



# WERE WOLVES

Jon Izzard

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藏书章





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## Dedication

*To all the charities and individuals throughout the world who are committed to the welfare of wolves and to their natural environment.*

## Caveat

While the text and illustrations may portray werewolves in a realistic way, the author asserts that the objective reality of werewolves should not be inferred from anything stated or depicted in this work. No part of this work should be regarded as offering recommendations that should be acted upon. Information on medical conditions, both physical and mental, is provided for entertainment only: seek professional medical advice if you have any concerns.

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# Introduction

If the werewolf signifies the beast within man—the beast that is eternally at odds with civilization—we are all werewolves. Whenever we are not enjoying absolute inner calm, we are experiencing the turbulence of the wolf prowling and growling within us. When we are annoyed and snap at somebody it is the wolf breaking surface and seizing control for an instant. When we lose our temper completely, the wolf is freed and pandemonium and destruction is unleashed.

The word “werewolf” is made up of a combination of two Old English words: *wer* meaning “man” and *wulf* meaning “wolf.” Sometimes the combination of wolf and man is said to be physical, involving a dramatic and painful metamorphosis of the body from one form to the other.

Some people think that the transformation is metaphorical and insist the werewolf is a creature of myth, a fanciful or poetic description of how anger can erupt and take over our behavior. But others see the werewolf as a spiritual mystery; a supernatural creature composed of pure energy that can break free from our unguarded minds and wreak havoc in the lives of those we hate—or love.

We may pity the werewolf for his helplessness in the face of destiny; we may envy him his supernatural powers; we may fear him for his ferocity and lethal nature; or we may respect him for his long-suffering stoicism—but we can never ignore him. What is certain is that anyone unfortunate enough to encounter a werewolf will never sleep quite so easily again—especially on those nights when the wind howls and the full Moon looms strangely large, rising over the horizon of life’s infinite possibilities...







### THE BEAST UNLEASHED



Animal magnetism runs riot as Leon (Oliver Reed) reveals his darker side in *The Curse of the Werewolf* (1961). Under the spell of the full Moon, the werewolf transformation overpowers the doomed hero, who loses all self-control and becomes a brutal killer.









Chapter 1

# Werewolves: The Beast Within



# Men & Wolves

Our world makes us who we are, but deep within us lives the animal, dreaming of a world of scent and blood. Our ancestors were simple animals, but as the centuries went by we stood upright, invented tools, and became aware of ourselves.

## HELPLESS HUMANS

Unlike most other animals, we are helpless when we are born because our bodies need more time to develop. However, a baby's head is already so large that to stay in the womb longer would make it very difficult for the mother to give birth. Our head, or brain, takes priority over our body.

## Animal origins

Our brain's cerebral cortex has swollen with the powers of thought, reasoning, memory, and imagination, and it has expert control over the rest of our body. These things may not be so well developed in creatures such as the wolf, but the human brain still contains a primitive, animal core—the hypothalamus. This small part of the brain is about the size of an almond, but it controls our anger and our fatigue, our hunger and our thirst. Just like the wolf, our fight-or-flight response is triggered by this ancient part of the brain, which is common to all vertebrates.

We share many traits with the wolf. We both have predatory instincts, our societies are both hierarchical, and we are happiest and healthiest when we live in a pack (if only of two). We are

both highly adapted to survive, yet in many ways the wolf is much tougher than we are: in a fight with an unarmed person, the wolf will almost certainly win. Men and wolves were rivals in the lean times when prey was scarce. Even after the great gray hunters became domesticated dogs, hunting with man rather than against him, that rivalry could all too easily come to the surface. Torn between cooperating and competing, we cover our wild side with a mask of "civilization" and coexist with our fellow creatures.

## Different werewolves

It may be that there are several different sorts of werewolves in the world today. There is the physical werewolf, where the human body literally changes; the exotic spirit of the werewolf that exists independently of the body; and there is the fascinating werewolf of the mind, which we may come across as our "inner wolf."

### ODIN, THE SCANDINAVIAN FATHER GOD



Odin's magical powers include shape-shifting, and as well as having two wolves, which are named Greedy and Ravenous, he has two ravens called Thought and Memory.





# Werewolfism



The word “lycanthrope” (the Latinized form of the Greek *lukanthropos*) carries the same literal meaning as “werewolf,” combining the words *lukos*, meaning wolf, and *anthropos*, meaning “man” (mankind).

Although lycanthropy is often used instead of the word “werewolfism,” meaning the physical transformation of a man or woman into a wolf, lycanthropy is also a medical term used by psychologists for a complex set of symptoms caused by a psychosis, or madness.

Lycanthropy has a broad range of symptoms, varying from mild to serious. One woman, who was helped a great deal by medication, had a number of distressing symptoms although she hurt no one. Her story was published by doctors Rostenstock and Vincent in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, October 1977.

The 49-year-old woman constantly felt inferior and needed a great deal of reassurance and affection. She was extremely interested in wolves, and these frequently cropped up in her dreams. Though her list of symptoms and characteristics do not show that anything was abnormal, her problem was how large they loomed in her life. She had overpoweringly low self-esteem, was obsessive, and completely fixated about wolves.

