

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



Contest ID: 1
Name: Naman Vijay Shah
Gender: Male
Age: 14-year-old
NRIC: SXXXX013B
Nationality: Singaporean
School: Raffles Institution

Artefact: Iranun Pirate
Museum: National Museum of Singapore

A Bloody History

I may not have a good history, but I do have some things that I am proud of. I have never ever failed my master, and have been used many times, with a hundred percent success rate. One might ask, "Why take pride in such a morbid and cruel 'achievement'?" My simplest answer would be, "It is in my nature to do what I do. I was made for this purpose and I had successfully served my purpose, thus I am contented and proud of my success, no matter how horrific it was to others."

I was born somewhere in Sulu, during the 1830s-1840s, to a blacksmith who regularly supplied pirates with weaponry. Little did that blacksmith know that I was about to be his greatest, if not last work. He sold me off to an Iranun pirate, where I hung in the scabbard of the captain. He and his merry band of pirates set sail to the Straits of Malacca. That was where I earned my first bloody badge of honour.

I remember that day so well; we had captured a small merchant ship and had its skipper on his knees in front of the captain. Suddenly, while our men were busy unloading the bags of tea, opium and assorted goods from the ship, one of the men gave a short sharp yell, and fell down on the deck, blood streaming from a huge, ragged in the back of his skull. The captain, realising that one of the skipper's men had hidden in a barrel with a large, blunt axe waiting for the right moment to try seizing control of the ship again, whipped me out from my scabbard and brought it down on the kneeling skipper's shoulder with feral force.

I bit deep into the helpless skipper. Further and further down I went, eager to quench my intense thirst for blood. First skin, then muscle, finally I hit bone. However, that did not stop me as I shattered right through it, like a juggernaut through a brick wall. Finally, I reached the base of the skipper's shoulder and burst back out of him in a crimson explosion of blood and gore. The skipper's dismembered arm fell onto the slick deck, stained red with his own blood. I watched as he fell over on his side, the fading light in his eyes staring at his severed limb, unable to comprehend the reality and totality of his circumstances. The captain roared with rage and then, all hell broke loose. By the time I was done, the captain had soaked his shirt in the blood of his victims. I stared on in morbid pride at my gory masterpiece.

However, my days filled with blood were numbered. Soon, the advent of the British Navy's steamships doomed my pirate clan forever. A well-aimed British cannonball flew straight into

our ship's deck, ripping it to shreds like tissue paper. I watched sadly, as my master and his crew succumbed to the resulting shrapnel.

When I was finally picked up, lying on a piece of driftwood from the wreck, by a British salvage ship, they honoured my bloody past by giving me a final resting place at the National Museum of Singapore. My designated number is 329 and to this day, that is where I rest. I wait for the day when my glass prison is broken, and I can resume my duties as a slick, efficient, harbinger of certain death.

(576 words)