

Lydia's Thanksgiving

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TEN-YEAR-OLD LYDIA sat at her study table with her chin cupped in her left hand and a pencil in the other. Now and then she would look afar, knit her brows, write something, cross it out, and look more bored than ever. Finally with an ugly scowl, she put her pencil inside her notebook and closed it with a bang. Her mother who sat knitting opposite her had been silently watching her daughter and asked, "Why, Lydia, what is the matter?"

"Oh, Mother, I simply can't do this homework. I've tried several times but it is of no use. No idea would come into my mind," answered the girl.

"A problem again in arithmetic, I

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suppose," suggested Aling Nena.

"No, Mam, it is a rough draft for our theme on "Things I am Thankful for."

"Well, well, you always enjoy writing your compositions. I don't understand why you find that work difficult this time," said the mother.

"Because this is something more serious, more real, Mother. I can't simply imagine things to be thankful about. How I wish we were richer like our neighbors who have magnificent homes, lovely cars, beautiful gardens, plenty of servants, lots of playthings, plenty of fashionable clothes, and everything that could be wished for. Then I can fill pages with the list of things I should be thankful for, but as it is, Mother, . . . well, don't you understand, Mother, why I can't prepare my composition?" asked Lydia bitterly.

Aling Nena looked at her child pitifully and was about to say something when they heard a voice calling for Lydia.

Lydia peeped out of the window and saw Corazon, a classmate, who was on her way to school.

"Come along, Lydia, aren't you ready yet?" was Corazon's greeting.

"I'll be down in a minute," answered Lydia as she got her books and with a, "Mother, I am going," ran downstairs.

"Corazon, were you able to write a composition about Thanksgiving?" she asked her friend.

"Why, surely, yes, and I have so much to thank God for that I had to use two sheets of pad paper," laughingly answered Corazon.

"You did?" asked Lydia, surprise and disbelief shown on her face and voice.

"Certainly, and why not?"

"Well, I simply wonder how you could fill pages when you are . . . er," said Lydia and suddenly stopped for she was about to say, "when you are very much poorer than I."

"What were you about to say?" asked Corazon.

"Nothing," lied Lydia. "May I know some of the things you are thankful about?" she asked, wondering what her friend had to be grateful for when her mother had to work in a factory because the little amount received by her father as a carretela driver would not suffice for the bare necessities of life.

"Above all, cheerfully began Corazon, "I am thankful that Father and Mother and all of us children in the family are enjoying the best of health."

"Why, yes, that is something to be thankful for. How miserable I would have been if Father or Mother, or Sister were dead or sick," interrupted Lydia.

"Then," continued enthusiastic Corazon, "I thanked God that our country is

in perfect peace. Imagine what a horrible condition we would be in, if we were Chinese or Japanese girls. Don't you think we ought to thank God for that?"

"Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed!" eagerly answered Lydia as she raised her eyes to heaven in silent prayer. "What a thoughtless girl I am! And, and, I remember the terrible earthquake last August. We must be thankful that it did not last longer than it did; otherwise, we would have been in the cemetery now, don't you think so?"

"To be sure we would," agreed the other.

Well, thanks a lot for opening my eyes to the great number of things I must be thankful for. A hundred ideas are now entering my head and I'm sure I'll fill not only two pages but even three. Here is our library. I'll go to a corner and write my composition before the bell rings," happily said Lydia.

Lydia left Corazon and went to a corner of the library. She was all eagerness to start writing her composition but not until she had said a fervent prayer asking forgiveness for her thoughtlessness and ingratitude and thanking God for the innumerable blessings He has given, did she begin the rough draft.

