



ISSUE 1

Deepak Chopra's

Buddha™

A Story of Enlightenment

CHOPRA
DYSART

HARSHVARDHAN

WRITTEN BY *Deepak Chopra*
ADAPTED BY *Joshua Dysart*
ART BY *Harshvardhan Kadam*
COVER ART BY *Satish Jayade*
COLORS BY *S.M. Bhaskar with Venkat Vasa*
LETTERS BY *Nilesh P. Kudale*
PROJECT MANAGER *S.P. Karthikeyan*
ASSISTANT EDITOR *Charlie Beckerman*
EDITOR *Mariah Kuehner*

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Frances Farrow, Dan Porter,
Christopher Linen,

Peter Feldman Raju Puthukarai

Mallika Chopra & Jonathan Peachey

BHODHA, ISSUE Number 5, March 2008 published by VIRGIN COMICS
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Printed in Canada.

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Deepak Chopra's

Buddha

A Story of Enlightenment

For me, as someone who trained as a medical doctor and practiced medicine for years, I see Buddha as the first physician in history. Why? Because when a physician sees a patient, he goes through four processes.

First, he makes a diagnosis of an illness.

Second, he looks for the cause of the illness (in medical parlance, it's called etiology).

Third, he determines the prognosis.

And finally, he prescribes a treatment.

Buddha's diagnosis was that human existence entailed suffering.

The cause, he deduced, was not knowing who we are, being afraid of impermanence, grasping and clinging to that which is ephemeral, and the fear of death. He reasoned that the prognosis is good if the treatment is enlightenment. For enlightenment gives us the experience of our real identity. The following stories are about the young Prince Gautama before he became the Buddha. Gautama did not look to outside authority nor did he mention God. His transformation was experiential and his story is not only unique, but also full of drama, suspense, and intrigue.

The word Buddha means to be awake. If we are to solve our own existential unhappiness and its consequences, such as violence, war and terrorism, social injustice, extreme economic disparities, and ecological devastation, then our collective humanity has to wake up.

I hope you enjoy this story and it inspires you to wake up.

Deepak Chopra
Virgin Comics
March 2008



AWAKE.

SEEK TRUTH.

STUMBLE.

BEGIN AGAIN.



KINGDOM OF
SAKYA. 563 BCE.



I'VE SEEN
THEIR WEAKNESS FROM
THE RIDGE! GIVE ME A NEW
ROW OF CHARIOTS, CLOSE
FILE! MAKE A MOVING
WALL! CRUSH THEIR
LINE!

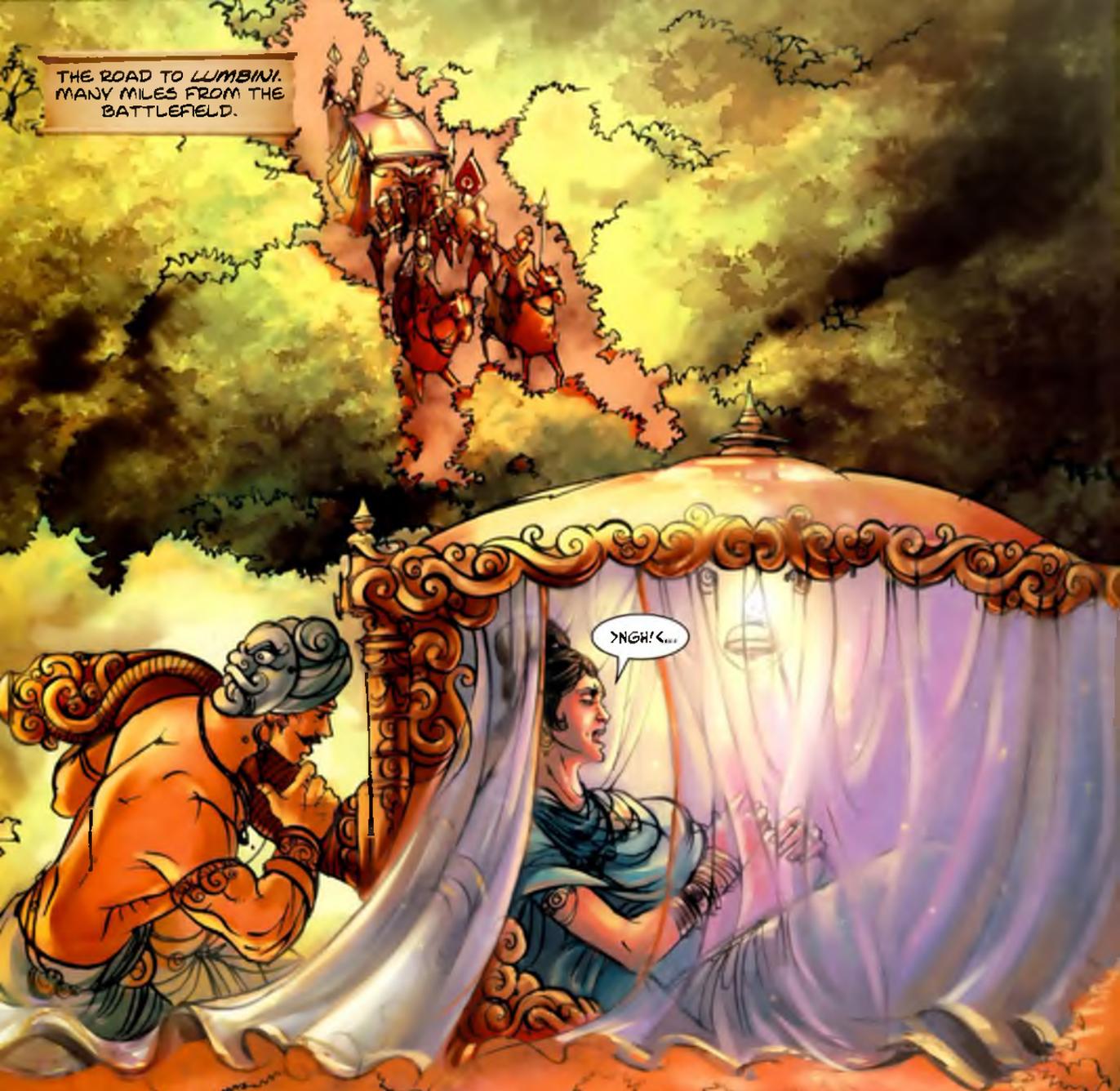


IF ANY
SOLDIER WITHIN
THE SOUND OF MY VOICE
FLEES, I'LL KILL HIM
MYSELF!



FATHER.

