

"Zebra"

At first, I didn't think I was going to like the story "Zebra." In fact, I thought it would be depressing. It turned out not to be depressing at all. "Zebra" is a story by Chaim Potok, and it starts with a bad accident. Still, it ends on a really hopeful note, and it made me think that even the troubles in my life would not do permanent harm.

When the story begins, Zebra is a regular, energetic kid. He loves to run and imagine things. Then one day a big car hits him. His leg and hand are hurt very badly. His spirit is really hurt too. Now he won't walk on Franklin Street anymore. He just hangs around and watches his friends. One of them calls him "a very gloomy life form." My brother was gloomy last year after his skiing accident.

Later in the story he meets a man who also had an accident. John Wilson lost an arm in Vietnam. Wilson is an artist. He starts teaching a class at Zebra's school. He finds junk in the street and turns it into art. The fact that he is missing an arm does not stop him.

He helps Zebra in many ways. He teaches him to draw and he encourages him. Zebra makes things for him. Since Wilson was a helicopter pilot during the war, Zebra makes him pictures and sculptures of helicopters. He also draws a picture of a helicopter and zebra together. Mr. Wilson really likes Zebra's work. My brother's writing teacher liked his work, too. Later, he sends Zebra a photograph. It shows John Wilson and Zebra's picture at the Vietnam Memorial.

Zebra thinks about the first time he saw John Wilson. He also thinks about all the names on the wall. Then he thinks that maybe he will try walking on Franklin Avenue again. In fact, now he wants to try a couple of things. The story was not depressing, because it ended with Zebra getting interested in things again. He also had a new friend and even a new interest, art. In fact, this story really had a happy ending, which I didn't expect. I liked it a lot.

"Zebra"

I thought "Zebra" by Chaim Potok was going to be a sad story. However, this story about a boy who is seriously injured in an accident turns out to be anything but sad. "Zebra" shows that personal struggles do not necessarily ruin your life—some become learning experiences that cause positive changes. Because this year has been hard for my family, this message meant a lot to me.

Before his accident, Zebra is full of energy and joy. "He would go running through the neighborhood for the sheer joy of feeling the wind on his face." Then a car hits him and it changes more than his body. His spirit seems hurt the most. His friend Andrea calls him "a very gloomy life form." This reminds me of my brother who was hurt in a skiing accident last winter. Even after he started recovering, he wasn't much fun.

After the accident, Zebra meets John Wilson, a man who lost an arm during the war in Vietnam. Mr. Wilson makes art from objects that he finds in the street. He tells the art class, "You-all are going to learn how to see in a new way." Through his artwork, Zebra does begin to see things in a new way. Wilson helps him focus on things outside of himself, and Zebra finds that he is good at drawing pictures. This is exactly what happened to my brother. Since he couldn't go skiing, he made new friends at school. He joined a creative writing class and learned how much he liked writing.

Later, Zebra draws a special picture for Wilson. In the fall, Wilson sends Zebra a photo in return. The photo shows Wilson at the Vietnam Memorial Wall, sharing the boy's drawing with an artist friend, Leon, who died in the war. Zebra recalls the names on that wall and decides that just maybe, he will try walking on Franklin Avenue again. "You are becoming a pleasant life form," says Andrea. That line, which ends the story, made me feel good. It reminded me that even bad times can turn into good ones sooner or later.

A Good Story

The story was sad at the beginning. I did not expect to like it. It got better as I read it. It made me think that maybe some of the problems in my life would get better too.

The story starts off with a description of the main character. His name is Zebra. He likes to run and feel the wind on his face and neck. One day he's running like this and a car hits him and hurts him. His leg and hand are hurt very badly and then he can't run. This really makes him depressed and sort of scared. He does not do much of anything any more. He just hangs out and watches people play basketball and baseball. A girl in his class named Andrea calls him gloomy. I called my brother gloomy after his accident.

One day he meets this man who wants to teach at his school. The man is named John Wilson and one of his arms is missing he lost it in the war in Vietnam. Wilson is an artist and he picks up stuff in the street and then turns it into people.

Zebra learns a lot from this man. He sees him working and happy even though he is missing an arm. Zebra also learns to draw and make things. My brother learned to write better. Wilson was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, so Zebra makes him helicopters. He also draws a picture of a helicopter and zebra together. He gives this to Mr. Wilson as a gift. He gets a picture of John Wilson and this picture. They are at the Vietnam Memorial. Wilson shares it with a friend.

This gets Zebra to thinking about all the people who had died in the war and the way the houses looked the first day he saw John Wilson. Then he decides to try walking on Franklin Avenue again. Andrea tells him that he's getting pleasant after he says that he can pick up some neat stuff on the street. You can tell that his life is better than it was at the beginning of the story. I really liked the ending. I liked the whole story.