

## CHAPTER 1: UNTIL THE SHIP SAILS

In the story, Ahmed Chotabhai must make an important choice. What are his two options?

Why do you think that the majority of passive resisters were working-class Indians like Narayansamy?

Besides the judges and the law itself, do you think there are other reasons why the Chotabhais won their case while the deportees lost?

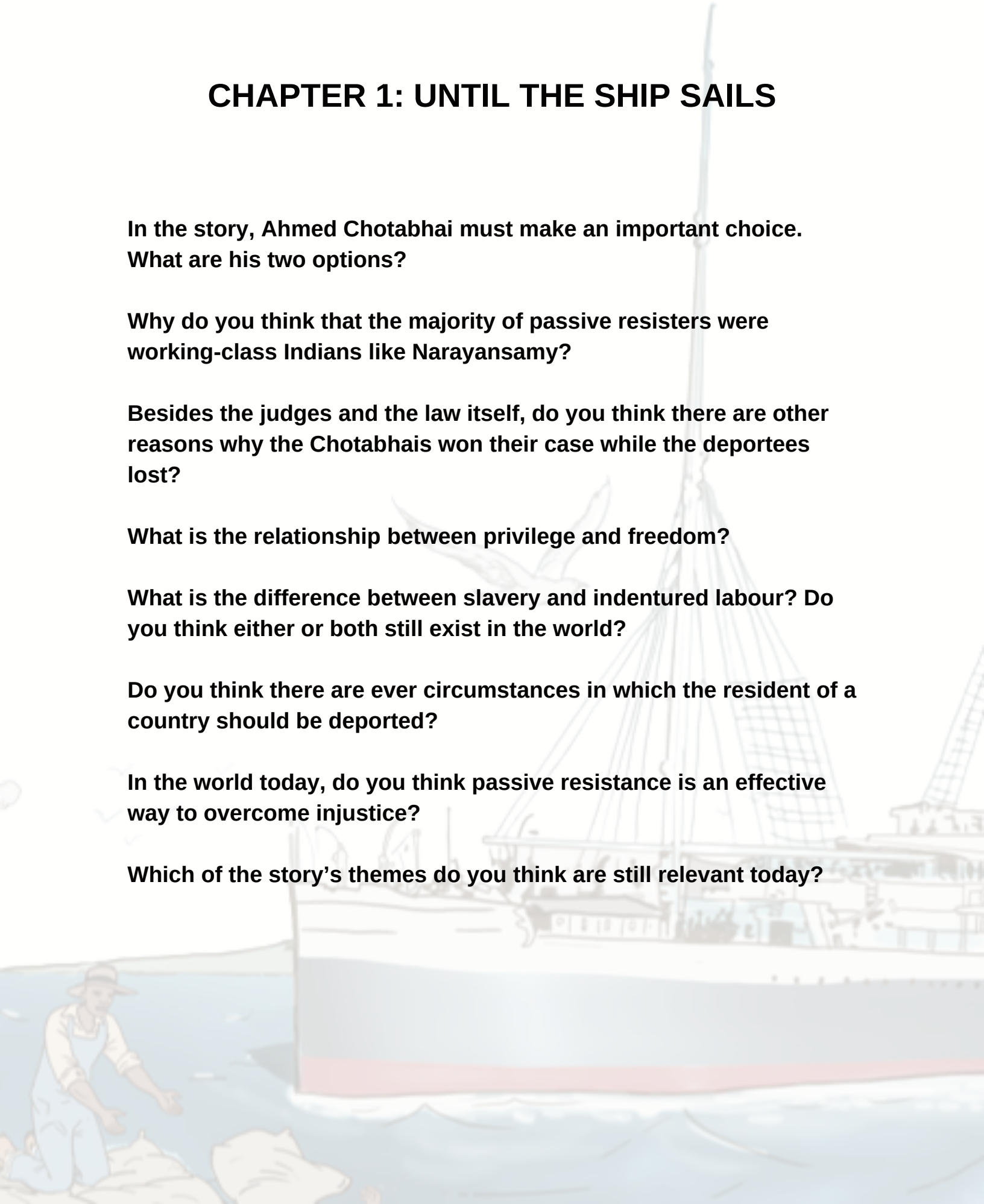
What is the relationship between privilege and freedom?

What is the difference between slavery and indentured labour? Do you think either or both still exist in the world?

Do you think there are ever circumstances in which the resident of a country should be deported?

In the world today, do you think passive resistance is an effective way to overcome injustice?

Which of the story's themes do you think are still relevant today?



## CHAPTER 2: IN THE SHADOW OF A HIGH STONE WALL

Think about the rights of prisoners in South Africa and other countries today.

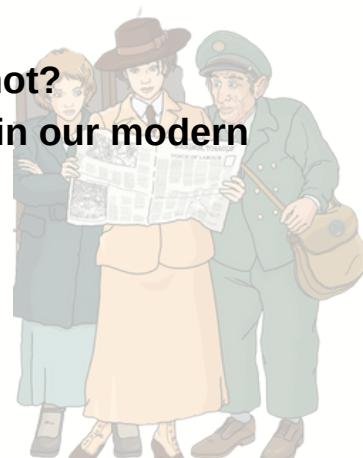
- What is the difference between an awaiting-trial prisoner and a convicted prisoner?
- Do you think the two should be treated differently? How so, and why?
- Why do you think it's important that the rights of awaiting-trial prisoners, and prisoners in general, are protected?
- Which rights should a person never lose, regardless of whether they are in prison?
- Do you know what prisoner rights are protected by South Africa's Constitution?

