

My Sunshine

A Collection of Short Stories by
Jon Tasai



*A collection of short stories by one of the most-loved
authors in Thailand - Jon Tasai*

A publication of the Creative English Writing Association of
Thailand (CEWAT)

Title: My Sunshine

Author: Jon Tasai

Publisher CEWAT Green Print, **Year** 2023

Number of copies produced 150

City & State: Bangkok, Thailand

Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Copyrights

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author.

Contents

1. The Fish & The Film	3
2. My Sunshine	6
3. B52 and the Turkeys	9
4. Her Life	19
5. Good Luck Hurts	22
6. Mai's Dream Job	25
7. Gold for Me and You	30
8. My Hero	35
9. Buala	42
10. The Story of Jundee	46
11. He Who Knew Too Much	49
12. Jack and Jane	52
13. Blessing from a Beggar Boy	55
14. Believe in What You See	61
15. The Colors of Memories	66
About the Author	68

1. The Fish & The Film

Boonyang and Sunee were an ordinary couple living by the sea in a small house. They earned a living by selling fruits and vegetables at the market and lived a simple life, enjoying the beach and coffee.



Life for them was simple. They rarely had any quarrels or disagreements.

However, one day, when Boonyang purchased some fish and asked his wife to cook it for him, little did he know that this simple request would lead to a life-changing lesson. Here was his big mistake.

Boonyang planned to go see a movie, but his wife wanted to accompany him. However, he declined her request, telling her to stay at home and cook the fish for him.

“I only bought one ticket,” he told her.

Sunee reluctantly agreed, and Boonyang left for the cinema alone. As he watched the film, he couldn't shake off the feeling of guilt for not bringing his wife along.

The film was a great one, and he remembered most of the plot

and names of the characters and was ready to share them with his wife. It was a big mistake.

When he returned home, he went straight to the kitchen to find a plate of cooked rice but no trace of the fish. He was so hungry. He asked his wife where it was, and she calmly replied that she had eaten it all. Boonyang was shocked and a little angry, but his wife asked him to sit beside her and listen to her story of how delicious the fish was.

“Now, listen to me, carefully,” she said calmly.

As Boonyang listened to Sunee's vivid descriptions of the flavor and texture of the fish, he began to understand that she had eaten it all because she wanted to teach him a lesson about leaving her alone to cook for him. She believed that he should have asked her to join him at the film and share the experience with him.

Sunee's actions made Boonyang reflect on his behavior and how he had taken his wife for granted. He realized that he needed to be more considerate of her feelings and make an effort to include her in his activities. From that day on, Boonyang made sure to include Sunee in all of his plans, and they began to enjoy a stronger, more loving relationship as a result.

“Sorry. I should have asked you to join me”, he said.

The lesson that Boonyang learned from Sunee's actions stuck with him for the rest of his life. He cherished every moment with her and never took her for granted again. The couple lived happily for many more years, always cherishing their time

together and the love that they shared.

Sunee's act of eating the fish may have been small, but it had a big impact on Boonyang's life. It taught him to value and cherish his wife, and their relationship only grew stronger as a result. This simple yet profound lesson serves as a reminder to us all to never take our loved ones for granted and to always make an effort to include them in our lives.

2. My Sunshine

Thanachart was reminiscing about a trip he took to New Zealand in the late 1980s. He could only recall fragments of memories, but they were vivid enough to make him feel as if he were there again. The sound of himself singing the famous song "You are My Sunshine" echoed in his mind even now, and the faces of the Smith family, who he had met on that trip, were still clear in his mind. He could remember four people, the father, mother, Kate, and Peter, all traveling together in a car towards Auckland.

It was the last day of his stay in the land of long white clouds. He came to NZ as an exchange student. His year-long stay with the Smiths has been delightful.

New Zealand is a country made up of two big islands (North Island and South Island) and many small islands. It's very big for an island country and covers a lot of land, about 268,021 square kilometers.

He recalls his time in New Zealand as a defining moment in his life, and the lyrics of the song have become a part of his reality.

That picture was 20 years ago. Now, he is a university lecturer in Bangkok, Thailand. His time in NZ, for him, was well spent and he never regretted having spent it in New Zealand.

He was thinking about those memories as he sipped his black coffee, trying to bring back more memories that were scattered like broken glass.

He remembered the green pastures of Waikato, the Kaimai

range, and the road where he stayed for twelve months. He felt calmer as he remembered more and more details.

Thanachart remembered going on a hiking trip with his host father, Phil, on the Kaimai range. He remembers standing at the edge of a cliff and looking north at the peak of Mt. Ruapehu. The



Kaimai Range is of volcanic origin and is mostly forested, with summits ranging between 550 and 950 meters. He remembered the trip fondly, despite the overcast and wet weather on the last day of his stay in New Zealand.

As he was about to finish drinking his morning coffee, he remembered that he was traveling in the car, he saw the face of Mrs. Kate Williamson, a teacher in Tauranga who saw his talent for story-writing. She encouraged him to share his personal writing, comics, and journals with her class, and became a mentor to him throughout his time at the boys' college. He reflected on the differences in teaching styles in New Zealand and Thailand, and how Kiwi teachers truly engage with their students and believe in their potential.

His host sister Nancy, three years younger than him, was sad on the day they were leaving. She promised to fly to Thailand to see him and asked if he would visit the Brown family again. Thanachart promised he would come back as soon as he could.

The memories of his trip to New Zealand, his experiences, and the people he met there, stayed with Thanachart for many years.

He would often find himself singing "You are My Sunshine," and the song would bring back all the feelings of happiness, warmth, and love that he felt during that trip.



It's been many years now, but Thanachart still thinks about that trip often. The memories are still as vivid as ever, and he still feels the same emotions every time he hears that song. The people he met, the places he visited, and the experiences he had, all combined to make that trip one of the most

defining moments in his life. It was a trip that taught him about the beauty of the world and the kindness of people, and it was a trip that he would never forget.

3. B52 and the Turkeys

My family has many weird traditions, on reflection, like wasting money on lottery and believing in superstition, despite the fact that we all consider ourselves Buddhists. One tradition that still stays in my memory, and it's hard to chuck it off is the turkey-keeping tradition. Turkeys, you probably can imagine their features, are big birds, which means that they can fly. They are huge birds and are not scared of small beings like hens or children. Their decisive weapon is the kick with their long legs, especially the males. As we are all under the species of moderate height, it has always been perplexing for me why they decided to somehow adopt turkeys as the family's domestic animals.

When I was young, one vivid memory was this - the turkeys. Later on I learned that Turkey is also a big country in the Middle East, which is quite far away from my country. I remembered having to avoid walking close to them as I am a small person myself and I often saw my grandfather feeding these birds with rice. They love to stay in a small flock.

The last time, about a year ago, I visited my parents was an opportunity to make an investigation. I often told my students that a systematic way of finding out about something is what we call 'research'. I have been lecturing at a private university on the outskirts of Bangkok for almost ten years now. This visit to Roi Et, a province, in the northeast of Thailand, was no ordinary one, as I was alone. My wife and the two children were not with me as in the past. The kids were in school and my wife had to teach. Tim and Tam, our two children, asked me to say hi to their

grandparents and the Turkeys. I had a week to look after everything.



I arrived by plane, which took me only an hour, too short to finish reading anything, I often felt. Then I would rent a car right at the airport and drive it to a small village just five kilometers east of a small district. In the past, before I got married and had kids, I used to take a bus, travel across the region overnight and arrived at the province in the morning. After that I continued the journey by another bus, a local one to get to the district and from the district you took a motorcycle taxi. All of these made one realize that life was hard and memory precious. But if you ask me today whether I miss those good old days, I am sorry to say that I am not. I prefer the comfort of today's technology, with respect to transportation, of course.

My feeling, as I was driving through the city center, was mixed. I missed my parents, worrying about their health and at the same time I missed my children and my wife, in short, my own family, and of course, the two cats. I stopped the car and bought some food and groceries at a small market on the way to the district, which is 35 kilometers from the province. I did not forget to buy two kilos of tangerines, as they were my mother's favorite, even though she was diagnosed a few years ago with diabetes, she still loved the fruit.

It was a flock of turkeys that blocked my car from entering the house. Sunee, one of my younger sisters who had been staying

with mom and dad, came chasing them away. She helped me carry my shopping with smiles.

“And this is for you,” I said as I handed mom the bag of tangerines.

