

## **Summaries for "Women Who Run With the Wolves"**

*Finally, we have meaningful summaries and connections compiled from "Women Who Run With the Wolves" by Clarissa Pinkola Estes.*

*This book was a powerful bestseller examining the wild feminine spirit through myths, fairy tales, and folk tales. It is for anyone who wants to tap into their instinctual knowledge and delve into the natural cycles of life in a unique way.*

*"Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype" is a book I have gone back to many times over the years but never read cover-to-cover. I usually pick it up and read random chapters (a bibliomancy approach - believing that whatever I turn to is what I need to learn). Another method I use for reading it is to study the table of contents until something resonates with me.*

*To help support those who want to follow similar strategies, I have provided more details to inform your reading path. It is just enough information to guide you. In the following passages, you will find summaries of each chapter, a seminal passage, and an application of the concepts to a person's everyday life that ties wisdom and nature.*

### **Chapter 1 - The Howl: Resurrection of the Wild Woman**

- **Summary:** Estés introduces the wild woman archetype as a force of the feminine psyche, suppressed by society but essential for a woman's vitality. Through the myth of La Loba, the wolf woman who resurrects dead bones into living creatures, Estés argues that women must reconnect with their wild, instinctual nature to reclaim their soul's health.
- **Key Passage:** "To adjoin the instinctual nature does not mean to come undone... it means to proceed by one's own lights."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Reconnecting with your instincts helps you find wisdom in nature's cycles. By engaging in activities like meditation in natural spaces, you're reminded of your ability to resurrect the parts of yourself that have been neglected.

### **Chapter 2 - Stalking the Intruder: The Beginning Initiation**

- **Summary:** The tale of "Bluebeard" illustrates how women ignore their intuition at their peril. Estés suggests that women must "stalk" their inner predators—those destructive forces that lead to self-betrayal—and trust their instincts to survive and thrive.
- **Key Passage:** "The Bluebeard story is about the killing of the creative spirit... it is about seeing, about re-seeing what you saw, and then seeing again."

- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Everyday challenges are like Bluebeard's castle. Observing patterns in nature—like the changes in weather or animal behavior—can remind you to stay alert and trust your inner voice.

### Chapter 3 - Nosing Out the Facts: The Retrieval of Intuition as Initiation

- **Summary:** The story of "Vasalisa the Wise" teaches how to follow intuition through trials. With guidance from Baba Yaga, the wild crone, Vasalisa learns to see, hear, and act upon the wisdom she receives from her intuition.
- **Key Passage:** "The fire that Baba Yaga gives is the fire of knowing, of enlightenment, of those things that sustain life."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Like Vasalisa, spend time in nature to cultivate a deep sense of knowing. You can draw on this "inner fire" when faced with uncertainty in daily life, trusting the lessons nature imparts to guide you.

### Chapter 4 - The Mate: Union With the Wild Man

- **Summary:** This chapter explores the concept of an inner union, focusing on the relationship between a woman and her inner wild man. Through the story of "The Skeleton Woman," Estés illustrates the importance of embracing life, death, and rebirth in relationships.
- **Key Passage:** "The work of the skeleton woman is to teach... the life/death/life nature of love."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Learn to accept cycles of growth, loss, and renewal as natural and essential. Spending time outdoors helps ground this understanding, where you can witness life/death/life cycles in ecosystems.

### Chapter 5 - Hunting: When the Heart is a Lonely Hunter

- **Summary:** The story of "The Crescent Moon Bear" reveals that healing from heartbreak requires an arduous journey to retrieve the strength and courage needed to trust again.
- **Key Passage:** "To love means to embrace and at the same time to withstand many endings, and many, many beginnings—all in the same relationship."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Use time in nature to reflect on relationships and heal. The process of seeking wisdom in nature—like walking through a forest—can parallel the emotional journey toward healing.

### Chapter 6 - Finding One's Pack: Belonging as Blessing

- **Summary:** The story of "The Ugly Duckling" addresses the search for belonging and how finding one's "pack" or community restores self-worth and strength.
- **Key Passage:** "There is a place in the psyche... where one's own kind is recognized."

- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Seek community with like-minded individuals who share a connection with nature. Spending time outdoors with others can help you find those who resonate with your wild spirit.

