Holding Out for a Shero:

Study of the Female Hero in Four Urban Fantasy Novels

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C-level Essay
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Abstract

This essay analyses the female hero in four urban fantasy novels, and evaluates several examples of the genre to find out whether or not the heroes can be found to be "sheroes" or traditionally male heroes. The study outlines the myth of the hero's journey and gives examples of the masculine as well as the feminine approach and how they apply to the four novels. The attributes of the hero are also reviewed and put into perspective within the studied material. It appears that while it is often argued that the urban fantasy genre has strong woman protagonists, the heroes therein are not "sheroes" since they behave like typically male heroes.

Keywords: urban fantasy, hero, journey, heroine, female hero, Laurell K. Hamilton, Kim Harrison, Ilona Andrews, Carrie Vaughn.
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Introduction

Margaret Hourihan summarizes Northrop Frye's argument in *Deconstructing the Hero* by claiming that "the quest myth is the basic myth of all literature" (2). There is no story as well known as that of the hero who set out on a quest to save the day and win the princess in the end. The hero might be a fairytale prince, a hardboiled private eye or a pilot in a science fiction movie - but regardless of his environment, the hero is still the epitome of manhood and a man of action. Any women featured in his story are supporting characters like mothers, brides or villains (Pearson and Pope 4). However, sometimes the action-filled story might have a female protagonist, and then the question is raised - can a woman be a hero without mimicking the male traits of the hero character or does she then become just one of the boys? Christine Mains et al describe a woman in a hero's position with a character and plot that differ enough to distinguish her from her male counterpart (179). Does this woman, this "shero" exist?

The question is well worth asking, especially since one of the most popular genres today is urban fantasy which features women as strong protagonists. *Wikipedia* defines urban fantasy as a sub-genre of fantasy that has been developing since the early 1980s. It is set in a contemporary urban environment containing supernatural elements. The "Urban Fantasy" entry in *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy* questions, though, whether urban fantasy is a genre of its own or a mode which can exist within several genres. It is also argued that urban fantasy has been around since people started to move to cities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where the narrative is said to describe how different cultures meet and interact (307). But, it is also noted that some of the themes and tropes that are used in urban fantasy "overlap with those of magical realism and those of the New Weird" (307).

The popular definition of urban fantasy, however, sides with the description set forth by *Wikipedia*. Even authors within the genre describe it as "kick-ass heroines with
vampires and assorted magic" (C. Vaughn, "Carrie Vaughn's Analysis of Urban Fantasy Part I: The Formula") and "leather-clad chicks kicking ass in an urban environment" (Saintcrow). Vaughn observes that the "genre is admired for its strong women characters" ("Carrie Vaughn's Analysis Part III") whereas Saintcrow claims that it is "mostly women's fiction." Both authors express their concerns regarding the genre, which can be considered destabilizing due to the portrayal of strong women ("Carrie Vaughn's Analysis Part III" ) and because the genre itself is considered to be women's fiction (Saintcrow). The dichotomy is apparent. Are the women of urban fantasy truly strong "sheroes," or can they be dismissed as "men with breasts" (Mains et al 179)?

This essay will examine how the protagonists of urban fantasy are characterized as male heroes rather than "sheroes." The novels chosen for the essay are written by well-known authors within the urban fantasy genre; in fact, two of them, Laurell K. Hamilton and Kim Harrison, are often claimed to have contributed to making the genre what it is today. Laurell K. Hamilton's Anita Blake series is often mentioned as an example of urban fantasy and can also be said to be one of the series that defined the genre itself. *Entertainment Weekly*, *USA Today* and *Time* have all credited Hamilton to be one of the most important authors in urban fantasy, and *Library Journal* calls the author "a pioneer." *Guilty Pleasures* is the first novel in the Anita Blake series, in which we are introduced to the character of Anita Blake and the world she inhabits. It is a parallel world to ours where supernatural beings like vampires and werewolves exist, and where Anita works as an animator and as a vampire executioner. Kim Harrison is another influential author in the urban fantasy genre, which *Amazon.com* notes in one of the editorial reviews for one of her later novels, *For A Few Demons More*. She is also praised as the best example of the urban fantasy genre in the *Writer's Digest* report on popular fiction. Her protagonist Rachel Morgan lives in an alternate world where a pandemic spread by gene-manipulated tomatoes has killed off most of the
world's human population, causing the supernatural creatures to come out of hiding. *Dead Witch Walking* is the first book of the series and introduces Rachel and her world.

Carrie Vaughn is a third acclaimed author in the genre and noted in the list of contemporary urban fantasy authors compiled by *Library Journal*. Vaughn writes a series about a werewolf named Kitty Norville, in which *Kitty and the Midnight Hour* is the first novel. Kitty works as a DJ at a local radio station, and she accidently starts up a late-night advice show called The Midnight Hour which talks about the supernatural. Kitty is a closet werewolf who soon reveals her identity as a prenatural being. Finally, Ilona Andrews is also mentioned in the contemporary urban fantasy authors list drawn up by *Library Journal*. The author has had several of her novels on the *New York Times* Bestseller list (Ilona Andrews.com). *Magic Bites* is the first novel in the Kate Daniels series, and it is set in an alternate world where magic has lashed back against technology. When magic works, all technological things die, and vice versa. Kate Daniels is a mercenary who do freelance work, but in *Magic Bites*, she takes on the task of investigating the death of her guardian. It is an investigation that will bring her into contact with the Pack and the Beast Lord, but she will also find ties to the necromancers and their vampires. The four novels will from here on be referred to in their abbreviated form: *Guilty Pleasures (GP)*, *Magic Bites (MB)*, *Kitty and the Midnight Hour (KatMH)*, and *Dead Witch Walking (DWW)*.

