

# THE GIRL WHO DREAMED TO GO TO SCHOOL

*From garbage collector to teacher, she  
won by faith, work and perseverance.*

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MEC -Register 797.555 – Book 1549 - Page 475

Children's story that integrates with the natural fantasy and creativity of children and young people, entertaining, educating and adding to the development of character, moral values, citizenship, ecological awareness, family values, culture, knowledge, spirituality, respect for educators, encouragement to study, order and discipline. Book for children and young people who enjoy intelligent, sensitive, cultural, educational readings and themes of social reality. Book with largest literary content, a better reading exercise.

*Synopsis:*

*The book tells the story of a favela girl who collected paper, cardboard, plastics, aluminum cans and other materials that she found to sell and help her mother with household expenses. In her trips, she admired children who could go to school and have their parties at home. Her life changes completely when on Christmas Eve she finds a magical holy book in the trash can. The feelings that she felt by the images in the book intrigues her and arouse her curiosity for learning to read. Thanks to this book, doors open for a better future.*

It was still dawn, when Francisca was already awake preparing something for her and her daughter to eat before starting a new day of hard work.

Outside the shack, the thrushes sang loudly and loudly announcing a new day and their presence in the territory.

Lindalva was still sleeping. She used to dream almost always of castles and princesses. In her dream, she found herself one of the princesses wearing beautiful dresses and having rich meals.

While Lindalva slept, Francisca watched her fondly, while recapitulating how it all started in her life:

*Francisca and her brother Raimundo came from the Northeast to São Paulo in search of better days. There they lived in a region where it hardly rained.*

*The drought was hampering food crops and raising the animals they needed to survive.*

*The water was barely drinkable. Most days, they went hungry.*

*So, they were discouraged from living there. In São Paulo, they had the hope of a better future.*

*Francisca and Raimundo got a small space in one of the dozens of favelas in the city. There, with much sacrifice, they built their shack with construction leftovers.*

*Raimundo was not used to living in the big city and soon returned to the Northeast. He did not like to see the streets full of cars, to breathe the polluted air, to see only buildings on all sides. Despite the suffering caused by the drought, he thought it was better there.*

*Francisca decided to stay and pursue the dream of a better life.*

*One day Francisca met, dated and married a truck driver who passed through the favela. But, a few months after the wedding, this driver's truck went on the roads of life, never finding its way back to the favela and Francisca's house.*

*Francisca waited for many months, while the memory of this quick love - the girl Lindalva - grew in her belly.*

*Alone, Francisca was preparing for the birth of Lindalva. At night, she tried to imagine what her life would be like from then on, accompanied only by a kerosene lamp, which lit the shack for a few hours.*

*As her belly grew, it was getting harder and harder to find cleaning woman service. She started to live with some poor donations made by her poor and generous neighbors in the favela.*

*Thus, Francisca gave birth to Lindalva, with the help of the midwife from the favela. Cida was a very experienced woman who had already helped with the birth of dozens of children in the favela.*

*Born Lindalva Menino de Jesus, her mother called her from an early age Fiota. This nickname has stayed forever.*

*There were many other shacks in the favela, but none as well maintained and clean as Lindalva's.*

*This, thanks to the extreme care of his mother Francisca.*

*The shack had only one room where Francisca placed a bed, a small broken table and two crates that served as chairs. On the dirt floor, she lit firewood and improvised a brick stove where she supported the cans she used for cooking.*

*Outside, Francisca built a small bathroom surrounded by boards and inside there was a hole in the floor. There was no running water, sewage, or light at Lindalva's house.*

*Francisca washed her cans, dishes and clothes on a board installed outside.*

*She took water from a school tap near her shack, which she carried in a can on her head.*

*And time passed for Francisca and Lindalva. With the difficulties increasing and without finding a job, Francisca had to dedicate herself to collecting garbage in the big dump near the favela.*

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*And to be closer to her new job, Francisca had to leave the shack in the favela and improvise a new shack closer to the dump.*

*In this way, she would be able to make better and faster use of garbage dumps and find recyclable material more easily.*

But Francisca interrupted her memories. It was time to call Lindalva.

- Fiota, wake up! Wake up, Fiota! It is already five o'clock in the morning. Garbage trucks are already arriving!

Still lazy and tired from the day before, Lindalva stayed in bed for a few more minutes.

But then she got up. She knew her mother's difficulties well and how much she could help.

Sleepy, Lindalva had a little coffee and a piece of bread from the previous day.

Lindalva was already eight years old and started working to help with household expenses.

She and her mother were in the struggle for life.

At the dump, Lindalva picked up paper, cardboard, plastics, aluminum cans and other materials she found to sell. Thus, she obtained an important help for his mother.

This could be felt in the improvements that Francisca made in the shack. She bought a small two-burner gas stove and even a toilet to replace the hole made in the bathroom floor outside. Then she bought a small cell radio, which was a joy every night. Francisca and Lindalva loved to listen to the country music before going to sleep. Francisca dreamed, now, of being able to have a laundry tub and water in the shack. If it depended on Lindalva's daily effort, this would be possible someday.

Francisca and Lindalva left early in the morning looking for the valuable material scattered in the dump. And with each garbage truck unloading, it was a permanent hope of finding a good amount of paper, cardboard, plastic and, especially, aluminum cans that were well priced.



But, the competition with other waste pickers was very strong...

One thing Francisca did well was to cook and there was always a plate of rice, beans, flour waiting for Lindalva. Sometimes, depending on the money they got, even a fried egg or a piece of chicken or meat. When this happened, it was Lindalva's greatest happiness that opened her eyes wide and she ate until she was belly.

After lunch, Francisca and Lindalva left again and went to the dump... storing the fruit of their labor in large bags to be able to sell to the recycled material warehouse where everything was weighed and paid for.