Mon thanked me and gave me a blessing as usual, citing the teaching of Lord Buddha, and I felt like the three planes and the universe were noting my good deed. This is something about humans. They rely on faith and some unknown and unproven interventions, but in a harmless way. Dad was busy in our rubber plantation and told Sunee that he would be back for dinner together – a family dinner. I gave him a jar of honey from the north, which I bought at a shop in Don Muang International airport. “With this price, a bit costly, and the location like this, it’s got to be real honey” I told myself as I handed the 500 Baht banknote to the shop assistant.

“Just because it’s from the shop like that doesn’t guarantee that it’s real,” dad argued, trying to show his IQ. It seemed he always tried to outsmart his children, including me. He took it anyway and had a taste with this comment: “Taste is a bit too sweet. Too hygienic. I prefer the taste of nature, and the smell of nature”. Arguing with Dad was futile, a self-centered like him was hard to convince with reasons or evidence. Mu strategy was simply acknowledging his opinion. Expressions like ‘That may be true’, or ‘that’s one way of looking at it’ were my usual responses. Mom was less diplomatic about Dad, so her usual reaction was ‘Don’t listen to him -old and stubborn’, or something along this line.

Dad was glad that I took interest in turkeys. When I announced that I would look for the history of these big birds. “I don’t know

myself. They were there when I was young. Everybody raises them.” He, however, recommended that I ask for help from some of his relatives in the village where he was born. I took his advice and listened to him more when he talked about turkeys. I remembered when I mistook Kai Tok (Tok chicken) as an informal name for turkey (Kai Nguang), he laughed out loud. Kai Tok is much smaller than Kai Nguang, he told me. I trust Dad when it comes to local knowledge and wisdom. My plan was to drive about twenty kilometers north of our house to another village. Uncle Sanit was mentioned and recommended by both Mum and Dad to be a reliable informant. His house was to the left of Uncle Boonchan, which I could only vaguely remember where it was.

After breakfast, I left with a mission. Mum told me to get some gifts from the market and give some to the villagers, she told me it’s a practical thing to do. I believed her. I bought three bottles of rice whisky and some grilled chicken with me. It took me about half an hour to get to a small village. I would say in the middle of a great rice plain. The gravel road leading to the village is full of bumps and bogs. I was worried that the rented car might be damaged, so I drove the car slowly with great care. Sunee and Dad said they were busy with work. I had to take the journey on my own, a little adventure won’t hurt, I told myself.

The first house I asked for directions was the one located on the left side of the entrance to the village. It was a bit isolated, like our house. After pulling over, I got out and, immediately, was greeted by a barking dog. Upon close look, it was not a fierce-looking dog; and, certainly, it was not a big dog, and it looked unhealthy with a sign of famine. “Sawasdee krab,” I was greeted by an old man. We exchanged greetings in our local dialect. The owner of the house looked at my face as I sat down

on a wooden chair in front of the house. "I am looking for..." I could not finish my sentence.

"You look like Uncle Pong. Are you his son?" I allowed myself to look amazed.

"You must be his eldest son working as a teacher in Bangkok," he continued.

"Don't you remember me?" I didn't know but his face and his way of talking looked familiar.

"I'm Ken, your father's close friend," he told me before I opened my mouth to ask.

I told him my name and we had a bit of chat. I went to the booth of the car and bought with me a bottle of rice whisky and a big bamboo stick of friend chicken. I gave him some presents – "Here's something small from Bangkok and from my family," I said.

Uncle Ken thanked me. "Are you looking for someone in our village?" he asked. I told him that I was looking for Uncle Sanit. He said that he knew where the house was. "I met him yesterday at the temple," said uncle ken. He then gave me the directions.

"Why are you looking for him?"

"I'm going to ask him about turkeys," I said.

"Turkey?" The man looked puzzled. "You want to buy some from him?"

No, I told him. As we were chatting a few checks came to search for grains near us. A few seconds later, a few turkeys came chasing them. “You’ve got some turkeys, too?” I asked.

“Of course, we did. It’s traditional that we keep turkeys. Everybody around here does.” Uncle Ken told me.

As we were talking, a young boy and an old woman came to join us. The old woman was his wife and the boy, ten years old, their grandson. “Where’s the father or mother?” I asked myself.

“His father passed away last year,” Uncle Ken told me. He told me that his daughter, the mother of the boy, went to work as a factory worker in the central region. She left the boy with them. The boy was in a school uniform and was about to ride his bicycle to school. The mother only sent them some money every month. Sometimes, she did not send them at all. After the boy left, Uncle Ken told me that his daughter might have found him a new father. They did not tell the boy this story. When he was more mature, we would tell him. We had a few minutes of exchanges. Then I bid him farewell. I told him that I would drop by the next time I came around the village. He bid me good luck.

The directions I got from Uncle Ken were not accurate. Did he lie to me? I began to ask myself. On the other hand, could it be my aging memory. It seems to be running away from you as you are aging. seemed to lose it. He told me to continue driving for 300 meters and turn left. I did follow the directions and found myself at the dead end of the dirt road. In front of me was nothing but a green rice field with a few water buffaloes looking at me and my car. I had to make a U-turn in an awkward maneuver. I kept on driving. The house on my left was what I had in mind. I’d better

stop and go inside to ask for directions to Uncle Sanit or Uncle Boonchan.

I saw a small flock of hens, roosters, and two small turkeys grazing grass nearby. I was glad as I found that there was not a single dog in sight. Walking toward me, slowly, was an old woman. I greeted her with a Wai gesture. "Looking for someone?" and I answered "Yes, is Uncle Sanit's house around here?"

"By the way, you look like someone I know," said the old woman.

"I'm Uncle Pong's son, his eldest"

"That's what I thought. Yes, indeed, you look like him when he was younger," said the woman.

"Don't worry I will walk you there." She invited me to have a seat at a wooden bench under a mango tree.

I began to notice that the old woman looked a bit like my mother. She saw me staring at her face. It must have been obvious to her that I was staring at her. "Your face looks a bit like my mother," I told her.

She laughed. "Of course, I am her older sister," she told me.

"You are kidding me!" I was stunned by this news.

"No, it's true. But I was born from the first wife of your maternal grandfather," she said.

I began to adjust my language and addressed her as my aunt, one of my relatives. My mother told me once that she was born into a big family. I knew only some of them. In fact, I could remember only some of them and could not remember their names. I could vaguely remember their faces. She told me that her name is Buala, and I called her Aunty Buala. Her husband passed away five years ago. She's got two children. They went to live in other villages, and occasionally would come to visit her. She was alone in this house. I went to the booth of my car and took out a small bag of cookies I bought at the market. I gave it to her and she thanked me.

"I met your mother at the temple last month," she told me.

Aunty Buala was ten years older than my mother. She looked old but still healthy. She kept two cats and some domestic animals like chickens and ducks. "I saw a few turkeys," I told her. "Yes, they were given to me by Uncle Sanit", she told me. Her eyes looked hopeful when she mentioned the name of the man I had been looking for. As I was with an important relative, I took time to talk to her. I did not feel the need to rush out to seek the truth about the history of turkeys.

"Your mother and father met each other in this village. It was me who helped them to get married."

"As a matchmaker, I was helping your father, Pong, to get closer to her," she added more detail to the story.

I sipped water and listened attentively to the story of my parents. To be honest, I had never asked them how they met. I knew so

little about their romantic relationship, their personal stories. We talked for almost an hour and got on well with each other like a bush on fire. I felt truly connected to her. The story told to me by Aunty Buala opened more windows into the story of my own family.

“My father kept turkeys and other big birds as domestic animals. We domesticated them for food,” she said. “Look, I still keep some around,” she pointed to a few turkeys next to a small haystack. The presence of a haystack implied that Aunty Buala was planting some rice. She told me that she was too old to ‘tam na’ or grow rice, so she asked some relatives to do it. I did so to consume myself, she told me.

She told me that the practice of raising turkeys was not a recent one. It was certainly before the Vietnam War era. During the war, she said that turkeys were common in many villages around the province and the northeastern region of Thailand. She said that there was a new village just across the field from hers, and its name was B52.



“B52?”

“It’s where the big plane clashed,” she said. “Named after the airplane that clashed when we were young,” she added.

Now, I began to gradually recall the story told to me, several times, by my father. He told me that somewhere in our district, near his birthplace, the airplane crashed. Aunty Bula told me that she and many other children ran to the site to witness the tragedy. No one survived, she told me.

