

On Were-Creatures - Were-horses and were-donkeys

Were-horses:

Overview:

Perhaps uniquely among lycanthrope subspecies, were-horses have a generally positive public perception. That's not to say that the average person would necessarily want to become one, but it is viewed as a favourable trait, especially when considering someone to employ. There are many reasons for this, but perhaps chief among them is that were-horses are largely non-contagious, so they don't pose the same level of threat as many other lycanthropes.

Combined with the sudden and unsubtle effects of their lunar transformation, were-horses are the subspecies most likely to be open about their lycanthropy. This has led to an elevated opinion about their prevalence - while many people might know of a were-horse, their complicated and specific transmission process has actually left them as one of the rarer were-creatures.

Personality and tendencies:

Were-horses have a reputation of reliability, but they're also publicly perceived as being simple and straightforward. Of course, this is all merely the public expectation. In reality individual were-horses can certainly be fiery and temperamental, but the ones that get work - and therefore are out in the public eye - tend to be those that are more agreeable.

There's little difference in temperament between shifted and non-shifted forms of were-horses, but it's worth noting the one area where their transformation does have an extreme impact. Were-horses largely lack a specific lunar form, and instead this influence makes itself known in their oestrus cycle, with the individual going into heat with the full moon. While the idea of someone exceptionally strong becoming hyper-focussed on sexual gratification might be concerning, in truth their coordination and planning ability declines so sharply in this state that they aren't regarded as a threat. Essentially, male were-horses in this state have to be guided to the right position or they'd be as likely to mate with a wall as they would a person leaning up against it, while females are just barely capable of standing.

Overall, this is perceived as a tolerable inconvenience for what is otherwise the ideal physical labourer. Sure, they might need to spend a few nights a month tied up outside camp and bellowing into the darkness, but all the rest of the time they'll happily carry everyone's supplies dozens of miles a day without complaint.

Physical Characteristics:

Regardless of the form they're in, were-horses are exceptionally strong. However, along with the normal transformation triggers, they tend to transition into their shifted forms the harder they work. This means they require expensively customised clothing in order to accommodate the tail that emerges from the base of their spine, and ideally with fabric soft enough to avoid being

abrasive after short dark hair coats their lower body. Most avoid wearing shoes altogether, given how their feet shift into hooves when they walk for any real distance.

For the most part, their upper bodies avoid much transformation. Generally their ears become long and flat, while their lips might become a little larger and rubbery. Likewise, their teeth at all times tend to be broad and dull, meaning that most were-horses frequently prefer a simple diet.¹

If not for their outward behaviour, it could be difficult to discern when a were-horse is in their lunar form. The most easily recognisable feature is that their hands often turn fully into hooves as well, further limiting their dexterity (but, more usefully to them in this mode, better allowing them to brace themselves for enthusiastic mating). Beyond that their genitals will get more animalistic and pronounced, but if you're at the point where you can make such a comparison, then you're probably not in doubt as to their level of heat.

Transmission:

The were-horse transmission vector is curiously specific. For starters, it is only the female were-horses who are infectious, and even then, only when they are in heat during the full moon.² In this scenario, contact with the sexual fluids is highly contagious, and generally even brief exposure can be sufficient to spread their lycanthropy.

Fortunately, this is easy to avoid. While individuals near a female were-horse in heat report a surprising allure to them,³ it's regarded as not hard to resist if desired. Likewise, the fluids are only infectious when they are fresh, so there are no issues with a frustrated were-horse accidentally contaminating drinking water if she's left tied up next to a well.

This has, however, spawned a few unexpected outcomes. The first is that these fluids, properly diluted and adjusted, can create a workable and effective strength potion for non-lycanthropes. It's become relatively common for female were-horses to team up with a skilled alchemist, one they can trust to both ensure they're as comfortable as possible during their heat but also carefully harvest and prepare said potions. These can be exceptionally profitable, so the money split between them can easily support both.

