

PUTING SARANGGOLA  
(WHITE KITE)

by

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OPEN ON A BRIGHT BLUE SKY. SLOWLY, WE TILT DOWN TO MANILA SKYLINE.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AREA - DAY

TRAFFIC NOISE MIXES WITH A PASSING TRAIN.

From afar, a bustling intersection appears.

HORNS HONK and drivers YELL their route to people lined up in unassigned rows.

A few of those waiting hop into jeepneys while the heavy traffic stops at a red light.

Further ahead, a public market comes into view.

TITLE ON SCREEN: PUTING SARANGGOLA (WHITE KITE)

EXT. PRITIL PUBLIC MARKET- DAY

Stenciled in a heavy looking metal arch: Pritil Public Market.

The place is packed with people. VOICES AND MUSIC OVERLAP in the heavy and damp air.

The heat engulfs the place. People fan their faces with anything they get their hands on, a fan, a towel, their shirt, or just their bare hands.

Out of the corner of the busy market, a kid enters the place, BENJAMIN (BEN), 11. He's wearing a faded school shorts, a white shirt, and a black back pack.

He shoves his way through the crowd.

He stops abruptly, pulls out coins from his pocket and stares at them for a moment. He frowns then puts the coins back.

Moving forward he walks-on, occasionally kicking dirt with his worn out slippers.

Ben halts before reaching the corner of a bakery store.

INT. PRITIL PUBLIC MARKET / EXT. BAKERY STORE - DAY

Ben looks around and see's an elder couple helping a customer.

COSTUMER  
Ito hong bente.

POV. The old man takes the bill, and walks to a podium like enclave in the middle of the store. Different kinds of treats surround the wooden enclosure.

While the young man waits for his change, Ben eye's a basket full of biscuits.

He inches forward briskly crossing to the other side of the shop.

He snatches a pack then stealthily walks off.

EXT. PRITIL PUBLIC MARKET - DAY

Quickening his pace, Ben makes his way back towards the entrance.

He scurries out of the open market and scans the traffic.

A jeepney catches his attention. On the side of the vehicle is an artfully painted design of "Rock! Baby Rock!"

Ben sprints toward the vehicle and slips into the passenger side.

INT. ROCKY'S JEEP - DAY

Ben turns to the driver.

BEN  
Kuya Rock! Uwian na!

ROCK MUSIC PLAYS ON THE RADIO.

ROCKY, driver, 24, has a square jaw and a muscular built. He turns down the volume.

His dashboard looks like an extension of his home, with pictures of his family displayed freely for everyone to see.

Two of the photos are of different women, both wearing their graduation cap. One of the pictures look yellowed by time. The other remains to have it's pristine white border.

Another older photo shows the picture of a man carrying a young Rocky in his arms. Both have a glowing smile on their faces.

A rosary hangs and swings on the rear view mirror.

*ELIAS* is stencilled on a piece of wood, in the middle of the dashboard.

ROCKY

Ben.

(beat)

Di ka nanaman pumasok niyan?

Rocky looks at the rear view mirror. There's a long gap between the passengers and a guy in the far back's holding out a bill to someone that's turned from him.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Paabot lang po ng bayad. Tulong tulong tayo dito.

Ben, looks down at the biscuit his holding. He swiftly averts his view to the heavy traffic.

Rocky holds his arm backwards and grabs the bill.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Salamat. San to?

PASSENGER

Brgy. 99.

Rocky opens a small drawer under the dashboard and puts the bill inside. One by one he picks up change.

BEN (O.S.)

Huwag mo nalang sabihin kila Tatay Kuya.

Rocky glances briefly at Ben, then hands the change back to his passenger.

The heavy traffic remain static. Rocky looks straight ahead.

ROCKY

Ang hindi ko naman maintindihan, eh, bakit mo kailangang gawin yan.

(beat)

Alam ko me sakit si Ann.

