



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

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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.

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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:

Patrick Stokes:

The guide untitled Heart of a Champion is the book that recommended to you to study. You can see the quality of the e-book content that will be shown to you. The language that creator use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The author was did a lot of analysis when write the book, so the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also can get the e-book of Heart of a Champion from the publisher to make you considerably more enjoy free time.

Macie Austin:

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent the whole day to reading a e-book. The book Heart of a Champion it is rather good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book provides high quality.

Luther Jensen:

Heart of a Champion can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to place every word into joy arrangement in writing Heart of a Champion nevertheless doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource details that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information could drawn you into fresh stage of crucial thinking.

Dean Herbert:

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