

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Series Treatment

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Series Summary

Zoltan the Wolf Man follows the exciting day-to-day activities of Zoltan Horkai, renowned wild animal trainer. Animals on Zoltan's farm just outside of Budapest, Hungary include bears, foxes, deer, wild boar, and most remarkably, wolves. These animals have been trained for TV and film productions through Zoltan's 'natural motivation' training technique, which focuses on respecting the animals' instinctive behaviours, a practice not observed in the training of domestic animals. By following Zoltan through the various commission requests he receives, the series offers an exclusive inside look into the way wild animals are trained to perform for television and film productions.

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Episode 1 Synopsis

On the first episode of *Zoltan the Wolf Man*, Zoltan Horkai, renowned animal trainer, welcomes us to the Horkai Animal Training Centre, home to more than 100 animals including several wolf packs, bears, and wild boars. Zoltan introduces the first pack of wolves while explaining his unique guidance method that revolves around natural motivation of the animals rather than traditional animal training. Zoltan must actively establish himself as the alpha male within each pack in order to maintain order and control among the animals.

Zoltan then receives word from his business partner Peter that they have received a commission request for a natural history documentary in Austria requiring wolves and bears acting natural in the wild, but they have only three days to prepare the animals. Zoltan anticipates being asked for a wolf pack running scene, a wolf in the mountain scene, and a climbing bear scene and begins to prepare the animals accordingly.

Back in the wolf enclosure, Zoltan herds the pack into a cage for transport to a training exercise. The wolves are well fed and he will need to use food strategically in order to motivate the wolves to perform. Zoltan prepares the wolves for a 'running wolf pack scene' by placing the wolf cage at one end of a field, and another cage with food at the opposite end. As the wolves are set loose, one of the wolves veers from the pack and doesn't make it into the second cage. This poses a problem to both the pack and Zoltan, as the hierarchy of wolves could be disrupted by the absence of dominant wolf. Zoltan enters the cage with the stray wolf to re-establish hierarchy within the pack, and the pack continuing to acknowledge Zoltan as the alpha male.

On day two of training, Zoltan takes one of the wolves to train for mountain climbing and jumping. Zoltan must make sure the wolf is not afraid of heights, in case a shot of a wolf on a cliff is requested for the documentary. The wolf performs well and is ready for action. Next, Zoltan starts preparing Brumi the bear for his close up. Zoltan practices standing

against and climbing a tree as this is a commonly requested shot. Brumi is cooperative and is ready to head to Austria.

Afterwards, Zoltan tries to introduce Boboka the wolf back into his pack, but the pack leader Rufus feels threatened and Zoltan realizes Boboka is not safe in this enclosure. Zoltan enters the enclosure to get Boboka out and move him to another enclosure. Moving him to an enclosure with Brumi the bear will be safer. Next, Zoltan receives confirmation of the shots required for the shoot. The crew will be shooting footage for a documentary about the increased sightings of wolves and bears in the Austrian Alps and Zoltan will be taking Brumi the bear and Boboka and Krista the wolves along for the shoot. While en-route to Austria, Zoltan receives a call from a nearby animal sanctuary that is having trouble with a wolf that has recently arrived. Zoltan plans to take this wolf back with him to the Horkai Animal Training Centre following the shoot.

At the shoot, Zoltan coaxes Brumi from the cage by laying a trail of meat on the ground and Brumi follows -- allowing the director to capture the perfect shot. For another shot, Zoltan prepares Boboka and Krista by feeding them at a 'rendezvous point' that they will hopefully return to after they are released to roam around the filming area. Zoltan is hoping that Krista, a wolf with a lot of film shoot experience, will work well with Boboka. The shoot is a success and Zoltan and the animals are on their way back to Hungary.

Before heading back to Horkai Training Centre, Zoltan stops to pick up the rescue wolf from the animal sanctuary that called for help. Zoltan is able to calm the seemingly aggressive animal and move her into a transport cage. After returning to the farm, Zoltan must find a home for the new female wolf he has rescued. Zoltan quickly establishes dominance over the newly arrived wolf and decides to introduce her to the enclosure with Brumi and Boboka.

