Welcome to PHANTACEA TWO.

At long last.

During Vedic times, an extraterrestrial race of super-powerful creatures came down to Earth. They were the Devas. Their patriarch, their progenitor in fact, was Dark Sedon. Under his somewhat insane leadership, the devas sought to assert dominance over the indigenous peoples of the Earth. Unexpectedly, the Earthlings proved too rebellious, too difficult to control. The devas were forced to flee to a continent created by Sedon in the Pacific Ocean. This continent was fashioned in the Mad God’s visage and, hence, is called Sedon’s Head.

To keep the outer-Earth from interfering with life on the Head, and vice versa, Sedon raised a barrier dome over his Headworld. This dome is invisible and intangible. It may be described as existing in the same Time-Space continuum as Earth but on a different plane of reality. The dome is formed out of Sedon’s own essence and is called the Cathonic Zone.

In PHANTACEA ONE, we saw how the collision between an Octopus Kamikaze and the gypsum-powered Cosmic Express ruptured that zone. This issue deals with some of the ramifications of that collision.

We see how Mikelangelo Starrus, commander of one of the Seven CosmiCars, becomes possessed by the master deva, YAJUR, Lord of the Sparkling Azuras. We watch as another CosmiCar commander, Dmetri Diomad, bereft of most of his senses, finds himself stranded on Sedon’s Head where he encounters VETALA, the outcast Queen of Hadd. And we read, no doubt perplexed as hell, the adventures of Vayu Maelstrom, a master deva, a protector of the Headworld and a Byronic Nucleoid, as the Whirling Deva battles not only Doc Defiance and a renegade deva name of DEMON LAND only to find himself face to face with a group of multi-talented human-types who haven’t been truly alive for over twenty years. And if all that doesn’t satisfy your craving for the fantastic then wait until you meet the Indescribable Mr. No Name.

A final note. Baron Justice, Dr. Nightingale, Stiletto, and Mammalian don’t appear this issue. I decided that enough was enough so I’ve transferred their activities to another magazine, tentatively entitled The Justice Chronicles, the first issue of which should be on your stands about the same time as PHANTACEA THREE. But, in the meantime, here’s a teaser for you. Just what is the relationship between Mr. No Name and the Death Dogers? A hint: O’Ryan James Maxwell was the first of a kind.

Be seeing you,

Jim McPherson
"NOW BLESSED WITH DEVIC POWERS, NOW CURSED WITH DEVIC POSSESSION, HE FACES HIS GREATEST STRUGGLE."

"TO REMAIN HIS OWN MAN OR TO BECOME SOME DEVA'S INSENTIENT SHELL."

MIKELANGELO STARRUS

SCRIPT BY JIM McPHERSON
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GORDON PARKER

Starrus Yajur & the Ubiquitous Uncle Universe
THE COSMICAR DRIFTS, A DERELICT IN SPACE.

WITHIN, STARRUS RESTS HIS WIFE AT HIS SIDE.

HIS FEVER'S DOWN. THE THIRD EYE HAS SUBSIDED.

THANK CYRUS...

QUICK, NIDABA, SOMETHING'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE.

SOMETHING

"... INCREDIBLE."
"THRU THE VERY FABRIC OF SPACE REACH TWO PUDGY HANDS. THE COSMICAR. A CHILD'S TOY BETWEEN THEM."

"FROM WITHIN."

"TO WITHOUT."

STARRUS SLASHES THROUGH THE HULL OF THE COSMICAR.
THROUGH TREMENDOUS CONCENTRATION OF HIS DEVIC WILL, STARRUS EXPANDS HIS STELLAR AURA. NOW HE MAY FACE THE MASSIVE STARCHILD.

FOLLOW FUTURE PHANTA-CEAS AND READ...

HELIOS ON THE MOON
IN SPACE,
TWO NEAR-GODS GRAPPLE.

THE STARCHILD RETURNS ITS ATTENTION TO THE COSMICAR.
KICKED SENSELESS. STARRUS THE MAN IS TRULY BEATEN.

FUSING THE SEDON SWORD...

DEVIC FOCUS OF...

THEREBY FREEING DEVA WITHIN.

YAJUR, LORD OF THE SPARKING AZURAS.
Hurt, the Starchild whirls to face his assailant.

Mercilessly, Yajur slashes through the very fabric of space.

A Starchild bleeds.

"Auntie."

"Retreating, demon?"

"Impossible."

"Lord Yajur shall not be denied."
"AUNTIE, AUNTIE, I'M BLEEDING."

