

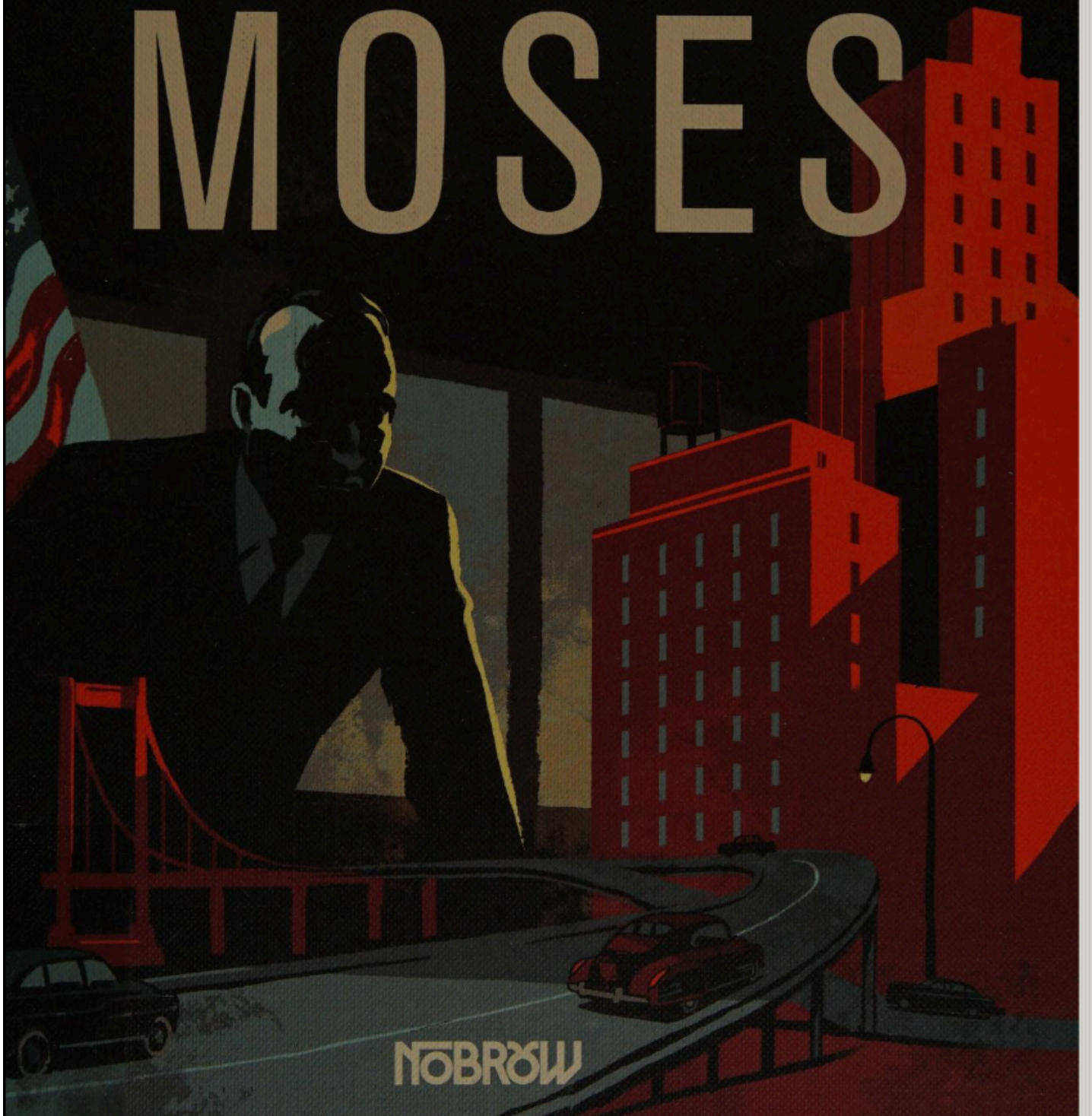
PIERRE CHRISTIN

OLIVIER BALEZ

ROBERT

THE MASTER BUILDER OF
NEW YORK CITY

MOSES

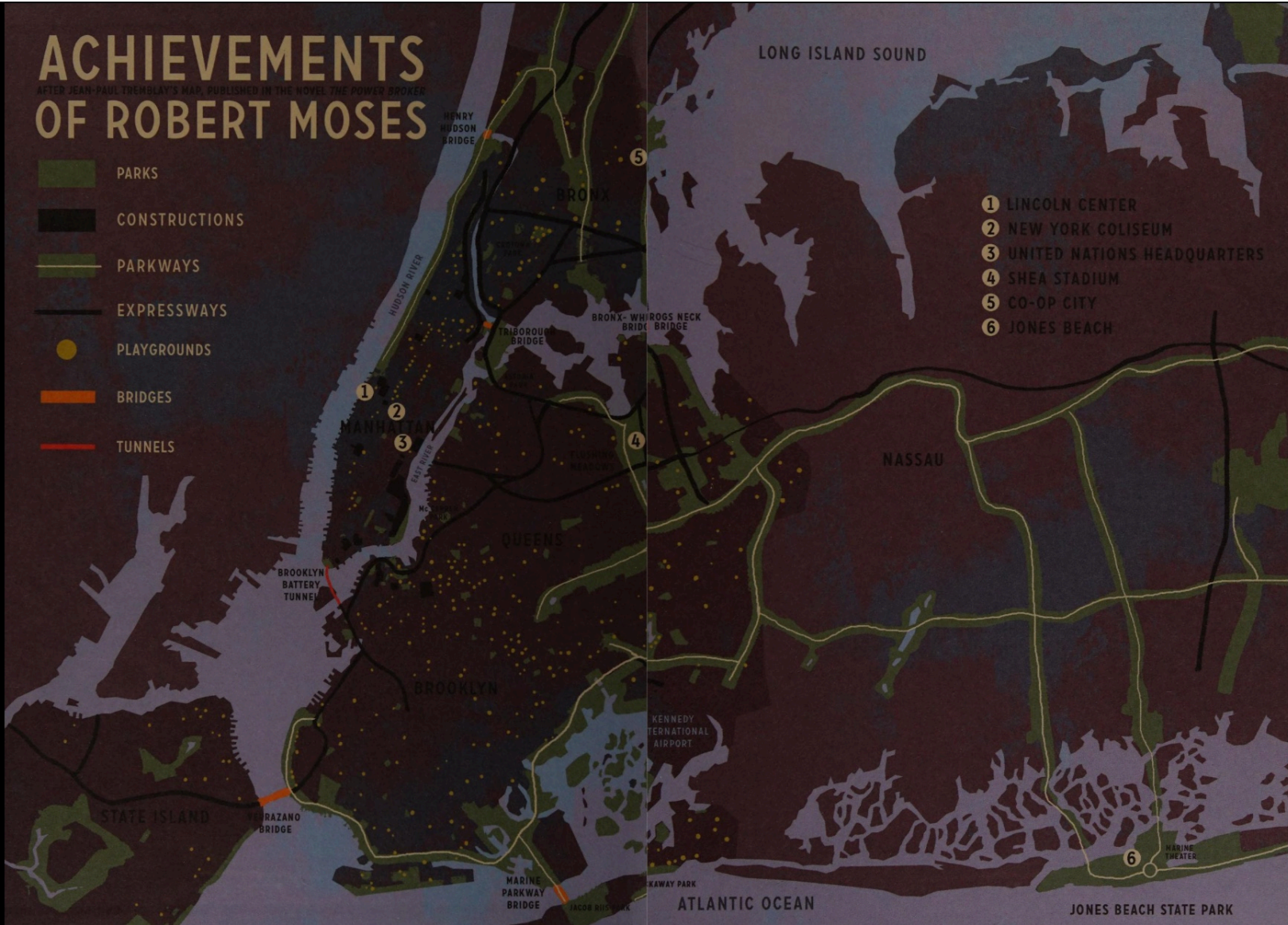


NOBROW

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ROBERT MOSES

AFTER JEAN-PAUL TREMBLAY'S MAP, PUBLISHED IN THE NOVEL *THE POWER BROKER*

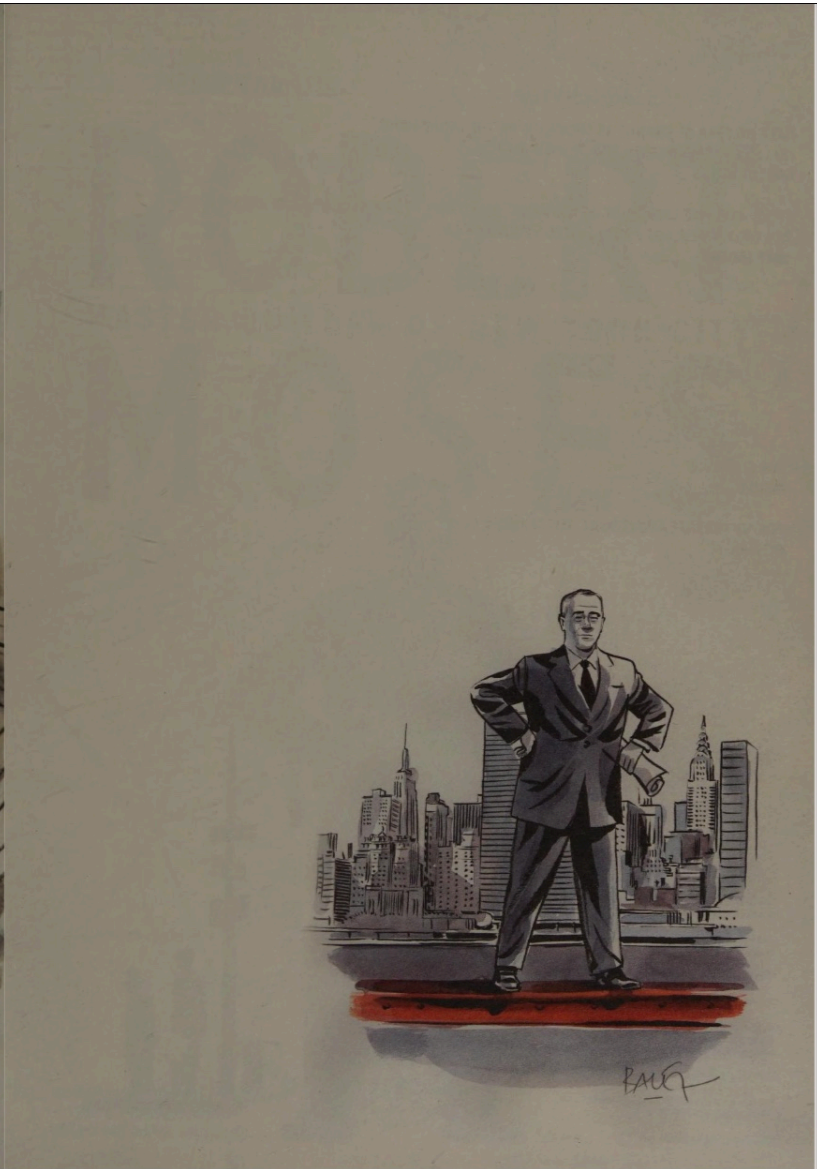
-  PARKS
-  CONSTRUCTIONS
-  PARKWAYS
-  EXPRESSWAYS
-  PLAYGROUNDS
-  BRIDGES
-  TUNNELS



- 1 LINCOLN CENTER
- 2 NEW YORK COLISEUM
- 3 UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
- 4 SHEA STADIUM
- 5 CO-OP CITY
- 6 JONES BEACH

ATLANTIC OCEAN

JONES BEACH STATE PARK



HAVE NO FEAR OF CHANGE AS SUCH AND, ON THE OTHER HAND,
NO LIKING FOR IT MERELY FOR ITS OWN SAKE.
ROBERT MOSES

CITIES HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF PROVIDING SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY, ONLY BECAUSE,
AND ONLY WHEN, THEY ARE CREATED BY EVERYBODY.
JANE JACOBS

FOR FLORENCE
PIERRE

FOR MY PARENTS AND ISIDORA, THE PLANNER OF MY LIFE
OLIVIER

This is a first edition published in 2014 by Nobrow Ltd, 62 Great Eastern Street,
London, EC2A 3QR.