THE ROAD TO LUMBINI.
MANY MILES FROM THE
BATTLEFIELD.



>NGH!<...

SHE WILL
NOT HOLD
OUT.

LOCALS SPEAK
OF A CLEARING
UP AHEAD. WE'LL REACH
IT BEFORE NIGHTFALL
IF WE HURRY.



ANHH!

MOTHER.



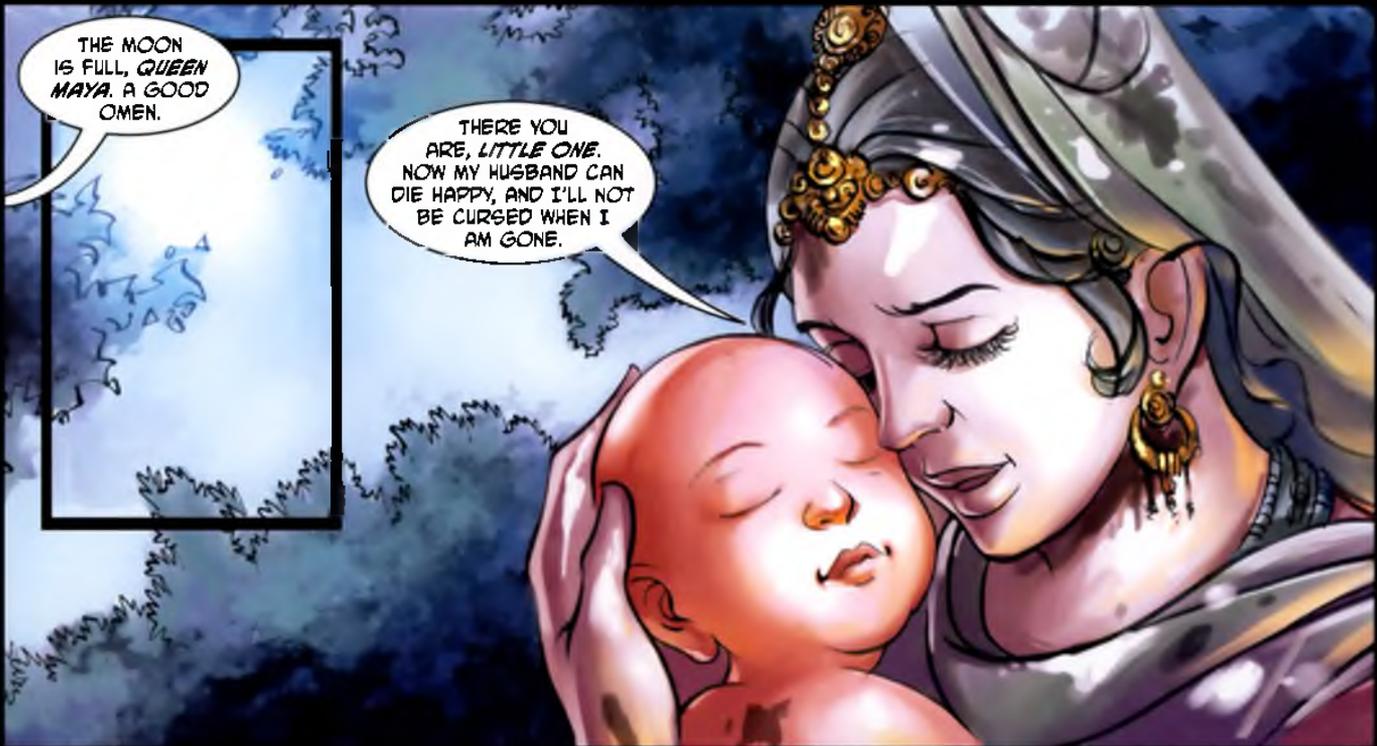
YES,
MY QUEEN,
PUSH...

PUSH!

THAT'S IT!
THAT'S IT! HERE
HE COMES!



GAAHH!



THE MOON IS FULL, *QUEEN MAYA*. A GOOD OMEN.

THERE YOU ARE, *LITTLE ONE*. NOW MY HUSBAND CAN DIE HAPPY, AND I'LL NOT BE CURSED WHEN I AM GONE.



HERE, YOUR HIGHNESS, HAVING THE MOONLIGHT ON YOUR BREASTS WILL *HELP* WITH THE *MILK*. ALL COUNTRY WOMEN KNOW THIS.



YES, I...I *DO* FEEL SOMETHING.

LOOK, SEE HOW *QUIET* HE IS? HE FEELS IT TOO.

YOU SEEM SO HAPPY, *LITTLE ONE*... TEN MONTHS? SO LONG. AND THEN AT THE END YOU COULD NOT WAIT TO BE BORN.



I SHALL CALL YOU *SIDDHARTHA*. "HE WHO ACHIEVES HIS AIM".

CHILD.

SOME SNAKES CAN NEVER BE CHARMED...

**SNAKE WOMAN VOL. 3
TRADE PAPERBACK**

"A kaleidoscopic panorama of pastel splendor that is drop dead gorgeous... (*Snake Woman*) hits all the right notes."

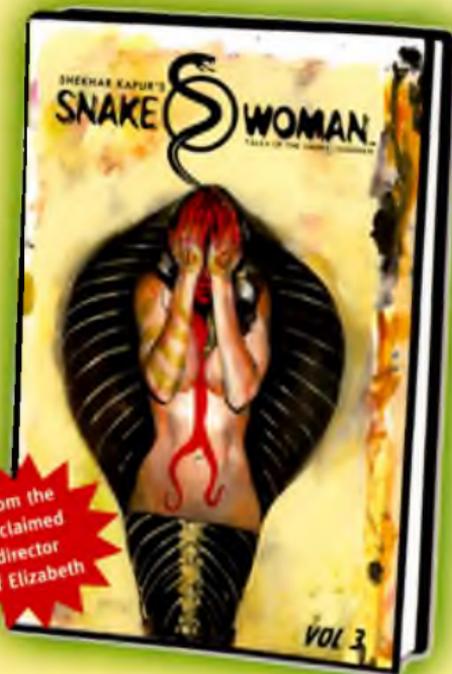
—Broken Frontier

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DIRECTOR'S CUT

THE PALACE OF KING SUDDHODANA. NEAR KAPILAVASTU.



NEWS OF YOUR MAJESTY'S VICTORY OVER THE NEPALESE WARLORD RINGS UP AND DOWN THE SILK ROAD.

HAD YOU ANY DOUBTS OF MY SUCCESS? WHERE'S MY SON?



