

# A Vampire Huntress Legend Series

By: L.A. Banks, Series Author  
St. Martin's Press, NYC – Publisher

# Teacher's Guide



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# A Vampire Huntress Legend: A Study Guide

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## A Note to Teachers

Leslie Banks worked to create a high interest series for young adults that would invite readers to question and think about issues and choices that impact their lives and the lives of others in today's society. How are we affected by our choices? How do we avoid being prey or predator in society? Who are our heroes and heroines?

Damali, the protagonist in the series, is protected by seven guardians who span generations, religious affiliations, and ethnicities. She finds herself attracted to someone who has preyed on society but who also has redeeming qualities. Damali has been given a role to help and protect others that requires discipline and sacrifice, and she struggles to focus on her mission at the expense of seeking personal gratification.

The series initially had four titles, *Minion*, *The Awakening*, *The Hunted*, and *The Bitten* (but has now grown to nine—see website for details at [www.vampirehuntress.com](http://www.vampirehuntress.com).) The themes that are explored in the series are appropriate for guided classroom discussion and reflection by your students. The choices characters make and the consequences resulting from these choices can serve as starting points for thoughtful discussions in your classroom.

Please be aware that the books contain some mature content which is in keeping with the depiction of certain characters. Teachers are advised to read the book before using it for instruction and to consider suitable responses for concerns that may arise from parents.

NOTE: Recommended for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes, due to mature content in some sections.

**A variety of strategies are being used to help students demonstrate their understanding of novels and stories that they have read.** One group of strategies utilizing the Internet and multimedia has been developed by the State Library of Victoria's Expermedia and Pop Fiction utilizing the website [www.bumble.com.au](http://www.bumble.com.au) after reading the article below from The Age Website, you may want to utilize this resource.



## Popping the fun back into fiction

**A new program is creating interest in reading, says Christopher Baikie.**

Teaching literature is not just about getting students to read good stories. It's about helping them understand, appreciate and create good stories - a task that is becoming more difficult with the growing number of reluctant readers who would rather watch television or surf the net than pick up a book.

The State Library of Victoria's Expermedia has teamed up with Pop Fiction to use the internet and multimedia to help steer young adults back to the printed page.

Pop Fiction is print, digital, audio, visual and interactive, and is setting a national benchmark for young adult fiction. Young adults read a selected novel (the first book to be adapted into Pop Fiction is *To Love Veronica Bee* by Sarah Boland) and then explore the story's plot and/or characters, themes, and issues and expand on them to create Pop Fiction artwork. This artwork can be painting and drawing, photography, crafts, 3-D art, writing, digital art, and whatever else the reader can come up with.

When submitted, the artwork is posted onto a Pop Fiction website (visit the *To Love Veronica Bee* Pop Fiction website at [bumble.com.au](http://bumble.com.au)), where it can be transformed into multimedia. The result is a dynamic website with a collaborative approach to art that allows readers to explore a story in a deeper, more creative manner than the traditional methods. It can also bridge communities as Pop Fiction artists from any age, region or social setting can post their own art, turn others' Pop Fiction art into multimedia and communicate with other artists in the blog section on the site.

Ms Boland came up with Pop Fiction after reading the report *Young Australians Reading: from keen to reluctant readers*, published by the Australian Centre for Youth Literature in 2001. It found that 45 per cent of readers aged 10 to 18 had either a neutral attitude towards books or found them irrelevant, and 21 per cent of those surveyed didn't read books because their peers didn't.

Ms Boland felt that reading for young adults should become a more collaborative and enjoyable experience, especially for those on the verge of giving up recreational reading. By reading a story together and transforming it into something relevant to their own pop culture through art and multimedia, young readers are able to create a positive shared experience with their peers that is more likely to transfer to other social groups.

Pop Fiction was soon hatched, and the first Pop Fiction Youth e-Literature event was run with Princes Hill Secondary College using Ms Boland's novel. Teacher Anna Vaxalis found the concept to be an inventive and original way to promote literacy that allowed students to become "part of the creative process (where) the study of literature became a relevant and stimulating personal experience". The students just thought it was "a blast".

Experimedia manager Indra Kurzeme sees Pop Fiction as a way to let literature, libraries and new media be presented in an exciting way where kids have a good time.

Experimedia will launch To Love Veronica Bee and Pop Fiction on Wednesday at the State Library. It will also host four Pop Fiction Youth e-Literature events next year:

Term 1: Creating Pop Fiction animation.

Term 2: Creating Pop Fiction online games.

Term 3: Creating Pop Fiction film/video and digital illustration/photo art.

Term 4: Creating Pop Fiction music and sound art.

Multimedia teachers and artists can register at [bumble.com.au](http://bumble.com.au)

Copies of the documentary, Pop Fiction: Project Bumble@Princes Hill Secondary College, are available for viewing before making artwork and multimedia.

Teachers of classes that do not make the artwork and/or multimedia can still structure classes around the Pop Fiction format by reading the novel and using the bumble website.

## About the Author



*Leslie Esdaile- Banks*

Ms. Banks is a graduate of The University of Pennsylvania Wharton undergraduate program, and alumnae of Temple University's Master of Fine Arts in filmmaking program. Ms. Banks began her career in corporate marketing for several Fortune 100 firms and worked as an executive for over a decade at Xerox, Hewlett Packard, and Digital Equipment Corporation. She then subsequently evolved her veteran marketing experience into a solid entrepreneurial career as a marketing consultant within the economic development and community-based organization environment.

In 1992, Banks added another facet to her career, entering the publishing industry. She writes under the pseudonyms; L.A. Banks, Leslie Esdaile, Leslie E. Banks, Leslie Banks, and Leslie Esdaile Banks. She has won several business as well as literary awards, and has penned over 20 novels and 8 novellas in genres as diverse as romance, women's fiction, crime suspense, and paranormal. She has contributed to magazines, newspaper columns, and has written commercial fiction for five major publishers simultaneously: St. Martin's Press (NYC), Simon and Schuster (NYC), Kensington Publishing (NYC), BET/Arabesque (NYC), and Genesis Press (MS.)

Banks' writing career took a new twist in 2000 when she won the coveted contract with Paramount/Showtime in collaboration with Simon & Schuster/Pocketbooks to write a book series for the popular cable network television series, *Soul Food*. From there, Banks transitioned into another hot genre—the world of paranormal fiction, where she is currently penning a nine book Vampire Huntress Legend series under the pen name, L.A. Banks, for St. Martin's Press: "*Minion*," (June 2003), "*The Awakening*," (January 2004), "*The Hunted*," (June 2004), and "*The Bitten*," (January 2005), "*The Forbidden*" (July 2005), "*The Damned*," to be released January 2006, with three additional titles to follow in 2006 thru 2007. In addition, Banks was recently signed to a St. Martin's Press inspired paranormal romance anthology, entitled, "*Stroke of Midnight*," contributing with Sherrilyn Kenyon, Amanda Ashley, and Lori Handeland, which hit the New York Times Bestseller extended list in 2004. Her story within that anthology, "*Make It Last Forever*," tells of the back story of one of the key Guardians in her Vampire Huntress Legend series (Jack Rider), and how he joined the Guardian team.