Original Title: Robert Moses, Le Maître Cache de New York
Authors: P. Christin, O. Balez

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Published in the US by Nobrow (US) Inc.

Printed in Poland on FSC assured paper.
ISBN: 978-1-907704-96-3

Order from www.nobrow.net



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CHAPTER 1

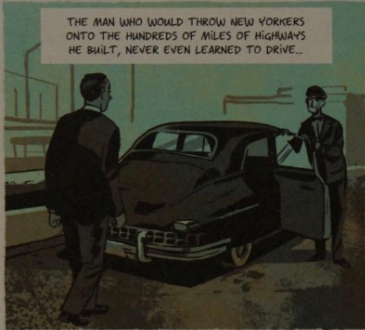
The childhood of a leader



ROBERT MOSES NEVER LEARNED
TO DRIVE...



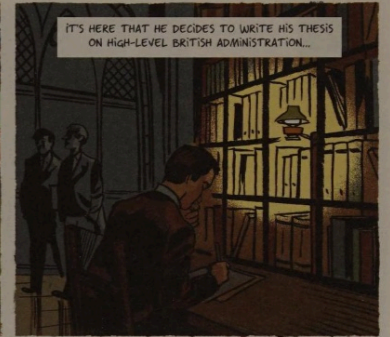
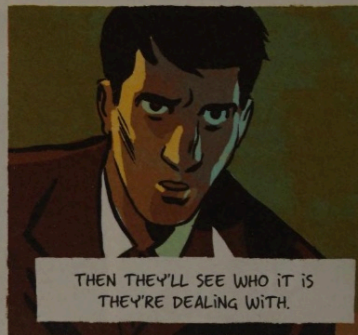
...EVEN IF HE OFTEN POSED
PAYING AT TOLL BOOTHS.





THE GREAT BUILDER OF NEW YORK AND HENCE OF THE UNITED STATES NEVER LEARNED TO DRIVE BUT HE CERTAINLY KNEW HOW TO BUILD.







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BY ABANDONING THE SLAHS, YIDDISH AND BY EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN.

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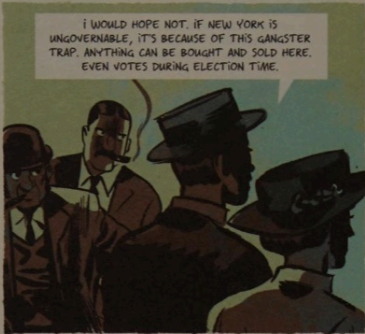


LET'S GO SOMEWHERE MORE PEACEFUL, AT LEAST SEEMINGLY SO.



TAMMANY HALL.

I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE.



I WOULD HOPE NOT. IF NEW YORK IS UNGOVERNABLE, IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS GANGSTER TRAP. ANYTHING CAN BE BOUGHT AND SOLD HERE. EVEN VOTES DURING ELECTION TIME.



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THEY LOOK LIKE GIFTS...



YES, AND INTENDED FOR THE IMMIGRANT NEWCOMERS FROM ELLIS ISLAND.

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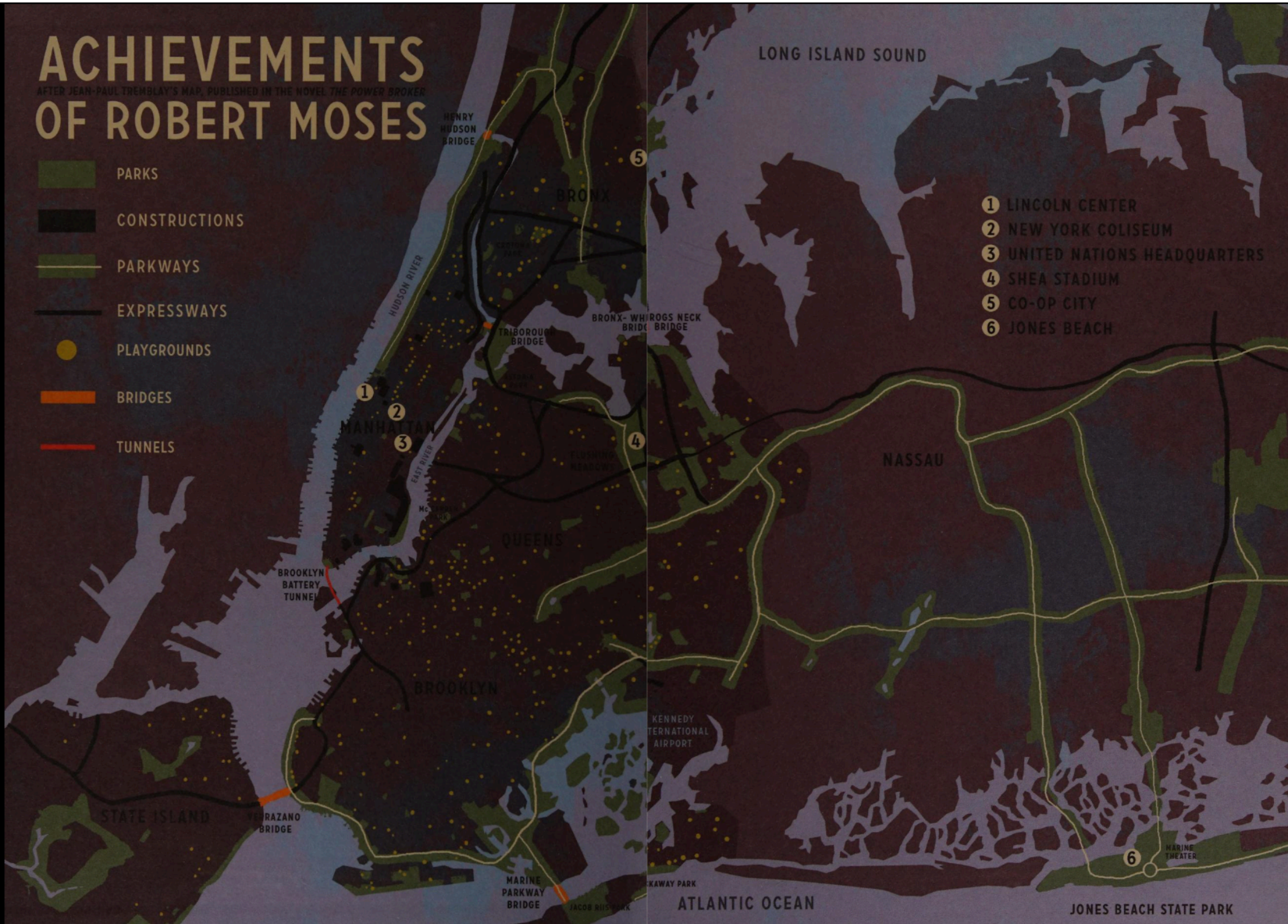
NOT AT ALL...

