

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group
Club Notice - 6/1/79

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(All meetings are in room 3H-506 on Wednesdays at noon.)

DATE -----	TOPIC -----
6/6/79	IMPERIAL EARTH by Arthur C. Clarke
6/27/79	STAND ON ZANZIBAR by John Brunner

Our library is in HO 2D-634A. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian.
Evelyn Leeper (HO 1B-527 x6334) is Club book-buyer.

1. We have a meeting coming up June 6 to discuss IMPERIAL EARTH by Arthur C. Clarke.

2. I was asked for some information yesterday about the Science Fiction Book Club that Doubleday runs. Since the Book Club is a fairly important force in modern science fiction, it is probably worth describing here for the information of those who do not know about it. I am neither recommending the Book Club, nor recommending against it. The Book Club offers hardback editions of books of science fiction or books of related interest. The books will usually not be bound as well as non-Book Club editions of the same books, but will usually cost considerably less, approximately competitive with paperback editions and available considerably sooner. Currently the cost of a novel will be from \$1.98 up to \$4.95. Add to that roughly a dollar in postage per book. The usual deal for joining is that you must purchase four books in the first year, after that you remain a member until you decide to quit. At the time you sign up you get four free books so in the first year you are really getting eight books for the Book Club price for four books.

The operating procedure is common to most book clubs. Fourteen times a year you get (along with a pile of ads) the notice, Things To Come. Each Things to Come lists two Book Club selections and about twenty alternate selections. The default is that they will send you the two Book Club selections. If you do not want the selections, and usually you won't, you can signify on a form they send you. If you want one of the alternates you can signify that also. Hence there is an implicit yearly membership fee of 14 15-cent stamps to return their form to them. Note that even if you do not reply and they send you the two Book Club selections, the law says you can still turn them down since non-action cannot legally be considered a contractual agreement. Things To Come, incidently,

helps to keep its readers up-to-date on what is being written since almost all the important novels published will end up either as Book Club editions or alternates.

Although the Book Club is run by Doubleday Books and many of the books offered are published by them, the Book Club will offer books from any hardback publisher whose books they think they can sell. Even the predominance of Doubleday Books is no problem since partially due to the needs of the Book Club they have made themselves one of the biggest publishers of hardback science fiction. It has worked out well for Doubleday since a book that comes out in a Book Club edition will sell roughly ten times as many copies as the non-Book Club editions of the same book. Having a novel chosen as a monthly selection is, for an author, a fairly lucrative jackpot since while there are less royalties per book on a Book Club edition, the sales far more than make up for the lesser per-book profit.

People interested in joining the Book Club will inevitably find their ads in science fiction magazines like Analog, Omni, and F&SF and usually in Scientific American, Science News, etc. Also, if you join through someone who is already a member the club throws an additional free book into the kitty to pay their member a pusher's fee. The one time I signed up a new member I let him keep the extra book. [Curiously the Book Club screwed up and sent me the "reward" book twice so I did benefit after all.]

Mark Leeper
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