



ISSUE 2

Deepak Chopra's

# Buddha

A Story of Enlightenment



CHOPRA  
DYSART  
HARSHVARDHAN

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# The story so far...

Amidst a great and catastrophic war comes the birth of one of the most iconic spiritual figures in the world.

After an overlong pregnancy, the infant Siddhartha—"he who achieves his aim"—is brought into the world, but with him he brings great sorrow and joy. Unable to survive after the difficult birth, his mother dies just as his father wins the battle that will solidify his rule. Though overjoyed to have a son, King Suddhona rejects the child after the death of his wife and distances himself from further loss.

Yet when the seers determine that Prince Siddhartha has two destinies, one of which will entail ruling the world, his father quickly steps in to ensure that this is the future his son will embrace. Conspiring with the priest, Canki, the King devises a way to keep his son from seeing any signs of suffering. By banishing thousands of the sick, elderly, and dying from the city he creates a perfect utopia for the young prince. By limiting who and what the child sees he believes he can control and manipulate the "right" destiny for his son.

Meanwhile, in another realm, the demon Mara is alerted to the birth of the Buddha and begins to plot how he can prevent him from accomplishing his spiritual fate.

But some forces are more powerful than a father's will or a demon's malice, and this child's true destiny is greater than any of them can imagine....



IN HIS SEVENTH YEAR, SIDDHARTHA HAD BEGUN TO HEAR A VOICE IN HIS HEAD.



THE VOICE ALWAYS SAID THE SAME THING:

"LOOK CLOSER."



WHO'S WINNING? THE ANTS OR THE TERMITES, SIDDHARTHA?



DOESN'T MATTER THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...SEE... THAT ANT IS TRYING TO SCALE A PEBBLE WITH A DEAD TERMITE IN ITS MOUTH.

"BUT THE PEBBLE IS *TOO STEEP* AND THE ANT KEEPS FALLING BACKWARDS. OVER AND OVER AGAIN."

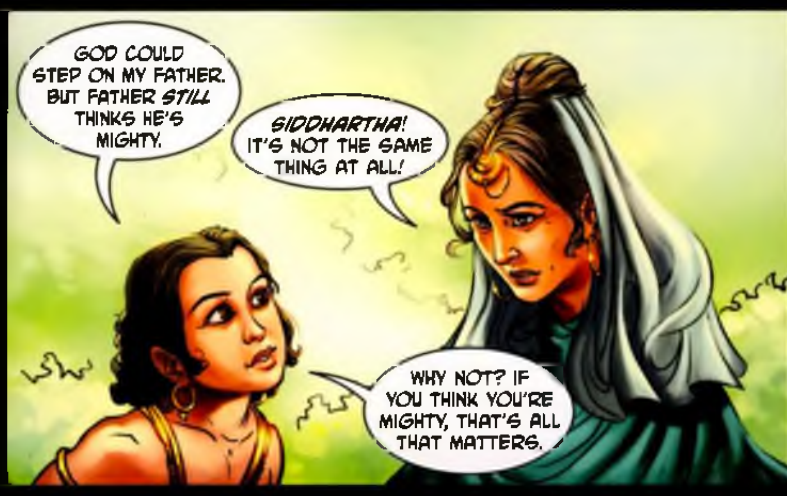


FOOLISH CREATURE. IT SHOULD SIMPLY GO AROUND.

THE MIGHTY DO NOT GO AROUND.

HE'S NOT SO MIGHTY. I COULD *STEP* ON HIM. WHERE WOULD HIS MIGHT BE THEN?







IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, OLD GIRL. SHHHH. BE STILL.

CHANNA?



YOU HAVE TO BE **STRONG** NOW, CHANNA.



DUNG DUST.

YES, PAPA.

TONIGHT WE'LL TAKE THE POOR BEAST OUTSIDE THE GATES AND **BURY** HER.



YOU UNDERSTAND THAT WE **MUSTN'T** TALK WITH THE YOUNG PRINCE ABOUT THIS, YES?

SIDDHARTHA DOESN'T EVER NEED TO KNOW THE OLD MARE WAS EVEN **SICK**.



DUST.

LOOK AWAY NOW, BOY.



NEEEEEHEE "THWAK!!"

