

# The SCIENCE FICTION

## Book Club News

SET IN THE SAME IMAGINATIVE UNIVERSE AS *THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE*

# JERRY POURNELLE

## KING DAVID'S SPACESHIP

Prince Samuel's World has been isolated from the galactic empire for three hundred years, and is now a network of squabbling kingdoms that, left to themselves, would have feuded their way to peaceful civilisation along the usual course of evolving worlds. But time is a luxury that Prince Samuel's World no longer has; it has been rediscovered by the Imperial Navy, and is to be annexed to the Empire in the lowest possible status: a colony without voting privileges. Given another fifty years it could have developed some sort of primitive space travel, and been admitted to the Empire as a Class Two planet: a *member* rather than a *subject*.

But the Empire has reckoned without Colonel Nathan MacMinnie, a patriot with a plan. Not far from Prince Samuel's World lies the primitive planet of Makassar. A planet noted for the relentless war waged there by barbarian tribes against the monks who represent 'civilisation' — and for a great library of books left by the first settlers from Old Earth, precious relics guarded by the Makassar religious order. Within this collection lies the knowledge that built starships in the first place. And Nathan MacMinnie determines to use it in order to build another.

And so an expedition of 'traders' goes to Makassar, hitching a ride ignominiously on a ship they could not have built themselves. With his military background, MacMinnie may not seem the logical man to lead an expedition in search of books — but before he can bring back any lost secrets of physics, he will have to rescue the library and its guardian monks from the barbarians who have besieged it. It is a dangerous mission — and it leads to a climax that only one of science fiction's greatest adventure writers could have created.

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Jerry Pournelle holds PhDs in psychology and political science, and worked on Projects Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo before becoming a full-time sf writer. He is a popular columnist in *Galaxy* and *Destinies* magazines, author of *Janissaries* and *The Mercenary*, and co-author of the best-selling *Lucifer's Hammer* and *The Mote in God's Eye*. His latest novel, *King David's Spaceship*, confirms his reputation as one of America's most exciting and inventive sf writers.

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