



## Crimson Death

*Laurell K. Hamilton*

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**Crimson Death** Laurell K. Hamilton

**In her twenty-fifth adventure, vampire hunter and necromancer Anita Blake learns that evil is in the eye of the beholder...**

Anita has never seen Damian, her vampire servant, in such a state. The rising sun doesn't usher in the peaceful death that he desperately needs. Instead, he's being bombarded with violent nightmares and blood sweats.

And now, with Damian at his most vulnerable, Anita needs him the most. The vampire who created him, who subjected him to centuries of torture, might be losing control, allowing rogue vampires to run wild and break one of their kind's few strict taboos.

Some say love is a great motivator, but hatred gets the job done, too. And when Anita joins forces with her friend Edward to stop the carnage, Damian will be at their side, even if it means traveling back to the land where all his nightmares spring from...a place that couldn't be less welcoming to a vampire, an assassin, and a necromancer: Ireland.

## Crimson Death Details

Date : Published October 11th 2016 by Berkley

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Format : Kindle Edition 717 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Urban Fantasy, Vampires, Romance, Paranormal Romance

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## From Reader Review Crimson Death for online ebook

### Jeanny says

Re-read 01/21/17 DNF I was reminded why I hate Nathaniel & how boring the story line was during the reread. 1 star.

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Read 10/10/16

2.5/3 generous stars. I can honestly say 25 books in I'm ready for an end to this series. It's passed it's expiration date imo it has perhaps 2 books left in the overall arc. I need to see an end near or I may jump ship soon bc it's getting ridiculously repetitive. This was an extremely tiring story. Also I now hate Nathaniel.

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### Mskychick says

Negative 2 stars

My god, I just want Anita Blake to shut up. Talking, talking, talking, whining, talking, complaining, endlessly describing. SHUT UP!

Only 35 pages in and someone is already whining about who is sleeping with who. God, I'm sick of this. Stop it, already- there's been books and books in this series filled with this drivel.

Also, disdainfully calling something a "girl trap" is rude and demeaning. You're a woman, too, Ms. Hamilton. Should we tar you with the same brush? Do you hate your own gender that much?

These books feel more and more like the author's attempt to over-justify her own lifestyle and perform her own talk therapy ad nauseum.

Remember when this series used to be good? Those days are long gone.

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### Skilly says

Updated and revised review below\*\*\*\*\*

This review is titled "Haters gonna hate" and may be deleted by Goodreads like my review of Dead Ice was. The Good: Edward/Ted always brings actual plot to these books (although he isn't in the book as much as he should be)

Nathaniel grew up and finally started showing that he is a were leopard and not a fluffy housecat. It was nice to see him go along for once and not be left home to do all the cooking and cleaning and basically housewife stuff for Anita.

Damien got pulled out of his coffin or wherever he has been for several books and got to see some action and became stronger. He has always been a favorite.

Little problems got resolved the big bad got taken care of police/marshal work got done and there wasn't so much sexy schmexy pages.

The bad: it took more than half the book to actually get to Ireland. And so so So many unnecessary conversations with characters who's sole purpose seemed to be just background filler in this book. Some guards and other were animals who Anita is not doing the schmexy with could have been cut out of the story

and it wouldn't have made a bit of difference. Edward: where is Edward of old. See my reading activity for more...

There is always a couple of guards or cop types that can't deal with Anita and all her men so of course pissing contests ensue.

And then there are all the beautiful Adonis men in Anita's life who are so full of angst. I'm hoping some of the "Food" for the ardeur men start getting eliminated. Pages of these gorgeous men whining that Anita doesn't love them like she loves her main squeezes.

The Ugly:

The "rape" of Damien. Did not enjoy seeing him so submissive and letting Nathaniel control his emotions like that. This is not ok!LKH could have tried to strengthen the triumvirate of power some other way.

The "Goodbye" Jean-Claude feed the ardeur schmexy schmex. For the love of all things holy! No woman I know or who I have ever met has screaming orgasms while -to put it bluntly- they're being throat fucked. That is a little TMI into the authors personal life that I want no part of. It happens too often in this whole series of books for me to be comfortable with any more.

Then the end. WTF was that? 708 pages and we barely get 10 devoted to the whole entire reason they went to Ireland in the 1st place? Jesus Christmas! We, as long time readers deserve more. 25 books in and the whole ending is a rushed cop out yet again

Then there was the Ardeur. Can we puh-leeze just do away with Anita's vagina being like Sauron's ring?

"Three snatches for the Elven-kings under the sky, Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone. Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die, One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne.

One Vagina to rule them all. One Vagina to find them. One Vagina to bring them all and in the darkness bind them." Someone just take the thing and throw it into the fires of Mordor already.

