



JANEELYN STOPS SCROLLING

She really wanted to see the next video. And the next. And the next.

By Charlotte Larcabal Speakman
(Based on a true story)

This story happened in Malaysia.

Janeelyn swiped her thumb across the phone screen. Videos flashed by. She paused to watch one, then scrolled again. Then she stopped at another video. It had a lot of bad language, but it was funny, so she kept watching. And then kept scrolling.

“Janeelyn! Want to come draw?” Her younger sister Jojo waved a piece of paper.

Janeelyn glanced up. “Not right now.”

“OK.” Jojo frowned and set the paper down.

Scroll. Scroll. Scroll. Videos of cute animals. Videos of famous people. Videos of kids dancing. And a few videos Janeelyn knew weren’t good to watch.

OK, maybe more than a few. Janeelyn started to feel like she should stop watching them.

But people also post a lot of good things, she thought. She’d even learned new ways to draw from a few

videos.

“Janeelyn,” Mom called.

“Hmm?” Janeelyn didn’t even look up this time.

“We’re having seafood fried rice tonight,” Mom said. “Will you help me make it?”

Janeelyn loved seafood fried rice. But she didn’t want to get up right now.

“Can I just set the table?” she asked. “I can help with dishes after too.”

“That’s fine,” Mom said. “But you need to set it right when I ask you. And then it’s time to give the phone back. Deal?”

“Deal,” Janeelyn said.

Janeelyn kept watching videos. Again, she felt that she shouldn’t be looking at them. But she really wanted to see the next video. And the next. And the next. *Scroll. Scroll.* It was hard to stop!

At last Janeelyn put the phone down. Well, maybe she could just finish one last video. . . .

No, Janeelyn told herself firmly. The Holy Ghost had prompted her, and she wanted to listen. Her hand still hovered near the phone. It was so tempting! Janeelyn squeezed her eyes shut.

Dear Heavenly Father, she prayed silently. *I’m trying hard to listen to the Holy Ghost, but I need help. I want to stop watching these videos, but I’m not sure how. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.*

Just then, Mom called her to set the table. Janeelyn hopped up and smiled. That was one way to help get her off the phone.

Janeelyn set the plates on the table. “Mom, I saw some bad things on the phone,” she blurted out.

Mom looked up from her cooking. “What kinds of things?”

“Just like, bad words and bad videos.” Janeelyn shrugged. “But it’s not *all* bad.”

“What did you do when you saw the bad things?” Mom asked.

Janeelyn was quiet for a moment. She set a cup at each place.

“I kept watching,” she said.

“I don’t know why. But the Holy Ghost told me to stop, so I said a prayer for help.”

Mom set a steaming platter of seafood fried rice on the table. “Sometimes it’s really hard to stop doing things even when we know they are bad,” she said. “And when that happens, the best thing we can do is pray.”

Janeelyn grinned. “So I did the right thing.”

“You sure did.” Mom handed Janeelyn spoons to put on the table. “And the internet isn’t all bad. It can help us connect with

friends and share ideas. But it can be hard to stay away from all the bad things too. From now on, if you’re going to watch videos, let’s only watch them together. That way Dad and I can help if you see something bad.”

Janeelyn nodded. Next time she’d watch videos with Mom and Dad. But until then, there were lots of fun things she could do without the phone.

“Will you tell everyone it’s time for dinner?” Mom asked.

“Yup! And after dinner, I’m going to draw with Jojo!” ●



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MITCH MILLER