesn't think you take
care of yourself.
(imitating wife)
Anita, she doesn't eat right.
Poor thing, no husband, no
boyfriend.

ANITA

She sounds like my stepmother.
Judith is sick with worry that
I'll be an old maid.

MANNY

You're what 24?

ANITA

Yup.

MANNY

Sometimes I just don't understand
women.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

What am I, chopped liver?

MANNY

I don't mean.

ANITA

I know. I'm one of the boys.

MANNY

You're better than any of the
boys at work.

ANITA

Sit down. Let me pour coffee in
your mouth before your foot fits
in again.

MANNY

You're being difficult.

ANITA

(smiling)

I know.

She takes a mug and sets it by him. He looks at it. It reads:
I'm a coldhearted bitch, but I'm good at it. He laughs. Hers in
covered in penguins.

MANNY

Why don't you ever bring that one
to work?

ANITA

I enjoy yanking Bert's chain.

MANNY

So you're going to keep bringing
in unacceptable cups?

ANITA

(smiling)

Mm-hmm.

He shakes his head and smiles, taking a sip.

ANITA (cont'd)

Thanks for going with me this
morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MANNY

(shrugging)

I can't let you going to see the
devil alone, can I?

ANITA

That's what your wife calls
Dominga, not me.

MANNY

But you'll take a gun with you.
Just in case.

ANITA

Just in case.

MANNY

If it comes to shooting, it won't
help. She has bodyguards all over
the place.

ANITA

I don't plan on shooting anyone.
I just want to talk to her.

MANNY

I see.

ANITA

I know it's awkward, Manny.

MANNY

Awkward? Piss her off, it's more
than awkward.

ANITA

You didn't have to come.

MANNY

You called me for backup. Not
Jamison, not Charles. Me. That
makes an old man feel good.

ANITA

You're not an old man.

MANNY

That's not what Rosita keeps
telling me. She's forbid me to go
vamprie hunting with you, but she
can't curtail my zombie raising,
yet. I know she talked to you
last year at the hospital.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANITA

You almost died, Manny.

MANNY

You've been there before.

ANITA

I don't have four kids to look
out for.

MANNY

(upset)

And I'm too old to be hunting.

ANITA

Oh, you're never too old for
that.

MANNY

(smiles)

I guess we better go. We don't
want to keep the Senora waiting.

ANITA

God forbid.

MANNY

Amen.

Manny stands and Anita rinses the cups out in the kitchen.

ANITA

Are you keeping something from
me, Manny?

MANNY

No.

She looks him in the eye.

MANNY (cont'd)

Honest.

ANITA

Then what's wrong?

He looks back at her and sighs.

MANNY

You know I was vaudun until
Rosita converted me to
christianity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

Yeah.

MANNY

Well, Dominga wasn't just my priestess. She was my lover.

She stops and looks at him.

ANITA

You're kidding?

MANNY

I wouldn't kid about that.

ANITA

That's why you were able to get me a meeting so quickly.

He nods. She walks to the table and checks her gun clip.

ANITA (cont'd)

Why didn't you tell me before?

MANNY

You might have tried to sneak in without me.

ANITA

Would that have been so bad?

MANNY

Maybe.

She puts the gun into her hip holster.

ANITA

I feel like I'm on my way to see the bogeyman.

MANNY

Not a bad analogy.

ANITA (VO)

Why am I doing this?

Flash to bloody teddy bear.

ANITA (cont'd) (VO)

Okay, I know why. I'd go to hell and back to get that little boy if there was a chance I could come back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ANITA (cont'd) (VO) (cont'd)
(beat)
I hope hell isn't a good analogy,
too.

EXT. DOMINGA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

They drive on a street lined with older homes from the fifties. The street is neat and clean, kids playing in the yards. They pull into her driveway. The two story home is nice with different species of flowers decorating the yard. A LITTLE GIRL rides a tricycle down the sidewalk with TWO YOUNG BOYS behind her.

