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The second Joe Pitt casebook finds Greenwich Village's favorite undead shamus caught in a nasty power struggle between competing vampire clans. Down to his last few bags of blood and behind on rent, Joe asks his old boss at the Society for work. The dirty job: finding the source of a powerful drug that's freaking out the newly infected. Unfortunately, that entails crossing the mid-Manhattan turf of the feared Coalition into the equally fearsome territory of Harlem's the Hood. Worse, Joe might be some powerful player's idea of a sacrificial pawn. One thing about vampires: they have plenty of time on their bloodstained hands to engage in complex, violent feuds. And one thing about vampire novels: they're usually bursting with metaphorical content. Here, Huston goes beyond the usual HIV comparisons to essay an extremist-fueled standoff that smartly echoes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the occupied territories. So, in addition to his usual sharp writing and entertaining characters (like an ironic vampire stud who parties the nights away in a Count Chocula T-shirt), he delivers a timely tale as well.