



## **Bluish**

*Virginia Hamilton*

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## **Bluish** Virginia Hamilton

In this powerful novel researched in NYC schools, Newbery Medalist Virginia Hamilton documents the struggle young people face as they simultaneously assert their independence and yearn for guidance.

Friendship isn't always easy. Natalie is different from the other girls in Dreenie's fifth-grade class. She comes to school in a wheelchair, always wearing a knitted hat. The kids call her "Bluish" because her skin is tinted blue from chemotherapy. Dreenie is fascinated by Bluish -- and a little scared of her, too. She watches Bluish and writes her observations in her journal. Slowly, the two girls become good friends. But Dreenie still struggles with with Bluish's illness. Bluish is weak and frail, but she also wants to be independent and respected. How do you act around a girl like that?

## **Bluish Details**

Date : Published June 1st 2002 by Blue Sky Press (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780439367868

Author : Virginia Hamilton

Format : Paperback 128 pages

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## From Reader Review Bluish for online ebook

### Tiffany says

This is the story of overcoming differences and true friendship. The main character, Dreenie, is drawn to Natalie (aka. Bluish). At first it is because she gets to bring a puppy to school. Then Dreenie begins to keep a secret journal completely about her interactions with Bluish. It is heart warming to how Dreenie goes from simply being fascinated with Bluish to developing a deep friendship. Dreenie even promote change in her classmates feelings and ideas about Bluish. They all begin to see Bluish as a person and not the blue looking girl in the wheel chair. At the end Dreenie does the most selfless thing by giving Bluish her journal. I really like this book. It made me sad at times to think about a young child having to deal with leukemia while trying to have a normal life. Dreenie and Natalie are both strong girls and very much alike. It's easy for me to see how such a strong friendship developed.

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### Badiss says

This book is about a young girl named Natalie who can't walk, she uses a wheelchair to do her walking. Natalie is in fifth grade. She comes to school in a wheelchair, wearing s knitted hat, and is the only one allowed to bring her puppy to school. Everyone in her class calls Natalie "bluish" because of her pale skin and tinted blue. Dreenie a girl Natalie's school is fascinated by Bluish, and a little scared of her as well. Dreenie always watches bluish draw in her little notepad. As times progress's the two girls become friends. Dreenie still struggles with bluish's illness. Bluish is weak and frail but also wants to be independent and respected.

I wouldnt really recommend this book to anyone, i didnt like it as much. It was kind of boring in my opinion.

if i were to rate this book out of ten, i would give it a four, i didnt really find anything special about it.

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### Jess says

Eh. Hamilton jumps around with narration and plot. She left out details and repeated other ones. Every now and again there's a snippet of something interesting only to never heard anything about it again. I'd say the book needed to be longer, fleshed out as they say, but I was bored at the current length.

Tuli was annoying and compliment needy. Natalie (Bluish--a horrible nickname) mostly gets facial expressions as personality, and, you know, I'm done being hard on things today.

Not my jam.

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### Jill says

Bluish is a girl who is recovering from leukemia. She is so pale that she looks almost blue. Dreenie is fascinated and pulled to her. She and her friend Tuli slowly befriend this new girl who seems so strange. The growing relationships among the three girls are touchingly detailed as they develop a new and rewarding

closeness.

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### **Aleksandra says**

Dreenie is a new kid in school, starting fifth grade. She is lonely until she meets a new friend Tuli. She is also curious about another girl in class, Natalie, who is in a wheelchair. Natalie always wears a knitted hat and her skin has a blue tint. Dreenie starts keeping a secret journal about her interactions with the girl. She finds out that Natalie has leukemia. Natalie is frail, but she desires to be independent. Dreenie and Tuli befriend Natalie while working on a project together. The story portrays the growing friendship of these three girls who come from different backgrounds. At one point, Natalie knits matching hats for the whole class. They all begin to see her as a person and not the blue looking girl in the wheel chair. Dreenie gives her journal as a gift to Natalie. In the end, we do not know whether Natalie will conquer her illness, but we are left with an impression that the friendships between the girls had a healing effect on all.

This book belongs in contemporary realistic fiction because it deals with real issues relevant to our time and society we live in: cancer, acceptance of differences, overcoming loneliness etc. It realistically portrays modern school atmosphere and peer interactions.

Lexile level for this book is 460 and grade level equivalent is 5.5. I would recommend it for grades 4-5. Concepts that can be taught are character development (evolution of relationships between the girls), character analysis (compare and contrast the three friends), narrative structure (journal entries are interwoven with the narrative), writing process and techniques (journal writing). Students can write their own journals observing someone from their environment (and even give it as a gift to that person, like Dreenie does.) The themes that the book explores are friendship, illness, acceptance, multiculturalism. Students can discuss bullying and discrimination (friends call Natalie Blewish to denote her African American and Jewish descent). They can also reflect on the way Dreenie's understanding of Natalie's circumstances changes. At first, she thinks Natalie is a lucky girl because she gets to bring her puppy to school, but then she finds out she is not that lucky because she is ill. Students can discuss how we can have wrong impressions about people based on the way they look.

It would be helpful for students to create graphic organizers and map out main events and characters. The narrative might be difficult for some because of the switch in perspective from 1st person narrative (Dreenie's journal entries) to Hamilton's omniscient 3rd person narrator. Students can study the two types of narration and the pros and cons of using each in their writing.

