



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

Test Yourself is where you can improve your reading skills. Whether it's for tests like University Entrance Exams or IELTS and TOEFL, or even just for fun, these stories help you to read, understand and improve your English.

The ugly world of the pretties by Gary Boyle



Photo by Varuth Hirunyatheb

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

Rachadech "Nam Oun" Wongtabutr, a male product presenter or "pretty boy", hit news headlines over the death of "pretty girl" Thitima "Lunlabelle" Noraphanpiphat into the lobby of his building.

Since then, people have questioned the "pretty boy" industry. To discuss this, the *Bangkok Post* met up with Job (not his real name), an attractive 30-year-old male model.

SLOW SEASON

Job, in the business for five years, said that Rachadech's behaviour is not typical of all male promoters.

"Rachadech's actions have impacted my work, in how people react to me, as if to ask whether I act like him. As pretty boys we do freelance work, and for the last couple of months, work has been slow. I am not certain if it is because of the Lunlabelle case or the slowing down of the economy," he said.

Another misconception he said he would like to clear up is about the notion that all promotional models are open to being hired for entertainment at parties. This, again, is not the case, he said. "Entertainment", or "N" jobs, often pay more for less working hours, but have risks and dangers. While pretties are at risk of sexual harassment in such instances, Job admits it is equally important for a promotional model to choose his work carefully.

"I once agreed to attend a birthday event which was organised by a wealthy gentleman. The job, which was posted in a Line chat group for pretty boys, was to carry a birthday cake with my shirt off. I didn't think much of it, as I wasn't naked, and decided to send in my name. I was picked for the job by the client.

"I was told to drink and eat with them first, after which I was invited to a club. I had become quite drunk by then. I had to act fast to get myself out of the situation as it was getting out of hand. Luckily, I was able to convince the client that my girlfriend was waiting, and I had to wake up early the next day for work, so he sent me home."

Job was given 8,000 baht for his work and a 3,000 baht tip on top. It was much more than what was agreed on. Such an income makes it tempting to go back for more jobs.

"However I decided to stick to product presenting and modelling. It is much safer as the event organisers protect you. Their staff check that the product presenters are not sexually harassed by guests."

NET IDOL

Job has over 90,000 followers on his Instagram and an equally large number on his Facebook account. He explains that the need to show more skin on social media is a way to attract followers in the hope of becoming a net idol, which then means attracting the attention of businesses looking for product presenters.

"It is not about prostituting yourself," replied Job, when asked if the photos were a little too sexy.

"But I have to admit that some people might get the wrong idea as I embarrassingly found out later. I once received a call from a guy who requested a pair of my underwear. I got a Facebook message from a guy who was willing to pay me a couple of hundred thousand baht for a night of sex. Both of which I declined."

Job admits that prostitution is an option for promotional workers, but not everyone is interested because once in, it becomes a vicious cycle which is hard to break.

"There is definitely a dark side to this industry, especially when it comes to entertainment work. However, people know of the dangers and risks involved. Many feel they have devised ways to ensure they are safe by having a friend watch their back. However, this type of work is not risk proof because you open yourself to sexual harassment, rape and even physical altercations induced by alcohol."

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

1. Job has had less work recently. True or false?
2. All pretty boys work as party entertainment. True or false?
3. Job once heard about a party job through Line. True or false?
4. How much did he get paid for the birthday job?
5. Job is a net idol. True or false?
6. Job once sold a pair of his underwear. True or false?
7. Pretty boys are aware of the risks of entertainment jobs. True or false?

8. Alcohol can cause problems at the entertainment jobs. True or false?

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

9. discuss10. important11. decided12. invited..... 13. tempting

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

"My parents were ...14... happy about me becoming a pretty boy, ...15... because it is freelance and not something to do long term. Their worst ...16... was the heavy drinking and parties. I convinced them that I would ...17... this. ...18..., I am not attracted to the luxury lifestyle. I'm happy to cook at home and wear simple clothes. I don't really need ...19... of money because I get freebies from the skin clinics and hair salons."

- | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 14. a. not | b. very | c. un |
| 15. a. totally | b. largely | c. slightly |
| 16. a. plan | b. fear | c. idea |
| 17. a. try | b. do | c. avoid |
| 18. a. Finally | b. Luckily | c. Initially |
| 19. a. a lot | b. some | c. all |

Section 4: Find words that match the following definitions.

20. earning money by selling your services to several different organizations
21. an idea that is not based on correct information
22. the act of annoying somebody by saying or doing unpleasant things to them.....
23. a small amount of extra money that you give to somebody
24. a noisy argument or disagreement.....

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