



Dark Curse

Christine Feehan

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Born into a world of ice, and slave to her evil father, Lara Calladine knew only paralyzing fear as a child—and escaping with her mysterious gifts unbroken would be the only way to survive her great Carpathian heritage as a Dragonseeker. Human, yet mage, she was of the blood of three species yet belonged to none. She walked her chosen path alone, guided by the wisdom of her aunts—to blend in and let no one know of her ancestry and powers. And never trust anyone. For beyond the frozen hell of her youth was a world of even greater mysteries and dangers.

Today Lara is the leading expert in the field of ice cave study around the world and the healing microorganisms that thrive in them. She's also in search of something else: the source of her nightmares—the cold dark corners of her childhood. Only one man has the will and the powers to help her: Nicolas De La Cruz, for whom centuries of hunting and killing have long since taken their toll. Dangerous and arrogant, he still longs to feel sensual love without the hunger for blood. Now, between Lara and Nicolas, a tenuous trust has emerged, and a passion neither has ever known before as a melody of dark promise begins.

But as each scales the treacherous land of the Carpathian in search of their past, they also harbor a secret that could save or destroy them. And as each may be desirous of a new beginning as lifemates, they are also haunted by the unknown dangers of a dark curse.

Dark Curse Details

Date : Published September 4th 2008 by Piatkus (first published September 2nd 2008)

ISBN : 9780749908836

Author : Christine Feehan

Format : Paperback 397 pages

Genre : Romance, Paranormal Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Vampires

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From Reader Review Dark Curse for online ebook

KatieV says

This is one of my favorite 'dark' books. Nicolas was delightfully dominant and arrogant in the vein of the earlier Carpathian heroes. He was softened just enough by his heroine but kept that core bad assness that I love so much in a PNR series, but he had his struggles.

The uber cave-alpha versus more modern open-minded hero is all about reader preference. I respect that Feehan has tried to give all her readers heroes they can root for. It's like any series, some heroes will do it for certain people and some won't. I'm just glad to see that the old school Carpathian hasn't disappeared from the series entirely. In fact, we get a lot of time with Gregori and Mikhail and other heroes from the early books. So great to have everyone being brought back together.

I also love that some of our long standing questions are beginning to be answered, such as why women are miscarrying. The mythology was deepened and expanded in very interesting ways. I feel like the series has been given a real boost.

Some may be a bit bothered by the 'separate spheres' argument that seems to be heating up in Carpathian society. It seems to be leaning toward accepting that the women do need to be trained to fight the vampire, but only in 'have to' situations. There's a stronger push by Mikhail, Gregori, Nicolas, and others to bench or otherwise reassign some of the women who have been actively fighting vampires. Mikhail was even leaning toward a royal decree. There's also a lot of emphasis on women's unique strengths and abilities, hence my 'separate spheres' comment. I see it being a strong debate within the series for some time to come and probably a debate with some readers.

Be aware, this book is dark in parts. There are some scary/disturbing things going on. Trigger warning for child abuse and suicide.

CC says

This one was tough. It was a hard story to read - because of the flashbacks. Nicholas was a typical Carpathian. A bit too much to take, but Lara wanted NONE of it. It is hard for me to rate a book highly when the heroine tries to kill herself to get away from the hero. I did not agree with her, but knowing her background I understood how she could have been that freaked. But it taints the romance for me.

Pat Cromwell says

Another hard cover that was worth the money. I felt so sorry for Lara. Her story is the 2nd of the series that made me friggin cry. If you read previous reviews, you know the first was Lucian and Jax's story. I felt so bad for this girl I could not think straight. I was so overcome when Lara and her aunt my girl Natalya discovered the truth about Lara's father! I read the book and saw so many sequels. Dark Curse has breathe new life into this series. There are so many possibilities and sequels. The ending breaks my heart because for IMO the hero had to truly make a sacrifice. This is one of the best. I about died the way it ended, rushed to

her website to see if she had another scheduled in the near future.

The danger in having a favorite writer is that the way for what they do is so far and inbetween. I am so jealous of James Patterson fans because he churns hit after hit out every 4 mos or so while we Christine Feehan, Sandra Brown, Pat Cromwell, Linda Howard, Lora Leigh fans have to wait

(He He He I slipped my name in -- its called subliminal messaging -- LOL)

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

4 Breaking Free Stars

First read Sept. 2012 Reread February 17, 2016

Feb 10 2017

Spoilers

"I know very little about your traditions or culture. Just stories my aunts told me when I was a child, but no matter what you've done to tie us together, know this: I don't know you. I don't love you. I don't care anything at all about you. I spent the first years of my life a prisoner and I will never-never-allow anyone to imprison me again. If you try to take anything from me by force, if you try to break my will or manipulate my mind, I will fight you with the last breath in my body. So you make up your mind-choose life or death for us."-Lara

Dark Curse the 19th book in the Dark series was great. I can't believe after 19 books this series still has me held captive. I am still so engrossed in the plot, and totally infatuated with these sexy Carpathian men. I don't know what it is about this series, but I just can't get enough. CF must weave a spell on the books that make us readers obsessed!

