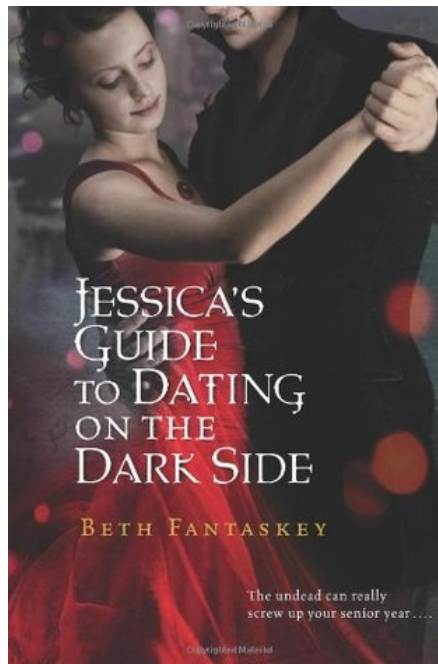




Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side

Beth Fantaskey

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The undead can really screw up your senior year ...

Marrying a vampire definitely doesn't fit into Jessica Packwood's senior year "get-a-life" plan. But then a bizarre (and incredibly hot) new exchange student named Lucius Vladescu shows up, claiming that Jessica is a Romanian vampire princess by birth—and he's her long-lost fiancé. Armed with newfound confidence and a copy of *Growing Up Undead: A Teen Vampire's Guide to Dating, Health, and Emotions*, Jessica makes a dramatic transition from average American teenager to glam European vampire princess. But when a devious cheerleader sets her sights on Lucius, Jess finds herself fighting to win back her wayward prince, stop a global vampire war—and save Lucius's soul from eternal destruction.

Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side Details

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Author : Beth Fantaskey

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From Reader Review Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side for online ebook

Steph Su says

Debut author Beth Fantaskey explodes onto the heavily populated YA vampire lit world with her amazing book, JESSICA'S GUIDE TO DATING ON THE DARK SIDE, which is sure to convert Twilight fans into having a new favorite vampire and vampire-novel heroine. Or if it doesn't do that, then at least it will leave you smiling, biting your nails, and reading far into the night.

In rural Pennsylvania, math nerd Jessica Packwood is about to enter her senior year of high school, determined to have a good time, potentially date Jake Zinn, a nice and handsome boy in her grade, and win some more math competitions. But her carefully imagined plan goes down the drain with the arrival of Lucius Vladescu, a hot but arrogant student from Romania who is under the unfortunate delusion that he is a vampire prince destined to marry Jessica, who is apparently a vampire princess from a rival vampire family. Their marriage would end a centuries-long war between the two families and ensure peace for all their vampire relatives.

Jessica, who loves scientific facts, is understandably confused, scared of her reluctant attraction to Lucius and unable to believe the "parlor tricks" that he performs: a flash of fangs here, a miraculous recovery from a serious injury there. But just as she begins to finally believe—in Lucius, in herself—Lucius suddenly begins to court Faith Crosse, the evil-souled reigning cheerleader-slash-prom-queen of Woodrow Wilson High, and Jessica finds herself struggling to win him back, and not just for the sake of her own heart. For if she doesn't, both vampire families, not to mention Lucius, could end up being destroyed.

Wow! It is almost unfortunate that this book has such an unwieldy and frothy, though eye-catching, title, because I did not realize the extent of what I was in for when I started reading. Jessica and Lucius are two of the best main characters that I have read about in a long time: they are fully three-dimensional and undergo incredible growth through the 350-some pages. Lucius' intensity and arrogance makes me simultaneously laugh and be attracted to him at the same time, and some of my favorite chapters were those that consisted of Lucius' letters to his uncle back in Romania. The relationship that develops between Jessica and Lucius seems totally natural, the growing love not forced. The plot goes beyond a typical Twilight spinoff (which all current YA vampire novels are inevitably being compared to), and reaches its awe-inspiring conclusion wonderfully.

Action, love, mortal danger, family, humor—JESSICA'S GUIDE TO DATING ON THE DARK SIDE has everything. I am wholeheartedly a fan, and you will be too.

DarienMoya says

^^ WHERE THE HELL WAS THE DATING!^^

So I don't even know where to begin, I heard great things about this book. Therefore, no brainer, I was really excited to read it. Let's say I was all kinds of disappointed, and for crazy reasons. I thought this book was a teen romance, and I thought Jessica would be using her guide to date, yet there was no dating and approximately two usage of the so-called GUIDE.

It's Jessica Packwood's senior year of high school and she just spotted a weird but sexy looking boy by the

trees, eyeing her like no tomorrow. The creep factor is high, when he shows up in her class and claims they are to be married, and that she is a Romanian princess, straight-jacket much. One thing is clear Lucius Vladescu clearly is hellaciously hot and thinks he is a vampire. Nice!

Lucius is on a mission to win his princess and bring her home, clearly, though she is way too much of an American teenager and lacks the up-standings of a lady. All that aside he needs to bring Jessica home (prefers to call her Antanasia) but his princess is proving difficult and teenage American life is very odd. As the saying goes "when in Rome", and that's exactly what Lucius does, and he does it in style and he ruffles a few feathers.

