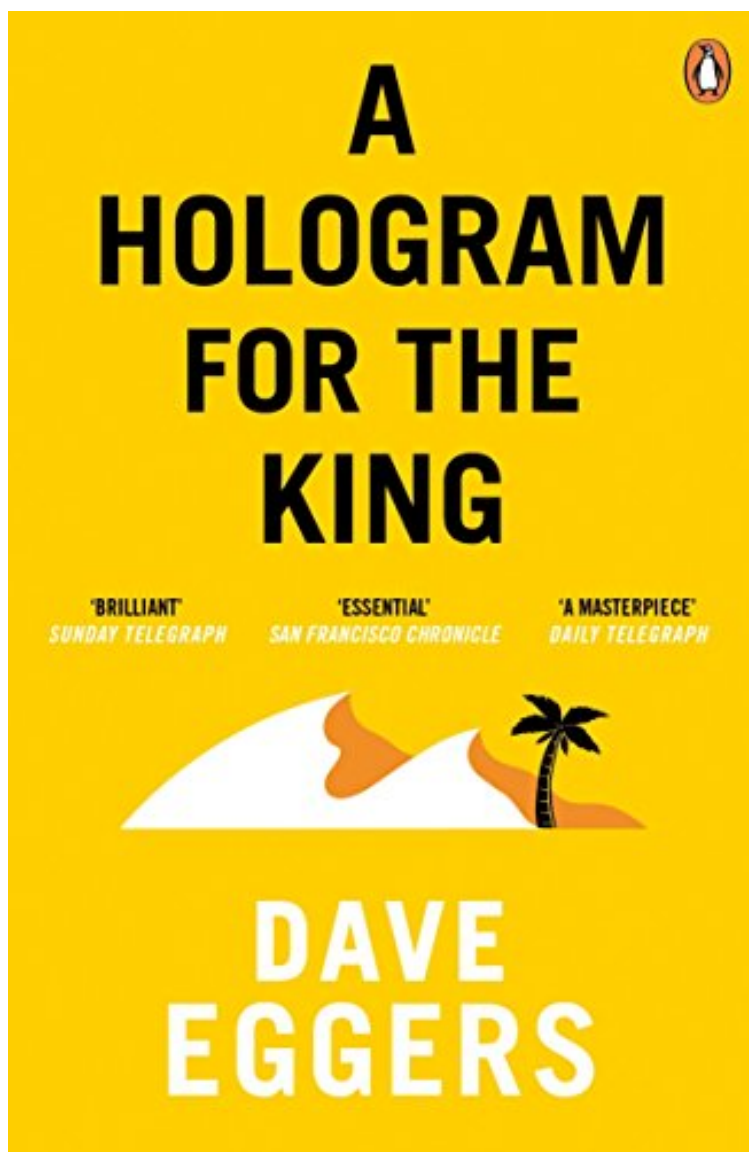


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A Hologram for the King



*Par Dave Eggers
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNew from Dave Eggers, National Book Award finalist A Hologram for the KingIn a rising Saudi Arabian city, far from weary, recession-scarred America, a struggling businessman pursues a last-ditch attempt to stave off foreclosure, pay his daughter's college tuition, and finally do something great.

In A Hologram for the King, Dave Eggers takes us around the world to show how one man fights to hold himself and his splintering family together in the face of the global economy's gale-force winds. This taut, richly layered, and elegiac novel is a powerful evocation of our contemporary moment - and a moving story of how we got here.'A master of the surprising metaphor, Eggers's great skill is in tracking the exuberant chaos of thought, with all its sudden poignancies and unexpected joys' Daily Telegraph'Among the most

