

PRAYERS FOR THE CHILDREN

EPISODE 204

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*BASED ON THE ANITA BLAKE SERIES
BY LAURELL K. HAMILTON

TEASER

EXT. BURRELL CEMETERY - DAY

DOLPH AND ZERBROWSKI walk with other POLICEMEN through the headstones.

ZERBROWSKI

The call said it should be right over here.

DOLPH

God, I hope they're wrong.

ZERBROWSKI

I know.

They look through a small grove of trees and their faces grow pale. ONE POLICEMAN throws up in the bushes.

DOLPH

Oh, shit. Not another one.

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Anita and Manny pull away from Dominga Salvador's house. There is tension in the air.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Anita stares out of the window. Manny steals glances at her.

ANITA
So, you used to do human
sacrifices.

MANNY
Do you want me to lie?

ANITA
No. I want to not know. I want to
live in blessed ignorance.

MANNY
It doesn't work that way.

ANITA
I guess it doesn't.

She looks out the window again.

MANNY
You're not going to rant and rave
about it?

ANITA
Doesn't seem much point in it.

MANNY
Thanks.

ANITA
I didn't say it was alright,
Manny. I'm just not going to yell
at you, yet.

They continue to drive. Silence. Manny pulls to the side of the road.

ANITA (cont'd)
I've known you for years, Manny.
You're a decent man, a good
husband, father.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA (cont'd)
You've saved my life, I've saved
yours. I thought I knew you.

MANNY
It's been 20 years.

ANITA
There's no statute of limitations
on murder.

MANNY
You going to turn me in?

ANITA
I don't have proof. I wouldn't
call Dominga reliable.

MANNY
If you did have proof?

ANITA
Don't push me on it.
(beat)
I don't think so. Ignorance is
bliss on this one. I don't think
your wife could deal with it.

MANNY
She'd take the kids and leave.

ANITA
Can you at least explain to me
why you did it?

MANNY
No, it's indefensible. I live
with it. I can't do anything
else.

ANITA
(sighs)
I need a nap.

MANNY
She's going to send something
through your window like she
said. Why did you threaten her?

ANITA
I didn't like her.

MANNY
Great. Why didn't I think of
that?

(CONTINUED)

ANITA
I am going to stop her, Manny. I
figured she should know.

MANNY
Never give bad guys a head start.
I taught you that.

ANITA
You also taught me human
sacrifice was murder.

MANNY
That hurt.

ANITA
Yes, it did.

MANNY
She'll make this your problem.

ANITA
I'll deal with it.

MANNY
You can't be that confident.

ANITA
She scared me, alright? But, what
do you want me to do, break down
and cry? I'll deal with it if and
when something drags itself
through my window. If I can't
handle it at that point, I'll
run. Ok?

MANNY
Not okay. You just don't know.

ANITA
Whatever, all that mumbo jumbo,
none of it will keep her safe
from a bullet.

MANNY
A bullet may take her out, but
not down.

ANITA
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

MANNY

Treat her like a vamp. Shoot her
in the head or heart and chop her
head off and burn her body. Then
she's dead.

They ride in silence as Anita stares out the window.

INT. ANITA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Anita is ready for a workout. She grabs her gym bag from her
couch. HER DOORBELL SOUNDS. He sees TOMMY from the peephole. She
fishes in her bag for her pocket sized 9mm and clips it to her
waist. HE RINGS AGAIN. She opens the door.

ANITA

What do you want?

TOMMY

Aren't you going to invite me in?

ANITA

I don't think so.

A MOTHER HOLDING A TODDLER steps from her door locking it. The
woman smiles a greeting. They both smile back. She goes on her
way.

TOMMY

Do you really want to do this
here.

ANITA

Do what?

TOMMY

Business. Money.

She reluctantly lets him in. He steps inside and nods his head.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Nice. Clean.

ANITA

Cleaning service. Say what you
came here to and leave. I have an
appointment.

TOMMY

In my car, I have a million five.
Half now, half after you raise
the zombie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANITA
(shaking her head)
I gave Gaynor my answer.

TOMMY
That was in front of your boss.
This is just you and me.

ANITA
I didn't say no because of
witnesses. I said no because I
don't do human sacrifices.

TOMMY
Everyone has their price, Anita.
Name it.

ANITA
I don't have a price. Go back and
tell Harold Gaynor that.

TOMMY
I don't know that name.

ANITA
Give me a break. I'm not wearing
a wire.

TOMMY
Name it. Two million? Done.

ANITA
What would constitute that kind
of expenditure, Tommy? What
zombie is worth that?

TOMMY
You don't need to know.

ANITA
I thought you'd say that. Tell
him I'm not for sale.

