

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 I

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(Note: throughout this document, the page number headings refer to pages in the Dramatists edition of the script)

Whitewash: Whitewash is an inexpensive kind of paint, usually white but sometimes colored, which is made from slaked lime. Various other additives can also be used. It is sometimes called “whiting” and also known as calcimine, kalsomine and calsomine.

Whitewash has many applications, both literally and figuratively, but in this usage, it is an inexpensive paint, hastily applied to mark a building for demolition (see next definition). Described as “new”, it has been recently done, likely by an unskilled worker and not a professional painter.

An expression, "Too proud to whitewash and too poor to paint", implies that whitewash is a cheap imitation of "real" paint.

Buildings about to be demolished: The building about to be demolished is identified as a Manhattan brownstone on page 6 of the play. (See definition of Manhattan brownstone on page 16 of this glossary.)

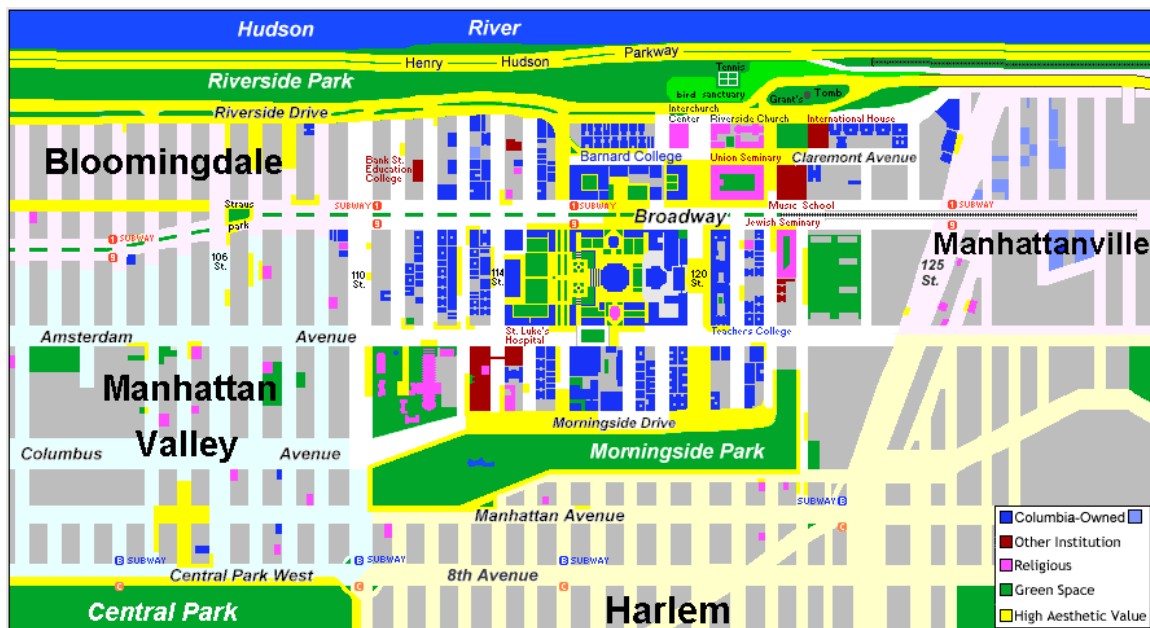


A Morningside Heights brownstone that survived demolition

The brownstone is located in Upper Manhattan: on page 62, Walter tells Victor, "... you moved up here with Dad ..." Harlem is the middle of Upper Manhattan; East Harlem is East and Morningside Heights is West. Some buildings in Manhattan had become uninhabitable because of neglect and disrepair; many of these were in the Upper Manhattan areas of Morningside Heights, Harlem and East Harlem.

More than likely, the building is in Morningside Heights. Morningside Heights is described in Wikipedia as "a neighborhood of the borough of Manhattan in New York City, on the border of the Upper West Side and west Harlem ... Morningside Heights is bounded by Morningside Park at Morningside Drive to the east, Manhattanville and Harlem at 125th Street to the north, Manhattan Valley at 110th Street to the south, and Riverside Park at Riverside Drive to the west. The main thoroughfare is Broadway".

Beatrice Gottlieb, a historian who since 1958 has resided in Morningside Gardens, an apartment complex in Morningside Heights, writes of the change in the area after TGD. Once "one of the most elegant residential locations in the city," it became populated after the opening of the first subway in 1904 with "those who wanted to live on 'the beautiful hilltop' and could afford to do so". The area flourished as speculators flocked to invest in its apartment houses, which they favored over the ubiquitous row houses of the West Side below 110th Street. According to Gottlieb, Morningside Heights would become "the first middle-class apartment-house neighborhood in the city. There were large upper-middle-class buildings on the main avenues, especially on Riverside Drive, and somewhat more modest buildings on the side streets".



Map of Morningside Heights

This would change. TGD hit Morningside Heights hard. Instead of enduring as a home for affluent people in comfortable apartments, it gradually became a place where the less affluent could hardly afford the rent for the smaller apartments that desperate landlords had carved out. Gottlieb describes the degeneration: "Many buildings were converted into hotels, most of them cheap, and they acquired the reputation of being seedy and dangerous. After the war better-off New Yorkers tended to avoid what had become an undesirable neighborhood and joined the exodus to the suburbs. As the buildings on the Heights deteriorated, they attracted poor immigrants who needed affordable housing. In both Manhattanville and the Heights the ethnic composition of the population was very different from what it had been before the postwar influx of African-Americans and Puerto Ricans. This was the situation in the early 1950s. All American cities had similar problems, which so often manifested themselves as crime statistics. There was wide agreement on the need for urban renewal, for rescuing old cities primarily by changing the physical environment. Getting rid of bad, ugly housing, a breeding ground of crime, would give cities a chance at a fresh start."

This fresh start prompted the Housing Act of 1954. A program of "urban renewal", it provided federal funds to cities and to private developers to pave over slums and construct new housing. In full swing in the 60s, urban buildings were being demolished in the name of "progress" daily, as Victor tells Esther on page 9 of the play: "They tear down old buildings every day of the week, kid."



A view of Claremont at 119th looking south (2010). The foreground shows a Beaux-Arts Revival building, the middle building has a modified Mansard roof and the tall building in the back is typical of a 1960s "urban renewal" building

The 1960s were a decade of change – not just in NYC, but also in the rest of the country and most of Eastern and Western Europe. In an effort to modernize, developers all over the world were tearing down landmark buildings. NYC’s old brownstones, with what were considered outdated Mansard roofs, irrelevant high ceilings, wide doorways, marble facing and gothic embellishments, were being replaced by “modern” box-like, characterless, generic buildings that had less living space and smaller rooms. On page 44 of the play, the furniture Victor is selling is described as “too big to get into the [doorways of] new apartments”. Later on page 27, Solomon measures the depth of the buffet to show Victor that at 40”, it won’t fit into the bedroom doors of a modern apartment, which are “thirty, thirty-two inches maximum.”

In 1968, the time of the play, Victor and Walter’s father has been dead for 16 years, during which time the apartment has been left vacant and the furniture from its 10 rooms jammed into the attic. Morningside Heights’ demographic had changed, as described above, after TGD and then again post WWII. The wealthier residents were long gone, replaced by underprivileged Puerto Rican and African-American families. Because urban renewal targeted and displaced the most disadvantaged residents, in a National Educational Television interview on May 24, 1963, James Baldwin said, “Northern cities now are engaged, in something called urban renewal, which means moving Negroes out; it means Negro removal, that is what it means.”

***Note:** Descriptions of the furniture that Victor is selling follow. I debated including them in the glossary; although they’d be useful to the designers, I wasn’t convinced of their relevance to an actor’s development of character. Then I read a passage from Miller’s autobiography Timebends, which made me realize that the furniture was an important part of the story for him. Here AM writes about the table in the dining room of his childhood home, which was used in the set of The Price’s Broadway premiere:*

About forty-five years later that very dining room table was on the stage for the first Broadway production of my play *The Price*. In 1968 I had no idea that our old dining table still existed, and could hardly recall what it had looked like. But the set designer, my old friend Boris Aronson, liked to take off from reality and kept after me to describe each piece of furniture that would be piled up, one piece on top of another, in the room of the deceased father when his two sons returned to divide up the family’s possessions after many years of not seeing each other. The characters were not based on Kermit and me, we were far different from these two, but the magnetic underlying situation was deep in my bones.

It was my sister, Joan—not yet born in this narrative—who, on hearing that the set required furniture of the twenties, reminded me that our old dining table had been given to my father’s baby sister Blanche, then in her seventies; my mother had no room for it in the small apartment she and my father occupied in the last years of their lives. I hurried out to Brooklyn and

Aunt Blanche's apartment. The youngest in my father's family, Blanche was sweet and pretty and soft, and now she was old but still good-heartedly ready for laughter. As it turned out, she had recently been talking to secondhand dealers about selling the table and eight chairs because she and her husband, Sam, my father's Depression-era partner in one of his ill-fated attempts to get another coat business going, were about to move into a smaller apartment themselves.

I looked at the table, still solid and sound and somehow amusing with its heavy harp trestle legs deeply carved and a scalloped border running around its top. My mother had gotten up and danced on it on more than one New Year's Eve (also her wedding anniversary), although I had never been allowed to witness these riotous displays, which only took place in the small, evil hours, long after my bedtime. But I was not sure its style would fit into Boris's design, so I phoned him then and there and described it to him.

Boris generally didn't take kindly to outside suggestions; in fact, he found it hard to hear anything at all without instinctively taking exception to it. Years before his great success as designer of *Cabaret*, *A Little Night Music*, and other hit musicals, as well as *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *A Memory of Two Mondays*, we were sitting beside the swimming pool of a mutual friend who had invited us up to his swank Westchester estate to escape the terrible heat of the city. Stretching out in the cool shade, I lamented the fate of the poor folk who had to stay in the city in such weather. Boris was instantly spurred to invent his demurrer.

"I don't know, I like New York in the heat; even better I like it than in good weather."

"How can you like New York in the heat?" I asked.

"Because it's so relaxing. I mean, when I'm walking down a street on a hot July day in New York, I know that whoever I'm going to meet is also a failure."

Boris's Russian-Yiddish accent and his plastic attitude toward language were among my sources for Gregory Solomon, the eighty-nine-year-old used furniture dealer in the play. Though the true model for the character was a quite different man, it was still rather strange to be standing in sight of the dining table asking Boris what he thought of our buying it for the set of *The Price*, which was of course a play about selling old furniture to a dealer whose distinctive mangled English was exactly like Boris's. I was standing, as it were, between slices of mirrors going off into infinity reflecting my image, and within my image that of Boris, my play, my parents, their table . . .

"Vat style is it?" Boris asked.

I had no idea what to call it and turned to Blanche, who was standing there thrilled by the idea that the table might end up on a Broadway stage. “What style is this, do you know?”

“Well, one of the dealers who looked at it said it was Spanish Provincial.”

