



Bella & Blue

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ABOUT THE BOOK:

Eight year old Bella has anxiety. Small things aren't too small for Bella. But with the help of her colorful dog, Blue, and her grandma, Gigi, who has a flair for all things French and over the top hats, Bella can handle everyday's twists and turns. Blue is the companion children dream of having. He's the therapy dog that plays paddy-cake to calm Bella's nerves and take away her blues.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR:

Berrie has been passionate about children's literature since she was a little girl, and has fed her desire by becoming a children's librarian and by pursuing a career as an illustrator and writer of children's books. Berrie's professional experience includes illustrating books for various businesses and academic institutions. Berrie is the Illustrator Coordinator for the Eastern PA SCBWI. Berrie is an active contributor to the Eastern PA SCBWI blog. Bella & Blue is Berrie's debut children's book.



PRE-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Observe the illustration on the front cover.

Look at the front cover, what do you notice? Who do you predict is Bella? Who do you predict is Blue? This book type is called a graphic novel, have you ever read a graphic novel before? What do you know about graphic novels?

Read the back cover.

What predictions do you have after reading the back cover? What decision do you think the main characters are going to make? What are some problems Bella might face in this book?

READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What if there is thunder and lightning? The weatherman said it's just a little rain shower.

- Authors and illustrators sometimes use weather as a symbol for feelings. How do the author and illustrator use weather to portray emotions at the beginning of the story?
- Bella and Gigi are very different. Think about how you would compare these two characters. How are they alike or different? Why do you think that Bella and Gigi are so different from each other? How might their experiences in life impacted them?
- What made Bella's dad change his mind about letting Bella keep Blue? Do you think Blue will be helpful for Bella?

What happened to third? Why are there so many rules? I don't think I'm doing anything right!

- What does it mean when someone uses the phrase "comfort-zone"? What does it mean to be stuck in your "comfort-zone"?
- Have you ever been afraid to try something new? What was holding you back from that moment?
- Blue is always there for Bella no matter what; do you have a pet, friend or family member who supports you like that?

You get the prize for being the best dog ever!



I think Blue would be good for Bella. I think you may be right.

- What does Blue do for Bella? Do you have anyone in your life who supports you through challenge?
- The illustrator of this story sometimes uses pictures instead of words to give us ideas of what's happening in this story. Can you find an example of when the illustrator did that? Why do you think they might choose to draw pictures in some moments rather than write words?
- How does Bella feel at her ballet class? Why does she feel this way?
- Bella was nervous about entering Blue into the costume contest. What was she so nervous about? Have you ever felt this way about something?

What if everyone laughs? I guess laughing isn't such a bad thing.

- This book has multiple story-lines. What are some story lines that you noticed in this book? What was your favorite story line and why?
- In this story, Gigi is such a positive influence in Bella's life; what are some things that Gigi does to push Bella outside her comfort-zone. Think of a friend or family member you would like to support. What are some things you can do to show support to a loved one?
- Blue also provides a lot of support to Bella, have you ever heard of a service pet or animal? What do you know about them? How does Blue provide service for Bella?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- Some characteristics of graphic novels are- using images to tell the story and heavy use of dialogue bubbles. Use the space below to create your own graphic novel!
- In this story, Bella relies on both Gigi and Blue to help her push outside her comfort zone. Think about a time you needed help pushing outside of your comfort zone, use this as a story line in your graphic reader.



Draw your Graphic Story



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