



ISSUE 2

THE *Sardhu*

CHOPRA | KANG

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Shakti

SHAKTI IS THE FEMININE FACE OF GOD. SHAKTI IS THE WOMB OF CREATION FROM WHICH THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS BORN. SHAKTI IS POWER. SHAKTI IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL. SHE COMES IN MANY FORMS:

Chitta Shakti is the power of pure consciousness. Chitta Shakti is experienced as profound peace and centered awareness in the midst of chaos, turbulence, and danger. Established in Being, it performs in action. It is the spiritual warrior in all of us.

Ichcha Shakti is the power of intention and the manifestation inherent in desire. Those that master ichcha shakti garner the infinite organizing power of intention that weaves the tapestry of the universe.

Kriya Shakti is spontaneous right action without anticipation of response – knowing what to do and when to do it with finesse. It is the power of intuition – a form of intelligence that is holistic, nurturing, relational and contextual and that eavesdrops on the mind of the cosmos and has a computing power that is far beyond linear rational thought.

Ananda Shakti is inner bliss and contentment. It is bliss that radiates from Being as light from a bonfire, transforming all who are enveloped by it.

Gyan Shakti is understanding the laws of nature and knowing that the elements and forces of the cosmos 'out there' are the same as the elements and forces within us. By harnessing these elements and forces, it becomes possible to influence nature herself through our awareness.

When Shakti awakens in us, she manifests as the Goddesses

1. Siddhi - *the Goddess with supernatural powers in the world and*
2. Riddhi - *the Goddess who controls the elements and forces of the Universe.*

As humanity evolves into a wisdom-based culture, the forces of good, truth, and harmony will continue to battle the dark forces. These epic battles will be fought in the domain of consciousness where even the most powerful technologies of destruction will be rendered impotent. Shakti will provide new raw materials for the collective imagination of humanity and give birth to an age that even Homer or Valmiki never dreamed of.

Story so far...

James Jensen, a down and out yet noble hearted Englishman, has taken the first step in meeting his destiny.

Intrepidly bidding farewell to his Brother and to a hopeless life in Victorian England, James has enrolled in the British Army serving in colonial India during the early days of the Raj.

James is joined by pregnant wife Tess.

Upon arrival, James discovers he is to serve under the ruthless Colonel Timothy Townsend - a savage man charged with the task of suppressing a recent mutiny amongst the native soldiers.

As the months pass, James makes an unlikely peace with his new home and Tess delivers a baby boy named "Jack."

A few weeks later, while taking a walk in a plantation along with their newborn, James and Tess suddenly encounter a Bengal Tiger seemingly ready to attack them. As the Tiger gets closer, it gets lured away by the mysterious figure of a Shaman... a Sadhu...





IN THE EAST IT IS SAID THAT
ALL OF REALITY IS AN ACT OF
PERCEPTION. FOR MOST OF US,
WE CONSUME THE WORLD
THROUGH ONE NARROW AND
RIGID POINT OF VIEW.

THE ENEMY IS
UPON US MEN. SHOW
NO MERCY. DISPATCH THEM TO
HELL WITH BLOOD ACROSS
THEIR CROWNS!

"COME ON, OL' BOY JENGEN, YOU COULDN'T SQUASH AN INDIAN ANT WITH THAT EFFORT."

YAAARRGH

"COMING ON YOUR RIGHT, THEN YOUR LEFT, FROM ABOVE AND BENEATH..."

GRUNT!

UNNNHFFF

"THESE MCKEYS WE'RE FIGHTING OUT HER HAVE NO RULES, NO ATTACK STRATEGY. EVEN WITH YOUR MISLY BRAIN JENGEN, YOU'RE W/ AHEAD OF THEM."

"CONCENTRATE!"

SOCK

MMMFF

YURRRKK

LIFE LIVED FROM A SINGULAR POINT IS TEMPESTUOUS, BECAUSE YOU ARE AT THE MERCY OF ALL THE FORCES AROUND YOU.

YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF
THOSE AROUND YOU

WHAT DO
YOU THINK?

