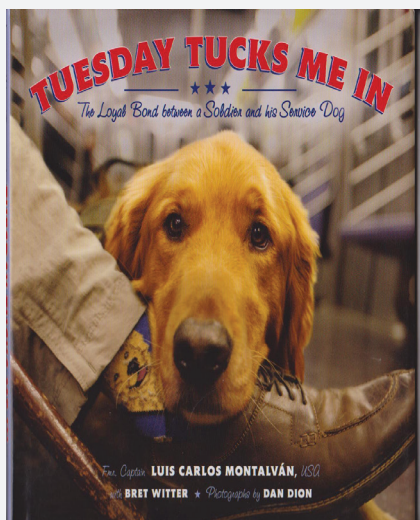


Second Reaction: *Tuesday Tucks Me In* Takes “Best in Show”

Montalván, Luis Carlos. *Tuesday Tucks Me In: The Loyal Bond between a Soldier and his Service Dog*. New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2014.

Kathryn Bauserman



As the saying goes, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression,” and Tuesday, the golden retriever service dog in this story, makes an excellent first impression. The reader will fall in love with this from the first page, and that love for this courageous dog and his owner will only grow as the reader discovers their true story in the nonfiction book, *Tuesday Tucks Me In* by Captain Luis Carlos Montalván (a veteran who has served our country for 17 years) with Bret Witter as collaborator. This 40-page inspirational book tells the heart-warming story of Tuesday and the veteran he cares for each day. It is told in first person as if Tuesday is the narrator. The story begins with Tuesday waking up Luis and follows them through a typical day in New York City. At the very end of the day (book), Tuesday tucks in Luis, even sleeping with him to calm his nightmares. The bond between Tuesday and Luis is so strong that it will appeal to dog-lovers of all ages. The photographs by Dan Dion are magnificent. They tell the story so beautifully that a reader could “read” the story based only on the illustrations—great for “picture walks” and students writing their own text.

Luis Carlos Montalván is a *New York Times* best-selling author of his first book, *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*, which is a serious chapter book that tells the story of how Tuesday became part of Luis’s life and saved him from his

emotional and physical war injuries. This second book is written in a “kid friendly” tone with a lighthearted approach. It is appropriate for reading to children from ages four to ten. Tuesday is quite renowned in his own right: he won the 2013/14 American Kennel Club Humane Fund Award for Canine Excellence (ACE)—Service Dog.

The book was rated 4.26 out of 5 stars on the *GoodReads* website. *Amazon.com* has selected it as the Best NonFiction Children’s Book of 2014 (so far). It has been favorably reviewed by *Kirkus*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*, *Brodart Vibe*, *Booklist*, *The Missourian*, *The Detroit Examiner*, and the *Horn Book*. The book has its own website at <http://www.tuesdaytucks.com/>. There are many features on the website that could be used to support an elementary classroom curriculum. The teacher’s link has a maze, word search, and a list of service dog do’s and don’ts for a lively class discussion. There is also a four-minute interview with the author that is age appropriate for elementary students. The book is at a lower reading level, but it contains pictures and content for older students with limited reading skills, thus it could be classified as a high interest/low vocabulary book.

Many young readers will identify with Luis because they have close family members who have served in a branch of the armed forces. Luis’s disabilities (PTSD and TBI) are not mentioned in the story by name. Details of their impact on his life are discussed in ways that would not upset young children. The book would definitely work well for sharing around Veteran’s Day to help students understand the importance of celebrating the sacrifices of our servicemen and the theme of giving back. But the book is appropriate for other lessons—a vocabulary lesson and a spelling lesson both worked well.

So what did elementary students think of the book? Tuesday’s story was shared with a second/third grade gifted/talented class during a unit of study about cats and dogs. One student guessed from the cover that the book was about a vet (veterinarian). They all loved the first picture of the dog “in your face,” whiskers and all (3). They were amused that the dog’s name was Tuesday. They laughed at the toothpaste picture (33). One boy said, “I’d like that kind.” The students were so entranced by the whole book that three boys were almost in the reader’s lap from beginning to end. After reading, one boy guessed that it was nonfiction because of the “pictures”, then clarified that they “looked like” photographs. The students were very thoughtful about the content, especially about what a “disability” is or could be and the fact that we might not be able to see some disabilities. They also understood the idea of Luis giving back to other veterans. The book content led to a discussion about service animals, a familiar topic since the class had a police dog visit the previous week. They predicted that grades one or two would be the best audience; then one boy suggested fourth and fifth because of the story. Another thought it would be appropriate for preschool, and when a couple pooh-poohed her idea, she said, “But they like animals, and the story is about a dog.” Tuesday is definitely a winner by anybody’s definition.

Works Cited

- Channel 4 News. <<http://www.news4jax.com/news/tuesday-tucks-me-in/27951558>>. Sept. 9, 2014.
- Goodreads. 2014. <<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18465502-tuesday-tucks-me-in>>.
- Kirkus Review. April 1, 2014. <<http://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/luis-carlos-montalvan/tuesday-tucks-me-in/>>. Montalvo, L. C. *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*. New York: Hyperion, 2011.

About the Author

Kathryn Bauserman is a former elementary classroom teacher who currently teaches language arts methods at Indiana State University. She is a devoted dog lover and has her own golden retriever mix named Pooh. She lives with her husband, and she is frequently visited by her five grandchildren, who love Pooh, too. Bauserman and Pooh love to watch dog shows together.