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Outline of Proposed New Rules for the
Booker Fiction Prize.

The object of the new design is to aim at an arrangement whereby the publication of the winning novel, and the first announcement that it is the winner, should coincide as far as is practical, preferably to take place within two to four weeks of each other at the most.

As the autumn is the main publishing season it is therefore proposed to make the Booker Prize an autumn prize, and the general intention is to announce the winner before 15th November at the latest.

This plan will first come into operation in 1971. It will not result in a year being missed, since a Booker Prize was awarded in the spring of 1970.

To this end publishers are asked to take note please of the new system of dates for submission of titles :

1) The Prize will be awarded to a novel published between 1st September and 15th November of the year in question, but please see 2) below.

2) Since the prize is intended effectively to embrace the whole publishing year (taken ~~as~~ for this purpose as being 1st January to 15th November) any member of the panel of judges will be free to call in for consideration any novel published between 1st January and ~~1~~ 31st August. In the event that such a novel is called in and wins the prize it is evident that the main object of the new arrangement would be frustrated; but Bookers and the Publishers Association accept this risk, while hoping that it would not happen very often.

3) The period for submission of titles will be from 1st January to 1st July, though the panel will be willing to consider a few latecomers in ~~August~~ ^{July} provided notice of such latecomers is given by publishers in their original submission. The point of this is that a publisher might have a good and important book for late October publication for which he still had no proofs in June.

4) The new system requires that publishers should submit either proofs or finished books, and six copies of each title will be needed as before. *The timing suggests that in most cases proofs will be relevant.*

5) Publishers who have more than two novels which they believe are capable of winning the prize are requested as before to limit their submissions to two titles only, but when submitting them please to list the other titles and authors they think should be considered.

6) Collection of short stories are not eligible.

BOOKERS BOOKS	Date Recd 21/9/70
ACTION:	Copies
	CWT
	JNM
	BCW
	JNWH
	RDN

18 September 1971

Dear John,

I am so sorry I have not sent these rules through to you before, there have been various hitches - but herewith they are. I have, as you see, kept within the framework of the previous rules, but there are one or two things which worry me slightly.

In 1a I could not put "entered" for the prize as some of the books which will be considered will not be entered indeed cannot be entered but merely claimed in by the judges, so "eligible" seemed the best way round that. ✓

3c - I had no idea what closing date ought to be for judges calling in books, but as they must know the short-list by 1 October it seemed to me that that was the absolute limit of time allowed them. Perhaps you feel their closing date should be earlier. It used to be 31 December, about a month after submissions stopped.

Another thing that slightly worries me is that we make no mention of when the short-list will be published - we never have done. I feel it might be a good idea to mention this in the first para when I say that the prize will be awarded in November - what do you think? ✓

4iii - it is all very well for Tom to say that it would be much better if the winner was not known at the time of the announcement of the short list, but it is difficult to see how we can give the winning publisher six weeks warning to get a reprint done if necessary (and it still may be if the judges pick an already published book) under those circumstances. I have reduced the period to five weeks, which is cutting it a bit fine but this does mean it is just possible to announce the short-list and then for the judges to get together immediately afterwards. ✓

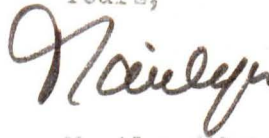
Anyway these are just guide lines. I hope that this proves practical - but publishers like everyone else never read things properly! I never asked you - what happens if we have a situation like last year when the publishers refuse to submit a book, presumably that is that, as it is a condition of award that the publisher agrees to pay £500 etc.

*this is a
non-situation
study?*

I go to Frankfurt on Tuesday until the beginning of the following week, but will be in the office on Monday if you want me, I am afraid that I will not be able to send these round to publishers until I return, but I do not think the urgency is that great. The beginning of October is soon enough?

Best wishes,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Marilyn'.

Marilyn Edwards