



Festival of Colors

[NTC-S] Estephanie Delos Reyes



In a cozy bedroom in a small Philippine town, Ana carefully touches the vibrant feathers of her festival costume. Her heart beats with a mix of excitement and nerves as she prepares for her very first street dance, wondering if she can remember all the steps.



The morning sun rises over streets adorned with colorful banners and banderitas waving in the breeze. This celebration is a festival, which is a special time where a community gathers to celebrate their culture, history, or religious traditions with music and joy.



Ana stands with her dance troupe, feeling small amidst the towering headdresses and bright patterns. She clutches her props tightly, looking at the other performers who are inspired by the Ati-Atihan festival, a famous celebration from Kalibo, Aklan, known for its wild costumes and rhythmic beats.



Suddenly, the thunderous boom of the drums echoes through the air, signaling the start of the parade. The group begins to move in a rhythmic wave, and Ana takes her first hesitant steps onto the pavement as the crowd begins to cheer.



The streets are a sea of motion celebrating the Sinulog Festival, a grand dance ritual from Cebu City that honors the Sto. Niño through a unique forward-and-backward step. Ana watches the older dancers glide effortlessly, their costumes shimmering like jewels under the tropical sun.



When Ana's headpiece slips during a difficult turn, a fellow dancer quickly reaches out to steady it with a reassuring wink. She realizes she isn't alone; everyone is looking out for one another, fixing costumes and cheering to keep the energy high.



As the rhythm of the drums intensifies, Ana stops overthinking her feet and starts feeling the music in her soul. Her shy expression melts into a radiant beam as she leaps and turns, fully immersed in the unity of her community dancing as one.



The parade eventually reaches the grand stone church, where the vibrant colors of the costumes contrast beautifully against the ancient gray walls. The music softens into a respectful hum as the thousands of dancers and spectators gather together in the courtyard.



Inside the quiet courtyard, Ana bows her head in a moment of prayer, offering thanks for her family and her heritage. She understands now that the festival is not just about the bright colors and fun, but also a deep expression of faith and gratitude.



As the golden sun sets on a day she will never forget, Ana stands proudly with her friends, tired but happy. She has learned that through unity, culture, and faith, the people of the Philippines create something truly beautiful that brings everyone together.