

## Grandmother's Stories

## The Rich Man And The Poor Man

**D**RAW closer to my chair, children, for I shall tell you a story. This is an old, old story. It is older than I am. My mother told it to me and her mother had told it to her.

I shall tell you the story of Mayaman and Mahirap, two honest men who once lived in the town of Pasig. Mayaman was very rich, while Mahirap was very poor.

One pleasant afternoon, these two friends took a walk in the neighboring woods. While they were talking about their fortunes, they saw a wood-cutter busily cutting and collecting fagots for sale. This wood-cutter was so poor that he had to work hard to give his family food.

Mayaman said to his friend, "Which of us can make that wood-cutter rich?"

"Even though I am much poorer than you," replied Mahirap, "I can make him rich with just the few cents I have in my pocket."

The two men agreed to try making the wood-cutter rich. The first to try was Mayaman. He called out to the wood-cutter: "Do you want to get rich, my friend?"

"Certainly, Master, I would like to get rich so that my family would have plenty of food to eat," at once replied the wood-cutter.

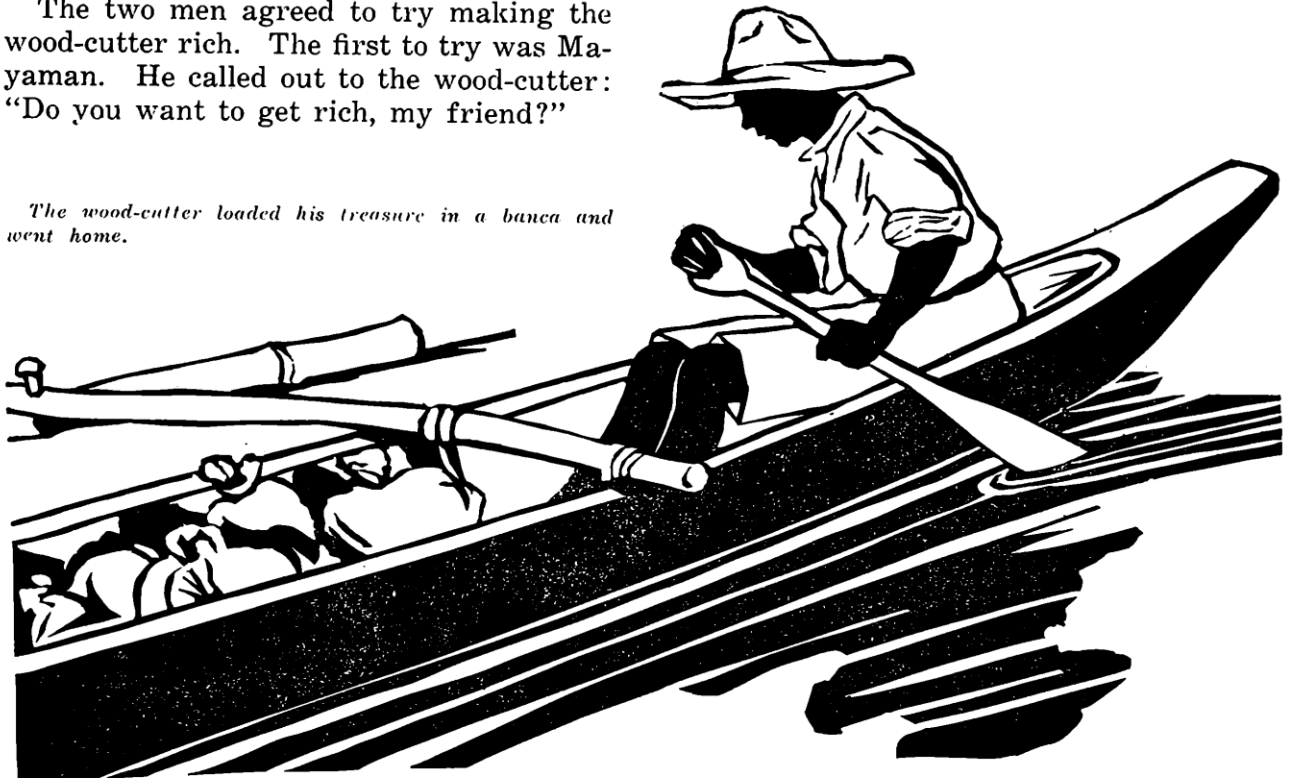
Pointing to his large house which was a little distance from the woods, the rich man said, "Come to my house this evening before you go home and I will give you plenty of money."

