

Indignation (Vintage International)

By Philip Roth

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National Bestseller. Now a major motion picture, directed by James Schamus!

In 1951, the second year of the Korean War, a studious, law-abiding, and intense youngster from Newark, New Jersey, Marcus Messner, begins his sophomore year on the pastoral, conservative campus of Ohio's Winesburg College. And why is he there and not at a local college in Newark where he originally enrolled? Because his father, the sturdy, hardworking neighborhood butcher, seems to have gone mad—mad with fear and apprehension of the dangers of adult life, the dangers of the world, the dangers he sees in every corner for his beloved boy. Far from Newark, Marcus has to find his way amid the customs and constrictions of another American world.

Indignation, Philip Roth's twenty-ninth book, is a startling departure from the haunted narratives of old age and experience in Roth's recent books and a powerful exploration of a remarkable moment in American history.

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Indignation (Vintage International) By Philip Roth Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #125932 in Books
- Brand: Roth, Philip
- Published on: 2009-10-06
- Released on: 2009-10-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .70" w x 5.20" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best of the Month, September 2008: Enter once again into the echo chamber of Philip Roth's memory and imagination. In the second year of the Korean War, a butcher's son--a straight-A student wound tight with aspiration--flees Newark and his father's increasingly unhinged fears for his safety. Heading midwest, he finds a strange collegiate land of fraternities, football heroes, V-neck pullover sweaters and white buckskin shoes, panty raids, and mandatory chapel services, and, most startlingly, a young woman with desires of her own. Like another fiction grandmaster of his generation, Alice Munro, Roth seems able to spin infinite surprising tales from a few familiar building blocks, and in *Indignation*, his 25th novel, he has constructed a taut, haunting (and, as always, funny) story that ranks among his best. Reading at times like a buttoned-down *Portnoy's Complaint* (if it's possible to imagine such a thing), *Indignation* records a series of small explosions against '50s propriety and the dire consequences they lead to, capturing the misery of desire amid repression, along with the greater terror of being trapped in endless, relentless memory. --Tom Nissley

From Publishers Weekly

Roth's 29th book tells the tale of young Marcus Messner, a boy forced to attend a pastoral, conservative college because of his fathers apprehensions about life in 1951 New Jersey. Narrator Dick Hill delivers a sturdy performance that manages to bring Messner to life, but never really captures the listeners attention as he normally does. As talented as Hill is, theres something lacking in his characterization. He reads with a droning, slightly whiny voice that sometimes grates. Hill always seems on the verge of losing himself into the tale only to yank himself back from the edge at the last moment. He has a knack for bringing characters to life, but here he sounds tired. *A Houghton Mifflin hardcover (Reviews, May 12). (Sept.)*

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From [The New Yorker](#)

In a departure from Roths recent meditations on age, his new novel revisits the no less sexually frustrating experience of growing up. We are back in nineteen-fifties Newark, and nineteen-year-old Marcus Messner, the son of a kosher butcher, attempts to escape his fathers stifling influence by enrolling at a college in Ohio farm country. Messner is a scholarly type, while his new classmates are an unfriendly bunch of churchgoing, beer-swilling louts. Stubbornly disregarding overtures of friendship from members of the schools only Jewish fraternity, Messner devotes his attentions to a troubled Gentile named Olivia Hutton. Theres something of Portnoy in the masturbation-filled high jinks that follow, but Messner, fearful that he might wind up a rifleman in Korea, is a far darker creation. Roth, blending the bawdy exuberance of his early period and the disenchantment of his recent work, demonstrates with subtle mastery the incomprehensible way ones most banal, incidental, even comical choices achieve the most disproportionate result.

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Users Review

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