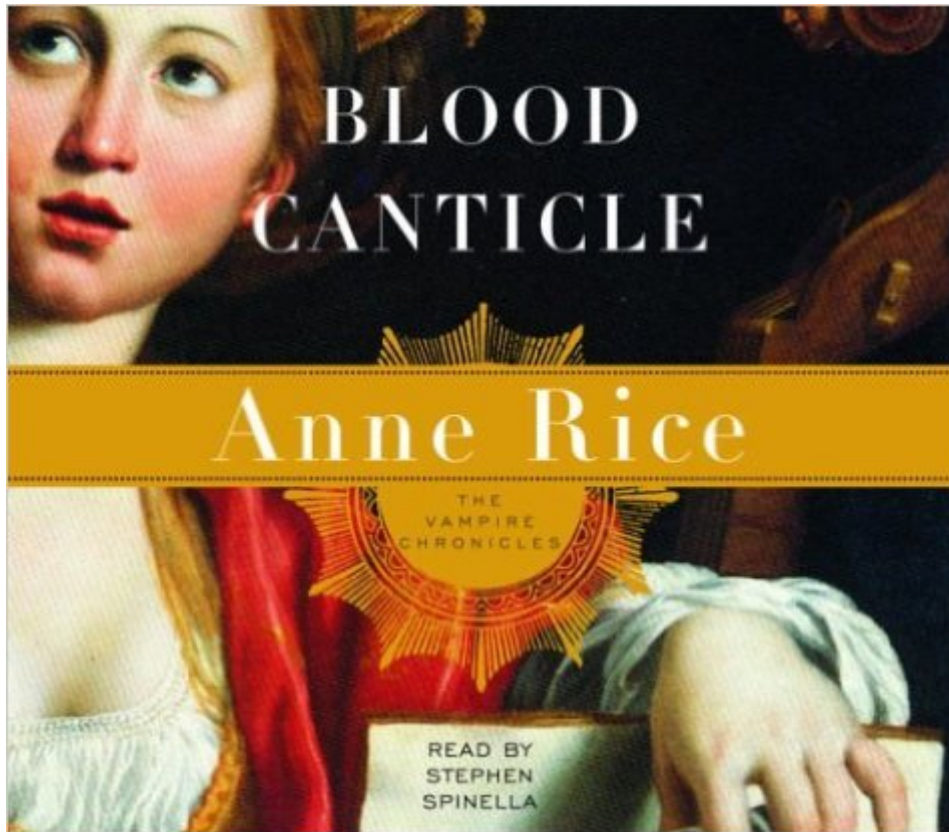


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Blood Canticle (Anne Rice)



Synopsis

Anne Rice continues her astonishing Vampire Chronicles in a new novel that begins where *Blackwood Farm* left off and tells the story of Lestat's quest for redemption, goodness, and the love of Rowan Mayfair. Welcome back to Blackwood Farm. Here are all of the brilliantly conceived characters that make up the two worlds of vampires and witches: Mona Mayfair, who comes to the farm to die and is brought into the realm of the undead; her uncle, Julian Mayfair, guardian of the family, determined to forever torment Lestat for what he has done to Mona; Rowan Mayfair, brilliant neurosurgeon and witch, who finds herself dangerously drawn to the all-powerful Lestat; her husband, Michael Curry, hero of the Mayfair Chronicles, who seeks Lestat's help with the temporary madness of his wife; Ash Templeton, a 5,000-year-old Taltos who has taken Mona's child; and Patsy, the country-western singer, who returns to avenge her death at the hands of her son, Quinn Blackwood. Delightfully, at the book's centre is the Vampire Lestat, once the epitome of evil, now pursuing the transformation set in motion with *Memnoch the Devil*. He struggles with his vampirism and yearns for goodness, purity and love, as he saves Patsy's ghost from the dark realm of the Earthbound, uncovers the mystery of the Taltos and unselfishly decides the fate of his beloved Rowan Mayfair. A story of love and loyalty, of the search for passion and promise, *Blood Canticle* is Anne Rice at her finest. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Series: Anne Rice

Audio CD

Publisher: Random House Audio; Abridged edition (October 28, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0739306308

ISBN-13: 978-0739306307

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1 x 4.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (519 customer reviews)

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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.

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.

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