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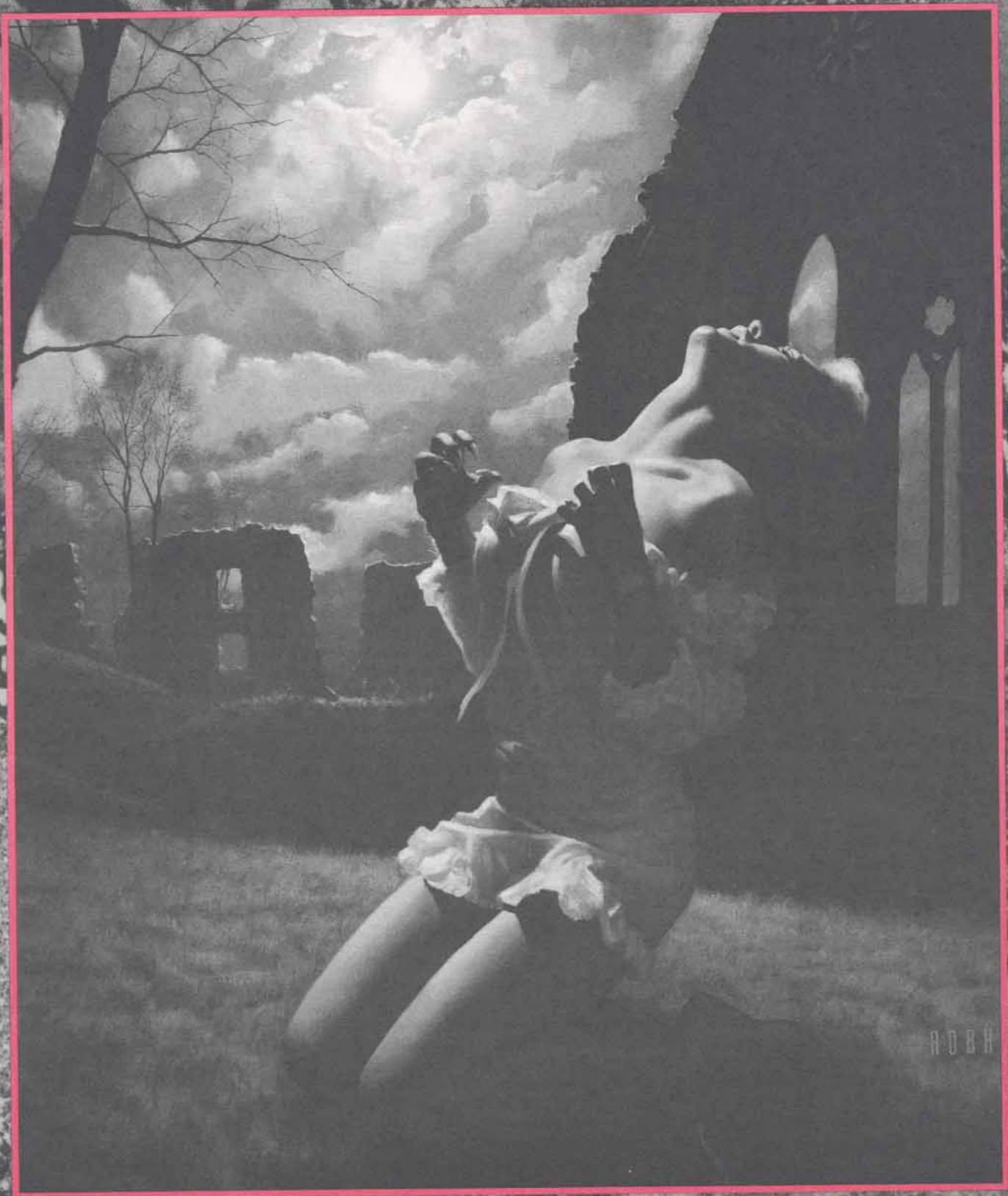
# Ravenloft<sup>®</sup>

Official Game Accessory

*Van Richten's Guide  
to Werebeasts*



# VAN RICHTEN'S GUIDE TO WEREBEASTS



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# UAN RICHTEN'S GUIDE TO WEREBEASTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4	True Lycanthropes .....	50
<b>Chapter I: An Overview of Lycanthropy ...</b>	<b>10</b>	Bloodlust .....	52
Heritable Lycanthropy .....	10	Relationships Between Lycanthropes ...	52
Transfiguration .....	11	Within a Single Phenotype .....	53
Primary Aspect .....	11	Between Phenotypes .....	54
Secondary Aspect .....	12	Relationships Between Lycanthropes	
Tertiary Aspect .....	14	and Humanity .....	56
Pathologic Lycanthropy .....	14	Werebeast-led Groups .....	57
Transfiguration .....	15	Infiltrating Society .....	58
Primary Aspect .....	15	Obtaining Skills and Abilities .....	59
Secondary Aspect .....	16	<b>Chapter IV: The Pathologic Scourge .....</b>	<b>61</b>
Maledictive Lycanthropy .....	17	Susceptibility .....	61
Self-Induced Curses .....	18	Vestiges of Race .....	63
Curses of Vengeance .....	18	Conservation of Phenotype .....	64
Magical Curses .....	20	Conservation of Triggers .....	64
Removing the Curse .....	20	Multiple Infections .....	64
Other Characteristics .....	20	Infecting a True Lycanthrope .....	65
Shapechangers and Lycanthropes .....	20	Triggers .....	66
Origins of Lycanthropy .....	21	Symbolic Triggers .....	66
The Parasitic Theory .....	21	Physiological Triggers .....	67
<b>Chapter II: A Biological Survey .....</b>	<b>24</b>	Other Triggers .....	68
Werebeast Phenotypes .....	24	Lycanthropic Control .....	68
Vulnerabilities .....	24	Detecting Infection .....	70
The Transfiguration .....	28	Curing the Affliction .....	71
Clothing and Armor .....	29	Exterminating the Root .....	71
Damage and Healing .....	29	Revitalizing the Tarnished Spirit .....	72
Memory Loss and Retention .....	30	Removing the Blight .....	74
Effects on Character Skills .....	31	<b>Chapter V: On the Hunt .....</b>	<b>76</b>
Diet .....	32	Identifying the Beast .....	76
Infected Lycanthropes .....	34	Hybrid Form .....	76
True Lycanthropes .....	34	Animal Form .....	77
Life Span and Life Cycle .....	36	Human Form .....	78
Infected Lycanthropes .....	36	Tracks .....	79
True Lycanthropes .....	36	Gory Leavings .....	82
Aging and True Lycanthropes .....	39	The Lair .....	82
Procreation .....	39	Multiple Monsters .....	84
Infected Lycanthropes .....	40	Witnessing the Transformation .....	85
True Lycanthropes .....	40	Stalking the Werebeast .....	85
Lairs .....	42	Trapping the Beast .....	85
Town Lairs .....	42	Making the Kill .....	88
Wilderness Lairs .....	45	Charlatans .....	88
<b>Chapter III: A Psychological Survey .....</b>	<b>47</b>	Last Thoughts .....	89
Moral and Ethical Outlook .....	47	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>90</b>
Goals and Desires .....	48	<b>Appendix for the DM™ .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Infected Lycanthropes .....	49		

# INTRODUCTION



**I**n the heart of every man  
hides the soul of the beast. In  
this way, we are not so  
different from the  
Shapeshifter.

—Speculations, Marth Venn

Tales of the lycanthrope—of the shapeshifter, the beast in man’s form—are common to every society, human and demihuman alike. There is a certain universality to the concept, which is understandable. The symbolism is so potent, so immediate: A man becomes the beast, and the beast masquerades as a man. Does this not perfectly encapsulate the duality of human nature?

In many accounts, the metamorphosis is beyond the shapeshifter’s control, signifying the bestial rage that can well up within the mildest of souls. And the fear engendered by the presence of the shapeshifter—the suspicion that any stranger or even a friend may turn out to be the beast—is a reflection of the grim truth that no man may truly know what is in his fellow man’s heart.

Yes, the shapeshifter is a powerful symbol. And when I was young, I felt certain that this creature was *purely* symbolic. One did not have to believe in the existence of the shapeshifter to understand the innate truth of such wild tales, for that central truth had nothing to do with monsters or bestial nightmares, but with the psychology of humanity (or so I believed).

How naive was I then. While tales of the shapeshifter may be symbolic, they also reflect a substantive reality. I know now that shapeshifters *do* exist. Once, I discounted the werebeast as a superstitious folly, as something no more significant than an old wives’ tale. But I had overlooked the obvious: those so-called

“old wives” frequently remember the ancient truths. . . .

## A Welcome

**G**reetings, fellow scholar. I am Dr. Rudolph Van Richten—erstwhile healer, herbalist, chronicler, husband, father. It seems to me now that I have lived many lives, pursued many careers. How could all of my experiences, all I have learned, be encompassed by a single life span?

Yet that is definitely the case. I was born nearly threescore years ago in the land of Darkon. Although the tales and rumors may say otherwise, Darkon is not a place of unrelieved terror, death, and destruction. Certainly, those who live within its boundaries must make certain . . . *adjustments* . . . to their manner of life. There are particular regions where one travels only at the greatest of need, where one invites only trusted friends across the threshold, and where the windows are always shuttered and barred after sunset.

Yet during the daylight hours, Darkon—or that region where I spent my childhood, at least—is a beautiful land. For me, few places can rival the allure of its rolling hills, deep primeval forests, grassy glades, and meadows ablaze with a profusion of wildflowers. Before the chill of night sets in, the breezes are gentle, carrying with them the whispers of the trees, and the perfumes of myriad flora.

I find that now I can look back on those days of youth with pleasure, and can relish their richness. Such was not always the case. Once, the *slightest* reminder of the past would rack me with pain and grief. For I had been sundered from those innocent, joyful times by a chasm that no living man could ever cross.

In what now seems a previous lifetime, I had a family I loved, a profession I cherished. I was a simple healer leading a simple existence. Then a wretched, blood-sucking horror took my wife and child. My simple existence died with them, and I came to follow a path very

# INTRODUCTION

different from the one I had chosen for myself.

Today I am driven not by my own needs and whims, but by a central cause: to rid the world of the Accursed, those unnatural and *supernatural* predators who threaten the lives and happiness of all. I speak, of course, of those beings which some have imprecisely classed as “monsters”: the various forms of undead, the shapeshifters, and other fiendish beasts who feast on sorrow and pain.

Some who know of my cause believe me to be driven by vengeance. Not so. This *once* was true, of course. After the loss of my beloved wife and son, desire for vengeance burned brightly within me. It shames me to admit it, but I took great pleasure in sending the fell beast who had destroyed my family down into the blackness of true death. The realization that I had *enjoyed* my act forced me to re-examine my motives, however, and to scrutinize the very shadows in my soul.

It was that intense personal scrutiny which redirected my efforts. From that moment forward, I no longer sought the destruction of such foul creatures for personal benefit or desire for vengeance. Today my central motivation is to spare others the torture and heartache that I myself have suffered. If I go to my grave knowing that I have saved only one person from the torment that I was forced to endure, I will count myself a lucky man and judge my life to have been of worth.

## The House on the Hill

**A**s I have stated, once I did not believe the legends of the shapeshifters, the werebeasts. It was in my thirty-ninth year that I discovered my mistake. By that time, I had traveled the length and breadth of Darkon in my quest to eliminate the unnatural predators which threatened the populace—namely, the undead. I was near Varithne, a village too tiny to appear on most maps. It lies in the north of Darkon, where the terrain is rugged and the populace sparse. As was (and

still is) my habit, I stopped at the local tavern at day's end, seeking a glass of brandy and a bit of conversation.

That night, Varithne's tavern was crowded. Nearly all who filled the room were talking of strange disappearances. Simply by listening, I discovered their plight.

Over the past fortnight, seven men had gone missing. The first two were shepherds. As it was the season for doing so, they had led their flocks into the hills to graze. Neither shepherds nor sheep ever returned. Scant days later, a pair of professional hunters joined the ranks of the missing. The people of Varithne had hired these two men to provide meat. Their hunting expedition was to last only a day or two, but like the shepherds they failed to return.

The latest to disappear were three travelers who claimed they hailed from a land called Sembia. These adventurous men took it upon themselves to locate the shepherds and hunters. Again, none returned.

At first I paid little heed to the rumblings in the tavern that night. Certainly I understood the villagers' concern, but there are many *natural* predators in the hills of Darkon, and I assumed that the seven unfortunates had fallen victim to such creatures. Wolves, bears, or the like could easily have killed the seven men. I was not then, and am not now, a hunter of normal, living creatures.

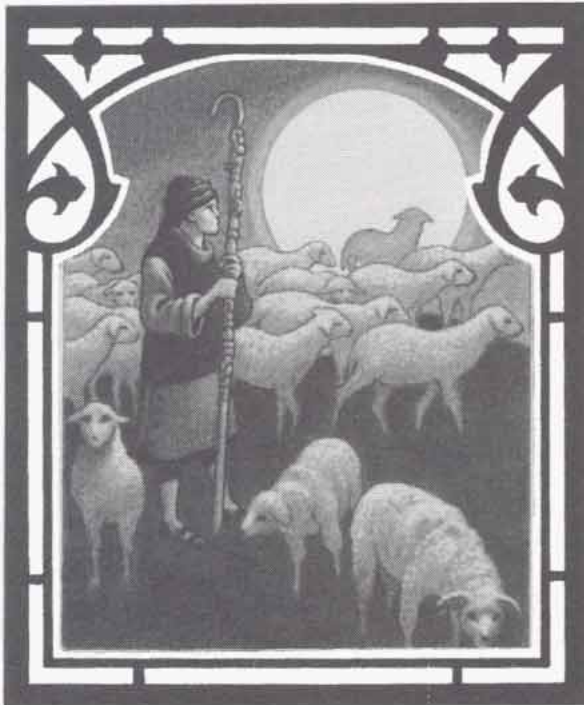
I had emptied my brandy and was about to leave the tavern when I overheard something that changed my mind. Two villagers began to exchange tales of a strange howling they had heard. The sound had been carried on the night winds that blew down from the hills. I asked them to elaborate. This was not the howling of a wolf, the pair assured me, but something quite different. My curiosity was piqued. Not long before, I had discovered and destroyed several unusual ghostly creatures, apparently examples of a hitherto unrecorded subtype of wailing spirit. Those hauntings had been characterized by a nocturnal howling very much like that described by the villagers. Assuming that the

## INTRODUCTION

orchestrator of Varithne's torment might be one of these spirits, I decided that I would put to rest this accursed creature as well.

The next day I set forth into the hills, equipped with several vials of sanctified water, which had proved quite effective against the other wailing spirits. I was confident that I could recognize the sanctuary of my ectoplasmic quarry and then dispatch the creature with little ado. For one of the first times in my life, overconfidence possessed me, and truly led me astray. Not simply in a symbolic sense, mind you. I admit it openly: I became lost. Although a bright morning sun had greeted me when I left the inn, by midmorning that sun was hidden behind slate-gray clouds and a thick mist clung to the hills. Visibility decreased to little more than a stone's throw. I fear I wandered in circles for hours, until the day—already twilight-dark under the clouds—began to darken still further.

As the damp chill of the mist leached the warmth from my body, fear washed over me at last. It was not the darkness I feared, however.



It was disorientation. In fact, there was still light enough for me to see, even though the sun had already sunk below the horizon. As in other regions of Darkon, the rise and fall of the hills was traced by a faintly shimmering, blue-green luminescence. Many call it "gravelight." This light might still have allowed me to return to the village safely—if only I had known in which direction the village lay.

It was then I heard the howling: a high-pitched, prolonged ululation. It hung upon the cold wind, fading and then renewing itself again and yet again. My ear perceived the sound, but my soul understood its meaning. It spoke of hunger, solitude, and ferocity. And, cliché though it seems, it spoke of inhuman glee. No mere wolf had ever uttered such a sound—that I knew at once. Nor did the hideous cry precisely match my memories of the wailing spirits. But, in the emotion of the moment, I discounted the difference.

I was lost, but I knew the direction from which the heart-numbing howl had come. If I could not find the village this night, at least I could complete the task to which I had set myself and hunt down the wretched spirit. I strode determinedly through the mist.

The wailing spirits I had previously destroyed always lurked within some human-constructed building: a deserted house, a desolate warehouse, or (by preference) an abandoned church. Thus, when I saw a small stone house set atop a nearby hill, I thought my trek was at an end. Surely this was the sanctuary of the unquiet spirit I believed I was hunting. Preparing my holy water and other accoutrements, I advanced stealthily toward the building.

Great was my surprise and embarrassment when the front door swung open, silhouetting a burly figure against the light. No spirit this, but a red-faced, jolly-looking man around his fiftieth year. He was tall and broad, as muscular as a blacksmith, yet with the weather-tanned face of a farmer. When he set his eyes on me, upon a comparatively little man skulking

## INTRODUCTION

toward his home like a thief, he threw back his head and laughed. Of course, this only added to my humiliation.

"Come in, come in," he called boisterously. "No need to steal an invitation to shelter when it's freely given. Get yeself in out of the night."

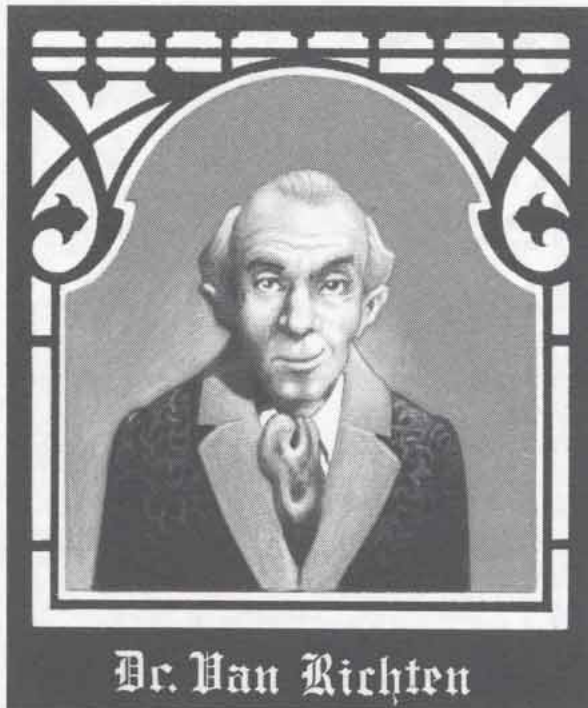
I felt my face burning as I returned my vials of sanctified water to my pack and slid my silver-bladed ritual knife back into its sheath. "My apologies," I began abashedly, but he cut me off with another booming laugh.

"Ne'er mind that now, friend," he said. "Come join me in the light and the warmth, and sup with me. Unless ye'd prefer to sleep in the gravelight, o'course."

I did not have to be invited twice. Though I was confused—for surely the wailing spirit must be *somewhere* around here—I welcomed the invitation. This man was undeniably among the living, and no joy of life such as he displayed could coexist with a wailing spirit. Perhaps this burly fellow could direct me to the ectoplasmic horror's true sanctuary . . . on the morrow, of course.

He gestured for me to enter and I stepped into the cozy little two-room structure. My host's face was wrinkled in a jolly smile, yet it was curious: I sensed some kind of undertone, some submerged emotion, beneath his jocularity. Was it tension? A well-concealed effort or strain? I quickly forgot the little mystery, however, as he maintained a continuous flow of words. At first, I tried to follow my host's rambling conversation, but before long I realized that he was talking for the sake of speaking rather than to communicate anything of value. His must be a lonely life, I decided. My visit represented a rare opportunity for conversation, for which the man was both eager and out of practice.

Still, I did not mind the man's chatter. There was a fire in the hearth and a kettle of stew hanging over it. The transition from a bone-chilling cold to such cheery warmth seemed to numb my mind like a strong herbal sedative. When he bade me sit near the hearth, I did so



with a will. It was only moments before I felt my head start to nod with the onset of sleep, and I began to fade away.

Then the man said something that drew me out of my reverie.

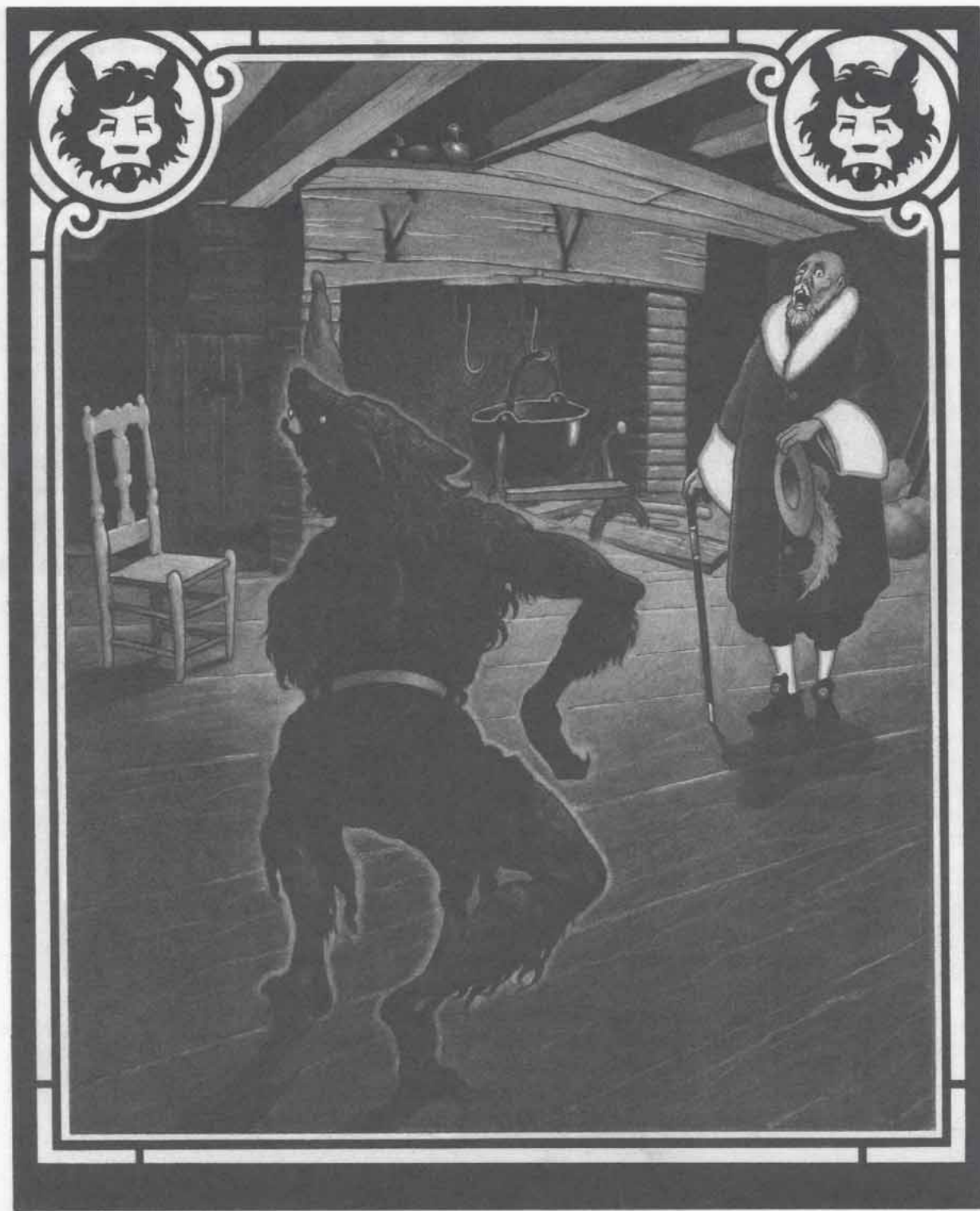
"Welcome I said, and welcome I meant, Dr. Van Richten." He was standing behind me, near the front door. His tone was still friendly, but the words that came next were not. "Your name is known to me, for your fame has spread far. So fine it'll be to feast on a man as famous as yourself. . . ."

With that I turned, disbelieving. I simply could not have heard him say what I *thought* I heard.

The scene which unfolded shocked me into stupefaction. The man had stripped off his shirt and he was *changing*, undergoing what I now call the *transfiguration*. As I watched in dumb horror, I saw his bones shift, bend, and lengthen. His skull warped as though made of clay. His mouth and nose become a bestial snout, and his forehead sloped sharply back above his eyes—eyes that were suddenly



# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

bloodshot and glaring. His muscles, too, shifted beneath his skin. The sight would have been enough to nauseate me even without the accompanying sound: a wet, gristly squashing and crunching reminiscent of the noise made by tearing apart raw chicken meat. His hair, previously shoulder-length, had shortened and become more like a mane or a dog's hackles, traveling along the path of his spine. And a gray pelt had sprung into being, covering his exposed skin.

The transition was over in only a heartbeat or two, yet to my fevered mind it seemed much longer. Then the beast stood before me, half man, half animal, smiling with a predator's smile. Saliva dripped from its lips. Now, almost too late, I realized what had invited me to dine.

Then it repeated its blood-chilling howl and pounced!

I was fortunate. As I have now come to learn, it was but a weak example of its kind. Had it been one whit stronger, it would have devoured my flesh and sucked the marrow from my bones. As it was, I narrowly managed to defeat the creature. Its claws and teeth scored me a dozen times, but my silver ceremonial dagger proved an efficacious weapon. Eventually, the thing lay dead, pierced to the heart with my nine-inch blade. As I withdrew the weapon from the corpse, the creature underwent a reverse metamorphosis, returning to its human form. Once more I gazed at the broad, jolly face of the farmer. This time, however, it was truly at peace, without the hint of tension I had sensed earlier.

A *werewolf*? I thought. I searched the rest of the building, both in fear that it had a fellow and in grim suspicion that I would find the final resting places of the missing villagers. I was right in my guess. There is no need to go into a description of what I discovered; some things are best left undescribed. Suffice it to say that I was not the only one who had been invited to dine with this fellow and then found himself on

the menu. For obvious reasons, I was unable to remain in that house that night. I set out across the hills once more, and by sheer luck I stumbled across a road that led me back to Varithne.

The creature's death did little to ease my terror. I remained in mortal fear for weeks—not for my life, as such, but for my humanity. I had heard many of the legends describing werewolves, although I had paid little enough attention to the details. I feared that the wounds inflicted by the creature would ensure that I would suffer the same dire curse—that I would, on the next full moon, become a ravaging monster, myself.

Yet no such grievous fate overtook me. To this day, more than a decade later, I have suffered no ill effects. Perhaps the wounds that the monster inflicted were not serious enough to convey the contagion. Or perhaps my natural resistance to disease provided some protection. Perhaps the fact that I used cold silver to slay the beast was the reason for my good health.

Or perhaps I was simply fortunate.

From that day forth, the insidiousness of the werebeast's threat has not been far from the forefront of my mind. From that day forth, I have numbered the werebeast among the nemeses of mankind.

*Editor's Note:* Van Richten refers to "humans" throughout this text. (Unless otherwise noted, the term also encompasses demihumans.)

Information directly pertinent to the RAVENLOFT® campaign appears in gray sidebars like this one. In addition, short notes relating to AD&D® game rules can be found in the text, set off in square brackets [like this]. Ideally, such information is for the DUNGEON MASTER™ (DM™) only. (Players should discover this material through the actions of their characters.)

# Chapter 1: AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY



T

*he blood of my parents runs through my veins . . . with all that this kinship implies. Is this blood that we share cursed, tainted? Or is it blessed, somehow sanctified by a power greater than that of humanity? My father would have me believe the latter—that our kinship marks us as far advanced above the bustling hordes of humanity as they are above the cattle they slaughter for food.*

*Yet in these latter days, I have trouble believing that. I hear their screams as we fall upon them and I have to believe they are not so unlike us. We, too, are kin in some sense—humanity, and that*

*which my blood tells me I am. They consider my kind monsters, and sometimes I wonder whether they are right.*

*But when I feel the fierce elation of the metamorphosis come upon me, then how can I not consider myself blessed, as one small step below the gods?*

—Excerpt from a Werebeast's Journal

Since my encounter with the werebeast in the hills near Varithne almost two decades ago, I have endeavored to learn all that I could about its foul kind. This has proved to be difficult, although not for the same reasons that my research into the nature of vampires and ghosts was so challenging. No, the degree of variability between two werebeasts sharing the same animalistic form is far less than the variability shown by either vampires or ghosts.

The difficulty of the research stems more from the fact that the werebeast is such an emotionally evocative symbol. So many descriptions, tales, and legends that refer to werebeasts incorporate purely symbolic material. It seems, in fact, difficult verging on impos-

sible to find any discussion of werebeasts that sticks entirely to the unembellished truth. While understandable, as a researcher I find this highly irritating. Nevertheless, I have been able to separate—to some degree, at least—the truth of the matter from the symbolic elaborations.

There are, of course, many *phenotypes* of lycanthropes—werewolves, wererats, werejaguars, even werebadgers, to name but four I have encountered personally. (The word “phenotype” was introduced to me by a sage from a mysterious and distant land. I find it more descriptive than “species.”) I shall outline the characteristics of each phenotype in a subsequent chapter. In this section, however, I shall concentrate on the two basic classifications of werebeasts: *true* lycanthropes, who inherit their condition, and *infected* lycanthropes, who acquire their affliction through a werebeast's attack. Because the latter condition more closely resembles a disease and can be cured (albeit through extraordinary means), I have dubbed it *pathologic* lycanthropy. There is a third classification as well, which is curse-induced, or *maledictive*, lycanthropy. However, examples of this class are so rare, and their characteristics so diverse, that I shall only touch briefly upon the subject.

Finally, at the end of this chapter I shall share with you my theory on how lycanthropy arose.

## Heritable Lycanthropy

This is the archetypical form of the scourge that is lycanthropy. Often called true lycanthropy, it is an inherent, self-sustaining condition that can neither be cured nor contracted by others. If one is not born a true lycanthrope, then one can never become one. If one *is* so born, then it is impossible to alter or cure the condition, much as it would be impossible to cure an elf of the condition of being an elf.

True lycanthropes have their own society as well as their own rules of conduct. Although

# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

they may move through normal human society, they are not *of* that society. This is discussed in considerably more detail in Chapter III. For the moment, suffice it to say that when it comes time to choose a mate, most true lycanthropes select another of their kind. The offspring of such a union will always prove to be heritable lycanthropes themselves.

Sometimes, for whatever reason, a true lycanthrope will breed with someone who does not suffer the scourge. If it is the male who is the true lycanthrope and the female who is free of the contagion, I estimate a simple 50 percent chance that any offspring of the union will be a true lycanthrope. If the offspring does not inherit true lycanthropy, it should be completely free of the taint (although the father may well come back at some later time to transmit the contagion through an attack, thereby infecting his own child).

If it is the mother who bears the scourge of true lycanthropy, however, the offspring cannot be so lucky as to escape the taint. There is still a 50 percent chance that any offspring will be a true lycanthrope, inheriting the full form of the condition. If this does not come to pass, however, the child is not completely spared: instead of becoming a true lycanthrope, it becomes an *infected* one. Thus, every offspring of a lycanthropic mother will suffer one form or the other of the scourge.

## Transfiguration

Transfiguration is the term I apply to a werebeast's ability to change forms, or *aspects*. With few exceptions, a true lycanthrope has three aspects, any of which it can adopt at will. In contrast, an infected lycanthrope normally displays but two forms (to the best of my knowledge). Furthermore, the true lycanthrope is generally unaffected by the triggers that initiate transfiguration in infected lycanthropes. Thus, a true werewolf need never fear that the full moon will trigger an unwanted transfiguration.

It is important to stress that the actual process of transfiguration is not typically a rending, burning agony for true lycanthropes, but it is often so for the nonheritable variety. In fact, many of the true lycanthropes with which I have spoken (before destroying them) have claimed that the experience is one of transcendent ecstasy.

Furthermore, true lycanthropes retain all of their mental faculties while in any of their forms. At no point do they forget what occurs when not in human aspect, nor do they lose control of their actions. In addition, they always retain their immunities and most of their abilities.

## Primary Aspect

The first aspect of a true lycanthrope is human (or demihuman, of course), and the human aspect is characteristic of the individual. In other words, when in human form, it will always look the same. A werebeast cannot use the transfiguration to alter its human appearance or create disguises.

To an astute observer, certain characteristics of the true werebeast's human form can provide hints of the individual's *inhuman* nature. Almost invariably the human form shows one or more bestial features: slightly pronounced canine teeth, unusually bushy brows which meet above the nose, slightly pointed ears, abnormally pronounced body hair, hair on the inside of the wrist and on the palm, or perhaps exaggerated finger- or toenails, for example. Furthermore, many true lycanthropes have overly long forefingers, equal in length to the second finger of each hand.

Of course, it should be pointed out that none of these physical traits is sufficient to incontrovertibly label a subject as a werebeast. I have personally met folk who have never so much as seen a lycanthrope, yet they themselves exhibited one or several of these telltale signs. In truth, I feel somewhat

## AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY



uncomfortable over having listed these apparent signs at all, since they can be (and *have been*) misused to accuse innocents of being werebeasts.

