

Excerpts from *Out of the Shadow* (1918) Rose Cohen

In 1891, the Czar's persecution of Jews forced Rahel Golub's father to flee Russia for the United States. Months after his arrival in New York City, twelve-year-old Rahel sailed for America to help him earn the money needed to bring over the rest of the family. In 1918, Rahel—now, Rose Golub Cohen (1880-1925)—wrote about her experiences in her autobiography, Out of the Shadow. Below are some excerpts from her story.

[After a rough journey on a steamer from Hamburg, Germany, Rahel and her young Aunt Masha arrived at Castle Garden, the entry point for immigrants at New York City, on July 1, 1892]

From Castle Garden we drove to our new home in a market wagon filled with immigrants' bedding. Father tucked us in among the bundles, climbed up beside the driver himself and we rattled off over the cobbled stone pavement, with the noon sun beating down on our heads.

As we drove along I looked about in bewilderment. My thoughts were chasing each other. I felt a thrill: "Am I really in America at last?" But the next moment it would be checked and I felt a little disappointed, a little homesick. Father was so changed. I hardly expected to find him in his black long-tailed coat in which he left home. But of course yet with his same full grown beard and earlocks. Now instead I saw a young man with a closely cut beard and no sign of earlocks. As I looked at him I could scarcely believe my eyes. Father had been the most pious Jew in our neighbourhood. I wondered was it true then as Mindle said that "in America one at once became a libertine"?

Father's face was radiantly happy. Every now and then he would look over his shoulder and smile. But he soon guessed what troubled me for after a while he began to talk in a quiet, reassuring manner. He told me he would take me to his own shop and teach me part of his own trade. He was a men's coat finisher. He made me understand that if we worked steadily and lived economically we should soon have money to send for those at home. "Next year at this time," he smiled, "you yourself may be on the way to Castle Garden to fetch mother and the children." So I too smiled at the happy prospect, wiped some tears away and resolved to work hard.

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...I was dazed by all there was to see. I looked with wonder at the tall houses, the paved streets, the street lamps. As I had never seen a large city and only had had a glimpse of a small one, I thought these things true only of America. ...

One night father came home from work a little earlier than usual and took us to Grand Street. I was dazzled by the lights, the display in the jewelry shops and dry goods store windows. But nothing surprised me so much as the figures in the hair dresser's window. One was a blonde, the other a brunette. One was in pink, the other in blue. Their hair was beautifully curled and dressed, each one with a mirror in one hand and the other held daintily on the back of the hair, went slowly turning around and around and smiling into the mirror.

At first I could not believe that they were not alive until father and Aunt Masha laughed at me. It seemed to me nothing short of a miracle to see how perfect the features were, the smile. And

I thought, "Oh, America is truly wonderful! People are not shovelling gold in the streets, as I had heard, but still it is wonderful." When I told it to father he laughed. "Wait," he said. And then he took us to "Silver Smith Charlie's saloon" and I saw the floor studded with half dollars!

From Mrs. Felesberg we learned at once the more serious side of life in America. Mrs. Felesberg was the woman with whom we were rooming. A door from our room opened into her tiny bedroom and then led into the only other room where she sat a great part of the day finishing pants which she brought in big bundles from a shop, and rocking the cradle with one foot. She always made us draw our chairs quite close to her and she spoke in a whisper scarcely ever lifting her weak peering eyes from her work. When she asked us how we liked America, and we spoke of it with praise, she smiled a queer smile. "Life here is not all that it appears to the 'green horn,' " she said. She told us that her husband was a presser on coats and earned twelve dollars when he worked a full week. Aunt Masha thought twelve dollars a good deal. Again Mrs. Felesberg smiled. "No doubt it would be," she said, "where you used to live. You had your own house, and most of the food came from the garden. Here you will have to pay for everything; the rent!" she sighed, "for the light, for every potato, every grain of barley. You see these three rooms, including yours? Would they be too much for my family of five?" We had to admit they would not. "And even from these," she said, "I have to rent one out."

Perhaps it was due to these talks that I soon noticed how late my father worked. When he went away in the morning it was still dark, and when he came home at night the lights in the halls were out. It was after ten o'clock. I thought that if mother and the children were here they would scarcely see him.