Another outcome is the relative rarity of were-horses overall. They've spread perhaps the least of all lycanthropes since the Selection, as accidental and casual infections mostly don't occur. Generally a new were-horse is only made if they choose to be with a female were-horse during their heat, and given that that requires the consent it's substantially rarer than the bite of a wererat or even the cocooning of a were-spider.

¹ Oats, while cliché, are often favoured

² Again, terms like 'male' and 'female' are imprecise, but should be understood here to mean those with vaginas, and who enter heat with the need to be bred, rather than rutting to breed others

³ At least, more allure than you might expect from a six foot slab of muscle yelling incoherently about needing to be fucked

Finally, the presence of these strength potions must have surely spurred the development of the were-donkey subspecies. Because, as it turns out, if these potions are *improperly* diluted and prepared, then a rather different infection can eventually take hold.

Were-donkeys:

Overview:

Were-donkeys have the distinction of being the only 'created' lycanthrope. There were no were-donkeys resulting from the Selection, and were-donkeys themselves cannot directly infect others. Instead, the subspecies results entirely from individuals who have ingested altered strength potions derived from were-horses, and even then only under particular circumstances.

As it is unlikely for a person to become a were-donkey accidentally, they have a very particular public perception. In polite society they're generally looked down on, regarded as people who have given themselves too freely to animal indulgence. Conversely, among a harder-partying crowd, were-donkeys are seen as ringmasters for the most impressive revelries, seemingly able to conjure wild abandon from almost nothing. Even in that case though, they are not seen as aspirational. A were-donkey would be the absolute life of the party, but many hold reservations about *living* that life. That said, the appeal of their irrepressible lust and energy is hard for those who have seen it to deny, and there wouldn't be as many were-donkeys now if some didn't find that irresistible.

Personality and tendencies:

There are essentially two kinds of were-donkeys. Those who embrace the partying lifestyle tend to embody it, bringing raucous celebration⁴ with them as they meander from town to town. These tend to spend more or less their entire lives in their shifted form, essentially uncaring about any opprobrium directed their way. There are also what you might call the more 'mature' were-donkeys, those who may have either grown out of constant partying, or simply became a lycanthrope in a moment of indulgence that they then withdrew from. These examples tend to be more reserved than even your average person, in order to avoid the cavalcade of urges that can overwhelm them if they're not careful.

In both cases, were-donkeys have a reputation for being exceptionally stubborn. While that can fuel their endless parties, it also means they can achieve surprising accomplishments should they set their mind to them.⁵

Physical Characteristics:

In their non-shifted forms, were-donkeys are generally able to pass as uninfected. Their ears are a little longer and heavier than normal, and they have notably larger front teeth, but neither

⁴ 'Celebration' generally defined as 'copious intoxicants and free-wheeling orgies'

⁵ Both of these traits means there's an unusually large distribution of were-donkeys scattered throughout academia. I've been told this is surprising, but if you consider the combination of the irreverent, hard-partying lifestyle of privileged students, together with the unwavering dedication needed to make your way into the upper ranks of published professors, it makes a lot more sense

of these are too exceptional to be hidden or explained away. They do tend to be stronger than average, but not as strong as were-horses. However, their most unmistakable physical feature is that each were-donkey has an equine penis and testicles, regardless of their sexual characteristics prior to infection.⁶ Struggling to deal with this is a long-term preoccupation for the more reserved were-donkeys, just as willfully indulging it is a favourite pastime of the partying ones.

Like all lycanthropes, arousal is a significant trigger for their transition into their shifted forms. However, were-donkeys in particular are almost constantly dealing with an irrepressible libido. This means that those that indulge are essentially always transformed, and even those who don't are often mere moments from dramatically cutting loose. Accordingly, it's not hard for the general public to identify what a shifted were-donkey looks like.

