Old Ways
New Ways
A story based on history

Second Edition

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The Hopes and Dreams Series
Jewish-Americans
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.”
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!”
“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.
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

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.*
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

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?