

TOMÁS LEÓN

GRANDPA'S BOYS



Illustrations by POLA HOFFMANN


AZAFRÁN
EDITORIAL



Grandpa's Boys

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In my house, there is only one date more important than the National Holidays, New Year and even Christmas, and that is the 15th of each month.



But, what is so important about the 15th of each month, people ask me?

Well, this tradition goes back about 50 years.



On July the 15th, 1972, Los Muchachos, my Grandpa's handball team, won second place in the Latin American championship. The team was elated and my grandfather was proud to be captain of the team..



On the 15th of each month, my grandfather's teammates gathered at my house in the afternoon without fail. We ate empanadas, the adults drank wine, and music was played until sunset. They always told the same stories. I knew them so well that I could finish the stories for them, as if I had been there myself.



But over the years, fewer and fewer people came.
My mom told me they were already very old and got
sick more often, so they often couldn't come.



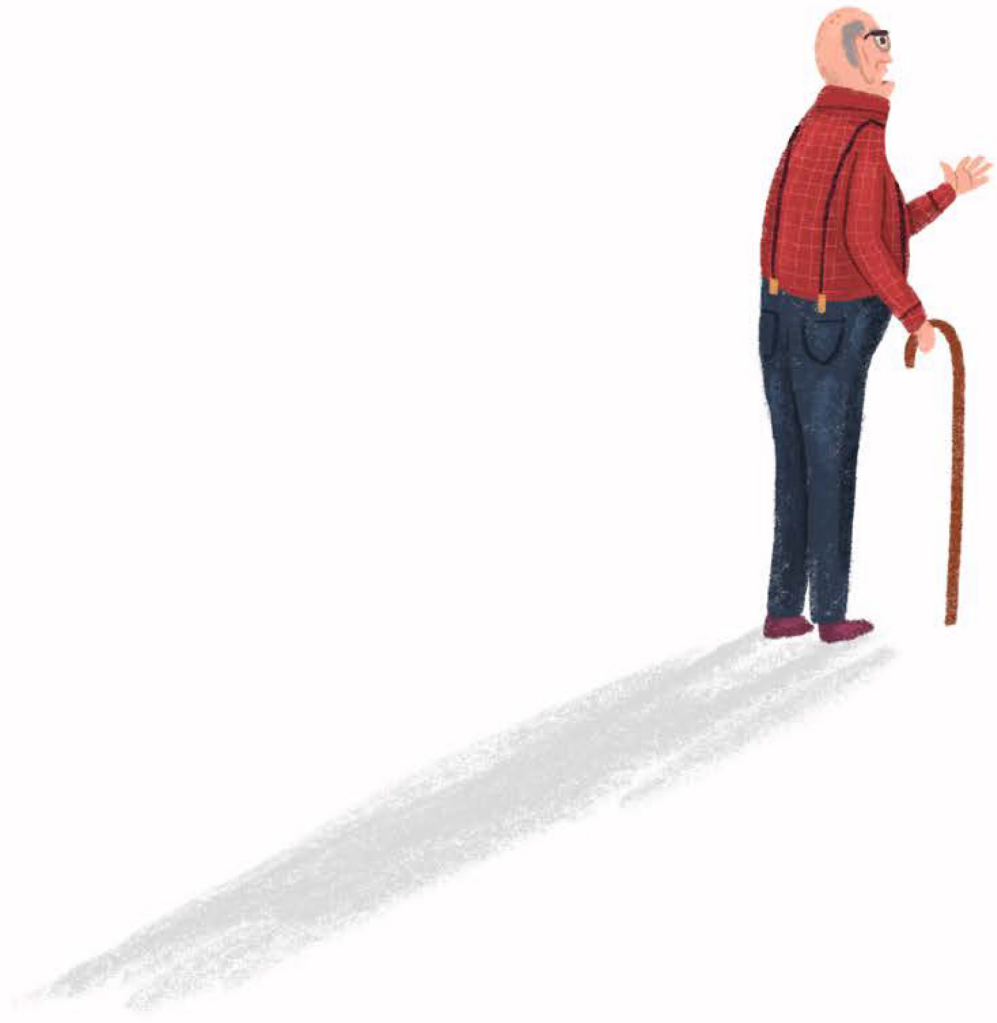
One of them, Uncle Caco, died last year, which was
very sad for everyone.



