



# This Is Not a Werewolf Story

*Sandra Evans*

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## **This Is Not a Werewolf Story** Sandra Evans

This is the story of Raul, a boy of few words, fewer friends, and almost no family. He is a loner—but he isn't lonely. All week long he looks after the younger boys at One Of Our Kind Boarding School while dodging the barbs of terrible Tuffman, the mean gym teacher.

Like every other kid in the world, he longs for Fridays, but not for the usual reasons. The woods have secrets...and so does Raul. As soon as the other students go home for the weekend, Raul makes his way to a lighthouse deep in the heart of the woods. There he waits for sunset—and the mysterious, marvelous shapeshifting phenomenon that allows him to go home, too.

## **This Is Not a Werewolf Story Details**

Date : Published July 26th 2016 by Atheneum Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9781481444804

Author : Sandra Evans

Format : Hardcover 352 pages

Genre : Childrens, Middle Grade, Fantasy, Animals

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# From Reader Review This Is Not a Werewolf Story for online ebook

## Melissa Smith says

This is a review about a story that is not about a werewolf. It is about Raul, a boy that lives in a boarding school of sorts where all the kids go home during the weekend. While everyone else is with their parents, Raul is searching for answers to who his mother was. This leads him on a great adventure that teaches him that there is more to people than just what you see.

Raul is a loner that sneaks off to the woods every weekend where he turns into a wolf. While he is a wolf, he has White Wolf that plays with him and shows him how to be a wolf. During the week, he spends his time at a boarding school with other kids. His teachers all seem a little on the strange side. The P.E. teacher seems to be out to get him. The dean/science teacher is obsessed with the woods and lighthouses. And the history teacher is obsessed with the history of spirit animals. All this combines to make for quite an interesting time for Raul. And that's not including all the other students.

Honestly, while reading this I thought that it was going to be stupid. I am happy to say that I was sucked into the story after a few pages. The characters are memorable and all have their own quirks. The ending was awesome and unique. I actually did not see the story ending the way it did. This is a great read and I say everyone should read it at least once. I like it so much that I can't stop telling my spouse and teenage daughter to read it as well.

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## Emily de Moura says

I first picked *This is not a Werewolf Story* up because of its cover. I saw it at Tumblr and immediately felt in love with it. It was sweet, curious and beautiful - and it had *werewolf* splattered over it. I was even more smitten when I picked it up with my own two hands - One of my best friends had bought it to me and added another layer of love to it.

Then I read it.

And my heart was so happy it could barely stay in my chest.

This is a story about Raul. Raul spends his weekdays at One Of Our Kind Boarding School and his weekends, which he had to spend at home with his father, at White Deer Woods. Raul's happy about this. There's magic in the woods. There's also someone else he loves there.

Raul's the narrator, and this is only the first beautiful thing about this book. Raul's not the kind of person who talks a lot, but when he writes he's the most poetic child in the world. And the funniest. And the most kind. I read some parts out loud and I could *hear* the smiles in my voice echoing Raul's. He's kind when he takes care of the younger kids (specially Sparrow, his favorite), when he talks about them or about his crush, Mary Anne, or when he talks about the magic in the woods. Raul's brave, even if he doesn't believe it himself. Raul's also strong and caring and beautiful and, honestly, I've loved this boy since the first page and I feel like I'll love him for the rest of my life.

Raul befriends Vincent, the new kid who could have a secret just like him, and learns that his PE teacher,

Tuffman, the one everyone fears and hates and, honestly, is just the most awful person in the world (How *dare* him do what he did to Raul and the kids?), has secrets of his own. Raul lives with Dean Swift, a man of science and magic, and Cook Patsy and Ms. Tern, the wonderful mother figures at the boarding school. Raul also lives with White Wolf and the German shepherd Bobo.

I loved this book so much I didn't even care that I had figured out most of the main issues before I had reached the middle. Seeing Raul putting the pieces together and going through everything he went was more than enough. This is a child's book, after all, full of surprises and twists that I could have picked, but someone else might have not. I know I've said it before, but I'll say it again - The writing here is so beautiful it makes up for anything.

