

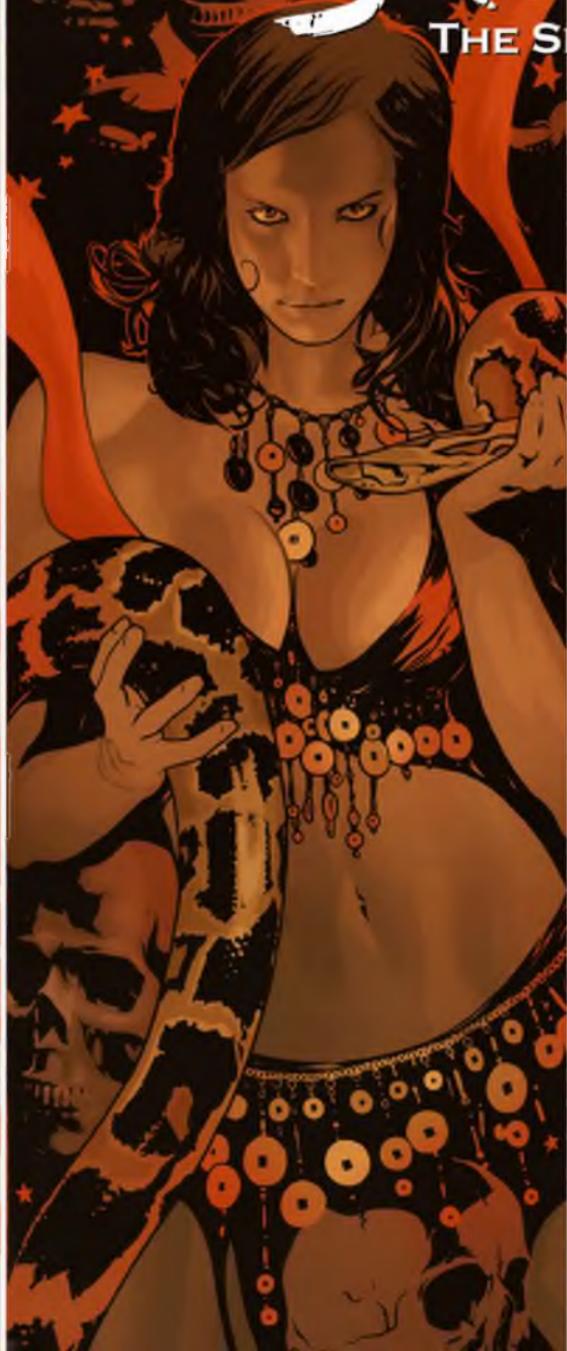
Virgin
COMICS

ISSUE 5 of 5

THE

SARATHI

THE SILENT ONES



MOHAPATRA
MANIKANDAN

THE **sadhu**

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PREVIOUSLY...

James Jensen came to 19th-century India as a soldier in Her Majesty's Army. Marked as a traitor by his cruel commanding officer, **Col. Townsend**, for defending the indigenous population, Jensen's family was massacred before his eyes. Hunted as a deserter after escaping imprisonment, James found refuge with the enigma **Dadathakur**, who initiated him into the ways of the Sadhu, mystic warriors of legend. Spurred by vengeance, James killed Townsend in a climactic battle.

His spiritual quest unfinished, James drifted through life without sense of purpose or ambition. But at the Kumbh Mela, the greatest gathering of mystics known to man, James encountered the evil cult of the Silent Ones, led by their **Grand Mistress**. She revealed to James that his son **Jack** was still alive, and was now her prisoner. As the Grand Mistress prepared to trap James in her thrall, the Sadhu was whisked away to Limbo, where he was greeted by a mysterious stranger named **Trishanku**. Upon returning to our plane of existence, they met Trishanku's blood brother **Dhanvantari**, a master healer. **Dhanvantari** warned James and Trishanku that the Grand Mistress planned to sacrifice Jack during the coming eclipse, unleashing demonic forces into the world. James and Trishanku made a mad dash through the forests, and reached the stronghold of the Silent Ones at the very hour of the eclipse.





I GIVE YOU WILLINGLY THE BLOOD OF MY OWN VEINS...



...WITH THE HEARTS THAT I TOOK FROM THE SYLVAN NYMPHS.