### Secondary Aspect

The second form that any true lycanthrope can assume is that of the beast. In this aspect, the individual appears as an animal. Again, the type of animal and the specific details of its appearance are characteristic of the individual. Details such as eye color, pelt markings, and other distinguishing features do not change, which makes it possible for an astute observer to distinguish between individuals, just as an owner of hounds can tell the difference between two members of the same breed.

A true lycanthrope's animal aspect is usually larger than average, when compared to normal animals of the same type. Remember, however, that there is a wide variability in sizes among *natural* animal populations. While it is true that lycanthropes in animal aspect are larger than the average for that species, it is *not* always true that werebeasts are larger than all other specimens. If a werewolf is leading a pack of timber wolves, the lycanthrope need not automatically be the largest creature in the pack. (Wererats pose a special case: their secondary aspect resembles a *giant* rat, not a normal rodent. With that caveat, my remarks above still hold, with wererats frequently appearing as larger-than-average giant rats.)

Many tales and legends claim that lycanthropes in their secondary form can be distinguished from natural animals by their sense of intelligence, unnatural wisdom, and anomalous watchfulness. This can be true in some cases, but only when the werebeast *wants* the observer to discern its true nature. True lycanthropes in their animal aspect retain their full intelligence, which makes them much more intelligent and aware than natural animals that may surround them. Yet the

## AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

monsters are also in touch with their animalistic nature—with the beast within—in the form of natural senses and instincts. They can, if they so wish, allow these senses and instincts to overshadow their human intelligence and thus behave identically to a natural animal. This knack for subterfuge makes it exceedingly difficult to distinguish a werebeast from a normal animal.

It is important to point out the fallacies in some legends and tales. While it is true that lycanthropes in animal aspect can still *understand* the languages of mankind, it is *not* true that they can speak them. The anatomy and physiology of animals precludes this. For example, the throat and mouth of a rat is incapable of human speech; thus, so is a wererat in animal aspect. (The wererat *would* be able to both speak and understand the limited communication of natural rats, however.) Similarly, while in animal aspect most werebeasts have neither hands nor fingers, and thus cannot easily manipulate their environment. Accordingly, those tales which describe werewolves in wolf form opening intricate locks or latches are most obviously fantastical.

It seems obvious that natural animals can distinguish a werebeast in animal aspect from one of their own kind. Natural animals' responses to werebeasts vary quite widely, however. Pack-oriented or herd-oriented creatures will usually cede dominance of the group to the werebeast. Thus, wolves will almost always signal their submission to a werewolf in their midst and allow the lycanthrope to lead the pack. Trained animals such as domesticated dogs will be more likely to react with unease or even distress if a werebeast is in the area. Naturally solitary animals will usually respond by avoiding werebeasts in animal aspect.

As an aside, there are many tales in which faithful house pets detect the inhuman nature of true lycanthropes in human aspect, and react by growling, whining, or even attacking.

*It was a travesty of justice, of course. While I can well understand the townsfolk's fear over the wereboar's predations, I could never sanction their response to that fear.*

*That response was hysteria, pure and simple. They needed someone on which to vent their rage and their terror. They selected the hermit who lived on the outskirts of the village. Nicknamed the "terrible old man," he was actually a harmless soul, cursed by diminishing mental faculties. Encroaching senility made him something of a curmudgeon, and he had earned the enmity of many of the villagers. His appearance was unkempt; his hair was wild, his clothing ragged, his teeth discolored and crooked. All in all, his appearance could well be described as feral, and that was all the villagers needed.*

*Their response was brutal in its immediacy. To this day I blame myself for not acting fast enough to stop it. But before I even knew what was happening, the old man was writhing in terminal anguish, impaled on the sharpened stake the villagers had set up in the square.*

*It did not take the villagers long to realize their mistake. The night after the old man's grisly end, the wereboar was on the hunt again. . . .*

—From the personal journal  
of Dr. Van Richten

# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

I can neither support nor deny these contentions. I have seen no evidence on either side of the issue.

## Tertiary Aspect

The true werebeast's third aspect—half man, half beast—is indeed the most dreadful. This is the *form most commonly associated with true lycanthropes in tale and legend*. The man-beast has the features of both human and animal forms, creating a horrifying, unnatural blend.

The actual details of the man-beast aspect vary from phenotype to phenotype, and even from individual to individual within a single phenotype. Any given individual will always look the same in his or her tertiary aspect, however.

In general, the body's overall form is humanoid, although there may be noticeable *differences in musculature*. The head closely resembles that of the animal, but with some disturbingly human features. The eyes are typically human in appearance, albeit frequently bloodshot and glaring—malignant intelligence seems to gleam within them. The entire body is usually covered in fur which is similar in color and texture to that of the natural animal. The pelt is typically thicker around the head and shoulders, especially at the back of the neck. Hands and feet usually sport elongated nails—not quite claws, but definitely reminiscent of them, and capable of *inflicting gruesome wounds*.

The tertiary form always has characteristics symbolic of the phenotypical animal. Thus, if the natural animal type is powerful, then the man-beast form based on it will also be powerful, as in the case of werebears for example. If the animal type is exceptionally agile, then the man-beast form will reflect this, too, and thus wererats are slender, fast-moving things. It is interesting to point out that this characteristic is based more on symbolism than anything else. If the animal

type is symbolic of some attribute, whether it actually possesses it, then the man-beast form will incorporate that attribute into its appearance.

True lycanthropes in man-beast aspect retain the ability to use language. Their voices are usually harsh and growling, however. The creatures also retain their full dexterity in man-beast form, and thus can manipulate their environment easily.

## Pathologic Lycanthropy

This is the dreaded disease described in hundreds of folktales, the cursed affliction that turns an innocent victim into a ravening beast. No race or sex is immune; it is a plight to which every man, woman, and child is susceptible.

Unlike true werebeasts, infected lycanthropes are not born with their affliction. Their condition more closely resembles a disease, in that it can be contracted and passed on. If the victim is very fortunate, it can even be cured, though *not* as any ordinary disease might be (see Chapter IV: The Pathologic Scourge for a more in-depth discussion of cures). This form of lycanthropy can be acquired through contact with the saliva, blood, or other secretion of *either* a true werebeast or another infected werebeast (and perhaps even that of a maledictive one).

Simply touching a werebeast or its blood will not transmit the contagion, however. Conventional wisdom—which I have found little evidence to discount—is that the infective agent must be insinuated into the bloodstream of a victim through some wound. (A handful of legends suggest that more intimate contact *may* convey the affliction, but this is beyond the range of my expertise.) The chance of a victim succumbing to the scourge seems to be proportional to the severity of the wounds inflicted.

As described in a subsequent chapter, infected lycanthropes are (initially at least)

# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

unaware of their affliction. When in nonhuman aspect, they have the mentality of an animal, a ravening beast. Thus, infected lycanthropes cannot have the same kind of distinct society enjoyed by true lycanthropes.

The offspring of a father who is an infected werebeast does not automatically suffer the same affliction. Remember, there is no genetic or heritable component to this form of the scourge. However, a child born to a mother who is infected with lycanthropy *will* be similarly blighted. This is because there is a sharing of blood between the mother and her unborn child. The offspring does not, strictly speaking, inherit the affliction; rather, he is infected before birth. This distinction makes little difference to the innocent child, except that a cure is still possible. If the infected mother is cured of her lycanthropy before the child comes to term, the poor offspring is still susceptible to the affliction. In my estimation, such a child must undergo its own cure if it would be rid of the scourge.

The chance of a character contracting lycanthropy in Ravenloft is 2% per hit point of damage suffered from a werebeast's attack. (On other planes, the chance is only 1% per hit point.) The damage must be inflicted by the "natural weapons" of the werebeast: teeth, claws, or (in human or demihuman aspect) unarmed attacks. If the werebeast uses a weapon, damage inflicted by that weapon is not taken into account when determining whether the victim is infected or not.

To minimize bookkeeping, DMs may decide to include damage inflicted by weapons in the total, on the rationale that such wounds decrease the victim's systemic resistance to infection. Note that infection is possible, under this rule, only if at least 1 point of damage has been inflicted by the lycanthrope's natural weapons.

## Transfiguration

While most true lycanthropes have three forms, an infected lycanthrope has only two: human or demihuman, and either animal or hybrid. Further, unlike the true lycanthrope, an infected werebeast has no control over its transfiguration. Each infected individual has a characteristic "trigger"—an event, circumstance, or set of circumstances that initiates the transfiguration. The archetypal trigger for werewolves is, of course, the full moon, but there are many more possibilities. Sometimes extreme emotion triggers the change—usually anger or fear, but sometimes (tragically) even love. In other individuals, the trigger is physical pain or proximity to violence. And for some particularly unfortunate victims, every sunset or sunrise may bring about the metamorphosis.

For an infected werebeast, the experience of transfiguration is usually one of tearing, rending agony. Such is the nature of the affliction, however, that the victim almost always suppresses all memories of this agonizing pain.

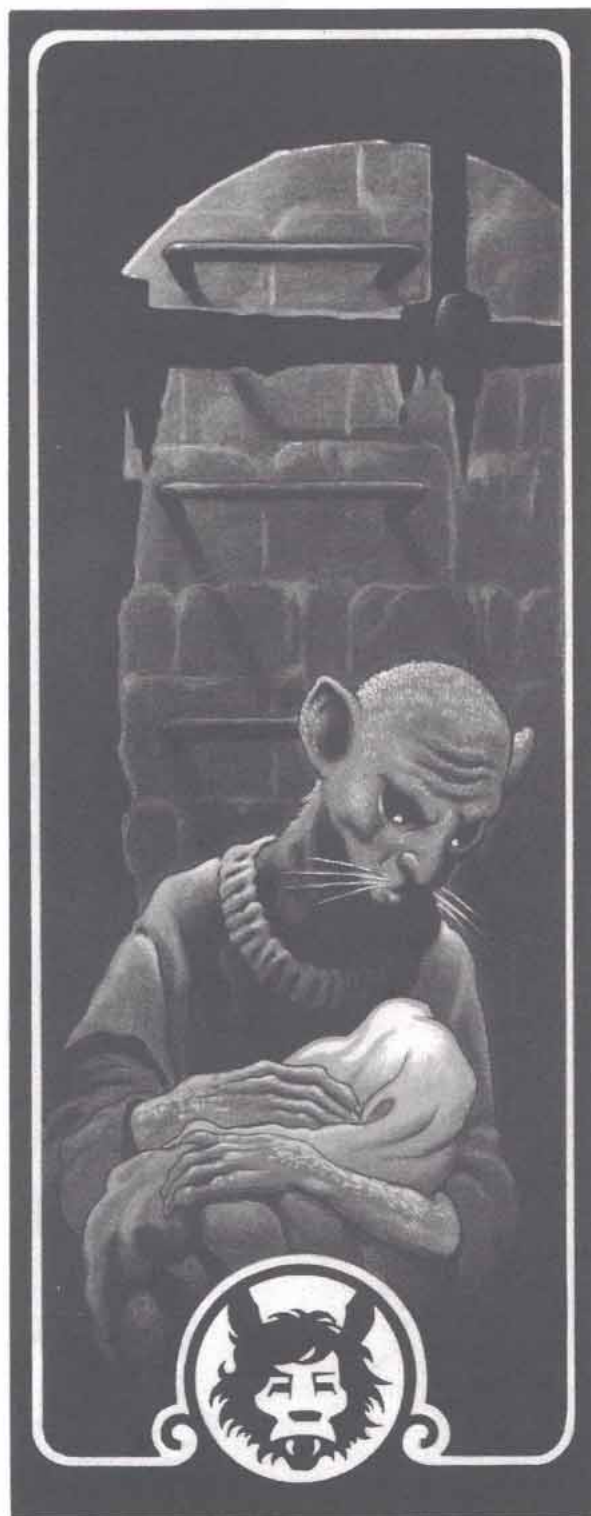
## Primary Aspect

This is, of course, the natural and original form of the infected victim. According to many folktales, the same signs by which a true lycanthrope can be identified—the extended forefinger, slightly bestial features, etc.—also mark the victim of infection. My own studies neither support nor contradict this contention; in truth, I have found little evidence on one side of the issue or the other.

Certainly, a few of the infected lycanthropes I have encountered have shown progressive development of bestial features. Yet I am not convinced that this progression was actually a result of the lycanthropy itself. Outside my study of lycanthropes, I have seen the appearance of an individual begin to change as his or her heart darkened through crime or sin.



## AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY



Perhaps that person's actions or desires attracted the attentions of some malign agency, which in turn caused the physical alteration. Or perhaps one's body can truly become a mirror of one's soul.

At any rate, if such physical changes can occur among those who are *not* lycanthropes, it seems quite possible that it could hold true for an infected lycanthrope as well. For this reason, I cannot embrace the widely held belief that infected lycanthropes will always, in time, display some physical manifestation of their curse. More likely, such a notion is no more than a feeble attempt at self-reassurance. And the disturbing truth is that one *cannot* directly detect the taint of lycanthropy until the transfiguration is actually triggered.

Fortunately for those who hunt the lycanthrope, other clues sometimes exist, pointing at the fearful truth. Most notably, infected lycanthropes often return to their primary aspect bearing wounds, bruises, or abrasions . . . which they cannot remember sustaining.

### Secondary Aspect

The secondary aspect of an infected lycanthrope can be either a normal animal or a man-beast similar to the true lycanthrope's tertiary form. Each infected individual has a characteristic secondary aspect and always assumes this form when the trigger condition occurs. There seems no way of predicting beforehand (that is, before the lycanthropic curse is acquired) what one's secondary aspect will be.

If the secondary aspect is an animal, it largely shares the features discussed for a true lycanthrope's animal form. Thus, it is larger than average for the animal type and frequently becomes the leader of a pack of like creatures. A man-beast secondary aspect also largely conforms to the description provided earlier.

The important difference between infected and true lycanthropes is that the former do *not*

## AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

retain their normal mentality when in their secondary aspect. Instead, they take on the *personality*—if that is the correct word—of a ravening, predatory animal. The beast within comes to the fore, taking control and suppressing all elements of the human character. The new personality incorporates elements of the phenotype's behavior. Thus, wereboars tend to be blindly aggressive, while wererats show more low cunning. In any event, the major elements of the secondary aspect's persona are aggression and hatred. The werebeast will kill anyone or anything it encounters, initially to feed, although it may still attack even if its appetite is totally sated.

It has frequently been stated and seems to be true that the preferred victims of an infected lycanthrope in secondary aspect are those individuals closest and most important to the werebeast when he is in human form. In other words, loved ones are the most likely to be harmed by the beast. This tragedy seems to confirm the old saw that love and hate are closely related emotions.

When he returns to his natural form, the werebeast rarely remembers any details of his actions while in his secondary aspect. If he *does* recall anything at all, it will have a hazy, indistinct, cast to it, much as a nightmare is vaguely recalled upon waking. In fact, many infected lycanthropes believe at least initially that such memories *are* nightmares. Only when they find that reality matches elements from their dreams might they realize what is happening, and not all individuals understand (or admit that they understand) even then. Humans have an almost infinite capacity for self-delusion.

### Maledictive Lycanthropy

**M**aledictive is the term that I have coined to describe those unfortunate victims who suffer from lycanthropy as the result of a curse. While powerful magics such as a *wish* might also induce lycanthropy, such



# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

maleficent enchantments are fortunately very rare. On the other hand, a curse that somehow summons the beast within is not so uncommon that it can be ignored.

In the lands with which I am familiar, maledictive lycanthropy is a very real risk of which all residents and visitors must be aware. While I have heard travelers speak of distant lands where curses generally are not strong enough to cause this affliction, I myself have never visited a place.

As has been discussed in other tomes, there are three general forms of curse, each of which may result in lycanthropy. These can cause a condition that is indistinguishable from the pathologic form of lycanthropy with one exception: the victim of such a curse may or may not be able to infect others with his contagion.

## Self-Induced Curses

This is an incidence of a dark desire, where an individual lusts for some power or boon, and that lust is acted on in a transport of terrible evil. In effect, this situation is a kind of cry for help, which some mysterious and malign agencies will sometimes grant, but always in a way that causes suffering and despair in the long run for the recipient.

I know the details of only one curse of this kind (which is not to say that other cases do not exist, of course). The curse's recipient was a man named Talbot, the servitor of a petty noble in Darkon. Talbot was a soft-spoken, sensitive man who seemed cowed by every circumstance, and particularly by the reactions of others. He appeared incapable of standing up for his own rights; an impotent sort who could not defend himself against the anger of others. If blamed for an act he had not committed, he typically hunched his shoulders, turning in on himself. In other words, he acted as though he were crippled with guilt for acts he had never performed.

In contrast, his master Lord Meritu was a verbal and emotional bully. Meritu verbally

abused Talbot at every opportunity, and while virtually any other person would eventually have responded with anger, Talbot simply endured the torment. The servitor seemed incapable of expressing the natural anger (and even hatred) that Meritu would certainly engender in another man.

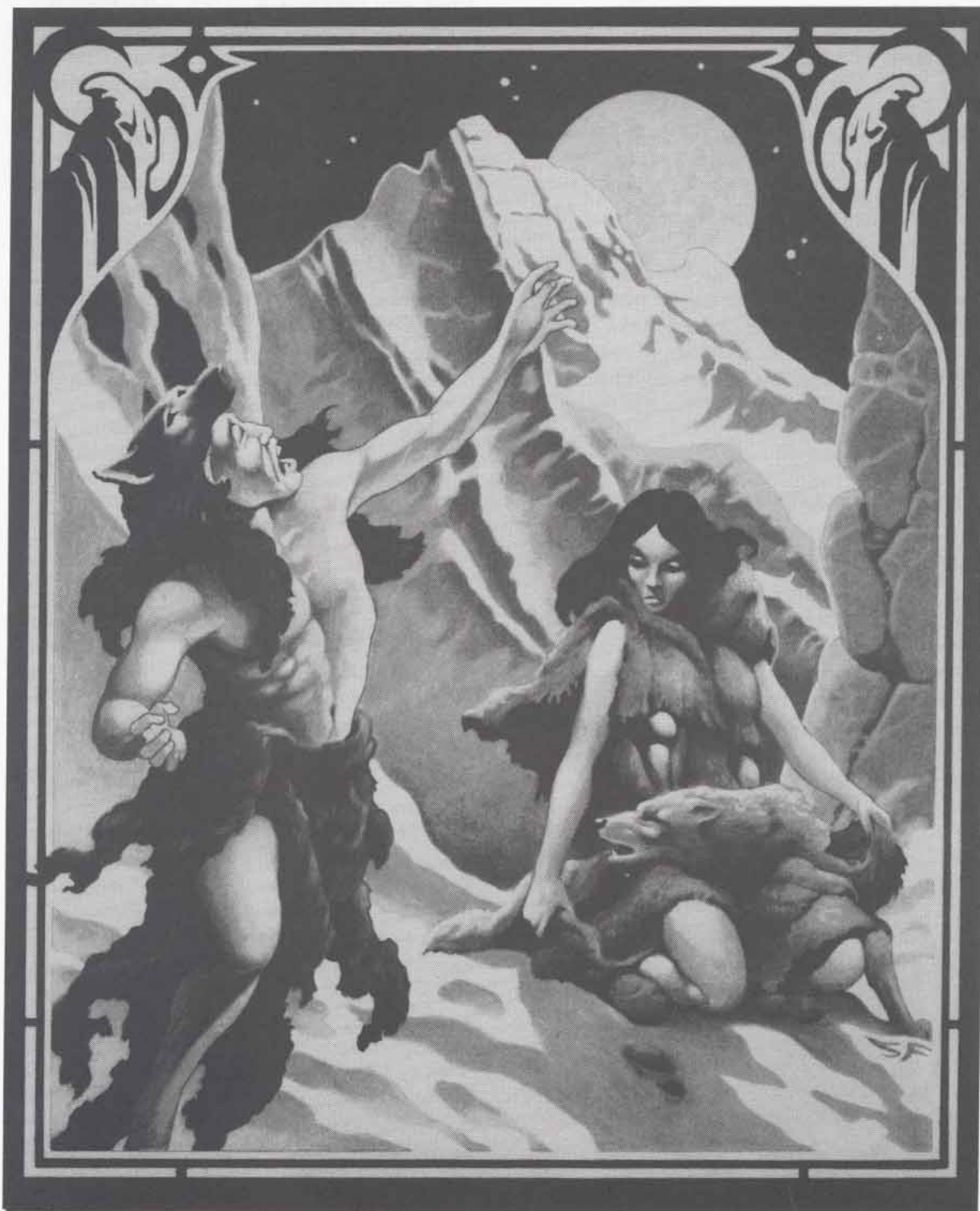
Eventually, a tremendous internal conflict arose between Talbot's self-effacing mien and his unquenched rage, which ultimately led to a tragic conclusion. Rather than facing the author of his misfortune, Meritu himself, Talbot vented his fury upon Meritu's young children. In short, Talbot poisoned these innocents and then ran off to the countryside.

Although Talbot never expressed it, his actions were the result of a desire to express his indignant wrath. Apparently some dark agency responded to this unspoken cry for help by turning Talbot into an infected lycanthrope. He became a wererat, in fact, with sunset as the trigger of his transfiguration. Now, every evening when the sun goes down, Talbot is finally able to express the rage within him. Unfortunately, however, he has no control over who becomes the victim of this rage. . . .

## Curses of Vengeance

The fact that infected lycanthropes frequently turn on those they love makes this affliction the logical result of a curse of vengeance. Although I have yet to personally encounter such a case, I have heard of almost a dozen incidents, all of which follow similar lines: An individual kills or seriously harms the loved ones of another, and in a transport of hatred this other cries out for a curse to fall upon the killer. The killer, in a form of divine justice perhaps, is then blighted with lycanthropy. In all of those cases, among the first victims of the new werebeast were his or her family or loved ones. However, in three rather unusual episodes, the person who brought down the curse eventually fell victim to the werebeast as well; such is the ironic justice of curses.

# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY



# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

## Magical Curses

Magics such as a *wish* spell or the more specific *divine curse* and *ancient curse* spells also can inflict lycanthropy. As many spellcasters know, the intent of a *wish* is frequently perverted in some dire manner. Thus, when a *wish* causes lycanthropy, it is quite likely that this outcome was not what the caster intended.

Neither the *divine curse* nor the *ancient curse* spell suffers the same risk of perversion of intent. However, for the curse to take effect, the casting priest's deity must approve it. Only the most malignant deities would countenance the infliction of lycanthropy on anyone.

## Removing the Curse

Most curses of vengeance and magical curses include some kind of escape clause. If the action in this clause is performed, the victim is freed of the taint of lycanthropy. This is not necessarily the case for others who have contracted the dreaded affliction from the original curse victim. The fate of these secondary victims depends in large part upon the details of the original curse. Their own affliction may end the moment the curse is

lifted from the original victim. If the original curse is particularly powerful, however, this may not happen. Once the original victim is free of the curse, all secondary victims can potentially be cured, just as if the original source of the affection had been slain.

## Other Characteristics

Most maledictive lycanthropes resemble infected lycanthropes in all particulars. Otherwise, no set of characteristics is typical of the maledictive class; each curse can be unique. For that reason, and because maledictive lycanthropes are comparatively rare, I shall confine my discussions in subsequent chapters to heritable and pathologic lycanthropy.

## Shapechangers and Lycanthropes

**L**ycanthropes are men and women who assume the shape of animals. They are not to be confused with other shapechangers such as wolfweres and jackalweres, which are animals that can masquerade as men and women. Despite their superficial likenesses, both types of creatures are profoundly different. All of the discussions in this volume concern lycanthropes.

Animalistic shapechangers do enjoy some magical benefits similar to those shown by lycanthropes. For example, jackalweres are harmed only by enchanted weapons or by those forged from cold iron. They also have the ability to change at will between three (or, in some rare cases, only two) aspects. Surely, some sages argue, this makes them kin to werebeasts.

Not so, I suspect. The major distinction is that shapechangers pass on no contagion to victims of their attacks. It is impossible to contract lycanthropy from a jackalwere, and that is the vital difference between the creatures.



# AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

I believe that there might, once, have been some kinship between lycanthropes and other shapechangers. Many centuries ago, it may be that a union between a lycanthrope in animal aspect and a normal animal gave rise to the beastweres. Unfortunately, there are few means to test and validate my hypothesis.

## Origins of Lycanthropy

**H**ow did the blight of lycanthropy first come into the world? Many sages and scholars have addressed this problem. And many more legends—most quite literally incredible—have proposed more or less far-fetched answers.

One theory, embraced by many true lycanthropes, is that the creatures naturally evolved from normal, nonlycanthropic humans and demihumans. The symbolism incorporated into this view is compelling, if not totally convincing. First came the beast, in the form of proto-humanity, the precursors from which humankind arose. Then came humanity itself, in which the beast still exists, yet is suppressed and driven deep into the subconscious. And finally comes the lycanthrope, in which the beast and the socialized human are united in a balanced form. The beast is no longer denied or suppressed; instead, it is accepted, welcomed, cherished . . . *utilized*. Instead of conflicting duality, there is now unity. How can this *not* be considered progress and evolution, the proponents of this idea argue.

Then there are scholars, many of a theological background, who argue very much the opposite. Lycanthropes are the result of *devolution*, these sages propose. If progressing from animal to socialized human was evolution, how could releasing the suppressed beast be anything but regression?

I find myself unable to fully accept either proposition. The latter position argues from ethics and morals, and hence is somewhat suspect. Not that I discount morals and ethics—quite the opposite, I consider them to

*The beast is loose. It prowls the night around my village. At first it fed only on livestock, but now its tastes have—matured. In the past fortnight, full seven of my friends and neighbors have fallen to the beast, their throats torn out by its ripping teeth.*

*And yet, the nighttime landscape is not the only place the beast prowls. It haunts the internal landscape of my dreams as well. Is there some mental link between me and this fell creature? I must accept that there is, since my dreams seem to echo with details of the foul murders—details I could not know were our minds not somehow linked.*

*Yes, that must be the answer. . .*

—Anonymous

be of overreaching importance. Yet morals and ethics are based on individual choice. They are not laws of nature, and the path from unethical or amoral action to what we consider civilized behavior is not a natural or pre-ordained progression.

The former position also lacks empirical substance. In my view of evolution, the next logical step for humanity would be a super-race, in which the beast is not present at all.

## The Parasitic Theory

After considering the facts and speculations, I hold that true lycanthropy, that form which is genetically heritable, arose originally as an

## AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY



infection similar to the pathologic lycanthropy we see in the world today.

I believe that the infective agent involved was a magically active parasite—perhaps akin to the tiny, unseen entities to which some sages attribute the spread of disease. I imagine, although I have little enough evidence for my position, that this parasite arose naturally, although perhaps in a time and place where the magical influx was somehow greater. It infected humans and demihumans alike, causing behavioral symptoms similar to those of hydrophobia, or rabies, which in effect unchained the beast within its victims. Yet since it was also magically active, it had other, more pervasive effects. In the manner of sympathetic magic, as the beast was released from within the victim, so did his body alter to reflect his symbolic nature.

At first I imagine that the destruction and suffering caused by those initial victims was great in the extreme, for in the first flush of its rage the beast cares little for others. In its earliest form, I believe that the infective agent proved to be a generally unsuccessful parasite, in that it caused the death of its hosts—not in

the way of most other diseases, where sickness causes systemic damage that eventually proves fatal. Rather, the parasite led to death by forcing those around the victim to slay him in defense of their own lives.

Yet parasites adapt, given time. The lycanthropy agent probably did so, possibly by lessening the intensity of the bestial rages it caused. It allowed its victims to retain some of their intelligence, or perhaps mere animal cunning. At this point, I imagine that the victims of the parasite began to form small communities of their own, analogous to wolf packs or hunting groups.

This allowed the infectious agent to undergo its most significant and pernicious adaptation. Up to this point, I envision that the parasite was passed on in much the same way as today's pathologic lycanthropy: through the saliva or perhaps the perspiration or other secretions of a lycanthrope, insinuated into the bloodstream of a victim. Now, however, a new vector of infection presented itself. The infected victims were able to breed.

Initially, the blight of lycanthropy was passed on from mother to offspring, due to the mixing of blood in the womb. In essence, progeny of lycanthrope parents were infected before birth by this time.

This, too, changed with time, or so I believe. Eventually the infective agent, the parasite, became incorporated into its victims (now its hosts). Eventually it became incapable of existing in its true form, separate from the host. In essence, it became a natural, innate characteristic of its hosts, passed on from generation to generation, now according to the laws and patterns of heredity and not of infection, much as are hair color and other attributes.

At this point, I believe that the various phenotypes of true werebeasts split off from the human and demihuman races. Werebeasts, regardless of their ability to assume human or demihuman form, are *not* human or demihuman. They have become totally distinct

## AN OVERVIEW OF LYCANTHROPY

Some important distinctions can be drawn between lycanthropes that exist on the Prime Material Plane and those that are born or infected specifically in Ravenloft. First, the victim of a Prime Material lycanthrope has various options by which he or she might avoid the affliction. As described in Volume One of the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™*, if the victim eats belladonna within an hour of the attack, there's a 25% chance that this will cure the affliction (or, more precisely, stop it from occurring in the first place). This possibility of reprieve isn't available to victims of Ravenloft werebeasts. Victims of such a monster's attack can certainly eat belladonna (and suffer the 1d4 days of incapacitation that this poison inflicts), but there's exactly *zero* chance that it will prevent the onset of lycanthropy, should the die roll (2% per point of damage suffered) indicate infection. The PCs don't have to realize this, of course.

Furthermore, *curing* lycanthropy is considerably easier outside Ravenloft. Outside the demiplane of dread, all that's required is the casting of a *remove curse* on the night of a full moon (or on the night preceding or following a full moon). If the infected character makes a successful save vs. polymorph, the curse is broken.

Not so within Ravenloft. The process is detailed in Chapter V of the *RAVENLOFT® Realm of Terror* boxed set. Note that the original source of the contagion, the true lycanthrope that infected the victim or started the chain of contagion, must first be destroyed. If that creature is not destroyed, *no* cure of its victims (or its victims' victims) is possible.

Furthermore, there's more variability among Ravenloft werebeasts. Not all lycanthropes are triggered by the full moon, and not all are vulnerable to silver. Certainly each infected lycanthrope has a trigger, and each werebeast (regardless of classification) has a nonmagical vulnerability. However, upon the demiplane of dread it's much harder to predict what these elements are.

Finally, infected lycanthropes in Ravenloft are much more likely to choose friends and loved ones as their victims. Outside the demiplane, werebeasts target either personal friends or enemies, making no distinction between the two. (As stated in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*, all that matters is the strength of the love—or hate—binding werebeast and victim.) Such is the dark, horrifying nature of Ravenloft that friends, family, and lovers are much more likely to suffer.

racers. Some taxonomists consider them as distinct species, but I do not fully share this approach. True werebeasts *can* interbreed with humans and demihumans, producing fertile progeny, which implies that they are not distinct species after all.

Such is my belief, at least. It seems to me very unlikely that the truth of this theory will

ever be determined. Not even the deities have been of assistance; in fact, they have been singularly unforthcoming when I have questioned them via commissioned spells.

In practice, of course, it hardly matters how lycanthropy first arose. The fact that it exists, and that it remains quite disturbingly prevalent, is sufficient for most people.



## Chapter II: A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



*I never knew my natural parents. My guardians never spoke of them, never seemed to know anything about them, never even showed any curiosity. Thus my own curiosity was never satisfied. I dreamed—as most adoptive children do—that my birth parents were a great lord and lady, perhaps a king and queen. I dreamed that they would one day find me, take me away from my humdrum life, and anoint me as prince of a distant land.*

*I always thought I was different from the other children around me. I was faster, stronger, and fiercer sometimes. I felt more of a kinship with the village dogs,*

*particularly the mayor's vicious hunting dogs, than I did with human children.*

*Even then, at the age of ten, I had the inescapable belief that my mysterious heritage would set me apart from those around me. Three years later, with the onset of puberty, I realized I was right.*

*How I wish that I had been wrong. . . .*

—Anonymous

### Werebeast Phenotypes

**W**erebeasts come in a staggering number of phenotypes, each distinguished by its animal form. During my travels, I have personally encountered evidence of a baker's dozen, from the common werewolf to the enigmatic wereraven. If that were not enough, I have heard credible rumors of roughly another half-dozen varieties. This does not include the scores of more-or-less fantastical tales which describe everything from werefrogs to were-elephants.

I have determined certain guidelines as to what animal forms are viable. In my experience, there is only one strict prohibition:

a lycanthrope *never* has a pure herbivore (plant-eater) as its animal aspect. To my knowledge, this prohibition has never been broken, and anyone who claims to have encountered a wererabbit or a werecow has almost certainly been hallucinating, perhaps after an extended visit to the local tavern.

For the vast majority of lycanthropes, the beast within is a carnivore, a creature that subsists on the flesh of other animals. This category includes werewolves, weretigers, werejackals, and the like. Though less common, certain lycanthropes do assume the form of omnivores, creatures whose diet comprises both plants and animal flesh. Examples include werebears and wererats.