I must say even through my disappointment I was very surprised by this book, this is no teenage fluff and it is quite intense. I really loved Lucius, he was intelligent and dark and the things he said were the highlight of the book. His letters to his uncle describing living in America was really hilarious, and his selfishness when it came to other people I totally loved. Nothing says prince like complete disregard for other people's feelings.

Low point, the title. There is no guide and there is no dating, she looked at her guide maybe twice and that's all it was about, unless you count that, it spends a majority of the time under her pillow. Low point number 2 Jessica; I found her annoying and like 12, only wants things when other people get it. Low point number 3, town folks correction town teenagers so supremely ridiculi.

Otherwise, I liked it but only for Lucius he lit my fire and I would marry him in heartbeat.

Kristi says

This novel wasn't exactly what I was expecting! With a line like... "The undead can really screw up your senior year..." I was thinking more a more fluffy, funny, entertaining, just generally a cute novel. I was wrong.

Honestly... when I started this novel and read about the first ten pages... I was skeptical. I started having a little bit of deja vu... which really isn't that big of a surprise considering the volume of vampire novels I read. And it is not necessarily a bad thing, but the feeling of deja vu was quickly replaced with awe. Kudos to Fantaskey for reinventing the genre with this one. I think I should start rating my books according to how frequently I put them down. During my duration of reading Jessica's Guide, I only put it down when I absolutely had to. Which I think only happened once or twice, I was that into the story. I started it and finished it in the same day. This is definitely one of those novels I will be revisiting.

The main conflict, referring to the transition to vampire princess, is minimal compared to the real conflicting themes, of identity, independence, and self discovery. Jessica's character is adopted but, she never fully accepts that part of her life, but you see that change throughout the novel, it is a very powerful thing.

I was very skeptical of the supposed 'love' aspect of this novel. Jessica's account is very realistic and it wasn't hard for the author to portray that when the novel is told mainly through her observations. She doesn't immediately fall into his arms, her feelings gradually change. Lucius was the one I was worried about. He is motivated by duty and not love. As a reader I needed to see this radical transformation, I needed to see him switch that mode of duty to genuine feelings. And Fantaskey masterfully displays Lucian through his first-person letters to his uncle. You witness the change in his letters, and that's what made the love story for me. I believed it. Had the author not included that insight to Lucian, the story would have been inadequate.

The writing was also exceptional. The minor characters really made the story that much more enthralling. It was just perfect. Perfectly entertaining, perfectly masterful. An impressive addition to the genre.

While the ending of the novel is satisfying (I believe it is a stand alone novel, but I hope I'm wrong), I would love to see a continuation of this story.

Cindy says

I have noticed this book floating around out there amongst book lovers, but for some reason or another it never just reached out and grabbed me, moved me, or spoke to me. Maybe it's the title, not really what it says, but visually a little long (okay so that sounds crazy, but I am very visual). I am soooo glad though that I found this at the 1/2 price book store and gave it a chance. It has become one of my favorite vampire books next to Stephenie Myers "Twilight" series. I loved the dialogue, and emotions that I felt while reading this wonderful story. My heart reacted to the sad and happy times that Jessica and Lucius experienced, and oh how it ached sometimes. To me this was a different take on the vampire story Jessica early on finds out Lucius is a prince vampire and she is a destined to be a princess vampire, how they deal and feel about that knowledge is what makes this story. I loved Lucius, I love that whole old world chivalry, cloths and good manners, which is totally Lucius in a vampire kind of way. A quote or two that I loved provided by Lucius, "Jessica, he said. Allow me to do at least one common courtesy for you. In spite of what women's lib teaches you, chivalry does not imply that women are powerless. On the contrary, chivalry is an admission of women's superiority. An acknowledgment of your power over us." so sweet! I love this quote to by Lucius, "American women. Why do you all want to be nearly invisible? Why not have a physical presence in the world? Women should have curves, not angles. Not points." Is he not the best at wooing a woman. Jessica, is great in this story as well, she is a typical teenager trying to figure out her world, which continues to change and becomes more and more complicated. I liked how Jessica responds to her situations, they seem real and not forced or typical for her age. She is smart, carrying, confused, loving and kind. Never thought I would say this, but wow Lucius makes fangs look sexy lol. Great story I completely enjoyed it and couldn't put it down, flows effortlessly. Enjoy!

Mild language issues

clean romance some sex talk, there are some sexually charged moments, for older teens no details

Nikoleta says

Σε αυτ? το βιβλ?ο οι χαρακτ?ρες δεν ε?ναι τ?λειοι, ε?ναι σχεδ?ν ελαττωματικο?, κ αυτ? ακριβ?ς ε?ναι το σημει?ο που τους κ?νει τ?σο απολαυστικο?ς!!! Δεν θυμ?ζει τ?σο τα υπ?λοιπα Υ.Α. φαντασ?ας. ?χει μια σκωπτικ? δι?θεση, μια σκανδαλι? που κ?νει την αν?γνωση του πολ? ευχ?ριστη.

♥Booklish Reviews♥ says

For the last month all I've read is New Adult and Erotica. So I knew by reading a YA novel that I wouldn't be completely satisfied with the romantic aspect of the story. The odds were against it from the beginning.

