

DEEPAK CHOPRA & SHEKHAR KAPUR PRESENT

Rāmāyaṇ RELOADED

3392 AD

Virgin
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VARIANT
EDITION

ISSUE

2



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DEEPAK CHOPRA & SHEKHAR KAPUR PRESENT

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PREVIOUSLY...

Thousands of years in the future, an epic unfolds. From his stronghold on the continent of Nark, the evil **Ravan** means to crush the world under his heel. But the free-willed races of the lands of Aryavarta, led by the humans in the city of Armagarh, resist the dark lord's conquests. However, treachery resulted in the exile of **Rama**, who is Armagarh's greatest warrior. Along with his younger brother, **Lakshman**, and the beautiful **Seeta**, Rama travels the land, dreaming of restoring the earth to its former glory.

Wounded in battle, Rama teetered between life and death in the deserts of Thar. But his life was saved by Seeta, who displayed amazing powers in healing not only Rama, but the blasted lands of the desert as well. Seeta transformed the wasteland into an orchard, a veritable oasis in the desert. Now Rama, Lakshman and Seeta continue their journey, unaware that they are being watched by a dangerous band of Vanara rovers, led by **Prince Angad...**

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RAMA



SEETA



LAKSHMAN



RAVAN



DO YOU HAVE EVEN THE *SLIGHTEST* IDEA WHERE WE'RE HEADED, RAMA?

EAST, WHILE WE STAY OUT OF THOSE MOUNTAINS. I'D PREFER TO AVOID THE CHITRAKUT RANGE, AND THE *ASURA* STRONGHOLD THERE.



BUT WHAT LIES TO THE EAST, BROTHER? DO YOU INTEND A RETURN TO *ARMAGARH*?

LAKSHMAN, YOU KNOW THAT EVEN IF I *WISHED* TO RETURN, *ARMAGARH* IS CLOSED FOR ME FOR THE NEXT THIRTEEN YEARS.



NO, I'M HEADED FOR THE *NISHAAD* VILLAGE, SO I CAN GIVE NEWS OF MY FRIEND *GUHA*'S DEATH TO HIS FAMILY.

I GUESS NO ONE'S INTERESTED IN WHERE I WANT TO GO?

AND WHERE MIGHT THAT— UH, RAMA?



RIDE WHEREVER YOU WANT, BUT MAKE IT *FAST*...

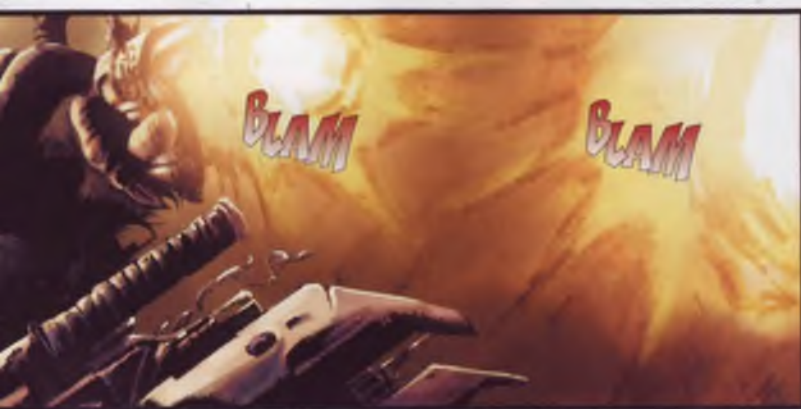
"...LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE SOME UNWANTED COMPANY."

INDEED, PRINCE ANGAD! BEEN SOME TIME SINCE WE COME ACROSS HUMANS!





PATIENCE,
BOYS. LET'S
PLAY A LITTLE
BEFORE THE
KILL!



