



**THE LOST
SHTETL
A NOVEL
MAX
GROSS**

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GLOSSARY

agunah (Hebrew): a “chained woman”—a woman who has not received a divorce from her husband and is thereby forbidden from remarrying.

amidah (Hebrew): the “standing prayer”; the central part of the Jewish prayer service.

altercocker (Yiddish): old fart.

apikoros (*pl. apikorsim*) (Hebrew): a skeptical or heretical Jew.

Armste (German): poor wretch; unfortunate.

ba'al teshuva (Hebrew): a transgressor who has had a change of heart and begins religious observance again.

babka: Eastern European yeast cake.

Bar Kokhbar, Simon: ancient Jewish leader of a revolt against the Romans in 132 CE.

beit din (Hebrew): a rabbinical court.

ben Maimon, Moses (1138-1204): Better known as Maimonides, was the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher considered one of the greatest sages of the medieval era.

Betar: a fort in Ancient Israel where Simon Bar Kokhbar took his last stand against the Romans, which was subsequently crushed.

bubbe (Yiddish): grandmother.

bubkes (Yiddish): nothing.

bubliks: A dense, ring-shaped bread.

Casimir the Great (1310–1370): Polish sovereign who introduced a legal code to the nascent kingdom, founded the University of Krakow, and offered protections to Jews.

Chabad: the largest ultra-Orthodox Jewish movement in the world and the only Hasidic movement that missionizes.

GLOSSARY

Chabad House: one of the Chabad movement's houses of study and outreach.

challah (Hebrew): a braided bread.

cheder (Hebrew): elementary school.

Chmielnicki, Bogdan (1595–1657): Ukrainian revolutionary and notorious anti-Semite who led an uprising that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Jews.

cholent (Yiddish): a long-simmering Sabbath stew made of beans and beef.

Chumash (Hebrew): The Bible, or Torah.

dayyan (pl. *dayyanim*) (Hebrew): judge in a rabbinical court.

Di Baytsh Fun Haknkrayts (Yiddish): *The Scourge of the Swastika*.

dobrze (Polish): good.

Dos Togbukh fun Ana Frank (Yiddish): *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

dreck (Yiddish): filth, trash.

Du Bist a Yid? (Yiddish): Are you Jewish?

dybbuk (Yiddish): an evil spirit.

dzielnica (Polish): administrative.

Fakt: a Polish tabloid newspaper.

Frank, Jacob: eighteenth-century Polish Jewish religious leader, ultimately excommunicated from Judaism, who preached a new mixture of Christianity and Judaism called Frankism, which also advocated “purification through transgression”—i.e., sexual swinging.

gatkes (Yiddish): undergarments.

Gazeta Wyborcza: a Polish newspaper.

get (Hebrew): a bill of divorce.

Główny Dworzec Autobusowy (Polish): bus station.

Gomulka, Władysław (1905–1982): First secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party.

hamentashen (Yiddish): a triangular cookie filled with preserved fruit, typically served on Purim.

herem (Hebrew): excommunication.

hesped (Hebrew): eulogy.

GLOSSARY

horah (Hebrew): a Jewish dance.

Judenrat (German): a council of Jewish elders established during World War II tasked with enforcing Nazi law.

kaddish (Hebrew): Prayer for the dead.

kahal (Hebrew): assembly of elders.

Kapo: An internal concentration camp police force, populated by prisoners.

Karaites: a sect of Judaism that rejects the Talmud.

Karo, Joseph (1488–1575): Rabbi who authored the *Shulchan Arush*, one of the largest compilations of Jewish law in history.

Katz, Naphtali ha-Kohen (1649–1718): Rabbi, Kabbalist and commentator.

klemzer (Yiddish): Traditional Ashkenazic Jewish music.

Koidanover, Tsevi Hirsh (1648–1712): Kabbalist and author of *The Just Measure*.

korva (Yiddish): whore.

kurator (Polish): parole officer.

lashon hara (Hebrew): literally, “evil tongue”; malevolent gossip.

lazienka (Polish): bathroom.

