

Virgin  
COMICS

ISSUE  
#1 OF 5

THE  
*Sarathu*  
WHEEL OF DESTINY



DASGUPTA / MANIKANDAN

# THE *Sadhu* WHEEL of DESTINY

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**RAJU PUTHUKARAI, MALLIKA CHOPRA, JONATHAN PEACHEY.**

## **PREVIOUSLY**

**JAMES JENSEN CAME TO 19TH-CENTURY INDIA AS A SOLDIER IN HER MAJESTY'S ARMY. MARKED AS A TRAITOR BY HIS CRUEL COMMANDING OFFICER FOR DEFENDING THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION, JENSEN'S FAMILY WAS MASSACRED BEFORE HIS EYES. HUNTED AS A DESERTER AFTER ESCAPING IMPRISONMENT, JAMES FOUND REFUGE WITH THE ENIGMATIC DADATHAKUR, WHO INITIATED HIM INTO THE WAYS OF THE SADHU, MYSTIC WARRIORS OF LEGEND. IN THE YEARS SINCE, JENSEN HAS CONTINUED HIS SPIRITUAL QUEST, WANDERING INDIA AND THE WORLD.**

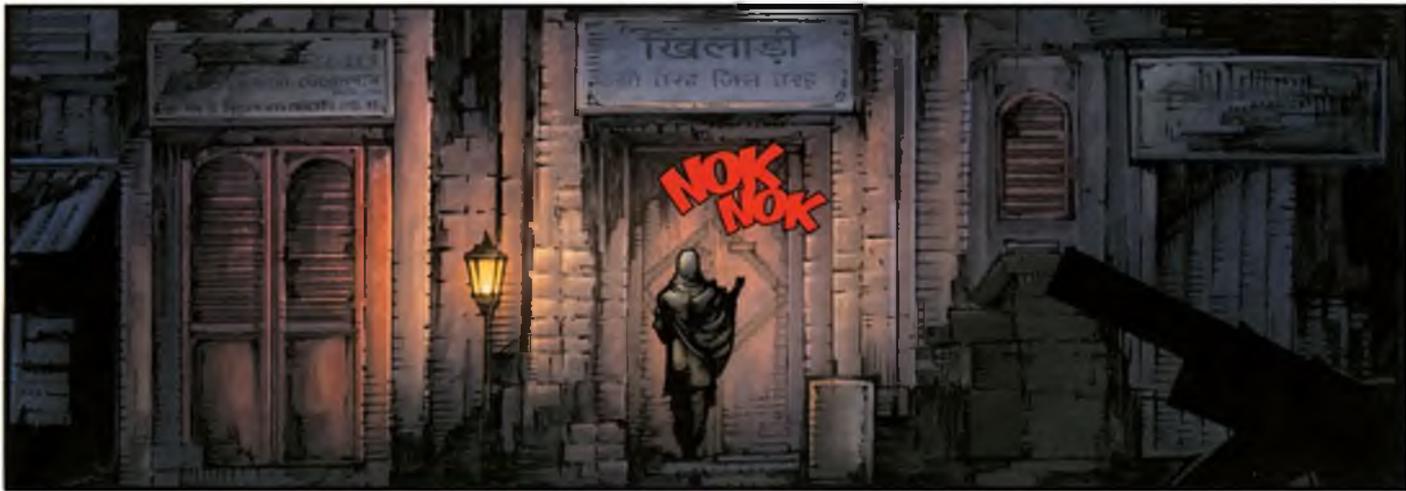
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MARCH 12, 1930

SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY  
OF AHMADABAD, INDIA





VANDE  
MATARM

VANDE  
MATARM

VANDE  
MATARM

VANDE  
MATARM



YOU JOINED US WHEN YOU WERE A SMOOTH-CHEEKED BOY. NOW I SEE STUBBLE. YOU ARE BECOMING A MAN, JATIN.

A MAN THIS GENERATION CAN LOOK TO.

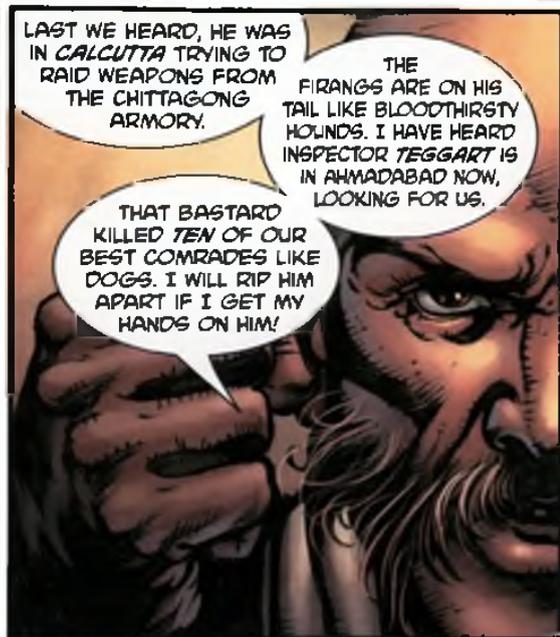
THANK YOU, SIR.

