

# *Take Me to Amerika*

---

Jose Mojica

**SETTING:** Late 90s

**CHARACTERS:**

**Jessa**- Late 20s. Dreams of living abroad and becoming an American citizen

**Junjun**- Jessa's older brother. Grew up in the streets. Hates Americans.

**Nanay**- Jessa's mother.

**Tatay**- Jessa's father.

**Lola**- Jessa's grandmother.

**Princess**- 8 years old. Jessa's younger sister. Smart/Nerdy.

**Tito Boy**- Parlorista Gay. Used to live with Americans in Subic.

## **1. INT. JESSA'S ROOM. DAY**

Different American magazines are laid out in front of JESSA. She stands in front of the mirror as she tries out different clothes, imitating the models from the magazine. As she puts on her make up, she calls to her family outside her room.

JESSA:       Nay! Tay! Kayo lahat! Nakaayos na ba kayo? Patapos na ako.  
                  Saglit na lang 'to.

PRINCESS:   (speaking outside the room) Yes po, Ate. Naka-ready na po.

JESSA: (to mirror) Oh my gad. I'm so excited. This is a bery important day. It's like I'm getting marry. Well. Hindi pa. But apter this day. I will. And I will pinally go to America with my pyuture hasband. I lab you, James.

She finishes fixing her make up and closes her scrapbook with James' photo and all his details. She leaves the room.

## 2. INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Everyone wears pambahay except for PRINCESS who is in her Sunday dress. Jessa sees her LOLA praying, her NANAY doing her nails, her TATAY reading a newspaper while drinking coffee, Princess sitting properly, and JUNJUN breaking up with her girlfriend over the phone.

JUNJUN: (to phone) E di maghiwalay na. Ako pa ang tatakutin mo kala mo ang ganda-ganda mo, ang itim naman ng kili-kili mo. Bahala ka...

Jessa goes down the stairs (slow-mo). Everyone looks at her, stunned. Their mouths open. Junjun looks away from Jessa and shuts his phone. He goes out of the house.

JESSA: (runs after Junjun) Kuya Junjun! San ka na naman pupunta? Kayo Nay? Tay? Bakit hindi pa kayo nakaayos? Kanina ko pa sinasabi na magmadali kayo kasi darating na si James.

Everyone ignores her until she screams.

JESSA: (screaming) Ano ba!

Everyone stands up and starts moving.

TITO BOY arrives from Divisoria carrying lots of large plastic bags with American style clothes and decorations inside. He sees everyone rushing.

TITO BOY: Ay! Nakakaloka. Bakit nag-papanic ang mga jutao?

JESSA: Kasalanan n'yo 'to e. Kung hindi kayo late dumating, kanina pa sana nakabihis ang mga 'to.

TITO BOY: Kakadating ko lang 'yan agad ang sasalubong? Nakaka-stress mag-Divisoria ha. Lapot na ang make-up ng lola mo.

JESSA: Sorry po. Medyo nag papanic lang talaga ako. Alam n'yo naman na importante sa'kin ang araw na 'to.

TITO BOY: Relax, darling. Bawal ma-stress ang beauty mo. Wit bet 'yan ng mga Kano. Don't worry. We can handle this.

### 3. MONTAGE SEQUENCE

They start decorating the house as though it is a foreigner's house. Jessa rehearses their English as they decorate. Princess speaks well, way better than Jessa. But aside from Princess, her family finds it difficult to speak. They say the wrong things. Tito Boy keeps on insisting what is right, telling them he knows more because of his experiences with foreigners in Subic.

Tito Boy takes out the false eyelashes he has bought from Divisoria.

TITO BOY: Ay! Bongga 'to girl. Try mo 'to o. Yan!

JESSA: Sure ka dito Tito ha? Trust ko ang wisdom mo.

TITO BOY: Oo, pak na yan! Nasaan pala ang red gown para kay Nanay?

Lola suddenly appears.

LOLA: Hoy, Boying. Umayos ka. Ayoko ng red gown na yan. Walang red gown!

After decorating, Jessa asks them to wear the clothes Tito Boy has bought for them.

TITO BOY: Ano na Jessa? Come on, let's rehearse our lines. Hey, everybody! Sit down na.

Everyone gathers around the living room.

TITO BOY: Let's start with Nanay.