WE'VE HAD
BETTER, COLONEL.
THE INDIAN NATIVES ARE
RELENTLESS. OURS KEEP
AT IT ONLY OUT OF
OBLIGATION.

WHAT
ABOUT
JENSEN?

INSTINCTS
AREN'T BAD. NOT THAT
INTERESTED THOUGH. NOT
MUCH OF A SOLDIER,
I'M AFRAID.

MAKE HIM ONE.
BEAT IT INTO HIM IF
YOU HAVE TO.

HAPPILY, SIR.



FOR ME, MY FIRST FEW YEARS IN INDIA SEEMED TO PASS WITHOUT MUCH FANFARE. MY REALITY PASSED RATHER SOBERLY.

RAVI, WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS THIS?

WATER WITH LEMON, AND SOME... MASALA.



I HAD MY MATES--THEY WERE GOOD MEN, BOTH THE NATIVES AND MY FELLOW ENGLISHMEN.

GOOD LORD, WHAT THE HELL IS MASALA?

SOME TURMERIC, DRIED SPICES, PEPPER. CLEANGES THE SOUL.

TASTES LIKE SHIT.



ONLY THE ENGLISH IN THEIR INDULGENT WAYS WOULD KNOW THE TASTE OF OFFAL, SAHIB.



HA... I RAISE MY CUP TO THAT!



AND I HAD MY FAMILY. AS WELL--TESS AND MY BOY, LITTLE JACK.

MEMSAHIB...

HOWDY TESS, LOOKING RADIANT AS EVER.

HA... HA...

IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY FOR US AS WELL. AND SUCH A FINE EVENING SHOULD BE SPENT IN MORE PLEASURABLE COMPANY--NOT WITH THE DREGS OF GENTRY.

EVENING GENTLEMEN. JAMES, I'M GOING TO TAKE JACK IN AND GET HIM CLEANED UP. HE'S HAD ENOUGH FUN FOR TODAY.



BUT THERE ALWAYS REMAINED ONE BLACK CLOUD HOVERING; MY COMMANDING OFFICER, COLONEL TIMOTHY TOWNSEND.



JENSEN, RETIRING SO EARLY? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO KICK BACK ON YOUR OFF-DAYS AND HAVE SOME FUN.



GOOD EVENING, COLONEL.



DON'T GOOD EVENING ME, JENSEN. I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE ME. I DON'T LIKE YOU EITHER. I DON'T LIKE ANY OF YOU. IN FACT I HATE THIS WHOLE ROTTING COUNTRY.



