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## Even Steven

*By John Gilstrap*



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When Bobby and Susan Martin come across a dirty, shivering child at their campsite, the last thing the childless couple expects is to be drawn into an unthinkable crime. But when one of the boy's kidnappers comes out of the brush waving a gun, Bobby is forced to react. In one chaotic, explosive moment, the predator is brutally murdered. But was he a criminal -- or a cop?

With a vicious crime ring closing in on them, and unsure of whom to trust, Bobby and Susan desperately plunge into the heart of danger to save the boy -- and themselves.

John Gilstrap's *Even Steven* enhances his reputation as an ingenious and innovative contemporary thriller writer.



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## Even Steven By John Gilstrap Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Author John Gilstrap's last thriller, *Nathan's Run*, was a fast-paced, deftly plotted tour de force about a kid in trouble. In his newest, the author serves up another child-in-danger plot, not quite as scary but touching a more sentimental nerve. Bobby and Susan Martin are still grieving the stillborn son who represented their five-year dream of a family of their own. When a frightened toddler escapes from his kidnappers and plunges into the clearing in the West Virginia mountains where the Martins have pitched their camp, he seems to Susan like the answer to her prayers. And when Bobby shoots the man pursuing the little boy, what seemed at first like a justifiable homicide turns into a nightmare; the pursuer is a cop. Bobby wants to surrender himself and the silent child to the authorities, but after several failed pregnancies, Susan is less willing to give up the boy she almost immediately names Steven, after her dead son. Meanwhile, April, the boy's mother, learns he was taken to satisfy a gambling debt incurred by her ne'er-do-well husband. Gilstrap deftly sets April's search in motion, taking her into a criminal underworld of drugs, extortion, and murder and setting up a heart-tugging situation in which the reader isn't sure whom to root for--the child's real mother, trapped by circumstances, or Susan Martin, who'll do anything to keep him. This explosive thriller ends in a hail of bullets, a climax well worth waiting for after a page-turning read that should earn its author a following of new fans. --*Jane Adams*

### From Publishers Weekly

Corny internal monologues drag down this action-packed third novel by Gilstrap (*Nathan's Run*; *At All Costs*), featuring an ill-starred childless couple and a hapless young mom caught between the cops and the bad guys. Still grieving over the recent stillbirth of their first child, a son they named Steven, Susan and Bobby Martin are on a camping trip in the mountains of West Virginia to mark their fifth wedding anniversary when they encounter a frightened little boy and a suspicious man claiming to be his father. After the stranger pulls a gun, Bobby kills him in the ensuing struggle. Finding police ID on the corpse and fearing the consequences of having killed a cop, the Martins take the boy and flee. Having suffered several miscarriages before the stillbirth, Susan believes that God intends the boy to replace Steven. Meanwhile, in nearby Pittsburgh, down-on-her-luck April Simpson discovers that a local drug dealer has kidnapped her two-year-old son, Justin, to hold as a hostage until he can collect a debt from her ne'er-do-well husband. Desperate for her child's safety, April threatens a mob boss with blackmail and is arrested while attempting armed robbery of a department store. Elsewhere, on a rundown farm, the brother of the man Bobby killed is anguishing over not having come to his sibling's rescue. The hero-protagonist (of sorts) who connects all three stories is aging FBI agent Russell Coates, himself embroiled in an old bull/young bull struggle for king of the hill. Although underdeveloped characters, hokey escapes and rescues replete with pulp romance epiphanies give the thriller a comic opera ring, its swift forward motion will speed readers past its flaws. Agent, Molly Friedrich. 7-city author tour. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

### From [Booklist](#)

The author of *Nathan's Run* (1996) and *At All Costs* (1998) just keeps getting better and better. Gilstrap likes to take ordinary people and put them in extraordinary situations. Here, for example, a married couple, camping in the West Virginia mountains, stumbles into the middle of a kidnapping. The husband kills one of the kidnappers and rescues the hostage, a little boy. His wife, depressed because they have been unable to have children of their own, decides she wants to keep this one, leaving the husband with a terrible choice: turn himself in and lose the boy, or say nothing and try to live with the knowledge that he killed a man and kidnapped a child. Throw in a few plot twists (the dead kidnapper may or may not be a police officer) and a

particularly cunning villain, and you have a fresh, unpredictable thriller that will appeal not only to Gilstrap's fans but also to anyone looking for something different from the usual collection of chase scenes and shoot-'em-ups. *David Pitt*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Claire Underwood:**

Do you among people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This Even Steven book is readable simply by you who hate those perfect word style. You will find the information here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving possibly decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer connected with Even Steven content conveys thinking easily to understand by many individuals. The printed and e-book are not different in the content material but it just different by means of it. So , do you still thinking Even Steven is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

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