



A MASTERPIECE OF GOD’S CREATION

by: CLARALIZA C. QUIAMBAO

The sun dipped below the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the iconic mountain ranges of Caraballo and Sierra Madre. Tatay Amor, Marisol, and Roderick stood at the observation deck of Pantabangan, their gazes fixed on the breathtaking panorama before them.

Marisol, the adventurous big sister, adjusted her camera settings. She had always been the family’s storyteller, capturing memories in pixels and prose. “Roderick,” she said, nudging her younger brother, “this place is like something out of a fairy tale.”

Roderick, wide-eyed, nodded. At ten, he was still discovering the world beyond video games and school books. “Tatay,” he whispered, “are those creations (mountains) touching the sky?”

Tatay chuckled, ruffling Roderick’s hair. “Not quite,” he replied. “But they’re close. These are the Sierra Madre Mountains—a masterpiece of God’s creation. This served also as protection for the people in the province of Central Luzon particularly Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Aurora and nearby provinces in Cagayan Valley like Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Viscaya and Quirino, for floods and soil erosion during rainy seasons.”

As the evening deepened, the lighted buildings downtown seemed to merge with the sky. The land formation or cone structure connecting them glimmered like an off road trails. Tourists chattered in various languages, their awe echoing off the vast horizon.

“Remember when we used to dream about traveling different places?” Tatay said, his voice tinged with nostalgia. “And now, here we are.”

Marisol nodded, her fingers entwined with Roderick’s. “Life’s full of surprises,” she replied. “Who would’ve thought we’d stand here, witnessing this?”

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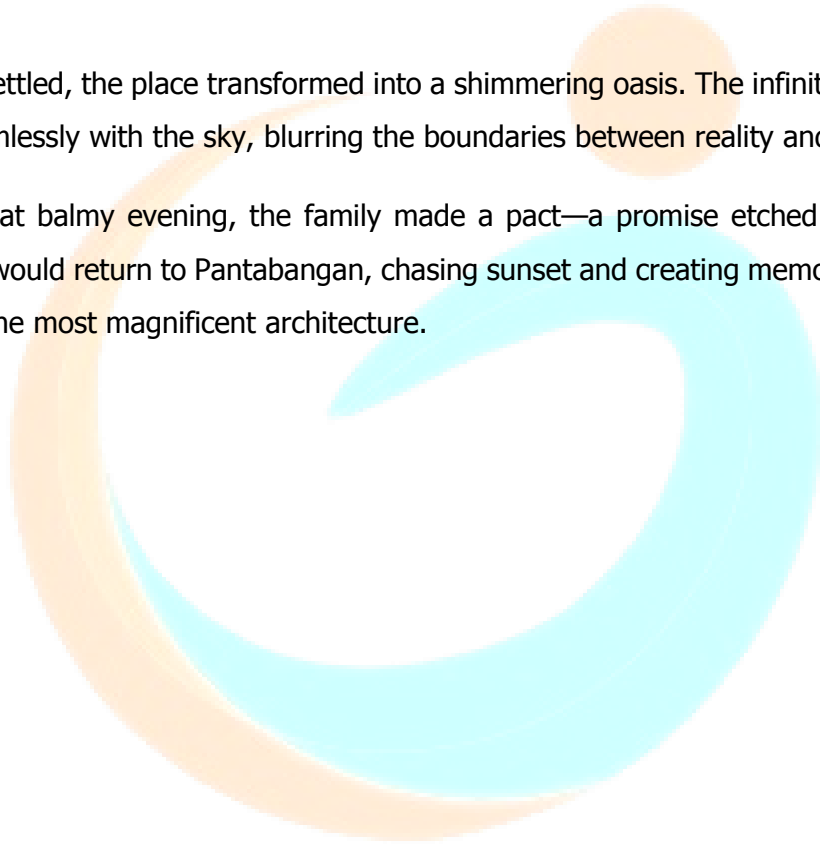
They leaned against the railing in the Pantabangan bridge, absorbing the moment. Marisol framed the most captivating shape against the dusky sky, capturing the reflection in the calm waters below. The stars' light began to twinkle, mirroring the celestial bodies above.

"Promise me," Roderick said, his eyes shining, "that we'll come back someday."

"We will," Tatay assured him. "And next time, we'll explore every corner of this vibrant wide-ranging place."

As darkness settled, the place transformed into a shimmering oasis. The infinity edge seemed to merge seamlessly with the sky, blurring the boundaries between reality and imagination.

And so, on that balmy evening, the family made a pact—a promise etched in the hues of sunset. They would return to Pantabangan, chasing sunset and creating memories that would outlast even the most magnificent architecture.



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