

# BIGBY WOLF

---

The tale of a fresh start with  
a dark past

Character Design Analysis by Ingo Redenius

# The Wolf Among Us

## Description

The Wolf Among Us is an episodic, point-and-click adventure game based on Bill Willingham's comic series, Fables. Set in 1986, the player takes on the role of Bigby Wolf, the gruff sheriff of Fabletown. His job is to protect the Fables and enforce their laws.

**The Wolf Among Us**  
Developer: Telltale Games  
Publisher: Telltale Games  
Genre: Adventure  
released: 2013  
PEGI 18

The Fables are characters from myths, legends and fairy tales, such as Snow White, Beauty and the Beast, and Bigby himself, who is known as the Big Bad Wolf from Little Red Riding Hood. Having fled their homelands, the Fables founded Fabletown in the heart of Manhattan, New York. In order to live unnoticed among ordinary humans, also known as 'mundies', they must use an expensive spell called 'glamour'.

After a decade without murder, Bigby finds a severed head in front of his residence. While trying to leave his dark past behind, he begins to investigate.

As is typical of Telltale games, the player is confronted with tough moral decisions within a rich narrative. Alongside the point-and-click detective gameplay, there are some very violent and graphic action scenes involving Quick Time Events.

## The origin of Bigby Wolf

### Character description in the game:

“The renowned Big Bad Wolf. He’s known for tormenting pigs and girls in red hoods, but is trying to put those dark days behind him.

Bigby now acts as Fabletown’s sheriff and remains in his human form, mostly.

However, due to his rough past, the citizens of Fabletown are slow to trust him.

Bigby is determined to show that he’s truly changed, but some instincts are just too hard to control.

The character Bigby Wolf originates from the comic book series *Fables*, which has been in publication since the early 2000s. Bigby is one of seven wolf cubs born from the romance between the White Wolf, Winter, and the divine father North Wind. His brothers mocked him, ironically calling him 'Bigby the Big Bad Wolf', because, unlike them, he remained small, weak and sickly. His mother always defended him against this injustice, but she slowly succumbed to her broken heart and failed love. Despite his small size and lack of strength, Bigby was neither fearful nor cowardly. When his brothers left their dying mother, Bigby stayed behind to defend her

against scavengers. He failed. He then vowed to grow big and strong by devouring larger creatures on every hunt.

Obsessed with this goal, he became the big bad wolf, responsible for the deaths of thousands.



Figure 1 *Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall*, Page 77 & 81

## The Beast Within

In Fabletown, the Big Bad Wolf is the sheriff and protector of the Fables. He mostly appears in human form, but his self-control is repeatedly put to the test. Within him lurks the untamed evil of his past, fuelled by violence and destruction. This clearly refers to characters from Grimm's fairy tales, such as Little Red Riding Hood and The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids.



Figure 2 Little Red Riding Hood. Illustration by



Figure 3 Crest of AS Roma

Nevertheless, not all folklore portrays the wolf as inherently evil. While Fenrir is the embodiment of destruction in Norse mythology, Odin's wolves Geri and Freki represent loyalty. Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were nursed by a she-wolf, a symbol that can still be seen today on the crest of the AS Roma football club.

The character Bigby also embodies this duality of good and evil by attempting to rewrite his history as sheriff. This can be compared to the story of Dr Jekyll, who unconsciously becomes his deeply evil alter ego, Mr Hyde.

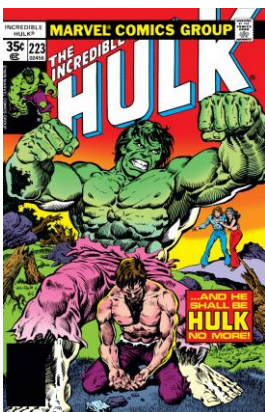


Figure 5 The Incredible Hulk, Marvel Comics Group, 1978

Similarly, Bruce Banner, a character from the Marvel comic The Incredible Hulk, displays this inner conflict. Triggers such as stress, fear or anger repeatedly cause Banner to lose control, transform into the Hulk and fight anything in his path. He hates himself for his green alter ego, who endangers the general public and his loved ones.



Figure 4 Scene from The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Illustration by Edmund Joseph Sullivan, 1927



Figure 6 Bare chested Bigby Wolf, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

Incorporating this concept into Bigby's design, the artists chose to hint at the monster even in his human form. He has wide shoulders, muscular chest and arms, and a six-pack, as well as thick body and facial hair. Combined with his striking facial and jaw features, Bigby can be described as hypermasculine.

This is also evident in his walking animation. Like the character Thomas Shelby from *Peaky Blinders*, he has a determined, slightly forward-leaning posture with outstretched arms, evoking an aura of dominance and danger reminiscent of a predator.



Figure 8 Thomas Shelby walking, *Peaky Blinders*,



Figure 7 Bare Walking Animation of Bigby Wolf, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

There are three stages representing the degree of transformation from human to monster: slight changes to the eyes, hands and teeth; a fully wolf-like appearance; and a werewolf-like appearance. These give the player clear visual cues that a dark side lurks beneath the surface, ready to break out at any moment.