Nicolas De La Cruz, informing his brothers how they should handle their lifemates, so certain he knew best for everyone around him, after all, he was faster and smarter and had lived so much longer. And yet his own lifemate, the woman he had sworn to protect, to make happy, he had driven to this-taking her own life rather than submit to him.-Nicolas

I am all you think I am, but I can learn. I will learn. I have many sins, palafertiil, not the least is arrogance, but I am not above admitting my mistakes. Come with me. Come back to me and give me a second chance.-Nicolas

Nicolas De La Cruz was like all the De La Cruz brothers, rough, controlling, and dark. When he found his lifemate Lara, he like most Carpathian men figured she would obey him and do all the changing. Nicolas learned very quickly that his lifemate would rather die then ever be helpless like she was when she was a child being held prisoner by her great-grandfather Xavier and her father Razvan. I loved that Nicolas really grew in this book. Though his brothers that found their lifemates soften a little I feel Nicolas is the only one of them that really grew and changed on a deeper level. Which is why he is my favorite of the De La Cruz brothers. He really seen how much he hurt Lara trying to control her and did everything he could to make her

happy, and empower her. The one place he didn't give up control in was the bedroom, damn but the man was sexy and dominating. Lara was very broken in ways, but she had a core strength that grew as the book went on. Lara was a survivor and a fighter. Her past demons overwhelmed her a few times but she did her best and met her fear head on, overcoming it to help others and be a good lifemate to Nicolas. Lara was not only a powerful Mage but her Dragonseeker blood was strong which gave her some bad-ass power.

"I need to go back to the ice cave," she blurted out. "That's the reason I came here in the first place. I have to go back. Not you. Not the other Carpathians, but me. My aunts kept me alive, no, they did more than that. They kept me sane, and I suspect they kept my father sane as long as they could. I owe them and I need to go find them. Dead or alive, finding out the worst, it doesn't matter, I have to do this."-Lara

"And I want to feel your body under mine and hear you scream with pleasure. I plan on taking my time, having you over and over all night long until neither one of us can stand up, until you cannot think, only feel. I want to give you every sensual experience that I can." He brought her hand to his mouth. "I have waited several lifetimes for you, Lara."-Nicolas

I loved Lara and Nicolas together. They were both so giving and supportive. They both went out of their comfort zone to meet the other half way. Their passion for each other was very strong as was their respect for one another. I could almost feel their love it was so strong. I really connected to their relationship and them as individuals. I loved that Lara was the one to help saved the babies(Gregori and Savannah's twins still in womb, Raven and Mikhail's son still in womb, and Shea and Jacques's son already born) and that she is the one who found a huge clue to what was causing the lost of all the babies in the first place. I really loved the Warrior cave and the fight between the men and women on if the women should stay home. Gregori as always stepped on some toes in this book and, he and few others almost came to blows. Oh my Gregori I just love you and your caveman ways!! I was glad the aunts were saved in this book. Poor women have been prisoners forever! I can't wait to get to their books. I only have 2 small complaint about this book and it's why I gave it a 4 star instead of a 5 and that is this book had a little to much of the Carpathian language. A few lines here and there is fine, but line after line of gibberish gets a little boring to read just sayin'. Also Lara's spells! I don't need to read all of her spells. Line after line of nursery rhyme sounding spells also gets a little boring and kinda bogged down the book. Maybe if it was a really important spell but not every single time she uses her magic! I really enjoyed this book and can't wait to see what else CF creates in this amazing world!

Free will. Have you forgotten that small little detail? We take that away when we bind them to us, do we continue to do so after they are our lifemates? I suppose we can reduce them to little more than puppets who do our bidding at our will. But I know both Raven and Savannah would walk into the sun before submitting to such enslavement." "O jela peje terad. Sun scorch you, Mikhail," Gregori growled. "You have become modern and liberal in your old age."-Mikhail and Gregori

Heather says

First off, I LOVE The Carpathians! I know that these guys are almost always overbearing, controlling and bossy... but I still think they are sooooo sexy! Yum! This story about Nicholas and Lara is no exception.