And I'm glad Nathaniel's hair got cut off. Ankle length hair doesn't look good on anyone. Hello circa 1970's Crystal Gayle

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## Suz says

2.5 stars

I am saddened to have to round up to a three but this one was only barely OK. My rounding up to 3 is from loyalty to the series. It's nice to revisit beloved characters and there were a couple of places that made me smile, but mostly I had to force myself through this installment. I am worried that my hard-core fan-dom of this series is waning, and hoping that it was just this installment to the series.

First let me say this:

I didn't mind the erotic turn the series took. Admittedly not all the books are equally good, but I thought Hamilton did a good job of writing justification for the erotics into the story and even did a fair job of using it as a reason to force the MC to face her baggage and grow personally. But I didn't stop loving this series after Obsidian Butterfly, in fact Narcissus in Chains remains my favorite book in the series, and that's pretty much where everyone who now hates the series because SEX! seems to mark as the decline of the series. I do think she has flogged a dead horse with it and has continued to do so, but what I am really over is her wish to try to keep each book in a 25 book series self contained. I'm thinking that it has become her excuse for keeping her books long by just restating the same points in every book in the name of self containment. I begin to wonder if she has a clips file of descriptions that she just cut & pastes for her characters and for the recurring issues on Anita's "jobs."

I thought this book was entirely too descriptive particularly with the bits that could be put in a character list

and then not need to be restated in every flipping book. Also, explaining the "brain doesn't want to see bad stuff" thing is old, too, not just the characters eye and hair color descriptions. Much of the garbage of her "police procedural" stuff is becoming cut & paste, too, although admittedly it was never my favorite part of the series. There's always at least one person in the police who will abuse her because they are really scared of her, there is always her talking about the brain not wanting to see the atrocities. These things have frustrated me more with this entry than ever they have before.

Even the "mystery" after they hit Ireland (which didn't happen until past the 50% mark) was entirely too bogged down in the same old shit, there was really no mystery at all, the resolution was pretty much handed up on a silver platter, and even Hamilton's traditional info-dump-epilogue felt like a weak wish to just get it to the printer and done with already.

I don't mind the relationship focuses, I don't mind the sex, I don't mind descriptions of how hard poly is to make work and why, but the rehashes have gone from being frustrating to my considering them to be the reason I may abandon the series. Ms. Hamilton, it's really long past time to create a character list and just append it to the back of the books and get on with the stories because 700 pages to tell a 150 page story is intolerable and too expensive to justify. Much of those pages could have been devoted to exploring the Fey and the differences in the magics in Ireland, to the differences regarding how Ireland was approaching their new vampires, and would have been infinitely more interesting than eye and hair color descriptions, and rehashing how people came to be in Anita's circle and why.

This book died a victim of the books that came before it.

ETA: (view spoiler)

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## **Lorena says**

When I first started reading this series, the books averaged between 300-350 pages in paperback. This latest entry is 708 pages in hardcover, and it took me FOREVER to get through it, because the page difference is not made up of more plot. Instead, it has never been more clear that LKH is mining her own humdrum life of polyamory, therapy about polyamory, and working out for filler material to surround increasingly meager and thin "plots," and dressing it up in allegedly-sexy vampire and lycanthrope clothing. If anything could be said in favor of this drab, hodgepodge, train-of-thought masquerading as a novel, it would be that LKH has really done her part to make the polyamorous community seem less seductive and dangerous to those in monogamous relationships. Nothing, NOTHING, could sound more boring and tedious and less tempting than polyamory as described by LKH, even if it does involve the most physically perfect specimens ever known on earth.

Here's the basic plot we start out with:

Anita: Some weird shit is happening to people I know.

Some boytoy: You ate Marmee Noir.

Anita: Yeah.

Boytoy: Marmee Noir had the power to make weird shit happen.

Anita: I'm with you.

Boytoy: Specifically, the exact things that are now happening around you.

Anita: Go on.

Boytoy: Someone who had absorbed Marmee Noir's powers, for example, by eating her, would then have the power to make this weird shit happen, even if they didn't realize they were doing it.

Anita: I have no idea what you are saying or why you think it is relevant to mention this now. I really wish someone could figure out what could possibly be causing this weird shit to happen around me.

**SPOILER ALERT IT WAS BECAUSE ANITA ATE MARMEE NOIR THAT THE WEIRD SHIT HAPPENED.** But that's not really what matters or what the book spends any time on, really, so don't worry about it.

