

Life

With

Stripes

Coloring Book

By: Anna Keith

Author's Note

This page is dedicated to Christina Irene, who advised this project and edited this book. Thank you, Christina, for being a part of my Gold Award project. I hope everyone enjoys my book.

Gold Award Project

For my project, I chose to write about the disorder I have. EDS is a disorder I got diagnosed with at 13. I have lived with it my whole life and wanted my project to show part of who I am.

Disclaimer

The Beighton scale discussed in the book is a great way to predict EDS, but only a doctor can diagnose you. Please do not self-diagnose. Thank you and enjoy my book.

Copyright©2022 by Anna Keith. All rights reserved



Zara the Zebra was born different from everyone she knew. Sure, she had the stripes of a zebra, but how she looked was not what made her so different.



She was always behind while all her friends went outside to play. She was always sitting on the side. Zara was too exhausted to keep up, and it became a huge struggle for her. Zara was tired all the time. She didn't want to go out and play; she just wanted to sleep all day.



She always had a lot of flexibility; her body could bend and move in ways other kids couldn't.



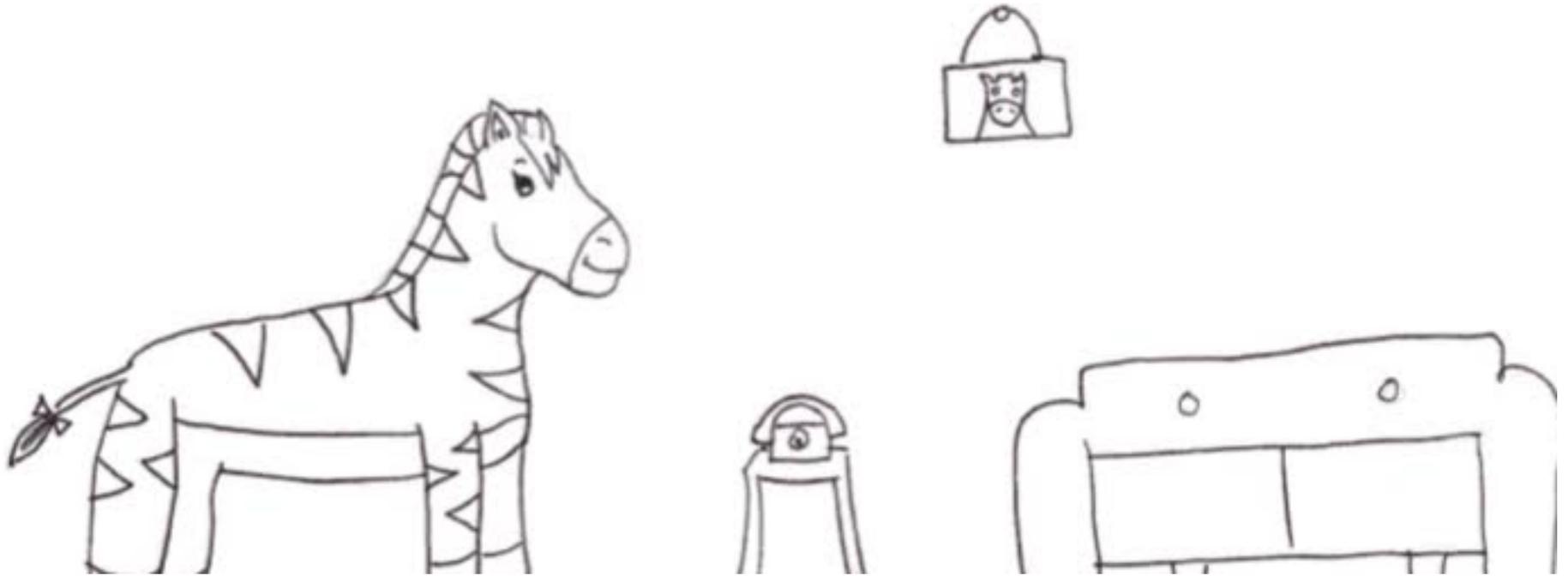
Zara's flexibility was a gift and a curse. At the same time, it allowed her to fit into small places during hide and seek. She quickly realized how painful it was. Her joints, such as her knees and elbows, were in a lot of pain. Zara had trouble standing for too long, and climbing hills was an immense challenge for her.



Kids bullied Zara for how she was, which made her sad. She just wanted to fit in. “You can’t play with us because you’re too slow,” the kids would say in a mean way. One kid was friendly to Zara, though, and her name was Ellie. She was an elephant and always invited Zara to play with her by the water while her family would drink.



Ellie never minded Zara being slow, because Ellie had to be careful too. If Ellie pushed herself too hard or she didn't stay hydrated, she would pass out. This is why they enjoyed each other's company so much, each with their limitations working together to have fun still.



On the other hand, Zara's mother was sad. Her daughter was struggling to play with the other kids and decided enough was enough. It was time to take her to the doctor. The waiting list was long considering this was a special doctor—a specialist, which is a doctor whose primary focus is on animals like Zara.



