



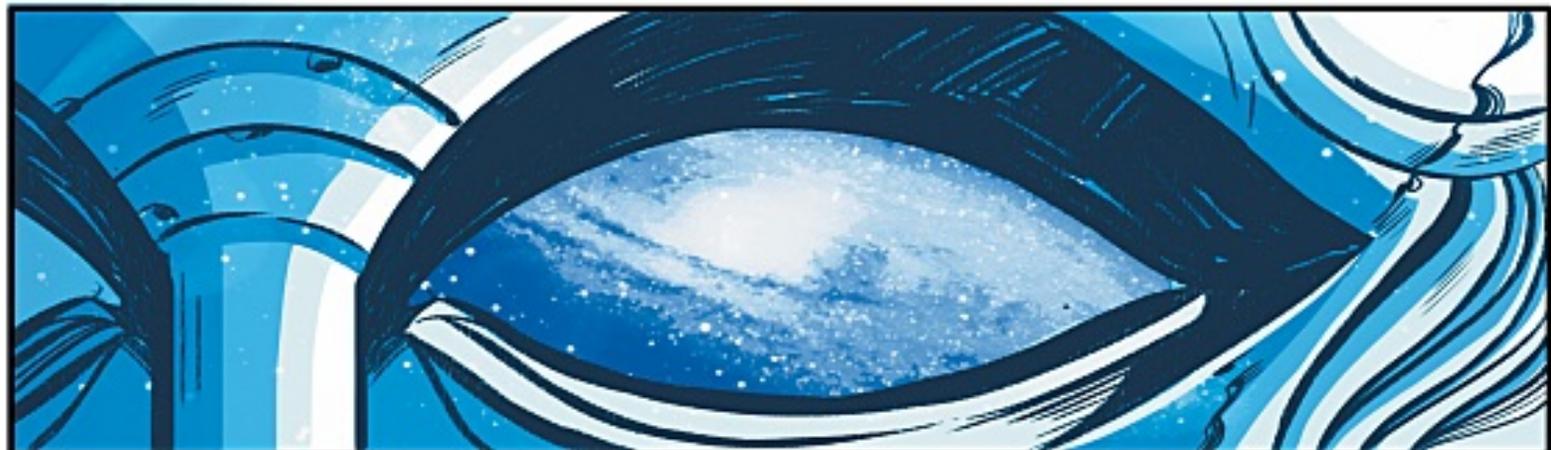
GRANT MORRISON'S
18 DAYS™

Issue
01





"FIRST, THERE IS *BRAHMA*,
THE *SELF-AWARE*
IMMENSITY, FROM WHOSE
THOUGHT-SUBSTANCE ARE
CREATED ALL KNOWN
AND UNKNOWN THINGS.



"IN THIS VAST, INFINITE
EXPANSE OF AWARENESS,
ONE SINGLE DAY LASTS
FOUR BILLION, THREE
HUNDRED AND TWENTY
MILLION YEARS..."



"...OR ONE **GREAT DAY**, IN WHICH THE **FOUR AGES** OF THE EARTH REPEAT LIKE THE CYCLE OF SEASONS.



"IN THIS **EBB AND FLOW** OF **COSMIC KARMA** LIES THE **WEB** OF ALL EXISTENCE, **ECHOES** OF **HUMANS, GODS, WARRIORS, SUPER SCIENCE, AND SAGES.**"



"IN THE PRIMORDIAL SPRING MORNING OF THE *GOLDEN AGE*, PERFECT MEN AND WOMEN LIVE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN AN EARTHLY PARADISE WITHOUT SORROW, EVIL, SICKNESS, OR FEAR.



"NATURE, GOD, AND MAN ARE ONE IN ECSTASY HERE.