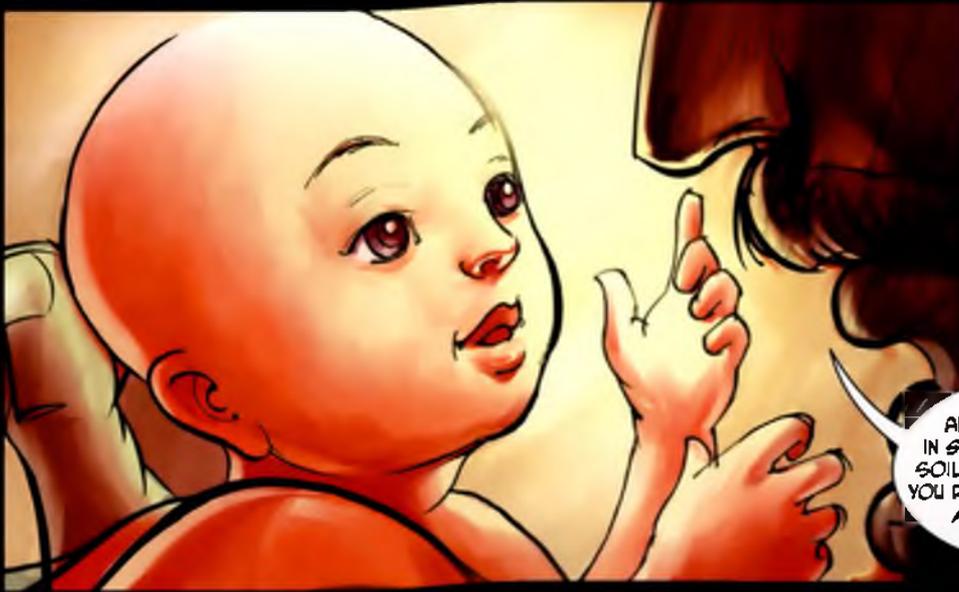
LOOK! AH? HE RECOGNIZES ME UPON FIRST GLANCE! MY BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL HEIR...

WHY IS HIS NOSE RUNNING? WHY DOES SOMEONE NOT DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS?!



IT IS ONLY NATURAL, SIRE.

IF HE IS LEFT ALONE FOR AN INSTANT I WILL HAVE SOMEONE WHIPPED. UNDERSTOOD?



AND LET HIM ALWAYS BE CLOTHED IN SILK. WHEN THE SILK IS SOILED THROW IT AWAY. IF YOU RUN OUT OF SILK, TEAR APART THE COURT LADIES' SARIS.



HA! HE IS LAUGHING INSIDE. HE THINKS MY CONCERNS AMUSING. HMMM, DON'T YOU, SIDDHARTHA?

HE IS OVERJOYED BY YOUR LOVE, KING SUDDHODANA.



I WANT TO SEE MY QUEEN.

SHE MUST BE QUARANTINED FOR A MONTH, SUBJECT TO CLEANSING AND RITUAL. WE DISCUSSED THIS.



IT'S FOOLISH, KUMBIRA. MAYA AND I HAVE BEEN APART TOO LONG. I AM BLESSED WITH A VICTORY IN BATTLE, A LIVING SON AND WIFE AND I--

MY LORD, BE STILL. TONIGHT, WHILE THE QUEEN SLEEPS...



"...YOU MAY GAZE UPON HER FOR A FEW MOMENTS BY CANDLELIGHT."

SHE DOES NOT LOOK STRONG. SOMETHING IS WRONG. I WISH SHE'D NOT INSISTED ON RETURNING TO HER FATHER'S HOME FOR THE BIRTH. SHE WAS SAFE HERE.



YOU'VE DONE WELL, MY PERFECT MAYA. NOW IT'S TIME. TIME TO COME BACK TO ME.



HERMIT.
I FEEL YOUR
PRESENCE.



I LEAVE THIS PLACE
JUST BECAUSE YOU WERE
ABLE TO TRAVERSE THE DEMON
WORLD. DOES NOT MEAN YOU
ARE IMPERVIOUS HERE.



I BRING NEWS,
KING TEMPTER, PRINCE
OF THE MUNDANE, LORD
OF ALLURE, DEMON MARA.
SOMEONE COMES TO
MEET YOU. SOON.



MILLIONS HAVE MET ME.

WHAT DO YOU CALL YOURSELF, ASCETIC?

I AM ASITA. AND I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT BUDDHA IS COMING.

AH, I KNEW YOU'D BE INTRIGUED.



YOU KNOW NOTHING. YOU SUFFER FROM DELUSIONS. WHO CHOSE YOU AS A MESSENGER?

AND EVEN IF IT'S TRUE. LET HIM COME. HE'LL ABANDON THE WORLD AS YOU HAVE. NOTHING MORE.



IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, THEN YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT BUDDHA CAN DO.

IS THAT SO?



PERHAPS YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT I AM.

INSIDE.

LET THE
SAINT COME! IN THE
END WE WILL ONLY BE
ANOTHER INSTRUMENT
OF DESTRUCTION.

INSIDE IS
SUFFERING.

THEN I SHALL
SPEAK OPENLY, SO THAT
I MAY TELL YOU OF YOUR
FATAL WEAKNESS,
DEMON KING.

INSIDE IS WEBBED
WITH SOULS IN
TURMOIL.

BEING
THE MONARCH
OF FEAR...

INSIDE IS
TANGLED WITH WAR,
DISEASE, PAIN.

...HAS MADE
YOU FORGET HOW
TO BE AFRAID
YOURSELF.

INSIDE.