The essay will start by outlining the hero myth and the story which is behind it and show how the urban fantasy novels can be said to be prime examples of the hero's journey, whether it is a feminine path or a masculine one. This discussion will be continued in the examination of the heroic traits often associated with male heroes but which are cropping up in these novels as well. It seems that even though the urban fantasy protagonists are portrayed as strong women, they are still too close to their male counterparts to be counted as real sheroes.
The Hero's Journey

The hero's journey or the monomyth is a term coined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. It is used to describe the pattern found in myths and stories from all over the world for thousands of years since the Epic of Gilgamesh (Schmidt 192) and the Odyssey (Hourihan 10). We are familiar with this pattern from literature as well as movies. The hero myth is simple in itself, and unfolds in a natural, linear progression of events. The threefold journey, originally outlined by Campbell, has been redefined by many other authors, among them Victoria Schmidt. She maps a masculine as well as a feminine journey for the hero in *45 Master Characters*, and calls the masculine journey a "new story model" (243) where the hero is "given a chance to awaken" (243). Moreover, she explains that the difference between the journeys is simply that of gender, and that men and women face different issues in order to develop in terms of power, support and perception of the world (193). The development of power is especially interesting as Schmidt notes that "women come into their power to realize their authentic goals and connectedness, whereas men let go of their power to realize their authentic goals and connectedness" (194). This view is supported by Carol Pearson and Kathleen Pope, who state that the a female hero conquers her world through understanding rather domination (5). I will argue that Anita in *GP*, and Kate in *MB* go through the masculine hero's journey, whereas Rachel in *DWW* and Kitty in *KatMH* take the feminine journey.

The Masculine Journey

The masculine journey is a term used by Victoria Schmidt in *45 Master Characters*, and it describes the hero's road to transformation. The change is that of attitude, which takes place at the third stage of the journey in which the hero must choose to rebel or awaken (192).
The Masculine Journey

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<td>5. Invitations</td>
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<th>Act III - Transformation</th>
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<td>7. Death / A Fork in the Road</td>
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Table 1. The Hero's Journey according to Schmidt (2001).

The first part of the journey is where the hero is found at home and everything appears to be normal. Schmidt calls this point of origin the "perfect world" (244), and Hourihan makes the claim that the hero's home stands for civilization and order in contrast to the wilderness which he is about to embark on a journey into (22-28). The hero goes on with his everyday life, and this seems to be true for the urban fantasy heroes as well. In GP Anita is at work and then goes home to sleep seeing the sunrise on the drive home (6). Similarly, in MB, Kate is found at home in her house (1).

Then the call for the quest comes for the hero. In Kate's case this means that she is asked about her guardian by a necromancer (Andrews 4), and she takes up the quest immediately as she goes to make a call about her guardian. Campbell, however, points out that the hero might refuse to take up the challenge and needs to be persuaded to do so (59). This applies to Anita who will not accept the quest of a murder investigation instigated by the vampires of the city: "Tell them, whoever they are, that I don't work for vampires" (Hamilton 5). But the hero has to accept the call or it would not be a hero's story. According to Schmidt, it might be a friend or even an enemy that pushes the hero into accepting the quest (249-50), and for Anita, it is both since the enemy uses her friend Catherine as bait in order to bully her into accepting the job (Hamilton 32).
Once the hero has accepted the call, he is ready to "venture into the wilderness" (Hourihan 22). He might be accompanied by others and he might have gained an item to help him on the way. This approach is supported by Campbell who mentions a visit from a supernatural being to aid the hero (69). Kate gains aid in the form of words of power left for her by her guardian in his office (Andrews 23). Later on she also acquires a temporary helper in the form of a shapeshifter whom she is forced to accept as her bodyguard. Anita has several companions to help her along the way, but they are not accompanying her on the whole journey: Phillip is assigned by the vampires to help her, Jean-Claude helps her for his own personal gain, and Edward is merely showing up at certain points to help Anita out of tricky situations. Schmidt remarks that even though the hero is leaving to go on his journey, he is still unsure of what he truly wants inside (252). Kate does not reflect on her inner goals, though, or what she truly wants as she goes about to solve the murder of her guardian; she is strictly looking at the investigation as a task to solve. Anita is sent out on her journey because she wishes to protect an innocent friend, and, therefore, does not reflect either. She is asked why she hates vampires and kills them, and laconically replies that it is "'my job, and I'm good at it'" (Hamilton 79).

The second stage of the journey starts once the hero has left the safe haven of home and civilization. During this stage the hero "must survive a succession of trials" (Campbell 97), "face obstacles" (Schmidt 283) and "is threatened by dangerous opponents" (Hourihan 9). Both Anita and Kate run into problems during the course of their investigations, and have to fight off enemies along the way. When it comes to Anita, she goes to a vampire freak party, raise a zombie, is shot at by a hit man and finally faces a pack of ghouls. Furthermore, she is forced to deal with vampires along the way as well as her fear of being controlled by them. Kate needs to deal with a vampire attack, the red herring in the form of a man she dates and she needs defeat a stalking horse set up by the real villain.
The hero will have some "small success" (Schmidt 282) when it comes to the obstacles he encounters, and will also, according to Schmidt's model of the journey, receive an invitation to go down the feminine journey. The invitation can be that he is inquired about his goal in life or that he is asked not to be a part of violence (259). The hero will, however, not respond to the invitation because "he won't let down his defences". Anita's quest is a murder investigation, her small success can be said to be the clues she is gaining. She learns that the vampire freak parties have a connection to the murders, that a hate group might be involved, and finally who the murderer truly is. This is like the story in MB. Kate is involved in a murder investigation as well, and deducts her conclusion from the clues that she gathers in the course of the investigation. Anita does not truly receive an invitation to the female journey; she is just warned what might happen to her: "Anita, damnit, these creatures are using you. They want you discouraged and frightened, so they can control you. If you let the guilt mess with your head, you're going to get killed" (Hamilton 89-90). Kate does, however, receive the invitation as her friend Anna tells her: "And I know you're looking for the murderer. You must drop it, Kate" (Andrews 45).

The hero now enters the final phase of Act II, which is called Trials. In this stage of the journey, the hero faces new obstacles. Schmidt explains that this phase is used to set up everything for the final act, and prepare the hero for "facing his worst fear in the next stage" (262). The hero starts onto the path of either awakening or rebellion, which according to Schmidt, is shown in how the hero perceives things. If he is on the path of rebellion, "he has a false sense of superiority" (283) whereas if he is on the path to awakening, "things seem to be falling apart for him." Kate is thrown a red herring by the true villain, and fights this stalking horse successfully. She realizes afterwards that there are still loose ends, and when she tells the Beast Lord about her thoughts, he replies that the case is closed and that Kate is merely seeking further attention (Andrews 191). At this stage, Kate feels how the world
crumbles around her, when even her allies think that she is incorrect in her assumptions and aches to be in the spotlight. Kate is therefore on the path to awakening. Anita, by contrast, has to face her fears when she meets the head vampire in a graveyard and has to agree to let the vampire feed from her in order to gain a favour (Hamilton 166). Even though Anita is facing opposition, she still has a sense of superiority. She is therefore on the path of rebellion.

