

# Paper bird and gilbert's ghost train



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The two novels I'm comparing are Paper bird and Gilbert's ghost train. Paper bird is the portrayal of a struggle of a boy, Adam, through amid poverty and violence to keep some semblance of normality and love in the life of his family. Gilbert's Ghost Train is about Martin and his dying brother, Dally, having to face up to the facts of life and death and learns to accept it with the help of the mysterious Gilbert Cutler. As a first impression, it appears as if these two novels don't have similar themes but as you learn more it turns out that they do. Struggle is the theme of the stories; Adam physically struggles to support his family while Martin emotionally struggles to accept the facts of life and death. In the paper bird Adam had to overcome tremendous problems and fear that prevents him from going to his job as a newspaper seller.

His fear involves the Casspirs (South African police) and mainly the gang who threatened anybody who went to work and will harm them terribly if they do. He also encounters unlucky problems such as a bad fever. Adam's problems are physical but Martins are emotional. Martin constantly asks questions with no answers about life and death and about his dying brother. Adam and Martin are victims of struggle.

Eventually they overcome this at the end of the stories. But they did it with the help of certain individuals. In the Paper Bird, when Adam was very ill his newspaper selling colleagues, Old Hansie and Taffie, offered him a place to stay. Adam was too ill to work which means he won't be getting any money, but then Old Hansie and Taffie offered their earned money even when they too were very poor. During Adam's stay with his colleagues, Adam's

relationship with them became stronger that " They became his brothers". He also then addressed Old Hansie as Grandpa.

In Gilbert's Ghost Train, Gilbert is the person who eased Martin of his dying brother, Dally. Gilbert brings Martin as well as Dally a mysterious gift that they greatly appreciate. This gift is not physically, to Martin Gilbert brought with him an appreciation that Dally is going to a better place. Gilbert also reminds Martin to think about the good times that he was with Dally rather than his death - " When I'm up in the cabin of the old steam engine I can think of Dally in many ways. When I stand in the cemetery I only feel grief that is gone" Adam and Martin are quite similar characters.

Martin was not emotionally strong about the fact that his brother is dying. He sometimes gets mad at everything, cries, and believes that he is going mental. With things changing and nothing to do he would have a breakdown. When he learns thing from Gilbert Cutler he becomes stronger and stronger about the situation. Just like Adam, who braved the gang threats, violence, just to help his family especially the newly born twins. Adam was referred to as a man by his mother - " You are no longer a boy.

You are a monna" (' monna' means ' man' in another language)So Adam and Martin became a new person at the end of each novel. In both stories, there are two similar subjects/items that represents something special for the main characters, Adam and Martin. The two are Gilbert Cutler, in Gilbert's Ghost Train, and the paper bird, in the paper bird. Their importance is suggested by the novel titles. Gilbert Cutler's importance and what he represents is already mentioned but the paper bird has yet to be.

The paper bird is basically a sheet from a newspaper that just goes fling around by the wind. It represents something else through Adam's eyes. To Adam, it reminds him that even when everything seems bad there are a lot of good too that eventually will come if you wait long enough, which is like witnessing a paper bird fly just as long as you work at newspaper selling long enough until that event does happen. The way each book is written is different from one another. The books are written by different authors.

Paper bird was written by Maretha Maartens and Gilber's Ghost Train was written by David Metzenthien. Gilbert's Ghost Train was written in first-person view of Martin but what as strange about Paper Bird is that it was written as third-person view but felt like a first-person view of Adam, therefore making it feel awkward.