INT. CAR - MORNING

They stop and watch Manny and Anita park the car. A MAN, ANTONIO, stands at the front porch. He wears a shoulder holster and a tight T-Shirt. He is around 18.

ANITA
Boy, all he needs is a big neon
sign saying Bad Ass.

EXT. LAWN - MORNING

They step from the car and approach the porch. He meets them halfway.

MANNY
Buenos Dias, Antonio. It's been a
long time.

ANTONIO
Si.

MANNY
How you've grown.

ANTONIO
My grandmother says I have to let
you in.

MANNY
She is a wise woman.

ANTONIO
She is the Senora.
(to Anita)
Who's this?

MANNY
Senorita Anita Blake.

Anita smiles up at him. He remains passive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTONIO

Nice to meet you.

She continues smiling up at him. He flashes a slow smile. His words are said with a seedy look in his eye.

ANTONIO

(in Spanish)

You are very beautiful. I would love to take you in my arms.

MANNY

(in Spanish)

Watch what you say, boy. She is not your property.

Antonio is angered. He reaches for his gun.

ANTONIO

(in Spanish)

Don't tell me what to do, old man.

Anita places a hand on his arm to stop him from pulling his gun. He looks at her. She grips his wrist, still smiling. He relaxes and takes her hand, kissing her fingers. He keeps it and escorts her to the porch.

EXT. DOMINGA'S PORCH - MORNING

He stops them at the threshold.

ANTONIO

I must check you for weapons, Manuel.

MANNY

Of course.

Antonio turns his back on Anita to search Manny. She smiles and shakes her head. AN OLDER MAN, ENZO, walks up behind them.

ENZO

What is taking so long, Antonio?

ANTONIO

I was checking him for weapons.

ENZO

Well, let's go. She is waiting.

Antonio lets Manny stand and sits back on the porch. He makes a kissing noise to Anita as they pass into the house.

INT. DOMINGA'S HOUSE - MORNING

They walk into the immaculate house and go into the kitchen. DOMINGA SALVADOR sits waiting for them. A woman in her sixties, she is small and grey haired. He stands and holds her hands to Manny. He takes them as she kisses his hands.

DOMINGA
It is good to see you, Manuel.

MANNY
And you, Dominga

He sits across from her. Anita remains in the doorway.

DOMINGA
So, Anita Blake, you have come to me at last.

Anita looks at Manny. He shrugs with his eyes.

ANITA
I didn't know you so eagerly wanted to see me, Senora.

DOMINGA
(smiling)
I have heard stories about you, Chica. Wonderous stories.

ANITA
Manny?

MANNY
Wasn't me.

She grows a little cold.

DOMINGA
No, Manuel doesn't talk to me anymore. His little wife forbids it.

Anita swallows.

DOMINGA (cont'd)
All who deal in vaudun come to Senora Salvador eventually.

ANITA
I don't deal in vaudun.

Dominga laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOMINGA

You raise the dead and you do not
deal in vaudun. Oh, that is
funny, chica.

MANNY

Dominga, I told why we needed
this meeting. I made it clear.

DOMINGA

Oh, you made it clear.
(to Anita)
He made it very clear that you
were not to participate in my
pagan rituals.

She holds out her hand. Anita cautiously steps forward and takes
it. Dominga lowers her to the seat next to her. She whispers
something. Anita leans forward.

ANITA

I'm sorry I don't speak Spanish.

Dominga touches her hair.

DOMINGA

Such dark hair. Like that of a
crow's wing. It does not come
from any pale skin.

ANITA

My mother was Mexican.

DOMINGA

Yet, you do not speak her tongue.

ANITA

She died when I was very young. I
was raised by my father's people.

DOMINGA

I see.

Anita takes her hand back and glances at Manny. His hands are
clasped tightly on the table, staring at Dominga. She looks back
at Dominga. They were staring at each other. Manny relaxes.

