

Shapeshifters in the Old World, notably werewolves

Throughout the Old World men and women have long lived in fear of shape-shifters or Garou, those that can take on some of the attributes or even the full shape of another animal. In the Empire this is most commonly the wolf, whereupon these Garou are known as werewolves. Further north, in Norsca and certainly Kislev tales of were-bears, were-cats and even were-birds (ravens) are not unheard.

Primal fear

Although the names vary from one region to another, the dread remains universal:

- Empire: *werwolf, shapshifters, lupenir*
- Norsca: *ulfwerener, werwulf, bersekers*
- Kislev: *oborotyen*
- Brettonia: *lapou, Garou*
- Estalia: *hombre lupo*
- Tilea: *licantropo, uomo lupo*
- Ungol: *kurtadam*



Initiation

Although there are several ways of becoming a Garou, most are rare and some quite difficult. Here are the most common sources:

1. Birth-right – most children of one or more parents with the condition inherit it but even then, it only seems to manifest itself after puberty.
2. Tainted - any wound inflicted by a Garou can corrupt its victim through “wolf redness”. It is said that a scratch is unlikely to infect but that a bite is often fatal, so an *Infected Wounds* test, i.e.
 - a. **Heavy Wound** = **Easy (+20) Toughness** test
 - b. **Severe Wound** = **Simple (+10) Toughness** test
 - c. **Critical Wound** = **Standard (-) Toughness** test
3. Cursed – it seems that certain wizards, priests or even gods can inflict this curse on their victims.
4. Apprenticed – it seems that this condition can be studied and even learnt. Several techniques have been evoked from the removal of clothing and donning of a wolfskin pelt, to the body being rubbed with a magic salve, as well as drinking rainwater from the footprint of the target animal or from enchanted streams, even initiation by draining a cup of special beer and repeating a set formula:

Certain sorcerers, who having annoyed their bodies with an ointment which they make by the instinct of the devil, and putting on a certain enchanted girdle, does not only unto the view of others seem as wolves, but to their own thinking have both the shape and nature of wolves, so long as they wear the said girdle. And they do dispose themselves as very wolves, in worrying and killing, and most of humane creatures.

Gift or curse?

Some might argue that this is a matter of perspective, but most agree that it boils down to the Garou’s ability to control the Urge and, to a lesser extent, local society’s interpretation of this circumstance. The capacity to control the Urge seems to be heavily dependent on the source. Indeed, it seems that those who became Garou through no fault of their own are somehow less able to control their primal urges than those who learnt how to shift. In terms of mechanics in WFRP, this is best expressed as 2 separate skills:

- *Lycanthropy*: believed by physicians to be a condition, probably a disease, though maybe a corruption, by which victims suffer the following symptoms:
 - Impulsive: **when the Garou is exposed to 1 or more of the influences (see below), they must test their Will Power.** A pass indicates they control their primal Urge. If not, they Change...
 - Unbridled: the Garou can Change into any of the forms (see below)
- *Shapeshifter*: a person that has learnt the ability to shift their human body into the form of an animal:
 - Controlled: **whenever the Garou is exposed to 1 or more of the influences they must roll a Very Easy (+30) WP test.** A pass means they resist their primal Urge. Fail and they Change...
 - Limited: the Garou can only Change into the form with which they’re familiar (usually *Lupus*)

So, in most cases the cause was unwelcomed and society is terrified of these half-creatures, leading to the general opinion that lycanthropy is a terrible affliction. That said, the rare few that sought to shape-change and/or can control their urges consider it a gift and, in some cases, a divine blessing.

Influences

Regardless of the source of the lycanthropy, all Garou are susceptible to the following stimuli. So, whenever Garou encounter these triggers, they must pass a **WP** test to determine whether they succumb to the Urge or not. Worse still, these stimuli have been known to combine... (cumulative penalties)

