



Guilty Pleasures

Laurell K. Hamilton

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Anita Blake is small, dark, and dangerous. Her turf is the city of St. Louis. Her job: re-animating the dead and killing the undead who take things too far. But when the city's most powerful vampire asks her to solve a series of vicious slayings, Anita must confront her greatest fear—her undeniable attraction to master vampire Jean-Claude, one of the creatures she is sworn to destroy...

Guilty Pleasures Details

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From Reader Review Guilty Pleasures for online ebook

Anna says

All of Ms. Hamilton's books have erotic undertones, but this is toward the beginning of the series, before those undertones turned into overtones, sidewaystones, diagonaltones, and all those other tones that we can't discuss in polite society. At this point and through book six or seven, you can still call them action novels, rather than "action" novels, at which point you're just turning the pages thinking MY GOD, WHAT A HORNBALL THIS WOMAN IS.

Anyway, if you like the supernatural and action heroines (read 'babes with guns'), and don't mind a few (read 'dozens of') bloody scenes, there's something about a French vampire, a lesbian werewolf, and a 5'3" heroine that I found captivating. Give it a try if you're in the mood.

Christine (AR) says

(This is a massive pan. Just a heads-up.)

I've finally given up on this series, though I'm embarrassed to say it took me about ten books to get there.

This is another of those books where I loved the premise, but the execution made me gag. Anita is insufferable, self-centered and judgmental, and her self-justification for her transformation from *noli me tangere* virgin to super-slut is laughable. (God apparently told her directly that it was okay. Whatever.)

The appeal for me was always Richard the werewolf and Jean-Claude the vampire, whose relationship was obviously the true love story about to happen, but in later books they don't even appear. Contract problems? Scheduling conflicts with other projects? Why on earth would the author replace the most compelling characters with a series of beta males who Anita can control like she controls every other aspect of this world?

Well, obviously, because this is Hamilton's fantasy, isn't it? Right down to the creation of a character that is the male version of Anita, so she can make love to herself. Yuck.

Alex ? Deranged KittyCat ? says

That was... something. Right, I guess it was ok.

How did vampires become common knowledge? I understand they became legal 2 years prior to the action in the book, but why? How?

And who is Anita Blake? I could not connect with her at all. She felt shallow... No, not shallow. I really can't find the word right now... She felt not real, but someone that simply went with the flow, with no actual starting point, or purpose. I would like to say she felt like a character in a book, but I love books, so that would be insulting to them.

And how on Earth (view spoiler)

Anyway, something good did come out of all of this as I started re-reading the Night Huntress series.

Cassa says

If I read "naw" one more time, I'm gonna have to slap a bitch. That has to be, to me, the least intelligent-sounding word to come out of anyone's mouth--doubly so if you're answering your own rhetorical questions, Anita, as though the reader is too stupid to realize that no, the vampire probably won't let you go.

Anita's a stone cold bitch; in all three hundred pages I think the only real concern she had was for a character we barely met whose name I've forgotten. (In fact, this review had one star, but just remembering this fact made me remove it. No stars for you, Anita.) I get the feeling that Anita's just in this job to kill vampires legally. Her entire feeling towards vampires seems to be summed up as "I hate them all and want to kill them but I guess Jean-Claude's OK because he's kinda cute."

I wanted more, lots more, of Edward. He was the most interesting character in the book, and he was clearly a sociopathic killer with no real emotions or empathy. When that's the best character in a story, something's gone wrong in putting him in a sidekick role.

Half this book could have been eliminated if clothing and gun details had been removed. Every chapter seemed to have a lengthy description of just what Anita was wearing to hide her super cool, heavily detailed guns and knives. I only need to know once that she's wearing something that will cover her weapons and it's gonna be hot because of it. Briefly mention how the guns are special and then just call it "the gun." I don't care to begin with and I won't care the third time you reference a gun I've never heard of.