ARE ALL THINGS THAT COME FROM THE EARTH JUST DUST?



OOF!



WHAT'RE YOU, BLIND?! COULD YOU NOT SEE ME HERE?!

I-I'M SORRY.

OBVIOUSLY, YOU ARE VERY SORRY.



I'M YOUR COUSIN FROM DOWN THE MOUNTAIN. I ARRIVED THIS MORNING. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

THEY TOLD ME YOU SPEND YOUR DAYS WITH SOME HALF-CASTE BOY IN THE STABLES.



AH! YES! SPLENDID! THEY TOLD ME YOU'D BE COMING!

MY NAME IS DEVADATTA, AND I'M A PRINCE TOO, YOU KNOW. JUST AS GOOD AS YOU.

SO YOU'D BETTER LEARN TO SHOW ME RESPECT!



THE **संजानु**  
WHEEL of DESTINY

ISSUE **1**



**ON SALE APRIL 2008**



IN DEVADATTA'S PRESENCE, KING SUDDHODANA EXULTED.

THIS IS A PRINCE OF SAKYAN BLOOD. HE GRACES THE COURT WITH HIS PRESENCE. YOU SHALL TREAT HIM AS MY SECOND SON.



IN TRUTH, IT WAS THROUGH INTIMIDATION THAT SUDDHODANA HAD FORCED A NEIGHBORING KINGDOM TO SURRENDER THEIR HEIR APPARENT.



TO HIS FATHER, SIDDHARTHA HAD BEGUN TO SHOW SIGNS OF DANGEROUS PASSIVITY.

SUDDHODANA FELT THE BOY NEEDED SOMEONE CLOSE TO HIS AGE, BUT MORE CRUEL. MORE PETTY.



IN ESSENCE, THE KING NEEDED TO PROVIDE HIS SON WITH AN ENEMY.



THAT YEAR,  
CAME THE ARRIVAL  
OF SPRING...



...THE KING THREW  
A GREAT FEAST.



AND  
SO HANUMAN,  
KING OF THE  
MONKEYS...



...FLEW WITH  
THE *WHOLE, ENTIRE*  
MOUNTAIN IN HIS  
HANDS!

ALL BECAUSE HE COULD  
NOT FIND THE RARE HERB  
THAT GREW UPON IT, THE  
ONE THAT WOULD HEAL  
THE BATTLE-WOUNDED  
LAKSHMANA!

THE STORYTELLERS WERE GRAND. BUT NOTHING COMPARED TO...



...THE MANIC HOUR WHEN THE CELEBRANTS BEGAN HURLING FISTFULS OF DYED POWDER AT EACH OTHER.



HEY, COUSIN!

DEVADATTA. A FEW FEET AWAY.



UMPH!

A ROCK, HIDDEN IN THE POWDER.



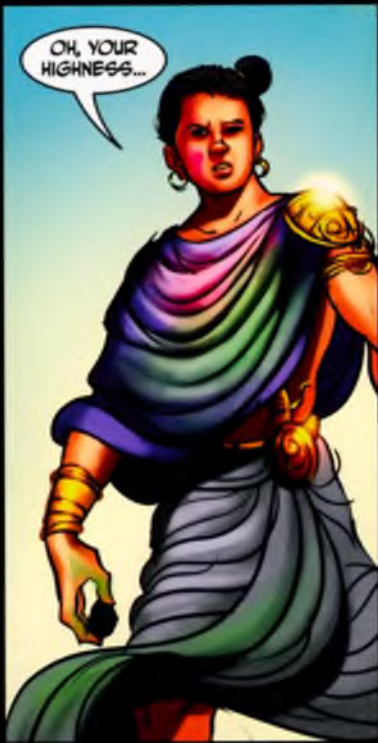


SIDDHARTHA DID NOT REGISTER THE PAIN. ALL WAS PURE FASCINATION.

FOR THE PRINCE HAD NEVER SEEN HIS OWN BLOOD BEFORE.



LET'S PLAY AGAIN! ONLY, TRY TO STAY AWAKE THIS TIME!



OH, YOUR HIGHNESS...



GO ON, DEVADATTA.





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"LOOK CLOSER."



THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION. PERHAPS THAT'S YOUR GIFT.



QUESTION?  
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.

