



Serpentine

Laurell K. Hamilton

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Vampire hunter Anita Blake has managed to overcome everything she faces. But this time there's a monster that even she doesn't know how to fight...

A remote Florida island is the perfect wedding destination for the upcoming nuptials of Anita's fellow U.S. Marshal and best friend Edward. For Anita, the vacation is a welcome break, as it's the first trip she gets to take with wereleopards Micah and Nathaniel. But it's not all fun and games and bachelor parties...

In this tropical paradise Micah discovers a horrific new form of lycanthropy, one that has afflicted a single family for generations. Believed to be the result of an ancient Greek curse, it turns human bodies into a mass of snakes.

When long-simmering resentment leads to a big blowout within the wedding party, the last thing Anita needs is more drama. But it finds her anyway when women start disappearing from the hotel, and worse--her own friends and lovers are considered the prime suspects. There's a strange power afoot that Anita has never confronted before, a force that's rendering those around her helpless in its thrall. Unable to face it on her own, Anita is willing to accept help from even the deadliest places. Help that she will most certainly regret--if she survives at all, that is...

Serpentine Details

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Author : Laurell K. Hamilton

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From Reader Review Serpentine for online ebook

Beth says

I've read every book in the Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter series. I have to say I have been a devoted follower and was thrilled that Anita and Edward were paired up again. The stories with both Anita and Edward have always seemed to be one of my favorites.

From 65% percent on this was the Hamilton storytelling that I enjoy reading. And here comes the BUT... But before the 65% point there was a lot of feelings, mono-logging, feelings, psychoanalyzing, and more discussions about... you guessed it, feelings... I remember Edward even said something about enough bonding for one day (somewhere around 75%) and I wanted to say, YES PLEASE, ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! With just shy of 500 pages that is way too much emotional talk and not enough storytelling substance for me. I sure as heck don't want to spend 6+ hours of my reading time reading about fictional characters discovering their feelings. If you can't get enough of Anita's, her poly-group's, brides's and guard's feelings and dynamics then this is the book for you. I'm sad to say, it just didn't working for me.

I received this ARC copy of **Serpentine** from Berkley Publishing Group. This is my honest and voluntary review. **Serpentine** is set for publication Aug. 7, 2018.

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Trista Wilson says

You know this shit is going to suck. This went from being one of the best urban fantasies to the worst porn you could buy. It never gets better, only worse. Why the hell is this woman even still writing this series? She destroyed it. Just end it with a wrap up and make a new series. It could be titled vampire and ware porn for the sexually frustrated. Lawd! I won't buy this book when it's released. I'll buy the last book when it's over. Maybe Anita's vagina will break and we can all have a rest from this giant pile of crap she calls literature.

marlene says

The real question is if LKH will be able to tone down her rampant narcissism just enough to let an editor actually do their job? The last book was about 90 pages of incoherent plot and 400 pages of filler. The atrocious writing aside the continuity errors were horrific to the point where the majority of the book didn't even make sense.

cola_bear says

SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS!

SERIOUSLY! SPOILERS!!!!

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!!!

The Good: for a brief, brief moment at the end, I saw a speck of the action we used to see in the first nine books.

That is all of the good.

The Bad: where to start?

Nate: let us remember that in Crimson Death he mind rolled Anita and Damien and RAPED them for HOURS...repeatedly raped them for HOURS. In Serpentine, he actually complains that he doesn't have enough time with Micah or Anita because their jobs take them out of town so often. But he's not upset that he doesn't spend quality time, he's upset because they don't have sex at the rate they used to. Yes, the manipulative rapist is actually angry that he isn't having sex with Anita and Micah multiple times a day. Not only that, he's complaining that Micah doesn't like to sleep with him unless Anita is around- he even states that he KNOWS that Micah is barely heteroflexible, and that he doesn't like to have sex with other men (Micah states this as well). Boo-freakin-hoo, Nate. Your "partners" have full time "jobs" that they travel often for- pick different partners if you are that unhappy. He goes even further and wonders if the only reason they ever even had sex is because of the arduer...and Anita answers "probably" knowing full well that is the case and they all know it. Anita has stated it in past books.