I'm still amazed that I read three hundred pages and not once was there any explanation of the vampire myths; the most we got to explaining how any of these creatures came to be was a vague "no one really knows" for the ghouls that was poorly explained later in a way that was supposed to be definitive but never actually explained anything. Three hundred pages in a world where vampires are possibly getting the right to vote and you're not going to explain where the heck they came from? That's a severe lack of detail. I wanted to know how vampires came to be, why they have a pulse and can bleed, what exactly is going on with the mind connection and "four bites"; all these things are so drastically different from any other vampire myths that they need to be explained. All Anita's concerned with is killing them--some expert; if she does know anything about vampires (and all she seems to know is how to murder them), she doesn't bother to let anyone know. I get the feeling she knows just enough to hate and that's all she wants to know. Her loathing for the Church of Eternal Life was palpable and insulting; her attitude there as well as elsewhere seemed to be "How dare people be different from me? They should all die, the monsters."

This book needed less of Anita's bigotry and demeaning attitude and more explanation of vampire origins

and how they came from feared monsters to nearly getting the vote.

StoryTellerShannon says

Anita Blake is a vampire hunter/slayer among other dealings with the undead/occult and she's only in her early twenties. Story is told in a first person P.I. style which means there's some wry humor as well as a focus totally from the main character's POV.

PROS

- (1) Fast read;
- (2) Vampires are similar to the legends but have enough unique differences where we are dealing with something new and enticing;
- (3) Anita is a nice mix of male and female which means she should appeal to both genders;
- (4) Well plotted; hardly any gap holes of logic; pacing is well done; and
- (5) Big finale climax at the end. Satisfying if you like things settled, well, violently. Heh.

CONS

- (1) Her early books are great. I would warn that by book ten she starts to spend too much time in the lovemaking which slows everything down. Not an issue in this novel but will be later if you fall for the series as I did.

CHARACTERS/DIALOGUE: B to B plus; ACTION SCENES: B plus; STORY/PLOTTING: B; SETTING/TONE: B plus to A minus; WHEN READ: 2006 (revised review mid November 2012); OVERALL GRADE: B plus.

Lianne says

This was a complete waste of time. The obscenely poor writing drove me crazy. If it hadn't been a library book, there were several occasions when I would have thrown it across the room.
("Bully...naw...dammit...goosebumps marched up my arms...")

Hamilton never took the time to set up the world we're reading about, or give any sort of motivation to the characters' choices/actions. This was confusing and annoying.

The lazy editing was incredibly distracting; I found at least four typos in the book.

I didn't like a single character in this book. Was Anita Blake supposed to be endearing? Cute? If so, I disagree. She alternated between insufferable bitch and whiny adolescent. Was Jean Claude supposed to be sexy? Was Edward? Was Phillip supposed evoke sympathy? I think that was the intention, but I was just

disgusted with them all.

I don't understand the devotion so many people seem to have to this author/series. Needless to say, I will not be wasting any more time on the following books.

Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

I finally got around to reading *Guilty Pleasures*, the first Anita Blake book, and can at least see why they're not in the Romance section: it's gory and the author doesn't seem to like vampires at all.

I know Hamilton's very well established and has a huge fan base, and I know there are lots of other people who don't like her books, so I feel pretty confident I'm not going to get lynched by saying I'm glad I only spent \$2 on this book.

I really didn't like it. This is partly because I was so often confused, partly because I was very bored, and partly because there's simply no one to like in this book. I didn't like Anita, I was very distracted by the way she dresses and the things she thinks about; I didn't like any of the humans or other characters; the vampires were portrayed in the non-romantic cliche way (as opposed to the romantic cliche), and I didn't like all the guns. The plot is slow and dull and Anita misses some glaringly obvious things - and doesn't ask very good questions. There were many scenes where I kept thinking "What the hell is going on?" It often didn't make much sense to me at all and seemed to contradict itself, and I am not a stupid person. It's like, during the rewrite stage, things got cut out that should have stayed.

Also, what the hell is a "hubba hubba" motion *with your hand* supposed to look like??

I have never skimmed a book like I did with *Guilty Pleasures*. Jean-Claude was intriguing but hardly in it at all, and I didn't start properly reading it again until the end. I don't like skimming, I never usually do it, and it's a very bad sign if I do. It gets two stars for Jean-Claude and the interesting thing about not being able to properly envision or understand a character until you get to see their eyes.

