



ISSUE 4

SHEKHAR KAPUR'S

DEVI

PRARAMBH



BASU / SINGH

SHEKHAR KAPUR'S
DEVI™

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IT WAS THE SECOND CENTURY of mankind's arrival on earth when the Gods of Light took up arms against one of their own. Bala, a fallen God, had rejected the old ways of the Pantheon and sought to impose his dominion over man.

Feeding off the forced worship of men, Bala had grown too powerful for the pantheon. So the pure Gods each sacrificed a part of themselves to create a powerful entity.

She is Devi.

Story so far.

HAVING LEARNED FROM AMARA GAELLE THAT HIS MASTER, LORD BALA, HAS CALLED UPON THE APSARA ASSASSIN KRATHA TO KILL HIS GIRLFRIEND TARA MEHTA (THE NEW DEVI INCARNATE), IVAM SWEARS TO REGAIN BALA'S TRUST BY KILLING TARA HIMSELF. BUT BEFORE HE CAN PUT HIS NEW PLAN INTO ACTION, HIS DARINDE HENCHMEN CAPTURE A SPY-INSPECTOR RAHUL SINGH, OF THE SITAPUR POLICE FORCE. IVAM LEAVES THE DETECTIVE TO AMARA TO DO WITH AS SHE PLEASURES.

MEANWHILE, THE DEVI RITUAL HAS BEGUN AND TARA IS IN A SOMA-INDUCED TRANCE. IN THIS DREAM-LIKE STATE, TARA MEETS HERSELF IN VARIOUS AVATARS--POTENTIAL, PAST AND FUTURE. HER OTHERSELVES BLESS HER AND WISH HER LUCK, WHILE ISANA, THE FIRST DEVI-INCARNATE, ARRIVES TO GUIDE TARA ALONG HER PATH TO GODHOOD.

BUT IN THE MORTAL WORLD, TARA IS IN GREAT DANGER. KRATHA IS PRIMED TO KILL TARA AS HER TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION CARRIES HER SLEEPING BODY TOWARDS ITS UNCERTAIN FUTURE. BUT THE ASSASSIN IS INTERRUPTED BY A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, WHO TELLS HER THAT HER FUTURE LIES DOWN ANOTHER PATH, ONE THAT MAKES HER A CRUCIAL PLAYER IN DETERMINING THE DESTINY OF THE WORLD. BUT KRATHA LOST FAITH IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN HER WORK LONG AGO, AND REFUSES TO LISTEN, NEARLY KILLING THE STRANGER WITH A VICIOUS STRIKE.

NOW, AS THE DREAMING TARA FLIES WITH ISANA TOWARDS HER FUTURE SELF, HER MORTAL BODY IS IN DEADLY DANGER, AND NOT JUST FROM KRATHA-IVAM ARRIVES WITH MURDER ON HIS MIND.



Part Four
PRARAMBH



SORRY, LADY. TWO STAY. RULES. GOT TO SEE HIM OFF.

OUR CATCH. OUR DINNER WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED.

WELL, HOLD ON, THEN.

BREEP



LORD BALA! I WAS JUST GOING TO CALL YOU!

UM, YES... BUT THERE'S A LITTLE PROBLEM. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THIS...

IT'S IYAM. HE WAS ACTING A LITTLE STRANGE--HE CAME CHARGING UP TO ME ASKING WHY KRATHA'S FOLLOWING SOME PROCESSION.



I DON'T KNOW. HE SAID HIS SPIES HAD SEEN THEM.



I TOLD HIM NOTHING, OF COURSE. HE RAN OFF, CURSING LIKE HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT TARA OR SOMETHING. HE WAS REALLY MAD.

I HOPE HE'S NOT DOING ANYTHING RASH. YOU DON'T THINK HE'D TRY TO... SAVE HER, DO YOU?



WELL, THAT SHOULD DO IT.



LET'S SEE NOW...

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH YOU?

ELSEWHERE









THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME TROUBLE.



WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO, BROTHER HALLA--THE SCREAMING OR THE STAMPEDING ELBPHANT?



PERHAPS WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING, BROTHER SHUNDI.

BE MY GUES--



AAAAA!!



AGANTUK! WHAT ARE YOU--

SAVE HER. LEAVE NOW. NO TIME TO EXPLAIN.



COMMUNICATIVE, ISN'T HE?

LET'S GO.





KRATHA.

IYAM. BEEN
A WHILE. WHAT,
TENOCHTITLAN,
1521?



LEAVE
NOW. YOU'RE
IN MY WAY.

