

Philip Roth ~ The Plot Against America

About The Plot Against America

Set in Newark, New Jersey, in the early 1940s, *The Plot Against America* tells the story of what it was like for the Roth family and Jews across the country when the isolationist aviation hero Charles Lindbergh was elected president of the United States. Roth's richly imagined novel begins in 1940, with the landslide election of Lindbergh, who blamed the Jews for pushing America toward war with Nazi Germany. Lindbergh's admiration of Hitler and his openly anti-Semitic speeches cause increasing turmoil in the Roth household, and in nine-year-old Philip, as political events at home and abroad overtake their daily lives. Alvin, the orphaned nephew the family has taken in, runs away to Canada to fight the Nazis. Sandy, Philip's older brother, ascribes his parents' fears to paranoia and embraces Lindbergh's Just Folks program, which sends him and other Jewish children to live in the "heartland" for a summer. Philip's mother, Bess, wants the family to flee to Canada before it is too late to escape. But his fiercely idealistic father, Herman, refuses to abandon the country where he was born and raised as an American. Overwhelmed by the tensions around him, Philip tries to run away. "I wanted nothing to do with history," he says. "I wanted to be a boy on the smallest scale possible. I wanted to be an orphan." But history will not let go, and as America is whipped into a deadly frenzy by demagogues, the Roths and Jews everywhere begin to expect the worst. In *The Plot Against America* Philip Roth writes with a historical sweep and lyrical intimacy that have rarely been so skillfully combined. As the novel explores the convulsive collision of history and family, readers take a chilling look at devastating events that could have occurred in America—and consider the many possible histories existing beneath the one that actually happened.

About Philip Roth

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 received 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, the

PEN/Faulkner Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. In 2005 Philip Roth has become the third living American writer to have his work published in a comprehensive, definitive edition by the Library of America.

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