## 

**BASU/PADALEKAR** 

## THE TALL TALES OF VISHNU SHARMA Panchatantra.

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## THE TALL TALES OF VISHNU SHARMA Panchatantra



LERO The Lion



Kandy The Bull



Vishna



# Vishnu Bandra Jack Sharma The Monkey The Jackal



Story so far...

The stories of our childhood are under attack. Sinister figures, known as TaleCorps, now invade the storyworlds, leaving death and oblivion in their wake. The Panchatantra, a book of ancient Indian fables, teeters on the edge of storybook history. But there is hope! The animal heroes of lore—Lion, Bull, Monkey and Jackal in their modern avatars Leo, Nandy, Bandra, and Jack, respectively-search for their savior, the true guardian of the Panchatantra, the heir to the seer Vishnu Sharma's legacy who would risk everything to save the ancient storyworlds. Thing is... the current guardian has no idea the Panchatantra heroes even exist.

Vishnu Sharma, would-be boy hero, is too busy playing in online tournaments to fight storybook wars. But when the animal heroes show up at his door, Vishnu finds it difficult to separate fact from fiction. After being saved from murderous TaleCorps agents, Vishnu is pulled into the pages of the Panchatantra to visit the storyworld he was born to protect. But his trip is cut short when TaleCorps' top agent, Professor Shadow, yanks the boy back into the real world to offer a lesson of his own. Shadow schools Vishnu on the TaleCorps mission: to gain control over the hearts and minds of story lovers the world over by uniting modern and long-forgotten characters alike. Under the leadership of the elusive Boss Cameo, these characters have become an army, destroying any other characters that stand in their way. And what better recruit than the Panchatantra guardian himself?

> Even though Vishnu is on the fence about joining the Panchtantra characters' cause, he wouldn't help kill them ... right?



I HAVE Summoned you here, to the council rock of kathagraha, because the occasion demands IT. Indeed, no king of kathagraha has *EVER* faced times as Dark as these.

> SO I URGE YOU NOW, TALE-BRETHREN, CAST YOUR DIFFERENCES ASIDE AND LISTEN.

FOR MILLENNIA UNTOLD WE HAVE LOVED AND LOST, LANGUISHED AND LABORED ON IN OUR STORY CYCLEG, CONTENT TO PERFORM THE FUNCTION FOR WHICH OUR FOREFATHERS, OUR PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS, HAD BEEN CREATED. OUR SACRED DUTIES. OUR STORIES.

UNTIL ONE DAY WHEN THE JACKAL, MY MORTAL ENEMY, SHOWED ME THAT THERE WERE WORLDS BEYOND OURG, TALES GREATER THAN OUR STORIES. AND IN THESE WORLDS WE HAD ENEMIES FAR DEADLIER THAN OUR TALE-BRETHREN, OUR BICKERING FAMILIES.

> FOR THESE ENEMIES SOUGHT NOT TO KILL OUR BODIES AND SEND US INTO OUR NEXT INCARNATION AND THE NEXT STORY CYCLE...

...BUT TO







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THE PARLIAMENT APPLAUDS THE NOBLE SO-CALLED KING FOR DEIGNING TO SHOW UP AT COUNCIL ROCK FOR ONCE.

GREAT, JUST WHAT LEO NEEDS. A CROW-OWL BLOODBATH IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS SPEECH.

> THOUGH IF THEY DO WIPE EACH OTHER OUT, IT WOULD MAKE THINGS SIMPLER.

THE PARLIAMENT

122

IT HELPS PEOPLE LIKE YOU GET KILLED. WATCH THE CROWS, NANDY. I'M GOING TO GO HUNT AROUND FOR CLUES. THERE MUST BE A GATEWAY WHERE THE ROBOTS FOUND YOU. SOMEONE COULD BE SENDING AN ARMY IN RIGHT NOW. SPEAKING OF ARMIES ....

NEXT YOU'RE GOING TO GAY VISHNU'S AN ENEMY, TRY TRUSTING, BANDRA, IT HELPS.





You have to Understand that I'm trying to help you. This is no time for Petty selfish concerns. Of course I could decide on an arbitrary Course of action, but that would be Short-sighted. If we do not gather Our wits, we will be crushed. I have seen the enemy, and he Is *Relentless*.