In the last stage of the journey, the hero reaches his goal (Hourihan 9). This is not that simple as it may seem, though, as the hero has had to choose which path he is to go down on. If the hero awakens, he will face his flaws and accept the change. He will then go on to victory and rewards. On the other hand, if he rebels, he will refuse the change and thereby go down "a path of no return" (Schmidt 275) where he will fail. Kate Daniels is a hero on the path of awakening, and thereby has to face her "own mortality, fears and shortcomings" (Schmidt 267). Kate faces the villain of the story, and has to realize that her words of power cannot protect her: "He didn't die. I hadn't expected him to. One who can weave the power words into sentences wouldn't die from a single word" (Andrews 213). Kate is humbled, and she realizes that she has to ask others for help. She contacts the Pack and the Beast Lord, and she works with the Knights of Merciful Aid in order to take down the villain. She is told by the Crusader that he can help her find a weapon to kill the villain with if she helps him in turn (Andrews 231). Together with the Beast Lord and the Crusader, Kate goes to face the monster. It is because she fights together with them that they secure the victory. Thus, as Schmidt puts it, the hero who has awakened sacrifices his ego, and humbles himself in order to win (275).

Anita Blake in GP is, on the other hand, a hero on the path of rebellion. When her friend Phillip is killed by the vampires, Anita is blinded by her rage and sets out on a path of vengeance. Schmidt describes this kind of behaviour when she outlines the rebelling hero who refuses to accept death (283) and wants to retaliate in order to get revenge (268). Anita
has also been bitten by the leader of the vampires, and this only makes her even more angry: "I bet she thought I'd be scared absolutely shitless of her. She was right on that. But I spend most of my waking hours confronting and destroying things that I fear" (Hamilton 217). Anita acknowledges her fears, but she does not look into herself or reflects on her weaknesses which is what an awakening hero would do. Instead, she turns to her friend Edward to receive more firepower, which, according to Schmidt, would be seen as yet another sign of the rebelling hero (272). Even though Anita does manage to face the monster and kill it, she has failed to awaken. She has not progressed in comparison to her original state (Schmidt 276). In fact, Anita describes herself in basically the same manner as she did in the beginning of the novel: "I know who and what I am. I am The Executioner, and I don't date vampires. I kill them" (Hamilton 266). She has failed to grow as a hero, and therefore also fails to be rewarded in the end.

**The Feminine Journey**

The feminine journey is defined by Schmidt as "a journey where the hero must go deep inside herself and change throughout the story" (191-92). This journey differs from the masculine one in the sense that the hero awakens earlier in the story, and realizes that she has to change in order to fulfil the journey. The pattern of this story is old, and follows the myth of the Descent of the goddess Inanna, which Schmidt argues is "one of the oldest recorded myths in history" (192). Rachel Morgan in *DWW* and Kitty Norville in *KatMH* can be said to take the feminine journey since they awaken early on in the narrative and take steps to change.

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<tr>
<th>The Feminine Journey</th>
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<td><strong>Act I - Containment</strong></td>
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<td>1. The Illusion of the Perfect World</td>
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<td>2. The Betrayal or Realization</td>
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<td>3. The Awakening - Preparing for the Journey</td>
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<td><strong>Act II - Transformation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Descent - Passing the Gates of Judgement</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Eye of the Storm</td>
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<td>6. Death - All Is Lost</td>
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Act III - Emergence
7. Support
8. Rebirth - The Moment of Truth
9. Return to the Perfect World

Table 2. The feminine version of the hero's journey according to Schmidt (2001).

Like the hero who sets out on the masculine version of the journey, the feminine hero begins in the perfect world. For her, however, it is just an illusion of a perfect world. She is caught in what appears to be a gilded cage, but something will happen to make her realize that she is trapped. She will have to change her life, because "her world falls apart" (Schmidt 207). With the decision to change, she prepares to go on her journey. This includes finding the means and tools needed during her journey (Schmidt 214). Rachel realizes that she is not satisfied with her job, as she is assigned the tasks that should be done by someone with less experience (Harrison 6). Kitty is a werewolf radio DJ with her own show. She defends her desire to keep it to the werewolf pack's alpha when he asks her to quit it. The show makes her stronger as a person, which echoes in her werewolf life where she is at the bottom of the pack. She gains courage, however, and can face one of the other pack members:

Zan went through this whenever Carl wasn't around. I usually cowered and slunk away to hide behind T.J. Zan could take me, but he couldn't take T.J. That was how the dominance thing worked.

I was so not in the mood for this shit.

'No,' I said, not realizing what I was saying until the word was out of my mouth.

'No? What do you mean, no?' . . .

'I mean no. I mean get out of my face.' (KatMH 58)

Both Rachel and Kitty make the conscious choice to change their lives. Rachel quits her job even though it means that she will live with a death threat. She gathers her tools in the form of
spells to help her through her journey, but also realizes that they are ineffective as the spells are just aimed at defending herself and not designed to attack others (Harrison 103). Kitty learns self defense but reflects that the training will not help much. As a werewolf, she is stronger than a human, but still weaker than a vampire (KatMH 47). Moreover, Kitty advances in her pack by making the choice of fighting Zan, which is a huge change in her life and her standing in the pack.

The feminine journey next takes the hero to the stage of transformation which Schmidt calls the Descent - Passing the Gates of Judgement (218-23), where the hero faces her fears realizing that she cannot defend herself against them. Kitty says "I wanted to be safe" (KatMH 65) but she finds that she is not any more. She is almost assassinated while on the air, is threatened by a master vampire who wants her to quit her show; and she sees cracks in the structure of the werewolf pack which has been her safe haven so far. Rachel has a death threat hanging over her head, has problems with her room mate and she is caught red-handed in the guise of a mink as she breaks into the office of Trent Kalamack.

According to Schmidt, at this stage the hero has a small victory and is lulled into thinking that her journey is over, but this is just the "Eye of the Storm" (226-27). Rachel escapes from Trent Kalamack with the help of her friends, she makes up plans to trap Kalamack in turn and finds the means to do that. Kitty tries to stay out of the internal pack struggles, helps the master vampire and thereby gains his approval of her show. Moreover, she helps the police with a murder investigation and finds the murderer, another werewolf, and kills him.

Next, the hero enters the stage which Schmidt calls "Death - All is Lost" (228). This is "a dark moment where all seems lost" (229) and the hero is defeated. She can no longer see the light at the end of the tunnel, and therefore, gives up. She may even be close to actual death (Schmidt 230). Rachel is almost killed by a demon. This comes close to her worst
fear, to be bitten by her vampire room mate. She bleeds, and realizes that the end is near.