I was not in a hurry to meet Uncle Sanit. I enjoyed being with this old woman, partly because she looked like my mother. Like they said, all good things must eventually come to an end, I bid her farewell. I promised her that I would come and visit her the next time I could come. As I finished saying that I felt hurt, blaming myself for not coming to visit my relatives. She gave me a 5-minute long blessing, citing the power of every god in the universe.

The direction she gave me was clear, as clear as the blue sky above my head. I declined her offer to walk me to Sanit's house, located at the other end of the village. I drove slowly along a small dirt and gravel lane. Along the way, I saw children walking after their cattle, barking dogs, roosters and chickens, and, of course, big and small turkeys here and there. I started to think that this village might well be the birthplace of all the turkeys in Thailand.

As I was about to take a left turn, I saw a sign posted in front of a house on my left, and the sign said "Boonchan Maneechai". I realized that I had arrived at the house next to Uncle Sanit. Even though my destination was not there, I decided to drop by. I started to feel at home around this village. It's amazing how small and close-knitted everybody was.

As I was walking inside an open field leading to the wooden house, an old man with gray hair and an old woman about the same age as the man, must be her husband, appeared from a bamboo grove with a spade and a bamboo basket. Running to greet me was a small dog, looking harmless. Two adults and a few kids came out of the house.

All eyes were on me. I gave the old man a big smile and said: "You must be Uncle Boonchan, right?"

4. Her Life

I have heard that many writers feel like being a writer is a thief or a stealer. Let me try to explain why. It's someone, a man or a woman, trying to tell other people's stories - their agony, happiness, bewilderment, luck, mishaps, and joy. In this aspect, writing is stealing with imagination, of course. Some might even regard it as a sinful act. I, like most second-rate or third-rate amateurs, couldn't help but dwell on this guilt, this unsettling state of mind. One of my friends told me that a poet (like myself) had the canny ability to turn destruction into creation. I took it as a compliment, realizing that he was being sarcastic. Stories have no soul. I wonder about my own stories, their origins, and how the plots and characters have been dwelling inside my consciousness, sometimes for decades.



Allow me to tell you this story. The story of a Thai woman named Yuwadee, or Yu for short. She was in her fourth year of a degree program at one of the universities in Bangkok, Thailand. As a university lecturer, I not only teach but offer professional advice. Yuwadee told me that she was interested in going to the US, Australia, or any other

English-speaking country. She had enough money to support herself, but the cost was beyond her affordability. Her parents, unknown to me, said they would pay for her to fulfill her dream. She was not from a poor family by Thai standards.

After a great deal of money was spent and some legal hassles, a month and a half later, she was in the US. I did not see her off but wished her luck in her adventure of a lifetime. "I have no grade for you. You grade yourself," I told her through a Line call.

A month in the US was not easy for her. She sent me an email saying, "I struggle with my English." "Keep practicing," I suggested. "They speak so fast here," she voiced her frustration. "Do you enjoy the food and the weather?" I tried to soothe her anxiety. "You'll get used to it, believe me."

Three months passed, and a lot had happened. I received little news from Yu. She might have been busy working and traveling. Things changed, that's what I imagined it to be.

Yu posted several photos on Facebook, updating her status as usual. In one of the pictures, she is standing on the top of a tall building that looks like a big city - it could be Boston, Los Angeles, or New York. I offered my comment, "New York?" She confirmed, "Yes, Sir." I didn't ask anymore questions, but from other comments, I noticed some comments from Western names like John or Bill.

A year later, Yu posted a happy picture. She was standing next to a tall and handsome man - it was a wedding photo. The man's name was Michael. The photograph, according to the caption, was taken on a beach in Florida. Her face showed everyone that she was on top of the world.

I did not hear anything regarding her poor listening skills or problems with communication. A year later, she posted a picture of her baby in a stroller.

5. Good Luck Hurts

Everybody wants to win the lotto and have a lot of money. For me, I do not want to (I still think that luck is the consequence of your doing). Why? Sometimes, good luck in the lottery may turn out to be your bigtime bad luck. In fact, there were plenty of cases, serving as examples. And I would like to share with you a few of them.

This is one of such cases. Ratree, a Thai woman, used to have an ordinary life. She was a factory worker. She was 25 years old when luck struck her. The factory worker won a big prize worth 67 million Baht in total. Yes, she won the first prize. After the big win, her life was a series of bad luck. She was indirectly robbed by her ex-husband's relatives. Everybody knew her when she had a lot of money.

Back in March several years ago, Ratree was then 25 years old, a woman washing beer bottles in a factory in Rayong Province, Thailand's eastern region. She occasionally bought lottery tickets, like most people. In March that year luck was on her side. She won the 1st prize – the lottery prizes of the 8 lottery pairs. Her luck made a big headline across the country.

Ratree was not well educated. Her humble education made it hard for her to manage her money. As it turned out, she had no clue as to what to do with the money on top of her.

What happened was that she received a total prize money of 67 million Baht. This made her a millionaire within the blink of an eye. But then the luck that came back brought suffering as well.

After winning the lotto, she had used the money to pay off debt to relatives. That was a sensible thing to do.

Suddenly, she was visited by many relatives. She bought a mobile phone, a watch for more than 300,000 baht and gave the money to four people, 1 million Baht each. Besides, she bought a 4-door Isuzu car for his brother worth 700,000 baht. She spent and spent.

She had prepared five hundred thousand Baht to give away to relatives in Chiang Mai. Roi Et, but the money was stolen, suspected by her husband's relatives.

And the daughter of her ex-husband's father also asked for a lot of money from her, as much as 4 million Baht. Ratree had to help The former husband's relatives. She began to suffer depression and health problems.

After that, she gave five hundred thousand Baht and had to spend more than 10 million baht with relatives, both of themselves and of the ex-husband's side, although the prize money was remaining several million, but a lot had gone - to other people. She began to lose her sense of reality and swayed by requests from people around her.

It is unbelievable that the fortune that has been returned has turned into every halo that has been brought to her. In fact, it is the desires and greed of the person who brings all the kings of heaven. Because other people's desires and selfish behavior brought her all the problems.

Ratree won nothing, but lost almost everything in her life. Her ex-husband married a young and beautiful girl. Everybody won, not her.

Ratree was left with only 5 million Baht. She went to a temple and was told by the abbot to make a big merit. She later donated a million Baht to the temple. Since then, her life has become smoother. Her rice field began to return her some produce and the remaining money made her life a better one. She realized that nothing is for free.

6. Mai's Dream Job

Ratree and Mai were best friends, who had been inseparable since childhood. They shared everything, including their hopes and dreams.

One day, Mai asked Ratree the question that often stumps many people, "What is your dream job?" Ratree, who was known for her wit and outgoing personality, hesitated to answer. She felt uneasy and couldn't seem to come up with a solid answer.

Mai, who was the complete opposite of Ratree, had a clear vision of her future. She wanted to be a nurse and help those in need. Ratree smiled and urged her friend to eat more hot papaya salad, avoiding the question. She knew that being a nurse was not on top of her wishes or dreams. She felt ill just thinking about it.

But Mai wouldn't let it go that easily. "What do you think about my dream?" she asked after taking another bite of food.

"I think it's a perfect job for you," Ratree replied, still avoiding the topic of her own dream job. Mai was content with her simple life and aspirations. She was a fan of ordinary foods, such as noodles, and preferred to wear plain clothes.

On the other hand, Ratree was known for her adventurous spirit and stylish choices. She loved pizza and always dressed in sexy clothing. She was confident, bold, and never hesitated to start a conversation with strangers, especially good-looking men.

However, Ratree's outgoing personality also came with its own set of problems, one of which was her inability to make choices. Despite having several suitors, none of them seemed serious about forming a long-lasting relationship with her. This left Ratree feeling unsure and uncertain about her future.

Days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months, and Ratree was still unable to figure out what her dream job was. She felt lost and unsure of herself. One day, as she was wandering through the streets, she came across an old man who was in need of help. She instinctively offered to assist him and soon found herself enjoying the experience of helping others.



This newfound joy sparked a realization in Ratree. She finally knew what her dream job was – she wanted to be a successful businesswoman and get rich, so she could do humanitarian work as well. Ratree felt that helping those in need and making a positive impact on the world was her dream, a noble one too.

She was filled with a sense of excitement and purpose, knowing that she had finally found her calling.

