

New York Times bestselling author

AMY HARMON

A

DIFFERENT

Blue

a novel

A DIFFERENT BLUE

Blue Echohawk doesn't know who she is. She doesn't know her real name or when she was born. Abandoned at two and raised by a drifter, she didn't attend school until she was ten years old. At nineteen, when most kids her age are attending college or moving on with life, she is just a senior in high school. With no mother, no father, no faith, and no future, Blue Echohawk is a difficult student, to say the least. Tough, hard and overtly sexy, she is the complete opposite of the young British teacher who decides he is up for the challenge, and takes the troublemaker under his wing.

This is the story of a nobody who becomes somebody. It is the story of an unlikely friendship, where hope fosters healing and redemption becomes love. But falling in love can be hard when you don't know who you are. Falling in love with someone who knows exactly who they are and exactly why they can't love you back might be impossible.



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Genre: Contemporary Romance, Inspirational, Coming of Age
Recommended for ages: +16



ATTENTION
**THIS DOCUMENT INCLUDES SPECIFICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO AVOID
UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE BOOK.**

CHARACTERS

The love story is centered around Blue Echohawk and Darcy Wilson. Do you consider them the only main characters in this novel or do you think there are others who play a pivotal and influential role? If so, who and why?

Do you think the characters were realistically portrayed? Describe these character's personalities, motivations, inner qualities.

How does the way the characters see themselves, differ from how others see them? How do you see the various characters?

What did you think about their attraction to each other? What drew them in? What did you think of their relationship?

What is motivating the actions of the characters in the story? What do the sub-characters want from the main characters and what do the main characters want with them?

Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices of any of the characters? What would you have done differently?

What past influences are shaping the actions of the characters in the story?

Who did you like best? And who do you like the least? Why?

Did any of the characters remind you of yourself or someone you know? How?

What were the dynamics of "power" between the characters? How did that play a factor in their interactions?

Do the main characters change by the end of this novel? Do they grow or mature? What events trigger such changes?

What do you think will happen next to the main characters?

THEMES, DEFINITIONS & SYMBOLISM

Redemption

noun

the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil

In theology, redemption is forgiveness or absolution for past sins or errors and protection from damnation and disgrace, eternal or temporary, generally through sacrifice.

“Some birds are not meant to be caged, that's all. Their feathers are too bright, their songs too sweet and wild. So you let them go, or when you open the cage to feed them they somehow fly out past you. And the part of you that knows it was wrong to imprison them in the first place rejoices, but still, the place where you live is that much more drab and empty for their departure.” ~ Stephen King

“I wrapped my head in my arms, and let the torrent consume me. I had never let myself cry like this. I had feared that if I opened the floodgates I would drown. But as the waves crashed over me, I was not consumed, I was swept up, washed, my soul blanketed with blessed relief. Hope rose within me like a buoy. And with hope, came peace. And the peace calmed the waters and quieted the storm, until I sat, spent, bled out, done.”

Do you recognize this part? Was this Blue's turning point? Or was it a combination of things?

Revelation

noun

the divine or supernatural disclosure to humans of something relating to human existence

“It’s all about perspective. I don’t know what all of you see when you look at this [sculpture]. I can’t control what you see or how you interpret what you see any more than I can control what you think of me.”

Blue uses her art to tell a story. About things she sees, things she feels, things that inspire her. Things about herself. How do you feel about Blue’s revelation? Could you find yourself in Blue’s interpretations?

QUOTES

“I keep wishing you had had a better life . . . a different life. But a different life would have made you a different Blue. And that would be the biggest tragedy of all.”

This is one of the most highlighted quotes from the novel. What are your thoughts about it? Do you have any favorite quotes or passages in the novel that you enjoyed or found insightful?

Discuss the following quotes.

“What we believe affects our choices, our actions, and subsequently, our lives.”

“Sometimes the things we want to be rescued from can save us.”

“But there's no way to avoid regret. Don't let anybody tell you different. Regret is just life's aftertaste. No matter what you choose, you're gonna wonder if you shoulda done things different. I didn't necessarily choose wrong. I just chose. And I lived with my choice, aftertaste and all.”

“You can't control who loves you . . . you can't let someone love you anymore than you can make someone love you”

Were there any particular quotes that stood out to you? Which ones and why?

STRUCTURE, WRITING & GENERAL DISCUSSION

What did you think of the overall structure of the novel? Were you engaged immediately?

What did you think about the time-line and point of view?

How did you feel reading it? Which emotions conveyed the story? Did the story keep you interested?

Would you say this is a plot-driven book or does the story unfold slowly with a focus on character development? Were you surprised by the plot? Or did you find it predictable?

How credible did the author make the setting and dialogue?

What scene did you find was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

Wilson's words to Blue right before her big night are so harsh and perfectly awful to shatter her. Should she have forgiven him as quickly as she did? Why would fear lead someone to hurt the one they love most?

And how did this show Wilson's insecurity and his youth? He comes off as such an old soul for most of the book, yet he becomes a typical young man (22) at this point who is completely clueless at how to express his real feelings.