Instead, remember the last book, where Anita cracked the case by literally grabbing a computer and praying into it so God would let her talk to the victim on the other end of a web cam? All of a sudden, in this book, Anita has no idea how to use a computer. Getting access to an email attachment suddenly involves waking up one of her men from a dead sleep to accompany her to the vampire computer lab (yes, that's really a thing) and enter her login and password, because despite not being your grandmother, this is all too complicated and newfangled for her. Hopefully, Apple is working on an iGod app for the rest of us, so we can just pray fervently into our phones and laptops and get instant access to the exact email attachment and/or cat gifs we are looking for at that particular moment.

On the other hand, Anita's penguin collection makes a rare appearance! So weird to see any mention of something that has any connection to the beginning of this series! But here, it's used as evidence, once again, of how superior Anita is to other women in every way. In this particular case, she demonstrates her excellence by not really giving a shit about how her boyfriends decorate their shared bedroom, contributing only the penguins and some negative feedback on stuff she doesn't think she will like (but ends up liking). Anita is the ultimate "guy's girl," who just doesn't understand those silly other girls or the girl things they like (or her own deeply internalized misogyny). Any "girl" stuff Anita likes, on the other hand (like her penguins) is totally fine and also charming.

Despite her claims to have no sense of interior decorating, Anita sure has a lot of opinions about the decorating style of her vampire servant Damian's girlfriend Cardinale (got that?). The hideously monogamous Cardinale is an "extreme girl," as evidenced by the fact that she gets jealous and wants a monogamous relationship. This is obviously the wrong way to be a person. Cardinale's crimes are demonstrated through such grievous sins as decorating her shared bedroom with Damian with a flowered bedspread. I don't even know why such a monster is allowed to live in this series. I don't understand why Anita hasn't gone right out and executed her. But I guess she serves as yet another important object to demonstrate (again) that everyone in a monogamous relationship is either (1) evil and selfish, or (2) trapped in that relationship by the person who is evil and selfish.

Just to drive that point home, Ascher, who was trapped in a monogamous relationship with some dude whose name I can't really be bothered to remember or look up right now, on account of how Ascher was an abusive dick who also kind of tried to murder everyone, is now ready to become less of an abusive and murderous dick and also less monogamous thanks to - and I am not making this up - therapy and antidepressants. How does that even work? Isn't vampire physiology pretty different from just human? Can he even eat a solid pill and digest it, or does he have to suck the blood of some medicated depressed person to get his dose? And who, exactly, is this therapist everyone is working with? What therapist specializes in the issues of vampires and were-animals who were born in and were tortured throughout different centuries and now are all in a giant polyamorous relationship with each other? Is there a degree certificate you can take in this? What accrediting agency oversees that?

But we don't have any time to go into that, because instead we need to spend several dozen pages describing what everyone is wearing at the gym. LKH has really gone overboard with her belief that minutely describing every detail about a person's physical appearance counts as character development or creating atmosphere. Personally, I don't think I've learned everything there is to know about someone by learning whether their gym shorts are long or short, compression or loose, and what color their hair is and how it is styled for working out. There is also a Highly Dramatic Scene where some new guard messes up his job and

picks a (verbal) fight with Anita, and she ends up promising him that she will throw down with him physically at the gym, and they go back and forth for several pages about whether or not she is serious, and when exactly they will schedule this fight, and then...they never fight. The book forgets about the whole incident entirely, because everyone has to go to Ireland.

This brings us all the way up to Chapter 33: Weresnakes On A Plane. Not really, but it would have been more interesting, actually, as opposed to the word-by-word playback of 8 hours of idle plane small talk. For example, page 373:

“So, Mephistopheles, why didn’t you rebel and become the perfect little angel?” I asked....  
“I went the other way,” he said, in a voice that almost purred. “I decided to be my name.”  
“Mephistopheles,” I said.  
“Devil,” he said.

OMFG and this is at least the 18th time in the book so far that someone has pointed out that Mephistopheles is one of the names for the Devil, and they usually call Mephistopheles “Devil” as his nickname, and often shorten that to “Dev.” Which is short for “Devil.” Because Mephistopheles means “Devil.” I’m not sure you’re getting this. Should I go through it again? You can bet LKH will. She also keeps using the phrase “girl trap” throughout this book, to indicate the act of asking a question you don’t really want an honest answer to, even though at least half the time, they are addressing the accusation to men. This careless misogyny is grosser and more morally objectionable than any of the sex acts anyone gets involved in, frankly.

As usual, once they are actually in Ireland and the “investigation” part of the book has (finally...kind of...) started, Anita is exactly as smart or as stupid as the lazy plotting requires her to be. Her intelligence and competence is not a fixed point around which her reactions to any given plot occurrence can be guessed. No, if a stray idea for a plot point would require Anita to be exceedingly stupid and forget all common sense and experience, then that is what she will do.

