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The Courage to Compete: Living with Cerebral Palsy and Following My Dreams

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Book Review
The Courage to Compete: Living with Cerebral Palsy and Following

Abbey Curran starts the book by beginning with her childhood and the difficulties she had to overcome as a girl with cerebral palsy living on a farm in rural Illinois. Abbey went to a Catholic school for elementary and middle school, but in high school, she began attending the local, public one. This caused many problems when dealing with students who did not know she had cerebral palsy. Abbey continued her story by explaining how she got into beauty pageants, and even created her own. Finally, Abbey wins Miss Iowa and tells the story of her Miss USA competition, HBO special, and her very own Miss You Can Do It pageant, the entire time explaining how her CP never held her back.

Throughout the entire book, Abbey is extremely positive, repeating that she has never and will never allow her cerebral palsy to limit her in any way. The message is strong, and through a variety of examples, she shows how she has overcome lots of obstacles that many people, including her family, thought she could never achieve. Initially, there are many unnecessary details that make the storyline drag on. In one chapter, Abbey discusses the special education room of her high school and how bad she felt for the students that had to be in that room. If Abbey does not want anyone feeling bad for her and her challenges, it is hypocritical that she felt bad for others who also had difficulties. Seeing Abbey accomplish all of her dreams and more is inspiring, however, and she should be proud of how she represents the community of girls with disabilities.