

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



Contest ID: 212
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Age: 14-year-old
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Nationality: Singaporean
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Artefact: Iranun Pirate
Museum: National Museum of Singapore

The Blade

The scourge of the seas, just the mere mention of a pirate would strike a deep chord within any sailor's heart. Though tensions in the sea have more or less dissipated nowadays, do not be complacent about anything. Modern day technology has refined the pirate's arsenal of weaponry to include guns and even grenades, in a stark contrast to pirates of old. Nevertheless, the governing authority around oceans has also stepped up in terms of security, and the ships have been armed and anticipant, thus severely reducing the profitable nature of being a pirate.

Travel back in time, in the era of merchants and vessels, the most dangerous of times for a seafaring person to exist. As a merchant sailing through Southeast Asian waters, every possible precaution had to be taken; a single slip in vigilance could have calamitous consequences.

He was a man of strength, cunning, resolve, and above all, wit. It was no wonder he was selected as the ambassador for Britain in newly developed Singapore. Sharpened by a strict schedule of daily workouts, his senses were honed to inhumane peaks. His eagle eyesight had already picked up the faint outline of another ship appearing in the mist. Slowly but surely, it was headed right at him.

He stood on the deck, prepared. An uncomfortable prickle at the back of his neck gave him an ominous premonition of foreboding danger; it was the Iranun pirates. Their reputation had spread far and wide, and word of their deeds had even spread as far as Britain. It was said that any ship that encountered them was surely doomed. He raised his head up to the sky, eyes transfixed on the nearest star, blade gleaming in the moonlight. He was ready.

They came with a terrifying screech, a flurry of blades. He saw their swords flashing in the blinding sun, the fearsome sword they called the *Kampilan*. The deadly blade, which could kill a person in a swift stroke, coupled with the bloodthirsty rage of its owner - the perfect killing machine. Round and round they danced, sparks flying in all direction. He marvelled at the almost superior skill of the rogues, as they had no formal military training. Gears turning in his head, he lunged forward, twisting his sword at the same time; hoping to catch them off guard. With a sharp flick of his wrist, he sent two blades flying, doubling up with a kick to one man's chest.

He jerked his head from side to side in pure instinct, feeling the blade rush over where his head had been just seconds before. With pure adrenaline coursing through his veins, he recklessly swung his sword in a wide arc, downing two men in a single blow. Only one man remained. By now, he was fatigued, and the other man, sensing an opening, charged. With a grunt he parried the blow, but his opponent was quicker. With blood flowing freely from his leg wound, he was at a severe disadvantage. Risking everything he had, he threw the sword with all the force he could muster. True to his aim, the sword struck dead centre of the man's chest. He had won.

With a triumphant smile, he lifted the *Kampilan* of the fallen man high in the air, a testimony to his victory. Later, this was the sword he placed in the National Museum of Singapore, symbolizing the vicious struggle against piracy, and the hard battles won. Even though pirates still exist, this type of intense combat has been eradicated from our world today.

(592 words)