

## Raised by Dogs



Some legends tell of people who were raised by animals. One of the most famous is a Roman myth. In it, a wolf found twin brothers Remus and Romulus by a river. She took care of them. She fed them. When they were older Remus and Romulus founded ancient Rome.

There's no way to know if that story is true. But there are true stories about children being raised by animals.

Oxana Malaya was born in the Ukraine in 1983. She lived in a small village. Sadly, Oxana's parents were alcoholics. They did not take good care of her. Oxana says that her mother wanted a boy, not a girl. So she threw Oxana out of the house to live with the dogs. Oxana was cold, scared, and lonely. She began to think of the dogs as her family.

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No one came to check on Oxana. Not even her parents. She stayed in the shed with the dogs. It was warm in the shed. And they brought her scraps of food and raw meat. Oxana soon forgot how to speak like a human. She began to speak and even behave like a dog.

Five years later, the neighbors finally noticed. They told the police. When the police came, they were shocked by what they found.

Eight-year-old Oxana walked on all fours. 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 a special home. There, she learned how to speak and behave like a human. But even though she was born normal and healthy, Oxana will always be a bit different.

These days, Oxana lives in a home for people with special needs. There, she takes care of cows. She loves working with other animals, too, like horses.

Oxana has a pet dog. But these days she prefers to be with people. She enjoys being the center of attention. She enjoys making people laugh. She says her biggest dream is to meet her mother again one day.