She has also worked with other horror anthology collections, Dark Dreams I and Dark Dreams II for Kensington Publishing. Her most recent project is the novelization of the movie, *Scarface*, for DH Press (under pen name, L.A. Banks), which takes a look at the main character's life (Tony Montana) two years before he emigrated from Cuba to American in 1978. That novel will be released in March/April 2006.

Banks other works include a crime thriller with Kensington/Dafina, which was released November 2004 (“*Betrayal of The Trust*”—the 2005 September sequel is entitled, “*Blind Trust*”), as well as numerous romances and women’s fiction works with BET/Arabesque, Kensington Publishing, and Genesis Press. Banks also contributed her inspirational personal story of triumph over tragedy within the anthology, “*Chicken Soup for the African American Soul*.”

Ms. Banks is a native West Philadelphian and entrepreneur, who remains fervently committed to her community. She writes and lives in University City, Philadelphia, with her husband and children.

[www.vampirehuntress.com](http://www.vampirehuntress.com) -or- [www.LeslieEsdaileBanks.com](http://www.LeslieEsdaileBanks.com)

**Questions and Answers**  
**A Vampire Huntress Legend**  
**Study Guide**

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Below are some frequently asked questions and the associated answers for new readers to the series:

1. What does *Neteru* mean?

Answer: Neteru is an ancient Egyptian term for, “Divine Powers latent within” or divine ways. It was chosen as the title for the heroine, Damali Richards, because she is a “superhero” in this story that fights for the good (or the divine.)

2. In the legend, the author often interchanges the word Egyptian with Kemetian (Egypt and Kemet.) Are these the same people and lands?

Answer: Yes. Egypt was also called “land of the blacks” or “The Great Black,” and the native African inhabitants called it KMT (pronounced Kamit, or Kemet, also seen in some documentation as Kemit), and refers to the historical period before the Greek and Roman invasions. Therefore, the author uses the indigenous reference to go all the way back to the original African people who actually built the great Egyptian/Kemetian Empire.

3. Who were the people in the prologue?

Answer: Sara Richards was the heroine’s mother. Damali Richards is the story’s heroine (shown twenty years later when the actual story begins in Chapter 1), and she was the little baby who was crying in the crib. The preacher (Armand Richards), who was abducted by the vampire (Fallon Nuit), was Damali’s father. Damali’s father (Reverend Richards) was attempting to go after and slay the vampire, when he was abducted from his home. The young woman who came to baby-sit little Damali in the prologue, was Marlene Stone—who later goes on a quest to find the girl and bring her into the Guardian family for protection.

4. What is the tattoo that is on the heroine’s back and what does it mean?

Answer: The tattoo that Damali Richards wears is called a Sankofa. This is an ancient Akhan symbol from West African, and the literal translation means, “to go back and fetch it.” The bird is looking backward to the past, the history of its ancestors and it is trying to grab an egg. The egg represents the future generations. Thus, symbolically it represents “going back to one’s historical past, ancestry, to chart a path for the future,” or, “going back to learn about the past to inform one’s future decisions.” Therefore the author used this for the young heroine, because she must learn about her history and past in order to do her present job of fighting for the good of humanity.

5. What is making the character, Jose, sick? (Is he a vampire or turning into one?)

Answer: Jose is not a vampire, and is not turning into a vampire. He is a Guardian, but has made a child with a woman that became a vampire. The unborn child died with the mother (when she passed away from the vampire bite.) But the fact that the soul of this unborn child got temporarily trapped within the mother is making him sick. He, like the mother, is a part of the child. Therefore, to keep him from getting sicker, the situation requires that the Guardian team free this little soul and commend it into the Light so that Jose's connection to it is also sent toward the Light. As long as a part of it is trapped within the darkness, a part of Jose will continue to be trapped there as well, and he will remain ill.

6. How did the vampire, Fallon Nuit, get out—and what came up with him?

Answer: When Sara Richards went against her faith to consult an old witch, she unwittingly cast a spell that released the trapped vampire, and also, quite accidentally, released a demon along with it (an Amanthra demon.) Damali's mother, in her anger and hurt, was tricked by the old witch in the woods, and her actions caused a spiral of tragic events that would later affect her daughter (Damali) in years to come. [Note: Reverend Richards, Damali's father, also made a fatal mistake of not being honest with his wife or his congregation about what he was up to—slaying vampires. Hence, by keeping this secret, no one could help him, no one understood, and it created vast misunderstandings all the way around. The author used this device of 'mistaken intent' to demonstrate how a lie or an omission of truth by respected leaders can cause catastrophic issues within families and communities.]

7. Who are the Guardians and what do they represent?

Answer: Each member of the Guardian team is an individual with a special power that was given to him/her to fight evil. Each one came to the team after they had a personal encounter with "the dark side," and survived. These people are not perfect but have good hearts and care about the broader scope of humankind. They are all older than the heroine, and their job as a superhero 'family' is to teach Damali, guide her, and protect her until she is old enough and wise enough to fight on her own (and until she is ready to lead the team.) They represent people from all ethnic groups and religions and cultures. The author chose this mix of individuals to represent the 'world family' of humanity. The focus is on people of all walks of life coming together to resist evil and to help each other to do the right thing for the greater good of the world.

## Character List

**Damali Richards:** Damali was born in New Orleans. After the death of her parents, she lived with foster parents and became a teenage runaway living in Los Angeles, California. She was rescued by Marlene Stone and discovered that she was born with the ancient powers needed to be a vampire huntress. During the day, Damali works as a spoken word artist and performs with her team of guardian protectors who assist her in the fight against evil vampires.

**Marlene Stone:** Marlene was born in the South Carolina islands and was relocated to New Orleans. After the death of her church pastor, Damali's father, at the hands of the vampire, Fallon Nuit, Marlene was forced to flee and protect Damali from harm. She serves as the Guardian team leader and the business manager for Damali's performance group, Warriors of Light.

**Nafes Shabazz:** 'Bazz (for short) was born on the east coast and served time in prison on drug charges. He turned his life around and learned Aikido, philosophy, and strategies to protect Damali and his team. He serves as a sharpshooter for the Guardian team and works as a bassist and choreographer for the Warriors of Light.

**Michael Roberts:** "Big Mike" was born in Mississippi and moved to Georgia before enlisting in the military. After he left the military, Mike counseled children and then became a part of the Guardian team. He also works as the sound man for the Warriors of Light.

**Jacob Rider:** Jake (Jack or Rider) grew up in the Midwest and rode cross-country on a Harley. He met Jose on an Indian reservation and became a member of the Guardian team. He also plays the guitar for the Warriors of Light.

**Jose Cipointe:** Jose (a.k.a. Wizard) was born to a Mexican mother and a Creek Indian father. He grew up in Mexico and Los Angeles. He learned the spiritual ways of his father's people and became a guardian after meeting Jake Rider in New Orleans. He is also a percussionist for the Warriors of Light.

**Joseph Leung:** Joseph (J. L.) was born in Laos and was adopted by an American family. He was reunited with his birth parents after they immigrated to the United States. Joseph has a talent for creating electronic gadgets which he uses in his guardian duties. He plays the keyboards for the Warriors of Light.

**Daniel Weinstein:** Daniel (Dan) was born in the suburbs and received an Ivy League education. He manages the Warriors of Light and becomes a guardian after he narrowly escapes an attack by vampires.

**Carlos Rivera:** Carlos was born in Los Angeles and died in the Santa Monica Mountains. He becomes a Master Vampire and tries to hold his own against the Guardians and the Vampire Council.