OF COURSE YOU DID. YOU ASKED YOURSELF, "WHY?" WHY DO YOU FEEL THE PAIN OF SUCH AN INSIGNIFICANT CREATURE?



I'M GLAD YOU FOUND ME, AND SO QUICKLY, TOO.

I DIDN'T FIND ANYONE. I WAS JUST SITTING HERE.



THINGS DON'T WORK QUITE THE WAY YOU SUPPOSE, YOUNG SIDDHARTHA.



WHERE AM I?!

SPEAK, DEMON!!

IT IS RARE FOR SOMEONE SO YOUNG TO BE SO FEARLESS IN THE MIDST OF PERIL.



SILENCE.

I NEED SOMEONE LIKE YOU. RECKLESS, UNABLE TO JUDGE THE LIMITS OF HIS OWN DANGER...

...SLY BUT STUPID ENOUGH TO FALL INTO THE LURE OF ARROGANCE.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT?!

INSIDE THE ILLUSION THAT WAS MARA'S CAVE, IT WAS AS IF AN HOUR HAD PASSED.

THEN TWO. THEN SIX...

...BEFORE  
MARA SPOKE  
ONCE MORE.

YOU  
ARE HERE TO  
LEARN.

P-PLEASE,  
RE-RELEASE ME.  
I'M A *PRINCE*. WE  
CAN BARGAIN.

CHILD, YOU GAVE AWAY YOUR  
THRONE THE *MOMENT* YOU  
STEPPED FOOT FROM  
HOME.

THAT'S A  
LIE!!

YOUR  
FATHER WANTS TO  
LIVE *THROUGH* YOU,  
SIDDHARTHA, BUT HE  
DOESN'T HAVE  
THE RIGHT.

MY FATHER  
IS THE KING. HE  
HAS *EVERY*  
RIGHT.

MMM...I SEE,  
OF COURSE...

HERE.  
LOOK AT THIS  
*ROSE-APPLE TREE* IN  
FULL BLOOM. TELL ME  
WHAT YOU SEE.

I SEE WHAT  
YOU SEE, A...A  
TREE. BLUE SKY.  
SPRINGTIME.

"An illustrative tour-de-force that seizes your eyes and imagination by the throat and throttles you with every turn of the page."

-The Comics Review

PERHAPS NOW IS A GOOD TIME FOR A *REFRESHER* COURSE?



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Written by Garth Ennis  
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Volume 2

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From John Woo, the  
acclaimed director  
of *Face/Off* and  
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DIRECTOR'S CUT



AND HOW DOES IT ALL MAKE YOU FEEL?

IT...IT MAKES ME...HURT.

HURT LIKE WHEN YOU SAW THE NYMPH EATING THE MINNOW?