Bark says

Reread. Back in the day, when Anita wasn't a power hungry, nympho :(

This book reminds how great the Anita Blake series once was. Here Anita Blake has a job as an animator (raising the dead for information for the police force) and isn't spending any of her time lazing in bed with her posse of wimpy beauteous men, she even has girlfriends and we are introduced to an intriguing character named Edward (I had forgotten all about him!).

This is the book where she meets Jean Claude whose charms she is easily able to resist. Vampires are being murdered and master vampire, Nikolaos (sp?) demands her expertise to track down the killer. Here Anita is still known as the "Executioner" and lives by her words "I don't date vampires. I kill them." In order to get more information into the secret underground vampire scene she pals around with vampire junkie Phillip. Phillip is the first inkling into Hamilton's obsession with weak-willed, beautiful man-boys who show up and take up residence in later books. Phillip's character is more than physical perfection though, he is

sympathetic in a way and a useful tool to progress the plot of this book.

The Anita in this book is strong-willed, independent, judgmental and abrasive but has a wicked barbed tongue which I find missing in later books. The black humor lightens up the darkness and makes Anita approachable while in later books there is little, if anything, left to like about the character who is obsessed with power, sex and is often just plain mean. I may reread the first few books but will stop when the ardour makes its appearance.

Jessica ☀⇒ Silverbow ⇒ ☀⇒ Rabid Reads-no-more says

2/7/18 - ON SALE for \$1.99:

<http://amzn.to/2C1qvfx>

Adina says

It was ok, I guess.

Before Kate Daniels it was Anita Blake. However, it is one of those rare instances where the copy cat is much better than the original. Anita is a raiser of the undead and killer of vampires. She is coerced to help a powerful vampire queen and to investigate the murder of several powerful vampires. The main problem with the book was its heroine. She was so unlikable, so proud of herself that she does no drink, doesn't have sex and is such a good Christian. Oh, she is so judgemental. Taking in consideration that the series will turn into a porn fest after book 6-7 I call her a hypocrite. Also, the humour and the fight scenes did not work for me. Kate Daniels, on the other hand is a fun, likeable, kick ass character. Even the character Ilona Andrews copied from Guilty Pleasures, Rafael, is so much better.

I might try the next one in the series but I am in no rush to do so. This was one of the first UF-PR books so it might wort a try if you are interested how it all began.

Evgeny says

The book belongs to urban fantasy genre; it was written long before the term was created. So humans did something really stupid (in my opinion formed after I finished reading) and legalized vampires despite the fact that these creatures need to kill people to exist - as everybody knows.

To justify this I can only say that this is not the first time the humanity acted like complete retards - we can all give countless real-life modern examples.

Anita Blake was a reanimator meaning she could raise zombies. This skill often comes handy as dead people can tell interesting tales.

She also did not belong to vampire fan club; Bella Swan she was not. One day the master vampire of her city offered her a job she could not refuse; it was all about the right motivation obviously. It seemed somebody was killing innocent (huh???) vampires and Anita was to investigate or lose her life as well as get her friend killed. As the title implies Anita had some experience of dealing with annoying bloodsuckers so when they finally got on her nerves she realized it was time to quit acting stupid and start kicking some undead butts. Some long-awaited action finally came.

I was very surprised by some things about the book. Unlike what reviewers said it did not suck outright. In fact it was decent enough. I also found Kate Daniels' granny: Anita.

For those unfamiliar with the latter lady let me just say that Kate was heavily influenced by her and the influence is quite clear. Anita even possesses trademarked Kate's sarcastic humor. To be fair I have to say Kate Daniels writing is better.

Thus on the negative side the writing is not great (but passable) and there are plot holes and just illogical and just stupid things aplenty; Anita's IQ drops to single digit range sometimes. On the positive side any relative of the current Queen of urban fantasy deserves respect. I was never bored reading the book.

