Burnt Offerings is the seventh in Laurell K. Hamiltons genre-straddling Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter series. Anita carries a gun and an attitude: Questions are great, but only if you know the answers. If you ask questions and the answers surprise you, you look silly. Hard to be threatening when you look ill-informed. As Burnt Offerings unfolds, Anita agrees to help track down a possible psychic firestarter. She's also policing the local werewolf pack, though she split up with their alpha, Richard. Then Jean-Claude, the vampire Master of the City and her lover, needs her help to confront a visiting delegation of the vampires ruling council. They wonder how he got the power to destroy a council member and believe him dangerous to the hierarchy. This fast-paced, urban fantasy includes gore, hardboiled mystery and a romantic triangle. The vampires and werewolves are as three-dimensional as the human characters, allowing us to join Anita in wondering who the real monsters are and to understand how her increased personal involvement with them is alienating her from her human colleagues. --Nona Vero

My Personal Review:
Burnt Offerings (1998) is the seventh Fantasy novel in the Anita Blake series, following The Killing Dance. In the previous volume, Anita killed Gabriel and Raina. With help from Edward and Harley, she also freed Jean-Claude and Richard from their captors.

In this novel, Anita is hired by Captain Pete McKinnon of the Fire Department to investigate a series of unusual fires. He had been referred to Anita by Sergeant Rudolph Storr, leader of RPIT (Regional Preternatural Investigation Team). McKinnon thinks these fires have all the signs of a firebug, a pyrokinetic arsonist. He had previously encountered such a psychic talent and does not want to repeat those experiences.

After McKinnon left, Anita receives a call from a co-worker asking for a ride. Larry -- a vampire executioner trainee -- had gone to the morgue to
stake the bodies of two vampire victims who did not want to rise from the dead. After completing that job, a hospital attendant had wheeled in another body to be staked.

Since the third body did not have the proper paperwork, Larry refused to stake it. While they are waiting for the paperwork to be recovered, Larry went to talk to the medical examiner. When he returned to the morgue, he found the attendant trying to stake the body with his own equipment. He removed her from the body, but then she tried to stake him.

Anita takes Larry home and puts him to bed. Then she returns a call and learns that Nathaniel -- a wereleopard stripper at Guilty Pleasures -- has been hurt by a violent customer. Steven -- a lycanthrope from Richards pack -- was on Nathaniels contact list and had called Anita from the hospital.

Unfortunately, Zane -- another wereleopard who is trying to protect the shapeshifters after the death of Gabriel -- is trying to take Nathaniel home. Anita has to shoot Zane twice -- with regular bullets -- to get his attention. She arranges for other werewolves to guard Nathaniel and Steven while they are in the hospital.

In this story, Anita finally gets to her date with Jean-Claude at Demiches, only to find out that the Vampire Council has sent representatives to Saint Louis. They would like to know why Jean-Claude has not taken the Council seat formerly held by Oliver. Anita meets two of the Council reps at the restaurant and is not impressed, but she does make an impression on Balthasar.

Anita also meets Asher in the parking lot of the restaurant. Although he is now hostile to Jean-Claude, they had been friends before the death of Julianna. Asher had blamed Jean-Clause for her death and now wants revenge.

The Council has also sent the Traveler, a vampire who is capable of possessing other vampires. He moves from body to body, taking over the minds of his victims. But the possessed ones recover when he moves on to another body.

Another representative is the Master of Beasts, who can dominate any unmarked shapeshifter. Padma is arrogant enough, but his son Fernando is a full-blown sadist. Moreover, he believes that his father can protect him from anything. Then he meets Anita.

Later, Sergeant Storr calls Anita about the burning of a vampire at Burnt Offerings, a vampire bar far outside the Zone. The police are holding a woman who set the vampire on fire, supposedly after he had bitten her without permission. Storr wants Anita to talk to her about the incident.
This story tells of the ploys of the Council representatives within Jean-Claudes territory. Their very presence is enough to upset the delicate balance of power in the area. The whole preternatural community is conflicted and confused.

This novel is full of action and violence. It does not have as much sex as other books in the series, but it does have plenty of sexual innuendo. It does not disappoint the reader. Enjoy!

Highly recommended for Hamilton fans and for anyone else who enjoys tales of preternatural creatures, violent activities, and a touch of lust.

-Arthur W. Jordin

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