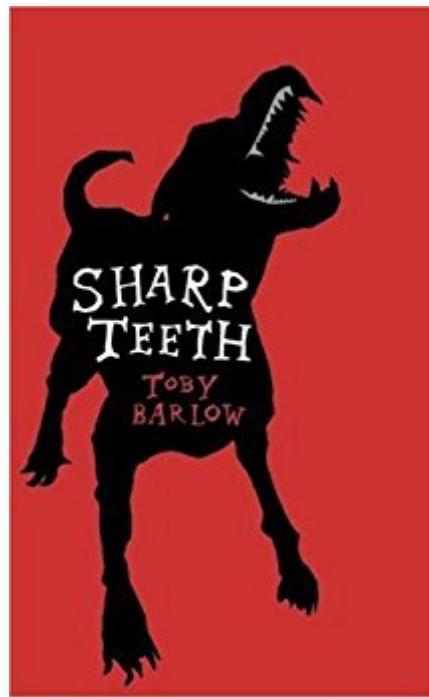


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# Sharp Teeth: A Novel



## **Synopsis**

An ancient race of lycanthropes has survived to the present day, and its numbers are growing as the initiated convince L.A.'s down and out to join their pack. Paying no heed to moons, full or otherwise, they change from human to canine at will "and they're bent on domination at any cost. Caught in the middle are Anthony, a kind-hearted, besotted dogcatcher, and the girl he loves, a female werewolf who has abandoned her pack. Anthony has no idea that she's more than she seems, and she wants to keep it that way. But her efforts to protect her secret lead to murderous results. Blending dark humor and epic themes with card-playing dogs, crystal meth labs, surfing, and carne asada tacos, Sharp Teeth captures the pace and feel of a graphic novel while remaining "as ambitious as any literary novel, because underneath all that fur, it's about identity, community, love, death, and all the things we want our books to be about" [Nick Hornby, *The Believer*].

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This debut novel at first seems strange, bizarre, difficult to take the first bite. But then, the story gets going, and you forget that it's written in free verse- except that it doesn't rhyme, and you know how I am about rhymes. But still, What's not to like about a story About werewolves? or was it

weredogs?Prowling the streets of LA,changing at will,killing and devouring without leaving a trace-sometimes not even bloody tissue,licking the ground Ajax clean.Yet being civilized enough to knowthat the most important dog in the packis the b!tchThree packs,one led by a lawyer at first,who gets outmaneuveredin an ironic kind of wayand forced to hide in the guise of woman's best frienduntil he can regroup and reclaim, and remark his territory.But Lark has a planto infiltrate and conquerIt's also about Anthony the dogcatcher.Who doesn't really want to be like the rest- of dogcatchers, that is"Perhaps over time he will become like themwith their permanent stains and bitter dispositions.But Christ almighty, he thinks,I hope not"Anthony feeds the dogs tacosthat he can't affordand one day he falls in loveThen there's the copPeabodyInvestigating missing peopleand dogsand bloody trails of big red printsThese dogs don't play pokerpreferring the game of bridgeespecially Cutter and Blue, who have a knack for the game.They follow Lark and the Ukan way, but things get complicated when their fellow bridge playersturn out to be quite different than they seemand there's also the new pack...

One may at first be put off by the notion of a werewolf novel as an epic poem. In the minds of many - too many - poetry is an aged, calcified form, difficult to penetrate, and approached not for fun but out of a sense of intellectual obligation. Yet any such concerns should be immediately thrust aside by any potential reader of Toby Barlow's clever, compelling debut novel, "Sharp Teeth."Barlow's plot, at its surface, is a straight forward modern werewolf tale - a pack living in LA under the command of Lark have big plans, having to do with dog pounds. From there the story branches our into many directions - a love story between a werewolf woman and the novel's protagonist, several survivors of a decimated pack dealing with their loneliness, and other wolves hungry for the vengeance of blood. The poetry in which all of this comes is delivered in language at once subtle and raw, visceral as Barlow's topic and modern his book's setting. For example, when writing about a lovers wonder about how well he knows his love.He worries that thisls beginning to feel likedriving a car through the mountains,finding a great song on the radioand then as you pass out of its rangehearing it flicker and fade.Snap, pop andthen its gone.Or another musingTomorrow she knowsthe tactics will have to changeher luck has held three timesand Lark has always said,luck is stupid as a coward blind as a bat.What would you do to protect the love you have?Would you kill?Would you hunt to kill?Would you kill without mercy?And if you wouldn'tThen how precious is your love?

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