Chapter 1, 1928.
The Past.

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In 1928 Chicago, at the height of the construction boom following the 1909 Plan of Chicago, Reggie, Elisa and Bernard defy social codes to spend an afternoon together downtown. They run headlong into the contradictions of racial and class discrimination, and they must decide to stand and fight or protest another day, another way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• Reggie, Elisa and Bernard see different things as they travel downtown. Based on what they see during their trips, who do you think the city is for?
• Do you agree with how Elisa, Bernard, and Reggie each responded to the bullies on the beach? What would you have done if you had been there?
• How do Elisa and Reggie participate in their communities? How do you participate in your community?
• Do you think the three characters will meet up again?

Themes
Geography
Neighborhoods
Demographics
Infrastructure and transportation
Identity
Belonging
Racism

Universal Questions
• Who is the city for?
• Who does the city belong to?
• What is public space in a city?
• Who decides what makes up public space and who is welcome?
• What does civic engagement look like?
Austin neighborhood, 1928

Located 7 miles west of downtown, the neighborhood of Austin was developed by Henry Austin in 1865. Bordered originally by Chicago Avenue (north), Madison Avenue (south), Laramie Boulevard (east), and Austin Avenue (west), the 470 acres were originally established as ‘Austinville,’ a temperance community free from alcohol. Henry Austin promoted home ownership and provided public amenities to new residents. As western suburban rail lines improved throughout the mid to late 19th century, Austin grew in population. More than 4,000 residents called Austin home by the 1890s.

In 1899 Austin became one of several independent surrounding towns that was annexed to the city of Chicago. The neighborhood’s rapid transit lines—both suburban commuter trains and streetcars—increased and were well-known for their speed and frequency. In Chapter 1, Bernard is seen riding the “Green Hornet” streetcar along a busy Madison Street.

Middle-class Germans and Scandinavians settled in the neighborhood first, followed by Irish and Italian families who continued to build many large Catholic parishes and schools. By the 1930s, the neighborhood had 130,000 residents. The early housing stock of Austin consisted of large single-family neoclassical and Queen Anne style homes, as well as several Prairie style homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. In the 20th century, new brick two-flats, smaller frame homes, and typical Chicago bungalows were built. The Richter family calls one of these one-and-a-half story brick Chicago bungalows home.

Austin is also home to Columbus Park—“the crown jewel of the neighborhood”—which Bernard passes through on his way to the streetcar. Designed by Jens Jensen in 1920, a significant landscape architect influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Style, Columbus Park featured quiet and restful spaces as well as athletic fields.
Near West Side, 1928

Beginning in the 1850s, the Near West Side of Chicago was the main ‘port of entry’ neighborhood for new immigrants. Located two miles west of downtown, the area is bounded by rivers and railroads: Chicago and Northwestern Railroad/Kinzie Street (north), Pennsylvania Railroad/Rockwell Street (west), the Chicago River (east), and 16th Street (south).

German, Bohemian, French, and Irish immigrants arrived first, followed later by Eastern European Jews, Greeks, and Italians into the late 19th century. As historians Dominic Pacyga and Ellen Skerrett explain in Chicago, City of Neighborhoods, the overcrowded neighborhood was less of a ‘melting pot’ and more often an area divided along ethnic, economic, and racial lines.

Most residents lived in wooden two- or three-story gabled homes constructed throughout the 1880s and 1890s during the first population boom. Many factors led to challenging living conditions—extreme overcrowding, a lack of sanitation facilities, very little green spaces, densely-constructed buildings with little access to light and fresh air, and often unpaved streets.

One of the most important institutions on the Near West Side was Hull House, Chicago’s first—and the nation’s most influential—settlement house. Reformers Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established the home in 1889 with the goal of providing social services, training, and resources for the hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the surrounding neighborhoods.