BLAM

BLAM

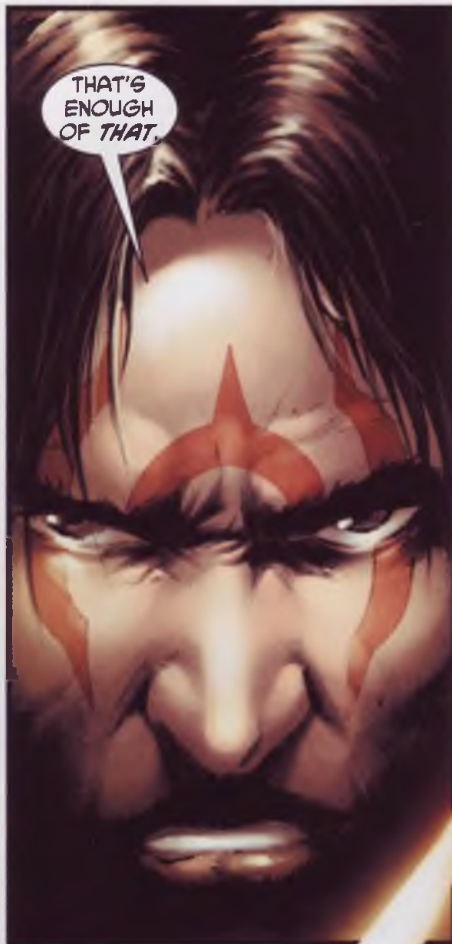
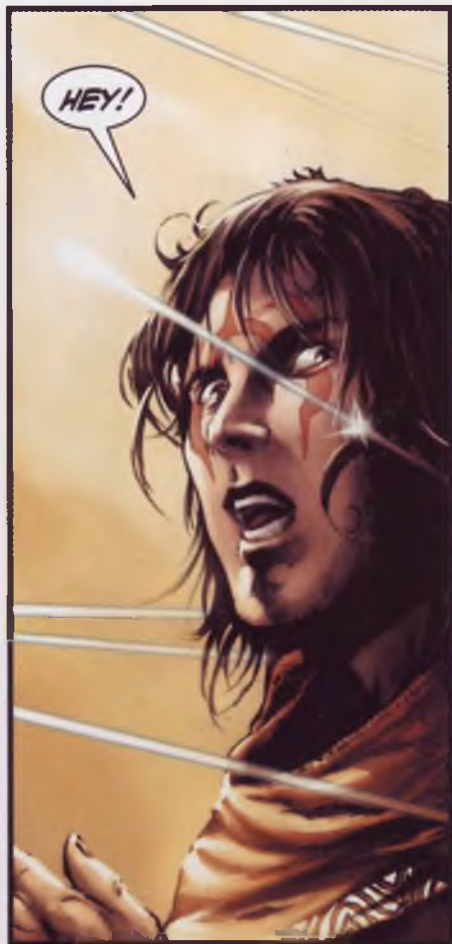


VREEOW



IF ANY OF YOU
WRETCHES ACTUALLY
HIT THE HUMANS, I'LL
HAVE YOUR
HEAD!

WRECK THEIR
VEHICLE, BUT I WANT
THEM ALIVE!





HRAARR!

COME ON, A LITTLE CLOSER, JUST A LITTLE CLOSER...



HAARGH!



WHOOHP



THE ANT KNOWS HOW TO STING...



FOOSH

...BUT ANTS ALWAYS END UP SQUASHED.



BRAKKOOOM

HANG ON!



STOP SQUIRMING!

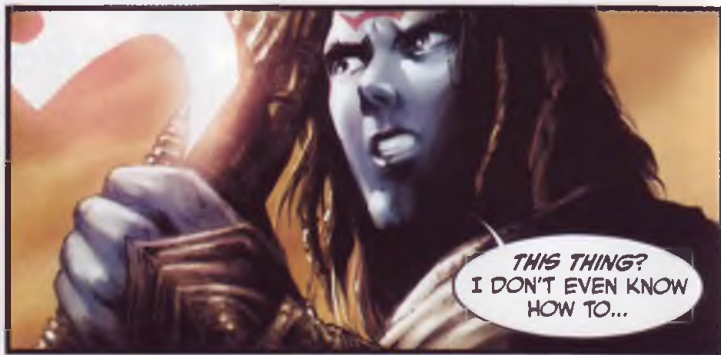
IF I STOP SQUIRMING I START FALLING!

I DON'T THINK WE CAN **OUTRUN** THEM...

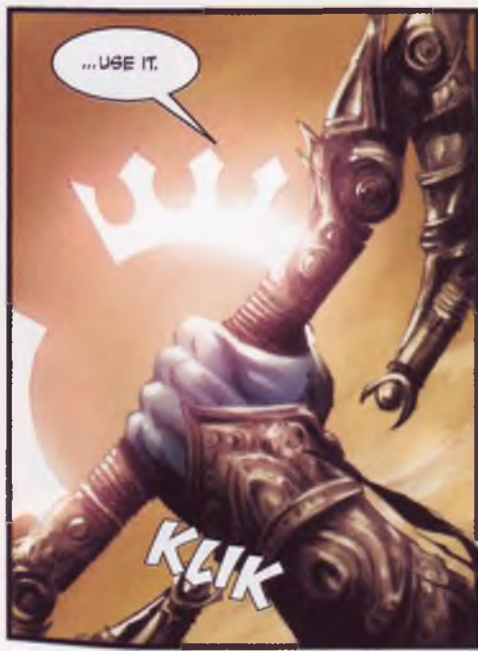


...AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY **GUNS!**

WHAT ABOUT THE **HARADHANU** MY FATHER GAVE YOU IN MITHILA?



THIS THING? I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO...



...USE IT.

KLIK



KLIK



BY THE **GODS!**

KLAK



YOU DRIVE.

BUT I'VE NEVER **DRIVEN** ONE OF THESE!

JUST KEEP US **STRAIGHT...**



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I OWE YOUR FATHER A *VERY* BIG THANK YOU.