**Fallon Nuit:** Fallon was once member of the Vampire Council but he abused his power and was incarcerated in a New Orleans lair. He escaped imprisonment and created an evil army which he used to work towards overthrowing the Vampire Council. (His name means The Fallen Night in French)

## Neteru Council of Queens Symbology from the Legend (Akhan Culture)



### Eve

**Sankofa** (return and fetch it). Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi. It is no taboo to return and fetch it when you forget. You can always undo your mistakes.



### Aset

**Mmra krado** (Seal of the law). Symbolizing supreme authority.



### Aset

**Nsoroma** (A child of the heavens). Obu Nyankon soroma te Nyame na onte neho so. A child of the Supreme Being I do not depend on myself. My illumination is only a reflection of his.



### Nzinga

**Akoko nan tiaba na enkum ba** (The foot of the hen). The hen treads upon its chicks, but it does not kill them.



### Nefertitti

**Ntesie matemasié** (I have heard and kept it). Nyansa bun mu nne mate masie. A symbol of wisdom and knowledge.



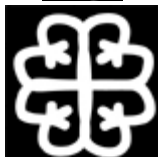
### Asian

**Nyame biribi wo soro na ma embeka mensa** (God is in the heavens, let it reach me). A symbol of hope.



### Aztec

**Aya** (the firm). Also means 'I am not afraid of you'. A symbol of defiance.



### Joan

**Nyame nwu na mawu**. If Nyame -- God -- dies, then I may die. Perpetual existence.



### Amazon

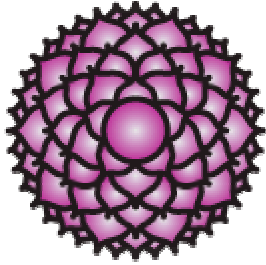
**Akobén** (The war horn). The sound of Akoben is a battle cry, hence it symbolizes a call to arms.

With the dawn of a new male Neteru, so has this Akhan symbol been burned into Carlos Rivera's skin--over the left jugular vein--in supernatural silver to anoint and seal off his previous vampiric bite markings.



**Carlos**

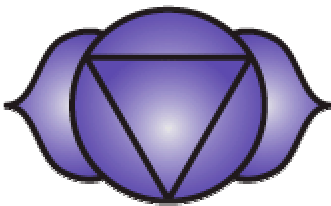
**Nkyin kyin** (ohema nkyinkyin). Changing one's self. Playing many roles.



**Chakra Seven:**

*Thought, Universal identity, oriented to self-knowledge*

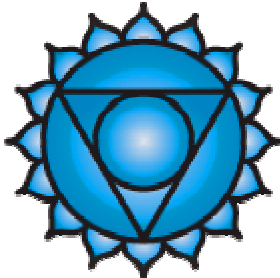
This is the crown chakra that relates to consciousness as pure awareness. It is our connection to the greater world beyond, to a timeless, space-less place of all-knowing. When developed, this chakra brings us knowledge, wisdom, understanding, spiritual connection, and bliss.



**Chakra Six:**

*Light, Archetypal identity, oriented to self-reflection*

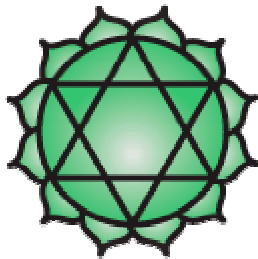
This chakra is known as the brow chakra or third eye center. It is related to the act of seeing, both physically and intuitively. As such it opens our psychic faculties and our understanding of archetypal levels. When healthy it allows us to see clearly, in effect, letting us "see the big picture."



**Chakra Five:**

*Sound, Creative identity, oriented to self-expression*

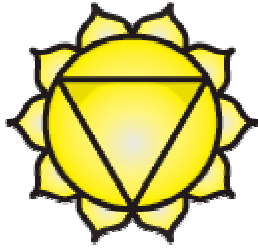
This is the chakra located in the throat and is thus related to communication and creativity. Here we experience the world symbolically through vibration, such as the vibration of sound representing language.



**Chakra Four:**

*Air, Social identity, oriented to self-acceptance*

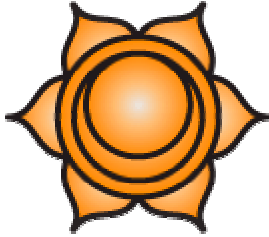
This chakra is called the heart chakra and is the middle chakra in a system of seven. It is related to love and is the integrator of opposites in the psyche: mind and body, male and female, persona and shadow, ego and unity. A healthy fourth chakra allows us to love deeply, feel compassion, have a deep sense of peace and centeredness



**Chakra Three:**

*Fire, Ego identity, oriented to self-definition*

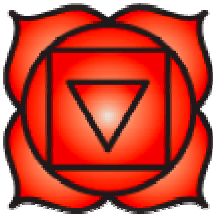
This chakra is known as the power chakra, located in the solar plexus. It rules our personal power, will, and autonomy, as well as our metabolism. When healthy, this chakra brings us energy, effectiveness, spontaneity, and non-dominating power.



**Chakra Two:**

*Water, Emotional identity, oriented to self-gratification*

The second chakra, located in the abdomen, lower back, and sexual organs, is related to the element water, and to emotions and sexuality. It connects us to others through feeling, desire, sensation, and movement. Ideally this chakra brings us fluidity and grace, depth of feeling, sexual fulfillment, and the ability to accept change.



**Chakra One:**

*Earth, Physical identity, oriented to self-preservation*

Located at the base of the spine, this chakra forms our foundation. It represents the element earth, and is therefore related to our survival instincts, and to our sense of grounding and connection to our bodies and the physical plane. Ideally this chakra brings us health, prosperity, security, and dynamic presence.

## **Synopsis of Minion**

All Damali Richards ever wanted to do was create music and bring it to the people. Now she is a Spoken Word artist and the top act for Warriors of Light Records. But come nightfall, she hunts vampires and demons-predators that people tend to dismiss as myth or fantasy. Damali and her Guardian team cannot afford such delusions, especially now, when a group of rogue vampires has been killing the artists of Warriors of Light and their rival, Blood Music.

When strange attacks erupt within the club drug-trafficking network and draw the attention of the police, Damali realizes these killings are a bit out of the ordinary, even for vampires. Instead of neat puncture marks in the neck showing where the blood has been drained from the body, these corpses are mutilated beyond recognition, indicating a blood lust and thirst for destruction that surpasses any Damali has encountered before. Soon she discovers that behind these brutal murders is the most powerful vampire Damali has ever met-a seductive beast who is coming for her next...

## **The Awakening**

A battle is brewing in the underworld, and at the center of it all is Damali Richards, spoken word artist and vampire huntress. But she is not just any huntress; she is the millennium Neteru, a woman so powerful that the vampire world is about to start a war-one that threatens to spread onto her streets-in order to possess her...

Fallon Nuit, a rogue vampire who is one of the most powerful Damali has ever encountered, has allied himself with the deadly Amanthra demons in order to claim her. But the Vampire Council has plans for her as well. And now an unlikely variable has entered the equation: an ex-lover turned master vampire with an agenda of his own. Damali must risk trusting him once more if they are to survive.