He moves fast to grab her, but she is ready. She pulls her gun,
aiming at his chest.

ANITA (cont'd)
Don't do it, Tommy.

TOMMY
Bitch.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

Now, now. Don't get nasty. Ease down so we can both see another glorious day.

TOMMY

You wouldn't be so touch without that piece.

ANITA

Back off or I'll drop you here and now.

He backs off.

TOMMY

Fine. But if you keep turning down my boss, I'll find you without your gun. Then I'll see how tough you are.

ANITA

Get out, Tommy.

He snarls and leaves. She locks her door and then puts her gun away. She sees him pull away and takes her bag and leaves.

ANITA (cont'd)

No one spoils my workout.

EXT. FUNERAL - DAY

All the animator's are at the grave site. MRS. BURKE weeps at her seat. HER TWO CHILDREN looking on holding their GRANDFATHER'S hand. JOHN BURKE, the dead's brother, rubs her back. John is tall, dark, handsome and around 30.

Anita sits with CHARLES, JAMISON, Manny and Manny's wife, ROSITA in the back. Jamison is the only one affected.

CHARLES

I wish we could raise him and find out who did it.

ANITA

Too bad he got shot with a 357 to the head.

JAMISON

He won't be telling anyone anything.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA
Poor bastard.

MANNY
Cool it guys.

They look at each other and hush. Anita stares around. The funeral ends and everyone stands. John helps Mrs. Burke up. They walk away, but the woman breaks free and screams, running to the coffin.

ANITA
Stop her.

Anita rushes to her. John beats her there. The woman scrapes her nails against the wood. She collapses against the side of it. Anita stops at the grandfather.

ANITA (cont'd)
Sir...Sir.

They were frozen, but eventually he looks at her.

ANITA (cont'd)
Do you really think the children
should see this?

GRANDFATHER
She's my daughter.

ANITA
Still, they shouldn't see this.
You're their grandfather. Act
like it.

GRANDFATHER
How dare you. Maybe it's you who
should leave.

ANITA
You are so right.

She leaves the area and is stopped by Rosita giving her a hug.

ROSITA
You should come over Sunday after
church for dinner.

ANITA
Oh, thanks anyway. I can't.

(CONTINUED)

ROSITA
My cousin Albert will be there.
He's an engineer. A good
provider.

ANITA
I don't need a provider.

ROSITA
You make too much money. It makes
you not need a man.

Anita shrugs and smiles.

MANNY
Come on, Rosie. We have to pick
up Tomas.

He shoos her away. She looks over her shoulder.

ROSITA
I mean, Anita. Albert is very
handsome.

ANITA
Thanks anyway, Rosita.

She looks around as they leave. Jamison is the only one waiting
for her. He is quite upset at the loss of his friend. She sighs
and goes toward him.

JAMISON
I'm glad so many of us showed up.

ANITA
I know he was a friend of yours,
Jamison. I'm sorry.

JAMISON
The police won't tell the family
anything. A man gets blown away
and they don't have a clue who
did it.

ANITA
I'm sure they're doing their
best.

JAMISON
Can you look into it for them?

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

I can try. I'll see what I can do.

JAMISON

Thanks, Anita. Really.

He squeezes her shoulder. The deceased's family walks to their car. John breaks away and heads toward Anita and Jamison. He shakes Jamison's hand.

JOHN

Is she going to help us?

JAMISON

Yes. John this is Anita Blake.
Anita this is John Burke, Pete's brother.

She opens her mouth in shock and closes it, shaking his hand instead.

ANITA

I was sorry to hear about your brother.

JOHN

Thank you for talking to the police.

ANITA

I'm surprised you couldn't get the New Orleans police to help you out.

He looks at her in confusion.

ANITA (cont'd)

My Aunt Sibette talks about you.
Your kind of a kindred spirit.

JOHN

I see. Well, me and the police had a disagreement.

ANITA

Really?

JAMISON

John was accused of participating in some ritual murders. Just because he's a practicing vaudun priest.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA
Oh. How long have you been in town?

JOHN
Almost a week.

ANITA
Really.

JOHN
Peter was missing two days before they found him. Anything you could find out would be appreciated.

ANITA
I'll do what I can.

JOHN
I have to get back to the house. My sister in law isn't taking things too well.

ANITA
Look after the kids, will you?

He looks back at the children, then back at Anita, tears in his eyes.

JOHN
Oh, shit. I was so worried about her, I didn't think.

ANITA
Just try to keep them out of the dramatic stuff as best you can. I'll let Jamison know what I find out.

She offers small smiles to each and exits.