The day finally arrived when Mai and Ratree were set to embark on their separate journeys, Mai to nursing school and Ratree to a business college. They hugged each other tightly, both filled with happiness and excitement for the future.

However, just as they were about to part ways, Mai received a phone call that would change everything.

Her father had fallen ill and she was needed back at home immediately. Mai was torn between her duty to her family and her dream of becoming a nurse. Ratree, who had finally found her own sense of purpose, offered to help her friend by looking after Mai's father. Mai had to study hard at a nursing college and Ratree helped her fulfill the dream for her.

Mai was stunned and shocked and filled with gratitude. She couldn't believe that her best friend would do this for her. She agreed, and Ratree stepped into her new role, eager to make a difference in the world and fulfill her friend's dream.

After three months, Ratree returned to her business program and studies hard. She did well in accounting and English. Soon she graduated with flying colors.

Years went by, and Mai excelled in her career as a nurse. She had made a positive impact on countless lives and was known for her kindness and compassion. Meanwhile, Ratree had become a successful businesswoman and was able to provide for her family.

They got married and remained best friends and always looked back on the day when their paths diverged and came full circle, grateful for each other's unwavering support and love.

The two women often laughed about how their personalities and aspirations had been so different, yet they still remained the best of friends.

They were a testament to the power of friendship and the importance of supporting each other, no matter what.

One day, as Mai was about to retire from her job, she received a surprise visit from Ratree. She had come to thank her for everything she had done for her, and to present her with a special gift. It was a beautiful, silver plaque, engraved with the words "To my best friend, who made my dream a reality." Mai was overcome with emotion and tears filled her eyes.

As she looked back on her journey, Ratree realized that the path to finding her dream job had not been an easy one. But through it all, she had the support of her best friend, who had always been there for her. And in the end, it was her own selflessness and willingness to help others that had led her to her true calling. She remembered talking to Dr Saman, a university lecturer about her dream job. He told her to listen to her heart. After all, he told her, it's all about you.

Mai and Ratree embraced each other, their arms wrapped around each other in a tight hug. They were both overcome with emotion, reflecting on the journey they had taken together and the bond that had formed between them.

"Can you believe how far we've come?" Mai whispered, tears in her eyes.

"It's been an incredible journey," Ratree replied, her voice filled with gratitude. "I'm so grateful for the memories we've shared and for our friendship."

The two women pulled away from each other, still holding hands. They looked into each other's eyes, and both knew that their bond would endure through the years. No matter what life threw at them, they would always be there for each other.

"We've been through so much together," Mai said, her voice filled with admiration. "Our friendship is strong and unbreakable."

"I couldn't agree more," Ratree replied, a smile spreading across her face. "I know that no matter what, we'll always have each other's backs."

With a final squeeze of each other's hands, Mai and Ratree turned and walked down the street, their friendship shining bright and unbreakable.

And as they parted ways, they both felt a sense of contentment, knowing that they had each fulfilled their own dreams, and in the process, made the other's dream a reality.

7. Gold for Me and You

Tim and Adam had been best friends since they were children, and they had always been adventurous. They had gone on many adventures together, exploring the forests around their small village and discovering new things. They were always eager to see what was out there, and they never stopped searching for adventure.

As children, they explored the forests near their village and always sought out new experiences. They were compassionate and had a soft spot for animals, often freeing trapped birds and rescuing fish in drying ponds. Tim and Adam's kindness extended to all creatures.

One day, Tim and Adam decided to go into the forest to find some food for their families. They had heard about a place where there were plenty of bamboo shoots and mushrooms growing, and they wanted to bring back some food for their families. They set out early in the morning, armed with their baskets and a few tools.

As they walked through the forest, Tim and Adam stumbled upon a strange jar that was lying on the ground. They did not pick it up and left it lying there.

Tim said, "we'd better go to the bamboo groves, and look for our food, the jar could be something dangerous," Adam agreed and they continued their search.

Soon they found a place where they could use their spades to dig out some big bamboo shoots. As they were about to leave

the area, they saw an old woman. They had never met her before. She looked old and carried her bamboo basket too.

“Could you give me some of your water and bamboo shoots?” the old woman made a request.

The two boys were kind and gave her a bottle of water and a few bamboo shoots.

“I have nothing to give you two in return,” she said. “I only had an old jar and something in it. I would like to give it to you.”

“We saw it lying on the ground. Not far from here.”

“Yes, now, it is yours, two of you can have it.

They two boys thanked her. They knew that the jar belonged to the old woman and they walked back to find the jar.

The jar they first saw was still lying. To their surprise, they found that the jar was heavy. They opened the lid and were stunned.

The jar was full of gold coins.

They were stunned and couldn't believe their eyes. They had never seen so much gold in their lives.

“We should give some gold back to the old woman,” Adam said.

“I agree,”

But they could not find her. They spent almost an hour looking for the old woman. They failed to find her. So what would they do?

The weather began to change. Dark clouds started forming and the weather began to change. The two boys knew something strange was happening to the forest. They needed to get out of the forest and get back to their community. The sooner the better ,Tim said.

They quickly divided the gold into two halves and placed each half into their baskets.

When they returned to their village, Tim's mother and father were waiting for them. "Tim, where have you been? We've been worried sick!" Tim's mother exclaimed as she hugged him tightly.

"We were just in the forest, Mom. We found some bamboo shoots and mushrooms," Tim replied.

"Well, we're just glad you're safe. But what's this?" Tim's father asked, pointing to the baskets.

"We found a jar full of gold in the forest. We divided it into two halves and brought it back with us," Adam explained.

"Gold? Are you sure?" Tim's mother asked, a look of disbelief on her face.

"Yes, we're sure. We have it right here," Tim said, pulling out the gold from his basket.

Tim's parents were shocked and amazed at the sight of the gold. They had never seen so much wealth in their lives. "We can finally escape poverty," Tim's father said with tears in his eyes.

"Thank you, boys. This gold will change our lives forever," Tim's mother said, hugging them both tightly.

Tim and Adam smiled at each other, knowing that their luck had finally changed for the better. They had found a way out of poverty and could now live the lives they had always dreamed of.

They decided to use the gold to start a business. They bought a piece of land and built a small shop. They started selling goods and services, and soon their business became very successful. People from all over the village came to their shop to buy things, and they became very well-known and respected.

Their families also benefited from the gold. They were able to build bigger and better houses, and they could afford to buy better food and clothing. They no longer had to worry about money or poverty, and they could enjoy a comfortable and happy life.

Years went by, and Tim and Adam's business continued to grow. They expanded their shop and hired more employees. They became very wealthy and well-known throughout the village. They were proud of what they had accomplished and were happy to have changed their lives and the lives of their families.

In the end, Tim and Adam learned that true wealth and happiness come from hard work and determination. They had worked hard to build their business, and they were proud of what

they had accomplished. They were grateful for their good fortune, and they never forgot the day when they found that jar of gold in the forest.

From that day on, Tim and Adam were known as the wealthiest and most respected people in the village. They were happy and proud of what they had accomplished, and they lived the rest of their lives.

8. My Hero

Aunty Pian was contacted by Somsri, her son's homeroom teacher. She was called to come to the school - urgently. She was summoned and was informed about his unbecoming behavior and academic performance. In the teacher's room, Somsri, a middle-aged school teacher, told Aunty Pian that her son was found to be a drug addict.

"His urine is purple in color. The school suspected that Wisut might be addicted to drugs." The teacher looked straight into Aunty Pian's eyes. She saw emptiness and pain.

Pian's heart dropped to the floor. She was not only poor but lowly educated. What should I do? She lamented her fate to herself. The teacher added, "As for studying, it was found that Wisut, your only son, got "0" in 10 subjects. What do you have to say about this?"

What else could be worse? The woman said to herself. her eyes were full of tearwater. She was on the floor. Shameful, she told herself.

"We suggest that you will have to hurry to find a school for your son to continue studying"

The school may have to ask Wisut to leave school to study elsewhere. because it was found that he was both a seller and a drug user.

"Maybe I'll have to go to the police station first," Somsri said. As soon as Aunty Pian heard that she cried and said in a sobbing voice, begging the teacher to help her son too.

“Please help him. I beg you. Give him a chance, please.”
The mother was crying. She was kneeling on the floor.

Nobody expected Wisut, a hopeless high school student. who study in school class 00 will have a very prosperous history stories had poured out from Aunt Pian's mouth that in the evening,

If his son came home, he would just sleep complaining about studying hard. He would wake up again around 10 p.m., wearing a volunteer uniform to go with the Relief Foundation car. He would provide services to the other people.

