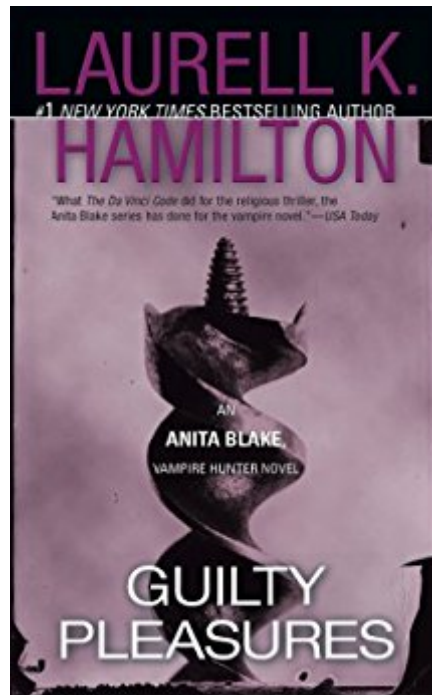




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Guilty Pleasures: An Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter Novel



Synopsis

Published over twenty years ago by Ace, Guilty Pleasures marked the debut of a series that was destined to grow from cult favorite to a major New York Times bestseller. Now, for long-time Anita Blake junkies and newfound fans, Guilty Pleasures makes its trade paperback debut. Readers will learn how Anita Blake started raising the dead-and killing the undead. And how she met Jean Claude, the master vampire destined to become not only her biggest nemesis, but her greatest lover...

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Customer Reviews

I am re-reading this series to remember what enthralled me about it now that the 25th book is coming out. I remember finding Jean Claude cold and ruthless. Most of the characters were not very likeable, but that is their appeal. They are all too human, and often the worst monsters of all. The world created is fascinating and draws you in waiting for the next event. So after at least two decades, I am still hooked.

GUILTY PLEASURES by Laurell K. Hamilton is the first book in the Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter series. It is a series that I have re-read countless times and I never fail to enjoy myself. This is the only time I've attempted to review them, I'm not sure why I never got around to it, but I guess this is as good a time as any.

"Welcome to Guilty Pleasures. We are here to serve you. To make your most evil dream come true."

Anita Blake is the ever popular zombie animator for Animators, Inc., licensed vampire hunter, and the bogeyman •dubbed The Executioner• to vampires everywhere. After the Master of the City not-so-politely blackmailed her into investigating the vampire murders shocking Saint Louis, Missouri, Anita must use her skills as preternatural expert, vampire hunter, and even as a zombie animator to solve the mystery and save her friends from harm.

Anita Blake is a character I've admired for years. The woman is flawed. She's frustrating, stubborn, and judgemental, but she's also tough-as-nails, loyal, and will never stop seeking justice for victims, humans or otherwise. The facets of her personality never fail to fascinate me. She will kill to protect her loved ones. She is feared by monsters, respected by cops, deeply religious, prude, compassionate, and collects stuffed penguins. Plus, she's a reader. How can I not be in love with her?

Another beloved Anita Blake character is Jean-Claude, a master vampire and local business owner. He's deliciously French and is intrigued by the challenging vampire hunter. He's not my favorite character of the series, but I am a fan of the seductive vampire. He is a puzzle that I doubt I'll ever truly understand, but that is one of his draws.

Hamilton created a world that stands out from other horror or urban fantasy stories. It is detailed and dazzling and sports an alternate history where humans and supernatural creatures live in recognition of one other's presence, but certainly not harmoniously. Though the police and average humans do live woefully ignorant of preternatural species and their cultures, which gives more depth and conflict to GUILTY PLEASURES and the rest of the series. It does also make for a plausible human race. When aren't we ignorant of other cultures? Every time I re-read this series, I find new books have been written. I am a die-hard fan of Laurell K. Hamilton and no doubt I always will be, though it is crazy to think this series was first published in the early 90s and new books are still coming out. Yet somehow, I am still eagerly awaiting more Anita Blake adventures.

Romance does not come into play in GUILTY PLEASURES, but there are a couple of heated scenes to enjoy. Fear not, there is intricate world building, supernatural creatures out the wazoo, and a captivating mystery to devour in the first book of this treasured series.

Anita Blake is an animator, she brings zombies to life. She is also a court approved vampire slayer. Due to previous unsavory dealings with vampires, she doesn't like to work with them. Thus, Anita refuses when she's asked to do a job for vampires, hunting down and exposing who is killing off the eldest of the vampires. But, it's hard to refuse a master vampire. When they want something done, they have ways of convincing people to get it done. Putting her friend's lives in danger is one such way to get Anita's attention. Anita's friend, Catherine, is getting married soon and they go to a strip club called Guilty Pleasures for the bachelorette party. Guilty Pleasures is not your typical strip club though. It's a vampire strip club where they not only dance on stage, but they put their vampire skills to work in hypnotizing the audience. The master, Nikolaos, has recruited Jean-Claude, owner of Guilty Pleasures, to get under Anita's skin and get her to help them. During the show, Catherine is lured into a trap by vampire Aubrey and linked to him to do whatever he asks. This link could prove fatal for Catherine. Anita is blackmailed into working for Nikolaos with Catherine as the bait. Anita agrees on one condition, that Nikolaos agrees Catherine will be freed from vampire control and no harm will come to her. This necessitates a meeting with Nikolaos, which is no small feat. Nikolaos is the oldest vampire in the area and she is extremely powerful. Anita may have some immunity to other vampire's charms, but it's hard to keep the master out. Anita will have to make some tough decisions on this assignment. She knows she can't trust Nikolaos, but she must help solve the murders or she'll be killed herself. This was an ok read. It has the potential to be an interesting series with zombies, vampires, and were-creatures. I enjoy the supernatural aspect of the book. I have seen the book tagged as erotica (which I don't fully agree with...but perhaps my definition is a bit off from mainstream?). If the series goes into the erotica direction, I'm not sure it will hold much interest for me. Thus far I'm not really drawn to any of the characters or have an invested interest in them. We'll see what the next book holds, but I'm not chomping at the bit to read it. Some quotes: "I raised the dead and laid the undead to rest. It's what I do. Who I am." "Remember, no one can make you feel inferior without your consent. Eleanor Roosevelt said that. It is a quote I try to live by. Most of the time I succeed."

Guilty Pleasures is the commencement of an intensely satisfying Vampire series. The beginning of the book had me a smidgen apprehensive because the first few chapters were either the start of an adventure that could be uncannily thrilling or could have went a completely different and disappointing direction. Luckily for me, the plot caught me off guard and I was hungry for what was in store. I knew that my imagination had to be on its game in order to comprehend the preternatural

beings that I have yet the pleasure of reading about. I felt that the whole voodoo, zombies, & ghouls were really not up my alley and it sounded a little too over the top for my taste, but it was very well executed and quite believable in the paranormal sense. The foundation does run along the same lines as the Sookie Stackhouse series, but do not be fooled! If you are looking to fill a void because you finished the SS series, you will be disappointed. You have to go into reading this series with an unbiased opinion, or you end up judging the novels based on what they are not than for what they are. I found myself completely bewitched by this action packed, (nec)romantically blood curdling chiller and I am anxiously thirsting for more.

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