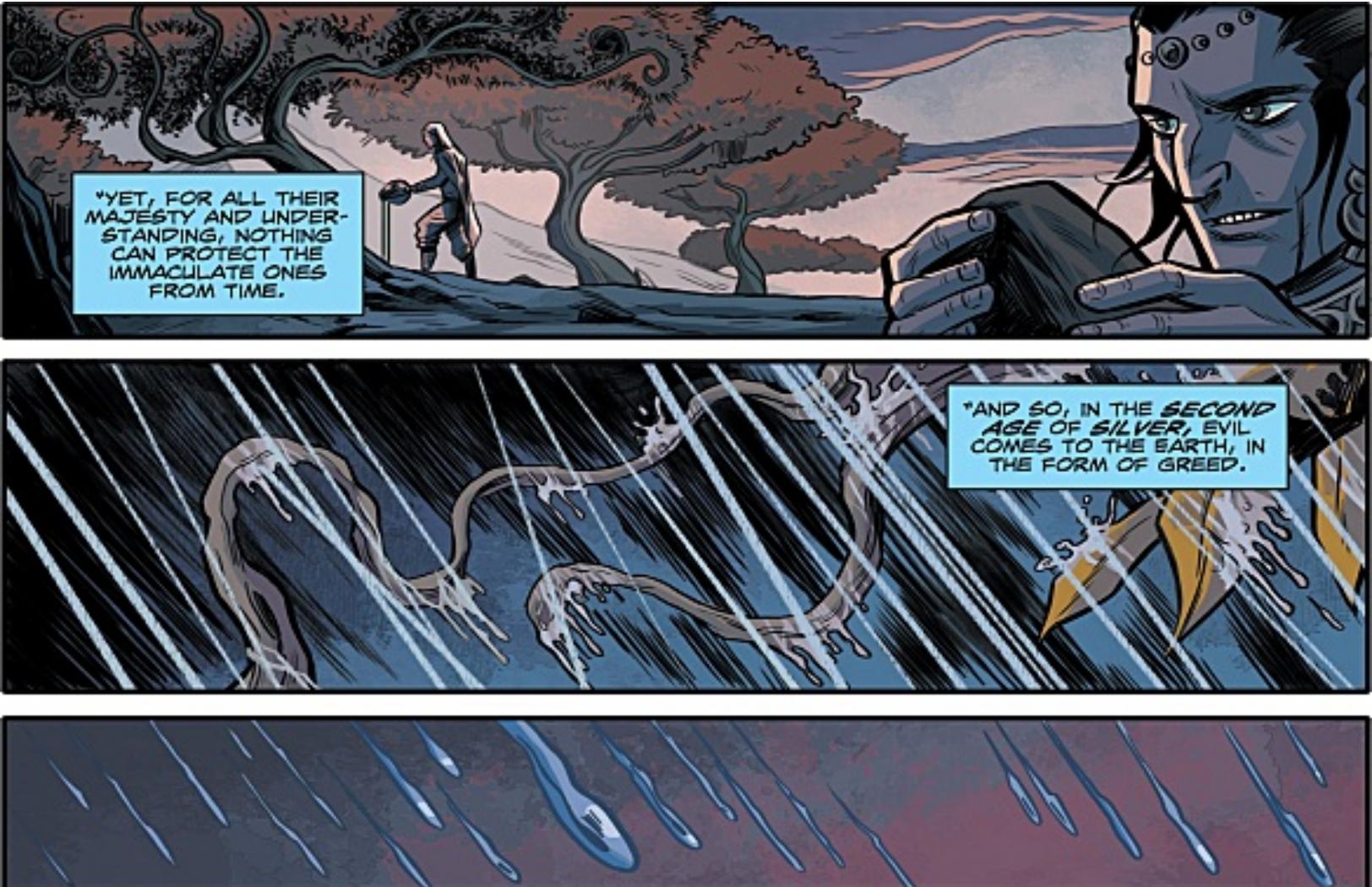
"HEAVENLY BLISS AND SUPREME WISDOM BLESS THE IMMACULATE ONES BORN TO THIS HAPPY DAWN."



