




# Blood Memories

*Barb Hendee*

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## **Blood Memories** Barb Hendee

Eleisha, a vampire, is far older than she looks and makes men yearn to care for her. Then she usually kills them, since self-preservation comes first. So when an old vampire friend kills himself, Eleisha is shocked. And what she finds in his home shows how world-weary he had become; hoarding corpses and keeping records of vampires actual names and addresses. Now the police know who Eleisha is, and more alarmingly, what she is. But she soon realizes that being known may have its uses, even if it puts her and her kind at risk.

## **Blood Memories Details**

Date : Published October 7th 2008 by Roc (first published November 1st 1999)

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Author : Barb Hendee

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## From Reader Review Blood Memories for online ebook

### Katie(babs) says

Blood Memories is about vampire, Eleisha Clevon who has been around since the mid-nineteenth century ever since she was turned into a vampire by another, Julian, who wanted her to take care of his crazed father, William Ashton for all eternity. Julian turned his father, thinking the change would make him sane again. That did not happen, and Julian was ashamed by what he did, so he banished both Eleisha and William to the states. They were able to survive and have been living in Portland, Oregon for almost a century. Since William cannot hunt, because he is still a feeble old man with dementia, Eleisha gives him rabbits to feed on. Eleisha is able to look young and vulnerable to those she targets. This allows her to overpower her prey and suck their blood, and most importantly, their life force out of the bodies. She has also has a very close vampire friend, Edward Claymore, who helped her when she first came to America. Edward decides he can no longer live as an undead predator. He kills himself while Eleisha watches. Eleisha is not the only one to witness Edward's suicide, as two police officers arrive on the scene and see a man come running towards them in flames.

Eleisha has no choice to run for safety. She and William find sanctuary with Maggie, another vampire from her past. Soon these two women are hunting together and for a short while Eleisha feels safe. Unfortunately, the two cops who saw Edward go up in flames, have been looking for Eleisha. These two men are empaths and one of them, Dominick, wants to kill Eleisha and all creatures like her. Dominic has a partner, Wade, who though Psychometry, the touching of objects, can know all about a person. Whereas Dominick feels the need to destroy, Wade wants to befriend Eleisha, because for the first time in his life, he feels in tune with another person. Eleisha and Wade are able to touch each other with their minds, and when Wade finds out about Eleisha's past and how she turned and why, he wants to protect her. As for Dominick, he has become delusional. And if that isn't bad enough, Julian has found out that Eleisha hasn't been staying under the radar and may be on his way to make things right, which makes Eleisha frightened to her very soul.

Even though Blood Memories has some interesting moments, there is something lacking within this story that could simply not hold my interest. The action comes on suddenly and things seem to jump around too much and a bit too fast in some passages, as if Hendee was trying to put as much information as she can out there without enough descriptions to back it up. I wish Hendee would have given more time with the flashbacks about Eleisha and Wade's past, rather than an overview.

I will say that Blood Memories should appeal to fans who have an interest in vampire lore along with a twist on the legend and myth. I did enjoy Eleisha, who was the most well rounded and most dimensional of all the characters. I could not stand Wade at all because he was very one-dimensional and not a worthy partner for Eleisha. I found him annoying and he really didn't bring any substance to the plot. I would have preferred if Eleisha was on her own because she would have come across as a better female heroine than to rely on a sap that I found Wade to be. Quiet honestly I found all of Hendee's male characters to be very lacking. It seems her strong suit was with Eleisha and Maggie.

With that in mind, would I want to read a sequel to Blood Memories? I would have to take a pass. This almost became a DNF for me, and the only reason I stuck till the very end was because I wanted to see if Eleisha was able to come out on top. Perhaps the problem lies with Blood Memories not being refined enough and too amateurish for my tastes.

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## Jean says

Don't let the cover fool you, this isn't like other Urban Fantasys. The plot set up on the back cover serves more as a catalyst than anything, driving a meditation on what it means to be immortal, different, a vampire? How does living for so long, and how does coming to be that way, affect you?

Even at it's slowest and most introspective the pacing clips along at a good speed. There are some real heart-string pulling moments. Every character is drawn in detail, even the worst of the antagonists is far from being labeled evil.

For me it didn't have the hypnotic draw that the Noble Dead books have, but it is a good read and I definitely recommend it to fans of the series, and to anyone looking for a vampire story that isn't run of the mill.

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## Kelly says

Originally published in 1998, *Blood Memories* is an odd book. In some ways, it's more in line with the gothic vampire-fiction trends begun by Anne Rice, while in other ways it's more reflective of the newer urban-fantasy trends influenced by Joss Whedon and early Laurell Hamilton.

