

Virgin
COMICS

ISSUE 4

THE

Saiyaku



CHOPRA | MANIKANDAN



Story so far...

Having left Victorian England for a life in the army, now in India, James Jensen finds himself in a unit commanded by the ruthless Colonel Timothy Townsend - a man charged with the task of suppressing a recent mutiny amongst the native soldiers. The two are instant adversaries.

One evening, during a casual break from regular military regimen, and in the company of his wife Tess and his fellow soldiers, James rebukes a drunk Townsend for coming onto his wife.

In the weeks that follow, Tess announces that she is carrying another child, and James draws the final straw with Townsend when he refuses to kill his Indian platoon mate Ravi Mandal, upon Townsend's orders. Later that evening, soldiers loyal to Townsend corner James in the barracks and start beating him up. To add to James' agony, they bring in Tess and their boy Jack, and make James watch as Townsend tries to sexually assault her. James retaliates but is outnumbered and at the mercy of the gun wielding soldiers. Townsend, in one horrendous move, kills Tess, slitting her throat, leaving a defeated James to his henchmen.

However, under the cover of midnight, James is set free by his friend Hugh Riley, who is summarily shot dead by Townsend for his collaboration. James, weak and in delirium, flees into the forest as the soldiers give chase. As he gets deeper and deeper into the dense jungle, exhausted, he runs into a band of Indian outlaws who subdue him with their native weapons. One of the brutes prepares to deliver the final blow when he is stopped by an old man... their leader... a shaman...

Wearied and in a deep delirium, James is taken by the natives deep into the jungle to their encampment. It's here that their enigmatic old leader leads James through a psychological journey that challenges his so-called reality. Unsure of what is happening to him in this strange place and unsure of his own sudden flimsy identity, James gets his first glimpse of the world of Sâdhuis. Only to discover it's not very real...because, nothing is very real.



SUFFERING
COMES FROM
ATTACHMENT...



ATTACHMENT TO
THOSE YOU LOVE, AND
ARE EMOTIONALLY
BONDED TO...



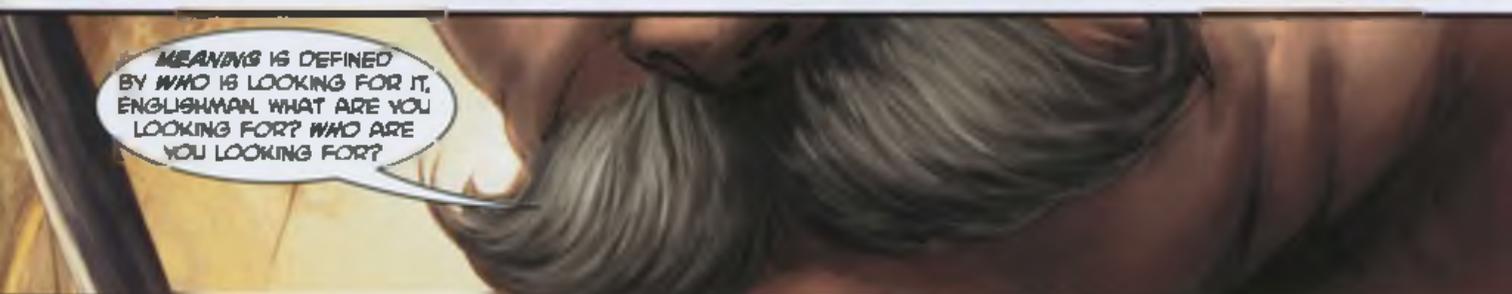
ATTACHMENT TO
THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE
MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU
THAN YOUR OWN.