Kitty is resolved to question her alpha's mate about the werewolf killer. The alpha offers her the position as his mate, but she does not want it. Instead, the alpha's mate persuades him to attack Kitty, and she has to fight both the alpha and his mate.

The hero now enters the final stage of her journey, which is called Emergence by Schmidt, and this is where the hero is helped by an outside source. As Schmidt points out, "the female journey includes the relation between the individual and the group" (232), and it means that the hero will have to learn to let others help (232). Kitty is saved by her friend T.J. just as she is about to be killed by the alpha and his mate. Rachel is saved by the efforts of her friends who stop the bleeding and patch her up. Thus the hero is able to continue reborn on her path and overcome whatever obstacles are left, yet still remain complete and strong. She can return to the place where she began, and see the world from a whole new perspective (Schmidt 281). Kitty loses her friend in the fight with the alpha, but she is free to escape and continue with her radio show. Rachel is able to fulfil her goal of taking down Kalamack's drug runner, but she cannot beat Kalamack himself. The ending in both novels is a small climax. This gives the reader a sense that more is to come for both Rachel and Kitty. This impression fits in well with the feminine journey, which can be said to be "circular or episodic" (Schmidt 285).
What Is the Measure of a Hero?

You cannot look at the hero of myths without discussing what is the measure of a true hero. The image of the hero is so ingrained in our minds that we do not even reflect upon what qualities and values that the hero really has and stands for. In *Deconstructing the Hero*, Hourihan discusses attributes which I will use to analyze the heroes of urban fantasy.

According to Hourihan, the nature of the hero is inscribed in the story of his journey (58). The quest is "the consequence of his will, his ambition, his activism, his rationality and his view of the world" (58) and this is reflected in how the hero is described in the narrative. She explains that the hero is always white, that he represents the elite which is often expressed as him being from the upper class as well as a gentleman (62-63). When it comes to the protagonists in urban fantasy these statements need to be somewhat modified. Admittedly, the heroes are portrayed as white. Anita says about herself that she has pale Germanic skin but Latin dark hair and eyes (Hamilton 9) and Kate explains that she has the colours of a gypsy (Andrews 21). Rachel is said to have red hair and green eyes (Harrison 3) whereas Kitty simply says that she is blond (*KatMH* 1). However, the heroes of urban fantasy are never contrasted against those with darker skin or a different nationality, and so the binary of the white overlord and the dark underlings does not work here. The urban fantasy hero battles the monsters of the supernatural, and it is, therefore, irrelevant to look at the race of Anita, Kate, Kitty, and Rachel. It is far more interesting to look at their relation with the beings that they battle.

Hourihan calls the opponents of the hero "wild things" who are said to "symbolize both the external 'others' and the hero's inner fears and passions" (107). The wild things in urban fantasy are represented by supernatural beings like vampires, lycanthropes and zombies and the heroes in the four novels I have studied belong with these beings as well. Anita is an animator, and this is primarily what other characters define her as. It is also how she sees herself: "Vampire slaying is . . . a sideline. I am an animator. It isn't just a job"
(Hamilton 229). Rachel is a witch. This is pointed out right from the start of the narrative (Harrison 1). Kitty is a werewolf, which is also made explicit from the outset (KatMH 18). Kate is a little more tricky to define although there are some hints in the narrative to suggest that she has more power than a normal human (Andrews 211). However, it is important to note that the four heroes I have studied are not only wild things; this is merely how they identify themselves. Thus, being heroes, they symbolize the elite while simultaneously choosing to stand outside society as wild things. This approach makes for a very complex image of the hero but is not without dangers. Hourihan gives the example of Shakespeare's Othello as a hero who becomes both master and wild thing, and describes him as being "incapable of reason, ruled by passion, unable to love 'wisely', wild and violent" (62). The heroes of urban fantasy are still able to reason but they are also feral and violent, which will be discussed further on in the essay.

The hero battles the powers of darkness and beats down those opposing him with not only brute force but with the power of his mind as well. Hourihan claims that the hero should represent rational thought, and that in many stories the enemy is not simply the unexplored, but the ability of the psyche to inflate fear of the unexplored with only a handful of cues from our senses (88-89). Urban fantasy is a genre which often has protagonists "involved in law enforcement or vigilantism" ("Urban Fantasy"), and this is true for the primary sources used in this essay. Anita Blake is hired to solve the murder of several vampires. In the beginning Rachel Morgan is a runner who works for the Inderland Security (which is the equivalent of the police force) and who starts her own runner business. Kitty is asked to come and help the police with a murder case and goes vigilant. Kate investigates the murder of her guardian on behalf of the Order of Knights of Merciful Aid and she is also a mercenary. All four use deduction in order to solve the investigations that they are involved in. Kitty Norville realizes that she has the murderer on the phone for her show:
'I think I'm doing what I was meant to do. Why else would this have happened to me, if not to be this way and be able to do these things?'

My stomach froze. 'Do what things, James?'

'I have a confession, Kitty. ... I know what to do. When I can't decide what to do, the wolf tells me what to do.'

James was psychotic. He'd probably been that way before he became a lycanthrope. So, what happened when a self-loathing, misanthropic psychotic became a werewolf?

... I couldn't remember where he was from. I squinted at the screen to read the monitor.

Oh, my God. Denver. He had been under my nose the whole time. (KatMH 209-210).

Anita realizes that Zachary is the murderer as she faces him in a graveyard together with Edward: "I knew then. He wasn't killing human beings to feed his gris-gris. He was killing vampires" (Hamilton 233). She simply adds together the various clues she has collected before: the gris-gris that needed blood and that the murderer could not raise an old zombie because he was already dead. Kate goes through the same process as she adds up the clues about the upir: "It says here this creature feeds on dead human flesh. It will make with animals and produce half-breed sons, neither animal nor human" (Andrews 197). Rachel does not conduct as formal an investigation as the other heroes, but she comes across clues when she overhears a conversation. As a result, she realizes that Kalamack does not only run biodrugs, but also manufactures them (Harrison 235). These examples suggest that the heroes of the primary sources clearly display the trait of rationality and reason.