The wood-cutter was very happy at his good luck. In the evening, he went to the rich man's house. Mayaman gave the man four bags of money. The wood-cutter loaded his treasure in a banca and went home. When he reached his house, he spread the gold and silver on the floor and began planning. He thought of the things he would buy for the home and for his children. After a while, he went happily to bed.

Some evil neighbors found out that the wood-cutter had plenty of money in the

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*The wood-cutter loaded his treasure in a banca and went home.*



## THE RICH AND THE

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house, so during the night, they went softly inside the poor home and stole the bags of money. In the morning, the wood-cutter discovered the loss of his money.

"What shall I do?" he wept, "Now I am as poor as I ever was." He hurried to Mayaman's house and told him all that happened.

Mayaman listened to the wood-cutter's tale patiently, then he once more gave him four bags of money.

The four bags were stolen that very night by the same bad neighbors. Three more times the rich man gave the wood-cutter bags of money, but no matter how well the bags were hidden, the neighbors always found out and the wood-cutter remained as poor as ever.

On the sixth time, Mayaman did not give the wood-cutter money. Instead he presented him with a beautiful ring.

"Treasure this ring," Mayaman said, "for it will give you everything you ask for. With its help, you can become the richest man in the whole world."

The wood-cutter received the ring with joy and sailed home. In the middle of the river, he felt hungry, so he asked the ring for food. In an instant, twelve different kinds of food appeared in the banca, and the hungry man ate heartily. After he had eaten, the wind calmed down, and his banca would not move.

"O beautiful ring!" he cried, "Blow my banca very hard so that I can get home quickly."

At once a strong wind rose and blew the banca very hard. The little boat was broken to pieces and the man had to swim for his life. In his hurry to get ashore, he lost the ring. He went back to Mayaman and told him of his loss.

"I am very sorry," said Mayaman, "but I have nothing more to give you. Go to my friend, Mahirap, and ask him to make you rich."

Mahirap had no money to give the wood-cutter. He was so poor himself that he had only five centavos to spare. He gave the five centavos to the wood-cutter and told him to go to the market and buy a fish. The wood-cutter was disappointed, but he sailed home and followed Mahirap's advice.

The wood-cutter went to the market. There he saw a very nice fat fish. "For how much will you sell the fish?" he asked the fish vendor.

"You can have it for five centavos."

"Will you give it to me for three?" asked the wood-cutter. "I have only five centavos and if I give you all I will have nothing with which to buy rice."

But the tendera refused to give him a discount. So, because the fish looked so fat and fresh, the wood-cutter got it for five centavos.

When he reached home, he at once proceeded to clean the fish. When he opened it, he could not believe his eyes. For there before him was the precious ring which Mayaman gave him! He was so happy about recovering his treasure that he walked up and down the streets laughing and singing:

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!

I have found you now;

You are here and nowhere else."

His bad neighbors heard him. They thought that the wood-cutter had discovered who stole his money and were addressing those words to them. They were frightened, so running up to him, they gave him his bags of money. "Forgive us!" they cried, "We are returning everything to you."

The wood-cutter was greatly surprised, but he pretended to be angry. He took all the money from them.

With his ring and his bags of money, the wood-cutter soon became the richest man in the town.

"You see," said Mahirap to his friend, "With five centavos, I have made a man rich."