My grandfather was very sad. He would still set the table for the 15th. “Just in case,” he said. But there was no case; there were always empty places at the table, and we had to eat all the leftover empanadas over the following days.

As time passed and more places at the table lay empty, my Grandpa became sadder and quieter. He didn't feel like doing anything and sometimes complained that he felt dizzy when he stopped moving.





Sometimes, I caught him speaking to himself as he wandered around the house. I thought that perhaps he was talking to the Boys who were no longer there.

He wasn't himself. One night my grandmother announced that she would need to start sleeping in another room at night. She said my grandfather would often scream and move around a lot in his sleep.



He even once accidentally kicked her in his sleep. "He doesn't dream silently anymore. He won't let me get a wink of sleep," my grandmother said. .

Other times his whole body seemed to go stiff, or he would tremble, especially his hands, and it was difficult for him to control his movements. Sometimes he would fumble and drop things, or he would trip and fall on his knees.



My Grandpa had always been strong and had great balance, so sometimes now when he broke things, he would get angry and shout. The truth is that I was terrified when I saw him get angry.



BLAH
BLAH
BLAH

JAJAJA!



Some nights, we heard him telling the stories of the Boys with laughter and great joy, but when we went to see who he was talking to, he was alone.

One day, my dad told me he was going to take Grandpa to a house to live with other people who had the same problems. “But what was wrong with Grandpa?”

Dad showed me some images of brains on the computer. He explained that some were healthy, looking fat and pink, but that grandpa’s was a bit different. “See those little white things here?” Dad said, pointing at one of the black-and-white photographs. I nodded.

“That’s a cluster of proteins that shouldn’t be there. It’s called Lewy bodies. Those little things cause Grandpa to see things that aren’t there and lose control of his movements.”







LOS MUCHACHOS

When Grandpa was leaving, I asked him if he was afraid to go to another house, and he replied that he wouldn't be alone: "The Boys are always with me." That put me at ease because I knew he would continue to enjoy telling his stories.

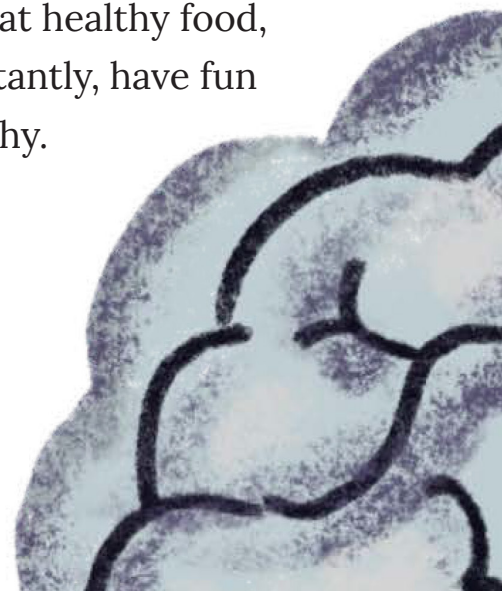
What are dementias?

Dementias are a group of diseases which change the way the brain works.

People with dementia might be forgetful, they might find it hard to pay attention, they could see things which aren't there or find it hard to do every-day jobs around the house. These problems may get so bad that the person won't be able to live alone anymore.

We don't know how to cure these diseases yet, but scientists are working hard to find out how to do this. We are also learning how to support people living with dementia to stay connected and active in their communities, neighborhoods, and families. Dementia is most common in older people, like grandparents, but it can also happen to young people.