Thus, the heroes of urban fantasy might fall into the same category as the detective heroes. Hourihan, however, describes the hero even more generally as "a man of action" (96). He is staggeringly linear in his story; if he runs into trouble he normally deals
with it using brute force. Moreover, as Hourihan accurately points out, the hero is "neither contemplative nor creative" (96). He does not stop to ask for the motives of his foes; in fact, he deals "death to all opponents" (Hourihan 99). The urban fantasy heroes seem to fit the description. Anita, in particular, is highly prone to react with action and violence. When threatened by a vampire, she exclaims that "What I need is a shotgun" (Hamilton 78), and she is given one by her friend Edward to use in the last fight with the vampires. Anita is a pure action hero in the sense that she does not contemplate any other solutions other than violence. In the climatic scene, she goes into the vampire lair carrying plenty of firearms and knives (Hamilton 247) to bring death to the vampires. Kate also reacts with action and violence. She differs from Anita in the sense that her weapons are more of a medieval kind but she also fights with magic. She is also a very able swordfighter:

I aimed for the throat and missed, my blade sinking to the hilt into its shoulder. ... The thin blade of my saber protruded from its back. Two inches lower and to the left, and I would've hit its heart. The shoulder jerked, twisted by a powerful spasm as Slayer ground deep into the muscle seeking the heart. The flesh around the blade softened like melted wax. (Andrews 135)

Rachel and Kitty differ slightly from Kate and Anita, which might be related to them following the feminine journey instead of the masculine one. Rachel is a witch, and as such, she does not fight with weapons per se; she uses spells and charms that are for defense (Harrison 103). As a radio DJ, Kitty is not at all involved with anything regarding law enforcement at the outset of the story, and she does not even know how to defend herself. She does start to take self defence classes, though, and is asked by the police to come and help out at a crime scene (109). She learns to stand up for herself in her pack, and she fights as a shape
shifted werewolf. However, when she is threatened to be shot by Cormac the mercenary, she chooses to be creative and talk him out of the contract instead of attacking him. It can thus be argued that both Kitty and Rachel are examples of heroes who are both contemplative and creative as they progress through their journey. Kitty reflects on the murderer, James, and concludes that he is insane: "James as a wolf wouldn't be a wolf. He wouldn't even be a psychotic human in the shape of a wolf. He'd be a little of both" (*KatMH* 211). Rachel is creative in her use of spells even though her magic may appear somewhat random:

> Still on the floor, I dumped my bag. I grabbed an amulet, smacked it against my bleeding neck, and threw it at his feet. Half the charms in my bag were tangled in it. Like a bola, it flew through the air at knee height. It hit him, wrapping around his leg like he was a cow. Tripping, he went down (Harrison 378)

With the evidence of the sources before us, it may be asserted that the heroes engaged in a masculine hero's journey are more action-prone and more likely to resort to violence whereas the heroes on the feminine version of the journey will try other approaches before resorting to violence.

> Regardless of the journey, the hero is, however, traditionally a man, and as Hourihan puts it, "heroism is gendered" (68). A hero shows male qualities described as "courage, single-minded devotion and goal, stoicism, self-confidence, certitude, extroversion and aggression" (68). Hourihan also explains that these traits show in women who choose to do the same things as a male hero. The women then become "honorary men" according to Hourihan. It is, therefore, interesting to study the four sources and search for traits that are traditionally ascribed to the hero and defined as typically masculine. One such quality is the "profound uneasiness about sexuality" (Hourihan 68). According to Hourihan, the hero should
avoid relationships as they would distract him from his quest. Anita and Kate show clear signs of this attribute. Kate expresses her uneasiness about sex: "Sex placed me in a position of vulnerability and there was nothing casual about that" (Andrews 179) whereas Anita merely states that she does not "date much" (Hamilton 9). In contrast, Rachel and Kitty do not appear to display the same uneasiness about sexuality. Rachel goes on "a surprisingly nice date" (Harrison 399) towards the end of the narrative, and Kitty has clearly no problems with expressing her sexuality:

Alpha's prerogative: He fucks whomever he wants in the pack, whenever he wants. One of the perks of the position. It was also one of the reasons I melted around him. He just had to walk into a room and I'd be hot and bothered, ready to do anything for him, if he would just touch me. (KatMH 28)

Hourihan explains that the "essence of the hero's masculinity is his assertion of control over himself, his environment and his world" (69). The hero does not want to be diverted from his goal. Moreover, sexuality would be a way of showing weakness. Another example of not showing weakness is displayed in GP where Anita expresses her dislike of alcohol: "I didn't like having my inhibitions lowered. If I was going to cut loose, I wanted to be in control of just how loose I got" (Hamilton 10). Yet the need for control is contradicted in KatMH where Kitty is more than happy to give up her control to her alpha: "I needed the pack, because I couldn't protect myself. . . . Carl wanted me to be dependent. I wasn't expected to hunt for myself, or help defend the pack. I had no responsibilities, as long as I deferred to Carl" (28).

Another trait of masculinity is that heroes "are never prey to self-doubt or uncertainty" (Hourihan 72). In this respect the urban fantasy heroes actually differ from the norm. Vaughn points this out in her analysis of the urban fantasy genre when she explains that
the hero often has low self-esteem and hides this by acting aggressively and violently ("Carrie Vaughn's Analysis Part II"). This is exemplified in *GP* as Anita receives a call from the vampires that her friend Phillip has been taken: "The anger was fading in a wash of cold, skin-shivering fear. 'No!' I would not go in there afraid. I held onto my anger with everything I had" (Hamilton 200). Rachel doubts her friends and her own judgement, in particular when it comes to Ivy, whom she thinks is just out to feed from her: "'You lied to me,' I whispered, retreating into the kitchen. She had lied to me. Dad was right. Don't trust anyone. I was getting my things and leaving" (Harrison 145).

In conclusion, to complete the discussion regarding the hero's gender, a point must be made about his relationship to other women in the narrative. Margaret Hourihan points out that in the dualism of man and woman, man is "constructed as superior" and woman is therefore seen as the inferior counterpart (16). According to Hourihan, this feature is visible in many ways; these women may be "backgrounded" "defined as radically different" and "defined only in relation to the superior" (16). The most important aspect here is perhaps that "no attempt is made to elucidate their own qualities from their own perspective, or to show them as significant in their own right" (Hourihan 17). This agrees with Carrie Vaughn's statement regarding common tropes in urban fantasy: that the books tend to have only one strong woman character ("Carrie Vaughn's Analysis Part II"). This might very well be true for the four sources in this study as many of the minor women characters are little more than stereotypical brides to be saved (Hourihan 196) or witches and bitches to be opposed (174). Catherine in *GP*, for instance, is a bride to be saved whereas Meg in *KatMH* can be said to fit the bitch category.