INT. ANITA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Anita rushes in to her apartment, THE PHONE RINGING. She picks it up.

ANITA
Hello...Dolph, what's up?

EXT. BURELL CEMETERY - DAY

Dolph stands with Zerbrowksi and other policemen at a crime scene.

DOLPH
We think we found the little boy.

ANITA (VO)
What do you mean think?

DOLPH
You know what I mean.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Anita sits on a chair and turns pale.

ANITA
Like the parents.

DOLPH (VO)
Yeah.

She closes her eyes.

ANITA
Oh God. Is there much left?

EXT. BURELL CEMETERY - DAY

Dolph walks to the side.

DOLPH
Come and see. We're at Burell Cemetery. Be here as soon as you can. I want to go home and hug my wife.

He ends the call.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Anita barely stands and hangs the phone back in it's cradle. She sinks to the chair, head in her hands.

ANITA
I don't want to see this.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BURRELL CEMETERY - DAY

Anita pulls up to the scene. It is in an obscure place hidden off a dirt road. CLIVE PERRY stands at the base of a beaten path leading up a small hill where OTHER POLICE scour the area. Anita walks up to Clive.

CLIVE

Anita.

ANITA

Clive. How bad is it?

CLIVE

Depends on what you compare it to.

They walk up the hill to the scene. There is a sheet covering the small child. Dolph stands to the side.

ANITA

Dolph.

DOLPH

Anita.

She kneels down.

DOLPH

You ready?

She rolls her eyes and takes a breath. He starts to pull back the sheet. A gust of wind blows the sheet back. Anita swallows. She holds the sheet back. The little boy is in his pajamas, but his stomach and intestines are scooped out. Brown goo leaks to the side mixed with blood. Anita stands too quickly and stumbles to the side of the scene, throwing up. She goes back to the body. The other police just watch her. Dolph kneels beside her.

DOLPH (cont'd)

Well?

ANITA

He hasn't been dead long. Late morning max. Damn it, Dolph. He was alive when that thing took him. Alive.

She tears up, but takes a breath.

(CONTINUED)

DOLPH
I gave you 24 hours. What did you
find out from Dominga?

ANITA
She says she doesn't know
anything. I believe her.

DOLPH
Why?

ANITA
Because if she wanted to kill
someone, she wouldn't have to
anything this dramatic.

DOLPH
How do you mean?

ANITA
She could wish them to death.

DOLPH
Come on. You don't believe that.

ANITA
Hell, I don't know. She scares
me.

DOLPH
I'll make a note of that.

ANITA
I do have one name though to add
to your list.

DOLPH
Who's that?

ANITA
John Burke. He's in town visiting
for his brother's funeral. I
don't know a motive, but he could
if he wanted to. Check with the
cops in his town of New Orleans.
I think he's a suspect of murder
there.

DOLPH
Then what's he doing traveling
out of state?

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

I don't think they have any proof. Dominga said she would look into things for me, so I'll let you know if I find out anything.

DOLPH

I've been asking around and it seems Dominga doesn't help people outside her group. How'd you convince her to help?

ANITA

My winning personality.

He shakes his head.

ANITA (cont'd)

It wasn't illegal. Beyond that, I don't want to talk about it.

(beat)

Is this where you found the other vics?

DOLPH

Yeah.

ANITA

Then maybe there's evidence still here.

DOLPH

Like what?

ANITA

Well vampires have to sleep in a coffin, ghouls burrow underground, zombies don't need anything. If it was summoned, there will be markings of a ritual.

DOLPH

If it's a zombie.

ANITA

We have to hope it is. I don't have anything else.

DOLPH

If an animator raised it, could you find which grave?

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

Maybe. Sometimes I can feel the
dead underground, sometimes I
can't. It isn't an exact science.
But I can try.

DOLPH

All give you all the help you
need.

ANITA

I'll have to wait until full
dark. My powers are always better
then.

DOLPH

That's hours away. Can't you do
anything now?

ANITA

I wish, but no.

DOLPH

Fine. What time should I send
someone?

ANITA

Shoot, I don't know. I could be
out here minutes or hours, or I
could find the thing itself.

DOLPH

What should I have them bring
weapons wise.

ANITA

Napalm, preferably. I would just
have an extermination team
waiting.

DOLPH

Good idea.

She shifts her feet.

ANITA

Dolph, I need a favor.

DOLPH

What's that?

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

Peter Burke was murdered, shot to death. His brother asked me to look into it for him. See what the progress is on it.

DOLPH

You know I can't give out that information.

ANITA

I know, but if you give me the facts, I can feed him enough to stay in contact.

DOLPH

It seems you're getting along well with all our suspects. I'll see what I can find out.

