

"BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE SAME CARE WILL BE TAKEN EVERYWHERE IN THE MINUTEST OF DETAILS."

"...AND THAT YOUR CHILDREN AND FELLOW CITIZENS' CHILDREN WILL ALL BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FRESH AIR AND CLEAN WATER IN COMPLETE SAFETY."



# CHAPTER 3

*The building machine*







SO DID I, WHEN I WAS YOUNG. BUT WE'RE IN AMERICA NOW AND IT'S UP TO US TO INVENT OUR OWN STYLE, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

CERTAINLY, BOSS.



SHOW ME YOUR DRAWINGS, WILL YOU?



YES, I LIKE THIS A LOT. THOUGH THERE'S STILL A LOT TO BE CHANGED.

MEANING...



MEET ME TONIGHT AT MY OFFICE. I'LL SHOW YOU MY MODIFICATIONS. AND AFTERWARDS YOU'LL STAY FOR THE DINNER I'VE ORGANIZED WITH SOME PEOPLE FROM THE MUNICIPALITY.



SIR, THE ADDRESS FOR THE DINNER.

?



COULD YOU CALL THE FOREMAN? I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH THE GUYS WORKING UP THERE.

RIGHT AWAY, BOSS.



INVITED TO RANDALL ISLAND FOR DINNER? HE MUST REALLY HAVE LIKED IT!

REALLY? ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT MODIFICATIONS...



WHEN YOU WORK FOR THE COMMISSIONER YOU BOW TO HIS EVERY COMMENT, WHICH, ACTUALLY, IS ALWAYS SPOT ON.



DO YOU HAVE EVENING DRESS?

EUH, NO...



WE'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.

STOP HERE PLEASE.



MR MOSES NEVER RECEIVES GUESTS IN RESTAURANTS, ONLY EVER AT HIS, IN THE DINING ROOM OF ONE OF HIS MANY HEADQUARTERS.



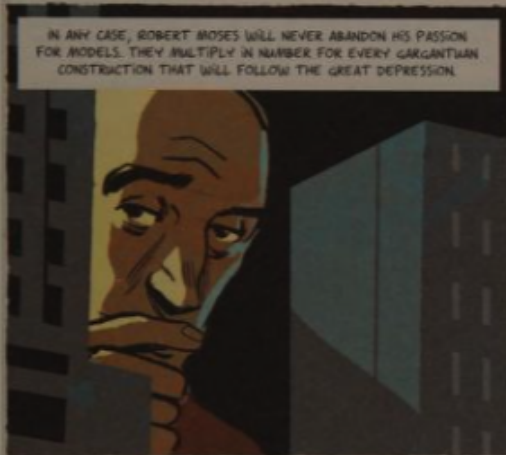
IT IS WHERE MOSES PLAYS CREATOR ON HIS SPRAWLING MINATURE OF THIS GREAT CITY, BEFORE BUILDING IT TO SCALE.



IS THERE A RESIDUE OF A YOUNG JEWISH BOY'S SPIRIT, IN THE CALCULATION AND BUBBLING ENERGY OF THIS DEMURGE?



BE WARNED, IT WILL BE VERY INTERESTING, BUT VERY FORMAL.



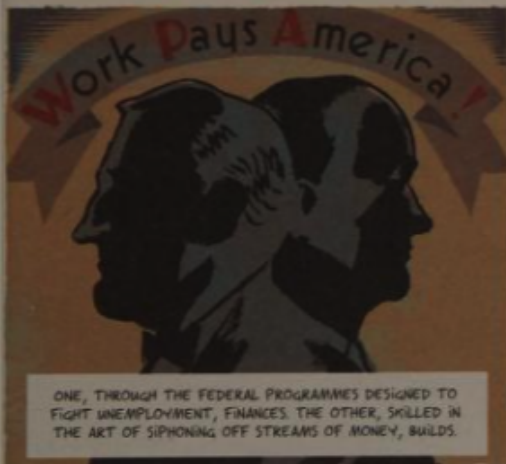
IN ANY CASE, ROBERT MOSES WILL NEVER ABANDON HIS PASSION FOR MODELS. THEY MULTIPLY IN NUMBER FOR EVERY GARGANTUAN CONSTRUCTION THAT WILL FOLLOW THE GREAT DEPRESSION.