WHERE IS MASTERJI? I DON'T SEE HIM AROUND...



RAJAT IS LATE, SOMETHING HE'S NEVER BEEN.

WE NEED HIS LEADERSHIP. WE CANNOT START THE MEETING WITHOUT HIM.



LAST WE HEARD, HE WAS IN CALCUTTA TRYING TO RAID WEAPONS FROM THE CHITTAGONG ARMORY.

THE FIRANGS ARE ON HIS TAIL LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY HOUNDS. I HAVE HEARD INSPECTOR TEGGART IS IN AHMADABAD NOW, LOOKING FOR US.

THAT BASTARD KILLED TEN OF OUR BEST COMRADES LIKE DOGS. I WILL RIP HIM APART IF I GET MY HANDS ON HIM!



I REMEMBER WHAT TEGGART DID TO MY SISTER WHEN HE QUESTIONED US ABOUT MASTERJI. I STILL BEAR HIS MARK AS WELL.

I SWEAR TO THE GODDESS HE WILL PAY FOR HIS SINS. THE ENTIRE BRITISH EMPIRE SHALL FACE THE WRATH OF THE GODDESS.



BY THE GODDESS!





WE'VE GOT THEM IN THEIR RAT HOLE!

STORM THE BUILDING AND KILL THOSE SODDING REBELS IN THE NAME OF THE CROWN!



TAKE DOWN AS MANY AS YOU CAN. IF WE DIE...

...WE DIE AS MARTYRS!



**BAKOOM**



KEEP A FEW  
OF THEM ALIVE. I  
WANT THEIR SODDING  
LEADER, RAJAT SINGH  
CHAUHAN!



YOU WILL  
NEVER FIND HIM,  
BUT YOU WILL FIND  
DEATH!

**SWOOSH**



**BITCH!**

**AAGH!**

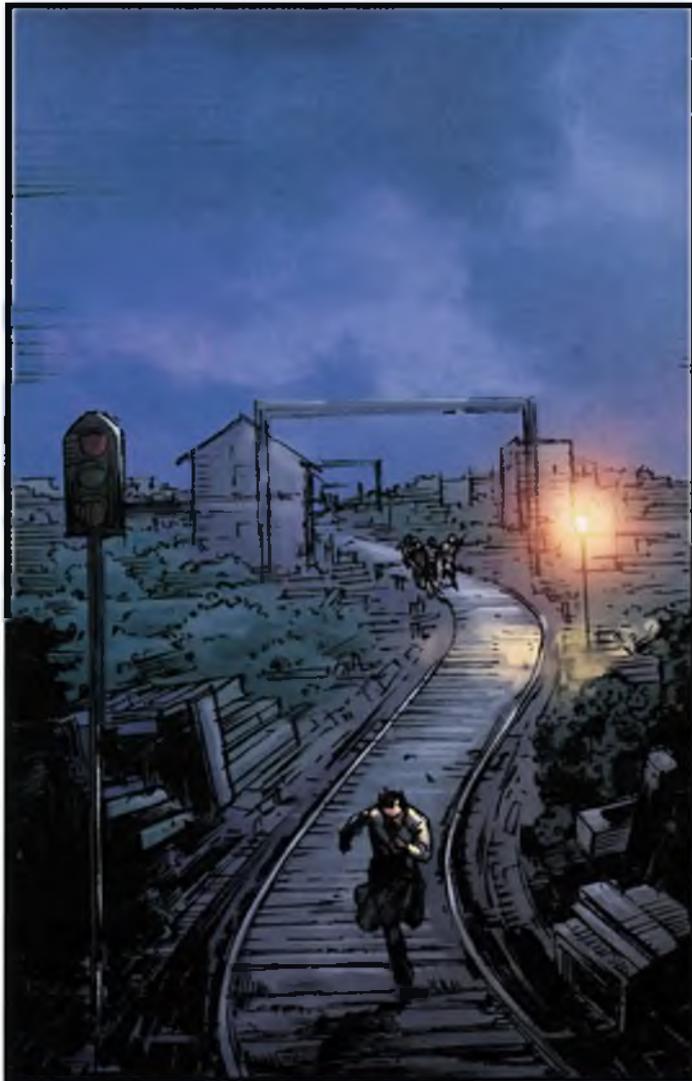


**VANDE  
MATARAM!**



**BWOOOM**





WHY CAN'T WE JUST SHOOT HIM?

THE INSPECTOR WOULD SKIN US ALIVE. HE NEEDS THIS ONE FOR QUESTIONING, ALL THE OTHERS ARE DEAD.



JATIN, WE MUST *ESCAPE*. MORE POLICE ARE ON THE WAY.

