



Noah's Ark

Barbara Trapido

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Noah's Ark Details

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Author : Barbara Trapido

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From Reader Review Noah's Ark for online ebook

Sam says

I'm not sure if this book is pro or anti-feminist?

It seems to despise its characters, especially the men, who are all cut from different horrible stereotypes. The women are either loose, vulgar or doormats (often more than one of these).

While I found the main character slightly annoying in her timidity at the beginning, she lost all my respect when she so casually cheats on her husband.

I'm pretty sure this novel may be deeper than I am depicting it, but the characters were so annoying I couldn't be bothered to contemplate the subversive, but oh so common messages in this kind of literature.

Zarina says

While *Noah's Ark* was a fascinating read at times, the story seemed to bounce from plot to plot without a main direction. There was no particular start or ending to the descriptions of the relationship of Alison and Noah, the focus of the book, which sometimes made it hard to grasp the plot or even remember the background to other characters mentioned as they were not given a proper introduction. As a period piece it was a satisfying read but I wish there had been a clearer aim to the depiction of the characters and their lives to give the novel its lacking purpose.

Barbara says

This is the fourth of Barbara Trapido's novels that I have read though it is her second in order of publication. Within two or three pages I felt completely at home in her world. I even identified strongly with a couple of her characters. I love the stylish insouciance of her prose, the allusions to poetry and music, the witty dialogue and her generous view of humanity. At the end, the main character has toughened up a bit and describes her previous existence as a black comedy. Well, certainly a comedy, but a sparkling one.

Cathy says

I haven't really played fair by this book - I started reading it at the end of my Summer of Reading, and consequently had to drop it several times as book group / club books had to be read instead. I got into it really easily, but this fragmented reading didn't do it any favours. Nonetheless I enjoyed it, altho perhaps not as much as the other Trapido I've read, *Brother of the More Famous Jack*, which I really did like very much.

Carla says

Certainly not on the level of *BROTHER OF THE MORE FAMOUS JACK*, but few books are, so that may

not be fair. A novel with lots of children, a rather sexy, bossy husband, a less sexy ex-husband (complete with standard annoying new wife) and a potentially sexy lost love who (naturally) makes an appearance. Structurally, the book is lopsided, with much happening in the final chapters, as if, finally, the distracted heroine's life is getting interesting.

Supriya says

Just marvellous: more tart and explicit than Brother of the More Famous Jack, and a much stronger exploration of themes and types we come to see in The Travelling Hornplayer. Perhaps the satire of the ex-husband is a bit too strong, but only '...More Famous Jack' is pitched to a sweeter note. I love Trapido and her masochistic women.

Charlotte Davies says

This was a little strange but I enjoyed it. The storyline was subtle but I couldn't help feeling the benign dictator needed to go! The characters developed and it was an enjoyable read!

Julia Schulz says

It was ok. Suitable light reading for a uni student perhaps. To be honest i struggled to comprehend some of the text. What the author does well is creating subtle nuances of character rather than a brutal dichotomy of Ali as "the artist" and Noah as "the scientist". Far superior character portrayals than David Nicholls "Us" which also centres it main characters as a love pairing between artist and scientist. I did find it unnecessarily crude in places but then i am prudish. Another criticism is the ending, it petered out into nothing, where it could have tidily finished off the several storylines it had developed. Im looking forward to now reading "The More Famous Jack", Trapidos debut novel, as i have researched and found it is without the crudity of this one.

Helena Wildsmith says

Sadly I found this book to be nothing more than pretentious twaddle. Unlikable characters, an irritating lack of detail when needed and far too much detail when not, and a plot that didn't go anywhere - this book has put me off reading anything else by this author.

David Proffitt says

I picked this book up from a local stores "bargain bin" one day when I was looking for something a little different from my usual kind of book. And it is certainly that.

Noah Glazer is a strong American doctor researching respiratory illnesses in the UK. But despite the book's title, this isn't really his story. Instead it follows the joys and tragedies of his second wife, Ali.

