

## **The Hunger of the Wolf**

Stephen Marche

Marche's latest (*Shining at the Bottom of the Sea*) tells an epic, Gatsby-esque tale of a financial dynasty and adds a touch of the supernatural, with uneven results. When Ben Wylie, the heir to a multibillion-dollar empire, is found lying dead in the Canadian snow, Jamie Cabot, a writer with childhood ties to the Wylies, tries to uncover the truth. He traces the history of WylieCorp, beginning with Dale, whose business of buying up radio stations and newspapers during the height of the Great Depression laid the groundwork for his son George, who took the company international. The story of the self-made Wylies would seem to be a triumph of ambitious capitalism, but they harbor a dangerous secret: for three days a month, the Wylie men cage themselves in the basement where they turn into werewolves, howling themselves into exhaustion. The revelation of how Ben died is the glum culmination to a family saga devoid of nearly any joy. **VERDICT** As one would expect from the author of *Esquire*'s monthly column A Thousand Words About Our Culture, Marche's observations on the growing hollowness of the moneyed class are trenchant and timely, but the strained metaphor of capitalists-as-wild-beasts feels out of place. An immaculately written but unsatisfying effort.—**Michael Pucci, South Orange P.L., NJ**

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