

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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## 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

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### 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?*