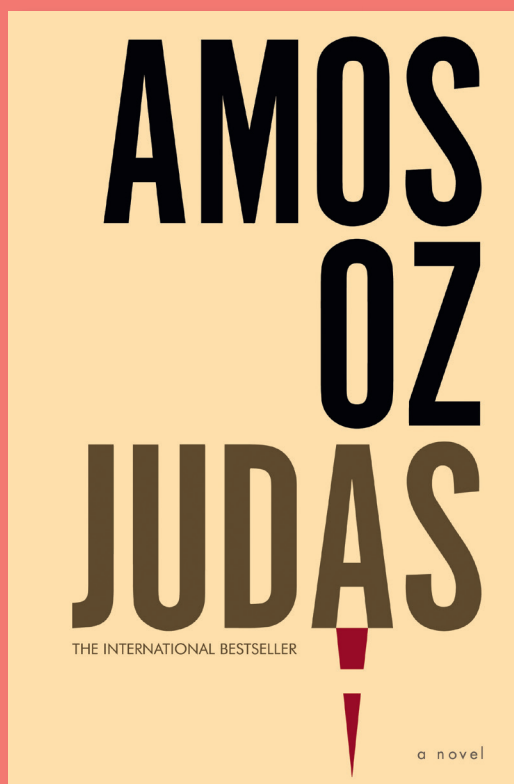




Reader's Guide



Other novels by Amos Oz
How to Cure a Fanatic (2006)
The Hill of Evil Counsel (1976)
Rhyming Life and Death (2007)

Judas Amos Oz

Translated by Nicholas de Lange

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About the author

Amos Oz was born in Jerusalem in 1939. He is the internationally acclaimed author of many novels and essay collections, translated into over forty languages, including his brilliant semi-autobiographical work, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. He has received several international awards, including the Prix Femina, the Israel Prize, the Goethe Prize, the Frankfurt Peace Prize and the 2013 Franz Kafka Prize. He lives in Israel and is considered a towering figure in world literature.

About the translator

Nicholas de Lange has been translating Amos Oz's work since 1972, and *Judas* is the 17th novel by Oz that de Lange has translated. He has also translated fiction by Aharon Appelfeld, A.B. Yehoshua and S. Yizhar. He was born in Nottingham, UK in 1944, and still lives there.

About the book

Set in the still-divided Jerusalem of 1959-60, *Judas* is a tragi-comic coming-of-age tale and a radical rethinking of the concept of treason.

Shmuel, a young, idealistic student, is drawn to a strange house and its mysterious occupants within. As he starts to uncover the house's tangled history, he reaches an understanding that harks back not only to the beginning of the Jewish-Arab conflict, but also to the beginning of Jerusalem itself – to Christianity, to Judaism, to Judas.

Discussion points

The novel's epigraph is a quote from a poem by Nathan Alterman called 'The Traitor'. Amos Oz has said that he has been called a traitor himself many times, and that a traitor is 'the one who changes in the eyes of those who cannot change'. In this novel he writes about perhaps the most infamous traitor of all, Judas – how does he explore the concept of treason? Are traitors always bad?

How did you respond to the author's presentation of the story of Judas in the novel? Did it alter your views?

The book has been described as an old-fashioned novel of ideas. Do you think it works as a modern and compelling narrative too?

This novel tackles huge subjects: the founding of Israel and the founding of Christianity. What links between the two events is the author drawing?

Shmuel's academic work on the Jewish views of Jesus is folded into the narrative – does this work? Do you think we are reading the character's ideas or the author's?

The novel opens saying that it is a story of 'error and desire, of unrequited love, and of a religious question that remains unresolved...' Is this a political novel or a love story, or both?

The novel can also be seen as a coming-of-age tale. How has Shmuel changed by the end?

Themed reading

Eshkol Nevo *Neuland*
Jonathan Safran Foer *Here I Am*