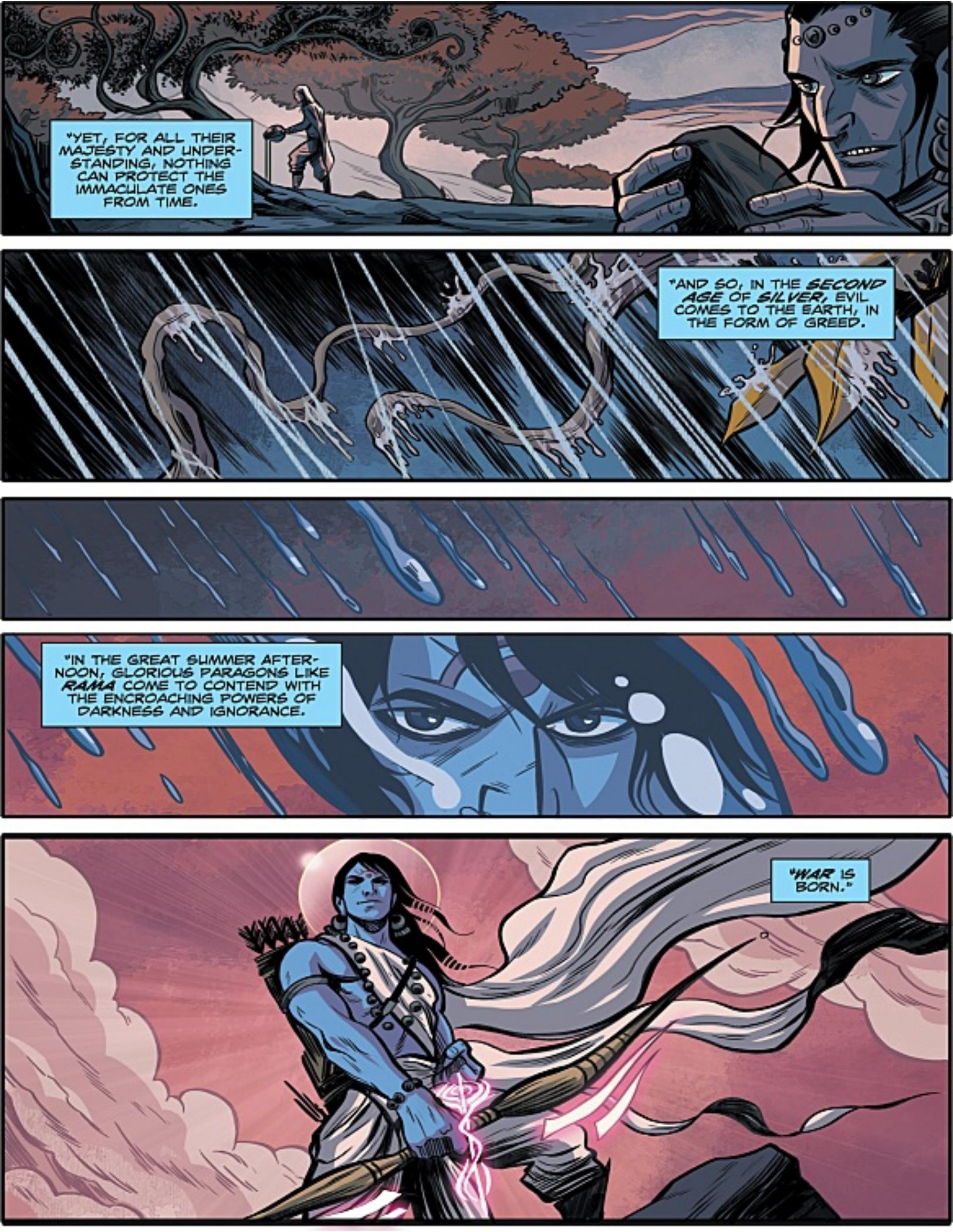
"YET, FOR ALL THEIR MAJESTY AND UNDERSTANDING, NOTHING CAN PROTECT THE IMMACULATE ONES FROM TIME."



"AND SO, IN THE *SECOND AGE OF SILVER*, EVIL COMES TO THE EARTH, IN THE FORM OF GREED."



