

The Hopes and Dreams Series
Jewish-Americans

Old Ways New Ways

A story based on history



Second Edition

Tana Reiff

Illustrations by Tyler Stiene

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Text ISBN 13: 978-0-86647-447-4 – Audio CD ISBN 13: 978-0-86647-448-1

The first edition of this book was originally published by Fearon Education, a division of David S. Lake Publishers, Belmont, California, Copyright © 1989, later by Pearson Education. This, the second edition, has been revised and redesigned.

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The cover and illustrations are by Tyler Stiene. The book was set and designed by Tana Reiff, consulting with A.A. Burrows, using the Adobe *Century Schoolbook* typeface for the text. This is a digital adaptation of one of the most popular faces of the twentieth century. Century's distinctive roman and italic fonts and its clear, dark strokes and serifs were designed, as the name suggests, to make schoolbooks easy to read. The display font used on the cover and titles is a 21st-century digital invention titled Telugu. It is designed to work on all digital platforms and with Indic scripts. Telugu is named for the Telugu people in southern India and their widely spoken language. This is a simple, strong, and interesting sans serif display font.

This book was printed and bound by KC Book Manufacturing in North Kansas City, Missouri. Printed in the United States. Second edition 2018

The Hopes and Dreams Series

by Tana Reiff

The Magic Paper (Mexican-Americans)
For Gold and Blood (Chinese-Americans)

Nobody Knows (African-Americans)

Little Italy (Italian-Americans)

Hungry No More (Irish-Americans)

Sent Away (Japanese-Americans)

Two Hearts (Greek-Americans)

A Different Home (Cuban-Americans)

The Family from Vietnam (Vietnamese-Americans)

Old Ways, New Ways (Jewish-Americans)

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1 The Cobbler

New York City, Lower East Side

1914

Pound! Pound! Pound!
Solomon Gold
pounded the nail
into the shoe.
His young son Sidney
watched him work.
This was his father.
The shoemaker.
The cobbler
from another place.
A cobbler
like his father
before him.

“When does school
start up again?”
Sol asked his son.

“Next week,”
said Sidney.

“That’s good,”
said Sol,
not looking up
from his work.
“School is important.
Very important.
My father
put sugar on my books.
‘Learning is sweet,’
he would say.
I want you
to get good grades.
You are smart.
You work hard,
you’ll do fine.
Hand me that shoe,
will you?”

Sidney handed his father
the shoe.
“How can you do this
day after day?”
the boy asked.

“What do you mean?”
asked Sol.

“This is my work.
I work hard.
I am good at what I do.
I put food
on the table.
Someday, my boy,
you’ll work too.”

“Not here,”
Sidney said to himself.

“You and I,
we will work
side by side,”
Sol went on.
“We will build
the business together.
Look how far
I have come already!
When I first came
to America,
I worked in a crowded shop.
I helped to make shoes
for pennies.
Now I have
my own shop.”

Sidney looked
around the little room.
Maybe this was
his father's dream.
But Sidney
could never spend
his whole life here.
Helping his father
when school was out
was one thing.
But work here always?
Never!

“You are only 14,”
said Sol.
“You do not understand
how it was
for your mother and me.
You do not understand
where we come from.”

“I know
you come from Europe,”
said Sidney.
“You don't speak
much English.
And you fix shoes.”

“School is very good,”
laughed Sol.

“But it does not teach
some important things
you should know.

Let me tell you
how it was.”



2 The Old Country

Russia, 1882

Young Solomon Gold
was sleeping.
“Wake up!”
cried his mother
in the middle
of the night.
“The house
is on fire!”

Young Sol
jumped out of bed.
He felt
a wall of heat
moving toward him.
He saw orange flashes.
He ran outside.

Sol heard
his father’s voice.
“Stop it!”
cried Sol’s father.

Men with sticks
were beating him.
Some of the men
threw stones.

Sol ran
to his father.
“Stop hurting my father!”
he yelled at the men.
Then Sol himself
felt stones
hit his body.
He cried out
in pain.

Two large men
pushed the boy away.
Then they all left.

Sol's father
lay in the street.
He was not dead.
But there was blood
all around him.
Sol helped him
stand up.

Over the next weeks,
Solomon Gold's father
began to feel better.
But he was angry.
“What is going on?”
he cried to Sol's mother.
“First they tell us Jews
that we are not
real Russians.
Then they pass laws.
The new laws say
Jews may not buy land.
And only a few Jews
may go to school.
Then these men come here
to beat and to kill.
They burn our house.
Now they tell us
that all Jews
must move to the city?”

“Oh, no!”
said Sol’s mother.
“Our families
have lived here
for hundreds of years!
We never made
any trouble.”

Even so,
the family
had to leave their home.
They went to a city
in the west of Russia.
All the Jews
had to live
in one part of the city.
It was known as
the ghetto.
Most jobs
were not open to them.