On a typical day in 1928 on Maxwell Street—at the intersection of Halsted and Maxwell streets—you’d find rows of temporary tables and pushcarts set up between the shops. The street would have been crowded with peddlers selling everything from food to clothes to household goods. Acoustic guitar music, and then later electric Blues music—a major movement in music evolution—thrived on Maxwell Street. This is where we first meet Elisa.
Grand Boulevard/Bronzeville, 1928

The neighborhood of Bronzeville sits within a larger community area called Grand Boulevard, named for the north/south street that would eventually become Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Located four miles south of downtown, the community was annexed—as part of Hyde Park Township—to the city of Chicago in 1899. Bounded by 39th Street (north), 51st Street (south), Cottage Grove Avenue (east), and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad/Federal Street (west), the area became well-connected to the city center with cable cars and the new South Side ‘L’ line.

Middle-class and working-class people, typically second generation Irish, Scottish, English, and German Jews were the first residents of the neighborhood. A few African-Americans lived in Grand Boulevard in the 1890s, but the population started to swell in the late 1910s during the beginning of the Great Migration from the rural states of the Deep South—one of the most rapid racial transitions in any Chicago neighborhood. By 1920, blacks made up 32% of the neighborhood residents; just ten years later blacks were 95% of the total population. And by 1950, the community’s 114,000 residents were 99% African-American.

Often characterized by historians as a cultural mecca and a “city with a city,” Bronzeville in the 1920s was a thriving metropolis of black-owned businesses, religious institutions, social and music clubs, and civic organizations. A large number of black artists, musicians, writers, athletes, intellectuals, and politicians called Bronzeville home in 1928. The heart of the neighborhood was the commercial corner of 47th Street and Grand Boulevard which was home to the Regal Theater. We see Reggie walking past the theater on his way to his family’s restaurant.

The original housing stock around Bronzeville is some of the finest examples of single family row homes, two-flats, and three-flats. Typically constructed of brick with rusticated stone facades and ornate details, the homes have provided a solid housing stock for many generations.
CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

Reginald Williams Reggie is the son of two business owners in Bronzeville. His parents migrated to Chicago’s “Black Belt” from Mississippi in the 1910s to escape the racial violence and discrimination of the Deep South and find new opportunities in the North. They own a diner in the heart of the hustle and bustle of the Black Metropolis known as Bronzeville, centered around 47th and Grand Boulevard (originally South Parkway; renamed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in 1968). Reggie is a paperboy for the Chicago Defender, the “most important black metropolitan newspaper in America,” (The Encyclopedia of Chicago) and the paper’s journalists frequent his parents’ nearby diner. Reggie wants to be a journalist and keeps a diary. He meets Elisa Gallo at her food stand on Maxwell Street, about 5 miles north of Bronzeville, when his parents send him to the market to buy supplies for their diner. The two become friends and they explore the city together, often when Reggie is in search of a story to pitch to the Defender. The character of Reggie is inspired by the life of Chicagoan Levi Williams (born 1913, Texas) who lived at 31st Street and Giles Avenue, with his parents, Morris and Annie Williams, brother Morris Jr., and sister Willa. The Williams were part of the Great Migration, moving from Texas to Nebraska before settling in Chicago. The family owned a restaurant at 427 East 31st Street.

Elisa Gallo Orphaned when she was four, Elisa is cared for by an elderly woman she calls ‘Mammina,’ whom she lives with in a tenement near Taylor Street. In exchange for room and board, she works at the food stand owned by Mammina in the Maxwell Street Market, where she meets Reggie. Elisa’s interactions with diverse customers and vendors at the market nurtures her street-savviness and knowledge of the city’s secret alleys and hidden gems. Elisa is a polyglot from her multi-lingual upbringing, and is able to sell food at the market in Italian, Polish, Czech, German, Yiddish, Spanish, and English. Elisa is an active member of the Hull House community—“Chicago’s first and the nation’s most influential” settlement house established by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr (The Encyclopedia of Chicago)—where she participates in health and meal services, and art and language classes. Elisa met Bernard Richter at Hull House, where she is an English tutor for recent immigrants.

