

2001: A SPACE
ODYSSEY

MARVEL COMICS GROUP



30¢
CC

1
DEC
02672

BEGIN A NEW JOURNEY TO THE STARS-AND BEYOND!!

BASED ON
CONCEPTS FROM THE
MGM/STANLEY KUBRICK
PRODUCTION



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY™



PREMIERE
ISSUE!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

2001 A SPACE ODYSSEY™

BASED ON CONCEPTS OF THE MGM MOVIE BY STANLEY KUBRICK AND ARTHUR C. CLARKE

EDITED, WRITTEN & DRAWN BY **JACK KIRBY** * INKED & LETTERED BY **MIKE ROYER** * COLORED BY **G. ROUSSOS** * CONSULTING EDITOR **ARCHIE GOODWIN**

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

SOMEWHERE IN THE DAWN OF TIME, WE BEGAN--
SOMEHOW, IN THESE PERILOUS TIMES WE KEEP
MOVING ON--AND SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE,
SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN TO CHANGE US! THE
PROCESS OF CHANGE BEGAN EONS AGO WITH
A CREATURE CALLED--

BEAST- KILLER!



THE
MONOLITH
MAY BE THE
CAUSE!

IT DOES NOT
BELONG TO
THIS WORLD--
YET IT DOES
BELONG TO
US ALL!

READ ON--AND
BEHOLD ITS
AWESOME
SECRETS!



NEW ORLEANS

... AS IT WAS IN THE GEOLOGICAL PERIOD KNOWN AS THE MIOCENE AGE. ANY EVIDENCE OF A GREAT CITY ON THIS SITE WILL BE LONG IN COMING!! HOWEVER, AT THIS MOMENT, THE NEO-MAN CALLED BY HIS FELLOWS "THE ONE WHO HUNTS ALONE," WAITS ON THE BRANCH OF A TREE, HIS NERVES TAUT, HIS CLUB POISED, HIS EYES RIVETED ON THE GAME BELOW, SEEKING, SELECTING THE ANIMAL HE WILL KILL...

THIS LAND ABOUNDS WITH GAME! IF I DO THIS WELL, I SHALL NOT RETURN IN HUNGER TO THE CAVE!

THE STONE SPIRIT ITSELF HAS TOLD ME THIS!

THE LONE HUNTER IS HUNGRY, BUT HE HAS IGNORED SMALLER GAME IN PURSUIT OF BIGGER, SWIFTER BEASTS... FOR THIS ANCESTOR OF MODERN MAN HAS ALREADY DEVELOPED A CUNNING AND PRIDE OF HIS OWN!

HE DOESN'T RUN WITH THE PACK THAT HUNTS AFOOT! HE HAS VISIONS AND METHODS NOT COMMON TO HIS FELLOWS. IT IS THOUGHT THAT THIS HUNTER IS IN UNION WITH AN EVIL SPIRIT THAT LIVES IN STONE!!

THE OTHERS
ARE NOT TO
BE SEEN. IT
IS GOOD!

YES, HE IS DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHERS. IT HAS COME TO HIM THAT ON THE GROUND THE GAME IS NOT ONLY SWIFTER BUT MORE DANGEROUS. PERCHED IN THIS TREE, HE CAN HOPE FOR A NEW ADVANTAGE THAT WILL RID HIM IN THE HUNT!

I HATE THE
OTHERS. THEY
SHUN THE
STONE-SPIRIT
AND CANNOT
HEAR ITS
VOICE!

THE MOMENT COMES!!
THE HUNTER LAUNCHES
HIMSELF INTO SPACE
AND UPON HIS
STARTLED PREY!!

I MUST
STRIKE
NOW!!

PROCAMELUS, WHOSE DESCENDANTS WOULD ONE DAY ADAPT TO THE BARRED DESERTS, BOLTS IN TERROR AS THE HUNTER DROPS FROM ABOVE. FEAR DRIVES ITS LONG LEGS TO GREAT SPEED, BUT THE ATTACKER HANGS ON WITH SAVAGE DETERMINATION...

HHIIIIYAAAH!!

THIS ONE IS BIG! HE
IS SWIFT! BUT I HAVE
CAUGHT HIM, EVEN AS
THE STONE-SPIRIT
SAID I WOULD!

PPPAWK!!