One night when he came home and as he sat at the table eating his rice soup, which he and Aunt Masha had taught me to cook, I sat down on the cot and asked timidly, knowing that he was impatient of questions, "Father, does everybody in America live like this? Go to work early, come home late, eat and go to sleep? And the next day again work, eat, and sleep? Will I have to do that too? Always?"

Father looked thoughtful and ate two or three mouthfuls before he answered. "No," he said smiling. "You will get married."

So, almost a week passed and though life was so interesting, still no matter where I went, what I saw, mother and home were always present in my mind. Often in the happiest moments a pain would rise in my throat and my eyes burned with the tears held back.

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....After dinner we went out into the street. I walked beside father, clasping his hand tightly. I looked about and wondered how people could find their way without seeming to think about it. All the streets, all the houses, seemed so very much alike.

Father stopped at a fruit stand and told me to choose what I wanted. There was nothing strange to me in that. At home when we sold fruit, as we did sometimes during the summer, Jewish people came on Saturday to eat apples or pears for which they paid the following week. So I thought it was the same here.

I looked and looked at the fruit: "What shall I take?" Apples, oranges, plums, pears — all were arranged in neat pyramids, all looked good and very tempting, surrounded by fresh green leaves, glistening with drops of water. I looked at the strange fruits also. I saw long finger like

things with smooth yellow skins, and grapes which I knew by name only. In a glass case on a square of ice there were some slices of watermelon.

"What shall I take?" I asked, turning to father. "Anything you like," he smiled encouragingly. I decided on a slice of melon. I looked up into father's face. I felt proud of him that he had credit at so beautiful a fruit stand.

As I received the melon in my fingers I saw father take his hand out of his pocket and hold out a coin. I felt the blood rush to my face. I stood staring at him for a moment. Then I dropped the melon on the pavement and ran. Before I had taken many steps I realized that I was running away from home and turned back.

In passing the stand I did not look to see if father was still there but ran on. "My father has touched coin on the Sabbath!"

These words rang in my ears. I was almost knocked over by people into whom I ran but I paid no attention. Others stopped to watch me curiously as I ran by. It seemed to me that it was because they knew what I had just seen and I ran on with my cheeks flaming. Suddenly it seemed to me that I had been running a long while and I felt that I should be near home. I stopped and looked about, but I could not see the house anywhere. I ran further, looking about wildly and trying to remember things so as to locate myself. Suddenly I came upon a dressmaker's sign which I recognized. I hurried into my room, closed the door carefully, and threw myself down on the cot, burying my face into the pillow. "Father carries money about with him on the Sabbath. Oh, the sin! Oh, poor grandmother," I thought, "how would she feel if she knew. Brother is only seven years old and already he is so pious that he wishes to remain with a learned Jew in Russia, after mother goes to America, that he may become a great Rabbi. How would he feel? How would they all feel?"

Then I remembered Yanna, who, on hearing that father was in America, and feeling that perhaps we were too happy over it, came one day to torment grandmother. "The first thing men do in America," she had said, "is cut their beards and the first thing the women do is to leave off their wigs. "And you," she had said, turning to me venomously, "you who will not break a thread on the Sabbath now, will eat swine in America." "Oh, God," I thought, "will it really come to that? shall I eat swine?" After what I had just seen nothing seemed impossible.

In utter misery I turned and felt about with my burning cheek for a cooler place on the pillow. As I did so I remembered that the pillow was one which mother gave me from home. I slipped my arms under it and pressing my lips to it I wept. "No, I shall not eat swine, indeed I shall not!"

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On the following day father came home at noon and took me along to the shop where he worked. We climbed the dark, narrow stairs of a tenement house on Monroe Street and came into a bright room filled with noise. I saw about five or six men and a girl. The men turned and looked at us when we passed. I felt scared and stumbled. One man asked in surprise: "Avrom, is this your daughter? Why, she is only a little girl!"

My father smiled. "Yes," he said, "but wait till you see her sew." He placed me on a high stool opposite the girl, laid a pile of pocket flaps on the little narrow table between us, and showed me how to baste.

All afternoon I sat on my high stool, a little away from the table, my knees crossed tailor fashion, basting flaps. As I worked I watched the things which I could see by just raising my eyes a little. ...

The machines going at full speed drowned everything in their noise. But when they stopped for a moment I caught the clink of a scissors laid nastily on a table, a short question and answer exchanged, and the pounding of a heavy iron from the back of the room. Sometimes the machines stopped for a whole minute. Then the men looked about and talked. I was always glad when the machines started off again. I felt safer in their noise.