"STAR-SHINE, WHAT HAPPENED."

"BAD MUNGUS-MAN CUT ME."

"AUNTIE — HE'S THERE."

"EXPLAIN THIS BOY'S ACTIONS."

"WHO ARE YOU?"

"OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES."

"PERHAPS I CAN EXPLAIN THEM."

"DEVÂN."
"YOU SEE, MY FRIEND,"

I AM THIS WORLD'S PREMIERE ASTRONOMER, AND I'VE JUST MADE A MONUMENTAL DISCOVERY."

"SEDON'S TEETH, THAT LOOKS LIKE."

"AND IN MY HASTE TO RECORD THIS DISCOVERY, I NEGLECTED TO LOCK THE DOOR TO MY LAB."

"LOOKS, NOTHING, MY FRIEND, IT ACTUALLY IS . . ."

"YOUR SUN'S PLANETARY SYSTEM."
“AND THIS DOORWAY IS A WARP INTO MY GALAXY.”

“NO, I CAN’T STEP CLEANLY THROUGH IT.”

“BUT I CAN REACH TANGIBLY INTO YOUR GALAXY.”

“WHICH IS WHAT YOUR NEPHEW DID.”

“UNFORTUNATELY, YES.”

“THIS FABRIC WARP. IT IS UNIQUE.”

“IN ALL THE KNOWN COSMOS.”

“THEN IT MUST BE...”
DESTROYED

ARE YOU MAD?

"MY WORK."

"MY FAMILY."

"MY LIFE."

NO NOT MAD.

MERELY PROTECTIVE.

REVERSING HIS STROKE,
YAJUR RENDS

... THE VERY FABRIC
OF SPACE.

THROUGH WHICH
ROCKETS.

MIKELANGELO
STARRUS.
"MY LIFE'S WORK, MY WIFE, MY FAMILY."

"ALL DESTROYED."

"WHERE AM I? WHERE'S THE COSMICAR?"

"WHERE'S NIDABA?"

"A BLACK ROSE."

"YOU'LL PAY, DEVA. YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM THE UBQUITOUS UNCLE UNIVERSE"

MIKELANGELO STARRUS, ALL THE WHILE STRIVING TO RESIST THE DOMINANCE OF HIS BEING BY LORD YAJRA, FINDS HIMSELF ON THE MOON. THERE HE FINDS HIS WIFE AND HER FELLOWS FROM THE COSMICAR. THERE HE ENCOUNTERS JAMES AREMAR AND THE FORCES OF AMERICA BEYOND. THERE HE LEARNS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLACK ROSE OF ANARCHY. IT'S ALL IN THE TALE ABOUT HELIOS ON THE MOON. THE ABOVE MYRIAD'S GUARANTEED BY ME FOR PHANTACEA THEA.
P.S. AS FOR UNCLE UNIVERSE, JUST WAIT AND SEE.
The Cosmic Express was launched.

From Centauri Island.

Minutes later, it vanished.

Gentlemen, I demand to know what the Deva's happening.
"NEAR AS WE CAN DISCOVER, THE EXPRESS WAS BLOWN APART."

"PERHAPS NOT."

"DETAILS, SAMARAND, I REQUIRE DETAILS."

"THREE OFF-SHOOT COSMICARS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTALLY DETECTED."

"ONE, COMMANDED BY STARRUS, MADE IT TO SPACE."

DIOMED'S CRASHED IN THE PACIFIC. THOUGH THE SIGNAL'S INDISTINCT, IT SEEMS TO HAVE LANDED.

"WE'VE PINPOINTED THE THIRD ONE IN EXACTLY THE SAME AREA AS PROF. KINESS."
ABOVE THE ALEUTIANS.

"GYPSIUM RAYS."

"A BOMBARDMENT OF MOTIVE REVERSING."

"EFFECTIVELY STOPS YOUR WHIRLING."
The human thinks me defeated.

But I am a master deva.

A byronic nucleoid.
I will not falter.

Catching an unsuspecting defiance from below. Maelstrom strikes back.

"Shield useless."

"Centrifugal force yanking controls apart."
"I sense you have absorbed enough gypsum to propel yourself home."

"So begone and with Sedon speed. I have matters to deal with below."

"A nucleoid does not kill, merely defeat."

"YES."

"Thanks for my life."

And they part. For now.
"WHERE MOMENTS BEFORE HE WAS A ZOMBIE CAPTAIN OF COSMICAR FOUR. NOW SUDDENLY HE IS BACK IN VIETNAM, JUST AS HE HAD BEEN TEN YEARS EARLIER?

