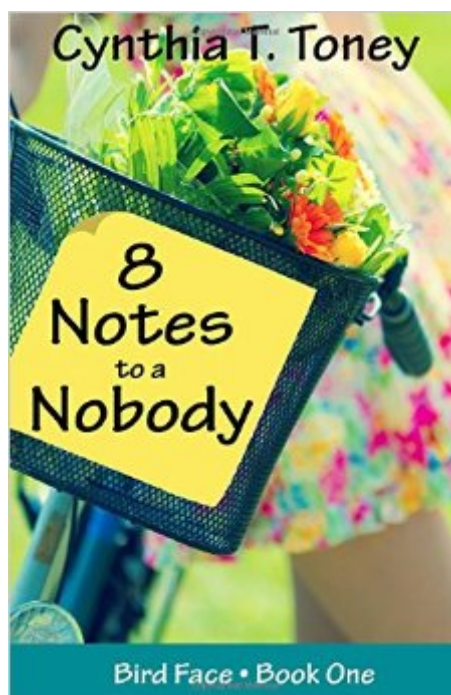


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# 8 Notes To A Nobody (The Bird Face Series) (Volume 1)



## Synopsis

"Funny how you can live your days as a clueless little kid, believing you look just fine ... until someone knocks you in the heart with it." Wendy Robichaud doesn't care one bit about being popular like good-looking classmates Tookie and the Sticks--until Brainiac bully John-Monster schemes against her, and someone leaves anonymous sticky-note messages all over school. Even the best friend she always counted on, Jennifer, is hiding something and pulling away. But the spring program, abandoned puppies, and high school track team tryouts don't leave much time to play detective. And the more Wendy discovers about the people around her, the more there is to learn. When secrets and failed dreams kick off the summer after eighth grade, who will be around to support her as high school starts in the fall?

8 Notes to a Nobody received the Catholic Writers Guild Seal of Approval. In its original edition, Bird Face, it won a 2014 Moonbeam Children's Book Award, bronze, in the category Pre-teen Fiction Mature Issues.

## Book Information

Series: The Bird Face Series

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## Customer Reviews

This is a stellar debut novel with a captivating voice by a talented writer. The main character, Wendy, is realistic and sympathetically portrayed, so much so that the book drew me in and transported me back in time to the end of eighth grade with all those up-and-down emotions, from joy to angst. The author holds nothing back in dealing with the serious problems affecting today's youth: anorexia, depression, divorce, alcoholism, and suicide, yet all are portrayed in a sensitive, caring manner, and the main character grows in wonderful and sometimes unexpected ways. Highly

recommended for ages 13 and up!

This book doesn't deal with vampires, the occult, or any of the other usual subjects. It does delve into the soul of a shy but talented eighth-grader who's trying to find her place in her family, her community and the cliques in her school. As she discovers more about who she is and how to be a friend to those around her, she sees others' vulnerabilities. Author Cynthia Toney nails the voice of the fourteen-year-old protagonist. Recommended for middle-schoolers and teens--but this book carries messages for the adult reader as well.

A lovely, engaging, and well-written story about Wendy, a shy, sensitive middle-schooler who feels inadequate in so many ways, despite her kindheartedness and talents. She experiences strongly not only the many pangs that are hers alone--her absent father, her too-large nose, and the bully who has singled her out--but also, vicariously, the pangs of her friends and schoolmates who have their own sufferings and pining for acceptance. But even with Wendy's shyness, she's a spunky girl who works hard to improve her situation, overcome her inner obstacles, and learn to accept those parts of herself that can't be changed. Only then is she able to reach out to others. Wendy is a highly likable, relatable character--not prissy, not perfect, but somebody who manages to gain some perspective on life's crosses and gains by them. I can truly see how early teens/preteens could benefit from reading this book, as it covers many realistic struggles that young people face today. Oh, and it's a fun read, too!

8 NOTES TO A NOBODY is a compelling page-turner with heart. I finished it within a few days because of the way the writing and characters drew me into the story. Wendy is a likable protagonist and becomes very "real" to readers through her individual quirks and strong narrative voice. I loved spending time with her and could relate to her lack of interest in following the "cool" crowd. Her friendship with a long-time friend brought with it a certain nostalgia, but also the bittersweet feeling that all of us feel with the passage of time. Toney's writing style is a wonderful combination of clever turn-of-phrase and unique imagery. Her metaphors truly painted a picture in my mind and often were humorous, as well. It suited the story, as the writing style paralleled the personality of the main character. While 8 NOTES is a work of contemporary realistic YA, I enjoyed the elements of mystery within, which added a sense of intrigue to the storyline. I could not wait to find out who was giving Wendy the notes, and found myself engaging in speculation as to his/her identity. While I will avoid spoiling the ending, I thought that it was a fitting resolution. I also enjoyed the sprinkling of romance

and look forward to the inevitable development of a certain relationship in the next book. However, more than anything else, what I found to be especially important about the novel was its theme of self-image. So many teenage girls and young adults are insecure about their appearance. They need to know that they are beautiful in their own way and that the popular, "cool" image of how you should look should not be used as a measure for their own appearance. This is the book for any girl who has ever felt insecure about her looks, whether to a mild degree or taken to a more extreme level. When reading, I also found myself reflecting on the idea that a "cool" girl with the perfect image according to society may, deep down, be very insecure. She reaches for what society wishes her to be, yet loses herself in the process. As a result of that insecurity, she may react in a negative way to those who reject society's norms. I don't think I have ever seen that concept played out to this extent in a novel before, and believe that Toney has hit on a truth that many teens and even adults need to remember. I look forward to the next volume in this series!

I just finished reading this book. I started it yesterday. I only meant to read the first chapter because I had things to do, but the story captivated me and before I knew it I'd finished the book! This is a well-written story with realistic characters and situations. The subject matter is relevant to the struggles teens face today. I was drawn in by the voice of the main character and the humor—I even laughed out loud. But the story also pulled at my heartstrings, and many moments rang so true they brought me back to my teenage years. The main character, almost fourteen-year-old Wendy Robichaud, has so much to offer but she just can't see it. She sees others as having what she lacks and has to remind herself, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's life!" As the story unfolds, with the help of notes from an anonymous friend, she begins to realize the truth. And the truth can be hard at times. She hadn't known the struggles other kids in school faced. I wish I'd read this book as a teen or pre-teen. It offers perspective and solutions for the struggles teens face. It's natural to be introspective in the pre-teen and teenage years, but the more we can look outside and really see others, the more we can realize we're all in this together. And everyone is carrying their own cross. Perhaps with that frame of mind, young people can see themselves and others in a new light. I am happy to have received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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