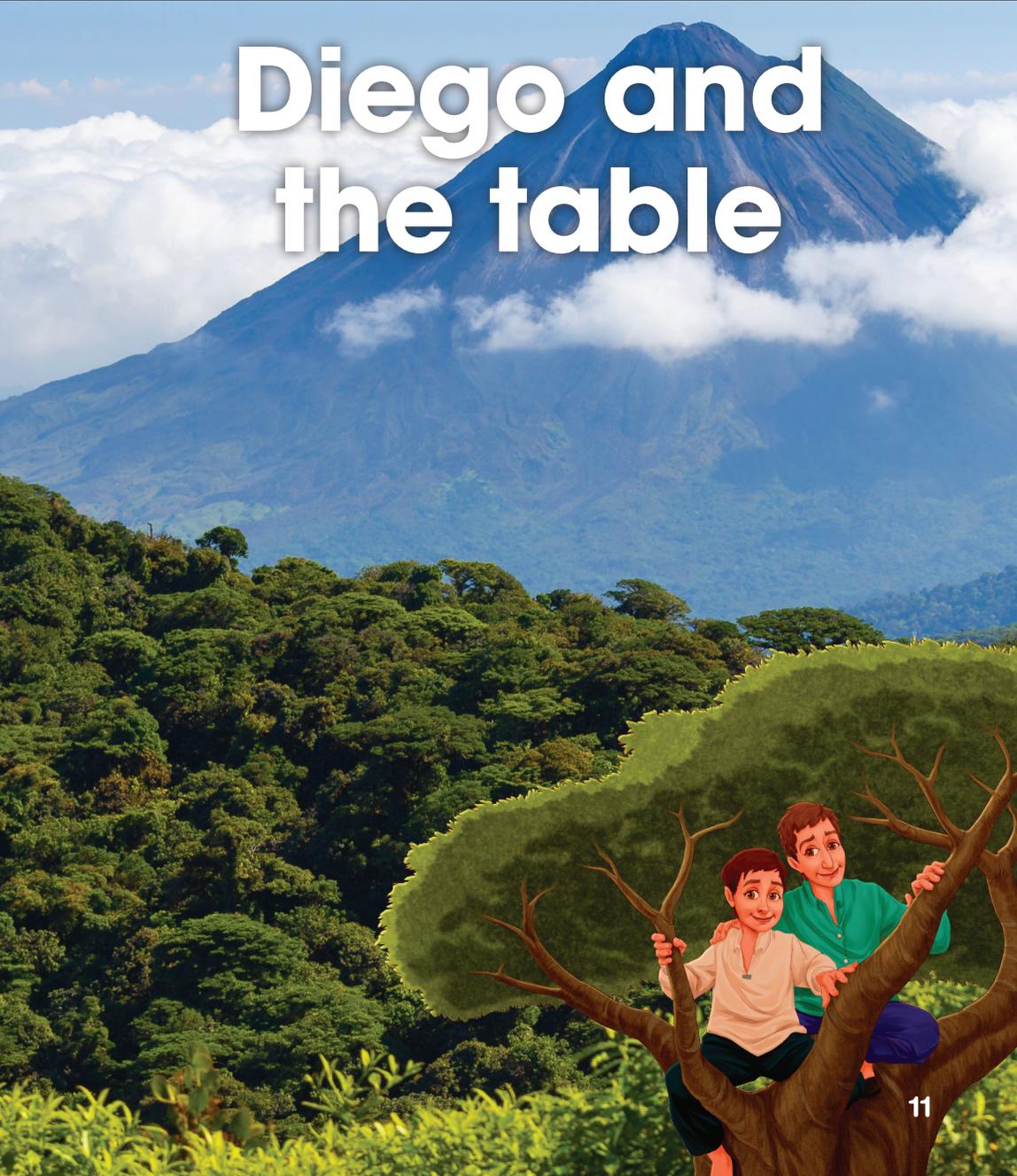


STORY  
2

# Diego and the table



A long time ago, in Costa Rica, there was a woman who lived with her two sons. The youngest son, Diego, was an honest boy, but he didn't understand the value of money.



They were very poor. One year, they had a very bad year. Their corn dried up, so they couldn't make any tortillas. Their beans didn't grow, so they couldn't eat beans with their rice.



One day, the woman called her sons and said, 'Boys, take our cow to the market and sell it. Make sure you get lots of money for it.'

'OK,' said Diego. 'Don't worry, Mother.'

The two sons walked through the forest to the market with the cow. When they arrived, the older brother went to buy some things.

'Stay here with our cow,' he said to Diego.





While the older brother was away, a young man passed Diego with a big table.

'Hello,' he said. 'Why are you here with your cow?'

'I'm going to sell it at the market,' replied Diego.

'Don't sell it,' said the young man. 'Why don't you swap it for my table?'

'OK!' said Diego. 'You take the cow and let me have the table.'

After a while, Diego's brother returned.

'Where's the cow? Did you sell it?' he asked.

'No, I didn't. I swapped it for this table!' replied Diego proudly.

