5. Do you find the illustrations, scribblings, over-written texts, etc. a meaningful, integral part of the work? Or do you find them distracting and gimmicky? Why are they there?

6. How do both main plot and subplot (Oskar’s grandfather and the bombing of Dresden) interweave with one another?

Nothing Daunted:
The Unexpected Education of Two Society Girls in the West
by Dorothy Wickenden
March 20, 2014, 6 pm
Library Board Room

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Manitowoc Public Library
Adult Services Department
707 Quay Street
686-3020
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About the Book...

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11.

This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey.

Jonathan Safran Foer emerged as one of the most original writers of his generation with his best-selling debut novel, *Everything is Illuminated*. Now, with humor, tenderness, and awe, he confronts the traumas of our recent history.

About the Author...

Jonathan Safran Foer is the author of the best-seller *Everything is Illuminated*, named Book of the Year by the Los Angeles Times and the winner of numerous awards, including the Guardian First Book Prize, the National Jewish Book Award, and the New York Public Library Young Lions Prize. Foer was one of Rolling Stone’s “People of the Year” and Esquire’s “Best and Brightest”. The film of *Everything is Illuminated*, directed by Liev Schreiber and starring Elijah Wood, was released in 2011 for film by Scott Rudin Production in conjunction with Warner brothers and Paramount Pictures.


Discussion Questions

1. Talk about Oskar—an unusually precious child. Do you find him sympathetic or annoying? Or both?

2. For Shakespeare buffs: Oskar “plays Yorick” (the long dead jester whose skull Hamlet holds in his hand!) in a school production. What is the significance of that role? (See *Hamlet*: Act V, Scene 1, Line 188)

3. Jonathan Safran Foer has said that he writes about characters and their mis-communications: some characters think they’re saying a lot but say nothing; others say nothing but end up saying a lot. Which characters fall into which category in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*? What might Foer be saying about our ability to communicate deep-seated emotions?

4. Some critics have wondered where Oskar’s mother is and how the child is left alone to wander the streets of New York alone at night. Is that a relevant comment? Do you see this book as a work of realism (in which case the mother’s role would matter)... or as more of a fable, on the order, say, of *Life of Pi*? If the latter, what is *Extremely Loud* a fable of? (Like *Pi*, Oskar seems to be a quester—but of what?)