

## #BOOK LAUNCH

### Of Rare and Exquisite objects

Renowned author and mythologist, Devdutt Pattanaik was recently in the Pink City for the launch of his latest book 'The Adornment of Gods'. The book features rare objects from the Amrapali Jewels Museum.



Tusharika Singh  
Freelancer  
writer and city blogger

Jaipur to launch the book at the Amrapali Museum. In conversation with the Managing Director of India's only Museum consulting company, Eka Cultural Resources & Research, Promod Kumar KG, he spoke on various intriguing topics related to writing, history, geography, and mythology. While emphasizing the significance of museums, Pattanaik remarked that we are presently living in the industrial era, where it is crucial to preserve memory, making the role of museums more important than ever before. He explained that earlier, an object had aesthetic and functional aspects: Satyam (Function), Shivam (Narrative that made it sacred), and Sundaram (Beauty). However, currently, we are merely focusing on the function and disregarding the story and silver objects. The museum is spread across two floors, with distinct areas of focus. The ground floor exhibits exquisite items of beauty and adornment, including silver and gold jewellery from different parts of India, with a special emphasis on pieces that are associated with significant life events, from birth to death. Meanwhile, the basement houses a plethora of design inspirations that have been available to Indian craftsmen over time, demonstrated through the collection of jewellery and silver objects. The founders of the museum - Rajiv Arora and Rajesh Ajmera, who became friends during their college years nearly forty years ago, have created this collection as a labour of love, which pays homage to the diverse living culture of India, as seen through its various regions, rituals, and religions.

**Significance of symbols**  
Pattanaik discussed the significance of symbols, stating that ideas as a labour of love, which pays homage to the diverse living culture of India, as seen through its various regions, rituals, and religions.

#### The Adornment of Gods

Renowned author and mythologist, Devdutt Pattanaik has penned a book 'The Adornment of Gods' that features rare objects from the Amrapali Jewels Museum. From the magnificent collection of the museum, the book thoughtfully curates fifty rare and exquisite antiques. Each object is a small but significant part of Indian history. Its motifs and materials offer a unique perspective on the country's cultural heritage.

Shedding light on the book, Rajiv Arora and Rajesh Ajmera share: "The fifty objects that Devdutt expands on are but a small sample of the holdings at Amrapali Jewels Museum. They are, however, representative of our collection at its conceptual widest. From the five elements that have brought creation, to the subcontinent's myriad gods and goddesses, our plentiful flora and fauna, to objects intrinsic to religious rites and rituals, votive offerings, jewellery and decorative objects, this book covers a vast narrative that no single thread could otherwise hold. We hope that this book arouses an appreciation of our material culture, their many makers across geographies, their uses, layered meanings and their continued ability to engage with us today."

#### Designing the book

Pattanaik elaborated on his writing process, revealing that he devotes a significant amount of time to crafting the table of contents for his books. He emphasized that nearly half of the time he spends on writing is dedicated to designing the book's structure, as it guides him on how to conceptualize and approach the subject matter. 'The Adornment of Gods' is also structured into five distinct sections: Elements, Life, Humans, Goddesses, and Gods.

#### Launch of the book

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# Gandhi - yes, Gandhi! Superannuated Gandhi, old rascal Gandhi (...1)

"Fasting! Really?" "Yes. Crazy, this man is. He will fast unto death, he won't eat a morsel until the riots stop, he has said." "Arre let him!" Ratan hissed. "Let the oldie die. This is how he has been pampering the Musalmaans. Forget him - he should die!"

"Right you are," Jatin nodded in agreement, "let him die. You come with me, there's work to be done."

A while later the sky lit up with the blaze of a burning slum. The fire brigade rushed to the spot with sirens blaring. The city covered, trembled with fear, as the sound of bombs rent the air every now and then.

Coming home, Ratan was again subjected to the tongue lash of Jasoda. What is this vixen, a virago? No fear in her soul!