All the money they earned was used to buy mainly food.

Lindalva loved her home. At night, she could see the stars and the moon through the holes in the tin and cardboard roof. Her mother said she had to fix the roof. This would be done when they found newer zinc pieces among the abandoned building materials.

But Lindalva hoped she wouldn't find the zinc pieces. She preferred to sleep counting the stars and admiring the moon's glow.

The only problem was when it rained. The rain dripped inside the house, made mud on the bedroom floor and wet the mattress where Lindalva slept.

When this happened, she looked for the drier corner of the mattress and fall asleep. The next day, the sun dried the corn straw on Lindalva's mattress, and everything was back to normal.

After all, this did not happen every day. Lindalva found the dry clay that got stuck between her bare toes funny.

Lindalva was a happy and cheerful girl. She loved her mother and was a partner to the other.

Lindalva liked to sit on a stool made of loose bricks near the small stove, while her mother prepared dinner.

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They talked, made plans. She told about the good stuff she found during the day, the scolding she received from other scavengers who did not like to see Lindalva very close to them at the dump.

Lindalva had some friendly animals in the dump that already knew her well - the vulture Sebastian and the pig Cotinho.

Every time Lindalva found a piece of meat or something else to eat, she called Sebastian and Cotinho to meet her...

The vulture Sebastian, whenever he saw Lindalva, flew to meet her in the hope of winning some food.

The same did Cotinho, who ran towards him when he saw Lindalva at the dump.

Lindalva sometimes found toys in the dump. She collected the ones she thought were most beautiful and took them to the shack.

There, they received a bath, were cleaned and were next to Lindalva's bed.

Before going to sleep and on the days when she didn't go to the dump, Lindalva had fun playing with her toy collection.

People who passed by car near the dump, seeing little Lindalva all dirty, panning her precious garbage, were very sorry for her and blamed the Government for not giving dignified conditions to all the inhabitants, forcing children to live at such a level. misery... but, they moved on with their lives.

However, Lindalva did not have the same perception as these people. She liked everything she had around the dump.

She liked her house, her friends Sebastian and Cotinho, in the dump she had some other children who, in the intervals of unloading the garbage trucks, played catch-up, talked, laughed...

She found all the scavengers running around when a garbage truck arrived... they screamed, laughed loudly, they were all friends. Everyone was hoping to find something of great value!

This is a miracle of God. It seems that He ordered the Guardian Angels to watch over and guarantee innocence to all children, so that they could be happy and joyful in any environment in which they lived...

At night and for several nights, before going to sleep, Francisca talked to Lindalva for a while, while listening to some music on the stack radio.

And Lindalva was very curious and one night she asked her mother:

- Mother, why did we come to live near the dump? There aren't many houses around here...

And Francisca tried to explain:

- Ah, my daughter! It's a long story...

- First, it's our way of life, the way we manage to earn some money to eat...

- But mom is not ashamed of what she does! Nor should you, my daughter, be ashamed of what you do to help mom...

- Here in our house we have a hammock, bags with clothes, a bible, candles, a bottle of water and a wood stove. To build our house I had to look for pieces of wood, zinc, cardboard, canvas and straw...
- I could be doing something wrong, as stealing, selling drugs, but I'm not. That was the way I found to survive and not go hungry.
- This was the way I found to support myself and support my baby! Every day I came to work here at the dump and returned to the favela, it was an hour by bicycle to go and an hour to return.
- It was very tiring to have to come and go, so I decided to make the shack and stay here...
- It was very complicated before. I had to collect all the recyclable material I could find and take it to the city to try to sell the material. Now, when we manage to fill the bags with bottles, cans and wires, all separated, I call the deposit and they come here to weigh it and give the money to me...

- The most valuable garbage is the wires... but, it is difficult to find... it is much disputed by the collectors... the most common to find here are bags, pets, and beer cans. Wire is like gold.

- Many people don't understand the reason we are here and end up looking at us differently. Still, I am not ashamed of my life and work. I like to live and work here, at least I can earn a living and provide what we need, my daughter!

- The noise of animals at night is what scares the most, I don't know if it's a dog or a bird. I always light my candle and read the Bible until I fall asleep.

- There was a time that I found a good money when I separated the garbage. I was very happy. I ran into town and bought oil, five kilos of rice and meat. It was not much, because it even fit in one bag, but it helped a lot. I always find some things here in the dump that we can use, people even throw food. In addition, there are many earrings, watches and bracelets and I am saving everything for you, my daughter.

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- Even the cell phone I use found here! I'm not afraid of getting sick by having direct contact with garbage. There was never anything serious, just the flu.

- I don't wear a glove, because I don't have one. I only put it on when I find it in the trash, but it soon ends. Sometimes I get hurt, people throw broken glass cups and plates and when we open the bag, it ends up cutting myself. But this is the only bad thing...

- I feel alone at night when the other scavengers return to their homes and we are just the two of us in the shack.

- To make food, I improvised a wood stove. With a grill on top of bricks, I prepare beans and rice. The menu is usually just that. It is difficult to have meat. I get the water to make the food from the house of a friend, who lives a few meters from the dump and has also been working there for more than five years...

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- I go there with ten pet bottles and fill them with water. That's how I wash the dishes and cook.

Lindalva, who listened attentively to the story of her dear mother, interrupted to ask:

- And what is your biggest dream, mom?

- Ah, my daughter! My biggest dream is to have a house, to get a house of my own, no matter where it is. I want a home that I can say it is mine to live with my daughter until God takes me out of this life.

- But I'm afraid of dying before I get this and leaving my daughter helpless.

- Another dream is that I would like to go back to the Northeast someday. I have my parents and brothers there ... I never heard from them again... I don't know if my parents are alive or not... I would like to show my daughter to them...

