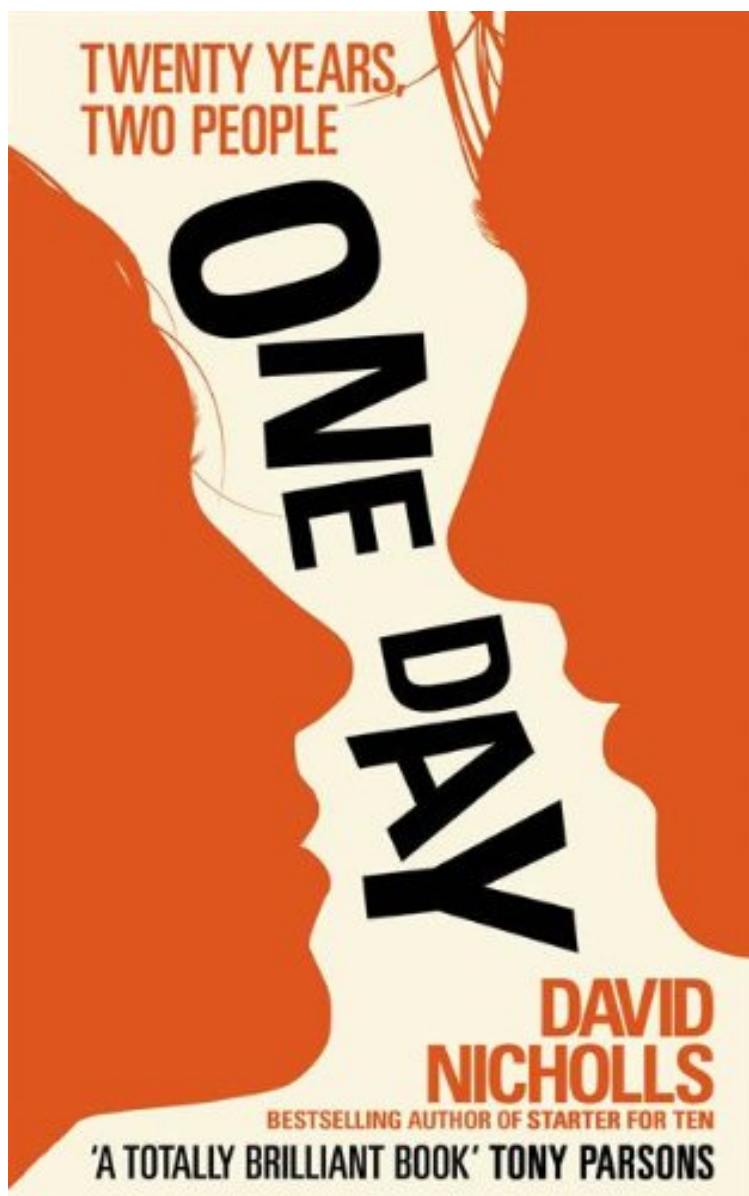


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One Day (English Edition)



Par David Nicholls
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Par David Nicholls : One Day (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Day (English Edition):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur'ONE DAY is destined to be a modern classic' - Daily MirrorTwenty years, two people, ONE DAY. The multi-million copy bestseller that captures the experiences of a generation.'I can imagine you at forty,' she said, a hint of malice in her voice. 'I can picture it right now.'He smiled without opening his eyes. 'Go on then.'15th July 1988. Emma and Dexter meet for the first time on the night of their graduation. Tomorrow they must go their separate ways. So where will they be on this one day next year? And the year after that? And every year that follows?ExtraitCHAPTER ONE'THE FUTURE'Friday 15TH July 1988Rankeillor Street, Edinburgh'I suppose the important thing is to make some sort of difference,' she

said. 'You know, actually change something. "What, like "change the world", you mean?" "Not the whole entire world. Just the little bit around you.' They lay in silence for a moment, bodies curled around each other in the single bed, then both began to laugh in low, pre-dawn voices. 'Can't believe I just said that,' she groaned. 'Sounds a bit corny, doesn't it?' 'A bit corny. I'm trying to be inspiring! I'm trying to lift your grubby soul for the great adventure that lies ahead of you.' She turned to face him. 'Not that you need it. I expect you've got your future nicely mapped out, ta very much. Probably got a little flow-chart somewhere or something.' 'Hardly.' 'So what're you going to do then? What's the great plan?' 'Well, my parents are going to pick up my stuff, dump it at theirs, then I'll spend a couple of days in their flat in London, see some friends. Then France- "Very nice- "Then China maybe, see what that's all about, then maybe onto India, travel around there for a bit- "Traveling,' she sighed. 'So predictable.' 'What's wrong with travelling?' 'Avoiding reality more like.' 'I think reality is over-rated,' he said in the hope that this might come across as dark and charismatic. She sniffed. 'S'alright, I suppose, for those who can afford it. Why not just say "I'm going on holiday for two years"? It's the same thing.' 'Because travel broadens the mind,' he said, rising onto one elbow and kissing her. 'Oh I think you're probably a bit too broad-minded as it is,' she said, turning her face away, for the moment at least. They settled again on the pillow. 'Anyway, I didn't mean what are you doing next month, I meant the future-future, when you're, I don't know...' She paused, as if conjuring up some fantastical idea, like a fifth dimension. '...Forty or something. What do you want to be when you're forty?' 'Forty?' He too seemed to be struggling with the concept. 'Don't know. Am I allowed to say "rich"?' 'Just so, so shallow.' 'Alright then, "famous".' He began to nuzzle at her neck. 'Bit morbid, this, isn't it?' 'It's not morbid, it's...exciting.' 'Exciting!' He was imitating her voice now, her soft Yorkshire accent, trying to make her sound daft. She got this a lot, posh boys doing funny voices, as if there was something unusual and quaint about an accent, and not for the first time she felt a reassuring shiver of dislike for him. She shrugged herself away until her back was pressed against the cool of the wall. 'Yes, exciting. We're meant to be excited, aren't we? All those possibilities. It's like the Vice-Chancellor said, "the doors of opportunity flung wide..." "Yours are the names in tomorrow's newspapers..." 'Not very likely.' 'So, what, are you excited then?' 'Me? God no, I'm crapping myself.' 'Me too. Christ...' He turned suddenly and reached for the cigarettes on the floor by the side of the bed, as if to steady his nerves. 'Forty years old. Forty. Fucking hell.' Smiling at his anxiety, she decided to make it worse. 'So what'll you be doing when you're forty?' He lit his cigarette thoughtfully. 'Well the thing is, Em-' 'Em'? 'Who's "Em"?' 'People call you Em. I've heard them.' 'Yeah, friends call me Em.' 'So can I call you Em?' 'Go on then, Dex.' 