## **The Hunted**

A Neteru---a hunter or a huntress---is born every thousand years in favor of the Warriors of Light as they fight against the Dark Realms. But Damali Richards is the Millennium Neteru. The one who will play a pivotal role in the Final War. The Warriors of Light had been waiting for her and the Dark Realms will do anything to either possess or destroy her. What they did not account for was the man who would love her.

Damali Richard has been to hell and back---literally---and she is not eager to repeat the trip. A Vampire civil war has been averted, but there were casualties and she believes that Carlos Rivera, former lover turned master vampire, is one of them. His death has not only shaken her emotions, but weakened her powers as well. But then Damali gets word that horrific killings are taking place in Brazil. The vampire civil war has left a small door to hell open and new and dangerous foes have risen from the Dark Realms. The leader, a deadly female, is set on a path of destruction. However, her blood lust hides a nefarious

plan and the newly resurrected Carlos Rivera is at the heart of it. But Damali is not about to lose her man a second time, so she plans to send this old girl right back to hell she came from---no matter who stands in her way.

### **The Bitten**

The vampire civil war has been averted, deadly were-demons have been beaten back and now it Damali Richards and Carlos Rivera (now a Council level vampire) will finally have the chance to settle in and explore their deeper, sexier love. But Carlos and Damali should know by now that there is no rest for the saviors of the known world. One of the four topside Master vampires has stolen one of the Keys-the living blood of Christ---that opens the sixth seal as foretold in Revelations. He who possesses the Key and the Seal can decide to the outcome of the Final War, a.k.a. Armageddon. With a vampire in possession of the Key, the balance between the Light and the Dark has been thrown off and even Damali is deeply affected. She is now sporting a pair of fangs. In order to retrieve the Key, Carlos and Damali are quickly thrust into a web of vampire politics and intrigue. And when Carlos's secret drug, Oblivion, finds its way into the hands of the enemies, even the seventh level of Hell comes calling.

## Glossary of Terms

**Atomic Pass:** Also known as a demat/remat—dematerialize/rematerialize maneuver. An atomic walk-thru (or an atomic pass) allows a vampire to walk through what appears to be a solid object (e.g. a door or a wall.) This is accomplished by deconstructing his/her cellular structure at the atomic level and passing through the atom gaps in the seemingly solid surface (since all surfaces are permeable at the atomic level), and then rematerializing on the other side of the obstruction. Requires the significant powers of thought concentration only available at the Master vampire level, but some strong second-generation vampires can perform this feat on a more limited basis.

**Black Blood Exchange:** Whereby two vampires siphon one another to feed, to heal a severe wound/regenerate, or do so in passion. This exchange is a capital offense when shared with those outside level six (i.e. were-demons), because with the exchange, temporary power transfers to enemy levels within the realms could accidentally occur. An exchange with an adversary level at V-point is grounds for immediate execution.

**Bulk:** Increase in muscle mass for battle.

**Covenant:** Members of The Covenant are lethal clerics that represent the twelve major religions on earth, and are regarded as spiritual assassins that protect the Guardian teams. The Vampire Nations, or The Empire, considers this group of humans to be their mortal enemies, and they are a hindrance that forms the deadly, outer protective ring around the Neteru.

**Daywalker:** A vampire impervious to sunlight that can also eat normal food—the most revered entity that can be genetically engineered via the combination of a ripened female Neteru and male Master level (or higher) vampire.

**Double-plunge:** A highly erotic simultaneous passion bite as a part of lovemaking. (Can only be accomplished by two vampires, thus a drawback for selecting a human sexual partner.)

**Drop fang:** Lower one's incisors; used as, "She made me drop fang on her, man." NOTE: Fang length is denoted by the type of bite being delivered;

- Passion-length is normally two inches (as not to create mortal injury to a human—and the inability to control the drop under these circumstances is akin to an oral erection, a source of novice embarrassment in public if seen by other higher-ranking male vampires. However, it is a magnet signal for female vampires);
- Rage-length is approximately six inches;
- Battle-length can be as much as eight to ten inches—depending on the vampire's prowess and testosterone levels. Comparisons are made between male vampires' battle-lengths within the vampire community.

**Flicker:** Change in normal eye irises denoted by color. To “flicker” gold is a warning that gall level in the chakra system has been reached (angry, but still rational.) To “flicker” red is a definite warning that mortal combat is potentially eminent, as the primal chakra system (base chakra) has been breached. To “go solid red” (glowing) means that the fight response has been engaged—also accompanied by instantaneous bulk and a battle-length fang drop. However, to “flicker” in the presence of a lover during a seduction is a compliment and cue to the level of arousal in effect... generally accompanied by a “hint of fang” showing.

**Generations:** Within the vampire hierarchy, there are multiple levels of vampires. Each generation is diluted as new vampires are made at decreasing levels, and the powers they have also diminish;

- Council Level (or throne level) is the highest caste—and they rarely come to the earth’s surface. Their primary residence is on Level Six in Hell and their blood supply is brought to them by courier transporter bats;
- Master level vampires can only be made by seated Council level vampires, (Note: Only Master Vampires have the power and skill to finesse a v-point experience, and are highly regarded for their sensual capacities);
- Second generations (or second-gens), are created by a bite from a Master Vampire;
- Third generations are made by a turn bite delivered by Second-generation level vampires (and so forth.)

**Guardians:** Usually a seven human squad (or larger) that is combat prepared, deadly, and has the linked soul mission to wipe evil from the face of the planet. Of the one hundred and forty-four thousand Guardians on earth, the one team that has the sole purpose to guard The Neteru is the most lethal. [Note: While mortal enemies with this group, vampires have a healthy respect for Guardian teams, and thus generally try to avoid them.]

**Knock Your Head Back:** Most often used in reference to the effects of being Neteru blitzed, but also means extreme ecstasy—whereby a male vampire will be moved to vulnerably expose his throat to a bite. E.g. “That woman was so fine she knocked his head back.”

**Lines:** Refer to a Master vampire’s bite lineage of victims, or those within his territory that were acquired upon taking over a region.

**Marked:** To put one’s vampire seal of protection on a human helper, or to mark a person/family as off limits to attacks, seductions, and feedings by other vampires. This mark is invisible to humans, but colors the aura of the marked individual(s.) To “mark” a lover is done at the jugular vein, whereby humans cannot see the healed bite puncture wounds, but the infrared heat tracer is apparent to other would-be vampire lovers.

**Mind Lock:** To telepathically send and receive messages between entities, and of particular usefulness in seducing humans. Also abbreviated to, “Get a lock on,” or “get locked.” E.g. “He had her locked.” Used most frequently for erotic, dream-state seductions;

- Open Channel Lock: to broadcast without touching the intended target of the lock. (Like wireless fidelity, but the thought can be pirated from the airwaves.)
- Closed Channel Lock: to broadcast while touching the intended target. (A secure channel)

**Mist or Vapor:** Used in speech as a verb; to transform into pure energy for transport or escape, but also used during arguments to denote anger. To “mist” on a relationship partner during an argument is akin to “catching an attitude.” E.g. “He’d mist on her if she didn’t shut up.” Or, “She pissed him off so bad he served her mist.” Or, “He’d vapor on her so fast that she’d be standing there arguing with herself!”

**Neteru:** (Female version) is a being revered for her capacity to produce daywalkers, but also hated as a deadly adversary when not “in season” (or “in phase.”) Also known as the huntress. (Also, “To get Neteru in one’s nose,” is akin to being mentally compromised by a female Neteru.)

