

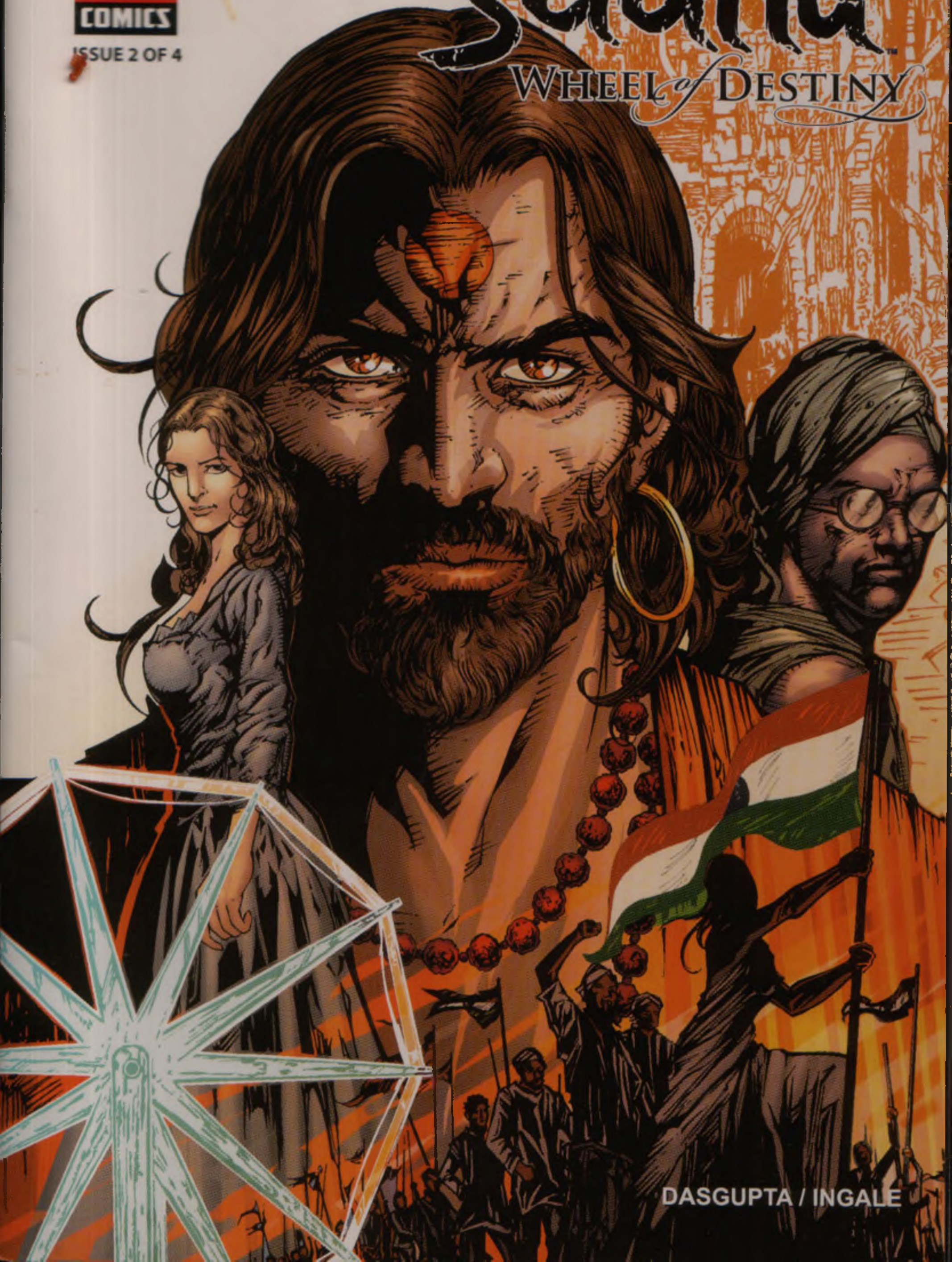
Virgin
COMICS

ISSUE 2 OF 4

THE

Swadeshi

WHEEL of DESTINY



DASGUPTA / INGALE

THE *Sadhu*™ WHEEL of DESTINY

Script **SHAMIK DASGUPTA**

Art **PRADIP INGALE**

Colors **A. ARUL KUMAR**

Letters **RAKESH B. MAHADIK**

Cover Art **R. MANIKANDAN**

with **I. JEYABALAN**

Project Manager **REUBEN THOMAS**

Editor **SANA AMANAT**

VIRGIN COMICS

Chief Executive Officer and Publisher **SHARAD DEVARAJAN**

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Chief Visionaries **DEEPAK CHOPRA, SHEKHAR KAPUR,
SIR RICHARD BRANSON**

Special Thanks to

FRANCES FARROW, DAN PORTER, CHRISTOPHER LINEN, PETER FELDMAN,

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.