RISE, MY DEMON LORDS, MASTERS OF DAKSHINAYAN.



YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT CALLS UPON YOU.



VISAKHA, DAUGHTER OF THE DEMONS...



...IS IT ALREADY THE TIME OF THE PASSING?

INDEED, THE HOUR HAS COME, MY LORDS. THE ECLIPSE BEGINS IN MERE MOMENTS.



EXCELLENT.

WE SEE YOU'VE
ARRANGED FOR THE
SACRIFICE. WHAT
ABOUT THE HYMN TO
BREACH THE
DOORWAY?

WORRY NOT
ABOUT THAT, MY
MASTERS. SOON YOU
SHALL BE FREE TO
ROAM IN THIS
WORLD.

I HAVE SENT
OUT MY ELITE
WARRIORS...

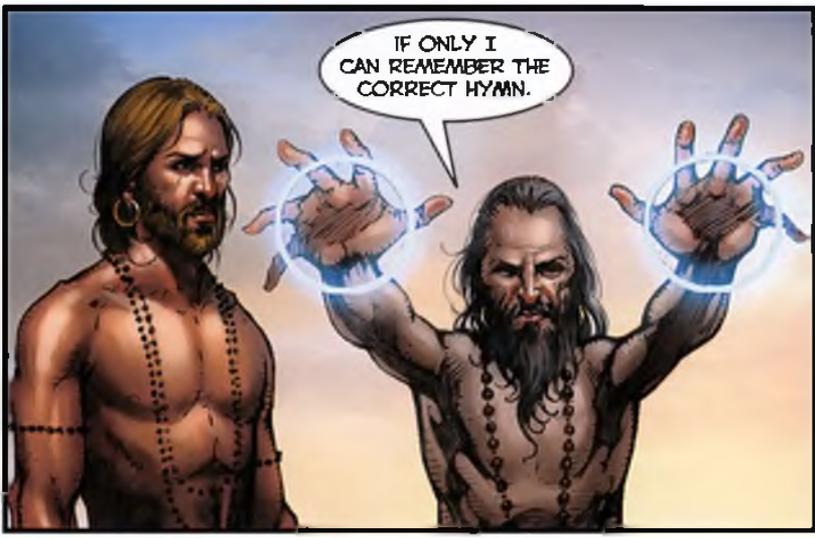


"... FOR THE SADHU AWAITS AT MY DOOR."

THIS WON'T EVEN BUDGE. MAYBE I SHOULD JUST **BLAST** IT, TRISHANKU?

PATIENCE, JAMES JENSEN. THIS DOOR IS PROTECTED BY POWERFUL SPELLS.

IT CAN... **RETALIATE.**



IF ONLY I CAN REMEMBER THE CORRECT HYMN.



LOOK...



...YOU DID IT.

I **DID**? BUT I WAS NOT EVEN **CHANTING**. I COULD NOT REMEMBER THE CORRECT HYMN.



DAMNATION. I AM AFRAID THE TIME FOR **STEALTH** HAS PASSED, SADHU...



... OUR PRESENCE
HERE IS NO LONGER
A SECRET TO THE
SILENT ONES.



WELL, AT LEAST
THE DOOR'S OPEN. THAT'S
ALL WE NEEDED.

YOU ARE A
BEACON OF OPTIMISM,
JAMES JENSEN.



AH, GLIB AS
EVER, BROTHER
TRISHANKU?

