

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close Reading Guide

1. In his review of the book, critic and novelist Michel Faber asks, "Aren't we accustomed to suspending disbelief for an unnaturally articulate pre-adult voice?" Was Oskar a convincing narrator or did you have trouble suspending your disbelief?
2. There are three generations of Schell men featured in the book: Oskar, his father, and his father's father. Apart from bloodline, what traits do these three characters share?
3. Safran Foer helped design the book, which includes photos, graphics, colorful inks, blank pages and pages with a single word or sentence printed on them. What was your reaction to the visual elements of the book? Did they enhance or detract from your experience as a reader?
4. Throughout the novel, Safran Foer suggests commonalities between 9/11 and other man-made tragedies such as the bombings of Hiroshima and Dresden. Do you find these linkages convincing? Why or why not?
5. The narrative occasionally shifts between Oskar, his grandmother, and his grandfather. Did you find multiple narratives distracting or did they deepen your understanding of the family?
6. Many of the characters Oskar encounters are experiencing loss and longing. How does Oskar help some of these characters change over the course of the book?
7. Oskar's father tells him the story of New York's "sixth borough" which floated away to Antarctica and whose residents are literally frozen in time. Why do you think this story appears when it does in the book? How does it contribute to our understanding of Oskar and his father?
8. Towards the end of the book, Oskar meets William Black, who tells the story of one of the worst days of his life, and the mystery of the key is solved. What do Oskar and William share, apart from the key?
9. What was your reaction to final series of photographs at the book's conclusion?
10. What do you imagine will become of Oskar?

Adapted from www.loft.org