

# WHEN CRUZITA AND LUPE CAME TO OUR SCHOOL

They were two of the queerest little things that ever come to our school. That is, they were the first day, but now they are just like all the others. Sometimes when I look at Cruzita now, I remember that first day, and it makes me feel old. But then, I am getting old. I shall be 14 next month, on graduation day, and it's six months since I saw Lupe, holding Cruzita by the hand, come in through the big gate, right into the middle of the yard, crowded with girls. Six months is really a long time.

They stood in the middle of the yard and the first thing I noticed about them was their eyes. I believe that Cruzita and Lupe have the biggest eyes of any children in the world. Lupe's are black, just like great, big, soft blackberries, but Cruzita's are gray. When she smiles they twinkle all over with little lights. Some people have miserly smiles, that just twitch up the corners of their mouths, but Cruz laughs all over her face. You see, sometimes we call her Cruz, which means cross, and sometimes Cruzita, little cross. They stood there in the middle of the yard, with their eyes as big as plates, looking scared to death, holding each other's hands.

It was rope season, and the yard was full of turning ropes, for all the world like dozens of windmills flying about. But in a moment everybody had caught sight of the two little things. The ropes stopped and we all crowded close about them. Really, they were the very funniest looking children we had ever seen. Cruzita had on a little Mother Hubbard, made of black silk, so old and shiny, and a pair of shoes that must have been her mother's. She had a yellow straw hat, that is, part of one, because the crown was out, all covered with bright, red roses; and her hair, braided so tight that it stuck out on each side of her head, like two little wire ropes, was tied with pieces of pink calico. Lupe had long trousers, although he wasn't more than 8. His coat had once been a skirt, and his cap—I remember, I wondered if it fell to pieces every time he took it off. They really did look funny, especially in our school, where nearly all the children are rich and dress beautifully.

There they stood, looking at us with those big eyes, till suddenly Paula White burst out laughing. She just laughed and laughed.

"Did you ever see such frights? Where on earth did they come from?"

"The clothes bag, I guess." If anyone had told me Freda would have said a thing like that I wouldn't have believed it.

"Pure silk—our mark on every yard." Marjorie's father keeps the biggest dry goods store in town, and they're awfully rich. Perhaps she only meant to be funny, but she reached out and took the corner of Cruzita's old silk dress in her fingers. I don't know what next she would have done, but she didn't have time to do anything. Lupe just dropped Cruz's hand and came at her like a little tiger. He pushed at her with his arms and his head without saying a word. The girls tumbled over themselves to get away from him, and when he had cleared a space he stood in front of his sister with his fists doubled.

"Well, of all the little wildcats." Marjorie tossed her head and walked away. "Come, girls. He'll bite if you look at him." But none of the girls went, only Thelma. Thelma follows Marjorie around like a shadow and does everything she's told to do.

Then the funny little thing in the black wrapper began to cry. She didn't make a noise, but just let the tears roll down her face as if she had nothing to do with them. Lupe turned round and saw her. He gave one long, slow look at us that made me feel burning all over I was so ashamed. Then he took his sister's hand and turned toward the gate.

"Little boy—little boy—come back." They were almost at the gate before I reached them. "What do you want? Come back. Nobody'll hurt you."

He stopped and turned round. Of course he didn't understand what I was saying, but I didn't know that then, so I knelt down on the floor in front of them and began asking all kinds of questions. They were such tiny little things I didn't feel as if I could talk to them standing up.

"You mustn't cry," I said. "She didn't really mean to be mean."

"Look out, he'll scratch." It was one of Marjorie's friends, but the other girls looked at her so she turned as red as a beet and slipped back into the crowd.

"Won't you tell me your names and why you came? What is it you wanted?"

Cruzita stopped crying and began to smile. It was just as if somebody turned a light on inside her head, all the twinkles in her eyes. Lupe smiled too, and then he began to talk. And I couldn't understand a single word he said. I just knelt there and looked at them and wondered whatever we could do, because I could tell by Lupe's face that it was something very serious he was telling me, and I knew he was asking me a question by the way his voice lifted up at the end.



"COME BACK—NOBODY'LL HURT YOU."