A TRAIN WILL BE PASSING, WE MUST CATCH IT.





THEY KILLED THEM ALL, RAJAT SINGH!

I SAW THEM SURROUNDING THE HOUSE AND ALLEY. I TRIED TO WARN YOU, BUT I WAS TOO LATE.

BY THE TIME YOU GOT THE MESSAGE, THEY HAD ALREADY LAUNCHED THEIR ATTACK.



SURYA SEN AND OUR COMRADES IN CHITTAGONG ARE DEAD. THE WEAPONS WE STOLE WERE TAKEN BACK INTO BRITISH CUSTODY. OUR ORGANIZATION IS SUFFERING HEAVY LOSSES.

WE MUST CONSOLIDATE OUR OPERATIONS HERE IN AHMADABAD, DESPITE IT BEING THE HEART OF GANDHI'S SO-CALLED NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT.



BUT TEGGART IS ON OUR HEELS IN THIS CITY TOO. OUR MISSION OF ARMED REVOLUTION ACROSS INDIA IS LOOKING LIKE A FAR-FETCHED DREAM, MASTERJI.

I THINK MAYBE GANDHI'S PATH OF REVOLUTION MIGHT BE OUR ONLY CHANCE.

NONSENSE!



GANDHI IS NOT REVOLTING AGAINST THE BRITISH. OUR PURPOSE DEMANDS BLOOD.

LOOK AT THE COURSE OF HISTORY, MY SON. FROM THE SLAVE REVOLUTION OF SPARTACUS IN ROME, TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, EVEN THE BOLSHEVIK INSURGENCE OF RUSSIA.

FREEDOM IS TO BE EARNED WITH THE PRICE OF BLOOD, NOT BEGGED FROM OUR WHITE MASTERS...

...WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT GANDHI IS DOING.



BUT MASTERJI, THOSE WHO SHARE OUR DREAMS ARE SCATTERED AND DISORGANIZED. WE ARE DIVIDED BY RELIGION, BY CLASS, BY POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES. HOW CAN WE UNITE AND FIGHT THE BRITISH?

SUBHASH BOSE IS THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD DO THAT, BUT HE IS IN JAIL NOW.



LISTEN TO ME. WE DON'T NEED TO DEPEND ON POLITICAL LEADERS OR TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS TO SERVE OUR PURPOSE. I HAVE FOUND A BETTER WAY.

THERE ARE POWERS FAR BEYOND THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN MIND. IF WE CAN TAP INTO THOSE POWERS, EVEN THE BRITISH EMPIRE WILL CRUMBLE.



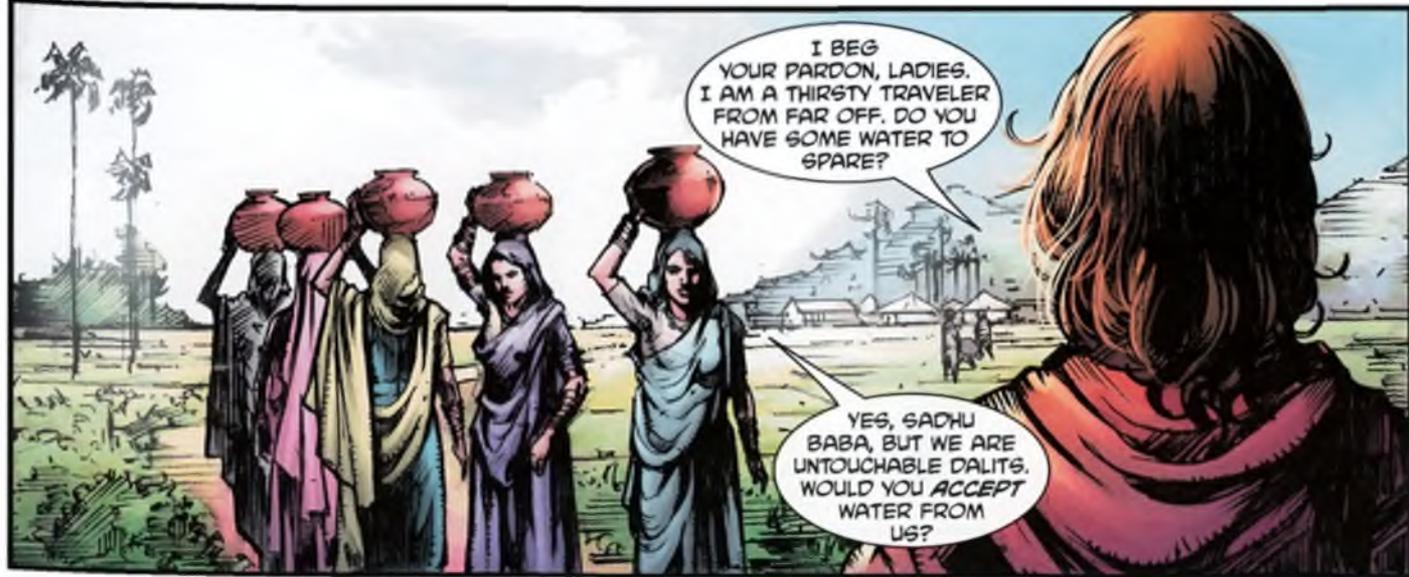
I KNOW OF A MAN WHO CAN DO THIS FOR US. HE CAN ACCESS THESE POWERS AND CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY. INDIA CAN BE FREE IN NO TIME.

