



Virgin
COMICS

ISSUE 3

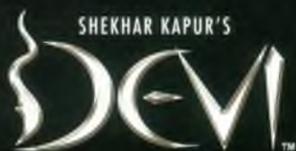
SHEKHAR KAPUR'S

DEV

NAMAHA

BASU / SINGH / DCP

100



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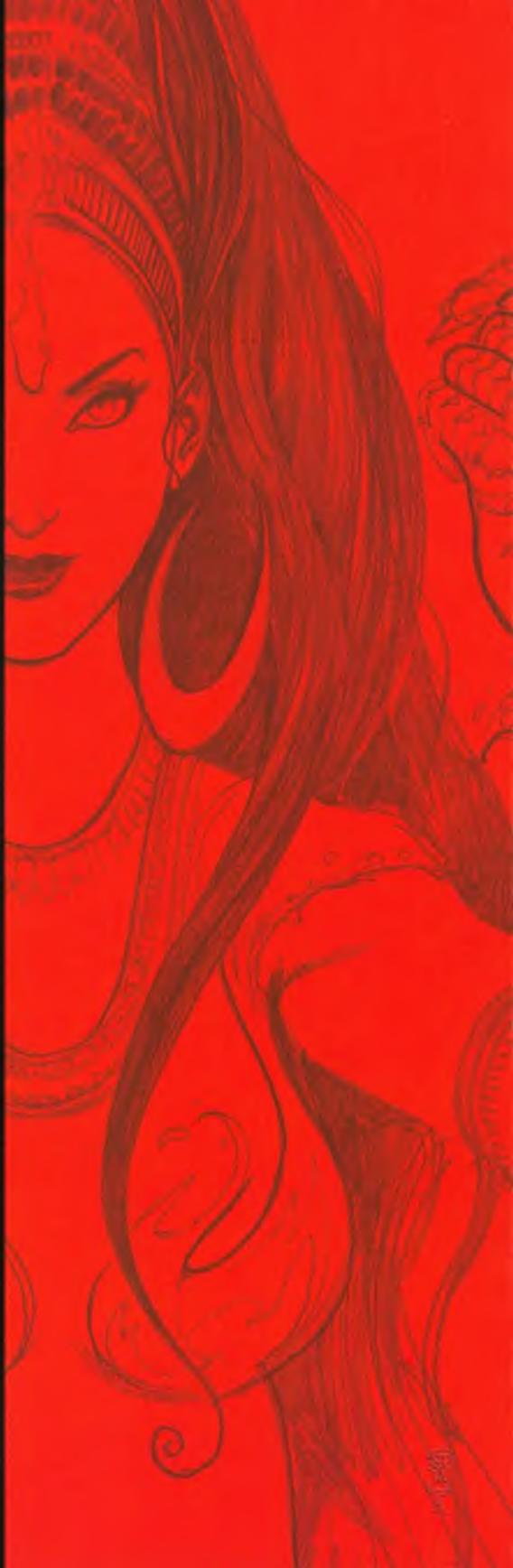
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IT WAS THE SECOND CENTURY of mankind's arrival on earth when the Gods of Light took up arms against one of their own. Bala, a fallen God, had rejected the old ways of the Pantheon and sought to impose his dominion over man.

Feeding off the forced worship of men, Bala had grown too powerful for the pantheon. So the pure Gods each sacrificed a part of themselves to create a powerful entity.

She is *Devi*.

Story so far.

WHAT STARTED OUT AS A STANDARD SUSPECT CHASE FOR INSPECTOR RAHUL SINGH OF THE SITAPUR POLICE ENDS UP AS AN ENCOUNTER WITH DEMONIC FORCES--HIS HISSING, BUILDING-JUMPING QUARRY LITERALLY LOSING HIS HEAD WHILE REFUSING TO COOPERATE IN HIS OWN AUTOPSY. A TATTOO ON THE DECAPITATED DEMON-CORPSE LEADS RAHUL TO *THE ABYSS*, A NIGHTCLUB OWNED BY IYAM, ONCE BALA'S FAVOURITE GENERAL, NOW SITAPUR'S MOST NOTORIOUS GANGLORD. THOUGH IYAM MAKES AN APPEARANCE AT HIS CLUB, IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE HE LEAVES ON IMPORTANT BUSINESS, AND RAHUL, INTRIGUED, GIVES CHASE.

