

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



Contest ID: 160  
Name: Nikhil Coomaraswamy  
Gender: Male  
Age: 13-year-old  
NRIC: SXXXX423Z  
Nationality: Singaporean  
School: Raffles Institution

Artefact: Revere Bell  
Museum: National Museum of Singapore

15 minutes

It was 1917, and Sulaiman was sitting in his rocking chair reading the newspaper. It had been a long time since the last customer had arrived and Sulaiman was contemplating closing the shop early. Nobody seemed to be interested in his antiques anymore. With a sigh, he got up and walked to the entrance to close the door. This wasn't the kind of job a man of his age would want. Just then, the church bells started to ring. Sulaiman stared at the scar on his arm, and began to remember how it had happened 69 years ago.

Kites. Everyone was obsessed with them at that time. Kids from every house would have their own kites and would "fight" their neighbours every evening. Sulaiman was one of the best kite makers in his *kampung*. He knew the best method to make his kite strings as sharp as razors and he never revealed it to anyone. Now, Sulaiman was feeling disappointed. He was playing against one of his friends, Zubin, and was losing. This was a very rare occurrence. *Sulaiman* looked at the sun. It was seven thirty at most. Anyway, his mother only told him to go home when the Revere bell rang. The Revere bell rang every evening five minutes before eight o' clock. It was Sulaiman's reminder to go home every evening. Sulaiman smiled. He still had plenty of time to beat Zubin.

Darkness was setting in, but Sulaiman was still standing in that field watching his kite and Zubin's kite battle it out in the air. The battle was showing no signs of ending any time soon. Suddenly Sulaiman snapped back into reality. He looked around and noticed that his surroundings were absolutely deserted. He dropped his kite string and looked around once again, his face painted with horror. Had it not rung? Had he not heard it? Zubin, meanwhile, was shouting with delight as his kite brought down Sulaiman's. When Zubin finally saw Sulaiman's worried face and said, "It's past curfew right? The bell rang already right Sul?" "I really don't know why you're so scared. It is probably only 15 minutes past curfew! What could happen?" Zubin said as the two boys raced down the street. Sulaiman didn't even bother replying. He knew that thieves and robbers roamed the streets at this time. Looking to prey on stragglers like him and Zubin. Just then Sulaiman noticed that Zubin had stopped talking. He had also stopped running. Sulaiman looked up and his worst fears were confirmed. A man holding a knife stood in the two boys' way.

The man smiled, revealing his crooked yellow teeth. "Boys, didn't your parents tell you to go home before the Revere bell rings?" The boys said nothing. The man wanted money. There

was just one problem. The boys had none. Then, Zubin did the craziest thing. He charged at the man. Sulaiman couldn't control himself. For some reason he followed. Sulaiman woke up in the hospital the next day. He had a scar on his arm, a reminder of that fateful night. What bothered Sulaiman more was that he couldn't find Zubin anywhere in the ward. 15 minutes had made the difference. 15 minutes.

(534 words)