Nanay stands up and walks in front of the television.

NANAY: I'm the mother op Jessa. Jusko. hirap na hirap ako nung pinanganak yan. It's so difficult to release her from my vagi... from wombs.

CUT TO

TATAY: (nervous) Ah... Hehe. Ah... Pano ba ire. Ako'y... Me. I'm. Pader op Jessa. Plis sit down. Later, we drink until we... lasing! Ah basta alagaan mo 'yang anak ko ha. Mahal na mahal ko 'yan.

CUT TO

LOLA: (frowning, combative with their teasing)

CUT TO

TITO BOY: (dancing) Hi, My name is Madonna. And because I'm always on the go, a woman that never rests, you can call me Curacha. You know, like the famous Filipina bold star, Rosanna Roces. Charing! Jessa grew up with me in the parlor. You know, parlor girl. She just sits there the entire day. Reading magazine or

watching sa cable. Kaya lang iniwan ko s'ya nung pumunta ako sa Subic to work. There, I met a lot of Americans. Like you, James. Sa akin nga 'to nagmana. Look. Same bet. Ay. Teka, nasaan nanaman si Junjun?

CUT TO

Junjun is in front of a sari-sari store with his barkada. They are drinking Coke and smoking cigarettes. One of Junjun's friend is beatboxing.

JUNJUN: (outside the house—rapping) Yo! Junjun nga pala ang tawag ng madla. Sa away ako daw ay walang kadala-dala. Laki sa kalye, kilabot ng mga babae, lahat sila ay takot kapag ako na ang umere. Sa tabas ng dila, wala silang panama. Lalo na ang Kanong 'kala mo ay maangas. Baka mamaya 'pag nakita ko na s'ya, isang solid na sapak at sa kalsada'y dadapa. Break it down yo.

#### 4. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Junjun enters the house.

JESSA: (to Junjun) Sa'n ka ba galing, Kuya? Bakit di ka pa nag aayos?

Junjun walks out. Jessa runs after Junjun.

#### 5. EXT. STREET. NIGHT

JESSA: Kuya, ano ba?

JUNJUN: Ano bang pakialam ko d'yan sa porener na 'yan? Ang laki-laki ng ginastos mo dyan sa handa-handa na 'yan wala naman tayong pera. Sigurado ka ba na pakakasalan ka n'yan?

JESSA: Oo, bakit?

JUNJUN: Ilang buwan pa lang kayong mag-syota? Tatlo? Lima? Anim? Baka nga sa susunod na buwan hiwalay na kayo.

JESSA: Hoy! Wag mo akong itulad sa'yo na lingguhan magpalit ng syota. Mas madalas ka pa makipaghiwalay kaysa maligo.

JUNJUN: Walang basagan ng trip!

JESSA: Wala talagang basagan ng trip! 9 months na kami magka-chat at nung last na umuwi si James dito, nag shopping kami sa Greenhills. Pumunta rin kami sa Tomas Morato. Uminom kami tapos nag-Motel. Kaya alam ko na lab n'ya ako. Nag-bibidyo call pa kami. At ano naman kung gumagastos ako? You don't care. Dis is my money.

JUNJUN: Ano rin kung wala akong pakelam sa mga porener na 'yan! Money money ka pa dyan. Wala ka ngang trabaho kaya umaasa ka sa James na 'yan. Gusto mo lang s'ya para makapunta sa America at magkaron ng magandang buhay. At tigilan mo na 'yang Ingles-Ingles. Nakakasuka ka mag-Ingles.

Jessa is about to hit Junjun with her slippers. They hear Tito Boy calling them.

TITO BOY: Jessa! Junjun!

## 6. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Jessa enters the house. She almost cries after seeing that her family looks like “foreigners” (her ideal America). Tito Boy hugs her, and her family follows. They hear a car honk and they all panic. James, Jessa’s boyfriend, arrives. They all stop. Even their neighbors. Even the world outside. Jessa holds James’ hand. They enter the house.

NANAY: It's you! James. Come, come. Napaka gwapong bata naman nito sa personal. Malayong-malayo sa picture na pinakita ni Jessa.

James hugs Jessa before he enters and carries her. She gropes for the ring but finds nothing.

JESSA: Nasaan na yung singsing?

JAMES: (confused) Honey, what are you looking for?