Aunty Pian said that Wisut would arrive home around 3 AM, this might have caused him to wake up in time for school. Indeed, regularly he was late for school. He never helped her with housework.

Aunty Pian and Renu, Wisut's younger sister, had to push a cart to sell curry and rice in front of the alley early every day, while Aunt Pian's husband had a career as a taxi driver, so he had to drive out to make money from morning and returned home at 6 p.m. Therefore, Wisut never saw the suffering of his own family.

Many neighbors viewed him and the family negatively. He was regarded as a loser, a trouble maker, and a teenager who wanted to have a beautiful shirt, a luxury house, dressed up elegantly to show off to the girls. “Hey girls, see me, I am a volunteer.”

There was nothing wrong about that. But he had no money, so it was a way for Wisut to associate with Pornchai, the only son of a

rich family. Pornchai was the only son of a gold shop's owner and also the man who owned the market. Moreover, he was a drug seller.

Pornchai persuaded and handed over the "pill" to Wisut. Soon, Wisut became addicted to this drug so much that it made him forget the suffering and poverty that he had seen from the addicts.

Pornchai invested and persuaded Wisut to be a seller. However, Pornchai was arrested and confessed that Wisut was also a participant in the gang's movement.

Eventually, Wisut was dropped out of school. It's been quiet for many years, many people thought that the future of Wisut would be put in prison. His life would be over.

But then one morning the newspaper ran the headline: "The villagers are delighted that Wisut saved people from the fire." When Somsri read the news in the newspaper, she exclaimed softly, "Wisut, you can do it, you are a great volunteer."

Wisut was credited for saving several people caught in the fire. One of them was Keng, a businessman who was also a real estate investor. He took the fact that he was saved seriously and said he owed Wisut his life.

As luck would have it, Wisut was given a chance to reborn. He went bck to school. He finished Grade 12 and he did it through a non-forma; schooling system. Wisut spent three years earning a 12-grade certificate from the Non-Formal Education department. This certificate was the key to other opportunities. With a high

school diploma, he continued studying at the university level. He graduated with a B.A. in Business Administration from a leading private university in Thailand.

Aunty Pian received an urgent call from her son Wisut's homeroom teacher, Somsri. She was asked to come to the school immediately. Upon arriving, Somsri informed Aunty Pian of Wisut's unbecoming behavior and poor academic performance. The middle-aged school teacher then revealed to Aunty Pian that Wisut was found to be a drug addict.

"His urine is purple in color. The school suspected that Wisut might be addicted to drugs," Somsri told Aunty Pian, looking straight into her eyes. Aunty Pian was filled with emptiness and pain as she saw the emptiness in Somsri's eyes. She was poor and lowly educated, and the news of her son's addiction was too much to bear. She wondered what she could do.

The teacher then informed her that Wisut had received "0" in 10 subjects, adding to her distress. Aunty Pian was on the floor, tears streaming down her face, as she realized the seriousness of the situation. Somsri suggested that Aunty Pian find a new school for Wisut to continue his studies, as the school may have to ask him to leave due to his involvement in both drug use and selling.

Somsri mentioned the possibility of reporting Wisut to the police, causing Aunty Pian to break down in sobs. She begged the teacher to help her son, crying and kneeling on the floor.

Despite Wisut being a hopeless high school student, Aunty Pian shared a different side of her son's story. In the evenings, Wisut

would come home, complain about the difficulty of his studies, and then fall asleep. Around 10 PM, he would wake up and wear his volunteer uniform to assist with the Relief Foundation. He would provide services to others, often returning home at 3 AM. This might have contributed to his regular lateness at school and lack of help with household chores.

Aunty Pian and Renu, Wisut's younger sister, would sell curry and rice from a cart every morning, while her husband worked as a taxi driver, leaving early in the morning and returning at 6 PM. Due to this busy schedule, Wisut was unaware of the struggles his family faced.

Neighbors viewed Wisut and his family negatively, seeing him as a troublemaker who wanted to show off to girls by dressing nicely and claiming to be a volunteer. This desire to show off was due to his association with Pornchai, the only son of a rich family who owned a gold shop and the market. Pornchai was also a drug dealer who introduced Wisut to drugs and eventually persuaded him to sell them as well.

However, Pornchai was eventually arrested and revealed Wisut's involvement in their illegal activities. Wisut was dropped out of school, and many believed that he would end up in prison.

But one day, a newspaper headline changed everything: "The villagers are delighted that Wisut saved people from the fire." Somsri read the news with pride and whispered, "Wisut, you can do it, you are a great volunteer." Wisut was credited with saving several people from a fire, including a businessman named Keng who owed Wisut his life.

Wisut was given a chance to turn his life around. He earned a high school diploma through a non-formal education program and went on to earn a B.A. in Business Administration from a leading private university in Thailand. His high school diploma opened up new opportunities for him, and he was able to overcome his troubled past and create.

Years passed, and Wisut had become a successful businessman. He had established his own company, which provided employment opportunities to many people in his hometown. He also became a philanthropist, dedicating his time and resources to helping those in need. He established a foundation to help young people stay away from drugs and other harmful activities. He also built a school for underprivileged children to provide them with a quality education.

Wisut's story had inspired many people, and he was now a role model for many young people. He had proved that anything was possible with hard work and determination. He had overcome his struggles and turned his life around. He had shown that even the most difficult circumstances could be overcome with the right mindset and support.

Wisut was also remembered as a hero, who had saved several lives during the fire incident. He had become a symbol of hope for many people. He had shown that even in the face of adversity, one could rise above it and make a difference in the world.

One day, Wisut was invited to speak at his old high school. He stood in front of the students and shared his story. He talked about the struggles he had faced and how he had overcome

them. He spoke about the importance of education and how it had changed his life. He encouraged the students to work hard and to never give up on their dreams.

The students listened intently to Wisut's words, and many of them were inspired by his story. They saw that with hard work and determination, they too could achieve their dreams. They saw that no matter what circumstances they were born into, they had the power to change their lives and make a positive impact in the world.

Wisut's story had become a legend, and it would be told for generations to come. He had shown that anything was possible with hard work and determination. He had proved that no matter what challenges one faced in life, it was possible to overcome them and achieve success. He had become a symbol of hope and inspiration for many people, and his legacy would live on forever.

As Auntie Pian sat in the audience, she couldn't help but smile with pride. She had never imagined that her son, who was once a hopeless high school student, would one day become a successful businessman and a hero. She was grateful for the opportunity that the teacher had given Wisut, and she was proud of all that he had accomplished.

In conclusion, Wisut's story serves as a reminder that no matter what challenges we face in life, it is possible to overcome them and achieve success. It is a story of hope, determination, and perseverance. It shows that anything is possible if we believe in ourselves and work hard to achieve our dreams.

9. Buala

Buala, a 45-year-old single mother of two, was struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Her neighbors and local authorities believed that she was depressed and infected with the virus, but the real reason behind her attempt to take her own life was due to her recent divorce. Her husband had run off with all their savings, leaving her penniless to care for her two children. The markets were closed due to the lockdown, making it impossible for her to sell her produce and make a living. She was also unable to receive the government's relief money because of her poor reading skills.

One morning, Buala was found attempting to hang herself from a neem tree. Police and health volunteers arrived on the scene and she was saved. She was admitted to a hospital and later declared out of danger. When asked why she tried to take her own life, she stated that she had no money and no food to eat. The media reported on her story and it soon went viral, attracting the attention of philanthropists and resulting in an outpouring of donations.

Although Buala survived the ordeal, she was still struggling to make ends meet. Her case highlights the difficulties faced by many people during the pandemic and lockdown, and the importance of providing support to those in need. The governor of the province reminded the public to not be hopeless and that help is available. Buala nods in agreement, but in her mind she is still struggling to survive and care for her children. The story of Buala serves as a reminder of the human toll of the pandemic and the importance of supporting those in need.

Her neighbors and the local police, including the village headman all shared the same conviction, which was that Buala, 45 years old, was depressed because of the virus and the lockdown. The media reported that she was probably infected with the deadly virus, broke, and deeply depressed. They cited her case as an example not to follow. Yet, no one knew her motive behind the extraordinary attempt on her own life, except one of her two children.

