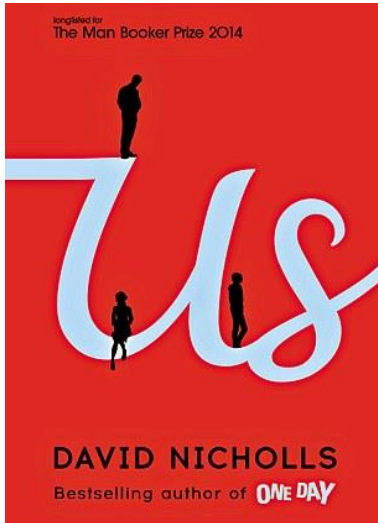


Review of "US" by David Nicholls



This is a book about a dysfunctional family written primarily from one view point and from the person who has one ambition to reunite his family. Douglas Petersen's family is on the brink of dissolution.

His marriage of 21 years to Connie is almost over.

When autumn comes around, their son Albie will leave for college. Connie has decided to leave soon after. But before everything falls apart, there's still the summer holidays to get through - a Grand Tour of Europe's major cities - and over the course of the journey, Douglas devises a plan to win back the love of his wife and repair his troubled relationship with his son.

Most people enjoyed this book but to differing degrees. It was interesting when in discussion it became clear that different people

had very differing views and sympathies for the main characters.

This was clearly encapsulated in

"They are well written characters which you may or may not like, empathise with or understand but their interactions produce a thought provoking and entertaining novel"

"An in-depth portrayal of a twenty- three year marriage between two incompatible people resulting in a difficult relationship between father and son. Cleverly brought to a conclusion with past and present strands. "

"This is a story about changes in peoples' lives for better or worse and their reaction to them"

Views about Douglas's were: -

"... A different take on a male life experience, a man struggling to get it right but not really full aware of his failings, his self-obsession"

"...I felt sympathy for all three characters but based on my own parenting methods I was on Douglas' side most of the time...."

"I liked the final page as Douglas typed in "Freya Kristensen dentist Copenhagen into his computer , a person with whom he felt justified in searching out and meeting again on more relaxed maybe loving terms . You deserve it Douglas"

"I hoped all the way through that he would succeed in holding his family together.

".....should have been called "I" and not "Us" as everything and everyone is described and seen from Douglas's point of view"

In a similar way people either sympathised with, liked or felt they understood, Connie and Albie. The other aspects of the book that were mentioned was the moving in time from the present to the past and back again.

"I thought the moving from one period of time to another worked for me..."

"The time line was sometimes confusing flitting backwards and forwards from the past to now"

"...is also prompted to reflect at great length ,and the bulk of the book , on the start ,middle and later stage of their 20 yrs of marriage together, surviving the death of a newborn daughter , and revived by the birth of Albie . "

".....learning through past events what has shaped their lives and characters to reach this point"

Although there was a feeling from some of us that the book went on longer than necessary -;

"....it went on for about 200 pages too many.....I read the ending about a third of the way through....."

".....left reading a very long book without any sympathies for anyone until Albie's girlfriend appears.

"...but for me it dragged on...."

"..but still found the book was too long and rather repetitive"

Many found plenty of humour -:

"....and I did laugh out loud...."

".....some of the disastrous bits are very funny....."

"a great deal of vey funny pieces"

Like the descriptions of foreign places and art galleries -:

"Using a variety of European cities for latter events...."

"The story unfolds as we travel along with"

"... the famous meal in a foreign restaurant...."

".... descriptions of the different European cities and art galleries quite appealing and make enjoyable reading."

Overall -:

"....an acceptable and satisfactory end , and I found it an enjoyable book to read"

"....their interactions produce a thought provoking and entertaining novel"

".... I had enjoyed the film as light entertainment, but mostly found David Nicholls writing style much more thought provoking and engaging"

"....All survivors in their own way..."

"I was sad when the book ended"

"I read the book very quickly and it was an easy read..."

"I enjoyed the episodes he shared with us.."