



## THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

by Lia Silva

Disneyland is supposed to be every kid's "happy place" however when I was a little girl we never were able to go there -- but then there was Dasma. The huge house with the Olympic size pool where all of Lola Luz' grand kids back in the 70's would come together every weekend, holiday and summer vacation. I always bragged about having a wonderful childhood because of this house. I'd like to share some of the memories:

- One time school was called off because of a storm, so my dad dropped off Bambi and me at the Dasma house. He felt guilty about not taking us home. Little did he know when we got there Bambi and I jumped for joy because we saw the Music Room was packed with cousins pillow fighting, screaming, and laughing. Kids were literally bouncing off the walls with the music turned up louder than a siren.

- Each summer was always a blast because at least half a dozen cousins spent their vacation there. We swam all day until the only thing visible was the whites of our eyes. Sometimes we even forgot our swimsuits but that didn't matter -- the water was warm and the sun was out. We always managed to get in trouble when we swam because our favorite dressing room was Tito Popoy's room which had an entrance to the pool -- we always got the hardwood floors soaked, his bed all wet and when we took a bath in his bathtub I don't know how but each time we used one bottle of Herbal Essence shampoo and somehow his shaving cream also managed to get into the tub. So once, he was fed up and he literally put a street sign on the door that said, "Keep Out." I think we were too little to read it because that never stopped us. Oh, except for the legend of the human skull inside his closet.

- Another group of people was stressed out by our presence --

the maids. Lola's house was a land of milk and honey and the pantry was the place to find it. There was an unlimited supply of coke, *barquillos*, cookies, candy and ice cream. The maids tried to keep us out of the kitchen because we were worse than a hungry pack of wolves. The maids tried to hide the keys for the fridge and the pantry but we always found them. One time Tita Malu intervened and locked us inside the pantry to teach us a lesson. When she opened it she thought we'd be in tears -- *yun pala nagpiesta kami* (only to find we were partying in there). On each shelf of the pantry there was a kid sitting with a bag of goodies in hand.

- We also use to harass the maids each time on the intercom wherever we were in the house and say "*Pahinging* (Could you give us) juice, *brojas* and coke float!" "*Pahinging* towels," and so on.



- Our games in that house were the best. Our favorite game of all was called Hiding in the Dark and the perfect place for it was the Library. It had many shelves to hide

in, desk spaces and an air conditioner! The Library was also a favorite hangout because there were lots of gadgets and two phones. Sometimes we would even pick up one of the phones and start laughing *yun pala* (only to discover) Tita Malu was at the extension then she'd say "*P\_n\_ta* put the phone down!" At the end of each summer I think Lola had to call a repair man for the air conditioner, the typewriter with the missing keys and buy a new set of rubber stamps, office supplies and shampoo the carpet *kasi amoy pawis* (because it smelled of sweat).

- We also had outdoor games. One of the best was playing in the dirt. We always built dams and bridges from dirt. The gardener Mang Juan always had a fit because you'd think a gopher was digging holes in the ground. Another outdoor game we loved was dropping dry ice into the pool because we thought it was so cool, like boiling lava.

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