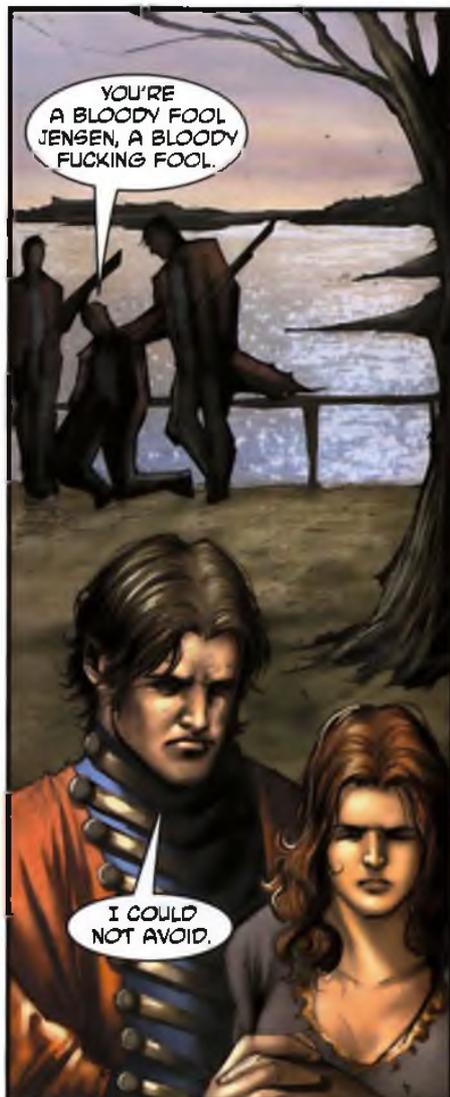
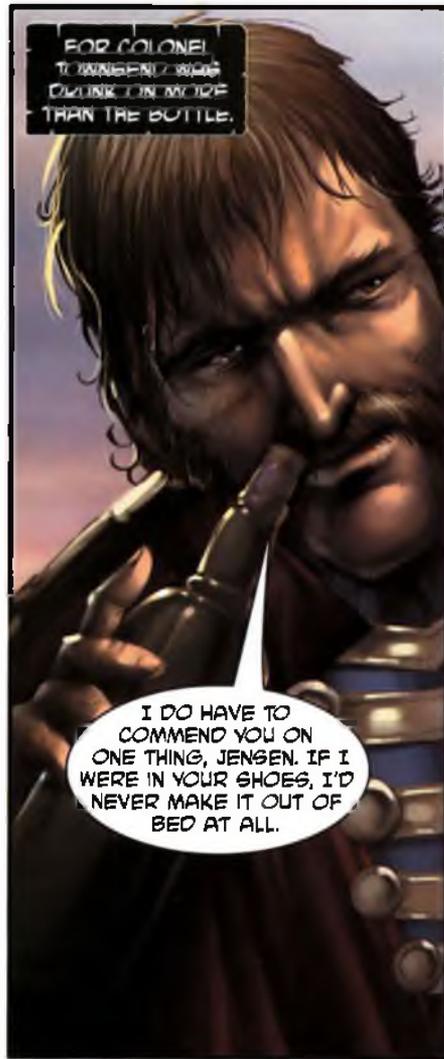
FOR THE MOST PART COLONEL TOWNSEND WAS AN UNLIKABLE FELLOW, BUT WHEN HE HAD HIS IRISH WHISKEY HE BECAME DOWNRIGHT HATEFUL.



YOU MIX WITH THIS BROWN SHIT TOO LONG, YOU BECOME IT.



SIR--PERHAPS IT'S YOU WHO NEED TO RETIRE FOR THE EVENING.





THE THING ABOUT KARMA IS, EVERY ACTION HAS A CONSEQUENCE. AND THOUGH THINGS DRIFT FROM OUR AWARENESS, THOUGH SOMETIMES WE FORGET OR DISMISS THINGS AS INSIGNIFICANT, WE ARE NOT RELIEVED OF OUR FATE.

ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN TROUBLE, JAMES?

DON'T WORRY. HE WON'T EVEN REMEMBER BY MORNING.



ALL OF LIFE IS ONE TANGLED WEB, A GRID OF ACTION AND CONSEQUENCE

ANOTHER LETTER FROM WILLIAM. HE'S BEEN PROMOTED TO A FOREMAN ON THE LOADING DOCK... UNBELIEVABLE!

HE SWORE HE WOULD RUN THE PLACE ONE DAY. HE'S KEEPING HIS PROMISE.



ALL OF LIFE IS IN FACT CONNECTED THROUGH THE GRID...

HE ALWAYS HAS. IT'S HIS BEST TRAIT.



...EVERYTHING IS A PREDECESSOR TO ITSELF.

JAMES - I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU. I AM CARRYING AGAIN. I'M PREGNANT...



THAT'S WONDERFUL... I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF THIS TESS. IT'S GOING TO BE A GIRL. I'VE SEEN HER IN MY DREAMS!



STILL, IT SEEMS THERE ARE THOSE MOMENTS, THOSE INSTANCES IN SPACE AND TIME EMBEDDED IN THE GRID, FROM WHICH FATE IS CONCEIVED.

LOAD YOUR MUSKETS SOLDIERS...



IRONICALLY MY MOMENT, AT FIRST WASN'T EVEN ABOUT ME.



JEMADAR RAVI MANDAL. DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM?

THE PAPER'S BEEN SOAKED IN COW GREASE. THE COW IS SACRED TO US.



