

## *Afraid of the Dark*

### 1

My name is Brian Richards, and I'm afraid of the dark.

I just thought I'd go ahead and get that out right from the start: I'm thirty-five years old and I'm afraid of the dark. I don't mean I turn into Little Miss Muffit every time the lights go out; but my heart races, I sweat, and my imagination goes apeshit.

I can overcome the fear. I am capable of functioning in the dark or near-dark. Well, I used to be. Lately it's gotten a lot worse, and it has nothing to do with the common fears: werewolves, vampires, monsters under the bed and that terrifying fucking alien from the movies.

I've dealt with the fear as I grew older by using it to drive my writing. I turned terror into high-octane creative fuel and wrote about what scared me. For some reason I started getting paid for it, too. Funny, isn't it? People will pay money to read about what scares me. So let's add that to the list: I'm thirty-five years old, I'm a successful writer of books that scare other people and I'm as scared of the dark as I was when I was eight.

I've written seven novels, four of which have been turned into movies, two collections of short stories, seventeen essays and magazine articles, two original screenplays, a non-fiction book about writing and this is the last thing I'm ever going to write.

### 2

I first saw "Alien" when I was nine years old. Two years later I saw "An American Werewolf in London" at the drive-in with my folks.

"Alien" got me in a kind of cerebral way at first. It didn't really scare me too badly. I figured if I was ever on an interstellar mining ship and heard an alien distress call, that was my ass. But weighing the likelihood of that in my young mind meant that the fear of that movie menace just kind of stayed near the front of my mind and didn't really get underneath in a truly scary way until much later.

"An American Werewolf in London," on the other hand, fucked me up pretty badly. I remember a dream I had shortly after I saw that movie. I was attacked by vicious versions of Jim Henson's Muppets. I suppose that could have been because the Muppets appear in "An American Werewolf in London." In the dream, they attacked me on the floor of the hallway that ran from the front door to the bathroom, with the bedroom doors both on the left as you enter. The closet was across from the bedroom doors and the Muppets came out of it and got me as I was coming out of my bedroom. Kermit had a mouth full of fangs. As the others held me down, Kermit went for my throat. The worst part of that dream was that my parents were in the living room, just on the other side of the wall, and I tried like hell to scream but couldn't make a sound. I beat my hands on the floor, but they didn't hear. I even kicked the closet doors as hard as I could with both feet, but the other Muppets muffled the sound and my parents didn't come to help me.

I awoke from that dream soaked in sweat. My pillow and sheets were wet through and uncomfortable as hell, but I didn't dare move. I lay there, ramrod straight, eyes wide open and darting back and forth. I wouldn't even move my head side to side for fear that something (Muppets) would see and come get me.

But I also got some sort of perverse pleasure out of it. There were times (after I heard about it, tried it, and found out it often worked) that I would drink a lot of water or soda before bed and not use the bathroom, intent on making myself have nightmares. I never worried about wetting the bed – I like to say I have a three-gallon bladder and an iron...whatever it is that keeps you from pissing until you're ready – and I learned to live with sweaty sheets. The fantastic nightmares I had were worth it.

I didn't abuse it – Lord, no! – but it's a habit that I indulged in secretly, even as a married adult. It's a dirty, private thing; like masturbation, only better. It's in my head and I created it effortlessly.

Also, not all of the nightmares scared me.

### 3

Everyone knows that you can't run in a dream.

I guess that sets me apart, too.

Most of the time when you try to run in a dream it's like being stuck in taffy or molasses. You piston your legs like mad and get nowhere. Whoever or whatever is chasing you just keeps getting closer. I learned how to beat that during one dream and can now do it in any dream I want.

I dreamed that I was running down a neighborhood street. It was night and there were no lights in any of the houses. There were no streetlights, either. The full moon shone brightly down and illuminated the entire scene.

