

NEWBERY MEDAL—WINNING AUTHOR OF MANIAC MAGEE

Jerry Spinelli

LOSER



I • You Grow Up

You grow up with a kid but you never really notice him. He's just there—on the street, the playground, the neighborhood. He's part of the scenery, like the parked cars and the green plastic cans on trash day.

You pass through school—first grade, second grade—there he is, going along with you. You're not friends, you're not enemies. You just cross paths now and then. Maybe at the park playground one day you look up and there he is on the other end of the seesaw. Or it's winter and you sled to the bottom of Halftank Hill, and you're trudging back up and there he goes zipping down, his arms out like a swan diver, screaming his head off. And maybe it annoys you that he seems to be having even more fun than you, but it's a one-second thought and it's over.

You don't even know his name.

And then one day you do. You hear someone say a name, and somehow you just know that's who the name belongs to, it's that kid.

Zinkoff.

LOSER?

Just like other kids, Zinkoff rides his bike, hopes for snow days, and wants to be like his dad when he grows up. But Zinkoff also raises his hand with all the wrong answers, trips over his own feet, and falls down with laughter over a word like "Jabip."

Other kids have their own word to describe him, but Zinkoff is too busy to hear it. He doesn't know he's not like everyone else. And one winter night, Zinkoff's differences show that any name can someday become "hero."


"Here's one loser who will win plenty of hearts."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Spinelli understands some aspects of childhood better than anyone else since Beverly Cleary."

—*The Washington Post*

Joanna Cotler Books

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