

SAFETY SECTION**Too Confident**

By QUIRICO A. CRUZ \*

"Let's go fishing. My brother has two new fishing rods and small sharp hooks for catching *ayuñgin*." Alfredo invited Luis.

"I am sorry, Fred. It has just rained and the river banks are slippery. Our teacher told us it is dangerous to walk on the banks of the river especially after a heavy rain," replied Luis.

"That is true, but we know how to swim, don't we?"

"Yes, just the same, it is dangerous and I cannot go with you."

"Then I must go alone. I don't want to miss the fun and thrill in fishing *ayuñgin*."

"If you are determined to go you may. How-

ever, let me remind you not to go alone."

"Aw! I can take care of myself," replied Alfredo with an air of confidence.

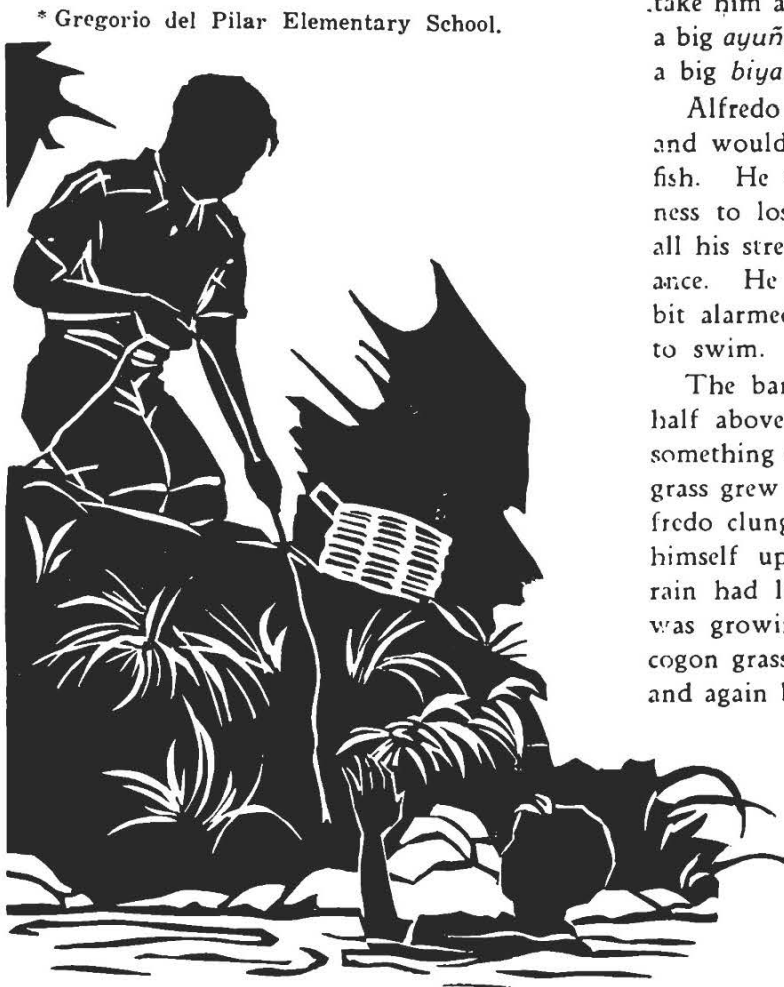
"All right then. Good day to you and good luck," Luis said as he turned away.

Alfredo went home and got ready for fishing. He took with him a bamboo basket in which to put his catch. On his way to the river he bought shrimps for bait.

The river banks were indeed slippery and it took Alfredo a hard time before he could seat himself comfortably on a big root of a mango tree that grew at the edge of the river bank. Luck seemed to have favored him for it didn't take him a long time to catch two mud-fish and a big *ayuñgin*. His fourth would-be victim was a big *biya*.

Alfredo realized that his hook was too small and would soon give way to the weight of the fish. He was greatly thrilled and in his eagerness to lose the fish he whipped his rod with all his strength and in doing so he lost his balance. He fell into the river. He was not a bit alarmed for he was confident in his ability to swim.