"So you'll kill him? You will kill Gandhiji?"



he sun went down. One after another the lamp posts in the winding lane sprung to life. Their brilliance was dimmed by the smoke from the homely clay oven, signifying the darkening sky above got dotted by a glittering star or two. And that is when Ratan's feet became unruly like a wild steed. Donning a mulmul kurta he got ready to go out for the evening.

Jasoda had entered the room to pick up something. She came to an abrupt halt.

"Off?" she asked, her voice laced with sarcasm. "Can't stay put at home any longer, can you?"

Solemnly Ratan nodded his head. "Yes, just need to take a round."

Jasoda knitted her brow. "Just take a round? Chhee! Don't do that. Pour some down your throat too, okay?"

"Jasoda!" "Why? Am I saying something wrong, haan? Something not quite done?"

Ratan did not utter a word in reply. He only glared at Jasoda for a second before walking out in rapid steps.

He didn't stop until he reached Jatin's house. His friend Jatin who sells fish every morning and evening. He has no family save his aged mother - he had married but his wife died years ago, and he made no attempt to have another after that.

They all gather in his house - Haaru, Potla, Jaga, Radhu and a few others. Since most of them are in the business of selling fish or meat, they have cash in their pockets. They easily turn uproarious as mutton chops and prawn cutlets stream in to enhance the pleasure of downing country liquor.

In a room foggy with fumes of cigarette, they settle down to a few games of card. They play as long as they feel like; when they don't want to, they storm the cells of Gendri or Bunchi in the dark of the night. Or, when they are told to dive into the alleys of the Muslim neighbourhood and toss a few hand grenades.

Yes, the responsibility to curb the riot - a euphemism for hunting down Muslims - has suddenly come to rest on their able shoulders. They didn't anticipate or expect it to, but it did.

All of a sudden the wealthies of their end of the city started to pamper them. They raised funds through donations, to arm Ratan and his friends with small weapons so that they could protect the prestige of the Hindus, and of the womenfolk.

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## #MOKSHA

The way things were going, this was bound to happen. They had outdone everyone in severing head from the torso of walking talking men.

They were all there. Haaru, Potla, Jaga, Radhu - all of them had showed up. Ratan lent the final touch.

"Come in saala, come!" Jatin affectionately welcomed him.

"Hear that?" Ratan turned to gaze at Jatin.

"What?" "All of you here can hear this?" Potla shook his head, "How can we hear if you don't spit it out, saala..."

Ratan crinkled his face, "This Gendo of yours has thrown a spanner in the wheel, re..."

A gentle murmur coursed through the room. Almost as if a gentle breeze had rustled dry leaves.

"All fixed?" Ratan's face brightened at this, "Good. I'm relieved."

"Oh, good. Come on, baba Jatin..." Haru called out, "bring out another bottle Jatin!"

"Abe! Shut up saala! Here I come..." "Hey where's the chaat? Pass it around..."

"Die, you pests!" Jaga stood up and spoke in excitement, "None of you are sober. I'm off to Bimbi's."

"Saala can't wait to get there, Ratan chuckled. "Arre baba, we'll all go with you..." They all got to their unsteady feet.

Ratan couldn't contain his glee. As he strode forward he kept thinking, "So there'll be riots again - good!"

The lull in the violence these past few days was most irritating. He simply couldn't take it anymore. He had tasted blood - and that is a dangerous addiction. For years, he had been a butcher and beheaded goats and lambs. But the thrill of killing a man, a live human being, was something else.

"The first day he stabbed a man he understood that this was the king of highs. Day after day, he had sought out Musalmaans and delighted in putting the knife into them - and now it had spread through his veins. Now he felt out of depth on the days when he did not come home to Jasoda, yeah? So liquor and sluts are not your cup of tea round the clock!"

"Jasoda!" "But why are you losing your cool? I'll get it for you - after all, you have been doing so much work! Boozing... whoring... killing..."

"Jasoda I'll knock your head off!" "Don't I know that?" Jasoda's fiery eyes bored through him. "The day you will fail to find a human to stab, you'll twist your knife into me to satisfy your thirst for blood..."

