

Touch Blue

Cynthia Lord

Reviewed by: Annie, 24

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Touch Blue is the story of a small east coast island city that opens its arms to foster children in order to keep school attendance high enough not to shut down. Tess is excited to show her teenage foster brother, Aaron, all of the cool things her town has to offer. But when he gets dropped off she is disappointed to find him disinterested, quiet, and reclusive. Tess finds out, after accidentally opening up her parents mail, that Aaron was placed in foster care when his mother's alcoholism eclipsed her parenting and has been passed from foster home to foster home over the years. Through hatching a plan to create an opportunity for Aaron to see his mother, Tess forms a bond with her foster brother, teaching him that her family cares for him.

This story will take you on a journey to belonging as both Tess and Aaron find what they need to feel like they are where they belong. At first Tess believes her life and happiness hinges on her island life, and that if the school shuts down she will be miserable when they move away. Through helping Aaron to feel welcomed into her family after he has been uprooted from home after home, Tess finds that it is not in the place that she needs to belong, but with caring people.

Young readers will catch a glimpse of the foster care system through Aaron's experience as well as show them some of the ins and outs of lobster fishing. This novel balances emotion, excitement, humor, and suspense, making it a breeze to read and enjoy. I recommend this book for kids who might know someone in a foster family or who might be moving and can relate to Aaron or Tess. I also recommend this book to anyone who likes learning about different lifestyles, because the island lifestyle Tess has is definitely unique.

Similar book recommendation: *Ice Dogs* by Terry Lynn Johnson