

Tough Guy - Confront

- ① Ask Aida for exact wording ✓

- ② "I would like to write to an Englishman too"

"How old are you Mr. Cook?" was the blunt question thrown at me by the girl at the tourist office.

"46" I replied truthfully, not in the least offended by her directness.

"You look very young, more like 36" was the flabbergasted response.

My only thought was the cynical view of the European that she might at least have asked the answer before asking the question.

The girl was a Filipino. That says it all. Open, honest, innocent, direct.

I'd ~~never~~ been brought into her office by another Filipino on my first morning in Manila. I was greeted like a long-lost brother as my friend personally introduced me to all the girls in the office. They were generally pleased to see me. We were shown some seats, ~~as~~ just ~~any~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~seats~~, but before our bottoms had more than lightly grazed the leather, we were asked to move to some other chairs, near to a rather more conspicuously appointed desk that gave us more space. Rapid Promotion indeed! We had joined the "Bring Home a Friend" scheme under the banner of "Philippines - My Home, Your Home."

- ① → "How did you meet" the curious girl behind the desk asked. There weren't officious girls asking officious questions.

"We wrote letters" was Aida's reply. All smiles. Then perhaps ~~then~~ ^{then} will write to me ~~then~~ ^{then} the girl's response asked at me. Relaxation soft ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~the~~ ~~girl's~~ ~~response~~ ~~asked~~ ~~at~~ ~~me~~.

No animosity, just open kindness.

"You have friends in Manila"? I was asked

"Only Aida"

"But now you have all of us for friends too" she replied ~~replied~~ gesturing to all the ^{students} girls in the office.

We were given our 8 vouchers - in effect raffle tickets which we duly completed with our details as Visitor and Sponsor respectively, Alan & Aida.

The prizes were wonderful, the chances of winning as slim as any other raffle, but it was worth all the writing on the tickets just to receive such a welcome.

Welcome to the Philippines

"How old are you, Mr. Cook?", was the blunt question thrown at me by the girl at the tourist office.

"46", I replied truthfully, not in the least offended by her directness.

"You look very young, more like 36", was her flattering response.

My only thought was the cynical view of the European that she might at least have said the answer before asking the question.

The girl was a Filipina. That says it all. Open, honest, innocent, direct.

I'd been brought into her office by another Filipina on my first morning in Manila. I was greeted like a long lost brother as my friend proudly introduced me to all the girls in the office. They were genuinely pleased to see me. We were shown to some seats, just emptied, but before our bottoms had more than lightly polished the leather, we were asked to move to some other chairs near to a more sumptuously appointed desk that gave us more space. Rapid promotion indeed! We had joined the 'Bring home a friend' scheme under the banner of 'Philippines – My home; Your home'.

"How did you meet?", the curious girl behind the desk asked. These weren't officious girls asking officious questions.

"We wrote letters" was Aida's reply. All smiles.

"Then perhaps Alan will write to me. I would like to write to an Englishman", was the girl's response aimed at me. Relaxing soft laughter followed. No animosity; just open friendliness.

"You have friends in Manila?", I was asked.

"Only Aida".

"But now you have all of us for friends too", she replied, gesturing to all the smiling girls in the office.

We were given out 8 vouchers – in effect, raffle tickets, which we duly completed with our details as visitor and sponsor respectively, Alan and Aida.

The prizes were wonderful, the chances of winning as slim as any other raffle, but it was worth all the writing on the tickets just to receive such a welcome.