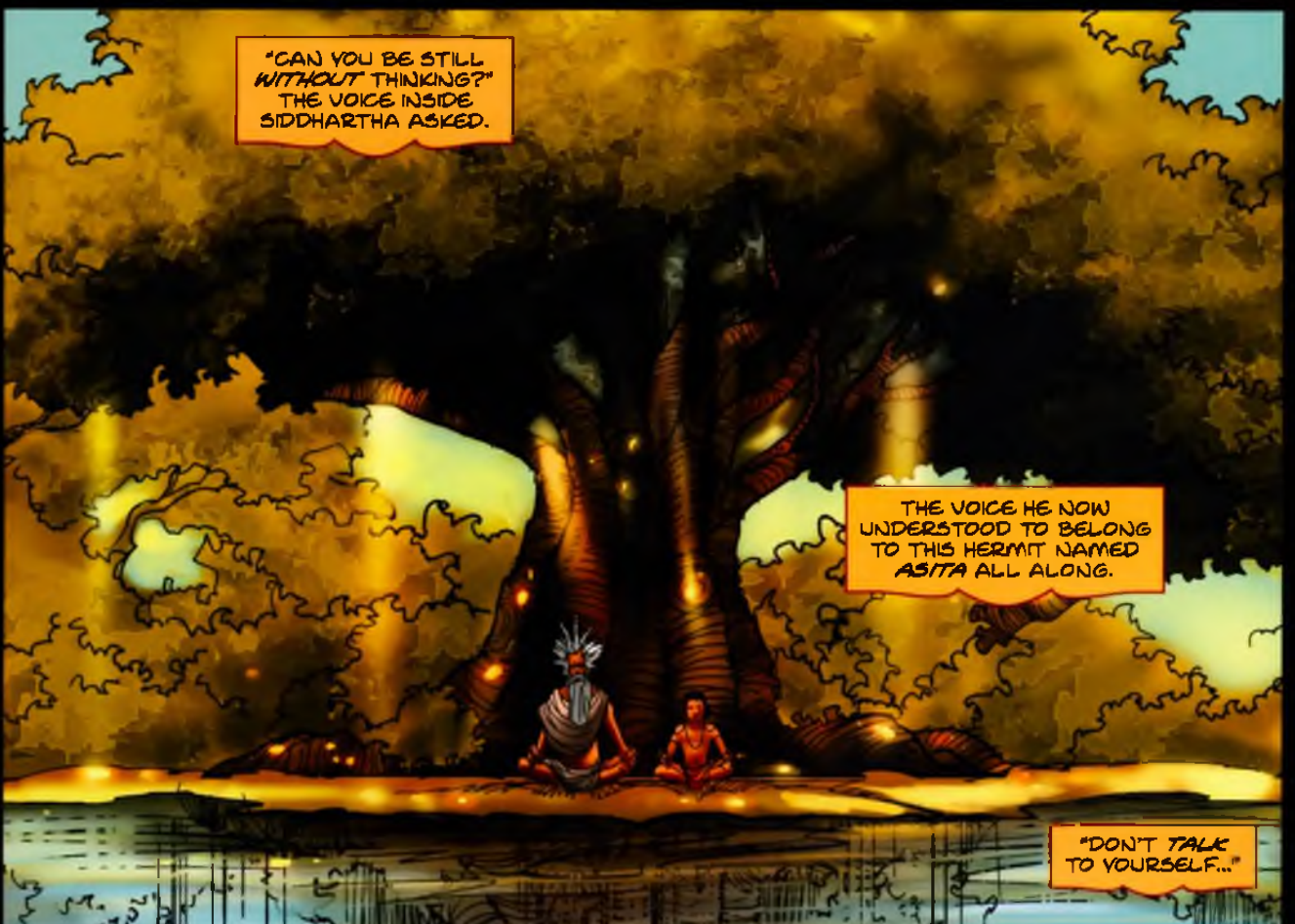
YES.

NO. THIS MAKES ME HURT WITH...WITH JOY. BECAUSE OF ITS BEAUTY. BUT IT FEELS THE SAME.

SOMEHOW THEY'RE THE SAME.



PERMIT ME TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING, YOUNG PRINCE.



"CAN YOU BE STILL WITHOUT THINKING?" THE VOICE INSIDE SIDDHARTHA ASKED.

THE VOICE HE NOW UNDERSTOOD TO BELONG TO THIS HERMIT NAMED ASITA ALL ALONG.

"DON'T TALK TO YOURSELF..."

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"JUST BREATHE."





**FWOOSH!**

THE ONLY THRONE YOU HAVE A HOPE OF CAPTURING IS SIDDHARTHA'S!



HIS FATHER IS TOO STRONG, YOU CANNOT HOPE TO OVERTHROW HIM. YET, THROUGH HIM YOU WILL DEPOSE THE SON.

IT WOULDN'T TAKE MUCH, A SIMPLE MISFIRED ARROW WHEN WE'RE OUT HUNTING--



YOU'RE A FOOL AND A BASTARD.

THE KING WOULD HAVE YOU KILLED IMMEDIATELY, WHETHER YOU FIRE THE BOLT OR NOT.

IF I LET YOU TEACH ME--TEACH ME HOW TO TAKE THE THRONE--WHAT WILL IT COST?



**FWOOSH!!!**





"OPEN YOUR EYES NOW, PRINCE."



YOUR FATHER'S GUARDS ARE LOOKING FOR YOU. BUT REMEMBER WHAT I'VE SHOWN YOU.

WHEN YOU ARE CONFUSED OR SOMEONE IS TRYING TO MAKE YOU, SOMEONE YOU ARE NOT, COME BACK TO THIS TREE.