Bernard Richter Bernard is a recent German immigrant who fled the instability of post World War I Germany with his immediate family. His extended family has been living in Chicago since the 1880s. They all live in Austin, on the city’s West Side, a neighborhood that grew and attracted upwardly mobile Germans and Scandinavians. Bernard and his family live in a typical Chicago bungalow, newly-constructed in the 1920s. Several of Bernard’s family members are engineers and he is fascinated by the many engineering marvels constructed during the industrial heyday of Chicago in the 1920s. He meets Elisa at Maxwell Street, approximately 7 miles east of his home in Austin. Bernard tells his family he is going to meet his cousin Otto downtown to see the Michigan Avenue Bridge being raised over the Chicago River, but he actually is spending time with Elisa. Bernard has a crush on Elisa and uses the pretense of practicing English as an excuse to spend time with her. He’s disappointed when he meets Reggie because he thought he would be spending the day alone with her.
PAGES 5–6
Chicago from above, 1928. Summer. The story begins as we meet Reginald (Reggie) Williams who lives in Bronzeville.

PAGES 7–8
The Chicago Defender (3435 South Indiana Avenue) was one of the most important and influential media outlets in the Black Metropolis and reached far beyond Chicago's borders, setting new standards for African-American journalism. Defender articles "fought against racial, economic, and social discrimination, baldly reporting on lynching, rape, mob violence, and black disenfranchisement," and played a major role in the Great Migration. With a population fueled by African-Americans moving from the South to northern cities, Chicago drew more than 500,000 of the approximately 7 million people who left the rural south between 1916 and 1970.
PAGE 10, PANEL 1
Reggie crosses 35th Street and South Parkway (originally named Grand Boulevard, renamed South Parkway in 1928, then again in 1968 as Martin Luther King Jr. Drive). The Liberty Life Insurance Building (3501 South Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) can be seen in the background. It was the first African-American owned insurance company in the northern U.S. Liberty Life (later Supreme Life) served Bronzeville’s residents who were regularly denied insurance by white-owned companies in the 1920s. In the 1990s, the building—now a historic landmark—was saved from demolition by the Black Metropolis Convention and Tourism Council. It is now home to the Bronzeville Visitor Information Center.

PAGE 10, PANELS 2–4
Reggie walks past the partially-completed Victory Monument at 35th Street and South Parkway. Erected in 1927 and dedicated on Armistice Day in November 1928, the monument honors black soldiers who fought in several 19th and early 20th century wars as part of the Eighth Regiment. Designed by French sculptor Leonard Crunelle, who studied under famed artist Lorado Taft, the sculpture illustrates a black soldier, a black woman, and “Columbia,” a patriotic figure holding a tablet that lists the regiment’s battles.

PAGE 10, PANEL 5
Among the beautiful Romanesque Revival row houses along South Parkway, Reggie walks past the home of Ida B. Wells, who owned the building at 3624 South Parkway (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive) from 1919 to 1921 with her husband. One of the most important activists fighting for 1890s legislation against lynching and an advocate for suffrage, Wells lived in Chicago from the early 20th century until her death in 1931.

PAGE 10, PANEL 6
Reggie walks past the remnants of a firebombed home. By the 1910s, available housing in the narrow “Black Belt” of Bronzeville could not keep pace with the rapidly growing African-American population. As blacks began to move into historically segregated white neighborhoods, they were often met with violence from South Side youth gangs. Between 1917 and 1918, 58 bombings of black homes were recorded. On July 27, 1919, during a hot summer filled with riots in several American cities, an incident at Rainbow Beach sparked Chicago’s largest race riot. Swimming off the informally segregated South Side beach, African-American teenager Eugene Williams drifted towards the whites-only beach. He was struck in the head by a white man who threw rocks off the breakwater. The rioting of gangs of white youth resulted in the loss of 1,000 African-American homes torched in Bronzeville in the weeks following Eugene’s death. Both the Chicago Defender and the Chicago Daily News featured extensive coverage of the story on June 28, 1919.

PAGE 11
On his walk, Reggie strolls through the cultural epicenter of Bronzeville—East 47th Street and South Parkway—and past the newly-opened Regal Theater and nearby Savoy Ballroom. Built as an exotic “atmospheric theater” with an extravagant Byzantine-inspired interior, the Regal showed the latest Hollywood motion pictures and hosted some of the country’s most famous black artists and performers. Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, B.B. King, and Lena Horne all performed at the Regal. Chicago artist Archibald Motley’s paintings from Bronzeville in the 1920s Jazz Age captured this atmosphere well.