Stimuli	Garou's chances of resisting the Urge
Baying livestock, Wolf howls	Very Easy (+30) WP
<u>Sight</u> of fresh blood	Easy (+20) WP
<u>Smell</u> of fresh blood	Simple (+10) WP
Acute fear, e.g. anxiety, despair, panic attack	Standard (-) WP
Acute anger, e.g. insulted, resentment, <i>Animosity</i>	Tricky (-10) WP
Acute hatred, e.g. humiliated, jealousy, <i>Hatred</i>	Tough (-20) WP
Acute trauma, e.g. Critical Hit, Insanity Point or <i>Frenzied</i>	Hard (-30) WP
Hexensnacht or Geheimnisnacht or Pools of Ghur (Amber magic)	Very Hard (-40) WP
Nighttime or Moonlight from Mannslieb/Morrslieb	Varies (see below)

Lunacy

For reasons unknown, the moons of the Old World exert a terrible influence over the Garou. So as each moon rises (at dusk), each Garou must roll a **WP** test with these modifiers to resist the Urge:

- Mannslieb: a regular moon so its lunar phase (lasts 3 days) can be predicted using [the appropriate Imperial Calendar](#):
 - New moon (●) = no test
 - Crescent moon (☾) = Easy (+20) WP
 - Quarter moon (◐) = Simple (+10) WP
 - Gibbous moon (☾) = Standard (-) WP
 - Full moon (○) = Tricky (-10) WP
- Morrslieb: a green moon and the dark twin of Mannslieb:
 - Its cycle is erratic, unpredictably appearing smaller or larger in the sky (GM's discretion).
 - Morrslieb's appearance has always heralded great misfortune for "those touched" for its pallid call seems harder to resist (the modifiers for Mannslieb's phases are all reduced by -10 WP)
- NB: twice a year both Mannslieb and Morrslieb appear as full moons. These conjunctions mark a period of hardship for many and disaster for a few...
 - Hexensnacht (1st night of the year)
 - Geheimnisnacht (1st night after the Summer Solstice)



The Urge

Whenever a Lycanthrope or Shapeshifter tries to resist the Urge, consult this table to determine the effects:

Result of WP test	Description	Effect
Amazing success	Effortless restraint	Impeccable, the Garou gains +10 WP to their next Urge test
Great success	Moderated calm	Serene, the Garou belies no sign of the yearning within
Good success	Tight curb	Tense but controlled, the Garou battles the turmoil within
Lucky success	Guilty cravings	Agitated, the Garou bristles with ill-disguised hanker
Unlucky failure	Inexorable descent	Bristling, the Garou feels the Change coming (in 2D6 rounds)
Bad failure	Insatiable thirst	Frothing, the Garou starts to Change <u>next</u> round
Terrible failure	Unbridled desire	Eager, the Garou starts to Change immediately
Horrific failure	Wild abandon	Desperate, the Garou rips into his Change (-10 CI to Change test)

The Change

The monstrous transformation usually takes an entire round throughout which the Garou is considered *prone*. During this the Garou must pass a **Cool** test to determine the success of the Change:

Result of Cool test	Description	Effect
Amazing success	Effortless	As below, plus gain +10 Cool to the Garou's next Change
Great success	Smooth	Gain +10% to the Garou's next test (any)
Good success	Controlled	Changed without damaging possessions
Lucky success	Rough	Changed but destroys 1D3 possessions
Unlucky failure	Tense	Takes a few moments longer than usual, i.e. 1 extra round
Bad failure	Agonisingly slow	As above, plus the Garou suffers D3W to every location
Terrible failure	Frustrated	Not quite able to change form! i.e. lose 1 round > try again?
Horrific failure	Uncontrolled	Evolves into another (D3) form, i.e. not the desired form

Suffering

Every Change is exhausting, some are painful and a few are truly disturbing. For beyond the physical shift, the Garou's mind undergoes a brutal meld, i.e. any double rolled, whether success or failure, indicates that the Garou has gained 1 **Corruption Point**.

Hardened

For the inexperienced, the Change is a traumatising experience but over time it tends to become less distressing. This phenomenon is best represented by a modifier to their Change test:

Attempt	Tendency	Modifier to Cool test
First	Traumatising	Very hard (-40) Cool
Second	Horrifying	Hard (-30) Cool
Third	Terrifying	Challenging (-20) Cool
Fourth	Fearsome	Tricky (-10) Cool
Fifth	Formidable	Routine (-) Cool



Destruction

Each Change is such a brutal transformation that it ruins any clothing and/or armour worn by the Garou. The only exception are shifts into the Homid shape where clothing and armour is damaged, not destroyed. Also, there is a small risk (10%) that each personal effect maybe damaged, lost (2%) or even destroyed (1%).