MEANWHILE, A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN NAMED AMARA GAELLE GIVES KRATHA, THE APSARA ASSASSIN, HER MARK--A YOUNG WOMAN NAMED TARA MEHTA, THE PRESENT-DAY DEVI INCARNATE AND IYAM'S GIRLFRIEND. THAT NIGHT, TARA, UNAWARE OF THE DEADLY FORCES CONVERGING AROUND HER, IS KIDNAPPED AT KNIFEPOINT BY THE DURAPASYA, HUMAN SOLDIERS FOR THE GODS OF LIGHT. TARA IS DRUGGED AND HOISTED ON TOP OF AN ELEPHANT WHICH, DESPITE WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD, IS NOT PART OF YOUR AVERAGE SITAPUR NIGHT ON THE TOWN. THE DURAPASYA NOW INTEND TO MARCH TARA IN STYLE TO THE CEREMONY WHERE SHE WILL BE INITIATED INTO THE WAYS OF THE DEVI. BUT THEY'RE UNAWARE OF THE DANGER THAT LURKS ON THE ROOFTOPS ABOVE--KRATHA HAS JUST BEEN ORDERED TO KILL THEM ALL.



Part Three
Namaha

AH, THE STREETS OF MY BELOVED CITY, PUG-FILLED PIMPLE ON THE POCKMARKED FACE OF THIS LOVELY PLANET.

THEY SAY SITAPUR WAS BUILT ON THE BONES OF AN ANCIENT CITY CALLED CANDAKA, ONE OF THOSE ONE-FOOT-IN-MYTH CITIES CRAWLING WITH DEMONS AND DEMIGODS.

WHICH MIGHT EXPLAIN THE FANG-BARING, BUILDING-JUMPING BASTARDS I SHOOT DOWN EVERY OTHER DAY. DEMONS OTHER POLICEMEN DON'T SEE. OR CHOOSE NOT TO SEE.

BUT NO MORE DEMON TALK. JUST GETS ME SERMONS ABOUT DRINKING. HAH. THEY DON'T KNOW DRINKING MAKES IT WORSE. I DON'T HEAR THE VOICES--CHILDREN'S VOICES, CRYING, SOMEWHERE UNDERGROUND--WHEN I'M SOBER.

BUT I KNOW I'M NOT CRAZY. SOMETHING BIG'S GOING ON.

AND I KNOW IYAM, THE SCUMBAG I'M TRAILING, IS BEHIND IT ALL, SOMEHOW.

MEMO. FROM DRUNKEN,
BURNT-OUT, WALKING CLICHÉ
TO SMOOTH-TALKING CRIMINAL
MASTERMIND. YOU'RE *MINE*.

I HOPE YOU
HAVE A GOOD REASON
FOR CALLING ME HERE,
AMARA.





MY POINT IS THAT IT'S WELL DOCUMENTED THAT MEN WHO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WITH THE DEVI, WELL, THEY FALL FOR HER. MAYBE LORD BALA'S WORRIED YOU MIGHT BE... RELUCTANT TO DO YOUR DUTY.

YOUR FORTHRIGHTNESS IS ADMIRABLE.



AAAAHAHAHAHA

GOOD ONE, AMARA. I ALMOST BELIEVED YOU.

I WASN'T JOKING, IYAM. THE APSARA'S ALREADY ON TARA'S TRAIL.



HMM. SO, LORD BALA HAS DISCOVERED THE... ARRANGEMENT I HAVE WITH TARA?

IT'S RUMOURED THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE, MY LORD.



BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I HAD ASSUMED LORD BALA WOULD BE PLEASED THAT I WAS TOYING WITH THE DEVI BEFORE KILLING HER.

HE IS NOT. AND I'D SUGGEST THAT YOU ACT FAST.

YOU WOULD,
WOULD YOU?

AND WHAT IS
YOUR ROLE IN THIS,
AMARA GAELE? WHY IS
MY LORD WHISPERING
IN *YOUR* PRETTY
LITTLE EAR?

I HAVE HALF A
MIND TO TEAR
YOUR CUNNING
HEART OUT.

I'M ONLY
TRYING TO HELP YOU.
AND PUTTING MYSELF
IN A HELL OF A LOT
OF DANGER, TOO.
I MIGHT ADD.

I'M TRYING
TO SHOW YOU
CAN TRUST ME. OUR
EXCAVATION WON'T
SUCCEED,
OTHERWISE.

TRUST YOU?
WHEN YOUR ARRIVAL
HERALDED MY LOSING
CHARGE OF THE EXCAVATION.
AND NOW, THE DEVI'S
DESTRUCTION?

LORD BALA'S WILL,
IYAM. NOT MINE. YOU
KNOW WHAT I WANT, AND
IT'S NOT POWER.

HMM. TRUE.
I...APOLOGIZE.

NOT
NECESSARY.

THANK YOU,
AMARA. IT IS CLEAR
NOW WHAT I MUST DO
TO WIN BACK LORD
BALA'S FAVOR.

MASTER,
WE'VE--

WE'VE FOUND
A SPY!

I TOLD YOU
I WASN'T TO BE
DISTURBED.

ON STANDS SEPTEMBER 2006



ISSUE 3

SHERMAN GARDNER'S
SNAKE & WOMAN.



WELLS | GAYDOS

DIRECTOR'S CUT



HOW TEDIOUS. WHERE?



EH HEH HEH.



THWACK

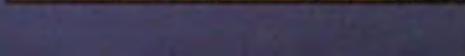


INTERESTING, BUT I HAVE TO RUN. HE'S YOURS, AMARA. A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE.

YUMMY, THANK YOU.

NOW, YOU MUST EXCUSE ME.

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GO KILL TARA MYSELF.





KRATHA,
LISTEN TO ME.



HOW DID
YOU DO THAT?



OR NOT.



LET ME KNOW
WHEN YOU'VE TIRED
OF THIS.





WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

WHO I AM IS NOT IMPORTANT.



YOU HAVE SOME SKILLS.

I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS.



WHY ARE YOU, AN APSARA OF THE LIGHT, SEEKING TO DESTROY OUR FUTURE SAVIOUR AT THE BIDDING OF THE DARK?

THE PAY IS GOOD.

HOW COULD YOU EVEN CONSIDER SO TERRIBLE A BETRAYAL?



TELL YOU WHAT.

YOU TRY GROWING UP WATCHING YOUR MOTHER DANCING TO THE TUNES OF THE GODS, FORCED TO PERFORM UNSPEAKABLE ACTS AT THEIR WHIMS, LAUGH WITH THE GODS WHEN SHE DIES OVER SOME CHILDISH BET.



YOU TRY BEING FORCED INTO HEAVEN'S ARMY WHEN YOU'RE NINE, AND FIGHTING FULL-GROWN DEMONS EVERY DAY FOR TWO HUNDRED YEARS. WATCH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY DIE, AND YOUR GODS LOOK THE OTHER WAY WHEN YOU NEED THEM MOST.



THEN YOU'LL KNOW WHAT WE WENT THROUGH.

THEN YOU CAN COME BACK AND TALK TO ME ABOUT BETRAYAL.



I UNDERSTAND YOUR PAIN, AND YOUR NEED FOR REVENGE.

NO, YOU DON'T.

THIS ISN'T REVENGE. THIS IS MY JOB. I JUST GET TO CHOOSE WHO I WORK FOR, NOW.

