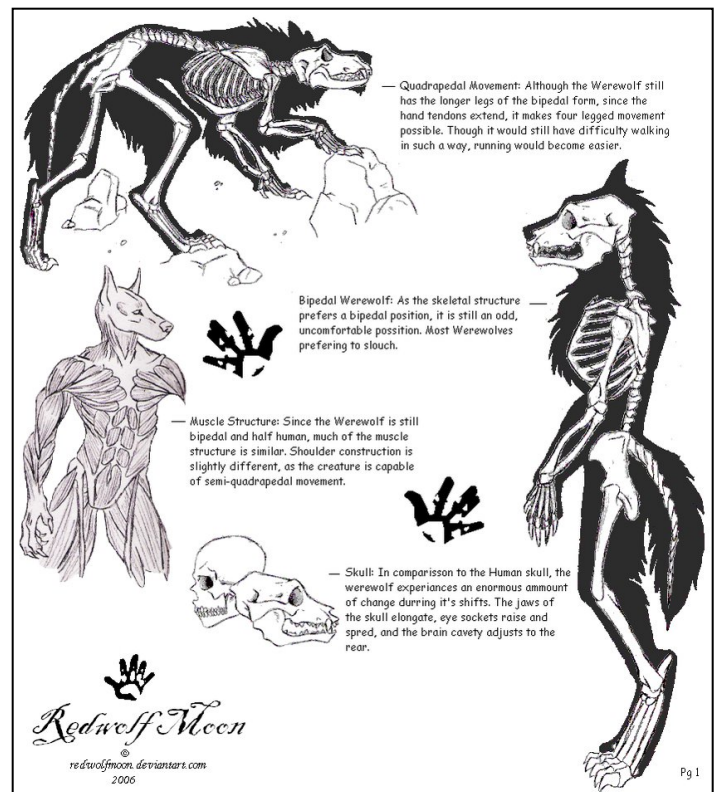


WEREWOLF DEFINITION

A **werewolf**, also known as a **lycanthrope**, is a mythological or folkloric human with the ability to **shapeshift** into a wolf or an anthropomorphic **wolf-like creature**, either purposely, by being bitten by another werewolf, or after being placed under a curse. This transformation is often associated with the appearance of the full moon, as popularly noted by the medieval chronicler Gervase of Tilbury, and in earlier times among the ancient Greeks through the writings of Petronius. A distinction is often made between **voluntary and involuntary werewolves**. The former are generally thought to have made a pact, usually with the Devil, and morph into werewolves at night to indulge in nefarious acts. Involuntary werewolves, on the other hand, are werewolves by an accident of birth or health. In some cultures, individuals born during a new moon or suffering from epilepsy were considered likely to be werewolves.



Werewolves are often attributed **superhuman strength and senses**, far beyond those of both wolves and men. The werewolf is generally held as a **European character**, although its lore spread through the world. Shape-shifters, similar to werewolves, are common in tales, most notably amongst the Native Americans, though most of them involve animal forms other than wolves.



WEREWOLF LORE: Becoming a Werewolf

1. Various methods for becoming a werewolf have been reported, one of the simplest being the removal of clothing and putting on a belt made of wolfskin, probably as a substitute for putting on the entire animal skin (which also is frequently described).
2. In other cases, the body is rubbed with a magic salve. The “magic salve” that was used by humans to transform into wolves was a strong hallucinogenic. When rubbed over the body, it is absorbed into the bloodstream and causes effects similar to LSD. A person under the salve’s effect could imagine that he was anything or anyone. One reason that people during the Medieval Times imagined themselves as werewolves, as opposed to other things, is because of the mass hysteria over werewolves during this time.
3. Drinking rainwater out of the footprint of the animal in question or from certain enchanted streams were also considered ways to accomplish metamorphosis (transformation or shape shifting).
4. In Italy, France and Germany, it was said that a man or woman could turn into a werewolf if he or she, on a certain Wednesday or Friday, slept outside on a summer night with the full moon shining directly on his face.
5. In other cases, the transformation was supposedly accomplished by Satanic allegiance for the most loathsome ends, often for the sake of sating a craving for human flesh.
6. The phenomenon of animal metamorphosis, or of sending out a familiar, real or spiritual self, as a messenger with the supernatural powers associated, are also attributed to the magician, whether male and female – this is closely related to witch superstitions
7. The curse of lycanthropy was also considered by some scholars as being a divine punishment. Werewolf literature shows many examples of God or saints allegedly cursing those who invoked their wrath with werewolfism. Those who were excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church were also said to become werewolves.

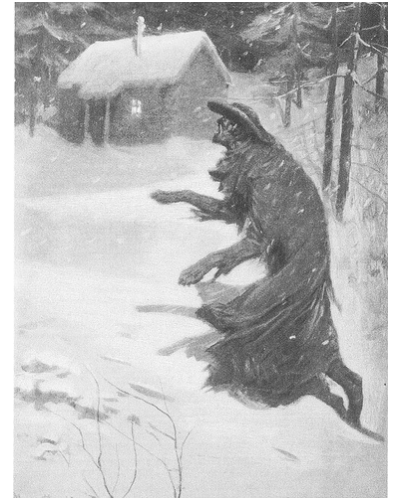


8. The power of transforming others into wild beasts was attributed not only to malignant sorcerers, but to Christian saints as well. *Omnes angeli, boni et Mali, ex virtute naturali habent potestatem transmutandi corpora nostra* ("All angels, good and bad have the power of transmutating our bodies") was the dictum of St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Patrick was said to have transformed the Welsh king Vereticus into a wolf; Natalis supposedly cursed an illustrious Irish family whose members were each doomed to be a wolf for seven years. In other tales the divine agency is even more direct, while in Russia, again, men supposedly became werewolves when incurring the wrath of the Devil.
9. A notable exception to the association of Lycanthropy and the Devil, comes from a rare and lesser known account of an 80-year-old man named Thiess, 1692, who testified under oath that he and other werewolves were the Hounds of God. He claimed they were warriors who went down into hell to do battle with witches and demons.



