

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



Contest ID: 4
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Artefacts: A Pair of Earth Spirits; Washed Up
Museum: Asian Civilisations Museum; Singapore Art Museum

The Competition

Once upon a time, there were two brothers-Tom and Dick. They were the children of a very popular king. The king garnered much respect from all the people. He ruled with impartiality and did not oppress them.

Alas, one day, the king fell terribly sick, to the extent that he could not even walk. The king was still thinking about the well-being of his beloved people and he decided a successor would have to be determined. Both his sons were capable in their own ways but they each lacked a very pertinent trait which was necessary for them to be a good leader. The king thus decided to hold a competition. The competition would be held in two stages to test his sons on bravery and humanity.

In the neighbouring country, there was a whole cave of treasures which had been stolen twenty years ago. This made the people suffer terribly and the king still harnessed a deep hatred. To seek his revenge, he had tried many times to get the treasures back. However, many men had died in their attempt since two earth spirits, stronger than anything else in the world were guarding it. The king told his sons that they had to bring back 50kg of gold to proceed to the next stage.

Tom was an especially rash man, acting without thinking. He decided to battle it out with the spirits. He was obviously no match for the spirits and was banished into the cave.

Dick was much more rationale and considered his various options carefully. He did extensive research on the two spirits and found a flaw in them. They were particularly susceptible to beer and would do anything to get it. Dick thus poured their favourite beer into a big barrel and left traces of the beer from the cave all the way to an enclosure a few kilometres away. The spirits instantaneously went straight into the enclosure, not knowing what had happened until they finished the beer. Dick thus managed to get into the cave and took all the gold he needed. Dick knew he had won the battle. Still, he was a very compassionate person and knew his father would be very sad if his brother did not return. Thus, he brought Tom home and even brought the gold for both of them.

When they got back, his father was much satisfied with Dick's helpfulness with saving Tom. He

thus named Dick the winner of that round. Still, since both of them had brought back the gold needed, he allowed both to proceed to the next round.

The next round was really simple, yet difficult. There was a sea that had pieces of glass with words on them that were thrown out thousands of years ago. The sons had to each pick one piece and use that word to show their humanity

Tom picked the piece with "happiness" on it. He thought that happiness was simply making the people have material wealth. He thus commanded hundreds and thousands of men to build luxurious houses for the people.

Dick picked the piece "love". He did not think love could be felt simply dumping things to the common folk. Thus, he spent his time with the people and understood their situation. He also talked to them and tried to improve their homes.

In the end, the wise king picked Dick as the winner of both stages. Dick had indeed showed his compassion and sincerity, and his ability to connect with the people was all that mattered.

(589 words)