Whatever their diet, the majority of animal aspects are mammals—furred, warm-blooded, air-breathing, and viviparous. This is not a hard and fast rule, however. Several *nonmammalian* creatures are worthy of note, including the wereraven, the weresnake, the werecrocodile, and the dreaded wereshark.

For the record, I have personally encountered lycanthropes with the following animal forms: wolf, bat, boar, rat, tiger, badger, bear, fox, shark, crocodile, raven, seal, and jackal. Other phenotypes which I believe to exist, although I have not seen them myself, include cats, snakes, coyotes, lions, jaguars, walruses, and—may the gods help those who sail the seas—killer whales!

Whatever their form or phenotype, werebeasts in Ravenloft share a common ability: they can see in the dark as well as any character with infravision. Further, when the moon is full, werebeasts can see as well as they do in broad daylight.

### Vulnerabilities

**L**ycanthropes of all types are daunting foes. Magical weapons [of +1 or better enchantment] can strike them and inflict damage normally, but most other weapons are

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

useless against a lycanthrope in its animal or man-beast form; the wounds caused by a non-enchanted weapon heal almost instantaneously.

When in human form, an infected lycanthrope is as vulnerable to attack as any normal man or woman. Not so for the true lycanthrope. In my experience, a true lycanthrope in human form may *appear* to sustain a wound from an ordinary weapon, but in reality suffers no ill or lasting effects. The apparent wound fades quickly, sometimes in an hour or so, but the change is not instantaneous. In this way true lycanthropes can sustain a ruse of being normal humans. (Perhaps this is for the best. I shudder to imagine the ignorant hunter who might stab one innocent after another, looking for the one who fails to bleed profusely.)

Yet the situation for a would-be hunter of lycanthropes is far from hopeless. Every werebeast has at least one nonmagical vulnerability, one item or substance which can bring about its death. If common lore is to be believed, no lycanthrope is immune to silver weapons. While that may be true in some mythical or distant realm, it is not true in any land I have visited. Rather, the vulnerability varies from phenotype to phenotype—and, less frequently, from individual to individual within a *single* phenotype. The werebeast hunter who relies solely on a silver weapon will inevitably face his own grisly death, or worse.

Most phenotypes are susceptible to some herbal concoction or naturally occurring element (even those who *can* be harmed by silver weapons). While some of these compounds are poisonous to humans, their effectiveness against specific lycanthropes is unmatched. The slightest trace of the appropriate compound, whether ingested or insinuated into a wound, may be enough to slay a susceptible werebeast instantly. Most lycanthropes find the smell of their chemical nemesis distasteful, although this reaction is not so strong that an individual cannot suppress it if circumstances so warrant.

A werebeast has a 75% chance of detecting any trace of its chemical nemesis in its food. If a piercing weapon is coated with this substance and subsequently wounds the creature, the beast is allowed a save vs. poison to avoid the fatal effects of the substance.

Below I have set out what I have managed to learn about the vulnerabilities of different phenotypes. (While I recognize that other werebeasts exist, I have not been able to gain such information about them.) Note that infected lycanthropes share the same vulnerabilities as the creature who infected them. Also note that none of my statements below is categorical; it would be unwise to bet one's life on this information.

**Werebat:** The vast majority of werewolves are vulnerable to weapons made of silver, as are werewolves. One rationale I have heard put forward is that the color and nature of silver represents the full moon, which is a frequent trigger for lycanthropes. (Since not all lycanthropes have this as their trigger, I am not totally convinced of this, but I have nothing better to propose.) Also note that many werewolves are vulnerable to skullcap.

**Werebadger:** I have encountered only a few of these creatures, so I must emphasize that my experiences may not be representative of an entire phenotype. However, those I battled proved vulnerable to silver weapons. Upon the advice of a Vistana (which I followed only with the greatest reluctance), I tricked one werebadger into ingesting poppy seeds. This substance proved fatal.

**Werebear:** Most werebears are vulnerable to a cold-forged weapon, provided the weapon is made of the purest iron. The symbolic rationale for this vulnerability seems to be that cold-forging iron requires great physical force, a characteristic that also applies to werebears. In addition, many werebears are susceptible to belladonna, or "deadly nightshade."

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

(Regarding cold-forged iron: According to the armorers I've consulted, most ordinary weapons are made of low-grade steel. Pure iron is rarely used, for it is softer than steel, it takes less of an edge, and it is less resilient. Thus, a would-be hunter desiring a cold-iron blade must commission a blacksmith to create it. Furthermore, most weapons are forged—or beaten into shape—when the metal is red-hot and pliable. In contrast, cold-forged weapons cannot be heated. The iron must be beaten into shape while it is cold. Obviously, this is a much more difficult procedure.)

**Wereboar:** In general, wereboars are vulnerable to spears made of sharpened oak. The entire spear must be free of any metal or stone reinforcement—a metal spear point renders the weapon ineffective. Natural boars are sylvan creatures, and they are most frequently hunted with spears (thus the expression, “bleeding like a stuck pig”). This seems to be the symbolism for this



vulnerability. As for an herbal bane, many wereboars are susceptible to camphor.

**Werecocodile:** Perhaps because they are relatively primitive creatures, werecocodiles are vulnerable to primitive weapons. The majority can be struck normally by cutting, piercing, or bludgeoning weapons made of flint. Flint weapons may have wooden or other handles, so long as the actual cutting edge, piercing point, or place of impact is unreinforced flint. Mandrake appears to be the herbal nemesis of most werecocodiles, though I am uncertain whether any singular part of the plant is responsible.

**Werefox:** Surprisingly, most werefoxes are vulnerable to bludgeoning or piercing weapons formed from the bones of any canine creature (dogs, coyotes, wolves, or jackals). I am intrigued by the possibility that this is a form of symbolic magic, since fox hunts using dogs to chase and kill the prey are common in several regions I have visited. In addition to the weapons described, many werefoxes seem vulnerable to juniper berries.

**Werejackal:** Weapons made of beaten copper are effective against most werejackals. This soft metal is rarely used for normal blades, so copper weapons must be custom-made. I do not understand the symbolism of this vulnerability. As for other banes, some werejackals seem extremely vulnerable to fennel.

**Wererat:** These fell creatures show the greatest variation in their vulnerability. Some are susceptible to silver weapons, others to weapons of cold iron, still others to implements of wood or stone. This variability makes these, perhaps the least powerful of werebeasts, quite difficult to destroy. They show similar variability with regard to chemical susceptibilities. There is no single chemical which can be depended upon to harm any significant proportion of wererats.

**Wereraven:** Most of these creatures are vulnerable to weapons made of silver, possibly for the same reasons described for werebats. If these creatures have an herbal bane, I have not

# A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

**Table I: Summary of Vulnerabilities**

Creature	Weapon Vulnerability	Chemical Susceptibility
Werebat	Silver (piercing)	Skullcap
Werebadger	Silver	Poppy seed oil
Werebear	Cold-forged iron	Belladonna
Wereboar	Oaken spear	Camphor
Werecocodile	Flint	Mandrake
Werefox	Canine bone	Juniper berry
Werejackal	Copper	Fennel
Wererat	Varied	Varied
Wereraven	Silver	Unknown
Wereseal	Whalebone, whale tooth	Amaranth
Wereshark	Petrified wood or silver	Mangrove
Weretiger	Obsidian	Ginseng
Werewolf	Silver	Wolfsbane (aconite)

**Table II: Weapon Effects**

1d10 Roll*	Weapon Type	Consequences
1	Cold-forged iron	-1 to hit
2	Wood (choose a specific type)	-1 to hit, -1 to damage
3	Flint	Weapon breaks on attack roll of a natural "1" (piercing or cutting weapon only; -2 to hit; -1 penalty to damage)
4	Bone	-1 to damage (bludgeoning weapon); weapon breaks on attack roll of natural "1" (piercing weapon)
5	Copper	-2 to hit, -1 to damage
6	Bronze	None
7	Lead	Bludgeoning weapons only
8	Silver	None
9	Obsidian	Cutting weapons only
10	Gold	-3 to hit

\* To determine a new werebeast's vulnerability at random, roll 1d10.

The special weapons used to combat lycanthropes present their own set of difficulties. For example, characters who attack with cold-iron weapons incur a -1 attack roll penalty. That's because cold iron can't hold an edge as well as steel. Copper is even softer, increasing the attack roll penalty to -2 and carrying a -1 penalty to damage. Since these weapons are custom-made, their cost is whatever the blacksmith wishes to charge (i.e., "as much as the market will bear").

Spears or other piercing weapons made of pure wood, without metal or stone tips or reinforcement, have an attack roll penalty of -1. Such weapons also carry a -1 penalty to damage.

Flint weapons have fragile edges and points. They carry a -2 attack roll penalty and a -1 penalty to damage. Furthermore, each time a character uses a piercing or cutting weapon of flint, a natural 1 on the attack roll means the weapon has broken, and is useless. This rule does not apply to bludgeoning weapons, however.

Bones are lighter than the materials normally used for bludgeoning weapons. Large bones can serve as clubs, but they carry a -1 penalty to damage. Bones also can be sharpened and used as piercing weapons. They're brittle, however, and will break if the player rolls a natural 1 on the attack roll.

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



discovered it; wereravens do not appear susceptible to any chemical poison.

**Wereseal (Seawolves):** Weapons made from the bones or teeth of whales are particularly efficacious against most wereseals, since carnivorous whales are among the natural enemies of this animal aspect. In addition, these fell creatures are usually susceptible to amaranth.

**Wereshark:** The majority—but not a *large* majority—of weresharks are vulnerable to silver weapons. Most others are susceptible to weapons made of two materials: petrified wood (whether the petrification occurs naturally through age or magical intervention) and flint. (Like werecrocodiles, weresharks are primitive creatures, and this is reflected in their vulnerabilities.) I know only of one herbal nemesis for weresharks: mangrove leaves. Unfortunately, it does not appear to be equally effective against all members of this phenotype.

**Weretiger:** Weretigers are frequently vulnerable to cutting and piercing weapons

made from obsidian, a resilient volcanic glass which can take a lethal edge. If there is a symbolic reason for this vulnerability, I do not know it. In addition, many weretigers are said to be susceptible to ginseng.

**Werewolf:** Most—but not all—werewolves are vulnerable to weapons made of silver. Solid silver is not required; even a weapon coated with a thin layer of this metal will usually suffice. In addition, some werewolves are highly susceptible to wolfsbane, also known as aconite, a highly toxic relative of horseradish.

### The Transfiguration

**T**he transfiguration is the process by which lycanthropes change from one form (or aspect) to another. It takes approximately one minute, during which time the creature is unable to take any action whatsoever. It cannot move, attack, or defend. It *is* aware of its surroundings, however, and can act appropriately the instant the transfiguration ends.

During the round in which it transfigures, a werebeast loses any Dexterity bonus to its AC. Furthermore, it cannot use a shield. Characters who attack a transfiguring werebeast gain a +2 bonus “to hit.”

The sight of a werebeast undergoing the transfiguration—in either “direction”—is so dreadful that anyone witnessing it is subject to a horror check. If the creature is transfiguring into a particularly powerful beast or man-beast form, a fear check might also be required, at the DM’s discretion.

During the transfiguration, the creature’s body is racked with convulsions as its skeletal structure and musculature shift into their new orientations. Observers can see the bones and muscles shifting around under the skin, a process which is accompanied by a wet, tearing sound. For true lycanthropes, the transfiguration usually is an experience of

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

transcendent joy. For infected lycanthropes, however, it is one of mortal agony. Because of this, true lycanthropes are quite likely to hold on to any objects or equipment they happen to be carrying during the transfiguration while infected lycanthropes are more likely to drop whatever they hold.

Infected lycanthropes must save vs. death to avoid dropping anything they are carrying.

### Clothing and Armor

While the transfiguration changes the form of a werebeast's body, it obviously does not transform the creature's clothing or equipment. In most cases, the man-beast form is larger and more heavily muscled than the human aspect. Depending on the particular phenotype, the metamorphosis from human to animal form may involve *either* an increase or decrease in overall size. For example, a wererat's animal aspect is smaller than man-sized, while a werebear's is larger. This size differential will determine what effect the transfiguration has on any clothing or armor worn by the creature.

If the transfiguration decreases the creature's overall size, then clothing and equipment pose little inconvenience. Elaborate clothing or a complex suit of armor might momentarily limit a much smaller aspect's freedom of movement—a two-foot-long rat is almost caged in a suit of plate mail, for example—but in all but the rarest instances, the werebeast can quickly free itself from such impediments. [At the DM's option, this may take an additional round.]

But what if the new aspect—the one into which the creature is transfiguring—is *larger* than the one that donned the accoutrements? With all but the most robust and confining clothing, there is little problem. The force with which the skeletal and muscular changes occur is almost always sufficient to burst any clothing at the seams. This happens so fast that the

creature is not discommoded, since the torn fragments simply fall away.

Such is not the case with all armor, however. Suits of armor are obviously more robust than normal clothing; they are designed to withstand abuse as well as to resist being torn away. So resilient are most types of armor that they can cause significant harm to a werebeast unwise enough—or unlucky enough—to change into a larger aspect while wearing them. Generally speaking, the more protection a suit of armor provides, the more damage it can inflict on the werebeast wearing it.

Calculations for constriction damage caused by armor are optional. Damage occurs during the round in which the transfiguration takes place. (Note that this damage is *not* healed during the transfiguration.) At the end of that round, the armor falls away; straps and the like tear, or the armor bursts asunder at the seams. There is no saving throw against this damage.

Table III: Constriction Damage

Armor Type	Damage (hp)
Leather/padded	0 or 1
Studded leather/ring mail	1d2
Scale mail	1d3
Chain mail	1d4
Splint/banded mail	1d3 + 1
Plate mail	1d4 + 1

When a werebeast changes back to human form, it will almost invariably be naked. The experience of coming to himself, naked, bruised, and in a strange place, is often the first clue to an infected lycanthrope of his affliction.

### Damage and Healing

The transfiguration is a process by which the entire body modifies itself to conform to a different pattern or standard. Since this

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



standard describes an unwounded, whole body, it should come as no surprise that the transfiguration can effectively cause cuts and contusions to vanish. Whenever a lycanthrope changes form, it heals a significant proportion of any wounds it has suffered in its previous aspect. In other words, if a wererat in rat form suffers a laceration, it may be able to heal that wound, at least in part, simply by changing to human aspect.

I have heard tell that lycanthropes in certain distant and mysterious lands can heal by transfiguration only that damage which they suffered while in animal aspect, in other words, by changing from animal to human form. Within the lands with which I am familiar, however, *any* transfiguration from any aspect to any other will have this salutary effect. Note that lycanthropes will be cautious when it comes to transfiguring while in combat, even if they could benefit from healing, because the process briefly leaves them at the mercy of their foes.

### Memory Loss and Retention

True lycanthropes suffer no memory loss due to the transfiguration. Their personalities are unchanged and their memories unaltered, regardless of what aspect they currently hold.

Each time an infected lycanthrope returns to human form, it heals 10% to 60% (1d6 × 10%) of any damage it has suffered *since its last transfiguration*. The same rule applies to true lycanthropes when they assume an animal or man-beast form. DMs who wish to avoid a little extra bookkeeping may rule that the transfiguration heals 10% to 60% of any outstanding damage, without regard to when it was inflicted.

Note that reversion to human form upon death is not the same as transfiguration, and hit points are not regenerated when this occurs.

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

As mentioned earlier, they are even totally aware of their surroundings *during* the transfiguration itself. Would-be werebeast-slayers who count on a moment of disorientation or shock immediately after their foe's transfiguration are bound to be sorely disappointed.

The situation with infected lycanthropes is more complex. As I have discussed previously, an infected lycanthrope in human form will remember his actions in secondary aspect vaguely at best. Those memories will have the surreal, indistinct characteristics of a nightmare incompletely recalled upon waking. Without other, more tangible clues such as inexplicable wounds, few victims of the dread affliction will believe those memories are anything *but* nightmares.

Further, even the transformation itself cannot be clearly recalled. For the present purposes, one should consider an infected lycanthrope to be secondary aspect from the moment the first transfiguration starts to the instant the second one ends. Thus, he will not remember clearly the torment of shifting to animal form or back again . . . although faint echoes of these agonies might be part of his "nightmares."

For infected lycanthropes, memory loss is unidirectional. In other words, a werebeast in human form will not recall what he has done as an animal. However, while the werebeast is in animal form, he *will* remember virtually everything that he knows in human form, though bloodlust colors his attitudes and sensibilities. This is how an infected werebeast successfully hunts down loved ones and enemies alike; it recalls all pertinent facts about its prey. Such knowledge includes any precautions, tricks, and traps that the prospective target may have mentioned to the marauder while the latter was in human aspect. Further, the ravaging beast recalls any precautions that he himself might have taken while in human aspect whether or not the human suspected that his own dark side was a thing to be feared.

I recall one particularly fateful case in Darkon. Unbeknownst to anyone, including

herself, a well-known and well-loved merchant was an infected wererat. When a mysterious, marauding beast started to slay this merchant's closest friends and associates, the survivors asked for her aid in protecting them. She helped them design cunning tricks and traps that should, by all rights, have kept even the shrewdest intruder out of their homes. Then the marauder penetrated these security precautions as though it knew everything about them . . . which of course it did.

Eventually, the merchant began to suspect the truth. So she set snares and traps around the periphery of her own home, hoping to trap herself while in the form of the beast as she left the building for her nightly rampage. Although a cunning ploy, this also failed, since her beast form remembered all of the precautions she had taken while in human aspect. Eventually she had no choice but to voice her suspicions to her neighbors and ask them to lock her up at night. Fortunately for all concerned, that was when I came upon the scene. After having tracked down the true wererat that originally infected the woman, I was able to arrange for her cure.

### Effects on Character Skills

Some victims of pathologic lycanthropy have learned specific skills before they contracted the dread affliction. For example, they may have acquired prodigious weapon skills. Or they may have learned how to wield the powers of magic. How does the transfiguration affect these skills?

As long as a victim of pathologic lycanthropy is in human form, the affliction has little effect on his skills. He can wield his sword or cast his spells as effectively as he did before he acquired the infection.

While I have heard that certain specific attributes are altered, this seems to be rare. For example, those skilled woodsmen known to some as "rangers" frequently show unusual degrees of animal empathy, being able to calm wild beasts with their very presence. This



## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

ability may evaporate if the ranger is infected with lycanthropy.

Priests of the more beneficent gods may find that their deities become somewhat unresponsive. Once the lycanthropy has started to manifest itself—that is, once the individual has transfigured for the first time—a priest may find himself unable to acquire and use the more potent types of clerical magic. I suspect that this arises more from the actions of the person while in secondary aspect than from the simple fact of his infection, however. Any priest who acts against the tenets of his faith will be punished, and the actions of a transfigured lycanthrope will almost certainly be against the tenets of all but the most bloodthirsty religions. Certain deities, especially those who follow the precepts of forgiveness, might not exact such penalties on their priests. I do not know this for sure, however.

The DM decides whether or not a deity withholds spells from an infected priest as punishment for the actions of the beast within.

What, then, about skills acquired through training and experience? Does an infected lycanthrope retain these special abilities even when he becomes the beast?

In general, the answer is no. In animal aspect, a lycanthrope's ability to attack and to defend itself are those of the aspect itself. It matters not whether the victim is, in human form, a sickly peasant or the mightiest warrior in the world. In animal aspect, both of these folk have the same physical strength and combat skill (assuming both are transformed into the same beast, of course).

An infected lycanthrope does not retain its human mentality when in animal aspect. While knowledge of facts is retained, all skills depending on mental outlook and philosophy are lost with the transfiguration. Thus, the animal aspect of a spellcaster *cannot* wield the powers of magic.

As noted, memory *is* maintained in animal aspect, albeit possibly in a modified form. (Otherwise the beast would not be able to evade traps set by itself in human form, and could not track down its victims using knowledge of their habits and whereabouts.) It thus seems logical to me that skills based largely on *factual* knowledge will be maintained in animal aspect. For example, if a woman skilled in heraldry becomes infected with the scourge, she will retain her ability to recognize coats of arms even while in animal form.

In general, all class-related skills will be lost on transition to animal form—a rogue's lock-picking and climbing skills, for example, or a warrior's combat skills. As stated in the original RAVENLOFT® rules set, an infected lycanthrope in animal form has the abilities and immunities of the werebeast that infected him. This means his THAC0, AC, damage, saving throws, hit points, and special attacks and defenses are those of the werebeast.

It's up to individual DMs as to which nonweapon proficiencies a lycanthrope retains in animal form. In general, active skills—those that require some degree of dexterity—are lost, while passive skills involving knowledge and perception are retained.

What about true lycanthropes? Since they were born as werebeasts and surely will die as such, they have no "previous skills" to lose. The issue of what special skills a werebeast can acquire is discussed in Chapter III.

### Diet

Infected and true lycanthropes differ significantly in their eating habits and dietary requirements. Thus, I shall deal with each type of lycanthrope separately.

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



# A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

## Infected Lycanthropes

While in human aspect, victims of pathologic lycanthropy experience no significant change in their need for food; it remains just as it was before they contracted the contagion. Although their *preferences* alter somewhat, leaning more toward rare cuts of meat, they can still subsist on normal diets, and can extract sustenance from fruits and vegetables.

As soon as infected lycanthropes assume the shape of a beast, however, things are very different. The creatures will immediately try to eat their fill of fresh, raw flesh. The amount required varies by phenotype and matches the requirements set out for true lycanthropes below. (For example, when an infected werewolf assumes its animal form, it will start hunting for 20 pounds of fresh meat.) Very few infected lycanthropes maintain their secondary aspect for more than eight to twelve hours, however, so the chance of starvation is slim. Once the beasts become human again, their need for flesh is diminished. Nonetheless, infected lycanthropes that retain their animalistic form for extended periods could conceivably starve if opportunities for killing were limited.

## True Lycanthropes

Regardless of phenotype, all true lycanthropes must eat meat to survive. Although they *can* eat vegetables and fruit (and will do so to bolster their masquerade while in human aspect), they gain little nourishment and less enjoyment from doing so.

Some phenotypes can subsist on previously killed prey, on flesh that has been dead for hours or even days. This ability matches the natural feeding habits of the base phenotype. If the animal form resembles a creature that is naturally a scavenger—for example, wererats, werewolves, and werejackals—then the werebeast can eat older flesh. If the animal aspect is naturally a hunter—weretigers or weresharks,

for example—the werebeast can gain sustenance only from flesh that is freshly killed.

Regardless, *all* werebeasts vastly prefer freshly killed prey.

A wary hunter of werebeasts does not confuse the need for a fresh kill with the *inability* to stomach cooked or aged meat, however. Even a weretiger could enter an ordinary household and dine heartily on a venison stew. While the creature would gain no sustenance from the meal, and might have to feign any enjoyment, it would not be harmed by the experience.

For werebeasts who assume the form of animal scavengers, the restrictions on what meat they can and cannot eat is very similar to the requirements of normal humans. Thus, if meat is in a state fit for humans to eat without serious risk of sickness, a scavenger lycanthrope can also eat it.

Scavenger lycanthropes can and do preserve flesh, using techniques similar to those used by humans, that is, spicing and salting. Such techniques decrease the nutritional value of the flesh, however, by a factor of two. Thus, scavenger lycanthropes must eat twice as much preserved meat as normal. Even scavenger werebeasts can *never* extract sustenance from cooked food. Cooking instantly and irrevocably destroys the nutritional value of meat for a werebeast.

As a general rule, a true lycanthrope must eat an amount of flesh roughly equal to the amount necessary to sustain a natural specimen of its animal aspect. For example, a two-foot-long giant rat would eat perhaps two pounds of food each day. This means a wererat must eat two pounds of raw flesh each day to sustain itself. Food other than raw flesh—or, in the case of nonscavenger werebeasts, other than *fresh* raw flesh—does not count toward this total. Thus the wererat would still have to eat two full pounds of flesh, no matter how much fruit, bread, and vegetables it otherwise consumed.

From my own research and encounters, I provide the following estimates of food requirements for different phenotypes. I must stress

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

that these are estimates; variation between individuals may exist. Also, this does not take into account the possibility that certain werebeasts may *prefer* to eat more than others.

Type of Creature	Estimated Requirement (Pounds of Flesh Daily)
Werebat	2
Werebear*	50
Wereboar**	20
Werecrocodile**	50
Werefox	5
Werejackal**	20
Wererat**	2
Wereraven**	1
Wereseal	50
Wereshark	75
Weretiger	50
Werewolf**	25

\* A werebear who is not evil requires only half this amount. Note that such a creature may also be quite creative in fulfilling its dietary requirements. I once observed a bear who literally subsisted on thousands of moths each day!

\*\* Indicates scavenger.

The figures above represent my best guess at *average* requirements. A true lycanthrope can go for up to four days without suitable food before it begins to suffer any ill effects. This assumes, however, that it eventually makes up for the food it has missed.

Note that even the wererat discussed above will probably slay one animal (or person) every day (or couple of days, at least). Since it prefers fresh meat, it will probably make a kill just to get its two pounds of flesh.

All lycanthropes appear to prefer human and humanoid flesh to that of animals. This preference is not so strong that the creatures cannot override it when necessary, however. They can derive sustenance from *any* form of flesh (keeping in mind the restrictions I have set out above, of course).

Van Richten's estimates for dietary requirements are quite accurate, but he fails to answer several key questions. For instance, how much flesh can a werebeast glean from the average man? From a goblin? For a simple solution, use the following guidelines in play: On average, a man-sized victim yields 100 pounds of flesh (including skin, marrow, and organs). A creature classified as "large" yields 150 pounds, while a creature that is size "small" yields 50.

For each day beyond four that a lycanthrope goes without sufficient food, the creature loses *one-eighth* of its hit point total (rounded up). Each day, it receives a saving throw vs. polymorph to resist the day's loss. Note that the loss is of one-eighth of the creature's *total* normal hit points.

For example, a werebat whose hit points usually add up to 24 is forced to go without food. For the first four days, it suffers no ill effects (except, perhaps for an increasingly foul mood). On the fifth day, and on each subsequent day, it must save vs. polymorph or lose 3 hit points (one-eighth of its total).

Note that a werebeast cannot regain hit points lost to starvation simply by changing form. (The reverse is also true; obviously, a werebeast cannot heal combat damage simply by eating a square meal.) Although magic can restore the points lost to starvation, the mere passage of time has no effect. The creature regains all starvation points as soon as it devours *all* of the flesh it should have eaten up to that point.

Progressive starvation has another consequence. A starving werebeast has an increased chance of suffering bloodlust. (Bloodlust is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.) For each day beyond four that the creature goes without sufficient food, it suffers a -1 penalty to its save vs. polymorph to avoid bloodlust. This penalty vanishes as soon as the creature makes up for all the time that it's gone without sufficient food.

# A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

## Life Span and Life Cycle

Unlike the undead creatures I have studied, werebeasts follow a natural cycle from birth to death. They are born, they mature to adulthood, and they eventually die of old age. As noted below, however, this pattern varies between infected and true lycanthropes.

## Infected Lycanthropes

When a person contracts pathologic lycanthropy, his or her natural life span is unchanged. Thus, a human blighted with lycanthropy will rarely live past 75 or 80, while an elf with the similar affliction might have to suffer it for half a millennium or more.

To the best of my knowledge, regardless of the age and maturity of the victim, the animal aspect is always that of a mature creature in the prime of its life. (This quite obviously puts the lie to that oft-quoted folktale that an infected werewolf must only put up with the affliction for 15 or so years, after which time the wolf within will have died of old age.) Whether the victim is a youth or a centenarian, the animal aspect is always powerful and vigorous.

Does this mean, then, that an infant—perhaps infected with the blight while in the womb—may undergo the transfiguration the first time it experiences its trigger? Could a baby, on the occasion of its first full moon, become a ravening werewolf? Such is not the case. In my experience, infected lycanthropes will not undergo the transfiguration until they have reached puberty (at whatever age that occurs for the human or humanoid species in question). Up until this time, they do not react to the trigger stimulus.

Why is this? I believe that the infective agent insinuated into the bloodstream requires its own trigger—something to make it active. Presumably, the vast physiological changes of puberty provide such a trigger.

According to many tales, infected children do respond to their trigger conditions in subtle

ways. Rather than transfiguring into the beast, they exhibit a strong or inappropriate emotional reaction to the trigger. Thus, a child who will one day become a wolf when the moon is full may respond to a full moon with rather *bestly* behavior. In short, the child may exhibit a monthly lunacy. As of yet, I have found no direct evidence to support this notion, however.

Other aspects of the life cycle—sexual maturity, senility, and the end of fertility—are all unaffected by the blight of lycanthropy. Victims of this dread affliction reach all these signposts of life at the same ages as others of their race.

It should be pointed out, however, that the *animal aspects* never reach such signposts. No matter how old the human aspect, the beast form will never grow senile, nor will it suffer other visible or physiological effects of aging.

Of course, some infected lycanthropes have a hybrid as their secondary aspect. (They take the form of a man-beast.) In that case, the hybrid form shows the same outward signs of aging as the werebeast's primary form.

Statistics measuring the Strength and Dexterity of common werebeasts in hybrid form are listed in Table IV (see page 39). These figures, and the accompanying notes on aging, apply to any creature in man-beast form, true or infected.

## True Lycanthropes

The overall life span of a true lycanthrope seems to be approximately that of the race which its primary aspect resembles. Thus a werebeast that can appear human will have a life span of about 70 years, while a creature that seems to be an elf can live for over half a millennium.

I have been led to understand that, in certain distant lands which I have never had the chance to visit, the offspring of true lycanthropes mature quite differently from normal children. (For example, wererat offspring reach maturity in about two years.) This does not

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

match my personal experience, however.

Everywhere that I have had occasion to visit, the offspring of true lycanthropes always appear to be normal human infants. Some, but not all, exhibit some of the subtle bestial characteristics described in a previous section (see Chapter I), such as slightly elongated forefingers. Otherwise, children who inherit lycanthropy grow and mature at the same rate as others of their apparent race or species.

Like infected children, the immature offspring of true werebeasts cannot change shape. The transfiguration is beyond their grasp, and they remain in human aspect. When they reach puberty, however, the situation changes rapidly.

At some point early in puberty, the child undergoes its first transfiguration. The exact moment cannot be predicted, nor can the metamorphosis be halted or controlled. Even the aspect assumed is uncertain; the child may become either the animal or the man-beast (assuming the phenotype exhibits all three aspects). Once transformed, the child cannot predict how long the change will last. For a period measured in days, the child has absolutely no control over its body, which changes from aspect to aspect randomly.

Understandably, this period is terrifying for the young lycanthrope, even if its parents have told it what to expect. When in secondary or tertiary aspect, there is a very real risk that the creature will fly into bloodlust.

This period of uncontrollable change lasts for  $1d3 + 1$  days. During this time, the lycanthrope changes aspect every  $1d6$  hours. For each change, randomly determine which aspect it assumes.

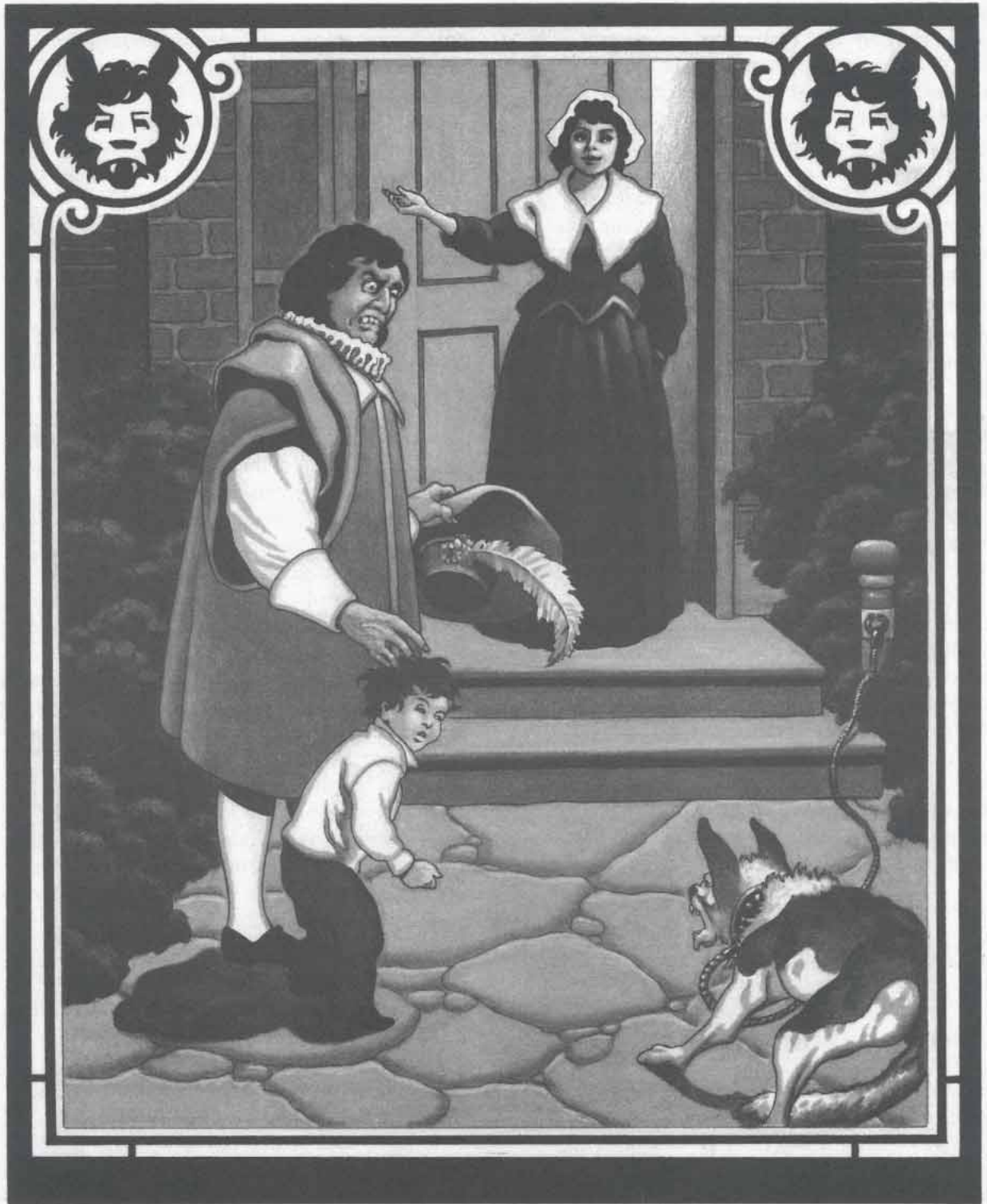
Each time the lycanthrope assumes its animal or man-beast form, it must make a successful save vs. polymorph—with a  $-2$  penalty—to avoid bloodlust. (Bloodlust is described in detail in Chapter III.)

