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## from "Flush"

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### [Alvin Greenberg](#)

I have represented us to the governments and royalty and industrial power of northern Europe for nearly half a century, and done so with considerable success, if I must say so myself. Our products grace the newest office buildings, the headquarters of highest officialdom, the most elegant homes-mansions, I should say-and, indeed, a few renovated castles as well. The middle class, anxious to emulate their betters and to have at home the same quality they enjoy at the workplace, will have no other than ours. If I failed in Russia-and who could have succeeded in those days-it was only because of that relentless, penny-pinching, Bolshevik shortsightedness. Ah, but what a contract that would have been when all that housing, all those government buildings, were going up in the decades after the war! But no, they told me, no, Mr. Kwartz, we can manufacture for ourselves ten million toilets for what one million of yours would cost. Well, do it, then, I told the, and see what you have to live with. They did it of course, at twice the time and expense they had estimated, I'm sure, with leaky, rusting tanks, with the incessant, Poe-like drip of decomposing gaskets, with regular backups and eternal stench and, from time to time, explosions. It doesn't seem to be generally known that toilets explode, but they do. Not ours, of course, or rarely, anyway. Flawed porcelain, invisible cracks, the buildup of gases, the sudden, brief change in water pressure that any system is liable to, and Boom! Russia, no doubt, echoes at dawn with the roar of exploding toilets.

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