

The Price Glossary

Key: AM=Arthur Miller, NY=New York, NYC=NY City, TTGD= The Great Depression, UK=United Kingdom, US=United States, WWI=World War I, WWII=World War II

ACT II

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“M.I.T. ... full scholarship ... Honors Program”: Victor’s son Richard is a brainiac. Seriously. MIT is notoriously difficult to get into and always has been. It is consistently named among the top ten most selective colleges and universities. A full scholarship? AND the Honors Program? Major.

Although I couldn’t find if it was the case in the 1960s, MIT’s scholarships are need-based and not merit- or athletic-based, although really, the merit is a given. My sense is that it would have been the same then, as MIT has maintained the collaborative, entrepreneurial, and egalitarian culture it established since it was incorporated.

MIT is the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a private research university in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Founded in 1861 in response to the increasing industrialization of the United States, MIT adopted a European polytechnic university model and stressed laboratory instruction in applied science and engineering.

MIT has five schools and one college, containing a total of 32 departments. It’s traditionally known for its research and education in the physical sciences and engineering, and more recently in biology, economics, linguistics, and management as well.

MIT is listed among the world's top universities. As of 2014, 81 Nobel laureates, 52 National Medal of Science recipients, 45 Rhodes Scholars, 38 MacArthur Fellows, 34 astronauts, and 2 Fields Medalists have been affiliated with MIT. The sum total of revenues from MIT alumni-founded companies would make it the eleventh-largest economy in the world.

Honors Programs are merit-based, which is why MIT doesn’t have them. The MIT culture, with its small classes, low student-to-teacher ratios, and emphasis on independent learning and co-curricular activities, already includes most of the aspects of an Honors Program; missing is the competitive nature of maintaining Honors status. Similarly, MIT has no valedictorians at graduation, and gives very little credit for legacies. These factors are all part of its unique character and environment.

Speaking of admission, Richard Franz’s application would certainly be judged on stellar grades, high test scores and notable extra-curricular activities, but perfect

numbers are not an MIT focus. They are interested in the entirety of the person, and that they have an abiding passion for something, which doesn't have to be science-based. Extra-curricular activities don't have to include earning a national medal in engineering or science, or publishing a book, though it's not out of the ordinary. MIT admissions criteria favor someone who excels at science and engineering, but pursues something beyond that realm. For example, a friend who graduated from MIT was a very accomplished pianist and, while a student there, gave classical concerts in the area with a group of other MIT musicians.

"The *Times* gave her quite a spread last fall": Walter is speaking of the *New York Times* newspaper here, and its coverage of his daughter, who he says is a designer. The spread he mentions would probably in the *Sunday Magazine* or the "Food Fashions Family Furnishings" section, which was the "women's pages" of the *New York Times* until 1976, running on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

To be profiled in the *New York Times* both then and now would be quite an honor and would provide quite a boon to one's business. Jean is likely a fashion designer: Walter talks about her "making something new out of the material" of the gown that once belonged to his mother. The *New York Times* is a known tastemaker, and a spread of her designs would bring her much notice in her field.

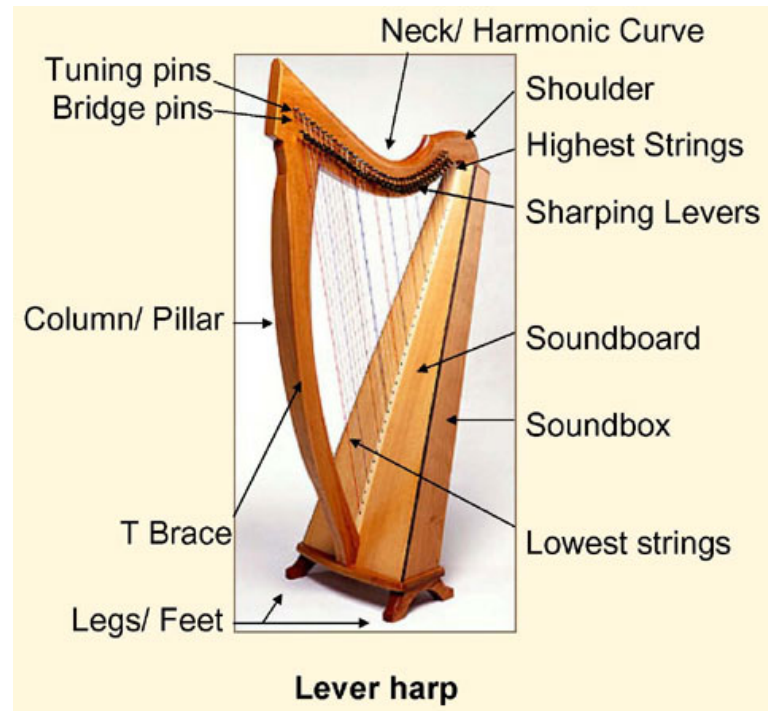
I searched the *NY Times* archives for such a spread, only to discover that women designers, although gaining ground, did not enjoy the prominence – and the accompanying coverage – of male fashion designers. I did, however, find an article entitled "Garment Jungle Holds Few Fears for Intrepid Young Designers" in the "Food Fashions Family Furnishings" section on Saturday, July 22, 1967. (See below.) The three designers profiled were less than 32 years old. Walter could easily have had a daughter that age: he is older than Victor and most people at that time had their children in their 20s. Victor didn't; Richard is in college, which means he would have been born when Victor was at least 30.



