

The Girl With Curly Hair

by Amparo C. de los Reyes*

EVERY night I end my prayers this way: "And please, dear Father in Heaven, teach me to control my temper." Yet it doesn't seem to improve my temper at all.

"It must be her curly hair," I overheard Grandmother saying to Mother. "Curly hair and a fast temper always go together."

"Is that so!" I thought to myself. "Then, that is easily cured." I went to the kitchen and wet my hair and it lay back flat and straight. I looked in the mirror and laughed when I saw how funny I looked with my hair plastered down.

"Aba!" said a mocking voice behind me. "Laughing all by herself. Crazy!"

I turned around swiftly. There was Pedro (my brother) making a face at me from the doorway. He is twelve (I'm only eleven) and he ought to have known better than to tag around and tease me all the time.

"You let me alone," I told him fiercely.

He danced a few fancy dancesteps. "You let me alone!" he piped; mimicking me.

I turned my back on him and just to show him I wasn't paying any attention, I began to powder my face.

"Oho!" he crowed. "Trying to make herself beautiful! Even though you powder very hard, you'll always remain b-l-a-c-k—black!"

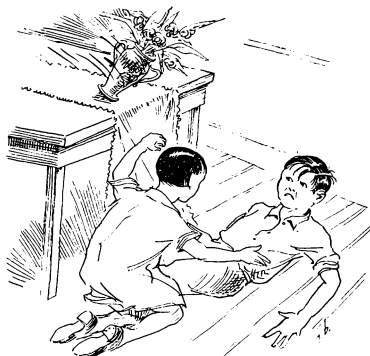
"Will you go away?" I cried, my voice rising very high.

"Hoh! Hoh!" he said. He made a graceful twirl, then mincing out of the room he began to sing:

Tinta, violeta, negra!

Negra, negrita, ita!

(Have I told you before that I am quite, quite dark? I am the darkest of all my sis-



ters and because my hair curls, they call me Negrita. Pedro had made up that song just to plague me.)

Tinta, violeta, negra!

Negra, negrita, ita!

He kept on singing and it seemed to me that he was coming back! I closed my eyes and began to count a hundred. The angry blood was making my ears very hot. I opened my eyes.

Pedro peeped into the room just then.

"*Tinta, violeta, negra!*" he sang, "*Negra, negrita!*"

I flung myself on him like a tiger. We both fell on the floor. He clutched at the table. The table-runner slipped down and Mother's favorite flower jar came crashing just a few inches away from his head.

We both got a beautiful spanking afterwards. I cried hard because I was spanked. I cried harder and shuddered to think of what might have happened if the jar hit Pedro on the head. (One part of my mind said—"It would have served him right!") I cried hardest yet when I saw that my hair began to curl once more as soon as it dried. Oh my hair and my terrible temper, is there no way of getting rid of them?

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