**Neteru Blitzed:** Disoriented by the scent of ripening female Neteru, akin to a DUI, that compromises rational thought or survival instinct. Master vampires have less tolerance to this volatile, airborne substance, and it is considered a dangerous controlled substance.

**Nick:** To bite. However, there are several derivations of a vampire bite:

- A passion bite is considered a “nick,”
- A bite transforms a human into a vampire is paraphrased as “a turn,” “turning,” or “turned” the intended victim,
- A feed bite for blood nourishment is a “siphon,”
- An attack bite in mortal combat can be shortened in slang as, “take a throat.”

**NOTE:** To the Guardian teams and the Neteru, a bite is a bite—their slang for it is simply, “nicked” – as in, “don’t get nicked.” There is no distinction.

**Realms:** Refer to the Six Levels of Hell; Dark Realms, where Vampires rule the most sophisticated space—Level Six... Level Seven is the ruling regional area that all demon levels report to. (Often abbreviated in conversation as, “I was down on six and met with Council.”)

**Sealed pull:** (Or a pro pull) to pull out of a bite and seal the wounds upon incisor exit—thus covering the vampire’s trail. Complex coordination required at the Master level, as moving matter and reshaping the human’s cellular dynamics are required while the vampire is experiencing extreme ecstasy.

**Serve Wrist:** Vampire bites are exchanged based upon a power paradigm. To allow another entity to feed from the wrist can either be a familial act of transferring blood nourishment between line brethren, or to demonstrate power and authority over another entity that is desperate to feed for survival. If the transfer is familial, the wrist vein will be offered while both entities are standing; if it is a power demonstration—the subservient vampire will kneel while the dominant vampire stands above him/her. NOTE: A throat feeding at the jugular vein is only offered to trusted lovers at the most sensitive erogenous zone, and is a very private exchange. Other erogenous pulse points, i.e. the inside of the elbow and femoral artery, are only used during encounters with casual sexual partners. The throat offering denotes significant commitment.

**Shape-shift:** (or “shift,” for short) Try on the form of an animal. (Master Vampires have the capacity to draw upon the most specialized skills from the less sophisticated realms above theirs; level five—were-demons that have werewolf capacity, etc.; level four where there are the snakelike Amanthras, and levels three through one, where there are succubae, poltergeists and ghosts—they can glean properties from any realm above their own when required.)

**Smoke:** To kill. (Vampires that are staked burn and turn to ash, thus the derivation of the term. Also commonly used is the word, Dust or Dusted, as in “She dusted him.”)

**Subterranean:** Also expressed as, “Going sub,” means to go underground to visit the Hell realms.

**Take A Heart:** A literal translation—meaning to snatch a heart from a victim’s chest.

**Topside:** Earth, to be present where humans dwell. (“Going topside,” means to leave Hell and come up to feed, or handle other pressing business matters.)

**Vanishing Point:** The ultimate vampire orgasm, whereby the two entities astral travel at high velocity as two parallel lines that intersect at the atomic level when light bends to refract them into a single point—and the intensity of the climax is shared and recycled by both parties. Also known as, V-Point.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Vampires also have their own language, “Dananu,” which they use during important negotiations. It has the power to bend wills. Look for references of it in book #4, The Bitten.



[Terms and Definitions](#) | The Vampire Power Paradigm

### **The Vampire Power Paradigm** **A Breakdown of Vampire Generations**

**Council Level:** There are only five seated Council members in a patriarchal formation at the pentagram board table in Hell. The Chairman is the epicenter of this configuration, and was made by the entity that rules all the dark realms from level seven. This power trust of entities rarely, if ever, comes topside to feed or handle economic maneuvers. Instead they have all their needs met by a retinue of courier bats that hover in wait for commands in a swirling transport cloud above their thrones.

This group is as old as time itself, and each throne-seated Councilman was chosen as a lieutenant by The Chairman—once he was made. Their focus is pure power, and while they appreciate the sensual pleasures afforded topside dwelling lower generations, their primary concern is subtly orchestrating evil chaos topside from behind the scenes to keep fresh blood running through their feeding table. Their board table is the nexus of their power. They are conservative, detest the overt, and only allow so many vampiric “turns” to keep the vampire food chain in balance. Their goal is to evade human detection at all times. All topside vampire activities are thus registered and monitored to keep their long-term strategies in tact.

Each Master vampire that is made is not only beholden to the Council in general, but is given a specific topside territory (and thus has an affinity for) the Councilman that turned him. Only five Master vampires are made and allowed to dwell topside at any one time, and as a Master is exterminated by rebel human forces, the empty territory is replenished by a new Master chosen by and made by Council. Every one of the seven continents is divided into five rich feeding/economic/hunting zones, with two held back in reserve; one to provide a constant Council table power/blood source, the other for a never-ending blood sacrifice to the ultimate darkness that resides on level seven.

These wise, old Council level vampires draw their knowledge from their black thrones, and move catastrophic world events, wars, diseases/plagues, all major blood-letting horrors and detrimental economic shifts on their black marble board table, much like an evil game of chess. They do not waste energy on hiding their true, hideous physical forms, nor do they indulge in the idle pleasures of the flesh... although they occasionally take cerebral hiatus to remember such ancient activities. Within their individual power thrones is enough kinetic charge to create visions, the sense of touch, smell, out-of-body experiences, astral travel through

time (past only), and their power seats hold enough temporal stimulation to burn out a mere human's cerebral cortex.

From their unseen positions within Hell, this is where they derive their greatest pleasures. They are the vanguard of The Armageddon, the elite ruling class of all demonic realms, and they have every power a Master vampire has—plus enough mental strength to kill one without breaking a sweat. [NOTE: A summons to Council Chambers is always a matter of grave concern, and reason for trepidation, by Master vampires. The outcome is usually negative.]

**Master Level:** This topside lair dweller has the ability to shape-shift at will, can create strong second-generation vampires with a Council-authorized turn bite, can do closed and open channel thought communication, and can delineate the effect of their bites, via intent, as the puncture wound is delivered (i.e. a feeding siphon, a battle bite, a “turn” siphon to make a new vampire, or simply a passion nick.) This level is adept in the negotiating language of Vampyre that can bend wills, and the language morphs to accommodate the mother tongue of the most recently added Master. (Vampyre alters, but is a language palimpsest that builds upon all the languages that were at its foundation when the new Master is added.)

This entity can enter dreams and make them seem real, and can take on the most select properties of the entities residing within the five dark realms above the vampire realm (level six.) Masters, therefore, can become vaporous, like ghosts (level one). They have the ability to move matter with kinetic energy, like poltergeists (level two). But they have the added skill of being able to break down their cellular structure to the atomic level to pass through solid objects, and can manifest illusion (like succubae). However, they can also materialize solid, permanent objects, as long as they have the resources (blood capital) within their territory. This also gives them the capacity to heal with their hands and thoughts, as they can regenerate non-mortal injuries within humans, and seal near mortal injuries within themselves and other vampires.

They are as arrogant and shrewd as the serpent-beings that reside on level three, and can be as twisted as the demons (with vengeance bloodlust) that reside on level four. Although not beholden to the moon, like the were-demons (their mortal enemies) on level 5, the primal nature of that entity resides within Master vampires, as does an aversion to silver.