Late in the afternoon a woman came into the shop. She sat down next to Atta and began to sew on buttons. Father, who sat next to me, whispered, "This is Mrs. Nelson, the wife of the big man, our boss. She is a real American."

She, too, was pretty. Her complexion was fair and delicate like a child's. Her upper lip was always covered with shining drops of perspiration. I could not help looking at it all the time. When she had worked a few minutes she asked father in very imperfect Yiddish : "Well, Mr. ———, have you given your daughter an American name?"

"Not yet," father answered. "What would you call her? Her Yiddish name is Rahel." "Rahel, Rahel," Mrs. Nelson repeated to herself, thoughtfully, winding the thread around a button; "let me see." The machines were going slowly and the men looked interested.

The presser called out from the back of the room: "What is there to think about? Rahel is Rachel." I was surprised at the interest every one showed. Later I understood the reason. The slightest cause for interruption was welcome, it broke the monotony of the long day.

Mrs. Nelson turned to me: "Don't let them call you Rachel. Every loafer who sees a Jewish girl shouts 'Rachel' after her. And on Cherry Street where you live there are many saloons and many loafers. How would you like Ruth for a name?"

I said I should like to be called Ruth.

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Father made the life for me as easy as he could. But there were many hardships he could not prevent.

We began the day at six in the morning. I would stand dressing with my eyes closed and feel about for my buttons. But once I was out on the street and felt the moist early morning air I was wide awake at once. ...

Father used to buy me an apple and a sweetened roll. We ate while we worked. I used to think two cents a good deal to spend for my breakfast. But often I was almost sick with hunger. At noon we had our big meal. Then father would send me out for half a pound of steak or a slice of beef liver and a pint of beer which he sometimes bought in partnership with two or three other men. He used to broil the steak in the open coal fireplace where the presser heated his irons, and cut it into tiny squares. He always picked out the juiciest bits and pushed them to my side of the plate, and while there was still quite some meat he would lay down his fork and push his chair away from the table with an air as if he had had more than enough. He also got me to drink beer. Before long I could drink a full glass. But I did not like it. One day it made me quite sick. After that I refused to drink it.

I liked my work and learned it easily, and father was pleased with me. As soon as I knew how to baste pocket-flaps he began to teach me how to baste the coat edges. This was hard work. The double ply of overcoat cloth stitched in with canvas and tape made a very stiff edge. My fingers often stiffened with pain as I rolled and basted the edges. Sometimes a needle or two would break before I could do one coat. Then father would offer to finish the edge for me. But if he gave me my choice I never let him. At these moments I wanted so to master the thing myself that I felt my whole body trembling with the desire. And with my habit of personifying things, I used to bend over the coat on my lap, force the obstinate and squeaking needle, wet with perspiration, in and out of the cloth and whisper with determination: "No, you shall not get the best of me!" When I succeeded I was so happy that father, who often watched me with a smile, would say, "Rahel, your face is shining. Now rest a while." He always told me to rest after I did well. I loved these moments. I would push my stool closer to the wall near which I sat, lean my back against it, and look about the shop. ...

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On Friday I worked only the first half of the day, then I would go home to do the washing and cleaning in our room. All morning I would count the hours and half hours and my heart beat with joy at the thought that I would soon leave the shop. When at last I heard the noon whistle from the big paper factory on Water Street I used to bend my head low to hide this joy. I felt ashamed at my eagerness to leave off work. When I came out into the street I had to stand still for a while and look about. I felt dazed by the light and the air and the joy of knowing that I was free. For at these moments I did not remember the work at home. I would start to walk along slowly, linger under the trees, of which there was one here and there on Cherry Street, and watch the children on the way home from school to lunch. In their white summery dresses and with books under their arms, they appeared to me like wonderful little beings of a world entirely different from mine. I watched and envied them. But I often consoled myself with the thought, "When our children come they too will ' go to school." ...

On Saturday father and I used to go to see Aunt Masha. The first time we went and asked to see her, her mistress opened a door in the back of the store and called in a shrill voice, "Jen-nie--, Jennie." To my surprise it was Aunt Masha who came out.

