



Edie Tells a Lie

INGRID LAGUNA

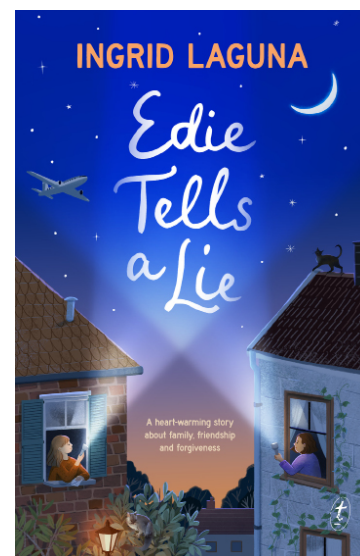
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Fiction

RECOMMENDED READING AGE: 8+

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following teaching guide has been designed to embrace shared curriculum values. Students are encouraged to communicate their understanding of a text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently, to reflect on their learning, and connect it to audience, purpose and context. They aim to encompass a range of forms and include a focus on language, literature and literacy. Where appropriate, they include the integration of ICT and life skills.



Credit: Carmen Zammit

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ingrid Laguna is an award-winning author and educator. Her books include *Songbird*, *Sunflower*, *Serenade for a Small Family*, *Bailey Finch Takes a Stand*, which was awarded best chapter book and overall primary resource winner in the 2022 Educational Publishing Awards, and *Kit and Arlo Find a Way*, which won the same award in 2023. Her writing has featured in various publications, including the *Monthly*, the *Age* and *AEU Magazine*. She regularly presents to teachers and students at schools, libraries, festivals and conferences. Find out more at <https://www.ingridlaguna.com>

SYNOPSIS

Edie Stefanski doesn't have a big family. It's just her and her mum – her dad died when Edie was five – and an uncle who lives in Scotland. Edie doesn't mind too much, until her best friend Bowie moves away. Suddenly, Edie feels lonely and lost. She's not sure who she is without Bowie.

At school, Edie meets a new girl, Aleki, and the two quickly become friends. Edie and Aleki sing together, and play Word Invention. Aleki has a big family, with lots of brothers and sisters. Edie loves hanging out with Aleki's family, but she is jealous, too. She wishes she had what Aleki has.

Edie tells Aleki that she is going to Scotland to visit her uncle. It's a lie that gets out of hand when Aleki tells Edie's entire grade five class. When Aleki finds out the truth, she doesn't want to hang out with Edie anymore. Edie is devastated, and she feels even more alone.

While flicking through one of her dad's old books, Edie finds a letter to her grandfather. The letter is written in Polish, and when Edie has it translated at the Polish market it tells a remarkable story about a woman named Simona. At first Edie thinks the story might be fiction, but when she looks up some of the details online she discovers it is true.

Edie wants to share this story and her family's connection to it with Aleki. But after Edie's lie about going to Scotland, will Aleki believe her?

Edie Tells a Lie is a heart-warming story about family, friendship, and figuring out who you are.

BEFORE READING

1. Have you ever moved to a new place, or had a friend move away? How did it feel? Did you keep in touch?



2. Look at the cover. What details do you notice? What predictions can you make about this story from its cover?
3. Find the country of Poland on a map. What countries are nearby? Do some research online. What can you learn about Poland's history, food, wildlife, language and culture?
4. Think about a lie you have told. What was it? Who did you tell it to? Why? What were the consequences?

WHILE READING

1. What does Bowie tie around Edie's wrist? Why?
2. Why do you think Edie has a stomach ache after doing her family tree project at school?
3. Why do you think Bowie hasn't called or messaged Edie back?
4. What does *agelu* mean? Why do you think Aleki's dad calls her that?
5. What does Edie find in her book *Zawisza the Wizard*?
6. What lie does Edie tell? Why do you think she does this?
7. How does Aleki find out Edie is lying?
8. Who does Edie talk to at the Polish market?
9. What does the letter Edie found say? What is strange about it? What animals are mentioned?
10. Why was Edie's grandpa, Milosc, in trouble in Poland?
11. What does Edie's mum give to her?
12. What does Edie find when she looks up images of the Bialowieza Forest online?
13. Why is Edie surprised when she finally talks to Bowie? Why didn't Bowie want to tell Edie how she was feeling?
14. What does Edie add to her family tree poster?
15. Who was Simona?