SORRY. ON A
MISSION. I'LL FINISH
SOON ENOUGH.



**BRAAK
BRAAK
BRAAK
BRAAK**



HANG ON.
IN YOUR WAY?
I'M WORKING FOR
YOUR BOSS.

YES. BUT
THERE'S BEEN
A MISTAKE. THIS
IS MY JOB.

PING

PING

PING

PING



YOUR JOB.
YOUR PROBLEM.
GET TO IT. WHAT
DO YOU WANT?



THE GIRL.
YOU?



THE
MONEY.



TAKE
DOUBLE. WORK
WITH ME.





A FINE SPECIMEN. POLICEMAN, TOO. I LIKE POLICEMEN. BIG, STRONG SEXY UNIFORMS. ALWAYS IN CHARGE. WHAT SAY, BOYS?



HEHEHEHEH



LAST WORDS?



YOU LOOK FAT.



NOT YOU, SWEETIE.



WHAT THE...



THANK ME.

HMM.



YOU'RE WELCOME. I DO SO LOVE MEN WHO AREN'T AFRAID TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.



WHO ARE YOU?

LET'S SAVE THAT FOR NEXT WEEK'S KNITTING CIRCLE. I'M IN A HURRY. NOW, YOU OWE ME, AND THIS IS WHERE YOU PAY ME BACK. WHY WERE YOU FOLLOWING IYAM?

I WANTED HIS AUTOGRAPH. I'M SUCH A FAN.

WORKS FOR ME. LISTEN, THEN.



DO YOU KNOW THE OLD DAWN TEMPLE ON THE WEST SIDE, BY THE SEA? NEAR THE SHAROKH HOSPITAL. GO THERE. NOW. IYAM'S CULTY FRIENDS ARE PLANNING TO SACRIFICE A GIRL TONIGHT. BRING YOUR POLICE BUDDIES, SAVE THE GIRL IYAM'S TRYING TO KILL, GET HIS AUTOGRAPH, AND WE'RE EVEN.



OR I COULD JUST GO WITH STANDARD POLICE PROCEDURE AND GRAB WHOEVER'S STILL AROUND.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.



THERE'S GRATITUDE FOR YOU.



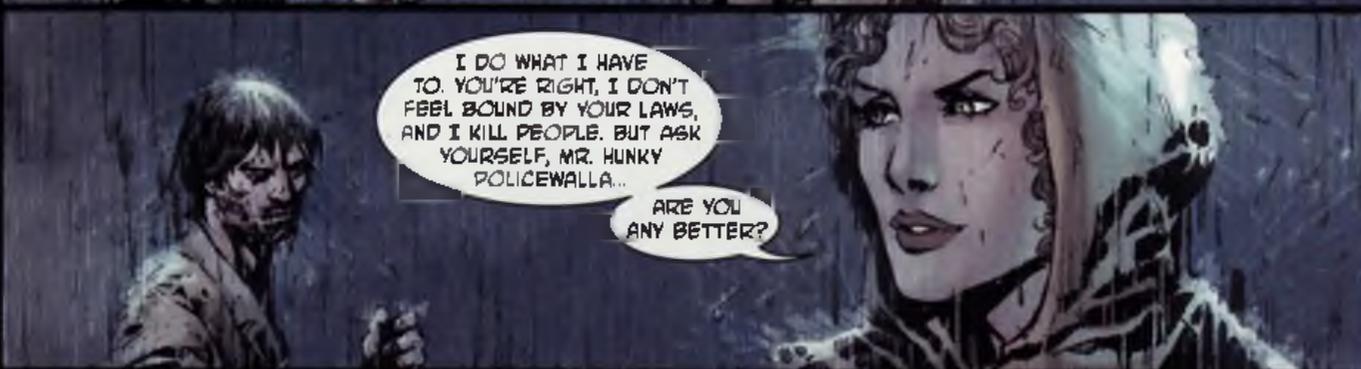
BEAUTIFUL LADY
ENTERS YOUR LIFE. SAVES
YOUR LIFE. TRIES TO HELP YOU
GET THE GIRL AND THE BAD GUY.
AND SHE'S THE ONE WITH THE
GUNS. 'YOU'RE UNDER
ARREST,' INDEED.

THIS IS
WHY THE POLICE
GET SUCH A
BAD NAME



AND THEN YOU
REALIZE YOU JUST WATCHED
HER BACKSTAB HER SO-CALLED
PARTNER, SUCK UP TO HER BOSS
AND KILL HER HENCHMEN--AND
SUDDENLY HER GOLDEN
OFFERS DON'T LOOK
SO GOOD.