I have no qualms with the plot of Jessica #1. (Sorry, the title is so long that Jessica #1 seems like a good substitute.) Everything was in place: drama, flirting, vampires, and an evil blonde bitch. It had everything worthy of a Twilight successor.

Lucius and Jessica have been promised to each other since birth to keep the vampire peace in Romania. But Jessica was sent off as a baby and grew up in America not knowing any of her family's History, nor does she know she is a vampire.

Lucius, however, has known of the promise since childhood. (Which is just fabulous ha-ha! It makes for an interesting plot and witty remarks on his part.)

The only issue I had with this book, sadly, was the last 50 pages. (Sorry Fantaskey...) The ending, though expected in the YA fandom, made me cringe. I'd been waiting 250+ pages to read about Lucius biting Jessica, and in return Jessica getting her fangs. All this flirting and "brushed kissing" had me begging for something more.

(I already mentioned I've been reading nothing but New Adult and Erotica for the last month, right? Now you see my conflict.)

I really believe Lucius Vladescu was meant to lead an erotica series, not YA. He's just got that appeal. That authority. When reading the romantic scenes, I just kept imagining what he would do if it wasn't a PG book. Pull her neck back, sink his teeth in....

Creative Romanian curse words during foreplay?

Horseback riding in a meadow, followed by tea at the castle...

(Sorry Fantaskey...just shooting shit. Don't be offended...)

I think what drove the "unplayed scenes" in my mind was Orlando Bloom. I pictured him as Lucius early on...

Though Lucius was an amazing character, the ending left me unsatisfied. Which has nothing to do with the author's ability to produce a decent ending. She did right by her PG audience. T'was me with the brain malfunction.

This is YA....He's not gonna throw her on the snow covered grass and have his way....

In the YA world it deserves 5 stars...

Tatiana says

There are dozens of vampire books on the market right now but I am confident this is one of the better ones, the one that stands out. I don't want to summarize the book's plot here because so many people have already done so. But I am going to say that this is an entertaining book, with colorful characters. The plot is not particularly strong and the story loses its ground in the final part of it, but mostly it is funny and witty, with a good measure of satire ("Twilight" comes to mind immediately), and is hard to put down (I finished it in a matter of hours). You also simply can't not appreciate Lucius – a Romanian vampire – who is refined, sophisticated, sarcastic, and amusingly uptight. You definitely have to read this book just to enjoy Lucius' letters to his uncle Vasile which are a special treat. I highly recommend this book and I will definitely check out what Beth Fantaskey writes next.

Kajol says

Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side

The title had long since convinced me that this was yet another YA paranormal that was hell bent on holding up a public mockery in the name of the genre "Fantasy". I mean a dating guide to the dark side? **Bite me.**

Thankful to Ms.Fantaskey, I'd like to express my elation by saying that I was quite glaringly, obviously wrong. I loved the book. In fact, I loved it so much that I stayed up till 3 am on a school night (yeah, so I'm a senior in high school. Big deal. Make fun of the school night thing, and I'll send you my personal guard of paranormal hotties who're quite apt at killing people off-- Dimitri, Barrons, Jace, Damon, and now a new addition Lucius).

As soon as I started reading this book, I just couldn't put it down. Never ever, in the short lifetime of my lustful dreams of sexy vampires had I ever imagined to find so much, so awesome, all in one place. We've got happening European exchange students, we've got beautiful/smart/spunky heroines, we've got meanace in the form of blonde horse-riding cheerleaders, we've got vampires, we've got fights, we've got romance, we've got sarcasm and we've got thrill. One of the most entertaining YA reads is what we've got here and I feel like yelling "Bring it on, bitches!" to every single person who deems YA paranormal writers to be "lame"--mindlessly coining the frankly overused American phrase, and only succeeding in proving the weakness of their argument-- but oh well!

Damn it, Lucius Vladescu was just so YUM (dangerous as he was luscious, oh I need some air)! For a lit-freak like me, it is like a rare dream come true when sexy-european-exchange-student aka vamps start spouting romantic lines from Wuthering Heights (even if they are doing it with some cheerleader side-kick playing Catherine. You just know she's not gonna last) and its enough to get you to sigh dreamily and off into the wilds of your not-so-innocent imaginations.

blush

He was arrogant, he was gentle.. He was EVERYTHING. At first when his character opened up, I didn't, for one moment, believe that I'd actually fall for this fictional owner of a royal pair of fangs- 'cause of course he was quite a jerk. But somewhere along the way, I did. You know, you really don't want me describing him, cause when you actually pick this book up, you're gonna want to know all about him without any outside hints.

Anyway, our heroine Jessica Packwood aka Antanasia Dragomir was pretty likable. I didn't have any qualms with her except that she sometimes showed doormat tendencies which maddened me a little and also the fact that her character was that of a close-minded person who sometimes refused to listen to what others had to say. But only sometimes(Heh..I said "sometimes" a little too many times, didn't I?). Spunky, beautiful, smart.. we have the rest of all grounds covered.

I even liked Jessica's foster parents who no doubt were pretty weird at times, but hey, no one's perfect! I can go on and on about this book, so stamping that urge, I'm just gonna say that I really really adored this book and I regret having purposely delayed picking it up(I'd believed this was some farce in the name of Paranormal Romance. Oh, my naivete. **shakes head**). Great story line, awesome characters.. You JUST know you won't be able to resist it!