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[Rahel's father wrongly thinks she has been seeing a boy in the apartment.] And now a different life began for me. Father thinking that he had given me too much freedom and had spoiled me went to the other extreme. He began to treat me so severely that I could scarcely lift my head. He suspected me at every step and found fault and blamed me for everything that happened.

One Saturday while standing out on the stoop I saw one little girl show a cent to another and boasting that she was going to buy candy. Seeing money handled on Sabbath had long lost its horror for me. It occurred to me that I too would like to have a cent with which to do just as I pleased. I went up at once to our room and asked father as he lay resting on the cot. He looked at me silently for a long moment. Then he rose slowly, took out his pocket book, took a cent from it, held it out to me, and said with a frown that reminded me of Aunt Masha, "Here, and see that this never happens again."

I felt as if the coin were burning my fingers. I handed it back quickly, left the room and walked about in the streets. I felt mortally hurt. I felt that I was working from morning till night like a

grown up person and yet when I wanted one single cent . When evening came I went home, cooked the rice and milk, as usual, put it on the table and then sat down away from it at the farthest end of the cot. Father ate a few spoonfuls and then commanded: "Sit down at the table and eat your supper."

"I am not hungry," I answered. And indeed I was not. I could never eat when I was miserable. The food always seemed to stick in my throat. Father commanded, "Eat whether you want to or not. Eat because I say so!" Again I repeated that I was not hungry. He looked at me and said: "Oh, you are sulking? Very well, we shall see." Without haste he laid down his spoon, took down our coarse linen roller towel which I brought from home, twisted it carefully into a rope and came over to me. Poor father, I know now that he hated to hurt me and took long to prepare to give me time to change my mind. "Will you eat?" he asked. I coughed to steady my voice and said "No." He struck me across the back. My only thought now was not to cry out. "On the right is the little old woman and her family, on the left the Felesbergs. They will hear me. I'll never be able to raise my head before any of them again." And I prayed for strength.

Father never did anything by halves. I felt the towel across my back again and again. Finally he threw it down and said, panting for breath, "Girl, I'll break you if you don't change." And I said in my heart, "My father, we shall see!"

He turned out the gas, went out, slamming the door after him so that the windows rattled.

When it was all quiet, a door opened in our room and Mrs. Felesberg came in with a light and a bottle of vaseline.

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[Rahel has witnessed several incidents of Irish-Americans and other people verbally and even physically assaulting the Jews in her Cherry Street neighborhood.] I found that father was already at home. As I came into the room I saw him sitting at the table before the little mirror resting against the wall, clipping his beard. I was so surprised and shocked to see him actually do this thing that I could neither speak nor move for some minutes. And I knew that he too felt embarrassed. After the first glance I kept my eyes steadily on the floor in front of me and began to talk to him quietly but with great earnestness.

"You had been so pious at home, father," I said, "more pious than any one else in our whole neighbourhood. And now you are cutting your beard. Grandmother would never have believed it. How she would weep!"

The snipping of the scissors still went on. But I knew by the sound that now he was only making a pretence at cutting. At last he laid it down and said in a tone that was bitter yet quiet : "They do not like Jews on Cherry Street. And one with a long beard has to take his life into his own hands."

"But, father," I said, looking at him now, "must we live on Cherry Street?"

"Yes, we must," he said, turning to me quickly and speaking in a more passionate tone. "They want the Jews to come and settle here. And because it is so hard to live here they have lowered the rents. I save here at least two dollars a month. You don't understand. For mother's journey we need not only tickets and money for other expenses, but we also need money for at least second-hand furniture. This is not like home. There the house was our own. And for the lot and

garden we paid one dollar a year. There, too, we were among friends and relatives. While here, if we haven't rent for one month we are thrown out on the street. Do you understand?"

I said I understood.

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Father began to strain all his energy to save the money to send for mother and the children. In the shop one morning I realized that he had been leaving out of his breakfast the tiny glass of brandy for two cents and was eating just the roll. So I too made my sacrifice. When as usual he gave me the apple and the roll, I took the roll but refused the apple. And he did not urge me.

When a cold grey day at the end of November found him in his light tan suit quite worn and me in my thin calico frock, now washed out to a tan color, we went to a second-hand clothing store on Division Street and he bought me a fuzzy brown coat reaching a little below my waist, for fifty cents, and for himself a thin threadbare overcoat. And now we were ready for the winter.