“You’re kidding.”

She laughed at the idiocy of the description and assured me it was what the dealer had actually said.

“Boris? One of the dealers who looked at it says it’s Spanish Provincial.” “That’s it! Take it!” he instantly and delightedly replied.

And so it was that table that David Burns, a comic genius, struck with the flat of his little hand as he tipped back his dusty black fedora, brushed cigarette ashes off the lapels of his drooping black overcoat, and explained, “Listen! You can’t move it. A man sits down to such a table he knows not only he’s married, he’s got to stay married—there is no more possibilities ... You’re laughing, I’m telling you the factual situation. What is the key word today? Disposable. The more you can throw it away the more it’s beautiful. The car, the furniture, the wife, the children—everything has to be disposable. Because you see the main thing today is—shopping ...”

Once the table was on the stage, I was strangely unable to feel sentimental about it. Nevertheless, it had once been a center of life, where my brother sat and did his lessons and I learned to read while Mother sketched us in a silence warmer than blanket or fire. The only sounds were the scrape of her pencil on paper and the hissing of the radiators. And if very occasionally a sharp shot echoed from some Harlem rooftop farther uptown, no one so much as looked up.

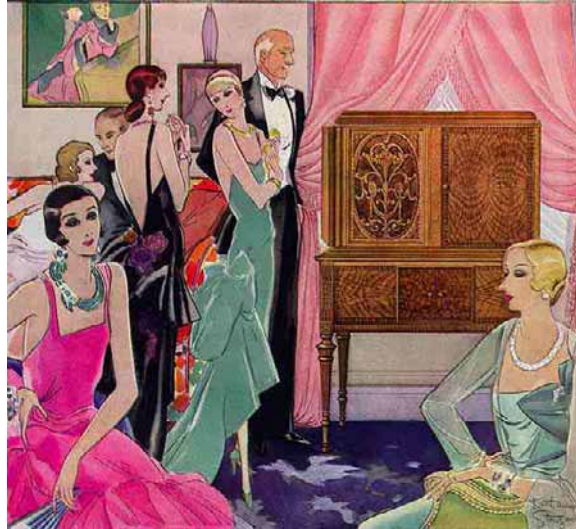
Slipcover: a loose, removable cover that may be slipped off and on; specifically: a removable covering for an article of furniture.



A rose-patterned slipcover

Slipcovers can range from drop cloths to fitted slipcovers to clear plastic, which my grandparents had on their living room sofa and chairs. I always wondered who was important enough to warrant their removal.

Filigreed: filigree is ornamental openwork of delicate or intricate design



A freestanding filigreed radio from the Twenties



A tabletop radio from the Twenties, but without filigree

Bridge lamp: a floor lamp, especially one having the light source on an arm so hinged as to be horizontally adjustable.



A typical Bridge Lamp lampshade of the time



A full-length image of a standing Bridge Lamp from the Twenties

The arm of the lamp was called a “Bridge arm” to describe how it could be positioned to illuminate the playing cards in the game of Bridge.

Settee: a long, often upholstered seat for more than one person, typically with a back and arms. The term is used synonymously with sofa, although a sofa is always upholstered whereas a settee may not be. Given that couches are part of the assemblage, I’m guessing this settee is of the un-upholstered variety.



1920s Empire Leopard Settee

Wingbacks: wingback chairs are club chairs with "wings" attached to the back that frequently extend to the armrests. Although the flat and scroll wing styles are more typical, ornate versions like bat-wing chairs and butterfly-wing chairs are also found. Most designs are fully upholstered with wooden legs, but older versions will have an exposed wood frame as well.



An upholstered leather wingback chair from the Twenties

Like many classic furniture pieces, the wingback chair's style emerged from the need to trap heat and shield the top half of the body from drafts. The chairs were

often positioned in front of a fireplace, offering cocoon-like comfort inside design grandeur.

Divan: a large couch usually without back or arms or only part of a back and one arm, often designed for use as a bed



A divan from the 1920s

Bureau: a chest of drawers, sometimes with a mirror at the top. The more current term is dresser; my mother has always called it a bureau.



A 1920s Art Deco bureau. I've been choosing the most ornate examples per the text

Armoire: a tall cupboard or wardrobe with drawers or shelves underneath, typically with a lot of decoration



A Twenties armoire that is “curving” with a “bulging front” as described in the text

Secretary: a piece of furniture used as a writing desk, it can also be called a “secretary bookcase” when it has bookshelves on top of it.



Bow front secretary desk from the 1920s, shown closed and open

Breakfront: a sideboard, cabinet or cupboard having a front with a central section extending forward from those at either side.



A 1920s mahogany and glazed breakfront display cabinet

Bow-front glass cabinet: a cabinet having a horizontally convex front, also known as a swell front



1920s bow-front glass cabinet

Wind-up Victrola: The Victor Talking Machine Company was an American flagship record company, founded by Eldridge R. Johnson in 1901 and headquartered in Camden, New Jersey.

Victrola is the company's trademark for their brand of wind-up phonographs (see definition on page 18 of this glossary), represented by the famous image of a fox terrier listening to a gramophone from the painting "His Master's Voice". In that image, the gramophone has an external horn. For our purposes, and to spare you a long history of the company, I'll discuss the type of Victrola in the attic, which is the kind with an internal horn, and has a lid that Victor lifts on page 7 of the script.



Sonora "Baby Grand" Victrola from the 1920s

According to Wikipedia, in September 1906, Johnson and his engineers designed a new line of gramophones with the turntable and amplifying horn tucked away inside a wooden cabinet. They didn't design it for audio fidelity, but for visual aesthetics, with the intention of producing a phonograph that looked less like a piece of machinery and more like a piece of furniture.

These internal horn machines, trademarked with the name Victrola, were first marketed to the public in August of that year and were an immediate hit. Soon an extensive line of Victrolas was marketed, ranging from small, inexpensive tabletop models through costly Chippendale and Queen Anne-style cabinets of fine wood with gold trim designed to look at home in elegant mansions.

Victrolas became by far the most popular brand of home phonograph, and sold in great numbers until the end of the 1920s. RCA Victor continued to market record players under the Victrola name until the late 1960s.

Sculling oars: Sculling is a method of using oars to propel watercraft in which the oar or oars touch the water on both the port and starboard sides of the craft, or over the stern. In that context, the oars themselves are also often referred to as sculls when used in this manner, and the boat itself may be referred to as a scull.



Sculling row crew team circa 1910-20

Bedstead: the framework of a bed, usually including a headboard and springs but excluding the mattress and other coverings



Marquetry bedstead from the Twenties with a modern mattress and coverings

Banked wall: an inclined, tilted or sloped wall. Since this is an attic room, chances are the slope is inward, following the line of a peaked roof.

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Hot plate: a portable, self-contained tabletop small appliance that features one, two or more gas burners or electric heating elements. They are often used as a stand-alone appliance for food preparation, generally in locations where a full kitchen stove would not be convenient or practical.



The Bersted (Chicago) hot plate, Circa 1920s

Icebox: a compact non-mechanical refrigerator, replaced in the late twenties by the electric refrigerator. The icebox had been the common household appliance for almost a century and a half prior.



Fancy oak lion head icebox circa 1900.

Iceboxes had hollow walls that were lined with tin or zinc and packed with various insulating materials such as cork, sawdust, straw or seaweed. A large block of ice was held in a tray or compartment near the top of the box. Cold air circulated down and around storage compartments in the lower section. Some finer models had spigots for draining ice water from a catch pan or holding tank. In cheaper models a drip pan was placed under the box and was emptied daily. The user had to replenish the melted ice, normally by obtaining new ice on a regular basis from an iceman.

Apartment buildings, like that of Victor's family, had small doors that opened to the icebox from the back porch. The iceman would bring the block of ice and insert it into the icebox through this door.

Iceboxes were commonly made of wood, likely for ease of construction, insulation, and aesthetics; many were attractive pieces of furniture.

Manhattan brownstone: the term brownstone is used in the US to refer to a townhouse made of brownstone, a brown Triassic-Jurassic sandstone that was once a popular building material.



A row of brownstones in South Harlem/ Morningside Heights (2014)

There are many brownstones throughout numerous New York City neighborhoods, especially in the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Park Slope, Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, Cobble Hill, Prospect Heights, Brooklyn Heights, Bedford Stuyvesant, Sunset Park and Bay Ridge. The Manhattan neighborhood of the Upper West Side, where the play is set, retains many brownstones, which are now among the most costly real estate in the country.

Hassock: a firm stuffed cushion used as a seat or leg rest.



Leather and mohair hassock, circa 1920s-30s

Saber: (pictured below, far right) a light fencing or dueling sword with an arched guard that covers the back of the hand and a tapering flexible blade with a full cutting edge along one side and a partial cutting edge on the back at the tip.

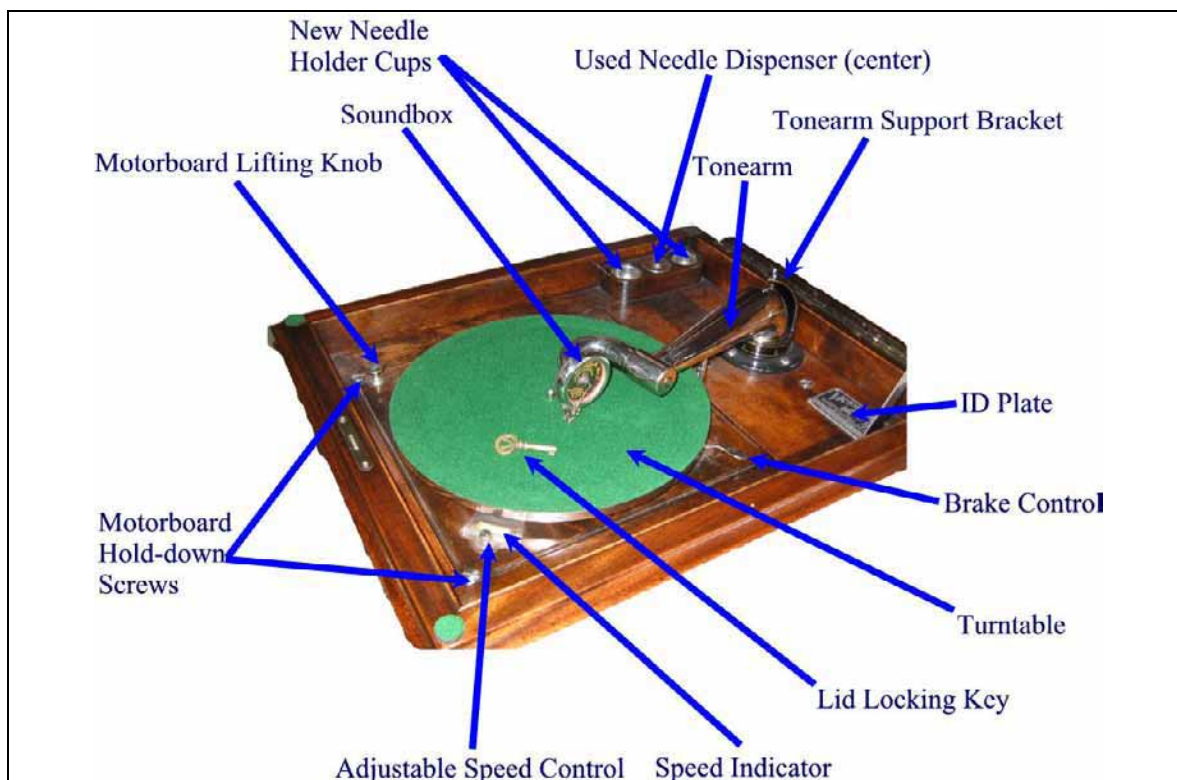


1920s Wilkinson sword fencing equipment set with (left to right) épée, foil, mask, and saber

Fencing mask: as pictured above, the head and facemask used for protection

while fencing. The mask includes a bib, which protects the neck. The mask must withstand 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of pressure on the mesh and 1,600 newtons (or 350 pounds of force) on the bib. Used at high-level competitions, there are foil, saber, and three-weapon masks.

