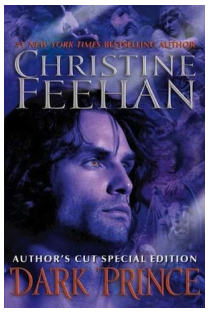
If you like your vampires to lean towards the more gushy romantic side than Barlow and co., chances are you’ll be a fan of Christine Feehan’s wildly popular Carpathian (Dark) series. In recent years, vampires have taken a turn from the frightening undead of old and morphed into romantic heroes with nothing on their mind except finding the one woman who will tame their blood-crazed hearts. And Feehan’s DARK PRINCE: Author’s Cut: Special Edition (William Morrow) certainly falls into the latter category.



In 1999, author Feehan began her “Dark” series by introducing us to a world in which an ancient race separate from humans exists. Not yet vampires, the Carpathians are from a remote region of Romania and have lived for centuries undiscovered. Unforgivably handsome and powerful, they do not turn into the bloodthirsty vampires of legend unless they are unable to find their so-called “lifemate”—a woman with special psychic tendencies who is more likely to be able to carry their mates’ babies. If these males exist for too long without said women, they change into violent creatures with nothing on their mind except the destruction of both Carpathians and humans alike.

With the powers oft thought to be exclusive to vampires, Feehan’s race of dashing rogues have the ability to read minds, shape-shift and use the power of suggestion to get pretty much anything they want. They also drink blood exclusively to survive, and in that respect are really no different than vampires, truth be told.

Feehan’s first Carpathian story, DARK PRINCE, was recently rereleased in a special “Author’s Cut” with additional story edited in, and it tells the tale of Mikhail Dubrinsky. Mikhail is the leader of the Carpathians and has been bogged down with worry over the near-extinction of his kind. A baby hasn’t been born in several centuries, and many of the older males of the race are close to turning vampire. When Mikhail meets the stunning Raven Whitney quite by accident, he realizes that she’s his destined partner. But Raven isn’t interested in giving up the life she has to mate with Mikhail.

Of course, it takes some convincing and some serious, mind-altering sex before Raven succumbs to Mikhail’s charms. But as is always the case, someone wants to make sure the two lovers don’t live happily ever after. And there is the added problem that Raven is human. Women who are human aren’t easily converted to Carpathian, and there’s a chance of her death or destruction by becoming a crazed vampire herself.

Feehan was one of the first authors to bring heroic vampires into the spotlight, and it is with this novel that she cut her teeth. Mikhail is a typical bombastic hero, spouting ridiculous romantic fodder that women can’t seem to get enough of. If you like your man to call you “little one” all the time, and if said man has a voice like “black velvet” and simply cannot live without you, you’re all set.

One must give Feehan a pass here, as it is the first in the long-winded (20 novels) series, but quite honestly there are an awful lot of velvet sheaths and too many whispering winds for my liking. While the story remains entertaining throughout, I’m much more of a J.R. Ward fan myself, and can’t imagine sitting through 20 books of women who can’t seem to live without their men, and men who claim to revere everything about their lifemate yet use their power to “suggest” they fall in love with them.

Having not read the original version novel, I can’t claim to enjoy it any more with the added content, but I’m sure fans of Feehan’s will be excited to read more about the unclaimed women, velvet-voiced heroes and the mystical realm of the Carpathians.