

year). Runners-up include Michael Bishop (8 nominations), Gene Wolfe (7 nominations), and Bruce Sterling (7 nominations). Next week: who has had at least two nominations and has the best batting average for wins? [-ecl]

THE MT VOID

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2.

Mayor David Dinkins
City of New York
April 18, 1994

Dear MR. MARK R. LEEPER,

An examination of our database shows that although you are a New Jersey resident you charged \$23.37 at the Broadway branch of Tower Records. Hence New York City had an opportunity to play host to you on that date. We are very pleased that you chose our city for your visit.

As you probably know, New York City is currently having a fiscal crisis. Our residents are already highly taxed to pay for running our city. As a resident of OLD BRIDGE, NEW JERSEY, you pay you taxes to NEW JERSEY and enjoy the benefits of New York City absolutely free and g_r_a_t_i_s. And it is our pleasure to serve you and to keep you safe while you are in our city. Now is the time to show your appreciation. Your tax-deductible contribution to New York City will be used to improve our city and to keep it the kind of place you want to visit.

Yours truly,

Mayor David Dinkins

Yes! I appreciate New York City and want to do my part
with a contribution of:

___\$100 ___\$200 ___\$500 ___\$1000

MR. LEEPER
AT&T--RM MT 3D-441
200 LAUREL AVENUE
MIDDLETOWN NJ 07748

THE MT VOID

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3. In keeping with the grand tradition of occasionally mislabeling
the VOID, the last issue should have been Volume 11, Number 45, _ n _ o _ t
46. [-ecl]

4. Reminders on discussion book availability: _ R _ e _ d _ M _ a _ r _ s is available
in trade paperback. _ C _ h _ i _ n _ a _ M _ o _ u _ n _ t _ a _ i _ n _ Z _ h _ a _ n _ g,
_ S _ i _ g _ h _ t _ o _ f _ P _ r _ o _ t _ e _ u _ s, and
_ C _ o _ n _ s _ i _ d _ e _ r _ P _ h _ l _ e _ b _ a _ s are all available in mass-market paperback.

_ S _ i _ g _ h _ t
_ o _ f _ P _ r _ o _ t _ e _ u _ s is available at the Old Bridge library as well. _ W _ o _ r _ l _ d
_ a _ t _ t _ h _ e _ E _ n _ d _ o _ f _ T _ i _ m _ e is available in mass-market paperback, and also
at the Monmouth County (Headquarters, Extension, and Eastern
branches) and Old Bridge libraries. (Some of the others must be
available at the libraries as well, but I haven't had a chance to
look them up.) The Hugo short stories are available as follows:

"The Mountain to Mohammed" by Nancy Kress, "The Arbitrary Placement
of Walls" by Martha Soukup, and "Even the Queen" by Connie Willis
are in the April 1992 _ A _ s _ i _ m _ o _ v' _ s. "The Lotus and the Spear" by Mike
Resnick is in the August 1992 _ A _ s _ i _ m _ o _ v' _ s. "The Winterberry" by
Nicholas A. DiChario is in Mike Resnick's _ A _ l _ t _ e _ r _ n _ a _ t _ e

_ K _ e _ n _ n _ e _ d _ y _ s
(available in paperback). I believe that the stories will _ n _ o _ t be

available electronically this year, at least not for free. [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
MT 3D-441 908-957-5619
...mtgzfs3!leeper

Critic, n. A person who boasts himself hard to please
because nobody tries to please him.

-- Ambrose Bierce

SIDESHOW by Sheri S. Tepper
Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-56098-0, 1993 (1992c), \$5.99.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
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in _ S _ i _ d _ e _ s _ h _ o _ w is set in the same universe as Tepper's _ G _ r _ a _ s _ s and
_ R _ a _ i _ s _ i _ n _ g _ t _ h _ e _ S _ t _ o _ n _ e _ s, but thought it contains references to events

those books, it is not necessary for you to have read them to read

_ S _ i _ d _ e _ s _ h _ o _ w. (For example, I have read _ G _ r _ a _ s _ s, but not
_ R _ a _ i _ s _ i _ n _ g _ t _ h _ e

_ S _ t _ o _ n _ e _ s.) _ S _ i _ d _ e _ s _ h _ o _ w is set on a far-future Elsewhere, a planet
dedicated to diversity. Each society on Elsewhere is free to chart
its own path and make its own rules, so long as it does not
interfere with any of its neighbors. This is similar to the
arrangement in Mike Resnick's "Kirinyaga" stories, but with one
major difference--no one can change to another society. If you are
born in a society which has child sacrifice or which keeps women as
slaves, you're stuck there. I found the various societies a bit too
obvious for my tastes: Molock has child sacrifice, Haifah keeps
women as slaves, Enarae was established by Guntoter and concentrates
on weapons and a rigid caste system with its own version of yuppies,
and so on. All this is overseen by the city of Tolerance and its
Enforcers, who "Attend to the Situation" when necessary.