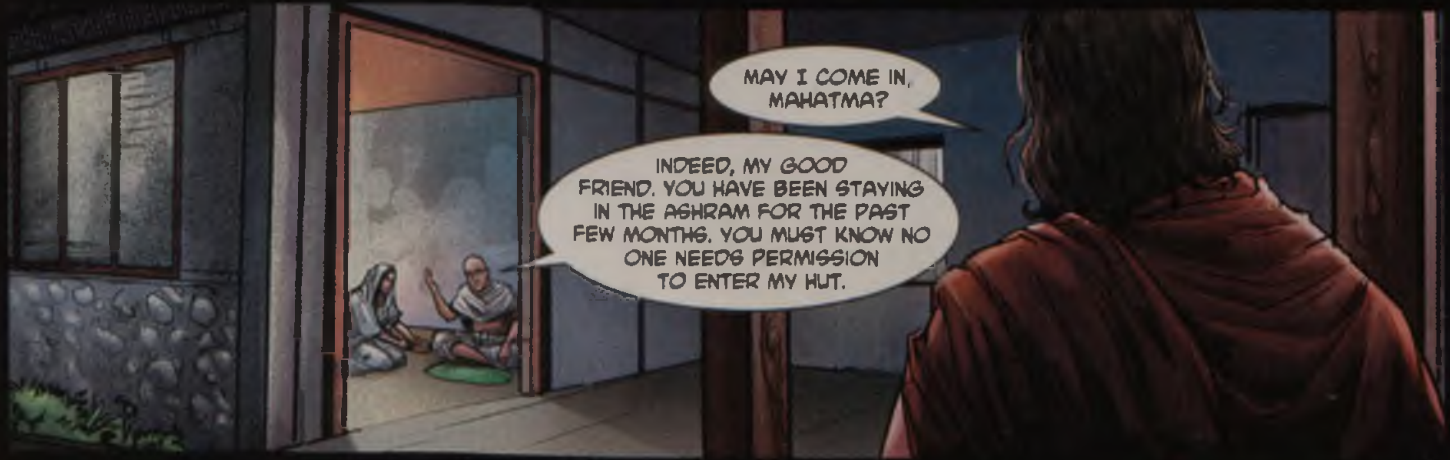
Now in the 1930s, India is in turmoil under British rule, as underground revolutionaries fight for freedom. On one end is the fierce Rajat Singh who will stop at nothing to end the British reign and on the other... Mahatma Gandhi. The Sadhu finds Gandhi in the midst of his legendary "salt boycott" attacked by British soldiers intent on destroying his movement for Indians' rights. Jensen defends Gandhi with his fists, but is stopped by the Mahatma, who tells him that violence is not the way. But how can a warrior understand the concept of peace?

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SABARMATI ASHRAM,
JANUARY 4TH, 1952.



MAY I COME IN,
MAHATMA?

INDEED, MY GOOD
FRIEND. YOU HAVE BEEN STAYING
IN THE ASHRAM FOR THE PAST
FEW MONTHS. YOU MUST KNOW NO
ONE NEEDS PERMISSION
TO ENTER MY HUT.



YES, AND DURING
MY STAY, YOU HAVE HAD
VERY LITTLE TIME TO
CONVERSE WITH
ME.

YOU ARE RIGHT--THEN
ALLOW ME THE PLEASURE
OF HAVING SUPPER
WITH YOU. WE CAN DINE AND CHAT
SIMULTANEOUSLY.



YOU MUST TASTE
THE DAAL MY LOVELY WIFE
KASTURBA MADE TODAY. I WARN
YOU THOUGH, EVEN IF YOU DON'T
LIKE IT, MAKE SURE TO PRAISE
HER CULINARY SKILLS.

LIKE ALL SPOUSE-FEARING
HUSBANDS, I TOO AM AT MORTAL
DREAD OF HER TEMPER IF
THE COOKING IS NOT
APPRECIATED.

HA HA

THAT'S
ENOUGH!



BEING IN CHARGE OF
THE COOKING IN THE ASHRAM,
I'VE NEVER HEARD ANY COMPLAINT
FROM THE RESIDENTS
SO FAR.

I DARE NOT
ARGUE!

AND
NEITHER
WILL I.

THE FOOD
IS DELICIOUS
AS ALWAYS,
KASTURBA.



BAPU, YOU ARE
SCHEDULED TO MEET
WITH THE PARTY
LEADERS NOW.

HEY, RAAM,
NOT A MINUTE
OF PEACE.

I WILL JOIN
THEM IN A MINUTE,
JATIN.



THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION, JAMES. OR SHOULD I RATHER SAY SADHU?

SADHU WOULD BE FINE.

