

Fantasy Sci: WHAT GETS YOU UP?

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Just like fingerprints, snowflakes or even malformed birthmarks, no fantasy fiction reader is the same. If the recent Edward vs. Jacob or the never-to-be-forgotten Gandalf vs. Dumbledore controversy has taught us anything, it's that we just can't seem to agree on which mythical creature kicks ass more.

HOBBITS are the littlest people to come to the big screen since Dobby from Harry Potter (the first movie in Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy is coming in December). In the grand scheme of fantasy characters, they sit near the bottom of the totem pole. The simple folk that they are, hobbits are non-confrontational beings who won't let you down in a pickle. Of the creatures that inhabit science fiction, hobbits are the bravest of them all. Frodo made it to Mordor and destroyed the ring, didn't he? They don't have any superpowers other than being small enough to hide in checked luggage and having feet tough enough to go barefoot. But when provoked they can take down dark lords and ride eagles—pretty awesome.

WEREWOLVES are just like humans, except that once a month they hulk-out—which usually entails their clothes being ripped to shreds—grow a mess of hair and get a taste for blood. Female readers tend to fall for the blatant masculinity werewolves embody, even if only during full moons. Their moonlit transformations and dark, furry secrets bring some excitement to the average Joes werewolves would otherwise be. While female werewolves do exist, Shakira's "She Wolf" ruined their chances of going mainstream. Those reading about the human-wolf combos might be on the prowl for a good guy with a predictable bad side or just a tortured soul to make their life's problems seem insignificant. There's more to werewolves than meets the eye, which often includes absurd amounts of body hair.



VAMPIRES usually have a dangerous mix of sophistication and bloodthirst. Eternal life gives them ample opportunities to brush up on any subject they choose—it's not uncommon for them to speak multiple languages, and imagine how many Kama Sutra books they can memorize. For this reason, their pale skin doesn't do much to deter the women they're always enticing, being on the sensual/romantic end of the spooky spectrum. Contrary to popular belief, they aren't all out to get Abraham Lincoln. Take the Count from Sesame Street, for example; he took advantage of his endless life and knowledge to teach kids math. Take note, Edward Cullen: there's more to life than getting hung up on the Bellas of the world. Good thing he's got plenty more chances.

WIZARDS' ability to control their powers sets them apart from victimized werewolves and vampires. That, and the fact they don't live forever or have to wax their bodies after a full moon. They're just like normal people, but with wands and the power to do whatever they want, which the average reader eats up while imagining the possibility of having magical abilities themselves. Wizards like Voldemort prove that with such power comes great responsibility and one magical misstep is all it takes to ruin their reputations. On the other hand, even Snape saw the light in the end, and Gandalf showed up right in time to thwart Sauron in Helm's Deep and nab Frodo and Sam before Orodruin erupted. They always come through in tough situations and use magic for both good and bad, so there's a wizard out there for everyone.

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