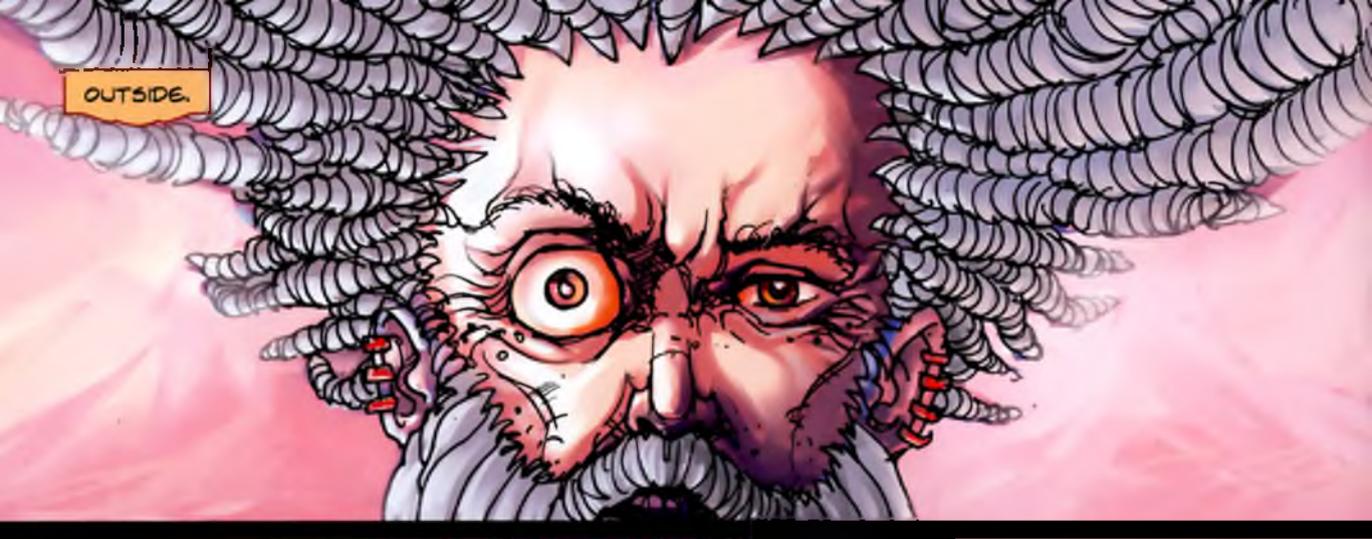


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OUTSIDE.



AFTER THE PRINCE'S BIRTH, THE MOON STOOD FULL SIX NIGHTS ON END.



ON THE SEVENTH NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, QUEEN MAYA, WHO HAD NEVER FULLY RECOVERED FROM BEARING THE CHILD...



...TOOK HER LAST BREATH IN THIS WORLD.



"YOUR MAJESTY..."

I SEE YOU. I SEE THAT YOU'VE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR SON SINCE THE QUEEN'S PASSING.

LOOK ON HIM NOW, PLEASE. HE IS YOUR GIFT FROM HER. HE IS THE LASTING PART OF HER.

I SHOULD LOOK ON HIM, KUMBIRA?!

LET HIM LOOK ON THIS!

SIRE!

BEHOLD, SIDDHARTHA, WHAT THIS FILTHY WORLD IS TRULY LIKE!

AGHAAAA!
AAAAAGHH!

AFTER THE CREMATION OF HIS WIFE, KING SUDDHODANA RETREATED TO HIS CHAMBERS, REFUSING TO UNBOLT HIS DOOR TO ALL WHO REQUESTED AUDIENCE.

UNTIL THE DAY OF
HIS SON'S NAMING
CEREMONY...



...WHEN THE COURT
ASTROLOGERS WOULD
READ THE PRINCE'S
BIRTH CHART.

VENUS IS
BENEFICIALLY
PLACED. THE TENTH
HOUSE SHOWS
PROMISE.

BUT THE FULL
MOON IS ALIGNED
WITH SATURN. HIS MIND
WILL TAKE TIME TO
DEVELOP.

YOU'VE BEEN
DELIBERATING
TOO LONG.



THE CHART
BELONGS TO ONE
WHO WILL BECOME A
GREAT KING, MY
LORD.

BUT...THERE ARE...
COMPLICATIONS.

THE CHART
FORESEES THAT
HE WILL NOT RULE
SAKYA...

...HE WILL HOLD
DOMINION OVER THE
FOUR CORNERS OF
THE EARTH.

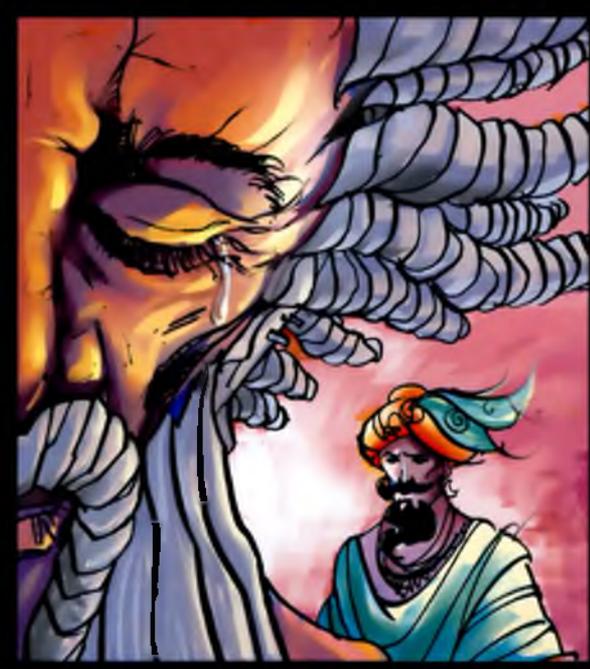


ASITA!



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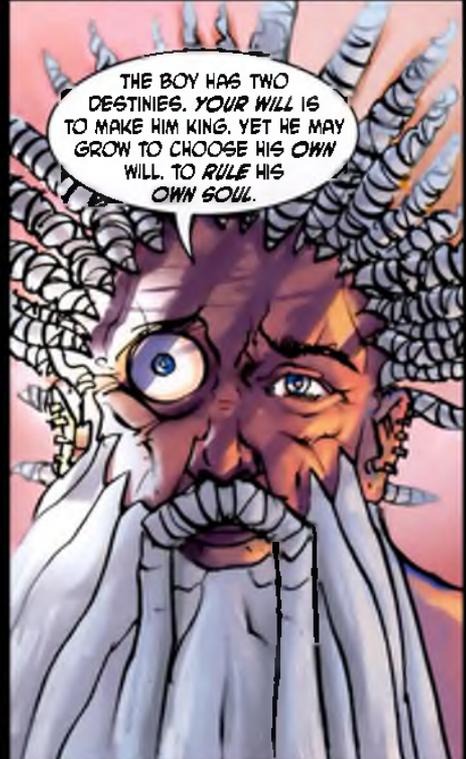


ASITA?