ANITA

Thanks. I'll call you as soon as I can about the meeting time tonight.

DOLPH

Just let me know.

ANITA

Will do.

Clive escorts her back to her car.

CLIVE

Do you think we'll catch it before it kills again?

ANITA

I hope so.

CLIVE

What are our chances?

ANITA

I haven't the faintest idea.

CLIVE

I was hoping you wouldn't say that.

ANITA

So was I, Clive. So was I.

INT. IRVING'S CUBICLE - DAY

IRVING sits typing away at his cubicle desk. He stops and speaks to Anita that has entered, not missing a beat. She still has on her skirt and blouse.

IRVING
How's tricks?

ANITA
Do you really think you're funny,
or is it just an annoying habit?

IRVING
Oh, I'm hilarious, just ask my
girlfriend.

ANITA
I bet.

IRVING
What's up, Blake?

ANITA
How would you like a story on the
new zombie legislation being
cooked up?

IRVING
Maybe. What do you want in
return?

ANITA
That part's off the record.

IRVING
Figures. Go on.

ANITA
I need information on a Harold
Gaynor.

IRVING
Name doesn't ring a bell. Should
it?

ANITA
Not necessarily. Can you get it
for me anyway?

IRVING
In exchange for the zombie story.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA

I can take you to the businesses
that use zombies. You can bring a
photographer. Take pictures of
corpses.

IRVING

A series of semigruesome scenes.
You center stage in a suit.
Beauty and the beast. My editor
would probably go for it.

ANITA

I don't know about center stage.

IRVING

Hey, it sells.
(beat)
I'll see if Harold Gaynor's in
the computer.

ANITA

Remembered after hearing it once,
pretty good.

IRVING

I am a professional.

He swivels and types at his computer.

IRVING (cont'd)

He has a file. A big file. This
is going to take a while to
print.

He looks back at Anita.

IRVING (cont'd)

I tell you what, I'll get the
file together complete with
pictures and deliver to your
sweet little hands.

ANITA

What's the catch?

IRVING

Catch? Moi, no catch. Out of the
goodness of my heart.

ANITA

Fine. Bring it to my apartment
then.

(CONTINUED)

IRVING
No, Dead Dave's instead.

ANITA
Why hang out there after dark.
You know it's turned pretty
seedy.

IRVING
I hear the master of the city
hangs out there. I want the
story.

ANITA
So you want to get info and the
vamps won't talk to you because
you look too human.

IRVING
Thanks for the compliment. The
vamps do talk to you, though. Can
you get me an in?

ANITA
Jeez, don't you have enough
problems without messing with the
king vamp? They're mean, Irving.

IRVING
They're trying to mainstream
themselves, get positive
attention. His thoughts on what
he wants for the vampire
community, his vision for the
future. It would be very up and
coming. No corpse jokes or
sensationalism, just straight
journalism.

ANITA
Have you been sniffing newprint
again?

IRVING
You get everything I have on
Gaynor. Pictures.

ANITA
How do you know you have
pictures?

He swallows and grins.

(CONTINUED)

ANITA (cont'd)
You recognized the name. You
little son of a.

IRVING
Tsk, tsk, Anita. Help me get that
interview, I'll get you anything
you want.

ANITA
I'll give you interviews with
zombies. Rotting corpses. It'll
sell a lot of papers. Full color
pics.

IRVING
No interview with the master?

ANITA
If you're lucky, no.

IRVING
Shoot.

ANITA
Can I still have the file on
Gaynor?

IRVING
(sigh)
Fine. I'd still like you to meet
me at Dead Dave's though. Maybe
with you there, they'll still
talk to me.

ANITA
Being with a legal executioner
will not make you very popular
with them.

IRVING
They still call you Executioner?

ANITA
Among other things.

IRVING
Ok, the file at Dead Dave's in
two hours.

ANITA
Make it one hour. I want to out
by full dark.

(CONTINUED)

IRVING

Someone isn't gunning for you,
are they, Blake? I'd hate to lose
you. You give me too many good
stories.

ANITA

You're concern is touching. But,
no, not as far as I know anyway.

IRVING

You don't sound very certain.

ANITA

One hour. That gives me time to
go home and change.

IRVING

Yeah. I don't think I've ever
seen you in a skirt before.

ANITA

I had a funeral to go to.

IRVING

Personal or business.

ANITA

Personal.

IRVING

Then, I'm sorry.

ANITA

Thanks for your help.

IRVING

Shoot don't thank me yet. I'll
make you pay for those zombie
photos, trust me.

ANITA

Can't wait.

She grimaces and walks out. Irving goes back to typing at his
station, smiling like a school boy.