For example, she has a blind trust that the police in Ireland will be sufficient to protect her and her friends from a super-strong vampire who wants to kidnap and kill one of their group, even though the police in Ireland had no idea that this vampire or any other vampire lived in Ireland, have no experience with vampires, have non-existent vampire-fighting and -containing equipment, and also actively hate Anita and don’t even want her in the country. But no, I’m sure that will all work out just fine. (SPOILER ALERT THIS DID NOT WORK OUT FINE.) It also extends to Anita saying stuff like (p. 387) “In all the years I’d been intimate with vampires, first hunting them and then sleeping with them, I’d never asked about cloud cover. I mean, if your skin fried in the sunlight, was a cloudy day worth the risk?”

...  
...

25 books, and this is the FIRST time she’s ever dealt with the question of how cloud cover effects vampires? But then, after that, Anita amazes everyone with her mad vampire-hunter skillz by...revealing that she has read an article of relevance to her job. She explains that (basically) she has an RSS feed that sends her relevant stuff on her computer. So...now she CAN use a computer? Or is this something someone else has to print off and read to her?

Whatever. Anita and her friends get captured by the bad guys, who demonstrate their badness by giving Nathaniel an involuntary haircut. Then they get out and everyone is fine (except the people it is more convenient to kill off) and there is the usual 2 page wrap-up of stuff that should have been fully-fleshed-out plot but couldn’t really be explored because of all the gym clothing.

And there is your super-long review of this super-long stupid book.

## Bradley says

Personal recommendation: don't go into this expecting much of anything, and then you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Of course, after the last book, where I got so frustrated I actually gave it a single star and a rant, where I told myself I was stopping the series altogether, I fully didn't expect to pick up this 25th book at all.

Especially because we were going to have to deal with whiney-boy Damian as a main character.

But. Haven't I invested so much time and energy loving this series as a whole? But. If I can just ignore the constant insert part A into part B endless sex scenes, wouldn't this be better? But. If I can ignore the fact that so much relationship drama is dragging me around as if I had a noose around my neck and some cowboy was riding away holding the other end of the rope, can't I just focus on the police procedural and the supernatural goodness?

Yeah. I can. I have been for so many books, now, ever since right after Obsidian Butterfly, admittedly my favorite book of the series.

So, yeah, this wasn't so bad.

Damian and Nathaniel and Anita were the first complete triumvirate. They were the weaklings. They were also the first solid power base that Anita had since all the crap between Richard and Jean-Claude. I hoped to see a lot better stuff between them, but then Damian's thread was just marginalized and the author turned him into the ugly red-headed step-child. Literally. For more than a dozen books. And all the while, Anita collected men (and now women) as if they are trading cards and those relatively solid storylines and wealth of opportunities with her supernatural power base just kinda slipped away.

Until now. Hell. I was very worried it'd be just another whiney whiney Damian story, but no, he's actually starting to grow up and take responsibility, which is about time since he \*is\* a 1000 year-old vampire. I was relieved. It felt like some of the good times I had before Obsidian Butterfly, when Anita was backed into a real corner and she had to dig \*really\* deep for some hidden juice. And she does, once again. The supernatural stuff in this one was great. It's the main reason I keep on reading the series.

Ireland. The leadership of the Harlequin. What does Mommy Darkness's shards of power mean for Anita's fate? I mean, the American Vampires are just consolidating their power, now, but there \*is\* another whole world out there. I'm glad that this issue is being addressed, finally. I hope to see even more of that. This book is actually establishing a very solid reason to do so.

Damian's old master, the lady of fear, is an awesome reason for Anita to go on a political duck-hunt across Europe and beyond.

As for the tragic death of a main character? Well, what can I say? It's about time. And no, it's not Damian. As far as I'm concerned, he's golden again. It's nice to have the hints of an actual triumvirate that WORKS. You know, rather than just using relationship drama to limit the overpowered monstrosity that is Anita Blake, we might actually get back to core issues like Ethics and Other Overpowered Monstrosities. :)

So yeah, if I ignore those things that annoy the shit out of me, I have to admit that the rest of this book was

pretty damn cool. This is the Ultimate Flawed Novel, but I can't help but think that we need to have a cheat-sheet for readers of the series. Something like an Anime Filler List for tv episodes that don't follow the Manga, but in this case it'd be pages we can successfully skim or just plain skip because of relationship drama or tired sex scenes.

