

Space Odyssey 2001
Ch44 - Reception, Rewrite
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Motivation: In the final chapters of 2001 the reader is woefully forced to suspend his belief in a string of thinly veiled allusions. Because I felt that Clark's narrative fell apart in Ch44-Reception, becoming a simplistic chain of vague transitions, I took up the challenge to rewrite a "harder" version by applying deliberate detail.

Room with a View

He passed beyond the companion star and its tornado bridge, and approached yet another planet centered in the window, possibly in a trailing Trojan orbit. Moments later he realized it was in fact artificial. Squarely in front of him and increasing in scale, he discerned his speed decreasing, and that this might be the end of the line. Its dodecahedral volume, perhaps a third the moon's diameter, was a series of rings connecting and holding sheets and planes of mica-like crystal. Clear and faceted, these sheets were lit with internal bolts of energy which coerced and reflected thru them, possibly in multiple dimensions, and there also appeared numerous ringed entrances interspersed across this powerful and unique base of operations that presumably lead to its interior.

Guided, the Pod maneuvered onto a base-vector with several entrances to his left at a latitude of about twenty degrees South. Within a minute they turned again facing one of them, and entering into the structure, he gazed up-close at its innumerable arrays of giant crisscrossing rings. Energized and radiating, in the silence these rings felt familiar... like watching an evening's thunderstorm on the vast planes of America -- from the comfort of your living room. In its final phase the pod traveled thru a conical series of smaller hoops, less than a kilometer across, and passed thru a field-sized iris of multiple, double diamond shaped covers, opening slowly but clearly on schedule.

His eyesight adjusting, ahead of him he surmised in the dim and irregular light an eight-sided pyramid with a top mounted dock, which with certainty, in this isolate interior void, was his ultimate destination. With a hundred or so meters to spare the pod pitched 90 degrees for landing. Slowing to a crawl it began an alignment and docking process. The pod and he were becoming part of the greater machine that had brought him here.

For the past hour he'd been fighting a subconscious sense of aggravation at the impersonal nature of his journey, but in these final moments his heart lept at the recognition that "this is it." Suddenly, it was a simple fit into a round hole as the pod descended thru a dark tunnel. Several seconds ticked by and then abruptly they emerged into a room concluding with a mild thump on the floor.

Total time: 4 hours 51 minutes.

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