



Heart of a Champion

By Carl Deuker

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Jimmy Winter is a born star on the baseball field, and Seth Barnam can only dream of being as talented. Still, the two baseball fanatics have the kind of friendship that should last forever. But when Seth experiences an unthinkable loss, he's forced to find his own personal strength--on and off the field.

An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

An ALA Best Book for Reluctant Readers

A New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age

Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Book of the Year

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Baseball becomes a metaphor for life in Deuker's thought-provoking testimonial to friendship and filial love. Narrator Seth, who lost his father at age seven, becomes a baseball fanatic five years later, when he starts playing ball with Jimmy Winter and Jimmy's perfectionist father. But Mr. Winter is hardly perfect: an alcoholic, he abruptly moves out and stops seeing Jimmy, then months later shows up, drunk, at a ballgame. Jimmy subsequently moves away, but Seth has been so strongly influenced that he's even eligible for the honors program in high school. Seth joins junior varsity baseball and is thrilled when Jimmy moves back and also makes the team. They start attending weekly beer-drinking parties at the home of teammate Todd. To his despair, Seth gets left in J.V. while Jimmy and Todd become varsity stars, even though they're suspended once for drinking. Eventually Seth makes the varsity squad and, along with Todd, quits drinking. But even with athletic stardom beckoning, Jimmy doesn't sober up, and the consequences are tragic. Deuker (*On the Devil's Court*) writes grittily, with action worthy of the sports page. Yet the sensitive examination of the importance of a father--or lack of one--in a boy's life is where Deuker really hits a home run. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-10-- On the day Seth Barham met Jimmy Winter, his life changed. Seth had been an unfocused, confused pre-teen who had never come to terms with his father's death when he was seven. He meets Jimmy in a park as Jimmy's overbearing father is putting his son through intense baseball drills. As their friendship develops, Jimmy's intensity and self-assurance on the playing field spills over into Seth's life, helping him to blossom as a student and a baseball player. However, Jimmy's home life begins to unravel when his parents divorce. Also, he is suspended from the team when he develops a drinking problem. Seth withstands peer pressure to drink, and, with his mother's support, begins to accept his father's death. However, his biggest battle comes when he must cope with Jimmy's death in an auto accident. Baseball action permeates the story, increasing the novel's interest to those readers familiar with the sport but setting up possible barriers for the uninitiated. Seth's simply told, often moving first-person narrative is meant to be his way of accepting the two losses in his life. However, although the semi-therapeutic story covers three years in the boys' baseball lives, it largely ignores their school lives and some readers may wonder what else they did. Mixing themes common to many YA coming-of-age titles with strong character development, this easy-to-read and well-paced novel will involve many readers. --Jack Forman, Mesa College Library, San Diego
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From Kirkus Reviews

From the author of *On the Devil's Court* (1989), another story in which sports and life intertwine. Jimmy Winter, his eyes fixed on the major leagues, accepts his father's harsh coaching as the only way to develop that special edge. Develop it he does, though their personal relationship founders on the rocks of his father's alcoholism. Jimmy fires up new friend Seth with the love of baseball, and the two play through Little League, Babe Ruth League and into high school. Seth is competent but not gifted, though he discovers that the benefits of hard work and concentration on the field carry over to school. His admiration for Jimmy's potential becomes mixed with more complex feelings when he learns that his friend is drinking and cutting class. After that revelation, the story moves with heavy inevitability: the varsity team puts together a championship season, but Jimmy kills himself in a car accident just before the clincher. Covering well worked thematic territory, Deuker offers readers few surprises in this outing, but the baseball action is believable and the contrasts between several sets of characters are thoughtfully explored. (Fiction. 12-14) --
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rose Warfield:

This Heart of a Champion book is just not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book will be information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This Heart of a Champion without we understand teach the one who studying it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Heart of a Champion can bring any time you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even phone. This Heart of a Champion having fine arrangement in word and layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

James Holmes:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent all day long to reading a guide. The book Heart of a Champion it is quite good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book features high quality.

Kenneth Porter:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Heart of a Champion, you can enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout people. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Hayden Wright:

Do you have something that you prefer such as book? The guide lovers usually prefer to choose book like comic, brief story and the biggest some may be novel. Now, why not trying Heart of a Champion that give your entertainment preference will be satisfied simply by reading this book. Reading habit all over the world can be said as the opportunity for people to know world better then how they react when it comes to the world. It can't be mentioned constantly that reading behavior only for the geeky particular person but for all of you who wants to be success person. So , for all of you who want to start reading as your good habit, you can pick Heart of a Champion become your personal starter.

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