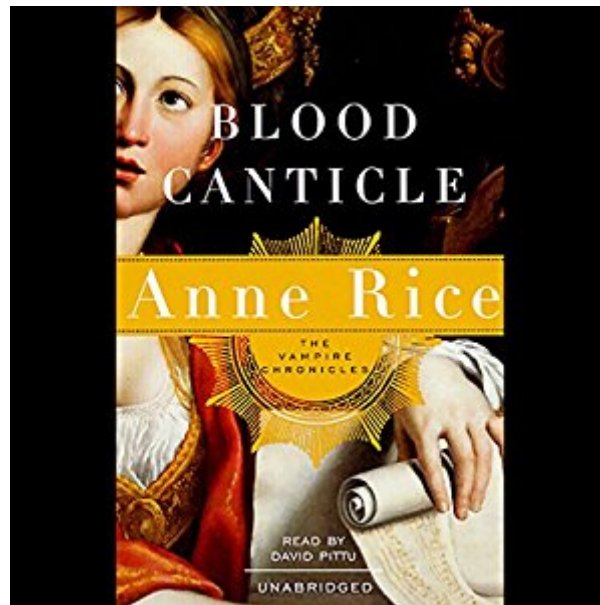


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Blood Canticle



Synopsis

Lestat is back with a vengeance and in thrall to Rowan Mayfair. Both demon and angel, he is drawn to kill but tempted by goodness as he moves among the pantheon of Anne Rice's unforgettable characters. Julien Mayfair, his tormentor; Rowan, witch and neurosurgeon, who attracts spirits to herself, casts spells on others and finds herself dangerously drawn to Lestat; Patsy, country and western singer, who was killed by Quinn Blackwood and dumped in a swamp; Ash Templeton, a 5,000 year old Taltos whose genes live on in the Mayfairs. Now, Lestat fights to save Patsy's ghost from the dark realms of the Earthbound, to uncover the mystery of the Taltos and to decide the fate of Rowan Mayfair. Both of Anne Rice's irresistible realms - the worlds of Blackwood Farm and the Mayfair Witches - collide as Lestat struggles between his lust for blood and the quest for life, between gratification and redemption. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You know how sometimes you spend hours and hours on a single work -- an essay, perhaps -- deliberating over each sentence, each word? You do lots of research; you proceed very carefully, making sure each sentence is as great as it could be. You are careful with detail. You take the time to craft that work. OK, you know how sometimes you type a careless e-mail to your friend about your day? Or maybe you're writing in your diary. You don't really care to take the time to be too careful with the imagery or diction. You just write it down for posterity. You just let things flow out. Well, Anne seems to have abandoned the first method for the second. At first I thought it was me. It

started with "Memnoch the Devil." I just couldn't get into it. With the first four novels of the Vampire Chronicles, I felt as if a whole entire world was popping up around me. A lush and ornate world that was full of grandeur -- details about places in Europe or New Orleans, the texture of the curtains, the ambience of the room, the sound of violins, the ferns. It was all very decadent and, quite frankly, amazing. She created this undescrivable feeling that no one else could. Then something went wrong. After she began releasing more books, I realized that it wasn't just me. Maybe Anne was getting sloppy? Maybe she just couldn't sustain her interest in this genre after so many years? Her latest works seem to be written in the same manner that many write in their journals or e-mails. The sense of carefulness, of passion, is gone; it's no longer about the nuances. The subtlety is gone. Now it's more like: "This happened . . . then this . . . and oh, don't forget about this." There's a stream-of-consciousness quality going on that comes from a lack of precision. Either she didn't outline this current novel, "Blood Canticle," at all or it was outlined poorly. I understand Lestat's language will change as time goes on. But "yo"? "Baby"? Does he have to sound like a sleazy Hollywood agent? Anne has failed to help readers make that transition; you can't have Lestat speak eloquently and formally in one novel and change his speech so abruptly without having some readers raise objections. His language clearly demonstrates Anne's lack of understanding of how people talk today; instead, she uses language that she thinks people still use today. This is comparable to Kate Beckinsale's "Romanian" accent in "Van Helsing"; she used an accent she thinks Romanians use. Let me say that I am a huge Anne Rice fan. I think "Interview with the Vampire," "The Vampire Lestat," "The Queen of the Damned," "Tale of the Body Thief," "The Witching Hour," "Lasher," "The Mummy," and "Cry to Heaven," were brilliant. And even though I did not love "Feast of All Saints," I still thought the details were mesmerizing. Anne had that "it" factor going on; she cast magic with her books. She had the ability to transport the reader to any place she wanted, to bring people and worlds alive. She's been rather prolific in recent years. Personally, I think Anne should take a break. Stop writing a book or more per year. Find that passion again. Take the time to write something really amazing. I truly believe that she spent more time writing her older works than her newer ones. In spite of the negative reviews of her recent work, she should take pride in the fact that she has other books to be proud of; that many of her previous works have changed people's lives; and that she has left a legacy that many will appreciate in the future. If she doesn't have the passion, she should know it is OK to stop writing for a while and bask in the success she's had with previous novels. After all, even the best writers have written books or stories that have fallen into obscurity because they didn't measure up to their most famous works.