WHO IS THIS MAN, MASTERJI?

HE IS A MYSTIC, AN ELITE YOGI OF UNIMAGINABLE KNOWLEDGE...

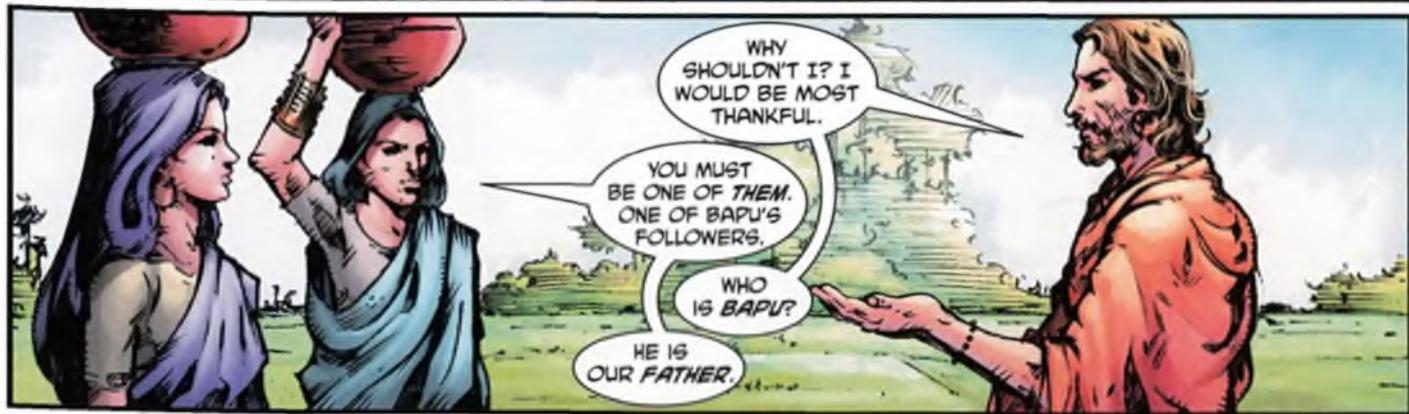
"...HE IS A SACHU."





I BEG YOUR PARDON, LADIES. I AM A THIRSTY TRAVELER FROM FAR OFF. DO YOU HAVE SOME WATER TO SPARE?

YES, SADHU BABA, BUT WE ARE UNTOUCHABLE DALITS. WOULD YOU ACCEPT WATER FROM US?



WHY SHOULDN'T I? I WOULD BE MOST THANKFUL.

YOU MUST BE ONE OF THEM. ONE OF BAPU'S FOLLOWERS.

WHO IS BAPU?

HE IS OUR FATHER.



HE IS FATHER TO ALL OF YOU?

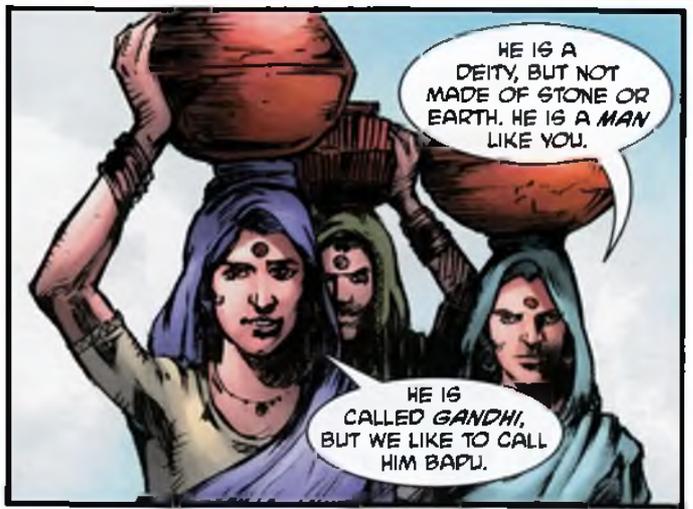
YES, ALL OF US.



HE IS OUR FATHER AND FATHER TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU SEE AROUND.

HE SAYS THERE ARE NO UNTOUCHABLES, HE LOVES ALL OF US EQUALLY AND CALLS US CHILDREN OF GOD.

THIS BAPU, IS HE ONE OF THE DEITIES YOU WORSHIP?