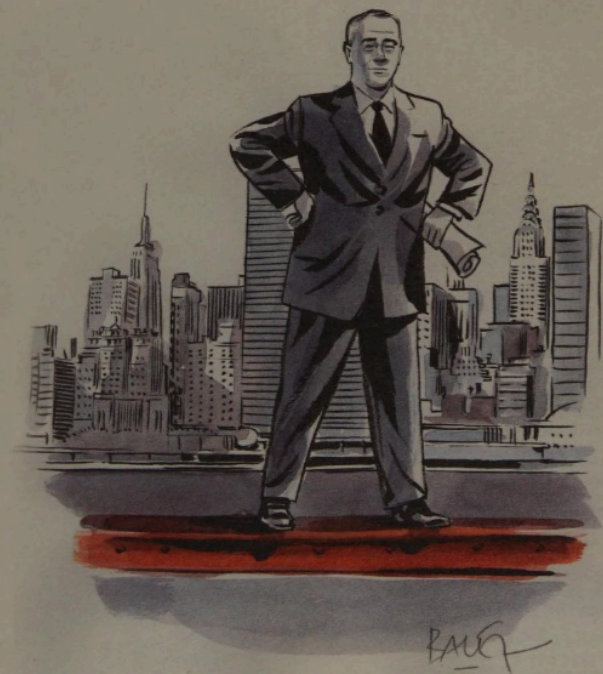
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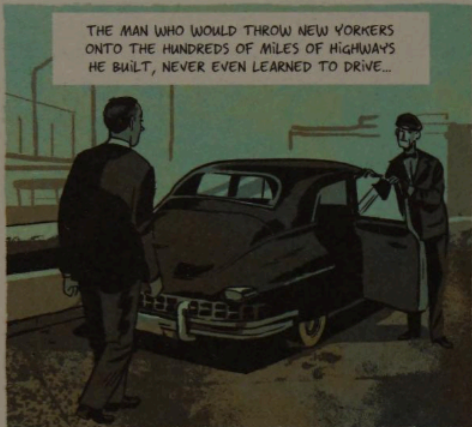
The childhood of a leader

ROBERT MOSES NEVER LEARNED
TO DRIVE...



...EVEN IF HE OFTEN POSED
PAYING AT TOLL BOOTHS.





THE MAN WHO WOULD THROW NEW YORKERS ONTO THE HUNDREDS OF MILES OF HIGHWAYS HE BUILT, NEVER EVEN LEARNED TO DRIVE...



...BUT HE KNEW HOW TO DO A LOT OF OTHER THINGS.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE US TO GO NOW THE INAUGURATION'S OVER, MR ROBERT?

HEAD FOR LONG ISLAND.



GOING FOR A SWIM TODAY, MR MOSES?

NO, NOT TODAY.



I'VE ALSO GOT THE BOAT READY FOR YOU.

NO, I DON'T THINK SO...



I'M GOING TO WALK.



YES, ALONE.

ALONE?



SLUMS, FILTH, CRIME... EVERYTHING HAS TO BE REBUILT HERE.



BUT THIS IS A MAGNIFICENT NEW PARKWAY, MR MOSES. NO TRUCKS, NO COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC AND LOOK AT ALL THESE TREES...



I NEED TO TAKE NOTES ON THE WAY THERE.

HERE'S YOUR CLIPBOARD, MR ROBERT.



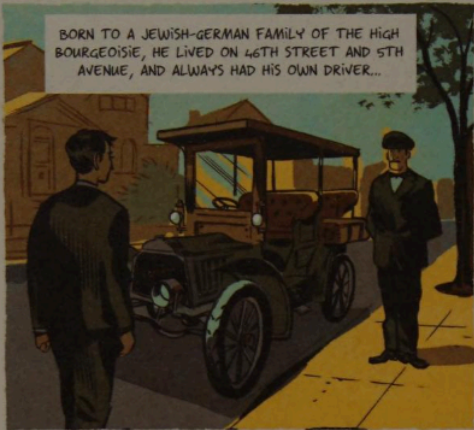
AND YOUR WALKING SHOES, SIR.

THANK YOU. I'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT ON THE RIGHT BANK OF HEMPSTEAD LAKE, NEAR THE TOWER.

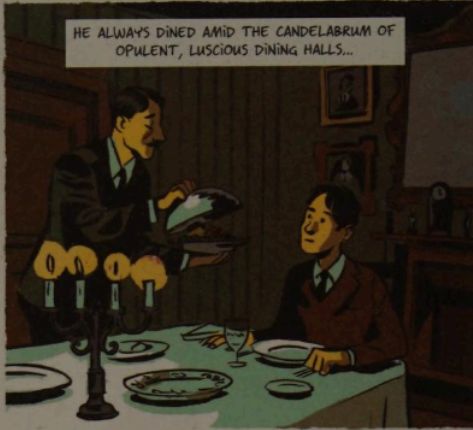


THE GREAT BUILDER OF NEW YORK AND HENCE OF THE UNITED STATES NEVER LEARNED TO DRIVE BUT HE CERTAINLY KNEW HOW TO BUILD.





BORN TO A JEWISH-GERMAN FAMILY OF THE HIGH BOURGEOISIE, HE LIVED ON 46TH STREET AND 5TH AVENUE, AND ALWAYS HAD HIS OWN DRIVER...



