

READING TIME FOR YOUNG FOLKS



MACARIA'S mother was a *lavandera*. Her father had died some years previous to the time of this story, and since then the mother had supported herself and Macaria by washing the soiled clothes for several wealthy families in the town.

By careful economy the mother had managed to send Macaria to school. Macaria was glad to go to school, and was one of the best pupils in her class.

She was a good girl, and helped her mother as much as she possibly could after school hours and on Saturdays and Sundays. She assisted her mother in the simple cooking of the home, went on errands to the market and the grocery store, and helped her mother with washing and ironing the clothes. Yet she managed to find time to prepare her lessons and all her school work.

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Macaria gradually learned from her mother how to do fine laundry work. After a while she could wash, starch, and iron shirts, dresses, and expensive fabrics almost as well as her mother could do it.

At last Macaria finished the primary and intermediate grades in school, and was ready to enter high school.

Then a sad thing happened. Macaria's mother became ill from pneumonia. The doctor came every day, and Macaria took care of her mother as well as she could. After a while the mother got better, and the doctor said she would get well.

But the mother was too weak to do the work of a *lavandera*. So Macaria gave up the idea of going to high school, and now, in place of her mother, became the bread winner. By washing the clothes for the wealthy families of the town who had been her mother's patrons, she was able to support her convalescent mother

and herself.

And now we come to the time of our story. Macaria had just received the soiled clothes from the big house on the hill—the home of wealthy young Don Ambrosio and his beautiful wife, Doña Elena.

As usual, before washing the clothes Macaria was looking in all the pockets to see that nothing had been forgotten by the owners. As she felt in the side pocket of one of the linen coats of Don Ambrosio, she found something. She drew it forth, and to her surprise it was a twenty-peso bill which Don Ambrosio must have overlooked in his coat.

Macaria held the bill up and looked at it carefully. Yes, it was a twenty-peso bill!

Immediately the temptation came to Macaria to keep the money. She had never in her life had so much as twenty pesos at one time: Don Ambrosio would probably never miss this twenty pesos, or if he did, very likely he would not know what he had done with his missing bill.

How many things she could buy with that money! A new pair of shoes—if they were cheap—which she needed badly. A new dress of simple, inexpensive material—she had seen one in the store window priced at only ₱2.98. And she could buy so many things for mother—oranges and fresh meat and butter and milk and lots of other things which were too expensive for the slender income to afford.

To poor Macaria the temptation was great. But just then she remembered what her teacher once told to her class: "Better be poor and honest than rich with shame." Those words of her teacher helped her make a decision. She would return to Don Ambrosio the money which

was not hers.

"I will return it at once, lest I yield to the temptation," said Macaria to herself.

With the twenty-peso bill in hand, she started immediately to Don Ambrosio's beautiful home. She went to a door at the rear of the house and knocked. A servant came to the door and recognized Macaria as the *lavandera* who did the family washing.

"What is it, Macaria?" asked the servant.

"Don Ambrosio. Where is Don Ambrosio? I have something for him."

The servant admitted Macaria, and soon she was in the presence of the young master of the house.

"Yes, Macaria? What can I do for you?" asked Don Ambrosio in a kind manner.

"Sir," said Macaria, "I found this twenty-peso bill in the pocket of one of your coats which was sent to me to be washed. Here it is, sir." And she handed the twenty-peso bill to Don Ambrosio.

"A twenty-peso bill!" said Don Ambrosio. "Where did you say you found it, Macaria?"

"I found it in the pocket of your coat, sir," Macaria replied.

"Well, you may keep it," Don Ambrosio said, as he handed the bill back to her.

"But this is not mine, sir. The money is yours. I didn't earn it," the girl said.

At this moment Doña Elena, who had overheard the conversation, entered the room.

"Macaria, you are an honest girl," said Doña Elena. "You could have kept that money and my husband would never have missed it. Keep the twenty pesos, Macaria. It will help your mother."

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REWARD FOR HONESTY

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As she said this, Doña Elena noticed the cheerful appearance of Macaria and the smile on her rather pretty features. A thought came to her.

"Macaria," said Doña Elena, "I am needing a new maid. Dolores, my maid at present, is getting married soon, and will leave me. So I must find some one capable of taking her place. I believe that with a little training you could take her place. I must have someone who is honest, and you have just shown that you have that desirable qualification. Will you come?"

"Oh, Doña Elena, thank you very, very much," answered Macaria, and tears came to her eyes. "I would love to come and be in this beautiful home, and serve you. But my mother. She would be alone at home. I cannot leave her."

Then Don Ambrosio spoke. "I think we can fix that. We need an *amah* to look after our two small children. It would be easy work, and I think your mother could look after the children splendidly."

"Thank you, thank you, Don Ambrosio and Doña Elena," said the grateful girl. "I think mother would be very happy to care for

the children."

So Macaria hastened home to tell to her mother the good news.

"Mother, mother, see! I have a twenty-peso bill, all my own! Now I can buy new shoes and a new dress! And mother, that is only the beginning. I am to be the maid for Doña Elena, and live in their beautiful home on the hill. And Oh, mother! You are to live there too, and look after little Pepito and Carling. Isn't it just wonderful!"

The poor mother cried for joy, for now they need not suffer any more nor be in want. There was work for both of them—delightful, agreeable work. And a nice home, and pleasant surroundings.

"Let us thank God for our good fortune," said the mother.

"Mother," said Macaria, "it has certainly paid to be honest. I remembered the words of my teacher, 'Better be poor and honest than rich with shame,' and so I returned the twenty-peso bill to Don Ambrosio. And this good fortune is the result."

In a few days mother and daughter were settled in their new home and had learned their new duties.

"Macaria," said the mother one day, "how hap-

MENDELSSOHN

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like church music, yet because of its fine style it is like concert music too. Be sure to hear and learn to love the music of this happy composer—the music of youth, of spring, of fairies, and of flowers.

A REVIEW

1. How was Mendelssohn's life different from that of other composers?

2. How was he like Mozart and Beethoven as a boy?

3. Tell of his father.

4. Who was his first music teacher?

5. What could he do at the age of ten years?

6. What was his first name? What does it mean? How was it suitable?

7. Where did the family go to live?

8. What did Felix and his sister Fanny do?

9. How did he regard his sister Fanny?

10. Tell of the Mendelssohn home in Berlin.

11. Tell all you can about Mendelssohn's music.

py we are now!"

"Yes, indeed!" said Macaria.

"And this, my dear Macaria," continued her mother, "this is your reward for honesty."