

DEEPAK CHOPRA & SHEKHAR KAPUR PRESENT

Rāmāyan

3892 AD



ISSUE 5

DASGUPTA/ABHISHEK



In a world over 1500 years in the future, the last human survivors of the apocalypse have settled in the city of Armagarh, the last city that receives natural light from the sun. But Armagarh has been undone by a rotting corruption that has festered within in it. Now, a motley crew of renegades including the brothers Rama and Lakshman and led by the sage Vishwamitra wander the ravaged frontier readying for a final conflict against a weapon-turned-being they cannot even fully comprehend.

Now in the land of Mithila, it holds many surprises for our heroes. For it is an enchanted city situated at the bottom of a lake. The lake is naught but a narrow stretch of water hiding the great city beneath, abundant with the blessings of nature, flora, fauna, habitable space and clean air to breathe. But this tranquil place is suddenly invaded by a small band of lethal Asuras led by the butcher General Tataka.

Rama and his band penetrate the secret city just in time to stop the Asuras as they wreak havoc in Mithila. In the process, Rama rescues a young Mithilan girl, Seeta, as she is threatened by Tataka who demands possession of the secret key to Maya Vidya or 'Earth Magic.' After a fearsome fight, Rama manages to undo the vicious Asura General. But as Tataka is about to die, Seeta rushes to her side trying to save the life of the wretched Asura. Rama is surprised to witness such an act of compassion, as the girl tries desperately to save the life of the very being who led the violent invasion of her homeland. Lakshman demands to know the identity of the strange Mithilan girl, to which Vishwamitra mysteriously replies: "She is the key to the salvation of this world and Rama is supposed to be her protector."



MITHILA: 5200 YOJANS
FROM ARMAGARH.

WE MEET
AGAIN AFTER
ALL THESE YEARS
VISHWAMITRA.

INDEED JANAK,
THOUGH I WISH
THE CIRCUMSTANCES
WERE BETTER
THIS TIME.

HOW LONG
HAS IT BEEN? FIFTY
ODD YEARS?

LONGER.
THE LAST TIME
WAS WHEN OLD
MITHILA FELL.

OLD
MITHILA?



MY CITY WAS ONCE IN THE FAR SOUTH, BELOW THE RISHYAMUK MOUNTAINS. YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE SERPENT BEASTS FROM NARK LAY CLAIM TO IT. APART FROM ARMAGARH, WE WERE THE ONLY HUMANS TO BUILD A TERRITORY IN THE SOUTHLANDS OF ARYAVARTA.



THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER HUMAN KINGDOM WAS NEVER RECORDED IN THE ANNALS OF ARMAGARH.

HOW DID YOU END UP HERE, IN A PLACE WHERE ALL OF NATURE'S LAWS ARE DEFIED?



IT IS A LONG STORY, BUT AN IMPORTANT ONE FOR YOU TO KNOW. I WILL BE AS BRIEF AS I CAN.



"50 YEARS AGO THE WARLORD
MEGHNAD, SON OF **RAVAN**,
OBLITERATED US COMPLETELY.
MITHILA WAS DESTROYED BY HIS VILE
MINIONS, THE **NAGAS**". EVEN NOW, THE
SERPENT PEOPLE RULE THE REMAINS
OF WHAT ONCE BELONGED TO US.

"OUR PLEAS FOR
HELP WERE **IGNORED** BY
ARMAGARH. OUR RACE WAS
CONSIDERED **INFERIOR** BY
YOUR FATHERLAND AND NOT
WORTHY TO PROTECT.

"SO, I AND A FEW
SURVIVORS FLED
NORTHWARD, AND ENDED
UP IN THE DENSE JUNGLES
OF **DANDAKARANYA**.

*SERPENT MEN

"BUT SUCH ARE THE
WHEELS OF KARMA.
FOR IF NOT FOR THOSE
DARK DAYS, I WOULD NOT
HAVE STUMBLED UPON
WHAT I DID.

"IN **DANDAKARANYA**,
I FOUND SALVATION. I
WAS GIVEN A DHARMA OF
TREMENDOUS IMPORT, A
MAGIC THAT MIGHT CHANGE
THE DESTINY OF ALL
REMAINING LIFE.

"DEEP IN THE FOREST.
I CAME UPON AN
ENCHANTED TREE.
FROM IT EMERGED A
SEED THAT WOULD
SPAWN AN ENTIRE
EXPANSE OF LAND.