WHEN YOU ARRIVE, SIT AND WAIT FOR THE SILENCE. DO NOTHING TO MAKE IT COME TO YOU.

WILL I FIND YOU HERE?



NO. THERE ARE TOO MANY WHO THINK THEY KNOW WHAT YOUR FUTURE SHOULD BE ALREADY.

I'LL NOT BE ONE OF THEM ANYMORE.



THANKS TO YOU FOR THIS MOMENT, MY PRINCE.



IT IS TRUE THAT ANYTHING TOLD TO US WHICH IS WISE ALWAYS SEEMS THE MOST EASILY FORGOTTEN.



THE YEARS PASSED AND SUDDHODANA'S TEACHINGS *CRASHED* AGAINST SIDDHARTHA WITH THE CONSISTENCY OF WAVES UPON A COAST.



SO IT WAS THAT BY THE PRINCE'S *SIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY* ASITA'S MESSAGE HAD BECOME VAGUE AND DISTANT.

KUMBIRA, HOW *HAPPY* SHOULD I BE RIGHT NOW?



STOP FRETTING. WE MUST SEND YOUR TROUBLES TO THE GODS. ELSE YOU *RUI*N YOUR FATHER'S BIG DAY.

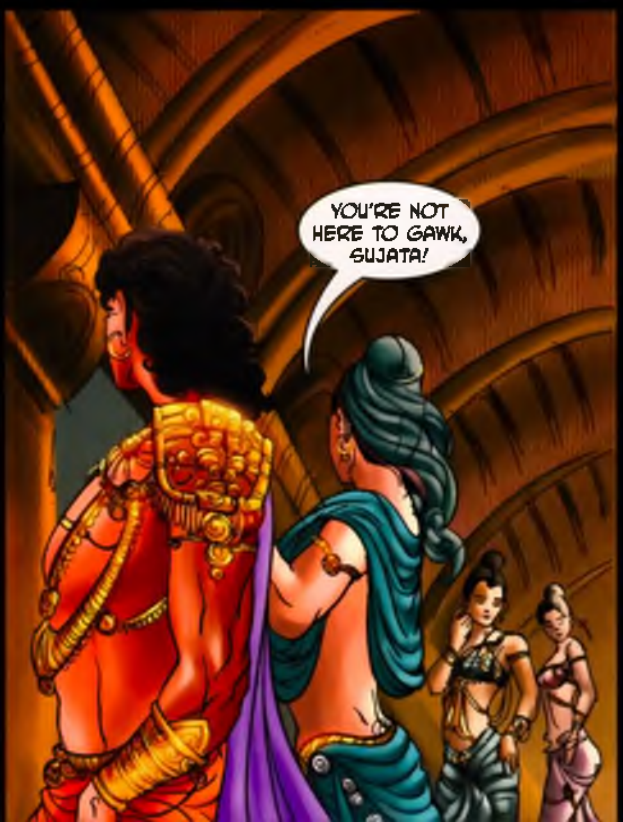
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THIS ROBE. IT LOOKS LIKE IT WOULD FIT ONE OF THE ELEPHANTS.



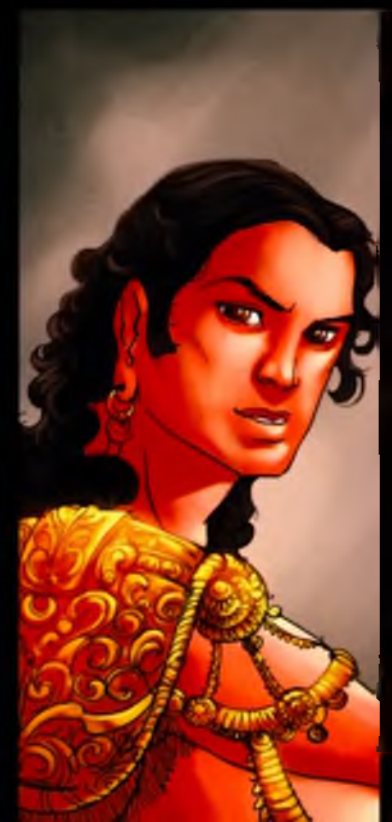
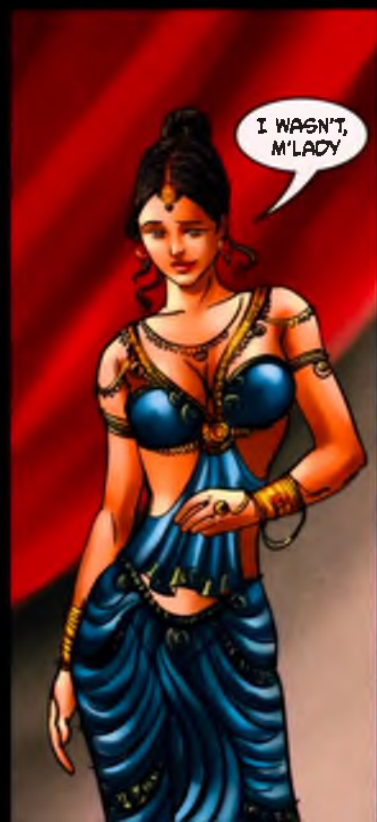
*TEEHEE*