All this is prefaced, in a manner of speaking, by a sequence on
near-future Earth in which a pair of joined twins are born whose
destiny is to save humanity. They eventually end up on Elsewhere,
where the inhabitants--who are all that remains of humanity after
the rest were taken over by the Hobbs Land Gods--are being
threatened by an unknown adversary. However, I found their story
during their time on Earth more interesting than that of the threat
to humanity and the digs at various groups on the near-future Earth
more convincing than those directed at the societies on Elsewhere.
When one sets up a fictional society for the purpose of satire, it's
too easy to leave the reader feeling the deck has been stacked.

For me, _ S _ i _ d _ e _ s _ h _ o _ w suffers from this and from the same flaw I saw
in _ G _ a _ t _ e _ t _ o _ W _ o _ m _ e _ n _ ' _ s _ C _ o _ u _ n _ t _ r _ y _ a _ n _ d
_ G _ r _ a _ s _ s: a tendency to preach. I can't
say this is a bad book, but I can't recommend it either.

DAVE

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Copyright 1993 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: This is an old plot dusted off and given some new life and a little bit of political bite. Kevin Kline plays a double for the President who is asked to be President. The film is pleasant with a few emotional moments. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4).

The basic concept of the plot is an old and familiar one. A commoner looks just like a famous person and suddenly finds he must replace that person. Coming up with examples is almost a trivia

game itself: T h e P r i n c e a n d t h e P a u p e r,

T h e P r i s o n e r o f Z e n d a,

Robert Heinlein's D o u b l e S t a r, K a g e m u s h a,

M o o n o v e r P a r a d o r. If you

want to press the point, there's also R e t u r n o f M a r t i n

G u e r r e and

S o m m e r s b y. The underrated science fiction film Q u e s t f o r

L o v e

treats some of the problems of standing in as realistically as many films more grounded in reality. Many of the recent body-switch films also treat the subject. Of course, to make one of these stories believable the writer has to come up with some contrivance as to why the shape of the ear does not give the imposter away. As Sherlock Holmes correctly points out, the shape of an ear is as unique as a fingerprint. Certainly somebody photographed as often as the President of the United States is could not long be replaced by an imposter. However, that is the premise of D a v e.

Dave Kovic (played by Kevin Kline) is an exact look-alike for President Bill Mitchell (played by guess who?). Dave runs a small temporary employment office and occasionally picks up dollars impersonating the President doing things like riding a pig at places like local car dealerships. Then one day the Secret Service shows up in Dave's living room asking Dave to impersonate the President at a social function. (Even this seems very implausible in a world where one wrong comment can ruin a politician's career.) The President is needed elsewhere. The elsewhere is an illicit tryst with one of his aides, and unfortunately the President suffers a massive stroke. At the urging of two aides (played by Frank Langella and Kevin Dunn), Dave agrees to continue his role as the

President.

Dave quickly finds out that President Mitchell was nobody to admire. A small group of people are running the Presidency for power and greed. Finding that the First Lady (played by Sigourney Weaver) detests the President, Kovic decides to change policies.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of D a v e is the performance of Frank Langella. Getting past the age when he can play dashing roles

Dave

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such as Zorro and Dracula, he is turning to acting. In a bleached crewcut he quietly steals scenes from Kline and Weaver. He has learned the difference between acting hammy and having an expressive face. Like Frederic March before him, he has made the transition from depending on his good looks to having an expressive face that is a study in itself. It seems even director Ivan Reitman underrates the power of Langella's acting. In one notable scene Reitman has the camera focused on Kline in the foreground. He then sets the focus deeper to pick up a reaction from Langella in the background, then again focuses on Kline to give him the viewer's attention. But once the viewer's eye is on Langella it stays on Langella through the scene, even though he is now out of focus. Reitman has underrated the interest and magnetism of Langella's expression. Kline plays his usual amiable self. Weaver does what she can with a role that gives her very little to do until late in the film.

D a v e is a light, pleasant film in the style of Frank Capra that may be a bit politically simplistic. The view that there is corruption in high places is undoubtedly true, but the view that a simple non-politician using intuition could do better than an elected President is questionable. There is some hypocrisy in this populist pseudo-President who wants programs that will increase Federal spending but who at the same time cheats on his own taxes--a rather wry touch in Gary Ross's script.

Still, it is fun to see over two dozen celebrities and commentators on government affairs commenting on this new President. The most enjoyable cameo features Oliver Stone. And one more nice touch: Kline's rendition of the song "Tomorrow" from "Annie" is the

first time I could ever make out all the words.

While not startlingly original, *Dave* is fun and well-made. I give it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.