She had coped with this inner turmoil for decades, but her stability eventually broke down and, during a family get-together, she started to actually act out her dreadful compulsions.

Feeling herself overcome by the spirit of her “inner wolf,” she stripped off all her clothes and started acting just like one. She hadn’t been drinking alcohol or taking any drugs, but her mind’s barriers had simply snapped under severe strain, allowing her repressed feelings to spill over into everyday life.

The following night, her wolf nature came to the fore again. This time the attack took place in her bedroom, where, growling, she scratched and chewed at the bed. Again it is the severity of the incident that is worth noting—it lasted for two whole hours.

Now seemingly beyond self-control, the woman was admitted to hospital. She complained about hearing voices and said that the Devil had entered her body. The doctors diagnosed her with lycanthropy. She said she was a wolf-woman by day and a wolf by night; that she was an animal with claws, hair, fangs, and snarling teeth. She also announced that she would continue to roam the Earth long after her death, continually searching for perfection and her own salvation.

Looking in a mirror, she often saw the head of a wolf instead of her own reflection, and that she would snarl and growl at herself, later saying the wolf had told her that it was the Devil. At other times, she would see her own face in the mirror, except that one eye looked frightened, while the other appeared to be that of a vicious wolf, deeply evil and filled with hatred of the other eye.

She was diagnosed with a chronic schizophrenic psychosis, so as well as receiving one-to-one psychotherapy she was given medication, which tackled the chemical imbalance in her brain that is the cause of schizophrenia. These frightening episodes stopped happening within a month, and when she looked in a mirror the wolf was gone.

The woman's symptoms calmed down and, after she had received treatment for nine weeks, she was released from hospital. The doctors were convinced that she had been on the verge of suicide, but that she was now firmly on the road to recovery.

Lycanthropy is not restricted to schizophrenia, but may appear as a symptom of depression, bipolar disorder, drug-induced toxic psychosis, hysterical neurosis, psychomotor epilepsy, or physical changes in the brain due to, for example, a tumor. As such, lycanthropy is not a

diagnosis in itself, but identifying it helps to make a more complete diagnosis.

An insightful novel that explores the theme of the inner struggle between man and wolf, civilization and chaos, matter and spirit, is *Steppenwolf* (*Der Steppenwolf*, 1927) by Hermann Hesse, who went on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The story follows Harry Haller, a man who regards himself as part wolf—a lost, lone wolf of the steppes. Nursing his split personality, Harry daily confronts the double standards and hypocrisy at the heart of his world. His continual efforts to balance the polar opposites in his life reveal his own humanity and make him a hero in a unique mold, like all true heroes.

The media often uses phrases relating to werewolves when describing particularly vicious attacks involving mutilation or cannibalism, even when there is no evidence of lycanthropy. For example, William Johnston was dubbed the “Werewolf of San Francisco” in the 1930s because he cut his victims with a bladed weapon and the wounds were said to resemble claw marks. And the notorious “Wolf Man” of London, Michael Lupo, simply derived his nickname from his surname, which meant wolf. He was convicted of killing four people in 1986 and died in prison.



# The Body of the Werewolf

## PHYSICAL CHANGES

Most of the werewolves in movies, books, and games physically change from ordinary men and women into wolves. Our everyday experience shows us that caterpillars transform into butterflies, and genetically modified foods combine different species into new hybrid organisms. So who's to say physical werewolves are pure fiction?

## Origins

The earliest stories of werewolves, such as Homer's tale of Circe (see page 128), the enchantress turning men into wolves, and the tale of King Lycaon in Arcadia (see facing page) who was turned into a wolf by an angry god, involve physical transformation. But even those early Greek sources are not in complete agreement on the nature of the beast.

The earliest of these stories, written around 2,800 years ago, tell that the men bewitched by Circe had the bodies of wolves, but they kept the minds of men. When Odysseus's seafarers arrived, the wolves did not hungrily attack them like a pack of wild animals, but greeted them as companions in the spirit of human friendship.

Another example that shows werewolves in their wolf form behaving like people comes from medieval Ireland, where the werewolves of Ossory (see pages 102–3) actually talk to people

(these are unusual, though, because under their wolf's skin they still remain human physically). Other examples are the werewolves in the stories of *Bisclavret* (see page 143) and *William and the Werewolf* (see page 146). Both these tales are medieval romances. And even the 1985 movie *Teen Wolf* (see pages 90–3), with its fun-loving werewolf, is a romantic comedy.

## Losing control

The wolf with a human heart, however, is a rare breed. The vast majority of werewolves in literature, both ancient and modern, stress the complete loss of humanity that accompanies the physical change: this is the bestial wolf, the true predator. A classic example is the 1941 movie *The Wolf Man* (see pages 69–72), where the werewolf in his human form knows he must leave the woman he loves rather than risk killing her in his wolf form. The earlier movie (from

### LYCAON INTO WOLF



King Lycaon killed and cooked a prisoner, and fed the meat to his guest. But the guest was the god Zeus in disguise, and he punished Lycaon by turning him into a wolf.









