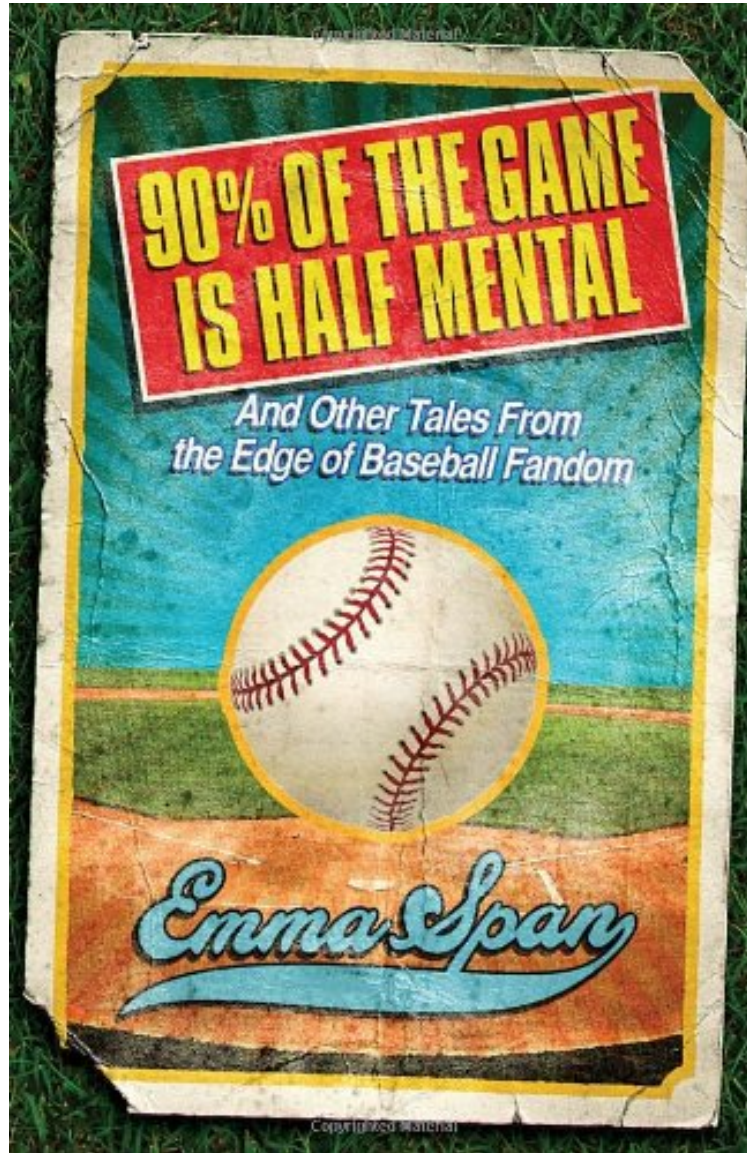


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## 90% of the Game Is Half Mental: And Other Tales from the Edge of Baseball Fandom

Emma Span

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**Emma Span : 90% of the Game Is Half Mental: And Other Tales from the Edge of Baseball Fandom** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 90% of the Game Is Half Mental: And Other Tales from the Edge of Baseball Fandom:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not SpamBy John DurkeeBlogger Span collects short pieces