Along the same stretch of street in 1928, black-owned businesses, restaurants, jazz clubs, loan companies, hardware stores, and boxing gyms could be found. In front of the Savoy Ballroom, Reggie sells copies of the Chicago Defender.

Reggie’s pose in this panel is significant and recalls the similar position of the black soldier in the Victory Monument he just walked past (page 10, panel 4).
Along East 47th Street, Reggie encounters merchants, street musicians, job-seekers, and pan handlers.

Reggie hops on the elevated train at East 47th Street and Prairie Avenue. The station was constructed as part of the South Side Rapid Transit’s extension to Jackson Park during the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. This 1926 map shows the various ‘L’ lines of the consolidated Chicago Rapid Transit Company.

The story shifts to the Near West Side—off Maxwell Street—as we explore another neighborhood and meet Elisa Gallo. Sometimes described as the “Ellis Island of the Midwest,” Chicago’s Maxwell Street Market was located just south of Roosevelt near South Halsted Street. A few blocks from downtown, this Near West Side neighborhood was home to one of the city’s most diverse, dense, and chaotic streets. Maxwell Street Market became a place with cardboard tables and pushcarts competing for customers alongside busy shops. The street was crowded with peddlers selling everything from food to clothes to household goods.

By the 20th century, Maxwell Street was also home to African-Americans from the Deep South who worked in shops and performed Delta Blues on the street.

Just a few blocks north along Halsted Street, reformers Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established Hull House in 1889 to improve the living and working conditions of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who poured into the neighborhood throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Hull House, one of the most important institutions on the Near West Side, provided social services, training, and resources and became the nation’s most influential settlement house. Germans, Irish, Poles, Bohemians, Mexicans, and Jews fleeing poverty and oppression in Russia, Poland, and Romania were the major ethnic groups served by Hull House.
PAGE 17
Elisa sells bread in several languages (Polish, Italian, and Hebrew), illustrating both her ability to cross ethnic and racial lines in this chaotic multicultural market and her need to earn a living. On Maxwell Street, money mattered more than where you came from. Cash was king. At its height around 1900, the Chicago Tribune reported that 10,000 customers could be found on Maxwell Street on a typical Sunday.

Toward the end of the 19th century, the University of Chicago's social services program partnered with Hull House around issues such as housing, juvenile delinquency, truancy, and vocational training for neighborhood residents. The researchers also conducted extensive house-to-house surveys to better understand the residents’ demographics and needs. These maps are some of the first such documents in the county.21

PAGE 20
In their 1909 Plan of Chicago, architects Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett proposed the widening of many existing streets and the creation of new diagonal streets throughout the city to create main arteries that would improve traffic flow. New and consolidated train stations were also proposed. This rendering from the 1909 Plan shows Burnham and Bennett’s proposal for 12th Street and Michigan Avenue.26 Twelfth Street (now Roosevelt Road) was one of the first new thoroughfares to be constructed. Recommended by the Chicago Plan Commission in 1910, the straightening of the south branch of the Chicago River near 12th Street and the widening of the road were completed by 1927.27

Burnham drastically underestimated the impact the automobile would have on Chicago and the nation. His plan did not include the massive highways we know today. The 1909 Plan’s renderings only hint at a few automobiles easily cruising along Michigan Avenue. In 1900, 25,000 passenger cars were registered in the state of Illinois. By 1930, there were more than 1.5 million.

Biking along 12th Street would have been extremely dangerous. Elisa encounters motorists who have a perception that roads were now designed for cars28 and that automobiles—not carriages with horses, street cars, or certainly girls on bicycles—took priority on the roads.
Elisa rides under the elevated train tracks near Wabash Avenue and State Street in the South Loop. The ‘L’ made its first circuit around the Loop in 1897.

The elevated train roars over Wabash Avenue and along what is known as “Jewelers Row.”

Elisa’s trail through the busy and crowded streets illustrates the density of the Loop. In 1928, Chicago’s population was approximately 3 million people.