COVID-19 was probably her excuse to get herself out of the mess, including debts. Two months ago, some terrible things happened to her, casting doubt on the cause of her failed attempt. It was later revealed by the media that she just had a divorce. Well, some months ago, right after the new year's celebration, her husband took all the savings money and ran away with a young girl from the nearby village. She was left penniless with two kids, five and seven, to look after. Terrible for her. Her parents were long gone and her relatives tried to avoid her. No one would like to have a poor relative. She only had a small plot of land and some coconut trees left. That would be a sufficient story to sell to the public.

The media was quick to put on the headline that Buala was another victim, poisoned by the Covid-19 pandemic. The lockdown and curfew announced by the military-backed government made things worse for her. She found out that she was unable to feed herself and children. She could not sell her produce, coconuts and neem leaves and flowers, and some green vegetables she could gather from the nearby bushes. Besides, the opposition of the government was quick to put all the blame on the incumbent government. They pointed out,

supported by the media, that the poor woman was denied relief money from the government. The government had a policy to hand out five thousand baht as a relief to remedy the effects of the pandemic.

It was also revealed by the media that Buala, due to her poor reading skills, was helpless, she could not register for the handout of 5 thousand baht. Buala was among the many in the country who were considered poor and semi-illiterate, as she did not finish basic education or Grade 6. On a fine morning, she was found trying to take her own life. The pictures that went viral across the media were those of the woman with a loin cloth as a rope trying to hang herself on a branch of a small neem tree.

Police and health volunteers came as quickly as they could, including local news reporters. She was saved. Buala was admitted to a provincial hospital for treatment. She was later declared out of danger. With two of her children by her side, she was crying sobbing and tears were coming from her eyes like waterfalls in the rainy season.

"I had no money and no food to eat. All the money had been spent. I have nothing left," she told the media.

The bruises around her body were covered with gauze tapes and betadine and soft white cotton. Bruises were not too deep, but bad enough to make her feel uncomfortable and cry. She was a middle-aged woman, poor, a single mom with two kids, and broke.

"All the coconuts and vegetables couldn't be sold. Markets and shops were all closed, as you know," she continued.

With other two young children, she had no money to spend. Depressed after the divorce, the virus was her last straw. The young man, probably an intern journalist, concluded.

"Next time, don't be hopeless."

"You can do it."

10. The Story of Jundee



Jundee was a young man from a small village in the northeast of Thailand. Unlike his friends who were farmers, he had a passion for education and dreamed of becoming a school teacher one day. His parents, who were devout Buddhists, encouraged him to join the local temple where

he was ordained as a novice monk. As he grew up, Jundee's thirst for knowledge was evident and he read all of the Buddhist scriptures available in the temple.

Despite the challenges of poverty, Jundee was determined to pursue his dream. He was lucky to have a master, Laung Phi Chamnan, who was supportive of his education. One day, while exploring an old temple, they came across some ancient manuscripts that were written in a script Jundee couldn't read. When Jundee expressed his interest in learning how to read these texts, his master told him that the only way was to visit a guru who lived in the village of heaven on the deer mountain.

Jundee's journey to the deer mountain was no easy task. He had to cross three rivers and two mountains to get there. But he was

determined to reach his destination. News of his journey quickly spread throughout the village and the villagers offered words of encouragement and support. Jundee's parents, although concerned for his safety, gave him their blessing and wished him a safe journey.

As Jundee traveled, he encountered many challenges along the way. The journey was long and arduous, but he remained focused on his goal. Finally, after many days of traveling, he arrived at the village of heaven. It was a small, peaceful community, surrounded by beautiful mountains and forests.

Jundee was greeted warmly by the people of the village, who were all eager to hear about his journey. They took him to meet the guru, who lived in a small cottage surrounded by nature. The guru was an old, wise man who had spent many years studying the ancient texts. When Jundee explained his purpose for visiting, the guru was impressed by his determination and agreed to teach him how to read the ancient scripts.

Jundee spent several months in the village of heaven, learning from the guru and immersing himself in the study of the ancient texts. He was amazed at the knowledge and wisdom that was contained in these sacred texts and he felt truly blessed to have the opportunity to learn from such a wise teacher.

Eventually, it was time for Jundee to return home. He was filled with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, knowing that he had achieved his goal. As he traveled back to his village, he was greeted with open arms by his parents and the villagers. They were amazed at how much he had learned and proud of all that he had achieved.

Jundee's journey had not only fulfilled his thirst for knowledge but also taught him valuable lessons about perseverance, determination, and the power of the human spirit. He knew that he would always cherish these experiences and the knowledge he had gained. And he was determined to continue his education and one day become a teacher, just as he had dreamed.

Years went by, and Jundee became a respected schoolteacher in his village. He taught the children about the wisdom and teachings of the ancient texts and encouraged them to follow their own dreams and passions. His students loved him and he was known for being a kind and knowledgeable teacher.

Jundee never forgot his journey to the deer mountain and the lessons he had learned there. He often looked back on his journey with fond memories and was grateful for the experiences that had shaped him into the person he had become. He knew that his journey had changed his life forever and that he would always be grateful for it.

11. He Who Knew Too Much

A student is defined roughly as a learner with some other people as teachers. The idea of being a student is to learn and gain knowledge and skills. Can a student know too much? If you are a student and you know more than your teachers, what would happen to you and the whole community of scholars? This could happen.

The story was told by a 59-year-old school teacher. His name was Decha Monkoltham or Kru Decha. He was a school teacher in Saraburi province, about 100 kilometers north of Bangkok, capital of Thailand. Decha was a teacher and keen to perform his duties, sometimes, beyond the call of a normal teaching profession. He loved to talk and share what he had read and believed to be significant.

When you talk about teachers, you unavoidably imply the existence of students. In this study, Yai was a student. He was in



his Grade 9. He often carried a lot of books, esp. Chemistry in English. He came and asked many questions. He was curious, a teen with loads of curiosities and wonders. Nobody told him that curiosity sometimes kills the cat. He knew that he was full of curiosity and he dared asking big questions. Most Thai

students, unlike him, have few questions.

Not a typical Thai student, indeed, - other students and many teachers got sick of him. "Wasting time for lunch," they said. Some of his questions were out of the box, but too far from the box. They said Yai was crazy and a bit of a trouble maker. "Why don't you just be like others?" one female teacher told him, straight to his face. Despite criticisms and bad comments, Yai stuck to his guns.

His questions about Chemistry stunned many teachers. For example, 'Sir, how does an electron travel around an atom?' Another time, Yai asked this question, "How does the color of the substance change the color?" He even asked this: "is the Universe finite?"

Besides, he was a bookworm. "You are not an international program" Why do you carry English books, not Thai books?" one teacher asked him.

Yai also criticized many Thai books or rather what is written in the books. He said: "Thai books are not interesting. Many things in the books are not even accurate, and some are misleading, full of rumors and superstitions" His criticism won him few friends. He was reguared as being a queer or a weirdo. Some even accused him of being insane at best, or a psychopath at worst.

His aunt was a lecturer at a famous university in Thailand. The aunt retired due to poor health. His aunt looked after him. She gave him a lot of books and advice on how to be critical and a true scholar.

I was one of his teachers. As an English teacher, I thought he had many interesting ideas. I also noticed his handwriting. “You are a strange person. Your handwriting is untidy, but it is unique,” I said.

His handwriting is a piece of art. Yai usually showed me pictures of his pets. Yai had two cats, and he loved them very much. As a cat lover myself, I spent a long time chatting with him about cats and cat food. He refused to take meat. He reasoned that animals are sentient beings like humans.

Some teachers said he had attention deficits. He was hyper active, could not stand still. Nevertheless, Yai was a delightful student. He simply smiled and said nothing. However, not long after becoming a vegetarian, he became calmer. His learning had undergone a huge transformation, too.

Yai did well in Chemistry. He was chosen to represent Thailand in the Chemistry Olympiad. Believe it or not. He won the award.

Now, his peers thought that he was too clever for the school. Yai went to do his Ph D in Japan and graduated with flying colors.

12. Jack and Jane

Every day, Jack would wake up early and head to his bakery to start his day. As he worked, he couldn't help but think about Jane, the beautiful university student who he had fallen in love with. She would always be waiting at the bus stop near his restaurant, and he would always make a point to say hello to her. Despite their age difference, Jack and Jane had an undeniable connection, and he could see the love in her eyes every time she smiled at him.