Rocky's brows furrows.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Mahirap ang buhay. Sino nagsabing madali. Pero, paano aahon ang mga taong gaya natin kung hindi tayo mag tatapos ng eskuwela. Yung me mga natapos nga diyan hirap, tayo pa kaya.

He pauses.

ROCKY (CONT'D)  
Palagay na natin, malaman ng Tatay  
mo. Na alam ko! Paano na?

He looks at the newer picture on the dashboard.

ROCKY (CONT'D)  
Naisip mo ba Ate Elsa mo?  
Intindihin mo, na-istorbo mo yun  
kapag nasa restawran ka. Hindi ko  
naman sinasabing huwag ka ng  
pumunta dun. Kung kailangan eh,  
andito na tayo, ano pa ngaba.

Rocky turns his head to Ben. Ben has his eyes glued to the new photo. Rocky looks at the picture then straightens his head back at the static traffic.

ROCKY (CONT'D)  
Kung di pa nasabi sakín ng kapatid  
ko yang ginagawa mo eh hindi ko pa  
malalaman.  
Sa ilang linggo mo ng ginagawa to,  
eh, akala ko pumupunta ka dito para  
bumili ng biskuwit ni Ann.  
Mamalimos ng barya barya!  
Sa lahat naman ng pwede mong gawin!  
Mamalimos. Yun pa naisip mong  
solusyon.

Ben, expressionless, maintains his eyes on the photo.

Rocky on the other hand has his eyes on the traffic.

EXT. BRGY 129 / INT. ROCKY'S JEEP - DAY

Rocky stops at a street corner and waits while his passengers leave.

INT. ROCKY'S JEEP / EXT. BRGY 129 - DAY

Ben gets off, turns to Rocky's direction but doesn't look the man in the eye.

BEN  
Salamat, Kuya Rock.

ROCKY  
Pag-isipan mo yung sinabi ko ha.  
Paulit-ulit na tayo.

Ben nods but doesn't answer.

ROCKY (CONT'D)  
Kamusta mo nalang ako sa bunso at  
sa Nanay mo.

Ben nods again then walks off.

Rocky stares at Ben's back while the boy walks away.

EXT. BRGY 129 (SMOKEY MOUNTAIN, TONDO) - DAY

A decent colorful metal sign stands before a tight street. Clearly written on top despite some chipped paint is BRGY 129, Smokey Mountain.

The homes are closely packed. The power lines hang loose from their poles. Multiple tricycles are parked on the street.

Ben walks past children playing street games, women sweeping, and men setting up tables.

He stares at the biscuit in his hand, he smiles, and continues to walk.

Further down the street, Ben stops at a home with a small store on the side.

EXT. ISKO'S HOME / INT. ISKO'S HOME - DAY

In front of the home is a small store. The front is covered with chicken wire, extending from one end of the store to the other. There's a small square opening right in the middle.

Ben peaks thru the opening and sees his friend sitting on their sofa, watching cartoons.

BEN  
Psst! Isko?

Isko turns and smiles.

ISKO  
Ben!

ISKO, 12, opens their front door. Slightly smaller in frame than Ben, the boy has a large birthmark on his right arm, dividing it into brown and white.

Ben hands Isko the change from his pocket.

BEN  
Ayan, sampong piso yan.  
Ano, tara tuloy na tayo?

ISKO  
Sa tagal mo dun. Sampong piso lang?

BEN  
Wala gaano nagbigay eh.

ISKO  
Bukas na, nagluluto na si Mama. Ako  
pinagbantay ng tindahan.

COSTUMER (O.S.)  
Pagbilan?

Both friends turn their heads to the voice.

Isko nods at the guy standing by the square opening.

BEN  
Sige, bukas. Saranggola mo  
gagamitin natin ha. Luma na yung  
akin, di na yun lilipad.

ISKO  
Sige. Teka.

BEN  
Bilisan mo.

POV. Isko helps his costumer while Ben wait patiently by the door.

Finished, Isko walks back to Ben and hands him a 10 peso bill.

ISKO  
Kailangan mong pumasok sa lunes.  
Galit na si Ms. Ruby.

BEN  
Wala yun, huwag mo isipin.  
Lagi naman yun galit, pero wala  
naman siya ginagawa.  
(pause)  
Sabi pa principal daw ako pero wala  
naman. Na-alala mo?

ISKO  
Ewan ko, mukhang seryoso siya  
kanina.

Ben keeps silent.

                    ISKO (CONT'D)  
Sige, bukas ha.

                    BEN  
Oo.

Ben walks off, when...

                    ISKO  
Hanap ka ng Tatay mo kanina. Kako,  
bumili ka biskuwit ni Ann.

Ben turns to face Isko and nods.

                    BEN  
Salamat bro.

Isko nods back and gives a light wave before closing the door.

EXT. BRGY 129 (SMOKEY MOUNTAIN, TONDO) - DAY

Ben walks down the busy street.

The backdrop transitions from the tight packed homes to multiple rundown apartment buildings.

EXT. SMOKEY MOUNTAIN COOPERATIVE - DAY

A group of girls gleefully play Chinese garter in-front of a square one floor establishment.

At the top of the door, written in red paint: Smokey Mountain Cooperative.

Ben's eyes focus on one particular girl. Her hair is up in a pony tail. She stands beside another girl that's CHEERING and encouraging someone jumping on the nylon garter.

ANN, 8, is smaller in frame than most of her playmates.

TALA, 8, Ann's friend notices Ben and hints on his presence. She looks at Ann then points to Ben's direction with her lips.

Ann looks. The moment she see's Ben, she dashes towards him with no inhibitions, almost tripping along the way.

Worried, Ben tries to stop and catch her at the same time.



ANN  
Ano ba yan, maikling takbo lang eh.

BEN  
Kahit na, alam mo namang napapagod  
ka agad.

Ann frustrated, grabs the biscuit from Ben's hand.

ANN  
Kaya ko naman.  
(pauses)  
Salamat Kuya.

She quickly opens the package and walks straight to Tala. She hands her a few pieces. Tala gives a soft smile and shares it to the rest of the group.

Ann waves at her playmates and struts back to her brother.

Side by side the siblings head straight inside the Cooperative.

ANN (CONT'D)  
Ang sarap Kuya Ben. Salamat.

Ann offers the biscuit to Ben.

ANN (CONT'D)  
O, kuha ka na bago pa maubos.

BEN  
Di na, saiyo lahat yan, ubusin mo.

Ben presses his hand on Ann's shoulder. The little girl looks up with a smile, showing her teeth that's full of biscuit crumbs.

Ben SNORTS then starts whistling the tune of SARANGGOLA NI PEPE.

INT. SMOKEY MOUNTAIN COOPERATIVE - DAY

The two siblings wait in the Cooperative lobby.

An elder lady, TESS, 55, peaks from a colorful curtain that separates the lobby from the back room. She smiles at the siblings and holds out her hand.

BEN  
Salamat Aling Tess.

Ben sits on a wooden bench, the only one in the small lobby. Ann does the same. She continues her ravenous enjoyment of her snack while Ben has his head tilted backwards, resting on the lobby wall.

There are four posters with pictures plastered on the wall.

Materials Recovery Facility - a man separates trash into different categories: bottles, plastics, papers. In bold letters: RECYCLE, FOR A BETTER FUTURE.

Water Station - a running spring serves as the backdrop for kids playing in a field of grass. In bold letters: CLEAN WATER, A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT.

Eco-Laundromat Service - a smiling old lady rests her back on a center folding table in front of a line of washing machines. In bold letters: NONE WASTED, ALL SAVED.

Handicraft Shop - a lady holds unto a a recycled paper bag while another stitches recycled stuffed toys. In bold letters: FROM TRASH TO TREASURES.

A hand pulls the curtain sideways and a thin but beautiful lady appears. MARIA, 35, has her hair tied to a bun. She's wearing an old skirt and washed out white shirt. She smiles at her children.

Ben immediately stands up and takes his mothers bag from her. Ann lags behind and stretches both arms forward just as she reaches her mother.

Maria immediately picks Ann up. She kisses her daughter on the forehead. She pulls Ben towards her and does the same to Ben's head.

MARIA

Kamustang eskuwela, Nak?

Ben looks down.

BEN

Walang bago, Nay.

MARIA

Ikli naman ng sagot.

Kuwento ka naman.

Ano ginawa niyo?

All three head out of the recycling center.

EXT. BRGY 129 (SMOKEY MOUNTAIN, TONDO) - DAY

Ben's eye wonders.

BEN

Wala naman, konting babasahin tsaka math.

ANN

Anong binasa niyo Kuya?  
Me kuwento ba kanina?

Maria, wide eyes stares at Ann in excitement.

MARIA

Gaya ni, Mariang Makiling.

Ann smiles from ear to ear.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Kuwento na.

Ben, rolls his eyes and shakes his head in frustration.

BEN

Wala nga, kulit niyong dalawa.

ANN

Sige na Ben, magkuwento ka na.

BEN

Ano, kung anu-ano lang?

Ann, clearly upset.

ANN

Lagi mo naman ginagawa yan eh!  
Saiyo na nga lang ako natututo.

Maria moves her hand to Ann's arm, gently brushing her thumb back and forth.

MARIA

Ganito nalang.  
Para lang sa araw na to, kasi  
parang pagod si Kuya eh.  
Ako si Charo Santos.

Maria turns her head to Ben and winks. She turns her attention back to Ann whose eyes gleefully sparkle in excitement, though the crumbs on her mouth takes the serious look away.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
 (to Ben)  
 Salamat sa biscuit, Nak.

Ben turns to look at his mother. He smiles.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
 Naku kailangan ko ng mag-isip ng  
 kuwento.

Ann smiles at her.

ANN  
 Galingan mo Nay ha.

Ben and Maria LAUGHS at the sentiment.

EXT. SMOKEY MOUNTAIN APARTMENT HOUSING - DAY

The family pass men, women, and children loafing around.

Men with no tops swing their shirts back and forth between their belly and their back, their faces, relieved from the false wind produced by the movement.

Most of the women chat and laugh as they fan their sweaty faces. The children, not bothered by the heat, continue on with their games.

Maria and the kids smile and nod at their neighbors as they pass.

EXT. SMOKEY MOUNTAIN APARTMENT HOUSING - DAY

The towering building drowns with NOISE from people chatting and children playing. The family continue their walk as they closely approach the end of the building.

They stop at a unit with a wooden bench in the front.

The apartment opens directly to the street, no wall separates the pavement from the building walkway except for a small canal filled with stagnant water.

EXT./INT. BEN'S HOME - DAY

Ben, Ann, and Maria reach their apartment. They enter quietly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maria walks straight to the kitchen, a section hidden behind the living room with a wall made of cardboard material.

Ann goes straight to the living room and sits in a long bamboo sofa.

Ben passes a flowery curtained door to the left of the living room. He walks straight to the one after it, draws the curtain and puts his moms bag on the bed.

He walks back towards Ann, takes his bag off and lays it on top of a small center coffee table.

MARIA (O.S.)

Ben, mag-aral ka ng kaunti bago  
kumain.  
Turuan mo si Ann, Nak.

Ann browses an old comic book, she doesn't budge and waits for Ben's cue.

Ben takes out two books from his bag and sits right next to his sister. First, he opens the math book.

Ann smiles, folds her comic book and puts it on a bunch of magazines and newspapers on the side of the sofa.

Ben takes his notebook and tears one piece from it, hands the piece to Ann, then hands her a pencil.

The siblings copy the numbers from Ben's book.

BEN

Subtraction yan ah.

ANN

Alam ko.

Behind the siblings, a few photograph hang by the living room wall; Maria with her husband in their wedding picture, a younger Ben with Ann, a few family photo, and a medium sized poster of The Last Super.

BEN

Yung lima, babawas mo yang 2 sa  
ilalim...

ANN

Alam ko nga. Magkumpara nalang tayo  
ng sagot.

BEN  
Kala mo kung sino.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The two siblings continue to argue.

ANN  
Ha!? Eh Bakit iba sagot mo?  
Nandadaya ka nan Kuya eh.

BEN  
Anak ng!

MARIA (O.S.)  
Narinig ko yun!

Ann, sneers and squints her eyes at her brother.

BEN  
Sorry Nay.  
Bat ako ang mali?  
Ako ang pumapasok sa eskuwelahan.

Ann crossing her arms with confidence.

ANN  
Hindi porket hindi ako nag school  
eh hindi ko alam ang tamang sagot.  
Ikaw kaya nagtuturo sakin.

MARIA (O.S.)  
Siya nga naman. Mali yung teacher.

Ben clearly agitated, purses his lips.

Ann smiles at him and chuckles.

BEN  
Bahala ka.

Ben points at Ann's paper.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Mali yan!

Ann, puts both arms on her waist, about to state her argument when the front door opens.

A man enters the home and locks the door behind him.

The two siblings stand to greet him.

Maria peaks momentarily from the kitchen and smiles at JOSE, 35. He has a rough look to him, his eyes tired and his hair disheveled.

Jose wears an old jeans that's been cut into shorts and a white undershirt for a top. He has a face towel hanging on his shoulder.

Both kids take their fathers hand and touch it to their foreheads.

BEN (CONT'D)

Tay.

Jose pats Ben on the head.

JOSE

Hindi kapa nagpapalit.

Ben nods and walks to his room.

ANN

Tay.

Jose stoops down and carries his daughter into his arms. Ann gives him a gentle kiss on the cheeks. Jose turns to Ben's bedroom.

JOSE

Ben, kamustang eskuwela?

BEN (O.S.)

Ok lang po.

Ann mouths Ben's next words but Jose doesn't see.

BEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Walang bago.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

An old white kite hangs on the wall on top of a plastic dresser.

Ben kneels beside his bed, he pulls out stacks of newspaper and magazines.

JOSE (O.S.)

Si Isko pa nagsabi sakin na pumunta ka nanaman ng palengke. Anong sabi ko diyan.

Ang layo ng palengke sa eskuwela.

(MORE)

JOSE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Aalalahanin paba kita? Ang init pa  
naman ngayon.

BEN  
Ok lang Tay, kaya ko naman.

JOSE (O.S.)  
Tsaka si Kuya Rocky mo.

Ben stops to listen.

JOSE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Hindi ako comfortable na nang  
hihingi ng pabor.

Ben exhales a sigh of relief.

JOSE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Oo, kaibigan siya ng pamilya pero.  
Nagtrabaho yung tao. Baka  
naistorbo mo.

Ben relaxes from his stiff pause and continues to pull things  
out until he gets to an old brown chocolate box.

BEN  
Wala yun Tay. Ok lang naman ke Kuya  
Rock kasi kahit papaano me kausap  
siya.

JOSE (O.S.)  
Hindi yun ang gusto kong sabihin,  
Ben.

Ben opens the chocolate box right next to a stack of  
newspaper. The page on top states a breaking news of the July  
2000 Payatas dump site tragedy.

BEN  
Wala talagang abala ke Kuya Rock,  
Tay.

We focus on the news papers headline for a beat.

JOSE (O.S.)  
Ayokong me naririnig sa ibang tao,  
alam mo yan.

Ben pulls the 10 peso bill from his pocket and adds it to the  
bills inside the box. He closes the box and puts it back  
under the bed.