HE IS A DEITY, BUT NOT MADE OF STONE OR EARTH. HE IS A MAN LIKE YOU.

HE IS CALLED GANDHI, BUT WE LIKE TO CALL HIM BAPU.



I HAVE HEARD OF HIM.



BAPU IS COMING!  
BAPU IS COMING!



WHERE?  
WHERE IS HE?  
ACROSS THE HILLS TO THE SEA SHORE. HE IS WALKING ALL THE WAY FROM AHMADABAD TO DANDI!



BAPU IS COMING!  
WE MUST JOIN HIM IN HIS MARCH!



EXCUSE ME, SIR...



ARE YOU CALLING TO ME, SADHU BABA?



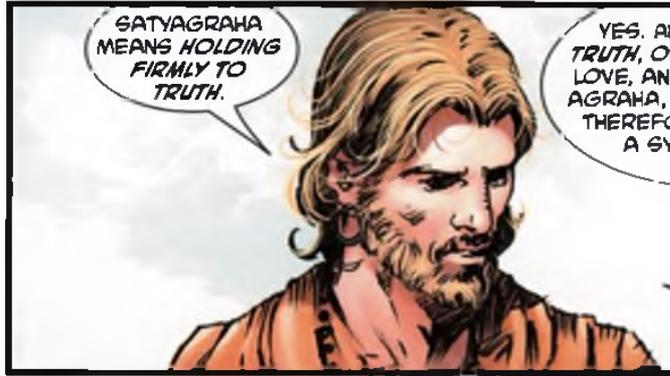
I AM CALLED NIKHIL, SADHU BABA. I AM A SCHOOL MASTER. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?  
PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT THIS MARCH ALL THE PEOPLE ARE RUNNING TOWARDS.  
I AM HEADING THAT WAY AS WELL. WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME?  
WHY NOT?



MAHATMA GANDHI IS WALKING ALL THE WAY FROM HIS *SABARMATI ASHRAM* TO THE SHORES OF *DANDI*, AS A PART OF HIS COMMITMENT TO NON-VIOLENT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE.

BUT WHY?

HE CALLS IT *SALT SATYAGRAHA*.



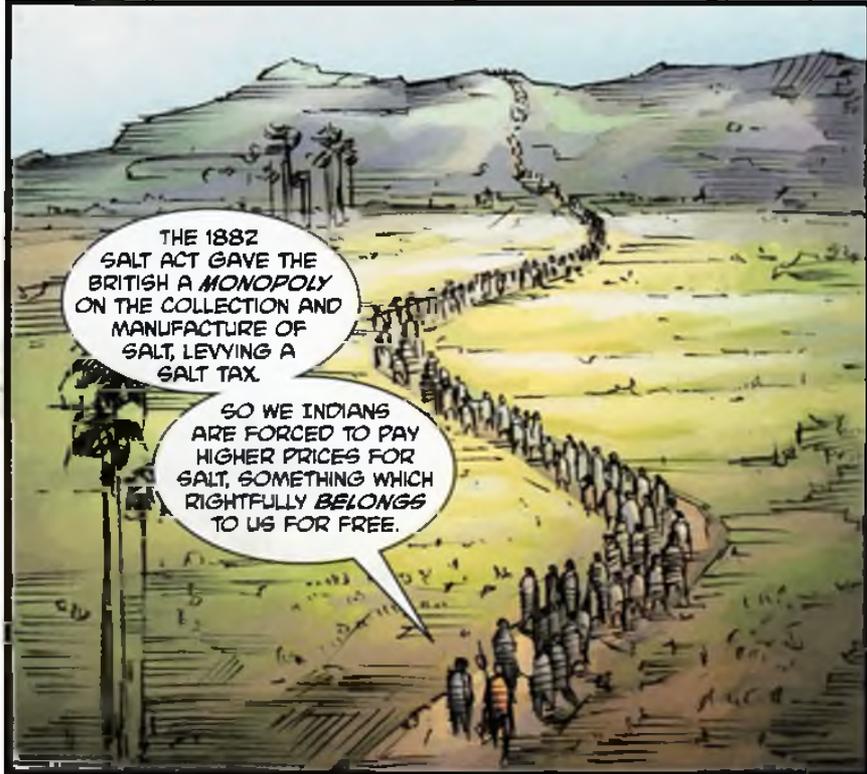
SATYAGRAHA MEANS *HOLDING FIRMLY TO TRUTH*.

YES. AND BAPU SAYS *TRUTH*, OR *SATYA*, IMPLIES *LOVE*, AND *FIRMNESS*, OR *AGRAHA*, ENGENDERS AND THEREFORE SERVES AS A SYNONYM FOR *FORCE*.



GANDHI BELIEVES THAT THE *FORCE* OF *TRUTH* AND *LOVE* WILL BRING *INDIA* *FREEDOM*.