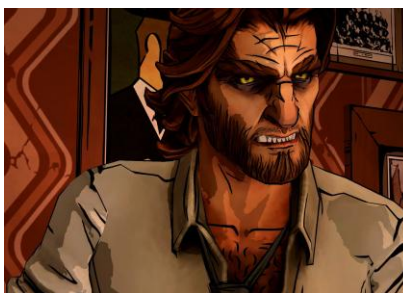


Figure 11 Bigby Wolf - Awakening beast, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013



Figure 10 Bigby Wolf - Fully Wolf, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

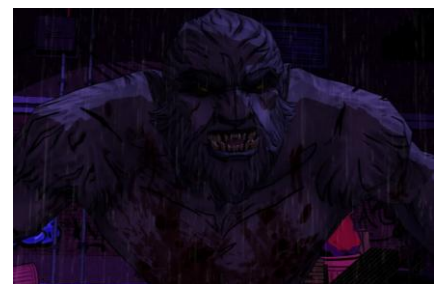


Figure 9 Bigby Wolf - Werewolf, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

Finding his place in a world free from prejudice thus becomes a challenge for Bigby. For a long time, he knew only one way of doing things: 'Being big and being bad.' He has not learned any other way of life. Despite his efforts, this repeatedly leads to violent confrontations, which are depicted in the game via quick-time events and portrayed with excessive harshness.



Figure 12 *The Woodsman, Faith and Bigby Wolf, The Wolf Among Us, 2013*

## Too tough to care

In the displayed origin story, Bigby lives by the motto of never submitting to anyone, seeking direct combat and devouring those weaker than himself. It is only after failing to defeat his father North Wind that he has to acknowledge the limits of this way of life.

To become stronger, he believes that the end justified the means. This obsession and compulsion to compensate for his inadequacies leads to emotional detachment and questionable moral decisions. The character becomes too tough to care.

This is an interesting area of tension, especially in the context of police work, when law enforcement officers act like heroes but also like villains. Another example of a detective antihero is Jimmy McNulty from the series *The Wire*.



Figure 13 James "Jimmy" McNulty, *The Wire*, 2002

He is unpopular with his colleagues because he obsessively puts all his energy into his work, showing no patience or respect for those around him. Although his investigative results are impressive, he often disregards the law in the process. This leads to a self-destructive attitude that spills over into his private life, manifesting as alcoholism and frivolity.



Figure 14 Bigby Wolf standing, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

The contradiction of being evil in order to do good often leaves the characters with an internal burden.

In the case of McNulty and Bigby, it results in isolation and loneliness. They no longer have anyone to support them and are becoming outsiders.

So it's no surprise that Bigby, scarred and bruised, walks around unshaven with wild hair and his shirt untucked.

There is no distinguishing mark to indicate his position as the highest-ranking officer, such as the sheriff's badge in the Wild West. His loosely tied tie seems to be the only sign of a uniform.

Bigby also smokes everywhere, even when it is not allowed.



Figure 15 Bigby Wolf smoking in non-smoking area, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

Bigby becomes strong by facing the world alone and scaring everyone else away.

He is trying to make a fresh start, but he doesn't have the right social skills. Instead, he comes across as unkempt, rough and rude. In terms of gameplay, the player is repeatedly tempted to allow Bigby to slip back into his old, aggressive behaviour, using his reputation and power to achieve his goals more quickly.

This is evident in the game through the reactions of the other characters, who take note of Bigby's behaviour. They act as a mirror to Bigby's detachment from Fabletown society.

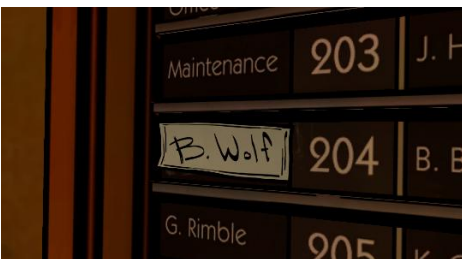


Figure 16 Improvised nametag at residence for Bigby Wolf, *The Wolf Among Us*, 2013

## Redemption

Ultimately, this mirror holds the key to his redemption. But is it even possible for the big bad wolf to be redeemed through reintegration and acceptance by the Fables?

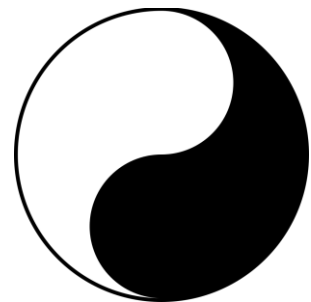
A sociological theory can provide insight into why this premise generates so much tension. According to Robert K. Merton's theory of the self-fulfilling prophecy, people change their behaviour in accordance with the judgement and external perception of others. This can lead to people adopting the external perception, even if they would not have viewed themselves that way before.

