

READING TIME FOR YOUNG FOLKS

Ester Learned a Lesson

Miss ELISA MARQUEZ *



“ESTER,” called the mother gently, “Ester, it is about time now that you go to bed. Put that book down, dear, and run to bed like a good child.”

Ester looked at her mother with pleading eyes as she said with a smile, “Mother, may I not stay up for just half an hour more? This story is so interesting that I hate to break up its thought. Just half an hour more, mother.”

Mrs. Cruz, Ester’s mother, loved her daughter so much that she did not want to hurt her feeling. But she did not want her daughter to disregard health rules, too. Ester was quite a bright girl but her health was rather poor. Of

course, Mrs. Cruz did not like Ester to get sick by staying up later than her usual time for sleeping.

Quickly, Mrs. Cruz thought of a plan to make Ester follow health rules willingly and without complaints. She approached Ester lightly and began, “Ester, like you, I, too, loved books very much. Indeed my love for books was so great that I hated to see the big clock point its hand to dinner time and bedtime. Your grandfather wanted me to observe a regular time for going to bed. But I was rather hard-headed. Without his knowledge I read and stayed up late. I did this until . . .”

“Until what happened to you?” asked Ester whose interest was now centered on the mother’s story.

“Until I felt that I was getting weaker and thinner. The worst part was when I woke up one morning with a severe headache and fever.”

“Do you mean to say that you fell seriously ill?” queried the sympathetic Ester.

“Yes, child, I had to lie in bed for a long time. But the worst punishment I probably had was when the doctor told me not to read for a long time since my eyes were failing me. My health was also weakened.”

“That is rather hard. You must have suffered much,” commented Ester.

“Yes, dear, I really suffered much and

* Teacher, San Miguel Elementary School, Manila.

(Please turn to page 230)

JOE, THE LITTLE

(Continued from page 208)

"Who stole the egg then?" the principal asked without addressing anybody.

Joe stepped forward and said, "Mr. Garcia, may I help you find the boy who got the egg from the nest under Iya Sabel's house?"

"Yes, Joe," answered the principal.

"I live a block away from Iya Sabel's house," Joe began. "Although I go there sometimes, I have not gone there today. If I did not come to the office this afternoon, I would not know that Iya Sabel has eggs under her house and that someone has been stealing them. I would not know that one more egg was stolen this afternoon. However, I can tell you who did the mischief."

The principal looked at Pablo with suspicion in his eyes. Iya Sabel looked calmly at the speaker. The four boys touched each other and then looked at Pablo who became the target of every eye in the room.

"You suspect Pablo judging from the way you look at him," Joe continued addressing the others. "but he has told the truth. From the window of our room, I saw him with his mother. Each of them carried a bundle."

"Who stole the egg?" asked the principal.

"That boy," Joe answered pointing to Tomas.

"You lie!" shouted Tomas.

"Yes, he lies," agreed the other three.

Joe did not pay attention to

what the boys said. Instead he looked at Tomas and said,

"There is a piece of cobweb on your hair. How did you happen to get it? The answer is clear. As soon as your playmates were gone, you ran back to get the egg and your hair caught that little piece near the nest. You were afraid you would be tardy so you went straight to school. We were on our lines when you came and you joined us. I noticed that cobweb on your hair while we were standing on our lines. I also noticed that you kept on touching something which bulged in your pocket. I thought it was a mandarin or a pingpong ball but now I am sure it was an egg—the egg that Iya Sabel lost this afternoon."

"You are a liar!" Tomas thundered as he turned his pockets inside out. "There is nothing in my pocket."

"You have had no chance to hide it outside of the schoolroom so the egg must be sleeping soundly in your desk now," said Joe.

"Janitor, go and see the desk of Tomas and get the egg if you find it there," said the principal.

The janitor came back with an egg of brownish color in his hand. Joe took it in his hand and showed it to Iya Sabel.

"Does this look like the egg you have at home?" he asked.

"Yes, it has the same color as those I have at home. Oh, it is mine! It is mine!" exclaimed the old woman.

"Thank you, Joe," said the principal. "Tomas is guilty. He stole eggs and he told a lie. For these two offenses, he will

ESTER LEARNED A . . .

(Continued from page 204)

I don't want my little girl to suffer the same pain. So there, put your book down and go to bed. Remember you can read all the books you like if you have good health," advised Mrs. Cruz to Ester who had now fallen in deep thought.

Ester was convinced that after all, good health should be prized more than anything else on earth. So putting the book down, she kissed her mother on the forehead and without any complaints, she willingly went to bed.

not be admitted to his class unless he brings his father here. Tomas may now go home. The rest of the boys may go back to their classes."

The boys went out. Tomas did not say anything as he went out of the room. Iya Sabel thanked the principal and patted Joe on the shoulder. Joe went back to his class after he had given the note to the principal.

(Next month you will read more about Joe's detective work in the story, JOE'S WONDERFUL BOX.)

HELPS FOR STUDY AND ENJOYMENT

Why did Iya Sabel go to the office of the principal?

If Joe were not present, who might have been punished? Why?

How did Joe identify the guilty boy?

Why was Pablo a good son?

How was the guilty boy punished?