Laura says

Enjoyed this vampire romance. Jessica's teen emotions were more realistic than Bella's.

Lina says

I think that of all the books I've read this year, Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side, is the one that has surprised me the most. When I first saw the title and read the blurb, I scoffed at this book and did not even give it the time of day. The only reason I *did* read it was because it was free on Barnes and Nobles so I figured "why not?" I was very mistaken. [In my defense everything about it on the outside is horrible though it is really upsetting]

When Jessica Packwood meets a mysterious boy, named Lucius Valdescu, staring at her at a bus stop, she is very much freaked out by him. This is only doubled when he arrives at her school and she is repelled by his dark, cocking and pompous behavior. However, when he is invited into her home and reveals to Jessica that she is a royal member of a vampire family and he is to be her betrothed, she stabs him with a pitchfork and runs away from him.

I love Jessica. She starts off a whiny little doormat, but goes through character development [sweet beautiful character development] and becomes a more secure [semi-] independent person. I also enjoyed Lucius and his jack-assery. He is very much a jackass, but he is also very witty, uptight and everything you'd expect a privileged royal vampire to be. The two leads have a lot of chemistry together and I enjoyed their interactions together and how they both sort of made each other "grow" in certain ways.

The downside is that this book has to do the popular thing: fall-in-love, fall-out-of-love, obvious ending love-triangle, romantic doom, male lead becomes an even bigger asshole, etc. Yet as irritating as those things are, they don't ruin the story and the good things about it ~~also most of that happens at the end so you are not dealing with it for long ;).~~

All-in-all, this was an entertaining book and while it's still free I highly recommend you pick it up.

[4 stars]

Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

At the start of her last year at high school in rural Pennsylvania, seventeen year old Jessica is spooked at the bus stop by the appearance of a mysterious young man who won't stop staring at her - and she could swear she heard him say her birth name, Antanasia, a relic from having been born in Romania before being adopted by her American parents.

When she gets to school, he's there in her English Lit class, an exchange student from Romania called Lucius Veldescu, domineering the teacher and, again, watching her. It's when he turns up for dinner at her parents farm that things get really freaky - especially when he claims he's a vampire prince and she's a vampire princess and his betrothed, that they must marry to fulfil the pact so that war doesn't break out between their

clans ... and her parents pull out a musty old scroll to prove it.

Determined to think Lucius is crazy as well as charming, arrogant, attractive and, yes, dangerous, Jessica refuses to let him have his way even if he does seem to have her parents on his side. Until he's nearly killed by a horse and then starts dating cheerleader-blonde-bitch extraordinaire, Faith Crosse, Jessica thought she could get rid of him and be happy settling for "nice" and simple Jake; now the pact is being threatened by Lucius himself, who no longer seems to want her, just as she discovers how much she wants to be a part of his world.

It's a fairly obvious thing to point out that this book is aimed at all the teen *Twilight* fans out there. Let's cover this so we can move past it. Both books:

- a) are debut novels
- b) are romances between teenage girls and teenage vampires
- c) have vampires who are, at times, mean to the girls who love them
- d) have vampires who are very charming, sexy and fascinating
- e) draw the teenage heroines into their world and put their lives at risk

There may be a few more comparisons but what does it matter, really? Fact is, when we like something we always want more of it. That's why so many of us are fat. Problem is, you can't help comparing Lindt chocolate to fake Hershey chocolate - likewise, you'll end up comparing this book with its highly successful predecessor.

But I'd like to talk about this book for its own sake, if I can. Lapses may happen but I'll try.

First up: plot. The premise is fairly straight-forward: Jessica and Lucius' parents made a pact by betrothing their only children to each other at birth, before being killed by mobs of scared, angry Romanian peasants. Nearly two decades of peace amongst vampires later, Jessica and Lucius must marry after her 18th birthday to seal the pact and prevent war from returning - after all, the vampires are a vicious, blood-thirsty lot, going by the scars Lucius sports from being educated by his uncle, Vasile.

I can buy that. Hell, why not? If you're going to suspend disbelief to get all excited about vampires, you may as well go the whole hog. There are a few quirks on the vampire myth - sunlight is no problem, they can eat regular human food as well, female vampires must be bitten by a male vampire to become a fully-fledged vampire, otherwise that side of their nature remains dormant - hence why Jessica had no idea what she was. The structure is fairly formulaic and predictable for a romance, right up to the cataclysmic moment when either character realises they're in love.

Next, the characters. Jessica narrates and does a passable job. She's a surprisingly bland character who never seems to laugh. In fact, Lucius comments on that and I admit I hadn't even noticed until he did, and then it irked me. I wanted her to lighten up. She wasn't terribly well-developed, nor very inspiring as a role-model. She's a good girl, a "mathlete" and a show jumper who has few aspirations. She's only interesting because she's got a vampire stalker.

Speaking of Lucius, he's the only really interesting character here. His character grows, develops, shifts, rebels, reverts - goes through all the phases of adolescence in just a few months, all thanks to the American influence. In the beginning he's insufferable but alluring, charming but arrogant, pompous but clever. We learn how he thinks through his letters to his uncle, which reveal his incredibly dry, quirky sense of humour that had me laughing out loud more than once. He undergoes so much change that it's a bit dizzying, though, and makes it harder to believe that Jessica could fall in love with him in a short period of time, especially knowing so little about him, as a person, because she refused to get to know him. Not quite sure what he saw in her, either.