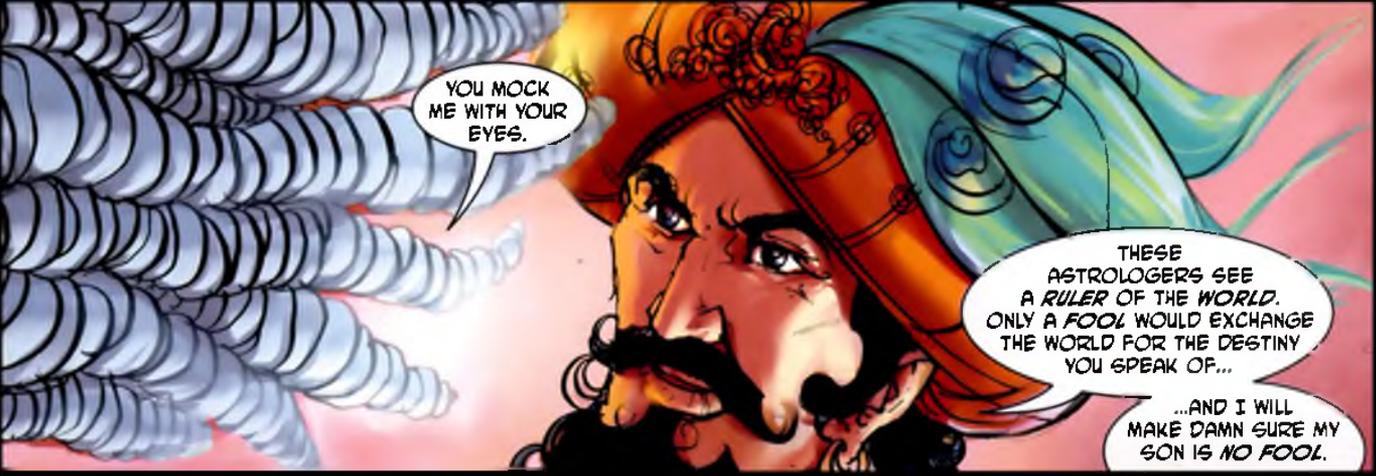


MY SON...
IF HE IS FATED
TO DIE, TELL
ME!

YES, HE
WILL DIE--
TO YOU.



THE BOY HAS TWO
DESTINIES. YOUR WILL IS
TO MAKE HIM KING. YET HE MAY
GROW TO CHOOSE HIS OWN
WILL. TO RULE HIS
OWN SOUL.



YOU MOCK
ME WITH YOUR
EYES.

THESE
ASTROLOGERS SEE
A RULER OF THE WORLD.
ONLY A FOOL WOULD EXCHANGE
THE WORLD FOR THE DESTINY
YOU SPEAK OF...

...AND I WILL
MAKE DAMN SURE MY
SON IS NO FOOL.



RULING THE WORLD IS A
CHILD'S GAME. TO RULE YOUR
SOUL IS TO HAVE DOMAIN OVER
CREATION. IT IS ABOVE
EVEN THE GODS.

AND YOU,
KING, YOU WILL
EITHER SUFFER OVER
YOUR SON AS NO
FATHER HAS...



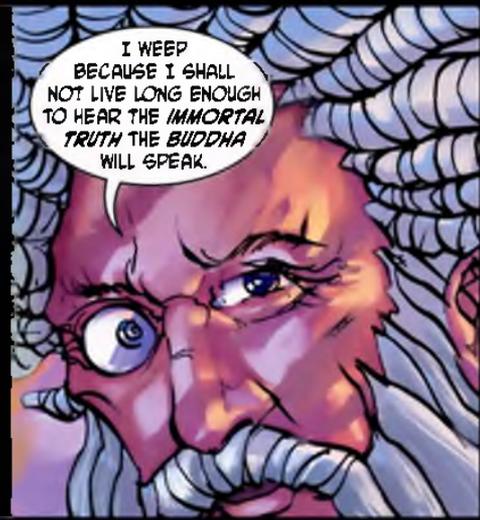
...OR YOU WILL
BOW BEFORE
HIM.

YOU'RE
WRONG, OLD
MONK! THE BOY
IS MINE TO
MOLD!



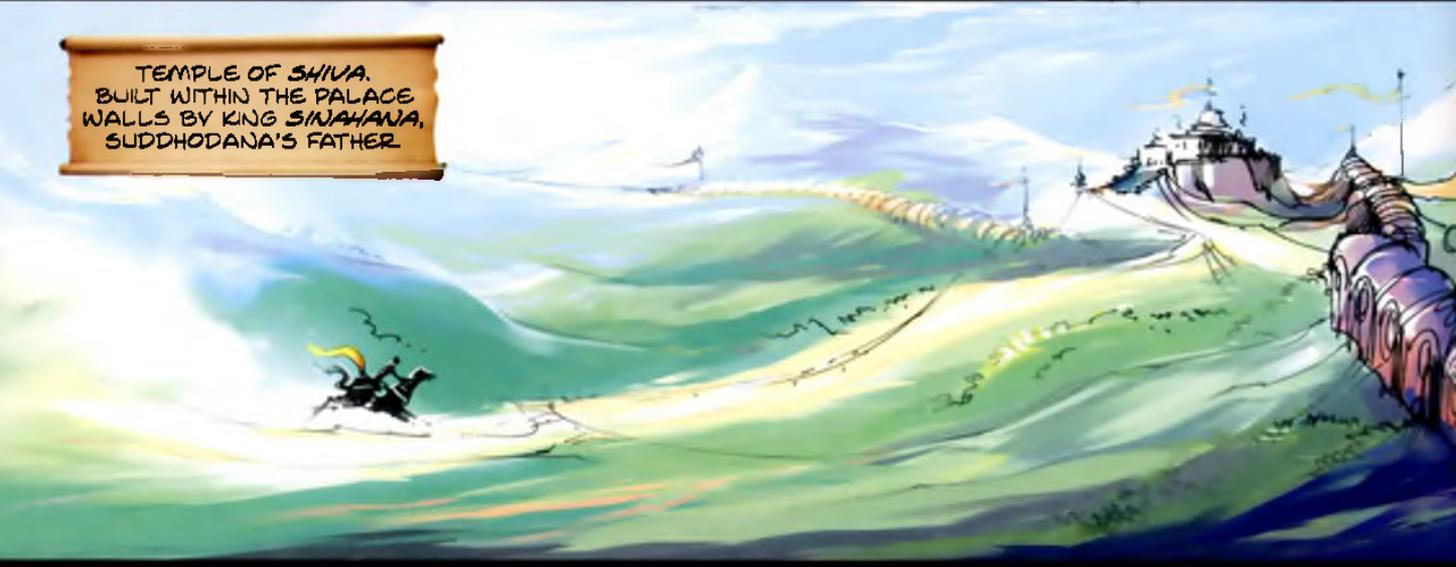
SO YOU SAY...I
WILL LEAVE YOU TO
YOUR UNDERSTANDING
THEN--

WAIT! WHY
DO YOU *WEEP*
UPON SEEING MY
CHILD?



I *WEEP*
BECAUSE I SHALL
NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH
TO HEAR THE *IMMORTAL*
TRUTH THE *BUDDHA*
WILL SPEAK.