The Hunger

Beyond the obvious changes to a Garou's body, their mind also undergoes a brutal transformation, often with dire consequences. At every *Unit of Time* (see [GM/Player screen](#)), the Garou must test versus **Cool** where:

Cool test	State	Effect on Garou
Amazing success	Sentient	You're aware of your humanity & in control, i.e. can act & Change at will
Great success	Conflicted	You revel in bestial impulses (howl, prowl & snarl) but occasionally your primal urges are soothed by warm but distant scruples (WP test to Change)
Good success	Forlorn	Find the nearest pack of wolves & bond with them (retest @ +20) or climb the nearest heights & howl at the moon mournfully (retest @ +10)
Lucky success	Ravenous	Search your surroundings (500') for nearest food (WP test if human body)
Unlucky failure	Predatory	Hunt & devour the nearest large mammal within 1 mile (WP if human)
Bad failure	Territorial	Defeat the <u>nearest</u> threat in sight (WP test if friendly and/or human)
Terrible failure	Domineering	Subdue the <u>biggest</u> threat in sight (WP test if friendly and/or human)
Horrific failure	Bloodthirsty	Slaughter the nearest D6 creatures (WP test if friendly and/or human)

The Beast Within

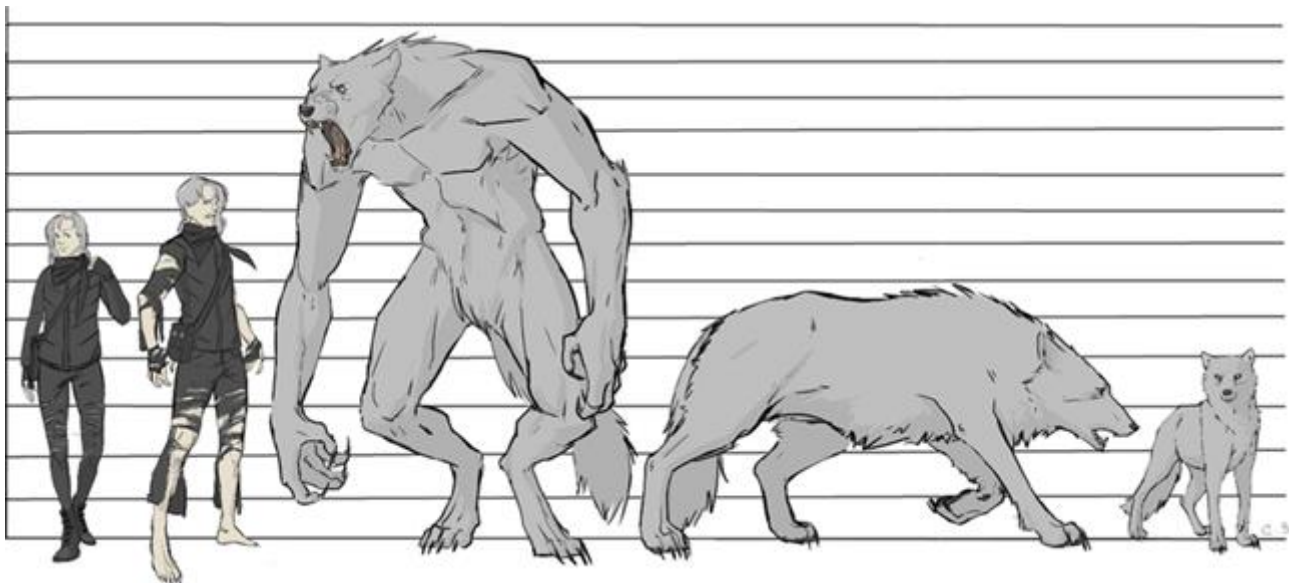
Through the depravity of their actions, Garou gradually lose their humanity (permanent loss of **WP**) and risk becoming uncontrollable monsters once their **WP** reaches 0:

- [Hunting livestock for food](#) = -1 **WP**
- Gratuitous violence, e.g. ripping limbs from enemies, beating foes with their limbs = -2 **WP**

