

Wolves, Werewolves and a Full Moon

by Marco Greganti

NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS

Dear reader,

I'm writing this story on an old but still working typewriter that I found in the tool shed. It's nighttime.

Who am I? I'm Mimi, an athletic and curious little dog. My fur is soft, part white and part black, like that of cows. I really love running, but I also enjoy sleeping in my dog bed, and I'm crazy about salmon-flavoured kibble.

What's that? Oh yes, it's normal for you to feel a little confused, dear reader.

You thought dogs couldn't write? Well, think again—haven't you heard of a certain Snoopy? Dogs think, feel, and dream just like you do. And we can smell way more things than you could ever imagine.

I must warn you right away: in this story, there is a frightening creature. Yes, well, it seems there's a monster.

But I'll let you in on a secret: monsters are only monsters because we say they are. If something scares us, that doesn't necessarily mean it's bad. If, for example, it just has sharp teeth, a hairy face, and four legs, that doesn't mean it's a monster—it could just be a dog!

But if we're talking about a werewolf, well, in that case things are a bit different. But listen to my story, because nothing is ever quite what it seems...



STRANGE NOISES

It all started, as far as I'm concerned and as far as I remember, on a spring night. I was sleeping in my doghouse when I heard strange noises.

My doghouse is outside the house, sheltered under a porch. My owner Anita's parents believe that a dog shouldn't be in the house when it can be just fine outside.

Are they right? Are they wrong? Who knows. In any case, I truly am fine out here, because the house is on a hillside, just a short walk from a village surrounded by ancient walls. It's peaceful here. But that night, I immediately sensed something different in the air.

Sometimes I jump up and start barking for no real reason: a gust of wind, a dove flapping its wings, a creaking door, or a distant siren. In short, there isn't always a reason to get worked up.

But when there *is* a reason, I snap to attention: my ears perk up, my nose activates, and I stand on three legs, lifting one front paw and bending it slightly.

First, I heard heavy footsteps on the ground, then something running. I heard a strange moan, I'd never heard anything like it before, but somehow it felt familiar. I stepped out of my doghouse and got into position.

I started circling the house.

I sniffed the air and picked up a sharp scent—so strong it made my head spin and my fur stand on end. It wasn't unpleasant, actually. We dogs get information through smell. We can form an idea of something we can't see just by sniffing. And what I smelled in that moment was fierce, animal-like... but also human. More than anything, it was something dangerous.

But what really set off my alarm was the sound of Anita's window opening.

I go under her window almost every morning to greet her when she wakes up and opens the shutters before school.

But this time it was nighttime, the moon was up in the sky, and it wasn't the right moment to be getting up and opening windows.

The window overlooked the garden. Anita's parents loved growing vegetables and fruit of all kinds, year-round. I hadn't even reached that side of the house when I heard:

"HEEEEEELP!!"

It was Anita's frightened voice, so I rushed under the window, barking.

When I rounded the corner of the house and saw that creature, I stopped barking and froze—I couldn't tell what it was.

It looked like a huge wolf-dog, and a muscular one at that. The weird thing was that it was standing on two legs, like a human. Its jaws were wide open, and it had thick black fur. It was staring at the ground-floor window: Anita's bedroom window.

I couldn't see Anita because her room was in dim-light, but she was there, and she was screaming for help.

Then, on instinct, I barked with all the strength I had. I bared my teeth to scare that thing off.

Even though it was bigger and would almost certainly have won in a fight with me, I had to protect Anita. We dogs aren't just fond of our human companions — we'd do anything to defend them. And in that moment, I would have thrown myself at that creature if I had to!

The moment I barked and stepped forward, the creature turned toward me. It was surprised, it hadn't expected that. Then, something hit it. Anita had thrown one of her trophies at it! It was a kind of cup with beautiful silver decorations. She won it last year in a sports competition.

The creature let out a moan and, when the light turned on, it ran away. I chased it, but only briefly because it vanished quickly into the moonlit countryside.

Then, from far away, a howl.

That was a full moon night.

RESCUER MIMI

That night, Anita asked her parents if she could let me sleep with her. Since she was so shaken, they said yes, even though they didn't believe what she'd told them. Adults, as we know, have a hard time admitting that there are things beyond their understanding.

Anita, sitting on her bed, held me close, petting me, rubbing me, and thanking me for scaring off that creature.

"Thank you, Mimi, my little rescue dog!"

I soaked up all the cuddles and strokes, even though it wasn't really *me* who had made that big, scary wolf run away. I'd distracted it, which gave Anita the chance to throw her trophy at it. "Which trophy?" you might ask.

Well, you should know that Anita is ten years old, with straight brown hair she often wears in two braids. She has a mischievous look (almost like me!) and excellent agility (again, almost like me!) which helps her compete successfully in artistic gymnastics (well, no, I don't do that kind of gymnastics). That trophy was very important to her, and apparently very heavy. It threw the creature off balance.

Anita was still scared and trying to understand whether what she'd seen was real or not. So she asked me. Humans know we animals can't answer. But then, why do you think they keep talking to us?

Because they know we understand them — and *you* know it too.

So Anita asked me:

“What was that, Mimi?”

I looked at her and kept listening carefully.

“It appeared at the window... at first I thought it was a bear! But then... it was worse. Who knows...”

Anita fell silent, her thoughts drifting far away. I got a little worried, because we dogs share our owners' emotions without being able to tell them.

So I rested my snout on her hand, hoping she would pet me. Suddenly, she remembered I was there and returned to the present moment. She stroked my head, which comforted me.

As a result, she felt better too, and before long we both fell asleep.