It might shock somebody, but I will give this novel the same rating as I gave to Kate Daniels #1: 3 stars. I have to say that there are 3 stars and there are 3 stars. This rating can mean "Nice, but I am not reading the next book" and also "I am mildly curious what comes next". This time I use the second meaning and will continue with the series.

Navessa says

This book. I loved it the first few times I read it. And then. Not so much. I blame reading Fever right before. Also. There was something. I could not quite put my finger on. At first. What was it? The writing style. Everything was fragmented sentences. And strangely formal speech. Instead of I'm, we get I am. Instead of I'd, we get I would. Every. Time. Even when it does not fit. It is like LKH has not yet met an apostrophe. I am one of those people, you know the ones.

Once I see something, hear something, NOTICE something like that, I cannot un-notice it. I'll stop with the annoying fragments and the non-apostrophes now as I can't even bring myself to write them for an extended period of time, let alone force anyone to read them...unlike someone else I could mention.

Okay, in all seriousness, don't do what I did. Don't read this book after reading Fever because you'll be trying to absorb descriptions of Jean Claude and then the Jericho Barrons that's taken up residence in your head will look out through your eyes and laugh before giving you a heart-stopping look of possession that makes you want to spike this book on the ground and flounce back over to Barrons Books and Baubles for a quickie.

To be blunt, Jean Claude seems like a total wuss compared to JZB (I know, I know, who doesn't?). The dude wears lace-trimmed shirts and tight leather pants tucked into hooker boots, which would be fine (maybe) if I hadn't just read about a man that hasn't fully pulled himself out of the primordial ooze and could murder JC and his entire city.

While smiling.

And then we have Anita. What a biased, narrow-minded, holier-than-thou misogynist. Her fashion decisions will make you silently long for Mac's lengthy descriptions of her pastel colored outfits and the affinity she feels for others of her own sex. I really didn't like Anita this time around. But if I remember correctly, she does get better as the series progresses. That is until it all starts to unravel around book ten or so.

I still liked all the blood and guts and the fact that vampires were vampires, not the glittery kind, the monstrous kind. I still enjoyed the plot and Anita's necromancing. I *really* enjoyed the flawless world building.

Still, I think I'm going to wait to read the next until after I successfully manage to burn the memory of Barrons from my mind. FML.

(view spoiler)

Jilly says

You know when you have someone who is constantly trying to get you to read a certain book because they KNOW you will love it? Well, that is why I decided to read this one. BUT, after I read it and told her that I liked it, she told me that this is NOT the series she was talking about. oops! haha, too bad! I like this one, so

far, and now I guess she will have to wait (and nag me) even longer until I get to the series she meant for me to read. (Dark Hunter?)

Also, she warned me to only read this series for around 8 books because then things take a left turn and it's all porn and no story.

I don't know why she's so happy about it, but okay. Whatever floats your boat.

That seems odd to me since there was absolutely no sex in this book at all. But, I'll take her advice. The person in question is my daughter. If she warns her mother about porn, then I guess I've done something right. ;)

So, everyone knows about Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter. Do I really need to tell you what it's about? No.

I'll just tell you what I liked about it.

First off, there is tons of action and blood. I like action and blood. Within a couple of pages we get our hero stuck in a dungeon with a bunch of vampires that may or may not kill her. I was pretty optimistic that she would live considering she has an entire series devoted to her, but still. Dungeons are cool - especially when they contain killer-wererats, a homicidal vampire child, and an evil circus going on upstairs. Of course, in my opinion all circus's are evil. I mean, come on---clowns. *shiver*

Clowns have streets named after them in Hell

Secondly, I liked that Anita is a smartass who makes jokes at inappropriate moments.

A lot of people don't get my jokes. If I was less secure, I'd think my jokes weren't funny. Naw.
I can relate to that. My jokes don't always land. I've heard the phrase "too soon" many a times.

Anita is no Kate Daniels - the benchmark for all smartass heroines in my book - but she is amusing. I love characters who make me laugh.

And, lastly, I liked the world with all of its scary creatures set in our modern times. Although, when I say "modern", I am using the term loosely. These books were written a while back and Anita actually has a pager and uses pay phones. O_o

So, I will keep reading this series for a few books.... until I start hearing bowm-chicka-bow-wow. Then, I'm out.

