

## The Books of Norene I: Wolves and Werewolves

**Jane Sefc**

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*Wolves and Werewolves is an imaginative and exciting fantasy adventure that puts a refreshing spin on werewolf mythology.*

In Jane Sefc's action-packed fantasy adventure *Wolves and Werewolves*, an uneasy truce between the werewolves and humans of Norene has existed for nearly a century. Now a green-eyed stranger, Rex, is in pursuit of a lost magical necklace that has the power to destroy the kingdom and all of mankind.

Rex hires the treacherous leader of the werewolves to retrieve the necklace in exchange for the throne. He also enlists disgruntled Norene lords to help the werewolves depose the king. Their search for the necklace runs into complications when a werewolf bite (aided by the necklace) transforms a wolf into a human named Daniel, whose superhuman abilities attract the king's attention. Both sides pursue Daniel; whoever controls him and the necklace will control the fate of the kingdom.

The narrative builds upon traditional werewolf folklore and mythology by introducing the imaginative twist in which werewolf blood transforms a wolf to a human. The detailed description of this transformation, beginning with the wolf's base attraction to the necklace because of its glow and moving to the higher-brain discovery of language and critical thinking, is shown through interior and exterior dialogue.

Daniel's evolution from wolf to human develops over a number of chapters, allowing the character to mature and form human relationships as he grapples with his dual identity and learns to use his newly acquired human abilities and behaviors. Such themes of maturation and, to a lesser degree, political intrigue form the central pillars and points of tension of the story.

While Rex's pursuit of the necklace is another major source of tension, Rex's own character arc is the least developed. He floats in and out of the action when there is need for conflict, and then disappears without further ado until the very end.

Other characters are thoroughly developed, and the book maintains a strong balance between exposition and dialogue. The story flows smoothly and logically. Action scenes alternate with quieter moments, creating suspense and tension that heighten the excitement.

The king's fatherly relationship with Daniel is one of the strongest elements of the story; it is written with emotional depth and honesty. Daniel becomes both more human and more animalistic under the king's guidance.

There is a lot happening within the narrative, including plot lines exploring Daniel's newfound powers, politics between the king and his lords, and the conflict between the king and the werewolves. Despite the multiple threads of action, most conflicts resolve satisfactorily by story's end. A cliffhanger provides the setup for continuing the books in the trilogy.

*Wolves and Werewolves* is an imaginative and exciting fantasy adventure that puts a refreshing spin on werewolf mythology.

NANCY POWELL (May 18, 2018)

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