Lara is part mage/dragonseeker/carpathian and as a child is kept captive by her evil grandfather Xavier and her "evil" father Razvan. These two baddies have made an appearance in quite a few (if not all, I dont

remember) of the Dark books. They use Lara for her blood as often as possible and they torture and abuse her as they see fit. Only her Aunts, the two Dragonseekers that are kept in the form of Dragons all the time, speak to her in her mind and keep her safe. They are the ones who sacrifice themselves in order for Lara to escape.

Fast forward 20 years and Lara is a Caver. She explores caves for scientific research and she remembers only some of her horrible childhood in the ice caves with Xavier. When she and two of her colleagues are exploring a very creepy cave in the Carpathian Mountains, a freaky creature attacks them and her friend gets injured. She uses a little magic to get away and they head into town to the Inn that Slavica owns. She is a friend to the Carpathians. Lara feels her dragon mark glow and she fears a vampire must be close by... however, up walks Nicholas. He is so shocked, he utters the bonding words and bites Lara! She knows who and what he is and now she knows they are bonded, but she freaks out when he bites her! She is terrified of other people taking her blood.

Nicholas and Lara have to learn to work with each other because neither of them is used to that. They have a ton of adversity to overcome, Lara wants to see if she can save her Aunts (the dragons), Nicholas wants to keep her safe, and Lara thinks she might be able to help with all the miscarriages the Carpathian woman keep having. They ultimately have to learn what all lifemates have to learn. To love and trust.

I just thought this book was hot hot hot!! Nicholas and Lara are so great together... the sex was amazing and I love the inner dialogue between the two of them. Plus, the plot was really good in this one. I was just as interested about what was going to happen to the aunts and the pregnant woman as I was about Nicholas and Lara's love story. There is just something about these Carpathian men. I wish I had one for myself. ;)

xo

Mariana says

Este es el segundo libro que leo de la saga de los carpatianos. Como ya mencioné en la reseña de “Lobo Oscuro”, esta saga puedes ser intimidante pues cuenta con más de 26 libros (y la autora sigue publicando más), así que si no saben nada de los carpatianos y quieren leer este libro, les aconsejo que se busquen un wiki o blog (los hay por montones) en donde les expliquen más a fondo sobre las características de este pueblo.

Una vez dicho esto, la verdad es que la historia se enfoca en la relación entre Lara y Nicolas por lo que si tienen ganas de un romance paranormal con bastantes escenas eróticas (explícitas) pueden leer este libro sin necesidad de haber leído sus antecesores.

El personaje de Nicolas del la Cruz me gustó bastante en su faceta de misterioso y poderoso luchador pero me costó trabajo conectar con él debido a su idea de “macho-dominante-hago-lo-que-quiero”.

Sigue en: <https://vikingalectora.wordpress.com/...>

Inky says

I have an addiction to Christine Feehan's Dark Series. I admit it. Sometimes the writing is awkward. Sometimes the characters are inconsistent. But I read on, compelled by the emotion infused into the story. If

you haven't read any of the Dark books, this is not the place to start. That being said, stop reading now if you don't like spoilers....

Dark Curse brings Nicolas De La Cruz together with his lifemate Lara Calladine, the descendant of an evil mage out to destroy the entire Carpathian race. The two come together just as Nicolas resolves to meet the dawn, choosing suicide over surrender to the darker impulses that would turn him vampire. Their bonding feels a bit artificial, mainly because the dialog in the beginning of the book is forced and unnatural. I couldn't believe the passage that had Lara accusing Nicolas of being a "sweet and syrupy" ladies man. Groan.

Feehan also presents Lara as warrior-like and fierce, a woman of Dragonseeker lineage, but her behavior in the book waivers from that -- a lot. And I had a hard time with the silly rhymes that Lara says as she works her magic. A lot of it was flinch-worthy and just interrupted the flow of the story. And if uber-alpha to the point of misogyny bothers you, stay far, far away.

That being said, Feehan has created a world that I can't help but return to, even when the trip is the cost of a hardback. I like the Carpathians, and in the book, we see a lot of familiar characters. Nicolas and Gregori go toe to toe. Mikhail has a lot of cameos. Shea and Jacques, along with their infant son, appear. A warriors' council brings together a lot of the males, with a few new faces being introduced for future stories. And good God, when is Feehan going to write Dimitri's story? His suffering without a lifemate is breaking my heart.

And there's where the hook comes in. No matter what complaints I have about the execution of Feehan's stories, I care about what happens to the characters in the book world she's created. Sigh.

In Dark Curse, Feehan also gives us the cause behind the Carpathian women's growing inability to conceive female children and carry any pregnancy to term. This won't come as much of a surprise to anyone who's read Destiny's story. It was pretty clear what the problem was going to be.

