THE BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

A VIEW FROM ABOVE, AS NIGHT DISSOLVES TO DAWN...

PART II

The ridge splits the land, dividing it into separate domains of the living and the dead. To one side, the earth is mantled in lush, textures of green, where rich swarms of swarming droves breed into hulking masses of gnarled trees, and where an arboreal city of treehouses awaits the coming of dawn...

But on the harsh side of the ridge, the earth is bleak and barren where all life has been seared from the scorched plain, and where desolation extends unbroken to the horizon...

On the crest of the ridge, dividing the land of the living from the land of the dead, there is an outpost staffed by a contingent of gorilla solders, to then put to guard the tree-house city from attack. But as centuries have grown indolent and complacent, for who would dare attack from death?

Thus, they do not notice the three small forms who stealthily approach from the domain of life, and slowly pick their way toward the valley of death.

THE DOOMSDAY SPAWN

Adaptation by Doug Moench  Art by Alfredo Alcala
First there is Caesar, the first leader of the human city. They leave behind the destruction and begin their journey. Does he think of the city and its future... or of his wife Lisa... and the possibility of a future without her...?

Caesar, why just you go to the human city...? It is dead! We left it to come here... to find life and peace and safety! And we have found it!

Why can't you let it be Caesar?

Because our peace and our safety may be threatened. Lisa is going to the unknown, thinking of his city... and the loss of both.

And then there is Macdonald, the human. The man who has seen his once mighty civilization explode and crumble into a bed of ruins. Does he now return to those ruins to assure that they remain like the hopes of the future? The civilization which committed suicide?

Better be careful, Macdonald. It must be hell in that city... even without the radiation...

Maybe it is hell... and maybe I'm playing the serpent in paradise... but we're always beginning again...

Caesar may feel as an ape feels... but he thinks like a man! I'm going to take him back to the city... and give him man's knowledge... before it's too late!
AND THE THIRD, VIRGIL--THE YOUNG ORANGUTAN
WHOSE INTELLIGENCE IS OFTEN OVERRULLED BY SHARP
EMOTION DOES HE SHARE CAESAR'S
MOTIVATION... OR MACDONALD'S...

OR DOES HE LOOK BEYOND
THE PAST AND THE PRESENT...
TO A FUTURE DIFFERENT
FROM BOTH...

THE TEACHER WAS WRONG, HE
ACTED LIKE A MASTER IN THE
OLD DAYS--AND DID WHAT IS
NOW FORBIDDEN...

HE TOLD ALDO: "WO!

AND THE LAST
MEMBERS OF THE
EXPEDITION, SILENT
WITHOUT
MOTION... THEIR
PAWNS TO BE USED
OR ABUSED IN
THE GAME OF FATE...

I'VE WATCHED THESE
THINGS SIT AND GATHER
DUST SINCE WE BROUGHT
THEM OUT FROM THE
RUES OF THE HUMAN
CITY AND THROUGH ALL
THOSE YEARS, I HAVE
DREADED THE ARRIVAL
OF THIS MOMENT...

...WHEN AT LAST
I WOULD BE CALLED
UPON TO WIPE THE
DUST FROM THEM, AND
TO ISSUE THEM
FOR USE!

IN SILENCE, AND EACH
IN PRIVATE
THOUGHT THEY
RISE, THE DESECRATION
TO NOON... WATCHING
THE LAND GROW EVEN
MORE WITIHERE
WITH EACH PASSING
MOMENT...

...UNTIL THEY ENTER
TWILIGHT...

...AND BEGIN TO MOUNT
A COLLAPSED SUMMIT
OF ROBBLE...

WEAPONS.
...FOR A VIEW OF STARK, PANORAMIC NIGHTMARE.

THERE IT IS...

HOW COULD IT...

HAVE COME TO...

THIS?

ALL THE NATIONS
OF MAN WENT ON
PREPARING FOR A WAR
THEY NEVER EXPECTED
TO ANSWER...
...AND THE VERRY PLANNING FOR THAT IMPOSSIBLE WAR BECAME...

AN ITCH!

YES...AND WHEN THE APE REVOLUTION STARTED...IN RAGE AND IN CONFRUSSION, MAN SCRATCHED THAT ITCH...
I'LL SAY HE SCRATCHED...
RIGHT DOWN TO THE GONE!

