

## My Dad, My Rock

**Victor D. O. Santos**

**Anna Forlati, Illustrator**

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*My Dad, My Rock is a heartwarming picture book about father-son love that carries from one generation to the next.*

In Victor D. O. Santos's sweet picture book *My Dad, My Rock*, a boy forms a strong, meaningful relationship with his father.

A boy writes to his grandfather, though neither he nor his father ever met him. He shares all that his grandfather should be proud of in his father—who jokes and laughs, reads books at bedtime, and teaches the boy how to do things, rather than doing them for him. The boy says he's been taught that it's more than okay for men to cry. This works toward a musing takeaway: the boy talks about how he wants to be like his father when he grows up and has his own children.

Gentle and optimistic, this book is a lovely exploration of a particular expression of fatherhood that, to the boy, seems heroic. It includes subtle examples, as of the father staying up with his son during a storm because "he can feel what I'm feeling." The boy's language is succinct and driven by poignant imagery: "Even if I cry a river, he is always there to wipe my tears." The text radiates love, as well as pride in this powerful family dynamic.

The illustrations, with their muted and nostalgic coloration, are gorgeous and charming. Their intricate details include recurring motifs that show the lifelong bond between the father and his son. They also amplify the personalities of both characters: a four-panel comic book page shows the pair planting a seedling tree; later, four panels depict the tree wilting, but returning to life after being watered; a final image of the family playing nearby indicates the lasting effects of a nurturing parent-child relationship.

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AIMÉE JODOIN (February 18, 2022)

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