Of all the topside dwelling demonic forces, Master vampires are the most shrewd, calculating, sensual, intelligent beings that are also the most difficult to exterminate. They use their sexuality for the purpose of seduction in all matters of interest to them, working it to their advantage. But like their fangs, their business acumen is razor sharp. [“Business before pleasure, and pleasure with all business,” is their credo.]

Each Master vampire retains the entire history of the line within his knowledge set. Thus the older the Master, the more powerful, as this entity will employ superior knowledge of the arts, music, war, technology, science... whatever subject matter is resident in his line to achieve his aim.

True predators, with substantial economic resources, these consummate professionals are suave, debonair, subtle, and extremely hard to isolate. They not only siphon victims, but also suck the lifeblood out of communities with systemic, evil purpose set in motion by Council.

As soon as a new Master is made, a “roll call” goes out to identify all female vampires in a male Master’s territory. Each female is imprinted in his cellular recall—identified by scent, sight, timbre of voice, date/time stamp of the turn (her vampiric age), blood taste, strength... and based upon those elements, lair queens are selected as much for their sexual capacities as for their ability to hunt and protect the Master’s lair from incursion by rival males. If a new Master isn’t satisfied by the available selection within his zones, he has eminent domain to make several second gens that fit his specifications. Females are ranked by generation level, hence the higher the gen level, the more desired. Second generation females are rare, only a handful are made by each Master, and are coveted by all territory dwelling males.

[NOTE: Only Master vampires are renowned for their ability to take a lair partner to Vanishing Point. Their prowess is legendary, and while Masters are extremely cerebral beings, they can unleash deadly strength at lightening speeds. They have 360-degree vision like a bat’s, internal radar beyond second sight, and each of their five once-human senses are heightened to ultra refined levels. This added sensuality and sensory perception is their greatest strength, yet also their greatest weakness—beyond sunlight and their insatiable lust for power, ripening Neteru will draw them to their demise. These creatures are driven by the darkest of lusts in every temporal manifestation.]

**Second Generations:** Vampires at this level are considered lieutenants of the Master vampire who made them, and are beholden to that Master. In most cases, and in keeping with the five points of the pentagram, a Master vampire will acquire five second-generation males as body guards, if the takeover of a territory wasn’t an internal, hostile power grab, or will make five second-generations, if there was a territory alignment struggle. It is always the right of the newly incumbent Master to dust any second generation male that poses a power threat—and that Master will be the epicenter of the star formation (the sixth crowning jewel in it to represent the sixth ruling level of the dark realms.)

These second-generation entities can also shape-shift and become vapor, but they are not as adept in the use of Vampyre. While they can transmit sensual thoughts in close-channel communications, whereby they must touch the intended target of the transmission, their powers of focus are not as laser as a Master’s. Also, when their

maker calls them, they cannot refuse to answer... a skull spitting bat decibel is sent that offers no peace until there is an adequate response. In the same manner that Masters are summoned to Council (with a transport messenger to escort them to Chambers), when a Master calls his second generations, an immediate response is required. Their thoughts are at the behest of their maker—for territorial security, that comes in the form of routine mental sweeps to monitor for a potential coup or treason, etc. However, only Master level vampires can take a territory grievance to Council. All disputes, topside, end at the autonomous Master level.

In addition, “seconds” can materialize and dematerialize non-living tissue or dead objects, as well as cast illusion—but they do not have the capacity to heal living tissue.

Second generation vampires are strong, lethal, shrewd, and very sensual, but are not nearly as dangerous (or physically as strong) as a Master vampire. The information retained in the line is not immediately at their disposal. When turned into a vampire by a Master, information is downloaded into their consciousness on a “need to know basis” only, along with the instinctive synapse absorption of how to “home to” their maker, how to feed, and other basic survival skills. Only second gen males are given the route to a Master’s secret lairs, and only the most trusted among them (or the occasional female lair partner) is allowed to know the exact location of the Master when he’s in a vulnerable, regenerative state.

**Third Generations:** This group is made by a turn bite from a second-generation vampire, which must be first authorized by a Master (to keep the food chain in balance.) Like second gens, they do not require as much blood for regeneration fuel as Masters and Council, which feed the most, (almost insatiably), and thus this lower generation does not use up as much territorial blood resources. “Thirds” also retain everything that second generation vampires can do—except the ability to materialize and dematerialize matter. They can cast illusion, but cannot enter dreams to siphon by thought. They can only influence human dreams and twist comprehension, not totally bend wills. As the strain dilutes, so do the powers within each generation as it gets further and further away from the original source (the Master of the line.)

**Fourth Generations:** “Fourth” can become vapor, enter thoughts through touch, can cause erotic dreams for seduction, but have lost the capacity to manifest objects or effectively cast illusion for sustained periods. Although still stronger than the average human, and although these creatures can be deadly adversaries, this level of vampire must rely more heavily on non-combative seductions to get within a victim’s kill range or to influence a desired transaction.

This generation (like the fifth and sixth generations) is still made up of “the undead,” but their deaths are drawn out, usually precipitated by an unexplained illness, unnatural aversions to sunlight, food, etc., before the victim expires.

However, once expired, if the victim awakes in three nights, it is a newly turned vampire.

**Fifth Generations and Lower:** As each generation becomes further removed from the original line source, power decrements. In the fifth generational level, one might find a physically strong (emotionally twisted) vampire masked as a serial killer with an eerie obsession for human blood—a being that is intelligent enough to avoid immediate capture. But, for example, by the eighth generation, one might find a human being with heightened awareness in one of the sensory areas, but who predominantly gravitates to the dark arts, murderous topics, child molestation, unnecessary, excessive violence, a hybrid human-demon whom is given to inexplicable rages, etc.

### **Vampire Vulnerabilities:**

- **Sunlight:** Fatal, vampires will instantly incinerate and turn to ash on contact. Ultra violet light (artificial, man made version) is also deadly, but requires a vampire to be trapped under it for a sustained period of five to ten seconds before it become fatal.
- **Human religious relics/icons:** Regardless of culture/religion and only if the wearer has true faith -- causes severe burns where the icon touches the vampire's skin and leaves a brand that may not allow the wounded area to fully regenerate.
- **Prayers and prayer lines (places anointed by positive spiritual intercessions):** Have the same effect as religious symbols and relics. However, if a significant prayer line is crossed, spontaneous combustion can occur. Prayer lines also make it impossible for a vampire to employ atomic walk-thru to enter a prayer sealed area, and can sound seal an environment from open-channel eavesdropping. A mental prayer can create a mental scorch to a vampire's thoughts, or create a surface skin burn, if that vampire is in a mind-lock with, or in physical contact with, (or during a bite transaction) the praying human—hence why seductions are favored over outright attacks, where humans generally pray for deliverance at the last moments of life.
- **Hallowed Earth:** Dirt from sacred grounds -- will slowly incinerate a vampire on contact in excruciating implosion. If delivered internally by a hollow point bullet/shell, internal explosion will occur on impact.
- **Holy Water:** Water blessed by a cleric of any human faith (who is a true believer) -- causes severe burns, can maim or kill a vampire if hurled like a Molotov cocktail or from an instrument used like a flame thrower. Often used by Guardian teams like C4 explosive and/or lit gasoline.
- **The Sacrament:** Blessed wafers/wine (and other cultural blessed items) – if

hurled will instantly ignite a vampire in flames. If ingested by the vampire—will fatally poison without an antidote. If recently ingested by the victim and is in the human's bloodstream when bitten, it will ward off a turn, and will make the vampire sick/lose power, can be fatal (depending on the concentration in the human's blood and how much the vampire consumed.)

