

BAGONG TAON

Written by

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SETTING - PRESENT DAY, NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

ABBY, OLI, and ERNIE are gathered around the table, chatting and waiting for more guests to arrive. MARK walks in through the door.

MARK

Happy new year! I brought every  
Filipino's favorite, Jollibee!

MARK begins to place the food on the table, explaining each dish and attempting to speak Tagalog.

ABBY & OLI

Thank you, Mark!

ERNIE

Speaking of food, there's only  
ten more minutes until the clock  
strikes twelve, I've been looking  
around and I didn't see you guys  
set up your twelve round fruits  
anywhere? Do you not want good  
luck?

MARK

Oh yeah, Ernie, I heard about  
that from my girlfriend, Mary  
Grace, from the Philippines!  
We were just talking about that  
the other night on Facebook  
Messenger.

ABBY and OLI side-eye each other.

ABBY

Oops we forgot the fruits Ernie,  
but we have pancit and suman for  
long life and sticking together  
as a family!

ERNIE

Ah I see, well you and Oli are  
forgetting the traditions Lola  
and Lolo taught us now huh!  
Forgetting about your roots  
haysoos, Abby!

ERNIE rolls his eyes.

OLI

You're one to talk, weren't you the one that just got dumped after giving your girlfriend shoes as a Christmas present? And she used the same ones to run off to her new lover. Looks like someone else forgot about the tradition.

ERNIE

Well... well...

OLI

Yup that's what I thought.

MARK

So guys, what are all those polka dots for? Looks like I didn't get the memo about the 1950s party theme.

ABBY

It's actually another Pinoy superstition for having good luck! Did your girlfriend at least tell you to put coins in your pocket for wealth and fortune?

MARK

Umm...

ERNIE

Well of course I have money in my pockets and these crispy new bills after working such long hours as a registered nurse at Kaiser Permanente... because I was the one that went to nursing school after all.

ERNIE looks expectingly at OLI.

OLI

Oh, not this again...

ABBY

Kuya stop it you know how he feels about this.

ERNIE

Well you wouldn't have to live in this sketchy apartment if Oli had just studied enough for his nursing major.

OLI

Just like how you "study" that picture of Allison under your pillow? So she doesn't forget you?

ERNIE

Uhhh how do you know about that picture?

ABBY breaks the awkward silence.

ABBY

Well Mark, speaking of coins, there's more about them in Filipino new year's superstitions. We also have the tradition that the breadwinner throws coins in the house for good wealth and prosperity! Oli will do that later after the clock strikes twelve!

MARK

Oh that sounds cool, hopefully I can get Mary Grace her green card soon. Maybe we can continue these traditions together next year. I can't believe it's only been three months since we've started dating and we're already in the process of getting married. I'm so kilig!

OLI, ERNIE, and ABBY all look at MARK and smile, visibly cringing/embarrassed.

ABBY

I've been getting hungry looking at all of this food, let's start eating!

ABBY starts handing out plates to everyone.

ABBY

Oh Kuya Ernie, did you see how clean the house is? We're so ready to ring in the new year! All the windows and doors are open. By the way Mark, do you mind taking off your shoes since we just cleaned?

MARK starts taking off his shoes, but everyone recoils from the smell coming from his feet. OLI sprays MARK's feet with disinfectant spray.

ERNIE

Actually...you can keep your shoes on...

MARK mouths "sorry" and puts his shoes back on.

ABBY

It feels so good to have a clean start, after Oli's dad passed away.

A "WHITE BUTTERFLY" skips across the room.

ERNIE

Oh, look! Do you see that butterfly? Do you remember when Lola and Lolo told us that's how they're going to visit us when they pass? Looks like Oli's dad wants to say hi!

OLI

Oh yeah, my mom told me about that!

MARK

Hey, do you guys have some pots and pans to make noise with later? I brought my own, Mary Grace told me it wards off the evil spirits... the moo moos! Look at me using my Filipino! I'll run outside and grab them from my car! Oh, looks like it's raining! Good thing I have my umbrella!

MARK reaches for his umbrella and starts to open it.

OLI, ABBY, & ERNIE

NOOOOO!

OLI, ABBY, & ERNIE frantically stop MARK from opening the umbrella.

OLI

Mark! That's a big no no in Filipino culture, we don't open umbrellas inside! It's bad luck. As much bad luck as breaking a mirror! Did you know Ernie broke a mirror seven years ago and still has some bad luck, look at how short he is!

ERNIE is visibly annoyed/bothered by this comment.

ABBY

Haha, don't worry about it Mark, we have some right here!

ABBY gestures at the kitchenware.

ABBY

Oh, it looks like there's one minute before we countdown, here Mark, put on this year's lucky color, purple!

ERNIE

Mark! I also have a late Christmas gift for you, a Louis-Vuitton wallet, make sure you look inside! I slipped you a little something.

OLI

Ernie, look at you again with another superstition. Trying to get all the good luck this year to fix that broken heart of yours huh?

ERNIE

Well you're wrong about that, Oli. It's good luck for my friend Mark Williams III. Looks like you're not the know it all you've been pretending to be.

MARK interjects, clearly not reading the room.

MARK

Thank you Ernie and Abby, it means a lot to celebrate this with you guys!

OLI

30 seconds left, let's start jumping, maybe Ernie will grow taller!

ERNIE

Be quiet Oli! Why don't you just grab a pan and make some noise!

EVERYONE starts jumping and making noise with the pots and pans.

EVERYONE

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1... Happy New Year!

ERNIE

Hey...did I grow any taller?

EVERYONE starts laughing.

FADE TO BLACK