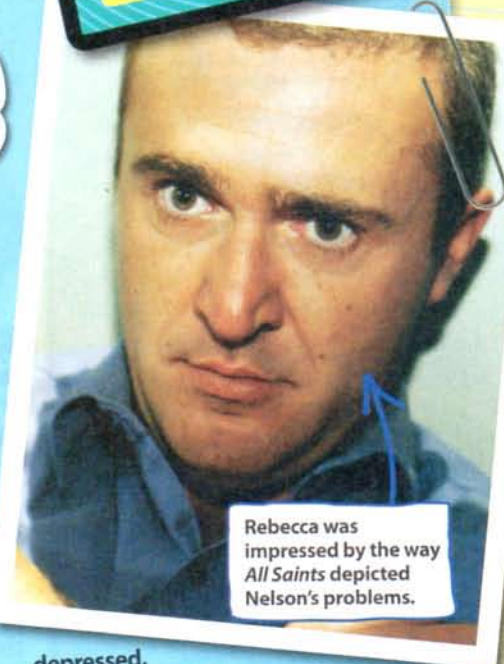


Out of the blue

MY TV DRAMA



Rebecca was impressed by the way *All Saints* depicted Nelson's problems.

Just like *All Saints*' Nelson, getting help turned this TV WEEK reader's life around

Realising he simply couldn't move on with his life following the tragic murder of his fiancée, *All Saints*' popular Nelson (Paul Tassone) made a brave decision. Struggling to cope with daily life, the nurse pleaded with colleague Frank (John Howard) to admit him to a psychiatric ward. The storyline certainly struck a chord with 20-year-old Queensland viewer Rebecca McConnachie. She explains why to TV WEEK's Jackie Brygel.

I was both saddened and pleased by the storyline in *All Saints*. I was sad to see Nelson go because he has always been my favourite character on the show.

But it was very positive – the way Nelson acknowledged that seeking help was what he really needed to do. He was willing to do whatever it took to get better, but he battled with the decision and talked to Frank about it. The way it was handled on the show was realistic.

I really believe it's about time TV shows portrayed the realities of a mental illness and the steps that are needed to get better.

Four years ago, I was admitted involuntarily to a psychiatric ward for about a week and a half, because my parents didn't know what else to do with me. They felt it was the only way for me to receive help.

At the time, I was deeply

depressed, self-injuring and contemplating ending my life. I was a teenager and didn't want to ask for help, but I was wrong.

The advice I'd give to other young people going through something similar is to get help – tell your parents. I tried to deal with it myself and you can't do that. If you're scared to tell your parents, tell a friend or someone you trust. You can also call the Kids Help Line (1800 55 1800), or speak to a school guidance counsellor.

I love both my parents very much. It was so hard for them to do what they did, but I'm lucky they cared about me enough to try everything to help me.

It's been a long struggle, but now I'm studying to be a nurse myself and also using my personal experiences to promote mental-health awareness in my small town of Ayr, North Queensland.

I recently organised my own forum called "Out Of The Shadows: Journeys Through Depression". It was such a success that we had to turn people away. Locals are saying they now have hope that things will change in our area.

It feels really good to be turning my struggles into something positive. ♦ Rebecca is donating her \$500 prize money to the Mental Illness Fellowship of North Queensland for use in the area.



Rebecca's own battle with mental-health problems has led her to study nursing...



... and she's now also working to promote awareness of the issues in her home town of Ayr.

Is your life like a TV drama? Have you been able to identify with a recent storyline on a popular show? If so, write to us and tell us about it. If we use your story in TV WEEK, you'll win \$500!