"AND HENCE,
NEW MITHILA
WAS BORN.

"INDEED, THIS LAND WAS NOT
BUILT BY THE TOILS OF MEN AND
TECHNOLOGY. IT WAS BORN OF
SOMETHING SPECIAL, FROM
SOMETHING DEEP WITHIN
THE EARTH HERSELF.

"THE FRUIT BORN OF THIS
LIFE TREE WOULD COME TO
DEFINE MY LIFE, AND MAY
YET GO ON TO DEFINE
ALL OF OURS STILL..."



...SEETA IS THE DAUGHTER OF MOTHER EARTH GIFTED UNTO ME. I WAS CHARGED HER PROTECTOR UNTIL NOW, AND I HAVE DONE THE BEST I CAN.



MY DEAR, I SEE THAT SHOOT OF CHAMPA HAS NOT PERISHED YET. IT ESCAPED THE FIRE.

DON'T WORRY FATHER, WE WILL RECOVER. I'LL MAKE IT MY COVENANT TO REBUILD OUR HOME.



I WOULD LIKE TO FORMALLY INTRODUCE MY OLD FRIEND VISHWAMITRA AND THE ARMAGARHIAN KSHATRIYA RAMA CHANDRA SURYAVANSHI, A WARRIOR OF UNMATCHED SKILL.

WARRIOR?



A MURDERER!



THEY BROUGHT DESTRUCTION AND VIOLENCE TO OUR LAND, FATHER. THEY MURDERED THOSE CREATURES LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY ANIMALS!



THESE 'ANIMALS' WERE ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT YOU, MY DEAR.

THE EVIL THAT WE ALL WITNESSED TODAY IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE DARK STORM THAT IS APPROACHING; THAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE.



WHEN DO YOU EXPECT THE ASURA PRIME TO APPEAR?



I'M AFRAID ONE OF THE RAKSHASAS ESCAPED US. IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE IS INFORMED OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF MITHILA. WE HAVE MERE HOURS.

TIME IS SHORT FOR EXPLANATIONS. MITHILA CANNOT BE SAVED, BUT SEETA *MUST* BE. RAVAN IS COMING FOR HER AND SHE MUST NOT FALL INTO HIS CLUTCHES. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON IT.

SHE *MUST* COME WITH US.



RAMA, FROM NOW ON, YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEETA. SHE IS THE REASON I BROUGHT YOU HERE.

WHAT?



I DON'T THINK SO! I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH, IF YOU PLEASE.

I GAVE UP SAVING THE WORLD A LONG TIME AGO WHEN THE WORLD - OR ARMAGARH, AT LEAST - TURNED ITS BACK ON ME.