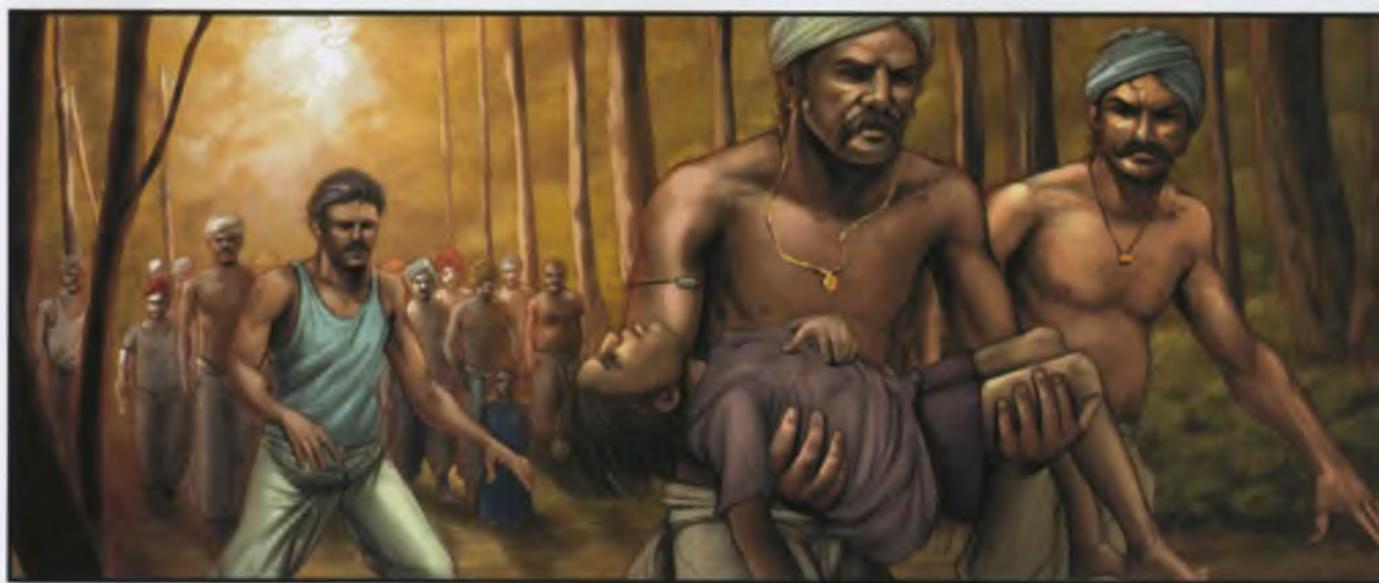
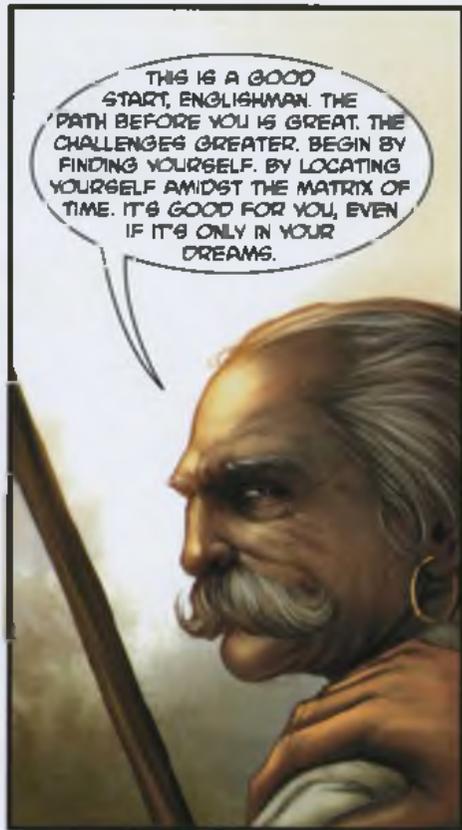
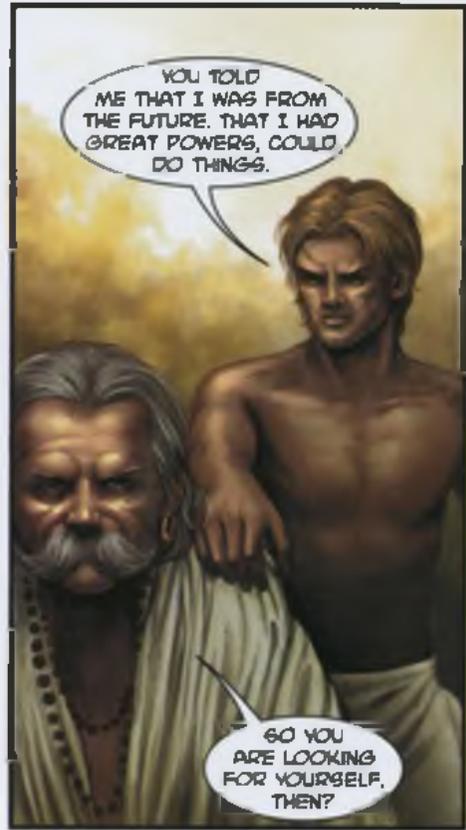