The transformation mostly impacts their lower body. Coarse hair covers them from the waist down, coloured anything from grey to russet red depending on their particular strain. Thick hooves replace their feet,⁷ and a tufted tail hangs behind them. In particular, their equine phallus is hard to ignore, and many were-donkeys in this state tend to avoid wearing pants rather than try to contain it.

Above the waist though, they're frequently more human than even were-horses. Their front teeth and ears are notably more prominent, and they often have a disconcerting tendency to mix their speech with animalistic brays, but that's the limit of their changes no matter how much they lean into it. Only in their lunar form do they go further, with were-donkeys generally reporting the loss of their hands to hooves, and something of an equine muzzle forming on their face.

As with were-horses, the largest impact of the lunar cycle on were-donkeys is on their libido. Even the most ardently reserved of them finds their urges utterly undeniable with the rise of the moon, which can cause some awkward situations. It can be hard to maintain your social standing when you start transforming and uncontrollably orgasming while working late, after all. Indeed, many of the stereotypical stories of a lycanthrope bursting suddenly out of their clothes tend to be were-donkeys, given how dramatic both their struggle and release can be. For those that embrace this aspect however, the full moon is an opportunity for the most wild, over-the-top parties possible, with their lycanthropy giving them limitless stamina and enthusiasm to share with their eager revellers.

Transmission:

As noted above, were-donkeys arise when an individual consumes a strength potion sourced from a were-horse that has been specifically altered. It's assumed the first tainted potions were

⁶ If the individual had a vagina previously this is still present, it just tends to be concealed beneath the new, substantially-sized equipment. Interestingly, I've heard some reports that in some cases the equine penis is not *a/ways* present, and it instead develops from the individual's clitoris upon arousal. This is difficult to confirm however, as the were-donkey's famously active libido will make the transformation inevitably occur at the merest suggestion of a detailed investigation.

⁷ The most popular of them have developed an energetic 'tapping' dance style with these hooves, which is genuinely impressive to see

created by accident, but the formula has spread as specific demand for it increased. However, simply drinking this once does not create a were-donkey. Rather, it causes a non-infected individual to take on the shifted form of a were-donkey, complete with both the sexual equipment and libido this entails. As such, these potions are a popular - if expensive - addition to the party supplies that tend to congregate around indulgent were-donkeys, allowing others in their coterie to experience the same release as their leader does.

That is merely temporary however, with all the potion drinkers reverting completely to normal by the light of the next morning. In order for the infection to take hold, the individual must drink such a potion *twice*. Even then, if a full moon passes between those evenings then there is no long-lasting impact, and indeed there are members of private societies who have been carefully indulging like this for years. However, if the potion is drunk twice on two separate nights *without* a full moon separating them, then once that moon rises the individual finds themselves fully transforming into were-donkey, for the first time in the full lunar form and generally insensate with their now-overwhelming lust.

The complicated situation required to permanently become a were-donkey is a big part of their public perception - people know that any were-donkey they encounter almost certainly *chose* to be one. That can add an extra level of embarrassment to the reserved individuals when they can't avoid transforming in public; those seeing them descend into a wild, horny beast know they brought that on themselves, because at least at some point in their lives, it seemed appealing.

Here, perhaps, I can give some advice. I'm no stranger to the appeal of becoming an enthusiastically sexualised creature, even one at least temporarily enthralled to the strange demands of new, animal anatomy. While it might be hard for some to recognise, the unfortunate consequences of such a choice coming back to haunt you can actually be a positive, or at least feel like one when you're young and achingly horny. So while I can't tell anyone to think clearly about the long term in such a state - I know that's impossible - I can at least give a few useful tips for anyone dealing with the aftermath.

Always be willing to clean up afterwards, be nice enough that those who know you forgive your indiscretions, and work hard enough that you can pay to fix anything you break. Hold those three things in mind and you'd be surprised how far you can get, even if you do sometimes ruin your clothes and the occasional rug.

- Isobelle Carroway