

BOOKNOTES

educators guide



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Michele Iaccarino journeyed from his home in Italy all the way to America, searching for a better life. He brought big dreams, a small shovel, and his parents' good advice: "Work hard, but remember to enjoy life, and never forget your family." Now, many years later, Michele's great-grandson Dan Yaccarino tells how he succeeded. Dan shows us four generations of this proud Italian American family, and how the little shovel has been passed from father to son—along with the good advice. It's a story that captures the experience of so many American families: each generation doing a bit better than the last; each generation holding fast to the memories and traditions of their forebears. And it's a story meant for sharing. One that will have kids asking their grandparents: Where did we come from? How did our family make the journey, all the way to America?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ARTIST

Dan Yaccarino is an internationally acclaimed author-illustrator with more than 30 books to his credit including *Lawn to Lawn*, *The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau*, *Every Friday*, *Unlovable*, and *Dan Yaccarino's Mother Goose*. Exhibitions of his work have been held in New York, Los Angeles, Rome, and Tokyo. Mr. Yaccarino is also the creator of the animated TV series *Willa's Wild Life* and *Oswald*.

Mr. Yaccarino lives in New York City with his wife and two children. For more information, visit him on the Web at YaccarinoStudio.com



Photo courtesy of the author.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Immigrant Experience
Family & Relationships
Community • Citizenship

GRADES K-4

*"Work hard, but remember to
enjoy life, and never
forget your family."*

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PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask the class: Do you know which country was home to your ancestors? How can a person find out?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- In what country is the town of Sorrento? Have you ever heard of either the town or the country before? How far away are they?
- Why did Michele's father give him a little shovel? What did he use it for as a child?
- Why did Michele decide to leave Italy and come to America? What did his father and mother give him besides the shovel? Is it good advice?
- What happened at Ellis Island? Why do you think so many immigrants had their name changed? Would you like it if someone changed your name for you?
- What did Michael use his little shovel for in his first job in America? Why do you think Michael decided to live in Little Italy with his family and five children?
- Who helped Michael when he started his own business? How old was Dan? Would a child that age be allowed to do this now or not?
- When Dan grew up, what business did he and his wife start? What did Dan use the shovel for? Where did Dan always dream of living? Did he make his dream come true?
- Besides a market, Dan also started what type of business? What types of things did they serve? Would you rather run a market or a restaurant? Why?
- Dan's son, Mike, helped out in the restaurant after school. Do you help out your family after school too? How?
- When Mike grew up, what business did he start? What did he use the little shovel for?
- How did the author help his dad? When did he get to see New York City?
- When Dan grew up, where did he decide to live? What did he decide to name his own son? What happened to the little shovel?

CONNECT TO THE CURRICULUM

WRITING

Assign the following writing project to the class: Write a story about an item that has been passed down through your family (or adopted family). Or, write a story about an item you would like to pass on to your own children and the advice you would give when you hand it over.

HISTORY

Have students research the history of Ellis Island. Why did immigrants often pass through this important American landmark? What happened when they arrived?

Next have the class research the way their own family came to live where they do. Ask students how many generations in their family (or adopted family) they can discover and have them create family trees as far back as they can.

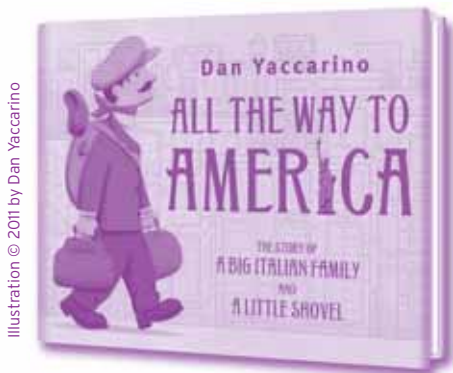


WORDS TO DIG UP

Directions: Rate the following words from *All the Way to America* in this chart. Color in each box that feels true to you.

NAME: _____

WORDS:	COMPLETELY NEW TO ME:	I'VE HEARD THIS WORD BEFORE:	I COULD TELL YOU WHAT IT MEANS:	I COULD USE IT IN A SENTENCE:
Zucchini				
Opportunities				
Immigrants				
Polished				
Apartment				
Pushcart				
Celebrations				
Suburbs				
Zeppoli				
Illustrator				
Terrace				



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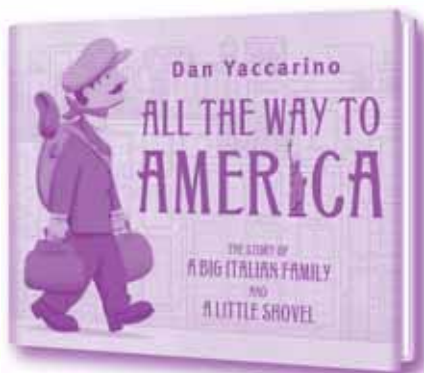
MY FAMILY PORTRAIT

Directions: Take a look at Dan Yaccarino's bold shapes and vivid colors in *All the Way to America*. Then create a family portrait inspired by the final page in the book. You can do a portrait that is far in the distance (like his oldest relatives) or an extreme up-close one like Dan's own family. On the back, identify the members of your family and share with your class.

NAME: _____



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