SO BE IT...WELL, NOW YOU KNOW WHY I CAN NEVER MANAGE TIME FOR US TO CONVERSE. I HAVE LITTLE TIME TO EVEN EAT A PROPER MEAL.



...A REGULARLY STARVED OR HALF-FULL BELLY USUALLY KEEPS ME IN PRACTICE...

...FOR THE FASTING PROTESTS AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE I AM SO INFAMOUS FOR.

HA HA HA...

AH! HERE WE ARE.



NOW, MEET THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE INDEPENDENT INDIA.

HELLO, I AM SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE, SECRETARY OF THE YOUTH WING OF CONGRESS. I HAVE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU. YOU HAD BEATEN UP AN ENTIRE POLICE PATROL IN DANDI. HOW DID YOU MANAGE THAT?

SOMETHING THAT I LEARNED A LONG TIME BACK... IT'S AN ADVANCED FORM OF GATKA, AN ANCIENT MARTIAL ART OF NORTHERN INDIA.

INCREDIBLE!

AND THIS CHARMING YOUNG MAN IS JAWAHARLAL NEHRU... ONE OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS.

IT'S A PLEASURE.

AND THIS IS MR. JINNAH, PRESIDENT OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE.

HOW DO YOU DO?

AND THIS IS BALLAVBHAI PATEL.

HELLO... WE HAVE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO DISCUSS, BAPU.

WHO IS ALSO KNOWN AS "THE IRONMAN" FOR CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEADERSHIP QUALITIES... BUT TO ME FOR HIS ABSOLUTE LACK OF HUMOR.

NICE TO MEET YOU.

HMM...

I AM MALLANA ABUL KALAM AZAD, AND I AM DYING TO HAVE SOME OF THIS EXCELLENT TEA AND PAKODAS* KASTURBA MADE FOR US.

SO IF WE COULD JUST SETTLE DOWN...

HE NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION.

SO HEREBY WE BEGIN THIS SESSION...

COME ON, JINNAH... THIS IS NOT ONE OF YOUR POSH TEA PARTIES. RELAX AND LET'S GET ON.

FOR THE LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY OF THE WORLD, YOU SEEM TO BE AN AWFULLY DIVERSE LOT.

HA HA...RIGHT YOU ARE. THAT'S WHY WHATEVER INDIVIDUAL IDEOLOGIES WE HARBOR AMONG OURSELVES WE END UP HERE IN SABARMATI ASHRAM. GANDHI IS THE THREAD THAT BINDS US TOGETHER.

AND STILL HE IS NOT PART OF ANY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

HE IS TOO BIG FOR THAT. GANDHI IS THE SPIRIT OF THE ENTIRE NATION.

THERE IS WORD THAT THE BRITISH ARE GOING TO ARREST YOU VERY SOON, BAPU.

THIS IS NEWS TO MY EARS. IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME I WILL GO TO JAIL FOR SATYAGRAHA*.

NO, THIS TIME IT IS DIFFERENT.

*NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE.

THEY WANT TO ISOLATE YOU FROM THE PEOPLE SO THAT YOUR WORD DOES NOT REACH THEM. IT IS A DELIBERATE PLOT. THEY WILL CHARGE YOU FOR SOMETHING INSIGNIFICANT AND MAKE A MOUNTAIN OUT OF AN ANTHILL.

THEY MIGHT EVEN SEND YOU TO THE RESIDENCY JAIL IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS!

HAH...IT IS SOMETHING THEY DID TO NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, THEY HOLED HIM UP ON AN ISLAND WHERE HIS WORD WOULD NOT REACH THE PEOPLE.

BUT THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN THIS IS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

YOU ARE IMPULSIVE, SUBHASH!

AND I AM NO NAPOLEON. I AM NOT FIGHTING THE BRITISH WITH GUNS, SWORDS OR CANNONS. I AM FIGHTING THEM WITH MY DREAM, NOW SHARED BY THAT HUNDRED MILLION YOU SPEAK OF.

IF THEY EVEN THINK OF TOUCHING THE MAHATMA, THERE WILL BE HELL TO PAY. A HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE WILL RISE TO DESTROY THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

IF EVEN A DROP OF BLOOD SPILLS IN MY NAME, THEN I WILL CALL OFF THIS ENTIRE MOVEMENT. I HAVE TRUST AND FAITH IN YOU, MY FRIENDS.

FAIL ME NOT!

MEANWHILE...

THE RESIDENCE OF
THE VICEROY OF
INDIA.

DELHI.

GENTLEMEN, THERE
MUST BE ANOTHER
WAY. THIS IS EAST INDIA
COMPANY NO
MORE.

WE ARE CIVILIZED
MEN AND WE HONOR
THE KING...