THOSE YOU WOULD DO
ANYTHING... ANYTHING TO
PRESERVE AND PROTECT.



SUFFERING. THE
WORD DOESN'T EVEN
BEGIN TO CAPTURE
THE FEELING YOU
HAVE INSIDE.



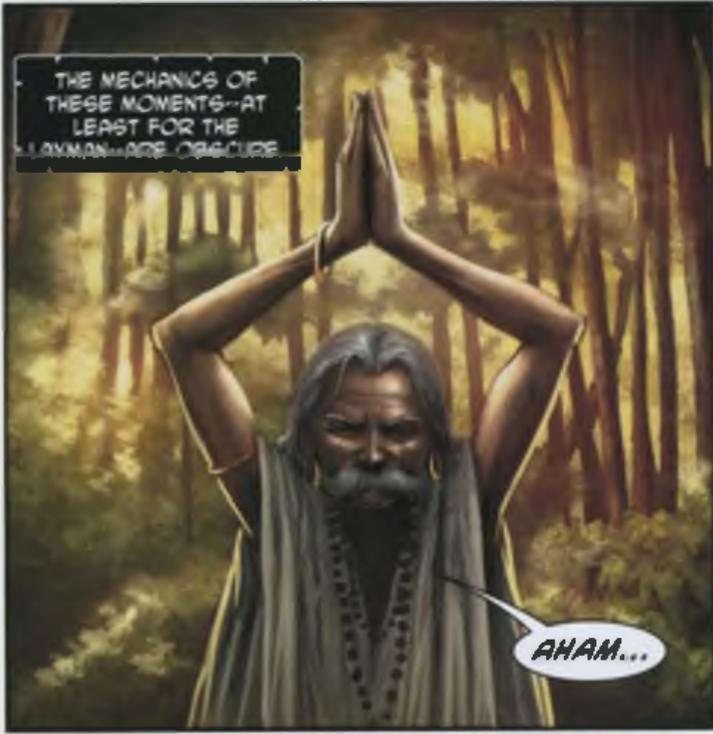




THERE ARE CERTAIN MOMENTS IN TIME WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGES. NOT JUST FOR YOU, BUT FOR EVERYONE, THE COURSE OF TIME ITSELF IS CHANGED.

SHHH... ABHI BE CALM...

GRRRR...



THE MECHANICS OF THESE MOMENTS--AT LEAST FOR THE LAYMAN--ARE OBSCURE.

AHAM...



"SEEING IS BELIEVING."

SHHH... IT'S NOT YOUR TIME, ABHI. IT'S NOT YOUR TIME.



OTHERS WILL SAY "BELIEVING IS SEEING."

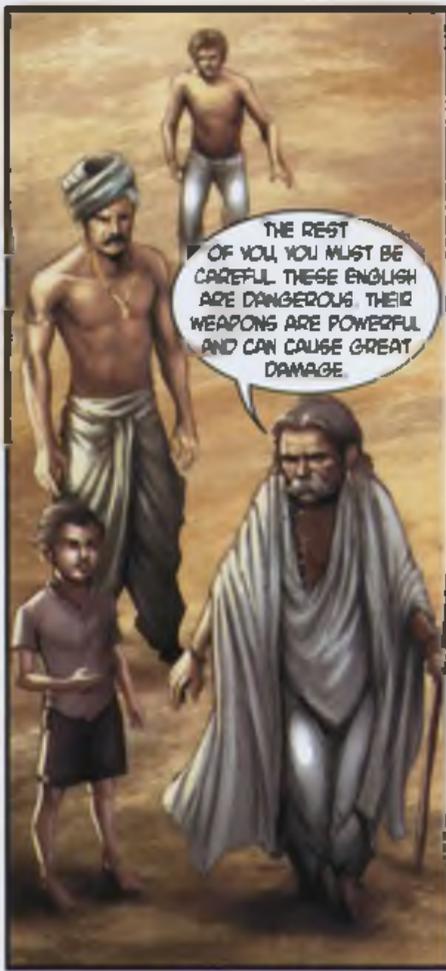
DON'T BE SO FOOLISH. NEXT TIME, YOU MAY NOT BE SO LUCKY.



