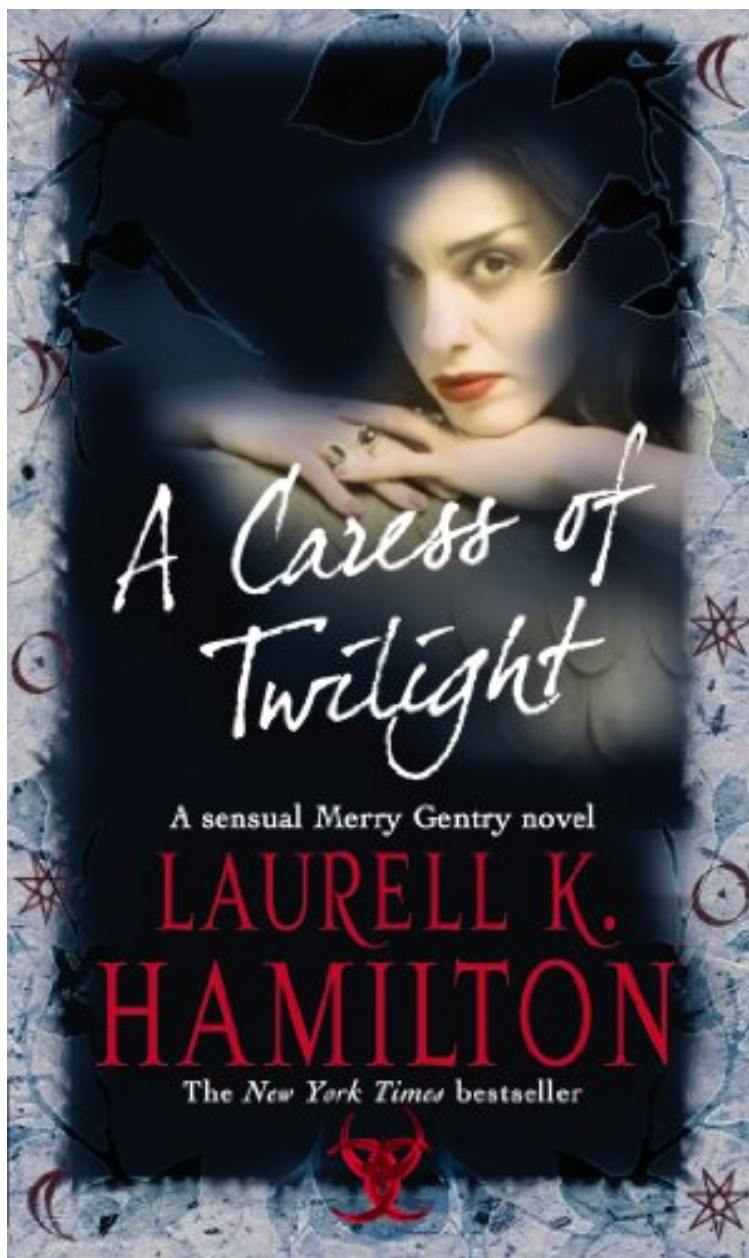


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A Caress Of Twilight: Urban Fantasy (Merry Gentry 2)



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Par Laurell K. Hamilton : A Caress Of Twilight: Urban Fantasy (Merry Gentry 2) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Caress Of Twilight: Urban Fantasy (Merry Gentry 2):

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Description : Description du produitI am Princess Meredith, heir to a throneif I can stay alive long enough to claim it. My cousin, Prince Cel, is determined to see that I dont. As long as we both live, we are in a race for the crown: Whichever one of us reproduces first gets the throne. So now the men of my royal guard frightening warriors skilled with blade, spell, and gunhave become my lovers, auditioning with pleasure for the role of future king and father of my child. And they must still protect me from assassination attemptsfor

unlike most of the fey, I am part human, and very mortal. All this royal back-stabbing makes it very difficult for me to pursue my living as a private investigator in Los Angeles, especially since the media made sure the whole world knows the Faerie princess is alive and well in sunny California. Now, in the City of Angels, people are dying in mysterious, frightening ways. What the human police don't realize is that the killer is hunting the fey as well. Havoc lies on the horizon: the very existence of the place known as Faerie is at grave risk. So now, while I enjoy the greatest pleasures of my life with my guardians, I must fend off an ancient evil that could destroy the very fabric of reality. And that's just my day job. . . . From the darkling throng to the glittering court, this is a world of magic and delights, greed and grotesque ambitions. Laurell K. Hamilton has created a mythos of extreme power and pure beauty that is a delight to behold.