Nate wants a child- Anita doesn't. Nate wants more sex- Anita has more control of the arduer and can go longer periods without feeding, which means she doesn't have sex with Nate that often. She says that her and Micah have had sex more frequently, but most of the time when they get home they like to collapse into bed and fall asleep snuggled against each other. And that BOTHERS Nate. Well, if he is that unhappy (again), then he needs to find another relationship.

Micah: this book certainly points to him being the one that Anita really love (you know, because he is her rapist). Also, for someone who's supposed to be so knowledgeable and such about wereanimals- he's an idiot.

Anita: I hate this woman. I really do. This entire book is how she's the most beautiful woman ever and even Donna, the bride to be, is jealous of her. EVERYONE is jealous of her for no reason. Her boobs, her body, her skills as a fighter (at least her vagina didn't save the day this time).

Edward: he really disgusted me in this book. He TOLD his fiance that he was sleeping with Anita, allowed her to believe it, and then had the audacity to tell her the entire wedding drama was HER fault. It is clear he

is emotionally abusive, and Donna shows every sign of being abused in that manner. He doesn't love her- not one bit.

Donna: I find it disgusting how LKH and her readers hate on this woman. Her fiance lies to her and then blames her for the fallout when the truth comes out. Her son, who is a rapist and physically abusive to his girlfriends, treats her like garbage. Anita treats her like garbage because she's a woman and she's blonde. Donna should run from Edward. Far away.

The entire wedding drama is all Edward and Anita's doing, and made worse by both of them and Peter. This book is filled with copious amounts of jealous whiners and the usual Anita Blake misogyny, sexism, better-than-everyone bs. It takes up 95% of the book.

The "plot" comes at the end of the book, of course, and by then I didn't care anymore. The snake curse could have been interesting but LKH ruined it, as usual, by putting in on the back-burner and ignoring it for the entire book. But as I said before, at least her vagina didn't save the day this time.

This brings me to Olaf: yes, he arrives in this book. What follows? Basically, this is a set-up for him and Anita to sleep together. He was creepy, as he should be, and worms his way into her good side, but Anita basically implies at the end that her lioness wants him as a mate and she needs to find one because she "Refuses" for her "mate" to be him. Olaf should be dead. He should kill several of her men before being killed, but he should be killed. This is just lining him up to be another "pet".

A few other things: Peter is wounded by Dixie (the woman trying to stop the wedding because Edward is a cheater- again, HE told Donna he WAS sleeping with Anita), but not one shapeshifter in the bunch senses it. Not even when it's "discovered" when he starts to weaken and they're trying to stop the bleeding. These shapeshifters, who are supposed to be able to smell everything far better than a human, don't even realize he's life-threatening wounded.

Honestly, considering this book went through THREE rounds of full revisions, it scares me what it was before they chopped out huge chunks of the book. The "plot" doesn't start until the last 15%, or less, and yet the blurb leads readers to believe that the snake creatures are the main plot. They aren't. This entire book is tired, boring, disgusting, and what could have been an interesting plot is again wasted. Replaced hundreds of pages of relationship angst, bullying, sexism...etc.

Overall: no, I don't recommend this book. If you're a diehard fan, go ahead and read it. Otherwise, it's not worth the liver damage to try and get slog through it. Snarking this book is almost impossible, that's how bad the books have gotten.

Sierra Miller says

I can't wait for this book to come out! I am completely obsessed with this series! I know the series gets a lot of hate about all the sex in the books but I think it is perfect for the progression of the story. I mean really, Anita is a succubus. What were people expecting? Anyway this series brings a lot of aspects from many genres that I love reading and I never want to put the books down. There are so many parts in previous books that were left unfinished that I am hoping to see soon. Like Olaf after he became a werelion, and Nicky's old group, and many other characters that I wonder about. I hate that I have to wait to read whatever comes next.

Elsa Crisol says

I had been obsessed with this saga for so many years... and since "Shutdown" I'm not excited anymore. I want something like Obsidian Butterfly or Narcissus in Chains... I want action but not "sex action". This thing with the Ardeur is out of control.

Lukas (LukeLaneReads) says

I don't even know why I did this to myself again.