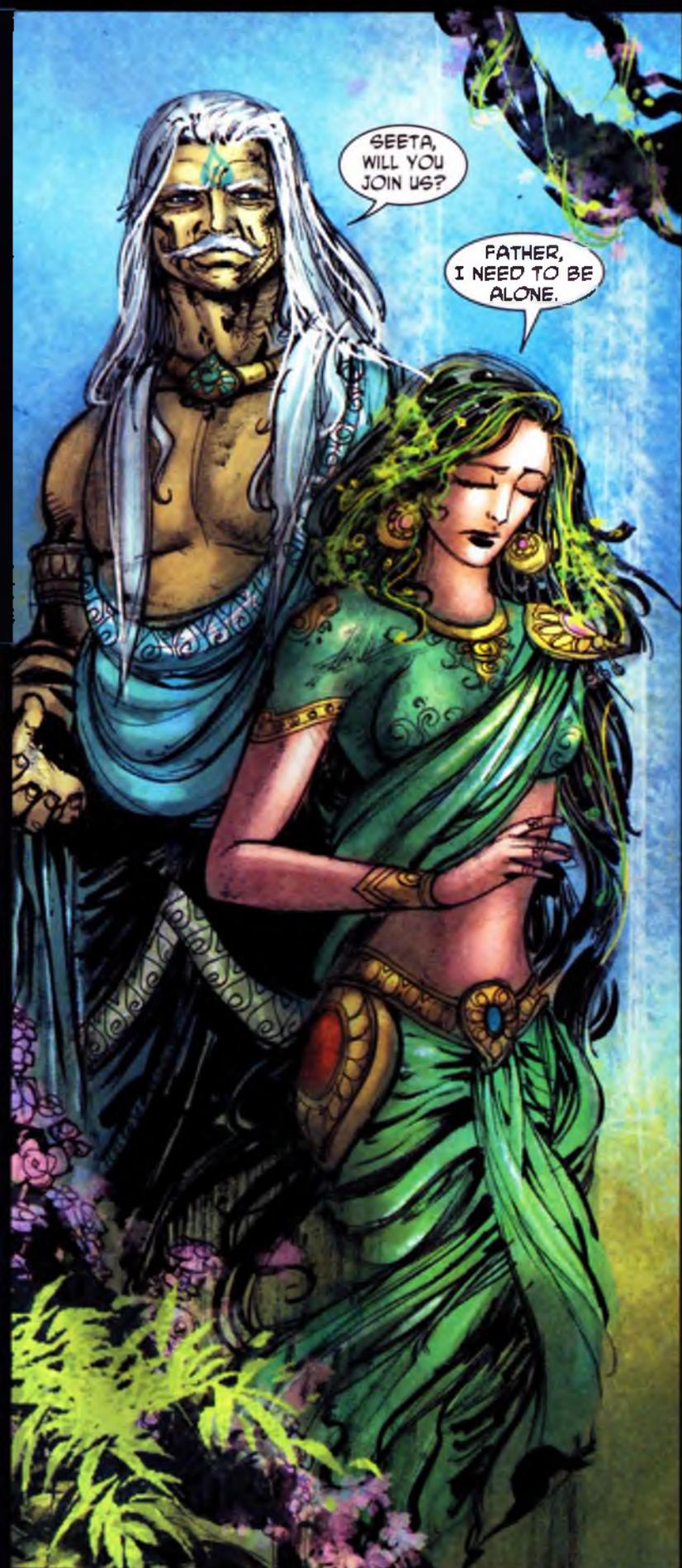


RAMA, THERE'S NO MORE TIME FOR TANTRUMS. YOU'LL RE-CONSIDER...

MY FRIEND, I NEED SOME TIME TO COMPREHEND THIS MYSELF. PERHAPS WE SHOULD SEEK HIGHER COUNSEL. COME WITH ME.

WHERE?

TO THE MAHAVRIKSH, THE LIFE TREE, ITSELF.



SEETA, WILL YOU JOIN US?

FATHER, I NEED TO BE ALONE.



AS YOU WISH, MY DEAR.



THAT FLOWER? IT WAS RE-INVIGORATED BY HER TEAR? HOW...?



AND NOW
YOU BEG FOR
COMPENSATION?

IF YOU ARE
DONE TREMBLING,
PROCEED WITH
REPORTS.

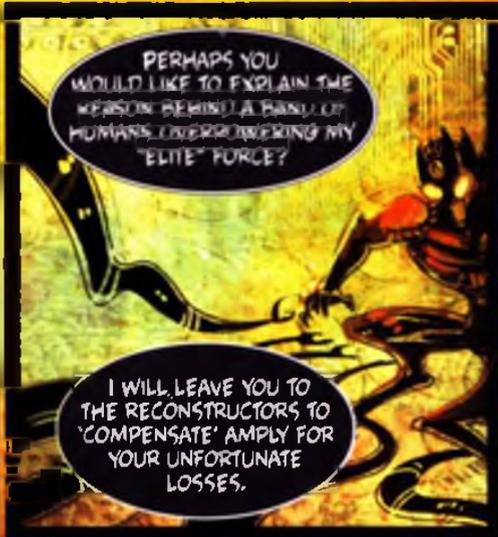
Y... YES...
O' LORD
RAVAN...



MITHILA HAS BEEN UNCOVERED. I HAVE THE COORDINATES.

THE OLD SEER VISSHWAMITRA, WITH HIS THREE HUMAN ACCOMPLICES, MANAGED TO KILL OUR MATRIARCH AND SOLDIERSSSS.

I MADE A NARROW ESCAPE THROUGH THE PORTAL MADE BY THE YANTRA SSSSTAFF.



PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAIN THE REASON BEHIND A BAND OF HUMANS OVERPOWERING MY "ELITE" FORCE?

I WILL LEAVE YOU TO THE RECONSTRUCTORS TO 'COMPENSATE' AMPLY FOR YOUR UNFORTUNATE LOSSES.



NOO... LORD RAVAN... MERCY... MERCYYYYY.....