'So I've given this whole "growing old" thing some thought and I've come to the decision that I'd like to stay exactly as I am right now.' Dexter Mayhew. She peered up at him through her fringe as he leant against the cheap buttoned vinyl headboard and even without her spectacles on it was clear why he might want to stay exactly this way. Eyes closed, the cigarette glued languidly to his lower lip, the dawn light warming the side of his face through the red filter of the curtains, he had the knack of looking perpetually posed for a photograph. Emma Morley thought 'handsome' a silly, nineteenth-century word, but there really was no other word for it, except perhaps 'beautiful'. He had one of those faces where you were aware of the bones beneath the skin, as if even his bare skull would be attractive. A fine nose, slightly shiny with grease, and dark skin beneath the eyes that looked almost bruised, a badge of honour from all the smoking and late nights spent deliberately losing at strip poker with girls from Bedales. There was something feline about him: eyebrows fine, mouth pouty in a self-conscious way, lips a shade too dark and full, but dry and chapped now, and rouged with Bulgarian red wine. Gratifyingly his hair was terrible, short at the back and sides, but with an awful little quiff at the front. Whatever gel he used had worn off, and now the quiff looked pert and fluffy, like a silly little hat. Still with his eyes closed, he exhaled smoke through his nose. Clearly he knew he was being looked at because he tucked one hand beneath his armpit, bunching up his pectorals and biceps. Where did the muscles come from? Certainly not sporting activity, unless you counted skinny-dipping and playing pool. Probably it was just the kind of good health that was passed down in the family, along with the stocks and shares and the good furniture. Handsome then, or beautiful even, with his paisley boxer shorts pulled down to his hip bones and somehow here in her single bed in her tiny rented room at the end of four years of college. 'Handsome!' Who do you think you are, Jane Eyre? Grow up. Be sensible. Don't get carried away. She plucked the cigarette from his mouth. 'I can imagine you at forty,' she said, a hint of malice in her voice. 'I can picture it right now.' He smiled without opening his eyes. 'Go on then.' 'Alright-' She shuffled up the bed, the duvet tucked beneath her armpits. 'You're in this sports car with the roof down in Kensington or Chelsea or one of those places and the amazing thing about this car is it's silent, 'cause all the cars'll be silent in, I don't know, what - 2006?' He

scrunched his eyes to do the sum. '2004-"And this car is hovering six inches off the ground down the King's Road and you've got this little paunch tucked under the leather steering wheel like a little pillow and those backless gloves on, thinning hair and no chin. You're a big man in a small car with a tan like a basted turkey-

"So shall we change the subject then?" And there's this woman next to you in sunglasses, your third, no, fourth wife, very beautiful, a model, no, an ex-model, twenty-three, you met her while she was draped on the bonnet of a car at a motor- show in Nice or something, and she's stunning and thick as shit-"Well that's nice. Any kids?" No kids, just three divorces, and it's a Friday in July and you're heading off to some house in the country and in the tiny boot of your hover car are tennis racquets and croquet mallets and a hamper full of fine wines and South African grapes and poor little quails and asparagus and the wind's in your widow's peak and you're feeling very, very pleased with yourself and wife number three, four, whatever, smiles at you with about two hundred shiny white teeth and you smile back and try not to think about the fact that you have nothing, absolutely nothing, to say to each other.' She came to an abrupt halt. You sound insane, she told herself. Do try not to sound insane. 'Course if it's any consolation we'll all be dead in a nuclear war long before then!' she said brightly, but still he was frowning at her. 'Maybe I should go then. If I'm so shallow and corrupt-"No, don't go,' she said, a little too quickly. 'It's four in the morning.' He shuffled up the bed until his face was a few inches from hers. 