

# Oxford University Werewolf Rules

By Michael

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Werewolf is a game of many variations and (I like to assume) a long and prestigious history. Chances are, you have almost certainly played one of its other forms or sibling games like Mafia at some point in your life. The Oxford University Ruleset is particularly distinctive, having developed over at least the past 50 years, though the claim that it was hatched from a cosmic egg laid by Brian Aldiss remains open for speculation. The rules and roles *are* rather complicated, I'm afraid, but with a bit of experience and frequent references to this document you should get it in no time! Probably.

## Premise

So, you are playing as the inhabitants of a remote, isolated village suffering from an unfortunate werewolf infestation. Said werewolves have a rather inconvenient tendency to maul villagers in the night. The villagers must identify and execute all of the werewolves before the werewolves kill them all. The werewolves, meanwhile, must kill every villager before they are caught and executed. Pretty simple, right?

## Objectives

Your objective is to survive to the end of the game. Ideally, you will get your side to win as well, (though that may not necessarily align with your agenda...), but your primary objective is always *your personal survival*.

## Game Setup

When starting the game, if a village is not currently setup, you will see a prompt to enter a name for it. Once you've decided a name, clicking 'Enter Village' will give you some instructions. Once you've completed these, you will find yourself on the main setup page.

At the top of this page is where each player enters the game. Typing in your name and then clicking 'Add' will make your name appear in the list. The name highlighted in red is who you are currently playing as. If you want to leave the village, you can do so with the button at the bottom right of the menu. The other players who are connected and ready to play are shown in green.

Below that is the list of roles. If a role is green, it means it will be in the game. You can select whichever combination you want, as long as you have enough people for it. Which roles to use is best discussed during setup, as this is dependent on player numbers and personal preferences. Descriptions of how each role works are below, under the **Roles** subheading, funnily enough.

Next to 'Start Game' (which starts the game), you can see the 'History' button. Clicking on this shows you the results and details of previous games.

## Day Phases and Night Phases

The game opens with the night phase. On screen, you can see which roles are active and a list of living players. Below that are a set of buttons. 'Show Role' shows your role and any of the information pertinent to it. Once you've looked, make sure to click 'Hide Role' to prevent someone accidentally seeing your role on screen. 'Rejoin' is for joining the game again if you left mid-match for whatever reason. 'Kill Myself' is somewhat self-explanatory – it kills you instantly. Finally, 'End Game' ends the game, with a prompt to make sure you definitely want to do that. During the night phase you select which player you want to use your role's action on – e.g. who you wish to attack as a werewolf – by clicking on their name in the list. If your role doesn't have any night phase action, you will still have to select someone to complete the night phase, but it doesn't matter who. Any player except a werewolf can just select "None". Once everybody has selected something (player's names turn green once they've selected), the night phase ends, and the day phase begins.

During the day phases, the screen looks very similar to night, though it now shows you any deaths and/or injuries that were incurred last night. This information is updated throughout the day (e.g. if someone is executed). All players still alive are allowed to discuss the dire werewolf situation and solutions to the issue. The werewolves, however, can attempt to coordinate with each other on their next target during this time, so be alert to suspicious looking eye contact, hand signals, etc. You will also notice the 'Sleep' button, which ends the day phase and starts the next night (do note, *anybody* can do this, so be careful not to click or press 'Sleep' by accident).

If you have died, you can no longer contribute to the discussion among players who are still alive. As you are now a zombie, you may say nothing except for, "Brains." However, you do have the privilege of the button 'Show Fate's Secrets', which, when clicked, reveals a full table of every player's role(s) and what actions have been taken throughout the game.

## Injuries

There are two ways you can sustain injuries during the night. The first (and most common) is from being attacked by a werewolf. The second is by setting off a trap by, as a werewolf, attacking someone who has had a trap laid on them by the trapper (see **Roles** for more detail about traps). Injuries are reported to players with no indication of what caused them. Sustaining two injuries *in one night* from any combination of attacks and traps will kill you. Injuries don't carry over from night to night, being healed at the end of each night phase thanks to the village's surprisingly effective healthcare system.

## Executions

If you suspect a player of being a werewolf (or just want them dead for any other reason) you can put a 'guillotine call' on them during the day phase by simply clicking on their name in the list. A second player must also do this to trigger the vote. Once the voting option has appeared on screen, the accused gets a defence speech, which nobody may interrupt. After this speech, every living player chooses between 'Guillotine' or 'Spare'. If the majority choose guillotine, the accused is executed and dies immediately. If there is a tie, the accused survives.

