



# Reader's Guide



Other novels by Joseph O'Neill

*This Is the Life* (1991)

*The Breezes* (1996)

*Netherland* (2008)

## The Dog Joseph O'Neill

Fourth Estate

[www.themanbookerprize.com](http://www.themanbookerprize.com)



## About the author

Joseph O'Neill was born 1964 in Cork, and is a lawyer, novelist, memoirist and critic.

O'Neill's novel *Netherland* was awarded the 2009 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and was longlisted for the 2008 Man Booker Prize.

O'Neill also writes literary and cultural criticism, most regularly for the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Since 1998 he has lived in New York City.

## *The Dog*

In 2007, a New York attorney bumps into an old college buddy – and accepts his friend's offer of a job in Dubai, as the overseer of an enormous family fortune. Haunted by the collapse of his relationship and hoping for a fresh start, our strange hero begins to suspect that he has exchanged one inferno for another.

*The Dog* is led by a brilliantly entertaining anti-hero. Imprisoned by his endless powers of reasoning, hemmed in by the ethical demands of globalised life, he is fatefully drawn towards the only logical response to our confounding epoch.

## Discussion points

The narrator of *The Dog* describes Dubai as a city of contradictions: hypermodern in some respects, but antiquated in others. How does this tension between modernity and tradition manifest throughout the novel?

Names are symbolic throughout *The Dog*. What connections can be made between names and power? Why is the narrator reluctant to reveal his name?

*The Dog* explores the line between morality and immorality. How does the narrator define morality? Would you consider him to be a moral person?

Throughout *The Dog*, the narrator's reveals his feelings of guilt and shame. Do you consider him a likable character? Do your feelings toward him change throughout the novel?

The protagonist was a New York attorney. How does legalistic thinking and interpretation of events come into play throughout *The Dog*?

## Themed reading

Don DeLillo *Cosmopolis*

Jason Porter *Why Are You So Sad?*

George Saunders *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*

Gary Shteyngart *Absurdistan*

## Useful links

[www.themanbookerprize.com](http://www.themanbookerprize.com)

[www.4thestate.co.uk/2014/07/the-dog-will-have-its-day-sooner-than-expected](http://www.4thestate.co.uk/2014/07/the-dog-will-have-its-day-sooner-than-expected)

[www.randomhouse.com/book/123726/the-dog-by-joseph-oneill](http://www.randomhouse.com/book/123726/the-dog-by-joseph-oneill)