

# The Preservationist

by David Maine

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## About the Book

To Sam Blount, meeting Julia is the best thing that has ever happened to him.

Working at the local college and unsuccessful in his previous relationships, he'd been feeling troubled about his approaching fortieth birthday, "a great beast of a birthday," as he sees it, but being with Julia makes him feel young and hopeful. Julia Stilwell, a freshman trying to come to terms with a recent tragedy that has stripped her of her greatest talent, is flattered by Sam's attention. But their relationship is tested by a shy young man with a secret, Marcus Broley, who is also infatuated with Julia.

Told in alternating points of view, THE PRESERVATIONIST is the riveting tale of Julia and Sam's relationship, which begins to unravel as the threat of violence approaches and Julia becomes less and less sure whom she can trust.

## Discussion Guide

1. Who is your favorite character? Why? Who is your least favorite?
2. In the original, Biblical version of the story, only God, Noah and his sons are mentioned (and only God and Noah perform any specific actions). Does this [male] writer do a good job of creating convincing female characters?
3. Who is "the preservationist"? Explain.
4. How does the book's structure contribute to its pacing and emotional resonance?
5. The chapters jump back and forth between 3rd and 1st person narration. Is this effective?

6. The book starts with Noe and ends with Mirn. Is she the right character to be given the last word, or would you have preferred someone else?

7. According to Father James Martin, a Catholic priest quoted in *USA Today*, the current trend of Bible-oriented books is "theology lite... some is nourishing, most of it isn't. But it's easily digested and makes few demands." Is this a fair criticism?

8. How does each character grow and change through the course of the novel and what are some lessons each of them learned?

9. Do you think any of these lessons have relevance to things we need to learn today?

## Author Bio

David Maine was born in 1963 and grew up in Farmington, Connecticut. He attended Oberlin College and the University of Arizona, and has worked in the mental health systems of Massachusetts and Arizona. He has taught English in Morocco and Pakistan, and since 1998 has lived in Lahore, Pakistan with his wife, novelist Uzma Aslam Khan.

## Critical Praise

"Part domestic drama, part supernatural thriller, Maine's unsettling retelling of Noah and the ark feels as realistic and suspenseful --- really! --- as any modern tale."

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