- Feasting on bodies of non-human victims = -3 WP
- [Impassioned crimes](#) (manslaughter), e.g. attacking the nearest person = -4 WP
- Feasting on bodies of human victims (cannibalism) = -5 WP
- [Planned Crimes](#) (murder, i.e. hunting a human) = -6 WP
- Attacking a friend = -7 WP
- [Repeated Crimes](#) (serial murder) = -8 WP
- Eating a friend = -9 WP
- [Heinous Crimes](#) (mass murder) = -10 WP

Manifestation

Once a Garou Changes into his new form, his mind is altered. This transformation is reflected by a change in the Garou's statistics as well as his skills. Above all, it is the form that the Garou shifts into that dictates the extent of this Change. While all Garou can change into 4 different forms, only the lycanthropes can freely choose which form to adopt. This is because most shapeshifters have focused on 1 form, the lupus.



Homid

This is the true form for most Garou but reverting to this aspect still requires a Change (**Cool** test). However, if slain in another form, a Garou will automatically revert to this form, albeit over several minutes. Even in Homid form, many Garou bear certain stigmata resulting from their Changes, e.g. meeting of both eyebrows at the bridge of the nose, curved fingernails, low-set ears, a swinging stride and/or a birthmark on the head. Obviously, witch hunters and other guardians of civilisation are very sensitive to such traits.

Glabro

This is probably the most common form for *lycanthropes* as it offers greater strength than their human form but is less bloodthirsty than their Crinos and Hispo forms. The Garou's physical appearance changes taking certain attributes of the wolf; body hair becomes longer and thicker, teeth and nails elongate, the brow slopes, and the character looks huge and menacing. Even their eyes turn a pale orange, almost yellow. Speech is still possible but only in guttural tones. This form is so widespread in Norsca that it is called the *kveldulf* or "evening-wolf" as by nightfall it can be difficult to distinguish between the 2 forms. However outside of Norsca, most communities, especially in the Empire, a glabro is viewed as mutant.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
			+5		+1								-10

Talents: Formidable, Natural Weapons

Formidable: your formidable countenance scares many, i.e. Easy (+20) *Fear* test for all opponents.

Natural Weapons: any unarmed attacks count as natural weapons, i.e. no **WS** penalty & D6 damage.

Crinos

This is by far the most terrifying form for both the victim but also the Garou. The Change unleashes a massive growth spurt for it gains 50% in height (yes, a 6-foot man becomes a 9-foot Crinos) and 100% in weight. The body is covered in fur and the head becomes that of a snarling canine. Fangs and talons are now pronounced with the arms becoming long and apelike, suitable for running on all fours. The addition of a tail helps the Garou maintain its balance. Speech is very difficult, being reduced to a sentence or two spat in harsh tones:

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
+1	+5		+10	+5	+4	+5		-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-20

Skills: *Concealment, Silent Move, Blood lust*

Talents: *Fearsome, Frenzy, Natural Weapons, Keen Senses*

Fearsome: your twisted form strikes fear into all, i.e. Standard (-) *Fear* test for foes & Simple (+10) for allies.

Bloodlust: Crinos are notoriously ravenous, i.e. they suffer -10 to their **Cool** tests (see *The Hunger*, above).

Hispo

This form is favoured by Garou seeking to hunt or flee for it offers great speed and endurance. The Hispo is a huge (10-foot long), hulking beast resembling the dreaded Dire Wolf with a massive head and jaws. Speech is impractical with humans, beyond a word or two spat through gritted teeth, whereas possible with wolves.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
+2	+10		+5	+10	+3	+10		-20	-20	-20		-10	-30

Skills: *Bloodlust, Concealment, Follow Trail, Silent Move*

Talents: *Keen Senses, Monstrous, Natural Weapons*

Monstrous: your massive countenance unnerves all, i.e. Simple (+10) *Fear* test for foes and Easy (+20) for allies.