influential writers in the English language' GQ 'Eggers can write like an angel' TabletExtraitI. Alan Clay woke up in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It was May 30, 2010. He had spent two days on planes to get there. In Nairobi he had met a woman. They sat next to each other while they waited for their flights. She was tall, curvy, with tiny gold earrings. She had ruddy skin and a lilting voice. Alan liked her more than many of the people in his life, people he saw every day. She said she lived in upstate New York. Not that far away from his home in suburban Boston. If he had courage he would have found a way to spend more time with her. But instead he got on his flight and he flew to Riyadh and then to Jeddah. A man picked him up at the airport and drove him to the Hilton. With a click, Alan entered his room at the Hilton at 1:12 a.m. He quickly prepared to go to bed. He needed to sleep. He had to travel an hour north at seven for an eight o'clock arrival at the King Abdullah Economic City. There he and his team would set up a holographic teleconference system and would wait to present it to King Abdullah himself. If Abdullah was impressed, he would award the IT contract for the entire city to Reliant, and Alans commission, in the mid-six figures, would fix everything that ailed him. So he needed to feel rested. To feel prepared. But instead he had spent four hours in bed not sleeping. He thought of his daughter, Kit, who was in college, a very good and expensive college. He did not have the money to pay her tuition for the fall. He could not pay her tuition because he had made a series of foolish decisions in his life. He had not planned well. He had not had courage when he needed it. His decisions had been short sighted. The decisions of his peers had been short sighted. These decisions had been foolish and expedient. But he hadnt known at the time that his decisions were short sighted, foolish or expedient. He and his peers did not know they were making decisions that would leave them, leave Alan, as he now was virtually broke, nearly unemployed, the proprietor of a one-man consulting firm run out of his home office. He was divorced from Kits mother, Ruby. They had now been apart longer than they had been together. Ruby was an unholy pain in the ass who now lived in California and contributed nothing financially to Kits finances. College is your thing, she told him. Be a man about it, she said. Now Kit would not be in college in the fall. Alan had put his house on the market but it had not yet sold. Otherwise he was out of options. He owed money to many people, including \$18k to a pair of bicycle designers who had built him a prototype for a new bicycle he thought he could manufacture in the Boston area. For this he was called an idiot. He owed money to Jim Wong, who had loaned him \$45k to pay for materials and the first and last on a warehouse lease. He owed another \$65k or so to a half-dozen friends and would-be partners. So he was broke. And when he realized he could not pay Kits tuition, it was too late to apply for any other aid. Too late to transfer. Was it a tragedy that a healthy young woman like Kit would take a semester off of college? No, it was not a tragedy. The long, tortured history of the world would take no notice of a missed semester of college for a smart and capable young woman like Kit. She would survive. It was no tragedy. Nothing like tragedy. They said it was a tragedy what had happened to Charlie Fallon. Charlie Fallon froze to death in the lake near Alans house. The lake next to Alans house. Alan was thinking of Charlie Fallon while not sleeping in the room at the Jeddah Hilton. Alan had seen Charlie step into the lake that day. Alan was driving away, on his way to the quarry. It had not seemed normal that a man like Charlie Fallon would be stepping into the shimmering black lake in September, but neither was it extraordinary. Charlie Fallon had been sending Alan pages from books. He had been doing this for two years. Charlie had discovered the Transcendentalists late in life and felt a kinship with them. He had seen that Brook Farm was not far from where he and Alan lived, and he thought it meant something. He traced his Boston ancestry, hoping to find a connection, but found none. Still, he sent Alan pages, with passages highlighted. The workings of a privileged mind, Alan thought. Dont send me more of that shit, he told Charlie. But Charlie grinned and sent more. So when Alan saw Charlie stepping into the lake at noon on a Saturday he saw it as a logical extension of the mans new passion for the land. He was only ankle-deep when Alan passed him that day. II. When Alan woke in the Jeddah Hilton he was already late. It was 8:15. He had fallen asleep just after five. He was expected at the King Abdullah Economic City at eight. It was at least an hour away. After he showered and dressed and got a car to the site it would be ten. He would be two hours late on the first day of his assignment here. He was a fool. He was more a fool every year. He tried Cayleys cellphone. She answered, her husky voice. In another lifetime, a different spin of the wheel wherein he was younger and she older and both of them stupid enough to attempt it, he and Cayley would have been something terrible. Hello Alan! Its beautiful here. Well, maybe not beautiful. But youre not here. He explained. He did not lie. He could no longer muster the energy, the creativity required. Well, dont worry, she said, with a small laugh that voice of hers implied the possibility of, celebrated the existence of a fantastic life of abiding sensuality were just setting up. But youll have to get your own ride. Any of you know how Alan will get a ride out here? She seemed to be yelling to the rest of

