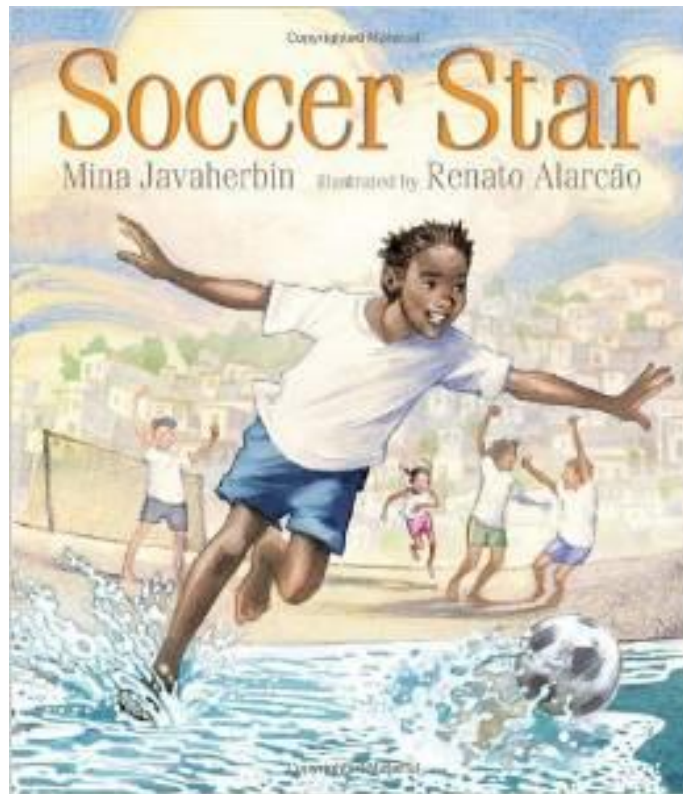


Children and Young Adult Book Review
Elementary School
Soccer Star

Educator Reviewer: Xiaoli Hong
Student Reviewer: Aidan Martin



Javaherbin M. (2013). *Soccer star*. Illus. by Renalto Alarcao. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press

Educator Review:

Soccer Star, written by Mina Javaherbin (2013) and illustrated by Renalto Alarcao, is another great book to add to teachers' collections of multicultural children's books. With the story set in a Brazilian favela, or slum, this book introduces a boy named Paulo who dreams of being a soccer star but can only practice soccer after a day's work. His teammates, who share Paulo's passion and situations, also have to work during the day before their practice. Through the narration from Paulo, readers see his daily life—sending his sister to school, greeting his teammates at their different working sites, spending the day helping on a fishing boat with Senhor da Silva, who is also his coach, and playing a soccer game after work. Despite the adversities, readers can clearly feel Paulo's enthusiasm for soccer and dream for his neighborhood team. The promise of hope increases as Paulo's sister scores the winning goal for Paulo's team with her stunning bicycle kick.

Although this book is set in a Brazilian favela, the author and illustrator did a perfect job showing that poverty does not stop dreamers of achieving their dreams. The boys' love of soccer is infectious, and their energy toward daily life exudes throughout the book. The illustrator Alarcao, who is from Brazil, used sepia ink with digital coloration to display the beauty of Brazilian favela houses stacked on a hillside facing the ocean and the danger of Paulo's work with lurking storms.

This book, published in 2014 by Candlewick Press, is an excellent resource for lower grade students to learn about another culture. The poetic text and scattered Portuguese words add to the appeal of the book. Teachers will probably need to introduce some background information about favelas in Brazil for students to better understand the story. Teachers can also use this book to guide discussions of poverty and stereotypes of relating people living in slums with drugs, crime and degeneration.

This book is an excellent resource for lower grade students to learn about another culture.

Xiaoli Hong
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Student Review:

I read the book *Soccer Star*. The story is about a boy named Paulo playing soccer in Brazil. He dribbles the ball around his neighborhood helping people around the way. Paulo wants to become a soccer star, so then his mother won't have to work long hours. My favorite part of the book is when Paulo teaches his sister Maria a bicycle kick and she scores a point in the soccer game. I would recommend this book to other children that love soccer.

Aidan Martin
Chase Street Elementary School, Athens, GA
5th Grade