previously written into 90% of the Game Is Half Mental.... Her aim, as stated by her publisher is to describe what it means to be a baseball fan through these short pieces written on different experiences around baseball. I think she only partially succeeds in that task. I found this book, at least the first half of it, to be a litany of her preferences about life and how she obtained them. The game of baseball is her canvas on which she illustrates those preferences. That would be a great idea were Ms. Span not such an uninteresting (by her own admission) person. In other words, in this portion of this short work, I learned more about Ms. Span than I wanted to know. But, what I did learn was that Ms. Span has a good touch with the English language. Her work is pleasant to read even if the subject is sometimes uninteresting. But, in the last five or so short pieces, the book comes alive with the spirit of what it means to be a baseball fan. She travels to Taiwan to understand and experience first-hand the depth of commitment to being a baseball fan that citizens of that small country are touted as having. In another piece she takes on the sabermetric baseball fan in an effort to learn what makes them tick without understanding the math upon which their understanding of baseball is founded. These are good pieces - more about baseball fans, and less about one person. Two stars for the work and an extra one for quality of the writing.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What a Delight  
By Christopher Soderstrom  
I got the Kindle sample, was instantly hooked, and devoured the rest in one sitting. Hard to imagine any baseball fan who likes reading not loving this book.  
10 of 12 people found the following review helpful. a girl with a gift and a true baseball heart  
By A. Marsh  
As a lifelong Philadelphia Phillies fan, and as such a longtime hater of all things New York baseball, I am completely charmed by Emma Span and her love of the game. Emma is a gifted writer and I look forward to much more by her in the future. Her knowledge is deep, her anecdotes fun to read, and her brutal honesty about how the game has impacted her life made me smile and want to cry. I can only hope that she is given yet another opportunity to channel her passion into her day job again...even if it is only in New York, where I likely wouldn't be a reader. In the meantime I highly recommend this, her first book, to everyone who has a love of the game.

Yogi Berra once said: "If you come to a fork in the road, take it." But for lifelong baseball aficionado Emma Span, it hasn't always been that simple. Now, in this winning collection of essays, Span chronicles her love of the sport, from childhood hobby to full-blown obsession, from big break (becoming *The Village Voice's* first staff sports reporter in years) to heartbreak (getting a pink slip within a year). She recounts elbowing her way to get a quote from Yankees captain Derek Jeter and waiting for Mets pitcher Pedro Martinez to put some pants on for an interview. She literally gives her lifeblood to see the Mets and hops a plane to Taiwan, home to perhaps the largest concentration of Yankees fans outside of the five boroughs. But after getting laid off and being forced to leave her press pass behind, Span wonders if her passion for the sport will fade. Highly unlikely. Baseball helped Span forge a lasting bond with her father, connect with total strangers, and endure even the toughest times. With a fresh voice, a devastating wit, and an alarmingly encyclopedic knowledge of the game, Span offers a new perspective on America's favorite pastime—as a journalist, a baseball nerd, a daughter, and a fervent stay-until-the-last-out fan.

"Emma Span's 90% of the Game is Half Mental is one of the most enjoyable, satisfying sports books I have ever had the pleasure to read. In a modern journalistic era pocked by snark and sarcasm, Span offers up a riveting glimpse at the absurdity—and splendor—of modern sports. Were this book a mustache, it would be Don Mattingly's—circa 1988."—Jeff Pearlman author, *Boys Will Be Boys* and *The Bad Guys Won!* "Emma Span likes bad movies ("Bats: Human Harvest"), terrible TV shows ("Walker: Texas Ranger"), and--from the perspective of this Red Sox fan—even worse baseball teams (the New York Yankees). But her zesty dispatches from the clubhouse and the bleachers signal the happy arrival of a new generation of baseball obsessives. I still can't bring myself to root for the Yankees, but it's easy to cheer for Emma Span." —Will Blythe, author of *To Hate Like This is To Be Happy Forever* "An irreverent, affectionate look at the frequently obsessive, often irrational, totally committed mindset it takes to be a true baseball fan."—Johnette Howard, author of *The Rivals* "Emma Span understands what it means to be a sports fan. She writes about baseball the way I wish everyone would write about baseball."—Will Leitch, contributing editor, *New York* magazine, author *God Save The Fan* About the Author Emma Span has written about baseball for the *Village Voice*, *Slate*, the *New York Press*, and popular blogs like *Bronx Banter*, among many other publications; yet when she appeared on *Jeopardy!* in the fall of 2009, she missed an easy question about Mickey Mantle (claiming that "the buzzer timing was really tricky"). She graduated from Yale University in 2003 and now lives in Brooklyn. This is her first book.