'I don't know where you get this idea of me, you barely know me. "I know the type." The type?" I've seen you, hanging round Modern Languages, braying at each other, throwing black-tie dinner parties-"I don't even own black-tie. And I certainly don't bray-"Yachting your way round the Med in the long hols, ra ra ra-"So if I'm so awful-' His hand was on her hip now. '-which you are.'" -then why are you sleeping with me?' His hand was on the warm soft flesh of her thigh. 'Actually I don't think I have slept with you, have I?" Well that depends.' He leant in and kissed her. 'Define your terms.' His hand was on the base of her spine, his leg slipping between hers. 'By the way,' she mumbled, her mouth pressed against his. 'What?' He felt her leg snake around his, pulling him closer. 'You need to brush your teeth. "I don't mind if you don't." 'S'really horrible,' she laughed. 'You taste of wine and fags.' "Well that's alright then. So do you.' Her head snapped away, breaking off the kiss. 'Do I?" I don't mind. I like wine and fags.' "Won't be a sec.' She flung the duvet back, clambering over him. 'Where are you going now?' He placed his hand on her bare back. 'Just the bog,' she said, retrieving her spectacles from the pile of books by the bed: large, black NHS frames, standard issue. 'The "bog", the "bog"...sorry I'm not familiar...' She stood, one arm across her chest, careful to keep her back to him. 'Don't go away,' she said, padding out of the room, hooking two fingers into the elastic of her underpants to pull the material down at the top of her thighs. 'And no playing with yourself while I'm gone.' He exhaled through his nose and shuffled up the bed, taking in the shabby rented room, knowing with absolute confidence that somewhere in amongst the art postcards and photocopied posters for angry plays there would be a photograph of Nelson Mandela, like some dreamy ideal boyfriend. In his last four years he had seen any number of bedrooms like this, dotted round the city like crime scenes, rooms where you were never more than six feet from a Nina Simone album, and though he'd rarely seen the same bedroom twice, it was all too familiar. The burnt out nightlights and desolate pot plants, the smell of washing powder on cheap, ill-fitting sheets. She had that arty girl's passion for photomontage too; flash-lit snaps of college friends and family jumbled in amongst the Chagalls and Vermeers and Kandinskys, the Che Guevaras and Woody Allens and Samuel Becketts. Nothing here was neutral, everything displayed an allegiance or a point of view. The room was a manifesto, and with a sigh Dexter recognised her as one of those girls who used 'bourgeois' as a term of abuse. He could understand why 'fascist' might have negative connotations, but he liked the word 'bourgeois' and all that it implied. Security, travel, nice food, good manners, ambition; what was he meant to be apologising for? He watched the smoke curl from his mouth. Feeling for an ashtray, he found a book at the side of the bed. The Unbearable Lightness of Being, spine creased at the 'erotic' bits. The problem with these fiercely individualistic girls was that they were all exactly the same. Another book: The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat. Silly bloody fool, he thought, confident that it was not a mistake he would ever make. At twenty-three, Dexter Mayhew's vision of his future was no clearer than Emma Morley's. He hoped to be successful, to make his parents proud and to sleep with more than one woman at the same time, but how to make these all compatible? He wanted to feature in magazine articles, and hoped one day for a retrospective of his work, without having any clear notion of what that work might be. He wanted to live life to the extreme, but without any mess or complications. He wanted to live life in such a way that if a photograph were taken at random, it would be a cool photograph. Things should look right. Fun; there should be a lot of fun and no more sadness than absolutely necessary. It wasn't much of a plan, and already there had been mistakes. Tonight, for instance, was bound to have