FOUR HUMANS EXTERMINATE A PLATOON OF RAKSHASA WARRIORS.

IMPROBABLE.

THIS MATTER NEEDS MORE DIRECT INTERVENTION.

DEVANTAK, NARANTAK AND TRISHIRA...

YOUR FATHER NEEDS YOU TO FOLLOW THE COORDINATES. FETCH ME THE ONE I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.

IF YOU FACE ANY RESISTANCE, BE SWIFT AND WITHOUT MERCY.

YES, SIRE.

MITHILA

IT'S MAGIC?!

HA HA... I DON'T KNOW IF I'D CALL IT MAGIC OR NOT. BUT THIS HAPPENS EVERY TIME, YOU KNOW?

YOU MEAN, YOU CAN BRING A DEAD PLANT BACK TO LIFE?

THE CHAMPA WAS NOT REALLY DEAD. WATCH THIS...



HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

WHenever I intend the plants and flowers to do things for me. I've always been able to do it. It just happens.

TELL ME LAKSHMAN, THE PLACE WHERE YOU COME FROM, ARMAGARH, WHAT'S IT LIKE?

AH...IT'S A MARVEL, THE ONLY LAND THAT RECEIVES THE LIGHT OF THE SUN.

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE SUN. WE USE GEO-THERMAL ENERGY TO NURTURE OUR PLANTS AND TREES, BUT I UNDERSTAND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF FLOWERS GROW UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE SUN.

WELL, I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOT MUCH VEGETATION IN ARMAGARH. THE COUNCIL DEEMED IT IMPRUDENT TO GROW TREES OR PLANTS. WE USE FILTERS TO SYNTHESIZE OXYGEN, AND FOOD PROCESSING PLANTS TO GROW NUTRIENTS.

THEY SAID THAT PLANTS TAKE UP TOO MUCH OTHERWISE HOSPITABLE SPACE.

WELL THAT EXPLAINS A LOT. YOUR DISREGARD FOR LIFE HAS TURNED YOU INTO MACHINES. *KILLING MACHINES.*

TRUE, IN ARMAGARH WE WERE ALL MANUFACTURED TO KILL...EXCEPT RAMA.

HE WAS ALWAYS DIFFERENT THAN THE REST. KIND OF LIKE YOU.

LAKSHMAN...



I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU EVERYWHERE.

OUR WORK HERE IS DONE, AND THE SOONER WE GET OUT, THE BETTER. WE JUST NEED TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET THROUGH THE WATER ABOVE US, THEN WE ARE GONE.



IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE, IT CAN BE ARRANGED. I AGREE: THE SOONER YOU GO, THE BETTER.

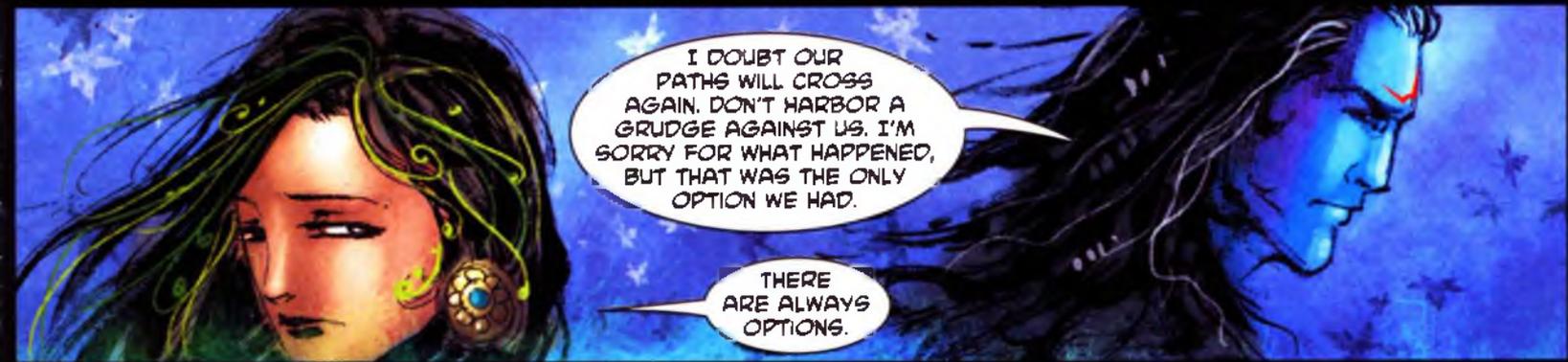


RAMA, VISHWAMITRA TOLD US TO STAY. ARE YOU SURE...?