Even though we don't know how to cure dementia, we do know that keeping our brains fit and healthy will make us less likely to develop dementia when we get older. Our brains need us to keep learning new things, eat healthy food, get good sleep, exercise regularly and, importantly, have fun with friends and family so they can stay healthy.



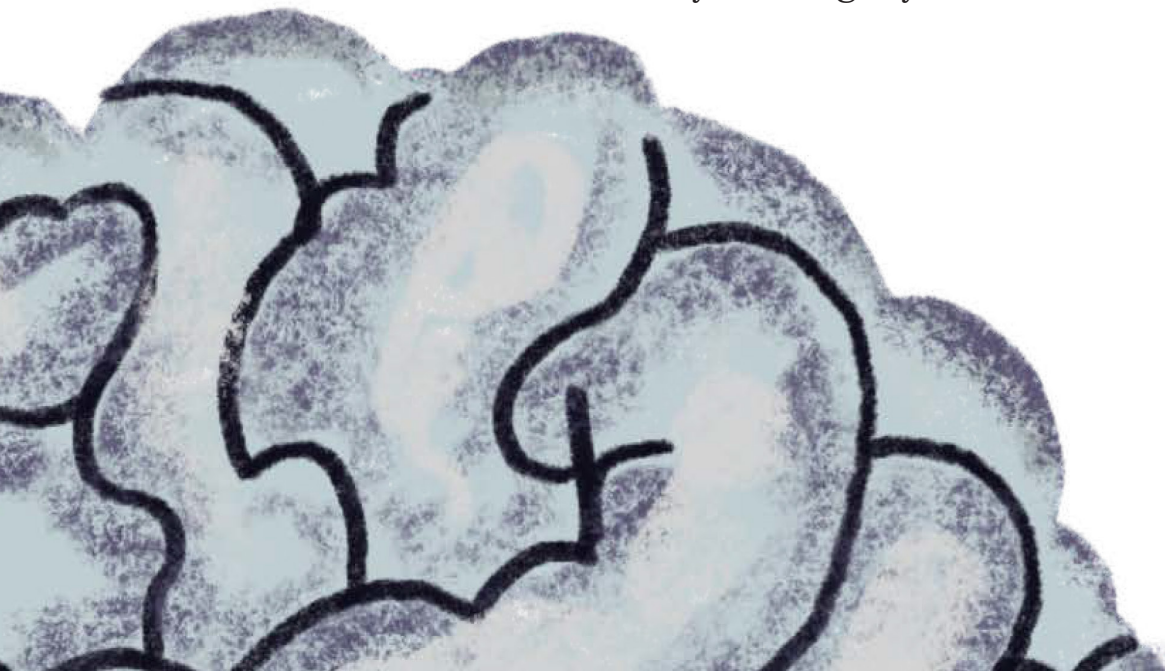
Lewy Body Dementia

People with this type of dementia often see, hear, or smell things that aren't there. These things don't feel like dreams. They are as real as you or me. People with Lewy Body dementia may sometimes try to interact with these things, maybe by talking to them or they might even find them frightening.

In addition, they have trouble sleeping. They can move around a lot in their sleep and may even fall out of bed.

Many types of dementia cause people to be forgetful, but this often doesn't happen in Lewy Body dementia. But people with this type of dementia can sometimes get lost on the street or even in their own home.

They may have strange movements, such as hand or foot tremors. Sometimes, they walk rigidly like a robot.







My grandpa has become very strange. He talks to himself, but he says he's with his friends. He moves oddly and sleeps a lot. The strangest thing is that he insists he's fine. My parents say he has a brain problem, but I'm not sure what's wrong with him. Can you help me understand?

Grandpa's Boys is part of a book collection that deals with dementia and seeks to accompany children whose grandparents suffer from this disease. This is the second volume and is about Lewy body dementia.