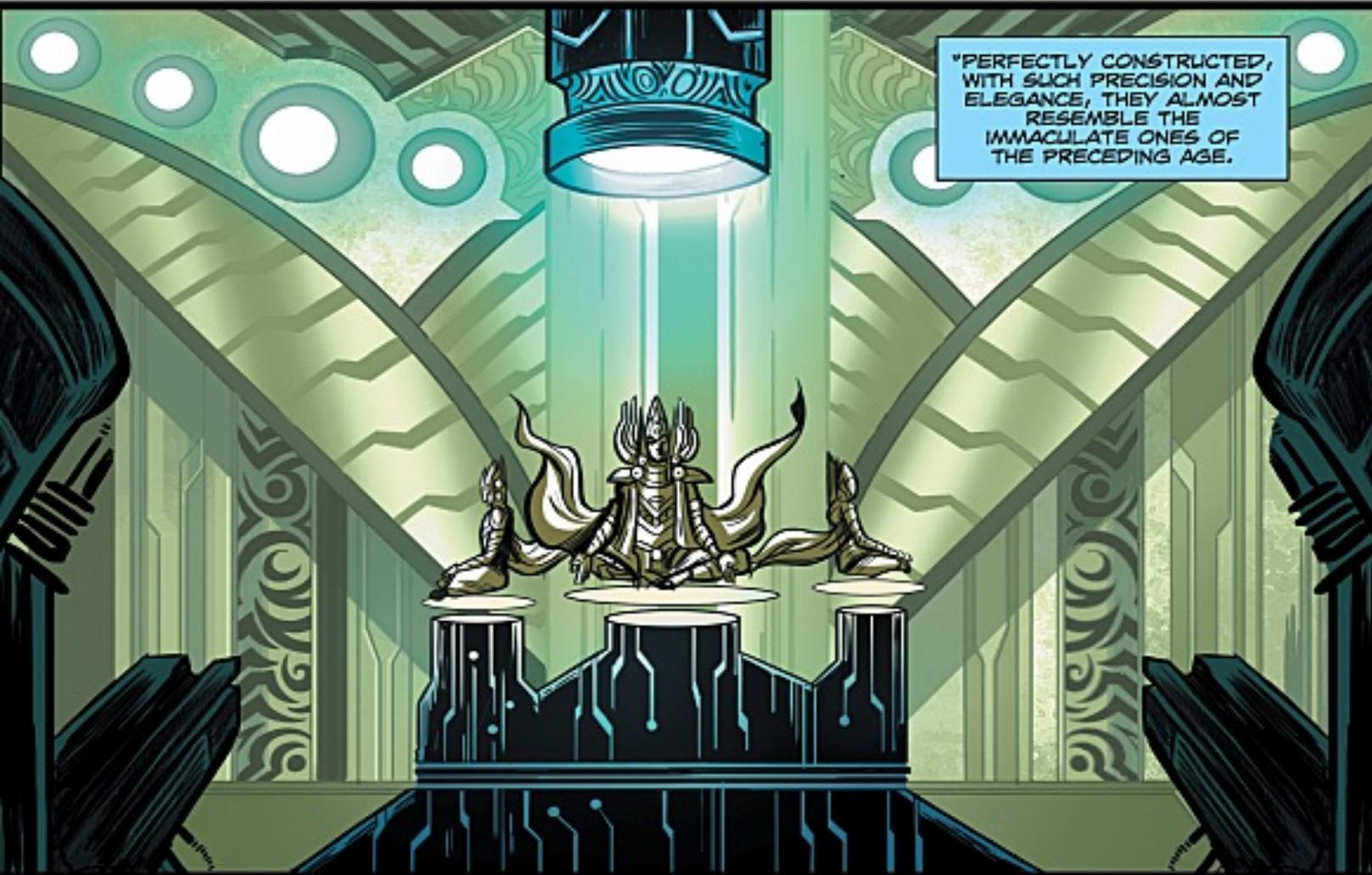
"IN THE GREAT SUMMER AFTERNOON, GLORIOUS PARAGONS LIKE *RAMA* COME TO CONTEND WITH THE ENCROACHING POWERS OF DARKNESS AND IGNORANCE."



"WAR IS BORN."



"WITH WAR COME THE **SUPERWARRIORS**, A NEW RACE OF ULTIMATE MEN AND WOMEN SENT TO STEM CIVILIZATION'S DECLINE AT THE END OF THE SECOND AGE.



"PERFECTLY CONSTRUCTED, WITH SUCH PRECISION AND ELEGANCE, THEY ALMOST RESEMBLE THE IMMACULATE ONES OF THE PRECEDING AGE.



"AND FOR A TIME, THEY SUCCEED."



*BUT THE GREAT AUTUMN AFTERNOON OF THE THIRD AGE BEGINS AND THESE SUPERWARRIORS BECOME PREY TO A NEW MISERY.



*DISEASE.



*IMPERFECTION.



*DECAY.



*PROPHECY SAYS THIS THIRD AGE OF OURS ENDS SOON. AND IN ITS TURN, ON AN EPIC BATTLEFIELD, UPON THE CRACK OF THE AGES...



