

***Everything is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer (2002)**

My legal name is Alexander Perchov. But all of my many friends dub me Alex, because that is a more flaccid-to-utter version of my legal name. Mother dubs me Alexi-stop-spleening me!, because I am always spleening her. If you want to know why I am always spleening her, it is because I am always elsewhere with friends, and disseminating so much currency, and performing so many things that can spleen a mother. Father used to dub me Shapka, for the fur hat I would don even in the summer months. He ceased dubbing me that because I ordered him to cease dubbing me that. It sounded boyish to me, and I have always thought of myself as very potent and generative. I have many many girls, believe me, and they all have a different name for me. One dubs me Baby, not because I am a baby, but because she attends to me. Another dubs me All Night. Do you want to know why? I have a girl who dubs me Currency, because I disseminate so much currency around her. She licks my chops for it. I have a miniature brother who dubs me Alli. I do not dig this name very much, but I dig him very much, so OK, I permit him to dub me Alli. As for his name, it is Little Igor, but Father dubs him Clumsy One, because he is always promenading into things. It was only four days previous that he made his eye blue from a mismanagement with a brick wall.

I had performed recklessly well in my second year of English at university. This was a very majestic thing I did because my instructor was having shit between his brains. Mother was so proud of me, she said, Alexi-stop-spleening-me! You have made me so proud of you. I inquired her to purchase me leather pants, but she said no. Shorts? No. Father was also so proud. He said, Shapka, and I said, Do not dub me that, and he said, Alex, you have made Mother so proud.

But first I am burdened to recite my good appearance. I am unequivocally tall. I do not know any women who are taller than me. The women I know who are taller than me are lesbians, for whom 1969 was a very momentous year. I have handsome hairs, which are split in the middle. This is because Mother used to split them on the side when I was a boy, and to spleen her I split them in the middle. Alexi-stop-spleening-me! she said, you appear mentally unbalanced with your hairs split like that.

Jonathan Safran Foer (1977 -)



Jonathan Safran Foer
AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews/Polfoto

Foer is considered a fairly controversial American novelist of the first decade of the 21st century, not only for the content of his writing, but rather for its unconventional style. Asked in an interview: It must be very hard to write bad English, as in the case of Alex who is the Russian translator in *Everything Is Illuminated?*, Foer said:

Writing it was a lot like reading it, I imagine. In the sense that in the beginning it was hard and a little bit frustrating and disorienting. You didn't know if you liked it or not. And then at a certain point it's easy. And then you become fluent in it. Then, it's almost hard not to do it.