YOU'RE NOT HERE TO GAWK, SUJATA!



I WASN'T, M'LADY





OUT! I WISH TO SPEAK TO MY SON!



SIDDHARTHA, THIS IS THE FIRST DAY OF YOUR FUTURE.

KINGS AND BRAHMINGS HAVE COME FROM FAR AND WIDE, MANY BY ORDER--NOT INVITATION--TO HEAR ME PRONOUNCE YOU AS MY HEIR.



YOUR VISAGE MUST FILL THEM WITH FEAR.

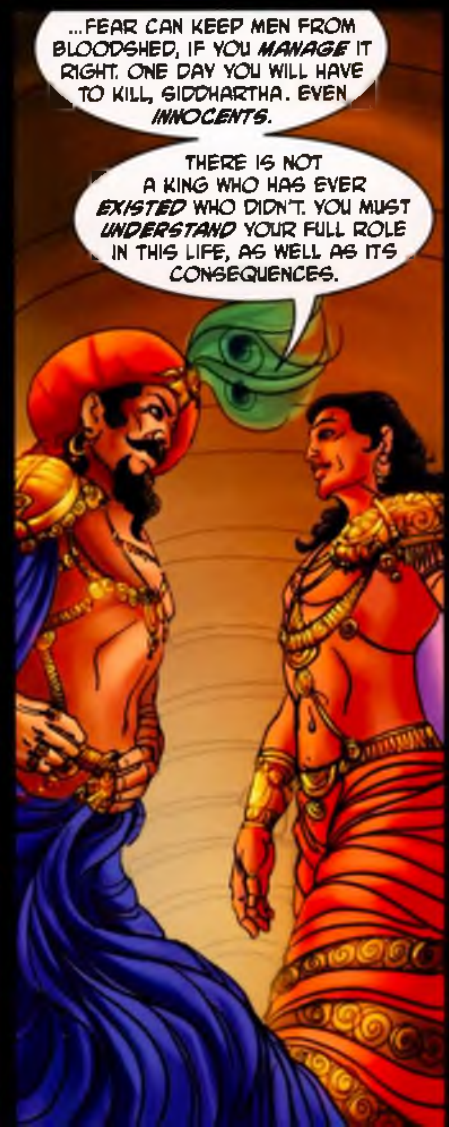
FEAR? BUT I'M NO THREAT. WHY NOT KEEP IT THAT WAY?

BECAUSE FEAR IS POLICY. FEAR IS PROTECTION.