Yeah, Um, you can skip pages 23-68, 74-82, 112-150, etc., etc. :) (Not real pages you can do this with, I'm just citing an example.) :) We need this for the whole series, then. Let people enjoy a really awesome UF, sometimes skipping whole Character-Named books entirely, and love it as much as some of us have, but without the angst. :)

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### **Terri ♥ (aka Mrs. Christian Grey) says**

Wow, well first I thought I might DNF. It had been so long, I wasn't sure I could survive Anita's head. Her obsessive need to have an hour long conversation during a thirty second walk to the bathroom annoyed me and about broke me. I dislike Anita very much and have from the beginning of the series. It's the cast of side/minor/major characters and my fantasy to walk in her shoes that keeps me going. I love we had a taste of all my favorites. Micah, JC, Nicky, Dev and Sin, oh and Edward made the book worth the read. And while Nathaniel was never my favorite, I did find myself liking him a lot more in this book including Damion. The only favorite of mine I missed in this story was Jason. And apparently not reading the novella about him has left me in the dark about somethings mentioned in the book. My heart hurts for that or those persons who didn't survive. (Cryptic so no spoilers) Anywho, I hope we don't have to wait years for the next book. Otherwise, I will have to go through that horrible adjustment of Anita's need to control and discuss obsessively about everything around her.

Ah yes, after all the unnecessary conversations, the ending was rushed. They won too easily. It felt like the author ran out of gas. I didn't like Asher's fate in the epilogue either.

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### **1-Click Addict Support Group says**

I don't always know why I keep reading this series. For one thing, at this point, I know what everyone looks like. I have them so ingrained into my brain after a million books that I don't need a full reminder of each character in every new installment. I get that there is a complicated poly-relationship. I don't need details of every kiss goodbye. It shouldn't take multiple pages to simply list who she has to say goodbye too. I do like how the author has adapted the sexual aspects of the relationships. It's not as complicated as it used to be. They all accept that they have multiple partners, multiple loves, and they go on with their lives.

I am loving this relationship ideal they've come to agree on. It's sexy, it's practical, and it works for them. I love the way characters grow and evolve. I love watching Anita go all badass and kill the monster. No spoilers there. If you've read the book, you know that's how she rolls. I do get annoyed at how she so often seems surprised at just how powerful she is. It's almost as if she has forgotten since the last big battle just what her powers can do, so she seems to learn a new one in each book and then rarely use it again. Not in this one. In *Crimson Death* she draws on some of her previously earned powers and rocks them like the Queen she is.

Nathaniel goes from being a pretty boy to being a badass in his own right. He deserved that. He has deserved

that for such a long time, and it was wonderful to watch. He has grown so much, yet so slowly that this felt so justified. I adore any chance to read more about Edward. He's just such a deeply layered character, who has also changed so much throughout the series. Damian deserved a little more time in the spotlight. He sort of got shafted, getting brought to the front then neglected in so many of the earlier books.

I think at this point though, this series reminds me more than anything of a soap opera. It's more about the characters relationships than the mystery and murder, and sometimes monotonous dialogue goes on for pages. I can just see some overly made-up, sub-par actors reading the dialogue while over-acting. It's like my frumpy housewife, can't look away, guilty pleasure. I don't want to tell everyone how much I enjoy it, but then if I find out you enjoy it too I feel as if I've found a kindred spirit. I can't look away no matter how bad it gets, and I binge on it nonstop until it's over. It's reliable in its mediocrity, and I kind of love that about it. ~ George, 3.5 stars

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## Jilly says

You know when someone is trying to tell you a story and then they get so fixated on details that don't matter that you forget what the point was? And, you no longer care. You just want out of the conversation so badly that you are willing to set yourself on fire to get away from them.

This book is that person telling the story.

I just want to know where the hell is the editing team? How could they allow such a messy clusterfuck go to print?

It's not just the usual B.S. of having Anita describe what every single character looks like in excruciating detail **every single time they are mentioned**. And, it's not even the fact that there are conversations about absolutely nothing, and have nothing to do with the overall story, that last for up to **40 freaking pages**. It's not even the ridiculously endless descriptions of every place, every body movement, every side-eye, every speculation on motivation ever on the face of the earth. Or, the complete girl-hate that shines through so strongly (either a female is a lover/admirer of Anita or she is evil) (the expression "girl trap" is endlessly used to describe the manipulations of us evil females).

It's the complete mess of the whole. The stuff I mentioned above takes precedence over the actual story to a point where the story is completely lost and a huge disaster. The problems/crimes become secondary to the bullshit, and when they are "solved", it hardly makes sense. Most of the questions are never answered. Most of the solutions are ridiculously half-assed, out-of-nowhere, "that makes no sense", kind of stuff. As a paranormal mystery, it totally fails.