PLEASE CONGIDER, HONORABLE KING, WE WEAKER CREATURES BELIEVE YOU DO GOOD, YOU DO RIGHT! WE WANT BE HEARD, BE POWER!

Since The Dawn of Story, we have Looked up to your bloodline For leadership, leo. You have Failed your ancestors Today.

IT SEEMS TO ME, O CRAVEN KING, THAT WHAT WE NEED IS NOT A BATTLE PLAN BUT A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP...

> ...AND WHAT BETTER NIGHT TO FIND A NEW LEADER THAN A NIGHT WHEN WE ARE ALL PRESENT AT COUNCIL ROCK?

I COULD CUT YOUR THROAT FOR YOU, IF YOU'D LIKE.

YEAH. YOU TRYING TO SCARE US WITH OUTSIDERS? TAKE A WALK, LEO. YOU WANT A PLAN? HERE'S A PLAN: QUIT. I GOT HUNDREDS OF ENEMIES RIGHT HERE, AND THEY MAKE MY LIFE HELL EVERY DAY. YOU THINK INVADERS ARE SCARY? WALK A LEAGUE IN MY HOOVES. IF YOUR MODERN STORIES WANT TO MOVE IN AND CHANGE THINGS, GOOD FOR THEM, I SAY. I'VE HAD ENOUGH.

PERHAPS IT AS TIME FOR OUR WORLD TO REFLECT THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS, WITH AUMANS IN CHARGE. YOU HAVE TRIED HARD, NOBLE BEAST, BUT WHAT HAVE YOU EVER DONE FOR US? LOOK AT THIS MOCKERY OF A COURT. WE SIT HERE, PEACEFUL CITIZENS, SURROUNDED BY VERMIN, MONSTERS, IMBECILES AND CUTTHROATS.



## SOME SNAKES CAN NEVER BE CHARMED....

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WHEN I FIRST MET HIM, I CONFESS I THOUGHT HE WAS NOT WORTHY OF THE HONOUR. BUT NOW, I ADMIT I WAS WRONG. HE CHOSE TO COME TO US IN OUR DARKEST HOUR, AND IT IS WE THAT ARE NOT WORTHY OF HIS BENEVOLENCE.



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11

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD, VIGHNU SHARMA, GUARDIAN AND SAVIOUR. YOU BRING UG HOPE IN BLEAK TIMES.





"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?



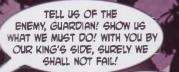
Written by Garth Ennis (Practic, Das Dary, The Bogs) 7 BROTHERS From John Woo, the acclaimed director of Face/Off and Mission: Impossible II



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### DIRECTOR'S CUT



N. V.

LEMMINGS.



SHADOW! SHADOW! HERE! HERE!

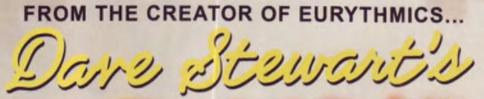
JACK! JACK! KILL! KILL! 











"A GHOULISHLY GOOD TIME." -THE NEW YORK POST-MORTEM

AY

"LEAVE IT TO THE UNDEAD TO BRING LIFE BACK TO BROADWAY."

-THE NETHERWORLD REPORTER

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A BABY. HE TOLD ME YOU WOULD ONE DAY GROW UP TO BE TWICE THE GUARDIAN HE WAS.

I DID NOT TELL YOU THIS, VIGHNU, BUT WE HAVE MET BEFORE. YOUR GRANDFATHER ONCE BROUGHT YOU HERE. YOU WERE JUST A BABY.

IMAGINE HOW PROUD YOUR GRANDFATHER WOULD HAVE BEEN OF YOU TODAY. LOOK, YOU GUYS ARE EXAGGERATING, I'M NO HERO. AND MY GRANDFATHER WAS A GREAT GUY, SURE, BUT IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, YOU GUYS PROBABLY SAVED YOURSELVES FROM ANY TROUBLE YOU GOT INTO--I'VE SEEN THE POWERS YOU HAVE. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS STOP BICKERING WITH ONE ANOTHER.





PRODUCTION: GROUNDBREAKING COMICS

DIRECTOR: VISIONARY DIRECTORS

STUDIO:

VIRGIN COMICS



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MY GRANDFATHER NEVER TOLD ME CLEARLY WHAT HE DID. I GUEGG HE THOUGHT I WAG TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND.