## Roles

There are two basic categories of roles: the villagers, who are at least nominally on the side of good, and the werewolves and their associates on the side of evil (and eating people). There are also the secondary relationship roles, which not all players will have.

You can remind yourself of your role at any time by clicking 'Show Role', which will tell you your role and any necessary associated information (who your lover is, who the other werewolves/cultists are, etc.).

When a vigilante of any kind is present in a game, the 'Load crossbow' button will appear for all players. However, for all those who are not vigilantes, it will do nothing. If you want to click it anyway, have fun with that.

## Recommended Roles and Tips

If you haven't played before or are still starting out, here's some advice on the roles in action. Best practice is playing some games with the standard set of roles to familiarise yourself before experimenting with the extra ones. That standard set is 2 werewolves, trapper, wolfsbane and a lover pair. This is with 6 people minimum in mind. You can play with smaller numbers, but that can be rather awkward. Anyway, here are some notes on the extra roles.

**Werewolves** – You can add a third werewolf if you have a large number of players to avoid leaving them too underpowered.

**Dark Villager** – This role is good if you just want to give the werewolves a small boost and can be a lot of fun when played well.

**Vigilantes** – No matter the type or whose side they're on, these guys' ability to abruptly and unexpectedly kill another player tends to speed the game up. If you have multiple of them, expect things to get *very* chaotic. Best saved for games with large numbers.

**Mayor** – With their special ability being fairly low-key, you can easily add the mayor to spice things up and give the villagers a small boost.

**Cultists** – The cult generally needs larger numbers simply because there need to be at least two cultists for it to work properly. If you have a particularly big game, you can have 3 cultists.

**Lover trio** – This one should definitely be saved for large games because it will kill 3 players in one go if triggered. Of course, you *can* have it alongside the lover pair, but we wouldn't advise it.

**Rival pair** – A good substitute for the lover pair in smaller games that also plays well alongside it in larger games.

## Werewolves and Associates

### Werewolves (Romulus/Remus/Lupin/Greyback)

During each night phase you can attack any one player, including yourself or one of your fellow werewolves (this is *sometimes* a good idea). These follow the logic described under **Injuries**. If there

is only one werewolf left alive, they become a super werewolf, which means their attacks are now a 'one hit kill'.

### **Werewolf Vigilante (Oz)**

You are a normal werewolf except for the fact that you also have a crossbow. It is only loaded with one bolt; it is a single use item, so use your shot wisely. The crossbow can only be fired during the day phase. This is done by first clicking 'Load crossbow' and then selecting the player you wish to shoot. They will be killed instantly. Make sure to move quickly – when you load the crossbow you are highlighted in violet for all players, so another vigilante may get a chance to shoot you first!

The 'Show Role' button only tells your fellow werewolves that you are a werewolf, so they do not know you have this ability.

### **Dark Vigilante**

You are villager but are on the werewolves' side, as they have promised you fame and fortune if you help them take over the village. You do not have an active role during the night phases, but you must do whatever you can during the day phases to protect the werewolves. If they're all exterminated, the villagers will execute you too at the end of the game.

But you are also a vigilante, which means you have a crossbow. It is only loaded with one bolt; it is a single use item, so use your shot wisely. The crossbow can only be fired during the day phase. This is done by first clicking 'Load crossbow' and then selecting the player you wish to shoot. They will be killed instantly. Make sure to move quickly – when you load the crossbow you are highlighted in violet for all players, so another vigilante may get a chance to shoot you first!

The 'Show Role' button just tells your fellow werewolves that you are a werewolf. That is, of course, not entirely accurate, so bear this in mind.

### **Dark Villager**

You are a villager but are on the werewolves' side, as they have promised you fame and fortune if you help them take over the village. You do not have any special abilities or an active role during the night phases, but you must do whatever you can during the day phases to protect the werewolves. If they're all exterminated, the villagers will execute you too at the end of the game.

The 'Show Role' button just tells your fellow werewolves that you are a werewolf. That is, of course, not entirely accurate, so bear this in mind.

## **Villagers**

### **Ordinary Villager**

You are an ordinary villager. You have no special abilities, but you are still working with the rest of the village to catch and guillotine the werewolves. Good luck with that.

## **Wolfsbane**

During each night phase, you select one player to protect. This player does not suffer any injuries from werewolf attacks during that same night phase but can still sustain a trap injury. You can choose to protect yourself, but not on consecutive night phases. The information you have from knowing who you have protected each night is very valuable to catching the werewolves, but there's a risk in revealing yourself...