In addition, Carrie Vaughn argues that few urban fantasy novels pass the Bechdel test. This is a test for female occurrence in mainly movies and TV even though it can be applied to other media as well. Doing the test is simply a matter of finding out whether the
story in question has 1) at least two women, 2) who talk to each other, 3) about something other than men (*Television Tropes & Idioms*). When applying the Bechdel test to the four primary sources in this study, the following pattern emerges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bechdel Test Criteria</th>
<th>Guilty Pleasures</th>
<th>Magic Bites</th>
<th>Dead Witch Walking</th>
<th>Kitty and the Midnight Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) at least two women</td>
<td>Yes, several named characters.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) who talk to each other</td>
<td>Monica calls Anita (6-8)</td>
<td>Kate calls the secretary at the Order of Merciful Aid (86-87)</td>
<td>Rachel and Ivy are talking in the kitchen (73-85)</td>
<td>Kitty and Det. Hardin talk in the car (110-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) about something other than men</td>
<td>...to talk about Catherine's bachelorette party (6-8)</td>
<td>...to ask for information about missing women (86-87)</td>
<td>...about living vampires, food, etc (73-85)</td>
<td>...about the crime scene and lycanthropes (110-11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Bechdel test applied to the primary sources.

It appears that all the primary sources pass the Bechdel test. Still, in accordance with Hourihan's theory, other female characters in the novels are still inferiorized. They are never seen or described in their own right but only in terms of what the hero sees. This is perhaps no surprise as the novels are all told in a first-person voice, but it lends further evidence to the opinion that the other women in the novels are inferior and "not regarded as worthy of notice" (Hourihan 16). Minor female characters are generally just given a brief physical description in all the primary sources. The tendency is noticeable in *KatMH*, when Detective Hardin is portrayed by Kitty: "She looked at me sideways, smiling grimly. She had dark hair tied in a short ponytail. Hazel eyes. Didn't wear makeup. Her clothes were functional—shirt, trousers, and blazer. Nothing glamorous about her. She was intensely straightforward" (*KatMH* 110).

The physical appearance of the minor female characters can also be used to determine their roles in the narrative. Hourihan notes that if a hero runs into women during the journey, "their appearance tends to indicate their nature" (156). In other words, a dark-haired woman is generally indicating that she is a witch or a bitch and out to do the hero...
harm, whereas a blond woman is benevolent. This is however not true in regard to one of the
opponents encountered in the primary sources. In GP, Nikolaos, the leader of the vampires, is
described as follows:

She had been about twelve or thirteen when she died. Small, half-formed breasts showed
under a long flimsy dress. It was pale blue and looked warm against the total whiteness
of her skin. She had been pale when alive; as a vampire she was ghostly. Her hair was
that shining white-blonde that some children have before their hair darkens to brown.
(Hamilton 57)

Nikolaos is, however, the only exception to this pattern. Most other opponents encountered in
the novels are traditionally portrayed as dark-haired women. Another secondary female
character whose looks would put her in the bitch category is Ivy, the vampire who shares
Rachel's house. She is described in great detail by Rachel:

She stood half a head over me, but where I just looked tall, she pulled off a svelte
elegance. Her slightly Oriental cast gave her an enigmatic look, upholding my belief that
most models had to be vamps. She dressed like a model, too: modest leather skirt and
silk blouse, top-of-the-line, all-vamp construction; black, of course. Her hair was a
smooth dark wave, accenting her pale skin and oval-shaped face. No matter what she did
with her hair, it made her look exotic. (Harrison 9)

Ivy is a living vampire, and as such, she is ruled by her instincts and physical hunger. This
implies, though, that Ivy cannot be seen primarily as a female character but has to be looked
at as a wild thing, the traditional opponent of the hero. As has been stated before, the wild
things are shown as the opponents and the embodiments of the hero's fears (Hourihan 107).
They are the monsters to be fought, and so Rachel has to battle Ivy's bloodlust. Ivy is a wild
thing, and she is thereby ruled by her darker nature which is contrasted to Rachel's rational self.

The supportive characters of the four novels studied are however predominantly male. This can be seen as another typical characteristic of the life of the hero, where women are only brief acquaintances, whereas the constant companions on the adventures are men. It is evidenced by Hourihan who points out that "heroes are close to men, dogs, horses and, in some more recent stories, cars" (76). This is certainly evidenced in the stories of the heroes of urban fantasy. Anita has female friends, but relies in the end on Edward, a fellow vampire hunter. Kitty has no female friends, she turns to her fellow pack mate T.J. and later on, Cormac the mercenary. Kate works alone but in the last fight, she teams up with the Beast Lord and the Crusader. Rachel, finally, has two partners: Ivy and Jenks. Ivy has been discussed above, whereas Jenks is a male pixy. All the heroes are therefore seen to be almost more comfortable with either male companions or with the wild things.

The heroes of urban fantasy appear to be firmly associated with the traditional image of the hero as a man of action who is the center of the story. Many of the dualities normally found in traditional hero stories such as good/bad, rationality / emotions, and action/passivity are inscribed in the novels I have investigated, and where the hero, as Hourihan so aptly puts it, is always an example of the privileged side (16). There is one binary pair which at a glance appears to be turned upside down in the genre, that of man/woman. The female protagonists should be a clear indication that the binary has been turned around, yet upon a closer examination, we find that the female hero acts more like a man than a woman and the binary is therefore intact.
Conclusion

Even though the genre of urban fantasy is often said to be about "kick-ass heroines" ("Carrie Vaughn's Analysis Part I") and "full of chicks in leather pants with big guns or special powers" (Saintcrow), it is not a genre that portrays "strong women characters" ("Carrie Vaughn's Analysis Part III"). While the protagonists are indeed women, their behaviour and the narrative of their adventure are, however, more like the traditionally male hero. Having examined four urban fantasies with female heroes and placed them either in the category of the masculine journey or the feminine journey, I can draw a few conclusions. It appears that the heroes who are portrayed going down a masculine version of the hero's journey are more likely to be found with the traditionally masculine attributes such as action, violence, and control. Moreover, this version of the hero journey enforces the portrayal of other women as inferior. Anita Blake and Kate Daniels are prime examples of heroes who are more or less men in a female guise since they display the traits that are traditionally assigned to male heroes. In particular, they are more inclined to react with action and violence to problems posed at them, and they respond to other female characters in the same manner that many male heroes do; they are women and therefore inferior. Many of the secondary women characters are also cast in stereotypical roles as women to be saved by the hero as well as dangerous opponents. The linear journey of both Anita and Kate is typical of the male hero in the sense that the hero is called to adventure, has to leave home in order to travel through the wilderness and battle various wild things and opponents in pursuit of his goal. The hero overcomes all obstacles in his way and wins some sort of treasure. It should be noted, though, that Anita takes the path of rebellion and thereby does not really gain anything from her adventure. In contrast to Anita, Kate pursues the path of awakening and she thereby slays the monster and receives a reward in the end.
Kitty Norville and Rachel Morgan are different in comparison to the two aforementioned heroes. As heroes undertaking a feminine hero's journey, Kitty and Rachel awaken early on in the narrative to find out that they can change their behaviour in order to grow as persons. Both of them take on problems with a more creative approach, and do not always resort to violence in order to remove an obstacle that has come in their way. They are far more comfortable about sex, but there is still a lack of truly strong minor women characters in the narrative. Even in these stories, the secondary female characters are more or less mentioned in passing and therefore inferior. The only possible exception to the rule is Ivy in *DWW*, but with the traits displayed, she cannot be accounted for as a woman character - she has to be categorized as a wild thing.