Maimonides: Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon (aka, the Ramban), a twelfth-century Sephardic doctor who became one of the most important Jewish philosophers of the Medieval era.

mamzer (Hebrew and Yiddish): a child born of a forbidden relationship; i.e., conceived in adultery or incest. They are forbidden from being counted in a quorum or from serving as a judge.

Matura (Polish): state secondary school exam.

meshuggenah (Yiddish): crazy.

mezuzah (Hebrew): A small case affixed to the doorposts of Jewish houses that has a prayer written on parchment inside.

mikvah (Hebrew): the ritual bath.

Mój Boze (Polish): exclamation, “My goodness!”

Moshiach (Hebrew): the Messiah.

Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE): Babylonian king who conquered the kingdom of Judah and destroyed Solomon’s Temple in 587 BCE.

GLOSSARY

Nu (Yiddish): “Well?” or “So?”

Orthodox Union: Contemporary Jewish organization that certifies kosher status of food.

People’s Crusade: Populist Crusade in the year 1096 that led to the slaughter of many thousands of Jews living along the Rhine.

Pilecki, Witold (1901–1948): Co-founder of the Secret Polish Army during World War II who was arrested and executed after the war by the communist government.

poczta (Polish): post office.

Polska Partia Narodowa: Polish National Party, a far-right fringe political party.

Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc: (Polish): Law and Order, an ultra-nationalist and populist political party.

Purim: Spring holiday that celebrates the defeat of Haman and openly encourages inebriation.

Rabbinic Council: Eastern European Jewish organization that collected taxes and served as a go-between with local communities and governments.

Reb (Yiddish): honorific, corresponding to “sir” for a non-rabbi.

Rebbe (Hebrew): the religious leader of the community.

Rebbetzin (Yiddish): The wife of the rabbi.

Reksio: a cartoon dog.

rugelach (Yiddish): a small rolled-up Jewish pastry.

Sigismund II Augustus (1520–1572): the last male of the Jagellonian dynasty of rulers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

schmaltz (Yiddish): rendered chicken fat.

schnorrer (Yiddish): beggar; moocher.

Sejm (Polish): one of the two houses of parliament.

Shalom aleichem (Hebrew): greeting meaning “Peace be unto you.”

shechita (Hebrew): slaughterhouse.

shmegegges (Yiddish): bunkum artist.

shmendrick (Yiddish): fool.

GLOSSARY

shtreimel (Yiddish): a large fur hat.

siddur (Hebrew): prayer book.

sofer (Hebrew): a scribe who handwrites official documents.

swinia (Polish): pig.

Talmud: the central text of Rabbinic Judaism, comprising the “mishna” and the “gemarah,” originating as the oral law of ancient Israel.

tefillin (Hebrew): phylacteries; a set of black leather boxes that are wrapped around the arms and forehead during morning prayers.

Tibbon, Moses: thirteenth-century French Jewish doctor and author.

Tisha B’Av: a fast day that commemorates the destruction of the First and Second Temple.

Titus (39–89 CE): Roman military commander and emperor who captured Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE.

toaleta (Polish): toilet.

Torah (Hebrew): the first five books of the Old Testament.

tzedakah (Hebrew): charity (literally, “justice”).

tzitzit (Hebrew): Tassels affixed to the garments of religious Jews.

voivodeship: a Polish province and area of local government.

Warszawa: A post-World War II Polish-manufactured automobile.

yenta (Yiddish): a gossip or busybody.

Yeshiva bachur (Yiddish): Yeshiva boy.

Zevi, Shabbetai: seventeenth-century Turkish rabbi believed by many to be the Messiah until he converted to Islam.

Zlote Tarasy: An office-and-retail complex in Warsaw.

Zoroastrianism: one of the world’s oldest Middle Eastern religions.