ABSOLUTELY. YOU CAN FOLLOW YOUR TRACK TO KHUNDGIRI IF YOU WISH, BUT GUHA AND I WILL BE HEADING BACK TO THE RIVER ANGARP.



I NEVER STAY WHERE I'M NOT WANTED.



I DOUBT OUR PATHS WILL CROSS AGAIN. DON'T HARBOR A GRUDGE AGAINST US. I'M SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED, BUT THAT WAS THE ONLY OPTION WE HAD.

THERE ARE ALWAYS OPTIONS.

BOOOOM!



TRISHIRA

THE
CO-ORDINATES
ARE EXACT THERE
SHE IS.

DESTROY
MITHILA, AND TAKE
THE GIRL. BE SWIFT
AND WITHOUT
MERCY.

NARANTAK

DEVANTAK



HERE WE
GO AGAIN.

MEANWHILE... THE MAHAVRIKSH.

THE INNER SANCTUM.

The time has come O' Janak. She must leave the sanctuary of Mithila.

She was bestowed unto you for protection and care. You have excelled in that task.

But now, her destiny lies elsewhere. With someone else.

YOU MEAN... THE BLUE STRANGER?

Yes.

IS THERE NO OTHER WAY... ?

There is no other way.

HEAVEN AND EARTH BEAR WITNESS, O' MOTHER DHARTI. I NEVER FLINCHED FROM MY DHARMA.

Then finish it with equal honor...



GIVE UP! EVEN THE APE LORDS OF KISHKINDHA FELL UNDER DEVANTAK'S BLADE, HUMANI

AM I LESS THAN A MONKEY IN YOUR EYES?!



DIE!

YOU KNOW, GIVEN ANY OTHER DAY, I WOULD HAVE PROPOSED TO YOU.

WE'D HAVE BRED THE FINEST OF 'RAK-SHATRIYAS'



KEEP THE HUMANS BUSY BROTHER AND SISTER..

THE PRIZE SHALL BE MINE.

NO!





...STOP!



I'M STUCK! CAN'T GET OUT!!!!



Hrooaaarrrrrr...



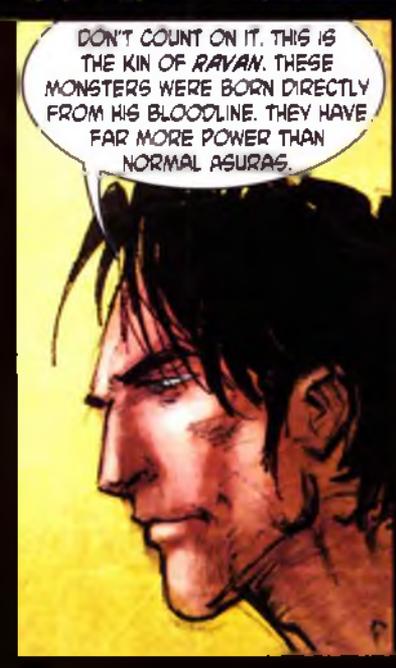
SHE DID THAT...?

BROTHER, SHE IS UNLIKE ANY WE HAVE EVER KNOWN.

ARE THEY DEAD?



NO, THEY LIVE ON. THEY HAVE JUST BECOME A PART OF MITHILA. THEY SHALL LEARN TO LIVE LIKE THE PLANTS AND TREES OF OUR LAND... IN PEACE, HARMONY AND STILLNESS.



DON'T COUNT ON IT. THIS IS THE KIN OF RAVAN. THESE MONSTERS WERE BORN DIRECTLY FROM HIS BLOODLINE. THEY HAVE FAR MORE POWER THAN NORMAL ASURAS.



RRRAARGHHH!

GHRRRHH...GIRL...
YOU DID THIS TO ME...KILL...
KILL YOU...



NOT AS
LONG AS I
BREATHE.



DIEEEEE...!

NYAARGHH!



YOU WILL
SUFFER...

BOP!



I...



...TOLD YOU...

GHRAAAARRRR...



...DON'T...



...DON'T YOU DARE...



...TOUCH...



...HER!



RAMA, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?



YOUR ACT WAS NOBLE INDEED, BUT BY SLAYING THE RAKSHASA PRINCE YOU HAVE BEGUN A CHAIN OF UNSTOPPABLE REACTIONS.