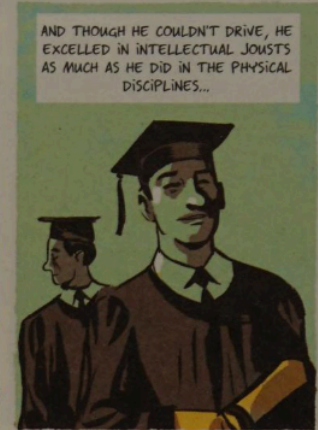
HE ALWAYS DINED AMID THE CANDELABRUM OF OPULENT, LUSCIOUS DINING HALLS...



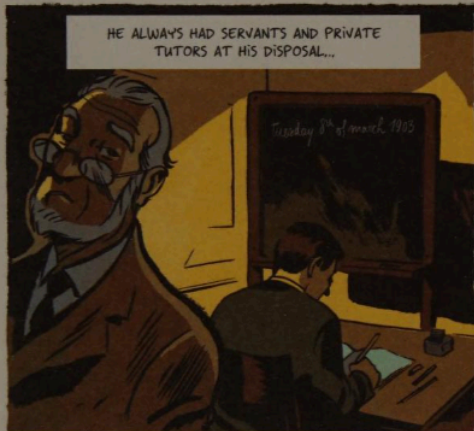
HE ALSO ENJOYED DEEP-SEA FISHING...



...SOLITARY WALKS...



AND THOUGH HE COULDN'T DRIVE, HE EXCELLED IN INTELLECTUAL JOUSTS AS MUCH AS HE DID IN THE PHYSICAL DISCIPLINES...



HE ALWAYS HAD SERVANTS AND PRIVATE TUTORS AT HIS DISPOSAL...



HE ALWAYS HAD BEEN A BRILLIANT AND DETERMINED STUDENT...

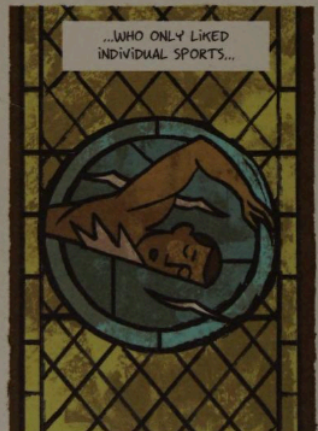


COULD THERE HAVE BEEN A POWERFUL DESIRE FOR REVENGE IN A WHITE PROTESTANT WORLD WHERE BEING JEWISH WAS ALWAYS PERCEIVED AS AN INCONVENIENCE?

NO, ROBERT, YOU'RE THE BRIGHTEST OF US ALL, BUT YOU'LL NEVER BE ALLOWED IN OUR CLUB, AND YOU KNOW IT.



HE WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED ATHLETE...



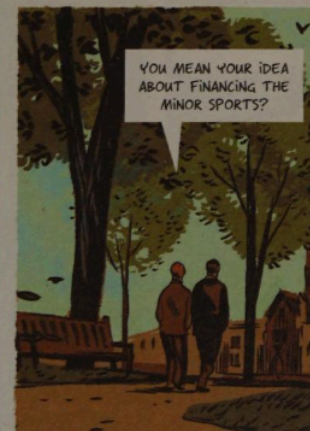
...WHO ONLY LIKED INDIVIDUAL SPORTS...



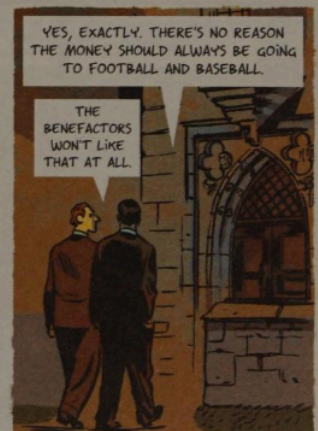
...AND ALSO POETRY.



BEING ONE OF THE FEW "HEBREWS" OF THIS UNIVERSITY, AS THEY SAY, WON'T STOP ME FROM PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN IT.

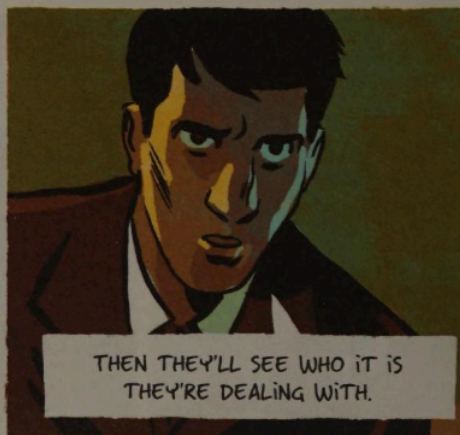
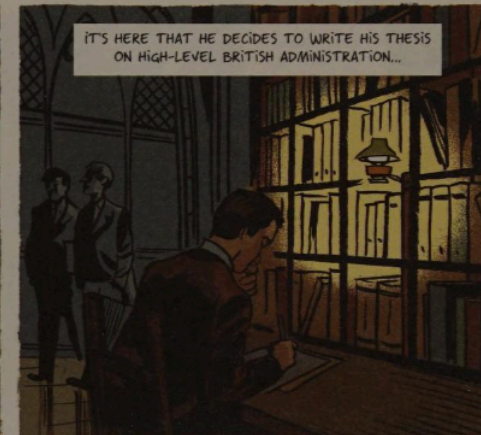
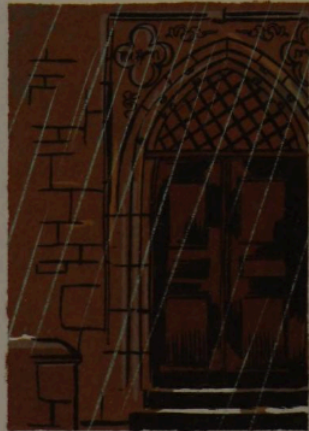


YOU MEAN YOUR IDEA ABOUT FINANCING THE MINOR SPORTS?



YES, EXACTLY. THERE'S NO REASON THE MONEY SHOULD ALWAYS BE GOING TO FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL.

THE BENEFACTORS WON'T LIKE THAT AT ALL.