If you're interested, a larger, readable PDF version of the article can be found here:
<http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/07/22/issue.html>

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Sounding board: Solomon says that the sounding board on the harp is cracked. Also called a soundboard, the sounding board is a thin, resonant plate of wood forming part of a musical instrument, placed to enhance the power and quality of the tone. On a harp, it's a slanted, upright board to which the strings are attached per the illustration below.



Parts of a Lever Harp, with the soundboard in the same position as a Pedal Harp

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A gown elaborately embroidered in gold: on the next page is a photo of an evening dress from the Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection, designed by the House of Worth (French, 1858–1956), dated 1925, and made of silk, beads and metallic thread.

There were many gowns from that era and fitting the description to choose from. I picked this one because I felt it was appropriate for the senior Mrs. Franz to wear at her son, Walter's, wedding. It has an understated elegance that won't upstage the bride, but at the same time, perfectly suits a mother of the groom.

Although the gown itself is not elaborate – it has the simple lines characteristic of the 1920s – the embroidery is. Despite its extravagance, the embroidery is still tastefully exquisite. Victor tells Solomon on page 22 that his parents may have bought their bed in Europe – “They used to travel a good deal” – so it would stand to

reason that his mother's dress could be from Paris. French couture was at the forefront of fashion then, and a dress by an esteemed French designer would show the wearer's impeccable taste. The cut and drape of the dress show the unmistakable influence of Coco Chanel, who was in her heyday at the time. The lavish fabric and trimming, as well as attention to fit, are characteristics of Charles Worth's designs and those of his successors.



House of Worth gold embroidered evening dress, circa 1925

My final reason for choosing this particular dress has to do with Walter's reaction to the dress Solomon pulls from the armoire. He exclaims, "Isn't that beautiful!" and remembers that his mother wore it at his wedding. The beauty of this memorable dress has weathered the test of time, and therefore would provoke a response like Walter's no matter the era.

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"You're not divorced, are you?": Victor asks Walter this question. In 1968, divorce was becoming more common, but those who married when Walter, and even Victor did, still considered it socially taboo. Victor married sometime after his father lost

his fortune and before Richard was born, which would have been somewhere around 1949. His brother married while his mother was still alive; she died in 1936.

In 1940, there were 1,595,879 marriages and 264,000 divorces in the US. In 1950, the rate increased somewhat, with 1,667,231 marriages and 385,144 divorces. By 1970, the divorce rate was beginning to climb, and by 1980, the 1940 rate had doubled, with 2,406,708 marriages and 1,182,000 divorces.

1949 was also the year my parents married, and to this day, my father considers divorce a moral and personal failure, even though five of eight of us are divorced and my brother was separated when he died.

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“Lovely Indian bracelets ... from Bombay: Bombay, which has been known since 1995 as Mumbai, is the capital city of the Indian state of Maharashtra. It is, and has been for some time, the most populous city in India, the second most populous metropolitan area in India, and the ninth most populous agglomeration in the world, with an estimated city population of 18.4 million and metropolitan area population of 20.7 million as of 2011. It is also the wealthiest city in India.

Mumbai, known as Bombay at the time of the play, had – and still has – a thriving jewelry trade, the main center of which is the Zaveri Bazaar. Jewelry-making is a skill that has been handed down through generations in families that operate large, thriving businesses as well as smaller shops in the district.

Esther would be understandably surprised if Walter traveled to Bombay, as India wasn't a destination for most American tourists in those days. An exception was the beaches of Goa, Bombay's neighbor along the Malabar Coast. Goa became a mecca in the sixties for hippies trailing after the Beatles, who had discovered India, Eastern mysticism, Ravi Shankar and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Hippies also influenced fashion at that time, and they borrowed their styles from traditional clothing in India. The flowing caftans and tunic tops worn over floor-length culottes by both men and women resembled the Shalwar Kameez, a tunic and loose pants set worn to this day – also by both men and women – in India and other countries in South Asia. Bracelets and bangles from Bombay, worn in multiples up and down the arms and around the ankles, found their way into the fashion mainstream. They could be of both of the less expensive wooden and bone variety, or beautifully hand-crafted of precious metals and stones.

Since Walter has “a whole boxful”, his bangles are likely not made with precious metals and stones. Chances are that the grateful businessman's gift is more of the costume jewelry variety pictured below, which is adorned with characteristic Indian charms and bells and fastened with the pin/hinge clasp commonly seen on this type of Indian bracelet.



Indian Bangles from the 1960s

Gallstones: Gallstones are hardened deposits of digestive fluid that can form in the gallbladder, a small, pear-shaped organ on the right side of the abdomen, just beneath the liver. The gallbladder holds a digestive fluid called bile that's released into your small intestine.

Gallstones range in size from as small as a grain of sand to as large as a golf ball. Some people develop just one gallstone, while others develop many gallstones at the same time.

If a gallstone lodges in a duct and causes a blockage, signs and symptoms may result, including sudden and rapidly intensifying pain in the abdomen, between the shoulder blades, and in the right shoulder. Gallstone pain may last several minutes to a few hours. People who experience symptoms from their gallstones usually require surgery.

Gallstones may cause no signs or symptoms and typically don't need treatment.

Having gallstones, or cholelithiasis, is a very common problem in the US. Cholelithiasis is more common in women, Native Americans, Hispanics, people over age 40, and people who are overweight. Gallstones can also be genetic.

Two of the risk factors for gallstones include overweight and eating a diet rich in fat and cholesterol and without enough fiber. Before 1976 and the advent of the low-fat and fat-free craze, many privileged US citizens ate that way, causing cholelithiasis to be identified as a wealthy person's disease.