Katie R says

My predictions:

Anita has long drawn out conversations about who she doesn't love enough. These take up at least 25% of the book.

Despite being engaged to Jean-Claude, we only see him for like 5 pages and they consist of a short sex scene, her wondering why he wants her when he's so super pretty, then her feeling bad for loving other people.

The mystery can only be solved with the power of her vagina. If not that, then only her super special lycanthrope strength. No normal abilities for her!

Edward will be nothing like how he was in the first books he was featured in, instead encouraging Anita to get married and have babies.

Anita complains about how annoying women are. Except her, of course.

Anita spends a long time telling everyone she isn't pretty because her grandma was mean to her once.

The actual plot (and reason I keep reading these things) will be crammed in at the very end and I'll find myself wishing the story was given to someone who cared about it. It will finish in around 20% of the book, and none of what happened in the first 80% will be relevant to it.

Melliane says

Mon avis en Français

My English review

I know that many people have abandoned Anita Blake in the face of the growing number of relationships and the overly polyamorous theme. I know it. I understand it too, but I have a weakness for this series. This is one of the first that I started and although many things tire me, I can not let it go. I sometimes take a long time to read them after their releases, but I do it anyway. I'm not going to tell you that things are changing because it would be lying, it's in the continuity of previous novels. I concede that I was a little irritated at the beginning of the novel because of the incessant stories in all the novel about Anita's personal concerns, jealousy, incessant demands for more attention. Yes, it's still tiring, but we know what to expect when we

dive into an Anita Blake novel. At least this time the scenes of sex are limited to the three principal characters Micah, Nathaniel and Jean-Claude and I did not have to think about who were her other numerous partners whose names I easily mix.

Apart from that, how can we resist reading a story about Edward's wedding? Yes, Edward is here and I did not remember how irritating Donna was. But that's not all because we also find Bernado and Olaf! Yes, Olaf! Oh I really like that one! It was the icing on the cake and that's what really enhanced the novel for me. It is a character full of complexity and completely psychopathic but I love it! His interactions with Anita are always a treat to follow!

In addition to all this, our heroes will be confronted with two problems: a population that seems to turn into serpents little by little without a possible return and the disappearance of a woman at the wedding hotel. So of course, and even if it's complicated, our Marshals will have to get back on duty even on vacation!

Princess J. Antoinette says

OMG! I'm excited about this next installment of this series... I love the action and the sex... Best of both worlds if you ask me! Yey

Cate MacCool says

How is this series still going on...? I used to be a huge fan before the series belonged on an erotica shelf rather than the original sci-fi/fantasy one. I have nothing wrong with sex scenes, even ones that take over a few pages, but I do have a problem when there's zero plot except a bunch of angsty teenagers worrying about their ego and who is playing with their toys. LKH needs to stop beating a dead horse already and go back to her books with a kickass female protagonist who gets shit done in an interesting plot.

Rebecca says

I hope for more Jean-Claude in this book. He and Richard are my favorite characters. I'm so excited, can't wait to read. ??

John says

A brief note: I submitted this to Amazon literally at 3:12 AM this morning and it just went through 10 minutes ago- obviously to give all the Verified Purchase reviews exposure first. So, if you're of a mind, I'd appreciate a little voting help to push it up the list. Thanks.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-re...>

I hadn't read the last two books... actually I stopped reading the last two books about 20% in because I completely lost interest in them that fast- so when the chance arose at an early copy of this one I figured: what the hell, maybe there's been some changes and improvement. Maybe there's been some actual

developments, revelations and repercussions from these character choices and events.

Let's put it this way: No.

Remember all the buildup for the plot of *Bullet*? That assassins were gunning for Anita and the crew, and even Belle Morte was high-tailing it as fast as she could, only for the book to be about everything else but assassins? How a story featuring cold blooded killers only dedicated about 19 PAGES right smack in the middle to said murderers? How the synopsis ended up getting revised because turns out there were virtually no assassins in the book, and would've been false advertising to keep saying it was all about them? Well, if that was your gold standard for storytelling, if that muck thrilled you to the stars and back- boy, has Laurell got a story for you now!