About the same time that the bitter cold came father told me one night that he had found work for me in a shop where he knew the presser. I lay awake long that night. I was eager to begin life on my own responsibility I but was also afraid. We rose earlier than usual that morning for father had to take me to the shop and not be over late for his own work. I wrapped my thimble and scissors, with a piece of bread for breakfast, in a bit of newspaper, carefully stuck two needles into the lapel of my coat and we started.

The shop was on Pelem Street, a shop district one block long and just wide enough for two ordinary sized wagons to pass each other. We stopped at a door where I noticed at once a brown shining porcelain knob and a half rubbed off number seven. Father looked at his watch and at me.

"Don't look so frightened," he said. "You need not go in until seven. Perhaps if you start in at this hour he will think you have been in the habit of beginning at seven and will not expect you to come in earlier. Remember, be independent. At seven o'clock rise and go home no matter whether the others go or stay."

He began to tell me something else but broke off suddenly, said "good-bye" over his shoulder and went away quickly. I watched him until he turned into Monroe Street.

Now only I felt frightened, and waiting made me nervous, so I tried the knob. The door yielded heavily and closed slowly. I was half way up when it closed entirely, leaving me in darkness. I groped my way to the top of the stairs and hearing a clattering noise of machines,

I felt about, found a door, and pushed it open and went in. A tall, dark, beardless man stood folding coats at a table. I went over and asked him for the name (I don't remember what it was). "Yes," he said crossly. "What do you want?"

I said, "I am the new feller hand." He looked at me from head to foot. My face felt so burning hot that I could scarcely see. "It is more likely," he said, "that you can pull bastings than fell sleeve lining." Then turning from me he shouted over the noise of the machine: "Presser, is this the girl?" The presser put down the iron and looked at me. "I suppose so," he said, "I only know the father."

The cross man looked at me again and said, "Let's see what you can do." He kicked a chair, from which the back had been broken off, to the finisher's table, threw a coat upon it and said raising the corner of his mouth: "Make room for the new feller hand."

One girl tittered, two men glanced at me over their shoulders and pushed their chairs apart a little. By this time I scarcely knew what I was about. I laid my coat down somewhere and pushed my bread into the sleeve.

Then I stumbled into the bit of space made for me at the table, drew in the chair and sat down. The men were so close to me on each side I felt the heat of their bodies and could not prevent myself from shrinking away. The men noticed and probably felt hurt. One made a joke, the other laughed and the girls bent their heads low over their work. All at once the thought came: "If I don't do this coat quickly and well he will send me away at once." I picked up the coat, threaded my needle, and began hastily, repeating the lesson father impressed upon me. "Be careful not to twist the sleeve lining, take small false stitches."

My hands trembled so that I could not hold the needle properly. It took me a long while to do the coat. But at last it was done. I took it over to the boss and stood at the table waiting while he was examining it. He took long, trying every stitch with his needle. Finally he put it down and without looking at me gave me two other coats. I felt very happy! When I sat down at the table I drew my knees close together and stitched as quickly as I could.

When the pedlar came into the shop everybody bought rolls. I felt hungry but I was ashamed and would not eat the plain, heavy rye bread while the others ate rolls.

All day I took my finished work and laid it on the boss's table. He would glance at the clock and give me other work. Before the day was over I knew that this was a "piece work shop," that there were four machines and sixteen people were working. I also knew that I had done almost as much work as "the grown-up girls" and that they did not like me. I heard Betsy, the head feller hand, talking about "a snip of a girl coming and taking the very bread out of your mouth." The only one who could have been my friend was the presser who knew my father. But him I did not like. The worst I knew about him just now was that he was a soldier because the men called him so. But a soldier, I had learned, was capable of anything. And so, noticing that he looked at me often, I studiously kept my eyes from his corner of the room.

Seven o'clock came and every one worked on. I wanted to rise as father had told me to do and go home. But I had not the courage to stand up alone. I kept putting off going from minute to minute. My neck felt stiff and my back ached. I wished there were a back to my chair so that I could rest against it a little. When the people began to go home it seemed to me that it had been night a long time.

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The next morning when I came into the shop at seven o'clock, I saw at once that all the people were there and working as steadily as if they had been at work a long while. I had just time to put away my coat and go over to the table, when the boss shouted gruffly, "Look here, girl, if you want to work here you better come in early. No office hours in my shop." It seemed very still in the room, even the machines stopped. And his voice sounded dreadfully distinct. I hastened into the bit of space between the two men and sat down. He brought me two coats and snapped, "Hurry with these!"