Kat Kennedy says

Okay, so some of the girls asked that I do a review of the Anita Blake series because I mentioned some things that intrigued them.

It's not a finished series and usually I would reserve judgment on a series until it comes to its conclusion just in case the author was going somewhere I wasn't expecting.

Kind of like that scene out of Austin Powers where Austin's in the bathroom stall with a bad guy and a big Texan man is in the next stall and can only see Austin's feet. He hears Austin Powers grunting as he fights the guy, saying, "Who does Number 2 work for?"

The Texan guy, thinking that Austin is taking a crap, decides to pitch in and give encouragement to someone who is obviously struggling.

"That's right! Show that turd who's boss!"

Well, that's what reading Anita Blake is like. You're sitting in the next stall with someone who, nine or so books ago you thought was really nice and normal. Suddenly they start to struggle and you want to be encouraging, or you want to tell them to give up, take a laxative and come back later. The thing is, at first you're wary to because maybe something else is going on. Maybe a brilliant struggle for life and death is happening but you just can't see it. Maybe at the end of the series, you're going to come out, see what's left over in the stall and proudly proclaim:

Jesus Christ, what did you eat?

The first 10 books are filled with mystery and intrigue. They've got great characters and really interesting storylines. They've got action. DAMN have they got action! Obsidian Butterfly, in my opinion, the last good book is such a thriller in so many ways.

They're a little bit sexy and you find yourself wishing a little more sexy would come your way because it's kind of really hawt.

But then something happens after book 10. It happens so quickly that you're kind of in a headspin, looking around going, "Am I still reading the right series? Have they printed a different book under the same name?"

Because suddenly, they're no longer mysteries. There's no longer any real edge-of-your-seat suspense. Suddenly, you think you're going to go a little crazy if you read another freakin' sex scene. Suddenly the writing is so poor, so transparent! The characters are so unlikeable and so unrelatable that they might as well be from another galaxy.

You're just walking along one day, admiring the view, when suddenly - OH CRAP! ANITA JUST HAD SEX WITH A WERELEOPARD IN ANIMAL FORM!!!!

You're minding your own business, enjoying a cup of coffee when - FUCK! SHE JUST HAD A THREE WAY WITH TWO MEN! ANALSEXANALSEXANALSEX!!!

You were about to get ready for work when, out of nowhere - CROTCHBUCKETS! SHE'S JUST HAD A MASSIVE GROUP ORGY AND BEEN 'SPITTED' BY TWO MEN! FAAARK!!!

Then you wonder if you can still walk into a church after reading these books. They become so appallingly bad that you wear them like a badge of pride. "Oh, you think THAT book is shocking? Has she ever had sex with an animal while a whole room full of people look on?" "Oh! You think THAT'S shocking? Did that character ever have seven consecutive boyfriends and nine casual fucks at the same time?" "Really? That

character is THAT powerful? Did they ever defeat an evil villain with the power of their crotch alone?"

Speaking of which, this is one of the major, MAJOR flaws of Anita Blake. Her Cooter. The Crotch of Doom as some of the girls call it. Almost every man she comes across, she has to sleep with. And then he loves her. He's addicted to her. He can't get enough of her. It's ridiculous. That girl had better have a TV screen in her forehead, beer leaking from her nipples and a bellybutton that dispenses sandwiches. Otherwise I just ain' buyin' it!

She amasses power like it's spare change. She goes from being a powerful animator of zombies, to a necromancer who can control ALL dead things (including vampires), as well as being a lupa (Queen of the Werewolves, Namira-Ra (Queen of the wereleopards) having six strains of were in her but none of the downsides like actually changing. She becomes a succubus. She is a human servant part of a powerful Triumvate. Then she makes her OWN triumvate with her own Vampire to call and an animal to call. It's just RIDICULOUS! You're wondering where it stops!