FOR ME, AT THAT MOMENT...



...NEITHER APPLIED.



THE REST OF YOU YOU MUST BE CAREFUL. THESE ENGLISH ARE DANGEROUS. THEIR WEAPONS ARE POWERFUL AND CAN CAUSE GREAT DAMAGE.



HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

HE HAD A STOMACH WOUND. HE WAS BLEEDING TO DEATH, AND YOU STOPPED IT.



CAN YOU TEACH ME HOW TO DO THAT?

IT'S NOT A MAGIC TRICK, ENGLISHMAN. AND NO--I CANNOT RAISE THE DEAD. AND NEITHER CAN YOU.



BUT I SAW YOU... I SAW YOU...



YOU DID THAT INTENTIONALLY. JUST TO MESS WITH ME! WHY ARE YOU MESSING WITH ME? WITH MY HEAD?



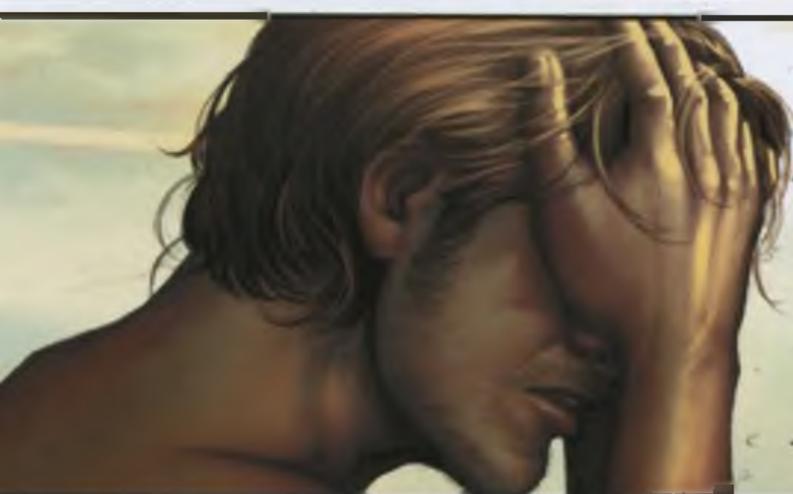
LET GO OF ME! LET GO!!!



GODDAMN YOU! GODDAMN YOUR BORGERY! IT WAGN'T THEIR TIME EITHER...

LET HIM GO...

I'M SO SORRY, TESS. I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING. I COULDN'T...



CRACKKKKKK!

I BROUGHT YOU AND JACK HERE AND I WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT YOU. YOU DIDN'T WANT TO, AND I FORCED YOU. I'M SO SORRY...



WE'VE GOT HIM!
WE'VE GOT HIM!



TRAITOR!!!!!!