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Episode 2 Synopsis

This episode on Zoltan the Wolf Man, Zoltan prepares to create an audition tape of three different action scenes for a producer in Hollywood. The scenes will require scenarios involving the wolves, a bear, and a horse. The audition tape is due by the end of the week.

For the first scene, the producer would like to see a man on a horse being chased by wolves. Zoltan brings along two wolf packs to the shoot in order to test them both for compatibility with the horse and the scene. Zoltan then explains that the wolves will not be actually chasing the horse, but merely running to another cage filled with food at the end of the enclosure while Zoltan and the horse run slightly ahead. Pack one executes the scene perfectly and is undeterred by the presence of the horse. Zoltan's crew along with the Octocopter overhead capture the footage they need. Next, Zoltan tests pack two in order to determine if they would be a suitable back up pack if something were to go wrong with pack one. Pack two also succeeds in their task and Zoltan and his team are able to wrap up scene one for the audition tape.

The next day, Zoltan and his team set out to capture scene two: a bear chasing a man on a horse. Zoltan is worried about how Brumi might react to the horse, but as soon as the scene

is set, it is clear that Brumi has little to no interest in the horse. Zoltan is unable to get Brumi to chase the horse and decides he must try another method in order to get the footage he needs. He and the crew decide to move on and attempt the third scene in which Brumi and the wolves fight over an animal carcass. Zoltan sets up the scene by releasing the first pack of wolves onto the carcass, followed by Brumi, and then the second pack. Brumi and the wolves briefly fight over the carcass, but Brumi prevails and the wolves quickly lose interest and become preoccupied fighting each other. Zoltan explains that wolves in the wild only hunt when they are hungry and because they are fed regularly at the Training Centre, they were not hungry enough to fight Brumi for the carcass. Zoltan is hoping that Peter can push back the producer's deadline so that they can try again in a few days when the wolves are hungry and motivated.

Overnight there is a storm and a tree knocks over the wall to the enclosure between the bear and the deer. Zoltan wakes to the sound of the commotion and rushes to call his team in to help reign in the chaos. Luckily neither bear nor deer seem to be injured and the team only needs to help corral both parties into temporary enclosures until they can fix the damaged areas in the morning.

The next day Zoltan is keen on trying a new method to get Brumi to run after the horse. Zoltan brings along another bear to simulate an old training exercise in which Brumi had to compete for food by getting from one end of an enclosure to another before his rival. The plan seems to work, as Brumi sets off toward the food waiting at the other side of the enclosure, until the Octocopter filming overhead spooks him. Brumi climbs a tree inside the enclosure and gets down on the other side. The crew must herd Brumi with wire fencing in order to get him back in the cage. Eventually they are successful and Zoltan attempts again to execute the scene – this time without the Octocopter. Without the distraction of the Octocopter, Brumi performs as planned and scene two is all wrapped up. Zoltan sets up to execute the final scene, this time with the wolves more motivated to fight for their food. Zoltan again lets the wolves at the carcass first and then pushes Brumi towards the carcass as well. The wolves and Brumi fight for the meat and eventually Brumi deters the wolves by standing on the carcass. Zoltan moves the carcass with a rope in order to give the wolves another chance at feeding on it while Peter tries to capture all the footage they need. After the footage is filmed, Zoltan must lure Brumi away from the carcass and back into his cage by intimidating him with a stuffed bear. After the shoot, Peter edits the footage and submits the audition to the Hollywood producer. The tape is a hit and Zoltan and his team get the job.

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Episode 3

On episode three of Zoltan the Wolf Man, Peter informs Zoltan of a new commission they have received for an upcoming Hollywood fantasy movie. For this commission, Zoltan will have to train a stuntwoman named Virag to work with the wolves. Virag has never done work with live predators and appears to have some apprehensions about the job. Zoltan quickly introduces Virag to the wolves and both the wolves and Virag become more comfortable with each other. The first order of business is to get a shot of a wolf growling

and showing its teeth in close proximity to Virag. To do this, Zoltan must interrupt a wolf while it is eating so that the wolf will react and protect its food. Zoltan and another wolf are used to make the first wolf feel threatened while Virag lies in position nearby. The cameraman is able to capture the action and the first part of the scene is complete.