TEMPLE OF SHIVA.
BUILT WITHIN THE PALACE
WALLS BY KING SINAHANA,
SUDDHODANA'S FATHER.



CANKI!



IF YOU *TRULY* TALK TO GOD THEN YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE.

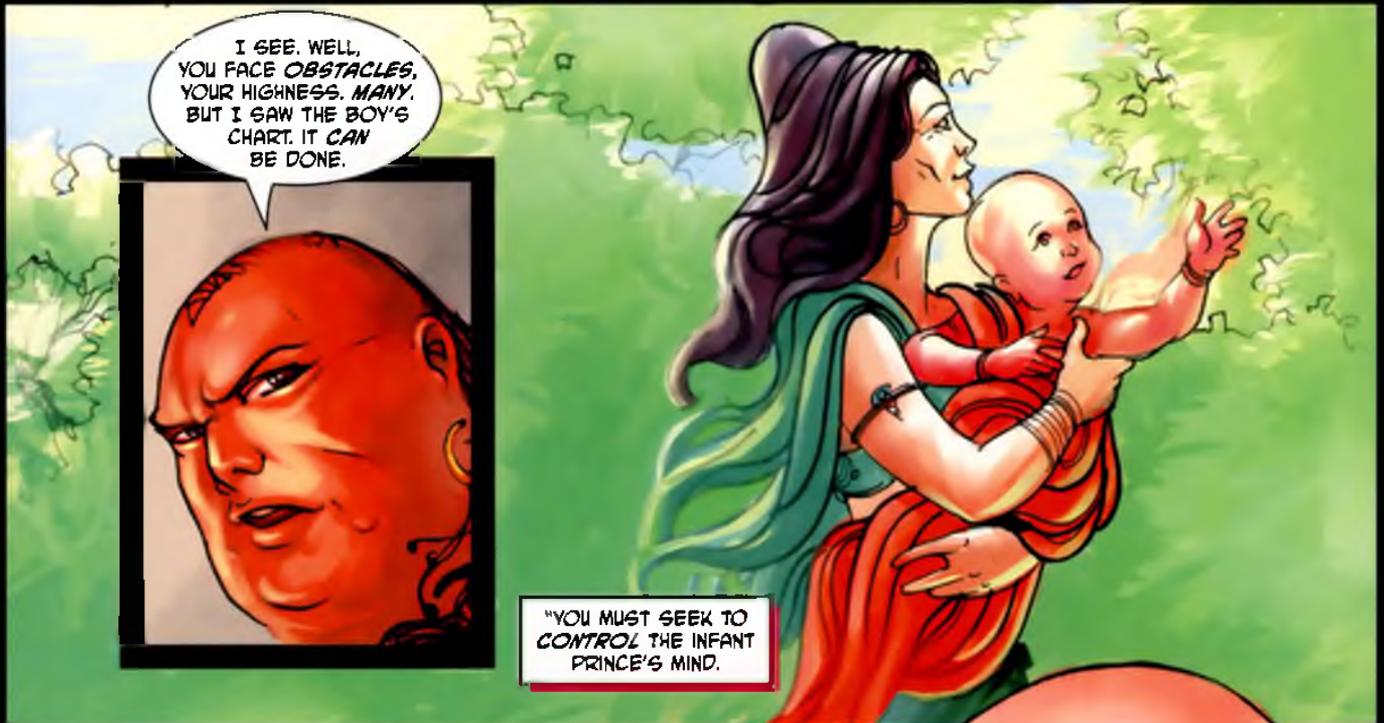
I KNOW THAT GOD WISHES TO *PLEASE* YOU IN EVERY WAY, YOUR HIGHNESS.



MY SON, I *WANT* HIM TO RULE THE WORLD.

EVERY FATHER WOULD WA--

NO! EITHER IT IS GOD'S *WILL* OR IT IS *NOT*. YOU TELL ME.



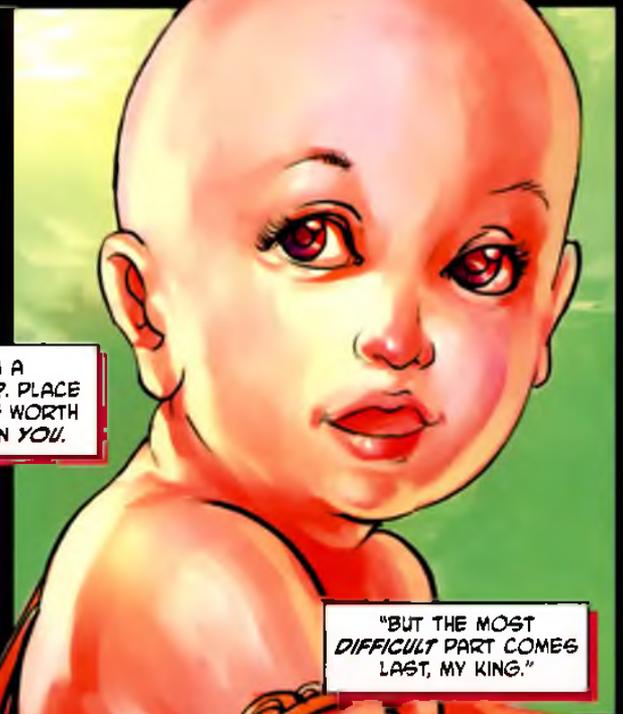
I SEE. WELL, YOU FACE *OBSTACLES*, YOUR HIGHNESS. *MANY*. BUT I SAW THE BOY'S CHART. IT *CAN* BE DONE.

"YOU MUST SEEK TO *CONTROL* THE INFANT PRINCE'S MIND.



"HE MUST BE TAUGHT TO *THINK* AS YOU DO. TO *BELIEVE* AS YOU DO. TO *LUST* AS YOU DO.

"CREATE OF HIM A *COMPLETE WARRIOR*. PLACE HIS WHOLE *SENSE* OF WORTH ON FIGHTING, AND ON *YOU*.



"BUT THE MOST *DIFFICULT* PART COMES LAST, MY KING."

"IN THIS I AM REMINDED
OF THE *MONSTROUS TRIALS*
THE *HOLY MEN* THREW AT
LORD SHIVA.

"THE *SAGES* HAD GATHERED
IN THE FOREST TO MEDITATE,
AND *LORD SHIVA* *DESIRED* TO
LEARN FROM THEM.



"BUT HE WAS *MISCHIEVOUS* AND
BROUGHT WITH HIM A *WOMAN* TO
THEIR RETREAT, THIS WAS A *TEST*,
FOR THE *WOMAN* WAS ACTUALLY
LORD VISHNU IN DISGUISE.



