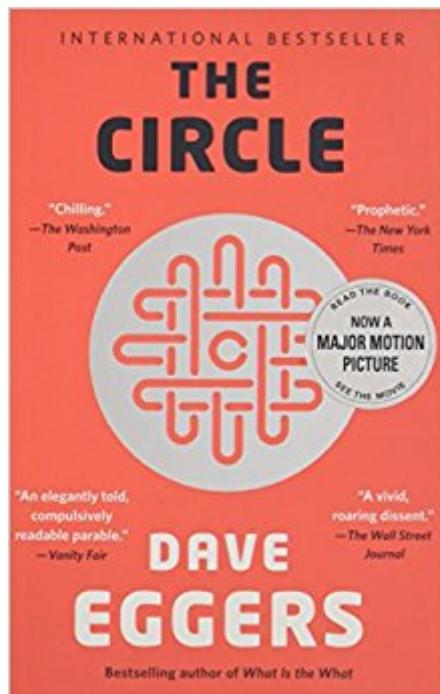


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The Circle



Synopsis

Now a Major Motion PictureÂ starring Emma Watson and Tom Hanks. A bestselling dystopian novel that tackles surveillance, privacy and the frightening intrusions of technology in our lives. When Mae Holland is hired to work for the Circle, the worldâ™s most powerful internet company, she feels sheâ™s been given the opportunity of a lifetime. The Circle, run out of a sprawling California campus, links usersâ™ personal emails, social media, banking, and purchasing with their universal operating system, resulting in one online identity and a new age of civility and transparency. As Mae tours the open-plan office spaces, the towering glass dining facilities, the cozy dorms for those who spend nights at work, she is thrilled with the companyâ™s modernity and activity. There are parties that last through the night, there are famous musicians playing on the lawn, there are athletic activities and clubs and brunches, and even an aquarium of rare fish retrieved from the Marianas Trench by the CEO. Mae canâ™t believe her luck, her great fortune to work for the most influential company in the worldâ™ even as life beyond the campus grows distant, even as a strange encounter with a colleague leaves her shaken, even as her role at the Circle becomes increasingly public. What begins as the captivating story of one womanâ™s ambition and idealism soon becomes a heart-racing novel of suspense, raising questions about memory, history, privacy, democracy, and the limits of human knowledge.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of the Month, October 2013: As a fiction writer, indie publishing icon and education activist Dave Eggers neither suffers fools gladly nor treads lightly. With his signature mix of

intelligence and highly literate snark, he dives headlong into contemporary crises--Hurricane Katrina, the Sudanese civil war--through the lens of a single character whose perspective we get to know intimately. In his new novel, Eggers tackles a modern problem that doesn't always seem like one: our near constant hunger for communication. When Mae Holland takes a job at the Circle, a tech giant with a utopian culture and cultlike following (Eggers didn't call it Schmoogle, but may as well have), she quickly loses sight of her friends, family, and sense of self in favor of professional success and social acceptance. As her Circle star rises, Mae succumbs to the corporate code of full disclosure, eventually agreeing to "go transparent" and let the public watch--and comment on--her every move. "Privacy is theft," decrees the company motto; "Secrets are lies." It's not subtle, but neither were "Harrison Bergeron" and 1984, and in its best moments *The Circle* is equally terrifying. Let's just hope it's not prescient. --Mia Lipman --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Starred Review Most of us imagine totalitarianism as something imposed upon usâ "but what if weâ™re complicit in our own oppression? Thatâ™s the scenario in Eggersâ™ ambitious, terrifying, and eerily plausible new novel. When Mae gets a job at the Circle, a Bay Area tech company thatâ™s cornered the world market on social media and e-commerce, sheâ™s elated, and not just because of the platinum health-care package. The gleaming campus is a wonder, and it seems as though there isnâ™t anything the company canâ™t do (and wonâ™t try). But she soon learns that participation in social media is mandatory, not voluntary, and that could soon apply to the general population as well. For a monopoly, itâ™s a short step from sharing to surveillance, to a world without privacy. This isnâ™t a perfect bookâ "the good guys lecture true-believer Mae, and a key metaphor is laboriously explainedâ "but itâ™s brave and important and will draw comparisons to *Brave New World* and *1984*. Eggers brilliantly depicts the Internet binges, torrents of information, and endless loops of feedback that increasingly characterize modern life. But perhaps most chilling of all is his notion that our ultimate undoing could be something so petty as our desperate desire for affirmation. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Eggersâ™ reputation as a novelist continues to grow. Expect this title to be talked about, as it has an announced first printing of 200,000 and the New York Times Magazine has first serial rights. --Keir Graff --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Warning: Spoilers *The Circle* makes some important points about timely issues such as the end of privacy (already upon us), totalitarianism/monopolies, the power of groupthink and delusion, and the weaknesses of governments that are incestuously