POSSIBLE MEDICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR WEREWOLF CONDITION?

Temporal Lobes in the Human Brain An explanation of werewolves comes from within the human brain. Temporal lobes in the brain control sensations in the human body, and any irritation of the temporal lobes can cause hallucinations. Also, if a person has shrunken temporal lobes, they can be subject to complex partial seizures. These seizures can lead to fixed delusions. Such delusions can include a person thinking that they are a wolf. Also, a lack of nutrition or a hit on the head can cause complex partial seizures.



Ergot Fungus During the period from 1520 to 1630 there were over 30,000 werewolf trials in France alone. Most of the people who were tried as being werewolves were poor, and came from lowlands with elevations less than 500 feet above sea level. A recent theory is that many of the werewolf accusations were a result of a fungus found in their rye crop. Rye bread was a staple for the poorer people of France, and after cold winters the rye developed the Ergot fungus. Unbeknownst to them, the fungus was a strong hallucinogenic. This theory contests that werewolf hysteria was a result of mass hallucination since most of the accusers and the accused were poor. The wealthy staple was the more expensive wheat, which was immune to the Ergot fungus. This explains why the wealthy were immune from the werewolf hysteria.

Hirsutism Hirsutism (from Latin *hirsutus* – *shaggy, hairy*) is the excessive hairiness on humans in those parts of the body where terminal hair does not normally occur or is minimal. It is a condition of unwanted, male pattern hair growth in women. Hirsutism may arise from excess male hormones called androgens, the key hormone being testosterone, or it may be due to an ethnic or family trait. It is primarily of cosmetic and psychological concern. Hirsutism is a symptom rather than a disease itself, and may be a sign of a more serious medical condition, especially if it develops well after puberty. A combination of self-care and medical therapies provides effective treatment for many women with hirsutism.



Excessive hair growth in women with normal androgen levels, regular menstrual periods and no other underlying conditions is called idiopathic hirsutism –meaning that there's no identifiable cause of the disorder. This occurs more frequently in certain ethnic populations. Women of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, or South Asian ancestry are more likely to develop idiopathic hirsutism than are women of other ethnicities.

GLOBAL WEREWOLF LORE

- American Indians limikkin or skin walkers
- Chili chonchon, a witch that transforms into a vulture
- Ethiopia, Morocco, Tanzania boudas, a were hyena
- France loup-garous, bisclavret
- Greece vrykolaka, a word for werewolf which is also used for vampires and sorcerers
- Haiti: loup-garus that can change into anything, both plant and animal
- Iceland hamramar, a shifter who changes into what is has last eaten, and gains power by eating more
- India rakshasa, a shifter who can change into any animal it wants
- Italy lupa manero or benandanti for people who permanently become wolves and fight witches in the underworld
- Japan kitsune, a werefox, also the tanuki or minjina, a wereraccoon, dog or badger. In general shapeshifters are called henge
- Mexico nahaul, aware wolf, cat eagle or bull
- Normandy, France lubins or lupins
- Phillipines aswang, a vampire/werewolf
- Russia oborotyen, werewolf/verwolf, vurdalak
- South America kanima, a jaguar-shaped spirit
- Spain hombre lobo, lupino
- United States an oddity being the were-rat who is said to be common around the PA area

ORIGIN OF "WEREWOLF" TERM

The word *werewolf* is thought to derive from Old English. The first part, *wer*, translates as "man" (in the specific sense of male human, not the race of humanity generally). The second half, *wulf*, is the ancestor of modern English "wolf"; in some cases it also had the general meaning "beast."

An alternative etymology derives the first part from Old English *weri* (to wear); the full form in this case would be glossed as *wearer of wolf skin*. Related to this interpretation is Old Norse *ulfhednar*, which denoted lupine equivalents of the *berserker*, said to wear a bearskin in battle.

Yet other sources derive the word from *warg-wolf*, with Old Norse *vargr*, meaning "rogue," "outlaw," or, euphemistically, "wolf" – the kind of wolf that slaughtered many members of a flock or herd but ate little of the kill. This was a serious problem for herders, who had to somehow destroy the rogue wolf before it destroyed the entire flock or herd.

The term *lycanthropy*, referring both to the ability to transform oneself into a wolf and to the act of so doing, comes from Ancient Greek *lykánthropos* – "lyc-" meaning "wolf", formally denotes the "wolf - man" transformation. There is also a mental illness called lycanthropy in which a patient believes he or she is, or has transformed into, an animal and behaves accordingly. This is sometimes referred to as clinical lycanthropy to distinguish it from its use in legends. Despite its origin as a term for man-wolf transformations only, lycanthropy is used in this sense for animals of any type. This broader meaning is often used in modern fictional references, such as in role playing game culture.