PHILIP ROTH

Indignation

'Intricately wrought, passionate and fascinating... A late masterpiece'

John Banville, Financial Times,

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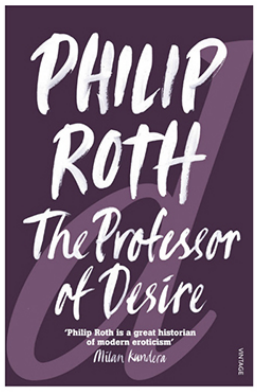
PHILIP ROTH
The Professor of Desire
'Philip Roth is a great historian of modern eroticism'
Milan Kundera
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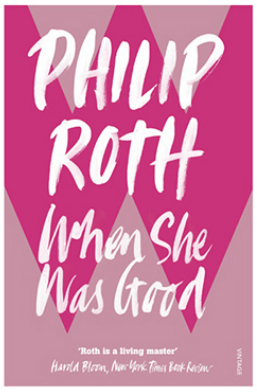
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When She Was Good
'Roth is a living master'
Harold Bloom, New York Times Book Review
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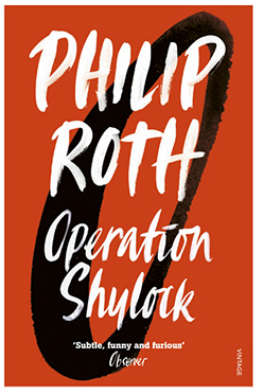
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Operation Shylock
'Subtle, funny and furious'
Observer
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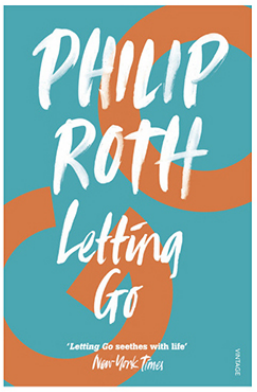
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Letting Go
'Letting Go seethes with life'
New York Times
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PHILIP ROTH
Our Gang
'The uncontested master of comic irony'
Time
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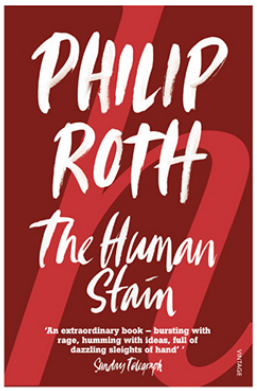
PHILIP ROTH
The Human Stain
'An extraordinary book – bursting with rage, humming with ideas, full of dazzling sleights of hand'
Sunday Telegraph
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PHILIP ROTH
Portnoy's Complaint
'The most outrageously funny book about sex yet written'
Guardian
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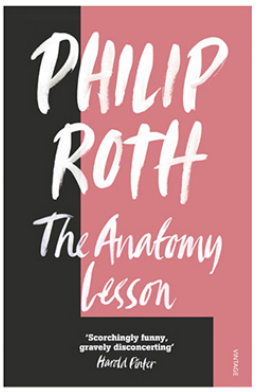
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The Anatomy Lesson
'Scorchingly funny, gravely disconcerting'
Harold Pinter
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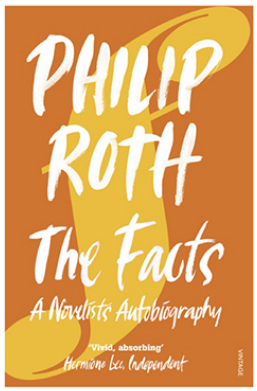
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A Novelist's Autobiography
'Vivid, absorbing'
Hermione Lee, Independent
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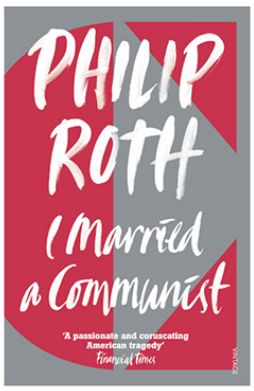
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I Married a Communist
'A passionate and coruscating American tragedy'
Financial Times
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Sunday Times
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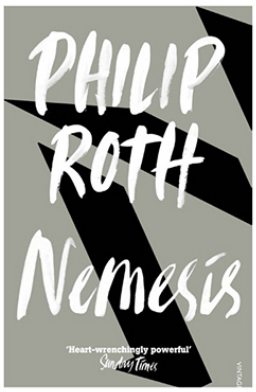
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Nemesis
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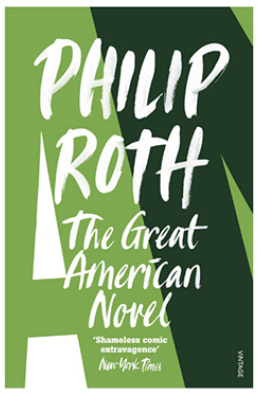
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The Great American Novel
'Shameless comic extravagence'
New York Times
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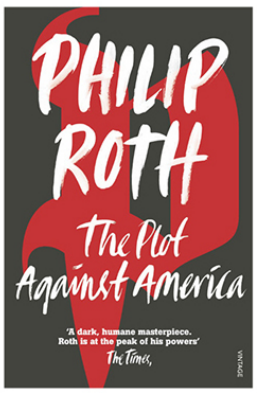
PHILIP ROTH
The Plot Against America
'A dark, humane masterpiece. Roth is at the peak of his powers'
The Times
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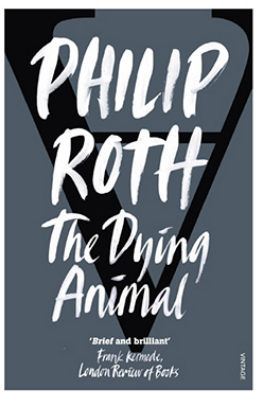
PHILIP ROTH
The Dying Animal
'Brief and brilliant'
Frank Kermode, London Review of Books
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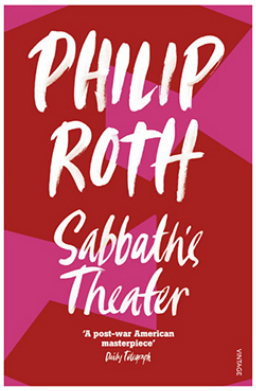
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Daily Telegraph
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ABOUT THE BOOK

