



points fingers at them. Well, let me start at the beginning. Evelyn and I like to travel. We want to see as much as we can of the world, as much diversity of lifestyle, as we can. We want a feel for the varying textures of life and culture. That means we particularly look for non-Western culture. That means some of the

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places we go are a little unstable. Even some of the Western places we go are unstable. When we went to Peru, the State Department said it was safe. And we sent our trip report to someone we knew who was going a month later. Except he didn't. Just about the time we went, the Shining Path started shining a little more brightly and the State Department turned on the red light, so our friend never went. It's not like Peru was all that dangerous while we were there, though that was the trip when 1) we were nearly arrested by the military police, 2) we got stranded on the Amazon with a bad storm coming up, and 3) I had to tackle a pickpocket and wrestle him into a gutter. But if we were in any danger from terrorists we never knew it. And one of the things that makes a trip to another country valuable is that when it shows up in the news, we can remember what the place was like. The thing is, I don't know if it is the changing nature of the world or what, but a lot of the places we have been are making news. Including ones I would not have expected. I'll say more on this next time.

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2. Last week we had the discussion of the Hugo-nominated short stories. In order to collect votes from the regular discussion group members who were unable to attend, there was a delay in counting the ballots toward the second annual "Alexanders." (No one claimed that the dog ate their ballot, but one person was assisting his wife in giving birth.)

Rather than try to keep track of the raw ballots, I will just give the final results. Based on a "1" for first place, etc., and with no voting for "No Award," the results from five voters are:

- 1 "Even the Queen" by Connie Willis (9 points)
- 2 "The Winterberry" by Nicholas A. DiChario (14.5 points)
- 3 "The Lotus and the Spear" by Mike Resnick (15 points)
- 4 "The Mountain to Mohammed" by Nancy Kress (15.5 points)

5 "The Arbitrary Placement of Walls" by Martha Soukup (21 points)

"Even the Queen" was ranked in first place by four of the voters.

As a reminder, last year's runaway winner (on a five-voter ballot of seven stories) was Michael Resnick's "Winter Solstice." [-ecl]

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3. For our Columbus members, there will be a convention in October 1-3, 1993, in Dublin OH: Context VI: "An Intimate Science Fiction Convention Focusing on the Written Word." It is at the Stouffer-Dublin Hotel and the Guest of Honor is Fred Pohl, with special guests Mike Resnick, Betty Pohl, Lois McMaster-Bujold, Dennis McKiernan, Joan Slonczewski, Calvin Pierce, and Buck and Juanita Coulson. Memberships are \$30 until September 1 and \$35 thereafter. For more information, write FANACO, Inc, PO Box 2954, Columbus, OH

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43216, call (614) 263-6089, or email pconnoll@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu [-ecl]

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4. THE FUGITIVE (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule review: This is a fast-paced chase and murder mystery film based on a much more leisurely television series. Ford is only okay, but Tommy Lee Jones is great as a wise-cracking U.S. marshal chasing Ford. There is also one sequence with very impressive special effects. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4).

In September 1967 Dr. Richard Kimble found his wife murdered by a one-armed man who escaped. Kimble was found guilty of the murder and sentenced to die. But as police Lt. Philip Gerard was taking him to prison, the train they were riding in derailed and Kimble was able to escape. For three years Kimble tracked the one-armed man and Gerard tracked Kimble. Or at least that was the premise of the television series T\_h\_e\_F\_u\_g\_i\_t\_i\_v\_e. that starred David Janssen and Barry Morse. T\_h\_e\_F\_u\_g\_i\_t\_i\_v\_e is also the name of a fast-paced new

film very loosely based on the twenty-six-year-old television series. In fact, the film version owes as much or more to Alfred Hitchcock thrillers such as T\_h\_e\_3\_9\_S\_t\_e\_p\_s, T\_h\_e\_S\_a\_b\_o\_t\_e\_u\_r, and N\_o\_r\_t\_h\_b\_y\_N\_o\_r\_t\_h\_w\_e\_s\_t as it does to the old Quinn-Martin series. That series, itself intended as a variation on Victor Hugo's L\_e\_s\_M\_i\_s\_e\_r\_a\_b\_l\_e\_s, had a leisurely pace which is just not the style of this tight and tense 127-minutes film. There is very little of the "nice guy mixing in people's lives" premise of the television series in the new film. The series was light on the murder aspect and the film has more motivation behind the murder than three years of the television show had.

