

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



Contest ID: 8
Name: Wesley Chioh
Gender: Male
Age: 14-year-old
NRIC: SXXXX876J
Nationality: Singaporean
School: Raffles Institution

Artefact: A Pair of Earth Spirits
Museum: Singapore Philatelic Museum

The tale of Wei and Bao

It was a quiet night. Stars hung in the sky like pinpricks of light. A cold gust wound its way through the forest. Jiang and Lin each held a lantern aloft and crept along the hallway of the tomb. The comforting orange disc radiating from the lantern reassured them. They were robbing the tomb of a late Tang court official.

Jiang led the way while Lin followed. They failed to notice the two earth spirits behind them, Wei and Bao. To the spirits, they had been slumbering in this forgotten tomb for too long and things had been too peaceful. The rasher of the pair, Bao, suggested confronting them but the playful one, Wei, restrained him. "Let's follow them and play some tricks. It should be fun and justify our presence." He cackled with an evil grin plastered on his face.

As Jiang and Lin approached the main chamber, Wei gently tapped Jiang's shoulder while Bao extinguished his lantern. Jiang halted suddenly and Lin bumped into him. As a result, Lin's lantern slid from his palm and extinguished. As Jiang tried to explain his lantern and the tap, Wei relit the lantern and he stammered to explain the phenomena. An argument began but was hushed, to Wei's disappointment.

Before they entered the chamber, Bao floated ahead and lit it and cast a spell to change all the dirt into gold and other precious metals and porcelain while Wei followed behind and locked and unlocked the door for them numerous times, much to their dismay. It was on their fifth try then did they get in. As they stumbled through the door, they stopped in their tracks as they were dazzled by the array of valuables. Greed floated in their minds as they grabbed valuables and stuffed them into bags. The thought of why the chamber was lit never crossed their minds until Wei shifted his shape into that of the court official and tapped Jiang and Lin. He whispered into their ears, "Is this enough? I don't think it is, please feel free to help yourselves. There are more." At this, Jiang's and Lin's face froze and seemed to be cast in stone as fear surged through them.

They made a mad dash for the door with their loot. As they reached the door, Bao slammed it shut and cackled. "You were right brother. It is more fun." Wei and Bao materialized in-front of the shell-shocked men and closed in on them as they fumbled with the door and fell through it. They slammed the door shut and seeing that the spirits did not go through, they fell down with

relief. Then, Wei and Bao appeared and said "Hello, care to have more?" They screamed and dashed for the exit of the tomb.

They ran through the winding hallways and saw the exit. That was when Wei floated ahead and slammed it shut and turned to face them. He cackled "Had fun? Goodnight" and with a wave, extinguished both of their lanterns. Meanwhile, Bao changed their gold back into dust. As they slithered down in disbelief, reality slammed into them. Joy from the gold, changed into shock at the spirits and regret at their prospects. They spent a sleepless night with two spirits muttering away in their ear passing snide remarks. Tears of remorse flowed. Their remorse lasted forever, as with the spirits but their bodies were long gone.

(570 words)