

SECRET IDENTITY FINALLY REVEALED...

THE NIGHT THE THREE KINGS CAME!

by PEEWEE VILLANUEVA

Mama was quite an expert with delegating chores to her children in such a manner that made the assignment seem like a privilege. One of those privileges was the role of the Three Kings. Usually the older children played the Three Kings to the unsuspecting younger children. The older children looked forward to their privileged role just as much as the younger ones looked forward to the goodies that the Kings would stuff in their shoes.

I remember waking up eagerly one Three Kings morning to see plastic-wrapped cookies together with the candies inside my shoes. I was saving up the goodies I had received until someone commented that the cookies were tasteless. It made me curious to know what she meant by "tasteless". From my first bite into that cookie, it was immediately verified that the comment I heard was an understatement. The cookie almost tasted *awful*! Then I heard another comment that made my ears perk up. Somebody said, "Maybe Nonon ran out of sugar when she made those cookies." That comment got my curiosity and imagination working but I refused to accept what my mind was piecing together from that comment. I refused to think that the Three Kings were not real. Or even worse - that the Three Kings were actually my older sister, Nonon! That traumatic Three Kings morning was a hint of the truth that I gradually managed to accept after two more Three Kings celebrations.

Then the awaited event finally came. Bibot and I were assigned to be the Three Kings. We tried our very best to cover all traces of any hint or any detail that might give away the real identity of the Three Kings. So we waited patiently until Popoy was fast asleep. He happened to be the sole occupant of the room which had all the pairsof meticulously-cleaned pairs of

shoes lining its window sill from end to end. Slowly, we tiptoed into the room with the sleeping boy and the shoe-filled window sill. We stealthily started filling up the shoes in the dark, trying to be as silent as possible.

Little did we know that Popoy, with his wild imagination, always slept with a flashlight under his pil-

low every night, just in case a burglar came around. He planned to catch the burglar by surprising him with the glare of the flashlight and by suddenly pouncing on him. Then he would be the hero of the day.

He was dreaming of that chance to become a hero when he suddenly woke up to a crackling sound, which was actually one of the candy wrappers of the goodies we were stuffing in the shoes. He stood upright in bed while Bibot and I immediately crouched beside the bed, almost under it. He saw Bibot's crouched figure, and in his excitement to catch the imagined burglar, he pounced on her, completely forgetting to use his flashlight. Bibot shrieked "Aray!" He was so surprised to see that the burglar he caught was just his older sister. He asked what we were doing there and, quick-wittedly, we came up with the excuse that we were trying to get Bibot's slippers that were under his bed.

In his obsession with burglaries, he accused us the next day of trying to steal the candies from the shoes. Better a wrong accusation than giving away the real identity of the Three Kings! **LL**

Funny Childhood Story

by Rey David

It began as a dare when we were little, no more than nine-year-olds. Art, Mike, Paul, and I would climb up the concrete fence of our backyard, walk precariously along the narrow ledge against the outside wall of the master bedroom, face the neighbor's house across the empty lot, and gleefully relieve ourselves. Borrowing a phrase we picked up from Sesame Street, we called this practice "Watch the Birdie". **LL**

I REMEMBER WHEN...

by Rory Laico Packwood

MALU...

- was only as tall as the turkey being raised in the yard for Thanksgiving dinner.

- was Papa's favorite child whom he fondly called "Malu-walo" and who was constantly made to sing the song "Nagpabando".

I...

- was called "Orey-Worey".

- would do just about anything Popoy would do... **LL**

Ching, September 1959

