

science fiction news

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

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE

The Stars are Too High

by Agnew Bahnson

(Random House \$3.95; SFBC 5s 6d)

THIS is a prophetic novel of the near future by an American who is himself sponsoring gravitational research at the University of North Carolina.

'As the book opens Dr Henry Alvin, scientific adviser to the United States Air Force, is called to the Pentagon for a conference at which he sees top-secret radar films of a UFO behaving as no known aircraft could behave. The craft, the *Argonaut*, has a controlled gravity drive that gives it range and mobility beyond anything else on Earth. Its inventor and backers intend to give the United States and Russia an ultimatum: they will pretend to be Powers from the Stars, who can destroy Earth unless it disarms and abandons war. They hope the *Argonaut's* antics will be the persuader.

'But the personalities of the conspirators begin to get in the way of this scheme. Alvin, naturally, is torn between his responsibility to the Air Force and his desire to see the plan succeed. Max Schoeller is a German scientist who stumbled on the gravity-control field just before the fall of Nazi Germany. John Sloan is an industrialist and idealist, whose money has made the further working out of the ship possible. Jack Baker, an old friend of Alvin, is a young pilot who found Schoeller and brought him to Sloan, and who has suddenly fallen in love with a young woman pilot in Cleveland. The fanatic, the idealist, the adventurer, the scientist trapped in the middle: four well-meaning amateurs blunder into a situation which may set off the war which they are trying to prevent. . . .

'The working out of this situation is Bahnson's story—pure sf all the way, even to his final gimmick, but a relaxed find of sf in which people sit around and talk about the things they are doing, instead of just ramming out there and getting them done. That, I guess, makes it a serious novel.' *New Worlds*.

YOU'VE DONE IT YOURSELVES

IN JANUARY'S *Science Fiction News* we appealed to members to do it themselves—in other words we offered to pay two guineas for good articles or sf short stories which we could publish in the *News*.

The response has been enormous, especially with short stories. Some we have had to turn down, but there are still quite a lot which we think worthy of the fee and of being printed in the *News*.

We are beginning, this month, with fifteen-year-old David Morton's short story, *New Bodies for Old*, which we hope to follow in the next few months with various others.

The offer is still open if *you* want to try!

New Bodies for Old

by David Morton

TO SAY that Mr Johnson was gullible would have been untrue. Actually he was a very shrewd man, for if he had not been he would not have amassed the considerable sum of 60 million credits. No, his one fault was that he was a sucker for any drug, pill, injection or ointment that laid claim to revitalize his ageing body. An attempt to sell him a patented anti-gravity machine would result in your being thrown out on your ear; offer him, however, a five-year lease to the fountain of youth and he would be your friend for life, or until such time as he discovered that the 'fountain of youth' was a reconditioned bird-bath. He had already spent over a hundred thousand credits on plastic surgery, so that he now possessed an epiglottis which had been brought out of two-hundred-year-old cold storage, a new heart, liver, spleen, a pseudo-flesh big toe and a few other oddments. It is not surprising therefore that he stopped in front of the sign when others might have passed it by.

The sign read:

AJAX MATTERCASTS LTD

NEW BODIES FOR OLD

Guaranteed Pseuds at Reasonable Prices

Visit Venus in the Form of a Lizard

Become a Sirian Carrot Man

Apply Within for Details

SAME DAY SERVICE

He could no more have resisted that sign than a free ton of gold. He went in.

Whereupon everything happened very quickly.

He was welcomed by a sleek young man, who passed him down a chain of other sleek young men to a cubicle marked:

MOLEXAMCUBE

(Molecular Examination Cubicle)

Then he was X-rayed, photographed, measured, observed under infra-red and ultra-violet, and explored under microwave. He had his knees knocked, his stomach poked, his pulse taken