*This Is Not a Werewolf Story* is a bittersweet, heartwarming and moving tale about love, magic and the early teenage phase and, honestly, I hope, one day, I'll be able to read it to my kids and my friends' kids. Also, please, someone hire me to translate it to Brazilian Portuguese. And give us other books. I'm sure I'll love them just as much.

Ps.: I'm putting this book under my werewolf category but this is not, in fact, a werewolf story. This is a shapeshifter story. This is a story about wolves and cougars and orcas and eagles and ravens and, above all, about a brave, caring kid.

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## **Linda says**

Raul is a quiet boy, who lives at a boarding school in the northwest. The story unfolds little by little, releasing interesting tidbits about Raul, his teachers and classmates. He has had a tough life, and between his mom's leaving and his dad's distance, it is even harder at school. The weaving of relationships is well done here, and the gradual revelation of the magic of the woods gives just the right amount of anticipation. I enjoyed seeing the characters at the school develop, and learn who was and was not trustworthy through Raul's interactions. I recommend this mix of mystery and fantasy for readers in grades 4 through 7.

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## **Katherine says**

*"I am not a werewolf. I am not a monster."*

**Synopsis:** There's a tween wolf in the closet, and it most definitely doesn't want to be let out to breathe. Navigating boarding school is hard enough; but when you have a were-cougar who's also trying to kill you, it just doesn't make things any better.

### **Pros:**

**I'm Just a Tween and It's Kind of a Nightmare:** I remember what it was like to be a tweenager. Oh, those awkward years of adolescence when you're too old to be considered a kid but too young to be considered a teenager and be 'In the know' of adult conversations. When you might really like someone but in all your awkward tweenage glory often end up looking like a total klutz in their presence. How you want desperately to be taken seriously, but the adults still treat you like you're in kindergarten. In this sense, the author did an outstanding job with the narration of Raul. With the help of his casual style narration, you'll be taken back to when you were in middle school just trying to figure things out. His brutally honest take on friendships,

family, and the pangs of first love resonated with me as a reader, and I definitely think that a tween reader will immediately identify with him. The interactions he had with his friends and teachers were much more interesting to read about than the werewolf story line.

**Miss Trunchbull, Meet Your Opponent:** I thought Miss Trunchbull from Matilda was bad. But she's nothing compared to Turnball, who with his name, might her second cousin twice removed, is the PE teacher at Raul's school. And he's a fucking nightmare. He reminds you of all the reasons you hated gym class in middle school. He actively picks on kids and makes their life a living nightmare, including Raul's. Even though he's hiding secrets of his own (and very big ones at that), it doesn't make him any less despicable.

**And They Called It Puppy Love:** I don't usually ship couples in middle grade novels because there really is no romance to speak of sometimes. But damn, the pangs of first love are extremely clear in this book, and I was fully on board with this ship. Raul has a helpless crush on Mary Ann, the smartest and prettiest girl in the entire school. If he can ever get out of the dreaded friend-zone that is. Their relationship reminded me a lot of Stiles and Lydia from Teen Wolf, which made me even more fond of them as a pair. Even when Mary Ann could be a bit of a stick in the mud snooty pants, I still shipped them (and that's a true ship, y'all).

### Cons:

**There Is No Tween Wolf in the Closet...:** The title of this book is actually kind of accurate, because it is indeed, not a werewolf story. However, I can see some readers taking this title to be a facetious joke. However, Raul himself (and the others like him), are not werewolves; they're shapeshifters. They don't prey on humans or retain human like features; they are completely and totally that creature. Young tweens might be disappointed to find this out, and especially disappointed if they wanted werewolf blood and gore. As far as the content, I can also foresee this as being a problem. Young tweens might see the title and the badass (but gorgeously illustrated) cover and think **WEREWOLVES! BLOOD! GUTS! ENTRAILS! GORE!**. And they'll probably be sorely disappointed to find out that there's none of the above mentioned. It's about finding where you belong and the process of growing up rather than a straight up tween slasher book as some readers might be expecting.