During the second year of the Korean War in 1951, studious, law-abiding Marcus Messner is beginning his sophomore year on the conservative campus of Ohio's Winesburg College. Marcus has fled from his hometown of Newark, New Jersey, trying to escape his father's oppressive love – a love that is also a mad fear of the dangers of adult life soon to face his son. Whilst at college, Marcus has to traverse an American world that isn't his own: facing off against ardent Christian, Dean Cauldwell, and falling in love with the beautiful Olivia Hutton. *Indignation* gleams with narrative muscle, as it twists and turns unpredictably, and extends – shockingly – beyond the confines of natural life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In 1997 Philip Roth won the Pulitzer Prize for *American Pastoral*. In 1998 he received the National Medal of Arts at the White House, and in 2002 the highest award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Gold Medal in Fiction, previously awarded to John Dos Passos, William Faulkner and Saul Bellow, among others. He has twice won the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. He has won the PEN/Faulkner Award three times. In 2005 *The Plot Against America* received the Society of American Historians' Prize for 'the outstanding historical novel on an American theme for 2003–2004'.

Recently Roth received PEN's two most prestigious prizes: in 2006 the PEN/Nabokov Award 'for a body of work … of enduring originality and consummate craftsmanship' and in 2007 the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction, given to a writer whose 'scale of achievement over a sustained career … places him or her in the highest rank of American literature'. In 2011 Roth won the International Man Booker Prize.

Roth is the only living American writer to have his work published in a comprehensive, definitive edition by the Library of America.

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Zuckerman Unbound
The Anatomy Lesson
The Prague Orgy

The Counterlife

American Pastoral
I Married a Communist
The Human Stain

Exit Ghost

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The Facts
Patrimony
Operation Shylock
The Plot Against America

Kepesh Books

The Breast
The Professor of Desire
The Dying Animal

Nemeses: Short Novels

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The Humbling
Nemesis

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Reading Myself and Others
Shop Talk

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Letting Go
When She Was Good
Portnoy's Complaint
Our Gang
The Great American Novel
My Life as a Man
Sabbath's Theater

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Sunday Times

‘There aren’t supposed to be degrees or intensities of uniqueness, and yet Roth is somehow inordinately unique. He is bloodymindedly himself, himself, himself’
Martin Amis

‘Opening the first page of any Philip Roth is like hearing the ignition on a boiler roar into life. Passion is what we’re going to get, and plenty of it’
Guardian

‘He is a writer of quite extraordinary skill and courage; and he takes on bigger enemies in every book he writes’
Frank Kermode

‘Philip Roth is a great historian of modern eroticism’
Milan Kundera

‘There is a clarity, almost a ruthlessness, to his work, which makes the experience of reading any of his books a bracing, wild ride’
The Times

‘He is skilled, witty, energetic and performs like a virtuoso’
Saul Bellow

‘Nobody writes about the American family with more tenderness and honesty’
New Statesman

‘Roth is a living master’
Harold Bloom

For K. W.

PHILIP ROTH

Indignation

VINTAGE BOOKS
London

Olaf (upon what were once knees)
does almost ceaselessly repeat
“there is some shit I will not eat”

—E. E. Cummings,
“i sing of Olaf glad and big”