Some traits that are normally assigned to heroes appear to be irrelevant in terms of the heroes in urban fantasy. Class and race are two such categories that do not truly apply, as the heroes themselves do not even remark upon these details. In this genre, it is rather a question of what species the hero belongs to as they all proclaim to be what is traditionally regarded as wild things or the opponent of the hero. All the heroes of the primary sources also in some respect use logic and deduction in order to solve crimes, but this appears to be a typical trait of all urban fantasy novels, as the protagonists are often involved in unravelling mysteries and law enforcement. In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the books used for primary sources in this essay are the first ones in series centered around the four heroes. It would, therefore, be interesting to examine the other books in the series and see if the heroes change their perspective and character later on, and if so, whether they develop into sheroes. We are after all, still holding out for a shero.
Works Cited


Main Characters

Kate Daniels - protagonist and mercenary. Kate is well versed in using magic as well as wielding a sword.
Greg - knight-diviner, member of the Knights of Merciful Aid. Kate's guardian whose death brings about all the investigations.
Curran - The Beast Lord and a lion shapeshifter. The leader of the local Pack of shapeshifters.
Bono - Journeyman and necromancer piloting vampires. The upir and the main antagonist.
Olathe - old necromancer and the stalking horse of Bono.
Derek - young shapeshifter who gets assigned as Kate's bodyguard.
Anna - psychic, Greg's divorced wife.
Nick - crusader of the Knights of Merciful Aid.

The Plot

During a magic fluctuation, Kate Daniels receives a call about her guardian Greg. It appears that he is dead, killed as he was investigating some murders. Kate calls his order, the Knights of Merciful Aid, and is eventually hired in order to investigate the murder of her guardian. During a search of Greg's office, Kate finds words of power of which she takes possession of with the intention of using them as weapons.

Kate is a thorough investigator, and finds that the murder has leads that point to both the local vampires and the shapeshifters. She is warned by Anna that this investigation means danger for her, but Kate pays no heed to the warning. She meets with leaders of the shapeshifters as well as the vampires, and finds out that both groups appear to blame one another as vampires and shifters are found dead.

Kate gains a companion in the form of Derek, a young shapeshifter she takes control of as a way to show that she is not going to be cowed by the leader of the shapeshifters, the Beast Lord. As they are riding away from a meeting with the vampires, they are attacked by a very old vampire.

Kate performs magic in order to find out who the old vampire belongs to. She brings a group of shapeshifters with her to go and confront this person. Yet she finds that even though Olathe is brought down, there are still loose ends to the investigation. She is told by Curran that she is a glory hound and cannot take not being in the spotlight.

Kate receives a visit from the upir, or the antagonist who has been behind all the murders. It appears that he is wanting to mate with Kate, who has magical powers. But Kate defends herself, and is shocked to find that she is weak in comparison to the upir. She manages to turn the upir's magic against himself, and he leaves. Curran comes to bring her to the shapeshifter stronghold, where Kate meets the crusader Nick. He helps her come up with a strategy to defeat the upir.

Kate, Curran and Nick goes to battle the upir and his minions. Because they cooperate, they are able to slay the upir. They are all hurt, but will mend. In the epilogue, Kate receives a call from the Order, and is told that she will be able to work for it as a crusader.
Main Characters

Anita Blake - protagonist and animator. She is also a licensed vampire hunter.
Catherine - Anita's friend and bride to be.
Monica - Catherine's co-worker and cohort of the vampires.
Jean-Claude - vampire and the owner of Guilty Pleasures, a stripclub.
Phillip - A stripper at the Guilty Pleasures who is assigned by the vampires to help Anita. He is also a vampire junkie.
Nikolaos - the leader of the vampires.
Zachary - dead animator held alive by his grisly voodoo magic.
Ronnie - Anita's friend and a private investigator.
Edward - mercenary and licensed vampire hunter.

The Plot

Anita has a meeting with a vampire in which she turns down a job offer about investing the local murders of vampires. She drives home, is reminded by a call that she is expected to go to a bachelorette party for her friend Catherine. Catherine's co-worker Monica is taking them to Guilty Pleasures, a vampire stripclub. Here they meet Jean-Claude, a vampire who tries to taunt Anita. They see Phillip on stage as a stripper and a clear vampire junkie with bite scars all over.

Anita needs to leave the club and help the police. When she returns, one of the vampires has taken Catherine. Anita agrees to help, but she wants to meet the leader of the vampires to guarantee Catherine's safety. The vampires tries to fool her, she is hurt in a struggle and healed magically by Jean-Claude, she is trapped with wererats but finally meets the leader, Nikolaos. She witnesses a try to make a zombie to give a witness statement. The animator, Zachary, is clearly in the hands of the vampires. As the zombie cannot answer, Nikolaos is angry and Anita flees the scene with Zachary. As Anita comes home, Edward is there. He wants to know the location of the leader of the vampires. Anita goes to bed, is woken up by Ronnie who agrees to help with the investigation. Anita goes to work, where she meets Phillip who is the vampire liaison. They go to interview a few witnesses, and it appears that vampire freak parties is the common denominator for the victims. Phillip agrees to take Anita to one of the parties.