"Why, they're not Americans." I guess none of us had ever been so close to anybody that wasn't American before. Anyway we were just as surprised as Sadie. "Why, we can't talk to them."

It was like meeting some of the strange people in the geography. I tried to think of what Indian explorers do when they can't talk to the tribes, but I couldn't think of anything except making signs, and I didn't know what signs to make, because I didn't know what Lupe was trying to say. He had begun talking again, and I was sure he was asking me the same thing because he kept saying the same words over and over. Suddenly his eyes all filled up and he took Cruzita's hand again, and I know that he thought we wouldn't do whatever it was he wanted, and that he was going away.

Just then I remembered Carmen. When Carmen first came to school her nurse used to bring her every day and I had heard them talking something that wasn't English. Perhaps she could find out what these strange little things wanted.

"Some one go and get Carmen. Tell Carmen to come here."

But when I turned I saw Carmen walking away toward the building. At the bottom of the steps she stopped and said, so all the girls heard:

"They're servants; I don't talk to servants."

I was so surprised I just sat down where I was and looked at her until she went into the hall and closed the door. Perhaps I should have been sitting there yet, if Miss Pierce (that's

the principal) hadn't come out to ring the bell.

"Well, what on earth?" I never heard Miss Pierce say anything like that before, but I guess she was so surprised she forgot we were there.

"What on earth have we got here?" I really do like Miss Pierce, but she does look awfully cross when she isn't a bit. It's her nose, I think. It's so long and sharp, like a knife, and her glasses seem to grow out of the top of it. She came up to Cruzita and put her hand on her shoulder.

"What is it, little girl?" But Lupe just took her hand in his and lifted it off Cruzita.

"Well of all the rude little boys! Do you think I'm going to eat you both?"

"I don't think he understands, Miss Pierce."

She turned around so sharp I almost felt it was my fault.

"What's the matter with them; lost their wits?" Sometimes Miss Pierce talks as if she were cutting things out with a pair of scissors. She almost clicks. "Why shouldn't they understand?"

"They don't talk English. They talk something else."

"Why, bless me, what can we do? Can't any one talk to them?"

"Carmen can, but—"

"Go and get Carmen." It was Alma Miss Pierce happened to look at, so Alma went.

It felt like hours before Alma and Carmen came down the steps. We had almost forgotten Cruzita and Lupe, wondering whether Carmen would

come. She can get madder than any girl I ever knew and she'll never do anything she doesn't want to. But I guess no one ever disobeys Miss Pierce.

"Ask these children what their names are, Carmen, where they come from and what they want?"

Carmen spoke to them, very low, as if she was ashamed. We couldn't hear, but we all saw what Lupe did. He let go of Cruzita's hand, stepped right up to Carmen and took off his ragged cap. And he didn't put it on again all the time he was talking to her. I guess that pleased Carmen, because her face changed and after a minute she began to smile. Cruzita and Lupe smiled too, and there they were all three laughing away together.

"Well, Carmen, what is it? Let us laugh too." Even Miss Pierce was smiling to watch them.

"Why he's only 8 and she's not 6 yet, and they want to get work. He says he knows a boy who works after school and on Saturdays and makes a lot of money, but when he tried to get a place nobody would take him because he can't speak English. Some man told him to come to school and learn first and then he would give him some errands to run. So he came and brought his sister because he thinks maybe there's something she can do too."

"For—the—land's sake—alive!" Mother says she's sure Miss Pierce never said that. But she did. I was right in front and I heard it. "Where do they come from? And why is he in such a hurry to go to work?"

Carmen talked to them again. They didn't laugh now, and pretty soon I thought Carmen was going to cry.

"Oh, they're awfully poor." I don't believe she stopped to think whether the girls were looking or not. "Their father's sick in bed and they haven't had anything to eat but beans for the longest time. And they didn't have any dinner last night, nor any breakfast this morning and there isn't anything in the house when they go home. They have a little, tiny baby brother that cries every time their mother goes out, so she has to stay with him all day. Their father got sick because he used to go out every morning, whether it was raining or not, to look for work, but he couldn't get any, because he can't speak English, either. They came from Mexico, and they can only talk Spanish. He says—"

"Bring them into the office, Carmen." Miss Pierce was almost crying. She took off her glasses, twisted them round and put them on again, and I saw her eyes were wet.