CONSIDERING THE
GUNS, THOUGH, I'M LETTING YOU
OFF NOW. NEXT TIME WE MEET,
I'M TAKING YOU IN.



I DO WHAT I HAVE
TO. YOU'RE RIGHT, I DON'T
FEEL BOUND BY YOUR LAWS,
AND I KILL PEOPLE. BUT ASK
YOURSELF, MR. HUNKY
POLICEWALLA...

ARE YOU
ANY BETTER?



THE CUTE ONES
ALWAYS DISAPPOINT. I'D
THOUGHT YOU WERE THE SORT
OF GUY WHO'D ACTUALLY DO
SOMETHING TO SAVE A
WOMAN IN DANGER.

BUT YOU'RE
NOT. I SEE IT
ALL NOW.





IN THE NAMES OF THE GODS THAT MADE ME, THE EARTH THAT SHELTERED ME AND THE DEMONS I WAS BORN TO SLAY, I WELCOME YOU TO THE CITADEL OF THE WARRIOR GODDESS, TARA-THAT-WAS--SISTER, DAUGHTER, SOUL'S COMPANION.

CONQUER YOUR PAIN AND FEAR; THEY ARE AS MORTAL AS YOUR PRESENT FORM. LET THE SOMA WITHIN YOU WASH AWAY YOUR WEAKNESSES AND EASE THE PASSING OF YOUR HUMAN SENSES. SOON YOU WILL BE REBORN, RENEWED, YOUR SENSES TUNED TO HARMONIES BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION, YOUR SOUL AT ONE WITH THE ANCIENTS WHO ONCE STRODE THE PATHS THAT NOW LIE OPEN BEFORE YOU.

IN THE WORLD YOU KNEW, OUR FAITHFUL WARRIORS, WHO WILL STAND BY YOUR SIDE IN OUR HOLY WAR, PREPARE FOR YOUR INITIATION WITH PRAYERS AND OFFERINGS TO THOSE WHO WATCH OVER US. SOON THEY WILL END YOUR MORTAL LIFE, AS OUR MASTERS, THE GODS, GRANT YOU A NEW ONE.

SOON YOU WILL ESSAY FORTH WITH THEM TO ASSAULT AND ANNIHILATE THE TOWERS OF DEATH AND DARKNESS, TO CAST DOWN THOSE WHO WOULD, IN THEIR IMPUDENCE AND ARROGANCE, CHALLENGE THE GODS.

WE ARE DEVI.

SINCE THE DAY ISANA-FIRST-FORGED WAS MADE FROM MORTAL CLAY AND CLEANSED WITH WATER, SPIRIT AND FIRE, OURS IS THE SACRED BURDEN OF LEADING THE ARMIES OF LIGHT INTO THE SHADOWS AND DRIVING AWAY THE DARKNESS THAT THREATENS TO ENGLUF THE THREE WORLDS.

OURS IS THE DUTY OF PRESERVING ORDER, DELIVERING JUSTICE, RESTORING THE RULE OF THE CHOSEN AND RIGHTEOUS, AND PROTECTING ALL THAT IS GOOD AND HOLY.



WHENEVER GREAT EVIL HAS RISEN, SO HAVE WE, WHENEVER CHAOS HAS CHALLENGED THE WORLDS, WE HAVE ANSWERED. WE HAVE ENTERED BATTLE. AND WE HAVE CONQUERED.

WE ARE DESTROYERS AND RENEVERS; WE STAND BETWEEN ALL THAT IS SACRED AND THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO HARM IT.



WHEN BALA FIRST ROSE,
THREATENING ALL CREATION
WITH ETERNAL DARKNESS,
WE WERE THERE.

WHEN THE TITANS RETURNED, WE
WERE THERE. WHEN THE MOTHER
DRAGON AWOKE, EMPTYING THE
SEAS, WE WERE THERE. WHEN THE
TENTACLED ONES SLITHERED
ACROSS THE RUINS OF ILIUM,
WE WERE THERE.

WE SLEW THE GREAT WERE-LION
FROM THE SAVANNAH OF ETERNAL
FLAME, AND SAVED HISTORY ITSELF
FROM DARKNESS-DRIVEN MEN WHO
WOULD HAVE TURNED THEIR OWN
HOMES TO DUST WITH ALL-DEVOURING
FIRE, SMOKE AND PESTILENCE.