From this hour a hard life began for me. He refused to employ me except by the week. He paid me three dollars and for this he hurried me from early until late. He gave me only two coats at a time to do. When I took them over and as he handed me the new work he would say quickly and sharply, "Hurry!" And when he did not say it in words he looked at me and I seemed to hear even more plainly, "Hurry!" I hurried but he was never satisfied. By looks and manner he made me feel that I was not doing enough. Late at night when the people would stand up and begin to fold their work away and I too would rise feeling stiff in every limb and thinking with dread of our cold empty little room and the uncooked rice, he would come over with still another coat. "I need it the first thing in the morning," he would give as an excuse. I understood that he was taking advantage of me because I was a child. And now that it was dark in the shop except for the low single gas jet over my table and the one over his at the other end of the room, and there was no one to see, more tears fell on the sleeve lining as I bent over it than there were stitches in it....

I myself did not want to leave the shop for fear of losing a day or even more perhaps in finding other work. To lose half a dollar meant that it would take so much longer before mother and the children would come. And now I wanted them more than ever before. I longed for my mother and a home where it would be light and warm and she would be waiting when we came from work....

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In proportion as life in the shop became harder, it also became harder at home. I had to do the washing and cleaning at night now. One night a week I cleaned and one I washed, I used to hang my dress on a string over Mrs. Felesberg's stove to dry over night. In the morning I pulled it straight and put it right on. The rest of the night I slept. During these days I could not seem to get enough sleep. Sometimes when I remembered how a few months before mother had to chase me to bed with cries and with scoldings it hardly seemed true. That time seemed so far away, so vague, like a dream.

Now on coming into the room I would light the lamp and the kerosene oil stove and put on the soup to cook. Then I would sit down with my knees close to the soap box on which the stove stood, to keep myself warm. But before long my body relaxed, my head grew heavy with the odor of the burning oil and I longed to lie down. I knew that it was bad to go to sleep without supper. Two or three times father woke me. But it was no use, I could not eat then. And so I tried hard to keep awake. But finally I could not resist it. The cot was so near, just a step away. I could touch it with my hand. I would rise a little from the chair and all bent over as I was, I would tumble right in and roll myself in the red comforter, clothes and all. It was on these nights that I began to forget to pray.

But it was only during the first part of the night that I slept heavily. After that I was half asleep, half awake. I was in constant fear of being late to work. Often in the middle of the night I would wake up with a start, tumble out of bed, scarcely conscious of what I was about, and run to the clock which we put on the table for the night. There I stood peering at it unseeingly for a long while. Gradually I would realize where I was, what I was about and that I must see the time. And only now I could see the hands of the clock distinctly, both on the twelve perhaps. How happy I felt when it was still so early. With what a feeling of joy and relief I lay back on the pillow and closed my eyes. But if I happened to wake near five I would not close them again for fear of oversleeping. That was about the time that father left.

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[Rahel did change jobs and did so repeatedly because conditions were bad and she was cheated or harassed. She and her father joined a union, which improved their working conditions somewhat. Nevertheless, Rahel's health began to break down.] That night I sat up for father. He laid the large brown loaf on the table when he came and sat down on the chair alongside of it. I saw at once that he had something pleasant to tell. He was not smiling but his face looked all lit up. After hearing what the doctor had had to say and cautioning me to take the medicine regularly he began slowly, drawing out his words almost as grandmother had often done, and smiling now quite broadly, "You know, Rahel, I think with this week's wages we have enough money for the steamer tickets, the journey and a little over."

He put his hand deep into his pocket, took out the long baggy purse and laid it on the table. Then he drew the white muslin curtain over the lower part of the window, and told me to lift the lamp from the bracket to the table. He began to count and I breathlessly watched his fingers as they turned back the bills.

"Ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty," and so on he counted. Finally he said slowly, "Yes, we have enough."

I could not realise that it was true, that we could send for them at once. Then the thought came, "In three months they might be here!" I laid my arms on the table, buried my face in them and began to sob. Father laid his hand gently on my head. For once he did not scold me for my tears.