I DON'T CARE IF A BLOODY COW SHAT ON IT. IT'S AN ORDER, NATIVE--AND YOU'LL FOLLOW IT!

I CAN'T.



WHACK!



BUT I WAS QUICKLY
CLAWN INTO IT

JENGEN,
APPROACH.

EXECUTE
HIM.

WHAT?



I SUPPOSE IF I WERE THE
SOLDIER THAT TOWNSEND
WANTED ME TO BE, IT WOULD
HAVE NOT BEEN A PROBLEM.
BUT I WAS NOT THAT MAN.

I CAN'T, THIS IS
MANSLAUGHTER!

I WOULD NOT DO
WHAT HE ASKED.

NOW!

I WON'T.



AND SO GREW
MY FATE.

OFFICER
RILEY--KILL THE
INDIAN!

SIR...

CAPTAIN RILEY,
MY PATIENCE
EBBS.

I WON'T
TOLERATE ANYMORE
DEFIANCE!

I CAN'T.

IT'S
EITHER YOU
OR HIM.

PLEASE
COLONEL...

CLICK!



"FORGIVE ME
RAVI...GOD BE
WITH YOU..."

BANG

LATER... SOMEWHERE
HIDDEN IN THE BARRACKS

HAVING GROWN UP AMONG THE LONDON
DICKS WITH MY MOTHER, IT WASN'T THE
FIRST TIME I HAD TAKEN A BEATING.

THOUGH IT WAS
DEFINITELY AN
IMPRESSIVE ONE.

REALLY I'M
QUITE GRATEFUL THAT
YOU'VE GRANTED ME THIS
OPPORTUNITY, CAPTAIN
JENSEN.

SOMETIMES A MAN
JUST HAS THE NEED TO
BEAT THE HELL OUT OF
ANOTHER.

AND DON'T REGARD
THIS AS PAYBACK FOR
WHAT HAPPENED
YESTERDAY.

I'D HAVE DONE
IT ANYWAY.



AT THAT TIME, PHYSICAL ASSAULTS WERE TOLERABLE.

IT JUST GETS BETTER.

BRING THEM IN LLOYD.

BUT EMOTIONAL ONES WERE NOT.

WELCOME TO THE PARTY, MRS. JENSEN. SO GLAD YOU COULD BE WITH US.

IT'S JAMES, IS IT? MAKES IT SO MUCH MORE PERSONAL.

JAMES!

NO!!!

AS YOU ORDERED SIR, I SLIPPED HER AND THE BOY OUT. THE OTHER OFFICERS DIDN'T SEE A THING.

WELL DONE.

TESS...

AND SO MUCH MORE EXCITING. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO RAVISH A WOMAN WITH HER MAN WATCHING.



MY DEAR, I SEE YOU SHARE YOUR HUSBAND'S SPARK. YOU SEE WHERE IT GOT HIM...

YOU'RE AN ANIMAL!

THE KING OF THE JUNGLE...

GIVE ME WHAT I WANT!

NO!







AT THAT EXACT INSTANT IN THE VAST CONTINUUM OF SPACE AND TIME, A PART OF ME, JAMES JENSEN, DIED. PERHAPS I COULD NOT ARTICULATE IT CLEARLY, BUT I CERTAINLY COULD FEEL IT.

UNNHHH



GODDAMN YOU!

GOD DAMNED ME A LONG TIME AGO. I ACCEPTED IT. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

AN INNER SURRENDER A SEAMLESS HAZE OF SHOCK...



...FURY...