THE APPROACH IS A SLOW ONE,
WITH CAREFUL STRIDES
MEASURED IN SWEAT...

AND AS THEY ENTER THE LURID EMA-NI-
ATIONS OF THE RADIATION
THROUGH THE SICKLY GREEN
GLOW ENVELOPING THE ENTIRE
FIELD OF DESTRUCTION, THEIR
VOICE LOW, AND FALL
to WHISPHERS.

THE WHOLE CITY... MELTS... FUSED TOGETHER INTO A SINGLE MASS OF WASTE...

AND IT MUST BE THE SAME ALL OVER THE WORLD... LONDON, ROME, BENGAL, MINSK... ALL REDUCED TO SLAUGHTER...

AND ALL OF IT CAUSED BY USUANS.
MACDONALD...

I WONDER WHAT APES WILL LEARN
FROM IT?

EVERYWHERE IT IS THE SAME: STREET STUFFED WITH THE LEGACY OF BRIGHT HORROR, BURNING DEEP INTO THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO WITNESS IT, WHO MOVE THROUGH IT AND WHO ARE TERRORIZED BY ITS INTENSITY...

CRUMPLED BUILDINGS FLOWING INTO THE PETRIFIED Ooze OF OTHER BUILDINGS ROOTED IN THE MIRE OF SOUL CONCRETE FLASH-SEARED IN A SINGLE BURNING MOMENT OF NUCLEAR DOOM NOW SWEPT BY SWIRLING DUST-DEVILS GREEN AND INCANDESCENT BLOWING AS THEY GLOW. HAUNTING THE DEAD NOW BURIED IN MOLTEN OFFICES AND SUBWAYS AND CARS AND STREETS.

EVERYWHERE IT IS THE SAME BUT NOT AS IN A DOOMSDAY VISION, THEY BEHIND SOMEWHERE NEAR THE END.
A COLD INFERNO SEETHING WITH THE EDDIES AND SWIRLS ALL GHOSTLY GREEN. LIGHT SNOW FALLS RIPPLED FROM THE GUTS OF A BLASTED BOMB BIGGER THAN NEVER AND BLACKER THAN THE CHAMBERS OF ETERNITY WELCOMING ALL AT ONCE WITH A SLY GRIN PAINTED WET RED.

MacDonald looks at him. He wants to run or retreat, but instead he says:

**This... is the hell they used to preach about... warned us about... and they created it themselves...**

**They... were all insane...**

AND WE'RE JUST AS INSANE FOR COMING HERE...

**This background radiation alone will subject us to three hundred roentgens an hour!**

**Which means...?**

**Come on, then! Why are we wasting time...?**

That if we're not out of here within two hours we might as well stay forever!
HERE ENDED THE FIRST JOURNEY OF THE ASTRONAUT TAYLOR...

IT WAS HERE UPON THE PLANET OF THE APES THAT HE FIRST SAW THE STATUE...

NOOOOOO!!
YOU FOOLS! YOU BLOODY FOOLS!!

IT WAS HERE THAT HE FIRST KNEW...

...KNEW HE WAS BACK ON EARTH... AN EARTH DESTROYED AND DESTROYED BY THE CLINCHED HAND OF MAN.

HERE THE FIRST JOURNEY ENDED... HERE THE SECOND BEGINS...

BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES
THREE DAYS HAVE NOW PASSED... THREE DAYS SINCE TAYLOR FIRST SET EYES ON THE STATUE... AND HOWLED IN ANGUISH AT THE GHOST OF LIBERTY...

THREE DAYS OF ITERMINABLE TREKKING... A MINDLESS JOURNEY THROUGH DESOLATION AND WASTE... THROUGH ROCKY, ARID TERRAIN AND TRACKLESS DESERT...

AN OASIS...
... BUT THE TREES ARE DEAD...

... POISONED...?

IT SEEMS TO BE ALL RIGHT, NOVA...
YOU AND THE HORSE MIGHT AS WELL WET YOUR WHISTLES. GOD KNOWS WE COULD USE A CHEERFUL TUNE...
So where do we go from here...? Or do we just stop off and found a new human colony? Play house together like Adam and Eve?

At least the kids would learn to talk... have better sense than the apes...

...which reminds me -- time to play me Tarzan, you Jane again.

Try to say the name I gave you -- Nova.

No-va... No-va... No-va...

All right. Let's try it this way... I'm Taylor.