I HAVE SPOKEN TO HIM
SEVERAL TIMES AND WE CAME
TO PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS BY SIGNING
TREATIES. TRUST ME, HE IS A REMARKABLE
PERSON TO KNOW. I AM SURE IF
WE JUST SETTLE DOWN IN MORE
COMMON GROUNDS--

I BEG TO INTERRUPT,
LORD IRWIN, BUT SIGNING TREATIES
AND PACTS WITH GANDHI ARE ONLY
MAKING US LOOK INFERIOR TO HIM.
HIS VOICE IS NOW REACHING THE
BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR INDIA HAS GIVEN
DIRECT ORDERS TO CONTAIN
THE DAMAGE ALREADY DONE
BY HIS SO-CALLED NON-
VIOLENT INSURGENCE.

HE EXPECTS
IMMEDIATE
RESULTS.

I STILL
BELIEVE THERE IS
A BETTER WAY. THIS
COUNTRY DESERVES
BETTER.

WHAT THIS COUNTRY
DESERVES IS TO BE JUDGED
BY THE PARLIAMENT AND THE
KING. AND SO FAR WHAT HAS
BEEN OBSERVED...

...YOU HAVE
PROVEN TO BE
UNFIT FOR HEADING
THIS OFFICE.

OH, SO IT SEEMS THE OLD GIVES WAY TO THE NEW.



I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THERE ARE SOME TROUBLES CONCERNING AN INDIAN NATIVE.

I'M NOT CERTAIN THAT WOULD APPROPRIATELY DESCRIBE HIM.

GOOD AFTERNOON, GENTLEMEN.

I DO ANNOUNCE MYSELF, FREEMAN THOMAS, EARL OF WILLINGDON.

I WILL BE HANDLING YOUR AFFAIRS HENCEFORTH, LORD IRWIN.



I HAVE SPENT A LONG TIME IN THIS COUNTRY, MY FRIEND. IN MY EARLY YEARS MY DISDAIN FOR THE COUNTRYMEN WAS NOT MUCH UNLIKE YOURS...BUT THROUGH THE YEARS I HAVE BECOME RESPECTFUL OF THEIR WAYS.

AND THAT NATIVE YOU SPEAK OF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THAT.

I AM SURE YOU WILL SHARE MY FEELINGS AS YOU STAY LONGER AND UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE. I TRIED TO CRUSH THEIR WILL BY ARRESTING GANDHI, BUT THE REPERCUSSIONS WERE BEYOND MY IMAGINATION.



YES, I KNOW OF THE DELHI PACT. NOW THE CONGRESS HAS BECOME A PART OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE. YOU BOWED TO GANDHI'S WILL.

TELL ME, SIR, HOW DOES IT FEEL TO SHARE SEATS WITH THESE BROWN-SKINNED NATIVES?



HONESTLY?

I AM HONORED.

I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST. I AM SURE WITH TIME YOU TOO WILL SHED THE PRIDE THAT MAKES YOU SPEAK ILL OF GANDHI AND THE PEOPLE.

YOU SHALL FIND THE TRUTH.

FAREWELL, AND MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU.



STRANGE MAN... I WONDER WHAT GOT INTO HIM.

PLEASE BE SEATED, GENTLEMEN. MY FIRST DUTY AND ACTION AS THE NEW VICEROY OF INDIA IS TO ISSUE AN ARREST WARRANT FOR GANDHI, AND I EXPECT PROMPT RESULTS FROM YOU.

UHH... SIR, I AM SORRY THIS WILL SOUND LIKE A JEST...

...BUT WHO WILL BELL THE CAT?

IT SEEMS YOU ARE IN MORTAL TERROR OF A MAN WHO SHOWS HIS OTHER CHEEK IF HE IS SLAPPED!

LORD IRWIN IS PAST. HE WAS A SANCTIMONIOUS GOD-FEARING OLD MAN. OUR ADMINISTRATION NEEDS A FIRM HAND AND IRON WILL.

SUMMON THE OFFICERS. I NEED A VOLUNTEER WHO WILL SPEARHEAD THIS OPERATION OF ARRESTING GANDHI.

NONSENSE! HE IS NO SAINT, JUST A POLITICIAN.

I HAVE THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB. IN FACT, HE IS WAITING RIGHT BEHIND THE DOOR. WITH YOUR KIND PERMISSION I WILL SUMMON HIM, MY LORD.

GRANTED.

THERE ARE NONE SIR. WE ISSUED THE DECREE. THEY ARE GOOD CHRISTIANS, MOSTLY AFRAID OF THE RIGHTEOUS WRATH OF GOD IF THEY ARE TO TORTURE A SAINT LIKE THE MAHATMA.

PINGGG!

GOOD AFTERNOON, LORDS.

