

Like many twelve-year-old boys, Sam Davis is crazy about basketball. Watching the neighborhood boys on the court outside his window, he longs to be a part of their team. But Sam's different from the other boys: he has cerebral palsy. The only two parts of his body that work well are his right hand and his tongue. Confined to a wheelchair, Sam's never touched a basketball. He's never even been to school.

It's 1968, and only a few enlightened educators understand that a boy like Sam might have a brain that's as good as anybody else's. When Sam's mother convinces the Stirling Junior High principal to let Sam enter sixth grade, Sam finally gets his chance to move into the world beyond his window. He'll have friends and learn from schoolbooks. He might even meet the elusive Mickey Kotov, a Russian boy with a dead-eye shot, who Sam thinks could be the future of the Stirling Tomcats' basketball team.

All that Sam knows about math and reading, he's learned from Miss Perkins, the English lady who cleans the apartment and baby sits him while his mom is at work. Perkins lived through the blitz in London, and she spends hours reading to Sam about Winston Churchill. Sam knows so much about Churchill's life that Winnie—as they call him—starts talking to Sam in his head. At first, Sam doesn't understand what a boy in a wheelchair has in common with one of the world's greatest leaders, but Winnie tells him, *Don't you see Sam? I was just a boy once, too. A boy nobody believed in.*

Junior High school can be difficult, not just for boys in wheelchairs. Sam has to convince his teacher Mrs. Martin that he knows enough to stay in sixth grade. Sometimes the other students are mean. One angry mother thinks that Sam is taking too much of his teacher's time. And Sam learns that if he can't make it work at Stirling, there are places for boys like him,

When the challenges of living with cerebral palsy seem overwhelming, Winnie reminds Sam, *Keep a stiff upper lip--just as he told the English people during the darkest hours of World War II. Our future is in our hands, Winnie says. Our lives are what we choose to make of them.* And if Sam can only believe in Winnie, he will finally be part of the team—a window boy no longer.

Andrea White, author

WindowBoy