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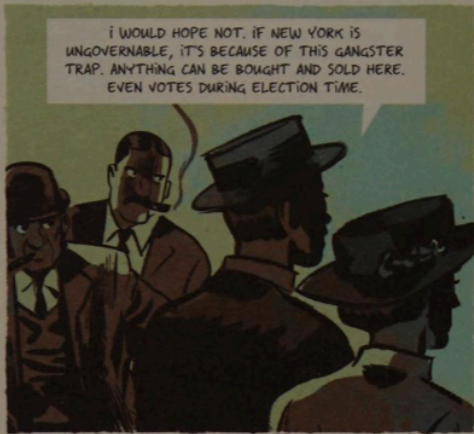


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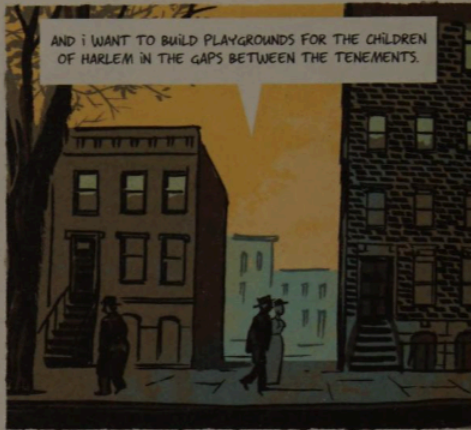
NOT AT ALL...

THEN LET'S GO BACK UP TO CENTRAL PARK. I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT ONE OF MY IDEAS.



I WANT TO BUILD LITTLE SHELTERS FOR MOTHERS TO CHANGE THEIR BABIES WITHOUT HAVING TO GO HOME, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

WHAT A GREAT IDEA, ROBERT.



AND I WANT TO BUILD PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE CHILDREN OF HARLEM IN THE GAPS BETWEEN THE TENEMENTS.



AND HERE, ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE, I'M SURE YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS PLACE, TOO?

YES, MARY, EVEN IF FOR NOW THEY ARE HYPOTHETICAL.



IT'S A CRIME TO LEAVE THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE OVERLOOKING THE HUDSON RIVER IN THE HANDS OF THE RAILWAY SPECULATORS.



LOOK AT THIS MESS, ALL THESE WASTELANDS...



THESE STEAMING LOCOMOTIVES...



THESE WAGONS FILLED WITH DISEASE-RIDDEN ANIMALS...



I SEE GARDENS HERE LEADING ALL THE WAY TO THE WATER'S EDGE...



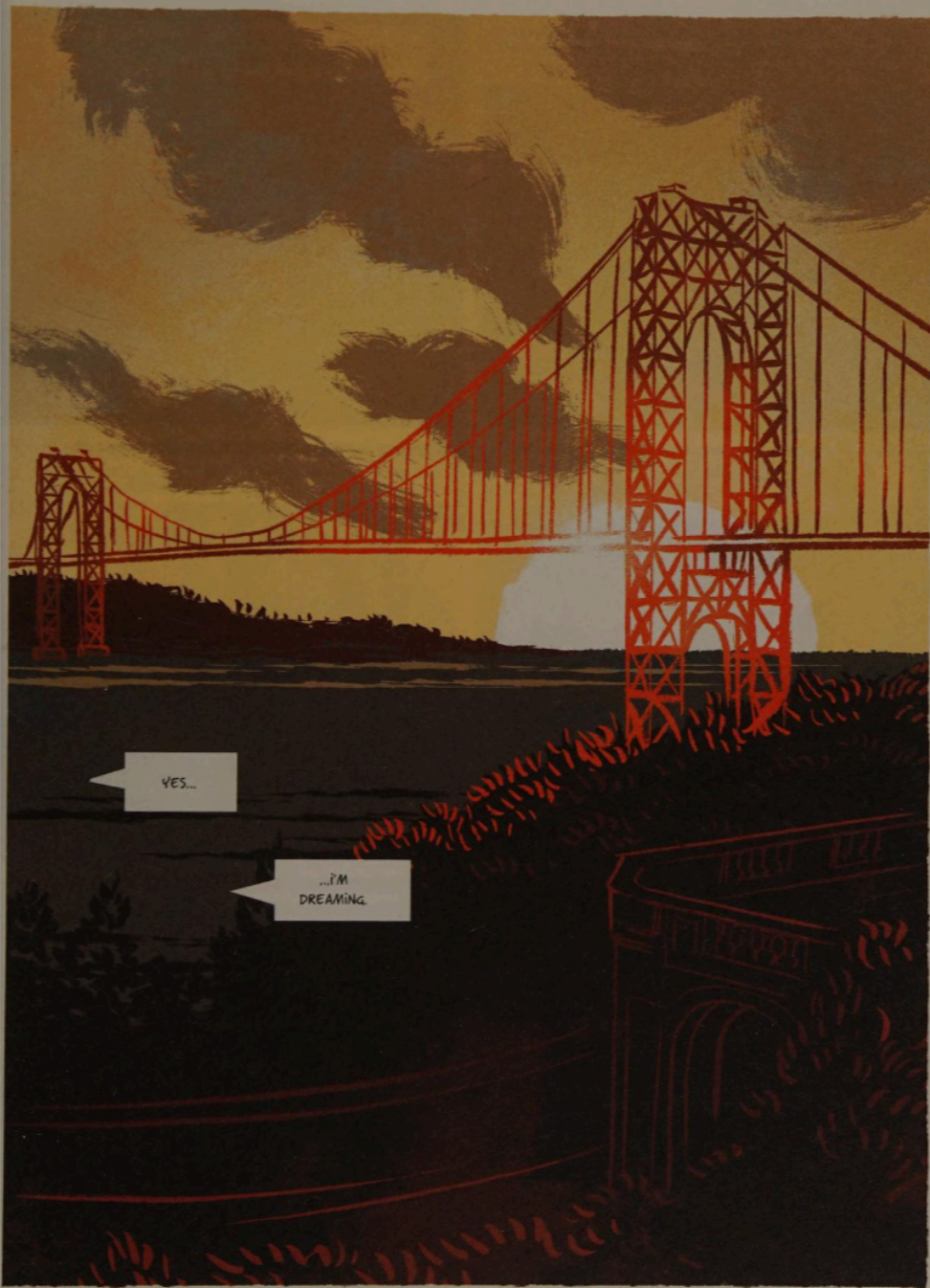
AND EVEN, IN LIEU OF THOSE
CROWDED FERRIES...