Zara walked into the waiting room covered in wallpaper. It was a pretty blue color, and there were places to sit and coloring books at a table. She was nervous because she had never been to a doctor like this before. This kind of doctor was exceptional. Her mom got her checked in, and she sat down with another kid and started coloring.

“Ellie, what are you doing here?”

“Mama takes me here sometimes,” she says. “I have to come here to get better.” Ellie has POTS, a condition where her blood doesn’t get everywhere it needs to go and often stays at her feet. It causes Ellie to get very dizzy and sometimes pass out
“Is this your first time here?” Ellie asked

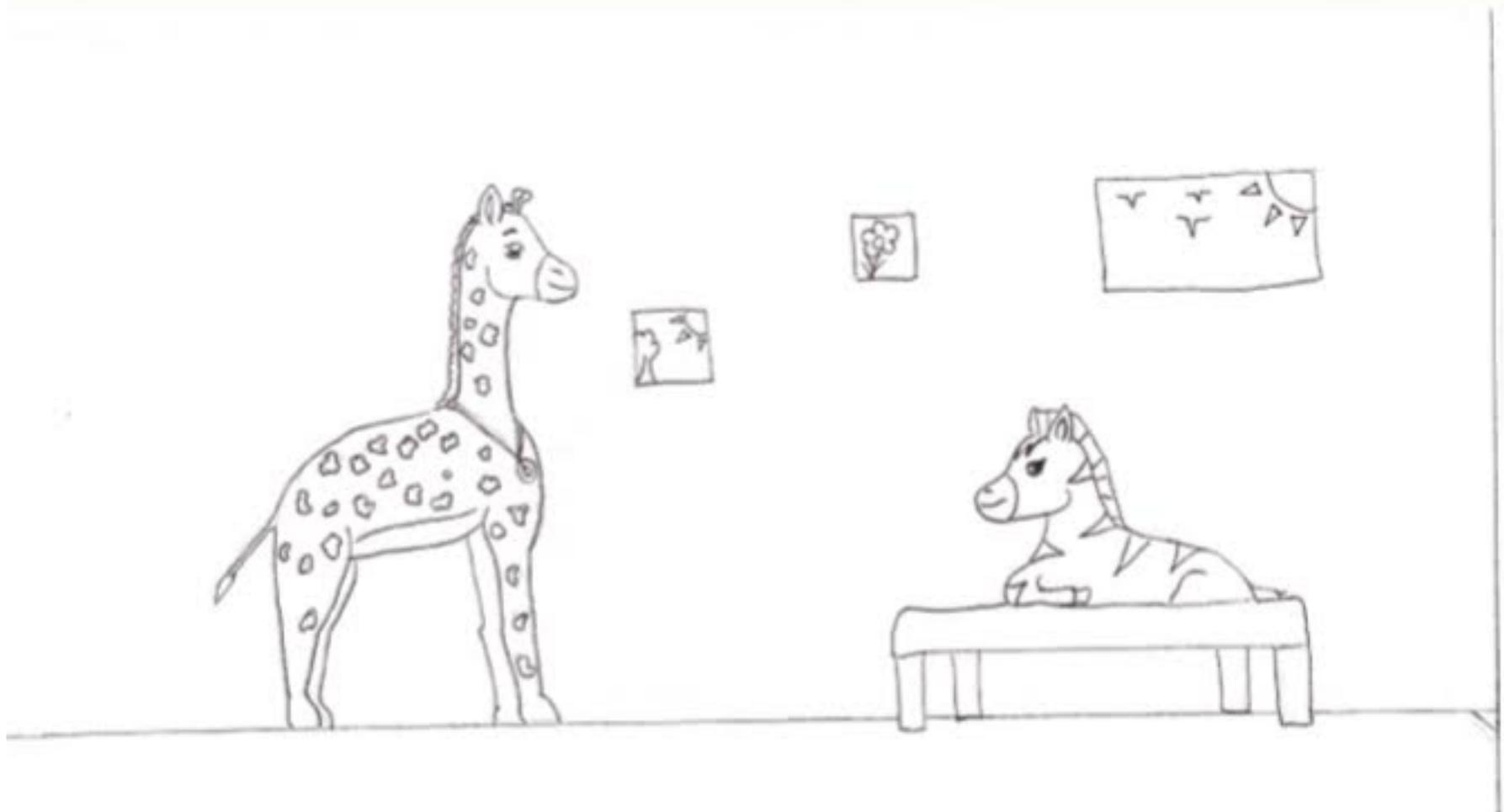
“Yes, but I’m a little scared.”

“Why is that?” Ellie asked

“What if they tell me I’ll be like this forever?” Zara said.

“Well, then that’s just one more thing that makes you different from the other kids; you have special abilities they don’t. The doctor will help you feel better. Don’t worry”

“Thanks, Ellie.”