Lara, who as a child was food and entertainment for her abusive mage relative Xavier, discovers the reason and is able to save Raven, Mikhail's mate, and Savannah, Gregori's chosen, both on the verge of miscarrying. There's a lot of flashback to Lara's experience as an abused child that might put off some readers. I thought Feehan used it very skillfully to show Nicolas, a powerful ancient warrior, what helplessness really is. It also underscores Feehan's strong point -- writing to evoke an emotional response.

Some of the side stories weren't really handled well. I knew what was going to happen to Lara's friends as soon as I finished the first chapter. And we don't see or hear much from them again until the end of the book. I know the emphasis in paranormal romance is the romance, but the supporting cast deserved a little better, I thought.

And don't expect to see all the story lines tied up here. Lara, whose unique ability to eradicate the cause of infertility in Carpathian couples, isn't fully converted by Nicolas at the end of the story. And the climactic battle in the ice caves still left Xavier free to continue his war against the Carpathians. We do finally find out who the dragons are that appeared in Natalya's story, Dark Demon. They're sure to be getting their own stories.

And could someone do something about the silly bookcover? For God sake, the guy on front is bare-chested in a cape!

Malinda says

4-4.5 stars

This was a really good story. I liked both Lara and Nicolas and their story was very enjoyable and engaging.

Lara is a Dragonseeker, an ancient race that is closely linked with the Carpathian people. Unfortunately, Lara is the granddaughter of Xavier, an evil mage that grew jealous of the Carpathian people's long lifespans and used dark magic to extend his life much longer than it should have. Xavier kept Lara, her father Razvan and 2 of her aunts captive when she was a child and it took their combined efforts to help Lara to escape. She grew up thinking that she must have imagined her childhood but is drawn back to the area to try to find the caves she was held captive in as a child.

Nicolas is one of the 5 De La Cruz brothers that own a large cattle farm in South America. Nicolas is an ancient Carpathian male; Carpathians are born vampires with abilities like shape shifting (to any form, even mist), magic spells and psychic powers. The males of the Carpathians have a darkness in them and if they don't find their lifemates, they can lose their souls and become evil. Nicolas decided to come to the Carpathian mountains to pay his respects to his people's Prince before meeting the sun (the Carpathian version of honorable suicide before the darkness overtakes them and they become evil vampires).

Lara works exploring and studying ice caves and has 2 friends that work with her. When the story begins, Lara and her friends are already at the place where the ice cave from her childhood should be located. Lara is sure they're in the right place but has some trouble finding the entrance. A trap is accidentally tripped and one of Lara's teammates is injured. They head back to the Inn and their rooms, hoping to find a healer that can help and Lara runs into Nicolas (almost literally). They have the instant connection of lifemates and Lara has some idea of what is going on because of stories her aunts used to tell her. Unfortunately, Lara was not treated well during her captivity as a child and had blood forcibly taken from her. This makes things rough for Nicolas because his first instinct is to feed off his lifemate and he doesn't realize how badly it will affect her.

Nicolas makes some mistakes in how he deals with Lara at first and it seriously messes things up. However, the results of that mess up is good in the end because it makes Nicolas fully realize what Lara went through. Nicolas really just wants Lara and for her to be happy so once he was confronted with this, he adjusted his actions and restrained his needs accordingly. Lara had some issues to deal with and things are a bit hard at first but once she understands that she can trust Nicolas, it goes much smoother. While Lara and Nicolas deal with their budding relationship, they also have other things to deal with. Raven and Savannah are both pregnant (and the pregnancies are in trouble) and Lara's shattered memories may be the clue to finding out how to help not only them, but all the Carpathian women. Not to mention the need Lara still has to go back to the ice cave... Let's just say that there is plenty going on to keep things interesting and in the end, Nicolas and Lara are together and heading towards a well-deserved HEA.

This was a very enjoyable story. Lara was a good heroine...she had a couple of TSTL moment (one literally) but those few times were promoted by her abuse in her childhood and once you read what she went through, you can forgive a few freak-outs considering the circumstances at the time. Nicolas was kind of an arrogant jerk at first (like most Carpathian males) but he came around real quick. Once he got past that, he was a great hero. My one complaint is that the end felt a little unfinished (but in no way is a cliffhanger) because Lara hadn't been fully transformed to Carpathian at the end and it seemed weird to end with that not done. Outside of that, the story was very good and stayed interesting (keeping me well engaged throughout) and I really

liked the characters (both primary and secondary) so I'd recommend it. :)

* note - I listened to the audio version of this story and the narrator did a pretty good job.

