

Content Guide

8 Notes to a Nobody (Bird Face series, book one)

By Cynthia T. Toney

Themes: This story uses humor and hope to address issues of bullying, eating disorders, imperfect families, shyness, and teen suicide.

Educational Value: In addition to discussion questions in the book, a free teacher's guide is available on the author's website or by emailing the author at birdfacewendy@gmail.com. The Teacher's Guide includes activities for all major curriculum subjects common in eighth grade (the setting of the story).

Positive Messages: Seeking an understanding of the trials and challenges peers face, what might make them behave the way they do, and how to reach out in friendship. Friendship between different races/ethnicities.

Spiritual Messages: Recognizing how powerful God made each of us and striving to use our gifts from Him to improve our lives and the lives of others. Forgiving a parent and fellow classmates for past wrongs.

Positive Role Models: The main character (young teen girl) demonstrates being a loving and caring daughter, befriends an elderly female neighbor, and also demonstrates concern for fellow students who have not treated her with kindness. Another teen girl cares for her younger brother after they lost their mother

Violence/Gore: None depicted. After a teen suicide, a description of the scene is handled delicately for young or sensitive readers.

Sexuality: None. The main (female) character has a crush on a male classmate but struggles how to approach or talk to him.

Language: No bad language. The main character stops herself short of saying a word because she promised the priest at her last confession that she would not say it.

Drinking/Drugs/Smoking: None among the young characters. The main character's father is an alcoholic who does not live in the home with the main character and her mother.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

The main character, her mother, and her father are Catholic, but the mother and father are legally divorced. The father left the home and family. Both the main character and her mother struggle with this situation. While details about the divorce are not provided, the father's alcoholism and its effects on the family are gently addressed for young readers. No judgement is made in the story regarding the laws of the Church and divorce because children, pre-teens, and young teens often feel that a divorce is their fault somehow and feel shame that their parents have defied the laws of the Church. This story provides an opportunity for parents,

grandparents, and other Catholic family members to discuss divorce, annulment, and Church teachings on those in depth if age appropriate.

Rating:

Light — for readers age 12 and older

Rating Scale:

Light- For all readers.

Moderate - Story includes subject matter for teens 14 plus

Advanced - Although not graphic in description, the subject matter is recommended for teens older than 15.