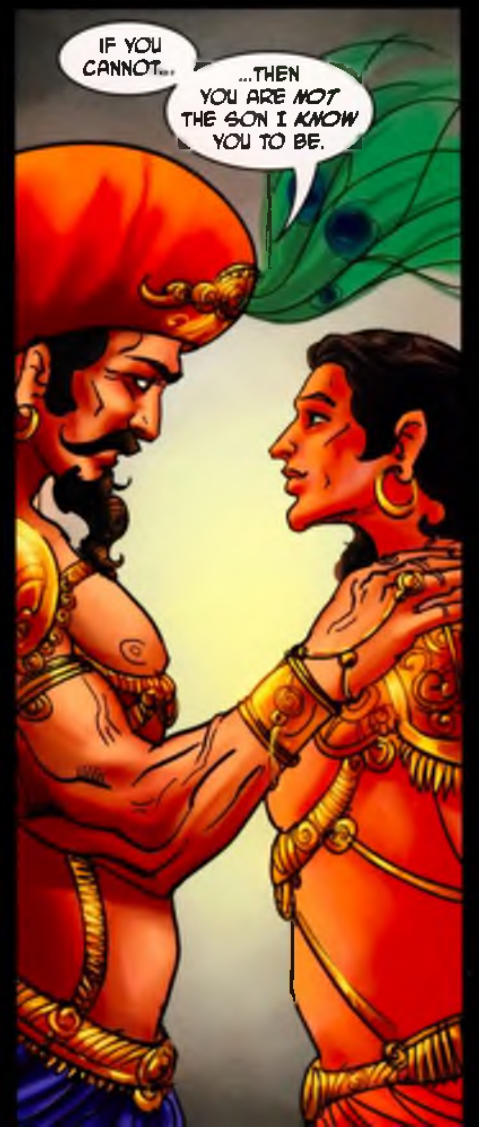
PEOPLE ARE EITHER AT YOUR FEET OR AT YOUR THROAT BUT IT'S EVEN MORE THAN THAT...

...WITHOUT FEAR THERE IS NO RESPECT. WITHOUT RESPECT THERE WILL BE NO PEACE. BUT FEAR...



...FEAR CAN KEEP MEN FROM BLOODSHED, IF YOU MANAGE IT RIGHT. ONE DAY YOU WILL HAVE TO KILL, SIDDHARTHA. EVEN INNOCENTS.

THERE IS NOT A KING WHO HAS EVER EXISTED WHO DIDN'T. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND YOUR FULL ROLE IN THIS LIFE, AS WELL AS ITS CONSEQUENCES.



IF YOU CANNOT...

...THEN YOU ARE NOT THE SON I KNOW YOU TO BE.



HEAR ME!



IN MY SON'S NAME I HAVE SPENT HALF MY TREASURE ON THIS DAY AND OVERSEEN EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR COMFORT AND ENJOYMENT.



AT SIDDHARTHA'S CRADLE, THE SEERS SPOKE OF ONE WHO WOULD RULE THE WORLD. MANY OF YOU KNOW THIS, BUT DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT?



IT MEANS, IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE IF YOUR LANDS ARE GREATER THAN MINE, OR YOUR ARMY TWICE THE SIZE!

OR THAT YOUR FATHER WAS A CONNING MURDERER WHO TRIED TO SEIZE MY FATHER'S THRONE.



HATE ALL YOU WANT! PLOT ALL YOU DARE! MY SON WILL SWALLOW YOUR KINGDOMS!

HE WILL BUY AND SELL OCEANS! UNDERSTAND?!

LOOK UPON HIM NOW!



COME,  
GREAT KING!  
COME!



HAIL  
SIDDHARTHA!

HAIL  
SIDDHARTHA!

HAIL  
SIDDHARTHA!



SIDDHARTHA MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN ASITA, BUT HIS COUSIN HAD NOT FORGOTTEN MARA.

HAIL  
SIDDHARTHA!

FOOLS AND  
BASTARDS!



FOR THE DEMON FANNED EVERY EMBER OF RESENTMENT IN HIM...

...UNTIL HE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A BLOWING PIECE OF IRON...

HAIL  
SIDDHARTHA!



...WAITING TO BE FASHIONED INTO A WEAPON.

HAIL  
SIDDHARTHA!

TO BE CONTINUED...

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# SPOTLIGHT ON DIGITAL COMICS

Comic books will always be printed on paper. If you don't feel the pages in your hands, suffer the occasional paper cut, or tremble at the prospect of some idiot dog-eared your precious copy of *Shadow Hunter* #1, then you aren't getting the unique experience of the comic book reader. This is not a purist's point-of-view... this is reality. Whereas movies might be shifting away from their celluloid origins towards an exclusively digital format, the physical experience of watching a film will remain the same. A digital movie will still be a movie, but a digital comic is nothing like a printed one... and that's pretty exciting!

