

LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

## Joe's Wonderful Box

By ANTONIO C. MUNOZ

*In this story, Joe has another adventure more interesting than that which you read last month. An important lesson in conduct is taught in this story. Find out what it is.*

THE pupils in Joe's school were busy. An operetta was to be staged on the following Saturday by the intermediate pupils. Those who were not taking part in the operetta were either helping in the construction and decoration of the stage or selling admission tickets to outsiders. It was a benefit show and every intermediate pupil was given three pesos's worth of tickets to be sold to friends and relatives. All sales were to be turned over to the principal on or before Friday.

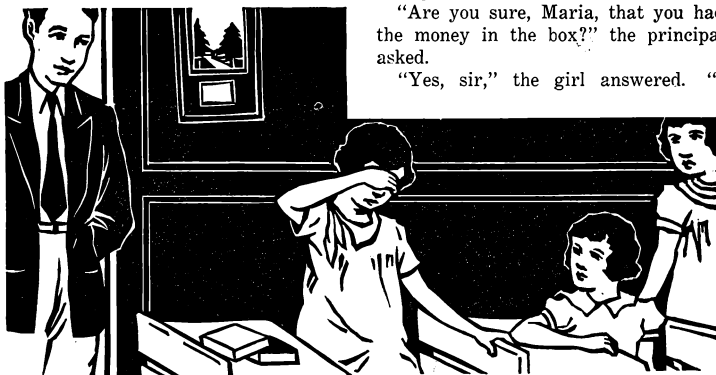
On Friday afternoon, the principal went around the classes to collect the sales from the pupils. Everything went on smoothly until he came to the Fifth Grade-2 Class. The principal noticed when he entered the room that one of the girls was crying.

"What's the matter, Miss Cruz?" he asked of the teacher.

"Maria lost one peso," the teacher replied. "That money was a part of her ticket sales. She put it in her box just before she left her home. When she reached the school, she put the box in her desk. When I told the pupils that you were coming soon to collect the sales, she got the box and opened it. The remaining tickets were there but the money wrapped in a piece of paper was gone."

"Are you sure, Maria, that you had the money in the box?" the principal asked.

"Yes, sir," the girl answered. "I



even looked into the box before I placed it inside the desk to be sure that it was there."

"Did anybody know that you had money in the cardboard box?" again asked the principal.

"I don't know," Maria replied. "Of course, every pupil knows that all ticket sellers have money with them this afternoon for this is the day we are to report the sales and turn the money over to you."

"Do you suspect anybody?"

"I have no idea as to who got the money."

"Do you think it was stolen by someone from another class?"

"I don't think so."

"Why?"

"Because pupils from other classes do not come into our room. Miss Cruz does not allow them unless she is present."

"Then one of your classmates got it."

"I am sure of that although I cannot point to any particular pupil."

"Miss Cruz," the principal said addressing the teacher, "I shall come back after the last period. Please don't let anybody out until I come."

The principal went out of the room and the teacher went on with the interrupted recitation.

As soon as the principal came to the Fifth Grade -1 Class, he told the teacher that he wanted to see Joe in the office. A few minutes later Joe and the principal were seated in the latter's office. The office was a narrow room adjoining the library which was vacant in the afternoon during recitation periods.

"What do you think of that, Joe?" the principal asked after he had told



the little detective the story of the loss of the money and the result of his investigation.

"I suspect someone," Joe said. "I noticed his strange behavior while the pupils were on their lines this afternoon."

"Who is he?" the principal asked.

"I can't tell you now but you will know who he is before you go home this afternoon," Joe assured the principal. "I shall come back after class so that we shall make the final investigation. Please tell the teacher not to dismiss the class until we come and not to allow anybody to go out before that time."

"I have already told her that," was the quick reply.

"Please send a note to Mr. Torres asking him to excuse Rod and me," Joe requested. "I should like to do something in the shop and I need Rod to help me."

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## JOE'S WONDERFUL BOX

*(Continued from page 255)*

"Rod is Rodrigo Villas, your classmate, isn't he?" the principal asked.

"Yes, sir," Joe replied.

Joe gave the note to his teacher. Rod and he went to the shop.

At four o'clock they were back in the office of the principal. On the table, Joe placed a box about a foot long, a foot wide, and a foot high. It was covered with black paper. On the front side of the box was pasted a paper cut-out of the head of a skeleton. Between its two sets of teeth was an opening in the shape of a mouth. At the back was a round hole about an inch in diameter.