ELATION AND FEROCITY SIMULTANEOUSLY
FILL THE HUNTER AS HE CLUBS HIS
KILL TO THE GROUND. HIS HEAVY
BELLOW OF TRIUMPH RISE
TOWARD A JOYOUS PEAK--
UNTIL THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE
OF OTHER HUNTERS...

SEE THIS! HE
HAS CAUGHT A
LONG-LEG!

HE IS
NOT
YOURS
ALONE!
WE
HUNGER
TOO!

THE PACK IS MET BY A RAGE WITH WHICH IT
CANNOT CONTEND! ONE AFTER ANOTHER
FALLS VICTIM TO THE BITE OF A FLAILING
CLUB...

BEGONE!

KRAK!!

POWW!

LIKE A BULL MAMMOTH IN FULL CHARGE,
"THE ONE WHO HUNTS ALONE" BATTERS
HIS ADVERSARIES SENSELESS...

WAAM!

THEN, THE OTHERS FLEE! THEIR BONES
ACHE, AND THEIR HEARTS QUAKE WITH
FEAR AS THEY ARE LITERALLY DRIVEN
FROM THE SCENE BY THIS
BELLOWING BROTHER
OF EVIL SPIRITS...

AARRR!!

ONCE MORE, THE HUNTER TURNS TO HIS PREY, BUT, DESPITE ITS INJURIES, IT IS ALREADY ON ITS FEET AND SPEEDING FOR THE COVER OF THE FOREST. EACH STEP TAKES IT FURTHER OUT OF REACH OF THAT DEADLY CLUB...



THE BEAST ESCAPES!

GIVING CHASE ON FOOT PROVES FRUITLESS. THE PURSUER IS MORE UNGAINLY THAN THE PURSUED. THE HUNTER'S DINNER IS SOON LOST TO HIM. HE WILL HAVE TO CONTENT HIMSELF WITH SMALLER GAME...



HAD I SLAIN THE LONG-LEG WITH MY FIRST STRIKE, HE WOULD NOW BE MINE TO TAKE BACK TO THE CAVE!!

THE LONE HUNTER DROPS THE PURSUIT. "I ATTACKED LIKE A BEAST FROM THE TREE," HE REFLECTS, "BUT I COULD NOT KILL SOON ENOUGH! NOT WITH THIS CLUB." IT CANNOT SINK TO THE VITALS AS DO A PREDATOR'S FANGS!!



THIS CLUB HAS FAILED ME!

TIME AND AGAIN, HE'S SEEN THE FIERCE SABER-TOOTH DISPATCH HIS VICTIMS WITH HIS TUSK-LIKE TEETH. YES, THAT IS WHAT HE LACKS-- THE IRRESISTIBLE KILL-POWER OF THOSE SHARP FANGS. IT IS TIME TO GO BACK AND CONSULT THE STONE!!



THE STONE-SPIRIT IS WISE. IT KNOWS ALL THERE IS TO KNOW.

I WILL TALK TO IT-- AND ASK IT FOR A LONG, SHARP TOOTH!

MEANWHILE, THE THWARTED PACK RUBS ITS WOUNDS AND GROANS IN DISMAY AT THE FURY OF THIS MAD ONE WHO HAS SET THEM ON THEIR HEELS. HE HAS INDEED BEEN GIVEN POWER BY A STONE SPIRIT, BUT HE KEEPS OTHERS FROM HIS CAVE SO THEY CANNOT BEHOLD IT...



HE COULD HAVE SLAIN ALL OF US!

HE IS TRULY IN LEAGUE WITH A POWER-SPIRIT!

WE MUST SEE THIS SPIRIT! WE MUST SEEK IT OUT-- AND TAKE ITS POWER!

IT IS DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE LONE ONE. IT IS DECIDED TO OBSERVE THIS SPIRIT...



STALK HIM IN SILENCE. HE MUST NOT BE AWARE OF US.

WHEN WE TAKE THIS SPIRIT-POWER, WE SHALL KILL "THE ONE WHO HUNTS ALONE"!

THE PACK STEALTHILY PROCEEDS ACROSS THE PLAIN UNTIL THEY COME WITHIN SIGHT OF THE PLACE WHERE THIS HUNTER LIVES. THEN, THEY FEARFULLY PAUSE AND STARE. THE SUN IS LOW IN THE SKY, AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISCERN OBJECTS BEFORE THEM...



