*Extremely loud and Incredibly close*

Oskar Schell is a nine-year-old boy whose father, Thomas Schell, died in the[terrorist attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_attacks) on the [World Trade Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Center" \o "World Trade Center) on [September 11, 2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11,_2001" \o "September 11, 2001).

After his father died, one day Oskar was looking through his father's closet when he found a key in a small envelope inside a vase he smashed; on the outside of the envelope the word "Black" is written in the top. Oskar sets out on a mission to contact every person in New York City with the last name

Oskar meets an old man he calls "the renter", he had only heard of the old man's existence from his Grandmother who referred to him as the new tenant in her apartment. ("The renter" is actually Oskar's grandfather.)

When Oskar talks to William Black, he learns that the key once belonged to William's father. In his will, William's father left William a key to a safe-deposit box, but William had already sold the vase at the estate sale to Thomas Schell. Oskar gives William Black’s key. Oskar was angry and sad because the key does not belong to him.