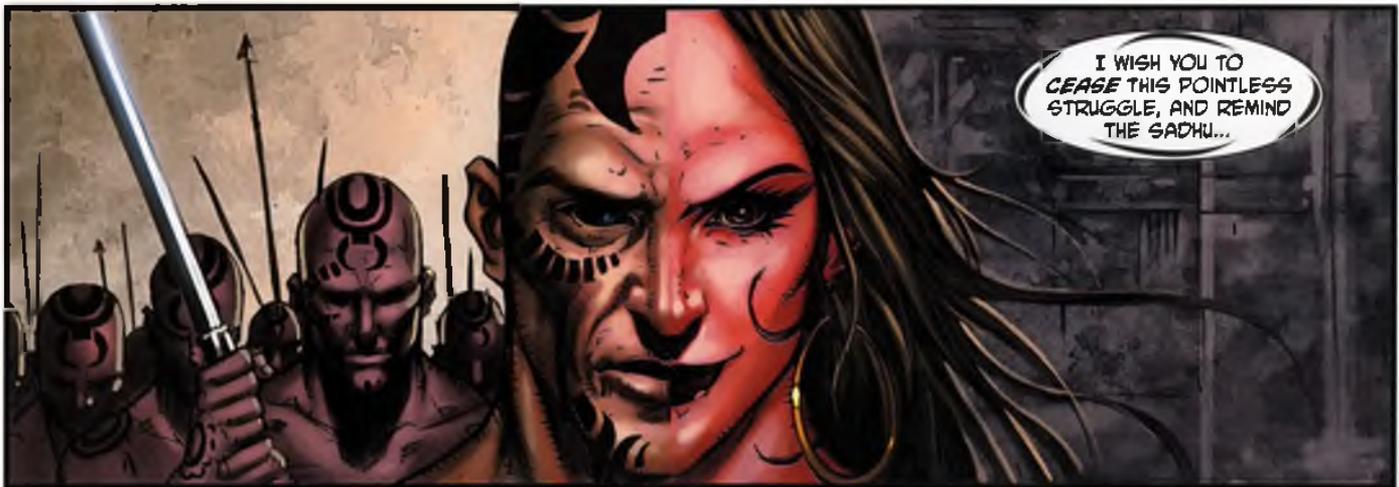


VISAKHA?
HOW?

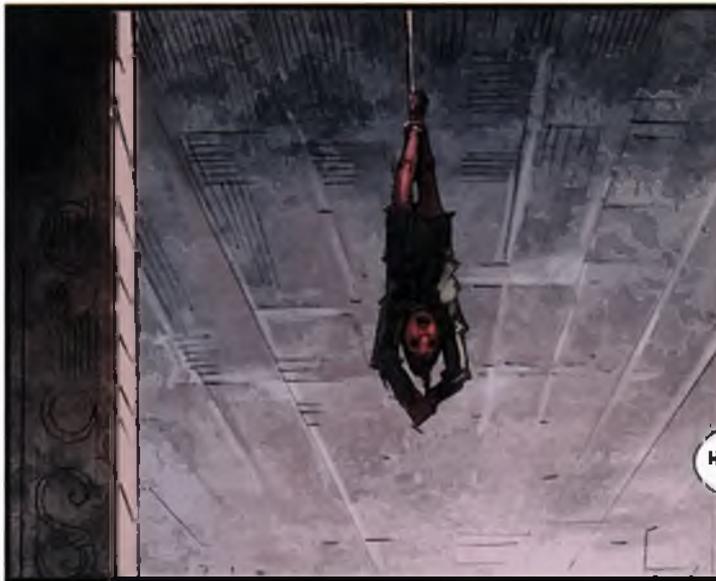
YOU UNDERESTIMATE
MY POWERS AGAIN. THESE
SILENT ONES ARE MY PLAYTHINGS,
BODY, SOUL AND MIND.
MY MIND REACHES OUT
THROUGH THEIRS.



I MUST WARN
YOU THAT YOU
FIGHT A FUTILE
BATTLE.



I WISH YOU TO
CEASE THIS POINTLESS
STRUGGLE, AND REMIND
THE SADHU...



...THAT I HOLD HIS SON HOSTAGE.



YOU'LL **SLAUGHTER** THE BOY ANYWAY, YOU DEVIOUS WITCH. YOU NEED HIS BLOOD TO OPEN THE DOOR FOR THE DEMONS OF DAKSHINAYAN.



MAYBE IT'S I WHO HAVE UNDERESTIMATED THE SHARPNESS OF YOUR MIND, BROTHER. BUT WHO SAID I WAS GOING TO **KILL** THE BOY?



PERHAPS IF YOU **BEHAVE** I SHALL BE REMINDED OF MORE **CIVIL** WAYS TO GET A FEW DROPS OF BLOOD.

STOP, JAMES JENSEN.



ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR **MIND**, TRISHANKU? WE'RE **WINNING!**

WOULD YOU RISK YOUR SON'S **LIFE** FOR THAT? VISAKHA JUST SPOKE TO ME VIA HER MINIONS. SHE PROMISES NOT TO KILL JACK...

