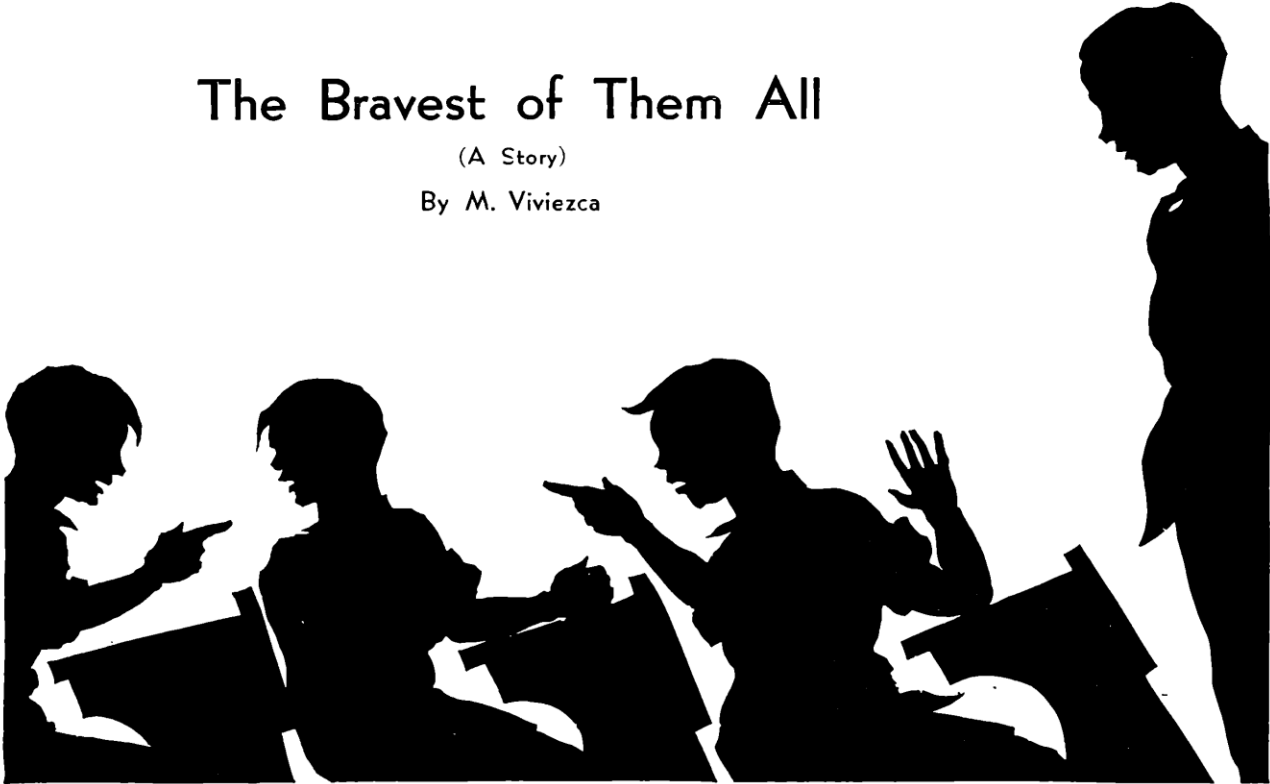


The Bravest of Them All

(A Story)

By M. Viviezca



MANUEL, Sofronio, and Victor were in Grade III in the Emilio Jacinto Elementary School. Victor was the youngest of the three. They were among the best children in the class. They loved reading stories about kindness, helpfulness, cleanliness, and other good stories. They had read several times the story of "Jose Rizal", "A Good Boy", "How Andy Helped", "First Day At School".

Such stories had made them not only best story tellers, but also kind, helpful, clean, and obedient. These points had earned for them the love and admiration of their teacher.

One day, these boys were given a number for the opening exercises. They were told to tell the class about the bravest little act they had done. They were given a week to prepare. This is quite hard for the young folks. But for Manuel, Sofronio, and Victor, it was rather easy.

Several days had passed. Manuel and Sofronio had made known to their teacher that they were ready to tell their stories. As for Victor, he found it hard. The past

days did not give him a chance to do or accomplish a brave act. To cross a street where automobiles, trucks, streetcars and other vehicles were passing, or to fight with a boy for no reason at all, was not a brave act to him. Neither is it courageous to walk in the dark nor to go near a live wire. What could he do? The next day was Monday. It was the day set for their number. Could he endure the shame of attending his class with this failure? For him, not to attend his class would be more painful. Under no condition would he miss his class unless due to illness. This year he would make his mother and teacher more proud of him by keeping his attendance record 100%. He had no choice then. He had to try his best.

While he stood by the window thinking what his teacher would tell him, Virginia, his older sister, came in with a magazine, *The Young Citizen*.

Virginia was in Grade Six. She borrowed the magazine from her classmate to find some materials fitted for theme writing.

"Virginia," Victor called. "Will you

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kindly help me prepare my lesson for tomorrow?"

"I am sorry, I cannot help you today. I am preparing for my written composition. Mother will soon arrive and I am sure she would ask me to cook the rice. After our supper I'll attend to my other assignments."

"Please, Virginia, help me," he pleaded with much disappointment.

Virginia saw in her brother's eyes the importance of the lesson assigned to him.

"All right, I'll help you," she finally said.

Early the next day Victor took a bath and brushed his teeth. Then he took his breakfast and after a few minutes he was on his way to school. He was very lively.

The bell rang. The children formed their lines. Victor's class entered the building. When they had seated themselves, the teacher greeted them good morning. Everyone was feeling fine.

The program began with a kundiman song. It was followed with a recitation and a harmonica selection. Then came the number of

the three boys. They were given stools to sit on. Manuel was the first to relate his story.

He said that a boy who lived in the neighborhood was too proud to tell the other boys that nobody could beat him in fighting. He challenged the boy to a fight and he won. The boys looked upon him now as the best fighter.

Sofronio had another story. He said that while a group of boys and girls looked at an electric wire that hang from the roof of a house, he stepped in and surprised them by holding the wire with his hands.

"Does he think he is brave?" Emilia whispered to her seatmate.

"No, he is not," was the answer. "He has forgotten what our teacher told us about wires."

Victor's turn came. He moved his stool a little, looked at his teacher and began.

"One night, after we were put to bed, little sister asked for a drink. I heard her call for grandma. Grandma was asleep. All the lights were out. I felt my way to sister's bed. I told her to go with me. I held her by the hand while we went downstairs to the dining room. I

took a glass of water and gave it to sister. She was very thankful.

When Victor had finished everybody turned to the teacher. The teacher told the class that Victor did the bravest act. She even added that bravery is admired best when shown as a help.

The time for dismissal came. All the pupils left the room except the monitors. Victor returned to the room and walked straight to his teacher.

"Did you forget something?" Miss Trinidad asked.

"No, Miss Trinidad," he answered feeling a little confused. "It is about my story this morning."

"It was fine! How old is your sister?"

"But—— that story did not happen to me. I read it from a magazine, *The Young Citizen*. The title of the story is "Brave Brother".

"It is all right too, Victor. Whether you did it or not, that was the bravest act for a young boy like you. That boy in the story was the bravest brother a sister could wish for."

After a while, Victor left the room with all the worries gone.