
Mi lazarella, mi capitán

Mi lazarella, mi capitán (My Guide, My Captain)

This is a 32-page picture book...

The text is written in the first person, and the narrator is a young girl. On most pages (and on the cover) she is holding her father's hand. On the cover and on the first page we see him, he is holding a white cane: we assume that he is visually impaired, and this is confirmed by the girl on the eight page: "[P]apá no ve. Es ciego" (Dad can't see. He's blind). So, the book described what the imagine they see and hear on the way to school, and the illustrations bright illustrations of the exotic animals and plants they imagine, and the more muted tones of the people, cars and buildings that are there:

First, she talks about their "forest of light and shadows. And sounds"; next, they imagine "animal-cars" – a Panda, a Jaguar, a Beetle... On page 8, she says "Yo apenas veo" (I can hardly see). So, the book charts their journey together walking to school, including their routine before leaving the house. When they get to school and it's time to say goodbye, the daughter wants to cry. She also imagines her father sad when she isn't there, walking home by himself. After school, this is over with the simple line "Hola, mano. Adiós, tristeza" (Hello, hand. Bye bye, sadness) – this ends the book, and we are left to imagine their walk home again.

Mi Lazarella, Mi Capitán is sensitively written, and attempts to give an insight into what an everyday action might be like for a visually impaired child (and father), and as such encourages empathy – this is a text that could easily be used to start discussion in the primary school classroom. Indeed, the story's basis of an everyday routine – getting ready for school, going to school, not wanting to say goodbye – is something that helps give any exploration of empathy a strong basis. The illustrations are beautiful, and give a lot for readers to explore and observe – and imagine.

From the reader's report by [Richard Mansell](#) [1]

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