Phonograph: also known as a turntable, gramophone, record player, and disc spinner, a phonograph is an instrument for reproducing sounds by means of the vibration of a stylus or needle, which follows a spiral groove on a revolving disc or cylinder, popularly called a record. An early phonograph, the Victrola, is defined and pictured on page 13 of this glossary.



A breakdown of the major functional components of a typical Victrola phonograph

Foil: (pictured on page 17, the second weapon from the left) a light fencing sword having a usually circular guard and a flexible blade of rectangular section tapering to a blunted point. Comparably, an épée (far left) is a fencing or dueling sword with a bowl-shaped guard and a rigid blade of triangular section with no cutting edge that tapers to a sharp point blunted for fencing.

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Record: cited in the definition of phonograph on page 18, records are discs with a spiral groove carrying recorded sound for phonograph reproduction. They are also called discs, disks, albums, LPs, EPs, 45s (singles), 78s, 33-1/3s, releases and recordings.

2122 Nr 22 e2 98d4' dnt 2BBIOVBd1222 qh22Yh=N:ht e21 2 t :t N, 212221 2Y:2 2222
 lur d222 d2YVr :t dVr :t)dV1:21 2e222 22eNl 2h221222 2i N2t 2k2h22h, 2:ht d
 eu222222=k21221 Nr 222 h22h, 2:ht e21 hNt 2222o2222o:e2t ht 22 :t N, 2S2

2

2t 2222e1hl, 2hl 2o, 2t 2222i=2k)2e222 Ne:22=222hl 2:t 212, 2ht, 2t e2 hl 22 Ne:22
 , 12t 22e:t =2hl 98d22N, 2e2NeN2=k2hh21hl, 2h2 N2=2k2e2222N=2, N2:h22=2Nr 2hl 2222
 (ht 2i=2k)S22, 1h2N2222t 0' 0' d21222r 222hl: :t 2=k21222l 2222h2u22222ku2e2h22
 Y:t k=222hl 2e2h, 12 212t 2' 2ur 2, 2t 22 22i=2k(22)222hl 2e22t 22221222hl 2eS22dhl 2
 BBI0qB2ur 2 :2h 1hhY22Y:t k=222hl 2d2e222hl r 2, 212, 222t b2k2, 222t 2t, 1h2N2222
 w12t 212222N 1:t 222hl 22t 2122i=2k2v2e2 222S2212k2v2 224' 2ur 2:e2e2

2

2Ter 222s2i222222t :;ht 22t 22=Ne, l2:ht 2hl 21ht h l2u1ht 22 22' S22122Nt, 22=22
 w2e2 2r 2222222Ne22122, 22=2 2Nuht 2v1:21 2122122hl 22e2i=22222h, 2, 2e2hl 2Nt eS2

2

2222s2i222222t :;ht 22t 22=Ne, l2:ht 2hl 21ht h l2u1ht 22 22' S221hN 12122
 t 222=22e2h, 2t 2:22, 22d, 2e2t 2122h,, hr 222122hNt 222hoS22hN22t 22eh2222, 2t 2122
 u1h, h222hr u2t k:t 212222t :;ht 2222ht 222r ht 22 22ROS22

2

22ss2222e22r 2222222r 22=2 12 2 22122t 2, 122hl 22, 2u2=t 2v2e222: 1k2
 eN222e2N=2 Ne:22=22hr 22k22Nh2t 2Y2N22Y:=222t 22ht 2hl h22w2k2t 21220' 05e22t 22
 0' R5eS222ht e:e, 222h222w2 2222=2 12 20' 4B2 22 212R' d0' R')22t 222=22122t d
 w1he2222=2 2r 22v2e222 212r 22=2e2 222h=21221pt 22 22 2k2Rd0' 0' 22N Ne, 2
 0Rd0' 9')g22122t 2v2e22t 2Nt 222h221222 2i o22h, 12 eS2

2



2

2122, 2 Ne:22h22:e, 2 22=2 12 22 222:e, 2 22122t. 2

2

212:222:e, 2 22=2 12 22 222:e, 2 22122t; 2e2t 2222122t he, 22r hNe2ht e2h22r 222

from vaudeville. First performed by the duo in the early 1920s, it became a huge hit and made them stars.

Here is a recording of Mister Gallagher and Mister Shean":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HH-BVputtM>

Laughing record: As Victor says on page 9, "It's a Laughing Record. It was a big thing in the Twenties."

Here's an excellent discussion and description of laughing records, with a number of links to sample recordings: <http://www.auscultations.net/2014/01/laughing-records.html>

The Okeh Laughing Record, which is the second one down in the samples list, was the most popular, and like the play, features a woman laughing at a coronet player. (The play describes a woman laughing at a trumpet player, but the coronet sound is often mistaken for that of a trumpet.) The record starts with a solo coronet playing "In My Younger Days", a 19th century German tune. Fourteen seconds of this, and a woman starts laughing. The performer, nonplussed, keeps going but for a slight hesitation. Soon you hear a man laughing along with the woman. Things carry on like this for two more minutes – laughter and bits of aborted melodies. That's it.

Okeh Records first issued the recording as a 78 rpm disc in 1923. The Okeh label is one of the very first recording labels that existed; Mr. Otto K. E. Heinemann launched it in 1916, whose initials form the name "Okeh", which is pronounced "okay".



A 1929 ad for the Okeh Laughing Record

Tone arm: On a Victrola, or another record player, for that matter, it's the movable arm supporting the pickup of a record player. The pickup is a device that also contains a transducer to convert mechanical vibrations into corresponding electrical signals. The signals are then increased in size by an amplifier. After leaving the amplifier, they are passed to a loudspeaker that converts them into sound.



#3 tone arm and reproducer (sound box) for the 1920s Model 102 Brunswick Balke Collender phonograph

Dealer: In the play, the dealer is a furniture dealer, or someone who trades antique and retro furniture, buying from individuals and estates and selling through auctions and/or showrooms.

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Bourgeois: middle-class, but Esther is probably assigning its worst attributes: predictably boring, unadventurous, staid, conventional and conformist.

Porcelain: Porcelain is a ceramic material made by heating materials, generally including kaolin, in a kiln to temperatures between 2,200 and 2,600 °F. The toughness, strength and translucence of porcelain, relative to other types of pottery, arise mainly from vitrification and the formation of the mineral mullite within the body at these high temperatures.

Porcelain derives its present name from the old Italian “porcellana”, meaning cowrie shell, because of its resemblance to the translucent surface of the shell. Porcelain can informally be referred to as china or fine china in some English-speaking countries, as China was the birthplace of porcelain making. Properties associated with porcelain include low permeability and elasticity; considerable strength, hardness, toughness, whiteness, translucency and resonance; and a high resistance to chemical attack and thermal shock. These qualities make porcelain more valuable and therefore, more costly, than other ceramics.

***Note:** this completes the majority of the entries for the furniture and housewares items found in the attic, with the exception of the chiffonier on page 29 of this*

glossary. For more information, you may want to see this illustrated article about household items and their cost in the 1920s:
<http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/20sfurniture.html>

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Picture: In this application, a movie, or moving picture.

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Consumers Union: a non-profit organization, founded in 1936 and based in the United States, whose mission is to advocate on policy issues related to telecommunications, mass media, vehicle safety, health care, product safety, financial services, investing, food safety, housing, and energy and utility deregulation.

Consumers Union's predecessor, Consumers' Research, was founded in 1926. In 1936, several of the members, feeling that the established Consumers' Research organization was not aggressive enough, founded Consumers Union. In part due to actions of Consumers' Research, the House Un-American Activities Committee placed Consumers Union on a list of subversive organizations, only to remove it in 1954. AM was also famously investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

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"Hot Diggity Dog": is said by Victor as he claps his hands. It's a nonsense phrase having nothing to do with dogs, but is instead an exclamation expressing extra excitement or anticipation.

The phrase "hot diggity dog!" dates to at least 1928, when Al Jolson was recorded saying "Hot diggity dog! Hot kitty! Hot pussycat! Didn't I tell you you'd love it?" after a performance of the tune "There's a Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder".

"Hot Diggity (Dog Ziggity Boom)" is an American popular song written by Al Hoffman and Dick Manning. Published in 1956, it was recorded by Perry Como and went to #1 on the Billboard pop music chart later that year. The song's melody is based on Emmanuel Chabrier's 1883 composition, *España*.

Perry Como's recording was done at Webster Hall in New York City. The conductor was Mitchell Ayres and the producer was Joe Carlton.

The nonsense phrase of the song's title, repeated throughout the song, is used as counterpoint to the lines it precedes in the lyrics, as in the following excerpt:

"Hot diggity, dog ziggity, boom
 What you do to me,
 When you're holding me tight."

My Mom used to sing it and it's now stuck in my head. Thanks, Mom!

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Moral debt: Esther is telling Victor that his brother Walter owes him a moral debt for his having taken care of their father, which enabled Walter to go to medical school. The term moral obligation has a number of meanings in moral philosophy, in religion, in legal terms, and in popular usage. Generally speaking, when someone describes an act as a moral debt or obligation, they are referring to a belief that the act has been prescribed by a set of values that may be based on religious faith, culture and/or natural law. The common definition is that moral debt is a serious debt to someone who has done something for you or been something to you in your time of need. When your position improves, you are said to have a moral obligation to repay that person and/or help them in their own time of need.

Esther and Victor believe that Walter is indebted to them, but Walter doesn't necessarily agree. He has a different set of values – a different moral compass – from theirs. He also feels he did what was required of him, both on behalf of Victor and of his father. So the question is whether moral debts are objective or subjective.

Kant addresses that concept with his Categorical Imperative, which argued that hypothetical moral systems cannot persuade moral action or be regarded as bases for moral judgments against others, because the imperatives on which they are based rely too heavily on subjective considerations. He presented a theoretical moral system, based on the demands of the Categorical Imperative, as an alternative. For more on this subject, you're on your own. Me? I have an episode of "Inside Amy Schumer" to watch ...

