



PINK SHIRT DAY
FRIDAY 16 OCT 2020

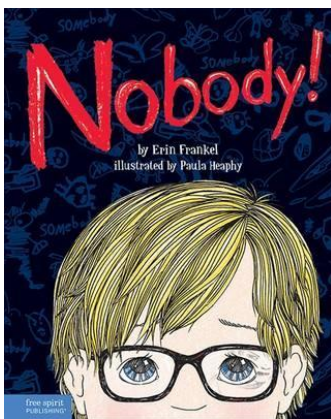
Nobody!

Erin Frankel (2015), Free Spirit Publishing, U.S.

My 10-year-old son and I read this book together and what stood out most for him was the detail in the drawings. He picked out details he could relate to, such as the contents in the bedroom of the main character, Thomas. My son said he really liked the book as “the pictures are neat and the story is good, as another kid is making Thomas feel bad and he learns to stand up for himself.”

The story takes us through the process of Thomas trying to make sense of why his classmate Kyle is being mean to him. He concludes that what makes him different also gives him strength, and he learns to verbalise what he needs from his friends to help.

The story is supplemented with further information and activities in the back, which look at language use and identifying feelings. One very useful section that can help children highlight useful strategies to apply in similar situations is a section that shows how each character felt the bullying scenario was impacting on them, and what they did to stop it. For example, one character called Patrick says “even though Thomas and I weren’t close friends, I felt bad about the way Kyle was treating him. I stood up for Thomas by not laughing when Kyle was acting mean to Thomas. When I felt safe, I told Kyle to stop.” In the story you see Kyle, the antagonist, grow in self-awareness as he reflects on his behaviour: “I got in the bad habit of saying and doing mean things to Thomas without even thinking about how it would make him feel.” The story shows how Kyle learns to socialise in a more positive manner with support from teachers.



Author Erin Frankel and her long-time friend and illustrator Paula Heaphy note they believe in the power of kindness and are grateful to be able to spread that message through their work. They also wrote the *Weird* series. I think they do a fantastic job with both their messaging and artwork that results in books that kids can relate to and find practical value in.

**Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Management Specialist,
Mental Health Foundation.**

The Mental Health Foundation's Information Service brings you reviews this Pink Shirt Day on books with bullying prevention themes.

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