

The Adventures of Juan

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Philippine

Intermediate

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Juan was always getting into trouble. He was a lazy boy, and more than that, he did not have good sense. When he tried to do things, he made such dreadful mistakes that he might better not have tried.

His family grew very impatient with him, scolding and beating him whenever he did anything wrong. One day his mother, who was almost discouraged with him, gave him a bolo and sent him to the forest, for she thought he could at least cut firewood. Juan walked leisurely along, contemplating some means of escape. At last he came to a tree that seemed easy to cut, and then he drew his long knife and prepared to work.

Now it happened that this was a magic tree and it said to Juan:

“If you do not cut me I will give you a goat that shakes silver from its whiskers.”

This pleased Juan wonderfully, both because he was curious to see the goat, and because he would not have to chop the wood. He agreed at once to spare the tree, whereupon the bark separated and a goat stepped out. Juan commanded it to shake its whiskers, and when the money began to drop he was so delighted that he took the animal and started home to show his treasure to his mother.

On the way he met a friend who was more cunning than Juan, and when he heard of the boy's rich goat he decided to rob him. Knowing Juan's fondness for tuba, he persuaded him to drink, and while he was drunk, the

friend substituted another goat for the magic one. As soon as he was sober again, Juan hastened home with the goat and told his people of the wonderful tree, but when he commanded the animal to shake its whiskers, no money fell out. The family, believing it to be another of Juan's tricks, beat and scolded the poor boy.

He went back to the tree and threatened to cut it down for lying to him, but the tree said:

"No, do not cut me down and I will give you a net which you may cast on dry ground, or even in the tree tops, and it will return full of fish."

So Juan spared the tree and started home with his precious net, but on the way he met the same friend who again persuaded him to drink tuba. While he was drunk, the friend replaced the magic net with a common one, so that when Juan reached home and tried to show his power, he was again the subject of ridicule.

Once more Juan went to his tree, this time determined to cut it down. But the offer of a magic pot, always full of rice and spoons which provided whatever he wished to eat with his rice, dissuaded him, and he started home happier than ever. Before reaching home, however, he met with the same fate as before, and his folks, who were becoming tired of his pranks, beat him harder than ever.

Thoroughly angered, Juan sought the tree a fourth time and was on the point of cutting it down when once more it arrested his attention. After some discussion, he consented to accept a stick to which he had only to say, "Boombye, Boomba," and it would beat and kill anything he wished.

When he met his friend on this trip, he was asked what he had and he replied:

"Oh, it is only a stick, but if I say 'Boombye, Boomba' it will beat you to death."

At the sound of the magic words the stick leaped from his hands and began beating his friend until he cried:

"Oh, stop it and I will give back everything that I stole from you." Juan ordered the stick to stop, and then he compelled the man to lead the goat and to carry the net and the jar and spoons to his home.

There Juan commanded the goat, and it shook its whiskers until his mother and brothers had all the silver they could carry. Then they ate from the magic jar and spoons until they were filled. And this time Juan was not scolded. After they had finished Juan said:

“You have beaten me and scolded me all my life, and now you are glad to accept my good things. I am going to show you something else: ‘Boombye, Boomba’.” Immediately the stick leaped out and beat them all until they begged for mercy and promised that Juan should ever after be head of the house.

From that time Juan was rich and powerful, but he never went anywhere without his stick. One night, when some thieves came to his house, he would have been robbed and killed had it not been for the magic words “Boombye, Boomba,” which caused the death of all the robbers.

Some time after this he married a beautiful princess, and because of the kindness of the magic tree they always lived happily.

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