Amy Schumer

Ha! Did you think you were getting a picture of gallstones here? *Gross!*

Spitzer and Fox; Bert Fox: Walter and Solomon identify them as appraisers, but I was unable to turn up any verification that they were real people. However, I did find an interesting story while researching the phrase “Spitzer and Fox”. Eliot Spitzer, who notoriously resigned as NY Governor in March 2008 amid a prostitution scandal, would use the name George Fox, one of his campaign donors, as an alias during his trysts with prostitutes.

Appraisers’ Association: There is an actual Appraisers Association! It was established in 1949, and is the premier national association of personal property appraisers who focus on fine and decorative arts.

Its website:

<http://www.appraisersassociation.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&pageId=781> touts it as “associated with the highest level of professionalism” and has published its Code of Ethics:

All Members of the Appraisers Association are required to adhere to a strict “Code of Ethics” which ensures unparalleled standards of ethics, conduct and professionalism. The code requires the appraiser to serve the public interest as follows:

- provide independent valuation outside of third party influences
- retain no outside interest in the subject property other than an accurate and professional value
- contract for appraisal work only within the areas of their professional expertise
- reach objective value conclusions by considering all factors in appraisal standards

- use the highest standards of connoisseurship in examining and documenting property
- professional remuneration is independent of the value of the subject property

It is conceivable that Solomon did what he claims and “made it all ethical”. He tells Victor on page 20 of the text that he is “62 years in the business”. 89 now, he would have started in 1941 when he was 27. After eight years of working in the business when it was a “**jungle**” (see below), he says he “**made it all ethical**”, which could easily have been when the Association came together and developed its Code of Ethics.

“jungle”: The wild nature of a jungle has generated two definitions that could apply here. “Jungle” can be a colloquial term for something made up of many confused elements; a bewildering complex or maze. It can also be a place or situation in which people engage in ruthless competition or in a struggle for survival; a place where people behave ruthlessly, unconstrained by law or morality. Though the former is certainly applicable, the latter is more in keeping with Solomon’s description, that during his tenure as President of the Appraisers’ Association, he “made it all ethical”. On page 44 of the text, he goes on to say that he “put in all the rates, what we charge, you know – I made it a profession, like doctors, lawyers – used to be it was a regular **snakepit**”. (See definition for snakepit below.)

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snakepit: an actual pit filled with snakes, snakepit has come to mean a place of horror and confusion, disorder and chaos. The word, and the notion, have made a mark on Western culture in music, arts and literature: it is found in the names of songs, books, a film and a video game.

As we read in the examples of “rat races” in the Bible on page 48 of this glossary, the serpent, or snake, is given the human qualities of treachery and deceit. Solomon is saying that appraisers were once a group of untrustworthy and dishonest people who behaved ruthlessly and lawlessly until a set of standards for ethical behavior and fair business practices were established – by *him*!

Joe Brody, Paul Cavallo, Morris White: as with Spitzer and Fox, these aren’t actual appraisers in real life, but in the play, they’re professionals who are well enough known to give Solomon status and credibility through his association with them.

“Darling, why don’t you leave it to the boys?”: Solomon says this to Esther. He also shouts at her on page 64. It kinda shows why three women divorced him, doesn’t it?

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Three thousand dollars: this amount in 1968 would be worth \$20,779.82 today

Thirty-five hundred dollars: this amount in 1968 would be worth \$24,243.12 today

Five thousand, ten thousand: these amounts in 1968 would be worth, respectively, \$34,633.03 and \$69,266.07 today

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Louise Seize: Solomon is talking about Louis XVI style, which is also spelled Louis Seize, and sometimes seen as Louise-seize. (The French word “seize” means sixteen.) It refers to a visual arts style produced in France during the reign (1774–92) of Louis XVI, which was actually both a last phase of Rococo and a first phase of Neoclassicism.

Since Solomon is a furniture appraiser, the rest of this definition, which is from FurnitureStyles.net, a source of a lot of the furniture styles information in this glossary, will focus on the furniture style and not the style of arts, architecture and décor of that period.

In Louis Seize furniture there is an emphasis on straight lines and right angles, projecting a seriousness and logical design that contrasts sharply with the curves of the Rococo, the prior style. Furniture became restrained in its form and decoration, with a proliferation of fluted columns, carved friezes, oak and laurel leaf, wreaths, the Greek band, and other various neo-classical attempts to imitate the furniture and architecture of the ancient Romans and Greeks.



Louise-Seize Side Table of oak, pine and walnut, veneered with African ebony, tortoiseshell and stained wood, with gilt-bronze mounts

The Louis XVI neo-classical style is also often associated with the "Etruscan" style, which was characterized by a fairly complex mixing in of sculpture-like ornamentation and metal and ceramic mounts. After about 1770, simpler furniture, which was based on classical architectural orders from ancient architecture, became popular.

Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI's spouse, is credited for the existence of the neo-classical style in furniture design.



Marie Antoinette's bedroom at the Little Trianon, Versailles.

She oversaw the design and construction of much of the furnishings of her apartment at Versailles; a representative picture is above.

Late 18th century furniture makers in France included Jean Henri Riesener, Jean Guillaume Beneman, Jean Henri Martin Carlin, and Adam Weisweiler.