"BUT THE SAGES WERE TOO
BLIND WITH *RAGE* TO SEE THIS.
THEY VOWED TO *KILL* THE
SACRILEGIOUS INTRUDER."



"FROM THE SACRED FIRE
THEY ENGENDERED A GREAT
AND FEARLESS TIGER.

"BUT WITH A SINGLE
FINGERNAIL SHIVA STRIPPED
THE TIGER AND WRAPPED ITS
SKIN AROUND HIS SHOULDERS."



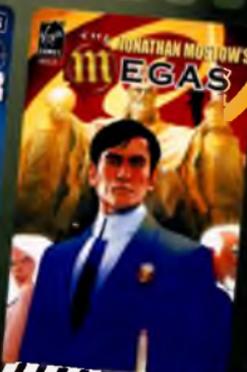


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"THE SAGES' FURY REDOUBLED
AND A *SECOND MONSTER*
SPRANG FROM THE FIRE.

"BUT SHIVA *CHOKED* IT
AND WRAPPED THE CARCASS
AROUND HIS NECK.

"HE *THANKED* THE SAGES
FOR PROVIDING HIM WITH A
NECKLACE, CAUSING THEM TO
GROW SO FURIOUS THAT A
THIRD MONST--"



STOP! IF YOU THINK WHAT I MUST DO TOO DIFFICULT THEN JUST SAY IT. SPARE ME THE TIRED PARABLE.



SO BE IT. YOUR FINAL TRIAL IS THIS: YOU MUST MAKE A PRISONER OF YOUR SON.

THE CHART SAYS HIS SPIRITUAL TENDENCIES WILL BE ALMOST UNCONTROLLABLE. AND SO YOU MUST NEVER LET HIM LEAVE THE WALLS OF THIS PALACE.



WHAT'S MORE, HE MUST BELIEVE THE WORLD A PARADISE



"REMOVE ALL SIGNS OF SUFFERING."

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ISSUE 18

SHEKHAR KAPUR'S

DEVI



e.Bas
2007
CAESAR

ON SALE NOW



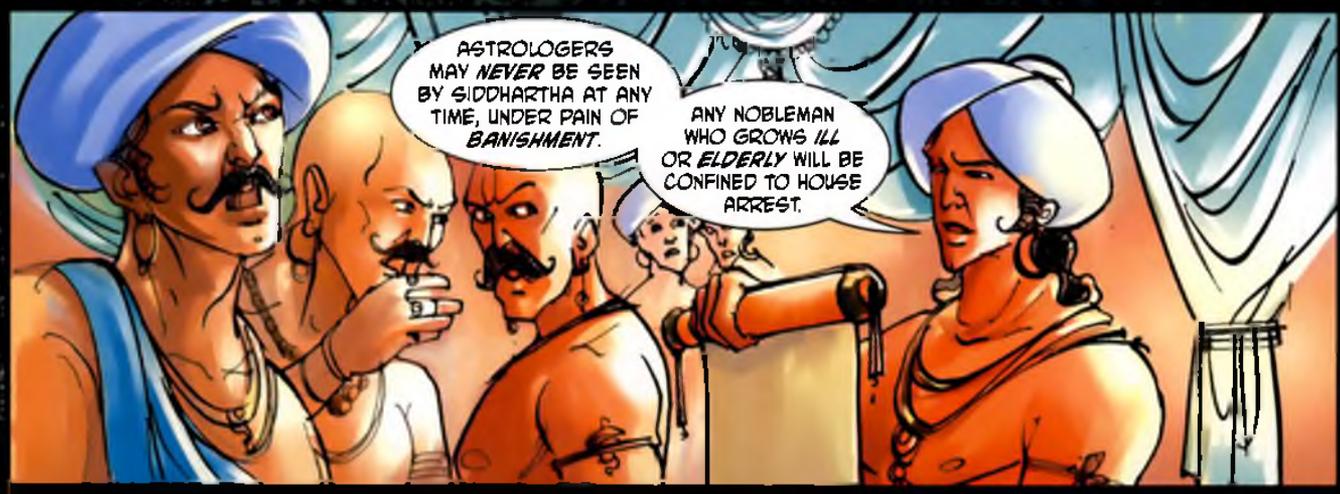
"IF HE SEES, EVEN ONCE,
SICKNESS OR DEFORMITY
OR MORTALITY..."



...THEN YOUR SON
WILL *NEVER* OBEY
YOU AGAIN.



...THE NOBLE AND THE
VENERATED ARE *EXEMPT*
FROM *EXILE* UNDER
THE FOLLOWING
CONDITIONS...



ASTROLOGERS
MAY *NEVER* BE SEEN
BY SIDDHARTHA AT ANY
TIME, UNDER PAIN OF
BANISHMENT.

ANY NOBLEMAN
WHO GROWS *ILL*
OR *ELDERLY* WILL BE
CONFINED TO HOUSE
ARREST.

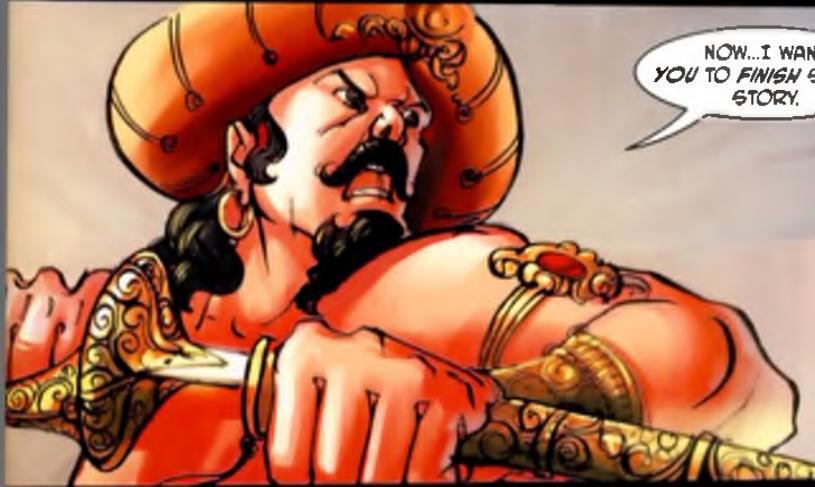


ALL FUNERALS WILL TAKE PLACE AT NIGHT, WITHOUT PUBLIC CEREMONY.

AND THE BURNING OF GHATS ARE TO BE MOVED TWO MILES DOWN RIVER...