Présentation de l'auteur She is Princess Meredith and she is heir to a throne - IF she can stay alive long enough to claim it. Unlike most of her kind, Merry is part human and all too mortal, as her cousin and arch rival knows only too well. For a deadly game is being played in the Faerie court and whoever produces an heir first wears the crown. But as she auditions her royal guard - illustrious warriors equally at home with gun and blade or spell - for the role of future king and father of her child, Merry is somewhat distracted from her career as a private investigator. Then, in her adoptive home, in the City of Angels, people start dying in mysterious, frightening ways. What the human police don't realize is that the killer is hunting the Fey as well. It seems chaos awaits, threatening the very existence of the place known as Faerie is in grave danger and Merry finds herself facing an ancient evil that threatens the very fabric of her world. And that's just the day job....com Faerie princess and private detective Meredith Gentry juggles love, sex, intrigue, magic, and more in this witty and sensual novel from Laurell K. Hamilton. Merry has her hands full: she's desperate to conceive a child and thereby claim the Unseelie throne; she's the target of intrigue from both the Seelie and Unseelie Courts; her newest client is an exiled goddess with a secret that could get them all killed; and a hideous fey force that alarms even her formidable lover-warriors is loose in Los Angeles. A Caress of Twilight is infused with Hamilton's characteristic appealing blend of sex, magic, wit, and romantic dilemma. The mystery takes a back seat to the concerns of Faerie power and politics, making the book less balanced, but Merry's growth in leadership and power, along with a bang-up ending, won't leave fans disappointed. Readers new to Hamilton might be advised to start with A Kiss of Shadows or the extremely popular Anita Blake series. --Roz Genessee Extrait Moonlight silvered the room, painting the bed in a hundred shades of grey, white, and black. The two men in the bed were deeply asleep. So deeply that when Id crawled out from between them, theyd barely stirred. My skin glowed white with the kiss of moonlight. The pure bloodred of my hair looked black. Id pulled on a silk robe, because it was chilly. People can talk about sunny California, but in the wee hours of the night, when dawn is but a distant dream, it's still chilly. The night that fell like a soft blessing through my window was a December night. If Id been home in Illinois, there would have been the smell of snow, crisp enough, almost, to melt along the tongue. Cold enough to sear the lungs. So cold it was like breathing icy fire. That was the way air was supposed to taste in early December. The breeze crawling through the window at my back held the dry tang of eucalyptus and the distant smell of the sea. Salt, water, and something else, that indefinable scent that says ocean, not lake, nothing usable, nothing drinkable. You can die of thirst on the shores of an ocean. For three years Id stood on the shores of this particular ocean and died a little bit every day. Not literally Id have survived but mere survival can get pretty lonely. Id been born Princess Meredith Nic-Essus, a member of the high court of faerie. I was a real-life faerie princess, the only one ever born on American soil. When I vanished from sight about three years ago, the media had gone crazy. Sightings of the missing Elven American Princess had rivaled Elvis sightings. Id been spotted all around the world. In reality Id been in Los Angeles the entire time. Id hidden myself, been just plain Meredith Gentry, Merry to my friends. Just another human with fey ancestry working for the Grey Detective Agency, where we specialized in supernatural problems, magical solutions. Legend says that a fey exiled from faerie will wither and fade, die. That's both true and untrue. I have enough human blood in my background that being surrounded by metal and technology doesn't bother me. Some of the lesser fey would literally wither and die in a man-made city. But most fey can manage in a city; they may not be happy, but they can survive. But part of them does wither, that part that knows that not all the butterflies you see are actually butterflies. That part that has seen the night sky filled with a rushing of wings like a hurricane wind, wings of flesh and scale to make humans whisper of dragons and demons; that part that has seen the sidhe ride by on horses made of starlight and dreams. That part begins to die. I hadn't been exiled; Id fled, because I couldn't survive the assassination attempts. I just didn't have the magic or the political clout to protect myself.