Under Morphine

ABOUT TWO AND a half months after the well-trained divisions of North Korea, armed by the Soviets and Chinese Communists, crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea on June 25, 1950, and the agonies of the Korean War began, I entered Robert Treat, a small college in downtown Newark named for the city's seventeenth-century founder. I was the first member of our family to seek a higher education. None of my cousins had gone beyond high school, and neither my father nor his three brothers had finished elementary school. "I worked for money," my father told me, "since I was ten years old." He was a neighborhood butcher for whom I'd delivered orders on my bicycle all through high school, except during baseball season and on the afternoons when I had to attend interschool matches as a member of the debating team. Almost from the day that I left the store—where I'd been working sixty-hour weeks for him between the time of my high school graduation in January and the start of college in September—almost from the day that I began classes at Robert Treat, my father became frightened that I would die. Maybe his fear had something to do with the war, which the U.S. armed forces, under United Nations auspices, had immediately entered to bolster the efforts of the ill-trained and underequipped South Korean army; maybe it had something to do with the heavy casualties our troops were sustaining against the Communist firepower and his fear that if the conflict

dragged on as long as World War Two had, I would be drafted into the army to fight and die on the Korean battlefield as my cousins Abe and Dave had died during World War Two. Or maybe the fear had to do with his financial worries: the year before, the neighborhood's first supermarket had opened only a few blocks from our family's kosher butcher shop, and sales had begun steadily falling off, in part because of the supermarket's meat and poultry section's undercutting my father's prices and in part because of a general postwar decline in the number of families bothering to maintain kosher households and to buy kosher meat and chickens from a rabbinically certified shop whose owner was a member of the Federation of Kosher Butchers of New Jersey. Or maybe his fear for me began in fear for himself, for at the age of fifty, after enjoying a lifetime of robust good health, this sturdy little man began to develop the persistent racking cough that, troubling as it was to my mother, did not stop him from keeping a lit cigarette in the corner of his mouth all day long. Whatever the cause or mix of causes fueling the abrupt change in his previously benign paternal behavior, he manifested his fear by hounding me day and night about my whereabouts. Where were you? Why weren't you home? How do I know where you are when you go out? You are a boy with a magnificent future before you—how do I know you're not going to places where you can get yourself killed?

The questions were ludicrous since, in my high school years, I had been a prudent, responsible, diligent, hardworking A student who went out with only the nicest girls, a dedicated debater, and a utility infielder for the varsity baseball team, living happily enough within the adolescent norms of our neighborhood and my school. The questions were also infuriating—it was as though the father to whom I'd been so close during all these years, practically

growing up at his side in the store, had no idea any longer of who or what his son was. At the store, the customers would delight him and my mother by telling them what a pleasure it was to watch the little one to whom they used to bring cookies—back when his father used to let him play with some fat and cut it up like “a big butcher,” albeit using a knife with a dull blade—to watch him mature under their eyes into a well-mannered, well-spoken youngster who put their beef through the grinder to make chopped meat and who scattered and swept up the sawdust on the floor and who dutifully yanked the remaining feathers from the necks of the dead chickens hanging from hooks on the wall when his father called over to him, “Flick two chickens, Markie, will ya, for Mrs. So-and-So?” During the seven months before college he did more than give me the meat to grind and a few chickens to flick. He taught me how to take a rack of lamb and cut lamb chops out of it, how to slice each rib, and, when I got down to the bottom, how to take the chopper and chop off the rest of it. And he taught me always in the most easygoing way. “Don’t hit your hand with the chopper and everything will be okay,” he said. He taught me how to be patient with our more demanding customers, particularly those who had to see the meat from every angle before they bought it, those for whom I had to hold up the chicken so they could literally look up the asshole to be sure that it was clean. “You can’t believe what some of those women will put you through before they buy their chicken,” he told me. And then he would mimic them: “‘Turn it over. No, *over*. Let me see the bottom.’” It was my job not just to pluck the chickens but to eviscerate them. You slit the ass open a little bit and you stick your hand up and you grab the viscera and you pull them out. I hated that part. Nauseating and disgusting, but it had to be done. That’s what I learned from my father and what I loved learning from him: that you do what you have to do.

Our store fronted on Lyons Avenue in Newark, a block up the street from Beth Israel Hospital, and in the window we had a place where you could put ice, a wide shelf tilted slightly down, back to front. An ice truck would come by to sell us chopped ice, and we'd put the ice in there and then we'd put our meat in so people could see it when they walked by. During the seven months I worked in the store full time before college I would dress the window for him. "Marcus is the artist," my father said when people commented on the display. I'd put everything in. I'd put steaks in, I'd put chickens in, I'd put lamb shanks in—all the products that we had I would make patterns out of and arrange in the window "artistically." I'd take some ferns and dress things up, ferns that I got from the flower shop across from the hospital. And not only did I cut and slice and sell meat and dress the window with meat; during those seven months when I replaced my mother as his sidekick I went with my father to the wholesale market early in the morning and learned to buy it too. He'd be there once a week, five, five-thirty in the morning, because if you went to the market and picked out your own meat and drove it back to your place yourself and put it in the refrigerator yourself, you saved on the premium you had to pay to have it delivered. We'd buy a whole quarter of the beef, and we'd buy a forequarter of the lamb for lamb chops, and we'd buy a calf, and we'd buy some beef livers, and we'd buy some chickens and chicken livers, and since we had a couple of customers for them, we would buy brains. The store opened at seven in the morning and we'd work until seven, eight at night. I was seventeen, young and eager and energetic, and by five I'd be whipped. And there he was, still going strong, throwing hundred-pound forequarters on his shoulders, walking in and hanging them in the refrigerator on hooks. There he was, cutting and slicing with the knives, chopping with the cleaver, still filling out orders at seven P.M. when I was ready to collapse.