Jasoda walked out of the room. After a while she sent a khullar of tea through her little boy but she herself stayed away.

Ratan was displeased. He spent the rest of the afternoon sleeping. Let the others take the responsibility to keep the fire aflame, now that it has been lit again, it will spread on its own steam.

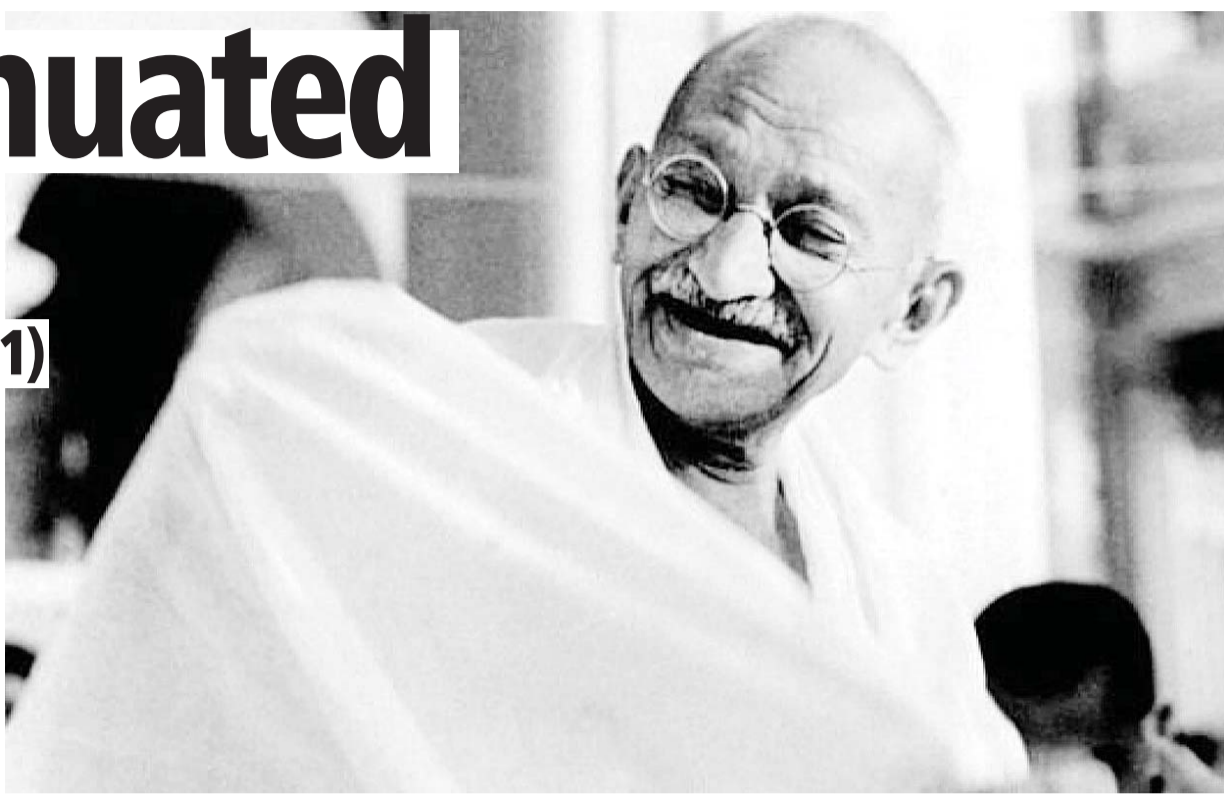
That's exactly what happened. By nightfall the riots took a sinister turn. Tension gripped the air of the city, dread filled the dark of the eyes. There was hardly any foothold in the streets.

When they met in the evening, Jatin said, "See how easy it was to



## No Silvery Shine

Metals shine because they reflect light rays from their surface, and do not let them through, like glass, and do not absorb them like soot. In gold, cesium and copper atoms, the electrons absorb the energy of photons with long waves which correspond to the colours blue and purple, and these metals reflect the remaining red and yellow part of the spectrum. So if you roll a piece of gold into foil with a thickness of 0.002 mm, sunlight will be visible through it. Although it will be a greenish colour.



them in the bustee at Beliaghata. Why I ask you dear, why couldn't you say this to our people? What did you, all told, achieve in Noakhali?"