AND THEN



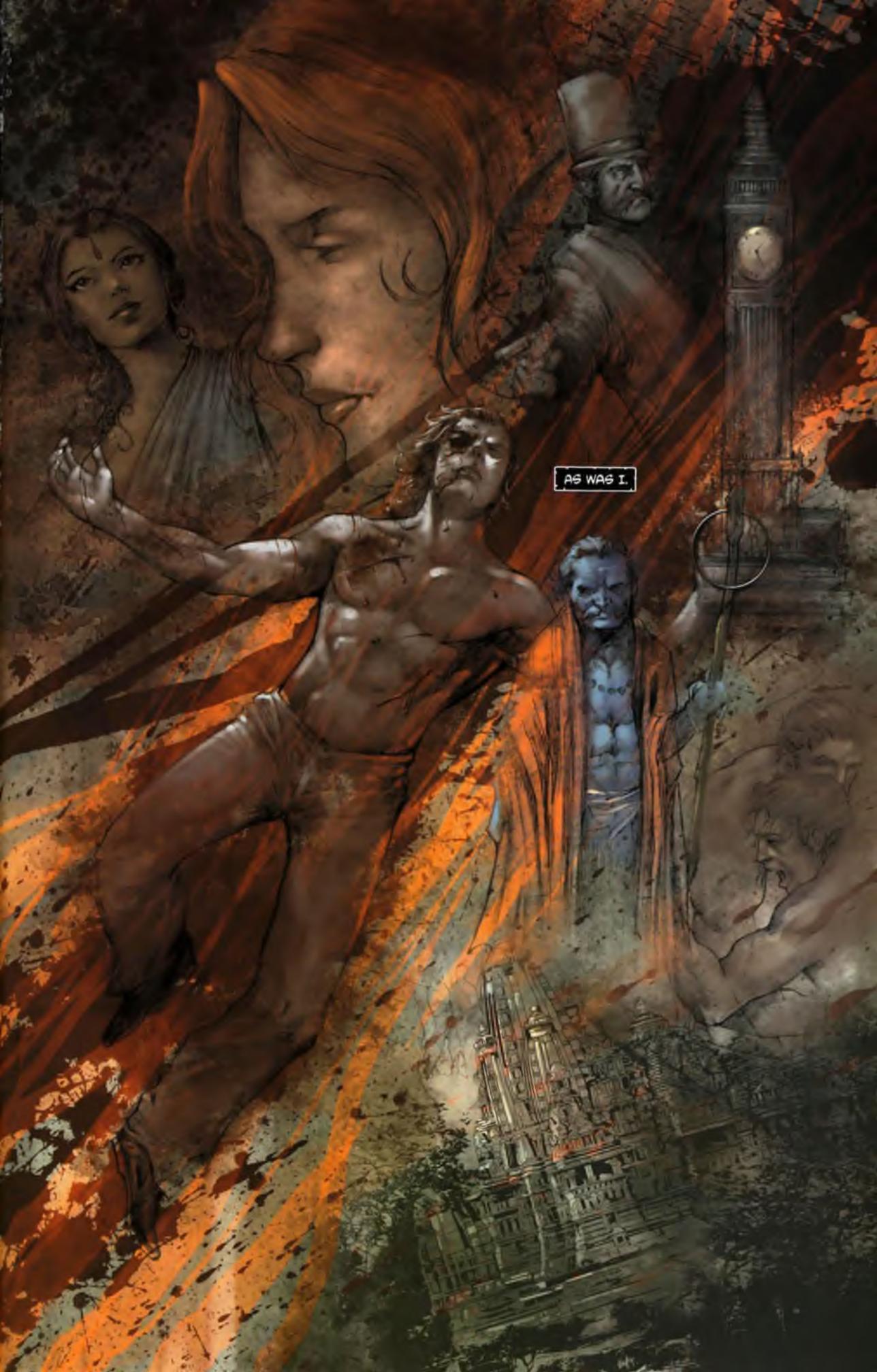
BURY HIM MEN. BUT DON'T KILL HIM TOO FAST. PEACE COMES TO THE DEAD. HELL IS SAVED FOR THE LIVING.

AND THEN EVERYTHING WAS GONE.



ON STANDS SEPTEMBER 2006





AS WAS I.

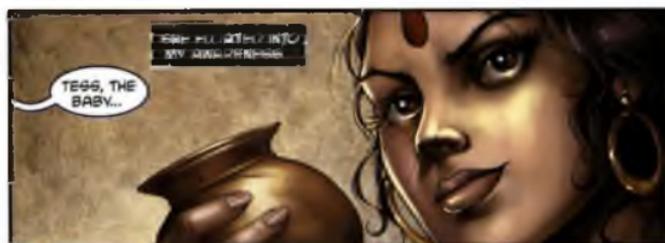
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DC Comics



THOUGH I DO
REMEMBER HER.