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Excited, Francisca looked at her daughter who had tears in her eyes and finished:

- Now, honey, it's time to sleep... we have to get up early tomorrow!

Lindalva was now 11 years old. She was already a young lady. And she understood her mom's struggle for survival in life very well. Lindalva thought her mom was a warrior and, like her, was becoming a warrior too.

With the leftovers and the money earned from the sale of recyclable material collected at the dump, Francisca could take a step forward. She bought her pushcart from another garbage collector, who decided to move to Bahia. Thus, they could collect recyclable material from door to door in the houses, especially when the garbage was not of good quality...

Francisca's pushcart had the advantage of being light and resistant, fitting a lot of material.

And so, Francisca and Lindalva started to give preference to the garbage in the houses of the

wealthiest neighborhoods in the city. And, from time to time, they returned to the dump. Lindalva moved again to the favela shack.

During her visits to the dump, Lindalva used to collect the books she found. She said:

- One day I will go to school. I will learn to read and will have many books to read! One day, I'll be a teacher!

And Francisca and Lindalva almost every day, in the morning and in the afternoon, roamed the streets of the city's wealthy neighborhoods in search of their precious recyclable material. Lindalva went a little further, searching the garbage in the houses and making a first separation and her mother followed behind pulling the cart and collecting the material separated by Lindalva, in addition to completing the garbage collection.

And so was Lindalva's daily routine. In the search for garbage in the houses she could see other children from the favela and the neighborhood

with their notebooks and books on the way to school. Lindalva was not yet at school.

In the city Lindalva saw mothers taking their children to school.

She really wanted to be going to school, too.

And Lindalva did not lose hope:

- One day, I will also go to school! And I will be a teacher!

But this was something she couldn't dream yet. After all, her mother depended a lot on the money that she bravely managed to earn every day from garbage collection.

But she wondered what a school was and what the children learned there. In these moments, Lindalva was a little sad. But as soon as she found the valuable cans, his enthusiasm and enthusiasm for life returned.

In one day, his happiness was extreme. He found more than a hundred cans of beer in a house

that, on the eve of the event, had a party. The pushcart came packed and full. She couldn't even see straight ahead of her to find her way back to her shack.

In the favela shack, things improved a little for Francisca. She placed a small steel drum on top of the sink, found by Lindalva, in which Francisca had a tap installed. So, she filled the water drum and had water on tap!

Further on, a bucket was hung from the top of the outside bathroom and Francisca installed a shower. The baths just got a lot better. Francisca filled the bucket with water and the water came out of the small shower. On the coldest days, Francisca heated the water and she and Lindalva could, for the first time, experience the pleasure of a hot bath. They were very happy with these innovations.

Christmas was a long-awaited date for Lindalva. The days leading up to Christmas, and especially on the eve of Christmas, garbage cans were full of wealth.

There was a lot of cardboard and plastic toy packaging that children got from Santa Claus, lots of cans of beer and soft drinks.

Lindalva took the opportunity to get as much as she could and made several trips to the material store. These days she managed to earn good money.

And it was with this money that Francisca prepared a special dinner for Christmas Eve and made the dish that Lindalva liked most - roasted chicken with polenta. And she even bought soft drink!

Lindalva greatly admired the children who received so many gifts from Santa Claus.

They, for sure, should be very good and special children to have so much merit and recognition from Santa Claus. And she kept thinking and reflecting on how she could be better to receive a gift from Santa Claus one day, too.

Thus, she tried to console herself:

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- Ah, I walk around looking for garbage so much that maybe Santa Claus looks for me and can't find me!

And on one of these Christmas nights, Lindalva decided to go out with the pushcart, while her mother prepared dinner. She hoped to get ahead and get cardboard from the toys that were given to the children.

Walking down the street she could see the houses at parties, children being visited by Santa Claus and many toys.

Sometimes she stopped at the gate and tried to rejoice in the joy of those children.

He discovered that there were several Santa Claus. They got out of cars, came from the back of the house, others were already inside the houses. But she didn't see any arriving by sled pulled by the reindeer or entering the houses through the chimney.

And it was on this Christmas night that something magical happened in Lindalva's life and routine.

In one of the garbage cans, she found a beautiful book with colorful illustrations and many letters, taking it home.

- This one I will not sell! But what are these illustrations and what do all these letters mean? She wondered, curious.

In the evening, she sat on the brick stool, next to her mother who prepared the food. Lindalva brought the lamp close to her and began to leaf through the treasure found.

She saw on the cover a man who had a calm face and looked very good. He had circles that sparkled around his head. This man looked very fondly at the sky.

On the inside pages, Lindalva tried to find the meaning of the illustrations and words. She soon realized that the book was telling a story.

She saw a man and a woman. She was dressed in a strange way with a veil that covered her head and he worked with tools in wood making objects.



One of the pages it showed this couple traveling in the desert at night under the brightness of the stars, she on the back of a donkey, he on foot.

A baby sleeping on a small straw bed caught his attention, with the couple beside him, surrounded by cows and donkeys. A large star shone in the sky that night.

It must have been a very important child because one of the illustrations showed three kings with gifts in their hands.

- Mother, can you read?
- I can't my daughter. But, one day we will learn!
- Look at this story, mom. It seems that it speaks of the birth of a very poor child, but very important. See where he was born, in a cow corral! And look at this illustration, don't they look like kings bringing gifts?

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- Lindalva, you have your imagination very high! Keep looking at your book and let me finish dinner!

Lindalva, in the nights that followed, continued to leaf through the book trying to decipher the mysterious images in the book.

The book became a real treasure for her. She pasted the covers, cleaned it's dirt and kept it under the pillow made of burlap sack and chicken feathers.

Lindalva had few friends, but she lived among many children. Some even asked her to go out in the city where they could pick up a lot of things from stores and street markets without paying anything. Others invited her to stay at the traffic lights asking for donations.