Louis XVI Sofa

Biedermeier: the Biedermeier (the correct spelling) period refers to an era in Central Europe between 1815 and 1848 during which the growing middle class brought a “common sense” spin to the arts. The period began during the time of the Congress of Vienna at the end of the Napoleonic Wars and ended with the onset of the European revolutions in 1848. Although the term itself is a historical reference, it is predominantly used to denote the artistic styles that flourished in literature,

music, the visual arts and interior design.

From the 1820s to the 1840s, the Biedermeier type of furniture design was quite popular, especially among the middle class in Germany and Austria.

FurnitureStyle.net calls the style “a take on French Empire furniture, but modified to incorporate local German traditions, particularly old peasant furniture. Biedermeier style is simple and elegant, consisting of clean, smooth lines, and utilizing light color wood, sometimes with painted black highlights. Veneered cherry, walnut, ash and birch are the predominant woods used, most of them coming from German farm and orchard lands.

Biedermeier furniture craftsman eschewed most forms of ornament, preferring simplicity. When there is ornament such as carving there is little detail in the work, although by around 1830 more detailed carving became prevalent. The main decorative motifs employed by Biedermeier era craftsmen included simple forms of swans, sphinx, dolphins, lion paws, acanthus, lyres, and garlands.”



Biedermeier Chair

Many scholars have suggested that the Biedermeier style was an insular and conservative one, and that it emphasized domestic comfort and security in an attempt to erase the world outside, which was engulfed in conflict in the age of Napoleon. Sounds like the “Calgon take me away” of furniture style.



Biedermeier Sleigh Bed

Borsolino: Borsalino is the name of a hat company known particularly for its fedoras. Established in 1857, Borsalino produces felt from Belgian rabbit fur at its factory in Alessandria, Italy.



A Borsolino Belgian lapin fur felt velour wide-brim hat

Giuseppe Borsalino (1834-1900), the company's founder, is said to have visited hat makers in Italy and France to learn the trade, and then set up the first artisan workshop for the production of felt hats.

When Giuseppe Borsalino died, his son, Teresio Borsalino, succeeded him in the family business. The company's singular success as a hat maker lasted until the 1940s, when the hat business declined.

The company currently produces a wide variety of products such as hats, ties, clothing, watches, perfumes and even old-fashioned bicycles, with the intent of retaining all the charm and class from the last century's fashion.

Borsalino fedora hats are very popular among Orthodox Lithuanian Jewish Males. Hm. Solomon married at 19 in Lithuania. I wonder if he adopted the Fedora then?

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“He’s fantastic!”: In this context, Esther means that Solomon is overly imaginative or fanciful to the degree of being remote from reality. In popular informal use the word has come to mean extraordinarily good, sensational, outstanding, and/or superb but that’s not the application here. Other words like “fantastic” that have since changed meaning and are now (over-) used as non-specific superlatives are “amazing” and “incredible”.

“ ... he’s got the money in his hand, so the deal is concluded”: In this instance and a bit later with “He’s got the money; I know the law!”, Solomon is referring to the terms of a binding contract. A contract is an agreement between two parties that creates an obligation to perform (or not perform) a particular duty. Solomon’s and Victor’s transaction is a legally enforceable contract, as it satisfies specific requirements, which are:

- an offer. Solomon offers Victor \$1,100 for everything (page 35 of the text)
- an acceptance. Victor agrees (page 36 of the text)
- consideration, which means that both parties must give something of value and receive something of value. It must be mutual. Here the value received and given is the money and the furniture.
- mutual assent, or a "meeting of the minds". The law requires the parties to demonstrate mutual assent to the contracts' terms. There is an actual physical demonstration of mutual assent in this case, as Solomon points out when he says “He’s got the money”.

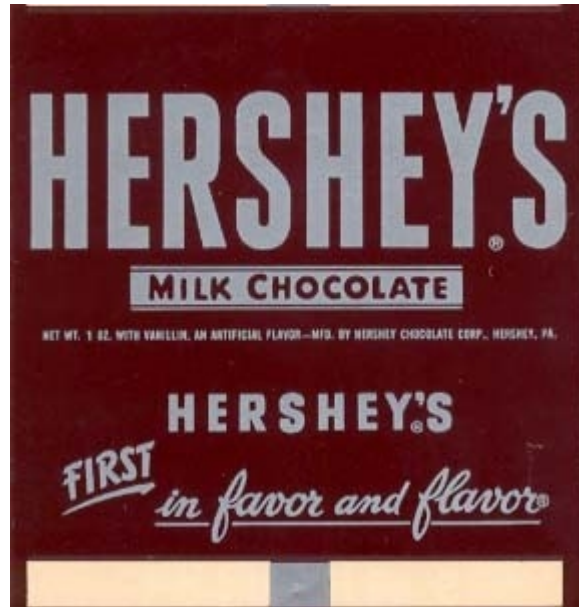
Walter objects to the sale price, but the market value of the consideration is, for the most part, irrelevant from a legal perspective. The law is concerned with whether the parties desired and assented to the contractual arrangement, not whether the exchange represented a fair market bargain.

There is a grey area in that Walter should have been a party to the contract as half owner, as he tells Solomon. Victor told Solomon on page 23 of the text that he would get a statement for him from his brother, in which he’d authorize the deal. Solomon really shouldn’t have proceeded without the written authorization from Walter, who was not present for the exchange. However, it could be argued that he had a reasonable expectation based on Victor’s promise, and the contract might stand. Like I said, grey area. Walter’s legal recourse would then be to sue his own brother. If that were to happen – and I can’t imagine it would in this case – it would make a self-fulfilling prophecy of what Solomon says on page 23 of the text: “five hundred dollars they’ll [the average family] pay a lawyer to fight over a bookcase it’s worth fifty cents”.