At least superficially, the film has the same premise. Dr. Richard Kimble (played by Harrison Ford, apparently still a little befuddled from the brain injury in R\_e\_g\_a\_r\_d\_i\_n\_g\_H\_e\_n\_r\_y) comes home from surgery late one night to find his wife dead and a one-armed man in his house. Nobody is particularly convinced by Kimble's story and he ends up headed for Death Row. On the way there is an attempted escape and a bus crash, and then a train comes along and slams into the bus. This spectacular chain of events leaves wide open an opportunity to escape as well as the mouths and eyes of the audience. Called in on the case is U.S. Marshal Samuel Gerard (substituting for police Lt. Philip Gerard, and played irascibly, irreverently by Tommy Lee Jones). And the chase has everything but the laid-back style of the television series. In the series Kimble would typically befriend someone and after he saves their marriage, they would help him escape. In the film Gerard is much closer on the trail and the escapes are much more physically challenging.

I think Harrison Ford is miscast in this and many of his films. He plays characters who are very sharp but he always appears on the bland edge of confusion. Admittedly, he has a right to be as dazed as he appears, after the events of the film, but at the same time he is supposedly making clever deductions. Tommy Lee Jones may be playing an honest cop--uh, sorry, U.S. marshal--but he steals the film right from under Ford. He really can play with the mind of the viewer by saying just the right unexpected comment at just the right moment. And nearly as sarcastic is Joe Pantoliano as Cosmo Renfro, assisting Gerard. Pantoliano is a character actor who

manages to make small parts get noticed. Sela Ward plays Kimble's wife and appears to be the perfect reward for all the hard work of medical school.

T\_h\_e\_F\_u\_g\_i\_t\_i\_v\_e is a terrific thriller that may stretch the credulity of the audience at times, but leaves them well-entertained for better than two hours. I give it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

\*\*\*HEAVY SPOILER\*\*\* \*\*\*HEAVY SPOILER\*\*\* \*\*\*HEAVY SPOILER\*\*\*

Here we have yet another mystery in which the solution does not quite explain the mystery. Apparently the drug company is involved with the plot since they have lent security people to it. It makes no sense that they would do that without knowing the drug was faulty. But a drug company is not the same as General Motors. It is v\_e\_r\_y dependent on a good name because the doctors who prescribe its products are a very cautious lot. So if you are a drug company, you might try to cover up the negligence of letting a faulty drug get on the market, but you would be really cautious about what has not yet been released. Any possibility of scandal is very, very strongly avoided. At least, that is my understanding. The story holds together neither if you assume the drug company knew nor if you assume it doesn't.

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##### 5. UN COEUR EN HIVER (a film review by Mark R. Leeper):

Capsule review: This is just about the best film I could think of about a love triangle. Most of the film revolves around the personality of one of the main characters, which is only gradually revealed in the film, so I will refrain from discussing it. This is a thoughtful, intelligent film and one of the best I have seen this year. Rating: low +3 (-4 to +4).

For many years Stephan (played by Daniel Auteuil) and Maxim (played by Andre Dussolier) have been partners in a violin repair business in Paris. Where Maxim is handsome and affable, Stephan is

introspective and introverted. In the years of their partnership Maxim has been married and divorced and has dated many women. Stephan has little life outside of the repair business. He is a genius in building and repairing violins. He has one friend, a woman, in whom he confides, but their relationship is purely platonic. Maxim's latest girlfriend is Camille, a brilliant and beautiful violinist (played by Emmanuelle Beart) who takes an instant dislike to the blunt Stephan, but when it is clear that Stephan appreciates Camille's music, Camille becomes interested in the odd loner. The stage is set for a tragic love story.