Jack sighed as he kneaded the dough for his morning pastries. He couldn't shake the thoughts of Jane from his mind. Every day, she would wait at the bus stop near his bakery, her hair blowing gently in the wind, her smile lighting up the whole street. He had fallen deeply in love with her, despite the differences in their ages, and he knew he couldn't keep these feelings bottled up any longer.

He finished his work and headed over to Sam's coffee shop, eager to talk to his best friend about his dilemma.

"Good morning, Jack," Sam greeted him with a smile. "What's on your mind?"

"Sam, I need your advice," Jack said, taking a seat at the counter. "I'm in love with Jane, and I don't know what to do."

Sam leaned against the counter, his brow furrowed. "Wow, Jack. That's quite a predicament."



"I know," Jack said, running his hands through his hair. "I just can't help the way I feel about her. Every time I see her, it just confirms my feelings."

"Have you considered telling her?" Sam asked.

"That's the problem," Jack said, sighing. "I'm afraid of ruining our friendship. And then there's the age difference to consider."

"Age is just a number, Jack," Sam said. "If it's true love, it will only make your relationship stronger. And as for ruining your friendship, only time will tell. But if you don't take the chance, you'll never know what could have been."

Jack nodded, taking in his friend's words. "You're right, Sam. I'll ask her out for coffee tomorrow and just be straightforward with her. I have to know if she feels the same way."

"Good for you, Jack," Sam said, clapping him on the back. "I have a feeling everything will work out for the best."

And with that, Jack left the coffee shop, his heart pounding with excitement and nervousness. He was going to take a chance on love, and he hoped with all his heart that it would lead him to the happiness he deserved.

One day, Jack finally mustered up the courage to ask Jane out on a date. To his delight, she said yes, and they spent a magical evening together, talking, laughing and sharing their hopes and dreams. As they said goodnight, Jack knew that he never wanted to let her go.

From that day on, Jack and Jane were inseparable. They spent every moment they could together, and as time went by, their love only grew stronger. Jack realized that his feelings for Jane were so much more than just infatuation, and he knew that he wanted to spend the rest of his life waking up with her by his side.

And so, on a warm summer's day, Jack got down on one knee and asked Jane to be his wife. With tears in her eyes, she said yes, and they embraced each other, knowing that their love would endure through all of life's challenges.

From that day forward, Jack and Jane woke up every morning together, grateful for each other's love and for the life they had built. And as they looked into each other's eyes, they knew that they had found the missing piece to their lives. They were in love and nothing could ever change that.

13. Blessing from a Beggar Boy

Pimpilai, a university student, sat on the steps of the library, her uniform hugging her curves in all the right places. The tight white shirt and short skirt were a staple of the school dress code, but Pimpilai loved wearing them nonetheless. As she waited for her friend Ratre, she couldn't help but feel a sense of excitement at the prospect of a day out.

When Ratre finally arrived, the two friends spent an hour and a half in the library before heading to the mall. As they walked through the bustling crowds, Pimpilai caught sight of a beggar boy and felt a twinge of compassion. Without hesitation, she dug into her purse and offered the boy some money, reflecting her innate kindness and generosity.

The beggar boy looked up at her with a smile, blessed her and said that she would have a handsome husband. Pimpilai couldn't help but laugh at the thought, imagining a knight in shining armor sweeping her off her feet.

At the mall, Ratre marveled at her friend's selflessness. "You're always so kind and generous, Pimpilai," she said, smiling.

Pimpilai blushed, a little embarrassed by the attention. "Thank you," she said, smiling. "I just feel like it's the right thing to do."

As they made their way through the mall, Pimpilai and Ratre laughed and chatted, enjoying each other's company. They

browsed through stores and tried on clothes, their spirits lifted by the joy of a day out.

In the end, Pimpilai's act of kindness had set the tone for a wonderful day, one that she would never forget. She left the mall with a full heart, grateful for the love and friendship of her dear friend Ratree, and for the simple pleasures of life.

A week later, the two students went to the same mall. This time it was a great day for Pimpilai.

The two girls then went into the mall where they met David, an American university student visiting his mother who was an English teacher in Thailand. Pimpilai joked about wanting a

husband who brings her appetizing meals and Ratree added that she wanted a husband with a 30-day money-back guarantee. David smiled at their conversation before leaving McDonald's in a hurry.

As the girls continued shopping, they couldn't shake the feeling that they had made an impression on David. They both

thought he was handsome and charming, but didn't want to seem too forward.



Pimpilai suggested they go to a nearby coffee shop to sit and relax for a bit. As they sipped their drinks, they noticed David walking by and quickly looked away, not wanting to seem obvious. However, David walked over to their table and introduced himself, explaining that he was visiting his mother who was a teacher in the area. The girls were pleasantly surprised and welcomed him to join them.

The conversation flowed easily, and they talked about their interests, university life, and travels. David was fascinated by Thai culture and Pimpilai and Ratree were eager to share their knowledge and experiences. As they talked, they realized that they had a lot in common and that David was kind, intelligent, and charming. They all laughed and joked, and before they knew it, several hours had passed.

Eventually, it was time for David to go, and he exchanged phone numbers with the girls before leaving. They both felt happy and content, and couldn't wait to see him again. From that day on, the three of them became close friends, and went on many adventures together, exploring the city and sharing their experiences. Their chance encounter in the mall had turned into a beautiful friendship, and they were grateful for the blessings the beggar boy had given Pimpilai.

Pimpilai and David started dating and their relationship quickly blossomed. They found that they had a strong connection and loved spending time together. Pimpilai was overjoyed to have found someone who was kind, loving, and thoughtful, and who always brought her the appetizing meals she had dreamed of.

As their relationship continued to flourish, David and Pimpilai spent countless hours discussing their future together. They talked about their hopes, dreams, and the kind of life they wanted to build for themselves. It was during these conversations that they discovered that they shared many of the same values and goals.

David felt a sense of comfort knowing that Pimpilai was the perfect partner for him, someone who understood him and supported his aspirations. Pimpilai felt the same way about David, knowing that he was the one she wanted to spend the rest of her life with.

One day, while they were taking a walk in a park near their home, David stopped and looked at Pimpilai with a serious expression.

"Pimpilai, I've been thinking a lot lately about our future together," David said.

"Me too, David. What have you been thinking?" Pimpilai replied, her heart beating a little faster.

David took a deep breath and then got down on one knee, pulling out a small velvet box from his pocket.

"I've been thinking that I don't want to spend a single day without you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Will you marry me?"

Pimpilai's eyes filled with tears as she looked down at David, the man she loved more than anything.

"Yes, yes, I will!" she said, her voice choking with emotion as she threw her arms around David's neck.

They hugged each other tightly, tears streaming down their faces. They both knew that this was it. They were meant to be together forever.

Over the next few weeks, David and Pimpilai began planning their dream wedding. Pimpilai had always wanted a traditional Thai wedding with beautiful decorations, amazing food, and lots of dancing, while David wanted to incorporate some American traditions into the celebration as well. They decided to hold the wedding in Thailand, surrounded by their friends and family.

As they made their plans, they talked about the future and what their life together would be like. They were confident that with their shared values and goals, they could achieve anything.

On their wedding day, Pimpilai and David exchanged vows in front of a beautiful traditional Thai temple, surrounded by the people they loved. They promised to support and love each other, no matter what life threw their way.

As they danced into the night, surrounded by their friends and family, they couldn't help but feel grateful for each other and the life they had built together. They knew that they were meant to be together, and that their love would only continue to grow stronger with each passing day.

Their wedding was a beautiful and joyous event, surrounded by family, friends, and well-wishers. They exchanged their vows,

promising to love and support each other for the rest of their lives.

After the wedding, they settled into married life, traveling and exploring new places together, and making beautiful memories along the way. Pimpilai was grateful for the kind and generous husband she had, who always fulfilled her wishes and requests.

Years passed, and their love for each other only grew stronger. They were blessed with two beautiful children, who brought them even more joy and happiness. They were grateful for their love and the life they had built together, and were happy to have found each other in the shopping mall all those years ago.

In the end, Pimpilai and David lived a long and happy life, filled with love, laughter, and adventure. They were a testament to the power of kindness, love, and the blessings that can come from unexpected encounters.

14. Believe in What You See

Hundreds of vehicles, including cars and trucks, got stuck in Nong Khai as people flocked to the area to witness the "Naga fireballs" in the Mekong River. Nong Khai locals and tourists crowded the area, eager to get a good view of the phenomenon. Many of them also hoped to see a famous TV star, Sara, who was invited to dance with her team of dancers. The purpose of the performance was to appease the spirits and make the event a memorable one.