FASCINATING. BUT...WHY *SALT*?



THE 1882 *SALT ACT* GAVE THE BRITISH A *MONOPOLY* ON THE *COLLECTION* AND *MANUFACTURE* OF *SALT*, LEVYING A *SALT TAX*.

SO WE *INDIANS* ARE FORCED TO PAY *HIGHER PRICES* FOR *SALT*, SOMETHING WHICH *RIGHTFULLY BELONGS* TO US FOR *FREE*.

SO GANDHI HAS CALLED THE PEOPLE TO GATHER AT THE SHORE OF *DANDI* SO THAT WE CAN MAKE OUR *OWN SALT*. MIND YOU, THIS IS A *CRIMINAL OFFENSE* ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH LAW.

GANDHI THINKS TO BREAK THAT LAW *WITHOUT VIOLENCE*?

HE *INTENDS TO*. WE SHALL SEE.



WE ARE ALMOST THERE. YOU SEE THE *OCEAN*?



INDEED...





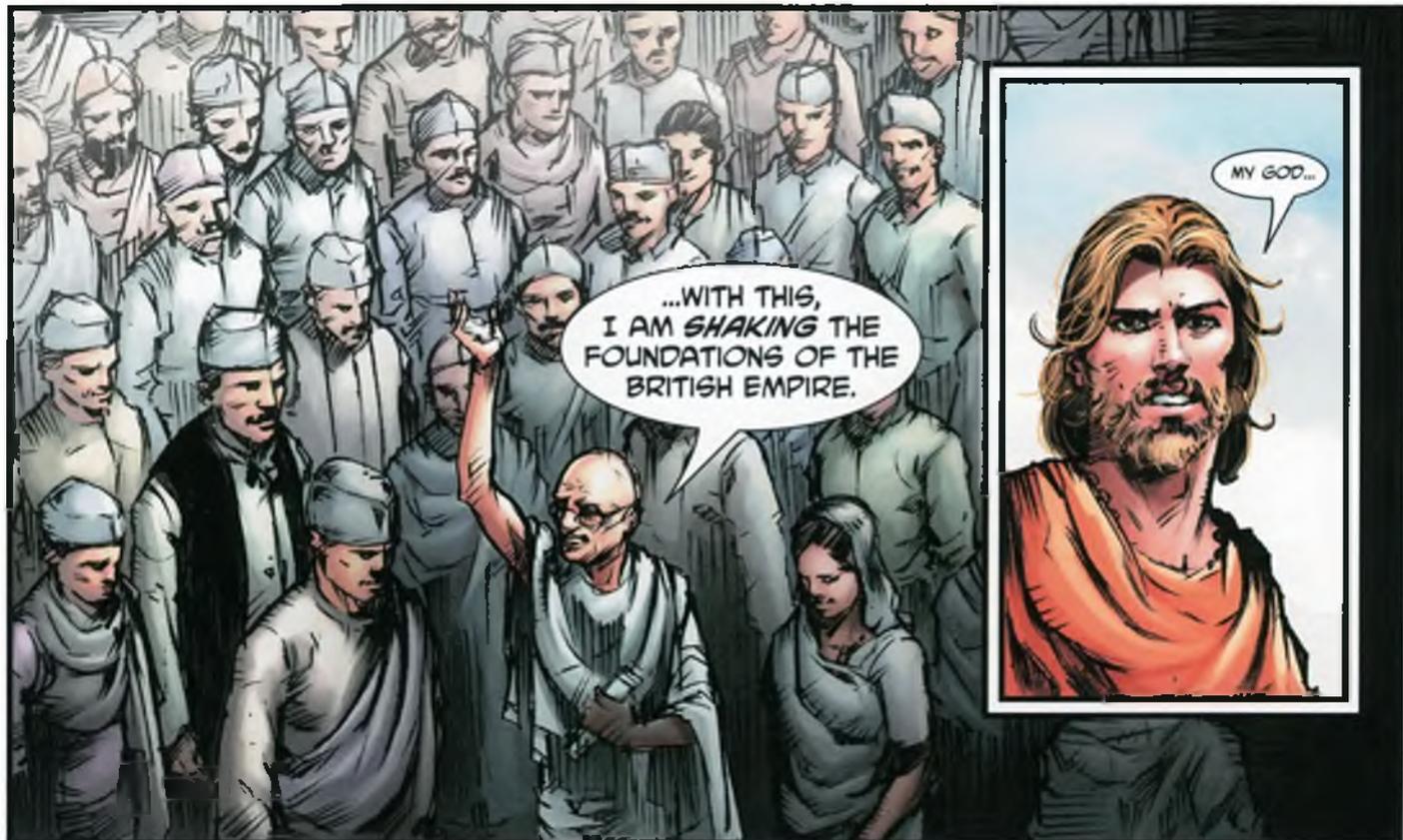
...I DO SEE  
AN OCEAN!