**Vague Popularity Chain:** In the book and synopsis, Raul says that he is the unpopular kid on his school, that no one really talks to him, no one really likes him. The usual things a kid would say if they're are unpopular. But in reading the book, I kind of didn't get that feeling at all. I considered him more of a floater and voluntary loner than truly unpopular kid. And from the writing, the author couldn't seem to make up her mind, either. None of his so-called antagonists do any... well, antagonizing.

**Oh, Mother Dear:** One of the main storylines has to do with Raul's family. Coming from a semi-broken home, his mother suddenly disappeared one when he was little with no inkling as to where she might be. Much to the dismay of readers, you'll figure out the mystery pretty quickly, which means the main part of the storyline is solved within the first hundred pages. For me, this made me unmotivated to pick it up from then on out. Furthermore, I also felt that while the author wrapped up most of the mysteries and burning questions just fine, she dragged them out longer than they needed to be with unnecessary filler. But the one mystery she didn't fully solve involves his mom, which is kind of frustrating.

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As Raul himself states, this is not a werewolf story. And he's right; it's not a werewolf story. Instead, it's a story about the pangs of first love, the pain of not belonging, and the optimistic hope of things getting better. With an easy writing style and sharp wit, the author takes you on a bittersweet tale of magic woods, shapeshifting creatures, and the power of believing not only in others, but in yourself.

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## **Emma says**

Good book, esp. for young readers, with plenty of adventure and mystery. You think you know the answers for sure but you're also kept second-guessing everything. Nothing overly amazing though, it won't exactly be at the top of my recommendation list.

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## **Kathy says**

First, Raul's mom disappeared, then he was sent to a boarding school and his father stopped visiting...and Raul stopped talking. But he has a secret: on the weekends he goes into the magical White Deer Woods near the school, and there he isn't alone. Unlike many fantasy books, Raul has a number of supportive (if sometimes clueless) adults around him, as well as the mysterious and mean PE teacher. Why does Mr Tuffman have it in for him so much? And is the popular new kid really his friend? Also unlike many fantasy books, this is really about Raul in his search for truth and love and family and friendship.

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## **Ben S says**

In the end of the book the plot comes together Raul figuring out that Mr. Tuffman is the cougar and he eats white animals (spirit animals) to become immortal. In the end we also figure out that Mr. Dean is an eagle and his second self is his human form so he is an animal that might be trapped as a human. (This doesn't make full sense since he needs to lose his clothes to become a human but his "changing area" might be to far away).

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## **Sum Thang says**

This is not a Werewolf Story was awesome, I mean one was chapter was kinda scary and overtime the book was gets better and better and I would had stoped read the book but no because is just so interesting and the cover is awesome and i picked out this book by is cover and I thought it would boring!! But I was wrong. You that is reading this review should just leave and go the library and get this book because it was my favorite book of all time and the main character name is Raul By the way.

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## **Debby Author says**

This is Not a Werewolf Story by Sandra Evans sparkles with magic and mystery but it also possesses the sharp glint of danger and adventure.

The protagonist Raul protests too much about not being a Werewolf to be trusted, but his denial at the outset of the book and slow parsing out of details regarding his unusual condition contribute to the fun and suspense of the story. This is a clever first-person account of a boy who has faced more than his share of adversity attending a very special school located next to a perilous but enthralling Woods. Reminiscent of

one of my favorite YA books, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, the quirky cast of supporting characters (a slippery snake named Gollum, Mr. Tuffman the sadistic gym teacher, the clever and fetching Mary Anne, Mean Jack who aspires to be a mobster, etc.) engages the reader in this debut novel.

I especially love finding books I can recommend to middle school and high school boys. *This is Not a Werewolf Story* is a rip-roarin' thrill ride for young readers that will leave them wanting more. Hopefully, Evans has a sequel in the works.

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## **April says**

This story starts out really cheesy and slow but I had to give the author credit for making the main character sound like a real kid. I thought to myself "this author understands kids really well." which impressed me. It sounded like a kid wrote it, which is why a lot of the humour or descriptions sounded very odd and random. The humour was very cheesy and immature, further making me wonder "did a kid write this?" so I wasn't at all surprised to find out the author AND HER 9 year old son wrote it together. Cute! I love that idea!