Jane (PS) says

Loved it! Just loved it! Can't wait for the next one... Thank heavens I already have it! :)

Erika says

4.25 stars

This definitely wasn't my favorite Dark series book, but I did like it better than the last one I read (Dark Celebration). The romance worked pretty well for me. Nicolas came on too strong and controlling at first, which did not mix well with Lara's traumatic past. But he found out in a frightening way, that he needed to respect her freedom or she mentally/emotionally would fall apart. Once he understood that, he was a wonderful lifemate, though he still had a very dominant, at-times aggressive personality (and sexuality). He took good care of her and was very supportive.

What didn't work for me in this book were the constant spell-casting rhymes, magical rituals and Carpathian language sequences. I ended up skimming all of that because it is boring to me.

I also noticed, while reading this, that I may have come to a point where I have just read too many Feehan books. The language is the same and much of it has started to feel repetitive. I like the way she writes the relationships, but I wish some of the dialogue and descriptive language was a little different. Maybe this is to be expected since she is my most read author ever.

The thing is: I don't want to feel that way because she is the only author I have found who gives you:

- (1) the obsessive, protective, possessive alpha heroes who don't push the heroines away
- (2) heroes who aren't manwhores (at least not in the Dark Series or most of the Ghostwalker books I read).
- (3) rarely, if ever, OW drama of any kind (no past OW and no present). These men meet their life mates and that is that. They simply don't even see OW.

I can't think of one single other author who writes that way. They simply don't exist as far as I know. Only Feehan.

Susan says

Nicolas De La Cruz has come back to the Carpathian mountains to deliver a serious message to Mikhail Dubrinsky, the prince of the Carpathian people. The De La Cruz brothers have discovered a terrible plot against their people and the prince, and must get word to him and the other Carpathian hunters to remain vigilant. Once he has delivered his message, Nicolas has every intention of meeting the dawn and ending his life. He has been living in an emotionless, colorless world for many centuries, and has become tired of

battling the enemy. He has no idea that destiny will bring his salvation to him that very night.

Lara Calladine spent the first years of her life trapped in the ice caves, a victim of her demented grandfather Xavier, the dark mage. After escaping, she learned to hide her "special" abilities from the humans around her, and has returned to the Carpathian mountains seeking her answers from her past. Part human, part mage, and part Carpathian, she will need all of her power to cope with the aggressive Carpathian male claiming her as his lifemate.

Nicolas must move beyond his domineering instincts toward Lara and help her find her way back into the deadly ice caves, for within her memories lie the key to the problems the Carpathian race has been facing for years. Lara has the power to unlock the mysteries surrounding Carpathian pregnancies and the high infant mortality rate. She may be the only one powerful enough to save the Carpathian people.

Dark Possession seems to follow the new pattern that has emerged in the last three books. The series is evolving, adding new and exciting elements, while giving us thrilling stories of new lifemates. Lara and Nicolas were compelling characters, and their story was very well-written. *Dark Possession* added to some of the other stories, and some lurking questions from the last few books were resolved. The only problem I have with this book is that it had a weak ending. I realize the purpose was to really leave things open for future books, but it was still a little disappointing.

Overall, *Dark Possession* was a little different and refreshing. Now I just have to wait until September to see what happens next!

Natalia815 says

Esta saga siempre da una de cal y otra de arena. El anterior no me gusto mucho. Este me ha gustado bastante, empezando por la protagonista. Daba pena leer como lo tuvo que pasar en su infancia. En cuanto a Nicolas, pues como todos los carpatianos de la saga, son adorables, pero cuando se ponen en modo macho alfa me sacan un poco de quicio.

La trama central que llevamos arrastrando durante varios libros me gusta mucho. En breve leeré el siguiente. Me llama mucho la atención la historia de los dos protagonistas.

¿Lo que más me ha gustado? Cuando se reúnen para decidir algo y se "enfadan" entre ellos y ver como defienden a sus compañeras eternas. Me encanta que las mujeres no se dejen arrastrar por el machismo que algunos carpatianos dejan ver.

Jodi says

I used to love this series until I grew disenchanted with the whole Alpha male must provide smothering to his mate to keep the species alive. Yeah, I know it's protection not smothering, but it amounts to the same thing. This is a complicated story that had some redeeming qualities and since I haven't read this series in a while, I didn't know the entire cast of characters. But this was an audio and I was annoyed because the readers didn't know the cast of characters either so their voices, with their heavy Russian accents, weren't always appropriate. I also thought a few characters that I did know were out of character, Savannah in particular. I liked that Lara and the other women eventually took a strong stand about the role of women but it was too

long in coming.

