



Cold Whispers II

# The VAMPIRE'S LAIR

by Dee Phillips

## **Credits**

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# Castle Prahova

Jack pressed his face to the car window. Mile after mile of dark forest flashed by. He checked the clock on the dashboard. Two hours had passed since they'd left the airport, and now the sun was going down.

"How much longer, Dad?" Jack asked.

Dad caught Jack's eye in the rearview mirror. "About thirty minutes," he said.

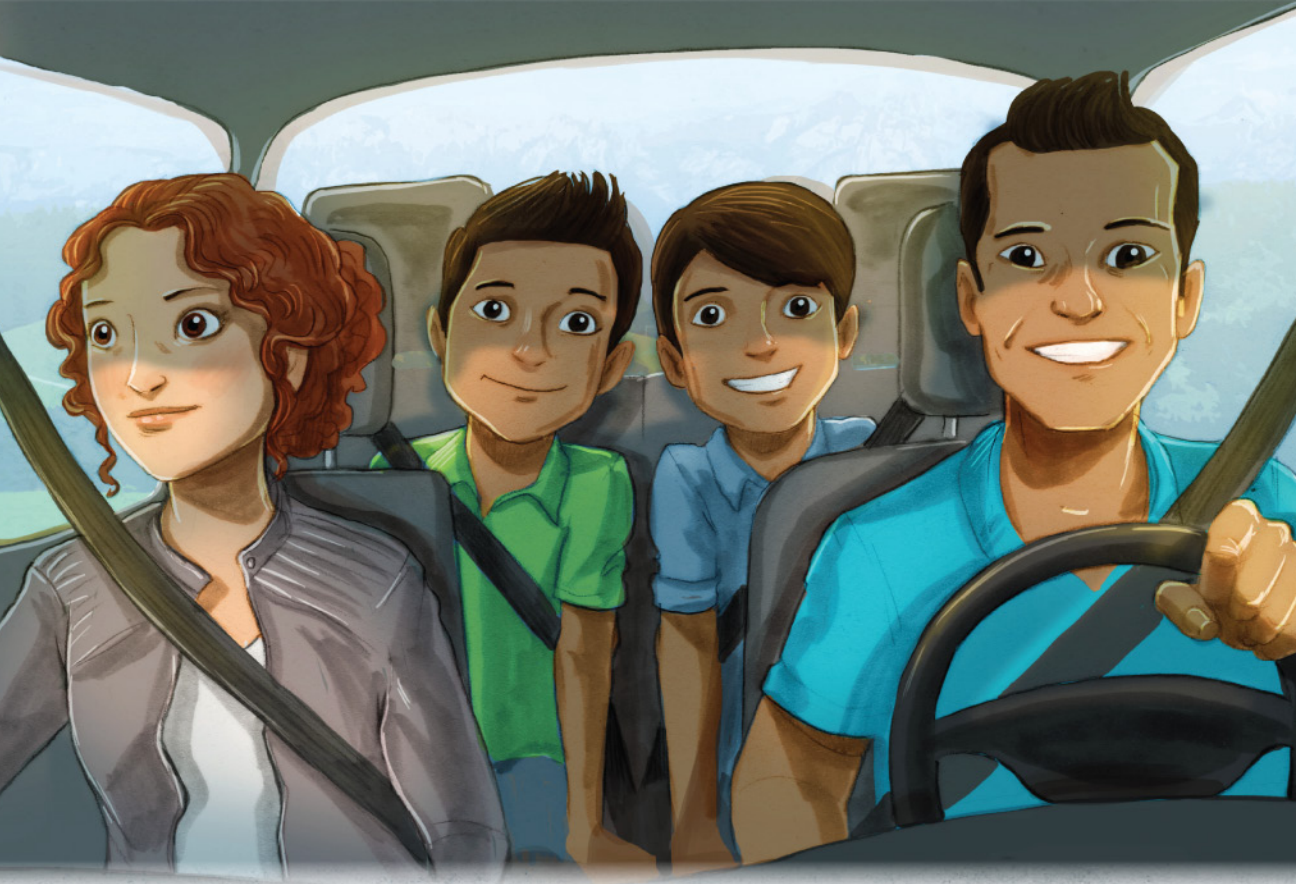
Jack was excited. Soon they would be at Castle Prahova. He gave his twin brother, Dylan, a nudge with his elbow. Dylan, who was dozing after their long journey from the United States, slowly opened his eyes.

"I can't believe your sister is getting married in Romania—in a castle!" said the boys' mom.

In less than twenty-four hours, the twins' older sister, Penny, would marry her Romanian fiancé, Razva. The wedding was taking place in a mountaintop castle a few miles from the tiny village where Razva had grown up. Everyone was eager to see Penny and to meet Razva for the first time.



“Here,” said Mom to the boys. She passed them a brochure.  
“This is all about the castle and its history.”



Jack slowly turned the pages, which showed photos of weddings and other parties that had been held in the old castle. Then the heading on one of the pages jumped out at him:

*The Vampire of Castle Prahova*



“Listen to this,” said Jack, reading from the brochure. “More than five hundred years ago, the castle was home to a Romanian prince. The prince had a beautiful daughter with long black hair and pale skin. The people of the village became **suspicious** of the young woman because she never left the castle except to walk in the forest at night.”

Jack continued. “Then, one morning, a group of villagers made a **gruesome** discovery on the edge of the forest. They found the body of a young shepherd. Every drop of blood had been drained from the boy’s **corpse!**”

“Eeww!” said Dylan.

