The Boy with the Black Hand



This story about a boy called Toribio, is an Ecuadorian legend. He was born with a condition. Toribio did not have a right hand. The family was devastated and his parents decided to offer their prayers to the *Virgen del Soto*. This church was famous for granting graces to devoted people. His parents asked for a miracle: to grant the grace of giving their son, a right hand.

As Toribio grew up, he was a happy kid. He never felt sad or timid because he did not have his right hand. He was one of the kids who received lots of love and care in the neighborhood. He also showed love and cared for people in need, he lived surrounded by poor people. Every time a person showed up to his house asking for food or money, Toribio tried his best to help them.

One day, an old lady with a little boy knocked on the door and begged for food. As Toribio had a big heart, he fed the visitors and also filled a basket with fruit for them to have something extra to eat

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at home. The old lady was grateful and the little boy felt very happy. In return, the old lady told Toribio:

"Thank you for being so kind. I will pray for you. You know? I think tomorrow you will receive a surprise".

The next day, Toribio's parents were woken with an unusual sound. They heard Toribio screaming and his parents did not know what was happening! Their son was shouting, laughing, and jumping on the bed. They ran to Toribio's bedroom and they could see their son was really excited. He cried out:



"Mom, Dad... Look! I have a right hand, A RIGHT HAND!"

When Toribio showed them his new hand they were silent for a few seconds and looked at each other with surprise. No one said a

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word, his parents could not believe their eyes. Toribio did have a new hand, but this hand was different. It was completely black. After the shock, the parents realized it was a gift from heaven. They prayed and thanked God for the miracle. They knew this miracle was a grace from the *Virgen del Soto* who they were devoted to.

Toribio was so happy. He did not care about the color of his brand new hand. He could do everything he wanted to do, just like the kids who played with him. Now he could grab and play with both hands. He could climb trees and help at home. Toribio continued his life being a generous teenager and a courageous adult. He never forgot what the lady said and the gift he received.

Some people say that Toribio also fought against some pirates who arrived to Guayaquil. He was a brave citizen and he had a large family. From time to time people used to ask him about the color of this hand, he only replied "this was a gift from the Virgen del Soto". The legend also says that after Toribio's death, they had to exhume his body due to a Municipal decision. People who were present that day observed that inside the coffin there was bone ash and a black hand. The mystery of the Black Hand has never been revealed. Why do you think the Black Hand was not converted into ashes?

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VOCABULARY

Match the vocabulary word or phrase with a synonym or description.

1. devastated	_____ a. Destroyed or ruined
2. prayers	_____ b. A container to carry things
3. timid	_____ c. An extraordinary event
4. basket	_____ d. Requests to God
5. unusul	_____ e. Valiant
6. silent	_____ f. Interesting because it is different
7. miracle	_____ e. People who rob ships at sea
8. courageous	_____ f. Mineral residue of calcined bones
9. pirates	_____ g. Lack of courage or confidence
10. bone ash	_____ h. Not speaking

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Read the statements. Check (✓) "True" or "False" on each.

Sentences	True	False
1. Toribio was born with a health condition.		
2. He did not have his right leg.		
3. Toribio's parents were devoted to the *Virgen del Soto*.		
4. The boy was a generous person.		
5. A fairy gave Toribio a magic hand.		
6. Toribio's hand was different.		
7. The boy could play and climb trees with his new hand.		
8. The family thought this event was a miracle.		
9. Toribio used his hand to fight against robbers.		
10. The black hand remained intact even after his death.		

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