I SEE A COLOSSAL BRIDGE CONNECTING
MANHATTAN TO NEW JERSEY.



NOW YOU'RE
DREAMING!



YES...

...I'M
DREAMING.

BUT THE REALITY IS LESS BRIGHT. THE PLAN THAT ROBERT MOSES IS WORKING ON FOR RADICAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IS SABOTAGED BY THE VERY PEOPLE WHO SUPPORTED IT.



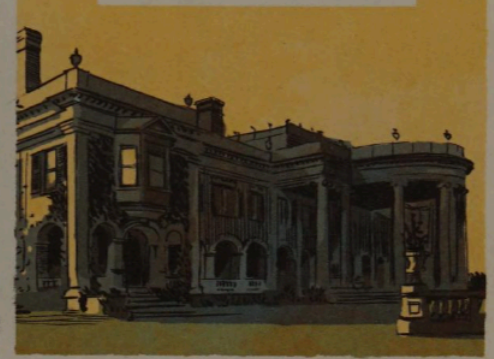
ONCE AGAIN, THE GREAT SACHEMS, THE UNDERWORLD BOSSES AND THE SCAMS OF TAMMANY HALL GET THEIR WAY.



...THE VANDERBILTS, JP. MORGANS AND CARNEGIES...



THE BIGWIGS OF STANDARD OIL, THE OWNERS OF RAILWAY LINES...



MOSES HAS BEEN WORKING FOR FREE, SO, STRICTLY SPEAKING, YOU COULDN'T SAY HE IS UNEMPLOYED.



BUT HE LEARNS A HARD LESSON: IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE IDEAS; YOU HAVE TO HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE THEM A REALITY.



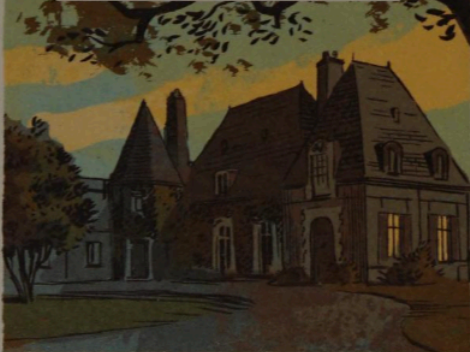
THE FRICKS, MASTERS OF COAL...



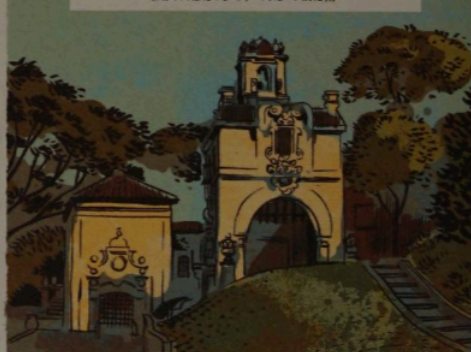
BEHIND IMPENETRABLE GATES AND WALLS THEY BUILD THEMSELVES MARBLE PALACES, BAALBEK INSPIRED SUN TEMPLES, GIGANTIC MANORS AND PRIVATE SPORTS CLUBS...



AGAIN HE WANDERS THE COASTLINE, LARGELY OWNED PRIVATELY BY THE RICH OF LONG ISLAND.



HE SEES THE VAST AREAS DOTTED WITH PALACES AND XANADUS, BELONGING TO THE WEALTHIEST CAPITALISTS OF THE TIME...



THEIR WIVES, WEARING TIARAS, DIADEMS AND RIVERS OF DIAMONDS, ORGANIZE HUGE RECEPTIONS WITH IMPERIAL CROCKERY AND HIGH RENAISSANCE FURNITURE BROUGHT BACK FROM EUROPE...





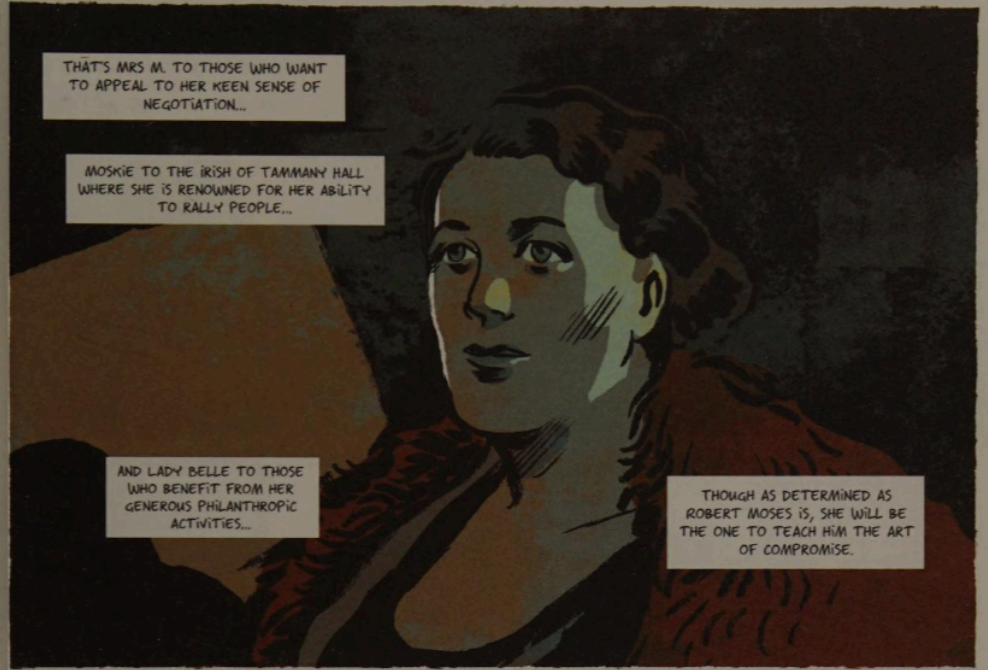
ALCOHOL FLOWS FREELY, DESPITE PROHIBITION, AT PARTIES THAT RESEMBLE THOSE OF THE MYSTERIOUS GATSBY...