Afterwards, Peter and Zoltan revisit the storyboard, which lays out the exact scene needed. Zoltan will be able to execute this scene by using the various training methods that he's used in previous productions. The end of the scene has a man being torn apart by wolves. Zoltan must execute this portion safely by training the wolves individually. Each of the four wolves is taken individually and trained to take a portion of meat off one part of Zoltan's body. Tomorrow's training will involve getting the wolves to hit their marks simultaneously.

The next day, the wolves are ready to go and haven't been fed for five days. Zoltan must again make Virag more acquainted with the wolves and asks her to get inside the wolves' cage with him so she becomes comfortable being in close proximity to them. After leaving the cage, Zoltan and the crew prepare for the next scene in which the wolves will have to stand still above Virag long enough for them to lock eyes and get a good shot. After a couple takes, the scene is successful and the crew moves on to prepare for a chasing scene. The first take goes well. All the wolves but one run behind Virag and back into their cage. Zoltan explains that the stray wolf must be cut from the scene, as this level of unpredictability is unsafe in an area that is not enclosed. Take two is seamless and both Zoltan and Virag are happy with the outcome so far.

In the next scene, the wolves must circle Virag while she is on the ground. The wolves are each given a mark on the ground surrounding Virag and the crew keeps them on their mark by tossing them bits of food.

The last portion of Virag's work is the most difficult. The crew must film a wolf jumping at Virag and knocking her to the ground. They are able to get the wolf to jump towards Virag from a table by putting bits of food on her shoulder. Eventually, Virag is moved further and further back and the wolf launches towards her from the table. After several takes, the shot is a success and Virag's entire scene is shown.

After the shoot, Zoltan must get some rams from the farm vaccinated. He and a colleague must herd the animals into a smaller enclosure and catch them one-by-one in order to vaccinate them.

The next day, Zoltan introduces Adam, who will help supervise the scene with the four wolves tearing Zoltan apart. Zoltan prepares for the scene and instructs his crew to release the other three wolves only after the first wolf has hit his mark, as this wolf is hitting a mark close to his vitals. The scene goes relatively smoothly, but Zoltan would like to do another take. After the second take, Zoltan is happy with the footage and feels confident that the animals will be able to repeat this scene when it comes to filming inside a studio.

On this episode of Zoltan the Wolf Man, the team heads to the south of Poland to shoot some scenes for an upcoming feature film called 'Erlprince'. The production team requires four different scenes from the wolves and Zoltan has only one week to prepare for the shoot.

Zoltan gets to work on training Rufus' pack for one of the scenes in which the wolves must jump for a carcass dripping with blood overhead. As jumping for food is not a natural activity for the wolves, Zoltan uses a special contraption that allows him to climb above the wolves and suspend food from overhead. The wolves, with the exception of Rufus, take to the task and quickly begin jumping towards the dangling food. Zoltan notices Rufus' lack of participation and begins to worry that something is wrong with him. On the second day of training, Rufus again is showing no interest in the food or in asserting his dominant role within the pack. This poses a problem for Zoltan because Rufus' status within the pack is crucial to the behavior and performance of the pack as a whole. Without Rufus' leadership, the pack may not be safe to shoot the scenes with in Poland. Rufus is taken to the doctor and a blood test is taken to determine the severity of his illness. Zoltan must wait until the following day for the diagnosis.

Next, Zoltan must focus on training with Nelson the wolf. Nelson will be used to shoot a scene in which he must appear injured and lie still while a gunman overhead prepares to shoot him. This is no easy task for the Wolf Man, as wolves are naturally inclined to move around almost constantly in order to keep safe and aware of their environment in the wild. Zoltan believes Nelson is up to the task and soon Nelson is lying still on his side with ease. Zoltan is confident that Nelson will be able to replicate this task even in the new surroundings on set.

The next day, Rufus' test results show that he has contracted anaplasma from a tick bite. Fortunately, this can be easily treated with antibiotics. Soon, Rufus has recovered and is ready for action - - just in time for the journey to Poland. Rufus is reintroduced into the pack and his alpha male position within the pack is once again established.