The story shifts to the Far West Side as we explore the Austin neighborhood and meet Bernard Richter. Bernard is seated for lunch with his family in a single-family brick home on South Mason Avenue, in the West Side neighborhood of Austin. The fictitious Richter Family emigrated from Germany, much like the large German and Scandinavian population that came to Chicago’s West Side in the early 1900s.

Bernard references the Hull House, where he presumably met Elisa in a youth program. While Hull House primarily aided the large populations on the near West Side, the social settlement also served immigrants from across the city through English classes, meals, resources, and skill-building workshops. Here we also begin to see Bernard’s fascination with “American” movable bridges, such as the Michigan Avenue Bridge, constructed in 1920.

The Richters live in a Chicago bungalow, an important part of life for many residents of the city and surrounding older suburbs. More than 80,000 bungalows—1/3 of Chicago’s single-family homes—lie within the city limits. From 1910 to 1920, Chicago’s population grew from 2.4 million to 3.4 million, continuing the city’s trajectory as the fastest growing American city. Developers eagerly subdivided empty land and sold the lots to a growing number of families wanting to escape more crowded neighborhoods. On a map, these lots appear in an arc 4 to 7 miles from downtown, thus creating the “Bungalow Belt.” Bungalow developments thrived because of the affordability of the homes, easy access to new public transit, parks, schools, and retail.

Built between 1911 and 1939, Chicago bungalows have several key characteristics, making them unique from other bungalows across the country: one-and-a-half stories, longer than it is wide, brick construction, front porch with steps, low-pitched hipped roof with wide overhangs, and large windows.

At the corner of Madison Street and Austin Boulevard, Bernard boards the “Green Hornet,” the famed streetcar that ran east/west along Madison Street until 1958. In the 1920s, Austin was well-served by public transportation, making the commute to downtown easy. The streetcar stopped nearly every half mile along Madison Street.
PAGES 25–26
From the streetcar, Bernard passes through West Garfield Park, which contained a booming retail district in the 1920s, one of the busiest outside the Loop. The 4,000-seat Marbro Theater, which once sat at 4110 West Madison Street, was among the city’s largest movie palaces.

The newly-constructed (1928) 13-story Midwest Athletic Club (panel 2) was another prominent Garfield Park Building at the time. Located at the corner of West Madison Street and South Hamlin Boulevard, the Club offered members exercise rooms, handball courts, billiard rooms, gymnasium, swimming pool, a ballroom, dining rooms, and a library. The ornate building stands today, repurposed as housing.

Bernard also catches glimpses of some window displays and advertisements including “Bob” hats for women to show off their new short haircuts, as well as refrigerators and radios—new appliances available to homeowners in the 1920s.

PAGES 27–28
Along Madison Street—between Canal and Racine Streets—just west of Union Station, Bernard passes the notorious Skid Row. With several railroad lines crossing through Chicago, the area became a convenient spot for day laborers, seasonal workers, seamen, and lumbermen passing through town or without work.

With strip joints, “greasy spoon” restaurants, dive bars, single room occupancy hotels (SROs), and lines of workers hoping to find day labor, this stretch of Madison Street in the 1920s would have been quite different than the world Bernard knew around his home in the Austin neighborhood.

PAGES 29–30
Bernard steps off the Madison Street streetcar at the corner of State and Madison Streets. Once called the “world’s busiest corner,” the intersection was home to the famed Carson Pirie Scott department store, designed by architect Louis Sullivan in 1899 and 1903. The intersection is also known as the “0, 0” point in the city, because every address—north, south, east, west—radiates from this point. Edward Brennan, an unsung hero of urban planning, developed this new system of addresses in 1909, making it easy to navigate the city. Today, the building is home to a bustling Target store, an architecture firm, and classrooms for the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Bernard thinks to himself: “This is the heart of the machine.” This is a reference to Burnham’s Plan of Chicago Chapter VII: “The Heart of Chicago,” as well as a nod to Bernard’s interest in engineering and machinery.
PAGE 31, PANEL 1

Bernard meets Elisa at the southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge (1920) and Wacker Drive as a large ship passes underneath.48 (Today, this is also the departure location of the Chicago Architecture Foundation River Cruise aboard Chicago’s First Lady Cruises.) In the 1920s, the Chicago River was a vital industrial transportation link to the rest of the city; a “water highway” of commerce. On a typical summer day in 1928, the Michigan Avenue Bridge would have been opened approximately 8 times per day and 3,000 times per year.