*...WHEN WE OF THE GREAT AUTUMN AFTERNOON DEPART, THE TERRIBLE **FOURTH AGE** OF WINTER NIGHT BEGINS. THE SINISTER AGE, THE **BLACK AGE OF IRON.**



"WEALTH IS
LAW HERE."



"COMMERCE
DRIVES POWER."



"TRADE IS
AUTHORITY."



"DOLLARS AND
CENTS, THE
NEW GODS."



"HERE, SURVIVAL IS
THE NEW DISCIPLE.



"LONELINESS IS
THE NEW FAITH.



"EVERYTHING
AND EVERYONE
IS FOR SALE.



"INSANITY IS
INSTINCT.

"TO BE BORN INTO THIS
BLACK AGE IS TO SUFFER
CONSTANT TERROR. A TIME
OF INTERMINABLE WAR."

"AND AT ITS END,
EVIL ENIGLFS
THE EARTH.



"LIFE IS
EXTINGUISHED."

"AT LAST, AS THE WORLD
SHUDDERS AND DIES, *RUDRA*
COMES IN THE FORM OF SEVEN
SUNS TO OBLITERATE CREATION.



"PLUNGING EVERY-
THING TOWARD THE
HEAT DEATH OF
ABSOLUTE ZERO."



"THAT'S THE TALE
OF THE FOUR AGES,
AS YOU ASKED..."



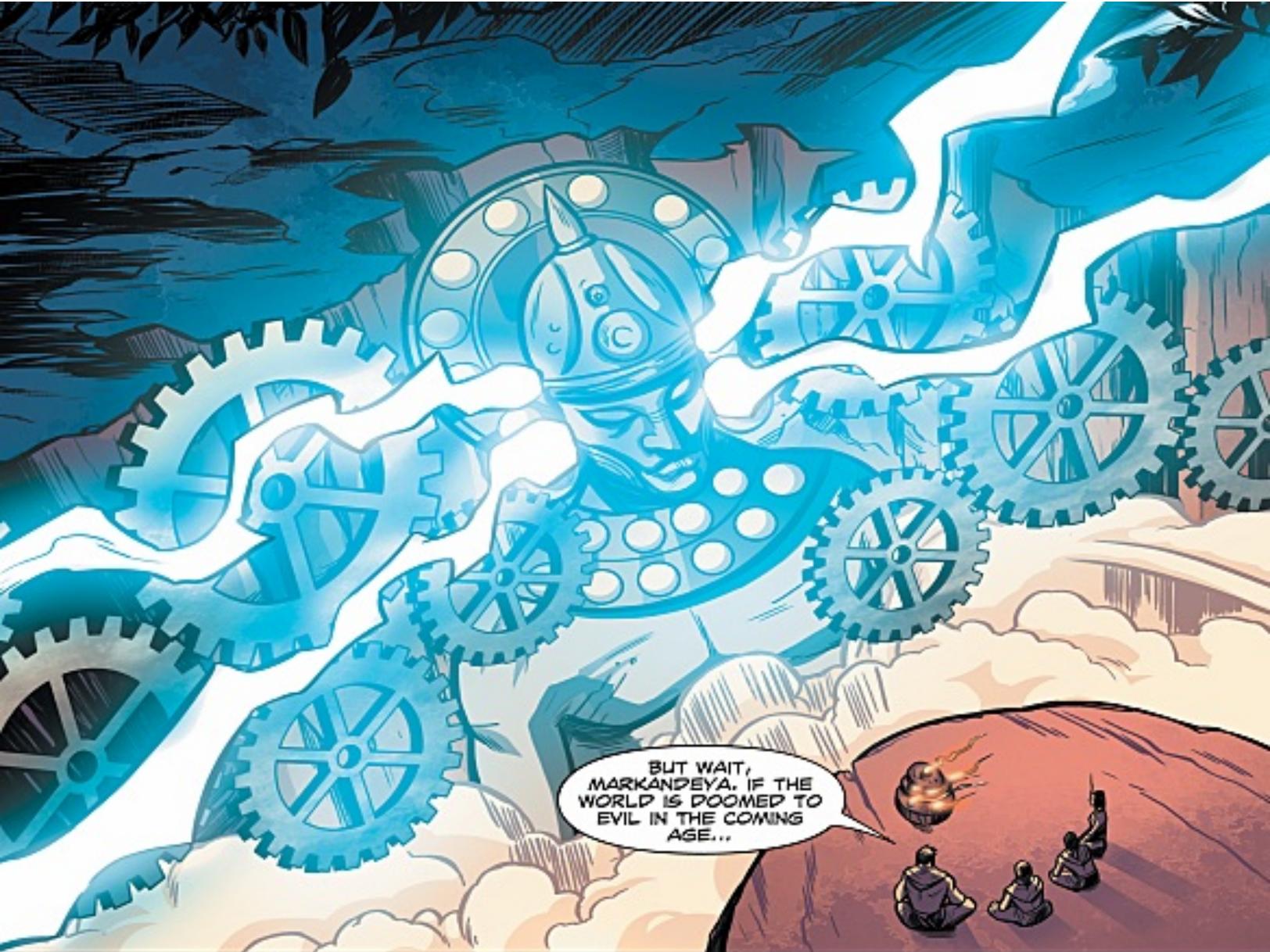
...AND THINK OF IT...HERE WE
ALL ARE, IN THE LAST YEARS
OF THE THIRD AGE. NOW IT
IS OUR TURN TO TAKE OUR
PLACE IN THE ARCHIVES.