U\_n\_C\_o\_e\_u\_r\_e\_n\_H\_i\_v\_e\_r revolves around about Stephan's unusual personality, which is only revealed gradually through the film. Suffice it to say this is a much more touching and engaging film than could be expected from the above description. Stephan is a personality type rarely seen in film, yet not nearly so rare in real life. I went into this film expecting a fatuous love story and came out with a film that will almost definitely be on my top ten list of the year. Stephan's personality, what it does to him, and how others use it and react to it make this a thoughtful and intelligent addition to the films of this year. U\_n\_C\_o\_e\_u\_r\_e\_n\_H\_i\_v\_e\_r was directed by Claude Sautet from a screenplay he co-authored with Jacques Fieschi. Scenes of Emmanuelle Beart playing Ravel (beautifully orchestrated by Philippe Sarde) have a pristine beauty that is as sexy as anything you will find in any American film this year. I give it a low +3 on the -4 to +4 scale.

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6. CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT by Dan Simmons (Warner Books, ISBN 0-446-36475-4, 1993 (1992c), \$5.99) (a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

I am often struck by the ingenuity of authors--not so much for their ability to write an intricately plotted story as for their apparent ability to make their travels around the world tax-deductible as a business expense.

Dan Simmons seems to have done that with C\_h\_i\_l\_d\_r\_e\_n\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_N\_i\_g\_h\_t, his story of real vampires living in present-day Romania. It does have that "sense of place" that stories and films are supposed to have in that it feels like Romania--or at least as much as I can tell after five days there. But Simmons lays it on a little thick, describing every street his characters walk down, including each major building they pass (see pages 40 through 42 for an example of what I am talking about).

The story itself has some interesting ideas in its attempt to put a scientific basis on vampirism. But the character development is disappointing, especially for Simmons. We have the dedicated (and divorced) nurse who adopts the sickly orphan, the priest who is questioning his calling, the very helpful Romanian student, and so

on. There are also the obligatory number of deaths and tortures-- this is, after all, a horror novel.

On the whole, I recommend this novel. I would say that blaming Romania's problems on vampires seems on the whole to be letting the human race off too easily, but that may well be Simmons's point: the monsters we invent and the evils we attribute to them are no worse than ourselves and the evils we do.

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7. FLYING DUTCH by Tom Holt (Ace, ISBN 0-441-24193-X, 1993, \$4.50)  
(a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

First it was the Ring of the Niebelung in E\_x\_p\_e\_c\_t\_i\_n\_g\_S\_o\_m\_e\_o\_n\_e  
T\_a\_l\_l\_e\_r.

Then it was B\_e\_o\_w\_u\_l\_f\_i\_n\_W\_h\_o's\_A\_f\_r\_a\_i\_d\_o\_f  
B\_e\_o\_w\_u\_l\_f? And now Tom Holt  
is busy looking at what the Flying Dutchman would r\_e\_a\_l\_l\_y be like.

Holt's humor relies largely on the matter-of-fact tone he adopts, whether he's talking about bores ("Such was Paul's skill at grabbing the attention of the viewer that if he told you your ears were on fire you'd be so bored with the topic you wouldn't bother putting them out") or world order ("So if we have third world poverty and nuclear weapons and East-West hostility and economic depressions, but all brought about by means of the democratic process, then that's all right, but if just one man is responsible, then it's tyranny. Sorry, I never did history at school, I don't understand these things").

I have only one minor quibble--the arithmetic on page 177 was done on a calculator that introduced a round-off error. But counterbalancing this is the fact that Holt mentions my old home town of Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts (though there is, of course, no University of Chicopee Falls). I enjoyed F\_l\_y\_i\_n\_g\_D\_u\_t\_c\_h better than W\_h\_o's\_A\_f\_r\_a\_i\_d\_o\_f\_B\_e\_o\_w\_u\_l\_f? and as much as E\_x\_p\_e\_c\_t\_i\_n\_g\_S\_o\_m\_e\_o\_n\_e\_T\_a\_l\_l\_e\_r-- which I loved. To anyone looking for a very funny book, I highly recommend F\_l\_y\_i\_n\_g\_D\_u\_t\_c\_h.

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A sportsman is a man who, every now and then, simply  
has to out and kill something.

-- Stephen Leacock