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Hershey’s: this is the ubiquitous Hershey’s milk chocolate bar, commonly called the Hershey’s bar, named after its inventor, Milton Hershey, who developed the process

to mass-produce it. It was first sold in 1900.



Hershey's Milk Chocolate bar wrapper, circa 1951-1968

Solomon is likely a diabetic or suffers from low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia. He eats a hard-boiled egg on page 30 of the text that he retrieves from his portfolio, telling Victor, “I’m not supposed to get too hungry”. Here in the text, he directs Walter to the orange and Hershey’s bar that are also in his portfolio. Diabetics and people with hypoglycemia use these specific foods to spike a jump in plunging blood sugar levels, as their glycemic indexes are high. The glycemic index (GI) is a number associated with a particular food item that indicates the food's effect on a person's blood glucose/blood sugar level. Solomon’s level is low, whether from diabetes, pre-diabetes, hypoglycemia or something else, and he carries the food items with him that will remedy that.

Portfolio: I should have already included this, as the word first occurs in Act I. It’s defined as a large, thin, flat case for loose sheets of paper such as drawings or maps.



a leather portfolio

The word “briefcase” is sometimes substituted for portfolio, but it isn’t accurate because a briefcase, as the name implies, is a case: smaller and not as narrow as a portfolio. The name “briefcase” comes from the briefs that lawyers carry in it to the courtroom.

Artists, designers, architects and other professionals carry portfolios for their larger-scale designs. Besides his hard-boiled egg, Hershey’s bar and orange, Solomon would likely carry photos or illustrations of furniture, auction catalogues, or other prints and papers related to the work he does.

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“I’ve got twenty-eight years to shake off my back”: Victor is talking about the length of time that has passed since he asked Walter for \$500 to finish school. When Walter turned him down, he joined the police force (page 65 of the text). He’s been with them for 28 years, so his animosity with Walter has lasted that long, too, and he hasn’t been able to “shake it off his back”, or get over it and move on.

Five-fifty: the value of \$550 in 1968 would now be \$3,809.63

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Charitable contribution: Since the Revenue Act of 1917, which introduced individual income tax deduction for charitable donations, the IRS, with the intent to encourage charitable giving, has allowed a tax credit for donations to certified tax-exempt organizations.

Under the Revenue Act of 1964, individuals could deduct contributions made to public charities of up to 30 percent of their adjusted gross income. This changed with the Tax Reform Act of 1969 (TRA69), which enacted new regulations that increased the maximum deduction limitation for cash and ordinary income contributions to 50 percent for public charities and operating foundations.

“My tax rate is much higher than yours ... I pay around fifty percent tax”: To qualify for the 50% tax bracket in 1968, Walter would have had to be making over \$44,000 a year or more, less deductions. In 2015, it would be the equivalent of \$304,770.73. That’s already high, but it’s probably significantly less than he was making before his nervous break, when he owned three nursing homes and invested in the stock market, which he talks about on page 56 of the text.

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Six thousand dollars: that amount is equivalent to \$41,559.64 today

Appraisal fee–fifty, sixty bucks: the equivalent value today is \$346.33–\$415.59

“Call it a gift ... you could list it as such. It’s allowed”: What Walter is telling Victor is that he won’t be taxed on the amount if he lists it on his tax return as a gift. According to Wikipedia, when a taxable gift in the form of cash, stocks, real estate, or

other tangible or intangible property is made, the tax is usually imposed on the donor, or the giver. However, at that time the taxable limit, or exclusion, was higher than the “gift” in this case, so Walter would not be taxed.

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“French gauntlets ... She brought them from Paris. Gorgeously embroidered”: described in the stage directions later on the page as *“emblazoned gauntlets”*,

Several different styles of glove are known as gauntlets, particularly those with an extended, expanding cuff covering part of the forearm. Gauntlets exist in many forms, ranging from flexible fabric and leather gloves, to mail and fully articulated plate armor.

In the past, soldiers and knights wore gauntlets. It was considered an important piece of armor, since the hands and arms were particularly vulnerable in hand-to-hand combat. With the rise of easily reloadable and effective firearms, hand-to-hand combat fell into decline along with personal armor, including gauntlets.

Gauntlets are worn as armor today in contact sports like fencing, sword fighting reenactments, and falconry. They are also used in industry, where workers wear them for protection against sparks when welding or grinding metal, or when handling potentially harmful substances.

In current fashion, the lower cuff on gloves is known as a gauntlet, and gloves bearing them are called gauntlet gloves.

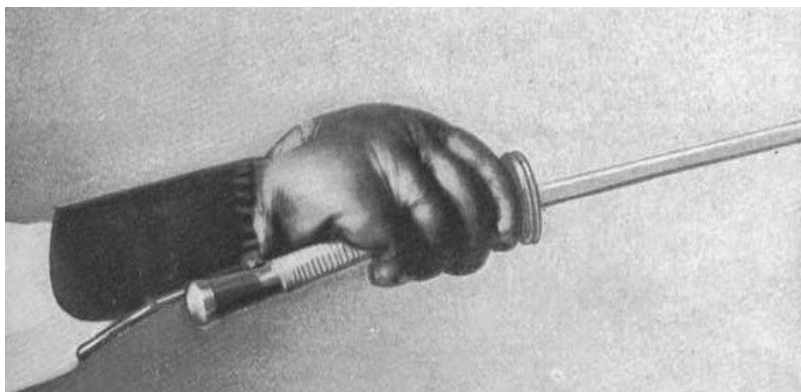
H.A. Colmore Dunne wrote an article, “Fencing Old and New as Typified by Angelo and Prevost” for the October 1894 issue of *Outing*, an Illustrated Monthly Magazine of sport travel and recreation that was published in the US in the late nineteenth century. In it, he compared fencing from the time of Domenico Angelo (1717-1802), a renown fencing master, to the period of the late nineteenth century. The segment on gloves, which is the most comprehensive I found, explained that they did not seem to be used until fencing became more of a sport or exercise. A glove with a gauntlet would be worn on only one hand, the hand handling the foil, and was attached to a sleeve.