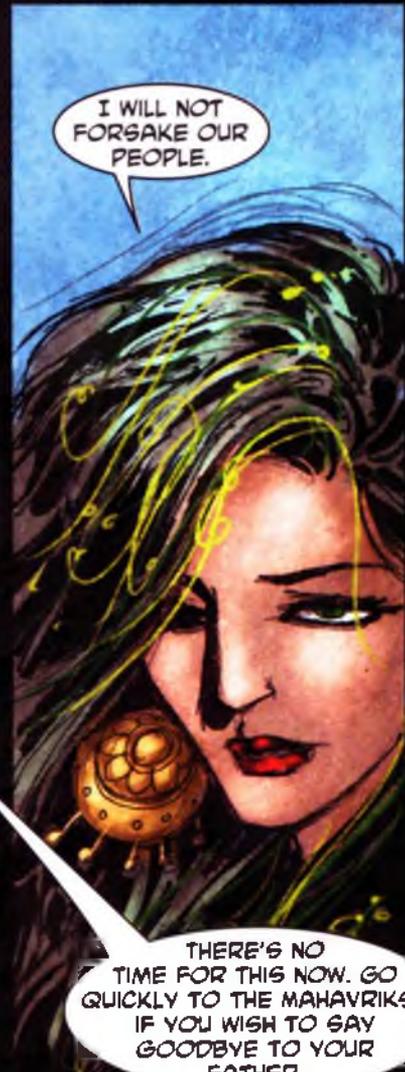
ALL OF RAVAN'S BROOD ARE LINKED WITH HIM BOTH PHYSICALLY AND THROUGH CONSCIOUSNESS. THE DEATH OF DEVANTAK WILL BRING THE ASURA PRIME HIMSELF TO MITHILA. HIS RAGE WILL BE DEVASTATING.



WITH THE *LOKA DWAR* AT HIS DISPOSAL HE COULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT.

YOU MUST GET AWAY FROM HERE BEFORE HE ARRIVES. *ESCAPE* WITH SEETA.

• DIMENSIONAL GATE



I WILL NOT FORSAKE OUR PEOPLE.

THERE'S NO TIME FOR THIS NOW. GO QUICKLY TO THE MAHAVRIKSH IF YOU WISH TO SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR FATHER.



HEY, WE TOOK DOWN THREE OF HIS BROOD TO BEGIN WITH. I THINK THE WHOLE MYTH OF RAVAN IS A BIT OVERBLOWN. NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT RAMA IS SEVERELY WOUNDED. HE IS IN NO SHAPE TO GO ANYWHERE.



FOOLS! DO YOU REALLY WANT TO FACE HIM?

HIS SPAWN ARE LEGION AND THESE WERE THE FEEBLEST OF THE LOT. YOU CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE POWER HE EMBODIES.