Joe got an auger from Rod and bored a hole through the partition. When this was done, he carried the box to the library. He placed it on a table close to the partition adjusting it in such a way that the hole in the wall occupied the center of the hole in the back part of the box. To make the box firm in its place, he nailed the back corners to the wall. Then he went back to the principal's office. To the wall he nailed a bow with a fixed arrow the point of which was painted red. The arrow was about two feet long. A gauge was fixed on it in such a way that when the arrow was drawn, its red point would look like the tongue of the skeleton and when shot, it would come out eight inches from its mouth. After Joe had explained to the principal how it should be operated and how it should be used in the investigation at five o'clock, he cov-

ered the box with a sheet of manila paper. They locked the door of the library and that of the office.

A few minutes before five o'clock, all the pupils in the class of Miss Cruz passed into the library room. The principal and Joe entered when the pupils were seated.

"Children," the principal said, "I told Miss Cruz to bring you here for this is a more suitable room for the investigation than any other in the building. After a careful study of the case, I have come to the conclusion that a member of your class stole Maria's money. Who that pupil is, I do not know just now but I have something in this room which does not tell a lie. Neither does it make any mistake in picking out a guilty person. It loves the truth and hates anybody who lies. Sometimes it goes as far as killing a liar with the skeleton's tongue."

"Let me tell you, children," continued the principal, "how this thing came to be with us this afternoon. When I came back to the office from your room, someone told me that the boy who did the mischief is a member of your class. When I asked for the name of the wrongdoer, my visitor told me that this wonderful thing would tell me his name."

"Now look," the principal said as he uncovered the black box.

Everybody including the teacher was thunderstruck. They stared at the hideous figure of the skeleton on the front side of the box. Some turned pale. Others turned away their

faces from the ugly figure.

"In identifying a wrongdoer," the principal went on, "the first thing to do is to gather all suspects and then let them stand one by one before the box at a distance of about six inches. As a suspect stands, he should say either, 'I AM INNOCENT' or 'I AM GUILTY' as the case may be. Nothing will happen if everyone tells the truth but if someone tells a lie, the sharp tongue of the skeleton will dart forward into the body of the liar. Remember, the box never makes a mistake."

"You are all suspects. Each of you will now stand six inches from the box and say, 'I AM INNOCENT' if you did not get the money or 'I AM GUILTY' if you got it. Miss Cruz, please read the names as they appear in the register," the principal concluded.

The teacher read the first name, Pedro Abante. The boy stood up, went to the box, and said, "I am innocent."

Nothing happened. Miss Cruz continued calling the names of the pupils and each time a name was called, the pupil concerned stood in front of the box and uttered the words. All went well until the teacher came to No. 17.

"Marcelo Quintos," called the teacher.

Marcelo did not move. He was pale.

"Come, Marcelo," said the principal. "You are wasting time. The girls have not had their chance yet, you see."

Marcelo did not stand. He put his face on his forearm

which rested on the desk and cried.

The principal took him to the box.

"Please don't let me go near that box," Marcelo begged. "It is not necessary. I shall tell you the truth. I stole that money because I had nothing to report to you. My uncle borrowed my sales yesterday and today he has no money to return. I was afraid you would punish me if I could not report the sales so I got Maria's money when the pupils were out on their lines. Of course, I would pay Maria as soon as my uncle will have returned the money he borrowed.

"Were you doing right when you got Maria's money?" asked the principal.

"No, sir, but I was, thinking only of myself right then," Marcelo replied.

"Where is the money?" the principal asked again.

"Here it is," Marcelo answered as he put his hand in his pocket. From it he drew out a small paper package containing coins and handed it to the principal.

"Bring your uncle here tomorrow," he said to Marcelo. "I want to see him."

"You may now go home," he said to the class.

As soon as everybody had gone away, Joe and the principal went to the office. They found Rod still peeping through a tiny hole near the bow. He had been watching for any signal from Joe while the latter was in the library during the investigation.

"Thank you, boys," the

## AMONG THE BOY SCOUTS

(Continued from page 257)

dim and its light was badly diffused throughout the place. Three tables away from me, directly beneath the electric bulb, was a noisy group of boys. Their faces were familiar to me, and even their manner of conversation was not strange. They were the members of the "Black Pirate" gang, a notorious association of mischievous street boys, shoe shiners, and the like, who indulged in egg-stealing escapades and neighborhood brawls at times. The leader was a "tough" boy of fourteen, whom they called "Max." His name was Maximo.

As I was saying, they were very noisy,—so noisy, indeed, that at the time when the excitement among them seemed to be at its highest peak, I quite forgot the cake I was munching. I diverted my full attention to the group and was not

principal said to Joe and Rod. "That was splendid work."

