

# The Unabridged Pocketbook of Lightning



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著者:Jonathan Safran Foer

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Extract from this book

Isn't it so weird how the number of dead people is increasing, even though the earth stays the same size, so that one day there isn't going to be room to bury anyone anymore? For my ninth birthday this year, Grandma gave me a subscription to National Geographic, which she calls "the National Geographic." She also gave me a white blazer, because I only wear white clothes, and it's too big to wear so that it will last me a long time. She also gave me Grandpa's camera, which I loved for two reasons. I asked why he didn't take it with him when he left her. She said, "Maybe he wanted you to have it." I said, "But I was negative-thirty years old." She said, "Still." Anyway, the fascinating thing was that I read in National Geographic that there are more people alive now than have died in all of human history. In other words, if everyone wanted to play Hamlet at once, they couldn't, because there aren't enough skulls!

So what about skyscrapers for dead people that were built down? They could be underneath the skyscrapers for living people that are built up. You could bury people one hundred floors down, and a whole dead world could be underneath the living one.

Sometimes I think it would be weird if there were a skyscraper that moved up and down, while its elevator stayed in place. So if you wanted to go to the 95th floor, you'd just press the 95 button, and the 95th floor would come to you. Also, that could be extremely useful, because if you're on the 95th floor, and a plane hits below you, the building could bring you to the ground, and everyone could be safe, even if you left your birdseed shirt at home that day.

I've only been in a limousine twice ever. The first time was terrible, even though the limousine was wonderful. I'm not allowed to watch TV at home, and I'm not allowed to watch TV in limousines, either, but it was still neat that there was a TV there. I asked if we could go by school, so Toothpaste and The Minch could see me in a limousine. Mom said that school wasn't on the way, and we couldn't be late to the cemetery. "Why not?" I asked, which I actually thought was a good question, because if you think about it, why not? Even though I'm not anymore, I used to be an atheist, which means I didn't believe in things that couldn't be observed. I believed that once you're dead, you're dead forever, and you don't feel anything, and you don't even dream. It's not that I believe in things that can't be observed now, because I don't. It's that I believe that things are extremely complicated.

作者介绍:

Synopsis

Widely acknowledged as one of the most inventive new voices in contemporary fiction, Jonathan Safran Foer is proof of Penguin's ongoing commitment to finding and publishing the bravest new writing. Safran Foer's debut, *Everything is Illuminated*, won the Guardian First Book Award in 2002, and *The Unabridged Pocketbook of Lightning* is packed with the wit, imagination and exuberance that make his work essential reading.

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