BETWEEN HIM AND PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, TWO GREAT PATRICIANS OF POLITICS, THERE IS ONLY MUTUAL ANIMOSITY. BUT THEY BOTH NEED EACH OTHER...



IN THE BUILDING HIDDEN AT THE HEART OF HIS TRIBOROUGH INTERCHANGE, CENTRE OF THE MOSES EMPIRE, DECORUM ISN'T THE ONLY THING...



ONE, THROUGH THE FEDERAL PROGRAMMES DESIGNED TO FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT, FINANCES THE OTHER, SKILLED IN THE ART OF SIPHONING OFF STREAMS OF MONEY, BUILDS.



WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW REFORMIST MAYOR OF NEW YORK, FIROELLO LA GUARDIA, OF WHOSE ADMINISTRATION HE WILL BE A PART, MOSES' POWER WILL ONLY INCREASE.



HE WORKS FIFTEEN HOURS A DAY, AND EVEN DURING THE ENTRACTE AT THE OPERA, A PASTIME HE ENJOYS PARTICULARLY...



A SUMPTUOUS MANOR AT HIS DISPOSAL AT BELMONT ON LONG ISLAND, WHERE HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTERS SOMETIME STAY WITH HIM.



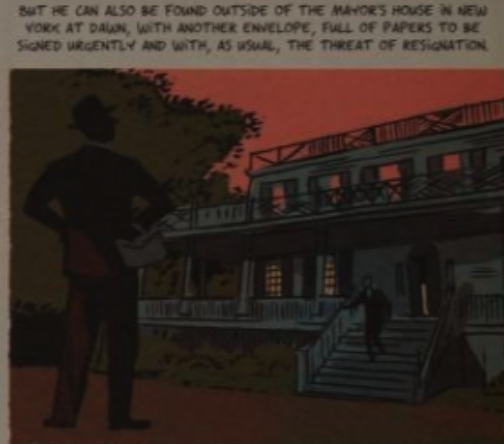
BUT NONE OF THIS STOPS HIM FROM HAVING FUN... ONE OF HIS GREAT FRIENDS IS GUY LOMBARDO, THE LEADER OF A SUCCESSFUL BIG BAND...



A BAND THAT, FIRST ON THE RADIO AND THEN ON TELEVISION, WILL ANIMATE THE FAMOUS NEW YEAR PARTIES FOR ALMOST HALF A CENTURY.



WHEN LEAVING A WORKPLACE, LATE AT NIGHT, HE LEAVES HIS COLLABORATORS A HUGE ENVELOPE OF TASKS...



BUT HE CAN ALSO BE FOUND OUTSIDE OF THE MAYOR'S HOUSE IN NEW YORK AT DAWN, WITH ANOTHER ENVELOPE, FULL OF PAPERS TO BE SIGNED URGENTLY AND WITH, AS USUAL, THE THREAT OF RESIGNATION.



A BAND WHOSE GIRLS WON'T WASTE THEIR TIME IDLING AWAY OVER THE DAYS OF SUMMER...



COME SEE WHAT I'VE BUILT FOR GUY...



THIS IS NOT ONLY A MAN OF FILES, A CUNNING MANIPULATOR AND IMPECCABLE PLANNER, BUT ALSO HIS OWN BEST PR MACHINE...



HE HAS LUXURIOUS PAMPHLETS PUBLISHED TO SHOW OFF HIS FUTURE PROJECTS AND IS ADORED BY THE PRESS, FOR WHICH HE IS A CONSTANT SOURCE OF NEWS...



...AND FOR YOU LADIES. THE LOMBARD GIRLS...

WOW!

THE MARITIME THEATRE!





"CREATING NEW UNIVERSES?"



"WORLDS THAT ARE THE PRODUCT OF YOUR IMAGINATION?"



TELL ME, MISS, WITH SUCH IDEAS, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ONE OF GUY LOMBARDO'S GIRLS?



YES. BUT BEFORE THE CRISIS, I STUDIED PHILOSOPHY.



HMMM...



YOU'LL FIND NO TREACHEROUS CURRENTS HERE. WE CAN GO WAY OUT.