I'M REMINDED  
OF THE STORY OF  
*MOSES* THAT FATHER  
BROWN TOLD ME WHEN  
I WAS IN SCHOOL.



THE BRITISH SCOFF AT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE. THEY THINK OUR MARCH IS *HARMLESS*, AS WE STICK TO THE PATH OF NON-VIOLENCE. LORD IRWIN SAYS WE CANNOT THREATEN THE BRITISH LION WITH A PINCH OF SALT.

BUT TODAY, WITH A HANDFUL OF SALT WHICH IS A *GIFT* OF THE OCEAN AND RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND...



...WITH THIS, I AM *SHAKING* THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

MY GOD...



SO THIS HALF-NAKED FAKIR,  
GANCHI, THINKS HE CAN TAKE  
ON THE BRITISH EMPIRE. I'M  
APT TO *SPLIT A GUT*  
LAUGHING AT THAT  
MONKEY.

WHY DID  
THE VICEROY EVEN  
BOTHR SENDING US FOR  
*CROWD CONTROL*? NOT MUCH  
TO CONTROLLING *THIS*  
FLOCK OF SHEEP.



STILL, I  
SUPPOSE THEY  
CAN BE DAMNED  
*ANNOYING*.

COULDN'T  
HURT TO PUSH  
THEM AROUND A BIT.  
PUT THEM IN THEIR  
*PLACE*.



*YOU THERE!*  
WHAT DO YOU THINK  
YOU'RE DOING WITH  
THIS *SALT*?

OUT OF  
MY *WAY*, FILTHY  
NATIVE!



I AM  
GORYRY FOR  
BEING IN YOUR  
WAY, SIR.

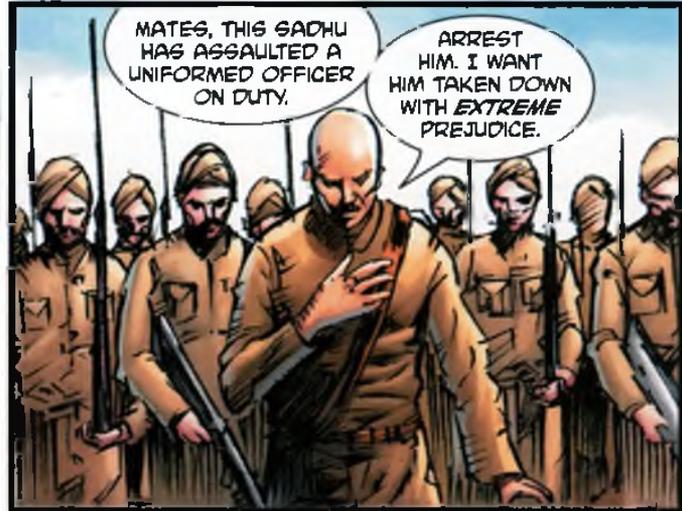
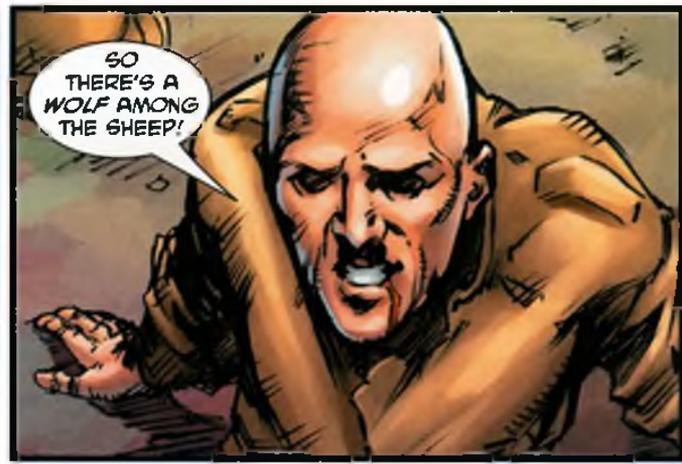
I WILL  
DO MY JOB  
SOMEWHERE  
ELSE.



DON'T  
YOU TALK  
BACK TO ME, YOU  
THICK-SKULLED  
APE!





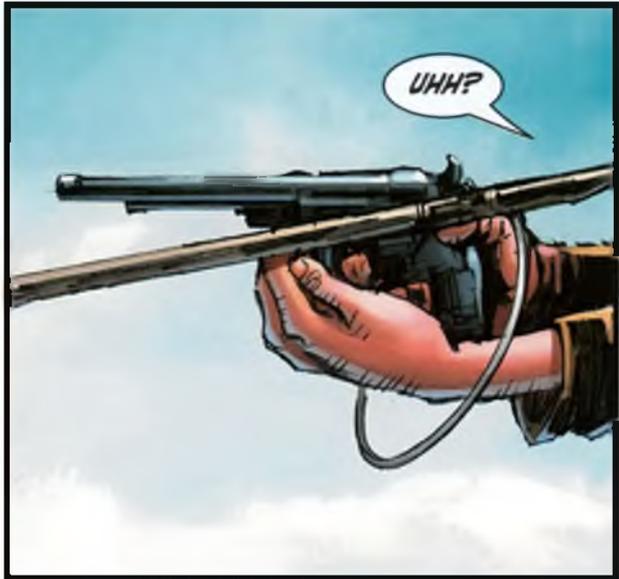




NO MORE OF YOUR MUMBO JUMBO, I WON'T BE MISSING THIS TIME.