For obvious reasons, the parents of a young true lycanthrope will find some excuse for separating the youth from human society before the onset of puberty. In some secure location, they will monitor the progress of their offspring, helping it gain control of its transfigurations. This training period may last for days or weeks, depending on the personality of the child, and the care with which its parents try to teach it [in other words, DM's discretion]. At the end of this time, the creature will have full control of its shapeshifting ability, and will rarely (if ever) undergo transfiguration without actively willing itself to do so.

What about young lycanthropes who are separated from their parents—and who may even be unaware of their true nature? (I have known one such case, an unfortunate child whose adoptive parents were forced to slay him when he became a wererat and tried to kill them.) Without guidance, it is possible that even an orphaned child could learn to control its transfiguration. The learning process takes much longer without suitable guidance, of course, extending from days or weeks to weeks or months. Some individuals can *never* learn how to control their transfigurations, however. With time, the random shifts become less frequent, but they never completely vanish. For obvious reasons, these individuals cannot successfully masquerade as humans. Neither are they accepted by their own kind, and thus are doomed to solitary (and usually short) lives.

Without direct training from an adult lycanthrope of identical phenotype, there's only a 50% chance that a young werebeast will learn to control its shapeshifting. If it fails this die roll (it only gets one chance), its random changes occur every  $1d6$  days (not hours). It still has no warning when a change is going to occur or which of its aspects it will assume.

# A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



# A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

## Aging and True Lycanthropes

True lycanthropes never assume the form of immature animals. Nor, in my experience, is there such a thing as a child-beast hybrid. When the first change comes upon the creature, its other aspects are fully mature in all characteristics. This to not say that time does not touch the true lycanthrope, however. Unlike their infected brethren, true lycanthropes appear to age in *all* their aspects.

In animal form, the changes wrought by age are largely cosmetic. The fur on the animal's ears and muzzle becomes whiter, the teeth discolor, and the eyes become steadily more rheumy and bloodshot. Such aging reflects the relative age of the creature's human form. (For example, assume that the primary aspect is a human with a life span of 80 years, and the animal aspect is a wolf, with a life span of 20. When the creature is 40 years old, its animal aspect will resemble a 10-year-old wolf.) Looks are deceiving, however. The animal's actual speed and strength seem to change only slightly with age, if at all.

The man-beast aspect also appears to age at a rate which is proportionate to the human aspect's condition. In time, patches of gray will appear in its pelt, and the hair may even start to thin. The eyes will become more bloodshot. In this case, appearances are correct. The man-beast's strength, dexterity, and other characteristics *are* affected by age, in much the same way as the primary aspect.

## Procreation

**W**hile I probably know more about this fascinating subject than any other expert, even my knowledge is incomplete. Like most other creatures, lycanthropes consider their procreative behavior to be intensely personal, and not a topic for public discussion.

The effective Strength and Dexterity of many man-beast forms are listed in Table IV. Note that some infected lycanthropes may acquire a man-beast form as their secondary aspect (rather than an animal). The rules stated here apply to such infected creatures as well.

As the man-beast ages, Strength and Dexterity decline. Table 11 in the *Player's Handbook* presents three categories for characters past their prime: middle age, old age, and venerable. When a werebeast shifts to a new category, its Strength and Dexterity drop one ranking (see Table 1: Strength, in the *Player's Handbook*). Thus a "venerable" werewolf has an effective Strength and Dexterity three notches below normal: 18/76 and 13, respectively.

Table IV: The Man-Beast in Ravenloft

Creature	STR	DEX
Werebadger	18/91	16
Werebat	18/01	19
Werebear	19	15
Wereboar	19	15
Werecocodile	20	14
Werefox	18/76	18
Werejackal	18/00	17
Wererat	18/51	19
Wereraven	18	17
Wereseal	20	16
Wereshark	21	14
Weretiger	21	18
Werewolf	19	16

The Armor Class value commonly given for each creature reflects the benefits of the Dexterity shown above. Any bonuses listed for attack rolls or damage do *not* reflect the figures above. Note that the man-beast's natural weapons (claws, teeth, etc.) are not affected by Strength and Dexterity.



# A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

## Infected Lycanthropes

While in human aspect, infected lycanthropes will engage in the same procreative behavior as uninfected individuals of their own race.

Fertility, incidence of multiple birth, gestation period, and similar factors are unchanged. As mentioned in the previous chapter, if the father of a child is an infected lycanthrope, the child will not suffer the affliction (unless the father subsequently infects it through normal means, of course). If the mother suffers the blight, however, so will the child. It will share the same phenotype and trigger condition as its mother.

It is interesting to point out that infected females who are with child become immune to their normal trigger condition during the last third of the gestation period. This seems to be an adaptation designed to protect the unborn child. Human females, then, will not undergo transfiguration—no matter what the stimulus—during the final three months of pregnancy. As though to make up for the lapse, the first transfiguration after giving birth may be particularly violent, and it will *always* lead to bloodlust.

The woman automatically flies into bloodlust on changing into her secondary form, and must eat twice her normal amount following her first post-partum transfiguration. If she survives this episode, she reverts to her normal behavior thereafter.

Although it would seem logical that a female werebeast's first target after giving birth might be her own offspring, this does not seem to be the case. Probably as the result of a pro-survival adaptation, female werebeasts in their secondary aspect seem to consider their own children off-limits . . . so long as those children are also infected lycanthropes. Children born before their mother's infection, who do not share the lycanthropic scourge, often do become targets of her bestial predations. (Of course, this willingness to attack one's own

offspring can also be observed in infected males whose children do not share their affliction.)

## True Lycanthropes

There are some significant differences in procreative behavior between true lycanthropes and the human or humanoid species they resemble. Gestation period is unchanged; thus, a female werebeast whose primary aspect is human will carry a child for about nine months. Many other characteristics of procreation are different, however.

For example, werebeasts reach sexual maturity earlier than most members of their "primary species." This difference is not so great as to be remarkable (as it would be if a young werewolf were sexually mature at age three, for example). However, if this early maturity were allowed to become known, it would qualify the offspring as sexually precocious. True werebeasts also tend to be more fertile than members of the race they resemble. And they have a slightly higher incidence of multiple births. However, none of these differences is great enough to alert any but the most meticulous (and suspicious) researcher.

The offspring of a male and female true lycanthrope will always be a true lycanthrope of the same phenotype, whatever conditions apply. I have heard strange tales of werebeast societies in which males and females only seek out their mates in hybrid form, but I cannot confirm such reports. Such behavior may be ritualistic. Or perhaps it reflects a societal perception of sexual attractiveness. (Do not normal men and women put their best face forward to attract the opposite sex?) At any rate, I know of no reason why any aspect of the true lycanthrope should be infertile, since each form is but a natural extension of the same being.

As dreadful as it may seem, true lycanthropes do sometimes court normal,

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

uninfected humans or demihumans. Such a union can lead to the birth of a child. (It is for this reason that I have characterized each variety of lycanthrope as a phenotype rather than a species.) The lycanthropic condition of their offspring is discussed in Chapter I.

Those who are well acquainted with werebeast lore have no doubt heard an occasional tale of the union between two distinct phenotypes—a wererat and a werewolf, for example. I have seen scant evidence of such aberrant pairings; fortunately, true werebeasts appear to have an aversion to such behavior. I firmly believe, however, that offspring will be produced only if the corresponding animal species—in the example above, a rat and a wolf—would produce young under normal circumstances. Thus, only similar phenotypic species can reproduce—werejaguars and weretigers, for example, or werejackals and werewolves. The offspring of such a union would reflect a mixed heritage in all three aspects. Note that such offspring would themselves be infertile; they could not produce young of their own.

**Gestation and Birth:** During the first quarter of the gestation period, female true lycanthropes are free to transfigure into any of their three aspects without any risk to their unborn child. After that, however, they will not change into animal aspect unless the only other alternative is death. (I do not know categorically what effect this change would have on the unborn, but I suspect that it might lead to a stillbirth.) During the latter three-quarters of pregnancy, the female limits her transfigurations to human and man-beast aspects exclusively. Dietary needs change as the pregnancy progresses; after the second month, the mother's appetite is increased by one-quarter to one-half.

True lycanthropic mothers usually give birth in the same form in which their children begin life: human. However, I have heard tell that the pain of labor may induce a spontaneous transfiguration into the man-beast aspect. [The

lycanthrope must save vs. paralysis to prevent this.] Perhaps for this reason, many true lycanthropes prefer to bear their offspring in private, lest a midwife learn of their true nature. (On the other hand, they may simply slay the midwife.)

Lycanthropes recover from the rigors of birth much faster than do normal humans. They could be up and around, fully functional, within minutes of the birth, if this were necessary. Most lycanthropes will feign the post-partum weakness (and sometimes depression) exhibited by humans, however, merely to maintain their masquerade.

**Rearing Young:** True lycanthropes show a somewhat schizophrenic outlook with regard to their young. If they can do so without personal risk or significant hardship, they will usually nurture their young until the offspring have reached puberty and can control their transfigurations. At this point, all contact between parents and offspring usually comes to an end. Before puberty, the parents—predominately the mother—will protect and educate the children. Most werebeasts are stricter, more severe parents than are the majority of humans. The difference is rarely great enough to attract overmuch attention, however.

It is important to note that few lycanthrope parents will tell their offspring the “facts of life” until the children are old enough to understand the importance of concealing their true nature. Since the parents are hunting throughout this period, it is not uncommon for lycanthropic children to be orphaned before they learn just what they are.

The attitude of werebeast parents toward their children seems directly tied to the parents' own security. Most true lycanthropes I encounter are living within (or at least on the outskirts of) human civilization, masquerading as normal humans. Typically, no one suspects their true nature. Cunning lycanthropes can maintain this facade for years or even decades—possibly not in the same locale, but

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

by moving on to a new village or town when the focus of suspicion turns in their direction. However, if suspicion *does* start to focus upon them, true werebeasts with young children will, without a qualm, arrange it so that their offspring are the next victims of the “mysterious monster.” This will usually divert suspicion, at least for a time, since few humans want to believe that parents of *any* species could so cold-bloodedly sacrifice their children. Such is the nature of werebeasts, however.

Even if children merely represent a hardship, true lycanthropes are quite likely to abandon or sacrifice their young simply to make their own lives easier. This may occur if the presence of children hinders the parents’ ability to hunt or otherwise feed themselves, or—if traveling is necessary—when offspring would limit the parents’ mobility. This willingness to contemplate and perform infanticide is perhaps the most horrifying facet of the lycanthropic personality, and the fact that most distinctly sets these beasts apart from humans.

The preceding paragraphs focus on lycanthropes that masquerade as humans and thus infiltrate society. Within the limits of my personal experience, such creatures are in the majority. However, there are also werebeasts who prefer to exist in the shadows outside normal human society. These creatures spend much of their lives in man-beast or animal aspect, assuming human form only temporarily—when it would benefit them on the hunt, for example. How do creatures of this feral ilk handle their offspring? Remember, such offspring are born in human aspect, and they cannot change form for more than a decade.

Based on my personal knowledge, lycanthropes of this kind use two main strategies. One is simply to raise their offspring themselves, carrying them around in the wilds, succoring them and educating them in the ways of their own savage lifestyle. I believe that immature lycanthropes raised in this way are at the heart of many legends of children who were raised by wolves or other creatures.

The second strategy is simply to abandon the offspring on the outskirts of human settlements. In most cases, of course, the foundlings will be adopted by members of the community who are unaware just how feral such children really are. I have no doubt that the true parents of these monsters enjoy many a cruel laugh at the humans who behave so generously. For that generosity will, in all likelihood, eventually be rewarded by a savage and lethal attack.

If the lycanthropes choose not to follow either of these options, they seem no less willing to practice infanticide than true werebeasts who lead (or feign) a more civilized existence.

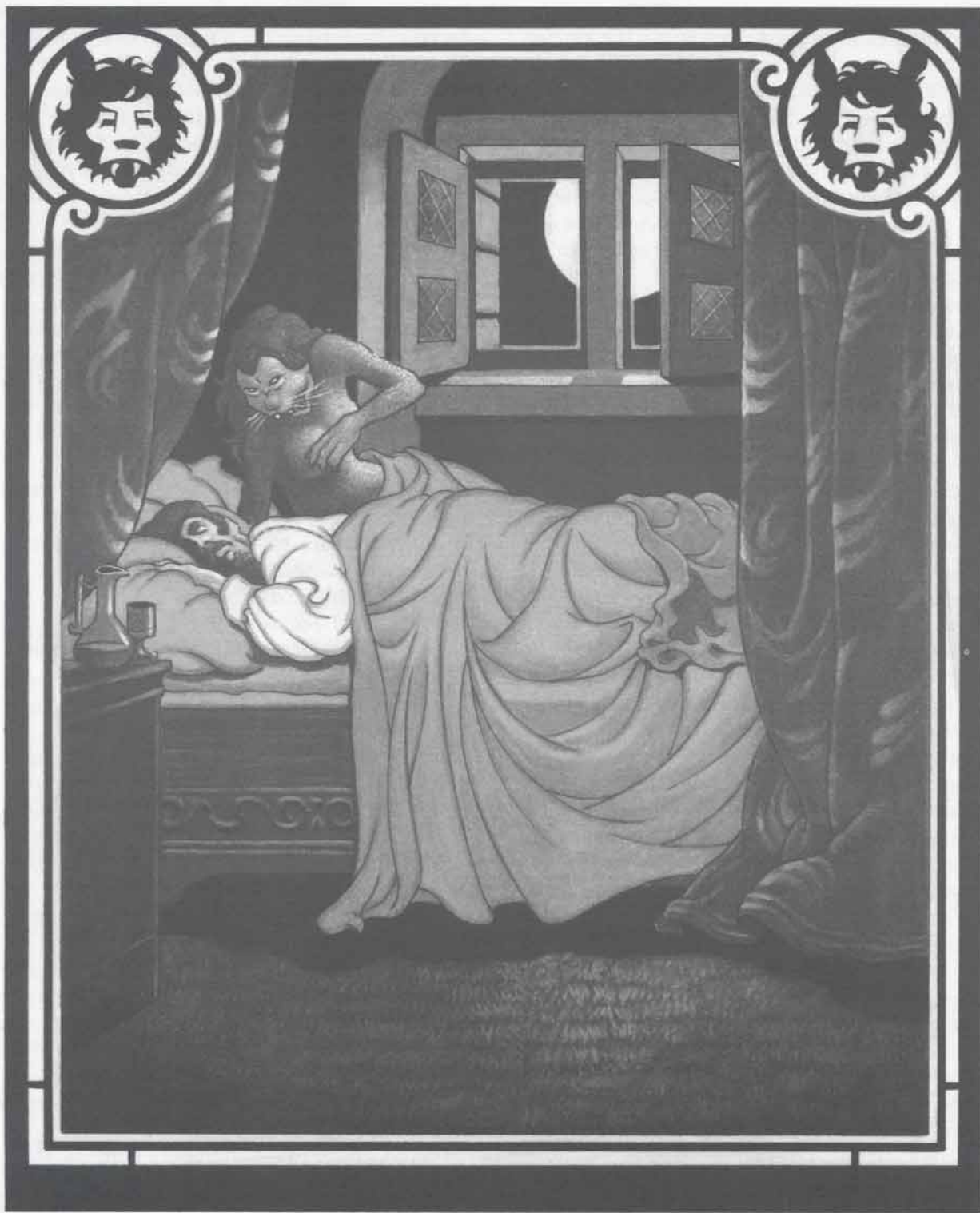
### Lairs

As I have hinted earlier, many true lycanthropes dwell within human or humanoid civilization or on its outskirts, acting as societal parasites. Some, however, choose to live in the wilds, or perhaps in secret lairs beneath the streets walked by unsuspecting humans. And even werebeasts that do reside within human society may maintain secret haunts elsewhere; lairs to which they can retreat should their true nature be in danger of discovery, or simply because they need time alone. Infected werebeasts do not typically alter their habitat once they have acquired lycanthropy, but they maintain a home in the fashion of others of their race. Thus, the following discussions relate primarily to true lycanthropes.

### Town Lairs

Although they are not what most people think of as lairs, the houses or apartments occupied by werebeasts within human society are worthy of some attention. In general, a lycanthrope’s personality will be largely influenced by its phenotype (see Chapter III for further detail). Since an individual’s home will usually be an outgrowth of his personality, it follows that a lycanthrope’s town lair will reflect its phenotype.

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

In large part, or at least symbolically, a lycanthrope's town lair will resemble the kind of lair the phenotypic animal would have in the wild. (In other words, the town lair of a werebadger will symbolically resemble the lair of a real badger.) Other facets of the creature's psychology might also be reflected. For example, a wererat will almost certainly have one or more secret escape routes. And, if at all possible, it will also have arranged access to the sewers or the local equivalent.

Despite such nuances in individual taste, several characteristics are common to werebeast lairs regardless of the owner's phenotype. First, most lycanthropes create at least one concealed access to their town lair. Werebeasts must frequently go out to hunt. However, few are daring enough to use the front door of their homes each time they leave and return. At any time, an observer might correlate the creature's late-night jaunts with killings or disappearances and suspect the werebeast's true nature. A secret passage helps eliminate this risk. However, even a cautious lycanthrope will sometimes leave by the front door to embark on a hunt—quite openly in fact, with some believable excuse. In this way, it will avoid suspicious patterns.

Secondly, storage is a common concern. Those creatures who subordinate their preference for fresh meat to the convenience of having a supply must create a larder. This larder must be concealed; otherwise a visiting busybody, with no suspicion of the werebeast's true nature, might find the half-eaten remnants of a vanished neighbor. The werebeast must also make provisions to prevent the supplies from spoiling, which would both render the food inedible *and* give the werebeast's secret away with the smell of corruption.

Thirdly, a town lair will typically be laid out so the lycanthrope can negotiate the doors, rooms, and hallways regardless of what aspect it currently holds. (This is more important for creatures like werebears than for wererats, of course.)

Allow me to describe the lair of a werebeast I faced in Port-a-Lucine, a town in Dementlieu. This individual, a wererat, had resided in this town for almost half a decade without anyone growing wise to his true nature. In fact, he held a position on the town council. (Readers from Dementlieu may well recognize the individual of whom I write, although for personal reasons I will not refer to him by name.)

This individual had commissioned his small house to be built on the Widow's Walk, the wide thoroughfare that ringed the natural harbor. Although the werebeast's human aspect was slightly above average size, the house's doors and corridors were surprisingly narrow, and the ceilings unusually low. The heads of most visitors would brush the ceiling, while the owner himself had to stoop. I believe the reason for this was psychological. As a wererat, he was innately used to cramped, labyrinthine warrens. Perhaps he even relished them. Thus, the wererat built his house in a fashion that made him feel most at home.

Although the individual was relatively wealthy, he had little interest in the finer things of life. His house was far from empty, however. Instead, it was full of knickknacks, predominately small and shiny things, that were of no discernible monetary or aesthetic value. While the individual seemed to enjoy being surrounded by these items, he evinced little emotional attachment to specific objects.

Unbeknownst to the builders, the individual had located his house directly over an abandoned branch of the storm drain system that ran beneath much of the town. In his private chapel, he had installed a concealed trap door that gave him direct access to this network of underground drains. It was via this route that he left his home to hunt. It was also this storm drain that he used as his larder.

Although the wererat had no true religion, he had persuaded the townsfolk that he was a fervent follower of a particularly introspective religious tradition. This tradition, he explained, required him to practice long hours of

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

meditation and self-examination in the chapel included in his house. He would always make a big show of returning home for his devotions as soon as the sun had set. In fact, of course, he was preparing to hunt.

For most individuals, this alibi would have been sufficient, but this wererat's cunning took it one step further. He constructed a mannequin that resembled himself, kneeling in prayer. Every time he left his house at night to hunt, he placed this kneeling mannequin before the altar in his chapel. Should any of his neighbors spy in his window, they would see a reverent man in rapt devotion.

Although I hesitate to boast, I must admit that it was I who discerned this individual's true nature. On the request of certain townfolk, I agreed to seek out the source of the mysterious depredations that had been bedeviling the place for years. After much research, I determined that the only way the ravaging creature could have reached its prey was through portions of the storm drain system thought to have collapsed. Returning to ancient records describing the system, I found where the unused section ran. Lo and behold, the only building that could possibly have access to that section was the house of the council member. Proud though I am of my detective work, the story did not end well. I found myself in a face-to-face confrontation with the werebeast, one which I survived only through good fortune. The beast escaped with its foul life, and could well have since set up housekeeping elsewhere.

### Wilderness Lairs

Lycanthropes that eschew human society make their lairs in the wilds. "Socialized" werebeasts may choose a wilderness setting as well, albeit for other reasons (such as pleasure, a place to hunt, or a place to mate and raise offspring).

Like town lairs, wilderness lairs reflect the nature and psychology of the phenotypic

*We had ridden forth, my friends and I, for an enjoyable day of hunting boar. We had our horses, we had our beaters to drive the quarry before us, and we had our weighted spears.*

*The weather was perfect, and luck seemed to be with us. We had been in the saddle for much less than an hour when the beaters called that they had seen signs of a fine boar in the woods ahead of us. My companions and I readied for our sport.*

*We heard the cries of the beaters, then a crashing from the underbrush before us. The boar burst into the clearing where we sat—a fine, muscular creature, larger than any I had ever seen. It lowered its head and charged directly at the legs of my horse. Calming my mount with whispers of encouragement, I steadied my spear.*

*It was a perfect thrust, I swear it. The keen point should have sheathed itself in the beast's flesh, just behind its shoulder—a killing thrust indeed.*

*Yet, for some reason, the spear point turned on the creature's pelt, with the shaft wrenched from my fingers by the impact.*

*And then the terror began. . . .*

—From the journal of Lord D'Arcy Penspot

animal. The psychological element is frequently more pronounced in wilderness lairs, since the werebeasts are most commonly in animal or man-beast aspect while using them.

Finding a suitable location for a wilderness lair is often an exercise in compromise. It must be at least somewhat removed from human habitation. (Otherwise, why have a wilderness lair in the first place?) Yet it must also lie close enough to suitable sources of food (that is, near humans or humanoids, for most werebeasts at any rate). Wererats seem to have the easiest time in meeting both these criteria. They often make their wilderness lairs beneath the streets of a town or village, in the sewers of storm drains. Despite the fact that they are

## A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

within the limits of a town, I qualify these as wilderness lairs anyway because they are distinct from human habitations.

Security is also a major concern. Most lycanthropes have little to fear from normal hunters. If an unfortunate woodsman encounters a werewolf, it will probably be the last creature he ever sees. Yet one day such an interloper may survive and inform others that a werebeast is close at hand, and those others may be quite capable of harming the lycanthrope. Even within the most depressed and fatalistic cultures, few villages would shy away from taking action against a lycanthrope that had constructed a lair nearby. For this reason, most lycanthropes seek to conceal the entrances to their wilderness lairs in some manner. This is obviously much easier for werebeasts with relatively small animal aspects (wererats, for example). While the interior of the lair could well be large enough to accommodate the creature in human aspect, the actual entryways may block anything larger than the phenotypic animal itself.

Some lycanthropes, it seems, build their lairs to resemble the lairs of natural animals of their phenotype. (Thus, a werewolf's lair might, at first glance, be indistinguishable from the lair of a real bear.) This has both advantages and disadvantages for the creature. On one hand, it will draw little attention from adventurers or investigators who may be looking for evidence of lycanthropic activity. On the other, it might draw unwanted attention from hunters who would normally track and slay the phenotypic animal, either for food or for sport. Many werebeasts disguise their lairs as something else entirely—an overgrown cave entrance, for example.

An easy means of entering and escaping the lair is very important. Most lycanthrope lairs have a main entrance, which is large enough to admit the beast regardless of its aspect. In addition, the lair features several other escape routes, usually well-concealed. Depending on the phenotype in question, some of these

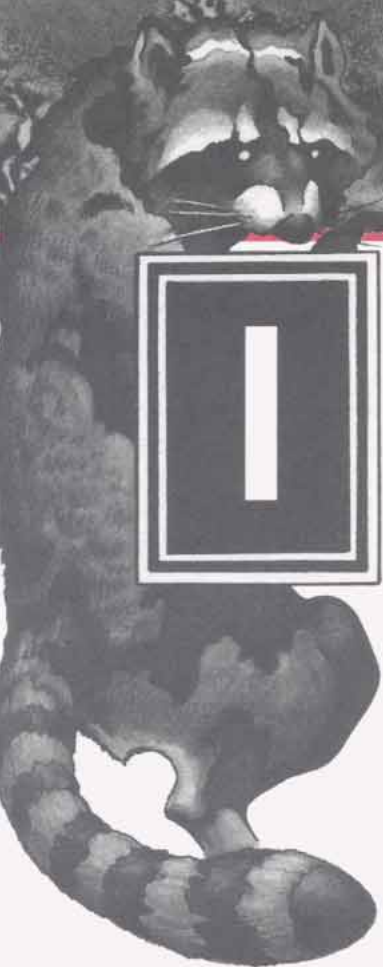
routes may be accessible to the creature only when in certain aspects. Obviously, creatures with animal aspects that are smaller than man-sized can benefit the most from this technique.

The interior of a lair can vary dramatically. Some that I have seen are bare of any adornment and free of any humanlike comfort. They are nothing but bare-walled caves, resembling the dens of ordinary bears. Other lairs look almost like human homes in their decor—at least when one is beyond the concealed entrance. Such lairs may have simple furnishings and carpets made of woven grass. Only rarely does a wilderness lair have more elaborate furnishings, such as ornately carved woods or art work on the walls. Lycanthropes who enjoy such human-style luxury usually establish it in town rather than in the wilderness.

Like town lairs, many wilderness lairs have some sort of storage area for food. However, most wilderness lairs have no provisions that can preserve raw flesh for any significant length of time. Thus, even the best-stocked larder will not significantly decrease the frequency of a lycanthrope's hunting.

Certain self-styled lycanthrope hunters claim that all wilderness lairs are protected by traps of unsurpassed cunning and lethality. Judging from my experience, such claims are nothing but self-aggrandizement, designed to make the hunters' own actions seem more dangerous and hence more valuable. This is not to say that traps are *never* found, however. I have personally visited lairs that were protected by deadfalls, concealed pits, and other rudimentary traps. Only one was protected by anything more sophisticated—in this case, mechanical and magical traps of disturbing efficacy. However, the werebeast in question was atypical, having learned the rudiments of the mage's art. Just as few humans have the skill to set up complex tricks and traps, so too do few lycanthropes. A few werebeasts with greater proficiency have somehow learned the skills of the thief, the mage, or the priest (which is discussed further in Chapter III).

## Chapter III: A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY



**O** had always thought—perhaps because I'd been told—that werebeasts were nothing more than kill-crazy monsters. No intelligence worthy of the name, just low cunning and evil intent. No greater goals than ripping up a few innocents and eating their flesh. That's what I was 'specting when I joined the group tracking down the werewolf terrorizing travelers

on the Old Svalich Road. I figured for a nasty battle at the end of our hunt, sure, but I was ready for it. I was armed for a stand-up fight against a foe tougher than any werewolf could possibly be.

It didn't take long to reevaluate that thought when people started dying; people I respected, people I figured would make it through with nary a scrape. What's more, it wasn't the werewolf what was killing them, not directly anyway. What I'm saying is, they weren't killed by claws or teeth.

They were killed by dropped rocks, and pits, and sharp stakes and other such traps. They were led into ambush and slaughtered. And I came to realize this was no dumb beast we were hunting. . . .

—From the journal of Zef Merrigan

### Moral and Ethical Outlook

In some distant lands, I am told, certain types of lycanthropes exhibit moral and ethical outlooks that are more or less benign. For example, travelers have claimed that were-

bears have exhibited concern for the general weal. Further, though these creatures champion individualism above all else, they oppose those who spread pain and suffering. Judging from still other tales, there are werebeasts in some climes that run the gamut of behavior, from beneficent to indifferent to malevolent.

Such is *not* the case within the realm of my experience. It is my considered opinion that virtually all lycanthropes are highly malign (although I must admit the actual *nature* of their malignity can vary somewhat). To be ever truthful, of course, the nature of my business is such that I am unlikely to encounter any werecreature of a less than cruel nature. As such, I must allow that “good” werebeasts can exist, though I have yet to meet them.

Why are lycanthropes such creatures of evil? My own guess is that they are subject to the same strange agencies that pervert magical wishes and twist the spirits of those who transgress the unwritten laws of moral behavior. Lycanthropy is a dark, malign disease—a perversion of the way life should be—and hence it is somehow akin to evil itself. When someone willingly kills a sentient creature, this is, in my view, an act of evil. Because such acts will ultimately corrupt the mind of those who perform them, so will a lycanthrope's killing slowly warp him into a malign form, whatever his original inclinations.

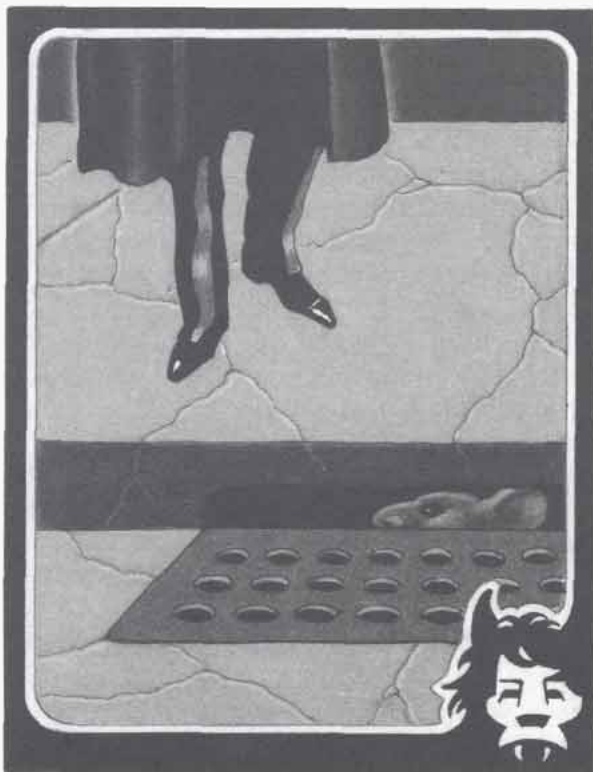
It has been my experience that lycanthropes native to the lands with which I am familiar (that is, Darkon, Dementlieu, and the rest) are malign in the extreme, regardless of phenotype. If they are born into lycanthropy, they exhibit their malign outlook regardless of the form they take. (This does not mean that a werebeast cannot *pretend* to have a different moral outlook when in its human aspect, of course.) Such lycanthropes are likely to exhibit a range of ethical attitudes, however. For example, a werebear will be aggressively independent and selfish, while a wererat may be more amenable to group interaction.



## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

The infected lycanthropes I have met in my travels retained their original moral and ethical outlook when in human form. However, when they transfigured into their secondary aspect, they took on the moral and ethical stance appropriate to their phenotype. In my efforts to rid the world of these menaces, I have often been placed in an uncomfortable predicament. Believing a human is good yet knowing his wereform is evil is a paradox that I have had to resolve within my own heart. Unfortunately, many infected lycanthropes resist all efforts to cure them, for their hearts have been claimed by their dreadful curse. As such, they, too, must be destroyed.