...IF WE **SURRENDER.**



CAN WE **TRUST** HER?



SHE IS INDEED *DEVIOUS*, BUT I THINK OUR FIGHT HERE IS *FUTILE*, JAMES JENSEN.

LET GO OF ME. THAT WITCH HAS POISONED YOUR MIND!



PLEASE, JAMES. TRUST ME. I HOLD THE BEST INTERESTS OF YOU AND YOUR SON IN MY HEART.

WE CANNOT DO MUCH TO HELP THE CHILD WHILE WE ARE *OUT HERE*.



AS LONG AS SHE HOLDS JACK HOSTAGE...



"...WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE."

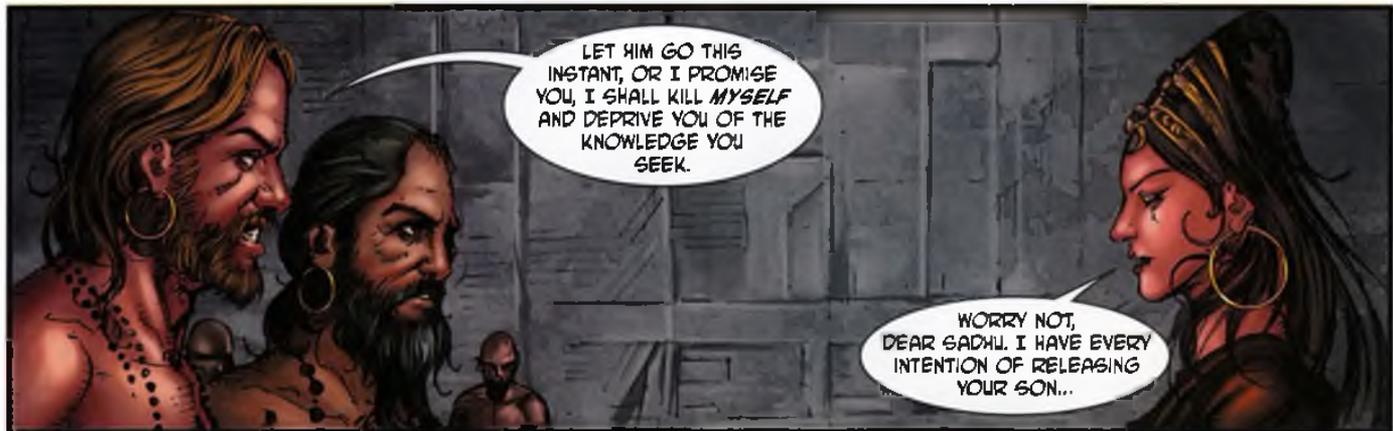


SO FINALLY YOU CHOOSE TO SEE REASON, SADHU.

FATHER? IS THAT YOU? HELP ME, FATHER!

JACK!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM, WITCH? LET HIM GO!

WE HAVE KEPT OUR END OF THE BARGAIN, VISAKHA. IT IS TIME YOU HONORED YOURS. RELEASE THE BOY.



LET HIM GO THIS INSTANT, OR I PROMISE YOU, I SHALL KILL MYSELF AND DEPRIVE YOU OF THE KNOWLEDGE YOU SEEK.

WORRY NOT, DEAR SADHU. I HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF RELEASING YOUR SON...



... BUT FIRST I MUST HAVE THAT WHICH I SEEK.

