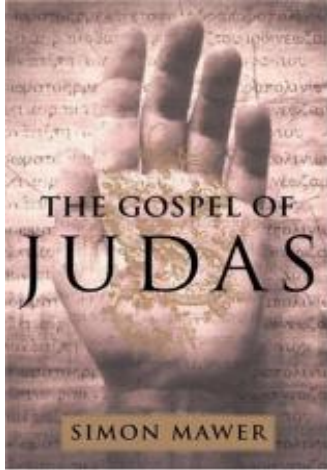


# The Gospel of Judas : A Novel

by Simon Mawer

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## About the Book

As a thriller, as a love story, as a rich and dazzling novel of ideas, **The Gospel of Judas** succeeds and satisfies. It also surprises?

A Roman Catholic priest experiences a crisis of faith?at the same time that he finds himself attracted to a married woman. A scroll is discovered near Jerusalem that, if authentic, could open Christianity to a complete reinterpretation. A dangerous passion ignites and secretly smolders in Fascist-dominated Rome during World War II. These and other brilliant threads are woven into a magnificent literary entertainment?a novel that resonates with tales of love and betrayal as it deals profoundly with questions of faith, identity, individual responsibility, and what it means to believe.

## Discussion Guide

1. Which character in **The Gospel of Judas** did you most closely identify with? Explain why.
2. There are three important female characters in the novel - Madaleine; Magda; and Leo's mother, Gretchen. What role does each woman play in Leo's life? How does each woman's life experience contribute to Leo's understanding of the world and his own place in it?
3. What did you think was the most surprising moment in the novel? Why?
4. Have you had a pivotal moment in your own life that made you re-evaluate everything that came before?
5. What do you think is at stake if Father Leo Newman validates the scroll? And if he denies its authenticity?
6. What do you imagine is the significance of Leo Newman's name? In what way does Leo's character change in the

course of the novel?

7. There are three storylines running through the novel. In what ways do they overlap, intersect, resonate? How did the novel's structure influence your reading of the book and your enjoyment of it?

8. **The Gospel of Judas** has been described as a novel of betrayal and resurrection. Can you trace these themes through the narrative? Do you think Leo's resurrection in the present-day passages is a triumph or a failure?

9. Discuss the contrast between the Italy of Leo's youth and the Italy of his adulthood.

10. Does **The Gospel of Judas** remind you of any other literary thrillers you've read? How are the books similar? How are they different?

## Author Bio

Simon Mawer was born in 1948 in England. His first novel, *CHIMERA*, won the McKitterick Prize for first novels in 1989. *MENDEL'S DWARF* (1997), his first book to be published in the U.S., was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize and was a *New York Times* Book to Remember for 1998. *THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS*, *THE FALL* (winner of the 2003 Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature) and *SWIMMING TO ITHACA* followed, as well as *THE GLASS ROOM*, his 10th book and eighth novel, which was short-listed for the Booker Prize. *TRAPEZE* was published in 2012 and its follow-up, *TIGHTROPE*, in 2015.

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