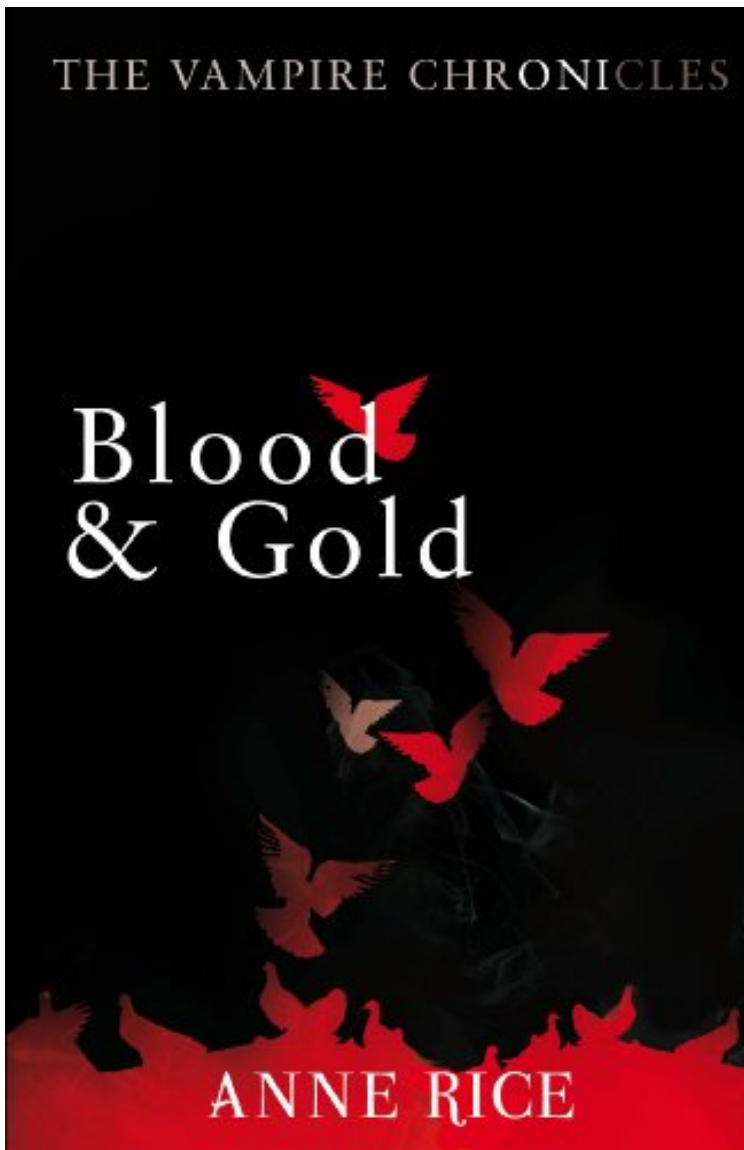


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Blood And Gold: The Vampire Chronicles 8



Par Anne Rice
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe 8th novel in Anne Rice's internationally bestselling Vampire ChroniclesHere is the glorious and sinister life of Marius: patrician by birth, scholar by choice and one of the oldest vampires of them all. From his genesis in ancient Rome, to his present day we follow the story of this aristocratic and powerful killer. His is a tale that spans the breadth of time. When the Visigoths sack his city, Marius is there; with the resurgence of the glory of Rome, he is there, still searching for his lost love Pandora. So prevalent is Marius that it is he who gives the dark gift to the illustrious vampire Armand. Intertwined with the stories of a magnificent Pantheon of the undead this account of Marius is the most wondrous and mind-blowing of them all..comTime heals all wounds, unless, of course, you're a vampire. Cuts may heal, burns vanish, limbs

reattach, but for the "blood god," the wounds of the heart sometimes stay open and raw for centuries. So it is for Marius, Anne Rice's oft-mentioned and beloved scholar. We've heard parts of his tale in past volumes of the Vampire Chronicles, but never so completely and never from his own lips. In *Blood and Gold*, Rice mostly (but not entirely) avoids the danger of treading worn ground as she fills out the life and character of Marius the Lonely, the Disenchanted, the Heartsick--a 2,000-year-old vampire "with all the conviction of a mortal man." Plucked from his beloved Rome in the prime of his life and forced into solitude as keeper of the vampire queen and king, Marius has never forgiven the injustice of his mortal death. Thousands of years later, he still seethes over his losses. Immortality for Marius is both a blessing and a curse--he bears "witness to all splendid and beautiful things human," yet is unable to engage in relationships for fear of revealing his burden. New readers to the Chronicles may wish for a more fleshed-out, less introspective hero, but Rice's legions of devoted fans will recognize *Blood and Gold* for what it is: a love song to Marius the Wanderer, whose story reveals the complexities and limitations of eternal existence. --Daphne Durham

