

Nydia Ecury



Which Other One?

THERE WAS THE TIME WHEN MY BROTHER, TWO YEARS OLDER THAN I, TOOK special pleasure in teasing me and the sister after me. When we were playing at tea visit with our dolls, he would rush by and run off with all the cookies our Grandmother had given us for the occasion. Another time, he would grab a favourite doll, swing it by an arm and fling it into a flowerbed in my Grandmother's yard. When we played at marbles, he would cheat and win, taking off with all of our marbles. Worse, he would frighten us, holding a dead cockroach by its whiskers and swinging it in front of our faces.

We were fed up and as I could write, just barely, we decided to do something serious about it. Painstakingly, we made a list of all the nasty things he did. There must have been at least a dozen different items listed.

Of an evening, when Papa had finished having supper and had started reading the newspaper, we approached him and presented him with our list. He began reading the list, item by item, uttering non-committals like: "Well, well," and "What do you know", and "How do you like that!"

Finally he said: "Go get your brother". We did so, already savouring the joy of victory, which must have smudged our otherwise new and innocent faces with a degree of meanness.

When our brother arrived, Papa told him: "I have here a list telling how often and in how many ways you are spoiling your sisters' fun."

The boy fidgeted.

To us girls Papa said: "Okay. I have read this list very attentively. The two of you have done a very good job of it. I am very proud of you. Now where is the other list?"

We were flabbergasted. Wasn't the list long enough? Had we missed out on more teasing by our brother? Did Papa know more about it than we did?

"Which...which other list?" we stammered in unison.

Papa put an arm around our brother and the other arm around the two of us. Then he said in a very warm and comforting tone: "The list of all the good things he does. Nobody is totally bad. Find out and bring me the other list, so I can put it next to this one. When I have had the chance to compare them, I can decide what's to be done."

The teasing stopped as if by magic.

