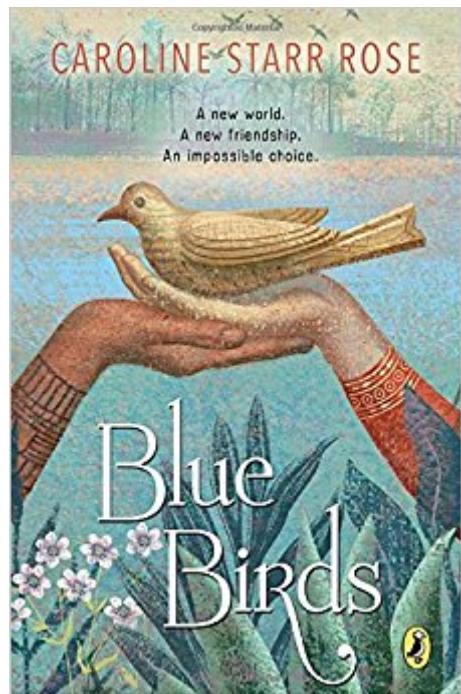


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## Blue Birds



## Synopsis

Author of the critically acclaimed *May B.* returns with a stirring novel in verse. Alis and her parents make the long journey from England to settle the New World. But it doesn't go as planned and Alis, her parents, and the others of their small community soon find themselves at odds with the Roanoke tribe. As tensions rise between the settlers and the Native peoples, twelve-year-old Alis forms an impossible friendship with a Roanoke named Kimi. Despite language barriers, the two become as close as sisters, risking their lives for one another until Alis makes a decision that will change her life forever.

“An excellent historical offering and belongs on public and school library shelves.” VOYA “With two compelling main characters and an abundance of rich historical detail, Rose’s latest novel offers much to discuss and much to appreciate.” School Library Journal

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0700 (What's this?)

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (January 5, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0147511879

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 28 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #111,584 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #85 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Native North & South Americans #376 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Stories In Verse #877 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7 •Like Rose's debut novel, *May B.* (Random, 2012), *Blue Birds* is historical fiction told in free verse. Set in the late 1580s, the story centers on two young girls who forge an unlikely bond, one which defies the conventions of their respective communities and threatens to shatter an already fragile détente. Alis is a colonist who's just arrived on the island of Roanoke

with her family and a small band of English men and women intent on settling the New World. Kimi is a young Roanoke girl who watches the arrival of the white folk with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation. Over time, even as tensions mount and violence erupts between the two peoples, the young women find each other amid the confusion, hatred, and ignorance—communicating through gestures and simple words. Told in alternating voices, rendered in distinct font styles for each girl, the verses allow readers to see their relationship evolve from one of tentative friendship to a deep bond of sisterhood. As the girls become closer, their poems occasionally share a page, the short stanzas working together as meaning and understanding is reached. Rose's writing is accessible and filled with rich details describing the setting: the rough and ragged barracks in which the settlers strive to make a home as well as the vibrant natural beauty of Kimi's village and surrounding woods. Based loosely on the slim evidence surrounding the events of the infamous Lost Colony of Roanoke, Rose takes some liberties with history (explained in an author's note): there was no record of a young woman—other than wives and mothers—being among the group of settlers during that time period. Similarly, the actual whereabouts of the missing settlers is one of history's great mysteries. The tough choices the characters must make are, on the whole, believable outgrowths of their burgeoning bond. The ending, however, may stretch credulity for some readers. **VERDICT** With two compelling main characters and an abundance of rich historical detail, Rose's latest novel offers much to discuss and much to appreciate. —Kiera Parrott, *School Library Journal* --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

2016 Jefferson Cup Award for Young Readers WinnerPraise for *Blue Birds*: “Composed in varying formats, the descriptive and finely crafted poems reveal the similarities the two girls share, from loved ones lost to hatred between the English and the Roanoke to a desire for peace.” Fans of Karen Hesse and the author's *May B.* (2012) will delight in this offering. —Kirkus Reviews “A memorable account of a friendship that transcends culture and prejudice.” —Publishers Weekly “An excellent historical offering and belongs on public and school library shelves.” —VOYA “With two compelling main characters and an abundance of rich historical detail, Rose's latest novel offers much to discuss and much to appreciate.” —School Library Journal “An imaginative historical novel with two sympathetic protagonists.” —Booklist “Themes of fear and freedom will appeal to a wide audience.” —SLC

"Blue Birds" is a YA historical-fiction book written in verse, so it's a very quick read for an adult. The storyline intrigued me from the beginning. It tells the tale of British settlers mistakenly left on Roanoke island who run into problems co-existing with the native people. There is only one girl in this group of European settlers, and she's quite lonely. She encounters a Roanoke girl of the same age, and though wary at first, they become fast friends even though their people are enemies. I really wondered how this story was going to end -- there seemed to be no easy way for it to since although the girls are fictional, it's based on actual events. I will not give the ending away, but suffice it to say that I truly enjoyed this entire tale. I initially wasn't sure I'd enjoy reading a book written in verse, however, I find that I really like the starkness of it. Stories told this way are not weighed down by flowery descriptions and mundane details. They get to the point and do it well.

BLUE BIRDS is powerful and lyrical in the way it connects the dots between the known facts surrounding the Lost Colony of Roanoke. The author has created two characters: Alis, to represent the colonists from England, and Kimi, to represent the Native Americans originally living on the island of Roanoke. Through a series of blunders, ignorance, and misunderstandings, a deadly culture clash becomes inevitable. Although it takes place in 1587, the themes are timeless. Although Rose did not change history to give the story of the missing Roanoke Colony a happy ending for everyone, she gives hope that in the future, there will be more people like Alis and Kimi who can see beyond their differences to become friends.

It's definitely different than the other types of books I read, but I liked it anyway! I loved the historical aspects of the story. The ending was satisfying, and tied up all the lose treads of the story. I also loved the character development that took place over the development of Blue Birds. It will be on my Christmas list!

My class loved this historical fiction story told in verses.

So beautifully written, this charming story of friendship, courage, adventure and family will steal your heart. One to share, for certain.

This is a wonderful book written by a very talented author. The amount of research Caroline did was amazing. I recommend this book to all who love Historical Fiction. Buy this book, you will not be disappointed.

Recommended by my mother. Can't wait to read it. Arrived promptly. Thanks!

As expected

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