

Singapore HeritageFest 2009
“Arte (factually) Speaking” Story-Writing Competition
Shortlisted Entry (Lower Secondary Category)



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Artefact: Revere Bell; Construction
Museum: National Museum of Singapore; Singapore Art Museum

Unfailing Love

Long time ago, in a time where kings and wizards and magic exist, there lived a young and loving couple in an Asian village. They were so poor that they could hardly make ends meet but they lived blissfully, contented with each other's company.

One day, King Abtash decided on a project to cast a divine bell for his deceased wife, Queen Absheba. He summoned all male workers young and old from the village. In much tears, the husband left his wife and set off with the rest of the men to go to the palace. For many months, the heartbroken wife spent her time weaving clothes and shoes for her husband, waiting for his return. But she grew more anxious when her husband did not send any letters. Winter set in and she heard rumours of workers being treated poorly. She was worried that her husband had no suitable clothes, furthermore when she was sleeping, she dreamt of her husband telling her that he was suffering terribly and was touched by her making the clothes for him. At sunrise, when she woke up, she packed her belongings along with the clothing and shoes she had woven and with her eyes set fast on the goal, set forth on a journey to find her husband.

After travelling for several days, she finally reached the twin mountains of fire and ice that were well-known for its difficulty to pass and countless number of people being turned to stone when they complained and none had succeeded in crossing. She walked through the fire mountain and felt the heat searing through her skin, but her determination to save her husband gave her the strength to grit her teeth and bear the pain. To her surprise, when she descended the mountain, all her burns disappeared. However, when she walked through the icy mountain, despite wearing all the clothes she had, she was still freezing. But she endured it all without uttering a word and made it through. After that harrowing experience, she continued onwards.

After a week, she finally reached the palace where they were building the bell. After many fruitless attempts of finding her husband, she finally found him.

She was delighted but was shocked to see her husband just skin and bones. She immediately presented him her bundle of clothing and shoes. Her husband was so happy to see his wife that they embraced each other tightly. But something unfortunate was about to happen.

In the meantime, the bell failed to peal again and again, despite the continued efforts of the workers. King Abtash summoned a magician to solve the problem. The magician told the king

that in order for the bell to peal, they had to sacrifice a young woman. However no one wanted to offer their daughter for such a purpose. One of the magicians having heard that a worker had a young wife with him, told King Abtash who then ordered the wife to be thrown into the melting bronze.

The next day, the guards threw the ill-fated wife into the pit of melting bronze and when the workers cast the bell again, this time to everyone's astonishments, the bell pealed loudly. The king was overjoyed but the husband despaired by this incident, ran inside the hollow of the bell and killed himself by striking his head against it.

Now whenever the bell sounds reverberated around the land, the sound is rich yet mournful. Till this day, the people remember the sad story surrounding it.

(591 words)