On the Rice side of the scales: Barb Hendee's vampires kill, but are presented as sympathetic characters who don't enjoy killing. (In current urban fantasy, it's more common to find vamps who rarely kill, or else vamps who are wholly evil and like to kill.) There's a focus on the angst and loneliness of eternal life. The present-day narrative is broken up by expository chapters in which the main characters' life histories are revealed. Characters fall in love and/or become intimate friends just after meeting.

On the Buffy side: The present-day plot is fast-paced with plenty of guns and chase scenes. The prose is simple and straightforward, not languidly descriptive as it is in Rice's novels. Most importantly, there's a streak of female empowerment running through *Blood Memories*. The heroine, Eleisha, starts out dependent on others, and in the end takes control of...well, of a lot of things.

The result is a novel that sometimes feels like it doesn't know what it wants to be. The juxtaposition of action scenes and "memory" scenes threw me at first. I eventually got used to the frequent changes in pace, but it was an issue at the beginning.

The villain is a little anticlimactic when he finally appears. I realize that he has the power to make others fear him. It's good for him that he has that power, though. When he doesn't have it "switched on," he's not all that and a bag of chips. I kept wondering why no one had stood up to him earlier, especially when he first went rogue in the 1800s. The minor villain, a mortal, was scarier by far.

However, I enjoyed the development of Eleisha as a character. I didn't like her much in the beginning. By the end, I was cheering for her. She's not the gun-toting, uber-tough type of heroine we're used to, but she grows to be strong in her own way. *Blood Memories* was written at a turning point in the vampire genre, and I can almost see Eleisha's path as a metaphor for what was going on in the genre at the time. Out with brooding, in with strong heroines.

This review originally appeared at Fantasy Literature's Hendee page.

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## **Delores says**

This book was about a young girl who was "turned" when she was 17 against her will. She wasn't given much information about what she had become or what her "new" life would be like. She was turned because of selfish reasons by her "maker." The reader learns her "modern" story as well as glimpses into her past dating back to the early 1800s. The basic plot was good. The story had some good twists and turns but it wasn't completely enthralling. It had just enough to keep me reading but not enough to give it more than 3 stars.

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## **Natasha says**

Blood Memories is the first book in the first book in the Vampire Memories series by Barb Hendee. Blood Memories is an amazing book. Once I started this book, I was hooked.

Blood Memories is about a female vampire named Eleisha Clevon who has been around since the mid-nineteenth century. She was turned into a vampire by another vampie named Julian, who wanted her to take care of his crazed father, William Ashton. Julian turned his father, thinking the change would make him sane again. Then the following day he turned Elisha so she can take care of Willam for all eternity. Julian didn't teach Elisha or William the way of life of vampires, he just sent them on their way for them to take care of themselves. More than 150 years later, Elisha still survives, still caring for her charge William but is suddenly thrust into danger. Things turn upside down for Elisha and she is pushed to new territory with new allies.

I personally loved this book. I love the characters and the plot. If I had to pick a favorite besides Elisha, I'd have to pick Phillip. He's strong headed and old fashioned but has great potential. I am a huge fan of this series, I'm currently reading the next book, Hunting Memories and I'm loving that as well. Barb Hendee knows how to write a great story. The story is compelling and fast paced. If your a fan of Urban Fantasy and a bit of Dark Fantasy/Paranormal Romance you have to read this book! I'm hooked!

### **Synopsis:**

Eleisha Clevon has the face of a teen angel, but she is no angel. Unlike most vampires, she doesn't like to kill, but self-preservation comes first.

When an old friend destroys himself by walking into sunlight right in front of her, Eleisha is shocked. And what she finds afterward points to how very sick of his existence her friend had become--piling drained corpses in the basement and keeping records of other vampires' real names and addresses. That's a problem.

Because now, there are policemen on the case: two very special humans with some gifts of their own. They know who Eleisha is, and, even more dangerous, what she is.

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## **Deanna Roberts says**

This was a completely guilty pleasure... vampires and all the goodness that goes with them.

I loved the twist that Barb Hendee put on the vampire society....

I am seriously hoping that this is not the end of what I am hoping is at the very least a 3 book series.

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## **Wanda says**

### **3.5 stars**

A pretty good vampire yarn. Great for those looking for *just* vampires. No annoying werewolves, faeries, or other supernatural creatures. The vamps are after blood, not sexy times, and have limited abilities. The main character has been made a vampire (against her will) to do a specific task and left without instruction or assistance from her maker.