GO, DISAPPEAR, ANNOYING OLD MAN, AND LET ME GET TO IT



WHAT THE GODS DID TO YOU AND YOURS IS INEXCUSABLE, KRATHA. BUT YOU WERE--AND ARE--A SOLDIER OF THE LIGHT.



YES. I HAD SO MUCH CHOICE, DIDN'T I? JUST LIKE THAT POOR DRUGGED FOOL OF A GIRL DOWN THERE.



IF YOU KILL HER, YOU CONDEMN MILLIONS OF INNOCENT HUMANS TO DEATH. IF YOU LOOK BACK AT YOUR OWN LIFE--



ENOUGH ABOUT ME. LET'S FOCUS ON YOU, MY SELF-APPOINTED THERAPIST.



NOW...WHERE WERE WE?



WHERE AM I?

WELCOME, THICE-BLESSED
TARA, TO THE THRESHOLD
OF A NEW LIFE.

I FEEL...
STRANGE.

SOMA, THE NECTAR OF THE
GODS, HAS BEEN MINGLED
WITH YOUR BLOOD. THE
STRANGENESS WILL
SOON PASS.

WHAT'S
HAPPENING
TO ME?

DON'T BE AFRAID,
TARA. I WILL BE
WITH YOU SOON.

BUT BEFORE THAT,
A FEW FRIENDS WISH
TO MEET YOU.



HELLO, TARA.



WHO ARE YOU?



WE ARE TARA.
TARA AS YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN.



TARA AS YOU WERE.



TARA AS YOU ARE NOT.



TARA AS YOU DREAM OF BEING.



TARA AS YOU'LL NEVER BE.

I'M DREAMING.

YOU'RE CHANGING.

NO.

AS WE DID. OR MIGHT HAVE.

WHAT?

THIS IS WHERE OUR TARAS MEET.

AND WE CAME HERE TO SAY GOODBYE. AND HELLO.

AND THANK YOU FOR HAVING BEEN WITH US. FOR HAVING BEEN US.

AND TO SAY-- WE'LL SEE YOU SOON, TARA--THAT IS.

WHEN YOU JOIN US IN THE REALM OF IF.

IT IS TIME.

Salvatore



THE ROAD AHEAD
WILL BE DIFFICULT,
AND DANGEROUS.

LIVES AND
LOVES WILL BE LOST
AND FOUND.

FAITH WILL
BE CHALLENGED,
AND DESTINIES
ALTERED.



GOOD LUCK,
TARA-THAT-IS.

WE MUST LEAVE
YOU NOW.



PLEASE
TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF.



THE GODDESS
APPROACHES.

ON STANDS SEPTEMBER 2006



BARKER / NAWAZIAN



GREETINGS,
TARA.

MY NAME IS
ISANA, AND THIS
IS WHERE YOUR TRUE
JOURNEY BEGINS.

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THIS IS GOING NOWHERE, KRATHA.

WE HAVE MORE IN COMMON THAN YOU THINK. I USED TO SERVE THE GODS MYSELF, ONCE.

NOW, I'M NOT SO SURE.



I WAS ONCE THE MOST FEROCIOUSLY COMMITTED DURAPASYA ALIVE. BUT THEN, LIKE YOU, I REALIZED HOW MISGUIDED THE LIGHT'S SERVANTS ARE--HOW NARROW THE GAP THAT SEPARATES THEM EVEN FROM BALA'S DARINDE.



BUT I REALIZED SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT, WHICH YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, FOR YOU HAVE A GREAT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE DRAMA THAT IS ABOUT TO UNFOLD, KRATHA.



THE SUSPENSE IS KILLING ME.



NO ONE IS ABOVE CORRUPTION.
NO ONE IS BELOW REDEMPTION EITHER.

DON'T LOSE FAITH JUST YET, KRATHA.

HATE THE GODS, BUT NOT WHAT THEY STAND FOR.



CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE DURAPASYA SOUL?



ABANDON THIS CHASE, KRATHA. COME WITH ME. THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE, AND YOU ARE NEEDED. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON.



ISANA,
WHERE ARE WE
GOING?

WHY WON'T
YOU ANSWER MY
QUESTION?

BECAUSE I'VE
BEEN WHERE YOU ARE
NOW, CENTURIES AGO. AND
AT THIS POINT, BELIEVE ME,
ANSWERS ARE IRRELEVANT.
ALL WILL BE REVEALED
TO YOU IN TIME.

WE'LL BE
THERE SOON.

BUT I WANT TO
KNOW NOW. I WAS IN A
CAR, AND SUDDENLY I'M
FLYING IN SPACE... AM
I DEAD?

IF YOU MUST KNOW...
TARA WILL SOON BE DEAD.
YOU WILL SOON BE MORE ALIVE
THAN EVER BEFORE. YOU ARE
BEING REBORN.

BUT I...I
DON'T WANT TO...

I'M AFRAID THIS
IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST
YOU, TARA. I STRUGGLED TOO, IN
MY TIME, BLINDED BY IGNORANCE
AND FEAR. METAMORPHOSIS,
HOWEVER DIVINE, IS NEVER
PAINLESS.

WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? LET GO!

IT IS MY DUTY, AS THE FIRST DEVI, TO BE PRIESTESS AND MIDWIFE FOR THE CEREMONY THAT FOLLOWS. WHERE YOU STEP OUT OF YOUR MORTAL SHELL AND EMBRACE YOUR TRUE DESTINY.

I ASKED YOU TO LET GO!

AN INDEPENDENT SPIRIT, AND A STRONG GRIP FOR A MORTAL. GOOD, GOOD. THESE WILL SERVE YOU WELL IN YOUR NEXT LIFE.

DON'T STRUGGLE, CHILD. I'M HELPING YOU.

STOP TALKING IN RIDDLES. WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

HAVE YOU EVER FELT THAT YOU WERE DIFFERENT? THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT DIDN'T QUITE MATCH YOUR MUNDANE SURROUNDINGS?

SURE I DID. EVERYONE DOES.

WELL, IN YOUR CASE IT WAS *TRUE*. YOU WERE MARKED FROM BIRTH AS THE SAVIOUR OF YOUR SPECIES, AND YOUR WORLD.



YOU WERE CHOSEN TO BE THE GODS' ULTIMATE WEAPON, TO DELIVER THE WORLD FROM THE DARKNESS THAT THREATENS TO ENGLUF IT JUST AS I WAS IN MY TIME. I WAS THE FIRST OF OUR KIND, TARA, AND I REPAID THE GODS' FAITH IN ME BY WINNING THE WORLD BACK FOR THEM. AS YOU MUST DO NOW.



BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE ALL THAT. I WANT TO GO HOME.

AND YOU ARE GOING HOME, TARA. FOR THE CITADEL IS WHERE YOU TRULY BELONG. THIS IS THE MOMENT WHEN YOU BECOME WHO YOU TRULY ARE.



AND AS SOMEONE WHO REMEMBERS BEING HUMAN, LET ME ASK YOU, WOMAN, TO WOMAN...



DO YOU REALLY NOT WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



I THINK I LIKE YOU.



COME ON, THEN. WE'RE ALMOST THERE.



DONNING!



WHAT IS THAT NOISE?

DONNING!

THE BELLS OF THE CITADEL WELCOMING YOU, TARA-THAT-WAS, DEVI-THAT-WILL-BE. IT BEGINS NOW.



DONNING!

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DEEPAK CHOPRA AND SHEKHAR KAPUR PRESENT...

RAMAYAN REBORN



**A POWERFUL NEW VISION OF
INDIA'S GREATEST EPIC**

**The Legend Begins This September
First Issue Cover by Alex Ross**



ENNIS | WOO

COMICS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN



ISSUE 1 COVER BY **YOSHITAKA AMANO**

ON STANDS OCTOBER 2006

I WANT YOU TO
KNOW, I'M KILLING
ALL OF YOU.



