

LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

MOTHER'S OWN DEAR BOY

By LUDOVICO AGULTO

"MOTHER, on July 1, I am going back to school. I shall need ₱2.00 for my matriculation fee and about the same amount for renting my books," said a little youngster to his mother one day.

"I know, Reynaldo. We have to have that much so you can continue your studies. But I'm afraid we cannot have ₱4.00 by the end of June, dear. The money I earn washing clothes is hardly enough for us. However, do not lose hope. I will do all I can to get the money you need. Perhaps I can ask Mang Pepe to give us a loan. We can pay him back little by little," answered Reynaldo's mother comfortingly.

Reynaldo said nothing. He was thinking of some way in which he could help his mother earn the money he needed. It was hard for Mother to give him the things he needed. This had been especially so since his father died four months earlier. Poor Mother, thought Reynaldo. He must help her somehow.

Days grew into weeks. His mother was always busy washing clothes and sewing baby dresses to earn extra money.

Reynaldo, after cleaning the house,

would go away because his mother wanted to be alone. And he would be away whole day, coming home only for lunch. This he kept doing for weeks.

Then one Sunday morning—

"Reynaldo, take a bath and wear your best suit. We are going to Aunt Maria's. It is her birthday."

"All right, mother, I shall only be a minute."



While Reynaldo was dressing, his mother went to look for the shoebrush and shoe polish to clean Reynaldo's shoes. She looked all over the room, but she could not find the box in which she usually kept them.

"Reynaldo, where is the box with the things we use for cleaning our shoes?" she asked.

"It's here, Mother," replied Reynaldo, bringing out his shoe-shine box.

"What did you do with these, Reynaldo?"

"I've been a bootblack, Mother. I've been one for three weeks now."

"Why, why did you do this?" asked his mother, almost in tears.

"I love you, mother, and I wanted to
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