P. 13

Eligible: in this case, it means eligible for retirement. According to Esther, Victor was eligible for retirement three years prior, after he had put in his 20 years on the force.

The character of Victor Franz is supposed to have been modeled after Irving Abrams, AM's childhood friend, who attended Columbia University, had the highest IQ on the NYC police force, and became a photographer after he retired. Abrams was also a superb tennis player. These characteristics parallel Victor's character: Victor attended college until he dropped out to care for his father, has always had a prodigious mind for science and was likely the smartest guy on the police force, and was an expert athlete, albeit a fencer rather than a tennis player. It would be nice to imagine that in the aftermath of the play, he did go on to retire and develop rewarding pursuits, like Abrams did with photography.

I couldn't find anything biographical about Abrams. There's an Irving S. Abrams who was born 14 years earlier than AM. Although he shared AM's socialist and political philosophies, he grew up in Rochester, NY, and was an activist, not a policeman.

Goggle at: to stare at with wide or bulging eyes

P. 14

“Important scientist”: Esther calls Walter an important scientist, saying that “his” hospital is building a “whole new research division”. We learn later in the play, on page 59, that Walter is indeed instrumental in developing the new research wing.

Medical achievements in the decade of the sixties were making the news, and doctors like the rather dashing Christiaan Barnard, who performed the first successful human heart transplant in 1967, were given rock star status.

Successful organ and other transplants were also made: the first kidney transplant was in 1960, the first hip replacement operation in 1962, the first lung and liver transplants were in 1963, and the first bone marrow transplant was in 1968.

There were other significant advancements in medicine in that decade, including the approval of the first oral contraceptive pill for women, and the first successful coronary artery bypass surgery and pacemaker implant in 1960, as well as the synthesis of propranolol, the first beta blocker, which became the world’s best-selling drug, in 1962. The first successful angioplasty was performed, the Epstein-Barr virus was first described, and zidovudine (AZT), an antiviral drug that came to be used in treating HIV, was synthesized in 1964. The first hospice was established and the first pediatric heart transplant was successfully performed in 1967, as was the first saphenous vein autograft in coronary artery bypass surgery. In 1968, Dr. Christiaan Barnard performed the second successful human heart transplant and a Harvard committee published a report on irreversible coma, establishing a paradigm for defining brain death.

P. 17

Tube: Victor is talking here about a vacuum tube, a component of the radio. Like most electronics, as it evolved, the tubes got smaller. For most purposes, solid-state devices such as transistors and solid-state diodes have replaced the vacuum tube. Solid-state devices last much longer, are smaller, more efficient, more reliable, and cheaper than equivalent vacuum tube devices.

For more information on the vacuum tube and its evolution, follow this link:
https://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Vacuum_tube.html

Storage battery: an energy source for transistor devices like Victor’s homemade radio. To describe how it works would require a very long explanation, but in a nutshell, the radio receiver uses an audion bulb for detecting, or rectifying, incoming radio waves. In the center of the bulb is a short tungsten filament, the ends of which are brought out to two terminals in the base of the bulb. This filament must be heated to incandescence, and a storage battery is required for this purpose, because it is necessary to have a very steady current in order to obtain clear sounds in the

receiver. Victor's storage battery, if it were indeed still around, would have lost its energy over the years.

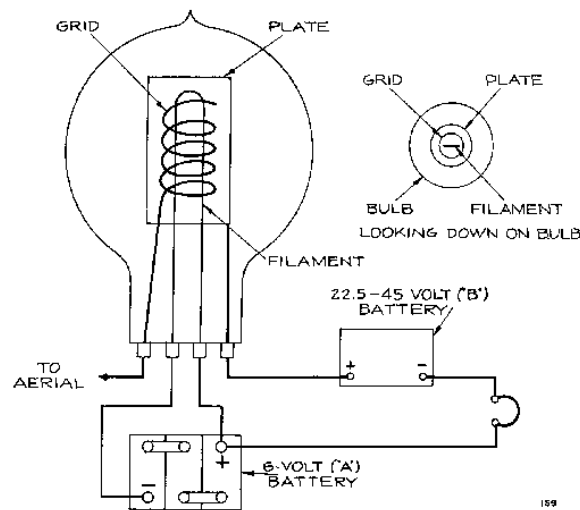


Fig. 159. Illustrating Principle of the Audion Radio Bulb

P. 18

Tramping lunge: in fencing, the lunge is one of the most basic and most common types of offensive footwork, engaged in combination with different blade work to deliver an offensive action such as an attack. It can be used with all three modern fencing weapons: the saber (like Victor has), the foil and the épée.

The lunge is executed by kicking forward with the front foot, and pushing the body forward with the back leg.

In sabre, the end of the attack is defined by the front foot of the lunge landing on the piste, which is the strip or playing area. An attack can be made with a lunge on its own, or can be made with a step-forward-lunge, which are both considered single tempo actions.

The step-forward-lunge is the tramping lunge that AM is describing.

P. 19

Fedora: specifically, the hat is a "worn, fur-felt, black fedora, its brim turned down on the right side like Jimmy Walker's".

A fedora is a hat with a wide brim and indented crown. It's often made of felt but sometimes of straw and is typically creased lengthwise down the crown and "pinched" near the front on both sides, though the positioning of pinches can vary.

The fedora is enjoying a comeback in a new, sleeker version, favored by pop artists like Bruno Mars.



Jimmy Walker, sporting a fedora tipped over his right eye, in 1932

Jimmy Walker was James John Walker (June 19, 1881-November 18, 1946), the swaggering and stylish Mayor of NYC from 1925 to 1932. According to Jonathan Mahler in a 2012 *New York Magazine* article, until the stock market crashed, he “presided over New York during the great age of Gatsby and perfectly embodied that moment of indulgence: the public servant who favored short workdays and long afternoons at Yankee Stadium, who was loath to miss a big prizefight or Broadway premiere, who left his wife and Greenwich Village apartment for a chorus girl and a suite at the Ritz-Carlton.”

Gentleman Jimmy Walker’s colorful career included a stint at writing popular songs for Broadway and vaudeville after his Law School graduation in 1904. Gravitating toward politics, he became a district captain and a member of the Assembly in 1909 and, under the tutelage of Alfred E. Smith, was elected to the State Senate in 1914. With the backing of the Tammany organization and Governor Smith, Walker was nominated in 1925 as the Democratic mayoralty candidate in the primary elections. He served as mayor of New York City for two terms. His first term was a boon to the city: he created the Department of Sanitation, brought about unification of the city’s public hospitals, and made considerable improvements in the playgrounds and park systems. Under his guidance, the Board of Transportation approved contracts for the construction of an elaborate subway system. After his reelection to office in 1929, he was investigated for corruption and, unable to explain satisfactorily the large sums of money deposited in his bank account, he resigned on Sept. 1, 1932.

He left quickly afterward for Europe with his showgirl-mistress and did not return to the United States until 1935. He was named chairman of the National Cloak and Suit Industry in 1940; he later became the president of the Majestic Records Company.

Both his Majestic Records National Cloak and Suit Industry gigs were well-earned:

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 2222r 221 2(e77hN77h2t 77 2k)v. 77 22 22v2eM hwt 771 2:e2t 221 277t 22:e772uu2 2
 21 2eer2:e7722hl 277h2M22hY21 2:e1: 1, 77k2d1:e2hu2 2, 77t 22w2=hw, 2=77h2, 2e2
 22e2:2222t 77222t 22t 771t 77:21h=2e772t t NCC:2e77t o22Vo2277e2, 1:t 21 2t 2ehr 22
 w22:t 77t 77= 2t, 77=N22:t e,l:u22N:, d1l2k2u2, ed1 2k22hl 2221277l:r 77hwt 2t 2
 ht 22:22 d1 277hN=277e:42 2Y27722t 2122 h22=2hl 21277h1t t:277 2=M2 772h, 21 2
 2 1:eMk2h h2
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2
 2h1tt:277 2=M2 77=2t 222772h, 21 77 1:eMk277Y21,:e2r 2t, 77 hr 27' B02
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 eu22M2 ed2 2t 477e1M2t 2C:277wed2t 21277222e2 22=277Nee:2277M 2t 277t 27 2t k2
 h, 12 77hNt, l:2eS2122 2r 277:22:e12e2ul h222477t 77222 2Y:2, 222Y21 e:ht 277277טעניש
 (k:2:e1I, 2k, e1)2v1:21 27 22t e22w:e1772r 2t; 2
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2t 2277hr 2t 2:r 2e77we2 2Y221huN=2, 2221277 22212, 2e2h w277r 2t kS277e:t 2 2
 2w:e177N, N1 277M hwt 77e77e1M2t 2C:d1l 772r 2t:277w1k277uu22 2277k277212205, 12

century. Ashkenaz was the medieval Hebrew name for Germany, though the Ashkenaz area also included parts of northern France and later spread to Eastern Europe.

The everyday language of the Ashkenazic Jews was Middle High German. They also used Hebrew and their German included Hebrew words and phrases. From the 13th century, they started to use the Hebrew script to write their language, which linguists refer to as Judeo-German or occasionally Proto-Yiddish. The earliest known fragment of Judeo-German is a rhyming couplet in a Hebrew prayer book dating from 1272 or 1273.

During subsequent centuries, Judeo-German gradually developed into a distinct language, Yiddish, with two main dialects: Western Yiddish, which was widely spoken in Central Europe until the 18th century, and Eastern Yiddish, which was spoken throughout Eastern Europe and (then) Russia/USSR until World War II. As a result of the Holocaust, Jewish communities throughout Europe were destroyed and the use of Yiddish as an every-day language went into sudden decline.

AM gives Solomon a Russian-Yiddish accent, which means he speaks the Eastern Yiddish dialect, found in Eastern Europe and (then) Russia/USSR until World War II.

In the passage from *Timebends* on page 5 of the glossary, AM cites set designer Boris Aronson's Russian-Yiddish accent and "plastic attitude toward language as among my sources for Gregory Solomon", but adds that "the true model for the character was a quite different man".

That "quite different man" was his maternal grandfather, Louis Barnett, a clothing contractor who came from the Polish hamlet of Radomizl and emigrated to the US as a child in the 1880s. Miller was proud of writing – and therefore, preserving – Solomon's way of speaking, as it imitated the cadence and idiomatic speech patterns and word usage of his grandfather. AM was quite familiar with the older man's manner of speaking and peculiar habits, as he shared his bedroom in the family's tiny house in Brooklyn during TGD when his grandfather no longer had a home of his own. AM describes him in *Timebends* as having lived in a "cultural twilight zone between the Austrian-German language and influence, the Polish peasantry and [his] Jewish identity".