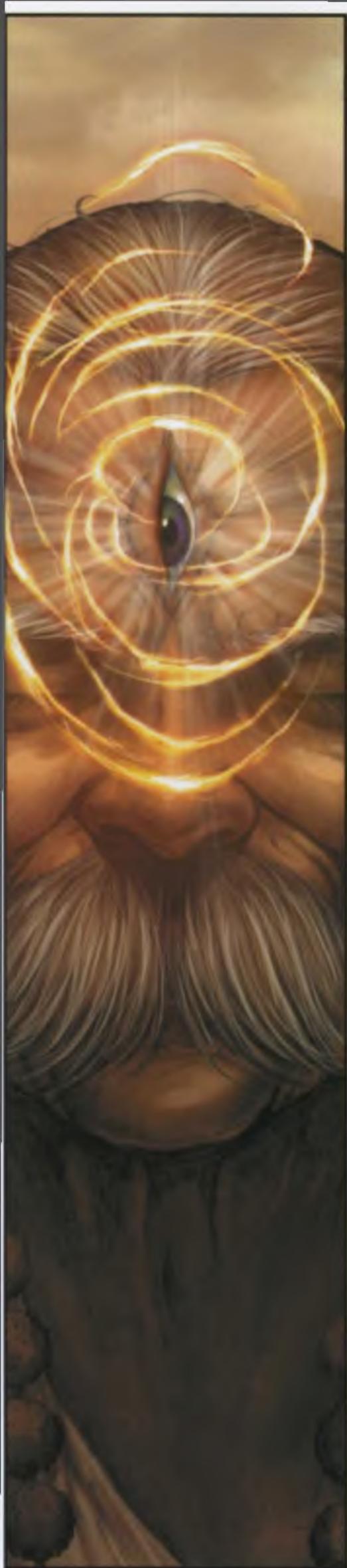


NAB HIM ALIVE FOR THE COLONEL!











UM, CAN YOU
TEACH ME HOW
TO DO THAT?

LATER

I WILL TEACH YOU, JAMES, ALL THAT I KNOW, ON ONE CONDITION.

WHATEVER IT IS, I ACCEPT.

WOULD YOU RATHER NOT HEAR IT BEFORE COMPLYING SO EASILY?

I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO BELIEVE, NO CONVENTION LEFT TO OBSERVE, OR EVEN RESPECT. I CANNOT IMAGINE WHAT YOU MIGHT REQUEST THAT I WOULD DEFY.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I PROMISE TO FOLLOW YOU, NOT TO DEFY YOU. YOU BE THE TEACHER, AND I'LL BE THE STUDENT.

ONE DAY YOU WILL DEFY ME JAMES. AND ON THAT DAY, OUR TIME TOGETHER WILL BE UP. I ONLY ASK THAT YOU CHOOSE THAT DAY WISELY.

OKAY, JAMES. OKAY...



YOU'LL BURN IT RIGHT BLOODY OFF.



YOUR FIRST LESSON: THE MIND IS YOUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON.



THE MIND IS THE AGGREGATOR OF ALL PERCEPTION, THE DETERMINER OF EVERYTHING AROUND US.



SO THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU TELL ME THAT YOUR MIND OVERCAME WHAT I JUST SAW? THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO RESIST THE PHYSICS OF FIRE?



AND THAT IF I JUST BELIEVE IT, I CAN DO THE SAME.

NO, JAMES.



I WAS NOT SPEAKING OF MY MIND RESISTING FIRE. I WAS SPEAKING ABOUT YOURS, CONVINCED THAT YOU SAW ME DOING SOMETHING AND DRAWING A CONCLUSION FROM IT... IT'S YOUR MIND JAMES, THAT NEEDS THE WORK, NOT MINE.

CLOSE YOUR EYES.



YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D SEE THE DAY, DID YOU? HOLDING YOUR GRANDSON IN YOUR ARMS? HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE JAMES JENSEN, THE GRANDFATHER?

IT FEELS... IT FEELS... UNREAL.



IT'S NOT REAL... IS IT?



IT COULD HAVE BEEN...



IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN. ALL REALITY IS MADE UP OF MULTIPLE FREQUENCIES. THE REALITY YOU SEE IS DETERMINED BY WHAT FREQUENCY YOU ARE TAPPED INTO...



THE FREQUENCY YOU TAP INTO IS DETERMINED BY THE CHOICES YOU MAKE, THE CHOICE YOU MADE--CONSCIOUS AND OTHERWISE...