HRAAARH!



I THINK ALL YOU DID WAS MAKE HIM *MAD*, BROTHER.



HE WON'T BE MAD MUCH LONGER. HIS *FUEL TANK'S* ON FIRE, IT'S GOING TO *EXPLODE*.



RAMA, NO, I DON'T WANT ANY MORE *DEATH!*

DON'T TELL ME...



... TELL HIM!

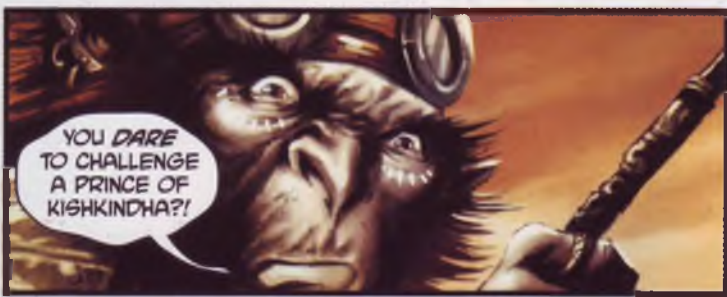
CHANK



HUMAN SCUM!



ENOUGH OF THIS.



YOU DARE TO CHALLENGE A PRINCE OF KISHKINDHA?!



CHALLENGE YOU?



I'M SAVING YOUR LIFE.



UHFF!

BAKOOM



I'M GLAD YOU SAVED HIS SORRY, HAIRY HIDE, RAMA...

...BECAUSE I'M GOING TO KILL HIM.



LAST WORDS?



JUST THIS, PRETTY BOY...

FSSH!

...LOOK AROUND.



DON'T WET YOURSELF, THEY WON'T HARM A HAIR ON YOUR HEAD UNTIL I SAY GO.

CARE FOR A BEED?

I DON'T SMOKE AND KEEP YOUR HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM.

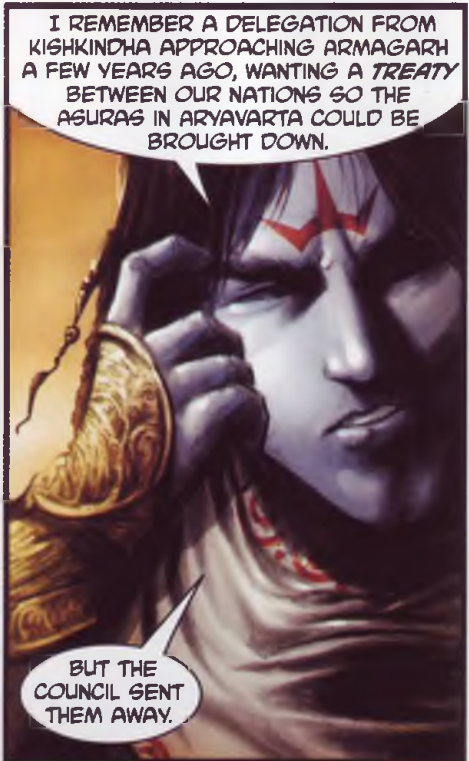


WHY DID YOU ATTACK US?



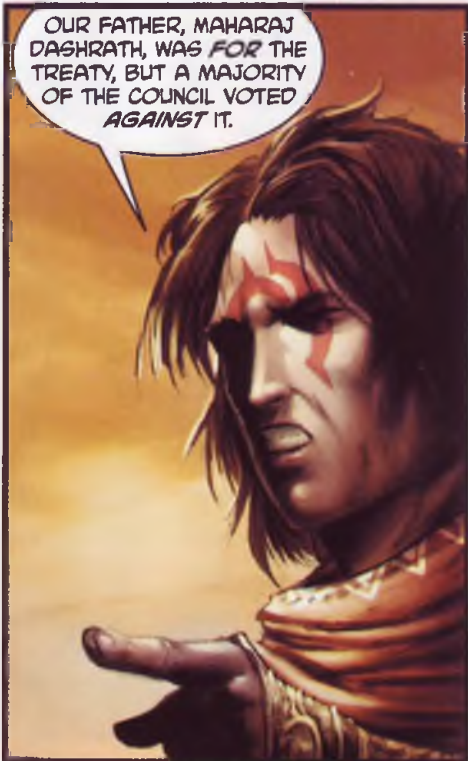
MY TROOP AND I NEVER MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COLLECT HUMAN HEADS. IT'S THE **LEAST** WE CAN DO...

...AFTER YOUR COWARDLY NATION COULDN'T MUSTER ENOUGH COURAGE TO JOIN KISHKINDHA AND **DESTROY** THE ASURAS ONCE AND FOR EVER.



I REMEMBER A DELEGATION FROM KISHKINDHA APPROACHING ARMAGARH A FEW YEARS AGO, WANTING A **TREATY** BETWEEN OUR NATIONS SO THE ASURAS IN ARYAVARTA COULD BE BROUGHT DOWN.

