

## Raised by Dogs



There are numerous myths and legends that tell of abandoned children being raised by wild animals such as wolves. One of the most famous is the ancient Roman myth of twin brothers Remus and Romulus. The story is that they were raised by wolves and later founded ancient Rome. While there's no way to know if the story was based on actual events, true stories do exist about children who were raised by animals.

Oxana Malaya was born in a small village in the Ukraine in 1983. Unfortunately, Oxana's parents were alcoholics. They did not take good care of her. Oxana says that her mother wanted a boy rather than a girl, so she threw Oxana out of the house. Oxana crawled into the shed to live with the dogs. Cold, scared, and lonely, Oxana came to depend on the dogs as her family and her caregivers.

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No one, not even her parents, came to check on Oxana for many years. She stayed in the shed with the dogs where it was warm, safe, and dry. The dogs fed her scraps of food or raw meat. Oxana also brought them any scraps of food that she could find. Oxana was

isolated from human beings and soon forgot how to speak and behave like one. She began to communicate, and even behave, like a dog.

After five long years, Oxana's neighbors finally noticed her situation and told the police. When the authorities came, they were shocked by what they found.

Eight-year-old Oxana walked on all fours like a dog. She couldn't speak. Instead, she barked, whined, and growled like dog. She ate and drank from dishes on the floor. She picked things up with her mouth rather than her hands. She even shook herself off like a dog when she got wet.

Authorities moved Oxana to an orphanage. There, she learned to speak and behave like a human once again. But extended isolation from humans at such an early age changed the way her brain developed. Even though Oxana was born a normal, healthy child, she will always be a bit different.

These days, Oxana lives in a home for people with special needs. She she has a job taking care of cows. She enjoys working with other animals, too, such as horses. She even has a pet dog.

Although Oxana likes animals, she definitely prefers the company of people. She enjoys being the center of attention and loves making people laugh. She says her biggest dream in life is to meet her mother again one day.