Judith Parra says

SPOILERS!!! Dark Curse is the story of Nicolas De La Cruz and Lara Calladine. Let me just say that I LOVED the character Lara. Boy was she strong and a worthy lifemate to Nicolas who learns quickly to value her strength and character. Lara Calladine is the Razvan's daughter and niece to Natalya. Lara spent most of her early life in the ice caves of the dark mage Xavier. She was more or less raised, protected and sheltered by (as much as they could) by Branislava, Tatijana and Razvan....whenever he wasn't in control of Xavier. Branislava and Tatijana are daughters to Rhiannon and Xavier.

Lara is instructed by her aunts to hide the true extent of her powers so that she has a chance to escape Xavier's greedy hands. At this point, I have learned to despise the mage. Wow, he is one of the worst evil men that I have ever read about! At great cost to themselves, Tatijana and Branislava manage to help Lara to escape the ice caves at the tender age of 8.

About 20 years later, Lara returns to the mountain that hides Xavier's labyrinth of ice caves. She was taught well to create mage spells and to fight Xavier's brand of magic by her aunts. They had suppressed her memories and little by little, they are returning. Lara is accompanied by her partners Terry Vale and Gerald French, fellow researchers that are experts in of extreme cave environments and extremophiles. Extremophiles are organisms that thrive in all kinds of harsh environments whether it be fire, ice, or water. The research that Lara is most famous for will become important in the fight against Xavier and what he has done to affect the conception and birth rate of Carpathian children. It is here that I realize that Christine Feehan has done massive work and research to get her facts right. I love that about her and makes her book all the more fascinating! Go Mrs. Feehan!

The treacherous mountain reveals its dangers when it attacks the three researchers who were trying to find the entrance to the ice caves. Terry Vale was attacked by a mutated worm or snake and was injected with deadly parasites designed to kill or enslave the victim to Xavier's influence. While in the car, Terry rips off the snake heads and splashes Gerald in the face with his blood. Lara drives them to the inn and goes to find help. It is then that she runs into Nicolas who is so close to turning vampire. He sets her in a trance and takes her blood nearly losing himself in the process. Lara is forced to stab him to save herself. Being the typical chauvinistic male, Nicolas immediately claims Lara after taking her blood and leaves it up to her to choose to reject his claim or not. She chooses to save him....along with a few choice, not so lady like words.

Lara tells Nicolas of what happened on the mountain and that she needs help for her friend Terry. Mikhail and Gregori are summoned to help. Gregori's appearance triggers post traumatic syndrome in Lara. His silver eyes remind her of Xavier and she senses Gregori's great power. She almost hurts everyone in the room with her power out of pure fright. Terry is healed for the moment but he is weak. Lara is more determined than ever to enter the caves and save her aunts or at the least bring their bodies for proper burial....much to Nicolas' disapproval. But first, Nicolas must attend the council meeting arranged by Mikhail from all Carpathians to discuss the upcoming war against Xavier and Razvan.

The council chamber is a place of power for the Carpathians. Warriors, even those who have lost their emotions feel clarity and even slight lifting of the darkness that threaten to consume them. Many topics are on the table in the council meeting and one of the most explosive is the topic of women fighting. Like most Carpathian males, Nicolas believes that women should be protected and not allowed to fight. Mikhail disagrees with most of the men, he knows that if the women are forced to stand by while the men fight and make decisions for them will divide the women from the men at a time when unity is most important in the

fight against the dark mage and his forces. It is here that Mikhail earns my full respect and shows his wisdom and worthiness of being a leader. He tells the council that if a woman wants to fight, she may do so and that women should be trained to fight in case they are forced to protect themselves..

Meanwhile, Lara fights her attraction to Nicolas. She is horrified to know that her body reaches for him despite her misgivings. Lara certainly has my sympathies there! Falling in love or caring for someone when all you have known is pain is terrifying! Lara understandably lashes out. Nicolas is furious on how Lara sees him...a manipulator who uses humans like cattle and keeping her a prisoner. He is also angry that she entertained the thought of leaving him without protection at his most vulnerable hour. Nicolas chains Lara to him to prevent her escape by using magic. This forces Lara who has a traumatic aversion to imprisonment (and for good reason) to try to kill herself. She is in the shadow world when Nicolas notices what is happening. He is furious at himself for looking at his mate like a possession and driving her to try to kill herself to escape him. He feels great remorse and that redeems him in my eyes just a slight bit.

However, he wins me over completely (darn him) and Lara too when he finally sees that his own arrogance and refusal to get to know her drives her to chose death rather than life. He heals her and promises to her and to himself that he will try to temper down his dominant nature to make her happy. Nicolas goes after her spirit which is drifting and reliving her horrific childhood in brutal detail. Shauna (Lara's mage mother) and Razvan had lessened her memories in order to protect her. One of the worst memories was the time that Shauna and Razvan created a hidden passage for Lara to use as an escape. Xavier catches her and forces Lara to watch her mother die at his hands. Razvan is helpless to stop him. Xavier pours parasites and maggots all over Shauna and forces Lara and Razvan to watch the things eat Shauna's body. Nicolas and Lara go through more memories and it is through her painful childhood that Nicolas learns to genuinely care for his mate. He learns to be gentle and caring for her.

