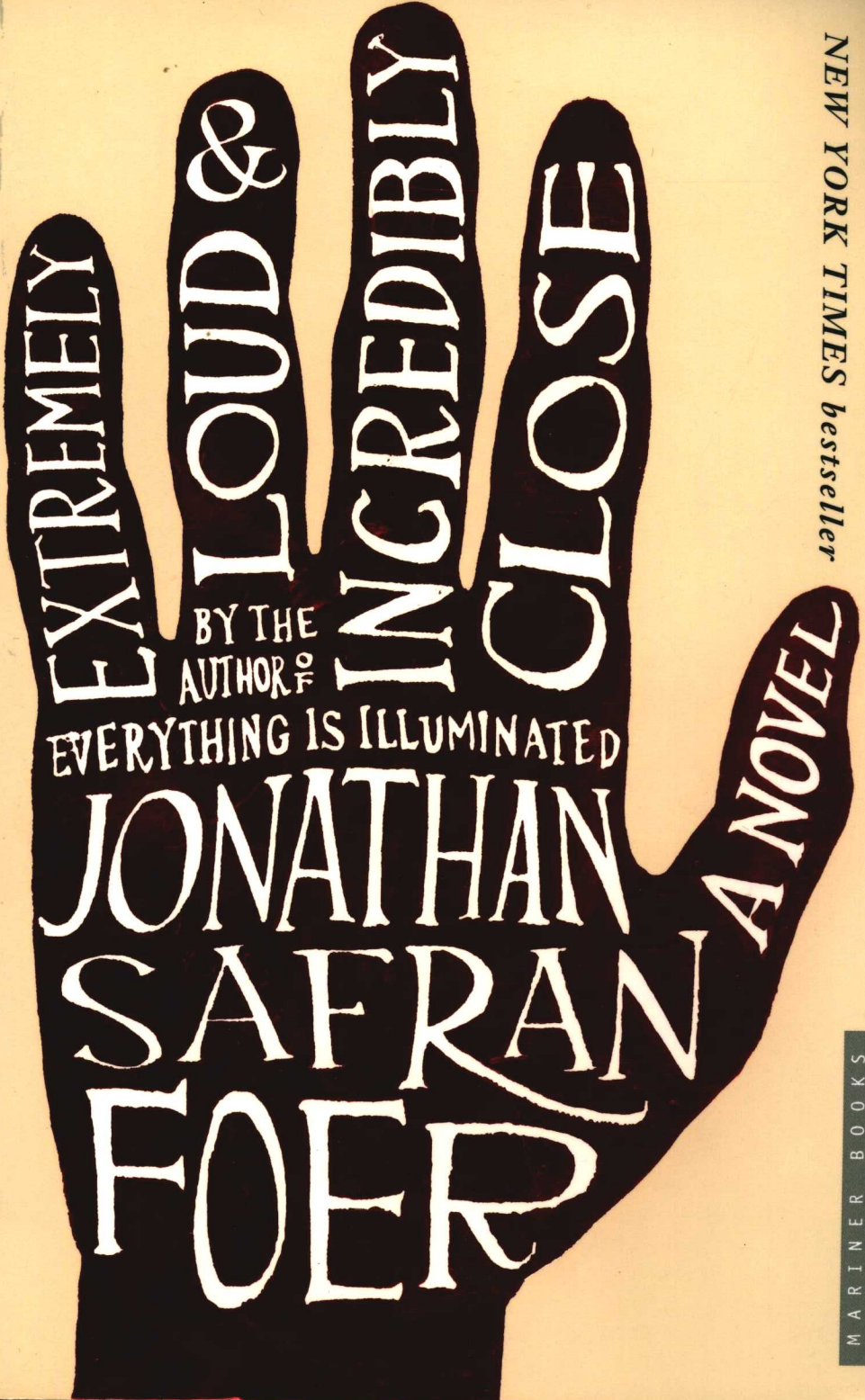


NEW YORK TIMES bestseller



EXTREMELY

LOUD &

INCREDIBLY

CLOSE

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF

EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED

JONATHAN  
SAFRAN  
FOER

A NOVEL

MARINER BOOKS

## MY FEELINGS

12 September 2003

Dear Oskar,

I am writing this to you from the airport.

I have so much to say to you. I want to begin at the beginning, because that is what you deserve. I want to tell you everything, without leaving out a single detail. But where is the beginning? And what is everything?

I am an old woman now, but once I was a girl. It's true. I was a girl like you are a boy. One of my chores was to bring in the mail. One day there was a note addressed to our house. There was no name on it. It was mine as much as anyone's, I thought. I opened it. Many words had been removed from the text by a censor.

14 January 1921

To Whom Shall Receive This Letter:

My name is XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXX, and I am a XXXXXXXXX in Turkish Labor Camp XXXXX, Block XX. I know that I am lucky XXX XXXXXXXX to be alive at all. I have chosen to write to you without knowing who you are. My parents XXXXXXXX XXX. My brothers and sisters XXXXX XXXX, the main XXXXXXXX XX XXXXXXXXXXX!

I have written XXX XX XXXXX XXXXXXXX every day since I have been here. I trade bread for postage, but have not yet received a response. Sometimes it comforts me to think that they do not mail the letters we write.

XXX XX XXXXXXXX, or at least XXX XXXXXXXXXXXX?

XX XXXXX X XX throughout XXXXX XX.

XXX XXX XX XXXXX, and XXXXX XX XXXXX XX XXX, without

once XXX XX XXXXXX, XXX XXXXXXXXXXX XXX XXXXX nightmare?

XXX XXX, XX XXXXX XX XXXXX XX! XXXXX XX XXX XX  
XXX XX XXXXXX to write a few words to me I would appreciate it  
more than you ever could know. Several of the XXXXXX XXXX re-  
ceived mail so I know that XX XX XXXXXXXXXXX. Please include a pic-  
ture of yourself as well as your name. Include everything.

With great hopes,

Sincerely I am,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I took the letter straight to my room. I put it under my mattress. I  
never told my father or mother about it. For weeks I was awake all  
night wondering. Why was this man sent to a Turkish labor camp?  
Why had the letter come fifteen years after it had been written?  
Where had it been for those fifteen years? Why hadn't anyone writ-  
ten back to him? The others got mail, he said. Why had he sent a  
letter to our house? How did he know the name of my street? How  
did he know of Dresden? Where did he learn German? What be-  
came of him?

I tried to learn as much about the man as I could from the letter. The  
words were very simple. Bread means only bread. Mail is mail.  
Great hopes are great hopes are great hopes. I was left with the hand-  
writing.

So I asked my father, your great-grandfather, whom I considered the  
best, most kindhearted man I knew, to write a letter to me. I told him  
it didn't matter what he wrote about. Just write, I said. Write any-  
thing.

Darling,

You asked me to write you a letter, so I am writing you a letter. I do  
not know why I am writing this letter, or what this letter is supposed to  
be about, but I am writing it nonetheless, because I love you very much  
and trust that you have some good purpose for having me write this let-  
ter. **I hope that one day you will have the experience of doing some-  
thing you do not understand for someone you love.**

Your father

That letter  
picture.

Next I was  
able to get  
him to write  
played on  
To the Pri  
My name  
a few year  
endars.

rain come  
wake up th  
I murdered  
I used that  
came from  
get on my  
I did a term  
take anyth  
chalk lines

I have trie  
their choro  
It might no  
wife. I di  
her.

If you rele  
Please con  
Kurt Schl  
My uncle  
than forty  
the letter t  
had childre  
that my un  
was also in  
cared for t  
my uncle,