



## AMONG THE BOY SCOUTS—

By Ricardo de la Cruz\*

# How Manuel Passed the Test

(A Boy Scout Story)



Manuel was sad. He was disappointed.

Trying his best to pass his First Class examinations, he still failed. As to how he failed, he could not tell. All he knew was that he had become confused during the examination and had answered foolishly the questions put to him by the Scoutmaster.

They were in camp then. Having selected a nice, comfortable camp site in Malolos, Bulacan, they—a Scoutmaster and twenty-four boys—had been staying in the place for three days.

It was Manuel's first experience in the out-of-doors. Mr. Castro, his Scoutmaster, had told him of the life in an open camp and Manuel really found it to be one full of thrills and enjoyment. But that was before he took his First Aid examinations.

And as he sat there, leaning against the sturdy bough of a full-grown guava tree, leisurely carving his name on an opposite branch, he was mentally reviewing the examination. He was assigned as guard, together with Vicente, another Scout from the Cobra Patrol. Vicente was fetching water from a stream behind the camp area. All the other boys had gone out to the woods, led by Mr. Castro. He was giving them instruction in Tracking.

Briefly and bitterly, Manuel recalled the questions. He was being tested on "artificial respiration." The Scoutmaster had asked him to



demonstrate. A boy was called upon to lie down and Manuel was asked to administer artificial respiration. It so happened that the boy was ticklish. The moment Manuel placed his hands on the boy's ribs, the latter started to wiggle and laugh. The other Scouts could not help but laugh too, and a general confusion took place.

Perspiring terribly, Manuel tried his best to apply what he had learned. All was of no avail. He rose with flushed face and flaming cheeks. He was ashamed and angry with himself.

The Scoutmaster then began to ask him questions. "How many seconds are required to make one complete respiration?" "Fifteen seconds," he had answered. The titter that swept around the other Scouts began to confuse him further. Three other questions were asked and in all cases, his answers sounded foolish and ridiculous. He had failed.

All these returned to his mind as he remained thus, absently engrossed in his carving.

Suddenly, he heard a slight noise coming from the rear part of the camp. He paused and strained his ears.

"Help! Help!"

The cry was feeble, almost inaudible. Yet he heard it quite distinctly. He recognized the voice. It was Vicente! Yes, Vicente! He had gone to fetch some water. The call was com-

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ing from the rear part of the camp, in the direction of the stream. It must be he! He was drowning!

With a bound, Manuel was up and away. Hastily closing his knife, he exerted himself and sped as fast as he could, all the while unbuttoning his shirt. Upon reaching the bank, he saw a glimpse of his brother scout's head disappearing into the water. Vicente was a Tenderfoot Scout. And he did not know how to swim.

Without as much as a moment's hesitation, Manuel threw aside his shirt and plunged into the river. The current was not so strong, and in no time, he found himself within a foot from the drowning boy.

Manuel was not an expert in life-saving. In fact, he did not even know why he ever dared to jump into the river in order to save that boy when he was ignorant of life-saving and its methods. Why had he not secured a rope instead? But it was not the time for meditation. It was a time for action.

Cautiously he approached the drowning boy. Vicente's eyes were closed; but he perhaps felt the presence of somebody near him. In his blind effort in clutching at somebody, he accidentally got hold of Manuel's forearm. Vicente was a bigger boy. Excited greatly by his discovery of aid he tightened his hold and pulled Manuel closer to him.

Manuel was frantic. He

knew what that meant. If Vicente would drown, he would have to drown too. He was alarmed. But he did not entirely lose his presence of mind. Taking a careful aim, he planted a terrific blow on Vicente's jaw.

Gradually, the latter's struggles stopped. He became quiet. He had become stunned and was unconscious.

Manuel breathed a sigh of relief and wasted no time in pulling the boy to shore. He himself was exhausted.

He wanted to rest upon reaching the shore but he knew that it would not do to let the minutes pass. Vicente was not breathing. He might die.

Artificial respiration  
yes, that's it!

Manuel forgot that he failed in this examination that morning. He forgot that he was a Second Class Scout. He was a SCOUT!

Knowing that a pause might mean the death of his friend and brother scout, he immediately set to work. It was strange: he experienced no difficulty at all. It seemed as if he had been a veteran life-saver. Placing his hands on the ribs, pressing them, pushing them, releasing them with a snappy jerk.—Manuel was regular in his movements, almost like an expert.

Ten minutes	twenty
minutes	one hour
no results.	

Manuel was fatigued. But he knew that he must continue, and he did.

Gradually, Vicente began to

show signs of life. He was breathing! Thank God! Manuel was overjoyed. He almost shouted with pride and gratitude. But he himself was weak. Vicente was revived. He needed stimulant. Manuel would get some for him. As he rose, however, a sudden attack of dizziness assailed him, and he toppled over in a faint.

When he regained consciousness, he found himself surrounded by his brother scouts. All were anxiously gazing at him. He fancied he saw looks of admiration in their faces.

About five yards away, there was another group of Scouts. They were huddled around somebody on a cot. The fog in Manuel's brain began to clear away. All that had happened returned to him vividly. He recalled the struggle in the water; then, the rescue, the artificial respiration. The Scouts must have arrived immediately after he had fainted. He smiled a little as he recalled the fact that he had saved a comrade's life.

From out of the group of boys emerged Mr. Castro. He approached Manuel and laid his hands on the boy's shoulders.

"I am proud of you, my boy. I am proud of you," he said, his voice trembling with emotion. Manuel knew that his Scoutmaster meant what he said.

And as the boy-hero drank the cup of coffee which his Patrol Leader extended to him, Mr. Castro smiled and added, "You have passed he test."