

# Men-Woolfes

By James I of England

For there is nothing in the bodies of the faithfull, more worthie of honour, or freer from corruption by nature, nor in these of the unfaithfull, while time they be purged and glorified in the latter daie, as is dailie seene by the vilde diseases and corruptions as yee will see clearelie proved, when I speake of the possessed and Daemonlacques.

*PHI:* Yet there are sundrie that affirmes to have haunted such places, where these spirites are alleaged to be. And coulde never heare nor see anie thing.

*EPI:* I thinke well. For that is onelie reserved to the secrecte knowledge of God, whom he will permit to see such thinges, and whome not.

*PHI:* But where these spirites hauntes and troubles anie houses, what is the best waje to banishe them?

*EPI:* By two meanes may onelie the remeid of such things be procured. The one is ardent prayer to God, both of these persones that are troubled with them, and of that Church whereof they are. The other is the purging of themselves by amendement of life from such sinnes, as have procured that extraordinarie plague.

*PHI:* And what meanes then these kindes of spirites, when they appeare in the shaddow of a person newlie dead, or to die, to his friends?

*EPI:* When they appeare upon that occasion, they are called Wraithes in our language. Amongst the Gentiles the Devill used that much, to make them beleeve that it was some good spirite that appeared to them then, ether to forewarne them of the death of their friend; or else to discover unto them, the will of the defunct, or what was the way of his slaughtcr, as is written in the booke of the histories Prodigious. And this way hee easelie deceived the Gentiles, because they knew not God. And to that same effect is it, that he now appeares in that maner to some ignorant Christians. For he dare not so illude anie that knoweth that, neither can the spirite of the defunct returne to his friend, or yet an Angell use such formes.

*PHI:* And are not our war-woolfes one sorte of these spirits also, that hauntes and troubles some houses or dwelling places?

*EPI:* There hath indeed bene an old opinion of such like thinges; For by the Greekes they were called *lykanthropoi* which signifieth menwoolfes. But to tell you simplie my opinion in this, if anie such thing hath bene, I take it to have proceeded but of a naturall super-abundance of Melancholie, which as wee reade, that it hath made some thinke themselves Pitchers, and some horses, and some one kinde of beast or other. So suppose I that it hath so viciat the imagination and memorie of some, as *per lucida intervalla*, it hath so highlie occupyed them, that they have thought themselves verne Woolfes indeede at these times and so have counterfeited their

actiones in goeing on their handes and feete, preassing to devoure women and barnes, hghting and snatching with all the towne dogges, and in using such like other bruitish actiones, and so to become beastes by a strong apprehension, as Nebucad-netzar was seven yeares: but as to their having and hyding of their hard & schellie sloughes, I take that to be but eiked, by uncertaine report, the author of all lyes.