There were a lot of other people running the same way, but I was at the tail end of the pack. Whatever was chasing all of us would surely get me first. I was scared, of course, this being a nightmare, but I was calm, too.

Then I dropped to all fours. Just like that. I didn't think about it, I just did it.

I figured out that the problem with running in a dream is that every time you push with one foot and then the other, there's a moment when neither foot is pushing you forward. That's the moment when you stop moving in the dream. That's why you try to run as fast as you can and still move so slowly. So I would beat that system. When my feet weren't pushing, I would pull with my hands, thereby keeping my momentum going. But in order to do this, I had to form my fingers like claws and dig into the rough surface of the street. I felt my fingers dig into the cracks in the pavement. I could feel the aggregate in the paving with my fingertips.

I began to break through the molasses. I sped up. My gait became that of an animal, crouched down and running on all fours. I was able to run fast in my dream, finally.

I began to catch the others that were running. I wouldn't be last anymore. I wouldn't be the first one caught by whatever was chasing us. Then I started to

see the terrified glances the others were throwing at me and it dawned on me what everyone was running from.

They were all running from me.

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It wasn't until I met my spirit guide in a dream that I realized I wasn't a predatory human when I was chasing people in my dreams. He never told me his name, but he was the big brown bear that taught me how to fly. He also helped me see myself within my dream. That's when I saw for the first time that I was a werewolf.

This was about the same time that I broke up with my girlfriend, Tabitha. She wasn't a knockout, but she was very pretty. She was smart, too, which makes me wonder even more why I dumped her the way I did.

And even though I broke up with her, I blamed her for the breakup. This was stupid, childish and probably pretty unhealthy, mentally. But the fact remains: I blamed Tabitha and wished bad things would happen to her.

I had a dream one night that she was waterskiing at some reservoir in the woods. It was probably a national park, but I'd never seen it in real life.

I was running back and forth on the shore, darting between the trees. I was up on two feet, but I was still moving fast. And I had claws: long, sharp, deadly claws. I was in my werewolf form and I was stalking my ex-girlfriend. Not stalking as in *it's-time-for-a-restraining-order*, but stalking as a predator stalks its prey.

I leapt onto another boat and chased her across the water. Somehow I was able to control the speedboat with my mind as I stood on the bow, down on all fours. She never saw me approaching as I neared, teeth bared and claws glistening, my damp fur blowing backwards in the wind caused by the boat's speed. I came within striking distance of her unprotected back.

The dream ended. I wish I could say that I woke up. That's how dream sequences in books are supposed to end, with the dreamer waking up. But I can't say that, because it isn't true. I stayed asleep, the dream just ended. Either that or I just couldn't remember any more of it after that point when I did wake up in the morning.

I think that particular dream might have been my mind's way of dealing with the fact that I had trashed a pretty good relationship for no good reason. The dream showed me about to tear Tabitha apart, the same way I did our relationship. Then again, I've also said more than once that dreams are just your brain taking out the trash – they mean nothing.

5

**Associated Press**

**July 26, 1990**

The body of Tabitha M. Milbern was found mutilated in the William Grant National Forest near the Chuckapeak Reservoir. Milbern, aged 19, had been reported missing by her parents when she failed to return from a day trip to the reservoir to water ski with friends last Saturday.

Police spokesman Phil Mitchell said in a statement released Wednesday night that it is possible she is the latest victim of the Chuckapeak Killer, who may be responsible for the deaths of sixteen other men and women whose bodies have all been found in the area around the Chuckapeak Reservoir. All of the victims were horribly mutilated, but police won't release any further details of the crimes except that none of the victims appeared to have been sexually assaulted. They also will neither confirm nor deny rumors that several of the bodies appeared to have been partially eaten.

The earliest victims were originally thought to have been killed by a wild animal, but no animal mutilates its prey in the way that the victims were. Mitchell would not say how they knew, but did confirm that all of the victims were killed by a human.