WE SPEAK OF THE PAST
AND THE FUTURE BOTH. A
TWISTED RIBBON OF TIME
SPIED THROUGH THE
CRUCIBLE OF THE PRESENT.



CLAP
CLAP
CLAP



BUT WAIT, MARKANDEYA, IF THE WORLD IS DOOMED TO EVIL IN THE COMING AGE...



...WHAT'S THE POINT OF OUR LIVES? OUR EXILES? OUR LOOMING WAR AGAINST DURYODHANA?



LIGHT BURNS LOW IN THIS SINISTER AGE BUT IT IS NOT YET EXTINGUISHED. ANY MAN OR WOMAN LIVING IN THIS DIRE TIME OF EMERGENCY NEED ONLY ONCE *SPEAK MY NAME* AND THEY WILL BE SAVED.



FOR THIS REASON, THE SINISTER AGE IS THE BEST OF ALL TO HAVE BEEN BORN IN. FOR WHEN IT ENDS, ANOTHER *GREAT DAY* WILL DAWN, AND WITH IT...A NEW GOLDEN AGE.





NO ONE WILL BE SAVED.



BILLIONS UNBORN AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS WILL FIGHT, BRAVE BHIMA.



FOR IN TIME TO COME, EVERY HUMAN BEING, IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER, WILL TAKE THEIR PLACE ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND THEY WILL LOOK TO ALL OF YOU FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION.



YOUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE WILL DETERMINE THE FATE OF ALL HUMANITY.



ARE YOU READY?

YEARS LATER.

ARE YOU
READY?

ARJUNA!
BROTHER...
I ASKED IF
YOU ARE
READY?

YUDISH...

IS A
MAN EVER READY
TO COMMIT THE
ATROCITIES THE WAR
GODS REQUIRE
FOR THEIR
WORSHIP?



... TO MURDER THOSE WITH WHOM HE ONCE PLAYED AS CHILDREN?



WHAT TRICKS
MUST OUR COUSIN
DURYODHANA PLAY
TO CONVINCHE HIMSELF
HIS CAUSE IS
JUST?



"PERHAPS, THE SAME TRICKS WE'VE PLAYED ON OURSELVES?"



CAN YOU SMELL THE BURNING EMBERS OF THE MORNING FIRE THAT STEEL MEN TOWARD THEIR DEATHS?



CAN YOU
HEAR THE PULL
GROAN OF THE
VIMANAS IN THE
SKY?





*CAN YOU FEEL THE HEAVY THUD OF MILLIONS OF BOOTS CRACKING THE GROUND BELOW THEM?



*LISTEN. LISTEN TO THAT SILENCE, WAITING ON MY ORDER TO KILL AND BE KILLED.



TO LIVE OR TO DIE FOR THEIR ONE TRUE KING.



TODAY MY TRAITOROUS COUSINS, THE PANDAVAS, SHALL LEARN THAT NO MAN OR GOD CAN STEAL WHAT IS MINE BY BIRTH-RIGHT.

*SEE THEM REVELLING
IN THEIR ARROGANCE.
THEY THINK THEY'RE
BETTER THAN US.

*ARJUNA...