- Silver: A metal -- not a substance that can kill vampires on impact, but it causes severe pain, and makes wounds slow to heal. Cuts from the edge of a silver blade, bullet wounds, etc. burn until the silver is removed from the vampire's flesh.

- Ripening Neteru scent: The scent of a female Neteru that is "in phase" and can conceive a daywalker, once every seven years of her fertile maturity. It is like a sensual atomic bomb lure to male Master vampires and higher Council level vampires. They become disoriented, unable to shrewdly conceal themselves or to sense danger... it will draw them out of their lairs on a quest to obtain the female bearing the scent, and will cause them to fight other males (even those on their side) to eliminate competition. Lower generation males are seduced by it, but because of their lesser sensory capacities, they do not display the pure sensual intolerance for it that Masters exhibit.

- Garlic, religious incense (like myrrh, frankincense, etc.): Herbs that create severe nausea, attacks the nasal passages and sensitive sinuses that give vampires heightened olfactory abilities.

- Colloidal Silver (if ingested in tainted bottled blood): Poison. Causes a slow, painful death as the digestive track of a vampire is critically burned from the inside out.

- Anointing Oils: Blessed oils – used to keep a vampire from physically or psychically siphoning/biting a human being – acts as body armor for the human, makes it nearly impossible to break the human skin to deliver the bite... burns the vampire's tongue and oral soft tissue, will taint the vampire's blood if swallowed, and has the same result as silver poisoning, if ingested.

- Holy books, scrolls, words, phrases, and spoken words, Holy names: Sacred objects and words and the names of The Most High – pierce the vampire's mind and ears, can rupture eardrums, create migraine headaches, and can cause blackouts.

- Reflective Surfaces: Mirrors, et al. – reduce the vampire's capacity to conceal their true identity, and are therefore avoided. For example, a mirror (and the lack of the vampire's reflection) is a dead giveaway and will blow their human cover.

- Fatal Injuries: A stake through the heart, ripping out the heart and crushing it, or beheading are the most effective and expedient ways to exterminate a vampire in battle. This method is most often used in vampire-to-vampire mortal combat

disputes, or in Guardian/Covenant vampire attacks. [NOTE: the Neteru's sword, while not made of wood, has the same result as a wooden stake when plunged in a vampire's heart. The cut from the Isis blades also deliver a wounds that are extremely slow, if not impossible, to heal. The point of the three-blade sword forms a crucifix at the tip, which will not seal on a vampire's skin, thus the vampire will "bleed out" and flat-line.]

## Discussion Questions and Activities

1. The novel begins in New Orleans. Research the history of New Orleans to find reasons to support New Orleans as a fitting choice for a vampire tale. Below are some possible online sites to aid you in your research:  
[http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/New\\_Orleans%2C\\_Louisiana](http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/New_Orleans%2C_Louisiana)  
<http://www.nola.com/haunted/>  
<http://goneworleans.about.com/od/famouslandmarks/a/hauntedno.htm>  
<http://www.parascope.com/articles/1097/neworleansintro.htm>  
[http://www.erzulies.com/new\\_orleans\\_voodoo\\_history.php](http://www.erzulies.com/new_orleans_voodoo_history.php)
2. Why do you think that the author placed the quote, “Being unconquerable lies within yourself; being conquerable lies within the enemy” before Chapter 1? How does this quote relate to the characters and events in the novel? Find a quote that you think applies to the novel and explain your choice.
3. The heroine of the novel and series is a Spoken Word artist. Use the site below or a website of your choice to research a spoken word artist. Does this artist share your views on social or political issues?  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoken\\_word](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoken_word)  
Create a spoken word piece that captures the content of a chapter of *Minion*. Perform your work for your class.
4. The Nzinga Queen is mentioned in Chapter One. Below is some information about her from the website  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pwmn\\_2/hd\\_pwmn\\_2.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pwmn_2/hd_pwmn_2.htm)

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, states on the Central African coast found their economic power and territorial control threatened by Portuguese attempts to establish a colony at Luanda (in present-day Angola). Many of these states had become regional powers through trade in African slaves. It was the growing demand for this human labor in New World colonies such as Brazil that ultimately led Portugal to seek military and economic control of this region. Old trading partners came under military attack by Portuguese soldiers and indigenous African raiders in search of captives for the slave trade, and rulers were forced to adapt to these new circumstances or face certain destruction. One leader who proved to be adept at overcoming these difficulties was the queen of Ndongo, Ana Nzinga.

In 1624, Ana Nzinga inherited rule of Ndongo, a state to the east of Luanda populated primarily by Mbundu peoples. At that moment, the kingdom was under attack from both Portuguese as well as neighboring African aggressors. Nzinga realized that, to remain viable, Ndongo had to reposition itself as an intermediary rather than a supply zone in the slave trade. To achieve this, she allied Ndongo with Portugal, simultaneously acquiring a partner in its fight against its African

enemies and ending Portuguese slave raiding in the kingdom. Ana Nzinga's baptism, with the Portuguese colonial governor serving as godfather, sealed this relationship. By 1626, however, Portugal had betrayed Ndongo, and Nzinga was forced to flee with her people further west, where they founded a new state at Matamba, well beyond the reach of the Portuguese. To bolster Matamba's martial power, Nzinga offered sanctuary to runaway slaves and Portuguese-trained African soldiers and adopted a form of military organization known as kilombo, in which youths renounced family ties and were raised communally in militias. She also fomented rebellion within Ndongo itself, which was now governed indirectly by the Portuguese through a puppet ruler. Nzinga found an ally in the Netherlands, which seized Luanda for its own mercantile purposes in 1641. Their combined forces were insufficient to drive the Portuguese out of Angola, however, and after Luanda was reclaimed by the Portuguese, Nzinga was again forced to retreat to Matamba. From this point on, Nzinga focused on developing Matamba as a trading power by capitalizing on its position as the gateway to the Central African interior. By the time of her death in 1661, Matamba was a formidable commercial state that dealt with the Portuguese colony on an equal footing. Nzinga, who reconverted to Christianity before her death at the age of eighty-one, became a sensation in Europe following the 1769 publication of Jean-Louis Castilhon's colorful "biography," *Zingha, Reine d'Angola*, in Paris.

Alexander Ives Bortolot  
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What similarities can you find between Nzinga and the female characters in *Minion*? What is your opinion of her ideas for ruling Ndongo and Matamba?

5. Philadelphia has a varied role for and against the institution of slavery. In Chapter One, mention is made of the slave-auction square in Society Hill. What have you learned about Philadelphia in the time of slavery? Below an article that gives more information about the history and controversy of slavery in Philadelphia. After reading the article, discuss why the author of this article states: "It may also change the way we tell the Philadelphia story of slavery. It's not only a tale of victimization and indignity. It's also a tale of courageous human beings - slave and free - taking history into their own hands."

Source: [\*Philadelphia Inquirer\*](#)

Date: July 11, 2002

Byline: Jane Eisner

### **How to tell Phila. slavery story**

The story of slavery in Philadelphia will be told. That much seems certain.