BUT THE COUNCIL SENT THEM AWAY.



OUR FATHER, MAHARAJ DASHRATH, WAS **FOR** THE TREATY, BUT A MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL VOTED **AGAINST** IT.



YOU ARE THE SONS OF **DASHRATH**?

HE IS THE MOST HONORABLE MAN IN ARMAGARH.



WAS. OUR FATHER LIVES NO MORE, AND ARMAGARH IS NO LONGER OUR HOME. WE ARE EXILED FROM OUR LAND.



IT SEEMS ARMAGARH SUFFERS THROUGH **DARK TIMES**, NOT UNLIKE KISHKINDHA.

OUR LAND IS TORN BY CIVIL WAR. WHEN YOUR NATION REFUSED ALLIANCE WITH US, MY FATHER, **BAALI**, LED THE GREATEST ARMY EVER AMASSED IN ARYAVARTA AND **ATTACKED** THE ASURAS.

VICTORY WAS **OURS**. BUT IN THE END, RAVAN'S **VENOM** DESTROYED MY FATHER'S SANITY. MY FATHER RETURNED TO OUR LAND, BUT WAS FOREVER CHANGED INTO A **MONSTER**.



NOW MY GOOD UNCLE, **SHUGREAVE**, FIGHTS A HOPELESS BATTLE AGAINST HIS MAD RULE, WHILE I SEARCH THE WHOLE OF ARYAVARTA FOR MERCENARIES WHO COULD HELP US **BRING DOWN** MY FATHER.



I OWE YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE. PERHAPS YOU CAN FIND A PLACE IN OUR REBEL ARMY.

I AM **ANGAD**, SON OF BAALI. HOW ARE YOU CALLED?

RAMA CHANDRA SURYAVANSHI. BUT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN BECOMING A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

FROM THE LOOK OF YOU, YOU WERE **BORN** FOR IT.



THANKS... BUT NO.

YOU CAN TELL US THOUGH WHERE WE CAN FIND SOME PROVISIONS AND SHELTER.

HEAD SOUTH...

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"...THERE AT FOOT OF THE CHITRAKUT RANGE LIES THE FREE LAND OF PANCHVATI.

"MANY CITIES BEAR APPELLATIONS --'THE MAGNIFICENT,' OR 'THE DECADENT' --BUT PANCHVATI HAS NO NEED OF SUCH. A CITY OF SMUGGLERS, BRIGANDS AND THIEVES OF ALL NATIONS, ITS MIGHT AND DECADENCE ARE SO WELL KNOWN THAT ANY APPELLATION MIGHT SEEM LIKE GILT LAID UPON GOLD.

"EVERY VICE CAN BE HAD WITHIN PANCHVATI'S GRANITE WALLS, FROM THE DREAM POWDERS AND PASSION MISTS PEDDLED BY THE NAGAS, TO THE SPECIALIZED BROTHELS OF THE STREET OF KAMA.

"THE STENCH OF SLAVERS FROM THE BRISHAVA IS OFTEN DROWNED IN THE SCENT OF ORANGES FROM RISHYAMUK, OF MYRRH AND CLOVES FROM GODIVAR, OF ATTAR AND ROSES FROM KIRTA, AND SUBTLE PERFUMES FROM GANDHARVA.

"YOU'LL SEE FIERCE BEAR-MEN OF JAMBA RUBBING SHOULDERS WITH THE SCHOLARS OF THE KURU ISLES, OR VANARA MERCENARIES DRINKING WITH TRADERS OF NARK.

"IT IS SAID THAT SELDOM A DAY PASSES IN PANCHVATI WITHOUT A MEETING OF CREATURES, EACH OF WHOM BELIEVING THE OTHER'S LAND TO BE FABLE.

"PANCHVATI IS RULED BY THE THREE ASURAS --TWO BROTHERS AND THEIR SISTER.



"DUSHAN, THE CORRUPT..."

"...KHARA, THE ELDEST, LORD OF AVARICE..."

"...AND SURP'NAKA THE BLACK HEARTED.

"THEY ARE RAKSHASAS WHO FLED NARK YEARS AGO, DECLARING THEMSELVES FREE OF RAVAN'S RULE. IT IS SAID THEY BELONG TO THE GRAKSH CLAN OF LANKA, KIN TO THE ASURA PRIME HIMSELF.

"THEY HAVE THEIR SHARE OF WHATEVER IS TRAFFICKED THROUGH PANCHVATI, AND ANYTHING CAN BE HAD FOR A PRICE: MERCENARIES, WEAPONS, SLAVES, PROSTITUTES, AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL..."

"...ENTERTAINMENT.