As for the prose, well, it's decent, moves at a fast pace, is mostly dialogue, and has some suspense. Also pokes fun at environmentally-concerned people who grow their own organic food - though considering they're her parents, it's not surprising. Some of things the characters say weren't "correct", and there was that fault common to fantasy books of characters guiding their horses with their knees. I've gone into that before so I won't bother with that again.

For a first novel it's not bad - a fun, light read that quite often pokes fun at the whole deal - but not gripping or emotionally intense either. The title alludes to a flippant kind of novel - and Lucius is certainly flippant - but it's also surprisingly serious, which makes the title seem misleading. Not sure what else you could call the book though.

Adele says

Before I start, I want to clarify one insy weensy matter - this book is nothing like Twilight! Would people stop saying that as I am beginning to get tired with people's lack of imagination and investment in Twilight theory (YA vampire = Edward = Twilight = Adele arggggghing). Thank goodness it's not like Meyer's work because I actually like and relate to the protagonist in this tale. Jessica's got moxie and buckets of it. She's smart, she's capable and she's unknowingly betrothed to Lucius due to her being a vampire princess!

Lucius is an intense, righteous and darkly handsome Romanian (more Mr Darcy than Edward) who has come to America to convince Jessica that they should marry and reunite their warring vampiric families. I just loved every bit of repartee between these two. Lucius would get all hoity-toity and Jessica would smack him back down to size. The development of their relationship moved naturally as did the pace of the story. Each possess distinct voices which make for hilarious interchanges. Fantaskey also uses letters as way to view Lucius' perspective on certain events, saag and "squatty boy" (hehe). I really knew these characters well by the time I was a few chapters in and found myself very invested in the outcome. Hence, very little movement between pages 1 and 354, my body is atrophying but I really don't care.

Jessica's always known that she was adopted. She lives with her yoga practising, vegan eating adoptive parents in the country and refuses to believe her origins when presented them by Lucius. I loved the new take on vampirism, particular the guide book that Lucius presents to his betrothed. This book was a great sense of humour as are the continual misunderstandings between our terrible twosome. I loved tracing their changing feelings throughout the course of the story. Jessica denying her past and repelling Lucius, slowly comes to see Lucius for his strengths while Lucius begins to see Jessica less as a duty and more as a person of worth. The necessity of the alternating perspectives make this intense, hilarious and moving as we are able to identify both individual's motivations.

I loved these characters, I hope we see more of them. More than anything I love that Lucius, at no point, was compared to cold marble. If I were to nitpick anything, it would be that the cover model should be more curvy with curly, dark hair (emphasis on the curvy).

Beth Fantaskey (she of the fabulous surname), I loved your debut effort. What's next? Zombies, unicorns, football players?

Elena Salvatore says

This book, just like Boys that Bite, I only read because it was one of the oldest books in my TBR.

However different from the BTB, I didn't hate this book and would probably have enjoyed it when I was a new reader.

Jessica lives just a normal teenage life.

She is an only child, has only one friend, she get's bullied by the popular kids in school and she has two weird parents whom she loves.

But Jessica has also a secret. A secret no one other then her parents and best friend knows. Even Jessica herself doesn't know the whole truth of it.

But all that changes when her secret comes to haunt her. One day a mysterious boy shows up at her school and later at her house and claims that he is her betrothed and they are to be married. Not only that but he also claims he is a Vampire.

Jessica refuses to be married against her will, to someone she doesn't even know and more of all she doesn't even believe in Vampires no matter what the stranger or her parents say.

So Lucius Vladescu enters her life and is determined to stay until she changes her mind.

Meanwhile no matter how hard Jessica tries not to, she finds herself falling for Lucius.

This book contains all your classic Vampire Romance tropes.

- A Dark Vampire who is unable to love until he meets "her".
- A stubborn protagonist who doesn't believe in Vampires until she does.
- Insta love.
- A Vampire who doesn't really feed on humans but finds another way to survive amongst other humans.
- No sun burning, no garlic hating, no sparkling, no special powers other than super Vampire strength and speed.
- The protagonist being "pure" and good hearted (even tho all she did was being rude).
- The Vampire realizing he is to "bad" for her and leaving her for her own good even tho it means him getting harmed etc.

So is this book worth reading? No, not really unless you already own it then go right ahead. It won't take too much out of your time and even tho you won't really love it, you won't hate it either.

Peri June says

Jessica is your typical 17-year-old--that is until her adoptive parents inform her she's a Romanian vampire princess who must fulfill a pact her birth parents had signed before their death by marrying Lucius, a vampire prince from an enemy clan.

I thought the whole trying-to-get-Jessica-to-believe-that-vampires-really-do-exist-and-Lucius-is-not-an-escapee-from-an-insane-asylum-thing was freaking hilarious!!

Watching Jessica slowly-and somewhat incredulously-accept her vampiric nature and Lucius's love for her was exciting; it made me realize how much I missed vampire novels and the arrogant nature of vampires. If you're a vampire fan, don't miss this one.