Ratan nodded in agreement and let out a mouthful of smoke. "No, such humbug will no longer work here. Enough. The guy wants to unite Ichwar and Allah! As if you can do that will!"

"Shut up bey!" Jatin cackled. "Tomorrow. We will rake it up tomorrow itself. The Babus had sent for me today - everything is fixed."

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"And what if I kill him?" "What if you kill him! Are you a human being? You'll kill a sage like him? You'll rot in hell if you do that, understand? You'll burn in hell-fire..."

"Fiss off! Just shut up and go. Get lost..."

"Chhee! What are you, a man?"

"Jasoda!"

"What? You'll kill me too? Go ahead, do that!"

But what good was silencing Jasoda? Ratan simply couldn't sleep that night.

That Gandhi has gone off food? What stuff is the man made off? If I kill two men, you'll fast yourself unto death? What a dissembler! But otherwise the man has done so much! That the country has gained independence - it is largely due to this man, they say. So what? Why must he pamper the Muslims to this extent? If he's really so bothered, why doesn't he go fast to stop the riots in Punjab? Humbug. Let him rot.

The same story repeated itself the next day. The sacrificial fire kept devouring human flesh.

"What a hassle," Jatin grumbled. "This Gendo simply won't eat a bite, I hear! He'll kick the bucket day after if not tomorrow."

"All this is willed by Goddess Kali, d'you realise Jattye?" Ratan added with a wave of his hand. "It's best he shuffles off his mortal coil and drops dead."

Stray incidents filled the day. Then it started to pour. They couldn't do very much after that. When the rain stopped, Ratan stepped out to stretch his legs. He noticed that people were gathering here and there, reading newspapers, discussing something in a grave voice.

Gandhiji, the name, kept recurring. They all looked worried, sounded concerned, crestfallen.

All his countrymen genuinely worshipped Gandhi. He has actually done a lot - gone to great length to gain independence for the people. Not just the Lord Saheb, even the King of the British rulers held him in deference!

Suddenly Ratan hastened his pace. Why not go upto Beliaghata and take a look at Gandhi? To this day he had not set his eyes on this man, what was the harm in sizing him up? Ratan was not enamoured of Gandhi, he didn't care two hoots whether he lived or died. Still, a peek at the man would do no harm.

All said and done, he'd made a name for himself, perhaps even a place in history.

Ratan was overcome by a strange emotion. Inscrutable. Without much thinking he showed up in Beliaghata for the evening prayers. There was a large crowd waiting outside the house. He nudged and pushed to wend his way and find a footing in the front row. After a long



Mahatma Gandhi Fasting.

wait he got to see Gandhiji. A short statured, dark complexioned ageing man with the radiance of a child on his face. Bare bodied, Khadi-clad, he had a meditative calm about him. So this was the magnanimous Gandhiji?

A tremor passed through Ratan. It was as if he had suddenly come face to face with a morning sun. As if he was standing on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, as deep as its boundless expanse.

In a flash something happened deep within Ratan. Everything turned topsy turvy as if shaken by an earthquake high on the Richter scale. He realised he had finally encountered a magnificent personality. One who would not bow his head to anything - unjust or immoral. One who would not daunted by guns and bullets.

As he looked on, Ratan turned misty eyed. Who said Gandhi was a pygmy? To Ratan he seemed like the Himalayas piercing the sky. Ratan trembled, he panicked, he fled.

All kinds of thoughts beset Ratan and he became restless. He headed straight for Jatin's house. He felt like settling down with bottles of the fiery stuff. As he felt the liquid sear down his throat, the daze cleared somewhat.