PAGE 31, PANELS 5 AND 8

The Michigan Avenue Bridge opened in 1920 as the world’s first double-deck, double-leaf, trunnion bascule bridge.49 In a city known for its innovative bridge design and engineering, the Michigan Avenue Bridge was one of the later bridges constructed over the Chicago River downtown. In the 1909 Plan of Chicago, Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett first proposed this bridge in an effort to establish Michigan Avenue as the commercial spine of the city and connect and grow commerce on both sides of the river.50 Built eight years after Burnham’s death and 11 years after the 1909 Plan, Bennett was chosen as the architect to design the four Beaux Arts style pylon and bridgehouse.

PAGE 31, PANEL 2

By 1928, artist Henry Hering designed new bas relief sculptures that were carved into the facades of the four bridge pylons. Elisa and Bernard stand in front of the bridgehouse sculpture titled ‘Defense’, which depicts a scene from the Battle of Fort Dearborn in 1812. This structure is now home to the McCormick Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum.52

PAGE 31, PANEL 6

333 North Michigan Avenue is outlined in the center of Panel 6. Designed in 1928 by the famed architectural firm of Holabird and Root,53 this Art Deco style building features setbacks, dramatic verticality, and a highly sculptural form. Holabird and Root’s design was inspired by Eliel Saarinen’s second prize winning entry (unbuilt) for the Chicago Tribune Tower Competition of 1922. Although Saarinen didn’t win the competition, his entry sparked a new direction in skyscraper design, seen in many similar skyscrapers throughout the 1920s.

PAGES 32, PANELS 3–5 AND PAGES 33–34

Elisa leads the boys along North State Street to the alley next to the Chicago Theatre (1921, originally named the Ambassador Theatre).54 The lavish neo-Baroque style building was one of largest movie “picture palaces” in the country55 at the time of its construction, with 3,600 seats.56 Owners Balaban and Katz operated dozens of movie palaces throughout the country. Their architects C.W. Rapp and George L. Rapp designed this ornate flagship, which became a prototype of many others.

The marquee announces “Lights of New York”57 (released July 1928), one of the first “talkies” from Hollywood. The film also features music from “Al Mooney on the Mighty Wurlitzer” pipe organ.
PAGE 35, PANEL 7
Reggie hesitates at Elisa’s idea to visit Oak Street Beach. While she says “It’s public. It’s for everyone,” he knows that Chicago’s beaches were racially-segregated, contested spaces.

PAGE 36
After the Chicago River was reversed in 1900, diverting sewage that had previously flowed into Lake Michigan, the lake became a much more desirable area for swimming and bathing. The small Oak Street beach—today in the shadow of skyscrapers like the John Hancock—became extremely popular in the early decades of the 20th century. Owners of nearby mansions along Lake Shore Drive fought the creation and extension of the beach. In 1928, an estimated 55,000 bathers visited Oak Street Beach on hot summer days.

PAGE 36, PANEL 5–PAGE 37
The argument between our three characters and the big guys on the beach is a reference to the 1919 murder of Eugene Williams. It’s also a callback to the bombed out house Reggie sees in his walk through Bronzeville (Page 10, Panel 6). Swimming off the informally segregated Rainbow Beach on the South Side, African-American teenager Eugene Williams drifted towards the whites-only beach. He was struck in the head by a white man who threw rocks off the breakwater. The incident sparked more than a week of rioting between gangs of white and black youth. While Chicago’s beaches were never officially designated by race, racial segregation informally occurred along the lakeshore for much of the 20th century. Many argue de facto segregation continues today.

PAGE 38, PANEL 1
The view looks north along North Michigan Avenue at Chicago Avenue. The Chicago Water Tower (left, 1869) and the Pumping Station (1866) can be seen in the center of the frame. Designed by architect William W. Boyington, the structures were some of the few in downtown to survive the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

PAGE 38, PANEL 3
Bernard’s choice of the more formal word “incorrect,” is another example that he is still learning the nuances of English. (See also Pages 23–24 and Page 35, Panel 3.)