## 6

That wasn't the only time I've had a dream like that. There have been several. I never knew what to make of them, but I started getting pleasure from them. They became less like nightmares and more like good dreams. I grew to like being a predator.

The dreams and my attitude towards them started affecting my waking life. When I first started writing little stories as a kid, I always wrote science fiction. That was my first love and it's still my favorite genre for reading. But as the dreams started to change from nightmares to pleasures, I started writing darker stuff. At first I just added some darker elements to my sci-fi stories, but it's no wonder that the first story I sold to a magazine was a horror story. And it makes sense looking back that my entire career has been built on scaring the shit out of people.

Don't get me wrong, I still had nightmares where I was the prey. I still woke up in a cold sweat after dreams of loss (particularly of losing my wife). But when I really got scared was when I started waking up with blood in my mouth.

At first I was scared shitless. I had no idea what was going on. I saw a dentist, who immediately said I had bleeding gums, scolded me on my oral hygiene and prescribed a medicinal rinse for gingivitis. I tried everything the dentist said and still woke up with blood in my mouth. Sometimes I woke up and it had run down my chin or jaw line and soaked into my pillow, staining it.

I went back several times and saw different dentists. Each one tried to figure out a different reason than the last.

Finally one told me that my nighttime teeth-grinding was probably at fault. I felt hopeful because this might explain why I sometimes experience bleeding while awake, usually near my canines, as though they were constantly loose and moving around. I thought that it was just because I had never had braces and had some pretty bad alignment around those teeth. I was fitted with a night guard to wear while sleeping. It even helped for awhile.

It wasn't long, though, before I started waking up to find the night guard laying on the floor and my mouth full of blood again. It wouldn't have been so bad if it had at least been fresh blood that I could swallow or spit out easily. Instead, it was old blood, congealed and crusty at my lips and the corners of my mouth.

It was almost as if it weren't actually my blood at all.

Then I started thinking about how the Chuckapeak Killer was scaring the crap out of the local population. No one knew who this guy was or why he did what he did. But when a victim was found just a few miles from my house I was terrified. The authorities and the media said it was the Chuckapeak Killer based on the *modus operandi*. But imagine my terror when I started piecing things together.

I had dreams of being a predator, hunting people.

I often woke up with blood in my mouth.

One of the victims was found not far from my house.

Then I came to my senses. Why would only one victim be near my house if I was the Chuckapeak Killer? Why wouldn't I find bloody clothing in the morning that I had worn during the previous night's activities? I never had any knives go missing or turn up bloody and I find it hard to believe that I – as an unaware killer – would have the presence of mind to clean the murder weapon and put it away neatly, but leave my own mouth full of my victim's blood.

And the biggest question of all: How could I be doing this in my sleep and be able to cover my tracks so well that I could continue doing it for years, and never get caught? The idea that I could be the Chuckapeak Killer was even crazier than I'd have to be to commit these foul crimes.

## 7

I've been sexually active since I was fifteen years old and I just can't get enough. Even when I have a girlfriend and we're sexually active, I still masturbate nearly every day. I refused to live with any of my girlfriends for various reasons, but the truth of it always came down to the fact that I wanted privacy so I could masturbate. I have a porn collection – videos, DVDs, books, magazines, even toys – that borders on obsession. You might say I'm addicted to sex and porn.

I've never been quiet during sex or masturbation. I don't mean porno-movie moaning and groaning and dirty-talk. But when I come I often growl brutally, craning my neck back with my eyes squeezed tightly shut. Some of my girlfriends have been scared of this; some were turned on by it, reaching their own climax as I did. I even pulled a Marv Albert move on a couple of girlfriends, taking them from behind and biting them on the back when I came. I only drew blood twice, and both of those girls were so into it that they didn't seem to mind at all.