DOMINGA (cont'd)

You could have been so powerful,
mi corazon.

MANNY

I didn't want it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She stares intently at Anita.

DOMINGA

And what about you, chica. Do you
want the power?

ANITA

(swallowing)

No.

DOMINGA

Perhaps not, but you will.

Dominga stares deeply at her. Anita shivers and licks her lips.
They look into each other's eyes. Anita falters forward and
snaps back. She stands.

ANITA

Shit.

Many stands with her.

MANNY

Are you all right?

ANITA

What did you do to me?

DOMINGA

It is what you have done to me,
chica.

Enzo comes into the room, ready for action.

DOMINGA (cont'd)

No, Enzo. I am all right.

MANNY

We didn't come here for games,
Dominga. I don't want her harmed.

DOMINGA

It is up to whether or not she is
harmed, mi corazon.

ANITA

You had no intention of helping
us. Just to play cat and mouse.
Well, this mouse is leaving.

Anita starts to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOMINGA

Do you not want to find your
missing boy? Three years old.
Very young to be in the hands of
a bokor.

Anita turns to her.

ANITA

What's a bokor?

DOMINGA

(smiling)
You really don't know?

Anita shakes her head.

DOMINGA (cont'd)

Come and place your hand palm up
on the table, por favor.

ANITA

If you know something, just tell
me, please.

DOMINGA

Endure my little tests and I will
help you.

ANITA

What sort of tests?

DOMINGA

Chica, I will not harm you.

ANITA

Manny?

MANNY

If she does anything that may
harm you, I'll say so.

Anita looks from Manny to Dominga.

ANITA

Every moment you waste could cost
the boy his life.

DOMINGA

You still think he's alive, don't
you?

Anita sits and stares at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANITA

No.

DOMINGA

Then we have time.

ANITA

For what?

DOMINGA

Just give me your hand.

Anita does so. Dominga pulls a little black bag from under the table. She reaches in and pulls out a charm of a dried hawk's foot with bone and feathers attached. She places it in Anita's palm. Anita looks around, feeling silly. She then looks at her palm, shocked. It starts to move.

ANITA (cont'd)

Shit.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. DOMINGA'S HOUSE - MORNING

She lets it move a little longer.

ANITA (cont'd)
Ok, I passed your test. Get this
thing out of my hand.

Dominga carefully takes the charm, not touching Anita's skin.
Anita rubs her hand on her stomach.

ANITA (cont'd)
Now, can we get down to business?

DOMINGA
You made the claw move. You were
frightened, but not surprised.
Why?

ANITA
(shrug)
I have an affinity with the dead.
It responds to me like some
people can read thoughts.

DOMINGA
Do you really think your ability
is similar to a parlor trick?

ANITA
I raise the dead, Senora. It's
just a job.

DOMINGA
You don't believe that any more
than I do.

ANITA
I try real hard.

DOMINGA
You've been tested before by
someone.

ANITA
My grandmother on my mother's
side, but not like this.

DOMINGA
She was vaudun?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anita nods.

DOMINGA (cont'd)
Why did you not study with her.

ANITA
I have an inborn ability. It
doesn't dictate my religious
preference.

DOMINGA
(disgusted)
You are Christian.

ANITA
That's it.
(stands)
I wish I could say it's been a
pleasure, but it hasn't.

DOMINGA
Ask your questions, chica.

ANITA
What?

DOMINGA
Ask whatever you came here to
ask.

Anita looks at Manny.

MANNY
If she says she'll do it, she
will.

Anita sits.

ANITA
Did you raise a zombie in the
last two weeks?

DOMINGA
Some.

ANITA
(swallow)
Have you sent them on any
errands...for revenge.

DOMINGA
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANITA

Are you sure?

DOMINGA

(smiling)

I'd remember if I loosed
murderers from the grave.

ANITA

Killer zombies don't have to be
murderers.

DOMINGA

Oh? Are you so familiar with
raising killer zombies?

