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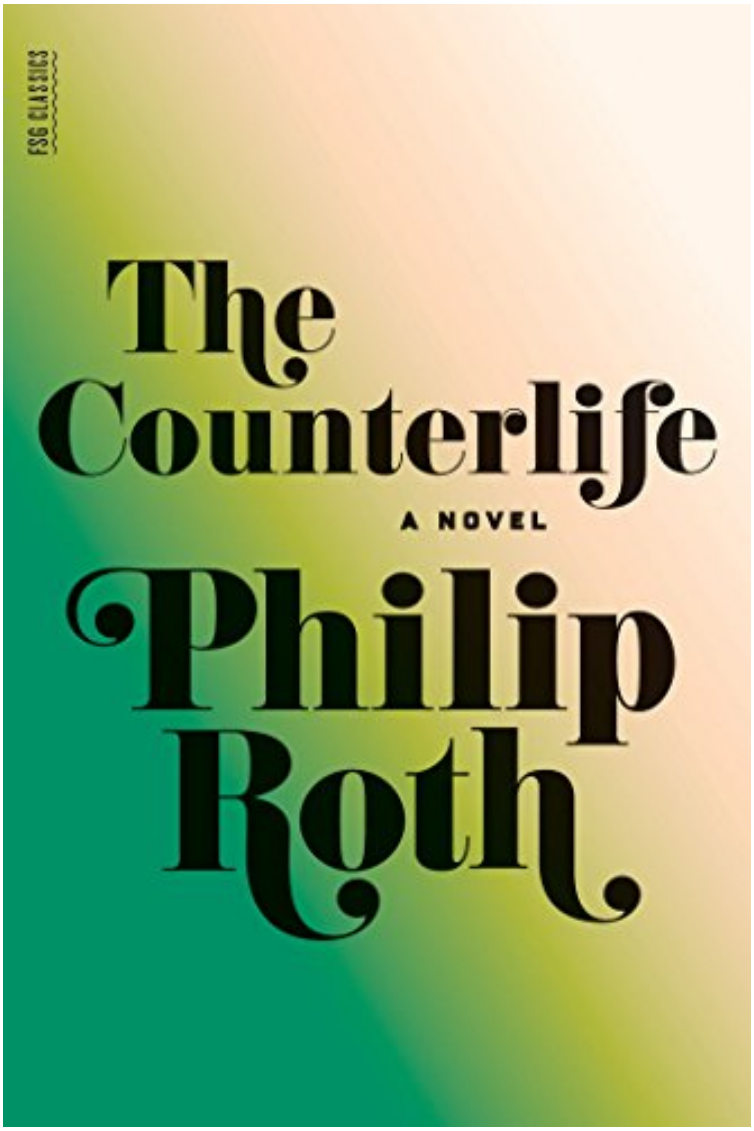
The Counterlife: A Novel



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Counterlife is a novel unlike any that Philip Roth has written before, a book of astonishing 180-degree turns, a book of conflicting perspectives and points of view, and, by far, Roth's most radical work of fiction.The Counterlife is about people enacting their dreams of renewal and escape, some of them going so far as to risk their lives to alter seemingly irreversible destinies. Every major character (and most of the minor ones) is investigating, debating, and arguing the possibility of remaking the future.Illuminating these lives in transition and guiding us through all the landscapes, familiar and foreign, where these people are seeking self-transformation, is the mind of the novelist Nathan Zuckerman. His is the skeptical, enveloping intelligence that calculates the price that's paid in the struggle to change personal fortune and to reshape history.Yet his is hardly the only voice. This is a novel in which speaking out with

force and lucidity appears to be the imperative of every life. There is Henry, the forty-year-old New Jersey dentist, who risks a quintuple bypass operation in order to escape the coronary medication that renders him sexually impotent. There is Maria, the wellborn young Englishwoman, who invites the disdain of her family by marrying the American she knows will be lease acceptable in Gloucestershire. There is Lippmann, the Israeli settlement leader, who contends that "everything is possible for the Jew if only he does not give ground."The action in The Counterlife ranges from a dentist's office in quiet suburban New Jersey to a genteel dining table in a tradition-bound English village, from a Christmas carol service in London's West End to a Sabbath evening celebration in a tiny desert settlement in Israel's occupied West Bank. Wherever they may find themselves, the characters of The Counterlife are tempted unceasingly by the prospect of an alternative existence that can reverse their fate.The Counterlife was a finalist for the National Book Award and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award.Revue de presse"Roth is a comic genius... In this book (wonderfully sharp, worryingly intense) he is an electrifier" (Martin Amis)"Unquestionably his masterpiece" (John Banville)"Boisterously serious, dense, fizzing and formally audacious... The final thing that needs to be said about The Counterlife...is that it's fucking funny" (Julian Barnes London of Books)"No other writer combines such a surface of colloquial relaxation with such a dense load of mediating intelligence - Roth has never written more scrupulously or, in spots, more lovingly" (John Updike New Yorker)"Magnificent...splendid... I hope The Counterlife felt, as Mr. Roth wrote it, like a triumph, because that is certainly how it reads to me" (New York Times Book)Prsentation de l'diteurThe Counterlife is a novel unlike any that Philip Roth has written before, a book of astonishing 180-degree turns, a book of conflicting perspectives and points of view, and, by far, Roth's most radical work of fiction.The Counterlife is about people enacting their dreams of renewal and escape, some of them going so far as to risk their lives to alter seemingly irreversible destinies. Every major character (and most of the minor ones) is investigating, debating, and arguing the possibility of remaking the future.Illuminating these lives in transition and guiding us through all the landscapes, familiar and foreign, where these people are seeking self-transformation, is the mind of the novelist Nathan Zuckerman. His is the skeptical, enveloping intelligence that calculates the price that's paid in the struggle to change personal fortune and to reshape history.Yet his is hardly the only voice. This is a novel in which speaking out with force and lucidity appears to be the imperative of every life. There is Henry, the forty-year-old New Jersey dentist, who risks a quintuple bypass operation in order to escape the coronary medication that renders him sexually impotent. There is Maria, the wellborn young Englishwoman, who invites the disdain of her family by marrying the American she knows will be lease acceptable in Gloucestershire. There is Lippmann, the Israeli settlement leader, who contends that "everything is possible for the Jew if only he does not give ground."The action in The Counterlife ranges from a dentist's office in quiet suburban New Jersey to a genteel dining table in a tradition-bound English village, from a Christmas carol service in London's West End to a Sabbath evening celebration in a tiny desert settlement in Israel's occupied West Bank. Wherever they may find themselves, the characters of The Counterlife are tempted unceasingly by the prospect of an alternative existence that can reverse their fate.The Counterlife was a finalist for the National Book Award and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award.