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# Blue Heron



## Synopsis

What is magic really for? As Maggie approaches her thirteenth birthday, she wants to believe that some kind of magic can stop the changes all around her. Her visit with her father and his new family at a lakeside cabin makes her wonder. Will he still love her as much, now that he has a new family, or will he love her baby half-sister more? Her father seems troubled and withdrawn and, while he insists nothing is wrong, she worries. Alone with her own secret thoughts, Maggie finds comfort in the beautiful blue heron she visits at the lake every morning. With each visit, she grows more attached to the bird, and she becomes aware that someone else is watching, too -- someone who's putting the bird in great danger. Through her determination to protect the bird, Maggie begins to understand the magic of change in her own life, and in the constantly changing world around her.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5-8-- Almost-13-year-old Maggie has a loving mother, a terrific young stepmother, and a father whose delight in seeing her each summer is apparent. This year, there's an infant half-sister for Maggie to meet. The status quo is perfect. But even before her arrival at the rented marsh-side cottage, the girl senses that something isn't right. Her father's anger is barely under control; the relationship between him and his wife is rapidly deteriorating; and Maggie is too young to

understand fully the troubles that are destroying them. When she learns that her father's health is poor, and he confesses that he has lost his job and hasn't told his wife, she feels mired in a marsh of complex adult emotions. As she tries to sort things out, she sees a blue heron. It becomes a symbol in her life, especially when she discovers that someone is trying to kill it with a bow and arrow. This is a complex novel, and it is needlessly complicated by symbolism. An overburdened story line about the heron's would-be killer, a lonely boy, is never fully explored and serves to muddle rather than enrich and enhance. The important thread, that of a happy family coming apart because of events seemingly beyond their control--depression, poor health, unemployment--is poignant enough without further intricacies. --Marjorie Lewis, Scarsdale Junior High School, NY  
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A versatile author whose popular books include rousing historical adventures (*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, 1990, Newbery Honor) and sparkling satire (*Nothing But the Truth*, 1991) portrays a contemporary family under unusual stress. Flying in for her annual visit with her 50-ish father, his young wife Joanna, and their new baby, Maggie (12) hopes that "nothing about her father [has] changed." Not so: Dad is unaccountably snappish and unreasonable. As the vacation on a Connecticut lake progresses, it develops that he's at odds with Joanna and has heart trouble, while even Joanna doesn't know that he lost his job just after the baby's birth and isn't taking his medication. Maggie's plea that he do so precipitates an angry outburst during which Dad nearly dies in an accident. Though sadly credible, Dad's behavior, as observed by Maggie, makes him unsympathetic and hard to like. Meanwhile, Avi draws other relationships with exceptional subtlety, especially Maggie's growing affection for her nice, intelligent stepmother, who in her need reaches out to her like a sister; and Maggie's delicate negotiation with a neighborhood bully, Tucker, who has been stalking a noble great blue heron. The heron, a potent symbol (Dad says it can mean life or death), has been Maggie's preoccupation and solace; in the end, though Dad's adult problems may defy solution, she manages to transform the belligerent Tucker's perception of the awe-inspiring bird. A thoughtful, beautifully crafted story. (Fiction. 11+) -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Blue Heron by Avi  
Have read other author's works and have enjoyed them all. This one is about Maggie and they are spending time at the shore and she has a new sister. Magic and her father, she

believes in all. Her mother gave her a crystal that is pure magic in her pocket. She travels to visit her father and step mother from Seattle all the way to MA. The shore will have much magic. Very familiar to the area as we live nearby. It's interesting how the descriptions are so detailed-we tend to take things like the countryside for granted at times. The heron has a magic all it's own and she wants to save her father....he spends much time on the phone doing work. She entertains herself as the stepmother is always busy with the new baby. She studies the heron and discovers lots of things about how the bird lives and survives in the marsh. She discovers many treasures and she also finds out her ailing father has not been taking his medicines! Someone has also been shooting arrows at the heron! Magic happens! I received this book from National Library Service for my BARD (Braille Audio Reading Device).

