



## Dreaming of Wolves

*Alan E. Sparks*

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Part travelogue, part memoir, part natural and cultural history, “Dreaming of Wolves” presents a unique and thought-provoking story of adventure. Through a series of entertaining vignettes and informative essays, the author paints an extraordinary portrait of the lives of wolves, of the researchers who study them, and of the rural people with whom they have coexisted for centuries in a remote mountainous region of Eastern Europe – an exotic land that has remained largely untouched by modern trends and undiscovered by western travelers.

Whether joining the narrator as he tracks wolves through the deep snows and dense forests of the Carpathian Mountains, or fends off belligerent shepherd dogs, or journeys through history to discover the real Dracula, the reader learns a remarkable amount of fascinating information about wolves, about the history and folklore of Romania, and about traditional rural life in the mountain villages of Transylvania. The story is written in an understated voice that is at once honest and humorous, deriving from events perceived with a keen and sensitive eye. The book presents several sub-themes – such as the benefits of conserving wilderness, the joy of discovering self through the pursuit of dreams, and an unusual perspective on the nature of time and consciousness – all of which are woven smoothly into the fabric of a well-told story.

The narrative is enhanced with 32 pages of beautiful color photographs.

## Dreaming of Wolves Details

Date : Published July 1st 2010 by Hancock House Publishers Ltd, Canada (first published 2010)

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Author : Alan E. Sparks

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## From Reader Review Dreaming of Wolves for online ebook

### Colleen Sparks says

This is a well written account of life in rural Romania, the history of the area, and a man's experience learning about wolves first hand with little formal knowledge of the subject. My only complaint is that sometimes it's a little too philosophical for my taste, although I enjoy the cultural commentary. Overall a very interesting read.

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### Angie Hilbert WanderLit says

The diary entries from March 3 to May 24 will be interesting to wolf enthusiasts. I enjoyed Alan's descriptions of tracking wolves and his observations of what he learns of wolf behavior. Occasionally, he gives lovely descriptions of the scenery and historical attractions in the area. I enjoyed these. Dearest and I are thinking about hiking the Carpathian Mountains next year and reading about the little towns of Romania was fun. Alan does have a gift for description. I enjoyed his visit to monastic caves and his account of the historic towns of Bran and Brasov. Alan also describes some of his encounters with the local people though these seem to be sporadic and not particularly meaningful to his narrative. I would have liked to learn more about the people through his eyes.

Read the full review on WanderLit at:

<http://wanderlustandlipstick.com/blog...>

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### Tara Hall says

I was given this book as a gift and expected to like it ok. But I really enjoyed it. What I thought would be a recounting of days of looking at scat and doing research in the field was instead a compelling story of a man who lost both of his canine companions shortly after losing his job. Alan chose to take a break from his current life of 9-5 in the Western World of paved roads and electricity to become part of a wolf research study in rural Romania.

Some of my affection may be that at the time I also was an American traveling in a foreign country (though admittedly not so far from home and comforts as the author) with similar mishaps and difficulties. The only parts I did not like were when 2 domestic dogs associated with the research group were lost in the wilderness (1 assumed dead, the other captured by a neighboring farmer and left to that fate).

I agree with the author on his remarks about the lack of effort of people enjoying the wilderness to remember to clean up after themselves, though I see enough litter and garbage here in America down my local rural streets to be inclined to say that its a worldwide problem, one that needs more civic community attention. And that littering is not limited to the poor, as the author himself remarks on the shredded plastic left behind in Romania by the filming crew that shot the big-budget movie Cold Mountain there years ago.

I will add that there is a lot of graphic cutting up of meat and burning remains, maggots etc, which is realistic, but may bother some people.

Can't wait to read the next adventure, Alan!

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### **Linda says**

I received this book free through Goodreads First Reads.

Well-known and respected tracking authority, Dr. James C. Halfpenny, PhD. has written the blurb on the back cover of this book. As a tracker myself(CyberTracker Track& Sign level II, western Washington), this assured me that the animal tracking and wildlife information inside would be accurate.

I thoroughly enjoyed the author's adventures as he tracked wolves as part of a research project. He makes the Romanian countryside and it's wildlife and people come alive. Imagine tracking wolves in the shadow of Bran (or Dracula's) Castle!

The historical perspective about vampires and gypsies was fun - and well researched. There are many pages of notes to back up the narrative, and a nice selection of color photographs.

I spent several pleasant evenings enjoying this book, and it's a nice addition to my tracking library.

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### **Jane says**

I love good books about Romania, and this true story of a man who joined a wolf project in Transylvania was good reading. I liked learning about wildlife management there, and how the author felt about living in a primitive cabin in the Carpathian Mountains.

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### **Nancy says**

I envy this author Alan E. Sparks, through books I can only be taken on such an adventure like his. I can't imagine myself just packing up and leaving everything familiar. I think a section on the back cover explains this book best, "Yes it is a travelogue, a personal adventure, but it is also a narrative explaining wolf ecology and behavior versus rural cultural integrity and history"

This book was packed with information of the area and the wolves, but you weren't overwhelmed with information. It's well written with some humor and sadness. You felt like you were there with him and the people and animals he interacted with through his successes and struggles. There are beautiful pictures of the area and people in the book.

I was very lucky to have won this book on Goodreads first reads, I can only hope that this author writes about his next adventure and takes us with him.

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### **Chris Wares says**

I enjoyed this book more than I expected.

I picked it up as I was interested in the Carpathians mountains rather than wolves per se and I guess was thinking it was going to be an environmental rant that eulogised the "savage majesty" of wolves, bemoaned how humans were ruining their environment and where the author sounded as if they were keener on canines

than humans.

But in fact the author sounded very level headed. Yes he likes wolves but he doesn't go dewey-eyed about them. Nor is he judgemental about the Romanians fairly utilitarian attitude towards dogs and horses, or their understandable fear of wolves. He describes it all without imposing his/our western morals on events and, apart from being outraged by the inhuman treatment of an ailing horse, keeps his opinions to himself. A description of a way of life that still exists the other side of Europe.

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