It would seem that there are only half a dozen vampires in her world and that number is shrinking, as Eleisha's current companion commits suicide. Chances to learn from another are limited and her abilities are changing in ways that startle her.

Reminiscent of Anne Rice's vampires, as there is a fair bit of angst about the need to kill to survive. There are also hints that vampire history may become a focus, as it does for the Vampire Lestat. However, without the same powers as Rice's vamps, these characters must learn human skills like driving, managing money, and renting hotel rooms.

Eleisha is in many ways an abused woman who is learning to own her power and to run her own life. I wasn't crazy about her at first, as she starts out timid and overly dependent on others, but she gains momentum during the course of the book, eventually leaving her in a much more independent place.

An interesting exploration of the concept of immortality—what will keep an immortal being engaged & interested in life? What interests or skills will keep them anchored in their society and in sanity? So many speculative fiction books deal with enormously long human lives, but don't really consider this problem.

It looks like I will have to request book 2 by interlibrary loan if I am to continue the series.

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## **Sarah Mac says**

Nope. DNF, pg 80-something.

I snagged this from the clearance rack several years ago -- back when I was stockpiling UF/PNR, especially the vampire variety -- but honestly? I was on the fence even then, & I should've listened to my gut. It's one big yawn. The characters have no spark, the dialogue is flat, & the delivery of backstory is a trance-inducing snore. I like the idea of each vampire being assigned a specific 'survival gift' when they change -- there's

intriguing possibility there, given some of the gifts wouldn't be so blatantly useful as sexual thrall or super strength -- but that's all I can say.

Strike one: Blah prose & unnecessary animal death.

Strike two: The single most interesting character is killed off somewhere in the first third.

Strike three: The hamfisted (and abruptly overwhelming) reliance on psychic communication, telepathy, mind control, blah blah blah.

Not. Interested.

Standard issue DNF 2-star. It's flat & boring, but nothing to induce 1-star rage.

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### **Faith Hunter says**

Very dark urban fantasy. This is the first book of a series, limited 3rd person POV, with rich detail and intense internal dialogue. The characters all all dynamic and very different from the Nobel Dead series, yet it reads just as easy. I admit that I am totally hooked and started on book 2 in the series five minutes after I finished this one! Go get this book!

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### **Julie (jjmachshev) says**

I enjoyed reading "Blood Memories" by Barb Hendee. This is definitely an urban fantasy vice romance novel (at least so far and there is at least one more novel to come) as there is no one special relationship that the story focuses on. Instead, it's an interesting look at a young woman turned vampire to be a caretaker but not given any information on her existence. The story is told mostly in first person from her POV and it's strangely fascinating to read about how she lives and how she learned to continue her existence. The story of how she came to be is told in a kind of flashback and as she learns more from the few others of her kind she knows, her ideas of how to live change and grow.

A more cerebral type of vampire story, but compelling nonetheless.

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### **Brenda says**

Imagine a life that revolves around only two other people, and one of those dies. How alone would you feel? How desolate?

This is a dark and haunting tale of a young woman turned into a vampire and then sent of to care for a mentally deficient vampire with no training and no knowledge of what she had become. More than 150 years later, she still survives, still caring for her charge, but is suddenly thrust into danger.

I really enjoyed this and am looking forward to reading another in the series.

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## StarMan says

An above-average vampire novel (~3.5 stars), and the 1st book of a series.

PLOT (NO SPOILERS): There are fewer than 10 vampires left in the entire world, or so our heroine vampire has been told for ages. Most of them remain hidden. But then one of the vamps suddenly commits suicide. And our heroine encounters a man with most unusual talents. She begins to wonder if what she has believed for years is all just a lie. And who is the cop who knows about hidden vampire society?

No werewolves, fairies, or goblins. Perhaps one other type of supernatural creature (here or in Book 2), but I won't tell.

Recommended for those who want some real vampires in their vampire novels. This is a moderately serious paranormal book, but it's not super-dark or terrifying. I'd say it's somewhere between Anne Rice (denser, darker) and Charlaine Harris (lighter, sillier).

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## Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

Eleisha is one of only a handful of vampires in the world. Once a servant in a lord's castle in Wales, she was turned in the 1830s at the age of seventeen by Julian, the lord's son, a man everyone fears. She's put on a boat to America with a very specific responsibility: to care for William, a vampire everyone but Eleisha is repulsed by.

