

Thai Fiction

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THAI
short
STORIES

SILA KOMCHAI



one for the road

My wife is very thoughtful. As soon as I tell her I have an important appointment at three in the afternoon – to take my boss to meet a major customer of ours at a riverside hotel in the Khlong San area – she says we must leave the house at nine in the morning. She, too, has a business engagement at Saphan Khwai before noon, and she thinks that by leaving then, we'll both be right on time.

Her thoughtfulness doesn't stop there. On the back seat of our car, she keeps a basket full of fast-food items, an icebox to chill drinks, some snacks and sweets, including tamarind seeds and star gooseberries, a salt-shaker together with a plastic trash bag, a spittoon, and even some spare clothes hung on the pegs above the windows. It looks like we're going on a picnic.

blood buds

He wasn't sure when 'classic' had become his catchword; he didn't even know what the word really meant and had never thought of looking it up in a dictionary. He only knew that it was a generic term used to describe what you felt in front of a picture that deeply impressed you and that everybody around you was talking about. You used it to give your opinion about someone's work, as a kind of quality label for an outstanding piece.

So, when he started his own work, the word roamed in his mind as if he was haunted by a ghost.

The sheet of paper he had fed his typewriter the night before was still totally blank, even though the marketing objective was clear and data gathering and analysis had been completed. These days, people are under stress because of their hectic struggle for money and social ...



KORN SIRIWATTHANO

the lookers-on

‘What are you looking at, mister?’

The fifth man, who happened to arrive in front of the trade centre just then, asked the first man, who had been standing looking at something for some time. The first man turned to look at him, and the fifth man smiled back in a friendly way.

‘I don’t know. I asked around, but nobody seems to know anything,’ the first man said, pointing at the thing in question. It was some sort of object with a round shape and a flat front, and it was placed on a stool against a power pole next to the pavement. A piece of unbleached white muslin covered it and its selvage almost reached the ground. A sign pinned to it stated: ‘...’

SEKSAN PRASERTKUL



a bamboo bridge over rapids

Some stories seem to be buried stubbornly in our memory. They usually come back to haunt us on nights of loneliness, at moments when we let our mind drift with the whisper of the sea or the sighs of the breeze. They return time and time again like whirling waters and form a sad melody of life, intruding faintly, regardless of place, whenever we are engrossed in the present.

On the last day of September 1980, my eight friends and I were walking down a high ridge and, a little before noon, we reached the upper course of the Kha Khaeng stream. Monsoon rains had been falling for days on end, at times seeming to split the whole range asunder, at others melting in a fine drizzle that lasted from dawn to dusk. Even when the rain stopped, the whole...

friends

Not long ago I travelled to Thong Pha Phoom district in the province of Kanchanaburi as advisor for the filming of *The Moon Hunter*, which covers parts of my life history.

That day we filmed the sequence of the evacuation of a friend of mine who had been wounded in the fighting and there were a few other close friends in the event.

I tried to explain to the actors involved in the sequence how badly my friend, who had a major nerve severed by a bullet, was suffering and how frustrated I was feeling at being unable to do anything to alleviate his pain.

But after uttering a few sentences I fell silent and still for some time...

The real actors in the scene, whether Prasit who had been shot, Khorn and Neing, who came to help carry ...

SUCHART SAWASDISRI



the muzzle

270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 278, 280, 282. He wasn't sure. It could well be 284, 285, 286 ... His target was a large, movable object which stood still in front of the three-way junction, looking like a dangerous snake poised for the strike. Some of its camouflage spots were flaking off, except around the target he was aiming at, the long, stout barrel that protruded out of the main body. A piece of coarse, army-green cloth was wrapped around the muzzle, which stuck out like a phallus ready and eager to perform its duty. 289, 290, 291, 292, 295, 299 ... It was as though it was shaking its head and greeting him in a display of sheer power. He didn't wait, and shot at it in quick bursts, 330, 331, 332, 334 ... He didn't think, didn't feel anything. There was absolutely no ...

MANOP THANOMSRI



the night of the falling stars

Pssss...

'Hey, you! This is a man's house, not a urinal!'

'Oh!' The man, who wore a white shirt and dangling necktie, stepped back in haste. 'I'm sorry. I thought it was a rubbish dump.'

The younger man, who had long hair and a long, scraggly beard, poked his head out and shrugged.

'Never mind. You aren't the first.' Having said so, he made as if to withdraw back inside. The man was zip-ping up his pants as he called out: 'Hey, wait!' He adjusted the round bottle he held under his armpit.

'What do you want?'

The man wearing a shirt went and squatted in front of the man with the long hair, suffusing him with the ...

SAKCHAI LAKKHANAWICHIAN

instructions

Please take off your shoes

1

Every morning of every day, before you step into the office, a sign in front of the room stares at you. It really stares at you...

2

Today is the third anniversary of having to take your shoes off every time you enter the office. You sit down on the same chair as three years ago.

REUNGSAK KAMTHORN

ties that bind

At first, when he came to the funeral, he had nothing much in mind. He didn't try to talk to her relatives, but walked in to pay his respects to the body, and then went and sat alone in a quiet corner, answering whoever greeted him. With Grandma Jan, it was the same. They didn't talk much together; they merely exchanged a few words when they met, as old acquaintances do. It seems they only started to get intimate after her husband's cremation was over.

Everyday he'd walk by her house and poke his head in and ask if she was home. If she wasn't, he'd leave right away, but if she was, he'd go in and chat with her for a while before going back home. Besides, he never came empty-handed. He brought packets of rice with sliced...

Other short stories in English

A baker's dozen – CHART KORBJITTI

An ordinary story – CHART KORBJITTI

Venom – SANEH SANGSUK

Lover etc. – WIN LYOVARIN

Rart Eikkatheit's three worlds – WIN LYOVARIN

Short stories in French

Une histoire ordinaire – CHART KORBJITTI

La maison natale – KANOKPHONG SONGSOMPHAN

Venin – SANEH SANGSUK

Quatre nouvelles – WIN LYOVARIN