IT'S OKAY,
DRINK THIS...

I DON'T
REMEMBER MUCH.



TEGG, THE
BABY...



SHHH...



...LIKE AN ANGEL.

LATER...

I GREW QUITE FOND OF THE EMPTINESS. I FOUND IF I DID NOT MOVE AT ALL, I COULD SIMPLY EXIST AND NOT FEEL. I THOUGHT THIS COCOON OF DARKNESS AND SOLITUDE MAY BECOME MY GRAVE.

BUT THAT WAS NOT MY FATE.

JAMES-- YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME. THE GUARDS WILL BE BACK...

JAMES... JAMES ... WAKE UP!



SO THEN AND THERE...



MY RAGE FLOODED BACK.

THEY'RE DEAD!

STOP!



RILEY--YOU KILLED RAVI. YOU KILLED THEM!

I DID WHAT I HAD TO. NOW THEY'RE GOING TO KILL YOU JAMES...

... UNLESS YOU RUN NOW, JAMES. RUN!

MY FURY POSSESSED ME.

IT IGNITED ME,
SPURRED SOME
INSTINCT TO SURVIVE...



JENSEN'S
ESCAPED! RILEY
BROKE HIM
FREE!



...WHILE OTHERS...



...WOULD NOT.



I WANT THE
BUGGER BACK.
I'M NOT DONE
WITH HIM.



"HE CAN'T GET FAR MEN..."



"...BRING HIM BACK IN
PIECES IF YOU MUST..."



I RAN DEEPER...



...AND DEEPER.



I WANTED TO DO NOTHING
BUT FOLD INTO MYSELF. TO
SURRENDER TO MYSELF AND
SLOWLY DRIFT AWAY FROM
CONSCIOUSNESS.

PERHAPS I DID.



PERHAPS THAT'S
WHERE THEY TOUNDED



FOR IT WAS NOT THEM THAT I ATTACKED.

AHHHHH!!!!



NOR WERE THEY REALLY ATTACKING ME.

FOR WHEN REALITY COLLIDES WITH ITSELF, THE POINT OF VIEW BECOMES IRRELEVANT.



DEATH-EVEN A BRUSH WITH IT-IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER.



THERE IS NO PERSPECTIVE.

HE'S A FIRANG. IT'S HIS TIME...

SURVIVAL, FOR ME, WAS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ACT OF WILL. IT WAS A COLLECTIVE CONSPIRACY, A PART OF THE KARMIC GRID THAT WOULD OPEN A WHOLE NEW REALITY.

NOT YET...