Dunne provided guidelines for the fencing glove:

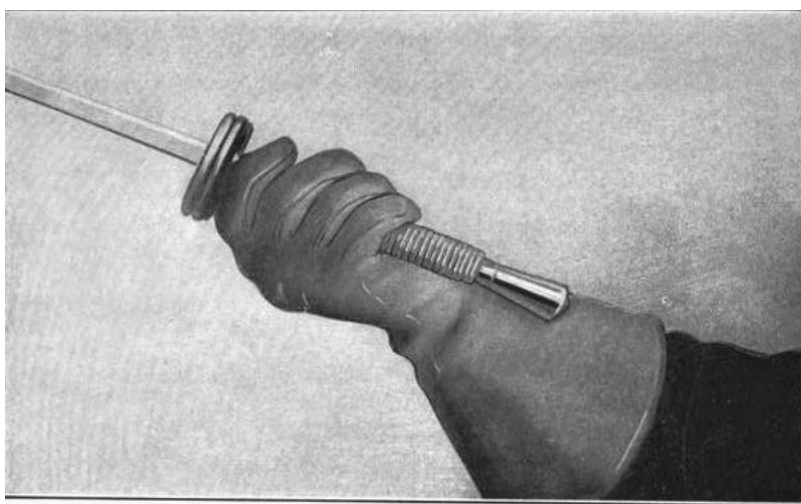
It should be just sufficiently padded to save the hand, but subject to that it should be light and flexible, so as to interfere as little as possible with the play of wrist and fingers. The padding should be properly distributed, so as to protect the parts most exposed, and particularly the tip of the thumb, which otherwise is apt to be jarred, the grasp of the foil being thereby impaired. The fingers of the glove should be well-shaped, following the configuration of the hand, so as to allow easy and independent movement. To secure ample space for the wrist, it is well to have a certain fullness at the

point where the hand joins the gauntlet. The palm should be roomy, so as to avoid cramping the thumb. If the hand is boxed up tightly in a stiff case, there is no chance of fencing neatly and lightly, as you must be sensitive to the slightest variations in the amount of pressure offered by your opponent to your blade, if you are to detect and anticipate any change in his tactics to which this pressure may be the prelude. This power of judging by the touch, which may be compared to the faculty of "hands" in horsemanship, is one of the most valuable qualities in fencing.

Two types are pictured below: the first one appears to be more of a training glove, thickly padded with a leather gauntlet. The bottom one is described as being made of a softer leather that enabled better manipulation for the fingers. My guess is that Victor's gloves were of the latter variety.



Padded Leather Gauntlet Training Glove, Senca, 1915



Padded Fencing Glove, Senca, 1915

The illustrations are ascribed to "Senca, 1915", Senca being the name of a famous French fencing family that emigrated to the US in 1872, establishing a fencing school, the "Salle d'Armes", in 1874 on Broadway near Forty-third St. in NY.

I searched in vain for a man's gauntlet that would have been obtained in Paris in 1929, "emblazoned" with "gorgeous embroidery" to fit Victor's the description. However, I was able to find photos of two different pair of gauntlets on the Metropolitan Museum of Art site.



circa 1680– 1710
leather, silk, metal



circa first quarter 18th century
silk and metal

As you see, they are not from the 1920s, but the style hasn't changed much, as evidenced by the pairs of women's gauntlet gloves from the 1840s and 1930s below:



1930s Silk Gloves
Kayser-Roth Glove Co., Inc., US



1840 Parisian White Kidskin Gauntlet Gloves
with silk floral embroidered embellishments

Christmas, 1929: Walter recalls that his mother gave the gauntlets to Victor, after purchasing them in Paris earlier that year. Victor would have been 11.

By Christmas 1929, the Franz family had moved themselves and their possessions into the attic of the apartment: on page 21 of the text, Victor tells Solomon “my father moved everything up here after the '29 crash. My uncles took over the house and they let him keep this floor”. The Stock Market Crash of 1929, which heralded the beginning of the 10-year Great Depression, began on October 24, 1929. On page 32 of the text, after Victor tells him about the fortune his father made, Solomon asks, “And from all this he could go so broke?”. Victor replies, “... Took five weeks. Less.” Little else besides the gauntlets, the gowns, the furniture and the instruments were left, but it doesn't seem to have kept the family from having a Christmas celebration.

Though it's not stated anywhere in the text, my understanding has been that the Franz family are Jewish. It is not unusual for Jews to celebrate Christmas, particularly those who migrated from European before the Holocaust.

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Galoshes: waterproof overshoes, typically made of rubber. They are slipped over shoes to keep them from getting muddy or wet, and also to keep the foot warm and dry.