I AM INSPECTOR TEGGART, PRESENTLY POSTED IN AHMADABAD, GUJARAT.

I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO LEAD THIS OPERATION.

SABARMATI ASHRAM,
A FEW DAYS LATER.

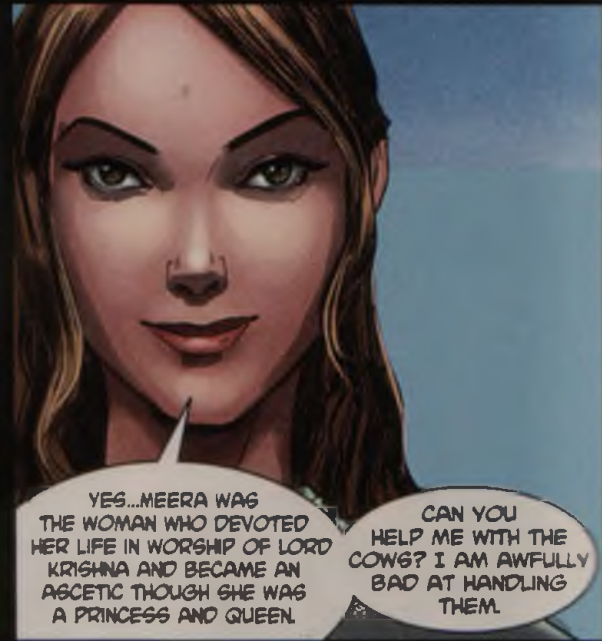


ER...EXCUSE
ME...



HELLO, I AM MADELINE,
THOUGH I PREFER TO BE
CALLED MEERABEHN, THE NAME
BAPU GAVE ME.

HELLO, MEERA..
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL
NAME GANDHI HAS
CHOSEN FOR
YOU.



YES...MEERA WAS
THE WOMAN WHO DEVOTED
HER LIFE IN WORSHIP OF LORD
KRISHNA AND BECAME AN
ASCETIC THOUGH SHE WAS
A PRINCESS AND QUEEN.

CAN YOU
HELP ME WITH THE
COWS? I AM AWFULLY
BAD AT HANDLING
THEM.



YOU ARE
VERY NEW TO THIS
PLACE?

YES, I ONLY
ARRIVED LAST WEEK. I SAW
YOU BEFORE. YOU SEEM TO BE
AN ENGLISHMAN BUT YOU STAY IN
THIS ASHRAM AND YOU DRESS
QUITE DIFFERENTLY
AS WELL.



WHO ARE
YOU?



I HAD A CHRISTIAN NAME ONCE AS WELL. I WAS CALLED JAMES JENSEN, AND I AM FROM ENGLAND.

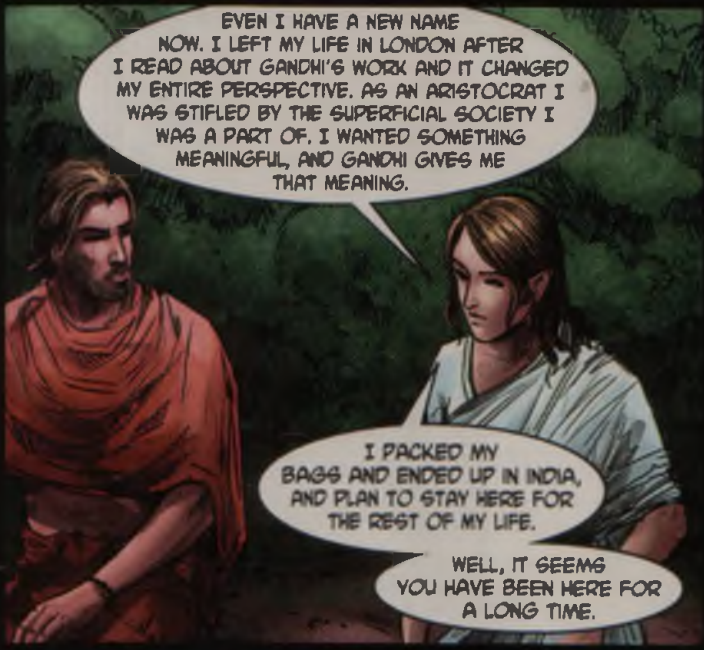
BUT THE MAN I WAS DIED A LONG TIME AGO AND I WAS REBORN UNDER A NEW NAME, AND HAVE EMBRACED IT.



YOU DIED AND CAME BACK TO LIFE?

METAPHORICALLY.

THAT'S A RELIEF. OTHERWISE I WOULD HAVE BEEN CONVERSING WITH LAZARUS...HA HA...