This could be considered aberrant behavior, but I've always managed to find girls who enjoyed or at least accepted it. Those who didn't went away and never contacted me again. This is also part of the reason why I've never dated a girl I worked with. It's not so much of a problem now that I write full time; but it mattered when I still had to hold down a regular job. I didn't want to have to continue seeing them in a professional setting after scaring the shit out of them with my sexual proclivities.

The reason this matters enough to write about now is the animal nature of it, the brute instinct to copulate in an animalistic way. My human mind is still in ultimate control – it's not about procreating at all. I had a vasectomy several years

ago, even though I've never had children. But the underlying animal instinct doesn't lie so low in me. It's very near the surface.

In mythology, vampires are very sexual beings. They can't get enough and they're very good at getting it whenever they want and from whomever they wish. I'm no movie Count Dracula, but I'm pretty good at getting the ladies and getting them to do what I want, how I want. They may not come back for more, but I get it my way at least once, and there's always another one.

Does this mean there's some truth to the mythologies? Am I living proof that the myths are based on the instincts and real abilities of some people, to a certain extent? I don't have the answers to those questions, but I do have my suspicions.

## 8

I got married. Some said I married early, some said I married late. I was twenty-five when I married Deana. We're crazy about each other.

I'm not going to say that we've never had arguments or other problems, but for the most part, we really do exist in wedded bliss. I've never even cheated on her, as I've been known to do with girlfriends, and that's a pretty big step for me. Like I said, I can't get enough. I won't say I haven't been tempted, but I love her so damn much I don't dare risk what we have.

My wife has seen me through some rough times, mentally and emotionally. She was really supportive when I had to go through anger management when I went too far defending us against a mugger six years ago. I shouldn't have been convicted of murder or even manslaughter because it was clearly self-defense; the man had a gun. What got me sentenced to six months and anger management counseling was that after I had taken the gun away from him I partially crushed his skull with it. The jury decided that since he no longer had the gun, I should have stopped because he didn't pose an imminent threat anymore. What saved my bacon was that the judge saw it a little differently and gave me the light sentence instead of two years. Through all of the trial, my time in lockup, and the anger management counseling, my wife was right there with me, supporting me the whole time.

My love for my wife and the love I receive from her is what keeps me going and keeps me writing. Without her support I might still be punching a clock at a day job.

## 9

I did some research recently for a story about werewolves. A lot of the newer stuff I found was probably made up to sound good and feed the imaginations of people who visit web sites with forums for werewolf-wannabes. It was a bunch of crap like being born on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> or reciting an incantation could lead to you becoming a werewolf. But like the movies say: if you dig deep enough and go far enough back, you always find the nuggets of truth that feed the legends.

I found a very old, leather-bound edition in a shop on Commerce Street downtown. While many modern books cover single topics (which is probably why

they have to embellish so much to fill space and justify a \$24.95 price tag), this one covered many ancient legends, including werewolves.

The book said that while true shape-shifting had never been proven, a person who becomes a werewolf does go through some physical changes. The cursed man (or woman) does move and act as a wolf does. Their canine teeth often grow longer; hearing, smell and night vision improve; body hair becomes more coarse. And, of course, they grow a thirst for blood and a penchant for wolf-like violence. It also says that the myth of turning under the light of the full moon is wrong. A werewolf can change anytime, day or night, regardless of the phases of the moon. It makes sense, if you think about it. The phases of the moon are nothing more than the cycle of the Earth blocking sunlight and creating a shadow on the moon. The full moon is always there, whether it's lit by the sun or not. The main determining factor seems to be when it's safe for the werewolf to change and hunt. This just happens to be usually at night.

Often, the book continues, werewolves start to behave in wolf-like ways even when in completely human form. Sometimes this manifests itself as sudden bursts of extreme rage and violence in a normally calm person. Most of the time, the werewolf in each state isn't even aware of its other state. As a wolf, the creature has no apparent knowledge that it is also human; as a human, it may suspect in time, but never fully understand that it becomes a wolf. The cursed are prone to nightmares where they are alternately predator and prey.

