



Werewolves in Their Youth: Stories

By Michael Chabon

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Chabon's second story collection, about couples and families suffused with yearning but crippled by broken love

Paralysis in the face of insight afflicts many characters in this stunning volume. In the title story, a boy named Paul does nothing to protect his feral friend Timothy from the scorn of teachers and classmates alike, even though he knows the reasons for Timothy's irritating games. In other stories, a young alpha couple sees a future together in the defects of a house up for sale, a heartbroken thief finds his ex-girlfriend's grandma to be an easy mark, and a man drifts away from a wife who has experienced a terrible misfortune.

At times darkly funny, and others achingly beautiful, *Werewolves in Their Youth* renders the sad compromises of adulthood and the vivid fantasies of childhood with clarity and warmth.

This ebook features a biography of the author.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Wonder boy Michael Chabon's second collection of stories tackles the American family in all its tragic and often frighteningly funny dysfunction. In the title story, a self-professed "King of the Retards" tries to distance himself from his next-door neighbor and only friend, who has taken their games (Plastic Man, Titanium Man, Matter-Eater Lad) just a little too far. In "House Hunting," a drunk real-estate agent shows a young couple through a house far too expensive for them, pocketing knickknacks and demonstrating a strange familiarity with its rooms. The wrenching "Son of the Wolfman" follows the aftermath of a rape; after a long struggle to conceive, Cara Glanzman becomes pregnant by her rapist and decides to keep the child, even as her husband struggles with his violent thoughts. In spite of the potential for sensationalism in such a plot, "Wolfman" is moving, unsentimental, and like the rest of these tales, wholly original.

Chabon is a master of the lively and unexpected description, his prose studded with images that split these mostly conventionally themed stories wide open. Consider his burly Quebecois carpenter, who has "a face that looked as if it had been carved with a pneumatic drill by a tiny workman dangling from the sheer granite cliff of Olivier's forehead." Or the "local drunks" of a Chubb Island bar, "a close-knit population, involved in an ongoing collective enterprise: the building, over several generations, of a basilica of failure, on whose crowded friezes they figured in vivid depictions of bankruptcy, drug rehabilitation, softball, and arrest." Or, the narrator of "Mrs. Box" and his failed marriage: "...very soon they had been forced to confront the failure of an expedition for which they had set out remarkably ill-equipped, like a couple of trans-Arctic travelers who through lack of preparation find themselves stranded and are forced to eat their dogs." *Werewolves in Their Youth* is worth reading for such moments alone. When Chabon uses them to illuminate our darkest impulses and fears, the result is often revelatory.

From Publishers Weekly

Applying his ironic talents to even darker material than in previous outings, Chabon has produced a winning collection of nine stories. Failed marriages haunt almost all the protagonists; personal disasters, depressive malaise and sexual violence are recurring themes. In "House Hunting," a realtor is more intent on stealing objects from a house than on showing it to his clients, a troubled young couple. His bizarre incompetence increases the tension between them, finally driving them into one another's arms. A young man flees town in "Mrs. Box," hoping to leave the twin disasters of his marriage and his business behind. He stops to visit his wife's senile grandmother and suddenly resolves to rob her of her jewelry, only to find a half-measure of redemption when his plan misfires. In the title story, Paul is the only one on the school playground who can call Timothy back from his werewolf fantasy, but Paul, who is already taunted for smelling weird, can't risk being associated too closely with his strange pal. As a result, Timothy attacks a fellow student and is reassigned to a "Special School." The closing tale, "In the Black Mill," presented as a story by August Van Zorn, a writer Chabon invented in *Wonder Boys*, is a brilliant riff on pulp horror tales featuring an archeologist who unearths the terrifying secrets of a small town. Here, Chabon is as witty as ever while dispensing with the glibness that sometimes marred his earlier work. His characters, even when they are silly and flawed, come across as sympathetic, three-dimensional human beings. Author tour.

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From Library Journal

This collection of short stories from novelist Chabon (*Wonder Boys*, Villard, 1995) reveals the intricacies of emotion in the lives of everyday people. Chabon's central figures are beset by divorce: the pressures that cause it, the traumas that accompany it, and the aftershock and readjustment that follow. Whether children or

adults, they struggle to manage in situations that are not always so manageable. From the fat boy trying to reunite his estranged parents to the husband helping his wife give birth to the child of a rapist, these remarkably crafted stories explore life at the lunar extreme that brings out the werewolf in the human condition. Yet Chabon magically instills a ray of hope, even in his most desperate characters. For most collections. ?Joanna M. Burkhardt, Univ. of Rhode Island, Coll. of Continuing Education Lib., Watch Hill Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terri Hatfield:

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Christopher Hickman:

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Merle Poteet:

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