For example, a child who hits another child at school may be labelled a bully. From then on, people assume that the child is violent and that they need to be careful. Extraordinary efforts must be made to eliminate this stigma. If this is not possible, the child may begin to adopt the assigned role and respond to conflicts with the expected violence.

In Bigby Wolf's story, this concept is expressed through an identity crisis, which is illustrated by the various stages of his physical transformation. He is never fully human or fully wolf. Visually, he oscillates between his desired new self-image and the Fables' old perception of him.

Notably, Bigby loses the only white piece of clothing during his full transformation. White has a special meaning for him. His mother, Winter, was a white wolf, and her death was a turning point in his life as the big bad wolf. Furthermore, Snow White is the only person in Fabletown who shows him kindness and affection.

Combined with the black trousers, tie and shoes, Bigby's outfit almost resembles a representation of yin and yang. From an aesthetic point of view, it seems reasonable to assume that Bigby's light and dark sides are most harmonious in human form.



*Figure 17 Yin and Yang, Wikipedia*



*Figure 18 Bigby Wolf in white shirt, The Wolf Among Us, 2013*

In addition to the colour of the shirt, the sleeves reveal another character trait. Not only do the rolled-up sleeves reveal strong arm hair as an animalistic reminder, they also symbolise a commitment to hard work by definition.

This is a sign that Bigby tackles things with great determination. No one else in Fabletown is putting in as much effort to solve the murder case.

In terms of gameplay and narrative, the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy regarding Bigby's redemption is also evident.

For example, after breaking through the outer wall during a fight on the first floor and falling down, Bigby demolished Mr Toad's car.

Mr Toad's response to this shows how difficult Bigby's situation is, despite his good intentions: "I can't be mad, I called you for help and you came, but even when you help, things get more fucked than they started."

It quickly becomes clear that Bigby has no allies to support him and help him integrate. Yet the player can fill this void, as we have the ability to influence how the Fables react to Bigby by supporting him in his decisions and conversations.

Doing so encourages Snow White to trust and support Bigby, and we hear hopeful statements such as Faith's: 'You're not as bad as everyone says you are.'

Therefore, the player can try to ensure that Bigby's restart is successful and that the prophecy of the big bad wolf does not come true.

## References

- Collins Dictionary. (2026). *roll up your sleeves*. Retrieved March 10th, 2026, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>:  
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/de/worterbuch/englisch/roll-up-your-sleeves>
- Merton, R. K. (2016). The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. *The Antioch Review*, 74(3), 504-521.  
<https://doi.org/10.7723/antiochreview.74.3.0504>
- Moby Games. (2026). *The Wolf Among Us*. Retrieved March 10th, 2026, from [mobygames.com](https://www.mobygames.com/): <https://www.mobygames.com/game/63185/the-wolf-among-us/>
- Kight, S. (Creator). (2013). *Peaky Blinders - Gangs of Birmingham* [TV Series].
- Simon, D. (Creator). (2002). *The Wire* [TV Series].
- Telltale Games. (2013). *A Wolf Among Us* [Video Game].
- Willingham, B. (2006). Fables. *1001 Nights of Snowfall*. Retrieved March 10th, 2026, from <https://www.zipcomic.com/fables-1001-nights-of-snowfall-issue-full>

## List of Figures

FIGURE 1 FABLES: 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL, PAGE 77 & 81 .....	3
FIGURE 2 LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, ILLUSTRATION BY JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH, 1912 .....	4
FIGURE 3 CREST OF AS ROMA .....	4
FIGURE 4 SCENE FROM THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, ILLUSTRATION BY EDMUND JOSEPH SULLIVAN, 1927.....	4
FIGURE 5 THE INCREDIBLE HULK, MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 1978.....	4
FIGURE 6 BARE CHESTED BIGBY WOLF, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013 .....	5
FIGURE 7 BARE WALKING ANIMATION OF BIGBY WOLF, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013.....	5
FIGURE 8 THOMAS SHELBY WALKING, PEAKY BLINDERS, 2013 .....	5
FIGURE 9 BIGBY WOLF - WEREWOLF, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013.....	5
FIGURE 10 BIGBY WOLF - FULLY WOLF, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013 .....	5
FIGURE 11 BIGBY WOLF - AWAKENING BEAST, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013 .....	5
FIGURE 12 THE WOODSMAN, FAITH AND BIGBY WOLF, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013.....	6
FIGURE 13 JAMES "JIMMY" MCNULTY, THE WIRE, 2002 .....	7
FIGURE 14 BIGBY WOLF STANDING, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013 .....	7
FIGURE 15 BIGBY WOLF SMOKING IN NON-SMOKING AREA, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013 .....	8
FIGURE 16 IMPROVISED NAMETAG AT RESIDENCE FOR BIGBY WOLF, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013 .....	8
FIGURE 17 YIN AND YANG, WIKIPEDIA .....	9
FIGURE 18 BIGBY WOLF IN WHITE SHIRT, THE WOLF AMONG US, 2013.....	10