

dozens of Hollywood films, most of which are poor rip-offs of each other.

Peter David knows the stereotype, and is as bored with the traditions as he is fascinated by the man-wolf dichotomy. His werewolf novel, *HOWLING MAD*, is a different sort of lycanthropy

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story. Everyone knows what happens a man is bitten by a werewolf -- every full moon the poor fellow turns into a wolf. But if a *wolf* is bitten by a werewolf -- what happens during the full moon?

Joshua is the human name for this new twist on the man-wolf legend. Peter David does a convincing job of getting into the mindset of a wolf who finds himself occasionally painfully distorted, pink, almost hairless, and devoid of a sense of smell. When Joshua is captured and brought to a New York zoo, an animal-rights activist named Darlene crosses paths with him, and the story takes off. By the time it's done, we've watched Joshua's struggle to cope with his occasional humanity while seeking a way to return to his lupine mate, Darlene's efforts to educate Joshua and help him return to his mate in spite of her love for his human form, a vampire named Duncan, and an encounter with the werewolf that started it all.

Yes, some aspects of the book are played for laughs. David's penchant for combining straight-forward suspense with wry humor, as seen before in *KNIGHT LIFE* (King Arthur in present-day New York), is in excellent form. For example, when Duncan the vampire is sent to the zoo to destroy Joshua's wolf form, he can't -- vampires cannot enter private territory without being invited and wolves are even more territorial than humans. Joshua's first night in New York as a human, howling at Darlene's doorstep, is both ferociously funny and disarmingly sweet. And when Joshua finally meets Duncan, the latter's explanation for why vampires and werewolves exist had me snickering for hours ("Are you partners in evil?" "No, real estate... Never bilk a gypsy.").

If the book has a flaw, it's the almost-too-sudden end of the book, with all plot threads resolved in a few pages. This problem may be in part due to David's career as a well-known writer of comic

books. Nonetheless, I found HOWLING MAD to be a funny, engrossing, and fascinating twist on a hackneyed character type. It won't win Hugos, but it should win David some fans.

2. I have been talking recently about lawyers and it occurs to me that the laws of thermodynamics can be applied to the economy. The First Law is lawyers get a cut on every piece of food we buy, every record, every screwdriver, everything. No purchase is free of legal expense and that is where all money eventually.

Somebody was recently figuring the amount of heat given off by a piece of electrical equipment. He just took the input power and converted it to British Thermal Units. I asked if that was valid since the electricity surely will be doing things other than just heating the room. My friend told me that was irrelevant. It all goes to heat; everything else it does, running the piece of equipment, is just what it does _ o _ n _ t _ h _ e _ w _ a _ y _ t _ o _ b _ e _ c _ o _ m _ i _ n _ g _ h _ e _ a _ t . It still all becomes heat.

So as you probably already know, that is much like our economy. The government prints money and it all eventually goes to lawyers' pockets. Our entire economy functions on what the money can be made to do on its way to being stockpiled by lawyers. As an example of this principle, I remember a few years ago there was a telethon for Ethiopian famine relief and due to some mix-up a lawyer was put in charge of the proceeds. The lawyer ended up taking something like 95% of what was collected. This is true. Now I would contend that putting a lawyer in charge of the money is the economic equivalent of a short circuit. The money should have gone to buy grain from some concern that had a legal staff and what the legal staff wouldn't get would go to buy things such as cars from companies with legal staffs, etc. It would eventually all be dissipated in legal expenses, but a bunch of hungry Ethiopians would have eaten in the meantime. By putting a lawyer in charge of the money, it got short-circuited and went immediately to the lawyer.

Now, I don't blame the lawyer. Every occupation has standards and if he had handled all that money without stealing it, he would

essentially be letting down every other lawyer in the world. Don't be misled by the fact that he gets a reprimand from the Bar Association. They are just upset because had the money gone to ease hunger, they would have all gotten a chunk. But deep down each member really admires the crook and wants to figure how he can pull a similar deal. There is no point in blaming lawyers any more than you blame smallpox for being smallpox.

I think we should have Underwriters Laboratories extend their expertise to charities. A UL-approved appliance has been checked that it will not short-circuit; a UL-approved charity will be checked so that at no point will the proceeds be put in the hands of a lawyer. They just have to wait.

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The proper study of mankind is science, which also means that the proper study of mankind is man.

-- I. I. Rabi

STRANGE INVASION by Michael Kandel
Bantam Spectra, 1989, ISBN 0-553-28146-1, \$3.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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This short novel (very short--152 pages, and by my estimate just

over the 40,00-word minimum in the Hugo definition for novel) is just the sort of thing one would hope a line such as the Bantam Spectra Special Editions would publish. A Dicksian (_ n_ o_ t Dickensian!) slide through the story of how one schizophrenic saves the world from invaders, _ S_ t_ r_ a_ n_ g_ e_ I_ n_ v_ a_ s_ i_ o_ n whiplashes its "hero" all over the world

to

fight off invaders who try to conquer the world through hedonism, ennui, and any other psychological tool they can muster. Only the fact that our hero is a psychological mess to begin with (he has a difficult time separating the invaders from his ordinary visions of monsters crawling up his wall) protects him. Kandel takes the standard plot of "Earth threatened by invaders and saved by Everyman" and twists it fifteen degrees to "Earth threatened by invaders and saved by total wacko." One gets the impression that the hero was (and perhaps still is) only a step away from being one of the ranters on the street corners or people who talk to trash cans. In fact, he does spend a fair amount of time

talking to inanimate objects in _ S_ t_ r_ a_ n_ g_ e_ I_ n_ v_ a_ d_ e_ r_ s--but then sometimes the

aliens do disguise themselves as trash cans.