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### **Anne says**

This is a nice read alike for *Wonder*, *Fish in a Tree*, and other books about differences and special needs.

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### **Karen says**

Delightful and educational. This would be a great read aloud book for elementary children but an enlightening read for all ages. I am a retired school teacher and now I fill in all the books I did not have time to read. Try children's books because they will capture your attention.

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### **Annette says**

I was surprised at what an impact this short little book could have. It's amazing how fleshed out the characters are too. I loved reading about these four girls and how they develop a friendship in spite of their differences. I think Tuli is my favorite, she's so unpredictable and funny. The interactions between the characters, especially the dialogue, was very believable. I liked the message of don't be afraid of those who are different and also, how one person's kindness can influence the whole class. I guess my only complaint is that it's too short. Hamilton could've easily made it twice as long without losing her audience. I give it 3.5 stars.

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### **Brooke says**

I recently found a review of this book that I had written in third or fourth grade. Up until then, I had no idea I had read the book. It's easy to forget if you're not keeping track of them, and I was a vivacious reader back then, as I am now. Unfortunately, the review was more of a summary. It had no rating of the book. I'm rating it 3.5 stars because that's about average, and I wouldn't want to give the book a false rating.

Here's the review (no edits):

I read a book called "Bluish." by Virginia Hamilton. It is a novel. This book is about a girl named Dreenie, and she is trying to become friends with Bluish. Bluish is really sick. Bluish has Leukemia, which is a kind of cancer. This makes it hard for Dreenie to become friends with her. But in the end, Dreenie and Natalie (Bluish's real name,) become GFFs, or Good Friends Forever.

End Review.

I don't know if I invented Good Friends Forever or if that's actually in the book--it sounds like the sort of thing I would've made up. :)

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### **Adam James says**

There simply aren't enough children's novels that revolve around a diverse cast of characters. I'm not placing blame on this issue, but books like *Bluish* need to be placed in the hands of more children in more classrooms. Much like Jacqueline Woodson, Virginia Hamilton (*Cousins*) embraces racial discussions even in novels where race isn't even a running theme. Hamilton is able to casually write about race in the innocent way that children generally approach it.

In terms of the actual plot, I would've liked to be able to chew on a little more than 127 pages, but Hamilton knows what she's doing. As a challenging book for 5th grade/6th grade students, Hamilton keeps the pages short so as not to overwhelm young readers.

I'll be handing *Bluish* to students who need something quick, but challenging.

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### **Allison says**

I found this book a little difficult to follow because the timeline skips around a bit and the kids have nicknames and there's a lot going on around the periphery of the story. I feel like it would have helped if there'd been a short prologue introducing us to the characters, setting and some of the story.

It's a great, but very incomplete, peek into the life of a few girls in 5th grade. A couple of them are sisters who are new transfers into the school mid-year, one who is a friend of theirs and another who is a classmate who is very different from them and that the speaker wants to know more about and hopefully befriend.

The story does a good job of showing some of the stress that children face today on many levels. It also does a good job of showing how the positive outreaching actions of one child in a classroom towards someone different can transform the entire classroom's attitude. And, it also pointed out how the behavior of the "outcast" child can help the transformation.

I'm curious to see how my 6th Grader likes this book and what sorts of discussions and activities they engage in with it.

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### **Timothy McNeil says**

Hamilton chooses an oddly affected style of writing, one that leaves the first quarter of the book as (almost) a cipher. Eventually she moves into telling the story she has set to tell, and bits of personality occasional narrator Dreenie established early on come into play and help establish some degree of emotional depth. I'm curious if the target audience would find the early chapters as frustrating or if that is a more effective means of writing for and to them. The finished product is admirable and covers a lot of ground in limited text.

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### **Cornupyn says**

What I thought of this book called Bluish by Virginia Hamilton, is that it was quite good, but I found it hard to follow due to random journal entries, but overall I would give it 4 stars.

In this book Dreenie becomes friends With Tuli (In the journal entries she calls here Tulifoolie). Then they both are chosen into a project with Bluish (The one with ALL cancer she is keeping the journal about). The project helps them become better friends, while they become real friends when Bluish (Her real name is Neatille) make Dreenie and Tuli hats, then she makes hats for the whole class. But will Dreenie's wish come true? To get a puppy like Bluish has for christmas? You'll never know until you read the book.

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### **Josiah says**

I would actually give this book three and a half stars. Virginia Hamilton, in this very short novel, creates an amazingly complex world (including uncommonly textrous histories for each character, especially for a book of this brevity,) and lets the reader get to know them well enough to deeply feel of their heartache, loneliness, illness, and happiness, too. While dealing with the sober concept of cancer, the book touches lightly, eliciting emotional response while never seeming overly somber or dark. This is the best Virginia Hamilton book I have read, and that is saying quite a bit when it comes to this nearly-legendary writer.

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### **Deja says**

This one of my favorite books because this book is baisclly about friendship and how her and her friends are

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like the girl bluish is called bluish because she has cancer and you can see her skull and her classmates call her that and her mother dont like them calling her that because her mother think they are trying to be mean.And at the end of the book her and her friends wear matching hats (shown on the cover of the book).

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