As an end to the Vampire Chronicles and the Mayfair Witches, this book does both of those series an immense disservice, as it is not a fitting end for either. Ash and Morrigan, the Taltos, should have been left alone if their fate was the best Rice could come up with. While the message Rice is sending there is obvious, it's muddled by the presence of the drug lords, and would have been much clearer and direct if left to the Taltos alone. As for the Mayfairs... Rowan's every action seems forced against her previously established character, and Michael is reduced to her accessory. Over on the Vampire side, Rice mercifully does ignore most of the pantheon of characters she has developed there. Louis, Pandora, Gabrielle, Marius, and almost all the others are allowed to drift away without acknowledgement, a blessing based on the way everyone else is handled. Maharet and Kayman make cameos without really appearing, which is probably also a blessing. As for the rest, Quin, like Michael, is Mona's accessory. Mona is spoiled and insolent, and if you hated reading what had become of her in "Blackwood Farm", you'll really hate what she becomes here. Lestat, well, he's Anne Rice, not himself. He fully ceases to be his own character and instead becomes his author's mouthpiece, prone to rants and tantrums based on whether or not people like him. As the conclusion to both series, this could have been an epic, but instead it's more of a travesty.

What can I say about this book that hasn't already been said by other reviewers? This has to be the worst book Rice has written, and it took an act of will for me to finish it. Rice has said that this is the last of her Vampire Chronicles. I only hope she keeps her word. So why is this book so bad? First of all, the story is thin. Newly made vamp Mona Mayfair (who spends most of the book acting out) wants to find out what happened to her Taltos child. Ok, interesting premise. Could have made for a good story. Mayfair family dynamics come into play--Mona's daughter was fathered by Rowan's husband Michael and Mona's mad at Rowan. Could have been interesting. Uncle Julien haunts Lestat because he's mad that Mona has been vamped. Interesting idea. There are other glimmers of a plot that could work, but mostly they get a superficial, breakneck treatment that reads more like the outline of a longer, more developed novel. However, my major complaint about "Blood Canticle" (and much of Rice's recent work) is her treatment of her characters. In her earlier works, they were better fleshed out and more complex. In other words, they were believable, and from book to book Rice maintained their integrity. In recent books, however, she's turned them into one dimensional cartoon characters that bear only a superficial resemblance to what they used to be. She manipulates them like puppets to suit her whims--disposing of them off-handedly when it suits her fancy (poor Ash, poor Morrigan, poor Merrick--oops, wrong book). Her characters have lost any psychological reality they originally had. For instance, Mona's just an spoiled, immature brat;

Rowan's a controlling Mad Scientist who wants to leave her husband for Lestat; and Quinn (Rice's best developed recent character) is so bland he fades into the woodwork. Even Uncle Julien becomes a incompetent ghostly meddler who can't get anything right. As for Lestat, now he's a do-gooder who wants to become a saint. You know the book is in trouble when it begins with Rice using Lestat's voice to whine about how "Memnoch the Devil" was misunderstood. Much of the Vampire Chronicles has been about Lestat's moral evolution, but please, give the vamp his fangs back! Part of the problem here is that Rice has written some very good books that conveyed a real sense of the unearthly. "Blackwood Farm," Rice's most recent book before this one, was downright creepy and spooky in spots. Even "Merrick" had an eerie atmosphere to it. "Blood Canticle" suffers in comparison and does justice to neither of her major series. Both deserved a better sendoff. Vampires & Mayfairs alike, may you rest in peace and be subjected to no further indignities.

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