



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

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Boyhood love

by Gary Boyle



Photo courtesy of CJ Major Entertainment

Read the following story by Melalin Mahavongtrakul from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.

After taking some time to focus on TV work and other side projects, filmmaker Chookiat “Madeaw” Sakveerakul (*13 Beloved and Love of Siam*) finally returns to the big screen with his latest feature, *Dew Pai Duay Kan Na* (*Dew, Let’s Go Together*), now showing in cinemas.

HIDDEN ROMANCE

Chookiat’s new romantic drama follows two teenage boys — Dew and Phop — who met in the 1990s and started a romance they had to hide from the rest of the world. Eventually, the two separated. In present day, Phop — now a teacher and married to a woman — moves back to the town where his boyhood romance began.

“I guess you could call it a gay film,” said director Chookiat. “At the same time, it’s also more into romantic drama than focusing only on gay love. The story starts from homosexuality, but it is also much more than just that. It grows into a story about a person’s life. It’s unlike a romance between a woman and a man. We’re going back to an age where being gay wasn’t so accepted and seeing how that can affect a person.”

Rising star Pawat Chittsawangdee plays Dew, while newcomer Sadanon Durongkaveroj plays Phop. But a casting choice that will both surprise and delight audiences is seeing TV star Sukollawat “Weir” Kanarot in the role of the grown-up Phop so soon after *Malila: The Farewell Flower*, the acclaimed gay drama by Anucha Boonyawatana. “At first, I thought he [Sukollawat] wouldn’t say yes,” revealed the director. “In *Malila*, the gay image was pretty heavy. People would ask why he’s taking on a gay role again. But then the adult character isn’t gay. In his teens,

he was at a crossroads. And as an adult, there's another crossroads where he has to choose. And if there's anything I saw from Weir in *Malila*, it's that he can play drama in a deep way. He's a good actor."

MIRACLES EXIST

For *Dew*, Chookiat was approached to direct an existing story, which he later adapted and wrote the screenplay for.

"It's the romance — the belief that true love and miracles do exist — that attracted me. I've been through things in life and I still believe they do exist. I want others to believe that too," he said.

He added that *Dew* is unlike his best-known title *Love of Siam*, the gay teen drama that became a controversial hit 12 years ago, as well as a pioneer for LGBTI films focusing on younger characters.

"I'm not repeating the path I've taken. This time, we have a new story to tell, so that's why I'm telling it."

While *Love of Siam* came in at a time when gay content was rare, it's a different story for *Dew*. Today, the yaoi and boy's-love market in Thailand has never been bigger. Many novels and TV series are being released to a loyal fan base. Still, Chookiat said he's not going to try to be different to stand out from the crowd.

"I don't feel like I have to set my story apart. It's the way it is. People who were born in that same period of time would know and understand what kind of society it was before the days of *Love of Siam*. It wasn't like how it is today. With *Dew*, I think it speaks to the older population rather than teenagers. But teens can enjoy it nevertheless."

Thailand is very open when it comes to gay content, Chookiat added. Today, there is clear support for the genre that even manifests in its own culture. There are novels being made into TV series, and there are talents that promote them into big events.

"I would call Thailand a strong market for LGBTI content, and also one of the best markets for it in the world," he said.

Section 1: Read through the story and answer the following questions.

1. The character Phop is a married teacher. True or false?
2. The film's focus is gay love. True or false?
3. How many actors play Phop in the film?
4. Chookiat was confident that Weir would accept the role of Phop. True or false?

5. Chookiat says *Dew* and *Love of Siam* are similar films. True or false?
6. There weren't many gay films being made when *Love of Siam* came out. True or false?
7. Chookiat says both teens and older people can enjoy the film. True or false?
8. Chookiat ends the interview with a positive statement . True or false?

Section 2: Write the noun form of the following words.

9. married10. accepted11. exist12. attracted..... 13. rare

Section 3: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

"I think people have been more open in society ...14..., especially among younger people. ...15..., we also see news about teachers being shunned for being transgender women. There are people, ...16... from another generation, that still can't overcome it and feel that being different is ...17... terrible. And there's not really ...18... we can do about it, either. That person could be our uncle or ...19... our mother."

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|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 14. a. outside | b. at large | c. more |
| 15. a. Still | b. Likewise | c. Recently |
| 16. a. most | b. mostly | c. more |
| 17. a. somehow | b. sometimes | c. somewhere |
| 18. a. everything | b. anything | c. nothing |
| 19. a. still | b. even | c. also |

Section 4: Find words that match the following definitions.

20. a relationship between two people who are in love with each other
21. agreed or approved of by most people in a society
22. an important point in somebody's life
23. lucky things that happen that you did not expect or think were possible
24. a plan of action or a way of achieving something

For the answers, find the story online at www.bangkokpost.com/learning. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at garyb@bangkokpost.co.th