WE HAVE HELD BACK ENEMIES
FROM OTHER WORLDS AND
OTHER TIMES. WE HAVE PLAYED
MIDWIFE TO ERAS OF PEACE,
GUARDIAN TO BENEVOLENT
EMPIRES, SAVIOUR TO MANKIND.

WE SAY THIS WITHOUT
PRIDE; THIS IS WHAT WE
WERE BORN TO DO.

OUR MOST DEVOUT WISH
IS TO NOT BE NEEDED.



THIS, THEN, IS THE LEGACY YOU WERE BORN TO UPHOLD. THIS IS THE ROAD YOU MUST WALK. IT IS DARK, DESPERATE AND FULL OF DESPAIR, BUT DESTINY AWAITS, AND YOU MUST NOT BE FOUND WANTING.



YOU MUST SHAKE THE EARTH AND SKY WITH THE FEROCITY OF YOUR DEVOTION; YOU MUST BE PURE OF HEART AND SWIFT OF THOUGHT, AT ONCE MERCILESS AND MERCIFUL YOU MUST JUDGE WITH COMPASSION AND EXECUTE WITHOUT REMORSE. ON YOUR SHOULDERS LIES THE BURDEN OF THE FUTURE.

ACCEPT YOUR BLESSINGS NOW WITH GRACE, REVERENCE AND HUMILITY; REJOICE IN YOUR NEW EXISTENCE, LET YOUR GRATITUDE REVERBERATE THROUGH THE STARS.

CELEBRATE YOUR NEW LIFE AS YOU PROTECT THE LIVES OF OTHERS. MAKE US PROUD.

BE US.

TAKE OUR HAND, THEN, SWEET TARA, AND LET US JOURNEY TO AAKASHIK.

GODS AND GLORY AWAIT.





YOU'RE HURT.

I WILL HEAL.

GENERAL IYAM AND KRATHA, THE APSARA ASSASSIN, HAVE ATTACKED THE PROCESSION AND ARE BOTH TRYING TO DESTROY THE DEVI VESSEL.

NO!

