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6 The year 600 BC

Some farming people decide to build their village on a hilltop.

8 The year AD 100

The Romans have conquered the hillfort and built their own fort in its place.

10 A thousand years later ...

The hilltop site is a perfect place for a new fort from which the Normans can rule over their new lands.

12 Thirty years later ...

About 1000 men work on building a new stone castle.

14 Ten years later ...

The magnificent stone keep towers above the cottages gathered inside the castle walls.

16 A hundred years later ...

A grand banquet in honour of the lord's guest, a neighbouring baron, is in full swing.



18 A few weeks later ...

The guards are in a hurry to prepare the castle's defences.

20 A few days later ...

Enemy soldiers surround the castle and use a range of weapon machines to attack the castle.

22 A hundred years later ...

A new castle, with round towers but without a keep, is built in the same hilltop position.

24 250 years later ...

A noble family enjoy their castle home in peace.

26 Another 250 years later ...

The castle has fallen to ruin.

28 Today

Visitors wander around the ruins, admiring the vast walls and towers.

30 Glossary

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Introduction

Imagine you are standing on a hilltop somewhere in Europe, thousands of years ago. Some farming people have gathered to make their home here. They have built simple shelters and a high fence all around their camp to protect it. As the years go by, other people come to live on the same hilltop. They put up stronger and stronger defences, finally building a castle with thick stone walls.

The new castle will live a long and eventful life ...

The story told in this book is like a journey. It is not a journey you can make by plane, car or ship. In fact, you don't have to go anywhere at all. You are about to travel through time. With each turn of the page, the date moves forward a few days, years or centuries. You are still in the same place, but notice how many things change from one date to the next. Each date—each stop on your journey—is like a new chapter. The early forts, the building of the stone castle, the preparations to defend it, the siege, the rebuilding and fall to ruin—all tell the story of the castle.



Look out for a pair of lovers. They appear in every illustration, although sometimes they are quite hard to find!

Use this thumb index to travel through time! Just find the page you want to see and flip it open. This way you can make a quick comparison between one scene and another, even though some show events that took place many years apart. A little black arrow on the page points to the time of the scene illustrated on that page.



The castle was a home for the lord and his family. The lady took charge of the castle while the lord was away.



MIDDLE AGES
This period in history is known as the Middle Ages. In those days, the king gave land to his nobles (barons or lords) in return for their support in ruling the country. Noble families became powerful.

Ten years later...

At last, the castle is complete. The magnificent stone keep, gleaming white in the sun, towers above the cottages gathered inside the walls. Delighted with their new home, the lord and lady set off on horseback for a day's falconry, accompanied by their favourite dogs.

Meanwhile, the castle is buzzing with activity. The steward checks the food store, fresh water is drawn from the well and workers are hard at work in the kitchens preparing the meal for when the lord returns. A blacksmith makes shoes for one of the lord's horses. Up on the battlements, the guards keep watch.

