

## Homework: Eggers

Questions on Excerpt, Dave Eggers, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000)

Dave Eggers, in his memoir, *A Heartbreaking Work...*, captures his experience, as a 21 year old young man, of losing both parents to cancer within the period of a month and taking responsibility for raising his 8 year old brother. Eggers's memoir, which achieved significant popularity and critical acclaim, is marked by an irreverent and unusual narrative style. The section you are reading captures Eggers's experience of accompanying his young brother to an elementary school parent-teacher night. He begins in the more traditional narrative "we" and then moves to third person narration, in which he becomes "BROTHER" in a segment of dialogue and interior monologue.

**Answer two of the three questions below (about a page):**

1. When you learn of Eggers's life situation –the loss of his parents and his unexpected assumption of parental responsibility for his brother at a young age—what do you expect his narrative will be like? In what ways is Eggers addressing those expectations in his writing?
2. Why do you think that Eggers uses the narrative style of beginning in the "we" and then moving to "BROTHER" with extended dialogue and interior monologue? In what ways is he commenting on the experience of parent-teacher night?
3. What is Eggers saying about his own parenting skills in this excerpt? How do his writing style and his choice of language convey his meaning?

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