The bank was steep,—about a meter and a half above the water surface. One must have something to climb on to reach the top. Cogon grass grew on the sides of the river banks. Alfredo clung to some of them and tried to pull himself up, but, down he went again. The rain had loosened the soil on which the grass was growing. Alfredo was too heavy for the cogon grass. He tried pulling himself up again and again but failed. The loosened soil had to give way. He was now feeling exhausted. On the other side of the river, he saw guava branches hanging near the water surface. If he could only reach that place! But, he was now very weak and to swim to  
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\* Gregorio del Pilar Elementary School.

## TOO CONFIDENT

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the other side would endanger his life the more. However, there was no other way of saving himself except swimming to the other side of the river. He was about to swim to the other side when suddenly he heard a familiar voice calling him.

"Hey! Alfredo! I thought you were fishing."

Alfredo looked back and saw Luis. He wanted to talk but could not. He was completely exhausted. Luis noticed this and readily guessed Alfredo was in trouble. He took a long rope from his basket and threw one end of it to Alfredo.

"There, hold on Alfredo," he said, but Alfredo was too weak. He heard everything Luis said, but his hands were numb and couldn't even grasp the rope. Luis realized what danger Fred was in. He hurriedly tied one end of the rope to a protruding root of the mango tree and tied the other end around his waist. Then he jumped into the river and caught Fred by the collar of his shirt.

With great efforts, he pulled Fred near the bank.

"Hold on, Fred, and rest yourself."

The two boys held on the rope and after resting for some time pulled themselves up the bank of the river.

"What a break!" sighed Fred.

"Are you all right now?"

"Yes, Luis. Thanks for all that you have done. I would have been drowned had you not come on time. But tell me,

## YOUNG WRITERS

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saw that it was a pencil box. It was from father. Then she opened the other package. It was a supply of pads enough to last the whole year. The gift came from Rosa, her sister who was married.

Just then her father came into the room. He said, "Well, how do you like my present?"

"Oh, father, I know now why you did not want to give me the money to buy a pencil and a pad," Anita said.

She kissed her father and ran to the window to call for the car. Just before she stepped into the car she said, "Father, I think the first day of school is not so bad as I thought it would be."

Erlinda Alcantara  
Age 10

why did you bring this rope? Did you anticipate my . . ."

"Oh! no," interrupted Luis. I was on my way to grandfather's farm. Father told me to help him pasture our carabaos so I brought this rope with me. I dropped to this place to see what you have caught and—how did it happen anyway?

Fred told him about his struggle with the *biya*; how he lost his balance and fell into the river; and his futile attempts to pull himself up with the aid of the cogon grass.

"Oh, I just do not know how to thank you," sighed Fred.

"Don't thank me. Let us thank God, and remember, it is not safe to fish or even stay near the banks of the river especially during the rainy season.

## HOW IRMA FOUND

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"How clear the water is!" she exclaimed. "Clear as crystal," she quoted. "Look at the pebbles at the bottom. Some are white and round."

The water on the side was only ankle-deep. The sand on the river bed tickled the sole and the children danced and yelled. They leaped and splashed at one another as they bit off mouthfuls of the juicy watermelon.

The sun was becoming warm and the children were beginning to feel hungry, still they were unwilling to go home. Only the thought of an inviting breakfast made them leave the river. Carrying melons and watermelons, they trotted home as fast as they could.

And how Irma relished the breakfast consisting of rice, *tinapa*, and tomatoes!

Every morning after that day, Irma got up earliest and roused the others. They raced to the watermelon plots, chose the roundest fruit, and ran to the river for their bath. The children's appetite grew keener and their endurance in running became greater.

At the close of the long vacation the children returned to the city. Irma's friends greeted her with surprise.

"Why, how plump you have grown!"

"And rosy in the cheeks!"

Irma would smile and say, "The race to the river did all these. I do not call it exercise. It was just fun."