When infected individuals first enter such lands as Darkon or Dementlieu, they retain the personality they had before their journey—or so certain sages insist. In all too short a time, however, these blighted people grow progressively immoral and depraved. Sages claim that this change does not affect the



Dr. Van Richten's zealotry to rid his world of evil is laudable, but his bias against lycanthropes is colored. He believes that all true werebeasts must ultimately be evil. This is not so in game terms. A werebear in Ravenloft may still have chaotic good tendencies, whether it is born in the demiplane of dread or is swept there via the mists. The same is true of other lycanthropes. Dr. Van Richten *is* correct, however, in the assumption that, given time, the powers of Ravenloft itself may corrupt even a lawful-good werecreature.

Please note: Dr. Van Richten's references to "moral outlook" equate, in game terms, to good and evil; "ethical outlook" equates to the lawful and chaotic alignments.

creatures' ethical stance—that is, whether they value the common good higher than individual freedoms—but only their moral outlook.

This process is not instantaneous. Some lycanthropic individuals seem capable of resisting the siren song of depravity for a considerable period of time. Eventually, however, nearly all succumb to the fell blandishments of corruption. Werebeasts born to their malady who wish to resist this change seem able to postpone the inevitable by limiting the number of times they kill sentient creatures. This *seems* to imply that it is the slaying of intelligent, self-aware victims—and *not* a simple fact of lycanthropic nature—that causes the progressive decline into depravity.

### Goals and Desires

**M**any believe that lycanthropes are dumb, ravening beasts, with only a modicum of animal cunning and certainly no real intelligence. This is true in enough instances that the belief has become firmly rooted in the minds of man. Yet it is definitely not the general case.

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

Each time a non-evil lycanthrope hunts and kills a sentient, intelligent victim, it must save vs. polymorph. If it makes this save, its alignment remains unchanged . . . this time. If it fails, however, the component of its alignment moves one step toward evil. (For example, a chaotic-good werebear is transported to Ravenloft. Each time it hunts and kills intelligent prey, it must save vs. polymorph. The first time it fails this save, its alignment permanently changes to chaotic neutral. The second time it fails, its alignment becomes chaotic evil.) This rule applies equally to infected and true lycanthropes.

This progressive change in moral stance affects true lycanthropes in *all* their aspects. Infected lycanthropes, however, become more malign only in their *secondary* aspect. When in their primary human aspect, their personality remains unchanged.

Note that this rule refers only to incidents where the lycanthrope kills an intelligent quarry *for food*. Even in Ravenloft, lycanthropes aren't punished for killing in self-defense.

Unless the DM rules otherwise for special cases, a victim is "sentient" if it has an intelligence of "semi" or greater.

Why does this misconception persist, when anyone who has had personal experience with a lycanthrope can testify to this fallacy? I believe that the misconception is, perhaps, an attempt to *minimize* the danger represented by werebeasts—that is, to deny that they are as significant a threat as they undoubtedly are. It is less daunting to consider lycanthropes as unintelligent—albeit still powerful—animals. How much more terrifying they become when one factors in their human-level intelligence. . . . As I have discovered many times in my travels, humanity shows a remarkable capacity for self-delusion.

### Infected Lycanthropes

In their secondary form, that of the beast, infected lycanthropes come closest to the stereotypical view of ravening monsters—particularly during the first few times that they transfigure. When a newly infected lycanthrope changes shape, its overriding desire is to find food. While it may show some level of animal cunning in hunting down its prey, it will rarely exhibit anything akin to true intelligence. Its hunger is simply too vast—its sense of freedom too overwhelming as the beast within is released from captivity—to allow it sober judgment.

The issue of bloodlust, too, is something that comes into play here. As discussed in more detail later in this chapter, newly infected lycanthropes are highly likely to be overcome by this fiendish urge. Thus, the lack of intelligent planning during early kills and the greater propensity to enter bloodlust ensures that an infected werecreature is likelier to be detected at the beginning of its "career" than later on. Based on rather infrequent encounters, I can only hazard that this condition pertains to the first five or six times an infected lycanthrope undergoes transfiguration. Needless to say, the goals and desires of a recently infected werebeast differ from one that has adjusted to its new lifestyle.

If the creature can avoid being detected and destroyed, after the seventh transfiguration or so it begins to show a little more intelligence and restraint in its behavior. Its chance of entering bloodlust also decreases at about this time. Hunger and the lust to hunt are still its dominant desires, but now the creature seems able to analyze and act upon these motivations a little more dispassionately.

While a newly infected werebeast will hunt quite openly (which is, I might add, the most opportune time to track and kill these creatures), one that has survived numerous transfigurations will be more cunning. It will make the effort to cover its tracks and to keep its true nature secret. For example, a newly infected

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

werebeast is quite likely to attack its prey—often, sadly, a loved one—in a relatively public place, rending him or her within clear sight of others. An “experienced” (if I may use that term) werebeast is more likely to sneak into the house of its prey at night and drag the victim into the woods. In a private, secluded place, it will devour its quarry with vicious glee, knowing that his or her screams will never be heard.

Obviously, if an infected lycanthrope has survived its first six or so transfigurations, the chances of its continued survival dramatically increase. Once the werebeast begins to apply its intelligence to the problem of survival, the difficulty of hunting it increases tenfold. For this reason, it is vital to start the hunt as soon as a werecreature has claimed its first victim. If the culprit is a newly infected lycanthrope, the chances are much better of successfully hunting it if the effort is made immediately.

### True Lycanthropes

There is a wide variation in the goals and desires of lycanthropes that inherit their condition. Initially, when I first became aware of the existence of werebeasts, I suspected that this variation was based along phenotypic lines. In other words, I believed that lycanthropes of the same phenotype shared an overall set of behaviors and views. Over the intervening years, however, I have found that this is not true—or, at least, not *universally* true. Certainly, there are similarities between lycanthropes of the same phenotype. But, quite often, the variability *within* a phenotype is greater than that *between* phenotypes. The inescapable conclusion is that lycanthropes are individuals first and foremost. Indeed, they show much the same disparities and similarities as do humans and demihumans.

The central aspect of any lycanthrope's philosophy is survival. Since survival requires the creature to eat raw meat, and since its preferred food (regardless of its origin or moral

outlook) is humanoid flesh, hunting intelligent prey is at the heart of all its behaviors.

However, this does not mean that a lycanthrope that has inherited its illness will be the conspicuous, ravening beast that newly infected werebeasts often are. (Certainly there are some true lycanthropes that seem to enjoy openly terrorizing humans and thus attracting attention to themselves, but they are rare. I postulate that this is particularly true because such creatures would bring down the wrath of every werehunter in the region. As such, these lycanthropes are few and far between.)

It is possible to argue this point by analogy. Humans must eat to survive. (Granted, they do not have the dietary restrictions of lycanthropes, but set that consideration aside for the moment.) Does this mean that a human's every waking moment will be spent concentrating on finding his next meal? Does this imply that humans think of nothing but food? Of course not. The same logic holds true for lycanthropes, whether hereditary or infected ones that have adjusted to their disease.

Indeed, for many werebeasts the greatest motivation in their lives is that of continuing the deceit that they are normal humans or demihumans. I have personally encountered several lycanthropes that have crafted such cunning, complete masquerades that maintaining them interfered with their ability to hunt. They would undoubtedly have found it easier to feed if they had relaxed their attention to detail in their ruse. Yet they did not do so.

It has been posited that lycanthropes maintain a human facade to assure continued access to convenient sources of food. In the numerous cases I studied, this theory did not hold true, for the cost of maintaining a deceit frequently proved detrimental to acquiring food on a regular basis. Thus, these creatures must have been enjoying some other benefit gained from their deceptions. I believe this benefit is a kind of personal satisfaction, a knowledge that they are capable of deceiving—and thus proving they are smarter than—the humans

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

surrounding them. So important to such werecreatures is this satisfaction that they will suffer obstacles to their hunting to maintain it.

This kind of demonstrated “superiority” over humanity seems to be a common motivator among werebeasts. Yet it is by no means the only one. Some of these fell creatures seem to share many of the same drives as humans and demihumans: wealth, comfort, power. Such lycanthropes tend to pursue wealth and comfort in much the same ways as mankind, through means honest or criminal. If they choose the latter, their unnatural powers provide them with significant advantages over merely human thieves.

It is interesting to note that true lycanthropes’ definitions of wealth and comfort vary depending on phenotype. For example, werebears or weretigers relish a large house, with lots of space and privacy. Wererats, in contrast, prefer small, labyrinthine dwellings, cluttered with shiny baubles. In terms of artwork and other aesthetic elements, the items chosen by lycanthropes often reflect their underlying personality. Thus, the art preferred by a werewolf might well seem brutal, almost cruel, to humans. (One must not forget that most werebeasts are intelligent enough to understand this and will subvert their aesthetic tastes to maintain a facade, if they desire.)

Lycanthropes define “power” in either much the same way as humans do or quite the opposite. I have learned of werebeasts who pursued (and attained) public office. I have also encountered others who led human bandits, and still more who organized thieves’ guilds, surrounding themselves with followers who were unaware of their leader’s true nature.

One surprisingly cunning individual—a wererat—accrued great influence in a village by leading the locals’ efforts to counter the depredations of the “mysterious beast” that was terrorizing the region. Although these efforts neither identified nor destroyed the beast (which was, of course, the wererat itself), they did minimize its impact on the citizenry—



merely because the wererat scaled back its attacks as soon as it gained the position of power it had sought. Fortunately, few lycanthropes seem to be quite so cunning and enterprising. Unfortunately, most lycanthropes simply take the guise of a “mysterious ravening monster” to remove anyone who attempts to block their advancement.

Regardless of phenotype, the vast majority of true lycanthropes have as a major goal the spreading of fear, pain, and suffering. Werebeasts seem to derive pleasure from tormenting mankind. While some werebeasts are quite blatant in this and go so far as to instigate “waves of terror” in which many innocents are slaughtered, others enjoy more subtle machinations. Through carefully escalated acts that start with mildly disturbing events and end with out-and-out atrocities, lycanthropes can create an environment of growing fear and paranoia, paralyzing and eventually destroying an entire community.

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

I suspect that some werebeasts consider this kind of terrorism to be the highest form of “art.”

### Bloodlust

I alluded to this topic earlier, and I include it here to present a counterpoint to the two previous sections on lycanthropic outlook and goals and desires. Bloodlust is the characteristic of lycanthropy perhaps most familiar to the average person, and it is by far and away the most frightening one. It is an uncontrollable rage into which a lycanthrope can fly when hungry, or when presented with the sight and smell of freshly spilled blood or fresh, raw meat.

Lycanthropic bloodlust can be compared to the rage of a berserker or a feeding frenzy among sharks, where the creatures lose all inhibitions and forget all caution in the desire to feed. During bloodlust, werebeasts lose all inhibitions. They fly into a rage that is horrifying to behold, falling with incredible fury upon anyone and anything unfortunate enough to be in the vicinity. During bloodlust, all lycanthropes become the heartless, ravening monsters from folktales—and then some. They will attack and attempt to slay anyone nearby, regardless of whether it is prospective prey or an erstwhile ally. They will fall upon that person and then feed to satiation. If the werebeast in bloodlust is well fed (that is, if it has been eating its normal food requirements over the past few days), it will eat only its regular amount . . . plus, perhaps, a little extra. If it has been denied food over the last several days (if it is suffering from progressive starvation or food debt as described in Chapter II), it will eat enough to eliminate this food debt totally . . . and again, perhaps a little extra.

The primary stimulus for bloodlust is proximity to a source of food, combined with the sight, smell, or taste of fresh blood. Hunger, predictably, exacerbates the problem, as does the proximity of any other lycanthrope that has

already entered bloodlust. The chance of losing control is also increased if the werebeast is seriously wounded; apparently, pain diminishes the creature’s self-control. There are other aggravating factors: puberty (for true lycanthropes), and the unfamiliarity of the lycanthropic state (for newly infected werebeasts).

Infected lycanthropes can enter bloodlust only when they are in their secondary form. True lycanthropes are much more likely to enter bloodlust in their secondary or tertiary form, although if they are severely wounded they may also succumb while in their primary human aspect.

Once it has entered this state, a lycanthrope will remain in bloodlust until it has eaten its fill. Then it will slowly regain control. This effort may be immediate or may take several minutes. If the bloodlust continues after the creature has eaten its fill, it will not gorge. Instead, it will continue its slaughter, but it will not feed on the bodies of its victims.

Obviously, bloodlust is a hideous thing to witness. Lycanthropes—intelligent ones, at least—fear its onset, since it can easily destroy years of effort in building up a subterfuge. I shudder to write this, but I have heard that certain lycanthropes have learned how to initiate bloodlust *willingly*. I do not know how much credence to put in this claim, having never personally encountered a werebeast capable of this act. Having witnessed—and barely survived—a bloodlust engendered by a young lycanthrope, I can only cringe at the idea of confronting a wily, adult werebeast that *chooses* to enter bloodlust. [If DMs decide that this is possible, the ability to initiate bloodlust at will should be very rare indeed.]

### Relationships Between Lycanthropes

**S**peaking generally, infected lycanthropes are solitary creatures, looking out for their own individual interests. (The only

# A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

## Entering Bloodlust

Whenever a lycanthrope is exposed to a stimulus for bloodlust, the creature must save vs. polymorph. This saving throw suffers certain situational penalties as noted in the following table.

**Table V: Bloodlust Saving Throw Penalties**

Condition	Penalty
Other werebeast(s) nearby	
already in bloodlust	-2
Each day beyond 4 of food debt	-1
Werebeast tastes blood	-1
Werebeast has suffered 25% damage	-1
Werebeast has suffered 50% damage	-4
Werebeast has suffered 75% damage	-7
Werebeast is infected lycanthrope	-3
Werebeast is "new" infected lycanthrope*	-9
Werebeast is a true lycanthrope undergoing puberty	-3

\* "New" means the creature has assumed animal form six or fewer times.

Hereditary lycanthropes are normally candidates for bloodlust only when in animal or man-beast form. If they are reduced to less than 50% of their total hit points while in

human aspect, however, they must save vs. polymorph at -2 or enter bloodlust. If they do succumb to bloodlust, they will immediately transfigure into either of their other forms.

## Effects of Bloodlust

A lycanthrope in bloodlust will attack the nearest living creature in a wild attempt to slay it. During this berserk rage, it gains a +2 attack bonus and a +2 bonus to damage; its AC, however, is decreased two steps (that is, AC 4 becomes AC 6). If multiple targets are equally close, it will usually attack the weakest creature, unless the DM decides this leads to a ludicrous situation (a lycanthrope faced by three warriors attacking a nearby rabbit, for example).

## Shaking Off Bloodlust

Once a lycanthrope in bloodlust has consumed enough flesh to satiate its urges, it must again save vs. polymorph. All previous modifiers are eliminated, except for any relating to damage suffered. In addition, the creature gains a +2 bonus. The lycanthrope must make this saving throw each round until it succeeds. Once it makes the save, it leaves bloodlust and regains control of its actions. Its subsequent behavior will, of course, depend on the situation.

exception to this rule seems to be when they come under the influence of a true lycanthrope.) Werebeasts that are born to their disease, however, can be quite social creatures.

## Within a Single Phenotype

In general, a lycanthrope's outlook toward others of the same phenotype will depend on its ethical view of the world. Thus, some werebeasts will be solitary, while others will be more social. Most, perhaps, will fall somewhere in the middle. Let us examine, for example,

creatures at the two extremes: werebears and wererats.

Werebears have a highly individualistic outlook on life. They are more concerned with their own freedoms and prerogatives than they are with the rights and concerns of others. They are naturally solitary creatures, not given to seeking the companionship of their own kind except when it is time to mate. Werebears are extremely territorial and will frequently resist the incursion of others into their domains. (Werebears are also highly intelligent, so one masquerading as a human in a village will

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

certainly not automatically respond to the arrival of another werereature by changing form and attacking.)

In direct contrast, wererats are highly social, gregarious creatures—with respect to their own kind, that is. They demonstrate this enjoyment in ways that seem strange to most humans. The creatures are almost continuously in competition with each other—for mates, for standing within their community (and their “adopted” human community as well), for wealth, and for other tangible benefits. By human standards, this competition is not friendly; it is more sly and conniving than anything. Most humans would describe multiple wererats living a ruse in the same community as enemies, or at the very least ardent rivals. Yet, to the wererats themselves, this behavior does not illustrate any ill will; quite the opposite, in fact.

Weretigers and werewolves are examples of lycanthropes that fall in a middle ground. The former phenotype forms strong bonds within a “pride,” or extended familial group. A pride will establish a territory and consider other weretigers that enter this region as rivals or even enemies. Interlopers are occasionally invited to join a pride, at which point such rivalry ends.

Werewolves are, generally speaking, loners. Yet under certain conditions they evince strong social behavior. For example, like their natural lupine cousins, werewolves can form packs (extended familial groups, generally larger than weretiger prides). Members of a pack will usually forget personal differences and work together if the pack is threatened, whether through the actions of locals or through the invasion of another pack. Yet, when there are no such direct threats, a werewolf pack is characterized by machinations, politics, and backbiting that makes most human political maneuvering look tame by comparison.

The leader of a pack is the strongest individual, usually judged through personal challenge and combat in animal or man-beast form. Other positions of authority fall to those

who have the wherewithal to take them and hold them. Challenges and internecine squabbles within a pack are occasionally fatal, but this does not diminish the vehemence with which individuals pursue them.

It is important to note that characteristic behaviors hold true no matter what form the werebeasts involved are in. For example, two werewolves who are both masquerading as human merchants might extend their pack-based rivalry into the marketplace and engage in vicious price wars.

It is vital to realize that the above discussions are generalities *only*. Lycanthropes are individuals; even though they may be genetically predisposed to certain behaviors, they have the freedom to choose their own paths. Thus, though most wererats are social creatures, it is not impossible to encounter a solitary example of its kind. Similarly, atypical werebears may form a tight-knit social group. It is my belief that one who blindly trusts to trends and generalities is as foolish as one who categorically ignores them.

### Between Phenotypes

Generally speaking, lycanthropes of one phenotype tend to shun those of another phenotype. They are liable to ignore the others' actions unless those actions would bring direct harm or disadvantage to themselves.

This said, I must again stress the unreliability of generalities. Some werebeasts show extreme antipathy to lycanthropes of different phenotypes (whether they act overtly on this antipathy is another question, of course); others show the opposite behavior and actively seek them out. It is impossible to predict the behavior of any individual werebeast. Further, there seems to be no phenotypic correlation with this behavior range; in other words, no phenotype is more or less likely to diverge from the norm. In this matter, then, phenotype is of no significance, while individual personality is of paramount import.

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

I have sometimes thought that collaboration between lycanthropes of different phenotypes would be beneficial, perhaps even favoring natural selection, and thus likely to become more common. While this has not proved to be the case over the decades I have studied lycanthropy, I am not yet ready to discard my hypothesis. Perhaps the increase in interphenotypic collaboration is so slow that I have been unable to measure it. Or—more disturbingly—perhaps collaboration is so successful that, where it occurs, the werebeasts involved are never detected and thus never destroyed. . . .

Even when lycanthropes feel the strongest of antipathies toward each other, they will rarely abandon their own subterfuges to act on their hatreds. Even the most virulently hate-filled werebeast might suffer the presence of another, simply because taking action against the intruder would put itself at unacceptable risk. In all but the rarest cases, lycanthropes are highly pragmatic; they are practical enough to put enlightened self-interest ahead of any personal animosity.



From my experiences, most lycanthropes seem able to recognize and identify others of their ilk, regardless of what forms they take. This explains, perhaps, why werecreatures who meet in man form in, say, the local market, do not react and attack. Perhaps this recognition is based on smell; yet, then, why would dogs not detect the difference? Or it could be visual cues, too subtle for men to recognize. Most likely, however, is the supposition that lycanthropes exude a kind of “psychic taint” that others of their kind can detect. After all, in so many other ways it seems that Evil recognizes its own.

A resident werefox I once knew sensed that a newcomer to town was actually a lycanthrope in disguise. I admit to believing the werefox was in error, for I had detected nothing out of the ordinary from the stranger. But not only did the werefox know the man was an interloper, she knew too that he was a weretiger of excessive cunning. Sadly, I still did not believe the fox, and she paid for my disbelief with her life when the weretiger decided to invade her territory. By then, of course, I believed my confederate. Try as I did, however, the weretiger eluded all my attempts to hunt and kill him. He escaped one night, and I have never seen him since.

That was my first glimpse into understanding how keen the senses of werecreatures must be in order to recognize someone not quite of their kind, regardless of what form they are in. On more than one occasion, this belief has been upheld and even fortified. Yet, on others, the creatures have seemed absolutely unaware of another's presence or specific phenotype. Does this mean that some werebeasts have the power to make the determination while others do not? I cannot say, but I maintain that this ability is a highly dangerous quality for, if a lycanthrope is able to detect the presence of others of its kind, how unlikely is it that it will *not* be able to detect a werehunter?



## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY



### Relationships Between Lycanthropes and Humanity

In its most basic terms, the relationship between lycanthropes and humans (or any humanoid race) is one of hunter and the hunted, predator and prey. Yet there are some interesting twists and complexities to the relationship that belie this apparent simplicity.

First and foremost, all lycanthropes I have encountered consider themselves undeniably superior to other races. As discussed in Chapter I, most of these creatures consider themselves to be the next logical step in evolution beyond humanity. Even those who do not fully embrace the evolutionary view believe that their ability to change shape and their immunity to nonmagical weapons make them definitely superior.

Still, many lycanthropes evince a need for mankind as more than handy prey. These are the werebeasts whose goals and desires extend to more than finding their next meal. Those lycanthropes that do feel a need beyond that of food are hardly ever creative; they can produce nothing, neither works of art nor items of practicality. Their rapacious natures inhibit, distort, and finally destroy what finer impulses might run through their veins. Instead, they must depend on humanity to provide for their material needs. Similarly, those werebeasts that desire repute and notoriety are dependent on humans simply because they need a means to achieve that end.

Werebeasts that infiltrate human society generally do so for multiple reasons. The first, of course, is to surround themselves with a food source. The second, however, relates to security. A lycanthrope that successfully maintains its subterfuge is safer from hunters than is one living in the wilderness—or so I have concluded. If the disguised werebeast has properly infiltrated the society, it will have a group of “supporters.” These people know and deal with the lycanthrope, yet are unaware of its true nature; they will, consciously or

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

unwittingly, help defuse any suspicion that their associate is actually a ravening monster. A lycanthrope that has successfully infiltrated a village or town will use its neighbors to defend it from threats, particularly if a group of werehunters arrive in the region. Note that the longer a werebeast has been living in society, the less likely the locals will be to entertain suspicions against it. Although there are other reasons for this, one of the central motivations is that few people like to entertain the possibility that they may have been very wrong about someone. . . . This unwillingness to consider the unpleasant has caused the death of more than one hapless villager.

### Werebeast-led Groups

**A**lthough it is attractive and reassuring to think so, werebeasts have no monopoly on evil or ill will. There are those individuals who would not hesitate to knowingly throw in their lot with a lycanthrope. Fortunately, this situation is rare. But, when the condition does arise, the suffering and woe it can promote is considerable.

I am thinking specifically of a small settlement that used to exist in northern Nova Vaasa—a large village known as Mel Fira. Some decades ago, an ambitious wererat moved into the village disguised as a human merchant. Over a period of months, he picked out those residents of Mel Fira who were evil of heart, who were willing to bring woe to others to satisfy their own desires. To these individuals, the wererat finally revealed its true nature. If these individuals would work with it, the werebeast promised, they would enjoy wealth and personal power beyond their imagining. According to my sources, only one person out of the dozen approached refused the wererat's offer; of course, the lycanthrope killed her on the spot.

The wererat's band quickly took control of the village. The government was already corrupt, but this band raised matters to new

heights of depravity. Throughout this period, the wererat brought more of its kind—also masquerading as humans—to Mel Fira. Apparently, none of the members of the creature's original band knew the true nature of these "new arrivals," believing instead that they were other human comrades of the wererat.

Although the townsfolk were unaware that there were wererats in their midst, they did not long remain ignorant of the presence of lycanthropes in the vicinity. Mysterious disappearances and deaths were on the rise, and various witnesses reported seeing twisted, almost-human shapes that could only be werebeasts. The wererats were careful, however, sharing the kills they made. Each creature needed only about two pounds of meat a day, and enough prime flesh to sate several wererats could be "harvested" from even the smallest human victim. The werebeasts were also careful not to spread their lycanthropy, which would undeniably prove the nature of the threat to the town.

The village government, under the sway of the wererats by this time, constantly acted to sow dissension and confusion, to allay people's fears, to cast doubt on the belief that the deaths were the acts of lycanthropes, and to prevent the villagers from taking any concerted action. Any strong leaders who arose among the uncontrolled populace "coincidentally" fell victim to the "mysterious monster" threatening the village.

Finally, someone suspected what was occurring and managed to get word to a small band of adventurers who were currently traveling through the region. This group, which included several magic-armed warriors, quickly saw the true situation and identified the original wererat and its human followers. They did not suspect that there might be more of the creatures in Mel Fira, however.

The final act of this tragedy took place in a general town meeting, at which the visiting adventurers accused the central figure of being a wererat. Rather than denying it, the creature

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

*The hour of transformation is at hand. . . . I feel the bite of my own teeth as my mouth distorts and fangs emerge between suddenly hard lips. My hands tremble as they twist and curve into claws that make a mockery of human fingernails. My skin prickles and crawls with an unholy fervor as bristles of jet hair emerge across my body.*

*And—O!—the stench of it all! The choking, putrid smell that is beyond description! The charnal smell of dried blood and burnt hair corrodes my nostrils as my face contorts into that of a werewolf. The rank smell of transformation haunts my waking hours, and it invades my dreams as well. I cannot rid myself of the fetid odor: it is driving me mad.*

*The waxen moon rises above the line of trees surrounding, sheltering me, and I fall to all fours. The hour of evil is at hand, and I must succumb to what is now my nature.*

*I know now the shape of madness, of ravening insanity, and it is me!*

—Anonymous

transfigured into its man-beast form. Simultaneously, some eight or so other “townsfolk” also transfigured, causing absolute panic. The ensuing chaos culminated in a fire that virtually razed the village. Many townsfolk died, as did several human associates of the wererat, a couple of lycanthropes, and all but one or two of the adventurers. Most of the wererats escaped into the surrounding wilderness, but not before attempting to infect as many innocents as possible with their dread affliction. Mel Fira effectively ceased to exist that night and has never been rebuilt. The region where the village used to stand is considered one of ill omen, if not cursed. Although I have no firm evidence, I fear that the wererat that started the entire debacle escaped with its life. It may well be repeating its actions in another village.

The point of this story is to illustrate the vulnerability humans possess. Most men revere, and will gladly follow, any creature that proves itself more powerful than they. This theory also applies to demihumans and those of humanoid origins. Since a wereboar, for example, is considerably more intelligent and powerful than an average goblin, the lycanthrope would have little difficulty taking over leadership of a band of the small humanoids, should it so desire.

Lycanthropes typically consider humanoids to be even lower forms of life than humans, which are already inferior to themselves. There is no reason, however, why they cannot suppress their distaste and condescension if it suits their purposes. Humanoid followers do not offer the same potential for cunning and guile as do human devotees, but they *do* represent excellently expendable troops that can be used (and used *up*) in combat.

### Infiltrating Society

It is sad but true that it is almost more difficult for a real person to become an accepted member of a town than it is for a werebeast to infiltrate the same society. Most townsfolk or villagers are highly suspicious of strangers. Initially, both “candidates”—a real human and a werebeast in human form—are on an even basis. Few normal humans are as skilled social adepts as are most true lycanthropes, however. A human expresses his own personality, and it is a fact of life that not everyone is going to *like* that personality.

Lycanthropes, too, have their own personalities . . . but, almost from birth, they have learned to *suppress* their true manners and emotions. They have learned to watch the reactions of the humans around them and to tailor their delivery to make those reactions as palatable as possible.

A werebeast dissembling as a human might make an ambiguous comment about elves to the human farmer it meets. When the farmer

# A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

expresses distrust of all nonhumans, the werebeast echoes the sentiment—tailoring the intensity of its opinion to match the emotional climate of the farmer. Since werebeast and farmer now have something in common—bigotry toward nonhumans—the lycanthrope is well on the way to earning the farmer's trust and even friendship. Obviously, this technique must be used in a subtle manner, particularly in group situations, where not everyone will share the same outlook. The basis remains the same, however. Lycanthropes are masters of this skill.

One characteristic I have noted among natives of more remote locales is the tendency not to ask questions whose answers might be disturbing. These people prefer not to reflect upon mysteries, the bases of which might be too frightening to contemplate. (Frankly, this is an attitude I find altogether frustrating and impossible to understand.) This tendency—to shy away from “things man was not meant to know,” to paraphrase what one old man shouted at me once—easily works to the benefit of lycanthropes. Once an individual—human, lycanthrope, or something else—has earned a level of superficial trust and acceptance, it is frequently free of any subsequent suspicion. People will not pursue nagging doubts, preferring instead to ignore them. An annoying—and often deadly—human trait, I'm afraid, but one that the werehunter must keep in mind when dealing with townsfolk.

It is, perhaps, fortunate in some ways that there are always new arrivals to Darkon and other lands. Most of these new souls have not learned this tendency to shy away from unpleasant possibilities. Without such individuals who still maintain a natural level of curiosity, lycanthropes would have an even easier time infiltrating human society than they do already. Perhaps their fresh outlooks can excite the jaded townsfolk into a higher regard for safety and life.

## Obtaining Skills and Abilities

Perhaps the most successful lycanthropic infiltrators in society have the ability of which I am about to describe. Apparently, or so I have been told, certain true lycanthropes have been able to learn the skills and abilities normally allotted only to those people who have dedicated themselves to pursuing a career. In other words, certain lycanthropes have learned the skills specific to trained warriors, rogues, mages, and perhaps even priests.

This possibility terrifies me, I must admit. I draw solace only from the fact that I have yet to encounter such a skilled werebeast, which leads me to believe this potential is exceptionally rare. I pray that my thinking on this is clear and not clouded by the human tendency to ignore unpleasanties.

*“You call us the beast,” the lycanthrope said, stroking its handsome human face. “You say we are dark, twisted reflections of you. Is that not so?”*

*I had to nod in agreement.*

*“Yet we see things differently,” the creature continued, musingly. “We see ourselves as the next logical progression, the next step above humans. Tell me,” it said, leaning forward, “you have the beast, the rage within your soul, do you not?” It waited not for my answer. “Of course you do,” it stated. “‘Overpowering rage,’ is that not a common human phrase? That describes when the beast within you is beyond your control.*

*“Such is not the case with me. I am the beast, the beast is me. And thus it is always my will, not an inadequately-leashed beast, that is in control.” He smiled.*

*“Now, for example.” And with that, the creature began the transfiguration. . . .*

— From the personal journal  
of Dr. Van Richten

# A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY

## Character Class Skills

Generally speaking, no more than 5% of true lycanthropes—and possibly a lower percentage than that, at the DM's option—should be able to learn *any* character class skills. Of those that can learn these skills, the most common character class is warrior (note that werebeasts *can't* become specialized subclasses). The rationale is that these creatures are physically fit and highly aggressive, two of the prime characteristics of good warriors. Some lycanthropes lean toward the rogue class (most notably wererats) since the characteristics of this class fit in well with their sly and manipulative nature.

Certain lycanthropes could conceivably become wizards or priests, but this should be *exceptionally* rare—perhaps only one-tenth of those lycanthropes capable of learning class skills. Both of these classes require much more introspection, cerebration, and self-discipline than the majority of werebeasts could muster. Lycanthrope clerics will, obviously, devote themselves to deities whose precepts match their own outlook on life. Good lycanthropes are likely to be priests of forest deities or guardian deities. Evil lycanthropes would be priests of storms or war.

Psionicist lycanthropes are likely to be even more rare an occurrence than the mage or priest werebeast. If the Dungeon Master is willing to permit these creatures into his or her campaign, they are only allowed to study the psychometabolic, psychokinetic, and telepathic disciplines.

Note that lycanthropes can use their character class skills when they are in human or man-beast form *only*.

The following table lists the character classes open to the most common types of werebeasts, along with the maximum level the creature can attain. If a particular class doesn't appear for a creature, it is incapable of learning that class. The order in which the classes appear indicates their relative

frequency. DMs can also use the information in the table to extrapolate for additional phenotypes of lycanthrope.

Table VI: Allowable Character Classes

Phenotype	Potential Character Classes (Maximum Levels)
Werebadger	Warrior (3rd), priest (2nd)
Werebat	Rogue (4th), wizard (3rd), psionicist (2nd)
Werebear	Ranger (3rd), wizard (3rd), priest (3rd)
Wereboar	Warrior (3rd), druid (2nd)
Wrecrocodile	Warrior (4th), priest (3rd)
Werefox	Rogue (2nd), bard (6th), illusionist (4th), psionicist (3rd)
Werejackal	Warrior (3rd), wizard (2nd)
Wererat	Rogue (6th), wizard* (3rd), psionicist (2nd)
Wereraven	Ranger (3rd), wizard* (6th), psionicist (4th)
Weresial	Warrior (3rd), rogue (2nd), psionicist (2nd)
Wereshark	Warrior (3rd), priest (4th)
Weretiger	Warrior (6th), priest (4th), druid (4th), illusionist (5th)
Werewolf	Warrior (3rd), wizard (2nd)

\* These werebeasts can become specialist mages.

