

It doesn't matter if you're a sports fan, a hopeless romantic or a parent who's gone through a life-changing crisis with your child, this book is an unforgettable page turner that will leave you feeling hopeful and inspired.

The Beauty of Love: A Memoir of Miracles, Hope, and Healing

By Jorge Posada and
Laura Posada

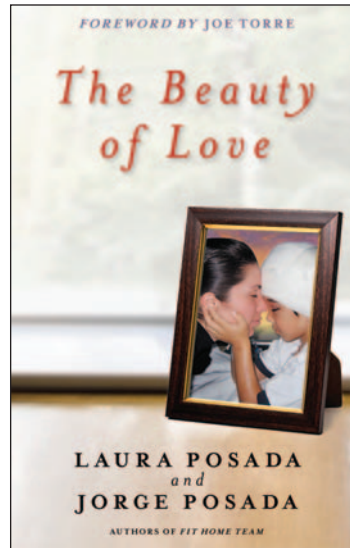
Jorge and Laura Posada

had it all. A five-time World Champion and catcher for the New York Yankees, Jorge had worked his way up from being the smallest kid in his class—"sports were always a bit harder for me," he admits—to the status of baseball star with an enviable track record. Beautiful, brilliant and incredibly popular, Laura had become an actress, fitness model and powerhouse lawyer. Both grew up in privileged and close-knit families in Puerto Rico, raised by tough but loving parents who expected much from their children. Both were highly competitive, especially in sports.

After a tempestuous romance, with Jorge doggedly wooing a resistant Laura, the two made plans to marry and in 1999 their first child, Jorge Luis Jr., was born. They immediately knew something was wrong. The child's head was oddly shaped on one side, with a noticeable bump on the other. At home he cried constantly, and his facial features grew even more strange-looking. Ten days after his birth, Jorge Luis was diagnosed with craniosynostosis, a life-threatening condition in which the bones of the skull fuse together prematurely, causing a disruption in brain growth and an abnormally shaped head. If left untreated, the deformation can lead to severe and permanent damage, from seizures and neurological deficiencies to eye problems and cognitive delays.

In *The Beauty of Love*, which debuts this month, the Posadas recount their ordeal with alternating chapters about their courtship, the birth of Jorge Luis and their daughter Paulina, and the terrifying ordeal that culminated in eight surgeries to reshape their son's skull and face. This book is part love story, part motivational how-to, with just enough information about Jorge's career to quench the thirst of even the most dedicated sports fan without alienating those who know nothing about baseball.

Some chapters will undoubtedly give you goose bumps, others will make you cry or exhale with relief. The scene in which



Laura walks down the street with Jorge Luis after one of his surgeries, and is suddenly accused of child abuse by a passerby who sees the inflamed wounds on the baby's head, is extremely moving. And this young mother's memory of desperately trying to get back to the New York hospital where Jorge Luis was recovering just minutes after the 9/11 terrorist attacks is nothing short of riveting.

The best thing about this book may be its candor. Jorge and Laura mince no words as they recall the stress and strain on their marriage, their efforts to hide their newborn son not just from the media but even their close friends, and the dread Laura felt when she became pregnant with the couple's second child while still going through their overshadowing

ordeal with Jorge Luis. Separate, short anecdotes from friends, colleagues and family members make the story seem even more intimate, powerful and real. In the back of the book are stories from other parents affected by craniosynostosis, affirmations to help maintain positive thinking, a comprehensive list of resources, and a revealing medical Q&A with the Posadas' craniofacial surgeon, Dr. David Staffenberg, complete with illustrations.

This is the story of a fiercely independent woman who must come to terms with her own vulnerability and a family man who must remain strong in spite of the pain in his heart. It is the story of a couple learning to live with uncertainty, who end up not torn apart but more tightly bound by their son's illness, who discover what it means to truly love another person, for better or worse.

The high-profile couple now runs the Jorge Posada Foundation to promote awareness of craniosynostosis, offer emotional support to families with children affected by the condition, help underwrite surgical fees, accelerate medical research, and conduct other outreach efforts. President Barack Obama recognized the Foundation earlier this year at the White House.

The Posadas' greatest regret seems to be that they waited so long to share what they were going through and didn't reach out to others who might have helped ease their fears. Now, through their non-profit foundation and their new book, they are doing just that.

For more information, see www.jorgeposadafoundation.org.

This book is available in the EP Bookstore