*...SATYAKI...

*...BHIMA...

...YUDISH...



"GIANTS!"



"DARK SPIRITS
THAT HAVE NO
PLACE ON
THIS EARTH."



"THIS IS WHAT
DURYODHANA HAS
BROUGHT INTO
OUR WORLD."





BUT WE HAVE *SOME-THING* THEY DO NOT.



THERE IS ONE AMONG THEM I DID NOT TEACH, KING PURYODHANA...



"*SOME-ONE* THEY DO NOT."



...ONE WHO IS A MYSTERY EVEN TO ME...

A blue-skinned Krishna with a halo, wearing a red cape and ornate blue and gold attire, sits atop a white horse. The horse is rearing up and has a green flame-like energy emanating from its forehead. The background is a warm, golden-orange glow.

"KRISHNA.
THE LIVING GOD."

"KRISHNA.
THE LIVING GOD."

A close-up of a man with a mustache and a wide, toothy grin, laughing heartily. He is wearing a dark, patterned garment.

HAHAHA!!
YES, BUT A LIVING
GOD WHO HAS
VOWED NOT
TO FIGHT!

NEXT ISSUE: The Pandavas Raise The White Flag

PANDAVAS



Yudish

Exiled King of Indraprastha
Leader of the Pandava Clan



Arjuna

Master Archer
Most Feared Superwarrior



Bhima

Destroyer, Armed with
the Mace Worldbreaker



Nakula and Sahadeva

Twin Superwarriors
Master Swordsmen



Abhimanyu

Son of Arjuna
Vicious Swordsman



Krishna

Living God
Arjuna's Charioteer

KAURAVAS



Duryodhana

King of Hastinapur
Leader of the Kaurava Clan



Dushasan

First Brother of Duryodhana
Cunning Spearman



Bheeshma

Grand-Uncle to the
Kaurava Clan
Most Powerful
Superwarrior in Bharat



Drona

Sage and Teacher
of Martial Arts
Advisor to Duryodhana



Karna

Kaurava Loyalist
Fierce Superwarrior
forbidden to fight
in the War



Shakuni

Evil Master Tactician





A CONVERSATION WITH **GRANT MORRISON**

Q: With epic fantasies like *The Lord of the Rings* capturing the imagination of people, what made you turn towards Indian mythology and *The Mahabharata* in particular?

GM: The source material is incredibly rich and while I enjoy *The Lord of the Rings* a great deal, it's a story that presents an often simplistic, dualistic view of human nature and the world. *The Mahabharata* on the other hand is filled not only with fantastic spectacle, magic and epic combat but with flawed, relatable characters, all of whom must break their own rules to win the day, all of whom must face the consequences of their every action. At its centre, the story also has the *Bhagavad Gita*, the wellspring of spiritual, contemplative thought, which provides it with an incredible transcendent dimension. Quite simply, it is among the greatest stories ever told and it

remains fresh and relevant to our lives.

When I met Sharad Devarajan many years ago, he shared with me his passion to build characters, heroes and stories that tap into the unique creativity and mythic culture of India but appeal to audiences worldwide in the same way *The Lord of the Rings*, *Clash of the Titans*, *Harry Potter* or *Batman* have been able to do. When we discussed *The Mahabharata*, it was clear there was no better partner for me to work with on this story. The project started many years ago and it has been a labor of love for all of us to get it this far. Graphic India is really pioneering a new space in Indian character entertainment and the quality of the artwork being done by Jeevan J. Kang, Mukesh Singh and many of the other talented creators in India that have worked with Sharad is some of the best being produced in the world today.

Q: How do you make *The Mahabharata* and the philosophies of the East relatable and accessible to audiences in the West, and what do you think audiences in the East will be able to take away from *18 Days*?

GM: Audiences in the East can expect a new take on a story they probably know by heart. They can expect to see the story removed from antiquity – most depictions of the battle show armor and weapons which suggest specific periods in the history of India but we've chosen instead to place the action in a mythic time; this battle is always happening, it's always playing out in the timeless world of symbols and archetypes so it should always feel new. We've also added some big twists to the old story – and one in particular which will speak directly to those of us living through the Fourth Age of Kali and hopefully make the outcome of the battle seem much more urgent and relevant to our lives today.