The beginning started out slow and seemed to take forever. I wondered if I could make it through the book because it just sounded like a typical, everyone at the school is cruel, Annie type of story, with crushes, bullies, dumb little annoying kids, and mean teachers and the stupid no snitching rule that of course creates more drama than there needs to be in every school story out there. At first I was worried I bought another story I would end up having zero interest in.

Then slowly things got weird. At first I thought it was just the kids imagination going wild. Or taking weird interpretations from things their teachers said like kids often do. As the story progressed and things got weirder and weirder I began to question reality, no longer understanding or able to predict what was going on. When the story of the orca part came I thought it was really random. I guessed it somehow had meaning but it seemed so random and distant from the rest of the story I couldn't figure out how it fit in. Actually this is how most of the story felt to me. like I was scrambling around trying to figure out how the heck things fit in with the story. By 3/4 of the book I was so hooked. it took a long time to get hooked but once I was hooked, I was absolutely hooked. I wanted to know the recipe card secret. I wanted to know why his mom was hiding. The story, at first so random and cheesy, took a darker turn. and as I flipped through pages and pages, it only became darker and darker. things you would never expect began to happen. it felt like I was in a random dream that was slowly turning into a nightmare, that's how it felt.

I liked Mr. Tuftman. I felt sorry for him. he was an interesting character that was totally unique from any other character I've ever read about. I also liked Mean Jack. I guess I liked all the characters I wasn't supposed to like, but that's because they were hard to figure out. they were puzzles and didn't fit into the stereotypical personalities everyone uses. mean Jack actually had a conscience you saw bits and pieces of throughout the story.

Sparrow on the other hand was annoying, I had a hard time getting a feel for Vincent's personality, and finally, ended up hating Mary Anne by the end. I would say I was indifferent to her for most of the story but when she lashed out that one time, it was totally uncalled for and unfounded. wow someone makes ONE mistake and all her niceness goes out the window. doesn't even wait for Ralph to realize what he did before she's all over him like a rabid animal, and ironically, isn't thoughtful enough to take into consideration that he has a concussion, and that that influences his mood. Nope. no mercy for Ralph. and that snipe she made

about everyone else in the school being a bunch of primates and thinking he was different really showed her true character. anyone who has flaws is less than human to Mary Anne. she's clearly above everyone else. and the instant someone makes a mistake or messes up or shows a flaw is the day that that person becomes less than human to Mary Anne. for considering herself a novelist, she sure has a warped view of people, despite writing about them all the time. If anyone needs counseling about their views on life, it's Mary Anne. She actually doesn't deserve Ralph at all, who constantly gives other people second and even third, even fourth, etc. chances. Ralph, who actually tries to understand why other people do the things they do, no matter how cruel and uncalled for. Anyway, enough my hatred for Mary Anne.

Mr. Tuftman never did make sense to me. Even after the story was over, I never quite figured him out. Why was he off hunting Cougars when he had no reason to? that prank should have never worked on him. Why was he so sad that Bobo was dying even though he's the one who did it? Why did Tuftman think he was the victim of the person he was trying to kill? he never struck me as a sinister man. why did he sometimes really seem like he felt bad about what he did and try to justify it to Ralph like he felt like he needed to? I had so many questions about Mr. Tuftman by the time the story ended that I feel like he could have a novel about his past and how he became to be what he is. he is probably the most interesting character in the book.

I don't think this is the type of story you can read a second time, because it's mainly a puzzle or a mystery book, and there isn't really much to it other than that. it makes an amazing first read but since I know who the culprit is and what ends up happening, despite loving the story I don't think I could ever read it a second time unless I was reading it TO someone else who hadn't read it before. that's the problem with mystery books though.

Throughout the story I felt like Ralph and his mother acted more like foxes than wolves. at least until the end anyway. Not to mention that on the cover, Ralph LOOKS like a little white Arctic Fox.

