

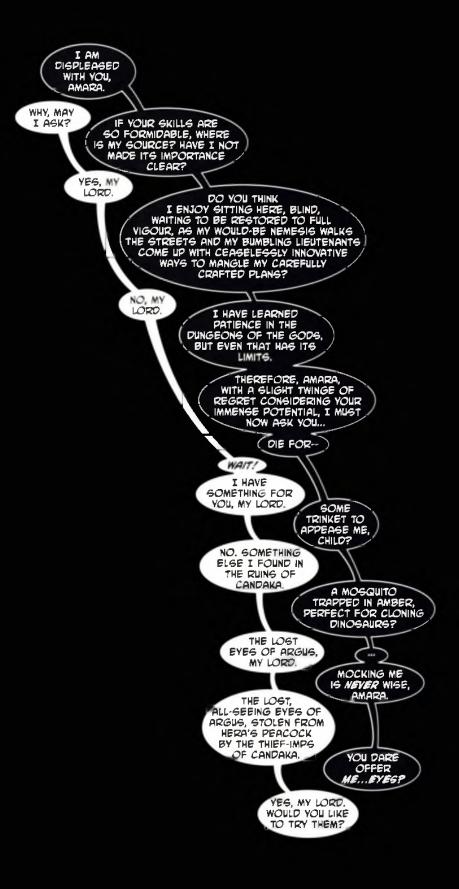
Tara Mehta, the new Devi avatar, is in a lot of trouble. Her first encounter with the fallen God Bala's demonic soldiers-the Darinde--leaves her flushed with awareness of her awesome new powers, but determined to leave Sitapur before things get worse. The only bright spot in her life is inspector Rahul Singh, a downtrodden cop who is determined to persuade her to stay on and help cure Sitapur of its many ailments.

In the more immediate future, though, Tara's in more danger than she knows. Two of the Devi's deadliest foes, Iyam--Lord Bala's former right-hand man--and Kratha--the Apsara Assassin--have escaped from Durapasya captivity, and delivering Tara's dead body to their master is the only possible conclusive evidence of their loyalty to Bala.

Meanwhile, it is revealed that the bounty hunter, Amara Gaelle, and the forward-looking Durapasya warrior, Agantuk, are both working for a secret organization called the Cabinet of Shadows, who seek to establish human dominion on earth, free from the tyranny of all supernatural beings, divine or demonic.

Amara tells the Cabinet she has located the Source, the powerful vessel ford Bala seeks so desperately, but that she doesn't dare unearth it for fear of Bala claiming it before she can steal it away. Agantuk promises to lead an attack on the Parinde in a week's time, to give her an opportunity to locate it unobserved and bring it to the cabinet. Until then, Amara must play a dangerous game: She must keep her suspicious, blind and ultimately deadly employer from punishing her apparent inefficiency--and bala's punishments usually involve death.







JUST A FEW MORE DAYS, LORD, HOW UNFORTUNATE IT IS THAT EVEN WITHOUT EYES I COULD HAVE SEEN THAT YOU NEED MORE TIME BECAUSE YOU ARE WILFULLY MISLEADING THE SEARCH FOR THE SOURCE. A FALSE AND GROUNDLESS ALLEGATION, MY LORD, AND WHOEVER WHISPERED THANK YOU, MY LORD. IT IN YOUR EAR IS A LIAR. INDEED? THEN YOU INTENTIONALLY OUDER MY LAGARDES TO MON. AWAY PROM THE CARECTLAN THE CHILD-DOWGERS POINT TOWARDS? WHAT A PITY IT IS THAT YOU WERE EMPLOYED TO FIND THE SOURCE, NOT THESE EYES. AND THE SOURCE REMAINS HIDDEN. THE CHILDREN ARE UNTRAINED IN Salary . THE ART OF MAGIC DETECTION, MY LORD. THEIR DIVINATIONS ARE SOMETIMES WAYWARD. I KNOW HOW TO INTERPRET THAT IS THEM. WHY YOU, IN YOUR INFINITE WISDOM, EMPLOY ME I WISH TO CONTINUE EMPLOYING YOU, AMARA. I SUGGEST YOU ENSURE THAT BY DIGGING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION HENCEFORTH. YES, LORD. AND AMARA FAILURE IS NOT AMONG YOUR OPTIONS.









I'M A LOVER, NOT A FIGHTER--THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL GAY. PLEASE!!!

> THIS IS REALLY NOT MY FIELD OF EXPERTISE. THE VERY FIRST TIME SHE SPOKE TO ME, SHE SAID SHE'D DO WHATEVER SHE WANTED, AND WE HAD TO FIGURE HER OUT.

> > I SUPPOSE I SHOULD JUST BE GLAD I'M IN CHARGE - AT LEAST FOR NOW -- AND NOT GO CRAZY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY.

AG I WAS SAYING WHAT WAS THAT?

