

Free guilty pleasures by laurell k. hamilton book review sample

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



The novel "Guilty Pleasures" by Laurell K. Hamilton, is the first book in a series about a female vampire hunter named Anita Blake. Anita is an animator, a term used to refer to someone with the powers of necromancy, or the ability to bring the dead back to life. She raises the dead as a profession and is usually paid by a family who want to gain closure with dead relatives, although Anita is sometimes also hired by the police and government agencies to raise the dead in order to solve crimes or handle sticky legal issues. Through her job as an animator she becomes a vampire hunter and is made a federal marshal. This means that she is one of the chosen few who can legally kill vampires and other supernatural entities thought to pose a threat to the human world. This strong female protagonist is set against a strong female antagonist in the guise of a Master Vampire. The author clearly has intentionally set up the two main characters in the novel to be strong willed females in traditionally male roles, to quash the stereotypes of a lead detective and head vampire having to be male to be believable. Instead, without taking away the ideas of femininity and masculinity she manages to create a cast of characters where traditional ways of portraying females and males have often been reversed. In this book it is the women who play out both the hero and the anti-hero, while the male character are important as well but act as support cast to the two lead females.

The plot follows Anita on a case involving a string of vampire killings believed to be the work of a rogue vampire. Anita has been hired by Nicholas, the Master of the City, the head Vampire, to investigate the case in order to prove that vampires are not killing vampires. Anita agrees with Nicholas,

believing the killer to be someone else, another member of the undead community. Over the course of the investigation, Anita learns that the culprit is someone she knew, a former animator who killed six police officers who was then killed. He has been brought back to life to serve others however must consume the flesh of the undead in order to live. He also relies upon voodoo to stay alive. Unfortunately the killer ties back to Nicholaos and her underlings and Anita is forced to confront them and fight them. In the end Anita discovers the identity of the killer and executes him along with the Master of the City, the head vampire who has tried to have Anita killed along the way. Anita starts to develop a relationship with Jean Claude, who has taken over as the new Master of the City.

The story of Guilty Pleasures takes place in an alternate reality where magic, vampires, Lycans and other supernatural forces are real. The novel merges components of two distinct genres, those being the supernatural and the hard-edged detective fiction while adding a touch of horror.

It is also notable that both the protagonist, Anita and the Antagonist Nicholaos are extremely strong female characters. Similarly to the way that the head detective is most often portrayed as a man, the most powerful vampire in the supernatural genre is almost always portrayed by a man as well. Neither of the characters need to be rescued by men or have their roles taken over by men in order for them to work towards their goal. Not even when Nicholaos is about to be executed does she turn to her lover, and equally strong vampire, Jean Claude. Even in her darkest hour, when will lose her eternal life doe the protagonist turn to the strongest male in the story to save her.

Similarly, while Anita brings in others to help her such as the human Edward who is quite adept at killing the undead and ultimately Jean Claude, despite both being strong and necessary for her to achieve her goals, she is clearly the one in charge. Additionally, while there is a great deal of erotic and sexual scenes in the story, (Guilty Pleasures is a strip club owned by Jean Claude) Anita is not a primary participant in these areas as a typical female character. In fact men and women both populate Guilty Pleasure equally as both men and women act as strippers. Edward, a main character in the book is one of the strippers. So a main character and the one stripper there is the most interaction with is male whereas in most detective stories it is a male detective who goes seeking information from the female stripper who tries to entice him.

Another difference in the way the protagonist female detective is played is in the amount of humor that is involved in the story. Often in detective stories where there are male detectives surrounded by other male detectives and cops there is a lot of camaraderie and joking around. When a female is assigned to a case, she is often resented and has to earn her place among the men on the team who fail to see her as an equal. In this novel, Hamilton creates a female lead character who is strong, sexual when she chooses to be, and an expert at what she does. Her profession even in a supernatural storyline is unusual for a woman -raising the dead, harnessing their power to be able to question them, then returning them to the ground. Yet while there are plenty of male necromancers to enlist, she is immediately approached both by the Master of the City and the legitimate authorities who consult her regularly. While she comes into contact with other police personnel, the

focus is on her and everyone she works with looks to her to make the decisions. The humor in the story is sparse and provided by Anita through a series of macabre comments. This also strengthens the seriousness of the plot such that the main female characters are not dismissed with a campy storyline putting it in the category of a one- time only digression from the main fiction of this genre.

Works Cited

Hamilton, Laurell K.. *Guilty Pleasures*. Berkley, CA: Berkley Trade. 1993. Print.

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