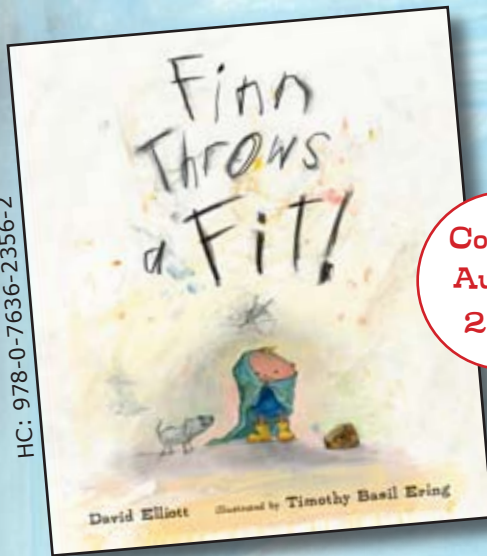


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Coming
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2009

The creators of *Finn Throws a Fit!*

DISCUSS **FATHERHOOD**

David Elliott

"It's like driving a car at night. You never see further than your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way."

So writes E. L. Doctorow, the author of *Ragtime*. His encouraging simile was, of course, describing the act of writing a novel. But it's also an apt description of the art of fathering.

The father that Tim Ering depicted in *Finn Throws a Fit!* reminds me so much of myself in those early years when my son, Eli, was a toddler. I was clueless. Who was he? What did he want? Was he hungry? Was he sick? Was he happy? Was he sad? By the time I thought I had a handle on it, he was already hurtling full throttle toward the next stage of his young life, and I was left behind, dangling a toy fish in the air in front of me, feeling silly and useless.



I was often driving in the dark. Still, like the father Tim so wisely renders in the book, though I was almost always bewildered, I didn't give up. How could I have? He was my son. Most of the time, I could see no farther than the headlights, but somehow in spite of the floods, the hurricanes, the blizzards, and the earthquakes, we made the whole trip.

Eli is twenty-two now. He does most of his own driving, and that's how it should be, but in our own way, we're still traveling together. Sometimes the immutable truth of this fact hits me, and I am filled with the same wonder, the same ineffable joy, that I felt the first day I saw him.



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Timothy Basil Ering

Fatherhood takes great doses of energy, but it is the most fulfilling obligation I've ever had.

One thing I have found that depletes mass amounts of energy is the eternal vigilance needed all the time. But the reward of tucking a safe and happy child into bed at the end of an adventurous day is priceless!



Another energy drainer is practicing patience even in the stormiest of seas. I practice more patience in a day as a father than I ever have while fishing. My toddler didn't mean to throw the baseball at the full liter of olive oil on the kitchen counter that emptied into the silverware drawer and then onto the floor a half minute before we all needed to get into the car.

But the part of the parenting package that takes zero energy is unconditional love.

My son, Finn, is almost three, and he loves everything from ice fishing to brussels sprouts. We do almost everything together! But as sweet as he is, when I run out of reasons to explain to him why he can't go scuba diving for lobsters with me, there is a great chance that Finn might throw a fit.

Boy, have I learned that sweet toddlers can surprise their mommies and daddies with sudden mood changes!

When I read author David Elliott's manuscript for *Finn Throws a Fit!*, I laughed out loud. It was as if David had been writing a story about my very own Finn! And just as funny was that David and I did not know each other while he was writing his story—about a little boy named Finn!—who throws an unworldly fit.

I was excited to illustrate David Elliott's story: the subject matter was a perfect candidate for expressive paint and gestural line. And I also had a full well to draw from with real-time toddler experience right under my nose. I was living with the perfect inspiration!