By the time Ali and Noah meet, she is estranged from her abusive second husband and attempting to bring up her eleven year old daughter on her own. Noah blasts into her life like a knight in shining armour, rescuing her not only from an oncoming car, but also from her own self-deprecation and the abuse of almost everyone else around her.

The relationship between Ali and Noah is tested when an old friend from her childhood in apartheid South Africa comes back into her life.

Ali Glazer is a shy woman. She is the victim of her oppressive childhood and two very bad marriages. It is her vulnerability that first attracts Noah to her, but through him she begins to slowly show signs of a new confidence.

Noah's Ark is a witty and well written story with some very serious undertones. Dealing with abuse and the injustice of apartheid (the book was written in 1984) Barbara Trapido manages to balance the conflicting tones of the book very well.

Although it is not the kind of book I would normally set out to read, I found Noah's Ark to be a captivating and very enjoyable novel.

Judith Yeabsley says

Should this have been half the length I'd probably have added an extra star. It was quirky and interesting at first and then it continued ...
Certainly not a bad book but just too much of the same.

Kate Vane says

This is the story of a marriage but it is also a clever study of power.

Ali Bobrow, artistic, beautiful and unworldly, is easy prey to controlling men. Her third husband, Noah, is at least a benign dictator. Before him she was mistreated, her daughter was unhappy and she was unable to resist the demands of any manipulative neighbour or acquaintance. Noah, a doctor, the ultimate protector, replaces the chaos with love, calm and security – so long as she follows his rules.

Then one day Ali decides to rebel – and this disrupts the delicate balance of her life with Noah, and leads her to look back at her past in South Africa.

Trapido's characters are funny and vivid and clever. You feel like you want to climb into her world (though probably not for too long – who could keep up?). She creates atmosphere with economy and style. The opening scene shows Ali sewing in her kitchen, an icon of domesticity. The apparently ordinary items – the fruit bowl, the pinboard – and her thoughts about them immediately evoke the family and her place within it.

There are other types of power here. Ali grew up under apartheid, the descendant of German refugees from World War Two. Her best friend at school was Jewish, and she is attracted to Jewish men. Her unconsummated first love was dark-skinned and was rumoured to have lied about his background to attend the all-white university.

There are also the dynamics between parents and children. Noah's step-daughter, once so timid, is able to be rebellious and demanding precisely because he has made her feel safe – for now. He is also confronted by the stubbornness of his own daughter.

How do we respond to a world where every day people are harming others? Trapido asks subtle questions about the limits of power, resistance and compassion.

Clare says

Not what I had expected at all, it was far more serious and slightly dark than the "fabulously witty" recommendation had suggested. Ali's decision, the one that affects her marriage with Noah (dont want to say too much in case I give a spoiler) but basically it was a decision that greatly decreased any respect I had previously felt for her. Which to be fair wasn't a great deal. Maybe this is being horribly judgmental but I disapproved of what she did and it affected my view of the rest of the book. Noah was a more likeable character but he wasn't one I would want to be married. I found him controlling and this annoyed me. Camilla was the best character in my opinion, with maybe Arnie as well. A well written novel that is only marked down for me because I did not connect with the protagonist.

Dorothy says

I found this book a bit hard to get into at first as I did not immediately relate to the main characters. As with all her books, the characters are somewhat eccentric and as the book moved along I found myself increasingly drawn into their world. Barbara Trapido writes with great wit and I'm tempted to copy out certain paragraphs to send to friends I know will appreciate the humour. Better still, I'll just recommend that they read the book.

Kathy says

Ali is a beautiful, arty but flakey woman who needs to be rescued by a sensible, intelligent well-salaried man who can pay the bills and generally make himself feel virile by curbing the worst excesses of her infantile existence. The perfect plot of a Mills and Boon romance. A few feminist references and a bit of liberal politics embroider the edges of this fundamentally nineteenth century plot. Disappointing.
