Wolf at the Door

An HIV-positive author’s biting commentary on a very real monster

December 1, 2008 By James Wortman

In his latest novel, *Into the Mouth of the Wolf* (Breur Media Corporation, $18.95), HIV-positive author Joshua Dagon (*The Fallen, Demon Tears*) puts a potent spin on a classic theme, using werewolf mythology to dissect the AIDS pandemic on a global, as well as personal, scale.

“My publisher and I thought it was relevant and that the intimacy involved in the spread of the werewolf contagion was a parallel,” says Dagon, who was diagnosed with HIV in 2005. “After I was infected with HIV, I kind of felt like a monster. I felt tainted.”

The story is told from the perspective of Russell Shepard, a young gay man who has just been bitten by one of the snarling beasts. While werewolf—or lycanthropic—infection is perceived as being under control in the novel, a dangerous combination of stigma, rampant misinformation and apathy is allowing it to thrive. Sound familiar?

“I grew up with HIV on the news, and it was always considered to be the result of a chosen lifestyle. ‘You chose the lifestyle, you put yourself at risk, and it’s your fault,’” says Dagon, 35. “And in the book, that separation is even more ridiculous. I think it’s human nature for people to try to distance themselves from something that frightens them.”

Into the Mouth of the Wolf is available online at breurmedia.com.

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