

THE ECHO

A wise young mother lived with her son high in the mountains. Her husband had died, so she was raising her son by herself. They lived alone on a farm which looked out on a deep valley.

They worked hard every day, grew their own vegetables, and got milk from their cows. The mother had the boy do many chores on the farm. Sometimes he didn't want to, but his mother never let him be lazy.

One day, however, the boy disobeyed his mother. She had told him to milk the cows, but he ran to the edge of the valley. He said to himself, "Work, work, work! Always work. She never lets me have any fun." Then he shouted in a loud angry voice, "I hate you!"

Suddenly, he heard a voice shout back – "I hate you! I hate you!"

The boy was frightened and ran back home. "Mother!" he cried. "Someone down in the valley shouted, 'I hate you'. Don't let him find me."

The mother led him back out to the edge of the valley again. She said to him, "Now shout 'I love you' as loud as possible." He did this, and then he heard the echo call back – "I love you! I love you!"

The mother said to the boy, "That, my son, is an echo. That echo teaches us a law of life – you always receive the same thing that you give. If you give hate, you will receive hate. If you give love, you will receive love."

(Adapted from a passage by Robert M. Flynn, Progress in English 21)

