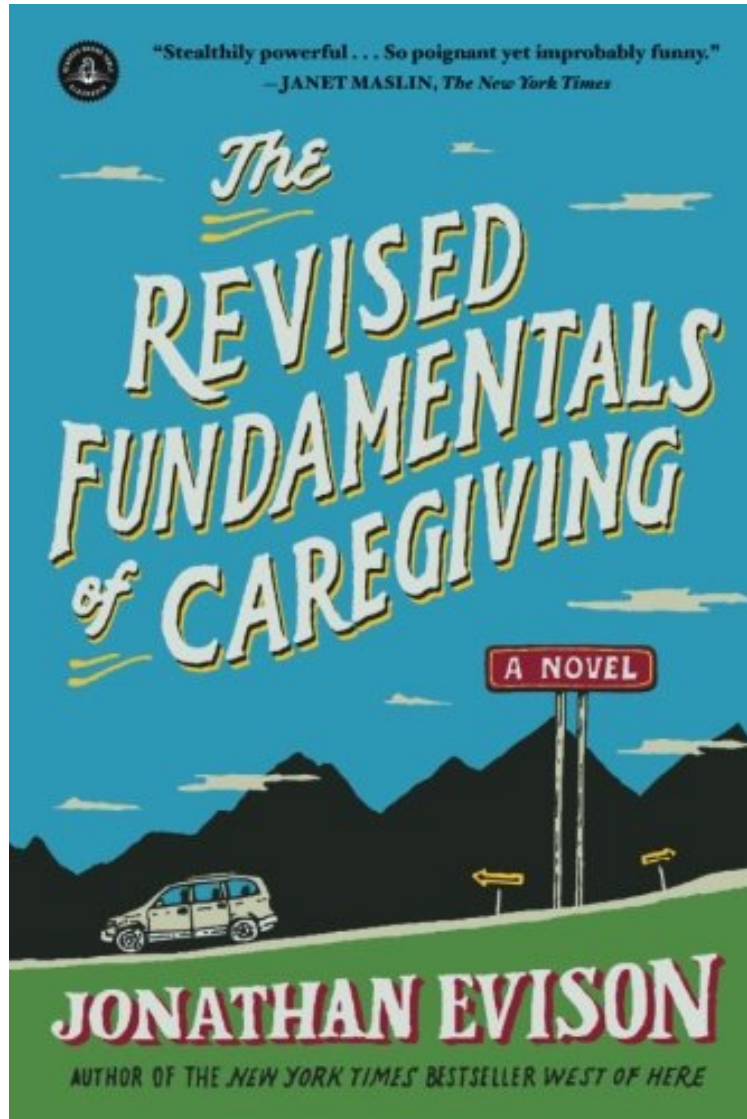


[Free download] The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving: A Novel

## The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving: A Novel

Jonathan Evison

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**Jonathan Evison : The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving: A Novel** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving: A Novel:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. I feel like I discovered a Picasso painting in my atticBy Ron JohnsonI feel like I discovered a Picasso painting in my attic. I had never heard of Evison before reading this novel, and now I wonder how I ever missed him. If you're like me, you'll think that you've been reading this book for 30 minutes only to discover that it's 2:00 A.M. and you've been reading for three hours.On the surface, Evison's writing

appears simple, until you start recognizing that he is painting beautiful images and evoking a wide range of emotions. This book could have been a maudlin mess of melodrama in the hands of a lesser writer, but Evison manages to avoid this while presenting a very emotional work. His characters undergo an Odyssey that I was extremely willing to go along with. Lastly, I will say that this novel also has comedy liberally interspersed throughout the narrative that oftentimes created a belly-laugh for me. I will be reading more of Evison's work and I hardly recommend him to you. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Allow Yourself To Love This By Minnesota Mind Call me sentimental but I LOVED this book. Based upon the quickly crumbling life of Humbert Humbert, ooops, I mean the equally curmudgeonly (though much younger) Benjamin Benjamin, the novel becomes part Little Miss Sunshine, part Garden State. Our narrator takes to the road in a Handicapped Van with his "side-kick," Trevor who suffers acutely from Muscular Dystrophy. To Evison's credit, he does not romanticize Trevor's condition nor does he attempt to make his suffering a metaphor for anything but itself---senseless, deep and mostly meaningless suffering. The descriptions of Benjamin's time spent tending to Trev's various bodily limitations are clinical and direct. At times, however, I wished that Evison had kept up with the clinical detail during the road trip since it seems that traveling with Trevor was supposed to be part of the gauntlet. At the heart of the book, however, is the shared goal of the caregiver and the patient to find meaning. Benjamin's body works just fine, but due to an accident of which we learn in fits and starts throughout the novel, he is dystrophied emotionally and psychologically, and once we learn the full horror story of his tragedy, we realize that we would probably be in his condition as well. Because the writing was so good and the characters sympathetic, I was willing to forgive the derivative nature of the van ride across the country and the very obvious Garden State symbol of stopping/finding redemption at one of America's deepest holes (literally). I read this book to buy time while my wife finishes up Jonathan Tropper's new novel (which she swiped before I could); I am thrilled I read it and I'm glad to discover a new strong voice in American fiction. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I generally really liked his writing By Milena Despite a line here and there that gave me pause as a questionable choice, I generally really liked his writing. I love that he doesn't dramatize disability or try to turn it into "inspiration". I am a fan of flawed characters written well. There are parts that are really hard to read. If I had to sum it up, I would call it the most optimistic depressing book you'll ever read.

