

Little Anastacia—The Heroine

A True Story

HAVE you ever heard of a little girl eleven years old who died in a fire in order to save her brother and other younger children? That was what young Anastacia Orense did in a little barrio of Tanza, Cavite. She was playing one day at about the beginning of this month with six children in a little house made of nipa and cogon. One of the children was her brother. They were all younger than herself. Tired from playing, some of the children fell asleep. Little Anastacia went to the kitchen to cook some rice. When she got through with her work, she discovered that the house was on fire. Her first thought was of the children. She immediately sent away those that were awake, three of them. The three children that were asleep, however, had to be taken away one by one. Anastacia was so thoughtful that she did not even want to awaken them.

Some neighbors who had approached the burning house saw Anastacia go in and out of it to save the children. They warned her not to enter a third time because the house was already about to fall. But the brave girl, who knew that her young brother was still inside, dared everything and calmly ran into the house. Upon reaching the place where the child was still sleeping, she took him into her arms at once and ran to the door. But it was too late. Two burning rafters fell on her, pinning her to the floor, together with the child in her arms. The flames devoured the house, reached the two other girls already in the yard so that all four were burned to ashes. Afterwards, looking over the ruins and turning up the ashes, the neighbors discovered the charred bodies of Anastacia and the younger brother still clasped in her arms. With tears in their eyes, they removed the tiny corpses, and could not find adequate words to praise the little girl who saved first her playmates before she even attempted to save her brother.

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*The Magazine for the Young People of
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