The digital landscape has provided extraordinary opportunities in the evolution of the comic book. Creators that don't have publishing deals can now bring their stories to the masses in ways that would have been impossible in the pre-internet age. But this evolution of technology isn't just about a new distribution method. The digital platform provides an entirely new way to experience visual storytelling. And you'd better believe that Virgin Comics will be at the forefront of this exciting new movement.

One way we've embraced this platform is with the introduction of Virgin Comics' Widescreen Digital Comics, in which the panels of our stories are reformatted into a widescreen aspect ratio, creating a unique and dynamic viewing experience that is unlike anything that can be printed on paper. Each frame exists within its own context so the viewer is completely in the moment with the character—no skipping ahead or knowing what the outcome will be because it's at the bottom of the page.

We'll also be experimenting with other formats. In some cases, the layout might resemble a traditional comic page, but with the addition of special bonus features that you can access on the spot. And did we mention that the colors look amazing?!

Sometimes a story comes along that begs to be born digitally. For us, that story is *The Econauts*. After all, how can a series about eco-friendly teenagers not exist on-line? Focusing on a group of ecologically aware kids, *The Econauts* chronicles their adventures as they fight crimes against the environment by taking down the greedy perpetrators.

Led by the mysterious, orphaned Ayanara Ashworth, the team is made up of a secret global group of her classmates from the posh Sawhill Academy: daredevil and heartthrob Raju Kang; thieving wild-child Keiko Oshima; master-of-disguise Terrence "Tweaker" Thomas; and Mohammed Nabu, the tech genius without whom they'd all be grounded. After a train crash in Latin America releases a dangerous pesticide, the Econauts must draw upon all their abilities to track down the ruthless corporation behind the toxic spill. But as the team begins to uncover the dirty secrets of Mason Morningstar's corporate and political dealings, Ayanara must risk her own life in order to put Morningstar's wrongs to right. There's intrigue, disguise, espionage, and it's all for the best cause we can think of: saving the world... literally!

Each new chapter of *The Econauts* will be posted regularly at [www.theeconauts.com](http://www.theeconauts.com) and you can start checking it out now. But the story doesn't end there. I guess we are comic book purists at heart, because we just can't resist putting out a printed version of *The Econauts* as well. Staying true to our characters' eco-friendly ways, the comic will be printed on recycled paper. It's a first for us and exciting for the comics industry at large. Look for the first graphic novel in comic shops or at [www.virgincomicsstore.com](http://www.virgincomicsstore.com) on April 16th, just in time for Earth Day!

So check us out on-line and in your local comic shop. The digital revolution starts here!

See you on the inside...

**Gotham Chopra**  
Editor-In-Chief



**THE  
ECONAUTS**

# MEET THE ECONAUTS!

*A covert group of gifted teenagers fighting crimes against the environment, these are THE ECONAUTS.*

**AYANARA**



### **Strategist, Team Leader**

*Orphaned when her eco-scientist parents disappeared, Ayanara uses her hefty trust fund to finance The Econauts' covert missions.*

**RAJU**



### **Daredevil, Heartthrob**

*An extreme-sport enthusiast, Raju's fearlessness is matched only by his need for adventure.*

**KEIKO**



### **Former Thief, Wild-Child**

*An ex-reform school student, Keiko has turned her life around and now uses her special skills to help important causes, not just herself.*

**NABU**



### **Resident Tech Genius**

*Every team needs a computer expert that can hack into any secure site in the world, and there is nobody more tech-savvy than Nabu.*

**TERRENCE  
a.k.a. TWEAKER**



### **Master of Disguise, Multi-Lingual**

*Raised by renegade eco-activists, Tweaker is the real heart of The Econauts and would literally do anything to protect the planet.*



NEW CHAPTERS EVERY MONDAY & WEDNESDAY



# THE ECONAUTS

FREE! Digital Comic



CHAPTER 1  
3/24/08



CHAPTER 2  
3/26/08



CHAPTER 3  
3/31/08



CHAPTER 4  
4/2/08

## THE STORY

A covert group of gifted teenagers fights crimes against the environment by exposing the greedy perpetrators. They are THE ECONAUTS, the planet's new protectors!

## MEET THE ECONAUTS

Terrence "Tweaker" Thomas  
If our group needs to be reminded of the whole point...

More

## NEXT ISSUE

Ayanara goes undercover



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