**To be concluded...**

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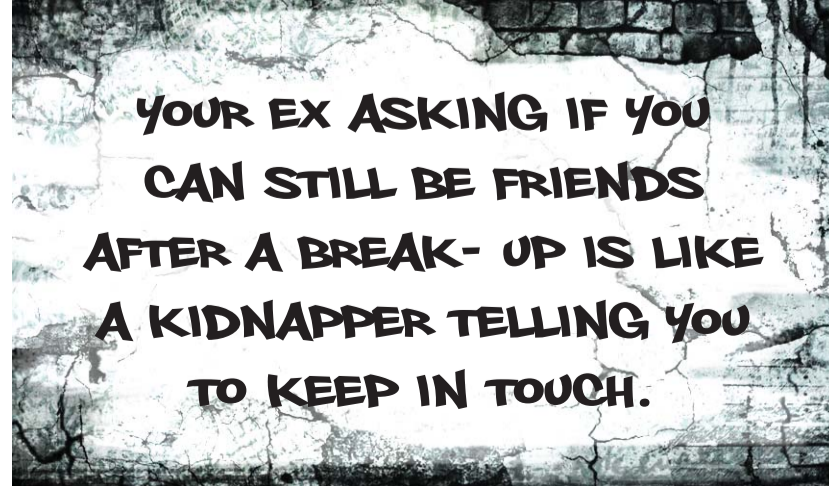
Nabendu Ghosh's (1917-2007) oeuvre of work includes thirty novels and fifteen collections of short stories. He was a renowned scriptwriter and director. He penned cinematic classics such as *Devdas*, *Bandini*, *Sujata*, *Parineeta*, *Majhi Didi* and *Abhimanyu*. And, as part of a team of iconic film directors and actors, he was instrumental in shaping an entire age of Indian cinema. He was the recipient of numerous literary and film awards, including the *Bankim Puraskar*, the *Bibhuvi Bhushan Sahitya Arghya*, the *Filmfare Best Screenplay Award* and the *National Film Award for Best First Film of a Director*.

*Ratnottama Sengupta, formerly Arts Editor of The Times of India, teaches mass communication and film appreciation, curates film festivals and art exhibitions, and translates and writes books. She has been a member of CFFC, served on the National Film Awards jury and has herself won a National Award*

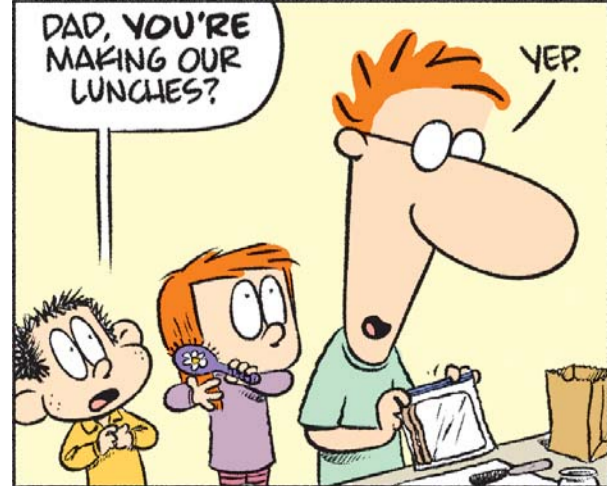


Riots.

## THE WALL

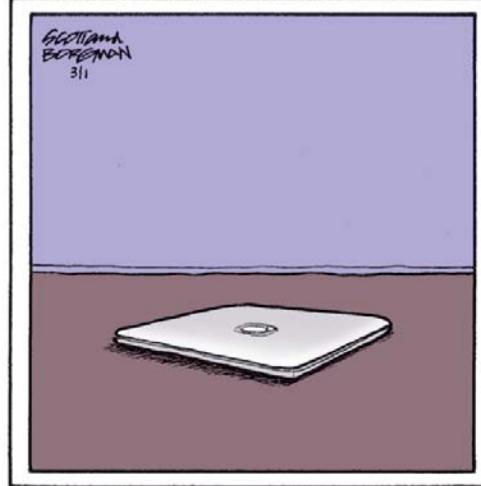


## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman