THE VILLAINOUS SENIOR AND HIS ENGINEERING UNCLE

English Sample: Chapters 1-2

by 22August

Amarin Coporations PCL.

CHAPTER 1

The Oldest Freshman in Civil Engineering

One week into university life, the classes were still fairly light, which gave Phasin some time to adjust. He was not particularly fond of having to attend freshman activities every evening, but what choice did he have? He had chosen to come back to school, so he would simply have to endure the awkwardness of being stared at by his much younger classmates.

Thud!

"Ah! I'm sorry!"

Lost in thought on his way to the faculty's Gear Yard, Phasin walked straight into someone's back. The impact sent both of them stumbling in opposite directions. When Phasin finally looked up, his eyes widened as if he had seen a ghost.

Of all people, the person he had collided with - splattering half-melted ice cream all across the back of a workshop jacket - had to be It.

It, the son of the family Phasin had once worked for as a housekeeper for years.

He had never imagined they would meet again, much less as students in the same faculty, with It now his senior.

"Damn it! Watch where you're going, Uncle! Look what you did to my shirt!"

It spun around and barked at him. A moment earlier, he had been leaning by the footpath, posing coolly in front of a group of girls from the Faculty of Communication Arts. Now his image was ruined by one careless collision. He swore under his breath as the girls giggled among themselves and walked away.

"I'm sorry. Are you hurt anywhere?"

"Of course I'm hurt! What kind of question is that? Learn to watch where you're going next time instead of crashing into people like an idiot!"

It glared at the older freshman as though he wanted a fight. First, he had failed to impress the girls. Then this clumsy man had gone and rammed into him.

What the hell kind of luck had he walked out of the house with today?

A long finger pointed accusingly at the older man before It brushed at his jacket with open disgust. Phasin's face burned. He bowed his head and apologized again and again, but nothing seemed capable of soothing It's temper.

"S-sorry."

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“Is that the only word you know? Still as clueless as ever!”

Thump!

“Ugh!”

The sight of that plain, apologetic face only irritated It more. He deliberately drove his shoulder into the shorter man as he passed. Phasin staggered backward and nearly fell, and the ice cream he had barely eaten slipped from his hand and landed tragically on the ground.

He stared after the broad back of the ill-tempered younger man, completely baffled.

“What kind of person stays angry after someone apologizes? Still as badly behaved as ever.”

Phasin remembered that when he had worked as a housekeeper at It’s home, the boy had loved tormenting him like this. It had been one of the reasons Phasin eventually quit. He had never expected to meet him again in a taller, more grown-up version with exactly the same foul temper.

If that was the case, Phasin decided, the safest thing would be to stay away from It whenever possible.

It, meanwhile, was still stewing as he shoved his hands into his pockets and stalked toward his friends with a scowl.

Damn it. That old man had dared disappear on him for a whole year, and when they finally met again, he acted like It was a complete stranger.

Unbelievable.

“What’s wrong with you now? You’ve been pulling that face from fifty meters away.”

“That damn uncle walked into me. And he got ice cream all over my workshop jacket!”

“Huh. Feels like fate keeps throwing you two together. You haven’t stopped talking about him since term started.”

Yo laughed, then quickly leaned away when It aimed a kick at him for saying the wrong thing.

“Fate, my ass! He’s a damn eyesore. Speak of the devil and there he is again.”

It glanced toward the person they were discussing. Phasin’s lean figure had just joined the cluster of first-year students, and somehow he stood out despite trying his best not to. Maybe it was his deeper complexion, darker than most of the others. Whatever the reason, It kept catching himself looking over.

“The more I look at him, the less bad he seems,” Yo said. “I heard some first-years talking. His name’s Phasin, thirty-six years old. Honestly, he doesn’t look that old.”

“Not old my ass. We’re only twenty-one. He was born fifteen years before us.”

“True. Still, leave him alone, would you? Stop picking on the guy.”

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“I will - as long as he stays out of my life first.”

It filed the grudge away for later. Phasin had already made him look stupid in front of the girls, and now there was a ridiculous blotch of ice cream dried across the back of his jacket.

Who wouldn’t be annoyed?

“All right, freshmen! We’ve been in term for a week now, so you should know some of your classmates and seniors already. That means today we’re drawing our senior-junior mentorship lines!”

Excited chatter swept across the yard. Seniors and freshmen who had been secretly hoping for particular people began praying they would get the mentor they wanted.

Phasin had only one wish: if possible, he hoped he would get Nine.

Nine had been the first senior to defend him on his very first day at university. Phasin still did not fully understand the whole senior-junior mentorship system. He had spent most of his life keeping his head down and working, with little time to keep up with youth culture or the habits of a younger generation. Naturally, he needed time to adapt.

But he was a freshman now, even if he was already closer to forty than twenty. He had to learn how to fit in as best he could.

Poke, poke.

Someone nudged him from the side. Phasin turned, and the other freshman leaned closer to whisper so only the two of them could hear.

“Hey. Did you get into some kind of fight with Senior It? Why does he keep staring at you like that?”

Kawin, brave enough to voice what everyone else was probably wondering, followed It’s gaze. Phasin looked too and immediately found that Kawin was right. It was staring directly at him without blinking, his expression so severe that Phasin instinctively looked away.

“N-no. It’s nothing. I just got a little ice cream on his shirt.”

“A little? I don’t think that counts as a little. Everyone knows Senior It is a total troublemaker. He gets into fights with vocational-school guys all the time. Sure, he’s handsome, but please, every sacred thing in the universe, don’t let him be my senior mentor. Just thinking about it gives me chills.”

Kawin shuddered theatrically, then looked at Phasin with sympathy. His new friend seemed to have pressed exactly the wrong button on It’s temper.

“I don’t think it’s that serious. Besides, I already apologized.”

“If that’s what you think, then good luck.”

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Kawin gave a dry laugh and patted Phasin on the shoulder. At that exact moment, a senior from the recreation team walked into the middle of the circle carrying a large cardboard box.

“All right, everyone, time to draw your senior mentors. Each row will come up and draw a name from this box. Whoever you get will be your assigned senior.”

The yard erupted again. Several freshmen looked as if they might levitate from sheer excitement; some even pressed their palms together and prayed.

When Phasin’s turn came, he slowly reached into the box, pulled out one folded slip, and opened it.

Handsome It.

...!

Phasin froze.

His lips pressed into a thin line as he slowly raised his head, almost unwilling to believe his own eyes. Across the yard, a tall figure stood with his arms folded and a dark expression on his face.

Phasin managed a strained smile.

Of all people, the bad-tempered brat had become his senior mentor.

He had wanted nothing to do with It. Why did the universe insist on throwing them together?

“All right, freshmen. Now that you know who your senior mentors are, go introduce yourselves. We’ll have some activities for each mentorship line in a moment.”

The instant the announcement ended, freshmen across the yard sprang up and went searching for their seniors.

Phasin alone remained rooted in place.

The thirty-six-year-old man took a deep breath, gathered his courage, and walked toward the tall figure leaning beneath a tree with folded arms and a face that plainly said he was not welcome.

“You...”

It looked Phasin up and down, then arched a brow when the older man stood there stammering without getting to the point.

“What?”

“I... drew your name. You’re my senior mentor.”

Phasin held out the slip as proof. It glanced at the name written there, then let out a disbelieving laugh.

“So what? Drawing my name is one thing. I never said I’d accept you as my junior.”

“What do you mean?”

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A wicked smile tugged at It's mouth as he glanced at the freshmen and seniors gathered around them.

"You want to be my junior, right?"

"Y-yes."

"Then prove you're good enough to be my junior."

Phasin tightened his lips. He knew perfectly well that It was looking for an excuse to torment him, but he nodded anyway.

"How do I prove it?"

It's smile turned downright villainous. He pointed toward the Gear Yard, where seniors and freshmen were still milling around.

"Go stand in the middle of the yard and shout, 'My name is Phasin. I'm thirty-six years old, the oldest freshman in Civil Engineering. Please take good care of me, everyone.' Loud enough for the whole place to hear."

"But...!"

Phasin stared at him in horror. He had not expected It to demand something that humiliating.

"I'm not forcing you," It said with a smirk. "Don't want to do it? Go sit back down. But I won't take you as my junior. So, Uncle? You got the guts or not?"

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CHAPTER 2

The Reluctant Senior Mentor

Phasin stared at the man in front of him, nerves twisting in his stomach. There was not a trace of pity on It's face. If anything, the curl at the corner of his mouth made it clear that he was thoroughly enjoying this.

If Phasin gave up now, he would only be giving It exactly what he wanted.

With that thought, he walked to the center of the Gear Yard, drew a deep breath, and shouted at the top of his lungs.

"My name is Phasin! I'm thirty-six years old, the oldest freshman in Civil Engineering! Today I'm here to become Senior It's junior. Please take good care of me, everyone!"

His voice carried across the entire yard. Every freshman who had been busy searching for their assigned seniors turned to look at him at once.

"Hahaha! Uncle's getting hazed!"

"Damn, he got Senior It? He's screwed."

"Poor Uncle. At his age he still has to go through freshman initiation."

Comments erupted from every direction once people realized who the oldest freshman had drawn. Being ordered to announce his age in the middle of the yard was humiliating enough, but plenty of people were also impressed that he had actually accepted It's challenge.

It, meanwhile, should have been satisfied that his little prank had worked. Yet his handsome face remained stormy.

It was already annoying enough that the old man had dared come asking to be his junior. Now Phasin had loudly announced in front of everybody that he wanted It as his senior mentor.

Old, irritating, and shameless.

The man who had just made a public spectacle of himself marched back toward It, who stood beneath the tree with his arms folded and an expression that promised nothing good.

"I shouted exactly what you told me to. Will you accept me as your junior now?"

"Huh. In a hurry to collect your reward, aren't you?"

"Well? Are you accepting me or not?"

Phasin pressed for an answer. He had done everything It asked and let the whole yard laugh at him like a clown. The least he deserved was a straight answer.

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It rolled his eyes, visibly irritated. He did not want to say the words out loud at all. Just look at Yo, Best, and Nine - every one of them had gotten a cute young freshman.

Why the hell was he the one stuck with this uncle?

"Fine! Fine. You're my junior. And stop sticking your face so close to mine. You smell old as hell."

Phasin froze. He had leaned in without realizing it because he wanted to hear the answer clearly. The second he understood, he recoiled at once.

He had showered that morning, scrubbed himself clean, put on deodorant, and even dusted himself generously with Snake Brand cooling powder. There was no way he could possibly have an "old-person smell."

"S-sorry. I was just a little happy."

"Of course you're happy. I'm this handsome. Everybody wants me as their senior mentor."

"No, that's not it. I was just worried I wouldn't pass the activity."

Crash.

Something seemed to shatter inside It's head.

The smug smile on his face vanished instantly.

So this old man wasn't happy because he got me as his senior?

It cleared his throat to cover his reaction, then quickly put on a scowl as though nothing had happened.

"Ahem. Who asked for your reason? I was just saying it. Don't get full of yourself, Uncle."

Phasin's expression faltered. It had suddenly become angry even though Phasin had only answered honestly. He nodded meekly.

"Yes..."

"Enjoy yourself while you can. Freshman activities aren't over for a long time. Better prepare yourself, Uncle. If you're my junior, you obey everything I say. Whatever I tell you to do, you do it. And from now on, stop calling me 'you.' You call me P'It - Senior It. At least try to act like a proper junior. Got it?"

"Got it."

A wicked grin spread across It's face. He already had at least ten new ways to torment the older man running through his head.

"It!"

A shout came from behind them. Both men turned at once. Two or three fourth-year students were approaching, including Sing, It's senior in the same mentorship line.

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“Hey, Hia. What are you doing here?”

“Heard you were drawing junior partners today, so I came to look. You got yours already?”

“Yeah.”

Sing’s gaze shifted to Phasin. He looked him over from head to toe, read the name tag around his neck, then turned slowly back to It.

“Wait. Don’t tell me...”