I'll give her credit; it took some serious gall to write this. She had a lotta nerve pulling this again. In a 500 page book about cursed snake people, they get mentioned in the beginning, referred to in the middle-ish and never brought up again until the finale. Take one guess what's on the rest of the dead trees sacrificed for this drek. You got it: relationships and all the baggage they come with!

*** Mini-Spoilers Ahead***

There ain't a K-Drama in the world that can hold a candle to this! It's everything all the other Anita Blake books have given you the past fifteen years, yet somehow less. The paint by numbers scenes of gratuitous boob/crotch flashing, jellus haterz who deep down want to be just like Anita, hawt zexxy zex with the sweeties, fifty pages to leave town, forty pages to get to the hotel from the airport, recycled & rehashed pissing contests with cops, identifying friends from enemies by their boob size and curves, bad guys who suddenly can't function without literally giving themselves away, rushed & compressed ending with tons of exposition in order to get back to the real story- troo wuv with the boyz. It's all there, y'all! Knock yourselves out... or at least get a friend to do it. Not so messy that way.

The one real surprise is the return of a character we hadn't seen in a while- Olaf. And despite being as boring and repetitive as everyone else, still manages to be creepy and somehow able to sneak a bit into Anita's good graces. In hindsight, an appearance from him is overdue but under the circumstances you wouldn't expect him to be there, which makes the reason for his being there utterly contrived. But given the implausibility of everything else, why the heck not? Toss in Bernardo Spotted-Horse and it makes for a reunion of the Four Horsemen, which could've been a tour de force, but instead plays like an investigation by Scooby-Doo & the gang. Because, yeah- the baddie would've gotten away with it if it weren't for those meddling U.S. Marshals and their were-buddies.

By the time Hamilton returns to the supposed mystery/curse to solve, you flat out won't give a flip because it hasn't mattered in so long you forgot all about it. Far more important are the sudden appearance of Donna's jellusy about Anita's special bond with Edward, Donna's BFF Dixie's seething jellusy about the wedding, the cadre of bimbos jellus about Anita's men, Olaf's jellusy about Anita boitois... you might be sensing a theme here. Jellusy even has a place in the motives of the bad guy- go figure!

Another theme is Hamilton's ridiculous fixation with superhero metaphors. Man, did she just love comparing Edward/Ted to Batman/Bruce Wayne; even Superman/Clark Kent a few times just to mix things up a bit.

No LKH novel would be complete without the sheer idiocy that's Anita & Co- in both the classic and contemporary sense of the word. Early on they ask a particular character if they know anything about the snake curse; they deny it, only to discover in the end just how much they did know. Why such pertinent info was withheld is neither explained nor explored- just tossed in to avoid thinking something else up.

In the midst of an investigation into some missing women, Anita & co. come in contact with someone who's

obviously tied to the disappearances, but just plain fail to alert anyone about this in time to prevent other problems. Why? Why ask why.

There's really not a lot to say about Serpentine-all the endless inanity, vapidness, vulgarity, insanity, mendacity, fragility... It's just plain bad, lazy, dull, self-indulgent, writing. The usual, but somehow worse.

Sorry for the lack of snark. But I got nothing for this thing.

Michelle says

Before Serpentine came out, I was really excited about this story. Hamilton had set us up with two interesting premises: Edward's wedding and the discovery of this snake-like monster, something that we hadn't seen too much of in the Blake-verse. I find myself feeling like she just bit off way more than she could chew. Despite the book's length, neither plot is done the justice it deserved.

The saga of Edward's marriage feels rushed and repeated. The central roadblock to the wedding is one that we've read about many times: a woman has a conflict with Anita because she's both good at her job and a beautiful woman. How many times can we read the same conflict???? Evidently, many. There's an ongoing issue between Donna, one of her bridesmaids, and Anita, and it just becomes too much to want to keep reading. I admit; by the third time that I was reading an almost identical argument, I started skimming.

With such an emphasis on an old issue, there are other moments within Edward's wedding trip that are under-served: the reappearance of Otto/Olaf, Peter's growing up and a few "gifts" of his, Micah/Nathaniel/Anita's first trip away from home together. I would have rather read about all three of those, but they felt like side-notes to a main attraction I don't want a ticket for anymore.