Id saved my life but lost something else. Id lost the touch of faerie. Id lost my home. Now, leaning on my windowsill with the smell of the Pacific Ocean on the air, I looked down at the two men and knew I was home. They were both high-court sidhe, Unseelie sidhe, part of that darkling throng that I might someday rule if I could stay ahead of the assassins. Rhys lay on his stomach, one hand hanging off the bed, the other lost under his pillow. Even in repose that one visible arm was muscled. His hair was a shining fall of white curls caressing his bare shoulders, trailing down the strong line of his back. The right side of his face was pressed to the pillow, and so I couldnt see the scars where his eye had been taken. His cupid-bow mouth was turned upward, half smiling in his sleep. He was boyishly handsome and would be forever. Nicca lay curled on his side. Awake, his face was handsome, bordering on pretty; asleep, he had the face of an angelic child. Innocent he looked, fragile. Even his body was softer, less muscled. His hands were still rough from sword practice, and there was muscle under the velvet smoothness of his skin, but he was soft compared to the other guards, more courtier than mercenary. The face did, and did not, match the body. He was just over six feet, most of it long, long legs; his slender waist and long, graceful arms balanced all that length. Most of Nicca was shades of brown. His skin was the color of pale milk chocolate, and the hair that fell in a straight fall to his knees was a rich, dark true brown. Not brunette, but the color of fresh turned leaves that had lain a long, long time on the forest floor until when stirred they were a rich, moist brown, something you could plunge your hands into and come away wet and smelling of new life. In the moonlit dark I couldnt see his back, or even the tops of his shoulders clearly. Most of him was lost under the sheet. It was his back that held the biggest surprise. His father had been something with butterfly wings, something not sidhe but still fey. Genetics had traced his back with wings like a giant tattoo, except more vibrant, more alive than any ink or paint could make it. From his upper shoulders down his back across his buttocks flowing over his thighs to touch the backs of his knees was a play of color: buff brown, yellow tans, circles of blue and pink and black like eyespots on the wings of a moth. He rested in the dark drained of color so that he and Rhys were like two shadows wrapped in the bed, one pale, one dark, though there were darker things to be had than Nicca, much darker. The bedroom door opened soundlessly, and as if Id conjured him by my thoughts, Doyle eased into the room. He shut the door behind him, as soundlessly as hed opened it. I never understood how he did that. If Id opened the door, it would have made noise. But when Doyle wanted to, he moved like the fall of night itself, soundless, weightless, undetectable until you realized the light was gone and you were alone in the dark with something you couldnt see. His nickname was the Queens Darkness, or simply Darkness. The Queen would say, Where is my Darkness? Bring me my Darkness, and this meant that soon someone would bleed, or die. But now, strangely, he was my Darkness. Nicca was brown, but Doyle was black. Not the black of human skin, but the complete blackness of a midnight sky. He didnt vanish in the darkened room, because he was darker than the moonlit shadows, a dark shape gliding toward me. His black jeans and black T-shirt fit his body like a second skin. Id never seen him wear anything that wasnt monochromatic except jewelry and blades. Even his shoulder holster and gun were black. I pushed away from the window to stand as he moved toward me. He had to stop gliding at the foot of the king-size bed, because there was barely room to squeeze between the bed and the closet doors. It was impressive simply to watch Doyle slide along the wall without brushing the bed. He was over a foot taller than I was and probably outweighed me by a hundred pounds, most of it muscle. Id have bumped into the bed a half-dozen times, at least. He eased through the narrow space as if anybody should have been able to do it. The bed took up most of the bedroom, so when Doyle finally reached me, we were forced to stand nearly touching. He managed to keep a fraction of distance so that not even our clothing brushed. It was an artificial distance. It would have been more natural to touch, and the very fact that he worked so hard not to touch me made it the more awkward. It bothered me, but Id stopped arguing with Doyle about his distance. When questioned, he only said, I want to be special to you, not just one of the mob. At first it had seemed noble; now it was just irritating. The light was stronger here by the window, and I could see some of that delicate curve of his high cheekbones, the too-sharp chin, the curved points to his ears, and the silver gleam of earrings that traced the cartilage all the way to the small hoops in the very pointed tops. Only the pointed ears betrayed that he was a mixed-blood like myself, like Nicca. He could have hidden the ears with all that hair, but he almost never did. His raven black hair was as it usually was, in a tight braid that made his hair look clipped and short from the front, but the braids tip hung to his ankles. He whispered, I heard something. His voice was always low and dark like thick candied liqueur for the ear instead of the tongue. I stared up at him. Something, or me moving around? His lips gave that twitch that was the closest he usually came to a smile. You. I shook my head, hands crossed over my stomach. I have two guards in bed with me and thats not protection enough? I