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[Finally the rest of the family made it across the Russian border and sailed to the United States.] ... father and I again stood in Castle Garden. I do not know whether Aunt Masha was with us or not. As I look back now I can only see father and myself, he talking to an officer and I standing with my face pressed against iron bars. In what an agony of joy and fear I stood there! At first I was neither surprised nor disappointed when I looked about and did not see them at once. Feeling sure that they must be there, I could wait. Then it flashed through my mind, "But perhaps they are not here! Perhaps they missed the steamer, perhaps they fell ill!" Then I saw them. It was as I often pictured them. Mother with baby on one arm, a bundle on the other, and the eight year old boy at her skirt, was following a uniformed American. She walked slowly with her head a little bent and her eyes on the ground. Her face looked so uncertain, as if she were not yet sure whether her journey was at an end and whether this was the place where she would meet us. After her came sister, quite bent under a bundle on her back and with the little four year old girl holding on to her skirt. Though she was so bent under her bundle her head was raised and her eyes were looking about eagerly. Then they met mine, and as she recognized me she dropped her bundle and ran screaming, "Mamma, there they are! There they are!"

A few minutes later I heard my mother's tearful joyous voice close to me, "Rahel! Rahel!"

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[The Golubs' reunion did not end their struggle in the United States. *Out of the Shadow* goes on to relate Rahel's health problems, her various jobs, including living with a family as a domestic servant, the harsh experience of the economic depression beginning in 1893, and her failure to satisfy her parents by marrying the grocer who could have helped the family get by. Here is one more passage from of her autobiography.]

I found from Mr. Raisen that these books could be borrowed from soda water stand keepers, if one left fifteen cents security and paid five cents for the reading of the book. I listened to all the details with discouragement. For when could I hope to have twenty cents saved! Nevertheless I began to save, or rather, I determined to put away the very first cent I had. ...

At last one night I brought home my first volume. I took the lamp out of the bracket, placed it on the table, and opened the book. I had told the stand keeper to give me anything as long as it was with vowels. For I had only learned to read the Hebrew print that had the vowels. These consisted in dots and lines printed under each letter. In the meantime the children gathered around me and mother came over with her sewing and looked at me disapprovingly, sadly, "What a child you are," her eyes seemed to say. "How little sense you have. If you had spent this money on nourishing food." And again, "True, you did not ask for the money, you saved it. But where did it come from?"

I understood this as plainly as if she had uttered the words. Poor mother, she was often worried over how to live and save on our six or seven dollars and over my health. And so, partly with the hope of cheering her up a little and partly to draw her attention away from myself and a possible scolding, I began to read aloud. In a few minutes I looked up and saw her stitching quickly on the little dress she was mending. I could see she was listening but the sad look had not left her eyes. But when again I looked up the little dress lay forgotten in her lap and on her face there was a healthy look of interest and curiosity. The only stories she had ever heard before were from the Bible.

From that time many happy evenings were ours. Mother always listened reluctantly, as if she felt it were a weakness to be so interested. Sometimes she would rise suddenly during the most interesting part and go away into the dark kitchen. But soon I would catch her listening from the doorway.

And I lived now in a wonderful world. One time I was a beautiful countess living unhappily in a palace, another time I was a beggar's daughter singing in the street. Of course we never drew more than one little book a week, about two hundred and fifty pages for five cents. But I got all I could out of it... [She looks at the last book "with vowels" on the soda stand's shelves.]

I turned to the first page of the story and read the heading of the chapter: "I am born." Something in these three little words appealed to me more than anything I had yet read. I could not have told why, but perhaps it was the simplicity and the intimate tone of the first person. I had not yet read anything written in the first person. My eager fingers turned to the title page and I uttered the words half aloud, "David Copperfield. By Charles Dickens." "I'll take it," I said. I laid the five pennies on the zinc covered soda counter and walked away slowly, expecting and fearing to hear the standkeeper's voice calling after me and demanding an extra five cents because the book was so thick. But when the danger of that was passed I fairly ran home with my prize.

...The next book we drew was without vowels. Sister and I had never dreamed it would be so easy to learn to read it. In a week we read it as fluently as the other. And now reading material was not so limited. A flying newspaper in the street, a crumpled advertisement sheet, I would smooth out tenderly and carry off home, happy in the expectation of what was awaiting me. I tried to understand everything I read but if I could not, I read it anyway. For just to read became a necessity and a joy. There were so few joys.