Before long, Zara was called into the doctor's office feeling better about it after what Ellie said. The doctor sat Zara on the exam table and started to take her temperature and blood pressure. The room had drawings kids had colored in the waiting room. Dr. Giraffe asked Zara about what was going on. She explained that her joints hurt, she had a hard time playing with other kids, and she was also tired. No matter how much sleep she got, it was never enough.



The doctor looked puzzled; then, he had a thought. He decided to use the Beighton Scale to test for Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. The Beighton Scale is a test that tests how flexible each of your joints is. The test has a nine-point scale; if she has a score of 5 or above she may have it. Zara got all nine, so Dr. Giraffe diagnosed Zara with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome.

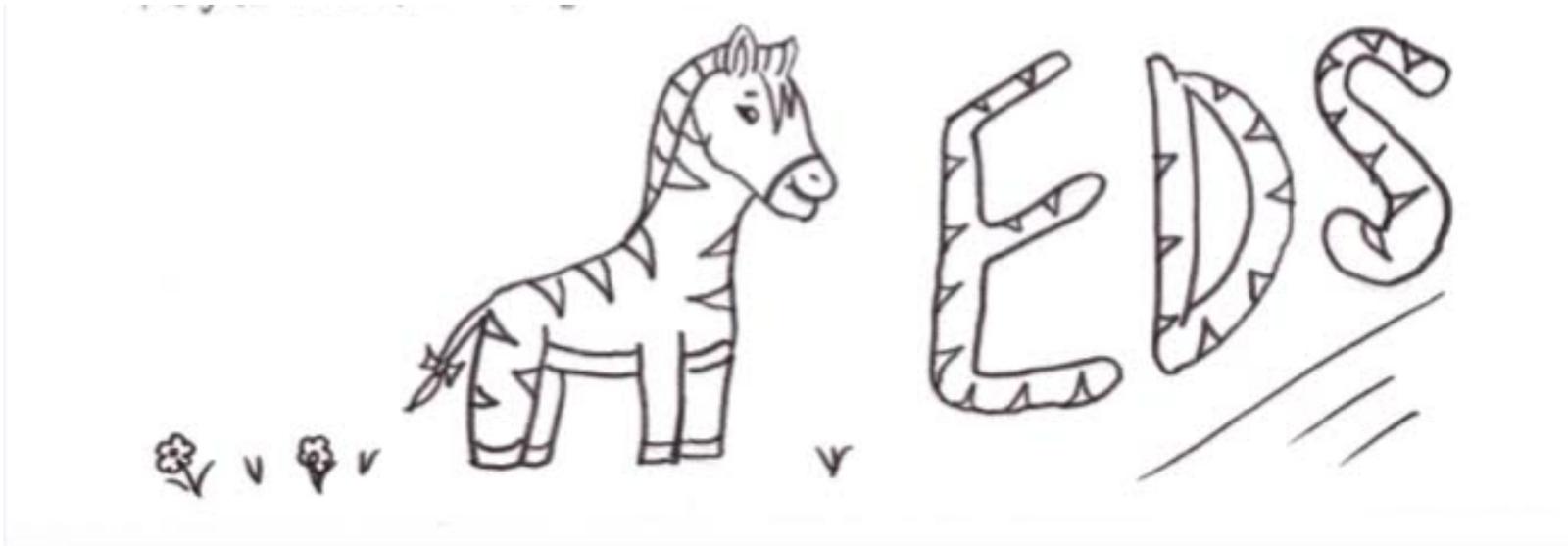
“What is Ehlers Danlos Syndrome?” Zara asked.

“Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, or EDS, is a condition where the stuff that sticks your joints together gets loose, and that can cause pain in your body so you can get injured more easily. It can also be the reason for your tiredness.” The doctor responded

“Will It ever go away?” Zara exclaimed.

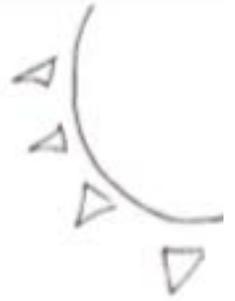
“No, unfortunately, Zara, this is a chronic disorder meaning that it is permanent, but we will help you feel better as much as we can.” The doctor tried to comfort Zara and make her feel better, but she was very sad.

“Stripes are the symbol for EDS, Zara. You may not like the diagnosis, but learning to embrace your stripes is the best thing you can do. Not every animal with EDS has physical stripes, but they all do metaphorically, almost like an invisible mark.”





Zara thought about what the doctor said. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad. The doctor gave her some medication, so maybe she can play better.



Zara's mom realized her daughter was mostly upset because she was different. So, her mom went and looked for more people like Zara. She was amazed to find a whole community of people just like Zara.



She found friends who were just like her. Zara was amazed at how well she fit in and no longer was sad about the things she couldn't do. However, she was happy about the things she could do. Ellie joined Zara and made friends with her, too. The more Zara learned about EDS, the more she felt like she belonged. Zara was proud to live her life with stripes.