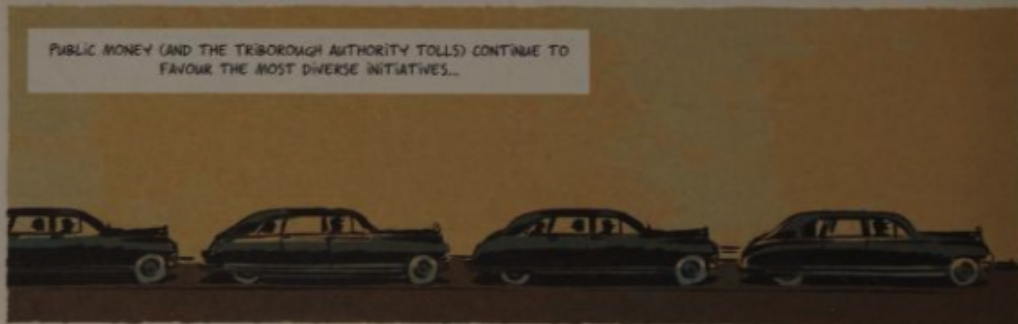
LET'S SWIM, DOCTOR MOSES.



OVER THE YEARS, THE INFLUENCE OF ROBERT MOSES ON THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS GROWS. THE BRUTAL STYLE OF THE EXPRESSWAYS SUPPLANTS THE LOVELY LINES OF THE PARKWAYS...



CAREFUL ATTENTION TO DETAIL AND THE TASTE FOR COMFORT WILL PROGRESSIVELY GIVE WAY TO CONCERNS OF SPEED AND PROFITABILITY...



PUBLIC MONEY (AND THE TRIBOROUGH AUTHORITY TOLLS) CONTINUE TO FAVOUR THE MOST DIVERSE INITIATIVES...



HERE AND THERE PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS CONTINUE TO POP UP...



OVAL STADIUMS AND THE DIAMONDS OF BASEBALL MULTIPLY...



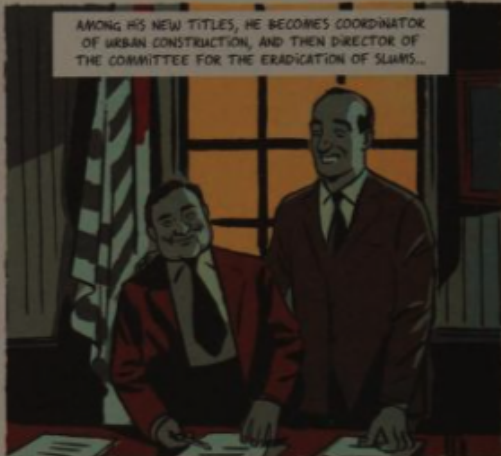
MORE PUBLIC BEACHES ARE DEVELOPED: ORCHARD BEACH IN THE BRONX, MARINE BEACH IN BROOKLYN, THE ROCKAWAY IN QUEENS...





AFTER A BRIEF FORAY INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA, HIS ARROGANCE BEING THE MAIN CAUSE OF HIS DEFEAT AT ELECTION TIME, MOSES REMAINS WHAT HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN: A MAN OF INFLUENCE.

IN 1948, THE LAW FOR URBAN RENOVATION ALSO KNOWN AS "TITLE I" CREATES ENORMOUS CASH FLOWS FOR THE COUNTRY. PROBLEM: IN ORDER TO BUILD IN NEW YORK, YOU FIRST HAVE TO DESTROY.



AMONG HIS NEW TITLES, HE BECOMES COORDINATOR OF URBAN CONSTRUCTION, AND THEN DIRECTOR OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ERADICATION OF SLUMS...

BUT THAT DOESN'T PUT ROBERT MOSES OFF, WHOM THEY WILL SOON NICKNAME "BIG BOB THE BUILDER".