Outside The Opera House, North Dakota, 1920s
the open galoshes (at left and right) were a teenage fad

Louis Pasteur: A French chemist and microbiologist, Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) discovered that microbes were responsible for souring alcohol and came up with the process of pasteurization, where bacteria is destroyed by heating beverages and then allowing them to cool. His work in germ theory also led him and his team to create vaccinations for anthrax and rabies.

Using Pasteur's name is Walter's way of saying that his mother regarded his brother's talent in science rather highly, or at least bragged about it in those terms to everyone!

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I broke down ... I was out of commission for nearly three years": Walter is describing a condition once called a nervous breakdown and now called a "nervous break." The term is used to describe a stressful situation in which someone becomes temporarily unable to function normally in day-to-day life. It's commonly understood to occur when life's demands become physically and emotionally overwhelming.

The term was frequently used in the past to cover a variety of mental disorders, but it's used less often today.

Nervous breakdown isn't an actual medical term, nor does it indicate a specific mental illness. However, that doesn't mean it's a normal or a healthy response to stress. A nervous breakdown may indicate an underlying mental health problem that needs attention, such as depression or anxiety.

Signs of a nervous breakdown vary from person to person and depend on the underlying cause. Exactly what constitutes a nervous breakdown also varies from one culture to another. Generally, it's understood to mean that a person is no longer able to function normally.

It takes courage to admit to a nervous breakdown, as Walter does, especially for a doctor who is expected to be in control at all times and under every circumstance. There was also a stigma about mental illness during those times. In 1972, presidential candidate George McGovern chose Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri as his running mate on the Democratic ticket. They didn't do background checks in those days; it was beneath a presidential nominee to ask a prospective candidate for vice-president about health issues or personal problems like alcoholism. Though it wasn't mandated then, it would be required for future elections in the wake of the damage its oversight cost McGovern's campaign.

It wasn't long before rumors started to circulate about Sen. Eagleton's "complicated" medical background. It soon surfaced that Eagleton had been hospitalized for depression and had undergone electroshock treatment in the 1960s.

Eagleton was honest and forthcoming to the media, telling them, "On three

occasions in my life, I have voluntarily gone into hospitals as a result of nervous exhaustion and fatigue. As a younger man, I must say that I drove myself too far, and I pushed myself terribly, terribly hard, long hours, day and night." McGovern stood by him.

The opposition, capitalizing on the public's fears at the height of the Cold War, questioned Eagleton's mental fitness to have his finger on the "red button" that could conceivably start global war. Despite their honest and forthright stance, Eagleton and McGovern were beleaguered by reporters and voters. Even their own party members and campaign staff clamored for Eagleton to step down, citing the potential risk to have him, as they say, "a heartbeat away" from the presidency. McGovern's poll ratings plummeted from 41 to 24 percent

McGovern met with several psychiatrists, including Eagleton's own doctors, who according to his autobiography, advised him that a recurrence of Eagleton's depression was possible and could indeed endanger the country should Eagleton become president. He asked Eagleton to step down, which he did graciously 18 days after the Democratic Convention made him a candidate. McGovern was seen as waffling, weak, and lacking in conviction for his perceived nonsupport of his running mate. The whole affair would prove disastrous for the McGovern campaign, which had started with such promise, mobilizing young voters, people of color and women with an anti-war platform that supported the Equal Rights Amendment and a guaranteed minimum income. McGovern lost the election to Richard Nixon, who defeated him by the widest margin of victory in the popular vote in presidential history.

P. 57

"You get to see the terror – not the screaming kind, but the slow, daily fear you call ambition, and cautiousness and piling up the money": Reading this, I was reminded of Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance*, which I saw in its 1996 Broadway revival. Edward Albee premiered his play in 1966, around the time AM wrote *The Price*. Albee's play explores the unnamed but persistent "terror" that its characters experience, acknowledge or deny, either actively or passively. Like Walter, they recognize their alienation, the compromises that they have engineered, and how they've corrupted their values. Ultimately, though, Albee's characters fail, as does Walter, to elevate their own sense of guilt above the need for compassion. Tobias, a character in *A Delicate Balance*, says that in the light of day, "the insight [he has gained through self-examination] won't be worth a damn". In my opinion, this is true for Walter at the end of the play.

"For the Administrative side. Kind of liaison between the scientists and the board": Walter was ahead of his time in recognizing an issue that our tech/science companies wouldn't come to address for another twenty-plus years: that gearheads and governance rarely speak the same language. He was smart to want Victor for the job, as he had developed the ability to read people, which would come into play when trying to discern what the disparate groups might need from each other.

P. 61

Fantastic: Victor's use here of the adjective is the same as Esther's on page 47 of the text, as defined on page 63 of this glossary.

P. 62

"You sent him five dollars every month": value of five dollars in 1936, when Walter began to send it to support his father, is comparable to \$34.63 today.

"What did a hundred and fifty million other people do in 1936?": I haven't been able to verify this number. Figures I've found put it that in 1932, an estimated 30 million people were unemployed around the world.

P. 63

"It's all over the dam": Victor tells this to Walter to explain why he doesn't want to get into a discussion about the past. "Water over the dam" or "all over the dam", as Victor says, is also said "water under the bridge". It refers to something that is over and done with, especially an unfortunate occurrence, metaphorically alluding to water that has flowed over a spillway or under a bridge and thus is gone forever. "Water over the dam" was first recorded in 1797; "water under the bridge" dates from the late 1800s.

