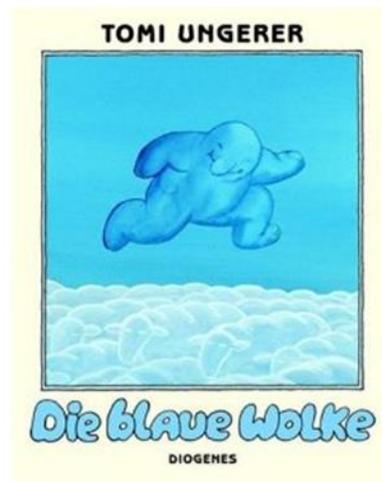


# Instructional Materials for *Die blaue Wolke*

Contributor: Marianne Zose



## Story Summary

The blue cloud was content and lived a happy life. She was different from her fellow clouds for she was curious and open minded. However, she did as she pleased; she would never go with the flow. This behavior was very much disliked by the other clouds. If they threatened her with thunder and lightning she just smiled. Birds and airplanes that came in contact with her turned blue. Day after day the blue cloud grew bigger and bigger as she circled around the world. People on earth noticed her and were impressed by her appearance.

One day the sky was filled with black clouds and smoke. Below there was a city in turmoil, a city on fire. White people hurt black people, black people fought red people, red people attacked yellow people, and yellow people chased angrily after white people. The blue cloud was very upset and saddened by the people's outrageous actions. She made a quick decision and sent heavy rain upon the town. The fire went out, and everything turned blue. People did not fight any longer, instead they lived together peacefully and cherished each other. Together they celebrated and rebuilt the old city. In memory of the blue cloud they painted all the buildings blue.

## Author Information

Tomi Ungerer, an internationally known artist and writer, was born in Strasbourg, France, in 1931. The paternal part of his family, the Ungerers, were established Alsatian clockmakers, whereas the maternal part of his family derived from the Rhineland. Tomi lost his father when he was only four. His mother moved with her children back to her parents' house in Logelbach, near Colmar. Tomi grew up in an environment that was filled with warmth and affection. The family's library was well stocked with German books, such as *Der Struwwelpeter* by Heinrich Hoffmann and the *Hausbuch* by Ludwig Richter. Reading and listening to music were common practices, especially during the winter.

His later childhood years were marked by war. During the German occupation of the Alsace, students were taught German in school, after 1945 they went back to French. His memories about this period of time are marked with disgust towards war and intolerance.

*Die blaue Wolke* is a reflection of Tomi Ungerer's ultimate dream - tolerance and mutual respect of our fellow human beings. He once said: "Without difference of race, social class, or religion, there would be nothing to compare between, and it is that process of comparison combined with curiosity which leads to acceptance. For each one of us has something which others do not have." He added, "To fight racism, we must enlighten children at the youngest age possible. It takes years for a tree to bear fruit on a well-grafted trunk."

Tomi Ungerer was awarded the prestigious title "Ambassador for Childhood and Education" by the Council of Europe for his visionary work promoting peace and understanding.