None of the lycanthropic phenotypes listed in this table get the THACO or Hit Dice size advantages for their class. However, they do get the best of both saving throw values, proficiencies (weapon and nonweapon), and other specialized class skills (such as spellcasting).

All werebeasts pay *twice* the normal Experience Point values to advance in levels. This reflects the fact that the self-discipline required for training doesn't come easily to these creatures.

Individual DMs can decide whether dual-classed or multiclassed lycanthropes are possible. If so, they should be even rarer than lycanthropic wizards, priests, or psionicists.

## Chapter IV: THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE



*he was a charming lady, to be sure, and not at all the shy creature we had expected our old friend Edward to marry. Even though she was expecting, and very near her term, she showed me an extraordinary degree of hospitality. Still, some memories of that visit were quite unsettling.*

*Here is one such example: You have no doubt heard that women who*

*are with child may experience cravings for strange foodstuffs—pickled vegetables and the like. I was still surprised, however, when one night—unable to sleep—I was walking the house and found the lady, my hostess, in the kitchen, gnawing hungrily on a haunch of raw meat!*

—From a letter penned by Rasten Fefoeg

Pathologic lycanthropy, the form acquired through a werebeast's attack, is a blight unequalled in its horror. In this chapter I shall focus on the nature and stages of this accursed condition, from its contraction to (the gods be willing) its cure.

### Susceptibility

**T**hough I have used the word "human" to describe the primary form of werebeasts, it is well known that the so-called demihuman races also may contract the scourge of lycanthropy. Specifically, elves, half-elves, gnomes, halflings, and dwarves are all susceptible to the fury of the beast. But what about other races? Can they, too, acquire this heinous affliction?

It is an interesting question, and one that allows for no simple, straightforward answer.

In theory at least, any living, fully mammalian, intelligent creature that matches the humanoid body-form can succumb to the dreaded lycanthropic affliction. This is not to say that *any* intelligent creature with two arms and two legs may be stricken. In my estimation, creatures who are a great deal larger than humans (such as giants) do not acquire lycanthropy. Further, creatures who are inherently and highly magical seem immune, as do beings whose biochemical processes differ significantly from our own (thus presenting a hostile environment to the contagion). Of late I have begun to study certain fiendish and otherworldly creatures who truly are the stuff of nightmares, come to haunt us in the day. They, too, appear to be completely immune to lycanthropy.

This immunity does not extend to any of the more common humanoid races, however. If my research is correct, the following races are indeed susceptible to lycanthropy: orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, kobolds, ogres, bugbears, gnolls, and even the dark-natured elves, who dwell far below our surface world.

These humanoid races do not appear to be *uniformly* susceptible to all werebeast attacks, however. To a human or demihuman victim, the phenotype of the werebeast who transmits the contagion does not affect the viability of the disease. (A human attacked by a werebear is no less likely to acquire lycanthropy than a human attacked by a werewolf.) In contrast, other humanoid races appear more likely to acquire lycanthropy from just one or more particular phenotypes, while infected folk representing other phenotypes are unknown to their race. Often, the humanoid's own lore and beliefs support this theory. Kobolds, for example, are particularly fearful of werebats. In my opinion, this fear is not unfounded, but it is the result of actual experience. While I have never seen a kobold take the shape of a wolf, I have indeed seen several fall prey to a werebat's assault.

## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

The following table lists one or more phenotypes to which a major race is vulnerable. (Note that these entries encompass racial varieties, such as derro [dwarves], aquatic elves, etc.) If a member of the race is wounded by such a lycanthrope, the odds of infection are as usual: 2% per hit point of damage sustained.

The table also provides a “nonsusceptibility percentage.” This applies if a member of the race is wounded by a lycanthrope *not* of the phenotypes listed. The DM should roll 1d100 and compare the result to this percentage. If the roll is equal to or less than the stated percentage, the usual process is used, based on a 2% chance of infection per hit point sustained. If the roll is greater than the stated percentage, however, the victim is immune to this particular lycanthrope (i.e., the individual attacker, *not* the entire phenotype).

Table VII: Susceptibility by Race

Race	Infective Phenotypes	Nonsusceptibility Percentage
Bugbear	Werewolf, wereboar	75%
Drow	Werebat	95%
Dwarf	All	—
Elf (non-drow)	All	—
Gnoll	Werefox, werebear	70%
Gnome	All	—
Goblin	Werebat, wererat	90%
Half-elf	All	—
Half-orc	All	—
Halfling	All	—
Hobgoblin	Wereboar, wererat	80%
Human	All	—
Kender	All	—
Kobold	Werebat, wererat	95%
Ogre	Werebear, wereboar, werewolf	65%
Orc	Wereboar, wererat	70%
Sahuagin	Wereshark, wereseal	55%
Troll	Werebear, werewolf	50%

**Example:** Two trolls are attacked by werebats—*not* a phenotype to which trolls are specifically susceptible. The nonsusceptibility percentage for trolls is 50%. Each troll is attacked by one werebat. The DM rolls 1d100 for “Troll A,” with a result of 45. Troll A is susceptible to the specific werebat attacking it, and its chance of contracting lycanthropy is 2% per hit point of damage suffered. For Troll B, however, the DM rolls 70. This troll is totally immune to infection from the werebat currently attacking it. Should the werebat attacking Troll A switch its attention to Troll B, however, the DM would have to repeat the d100 roll for Troll B.

# THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

## Vestiges of Race

**S**omewhat predictably, an infected person's race can affect the appearance of the werebeast's secondary aspect. For example, lycanthropes of races that possess certain special abilities or characteristics might retain those characteristics even after transfiguration.

Below, I have set out what little I have learned about this topic. Note that these observations are far from exhaustive, and far from categorical. I may well be mistaken on several of the points raised, or perhaps the situation is more variable than I believe it to be.

**Bugbear:** To the best of my knowledge, infected bugbears have no unusual characteristics in animal or hybrid form.

**Drow:** It would seem that drow lycanthropes retain something of their resistance to magic, regardless of form.

All drow lycanthropes have an innate 25% magical resistance while in animal or hybrid form. In drow form, they have the standard magical resistance described in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™* (50% plus 2% per level).

**Dwarf:** Lycanthropic dwarves seem to retain their ability to detect sloping passages, regardless of the aspect they hold. [Van Richten is correct.]

**Elf:** In any form, infected elves appear highly resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells.

Regardless of their aspect, infected elves are 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells.

**Gnoll:** No "gnollish" traces are apparent.

**Gnome:** The animal or hybrid form of an infected gnome is generally slightly smaller than the average for a particular phenotype. This size differential seems to be less than the

natural variability of werebeasts, however.

**Goblin:** Like gnomes, goblins infected with lycanthropy tend to exhibit a smaller-than-average animal or "gnome-beast" form. Again, this differential is still less than the natural variability among individuals.

**Half-Elf:** Nothing distinguishes the infected half-elf from others of the same phenotype.

**Halfling:** Halfling-based lycanthropes are generally smaller than the average for a particular phenotype. However, this slight difference is not a telltale sign of race.

**Hobgoblin:** No special hobgoblin traits are apparent after transfiguration.

**Human:** Human lycanthropes have no unusual characteristics (since this is the race against which all others are compared).

**Kender:** Kender-based lycanthropes are generally smaller than the average for a particular phenotype. As with gnomes and goblins, this differential is less than the natural variability among individuals.

**Kobold:** Among members of a particular phenotype, the animal or hybrid form of an infected kobold is always smaller than average. This size differential is slightly greater than natural variability.

**Ogre:** An infected ogre in animal or hybrid form tends to be slightly larger than other members of the same phenotype. The ogre werebeast also seems considerably more resilient and more resistant to damage.

Infected ogres gain an additional Hit Die in their secondary aspect.

**Orc:** Lycanthropes based on orcs appear to have no unusual characteristics in their secondary aspect, except, perhaps, an unusual propensity for drooling.

**Sahuagin:** I've observed no unusual racial traits.

**Troll:** Troll lycanthropes are generally larger than average for their phenotype when in animal or hybrid form. Also, they seem at least



## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

partially able to regenerate damage inflicted by weapons to which the creatures are vulnerable. Thus, werebeast-hunters might face the daunting spectacle of a troll-based werewolf *spontaneously healing* wounds inflicted by magical or silver weapons.

Infected trolls regenerate 1 hit point per round while in animal or hybrid form. When they are reduced to 0 hit points, however, they are dead. (Their regenerative ability isn't *that* good.) In primary aspect, the normal rules apply. Thus, they regenerate their normal 3 points per round, and can be slain only by fire or acid.

### Conservation of Phenotype

**T**he vast majority of victims infected with lycanthropy will match the phenotype of the creature that infected them. I have heard, however, of the occasional “sport”—a case where this “conservation of phenotype” is not upheld. For example, a person infected by a werewolf might transfigure into a werefox, or into a wererat, or into another phenotype altogether.

Several explanations for such flukes are possible. First, the number of cases is so small (fewer than one in several thousand) that this could well be a mistake in observation. Secondly, it is possible that the victims were actually infected by *two* different lycanthropes. (This is discussed under “Multiple Infections” below.) And thirdly, perhaps a curse—i.e., the maledictive form of lycanthropy—was involved.

### Conservation of Triggers

**A** person who acquires lycanthropy from another infected werebeast will share the same trigger condition as the monster that defiled him. This is common knowledge.

What, then, about the victims of *true* lycanthropes? True werebeasts traditionally

have complete control over matters of transfiguration, and thus have no trigger condition. Where, then, do their victims' triggers come from?

I propose that each and every lycanthrope, whether true or infected, has an innate trigger condition associated with it. However, this trigger is exhibited, or “expressed,” only by infected werebeasts. It is a fact that victims infected by a particular true lycanthrope will share the same trigger condition, which argues to me that the infecting creature passes it on as part of the affliction.

Furthermore, true lycanthropes who are siblings pass on the *same* trigger condition to their victims. This does not mean, however, that a person infected by a true lycanthrope can expect to suffer the same trigger as victims of that lycanthrope's parents. The litter of two true lycanthropes may carry the father's trigger, the mother's trigger, or an entirely new trigger. It seems inescapable, however, that with any pairing of true werebeasts, all resulting offspring will transmit the same trigger condition.

### Multiple Infections

**T**hough rare, it is possible for a single victim to be attacked by—and be infected by—two or more werebeasts of a different phenotype. Personally, I know of five such cases. For example, a person might be infected by both a werebear and a werewolf. What is the result of such multiple infections? What animal aspect does the victim assume upon transfiguration?

It is interesting to note that virtually no folktales or myths discuss this matter, and those few which do mention the issue provide little detail. I know of only two exceptions. Both tales originated from the same region (Kartakass), but each presents a different solution to the puzzle. The first story claims that a multiple infection results in a deranged lycanthrope of mixed phenotype (an unholy

## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

blend of bear and wolf in my preceding example), which immediately and invariably flies into bloodlust upon transfiguration. The other tale asserts that the phenotype of the last lycanthrope to infect the victim is dominant, and that the afflicted person will always transfigure into this phenotype, regardless of the time elapsed between infections.

My own research has proved to my satisfaction that the second tale is closer to the truth. Even so, there are complexities that are not even hinted at by this story.

The fate of a person infected by more than one phenotype appears to hinge on a single factor: whether or not the victim has undergone his first transfiguration. If he has not, the *last* contagion to enter the victim's system becomes dominant. Specifically, it determines the phenotype of the victim.

Let us imagine, for example, that a man is first infected by a werebear. Soon thereafter—before the man has ever changed shape—a werewolf attacks and infects him. The unfortunate will take the form of a wolf (or man-wolf hybrid), not that of a bear.

This does not mean, however, that the contagion transmitted by the werebear has no effect whatsoever. Though the man will never resemble a bear, the trigger condition carried by the werebear *does* apply. Instead of causing a change to bear shape, however, the trigger brings about the transfiguration into a wolf (or man-wolf hybrid). Thus a victim of multiple infections will be susceptible to *all* the triggers associated with the lycanthropes that infected him, though he will assume only the shape dictated by the most recent infection. (Again, this situation occurs only if the multiple infections were acquired before the victim's first transfiguration.)

And what if the victim is infected *after* his first transfiguration? Once I deemed such multiple infections impossible. In the overwhelming majority of cases, an infected lycanthrope simply cannot acquire another version of lycanthropy after the beast within

has been unleashed. I have recently encountered an exception, however. The unfortunate involved was first attacked by a werewolf, and he became a wolf at the next full moon. Thereafter, he acquired a second infection from a wereboar, with the equinox as his trigger condition. The victim responded to that trigger too, becoming a boar, which was subsequently slain with an oaken spear.

Note that an individual infected multiple times need only be cured *once* to be free of lycanthropy. It does not matter how many times he was infected. This is fortunate, considering how arduous the curative process is, and considering the unlikelihood of its success.

### Infecting a True Lycanthrope

In my travels, several people have asked me whether a true, or heritable, werebeast attacked by another lycanthrope would suffer any effects akin to the infection that humans suffer. It is an interesting question, and one to which I do not have a categorical answer.

In all likelihood, such an infection is not possible. I believe that any lycanthrope who attacks a true werebeast will inflict physical damage, and that is all. Yet, from time to time, folktales spark my interest in the subject. I have heard several stories concerning true lycanthropes that do not have *complete* control over their transfiguration. Like other true werebeasts, these creatures can change aspect at will. But sometimes they also will transfigure *against* their will, in response to some external trigger condition. They can regain whatever form they wish—if not immediately, then within a score of heartbeats—yet even a momentary shift can destroy a life-long masquerade.

Are these creatures true lycanthropes that have been partially infected by *other* lycanthropes, contracting their attackers' trigger conditions? I cannot say for sure. Perhaps the loss of control stems from another

# THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

cause entirely. Yet, it is an interesting hypothesis, and one that I intend to investigate over the next several years.

## Triggers

I have made something of a small study into the conditions, or *triggers*, that cause *transfiguration in infected lycanthropes*. Such triggers typically fall into two large categories, which I have dubbed “symbolic” and “physiological.”

Allow me to define these terms. Symbolic triggers are events that have some allegorical or figurative connection to the nature of lycanthropy in general and to the transfiguration itself. Physiological triggers are events that cause some change in the lycanthrope’s body—a change which in turn could reasonably be expected to initiate a more drastic physical alteration. Below I shall describe each category, as well as those exceptional triggers which refuse to comply with either definition.

## Symbolic Triggers

Many of the so-called “symbolic” triggers define or represent change. They symbolize a transition, often drastic, from one state to another. So powerful and so magical is this symbolism that when some facet of the environment undergoes a change, so too does the infected lycanthrope. An archetypal example is a sunset or sunrise—the transition from day to night, or from night to day. Sleep is another symbolic trigger, for it represents an altered state of consciousness and the journey from reality to the realm of nightmares.

However, not every symbolic trigger represents a clear change from one strictly defined condition to its antithesis. Other symbolic triggers reflect a more general change or transition. For instance, in most lands the changing phases of the moon serve to measure the passage of time, and the moon

itself has often come to *symbolize* passing time. Thus it should come as little surprise to learn that a particular phase of the moon acts as trigger for many werebeasts. According to popular legends, the full moon is the archetypal trigger. I have found, however, that virtually every phase of the moon—from new to full, through one-quarter waxing through three-quarters waning—successfully triggers certain werebeasts.

In like manner, other conditions symbolic of passing time can act as lycanthropic triggers. Some werebeasts respond to changing seasons. Others respond to astronomical events, such as eclipses or the movements of wandering stars. Even the first snowfall or another “weather landmark” may trigger a particular creature.

I must emphasize that in the previous examples, the victim need not actually witness the symbolic trigger for its effect to take hold. In other words, the stereotypical werewolf does not have to see the full moon to become a ravaging beast; the simple fact that the moon is full triggers the change. Thus, a werewolf could not prevent disaster by locking himself in a windowless basement for three nights each month—unless, of course, those locks were exceedingly secure.

Symbolic triggers also include conditions or events which somehow represent the death and destruction left in the wake of a lycanthrope. Such triggers are comparatively rare, however (that is, few infected lycanthropes respond to them). Examples include seeing the color red, which is symbolic of blood, or black, which represents death. Other examples are as follows: being plunged into total darkness, which is again symbolic of death; seeing or smelling blood; seeing combat or other overt violence; witnessing or experiencing *emotional* or covert violence; and passing through or by a graveyard.

I recognize that some of these triggers could alternatively be classed as physiological events. For example, is the scent of blood a

# THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

symbolic trigger, or does it stimulate the hunger of the beast within and thus qualify as physiological? And is being plunged into darkness symbolic, or is the natural surprise and fear it enjoins the actual trigger? I do not have all the answers. Ultimately, however, such distinctions do not appear as important as the recognition that such triggers exist.

## Physiological Triggers

Compared to symbolic triggers, these conditions or events are more direct, less metaphysical, and hence easier to understand. Many of them engender strong and clearly defined changes in the body, even when that body is *not* infected with lycanthropy. For example, both extreme fear and extreme anger are common physiological triggers. Even among normal humans, both conditions bring about profound changes in the way the body functions. Muscles tense, pupils dilate, and the

heart quickens its pace. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, and blood is redirected toward specific muscles or organs. In essence, the body undergoes significant changes to prepare itself for fight or flight.

It seems to me quite logical that such profound changes can and do trigger the transfiguration in some werebeasts. Perhaps one of the natural chemicals which flood the bloodstream reacts with the infective agent, causing it to initiate a metamorphosis. If my interpretation is correct, then the action of such triggers can be explained solely in chemical and biological terms.

Let us look at several other common physiological triggers. Strong emotions of any kind, as well as what we may euphemistically label "intense passion," cause noticeable physiological changes in the body. According to some sages, injury or even intense physical pain causes the body to release certain natural painkillers into the blood. I see no reason why



# THE PATHOLOGIC SOURCE

any of these chemical changes could not trigger the transfiguration.

Perceptive readers will ask themselves a question that counts heavily against my arguments above: Why does each lycanthrope generally have only one trigger?

I fear I have no answer. If, as I have argued above, the transfiguration is triggered by predominately chemical processes, it would seem logical that *all* such processes would trigger *all* lycanthropes. In other words, since fear and anger have such similar physiological effects, why are some lycanthropes triggered only by one and not the other? Why are so very, very few triggered by both? Obviously, there may be much more to the matter of triggers than simple chemistry and biology.

## Other Triggers

I have recorded some trigger conditions that do not fit easily into either the symbolic or physiological groups. Some examples follow: seeing a particular animal, plant, or object; hearing a particular sound, word, phrase, or snatch of music; or casting or being the target of a particular class of magical spell (frequently healing magic).

To focus on specific instances, if a lycanthrope were triggered by sighting its own phenotypic animal (for example, a werewolf sighting a wolf), that would qualify as a symbolic trigger. However, not all animal-related triggers are so cut and dried. Where is the symbolism involved in a wererat transfiguring when it sees a sea gull (as was the case with a merchant in Souragne)?

Similarly, if a lycanthrope were triggered by a musical melody that had great emotional significance for him (perhaps bringing back happy or sad memories of childhood), that would be a physiological trigger. Yet I met one unfortunate fellow who became a raging boar each time he heard Vistani violin music, despite the fact that he had never heard such music before his first transfiguration!

DMs can specify that *any* event acts as a trigger, from reading a book to being kissed, and from hearing a thrush chirp to being struck on the head with a mallet. However, in the interest of game balance, Dungeon Masters should keep the following points in mind.

First, if a trigger event is very common (e.g., a sunset) or involves large numbers of adept people (e.g., mass combat), it's not likely that a lycanthrope will survive for very long, unless it's exceptionally powerful. For example, if the local blacksmith becomes a werewolf every time he touches iron, it won't take the local folk long to realize that something's amiss and to do something about it.

Second, if the infected lycanthrope is a player character, it's doubly important not to saddle the PC with a trigger that occurs too often or can't be avoided. Remember, each time the PC transfigures, the player loses control of the character. Frequent trigger conditions can get frustrating very fast.

As a guideline, triggers for infected PCs should probably occur no more than once or twice a month.

## Lycanthropic Control

There are many folktales describing how a true lycanthrope automatically enjoys a form of innate control over all those infected lycanthropes it creates. These tales tell of ravening packs of werebeasts marauding through the countryside under the control of their true lycanthrope master.

Although tales attribute this power to all true lycanthropes, my own research indicates that it is far from universal. Certainly, some true werebeasts seem able to enslave—or at least guide the actions of—those infected victims they create. But by no means all, and perhaps not even the majority, enjoy this dark ability.

## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

For those lycanthropes that can control their “infected progeny” (if I may use such a term), there seem to be several universal characteristics of this power. First, the true lycanthrope can control its progeny only when they are in secondary aspect. The creature has no influence whatsoever on their behavior while they are in human form.

Secondly, the controlling werebeast must itself be in its own secondary or tertiary aspect—that is, animal or man-beast—to effect such a control. I can only guess why this might be true—a matter of perceived kinship, perhaps—but it seems to hold in all cases I have investigated.

Thirdly, the control seems very tenuous. The controlling lycanthrope can guide its progeny’s actions only in very general terms. It can prompt an attack against a certain target, or prevent one. It can keep its progeny quiet and calm, or send them ravening forth in a fury. Any more precise control appears to be beyond the true lycanthrope’s abilities. As an analogy, the controlling werebeast has about as much control over its pack of progeny as a trusted leader has over a mob of humans. While such a leader can direct broad, unfocused responses, anything more specific is impossible.

These are the elements that all examples of control have in common. Now I shall discuss the factors that can differ from case to case.

In some cases, the true lycanthrope and its progeny can somehow sense each other’s presence. As soon as a progeny creature transfigures into secondary form, it can sense where its creator is (as long as the werebeast is within some reasonable range, such as a *handful of miles*) and will head toward its master at its best speed. Similarly, the true lycanthrope can sometimes sense when its progeny have undergone a transfiguration, and roughly where they are within the same range limit. This ability obviously makes it easier for the progeny to gather into a pack. I would estimate that this occurs in perhaps twenty-five

percent of cases where control exists. In an additional five percent of cases, this “locator sense” is unidirectional, not bi-directional (in other words, the progeny can sense their creator, but not vice versa; or the creator can sense its progeny, but not vice versa).

In certain rare cases, progeny will feel a kind of inexplicable kinship with their creator while *both are in primary human aspect*. Even though the victim does not know why, he will feel a propensity to trust and like the lycanthrope which infected him. Note that this is a propensity only; unless the creator behaves in an appropriate manner, the tendency will vanish over time. I have heard of one case where this propensity for trusting the creator werebeast was as strong and wide-ranging as a *charm* spell. This is based entirely on hearsay, however, and could well be incorrect.

Further tales describe how certain lycanthropes can trigger the transfiguration in all their progeny. The way most tales describe this ability, the true werebeast must be in the presence of its progeny, and then it simply has to *will* them to change. I have come to the conclusion that this is totally incorrect. No werebeast that I have studied can mentally command its progeny to transfigure. I can understand, however, where these tales come from.

Most true lycanthropes are intelligent, or at the very least, cunning in the extreme. It would not be difficult for a werebeast to discover what condition triggers its progeny. (Recall that each true werebeast seems to imbue all of its infected progeny with the same trigger condition; this was discussed on page 64.) When it has learned what this trigger is, it can certainly use this knowledge to its best advantage. If the trigger happens to be something it can orchestrate, such as hearing a particular sound or phrase of music, it could arrange a nasty surprise for a village by organizing a concert to which its progeny are invited and then making sure the trigger occurs!

## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURCE

Even if the creature has no desire to cause such a catastrophe, knowing the trigger it imbues might well come in handy should it ever be hunted. After all, who has better motivation to hunt down and destroy a werebeast than one of its infected progeny? (Refer to the section “Exterminating the Root” on page 71.) Again, if the trigger is something it can orchestrate, it can turn one of its most fervent foes into an ally. (Hunters who are infected lycanthropes are well advised to take precautions against this stratagem.)

### Detecting Infection

For those who have recently suffered a werebeast attack, or believe they have, a single question becomes of great importance: How do I know whether I’ve acquired lycanthropy? The question is pressing, for no one wants to learn of his affliction *after* the first transfiguration, when the only signs may be the steady loss of family members.

Unfortunately, I can offer little help to such people. To the best of my knowledge, there is no outward sign of infection. Some infected lycanthropes report having experienced a swelling around their wounds immediately following a werebeast’s attack. This suggests that their bodies might actually have been fighting the lycanthropic infection. However, not all infected victims experience this inflammation. More often, in fact, the individuals who experience such initial swelling never exhibit lycanthropy. I have therefore concluded that this inflammation is a symptom of some other infection, or some other mundane condition which may or may not have been transmitted by the werebeast. (Werebeasts are, after all, often filthy, and quite capable of hosting vermin.) It even may be possible that these lucky individuals’ bodies actually destroyed the taint of lycanthropy within them.

Folktales and myths are full of tests for lycanthropic infection. Some make a

modicum of sense. For example, some people swear that dousing a werebeast-inflicted wound with holy water is telling—if the victim experiences intense pain, then he has indeed acquired lycanthropy. Other tests seem totally nonsensical, however. For example, I once saw an old hermit pass a red hen over the prospective victim’s head, to see whether this would make him sneeze. My personal research has confirmed my initial suspicions; none of these peculiar tests has any efficacy whatsoever.

It is said that some powerful forms of divinatory magic can determine whether a victim has been infected. This seems to be a real hit-or-miss affair, however. Certain spells allow the caster to commune with his deity; yet, since in my experience only malign deities can be contacted, any information gained by such a communion is immediately suspect. I have heard that powerful magics such as a *wish* may sometimes determine whether a victim is afflicted with lycanthropy. Yet, since the intents of wishes are so frequently perverted, again the information so gained is highly suspect.

Not all tests regarding a victim’s condition are fruitless, however. Though it is difficult, it is not impossible to determine what event or condition triggers an infected lycanthrope’s transfiguration, provided the first such change has already occurred. Once the individual has transfigured for the first time, some might ask, is the trigger not apparent?

I would say not. If a character’s trigger occurs largely when he is alone—in the middle of the night, for example—then it’s likely that nobody will be there to witness the transfiguration, and he himself will lose all memory of the event. (Such is the nature of the transfiguration; see Chapter I for a more detailed description.)

Secondly, even if the trigger occurs in public, the precise condition need not be obvious. Many environments and situations are complex, with multiple events and conditions

# THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

occurring simultaneously. Which of these multiple stimuli is the actual trigger?

Let us take two examples. An infected lycanthrope encounters a large spider and transfigures to his animal aspect. The obvious conclusion is that his trigger is the presence of large spiders, particularly if this happens several times. Yet, some time later, he encounters a ghost and transfigures again. It now becomes apparent that the trigger was not the spider itself, but in all likelihood the fear he felt on encountering it (assuming he indeed has a phobia of spiders). What's worse, neither spiders nor fear may be the trigger, either.

Here is another example. Imagine a lycanthrope who, so far, has transfigured only during combat. Does this mean that combat is the trigger? Not necessarily. In just such a case, the infected character later changed shape when someone egregiously insulted his heritage. It became apparent that the trigger was not the combat as such, but the rage that combat initiated in the character's soul.

In general, the constraints for divining whether or not the infection is present also apply to determining a trigger condition. Yet it

would seem that the agencies responsible for such matters are less loath to reveal information on trigger conditions. Divinatory magic may still yield lies, half-truths, or evasions; yet there seem to be fewer obstacles to finding the truth in this lesser investigation.

## Curing the Affliction

**C**uring an infected lycanthrope of its affliction is an extremely arduous task. Travelers who claim they hail from distant lands sometimes say the curative process is less taxing in those lands. Never having visited these places, I can say nothing to support or contradict their statements (except, perhaps, that I often view such claims with a healthy dose of skepticism, for I have met no shortage of lost, deluded souls in my travels). At any rate, in every land I have visited during decades of research, the curative process comprises three distinct phases, which are outlined below.

## Exterminating the Root

Before there is even the slightest hope of curing an infected lycanthrope, it is necessary to hunt down and slay the true werebeast that ultimately started the chain of infection. If a true werebeast attacked the infected lycanthrope who is to be cured, then that chain has only two links, and it is sufficient to slay the attacker. Unfortunately, given the infectious nature of the scourge and the difficulty of a cure, the chain is usually much longer. An infected lycanthrope passes its contagion to other victims, and those victims pass it to still others. The person at the end of this horrid chain cannot be cured unless the true lycanthrope who originated the terror is found and slain. Unfortunately, since intermediate links may be killed, this task is never easy.

Tracking down that originator, which I shall refer to henceforth as the progenitor, requires a clever detective. Painstaking research is

If the DM decides that, for story purposes, the condition of a victim should remain unknown, then so it remains. The enigmatic powers of Ravenloft may block any and all attempts to learn whether the victim is infected.

Alternatively, the DM can rule that the dark powers of the demiplane somehow "release" the information, should it enhance the story at hand. Ravenloft is, after all, a place of great despair. If knowledge of one's condition brings about suffering—especially when that suffering is deserved—then the pivotal knowledge may be gained. Note that such "deserved suffering" usually involves a domain's lord, or a character whose greed or shortcomings have somehow led to the infection.



## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

essential, and quite often, so is luck. The victim himself, and all those who know him, must be closely questioned to determine exactly when and where the person was initially infected. One must then track down the creature that infected him, and determine if it is a true werebeast, or itself an infected victim. If the latter, then the process must be repeated.

The task gets progressively more difficult as one approaches the progenitor. By definition, that creature is aware of its condition, as all true lycanthropes are. It can be expected to protect itself, initially from detection and eventually from destruction.

Even if the progenitor is unaware of the attempts to track it down, the sheer length of the chain can be obstacle enough. If only one of the links is something of a traveler—an adventurer, perhaps—then the progenitor could be located great distances from the individual to be cured. If one or more of the links has died in the interim, the chances of success are diminished drastically. The longest chain of contagion I have ever tracked to its conclusion comprised only three links, and that endeavor took several months of unrelenting effort. Ironically, when I eventually identified the progenitor, I discovered that the beast had already been destroyed several days before the individual to be cured had come to me for help. Although I had not known it, I could have proceeded directly to the next step of the cure without hunting the progenitor at all.

This irony brings up a very important point, however. It is *vital* to ensure that the progenitor has in fact been destroyed *before* attempting the next stage of the cure. An afflicted victim has but one chance to escape the blight. If any step has been missed, or imperfectly completed, then the cure will fail and the victim will be doomed to live out the rest of his days as a lycanthrope. There is no recourse, no second chance.

