



Second Dad Summer

Benjamin Klas

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In the thoughtful middle grade novel *Second Dad Summer*, a boy spends his vacation with his father and his father's boyfriend.

Jeremiah likes his summers with his dad. This year, their time together includes Michael, his dad's new boyfriend. Michael eats organic food, rides a bike with a unicorn on it, and has a whole circle of friends that Jeremiah's dad is now a part of, too.

Jeremiah's days are spent biking, exploring, and working in and around the apartment. He makes new friends, including Sage, who lives in the same neighborhood with her two moms, and Mr. Keeler, a grumpy old man who lives in his father's apartment building and who is antagonistic towards Michael.

Jeremiah works to adjust to significant changes in his family. He is fine with his father dating men, but he is not comfortable with colorful, flamboyant Michael. He is also not happy with Michael trying to take care of him. As summer progresses, Jeremiah observes the actions and interactions of those around him and is exposed to new ideas about what family means, leading him to consider how both he and Michael might fit within the same family. Slowly, his attitude shifts.

Minneapolis is made vibrant by references to its sites and activities, including its library and museum; pride and art festivals; and the city's biking trails. Its citizens are diverse, and Jeremiah meets other LGBTQ+ people and people of multiple ethnicities. The book's characters are vibrant, and the novel is welcoming and inclusive.

Insightful and sensitive, *Second Dad Summer* is a story all about the meaning of family and the value of acceptance.

CATHERINE THURESON (May / June 2020)

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