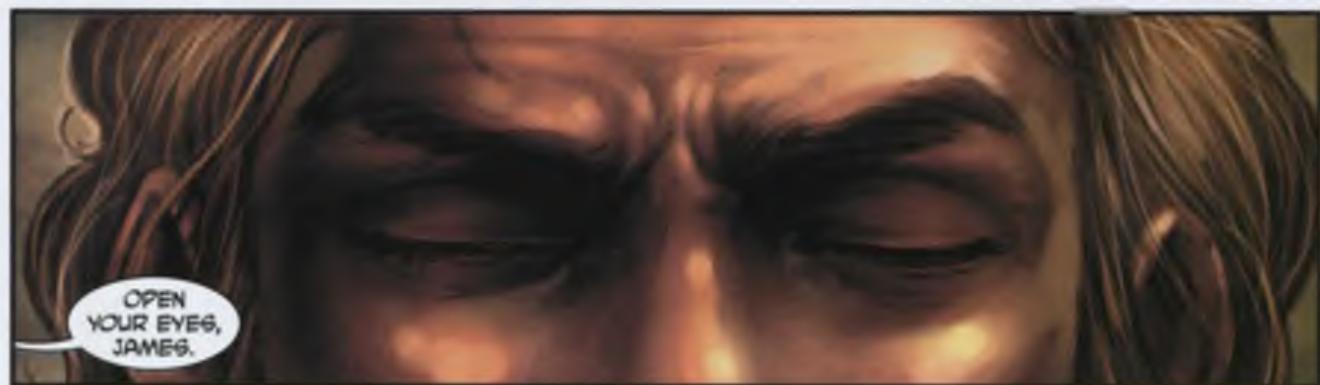
INDIA? JAMES,
THAT'S THE OTHER
SIDE OF THE WORLD, SO
FAR AWAY FROM
HERE?



EXACTLY. FAR
AWAY FROM
HERE...



OPEN
YOUR EYES,
JAMES.





BUT HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW? THERE WAS NO WAY FOR ME TO KNOW THAT COMING TO INDIA MEANT...

EVERY CHOICE YOU MAKE IS PART OF THE TANGLED HIERARCHY THAT IS KARMA. YOUR CHOICE AFFECTS THE LIVES, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, OF ALL THOSE AROUND YOU. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEN, WHAT YOU KNOW NOW. WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN.



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT IT'S MY FAULT TESS AND JACK ARE DEAD?! THAT THEIR BLOOD IS ON MY HANDS? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?



PERHAPS WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT YOU ARE NOT JUST RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WIFE AND CHILD, BUT THAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYONE, AND FOR EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE, ALWAYS. PERHAPS THIS IS THE WAY TO START THINKING.

PERHAPS, MAN
IS NOT INSIDE
THE EARTH--

BUT EVERYTHING
IS INSIDE OF HIM.

PERHAPS, MAN IS NOT
THE PRODUCT OF ALL
THINGS AROUND HIM--

PERHAPS, ALL
THINGS ARE THE
PRODUCT OF HIM.



I AM LOST...
I HAVE NOTHING LEFT.
I WANT TO UNDERSTAND
YOU. UNDERSTAND WHAT
YOU ARE SAYING.



SOMETHING STILL
REMAINS INSIDE OF YOU,
JAMES. ALL IS NOT
LOST IN YOU...



PLEASE HELP
ME... PLEASE...



OKAY... I
WILL HELP YOU
FIND WHAT IT IS YOU
REALLY WANT...



3 YEARS LATER



THEY CALL THESE MYSTICS IN INDIA, SADHUS.

THESE SADHUS ARE PERHAPS MOST SO-CALLED SUPER-POWERS, AMONGST THEM, THE ABILITY TO MANIPULATE TIME ITSELF.



OUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN WHO HAVE TRAVELED TO THE REGION FIND THESE TO BE THE MOST INTRIGUING OF ALL THE NATIVES. THEY SAY THEY ARE LIKE LIVING PHILOSOPHERS.

