A History of the Vampire Genre

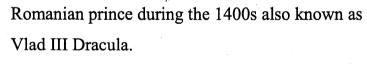From what information there is available vampire fiction began in the 1700's with a short German poem called *The Vampire* (1748) by Heinrich August Ossenfelder. The poem was about a man whose love is rejected by a respectable maiden. He threatens to visit her in the middle of the night to drink her blood by giving her the seductive kiss of a vampire.

The popular Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was written in the late 1800s. It portrayed vampirism as a disease with its undertones of sex, blood and death. The name Count Dracula was inspired by an actual person named, Vlad Tepes. Tepes was a Romanian prince during the 1400s also known as Vlad III Dracula.

Stoker's Count Dracula remained very popular throughout the 1900s, especially when movies were introduced as the new medium. Multi-volume vampire epics became immensely popular during the late 1900s. The first of these was the Barnabas Collins series written by Marilyn Ross in 1966-1971. It was loosely based on the American television series called *Dark Shadows*. The series

Vlad Tepes

also set a new trend for vampires by them appearing as poetic tragic heroes rather than the embodiment of evil.

During the past five or so years, a modern version of vampire fiction has become extremely popular. In juvenile and young adult literature, Darren Shan wrote a series of twelve books, called *Cirque du Freak*, based on a boy who becomes a vampire's assistant. The hugely popular *Twilight* is a fantasy series about a teenage girl named Bella Swan and her vampire boyfriend named Edward Cullen. There is also a film adaptation of the book with more films to come in sequence of the series. Ellen Schreiber also created a series, called *Vampire Kisses*, for young adults about a character named Raven Madison and her vampire boyfriend Alexander Sterling. *Peeps* was written by Scott Westerfeld is a young adult novel where the protagonist carries a contagious parasite that causes vampire-like behaviours.

Vampire fiction is still inspired by the story of Dracula but it has evolved over the years from an embodiment of evil to being portrayed as a more romantic and tragic character. It has become a mixed genre containing elements of romance, parody and in some cases even comedy.

Source:

Wikipedia. (April, 2009). Vampire Literature. *Wikipedia*. Retrieved April 9, 2009, from
    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vampire_fiction