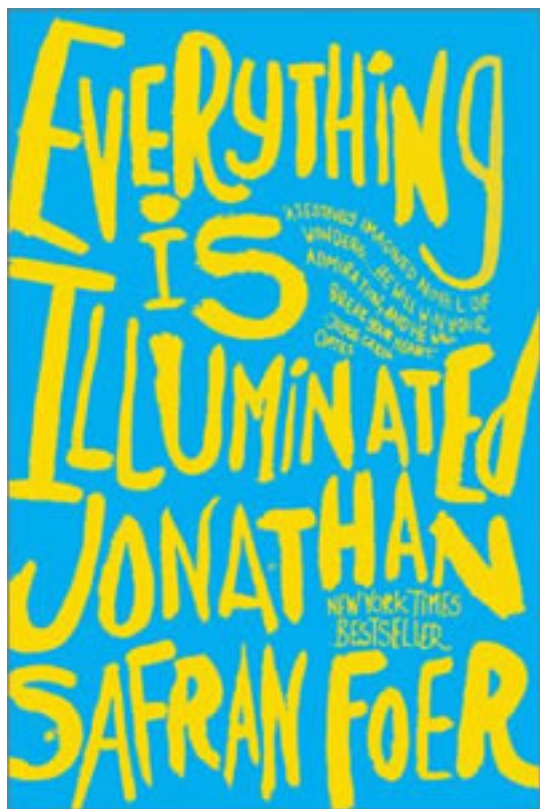

Jonathan Safran Foer

Everything Is Illuminated



Title: Everything Is Illuminated

Author: Jonathan Safran Foer

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Description

A young man arrives in Ukraine, clutching in his hand a tattered photograph. He is searching for the woman who fifty years ago saved his grandfather from the Nazis. Unfortunately, he is aided in his quest by Alex, a translator with an uncanny ability to mangle English into bizarre new forms; a 'blind' old man haunted by memories of the war; and an undersexed guide dog named Sammy David Jr, Jr. What they are looking for seems elusive - a truth hidden behind veils of time, language and the horrors of war. What they find turns all their worlds upside down...

Insightful reviews

Jason: One of the nice things about being stoned is the added dimension of humor or profundity that otherwise inconsequential things can assume in our impression of them. I remember once having my mind blown at the idea of language, and how any two unrelated people, having been raised in the same country and while having no connection at all to each other, or there being any crossover among those who have taught or influenced them, can meet each other one day and have a mutually intelligible conversation. Fascinating, right? Well, no not really, but it sure as hell seems fascinating when you're high.

I feel as though the only way I could have read this book and found it as funny and profound as other readers found it is if I were completely and totally baked.

Everything Is Illuminated is essentially comprised of two narratives interwoven in a nonlinear arrangement. The first is the account of a small Jewish settlement in the Ukraine which, along with most of its quirky inhabitants, is wiped out by the invading Nazis in 1941. The "writer" of this section is a fictionalized version of Foer himself, who is a direct descendant of some of these villagers. The second narrative is that of a present-day Ukrainian who recounts his experiences with Foer as they try to locate a mysterious woman who Foer believes helped his family escape that aforementioned invasion. The Ukrainian, whose name is Alex, is hired by the fictional Foer as a translator in his endeavors.

While Alex is the source of much of the book's comedy in his unintentional misuse of the English language, the comedic value stemming from this quickly ran dry for me. I think there is also an absurdity with which Foer describes the ancestral characters in the Ukrainian village (called Trachimbrod) but to me most of the quiriness seemed forced and unnatural, and ruined what could have provided an endearing element to the story. I mean, we're talking about a village wherein characters collect each other's tears in thimbles and send each other pieces of string that match the length of their body parts in order that their recipients be assuaged of any fear that their loved ones have "changed." (Blech.)

And then there are the sentences, the ones I think are meant to sound deep and awe-inspiring but which only come across as shallow and trite in my non-Coloradan state of sobriety. (Sorry, Coloradans, but I guess that's your *thing* now.) Sentences, for example, like these!

We burned with love for ourselves, all of us, starters of the fire we suffered—our love was the affliction for which only our love was the cure.

They reciprocated the great and saving lie—that our love for things is greater than our love for our love for things—willfully playing the parts they wrote for themselves, willfully creating and believing fictions necessary for life.

She never ran from his fists, but took them, went to them, certain that her bruises were not marks of violence, but of violent love.

The Kolker was trapped in his body—like a love note in an unbreakable bottle, whose script never fades or smudges, and is never read by the eyes of the intended lover—forced to hurt the one with whom he wanted most to be gentle.

Yes, there is a lot of talk of love in this book. (I think JSF wrote it before he got himself hitched.)