Extrait 1 His name was Thorne. In the ancient language of the runes, it had been longer Thornevald. But when he became a blood drinker, his name had been changed to Thorne. And Thorne he remained now, centuries later, as he lay in his cave in the ice, dreaming. When he had first come to the frozen land, he had hoped he would sleep eternally. But now and then the thirst for blood awakened him, and using the Cloud Gift, he rose into the air, and went in search of the Snow Hunters. He fed off them, careful never to take too much blood from any one so that none died on account of him. And when he needed furs and boots he took them as well, and returned to his hiding place. These Snow Hunters were not his people. They were dark of skin and had slanted eyes, and they spoke a different tongue, but he had known them in the olden times when he had traveled with his uncle into the land to the East for trading. He had not liked trading. He had preferred war. But he had learnt many things on those adventures. In his sleep in the North, he dreamed. He could not help it. The Mind Gift let him hear the voices of other blood drinkers. Unwillingly he saw through their eyes, and beheld the world as they beheld it. Sometimes he didn't mind. He liked it. Modern things amused him. He listened to far-away electric songs. With the Mind Gift he understood such things as steam engines and railroads; he even understood computers and automobiles. He felt he knew the cities he had left behind though it had been centuries since he had forsaken them. An awareness had come over him that he wasn't going to die. Loneliness in itself could not destroy him. Neglect was insufficient. And so he slept. Then a strange thing happened. A catastrophe befell the world of the blood drinkers. A young singer of sagas had come. His name was Lestat, and in his electric songs, Lestat broadcast old secrets, secrets which Thorne had never known. Then a Queen had risen, an evil and ambitious being. She had claimed to have within her the Sacred Core of all blood drinkers, so that, should she die, all the race would perish with her. Thorne had been amazed. He had never heard these myths of his own kind. He did not know that he believed this thing. But as he slept, as he dreamt, as he watched, this Queen began, with the Fire Gift, to destroy blood drinkers everywhere throughout the world. Thorne heard their cries as they tried to escape; he saw their deaths in so far as others saw such things. As she roamed the earth, this Queen came close to Thorne but she passed over him. He was secretive and quiet in his cave. Perhaps she didn't sense his presence. But he had sensed hers and never had he encountered such age or strength except from the blood drinker who had given him the Blood. And he found himself thinking of that one, the Maker, the red-haired witch with the bleeding eyes. The catastrophe among his kind grew worse. More were slain; and out of hiding there came blood drinkers as old as the Queen herself, and Thorne saw these beings. At last there came the red-haired one who had made him. He saw her as others saw her. And at first he could not believe that she still lived; it had been so long since he had left her in the Far South that he hadn't dared to hope she was still alive. The eyes and ears of other blood drinkers gave him the infallible proof. And when he looked on her in his dreams, he was overwhelmed with a tender feeling and a rage. She thrived, this creature who had given him the Blood, and she despised the Evil Queen and she wanted to stop her. There was a hatred for each other which went back thousands of years. At last there was a coming together of these beings, old ones from the First Brood of blood drinkers, and others whom the blood drinker Lestat loved and whom the Evil Queen did not choose to destroy. Dimly, as he lay still in the ice, Thorne heard their strange talk, as round a table they sat, like so many powerful Knights, except that in this council, the women were equal to the men. With the Queen they sought to reason, struggling to persuade her to end her reign of violence, to forsake her evil designs. He listened, but he could not really understand all that was said among these blood drinkers. He knew only that the Queen must be stopped. The Queen loved the blood drinker Lestat. But even he could not turn her from disasters, so reckless was her vision, so depraved her mind. Did the Queen truly have the Sacred Core of all blood drinkers within

