



four ran into a coconut grove toward a big tamarind tree laden with green fruit. Most of the other boys picked up their books and went home. A few including Lolo remained on the school lawn.

"Let's play ball for a while," suggested one.

"Not a bad idea," added another. "Our mothers, my mother particularly, will not need us until sunset."

"Quite right!" exclaimed a third boy.

Soon they were playing ball but Lolo was not with them. He had slipped away before the game

HOW LITTLE BROTHER HELPED

(A STORY)

By ANTONIO C. MUÑOZ

"HAVE you hoed the ground, Gildo?" asked the garden teacher just before he dismissed the class one afternoon.

Gildo hesitated. Then with difficulty, he answered, "A part of it, Mr. Quilat. I mean it is almost finished."

"Good!" exclaimed the teacher. "You see, Gildo, you have not been working very hard. I am afraid you will not be able to plant your seedlings on time unless you double up your speed. Your brother, Lolo, and the rest of the boys have pulverized the soil and on Monday they will transplant the seedlings to their plots. All the plots except yours are in fine shape now."

"Yes, Mr. Quilat," Gildo admitted, "but I'll do all I can to catch up with them. I'll work hard tomorrow and Sunday. By Monday, my plots will be ready."

"That's the spirit, boy," said the teacher trying to encourage the thoughtless and lazy Gildo.

Lolo, Gildo's younger brother was uneasy in his seat during the conversation. He was ashamed—very much ashamed of his brother. He was afraid that Gildo was not telling the truth. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he left the room.

"Come on, boys," shouted Gildo when he reached the street. "To the tamarind! Yes, to the tamarind!"

Three boys joined the thoughtless boy. The

he went to the garden to find out how much his brother, Gildo, had done. He looked all about him. The garden as a whole was clean. All the plots were ready for planting. He was relieved. Gildo, he thought, had done something. But upon reaching the other side, he was surprised to see a patch of ground, untouched. He looked at the stake in the middle. It was No. 20. That was Gildo's number.

"My God! Gildo hasn't done anything," he sighed. "The worst part of it is that he lied to the teacher when he said that his plot is almost finished."

That was Friday afternoon. Without another word, Lolo took off his shirt and laid it on a box nearby. Then he grabbed his hoe and hoed the untouched ground. After an hour's hard work, he had hoed the part assigned to his lazy brother.

He went to the garden very early the next day. He had removed all the weeds before he went home that morning. In the afternoon, he was there again doing the work for his thoughtless brother. On Sunday afternoon, he put the plots in shape. It was then that Gildo came with his hoe. Perhaps he wanted to do a little hoeing for Mr. Quilat's inspection on the following day. From where he stood, he could see Lolo working on his plot.

"I'll not bother Lolo," he said to himself. "He is here to help me, I believe. If he does a little hoeing, it will be enough for Mr. Quilat's inspection

tomorrow. I had better go for the gang must be waiting for me now."

Gildo slipped out of the garden without Lolo seeing him. Lolo was too busy to look around.

Monday came. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Mr. Quilat and his boys went to the garden for the periodic inspection. All the boys' faces including Lolo's beamed with joy. They expected good ratings for their work was done and up-to-date. Gildo was uneasy. His face was a picture of hopelessness. It's true that he saw Lolo in

Gildo stood at the gate. He was too frightened to go near his plot which was behind the tool house. Mr. Quilat with his notebook was going around the plots and grading them.

"Gildo, come on," he shouted. "Let's see what you have done."

Gildo walked slowly toward the teacher and the two went to the space behind the tool house.

"Oh!" was all that Gildo could utter when he saw his plot in as fine a shape as the rest. He could not believe it. He looked around for his brother, Lolo. The latter stood a few yards from him. He grinned as Gildo's eyes met his.

"Now, isn't that fine, Gildo!" exclaimed Mr. Quilat. "I never thought you could catch up with the other boys."

Gildo did not answer. When the teacher was gone, he sat down and cried like a baby. Lolo went to him and patted his brother's back. "Come, brother, let us go home," he said as he held his brother's arm.

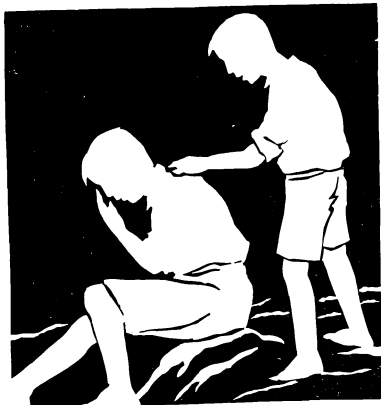
"Oh, Lolo! You are so good!" he sobbed. "I never realized until this afternoon how lazy, careless, and thoughtless I have been. How can I ever repay you?"

"By always doing your work well," Lolo answered.

"That, I promise," Gildo said.

Gildo was changed. After that incident in the garden, he became a new boy. He did his work so well that Mr. Quilat often praised him. All this was due to Lolo, the good and thoughtful brother.

BIG BROTHER



the garden, but did he work on his plot? If he did, had he done enough to give him a passing mark? These things came up in his mind as he lagged behind his happy classmates. Already he pictured in his mind the angry face of his teacher, Mr. Quilat. Already he seemed to hear his favorite expression, "Cuño! Quinto Grado!" And before he knew it, he had splashed into a mudhole. He got up, a pitiable but very funny picture. His classmates laughed at him. Lolo ran back to his brother. He took off Gildo's shirt and told him to go to the garden. "There is a surprise waiting for you there," Lolo told him as he ran to the faucet and rinsed Gildo's dirty shirt.

Acknowledgment

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