EVEN I HAVE A NEW NAME NOW. I LEFT MY LIFE IN LONDON AFTER I READ ABOUT GANDHI'S WORK AND IT CHANGED MY ENTIRE PERSPECTIVE. AS AN ARISTOCRAT I WAS STIFLED BY THE SUPERFICIAL SOCIETY I WAS A PART OF. I WANTED SOMETHING MEANINGFUL, AND GANDHI GIVES ME THAT MEANING.

I PACKED MY BAGS AND ENDED UP IN INDIA, AND PLAN TO STAY HERE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

WELL, IT SEEMS YOU HAVE BEEN HERE FOR A LONG TIME.



YES...LONGER THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.



THEN YOU MUST SHOW ME AROUND THIS COUNTRY. IT'S SO DIFFERENT FROM ENGLAND! I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A DIVERSELY BEAUTIFUL LAND BEFORE.



SHALL WE BEGIN WITH YOU TEACHING ME HOW TO MILK THIS COW...



...JAMES?



KANTA BAI TAUGHT ME HOW TO MILK THE COW.

MEMSAB IS GETTING BETTER WITH HOUSEHOLD WORK. IN NO TIME, SHE WILL BE ABLE TO RUN AN INDIAN HOUSE ALL BY HERSELF.



LOOK OUT, TESS, SHE IS GOING TO TAKE A...



EWWW...



BY JOVE!



HAHAHAH!



HAHAHAHA!

UH...JAMES... SACHU...



WHAT'S SO FUNNY? SEE...I FILLED THE JUG WITHOUT SPILLING A DROP.



NO...IT'S NOTHING... HA HA--

WHAT'S THAT?

HELP!



GANDHI...
COME OUT,
YOU OLD
BUGGER!

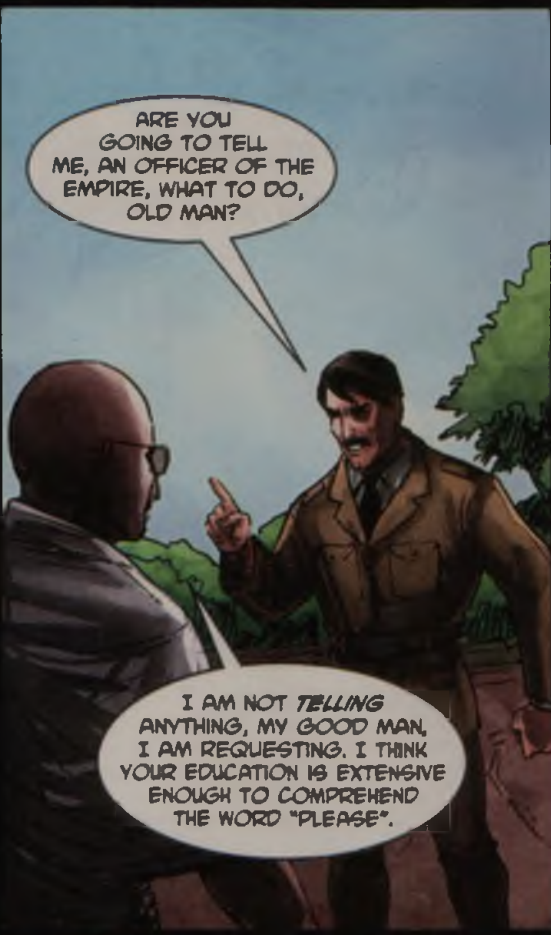
I HAVE A
WARRANT FOR
YOU AND YOU ARE
GOING IN FOR A LONG
TIME, YOU GODDING
FAKIR!





WHAT'S HAPPENING? PLEASE STOP, IN THE GOOD NAME OF GOD!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS.



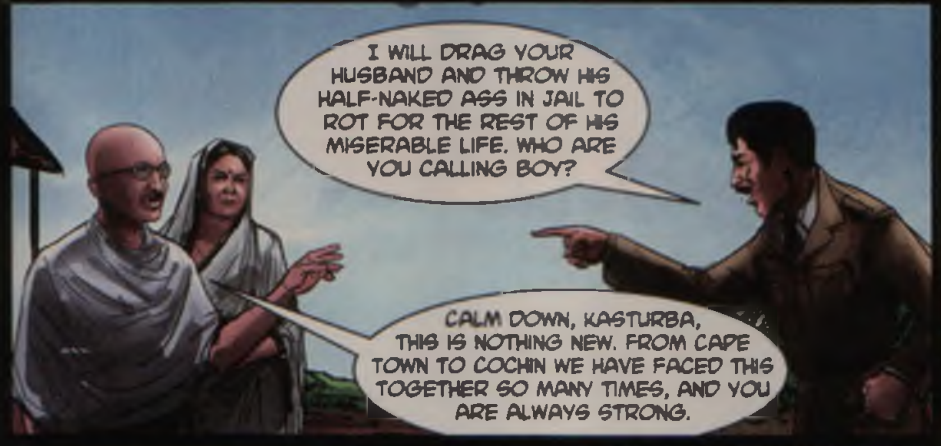
ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME, AN OFFICER OF THE EMPIRE, WHAT TO DO, OLD MAN?

