

‘Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close’ Is Extremely Profound & Incredibly Uplifting

For those of us non-New Yorkers who watched the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as they happened, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* gives us a deeper, more personal understanding than all the previously released 9-11 movies regarding that national tragedy.

Based on Jonathan Safran Foer’s novel of the same title, the movie tells the story of a 9-year-old boy Oskar (Thomas Horn) who lost his father, Thomas Schell (Tom Hanks), during what he calls “The Worst Day.”

A year after 9-11, Oskar’s mother and Thomas’ adoring wife/widow, Linda (Sandra Bullock) is making the best of things trying to raise a grieving boy in the city while continuing to grieve quietly herself. Oskar, who has problems socializing and had been tested for Asperger’s Syndrome (inconclusive), is a handful—sometimes loving her, then switching to hate and back again. One day he is searching in his father’s closet and discovers a mysterious key in a manila envelope labeled “Black.” He is convinced this key is a clue that may lead to a special message from his dad and consequently embarks on a search for every person in New York City with the last name of Black to find the lock that belongs to this key.

Throughout the movie, you experience how Oskar, out of the thousands who lost parents on that day, tried to make sense of it all. Ten minutes into it, I felt I knew and loved this kid. I think because I’m a dad, it connected on a heart level, reflecting how we desire our sons to be strong—even when we’re not able to be there for them.

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close deals with change, and how a son's love, determination and frustration dealt with that change. It also offers a lesson on deliberately making physical memories in your life that you can pass down to those you leave behind.

Tears, gasps and open crying were prevalent in the audience of our movie screening. There were scenes from 9-11 that were difficult to watch—almost as if it were *deja vu*. Every face I could see had wet cheeks. Every face. God forbid my son, Kellen, would ever have to go through the turmoil Oskar faced in overcoming grief.

After the movie, a couple of guys were walking behind us. One said to the other that he really didn't want to see *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. The 20-something guy thought it would be a waste of his time. Turns out, this was probably the best movie he has ever seen.

I have to agree. This movie connected in a way that few do—extolling forgiveness and family. I'll probably watch the Oscars just to see this movie win best picture.

Content Watch: Rated PG-13 for emotional thematic material, some disturbing images and language, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* is best suited for teens and adults—not children. The 9-11 scenes are not graphic, but disturbing. The movie features slurred foul language, disrespectfulness and lying. The film touches on some spiritual issues and questions of faith, but it doesn't offer answers.

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