“We have taken
enough!”
said Sol’s father one day.
“We cannot live
like this.
It is too hard
to be Jewish
in this country.
We must leave.
Yes! we will go to America.
The land of hopes and dreams!”



3 Friday

“So now you know,
my boy,” said Sol.
“And your mother’s story
is much like mine.
This is the life
we came from.”

Sidney Gold
had heard the story before.

“I am happy
to work hard,”
said Sol.
“Why?
Because here,
we can be Jewish.
No one tells us
we cannot be Jewish.
And here,
you and your sister
can go to school.”

Just then
two of Sol's friends
came into the shop.
Sol looked up
at the clock
on the wall.

“Is it noon already?”
he asked.

“We are early,”
said one of the men.
We came to visit
for a few minutes.”

Sol's friends
came to the shop
every day.
But today was Friday.
On Fridays
all the shops
closed early.
It was Shabbat.
All the Jewish men
went to pray and sing.

“Are you coming along?”
Sol asked Sidney.

“Of course,”
said Sidney as he
locked the back door
and closed the windows.

Sol pounded in
the last nail.
He pulled off
his leather apron
as he stood up.
“Let’s go!”
he said.

They walked out
into the street.
Earlier this morning
the street
was full of people.
Men sold
food and clothes
on the street.
The street was loud
and full of life.
Now the last wagon
was rolling away.

The women
were already busy inside.
Sidney's mother, Hannah,
was cooking special food
for the Friday night dinner.

Sidney turned the sign
on the door.
CLOSED, it read.
But everyone around
knew that already.
It was Friday
on the Lower East Side.
It was not a time
to do business.



4 Mr. Fine

The Gold family
lived in four rooms.
There was a tiny kitchen
with a table and chairs.
Sol and Hannah
slept in the living room.
They slept
on folding beds.
Emma, Sidney's older sister,
had a small room
off the kitchen.
Sidney shared his room
with a boarder.

The boarder
was not a member
of the family.
He lived
with the Golds
for a dollar a week.
Having a boarder
helped the Golds
make ends meet.

Each boarder
stayed about a year.
Then another one
would move in.
This week
a boarder
had moved out.

New York was crowded.
Everyone needed
a place to live.
Hannah had no trouble
finding someone
to share Sidney's room.
When Sol and Sidney
got home,
a new person was there.

“Meet our new boarder,
said Hannah.
“This is Mr. Fine.
He is a teacher.”

Sol and Sidney
shook Mr. Fine's hand.
“Glad to meet you,”
they said to each other.

Sidney liked Mr. Fine
right away.
But Sol was not so sure
about this young man.
He did not like
Mr. Fine's looks.
This young man
was Jewish.
But he was
a different kind of Jew.
He acted
more like an American.
He spoke perfect English.
And why
had he not been
at temple today?

But to Sidney,
Mr. Fine seemed
very interesting.
Sidney wanted
to get to know him better.

Glossary

Definitions and examples of certain words and terms used in the story

Chapter 1 — The Cobbler page 1

cobbler — A person who makes or repairs shoes.

The cobbler from another place.

pound (to pound) — To hit something hard.

nail — A sharp piece of metal used to connect two things together.

Solomon Gold pounded the nail into the shoe.

spend — To use time (or money).

But Sidney could never spend his whole life here.

(school) was out — Not open, finished at the end of the school day.

Helping his father when school was out ...

Chapter 2 — The Old Country page 6

flashes — Sudden and bright light, like lightning.
He saw orange flashes.

beating (to beat) — To hit something or someone very hard many times.
Men with sticks were beating him.

yelled (to yell) — To speak very loudly; to shout.
“Stop hurting my father,” he yelled at the men.

even so — However.
Even so, the family had to leave their home.

ghetto — A part of a city where a special group of people live, separate from the main city.
It (the part of the city) was known as the ghetto.

Chapter 3 — Friday page 11

Shabbat — The Jewish holy day of rest.

... all the shops closed early. It was Shabbat.

pulled off (to pull off) — To remove a piece of clothing.

apron — A piece of cloth or leather worn across a person's front for protection.

He pulled off his apron as he stood up.

Lower East Side — A part of New York City where immigrant groups, especially Jews, lived. It is now more fashionable.

It was Friday on the Lower East Side.

Chapter 4 — Mr. Fine page 15

folding bed — A small bed (may also called “cot”) that can be folded and easily stored.

They slept on folding beds.

shared (to share) — To use, or have something together.

Sidney shared his room with a boarder.

boarder — A person who pays to have a room and sometimes meals with the owner of a house.

Sidney shared his room with a boarder.

(to) make ends meet — To earn enough money to pay the bills.

Having a boarder helped the Golds make ends meet.

move in/out — To begin living (move in) in a place and end living there (move out).

Then another one would move in. This week a boarder had moved out.

temple — A holy Jewish house for worship and prayer.

And why had he not been at temple today?