"EVERY WEEK THE SPECTACLE OF THE DWAND-YUDDH TAKES PLACE IN THE ARENA, WHERE THOUSANDS OF SPECTATORS GAMBLE ON THE LIVES OF COMBATANTS WHO MUST FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

"FOR THE PAST YEAR THERE HAS BEEN AN UNBEATEN CHAMPION, CALLED THE GENERAL, HIS TRUE IDENTITY UNKNOWN. HE WOULD MAKE A FINE ADDITION TO OUR ARMY, BUT KHARA REFUSES TO SELL HIM.

"TRY YOUR LUCK IN PANCHVATI..."



"... BUT BEAR IN MIND IT IS *NOT* KNOWN FOR ITS HOSPITALITY TO HUMAN BEINGS."



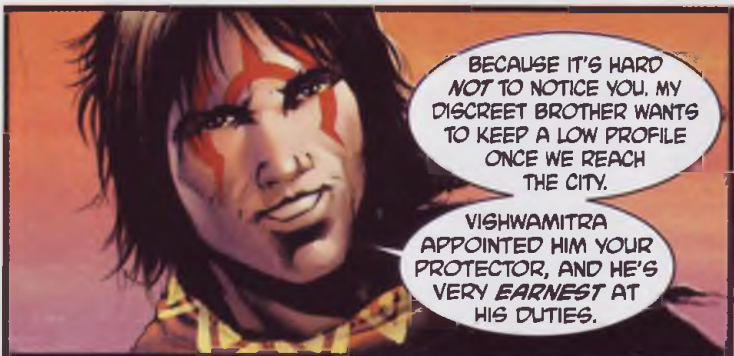
I'M NOT EXPECTING A WARM WELCOME.

WHAT CAN WE DO? BAD REPUTATION FOLLOWS ARMAGARHIANS LIKE A SHADOW.



SEETA, I SUGGEST THAT YOU COVER YOURSELF WITH LAKSHMAN'S CLOAK. BETTER YOU'RE NOT SEEN.

BUT WHY?



BECAUSE IT'S HARD *NOT* TO NOTICE YOU. MY DISCREET BROTHER WANTS TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE ONCE WE REACH THE CITY.

VISHWAMITRA APPOINTED HIM YOUR PROTECTOR, AND HE'S VERY *EARNEST* AT HIS DUTIES.



SEEMS LIKE ENTRY IS *RESTRICTED*. WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE THE BIKE OUT HERE.



IF YOU WANT TO GET INSIDE, YOU'LL PAY FOR IT!

TEN MUDRAS FOR EACH!



GREETINGS, SIR.

WE ARE POOR PILGRIMS FROM THE EAST. WE SEEK FOOD AND SHELTER FOR A NIGHT OR TWO.

NEVER HAVE I SEEN ARMAGARHIANS SO FAR FROM THEIR LAND. FOR YOU... TWENTY MUDRAS EACH. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH LIKING FOR HUMANS.



WHERE ARE WE GOING TO GET SIXTY MUDRAS? WE'RE BROKE.

NO, WE'RE NOT



GIVE THIS NECKLACE TO HIM, I THINK IT'S WORTH WHAT HE'S ASKING.

SEETA, NO, THIS IS THE LAST MEMORY OF MITHILA YOU HAVE.

MEMORIES ARE KEPT IN THE HEART, NOT IN ADORNMENTS.



ENOUGH?

FOR THREE OF YOU? WHO IS THAT HOODED ONE?



PARDON, SIR, BUT THAT'S OUR AGED MOTHER. SHE SUFFERS FROM HIDEOUS ULCERS ON HER FACE. SHALL I TAKE OFF THE HOOD?

THAT... WON'T BE NECESSARY.



OLD MOTHER!

A JEST! YOU HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR...



...UNLIKE MY BROTHER.

LET'S EAT. AFTER THAT WE CAN LOOK FOR SUPPLIES.

FINALLY YOU HAVE A CONGENIAL IDEA.



I LIKE PANCHVATI ALREADY.



GREETINGS, GOOD SIR. WHAT HAVE YOU ON YOUR MENU?



TENDER VEAL FROM THE FORESTS OF SOUTH, RED MEAT OF BRISHAVS, TANDOORI KEBABS OF GARUDA BIRDS, SPICY CURRIES OF SEA TURTLES, AND A HUNDRED OTHER DISHES.

NOT TO MENTION ALE AND WINES OF FINEST VINTAGE.