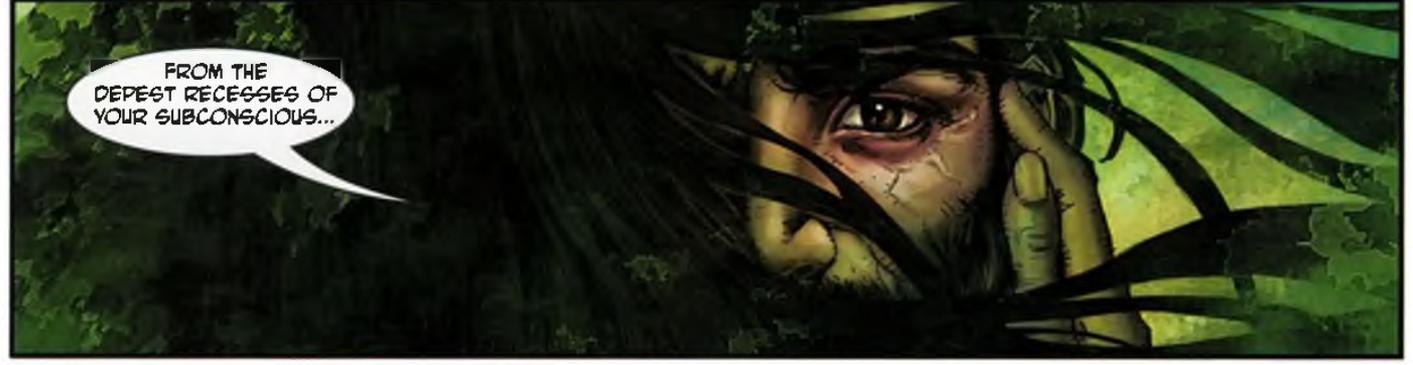


WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THIS IS NOT WHAT WE AGREED UPON!

YOUR NAIVETE NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME, TRISHANKU.



OPEN YOUR MIND TO ME, JAMES JENSEN.



FROM THE DEEPEST RECESSES OF YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS...



...FROM THE WELL OF YOUR MEMORIES, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE...



...GIVE UNTO ME THE ULTIMATE KNOWLEDGE...





WITH THE BLOOD
OF THIS INNOCENT,
WHO KNOWS NOT
THE TOUCH OF
SIN...



...I KNOCK
AGAINST THE
DOORWAY THAT HOLDS
MY DEMON KIN.



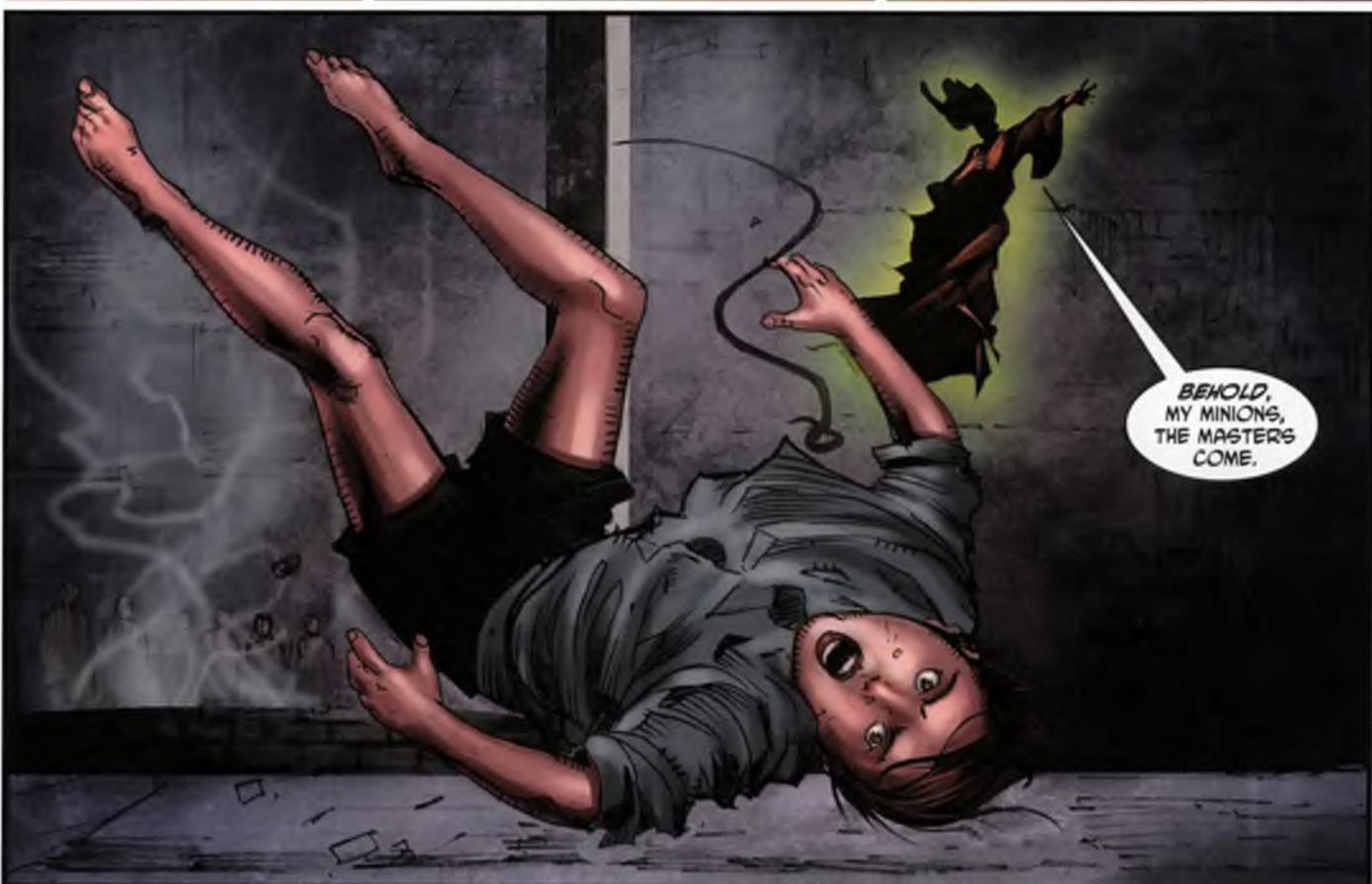
I BID THE LIGHT
FAREWELL, AND CALL
UPON THE ETERNAL
DARK.



