

Nelson Mandela in 1990, greeting a jubilant crowd two weeks after being released from prison

MANDELA

His determination and courage made him a leader South Africa—and the world—could not ignore

CHARACTERS

NELSON MANDELA
BETTY SHEIN, a white secretary
OLIVER TAMBO, a black attorney and activist
WINNIE MANDELA, Nelson's wife
POLICE OFFICER
BRAM FISCHER, a white attorney

WALTER SISULU, a black activist
AHMED KATHRADA, an activist of Indian descent
P. W. BOTHA, South Africa's president, 1984-1989
ZINDZI MANDELA, Nelson and Winnie's daughter

***ANDERS KRUGER**, an aide to President de Klerk
F. W. DE KLERK, South Africa's president, 1989-1994
NARRATORS A-E

*Indicates a fictional character. All others were real people.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **apartheid** (*uh-PAHR-tate*) (*n*): an official policy of separation by race that was the law in South Africa from 1948 to 1991
- **sabotage** (*n*): the deliberate destruction, damage, or obstruction of something, usually for political or military advantage
- **abolish** (*v*): to officially stop or end something, such as a law

PROLOGUE

Narrator A: When Rolihlahla Mandela was born in 1918, in the tiny village of Mvezo, South Africa, his country was already deeply divided by race. But the boy—who was given the name Nelson by a teacher when he was 7—was still able to get a good education at black schools. As a young man, he was even able to take law classes with white students.

Narrator B: Then, in 1948, the year Mandela turned 30, South Africa's white-ruled government began to enforce racial separation by law.

Apartheid established different rules for the country's whites, blacks, Coloreds (people of mixed

race), and Asians. It limited where each group could live, work, and be educated. Whites, who were 14 percent of the population, had most of the wealth and power. Blacks, who were 75 percent, had little. Coloreds and Asians were marginally better off than blacks.

SCENE 1

Narrator C: In 1952, a tall young black man strides confidently into the offices of a white law firm in the city of Johannesburg. None of the white staff will meet his eye.

Nelson Mandela: I'm here to see Mr. Tambo. He's expecting me.

Betty Shein: You mean Oliver?

Nelson Mandela: Mr. Tambo. I'll just wait right over there.

Narrator D: He calmly takes a seat in the waiting area, ignoring the "Whites Only" signs.

Shein: Hey, you can't—

Oliver Tambo (*coming forward*): Don't worry, Miss. We're leaving.

Narrator E: A little later, as the two young men have lunch . . .

Tambo: You always put everyone at my office in a tizzy. The idea of calling a black man "Mr." is completely alien to them. Then you pull that stunt with the chair!

Mandela: I do the same thing anywhere I see a whites-only sign. I refuse to accept the idea that I'm inferior because of my skin color.



Above: Under apartheid, blacks could live only in specified areas, like this shantytown. Inset: Protesters at a Johannesburg rally in 1952

Tambo: But it's getting dangerous to ignore apartheid restrictions.

Mandela: It's now a crime to walk through a whites-only door, a crime to ride a whites-only bus, a crime to use a whites-only drinking fountain, a crime to walk on a whites-only beach, a crime to be on the streets past 11, a crime to live in certain places, and a crime to have no place to live. It's the people who commit these crimes that I defend.

Tambo: As far as the government is concerned, our real crime is being black.

Mandela: Why don't you come work with me? We'll be South Africa's first black-run law firm.

Tambo: I'll do it! We'll help people arrested for breaking laws that shouldn't exist in the first place.

Narrator A: The firm of Mandela & Tambo opens its doors in December 1952. The two friends defend countless black South Africans in court. But apartheid laws get more and more restrictive.

SCENE 2

Narrator B: As members of a group called the African National Congress (ANC), Mandela and Tambo help organize protests against the apartheid system. They often meet in secret, because opposing apartheid is against the law. In March 1960 . . .

Winnie Mandela: Did you hear what just happened in Sharpeville, one of the townships where blacks are protesting apartheid rules?

Nelson: Yes! About 5,000 were peacefully gathered outside the police station when officers opened fire on the crowd.

Winnie: Several hundred people were wounded and 69 were killed.

Nelson: The ANC must respond!

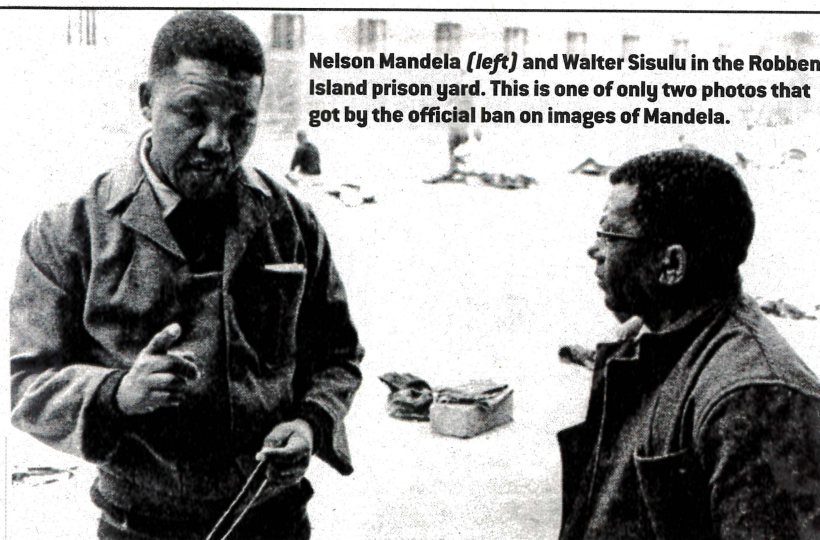
Narrator C: He and other ANC leaders plan a nationwide Day of Mourning and stay-at-home strike.