AND NOW THAT PHAGE IS THANKFULLY OVER, WE CAN QUIT THE ANGST THING AND GO HURT PEOPLE. THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE THAT SHOULD BE HURT.

YES, YOU SHOULD. LATER, YOU'LL PROBABLY REALIZE THAT SHE LET YOU

TAKE CHARGE BECAUSE YOU'RE FINALLY READY TO STOP COMPLAINING AND DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

WHAT DID

YOU JUST

RUN TO YOUR

MOTHER, GIRL. AND BE GOOD AND STRONG

AND EVERYTHING.

THANK YOU, DEVI.

IT'S MORE

LIKE THIS .. NOW THAT

I FINALLY SEEM TO HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER MY BODY ...

> I CAN ACTUALLY LEAVE.

THAT'S NOT HOW I SEE IT,

THOUGH.

YOU KNOW ... SHE WAS TAKING CONTROL BECAUSE YOU WERE BUGGING OUT. YOU HADN'T REALIZED WHAT A GREAT OPPORTUNITY THIS IS. I MEAN, EVEN WITH ME STICKING AROUND GIVING YOU NOBLE SPEECHES, YOU'D HAVE RUN OFF, IF SHE'D LET YOU.

LOOK, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE, TARA, IN CASE THAT'S NOT CLEAR. NOT BECAUSE I INTEND TO GIVE UP--I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE. BUT NOW YOU'RE HERE, WE CAN ACTUALLY W/W.

















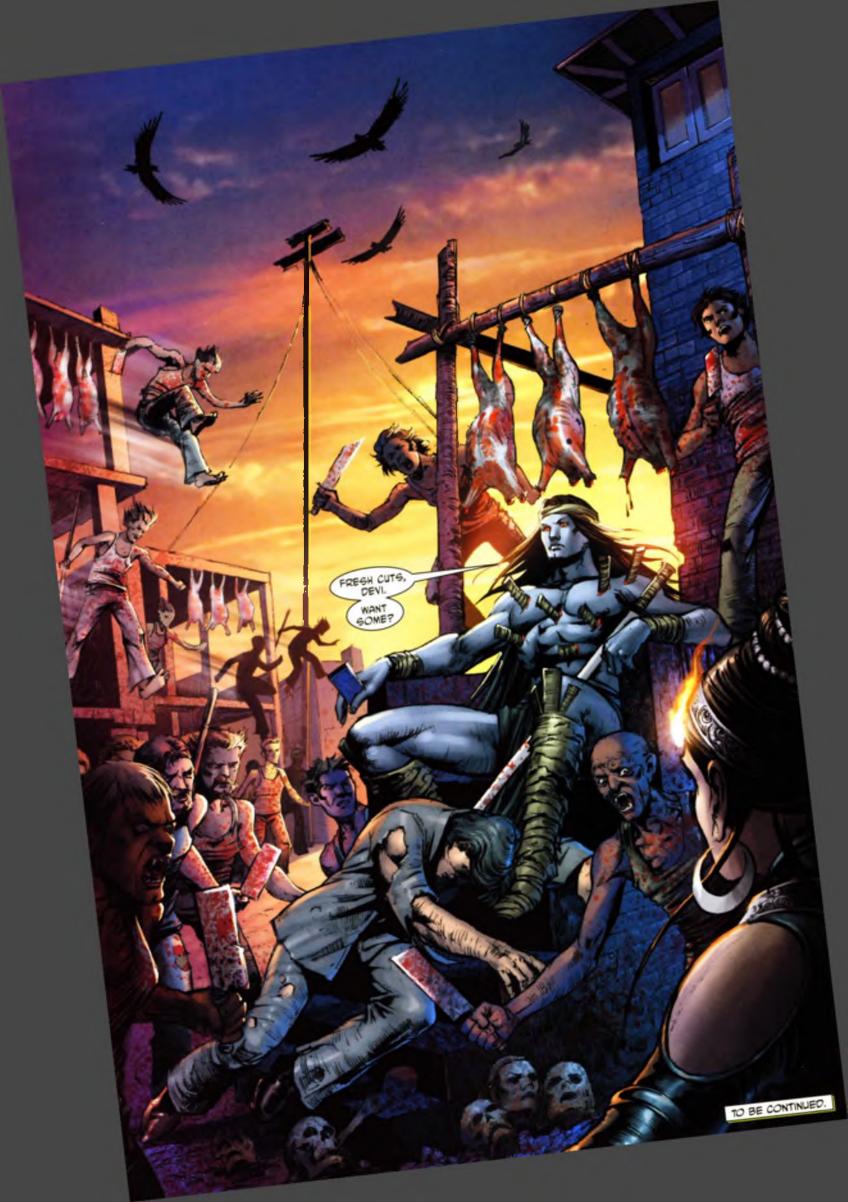












## **ON STANDS FEBRUARY 2007**





