



0. VLAD THE IMPALER - Story Preface

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This view of Bran Castle—online via the official Bran Castle website which provides an online [video tour of the famous castle](#) where the real Dracula *may* have lived—gives us a view of the beautiful countryside. Click on the image for a better view.

As he wrested power for himself, [Vlad Dracula](#) became notorious for his cruelty and inhumanity. His favorite method of punishment was impaling captives on wooden stakes. Sometimes he had tens of thousands impaled at the same time.

German manuscripts, published soon after Dracula's death, refer to him as [Vlad Tepes](#) (pronounced Tse-pesh). Translated from Romanian, the name means Vlad the Impaler. [Explicit pictures](#) from those German [manuscripts](#) help modern-day viewers to easily understand where legend and fact meet.

It wasn't just the horrible cruelty of Vlad Tepes that made him such an intriguing character for Bram Stoker, whose novel ([dramatized for the radio](#) by Orson Welles) continues to make Dracula a famous legend in the modern world. It was also the settings, of the real tale, which were so compelling for storytellers.

The [castle](#) in which Dracula lived, the Transylvanian [countryside](#), his [castle](#) fortress, the [Carpathian mountains](#), the centuries of [Romanian](#) folklore, the Russian and German manuscripts, plus ... Dracula's [empty](#) grave on [Snagov](#) Island ... all contribute to the make-up of great tales.

And ... it was the story behind Bram Stoker's *Dracula* that led [F.W. Murnau](#), one of the most famous [movie directors](#) of all time, to create the first (and many critics say the best) *Dracula* movie.

He called his 1922 silent movie [Nosferatu](#) (the Romanian word for vampire).

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