The Library Lady says

Let's get it straight, I am not,not, NOT into vampire books.

I think that "Twilight" is the greatest piece of crappy fan fiction style writing to get published since "Eragon".

The only vampire book I've really enjoyed until now is Sucks to Be Me The All-True Confessions of Mina Hamilton, Teen Vampire, which makes fun of the conventions of the genre.

But this one is worth reading.

Unlike that simp Bella Swan, Jessica doesn't think being a vampire would be cool. When a Heathcliff like (Wuthering Heights figures into the plot)vampire arrives at her school, and tells her that she is a vampire princess, pledged to marry him at birth, she doesn't swoon. Heck, she doesn't even believe that he IS a vampire. Besides, all she wants is to be a normal American teenager and date the boy next door.

The story of how Lucius slowly wins her over (and he does, if that's a spoiler) develops beautifully. Jessica's narrative is interspersed with Lucius's hilarious letters to his Uncle back in the old country, and his take on 21st century American culture should make anyone laugh out loud.

Though it appears frothy at first, the drama of the plot deepens and intensifies as it draws towards the climax. And Fantaskey doesn't take herself or her characters so seriously as to not allow humor to pop into even the darkest scenes. She has maturity as a writer that the Meyers and Paolinis can only dream of.

The characters are well developed. Jessica and Lucius's voices ring clear and true. Subcharacters are well drawn--Jessica's adoptive parents initially come off as a pair of crunchy granola hippie types played for laughs, but they are allowed to fully develop, something that doesn't always happen with parents in YA books!

I am not sure if Fantaskey has left room for a sequel, but if she does I'll be reading it and regardless I'll be looking forward to her next book.

Kat Kennedy says

Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side is an imaginative, immersive (when will the world realize this is a word?) tale of the struggles of a pair of teenage vampires against tradition, expectations and politics.

In a completely original storyline that we've never seen before...

Jessica discovers one day that she is not a normal teenager but is, in fact, a vampire Princess bound by contract to marry a repugnant, spoiled, aristocratic prince, Lucius Vladescu. He does not approve of her at all... at first.

I swear, I'm not trying to draw a parallel between this book and certain movies... I just like the image...

Senior year for Jessica begins to pass by and slowly, both she and Lucius begin to change and accommodate each other as they learn more about each other and come to respect their unique qualities.

Then! Drama! Lucius uncovers a plot on Jessica's life and attempts to save her life by wielding the only weapon he knows...

[image error]

By becoming an emo...

Okay, so I'm being facetious. That all does kind of happen, and the book can be frustrating in that melodramatic regard. At some point, the people in this novel start consuming A LOT more eyeliner. Yet, on the other hand, it is also sweet and touching. The relationship developed between Jessica and Lucius is sweet and tender, awkward and rich. Lucius' personal growth and character development, until Emo!Lucius, is actually fascinating and complex.

This book is long with a plot that possibly could have been cut down but it was also pleasant to see how time in America was affecting pompous, stuffy Lucius and how he, in turn, was affecting Jessica.

Her personal growth was to discover through dressing well, that she is a powerful, attractive woman. This is the one part that I felt the novel failed at.

she never really comes into her own and stands as a pinnacle or tower of strength. Throughout this novel it is alluded to that she is growing stronger and more powerful as a person, coming into her own. Yet, the ending, which I won't spoil, only goes to show that she is still waiting on a man to make the decisions and have the power.

She's a princess! People depend on her yet, predictably, she's more interested in her love life than she is anything else. Her royal duties are nothing more than a way to get to the man she loves. She doesn't truly put any thought into being a monarch. It's frustrating to read. Apparently, we can be strong and powerful, but only over our bodies and self-esteem.

Overall, this is one of the nicer, better written YA teen romances. It's far from perfect and there are minor issues with plot and pacing. Still, it is more than readable and quite enjoyable.

Just like a certain movie that I won't admit to owning...

[image error]

Feel that sexual tension...

Colette says

I've never actually hated a book...but for "Jessica", I'll make the exception.

I WOULD give it three, due to it having such promise in the writing-style, but the content itself made it a two.

First of all, before you are deceived, this title does not match the theme of this book. It began as a light-

hearted read, comical even, but then it just became a dark, angst volturi-twilight moody thing. I literally watched the tone change right before my eyes, like a gray scale being turned down to its darkest. This would usually please me, a change of tone as the adventure begins, if done right. But here it was just in bad taste, false advertisement. I might have been better prepared if I had known it would get as dark as it was.

This book made me angry. Not just because of the events, but the fact that it could have been GREAT, but the author wasted her talent and pretty much threw the book down the toilet, kind of like she lost commitment. I'm not sure if that is true, but judging by the content, it is how I felt. Now I will explain why it has its ups and down.

1. Conflicting Women Empowerment Message

Jessica begins as a struggling woman, growing through the first half of the book to embrace her beautiful, naturally curvy body. But then...

UH OH SPOILER ALERT: She spends the rest of the book chasing after a boy that does not even want her or is a Broadway-actor at pretending not to want her. A boy that slights her again and again and again until the very last pages of the book (when I say very I mean the VERY last pages).