linked to private corporations. However, I found myself skimming through parts where it got bogged down. On one hand, Eggers' attention to detail is impressive and extremely conscientious. For instance, he details the Circle's elaborate system of success metrics (a combination of performance and social media rankings) that eerily parallels today's times. But he also spent a lot of time describing the mechanics of Mae's job as a customer service rep, and I'm not sure there was a point to having to digest all those specifics. I think a talented editor could have honed this manuscript down to 300 pages instead of 500, while still making the main points. I also found it odd that Mae (the protagonist) did not undergo a major character transformation, since most novels follow that formula. Mae is sort of a flat character with little emotional depth. I kept hoping Mae would see the error of the Circle's philosophy and her acceptance of it. But maybe the point is that good people can find themselves embroiled in ultimately bad things due to a lack of awareness and insight. Mae is, after all, only in her 20s. Perhaps she just lacks the wisdom and empathy that come with age and experience. Yet Mae's character flaws – megalomania and self-delusion – seem deeply ingrained in her psyche (e.g., her refusal to admit to herself how her behavior resulted in the death of someone close to her). As Mae and the other Circlers approach completion, ironically, the people in Mae's inner circle – her parents, her best friend, her ex-boyfriend – begin dropping out of her life. It serves as a cautionary tale about how obsession and delusion can lead to the destruction of what's most important to us.

Really creepy, and a view into what's happening all around us. I'd recommend reading it before seeing the movie. Most, if not all, of the book is necessary for the full story you never know what they'll have to leave out

As technology advances and adoption speeds infiltration into every aspect of our lives, it's easy to see this story becoming a reality. Maybe not to this extreme but you see glimpses of it now. Social media driving purchasing decisions, influencing the success of others merely from the volume of "watchers". I found Mae to be incredibly frustrating. I wanted her to snap out of herself but she continued to fall into this weird dependency role on her own likeability. It was off putting. The author created a horrific utopian image that I can't wait to see rendered on screen.

This novel was both intriguing and scary at the same time. To be monitored, minute by minute, everyday is frightening. Not to have time alone and private is unfathomable. I was taken back by that

concept happening in my lifetime. The story was delivered perfectly. Well written. I cannot imagine how our World would be in this Circle. Some of the concepts to protect children and families had merit, but at what cost to our privacy? Now that I have read the book, I want to see the movie! So much to think about!

Riveting and terrifying at once. The demise of privacy or anonymity seems more likely as we embrace digital society. This novel gives us a fictionalized view of what our world could become in fact. Group think and mob rule passing for democracy. Who controls the strings of the puppets? Who dares to voice dissent with popular ideology?

I bought this book because of the related movie. (I haven't watched the movie). I never did relate to, or come to care for Mae. She has normal self doubt that usually helps you to develop empathy, but she generally has negative thoughts of those around her which pushed me away. I kept reading the book because I paid money for it and hoped that it would eventually become a good book. The book does a good job of showing how people can fall for a totalitarian government when it is presented in the correct way.

Mae is a terrible person, and a character who is extremely unlikable and unrelatable. Her transformation throughout the book is from selfish to evil, and there are no redeeming qualities to her character. Besides that, this book is a jumble of stats and social data meant to scare and warn, but it falls far short. The whole premise is not 100% believable, and it took too much from Orwell, but not in a good way. More to the point, the book is quite boring as none of the characters have much depth or redeeming qualities. I also find it incredibly hard to believe that the majority of people living on earth would want a company like the Circle to exist, and it would never gain the power it has in the book. I would not recommend this book. You're better off reading 1984, Fahrenheit 451, or Animal Farm.

This was highly recommended and so I downloaded it hoping for a good read. It started out well, had an interesting plot, but characters never seemed to fully develop. Seemed like the author may have put in certain graphic parts to possibly fulfill the wants of a publisher to gain more interest... but didn't really need it IMHO... halfway through, I began to get bored and started skimming the chapters.... the premise of the book was a good idea, however, it was not implemented that well. Would have done better to borrow from the library - could've returned it without feeling I needed to

finish it because I'd already paid for it.

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