whispered back. They are good men, but they are not me. I frowned at him. Are you saying you don't trust anyone but you to keep me safe? Our voices sounded quiet, peaceful almost, like the voices of parents whispering over sleeping children. It was comforting to know that Doyle was this alert. He was one of the greatest warriors of all the sidhe. It was good to have him on my side. Frost . . . perhaps, he said. I shook my head; my hair had grown out just enough to tickle the tops of my shoulders. The Queens Ravens are the finest warriors that faerie has to offer, and you say no one is your equal. You arrogant . . . He didn't so much step closer we were standing too close for that he merely moved, pressing close enough that the hem of my robe brushed his legs. The moonlight glinted off the short necklace he always wore, a tiny jeweled spider hanging from the delicate silver chain. He bent his face down so that his breath pushed against my face. I could kill you before either of them knew what had happened. The threat sped my pulse faster. I knew he wouldn't harm me. I knew it, and yet . . . and yet. I'd seen Doyle kill with his hands before, empty of weapons, only his strength of flesh and magic. Standing, touching in the intimate darkness, I knew beyond certainty that if he wished me dead, he could do it, and not I or the two sleeping guards behind me would be able to stop him. I couldn't win a fight, but there were other things to do when pressed together in the dark, things that could distract or disarm as well or better than a blade. I turned minutely toward him so that my face was pressed into the curve of his neck; my lips moved against his skin as I spoke. I felt his pulse speed pressed against my cheek. You don't want to hurt me, Doyle. His lower lip brushed the curve of my ear, almost but not quite a kiss. I could kill all three of you. There was a sharp mechanical sound from behind us, the sound of a gun being cocked. It was loud enough in the stillness that I jumped. I don't think you could kill all three of us, Rhys said. His voice was clear, precise, no hint of sleep in it. He was simply awake, pointing a gun at Doyle's back, or at least I assumed that's what he was doing. I couldn't see around the bulk of Doyle's body; and Doyle, as far as I knew, didn't have eyes in the back of his head, so he had to guess what Rhys was doing, too. A double-action handgun doesn't need to be cocked to fire, Rhys, Doyle said, voice calm, even amused. But I couldn't see his face to see if his expression matched his tone; we'd both frozen in our almost embrace. I know, Rhys said, a little melodramatic, but you know what they say: One scary sound is worth a thousand threats. I spoke, my mouth still touching the warm skin of Doyle's neck. They don't say that. Doyle hadn't moved, and I was afraid to, afraid to set something in motion that I couldn't stop. I didn't want any accidents tonight. They should, Rhys said. The bed creaked behind us. I have a gun pointed at your head, Doyle. It was Nicca's voice. But not calm, no, a definite thread of anxiety wove his words together. Rhys's voice had held no fear; Nicca held enough for both of them. But I didn't have to see Nicca to know the gun was trained nice and steady, the finger already on the trigger. After all, Doyle had trained him. I felt the tension leave Doyle's body, and he raised his face just enough so that he was no longer speaking into my skin. Perhaps I couldn't slay you all, but I could kill the princess before you could kill me, and then your lives would mean nothing. The Queen would hurt you much more than I ever could for allowing her heir to be slaughtered. I could see his face now. Even by moonlight he was relaxed, his eyes distant, not really looking at me anymore. He was too intent on the lesson he was teaching his men, to care about me. I braced my back against the wall, but he paid no attention to the small movement. I put a hand in the middle of his chest and pushed. It made him stand up straighter, but there really wasn't room for him to go anywhere but on the bed. Stop it, all of you, I said, and I made sure my voice rang in the room. I glared up at Doyle. Get away from me. He gave a small bow using just his neck for there wasn't room for anything more formal, then he backed up, hands out to his sides to show himself empty-handed to the other guards. He ended between the bed and the wall with no room to maneuver. Rhys was half on his back, gun pointed one-handed as he followed Doyle's movement around the room. Nicca was standing on the far side of the bed, gun held two-handed in a standard shooter's stance. They were still treating Doyle like a threat, and I was tired of it. From the Hardcover edition.