I AM NOT TELLING ANYTHING, MY GOOD MAN, I AM REQUESTING. I THINK YOUR EDUCATION IS EXTENSIVE ENOUGH TO COMPREHEND THE WORD "PLEASE".



YOU DARE MOCK ME, YOU SODDING BROWN NIGGER?!!

YOU ENGLISH PRIDE YOURSELVES ON MANNERS AND THIS IS THE WAY YOU SPEAK IN FRONT OF AN ELDERLY MAN AND LADY? STOP DOWN, BOY!



I WILL DRAG YOUR HUSBAND AND THROW HIS HALF-NAKED ASS IN JAIL TO ROT FOR THE REST OF HIS MISERABLE LIFE. WHO ARE YOU CALLING BOY?

CALM DOWN, KASTURBA, THIS IS NOTHING NEW. FROM CAPE TOWN TO COCHIN WE HAVE FACED THIS TOGETHER SO MANY TIMES, AND YOU ARE ALWAYS STRONG.



NOOOOOO!!!



PUT THE CUFFS ON MY WRISTS, OFFICER. TAKE ME WHEREVER YOU WISH.

BUT LEAVE THESE PEACEFUL PEOPLE ALONE.







LATER
THAT NIGHT.

K...MAHATMA...



HE IS OKAY...YOU
NEED REST.

I AM HERE...
YOU DON'T NEED
TO WORRY ABOUT
ANYTHING.



IT'S...
IT'S YOU...
TEGG...
...MY
LOVE...

TEGG?



IT'S ME...
MEERA...



MEERA...



THE NEXT MORNING.

UHH...



MEERA?



HM...?

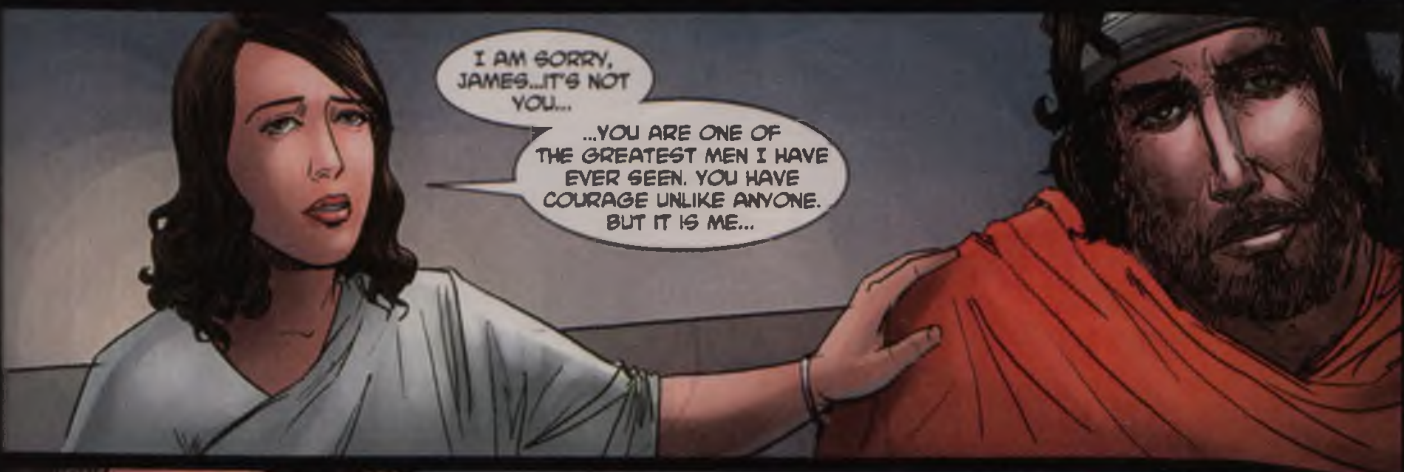


OH... I AM SORRY. I DOZED OFF.