Anyway, there *is* a section toward the end of the novel during which Alex's grandfather reveals an atrocity that occurred in his presence, and in which he was involved, and that revelation was very heartfelt and exemplifies, possibly, what JSF can be good at. But it wasn't enough to rescue this book from its overall effect of having kind of irritated the crap out of me.

Tea Jovanovi?: Jedna od onih neobi?nih "otka?enih" knjiga koje mi s vremena na vreme nalete i osveže mi dan... Imala sam zadovoljstvo da je ?itam u rukopisu pre objavljivanja... Mnogo kasnije nastao je film... Knjiga je, nažalost, kod nas prošla nezapaženo i sre?om u me?uvremenu mu se promenio izdava?... Koji ?e možda više u?initi za ovog autora jer on to zaslu?uje... Ako volite Marka Haddona ili Dana Rhodesa... ovo je autor za vas... :)

Ben: Sorry but I didn't care for this at all. If Mr. Nobody wrote a book about himself as the main character, and used some uninventive malapropisms to make discussions with a foreigner amusing, the book would be tossed. But wait, Foer went to Yale. Unfortunately for me the quality of his writing shows me that nepotism will always beat out merit these days. Sorry to be harsh, but really, I found the writing to be quite poor.

Kua: All'inizio, non ci capivo una mazza... poi proseguendo nella lettura ho cominciato a trovare i fili da seguire e questo scoprire il libro pian piano mi è piaciuto molto. Questo racconto è tenero, malinconico, cinico, buffo, straziante... insomma, un bel problema tirarne fuori una recensione con i dovuti crismi. Nonostante alcune pecche narrative, è un libro che ti porta in un'altra dimensione, da cui poi è difficile staccarsi e pur trattando un tema distinctiveness come l'olocausto I. a. lettura rimane leggera, quasi sospesa. Credo che Foer non sia un autore da mezze misure, ma una volta entrati in confidenza con I. a. sua scrittura è difficile non amarlo. Ho trovato bellissime pagine di poesia, descrizioni di stati d'animo, inserite quasi a caso nel racconto, che hanno dato un tocco di magia alla storia. E alla fine, chissà se Alex c'è poi andato in America...

Nathan Pearson: The gut-tickling malaprop voice of Alex, bragging falsely (but and not using a

hint of guile) in a damaged idiolect that means machine translation long gone awry, is definitely worth the rate of admission all by way of itself. Sadly, the remainder of the ebook -- a lot of it strung out in unimaginative flashback episodes -- is a turgid, half-baked mess. Interpreting simply Alex's bits and ignoring the remainder will be just like picking all of the chocolate chips from a bag of trailmix...but which may be the right way to snack here.

Shovelmonkey1: Jonathan Safran Foer has magical powers. No, quite he does. Look I will turn out it. He could make somebody who reads his books spontaneously vomit adjectives in nice abundance. Proof? The conceit of every thing is illuminated. Let's learn the evidence: Gripping, entertaining, fantastic - The night Standard Outrageous, outstanding - monetary Times Hilarious, exhilarating, relocating - Jewish Chronicle Serious, humorous - Herald Powerful, shocking, harsh, honest - List Spectacular, funny, brilliant, relocating - Observer Showy, clever - Susan Sontag Startling, original, comic, tragic - Nicci Gerard Extraordinary, brilliant, shattering - San Francisco Chronicle Glittering - Mark Lawson Bold, exuberant - day-by-day Mail Subtle, profound, fantastic, bold, ingenious - Boston Globe Funny, really good - Esquire Effervescent, reckless, vibrant, playful - TLS Astonishing, shattering - Independent See, the covers are spattered, within and out, with a veritable adjective pebble-dash. Proof, Mr Safran Foer that you're not the one individual in ownership of a glossary and that even the folk at Esquire and the day-by-day Mail have one too. Jon-fen is looking for a lady who kept his Grandfather in the course of global struggle II. To discover her, he has travelled from the USA to the Ukraine. He has just a photo and a name. He had a map yet that was once eaten by way of the bitch. He's helped, and hindered in equivalent degree by way of Alex and his Grandfather who's liable for the bitch. The complain is a seeing-eye puppy referred to as Sammy Davis Jr, Jr. The inclusion of the puppy is for funny purposes. Jonathan is within the Ukraine to discover part of his relations history, even if his presence forces Alex's grandfather to envision his personal prior too. Alex acts as interpreter and advisor and places his personal inimitable spin at the English language. Informed in 3 elements with 3 separate voices, unfortunately none of which belong to the bitch, the tone of the booklet alternates among melancholy, mirth and malapropisms. This publication is tough to classify and plenty of humans have attempted to cram it into the field marked holocaust. Others have said, no it belongs within the field referred to as love. Or family. Or remembering. Or war. Or semi-autobiographical. Or biographical. Or atonement. Or lost. Or outdated country. Does it really want to move in a box? Shall we simply position it on most sensible of the field and notice what happens.

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