The actual serpentine plot is almost haphazardly thrown into the novel. At first you feel like it's going to be a big focus, that it might get well-developed, but then it takes a backseat to Edward's wedding. The connection between the wedding and Micah's snake-shifter case felt so FORCED, like Hamilton got to page 400 and thought, "oh SH*T, I had another story going on here." Everything fell together in a messy way that, to me, felt like lazy story-telling.

Even the relationship drama is unresolved. We get some tiny snippets that there's some important issues coming up with Micah, Nathaniel, Anita, and Jean-Claude, but that's all they are- snippets. Instead of getting real resolution, instead of seeing them work together to figure something out, it's just implied that they'll go to therapy. I want to see the characters grow "on page", not see big changes with just the tagline- "therapy was helping." We've invested years of readership & feelings in these characters; I want to actually see their story unfold.

Finally, I don't know about the rest of you, but it's become an eye-rolling question of not IF, but WHEN there will be an insensitive/prejudiced/conservative member of law enforcement who asks invasive questions, makes rude comments, and/or needs to be educated on the poly life. If you've gotten to Serpentine (not just by happenstance or accident), you've experienced the lecture/explanation of poly life more than a dozen times. Sometimes I wish Hamilton would just use a single sentence to just let us know that Anita's just finished explaining/exploring. There's so much reflection about poly, which wouldn't bother me if it was new/a progression of understanding, but once again- we're getting the same lecture again in Anita's conversations and thoughts.

I just wanted a good story, to cuddle up with my book and get to read about Anita and my favorite others

(Micah & Nathaniel), but I'm just not sure if I can keep going on like this.

BWT (Belen) says

Told from Anita's single, first-person, POV *Serpentine* doesn't offer much new content in the way of how the story is developed from the way Laurell K. Hamilton has approached the series in the last dozen or so installments.

Anita, Micah and Nathaniel, along with Nicky and a few other bodyguards journey to a small island off the Florida Keys to attend Edward, sorry *Ted's*, wedding to Donna. There's plenty of relationship angst from Nathaniel being pissed that Anita and Micah are always working, Micah dealing with not feeling like he can provide everything Nathaniel needs in their relationship, Anita's juggling of work and men, and the big drama of Donna dealing with fallout from believing Anita and Ted were having an affair.

There's a lot of hand wringing about the poly groups Anita and the men in her life are trying to juggle, with lots of conversations about how much therapy they're all in to deal with the relationships and their jobs, and how their jobs are affecting their relationships.

When even more drama and a couple of missing women points the police at one of Anita's fiancés, she gets involved and comes up against multiple things she's never seen before. Help comes from an unlikely source, and it's this point, **at about 60% into the story, when it stopped being relationship drama and kicked into the mystery and action that *Serpentine* started getting good. Really, really good.**

Frankly, I'm tired of the polyamory relationship troubles in this series. Anita's polyamory has become so front and center it's completely eclipsing all the other far more entertaining aspects of this series like her necromancy, the action, and the mysteries. I'm becoming more convinced with each new book the moment Anita got the *ardeur* is when this series started to lose its way.

However, once *Serpentine* reaches the 60% mark - the story kicks into high gear, and actually takes off and becomes *very* interesting, and while the last 40% was definitely riveting, *absolutely intense*, and held most of what I've loved about this series from the beginning, the first third of the story being mired in relationship drama was, frankly, tiresome and off putting.

With each new book most of the relationships feel more forced - like trying to fit square pegs in round holes, but when Hamilton focuses on a smaller relationship group or focuses on the executioner/necromancer parts, and the mysteries, the stories shine and remind readers why we keep coming back for more.

All series, particularly ones that are as long-running as the Anita Blake series, have some stories that aren't as good as others, but lovers of the series will continue to return, up to a point, because we keep hoping for a former glory. The last 40% of *Serpentine* shows Hamilton still has the writing chops - now if she could just chop some characters out I think the series could be absolutely return to being great again.

3.5 Stars

Advanced Review Galley copy of Serpentine provided by Berkley via NetGalley in exchange of an honest review.