TO BE CONTINUED.



Artist Jeevan J. Kang is both Studio Chief At Virgin Animation, and conceptual artist on *The Sandhu* and the upcoming Woo/Ennis series *Seven Brothers*.

Xplorations



"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." - Goethe

And so I did.

From the tender age of four, I immersed myself in comics. I laughed, I cried, I feared, I raged, I learned, I fought, I cared, I evolved and I dreamt with the multitude of characters, comicbook after comicbook. They took me on flights of imagination, showed me new worlds, helped me face my inner-demons, entertained me and enthralled me. They taught me how to live and what to live for. It was said somewhere, of an artist of great acclaim, that comics rescued him. And many years later, through his art, he returned the favor.

Two decades and many, many comicbooks later, from the time I picked up my first, I stand at the beginning of what I dream I can do.

Make comicbooks. Create worlds. Entertain. Tell stories. And, possibly, even in the smallest way, return the favor.

When you dream with conviction, providence itself starts making way for you. So, I stand at the beginning with many other dreamers, truly gifted people who I've had the honor of knowing, crazy enough to dream the same dream.

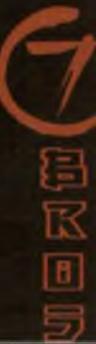
I thank them all for being part of the vision and making this a crazy, but thoroughly enjoyable ride so far.

So here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The ones who see things differently. They do not respect rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. They annoy. Question. Disregard. Are pains in the proverbial ###. You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them, disbelieve them, exalt or vilify them. But the one thing you can't do is ignore them.

Because they imagine. They create. They inspire. They can stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art. Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written. Or create beings that can fly faster than a speeding bullet and change the course of mighty rivers out of thin air.

I thank them because if they are crazy enough to think they can change the world, they probably will. And it'll be one hell of a ride.

- Jeevan J. Kang
16th August 2006





THE PATH WE CHOOSE IS WHO WE ARE



In India, they say that your life is divided into four stages.

The first stage should be devoted to *learning*. That means from birth, interacting with the world and letting it imprint itself upon your consciousness. From the people that you meet, to the places you go, the emphasis should be on gathering knowledge and expanding your awareness.

The second stage, it is said, should be spent *earning*. That means that with all that you have learned, you should put it to some use, apply it to a trade, and earn all that you can. *Earning* becomes the point of all the *learning*.

The third stage should be dedicated to *servicing*. So with all that you've earned, you use it to make your family comfortable and secure. They say also that your "family" is not just your blood, but your community – the larger society in which you live, indeed humanity at-large. Hence, charity is integral to this stage of life. And if you're successful at it, ideally by the end of this third stage, you should have nothing material left to your name. Which prepares you for the fourth and final stage of your life.

This last stage is for *seeking*. And as much as the third stage of life, serving, is about others, seeking is all about oneself. Seeking traditionally means detaching oneself from all that you are bound to and retreating from your life. For it is what you are bound to emotionally – including even your family – that keeps you attached to this life. The goal then is to identify with something beyond yourself, to identify with the source of all things – that from which you came and to which you will return, the ceaseless silence that always has been and always will be.

They call this silence “samadhi” and those that seek it “sadhus.” Even today in modern India, in cities all across the country, you’ll find sadhus wandering the streets, sleeping by the rivers, and meditating in various temples. There are entire cities – mostly along the holy river Ganges – that have become veritable homes to sadhus, like Hardiwar, Rishikesh, and Varanasi (the city of death). And when you are in a sadhu’s presence, you can’t help but feel some piece of *their* soulful liberation infect yours.

It’s an eastern concept for sure, this idea of surrendering all and walking away from everything you have accumulated/achieved just as you hit old age. But as exotic and foreign as it is (and even as someone of Indian – heritage as I am, it is to me), there is a definite appeal to it. Because so much of life is about its seeming lack of meaning, about the race to get through it, only to arrive at certain points and ask, as a child would, “but why?” To think that there could be a portion of your life devoted to finding the answers to these simplest and most existential questions – that sounds like a pretty decent time.

