

If You Were Me and Lived in...Brazil

Carole P. Roman

Kelsea Weirenga, Illustrator

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This educational tour puts faces to the place on the map and helps to make the world a little smaller for kids.

Carole P. Roman provides an enlightening, educational view of life in the land of the Amazon and the home of Carnival in *If You Were Me and Lived In ... Brazil*.

Roman's practiced technique in her *If You Were Me and Lived In ...* series puts readers in the role of children of the country in question—in this case, Brazil. After some background information, some of which may be new even to adults—including the fact that the country's full name is the Federative Republic of Brazil, or that Pedro Álvares Cabral was the explorer who first declared it a colony of Portugal—Roman and artist Kelsea Weirenga prove able guides on a journey around the country, using real photographs combined with drawings to illustrate everything from famous sights to common foods and games. Roman's text is written at a level sophisticated enough for grade schoolers to get a sense of issues like deforestation, but accommodating enough to include pronunciation guides throughout the book and a glossary at the end.

One of Roman's simplest and most effective techniques is telling readers:

If you were a boy, your parents might have chosen Lucas (Loo-cas), Paulo (Pau-lo), or Bruno (Brew-no) as your name. Gabriela (Gab-ree-el-la), Ana (An-a), and Natalia (Na-ta-lia) are some of the popular names for girls.

These lines go far in helping young imaginations view the book not just as a tour of another country but as a glimpse of a parallel, equally valid lifestyle to their own.

If You Were Me and Lived In ... Brazil is not a complete introduction to Brazil, nor does it try to be. Certain items are shown but go unnamed, such as the famous statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. The variety of skin tones are shown accurately by Weirenga, which allows parents to explain the history if they choose.

The book succeeds by approaching children on their own level, showing Brazilian kids eating dinner, attending events, playing with a *boneca* (doll), and on a boat tour of the Amazon. *If You Were Me and Lived In ... Brazil* puts faces to the place on the map, and in doing so, helps make the world a little smaller for kids.

PETER DABBENE (August 10, 2016)

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