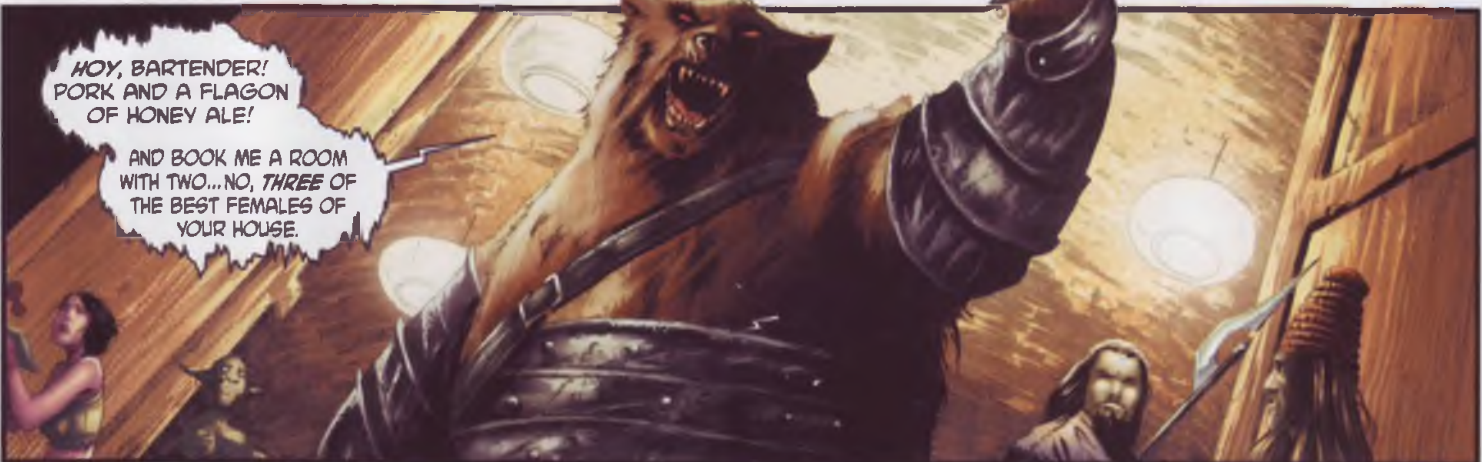
I, UH, PREFER SOMETHING VEGETARIAN. HAVE YOU LENTIL SOUP AND MILK?

OF COURSE. AND YOUR FRIENDS? THE SAME?



NONSENSE! I'LL HAVE TANDOORI KEBABS, AND ANOTHER FOR OUR HOODED FRIEND.

RAMA, I WONDER HOW YOU MAINTAIN YOURSELF ON A PURE VEGETARIAN DIET.



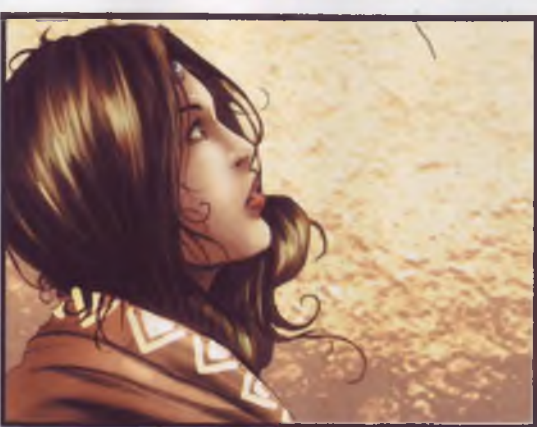
HOY, BARTENDER! PORK AND A FLAGON OF HONEY ALE!

AND BOOK ME A ROOM WITH TWO...NO, *THREE* OF THE BEST FEMALES OF YOUR HOUSE.



PRAISE THE FOLLY OF STUPID HUMAN PILGRIMS! I AM RICH FOR THE NIGHT!

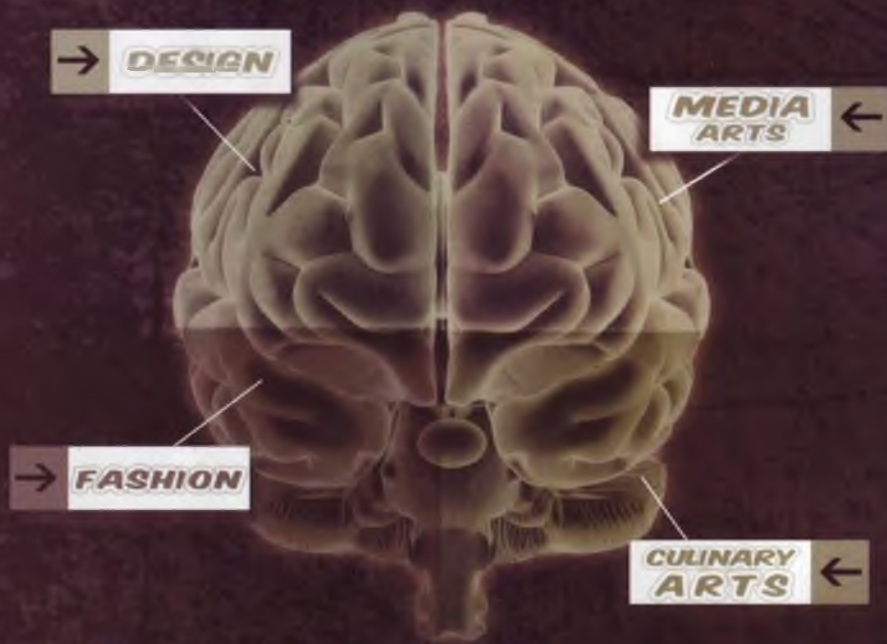
OWW! LOOK WHERE YOU *STEP*, YOU BIG...