TO BE CONTINUED

The Cobra and the Mongoose

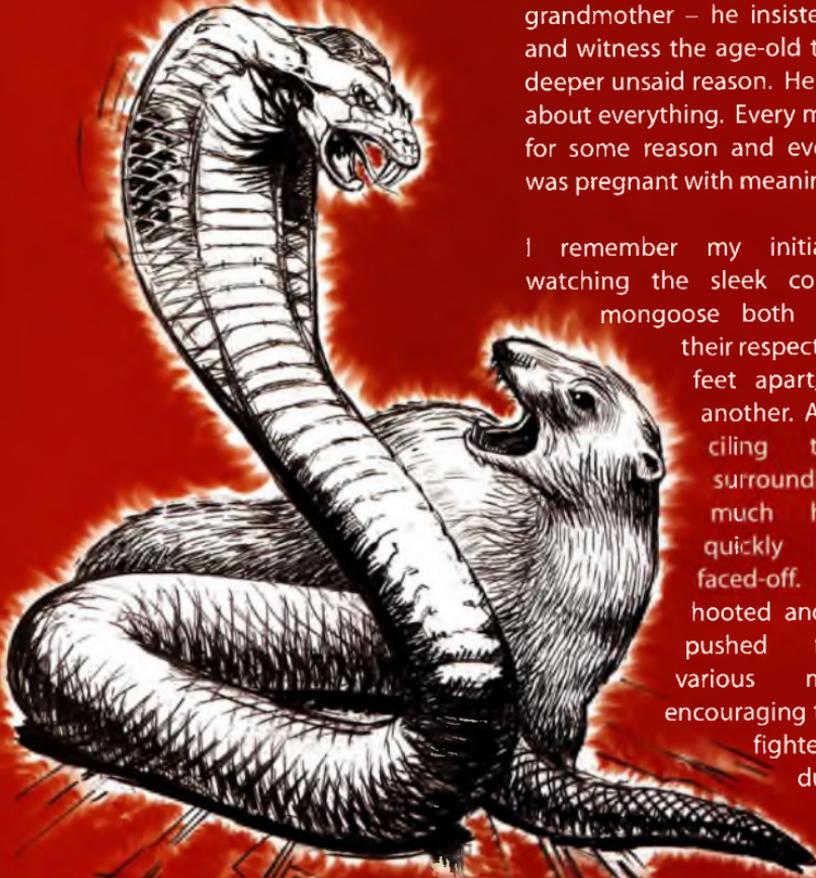
Unlike most of those that crowded around the cobra and the mongoose, my grandfather was a soft-spoken and solemn man, not the type to indulge in the cruel subjugation of the two animals. Still – against the pleadings of my grandmother – he insisted that I come and witness the age-old tussle for some deeper unsaid reason. He was deliberate about everything. Every moment existed for some reason and every experience was pregnant with meaning.

I remember my initial excitement watching the sleek cobra and lean mongoose both released from their respective cages a few feet apart, facing one another. After first reconciling their strange surroundings amidst so much hysteria, they quickly focused and faced-off. The crowd hooted and hollered and pushed forward, the various men crudely encouraging their respective fighters. And so the duel played out, the mongoose

dancing frenetically around the serpent, swatting with its paws at the graceful hooded cobra and the snake, alternatively, dodging the mongoose's reckless assaults, hissing with each move and occasionally spitting back with a singular and precise snap.

I was about 10 years old the first time my grandfather took me to one of the cobra vs. mongoose fights in India. While not as prevalent today as they once were, these duels still exist, especially in the crowded alleyways of the old parts of the city (for me, Delhi) where small throngs congregate and throw down a few rupees to bet on which of the two creatures will survive the battle.

But what started out as fascination and excitement rather quickly turned to horror as both the cobra and mongoose



became weary and I realized that one of these two animals would be killed by the other. There was something very primitive about the whole experience, watching the two hapless beings resort to a game of death because they were cornered into it by a bunch of humans seeking some entertainment during their lunch breaks. After almost half an hour, the mongoose's energy waned until it finally, sadly flopped onto its side and took its last breath. For while it had been swatting energetically at the snake, somewhere along the line, the cobra had landed a hit, buried its fangs into the mongoose and injected its deadly venom. It had happened so fast that no one really knew when exactly the fatal blow had occurred. After landing the fatal hit, the cobra's singular objective was waiting out the inevitability of the mongoose's death and surviving the last bold assaults of the dying creature.

When it was over, the spectators paid off their bets, jibed each other about their losses (or winnings), and retreated back to their lives. Likewise, my grandfather took my hand and led me away silently, not bothering to acknowledge the horrified look frozen on my face, nor to explain why he had brought me there in the first place to witness the fight. That would be up to me to figure out for myself.

Years later, in a small bookshop in old Delhi, I came across an aged text of Indian fables. One chapter described the meaning behind the cobra vs. the mongoose fight and it was then that I suddenly realized what I had ingested so many years ago.

mongoose is not just a struggle for survival between two of God's creatures; it is the eternal cosmic dance between the past and the future, between ancient wisdoms and modern technologies. The cobra, in its wisdom, with patience and presence, waits for the precise moment to strike, knowing that only one bite from its venomous fangs will do the trick. Meanwhile the mongoose dances, relentlessly stalking the serpent, hoping that all its blows will add up and wear the snake down, guaranteeing victory. It is wisdom vs. persistence, and the right balance between the two ensures a clash that can last for hours, even, legend says, the whole day. But if one side is to falter, destruction is imminent.