the team. The space sounded cavernous. He pictured a dark and hollow place, three young people holding candles, waiting for him and his lantern. He can't rent a car, she said to them. And now to him: Can you rent a car, Alan? I'll figure it out, he said. He called the lobby. Hello. Alan Clay here. What's your name? He asked names. A habit Joe Trivole instilled back in the Fuller Brush days. Ask names, repeat names. You remember people's names, they remember you. The clerk said his name was Edward. Edward? Yes sir. My name is Edward. Can I help you? Where are you from, Edward? Jakarta, Indonesia, sir. Ah, Jakarta, Alan said. Then realized he had nothing to say about Jakarta. He knew nothing about Jakarta. Edward, what do you think of me renting a car through the hotel? Do you have an international driver's license? No. Then no, I don't think you should do this. Alan called the concierge. He explained he needed a driver to take him to the King Abdullah Economic City. This will take a few minutes, the concierge said. His accent was not Saudi. There were apparently no Saudis working at this Saudi hotel. Alan had assumed as much. There were few Saudis working anywhere, he'd been told. They imported their labor in all sectors. We must find someone appropriate to drive you, the concierge said. You can't just call a taxi? Not exactly, sir. Alan's blood went hot, but this was a mess of his making. He thanked the man and hung up. He knew you couldn't just call a taxi in Jeddah or Riyadh or so said the guidebooks, all of which were overwrought when it came to elucidating the dangers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to foreign travelers. The State Department had Saudi on the highest alert. Kidnapping was not unlikely. Alan might be sold to al-Qaeda, ransomed, transported across borders. But Alan had never felt in danger anywhere, and his assignments had taken him to Juarez in the nineties, Guatemala in the eighties. ***The phone rang. We have a driver for you. When would you like him? As soon as possible. He'll be here in twelve minutes. Alan showered and shaved his mottled neck. He put on his undershirt, his white button-down, khakis, loafers, tan socks. Just dress like an American businessman, he'd been told. There were the cautionary tales of overzealous Westerners wearing thobes, headdresses. Trying to blend in, making an effort. This effort was not appreciated. While fixing the collar of his shirt, Alan felt the lump on his neck that he'd first discovered a month earlier. It was the size of a golf ball, protruding from his spine, feeling like cartilage. Some days he figured it was part of his spine, because what else could it be? It could be a tumor. There on his spine, a lump like that it had to be invasive and deadly. Lately he'd been cloudy of thought and clumsy of gait, and it made a perfect and terrible sense that there was something growing there, eating away at him, sapping him of vitality, squeezing away all acuity and purpose. He'd planned to see someone about it, but then had not. A doctor could not operate on something like that. Alan didn't want radiation, didn't want to go bald. No, the trick was to touch it occasionally, track attendant symptoms, touch it some more, then do nothing. In twelve minutes Alan was ready. He called Cayley. I'm leaving the hotel now. Good. We'll be all set up by the time you get here. The team could get there without him, the team could set up without him. And so why was he there at all? The reasons were specious but had gotten him here. The first was that he was older than the other members of the team, all of them children, really, none beyond thirty. Second, Alan had once ... *Revue de presse* A Hologram for the King is an outstanding achievement in Eggers's already impressive career, and an essential read. *San Francisco Chronicle* [A] clear, supremely readable parable of America in the global economy that is haunting, beautifully shaped, and sad. . . . A story human enough to draw blood. Groundbreaking. *The New York Times Book* Completely engrossing. . . . Perfect. *Fortune* "Dave Eggers is a prince among men. . . . A strike against the current state of global economic injustice." *Vanity Fair* A fascinating novel. *The New Yorker* Eerie, suspenseful and tightly controlled. *The Globe and Mail* A comic but deeply affecting tale about one man's travails that also provides a bright, digital snapshot of our times. *The New York Times* Eggers's most fully-realized character to date. . . . True genius. *Boston Globe* An unforgettable read. *Entertainment Weekly* A novel poised on the central meridian of our times. . . . Eggers maintains an exquisite balance of irony, empathy, dark humor, and unexpected tenderness in this taut exploration of the ever-increasing price of ordinary survival. A book as heartbreaking as the global economy it explores with such beauty and ferocity. *National Book Awards* citation Eggers, continuing the worldly outlook that informed his recent books *Zeitoun* and *What Is the What*, spins this spare story a globalized *Death of a Salesman* into a tightly controlled parable of America's international standing and a riff on middle-class decline that approaches Beckett in its absurdist despair. *The New York Times* citation for Best Books of the Year Solidly constructed and elegantly told. There is nothing inaccessible about it. . . . Clay may not be like each of us, but he is an everyman whose irrelevancy is parallel to America's own. *Los Angeles Times* Eggers understands the pressures of American downward-mobility, and in the protagonist of his novel, Alan Clay, has created an Everyman, a post-modern Willy Loman. . . . The novel operates on a grand and global scale,

but it also is intimate. The Chicago Tribune Fascinating. . . . A Hologram for the King, as far from home as it might seem, is an acute slice of American life. Tampa Bay Times A fresh surprise. . . . Strong and satisfying. As the kingless days pass, Alan ventures from the tent and hotel into the rich, unsettling realities of the Kingdom, and Eggers ventures deeper into Alan, as well as into the question that has seemingly guided Eggers work for years: What does it mean to be an American in a world that has places like the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, or post-Katrina New Orleans? San Francisco Weekly Deft and darkly comic . . . A Hologram for the King is not only a portrait of a man in midlife trying desperately to salvage his future. The book is emblematic of what Eggers sees as wrong in America today: the collapse of homegrown industry, the outsourcing of labor, a loss of confidence, soured ideals. . . . But [it] isnt a bummer or if it is, its a bummer beautifully enlivened by oddball encounters and oddball characters, by stranger-in-a-strange-land episodes. . . . A Hologram for the King moves forward a momentum of melancholy and possibility, driven by the meditations and memories of its once-noble American salesman hero. The Philadelphia Inquirer Eggers spare prose is a pleasure, and A Hologram for the King proves to be a deft blend of surreal adventure, absurd comedy and pointed observations. San Jose Mercury News [Hologram] has at its center a sort of moral vision quest. . . . Alans plight is endearing in its universality, even while being singularly his. Time Out Chicago A Hologram for the King presents us with the Great American Novel for this not-so-great America. . . . It strikes a new note for Eggers with its pervading sense of gallows humor. Baltimore City Paper A Hologram for the King . . . reads fast and clear, with clean, stripped-down prose and a tone at once mournful and darkly amused. . . . Its not that this world is changing, or that it will change. The world already changed, and now everyone, whether they like it or not, is tasked with figuring out how or if they can adapt. Portland Mercury A Beckettian masterpiece. . . . The finest work to date from an influential figure in American letters.

The Telegraph (UK)