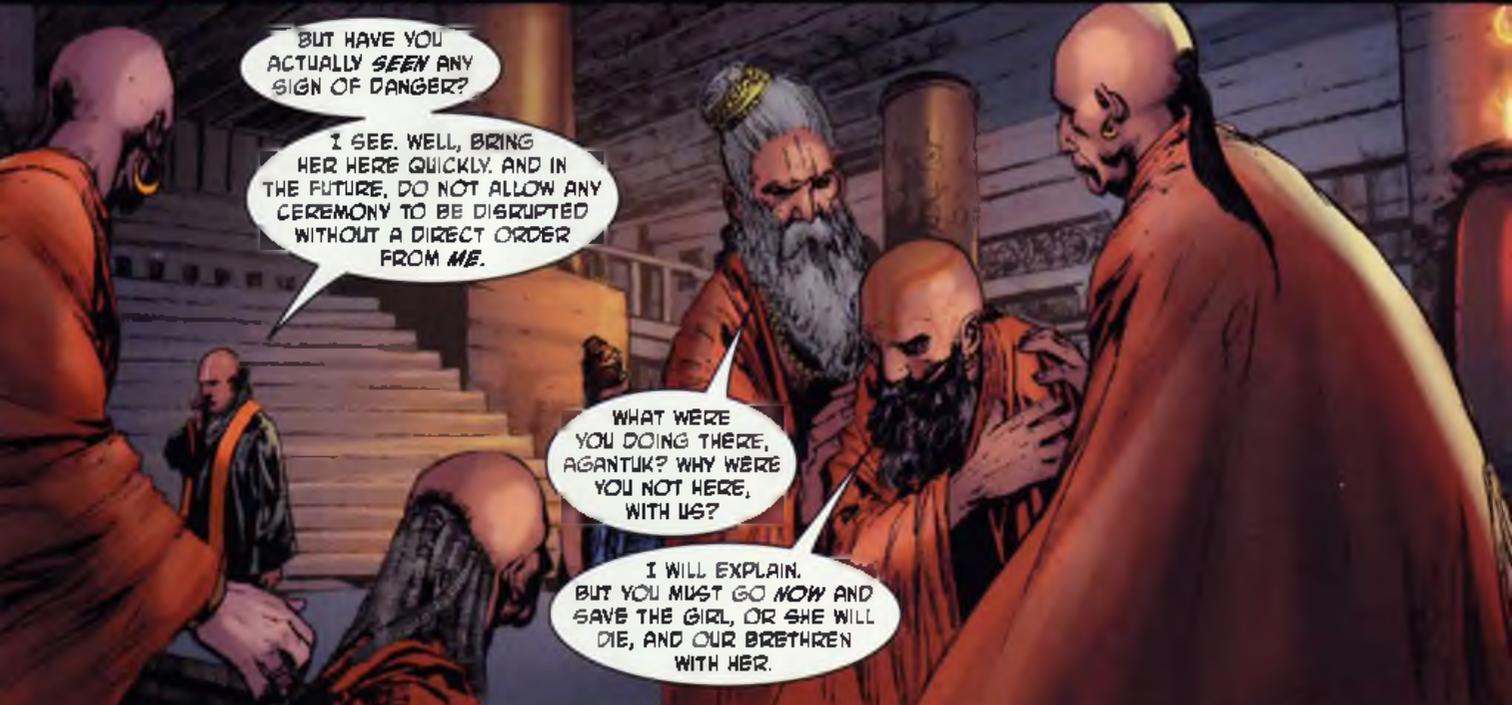
BEEEEEP



WHAT IS IT?

IS SHE ALIVE?

SHE WAS. I TRANSPORTED HER TO THE COUNCIL CAR, BUT WAS TOO WEAK TO BRING HER HERE. THE APSARA WAS TOO QUICK FOR ME.



BUT HAVE YOU ACTUALLY SEEN ANY SIGN OF DANGER?

I SEE. WELL, BRING HER HERE QUICKLY. AND IN THE FUTURE, DO NOT ALLOW ANY CEREMONY TO BE DISRUPTED WITHOUT A DIRECT ORDER FROM ME.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING THERE, AGANTUK? WHY WERE YOU NOT HERE, WITH US?

I WILL EXPLAIN. BUT YOU MUST GO NOW AND SAVE THE GIRL, OR SHE WILL DIE, AND OUR BRETHREN WITH HER.



KLIK

THEN THEY WILL HAVE DIED AS TRUE DURAPASYA.



THAT IS ENOUGH, AGANTUK. THANK YOU.

SHUNDI AND HALLA MADE THEIR REPORT, FOLLOWING CORRECT EMERGENCY PROCEDURE. THE GIRL IS SAFE ENOUGH. THEY ARE BRINGING HER HERE.



THEY HAVE NOT SEEN ANY OF AGANTUK'S DEMONS, BUT THERE WAS SOME MINOR DISTURBANCE IN THE PROCESSION, OF UNKNOWN CAUSE, BEFORE AGANTUK ARRIVED IN THEIR CAR WITH HIS REMARKABLE CLAIMS.

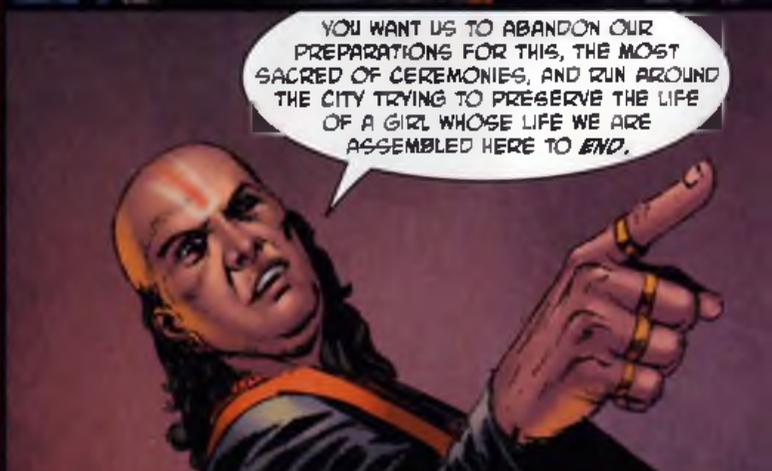
THE CEREMONY AND THE SACRIFICE *WILL* TAKE PLACE AS PLANNED.

THE COUNCIL HAS SPOKEN.



SWAMIJI, LISTEN TO ME FOR ONCE...

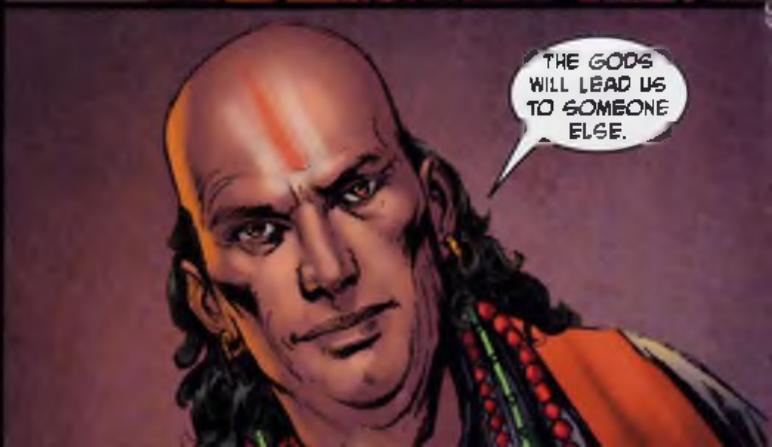
ENOUGH, AGANTUK.