Individuals infected by multiple werebeasts pose a special problem. It is true that an

infected victim need only be cured once; the successful cure removes all taint from his blood and soul. Yet the question remains: which beast (or beasts) is the progenitor? I believe that, for the purpose of the cure, *the* progenitor is the werebeast that last infected the victim before his first transfiguration. It is this beast—the one that determined the victim's phenotype—that must be destroyed. (Of course, if that creature was an infected lycanthrope itself, it is this *beast's chain of contagion that must be tracked to its source.*)

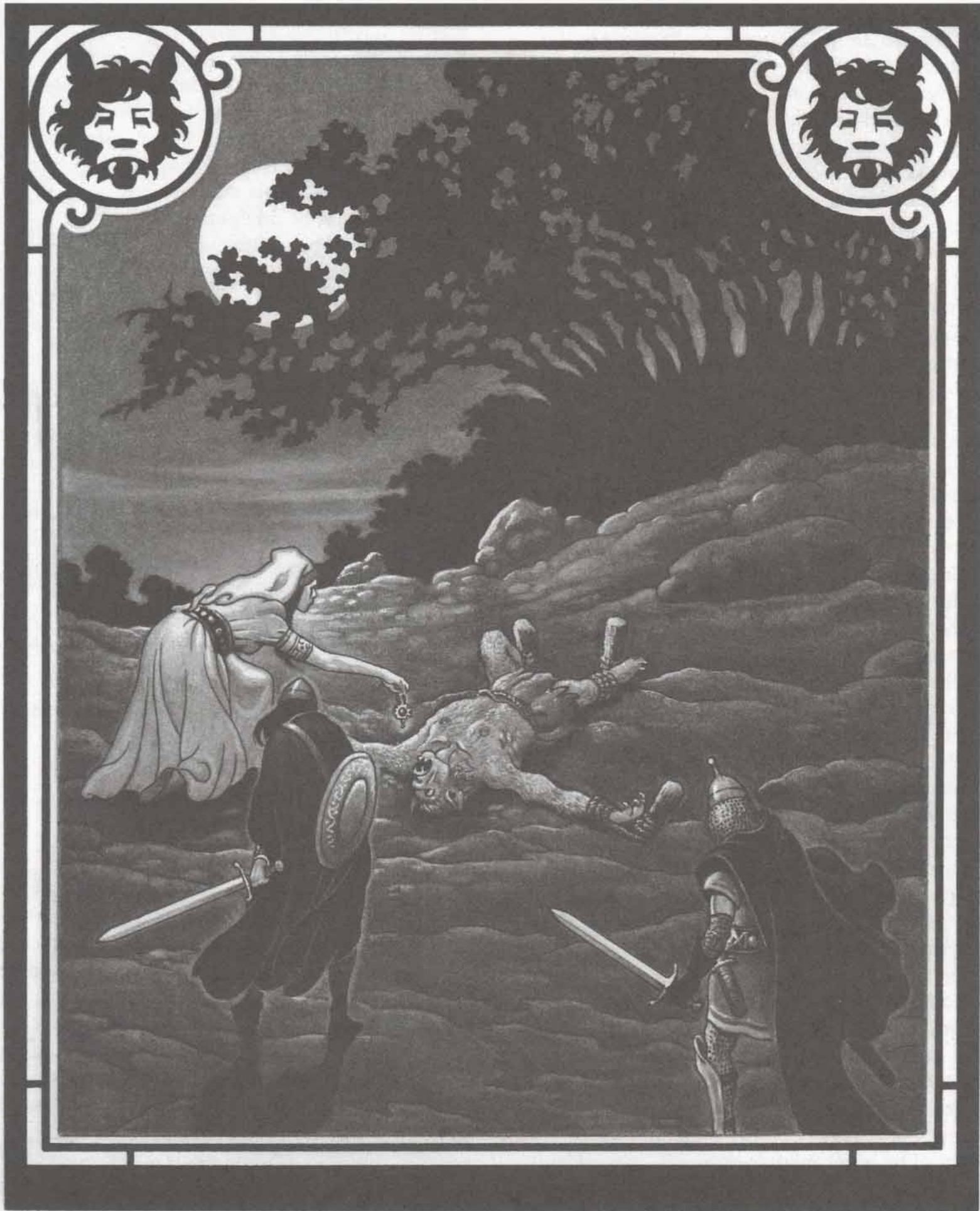
This is my belief about multiple infections, at least. While some evidence bears me out, I have no actual proof, since controlled experiments are out of the question. On both occasions where I have been involved in curing someone with a multiple infection, I assumed that my definition of the progenitor was correct. In one case the cure worked; in the other, it was a failure, although I attribute that catastrophe to another cause (specifically, a failure of will in the victim himself). Was I correct in my definition? I may never know for certain. In the former case, perhaps *each* werebeast that had infected the victim had to be destroyed for a successful cure . . . but only the one I defined as the progenitor still existed at the time of that cure. In the second case, perhaps it was the continued existence of *another* progenitor, and not the victim's weakness of will at all, that led to failure.

To be totally safe, then, one should theoretically hunt down and destroy *all* lycanthropes that infected the victim (or the originators of each chain of contagion). This *obviously complicates matters considerably.*

### Revitalizing the Tarnished Spirit

The second stage of the cure must be performed by the victim himself. He must perform some kind of atonement for the evil he has caused while in secondary aspect. The exact nature of this atonement will vary from case to case.

# THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE



## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

Those individuals who are faithful followers of some religious tradition are often in a better position than others, in that their religion might specify a form of penance. Perhaps their faith has a pious ritual that is always used to atone for wicked acts. If not, then it is my belief that the act of atonement should fit the crime (or crimes) in nature and severity. For example, making provisions to support the children of a man the werebeast has killed would be a good start.

Note that the clerical spell *atonement* cannot be used to speed this process. (The spell must be used separately in the third portion of the cure.) So profound is the curse of lycanthropy that there are no shortcuts on the road to a cure. The victim must determine what is necessary for atonement, and perform it himself. (Certainly others can provide input and even guidance, but the responsibility for success or failure lies solely with the one who would be cured.)

The requirements for atonement will depend on the amount and severity of harm wreaked by the werebeast. A lycanthrope who has suffered under the affliction for decades may have to spend several years atoning. Perhaps he will choose to seek out the surviving relatives of his victims and tend to their material needs while doing everything else in his power to wipe away the emotional and psychological damage he inflicted.

There is no means of determining categorically whether or not the required amount of atonement has been completed. To the best of my knowledge, no magic, divination or otherwise, will yield a solution. The only place an answer may be found is in the heart of the one who would be cured. If he truly *knows* that he has done everything in his power to correct the evil he has done, then the atonement is probably complete.

It is vital to point out, once again, that each victim of lycanthropy has only one chance to remove the contagion. If the cure fails because the victim has done too little to atone for his fell

What constitutes atonement for an infected player character? DMs should decide this matter based on the character's thoughts, beliefs, and emotions, as well as on the character's actions. A PC who cynically goes through the motions of penance is not really atoning for his actions.

DMs might decide beforehand what degree of atonement is required, then leave it entirely up to the player to decide when the character has done enough. If the DM judges that the character has met the criteria, then the cure can proceed; otherwise, the cure will fail. Alternatively, the DM can collaborate with the player—in effect role-playing the character's conscience—to figure out a suitable penance.

The key issue is that characters shouldn't escape the blight too easily. Lycanthropy is a big deal, particularly in Ravenloft, and curing the affliction might turn into a full-fledged campaign all on its own.

acts, then his punishment is to remain a lycanthrope for as long as he lives. Because of this, it is much better to overestimate the degree of atonement required than to underestimate it.

### Removing the Blight

The third and final stage of the cure is the most demanding. It is also the most dangerous, and cannot be accomplished without the aid of others. The actions required severely tax the infected subject and all others involved, both physically and emotionally.

In order for the blight to be lifted, the subject must first assume his secondary form. Thus, the assistants who are actually performing the cure must await, or orchestrate, the subject's trigger condition. (Orchestrating a trigger condition may in itself be quite difficult or dangerous, and may carry with it certain

## THE PATHOLOGIC SCOURGE

regrettable consequences.) Despite the subject's intense desire to be cured, his assistants will gain little cooperation once the transfiguration is underway. A subject in secondary aspect takes on the mentality of the beast . . . and the *last* thing the beast wants is to be "cured!" As a result, the subject should be suitably restrained before the next steps are undertaken.

Assuming the beast within is now the beast without, a priest must next cast three spells on the subject: *atonement*, *cure disease*, and *remove curse*. The spells must be cast in quick succession. (If necessary, more than one priest can cooperate in casting the magic.) The order of spells is symbolic, and hence significant. *Atonement* completes the spiritual revitalization described in the preceding section. *Cure disease* rids the body of the infective agent. And *remove curse* erases the contagion's intangible effects.

The moment the *atonement* spell is complete, the subject's mentality returns to normal, even though he retains his secondary aspect. At this point, he must be freed from all restraints. In addition, he must remain totally motionless until the cure is complete. If he moves so much as one limb, then the cure fails, his animal mentality returns, and he is doomed to remain a lycanthrope until his death.

The *cure disease* spell can be cast without difficulty. As soon as the priest begins the *remove curse* spell, however, the subject's body is racked with agony as he begins a slow metamorphosis, returning to his normal human aspect. Regardless of the alterations which his body is undergoing, and regardless of the burning pain, he must remain completely motionless. This requires exceptional fortitude and strength of will.

If the subject conquers the pain and remains motionless, the transfiguration eventually completes and he is fully human once more. The affliction has been banished.

If the subject cannot adequately control himself, however, and moves, then his human mentality flees, the beast within takes over, and the subject's body re-transfigures into its secondary aspect. The werebeast immediately enters bloodlust. Its first act will probably be an attempt to slay the priest who was inflicting such hideous pain on him (or so the werebeast will interpret it).

What if some earlier portion of the cure was not completed correctly? Everything will appear to proceed normally until the final transfiguration begins. At this point, however, the pain will continue to increase until it becomes totally unbearable. No matter how strong-willed the character is, he cannot withstand the agony. Eventually he will move, and the cure will fail as described above.

I must stress that the agony of the transfiguration is an integral part of the cure, and must be experienced by the subject in its totality. There are certain magics and herbal concoctions that can lessen or even eliminate the sensation of pain. If any of these are used, the cure will automatically fail. The pain will increase sufficiently to overpower the magical or chemical precautions, and the subject will be totally unable to withstand it. For similar and obvious reasons, the subject must be fully conscious during this process.

Van Richten states that the victim must remain motionless when the final transfiguration occurs. In game terms, the character must save vs. death. There's no way to alter or avoid this saving throw, either magically or pharmaceutically.

As always, the DM is encouraged to add custom prerequisites for effecting a cure, based upon the phenotype, the crimes committed, the individual campaign, and so on. The cure for lycanthropy should never be as simple as looking up the answer in a book, whether it be this or any other.

## Chapter V: ON THE HUNT



**B**

*efore I came to this fell place, this land called Barovia, I considered myself a skilled hunter. In the hills surrounding my home, I have successfully hunted all of the naturally occurring predators—bears of various sizes and ferocity, dire wolves whose packs terrorize the local shepherds' flocks, even the great wyvern that wings over the peaks. Yes, I considered myself well versed in the art of the hunt. There was no beast that could get the better of me.*

*Or so I thought until I was engaged to lead that ill-starred hunting trip.*

*Was there any clue, any omen, that should have*

*warned me that what I hunted was no ordinary bear? No, looking back on the events I have to say there was no indication. None, that is, until the members of the party began to die, and I realized that I was not the hunter, but the prey!*

—From the journal of Darzin Morcantha

Knowing the mind of the werebeast is the first rule of the hunt. Both forms of the lycanthrope—true and infected—are equally deadly. However, each has its own mindset, its own view toward mankind. Hence, recognizing which is which can be crucially important.

Pursuit of a true lycanthrope is as much a battle of strategies as it is a contest of blood; the true werebeast has lived with its mutable nature all its life, is accustomed to its predatory nature (if not comfortable with it), and remains ever cognizant of its nature. In contrast, tracking the infected lycanthrope is far more subtle, more cerebral on the hunter's part. The infected creature is either unaware of its bestial aspects or desperately concealing its murderous double life. As a result, seeking one of these pitiable creatures may seem like

hunting two separate prey at the same time. To complicate matters, this creature is curable.

If the two, contrasting mindsets of these monsters were not enough to muddle the hunter's strategy, I must pause and re-emphasize the fact that werebeasts are no more "typical" than vampires or ghosts or liches. Each lycanthrope has its own strengths and weaknesses, both of which are often quite subtle. Hence I return to the axiom by which I began this chapter: *Knowing the mind of the werebeast is the first rule of the hunt.* If this book can be of service to that end, so much the better, but the study of my work is not nearly sufficient to arm even the doughtiest enemy of darkness against the task at hand. Those who hope to survive such a quest *must* search out every report of the creature and follow up every clue. Werebeasts are some of the most violent and ruthless beasts to prowl the land of the Mists. No matter how powerful you are, and no matter how typical the werebeast may seem, failure to seek at least some inkling of the monster's strengths and weaknesses will deprive you of your throat and quite possibly your very humanity!

Enough said; on to observations regarding the two basic stages of a successful hunt: identification and entrapment.

### Identifying the Beast

**K**nowing a werebeast when one sees it may seem obvious enough, especially if the monster occupies either its hybrid or animal form, but the mutability of the creature, plus its intelligence which is sufficient to counter-strategize, forces us to reconsider this issue.

### Hybrid Form

Certainly the human-beast combination, under normal circumstances, is unmistakable if not singularly horrifying. Even the charming and seductive werefox is terrible in her beauty, alluring yet cruel and sadistic. When the werebeast reveals itself in this form, blood is

## ON THE HUNT

almost sure to follow whether the creature is a true or infected lycanthrope. In this aspect the monster entertains no thoughts of stealth, and in this shape it is the most effective killer it can be, calling upon the powers of both its polar forms to achieve its deadly objectives. In short, when one meets a werebeast in hybrid form, one should prepare to kill or be killed—the beast most certainly will.

Indeed, the hybrid aspect seems to be the form in which the lycanthrope most often kills. By far the predominant report of those who have survived an attack by a lycanthrope is that the creature resembled man *and* beast, and was thoroughly horrifying to look upon.

I have conferred with several sages on this matter, and I have arrived upon a few reasonable speculations as to why the lycanthrope might prefer to kill in hybrid aspect. Certainly the man-beast is a more efficient killer, for it enjoys the advantages of both human and animal forms, as I have already stated. Its claw and bite attacks are more instinctive and, thence, more accurate than the swing of a sword, and it can employ multiple attacks in the place of only one. The inhuman creature also threatens its adversaries with a fell disease, which is or should be fairly intimidating to even the most courageous hero. Meanwhile, the hybrid aspect has fingers and an opposable thumb, which are necessary for opening doors, jimmying locked windows, climbing trees and roofs, and wielding a weapon if it proves to be the most effective means to the creature's ends.

In spite of all these legitimate arguments for preferring the hybrid form, though, I think that the real reason lies below the surface. I have the chilling belief—not a certainty, quite, but close—that the beasts prefer this form because of the terrible fear it strikes into the hearts of their prey before they die. The beasts might relish this terror out of some unholy, sadistic joy, or perhaps they, like cats that play with mice before eating them, enjoy or even crave the taste of fear itself.

Whatever the reason, I must return to my

previous warning before proceeding: When you meet the hybrid werebeast, prepare for battle.

The DM can generate more fear in the PCs by withholding their interaction with the hybrid form until the climactic battle. Whether the creature dramatically transforms before their eyes or leaps out of the shadows in all its terrifying glory, for optimum horror save this aspect's role for last.

### Animal Form

I do not believe it is practical to seek to identify a lycanthrope in the company of natural animals. If the creature differs in size or coloring from its natural counterparts, readily recognizing it is not beyond the scope of observant hunters, and most werebeasts realize this, including the infected ones, who are little more than beasts when the curse overcomes them. Conversely, if the lycanthrope is not readily discernable from its natural cousins, then a hunting party might be forced to kill entire populations of natural animals in order to ferret out the monster among them; this is plainly unacceptable, as any ranger or druid will angrily point out.

If the lycanthrope is pathologic, it is possible that the monster could lose so much of its conscious identity that it might actually believe it is a wolf or bear or badger while occupying that particular form. These poor creatures, who may be wholly ignorant of their ailment while they suffer from it, can be easy targets for those who hunt them. Any hunter with the ability to magically speak with, befriend, or control animals may quickly learn through any number of approaches which beast is the monster. However, I hasten to add that most infected lycanthropes retain enough consciousness to understand that they are *not* natural animals, so it is highly unlikely that the hunters will *ever* find a werebeast lounging carelessly among its distant relatives, heedless of discovery.

## ON THE HUNT

Knowing that the werebeast can and does take the form of an animal still has its advantages, though. Werebeasts commonly surround themselves with their natural counterparts and take that form while they do so. Hence, any ranger or druid who can track a animal can also lead a hunting party to the trail of a lycanthrope. That is often as good as place to begin the search as any.

### Human Form

Ironically, this lycanthropic aspect is by far the most dangerous. Recognizing the true nature of a werebeast in human (or demihuman) form is frequently accomplished in hindsight, too late. Survivors of a close encounter with a werebeast sometimes observe that they should have noticed the elongated forefingers or the abnormally hairy eyebrows before, and the common failure to do so leads all too often to bloody mayhem, as well as the spread of a cursed affliction and unbridled evil.

The hybrid form may be the more efficient killer and the animal form may move faster, but the human form is the beast among us—pry to our plans, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and as capable of killing in this aspect as any. Anyone, be they strange or familiar, friendly or hostile, may suddenly change to a terrifying monster before your unsuspecting eyes, or worse, when you are not even looking.

As the physical signs of lycanthropy are always there, visible to those with foresight as keen as their hindsight, an objective search for these features may prove invaluable. Certain features of the animal breed—the beady eyes of the wererat, the feral grin of the werewolf, the piggish nose of the wereboar, and so on—are inescapable to the human form. If the hunting party knows the phenotype of the lycanthrope, body traits can do much to eliminate some suspects and indict others. Even so, I hasten to add that these features are often subtle in the extreme, and no one can be blamed for missing them even when actively looking for them.

Perhaps the most important key to recognizing a lycanthrope in human form is to return to the first rule of the hunt and determine whether the creature is born or fallen to its condition. True lycanthropes tend to formulate evil agendas, while infected ones live in ignorance or shame of their other selves. The former takes the human aspect as a disguise, while the latter simply remains human until some circumstance beyond control sweeps him or her into a nightmare world where nightmares are reality. The reasons for occupying the human form are diverse, and therefore the means of identifying the two types are different.

**True Lycanthropes:** Born a monster, the hereditary werebeast's constant awareness of its identity and actions in any form enables it to use its mutability to deadly advantage. These creatures are more likely to spot the hunting party before it spots them. A true lycanthrope in human form engages in psychological warfare. Therefore, the hunting party must respond in kind.

If the true lycanthrope is aware of its enemies, the clever hunting party can turn this vulnerability to its own advantage. An alert hunting party should pay attention to people around them and note who is perhaps unreasonably interested in helping or hindering them. Watch for casual on-lookers who turn up wherever the party goes, and most especially beware of people who offer a "sure way to kill a werebeast." They may be sincere or they may be agents of the monster, if not the beast itself.

**Pathologic Lycanthropes:** These poor fools are often completely unaware that they become monsters when conditions are right (or should I say *wrong!*). Others have made the painful connection between the blood they find on their hands when they awaken and "last's night murder by an animal of some kind"; these sorry creatures are torn between the shock of committing actions over which they have absolutely no control and the consequences of a crime of which they have no memory. In either case, the afflicted wererecrea-

## ON THE HUNT

ture generally lives in effective denial of its bestial nature and, in all likelihood, lives its human life as if it has no other.

If the affected person has no knowledge of his or her acts, a hunting party cannot depend upon suspicious behavior to identify the monster. Neither the werebeast itself nor any associate is likely to play any form of “cat-and-mouse.” In fact, I know of a few infected lycanthropes who have noticed the subtle emergence of telltale physical traits of lycanthropy (a narrowing of the nose, excessive facial and body hair, etc.), considered them a cosmetic nuisance resulting from growing older, and took steps to hide them without ever realizing that they were protecting their inner beast from the outside world. In short, werebeasts who are ignorant of their bestial nature may be even better at hiding their identities than true lycanthropes.

I'm afraid that the most efficient way to identify an infected lycanthrope is also the most tragic: by drawing a connection between the guilty party and its circle of murdered loved ones. If a predator targets prey who are all members of a single family or social group, the odds are good that the hunter is a lycanthrope and a member of that same circle. Unfortunately, this kind of identification depends on the beast establishing a pattern of victims, which means that a number of innocents must meet their deaths before the pattern is established.

### Tracks

Unless the werebeast you hunt possesses the capability of flight, it is unlikely that the monster can help but leave a trail (and even avians must land sometime). After all, how does a wolf pass without a trace as it lopes through the forest with the rest of its pack?

The rules of tracking werebeasts are much the same as those for hunting natural animals. Here are a few pointers for those who do not enjoy the company of rangers or druids:

- Naturally, you must find some tracks before you can follow them. There are always some

The lycanthrope's shapechanging ability results in a preponderance of scenarios involving identification as a primary factor in the hunt, and many players expect this. The DM must, therefore, seek ways to muddy the trail without destroying it altogether. Van Richten suggests a number of methods by which the werebeast may be recognized, but the DM can easily use these tests to confuse the PCs or send them toward a secondary goal. For example, what if a young man were to leave town in search of his fortunes, become infected with lycanthropy, return home covertly, and begin to kill the members of his true family, even though *nobody* knows he is back? Or what if an unidentified true lycanthrope managed to convince the PCs that it was an infected one by killing off a family, one by one, in order to implicate one of its members?

If the lycanthrope has no idea of its bestial nature, there still may be some other NPC who knows the truth and becomes involved in the scenario for any number of reasons. He or she may be protecting the creature (out of love or evil plans), or the NPC may be using the monster to distract or occupy the PCs while other plans work themselves out. In other words, the lycanthrope doesn't even have to be the arch-adversary in the adventure.

particular places in the woods where tracks are much easier to see than in others. Once the trail of a lycanthrope is undeniably identified, it can be traced through some of the most adverse conditions if the tracker's eye is keen and heart is patient.

- Study the track at length, get to know it. Many hunters discover, too late, that they lost one set of tracks and picked up another. Suddenly, they closed in upon a beast that was *only* a beast while the monster they sought came upon them from behind. . . .



# ON THE HUNT

## Tracks

Drawings on this page are not to scale.



Badger  
(front)



Badger  
(rear)



Wolverine



Bear  
(front)



Bear  
(rear)



Wild Boar  
(Note closed bottom;  
bottom of sheep or  
deer print is open.)

Cat (cougar) running  
(Note absence of claw  
marks.)



Fox running (Note irregular pattern of three prints.)



Female Werewolf  
in hybrid form  
(actual size)



Timber Wolf  
(actual size)

## ON THE HUNT

One druid suggested that hunters sketch the footprints they wish to follow. Doing so does not necessarily provide an incriminating picture of the track, but it does force the drawer to make note of many nuances that might otherwise go unnoticed.

- If possible, it is best to track the beast either early or late in the day. Even the trail of the largest lycanthrope may be shallow, and shadows cast by the sun will help the hunter find it.
- Take note of all signs of the creature's passing, not just its tracks. Broken twigs, bent branches and grass, even displaced pebbles can tell the alert tracker that the prey has been here, as well as which way the creature is heading.

If the hunter is lucky, tracking a lycanthrope can be easier than tracking a natural beast. Since the size of the lycanthrope is often larger than that of a natural animal, so are its footprints. I myself have once successfully followed a trail of bear tracks virtually twice as long, wide, and deep as those of a grizzly (which did *not* result in a feeling of victory, believe you me!) Unfortunately, most werebeasts' footprints are not nearly as dramatic as this, and some are not distinct from the natural animal's footprints at all, but those skilled in the arts of tracking still provide an invaluable service to the hunting party. Following such a lead may not always reward the hunters, it can still provide a fresh start when more esoteric trails have gone cold, and it can at least tell you where the monster has been.

As an aside, I would think that even a novice woodsman could recognize the footprint of a werebeast in hybrid aspect. Typically, such a mark is possessed of the padlike "toes" of the animal form, but the print is longer and narrower, in the manner of human feet. These tracks are most often found on and near sites of death.

### Gory Leavings

Sadly, a lycanthrope may be tracked by more than its footprints. The beast leaves carnage in its wake, and such brutal evidence of its passing as would render a mad butcher sick to his stomach. In the company of its natural fellows or alone, the werebeast abandons a corpse terrible to behold. And more horrible yet is it to search that disfigured mess for some clue that may lead to the murderer!

Even so, examination of the werebeast's victim is important for two reasons: First, he or she may reveal something important from his or her possessions, position in death, state of decay, or any number of other things. Second, many other creatures (natural or monstrous) may leave a body in shreds upon the road. The conscientious lycanthrope hunter must be sure of exactly what caused the fatal wounds or risk tracking the wrong killer.

The bite marks of a lycanthrope are wider and deeper than those of natural beasts, and I also have observed a certain *viciousness* in the making of the wounds, as if were not enough to simply bring down the victim and then eat of it. Agony and terror are often quite visible in both the eyes and the crimson, gaping rips of a werebeast's kill; it is not a sight that can be objectively described, but you will definitely know it when you see it, and I apologize in advance for insisting upon it.

### The Lair

Uncovering the lair of the beast certainly advances the identification process (especially if the monster is at home), but it also may provide some crucial insight into the beast's strengths and weaknesses. The best way to approach this den of death depends upon whether you seek a town or a wilderness lair, and I shall briefly address those two issues here. Note that I speak of the abode of a *true* lycanthrope in either case, since infected werebeasts do not maintain a lair as such.

## ON THE HUNT

When the hunt is just beginning, or when the clues have run dry, the PCs can always pick up the trail in the woods. DMs can use the werebeast's trail either to lead the PCs to their next important encounter or to false ends. True lycanthropes might even play games with PCs, leading them on a wild and lethal goose chase.

To track a werebeast, a PC should have the tracking proficiency. However, if no one in the adventuring party has it, the DM can still leave telltale footprints that provide bridges to the next encounter; the PCs simply won't be able to follow them for long. Be sure to consult Table 39 in the *PHB* for tracking modifiers.

Discovering the body of a lycanthrope's victim is definite cause for a horror check, with ascending modifiers proportionate to the extent of the mauling and the length of time before the body is discovered. However, the victim can be a convenient source of some important clue as to the monster's identity or whereabouts.

For example, the lycanthrope may have worn a chain that did not fall away when it assumed animal form, and the victim could pull it free as he was murdered. Or perhaps the victim carried some map or letter on his person which the animalistic lycanthrope left behind, soaked in blood. Of course, diabolical werebeasts (and the DMs who run them) might plant false clues upon the bodies of victims, too. . . .

Identifying the evidence of a lycanthropic attack on a corpse can be considered a function of the animal handling, animal lore, healing, or hunting proficiencies. If the check is successful and a lycanthrope's involvement is indicated, it may be assumed that the PC had to conduct a very unappealing probe of the body—horror checks are appropriate.

### Town Lairs

In the case of the town lair, finding the residence of a werebeast is mostly a matter of confirming the hunter's suspicions. When the search is narrowed to a short list of suspects, it's a good idea to penetrate the living quarters of those people and look for evidence. I am *not* suggesting that the intrepid hunter find a way to break and enter into the home of anyone who was not accounted for the last time the lycanthrope made an appearance. When criminal activity is justified by the virtue of its intent, then the line between good and evil is lost and we quickly find ourselves hard in the company of those we despise. Rather, I am suggesting that the hunter enter into a, shall we say, *diplomatic* form of pursuit.

Pose as a delivery clerk, drop by unexpectedly for tea, even boorishly invite yourself into the suspect's home under the pretense of using the facilities, but find some way to insinuate yourself into the suspect's quarters, if only to take a quick look around. It's not necessary to find the meat larder in order to confirm your hunch. If you have reason to believe that someone is a werebeast, then a simple scan of their living room can condemn them. Do not look for overt signs of violence and cannibalism, but for subtler clues that fit into the puzzle you have already been piecing together. Observe the suspect's taste in decoration, for example. A dark and disturbing painting often reflects a similarly disposed character. Or seek objects lying about that link the person to the scene of a crime, like a possession of the deceased. I once identified a wererat when I coincidentally observed a shiny brooch on its coffee table that had belonged to a friend of mine, recently murdered.

### Wilderness Lairs

My discussion of the wilderness lair assumes that the hunting party has already found it—whether they have followed a set of tracks to

## ON THE HUNT

the monster's doorstep, convinced a natural animal of the beast's phenotype to lead them there, or bungled upon it by sheer luck.

Discovering the residence of the beast is a step in the process of both identifying the beast and learning a bit about it. If you are lucky, you may find some insight into the monster's habits, and maybe a record of what the lycanthrope knows about you. But best of all, a hunting party that locates the lair of a werebeast has just located the ideal place to set a trap!

When the place in question is located, first search it out for all its entrances and exits, and all its hidden nooks and crannies. Then learn what you can about the beast's domestic habits—where it sleeps, stores its food, hides if necessary, and so on. Finally, design a trap that will blend into the surroundings, avoiding the disturbance of so much as a pebble if possible. Don't forget that you yourself leave a scent wherever you go, which most werebeasts can detect as easily as a shark smells blood in the water. (Most druids and rangers are highly adept circumventing these problems—I highly recommend engaging the services of one of these people before attempting to infiltrate a wilderness lair.) Remember, true lycanthropes are as cunning as they are lethal; suspicion is second nature to them, especially if they know they are being hunted.

Beware the sudden arrival of the werebeast while you inspect its domicile. Such forays are necessarily clandestine, especially when one seeks to prevent the monster from detecting the intrusion, so bringing along a complement of warriors for protection is impractical. If you are caught, know well that no fury can match that of the beast whose "safe haven" has been compromised.

### Multiple Monsters

Most of the creatures of darkness I have studied are more solitary than the lycanthrope, and more careful about multiplying their

A great way to turn a simple hack 'n' slash adventure into a detective mystery is to very subtly wave clues of the lycanthrope's identity under the PCs' noses. Introduce objects or sounds or smells that readily blend into innocent backgrounds and then challenge the PCs by linking them to the murders, later on in the adventure.

Sometimes the tiniest clue is the key that breaks the mystery wide open, and the werebeast's lair is the ideal place to plant it.

If and when the PCs discover the lair of a lycanthrope, particularly the wilderness location, the DM should pay close attention to how carefully they approach and search the area. Most animals can easily tell if their lair has been compromised, without even entering it, and the best laid plans may be wasted by one PC footprint.

Always give the PCs a chance to find every secret door in the lair, but seek ingenious ways to keep them from turning the creature's home into a death trap—this is the monster's home turf, after all, and should not be easily used against it.

numbers. Vampires, for example, are careful not to create another of their kind with each feeding, if for no other reason than to assure that the general blood supply is not depleted. Liches consider the existence of even *one* other of their kind to be an affront. On the other hand, werebeasts, in their native savagery, are not nearly so concerned with their own numbers. Indeed, some of them actively seek to infect as many people as they can in the hope that they may command entire legions of murderous creatures. I have heard a tale of an entire city of lycanthropes which grew in leaps and bounds as its army, organized under a king who was himself the lycanthropic trigger, spread across the lands, killing and devouring every living being in its path.

Hunting parties who are attempting to learn the identity and type of a lycanthrope should

## ON THE HUNT

consider the possibility that they are hunting any number of monsters. An intelligent pack of werebeasts may confound the most astute and scientific of hunters. I can say from personal experience that there is no shock as sickening as that which comes from learning you are surrounded when you believed that you were hot on the trail of a single monster!

### Witnessing the Transformation

Perhaps the surest way to identify an infected lycanthrope is to catch it in the act of transforming. The secret to this is in learning what triggers the change, which comes from careful observation of objects and conditions that are repeatedly associated with the monster. Perhaps a pattern of killings emerges in conjunction with a time of day, or the lycanthrope's victims are repeatedly found in a patch of wild flowers. Discovering what triggers the change of an infected lycanthrope without actually witnessing the agent at work is but a slim possibility, but any prospect is worth considering.

If the catalyst is something that the hunters can manipulate, so much the better. However, be prepared for a singularly negative reaction if your hunch is right and your trigger device is effective. The hunter who forces a werebeast to change form becomes both a witness and an enemy with a deadly power over the monster; nothing short of murder will satisfy the lycanthrope's fear and indignation. Also be warned that some of these creatures can fight the change, if only for short periods of time, averting suspicion and removing any advantage of knowledge that the hunter may have enjoyed.

### Stalking the Werebeast

**T**he hunter of werebeasts faces a moral dilemma: If the monster suffers from a disease that was thrust upon it through a bite or scratch, then its condition is, first, not its own fault and, second, most possibly curable.

What is the lycanthrope hunter's responsibility in this case? Should he (or she) slay the beast outright, and thereby prevent any further attacks by the creature? Or should he attempt to entrap the beast and effect a cure, even though such action may leave the door open for further destruction?

There is no simple answer. Certainly, if a victim is willing to undergo a cure, then every effort must be made to assist that person. If the victim is unwilling, however, destruction of the beast may be the hunter's only recourse.

### Trapping the Beast

Whether the lycanthrope is born to its condition or acquires it, trapping the creature should be the ultimate goal of the hunting party. Unless the monster has special abilities, it cannot take gaseous form like a vampire or teleport away like a lich. As long as the bonds of a trap are strong enough, the captured beast may remain captured. This procedure is particularly recommended if the werebeast is a cursed one that may be cured. The method of trapping depends largely, of course, upon the form of the creature, and various parties might lay a snare for any one of the three aspects.

If the hunting party seeks to trap the animal form, it should probably mimic the traditional methods of trapping natural animals. I might recommend this approach if the monster in question has shown a definite predilection for its animalistic side. When such is the case, the creature tends to practice the habits of its normal cousins. These include following regularly traveled paths, frequenting a dependable source of prey, revisiting favored watering holes, and practicing predictable defensive patterns. Sometimes the hunters may find a commonly used path and then simply lie in waiting for the prey to come by. Other times the hunters must discern freshly tracks and then follow, remaining upwind and approaching the beast in utmost silence. In either case, patience always wins the day. You

## ON THE HUNT

A hunting party of good alignment should seek to cure an infected lycanthrope rather than kill it. This creates a challenging and exciting adventure while it demands more role-playing from everyone, including the DM. It is sweet irony that the ideal resolution to a scenario involving one of the most violent of monsters is to avoid the common “hack ‘n’ slash” remedy by which many adventures end.

Seeking a cure to lycanthropy can extend an adventure that otherwise might have come to an end with simple defeat of a monster. One of the best things about infected werebeasts is that they can be saved from evil and regain their peaceful existence, with the help of intelligent and heroic PCs. Some quick adventure hooks for this scenario are: an NPC werebeast who holds a strongly rumored key to the PCs’ escape from Ravenloft; a time limit before the beast must kill an innocent or die himself; one of the PCs is infected, and the adventurers learn (perhaps from the Vistani) that the only way to cure the PC is to first cure the werebeast that infected him and then kill the true monster that began the chain of contagion. Of course, the DM is encouraged to think of a hook that affects the PCs personally or one that affects the overall story of the campaign (any recurring villains or quests to tie into the adventure?).