P. 21

"... an armoire like this, thirty years ago you couldn't give it away; it was a regular measles": Solomon is referring to measles, a highly contagious airborne disease. In 1938, when the armoire was first made, there was still no vaccination for measles. Before the widespread use of the measles vaccine, first introduced in 1963, the incidence of the disease was so high that, according to the *American Journal of Medical Science*, infection with measles was felt to be "as inevitable as death and taxes." With the vaccine, reported cases of measles in the United States alone fell from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands per year. Before then, the only

immunity came from having contracted and survived the disease. Nine out of 10 people who are not immune and/or have not been immunized and who share living space with an infected person will catch the disease.

P. 22

Chiffonier: a chest of drawers; specifically, one that's tall with a mirror on the top.



A chiffonier from the 1920s

Rockaway ... the airports: Victor is referring here to the two major NYC airports, LaGuardia and JFK. JFK is located in Jamaica, Far Rockaway, Queens, New York and LaGuardia is 12 miles away, on the waterfront of Flushing Bay and Bowery Bay, in East Elmhurst, Queens. Because the airports are part of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, they are patrolled by the NYPD.

Most of the time that Victor would have been working at JFK, he would have known it as Idlewild, after the Idlewild Golf Course that it displaced. It was renamed in 1963 after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Depending on how long he worked at the airports, Victor may have also known LaGuardia as New York Municipal Airport-LaGuardia Field. In 1953, it was renamed LaGuardia Airport after then-mayor of NYC, Fiorella La Guardia.

P. 23

“That’s Siberia, no?”: Solomon has an attitude characteristic of many Manhattanites, that the outer boroughs of NYC are as remote as Siberia.

Spanish Jacobean ... 1921, 22: An ornate style of furniture that became popular in the 1920s, Spanish Jacobean is a Spanish-influenced hybrid of the Jacobean style. The Jacobean period of furniture style began 1603 in England with the reign of James I and ended in 1688 with the reign of James II. Jacobean furniture was massive in size ("too big to get into the [doorways of] new apartments": page 44 of the script and on page 3 of the glossary). It had squared or rectangular lines and was embellished with scrollwork, thick columns, and arches. It was very sturdy, notoriously uncomfortable, and built to last. Assembly was done with mortise and tenon joints and pegs. Oak was the primary source of wood.



A table and chairs in the Spanish Jacobean style, showing the characteristic carvings

The Spanish influence meant more elaborate, imaginative and decorative carvings and turnings in the legs and stretchers. A Moorish element distinguished it from mere Jacobean, and can be seen in the taller headboards on the chairs, topped with tall spires.

“Cost maybe twelve, thirteen hundred dollars”: The equivalent value today for \$1,200 in 1915 would be \$27,898.45 and for \$1,300, it would be \$30,223.32. Something that cost \$1,200 in 1915 would have cost \$4,027.72 in 1968 and something that cost \$1,300 in 1915 would have cost \$4,363.36

P. 24

“... anything Spanish Jacobean you’ll sell quicker a case of tuberculosis”:

Solomon is saying that a case of tuberculosis would be a very hard sell. No wonder – it’s a contagious disease, often a fatal one, and is resistant to treatment therapies. An estimated 110,000 Americans died each year from tuberculosis in the 1900's. It was one of the leading causes of death in the United States in the early twentieth century. Those infected with tuberculosis were isolated from society and placed in sanatoriums. These self-contained communities became known as "waiting room[s] for death." As described by historian Sheila Rothman, death was synonymous with tuberculosis and was an ever-present characteristic of the sanatorium. Even after the introduction of streptomycin therapy 70 years ago, patients were treated in sanatoriums, although the death rate lessened.

Solomon makes several references to illnesses. It is well-documented in the Jewish community that there is a prevalence of obsession with disease (see <http://ou.org.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/ja/5765/5765winter/ISOCDAJE.PDF>). It appears to stem from a higher-than-average incidence of OCD, or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. Dr. Roz Shafran, one of the country's leading researchers into OCD, attributes it to the ritualistic behaviors of Jewish religious observance. "In Judaism," Shafran says, "there are so many behaviors around washing hands, purity and morality, and given that OCD sufferers report that washing their hands repeatedly reinforces the problem, observant Jews are vulnerable."

An even more common affliction of OCD sufferers than obsessive washing is the need constantly to check that doors are locked, taps turned off and irons are unplugged. "There are a lot of responsible Jewish mothers around," Shafran observes, herself a Jewish mother from Barnet. As the need for this checking comes from an over-developed sense of responsibility, it is not hard to see why Jews are vulnerable to this behavior." Anxiety and conscientiousness can be a pretty toxic combination," she says.

Scrupulosity is a well-documented form of OCD, and one acknowledged as prevalent among Jews by one of the great Chassidische Rebbes, Rabbi Nahum of Stephanesht. He recognizes Jewish guilt and depression as contributing factors, and sees Scrupulosity as "a cloak made of pride, lined with guilt and sewn with melancholia."

Looking at Jewish history, it is easy to understand why Jews are likely to become overly anxious, leading to obsessions and compulsions. They constantly have had to pull up roots and migrate to a country that doesn't persecute them. After leaving their homes and livelihoods with little more than the clothes on their backs, they would start a new life in a new country only to find that the political winds had shifted and they'd be driven out once again. Never knowing when the boom will fall is synonymous with the unpredictable contraction of a disease. Despite one's best laid plans and other preventative measures, disease will inevitably befall.

"... walk off with the gravy and leave me with the bones": Victor is telling Solomon that he will inherit the picked-over carcass, while Solomon feasts on the meat and gravy.

P. 25

"The Five Solomons' ... I was the one on the bottom": Solomon was part of a Vaudevillian traveling acrobatic troupe, all of whom are deceased now except him ("may they rest in peace"). His job was to anchor the pyramid or hold up the other acrobats.



Vaudevillian acrobats doing a three-person hand balance

Jacob ... wrestled with the Angel: To illustrate that there are Jewish acrobats (**"Jews been acrobats since the beginning of the world"**), Solomon cites Jacob, a figure in the Torah, the Jewish Bible, in the Book of Genesis. Jacob is also a figure in a number of other sacred scriptures, including the Talmud, the New Testament, the Qur'an, and Bahá'í scripture.

Jacob (later given the name Israel) is considered a patriarch of the Israelites. He was the third Hebrew progenitor with whom God made a covenant. He is the son of Isaac and Rebecca, the grandson of Abraham and Sarah and of Bethuel, and the younger twin brother of Esau. Jacob had twelve sons and at least one daughter by his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and by their handmaidens Bilhah and Zilpah. Jacob's twelve sons became the originators of the "Tribes of Israel".

The name Israel, which means, variously, "one that struggled with the divine angel", "one who fights victoriously with God", "one who has prevailed with God", "a man seeing God", "he will rule as God", or "a prince with God", is from the Hebrew שָׂרָה, or "prevail", "have power as a prince". Jacob was given the name after wrestling with a mysterious being who appeared to him at night. The two wrestled until daybreak, and when the being saw that he could not overpower Jacob, he granted him the blessing of the name. Jacob asked, but the being never identified himself.

Nevertheless, Jacob called the spot where they wrestled Peniel, which means "face of God", saying, "I have seen God face to face and lived."

Because the terminology is ambiguous and inconsistent, and because the being refused to identify himself, there are varying views as to whether he was a man, an angel, or God. Nevertheless, the struggle is universally described as no small victory.



Jacob Wrestling with the Angel by Eugène Delacroix

Speaking of the Biblical, Gregory Solomon lives up to his namesake, King Solomon, who was known for his wisdom, especially when it came to people. Solomon successfully overcomes Victor's resistance with his simple humanity and humor, using exactly the right tools to guide Victor to warm to him. He cares about dividing the profits from the property fairly, and this concern corresponds to the famous Bible story of the two mothers who approached King Solomon to decide who would mother a baby that both laid claim to. Solomon's decree that the baby be cut in half ferreted out the true mother, who was the only one of the two who protested. Solomon also cares about the integrity and ethics of the Appraisers' Association, using his tenure as president to set rates and fair procedures. Each of the Solomons was just.

Discharge from the British Navy: The date of Solomon's induction into the British Navy is not mentioned. The date of his discharge is also not mentioned, and he doesn't want to talk about his service there.

To try to determine how, when and why he came to serve in the British Navy, I compiled bits from Solomon's dialogue. He says he "left Russia sixty-five years ago, I was twenty-four years old". He's "almost 90" at the time of the play, so putting those two pieces together would make his birth year 1879. That would make him twenty-three in 1902, the year he left Russia. He says on page 31, "Seventy-five I got married, fifty-one and twenty-two." He was 22 in 1901, so he was married before he left Russia.

He mentions a daughter on page 33 who took her own life in the latter part of 1915. She was presumably from his marriage in 1901 when he was 22. He described her as "pure like the morning", which suggests that she was a pre-teen or teenaged girl when she died, putting her year of birth anywhere from 1896-1902. If he was married when she was born, she probably died when she was 13 or 14, but she could have been older if he married after she was born.

In any event, when he left Russia at 24, he already had a family. He may have moved to the UK, lived there with his family and joined the British Navy, possibly at the time of WWI, which began July 28, 1914 and lasted until November 11, 1918. However, he would have been between 35 and 39 at the time, a bit old for the military, although the current Royal Navy accepts enlistees until they are 41. I couldn't find any information on the age limit for enlistees in the 1900s – however, as WWII progressed, the beleaguered UK was recruiting men of nearly every age.

Solomon's daughter, he says, died in the "latter part" of 1915. WWI was already a bit over a year underway. He eventually would have divorced the wife he married at 22 in order to remarry. It is not uncommon for a couple to divorce after the death of a child, especially after suicide. I could see him joining the war effort after his daughter died and he divorced – it is something people will do when they feel there's nothing left to live for.

He also could have joined the British Navy shortly after he left Russia. At that time, he was younger, and because it wasn't wartime, he was in less danger of dying in combat. He had a young family that depended on him, and enlistment at that time would have been safer.

Could enlistment have been a condition of UK citizenship for the young Russian expatriate? Unfortunately, I was unable to find any information about that. Conscription can also be punishment for a crime, and that might be why Solomon is reluctant to talk about his service. So, I've come up with nothing definite, but a lot to chew on.

P. 26

Hook: to get one's hooks in or into someone or something is a figure of speech, meaning to obtain a strong and possessive hold on someone or something. It probably comes from hooking a fish, or catching a fish on a line with a fishhook. No matter how hard he tries, Solomon "can't get a hook into Victor".

In the stage directions, we find Solomon “Wagging a finger into Victor’s face,” on page 26; “Walking away with a hand at his temple,” and “Raising a finger” on page 27; and “Sunk, he presses his fingers into his eyes,” on page 28. These gestures, like many others Solomon employs, are quite dramatic and favored by older Jewish men no matter what the era.

A piece advice: Solomon drops the “of” like he drops many articles throughout the play. It’s an idiomatic speech style, a pattern of speech that’s part emphasis; partly influenced by Yiddish; part NY Jew.

