

WORDS TO KNOW

century cen • tu • ry
furnishings fur • nish • ings
kingdom king • dom
passageway pas • sage • way

remodeled re • mod • eled
reputation rep • u • ta • tion
vampire vam • pire
vaulted vault • ed

A Castle Fit for a Vampire

Partly hidden among some mountains in Romania there lies a huge stone castle. Bran Castle is believed to have once been the home of the horrible Prince Vlad Dracula. Dracula lived from 1431 to 1476. His reputation for evil is told in legends, for he killed many people.

Bran Castle is well preserved. It contains lots of rooms with vaulted ceilings. Some of the doors have arches. There is even a secret passageway, perhaps for quick escapes.

On the lower level there is a prison. It is thought that the Prince was once jailed here when he made the king angry. At the top of the castle are pointed towers. Soldiers stood guard there. They hurled rocks and poured boiling water on any enemies who attacked Bran Castle.

Prince Dracula was made famous by an Irish writer named Bram Stoker. He wrote a book in the 1890's called Dracula. The name means "devil's son." Stoker described Dracula's home as "...a vast ruined castle, from whose tall black windows came no ray of light." The castle was located near a kingdom called Transylvania.

The main character in his book was inspired by the evil deeds of the Prince. But there was at least one difference. Stoker made his Dracula a vampire. That is a creature who sucks blood from his victims. It only comes out at night. In real life, we know that there are no such things as human vampires. But there are plenty of stories about them. Many movies have been made from Stoker's book.

It is worth knowing that Stoker never even saw Romania or Bran Castle. He found all his facts by reading books at the library. Yet he

(Continued on next page)