The brother was angry. 'For a table? What are we going to tell Mother?'



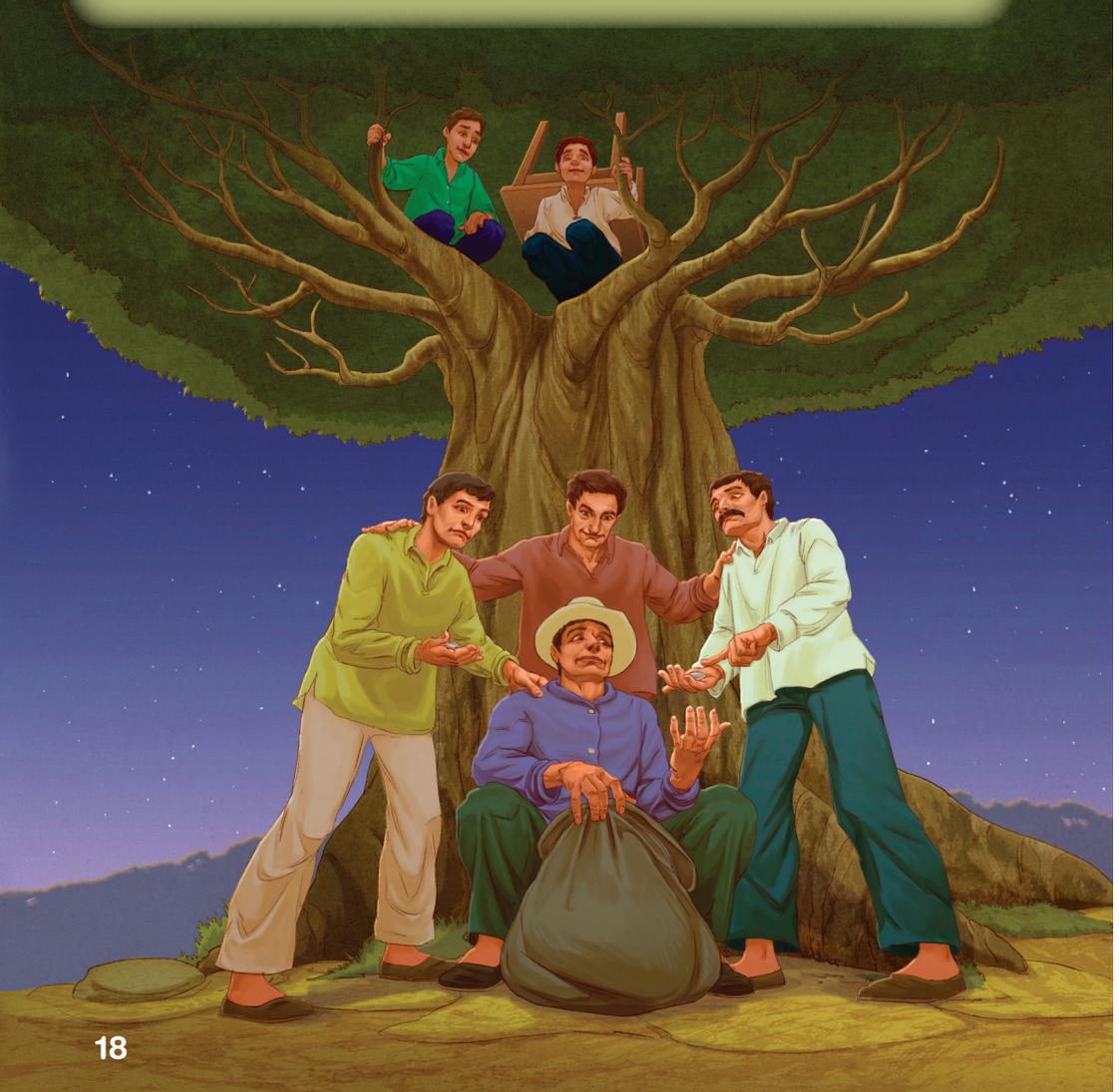


The two boys started to walk home. Diego could only walk very slowly with the table on his back. It started to get dark, so they decided to sleep in a big tree where it was safe. They didn't want to leave the table on the ground, so Diego carried the table up into the tree.

Suddenly, they could hear loud voices below.

Four men stopped under the tree, opened a big bag of silver coins and started to count them.

'Shh!' the older brother whispered. 'They're robbers! Those coins are from the market! Oh no! I hope they don't see us.'



Diego still had the table on his back. He started to get tired and said quietly, 'This table is very heavy.'

'Be quiet!' whispered his brother. 'Don't drop it!'

But Diego couldn't hold the table any longer. He closed his eyes and dropped it. With a terrible noise, it landed right in the middle of the robbers. They believed it was a wild animal and hurried away, leaving the silver coins behind.



The two brothers climbed down and picked up all the coins. They carried the coins back to the market and gave them back to the merchants.

The merchants were so grateful that they gave the brothers half of the coins. They carried the coins and the table home to their mother. Now they were rich and the family lived happily for many years.