The ways in which a person becomes a werewolf are in dispute. Hollywood says you have to be bitten by a werewolf and survive the attack to become one. Like I noted previously, some say you can be born at a certain time or curse yourself with magic spells, et cetera. The book I found says that while the most common way to become one is to be bitten by one, in some cases a person becomes one with no apparent outside influence whatsoever. It's as if they *think* themselves into becoming one. This method of becoming is cited in cases when a werewolf is suddenly in an area that has never experienced the curse before. In these cases it is unlikely that the werewolf became one by being bitten by another, but rather became a werewolf spontaneously.

The book also disputes Hollywood's claim that you need silver to kill a werewolf. It says that anything that will kill a man will kill a werewolf. The problem is that the werewolf is so powerful and fast while at the same time retaining so much of the human's intelligence that it's very difficult to injure or kill one. Werewolves are also instinctively able to sniff out remote traps and avoid them. And Heaven help any human who tries to spring the trap themselves.

There is little hope for one who becomes a werewolf. The major religions all agree that suicide is a sin. But isn't it a worse sin to continue existence as an abomination?

## 10

The police came by one day to ask if my wife and I had seen anything unusual the night before. It seems a body was found in the greenbelt behind our neighborhood. The M.O. suggests the man was another victim of the Chuckapeak Killer,

bringing the killer's total to twenty-eight. It was also a lot closer than the body that had been found just a few miles from the house some time ago.

My wife and I told the officers that we hadn't seen or heard anything at all. When we talked with some of our neighbors, they all said that they hadn't, either. So how does a killer dump a body in a narrow greenbelt – at its widest, it's only twenty yards between the backyards on our street and the backyards over on Beachwood – with no one seeing or hearing anything?

From what we learned about the investigation there wasn't much blood and no sign of a struggle around the body, indicating that the body was dumped rather than the man being killed right here. But there also weren't any drag marks, meaning that the killer carried a 210-pound dead body through the trees on relatively rough terrain and never made a sound loud enough for anyone to hear.

Also, the greenbelt is bordered on three sides by houses and a deep ravine with a marsh at the bottom of it. The killer would have either had to make his way through the marshy ravine and then climbed the steep slope to get into the greenbelt while carrying the dead body, or he would have entered the greenbelt through someone's yard. Either way, why would a killer go through so much trouble to dump a body in this particular place? It would have been much easier to dump the body in the marsh at the bottom of the ravine. It wouldn't have been found so quickly, either. Unless, of course, the killer wanted the body to be found quickly, like a challenge – or a warning.

## 11

The event that decided me, that convinced me of what was happening and what I need to do, happened just two days ago.

Once again, I woke up with blood in my mouth. But this time I had a piece of something caught between my teeth. It was a little bit painful. I went to the kitchen, got a toothpick, and removed the hurtful bit. I examined it on the end of the toothpick. It appeared to be a small piece of raw meat.

I didn't think anything of it at first because I had eaten a rare steak the night before for dinner and had maybe missed the piece when I brushed and flossed. It happens sometimes.

I went out to the end of the driveway and got the newspaper from the box on the side of the mailbox post. I stopped in the kitchen long enough to grab a cup of coffee from the pot that had begun brewing on the timer at six o'clock and continued in my robe and slippers onto the back patio to read the paper while I drank my coffee. I was paying attention to the front page below the fold – another story about the inability of the police to track down the Chuckapeak Killer – when my foot hit something heavy, but yielding.

I dropped the arm holding the paper to my side, then I dropped both the paper and my coffee mug onto the concrete patio. The mug shattered, spilling hot coffee on my left foot and lower leg. I never felt it.

Lying on the patio was a human foot. It had been chewed off. A small pool of blood had congealed around the severed ankle. A few drops trailed off of the

patio onto the grass. When I kicked it, it had turned a little. Luckily my toes missed hitting the inside of the ankle and hit the top of the foot, instead.