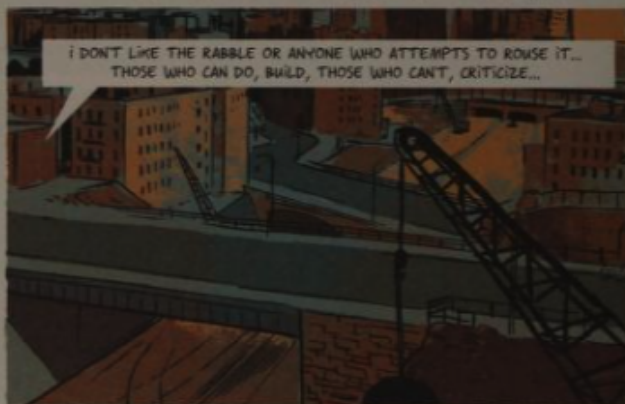


BECAUSE BIG BOB THE BUILDER IS ALSO A BIG DESTROYER AND WILL NEVER SHY AWAY FROM THE FACT...



FOR THE CROSS-BRONX EXPRESSWAY, AND DESPITE ALL THE PROTESTS, HE WON'T HESITATE TO RAZE 1500 HOMES TO THE GROUND.

THERE IS ONLY ONE SOLUTION: DESTROY ALL THE SLUMS, ERECT NEW, TALLER BUILDINGS WITH LESS SURFACE AREA AT THEIR BASE, AND THEN PUT THE PEOPLE BACK INSIDE.



I DON'T LIKE THE RABBLE OR ANYONE WHO ATTEMPTS TO ROUSE IT... THOSE WHO CAN DO, BUILD, THOSE WHO CAN'T, CRITICIZE...

IN THE NAME OF OTHER MANHATTAN PROJECTS AND WITHOUT ANY MERCY WHATSOEVER HE ERADICATES TRADITIONALLY POOR NEIGHBOURHOODS.



WE CAN'T GET RID OF THE GHETTOS WITHOUT DISPLACING THEIR INHABITANTS. I CHALLENGE ANYONE TO MAKE A GOOD OMELETTE WITHOUT BREAKING SOME EGGS...

ON THE ONE HAND CAPABLE OF BUILDING SWIMMING POOLS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN (AND HE DID NOT REFUSE TO HEAT THE WATER TO DISSUADE THEM FROM SWIMMING, AS IT WAS CLAIMED)...



BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE FURIOUSLY ATTACKS THE ULTRA-RICH WHO COLONIZED LONG ISLAND...



UNFORTUNATELY, MOST OF MOSES' BROKEN EGGS BELONG TO NEW YORK'S MINORITIES, AND IN PARTICULAR THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION.



...HE IS ALSO FULLY AWARE THAT THE PARKWAYS' LOW BRIDGES PREVENTS THE DISADVANTAGED CLASSES FROM ACCESSING THE PUBLIC HIGHWAYS IN THEIR CARS...



WAS MOSES A RACIST AS IT WAS LATER CLAIMED? MOST PROBABLY, LIKE MANY OF HIS GENERATION BUT IN TRUTH, WHAT CHARACTERIZES MOSES IS HIS CONTEMPT FOR THE POOR AND THEIR SUFFERING, WHATEVER THEIR RACE...



WHAT HAVE YOU GOT AGAINST THEM, ROBERT?

AND HIS OPINION OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES, WHOSE RIGHT TO THE CITY HE DEFENDS, ISN'T PARTICULARLY FAVOURABLE EITHER...



THE MIDDLE CLASSES ARE INHERENTLY, FUNDAMENTALLY AND INCURABLY CONSERVATIVE...

MOSES IS A CONSERVATIVE UTOPIAN WHO'S INITIALLY COMMITTED TO PUBLIC SERVICE, BUT ONE THAT CONTRACTS PRIVATE DEVELOPERS TO BUILD QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY (BUT ALSO MORE AND MORE POORLY).



THE ACCUSATIONS OF "MILKING", LEVELED AGAINST THE CORRUPTED ELEMENTS THAT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS SYSTEM, BEGIN TO MULTIPLY...