During the municipal tram strike of 1911, radical strikers planted dynamite on the tram lines to scare away 'scabs' (people who refuse to strike and/or willingly take over the job responsibilities of strikers) and passengers.

- Why do you think Jack disagreed with this action?
- Do you think passive or violent resistance is more effective?

Mary Fitzgerald was an extraordinary figure in early-twentieth-century Johannesburg.

- Do you agree with this statement? Why/Why not?
- Have the roles and status of women changed in our modern society? How so, and why?



## **CHAPTER 3: COME GALLOWS GRIM**

**From the information provided in this story, why do you think the Rand Revolt took place? Do you think it could have been avoided? If so, how?**

**In Johannesburg and its surrounding towns, the first quarter of the twentieth century was characterised by violent resistance, particularly by white workers. In the case of Taffy Long, Jan Smuts wanted to set an example to the people. Do you think he was justified?**

**In the world today, 48 countries retain the death penalty while 108 – including South Africa – have abolished it.**

- What is your opinion of capital punishment?**
- Why do you think the judges of the Constitutional Court called it “cruel”, “arbitrary” and “incompatible with the right to life”?**
- Do you think it’s possible that a person can be sentenced to death for a crime they did not commit?**
- Do you think it’s possible that a person can be executed for political reasons?**
- What do you think happened to Taffy Long? Did he murder the greengrocer Alwyn Marais? Did he deserve to be executed?**

## CHAPTER 4: THE WIDOW OF MARABASTAD

Thanks to a police spy report housed in the national archives, we know that on 14 June 1925 two women called Helena and Annie volunteered to get arrested during a Marabastad community meeting. If it were not for this single piece of paper, and the brief court records of *Rex v Detody* (1925), this story would have been lost forever.

- Why do you think this story was almost forgotten?
- Why do you think the history of resistance by black women in South Africa is so poorly recorded?

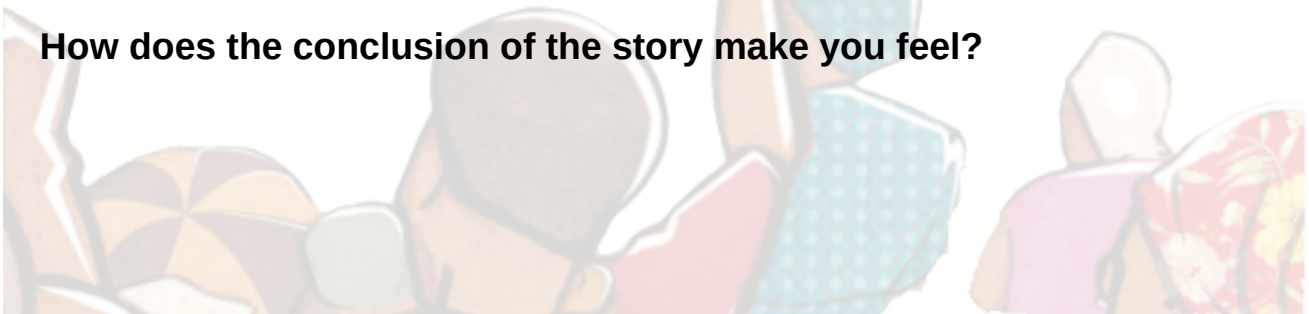
Why do you think the South African government forced black people to carry passes which identified them?

We know that Helena Detody was a widowed washerwoman from the township of Marabastad. Do you think these characteristics had any influence on the decisions she made in this story?

What challenges did Helena Detody and other black women resisters face on the basis of their gender and race?

What is the status and role of women in black working-class communities today? Are they any different from what is portrayed in this story, which took place almost a century ago?

How does the conclusion of the story make you feel?



## **CHAPTER 5: A HOUSE DIVIDED**

**In the story, the Bafokeng lekgotla describe their kgosi as an “autocrat”. What does this mean?**

**In their handling of what became known as the ‘Bafokeng rebellion of 1921-25’, the South African government faced a dilemma which exposed their hypocrisy. What is your interpretation of this statement?**

**What do you think is the best system for governance (and electing leaders) in a community or country?**

**What do you think caused the events in this story – the influence of the white colonial government, the weaknesses of kgosi August Mokgatle, the political ambitions of the lekgotla, or a combination of these forces?**

**South African legislation defines customary law as “the customs and usages traditionally observed among the indigenous African peoples of South Africa and form part of the culture of those peoples.”**

- In the story, how does the South African government determine what constitutes Bafokeng custom?**
- What do you think is the best approach for incorporating customary law into South African society?**

## CHAPTER 6: HERE I CROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE

In this story we are given insight into the conditions experienced by black miners on the Witwatersrand during the 1940s.

- What made so many men leave the rural areas to work on the mines?
- In the compounds, can you identify any structures that the authorities imposed to deter or prevent miners from resisting collectively?
- How much do you think conditions on South Africa's mines have changed over the past 80 years?
- Are there similarities between the events that took place at Sub-Nigel mine in 1946 and those at Marikana in 2012?

Over a million black men have worked as miners on the Witwatersrand since the discovery of gold there in 1884. Why is it that we know so little about them as individuals?

Tuma and Isaac are 'composite characters' (characters based on more than one real or fictional life). Like many thousands of men on the Witwatersrand in the 1940s, they go through a process of awakening in this story.

- What factors led them and others to participate in the 1946 strike?
- What is your understanding of the strike's legacy? Even though it was brutally crushed by the police, what was its longer-term positive effect?