I spent some time attempting to 'translate' the complex storytelling of *The Mahabharata* into something that could be understood in terms of familiar western archetypes. If it works out, audiences in the West will be introduced to one of the greatest human stories ever told, as well as some of the most compelling, nuanced and human characters created prior to Shakespeare.

Q: How did you research *The Mahabharata* and what was important to you while crafting your interpretation of it?

GM: For me, the process involved re-familiarizing myself with the epic in several different versions, particularly R. K. Narayan's condensed retelling, Ramesh Menon's 2-volume 'modern rendering' and the short, punchy *Penguin Guide to the Mahabharata* which manages to explain everything in 138 pages and is probably the best book for the newcomer. Also particularly helpful on the spiritual side were Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda's *God Talks With Arjuna* and *Perennial Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita* by Swami Rama.

Once I felt I'd internalized the structure of *The Mahabharata*, I was able to break it down, re-arrange it in a new configuration and add a couple of sci-fi twists to give this version a new and more contemporary flavor. I really felt I had to immerse myself quite deeply in the background and to try and understand things like the *Bhagavad Gita*, which took a lot of reading obviously. So it was important to get it right. But at the same time it was also important to make it universal because the story is universal. The themes are actually not necessarily culturally bound so we wanted to honor the origins of the story, but at the same time create a new version of it that was, as I say, much more universal and global.

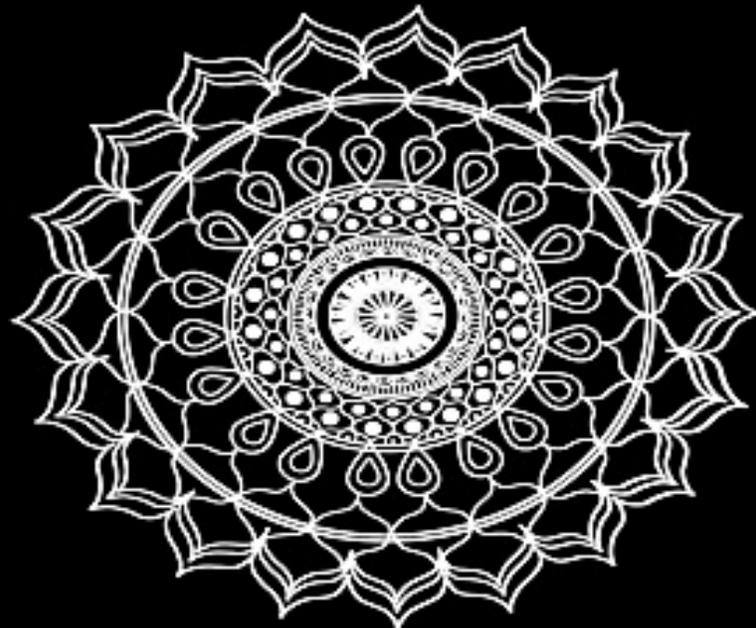
Q: Has the epic scale of the story of *The Mahabharata* been a challenge to you while creating *18 Days*?

GM: Not so much a challenge as an inspiration. Although the story of the battle is immense, involving millions of men, animals and machines, it's also the story of the human heart – the battle at Kurukshetra is fought in a thousand ways, every day, by ordinary people in the real world. In *The Mahabharata*, small human moments trigger mythic confrontations and I like that idea. The tiniest snowflake can trigger an avalanche that changes the world.

Continued Next Issue...



CHAPTER ONE
THE TALE OF THE FOUR AGES
Created by Grant Morrison



Script

Grant Morrison

Art

Jeevan J. Kang

Covers

Jeevan J. Kang (Main) • Mukesh Singh (Variant)

Publisher & CEO

Sharad Devarajan

Letters

Aditya Bidikar

Editors

Sharad Devarajan • Gotham Chopra • Ashwin Pande

Print Production

Nilesh S. Mahadik • Rakesh B. Mahadik

Project Managers

Ashwin Pande • Andrew Lu

Special Thanks

Kristan Morrison • Steven Lehrhoff

Graphic India Founders

Sharad Devarajan • Gotham Chopra • Suresh Seetharaman

"WHEN WE OF THE GREAT AUTUMN
AFTERNOON DEPART, THE TERRIBLE FOURTH AGE
OF WINTER NIGHT BEGINS. THE SINISTER AGE,
THE BLACK AGE OF IRON."

