

# science fiction news

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Selectors: Kingsley Amis, John Carnell, Dr J. G. Porter

## NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE

### WOLFBANE

by Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth

(Gollancz 12s 6d; SFBC 5s 6d)

WHY are the people of the earth afraid? Why are they short of food, fuel, life? What lies at the heart of the difference between careful, passive Citizen Germyn and 'normal', boisterous Glenn Tropile? We soon learn.

The earth is in the grip of unmoving, seemingly dead machines called the Pyramids who have dragged it out of orbit into chilly space and provided it only with a meagre little sun, which burns itself to a clinker every five years, and hardly succeeds in keeping anyone or anything alive. Decimated, earth's inhabitants wait every five years to see whether the Pyramids will renew their sun and ensure survival. Their situation is complicated by the presence of the Wolves, of whom Glenn is one, who refuse to lead the new submissive life and take no notice of restrictions, while remaining competitive and antagonistic to the Pyramids.

The Sheep in the area where Glenn has the misfortune to live subject their enemies the Wolves to a ritual in which they sap all life of the victims by making an incision in their backbones—they call it the Donation. Glenn, caught and imprisoned, waits to make his Donation while planning an escape. He is amazed and terrified, as are the Sheep, when the man in front of him in the queue disappears before everyone's eyes. Glenn's fellow Wolves, who appear on the scene, call it being 'translated'. Translation comes it seems to people who meditate, who try and work out the mystery that surrounds them, and the Wolves warn Glenn not to try. But despite their warnings, he does meditate and gets 'translated' too.

He awakes, somewhere, somehow, to find his mind-power increased eightfold. He is, he eventually realizes, being set to work by the Pyramids; part of a machine which possesses sixteen hands. But he is still a Wolf and just as determined as ever to release the world from its cold terror. How he sets to work to use his increased powers, not for, but against his new masters, makes an exciting climax to the book—one which must not be revealed here. Enough to say that Pohl and Kornbluth, old hands at the game, have excelled themselves.

Extracts from several of the book's reviews are printed below:

'Plenty of invention and pace throughout.' KINGSLEY AMIS.

'Wonderful science fiction.' EDMUND CRISPIN.

'A work of sheer exuberant imagination, combining excitement with the sense of wonder and mystery which is so sadly lacking in much modern sf.' ARTHUR CLARKE.

'I don't know anyone who comes near him in this ability to show the crazy in the logical and cause the uneasy feeling that the seeds of the utterly inhibited society of *Wolfbane* are ready to germinate, given the right fertilizer.' JOHN WYNDHAM.

## SIX MONTHS AHEAD

**SLAVE SHIP** by Frederik Pohl (Dobson 11s 6d; SFBC 5s 6d)

THIS is Pohl on a very different tack. In a state of hot 'cold' war, not between nation and nation, but United Nations versus an Eastern power, the Caodais, manpower is scarce, especially when the mysterious Glotch threatens to decimate forces and civilians alike. But in Project Mako's H.Q. the Americans are working on a long-term plan to ease the situation—they are training animals to communicate with man, and to do this they must first learn the language of the beasts. Miller, set to work on the problem, runs up against plenty of difficulties and several dangerous situations. But what happens when he eventually invades enemy waters with a team of chimpanzees, seals and a collie dog you must wait to find out!

[To members who may feel we are overdoing the work of Frederik Pohl we would only point out that *Wolfbane* and *Slave Ship* are Pohls (well) apart!—Ed.]

## NEW JACKET

'I AM very pleased to hear that SFBC is now issuing books every month. Also I hope they will show a different cover every month, as in *City*, the latest choice.' C. W. · *Sussex*.

'I have just received the November issue of the SFBC and I would like to compliment you on the new design for the jackets. I like especially the quality of the paper used. . . . I am very pleased that I will now be receiving a book a month, and I shall look forward to the next issue.' J. P. · *Surrey*.

'Congratulations on the new covers. As a new member of SFBC I must admit I was horrified when I removed the paper wrapper on the other three choices received. The new wrapper and cover layout is excellent.' J. A. · *London*.

'I like very much your cover, and would suggest that you have a different one each month, perhaps asking for designs from members of the SFBC themselves.' P. K. · *London*.

'Many congratulations on the new style cover—I think it is a great improvement on the former. I have always destroyed the dust jacket in the past—I shall do so no longer. I also welcome the plan to issue a monthly choice.' S. M. · *Surrey*.

'I have hitherto been a silent, but nevertheless very satisfied customer! However I should like to express a special word of appreciation of the new style of jacket and binding. They are very good and a considerable improvement. Thank you.'

J. C. · *London*.

'The new jacket is drab. It spoils the line of colourful SF jackets on my shelf. The design looks like a poor photographic reproduction of fibres under a microscope and is as symbolic of SF as a stick of rhubarb.' R. W. D. · *Devon*.