

Princess Flower Hands

Inang always gives me flowers before I leave our house.

Sometimes she gives me roses or daisies but Inang always gives me sampaguitas when we don't have roses or daisies. She gives me 'too-en-tee' flowers on my right hand and 'too-en-tee' flowers on my left hand. Inang tells me that the flowers are very important.

Inang taught me to give the flowers to other people so they can be happy but why do they give me money when I give them flowers? Inang says it's fine and that people are just being nice to me, so I have to be nice, too, and take the money they give me. Inang tells me that I'm a very good girl when I give all the flowers to other people but Inang gets sad when I go home at night and still have some flowers. Inang said we can't waste any of the flowers because people don't like dead flowers. I asked Inang what dead means and she said that it means we can't give the flowers to other people anymore because dead things make people very sad. I remember that Inang used that word, too, when we talk about Itay but Inang gets sad and angry when we talk about Itay, so I don't talk to Inang about Itay anymore.

I'm not like the other girls or boys I see. Inang says I can't go to school because if I go to school she'll be all alone and no one will give flowers to the people. She taught me to say the words like "Bili po kayo" or "Sampaguita po" or "Bulaklak po." She says that I'm telling people that I have flowers for them so they can be happy, so I'm happy, too, if they get flowers. Sometimes other girls and boys look at me and laugh at my flowers. I asked why the other boys and girls laugh at my flowers and Inang didn't answer but she looked really sad, so I don't ask that to Inang anymore.

Sometimes when I'm very bored, I play pretend. I close my eyes and pretend that I'm a princess in Inang's stories and that I have super powers. Do you know what my super power is? I pretend that I can make other people happy, just like my flowers. So I pretend that my hands are flowers.

When Inang leaves me by the streets, I close my eyes for a little while and pretend that I'm the princess with flowers hands; the little girl who can always make people happy. Every day, I ask people if they want flowers and I pretend that my super power is working.