A few minutes later the bell rang and we had to go in. At noon we tried to get Carmen to tell us what Miss Pierce had done, but she just looked important and smiled and wouldn't say a word. Early in the afternoon we saw her go out with Miss Pierce, and they didn't come back till it was almost time to go home. Then Miss Pierce called a meeting and told us all about it. There were Cruz and Lupe and the baby and the father and mother. They had just one bed and a stove and some boxes to sit on, and nothing to eat in the house at all.

They had come all the way from Mexico because they thought there was lots of work here for everybody, but they couldn't speak English and they couldn't find any. And now the father was sick and if we didn't do something for him right away he would die. It would be just the same as if we had killed him. Then she asked us if each of us wouldn't be willing to give some of our pocket money. But before she had finished speaking, every one of us, boys and girls, was pushing up to the desk. Carmen got there first and emptied her purse; every one of us handed over all we had. Then Miss Pierce counted it. When she got through she took off her glasses, and this time the whole school saw her eyes were wet. She came down to the front of the platform and you could have heard a needle drop, it was so quiet. She didn't say much. It was the way she looked. I don't believe any of us will ever forget a word.

"Girls and boys," she said, "I'm proud of you, far prouder than if every one of you had passed a perfect examination. That would only have shown that your heads are good, but this shows that something far better than your heads—your hearts—are good. You've made a family very, very happy, and you've done something for your country besides. You've shown a stranger that he is welcome in our land; that our doors are never shut night or day to a man because he is poor."

Miss Pierce stopped for a moment, and then she said—and whenever she looks cross again I'm going to remember that smile:

"I'm going to trust every one of you girls to look out for Cruzita, and you boys must take care of Lupe. Be kind and very gentle with them, because they don't know our ways and can't speak our language yet. Don't forget you're helping to train two future citizens. No matter what happens later they'll always think of this school and of us as the first place and the first people they knew in the United States. We are to give them a warm welcome. Let it be the very kindest we can make it."

## Relic of Prehistoric Man

Yale university is to have, as a gift from the University of Heidelberg, a plaster copy of the famous "Heidelberg man."

The "man" is not a man at all, but a jawbone. Possibly it was a woman's jaw. It was found buried deep in a sand pit near Heidelberg, Germany, and is regarded as the very oldest human relic ever found. Some scientists have estimated its age at more than 100,000 years.

It belongs to what geologists call the lower quaternary period. The teeth are well preserved. The bone is twice the size of the ordinary human jawbone of the present day and differs from it in other ways. Those who believe in the Darwinian theory think this is a relic of the "missing link"—that imagined creature that stood half way between ape and man, and which, according to the Darwinians, ages ago ceased to exist.

## Muzzled!

He was telling a thrilling story of a thousand and one hairbreadth escapes, and his pretty listener was leaning anxiously toward him, eagerly drinking in his every word.

"The wolves were upon us," he said, "bellowing and roaring, as I have so often heard them. We fled for our lives! I don't deny it. But every second we knew the ravenous pack was gaining on us. At last they were so near that we could feel their muzzles against our legs—"

"Ah!" gasped out the lady. "How glad you must have been they had their muzzles on!"

## A Challenge

"Come, Worry, let us walk abroad today; Let's take a little run along the way; I know a sunny path that leads from Fear Up to the lovely fields of Wholesome Cheer. I'll race you there—I'm feeling fit and strong. So, Worry, come along!"

We started on our way, I and my Care. I set the pace on through the spring-time air. But ere we'd gone a mile poor Worry stopped, Tried hard to catch his breath, and then he dropped, Whilst I went on— An easy winner of that Marathon.

And since that day when vexed by any fear, When Worry's come again with visage drear, I've challenged him to join me in that race, And found each time he could not stand the pace.

—John Kendrick Bangs in Ainslie's.

## Ain't It

"More than 5,000 elephants a year go to make our piano keys," remarked the student bearded, who had been reading the scientific notes from a patent medicine almanac.

"My word!" exclaimed the landlady, "Ain't it wonderful what some animals can be trained to do!"—Harper's Magazine.