



## Wings of Friendship: Reunion in Mexico

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High above the clouds, a commercial airplane glides smoothly through the bright blue sky on its way to North America. Inside the cabin, three close friends sit together, looking out the window with faces full of anticipation. Ichiro, a twenty-two-year-old university student from Japan, smiles as he realizes they are only an hour away from their destination.



Lyn May, a sharp and successful financial institution worker living in Singapore, leans across the seats to cheer up her travel companions. She was the one who enthusiastically convinced Ichiro and Song Wu to embark on this grand Mexican adventure. Her energetic smile fills the row with a sense of excitement and wanderlust.



Song Wu, a dedicated master's student from Seoul, South Korea, adjusts his glasses and nods in agreement about the long journey. He joined the global Hippo Family Club network through Ichiro's warm recommendation years ago. Now, the three of them are traveling together to represent their chapters at the grand Hippo International Congress.



As the plane cruises, Ichiro gazes at his hands, thinking about his lifelong dream of working for an airline after his upcoming university graduation. He has been a passionate member of the Hippo Family Club since he was just a five-year-old boy in Yokohama. Connecting different cultures and bringing people together across the globe is his ultimate life purpose.



The conversation turns to the exciting purpose of their trip beyond the official conference schedule. In Mexico City, they are finally going to reunite with the beloved host families and international friends they lived with six years ago. Memories of their wonderful high school exchange days in Wisconsin, USA, flood their minds.



Lyn May teases Ichiro with a mischievous grin when she mentions a specific friend they are all eager to see again. She says she cannot wait to see Belinda, a bright and kind girl from their exchange student group. Song Wu chimes in with agreement, watching Ichiro's reaction closely.



Ichiro instantly blushes, his cheeks turning a bright shade of crimson as he tries to look away casually. He stammers a quick denial, making his friends burst into joyful, lighthearted laughter inside the cozy airplane cabin. The shared inside joke makes the thousands of miles they traveled feel like nothing at all.



Looking out the small airplane window, the vast and colorful grid of Mexico City begins to unfold beneath the scattering clouds. Thousands of houses and buildings spread across the valley like a beautiful, endless mosaic under the warm sun. The sight takes Ichiro's breath away, signaling that their long-awaited destination is right below them.



The view of the sprawling city brings back a wave of deep nostalgia for their carefree teenage school days in the United States. To Ichiro, Lyn May, and Song Wu, it feels as if they were just sitting in that Wisconsin classroom together yesterday. Time has flown by, but their special bond has remained completely unchanged.



With a gentle thud, the airplane wheels touch down on the runway, and the friends gather their bags with racing hearts. Hand in hand, the trio steps out into the vibrant atmosphere of Mexico, ready to embrace the old friends waiting for them. A new chapter of laughter, culture, and lifelong memories is about to begin.