So the message becomes mixed, hypocritical really, because first our character is like "oh, I am beautiful and independent. I don't need any man." and then she changes her mind and is like "I love him so much, I will risk body, soul, and embarrassment to keep him in my arms!" ALSO, she gives up her hobbies and interests to instead focus all her attention on this boy. Yep, awesome...women power!

2. Bad Use of Humour

The letters to the Uncle. *sigh* they were cheesy, very cheesy, the play on outsider emerging into American culture was bad enough. (think "i am having a, how do you Americans say, 'a ball.'") But the fact that these letters were being sent to a highly rigid, strict uncle that beats Lucius makes it seem unreasonable that he would ever even write such letters to this man. If anything, it would only encourage him to be pissed, right?

3. Inconsistent (and bad) Focus

First we are dealing with Jessica and Lucius pursuing Jess to get this logical, smart girl to believe in the supernatural and embrace her true nature as the beautiful vampire princess. Instead, the focus shifts onto Lucius, angst-ridden teenage boy that neglects Jessica (forget her, she doesn't want me though we can save the vampire world together...anyways guess I will move on!) for a popular girl at the high school. From there, he slights Jessica, treats Jessica like complete garbage, and yet- all of this behavior is excused because he's "going through a rough time and had a tough life. So if a man has an abusive past, this means that he should be allowed to treat a woman in a way that leaves her broken, confused, lonely and neglected? Great message.

4. Fantaskey is such a great writer- she dumped her potential down the drain!

The book was interesting, the events flowed well, it seemed to be controlled and progress well-- then it took a turn. It was as if the author cut off her plans for the story and just decided to take it on a whole new road. The first half of the book could have been an entire different book just from how lighter it tended to be in tone. Even in Twilight (oh, yes, I'm going there) at least the tone shifted/enhanced in a nice transition-- mysterious, eerie, leaving you with anticipation when something magical will happen. In this book, the tone was superfluous at the beginning. The parents just say oh, Lucius is a vampire, honey. No lead-ins, it's just landed on us and we don't even get the time to wonder, to infer, such as in Twilight...we knew Edward was a vampire, but the fun was waiting for Bella to see for herself, for the truth to be exposed. Of course, Jessica

didn't believe at first, but no one even tried to prove it to her. They just stated it like it was natural.

Speaking of natural, the book seems to have some message about horses, being "Green" and eating vegan. Cool. but then it is dropped to focus on more important things I suppose. Not cool.

5. Gaping Plot Holes

Characters that were important in the beginning fall off the focus wheel. Mindy, Jessica's so-called best friend, is left out of all knowledge of what's going on, even though Jessica herself tells us how trustworthy Mindy is. So instead Mindy is left hurt and confused and eventually resents Jessica. Jessica's adoptive parents play a role consistently during the story, but in the end she goes to Transvania and we don't even hear a word about the parent anymore. Jessica doesn't even think of the people that raised her for 18 years. No "goodbye forever, Mom and Dad! She just forgets all about them and is only thinking about Lucius.

6. Another Loss for Women Empowerment that could have redeemed the book

Lucius treats Jessica like crap, as we know, even when she is taking over as princess, finally. He threatens her, belittles, and taunts her family. But instead Jessica excuses it. "I won't talk to you when you're acting like this!" no, idiot, don't talk to him at all and see him as an enemy. She is so intent on being WITH him that it becomes her first goal. EVEN when it is made clear that there is no trouble struggle- because Lucius's family is more powerful and rich and could wipe them out easy. But instead of dying with dignity, she wishes to be his woman. Oh my gosh...why cant you be independent?

By the way, was there just no leader this whole time in Jessica's vampire troupe? Who was leading them until she came along to lead for a day or two?

This story could have been saved if Jessica actually woke up and acted strong. Decided to die with honour, to fight but never bow to someone that belittled her people. They might have been a weaker vampire people, yes, but instead of fortifying an army, her disorganized family merely talked about it and loosely formed fortifications, but nothing significant. Had she been a real leader, she could have empowered her family to at least prepare to be taken over- fight until they were eventually beaten into submission. Warrior's spirit. But nope, it does not happen here.

7. One last point- the concept of vampires are butchered here.

Atleast Twilight (yep, going there AGAIN!) gives vampires qualities besides super strength. It is not the case here. these vampires sleep, eat normal food along with blood, transform into nothing, can go out in daylight...its just pretty much super strong people that use the title of vampire and also prefer blood and have fangs. If you want a real mythical story, this one will not do the job for you. In so many ways. Bram Stoker would cringe at this piece of..whatever you want to call it. Surely not literature.

So overall, this book will leave you more frustrated and angry than anything. I would not suggest reading it, unless inconsistent, angst-filled books is in your favor.

Amelia, the pragmatic idealist says

Well, the beginning was really good, the middle part was crap, and the ending was alright. Sorry for sounding crass - usually I try and sound more objective and mature when I write reviews, but this book just took all the emotion out of me. It's one of those up-and-down books.

There were things about this book that were really likable. For example:

Jessica as a character: I love well-rounded characters who undergo a transformation throughout the story - keeps them from being stagnate and boring. I like how she learned to be assertive and take charge of her life. Bravo.

I liked the vampire lore here: yes, even the biting. I mean, they're vampires, they bite! That's what they do.