P. 27

“... the bedroom doors in a modern apartment house are thirty, thirty-two inches maximum: see page 3 of this glossary

“What’re you jumping?”: another example of emphasis and of speech pattern/style, as is **“So what are you so hard on me?”**. “What’re you jumping?” is heard again on p. 28.

Nineteen in twenty-eight years: the number of arrests Victor made in his police career so far. I was unable to find statistics on how those figures compare to arrest averages made during his tenure, but if it sounds like he’s bragging a little, it would be consistent with the numbers-driven policing culture. “Productivity” is encouraged and rewarded to the extent that arrest quotas, which are illegal under New York state law, remain alive and well in the NYPD.

P. 28

“What should I do, lay down and die?”: Oh, the drama! Again, a distinct and specific pattern of speech

P. 29

It’s never gonna break ... If it wouldn’t break there is no more possibilities.”: a brilliant piece of wisdom on the part of Solomon the Wise. He is quite the observer of the human condition and quite the philosopher. I’ll take him over Kant any day.

Sell encyclopedias, door-to-door: before the days of Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica online, this was a way to make a living – mostly for men, who sold their wares to housewives. In March 2012, Encyclopedia Britannica announced that it would no longer provide the encyclopedia in book form. In commemoration, Laura Barnett wrote a piece for the UK’s *Guardian* on March 12, 2012, wherein she described the door-to-door encyclopedia salesman and his place in popular culture. “Encyclopedia sets once were flogged door to door by enterprising salesmen – and they were almost always men – with a neat line in charming householders into parting with a large amount of cash for books that they would in many cases never read”. Barnett was right: According to a 2006 report by Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management, Britannica’s own market research showed that the typical encyclopedia owner opened the books just once or twice a year.

First formed in Edinburgh in 1768, Encyclopedia Britannica moved its headquarters to the US in the 1920s, where its salesmen far outnumbered those in the UK. By the 1930s, nearly 2,000 salesmen were selling the Britannica door to door, earning a commission of \$500 to \$600 per sale.

According to Barnett, Mike Myers's father, Eric, sold encyclopedias and so did Woody Harrelson's dad, Charles, before he became a contract killer. Really, I don't make this stuff up!



The hunter and his prey

Laura Barnett ends her article with, "Smooth-pattered encyclopedia salesmen of the world: we mourn your passing." Fortunately, they still exist in film and literature, where the character of the encyclopedia salesman is largely seen as an unwelcome pest. In a 1969 Monty Python sketch, a suspicious housewife allows a burglar to enter her apartment to rob her on the condition that he doesn't try to sell her an encyclopedia. Once he gains entrance, however, he does just that. A sketch from a 1976 episode of *The Carol Burnett Show* has Dick Van Dyke playing Smiley Rogers, an encyclopedia salesman who is tossed across the room by an irate husband after he unknowingly interrupts a marital spat.

An encyclopedia salesman pays a visit to Grandma's cottage in a Sesame Street News Flash segment. He tries to sell his wares to Kermit, who declines and then chases the Big Bad Wolf, who is in pursuit of Little Red Riding Hood, asking if either is interested. They're not, so he departs for friendlier territory. A priest in the John Updike novel, *The Beauty of the Lilies*, loses his faith and ends up selling encyclopedias. Penn Jillette of Penn and Teller plays an encyclopedia salesman in a 1997 episode of *Friends*, where he sells Joey just the "V" volume for \$50 rather than

the whole \$1,200 set, making an inside joke about the fact that many households ended up with only a few volumes.

Southern part of Westchester County: Westchester County is a county in the state of NY. Westchester covers an area of 450 square miles and consists of 48 municipalities.

New York City, Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island, and Long Island Sound are south of Westchester County; Putnam County is north; Fairfield County and Connecticut are east; and Rockland County as well as Bergen County, New Jersey across the Hudson River are west.

Southern Westchester refers to the lower portion of Westchester County, a dense "inner-ring" suburban area north of New York City. Inner ring suburbs, aka "first-ring" suburbs, are the older, more populous communities of a metropolitan area that experienced urban sprawl before the Post-World War II baby boom, thus significantly predating those of their outer suburban or exurban counterparts.

The municipalities in the southern part of Westchester County are known as villages. In New York State, there are three types of political subdivisions of counties: cities, towns, and villages. While cities are incorporated entities, towns are not. However, areas within a town can incorporate; when this occurs, the said area is called a "village". Villages have their own additional level of government along with the government of the town the village lies within. Sometimes a town contains a village with the same name; this village usually contains the town's center.

Victor had very good territory for his job as an encyclopedia salesman, as most of the villages in southern Westchester county are quite tony, among them Ardsley, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington, Larchmont, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, and Rye Brook.

I grew up in a village west of Westchester County, suburb of NYC, where my father commuted to work.

P. 30

You want me to starve to death?: such histrionics!

"Boy, I picked a number!": Victor refers here to betting, about having picked an unlucky number.

"There wouldn't be a little salt, I suppose": this is a passive-aggressive question, where Solomon is telling Victor to get him some salt without asking directly. My friend Rochelle, who is Jewish and married to Roger, who is also Jewish, first identified the Jewish prince for me. Until then, I had only known of the ubiquitous Jewish princess. She told me that, for example, a Jewish prince would never presume to ask outright for someone to interrupt his or her dinner to get up from the table

and fetch something for him. Instead, he would look around and declare loudly, "Wouldn't butter go well with this. (?)", the subtext being that someone, anyone, and especially anyone but him, The Prince, must get up and get him the butter – usually his wife or, for sure, his mother if she were visiting. Roger's, that is.

Blue: in its adjectival form, which means "low-spirited", it was used as early as the late 14th century. As a pluralized noun, specified with the article "the", and meaning depression or low spirits, the expression ("the blues") goes back to 1741. As a music form (the "Blues") featuring flatted thirds and sevenths, it goes possibly as far back as 1895, though it appears officially in 1912, in W.C. Handy's "Memphis Blues".

P. 31

Like an IBM: Solomon is saying he can be as fast and accurate as an IBM data processing machine.

IBM is International Business Machines Corporation, an American multinational technology and consulting corporation, with headquarters in Armonk, New York. IBM manufactures and markets computer hardware, middleware and software, and offers infrastructure, hosting and consulting services in areas ranging from mainframe computers to nanotechnology.

The company originated in 1911 as the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company (CTR) through a merger of the Tabulating Machine Company, the International Time Recording Company, and the Computing Scale Company. CTR was changed to "International Business Machines" in 1924.

Some highlights of the company's history show that it would have been on Solomon's radar: In 1937, IBM's tabulating equipment enabled organizations to process unprecedented amounts of data. Its products supported the US Government's first effort to maintain the employment records for 26 million people pursuant to the Social Security Act. Through its German subsidiary, Dehomahe, one of its data processing clients was the Third Reich, who meticulously documented, for example, data about the Jews they processed into the death camps and gas chambers.

During WWII, the company produced the M1 Carbine and Browning Automatic Rifle for the American war effort. It also provided translation services for the Nuremberg Trials. In 1947, IBM opened its first office in Bahrain, as well as an office in Saudi Arabia, to service the needs of the Arabian-American Oil Company that would grow to become Saudi Business Machines (SBM).

In 1956, the company demonstrated the first practical example of artificial intelligence when Arthur L. Samuel of IBM's Poughkeepsie, NY, laboratory programmed an IBM 704 not merely to play checkers but "learn" from its own experience. In 1957, the FORTRAN (FORmula TRANslation) scientific programming language was developed. In 1961, IBM developed the SABRE (Semi-Automatic

Business-Related Environment) reservation system for American Airlines and introduced the highly successful Selectric typewriter.

In 1963, IBM employees and computers helped NASA track the orbital flight of the Mercury astronauts. The latter half of the 1960s saw IBM continue its support of space exploration, participating in the 1965 Gemini flights, 1966 Saturn flights, and 1969 lunar mission.

On April 7, 1964, IBM announced the first computer system family, the revolutionary IBM System/360. Sold between 1964 and 1978, it spanned the complete range of commercial and scientific applications from large to small, allowing companies for the first time to upgrade to models with greater computing capability without having to rewrite their application.

“Seventy-five I got married, fifty-one and twenty-two”: Solomon tells this to Victor. Since Victor is almost 90 in 1968, and says he left Russia 65 years ago when he was 24, he would have been born in 1879. That means he’d have married in 1901, 1930 and 1954.

“it’s a regular injection”: Solomon tells Victor that the job has given him a new lease on life. In this application, Solomon is referring to a health-giving insertion or infusion of liquid into the body via a syringe or an IV. Another use of injection is in economics, where it is a financial boost to an economy, but that doesn’t apply here.

“... my telephone you could use for a ladle”: Victor means his phone doesn’t ring much any more because he hasn’t been doing much in the way of furniture buying and selling; he tells Victor on p. 28 that he “must have looked in a very old phone book” because “a couple of years ago already I cleaned out my store”. Therefore the handset, with “cups” on either end that resemble a ladle, could be used as one.



A telephone from 1947

lap robe: A blanket or fur piece for covering the lap, legs, and feet, as of a passenger in an unheated car or carriage.



Newsday publisher Alicia Patterson reading her newspaper in the backseat of her chauffeur-driven limousine, with a large fur lap robe covering her legs, en route to her Long Island office from NYC

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Opera hat: a type of top hat that is collapsible.

On May 5, 1812, a London hatter called Thomas Francis Dollman patented a design for "an elastic round hat" supported by ribs and springs. His patent was described as:

An elastic round hat that may be made of beaver, silk, or other materials. The top of the crown and about half an inch from the top as well as the brim and about an inch, the crown from the bottom are stiffened in the ordinary manner. The rest of the hat is left entirely without stiffening, and is kept in shape by ribs of any suitable material fastened horizontally to the inside of the crown, and by an elastic steel spring from three to four inches long and nearly half an in. wide sewed on each side of the crown in the inside in an upright position. Then packed up for travelling, the double ribbon fastened under the band is to be pulled over the top of the crown to keep it in a small compass.