Although this book seems thick compared with other YA novels, these 186 pages read easily, thanks to extensive dialogue. Soon-to-be 13 Maggie feels like a "summer hostage" while visiting her father--a court-ordered social ritual which produces recurring mental anguish ever since her parents divorced when she was six. Clinging to her childhood memories of a game of Magic shared by her dad, Maggie dreads this visit to a rented cabin on a remote lake in Connecticut. There she will have to face a young step-mother and baby half-sister. Her stay will trigger explosive events which impact several lives and redefine already painful relationships. Seeking escape from the emotional turmoil in the cabin, Maggie is gradually captivated by the grace and quiet dignity of a blue heron, who rules the neighboring marsh. Soon she is obsessed by the giant bird--considering him an Omen, but for Life or for Death? Determined to win his trust, she daily observes him at dawn, discovering that he too has reason for private agitation. Maggie's investigations on his behalf demonstrate her budding moral courage, yet she also feels overwhelmed that they all seem to be asking for her help: the heron, her step-mother and even her belligerent father. Is this too great a burden for a young teen? There is no romance for Maggie on this vacation, but realization of her complex, extended-family roles. During most of the book she speaks to adults in unrevealing monosyllables; her vocabulary only comes alive when she interacts with kids. This book presents a gripping psycho-drama, as an ordinary girl suddenly comes of age. Perhaps Avi deliberately included a plea for wildlife conservation. BLUE HERON is probably of greater appeal to high school girls (who try to hide their true feelings from adults), despite the lack of love interest. Thoughtful insight into blended family dynamics.

Leaving her home in Seattle, Washington, 12-year-old Margaret "Maggie" Lavchek intends to spend

her last month of summer with her father, stepmother, and newborn half-sister in their New England lakeside cabin. During her stay, Maggie is captivated by the blue heron that frequents her marshy backyard, believing it to be a magical creature capable of foretelling life or death. As Maggie copes with her troubled family (her angry father who has recently been fired and refuses to take his heart medication, as well as her young stepmother who emotionally off-loads onto Maggie), she must also try and save the heron from her troubled young neighbor, Tucker, who intends to kill it. "Blue Heron" is a great story of a young girl's attachment to a bird that renews her youthful belief in magic and fantasy. Recommended for readers age 9 to 13.

when i first touched this book, which has great illustrations, i thought nothing of it. Who is Avi? I've never heard of him nor read any of his works before. The only thing about the book that lured me was the illustrations of Maggie, who looked so life-like like Britney Spears'. And i realised, this book may look outdated, and its contents may seem pretty dull, but if you carry on reading, you'll realise Avi had used great thoughts and a range of good vocabulary to express Maggie's thoughts about her father, whom she had not met for almost half a year. You'll realise that the feelings which all the characters felt seemed to be like those we've experienced before. Maggie is worried and confounded as silly questions ran through her mind: Will my father love me as before even after my baby sister's arrival? Will Joanna (her dad's new wife) find me an eyesore? You see... If you're a bookworm, then you must go read this book... for it's been read by almost everyone worldwide!

Almost 13 year old Maggie, full name Margret, goes to her Dad's cabin on the lake for part of the summer. She lives in Seattle with her Mom. Maggie goes down to the marsh everyday at dawn and sits on the same rock and watches the bird the Blue Heron. Maggie falls in love with the bird. She and the bird started having a good friendship until a boy named Tucker came along. The main character in this story is Maggie. Maggie's dad has a wife named Joanna. Joanna has a baby named Linda. Maggie also has an enemy named Tucker. She doesn't like him for a certain reason. This is a good book for children probably 7 and up. I liked it for all its details and creativity. I like the adventure in it. Highly recommended for kids who like adventure, magic and birds.

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