



TATAY SANDY'S AMAZING FARM

by: MARISTEL T. VILLAREAL

The sun beat down hard on the dusty tracks winding through Sito Bulihan in Tabangao, Batangas City. Tatay Sandy wiped his brow, barely noticing the heat. A quick glance at the weather app on his phone – yep, another scorcher – and he squinted back at his flourishing fields. Even with all the gadgets, life here still moved to the old, deep beat of the seasons.

His son, Aniceto, worked nearby. Hands calloused from years alongside his dad, but his head full of new farming tricks picked up from seminars and agri-school. He was pulling down ripe santol fruit, their sweet, tangy smell cutting through the dust – a familiar comfort, a piece of home steadiness in a crazy world. Tatay Sandy's granddaughters, Tyra, Fia, and Chervin, weren't just lending a hand; they were busy documenting the whole thing.

Tyra, phone practically glued to her palm, snapped picture after picture of the fat, juicy mangoes. "Gotta get the light right for Insta!" she muttered, angling for the perfect shot. Fia, crouched low, swept her phone across the busy harvest scene. "This is gold for my docu project," she grinned, already editing in her head. Up above, Chervin, the family tech whiz kid, maneuvered his drone with intense focus. The camera whirred, capturing sweeping views of the cornfields, the ears heavy and ready.

Aniceto worked with a quiet efficiency. Sorting the santol, he used the same careful eye his father and grandfather had taught him, but now sharpened by proper training. Tiny soil sensors tucked near the roots pinged data to his phone – stuff his Lolo would've shaken his head at in disbelief, back when it was all gut feeling and sky-watching.

Sure, Tyra, Fia, and Chervin loved their gadgets, but the weight of the harvest, the feel of the fruit, the dirt under their nails? That meant something. Each piece felt like a link to the people who'd worked this land before them. They just told those stories differently now – through quick vlogs and posts online, stitching the past right into today's digital buzz.

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They weren't just picking mangoes; they were sharing a piece of their family with anyone who cared to look. As the sun dipped low, painting the fields gold, the family gathered, not just around the dinner table, but online too. Phones buzzed as they shared snaps and clips, connecting with cousins in the city and titos overseas.

The table groaned under the weight of fresh-picked food, but the real richness was in the mix – old ways bumping up against new tools, tradition finding its place next to an iPhone screen. It was about sticking together, figuring things out as they went, holding onto where they came from while reaching for what came next.

Over it all, the harvest moon rose, hazy in the lingering heat. A quiet witness to their story: hard work, a bit of ingenuity, and that stubborn connection to each other and this stubborn patch of earth.



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