UHH?



AGHHH!



NO...NO, PLEASE...



I SAID PLEASE AS WELL!



PLEASE...

...THIS IS  
NOT OUR WAY.  
NOT *MY* WAY.

IF YOU *MUST*  
HIT SOMEONE,  
PLEASE HIT  
*ME*.



TO BE CONTINUED!

# 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-eared 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](http://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](http://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

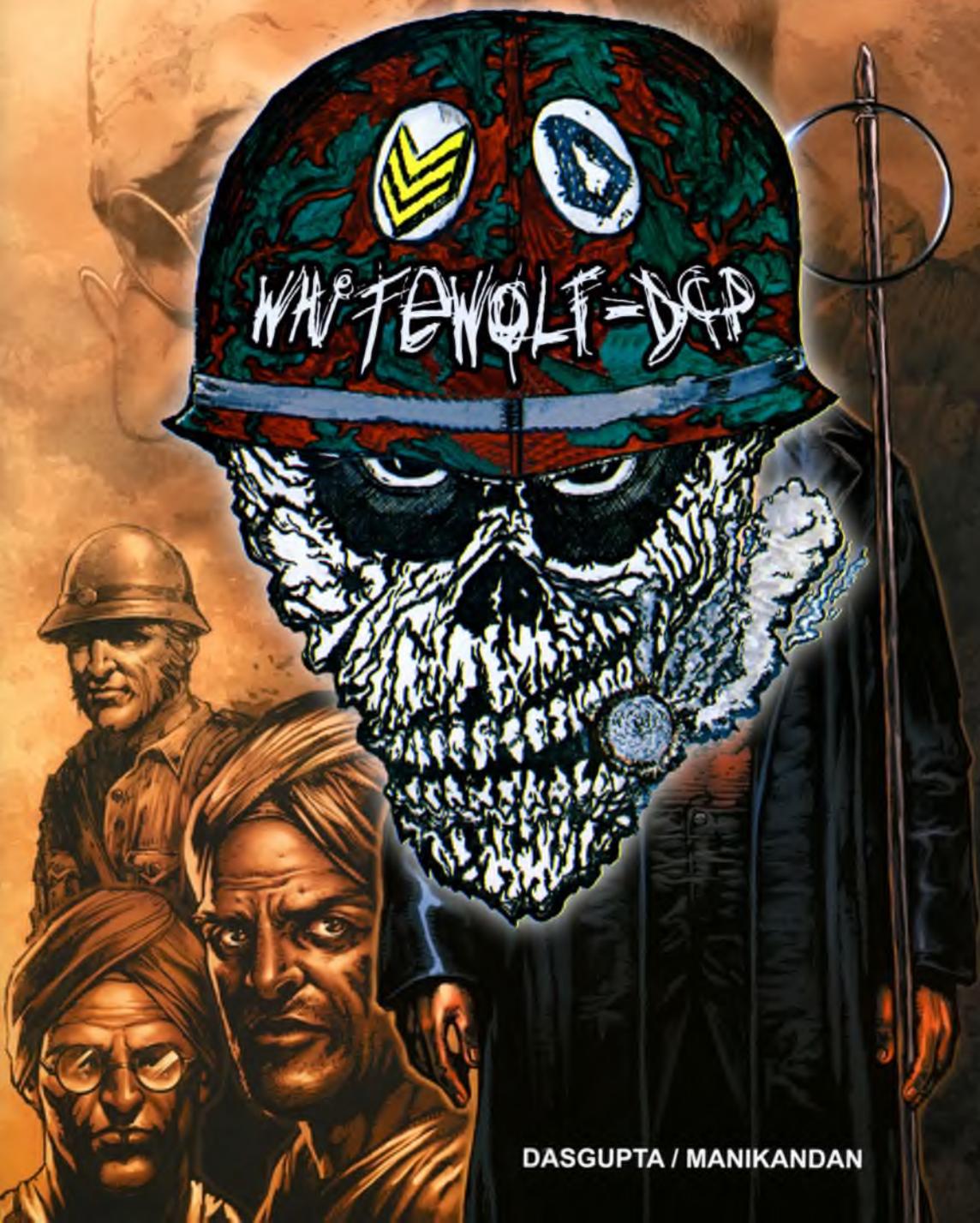


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