Actually, it was lucky that I had been shocked into dropping the mug of coffee. It gave me an excuse to quickly grab a trash bag and a mop. Deana had heard the crash of the mug and was coming down the stairs, asking if I was alright. I told her I was fine, that I had experienced a bit of “extra-clumsy” and dropped my coffee cup.

I grabbed a trash bag from the box under the sink, thought about it a second, then grabbed another. I retrieved the mop from the mudroom between the kitchen and the garage, grabbed the barbecue tongs from their hook next to the stove and went back out onto the patio.

The foot was still there.

I had wished that it would be gone and prove itself to be just a figment of my overactive imagination.

I used the tongs to pick up the severed foot and put it into one of the trash bags. I let the tongs drop in with it – I just couldn’t bring myself to ever use them again for food after this grisly task. The shards of coffee mug I picked up by hand and put into the bag, too. I took a moment to walk out to the end of the patio and make a brief survey of the yard to see if there was anything else that should go into the trash bag before I tied it off. Seeing nothing, I went back to the patio, tying the bag as I went. I put the trash bag with its sinister cargo into the other trash bag I had brought outside with me and set the double-bagger aside.

I picked up the mop and used the spilled coffee to start cleaning up the pool of blood and the trail of drops. I wanted to get the blood mostly cleaned up before Deana had a chance to get down here. I would wet the mop in the mop sink in the mudroom after the majority of the “red” was cleaned up, or at least diluted enough so Deana wouldn’t be alarmed.

Sure enough, she came out onto the patio, barefoot and holding her robe closed around her. The early-morning chill we get here this time of year never bothered me much, but Deana can hardly stand it, preferring instead to stay inside until the sun warms things up a bit.

She squinted her eyes at me and watched what I was doing. Some women just aren’t ready to face the world before they’ve had a cup of coffee and splashed some water on their faces, and my Deana was no exception.

I walked past her with the trash bag and mop. I told her I was going to finish cleaning up the spill after getting the mop wet. She asked me why I didn’t get it wet first. I shrugged and mumbled something about having to clean up the first cup of the day instead of getting to drink it.

I dropped the mop in the mudroom, took the trash bag directly to the can in the garage, then came back into the mudroom, wet the mop, and returned to the patio to finish the job.

## 12

Like I said before, I love my wife dearly. I know what I have to do, but that doesn’t mean I want her to have to know why. The book said that anything that will kill a man will kill a werewolf.

I know what the dreams are trying to tell me. Perhaps it was even the dreams that caused it in the first place. I believe now that I may have *thought* myself into becoming what frightens me. I have a whole new reason to be afraid of the dark.

People know with their hearts – long after their heads know better – that there are things that go bump in the night. Now I know that I’m one of the things that go bump.

It’s okay, though. I have a twelve-gauge shotgun that my dad left to me when he died. It has a long barrel – he used it for skeet shooting – but I think I can manage if I just put the end of the barrel under my chin instead of trying to get it into my mouth.

As I said, I’ve written seven novels, four of which have been turned into movies, two collections of short stories, seventeen essays and magazine articles, two original screenplays, a non-fiction book about writing and this is the last thing I’m ever going to write.

I want my wife to know I’m sorry for what I have to do, and I’ve written a separate note for her, making up a reason. I hope that she never reads this and finds out that her husband was a monster.

But I want others to know that there are such things as monsters, and I was one of them. A copy of this is going to the police to solve the Chuckapeak Killer murders. I’ve asked my agent to find that fine line between getting the word out that true mythological evil does exist in the world and letting my wife get hold of a copy. I have also instructed my agent to watch the papers and make sure that the killings have stopped. He and my editor will add an end-note proving that I was right.

Now I’m done and so now I’m done. I have the shotgun next to me and I have a shell in the chamber. The safety is off and shortly I will be clicking “Save” for the last time. After I send the file to my agent and the police, I will delete it from this computer, shut the PC down and pick up the shotgun.