Zoltan are ready to pack up and head to Poland. Once they've arrived, the team inspects the location and sets up the cages and other equipment necessary for the shoot. Sebastian, the actor being used in the scenes, is introduced to the wolves. Sebastian will be required to 'share' a carcass with the wolves, which will be especially dangerous given that the wolves will be hungry and aggressive with their food. Zoltan needs to establish trust between Sebastian and the wolves in order for the scene to run smoothly. In order for that to happen, Rufus, the pack leader, will need to show acceptance of Sebastian so that the others will follow. Rufus quickly takes to Sebastian and Zoltan is confident the scene will be a success. Zoltan and the wolves finish with a bit more training before calling it a day.

On filming day, the crew and Zoltan's team set up for the four required scenes. They start with the scenes requiring Nelson. First up is Nelson and Sebastian eating together and then Nelson 'playing dead'. The director is thrilled with the results and the team can move on to the next scene. The next scene is Rufus' pack jumping for the bloody carcass overhead. It seems the wolves have remembered their training and are performing the scene with ease. The final and toughest scene is all that is left. Sebastian must 'feed' off a real carcass among

the pack of hungry wolves. As the wolves will only be motivated by the food for a short period of time, it is essential that the director gets the shots he needs on the first take. Sebastian keeps his nerve and Zoltan is impressed with his comfort and ease working with the wolves. The scenes are all wrapped and Zoltan and his crew are ready to head home.

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Episode 5

This episode takes Zoltan and his team to an ancient mountain range in Turkey for a new international film called 'Grain'. The task that Zoltan has been hired for involves an intricate scene featuring a man and a wolf, where the wolf is required to stand still and then walk in circle around the man and a camping area, all in one take. Zoltan knows this is no easy task for a wild animal. Zoltan figures that they will require 3 days of training in order to accomplish the tasks required for this scene. Zoltan decides that Nelson is the right wolf for the job, but also opts to take Volko, another wolf, as backup.

In the middle of training, Zoltan receives a call from a friend who needs help at a nearby farm. Zoltan is needed to help rescue a herd of cattle that have escaped from the farm. The cattle have made their way to a busy road, posing danger to both the cattle and unsuspecting oncoming vehicles. Zoltan and Peter help the farmer and his farmhands herd the cattle all the way back home. It takes nearly an entire day, but with Zoltan's help all the cattle are safely returned to the farm.

The next day, Zoltan and Peter must start a journey that will last over two days and take them across two international borders. At last, they arrive and settle in at the hotel, preparing for the big day ahead.

The next day Zoltan, Peter, and the wolves arrive on set to begin training with Nelson. First, Zoltan releases the wolves so they can run around and stretch their legs after the long journey. A local Turk informs Zoltan of the herding dogs used by farmers nearby, saying that the dogs may attack the wolves if they come into contact. Zoltan seems un-phased by this and seems to think that the wolves and dogs may get along. He is invited to a shepherd's nearby village.

Next Zoltan begins the training with Nelson. All is going rather smoothly until Zoltan receives a phone call from the director. The director would like to shoot the scenes that evening as opposed to in a few days, as was scheduled. Zoltan works hard with Nelson to make sure he is ready to shoot that evening. When it comes time to shoot, Zoltan explains to the surrounding crew about the importance of them staying still throughout the filming, as any movement will distract Nelson from the task at hand. After several takes, it is clear that it might not be possible for the shot to be captured all in one take. Zoltan and the director resolve that in order to have Nelson looking in the right direction long enough and for him to be able to follow the path set out for him, Zoltan would have to coach him from inside the circle. The result is the scene being split into two parts. This method is successful and the scene is complete.

The next day, Zoltan goes to the nearby village in order to introduce the wolves to the locals and the herding dogs. The wolves and dog seem a bit aggressive towards each other, but Zoltan is confident that the two animals will eventually get along. Zoltan is also hoping to show the locals that wolves are not as dangerous and threatening as they assume. The villagers and their children take turns petting the wolves and Zoltan is happy to have made an impact.

Back on set, Nelson is needed again for a scene where he is looking at an actor in the centre of the set. In order to have Nelson look in the direction of the actor, Zoltan holds food just behind the actor so it appears as if Nelson is staring at the actor. After this shot is achieved, the director needs to get footage of a wolf's shadow passing by a tent. Nelson walks back and forth behind the lit up tent so that the director has several shots to choose from.

