

February

GLADIATOR-AT-LAW

by Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth

The setting is America some two hundred years hence. The country is controlled by the great legal families, holding all wealth and power in a society divided into the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The fortunate ones—the loyal employees of the big companies—live in a kind of super-home, the GML bubble; for the unemployed there is only the horror of the slums left from the previous century, and the hope of escape if they can win a money prize at one of the organized Field Days—occasions only a little less bloodthirsty than the Roman games. This is the world in which a young lawyer, Charles Mundin, is struggling to make a living, and the way is hard because he is not a member of any of the leading legal families. But suddenly one day his chance comes: he takes over the case of the Lavins, the last legal descendants of one of the inventors of the bubble-home; the Lavins want to make the homes available to everyone but they are opposed by the great corporations, fearing that their hold over their employees will be weakened if the homes can be freely bought. Mundin discovers how hard it is to fight the Establishment, and he can win his battle only by trickery.

'Here is a complete commercial technocracy; Frederik Pohl's and C. M. Kornbluth's visualizations are frighteningly convincing: elegant plastic bubble-houses for those who conform, the slums for the others, and everyone in the pay of someone higher up. Only money can break Money. How well these two write.' *Daily Telegraph*.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

March

DOPPELGÄNGERS

by Gerald Heard

Until it was selected for SFBC, this classic sf novel has been unobtainable for a long time. It pictures the world of 1997—the 'upper' world—controlled by a benevolent dictator, run for its own good with the help of highly developed science. To any dictator, however benevolent, there will be opposition—in this society an opposition driven literally underground and organized as ruthlessly as the world of light overhead. The dictator of darkness selects a willing victim to become the 'double' of the upper world's ruler: to assume his habits and physical characteristics through rigorous training and through grafting operations so painful that only the greatest fortitude can make them endurable. The *doppelgänger* sets out on his mission of assassination, comes face to face with his intended victim and accomplishes his task. But the circumstances of his success are not those of the plan and the results were not foreseen. . . .

o.p.; SFBC 6s

April

IN DEEP

by Damon Knight

'Mr Knight's talent is hard to classify. You think you have him taped as an expert cartographer of nightmare and the next moment he comes up with the first story in this collection, a classic account of what happens when four assorted people become engulfed, but not assimilated, by an outsize jelly-fish affair. The tone of this, bizarre and gay by turns, is captivating.

'Nevertheless it's the darker side of the possible that gets more of an airing here. "The Country of the Kind" is the only interesting and believable guess I've seen at what the artist of tomorrow might become, and being this it inevitably makes the artist of today look a little different. "Stranger Station" begins with some familiar ingredients—a monster, solitude in space, a mechanism with feelings—and ends up as new and odd. To do something properly is to be original.' KINGSLEY AMIS in the *Observer*.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

THIS MONTH'S CHOICE IS
THE JOY MAKERS by James Gunn
(Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s)

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE IS
CONDITIONALLY HUMAN
by Walter Miller
(Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s)

WANTED AND FOR SALE

MISS JANET PIKE, 150 Argyle Street, Leicester, would like to buy a copy of *I, Robot* and of *Dark Universe*.

Mr P. Matthews, 101 West Hendford, Yeovil, Somerset, wants to get hold of a copy of Asimov's *Second Foundation*.

Mr T. W. Carter, 184 North Street, South Bank, Middlesbrough, Yorks, wants to buy a copy of *Tiger, Tiger*.

Mr W. Russell, 26 Hayfield Road, Off Lancaster Road, Salford 6, has the following books for disposal:

SFBC Past Titles: Nos. 6, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, and also *Jizzle*, *Spectrum II*, *The Neon Halo* and the three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings*.

All the above members should, of course, be contacted direct.

