



Moctezuma's law

How green! Take a deep breathe because the air is very fresh where the land is lush and green..

But look who is coming out of the bushes. Why it's Xoco! Well, his real name is Xocolatlan, but since it's so long everyone calls him Xoco.

Xoco can't sit still. He's a natural-born traveler and any excuse is good enough for him to set out on a journey. But always with a smile on his face and his eyes wide open because Xoco loves nature and is a staunch defender of the law that protects it... Moctezuma'a law.

One day when Xoco was taking the shortcut to the city of Tenochtitlán, he saw a man in the distance standing beside the road.

The man looked more like a giant standing there tall as a pine tree and strong as an oak.

The closer he got, the more impressed Xoco grew with the man who was wearing a shirt with cuffs embroidered with gold and silver thread.

The man and Xoco exchanged warm greetings and started chatting under the shade of a tree.

They spoke mostly about nature and how important it is for everyone. They were so engrossed in their conversation that they didn't even notice that it was getting dark.

"Look," said the man, "in a little while we won't even be able to see the tip of our nose. So I think we should spend the night here."

Xoco loved sleeping out under the stars.

"We'll build a fire to stay warm," continued the man. "Go fetch some firewood and I'll find stones to keep the fire from spreading."

Xoco went to gather firewood. But since that country was so green and luxuriant, he couldn't find a single dry branch.

"It doesn't matter if there are no dry branches," said the man when he saw Xoco return empty-handed. "Break off a few green ones; they'll do."

"I refuse to break off a single branch from anywhere," replied Xoco in a huff.

"Everything is green and in flower. What's more, King Moctezuma's law says we have to respect nature."

Then suddenly, the man took a crown out of the pouch he was carrying and said,

"I am King Moctezuma!"

"In that case, Your Majesty, you should be ashamed of yourself. Who ever heard of a king who doesn't obey his own laws?"

The king was so ashamed after being scolded by little Xoco that he went off to sleep without a peep.

That night was very cold, bitter cold. But Xoco knew that it was better to be cold than destroy nature.

Early next morning, King Moctezuma and Xoco set off together towards the city of Tenochtitlán without saying a word.

This was the city where the king had ordered a beautiful palace to be built. The palace was built like a circle and made of solid gold; it shone even brighter than the sun.

When they reached the city, the king asked Xoco to kindly accompany him to the palace door.

"Well, Your Majesty, here we are. Now we'll each go our way. Goodbye!" said Xoco bidding the king farewell.

"Just a moment!" ordered the king. "Now you listen to me."

"Oh-oh," thought Xoco timidly, "now I'm really in for it."

Xoco expected to be scolded after having been so rude. But suddenly, the sour look that had been on the king's face all morning turned into a big grin stretching from ear to ear.

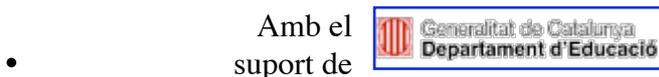
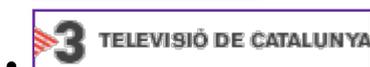
"What I want to tell you, little Xoco, is that you've taught me a good lesson. And since I see that you are strong enough to defend your convictions before the king himself, I've decided to make you my heir. I'm sure that you'll make a good king and that you'll practice what you preach."

Then King Moctezuma put a green crown on Xoco's head, symbolizing his love of nature.

He also gave him a shirt just like his own with cuffs embroidered with gold and silver thread.

Ever since then, Xoco has never stopped traveling to places where nature most needs the protection of Moctezuma's law.

Script: J.M. Hernández Ripoll



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