## **Trapper**

During each night phase, you select one local resident to trap. This can be any player, including yourself. At dusk, you sneak out and set a bear trap just outside the door of that player's house. If a werewolf attacks the player you have trapped, that player will still be harmed by the attack (unless they have also been wolfsbanned) but the werewolf will sustain their own injury from stepping in the bear trap and setting it off. If two or more werewolves attack the trapped player in one night, the trap injury is assigned randomly to one of them.

The Wolfsbane does not protect against traps, so a wolfsbanned werewolf will still suffer an injury from attacking a trapped player.

It is possible (and more likely than you think!) for a werewolf to get themselves killed by a combination of trap injury and attack injury from a fellow werewolf or themselves.

Much like the Wolfsbane, revealing yourself to other players and discussing what you know from who you trapped is very useful, but paints a target on your back for the werewolves, so be careful (or don't, it's up to you).

## **Vigilante**

You are a normal villager who happens to also be an enthusiastic believer in the right to self-defence, which means you own a crossbow. It is only loaded with one bolt; it is a single use item, so use your shot wisely. The crossbow can only be fired during the day phase. This is done by first clicking 'Load crossbow' and then selecting the player you wish to shoot. They will be killed instantly. Make sure to move quickly – when you load the crossbow you are highlighted in violet for all players, so another vigilante may get a chance to shoot you first!

## **Mayor**

You are the upstanding head of local government, against whom the recent accusations of bribery and wire fraud are completely spurious. This means that your vote counts as *two* votes during guillotine calls.

## **Cultists**

You are a member of the local cult, who meet in the middle of the night in to attempt (so far unsuccessfully) to contact eldritch horrors from beyond the veil of human understanding. You are not exactly innocent villagers, but at least you know you and your fellow cultists cannot possibly be

werewolves. However, though you have an alibi, you cannot mention it – if the other villagers knew what you have been up to, they would execute you too. You and your fellow cultists can still form a voting bloc, but be careful because you must NEVER mention, or even hint at, the cult. If you do so, you must immediately commit ritual suicide in shame for giving away your societies' secrets (or, rather, press the 'Kill Myself' button).

## **Relationships**

### **Lovers**

You may notice that, alongside your main role, you are also in a lover pair. Because you and your lover are eternally dedicated to each other, you have made a suicide pact. What that means in practice is that if your lover dies, you die as well. As such, you must protect your lover to ensure your own personal survival.

Occasionally, though rarely, the lover trio may be used. This functions exactly like the lover pair – if one member of the trio dies, the other two do as well.

You may find that you and your lover(s) are on opposite sides of the conflict. If this is the case, the win conditions change. The heart wants what it wants, meaning you and your lover(s) must conspire to kill off everyone else in the game. Only by doing that will you win. Isn't romance wonderful?

### **Rivals**

The rival pair are the inverse of the lovers. Instead of tragic love and death by heartbreak, you hate your rival so much you literally can't stand to live in the same village as them. Your purpose is to make sure your rival dies, either by killing them yourself or getting them killed by other players. If you do this and make it to the end of the game alive, you have met your win conditions.

## **Endgame**

Unfortunately, the app itself is not able to identify when one side has met their respective win conditions. Instead, this depends on a deceased player with access to Fate's Secrets informing the living players if the game is over after they have agreed to sleep. The win conditions are generally:

- All werewolves are dead (the villagers should sleep and wake up without injuries, at which point the dead can then confirm).
- All villagers are dead (or about to be because they are no longer in the majority).
- The lovers are alive and everybody else is dead (or about to be, usually because the lovers have formed a voting bloc).

Best of luck to you all!

## **Appendix 1 – Online and In-Person**

This app was designed during the plague years of Covid to be used as an online substitute to the pen and paper original. As it turned out, it also functions very nicely for in person games. Here is some advice for both scenarios.

### **Online**

As you will be presumably playing on Discord, Zoom or a similar video call scenario, all that is necessary is that each player have the site open on their respective computer and make sure they're not accidentally sharing their screen. Whilst it is no substitute for in-person interaction, seeing people on camera allows one to still try and read body language or physically signal to other players. It is against the rules to communicate with other players through DMs or any other form of private messaging.

### **In-Person**

If you are in person, then each player should have the site open on their respective smartphone. Make sure to use the 'Hide Role' button to avoid accidentally showing your role to someone sitting near you. In general, players are not allowed to look at other players' phone screens – i.e. to see how they voted. In the event that somebody has no smartphone to use, they can share with another player, with two tabs open in the web browser, one for each of them. In this situation, be extra careful about not peeking at information.