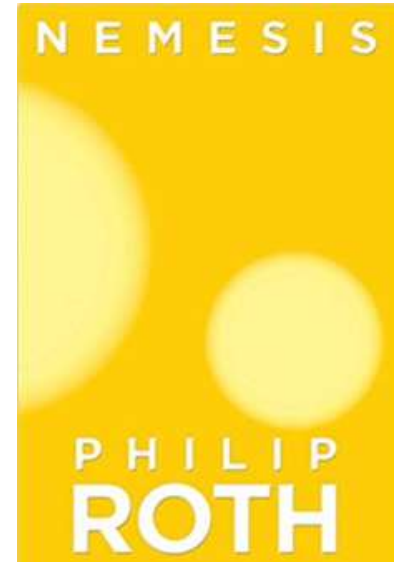


# *Nemesis* by Philip Roth

## Discussion Questions

- 1) Do you consider Bucky's move to the Poconos for the summer a betrayal of his "kids?" Does Bucky? Is this move connected to his military designation as 4F?
- 2) What is it about Bucky that attracts Marcia to him? Why is he so beloved by her two younger sisters, and at least admired by nearly everyone else?
- 3) What do you think of upper-middle-class Dr. Steinberg's enthusiastic welcome of orphaned, relatively poor, narrowly educated Bucky as a future son-in-law?
- 4) Although at summer camp Marcia's sister is infected, all the children in Bucky's playground infected are boys. What reason might Roth have had for this choice?
- 5) Is Bucky uninterested in girls' athleticism? Does the fact that they jump rope and play hopscotch, but participate in no organized team sport, reflect Cantor's values, Roth's, or the social attitudes of 1940s America?
- 6) Bucky continues to think that he carried the polio virus to Indian Hill; years later in response to a questioning of this supposition by Arnold Mesnikoff, one of Cantor's former "wards" and a victim of the disease, Bucky says, "There's no proof that I wasn't." What does this tell us about the former playground director?
- 7) How and why does Mesnikoff's post-polio life differ from Cantor's? Is Roth saying something hopeful in the contrast between the two men, or do you consider the story irredeemably bleak?
- 8) Who is narrating the story? Is there more than one narrator? If so, are any omniscient?



Questions issued by The Jewish Reader, <http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/jewish-reader/10-10/nemesis-by-philip-roth>