



2010

Touch Blue

Debbie Barr

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Lord, Cynthia. *Touch Blue*. Scholastic, 2010. ISBN 9780545035316. \$16.99. 186 p.

Reviewer: Debbie Barr

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fiction; Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Foster home care--Juvenile fiction; Luck--Juvenile fiction; Islands--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Eleven-year-old Tess lives on an island off of Maine, where her father makes a living fishing for lobsters. When the state threatens to shut down the local school due to too few students, the islanders take in foster kids to boost their student numbers. Among these is Aaron, thirteen and jaded, who lives with Tess's family. At first his relationship with the island and its inhabitants is rocky, but with the help of his musical talent and a little conniving from Tess, he is able to open up through performance. Tess schemes up a plan to get Aaron's mother to come to one of the performances in secret, hoping that seeing her will make Aaron want to stay. Aaron realizes that his mom can't take care of him and decides to stay on the island while still maintaining a relationship with his mother.

This charming novel, from a Newbery Honor author, comes to life through an earnest and quirky narrator. Deeply concerned with having good luck, Tess is always wishing on things or quoting sayings in order to give her plans the best chance of working out. Along with luck are themes of family, friendship, and understanding one's self even in the face of change. Lovely writing and a beautiful setting make this a thoughtful yet fun read for middle grade readers, especially ones with new foster or adopted siblings.

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