The event was a major attraction, drawing thousands of people from near and far. Some even traveled from across the river in Laos. As the crowds gathered along the Mekong River, the area became congested with cars, causing a traffic jam. However, street vendors and hawkers seemed to be the beneficiaries, their faces

lighting up with joy. They held a deep affection for the Naga fireballs, whether they were real or mythical, as that was not for them to determine.

"One local shared with a group of visiting tourists, 'I've never seen one myself.'

A young woman chimed in, 'I've been coming here for the past five years and I still haven't seen a single fireball. But I keep coming back, hoping to witness the magic.'

An elderly man, who had lived in the area his whole life, added, 'The Naga fireballs have been a part of our local folklore for generations. They bring us good luck and prosperity. That's why we celebrate this event every year.'

A tourist from the capital city commented, 'I've heard so much about the Naga fireballs, I had to come see it for myself. It's amazing to see such a strong cultural tradition being upheld.'

Everyone seemed to be in agreement that the Naga fireballs were a unique and cherished aspect of their culture and community."

The Naga Fireballs is a yearly event that happens in October in several provinces near the river. This year was special because the atmosphere was amazing. People came from all over to watch the fireballs rise out of the water. Nong Khai province is known for having some of the best sightings of the fireballs and it attracts many tourists, causing traffic on the Nong Khai-Rattana road. People crowded the river bank to witness the event.

The police officers had to work extra hard, making sure that the traffic could move smoothly. Many were waiting for the traffic along the intersections. Many cars were heading from Nong Khai town to the areas where there would be a lot of Naga fireballs.

While the multi-purpose area in front of Thai temple, Chumpon Subdistrict, Phon Phisai District, Nong Khai Province, there are

tourists laying mats to sit and watch the phenomenon of Naga fireballs. In the midst of a very hot 32 degrees Celsius, even if the weather is hot, it's not discouraged. Sat in an umbrella in the sun, waiting until the evening.

There is also a worship of Naga worshipers, with a popular actress Bee sharing a dance with the Phon Phisai people in the evening, causing the fan club to wait to see the stars doubled.



One tourist said: "Hey, have you heard about the Naga Fireballs? I heard that last year there were 2 sightings in Phon Phisai District and 783 in Rattana Wapi District. And can you believe it, even 880 kids saw it! That's crazy, right?"

His friend sitting nearby said, "I heard that most tourists visit both districts to see this amazing phenomenon. I'm so excited to see it tonight, aren't you?"

The phenomenon of "Naga fireballs" which occurred in Nong Khai province Data from the National Broadcasting Station of Nong Khai Province, Wat Pho Chai, Phra Aram Luang, reported by Nongkhai Amateur Radio Association Found that the number of Naga fireballs occurred in the number of 411 balls, less than the previous year with 900.

For the cause of the Naga fireballs rise May be caused by water years, the water level in the Mekong River is low, less than 2 meters, and the district with the most fireball is the Rattanapi district, 327 balls, the second is the District Phon Phisai, with 84 fireballs, the highest point is home. Nong Kaew, Rattanapee District, 86 children, followed by Ban Nam Peer, Rattanapee District, amounting 77 balls.

It was reported that thousands of people came out and created an unusual atmosphere along the Mekong river. watching Naga fireballs on the full moon night of October.

It was two days ago. On that night, tourists from all over the country came to see the special phenomenon. Many "Naga fireballs" are mostly seen in some districts where Naga fireballs have been occurring every year, namely Phon Phisai District and Rattanawapi District.

By entering to occupy the area along the Mekong River The spots that many tourists come to see are at Ban Nam Pae, Ban Tha Muang, and Ban Tan Chum, Rattanawapi District, Ban Nong Kung, Ban Nong Kaew, Phon Phisai district, where more Naga fireballs have occurred.

"I actually saw three fireballs last night," Wichai told his wife, Metta. "Wow!" she exclaimed, "Did you take any pictures?"

"I did, but I couldn't see them on my phone," Wichai explained. "That's strange," Metta said, "What do you think happened?"

"I'm not sure," Wichai replied. "I took lots of pictures of the river and they all turned out great, but the ones of the Naga fireballs just disappeared."

"That's odd, isn't it?" Metta asked. "Yeah, it is," Wichai agreed. "It just goes to show that there are things in this world that go beyond our perceptions and understanding."

Recently, a group of scientists conducted an interview stating that the Naga Fireballs were a natural phenomenon caused by gas released from the riverbed. However, many people, including Wichai, believe otherwise. They believe that the fireballs are connected to an ancient legend about the Naga, a mythical serpent-like creature. Wichai and others who hold this belief point to the mysterious disappearance of the fireballs in his pictures as evidence for the existence of something more supernatural at work. Despite the scientific explanation, the Naga Fireballs continue to captivate the minds of locals and tourists alike, with many flocking to the river each year to catch a glimpse of the elusive event.

Whether the Naga Fireballs are a natural occurrence or something more mystical remains up for debate, but one thing is certain: the event holds a special place in the hearts of those who have seen it.

15. The Colors of Memories

Preecha Dumrongtham waited at the bus station for his bus to depart. The overweight lady at the ticket counter told the passengers to wait and the wait was estimated to be "around 11 AM." This is what she said to each of the seven passengers heading to Sri Racha. Preecha felt that the excitement of traveling was trying to evade her. She seemed to be an enemy of joy, a harbinger of bad luck.

Preecha felt that his coffee tasted strange whenever she spoke or simply opened her mouth. He wanted to get out of this place.



Finally, Preecha was able to board the crowded van. The weather became overcast, with dark clouds in the sky as the van left the bus station. It was slowly carrying 12 passengers to the east coast of the country. His destination was a small district in Chonburi province called Sri Racha.

His mind began to wander again. Preecha detested traffic and bad weather. "Why can't I control my thoughts?" He often complained about things outside of his control, reflecting his worldview. He partly blamed the overweight ticket seller at the station. His goal was to take a ferry from the port in Sri Racha to Sir Chang island. He hoped the trip would be joyful and memorable. He longed for the trip and the memories to return. Could he make it happen today? He was not optimistic. The traffic to Thailand's east coast was always heavy. He blamed the

government for not building railroads like Japan.

“What a waste of time!” he thought silently to himself.

The last time he tried to reach the island was a failure. Preecha didn't make it. However, he was content. The world has its own priorities. The world does not revolve around one individual. One must learn to accept the world as it is, not as they wish it to be. He wanted to give it another try. He hated being a loser.

As he approached Chonburi province, old pictures came to mind, taking him back to the late 1980s. At that time, he worked as a volunteer teacher in a UNHCR camp in eastern Thailand, teaching refugees, mostly the Hmong from Laos.

He used to travel alone to the island and sleep on the beach. He still vividly remembers the beach - a small one - and the clear blue water for swimming. He joyfully swam in the water.



Back then, he was strong and adventurous. He slept on the sand near a group of three teens who were sleeping inside a tent. The night was cold with strong winds and sand all over the beach.

Looking at the scenery along the road, Preecha noticed many changes - more buildings, cars, and environmental degradation. Preecha's memories flooded back when he saw places from his past. He read that context is

important when it comes to retrieving memories. The brain's memory search process is more likely to find what you're looking for if it is augmented by the places and people you have been to and met.

He got off the van in front of a small noodle shop at 1:30 PM. Although he was a bit hungry, he was not in a hurry. Time was still on his side. He could reach the port and buy a ticket by taking a motorcycle taxi in less than 10 minutes. The last ferry from the port left at 5 PM, leaving him plenty of time to walk and see the city of Sri Racha. Many things had changed, the town used to be quiet and small, not many motor vehicles around. Now, it was almost like a cosmopolitan city. There were signs in English, Japanese, Thai, Burmese, and Chinese.

About the Author



John Tasai is the pen name of Janpha Thadphoothon, a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts at Dhurakij Pundit University, in Bangkok, Thailand. He is now an assistant professor in ELT. His research interests vary, including L2 acquisition, creative writing, CALL (TELL), and the practice of cooperative learning. He graduated with a BA in Education (Secondary Education) from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. He graduated with an MA in Industrial and Organizational Psychology for Thammasat University in 1999. He went to do his doctorate in the year 2001 and graduated with a doctoral degree (Ed D) in 2006.