But, I guess the thing is that if someone had taken a red pen to this book before printing, it would have either had to be a very bad short-story about a bad group of vampires getting caught. Or, it would have been a very bad short-story about polygamous relationship therapy. Put together, we got a very bad, **very long**, mishmash of both.

## **Lukas (LukeLaneReads) says**

To anyone like me, who continues to more or less hate-read this series....I think we need to get real and create a support group or something, because we must all have some serious, serious issues.

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## **Morgan Erwin says**

This whole series is a mess now. I just want to go back to the Anita Blake from the first 6 books. When she was an amazing character, not this mess of drama filled nonsense. I want to like this series again, but I just can't....

You can find more of my reviews here:  
Chapter One

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## **Ea Solinas says**

**WARNING:** this review discusses aspects of the book "Crimson Death" that may be triggering to survivors of rape and sexual abuse. So proceed with caution... and do not read the book.

Forget pride -- optimism is what goes before a fall. After hearing that Laurell K. Hamilton's latest book was going through the editing wringer, I actually began to hope that we might get at least a passable book. Not a great one, but at least readable.

Alas, my optimism was unwarranted. Not only is "Crimson Death" a truly, brain-meltingly awful Anita Blake book, it may actually be the worst Anita Blake book that Hamilton has written yet. It may not be the most plotless or the slowest, but this long tedious slog combines all the worst aspects of Hamilton's writing like some kind of bad-urban-fantasy Voltron -- as well as the most horrifyingly offensive subplot that I have ever read.

One thing to note is that this book is actually more like two loosely-linked books, with 90% of the tedious relationship stuff dumped in the first half of the book, and 95% of the tedious, slow-moving thriller stuff in the second half. In the first half, Damian is having bloody night sweats and horrible nightmares, and (like everything else) it can only be cured by getting in bed with Anita and Nathaniel. After a particularly bad nightmare, their otherwise-useless little tri suddenly gets a massive power-up. Also, there's other personal drama -- Nathaniel wants a baby, Cynric wants JC to bonk him, and so on.

Meanwhile, Edward gets the Irish Gardai to reluctantly invite Anita to Ireland, because vampires have started attacking there for the first time ever... except not, since Damien's former master Moroven has lived there for centuries. Anita immediately butts heads with the Gardai and Edward's military buddy Nolan (since annoying people is her specialty), and begins investigating the local fairies and selkie populace as she tries to figure out whether Moroven is responsible for all this. Spoiler: she actually never actually accomplishes

anything, and only makes life harder for the Gardai.

"Crimson Death" has all the qualities you would expect from LKH's awful books -- it has all the relationship melodrama (in-fighting, neediness, misogyny, whining, trashing Asher and Richard), and then it has the bad thriller elements (misogyny, the token "hater" cop, gun fetishization, Anita horning in on investigations with her thug squad). All of that, and more, are here. But there is one thing that sets this book apart from her other books:(view spoiler)

These would be a reeking, oozing stain even on the best book ever written, and "Crimson Death" is not that book. The book oozes by at the speed of frozen honey, with Anita spending half the book simply sitting around having relationship drama with her dozens of men and women (and occasionally beating someone senseless or threatening to kill them). The plot technically starts at exactly the halfway point -- but unfortunately it's just as slow-moving, and riddled with poorly-written red herrings, plot holes and Anita failing at everything she tries. Most of the story is crammed into the last few chapters, which end abruptly and without much resolution.

Anita is her usual self in this book -- violent, obnoxious, petty, jealous and persistently hypocritical, picking fights with anyone who doesn't immediately change their thoughts to mirror hers. She also spends a lot of time trashing the Gardai for trying to save lives and not having enough guns, and at one point goes off about the evils of antidepressants (which Hamilton claims "[fry] a brain that works just fine until it stops working") like a devout Scientologist.

But the worst character by far is Nathaniel. After about twenty books, Hamilton seems determined to make people see Nathaniel as a force to be reckoned with. Aside from Anita screaming at anyone who doesn't respect him,(view spoiler)

"Crimson Death" is not just a turgidly loathsome book, but a downright offensive one that attempts to defend and justify rape. As a result it's not just boring and horribly-written, but left me feeling dirty and drained as if I had been drowning in a peat bog.

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## Lindsay says

I've always had a love-hate relationship with this series, and the hateful aspects have come to dominate the way I talk about these books to people. So in this review I'm going to attempt to explain why I've stuck with them for this long despite their many, many flaws. (Very briefly, horrible pacing, overlong didactic conversations and too much tab A-slot B sexual description).