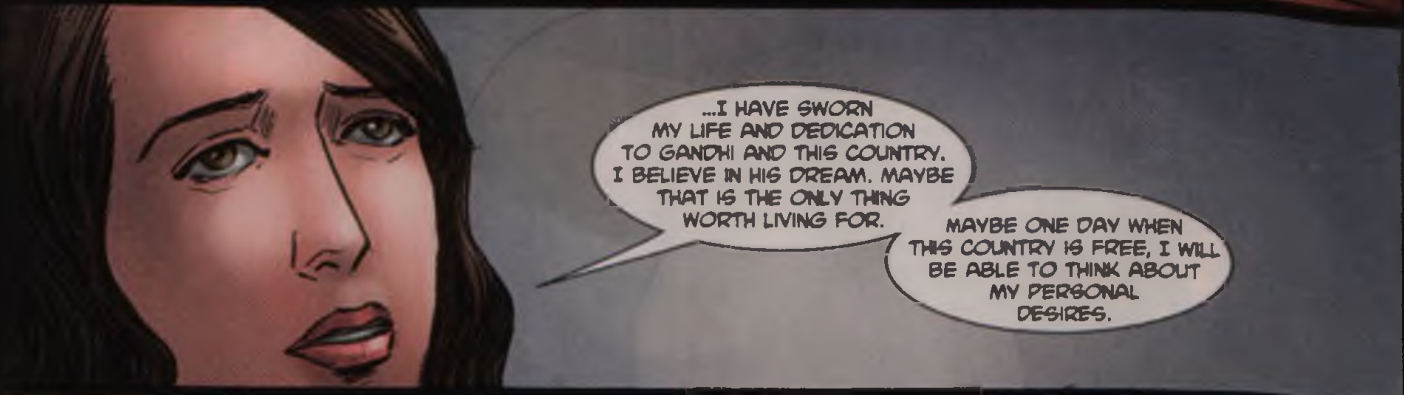
I...





I AM SORRY, JAMES...IT'S NOT YOU...

...YOU ARE ONE OF THE GREATEST MEN I HAVE EVER SEEN. YOU HAVE COURAGE UNLIKE ANYONE. BUT IT IS ME...



...I HAVE SWORN MY LIFE AND DEDICATION TO GANDHI AND THIS COUNTRY. I BELIEVE IN HIS DREAM. MAYBE THAT IS THE ONLY THING WORTH LIVING FOR.

MAYBE ONE DAY WHEN THIS COUNTRY IS FREE, I WILL BE ABLE TO THINK ABOUT MY PERSONAL DESIRES.



I UNDERSTAND.

AND I RESPECT YOU FOR THAT, MEERA.



YOU BRING BACK MEMORIES OF MY PAST LIFE, WHEN I HAD SOMEONE I LOVED.

FOR HER AND MY CHILD I CROSSED THE OCEAN AND CAME TO THIS LAND. THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED.



EVERYTHING I LOVED, EVERYTHING I HELD CLOSE TO ME, WAS LOST. I ALMOST DIED.

BUT THIS LAND GAVE ME MY LIFE BACK, AND I KNEW I WAS DESTINED TO BE SOMEONE ELSE, SOMEONE MUCH MORE THAN JAMES JENSEN. I LEARNED THINGS WHICH ARE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HUMAN RATIONALE.



WHEN I MET GANDHI, SOMETHING INSIDE TOLD ME THAT IT WAS TIME I PAID BACK FOR WHAT THIS LAND HAS GIVEN TO ME.

AND I TOO STARTED SHARING HIS DREAM.

TRUST ME, MEERA, THE BRITISH HAVE STRENGTHENED THEIR IRON GRIP ON THIS NATION.

I KNOW...THIS COUNTRY IS TORN BY VIOLENCE, MISTRUST, RELIGION...NOTHING CAN BRING THEM TOGETHER.

EXCEPT MAYBE GANDHI.

GANDHI!

MAYBE GANDHI IS NOT ENOUGH!

BAMM!

HOW COULD YOU SAY THAT?

BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN AROUND LONG ENOUGH.

FROM THE SEPOY MUTINY TO GANDHI'S SATYAGRAHA.

I HAVE SEEN IT ALL!

WITHOUT ACTION, I CAN'T IMAGINE AN INDEPENDENT INDIA ANYTIME SOON.

JAMES!

A FEW MILES AWAY FROM THE ASHRAM.



FREEDOM!

I WAS STAYING IN THE ASHRAM ONLY FOR YOU, SADHU... BECAUSE SOONER OR LATER WE KNEW YOU WOULD GROW TIRED OF GANDHI'S WAYS.

WHO ARE YOU TO COMMENT ON MY DECISION AND GANDHI'S WAY?

YOU CAN COME OUT OF YOUR HIDING, JATIN.

YOU HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING ME LIKE A SHADOW IN THE ASHRAM. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

A SON OF INDIA!

MY ALLIES AND I HAVE FOUND OUT A WAY TO USHER IN THE AGE OF FREEDOM. BUT WE NEED A MAN OF INCREDIBLE SIDDHIC POWERS LIKE YOU, SADHU. MY MASTER SAYS YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TURN IT.

TURN WHAT?

THE WHEEL OF DESTINY!

SO BE IT.

LEAD THE
WAY...

TO BE CONTINUED!