But, Lindalva refused. She felt that taking things without paying was not right. Nor did begging seem right for anyone who could work or do anything to earn money. She found this unworthy and humiliating.

These teachings she learned from Francisca. Poor woman, but very honest and dignified. She used to tell Lindalva to never accept money that was not due to the sweat on her face, with work. To accept donations is to sell your dignity and humble yourself, she often said.

Thus, Lindalva preferred to collect her papers, cardboard, plastic and aluminum cans.

Happy in her routine, Lindalva continued to leaf through her magic book.

That child who was born in the cow pen grew up. He spoke to people who stopped by the dozens to listen to him. He put his hands in the eyes of people who could not see, and they started to see. He touched his hands on the legs of paralytics and they started walking.

It was like a magician, a great magician. Lindalva had a great desire to know how to read in order to understand this story that fascinated her every day.

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Sometimes Lindalva stopped to play with other children... she played housewife, ring-pass, hide-and-seek. But for a little time...

In the distance, the pushcart reminded her of commitment and work.

She couldn't stop taking the money home. Thus, she returned to his daily work.

Lindalva had very little time to play.

At night, before going to sleep, she turned to reading the book.

Suddenly, the book's story jumped in time. The child had grown up, was always accompanied by twelve friends, visiting homes, talking to people, healing the sick.

In one of the illustrations Lindalva saw the magical man eating with all his friends.

He was in the center and his friends a group on each side. One of them had a small bag of money in his hands.

After this supper, Lindalva saw that the soldiers were not very happy with him. Without understanding why, Lindalva saw the soldiers arrest the good man and take him to jail.

- Mother, why did they arrest the magic man who helped people so much?

- I don't know Lindalva! What are you talking about?

- Look, they arrested the man who healed the blind, made the paralytics walk. Why did they do this?

- I don't know, daughter, I don't know. Maybe someone could be jealous of him or afraid of him having so many friends!

Lindalva wondered what the magic man could have done wrong.

She went back to the pages of the book to see if she had missed something. But not. Nothing that could make that man deserve this.

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Lindalva liked the book so much that she never sold the books she found in the trash again.

She thought: "Books are treasures. Whoever has books is a rich person".

Thus, she managed to gather dozens and dozens of books of all colors and of all sizes, thin and thick.

And she kept them all inside the shack, making piles and piles of books, placing them under the bed and in every corner she could find.

As time passed, the shack could not receive more books and Lindalva continued to find them in the trash cans and bring them home. Francisca started to stumble over so many books until one day she decided to speak to Lindalva:

- Lindalva, we have to stop saving these books. We can't keep them inside the shack!

- But, Mom, they are my treasure! One day I will learn to read, and I want to read them all!

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- I'm not talking to throw them away, Lindalva. We will have to make a shelter for them outside the shack.

- Good idea, mom. So, I can make some shelves to store them.

- And what do you intend to do with so many books?

- I will read them all when I learn to read one day!

Lindalva went to sleep intrigued by the story. Who would that man be? She would need to talk to someone. But who would pay attention to her?

One night, Francisca saw Lindalva cry softly as she flipped through the book.

- Daughter, this is just a story. Why are you crying?

- See, mother, what the soldiers are doing to him. They put thorns on his head and are forcing him to carry a large cross on his back. His blood

runs down his forehead and back. Why are these bad men doing this?

- I will read this book when I learn to read one day!

After a few laps around the area and Francisca was back with all the boards she needed to make a shelter for Lindalva's books.

The shelter was ready in two days. The shelves were missing. Lindalva had the idea of placing bricks on top of each other and, from time to time, put a board.

So, he made the shelves to place her books. There were already more than eighty books and there was room for more.

At night, Lindalva continued to see her magic book, curious to know how the good man story would end.

So, she could see the man being nailed to the cross by his hands and feet. The cross was raised, and the man suffered a lot.



The mother of this good man was crying weeping beside him, being pushed away by the soldiers when she tried to approach him. The good man stayed like that for hours and hours until he lowered his head and died. His friends took him to a grave.

But Lindalva was happy because in one of the illustrations she saw the good man coming out of the grave and into the heavens. He was still alive! He was a great magician and had great powers.

Lindalva was very curious to know more about this book and who the characters were...

One afternoon, while she was walking in the street looking for garbage bags to separate recyclable material, Lindalva stopped in front of a house where a boy was playing in the garden.

It was Lucas with his impressive collection of toys. Luca received many toys from his parents, grandparents and uncles on his birthday, on Children's Day, Easter and Christmas.

But, not always, Luca was a happy boy.

And this happened when he spread the dozens of toys, he got in the front garden of his house to play alone, without any friends.

Sometimes he lined up the carts in a row, like a traffic jam on the streets; sometimes he was riding his little train, with a locomotive and eight wagons; sometimes he caused a war between the superhero dolls he had and his terrible enemies.

And it was on one of these play afternoons that something magical happened in Luca's life.

Luca was distracted by his toys when he noticed a girl looking at him, leaning on the railing with both hands and sticking her head in the middle of the railing.

She was a poor girl who had just picked up cardboard and aluminum cans from the house trash, placing them in her pushcart.

The girl stopped for a while with her work to admire Luca's games, while her pushcart waited on the sidewalk.

Luca looked into the girl's two bright, dark eyes and continued to play.

And Luca remembered the girl's presence, when he heard her laugh at his games, especially in the struggles between superheroes and their enemies.

And the more the girl laughed, the more Luca got excited and gave strength to his superhero characters, who easily beat their terrible enemies.

Luca was enjoying hearing the unknown girl's laughter.

Luca only stopped for a few moments, when he heard Amelia scream from inside the house:

- Luca! Your snack and juice are ready. Come here to eat, otherwise your mother will be mad at me!