I am responsible for the mutilation deaths of thirty-three men and women and partially eating them.

I’m still afraid of the dark, but not because of what lurks in it that may harm me. I’m afraid of it because I know that I am the one lurking in it, laying in wait for my prey.

I am the monster.

#### **END NOTE**

*By Craig Jenkins, Literary Agent*

*&*

*Burlyn Wise, Editor*

According to this document, our good friend Brian Richards planned to kill himself. The police responded to a report of a gunshot. A neighbor called 911 to report it. Brian’s wife, Deana, was visiting her parents in Maine for three days and Brian was alone in the house. When the police arrived they found what appeared to be the scene of a suicide, but no body. The shotgun was on the floor. It had been fired. There was a blood spray on the wall and ceiling consistent with someone

shooting themselves in the head. The doors and windows were all secured and there was no sign of forced entry. Further investigation did find that an exterior attic vent had been knocked out, probably from the inside. The police were perplexed by this because the only way into the attic was through a crawlspace in a vaulted hallway ceiling that was too high to reach without a ladder. However, there was no ladder below the crawlspace in the hallway and one had not been pulled up into the attic. The vent that had been knocked out and was presumably the exit point of whatever had been in the house was too small to allow a ladder through it that was tall enough to have reached the attic entry.

The blood was DNA matched to Brian Richards, but his body was never found. The ravine and marsh behind the housing development was searched by Search and Rescue, police divers and cadaver-sniffing dogs. The entire neighborhood was searched, but still to no avail.

We believe there is an explanation for this, but no one would ever believe it. Neither one of us *wants* to believe it, but we have little choice. The evidence is too great, even if it isn't convincing enough for the police. They're still searching for Brian's body. Sherlock Holmes described deductive reasoning as after having eliminated everything that is impossible, whatever is left – however improbable – is the truth. We have included a newspaper clipping and an excerpt from the book Brian mentions as evidence. We believe he must not have read this particular passage. To believe that he had and still took the actions he did is unthinkable. You can make up your own mind about what happened; or you can choose not to.

Just because we have lived our whole lives denying the existence of something doesn't mean it can't exist. Sometimes things happen in our lives that shake the very foundation of our beliefs. Some people can't handle it at all; some simply ignore it. Others choose to examine it carefully and may accept it on a provisional basis. What happens most of the time, we believe, is that the mind continues to deny what the heart knows is the truth. And somewhere in between heart and mind, we can find some kind of life, some balance in our everyday lives that lets us continue in our lifelong beliefs, but sometimes causes us to look worriedly over our shoulders when we're alone in the dark.

**Associated Press  
October 19, 2009**

Four dead bodies attributed to the Chuckapeak Killer have been found near the Chuckapeak Reservoir in the William Grant National Forest, bringing the total count to twenty-two men and thirty women. There has never been a more prolific serial killer in the history of the civilized world. The latest bodies were found mutilated and partially eaten yesterday morning by a group of Boy Scouts hiking with their Scout Master, Scott McKenzie.

**Excerpt from *Dark Legends*  
Borogrovia Press, New York, Published 1837**

While it is true that a werewolf may be killed by the same circumstances that will kill a man, that is only true if the werewolf is killed by someone else. If a man learns that he is a werewolf and chooses to take his own life while in human form, he will only succeed in killing the part of himself

that is human, leaving the wolf intact, with all the viciousness of the werewolf and the intelligence of the man, but lacking any human compassion. In order to remove the curse of the wolf, the werewolf must take its own life while in its wolf form, thereby killing only the wolf half and leaving the man free of the curse.

If the man who is cursed kills his human side, the wolf will grow stronger and more vicious, losing all of the barriers and restraint that the human side may have imposed on the werewolf. In fact, the werewolf will take a completely lupine form, losing all human appearance completely. When this happens, nothing has yet been found that can kill the wolf.

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