

EVA'S COLOURS

Eva goes at school with her school bag on her back, and her hair combed as neatly as a doll's. People call out to her "Good morning Eva", but all they get in return is a tiny smile. Eva smiles shyly, faintly, as if she didn't want to smile too much. And when she smiles her eyes stare straight ahead, as though she were in a daze. When she arrives at school she goes straight to her desk, where there's always someone waiting to be with her, for a whole month. This month it's my turn.

I've got used to being with her, although she just does her own thing. I do my work, first there's a dictation, then a problem to solve, then some study time. She just looks at the blank page in front of her. She's not interested in people or books, drawings or photographs. She just looks at a blank page. When she's ready, she picks a colour. She's not in a hurry and she doesn't get tired. She scribbles and scribbles and scribbles until there's no white left at all. It's funny how she does it. I like watching her and sometimes I think she lives in a different world to us, and perhaps her world is full of colour:

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The funniest time, was when she coloured a page red until her pen ran out. I like red, and as she coloured in her page, I whispered in her ear:

"Now it's some lips with red lipstick."

"Now it's a match."

"Now it's a dragon with a long fiery tongue!"

"Now there's a real fire... a bonfire!"

I put the book on the floor and we jumped over it. It took a while, but once I got her to take the first jump, there was no stopping her! That's what Eva's like – she seems to have a battery that never runs down.

Another day, I saw she had a bright, bright yellow, like a shiny summer sun. When she was busily colouring in the page I leant over again and said:

"I spy, I spy... a duckling! ... No! It's a chick!"

"I spy, I spy... a fried egg!"

"I spy, I spy... a lemon, or maybe a sunflower?"

“Now I can definitely see a summer sun, a summer sun and a field of corn!”

And we played the game of putting the book on the floor. We held hands and ran through the wheat field. Eva was so happy, I said she should draw some red poppies - but she pulled a face, so I didn't insist.

When she coloured the page blue, things didn't go so well.

I started by telling her:

“Look Eva... your eyes!”

“Wow - now it's my T-shirt.”

“And here's the swimming pool!”

“Eva, look, the sea. The sea is big, it's really, really, big!”

Then I held her hand because I saw that something wasn't right. She couldn't breathe properly, and she'd gone all stiff: it was as if the blue was swallowing her up.

I didn't know what to do. Her mum and dad came and took her home. I just stood there feeling really worried. If I'd talked about the sky, and flying, instead of the sea, maybe nothing would have happened.

At the end of the month, I stopped sharing a desk with her. I thought she'd forget who I was, since she has a new person sitting next to her every month. But I missed her, so I decided to go and visit her. Besides, I had something that belonged to both of us that I wanted to give her. It was important for her to have it, and maybe that way she wouldn't forget me so quickly.

When I got to her house, I found myself in front of a big building, where there was a girl wearing a coat like the ones they wear in hospital, only hers was yellow. She took me into the garden, and there, under an orange tree covered in oranges, sat Eva, looking dazzled as if the sun was blinding her through the leaves. The oranges shone, and Eva's face shone like a doll's. A single flower fell onto her hair and I almost kissed her, she looked so lovely. But I didn't. And then Eva smiled at me... she smiled at me! I sat down beside her and gave her what I'd brought. Our book. The one we'd made together, page by page:

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She opened it slowly, turning from one page to the next. There was a red page, a yellow one, a blue one, a white one... By the time I left we'd added another page to our book. It's orange, the same orange as the orange tree. And there we are, the two of us, under the orange tree.

Script: Carme Aymerich