YOU WANT US TO ABANDON OUR PREPARATIONS FOR THIS, THE MOST SACRED OF CEREMONIES, AND RUN AROUND THE CITY TRYING TO PRESERVE THE LIFE OF A GIRL WHOSE LIFE WE ARE ASSEMBLED HERE TO *END*.



KNOW THIS. IT DOES NOT REALLY MATTER WHETHER TARA REACHES US ALIVE OR DEAD, AS LONG AS SOMA FLOWS THROUGH HER VEINS. AND IF SHE DOES NOT REACH US AT ALL...



THE GODS WILL LEAD US TO SOMEONE ELSE.



SOMEONE ELSE? BUT THE STARS HAVE CHOSEN ONLY HER!

TARA WAS BORN UNDER THE RIGHT ALIGNMENT OF STARS, BUT A MAN OF THE SCIENCES SUCH AS YOURSELF MUST SURELY BE AWARE SHE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE ONLY ONE.

WHAT I MEAN, MY DEAR AGANTUK, IS THAT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE TONIGHT. SHOULD THE HEROINE NOT ARRIVE...

WE HAVE AN UNDERSTUDY.



YOU HAVE ANOTHER HOST?

YES. IN THE LUNAR CHAMBER. BUT SHE IS NOT AS ATTRACTIVE AS TARA, AND WILL INSPIRE FEWER PEOPLE.

SO TARA'S LIFE MEANS NOTHING TO YOU?

THE HOST'S LIFE IS OUR PORTAL TO SUCCESS AND ETERNAL GLORY. IT MEANS EVERYTHING. WHICH BODY HOSTS THE DEVI IS A SUPERFICIAL CONCERN.



WITH RESPECT, SWAMIJI, THIS IS WRONG.

THE COUNCIL'S PATH IS WRONG?



THE COUNCIL VALUES LIFE.

HEAR ME
OUT, SWAMIJI.

I KNOW WHAT YOU
WANT TO SAY--YOU'VE BEEN
SAYING IT FOR YEARS, AFTER ALL.
AND THE ANSWER IS *STILL* NO. WE
CANNOT LET HER LIVE.

WE CANNOT
CREATE A DEVI WITHOUT
OFFERING HER MORTAL LIFE TO
THE GODS IN RETURN. HER LIFE
IS BUT A SMALL PRICE TO PAY;
THIS IS A WAR, AND VICTORY
IS AT STAKE.

AN INTERESTING
CONCEPT. AND I WOULD
HAVE LOVED TO SEE IT
EXECUTED, BUT WE CANNOT
THROW AWAY A PLAN THAT HAS
SUCCEEDED OVER MILLENNIA
TO TRY OUT *YOUR*
NEW-AGE FANCIES.

BUT SWAMIJI,
IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE.
IT IS A DIFFERENT WORLD NOW.
HUMANKIND AND THE GODS
HAVE GROWN APART.

FOR THE GODDESS TO
SUCCEED *NOW*, THE HUMAN AND
THE DIVINE *MUST* COEXIST
WITHIN HER.

THERE
IS TOO MUCH
AT STAKE.

I KNOW THE
STAKES, SWAMIJI. WHY
WOULD I ENDANGER MY LIFE
AND PLACE IN THE COUNCIL
OTHERWISE?

NOW THAT HER
STARS HAVE CHOSEN HER, TARA
IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE US.
TO CALLOUSLY CALL HER LIFE EXPENDABLE,
LET ALONE TAKE IT, BRINGS US CLOSER TO
THE DEMONS WE SEEK TO DESTROY, AND
EVEN FURTHER AWAY FROM THE
GODS WE SERVE.

WE MUST
RESCUE HER. SHE
MUST *LIVE*.

TARA'S LIFE IS
OVER, AGANTUK
ACCEPT IT.

WAR IS COMING, AND
YOU WILL BE NEEDED. HELP US
PREPARE NOW, AS WARRIORS
SHOULD, TO WELCOME OUR
NEW GENERAL.