repercussions: tears and awkward phone-calls and accusations. He should probably get out of here as soon as possible, and he glanced at his discarded clothes in preparation for his escape. From the bathroom came the warning rattle and bang of an ancient toilet cistern, and he hurriedly replaced the book, finding beneath the bed a small yellow Colman's mustard tin that he flipped open to confirm that, yes, it did contain condoms, along with the small grey remains of a joint, like a mouse dropping. With the possibility of sex and drugs in a small yellow tin he felt hopeful again, and decided that he might stay a little longer at least. In the bathroom, Emma Morley wiped the crescents of toothpaste from the corner of her mouth and wondered if this was all a terrible mistake. Here she was, after four romantically barren years, finally, finally in bed with someone she really liked, had liked since she'd first seen him at a party in 1984, and in just a few hours he'd be gone. Forever probably. He was hardly likely to ask her to go to China with him, and besides she was boycotting China. And he was alright, wasn't he? Dexter Mayhew. In truth she suspected he wasn't all that bright, and a little too pleased with himself, but he was popular and funny and - no point fighting it - very handsome. So why was she being so stroppy and sarcastic? Why couldn't she just be self-confident and fun, like those scrubbed, bouncy girls he usually hung around with? She saw the dawn light at the tiny bathroom window. Sobriety. Scratching at her awful hair with her fingertips, she pulled a face, then yanked the chain of the ancient toilet cistern and headed back into the room. From the bed, Dexter watched her appear in the doorway, wearing the gown and mortar board that they'd been obliged to hire for the graduation ceremony, her leg hooked mock-seductively around the doorframe, her rolled degree certificate in one hand. She peered over her spectacles and pulled the mortar board down low over one eye. 'What d'you think?' 'Suits you. I like the jaunty angle. Now take it off and come back to bed.' 'Revue de presse' It's rare to find a novel which ranges over the recent past with such authority, and even rarer to find one in which the two leading characters are drawn with such solidity, such painful fidelity, to real life that you really do put the book down with the hallucinatory feeling that they've become as well known to you as your closest friends. Hard to imagine anyone encountering characters as well drawn as this and not recognizing the extraordinary talent of the writer who has created them. (Jonathan Coe Guardian Books of the Year) I finished it last night and I'm still quite wobbly and affected by it. It was BRILLIANT. . . the jealousy nearly made me puke. I wish I'd written this book (Marian Keyes) The ultimate zeitgeist love story for anyone who ever wanted someone they couldn't have (Adele Parks) Big, absorbing, smart, fantastically readable . . . brilliant on the details of the last couple of decades of British cultural and political life (Nick Hornby) The novel of the year - a brilliantly funny and moving will-they, won't-they romance tracing a relationship on the same day each day for two decades (Heat) It is a cleverly and astutely constructed book - but that is worthy of a mere footnote compared with its emotional impact. I am not ashamed to say that upon finishing it I pressed it to my chest as a big fat tear splashed onto its upturned spine (The Times Book Club) You'd be hard pressed to find a sharper, sweeter romantic comedy this year than the story of Dex and Em (Independent) Nicholls' book is the sort of thing you can't put down, and I read it over a weekend, creeping upstairs to gulp down another chapter when I should have been downstairs preparing dinner or helping with homework (Dylan Jones) I felt that I had been emotionally taken apart by the very best. This perfectly executed novel is a reminder that reading can be the finest entertainment there is (Guardian) If you measure your love for a book by the number of times you buy it for people, then my favourite is ONE DAY by David Nicholls. I read it about a year ago and must have bought it for at least 20 people since (The Times Book Club) We could fill a page with descriptive proclamations of its brilliance, but we'll stick with intoxicating, engrossing and verging on genius. If this has never graced your bedside table, then go directly to the nearest bookshop, purchase one copy and start 2010 with a read that has taken the literary world by storm (Daily Record) It made me laugh and sob, and the characters just walk off the page into your head, where they remain. How I wish I'd written it, as does every novelist I know (Polly Williams) A totally brilliant book about the heartbreaking gap between the way we were and the way we are...the best weird love story since THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE. Every reader will fall in love with it. And every writer will wish they had written it. (Tony Parsons) A wonderful, wonderful book: wise, funny, perceptive, compassionate and often unbearably sad . . . the best British social novel since Jonathan Coe's WHAT A CARVE UP! . . . Nicholls's witty prose has a transparency that brings Nick Hornby to mind: it melts as you read it so that you don't notice all the hard work that it's doing (The Times) The funniest, loveliest book I've read in ages. Most of all it is horribly, cringingly, absolutely 100% honest and true to life: I lived every page. (Jenny Colgan) I really loved it . . . it's absolutely wonderful . . . just so moving and engaging (Kate Mosse) With its beautifully rounded, real characters and deeply poignant storytelling, this is one of the year's best novels. (Heat) With a nod to WHEN HARRY MET SALLY, this

funny, emotionally engaging third novel from David Nicholls traces the unlikely relationship between Emma Morley and Dexter Mayhew . . . Told with toe-curlingly accurate insight and touching observation . . . If you left college sometime in the Eighties with no clear idea of what was going to happen next, or who your lifelong friends might turn out to be, this one's a definite for your holiday suitcase. If you didn't, it still is . . . The feelgood film must surely be just around the corner. I can't wait. (Daily Mail)Page by page, the funniest book of the year (Uncut)[Nicholls] has both a very deft prose style and a great understanding of human emotion. His characterisation is utterly convincing . . . ONE DAY is destined to be a modern classic. (Daily Mirror)A moving and feel-good read. Nicholls is an expert at capturing that essence of young adulthood, first love, heartbreak, and the tangled, complicated course of romance . . . Deserves to be the must-read hit of the summer. (News of the World)I couldn't think of anyone who wouldn't love this book (Simon Mayo Books Panel, BBC Radio Five Live)Nicholls captures superbly the ennui of post graduation . . . The writing is almost faultless, there's a great feeling for the period and it's eminently readable. (Herald)David Nicholls' third novel captivates love in a way that's real and unassuming . . . Relaying the essence of friendship and unrequited love with fall-off-your-seat humour, this is an unputdownable romance for the 21st century (SHE)You're gripped from the opening pages . . . Nicholls, author of STARTER FOR TEN, writes faultless, engaging dialogue and keeps up a cracking pace. You will find this hard to put down (Psychologies)As a study of what we once were and what we can become, it's masterfully realised (Esquire)Perfect for the beach or summer in the city (In Style)An off-kilter romantic comedy with charm to spare (Harpers Bazaar)A delicious love story (Sunday Herald)funny and moving (Scotsman)David STARTER FOR TEN Nicholls is back with this smart comedy, packed with the mistakes, mismatches and meandering conversations that make up real life (Marie Claire, Book of the Month)A modern fairy tale, slickly put together. A gifted storyteller with lots of technical savvy. (Scottish of Books)An edgy romantic tale (Woman Home)I loved this book . . . moved me profoundly (Amanda Ross)Snort-out-loud stuff . . . it deserves to be a huge hit (thelondonpaper)A romantic comedy that the gents needn't be ashamed to read. Chronicling a friendship spanning two decades, Nicholls perfects the will-they-won't-they trick, starting with his leads at university in the 1980s and poking gentle fun at the decades following. A genuine tear-jerker as well as laugh-out-loud funny. (Independent on Sunday Books of the Year 2009)Intoxicating, engrossing and verging on genius (Daily Record, Scotland)A compulsive read you'll want to devour in one sitting (Woman)This is a real cancel-all-calls, leave-me-alone book (The Times Book Club)I can't recommend it more highly (The Word)A cross between Jonathan Coe and Nick Hornby, this is romantic, sharp and very English (Scotsman)Laugh out loud funny with razor dialogue (Nadia Sawalha)One Day should come with a health warning attached: This Book is Seriously Addictive (Belfast Telegraph)I found it totally gripping. The characters are complex, the locations familiar. I don't want to give away the ending but everyone who reads it agrees how powerful it is. (Ed Miliband, The New Statesman)