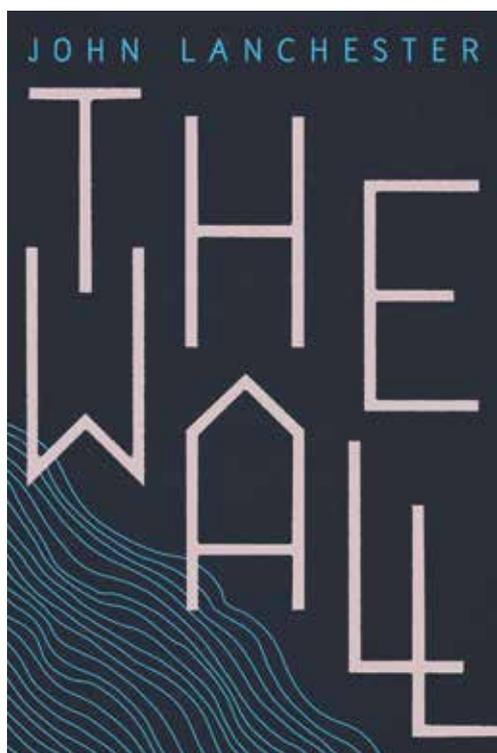




# Readers' Guide



## The Wall

**John Lanchester**

Faber & Faber

Other novels by John Lanchester

*How to Speak Money* (2014)

*Whoops!: Why Everyone Owes Everyone and No One Can Pay* (2010)

*Fragrant Harbour* (2002)

*The Debt to Pleasure* (1996)

[thebookerprizes.com](http://thebookerprizes.com)

## About the author

John Lanchester was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1962. He is a contributing editor to the *London Review of Books* and a regular contributor to the *New Yorker*. He has written five novels, including The Booker Prize 1996-longlisted *The Debt to Pleasure* and three works of non-fiction. His books have won the Hawthornden Prize, the Whitbread First Novel Prize, the E. M. Forster Award and the Premi Llibreter, and been translated into twenty-five languages. He lives in London.

## About the book

*The Wall* is a thrilling and hypnotic work of fiction: a mystery story, a love story, a war story and a story about a voyage. Kavanagh begins his life patrolling the Wall. If he's lucky, if nothing goes wrong, he has only two years of this: 729 more nights. The best thing that can happen is that he survives and gets off the Wall and never has to spend another day of his life anywhere near it. He longs for this to be over; longs to be somewhere else.

*The Wall* is a novel about why the young are right to distrust the old. It's about a broken world you will recognise as your own – and about what might be found when all is lost.

## What the judges thought

“A thriller that takes the definitive political issues of our time – climate change, populism and immigration – and crafts them into a compelling story that is chillingly familiar and imaginatively dystopian.”

## Discussion points

Although the novel is dystopian fiction, its context lies in reality, in particular climate change. Do you think any of the events in the novel are realistic or too far-fetched to come true one day?

How does reading the novel make you feel about your actions, and the impact they could have on our future world?

How does the country's situation affect the ways that people interact with each other? Is there a difference in the ways that people interact with people of their own generation, and of different generations?

Are you left with a feeling of hope or possibility at the end of the novel?

## Themed reading

J.G. Ballard *The Drowned World*  
Dave Eggers *The Parade*  
David Wallace-Wells *The Uninhabitable Earth*  
Jonathan Coe *Middle England*

## Useful links

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jan/15/the-wall-by-john-lanchester-review>

<https://www.ft.com/content/b0d3708e-1284-11e9-a168-d45595ad076d>

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/a-wall-around-britain-john-lanchester-on-the-timely-coincidences-in-his-new-novel-1.3753592>

<https://inews.co.uk/culture/books/john-lanchester-dystopian-novel-the-wall-interview/>

<https://literaryreview.co.uk/fortress-nation>