

Singapore HeritageFest 2009
“Arte (factually) Speaking” Story-Writing Competition
Merit Award (Upper Primary Category)



Contest ID: 137
Name: Joy Peh Yin Kai
Gender: Female
Age: 12-year-old
NRIC: SXXXX361J
Nationality: Singaporean
School: Bukit Timah Primary School

Artefact: Dayak Hornbill Carving
Museum: Asian Civilisations Museum

Dayak Hornbill Carving

Pierre and I stared in wonder at the statue. It was a beautiful bird - a myriad of colours, ranging from the lightest of yellow to the darkest of red. It had a silver beak. We looked at each other, adrenaline pulsing through our veins - could we have found a priceless artefact?

"What is it made of?" Pierre mused, and hesitantly stretched out his hand. I was hopping with excitement and at the same time nervous. I held my breath as Pierre's finger came into contact with the statue. I squeezed my eyes shut and covered my ears.

There was a moment of absolute silence. Not even a bird chirped. Nothing had happened! Disappointed, I tentatively lowered my hands, and regretted doing so immediately. There was a loud bang, and it was so sudden that my heart skipped a beat as I jumped three feet into the air. My eyes snapped open and scanned the area.

My eyes almost got blinded by the light shining from the statue. I took a closer look and gasped in wonder. In the statue's place was a real bird! Pierre and I ogled at it. It was even more beautiful than the statue!

"Thank you, saviours, for freeing me from my curse. I, the magic bird, was trapped in the statue for ten years, waiting for someone to free me, and in return, I shall grant you both two wishes," the handsome bird said. Pierre and I could not believe our ears! The speech was abrupt - after declaring us two wishes, the bird flew away.

After a moment of awe, I broke the silence. "I want to wish first," I said. "No! I want to first!" Pierre argued. "The older one gets to wish first," I insisted. "Ugh! You always use that against me! I wish you'd disappear!" Pierre complained. With a slip of the tongue, Pierre had accidentally made a wish! I gasped as I felt myself falling into a deep hole, and at that instant I realised it was an abyss - there would be no end, I would just keep falling and falling...

I quaked in terror. "No!" I screamed at the top of my lungs. The moment I said that, I was back on land with Pierre.

We stared at each other sullenly. We had so many ambitions! Why didn't we think that the smartest wish was to wish for more wishes?

(404 words)