

Excerpt from Oscar Lives Next Door

The following Saturday morning, I wait for Oscar to race me to the corner again, but he doesn't come out. I knock on his door.

"Is Oscar home?" I ask.

"Oscar's very sick, dear," replies Mrs. Peterson. "He had to go to the hospital last night."

It turns out Oscar has a disease with a long name. TU-BER-CU-LO-SIS.

Thank goodness there is a shorter way to say it: TB. Oscar has TB.

The doctor says he'll get better, but it will take a long time.

I hide in the hall closet.

"Millie!" Mom calls me to supper.
I squirm deeper into the closet.

"Mildred, what are you doing?"

"We played a trick on Reverend James. Is that why Oscar's sick?"

Mom smiles and shakes her head. "No, Millie, you catch TB from other people, not from making mischief. It's like a really, really bad cold. It hurts your chest and makes you cough a lot."