## Chapter 7 - Joyous Body: The Wild Flesh

- **Summary:** Estés explores the natural and instinctual relationship between women and their bodies. Through the metaphor of dancing, she illustrates that women must celebrate their physical form and experience.
- **Key Passage:** “The body in its state of rapture is a product of wild nature.”
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Regularly engage in physical activity outdoors—dancing, hiking, and yoga. Nature reminds you that your body is part of the wild landscape, alive with its own wisdom.

## Chapter 8 - Self-Preservation: Identifying Leg Traps and Snare-Headed Mothers

- **Summary:** The tale of "The Red Shoes" symbolizes the traps that pull women away from their true nature, leading them to a path of self-destruction. Estés urges women to avoid these snares by staying grounded in their instinctual life.
- **Key Passage:** “When women choose superficial values over instinct, they always lose.”
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Make time for nature to ground yourself. Recognizing "red shoes" in your life (addictions, superficial distractions) becomes easier when you're connected to nature's rhythm.

## Chapter 9 - Homing: Returning to OneSelf

- **Summary:** The story of "The Handless Maiden" deals with the long and painful journey of healing and the return to one's true self after experiencing loss and dismemberment.
- **Key Passage:** “It is not given to women to know just one life or one existence.”
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Spend time reflecting on your personal journey while immersed in nature. Just as nature regenerates, you can heal and re-grow into your wholeness.

## Chapter 10 - Clear Water: Nourishing the Creative Life

- **Summary:** This chapter emphasizes the importance of protecting creativity from being drained or stifled. Through the story of "The Seal Skin, The Soul Skin," Estés discusses how reclaiming one's creative life is essential to nourishing the soul.
- **Key Passage:** “If a woman has lost her skin... she must make her way back to it.”

- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Protect your creative energy by setting aside time for solitude in nature. Just as the ocean is a source of life for the seal, nature can restore your creative spirit.

## Chapter 11 - Heat: Retrieving a Sacred Sexuality

- **Summary:** Estés addresses the reclamation of sacred sexuality and vitality through the myth of "The Woman with Hair of Fire." She emphasizes how reconnecting with one's sexual nature enhances both life and creativity.
- **Key Passage:** "Sexuality in its healthy form is made up of psyche, soul, and instinct."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Spend time in the natural world to reconnect with your sensuality. Observing the cycles of nature can help you reconnect with your body and instinctual nature.

## Chapter 12 - Marking Territory: The Boundaries of Rage and Forgiveness

- **Summary:** The story of "The Crescent Moon Bear" in this chapter examines the powerful emotions of rage and the healing power of forgiveness. Estés emphasizes the importance of boundaries.
- **Key Passage:** "Rage is not to be eradicated; it is a part of the cycle of nature."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Use nature walks to process your emotions. When you set boundaries and protect your emotional space, you honor the natural flow of your feelings.

## Chapter 13 - Battle Scars: The Power of Healing Wounds

- **Summary:** The story of "The Little Match Girl" illustrates how women often sacrifice themselves and burn out by giving away too much. Estés encourages healing and renewal after such self-sacrifice.
- **Key Passage:** "The body remembers, the bones remember... the mind always remembers."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** Engage with nature to remember your own healing potential. Observe how plants regenerate after being damaged; recognize your capacity to heal.

## Chapter 14 - La Selva Subterranea: Initiation in the Underground Forest

- **Summary:** Estés uses the myth of "Demeter and Persephone" to discuss the initiation into the underground forest, a metaphor for the dark night of the soul. This journey is essential for growth and transformation.
- **Key Passage:** "Every woman descends into the underworld at some time."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** In difficult times, turn to nature as a guide. Just as seeds germinate in the darkness beneath the soil, personal growth often happens in the darkness of life's challenges.

## Chapter 15 - Shadowing: Canto Hondo, The Deep Song

- **Summary:** In this final chapter, Estés discusses the importance of staying connected to the wild soul even after completing a transformational journey. The "deep song" of the soul calls women to live authentically and fully.
- **Key Passage:** "The deep song is the song that comes from the soul... it is the original wildness of the psyche."
- **Nature Wisdom Application:** After periods of transformation, stay connected to your soul's song by regularly immersing yourself in nature, where you can be reminded of your connection to the wild.

By blending Estés' deep psychological insights with the wisdom of nature, you can live a life that honors both your inner wildness and the wisdom of the natural world.

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