

Second Prize Ending

by Peter R. Weston

45 Arthur Street, Small Heath, Birmingham

... I WON'T be missed for a year or two, and who would ever look for little Jack Turner? I might as well make myself at home.

Later he strolled away to look for a water-supply. The sun was high in the sky, and its golden light cast Jack's shadow as a darker patch on the pale sapphire of the ground.

In the near distance the undulating valley merged gently into a range of low hills. Everywhere the blue grass was growing, its myriad tiny flowers presenting a patchwork appearance that faded into the blue haze of the background.

Jack headed for the head of the valley, alert for a spring, but the smoothness of the land was unbroken apart from large bare patches presenting red sandstone faces to the sunlight on the hill-slopes.

Abruptly he reached the crest of the hill, and saw the other side. Beneath, a little winding path ran down to a tumbled group of giant red boulders, from which ran a glittering torrent that could only be water. Behind, flat plains stretched towards the sea, which was no more than a blue line on the horizon.

He trotted smartly down the well-surfaced path, miraculously devoid of the blue growth, until he reached the rocks.

In a clear space he was delighted to see a little crystal spring gushing from the base of a shoe-shaped boulder, losing itself in crazy ramblings amongst the stony maze.

The clearing was ringed with miniature trees, glossy-leaved, with cherry-red fruit. With complete disregard for safety, Jack bit into one, and found it delicious.

Then he bent over the bank, and saw shining silver fish darting about tangled pink waterweed, weaving intricate patterns in the swirling eddies and currents of the stream. The water itself looked so inviting that Jack plunged his hot face into it, and drew in a deep mouthful of the soothing liquid.

It tasted like the wine of finest vineyards, like the essence of the quartz sands of the stream's bed; surely the best water anywhere.

He wiped his mouth, filled his canteen and started back, ignoring the hard path, walking instead on the soft grass carpet.

'No planet was ever like this,' he thought aloud, 'it's a paradise world, so neat and peaceful that it might be a park.'

'It is a park,' replied a voice within his head.

Startled, Jack looked behind. On the nearest bend of the path stood a dull-grey box on four flexible legs. He suddenly realized, paths do not make themselves.

'Will you please get off the grass,' said the park-keeper.

THE NOVEMBER CHOICE IS

THE DEEP RANGE

by **Arthur C. Clarke**

(Muller 13s 6d; SFBC 5s 6d)

A Year Ahead . . .

FRIGHT seized him. . . Not again, he thought. Not again! It's happening to me again.

The soft-drink stand fell into bits. Molecules. He saw the molecules, colourless, that made it up. Then he saw through, into the space behind, the trees and sky. He saw the soft-drink stand go out of existence, along with the counter man. . . In its place was a slip of paper. He reached out his hand and took hold. . . On it was printing, block letters: SOFT-DRINK STAND.

From *Time Out of Joint*, by Philip K. Dick, our choice for September 1961. Published by Lippincott at \$3.50, it appears in England for the first time in book form in SFBC.

DETAIL

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SCIENCE



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RUMINATIONS OF AN ADDICT

by Kingsley Amis

who joins John Carnell and Dr J. G. Porter as
a SFBC selector

ONE of these days I really shall have to go into the downstairs department of my favourite science-fiction bookshop in Sicilian Avenue and start going through the files of the pulp magazines of the middle 1930's. With luck I may come across some of those stories which, with a kind of vivid vagueness, I remember making such a huge impression on me at the time. Perhaps the shock of recognition will be too much to bear, and memories of some of the other things I was going in for about that time—the B.B.C. Dance Orchestra, Greta Garbo in *The Rise of Helga*, Pythagoras' theorem—will all come together and overwhelm me with nostalgia; perhaps I shall merely wonder what possessed me, however retarded an adolescent I was, to start taking such stuff seriously. But whatever happens, I am sure my hopeless addiction to space-ships, monsters, robots, cosmic disasters and remote planets will not waver for a moment.

I can see now, of course, that 'The Seven-dimensional Tube,' which bewildered me so, must have been a lot of poppycock; that the story about Layroh and the Shining Ones, who turned up from Jupiter or somewhere to eat the human race, was nothing but a mixture of crude adventure and crude horror; that the heat-ray manipulated by another band of unfriendly visitors was a