I love the occasional reminder that Carpathian males can be romantic and tender towards their women. I loved how Nicolas was able to create a beautiful illusion of the outdoors for Lara. The illusion was complete with the sights and sounds of the night...I especially loved the dancing dragons in the sky. I also loved that Christine Feehan gave us a piece of Nicolas' personality. He is a musician! He loves to create music and is gifted with a guitar. That was a major swoon moment!

This book is full of awesome revelations that I did not notice the first few times that I read the book. Nicolas finally admits to himself that it is the Carpathian male how must make the sacrifices in the relationship to make his female happy. It is the male who benefits the most from the Carpathian mating ritual not the female. That makes him more determined to make Lara happy to be with him. He decides to take her to the ice caves to search for her aunts.

The warrior council resumes. It was cancelled earlier due to Raven having trouble maintaining her pregnancy. At the council, it is revealed that the Morrison Center for Psychic research (this center has been mentioned several times in the Dark series) has gathered a list of psychic women that are targeted for murder. The Carpathians decide to acquire the list and protect the women, especially since some of the women could prove to be lifemates to many of the males. Mikhail makes it clear that the women are not to be stalked and that the list should be entrusted to someone who is trustworthy. He also makes it clear that the Carpathian women predisposed to fight and protect people be allowed to fight and be trained. He feels that women who want to learn to defend themselves must be able to do so when the enemy might bring war to the their very doors.

While the men are at the council, Lara goes to the shadow world to save Raven's baby. Lara sees the signs of disease in the tree of life targeted towards children. Lara realizes that Xavier used an extremophile housed in a fungus within the shadow world to target the ability of Carpathian women to carry children. Xavier shows his mad desire to exterminate the Carpathians by hitting them where it will hurt most....the killing of their children. He designed the microbe within the extremophile to make the body of the mother see the infant as a

parasitic intruder. It hits the infant with a stinger that marks the infant for attack from the mother's body resulting in miscarriage. This happens despite the mother wanting the child. Lara sees the true extent of the damage cause by the microbe when she disguises herself as an infant. The microbe is lured to the surface by Lara and killed by Natalya. The price that Lara pays for taking out the microbe is reliving her childhood.

As soon as she recovers from saving the children to Raven and Savannah, she is taken to the ice caves. Lara and Nicolas are joined by Vikirnoff and Natalya. It is in the ice caves that Natalya finds a message written by Razvan about everything he tried to do to protect her, Lara and the rest of his children. Everyone in the cave realize what Razvan suffered in order to protect the women most important to him. He made everyone think that he was evil. They continue through the icy labyrinth and they find Xavier's laboratory. It is here that he found ways to bring the Carpathian people to near extinction. They find the cause for the women's having mostly male children and why miscarriage occurs often. The traps set within the ice cave are triggered and they are forced to fight to escape. Lara destroys the creature who was being used to breed the microbes and parasites aimed at destroying the Carpathian people. Nicolas encouraged her to kill it to empower her.

They manage to break out the aunts (Branislava and Tatijana) and fight towards the surface. The ice cave attacks them in earnest. Death soldiers arrive to finish them. They are shadowy warriors that have no honor and are just as evil as vampires. Nicolas calls for help and a Carpathian army is on its way to help them. I just got to mention that when they finally arrive, it is a fight to be seen! A huge battle ensues and it was exciting! I LOVE THIS SCENE and this is one of my favorite books. The Carpathians make it out of the cave with the aunts in tow.

While waiting for the naming ceremony, Lara and Nicolas are visited by Jacques and Shea. Their son Stefan is dying and is saved by Lara. The microbe can travel from mother to child. Lara is asked to not be converted until they can find a way to find and fight the microbes without her. Stefan is named in the naming ceremony and the story ends with hope.

Chitra *CJ* says

“Dark Curse” is the story of Nicolas and Lara.

Lara Calladine has lived a difficult life. After being tortured and mercilessly used as a blood prey by her father and grandfather- she escapes with the help of her aunts- and vows to live with the humans with plans to rescue her saviors.

When as an adult cave explorer, she and her friends are attacked by a deadly virus- she finds support in an unlikely Carpathian, Nicolas De La Cruz- who turns out to be her mate.

The usual Dark series plot about a Carpathian about to turn finding his mate in the unlikeliest of place, this one actually had a different and interesting storyline.