ANITA

Only one.

DOMINGA

Tell me.

ANITA

No. That's a private matter.

(beat)

I've raised murderers before.
They aren't any more violent than
other zombies.

DOMINGA

How many dead have you called
from the grave?

ANITA

I don't know.

DOMINGA

An estimate.

ANITA

Hundred?

DOMINGA

Thousands?

ANITA

Maybe.

DOMINGA

I'd like to know.

ANITA

I'll see what I can do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOMINGA

Such an obedient girl. I did not raise your zombie killing citizens, but I do know many people that are capable. I will ask them and they will tell me. Then I will relay that truth to you, Anita.

ANITA

Thank you very much, Senora Salvador.

DOMINGA

In return I ask a favor.

ANITA

What would that be?

DOMINGA

I want you to pass one more test. Come downstairs with me.

MANNY

No, Dominga. Nothing you seek if worth what she wants.

DOMINGA

I can talk to people and things that will not talk to you, good christians.

MANNY

Come on let's go.

ANITA

Tell me about the test.

MANNY

Anita. You don't know what you're doing.

DOMINGA

I'll show you in the basement.

ANITA

Just stay with me, Manny. Don't let me do anything that'll really hurt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MANNY

What she wants will hurt, Anita.
Maybe not physically, but it'll
hurt.

ANITA

I have to do this, Manny. It'll
be all right.

MANNY

No it won't, Anita.

DOMINGA

Let us go.

Manny grabs Anita's arm.

MANNY

Senora, may I please have a word
with her.

DOMINGA

Manuel, you have all day with
her. I have this short time.
After the test I will aid her
anyway I can.

ANITA

I've already said I'd do it.
Let's go.

Dominga touches his arm. He jumps.

DOMINGA

No harm will come to her, Manuel.
You have my word.

MANNY

I do not trust you, Dominga.

DOMINGA

(laughs)

It is her choice, Manuel. I have
not forced her.

MANNY

You blackmailed her with the
saftey of others.

DOMINGA

Have I blackmailed you, chica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ANITA

Yes.

DOMINGA

Oh, she is your student, corazon.
She has your honesty. And
bravery.

MANNY

She is brave, but she hasn't seen
what is below.

They exit to the basement door.

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

They descend down wooden stairs below. Light fades to darkness.
Enzo brings up the rear. Anita looks around. Manny and Dominga
have disappeared into the dark.

ANITA

Manny?

MANNY (VO)

I'm here, Anita.

She continues down and stops, wrinkling her nose. She gets to
the base and a light turns on. A bare bulb in the middle of a
room. Dominga and Manny are already there. A long hallway is
illuminated with bare bulbs. Dominga leads the way through the
hallway. Cement covers doors, pain new. Anita feels the surface.
Three doors are ahead. Two on the right, one on the left. Anita
stops at the one on the left. Something inside sighs. She looks
at Enzo.

ANITA

What's in there?

Dominga and Manny continue on. Enzo stops. She feels the door
and the thing starts to mew. She gags and covers her mouth and
nose with her hand.

ENZO

We must go, now.

She faces straight and opens a door to the left and peeks in. It
is empty and resembles a cell. Enzo slams the door shut. She
shrugs and continues on.

ENZO (cont'd)

Do not try any other doors,
Senorita. It could be very bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA

Sure, no problem.

The hallway ended in a rectangular room painted white. The floor was decorated in red and black vaudun symbols. The end of the room is lit with candles. Dominga stands in the light, emanating evil. Manny stares off to the side. There is an altar with fresh animal sacrifices behind Dominga. All types of animals. The blood drips onto the floor. A TALL WOMAN stands next to Dominga. She is dressed in a red gown and wears matching make up. She is a zombie filled with fear. ANOTHER WOMAN stands to the side, a zombie. Her hair is the only thing shiny. The rest is thin greyed skin and the dress hangs on protruding bones. Dominga nods and Enzo pushes Anita onto the floor.