2h→ 2t.e122t, 7roul222t 0' R8d2t 277 hNt 210' 95d2t, h:t 277:2Ne.e772e: t 77h 772
eul:t 1h222277=2ue:2-277hu2 2, 7ul hY222eh77huN=2 212, 772 2, 7 222277h2, 77277r 22
M hwt 77e772:2NeS7122 2, e7w2 277=eh772=277hu2 22 2, e77N277h21277hr r ht 7ul 22:222
h22, hl:t 212r 2t 212:l 772, 2 222, 2 277Nt 22 2 77t 2.e222, 77 21277hu2 2S712772, 2t 222
2:eM77hN=277=eh7722, hl 2277222 2t, 2r2t 77h2M hhr eS2

[illegible]

212712u22N7-2i N7h=2ue:2-2hu12, dM7u1 277, 1l 77:2Ned
21hwt 7h, 1hu2t 277t 277he222

2
21:e2e212e22ht 2?:r 277Y23vl:, 2t 777722t,:ht 2-M221:e27hl 77w2=2 21277le, 3w2e2t 2
,1??-hee2 k7hl 7 t N2o7 77 2 2dph7rou=2t 21277l1 2e=dc221:t M2, 7722,e2hr 2w12 2?
=M27e2h, 2t, h772hu 2 2.S7

2
 2 T6ya 2G6t 77N, hr 2, 1w2e7777e, 77h212e, 2N 2t, 1w12 2e:r u=277h2e77t 277l :t M2
 w2 277:eu2t e??77 hr 22 2 772t 2:t 7 277l :t 2e312 2t 27721 2w2=eS77

2
2hlt 3 77 2 22, 1hu2t 2221277 e, 77N, hr 2, 2t 21277 22t 771:-222-u1:27t 77Nt 27Rd0' 5RS2
21277N, hr 2, 3v2e77hN 1, 2h77 222t 0' OR77 22l 22N2-k7722r 27u2, 7777huN=2 2
2N=, N 22t 1hl, 12t t 2t 2Ne, l:2=77, :2eS77hlt 3 77 2 22, 3v2e2127 he, 77l hr :t 2t, 2
2N, hr 2, 771 2t S77 k77 223v77hN=27h2t 2h2h77hlt 3 77 2 22, 3v12t 2 23v2e77khNt d
Nu2hr :t 77hl uhl 2 27722hNt, 2t, 2t 771:-222-u1:2S77 22hY2221271 N:2M7722 2t 2k77h 22, S2
2hr 2:r 2e2 23v77hN=222M27 2212 2S77ht e:22 222, 77t 27h2127 he, 77oh,:27u-222e2t 2
1, 23vhl=2d77 2722t 222h77, 212 27h22t 2-M22 277:2S77

2
2l: :t 2=kd 21222N,hr 2 2 22l:t 2e2Ne222ht 2k2:2M2eS2222e1:2 2vhn222e:,2t 2221 2t 22
2nh,12t 212222t,2 2h221222e,2Nl 2t,2221:t 2222w:2222 2 2222hNt,2 2v:,122Y222h2
2: 1,2hNt 222222ul 2ee:ht e2t 2,2v12 2221222ew:2 2k2:eu2t e2212222t Mt 2 2:2M2eS2
21222:t 2 2vhn222e2,21222 N:l 2222 Nr 22 2h222h:t e2t 21222h222 221:t 2222 2212t 2
=2222w:t 2hwd2v1:21 2v2e2:t 2222,21222huch222 hY221222 2222v1:21 2v2e22t 2 222k2
wl 2uu2222t 2v2o22222u2 2S21222 221:t 2e2v2 2222222hr 21222M,212t 2221:t 2S222t k2

New York automats also had a cafeteria-style steam table where patrons could slide a tray along rails and choose foods, which were ladled out of steaming tureens. I never saw those, but I remember vividly the patrons during their hurried lunchtimes, still dressed in their overcoats, lining up to get change. I can still hear the sound of the nickels clattering their way into the shallow, bowl-like depressions, as well the sounds of the windows sliding and down. I remember the smell of the mac and cheese, the tomato soup, and the Salisbury steak and gravy, as well as the scraping sounds as the diners got up from their long group tables, their overcoats hanging on the backs of their chairs.

The automats were popular with a wide variety of patrons, including Walter Winchell, Irving Berlin and other celebrities of the era. The New York automats were also popular with out of work songwriters and actors. Playwright Neil Simon called automats "the Maxim's of the disenfranchised" in 1987. His quote was published in a *New York Times Magazine* article entitled "Last Automat Closes, Its Era Long Gone".

At one time, there were 40 Horn & Hardart automats just in NYC alone. The last one closed in 1991. Horn & Hardart converted most of its NYC locations to Burger Kings. (Isn't that sad?) At the time, some customers said the quality of the food was on the decline. It was probably never that good, but I thought it was ambrosia.

I had the privilege of seeing "Audrey Hepburn: Portraits of an Icon" at the National Portrait Gallery in London this summer. One of my favorite photos was the one below. She was all of 25, doing her second Broadway show.



Audrey Hepburn at a NY Automat during a rehearsal break from *Ondine*, 1954

telegram: a written message transmitted by using an electric device. The message was carried along wires, and the text written or printed and delivered by hand or teleprinter. The first telegram service was started in 1851 in British India, developed by the British Post Office as a service for urgent letters. The last telegram service, which was placed in India, closed on July 15, 2013 at 9:00 pm.

“I went busted 1932, then 1923 they also knocked me out; the Panic of 1904, 1898: Solomon, when his memory serves him, is citing international economic crises here. 1932 is easily verified, as it would have been during TGD, which was worldwide; so is 1923, which was the German Crisis of 1923, following WWI. There was no Panic of 1904; there was a panic of 1907, towards which events in 1904 were to lead. As for 1898, the US went through a severe economic depression from 1893 to 1898, but it’s speculative as to how it would have impacted Solomon, who was a teenager living in Russia at the time.

1932: The Great Depression, which lasted from 1929-39, would certainly have impacted Solomon, as nearly no one in the world escaped its grip. It was the deepest and longest-lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world. In the United States, TGD began soon after the stock market crash of October 1929, which sent Wall Street into a panic and wiped out millions of investors.

Over the next several years, consumer spending and investment dropped, causing steep declines in industrial output and rising levels of unemployment as failing companies laid off workers. By 1933, when TGD reached its height, some 13 to 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half of the country’s banks had failed. Though the relief and reform measures put into place by President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped lessen the worst effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the economy would not fully turn around until after 1939, when World War II kicked American industry into high gear.

Although TGD began in the United States, it quickly turned into a worldwide economic slump because of the special and intimate relationships that had been forged between the United States and European economies after World War I. The United States had emerged from the war as the major creditor and financier of postwar Europe, whose national economies had been greatly weakened by the war itself, by war debts, and, in the case of Germany and other defeated nations, by the need to pay war reparations (see “1923” below). Once the American economy slumped and the flow of American investment credits to Europe dried up, prosperity collapsed there as well. TGD hit those nations hardest that were most deeply indebted to the United States – Germany and Great Britain. In Germany, unemployment rose sharply beginning in late 1929, and by early 1932 it had reached 6 million workers, or 25 percent of the work force. Britain was less severely affected, but its industrial and export sectors remained seriously depressed until World War II. Many other countries were also affected, and protective measures for domestic production greatly reduced the volume of

international trade. By 1932, the total value of world trade had fallen by more than half as country after country took measures against the importation of foreign goods.

1923: The Crisis of 1923 was in Germany, following their defeat in WWI. Solomon could have been living there at the time, and therefore would have been impacted by it. The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 clearly outlined the aim of the Allies, who won the War: to quash German military power and deplete the German economy. Germany's colonies were divided between Italy, France, Belgium, Japan and Britain. Germany's Saar mines were given to France, as was Alsace-Lorraine, with its population of two million and high percentage of German iron production. The southern part of Silesia, with its industries and mines, was ceded to Poland, and the north part of Schleswig went to Denmark.

The Allied nations seized most of Germany's military equipment, as well as its planes, submarines and cruisers. Its army was severely reduced to 100,000 men, a number capable of managing an internal insurrection and nothing more.

In May 1921, the Allies demanded full payment of reparations. Because the Allies feared Germany might pay off the debt in paper marks, the actual amount of reparations that Germany was obliged to pay out was not the 132 billion marks cited in the London Schedule of 1921, but rather the 50 billion marks stipulated in A and B Bonds. The actual total payout from 1920 to 1931, when payments were suspended indefinitely, was 20 billion German gold marks, worth about \$5 billion US dollars. The value today would be \$73 million.

Payment in kind was arranged for some of the debt: the UK received equivalent tonnage and class for all her lost shipping during the war; the French were given thousands of trains, railway wagons, trucks and cattle; the Belgians also received their payment in cattle. Germany was completely humiliated and economically stripped. The German bourgeoisie made enormous profits from the ensuing inflation, but the remaining population faced starvation and severe hardship.

The reparations became an impossible burden on the economy. In January 1923 Germany defaulted on the payments. Within days, the French dispatched troops to occupy the Ruhr.

Rob Sewell, an economics historian, describes the impact on the German people: "National revulsion spread like wildfire throughout Germany at the French occupation: half a million people demonstrated in Berlin alone. The government asked workers in the Ruhr not to cooperate with the French, and to make the occupation as difficult as possible. Measures of resistance – strikes, go-slows and sabotage – slowed down the French, who resorted to 10,000 expulsions in the first six-month period of 1923. A wave of militancy gripped the towns of central Germany as inflation gave way to hyper-inflation. Living standards were cut to the bone, as the price of a single loaf of bread in Berlin escalated from 0.63

marks in 1918 to 250 marks in January 1923. Soon, prices would rise astronomically – a loaf would cost 3465 marks in July, 1.5 million in September, and reach a peak of 201,000 million marks in November 1923!”

Panic of 1904: Solomon may be talking here about the Panic of 1907. The year 1904 may have stuck in his mind because one of the mitigating factors for the Panic was the 1904 Northern Securities case, a victory for President Theodore Roosevelt in his "trust-busting" efforts to break up Big business monopolies. President Roosevelt ordered the Department of Justice to take the Northern Securities Company, a Trust set up by banker J.P. Morgan and railroad magnate James J. Hill, to court for violating the Sherman Antitrust. The result was that the Supreme Court ordered the Northern Securities Company to be dissolved.

Another event that contributed to the Panic of 1907 was the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, which caused considerable monetary problems when many insurance companies went bankrupt and shares on the Stock Market began to fall. Two months later, in June, the Hepburn Act, which gave the Interstate Commerce Commission the power to set maximum railroad rates, resulted in the depreciation of the value of railroad securities.

In July 1907, Copper prices collapsed and stock prices declined by 18%. In August 1907, President Roosevelt continued his "trust-busting" activities by levying a \$29 million fine against Standard Oil Corporation, which caused stock prices to fall again.

On October 14, 1907, copper magnates Augustus and Otto Heinze attempted to corner the copper market. The plan backfired, bankrupting the Heinze Brothers. The Knickerbocker Trust, an American bank based in New York, was also involved in the attempted manipulation of the stock market. A week later, the National Bank of Commerce announced that it would no longer accept checks for the Knickerbocker Trust Company, causing a run on the Knickerbocker Trust Company bank.

On October 23, Charles Barney, the president of the Knickerbocker Trust Company bank, requested financial assistance from J.P. Morgan, but the banker flatly refused to help. As a result, Knickerbocker went bust. The Trust Company of America and Lincoln Trust Company also collapsed. Charles Barney, though not financially ruined by the crash, was ostracized from the banking community. Unable to live with the disgrace, he shot himself in the abdomen with a .32 caliber revolver on November 14 and died the same day.