What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way?

Did certain parts of the novel make you uncomfortable? Were there any scenes that made you laugh?

What is the significance of the title? Did you recognize it in the book? Would you have given the book a different title? If yes, what is your title?

What surprised you the most about the book?

How important is the setting & time period to the story? How would it have played out differently in a different setting? What about a different time period?

Based on the prologue, did you expect the ending or were you surprised?

Did you think the ending was appropriate? How would you have liked to have seen the ending go?

Have any of YOUR views or thoughts changed after reading this book?

What do you think about the cover of this book? Would you change it? How?

Has this book changed you, broadened your perspective?

What did you learn from, take away from, or get out of this book?

Did your opinion of the book change as you read it? How?

FUN EXTRAS

The song for the book is "[Be Still](#)" by The Killers. As well as "[Make You Feel My Love](#)" which has been sung by Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Adele etc . . . and Ed Sheeran's "[Kiss Me](#)".

All these songs, and others, can be found on the [A Different Blue playlist on YouTube](#).

Interview with Amy Harmon

Where did you get the idea for A Different Blue?

Amy: In my first novel, [Running Barefoot](#), the character Josie has a lot of me in her. So I really wanted to write a book about a girl who is very different from me. But, as the book progressed, I discovered we weren't so different after all. I came to understand Blue on a very deep and personal level. I think we all know someone like Blue. I think we all have a little of Blue in us. I know I do. Blue is not me in the sense that I never lived her story, but I think every woman will be able to relate with her. There are some issues that are unique to being female, and you ladies will cry at certain scenes, I promise. Not because the scenes are sappy, but because every girl has struggled with similar issues.

What were the challenges in writing a story with a Native American character?

Amy: The leading man in my book *Running Barefoot* is half Navajo. That book has a very strong Native influence – it's pivotal to the story.

When I started writing *A Different Blue*, I didn't know Blue's last name was going to be Echohawk. I started writing that first chapter where she walks into Wilson's class, and her name just came into my head.

I resisted it, simply because I thought "I already did that!" but I went with it because it felt right. There is a lot of research that needed to be done, but I'd done so much for *Running Barefoot*, that I felt comfortable making the Native American element one of the many layers in *A Different Blue*. I have Native friends, and I've seen firsthand the struggle it is for them to retain their heritage and yet be assimilated Americans too.

I also had a reader tell me that she was amazed by the similarity some of the Aboriginal stories had to the stories in *Running Barefoot*. That was a revelation to me. We are all connected through our myths and legends, through the stories we pass on to our children. I find that very beautiful.

Was there a specific reason Wilson was British?

Amy: When I started *A Different Blue* Wilson wasn't British. And he just wasn't coming across the way I wanted him to. I thought about it for a while. I decided that Blue needed someone who was completely novel and different from her. Otherwise, how would he get her attention? His being

British really helped to set him apart from every guy Blue had ever known. And I admit, I just really, really have a thing for British men. Hugh Grant is still one of my favorite actors. He has such appeal . . . such a whimsical, sweet, intelligent appeal. I wanted Wilson to have that same appeal. But it was scary trying to get him right. I didn't want my British readers to scoff or roll their eyes. He needed to be absolutely authentic. I spent hours and hours researching British slang, watching British sitcoms, etc. I even had a British blogger named Tiffa Snook (recognize the name?) helping me get it right. I'm so glad he was spot on!!

If you were to cast a movie for the book, who would you pick to play who?

Amy: I like Henry Cavill. Who am I kidding? I love Henry Cavill. He has the curly dark hair and light eyes for Wilson. I also think James McAvoy might make a good Wilson. He has that intelligent intensity that I like. Blue is much harder for me to cast. Someone with a Megan Fox look, maybe. The dark hair and light eyes but with a smokier coloring. I tend to be harder on the females in movies, maybe because I am one, and we females relate so strongly with the female characters. I don't know who could play Blue. Maybe an unknown actress would be best, because I honestly can't think of anyone who could play her . . . Do I sound like a mother who thinks no one is good enough for my daughter?

What is the inspiration behind Blue's character? And Wilson's?

Amy: I've had a lot of people ask if Blue is based off of someone I know. She's not. I honestly don't know where my characters come from. I guess, in some ways, they are different versions of me, because I create them. Blue is unlike anyone I know, yet as I wrote about her I was able to relate with her. I think most women will be able to relate to Blue on some level. And Wilson? Wilson is my dream man. Loves music, loves words and history, and speaks with an English accent. *smile* And I really needed Wilson to be unlike any other boy/man Blue has ever known. It was his individuality, his specialness, that demanded her attention and helped her want to change.

How did you come up with the title? Did you ever change your title?

Amy: I always come up with my own titles. Often a line from the book will stand out to me, almost like the book names itself. Usually it's a phrase or a response that rings especially true. My first novel, *Running Barefoot*, was named after a metaphor I used in the opening chapter. This book, *A Different Blue*, was named early on as well.

