



# The White Devil: The Werewolf in European Culture

*Matthew Beresford*

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The werewolf is a creature familiar to us all, prowling our countryside and cinema screens alike on the eve of a full moon. Yet the birth of the werewolf myth can be traced back thousands of years into early Prehistory. The White Devil tracks the development of the myth as it progresses through history to the present day, and the firm grip it still holds on the modern imagination.

How do Iron Age bog bodies, Roman gods, Joan of Arc, Adolf Hitler, and Sigmund Freud all feature in the story of the werewolf myth? Matthew Beresford answers these questions and more in considering early death and burial rites, mythology, folklore, archaeological evidence and local superstitions through to Medieval literary offerings, werewolf trials, medical explanations, alleged sightings, and cinema.

The White Devil draws on a wide variety of sources in order to understand why the werewolf has been part of the beliefs and mythology across Europe, tracing mankind's fascination with the beast over time. It explores the early Wolf Cults of Prehistory, Roman mythology, Anglo-Saxon criminal punishments, Medieval werewolf executions, folkloric tales of noble werewolves, as well as psychological explanations, and offers a new understanding of how the werewolf has survived within European culture for thousands of years.

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