"MATER MATERE, AMBUSH! RUN FOR IT!"
His patrol leader'd shouted. Just before he'd been smothered.

"OR SO HE THINKS!..."

"AND SO HE'D RUN AND RUN AND RUN"

He knew what they'd do to him. The enemy. If they caught him, but they weren't going to get him. Not alive at least.

"HE'D KILL HIMSELF FIRST."

Terrified, exhausted, still he fled. Crawled, slithered through the stinking jungle. The slime.

Until he passed out, face down, in the swamp muck.

He'd forgotten to kill himself first.
THE SOLDIER'S TRILOGY
PART I:
VETALA

STORY: JIM McPHERSON
ART: SEAN NEWTON
SO HE'S BEEN CAUGHT, BEING DRAGGED TO SOME TERRIBLE JUNGLE HELL HOLE TO BE TORTURED AND MURDERED.

"THE IDIOTS," HE THINKS, "THEY MUST THINK ME DEAD. THEY'RE NOT DISARMED ME."

SUDDENLY HE ACTS, TWISTING OUT OF HER GRIP. HE WHIRLS AND SIMULTANEOUSLY EMPTIES HIS HAND GATLIN AT HER.

HAHA! YOU MISSED, HUMAN?

NO, IT CAN'T BE, IT'S A TRICK!

YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! I'LL KILL MYSELF FIRST!
HOLD, MORTAL!

NONE DARE DEFY MY WILL,

THE WILL OF... VETALA!

...QUEEN OF HADD!!

THERE'S A GOOD HUMAN, NOW COME.
LET ME HELP YOU TO YOUR NEW...

...HOME.
TIME PASSES. HE LIVES IN LUXURY, SURROUNDED BY THE SPLENDOR OF VETALA'S GOLDEN PAGODA.

LAZING AWAY HIS DAYS, STROLLING THROUGH AN EDEN LIKE GARDEN.

RELAXING AT NIGHT TO THE ENCHANTING SOUND OF OTHER-WORLDLY MUSIC.

ALWAYS AT HIS CALL, VETALA BRINGS HIM FRESH FRUIT, FRAGANT JUICES, ROAST BOAR...

PLEASING SMOKE, HEALING HERBS AND EUPHORIC POTIONS. TRULY HE MUST BE DEAD AND GONE TO HEAVEN. HE IS VERY HAPPY.
"What a stupid, devious fool I must have been to ever think myself an old wretch. Ed hag, why, she is the most exquisitely beautiful creature I could ever imagine — no — her hair could never have been dry fallen-out. Her breasts never sagged. She never troubled about dragging a useless leg behind her, her lips must always have been red, full of life's blood. She moved with the poise, no, the grace of a true queen, a goddess. She could dance, it seemed to him, on the very air."
IT STARTED JUST AS HE DRAINED THE LAST DUNCE OF SOMA, THE WONDER-
OUS NECTAR VETALA GAVE HIM EVERY NIGHT
SO HE COULD SLEEP BETTER.

THEN, ONE NIGHT AFTER TWO MONTHS
OF VETALA'S HOSPITALITY THE
SOLDIER HAS A NIGHTMARE.

AS UsUAL, AS He DOSED OFF
VETALA DANCED FOR Him. BUT
THIS NIGHT THIS DREAM AT
ANY RATE, HER DANCE SEEMED
Wilder more
PASSIONATE
THAN EVER.

AS SHE WHIRLED,
HER LONG TRESSES
FLAILING ABOUT IN
A DANCE ALL HER
OWN, THE LONG,
BLACK GOWN SHE
ALWAYS WORE,
SLOwLY...
She stopped dancing then and stood over him, licking her blood red lips.

For the briefest moment, the soldier dared hope that at last Vetala would stay with him.

But then...

He realised the hideous truth.
GOD! WHERE AM I? WHERE'S THE PAGODA? MY CLOTHES? PETALA?

SO YOU HAVE REALIZED THE TRUTH AT LAST, MY LITTLE SOLDIER.

YES, SOLDIER I TOOK YOUR BLOOD.

THEN, IT WASN'T A DREAM.

IT MADE ME WELL AGAIN. SO I LEAVE YOU WHAT'S LEFT OF YOUR LIFE.

TAKE IT, SOLDIER, AND BE DAMNED!

FOR YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE STRENGTH TO RENEW MY WAR AGAINST ALL THAT LIVE.