JESSA: Nating. (whispering) Maybe its surprise.

James steps in and looks around. He starts to get confused (looking at the interior of the house—the ideal America).

NANAY: Peel at home. You know mano po? (acting it out) Bless bless? Do it. Do it. (to Tatay) Halika nga dito ng ma-sample ko kay James.

TATAY: Bakit sa'kin? Ikaw nga ang mas...

NANAY: Ano?

TATAY: (trying to Nanay's hand) 'To naman, di na mabiro.

NANAY: Hmm.. Ewan ko sa'yo. (to James) Come on, James. Do it. Like this.

Nanay shows James how to do mano po. James puts everyone's hand on his forehead (mano po) including Princess.

TITO BOY: No mano for me. I want beso. Mano po makes me older.

James kisses Tito Boy's cheek. Everyone laughs.

JESSA: (to James) You're early. I tot you will arrive late.

JAMES: The cab driver told me that he knows short cuts. We passed by many small roads with kids playing basketball everywhere. And there was no traffic. I paid the driver five thousand.

EVERYONE: Five thousand?!

JAMES: Yeah, he told me that it should be 5500. But since he found me nice, he gave me 500-peso discount.

JESSA: You're got crazy. No, no. I mean. You got... uh... naloko ka.

PRINCESS: (to James) Ate said you got deceived, cheated, swindled, hoaxed.

JAMES: Oh, I see. Never mind that. At least I got here fast and safe. I'm just so excited to see you guys.

Tatay sneezes.

JAMES: Are you okay, Tatay?

TATAY: Aprub! Aprub! Dust prom clothes. Ukay-ukay.

JAMES: What do you mean by ukay-ukay?

TATAY: Ah... Ukay.

Tatay starts to sweat in his suit.

Lola, in her blonde wig, keeps looking at the tattoo on James's wrist and makes a sign of the cross. Lola suddenly asks James out of nowhere.

LOLA: James, pakakasalan mo ba talaga itong apo ko?

Everyone goes silent and looks at lola. They hear someone from outside. Lechon arrives.

## 7. INT. DINING AREA. NIGHT

Lola and Junjun bring in the dishes. None of them is American. They are all Filipino dishes. Jessa gets frustrated. Junjun flexes his non-existent muscle as he lays down the dishes. He also stares James down.

JESSA: OMG. Bakit puro pang ulam natin. Di naman magugustuhan ni James ‘yan. Mag-order na lang kaya tayo ng chicken at spaghetti sa Jollibee?

JAMES: No, no, no. It’s okay. I’d love to eat all of them. Food is a great way to know another’s culture, right?

James tries out different food. Although at times reluctant, he enjoys everything.

NANAY: How’s America? Have you seen the Tower? Eipel?

JAMES: Eiffel Tower is in Paris, Nanay. I come from Los Angeles.

JUNJUN: Lakers! Pero wala na ‘yan. Talunan naman ‘yan. Mga talunan!

JAMES: Well...

TITO BOY: I once had a boyfriend who came from Los Angeles. He has big...

Jessa giggles annoyingly. Everyone looks at her with judging eyes. Jessa continues to eat as if nothing happened.

TATAY: Tekang. James, hab you try Pale Pilsen? Good beer. Good beer. (to Junjun) Kumuha ka nga ng beer sa ref.

JESSA: (to James) Are you enjoying?

JAMES: Of course, honey.

Junjun returns with a beer. He gives it to James.

JUNJUN: O ano, sabay tayo? Straight ah.

NANAY: James, say “tagay!”

JAMES: Ta-kay?

NANAY: No, no. Ta-gay!

JAMES: Ta-gay!

JESSA: ‘Wag n’yo na turuan ng mga Tagalog. English naman kami sa America.

JUNJUN: O tara na. Ano ba ‘yan. Tagay!

Junjun finishes the beer faster than James.

JUNJUN: Wala pala ‘to e. Talunan talaga.

NANAY: (to Junjun) Pst! Tumigil ka na nga. (to James) James, what can we see in Los Angeles?

PRINCESS: They have Disneyland, Hollywood, and Los Angeles Zoo.

JAMES: That’s right, Princess. How’d you know?

PRINCESS: I read it from Ate’s book po, Kuya James.

NANAY: We also hab the same here. We hab Boom na Boom. We hab Manila Soo.

TATAY: Parang inaalala mo lang kung sa’n tayo nag de-date noon. He he.

NANAY: Naku, matagal na ‘yun. (to James) Anyway, we hab Quezon City, the city op stars. Many op sikat artista lib there. And ABS and GMA are there. You should go and audition. You can be sikat because you’re pogi.

JESSA: James, will you take me there after our mar—

Jessa sees Lola bowing her head, eyes closed.

JESSA: Lola! Anong nangyari?

TITO BOY: Inay!

They all panic.

NANAY: Nay, nay. Anong nangyari?

TATAY: Junjun, ano ka ba? Tumawag ka ng ambulansya. Mamamatay na ang lola mo!

TITO BOY: Nay, wag mo kaming iwan! Diyos ko!

JAMES: What’s happening?

JESSA: Lola! Bakit ngayon pa? Araw ko to e!

Princess stands up and walks to Lola. She shakes her, but Lola doesn't wake up.

TITO BOY: Nasan na ang red gown ni Nanay? Paki-kuha nga Princess. Yun ang isusuot sa libing.

Lola suddenly wakes up.

LOLA: Hoy! Ayan na naman yang red gown na 'yan. Naririnig ko na naman.

TITO BOY: Sabi sa inyo e. Kilala ko yan. Pero di ko rin alam kung bakit galit na galit sa red gown.

NANAY: Susmaryosep naman, Nay. Kala namin kung napano ka na.

LOLA: Nakatulog ako. Hindi ko naman naiintindihan ang pinag-uusapan n'yo. Puro America. America. (Lola takes off her costume) Kung nandito lang ang lolo n'yo, baka nabatukan na kayong lahat. Matapos niyang ipag laban ang bansa... Diyos kong mahabagin. O s'ya. Mabuti pa ay mauna na ako sa katre.

Lola stands up. Jessa takes her to bed.

When she comes back, she sees James eating with his hands. She feels disgusted.

JESSA: (to James) What are you doing?

JAMES: They taught me how to eat with my hands. Filipino custom. I enjoy it.

JESSA: Kayong lahat! Ano bang ginagawa n'yo? Bakit ba tinuturuan n'yo pa si James ng mga ganito? Nakakadiri. Hindi naman nya magagamit 'yan dun. Mga walang class. Kaya ayoko dito e.

Everyone shushes. Jessa walks out. Tatay follows her.

## 8. EXT. VERANDA. NIGHT

Jessa is about to light her cigarette. Tatay takes it from her and keeps it in his pocket. Tatay sweats again in his suit. Jessa starts to sob.

JESSA: Sorry po, Tay. Hindi ko lang po maintindihan kung bakit gustong gusto ni James yung mga gan'on.

TATAY: 'Di ba yun naman talaga ang gusto mo? 'Yung magustuhan kami ni James? Pero mas mahalaga pa rin na gusto n'yo ang isa't isa. Tingnan mo kami ng Nanay mo, lagi kaming nagtatalo pero lagi rin kaming nagkakaayos. Kasi nga, gusto ko naman lahat sa kaniya.

JESSA: Parang biglang nawala po kasi yung James na kilala ko.

TATAY: Alin?

JESSA: 'Yung porener. 'Yung may class. Yung American.

Tatay hugs Jessa. James follows them and tries to talk to Jessa. Tatay taps James' shoulder and leaves. Everyone in the family tries to peek from the corner.

JAMES: I'm sorry honey. I don't know what I did wrong. I was just enjoying with your family. By the way, remember what I told you?

JESSA: Is it about the...

JAMES: (James holds Jessa's both hands as though proposing) Our company is relocating here in the Philippines! We can now live together kasi Ma-hal ki-ta!

JESSA: Wha- what? What the pak are you saying? Mahal? Stay here? Where will you lib?

James stops, shocked.

JAMES: What do you mean? I thought...

Jessa slaps James and rushes inside the house.

JAMES:     Hey! Honey!

## **9. INT. JESSA'S ROOM. NIGHT**

Jessa sits and opens her scrapbook. She tears out James' page and throws it away. She picks another American from her collected details and copies it on her desktop computer.

JESSA:     (typing on computer screen) Hi Charles! Wanna talk? (with YM emoticon)

END