ANITA (cont'd)

What the hell is going on here,
Dominga?

DOMINGA

I'm not used to such rudeness.

ANITA

Get used to it. What have you
done to the two zombies.

DOMINGA

Study then. If you are as
powerful as you say, you will
answer your own question.

ANITA

Is this the test?

DOMINGA

Perhaps.

She walks around Dominga and stares at the women. She studies them. Their eyes make a sucking sound as they turn to look at her. She stares into their eyes. The women look back at her in fear. She steps back in shock and looks at Dominga.

ANITA

They still have their souls.

DOMINGA

Very good.

ANITA

How did you do it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOMINGA

I captured the soul the moment it
took flight.

ANITA

That didn't answer my question.

DOMINGA

Don't you know how to capture a
soul in a bottle.

ANITA

No, I don't.

DOMINGA

So much I could teach you.

ANITA

No thanks. You captured their
souls, you raised them, then you
put their souls back in.

DOMINGA

Exactly.

ANITA

Then why is the second zombie
rotting. Shouldn't it stay
preserved?

DOMINGA

I can remove and put the soul
back in at will.

She stares at the vaudun.

ANITA

So, you took the soul out and it
rotted like a normal zombie. You
put the soul back in and it
stopped.

DOMINGA

Exactly.

ANITA

So it essentially stays in the
rotted condition forever. What
about her.

She points to the pretty zombie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOMINGA

Oh, people would pay dearly for her.

ANITA

You sell her as a sex slave?

DOMINGA

Perhaps.

Anita shivers.

ANITA

Are they obedient or do they have free will?

DOMINGA

They seem to be obedient.

ANITA

Maybe because they are afraid of you. You can't just keep the soul imprisoned forever.

DOMINGA

I can't.

ANITA

It need to go on.

DOMINGA

To your christian Heaven or Hell?

ANITA

Yes.

DOMINGA

These were wicked women, chica. Their families paid me to punish them.

ANITA

You took money for this?

DOMINGA

It is illegal to tamper with dead bodies without consent of the family.

ANITA

No one deserves to spend eternity as a corpse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DOMINGA

We could do this to criminals on death row. Make them servants to society after death.

ANITA

This is wrong, Dominga.

DOMINGA

I have created a nonrotting zombie. Animators have searching for years for this. I have the ability. We could make so much money off of this.

ANITA

You're talking to the wrong girl.

DOMINGA

I was hoping that you would join me. We could make them that much faster.

ANITA

Sorry. Christian, Buddhist, Moslem, you name it, Dominga. No one is going to think this is right.

DOMINGA

Perhaps, perhaps not. It doesn't hurt to ask.

She looks at the rotted woman.

ANITA

At least put your first experiment out of it's misery.

DOMINGA

She makes a powerful demonstration, does she not?

ANITA

You've created a nonrotting zomie. Great. Don't be sadistic.

DOMINGA

You think I'm cruel.

ANITA

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

DOMINGA

Manuel, am I cruel?

MANNY

Yes, you are.

DOMINGA

You think so? After you so
willing slew the white goats for
me not so many years ago?

ANITA

Manny?..Manny?

DOMINGA

He didn't tell you of his past,
chica?

ANITA

Is she telling the truth, Manny?
Did you perform human sacrifice?

DOMINGA

He was my most treasured helper.

ANITA

Shut up.
(to Manny)
It's true, isn't it?
(yelling)
Answer me.

MANNY

Yes.

ANITA

How could you?

MANNY

It was 20 years ago, Anita. I was
vaudun and a necromancer. I loved
the Senora. Or thought I did.

Anita shakes her head.

ANITA

I can't deal with this right now.
Fine, Senora. You've dropped you
bombshell. Did I pass your test?

DOMINGA

I wanted to offer you a new
business venture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ANITA

Well we both know the answer to that one.

DOMINGA

It's a pity. With training you could rival my own powers.