“The villagers were convinced the prince’s daughter was responsible for the shepherd’s death,” Jack read. “They believed she was a vampire and wanted to kill her. To protect his daughter from the villagers, the prince locked her up in a secret room in the castle.”

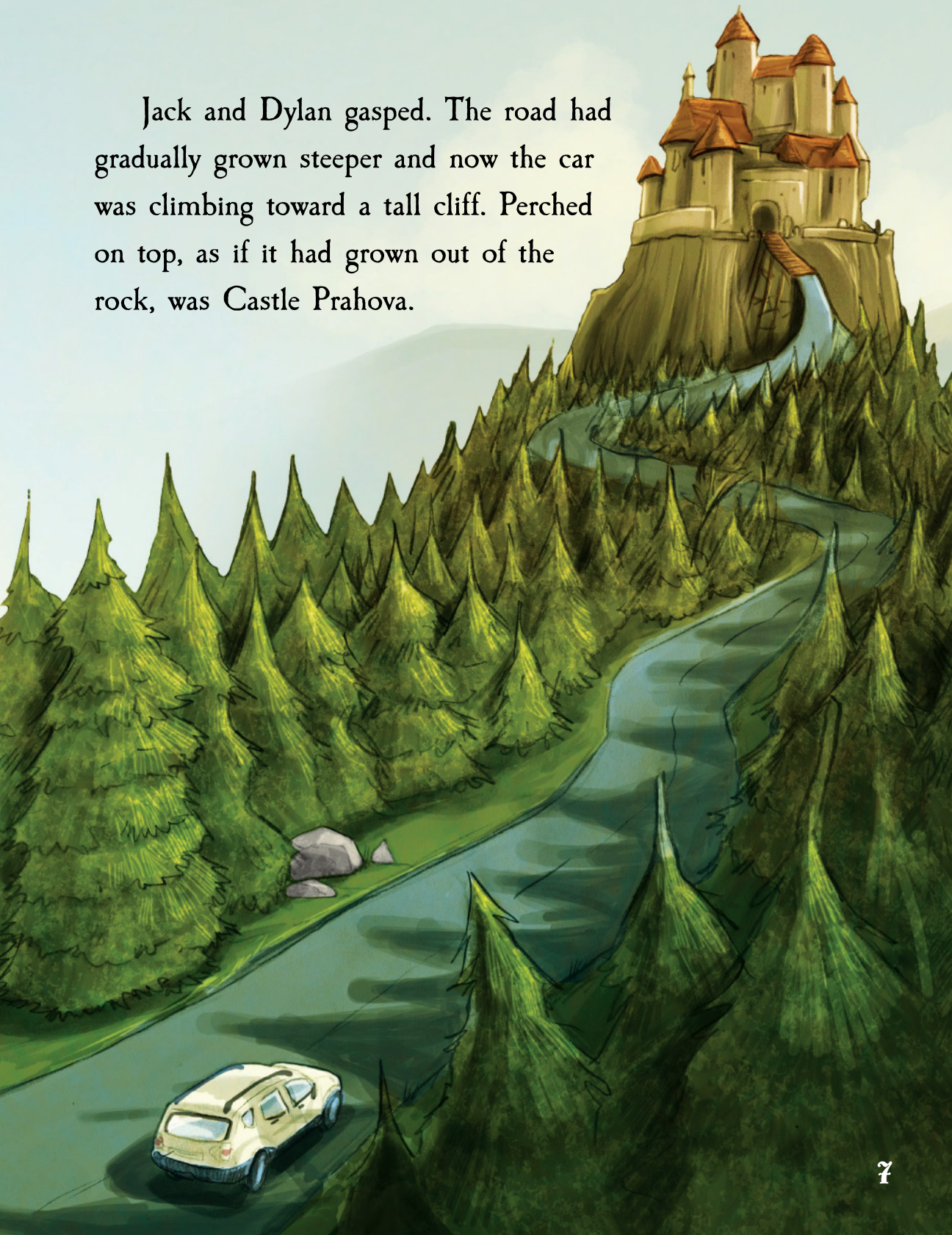
“Cool,” said Dylan, enjoying the tale. “What happened in the end?”

Jack read the last passage. “After the prince died, no one ever found his daughter. It is said that to this day, the vampire remains imprisoned somewhere in the castle.”

“Hey, guys,” said Dad. “Look up ahead.”



Jack and Dylan gasped. The road had gradually grown steeper and now the car was climbing toward a tall cliff. Perched on top, as if it had grown out of the rock, was Castle Prahova.





Dad drove through the castle gates and stopped the car in a small courtyard.

“Mom! Dad!” Penny came running across the courtyard. “It’s so great to see you all!” she said as she kissed and hugged her parents and brothers.

In the shadows beneath the castle’s steep walls, Jack noticed a dark figure watching his family. Penny followed Jack’s gaze.

“Everyone,” she said, motioning to the figure, “this is Razva.”

Razva stepped out of the shadows. He was tall and thin. His long black hair grew down to his shoulders, and his pale skin had an almost bluish-gray tone.

The twins watched as Razva shook hands with their father. Then, he took hold of their mother’s hand and bent to kiss it. “I am honored to meet Penny’s family,” he said with a thick accent.







Penny excitedly led her mother off toward the castle, while her father began unloading bags from the trunk.

Razva studied the boys. Jack felt as if the man's black eyes were burning into him. "So, you are Penny's brothers," he said slowly.

The boys nodded nervously. They were usually confident, but now the twins could think of nothing to say.

Razva stared past the courtyard entrance toward the distant, misty forest.

"Welcome to Transylvania," he said.



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