Luca obeyed; he was already hungry.

When he returned, he noticed that the girl was already gone.

After all, the poor girl had to fill the pushcart with more cardboard and aluminum cans, which were waiting for her in the dozens of garbage cans in the neighborhood.

Luca lost interest in continuing to play on this day.

In the days that followed playing in the front yard of the house, Luca looked from time to time at the iron railing.

He was looking for the girl's dark, bright eyes. It seemed that the girl's laughter of satisfaction motivated him to play.

And Luca thought:

- It's the first time I see a girl laughing at my games! My other friends, when they are with me, play and have fun each with their games. Or they argue with me when they want to exchange or borrow a toy and I don't want to. The girl was happy with my joy!

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One afternoon, Luca was surprised, again, by the girl. This time, she was intent on separating the aluminum and cardboard cans from the garbage can in Luca's house. Christmas was approaching.

But, when the girl went on her way, Luca called him:

- Hey Girl! What's your name?
- Lindalva!
- Mine is Luca! Why do you take these things from the trash?
- Ah, I get aluminum cans and cardboard to sell and help my mother!
- But, aren't you going to school? Don't you play? Don't you have toys?
- No. But, one day I want to study! I want to be a teacher! I have little time to play with my friends in the favela. The rest of my time I go out looking for aluminum cans and cardboard. And I use and repair the toys I find in the trash.

- Wow! You renovate your own toys!
- Yes! Lindalva replied, hurriedly leaving the front of Luca's house.

Luca had never met a girl like that. But he liked her. He couldn't explain, but he liked her. Lindalva seemed like a good girl.

But some people might think that Lindalva was not a good girl to play with Luca because of her dirty, torn clothes, bare feet and the fact that she lives in the favela!

These people would be acting with preconception!

(Preconception? Don't you know what this word means? Sit down that class is coming! Preconception is forming an opinion or giving a concept about a person or subject before having the appropriate knowledge. It is an unfavorable opinion or feeling about a person or subject, conceived in advance or independent of experience or reason. Discriminatory attitudes against people of another social class. Hostile manifestation or contempt against individuals or

peoples of other races. It is the manifestation of intolerance against individuals or groups that follow other religions or customs. examples of preconception).

A few days passed and Luca no longer saw the strange girl named Lindalva going through the garbage of her house in search of aluminum cans and cardboard.

- Did she get sick? Luca questioned himself, with an air of longing.

He liked that Lindalva saw him playing with his toys scattered on the floor in the front garden of the house.

But, Lindalva was back. One afternoon Luca packed up his toys for another afternoon of hobby. Among them, a giraffe with clowns that fell out of the chairs and stayed on the floor in the funniest positions.

And Luca heard laughter coming from the garden fence.

- Hi, it's you Lindalva! You were missing!
- I stayed home these days. My mother was sick, and I was taking care of the house.
- But, you're out of the pushcart today! Aren't you picking up more aluminum and cardboard cans?
- Yes, I am! But today I came to show you my game of bowling. I did it myself! Do you want to play with it?
- Of course, I want!

Luca took Lindalva's bowling game from the grid. The bowling game was made up of 8 cans of soft drinks painted by Lindalva and a tennis ball in good condition that she had found in the trash.

- Wow! That's Cool! I've never seen a toy like this! Luca said sincerely.

Luca arranged the cans in position, stepped away and threw the tennis ball, dropping 5 of the 8 cans.



And repeated the moves until he knocked down all the cans.

- That's Cool! Next time I'll try to knock down all the cans with one shot! Luca promised

- Lindalva, do you like living in the favela?  
Asked Luca.

- Yes! I Really like! I have a lot of fun there. In the favela there are pets that roam the streets, like ducks, chickens, rabbits, cats, dogs. From time to time, a few rats appear. There, the cats run after the rats, the dogs run after the cats, the ducks and the chickens run screaming to escape the confusion, the rabbits hide in the holes in the ground. It's really fun. It has a stream that cuts through the favela. On hot days, I cool my feet in the water. My mom thinks it's bad, saying the water is dirty! At night, I sleep counting the stars and watching the moon through the holes in the shingles of my shack.

Luca listened carefully to Lindalva, trying to imagine the scene of the cats chasing the rats,

the dogs chasing the cats and the ducks and chickens running away in terror.

And, trying to repay, he asked:

- Lindalva, you want to play with one of my toys!

- Can I?

- Of course, you can. Luca replied.

- Well, I would like to play with that one!

- Which one are you talking about? Asked Luca.

- That one, next to Spiderman!

- Ah! This little plane? Luca wanted to know.

- Is this a plane?

- Of course, it's a plane! Have you never seen a plane? Luca replied, amused by Lindalva's question.

- I just saw it in the sky. But I had never seen it so close.

Lindalva took the plastic plane and spun it admiring all the details.

- Luca, what are these little holes all the same on the plane?

- These are the little windows. Inside, in every little window, there are the seats where passengers sit! Luca explained.

- Is it a little window for each passenger?

- Lindalva, there are planes of all sizes. When I went to Disney, our plane had three seats near the window. My father sat in the armchair in the hall. My mother in the middle seat. And me in the window seat! Luca clarified.

- Disney? Lindalva asked.

- Yes! Have you never heard of Disney? Luca replied.

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- No! Never! Lindalva said.
- Disney is a place in the United States where we can visit several amusement parks! There we can have fun with millions of attractions and toys! Luca said.
- Millions? How much is 'millions'? Asked Lindalva.
- Come on, Lindalva. Millions are many, many toys where we can spend days having fun and, even so, we don't know everything! Luca replied.
- Ah! I already know! Once, near the church where I live, there was a playground. And there were millions of toys, too. I went on the Ghost Train. I almost died of fear! Lindalva said.
- Lindalva, you are really funny. I would like to see your terrified face when you left the Ghost Train! Luca said.
- And how does the plane fly? Does it fly like birds? Lindalva asked.

