

“Dreaming Baseball” by Gloria Zachgo

Dear Tillie,

Why? Why were you so cruel to send Harvey that bat and those baseball gloves? It was shameful. You know he can't possibly play baseball. You may as well have called him a cripple.

Yes, he loves it. He's been arguing with me ever since it came in the mail. He's defying my wishes and said he will sneak away if I don't let him try.

You have divided our family, as Jack encourages such behavior. He has accused me of being overly protective.

Of course, I am protective. The child has no sense of balance. He cannot run. He's tried. He falls. I'm tired of being the one to pick him up when that happens.

I'd finally convinced him to use his cane, but he says he won't let any of the fellows see him using “that thing.”

It's pitiful to see your child try and fail. You can't possibly understand that, since you have no children of your own.

Please cancel the plans you made for your visit next month, as we do not need you interfering in our family situation.

Your sister,

Nell

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Dear Nell,

Sister, I love you even though you point out every chance you get that I'm an old maid who will never know the joys you find in motherhood.

I also love my nephew and would never do anything to purposely hurt him. I would never call him a cripple – and you know that!

The last time I was there for a visit, Harvey told me he wanted to play baseball more than anything else in the world. We were out in the backyard, talking. He stood and pretended to be batting, and yes, he promptly fell. Then he giggled. He got up and tried that swing again. He fell again. He giggled again. He said he knows someday he will accomplish his task if he can keep trying.

Nell, how do you suppose he will overcome his afflictions if you never let him try? How will his legs ever get stronger if the child never uses them? How, if he's afraid to walk without a cane? If he's afraid to try?

Let him dream, Nell. Let him find out what his limits are. He's no longer the little baby that knocks his noggin when he falls. He sometimes even giggles.

I'll plan to see you next month. If I'm not welcome, I'll find a way to see my nephew anyway.

Tillie

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Dear Aunt Tillie,

Thank you for the baseball gloves and bat. The guys now let me play with them because their bat broke.

Mom's mad, but Dad said he thinks I'm improving every day because I'm finally playing outside and having lots of fun.

I fall down a lot, but it doesn't hurt that much anymore, and that's not why I got a black eye. I'll tell you all about it when you visit next week.

Your nephew,

Harvey