Now that a House committee voted Tuesday to "appropriately commemorate" the eight slaves who toiled in President Washington's official residence near Independence Hall, the National Park Service is sure to comply.

This uncomfortable paradox of history - that, just steps away from the birthplace of freedom, the father of freedom owned other human beings - can no longer be brushed aside.

But as historians argue over how to tell the story of Washington's slaves, it's worth remembering another occasion on which controversy over slavery made headlines and jarred sensibilities in this Northern city. What happened a century and a half ago may have a telling message for today.

For about a month in 1855, John Hill Wheeler became perhaps the most famous slaveholder in the United States, all because of an escaped slave and a notorious trial in Philadelphia.

I read of Wheeler in the fascinating introduction written by Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates to *The Bondwoman's Narrative* by Hannah Crafts. Gates purchased the narrative at auction and vigorously authenticated that it was, indeed, written by an escaped slave just before the Civil War. He concluded that the "Mr. Wheeler" in the narrative was John Hill Wheeler of Washington and North Carolina, a federal bureaucrat and plantation owner who was a staunch - and, in the end, foolhardy - defender of the entire system of slavery.

Wheeler, it turns out, was no match for Jane Johnson, the slave who accompanied him when he sailed into Philadelphia on July 18, 1855. Johnson, traveling with her two sons, had wanted to escape and sent a message to William Still, a free black man who ran the Underground Railroad. Still and Passmore Williamson, a white abolitionist, met Johnson and her sons on the boat and implored her to leave with them.

"If you prefer freedom to slavery, as we suppose everybody does," Still told her, "you have the chance to accept it now. Act calmly - don't be frightened by your master - you are as much entitled to your freedom as we are, or as he is."

Wheeler was the one who was frightened - and furious. When he tried to stop Johnson's escape, a minor scuffle ensued, and Williamson put his hands on Wheeler. That was enough to get them all charged with riot, forcible abduction, and assault.

Not only that, but Wheeler also filed a civil and a criminal complaint against the men who, he contended, violated the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act by "stealing" Johnson, his "property." The trial was a cause célèbre - especially when Jane Johnson made a daring appearance in court. In the end, Johnson stayed free, and Still was acquitted, though Williamson spent a much-publicized three months in jail.

Perhaps most important, Wheeler failed spectacularly in his claim that, even in Philadelphia, the slaves were his property. "The trial forced Northerners to address the

troublesome issue of slavery brought onto Northern territories," says local historian William C. Kashatus.

It may also change the way we tell the Philadelphia story of slavery. It's not only a tale of victimization and indignity. It's also a tale of courageous human beings - slave and free - taking history into their own hands.

Years before Washington and his slaves came to live on Market Street, Benjamin Franklin carried a petition to the Continental Congress to abolish slavery. The antislavery society he helped establish in 1775 - the same one Passmore Williamson later belonged to - still is in existence today.

In fact, two of the eight slaves owned by Washington made daring escapes before their owner returned to Virginia.

David Moltke-Hansen, president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, says scholars have come a long way from viewing slaves merely as infantilized victims, stripped of personality and humanity. "There's a good deal of discussion now about how slaves negotiated space for themselves, asserted themselves," he says. "But the popular imagination hasn't caught up with that."

Now is our chance.

(Here is the web address of a unit on slavery in Philadelphia that you may also wish to use with your students)

[http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs\\_lp\\_casestudy.htm](http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_lp_casestudy.htm)

6. In books and movies, a cross is often used to protect humans from vampires. Throughout this novel, religious relics and symbols provide protection for the characters who wear them. Interview someone of a different religious faith than your own to learn about the history and significance of their religious symbols.
7. In Chapter Three, we learn about the safe house where Damali and her crew live. Create a blueprint for your own ideal safe house with a written explanation of its safety features.
8. One of the themes of this book may be the clash between the forces of good and evil within, and between, certain characters. Select one character and explain how both good and evil are a part of their personality.
9. In Chapter Five, there is a reference to Jose having an imbalance of white blood cells. Research the function of each type of blood cell and what constitutes a healthy blood count.
10. Reread the first two paragraphs of Chapter Six noting the use of language to create vivid sensory descriptions of a Chinatown. Think about a neighborhood in

Philadelphia with a distinct ethnic or cultural flavor that you have visited or lived in and describe the sights, tastes, smells, and feel of this location.

11. Throughout *Minion*, Damali is urged to be a member of a team rather than a solo act. What advantages does she gain by being supported by the guardians? Describe an activity in your own life in which you are a part of a team. How do the strengths and talents of others in your team activity support your overall goal? What difficulties can arise when you are part of a team and how can these difficulties be alleviated?
12. There are references in the book to both real and mythological events that have affected the earth and other bodies in our solar system. We are aware that earlier in the history of the world, scientific inquiry was not as sophisticated and developed as it is today. It is thought that myths were created as one way to explain events for which people did not have a scientific explanation. Select a mythological or scientific reference in the book that interests you and research its origin. Here are some online sites that you may wish to consult:  
<http://www.pantheon.org/>  
<http://home.comcast.net/~chris.s/myth.html>  
<http://sln.fi.edu/>  
<http://www.solarviews.com/eng/toc.htm>
13. To be successful as a Spoken Word Artist, Damali had to sharpen her oratorical skills. What are the characteristics and qualities of an effective speaker? Create a checklist of these characteristics and qualities. Find a spoken word piece that appeals to you and practice performing it with a partner using the items on your checklist as your guide for an effective performance. Help create and participate in an in-class Spoken Word Event.
14. What is the role of the guardians in *Minion*? Think about the powers of any one of the guardians and explain how you would use these powers to solve a problem plaguing the world today.
15. The character of Carlos faces many challenges in this novel. He is bent on avenging the deaths of his friends and relatives. What is his plan? What are the legal and moral controls that can limit a person's desire for revenge? Carlos also has to resist a variety of temptations to save his family, friends, and soul. How are you able to resist some of the potentially harmful temptations that are offered to you in your daily life?
16. In Chapter Twelve, Damali writes about her feelings in her spoken word journal. Writers of the past sometimes wrote about their feelings in poetry. Read the poem below and discuss what the author is feeling. Create a modern

interpretation of the content of *We Wear the Mask*, and write your interpretation as either a poem, rap, or spoken word piece.

### **Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)**

#### **We Wear the Mask**

1 We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
2 It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--  
3 This debt we pay to human guile;  
4 With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
5 And mouth with myriad subtleties.

6 Why should the world be otherwise,  
7 In counting all our tears and sighs?  
8 Nay, let them only see us, while  
9 We wear the mask.

10 We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
11 To thee from tortured souls arise.  
12 We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
13 Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
14 But let the world dream otherwise,  
15 We wear the mask!

(Note to teachers: If you wish to do additional work with poetry, an online site for teaching ideas for Maya Angelou is found at:  
<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/angelou.htm> )

17. Damali and Marlene are frequently locked in a struggle over freedom and control. At one point Damali says to Marlene, “You have to allow a person to figure out some stuff on their own.” Why is universal about their struggle, and what is your relationship and struggle with the Marlene in your life?
18. Even before his conversion to a vampire, Carlos can be seen as a predator. How does his lifestyle affect his family and community? Explain who you view as the predators in your community and who you view as the guardians.
19. In Chapter Thirteen, we are given an explanation of the minion, the term used for the title of the book. Why do you think that the author selected this title and do you agree with her choice?