COME, MY BROTHERS,
MY MASTERS, AS THE
VOICE OF YOUR SERVANT
YOU DO HARK.



RISE FROM YOUR
SLUMBER AND HEAR
MY CALL.







I AM AFRAID ALL HOPE IS LOST.



AWAKEN, JAMES JENSEN.

HHNN!

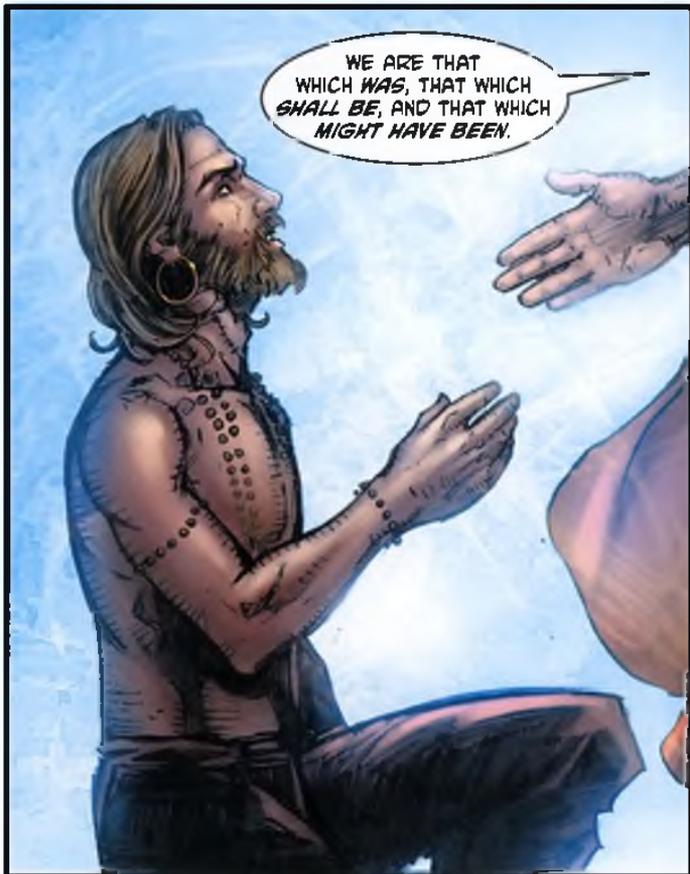


WHERE AM I?

THE HOUR OF AWAKENING COMES, JAMES.



WHO'S THERE? WHERE AM I?



WE ARE THAT WHICH WAS, THAT WHICH SHALL BE, AND THAT WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN.



WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?

WE ARE YOU, JAMES, AND YOU ARE US...



...AND WE
ARE SADHU.

THE DEMONS
MUST NOT PREVAIL.
WE GIVE YOU OUR WISDOM,
OUR STRENGTH AND
OUR PRAYERS.

