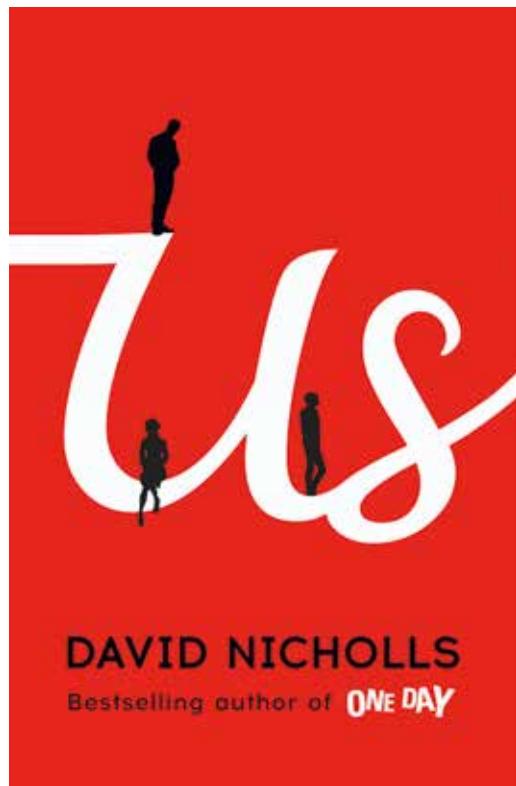


The Man  
Booker  
Prize

2014

## Reader's Guide



Other novels by David Nicholls  
*Starter for Ten* (2004)  
*The Understudy* (2005)  
*One Day* (2009)

# Us

# David Nicholls

Hodder & Stoughton

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## About the author

David Nicholls trained as an actor before making the switch to writing. His TV credits include *Cold Feet*, *Rescue Me*, and *I Saw You*, as well as a much-praised modern version of *Much Ado About Nothing* and an adaptation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. David has continued to write for film and TV as well as writing novels, and he has twice been nominated for BAFTA awards.

David's bestselling first novel, *Starter for Ten*, was selected for the Richard and Judy Book Club in 2004, and David has written the screenplays for film versions of both *Starter for Ten* (released in 2006, starring James McAvoy) and *The Understudy* (not yet released). David Nicholls' third novel, *One Day*, was published in hardback in 2009 to extraordinary critical acclaim, and stayed in the *Sunday Times* top ten bestseller list for ten weeks on publication. It has since gone on to sell over 2 million copies and has been translated into thirty-seven languages. *One Day* won the 2010 Galaxy Book of the Year Award. David wrote the screenplay for Lone Scherfig's film adaptation starring Jim Sturgess and Anne Hathaway, which was released in 2010.

## Us

'I was looking forward to us growing old together. Me and you, growing old and dying together.'

'Douglas, who in their right mind would look forward to that?'

Douglas Petersen understands his wife's need to 'rediscover herself' now that their son is leaving home. He just thought they'd be doing their rediscovering together. So when Connie announces that she will be leaving, too, he resolves to make their last family holiday into the trip of a lifetime: one that will draw the three of them closer, and win the respect of his son. One that will make Connie fall in love with him all over again. The hotels are booked, the tickets bought, the itinerary planned and printed. What could possibly go wrong?

## Discussion points

Why do you think David Nicholls chooses to tell the story through Douglas? What are the advantages and disadvantages to an author of first-person narrative?

To what extent do you think Douglas and Connie have been shaped by their parents and their parents' marriages? Is Douglas an archetypal Englishman?

How does David Nicholls use the various locations, both at home and abroad, to gain a perspective on his characters? What is the significance of Douglas being a scientist and Connie an artist?

In his previous novel, *One Day*, David Nicholls used the device of showing what his characters were doing on one particular day - July 15th - each year. How does he handle the time scheme here?

## Themed reading

Blake Morrison *And When Did You Last See Your Father*  
Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*  
Marilynne Robinson *Gilead*  
Evan S Connell *Mrs Bridge and Mr Bridge*  
Henry James *The Ambassadors*  
Deborah Moggach *Tulip Fever*  
Simon Scharma *Embarrassment of Riches*  
Jan Morris *Venice*  
Carlos Ruiz Zafon *The Shadow of the Wind*  
Laurie Lee *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*

## Useful links

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