- No, Lindalva. You are very curious! Airplanes don't flap wings! Luca explained.

- But then, how do they manage to fly?

- Well, I don't know very well. But, from what my father explained to me one day at the airport, the propellers pull the air back and the wings cut the wind and manage to stay in the air! Luca said.

- But, how does the plane go up and down?

- Lindalva, do you see these little rudders on the wings? When the rudders are moved downwards or upwards, the plane descends or ascends, turns to the right or to the left. Luca replied.

- I understand more or less. But, how does the plane stop when it lands on the ground?

- Well, I don't know! You're wondering too much! Luca replied, already a little impatient with so many questions.

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- Wow, but how beautiful the plane is. And who is the driver of the plane?

- There is not an airplane driver, Lindalva. Whoever drives an airplane, or rather, who flies an airplane, is called a pilot.

Then Lindalva took the little plane and ran out holding the plane in her right hand and lifting her left arm, as if she were a plane herself.

And she did acrobatics with the small plastic plane, sometimes going up or down, sometimes turning left or right. And she tried to imitate the sound of the plane she heard from the sky, when a plane crossed the favela: `uuuóóóó, uuuóóóóó.

And Lindalva laughed, alone, happy and cheerful, in her dream world, imagining herself as the pilot of the small aircraft.

After a few minutes, Lindalva came back and returned the plane to Luca.

Luca had never seen a child playing with the plane like Lindalva did.

- This is a child who really knows how to play. Luca though.

And before Lindalva left, Luca asked:

- Do you want to exchange your bowling game for my plane?

- Would you trade? Lindalva replied in surprise.

- Yes, I do! Let's change them!

- But, won't your mother be mad? Lindalva continued asking, still not believing in the exchange.

- I think not! I have a lot of toy planes, but I don't have a can of bowling!

And Lindalva got on the plane and left. Luca saw her running through the streets, towards the favela, imitating the pilot of the plane and her laughter was heard from afar.

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- Ah! Lindalva is really funny! Luca thought, gathering the other toys in the box and walking happily into his house.

The afternoon ended with a beautiful sunset, which was observed by few people.

A few days passed. It was Christmas Eve. Luca hadn't seen Lindalva since the day they switched bowling game to the plane toy.

At night, while Luca's family was having a Christmas dinner, Luca noticed that someone was scavenging through trash bin in his house.

It was Lindalva picking up the aluminum and cardboard cans. Her pushcart was already so full that she could barely carry it.

Immediately, he stopped dinner and went to meet Lindalva:

Lindalva! You around here! But, aren't you going to celebrate Christmas?

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- Yes, I will! This is my last trip! I already made four trips today, taking my pushcart full of aluminum cans and cardboard! Christmas Eve is the best day to collect garbage in homes. There are many cardboard boxes of toys that children get and hundreds of cans! Lindalva explained enthusiastically.

- But what about Christmas dinner? Luca insisted.

- I'm already going home. Today is a special day. My mom prepared chicken with polenta and will even have soft drink too! She also made banana candy. Lindalva replied, showing that she had already finished her job and was hungry to have dinner with her mother.

- And what will you get from Santa Claus? Luca wanted to know.

- Ah! I will not gain anything. Where I live the streets have no name, the houses have no numbers. I think Santa Claus can't find my shack. Every Christmas day is like that! Lindalva said.

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Saying this, Lindalva looked affectionately at Luca, took her pushcart and left, hidden behind the pile of cardboard and cans, hurriedly heading towards the favela.

Luca stayed on the sidewalk for a few moments, until he saw Lindalva disappear around the corner.

Luca slowly returned to his place at the dinner table and appeared to be sad. Kátia soon noticed this sadness in her son.

- Luca, how are you, dear? What did you do outside? Kátia asked.

- It was Lindalva, mom. She was collecting cardboard from my toy boxes and aluminum cans. But she was in a hurry. Her mother was waiting for her for Christmas dinner. She was glad she was going to have chicken with polenta and soft drink. Luca replied.

Then Luca asked:

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- Mother, doesn't Santa Claus deliver toys to the streets that have no name and to houses that don't have a number?

Kátia, wondering about Luca's question, wanted to know:

- But, why are you asking me this, Luca?

- Lindalva, mother, never got presents from Santa Claus. She thinks Santa Claus does not find her home in the slum. Luca replied, unable to hide his sadness for Lindalva.

Kátia and William looked at each other and sought an answer to Luca's question.

- Well, Luca. Men need to figure out how to show Santa Claus where these children live. Thus, one day, Santa Claus will find all the houses where children live, rich or poor, in the streets with or without names, in houses with or without numbers.

And Luca continued with his questions:

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- Mother, why did you never make chicken with polenta at Christmas? In fact, I don't remember having chicken with polenta one day!

Kátia thought for a few long seconds and replied:

- Luca, each family has its own particular habits regarding food. Some like one thing, others like something else. At Christmas, we like to eat roasted turkey, cod, roasted meat, among other things. And we like to make various desserts, like pudding, delicacy, pave, in addition to fruits.

- Mom, one day will you make chicken with polenta for me? I'm craving it. Luca said.

- Of course, mom will! Kátia replied.

Lindalva, with her simple way, her spontaneous joy, the sincerity of her emotions, charmed Luca. Lindalva seemed to be a real friend.

The days passed and Luca did not see Lindalva anymore. She and her mother went back to their routine, sometimes at the dump, sometimes

looking for recyclable material in the garbage of the houses.