At the party, Anita runs into Edward. As the other guests of the party are a little too deviant for Anita's taste, she goes outside, and feels someone trying to raise a zombie. It is Zachary, on the orders of the vampires. Anita helps Zachary, realizing that something is wrong with him. The zombie is raised, Anita runs into Nikolaos who threatens her and wants to feed off her, but the party is raided and Anita escapes together with Phillip. As she comes home, she is called by Ronnie who appears to have a lead. This points to the local vampire church. Anita is attacked by a hit man outside of the church, but manages to shoot him.

Phillip is taken by the vampires. He is killed, and Anita is contaminated by a bite from Nikolaos. She contacts Edward, goes to a set up trap and is almost killed by ghouls sent by the murderer, Zachary. Anita and Edward fight off ghouls, and go down into the vampires' lair to kill them all, including Zachary.
Main Characters

Rachel Morgan - protagonist and witch. Originally working for the Inderland Security, but leaves in order to start her own runner business together with Ivy and Jenks.

Ivy Tamwood - runner and living vampire. Rachel's room mate.

Jenks - runner and pixy. Rachel's room mate.

Francis - witch and I.S. runner. Secretly works for Trent Kalamack.

Trent Kalamack - local council man, biodrug runner and manufacturer.

Nick - trapped in a transformation spell as a rat, is saved by Rachel. Her potential new boyfriend.

The Plot

Rachel Morgan is on a run for the Inderland Security together with Jenks, and she realizes that she is only given unimportant assignments. She runs into Ivy and decides to leave I.S. to start up her own runner business. It means that she will have a death threat over her head. Ivy and Jenks decide to go with her and be partners with her. Her old boss is thrilled that she is leaving, and all her things appears to have been cursed. Her fellow co-worker Francis is bragging that he is going to investigate the death of Trent Kalamack's secretary. Rachel realizes that she could remove the death threat if she proves that Kalamack runs Brimstone, a drug. She moves into a church with Ivy, Jenks and Jenks' family. Here, she works on her spells, and she has an accident with Ivy, whose vampire instincts are triggered. Rachel goes to I.S. to read public records but is diverted by three assassins. She uses Francis as a shield to get away. In the end, she realizes that she has to go back in a more effective disguise. She performs a spell to be able to transform into a mouse, only, when she changes, she is not a mouse - but a mink. She breaks into the I.S. records but cannot find much and therefore decides to go with Francis on his interview with Kalamack.

Rachel manages to take Francis' interview with Kalamack, who knows who she is and offers her a job. She refuses. She decides to return to Kalamack's office, and searches for evidence of drug running. With the help of Ivy and Jenks, she is brought back into the office in the form of a mink. She and Jenks are however caught, and Rachel is trapped. Kalamack keeps her as a mink in a cage, and she is listening in on conversations. It appears that Kalamack does not only run biodrugs, but manufactures them as well. Francis comes to a meeting, and he is a mole working for Kalamack and provides a distraction so that drugs can be shipped in and out. Kalamack brings Rachel in her mink form to the rat fights. She manages to escape together with a rat who is a human trapped in a spell. Nick suggests that she should go to Federal Inderland Bureau instead of I.S. and he also says that she might find more spells in the university library. As they go there, they are attacked by a demon. Nick manages to trap the demon, but they are both badly hurt and Nick asks the demon for help. It transports them back to the church where Rachel is stitched up.

Rachel goes to F.I.B. to tip them about Kalamack's drug running. They go together with the officers to claim the drug shipment and Francis, but assassins show up to attack Rachel. She fights them off. The shipments are taken, and the F.I.B. captain buys off the death threat from Rachel's head. Francis is however killed in a car bomb and Kalamack goes free. Kalamack and Rachel play a cat-and-mouse game, and Rachel finishes by saying that she will figure things out later.
Main Characters

Kitty Norville - radio DJ and werewolf at the bottom of the pack.  
T.J. - the second of the pack and Kitty's best friend.  
Carl - alpha and leader of the local werewolf pack.  
Meg - Carl's mate, werewolf and the creator of James.  
Zan - werewolf who infected Kitty and constantly picks on her.  
Cormac - mercenary who hunts supernatural beings.  
Det. Jess Hardin - the detective who investigates the murders and asks Kitty for help.  
James - a fan of Kitty's talk show, werewolf and the murderer.

The Plot

Kitty Norville is a late night radio DJ who by mistake starts a talk show with people calling in, centering on vampires, werewolves and all other supernatural things. It is a hit, and her show gets attention. Her alpha does not approve of the show, and tells her to quit it. He dominates her, but Kitty continues the show and takes self-defense classes. At the full moon, Kitty meets with the pack, and is confronted by Zan, the werewolf who infected her. She stands up to him, and wins a fight. It means that she is no longer at the bottom of the pack. But all she wants is to be safe. As she continues with the show, she receives a call from a mercenary, Cormac, who is coming in to kill her. But Kitty manages to talk him out of killing her, and admits on the air that she is a werewolf.

Carl still wants her to quite the show, but she is now going nationwide with it and is not about to give it up at this stage. She takes calls from listeners, and one of which asks her what it is like to be a werewolf and a part of a pack. The police also contacts her, and Det. Hardin asks if Kitty can come and take a look at a crime scene. It appears that the victim has been mauled by a wild animal - or a werewolf. Kitty can say that it is a werewolf, but no one from her pack. Kitty goes to talk with T.J., who takes her to Carl's and Meg's house to warn them about the rogue werewolf in town. Carl shows Kitty evidence that Meg is the one who contracted the mercenary, but Kitty refuses to fight Meg. At the next full moon, Meg warns Kitty off about becoming too cocky.

During a show, Kitty is contacted by a vampire, and she does what she can to help this vampire escape a sect leader. It wins her the gratitude of the leader of the local vampires. Det. Hardin brings Kitty to another crime scene, but Kitty cannot identify the werewolf. She can just say that he smells like he is sick. As Kitty goes home, she is attacked by Zan in his wolf form. She is saved by T.J. who kills Zan, and is helped by Cormac to clean up. Cormac asks her about how she became a werewolf. The police arrive to look at the dead Zan, Kitty and Cormac are questioned. But since it was T.J. who killed Zan, they are able to go free. Kitty tells T.J. that it was Meg who set Zan up to kill her.

James calls in to Kitty's show, and she realizes that he is the psychotic werewolf murderer. She calls Cormac and goes to confront James who changes and runs. Kitty changes and goes after him. They fight, and Kitty kills James. Kitty then goes to confront Meg about James. Meg makes Carl fight for her, and T.J. shows up to help Kitty. T.J. is however killed in the fight, and Kitty is told to leave town. In the end, the news has spread - the paranormal world is real and the government acknowledges it.