Narrator D: On March 28, 1960, hundreds of thousands of South

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This 1953 sign reflects the often-brutal enforcement of apartheid restrictions.



Nelson Mandela (left) and Walter Sisulu in the Robben Island prison yard. This is one of only two photos that got by the official ban on images of Mandela.

Africans participate in the strike. Mandela and other ANC members lead protest rallies. Two days later, at 1:30 a.m., police pound on the Mandelas' door.

Police officer (*storming in*):

Mandela, you're coming with us!

Winnie: Where are you taking my husband? I demand to know!

Police officer: Shut your mouth, woman. It's no business of yours.

Narrator E: Mandela says nothing as the police drag him away. He is periodically arrested and jailed.

SCENE 3

Narrator A: The government bans the ANC, making it a crime to take part in its activities. Mandela goes into hiding but keeps doing ANC work. He goes from town to town, using false names and disguises, to meet with other anti-apartheid activists. But in August 1962, after two years on the run, Mandela is finally caught and imprisoned.

Narrator B: In July 1963, the police catch many of Mandela's ANC allies. Mandela is allowed to meet with them and their lawyer at a prison in Pretoria.

Bram Fischer: The authorities found weapons and papers at the farm where you were hiding out.

They have enough evidence to charge all 11 of you with **sabotage**, including acts of violence against the government.

Walter Sisulu: Their laws gave us no choice but to fight back!

Ahmed Kathrada: Even so, we attacked property, not people.

Fischer: Nelson, the authorities know you helped plan the attacks, so you'll be tried too.

Mandela: I've been beaten, put in isolation, and forced to work naked breaking rocks under a hot sun. They can't do any worse to me.

Narrator C: By the time the trial

begins in October 1963, Mandela has become a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement, so the trial gets worldwide attention. Outside the courtroom, crowds of protesters shout "Free Mandela!"

Narrator D: On April 20, 1964, Mandela makes a long statement to the judge and jury. After explaining why he opposes apartheid, he ends with these words:

Mandela: I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realized. But if it need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Narrator E: Mandela and seven of his co-defendants are found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

SCENE 4

Narrator A: By January 1985, Mandela has been in prison nearly



23 years. Much of that time, he's been at Robben Island, a harsh, isolated high-security prison off the coast of Cape Town [see map].

Narrator B: But the fight against apartheid has continued. Protests have been growing worldwide as well as inside South Africa. President Botha is feeling the pressure.

P. W. Botha (to an aide): Strikes, rallies, riots! South Africa is being torn apart. We must do something.

Narrator C: A few days later, the prison warden calls Mandela to a secret meeting. Afterward . . .

Mandela: Botha has offered to release us—on one condition. We'd have to swear to reject violence as political protest.

Kathrada: We never wanted violence, but apartheid must be fought in every way possible.

Sisulu: If we accept Botha's offer, it will make us look weak.

Mandela: That's what he wants. We must reject his offer. But he's already made a speech saying that he's willing to free us. People have to hear our side somehow!

Narrator D: On February 10, 1985, Zindzi Mandela stands before a huge crowd in a stadium in the black township of Soweto. Only 2 when her father was jailed, she's now 24. She reads a message that Mandela was able to get smuggled out of the prison.

Zindzi Mandela: My father says, "I cherish my own freedom dearly, but I care even more for yours. I cannot and will not make deals with this government at a time when I and you, the people, are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I will return!"

Narrator E: The crowd cheers. They know that Mandela is still fighting for their rights.



Fists raised in triumph, Nelson and Winnie Mandela walk in Cape Town on the day of his release from prison in 1990.

SCENE 5

Narrator A: In 1989, F.W. de Klerk becomes president.

Anders Kruger: International corporations refuse to trade with us. Athletes and entertainers won't come here. The United Nations and world leaders condemn us.

F. W. de Klerk: And here at home, nothing but protests and rebellion. We have to end apartheid! It's the only way to save our country.

Narrator B: De Klerk meets secretly with Mandela. He promises reforms and keeps his word. Whites-only signs come down, and most apartheid restrictions are **abolished**.

Then, on February 2, 1990, de Klerk speaks before the parliament.

De Klerk: All political parties will be unbanned, and Mr. Mandela will be released—with no conditions.

Narrator C: On February 11, 1990—after 27 years in prison—Nelson Mandela is a free man. As he walks the streets of Cape Town, huge crowds roar in celebration.

He stops to address the crowd
Mandela: Friends, comrades, and fellow South Africans! I greet you in the name of peace, democracy,

and freedom for all. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands. Our march to freedom is irreversible!

EPILOGUE

Narrator D: In 1993, Mandela and de Klerk were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in ending apartheid in South Africa.

Then on April 27, 1994, South Africa held its first multiracial national election. On May 10, Nelson Mandela was sworn in as his country's first black president.

Narrator E: It was a difficult task to peacefully bring 36 million nonwhites into a system that had excluded them for generations, while still protecting the rights and safety of 6 million whites. But Mandela managed just that.

Narrator A: Mandela left office in 1999 and devoted the rest of his life to humanitarian work. South Africans now celebrate April 27—the anniversary of his election—as Freedom Day, a national holiday.

—Kathy Wilmore