



## THE HAND THAT BLESSES US

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*To my father*

One day, the young man receives the news from his wife: he is going to be a father. He begins to ready himself, imagining and planning what he will teach his beloved child. With his wife, he thinks of possible names. The man is a father from the moment he hears the good news. Our father loves us before we are even born. His love for us precedes our birth.

When we are born, our father is there. His hand takes us, cradles us and blesses us. His gaze warms us and lights our face. If it is winter, our father's presence chases the cold away. If it is summer, he brings a soft breeze. Our father is a beacon in the middle of the night and guides us from before we open our eyes for the first time.

The father sees in his son what he was and what he will be. In raising his child, there is a reason for those long hours at work, clocking in and out, sleepless nights, worries about his salary and bills to pay. In his son, his struggle has a greater purpose. The father believes it really has to be like this and the fight is for a better future for his son. Everything is sacrifice and everything is love.

When they say "he has his father's face" or "he takes after his father", the father exhibits a feeling you can't put a name on (a mixture of love, affection, joy and pride) and smiles, grateful and happy. The creator and his creation. There is no finer work of art in the world than a son who looks like his father.

Our father builds the walls and roof. His effort is our shelter. Our father is the guardian and protects us. The son plays in sight of his father, who watches over him and ensures his safety and wellbeing.

Father is when we feel at home. When he comes home from work, he brings us chocolates, making us smile and jump. When our father locks the door to the street, our home is a castle and impenetrable fortress of walls and high turrets. In its rooms we can run and play in peace. No evil can enter. Father guards the keys.

Our father teaches us to swim and shows us the beach. Our father takes us to the theme park and for a haircut. He carries us in his arms to bed, from inside the car to our room, when we arrive home late at night. He signs our school report card and follows our development, with pride, from pre-school to university.



He cares about our progress and wants to help where he can. He wants to assist us and guide us. Father is our bedrock and inspiration. He is where we come from and the best of him forms a big part of who we are or who we are yet to become.

One day the son leaves his father's home and hits the road. He is leaving because the world also needs him. The son, in vain, hopes his father understands. The father loves his son, tries to understand, suffers in silence and never stops loving him. At the front door, the father pretends everything is fine, but inside he is crying. He cries because his son has grown up and he asks God to watch over his boy, as his gaze from the front gate will not reach him for much longer.

Saying goodbye at the bus station, from inside the coach, the son observes his father. From the pavement, the father looks at his son with the most tender hope of seeing him again. He feels now the weight of age and does not know if he will be here when his son next returns. A father saying goodbye to his son is a prayer that only fathers can recite, even if they do so without knowing.

The father has the heart and look in his eye of someone who hopes always to be there every time their son returns. The son cries too and asks many years of life for his dear father. Every goodbye is like a desolate sunless beach, in winter, waves battering the rocks, birds flying in the distance and an icy wind.

And the years pass by. The father has white hair now and admires his son for having the courage to go off in search for his dreams. The son loves his father, respects him for his wisdom and is grateful for all his love, education and support. However, much time passes, the son is a boat, but a father is always the sea. The small ship sets sail around the world, but the safest port will always be there: the father.