

# Trust

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A NOVEL BY

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CYNTHIA  
OZICK



November 22, 1993

This book ~~hunts~~ back (from the corridors of the Past) into my hands (ephemerally, for this inscription) on the thirtieth anniversary of the very day I wrote the final paragraphs. It was also ~~the~~ the day of President Kennedy's assassination — and yet I turned away from the radio (I was at that time too foolish to own a television set) to finish the novel. Unfortunately this edition is exactly as I

to

### My Mother and Father

editorial hand <sup>note it. No</sup> touched a hair of its head, though the editor at NAL, David Segal (my good friend, who died suddenly at age 42, five years later; his widow, the novelist Lore Segal, remains a close and admired friend), sent me one hundred pages of "suggestions." It was clear to me that my failure to satisfy him would result in his turning the book down. Nevertheless I declined to make a single change. It is a sign of his character — the eschewing of the power he certainly had — that he accepted the book as-is, and my gratitude to him enters (as I believe all gratitude does) the realm of Eternity.

After publication, there were a handful of reviews, many of them favorable, before Trust fell, as is common with first novels, into eclipse — an eclipse from which it has never emerged. I recall one of those reviews in particular, in TIME magazine, part of a "roundup of first novels" that season. Not only was I made a year older than my true age (I was 37, and oh, the difference from 38!), but I was, gratuitously, based on nothing, called "a housewife." I was unemployed — i.e., didn't have a job in an office — and a woman; a woman, married, who was a full-time writer, was, to TIME, a housewife! (It is difficult enough, in general, for writers to be taken seriously — "Are you working or are you writing?" people say.) I recognize that Trust isn't read, and never will be read. I also

(over)

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know (or recognize, or believe) that it contains the best prose I  
have ever written. I began Trust (thinking it would be a short  
novella - i.e., a novella) at age 29; I completed it at age 35.  
I had been writing steadily (in humiliation, in defeat, without  
status) since 22. I was glad, finally, after so long an  
apprenticeship, to be allowed to Begin.

Cynthia Ozile

## part one

# AMERICA





"Everything is mine," said gold.  
"Everything is mine," said iron.  
"I'll buy everything," said gold.  
"I'll take everything," said iron.

—ALEKSANDR PUSHKIN

Offer the resourceful man one of two legacies:  
a mammoth trust fund by inheritance of wealth,  
or a minuscule fund of trust by inheritance of  
nature; and he will choose the one which least  
inhibits venturesomeness.

—FROM THE UNPUBLISHED APHORISMS  
OF ENOCH VAND

# TRUST

*a novel by*  
**Cynthia Ozick**

The New American Library







PHOTO: HERSEL OZICK

CYNTHIA OZICK was born in New York City and educated at New York University and Ohio State. Her short stories, poetry, and criticism have appeared in such magazines as *Commentary*, *Mademoiselle*, *Midstream*, *Antioch Review*, *Evergreen Review*, and *The Noble Savage*. Married and the mother of a daughter, the author lives in New Rochelle, New York.

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*A new voice in American fiction is unmistakably revealed in the opening sentences of this extraordinary first novel.*

*Trust is the story of a young woman's search for her "psychological" father. It is a novel concerned with the concept of "trust" in private life...as well as in the worlds of finance, banking, and inheritance.*

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From the acute sensibility of the novel's young heroine and narrator emerges a group of superbly individualized characters. Foremost among them is her mother, Allegra, wealthy, almost grotesque in her pretensions, yet filled with unquenchable vitality; Enoch, her husband, a former Jewish radical, now grown cynically wise and burningly ambitious, facing the test of his public life before a congressional hearing; and William, a first husband, who cannot bring himself to break all bonds with Allegra even after her successive

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(Continued from front flap)

allegiances to the left wing, free love, and modern poetry have destroyed their marriage.

One major figure, however, threatens the well-being of all the others: Gustave Nicholas Tilbeck, firebrand, poet, bohemian. He is Allegra's youthful lover and the heroine's father, whom the girl has never seen and who becomes for her the symbol of salvation—or damnation. Her quest for him plunges her into a past of shifting loyalties and fierce passions, treacheries and self-betrays. It becomes, inevitably, a search for human truth itself, a quest that resolves itself in a confrontation both unpredictable and unavoidable, comic, tragic, and ultimately triumphant.

*Trust* is a richly complex novel, many-layered in its depth of meaning and in its psychological portrayal of character. Extending from the thirties to the present day, encompassing the splendid habitats of the rich in Europe and New York, it reveals with vivid clarity the intellectual, political, and social life of four fascinating decades.

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