Tay-lor...

Tay-lor...

Tay-lor...

No dice, huh? Okay, look at this little metal thing. It's an identifying sort of like a dog-tag. Except they give it to astronauts so they won't forget who they are.

It says Taylor on it. That's me...

Here -- let me put it around your neck. It means we're going steady now...

Now what does the tag say? Who are you going steady with?

Taylor, that's who. Say it -- say my name... Tay-lor...
WELL... THERE'S NO SOUND...

... BUT AT LEAST YOUR LIPS ARE TRYING... AND IT'D BE A SHAME TO LET THEM GO TO WASTE...

COME ON, LET'S FIND A HOME.

AND AGAIN THE TREK RESUMES... A JOURNEY LARGELY PASSED IN HOLLOW SILENCE... AND THE MockING ECHOES OF SILENCE...

...UNTIL... WELL... I'LL BE A MONKEY'S UNCLE... HOME SWEET HOME, NOVA...

JUST LOOK AT THOSE CRUMBLED TOMBSTONES -- THE GRAND CLIMAX OF FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS OF HUMAN CULTURE -- MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY... THE BIG APPLE ITSELF...

I WONDER WHO LIVES HERE NOW... BESIDES RADIOACTIVE WORMS THAT IS.

LET'S GO SEE.
THEN, AS THEY SLOWLY APPROACH THE Jumble OF CHARRED RUINS...

...A WAll OF WHINING FLAME ABRuptly SPRUts FROM THE GROUND...

WHAT... WHAT THE DEVIL'S FEEDING IT?!

THERE'S NOTHING TO BURN!!

PANICkED, TAYLOR'S MOUNT BOLTS AWAY FROM THE CRACKLING SCREEN OF FIRE...

HANG ON, NOVA---IF I CAN GET THIS HORSE UNDER CONTROL, WE'LL BE ABLE TO TRY A DIFFERENT APPROACH...

THEN, WITH THE HORSE SUFFICIENTLY RESTRAINED...

OKAY, HERE WE GO AGAIN...

BUT BEFORE TAYLOR'S SECOND APPROACH IS SCARCELY BEGUn---

--THE SKIES BLACKEN WITH THICK STORM CLOUDS, FORMING INSTANTLY AND FROM NOTHING...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!

THE SKY CRACKS WITH A DEAFENING ROAR, AND JAGGED BOLTS OF NEON-LIGHTNING STAB DOWN TO IMPALE THE GROUND---LIKE THE GLITTERING STAKES OF AN ELECTRIFIED PICKET FENCE...
Again, Taylor's mount bolts in panicked frenzy...

Seems Nature's hell-bent on wiping out our mistake...

Then, even as the sky clears behind them...

This is insane—It's sheer madness!

...The ground splits into a massive fissure at their very feet...

Reversing direction after narrowly avoiding a headlong plunge into the gaping chasm, Taylor kicks his horse into a gallop toward the ruins...

And yet again, the ruins are blocked from them—by a fourth demonstration of nature gone berserk...

A wall of ice—??

What the devil is going on—??

A minute ago, that wasn't here—It just wasn't here? And there's no way on Earth it can be here now—??

But it isn't just me who's seeing it—You see it too, don't you, Nova—??

Can two people have the same nightmare—??

Look, Nova—I've got to find out what's going on here.

That fissure is still ripping the ground behind us—You've got to leave—!!
GO TO THE APE CITY... NOT TO THE GORILLAS...
GO TO THE CHIMPANZEE QUARTER--THERE'S NO OTHER WAY--I FIND ZIRA-ZI-RA... DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

WELL, I HOPE THAT WAS A NOD YOU JUST GAVE ME... BECAUSE IT'S TIME FOR ME TO--

-- SCALE THIS GIANT ICE-CUBE. AND SINCE ICE IS TRADITIONALLY SLIPPERY...

... IT LOOKS LIKE I'D BETTER USE MY HAMMER BUTT TO START CHOPPING FOOTHOLDS...

BUT AS TAYLOR RAMS HIS RIME FORWARD, HE FINDS NO IMPACT OF RESISTANCE WHATSOEVER...

-- AND THE MOMENTUM OF HIS THRUST CARRIES HIM THROUGH THE ETHEREAL WALL...

... UNTIL HE VANISHES. 

--- NEXT WEEK: REVELATIONS!! ---