SHUN YOUR MORTAL
LIMITS, FOR YOU ARE
THE RADIANT, IRRIDISCENT
WARRIOR OF THE
SPIRIT.



RISE, SON OF
MAN, AWAKEN YOUR
CHAKRAS, FREE
YOUR MIND...



...FOR YOU
ARE SADHU.



WE SHALL MOURN THE PASSING OF YOUR FATHER LATER, CHILD. I MUST GET YOU TO SAFETY FIRST.



I FEAR GREATER TRAVAILS AWAIT US HERE.



TRUER LAST WORDS WERE NEVER SPOKEN, BROTHER TRISHANKU.



PREPARE TO FOLLOW THE SADHU INTO THE AFTERLIFE.



BE BRAVE, SON OF JENSEN. DO NOT GIVE THIS WITCH THE SATISFACTION OF SEEING YOU AFRAID.



WHAT TRICKERY IS THIS?

MY GOD!

BEGONE, DEMONS OF DAKHINAYAN...



...THE POWER OF THE SADHU COMMANDS YOU!



WILL YOU NEVER DIE?



YOU FIRST.



AAAAH!



YOU SHALL DIE MOST HORRIBLY FOR THIS, SADHU!



DEATH AWAITS US ALL...



...I SHALL WELCOME MINE WHEN THE TIME COMES.

KILL THEM ALL!



BUT TODAY...
...IS NOT...
...THAT DAY.



AAAGH!

YOU HAVE SERVED THE DEMONS LONG ENOUGH.



PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPEND THE REST OF ETERNITY IN THE PIT WITH THEM.



NO!



MOST IMPRESSIVE, JAMES JENSEN.

FATHER!

MY BOY...

DON'T EVER LEAVE ME AGAIN, FATHER. PROMISE ME.

I PROMISE, JACK.



DO YOU HEAR THAT, JAMES? THE GROUND RUMBLES.



THE STRONGHOLD SITS ON A DORMANT VOLCANO. IT APPEARS VISAKHA'S **DEATH THROES** HAVE MADE IT LIVE AGAIN.

THIS PLACE BEGINS TO TEAR ITSELF APART.



WE MUST FIND A WAY OUT BEFORE THE VOLCANO ERUPTS..

STAY CLOSE TO ME, JACK.



WATCH OUT!



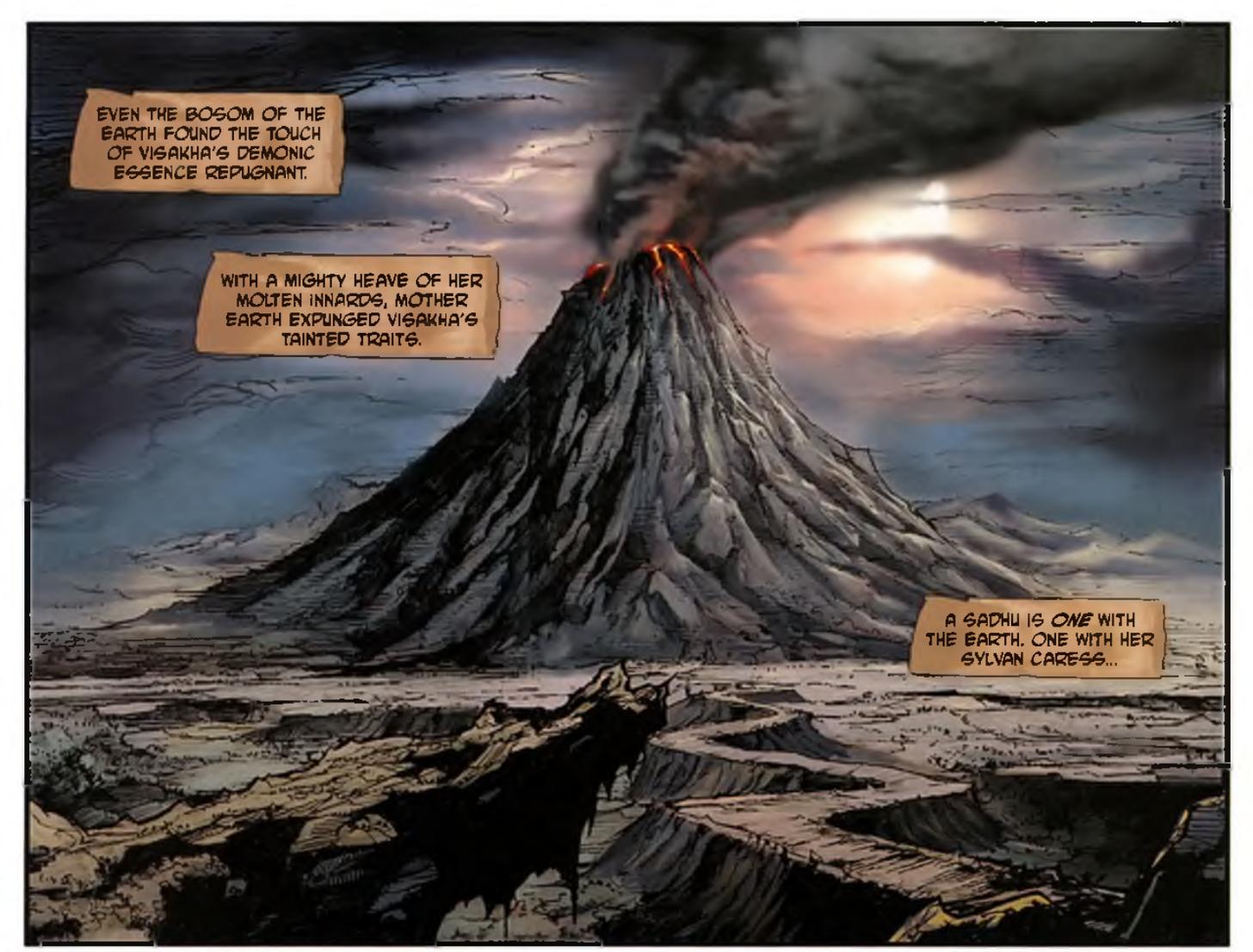
WE ARE CUT OFF FROM ESCAPE, SADHU. THIS IS OUR END.