Sadhus live by a code. However the code itself is a hard one to articulate because the point of spiritual liberation, one supposes, is not to live by any rules at all. Really, a sadhu is defined not even by what he believes but

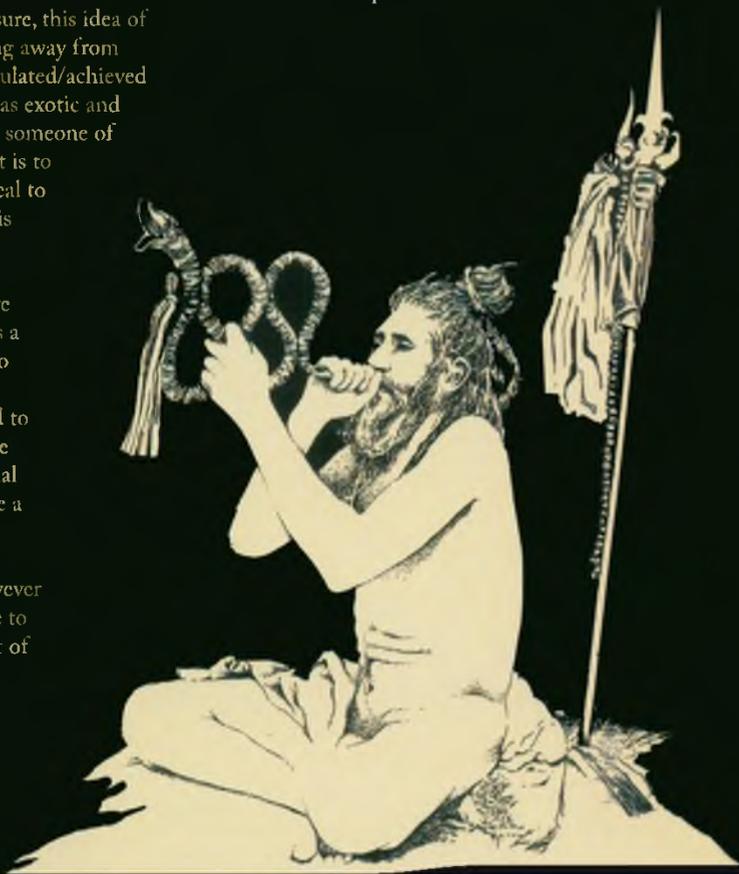
by what he does. Hence comes the saying amongst sadhus: “*the path we choose is who we are.*”

There are, of course, the sadhus that have successfully conquered this final fourth stage of their lives, who have essentially “found the answers.” So what of them? Who are they and what do they know? Well, if I could answer that, I surely wouldn’t be writing this. But what I can offer is something I was once told by a sadhu who I had met and who I am pretty sure had made it through the four stages. He was old and experienced, but his mind was quick and agile, and he let me in on the simplest of secrets. “It’s not the destination,” he said. “It’s the journey to get there. The destination is, in fact, the journey itself.”

And so it goes. We’re all sadhus-in-training along the ride of life.

Enjoy it.

Gotham Chopra



VIRGIN COMICS AT COMICON 2006



SAN DIEGO COMICON. THE PLACE WHERE THE FAN BOYS AND GIRLS, THE CONNOISSEURS OF GREAT STORY AND ART, THE SELF-PROCLAIMED ARBITERS OF REALLY AWESOME TASTE ARE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO VIEW AND REVIEW THE NEXT BIG THING IN ENTERTAINMENT.

As first-time participants in this year's frenzy, Virgin Comics may have been the budding flower, but we didn't have to wait very long to be plucked.

Alongside Spider-Man and the X-Men were suddenly Devi and Ramayan. The artwork of the great Alex Ross was accompanied by the visual stylings of India's up-and-coming talents Mukesh Singh (*Devi*) and Jeevan Kang (*Sadhu*). And Zeb Wells' signing line at the Virgin Booth was the

longest he'd ever had at a con (auctioning off an original piece of *Snake Woman* artwork from Michael Gaydos didn't hurt, either).