PAGE 38, PANELS 6–7
As Reggie, Elisa, and Bernard walk back to the Chicago River and discuss Reggie’s goal of becoming a journalist they pass the entrance to the Tribune Tower. Touting itself as the “World’s Greatest Newspaper,” the Chicago Tribune held a 1922 competition soliciting designs for “one of the most beautiful buildings in the world.” Today, the competition is remembered as one of the largest, most controversial, and most important architectural competitions in America. Designers from 23 countries submitted 267 entries. Despite many forward-looking modern designs, the jury chose a building with a distinctly historical style. The Gothic Revival crown inspired by a medieval tower in France and the ornate church-like entrance symbolized the newspaper’s desire in the early 20th century to root itself in the past.
PAGE 39, PANEL 1
This view of the Chicago River between the Michigan Avenue and State Street bridges shows the mix of 19th century industrial buildings next to new, gleaming 20th century commercial skyscrapers—such as the Tribune Tower (1925), the Wrigley Building (1924), and the Mather Tower (1928). All of these historically-inspired buildings would have appeared shiny and brand new for our trio of explorers.

Along the south side of the River, we get a glimpse at upper and lower Wacker Drive which opened in 1928. This ingenious idea was first proposed by Burnham and Bennett in the 1909 Plan of Chicago. The double-decker road was designed to separate delivery and commercial traffic from pedestrian and car traffic.

Wacker Drive is named for Charles Wacker, the chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission and a strong promoter of the 1909 Plan. Wacker also sponsored the writing and publishing of Wacker’s Manual of the Plan of Chicago written by Walter D. Moody in 1911. For more than 25 years, Wacker’s Manual was used as a textbook by Chicago schoolchildren. It was the Chicago Architecture Foundation’s inspiration for No Small Plans.

PAGE 39, PANEL 2
The white terra cotta Wrigley Building is seen on the right side of the frame. Chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. touched off the construction boom when he decided to build a new headquarters for his company on an oddly shaped lot west of Michigan Avenue and just north of the river. Designed by architects Graham, Anderson, Probst and White in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, it was completed in 1924.

PAGE 41
Our three characters stand on the Michigan Avenue Bridge and look west along the Chicago River, viewing the State Street, Dearborn Street, and Clark Street bridges opening.

PAGE 42, PANEL 3
As he begins to formulate the story in his head on the ‘L’ ride home, Reggie recalls the moments from the day exploring with Elisa and Bernard: sneaking into the Chicago Theatre, the (almost) fight at Oak Street Beach, the many bridges along the River.
ADDITIONAL READING

1. Street view: 3435 South Indiana Avenue, https://goo.gl/maps/8mVmdDyr6E62

See 2

5. Street view: 35th Street and South Parkway, https://goo.gl/maps/vRdCxo3J3s62
8. Street view: Victory Monument, https://goo.gl/maps/3qYF5MADmDz


31. Chicago Daily Tribune front page, 4 August 1928, chicagotribune.com http://trib.in/2vnAolu
38 Street view: 4143 West Madison Street https://goo.gl/maps/PCNV4bX8AVo
41 Street view: Midwest Athletic Club, https://goo.gl/maps/JC7AUEz2Cyx
42 Street view: Madison Street, https://goo.gl/maps/DuJAAk1af7p
43 “Skid Row: A last resort, a place to disappear—or, for many, home” by Ron Grossman, chicagotribune.com, http://trib.in/1NhFMzv
46 “The unsung hero of urban planning who made it easy to get around Chicago” by Chris Bentley and Jennifer Masengarb, wbez.org, http://bit.ly/2vFZbk1
47 Street view: Target store on Madison Street, https://goo.gl/maps/uKSgWzr3XaN2

Street view: SE corner of Wacker Drive and Michigan Avenue, https://goo.gl/maps/jr2amBY1id32
52 See 49
54 Street view: Chicago Theater, https://goo.gl/maps/zDghokhtq7zB2

65 “Tribune Tower Competition” by Blair Kamin, chicagotribune.com, http://trib.in/1LXpoln