

SAFETY SECTION**Stealing Rides***(A True Story)*

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Ricardo and Jose are brothers. Both are in the fifth grade and are in the same section. One Monday morning they ate their breakfast a little later than usual and so they had to hurry to school.

"Walk a little bit faster," said Ricardo to his younger brother, Jose. "We might be late."

Without saying anything, Jose walked faster and kept pace with his brother. Just then, a Halili truck slowly passed by.

"Come, let us steal a ride. This truck will pass by our school," Ricardo said to his brother as he began chasing the truck.

"No, I'm afraid," protested Jose.

"All right, if you want to be late, you may go on. I must have this ride," and with a jump and a swing, he was there on the step-board at the end of the truck, holding on a small iron bar.

Jose was left behind. He walked on and on

and after several minutes he reached the school in time.

"Where is your brother, Jose?" asked Mr. Nils when he saw Ricardo's seat vacant. "Is he sick?"

"No, sir," replied Jose.

"Where is he then?"

Jose could not answer at once. He told Mr. Nils what Ricardo did in his effort to come to school on time.

"Something might have happened to him," Jose said to himself. He was very much alarmed. Horrible thoughts clouded his mind. Did he meet an accident? Was he carried to a distant place unfamiliar to him? Where could he be then?

The whole morning passed. Ricardo did not appear in school. Jose hurried home to see if he was there. To his amazement he did not find Ricardo in any of the places where he used to play when out of school. He was not in the swing; he was not in the see-saw; he was not in their neighbor's yard.

Jose's heart seemed to have jumped to his throat. The thought of Ricardo's meeting an accident made him run frantically up their house to report the case to his parents.

"Father," he said as soon as he was up. "Haven't you seen . . . ?" Jose did not finish what he was about to ask. In bed, he saw Ricardo lying very straight. His left leg was carefully bandaged. His left cheek was slightly bruised.

"There he is, Jose. He told me everything. I am glad you did not follow him. His thigh-bone is fractured and he has to undergo a painful and dangerous operation. He will be taken to the hospital at once," said the father.

Jose stood motionless by the bedside.

What, if he, too, stole that ride? He shuddered at the thought of it.