BUT SOON THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT AS TO WHAT ONE'S EYES BEHOLD! THE SPIRIT STONE TRULY EXISTS!! IT IS OF A SHAPE NEVER SEEN BEFORE! SURELY NO STONE HAS BEEN KNOWN TO STAND IN MID-AIR...



THE ALIEN MONOLITH DEFIES GRAVITY AND MAN'S UNDERSTANDING, BUT SOMEHOW IT MAKES SOUNDS --AND COMMUNICATES WITH THE CREATURE IT HAS CHOSEN...



SEE! HE SPEAKS TO IT! BUT HOW DOES IT ANSWER?

IT IS SAID THAT ITS VOICE ENTERS HIS HEAD!

THE LONE HUNTER SHOWS COMPLETE FAITH IN THE THING. HE TREATS IT AS ONE DOES A COMPANION...



I KNOW NOW WHAT TO DO. I WILL MAKE A TOOTH!

SOMEWHERE, IN HIS BRAIN, A THOUGHT IS STIMULATED. HE FINDS A DEAD TREE AND BREAKS OFF A SHORT, THICK BRANCH...



HE SEEMS FIRED BY HIS DEED. HIS EYES DART AMONG THE NEARBY STONES UNTIL HE PICKS ONE OF A SHAPE AND SHARPNESS HE DESIRES. THEN HE JAMS IT INTO THE BRANCH SHAFT...



WITH A STOUT VINE FROM A TREE, THE LONE HUNTER BINDS THE STONE TO ITS SHAFT. IT IS A CRUDE TOOL, BUT IT SATISFIES HIS NEEDS...



THIS ACTIVITY IS ALL TOO MYSTERIOUS FOR THE ONLOOKERS, YET, THEY WATCH IN WONDER, FOR THEY'VE NEVER SEEN ONE POSSESSED BY SO STRANGE A SPIRIT...



WHEN THE SABER-TOOTH SUDDENLY STRIDES INTO THE CLEARING, HIS ROAR BREAKS THE SPELL AND SENDS THE PACK SCAMPERING FOR SAFETY. HE IS HUNGRY, AND THE SCENT OF MAN IS STRONG...



SMILODON IS THE KING OF KILLERS. HIS ATTACK IS DEVASTATING, AND EVEN THE MAMMOTH IS NOT SAFE FROM HIS HUNGER. HE CUTS OFF THE LOWER FROM ESCAPE AND LEAPS IN TO ADMINISTER QUICK DEATH...



BUT THE PREY DOES NOT FLEE! INSTEAD, IT MEETS THE ATTACK WITH A FEROCITY EQUAL TO THE SABER-TOOTH'S! THIS NIGHT'S MEAL HAS CHOSEN TO FIGHT BACK!



THE HUNTER'S ARM FLASHES HIGH, AND COMES DOWN WITH A DESPERATE STRENGTH. SABER-TOOTH ROARS TIME AND AGAIN, AS THE FIRST KNIFE PLUNGES DEEPLY INTO HIS HIDE...



WHEN THE SAVAGE STRUGGLE ENDS, IT IS SABER-TOOTH WHO DIES. HIS LIMP CARCASS IS CLUTCHED LIKE A TROPHY IN THE CURLED FIST OF THE HUNTER. HE HAS BEEN BEATEN BY A CREATURE HE HAS NEVER

FEARED...

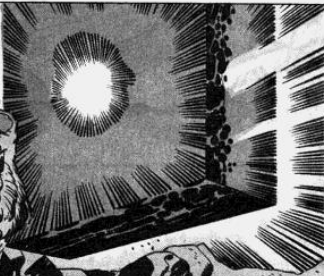
H-HE MOVES NO MORE. SABER-TOOTH IS DEAD! HE IS DEAD!!



THE HUNTER RETURNS TO THE MONOLITH IN TRIUMPH. HE HAS MADE A FANG, AND IT HAS DONE ITS WORK! HE CAPERS! HE SHOUTS! HE ROARS! THERE IS NO BEAST THAT IS SAFE FROM THIS TOOTH! THE MONOLITH GLOWS STRANGELY, AND NUMS WITH ODD SOUNDS...



THIS CAN SLAY SABER-TOOTH! THE SPIRIT DOES NOT LIE!!



DOES THE STONE SPIRIT SCOFF? SURELY IT HAS SEEN WHAT THIS TOOTH HAS DONE!! CAN ANY BEAST ESCAPE ITS DEATH-BITE?