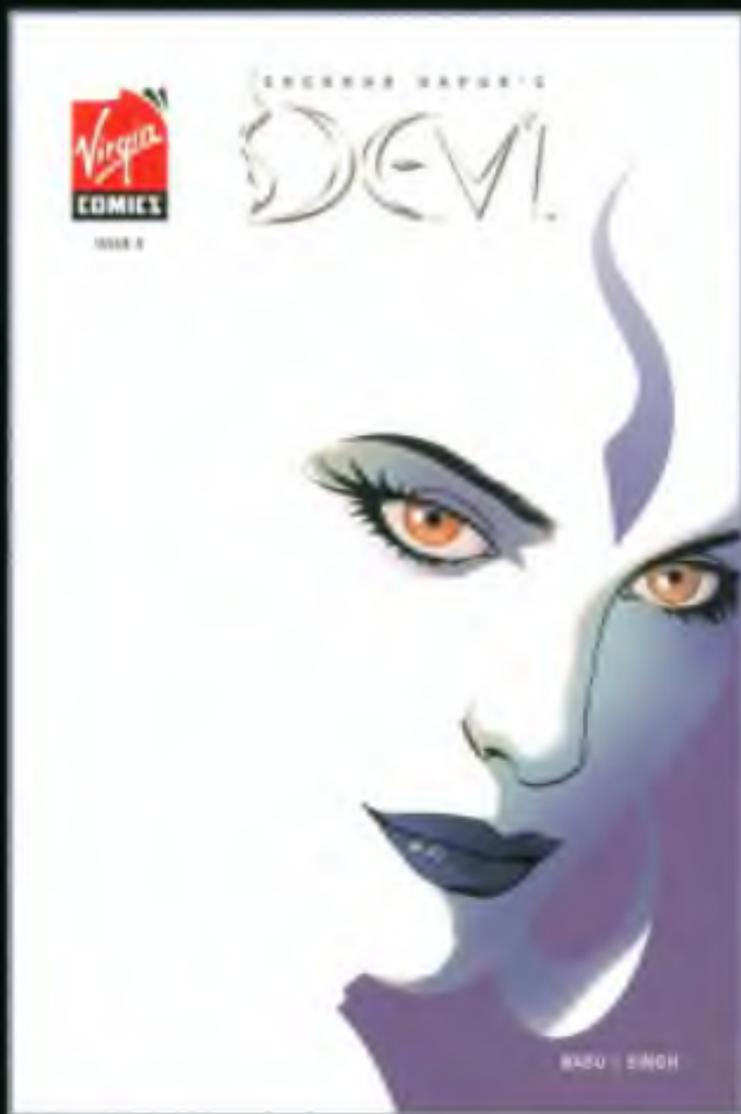
But the event that marked Virgin's coming-out was the meeting of two great storytellers – comics legend Grant Morrison and Virgin Comics' Chief Visionary Deepak Chopra. At the Virgin panel, "The Seven Spiritual Laws of the Super-Hero," Morrison and Chopra mused on the shared archetypes of the world's cultures, promoted the ability of story to influence social change, and invited the audience to help them define these seven spiritual laws. In so doing, that collective began the dialogue on the creation of the super-heroes of the new era. What those will be is as yet undefined. But it will be storytellers like Morrison, Chopra and the members of that audience who will create them.*

For Virgin Comics, Comicon was as much a success for getting our work out there as it was for offering an event such as the panel to get people talking about what the new mythologies are and will be. So, thanks to the fan boys and girls, the creators and the well-wishers who made our first time so special.



*for clips from the panel and to let us know what you think, visit us at: www.virgincomics.com or www.myspace.com/virgincomics

ON STANDS OCTOBER 2006



EXPERIENCE THE UNKNOWN



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