WHY ARE WE GOING SLOW? WE COULD TAKE THEM RIGHT NOW.

YES. AND UNDO THE WORK OF SEVERAL MILLENNIA.



WE WILL KILL HER *AFTER* THE GODS HAVE BLESSED HER, AND DRAINED THEIR POWERS. SHE'LL BE VULNERABLE FOR A WHILE.

BONUS: WE ALSO GET TO FINISH OFF THE *ENTIRE* DURAPASYA COUNCIL.



IF YOU'D KILLED HER BACK THEN, KRATHA, ALL WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST. YOUR ONLY PAYMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN ETERNAL TORTURE.

THIS IS A LITTLE DETAIL SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE BOTHERED TO MENTION.



DID YOU GET YOUR INSTRUCTIONS FROM A WOMAN NAMED AMARA GAELLE?



I CAN'T TELL YOU.

HMM. LOOKS LIKE I JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE. AND MINE.



WHY WOULD SHE--

SHUT UP AND DRIVE.



WE HAVE A
BUSY NIGHT AHEAD
OF US...



WE HAVE
A WORLD TO
SAVE...



WE'RE IN
SERIOUS
DANGER...



WE HAVE
A GODDESS
TO KILL...

TONIGHT.



TO BE CONTINUED.

For a series based on one character, Devi is filled with a whole lot of them. Gods, demons, drunken cops, Apsara assassins, philosophers, double-crossers. It has them all - the good, the bad and the uglies! Not to mention the city of Sitapur, where you find the ancient enmeshed with the ultra modern. For me, the environment was as important a character in the story as any other. Devi and the world in which she exists in the comic is a study in contrasts; Sadhus brandishing swords and Mobile phones; Ancient sculptures jutting out from in-between glass and steel structures; Modern day discos infested with punks and run by Gods-turned-gangsters.

The challenge was to incorporate the Indian feel, and yet, keep it relevant to a global audience. Classic example of that is the Devi costume - the elaborate hairdo, the flaming Bindi, the Duppatta (Indian stole), the earrings combined with slick black leather for an Indian Goddess who has to look as if she belongs here and now, but still retains that ancient Indian look.

Does it work?

You tell me.

Mukesh Singh
Artist on the Devi Series



The ASURA Analogues

As Editor-in-Chief of this motley comic laboratory that we've thrown together at Virgin Comics, I have a lot of stuff thrown my way. Part of our mission has been to tap the creative potential of India where writers and artists have long been fans of the comic medium but have not been playing in it. To push that door open, we've set up a sizeable studio in Bangalore, India that has become home to a number of writers, artists and designers. It is a place where creators dream up crazy comic book ideas and I get to see them all. But the one area I keep getting pitched is the thriller, horror genre. Seems like every kid in India has dreamt up some horrible genre. Blood ghost or vampire story and is now looking to export it to the world.

I'm not surprised actually, because in India we have a long tradition of demons and the myths that surround them. We call these demons *Asuras*. But unlike the vampires, monsters, ghosts, and zombies of Western lore, in the East, as with even the most villainous characters, there is less of a sense of good vs evil. Black vs. white. In *Asuras* have a deeper context, a backstory from which they emerged, and a careful slant they once suffered that has propelled them to what they've become. Black and white don't even apply. It's the land of gray...

And so was born a new series of comics called *The Asura Analogues*. In 2007, we'll be launching books that invoke the Asura tradition of India and reinvent some of those legends in a cool and entertaining way. Our first book in the series is a one-shot called *VIRULENTS*, a post-apo story that on a single night pits a crew of American soldiers and their regional allied forces against a demonic fusion of terrorists and vampires wandering the hidden planes and caves of Afghanistan.

Look out for *VIRULENTS* and subsequent *Asura Analogues* as we roll out next year. Let us know what you think. And remember, the lab likes the look.

GOTHAM CHOPRA
Editor-in-Chief

RāMāyaN

3392 AD

The original Ramayan is the greatest tale ever told.

It is, seriously.

The original was spoken – yes, spoken by the Indian poet Valmiki – about 2,500 years ago. Part of what makes the original story so cool is in fact the source, because legend has it that before Valmiki turned epic poet (he composed the story via 24,000 stanzas) he was actually part of a legendary group of bandits that roamed the countryside and had quite the outlaw image. Hence, even the story behind the story is a very rich one.