Lupus or Wolf-struck

This form is favoured by Shapeshifters as many consider the Glabro too intimidating and the Crinos as well as Hispo too wild. Whereas speech with humans is hopeless, it comes effortlessly with natural wolves.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
9	49		39	39	12	39	2	9	19	19	29	29	9

Skills: *Concealment, Silent Move, Follow Trail, Swim*

Talents: *Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Unsettling*

A Return to Old Form

Whichever shape they have shifted into, wercreatures must make a successful **WP** test to revert to their Human form. The only exception is if their Hunger has driven them into a Sentient state (see above), where they can shift back into human form at will.

Local legends

Many scholars claim that, regardless of their form, Garou share certain attributes, notably:

- “Garou never really die but instead fall into a deep sleep from which they later awake” – indeed upon reaching death Garou drift into a torpor in which they slowly regenerate (recovering 1W per hour).
- “Ye silver weapon doth inflict o most heinous of wounds” – actually this is untrue (due to the exploits of the Argent family of Witch Hunters) but few have lived to warn others. Though it should be noted that blessed weapons cause significant (+1W) wounds.
- “Werwolves are illegal in the Empire: they’re physical corruptions of man’s innocence & purity. Monsters to be eradicated with the purging fire of Sigmar!” – while true legally, fire isn’t more effective than other arms.
- “The only true way to kill a Garou, is to drive a stake through their heart!” – this is absolutely true.
- “Don’t eat meat from a wolf-killed lamb or you risk becoming a verwolf!” – this is utter rubbish.

- “Some alchemists pay good coin to bring in lupenir...” – this is true, bounty hunters can earn tidy sums for dead Garou but live specimens fetch much higher returns, as alchemists can test their subjects in their meandering search for an mythical antidote ...
- “There’s no known cure, only cold steel!” – indeed this seems to be accurate (see below).

Remedies

Despite centuries of studies and experimentation, man has yet to discover a cure for the Garou. Until then the only hope appears to be Monkshood or Wolfsbane. This pretty but highly toxic flower naturally repels werecreatures, i.e. it forces them to make a **WP** test to come within 6 yards of it. This herb is also the main ingredient in the Truefoil poison. Should the werecreature ingest or be infected with Truefoil then they must pass a *poison* (standard T test) or *Infected Wounds* (varies, see above) test.

Should it fail, the werecreature becomes nauseous (-1/-10) and must move away from the source of the poison for one round. It may (at GM’s discretion) pass a **WP** test to approach that source again. If two doses are administered and the tests failed, then the werecreature is seriously weakened (-2/-20), before vomiting uncontrollably (*prone* for 1 round) and finally reverting to its Homid form, where it suffers from burning in the mouth and face. Should the werecreature seek to change form again, they will find their Urge more reluctant than ever, i.e. 20% bonus to **WP** test. If three tests are failed, then the werecreature is critically weakened (-3/-30) and suffers tingling sensations which quickly (D10 rounds) numb their limbs (paralysis) before slowly (D10 turns) but quietly dying. Finally, it should be noted that Wolfsbane, while not a rare herb, can only be found in mountain meadows. Its scarcity renders it expensive (15 GCs per dose), especially outside of summer (30 GCs).



Local gossip

“Up north there are whispers of certain men transforming into horrifying beasts in the thick of battle...”
“There be ‘frightening spirits’ in the woods with human features that walked on four legs”

Children of Ulric

Also known as Step-Brood or Lost Children, these men and women are worshiped by certain extremists with the Ulrican faith such as the Sons of Ulric. For beyond their martial prowess, many see within them a physical manifestation of Lord Ulric’s copulation with fierce northern maid, Birgit, whom he took as his lover. More conservative Ulricans tend to view these Children of Ulric in curious mix of awe and wonder, other cults and many citizens, view them with suspicion bordering on fear. Indeed, most Sigmarites and witch hunters view them with unbridled hatred, believing them to be abominations; once followers of the Wolf God, but now corrupted by the taints of Dark Gods.

Der Wer

In Norsca, where Chaos exerts greater influence than anywhere else, the touch of the Wer is viewed by many as one of the greatest blessings from the Gods. Indeed, it is often ascribed to Tchar (Tzeentch), the Lord of Change. But be warned this condition is seen as an affliction by other tribes and a curse by most foreigners.

References

WFRP1 rulebook (page 247) & [Warpstone \(WFRP fanzine\)](#), [Diseases in WFRP - Warpstone](#)
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