ANITA

No thanks. I'm happy where I'm at.

DOMINGA

Happy?

ANITA

Will you help us?

DOMINGA

If I help you with you helping me, you will owe me a favor.

ANITA

I'd rather just trade information.

DOMINGA

Now, what could you offer that would rival me hunting you killer?

ANITA

I know there are laws being litigated right now giving zombies rights. Protecting them.

DOMINGA

Then I better sell them quick.

ANITA

I wouldn't think illegal would bother you. After all, human sacrifice still is.

DOMINGA

I don't do such things any longer. When Manuel left, I lost my taste for it.

ANITA

I gave you valuable information.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

DOMINGA

I will look into the zombie
killer.

ANITA

Manny, will she help us?

MANNY

If she says she will, then it
will done. She is good that way.

DOMINGA

I will find him if it has
anything to do with vaudun.

ANITA

Great. I don't suppose appealing
to your better nature will make
you forget this scheme of using
zombies for slaves.

DOMINGA

Chica, chica. I will more wealthy
than you have ever imagined. You
can chose not to join me, but you
cannot stop me.

ANITA

Don't bet on it.

DOMINGA

What will you do? Go to the
police? I am breaking no laws.
The only way to stop me is to
kill me.

ANITA

Don't tempt me.

Manny steps forward.

MANNY

Don't, Anita. Don't challenge
her.

ANITA

I will stop you, Senora. No
matter what it takes.

DOMINGA

You call death magic against me,
it is you who will die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

ANITA

(shrugs)

I was thinking something a little more down to earth. Like a bullet.

Enzo steps forward.

DOMINGA

No, Enzo. She is angry this morning, and shocked. She knows nothing of the darker magicks. She cannot harm me, and she is too morally superior to commit cold blooded murder.

ANITA

At least lay the first experiment to rest. Don't make her watch.

DOMINGA

But I already have a buyer for her.

ANITA

No, you don't mean. A necrophiliac.

DOMINGA

Those that love the dead better than you or I ever will, will pay extraordinary amounts.

ANITA

You are a cold hearted, amoral bitch.

DOMINGA

And you need to respect your elders.

ANITA

Respect has to be earned.

DOMINGA

I think you need to be reminded of why people fear the dark. On some night very soon while you are fast asleep in your bed, something evil will creep through your window. I will earn your respect if that is the way you want it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

ANITA

You can force people to be afraid
of you, but not to respect you.

DOMINGA

We shall see.

ANITA

Are helping us or not.

DOMINGA

I said I would.

ANITA

Good. Then may we leave?

DOMINGA

By all means. Go into the
daylight where you're bravest.

Anita takes a step forward.

ANITA

I may not be willing to kill you
in cold blood, but hurt me first
and I'll put a bullet in you some
sun shiny day.

DOMINGA

Threats will not save you, chica.

ANITA

(smiling)
You either, bitch.

Dominga shows anger.

MANNY

She didn't mean it. She will not
kill you.

DOMINGA

Is this true?

Anita looks at Manny.

ANITA

I said I'd shoot you, I didn't
say I'd kill you, now did I.

DOMINGA

No, you did not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

MANNY

Let's get out of here.

They exit through the hall. Halfway down, the bulbs burst and darkness engulfs them. They look at each other and start to run. A door slams and the thing behind the door rushes after them, not being seen, but heard.

ANITA

Oh, shit. That's not good.

MANNY

Nope.

They run up the stairs and exit into the light as a howl sounds behind them. They pant on the porch and continue to the car. Antonio calls after them.

ANTONIO

Did you fuck the zombie
downstairs?

Anita turns to face him.

ANITA

Go fuck yourself.

He just laughs as they get into the car.

ANITA (cont'd) (VO)

I had just met the evil
incarnate. She was right though,
I am moral and cannot kill in
cold blood. But with Dominga
Salvador, I sure as hell was
willing to give it the college
try.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR