

### **Grandpa and the Jets...ski**

I stared out into the glassy water and took a deep breath. From a distance, it was an astonishing bright blue, but as soon as I dipped in, I saw how crystal clear it really was.

“We’re not in Norfolk anymore,” I thought.

As I looked around, I saw several of my extended family wading in the water to combat the blazing, Philippines heat. My daze was interrupted by someone calling me to tell me it was my turn.

“My turn for what?” I puzzledly said.

“To ride the jet ski!” my younger brother shouted excitedly.

“Finally!” I rejoiced, smiling brightly. I had been waiting for the younger kids to try it first before jumping into line. It was going to be my first time jet skiing and I was thrilled.

I rushed over to where the jet skis were docked, but out of the corner of my eye, I noticed my grandpa from afar, paying close attention. As the instructor began explaining how to operate the jet ski, an idea popped into my head. “Are multiple people able to ride the jet ski at the same time?” I asked.

“Yes, of course! One person can sit behind the driver as long as they hold on tight,” the instructor replied.

“Awesome! Would I be able to grab someone to ride with me?”

The instructor gestured a thumbs up with both of his hands, so I sped over to where my grandpa was observing. He was standing nearby, watching everyone enjoying the water. As I came up to him, I planted a huge, convincing smile on my face.

“Grandpa! Would you like to ride the jet ski with me? I saw you watching earlier, and the instructor said it can support two people if you hold on tight!” This caused one of his eyebrows to raise, as he skeptically replied, “I don’t even know how to swim!”

“It’s okay. There are life jackets to make sure we stay safe.” His skeptical look was evident, so I prepared to bolster my offer.

“It will be so much fun! Plus, how many people can say that they rode a jet ski with their *favorite* granddaughter in their home country? Probably not that many.”

I could tell he was considering all the things that could possibly go wrong. Although he was extremely nervous, he finally nodded, ready to give it a go. After we strapped on our life jackets, the instructor began explaining how to operate the vehicle.

“So this red button starts up the jet ski and this lever is the accelerator which allows you to speed up. This other lever is the brake.” He pressed the button and pulled the levers to demonstrate before we hopped on. I went on first, with my grandpa following me afterward.

“Are you ready?!” I exclaimed.

I heard a faint reply as I pressed the button and pulled the lever to accelerate, causing the engine to make a loud noise. Before I knew it, we were bolting through the water.

“Woohoo!” my grandpa laughed as we zoomed forward, causing the water to splash us. I carefully navigated the jet ski as we rode around. As we enjoyed the rush, I was able to observe

and get a closer look at the gigantic rocks that were covered with thick greenery dotted throughout the water. From our new viewpoint at sea, I could fully view the camel and golden tones highlighting the coarse sand on the beach. My family waved at us from the distance, and I could feel my grandpa waving back. We had ventured out far enough that they resembled little dots, rather than people.

“Thank you for convincing me to come out here with you. It’s been so fun!”

A huge smile lit up my face. “Of course, grandpa! I’m glad I could share this experience with you! Are you ready to head back?”

He nodded, and I turned the jet ski around, speeding back to shore. After drying up, one of my uncles stated that we would be having a boodle fight.

“A boodle fight? Who’s fighting who?” I questioned.

“You’ll see,” he replied with a sly look.

After finishing up on the beach, everyone gathered around a long, outdoor table with no seats that was covered in banana leaves. Atop the banana leaves laid a bountiful meal including mussels, shrimp, barbeque skewers, fried fish, crabs, mangos, rice, and bowls of water. I could feel my mouth beginning to water.

“Why are there bowls of water instead of glasses?” my little brother asked.

“The water is to clean our hands, not to drink!” my uncle replied.

After saying a prayer, everyone began to dig in. I reached for a handful of rice along with some seafood. Since we did not have plates, we had to claim different spots for our food on. As I reached for another shrimp, my hand bumped into another hand reaching for the same thing.

“Oh, is this a challenge?” the owner of the hand, who happened to be my sister, asked.

“Well, I guess this is why they call it a ‘boodle fight’,” we laughed.

“So, I get the ‘fight’ part of ‘boodle fight,’ but what does ‘boodle’ mean?” I wondered.

My grandpa took the lead on answering. “Boodle is military slang for a bunch of food. The term refers to grabbing and eating as much as a soldier can before others grab them, or else you’ll be left with nothing!”

Everyone nodded in understanding as we continued to stuff our faces. Before we knew it, all that was left on the banana leaves were mussel shells, crab shells, skewers, and used bowls of water. That day, I was able to check off two things that I didn't even know were on my bucket list: riding a jet ski with my grandpa and participating in a hands-on, Filipino meal.