KONYO KID by JOSH DEVERAS - BATCH 25

AUGUST 20, 2020

JAMES is a 14 year-old small and scrawny teenager who is lonely and shy but wants to have a group of close friends. He is from the “South” where the “conyo kids” live so he becomes one. He tends to notice groups of friends having fun and wants to join in when he sees a slim chance. He is determined but keeps battling against things going against his way. The story is immersive following the character’s journey and told in a dynamic pace. It starts when JAMES is in his grade school graduation as his family celebrates and the few months after.

A few months later, JAMES would begin his first year of Ateneo High School, going through the daily struggles of waking up early and grueling traffic. JAMES becomes uncomfortable in the new unfamiliar environment as his classmates are speaking Taglish, a language he rarely speaks even to his *yayas*. MR. BASA, his homeroom adviser, tries to welcome JAMES, but almost instantly gets pointed out as the “conyo kid”. JAMES goes through weeks of struggling to wake up early to go to school, be attentive during class, and understand his classmates speaking Taglish to each other. While JAMES is trying to learn and adapt, his Filipino teacher MRS. SANCHEZ gives him a hard time for not understanding and speaking Tagalog as expected from him.

Feeling that he doesn’t belong anywhere, JAMES becomes curious when he encounters skateboarders in his village during grocery day. He becomes interested in skateboarding after feeling alive riding and falling. JAMES convinces his parents to get him a skateboard. On the day he gets it, JAMES skates alone around his street outside the house.

In school, JAMES’ Filipino teacher MRS. SANCHEZ continues to judge him for his broken Tagalog and failing her class. The tension begins between JAMES and his parents after the father scolds him. JAMES carries this tension and frustration when he goes out to skate till he bumps into the skateboarders he saw last time. They introduce themselves as MATT, TERRENCE and RYAN, whom JAMES particularly remembers for sharing the same size. JAMES becomes close with RYAN.

Financial stability worries JAMES after his father reveals they are not doing well and adds on to the baggage. This builds up to JAMES getting into a fight with his classmate after being mocked for the scolding by MRS. SANCHEZ. Hours later, MR. BASA tries to talk to JAMES and protects him from his resentful classmates. At home, JAMES’ FATHER scolds JAMES for the fight and tells him to focus on his studies. After the argument, JAMES’ MOTHER cheers up JAMES with ice cream. He was happy till he saw a luxurious gelato store, remembering that they are not well-off.

JAMES nervously asks to hang out for the first time with RYAN. RYAN says yes, and they skate with MATT and TERRENCE. After the session, JAMES overhears RYAN planning a sleepover with MATT and TERRENCE and asks if he can come. RYAN reluctantly says yes.

At home, JAMES begs his mother to go to the sleepover. He can go only if he scores high in his next Filipino quiz. A week later, MRS. SANCHEZ announces that JAMES was one of the top scorers for the quiz. She is sarcastic that a “conyo” can do well. On the car ride to the sleepover, JAMES’ MOTHER asks if JAMES is okay but he stays silent.

In RYAN’s house, he and JAMES get into a fight after JAMES breaks the controller while playing. MATT and TERRENCE try to calm them both down, but JAMES and RYAN don’t talk. During the ride home, JAMES’ MOTHER scolds JAMES after RYAN’S MOTHER told her about the fight. JAMES breaks down. He avoids RYAN, MATT and TERRENCE. Later, JAMES’ father talks to JAMES about the fight with the mother. JAMES’ MOTHER comes in and apologies to JAMES.

JAMES’ MOTHER reveals in a study session that they are moving out to Quezon City soon since they are struggling financially. JAMES feels lost. He looks at the phone. On the spot, RYAN, MATT and TERRENCE show up and see JAMES there. JAMES makes up with RYAN, MATT and TERRENCE. They all skate again while JAMES shouts out how much he hates MRS. SANCHEZ.

The last day of school arrives. JAMES is alone while his classmates and their parents are celebrating in a *salu-salo*. JAMES sees his classmates having fun together. He is then approached by MR. BASA, and MR. BASA congratulates and tells him in Tagalog that JAMES did better than expected despite everything. JAMES smiles, understanding everything.

JAMES, RYAN and the others skate together one last time. After the session, JAMES says goodbye to them. On the way to his new house, JAMES looks outside as he passes by highways, traffic and cars. When he finally arrives at the small house, JAMES goes out looking for skate spots on his street. He tries to skate but is having a harder time than when he skated in his old village.

It’s the first day of JAMES’ 2nd year in the same high school. JAMES’ MOTHER forces JAMES to commute to and from school by himself. JAMES sees groups of friends while commuting. In the classroom, JAMES is surrounded by classmates that may be jocks, theater kids and video gamers. The introductions begin and when it’s JAMES’ turn, he introduces himself in Taglish. Introductions continue, and JAMES is silently relieved. During lunch break, JAMES is approached by some of his classmates and is asked to join them. While eating, JAMES is quiet till MJ, one of his new classmates, breaks the ice and tells him that he knew JAMES because MR. BASA told him JAMES skates. His classmates get interested and ask JAMES more about skateboarding. JAMES breaks a timid smile. On the way home, JAMES walks with his new friends till they separate at the tricycle station.

JAMES enters his village when it begins to rain. JAMES is stranded under a cover with no umbrella when he remembers watching his grade school mates playing together. He then remembers RYAN, MATT and TERRENCE. Under the rain, JAMES goes out and skates. He never felt more free.