India is the land of everything. Those of us who have spent considerable time or grown up there affectionately describe India as being, "a lot of everything" or "an assault on all the senses." It is a hard country to reconcile because it is full of contradictions, chalked full of the sacred and profane, the divine and the diabolical, all in excess, all at the same time. The battle between the cobra and the mongoose is no different; it's both crude and cosmic, inhumane and existential all at the same time. They say there is one lesson worth taking away from it: "Do what you must to ensure the duel between the cobra and the mongoose never ends. For when it does, so does everything else."

Deepak Chopra is best known as the author of over forty books including New York Times best-sellers *How to Know God* and *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*. For two decades, Deepak has been at the forefront of bridging the technological miracles of the West with the wisdom of the East.

As Chief Visionary for Virgin Comics, he is the mastermind behind the upcoming *Ramayana Reborn*, a re-imagining of India's greatest myth.



Q: You have had such success in other literary fields, what was it that interested you in taking on the world of superheroes?

DEEPAK CHOPRA: I have always felt that a culture is sustained and nurtured by its myths. Mythical themes influence our behavior and even our habits of consumption. Myth encapsulates the collective imagination, the collective dream, the collective aspirations of society. We are in need of new myths as we move into a global culture. The superheroes of tomorrow will be cross-cultural and transcend nationalistic boundaries. They will provide the raw material for a new imagination that will take us across the seas of space, time, and beyond. I am excited about participating in the creative aspects of the comic project because I see an opportunity to bring to our society a message that goes beyond the narrow boundaries of nationalism, and invites them to a domain of awareness where we experience our universality and hopefully, go beyond racism, ethnocentrism, bigotry, prejudice, and hatred. The new super heroes will be hybrids of all cultures helping us dream infinite possibilities and actualize our highest potential.

Q: Why do you think this is the time to hit the market with such uniquely South Asian stories? Do you feel audiences will be more receptive now?

DC: These same civilizations and cultures from the East have been around for thousands of years. The lands of India and China, the far and south east of Asia have been trading posts and routes for global explorers for millennia. It is fascinating how these enduring spiritual and cultural traditions become "trends" in the west! I think the mere fact that they have been around for so long is indicative of their timeless resonance. I also think that it is time that our narrow walls of nationalism fall down and that the wisdom traditions of the East hopefully can add some direction on how we do that. In the future, I firmly believe that military might will become increasingly irrelevant and that the true super-powers of the future will be driven by their economic and cultural might. In that scenario, Asia will play a very prominent role — is already doing so.

Q: How will your depiction of superheroes differ from the typical American hero?

DC: What is a superhero after all? It is the representation of some of our greatest aspirations and ideals. The Superhero is the manifestation of our collective vision of what we wish our leaders to be and, to some extent, what we wish ourselves to be. What some western superheroes have done superbly is reveal a darker shadow self that is actually a very spiritual and eastern characteristic. That is to say, that the eastern traditions tell us that there is no separation between sinner and saint, the divine and the diabolical, or the sacred and the profane. They are just different sides to the same seminal state. Even our Gods and Goddesses are not immune to things like jealousy and rage. We'll definitely look to build these fundamental archetypes into the souls of our superheroes as we build them.

Q: Deepak Chopra, the comic creator, seems pretty far from where you started as a physician. Why this now?

DC: My whole life's work has been about the telling of good stories. Much of my career has been about bringing some of the traditions of the East — mostly in healing and spirituality — to the doorstep of the West. I know firsthand the appetite amongst many around the world for the messages and wisdom of India and Asia and I also know from growing up in India, the amazing and sensuous stories of our ancestry. What we are doing through Virgin Comics and Virgin Animation is really just another playground for me to tell more stories that will educate, enlighten, and most importantly entertain readers around the world.

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