THIS TOOTH MUST REACH THE SWIFTEST BEAST ON WING OR FOOT! WHEN IT REACHES THEM WILL IT KILL!? A LONGER BRANCH IS BROKEN... A LONGER SHAFT IS MADE...



HUNGER IS A NEVER ENDING CONDITION. THE TIME TO HUNT COMES AGAIN. THE NEO-MAN SEEKS OUT THE FLEETEST OF PREY. HE MUST TEST THE TRUTH IN HIS THOUGHTS...



THE SOFT, GRACEFUL ANIMALS SOUND FROM HIS APPROACH LIKE THE RUSH OF WIND!! HE SINGLES OUT A RUNNING TARGET AND RAISES THE TOOTH!! IT IS NOW LONG AND SLENDER AND BALANCES SMOOTHLY IN HIS HAND. HIS MIND AND LUNGS ROAR WITH THE TRUTH--"I WILL REACH AND I WILL KILL!!"



A NEW AGE BEGINS WITH THE FIRST THROW OF A SPEAR!! THE ONE SOON TO BE KNOWN AS "BEAST-KILLER" TO THOSE WHO WATCH AND EMULATE HIM, REPLACES THE SABER-TOOTH AS THE MOST FEARED ANIMAL ON EARTH!! HE WILL NOT ONLY SURVIVE THROUGH TIME, BUT HIS PROGENY WILL DARE TO ROAM THE VASTNESS OF SPACE!!



THE BRIDGE OF CENTURIES BEARS THIS OUT. IN THE YEAR 2001, ASTRONAUT WOODROW DECKER MAKES AN IMPORTANT FIND ON AN ASTEROID BETWEEN MARS AND JUPITER!!!



THIS THING IS USELESS!!
USELESS!!

DECKER RAGES AT THE COLD STARS. THEY'VE BROUGHT HIM TRIUMPH ON AN OCCASION OF SUPREME TRAGEDY -- HIS DEATH!!

DECKER! ARE YOU MAD!? THAT'S NO WAY TO HANDLE PRICELESS ARTIFACTS!!

WHY DON'T YOU SHUT UP, MASON! SHUT UP!

IN ANOTHER FEW HOURS, WE'LL BE AS DEAD AS THE BUILDERS OF THESE RUINS!

IT'S NO TIME TO LET YOUR NERVES DO YOUR THINKING, EITHER!

HAHAHAHA!! WHY DON'T YOU LAUGH, MASON? THIS IS A JOKE! A COSMIC JOKE!!

I'M NOT FREAKING OUT! I'M JUST ANGRY AT HITTING THE JACKPOT AT MY OWN FUNERAL, THAT'S ALL!!

BUT THE BALL GAME'S NOT OVER YET, MAN! WE'RE STILL ALIVE!

THE GAME WAS TO PROBE DEEP SPACE FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE ON THE OUTER PLANETS. NOW, IT IS LIKE WINNING AFTER THE CROWD HAS GONE...

WE'RE MAROONED ON THIS ASTEROID, BUT IT'S NO REASON TO LOSE HOPE OF RESCUE.

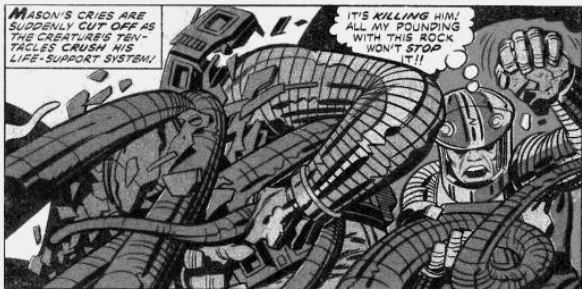
OH, YEAH!? LOOK THERE, MASON! HOW'S THAT FOR A REASON!? TRY STRINGING YOUR HOPES ON THAT!!

ON THE HORIZON, THEIR SHIP BURNS FURIOUSLY. WHEN THE FLAME HAS DIED, NO PART OF IT WILL BE INTACT AND USEABLE...

COMMUNICATIONS, SPARE OXYGEN, FOOD-- EVERYTHING NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL IS TURNING INTO ASHES!!

STILL CONFIDENT, MASON?

YES! FLIGHT CONTROL KNOWS WE'RE MISSING! THEY WON'T LET US DOWN!