Lastly, the director requires a close up growling shot of the wolf. In order to achieve this Zoltan must use several tactics in order to get Nelson to bare his teeth and growl while he is eating. Zoltan uses Volko, the other wolf, compressed air, and loud noises in order to get Nelson to growl protectively over his food. At last, the perfect shot is achieved and Zoltan and his team can begin their long journey home.

Zoltan the Wolf Man – Episode 6 Synopsis

This time on Zoltan the Wolf Man... Zoltan, Peter, and the wolves are off to southern Estonia, for a new commission. Before making the long trip to Estonia, Zoltan must attend to a few important issues at the training centre. It is mating season, and the wolves, especially the females, are behaving particularly aggressively. This makes training at the Horkai Centre very difficult, as the wolves are antagonistic and have very little interest in participating in any training exercises. Zoltan must separate the male wolves from the female wolves in order to maintain peace within the packs, and also to avoid any unplanned litters, which the training centre is not equipped to deal with at the moment.

Before they depart, there is a director that visits the training centre in order to scout out a special star for an upcoming film -- one of Zoltan's Red Deer. The director finds a deer that she believes embodies the main character and is keen on casting the animal in her film the following winter.

The following day, Zoltan and Peter travel over 2000 kilometres to Estonia and arrive at Karula National Park. Zoltan meets with the crew to discuss the scenes they will require and learns that the film is to be based on a popular Estonian book that came out a number of years ago. The main storyline follows a young girl's transition into a Werewolf, which is one of the main scenes that require Zoltan's wolves.

Zoltan and Peter then meet with the director and the crew to learn more about the film and about the scenes that will be required of the wolves. Following the brief, Zoltan and the crew set off to one of the film locations in order to try some test shots of the wolves running and jumping. The test shoot establishes that the wolves will need to run further and faster than originally anticipated, which indicates a starting point for Zoltan's training.

Next, Zoltan and Peter take the wolves out to train for some of the long distance running they will need to do on set. Mid-exercise, one of the wolves, Volko, takes off into the forest. After searching for the lost wolf for sometime, Peter and Zoltan must turn in for the evening and hope that Volko returns to the rendezvous site, as he has been trained to do. In the middle of the night, Zoltan makes one last attempt at having Volko return by howling just outside of the cabin they are staying in. To Zoltan's excitement, the wolf appears and Zoltan can rest soundly knowing all his wolves are safe.

The next morning, the crew and Zoltan set out at first light to ensure they can get the necessary film shots with the perfect aesthetics. Zoltan has one of the wolves do running exercises back and forth between him and Peter until they can get the perfect shot. The same is done with a jumping exercise that will be used in the scene where the main character transforms into the werewolf.

The next scene is a typical wolf-growling scene. Zoltan affixes some meat to the ground and threatens to take it away from a wolf that is eating it in order to get the wolf to growl. After several tries, they get the perfect shot.

For the long distance running scenes, Zoltan and Peter must improvise having a wolf run between the two of them in order to get the perfect running shots, making use of different wolves throughout the shoot to ensure each of them are rested enough to perform.

For the final scene, the crew travels 80 kilometres north to the main setting of the film, a cemetery. The lighting is perfect for what the director hopes to capture, and the wolves take turns running around the area and the director is able to get a ton of great footage. This signals a wrap for Zoltan and his wolves and they are ready to start the long trip back to Hungary.

On the way back home, Zoltan receives a call from a neighbouring national park explaining that they think they may have found wolf tracks in the snow. Zoltan is particularly hopeful that these are indeed wolf tracks, as it signals the return of wolves to an area that they have been gone from for 80 years due to the aggressive hunting of these animals in the past. When Zoltan sees the tracks and other evidence that points to the probability of wolves in the area, he is extremely happy and announces his mission to educate families and children about wolves in hopes to change the negative attitudes towards them.

Zoltan arrives at a school to give a lecture about wolves and the importance of native wolves returning to Hungary. Zoltan demonstrates the wolves' friendliness by allowing the children to approach and pet a wolf. Zoltan is hopeful that through this he can inspire the people of Hungary to allow wolves to have a home there and hopes to one day study wolves in the wild.