

JENOVA'S DISCIPLES

By Frank Verderosa

PROLOGUE: THE SECOND COMING

The meteor was no planet buster. It was about the size and weight of a small pick up truck, roughly spherical in shape. Nothing but a small speck on the planetary scale. Not likely to draw any notice at all except for supplying a harmless light show for anyone gazing up from the surface of the earth that night.

The meteor dropped through the upper atmosphere, caught in the unyielding grip of gravity, pulled like a moth to a flame. And toward the same inevitable end.

As it fell the surface of the meteor began to warm, and slowly the heat was conducted deeper inside. Eventually the inner core heated to a certain critical limit and suddenly a consciousness that had lain dormant throughout the cold dark journey through space awoke.

The first thing it felt was pain. At first it didn't understand the cause, but as it became more aware it's mind cleared and became sharp. The heat was intense now, but it knew what to do.

The meteor changed. It flattened out, became more aerodynamic. The front narrowed and the back thickened, until it took on a roughly triangular shape.

At first it sped up, with the narrow front offering less of a target for wind resistance, diving down toward the earth. But then it turned upward, and the wind provided lift beneath the splayed out wings, and it slowed. And with that, the heat dissipated.

The earth slowly grew beneath it as it glided down. Other changes took place, sensory apparatus began to form. It detected the surface of the planet below, and realized immediately that the unstable nature of it would be unsuitable for a landing. It flew on, sinking slowly down closer to the ocean. Then it detected a change ahead of it. The planet became darker, more coherent. This would be suitable, it thought with satisfaction.

It glided slowly across the beach, dropping down quickly now, and came softly to a landing just short of the trees. It lay still for a while, the journey down had been tiresome, and it was still weak from it's long journey prior to that. But eventually it stirred again. For the second time, it's form changed, the entire body seemed to shrink, the wings narrowed and new limbs grew from underneath it. The sensory organs shifted and changed, grouping at the top of the creature, centering themselves on a newly formed head.

The man looked down at himself, nodding slowly. He took a few experimental steps, then, gaining confidence, started walking rapidly across the beach toward the lights of the town of Gongaga.