The two boys grinned at each other and passed out.

### (Next month: JOE AND THE BURGLAR) HELPS FOR STUDY AND ENJOYMENT

Why were the pupils busy? What happened in the class of Miss Cruz?

Why did Joe use the box instead of telling the principal to search Marcelo? That would have been a shorter way.

What do you think happened when Marcelo's uncle met the principal?

Was Marcelo punished? If so, tell why and how.

surprised to find among them a boy who had recently joined our troop. Apparently, he was the target just then of the entire group.

All statements seemed to be directed at him, and a boisterous laugh which, every now and then could be heard, was, as I could see, an attack against him also.

The nature of the controversy, I soon found out.

"A sissy—that's what you are!" Maximo's voice was loud and full of scorn. "Won't smoke now, eh? Look!—" and he suddenly faced the group. "Look at our Boy Scout—he won't smoke!"

Laughter followed. Joel. (that was the name of the victim) was silent. His face was pale and his eyes were red. He rose to leave, but Maximo clutched his shirt and forced him down on his chair.

"Won't smoke, eh?" asked the malicious leader of the "Black Pirates," as he whiffed a wreath of smoke and blew it straight into Joel's face.

"Yes, I will not smoke," came the firm voice of the little 12-year old Tenderfoot. "Our Scoutmaster said it's bad for small boys—especially Scouts,—to smoke, and I believe him. I will not smoke!"

"That's what I told you before," butt in Nano, a boy of thirteen. This Boy Scout business will soften you up and make you a sissy instead of a man."

"Smoking doesn't make you a man," Joel retorted scornfully.

"But you can't deny that be-

fore you joined this Boy Scout affair, you smoked, no? When you became a 'Black Pirate' last year, you were as good as any one of us in smoking, no?" Nano snapped his fingers contemptuously.

"That was when I was not yet a Boy Scout, and as ignorant as any of you are. Now, I know it's not good to smoke. I took the Scout Oath last week, and I promised not to smoke. I will not."

"Then you are no longer one of us!" came the rasping voice of Max. "You're through, as far as being a Black Pirate is concerned. We can't accept sissies around here!"

Complete silence fell on the group, for each one of them knew the significance of being ousted from the gang. Eagerly, I watched the boys.

"All right!"

Joel stood, and pushed the chair backward with a loud noise.

"All right!" he repeated, hitching up his trousers, and his voice, louder than before.

"I'm going away from your foolish, dirty 'Black Pirate' gang. Mother has always told me it's not good, and that all of you are bad boys. I used to disregard her advice, but I know it's true now.

"I'm not going to smoke. And furthermore, I'm quitting your gang. Go where you will and do what you like. I'm through with you from now on!"

## THIS EARTH OF OURS

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upwards. These are known as capillary passages and these help water to ascend from below to the roots of plants.

In color the soil may be black, gray, brown, or even dull yellow. It may be either clayey and compact or sandy and porous. The fertility of the soil directly affects us. Many people live in places where the soil is fertile because they can make an easier living there.

Now let us see what the different kinds of soil are. Soil that remains above the bed rock from which it was formed is called *residual* soil. Soil that has been carried from the place where it was formed and deposited somewhere else is called *transported* soil. *Volcanic* soil is erupted from volcanoes.

What kind or kinds of soil are found in your locality? Tell your classmates what experiences you have had with the soil of Antipolo, of rice fields, in your garden or near a river bank.

## THE FOREST OFFERS

(Continued from page 251)

ladder is used. The nuts are also allowed to drop to the ground as they do when fully ripe.

Then the husk is removed from the nuts by soaking them

With that, the little boy strode out of the parlor, into the rain, and ran across the street, to take shelter inside the Drug Store there.

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## JOKES

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Teacher—"If you would apply for a position what would you put in the body of your letter?"

Luisa—"I have read in the newspaper that you are in need of a typewriter. I am very glad to apply for the position."

Moises—"Why are you limping, Cirilo? Is your foot sore?"

Cirilo—"No."

Moises—"Why don't you walk straight?"

Cirilo—"Because I stepped on the horse manure of the carabao."

Pacifico—"Why do you have a black eye?"

Adriano—"Because of that beautiful new classmate of ours."

Pacifico—"Did she strike you with her wooden shoe?"

Adriano—"No, while looking at her, I bumped my face against the wall."

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in cold water. In about an hour the pulp is removed. The nuts are then dried in the sun. Another method is to allow the husk to rot off by piling the nuts in a shade. Then the pili nuts are gathered and packed and shipped for export. Some of these finally find their way to our homes.