



★ **Brave Enough**

Kati Gardner

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Davis has been through a great deal in his young life. He is a drug addict and, after being convicted of possession with intent to distribute, he has been sentenced to community service in the children's cancer ward where he was once a patient.

Cason is a ballerina. She works professionally for the Atlanta Ballet Conservatory and dreams of moving to New York. She has been dancing through the pain of what she thinks is a strained thigh, but at an important audition, a snap and searing pain tell her that the injury is far more serious.

In *Brave Enough* by Kati Gardner, Davis and Cason are brought together at an incredibly difficult time in their lives. Davis is fighting to stay sober; Cason is fighting a new and horrifying illness and is terrified that she may never dance again. Though they are virtual strangers in the beginning of the book, it is the connection and support that they find in one another and in their shared community that allow them to face the most difficult realities of their lives.

The story is heartbreaking, beautiful, and ultimately hopeful. Many of the supporting characters are young cancer patients and survivors. These characters offer insight into what it is like to live with cancer, to be objectified by it, to be labeled as victim or survivor. Throughout the book, the hope of a summer camp for kids with cancer gives them something to look forward to; only there are they allowed to just be kids.

Though the story centers on illness and addiction, the lesson that it has to teach is applicable to each and every life. It is about possessing the will and the courage to face whatever challenges life offers—to be brave enough to hope, dream, and truly live.

CATHERINE THURESON (July/August 2018)

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