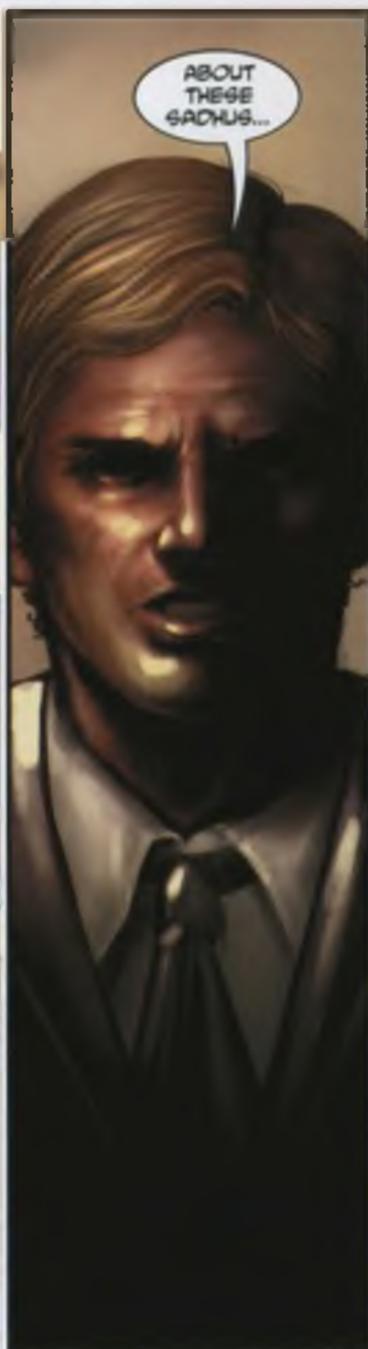


UNFORTUNATELY, UNLIKE THE SADHUS, WE ARE SHORT ON TIME AND CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT.



WE'LL PICK UP HERE NEXT TIME.







WELL, LET
ME SEE A GREAT
MANY THINGS
ACTUALLY.

SHARP INSTRUMENTS LIKE
SWORDS AND KNIVES GOING CLEAR
THROUGH THEIR BODIES WITHOUT ANY
ANATOMICAL DISRUPTION.



THE ABILITY TO
WITHSTAND HEAT - TO
WALK THROUGH FIRE.

TO SIT STILL FOR MONTHS
ON END, WITHOUT FOOD OR
EVEN WATER, IN A DEEP
INNER CONTEMPLATION,
OR MEDITATION AS
THEY CALL IT.

AND OF COURSE, MY
PERSONAL FAVORITE.
THE ABILITY TO ELLUDE
DETECTION, OR IN OTHER
WORDS, *INVISIBILITY!*





SOUNDS LIKE SOME INTERESTING STUFF. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?



WHAT I MAKE OF IT...

YES - YOU? DO YOU BELIEVE IT?



OH, I THINK IT'S QUITE THE FAIRY TALE NONSENSE. YOU KNOW, THE PRODUCT OF UNCIVILIZED MEN, ALBERT WITH GREAT IMAGINATIONS, IGNITED BY THEIR OWN BOREDOM.

BUT THAT'S JUST MY OPINION.

VERY WELL, SIR. SEE YOU TOMORROW I SUPPOSE.

OH PROFESSOR --ONE MORE THING...



HOW ABOUT FLYING? YOU KNOW--LEVITATION?



OF COURSE, THE GRANDMASTER OF THEM ALL. SURE--IT IS ONE OF THE MORE MENTIONED ABILITIES, JUST AS ABSURD AS THE OTHERS, IF NOT THE MOST.



HOW WERE
ARE YOU
PROFESSIONIST?

TO BE CONTINUED



GUY RITCHIE
ANDY DIGGLE



**GAME
KEEPER**





COMING SOON FROM THE ASURA ANALOGUES

AFGHANISTAN, 2001 - DEVASTATED BY WAR AND TERRORISM.
IT IS SAID THAT THIS LAND BREEDS TERROR. NOT UNTRUE.
FOR CENTURIES, MILLENNIA SOMETHING SINISTER HAD BEEN BURIED DEEP
BENEATH THE ROCKS AND SAND, UNTIL THE MILITANTS UNRAVELED ITS SECRET.
NOW, SOMETHING IMMENSELY MORE EVIL AND DANGEROUS THAN
TERRORISTS IS RAPIDLY SPREADING.

WHO WILL STOP THEM?

FIVE MEN...

STORM...ROCKS...BLOOD...SAND...GUNS...FANGS...TERROR...COURAGE...DEMONS...
DEATH...

VIRULENTS™

ON STANDS JANUARY 2007



ISSUE 5

THE
Saidhu



CHOPRA | MANIKANDAN

The
Red
Star