DECKER IS SEIZED BY PANIC AND TERROR! HE HAS A LAST GLIMPSE OF MASON IN THE GRIP OF THE MONSTROUS TENTACLES! DEATH HAS COME TO HIM SWIFTLY AND PAINFULLY--AND STAMPED HIS ASHEN FACE FOREVER WITH THE AGONY...



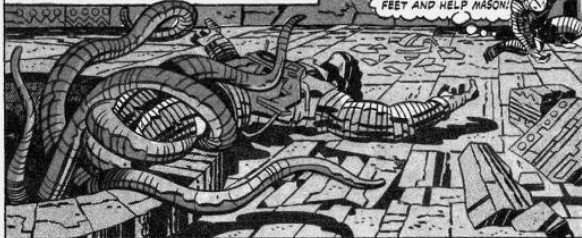
SUDDENLY, A TENTACLE LASHES OUT AND BLASTS DECKER WITH A NATURAL ENERGY-FORCE OF BONE-SHATTERING IMPACT!!

**MASON! MASON!!
AAAAAAH!!**



DECKER IS HURLED AGAINST A WALL AND IS STUNNED INTO IMMOBILITY. MERCIFULLY, HE CANNOT SEE THE FINAL ACT OF THE TRAGEDY!!

I-I CAN'T SEE! T-TOO WEAK TO STAND! GOT TO MAKE IT TO MY FEET AND HELP MASON!



WITH A HERCULEAN EFFORT, DECKER REGAINS HIS STRENGTH! HE TURNS TO SEE THE TENTACLES VANISH INTO THE DEPTHS. THEN HE SCREAMS!

**MASON!
MASON!**



AS IF IN MOCKING RESPONSE TO HIS CRIES, THE RUIN TREMBLES AND SHUDDERS AND CRACKS APART!!





FOR WHAT IS THE MONOLITH BUT AN ALIEN INTELLIGENCE WHICH HAS CHOSEN MAN FOR AN EXPERIENCE BEYOND HIS KNOWLEDGE. DECKER IS WHIPPED INTO THE CRUCIAL STAGE OF THAT EXPERIENCE!



GONE IS THE ASTEROID AND ITS DANGERS! BORNE ON BEAMS OF COSMIC LIGHT, DECKER STREAKS THROUGH TIME AND SPACE... THROUGH GALAXIES AND ISLAND UNIVERSES, WHERE SIGHTS THAT STAGGER THE MIND ASSAULT HIS SENSES!!

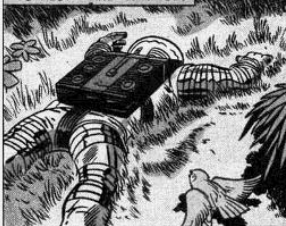


WORLD UPON WORLD--BIZARRE MAD-HOUSES, UNLEASHING THEIR ARMIES OF LIVING THINGS WHICH ONLY THOSE MEN CHOSEN BY THE MONOLITH WILL EVER SEE...



DECKER HIMSELF IS TRAUMATIZED BY THE VISUAL BATTERING OF THE SPECTACLE! IN HIS PRESENT FORM, HE CANNOT SURVIVE THE EXPERIENCE! DECKER MUST BE CHANGED!! AS "BEAST-KILLER" BECAME MAN, DECKER MUST BECOME SOMETHING ELSE!!

THUS, THE MONOLITH HAS PREPARED AN ENVIRONMENT. IT IS THE LAST STOP ON DECKER'S JOURNEY! IT IS MERELY A PLACE--A PLACE FOR WOODROW DECKER TO REST--AND CHANGE!



WHEN DECKER OPENS HIS EYES, A KIND, WARM SUN SOOTHES HIM WITH GENTLE RAYS. THERE IS THE SOUND OF BIRDS IN A BLUE SKY, AND THE COMFORTING SOFTNESS OF SWEET SMELLING GRASS BENEATH HIM...



DECKER'S SPACE-SUIT HAS MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED. HE INHALES CLEAR, FRESH AIR AND SLOWLY RISES. THEN HE SEES THE BOY...



Y'SURE LIKE NAPPIN' ON THE GRASS, DON'TCHA, WOODY? IT'S GETTIN' LATE THOUGH... AND YOU'VE GOT A LONG HIKE BACK TO THE HOUSE.

YEAH, IT'S TIME I GOT GOING.

YOU KNOW, I HAVEN'T FELT THIS FINE IN AGES.



