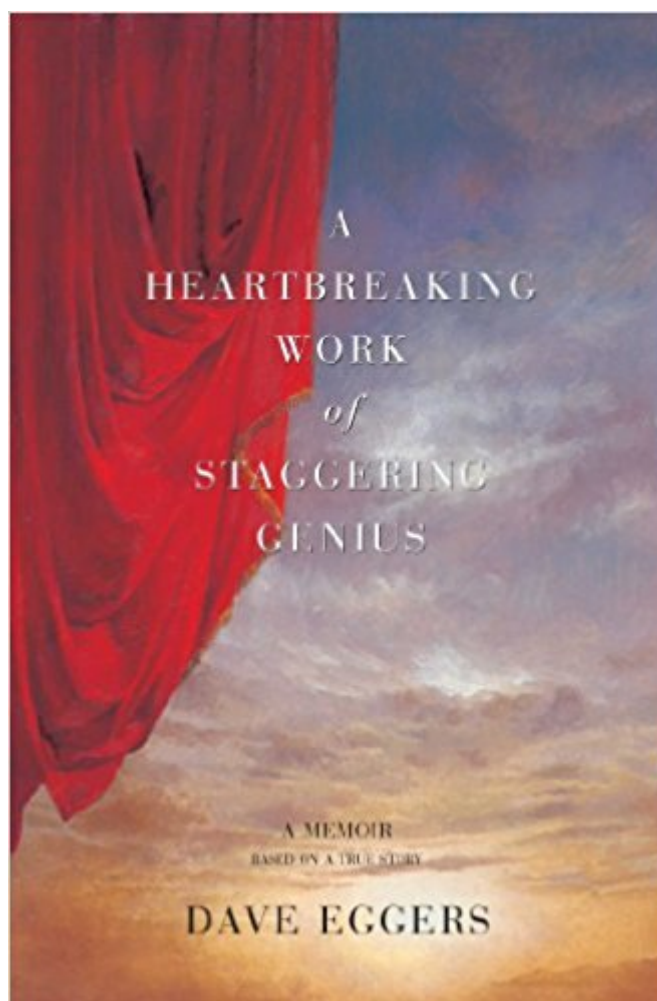


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# A Heartbreaking Work Of Staggering Genius: A Memoir Based On A True Story



## Synopsis

From the author of *The Circle* – the inspiration for the major motion picture starring Emma Watson and Tom Hanks! "Exhilarating – Profoundly moving, occasionally angry, and often hilarious – A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius is, finally, a finite book of jest, which is why it succeeds so brilliantly" (*The New York Times Book Review*). *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* is the moving memoir of a college senior who, in the space of five weeks, loses both of his parents to cancer and inherits his eight-year-old brother. Here is an exhilarating debut that manages to be simultaneously hilarious and wildly inventive as well as a deeply heartfelt story of the love that holds a family together.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A great memoir written with compassion and humor. My favorite book. I read it cover to cover, including all the footnotes at the end, which were great, too. Thanks, Mr. Eggers!

Dave Eggers writes of simple and ordinary stories, unless losing two parents in five months and moving to California to work and raise your younger brother while you are trying to pull together some sort of sexual and social life while these morons are all around you, not even noticing how

smart and clever you are and then just going on with their ordinary lives as if YOU never existed. Well. I apologize. That was my seriously pathetic attempt at mimicing Mr. Eggers style. One cannot mimic Mr. Eggers style. It is...un-mimicable! His style can drive you buggers, as he writes in a run-on, stream of conciousness, "fight or flight", semi-neurotic, nearly amphetaminically induced mania enhanced state. Then he pulls back. Kind of. Maybe. Maybe not. I'm not sure. Oh hell. Does it matter? Yes it does. But I cannot review this book so soon after reading it as I am developing the same kind of obsessive-compulsive narcissistic self-indulgence that the author is so good at doing to himself (and others, if you really want to know), but that is none of my business and none of yours either, except that he writes it all down so well, you just want to hug him, and then kick him really hard in the face, no, in the leg, no the face. Yes. That will do. In the face. But I highly recommend this book to anyone who can sit on BART and manage to completely enjoy everything about this new wave West Coast twenty-something book.. Even the maudlin tales are way excellent. Sorry. I did not mean to say, "way".

I had a fairly hard time with the first one or two paragraphs of this book. Eventually, I was able to figure out the author's style, unlike any other I've read. There are a lot of run-on sentences, little punctuation, and a good bit of swearing. Actually, I read it because I was aware of the title, but I don't really understand why it was such a hit.

I really enjoyed reading A Heartbreaking work of Staggering Genius. Although it is a long memoir, it was a quick read after getting used to the present tense that Dave Eggers uses throughout the book. Initially, it threw me off, now that I've finished, I realize it is such an interesting way of recounting a story. It gave me a different perspective, making me feel as if I were there while his memories were happening as opposed to listening to him recount them. The beginning of the book, in my opinion, was his best work. What I liked most was how honest he was about her sickness. He hid nothing, often explaining in graphic detail her illness. This openness is very inspiring because he is, in essence, reliving a very emotional part of his life in writing about it and hiding nothing. As a reader, I felt like I was almost intruding on this period of his life; I was sometimes uncomfortable, yet it made me respect Eggers and at the same time, feel remorse. His honest and descriptive details were memorable and relatable. His specific descriptions were very potent and gave us insight on him as well. "A balloon covered in dirt, or a rotting fruit, graying at the edges, were a couple of the many ways he described his mothers tumor, which not only provide a vivid mental

picture, but show us that during this time, he was uncertain, and always looked at her illness differently. What I did not like were his rants that would last page about nothing important, which became boring and redundant. While most of his details added to my understanding of who he is and how he was feeling I felt that these were unnecessary and hard to read. The book could have been much shorter and more concise, which would have made me like it more.

This is a very entertaining book. In my twenties, this is likely the novel I would have liked to write. The breakneck speed at which Eggers' ideas appear on the pages before you is a little startling at first, but his thoughts and themes are expressed and examined with great clarity and plain language, making the book easy to follow. From the beginning the theme of this novel is loss; "heartbreaking" loss, as it were. This theme sets the mood for the entire story. But Eggers lets the tale evolve into something more substantial, never allowing his loss to overwhelm him, or even bring him down. The theme eventually transitions into the overcoming of bad luck and negative situations, and the manner in which an extraordinary vision of life and the world we live in go hand in hand with youth and pretentiousness. Eggers' whimsical writing keeps the experience amusing and his self deprecating humor makes the material more lighthearted than it otherwise might be. Only those who are capable of laughing at themselves will be able to enjoy this book. I certainly did. Everyone should.

Not for everyone, you either love or hate this book.

Well, well, well. What to say about this book. The reviews are all over the place so I guess I'll join in. First of all, you would have to be an idiot to think Eggers can't write. He can. Parts of the book are very good, funny and sad and gross and touching, especially his relationship with his little brother, whom the author adores. But then the middle part, about his stupid job, should have been left out. (or at least the boring details) Why do writers, even talented writers, think their books have to be over 400 pages? This could have been a neat little book, if it had been whittled down to about half the size. Leave in the good parts and take out the fillers. (Ever heard of Hemingway?) Eggers writes a lot like Mark Haddon, bold and fresh and irreverent. The big difference is Haddon is a lot better.

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