

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

By Nola Smith

SUMMARY

Mistakes

We all make them - we're only human

But

Do we own them? Fix them?

OR

Bury them deep in the dark till they fester into a tangle of

Secret and lies?

Waiting ... waiting ...

Underdog teen Leroy Jones' life is a complete mess, shrouded with secrets to protect his vulnerable family. After his young step-brother is badly hurt while in his care, Leroy's life spirals out of control.

A fiery encounter at the hospital with an old lady, Betty, and an Asian boy, Aaron opens up an opportunity for Leroy to earn some badly needed cash.

When Betty reveals a shameful secret, one she's kept hidden for over sixty years, Leroy has two choices – keep it hidden or act to make it right.

What should he do? He seriously has enough on his plate but Betty was so young when she made her mistake. Was she even to blame?

But, then again, how can Leroy possibly be Betty's saviour when he can't even save himself?

Enough Is Enough is a book about unlikely friendships and finding the courage to trust others with your secrets no matter how bad they are.

USE IN THE CURRICULUM

Suitable for use in Year 7, 8 & 9 English classrooms – teachers should be aware that the book deals with forced adoptions that occurred in Australia during the 1940s up to the 1980s and also touches on domestic violence.

It addresses the general capabilities of Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, and Intercultural Understanding.

THEMES

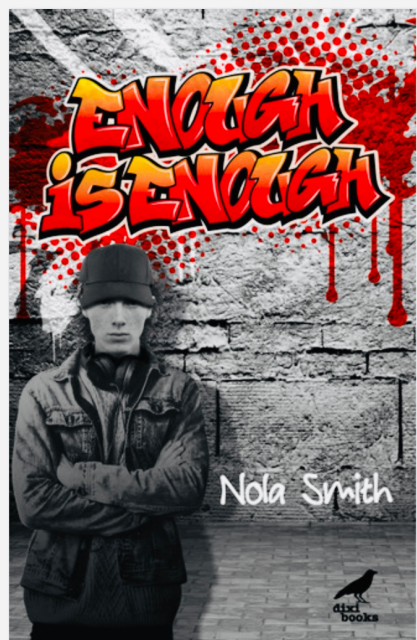
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|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| * friendship | * trust | * forced adoption | * guilt |
| * domestic violence | * family expectations | * single-parent families | * love interest |
| * dares and one-upmanship | * courage | * changing values | * identity |

BEFORE READING

1. Why do you think Nola Smith chose to title this book 'Enough is Enough' after reading the blurb?
2. Are secrets bad?
3. Is there any time lying is okay?

WHILE READING

1. Leroy states in his opening line – 'Childhood is supposed to be the happiest time of your life.' Do you agree with this? Why? Why not?
2. What motivates people to hide their mistakes? Why do they do it?
3. What kind of feelings does Nola Smith's writing evoke in you? Compassion? Empathy? What techniques does she use to achieve this?



November 2021

ISBN: 978-1-913680-27-5

Recommended for 12 - 15
year olds

4. From your experience, does a person's background and family circumstance define who they are and influence the makeup of their personality?
 5. Why has the author included the comparisons of Leroy, at the end of every chapter, to someone or something else? Eg In Chapter One Leroy compares himself to a beached whale.
 6. The author uses colloquial and figurative language when Leroy speaks. Why has she done this?
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AFTER READING

CHARACTER

1. Leroy is considered untrustworthy because of how he looks. Is this fair?
 2. Describe Leroy's character. How does he develop and change from the beginning to the end of the text?
 3. Aaron is portrayed as a privileged teenager who's full of confidence. Would you like him as a friend? Why? Why not?
 4. Does Aaron change over the course of the novel? In what ways? Will his personality change?
 5. Leroy describes Betty as a 'classic old lady'. Is there really such a stereotype?
 6. How would you describe Betty? Use examples from the text to back up your opinion.
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THEMES

Trust

1. What is trust?
2. What breaks trust?
3. How does it impact people?
4. Is it possible to repair?

Guilt

Betty and Leroy both carry great guilt about their past actions.

1. Why do people feel guilty?
2. Should Leroy and Betty be feeling guilty?
3. Are **Regret** and **Guilt** the same thing? Explain your thinking.

Identity

Betty, PM, and Leroy feel like they are missing a part of themselves. They are searching for their identity.

1. What makes you, you?

2. What makes up a person's identity?

3. Many happily adopted people still feel a desperate need to know their birth parents and the circumstances of their adoption. Why is this drive so strong?

Independence

Adults have a lot of control over teenagers' lives.

1. What does it mean to be independent?

2. Is there a specific age when teenagers become independent?

3. Are teenagers today more independent than in the days when Betty was a teenager? What makes you say this?

4. Betty is determined to stay in her home. She wants her independence. Should elderly people be able to do as they wish or do family members have a right to make decisions for them?

Values

People's attitudes change over time. For example, society's acceptance of unwed women having babies and being single parents.

1. Can you think of other attitudes/values that have changed over time? Why did this happen?

Courage

1. List all the times Leroy displayed courage throughout the book. Which time was the most courageous? Why?

Relationships

1. What is sibling rivalry?

2. Why does it exist between family members?

3. How and why does Zoe's & Leroy's relationship change over the course of the book?

4. Parents' expectations of their teenage children can sometimes be difficult. How would you suggest dealing with a parental expectation of you that you don't agree with?

5. Leroy and Aaron are polar opposites, yet their initial forced friendship ends in genuine mateship. What does it mean to be friends with someone? How do you make friends with someone? Why are friendship groups such a closed shop?

RESPONDING

Betty reached out to her son, Peter Murray after she'd ignored his first attempt to make contact with her many years before.

Knowing what you do about Betty's personality, write the letter she sends to him, after Paddy dies, asking to meet.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

As a teacher, over many years, I had the privilege of working with children and families who were doing it tough. Their resilience and courage in overcoming difficult circumstances provide me with the inspiration to write stories that celebrate the underdogs of our world. I want to give them a sense of hope. My message to teenagers who are struggling to find their place in the world: *Life isn't easy or fair but you have to keep fighting and believing in yourself. Don't give up no matter what frustrations, difficulties, or prejudices you face. You have it within you to succeed, to beat the odds, just like Leroy and Betty did.*

A few years ago, I read about Hillcrest in North Fremantle and the forced adoption of babies from the 1940s up until the 1980s. I was shocked by what I read. The Parliament of Western Australia formally apologized for the **'Removal of Children from Unmarried Mothers'** in 2010 and Julia Gillard, representing the Federal Parliament, apologized in March 2013. These women deserve a voice and their stories told so that society can learn from past mistakes. As was written in the novel, Hillcrest is now an aged care residency - Regis. Betty's scenario could really have happened - the place where she was forced to relinquish her child could be the place her family chose to place her as an elderly person.

THE AUTHOR



Nola Smith is an Australian children's author of the debut YA novel, *'Enough Is Enough'*. She is a retired teacher who's relishing her newfound freedom to focus on writing truthful, authentic stories that her readers can escape into. She wants her novels to give hope and courage to anyone doing it tough because of the difficult circumstances they find themselves in.

Nola is passionate about writing, her family, spending time with friends, travelling the world, and championing the underdog.

She is currently writing another YA book called - *'Home Truths'* about an angry, grief-stricken Manhattan teenager Tessa, ripped from her privileged life to live in Australia where she confronts a down-to-earth Aussie girl, Darcy who forces her to work out what's important in her life.

Visit Nola's website to keep an eye on the progress of *'Home Truths'*, for writing hints plus great book title suggestions to get students thinking and talking.

<https://www.nolasmithauthor.com>