PERHAPS THERE IS ANOTHER WAY, TRISHANKU...



...THE SADHU'S WAY.



EVEN THE BOSOM OF THE
EARTH FOUND THE TOUCH
OF VISAKHA'S DEMONIC
ESSENCE REPUGNANT.

WITH A MIGHTY HEAVE OF HER
MOLTEN INNARDS, MOTHER
EARTH EXPUNGED VISAKHA'S
TAINTED TRAITS.

A SADHU IS *ONE* WITH
THE EARTH. ONE WITH HER
SYLVAN CARESS...



...AND ONE WITH HER
FIERY TEMPER ALIKE.



A SADHU KNOWS THAT
REALITY IS MERELY A
BALANCE OF OPPOSITES.

IN HIS MIND, THE SADHU
REALIZES THE SECRET
OF TRANSMUTATION.

THE MOST ELEGANT
OF SIDDHIS.

LIFE FROM DEATH,

ICE FROM FIRE.





MY NAME IS JAMES
JENSEN. I WAS ONCE
A SOLDIER.



BETRAYED BY MY OWN
PEOPLE, WHO SLAUGHTERED
MY FAMILY, I EMBRACED THE
PATH OF VENGEANCE.



I DON'T
BELIEVE THIS.



LOST AND WEARY, I FOUND REFUGE
WITH A KINDLY OLD SAGE NAMED
DADATHAKUR. GUIDED BY MY TEACHER
AND MENTOR, I BECAME A SADHU, A
MYSTIC WARRIOR OF THE SOUL.

SNOW FROM
HEAVEN FALLS UNTO
THESE PARCHED LANDS.
THE GODS BE
PRAISED.

TODAY THE FATES HAVE
TRANSFORMED ME YET AGAIN.
THEY HAVE GIVEN ME A NEW
PATH TO SALVATION.

I CONTINUE MY JOURNEY,
BUT I AM MUCH MORE THAN
A MERE MAN OR EVEN
A MIGHTY *SADHU*.

TODAY I AM
AGAIN A FATHER.

SNOW FROM
HEAVEN! DO YOU
SEE THIS MIRACLE,
JAMES JENSEN?

FATHER,
YOUR FRIEND...

I KNOW.
HE CAN BE A BIT
STRANGE SOMETIMES,
BUT HE'LL GROWN
ON YOU.

END

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