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SEETA!



SSSS!



URGH!

SHLUKK



NO ONE BRINGS TROUBLE INTO MY PLACE!

SKAASH





OUT OF MY WAY, DAMN YOU!



LITTLE SCOUNDREL!

AWRK!



I THINK WE'LL GET OUR FOOD SOMEWHERE ELSE.



THE SERVICE HERE SUCKS ANYWAY.



GET THEM!



FIFTEEN MUDRAS TO WHOEVER CAPTURES THE GIRL!



OFFAL OF NARK, WE'RE TRAPPED.



PANCHVATI HASN'T SEEN A LASS LIKE YOU IN AGES. A WOMAN TO DIE FOR!



THEN TO THE DEATH IT SHALL BE.



BWOOOM



I DIDN'T SAVE YOU FROM RAVAN IN MITHILA ONLY TO HAVE YOU KILLED BY A BUNCH OF BRUTES.

GREAT GODS!



VISHWAMITRA!

WE
THOUGHT YOU
WERE DEAD!

IT'S NOT
EASY TO KILL ONE
OF THE SEVEN SEERS,
EVEN FOR RAVAN
HIMSELF.

VISHWAMITRA
IS AT YOUR SERVICE
AGAIN!

TO BE CONTINUED!



RAVAN



Story – Ron Marz

Art & Colors – Jim Starlin

Letters – B.S. Ravi Kiran

Thanks to Shamik Dasgupta



WHEN I WAS A BOY, THE MASTER OF MY SCHOOL SENT ME TO THE *GRANTH-GAR*, THE VAULTS OF KNOWLEDGE, AS A PUNISHMENT FOR MY DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN CLASS.

I WAS TO RESEARCH... SOMETHING OR OTHER. BUT I LOST INTEREST, AND INSTEAD STUMBLED UPON *FORBIDDEN FILES*, KNOWLEDGE ONLY FOR THE EYES OF THE ELDERS.



IN THE THIRD AGE OF MAN, THE SEVEN NATIONS OF THE EARTH FELL UPON ONE ANOTHER IN THE *GREAT GLOBAL WAR*.

THE OLD WORLD WAS SWEEPED AWAY IN THE BLOOD AND FIRE OF THE *MAHAVINAASH*.



BEFORE ITS DESTRUCTION, ONE NATION HAD SUCCEEDED IN THE CREATION OF A TRUE *ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*, A MERGING OF FLESH AND MACHINE.

WHILE MANKIND PERISHED, THE SENTIENCE SURVIVED...

...AND *FLOURISHED*.