**Nostalgia.** First and foremost, at one stage this was a fantastic urban fantasy series with some pretty good writing and inventive and rich world-building. Its always taken a serious look at the law-and-order aspects of the modern world with open exposure to werewolves and vampires and it does so from the point-of-view of law enforcement. The series has had it's ups and downs though, with some really rocky books once Anita gained succubus powers that she couldn't control, and another few that ignored the best aspects of the books in favor of introducing far too many unneeded new supernatural aspects (rainbow tigers?).

**Preternatural Law Enforcement.** I confess something of a fascination with the US approach of paramilitarization of the police. Hamilton postulates a world where that process is *actually necessary* to deal with actual threats. In Anita's world making sure you're armed if you leave your bedroom isn't just insane gun-fondling weirdness; it's actually a rational approach to a clear and present danger. It actually shines an interesting contrast on the people who behave like this in the real world though; I very much doubt that most of them are at risk of insane centuries-old were-assassins breaking into their apartments to kidnap them. Beyond just the changes in law and policing that this world necessitates, there's usually a lot of SWAT and small-unit police action in these books along with crime scenes and back-at-the-precinct action in these which *feels* well-researched. (I'm not sure if it actually is though).

**Politics.** Not the vampire/were-animal politics; most of that is more than tedious. I mean the politics of this point-of-view. Anita is religious and probably the biggest gun nut that I can think of in speculative fiction (and that includes the MilSF books that raise gun-porn to incredible new fetishistic levels). In American culture at the moment, most of that would go along with some of the most restrictive attitudes towards women and sexuality that typifies the red states. Instead, we get very positive views of LGBTIQ issues and one of the few positive portrayals of kink and polyamory outside of actual erotica. Anita herself has undergone a change over twenty-odd books from a conservative mindset to being part of a bisexual polyamorous group relationship. There's a huge focus on the communication and negotiation that would be required for that to work. And the author is very therapy-positive as well with a lot of references to the things that Anita and her people have actively worked on, something that's quite realistic given the level of trauma these people suffer on a regular basis. All up we get positive points-of-view of both conservative attitudes towards religion, guns and law enforcement and liberal attitudes towards women, LGBTIQ and sexuality, and you just don't get many positive things to say about all of that in one place these days.

I could talk about characters, but I don't think I've got much positive to say about those. Thirty-page conversations that are meant to take ten minutes while the characters are in a hurry have beaten any love I had for these characters out of me.

Now all that being said, I think I'm just about done with this series. The things I like are being drowned by the things I don't, and the issues are getting worse, not better.

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## Beth says

Anita gets a call from Edward asking for her help with an Irish paranormal problem. They don't know what is causing it but Ireland, a supposed vampire free zone, has had a rash of vampire killings.

For the first 50% of *Crimson Death* they are discussing Anita going to Ireland, their relationships and feelings, their relationships and feelings, their relationship and feelings.

There are a few issues with Anita heading to Ireland. The vampire known as "the one who made him", aka Damian's creator and the ruling vampire in Ireland (an evil, sadistic, "bitch") has lost control of the vampires. They are also consider that the fae magic may or may not be fading and that more vampires (the undead) are able to rise in Ireland with the lack of fae power on the land. Finally, there is the issue of Ireland having a peace keeper force and doesn't believe in violence or executions for any reason, which includes vampires and paranormal creatures.

The idea of turning the Executioner and Death loose on Ireland just made me squeal with what ifs.

Once Anita hits Irish soil, they must figure out all the above. While Anita once again must wrangle her

personal life, professional life and when those times when those lines absolute get crossed.

I'm going to preface my review by saying I have read every book in this series and have been a fan for years. Then I'm going to say, I wish I had just skipped the first 50% of this book and just read the second half. I almost gave up on a series that I have loved and that is a first for me.

What I didn't like:

The dialogue was mind numbing and monotonous and went on and on for pages. Everyone had to discuss how they felt. It was like watching a B movie with actors that were over the top.

Brother husbands??? Jean Claude??? I can't even process that one.

What I liked:

I liked both Damian and Nathaniel have come into their own.

I liked that Edward got some page time.

In the end, *Crimson Death* went back to the story telling that the fans have come to expect.

I received this ARC copy of *Crimson Death* from Berkley Publishing Group in exchange for a honest review. This book is set for publication October 11, 2016.

My Rating: 3 stars

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Reviewed for:

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## Bubble B says

Edited review

Edward!!!!!!!!!!

Edward, Edward, Edward!!!! Finally!!!! Mussed him soooooo much! I really hope this book brings it, because the last one, pffft.. didn't even want to read it again, and that's when you know the book didn't do it for me. Obsidian Butterfly is the book I judge all the other books by. Even though a couple of my favorite characters didn't say hello, the fact that there was no Richard drama and we got to find out so much about the most enigmatic character of the series, made it the most awesome.

