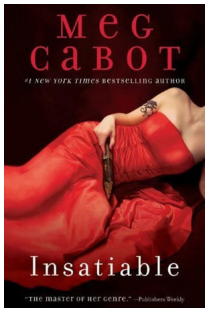
In INSATIABLE, THE PRINCESS DIARIES author Meg Cabot (pictured) has left princesses behind and brought the Prince of Darkness out to play. Sick of vampires, you say? Well, so is INSATIABLE’s main character, Meena Harper.

Life for Meena hasn’t been easy as of late. She was bypassed as head writer for the daytime soap that shares the book’s title, and is now being forced to compose a vampire storyline to boost ratings and crush INSATIABLE’s key competitor, LUST. But Meena has always had a connection to the supernatural: She knows how everyone she meets is going to die. That is, until she has a run-in with Lucien Antonescu. Tall, dark and handsome, Lucien doesn’t seem to have an expiration date, and may be the man Meena has been longing to have in her life.



But bad luck seems to follow Meena as Lucien becomes a bigger part of her life and Alaric Wulf, a member of a secret society of vampire hunters, swoops in, insisting Lucien is the “Prince of Darkness.” Now caught in the middle of an apocalyptic bloodsucker battle, Meena must try to predict her own future.

INSATIABLE is an obvious jab at the current undead pop-culture phenomenon—especially the TWILIGHT craze, with lines like, “Guys have been asking me to do their hair like his for weeks. Like it’s an actual style and not something accomplished with a razor blade and some mousse. People are psycho for that guy.” “Well, in books, the vampires struggle against themselves not to bite you, because they love you so much. But that didn’t exactly happen, did it? So the books aren’t really very accurate, are they?”

There are references to TRUE BLOOD and DRACULA as well, but Cabot seems to more respectful toward those works than she is to the Stephenie Meyer-spawned franchise. Yet for all her obvious jabs, Cabot still manages to create a TWILIGHT-esque love triangle between Meena, Lucien and Alaric which leaves the door open for a possible new series in the making.

Cabot also introduces an abundance of characters and subplots starting on INSATIABLE’s very first page, which will slow readers down as they try to digest it all and figure out how everyone and everything is connected. It’s not until about halfway through the book that all the pieces start to come together, and the reader becomes fully engaged into Meena’s world and ready to devour the book’s last half.

However, there are two things Cabot does in INSATIABLE which irked this writer and may turn other readers off as well. The first is the way she refers to Lucien as the “Prince of Darkness.” Lucien is in no way the devil, or even related to him; he’s just the prince of all vampires. Cabot even has one of her characters point out that the title “Prince of Darkness” is reserved for Satan, so why the author chose to give Lucien that title is a bit puzzling. Secondly, the soap-opera subplot gets annoying after a while. At the novel’s climax, when the vampire war comes to a head with a huge battle, the watching Meena seems only to think about possible plotlines for the show, or how her career may be affected by the outcome of the fight. Who would honestly be thinking about work when a painful, supernatural death may be eminent?

Although Cabot blends trend with tradition and creates a sometimes funny and pulse-pounding update of the ultimate Gothic romance, DRACULA, INSATIABLE feels for the most part like the result of Cabot being forced by her publisher to tackle the current hot topic of vampires—much in the way Meena is forced to write about them for her soap opera.

{jcomments on}