In America, Eleisha finds friendship with another vampire, Edward, who teaches her how to hunt, how to feed, how to ensure mortals never discover what she really is, and how to use her gift. When turned, a vampire's singular personality trait as a human becomes a tool of manipulation with which to lure mortals. Julian's was fear. Edward's was charm. Eleisha's own gift is to appear angelic but helpless, weak and vulnerable - and make people want to help her, protect her, rescue her.

Little changed over the course of years, decades, centuries - not for the small clan of vampires: Eleisha and William, Edward, Maggie, Philip and Julian. But everything changes when Edward commits suicide, dramatically bursting into flames when he steps into the sun - right in front of the police.

Now Eleisha is on the run, and not just from the police but also from a telepathic police psychologist who has somehow linked to Eleisha. Unable to turn to the cold and brutal Julian, she runs to Maggie in Seattle ... only to have trouble follow her and change her immortal existence, forever.

First published in 1998, long years before the vampire craze took off some time in 2007 (I remember it well - I'd just finished reading *Twilight* and about two months later, so had everybody else and suddenly vamps were IN!), *Blood Memories* has more recently been re-released - "resurrected", you could say - and very timely it is too, now that there's a more appreciative audience for vampire Urban Fantasy. The present-day dates have been moved to make it more current, but I don't think it needed it. It reads fresh and modern and is solid Urban Fantasy - no dash of Romance here, not even a whiff, as they tend to have these days. (Hendee is also co-author of the Nobel Dead series, a Fantasy series featuring vampires, which I've yet to read. I've got the first book, *Dhampir*, just haven't got around to it. There are a few authors who were writing about vampires in new ways, long before they became mainstream. Credit where credit's due.)



Eleisha narrates, though there are flashbacks told telepathically through memories that shift to third-person. Eleisha's voice is at once strong and vulnerable. She's come a long way, matured hard, and can fend for herself, hold her own, fight and kill efficiently when necessary, albeit reluctantly. The others think she's weird for genuinely liking William, and for seeking out the companionship of other vampires - they've been taught by Julian that they should always be alone.

As vampires, they're traditional - sleep all day, sun will kill them, as will fire and decapitation - and yet not: no fangs, no super-human strength or speed or hearing, though they're better than mortals and have good night vision. They're not invincible. And they're messy eaters. They have their personalised gift and, as Eleisha learns, something extra too. Overall they struck me as surprisingly vulnerable, but more organic for it. It could be their self-induced loneliness, their superiority complexes that mask a pathetic desire for companionship. It makes them sympathetic - alien, but understandable.

I liked that Eleisha's inhumanity - her non-humanness - was there to see, as well as the residues of her humanity. She's unapologetic about what she does to survive, but is also keen to explore ways of changing their methods of feeding without killing. The male vampires are more varied - Julian is more insane, insecure and deluded than plain evil (though maybe that combination is one definition of evil, especially when acted upon?).

Structurally, it's fast-paced for the most part but free of the worst traits of genre fiction, traits ever more prevailing today - the things that make my right eyelid tick: too much introspective thought, explaining everything and over-thinking everything; and those abominable standalone dramatic sentences that too many genre authors overuse, reducing the intended tension to the incessant landing of a fly on your leg that tickles and just won't leave you alone. It's why I haven't read any Kushiel since 2006, even though I keep buying the new books (I loved the stories, but the writing style got on my nerves and I needed a break), and why Rita Herron's abysmal *Dark Hunger* got such a bad review from me. Dramatic standalone sentences (which get their own paragraphs) should be used sparingly, or they won't be dramatic anymore. Just irritating to the point of being obnoxious. I can't bring that up without diverting into a mini-rant. Thankfully, Hendee's narration is just right: mature, nicely balanced between light and heavy, confident, firmly grounded in her protagonist.

However, the story itself did start to lose my interest towards the end for a bit. It lost momentum with all the flashbacks, as good and necessary as they were and interesting to read too. The ending was too static to give a suitable climax after all that build-up, and left me less interested to read Eleisha's next story.

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## **Karen says**

This was a 'thoughtful' vampire story. It seems at first to be going slowly, but that's an illusion - it flows smoothly despite having three of the characters stories told in 3rd person and injected amongst the normal 1st person chapters. The suicide of Edward by stepping into sunlight starts a chain of events, that lead to an exciting confrontation where I swear I had to remind myself to breathe. All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed it

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## **Alex says**

I had a hard time getting into this book at first but it got better as I kept reading. And I hope that as I read the

second one it will continue to get better. However, after I read the second one I don't think I'm going to continue with the series because of how long it is, and I have so many other books that I want to read. But it was good.

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