“Yeah. He’s my junior.”

It answered as if the admission physically pained him.

“Hahaha! Damn, your luck is something else. Everybody else gets a fresh-faced kid and you get an uncle.”

“More like terrible luck, Hia!”

“Come on. At least you got a junior.”

Sing laughed and clapped It on the shoulder.

“Good. Bring him to the mentorship-line dinner tonight. I’ll get everyone together at the bar. We’ll welcome the new kid properly.”

It let out a long, suffering sigh.

“Do I have to bring him?”

“Obviously. He’s your junior. You need to introduce him to the whole line.”

Sing then turned to Phasin with a friendly smile.

“See you tonight, Sin.”

“Yes, P’.”

Phasin gave him a polite wai even though Sing was younger than he was, then glanced at It, whose face looked as if the world were ending.

Being forced to accept him as a junior had already made It miserable. Learning that he now had to bring Phasin to dinner seemed to make him several times more annoyed.

“You heard Hia. After the activity, wait for me in front of the faculty. I’ll take you to the mentorship dinner. Don’t disappear. Understood?”

It’s tone was as irritated as ever.

“Understood.”

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It stared at him for a moment. Then his eyes caught the ice-cream stain on the back of his workshop jacket. His mouth twisted in annoyance.

He grabbed the hem and pulled the jacket over his head, leaving only a black tank top stretched over his athletic frame.

Whoosh.

“Wash this. You made that stupid ice-cream stain, so you clean it. Bring it back quickly. If it doesn’t come out, you’re dead.”

The jacket flew at Phasin. He caught it in surprise. It pointed at him in warning before turning and walking away.

The thirty-six-year-old freshman looked from the jacket in his hands to the broad back of his senior disappearing into the distance, then sighed softly.

“So being someone’s junior really means doing everything they tell you, huh?”

He carefully folded It’s jacket and tucked it into his bag, afraid of damaging it. The worried look on his face slowly gave way to a small smile.

At least he had made it through his first hurdle on campus. Now he had a senior mentor like everyone else.

That evening, as soon as the freshman activity ended, Phasin hurried back to his dorm to shower and change. He assumed a mentorship-line dinner meant nothing more than sitting down for an ordinary meal, so there was no need to dress up.

He chose his favorite faded plaid shirt, loose black trousers, and an old pair of sneakers. He combed his hair neatly into a center part, smoothing it flat, then finished with a few sprays of bargain perfume from the market - twenty-five baht per cubic centimeter.

Since he still had time, Phasin took a motorcycle taxi and arrived early to wait in front of the university, exactly as It had ordered.

Vroooom.

Before long, the roar of a large motorcycle engine thundered into the bus-stop area outside the university. A big bike pulled up directly in front of Phasin.

It killed the engine and removed his helmet, revealing a handsome face that immediately drew stares from several girls nearby.

Then he looked up at the man waiting for him.

It’s gaze traveled slowly from Phasin’s head all the way to his shoes.

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His brows pulled together.

“What the hell are you wearing, Uncle?”

Phasin looked down at himself, baffled.

“My normal clothes.”

“Normal?”

It snorted and shook his head, clearly amused.

“I thought you were dressed for a retirement party.”

Phasin’s face fell. He tugged self-consciously at the hem of his shirt.

“Does it look that bad?”

“Bad. Seriously outdated.”

The blunt answer silenced him. These were the kinds of clothes he had worn for years. Besides, he had to be careful with what money he had left. Most of his savings had already gone to tuition, so buying new clothes simply was not a priority.

“Should I go back and change?”

Whoosh.

“No. Just go like this. Changing won’t make you look any better anyway.”

It tossed him a spare helmet.

Back when Phasin had worked at his family’s house, he had always dressed in this same old-fashioned way. No matter what he changed into now, It doubted it would make much difference.

“All right...”

Phasin answered quietly. He accepted the helmet and put it on obediently before climbing awkwardly onto the back of the big bike.

Around them, more than a few students stared as the faculty’s notoriously hot senior prepared to take the middle-aged freshman uncle out to meet their mentorship line.

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