herself? If so, how could she be destroyed? Thorne wished the Mind Gift were stronger in him, or that he had used it more often. During his long centuries of sleep, his strength had grown, but now he felt his distance and that he was weak. But as he watched, his eyes open, as though that might help him to see, there came into his vision another red-haired one, the twin sister of the woman who had loved him so long ago. It astonished him, as only a twin can do. And Thorne came to understand that the Maker he had loved so much had lost this twin thousands of years ago. The Evil Queen was the mistress of this disaster. She despised the red-haired twins. She had divided them. And the lost twin came now to fulfill an ancient curse she had laid on the Evil Queen. As she drew closer and closer to the Queen, the lost twin thought only of destruction. She did not sit at the council table. She did not know reason or restraint. We shall all die, Thorne whispered in his sleep, drowsy in the snow and ice, the eternal arctic night coldly enclosing him. He did not move to join his immortal companions. But he watched. He listened. He would do so until the last moment. He could do no less. Finally, the lost twin reached her destination. She rose against the Queen. The other blood drinkers around her looked on in horror. As the two female beings struggled, as they fought as two warriors upon a battlefield, a strange vision suddenly filled Thorne's mind utterly, as though he lay in the snow and he were looking at the heavens. What he saw was a great intricate web stretching out in all directions, and caught within it many pulsing points of light. At the very center of this web was a single vibrant flame. He knew the flame was the Queen; and he knew that the other points of light were all the other blood drinkers. He himself was one of those tiny points of light. The tale of the Sacred Core was true. He could see it with his own eyes. And now came the moment for all to surrender to darkness and silence. Now came the end. The far-flung complex web grew glistening and bright; the core appeared to explode; and then all went dim for a long moment, during which he felt a sweet vibration in his limbs as he often felt in simple sleep, and he thought to himself, Ah, so, now we are dying. And there is no pain. Yet it was like Ragnarok for his old gods, when the great god, Heimdall, the World Brightener, would blow his horn summoning the gods of Aiser to their final battle. And we end with a war as well, Thorne whispered in his cave. But his thoughts did not end. It seemed the best thing that he live no more, until he thought of her, his red-haired one, his Maker. He had wanted so badly to see her again. Why had she never told him of her lost twin? Why had she never entrusted to him the myths of which the blood drinker Lestat sang? Surely she had known the secret of the Evil Queen with her Sacred Core. He shifted; he stirred in his sleep. The great sprawling web had faded from his vision. But with uncommon clarity he could see the red-haired twins, spectacular women. They stood side by side, these comely creatures, the one in rags, the other in splendor. And through the eyes of other blood drinkers he came to know that the stranger twin had slain the Queen, and had taken the Sacred Core within herself. Behold, the Queen of the Damned, said his Maker twin as she presented to the others her long-lost sister. Thorne understood her. Thorne saw the suffering in her face. But the face of the stranger twin, the Queen of the Damned, was blank. In the nights that followed the survivors of the catastrophe remained together. They told their tales to one another. And their stories filled the air like so many songs from the bards of old, sung in the mead hall. And Lestat, leaving his electric instruments for music, became once more the chronicler, making a story of the battle that he would pass effortlessly into the mortal world. Soon the red-haired sisters had moved away, seeking a hiding place where Thorne's distant eye could not find them. Be still, he had told himself. Forget the things that you have seen. There is no reason for you to rise from the ice, any more than there ever was. Sleep is your friend. Dreams are your unwelcome guests. Lie quiet and you will lapse back into peace again. Be like the god Heimdall before the battle call, so still that you can hear the wool grow on the backs of sheep, and the grass grow far away in the lands where the snow melts. But more visions came to him. The blood drinker Lestat brought about some new and confusing tumult in the mortal world. It was a marvelous secret from the Christian past that he bore, which he had entrusted to a mortal girl. There would never be any peace for this one called Lestat. He was like one of Thorne's people, like one of the warriors of Thorne's time. Thorne watched as once again, his red-haired one appeared, his lovely Maker, her eyes red with mortal blood as always, and finely glad and full of authority and power, and this time come to bind the unhappy blood drinker Lestat in chains. Chains that could bind such a powerful one? Thorne pondered it. What chains could accomplish this, he wondered. It seemed that he had to know the answer to this question. And he saw his red-haired one sitting patiently by while the blood drinker Lestat, bound and helpless, fought and raved but could not get free. What were they made of, these seemingly soft shaped links that held such a being? The question left Thorne no peace. And why did his red-haired Maker love Lestat and allow him to live? Why was she so quiet as the young one raved? What was it like to be bound in her chains, and close to her? Memories came back to Thorne; troubling visions of his Maker when

he, a mortal warrior, had first come upon her in a cave in the North land that had been his home. It had been night and he had seen her with her distaff and her spindle and her bleeding eyes. From her long red locks she had taken one hair after another and spun it into thread, working with silent speed as he approached her. It had been bitter winter, and the fire behind her seemed magical in its brightness as he had stood in the snow watching her as she spun the thread as he had seen a hundred mortal women do. A witch, he had said aloud. From his mind he banished this memory. He saw her now as she guarded Lestat who had become strong like her. He saw the strange chains that bound Lestat who no longer struggled. At last Lestat had been released. Gathering up the magical chains, his red-haired Maker had abandoned him and his companions. The others were visible but she had slipped out of their vision, and slipping from their vision, she slipped from the visions of Thorne. Once again, he vowed to continue his slumber. He opened his mind to sleep. But the nights passed one by one in his icy cave. The noise of the world was deafening and formless. And as time passed he could not forget the sight of his long-lost one; he could not forget that she was as vital and beautiful as she had ever been, and old thoughts came back to him with bitter sharpness. Why had they quarreled? Had she really ever turned her back on him? Why had he hated so much her other companions? Why had he begrudged her the wanderer blood drinkers who, discovering her and her company, adored her as all talked together of their journeys in the Blood. And the myths of the Queen and the Sacred Core would they have mattered to him? He didn't know. He had had no hunger for myths. It confused him. And he could not banish from his mind the picture of Lestat bound in those mysterious chains. Memory wouldn't leave him alone. It was the middle of winter when the sun doesn't shine at all over the ice, when he realized that sleep had left him. And he would have no further peace. And so he rose from the cave, and began his long walk South through the snow, taking his time as he listened to the electric voices of the world below, not certain of where he would enter it again. The wind blew his long thick red hair; he pulled up his fur-lined collar over his mouth, and he wiped the ice from his eyebrows. His boots were soon wet, and so he stretched out his arms, summoning the Cloud Gift without words, and began his ascent so that he might travel low over the land, listening for others of his kind, hoping to find an old one like himself, someone who might welcome him. Weary of the Mind Gift and its random messages, he wanted to hear spoken words. From the Hardcover edition.