





In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* Foer uses two characters, Oscar and his Grandfather, Thomas, to show how grief affects us all, and how this grief can define and corrupt a person's life, or how it can be the catalyst that forces a person to grow, overcome challenges, and eventually become better because of it. Both were alive during extreme tragedies in which they both lost someone whom they dearly loved. In Oskar's case this was his father during 9/11 and in the case of Thomas, it was his lover Anna who he lost in the bombing of Dresden. Despite this similarity, Foer creates a stark difference in how both characters deal with the loss. Oskar's grandfather is never able to recover from the loss of Anna, which causes him to lose the ability to speak and become withdrawn and lonely. Foer shows us this metaphorically through the use of the one-sentence pages that comprise Thomas Schell's life. These lonely words among a sea of text are a concise and effective metaphor symbolizing how grief has forever changed Thomas' life. Oskar manages to deal with this loss and depression in a different way. While Oskar is undoubtedly burdened with the same depression and sense of loss as Thomas, as symbolized by his "heavy boots" he manages his anxiety by coming up with marvelous inventions in order to prevent the pain and suffering he currently feels. These inventions span from an ambulance with messages flashing on the top to alert people to the status of the patient within, to speakers on skyscrapers so birds won't fly into them and die. Just as he becomes more inventive, he becomes more social on his quest to find "Black". He meets many new people, and throughout the journey we watch Oskar grow, become, overcome challenges and eventually become better for it.

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