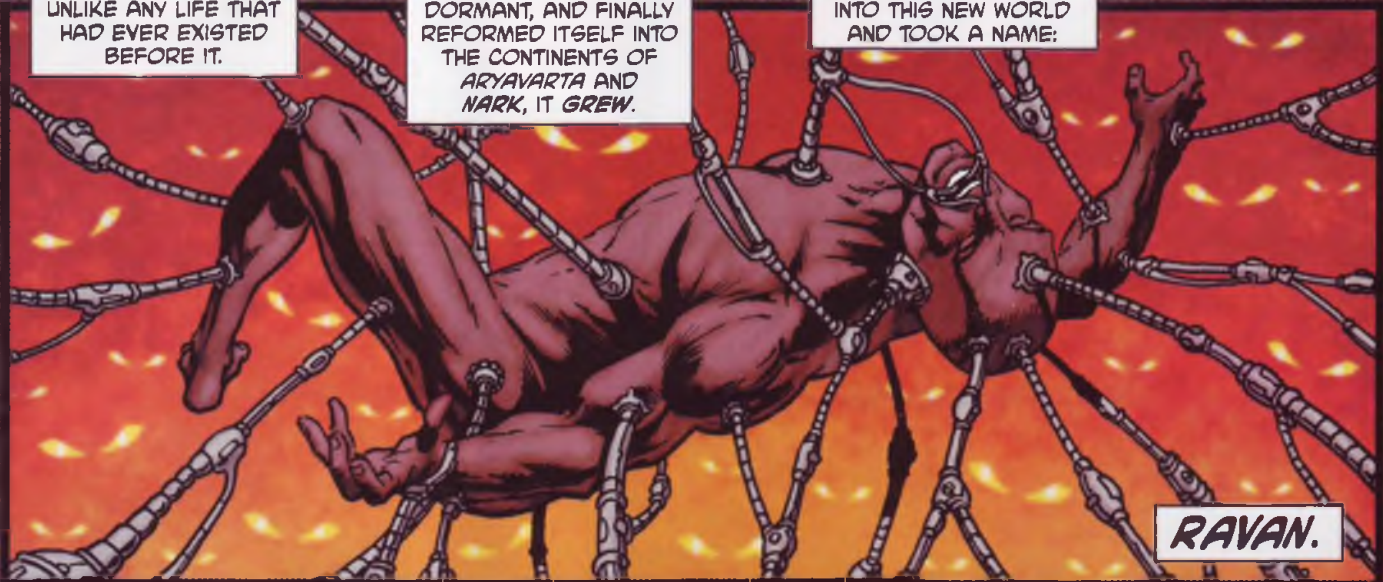




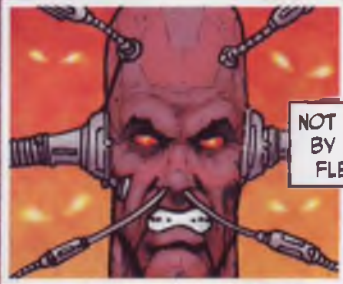
IT WAS *LIFE*, BUT UNLIKE ANY LIFE THAT HAD EVER EXISTED BEFORE IT.

WHILE THE WORLD LAY DORMANT, AND FINALLY REFORMED ITSELF INTO THE CONTINENTS OF *ARYAVARTA* AND *NARK*, IT GREW.

EVENTUALLY, IT CAME INTO THIS NEW WORLD AND TOOK A NAME:



RAVAN.



NOT BOUND BY MERE FLESH...



...RAVAN WAS ABLE TO SHIFT HIS SHAPE...



...TRYING AND DISCARDING MYRIAD FORMS.



ALL OF *NARK* FELL UNDER HIS INFLUENCE, ITS CREATURES BENT BY HIS WILL AND EVOLVED INTO SOULLESS ASURAS TO DO HIS BIDDING.

HE BUILT HIS CAPITAL OF *LANKA* IN HIS OWN COLD, AUSTERE IMAGE.

AND THEN, WITH THESE THINGS ACCOMPLISHED...

...HE TURNED HIS MALIGN ATTENTION TOWARD ARYAVARTA, AND MANKIND.

HIS BEING EXTENDED INTO NO LESS THAN *SEVEN* HEADS, RAVAN IS A CREATION NEITHER MAN NOR MACHINE, BUT WITH THE WORST TRAITS OF EACH.

JEALOUS OF WHAT WE ARE, HE MEANS TO BRING ABOUT OUR *END*.



I RAN ALL THE WAY HOME FROM THE GRANTH-GAR, AND HID IN A CLOSET UNTIL MY BROTHERS FOUND ME.



DAN DARE

WHO IS DAN DARE?

Is he Britain's most popular comic-book character of all time? Is he the reason that Garth Ennis agreed to tone down the expletives and imprecations? Or is he, as Ennis puts it, "our Captain America, our Superman, our Batman, he's all of them rolled into one"?

The answer to all of these questions is a resounding "yes." Exploding onto the British newsstands in 1950, Dan Dare was originally conceived in reaction to the horror comics being brought in from the US in the '40s. Dan Dare creator Frank Hampson and his partner Marcus Morris wanted to create a British hero that stood for morality and who promoted wholesome values. Colonel Daniel McGregor Dare—named after Hampson's wife's favorite hymn, "Dare to be a Daniel"—stood for honor, duty, and principle. He is, according to Ennis, the "quintessential British hero."

The original Dan Dare—which had wild success throughout the 1950s, selling all 900,000 copies of its first print run, and continuing consistently throughout the decade—took place in a fictional and then-futuristic 1990s, in a world governed by the United Nations. Dare was a colonel in the International Space Fleet, and was constantly saving the Earth from imminent destruction by nefarious forces, foremost among them, The Mekon: an evil genius and dictator who had enslaved the Treen people of Venus. Dare repeatedly rebuffed The Mekon's attempts to also enslave the people of Earth, earning himself fame and a reputation as the go-to hero of the Space Fleet.

In our revival of Dan Dare, Garth Ennis has meticulously updated this beloved icon. The United Nations has fallen, and Britain is the world's superpower, the Space Fleet has been disbanded and Dan Dare has retired. Yet, danger lurks on the edge of space. And because Dare is, above all, an officer and a gentleman, he heeds the call of his Prime Minister to return to the service—despite his severe misgivings about the PM himself. Ennis' Dare is simultaneously an homage to the great character that millions of British children grew up with and an extension of that character, bringing him to a world that is not united, where threats come from both on- and off-planet.

Don't miss this fantastic resurrection of a character that defined a generation. Between Garth Ennis' scripts and Gary Erskine's art, it's sure to be one wild ride.

See you on the inside.

The Virgin Comics
Editorial Team

Special Thanks to Peter Hampson

**DAN
DARE**



**INTERIORS BY
GARY ERSKINE**





SCRIPT

ART

GARTH ENNIS GARY ERSKINE

DAN DARE™



VARIANT COVER BY
GREG HORN

A LEGEND RETURNS
11-28-2007



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