In *The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving* (releasing June 24, 2016 as a Netflix Original Film titled *The Fundamentals of Caring*, starring Paul Rudd and Selena Gomez), Jonathan Evison, author of the new novel *This Is Your Life*, *Harriet Chance!* and the New York Times bestseller *West of Here*, has crafted a novel of the heart, a story of unlikely heroes in a grand American landscape. For Ben Benjamin, all has been lost--his wife, his family, his home, his livelihood. Hoping to find a new direction, he enrolls in a night class called *The Fundamentals of Caregiving*, where he will learn to take care of people with disabilities. He is instructed about professionalism, about how to keep an emotional distance between client and provider, and about the art of inserting catheters while avoiding liability. But when Ben is assigned his first client--a tyrannical nineteen-year-old boy named Trevor, who is in the advanced stages of Duchenne muscular dystrophy--he soon discovers that the endless service checklists have done nothing to prepare him for the reality of caring for a fiercely stubborn, sexually frustrated teenager who has an ax to grind with the whole world. Over time, the relationship between Ben and Trev, which had begun with mutual misgivings, evolves into a close friendship, and the traditional boundaries between patient and caregiver begin to blur. The bond between them strengthens as they embark on a road trip to visit Trev's ailing father--a journey rerouted by a series of bizarre roadside attractions that propel them into an impulsive adventure disrupted by one birth, two arrests, a freakish dust storm, and a six-hundred-mile cat-and-mouse pursuit by a mysterious brown Buick Skylark. By the end of that journey, Trev has had his first taste of love, and Ben has found a new reason to love life. Bursting with energy and filled with moments of absolute beauty, this big-hearted and inspired novel ponders life's terrible surprises as well as what it takes to truly care for another human being.

.com Exclusive: Essay by Jonathan Evison "Listen to me: everything you think you know, every relationship you've ever taken for granted, every plan or possibility you've ever hatched, every conceit or endeavor you've ever concocted, can be stripped from you in an instant. Sooner or later, it will happen. So prepare yourself. Be ready not to be ready. Be ready to be brought to your knees and beaten to dust. Because no stable foundation, no act of will, no force of cautious habit will save you from this fact: nothing is indestructible." — from *The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving* The weekend of my sister's sixteenth birthday, she took a road trip with some friends down to Lucerne Valley in the Mojave Desert. For two weeks prior, the trip was a source of debate around our dinner table. My old man reasoned that since she was a responsible kid, got good grades, fed her pets, and honored her curfew, she ought to be allowed to take the trip. My mother reasoned that it was a bad idea. She didn't trust the other kids. They were a scraggly bunch. My sister took the trip. She never came home. She was killed in a freak car accident the weekend she turned sixteen years old. The incident, the specifics of which have never been explained satisfactorily by anyone, all but exploded my family. My parents divorced after twenty-five years of marriage. I lost what amounted to my primary caregiver. My oldest brother was deeply depressed for two years afterward and was really never the same in some

fundamental way. To this day, my family is still feeling the shockwaves. I'm still walking around with this sister-shaped hole in my heart. After a few beers, my brother will still lament the fact that he owed her seven bucks at the time of the accident. The seven bucks had been a point of contention involving the sale of a ten-speed bike. They argued fiercely about the money up until the day she left. At fifty-seven, my brother is still trying to pay that debt. There are holes in our lives that can never be filled--not really, not ever. And yet, we have no choice but to try to fill them. We must drive on in the face of debilitating loss, crippling guilt, overwhelming hopelessness. Because to give up is to be dead. I've lived with this idea since I was five years old. Ben Benjamin is a character who has lost virtually everything--his wife, his family, his home, his livelihood. Broken, stripped down, stricken, and without hope, Ben is a shadow of his old self. He has been a stay-at-home dad for nearly a decade, so the job market has all but passed him by. With few options, Ben registers for a twenty-eight-hour night class called The Fundamentals of Caregiving, where, in the sweltering basement of the Abundant Life Foursquare Church, Ben learns how to insert catheters and avoid liability. He learns about professionalism and how to erect and maintain certain boundaries, how to keep physical and emotional distance between the client and the care provider. He learns that caregiving is just a job. But when Ben finds himself assigned to a tyrannical nineteen-year-old named Trev, who is in the advanced stages of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, he discovers that the endless mnemonics and service plan checklists presented in his class have done little to prepare him for the reality of caring for a fiercely stubborn, scared, sexually frustrated adolescent with an ax to grind with the world at large. When I set out to write this novel, I didn't envision it as a road novel. I've never had a desire to write a road novel--in fact, I was very resistant to the idea. But the characters led me to the road. They left me no choice. They all but dragged me kicking and screaming to the road. It seemed Ben and Trev were always driving around in that van of Trev's, but they were never getting anywhere. They were both stuck. They needed that van to deliver them somewhere--and I guess I needed it, too. Because that's where this novel delivered me. The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving is a story of total collapse, and ultimately, reconstruction. Before it is over, this calamitous journey will cover five states, resulting in one birth, two arrests, and one instance of cannibalism and including a dust storm, a hail storm, several shit storms, and a six-hundred-mile cat-and-mouse pursuit by a mysterious Buick Skylark. Baggage is collected. Hearts are won and lost. Mistakes are forgiven. Futures are realized. This book represents nothing less than an emotional catharsis for its author. I wrote this book because I needed to. Because my sister went on a road trip thirty-nine years ago and never came back. And my family has yet to heal from this terrible fact. This novel is about the imperative of getting in that van, because you have no choice but to push yourself and drive on, and keep driving in the face of life's terrible surprises. It's about the people and the things you gather along that rough road back to humanity. And in the end, for me, The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving is the van in which I finally bring my sister home.