AND IT MUST BE THIS WAY FOR THIRTY-TWO YEARS. SO THAT THE ENGINE OF YOUTH WILL FADE BEFORE THE CHILD KNOWS THE TRUE WAY OF THINGS.



NOW...I WANT YOU TO FINISH SHIVA'S STORY.



M-MY LORD?



FINISH IT! MAKE SENSE OF IT! COME ON!

NOP THEN I'LL DO IT FOR YOU!

OUT OF THE SACRED FIRE LEAPT A THIRD MONSTER. BUT SHIVA HELD ITS THROAT UNDER HIS HEELS, CRUSHING IT. WHO WAS THAT THIRD MONSTER?

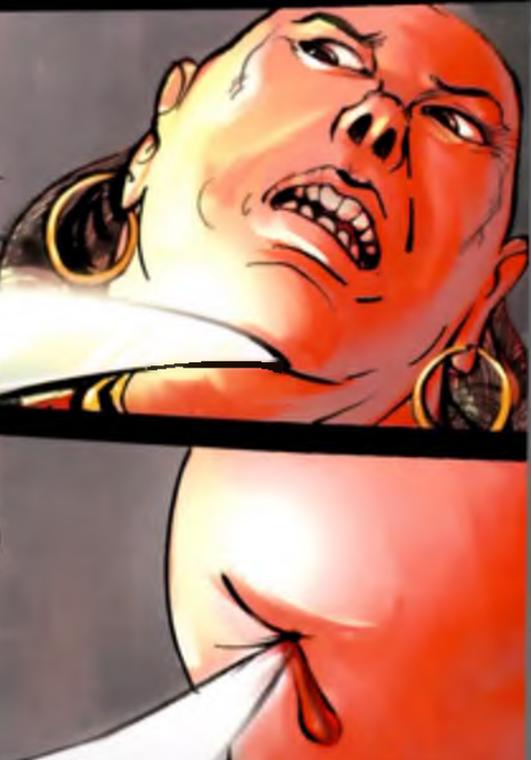


IGNORANCE, MY LORD...TH-THAT'S MY PRESCRIPTION FOR THE CHILD--

I TELL YOU, DO NOT PREY UPON MY IGNORANCE, PRIEST. WHAT YOU SAY HAD BEST BE THE ONLY WAY.



BECAUSE IT REVOLTS ME TO THINK OF CONSPIRING WITH YOU, ESPECIALLY AGAINST MY OWN SON.





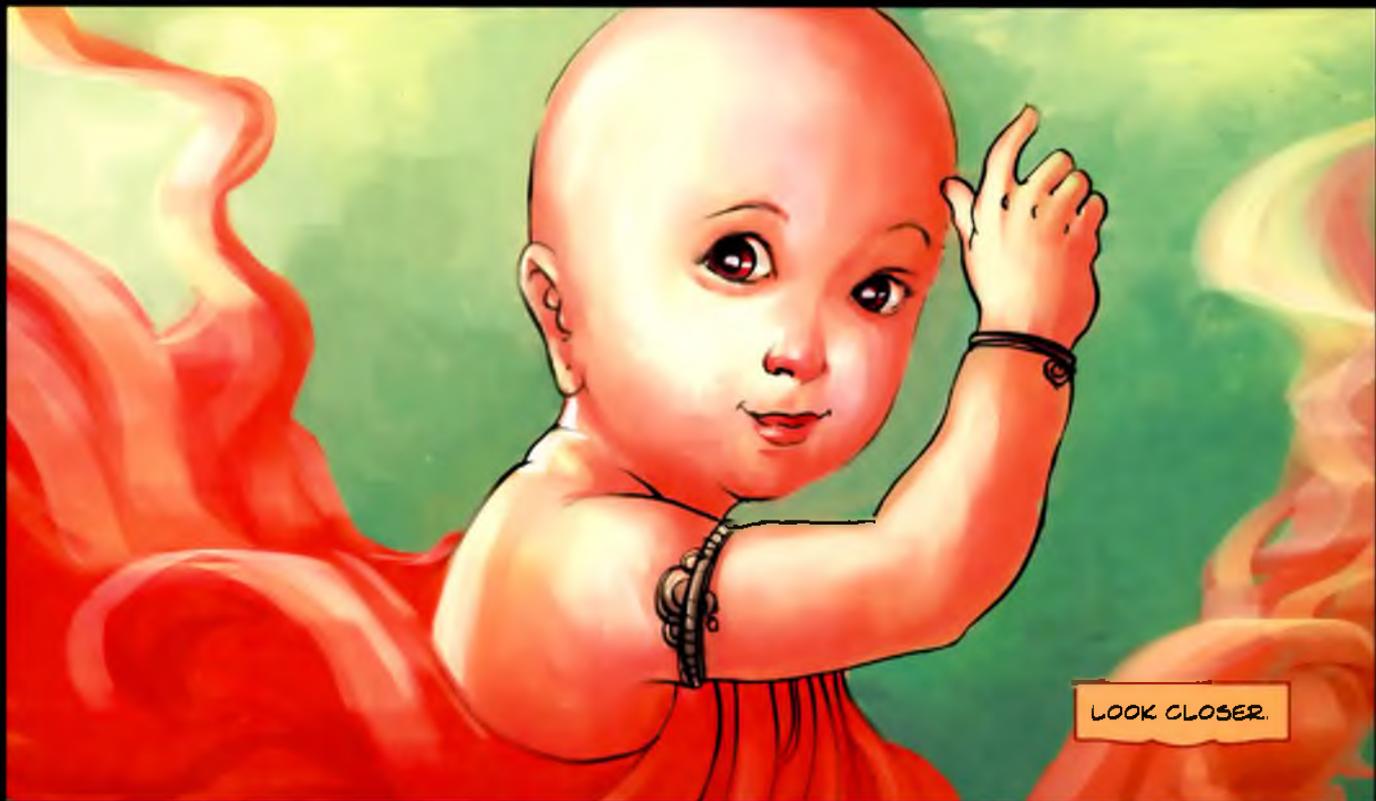
I HOPE YOU LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE WHAT I'LL DO TO YOU IF THIS RIDICULOUS PLAN FAILS.



THREE DAYS LATER, ONCE ALL SIGNS THAT TRAGEDY IS THE STOCK AND TRADE OF THE WORLD HAD BEEN CAST OUT...



...THE GREAT WOODEN GATES OF KAPILAVASTU WERE CLOSED.



LOOK CLOSER.



TO BE CONTINUED

Virgin
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ISSUE 3

THE TALL TALES
OF VISHNU SHARMA

Panchatantra



ON SALE NOW

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