HOW

WAS RIGHT. I ALMOST MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE AND GOT YOU ALL KILLED.

AND HE

BUT NOW, I PLEDGE TO HELP YOU THROUGH YOUR TROUBLES. WHATEVER THE COST.

TO BE THE GUARDIAN I NEED TO BE. AND I KNOW WHO YOUR ENEMIES ARE, AND WHAT YOU NEED TO DO. I'M FINALLY SURE I CAN BE WORTHY OF ALL THE TRUST AND HONOR YOU'VE GIVEN ME.

WELL DONE, VIGHNU JUGT THE PIGHT NOTE OF SINCERITY I KNEW, WHEN I RECRUITED YOU, THAT IT WAS A MASTERSTROKE.

ME TO REWARD

DENIZENS OF KATHAGRAHA! GREETINGS. I'VE BEEN LOOKING AROUND YOUR WORLD FOR A WHILE NOW, AND IT'S A LOVELY PIECE OF UNREAL ESTATE,



# 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-earing 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 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 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



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

MEETECONAUTS



#### Strategist. Team Leader

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

### Daredevil, Heartthrot

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





### 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.

### Resident Tech Genius

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

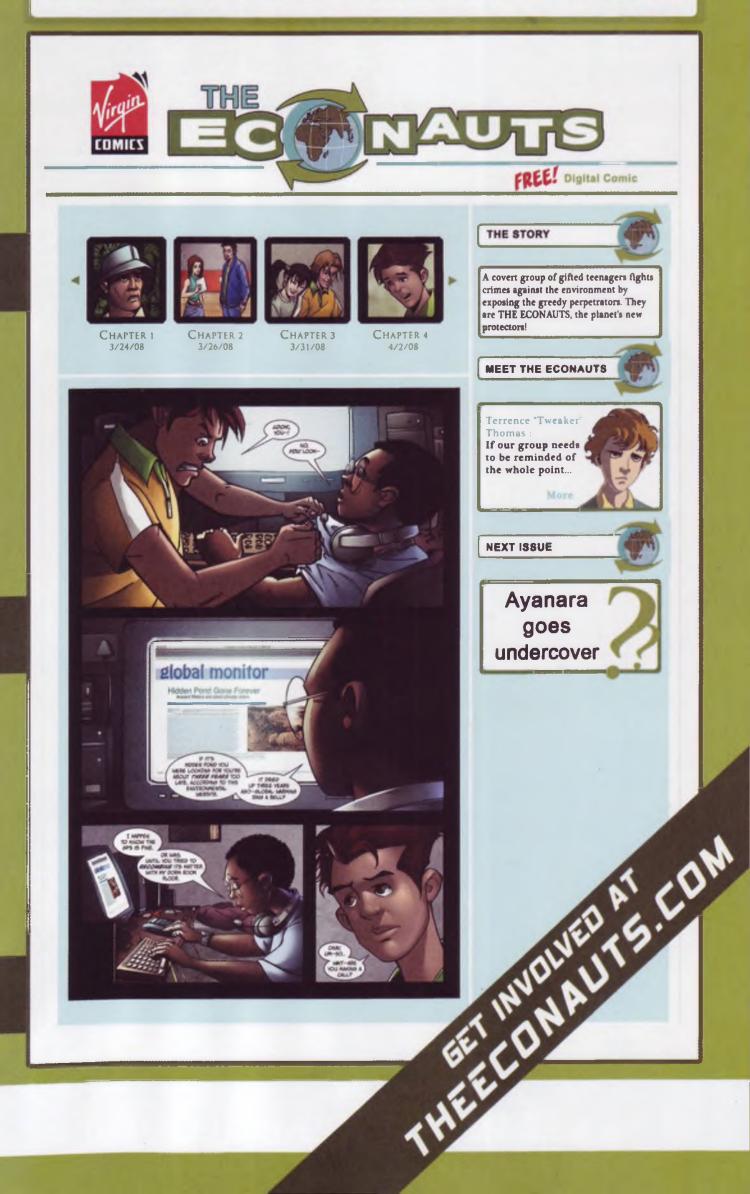




### Master of Disguise, Multi-Lingual

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





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2



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