...ESPECIALLY, THE THRICE-CURSED BYRONIC NUCLEUS!
YES, SOLDIER. TAKE THE GIFT OF YOUR LIFE FROM...

VETALA! THE VAMPIRE QUEEN OF THE DEAD!

COME BACK. I NEED YOU!

DESPERATELY THE SOLDIER RUNS AFTER THEM.

AND THERE HE LIES, UNCONSCIOUS, BETTER TO HAVE FIRST REMEMBER...

RUNS, AND RUNS AND RUNS

UNTIL HE PITCHES FORWARD, FACE FIRST, INTO THE SWAMP MUCK.

TO KILL HIMSELF.
YATAGAN!

NO WAIT!

GET CENTAUR OUT OF HERE!

SORRY, BATMAN! SAFETY FIRST!

THAT'S A GOOD BOSS!

IN YE GO...

AND IF I FALL, USE...

"...THE OTHER DOOR!"

"...THE OTHER DOOR?"

BUT I WANTED TO TALK TO THE CREATURE!

MAYBE...

PRIVATE

"HE WASN'T AN ENEMY, THE OTHER DOOR?"
YOU TOOK SIX SLUGS DOUGHBOY!

FALL OVER AND DIE!

HEY! WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE DOING TO YOUR STOMACH?

CHRIST--IT CAN'T BE!

HARDCENED FINGERS INTO PUTTY STOMACH!

PUSHING UPWARDS THROUGH THROAT INTO MOUTH...

SIX LEAD BULLETS!

SPITOON!
FIRST LESSON, DULLES!

MR. NONAME HAS COMPLETE...

...CONTROL OF HIS BODY...

AND ABOARD THE OCTOPUS SUB NEAR CENTAURU! ISLAND...

BUT NOT HIS MIND, EH MAJOR!

...NOT NOW THAT MY CEREBRAL PROBES WORKING AGAIN, DISL'ORCA!

YES... DAEMONICUS WILL BE PLEASED!

STAND ASIDE, YATASHAN. IT'S CENTAURU! I'M AFTER...

NO, NAMELESS ONE! I HAVE MY DUTY!

HA
SOME TIME EARLIER, DOC DEFANCE HAD FOUND HIS WAY BACK TO CENTAURI ISLAND....

HE'D BEEN HUMILIATED...

HE JUST HADN'T THE POWER TO WATCH YAVU MÆLSTROM!

THE EXPERIMENTS WERE LONG AGO COMPLETED! HE KNEW WHAT MUST BE DONE!

OBVIOUSLY, THE COMPUTER'D NOT BEEN REPROGRAMMED... HIS SECURITY BADGE STILL GAINED HIM ADMITTANCE!

PROF. KINESIS! YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES, YES, I'M FINE. JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.

SECURITY CLEARANCE O CLEAR O HOLD

HE'D NEVER DONE IT... HE'S ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID!

AFTER MAKING THE EXACT ADJUSTMENTS...

HE STEPPED INSIDE THE GYPSIUM...

...IRRADIATION CHAMBER!
SO YOU'VE HACKED OFF ME ARMS EH YATAKAN?

THEN'S TIME FOR LESSON TWO...

FASTER THAN YOU CAN HACK noname can...

...REFORM.

YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME YATAKAN!

NO, DOUGHBOY, BUT I AM!

I DO. DOC DEFIANCE

WHO DARES?
NO WHATZITMAN'S GONNA STOP...

...NONAME!

I-CAN'T GET--TO YOU...

NO! BUT I CAN GET TO YOU!

BEAMS OF POSI-NEG GYPSIUM RADIATION RIP INTO NONAME!

BOMBARDING, DISTORTING, WRECKING HIS BODY WITH PAIN...
WITH REMARKABLE QUICKNESS NONAME SPLITS HIS BODY NEARLY IN HALF...

WAFFLING OUT, REFORMING, ENCRUSTING DEFIANCE WITHIN HIS GYPSUM DOME...

PROTECTED BY HIS GYPSUM SHIELD, DEFIANCE SHOUTS HIS... DEFIANCE!

FREAK! WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT'LL ACCOMPLISH?

MY GYPSUM BEAMS WILL TEAR YOU IN TWO...

GIVE UP, O'RIAN!

JAMES MAXWELL!

MAXWELL...
FAMILIAR NAME--
MOMENTARY DIS-
TRACTION--RESULT... 

...PREDICTABLE...

...IT'S 
MAXWELL!

