



## **My Uncle Wal the Werewolf**

Written by Jackie French

Illustrated by Stephen Michael King

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### **Synopsis**

Buster lives in the happiest werewolf clan around. Dad can catch dried cow pats with his teeth, Mum's corgi milkshakes are to die for (unless you happen to be a corgi) and Aunt Paws makes one of the best dead rat sandwiches in the world.

One day Mum and Dad disappear without a trace. Have Buster's parents been wolfnapped? And now, Uncle Wal is leader of the pack. He wants the clan to move from Werewolf Mountain, and for Buster to go to SCHOOL! But Buster has other plans ...

Ages: 7–10 years

### **About the Author**

Jackie French is a full-time writer who lives in rural NSW. She writes fiction and non-fiction for children and adults, and has columns in the print media. Jackie is regarded as one of Australia's most popular children's authors. In 2000, Jackie won the Children's Book Council's Younger Readers' Award for *Hitler's Daughter*. In 2002, she won the ACT Book of the Year Award for *In the Blood*. Her bestselling picture book *Diary of a Wombat* was named an Honour Book in the 2003 CBC Awards and won the ABA Book of the Year, as well as numerous other awards. Most recently, *To the Moon and Back*, co-written with her husband Bryan Sullivan, won the 2005 Eve Pownall Award for Information Books.

## About the Illustrator

Stephen's first picture book, *The Man Who Loved Boxes*, was nominated for the Crichton Award for illustration, was the winner of the inaugural Family Award and was selected for Pick of the List (US). He has since illustrated over 20 books, and has been shortlisted five times for the Children's Book Council Awards. In 2002, he won both the YABBA and Koala children's choice awards for *Pocket Dogs*.

## All About Wacky Families

Jackie thinks that all families are wacky ... in their own way.

- What do you think makes your family special?
- Is everyone in your family human? Can an animal really be a member of a family?

## All About werewolves

- What are werewolves and how are they created?
- Where do they live? What are their habits?
- How did Buster change in and out of human form? (pp. 7, 20, 33, various)
- Werewolves have often featured in horror films and stories, for example, the Harry Potter series. Find out some of the common myths about werewolves. Present this information in the format of your choice.

## Activities and Discussion

1. List some of the things Buster did as a werewolf that weren't appropriate for a human. (pp. 1–9, 21, various) Would it be more fun to be a werewolf or a human? Why? The author has woven information about the behaviour of wolves into the story. What else can you find out about wolves? Carry out some research using books and the Internet and prepare an oral or written report for the class.
2. When Prunella is first introduced, what clues does the author give to show that she is not a real detective? (pp. 27–30) In fiction, there are many famous detectives. Can you name one? Choose a well-known fictional detective and write a short profile of them and their creator.
3. What sort of person is Prunella's mum? What is Buster able to learn about Prunella's mum just by sniffing her bum? (pp. 43–44, 47–49, 54, 56) Do you think Prunella is happy? Explain your answer.
4. Buster told Prunella that werewolves have a 'sixth sense'. (page 58) Using clues from the book, and your own research, explain what this means.

- What are the other five senses? Write an imaginative story which features the use of the 'sixth sense'.
5. Write out the list of twelve 'werewolf rules' scattered throughout the book. (pp. 5, 9, 21, 25, 27, 32, 40, 50, 56, 68, 111) Choose an animal, such as a dog or cat or a mythical creature such as a vampire, and make up a set of rules that could be applied to its daily life.
  6. What was the only thing Aunty Paws considered when she dressed in human clothes? (page 75) Why did she say, '... humans always make things so difficult!'? Do you think people place too much importance on clothes? Prepare a class debate on the topic: 'Clothes make the man or woman'. Cut out pictures of clothes from catalogues or magazines and create some wacky mix-and-match outfits of your own.
  7. How were the dogs treated at the Doggie Yums Pet-food Factory and Testing Laboratory? (pp. 101—102) Animals are used to test many products, and for medical research. Do you think it is right to keep animals in cages and use them for testing? Have a look in your kitchen, bathroom and laundry and list products that are 'not tested on animals'. Find out how these products are tested. Use the Internet to discover which animals are routinely used in product-testing.
  8. How did Buster convince Miss Snotgrass to stop testing Doggie Yum on dogs? (p. 106) Read the list of ingredients for the new Doggie Yum recipes on page 102. Make up your own dog food recipe containing ingredients that you think dogs would *really* like. Design a label for the can. You could extend this activity by producing your own radio or TV advertisement for this delicious new dog food.
  9. Why did Prunella think that she and Buster would make a good detective team? (pp. 114–115) Write a story about their next case, in which they combine their skills to solve a mystery.