P. 64

"You're both fantastic ... You're incredible, the both of you": Esther is using the words the same way she did on page 47 of the text. "Fantastic" is defined on page 63 of the glossary; "incredible" means impossible to believe. Like "fantastic", "incredible" has come to mean extraordinarily good, sensational, outstanding, and/or superb, but that's current use and not how it's applied here.

P. 65

The five hundred needed to get his degree: the value of \$500 at that time is now \$3,463.30

Rye: If Walter had a house in Rye, he was more than "well-established", as Victor says. He was already rather wealthy. The city is very exclusive and very tony, and always has been. Rye is one most expensive places to live in the US; the average cost now of a house is \$1,265,020 and the property taxes are very high. You get what you pay for: it is an ideal place to live with a low population and a location on the Long Island Sound. It's safe, it's beautiful, there's a great deal of green space, and the streets are lined with stunning homes and expansive lawns.

Rye is a city in Westchester County, NY, that abuts the aforementioned Long Island Sound. It is not the same as the town of Rye, which is larger than the city. Rye City, formerly the village of Rye, was part of the town until it received its charter as a city in 1942.

Rye is known for its famous amusement attraction, Rye Playland, which was

featured in the movie *Big* as the place where Zoltar, the Fortune Teller, changed Tom Hanks's character into a grown-up. Glenn Close and Ellen Latzen rode the roller coaster there in the 1980s thriller, *Fatal Attraction*.



A Rye estate on the Long Island Sound

In the television series, *Mad Men*, Betty divorces Don Draper and marries Henry Francis. They move to a large Victorian estate in Rye, New York.

P. 69

“Take a walk in the street with your eyes open, kid.”: If she had, Esther would have seen the rampant graffiti, the filthy sidewalks, and the crime on the streets and subways, which was considered the most dangerous mass transit on the planet.



NYC transit cops in the 1960s, ready to start the night shift

Rates of violent crime had nearly doubled under Mayor Robert F. Wagner, who was NYC's mayor from 1954-1965. They continued to rise under Mayor John Lindsay's term from 1966-73.

Lindsay's term also saw strikes that crippled the city, among them the transit strike in 1966 and the garbage strike in 1968, which filled the sidewalks with trash. During its nine-day duration, the quality of life for New Yorkers plummeted. Mounds of garbage caught fire, and strong winds whirled the filth through the streets. That same year, the United Federation of Teachers went on strike over the firings of several teachers in a school in Ocean Hill and Brownsville. With the schools shut down, the police engaged in a slowdown, firefighters threatening job actions, the city choked with garbage, and racial and religious tensions breaking to the surface, Lindsay later called the last six months of 1968 "the worst of my public life." (*NY Times*, December 21, 2000)



Anderson Ave. during the 1968 garbage strike

During the '60s, a gradual economic and social decay set in and NY teetered on the edge of bankruptcy. There were jolting economic shocks as the postwar prosperity came to an end with many factories and entire industries shutting down. Labor unions, especially in teaching, transit, sanitation and construction, became fractured over major strikes and internal racial tensions.

On November 9, 1965, NY endured a widespread power blackout along with much of eastern North America, costing the city thousands in extra protection and lost revenue.

The postwar population shift to the suburbs resulted in the decline of textile manufacturing and other traditional industries in New York, most of which also operated in extremely outdated facilities. With the arrival of container shipping, that industry shifted to New Jersey where there was more room for it. Blue-collar

neighborhoods began to deteriorate and become centers of drugs and crime. Strip clubs and other adult businesses started filling Times Square in the late '60s.

The city was a national center of protest movements that concerned civil rights for black citizens, opposition to the Vietnam War, and the newly emerging feminist and gay movements. There was a population transition with hundreds of thousands of blacks and Puerto Ricans moving in, and an exodus of whites to the suburbs.

Victor and his colleagues were indeed “a goddamn army holding this city down”.

“If you got a hook in your mouth, don’t try to stick it into mine”: Victor is telling Walter that if he is entangled in a lie like a fish caught on a hook, he shouldn’t try to drag him by the same hook into the lie.

four thousand dollars: \$4,000 in 1936 was worth \$9,826.08 in 1968. It would be worth \$68,061.44 today. If Walter managed to get a decent return on its investment, it could conceivably provide a subsistence income for his father once his Automat cashier and telegram delivery jobs (see page 32 of the text), as well as his and Victor’s contributions were factored in. He also didn’t have to pay rent: on page 21 of the text, Victor tells Solomon “my father moved everything up here after the '29 crash. My uncles took over the house and they let him keep this floor”.

P. 73

Bryant Park behind the Public Library ... The grass was covered with men. Like a big, open-air flop house. And not bums – some of them had shined shoes and good hats, busted businessmen, lawyers, skilled mechanics. Which I’d seen a hundred times: The City University of NY traced the history of Bryant Park during TGD: “Bryant Park was not immune to the negative effects of the Great



Breadline in NYC’s Bryant Park during TGD. Note the “shined shoes and good hats”

Depression. Because of the poor economic condition of the city, there was little money to support the upkeep of the park. Furthermore, it was located ‘in the shadow of the noisy, clanky, and utterly barbarous Sixth Avenue El train...[and] newsstands that look like the shacks of squatters’ (*Bryant Park Blog: ‘20th Anniversary: Bryant Park in the 1930’s’*).

One of the iconic images of Bryant Park during this era is one of New Yorkers lining up through the park, demonstrative of the severity of the poor economic status of New Yorkers during the Depression.”



Bryant Park food line during TGD

It’s not difficult to see how deeply affected the young Victor would have been when confronted by these tragic scenes.