A JEALOUS GOD

A Note about the November CF Choice

The Slave

by Isaac Bashevis Singer

THIS strange novel lies outside what seem to be the accepted formulae for most of today's fiction. It is not concerned with the minutiae of life; it does not map one more journey into the out-back of personality, and it does not look upon either evil (or goodness) as a form of psychological disorder. It is too glib to say that it reads as though it had been thought out before the invention of psycho-analysis, and yet in one sense this is a valid comment. *The Slave*, in its conception, is an epic, founded on a gigantic theme—the relationship between one man and God. There is no question about whether this relationship exists, or is feasible, or healthy, or deceptive, or anything else: it is accepted as given that for Jacob, the central character, God is as real and as close as his own self, and it is one measure of Mr Singer's skill and strength that this is accepted, on Jacob's own terms, as a Jew living in Poland of the seventeenth century, and not from point of view of the twentieth century.

Many of the Jewish communities in Poland have been destroyed by Cossacks. Jacob himself escaped from the massacre in Josefov, but he was caught by robbers and sold as a slave to a farmer in a remote mountain village. In his own town he had been a scholar and a religious teacher, and now he works as a cowherd, the only Jew among an almost barbaric people, in the midst of filth and violence. He greatly loves Wanda, his master's daughter, but she is a source of fear as well as delight to him, for he already has a wife, who may have survived the massacre, and in any case marriage between Jew and Christian is forbidden both by Jewish and Polish law. In time Jacob is ransomed and returns to Josefov, to his life as a teacher, but he cannot put aside his love for Wanda, and he goes back along the difficult journey to the mountain village to her. Together they escape to make a new life together.

At last they settle in another town. Although Wanda has learned and accepted the faith of Judaism, she cannot speak Yiddish fluently and so she pretends to be dumb. For a time they live peacefully and prosper, but Wanda dies at the birth of her first son. Jacob takes the child and begins the last and longest journey of his life.

The bare outline can give very little sign of the breadth and depth of *The Slave*. For one thing it misses out altogether the background to the story, the picture of Poland as it seemed to Jacob—a place of violence and danger, where Jews and Christians alike were locked in the same greedy struggle for life itself, for the means to survive at the expense of others. In the centre of this degradation Jacob stands out, not as a hero among human beings, but as a man comparing himself, in humility, with God.

'Indisputably the finest living Jewish writer.' *Sunday Telegraph*.

Secker & Warburg 21s; SFBC 7s, post free

Spectrum III is out of print: we will let members know if we are able to get more stock

BOOK LIST

PERIODICALLY we compile a check-list of the SFBC titles which are still in stock, and the one below will be useful for members who may have missed some of the past Choices and would like to add them to their SFBC collection now. This is a good place, too, to remind you that for every new member you introduce to SFBC or enrol by means of a Gift Subscription, you are entitled to four past Choices from this list. There is a Gift Subscription card included in this *SF News*, and an order form at the end of the check-list for titles you would like to buy.

Aliens for Neighbours by Clifford Simak

A vintage collection of nine of the maestro's stories. 6s 9d

The Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction (9th Series) edited by Robert P. Mills

Stories by Alfred Bester, Robert Heinlein, Daniel Keyes, Damon Knight, Theodore Sturgeon, William Tenn and others. 6s 9d

Best SF Four edited by Edmund Crispin

Ten outstanding stories. 6s 9d

Dark Universe by Daniel Galouye

Living in a vast system of underground caverns, the people of the 'dark universe' have lost the power of vision; for them light is a myth to be worshipped, until one of them escapes to the surface of the earth. 6s 9d

The Darkest of Nights by Charles Eric Maine

The world population is being destroyed by a virus: the survivors become all-powerful in conditions of horrifying chaos. 7s

The Death of Grass by John Christopher

England is a green and pleasant land until a terrible blight kills all vegetation. 6s 6d

The Drowned World by J. G. Ballard

'A novel by a science fiction author that can be judged by the highest standards.' KINGSLEY AMIS in the *Observer*. 7s

Drunkard's Walk by Frederik Pohl

An exciting account of the struggle to save mankind from an alien influence. 6s 9d