I hope that with Ted back, we will see great things.

ps.: What b'out the weddin?? Really want to see about that.

This review contains spoilers. Sort of.

It has been two and a half weeks now that I have finished reading the "Crimson Death", twenty fifth book of this long lived, fine series, and it took me this long to absorb the contents and calm my feelings and be capable of a somewhat impartial review.

I love Anita. I love her world, her friends, her enemies and her lovers. I have loved it all for many years now, and somehow, I still get excited when word is released that some sort of addendum to her vast history is being made. But today, and for some time now, said excitement is bittersweet. I know that Laurell is being very careful about Anita's personality and her wishes, her love for coffee, Nathanael and Sigmund. But for a while back, Anita became a two dimensional character whose only life experiences revolved around sex and some sort of metaphysical emergency. Her likes and dislikes, her wishes, her love, her job, her quirks and what made her tick vanished and became non important, non mentioned. It is better now. The house in Jefferson county is mentioned, Sigmund has his special appearances, coffee is drunk. But we still miss what Anita started up as: a crime fighter, a badass practitioner of necromancy, a girl, with an old, if not a little skeptical, soul. I miss RPIT, the SWAT, Vegas, Dolph, Animators Inc., and even that prissy Larry.

Our girl has been through a LOT. She comes from a three book long Drought, an engagement, an open relationship, a breakup, a seven book long no intercourse on the pages, a metaphysical condition in which sex with (many) different men is not even allowed but encouraged, a hierarchy of sexual favors going like: Boyfriends - lovers - friends-with-benefits - only-in-emergency-food, and finally, a marriage proposal gone haywire. And this is only in the "bedchamber" department.

I know that people grow up. That girls mature into women. That what once was black and white, is now a myriad of grey. But they do not lose their essence. And if an action filled book series become dimmed by long, hard thrusts (on interminable pages), then maybe, it is time to re-read all the books and find what was lost.

In regards to the "Crimson Death".

I have always hated Damien. And poor thing, it was not ever through his own fault. I have felt he was a spinless prig, with deprecating words and no action. He never allowed Anita to be anything to him, and always resented her for it. What I forget, is that nobody's perfect. Not even a millennia old vampire. Especially a very old vampire. It takes time to get over one's traumas and insecurities, but a man such as Damien, who was born so long ago, in a society with such different rules and aspirations from our own, and later locked away in a castle under the rule of a crazy bitch, doing her bidding and being tortured.. It will fuck you up. And he has not taken his time to heal. He's come from one distorted relationship of a thousand years, bound himself with another woman, who he didn't know and started dating someone who was as crazy, but in a different way, than his first Moroven. And the fact that he CHOSE to let go of all the bad feelings made me his fan. Made me remember that not everything has to go Anita's way, although it usually

does in the end.

In the synopsis, Laurell painted the fact that things were going to shit in Ireland, that Damian was going to have to step up, and (best of all) that Edward was going to be there. That was after the book was scrapped and re-written, thank the Gods. Apparently, in the first draft, Damian was kidnapped by Morover, The One Who Must Not be Named (kudos for Ted) further remarking on his spinelessness and necessity to be rescued over and over and over...

With some added bonuses of very important people in danger, a few deaths, some unexpected allies and of course the mention of one Van Cleef, it went all according to plan. What disappointed me during this book, was the fact that it took less than 30% of the book for the facts of the synopsis to unfold. The other 70% of the book was spent on over explanation, wedding bullshit, misbehaving Harlequin, over explanation, more relationship bullshit from Damian and Cardinale, over explanation and sex.

The thing is, it could have been the other way around. Everything on the first 70% of the book would be well placed and very comfortable in 30%, and the very awesome part of crime fighting, ass kicking, a few sex scenes to feed the ardeur, a little bit of tragedy, because.. Anita, and investigation, could be placed in the final 70% of the very awesome Crimson Death 2.0.

Regardless, the memory of better times, respect for what once were, and Laurell's resistance and determination to bring back an era of grandioseness, is the thread that ties my relationship with Anita and this series. I think Laurell could do no wrong. Weird and faulty, yes, but no wrong. I would continue to read Anita underwater. It has been for many years comfort reading for me. Although I have reread the whole series a couple of times now, there are a few books (Guilty Pleasures, Burnt Offerings, Danse Macabre, The Harlequin, Skin Trade, Kiss the Dead, Affliction and of course, the holy grail of it all, Obsidian Butterfly) that stay on my nightstand for cold lonely days, and hot arduous ones too.

Thank you Laurel. I needed this book. This series actually.

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