

The Fun Master: A Father's Journey of Love, Loss, and Learning to Live One Day at a Time

Jeff Seitzer

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The Fun Master is a moving memoir by a father whose love for his child proved stronger than the adversities they faced.

Collecting heartfelt moments that become heartwrenching from the vantage of loss, Jeff Seitzer's memoir *The Fun Master* is about his struggles to care for his ailing first child.

Seitzer, who was often sick during his childhood, developed rigid coping mechanisms to deal with his corresponding ups and downs. When his son, Ethan, was born with a condition that required immediate surgery, these methods stopped working for him. As he bore witness to how his vivacious son weathered surgeries, hospitalizations, hearing loss, and his difficulties with breathing, he began to believe that rigidity was less important than being present in each moment.

The book recounts how Seitzer, once an academic, became a stay-at-home father, devoting all of his time to his son. He worked to live in the moment, and to focus on more than his own well-being. But a tragic end to an otherwise joyful day at the beach upended this life, too. While himself in the process of drowning in the ocean, Seitzer worried that he wouldn't be able to share Ethan's story with others. Thus, in the decade that followed, he wrote this personal chronicle of Ethan's short life—one marked by the boy's passion and the father's love. And beyond the bounds of the project, Ethan's presence continued to effect him: Seitzer kept putting the needs of his family before his own.

The book balances its focus on entertaining outsiders with its determination to share the truth about Ethan's life. It begins with that pivotal day at the beach, rewinding to capture episodes from Seitzer's life before, during, and after Ethan was in it. Though its chapters have standalone narrative qualities—they are written in the style of journal entries, and capture Seitzer's immediate reactions to the situations that he and Ethan faced together—each returns to the central theme of Seitzer working to become the father whom Ethan needed. Likewise, the chapters celebrate Ethan's moments of thriving, despite the medical challenges and painful moments that he endured. Though Ethan's accident hangs over each scene, Seitzer's recollections center the positive impact that the boy had on everyone around him. The result is a poignant, loving tribute tale that beams Ethan's exuberance outward.

About coping, self-sacrifice, and loss, *The Fun Master* is a moving memoir by a father who was transformed by his love for his child.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May 31, 2022)

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