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But in The End, I Didn't Do Anything

by MARCELLA PURNAMA on Aug 22, 2011 - 11:53 pm

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"Where are you from?" they usually ask.

And I will answer, "I'm from Indonesia."

"Oh, an Indonesian! I've heard Bali is such a good place. Never been there though. And the food is good, isn't it?"

"Yeah, it's really good," I often say.

Bali. Beach. Nature. Food. Culture. There are so many Indonesian things that we can be proud of. "White sand and blue ocean," said an Indonesian trailer in the cinema. "Know your country, love your country."

... For what?



For You, My Homeland.

There lies an old shack, full of memories. The wood that once was strong, now starts to be torn apart by the old age. The roof starts to leak. If rainy season comes, the wood is unable to fight the raindrops that fall; the rain gives no mercy.

The shack is torn, eaten by its old age. But it holds on, protecting the Grandmother who lives inside. As if it answers her call, "Hang on, the rain will be gone in no time. After that, the people will help to renovate you. You must believe."

But help is never on its way.

And the shack waits, accompanying the Grandmother.

"Even though there are many countries I've been to
That people say so full of riches and beauty
But my country and my home
There, I find happiness
I will not forget my land
My homeland, I honour you"

Tanah Airku (My Homeland) – Ibu Sud

If we remember the lyrics of the song "My Homeland" by Ibu Sud, I think, why exactly are we proud of our country? What is the difference between Indonesia and America, Australia, Canada, and many others?

"Difference in location!" well, that's for sure. "Difference in season, culture, and language!" Yes, that is also true. But in the end everything else is the same, they are all made of land and water; there are ground, ocean, and air. The earth is still its planet; the humans are still the ones who dwell on it. White sand, blue ocean, flora, and fauna; they all take place.

What's the difference?

Indonesia produces herbs; France produces grapes. Indonesia consists of islands; Swiss consists of mountains. An Indonesian staple food is rice, and the West has potatoes.

But once again, *for what?*

Once in a while the Grandmother goes to the city. Because of the advance in technology, the people starts to move, move, and move. One by one, they are gone. The Grandmother is happy for the advancement, but she still decides to live in the village. She believes that even though the city is a very nice place, the place where she

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lives is still 'home'. The city is more exciting, for sure; more beautiful, of course. But...

After she goes back to her village, what she sees pierces her heart. Everyone is busy talking about their

moving to city. "This village has nothing," they say, "it's been so undeveloped. Let us move to the city very quickly, we do not need to care about this village anymore."

The Grandmother holds back her tears.

How painful it is to see someone rejecting his own homeland.

—

"I'm proud to be Indonesian. In here there's the heaven of flora and fauna. In here there are Komodo and Rhino, and no other countries have them. In here there is Bali – with all its beauty and diverse cultures. Here is the country that produces herbs. Maybe other people will say, 'Indonesia has nothing different with other countries! What do we need to be proud of?' But I'll say, Indonesia is Indonesia. There is no need for another reason. Here is the place I was born, my homeland. And I'm proud of it."

I'm proud.

"And I love Indonesia. Even though people out there say that our country is corrupt and everything can be 'legalised'. Even though we are still considered as 'developing country'. Even though there are many tsunamis, earthquakes, and other natural disasters; here is still the place where I grow up, the place where I live. And I love it."

I love.

—

The Grandmother starts to walk back to her old shack. Not even one person wants to help her renovate the only place that she calls as 'home'.

"Just give up, Grandma, follow us to the city. There, I'm sure your life will be much better."

Yet in this old shack a life was once born. The life of the Grandmother, the life of the people, the life of the 'Village'. Sixty-five years, the Grandmother has lived. Sixty-five years, she has lived in that shack. In that old shack, six decades ago was filled with laughter. In that abandoned shack, six decades ago hope was spread.

"Indonesia must be freed! Indonesia will be freed!"

"Mother Earth, we ask for your blessings. We will free Indonesia. We will make sure that our flag will always be raised!"

Now?

... The Grandmother may celebrate her sixty-sixth birthday, alone, with her faithful shack. This Mother Earth, will always be proud of her people, with her country. Like a Mother who will always love her son, so will the Mother Earth. Even though not one person, helps her to renovate her shack. Her place. Her 'home'.

—

I'm an Indonesian. And I'm proud of it. I'm proud of my country in all its riches. I'm proud of my country with all its weaknesses. And I love my country.

But in the end... I didn't do anything.

I'm just sitting there in silence, seeing the woods of the shack starting to be torn away, seeing the fire starting to fade away.

I'm waiting for the others to do something.

But the others never come.

And that chance passes me by.

—

I'm proud of my land. With a million culture and another million race. Red is my blood; white is my bone. I will raise the flag at its dwelling place.

But in the end... Once again, I'm just folding my hands. I'm going off the stage before the play is finished, waiting for the others to play the part that should have been mine.

But the others never come.

—

... The Mother Earth is still smiling. Waiting for someone to do something. "Proud," I say. "Love," I declare.

But in the end, I never do anything.

—

"...and even though you know how bad the news in the papers and... how broken our country is you will always say that you love this country."

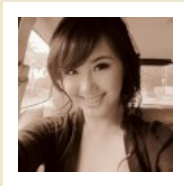
(excerpt from the book '5 cm', by Donny Dhurgantoro)

"I, I... I'm proud to be able to be here with you all, I will always love this land for the rest of my life... I will protect its honour like I'm protecting mine..."

(excerpt from the book '5 cm', by Donny Dhurgantoro)

"A thousand old people can only dream, one young man can change the world."

"Our country is rich, very rich, Brothers. Have faith, have imagination. Dig! Work! Dig! Work! We live in one of the



Marcella Purnama

Marcella Purnama is a second-year psychology and media and communications major at Melbourne University. She spends most her time writing and blogging (<http://marcellapurnama.wordpress.com/>), or else she can be found hopping from one Melbourne cafe to the other, trying all the different coffee shots. Disney, movies, and love fill three-quarter of her brain, so hopefully studies will be there somewhere among the quarter. Loving life, she is determined to live her best.

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