



Everything Is Illuminated

By Jonathan Safran Foer

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“Imagine a novel as verbally cunning as *A Clockwork Orange*, as harrowing as *The Painted Bird*, as exuberant and twee as *Candide*, and you have *Everything Is Illuminated* . . . Read it, and you'll feel altered, chastened — seared in the fire of something new.” — *Washington Post*

With only a yellowing photograph in hand, a young man — also named Jonathan Safran Foer — sets out to find the woman who might or might not have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. Accompanied by an old man haunted by memories of the war, an amorous dog named Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior, and the unforgettable Alex, a young Ukrainian translator who speaks in a sublimely butchered English, Jonathan is led on a quixotic journey over a devastated landscape and into an unexpected past.

As their adventure unfolds, Jonathan imagines the history of his grandfather's village, conjuring a magical fable of startling symmetries that unite generations across time. As his search moves back in time, the fantastical history moves forward, until reality collides with fiction in a heart-stopping scene of extraordinary power.

“A rambunctious tour de force of inventive and intelligent storytelling . . . Foer can place his reader's hand on the heart of human experience, the transcendent beauty of human connections. Read, you can feel the life beating.” — *Philadelphia Inquirer*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The simplest thing would be to describe *Everything Is Illuminated*, Jonathan Safran Foer's accomplished debut, as a novel about the Holocaust. It is, but that really fails to do justice to the sheer ambition of this book. The main story is a grimly familiar one. A young Jewish American--who just happens to be called Jonathan Safran Foer--travels to the Ukraine in the hope of finding the woman who saved his grandfather from the Nazis. He is aided in his search by Alex Perchov, a naïve Ukrainian translator, Alex's grandfather (also called Alex), and a flatulent mongrel dog named Sammy Davis Jr. Jr. On their journey through Eastern Europe's obliterated landscape they unearth facts about the Nazi atrocities and the extent of Ukrainian complicity that have implications for Perchov as well as Safran Foer. This narrative is not, however, recounted from (the character) Jonathan Safran Foer's perspective. It is relayed through a series of letters that Alex sends to Foer. These are written in the kind of broken Russo-English normally reserved for Bond villains or Latka from *Taxi*. Interspersed between these letters are fragments of a novel by Safran Foer--a wonderfully imagined, almost magical realist, account of life in the shtetl before the Nazis destroyed it. These are in turn commented on by Alex, creating an additional metafictional angle to the tale.

If all this sounds a little daunting, don't be put off; Safran Foer is an extremely funny as well as intelligent writer who combines some of the best Jewish folk yarns since Isaac Bashevis Singer with a quite heartbreakingly moving meditation on love, friendship, and loss. --*Travis Elborough, Amazon.co.uk*

From Publishers Weekly

What would it sound like if a foreigner wrote a novel in broken English? Foer answers this question to marvelous effect in his inspired though uneven first novel. Much of the book is narrated by Ukrainian student Alex Perchov, whose hilarious and, in their own way, pitch-perfect malapropisms flourish under the influence of a thesaurus. Alex works for his family's travel agency, which caters to Jews who want to explore their ancestral shtetls. Jonathan Safran Foer, the novel's other hero, is such a Jew an American college student looking for the Ukrainian woman who hid his grandfather from the Nazis. He, Alex, Alex's depressive grandfather and his grandfather's "seeing-eye bitch" set out to find the elusive woman. Alex's descriptions of this "very rigid search" and his accompanying letters to Jonathan are interspersed with Jonathan's own mythical history of his grandfather's shtetl. Jonathan's great-great-great-great-grandmother Brod is the central figure in this history, which focuses mostly on the 18th and 19th centuries. Though there are some moments of demented genius here, on the whole the historical sections are less assured. There's a whiff of kitsch in Foer's jolly cast of pompous rabbis, cuckolded usurers and sharp-tongued widows, and the tone wavers between cozy ethnic humor, heady pontification and sentimental magic-realist whimsy. Nonetheless, Foer deftly handles the intricate story-within-a-story plot, and the layers of suspense build as the shtetl hurtles toward the devastation of the 20th century while Alex and Jonathan and Grandfather close in on the object of their search. An impressive, original debut. (Apr. 16) Forecast: Eagerly awaited since an excerpt was featured in the New Yorker's 2001 "Debut Fiction" issue, *Everything Is Illuminated* comes reasonably close to living up to the hype. Rights have so far been sold in 12 countries, the novel is a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club and a main selection of Traditions Book Club, and Foer will embark on an author tour expect lively sales.

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From Library Journal

This highly imaginative debut novel features a protagonist with the same name as the author. The fictional Jonathan Safran Foer, also a writer, travels to Eastern Europe after his junior year in college. His mission, as

he ventures through the farmlands, is to find Augustine, who may have saved the grandfather he never knew from the Nazis. Accompanying Jonathan on his quixotic quest is Alex, a young Ukrainian translator who speaks hilariously fractured English. The fabled history of his grandfather's shtetl, or village, is juxtaposed with events in the present using comedy interspersed with tragedy. Generations become united across time in this fanciful tale, as Foer, the author, gives the reader a contemporary version of 19th-century Jewish drama one that blends laughter and tears. Recommended for all libraries. Molly Abramowitz, Silver Spring, MD
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sherry Spears:

This book untitled Everything Is Illuminated to be one of several books this best seller in this year, that's because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy that book in the book retail store or you can order it through online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quickly to read this book, since you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this publication from your list.

Paul Green:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Everything Is Illuminated, you are able to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Russell Hardison:

This Everything Is Illuminated is brand-new way for you who has intense curiosity to look for some information as it relief your hunger associated with. Getting deeper you on it getting knowledge more you know otherwise you who still having tiny amount of digest in reading this Everything Is Illuminated can be the light food to suit your needs because the information inside this specific book is easy to get by means of anyone. These books build itself in the form which can be reachable by anyone, yep I mean in the e-book form. People who think that in guide form make them feel drowsy even dizzy this e-book is the answer. So there is not any in reading a reserve especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for you. So , don't miss that! Just read this e-book kind for your better life along with knowledge.

Maria Couch:

In this particular era which is the greater particular person or who has ability in doing something more are more valuable than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you have to do is just spending your time little but quite enough to experience a look at some books. One of

many books in the top listing in your reading list is Everything Is Illuminated. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking way up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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