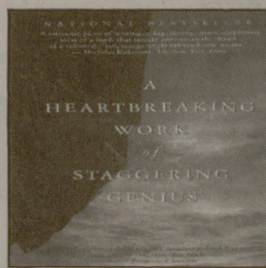


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Book Review



A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius
 Dave Eggers
 Vintage Books

Eggers creates his own copyright page on which he writes, "Any resemblance to persons living or dead should be plainly apparent to them and those who know them, especially if the author has been kind enough to have provided their real names and, in some cases, their phone numbers."

He also includes "Rules and Suggestions For Enjoyment of this Book," in which he suggests that reading the preface is not really necessary and is only there for those who have finished the book and have nothing else to read. He ends the book with a 48-page section titled "Mistakes We Knew We Were Making," where he includes corrections, clarifications and apologies.

The book, based on a true story, describes the deaths of Eggers' parents within five weeks of each other. At age 22, he becomes the unofficial guardian of his younger brother, Toph, who is only eight years old. Toph and Dave embark on several relocations and adventures. They live by their own rules in a house that is as dirty as two average boys would have it.

Readers see Eggers' sensitive and psychotic side when they read about his fear that he will be viewed as a bad guardian and will be reported to Child Protective Services. He is constantly conjuring crazy and unlikely ways they could take his brother away and thinking of ways he will stop them.

Anyone who finds their thoughts drifting from one subject to another and feel they must be a freak may be comforted and reassured after reading Eggers' rambling, inappropriate and sometimes psychotic thoughts.

Readers both laugh and mourn as they experience death within family and friends, humor when learning Eggers has a lengthy interview for a part on MTV's "The Real World" and nearly meets President Clinton outside of a restaurant.

The book was named a *New York Times* book review's editor's choice. They named *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* as one of the 10 best books of the year. Eggers' work has also received much-deserved praise from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe* and *USA Today*.

This is a definite must-read for readers of all ages.
 (Grade: A)



Four Blondes
 Candace Bushnell
 Grove Press Books

Fans of "Sex and the City" may be a bit disappointed after reading the ending pages of Candace Bushnell's *Four Blondes*. Bushnell, the author of *Sex and the City*, provides readers with the stories of four

new 30-somethings. The girls in the book — a model, a journalist, a socialite and a writer — are sexy, rich fashionistas in New York City.

The four characters are not friends and do not know each other, unlike the ladies of HBO's hit series, "Sex and the City."

The model, a former "it-girl," spends each year searching for a rich man who owns a beach house in the Hamptons and will let her live with him for the summer. In the end, she is probably the most successful at learning what she really wants from life — independence.

The journalist is plagued by a sour marriage to a man who will never meet her expectations. Both she and her husband end up having affairs. The socialite is drowning in a pool of alcohol, paranoia and fame, while the writer finds herself in London looking for love and a great story about sexual relationships in England.

This book easily can be read in two days if readers are willing to forego a little studying time.

While some scenarios are chuckle-worthy, the book, with the exception of the happy endings in "Nice 'N' Easy," — the story of the model, and "Single Process," — the writer in London, is mostly depressing as readers are dragged through loneliness, rejection and the consequences of aging through the lives of four very different women. However, not all is lost.

While readers would not like to imagine themselves struggling through love like the characters, many would not mind imagining themselves in the designer clothes, attending the elite functions in New York and the Hamptons.

(Grade: C+)

Reviews by Lizette Resendez

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