Lara’s past and her desperate actions after mating were heartbreaking. For once I am happy that the hero understood what his forceful will did to the heroine- and then eventually strives to do the best for his relationship. I loved his groveling and the eventual lovemaking scenes.

This book also leads to progress of the mage/dragonseeker storyline, the truth about Razwan and Carpathian fertility/ babies, and a breakthrough in their research.

A wonderful addition to the series with a lovable couple. One of my few 5 stars of this series.

Safe

4.75/5

Cyndi says

Not my favorite, but it was good. Nicolas was a big jerk at first, but he did redeem himself. I liked Lara- she was mostly strong and always willing to help the others. I loved that I got some Gregori! He is still my main boyfriend from this series. I also got some time with Vikirnoff- my other boyfriend! I didn't like any of the Razvan info- he had sex with loads of OW which bugs me even though Xavier was possessing his body. He also said he loved Lara's mother, but she wasn't his lifemate. And Xavier and Razvan both referred to Lara's mother as Razvan's wife. All that isn't for me! I don't like my paranormal H's to have kids with OW or past loves- I will be skipping his book!

IamGamz says

So much excitement!

So, the little girl who escaped Xavier's ice cave has grown up and has returned to find her dragons.

Lara spent her childhood being tortured by her father and great-grandfather. Her aunts helped keep her sane and helped her escape from her prison of ice. She has returned to the Carpathian Mountains to find her aunts.

Instead she meets a crazy, macho De La Cruz brother who happens to be her lifemate. He's an over the top alpha, controlling idiot who honestly believes his word is law. With today's #metoo movement, his ass would be in sooooo much trouble! #hotbuthellnah!

He does loosen up a bit, but not until AFTER Lara tries to commit suicide! It was a horrible time for all. He learned quickly what Lara experienced and worked hard to help her deal with the traumas of her childhood. Point for him.

My favorite bit was the trip to the ice cave. So much action! There was running and slashing and good old fashioned spell weaving. Lots of fun.

There was no conversion on this book. The hardass hero learned his lesson well and put his lifemate's needs before his. Maybe there's hope for the anachronistic Carpathian men after all.

Laura (Kyahgirl) says

I tried, I really did. For the audio books listening challenge I wanted to start a series and get sucked in. However, its kind of embarrassing but I was at the gym, forcing myself to listen to this book and by chapter 5 I was muttering 'for Christ's sake' and shutting it off and my workout buddy was laughing at me...'another bomb? she says'. Yeah. Between the 'old, wise' Carpathian warriors arguing ad nauseum about letting their 'little women' go into battle, the endless foreign language passages, and Lara and Nikolaus' doomed relationship, I decided it would be best to move on. My TBR pile is too high to waste time forcing myself to finish another book I don't like. I learned my lesson with Shadowfever.

Julie (jjmachshev) says

Let me first say that Feehan's 'Dark' series is akin to literary crack for me. I just can't stop reading them! I agree that her books have become very predictable, yet I still love those Carpathian dudes. I want one for myself. Anyway, I picked up "Dark Curse" which is #16 I believe. If you've read one, you know the story. He's a tortured hero who's ready to give up his soul to the dark when suddenly...he hears the voice of his lifemate and is saved. He quickly falls under her spell, and now he has to learn some gentleness and patience (which never comes easy for these Alphas) to lure his lifemate into loving him while saving her from the dark creatures who hunt for her. And YES, this book is the same story...but I still like it.

He is Nicolas. She is Lara. He is one of the famous De La Cruz brothers. She is the daughter of the ?evil? Razvan and granddaughter of the wicked Xavier. She still has flashbacks to her nightmare childhood where she was kept for food by Xavier and Razvan. She escaped with the help of her two great-aunts, full blood Dragonseekers, who were also held by the wicked pair. Now that she's an adult, she has come to find and bring the bodies of her great-aunts home.

What I liked: Feehan gives us a lot more information on Xavier's plot against the Carpathians. We find out why Carpathian women have such difficulty with pregnancy and why their children are so fragile. We find out more about Razvan including some facts that should provide at least one, if not two, novels in and of themselves! The sex is still mega hot.

What I didn't like: Several indexes about the Carpathian language. This isn't high fantasy...get over yourself. The cutesy, non-rhyming, chants (which are WAY too detailed). Lara being a bit too whiny. The diatribe about women fighters. A happyish ending, but Lara is still not Carpathian and can't be turned for a while which means Nicolas and she will continue to suffer. BOO.

Is the book worth reading? If you have been following this series, then absolutely. If you haven't...read Dark Prince (the very first one). If you like it, you'll pick up a couple more. Then you'll be hooked like the rest of us!

Delta says

3.5 stars
