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**White Trash Warlock, Trailer Park Trickster, and Deadbeat Druid,
by David R. Slayton. Reviewed by Phillip Fitzsimmons.**

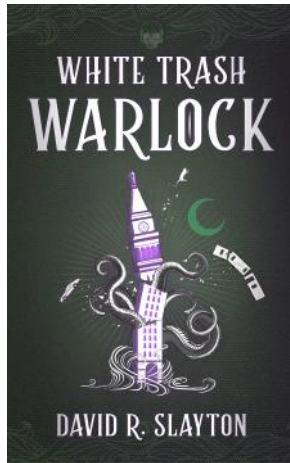
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David R. Slayton. *Adam Binder Series*
(*White Trash Warlock*, 2020, 287pp.
Trailer Park Trickster, 2021, 285pp.
Deadbeat Druid, 2022, 317pp.)
Blackstone Publishing. \$25.99. Re-
viewed by Phillip
Fitzsimmons.

A mark of a good urban fantasy author is one who can build a world that has the right balance of fantasy and reality. Author David R. Slayton nimbly accomplishes that balancing act in his *Adam Binder* series, which will appeal espe-

cially to those readers who grew up on the wrong side of the tracks in a small town but still see the magic in everyday life.

Writers of the Rohirrim, the Weatherford, OK, Mythsoc discussion group is always searching for talented new authors or unique fantasy plots to read and discuss. A member suggested *White Trash Warlock*, and the title alone was enough to intrigue our group. However, we unanimously agreed to add it to this year's reading list after learning that both the author and the title character are from Guthrie, OK.

This review is about the entire *Adam Binder* series by David R. Slayton, which is a trilogy of contemporary urban fantasy novels. The titles are *White Trash Warlock* (2020), *Trailer Park Trickster* (2021), and *Deadbeat Druid* (2022). I enjoyed reading the books in this series, and I hope the author will return to it in the future. He is releasing something different, *Dark Moon, Shallow Sea*, a work of epic fantasy, in October 2023.

I read *White Trash Warlock* early to see what it was like and enjoyed it so much that I got through the series in less than a week. I will focus here on *White Trash Warlock* in this review and mention Novels #2 and #3 briefly. My hope is to inspire readers to take an interest in the series without giving spoilers.

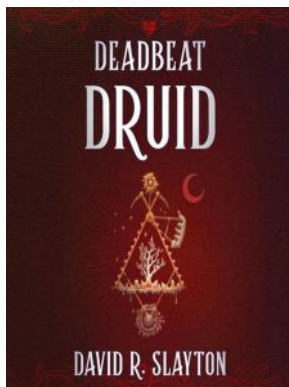
In a nutshell, *White Trash Warlock* opens with Adam Binder tracking down a warlock who makes charms from the parts of living magical creatures. The warlock is possibly Adam's long missing father. Adam is notified by his brother Robert that Anne, Adam's sister-in-law, is possessed by a spirit. It turns out to be an ancient spirit freed from imprisonment in a condemned Denver asylum as the building is being demolished. Adam finds himself working with high-powered Elves, magical creatures, and Death to attempt to save Anne and to deal with the ancient spirit.

In book two, *Trailer Park Trickster* (2021), Adam has been living for two years in his Aunt Sue's mobile home in Guthrie, Ok. At the end of his earlier adventure described in book one, Sue's familiar, a cat named Spider, appears to Adam in Denver to let him know she has died back in Oklahoma. Adam returns to Guthrie to

find out his Aunt Sue has died of a heart attack. He is quickly in conflict with his cousin Jody, a drug user who accidentally blows up Aunt Sue's trailer in a clumsy attempt at using it as a meth lab. She has also called up a warlock in the hopes of being taught dark magic, which she sees as her birthright. The novel segues between Adam's attempts to protect his cousin Jody and to find out the warlock's identity, as well as showing the activities of Adam's love interest, Vic, and the Elves in keeping the powers stable among the Elf kingdoms.

In *Deadbeat Druid* (2022) Adam must bargain with Death and make a road trip into Hell with his brother Robert in their father's Cutlass to bring back living people, including Jody and Vic from the nether regions. At the same time, the reader sees Vic and Jody battle demons as they struggle to walk out of Hell. The story resolves the mystery of the warlock's identity but, more importantly, shows Adam and his relatives learn to work together and become loyal to each other as they resolve their various conflicts and challenges that come about, usually, because of their magical talents and connections with other realms of reality.

Personal growth and redemption among Adam's family members are key to the *Adam Binder* series. In the back story, Adam was institutionalized during his high school years to an asylum by Bobby Jack, his brother, and Tilla Mae, their mother, because Adam appeared to talk to himself. While in the asylum Adam was instructed by an Elf on how to control his magic. After his release Adam lived in a trailer with his Aunt Sue, who is a witch with the ability to see the future. Meanwhile his brother moves to Denver and becomes a physician who insists magic is



not real and upon being addressed as Robert, not Bobby Jack.

I mention these biographical details because they are formative of the characters and point to details of small-town and rural Oklahoma life that Slayton nails. Refer-

ring to a person by a combination of first and middle names is common in rural Oklahoma. To this day my father is known as Phillip Joe and I was P.J. until I put it behind me, as did Robert, the hero's brother. The author presents life in the country realistically, and the details of mobile home living comes across as intimate knowledge. The author does an excellent job of capturing the language and attitudes of rural characters from three generations of the Binder family toward Adam being magical and gay.

The series is first and foremost an exciting set of popular urban fantasy tales that are well constructed and have multiple conflicts and challenges throughout the books with satisfying resolutions for each situation in which the characters find themselves. The book's hero is an intelligent, kind, loyal, and morally strong young man who puts himself in constant risk to do the right thing and to protect others. The stories include a love story between the hero and a rookie policeman whose life he saves while in Denver. The books do a great job of providing the primary elements of all good popular fiction.

I was initially surprised to enjoy this series as much as I am. The author is a solid craftsman at plotting compelling stories. He gives the reader interesting characters and, does a great job of capturing rural life in Oklahoma. My expectation is that if David R. Slayton continues to write and publish at his current rate that he will have a successful writing career.

I recommend this series to all public libraries. To help librarians decide if the action is right for their collections, I will point out the plots would be rated PG-13 if a movie, which is mild compared to many YA books already in public libraries and middle and high school collections. Finally, I highly recommend the *Adam Binder* series as good pleasure reading for young adults and adults.

