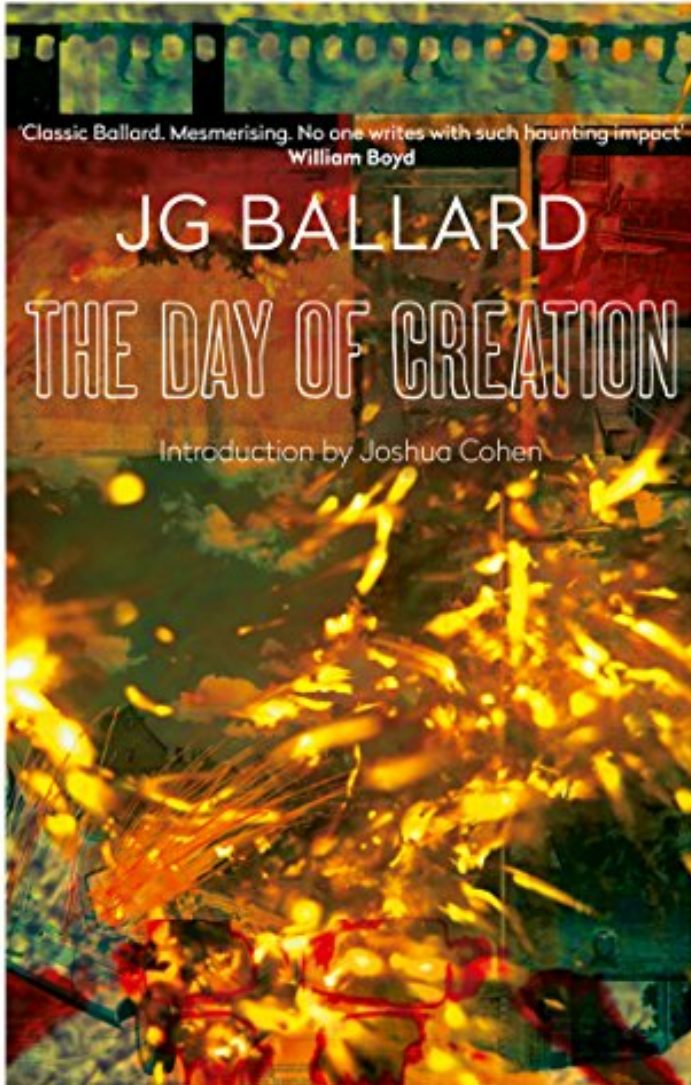


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# The Day of Creation



*Par J. G. Ballard*  
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**Description :** Description du produitAt Port-la-Nouvelle, on the parched terrain of central Africa, Dr. Mallory watches as his clinic fails and dreams of discovering a third Nile that will make the Sahara bloom. When there is a trickle on the local airstrip, and soon a river, the obsessed Mallory claims it as his own creation and sets out for the rivers source.

Prsentation de l'diteurClassic Ballard. Mesmerising. No one writes with such haunting impact William BoydIn parched, war-torn central Africa, Dr Mallory watches his clinic fail and dreams of discovering a third Nile to make the Sahara bloom. During his search for water, an ancient tree stump is uprooted by a bulldozer and water wells up, spreading until it becomes an enormous river. With the once arid land now abounding in birds and beasts, the obsessed Mallory forges up-river in an old car ferry, clashing with hostile

factions as he tries to find the source of his own creation. From Publishers Weekly Part spellbinding story, part fable for our time, Ballard's new novel is a vividly cinematic but nightmarish vision of a corrupted world. Dr. Mallory has come to a backward, drought-plagued and poverty ridden African country to run a WHO clinic, but constant warfare between a ragged band of guerrillas and the local chief of police has caused the tribal residents to flee. By accident, Mallory uncovers a mysterious stream that soon becomes a swiftly flowing river, and he dreams of creating a green Sahara and "saving" the Third World. Naming the river after himself and obsessively identifying with it, he immediately finds himself in conflict with Dr. Sanger, a charlatan maker of TV documentaries, who believes that his "flattering revision of nature was an act of creation as significant as the original invention of the river." Mallory undergoes a sinister change of heart, acknowledging a self-destructive impulse whose origins in his past are only dimly described. Suddenly deciding he must destroy the river, he travels toward its source on a derelict ferry with a former guerrilla, a 12-year-old girl he names Noon, and who progresses in a matter of weeks from Stone Age primitivism to a fascination with technology. Mallory encounters terrifying dangers at every stage of his quest. The area surrounding the river, which at first seemed Edenic, becomes poisoned by the water's now miasmatic influence, the people along its banks falling deathly ill with fever and starvation. Mallory himself slides into full-fledged dementia and delirium as he battles the guerrillas, the militia and the forces of nature. In a narrative filled with ironies, Ballard's prose is honed and supple, often flowering into vivid lyricism. His characters are larger than life, each carrying the destructive impulses that decimate civilization. Some readers may resist the unrelievedly dark, ominous atmosphere, a profoundly depressing nightmare that goes on a little too long, and find that Mallory is too much an opaque, unsympathetic character, almost a device. Ballard's scorn for technological "marvels" (the makers of TV documentaries are "the conmen and the carpetbaggers of the late 20th century") sometimes overpowers his storytelling skills, and the roots of Mallory's suicidal obsession are never made clear. Yet this is a mesmerizing tale by a master of the craft, one that resonates with dark implications for the future of humanity on this planet. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Ballard's demented narrator, Dr. Mallory, believes he can fertilize the Sahara with a river he has "created" in a desolate, warring region of Africa. "The river and I were one," he announces as he embarks on a search for the source of the Mallory, reminding us repeatedly that a duel is taking place between them. His companion and the object of his puerile fantasies is a native girl named Noon, whom he treats like an exotic pet. When they finally reach the source, the river dries up as Mallory kneels in it. Mallory's delusions are all we know of him and of the misfits he encounters. Consequently, we cannot care for them; we can only wish for a swift end to their implausible ordeal. Ballard's other novels, notably *Empire of the Sun*, may spark interest in this otherwise forgettable book. Leonard Kniffel, Detroit P.L. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.