PCs who seek only to wipe out the menace are arguably committing an evil act, regardless of the victim’s alignment, and thus are subject to a Ravenloft powers check. At the very least, the DM can impose an experience-point penalty for such irresponsible behavior. It’s a good idea to introduce an NPC priest or other character early in the adventure who will warn the PCs that killing monsters is not as simple as following a trail of blood and executing whatever is found at the end of it. That way, there can be no excuses for PCs who hack first and ask questions later.

may be right about the path, but wrong about the time or day, or you may find the pack and be forced to approach it through crackling dry leaves.

Snares are a tricky thing with lycanthropes. The hunter cannot depend upon limited intelligence and so it is unreasonable to expect the creature to simply step into a noose or fall into a pit. I recommend stalking the monster as if it were an animal, but snaring it as if it were a (very powerful) human. Magical traps are better if they can be deployed in such a way that will not alert the prey to your presence. The werebeast’s senses are keen, and whispering *halfa* spell may be the last thing you ever do.

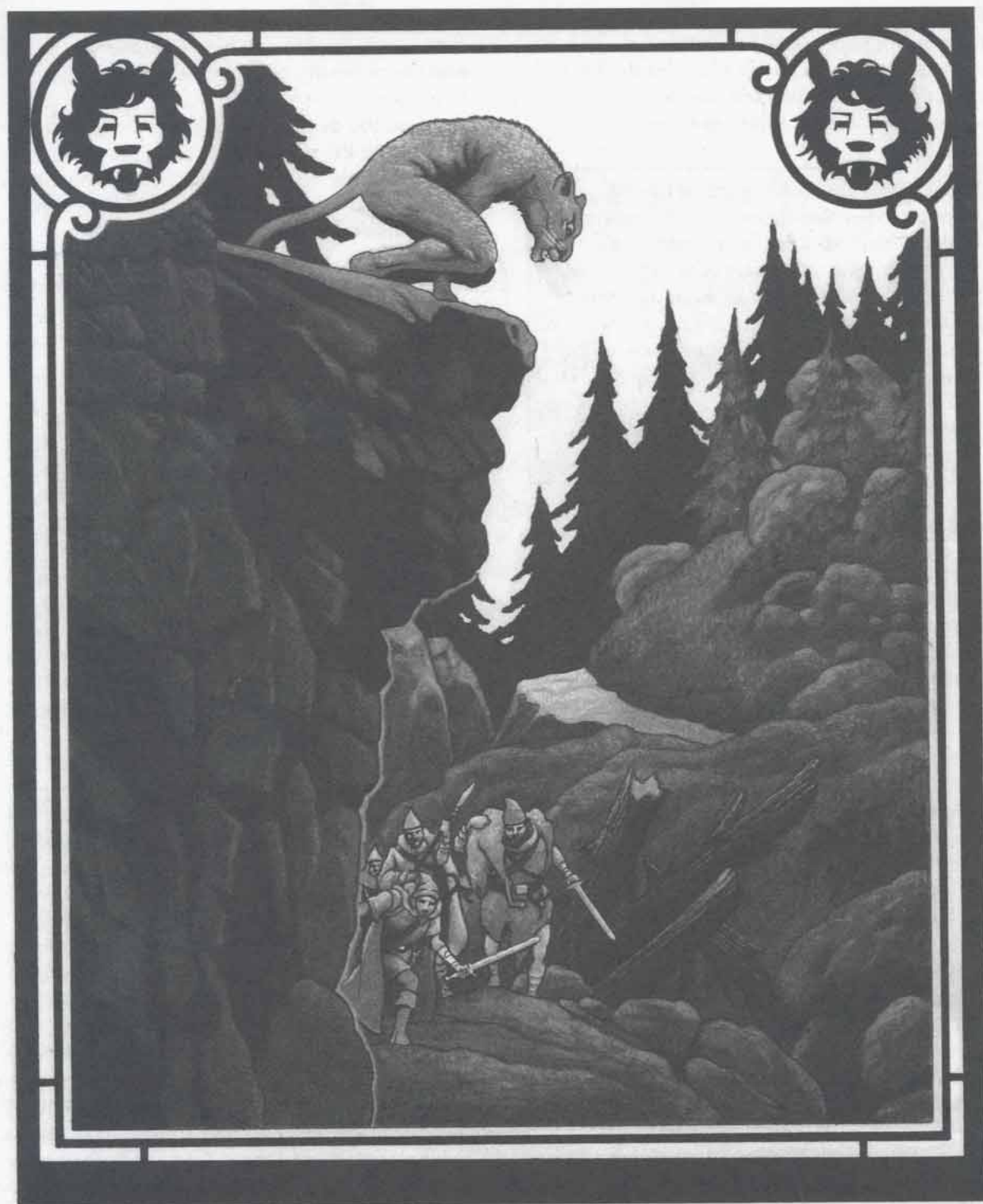
The psychological factor also comes into play here, and it may be necessary to create a feint of some kind, to distract the monster while it blunders into a real trap. I cannot provide any useful, specific suggestions for accomplishing this—there are too many factors to consider. The best advice is, once again, to first understand the mind of the beast and then use that knowledge to trap it.

Those who would trap the monster while in its human form may eliminate the need to crawl through the forest. If you are certain of your target as it moves incognito through the streets of a city, then you may perhaps lure the monster into a trap. This is more tricky than it sounds, though; the lycanthrope is most lucid in this form, and even if it is not aware of the PCs, it is instinctively suspicious and not easily fooled.

Of course, those who plot to trap the lycanthrope in its hybrid form must be doing so as part of a battle plan, but it is wise to plan the entrapment of a werebeast as if you expect it to be in the hybrid aspect. The monster is quite likely to assume that form as soon as the trap is sprung. This leads me to a final piece of advice for those who would snare the beast.

The hunters should strive to control the place where they will confront the werebeast. If they can do so, they can booby-trap the entire

# ON THE HUNT





## ON THE HUNT

area against escape, then hope to force or flush the monster into one of several snares. This is rarely a simple task, but it provides the best chance to save an infected werebeast or to interrogate one born to its condition.

Especially if the PCs are intent upon trapping a live werebeast, the determination of the perfect spot for an ambush can provide for the better part of an adventure. Here, the PCs first seek to learn the identity and habits of the lycanthrope, and then engineer the best possible trap zone and snare, magical or otherwise. Luring an intelligent creature into a trap inspires much more complex scheming than simply cornering and killing it.

### Making the Kill

When destruction becomes the only alternative, and I know well that it does, then the processes described above should still be adhered to, except in this case it would lead expressly to a *lethal* trap. The hunting party should use whatever means at its disposal to incapacitate the creature before putting it to death. This is much preferred to meeting the werebeast in open combat, for it may pass on its disease and escape or even leave a person infected after it dies. Like the animal it essentially is, the lycanthrope is most ferocious when cornered, capable of surprising feats and deadly blows even in its death throes.

If it is the hunter's intention to kill the creature, then I would suggest first learning the lycanthrope's chemical susceptibility (discussed in Chapter II). Then set the trap with enumerable blades or points, generously coated with the substance. Finally, find a way to flush the quarry into that trap and let the poison do its work. The hunters should coat their weapons with the toxin as well, but I strongly urge them not to meet the beast in

combat! They may accomplish their goal in battle, only to give rise to yet another curse and the necessity of destroying yet another hapless creature.

When the deed is done, invite a priest to consecrate the remains according to the dictates of his teachings and then cremate the body as soon as possible—immediately if you can. While werebeasts are not known for regeneration or rising as undead, they do harbor disease, after all, and it is proper and necessary to eliminate the possibility of its spreading in any way, shape, or form.

### Charlatans

**H**unting a werebeast is a difficult task, one which many would rather leave to someone more skilled (or foolhardy) than themselves. To the good folk seeking such assistance, I offer this caution: beware of charlatans. There are many who tout themselves as werehunters, self-styled “professionals” who claim to be skilled in the arts of detecting and destroying lycanthropes. These individuals travel throughout the land, hiring out their services to villages that believe (often falsely) that they suffer from a werebeast's attacks.

Few of these so-called professionals actually know what they're doing. In fact, virtually all the hunters I've encountered are scurrilous rogues. They charge exorbitant rates and leave town as soon as the money is pocketed.

The hoax perpetrated by such scoundrels is often simple. They visit a settlement—preferably an isolated one—and publicly claim to have found evidence of a lycanthrope in the vicinity. They frighten their victims with pseudoscientific babble about the “atmosphere of pestilence” and other intangible horrors. Some charlatans manufacture the so-called “proof” by savagely slaying some farm animals before approaching the village. Then they can appear, claim they are “following the spoor of

## ON THE HUNT

an itinerant terror,” and offer to eradicate the scourge (for a fee, of course). I know of several cases where the charlatans doctored animal remains by adding bits of shredded clothing and human bones to heighten the villagers’ terror.

Creating the appearance of a successful hunt is easy. The “intrepid hunters” sally forth into the wilderness for several days. Then they return, looking exhausted and wounded (thanks to quantities of mud and animal blood rubbed into their clothes and skin), claiming to have destroyed the beast. The more brazen hunters proudly present the hacked corpse of an unfortunate animal, claiming it’s the werebeast in question (trusting, of course, to the ignorance of the villagers, who may not know that slain lycanthropes revert to their human form). The satisfied villagers bolster the charlatans’ reputation, making it easy to repeat the ruse in a nearby locale.

While individuals like these provide no value for the money they receive, at least they do little enough damage. Unfortunately, other hunters take this fraud much further. The ruse begins as described above; a savaged corpse is found (usually an animal). But instead of claiming that the werebeast at fault resides in the wilderness, the charlatans declare that the culprit is an *infected* lycanthrope—and probably one of the villagers.

After a period of “research”—for which the hunters are compensated—they name the “ravaging beast.” This is usually a social outcast, a villager isolated by appearance, language, or eccentric behavior. By selecting a person already considered odd or not of the norm, the hunters can readily persuade the townsfolk to accept their supposition. To add further horror, sometimes the person identified as the lycanthrope will also accept the hunters’ claim and beg for assistance in finding a cure.

Thus, the hunters can begin the process of “curing” the lycanthrope. Such cures have two

things in common: they are impressive and flashy ceremonies, playing to all the base beliefs and misconceptions of the townsfolk; and they are very expensive. Most charlatans claim success, which is a simple matter given that no lycanthropy existed. Unfortunately, some evil few who claim failure have found this an easy excuse to commit murder.

Charlatans represent all manner of adventure hooks. For example, if murder is the villain’s goal, the PCs must prevent it. Perhaps the PCs stumble across a less diabolical ruse, attempt to reveal it, and then a *real* lycanthrope enters the scene. Or the player characters discover that a member of a so-called “hunting party” is in fact a werebeast himself, unbeknownst to his companions.

### Last Thoughts

**A** true hunter always has as much respect for the prey as he has for himself. This is as true for those who track werebeasts as it is for those who hunt deer and birds. It is not only a matter of understanding that the lycanthrope can kill at least as easily as it can be killed, it is more importantly a matter of recognizing the creature as a living thing instead of an object simply to be destroyed. It has drives and fears and a desire to live! When one understands the heart and mind of the beast, one becomes more attuned to it. When one knows what motivates the prey, one may anticipate its reactions. When the hunter puts himself in the place of his quarry, he comprehends what he would do if *he* were the hunted (as he may well be!).

That is the difference between hunting and murder. In the end, that is the sole distinction between a man who contains a beast within and another who becomes the beast without.

## CONCLUSION



T

he werebeast is a fell opponent—intelligent, cunning, and fearfully lethal in combat. Detecting its presence, locating it, and then hunting it down is a singular undertaking. Too often the task easily claims the lives of hunters . . . or curses them with a dread affliction, which is certainly worse than death.

Yet the task of hunting down and destroying the werebeast is an important one. Lycanthropy is a pernicious, insidious infection in the body of its victim and the body of society as well. It is a plague upon both the individual and the societal soul, for it erodes our ability to embrace our own

neighbors for fear that they may not be what we

think they are. Pitiably they may be, yet still they must be condemned.

As I draw to the close of this treatise, I must admit that the studying of the lycanthrope has been most disturbing. For all my condemnation of these monsters, I must pause a moment and reflect upon the reality of the beast within me. The werebeast kills because killing is what it instinctively does. It has no agenda, no point to prove, no hatred to vent. On the other side, I have no *need* to kill at all, instinctively or otherwise, yet I have pursued that objective with righteous tenacity. We are both predators, yet who is the more monstrous?

I must conclude that my agenda to destroy all creatures of darkness, my point to prove that they are indeed vulnerable in some way or another, and my utter hatred of all things evil renders my deadly intent a tragic necessity—and I am therefore no monster at all.

Let the werebeast look well to its hunting skills; I shall show it who is the *superior* predator!



## APPENDIX FOR THE DM™



*e are not monsters," the werewolf told me in its rough voice. With a furry gray forefinger it scratched absently at the side of its snout while it spoke. The beast's long black lip curled under the claw as it scratched, exposing a row of yellowed canine teeth.*

*"We are not monsters," it repeated, calmly emphasizing the point. "We are like*

*you, like the birds and the deer and, yes, like the wolves: We are all the creations of the gods. We all do that which is in our natures to do, following the natural imperatives incorporated into every cell of our beings. None has any choice in the matter, but we werecreatures are really quite content with the reality of the situation, unlike most humans.*

*"Would you call an eagle a monster for being an eagle?" It leaned toward me and an earnest tone entered its voice. "A wolf for being a wolf? No! Not when it kills a farmer's sheep or even when it hunts the lost traveler in the forest is it a monster. It is just doing what it was born to do—survive.*

*"We are no different, me and my kind, from any other predators. It is merely human arrogance that labels us with the term 'monster.' Since we have the temerity to feed upon the self-styled kings of creation, we are hated and feared."*

*The creature chuckled quietly. "If deer had the power of speech," it mused, "I wonder what horrible tales they would tell of that monster humanity. . . ."*

—From the personal journals of Dr. Van Richten

As Dr. Van Richten noted earlier, virtually any predator between the size of a small dog and a large bear can provide the basis for a lycanthrope phenotype. Most but not all werebeasts are mammals, and most but not all of them are pure carnivores. The various MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™ appendices list the most common—and probably most useful—of lycanthropes, but it's always a good idea to throw new creatures at the players . . . particularly in Ravenloft.

So how does a DM go about creating a new lycanthrope from scratch? There are six attributes to consider—phenotype, appearance, gaming statistics, special abilities, vulnerabilities, and society—each of which is described in the following pages. To render the process as clear as possible, a sample new lycanthrope, the werejaguar, is developed concordantly. The finished monster is detailed in the official MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM format on page 95 (followed by another new creature, the werebadger). This procedure focuses upon the design of a *true* lycanthrope, but the process remains much the same for infected werebeasts.

### Phenotype

**T**he animal you choose will determine some of the creature's characteristics, including its most likely habitat. For this example, the lycanthrope is a werejaguar (suitable for use in tropical domains such as Sri Raji).

### Appearance

**T**he next step is to decide on the appearance of each of the creature's three aspects: human, animal, and hybrid.

### Human

The primary form of the lycanthrope is that of a human (or demihuman). Pick the race that's appropriate for the adventure or encounter you have in mind. The creature's appearance usually will be reminiscent of the animal aspect. A were-

## APPENDIX FOR THE DM™

jaguar in human form might be slender and move with feline grace. It might have sandy hair with dark streaks or vice versa. The creature also might have more generic lycanthrope characteristics. For example, its forefingers may be abnormally long—the same length as its second fingers—and even females might be especially hairy.

The demeanor of the human form is also a characteristic of its appearance. A werebadger might be extremely ill tempered while a werefox might be flirtatious. The werejaguar might seem indolent in the extreme until goaded to action, at which time it would show startling speed and aggressiveness.

### Animal

The secondary form of the werebeast—that of an animal—is easiest to design, as a lycanthrope in that form generally resembles a larger version of the natural beast—larger than average, but not so much larger that its lycanthrope nature is obvious. (Note that the wererat is an exception, for its animal aspect resembles a giant rat [i.e., the monster—see the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*™]). This point raises the possibility that other werebeasts might be able to transfigure into giant monster forms of animals. While this is left up to the individual DM, such cases should be very rare.)

Most jaguars are about six feet long and two feet high at the shoulder—long, slender, and low. A werejaguar, then, might be up to seven feet long, or about the size of a small tiger.

Closer inspection of various body traits may yet betray the werebeast's identity. For example, its eyes might show a faint spark of unnatural intelligence, or perhaps a bit of whiteness around the irises. In any case, this feature shouldn't be immediately obvious, and the creature might well be able to suppress such characteristics in order to appear a simple "dumb animal." The lycanthrope's eyes might glow faintly red at night, but in such a way that a player character would attribute it to the reflection of a light source like a fire.

### Hybrid

The tertiary form of the lycanthrope should combine animal and human features. The overall shape is largely humanoid, yet animal features, subtle or conspicuous, render this the most identifiable lycanthrope form.

A werejaguar in hybrid aspect might be man-sized, yet with abnormally long limbs. It might have a black-spotted, golden pelt. Its hands might resemble paws, yet still retain opposable thumbs. Its face might have a pronounced, broad snout, with whiskers similar to a cat's. Its movements would be fast, dexterous, and almost entrancingly graceful.

### Gaming Statistics

**T**he easiest way to determine the werecreature's statistics is to extrapolate from those of existing lycanthropes. In general, a werebeast's attributes are proportional to the relative size of its animal aspect. A bear is larger and more powerful than a wolf, for example; thus, a werebear should generally be a tougher opponent than a werewolf. (Of course, those vulnerabilities specific to a bear, like a fear of dogs, can greatly alter the relative challenge of an encounter.)

A jaguar is smaller and less powerful than a tiger, yet considerably more robust than a wolf. Thus, a werejaguar will probably have Hit Dice (HD) somewhere between those of a werewolf and a weretiger—perhaps  $5 + 2$  HD. Its capability to inflict damage will probably be less than a weretiger's and about the same as a werebear's. (Although the creature won't be as physically strong as a werebear, its speed and aggressiveness will balance the numbers). Damage of  $1d3/1d3/2d4$  (claw/claw/bite) seems about right. Like many cats, werejaguars can also rake with their hind paws for an additional two attacks ( $1d4/1d4$ ) if they successfully bite. THAC0 depends on Hit Dice—15 for our werejaguar.

Armor Class (AC) depends upon the innate toughness (thickness of hide, etc.), speed, and

## APPENDIX FOR THE DM™

dexterity of the natural animal. Werebears have a low AC largely because they're such powerful, thick-skinned animals. However, a wererat's AC derives mainly from its quick, darting movements, which allow it to evade a blow. Since jaguars are both fast and powerful (yet not quite so powerful as a tiger), an AC of 4 seems about right for our werejaguar.

Don't forget that the Armor Class may alter with the lycanthrope's own change of form. A hybrid's AC should lie somewhere between that of the animal form and AC 10 (since armor owned by a werebeast would have to be donned after the change). Consider how much of the animal form's natural AC would remain with a hybrid. Our werejaguar would certainly lose a great deal of speed and thickness of hide in hybrid aspect, yet retain much of its dexterity—AC 7 or 8 seems about right.

Of course, the AC of the human form is dictated by attribute scores and armor.

Most other attributes derive from the nature of the phenotype. Jaguars are faster than tigers, so a Movement Rate of 15 is appropriate. The creatures are native to subtropical and tropical jungles, and are generally nocturnal. They are generally solitary creatures, although they can sometimes be found in family groups. They're pure carnivores, but not scavengers. Our werejaguar might have treasure class D. Natural jaguars are Neutral in alignment, so a werejaguar in Ravenloft would have an alignment of Neutral Evil. Number appearing would be 1 (1–4). Jaguars are skilled hunters and aggressive fighters, so a Morale of Elite (13–14) is appropriate.

### Special Abilities

Certain types of lycanthropes, by virtue of their phenotype, gain some special capabilities. For example, werefoxes have an ability to *charm* victims. A werebeast's special skill might be magical or simply a physical ability. It might be arbitrary or related in some way to the phenotype. DMs have a free

hand in this area, giving them the chance to create unique (and PC-surprising) lycanthropes.

Our example lycanthrope the werejaguar is a skilled climber that hunts arboreal prey as easily as it does ground-bound victims. Extrapolating from this, werejaguars might gain the climbing abilities of a rogue and retain these skills in all three of their aspects.

### Vulnerabilities

Each werebeast has at least one nonmagical vulnerability. Most—but not all—creatures of a particular phenotype share the same vulnerability (e.g., werewolves fear silver). DMs should first decide upon a basic vulnerability for a new phenotype, and then decide whether the individual creature(s) in question conforms to the generic weakness. The vulnerability might be something traditional (wolfsbane, silver, etc.), or it might be symbolically related to the nature of the phenotype.

Various Central and South American tribes have numerous legends concerning jaguars. Some of these tribes used weapons of obsidian (volcanic glass), so assigning most werejaguars a vulnerability to obsidian weapons makes some symbolic sense. Mercury is an appropriate chemical susceptibility, since jaguars could be described as being “fast as quicksilver.”

### Society

Social behavior should relate to the characteristics of the natural animal. If the animal is pack-oriented, the lycanthrope will be social. If it is aggressively territorial, so is the lycanthrope. These creatures are intelligent, however, so they can suppress their natural tendencies if necessary. The propensities will remain, however, even if they're not obvious, and they will tend to color the creatures' philosophies and behaviors.

Jaguars are often solitary. Hence, the werejaguar might be a lone adventurer or a hermit.

# APPENDIX FOR THE DM™

## Summary Tables

### Sample Triggers

- Appearance of a comet
- Emergence of spring flowers
- Entering a specific locale or type of terrain (e.g., swamp, graveyard, mountains, etc.)
- Exposure to a particular type of plant, animal, or mineral
- Extreme fear
- Healing magic
- Hunger
- Intense anger or embarrassment
- Intense passion
- Lunar or solar eclipse
- Necromantic magic (or magic from any specific sphere or school)
- Participation in combat
- Particular sound or music
- Phase of the moon
- Physical pain
- Seeing a particular image or type of image
- Sighting the phenotypic animal (e.g., a werewolf changes at the sight of a wolf)
- Sight or smell of blood
- Sleep
- Snowfall
- Solstice or equinox
- Sunset or sunrise
- Thunderstorm
- Total darkness

### Sample Weapon Vulnerabilities

- Bone
- Bronze
- Cold iron
- Copper
- Flint
- Gold
- Lead
- Obsidian
- Silver
- Wood (specific type)

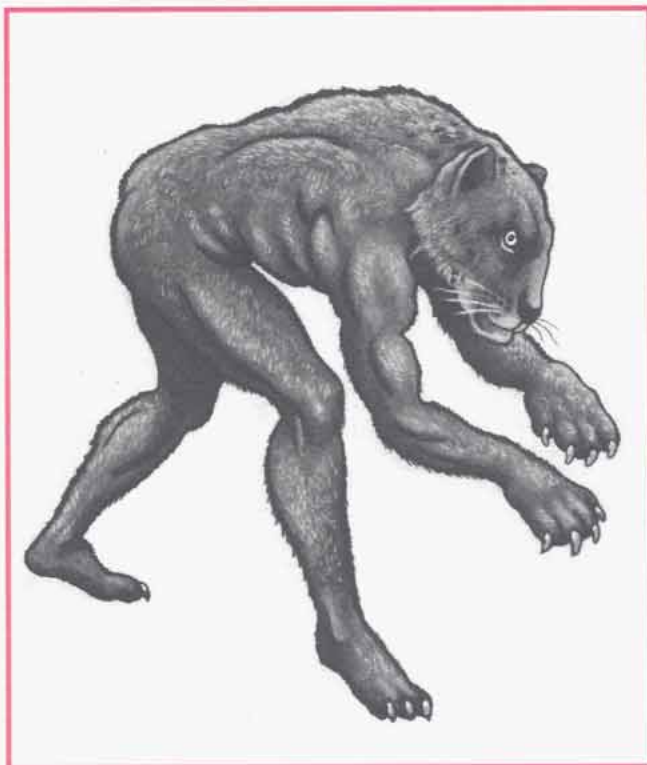
### Sample Chemical Susceptibilities

- Aloe
- Amaranth
- Belladonna
- Camphor
- Chamomile
- Clover
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Ginseng
- Ipecac
- Juniper berries
- Laburnum extract
- Lotus
- Mandrake
- Mangrove leaves
- Mistletoe
- Mercury
- Poppy
- Quince
- Saffron
- Skullcap
- Sulphur
- Tamarind
- Wolfsbane

### Sample Special Powers

- +2 bonus to resist bloodlust
- Breath weapon (as *stinking cloud* spell)
- Can enter bloodlust at will
- Can sense presence and location of “infective progeny”
- *Charm* by gaze
- *Charm* by voice
- *Fear* by voice
- Gaseous form
- Magic resistance (1d8 × 5%)
- Regeneration (1 hit point/round)
- Rogue skills (climb walls, hide in shadows, move silently: 50%–95% chance)
- Summon animal allies
- Super jump
- Two attacks per round
- Waterwalk

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical/subtropical jungles
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (11-12)
TREASURE:	D
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-4)
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	5 + 2
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d3/1d3/2d4 or weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Rear-claw rake
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Hit only by lead, or +1 or better magical weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6'-7' long)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	700



Werejaguars are humans (or demihumans) who can transform into three distinct forms: that of a human, a large jaguar, and a hybrid form that combines the features of both human and jaguar. The creature's human form is fairly unremarkable, although its hair might be sandy and streaked with black or vice versa, and its movements generally are fluid and graceful. The animal shape resembles a large jaguar, perhaps seven feet from nose to rump. The hybrid aspect combines animal and human features: broad snout, black-marked sandy pelt, broad paws that retain opposable thumbs, and a long expressive tail.

**Combat:** In human form, the werejaguar can wield normal weapons. In man-beast form, it can use a weapon or attack using a claw/claw/bite routine. In animal form, it cannot use a weapon. In either hybrid or animal form, if a werejaguar successfully bites a victim, it can then rake with its rear claws for an additional 1d4/1d4 damage. Rake attacks receive a +4 bonus because the victim is partially immobilized.

In their animal and hybrid forms, werejaguars can be harmed only by magical weapons or by those made of obsidian. Wounds from all other weapons heal so fast that they inflict no effective damage on the creature. Mercury—even in trace amounts—is immediately fatal when ingested.

When a werejaguar changes shape within Ravenloft, it automatically heals 10% to 60% of all damage suffered since its last transformation. If a werejaguar dies, it reverts to human form in one round.

**Habitat/Society:** If they live in the wilderness, werejaguars are usually solitary creatures. If a family group is encountered, it will comprise two adults and up to two offspring that are 10% to 60% grown. (At 50% of full growth, offspring fight as adults; otherwise, the adults protect their young with their lives, and they avoid encounters with adventurers and other hostiles.)

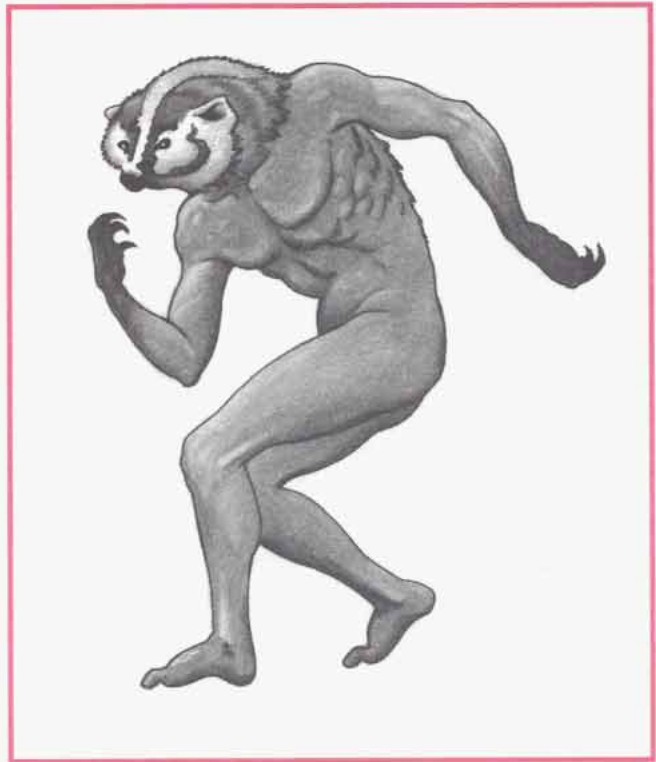
Some werejaguars enjoy living in villages or small towns, but they are commonly uncomfortable in larger settlements (towns with a population of over 100, for example). Bearing this loose limitation in mind, they frequently prove very adept at infiltrating human society. In town, werejaguars can easily set aside their solitary tendencies and cooperate with others for as long as necessary. However, a werejaguar who has infiltrated human society will increasingly yearn to seek out an isolated area in which to relax and be alone.

Werejaguars do not marry, but they do have preferred mates. Females typically mate only with other werejaguars. Males often impregnate human females and leave the area before the women realize the fell nature of the children they carry.

**Ecology:** Werejaguars are pure carnivores, and they subsist only on freshly killed meat. Although they greatly prefer the flavor of human and demihuman flesh, they can subsist on animal prey if necessary.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate hills and underground
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	M, Q, V
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	6, Br 3
HIT DICE:	5
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6/1d6/1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Berserk frenzy
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Silver or magical weapons required to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (4' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13) or Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	650 (975 magical weapon)



Weredbadgers are dwarves that can transform into giant badgers or dwarf-badger hybrids. In humanoid form, they appear to be normal dwarves with a silver stripe in their hair or beards (not an uncommon trait among dwarves). In hybrid form, they stand upright but have the features of a badger: thick fur, enormous claws, and a badger's head. In beast form, the weredbadger simply appears to be a giant badger. Transforming into this shape rips apart any clothing the creature wears.

The weredbadger's claws are so large that they "clack" together when not flexed or clenched.

**Combat:** This monster attacks with its foreclaws, followed by a bite. Unlike the giant badger, the claws are actually more fearsome than the bite, but only the bite can transmit the curse of lycanthropy.

Unlike most lycanthropes, the weredbadger has no qualms about using weapons. Their natural weapons are so potent, however, that only a magical weapon is of notable improvement. They favor axes and war hammers, and there is a 75% chance the creature owns a weapon (25% chance that it is magical). In animal form weredbadgers cannot use weapons. Weredbadgers are harmed only by silver or magical weapons. The oil of the poppy seed is poisonous to them.

Each round of combat, the weredbadger has a 25% chance to enter a berserk frenzy. Roll before each round of combat. When this occurs, the beast froths at the mouth, its claw attacks gain a +1 attack bonus, and its bite attack gains a +3 bonus. Once in a frenzy, it will not break off the attack until either it is dead or until all its opponents have fled or died. To make matters worse, during the frenzy, all bite attacks have double the normal chance to transmit lycanthropy.

**Habitat/Society:** Weredbadgers tend to live on the fringes of society (when they choose to live among others at all). They choose professions that allow them to be alone or excuse bursts of violent anger. For example, many become scouts or skirmishers in dwarf armies. Weredbadgers dislike physical labor as a rule. They typically do not work stone or metal.

Weredbadgers dislike other forms of lycanthropes, but do not hate them. Those that avoid dwarf society tend to be loners, living in caves and tunnels, preying upon the unsuspecting. If one encounters another werebeast, the weredbadger would fight only to defend its territory.

On rare occasions a weredbadger will be found with a mate and young. Treat the young as common badgers with lycanthropic immunities. Any sign of hostility on the part of intruders will immediately throw both parents into a berserk frenzy (no die roll necessary).

**Ecology:** This lycanthropy affects dwarves more readily than other forms of humanoids. Gnomes, goblins, orcs, and other underground dwellers are half as likely to be infected as dwarves. Humans, elves, and other surface dwellers are only 25% as likely to be infected.

Weredbadgers do not live as long as dwarves. If allowed to die of natural causes—a rarity for the specie—they can live to be 80 or 90 years old. Dwarves or other long lived races that are infected with this form of lycanthropy have the remainder of their life spans halved. A prematurely old dwarf or gnome is sometimes suspected of being a lycanthrope.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>  
2nd Edition



## Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts

**I** know now the shape of madness, of ravening insanity, and it is me! I dread the waxing of the moon, yet how can I flee from time itself? The hour of transformation is at hand, and my heart surges in bloodlust!

—The Cry of a Werewolf

Werebeasts: men and women who assume the shape of animals. In this volume, Dr. Rudolph Van Richten—Ravenloft's eminent expert on the horrific—exposes the truth about their ravenous kind. For years, Van Richten has doggedly pursued these creatures.

More than once, the hunter became the hunted, yet lived to tell the tale. Now Van Richten reveals the secrets of his survival.

Discover the werebeasts' many forms, from the common to the bizarre. Read how they live, lust, and multiply, spreading their affliction among the innocent. Learn to see through their human facade, and how to follow their beastly spoor. Finally, discover what it *really* takes to cure lycanthropy in Ravenloft. For upon the demiplane of dread, few adventurers can avoid the werebeast's fang forever. . . .

96 pages—Recommended for All Character Levels

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