THE 
BLOB'S 
REFORMING

YES... BUT 
HOW?

JUST THINK 
OF IT, 
DAEMONICUS

SHOULD 
NO NAME 
COME TO 
SERVE THE 
OCTOPUS

YES, 
THINK OF 
IT...
SEDON'S TEETH, THIS OUTSIDE WORLD IS TRULY STRANGE...
THE FOG SHROUDING THIS ISLE SEEMS SENTIENT.
BUT THE SMOG'S LIFEFORCE IS NOT DEVIC...
RATHER I DETECT THE MIND'S OF TEN DIFFERENT HUMANS!
BUT THERE IS A RE-ATOMIZED DEVA DOWN THERE.
AND IT'S MY DUTY AS A NUCLEO... TO RE-ATOMIZE HIM.
GHOSTS OR NO GHOSTS...
"Are you there, Cerebras?"
"And you, Aries, my brother?"
"We are all here, sea goddess."
"GlorIEL, diyER, ARGAa."
"Derysh Fury, Witchflower."
"And blind Sonny Bundown."

"That craft. That's how he got here."

James McPherson
Writer.

Ian Bateson
Artist.
"SILENCE, ALL OF YOU. I MUST CONCENTRATE."

"AND AN ATOMIZED DEVA MUST HAVE A BODY TO OCCUPY"

"CEREBRUS, WHO IS THIS ARMOR-ARMED CREATURE?"

"CEREBRUS, SOMETHING'S TRYING TO...

"... POSSESS US."

"A LIVING SHELL THROUGH WHICH TO FOCUS IT'S POWERS."

"GIVE IN TO IT SLORBEL. IT I'M RIGHT..."

"WE MAY YET BE DELIVERED!"

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**COSMI-COMPUTER REPORT:**

Events: Post-implosion into Cathonic Dome
DEVAS!

TOHN, ANAKOR Thanatos, Face, Vayu Maelstrom.

SO YOU REMEMBER...

...DEMON LAND.
DEPAIRED OF THE TOUCH OF THE EARTH FROM WHICH HE DERIVES HIS STRENGTH...

WELL, I REMEMBER YOU, DEVIC DEMON.

BUT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ME.

FOR YOU ARE ONLY BORN OF MASTER DEVAS....

WHEREAS I AM A MASTER DEVA....

...AND A...

...NUCLEOD...

...BOTH!

DEMON LAND REVERTS TO THE BEING THRU WHICH HE CHANNELED HIS DEVIC POWERS.
MAELSTROM LAYS THE RAINBOW-GOWNED WOMAN ON A CUSHION OF AIR JUST ABOVE THE ISLAND'S SURFACE.

SO, DEVA, THIS IS THE HUMAN YOU POSSESSED.

BUT SHE'S NOT MUCH MORE THAN A GIRL.

NO WONDER YOU FELL SO EASILY.

"EASILY, NUCLEO? NO DEVA IS DEFEATED EASILY."

AND YOUR WRONG. I DO REMEMBER YOUR WEAKNESS.

FOR AS I AM AN EARTH SPIRIT, YOU ARE A SKY-POWERED DEVA!

"FOR SO LONG AS YOUR ANKLES ARE HELD TO THE EARTH, YOU WILL FALL BEFORE MY MIGHT."
YOU DEFEATED ONLY ONE OF THE HUMAN SHELLS I FOUND ON THIS ISLAND...

NOW I'VE POSSESSED SIX OTHERS.

NO. MUST RESIST.

NEED MORE POWER. MUST ABSORB ANOTHER.

YES. RESIST! RESIST!
NO, TOO MUCH CEREBRAL INTERFERENCE.

MUST ABSORB ANOTHER.

CAN'T DO IT NOT TWO OF MY OWN...
CALM YOURSELF, DEVA.
WE ARE FRIENDS.

I AM CEREBUS
MEET GLORIEL
THE RADIANT
RAINBOW RIDER.

"BLIND JOHNNY SUNDOWN
AND HIS FEROCIOUS MOUNT."
"RAVEN'S HEAD."
"THE DEADLY WILDERWITCH"

"THE AWESOME AKBAR,"

"THE UNTOUCHABLE DIVER."

"DERVISH FURIE IS THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN..."

"AND LASTLY, MEET THE ELEMENTAL TWINS..."

"THALLASSA, THE SEA GODDESS..."

"UNLESS YOU GET HIM ANGRY."

"THEN, LOOK OUT!"

"TOGETHER, WE WERE KNOWN AS...."