And now on to the meat of this review:

Lucius went from being intriguing to incredibly frustrating and then finally to annoying. I guess I just hate characters like Lucius, because I was not impressed by his actions one bit, and so I kind of wondered what exactly it was that Jessica saw in him. He was *too* bad, with practically no redeeming qualities. So as a reader, I'm supposed to like and connect to Lucius because he wants to keep Jessica safe, so he accomplishes this by screwing around with someone else? Hmmm. And that's my biggest beef with the story: the author had a great premise, but she blew it for me with the stupid Faith subplot. Completely unnecessary - there are so many other ways to have Lucius accomplish the overall goal of what he's trying to do. Wayward characters can just go die in a hole for all I care. Geesh! And so it seemed like Jessica all of the sudden decided she was in love with Lucius because...why? He's messing around with someone else...and she's...jealous? Maybe? I don't know, it was too weird. I don't really understand what she saw in him. I guess I like my boys unspoiled. :P

Anyway, it ended nicely, though, but I really sped through this one, just to be finished with it. A great concept that, in my opinion, was sorely executed. I don't know if I'd recommend this book to anyone - I know it's popular, and I'm sure other readers will enjoy it.

For the record, my ideal fictional "hero" would be Captain America meets Thorin Oakenshield, with a little Loki tossed in. *flawed, but dreamy and idealistic at the same time*
:D

Annalisa says

A book that balks at the current trend in paranormal romance and for that it shines. It's not just a flat parody but a complex story in its own right by (gasp) a good writer (with a name like Fantaskey, how can you grow up to be anything *but* a fantasy writer?). A lot of the satire toward the YA trend is subtle, but it's there and it made me smile as much as Lucius' mocking commentary of American lifestyle. Finally a female protagonist that cringes at the dark, mysterious stranger who creeps her out when he's being chivalrous with demanding force. Because really, what normal teenager with a brain (and this one actually has one) is going to run into the arms of a monster who means her harm? And really what hormonal teenage vampire isn't going to mean a little harm? Vampires are supposed to be creepy. The clash of the vegan farmhouse and blood-thirsty royal Romanian was entertaining and Jessica's turn from the nice farm boy to the dark bad boy was not insensate lust but a proper transformation with dark, sexy vampire twists that won me to Lucius' side. He is the star of this story. The ending actually left me smiling and surprisingly wanting more (although I refuse to read any more series, even a continuation of this one, maybe). If you're as sick of YA paranormal as I have been, you may actually enjoy this one for that very reason.

Jac says

Sigh, this book really left me at a loss for words. For those of you not patient enough to read yet another review about a book you may want to read, let me save you some time and sum up my main grievances with this book in one sentence: Oh my god, what the hell was this publisher thinking when he agreed to put his name on this book! I wanted so badly to like this book since I have a thing for Romanian vampires but I just couldn't no matter how hard I tried.

My worst issues with this book were the two main characters--or rather three because I think Jessica/Anastassia experienced some sort of personality split during the course of this book.

Jessica/Anastassia, where to begin. Her so-called "strength" was actually just stupidity and weakness in cheesy costumes from the dollar store playing dress-up. Sometimes, I just wanted to reach through the pages and shake her—possibly even strangle her at some points. In the beginning, she goes off on how much she cannot stand Lucius. At one point her mother even says—and I quote—"Disgust turns to lust." At some point after that, she realizes how much she "loves" him and often seems to be tripping over herself to be getting his attention. I understand falling "head over heels" but Jessica took it one step further, firmly placing her face in horse manure. *takes deep breath* Without revealing too much of the book, I cannot say much else about our "brave" heroine here but I can say she was a righteous disappointment.

Onto Lucius. Oh, such a waste. Hot, tall, arrogant, Eastern-European royalty? Definitely sounds like the ideal book-boy, right? WRONG! Not only was he seriously disturbed mentally, he was also extremely sexist. I am not saying a man shouldn't be allowed to defend his lady's honor but almost killing someone for the sake of it? To me, that is unacceptable. At that point I practically shouted to Lucius in my empty room, "Just freakin' settle for pulling out her chair, opening a door, or something equally harmless for once. He was no more than a pest, no reason to nearly kill the bug!" Ugh, and if the author typed the phrase, "but I digress" just once more, I would have hurled the book across the room without hesitation. But now, I digress (you have my permission to kill me now that I have said it). He was so wishy-washy it was annoying. I want to marry you. I hate you. I like you. I hate you again. I am vulnerable. Fooled you, I still hate you! Never mind, I love you but I can't show you. Now I am masking my love with my falsified hatred and threats of violence. *bangs head against desk* All the while, Jessica/Anastassia is loving him saying she "knows him" just because she lusts for him.

God, I haven't been so exhausted by such a short book in a very long time. I would continue to complain about: Missy, Jake, Vasile, Faith, that ridiculous guide to becoming a vampire, and even just the plot in general but alas even venting about the book is starting to exhaust me. I need to go lie down next to an Austen novel to hopefully even out the negative book energy "Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side" left me with.

sigh Wish me luck!

PS. Once again, it was such a disappointment. I actually had semi-high hopes for that book. Though as to why is beyond me especially with a title like, "Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side". God, what was I thinking!?!

Original Review on my Blog:

Penny for Your Pages