DECKER'S MEMORY OF PAST TERRORS HAS FADED. HIS MIND CLINGS TO WHAT HE SEES ABOUT HIM. HERE, HE CAN DREAM AND FEEL SECURE. HE TAKES TO THE ROAD PROVIDED BY THE MONOLITH--IN SPECIAL COMPANY CREATED FOR HIM!



THE ROAD IS LONG. IT TWISTS AND TURNS AND BECOMES AN UPWARD SLOPE. DECKER FEELS THE FAINT SIGNS OF FATIGUE--UNAWARE, HE IS NOT COVERING DISTANCE, BUT ACCELERATING HIS OWN AGING...



THE AGING PROCESS IS SWIFT. WOODROW DECKER WILL LIVE OUT THE REST OF HIS LIFETIME IN A MATTER OF MINUTES...

I-I'M SURE GETTING BUSHED... BILL, CAN'T-- UNDERSTAND IT.

LET'S GO, WOODY! IT'S LATE! LATE!



IT IS LATE INDEED. THE SUN IS SETTING AND THE BOY IS SOON LOST TO VIEW. DECKER IS ALONE--WEARY--OLDER...



WHAT BEGAN WITH "BEAST-KILLER" CANNOT STOP. THE DESTINY SHAPED BY THE MONOLITH HAS TAKEN AGES TO COMPLETE. DECKER IS THE LAST STEP TO THE FORMING OF A NEW SEED!!



I-I'M REALLY TIRED. MY LEGS-- FEEL LIKE LEAD WEIGHTS!!

THE MOMENT IS ALMOST AT HAND. THE ASTRONAUT IS A MAN OF SEVENTY AND AGING FASTER...

C-CAN'T GO ON. MUST-- REST--



DECKER'S BODY SEEMS NO LONGER CAPABLE OF CONTINUING THE JOURNEY. IT SAGS. IT SLUMPS. IT SWAYS ON RUBBERY LIMBS...



AGE RAPIDLY OVERCOMES STABILITY. DECKER WILL NEVER SEE THE HOUSE THAT LIES AT THE END OF THE ROAD. FOR HIM, THE ROAD ENDS HERE, AT THIS VERY SPOT...



IT IS TIME FOR THE CHANGE. THE PATIENT MONOLITH HAS WAITED TEN MILLION YEARS FOR DECKER TO SHED HIMSELF OF LIFE AND LEAVE HIS SHELL BEHIND AS MATERIAL FOR ANOTHER...



DECKER'S LAST BREATH IS UPON HIS LIPS. THE MONOLITH APPEARS AS THE LIGHT FADES FROM HIS EYES...



WHAT REMAINS OF DECKER STARES WITHOUT SEEING. IT FACES THE MONOLITH LIKE CLAY, AWAITING THE FIRST TOUCH OF REMODELLING!



THE TRANSFORMATION BEGINS. ATOMS SHIFT, AND PLAY, AND SING THEIR SONG OF AGELESS TRIUMPH...



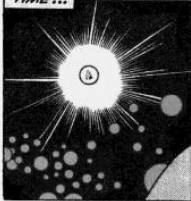
A WEB OF GOSAMER TRANSPARENCY FORMS TO CONTAIN WHAT TRANSPIRES WITHIN ITS FOLDS...



DECKER IS GONE. IN HIS PLACE IS SOMETHING THAT HE COULD NEVER DESCRIBE, YET, IT LIVES--TO CONTINUE A JOURNEY NO MODERN MAN COULD COMPLETE...



THUS, THE ENVIRONMENT VANISHES. THERE IS NO LONGER A NEED FOR IT; THE NEW SEED EMERGES, WELL-ADAPTED TO THE HOME IT IS DESIGNED FOR--SPACE AND TIME...



WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE? WHAT IS ITS DESTINY? THEY CAN NO MORE BE DEFINED THAN THE ALIEN MIND WHICH HAS MADE ITS EXISTENCE POSSIBLE...



BUT, IT IS NOT THE FIRST OF ITS KIND; THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE OTHERS, AS LONG AS EARTH BREEDS HUMAN LIFE...



IN A NEVER-ENDING UNIVERSE, THIS STRANGE, NEVER-ENDING PROCESS CONTINUES. THE NEW SEED ANSWERS THE CALL OF THE BECKONING COSMOS, AS THE MONOLITH WAITS FOR THE MATURING OF THE NEXT TO COME...



NEXT...
**VIRA
THE
SHE-
DEMON**