It was almost too convenient when Ralph's dad found him as a wolf. So I thought it was a nice touch that the ending still had some loose ends that never got solved. not only does it feel more real and magical that way, but sometimes I think you need a little sad with happy to have that feeling of hope. things are still not perfect. The story is still not over. but there is hope still. there are still so many things the author could explore if she ever wanted to write another book. I want to know more about his mother. so she wasn't a rotten cook after all, but what IS she rotten at? What is she like as a human? Why didn't Vincent want any part of the magic in the forest? Was he honestly cruel enough to want Ralph "put down" as a wolf? that takes Vincent to a whole new thing. He's not just a liar and a coward, he's a possible murderer.

Why did Vincent get to know Ralph's secret, but not Mary Anne or the Dean or Sparrow? Why keep it a secret at all? he could easily have proved it to everyone if he transformed in front of them.

finally, I like the idea that to change he needed a special recipe. The whole fiesnel lens thing felt strange but I like the clothes and oven idea, it was very unique and creative to the story. Overall the story felt both eerie and magical, random, and dark. in the end nothing felt random anymore, all the little random things had some kind of significance, which is why I love this book.

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**Amy says**

DNF @ pg 135



I was into the premise of the lone strange at the lone strange boarding school, but then the book got weird in a direction where I found myself not caring about what happened next. definitely a book best for readers who are comfortable inside middle grade fantasy

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### **Finn says**

Really good. This deeply thrilling novel has a unique original story and plenty of twists. The writing is good and I hope there is a sequel. A must read for people who want to be authors or who just love reading.

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### **Lucinda says**

Cute and enjoyable.

As this book was very middle grade I did have problems reading it a bit, since it felt so young, I plan on giving it to a little girl at my church who is ever and always asking about books.

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### **Suze Lavender says**

Raul goes to boarding school. He doesn't belong to any groups and doesn't have many friends there. He looks after the little kids at school and tries to stay out of trouble with his vicious gym teacher. Every student at Raul's school goes home for the weekend. Raul has a secret though. He pretends to go while he's actually staying. The reason for that is a beautiful white wolf. When they run he feels like he's home, which is why spending his weekends outside is so appealing.

Something changes for Raoul at school. He finally makes a friend, so he has the chance to share some of his life. He has a crush on a girl and there is a student who might be nicer than he seems. Is there someone Raul can trust with his secrets? He runs with a wolf and transforms, but he isn't a mean beast that kills and only comes out when there's a full moon, so he's certain he isn't a werewolf. What happens to him during the weekends and who is the white wolf that's always waiting for him?

This Is Not a Werewolf Story is a fun book filled with beautiful words and wonderful magic. I immediately loved Raul. He's strong and resourceful and he's terribly brave. His father isn't good at taking care of him and his mother has left them, which is why he ends up at the boarding school. His existence is pretty lonely, but he makes the best of it. He doesn't have friends, but in the forest that doesn't matter, then he feels like he's found his right place in the world. The deep connection he has with the wolf is unique, which is something I liked very much. I also loved that the school is fabulously peculiar and I enjoyed reading about the teachers and the students.

The inspiration for This Is Not a Werewolf Story comes from old folklore tales and I enjoyed what Sandra Evans has done with that information. She's skillfully used the amazing elements and turned them into a fascinating modern story. I absolutely loved that she's written her book with the help of her son, that makes it extra special. It's clear that there's much love and appreciation for the topic. I really enjoyed reading the vivid descriptions of Raul's adventures and his surroundings. The ending of the story is surprising and I liked the angle Sandra Evans has chosen. This Is Not a Werewolf Story is a fantastic book for both children and

grownups.

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## **Laura AP says**

This book is soooooooo cute. I loved every single part of it. Raul's voice makes for a great narration, and I just can say that it's a great and magical MG.

Raul's friends are wonderful and I loved how they built the concept of family and friendship in the book. I really can't say more about it without entering a loop, but suffice to say that if you love fantastic MG you should definitely pick this book up. The atmosphere, the plot and the characters are so lovely and I couldn't put the book down.

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