THEY SAY RAILWAY TYCOONS HAVE AMASSED LAND EQUAL IN SIZE TO THE STATE OF TEXAS...



MOSES STILL DREAMS OF PLACES ACCESSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK WHO MUST CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH SHABBY BEACHES THAT TAKE HOURS TO REACH ON ROADS MADE DELIBERATELY UNSERVICEABLE...



THAT'S MRS M. TO THOSE WHO WANT TO APPEAL TO HER KEEN SENSE OF NEGOTIATION...

MOSKIE TO THE IRISH OF TAMMANY HALL WHERE SHE IS RENOWNED FOR HER ABILITY TO RALLY PEOPLE...

AND LADY BELLE TO THOSE WHO BENEFIT FROM HER GENEROUS PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES...

THOUGH AS DETERMINED AS ROBERT MOSES IS, SHE WILL BE THE ONE TO TEACH HIM THE ART OF COMPROMISE.



IN 1918, AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR, WHICH HE DIDN'T FIGHT IN, A MEETING TAKES PLACE THAT WILL BE DECISIVE BOTH FOR HIM AND FOR WHAT IS TO COME.



A MEETING WITH MRS MOSKOWITZ, AN ACTIVIST CALLING ALL OF THE SHOTS IN THE NEW YORK DEMOCRATIC PARTY.



AND IT IS BECAUSE OF HER THAT MOSES WILL WORK FOR ALFRED E. SMITH, TWICE ELECTED GOVERNOR OF THE STATE.



IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE TWO CHARACTERS MORE DIFFERENT THAN MOSES AND SMITH. THE LATTER WAS BORN INTO POVERTY AND AS A CHILD WORKED AT A FISH MARKET ON FULTON STREET.



WITH A THUNDEROUS VOICE, SANGUINE FACE, GOLD TEETH AND A CIGAR IN HIS MOUTH, THIS TAMMANY THOROUGHbred ALSO PROVES HIMSELF A COMMITTED REFORMIST.

AND SO, WITH HIS FIRST PAID JOB, ROBERT MOSES BEGINS HIS POLITICAL APPRENTICESHIP BETWEEN TWO VERY IMPRESSIVE MENTORS, IN THE 1920S.



WELL, BOB, WHAT ABOUT THAT SPEECH TO THE STATE SENATORS?

IT'S READY.

WE ARE LISTENING.

GENTLEMEN, I HAVE THE HONOUR OF PRESENTING YOU WITH A REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF THE CITY. A REPORT THAT FORMS A COHERENT WHOLE AND WHICH MUST BE IMPLEMENTED IN ITS TOTALITY IF IT IS TO HAVE ANY EFFICACY.



STOP!



THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO MAKE IDEAS REALITY.

THERE'S NO ROOM FOR EXCESSIVE PRIDE HERE. JUST CONCRETE AUTHORITY, PLEASE.

THIS IS WHAT I SUGGEST, BOB: "I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT I'LL BE FORCED TO ASK THE GOVERNOR, THAT'S ME, ALFRED E. SMITH TO DEMAND THE RESIGNATION OF THOSE THAT DO NOT ADOPT THE REPORT."



MIGHT I SUGGEST INSTEAD: "A REPORT THAT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED POINT BY POINT IF WE WANT IT TO BE IMPLEMENTED EFFICIENTLY..."

BUT?

CONTINUE.



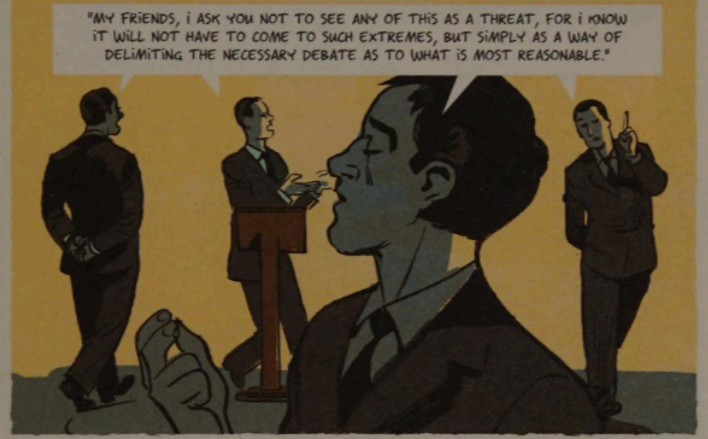
"THIS REPORT CONSISTS OF 375 PAGES CONCERNING 189 OF THE CITY'S PUBLIC SERVICES AND..."

I'VE HAD A 44 PAGE SUMMARY MADE, ROBERT, WHICH I THINK SHOULD BE QUITE SUFFICIENT. SENATORS DON'T LIKE TO READ.

CONTINUE.



SHALL I CONTINUE?



"MY FRIENDS, I ASK YOU NOT TO SEE ANY OF THIS AS A THREAT, FOR I KNOW IT WILL NOT HAVE TO COME TO SUCH EXTREMES, BUT SIMPLY AS A WAY OF DELIMITING THE NECESSARY DEBATE AS TO WHAT IS MOST REASONABLE."



"BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT I WILL HAND IN MY RESIGNATION IF THE REPORT IS NOT ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION RESPONSIBLE FOR..."



STOP THERE, YOUNG MAN!



YOU'RE WAY TO EXCESSIVE, ROBERT, THAT'S DANGEROUS!





WITH MRS M., MOSES LEARNS TO LISTEN (OR TO PRETEND TO LISTEN) TO THE DEMANDS OF THE WORKING CLASSES...



WITH ALFRED E. SMITH, HE LEARNS TO RESPECT (OR TO PRETEND TO RESPECT) THE WASP REPUBLICAN SENATORS AND REACTIONARIES OF NORTHERN NEW YORK.



ACCOMPANIED BY HIS FRIEND, EVER FAITHFUL TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HE GREW UP IN; HE RECOMMENCES HIS PERAMBULATIONS OF MANHATTAN EXPOSING HIS IDEAS ON URBANISM.

CHAPTER 2

The rise of a builder



THIS IS THE MOMENT THE AUTOMOBILE MAKES ITS ENTRANCE INTO THE DAILY LIVES OF AMERICANS.