



Making It (NYRB Classics)

By Norman Podhoretz

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Making It (NYRB Classics) By Norman Podhoretz

A controversial memoir about American intellectual life and academia and the relationship between politics, money, and education.

Norman Podhoretz, the son of Jewish immigrants, grew up in the tough Brownsville section of Brooklyn, attended Columbia University on a scholarship, and later received degrees from the Jewish Theological Seminary and Cambridge University. *Making It* is his blistering account of fighting his way out of Brooklyn and into, then out of, the Ivory Tower, of his military service, and finally of his induction into the ranks of what he calls “the Family,” the small group of left-wing and largely Jewish critics and writers whose opinions came to dominate and increasingly politicize the American literary scene in the fifties and sixties. It is a Balzacian story of raw talent and relentless and ruthless ambition. It is also a closely observed and in many ways still-pertinent analysis of the tense and more than a little duplicitous relationship that exists in America between intellect and imagination, money, social status, and power.

The Family responded to the book with outrage, and Podhoretz soon turned no less angrily on them, becoming the fierce neoconservative he remains to this day. Fifty years after its first publication, this controversial and legendary book remains a riveting autobiography, a book that can be painfully revealing about the complex convictions and needs of a complicated man as well as a fascinating and essential document of mid-century American cultural life.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A frank and honest book...high-stepping brilliance...tactfully and touchingly revealing of the fearful ambitions of Podhoretz's family.... Podhoretz has 'allowed himself to be fully known' and so may give the key to the B.Y.M. (Bright Young Men) of the next generation, which will allow them to shuck the iron mask of premature intellectual good taste and join in the common pursuit of self-knowledge and self-expression."
—Frederic Raphael, *The New York Times*

"This masterpiece of American autobiography is the tale of a striving, self-mythologized, and nearly Melvillean figure crashing toward his own salvation—and more.... Nearly 50 years on, it's clear that, to paraphrase Dostoevsky on Gogol, we all come out from Podhoretz's overcoat." —Lee Smith, *Tablet*

"One can't really understand the state of so-called highbrow culture today without first coming to terms with the career of Norman Podhoretz. Along with Jason and Barbara Epstein, Robert Silvers, Susan Sontag, Norman Mailer and a few others (the 'children' of Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling and Philip Rahv), Mr. Podhoretz reconceived the very idea of what it means to be an intellectual." —Robert S. Boynton, *The New York Observer*

"*Making It* was a brave and original book." —Robert Fulford, *The Globe and Mail*

"Podhoretz's analysis of the power of the family is penetrating." —Andrew M. Greeley, *The Reporter*

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The New York Observer

About the Author

Norman Podhoretz is an author, editor, and political and cultural critic. He was the editor of *Commentary* from 1960 to 1995 and has written twelve books, including *World War IV*, *The Prophets*, *Ex-Friends*, and most recently *Why Are Jews Liberals?* He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004.

Terry Teachout is the drama critic for *The Wall Street Journal* and the critic-at-large for *Commentary*. He has written biographies of Louis Armstrong, George Balanchine, Duke Ellington, and H. L. Mencken; the libretti for three operas by Paul Moravec; and a play, *Satchmo at the Waldorf*, that has been produced off-Broadway and throughout America.

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