YOU'LL BE *TWIGS* FACING A *STORM!*

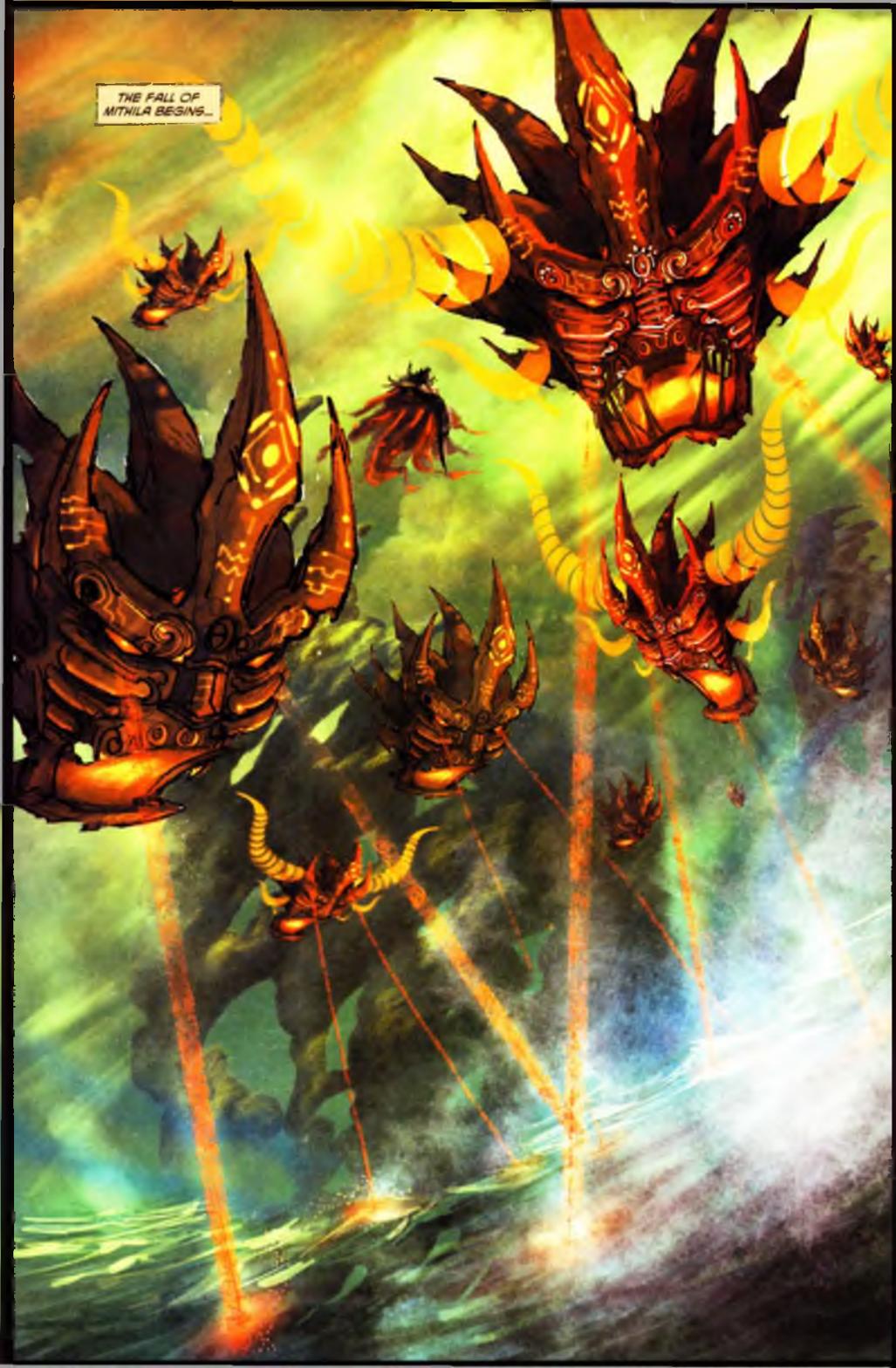


W... WHAT'S THAT!? AN EARTH QUAKE!

THIS IS NO EARTH-QUAKE... IT'S HIM... HE HAS COME...

RUN, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD. RUN!

THE FALL OF
MITHILA BEGINS...





RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN. I'LL ENGAGE HIM. TRY TO BUY YOU SOME TIME.



IT'S AN ARMOR I HAVEN'T WORN IN FIFTY YEARS.

YOU... YOU WILL FIGHT?



YES, MY CHILD, FOR YOU, TO MY VERY LAST BREATH, IF NEED BE.



RAMA... I BESTOW IN YOUR CARE, THE MOST PRECIOUS OF ALL BEINGS IN THIS WORLD, AND THE MEANS TO PROTECT HER.

ACCEPT THE HARADHANU. IT CAN BE THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IF USED WISELY.

FATHER, NO!!

CHILD, LISTEN CAREFULLY AND DO NOT ARGUE. THE GREAT MOTHER HAS OPENED A WAY FOR YOUR ESCAPE. LEAVE NOW MY DEAR; THIS IS THE LAST REQUEST OF YOUR FATHER.



FATHER! IT'S CHAOS OUTSIDE! THE DARK ONE THEY SPEAK OF HAS COME!

WHAT IS THIS STRANGE OUTFIT YOU ARE WEARING?



I... I...

I MEAN IT. NOW!

YOUR BEING HAS BLESSED ME BEYOND WORDS.

WE'LL COME BACK FOR YOU FATHER, I PROMISE. I LOVE YOU...



I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY OWN LIFE.





UNSETTLING,
BUT I, OR HOLY
FATHER?



ALL ALONE,
YOUR KINGDOM IN
RUINS, YOUR PEOPLE
ANNIHILATED.



FACING
ME.



RRRRVAN!

TO BE CONTINUED





...The...



..Red..



..Star!