AFTER READING CHARACTER

1. Make character profiles for Edie, Bowie and Aleki. You could draw each character, and write notes about them. How are they similar? How are they different?
2. Reread the first paragraph of chapter 1. What does it tell you about Bowie's personality?
3. At the end of the story Aleki admits to being nervous when she started a new school. Look

4. back at some of the things Aleki does to hide her nervousness. Do you ever do any of these things?

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

1. *Edie Tells a Lie* includes words from languages other than English, like *tak* in Polish, *aiga* in Samoan, and *grazie* in Italian. (There is a glossary at the end of the book – can you use it to find the meanings of these words?) Why do you think the author included words from different languages? How would the story be different if these words weren't included?
2. Look at the dedication on the first page. Why do you think the author chose to dedicate this book to these people?
3. Read the description of Bialowieza Forest in chapter 9 (pp. 101 and 102). Try drawing the forest based on this paragraph. What words stand out to you? How do they help to bring the landscape to life?

THEMES

Change and grief

1. 'Calling it a goodbye concert made her uncomfortable.' (p. 6) *Edie Tells a Lie* begins with Edie's best friend moving away. Change is a natural part of life, but it can feel uncomfortable. Have you ever been through a big change? What feelings did it bring up for you? What did you do with those feelings?
2. 'When the music was lifting off and Edie joined Bowie on the chorus, Edie felt a wave of grief, a weight in her chest and a lump in her throat.' (p. 8) Grief is a feeling of sadness after having lost something or someone important to you. Which characters in this book experience grief? Who or what have they lost? Have you experienced grief?
3. 'She thought of the last message she had sent Bowie. It wasn't true that she was okay without her.' (p. 49) Why does Edie pretend to be okay when she messages Bowie? Have you ever found it hard to share your real feelings with someone?
4. 'How easily good feelings can slip away, she thought.' (p. 123) We experience lots of different feelings in life. When difficult feelings come up, how do you cope? How might the phrase 'this too shall pass' help us deal with difficult feelings?
5. 'It is hard starting at a new school' (p. 132). Aleki seems confident – 'always singing or giggling one knee or doodling while she spoke, the air humming around her' – but she tells Edie she's good at pretending to be okay. Do you ever pretend to be okay? What strategies do you use? Do any of these things actually help you to feel okay?

Family



1. 'Edie knew that people were still in your family if they weren't alive. They should still be on your family tree, obviously.' (p. 19) Edie rubs out her dad's name from her family tree poster. Why does she do this?
2. 'Two people is *not* a whole family' (p. 38). Why does Edie think this? What do you think makes a family?
3. Aleki's grandmother tells Edie that she misses *aiga*: her family in Samoa. Edie notes that 'she had a missing feeling too'. (p. 43) Who is Edie missing?
4. Edie's dad wrote in the front of her book: 'Remember your ancestors.' Why do you think this was important to him? In what ways do you remember your ancestors?
5. Edie adds Bowie to her family tree poster, and writes best friend underneath her name. Who are the people in your life that feel like family, even if they're not directly related to you?
2. Research the animals mentioned in the letter Edie finds. Draw or paint them like Edie does.
3. Wanda says in the novel, 'So many true things are strange and unlikely.' (p. 93) The story of Simona is based on a real woman. Can you think of any other true stories that are strange and unlikely?
4. Make your own family tree. Add details – flags, drawings – like Edie and Aleki do.
5. Read the afterword and use the websites listed to learn more about Simona Kossak. Present your research in an interesting format, for example: a poster, a dramatic performance, a podcast, a blog post or a song.

Identity

1. When she got dressed for school, she tied her hair back and then let it out, teasing out her fringe with her fingers. She changed from runners to boots and back. I don't know who I am, she thought.' (p. 50) Why isn't Edie sure who she is? What makes you who you are? How would you describe your identity?
2. "'Sometimes we think we need to make ourselves stand out,'" said her mum. "We think we need to be something we are not for other people to like us."' (p. 82) Have you ever felt like you had to pretend to be something you weren't to impress other people?
3. 'The tips of Edie's fingers were sore from practising the guitar, and she was proud of the way she could play.' (p. 6) Playing guitar is something that makes Edie feel proud and happy. What is something you do that makes you feel this way?
4. Sylvia tells Edie she is 'made of magic' (p. 23). What do you think she means?
5. 'Edie felt like an impostor.' (p. 41) What does the word *impostor* mean? Why do you think Edie feels this way when she goes to church with Aleki and her family? Have you ever felt like an imposter?

RESPONDING

1. Play Word Invention like Edie and Aleki do. How many words can you make up? What are their meanings?