You have to understand that in the East, the Ramayan is so much more than the simple description we give it to try and explain it in the west, “The Odyssey of the East.” Ramayan is the quintessential, seminal myth, the story that is the forebearer of all others. It is the story that every kid growing up, still to this day, hears from his/her grandparents. Its heroes, Rama, Lakshman and Seeta are worshipped, literally. Even its side characters, such as Hanuman, the monkey king, are the stuff that legends are made of. So to reimagine it, to tinker with it in any way, shape, or form is a most challenging and tricky task.

And yet, if you're a creator, how can you not have a take on the Ramayan – the greatest tale ever told?

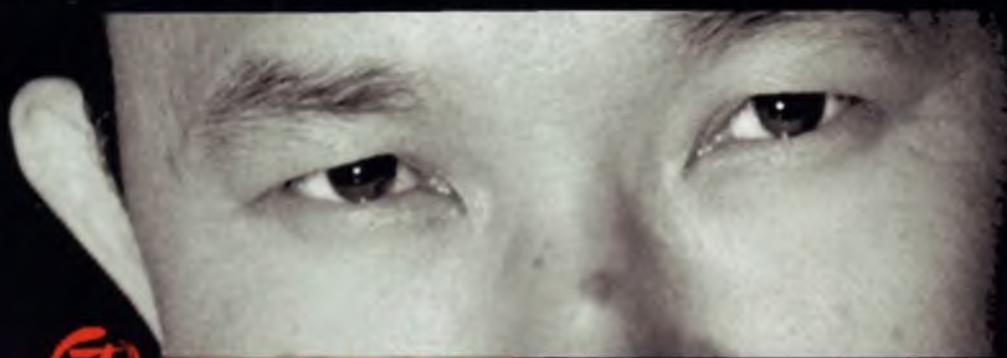
Our goal from the start of this project was never to retell the original because we wouldn't be able to do it justice. It'd be like trying to do a highschool rendition of Star Wars – you'd be doomed to failure and humiliation. Instead, our mission was to use the original Ramayan as inspiration, let it infect us, seduce us, terrorize us, and then to spin a new yarn by standing on the shoulders of greatness.

Our Ramayan, set in a post-apocalyptic future of 3392 A.D. is a collective effort. We've tapped the wisdom of great creators like Deepak Chopra and Shekhar Kapur. We've relied on the creativity, research, and endless hours of hard work of our creative team including lead artists Abhishek Singh and Ashwin Chikerur, writer Shamik Dasgupta and the man who inspires and leads them all in India – our President, Suresh Seetharaman. But more than anything, we've trusted that original epic in all its eternal majesty will provide the pulse that keeps our collective creativity going. So far, so good.

I'm not going to gush about our own work because that would be lame. But I encourage you to take a chance on *Ramayan 3392 A.D.*, read an issue, survey the art and send us your thoughts. Because it's everything we are about as a company and as story-tellers. It's why you tell stories and I'm proud of what we've done so far.

Gotham Chopra
Editor-in-Chief





7 不可错过的导演剪辑

JOHN
WOO



If you're like me, have grown up on movies, eagerly await opening weekends for big popcorn flicks, scour smaller theaters in your neighborhood for indie and foreign films, then you have in your head a list of film-makers that are your favorites.

Well, imagine for a moment that you had a chance to go to those filmmakers on your list and say to them: "Come collaborate with a team of artists and writers. Bring your creativity and use the engine that we have created to develop an idea and showcase it to the world via a really cool comic. Do what you do best – tell us a story you have and watch it evolve from an idea into a visual comic book universe."

In short, that's our "Director's Cut" line of comics. As many have already heard, we're launching the Director's Cut with acclaimed action filmmaker, John Woo. John is working with comic book superstar, Garth Ennis and our illustration studio at Virgin Comics to create the new series, *Seven Brothers*, launching in October. Quite a debut even if I say so myself. Our next Director's Cut is with Guy Ritchie, entitled *The Gamekeeper*. It'll be on the rack early 2007.

As for what's next on the horizon, more very cool iconic filmmakers – the type that you hear their names and you know their style, their look and feel, and the tones of their stories.

The obvious question is, will these comics become films? We certainly hope so, but in building the comic we don't get distracted by dreams of red carpet premieres, nifty after-parties, and box office bonanzas. A great comic is its own craft, not just a storyboard for a film.

And that's been the revelation so far. Because as much as we've been learning from our partners, we've also observed them learning from our trade – the way great comic stories are told, episodically, viscerally, visually. We think the Director's Cut is awesome and boy, are we glad we thought of it! We hope you love it as much as we love putting it together. Please send us ideas via our webpage (www.virgincomics.com) of other film-makers you want to see in comics. We plan on creating quite a canon and we're happy to keep adding to our list.