(Recyclable materials. Do you know what these materials are and what are they for? No? Then, sit down for a class! Recyclable materials are all product packages used by men that can be collected and sent to factories to be reused. There are several recyclable materials, the main ones are: plastics, glass, paper, cardboard and aluminum cans. The recycling of material is important to preserve the environment where we live, since it allows less exploitation of natural resources. the man to recycle, the less he has to remove from nature. In addition, recycling helps the survival of thousands of people, like Lindalva and his mother).

After several weeks, Lindalva passed Luca's house again and he was in the front garden...

- Lindalva! Lindalva! Come here! Where have you been? Luca asked anxiously.

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- Luca, doing what I always do - helping my mother and collecting recyclable material! Lindalva replied.

And it was on this occasion that Lindalva said to Luca:

- Luca, did you know that I have a treasure at home?

- Treasure? Wow!! What treasure is it? Luca asked curiously.

- I have a lot of books that I collected in the trash! They're all on shelves at home. Wouldn't you like to see my book collection one day? Asked Lindalva.

- Yes, I would! I'll talk to my mom! Luca replied.

Kátia was very hesitant to visit Luca's new friend in the favela. She had never been to a slum. But seeing how Luca was changed and happy after meeting Lindalva, Kátia agreed.

She also would like to meet this mysterious friend who was changing his son's behavior for the better.

And, one day, the long-awaited visit of Luca and his mother, Kátia, happened to the favela where Lindalva lived with her mother.

Luca and Kátia got in the car and headed for the small slum near the neighborhood where they lived.

Upon arriving at the favela, Kátia sought to know where Lindalva lived. Many curious children were already gathered around the car.

And everyone knew where Lindalva lived:

- Lindalva lives in the last shack, next to the stream, where there is a clump of banana trees!

Luca looked at the favela environment curiously. He had never been there before. He found it interesting that the houses were made of wood, the small streets were made of earth and the houses had neither bars nor gardens.

Everywhere he saw chickens, ducks, rabbits, cats and dogs. And Luca remembered the cats chasing the rats, the dogs chasing the cats and the chickens, ducks and rabbits fleeing terrified of the mess!

When Kátia arrived at Lindalva's house, she was already preparing her pushcart to begin her work of picking cardboard and aluminum cans as it was the end of the year.

Lindalva was surprised by the presence of Luca and her mother.

- Luca, you around here? What happened?

And Kátia and Luca watched the joy and enthusiasm of several children who lived in the favela surrounding the car curious.

- Lindalva, we came to see your book collection and mom wanted to meet you too! Luca replied.

Luca and Kátia were delighted with Lindalva's book collection.



- And there are missing some books that I loaned to other children in the favela to read! Lindalva clarified.

And Lindalva did not miss the opportunity to show Luca and his mother the magical book she had:

- I'll show you a book that I keep with me. It is a book that tells the story of a good man with many powers! This book I keep inside the house!

Kátia, leafing through the book, immediately exclaimed:

- Lindalva, this book tells the story of Jesus! It's like an illustrated bible. It is a very beautiful book, but several sheets are missing!

Lindalva looked long at Kátia and Luca bringing the book to her heart, her eyes watered, and she kissed the book. So, Jesus was the good man! She concluded admiringly and thoughtfully, asking:

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- Kátia! Why did the soldiers arrest and put Jesus on the cross, when he was a good man?

- Lindalva, the people began to spread the news that a boy would be born who would be the king of kings. But the soldiers, at the behest of their Emperor, sought to know who the boy would be, who would be born to be the king of kings. As the soldiers did not find this boy, the Emperor ordered to kill all the children born at the time. This led Mary and Joseph to escape through the desert, when she gave birth to baby Jesus in a manger.

And Kátia finished:

- It was when Jesus was betrayed by Judas, the one who appears at Holy Supper holding a bag of gold coins, payment for his betrayal. So, they managed to arrest Jesus and crucify him. But Jesus rose to eternal life.

- But if Judas didn't like Jesus, why did he kiss him in the garden?

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- This kiss, Lindalva, was the signal to the soldiers that that was Jesus, the king of kings. Then the soldiers arrested him and everything you already know happened.

Lindalva had thus closed her understanding of the dirty and torn book she had found in the wastebasket and which had changed her life forever.

And Kátia asked:

- Lindalva, why don't you go to school to learn to read since you like books so much?

- I cannot. I have to work to help my mom. If I don't work, we won't have anything to eat. I cannot.

- Look, let's do something. Until you can go to school, I'll teach you how to read and write a little bit every night. Do you agree?

- Of course, Kátia! Would you do this for me? Of course, I agree.

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Kátia was the director of a private school in the neighborhood. And she became very interested in Lindalva's studies.

And Kátia tried very hard to fulfill this new mission.

She bought notebooks, colored pencils, schoolbooks, a blackboard, chalk and everything she needed to set up a small classroom in her home office.

All night, Kátia taught the magical world of vowels and consonants, how letters combined to form words and how words formed sentences.

It also showed the mathematics of numbers, the accounts of adding, multiplying, dividing and subtracting. Lindalva paid unusual attention.

Francisca was very happy to see Lindalva start her studies. It was something she had wanted very, very long ago.

One night, Kátia talked to her husband William about Lindalva:

- ... so many girls help their parents but, come to school! Today all mothers and fathers are required to enroll their children in schools!

- ... dear, why don't you talk to this girl's mother and see their real situation? William said.

And so Kátia did. One day, she looked for Francisca to talk about Lindalva:

- Francisca, I am impressed with Lindalva's intelligence and interest in books. It is noted that she has a great desire and motivation to know what the books count on its pages. We need to enroll the girl in school. At 12 she should already be in the 7th year of elementary school.

- I appreciate your interest. But poor as we are, we need to work, or we don't eat!

- But, Lindalva can study in the morning and continue working in the afternoon!

Kátia, with much patience and perseverance, managed to convince Francisca. And Lindalva could finally attend school!

At night, while cleaning and admiring her books, Lindalva commented to her mother:

- See, mother, after I found the magic book of Jesus, how many good things are happening in our life? Kátia said that Jesus went up to heaven to look down on all the men who live down here and thus be able to protect them. From up there he can see our shack, mom!

- Daughter, this is true. When I was a girl, I used to visit Jesus' house in the Northeast. But this was for a short time. Then my parents moved to a far place in the outback where there was no church. Thus, Jesus became like a dream in my mind, despite feeling it in my heart. But I didn't know his story. When I came to São Paulo my life was just a struggle to be able to survive and raise you. I didn't find time for Jesus. What a shame!

Lindalva learned from Kátia that she had created the first library in the favela. She learned that a collection of books is called a library. What a complicated name. Lindalva felt herself very important.

Lindalva started her classes in the 1st year and, of course, was the oldest girl in the class and the tallest. But this did not hinder anything. Everyone liked her and she took a positive lead with the other students in the class.

She started to dedicate herself to studies with rare interest. It was something she had wanted a long, long time.

And the grades and easy of assimilation of the learning were so good that the Pedagogical Director of the school authorized Lindalva to be moved to classes of the year of teaching above. So, when she turned 14, she was already in the 8th grade of elementary school.

But Lindalva still found time to pick up paper, cardboard, plastic and aluminum cans in her spare time, with one condition - not to hinder her studies.

Lindalva read all the books she kept in her library, being enchanted by the world of knowledge that they contained in their pages.

In this way, Lindalva developed a culture and knowledge on various subjects.

Lindalva learned to read very well. And, as someone who reads well, Lindalva also learned to write and speak well.

She continued her studies with unusual dedication. She felt that this was the way to a better future!

Francisca got a permanent job as a maid in an excellent family home.

With time and savings, Francisca bought a piece of land and was preparing to build a small house at the bottom. It was the long-awaited house that took shape...

While building her house, Francisca continued to collect garbage from the houses, on days off from her job as a maid and even sometimes went to the dump...

Francisca entered an adult literacy program and began to benefit from the information and beauty



of the words written in newspapers, magazines, books, in short.

Time has passed, many years have passed, many years... Lindalva and Luca are no longer together.

Francisca returned to the Northeast to her hometown to be with her elderly parents and siblings... her roots spoke louder than any other achievement in the big city.

...

In the favela, a beautiful teacher taught as a volunteer for illiterate children and adults, in an improvised classroom ...

Still in the favela, a young doctor consulted as a volunteer, offering his professional services free of charge to the elderly and children...

After her class, the beautiful teacher met with the young doctor, who had also finished his medical consultations ...

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His face was familiar, but he couldn't remember where he had seen him. The voice, too, was familiar.

- No, it can't be! It cannot be!

Seeing the beautiful teacher, the young doctor shouted:

- Lindalva, Lindalva. It is me, Luca!

Lindalva stopped walking... she froze, staring at the young doctor. With slow, automatic steps she went towards him and shouted his name.

- Luca, Luca, what a surprise my friend! You around here? How big and strong you are! Lindalva said with great joy and tears in her eyes.

- Fat, you mean! You too, my friend. You are big and beautiful, from what I see, you became the teacher you always dreamed of! Luca replied.

- Beautiful? Or am I no longer with dirt on my face and dirty and torn dress? It is true. I

graduated as a teacher. Now, I try to repay everything that life has given me by teaching as a volunteer in the favela for illiterate children and adults, in addition to my job at school. And then you followed a medical career! Lindalva replied.

- Yes, it was also a dream of mine. And I confess, from your friendship from the past, I discovered how important it was to dedicate part of my time to helping the neediest people. So, here I am giving free medical consultations to children and adults. Luca clarified.

- Wow, this is good! You have always studied too much. How much time has passed, hadn't it? Lindalva said looking at her old friend with all kindness.

- Yes, but you know what? To this day, I remember our games in the front yard of my house. You were a lot of fun and you did it very well! Luca replied without hiding his emotion.

- Wow me too. I often thought of you and wondered what you were doing. Lindalva said.

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- But what happened? You gone! Asked Luca.

- I went to study, I lived with my mother for a while, then I went to college, she moved to the Northeast to meet her parents and siblings... and here I am! Lindalva replied.

That afternoon, the two friends met to celebrate the reunion. They hugged, laughed at everything.

From time to time, they pretended to play bowling and flying, as they did when they were young. They took the opportunity to talk about their lives, their plans for the future, remember the mischiefs of children.

The two pledged to be seen from time to time to remind oneself of past times and maintain friendship.

After all, the two have always been true friends! Real friends are like that. They don't care about the social level!

Luca and Lindalva became friends forever.

And nothing else separated them... and this friendship ended in... marriage!

Lindalva was a winner. She overcame social barriers, overcame the negative influence of the environment where she lived, overcame the temptation of easy gain and bad behavior. Studies and the preservation of her moral values opened the door to a better future. She was poor but lived with dignity and respect for herself.

And so, they were happy forever!

The time has passed.

On a Christmas night, Lindalva looked out the window of her house and saw a girl clinching through the garbage, while her two children were having fun with the gifts they got from Santa Claus. In fact, it was Luca in a Santa Claus costume and a white beard that came off and fell off his face. Only the innocence of children not to notice this...

That scene brought her whole life to mind.

Lindalva hurried to open the door and look for the poor girl. She brought the girl in and gave her food and a toy as a gift.

On the way out, Lindalva said to the girl:

- Take this book to you. This was my best gift I got for Christmas many years ago!
- But, lass. I do not know how to read!
- Take the book. It is a magical holy book. It will be very important in your life!

In the distance, Lindalva could see the book light up in the pushcart of the poor girl who disappeared in the dark street on that starry Christmas night.

The End