This stops her from having any character growth. I thought Anita Blake's flaws were going to be dealt with at some point. I thought her pride, arrogance, lack of impulse control, insecurities etc were going to be addressed through circumstances and a learning curve. No. She just becomes so powerful that it doesn't matter anymore.

And the books are just basically sex. That's all that happens. Everyone has sex. All the time. And then they all argue. A lot. Anita wears a skirt, so three out of seven of her boyfriends take issue with that and then argue with Anita and amongst themselves. Anita chips a nail, so at least five of her boyfriends go mental and start blaming each other.

I really don't know why this mess continues. It's beyond ridiculous. I think LKH just wants to see how much she can shock us now. What more can she do to play with our heads? So Anita has brain sex with another woman. So Anita has sex with a sixteen year old. It doesn't matter anymore. In the end, Anita never takes responsibility for ANY of it. She never really sits down and says: "Regardless of everything - I want to be with THIS person and THAT person. I want to do THESE crazy sex acts because that would get me hawt. Then I want to try it with five men at once."

No. It's always the situation. She's always "made" to do it. This makes me lose so much respect for both the character and LKH. You want fantasy smut in your story? Fine. Put it in there. But don't make it so that the character never CHOOSES the fantasy smut. Don't make it so that each and every time, the character is forced by circumstances to do these crazy, smutty things. WTH?

And lastly, don't push feminist bullshit down our throats when every other woman in this series is either a bitch, psycho, cow or pathetically weak! If Anita was a real woman than she'd stand up to a little damn competition. Instead she fights with every other woman around like it's some kind of damn pissing competition.

I kept thinking that maybe LKH was behind that stall, doing something that didn't seem apparent to me. From what I could see so far, she was struggling to get something out. I kept wanting to yell at her for it, but then I thought, maybe there's something epic happening. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe it's just because I can't see enough from my stall in the bathroom of life.

No, my friends. In this instance, she's not wrestling a man into a toilet bowl for information. She's not leading us through some epic, well thought out drama that's going to unfold brilliantly if we just hang on and

keep reading.

She's just shitting with us. Well and truly, and enjoying the money we pay her for the pleasure of reading this crap.

CJ says

The engaging start of a wonderful series that morphs into erotica partway through.

If you like V.I Warshawski, Kinsey Milhone, and other female gumshoes, and you like some fantasy, you will definitely like this series in the beginning. Normal world, normal woman, except that vampires (and other supernatural critters) are real, some have civil rights and coexist with humans more or less peacefully, and the protagonist is a 5'2" gun toting butt kicking necromancer. Her day job is raising the dead for a company that specializes in it so that answers about wills, etc., can be settled once and for all. Her other job is a vampire executioner which makes her a federal marshal, because you can't just run around and stake some poor vampire on sight unless you want to get arrested. The monsters are living among the humans now, and Ms. Hamilton does a wonderful job of looking at exactly what that would entail. What about mixed marriages? What kinds of jobs would vampires have? How would the ACLU fit into this? What about religion? And so on and so forth. At this point, Anita Blake's world is black and white. Vampires bad. Humans good. There are no shades of gray for Anita. This book reads like a decently written female detective book with the small twist of the kind of world the detective exists in and how that impacts her investigation and her life.

You must start with the beginning in this series or you'll miss some fascinating twists and turns as Anita's world starts to acquire shades of gray and she starts to grow up a little bit. What happens when the monsters go out of their way to rescue you from the humans who want to kill you? What happens when the scariest thing in your world is a human, not a monster? What happens when the monster thinks you're kinda cute and asks you out on a date?

Later in the series, Ms. Hamilton gets so busy exploring the social interaction side of things (what happens when ALL the monsters want to date you. At the same time.) that the mystery solving part goes bye bye, which is a shame. And right around Narcissus in Chains, Ms. Hamilton abandons any pretense at plot and starts writing not so vanilla porn. But the series right up to that point is a solidly written, engaging and nicely layered series that can be addictive.

And the fact of the matter is that not one of the other authors who have picked up on this oh so popular genre of female with unexplored powers doing something dangerous in a supernatural world has come close to what Ms. Hamilton managed to accomplish with Anita Blake.