On October 24, more banks started to collapse. These included the Twelfth Ward Bank, Empire City Savings, the Hamilton Bank of New York, First National Bank of Brooklyn, International Trust Company, Williamsburg Trust Company, Borough Bank of Brooklyn, Jenkins Trust Company and the Union Trust Company of Providence. New York banks stopped making the short-term loans

that were used by stock traders, and prices on the Wall Street Stock exchange began to crash.

The panic continued to increase on Friday, October 25. J.P. Morgan attempted to get banks to make short-term loans. He made a statement to newspaper reporters, "If people will keep their money in the banks, everything will be all right ..." (Clearly, he followed his own advice about his own money when he didn't use it to help the Knickerbocker Trust Company bank.)

On Monday October 28, the New York Clearing House issued \$100 million in loan certificates to be traded between banks. Confidence in the banks began to return.

Five days later, Moore & Schley, a major brokerage, nearly collapsed because its loans were uncertainly backed by the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company. US Steel made a proposal to purchase TC&I, which President Roosevelt approved two days later, despite his trust-busting stance.

Following the Panic of 1907 and the Stock Market Crash, the Postal Savings System was established. It was decreed that the US would have a central bank, and the Federal Reserve was eventually created in 1913.

1898: This is the year that brings up the most speculation. Solomon may be talking about the Panic of 1893, which was a serious economic depression in the United States that began in 1893 and lasted until 1898. Solomon was 14 in 1893 when the crisis emerged; he was 19 in 1898 when it ended, and presumably still living in Russia, since he didn't leave, by his own admission, until 1902. I couldn't find evidence of the crisis effecting Russia, nor any other foreign country for that matter, with the sole exception of Argentina, which might just provide the connection to Solomon.

At the time, the Panic of 1893 was considered the worst economic depression the United States had ever experienced. It had many similarities to TGD: panic, frenzied runs on failed banks and rampant unemployment. The severity was great in all industrial cities and mill towns. Because of protective import and export measures and the resulting falling prices for export crops such as wheat and cotton, farm distress was great.

The US economy began to recover in 1897. After the election of William McKinley, confidence was restored with the Klondike gold rush and the economy began 10 years of rapid growth, until the panic of 1907.

Historian Hasia Diner, writing in her 2004 book, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000*, noted a view from this time that's reflective of an attitude about Jews that would soon become prevalent after WWI, when Jews were blamed for starting the war in order to bring Europe financially and politically into ruin and

thereby allowing them to take control: "Some Populists believed that Jews made up a class of international financiers whose policies had ruined small family farms. Jews, they asserted, owned the banks and promoted the gold standard, the chief sources of their impoverishment. Agrarian radicalism posited the city as antithetical to American values, asserting that Jews were the essence of urban corruption."

Perhaps what Solomon said had something to do with this attitude, though I have another hypothesis related to Argentina's involvement in the Panic, which I mentioned earlier, and how it could have affected a Russian teenager.

One of the causes for the panic of 1893 can be attributed to Argentina: the Argentine agent bank, Baring Brothers, encouraged US investment. However, a failure in the wheat crop and a coup in Buenos Aires, related to the Revolution of 1893, ended further investments. This shock started a run on gold in the US Treasury, as investors were cashing in their investments.

Solomon may have had Jewish relatives in Argentina who were impacted by the fallout from the coup and the investment withdrawal. In the late 19th century, Ashkenazi immigrants (see "Russian-Yiddish accent" on page 24 of this glossary), fleeing poverty in Eastern Europe and the violent pogroms in the Russian Empire in 1881, settled in Argentina with the help of Jewish philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch. Founder of the Jewish Colonization Association, de Hirsche developed a plan to bring Jews to Argentina as autonomous agricultural settlers. In 1889, 824 Russian Jews arrived in Argentina on the S.S. Weser and became gauchos, or Argentinian cowboys, becoming known as "rusos", Spanish for "Russians". They bought land and established a colony named Moiseville. De Hirsch rescued them when they got themselves into dire economic straits. His Association would come to own more than 600,000 hectares (1,482,63 acres) of land, populated by more than 200,000 Jews.

De Hirsch's Jewish settlement plan thrived in Argentina's vast, unpopulated land reserves. Domingo F. Sarmiento, President of Argentina from 1868-1874, developed a policy where mass immigration was encouraged, and the country's 1853 constitution, guaranteeing religious freedom, provided relief to refugees.

Despite anti-Semitism and increasing xenophobia, Jews became involved in most sectors of Argentine society. Many settled in cities, especially Buenos Aires. Though they were prohibited from positions in the government or military, many became farmers, peddlers, artisans and shopkeepers.

Between 1906 and 1912, some 13,000 Jews, mostly from Europe, immigrated to Argentina every year. By 1920, more than 150,000 Jews were living in Argentina.

Who knows? Perhaps Solomon's family had ties in Argentina who sent money to support them in Russia or to help finance their passage to Argentina. Maybe his

Russian family meant to emigrate to Argentina, but the money dried up because their Argentinian relatives became victims of the American investment fallout in 1893 or the Revolution of 1893. Food for thought.

“Don’t shame me, will ya?”: the interpretation here is an actor’s and director’s choice. On one hand, Victor may be asking Solomon not to embarrass him for how his father allowed his financial loss to take away his spirit, unlike Solomon, who was capable of bouncing back again and again. On the other hand, he could be asking Solomon not to make him look bad for driving him away because of what he said. With the first choice, Victor would be showing how he is still carrying the emotional burden of his father’s descent; in the second, his own behavior towards Solomon would be responsible for his shame. There could be other interpretations, too. So many layers, so little time ...

P. 35

Eleven hundred dollars: \$1,100 in 1968 is worth \$7,619.26 in 2015.

P. 36

“I mean it’s already in the Bible, the rat race. The minute she laid her hand on the apple, that’s it ... There’s always a rat race, you can’t stay out of it”:

Solomon’s lines here have shades of misogyny, but I think he is talking more about wanting something you don’t have, can’t have, is forbidden, or that someone else has and you don’t. Believe me, there’s plenty in the Bible about that!

The “she” who laid her hand on the apple is Eve, whose story is in Genesis, the first book of the Jewish Bible. Eve and Adam are the original man and woman, created directly by God to live in Eden, the perfect world God also created. (The story has undergone extensive elaboration, interpretation and analysis throughout time by various religions and sects. My retelling is the more familiar one.)

There was one caveat in Eden: under pain of death, Adam and Eve were not to eat fruit from one particular tree, described as the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve started obsessing about the fruit, which is always depicted as an apple in religious art, probably because an apple is universally identifiable. Knowing she couldn’t have it, Eve would wonder why it was forbidden. It grew into something spectacular in her mind and she was tantalized by the idea of gaining wisdom that would make her more like God. She took to gazing at the tree, hungering for its fruit.

While at the tree, she encountered a serpent entwined in its branches. The serpent, anamorphized in the story, cunningly played into her desire for the fruit and the wisdom it would give her. He goaded her to eat the fruit, assuring her that God would never kill her. She gave in and “laid her hand on the apple”, as Solomon said, plucking it and eating it. She, in turn, goaded Adam into eating it as well, and they were banished from Eden, their perfect existence shattered.

Covetousness also figured in the story of Cain and Abel, who, according to Genesis,

were the sons of Eve and Adam. The story goes that Abel and Cain both made sacrifices to God, but that God was only pleased with that of Abel. Cain was furious that God was pleased with Abel and not with him, so he killed Abel. Another version factors a woman into the picture. Cain and Abel had two sisters, whom they were to marry, since they were the only men and women on Earth besides their parents and God had commanded them to procreate. (How come gay marriage opponents who stand on religious grounds don't mention this kind of thing? They talk about Biblical marriage between one man and one woman, but don't bring up Biblical marriage between one sister and one brother.) Anyway, Abel's promised wife, Aclima, was the more beautiful one, with absolutely nothing being said about her personality. Cain would not consent to the arrangement because he wanted Aclima for himself. Adam suggested seeking God's blessing by means of a sacrifice, and whomever God blessed would marry Aclima. When God openly rejected Cain's sacrifice, Cain killed Abel.

Believe me, there are a ton of stories in the Bible like these, but I'll just do one more. It's also in Genesis, and it involves Esau and Jacob, who were twin sons of Isaac and Sarah.

Esau was born first, so he was given the birthright, the inheritance of goods and position, which was rather substantial, Isaac being an old man who had amassed a great deal of land, cattle and other possessions in his lifetime. Jacob was born next, grasping Esau's heel, supposedly because he was trying to pull Esau back into the womb so that he could be firstborn. (Really? A *baby* did that because he *somehow* knew he'd get the birthright if he succeeded? You can't make this stuff up.)

Later, when they were both adults, as Esau was returning home, weary and famished after working very long and hard in the fields, he managed to happen upon Jacob strategically blocking his path, stirring a fragrant pot of lentil stew. Esau begged his twin brother to give him some, but Jacob wouldn't unless Esau gave him his birthright. Esau agreed.

The story takes many twists and turns after that, with lots more deception, subterfuge, theft, threats of murder, and, of course, the inevitable hot woman, all because two people want something that only one can have. Solomon's "rat race".

Camel's-hair coat: The coat Walter is wearing is identified on page 43 as a gift from "a big textiles guy", upon whom Walter operated, extracting two gallstones. (Gallstones are defined later in the glossary.)

Camel hair is a very exclusive and upscale type of cloth made from pure camel hair or a blend of camel hair and another fiber. Camel hair is collected from the Bactrian camel, which is found across Asia from eastern Turkey and China to Siberia. Significant supplier countries of camel hair include Mongolia, Tibet, Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, China, New Zealand and Australia.

The outer protective fur, or guard hair, is coarse and inflexible and can only be made soft and plush by blending it, especially with wool. The camel's pure undercoat is very soft, gathered when camels molt, and is frequently used for coats. Its high thermostatic properties not only provide insulation, but can also provide protection from heat.

Each camel produces only about five pounds of hair a year. It's collected by shearing, combing or by collecting fiber that's shed naturally during the six to eight-week molting season in late spring. Fallen hair is normally gathered by hand.

After collection, coarse and fine hairs are separated, again by hand. Fibers are washed to remove any dirt or debris and then spun into yarn suitable for weaving or knitting.

Pure camel hair is recorded as being used for western garments from the 17th century onwards, and from the 19th century a mixture of wool and camel hair was used. The first fashion brand to popularize camel hair in clothing was Jaeger, a UK manufacturer that specialized in the use of fine woolen fabrics for coats and suits. It became popular in the US in the 1920s and '30s, having been introduced through the sport of polo, where players would wear casual camel hair coats in-between matches.

The fabric is distinct because of its color, texture and hand (feel). It's also quite expensive because of its origins and the specific craftsmanship required to weave and sew it. Esther would have recognized what it was and noted its value.

Chances are that Walter's patient gave him a 100% camel's hair coat of the most exclusive quality, or one with a blend of cashmere, to show his esteem.



Men's 1960s double-breasted polo coat made of camel hair and Alpaca wool