

*Intension*

EILEEN O'HAYER  
Managing Editor

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC MONTHLY — 1307 S. WABASH AVE., CHICAGO 5, ILL.  
Telephone: WEbster 9-5338

June 24, 1964

Dear Mr. Ishikawa:

We have read the enclosed manuscript with a great deal of interest, and thank you for having permitted us to give it a reading.

It has been carefully considered by our readers, but unfortunately was found unsuited to our needs.

As we thank you again for having submitted the present manuscript, may we express the hope that your next will more readily fit our requirements?

Cordially yours,

*Eileen O'Hayer*

Managing Editor

Joseph Ishikawa  
715 Church Street  
Beloit, Wisconsin 53511

Short short story  
Approximately 1800

### THE MAGIC SWORD

Tommy Wolf's eyes popped open wide as his mind struggled to recall the reason for the thrill of anticipation that accompanied his sudden awakening. Like many children of six, Tommy often awoke this suddenly. Normally there was a kind of twilight zone between sleep and awakening, and this might take from thirty seconds to five minutes, but it wasn't unusual for him to be sound asleep one minute and wide awake the next.

This particular morning, however, there was a special feeling accompanying this sharp transition from sleep to wakefulness. His mind nibbled at various possible reasons for this feeling. "Is it Saturday?" Yes, he remembered that it was Saturday because the last thing his first grade teacher, Miss Noble, had said before class was dismissed was, "I'll see you next Monday; have a nice weekend." But there had been other Saturdays without this feeling.

Joseph Ishikawa

THE MAGIC SWORD

Page two

"Is it my birthday?" No, his sixth birthday had been on a cold day in late fall when the wind rattled the dry leaves that had fallen from the trees earlier and had escaped the sweep of the rake; this morning was bright and sunny with the expectation of summer, and the trees were beginning to put on their undergarments of young leaves.

"Is it Guy's birthday?" No, Guy Davis' birthday was two weeks earlier than Tommy's. Guy was his best friend. They went to school together, they were in the same reading group in school, they played together at recess, ate lunch together in the schoolyard, walked home together and usually played together, fought together, made up together, until their mothers called them in to wash hands for dinner. Often they ate dinner together at one house or the other.

"Is it someone else's birthday? A birthday party I'm going to, maybe?" No. The thought of Guy kept recurring and school. The reading group. What had they been reading? Well, nothing special even if his mother and Guy's mother kept telling people that Tommy and Guy were in the top reading group.

"That's it!" thought Tommy. It was nothing they had been reading but a story that Miss Noble had read to the whole class. It was about a magic sword that enabled its owner to do many wonderful deeds.

Joseph Ishikawa  
THE MAGIC SWORD  
Page three

Tommy jumped out of bed, took off his pajamas and dropped them on the floor, got underwear from his drawer, pulled on a polo shirt, looked under his bed to retrieve the blue jeans he had kicked under the bed, couldn't find them and discovered that his mother out of some kind of perversity had hung them in the closet. He put them on, found some socks, pulled them on, found only one sneaker and put on his Sunday shoes.

He ran downstairs, ignored the wonderful smells coming from the kitchen and started to open the front door.

"Whoa there," called his mother, "Where do you think you're going?"

"Over to see Guy!" shouted Tommy.

"Not until you eat breakfast," said his mother, coming out of the kitchen through the dining room and into the hallway. "And what are you doing with your Sunday shoes on? they're for Sunday school tomorrow. And I didn't hear you washing in the bathroom."

"Aw, gee, Mom," said Tommy, "Guy and I have important business and I couldn't find my sneakers."

"One is upstairs in your room, and the other is down here in the living room where you took it off while you were watching television last night," she said, referring to his sneakers. "Put them on, wash your hands and come to breakfast."

Joseph Ishikawa  
THE MAGIC SWORD  
Page four

"Aw, gee, Mom, why do I have to eat? Guy and I are going to be real busy."

"Now, none of that," said Mrs. Wolf firmly, "You can't do your business without a good breakfast. Now march!"

After retrieving his sneaker from the living room, Tommy pounded upstairs to get the mate. After a loud, ceremonious washing of hands, he reappeared in the kitchen.

"I'm hungry, Mom," he announced, "Where's breakfast?"

"Coming right up," she said, placing bacon, pancakes and a glass of milk before him.

"Where's Dad?" asked Tommy, drowning his pancakes in syrup.

"He's already eaten and gone to work. I let you sleep late because there's no school today.

"Aw, gee, Mom," Tommy blurted through a mouthful of pancakes, "Guy and I won't ever get our work done."

"Don't worry about it," said his mother without feeling, "Guy is probably sleeping late too."

"Can I have another pancake?" asked Tommy, spearing two, drenching them with syrup, gulping them down all in a matter of seconds. "Can I -- may I be excused?" he asked and dashed off without waiting for an answer.

"Whoa!" called his mother, "Brush your teeth."