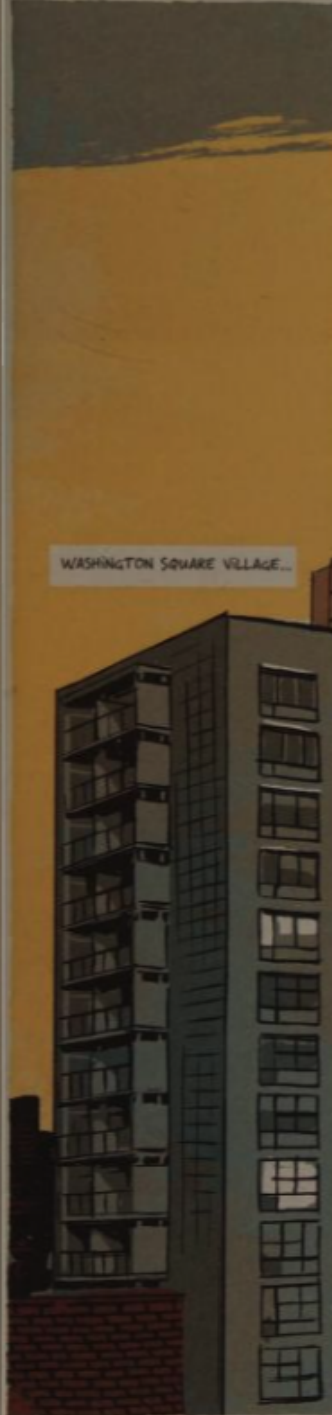
AT THE SAME TIME, ENORMOUS BUILDINGS (SOMETIMES EXCLUSIVELY RESERVED TO A WHITE POPULATION) EMERGE FROM THE EARTH, CRUSHING THE LOWER EAST SIDE UNDER THEIR WEIGHT.



STUYVESANT TOWN...



WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE...



MORNINGSIDE GARDENS...



CHATHAM TOWERS...





SOME REFERRED TO A KIND OF "MACHO URBAN PLANNING" IN RELATION TO ROBERT MOSES AND HIS BAND OF DISCIPLES.



BUT A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF URBAN PLANNING IS PERHAPS MORE ACCURATE.

I HOPE YOU TWO AREN'T AFRAID OF FLYING, ARE YOU?

WELL... NO, BOSS.

WELL THEN...



JUST A COUPLE MORE SIGNATURES BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF TO THE GREAT NORTH, BOSS...

LET'S NOT EXAGGERATE, IT'S ONLY THE NORTH OF THE STATE.

IT'S NOT AS WELL HEATED AS THE PACKARD IN THERE...

THANK YOU.



FIRST WE'LL FLY OVER MANHATTAN, AND THEN THE FIVE BOROUGHS...

I'VE... I'VE NEVER TAKEN THE PLANE BEFORE.



REALLY? I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED...





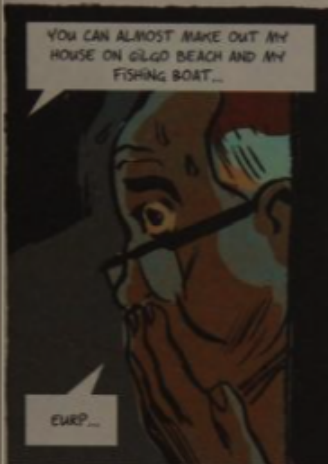
HAVE YOU GOT THE MAP WHERE OUR CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS ARE MARKED OUT?

HERE IT IS, SIR.

WE'RE ABOUT TO FLY OVER STATEN ISLAND AND THEN OVER OUR FUTURE VERRAZANO BRIDGE OVER THE NARROWS.



FLY ALONG THE SOUTH COAST OF LONG ISLAND AND OUR SEASIDE RESORTS...



YOU CAN ALMOST MAKE OUT MY HOUSE ON GLGD BEACH AND MY FISHING BOAT...

EURP...



WE WILL NOW PASS OVER JONES BEACH WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...



DO YOU SEE THE THEATRE?

EURP...



THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN THE METROPOLIS IN ITS ENTIRETY, SIR.

SORRY...



MY YOUNG FRIEND, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO SEE THINGS. THE BIG PICTURE. THE CITY IS ONLY PART OF THE WHOLE THAT SURROUNDS IT. AND AT THE SAME TIME IT IS THE LIFE FORCE OF THAT WHOLE.



JUST LIKE THE HUDSON, WHICH WE'RE NOW ABOUT TO FOLLOW NORTH.

